

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: THE PALIO IN ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART, THOUGHT,
AND CULTURE

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The palio race commemorates the history of Italian cities as it has done so since the late Middle Ages. Despite its cultural significance, and the popularity of ritual topics in Renaissance scholarship, there exists no comparable art historical study of the palio.

In the thirteenth century, the proliferation of feast days in Italian cities coincided with growth in population and commerce. The palio race was the culminating, profane event in a series of sacred offerings and processions, in which representatives of the city's religious and political groups participated. The palio may have descended from the chariot races held in Roman Italy for pagan festivals. The city government organized and paid for the palio. In Siena, the participation of the *contrade* (neighborhood groups) in the palio helped to preserve the tradition in the face of Florentine rule.

Italian cities, including Florence, were highly regarded for their silk fabrics. Cities commissioned the largest and most opulent palio banners for the patronal feasts. Making the banner was a collaborative effort, involving the craftsmanship of banner-makers, furriers, painters, and even nuns. During religious processions, the banner was paraded through the city on a *carro trionfale* (triumphal chariot or cart), reminiscent of the *vexillum*, a cloth military standard used in triumphs of Roman antiquity. The palio banner challenges preconceptions of how Renaissance society valued art objects. The

cost of making the banner equaled or exceeded payments for panel paintings or frescoes by well-known artists. Following the feast day, it was worth only the value of its materials, which were recycled or sold.

Noble and ruling families competed against each other through their prize horses. These families imported the animals from North Africa and Ottoman Turkey, and gave them as diplomatic gifts. The trade in horses, like the textile trade, was part of an international commerce that brought countries and cultures together. Equestrian culture flowered during the Renaissance, in which horses began to be seen as individuals possessing admirable, even human, qualities. Palio horses achieved a level of fame parallel to the racing champions of the modern era, and were portrayed in paintings, prose, and verse.

THE PALIO IN ITALIAN RENAISSANCE ART, THOUGHT, AND CULTURE

by

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I dedicate this study on the palio
to my parents
Philip and Solace Tobey
in this year, 2005,
the fortieth year of their marriage

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Just as the making of a palio banner involved many hands, my dissertation could not have been completed without the help of many individuals and institutions, to whom I am very grateful.

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I first learned about the palio in Marguerite Henry's children's book, *Gaudenzia, Pride of the Palio*, based upon the story of a mare who won the Sienese palio multiple times in the 1950's. Mrs. Henry corresponded with me over a period of years when I was a child and adolescent, and encouraged my interest in horses. Through her horse books which incorporated meticulous research, whether about the Godolphin Arabian (one of the founding sires of the Thoroughbred racehorse) or the Lipizzaner stallions of Vienna, distant times and places literally came to life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AG	Archivio Gonzaga (ASM).
AMP	Archivio Mediceo del Principato (ASF).
ASF	Archivio di Stato, Firenze.
ASM	Archivio di Stato, Mantua.
ASS	Archivio di Stato, Siena.
BCNF	Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Firenze.
BCS	Biblioteca Comunale, Siena.
CC, CU	Camera del Comune, Camarlinghi Uscita (ASF).
CC, NC, EU	Camera del Comune, Notaio di Camera, Entrata e Uscita (ASF).
CC, SC, EU	Camera del Comune, Scrivano di Camera, Entrata e Uscita (ASF).
CPG, NN	Capitani della Parte Guelfa, Numeri Neri (ASF).

Chapter One: Introduction

The July air is tense and heavy in the piazza as thousands of spectators await the start of the July 2nd Palio. It is about 8:00 in the evening, and I have stood since about two o'clock in the same spot just ten feet away from the racetrack, a layer of hard-packed red earth over pavement, covering the perimeter of Siena's shell-shaped Piazza del Campo. I have just witnessed a procession almost two hours long, in which the seventeen *contrade*, or neighborhood organizations, paraded their standards. The procession culminated in the cart, pulled by two enormous white oxen, bearing the *palio* itself, a painted silk cloth (fig. 1). The piazza is so jammed with people that I cannot even see where the start of the race (*mossa*), is about to take place, but hear the numerous false starts sounded by the blast of the *mortaretto* (gunpowder) and the subsequent roar of the crowd. All ten of the *barberi* (racehorses) must be lined up abreast of the taut-stretched rope for the start to be considered fair. I imagine the horses prancing nervously, tossing their necks and pulling heavily on their bits. Their bodies lather with sweat as their *fantini* (jockeys), try to stay seated upon the slippery, agitated backs (fig. 2).

A light rain begins to fall, giving temporary relief to those standing in the hot and crowded piazza. The crowd whispers as the rain patters down, wary that it will render the tight turns of the track even more slick and dangerous. But after a few minutes the rain stops, and the late afternoon sun, low in the sky, re-appears.

There is another blast of the starter's gun, and this time, the start is for real. The crowd roars loudly, and for the first time, I see the horses pass in front of me, a blur of speed crowned by the colorful silks of the jockeys. Suddenly the crowd becomes a living organism, swaying back and forth to follow the progress of the horses around the piazza,

and I am literally swept off my feet, at the mercy of the excited and tightly packed crowd. On the second pass around the piazza, a horse suddenly hurtles out of control on the turn, and vaults towards the place where I am pinned against my neighbors. Jockeys are catapulted into the air; for a horrifying moment, it seems as if the thousand-pound animal will tumble into the crowd, but instead her head strikes one of the stone pillars surrounding the piazza with a sickening thud.

The horses fly around one more time, and the crowd screams of “Oca! Oca!” as Quanero, the horse representing the Contrada of the Oca, or Goose, crosses the finish line first. The Campo erupts into chaos, as people joyfully leap over the barriers and swarm the track, following the victorious horse as he is led towards the neighborhood church of the Oca. I see colorful banners waving in the air, as grown men envelop each other in embraces, weeping in victory. I am swept along with the crowd onto the hard-packed track, and as I pass, I notice the blood of the fallen horse on the red earth, a reminder of the spectacle’s danger and violence.¹

What I have just described is my attendance of the July 2nd, 1996 running of the Palio of the Madonna of Provenzano in Siena, Italy. This race has been held annually in the piazza since the seventeenth century, and is part of a longstanding tradition of palio racing that has existed in Siena since the thirteenth century. In fact, the palio race is not unique to Siena, but was a spectacle common in Italian cities during the Renaissance. Even today, the running of palio races persists in other Italian cities as Ferrara and Asti. Palio races commemorate religious feast days, particularly those of a city’s patron saint. Historically, palio races marked other significant occasions, including visits by foreign

dignitaries or conquerors, weddings of members of the nobility, or anniversaries of battle victories and other events important to a city's history.

Although it may seem incongruous, even blasphemous, to use a profane sporting event such as a horse race to observe a solemn religious feast day, it is not unlike the custom in ancient Rome of celebrating the feast days of pagan deities with chariot races in the Circus Maximus. In fact, by the mid-sixteenth century, a conscious recognition of the palio's connection with the ancient tradition of chariot racing emerged, which led to an actual "revival" in the form of the Palio dei Cocchi, a chariot race held around two obelisks in Florence's Piazza of Santa Maria Novella.

The palio and its associated feast days provided impetus for extensive artistic production. The palio derives its name from the banner awarded to the winner of the horse race. Made of precious materials such as silk brocade, velvet, and damask and lined with vair and ermine pelts, the banners were objects of tremendous material value and prestige. Palio banners carried the civic or familial coats-of-arms of those in power. Cities maintained a *carro* (cart) for carrying the palio. Subject cities and towns, officials of municipal offices, confraternities, and the Sieneese *contrade* constructed elaborate floats (*carri* or *macchine*) with mythological or biblical themes for processions. Worshippers offered great candles, known as *ceri*, and tribute *palii* to the church of the saint whose feast was celebrated. Costume-makers stitched yards of brocade and taffeta for costumes, banners, and trumpet pennants, and women wove garlands as decorations.

Unfortunately, few of the palio banners survive to the modern day, but payment documents, letters, chronicles, histories, poetry, and other works of art give art historians some idea of how they might have appeared and the cost and materials involved in

production. Manuscript and published verse and prose works describe in great detail the processions held for various festivals. Account books from the state archives of Florence and Siena list myriad payments to artists and craftspeople for the construction and embellishment of palio banners and the building of carts and the *aste* (poles holding the banner). Chronicles, such as that kept by the Florentine writer Luca Landucci, record the running of palio races. Watercolor illustrations from the seventeenth century *Priorista* manuscript in Florence's Biblioteca Nazionale show the floats paraded in the festival of San Giovanni Battista, and Bernardino Capitelli's engravings depict the elaborate floats constructed by the Sienese *contrade*.

Images of the palio races also survive. A section of wall fresco of the Sala dei Mesi in Ferrara's Palazzo Schifanoia showing activities of the month of April includes a detail of the running of the Palio of San Giorgio. Two Florentine *cassoni*, or marriage chests, show the finish of the palio race of San Giovanni Battista in Piazza San Pier Maggiore and the offering of banners to the Baptistery of San Giovanni. Jacques Callot and his followers made a number of prints of Florentine festivals in the seventeenth century.

Why a Study of the Palio?

My study of the palio will contribute to and broaden the existing literature on spectacle and ritual in Renaissance Italy. During the past few decades, art historians have expanded their exploration of the traditional triumvirate of painting, sculpture, and architecture to include the ephemeral art produced for ritual and spectacle. In the past, art historians often dismissed festival art as "decorative" or overlooked this artistic production altogether. Yet Renaissance artists worked on festival projects alongside their

more durable commissions in fresco, panel painting, and sculpture, and learned how to make this ephemera as part of their workshop training. Even Leonardo da Vinci designed festival decorations for his patrons, and Andrea del Castagno painted one of his finest works, the *David* in Washington's National Gallery, upon a leather shield for use in a procession held in Florence before a tournament (fig. 3).² Today's scholars approach artistic production within the socio-historical context of the period. Public ritual was a tremendously important part of the day-to-day life of the residents of the Italian Renaissance city, for individuals could experience ritual as both spectator and participant. While other forms of artistic production, such as works produced for private chapels or for the court, had a select audience, every class and group saw the ephemeral art made for the palio. However, those in power who funded the festivals influenced and even regulated the appearance and lavishness of this spectacle.

A few scholars have considered the palio within works on certain feast days, such as Heidi Chrétien's study of the Festival of San Giovanni in Florence, while others such as Deanna Shemek, have written on the meaning of the palio in a particular city (in Shemek's case, Ferrara). Art historians have explored a number of topics regarding spectacle and ritual in the Renaissance, but there has yet to be a comprehensive study devoted to the palio. I seek to fill this gap in the art historical scholarship on festivals, illuminating our understanding of an artistic manifestation that continues in modern-day Italy.

Survey of Literature on Spectacle in the Renaissance

In order to better understand how my dissertation fits into the existing literature, I will summarize here some of the most significant works that have been published on Renaissance festivals, divided by the type of festivals they discuss.

This literature comes from a number of humanities disciplines. Because of the interdisciplinary nature of the festivals themselves, they have attracted analysis by scholars from fields including art history, history, social anthropology, musicology, Italian language and literature, and theatre and costume history. Because these approaches can yield fascinating insight into spectacle, I have chosen to include literature outside the field of art history.

In the classic work, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, historian Jacob Burckhardt proposes that all Renaissance festivals derived from two forms – the mystery play and the procession. According to Burckhardt, the descendents of each form had many variations, both religious and secular. The religious plays of the Middle Ages gave rise to both pious drama, enacted either in open-air piazzas or in churches and to the secular fêtes performed at the courts in which scenes from mythology were enacted. Burckhardt was among the first historians to mention the Renaissance *trionfi* (triumphs), modeled upon the writings of Petrarch and Roman imperial entries.³ Burckhardt also mentions the Carnival races held in Rome.

In fact, the first important comprehensive study of Renaissance festival, *Les Fêtes de la Renaissance*,⁴ a collection of papers edited by Jean Jacquot, was by nature interdisciplinary, and paved the way for subsequent collections of papers. Most of the essays in the first volume deal with the ceremony surrounding triumphal entries, with

other essays discussing theatrical presentations, including *intermezzi* (multimedia theatrical pieces presented between dramatic plays) and court dance.⁵

The essays in second volume, *Fêtes et Cérémonies au Temps de Charles Quint* (1960), written by some of the authors who contributed to the first, focus on various festivals and triumphal entries throughout Europe, particularly those celebrating the reign of Emperor Charles V and his successors.⁶

The third volume of *Les Fêtes de la Renaissance* appeared in 1975, following the fifteenth International Colloquium of Humanist Studies in July 1972.⁷ The essays in the third volume encompass five categories: entries and civic entertainments, the theatre and fête, tournaments and chivalric games, religious processions, and satiric festivals (Carnival). In the course of less than twenty years, the study of Renaissance festivals had grown increasingly specialized, hence the divisions delineated in the 1975 volume.

Jacquot's volumes paved the way for other broad surveys of Renaissance spectacle. Some collections approach the topic through a particular academic discipline, such as "*All the World's A Stage...*" *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, edited by Barbara Wisch and Susan Scott Munshower. Wisch and Munshower intended that this collection follow in the tradition of *Les Fêtes de la Renaissance*, organizing the two volumes by the themes of triumphal celebrations and theatrical spectacle within Italy. This volume of essays emerged from a 1987-1988 lecture series on the relationship between art and religious/secular ceremonies, and focuses particularly on the transformation of ephemeral art into more permanent art forms.⁸ Some collections compare and contrast Italian traditions with those in other European countries. For example, J. R. Mulryne & Margaret Shewring's *Italian Renaissance Festivals and Their*

European Influences brings together scholars from various disciplines to analyze the court theater and entertainments in Renaissance Italy and their influence on the development of similar spectacles in England, France, Germany, and Denmark.⁹

For brevity's sake, I include in my literature summary only those works where the subject matter and/or approach relate either directly or indirectly to my study of the palio, particularly studies of public festivals and tournaments included in feast days.¹⁰

As mentioned above, much of the festival literature appears in the form of conference proceedings and collections of essays. Some collections cover topics encompassing many themes within spectacle studies, so to facilitate organization, I have mentioned certain collections in more than one place.

Triumphs, Chivalric Festivals, and Theatre

During the Renaissance, cities erected temporary structures such as highly decorated triumphal arches to celebrate the entry of an important personage into a city following a military victory or as part of a state wedding celebration. Based upon imperial Roman triumphs, these Renaissance triumphs explicitly expressed victory and power. Though these ephemeral decorations no longer survive, published and unpublished descriptions, festival books, paintings, and prints help reconstruct their appearance.

The bibliography on triumph is quite plentiful. Wisch and Munshower devote their whole first volume of *All the World's a Stage* to the subject of triumph, and include a twenty-seven page bibliography on the topic, arranged chronologically from ancient to early modern times, including some general literature.¹¹ Bonner Mitchell, who is perhaps the foremost expert on Italian triumphs, contributed an essay on Charles VII's 1598

ceremonial journey to Ferrara.¹² Perhaps the most important contribution to the study of triumphs is Mitchell's *Italian Civic Pageantry in the High Renaissance*, which lists and describes various Italian triumphal entries by city along with the primary sources and secondary literature on each.¹³ Mitchell, a literature scholar, studies the *livrets*, or illustrated festival books, and *avvisi* (first-hand accounts or bulletins) that recorded such entries even prior to their occurrence.¹⁴ In *1598: A Year of Pageantry in Late Renaissance Ferrara, Renaissance Triumphs and Magnificences*, which analyzes the series of events that marked the departure of Cesare d'Este from Ferrara and his subsequent replacement by papal legate, Cardinal Aldobrandini, Mitchell emphasizes pageantry as a catharsis for political emotions.¹⁵ He also explores the *livrets*' production, providing selected texts of some of them at the conclusion of his study.

Roy C. Strong, an art historian from Britain's Warburg Institute, shares Mitchell's emphasis on the connection between court spectacle and power. "The Renaissance court fête in its fullness of artistic creation was a ritual in which society affirmed its wisdom and asserted its control over the world and its destiny," writes Strong in his 1973 monograph, *Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and the Theater of Power*.¹⁶ Strong sought to assemble all that had been written on court fêtes since World War II,¹⁷ and his study explores three different kinds of court festivals – the royal entry, the tournament, and theatrical manifestations – through a series of chapters presenting "case studies" from European courts from Charles V to Catherine de'Medici. The chapters are richly illustrated by reproductions of prints, drawings, and paintings of these festivities. The royal entry, according to Strong, was part of the "liturgy of secular apotheosis,"¹⁸

and drew upon classical triumphs, Francesco Petrarca's *Trionfi*, and the symbolism in Colonna's *Hypnerotamachia Poliphili*.

As I will explain in my section on approach and methodology, one of the works that most influenced my study of the palio is art historian James Saslow's book on the Granducal wedding of Ferdinando de' Medici and Christine of Lorraine, *The Medici Wedding of 1589: Florentine Festival as 'Theatrum Mundi.'*¹⁹ Saslow creates a narrative which follows the preparations, rehearsals, and performance of the various nuptial celebrations, including Christine's triumphal entry in Florence, the *intermezzi* in the Uffizi Theater, public parade floats and entertainments, and fêtes and *naumachie* (mock naval battles) at the Pitti Palace. Saslow analyzes the organizational structure of the festival through archival documents, account books, stage managers' daily logbooks, and letters. He also gives background on the personalities involved in various capacities, from the creators of the festivities' iconography; to the composers, set designers, costume-makers, and technical masters; as well as the performers (actors, musicians, and singers). The book unfolds chronologically in a dramatic fashion reminiscent of the theater that it studies, tracing the initial planning, the rehearsals, and the actual performances, which are reconstructed from accounts in published festival *livrets* and *descrizioni* and commemorative prints.

Claudia Rosseau²⁰ writes about the Pageant of the Muses performed at another Medici wedding (of Cosimo I), but takes a more iconographical approach to the material, and establishes the relationship between ephemeral art (costume) and permanent art forms (painting). Using Giambullari's published description of the pageant, Rousseau includes reconstructive drawings of the costumes of the Muses. She relates the

astrological symbolism of these costumes to the iconographical program of Vasari's ceiling paintings for the Salone del Cinquecento, where the pageant was performed. Rosseau demonstrates that both the costume design and the paintings are based upon Cosimo I's horoscope and refer to his reign as the beginning of a new age, like that of the Roman Emperor Augustus.

Alessandro Marcigliano, a literature scholar, writes of the chivalric festivals or *cavallerie* sponsored by the Ferrarese court of Duke Alfonso II D'Este for various state occasions, including weddings and visits from foreign rulers.²¹ Like many Italian noblemen, Alfonso was educated at the French court. These *cavallerie* were elaborate, open-air events with a dramatic plot, involving mechanical stage sets, *naumachie* or water battles, and pyrotechnics. For one spectacle, *Il Mago Rilucente*, the courtyard of the ducal palace was transformed into a classical amphitheater. Artists such as the antiquarian Pirro Ligorio designed the elaborate costumes and machines for the *cavallerie*. Marcigliano bases his research in part on five treatises, which were published in advance of the actual festivals, as well as first-hand accounts and letters.

Civic Festivals

While literature on court festivals predominates, other studies have explored religious processions and civic festivals. Perhaps the most important work on Italian civic festivals is Richard Trexler's *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*.²² Trexler divides his study into four chapters investigating the framework of ritual and the religious, governmental, and social institutions involved; individual case studies in ritual communication; the ritual of the *comune* (the Florentine government); and the involvement of new, marginal groups of society (women, working classes, etc.) towards the end of the Florentine Republic. Trexler includes a chapter on the ritual of celebration,

including discussion of the festival of San Giovanni Battista and other feast days, which he interprets as a type of social contract between the governors of the city and its citizens.²³ He devotes a section to the palio race, which he interprets as deriving from cavalry exercises, part of the same theme of subjection present in the subject cities' offering of tributes to the Florentine Baptistery.²⁴

Cesare Molinari's book on Florentine festivals explores secular festivities such as triumphal entries and tournaments, but also devotes particular attention to religious festival, from the *sacre rappresentazioni* performed in churches and on processional floats, as well as festivals held for feast days. The history of the palio definitely falls within this category, since most (but not all) palio races took place in conjunction with saints' days. Molinari mentions the citywide participation in the organization of such festivals as that of San Giovanni Battista, Florence's patron saint. Molinari devotes some discussion to the adornment of the Piazza San Giovanni in blue canvas awnings for this festival and the procession of the *ceri*, votive candles decorated with wood and papier maché.²⁵

Lay Confraternities

Particularly relevant to studies of feast days is the literature on the processions of lay confraternities. Art historian Patricia Fortini Brown traces the development of the *istoria* or narrative painting in Venice during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.²⁶ Painters during this period, such as Carpaccio and Gentile Bellini, developed an "eyewitness" style to depict the confraternal processions popular in Venice. They applied the same style to the depiction of contemporary scenes that they applied to narrative scenes from church history.

Another important work dedicated to confraternities is a collection of essays edited by art historians Barbara Wisch and Diane Cole Ahl, *Confraternities in the Visual Arts*.²⁷ In the introduction to this recent collection, the editors trace the scholarship on lay confraternities to 1960 and the first College Art Association session dedicated to the topic in 1993. The collection is organized chronologically, geographically (by city), and thematically, dealing primarily with images commissioned by confraternities, whether they be ephemeral works such as processional banners, or more permanent works such as panel paintings and architecture. Using statutes and an inventory published at the end of her article, art historian Ann Matchette reconstructs the oratory of the Purificazione in San Marco, a Florentine youth confraternity.²⁸ Among the items commissioned by the Purificazione were a banner painted by Fra Angelico. Matchette also refers to surviving works of art, such as peacock-winged angels in Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco, *Journey of the Magi*, to suggest what costumes may have looked like. Konrad Eisenbichler writes about another Florentine youth confraternity, that of the Arcangelo Raffaello. Eisenbichler also bases his study on inventories, and demonstrates that objects – such as stage sets or paintings - were often donated, not commissioned, by artists belonging to the confraternity.²⁹ Louise Marshall traces confraternal images commissioned in several European cities in response to the Plague.³⁰ Unlike Matchette's and Eisenbichler's more archival approaches, Marshall's study focuses on patronage and visual analysis of panel paintings, architecture, and a surviving processional banner belonging to a Perugian confraternity, although she does refer to some statutes.

Festivals' Construction of Reality

Two scholars, Günter Berghaus and Karen Barzman, apply theoretical constructs to illustrate how festival was used in the Renaissance to present a version of reality.

Berghaus traces the nineteenth-century Romantic idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* – the combination of several symbols and/or media to create an illusion of the total world experience – back to Italian Renaissance festivals.³¹ Berghaus cites the 1589 Florentine *intermezzi* as early examples of *Gesamtkunstwerk* that employed music, theatre, dance, and visual art in its expression of the harmony of the universe. He then shows how the musical theory behind the 1589 *intermezzi*'s musical program derived from the Pythagorean concept of world harmony and Neoplatonic thought. Berghaus' essay is not so much about the *intermezzi* themselves as the theory behind their conception.

Karen Barzman is interested in how early modern spectacle helped to create reality, and therefore, contested the authority of those in power. Her analysis of Renaissance spectacle is based upon postmodern theory of spectacle, citing Guy Debord, who contended in his *Society of Spectacle* that spectacle serves to justify the existing dominant system or power. Barzman ultimately challenges Debord's conclusion in her example of the early modern *ex-voto*, or makeshift religious shrine. Because these shrines were made outside the structure of the organized church, they challenged this institution. Barzman gives examples of Renaissance art works that blur the line between art and life, such as Masaccio's fresco of the Trinity in Florence's Santa Maria Novella, leading to early modern powers' increasing reliance on spectacle to construct reality.³²

Exhibition Catalogs on Renaissance Spectacle

A number of exhibitions devoted to spectacle have been particularly useful to my work on the palio. One of the most important exhibitions of the past fifteen years, and one that I was privileged to see while studying in Florence, was *Le Tems Revient, 'L Tempo Si Rinuova: Feste e Spettacoli nella Firenze di Lorenzo il Magnifico*,³³ held at the Palazzo Medici-Riccardi. The exhibition chronicled the spectacles held at the time of

Lorenzo de' Medici, including the re-enactments of Roman triumphs and allegorical floats. Many of the objects included in the exhibition were ceremonial armor and decorative objects painted with the festival scenes, including *deschi da parto* (birth trays) and *cassoni*, including one showing the running of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista.

Anna Maria Petrioli Tofani, chief curator of the Uffizi Gallery, co-curated with Giovanni Gaeta Bertelà in 1969 an exhibition of festival drawings and prints, *Feste ed apparati Medicei dal Cosimo I a Cosimo II: mostra di disegni ed incisioni*. Petrioli-Tofani also organized the 1982 exhibition, *Festival Life in Florence from the Renaissance to Baroque: Feste e apparati a Firenze dal Rinascimento al Barocco*.³⁴ Her 1982 catalog on Florentine festivals includes some of Jacques Callot's prints of the palio and the Palio dei Cocchi.³⁵

The 1985 exhibition of the graphic works of the Siennese artist, Bernardino Capitelli (1589-1639), held at Siena's Museo Civico in 1985, included the artist's engravings of the carts of the *contrade* and the running of the palio in the Campo.³⁶

Outside the Florentine sphere, a 1997 exhibition at Palazzo Venezia in Rome, organized by Marcello Fagiolo, explores the festival in Rome from the Renaissance to 1870, mainly through festival prints.³⁷ Arranged chronologically, this two-volume catalog includes essays on Carnevale, pilgrimage processions, and urban renewal projects that accentuated the city as stage for spectacle.

My study of the palio is a continuation and expansion upon the existing literature on spectacle, particularly that dealing with civic festivals.

Survey of Literature on the Palio

When compiling literature for my dissertation proposal, I was surprised to find out how much has been written about the palio. Like the general literature on festivals in the Renaissance, it is interdisciplinary and not limited to an art historical perspective. Most of what has been written is in Italian and is also almost exclusively regional in nature: works focus on the palio or associated religious festival in a particular city or region.

Festivals in Tuscany

Some palio literature appears as chapters in histories of Tuscan festivals. William Heywood's early twentieth century study on central Italian festivals includes a chapter on the Palio of Siena.³⁸ Luciano Artusi includes palio races as among several kinds of festivals and games that take place in various cities, such as the Giuoco al Ponte in Pisa and the Giostra al Saracino in Arezzo.³⁹

Florence

Artusi's and Silvano Gabbrielli's book, *Le feste di Firenze*, analyzes the various popular festivals of Florence. In addition to the Palio, they chronicle the Calcio Storico (also held during the Festa of San Giovanni Battista) and the Scoppio del Carro (Exploding of the Cart) during Calendimaggio.⁴⁰

Most literature on palio racing in Florence can be found within studies of Florence's most important religious festival, the Festa of San Giovanni Battista. Perhaps the earliest comprehensive study of this festival is Pietro Gori's *Le Feste per San Giovanni*, originally published in 1926 and reprinted in 1989.⁴¹ Gori's book traces the festival's history from its inception to modern times, and devotes chapters to the ephemeral art produced (*ceri, carri, and palii*) and the horse and chariot races.

Art historian Heidi Chrétien published an important work on the festival in 1994, based upon her doctoral dissertation.⁴² Chrétien traces the development of the cult of San Giovanni, outlines the components of the festival, and indicates how it changed over the years to reflect political changes. During the Florentine Republic, there was a conscious association with the cult of San Giovanni and its baptistery with the Roman foundations of the city. Chrétien contends that with the rise to power of Cosimo I in the sixteenth century and the establishment of the Tuscan state, the festival was transformed from a popular civic festival to a theatrical celebration for those in power. The components reminiscent of Florence's civic past (such as the palio race) were downplayed, while new events carrying imperial imagery, such as the Palio dei Cocchi (the chariot race) were added. Chrétien centers her study on Giovanni Stradano's fresco cycle showing scenes from the Festival of San Giovanni in the Sala of Gualdrada in the Apartments of Eleonora in Palazzo Vecchio. She suggests that the omission of the *Palio dei Barberi* from this cycle is a conscious effort by Cosimo I to downplay the race and its association with Florence's Republican past.⁴³

In 1997, to commemorate the bicentennial of the founding of the Society of San Giovanni Battista, a multidisciplinary collection of essays appeared in Florence, edited by Paolo Pastori.⁴⁴ The volume includes essays by Anna Maria Petrioli Tofani and Luciano Artusi, and deals in particular with questions of iconography.⁴⁵ Pastori's essay traces the history of the festival. Like Chrétien, he believes that the Florentines associated the festival with the Roman origins of the city. The palio race, Pastori notes, followed the path of the Roman *decumanus* or east-west artery, and the religious procession on the day before the race marked a *rifondazione* or a refounding of the city's Roman boundaries.⁴⁶

Pastori believes that the Medici used the festival's civic symbols and rituals to glorify their family's power.⁴⁷ Paola Pirolo's essay analyzes three important manuscripts on the festival in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence, including Gregorio Dati's fifteenth-century description of the festival and the 1640 *Priorista* manuscript that illustrates, among other things, the cart carrying the palio banner.⁴⁸

Pastori's essay includes discussion of the *potenze*, working-class groups of Florentine citizens who participated in the Festival of San Giovanni Battista and other religious festivals. Roberto Ciabani's book, *Le Potenze di Firenze: Una Pagina Inedita di Storia Fiorentina* devotes an entire study to this topic.⁴⁹ The *potenze*, whose existence dates back to the reign of the Duke of Athens in the mid-fourteenth century, played a major role in the San Giovanni Battista festival. Each *potenza* elected a mock court headed by an *Imperatore* (Emperor) or *Re* (King), and constructed elaborate platforms from which to view the processions and palio race. Members of the nobility and ruling class were invited to watch the race from these platforms. At times the Medici Grand Dukes gave money to the *potenze* to organize parades and mock battles. The *potenze* also commissioned *tabernacoli*, the religious shrines still found on street corners throughout the city.

Luigi Borgia writes of how the palio banner of San Giovanni Battista in Florence was modified in the sixteenth century to include the *stemmi* of foreign powers supporting the Medici Granduchy. Borgia analyzes some actual *stemmi* removed from palio banners in 1748 and conserved in Florence's Archivio di Stato.⁵⁰

A few scholars have attempted to illustrate the palio's relation to the Renaissance political arena and to the urban fabric of the city. Michael Mallett's article in *Lorenzo the*

Magnificent: Culture and Politics illustrates how palio racing became an important political and class issue among leaders of the Italian city-states in the late fifteenth century.⁵¹ Mark Christopher Rogers' 1996 dissertation, "Art and Public Festival in Renaissance Florence: Studies in Relationships" (University of Texas at Austin), devotes an entire chapter to the Festival of San Giovanni, during which Florence's most prestigious palio race took place. Rogers retraces the route of the Palio race through Renaissance Florence and hypothesizes the possible influence of the race's course upon the development of the neighborhoods through which it passed. He also briefly discusses the *cassoni* panels in the Cleveland Museum and Bargello, which show the finish of the race and viewing stands in Piazza San Piero and the offering of the *palii* in a procession to the Baptistery of San Giovanni.⁵² Rogers also compiled a very useful appendix listing, and excerpting, primary sources on the Festival of San Giovanni Battista, and I found this especially helpful in locating contemporary descriptions of the palio.

Siena

By far, the largest body of literature on the palio focuses on Siena. Some sources were not particularly helpful to my research, since they deal with the modern-day palio that differs from its Renaissance manifestation. Yet many studies include some discussion of the palio's origins.

The first English-language book on the Siena Palio is William Heywood's *Our Lady of August and the Palio of Siena*, published in 1899.⁵³ Probably the most extensive study of the palio race as cultural phenomenon, and the most important non-Italian scholarship on the Siena palio, is Alan Dundes and Alessandro Falassi's 1975 cultural anthropological study, *La Terra in Piazza: An Interpretation of the Palio in Siena*,⁵⁴ in which the authors present the palio in Siena as metaphor for the city's worldview.

Dundes and Falassi's book analyzes the symbolism of the modern palio in the lives of Sieneese citizens. Their chapter on the origins of the palio provides a useful summary of the race's history drawn from earlier authors' works.

Don Handelman presents another anthropological approach to the Siena palio in his 1990 publication, *Model and Mirrors: Towards an Anthropology of Public Events*.⁵⁵ Handelman believes that the palio functions to "regenerate" the entire *comune* of Siena as a whole. He sees the various aspects of the palio in terms of duality: of male and female, of spiritual and earthly, and sets the various players in the palio into a number of dichotomous pairings: the feminine and spiritual Virgin Mary and the masculine *comune*, and the "feminine" horse and the masculine *contrada*. The victory of the horse rejoins the Madonna's earthly aspect with that of her spiritual (the palio cloth). Even the holy Madonna, according to Handelman, is given an earthly aspect: the Sieneese slang for the palio banner, he points out, is *cencio*, which means "rag" or "faded woman."⁵⁶

But in trying to fit the palio into a theoretical framework, Handelman sometimes overlooks simpler, practical explanations for certain palio practices. For instance, Handelman maintains that the Sieneese view the palio horse as a "feminine" animal, since most competitors are mares and geldings.⁵⁷ However, the choice of mares and geldings is a practical, not a symbolic, choice, since the stallions' hormones and often aggressive temperaments make them more difficult to handle. Handelman also interprets the breeds of palio horses (many are *mezzo sangue*, or half-thoroughbred) as the Sieneese people's desire that the horse be an ambiguous symbol, a mixture of good and bad qualities. A more straightforward explanation for this choice is that pureblooded thoroughbreds are much more fragile than half bloods.⁵⁸

Probably the two most important secondary source materials in my research were Giovanni Cecchini's *The Palio of Siena*, published in 1958, and the 2001 volume, *L'Immagine del Palio*, co-edited by Patrizia Turrini. Both scholars are archivists as well as past or current directors of the Archivio di Stato in Siena. *Il Palio di Siena* by Giovanni Cecchini and Dario Neri, is divided into two sections: one devoted to the historical evolution of the race, the other devoted to the modern manifestation of the palio.⁵⁹ In the historical portion, Cecchini summarizes chronologically all the important archival documents on the history of the palio and the *contrade*, including their citations, held in Siena's institutions. These documents include statutes establishing rules for the races, expense accounts and inventories listing and describing details of palio banners and other ephemera, and lists of competing horses. Transcriptions of selected documents, in the original Latin and Italian, appear at the end of this section. I found Cecchini's book essential to my research in Siena's Archivio di Stato, as his survey of documents helped me pinpoint which documents I needed to see. Although Cecchini did not always summarize or discuss in depth every document cited, his citation of specific ledgers and page numbers helped me to locate material that proved very informative.

The year 2001 marked the appearance of perhaps the most comprehensive and lavishly-illustrated volume on the Siena Palio to date, *L'immagine del Palio: Storia Cultura e Rappresentazione del Rito di Siena*.⁶⁰ This book includes critical essays, a listing of documents, and the most complete set of illustrations of palio ephemera I have found. It includes a repertory of documents on the *contrade* and on Siennese festivals – a chronological listing of 307 important documents and their citations, with some whole documents and excerpts published in the original Italian and Latin. It is by no means an

exhaustive listing of all documents – the archivists explain that because of the sake of space, they could only include a sampling of the available material.⁶¹ The volume also includes a complete bibliography of published works from the early sixteenth century to the present. The “Atlante storico iconografico” catalogs 250 full-color illustrations of works of art relating to the palio, from sixteenth-century panel paintings and prints to twentieth-century palio banners designed by contemporary artists. Individual essays in this volume include a chapter on documentary sources on the palio (Patrizia Turrini), the development of the iconography of the Madonna in Siena (Raffaele Argenziano), the historical development of the *contrade* (Mario Ascheri), and the significance of the Madonna of Provenzano (Fabio Bisogni). Alessandra Gianni devotes an iconographical study to discussion of heraldry and allegory in panel banners from the palio’s inception in the thirteenth century to banners of the twentieth century.⁶²

Mauro Civai, director of the Museo Civico in Siena, published in 2000 (with Enrico Toti) a richly illustrated volume on the palio.⁶³ Civai outlines the development of the palio from the thirteenth century to the modern day, and traces how the race changed to reflect political developments in the city’s history. His study is particularly useful for its illustrations of paintings illustrating processions and animal fights in the Campo, and includes an extensive bibliography of works on the palio.

Two essays in the 1993 three-volume history of the Siena Palio, *Pallium: Evoluzione del Drapellone dalle Origini ad Oggi*, edited by Luca Betti, explore the iconography of the palio banner.⁶⁴ These provide some documentation as to decoration and values of Renaissance palio cloths, and illustrate palio cloths from the seventeenth-century onwards.

Several books focus on the early formation and participation of the *contrade* in Palio festivities. A two-volume study by Virgilio Grassi, *Le Contrade di Siena e le loro feste*⁶⁵ traces the development of the *contrade*. The first volume deals with the historical development of the *contrade*, while the second deals mainly with the individual *contrade* as they exist today. As shown by Grassi, the *contrade* became increasingly involved in the running of the palio races towards the beginning of the seventeenth century. The practice of a *contrada*'s having a fixed seat or oratory developed late, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Particularly notable about Grassi's study are reproductions of works of art commissioned by the various *contrade* that were kept in the churches or oratories. Grassi also catalogs poetic compositions commissioned by the *contrade* on occasion of the running of the Palio.

Aldo Cairola's 1989 book is less of an interpretive study and more of a compendium of information, documents, and facts pertaining to the history and development of the *contrade*. Especially useful are his tables of palio races and feasts held in Siena, pulled together from a number of primary and secondary sources.⁶⁶

Giuliano Catoni and Alessandro Leoncini's *Cacce e tatuaggi: Nuovi ragguagli sulle contrade di Siena*,⁶⁷ recounts the early participation of some *contrade* in the Festival of the Assumption. This volume reproduces the text of "Festa che si fece in Siena a di XV di aghosto MCVI," a poem composed by an anonymous Florentine writer that describes the festivities, processions, and animal hunts surrounding the 1506 festival. The published text was the first festival *livret* to appear in print in Italy. Among the ephemeral art described in the poem are the highly decorated *ceri*, or votive candles,

presented in tribute to Siena's cathedral, as well as procession of *carri trionfali*. Catoni and Leoncini analyze the poem and relate it to the *contrades'* historical development.

The most recent publication on the *contrade*, released in June 2004, is a conference proceedings from a 2003 gathering in Palazzo Pubblico sponsored by the city of Siena. Twenty-nine papers examine various aspects of the present and past history of the *contrade*, including articles on heraldry⁶⁸ and analyses of the populations residing in *contrada* neighborhoods in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries.⁶⁹ Two articles also deal with the recently published sixteenth- and seventeenth-century book of deliberations of the Contrada dell'Onda.⁷⁰

Ferrara

The scholarship on Ferrara's Palio di San Giorgio is not as extensive, perhaps due to the fact that the modern version is a historical revival rather than the unbroken tradition of the Siena Palio. Nico Franco Visentini's *Il Palio di Ferrara*, published in 1968, traces the race's origins in the thirteenth century to the present, and devotes extensive discussion to its Renaissance running and its connection with the ruling Este family.⁷¹ The most comprehensive study of the palio in Ferrara is Dino Tebaldi's 1992 book, *Ferrara e il Palio: storia, poesia in dialetto attualità*, which excerpts archival letters and the city chronicles of Zambotto and Caleffini from the Renaissance period.⁷²

The most recent scholarly treatment of the Ferrara palio is a 1995 essay (reprinted in 1998) on the palio and prostitution by Deanna Shemek, Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Santa Cruz.⁷³ Shemek centers her discussion on the fresco in Palazzo Schifanoia's Sala dei Mesi that shows the running of a palio race beneath the gaze of members of the Este family. Among the participants in the races for

women were prostitutes. Shemek analyzes this image in light of the morality laws imposed on prostitutes by Borso d'Este in the late fifteenth century.

Mantua

Mantua was ruled by the Gonzaga family, who bred and raced the most powerful stable of palio horses in Italy. Two books chronicle the Gonzaga's acquisition of horses from North Africa and Turkey and the development of their racing stables. The earlier book, by Carlo Cavriani, is a chronological history of the Gonzaga stables, and cites letters from the State Archives in Mantua.⁷⁴ Cavriani theorizes that the Gonzaga *barbero* influenced the development of the English thoroughbred racehorse through a group of broodmares presented by Federico Gonzaga to King Henry VIII of England in 1532. Historian Giancarlo Malacarne expands upon Cavriani's research with an extensive history of the Gonzaga stables published in 1995, telling the story of its development through letters, documents, and studbooks in the Mantuan State Archives, many of which appear photographed and/or transcribed.⁷⁵

Another work, *Il Palio nel Rinascimento*, published in late 2003 by historians Galeazzo Nosari and Franco Canova,⁷⁶ looks at palio racing throughout Italy but focuses mostly on the Gonzaga of Mantua. The authors devote a few pages at the beginning of their study discussing the Renaissance palio banner and the festivities associated with the race, about a third of the book recounts by city the palio races held throughout the Italian peninsula, Sicily and Sardegna. The rest of the book presents a year-by-year account of the Gonzaga's racing activities and victories in palio races. Except for the section on the Gonzaga that is drawn mainly from documents in the Archivio di Stato in Mantua, the section on the palio in cities throughout Italy is based mostly on secondary sources – including city and regional histories listed in the bibliography at the end of the book.

Rome

Palio races took place in Rome, first in the Testaccio quarter, and later along the Via del Corso, as part of Roman *Carnevale*. Unfortunately, most of the literature on *Carnevale* explores its later, eighteenth and nineteenth century incarnations, with little discussion of the practice during the Renaissance period. In his doctoral dissertation, Richard Ingersoll devotes a chapter to *Carnevale* and its horse and foot races.⁷⁷ A catalog of a small exhibition curated by Beatrice Premoli, *Ludus Carnelevari: Il Carnevale a Roma dal secolo XII al secolo XVI*, held at the Museo Nazionale delle Arti e Tradizioni Popolari in Rome, reproduces some sixteenth century prints showing *Carnevale*, though none show the horse race.⁷⁸ Essays in Marcello Fagiolo's 1997 catalog of the 1997 exhibition, *La Festa a Roma*, also make some mention of Renaissance *Carnevale* and the palio races.

Asti

The only book I have been able to obtain on the Palio of Asti is a 1983 publication by Venanzio Malfatto, *Il Palio di Asti: storia, vita, costume*.⁷⁹ Most of the book focuses on the twenty-one *rioni* (neighborhood groups) which participate in the modern palio, although the first few pages of the first chapter give some early history of the race and include some previously unpublished excerpts from letters and payment documents from the Archivio storico of the city of Asti, dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The distribution of existing scholarship on the palio has certainly influenced the shape and focus of my dissertation. Because of the predominance of scholarly works on the Palio di San Giovanni Battista in Florence and on the Siena Palio, these two cities provided the bulk of material for my study.

Primary Source Material

Although the details of the palio races varied according to the city and to the occasion, the races were more alike than different. Almost all palio races involved the presentation of a palio banner to the victor, the procession or *offerta* presented to the cathedral prior to the race, and the presence of *ceri*, *carri*, and other ephemera. The palio banners for the principal feasts of cities throughout Italy shared colors (red, gold) and materials (velvets, brocades, and damasks).

Clearly, there is a need for a comprehensive study of the palio that analyzes it as spectacle as well as a sporting event, and also analyzes the production and appearance of the Renaissance palio banner. I did not want to limit my study to those works of art produced for the palio, or those works showing the palio taking place, but wanted to present the palio as a cohesive, public performance.

Originally I conceived of the structure of my dissertation as a series of case studies, each outlining the history of the palio in a major city. I soon realized that this structure was inadequate for two reasons. First, it would require a tremendous amount of research in each city, making the project geographically challenging and beyond the time and resources available to me. In addition, such a structure would make it difficult to highlight themes or practices common throughout Italy.

For these practical reasons, I chose to focus my archival research on Siena and Florence so that I could examine a broad range of documents and primary sources in each city, rather than attempting a more cursory survey of documents in the archives of three or more cities. However, I have utilized published documents, chronicles, and letters from other cities to supplement the material from Siena and Florence.

Written Material

Another difficulty I had to consider when thinking about my topic was the problem that most of the ephemeral art of the palio no longer exists. So I looked closely at the work of other festival scholars who deal with ephemeral or lost works. When examples of the objects themselves are lacking, scholars turn to written material and illustrations of events in order to gain some idea of how this ephemera might have appeared. Written material falls into two categories: publications, such as the festival *livrets* studied by Bonner Mitchell or city chronicles such as that of Gregorio Dati in Florence; and unpublished material. In the case of the palio, the unpublished material is quite plentiful, taking the form of statutes, letters, and documents recording payment for works commissioned. With the guidance of the document summary in Cecchini's book and the inventory of important documents in *L'Immagine del Palio*, it was possible for me to narrow my search.

Published Primary Sources

A number of published primary sources yielded detailed information and descriptions of the palio. Some of these sources have been published in secondary literature, while others were only available in the manuscript collections of the Archivio di Stato in Siena, the Biblioteca Comunale of Siena, and the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence. Among the published sources most useful to my study were Cecchino's 1546 description of the processions and *caccia* (hunt) of the Assumption festival⁸⁰ and chronicles such as Gregorio Dati's early fifteenth-century description of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista.⁸¹

Unpublished Manuscripts

I also looked at a number of unpublished manuscripts in the Sienese archives and the Biblioteca Comunale. Domenico Tregiani's verse description of the palio races of the *contrade* of 1581 gave me a detailed account of the processions of the *contrade* and the events of the festivals.⁸² Another manuscript in the Biblioteca Comunale chronicled the festivals in which the *contrade* participated from 1482 onwards.⁸³

In 1997, years before I started my dissertation research, I had the wonderful opportunity of seeing, in a private collection in Milan, the "Libro dei palii vinti da Francesco Gonzaga," an illuminated manuscript depicting the palio horses of the Gonzaga stable and recording the races they won.⁸⁴ Malacarne published the text of this manuscript in 1995, and it provided me with information on almost two hundred palio banners, including the types and color of material used and the city, festival, and year in which the horses won the banners.

Archival materials

Most of the unpublished material that I looked at in Siena and Florence can be categorized under four divisions: account ledgers, statutes, deliberations of city offices, and letters.

Account Ledgers and Payments

Civic expense account ledgers list many of the expenses related to the organization of saints' days. For the most part, festival expenses were not set apart from other *comune* expenses, but appear chronologically in the ledger in the order in which the notary recorded them. Therefore, ledger entries for one festival are often scattered on several ledger pages spanning a period of several days or even months.⁸⁵ Many of these payments contain specific information about the making of the palio banner, including

the types and colors of material used for the banner and its lining, the length in *braccia*⁸⁶ of this fabric, the names of the artisans who made banner components or painters hired to paint the banner and cart, persons paid to retrieve fabric and other materials from other cities, taxes and duties paid on fabric, and, of course, the cost. Sometimes the total cost of the banner was given in one lump sum, while other times I could calculate the total cost by adding up the individual payments.

Complicating my interpretation of these costs is the fact that there was no uniform currency in Italy during the Renaissance like there is today, and cities circulated and minted their own coins. Florence had two systems of money: the gold *fiorini* (florin) used for international commerce, and silver and copper coins (*monete di piccioli*) for the local market. This second system was based upon the *lira*, which was worth twenty *soldi*, and twelve *denari* made up one *soldo*. The ratio between the *lira* and the florin varied with the market, and rose from 3½:1 to 7:1 from 1350 to 1500.⁸⁷ Siena's economy was also based upon the *lira*, but some account ledgers also record some expenses in florins. Because I did not always have the conversion tables to calculate the value in *lira* of the florin for a given year, it presented difficulties in tallying expenses paid for that year on the palio. To complicate matters, after the establishment of the State of Tuscany by the Medici grand dukes in the latter part of the sixteenth century, some account ledgers show payments in *scudi* or *ducati* (ducats), while some still display payments in *lira*.⁸⁸

In Siena, expenses for the festivals until the mid sixteenth century appear in the accounting ledgers recording the *entrate e uscite* (credits and payments) of the Biccherna, the city's financial office, presided over by four *provveditori* (providers or accountants),

that collected taxes, paid salaries of civil servants, and made expenditures on behalf of the city. These ledgers stop in 1555, and I was unable to find accounting ledgers beyond this date. However, the deliberations of the Balia (magistrate's council) from the latter part of the sixteenth century record some figures of money spent on the feasts of the Assumption and of Sant' Ambrogio and on the paying a silk merchant for manufacturing the palio banners.

It took me a while to locate the payments for the palio in the Florentine Archivio di Stato, since I had little guidance in the literature as to where to look. But I discovered payments for 1405 and 1422 in the *Uscita* (exit) ledgers of the Camera del Comune (Room of the City Government) for expenditures for the Festival of San Giovanni Battista, amidst the entries for June and July. Expenses for the festival later in the fifteenth century and into the early sixteenth century may be found in the entrance and exit ledgers of the Scrivano (clerk) and Notaio (notary) of the Camera.⁸⁹

I knew when I began looking for the payment documents from the latter sixteenth century that the Guelph Party was in charge of organizing the palio races in Florence at that time,⁹⁰ but I did not know whether they also recorded the payments for these festivals, or whether the expenses were to be found in the account ledgers of the Granducal government. Search in the *Giornali* (Journals) of the Party yielded no results, and I found nothing in the ledgers of the Camera Fiscale and the Depositeria Generale. Finally, I discovered payments for the Florentine palio grouped together in the *Stanziamenti* (transactions) placed at the very end of the Party's books of deliberations. Payment records for some years are not very detailed and just list one total sum for each

palio, but other records include a detailed summary of each individual expense in making the palio banner.

Statutes

Cities such as Siena and Ferrara issued statutes establishing rules for the palio races and setting requirements for the presentation of tributes to the cathedral on the feast day. Siena's statutes are located in the Statuti section of the archive, and Cecchini reproduces some statutes in the appendix of his book containing archival documents. Tebaldi publishes excerpts from the Ferrarese statute establishing the Palio of San Giorgio.

Deliberations

Deliberations of city councils are also a rich source of information on the palio and the planning of festivals. Documents from the Biccherna and other Siennese offices and governing bodies record discussions relating to the organization of the festival. It was fairly common for the Biccherna to decide upon the manufacture and appearance of the palio banner, as a 1454 document attests.⁹¹ Two other offices, the Consiglio Generale (General Council) and Concistoro, also discussed festival matters; in one deliberation, the Council fielded the request of the four *provveditori* to include a tournament for the Festival of the Assumption.⁹² After the Florentine takeover of Siena, most of the deliberations regarding the palio can be found in the ledgers of the Balìa. Unfortunately, I have yet to find deliberations discussing the planning of the palio in the Florentine archives.

Letters

The Archivio di Stato in Florence has recorded on microfilm the *carteggio* (official papers) of the governors appointed by the Grand Duke to rule Siena. Although I

did not spend very much time in this part of the archive, I did look at some of the correspondence of Federigo da Montauto, the Sienese governor from 1567 to 1562, in the Archivio Mediceo del Principato.

Other letters came from published sources, such as the correspondence of the Gonzaga family in Malacarne and Cavriani.

Visual Sources

Images of palio races and festivals are also important tools I have used in “reconstructing” ephemeral art. For example, two *cassoni* panels show the running of the palio in Florence and the offering of banners prior to the race in the Piazza San Giovanni Battista. A detail of the finish of the race shows the palio cloth itself held aloft on the decorative cart. A fresco in the Palazzo Schifanoia shows a shorthand detail of the running of the Palio of San Giorgio.

Approach and Methodology

I am examining the palio primarily within a socio-historical context. Because the archival documents, particularly the payment ledgers, have provided me with much information on the cost and materials used in manufacturing the banners, this has also propelled me to look at the economic history of Renaissance Italy as an impetus for the production of this magnificent banners. Part of my approach concerns the Renaissance viewer’s reception of the religious feast days, particularly in regards to the palio banner, and what sort of cultural/historical associations its materials, colors, and heraldry might have conveyed.

One of the challenges of my project was deciding how to discuss a festival that occurred in many places over a period of several centuries. In particular, I wanted to find

a way to bring together the data on the palio banners which I had gathered from payment documents and verse and prose descriptions. To facilitate my analysis, I constructed a database using the software, FileMaker Pro 6. For each palio banner for which I knew the city and year of production, I created a record in the database. Since some banners are mentioned in multiple sources, I recorded all citations for the banner in one record. I created fields containing drop-down lists and check boxes in which I could record information from the primary sources, including the primary and secondary colors of the banner, the primary and secondary fabrics used, features mentioned in the document (such as the frieze, lining, or pole of the banner), names of artists and artisans, dimensions, cost, date, festival, type of race or competition, and city. My data came from a number of sources. The Gonzaga *Libro* records almost two hundred palio banners won by Mantuan courses. Although the descriptions of these banners are very summary (color, fabric, date, festival, and city), the *Libro* provides valuable information on banners in the many cities where palio races were run. Most of the detailed information on banners came from accounting ledgers of the Sienese Biccherna, the Florentine Camera del Comune, and the *stanziamenti* of the Guelph Party. The deliberations of the Sienese Balia also provided information on the cost, materials, and makers of banners in the latter part of the sixteenth century. I also entered information from written descriptions, such as the chronicles of Caleffini, Zambotto, Burcardo, and Dati, as well as mention of the banners in Domenico Tregiani's verse and Luca Chiari's *Priorista* manuscript. I also created records for banners illustrated in paintings, and for the two examples of actual palio banners that I have been able to find, one in the museum of the

Torre Contrada, the other, a *piviale* (cape) in the Bargello Museum made from a Palio of San Giovanni.

In all, I have records of varying amounts of detail for 471 palio banners from the fifth to the early eighteenth centuries, with most of the banners dating from the fourteenth through the first half of the seventeenth centuries. The database proved very useful in finding my primary sources while I was writing, and also facilitated the making of charts and tables in which I could compare and contrast the banners across long periods of time.

There are two examples of existing scholarship in particular that have influenced me and from which I have drawn some ideas of how to look at the palio material. James Saslow's *The Medici Wedding of 1589* is an admirable attempt to reconstruct the narratives of producing and performing the *intermezzi* and other festivities for one particular event. Therefore, there are two levels of narrative unfolding in his study: the spectacle itself, and the "behind-the-scenes" drama of the mechanisms that produced the spectacle. Through analyzing archival (logbooks and payment books) and visual material, such as costume sketches and prints, Saslow is able to give us a glimpse of the artistic production behind the wedding festivities, and what a spectator might have witnessed.

Saslow centers his study primarily on one event, so he is able to order his book chronologically. I hope to assimilate into my study his emphasis on the production of ephemeral objects and his use of archival sources. But my study differs in that I am analyzing the palio as a phenomenon occurring at multiple times and in different places.

Although not part of the literature of Renaissance festival, Jacqueline Musacchio's study on *deschi di parto*, birth trays, is particularly useful to me as a model

of using a type of object to frame a discussion of an aspect of social history.⁹³ Unlike Saslow's book, Musacchio does not deal with a spectacle, but a social/cultural event in the life of the middle or upper class Renaissance family – the birth of a child and the subsequent commemoration of the birth. Rather than just analyzing the iconography of individual *deschi di parto*, Musacchio looks at archival documents that chronicle Renaissance births and list objects, such as the birth trays, purchased or commissioned for the occasion. Musacchio uses an object – the birth tray – to frame her discussion of birth in the Renaissance across social strata, from the noble classes to those families from more modest means.

Like Musacchio's book, my study on the palio is a type of object-oriented social history. The objects of the palio and the palio race itself, reflect the larger socio-historical and economic realities of the period in which they were produced.

Chapter Structure

My dissertation is divided into five chapters, including this introduction, each of which addresses a particular aspect of the palio.

Chapter Two provides historical background for the development of the palio races throughout Italy in the Middle Ages through the first half of the seventeenth century, showing how this secular horse race grew to be the climactic event of a sacred feast day. In the first part of the chapter, I explore the proliferation of palio races throughout Italy, beginning in the thirteenth century, coincident with the economic growth of cities. In the next section, I show how cities used the palio races to celebrate feast days, mark military victories, and celebrate births and marriages of those in power. Next, I outline the events of the feast day itself, and analyze two scenes from Florentine

cassoni depicting the offering of the palio banner and the finish of the horse race. Then I will discuss how the government organized the feast days and races, focusing on Siena and Florence. Lastly, I outline the history of the Sienese *contrade* and show how their increasing presence in the palio in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries helped shape the modern palio races.

In Chapter Three, I answer the question of how such a secular event as the palio race became associated with a religious festival. Palio races are vestiges of the chariot races of Roman antiquity. In the sixteenth century, the connection between the palio and these chariot races is explicitly stated by contemporary historians and is illustrated by the example of Cosimo I's establishment of a chariot race, the Palio dei Cocchi, in 1563.

Chapter Four deals with the production of the palio banner. In the first half of this chapter, I reconstruct the banner's appearance and examine the materials, colors, and features of the banner, as well as the artists hired to make its components. I also give some background on the silk industry in Renaissance Italy, which was a major component of commerce in a society that valued these fabrics as luxury items. In the last part of this section, I explain why so few banners have survived to the present day.

In the second half, I interpret possible meanings of the palio banner, drawing a connection between contemporary and Roman military standards and the palio. I also show how the processions of the religious feast days relate to the Roman triumph, a type of spectacle revived and performed throughout the Renaissance.

Chapter Five centers on the palio horses. Portraits of palio horses in Mantua's Palazzo Te, in a Florentine painting by Giovanni Butteri, and in a Mantuan manuscript prove that the horses themselves enjoyed a celebrity status of their own, as their

counterparts did in the Roman circus. The Renaissance emphasis on the accomplishment of the individual extends, to some extent, to these horses, who are shown as distinct personalities and to whom contemporary authors attribute “human” traits of courage, intelligence, and nobility. A family’s pride in its racehorses and their victories was an extension of familial pride and fame. The palio horse also became a point of contact between countries and cultures. Horses were regularly given as diplomatic gifts by Italian nobles to European leaders as a means of gaining favor with foreign courts. Throughout the Renaissance, Italian families imported horses for racing from North Africa and Turkey, areas known for their horsemanship and controlled by the Islamic Ottoman Empire. This horse trade, like the exportation of silk fabrics, was part of the extensive trade between Christian Europe and Islamic nations, and served often as a point of diplomacy between cultures.

Ultimately, my dissertation will add to the existing literature on Renaissance spectacle by showing the palio race as an expression of the power, identity, economic wealth, and artistic production of the Renaissance city. Part religious observance, part sporting event, the palio was an integral part of the life and pageantry of the Renaissance city, a role it continues to hold in Italy up through the present day.

¹ The mare, Minoredda, suffered a skull fracture and unfortunately died of her injuries while being transported to a veterinary hospital.

² John Walker, *National Gallery of Art, Washington: New and Revised Edition* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984), 92.

³ Jacob Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, 2nd edition, trans. S.G.C. Middlemore, edited with introduction by Irene Gordon, The New American Library (1868; New York: Mentor Classic, 1960), 294.

⁴ Jean Jacquot, ed., *Les Fêtes de la Renaissance*, 2 vols. (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1956). The third volume was published in 1975, also by CNRS. This first volume of three was published by the Centre National De La Recherche Scientifique in Paris in 1956, the year after an

international conference at Abbaye de Royaumont. Both European and American scholars contributed essays – all in French - on many types of European spectacle, primarily during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

⁵ Topics covered include a royal entry of Charles IX into Paris in 1571 (Frances Yates, Warburg Institute), the Florentine *intermezzi* of 1589 (D.P. Walker, Warburg Institute), the Marriage festival of Francesco dei Medici and Bianca Cappello (Leo Schrade, Yale University), the Carousel (horse ballet) in Paris' Place Royale (Jacques Vanoxem), and the site of festival (Andre Chastel, Sorbonne).

⁶ Association internationale des historiens de la Renaissance. Congrès., *Fêtes et cérémonies au temps de Charles Quint*, (Paris, Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1960). Topics include the entries of Charles V into Italy (Andre Chastel) and Cambrai (Nanie Bridgman, Bibliothèque Nationale), and a festival for Charles V at Binchy (Daniel Heartz, University of Chicago).

⁷ Colloque international d'études humanistes, *Les fêtes de la renaissance : etudes de S. Anglo ...* (Paris: Editions du Centre national de la recherche scientifique, 1975). The conference took place in Tours, France from July 10-22, 1972, and was organized by Jean Jacquot and Elie Konigson.

⁸ See Wisch's Introduction on pp. xv – xx for more on the themes covered in the collection. Barbara Wisch and Susan Scott Munshower, eds., "*All the world's a stage...*" *Art and Pageantry in the Renaissance and Baroque*, Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University 6, 2 vols. (University Park, Pennsylvania: Department of Art History, 1990).

⁹ J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring, *Italian Renaissance festivals and their European influence* (Lewiston : Edwin Mellen Press, 1992).

¹⁰ In my original draft of this chapter, I summarized the literature for several aspects of spectacle, including triumphs, theatrical spectacle and intermezzi, tournaments, and religious processions, but shortened this section in order to focus on the material most relevant to the palio.

¹¹ Wisch and Munshower I, 361-385.

¹² Bonner Mitchell, "A Papal Progress in 1598," in Wisch and Munshower I:118-135.

¹³ Bonner Mitchell, *Italian civic pageantry in the High Renaissance : a descriptive bibliography of triumphal entries and selected other festivals for state occasions* (Firenze : L. S. Olschki, 1979).

¹⁴ Mitchell noted that the first Italian printed *livret* was "La festa che si fece in Siena a di XV dagho MDVI," published in Siena in 1506 to commemorate the festival of the Assumption, of which the palio was a part. See Bonner Mitchell, *1598: A Year of Pageantry in Late Renaissance Ferrara, Renaissance Triumphs and Magnificences*, New Series, Vol. 4., Margaret M. McGowan, ed. (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1990), 4.

¹⁵ Mitchell, *1598*, 48-57.

¹⁶ Roy C. Strong, *Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and the Theater of Power*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1973), 56.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁹ James Saslow, *Florentine Festival as 'Theatrum Mundi': The Medici Wedding of 1589* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1996).

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- ²⁰ Claudia Rousseau, "The Pageant of the Muses at the Medici Wedding of 1539 and the Decoration of the Salone del Cinquecento," Wisch and Munshower II:417-457.
- ²¹ Alessandro Marcigliano, "Cavallerie a Ferrara: 1561-1570," Wisch and Munshower II:75-104.
- ²² Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (1980; Ithaca, NY: Cornell Paperbacks, 1996).
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 215-274.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 262-263.
- ²⁵ Cesare Molinari, *Spettacoli fiorentini del Quattrocento*, (Venice: Neri Pozzi Editore, 1961).
- ²⁶ Patricia Fortini Brown, *Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).
- ²⁷ Barbara Wisch and Diane Cohl Ahl, *Confraternities and the Visual Arts: Ritual, Spectacle, Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- ²⁸ Ann Matchette, "The Compagnia della Purificazione e di San Zanobi in Florence: A Reconstruction of Its Residence at S. Marco, 1440-1506," in Wisch and Ahl.
- ²⁹ Konrad Eisenbichler, "The Acquisition of Art by a Florentine Youth Confraternity: the Case of the Arcangelo Raffaello," in Wisch and Ahl, 102-116.
- ³⁰ Louise Marshall, "Confraternity and Community: Mobilizing the Sacred in Times of Plague," in Wisch and Ahl, 20-34.
- ³¹ Günter Berghaus, "Theater Performances at Italian Renaissance Festivals: Multi-Media Spectacles of *Gesamtkunstwerke*," in Mulryne and Shewring, 3-50.
- ³² Karen-Edis Barzman, "Early Modern Spectacle and the Performance of Images," *Perspectives on Early Modern Intellectual History: Essays in Honor of Nancy S. Streuver*, Joseph Marino and Melinda Schlitt, eds. (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2001), 283-302.
- ³³ Paola Ventrone, ed. *Le Tems Revient, 'L Tempo Si Rinuova: Feste e Spettacoli nella Firenze di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, (Florence, Palazzo Medici-Riccardi, April 8- June 30, 1992. Silvana Editoriale, 1992).
- ³⁴ Anna Maria Petrioli, *Mostra di disegni vasariani. Carri trionfali e costumi per la Genealogia degli Dei*, Gabinetto di Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, 1966.
- ³⁵ Anna Maria Petrioli Tofani, *Festival Life in Florence from the Renaissance to Baroque: Feste e apparati a Firenze dal Rinascimento al Barocco*, (Janet Shapiro, trans. Florence: Salani, 1982).
- ³⁶ Patrizia Bonaccorso, *Bernardino Capinelli 1589-1639*, Siena, Museo Civico, June 15-September 30, 1985 (Siena: Edisiena, 1985).
- ³⁷ Marcello Fagiolo, ed., *La Festa a Roma Dal Rinascimento al 1870*, 2 vols., (Rome: Umberto Allemandi & Co. per J. Sands, 1997).
- ³⁸ William Heywood, *Palio and Ponte: An Account of the Sports of Central Italy from the Age of Dante to the XXth Century* (1904; New York: Hacker Art Books, 1969).
- ³⁹ Luciano Artusi and Silvano Gabbriellini devote a chapter to the modern Palio delle *Contrade* in Siena in *Gioco, Giostra, Palio in Toscana* (Florence: Libreria S.P., 1978).

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- ⁴⁰ Calendimaggio, a spring festival, celebrated Florence's victory at Campaldino in 1289. See Trexler, 217. Artusi and Gabbrielli devote a chapter to the Palio of San Giovanni in Florence (see Artusi and Gabbrielli, 184-189 as well as a chapter on the Palio dei Cocchi on pp.190-192).
- ⁴¹ Pietro Gori, *Le Feste per San Giovanni, Le Feste Fiorentine attraverso I Secoli*, (Florence: R. Bemporad and Sons, 1926; reprint, Florence: Giunti (Ristampa Anastatica), 1989).
- ⁴² Heidi L. Chrétien, *The Festival of San Giovanni: Imagery and Political Power in Renaissance Florence*, *American University Studies IX*, vol. 138 (New York: Peter Lang, 1994).
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 92.
- ⁴⁴ Paolo Pastori, ed., *La festa di San Giovanni nella storia di Firenze. Rito, istituzione e spettacolo* (Florence: Edizioni Polistampa, 1997).
- ⁴⁵ Tofani's essay, "Le Feste di S. Giovanni. Carri e ceri," 55-60 deals with depictions of these ephemeral objects in 17th and 18th century manuscripts. Artusi's essay, "Le Insegne della Città," 61-66, deals with heraldic civic symbols including that of the *giglio* (lily).
- ⁴⁶ Paolo Pastori, "Le Feste Patronali fra Mito delle Origini, Sviluppo Storico e Adattamenti Ludico-Spettacolari," in Pastori, *La festa di San Giovanni*, 11-54.
- ⁴⁷ Pastori, "Le Feste Patronali fra Mito delle Origini, Sviluppo Storico e Adattamenti Ludico-Spettacolari," in Pastori, 13.
- ⁴⁸ Paola Pirolo, "Tre Momenti di Descrizione della Festa di San Giovanni Battista fra Le Fonti Manoscritte ed Iconografiche della Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze," in Pastori, 81-124.
- ⁴⁹ Roberto Ciabani, *Le Potenze di Firenze: Una Pagina Inedita di Storia Fiorentina*, (Florence: Casa Editrice Bonechi, 1994).
- ⁵⁰ Luigi Borgia, "Vicende di Alcuni Stemmi del Palio di San Giovanni (Secoli XVI – XVIII)," in Pastori, 243-256.
- ⁵¹ Michael Mallett, "Horse-Racing and Politics in Lorenzo's Florence," Mallett and Mann, eds., *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1996), 253-262.
- ⁵² Mark Christopher Rogers, "Art and Public Festival in Renaissance Florence: Studies in Relationships," Dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1996, 211-218.
- ⁵³ William Heywood, *Our Lady of August and the Palio of Siena* (Siena: Enrico Torrini, 1899).
- ⁵⁴ Alan Dundes and Alessandro Falassi, *La Terra in Piazza: An Interpretation of the Palio of Siena*, (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1975).
- ⁵⁵ Don Handelman, "The Palio of Siena," *Models and Mirrors, Towards an Anthropology of Public Events* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 116-135.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

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- ⁵⁸ In 1996, I spoke with a Sieneſe ſhop-keeper who lamented the recent trend towards using ſpeedy thoroughbreds as palio horſes, for they eaſily ſhatter their legs on the earth-covered ſtone track.
- ⁵⁹ Giovanni Cecchini and Dario Neri, *Il Palio di Siena*, English edition, trans. Eliſabeth Mann Borghese (Siena: Monte dei Paſchi, 1958).
- ⁶⁰ Maria A. Ceppari Ridolfi, Marco Ciampolini, and Patrizia Turrini; *L'immagine del Palio: Storia, Cultura, e Rappreſentazione del Rito di Siena*, (Siena: Monte dei Paſchi, 2001). The book includes eſſays by Raffaele Argenziano, Mario Aſcheri, Fabio Biſogni, Giuſeppe Cantelli, Giuliano Catoni, Maria A. Ceppari Ridolfi, Marco Ciampolini, Alessandro Falassi, Alessandra Gianni, Giovanni Mazzini, and Patrizia Turrini.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., “Repertorio documentario,” 519.
- ⁶² Alessandra Gianni, “Araldica e allegoria nel drappellone,” Ridolfi et al., 129-152.
- ⁶³ Mauro Civai and Enrico Toti. *Palio: la corsa dell'anima*, (Siena: Alsaba, 2000).
- ⁶⁴ Duccio Baleſtracci, “Alle origini del Palio. Da feſta come tante altre a feſta come neſſun'altra,” 9-14 and Cristina Ciampoli & Caterina Palmiera, “Il Drappellone: Nascita ed Evoluzione Stilistica fino al 1800,” *Pallium: Evoluzione del drappellone dalle origini ad oggi*, Luca Betti, ed., 3 vols. (Siena: Betti Editrice, 1993), I: 21-23.
- ⁶⁵ Virgilio Graſſi, *Le contrade di Siena e le loro feſte – Il Palio attuale*, 2 vols., (Siena: Edizioni U. Periccioli, 1973).
- ⁶⁶ Aldo Cairola, *Siena/Le Contrade: Storia, feſte, territorio, aggregazioni* (Siena: Industria Grafica Pistoieſe, 1989).
- ⁶⁷ Giuliano Catoni and Alesandro Leoncini, *Cacce e tatuaggi: nuovi ragguagli ſulle contrade di Siena*, (Siena: Protagon Editori Toſcani, 1993).
- ⁶⁸ Patrizia Turrini, “Il beſtiario delle *contrade* di Siena: letteratura, arte e araldica tra medioevo e prima età moderna,” Aurora Savelli and Laura Vigni, eds. *Uomini e Contrade di Siena: Memoria e vita di una tradizione cittadina: Atti del Ciclo di Incontri (Siena, 16 gennaio – 27 febbraio 2003)* (Siena: Archivio Storico Comune di Siena, 2003), 201-252, and Giovanni Mazzini, “Il microcosmo araldico contradaio: una propoſta di classificazione (sec. XVI),” 253-264.
- ⁶⁹ Giovanni Mazzini, “Il microcosmo araldico contradaio: una propoſta di classificazione (sec. XVI),” 253-332 and Aurora Savelli, “Con fuochi e inſegna, tamburo e torce: costruire il territorio della contrada, appartenere alla città (Siena, ſecoli XVII-XVIII),” 43-166.
- ⁷⁰ See Savelli, 43-166 and Armando Santini, “Il ‘caſo’ della Contrada dell'Onda (sec. XVI),” 333-340.
- ⁷¹ Nino Franco Viſentini, *Il Palio di Ferrara* (Rovigo: Istituto Padano di ArtiGrafiche, 1968).
- ⁷² Dino Tebaldi, Luigi Vincenzi, and Stefano Lolli, *Ferrara e il Palio: ſtoria, poeſia in dialetto attualità.*, (Ferrara: Giovanni Viſentini Editore, 1992).
- ⁷³ Deanna Shemek, “Circular Definitions: Configuring Gender in Italian Renaissance Feſtival,” *Renaissance Quarterly* XLVIII (1) (Spring 1995): 1-40. The article appears reprinted in *Ladies Errant: Wayward Women and Social Order in Early Modern Italy* (Durham & London: Duke University Preſs, 1998), 17-44. Subſequent citations of Shemek refer to the latter verſion of the article.

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- ⁷⁴ Carlo Cavriani, *Le razze Gonzaghesche dei cavalli nel mantovano e la loro influenza sul puro sangue inglese*, *Quaderni Storici Mantovani* 7 (Rome: Tipografia Manuzio, 1909; reprint, Mantua: Adalberto Sartori Editore, 1974).
- ⁷⁵ Giancarlo Malacarne, *Il mito dei cavalli gonzagheschi: alle origini del purosangue* (Verona: Promoprint, 1995).
- ⁷⁶ Galeazzo Nosari and Franco Canova, *Il Palio nel Rinascimento: I Cavalli di Razza dei Gonzaga nell'età di Francesco II Gonzaga 1484-1519* (Reggiolo: E Lui Editore, 2003).
- ⁷⁷ Richard Joseph Ingersoll, "The Ritual Use of Public Space in Renaissance Rome," Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 1985.
- ⁷⁸ The catalog does not have a date.
- ⁷⁹ Venanzio Malfatto, *Il Palio di Asti: storia, vita, costume* (Cuneo: Aga Editrice "Il Portichetto," 1983). I found another work through a bibliographic search, but was unable to obtain it through interlibrary loan or find it Italian libraries. Giorgio Lanteri, *Il Palio di Asti* (Asti, Scuola tip. Michelerio, 1934).
- ⁸⁰ Cecchino Cartaio, *La Magnifica et Honorata Festa Fatta in Siena per La Madonna d'Agosto l'Anno 1546*, MS. R VIII 011, Biblioteca Comunale, Siena. Aldo Cairola also includes a transcription of Cecchino's letter.
- ⁸¹ Gregorio Dati, *Istoria di Firenze di Goro Dati dall'anno MCCLXXX all'anno MCCCCV* (Florence, 1755), 84-89 reprinted in Cesare Guasti, *Le feste di S. Giovanni Batista Descritte in Prosa e in Rima da Contemporanei* (Florence: R. Società di S. Giovanni Battista, 1908), 4-8.
- ⁸² Domenico Tregiani, "Trattato sopra le belle e sontuose feste fatti ne la Magnifica Città di Siena Cominciate da la prima Domenica di Maggio per tutto il Di XVII d'Agosto d l'Ano 1581," MS. B.V.42, BCS.
- ⁸³ "Relazione Delle Rapresentanze, Spettacoli e Comparsate fatte dalle Contrade di Siena fin dall'Anno 1482= nella gran Piazza detta nei tempi antichi dalla Repubblica, Piazza dl Campo 'd Arme..." MS. A.VI.47, BCS.
- ⁸⁴ Silvestro da Lucca and Lauro Padovano, *Il libro dei palii vinti dai cavalli di Francesco Gonzaga, 1512-1518*, Private Collection, Milan, text published in Malacarne, 88-95.
- ⁸⁵ For example, for the Festival of the Assumption of August 1316, an entry of August 7 records a sum paid to cloth-sellers for wool cloth to make costumes; another entry of August 17th paid the salaries of trumpeters performing at the running of the palio, and to the velvet-maker who made the pennants for these trumpets and the thirty-six coats-of-arms of the city that decorated the trumpeters' costumes; and payments for the *ceri*, the painting of the candleholder to carry the *cero grosso*, for garlands, and *confetti* (candies or sweets) were entered under the date of August 19th. Biccherna 132 fols. 11, 15, 16 cited in Cecchini and Neri, 144-145.
- ⁸⁶ The *braccia* (arm), a standard of measurement used in Renaissance Italy, could vary from city to city and by the type of object measured. A Florentine *braccia* measured about .58 meters. A Sienese *braccia* measured about .6 meters, and the measurement for fabric was around .78 meters.
- ⁸⁷ For more on Florentine money, see Richard Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), xv, 301-317.
- ⁸⁸ Unfortunately, I was unable to find information on the relation of the *scudo* and ducat to the *lira* in time to finish this draft of my dissertation.

⁸⁹ Expenses from June and July in a 1422 ledger record payments for manufacturing the palio banners for the feasts of San Bernabo and San Giovanni Battista as well as salaries paid to musicians performing in the feast. In preliminary searching of the exit ledgers (Camarlinghi Uscita) of the Camera del Comune in the Archivio di Stato in Florence, I've been able to locate expenses for the Festival of San Giovanni Battista in a sampling of ledgers encompassing the period from June 1-July 31st for the years 1405 (Camarlinghi Uscita 350, fols. 1v, 2, 3, 4v, 5, 5v), 1417 (Camarlinghi Uscita 367, fols.1, 1v, 2), and 1422 (Camarlinghi Uscita 376, fols.3, 3v, 4, 4v, 14, 16, 17v, 19v, 20). Due to limited time at the archive and difficulty in reading the ledger entries, I was only able to partially and imperfectly transcribe them. Towards the end of the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth century, payments appear in the Camera del Comune, Notaio di Camera, Entrata e Uscita (the account books of the notary of the Camera del Comune) and in the Scrivano di Camera, Entrata e Uscita (the account books of the clerk of the Camera).

⁹⁰ Loredana Maccabruni, "La 'San Giovanni' e l'eredità storica della festa. Il palio, gli omaggi, l'offerta," in Pastori, 199, n.15.

⁹¹ Biccherna 767, fol. 21v, Archivio di Stato di Siena (ASS) cited in Cecchini and Neri, 55, n. 150.

⁹² The council declared instead that a buffalo-baiting be held instead of the tournament. Consiglio Generale 234, fol. 168v, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 61.

⁹³ Jacqueline Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

Chapter Two: The History of the Palio in Renaissance Italy

Introduction

Words and customs, especially in a country like Italy with a long history, resonate with the past. Magazine ads and television commercials advertise contests in which money and prizes are offered “*in palio.*” This word, *palio*, refers to one of Italy’s oldest and most pervasive cultural traditions, one that endures today. The word *palio* has come to signify a variety of races, games, jousts, and tournaments, performed in historical costume, including but not limited to its earliest form, the horse race. The awarding of a palio for a horse race is a distinctly Italian phenomenon, and I have yet to find evidence of a similar tradition occurring in any other European country, either during the Renaissance or in the modern day.

Born in the late Middle Ages, the palio has survived into the twenty-first century. Asti, Fermo, Ferrara, Siena, San Vincenzo,⁹⁴ and Udine hold horse races, while Alba and Ferrara also run races using donkeys.⁹⁵ Although some of these palio races are primarily re-enactments or revivals, others, such as the races run twice annually in Siena, are part of a continuous tradition dating back to the thirteenth century. Yet the word *palio* originates not from the race itself, but from the cloth palio banner awarded to the winner of the horse race. *Palio* derives from the Latin *pallium*, the word for “cloth.” *Palio* thus conjures up the distant past of the Italian city while referring to traditions still alive and present.

Since the late middle ages, the palio race has played an integral role in the cultural life and power dynamics of the Italian city. Palio racing marked religious festivals and other civic occasions, and was not merely a sport, but an important display of power and

communal identity. Cities committed resources and developed rules for these events. The races provided arenas in which prominent noble families competed against one another in public spectacles, and processions leading up to these races included members of the city's various governmental, civic, and religious groups.

The Birth of the Palio and the Development of Wealth in the Italian City in the Late Middle Ages

The first historical accounts of palio races in various Italian cities appear in the thirteenth century. It is no accident that the palio phenomenon appears just as these cities are accumulating wealth through the growth of banking and trade.

The Italian city grew and prospered beginning in the thirteenth century due in part to the growth of commerce during these periods. Participation in trade of such goods as textiles put Italy in contact with the rest of the world, and later Italian merchants and financiers dominated trade and banking during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Beginning in the late Middle Ages, Italian traders established offices throughout Europe and the Mediterranean to facilitate the trade of goods, and established banks in many of these cities.⁹⁶ Italians pioneered innovative banking practices, such as the use of cheques and credit in transactions that facilitated international trade.⁹⁷ Florence and Siena, the two cities upon which most of my research focuses, owed much of their wealth to their involvement in international trade and commerce.

Florence

Much of Florence's wealth grew out of the banking industry. Such families as the Medici and Strozzi⁹⁸ families made their wealth in banking and financial services and created commercial companies that traded goods, such as textiles and luxury items.

Florentine banking practices and firms spread throughout Europe, and the gold florin, first minted by the city in 1252, became the standard currency throughout Europe.⁹⁹

Florence was also a center of manufacture, particularly for textiles. In the later Middle Ages and early Renaissance, Florence's wool industry thrived. Initially Florentine shops specialized only in the finishing of raw woolen cloth imported from France, but later, merchant companies imported raw wool from England.¹⁰⁰ Later in the Renaissance, with the decline of the wool industry in the fifteenth century, Florence became one of Europe's premier producers of luxury silk fabrics, a topic I will explore in more depth at the beginning of Chapter Four.

Siena

Siena profited from its geographical location on the main road to Rome by developing textile trade with France and by hosting pilgrims and travelers en route to the Holy City. Siennese merchants also traded in textiles at the fairs at Champagne in France,¹⁰¹ an important hub of European commerce during the late Middle Ages where merchants from northern Europe traded goods with merchants from Italy and the Mediterranean.¹⁰²

It is no accident that Siena adopted the Roman *lupa*, or she-wolf, as its symbol.¹⁰³ In the late Middle Ages, Siena benefited greatly from its situation along the Via Francigena, the main pilgrimage route from France to Rome.¹⁰⁴ In addition to being a major stopping point on the road to the Holy City, Siennese banking families such as the Bonsignori and Salimbeni made vast fortunes lending money to the papacy.¹⁰⁵ Because of its situation in the rich area of the Chianti, Siena also derived much of its wealth from agricultural activities, and there was also a thriving wool industry in the city, much like Florence but on a smaller scale.¹⁰⁶

Along with the development of banking and industry during the thirteenth century, the populations of Italian cities increased as more citizens found employment in these industrial activities. Guilds were established to regulate manufacturing industries and to set standards for production and levy taxes on goods. As cities grew in population and wealth, they developed forms of government in which officials were elected from a body of members of these guilds.

Paralleling the development of institutions in the Italian city was the development of rituals through which citizen's could celebrate their civic identity, mainly through a calendar of religious feast days. Most cities had an ecclesiastical calendar that included the feast day of their patron saint or saints and other saints significant to the city's history. I believe that it is no coincidence that the first recorded instances of the palio coincide with the growth of Florence and Siena in the thirteenth century; the palio was part of the Italian city's process of self-definition. The feast day and its palio banners are manifestations of the growth and wealth of these two cities in the late Middle Ages.

Earliest Documentation of the Palio in Italy

The earliest documents mentioning palio races, all in the context of feast days for patron saints, are from this period. In Siena, the earliest document mentioning the palio race is from 1239 from the deliberations of the Biccherna, officials from the city's accounting office. The document mentions a fine of forty *soldi* levied on a certain shamed Bruno di Cigurda for not retrieving the *porco* (pig) awarded to him for finishing last in the August palio of the Assumption.¹⁰⁷ The awarding of the pig to the last-place finisher was determined by the statute governing the race. That rules were already in place suggests that the palio had been run for some years prior to 1239. According to the *Memoriale* of the thirteenth-century chronicler Guglielmo Ventura,¹⁰⁸ a palio dedicated to

San Secondo,¹⁰⁹ was run in the city of Asti in Piedmont in 1275, a city that continues this tradition to the modern day.¹¹⁰ The northern city of Verona in the Veneto region initiated a palio race by the year 1271, when rules were established in the Statuto Albertino.¹¹¹ In Ferrara, the earliest evidence for the palio run in honor of that city's patron saint, San Giorgio,¹¹² is a statute dated 1279 or 1287, issued by the ruling D'Este family to establish the prizes for the race.¹¹³

The Palio's Celebration of Sacred and Secular Events

Palio races marked important occasions in the social, cultural, and political life of the city. Although palio races commemorated primarily sacred occasions, such as the feast day of the city's patron saint, they could also mark secular events, such as a military victory, the entrance of an important ruler, or a marriage or birth. Although the celebration of a saint's feast day was in name sacred, it was at the same time civic or secular, in that representatives of the city's associations and guilds participated in the ceremony. In addition, it was usually the city government or rulers of the city - not the organized church - that organized and funded the feast day.

Races for Patron Saints

The palio race was the climactic event for the feast day of a city's patron saint. In Florence, the most important palio was that of San Giovanni Battista, held on June 24th. In Siena, the Palio of the Assumption, dedicated to the Virgin Mary, occurred each year on August 15th. Ferrara's Palio of San Giorgio, though now run in May, took place each year during the Renaissance on April 24th. Other cities, such as Pistoia, Asti, and Bologna also held palio races dedicated to their patron saints.

Florence's Palio of San Giovanni Battista

Florence's Palio di San Giovanni Battista was one of the most prestigious palio races in Italy. Although the feast day was celebrated for several centuries from the seventh century onwards,¹¹⁴ the saint and his natal day did not gain prominence until the thirteenth century, when he eclipsed the city's other patron saints, Santa Reparata and San Zanobi.¹¹⁵ Florence had an even older palio, dedicated to Santa Reparata¹¹⁶ on October 8th, whose origins date back as far as 405 CE.¹¹⁷ Yet as the worship of San Giovanni Battista grew, so did its palio supplant that of the Reparata palio in status.¹¹⁸ Chronicler Giovanni Villani records that the first festival began as a simple gathering of nobles in 1283 who enjoyed dinners and games. The earliest running of the horse race occurred in 1288, when the Florentines horses and riders competed beneath the walls of the assieged Tuscan city of Arezzo.¹¹⁹

As Richard Trexler has shown, the festival evolved from a simple feast to an important civic ritual in which the city of Florence enforced its social contracts between fraternal orders, between subject and ruler, and when charity was dispensed.¹²⁰ The palio was the climactic event of the festival for centuries. Although Florence still celebrates the Feast of San Giovanni each year with a procession in historic costume, a soccer match, and fireworks,¹²¹ the horse race died out in the nineteenth century, the last race occurring in 1858.¹²²

Siena and the Palio of the Assumption

During the Middle Ages and Renaissance, the Tuscan city of Siena had not one, but four patron saints - Saints Bartolommeo,¹²³ Ansano, Crescenzo,¹²⁴ and Savino.¹²⁵ Although a race was held annually for Sant' Ansano,¹²⁶ the most prominent of the palio races honored the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.¹²⁷ Though the Virgin was

never technically Siena's patron saint, she was certainly the most important religious figure and protector of the city. The Feast of the Assumption celebrates the assuming of Mary's body into heaven following her death.¹²⁸ The Virgin's importance in particular to the life of the Sienese was cemented after their defeat of the Florentines in the Battle of Montaperti in 1260, following which they dedicated the city to Mary in gratitude for her aid in battle. But veneration of the Virgin predates this military victory: the city's cathedral was consecrated in 1179 to the Virgin of the Assumption, and the practice of celebrating this feast in Siena is even older, dating back to the eleventh century. A document from September of 1200 establishes rules for citizens and subject communities presenting tribute candles for the Feast of the Assumption.¹²⁹

According to Cecchini, the tradition of running a horse race in Siena predates the present cathedral; in the twelfth century, a *palio* race was run for the Festival of Saint Boniface, the titular saint of the old cathedral that stood in Castelvecchio.¹³⁰ As mentioned earlier, the first documentary evidence of the race of the Assumption dates to the fine paid by a participant in 1239, but no document makes specific mention of the race again until 1310, when the Biccherna authorized fifty *lire* for the making of the palio banner.¹³¹ The procession of the *contrade* and the cart carrying the palio banner in the Piazza del Campo prior to the horse race is very old, with statutes from 1262 regulating the procession.¹³² The horse race was usually run *alla lunga* – along city streets - on August 15th.

Palio of San Giorgio, Ferrara

Ferrara's Palio of San Giorgio, now run in May, occurred on April 24th to honor the city's patron, San Giorgio, the patron saint of soldiers. Ferrara adopted San Giorgio as the city's patron saint around 657. He enjoyed popularity during the Crusades, and in

1110, Ferrara acquired a relic of the saint's arm for the city's new cathedral.¹³³ A statute of 1279 or 1287 established that each citizen of the city possessing capital of one hundred *libre (lire)* or more had to present a candle during the Mass on the eve of the celebration of the saint's day. This same statute established that a horse race be run on the feast day itself, with the first prize of a palio banner, the second a pig, and the third, a rooster.¹³⁴ Races for men, women, and donkeys were added over the years, and another statute from 1476¹³⁵ established the rules and prizes for these races. The San Giorgio Palio is depicted in a fresco commemorating the month of April in the Sala dei Mesi (Room of the Months) in Ferrara's Palazzo Schifanoia, decorated by Francesco dal Cossa in the late 1460s and early 1470s for Duke Borso d'Este. (fig. 4) Although the Schifanoia fresco shows the horse, donkey, and foot races happening simultaneously beneath the gazes of the Este rulers, this is an artistic conflation, as each race occurred separately and followed a different route through the city.¹³⁶ Ferrara's San Giorgio Palio was discontinued in 1860, but was revived once in 1933 to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the death of the Ferrarese poet, Ludovico Ariosto.¹³⁷ In 1967, the city of Ferrara re-instituted an annual palio for San Giorgio, which has been run every year since then in the Piazza Aristoea on the third Sunday in May.¹³⁸

Other Patronal Feasts with Palio Races

A number of cities ran horse races to honor their patron saints, including the Tuscan cities of Arezzo, Pisa, and Pistoia. Arezzo ran a palio for horses for its patron saint, San Donato, from 1327 to 1865. Pisa ran two palio races from the thirteenth century onwards for their patron San Ranieri, on June 17th, one competition a boat regatta, and the other, a horse race.¹³⁹ Bologna (in Emilia Romagna) had a palio race for its patron saint, San Petronio.¹⁴⁰

Pistoia, located along the Via della Collina, one of the major arteries between northern Europe and Rome, celebrated on July 25th the feast day of its patron saint, San Iacopo (Giacomo), or Saint James of Campostela, whose shrine in Spain was one of the most important pilgrimage destinations of the Middle Ages. Documents recording the festival in Pistoia date back as early as 1179, and like Florence's Festival of San Giovanni Battista, included an offering of palio banners to the city's cathedral, the largest of which was given to the winner of the horse race.¹⁴¹

The city of Verona in the Republic of Venice held palio races every year on the first Sunday of Lent as part of their Festa del Popolo (Feast of the People), to honor their patron saint, San Zeno (whose natal day is April 12th)¹⁴² as well as the Virgin Mary.¹⁴³ Three statutes from 1271, 1328, and 1393 established the rules and prizes for the horse and foot races, for men and later for women.¹⁴⁴

The city of Asti in Piedmont started running palio races for its patron saint, San Secondo, documented as far back as 1275. The city ran horse races, and for a certain period, donkey races, for the saint's natal day on May 4th. When the Dukes of Savoy took over the city in the sixteenth century, they perpetuated the tradition, establishing provisions for the making of two red velvet palio banners annually, one destined for the race, the other to be presented to the Church of San Secondo (fig.5).¹⁴⁵ This custom persists today, as past palio banners presented to the church are still kept in a chapel in San Secondo (fig.6), and each year an artist paints two banners, one for the race (fig. 7), and one for the church (fig.8). The city also awarded prizes to the runners-up: a velvet purse of coins to the second-place finisher, a pair of golden spurs for third place, and a live rooster for fourth place.¹⁴⁶ When I attending the running of the palio in September of

2004, the five consolation prizes were carried in the procession behind the palio banner, with the last place finisher getting the *inchioda* – a single sardine upon a bed of lettuce!

Asti's palio tradition, though almost as old as Siena's, is not continuous. The horse race died out in the mid-nineteenth century, and was revived during a period of six years from 1929 to 1935 when nationalism was fervently promoted by the Fascist government of Mussolini, and then suspended again until 1967. Since 1967, the Palio has occurred each year on the third Sunday of September, and draws crowds from all over Italy. Twenty-one *rioni*, neighborhood parishes analogous to the Sienese *contrade*, participate in historical costume in the elaborate procession proceeding the race in the Piazza Alfieri, (fig. 9) and are each represented by a horse competing in one of the three preliminary heats, with the top three finishers competing in the final heat. Some of the *rioni* date back to the Middle Ages, while others are recent creations, but unlike Siena, Asti does not have a historical tradition of its *rioni* participating in the palio, although churches and confraternities entered horses in the palio *alla lunga* in the seventeenth century.¹⁴⁷

Commemorating Patronal Feasts When Away from Home

When groups of expatriates from a city lived or traveled elsewhere, they still commemorated the feast days of their native cities. Venetians citizens in Ferrara held a palio for their city's patron saint- San Marco- on April 25th, the day following Ferrara's own festival of San Giorgio. The festivities included races for men and for women, as well as a procession to the church of San Marco in Ferrara, in which the Duke and the Venetian ambassadors took part.¹⁴⁸ Florentines staged elaborate spectacles in 1490 and 1492 in Rome for the Feast of San Giovanni Battista, erecting temporary structures such as a wooden church and fountains and holding processions including *spiritelli*, or stilt-

walkers, in costume. They also ran a palio race from the Campo dei Fiore to Ponte Sant' Angelo.¹⁴⁹

Races Held for Other Feast Days

Although the palio races run for patron saints were usually the most important and elaborate, cities commonly celebrated the natal days of other saints with palio races.

Mantua ran two palio races for its most important saints, San Pietro Apostolo (to whom the cathedral is dedicated), and San Leonardo. The comune of Mantua sponsored a race on June 29th to honor San Pietro and city officials offered *ceri* to the Cathedral on the eve of the natal day. The race took place outside the city walls from the Porta Pusterla (near the island of the Te, where Palazzo Te was constructed in the early sixteenth century) to an area called Migliaretto outside Porta Cerese.¹⁵⁰ The Gonzaga family, from 1328 onwards, sponsored another palio in honor of San Leonardo,¹⁵¹ which was run on August 16th and marked the Gonzaga family's defeat of the Bonacolsi for rulership of the city on that day in 1328.¹⁵²

Siena honored its great native-born saints, the Dominican Santa Caterina and the Franciscan San Bernardino, with religious feasts that included palio races. In the sixteenth century, the first palio race of the Sienese calendar was that of San Bernardino.¹⁵³ Following Santa Caterina's canonization on June 29, 1461, Siena spent over eight hundred florins to make the annual Festival of the Assumption especially lavish.¹⁵⁴ In the sixteenth century, Siena held a *palio* race for Santa Caterina on the first Sunday in May, recorded in the verse of Domenico Tregiani in 1581.¹⁵⁵

Roman *Carnevale*

The pre-Lenten festival of *Carnevale* (Carnival) was also celebrated with palio races. Originally sponsored by the city of Rome, Carnival races took place in the

Testaccio neighborhood across the Tiber, consisting of three races – one for geldings, one for mares, and one for horses owned by *forastieri* (foreigners). Pope Paul II (1464-1472) underwrote six new races, moving them from Testaccio to the Via Lata, which ran from the Porta del Popolo to Piazza Venezia. This street became known as the *Via del Corso* in the sixteenth century.¹⁵⁶ For a period from the late fifteenth century to the early sixteenth century, the route of the races was changed, beginning at the Campo dei Fiori and finishing on the other side of the Tiber in the Piazza of St. Peter's. In 1566, Pius V moved the races back to the Corso.¹⁵⁷

Ferrara was not the only city to run a variety of races for humans and non-equines. Paul II instituted six new races for Carnival; in addition to the horse races, there were races for buffalo and donkeys, as well as foot races for young boys, Jewish men, young men under thirty, and old men over sixty.¹⁵⁸ A *palio delle meretrici*, a race for prostitutes, was added in 1501 as part of the festivities celebrating the marriage of Lucrezia Borgia to Duke Alfonso I of Ferrara.¹⁵⁹ Montaigne witnessed the Carnival races in 1581:

Along the Corso...they race, now four or five boys, now some Jews, now some old men stark naked, from one end of the street to the other. ...They do the same with horses, on which are little boys who drive them with whips, and with donkeys and buffaloes driven with goads by men on horseback. For each race there is a prize offered which they call *il palio*: pieces of velvet or cloth.¹⁶⁰

Although I have found no scholarly interpretations of the participation of Jews and prostitutes of the *Carnevale* palio, Deanna Shemek, in her work on the Palio of San Giorgio in Ferrara, interprets the inclusion of Jews and prostitutes in such a spectacle to the, “economic fact that both groups profited financially from their willingness to

transgress Christian mores- the prostitutes by selling sex, the Jews (who were actively recruited to medieval cities to practice their banking trade) by loaning money.”¹⁶¹

Guild-Sponsored Palii

The races of Roman *Carnevale* invited participation of those of the fringes of society. But another social group at the center of Renaissance society – the guilds – held palio races to honor their patron saints. In Florence, a palio race of Sant’Alo (Saint Eligius) was run on June 25.th Sant’Alo, the patron saint of goldsmiths, farriers, and coppersmiths is often depicted in Florentine art for his miraculous feat of shoeing a difficult horse by removing its leg!¹⁶² The feast day of Sant’Alo became associated with the *Arti di Mercanti* (Merchants’ Guild). A letter from 1576 mentions the young men of the guild’s sponsorship of the Palio of Sant’Alo, for which they commissioned a *palio* banner of crimson velvet worth about fifty ducats.¹⁶³ In Siena, the *Arte dei Speziali* (Guild of Spice Merchants)¹⁶⁴ sponsored a palio for their patron, San Pietro Alessandrino,¹⁶⁵ on November 26th.¹⁶⁶

Asserting Family Power: the Palii of the Sansedoni and the Petrucci

Two palio races in Siena’s calendar were associated with two of the cities most important families – the Sansedoni and the Petrucci. From 1307 onwards, a palio run on March 20th marked the anniversary of the death of the Dominican cleric, San Ambrogio Sansedoni.¹⁶⁷ Sansedoni, who came from the banking family that built its fortune in the cloth markets of Champagne, founded a number of confraternities in the thirteenth century and hosted religious pilgrims who were traveling to Rome.¹⁶⁸ The race was an important part of Siena’s festival calendar for several centuries and maintained its Dominican connections. A document from the early seventeenth century records the

Balia's offering of a crimson palio to the Church of San Domenico annually for this feast day.¹⁶⁹

The Petrucci family initiated the Palio of Santa Maria Maddalena (Mary Magdalen) in 1487 by the Petrucci of Siena, to honor the family's patron saint. In that year, Pandolfo Petrucci, a member of the ruling committee of Nine, took over the city, invading from the Porta Tufi with his forces. Because the convent of Santa Maria Maddalena aided the Petrucci in their invasion, Petrucci initiated a palio to be run annually on July 22, the anniversary of the victory.¹⁷⁰ The palio of Santa Maria Maddalena was particularly valuable; in 1515, the banner cost 390 *lire* to make. However, following the exile of the Petrucci in 1524, the race ceased to be run.¹⁷¹

Shortly following the demise of the Petrucci, Siena initiated a new race on July 25, 1528 to mark the Siense victory over papal and Florentine forces at Porta Camollia, which occurred on the feast day of San Iacopo (Giacomo) two years earlier. This new race was dedicated to saints Giacomo (James)¹⁷² and Cristoforo (Christopher), and included the offering of candles to the church dedicated to San Iacopo.¹⁷³ In memory of the Siense victory at Porta Camollia, the city of Siena hired the painter Giovanni di Lorenzo¹⁷⁴ to design a church dedicated to San Iacopo in Via Salicotto, the territory of the Contrada of the Torre (Tower).¹⁷⁵ The Siense victory in this historic battle is commemorated also by a bell made by Antonio da Siena in 1532 from the melted-down bronze from weapons captured from defeated Florentines.¹⁷⁶ (figs. 10 and 11)

Commemorating Moments in History

As illustrated by the Palio of San Iacopo in Siena, some palio races commemorated important historic events and battles, dedicating the race to the saint on whose natal day the victory occurred. The Palio of Santa Reparata in Florence, dedicated

to one of the city's original patron saints, occurred on October 8th, the date of the saint's martyrdom and of a battle in 405 CE in which the Florentines expelled the Visigoth leader, Radagasio, killing sixty thousand Goths¹⁷⁷ and causing the River Mugnone to run red with blood. The race was run from the fountain of San Gaggio to the Porta del Vescovo. The sixteenth-century historian Vincenzo Borghini referred to the Santa Reparata palio as the city's oldest.¹⁷⁸ The Palii of San Vittorio celebrated Florence's defeat of Pisa at the Cascine outside of Florence, and San Bernaba both marked the Guelph Party's expulsion of the Ghibellines. The July 30th Palio of Sant'Anna celebrated the ousting of the dictator Walter di Brienne (known as the Duke of Athens) in the fourteenth century. The Palio of Vittoria di Marciano, run on August 2nd (called the Palio della Rotta), was created in the sixteenth century to celebrate Cosimo I's capture of his enemy, Filippo Strozzi.¹⁷⁹

Celebration of Secular Occasions

Although most palio races were connected in some way to the feast days of saints, there were also secular applications. The races could mark any number of important events in the life of the city, from the entrance of an important visitor, to the birth or marriage of a member of the ruling family, such as the wedding of Lucrezia Borgia.

Cities staged palio races and other spectacles to impress prominent visitors. The Sieneese spared no expense in 1529 on the palio race and bullfight at which Emperor Charles V was present.¹⁸⁰ On June 26, 1605, the Sieneese staged a *bufalata* (buffalo race) in honor of the visit of Pope Paul V, holding it in the Piazza del Campo so that spectators could easily view the event.¹⁸¹

Palio races could also mark events in the lives of a ruling family, such as a marriage, baptism, or appointment to office. When Duke Ercole d'Este married Eleanor

of Aragon in 1472, palio races made up part of the wedding festivities. The baptism of the couple's daughter, Isabella, was marked by a number of races that occurred on June 29, 1475 for the feast of San Pietro. These races included a race for mares, foot races for men, women, and children, as well as a sack race!¹⁸² In the seventeenth century, various palio races were run in Siena to honor the Grand Duke of Tuscany, including a race held on July 14, 1641, to mark the birthday of Ferdinando II de' Medici.¹⁸³

The palio race, therefore, could be part of both sacred and secular occasions. In most instances, the race was part of a feast day honoring the patron saint or a saint significant to the city or to civic groups or families within it. But the race could also mark non-religious occasions such as a triumphal entry. Although the race was run for a wide variety of purposes, the actual practice of running the race did not vary according to the occasion or sponsorship. The palio race was an "all-purpose" way for the city to introduce competition into a day of celebration.

The Place of the Palio Race in a Religious Feast Day

Since the majority of palio races commemorated feast days, it is useful to explore how the palio fit into these spectacles. The Sienese governor, Federigo di Montauto, referred to the Sienese Feast of the Assumption as "mixing the high with the low, the ridiculous with the serious."¹⁸⁴ The palio was almost always the culminating event led up to during two or more days that mixed sacred processions, offerings, and holy Masses, with street theater, floats, and competitions. The palio banner was the common thread tying together these diverse events, and was displayed prominently during processions and served as termination point of the race itself.

Each Italian city had its own practices and rituals for celebrating saints' days, with the exceptions far out-numbering the rules. However, in most cities, the celebration of a feast day followed this general pattern: personal offerings of candles by citizens and city officials on the eve of the day, a public offering on the day itself, followed by the palio race and other games or festivities. On the eve, or *vigilia*, of the saint's day, citizens presented candles to the cathedral. On the morning of the saint's day, the palio banner was presented to the cathedral along with the offerings of confraternities, guilds, subject cities, members of the city government, horse owners, and jockeys. The palio race occurred in the afternoon or early evening of the feast day, followed by feasting and celebration. Fast, fleeting, and even dangerous, the race provided a dramatic climax to days of anticipation and pageantry.

The Eve of the Feast Day: the Offerta

On the eve of the feast day, citizens would present candles to the church of the saint celebrated. Participation in this *offerta*, or offering ceremony, was compulsory, and those citizens who did not comply could be fined.¹⁸⁵ In Florence on the eve of the Feast of San Giovanni Battista, clergy¹⁸⁶ and members of both lay and religious orders marched throughout the city, beginning and ending their procession in the Piazza del Duomo.¹⁸⁷ Masked men on stilts dressed up as hermits,¹⁸⁸ *giganti* (giants) and *spiritelli* (stilt-walkers) accompanied the processions.¹⁸⁹ Giorgio Vasari describes these giants and phantoms as walking on stilts five or six *braccia* above the ground, about three to three-and-a-half meters high.¹⁹⁰ The designers “decked them with great masks and other ornaments, so that they seemed to have the members and heads of giants,” and stilt

walkers kept their balance by leaning on a pike, sometimes made to look like a weapon, supported by accompanying men on the ground.

Members of lay confraternities paraded in costume, such as the boys dressed up in angels' costumes,¹⁹¹ and acted out various religious tableaux along the procession route,¹⁹² some presented upon mechanical platforms called *nugole* (clouds) or *edifizi* (edifices).¹⁹³ The *nugole*, whose invention Vasari attributes to the engineer, Cecca, derived their names from the cotton wool (*bambagia*) used to cover up the machinery. The *nugole* had platforms revolving around a central axis, on which people in costume could stand. The subjects of the *nugole* were mainly taken from episodes of the New Testament, such as the resurrection of Christ, the Nativity, and the Journey of the Three Magi.¹⁹⁴

By the sixteenth century, the confraternities augmented the *nugole* with walking and figures on horseback representing Biblical characters, such as Moses and Abraham, as well as with *trionfi*, triumphal “chariots” or floats. A published description of 1576 describes the *trionfo* of the Holy Spirit, presented by the Confraternity of San Bastiano on the 23rd of June:

Then followed the Triumph of the Holy Spirit, which was a float (*caro*) covered by a cloud (*nugola*), and above which was a great sphere with doves; this cloud was covered with these angels, that is the Angel Raphael with an alabaster vase in his hand, and eight angels, archangels, and princes, that among the nine represented the nine choruses, and the three Tetrachs, all dressed in costumes of gold and other colors.¹⁹⁵

In the evening after Vespers, citizens, organized under the sixteen *gonfaloni*, or neighborhoods, would present candles to the Baptistery.¹⁹⁶

In other cities, the processions on the eve of the feast day may not have been as visually spectacular as the confraternities' processions in Florence, but all included some

sort of offering. In Ferrara on the eve of San Giorgio, guild members presented banners, subject towns presented candles, and artisans presented candelabra (*dupieri*) to the cathedral, with the palio horses presented following Vespers.¹⁹⁷

In Siena on the eve of the Assumption, various groups would proceed from a city gate¹⁹⁸ to the Cathedral carrying their offerings to the Virgin: the Signoria would present a large *cero istoriato* (a candle painted with historical scenes), neighboring cities would present their *ceri fioriti* or *fogliati* (flowered or leafed candles) and each citizen, divided by *contrada*, would carry a simple wax candle.¹⁹⁹ Various city councils would also present their offerings at this time, as a document of 1581 records the presentation of the Concistoro council on the eve of the Assumption.²⁰⁰ The *palio* banner²⁰¹ and racehorses were also present in the procession.

Many cities staged large banquets on the eve of the saint's day. Following the Mass in the Duomo,²⁰² the Sieneese celebrated the Eve of the Assumption with an elaborate banquet for two hundred people,²⁰³ held in the Palazzo Pubblico's general council room (the Sala del Consiglio Generale),²⁰⁴ and diners ate beneath the gaze of Simone Martini's fresco of the Virgin seated in majesty (fig. 137).

On the Morning of the Feast Day: the Procession

On the morning of the saint's natal day, there would be another procession and tribute offering by representatives from subject cities, government leaders, and various guilds, confraternities, and other civic and religious organizations. For Florence's Festival of San Giovanni Battista,²⁰⁵ groups assembled in the Piazza della Signoria for the Festa dell'Omaggio (Festival of Homage), in which there would be an offertory procession to the Baptistery. Leaders in the Florentine community, including the heads

of Guilds and government officials, each offered a *cero fiorito* (flowered candle), a decorative painted wax candle with a sprig of greenery affixed to its top, as seen here in this illustration from the seventeenth century *Priorista* manuscript showing young boys from the Abbandonati orphanage carrying the *barrelle* (platforms) with the candles (fig. 12).²⁰⁶ These are the predecessors of the large wax candles painted with images of saints still used today in Catholic liturgy and processions. Communities of the Florentine *contado* (area surrounding Florence) offered *palii* (banners) or *ceri* (small decorative contraptions, distinct from the *ceri fioriti*); one account records that seventy *palii* and thirty *ceri* were offered at one festival.²⁰⁷

In fourteenth-century Siena, the four officials of the Biccherna recorded all *palii* as they were presented to the Duomo, fining those who were not present.²⁰⁸ A document from 1526 in the archives of the Sienese Balia lists the declarations of tributes offered by representatives of towns in the Chianti region.²⁰⁹ The festival of the Assumption also included processions in the Piazza del Campo on the feast day, in which the *contrade* participated with their floats in the shapes of heraldic animals, as shown in this late-sixteenth century painting by Vincenzo Rustici (fig. 13).

Edifizi and Floats

This second type of *ceri*, also known as *edifizi*, were offered along with the *palii* by subject cities and towns “the tributes of the most ancient areas subject to Florence,”²¹⁰ were box-like geometric constructions fabricated of paper, wood, or cardboard. Dati describes the appearance of these:

Around the great piazza are a hundred towers, that seem to be made of gold; some of these are carried on little carts, and some by porters; these are called *ceri*, made of wood, paper and wax, with gold and colors and figures in relief, empty within: and within there are men who make the figures revolve.²¹¹

Giovanni Cambi described in 1515 that in olden times, the *ceri* were made of paper and filled with *bambocci di carta* (paper dolls), and when they reached the Piazza di San Giovanni, people beat them with sticks, spilling the dolls for waiting children,²¹² somewhat like the *bocci*, crepe-paper balls filled with games and toys, enjoyed during Carnevale in modern Italy.²¹³ When the Medici were reinstated in 1514, they issued a demand unpopular with the general public that the *ceri* be burned in the Piazza di San Giovanni immediately after the procession, believing them to be too garish.²¹⁴

Two Moments in the Ceremony of the Florentine Offerta

Two paintings in Florentine museums from different centuries and one manuscript in the Biblioteca Nazionale help to visually reconstruct of the Ceremony of the Offerta of the feast day of San Giovanni Battista.

The Gathering in the Piazza della Signoria

In storage in the Uffizi Museum is a painting, dating from 1625-1650 by an anonymous Florentine artist, showing the assembly of the participants in the procession in the Piazza della Signoria prior to marching to the Baptistry to offer tribute palii. On the far left and far right of the painting (figs. 14-16) are two groups of men on horseback, each one carrying a colorful palio banner. These are the tribute palii offered by the towns and cities subject to Florence, as described by Dati,²¹⁵ and as illustrated in the seventeenth century manuscript, the *Priorista*. In Dati's time, these included tributes from Pisa, Arezzo, Pistoia, Volterra, Cortona, and Piombino. Often defeated cities would present palio banners in appeasement of a value and specification dictated by the Florentine government.²¹⁶ Dati mentions that these palii were displayed before the procession in the Piazza della Signoria, affixed to iron rings on the exterior wall of the palace. In the manuscript are illustrated the various contingents of subject cities and

towns, including a group of gentlemen from Siena, then a Florentine possession, carrying tribute banners (fig. 17), including the ambassador on horseback who carries the Siense wolf on a *vaso d'oro* (gold vase). A fresco in the Sala di Gualdrada in the Palazzo Vecchio by Giovanni Stradano shows the riders from the subject cities parading at a gallop with the banners aloft past the *ringhiera* (balcony) where Grand Duke Cosimo I observes their tribute (fig. 18), and various *ceri* carried on wooden *barrelle* are shown in the foreground.²¹⁷

In the background of the Uffizi painting, to the right of the equestrian statue, are shown the six *carri*, elaborate floats of wood gilded and decorated with reliefs and sculptures in the round. The tallest, is the float of the Florentine mint, sponsored by the Calimala guild (finishers of cloth),²¹⁸ whose patron saint was San Giovanni, depicted at the apex of the *carro* (fig. 19) The other five belonged to the oldest towns bearing tribute to Florence: Montecarlo, Pescia, Barga, Montecatini, and Montopoli, as illustrated in the *Priorista* manuscript (figs. 20-24).²¹⁹

The ceremony of the offering also included two floats belonging to the city of Florence, the Martinella (fig. 25) and the Carroccio (fig. 26), which both allude to the city's military history. In the *Priorista* manuscript, Chiari mentions the Carroccio *che usavano gli Antichi Fiorentini in Guerra* (that the Florentines of old used in battle), which paraded in the festival carrying the red and white standard of the Florentine Republic. Another float, the Martinella, carries a bell that once was placed in the Mercato Nuovo on *un Castello di Legname* (a castle of wood) and sounded the call to battle whenever Florence went to war.²²⁰ Both of these floats were stored when not in use in the loggia of the Mercato Nuovo.²²¹

Towering above the other banners and floats in the center of the Uffizi canvas is the cart carrying the palio banner, also depicted in the *Priorista* manuscript (fig. 27). Although Dati does not mention the cart of the palio in his description of the offering to the Baptistery, it is certain that it was present, since it is included in the depiction of the offering on the Bargello *cassone*. In 1454, the palio was the second to last in presentation to the Baptistery,²²² and in the *Priorista* manuscript, the cart carrying the palio banner is the first described in the list of tributes presented on the morning of the feast day.²²³ The palio banner was paraded on its *carro*, drawn by oxen or horses, through the principal streets of the city, in the days leading up to the palio.²²⁴

Offerings Presented to the Baptistery: The Bargello *Cassone*

The participants in the offertory procession marched from the Piazza della Signoria along what is now the Via del Calzaiuoli, into the Piazza of San Giovanni in front of the Duomo (fig. 63), where, in a prescribed order, the participants presented their tributes to the Baptistery to honor the saint. Painted upon the front of a fifteenth-century *cassone* (marriage chest) in the Bargello Museum is the oldest known image of the presentation of tributes to the Baptistery (fig.28). The *cassone*, which is believed to have been part of a pair of chests by Giovanni Toscani depicting scenes from the San Giovanni Festival, was made for the marriage of Giacomo di Berto Fini and Giacoma di Filippo Aldobrandini, who were married around 1417-1418.²²⁵ Although there is significant paint loss on the surface of the painting that makes certain areas very difficult to read, it can tell us much about the ephemeral objects used in the procession.²²⁶

Riders on horseback proceed from right to left, carrying their banners of the subject cities and towns towards the Baptistery (fig. 29). They appear to be of red or gold cloth, and the artist has painted curved black lines on the banner on the far left to suggest

pattern or brocade. In describing the tribute banners, Dati mentions that the banners offered by the Comune of Florence “...are of double velvet, some of vair, some of silk cloth; the others [of the subject towns] are all of velvet and other cloths or striped silk taffeta: which are a magnificent sight to see.” (fig. 30)²²⁷ Most of these banners also have small shield-shaped coats-of-arms placed upon the horizontal ribbons at the tops of the poles, to which flowering branches are attached (fig. 31). Other banners are decorated with horizontal stripes, vertical friezes, or emblems placed within diamond-shaped lozenges, such as the seated animal on the third banner from the left, the rampant goat on the fourth banner from the right, and the checkered cloth in the quatrefoil on the adjacent banner, which may identify it as the tribute of the city of Pistoia.²²⁸

The golden banner at the very far right, carried by the rider on the caparisoned horse, is the Palio of San Giovanni Battista, identifiable by the lily finial at the top of its pole and several coats-of-arms of the Florentine Republic appearing on the horizontal ribbon (fig. 32).²²⁹ Faint outlines of a shield appear at the top of the palio banner and on the horse’s blanket near the shoulder and flank. To the right of the palio banner is a glimpse the old façade of the Cathedral dating back to 1357, including a lunette showing the Nativity.²³⁰

The city transformed the piazza into a sacred space for the festival by embellishing it with palm branches, a colossal canopy, and fabric decorations. Palm branches are scattered beneath the feet of the horses in the procession, and two youths near the Baptistery’s door flail the branches upon the ground. Above is an enormous blue and red canopy decorated with a few of the gold lilies mentioned in Dati’s description. Rogers identifies this as the *cielo* (heaven), an enormous canopy that extended across the

Piazza between the Cathedral and the Baptistery.²³¹ Giorgio Vasari describes such a canopy, “seeing that they have now for the most part fallen into disuse,” in his life of the artist, Cecca:

First, then, the Piazza di S. Giovanni was all covered over with blue cloth, on which were sewn many lilies of yellow cloth; and in the middle, on certain circles also of cloth, and ten *braccia* in diameter, were the arms of the People and Commune of Florence, with those of the Captain of the Guelph Party and others; and all around, from the borders of the said canopy, which covered the whole piazza, vast as it is, there hung great banners also of cloth, painted with various devices, with the arms of magisterial bodies and guilds, and with many lions, which form one of the emblems of the city. This canopy, or rather, awning, made thus, was about twenty *braccia* off the ground, and was supported by very strong ropes fastened to a number of irons, which are still to be seen round the Church of S. Giovanni, on the façade of S. Maria del Fiore, and on the houses that surround the said piazza on every side. Between one rope and another ran cords that likewise supported the awning, which was so well strengthened throughout, particularly at the edges, with ropes, cords, linings, double widths of cloth, and hems of sacking, that it is impossible to imagine anything better. What is more, everything was arranged so well and with such great diligence, that although the awning was often swelled out and shaken by the wind, which is always very powerful in that place, as everyone knows, yet it was never disturbed or damaged in any way whatever.²³² This awning was made of five pieces, to the end that it might be easier to handle, but, when set into place, they were all joined and fastened and sewn together in such a manner that it appeared like one whole. Three pieces covered the piazza and the space that is between S. Giovanni and S. Maria del Fiore; and in the middle piece, in a straight line between the principle doors, were the aforesaid circles containing the arms of the Commune. And the remaining two pieces covered the sides – one towards the Misericordia, and the other towards the Canon’s house and the Office of Works of S. Giovanni.²³³

The ropes attached the canopy to the façade of the Duomo are clearly visible above the palio banner, and the oval lozenge containing the red Florentine lily of the Comune and two other coats-of-arms, and directly below, Toscani has also depicted a number of spectators in front of the palazzo watching the procession from a stand decorated with the red lily. We can also catch a glimpse between the banners of the long flared trumpets of the musicians who performed for the festival.

The *cassone* also illustrates other embellishment of the sacred space with canopies made of gold fabric. The area to the immediate right of where the palio banner appears may have been painted over, or perhaps filled in during the painting's 1970 restoration, and it is hard to read, even when viewed in person. The extension of the horizontal ribbon of the palio banner appears to be in the foreground, and in the background appears to be some sort of tiered balcony or viewed stand decorated with swags of gold fabric, and a rat rests at the pinnacle of a star-studded canopy.

At the far left of the *cassone*, a crowd gathers around a bearded man in an orange tunic and red tights, identified as a *saltimbanco* (acrobat), who stands on a platform, wearing a pouch around his waist and holding a snake in one hand and a *scrigno* (gold box) in the other (fig. 33).²³⁴ In the scene of the offering to the Baptistery in the Sala del Gualdrada (fig. 34), dating over a century later, one sees another crowd of people gathered around a man on a platform, standing in front of a banner. No one has offered an identification of this banner, but I believe it to be the eleventh-century standard that was brought to Florence from Dalmatia in 1188 by Buoninsegna della Presa following a crusade in which the Florentines and Pisans participated. In 1324, the Merchant's Guild constructed a special balcony within the Baptistery to house this standard, described by Guasti as showing the Pisans and the Florentine people praying to the saint in penitence for melting down a statue of San Giovanni to make coins. In repentance, the Florentines placed the saint's image on the *fiorino*, or gold florin. In his sixteenth-century treatise on Florentine money, Vincenzo Borghini includes an illustration of a gold florin from the time of Boccaccio, which depicts San Giovanni naked from the waist up on one side of the coin (fig. 35),²³⁵ resembling the upper torso of the figure on the banner. I think it is

therefore conceivable that this standard, usually kept inside the Baptistery, was brought out during the feast of the offering, to remind the Florentines of their allegiance to their patron saint.

Though not illustrated in the *cassone*, Dati outlines the strict order in which members of the Florentine community offered their tributes to the Baptistery. Representatives of the Guelph Party always presented their offerings first, followed by those of subject cities and of the Zecca and the Cambio (Money Changers' Guild). The officials of the Florentine government, accompanied by the sound of trumpets and pipes, then presented their offerings, followed by the horses competing in the palio, the Flemish wool-weavers, and last, twelve prisoners offered in release for the feast day.²³⁶ Offerings were either left in the church itself²³⁷ or, later on in the festival's history, left outside;²³⁸ those tributes left inside the Baptistery were kept there for a whole year until the next year's festival.²³⁹

The Culminating Event: the Palio Race

The palio race always occurred on the feast day, usually late in the afternoon following the ceremony of offering and midday feasting. Prior to the seventeenth-century practice of running the palio in Siena in the Piazza del Campo, the races took place *alla lunga* (at length, rather than run circuitously) through the streets of the city, usually starting at or outside a city gate, passing through the center of the city, and ending in a major piazza. We have ample evidence from the sixteenth century from both Florence and Siena that city authorities paid to have sand (*rena*) put down in the streets to mark and cushion the track. In 1592, the officials of the Sieneese Balia authorized an official to move earth from the stables in Piazza Manetti in order to cushion the streets for

the horses to run on.²⁴⁰ In Florence in 1599, the organizers of the Palio of San Giovanni paid fourteen florins, four *lire* to a put sand down “from San Pietro [Maggiore] to the Porta al Croce,” the final stretch of the race route.²⁴¹

The sounding of bells or the blare of a trumpet indicated the start of the race. In Florence, three tollings of the bell from the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio indicated the start.²⁴² Two engravings by the seventeenth-century printmaker, Jacques Callot, and an anonymous follower, show the start of the race near the Porta al Prato in Florence (figs. 36 & 37).²⁴³ Sometimes, if the start did not go off fairly, the race would have to be run a second time; for instance, in 1558, Grand Duke Cosimo I ordered the Palio of Santa Reparata to be run again since one of the participating horses had been left behind at the start.²⁴⁴

The palio race ended whenever the winning horse reached the palio banner, which was almost always placed at the finishing point of the race.²⁴⁵ In some instances, a finish line marked the end of the race, but in most cases, the palio banner itself indicated the finishing point, as shown in this detail from a painting of 1677 showing the running of the Palio of San Secondo in Asti (fig. 38).²⁴⁶ In some instances, the jockeys were required to touch the palio banner as they passed it. Disputes erupted over who had arrived first, such as in the incident in which Costanzo Landucci’s horse, Draghetto, was cheated of the palio:

Another year, there at Siena, there happened to Costanzo a major treachery; that his horse finished ahead by the length of a shot of a bow, and when [the horse] reached the palio, [the jockey] dismounted and jumped up to get the palio. Then another horse arrived at the palio, and they said that Costanzo’s horse had not passed the palio, and that the other had passed it. And therefore they gave the palio to the other horse.²⁴⁷

Cities even had to publish regulations on how to deal with disputed finishes; the Sienese Balia stated specifically in its rules of 1592 for the Palio of the Assumption that, "...in the case that two barberi arrive at the finish line at the same point, everyone must run all over again."²⁴⁸

Following the race, the owner of the winning horse presumably acquired the banner, although in some cases, the banner was sometimes returned to city officials.²⁴⁹ Victory sometimes even carried a price: in Siena in the late fourteenth century, the winning owner was required to pay monetary offerings to the Cathedral and comune, as well as to the public banner-carrier and trumpeters!²⁵⁰

The Cleveland Cassone: the Finish of the Race

In the Cleveland Museum of Art is another *cassone* panel attributed to Giovanni Toscani of the same period as the Bargello cassone; the two may have been produced as a pair, since they display similar dimensions and themes. The *cassone* panel documents the exciting finish of the palio race in Piazza San Pier Maggiore in Florence (fig. 39).

Piazza San Pier Maggiore was the finishing point of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista for many years, until the sixteenth century when the finish was extended to the city gate at the end of Borgo della Croce, in what is now Piazza Beccaria. Horses entered the piazza from Borgo degli Albizi, an extension of the Via del Corso, which got its name from the running of the race. In the image from the Cleveland *cassone*, the tower of the Badia Fiorentina, one of Florence's oldest churches located near the Piazza della Signoria, is visible in the background on the right side of the painting. To the far left of the painting, behind the palio cart, is the façade of the now-destroyed Church of San Pier Maggiore. Although the church itself is no longer in existence, its Baroque portico, built

in 1638, still stands at the end of the piazza towards the Via Verdi. This church was extremely important in the ritual life of the Florentines. It was originally built in 1061 as a convent. Whenever the diocese appointed a new bishop, the bishop did not go to the bishop's palace directly, but always stopped first at the convent where he exchanged rings with the abbess of San Pier Maggiore, signifying the symbolic marriage of the bishop with the Florentine diocese. The Albizzi family, an important merchant family who participated in the ceremony of installing the bishop and were benefactors of the convent, also had their palace in the neighborhood.²⁵¹ Therefore, the finishing point of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista was in a part of the city that held both religious and social importance.

At the far left of the cassone is the cart carrying the palio banner (fig. 40). The *asta* (pole) of the palio banner is attached to a swivel joint on the cart, so that the banner can be positioned at various angles. The two attendants nearest the banner stretch forward, holding the ropes as the palio tilts towards the oncoming horses. Several people stand on the cart, including two people dressed in red and white garments. These are probably officials of the Florentine government, since red and white were the colors of the Comune. There are also two men on horseback directly in front of the palio cart, riding horses completely covered in red and white cloth. These two horses may have pulled the cart of the palio, since Dati describes the cart as “drawn by two covered horses, with the symbol of their Comune, and two young men that ride and drive them.”²⁵² One of the pages of the Palazzo Vecchio, wearing red and white leggings, also watches the finish of the race.

One of these figures dressed in red holds the *giglio*, the Florentine lily on a pole. This lily accompanied the palio banner and appears in the illustration of the palio cart in the *Priorista* manuscript, and is also mentioned in payment documents.

Musicians also stand on the cart. The figure to the immediate right of the one of the palio attendants holds what appears to be a bagpipe in his hand. He is probably a *nacharino*, or bagpipe player, employed by the city to perform at festivals. At the far right hand side of the cart are two *trombetti* – trumpet players. A pennant with the lily of the Comune hangs from one of the trumpets.²⁵³ The city's account ledgers from this period mention payments to the trumpeters of the Comune and for the manufacture of the pennants that decorated their trumpets.²⁵⁴

In front of the cart is a figure dressed as a knight, carrying a shield with a cross on it and wearing a pointed cap. He cracks a whip towards a small group of children standing next to the cart. I believe this may be one of the buffoons hired by the city to entertain the crowds.

Men, women, and children line the perimeter of the piazza and lean in the direction of the approaching horses. Some youths in the far right of the painting stand upon a platform, raising and hurling objects to the ground.²⁵⁵ Many attendees wear long gowns of colorful cloth, and the women braid their hair for the occasion. Other figures watch the race from windows draped with Oriental carpets, and some viewers wave branches from windows and from the struts of an awning on one of the buildings. The hanging of carpets from windows appears to be a common motif in images of the viewing of public spectacle, as it appears also in Butteri's painting of the palio horse led through the streets of Florence (fig. 41) and in the Palazzo Schifanoia fresco in Ferrara.

In the fresco of Palazzo Schifanoia (fig. 4), male government officials and members of the Ferrarese nobility, including Duke Borso d'Este watch the race from above, some from horseback, which the women watch from the windows and balconies above. Deanna Shemek, in her Lacanian analysis of the Ferrara palio, interprets these stratified layers of viewing as the objectification of the human participants in the palio, who were “marginal, outcast members of their communities,” and a reinforcement of the moral and governing authority of those in power.²⁵⁶ Although this stratification is less evident in the scene on the Cleveland *cassone*, it is evident that those in power, such as the officials on the palio cart, and those with wealth, such as the people watching the race from the windows of the palazzo, hold privileged, elevated positions in society, and thus have the best view of the race.

In the action of the race itself, fifteen horses battle towards the finish with a chestnut horse in the lead. One horse has fallen to the ground, and a jockey at the far right, who has apparently fallen from his horse, runs to try to catch his loose mount. The horses wear simple red or black bridles decorated with gold trim, and their manes are braided. The jockeys wear caps and silks of different colors bearing coats-of-arms, probably of the noble and merchant families who owned the horses.²⁵⁷ The jockeys wear spurs to goad on their horses and carry whips, which they use on their mounts and on each other, the same type of rough riding seen today in the Siena palio!

The Cleveland *cassone* freezes in time the most violent and visceral moment of the sacred feast day, the moment when horses and riders race towards the finish to claim the palio banner as prize. The building up of several days of religious ritual and solemn

festival suddenly releases in the explosive finish of the palio race, the most secular and profane moment of the entire feast.

Following the Race

Like the pandemonium that occurs today in Siena after the running of a modern palio race, great revelry occurred in the streets of the Renaissance city following the conclusion of the palio. Governor Federigo Montauto recounted in Siena that "...after the running of the palio races, the winners go triumphantly parading everywhere, visiting friendly *contrade*, and holding court brigades, wine, and feasting."²⁵⁸ After the Onda *contrada* won the prize of a silver cup for having the best costume in the procession prior to the palio of September 2, 1602, its members carried their prize throughout the city, "...with tambourines and trumpets and a good quantity of torches..." before returning to their neighborhood to feast.²⁵⁹ After the Oca *Contrada* won the July palio in 1996, for hours following the victory, I witnessed bands of *contradiuoli* wearing and carrying kerchiefs and banners paraded through the streets of the city, chanting the name of their *contrada* and singing impassioned songs.

The City Honors Civic Obligations: Offering of Dowries and Release of Prisoners

Saints' days also provided opportunities for the city to perform charitable acts of releasing prisoners and providing dowries to poor women. On the feast day, the city reached out to its marginalized citizens, releasing prisoners²⁶⁰ and awarding dowries by lottery to women from impoverished families whose names had been submitted for consideration.²⁶¹ Federigo Montauto, writing to the Florentine Secretary of State in 1581, mentions in addition to the red brocade palio banner awarded during the Festival of the Assumption, other prizes including "...a dowry, likewise, for two *fanciulle* (young women) nominated by the *contrade*, and the release of two prisoners."²⁶² The poet

Domenico Tregiani described a dowry awarded to a girl in honor of the Virgin Mary prior to a palio race held in Siena on the Feast of the Visitation (July 2nd):²⁶³ Another girl, from the Contrada of the Oca, received a dowry this same year for the Feast of the Assumption.²⁶⁴ Distributing dowries not only honored the patron saint, such as the Virgin Mary, but also gave the city government a very public and visible role in maintaining public order. City prisons in the Renaissance were very overcrowded, so the act of clemency of releasing prisoners served a very practical function. Many cities, especially Siena, had difficulty controlling prostitution, and had to respond to citizen complaints by designating neighborhoods where prostitutes were permitted to live. The distribution of dowries can be seen, also, as part of a city's effort to control prostitution, as it helped poorer women to marry.²⁶⁵

The Day After: the *Mostra* or *Mercato*

One final component of a feast day in some cities was a mercantile event in the days preceding or following the feast; in Florence, two days before the Feast of San Giovanni, guilds would show their wares in a *mostra* (display),²⁶⁶ and in other cities there was a *mercato*, or public market. Perini describes the wares put on display in each quarter, including *drappi e velluti e palii rosati* (draperies and velvets and rose-colored palii), gold and silver jewelry, and armor.²⁶⁷

A Sacred/Secular Narrative

Despite the variations during certain periods and in certain cities, the basic structure of the feast day remained fairly static throughout the Renaissance period. Citizens could anticipate a prescribed narrative for the festivities of offering, procession, and race, with the palio race providing the dramatic and visceral climax to the events. In following this particular narrative year after year, a city could maintain a sense of

stability even in times of war and change, through enacting the familiar festival. The ephemera produced for these festivals could change in form over time, such as the box-like *ceri* evolving into the elaborate *carri*, but certain fundamental forms, such as the palio cart and banner, remained remarkably unchanged. For instance, the palio cart from the early fifteenth century shown on the left of the Cleveland *cassone* (fig. 39), with its sides decorated by coats-of-arms and pleated skirting, is not very different from that of more than two centuries later, illustrated in the *Priorista* manuscript of 1630-40 (fig. 27).

Trexler has shown how these festivals also had the practical function of raising money for the city government and for its merchants. Merchants and artisans profited from the business of making the palio banner and other ephemeral for the festival. Money and material tributes (such as *palii*) collected during feast days helped maintain churches. The Florentine government also profited from tax collection during holidays: debtors were permitted to enter the city to attend the festivities with temporary protection from their creditors, but had to pay a tax at the city gates, and shopkeepers also had to pay a hefty tax to keep their shops open on feast days.²⁶⁸ In Siena, citizens paid city officials a hefty tax if absent from the ceremony of offering for the Assumption.

The feast day, therefore, brought together a number of sacred and secular elements fulfilling various civic functions:

- The offering of tributes to the patron saint helped ensure that saint's protection and blessing of the city.
- Public alms such as the releasing of prisoners and the distribution of dowries helped create a benevolent image for the city's rulers and at the same time, solve some societal problems.

- The public offerings of *palii* and *ceri* by subject cities and towns showed their subservience to the city, much in the way that staged “triumphs” in ancient Rome displayed the superiority of the victor through the display of booty and prisoners.
- The construction of *ceri*, floats, banners, and costumes not only provided an outlet for the creativity of various groups, such as the tableaux of the confraternities, but also was a conspicuous celebration of the city’s wealth. Only a prosperous city could afford to spend the sums of money for the ephemera to be used only once or on certain specified days.
- The inclusion of races into the feast day allowed a space for competition and violence that was state-sanctioned and controlled. The insertion of this secular event into a Christian feast day bears striking resemblance to the running of chariot races to honor pagan feasts in Roman antiquity. The pagan origins of the palio is a subject that I will explore further in the next chapter.
- Each group or component of society participated in some component of the festival, so that the all facets of the city and its subject territories were made visible. Almost everyone, from the government official to the newly-released prisoner, took part.

Secular Planning of a Religious Event

The blurring of sacred and secular becomes even more apparent when one looks at how the palio races were organized. Although palio races often commemorated religious feast days, the local parish or diocese had little or no involvement with the actual administration of these events; on the contrary, the city government planned and funded these palios. In Renaissance Italy, the division between secular and sacred was

much more fluid than it is today in most parts of the Western world, and it was not unusual for the government of the city to supervise and pay for the construction of churches, hospitals, and other religious institutions. Although clergy took part in the processions and celebrated Masses for these feast days, the organization of the festival – until the involvement of the Sienese *contrade* in the sixteenth century - rested entirely with officials appointed by that government. The documents in the state archives in Siena and Florence give us a glimpse into civic involvement in the funding, planning, and regulating of feast days and their palio races.

In Siena, the task of organizing palio races and the feast days belonged to officials of the comune. The governing councils appointed four *festaiuoli*, known as *provveditori*, to supervise the organization of the Festival of the Assumption.²⁶⁹ In a Sienese statute of June 16th, 1310, titled “On the running of the palio for the festival of the holy Mary of the month of August,” the General Council states the procedures for organizing the palio, entrusting the governors of the Nine, the Chamberlain, and the four *provveditori* of the Biccherna with the money and authority to purchase the palio and pay expenses for the feast.²⁷⁰ The government periodically issued statutes modifying rules for the race and the festival: one of 1337 set the value of the palio banner at 150 *lire*, to be paid by the four *Provveditori* of the Biccherna, and established a fine of twenty *soldi* to whoever illicitly rode a horse in the streets of the city on race day.²⁷¹ The Concistoro discussed many matters pertaining to festivals, such as enforcing four elected but reluctant deputies to follow through with the duties of their offices.²⁷² Deliberations of the Concistoro from 1581 show the election of four officials on July 14th to oversee the Assumption festival, leaving them about a month to organize the festivities.²⁷³

In the sixteenth century, the Balia appears to have also contributed to the organization of the palio. Books of deliberations of the Balia record the election of the *festaiuoli* and discussion of matters relating to the preparation of the festivities, including the organization of the race itself. On August 11, 1592, the Balia met to elect judges for the palio race of the Assumption (*Giudici sopra detto Palio*) and officials for the start of the race (*alla Mossa*). The Balia also laid out a number of rules regarding the Palio of the Assumption, including how owners should enter their horses in the race, outlining rules for the start, and setting procedures for arbitration in cases of a contested finish, such as outlined in the rules from the Palio of the Assumption of 1592.²⁷⁴ The rules required that the owners of the horses accompany them in the procession, to and from the Mass at the Duomo, that starting positions be drawn by lot, and that appointed judges resolve any disputes.

I have yet to discover deliberations from Florence discussing the organization of the palio prior to the sixteenth century, so I know very little about who organized these festivals prior to the Guelph Party's assumption of this duty after Cosimo I came to power. However, since the payments for the festival appear in city ledgers, it is more than likely that members of the government participated in the organization of these festivals.²⁷⁵ Heidi Chrétien notes that by the early sixteenth century, documents also record the names of the *festaiuoli* who organized the San Giovanni festival.²⁷⁶ Hopefully, further research in the Florentine archives will yield more information on the organization of these festivities.

Guilds and other non-government organizations that participated in the feast days also elected their own *festaiuoli*, presumably to organize the offerings of their own

particular group. In a record of the Florentine Arte di Calimala from the 1560's, guild members recorded the election of two *festaiuoli* at the beginning of January of each year for the "gift of San Giovanni."²⁷⁷

In both Siena and Florence, payments for various festival-related expenses appear in the account ledgers of each city. It is mind-boggling to look at some of these city account ledgers and realize how much was spent on these religious celebrations. In 1516, the four *provveditori* spent 15,212 *lire* on the feast of San Giovanni Battista in Florence, including 1435 *lire* for the floats alone!²⁷⁸ Siena spent 2154 *lire* on the Palio of the Assumption in 1414 and five hundred florins in 1460 for the Assumption feast, made particularly splendid for the visit of the Sienese Pope Pius II.²⁷⁹ Although it is difficult to make sense of these figures without knowing the total annual budget of the city, they do not appear to have been modest expenditures. In Chapter Four, I will show how money spent on this one object alone often exceeded the cost of paying a well-known artist to paint a fresco or large work on panel. Clearly these cities considered their feast days important enough to appropriate large sums of money each year for what was an ephemeral event.

The Guelph Party in Florence and the Organization of Palio Races in the Sixteenth Century

In the mid-sixteenth century, with the rise of Cosimo I de' Medici, there is a sudden change in the organization of the Florentine palii. In 1549, Cosimo I appointed the Magistrate of the Guelph Party to organize all horse races in Florence, and in 1563, added the responsibility of organizing the Palio of the Cocchi.²⁸⁰ The payments for these palii appear grouped together in the *Stanziamenti* (transactions) section at the end of the Party's books of deliberations, and include expenses for the Palii of San Giovanni & of

the Cocchi, San Bernaba, Santa Reparata, Sant'Anna, Vittoria da Marciano (also referred to as the Palio of the Rotta), San Vittorio, and sometimes also Sant'Alo.

The Guelph Party evolved from the pro-papal party that defeated and exiled their rival Ghibellines in 1289.²⁸¹ An "Office of the Captains of the Guelph Party" was established in Florence in the thirteenth century to suppress Ghibelline ideas and values, but the Party also became a type of "public works" department, assuming the practical functions of maintaining the walls of the city and its forts, its streets and piazze, and its rivers and bridges.²⁸² Conservative and drawn from the old Florentine families, the Guelph Party exerted tremendous political influence on the Florentine government in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Humanist Leonardo Bruni compared the knights of the Guelph Party to the civic militias that defended ancient Athens and Republican era Rome.²⁸³ The party played an important role in the ceremonial life of the city, particularly noted for their knowledge of horses. Maccabruni notes that its statute from 1335 requires that the captains of the Party be good judges of horseflesh,²⁸⁴ and for centuries, these captains selected fine horses to be given to members of the Florentine government and to prominent visitors.²⁸⁵ In the fourteenth century, the Guelph Party took part in *brigade*, ceremonial brigades that rode in costume through the city to mark significant events,²⁸⁶ and organized jousts as well as *armeggerie*, processions of nobles in livery.²⁸⁷

Feast Days of San Bernaba and San Vittorio

Two feast days were particularly important for the Guelph Party, those of San Bernaba and San Vittorio, which celebrated the party's rise to power. As early as 1422, Florence held a palio for San Barnaba²⁸⁸ (or Bernabo) on June 11th, the Feast Day of San Bernaba. This feast day commemorated the victory of the Guelphs, who supported the

Pope, at Campaldino in 1289 over the pro-imperial Ghibelline party.²⁸⁹ The palio and its feast day thus commemorated an important transition in the political parties that controlled the city. The palio was suspended for a period in the late fifteenth century due to the strict influence of Fra Savonorola, who preached against revelry and lavish displays of wealth, but then revived in 1497. According to Landucci, the Signoria ultimately decided in favor of restoring the race, saying, “Let us renew our people a little, must all of us become monks?”²⁹⁰ The Guelph Party also sponsored a palio of San Vittorio (Victor)²⁹¹ in Piazza San Felice on July 28th, to mark the Florentine victory over the Pisan Ghibellines in 1364.²⁹²

In the archive of the Captains of the Guelph Party in the Archivio di Stato in Florence are a number of letters that show this Party’s involvement in organizing horse races in the sixteenth century on behalf of the Grand Duke. I have found five letters dated from 1556 to 1576 addressed to the Grand Duke of Florence from various Captains of the Guelph party, many reporting to or asking the advice of the Grand Duke regarding the manufacturing of palio banners for various palio races, including the Palii of San Giovanni Battista, San Vittorio, and Sant’Alo.²⁹³ For example, in a letter of May 13, 1560, a representative of the party asked the Grand Duke if he would like to “put the arms of the King of Spain with the imperial arms (“mettere larme del Re di Spagna con laquale imperiale)” on the palio banner, and that “your excellency will order us as you want us to make [them]...the precise form as are the bands of all the palio banners to have them made according to what your excellency commands (S.E. *ordinera come vorra si facemo ...la forma apunto come siano le bande di tutti li palii per farle fare sechondo che V. E. chomandera*).”²⁹⁴ Although the Guelph Party seemed to be doing much of the

coordination of the banner's manufacture, the final say on its design was ultimately left up to the Grand Duke.

The Guelph Party also prevailed upon the Grand Duke to resolve disputes regarding palio races. In 1558, the captain of the Guelph Party appealed to the Grand Duke to resolve a dispute regarding the start of the Palio of Santa Reparata, in which a mare that was acting up was left behind, and her owner wished the race to be re-contested. The Grand Duke replied to the captain's plea that, "il palio si ricorra (the palio should be re-run)!"²⁹⁵

The sixteenth century saw the institutionalization of the running of the palii, and the organization of these events were the domain of this very traditional part of the Florentine government that deferred to the authority of the Medici Grand Duke. As Chrétien maintains, the Festival of San Giovanni became a spectacle aggrandizing the power of the Grand Duke, not the ritual of the *comune* it had been previously. The Guelph Party still administered the Palio of San Giovanni in the eighteenth century. I have wondered why the palio race, once the climatic moment of the San Giovanni festival, faded and died in the mid-nineteenth century, while other key events of the feast day, such as the procession of offering, still flourish. In Florence, the race and its organization was the domain of the nobility and those in power, unlike the history of the Siena palio, where the participation of the *contrade* in the organization of palio races helped to perpetuate the palio into modern times.

Organization of the Palio and the Sienese Contrade

Up until now, I have not discussed in any depth the Sienese *contrade* and their participation in palio races beginning in the late sixteenth century. The *contrade* were,

and are still, among the most compelling and important social organizations in Renaissance and modern Siena. The participation and support of the *contrade* in the organization of palio races ensured the survival of the palio tradition in Siena, in contrast to so many other Italian cities where the tradition died out. The neighborhood organizations known as *contrade* organize the most famous of the modern palio races, those run twice annually in Siena on August 16th for the feast of the Assumption and on July 2nd, the feast of the Visitation and of the Madonna of Provenzano.

The city of Siena is divided geographically into thirds, called *terzi* – Camollia, Città, and San Martino. These divisions have been in place since at least the early thirteenth century.²⁹⁶ Each of these *terzi* is subdivided into geographical areas known as *contrade*. In the Middle Ages and early Renaissance, men living in each of these neighborhoods joined *compagnie*,²⁹⁷ or militias, that helped defend the city in times of war.²⁹⁸ Most of these *compagnie* established their own oratories where they would gather for worship and for military training exercises.

The *contrade*'s primary duties included participation in public spectacles; in fact, Sieneese law dictated that members of the *contrade* parade in the Feast of the Assumption. The *contrade* appear in city documents as far back as 1200, in a statute establishing the order in which various officials and groups made offerings for this feast.²⁹⁹ By the end of the fifteenth century, *contrade* members began to participate in the city-sponsored hunts and games held in the Piazza del Campo. Combatants sat at a table in the midst of the piazza, fending off and slaying animals with weapons held in one hand, while always keeping the other hand on the table. The first of these types of fights, a combat against bulls in 1499, involved the use of *macchine* (machines or floats), also known as *tinozze*

(tubs) in the form of *contrade* animals, which were paraded around the Campo prior to the fight, and during the fight served as shelter for the human combatants. “When these men [the combatants] were unable to resist turning away [from the bulls],” writes an anonymous chronicler of the fights, “they jumped inside the *Tinozza* to save themselves from being gored by the enraged bulls, and after having taken a brief rest, they returned to fight as before.”³⁰⁰ One of these elaborate hunts, which held in 1546, is described in detail in a letter by Cecchino Cartaio (Cecchino the Stationer), and illustrated, based upon Cecchino’s description, in another panel by Vincenzo Rustici, in which these *macchine* were clearly visible (fig. 42).³⁰¹ As evidenced in a book of deliberations of the Sienese Balia concerning the organization of the hunt of 1546, members of the *contrade* were entrusted with such tasks as procuring the wild animals and bulls needed for the hunt, obtaining the livery (costumes) for their members to participate in the procession in the Campo, and providing food and beverages for the feast (presumably held in the Palazzo Pubblico).³⁰² However lavish, hunts were not an enduring part of religious festivals. The Council of Trent’s ban on violence during religious festivals, coupled with a developing antipathy among Florentines and Sienese towards violent and bloody spectacle, led to the cessation of hunts and fights in the late sixteenth century; the last hunt in Siena occurred in 1597, after which the city government banned future manifestations.

Virgilio Grassi contends that scholars have confused the *contrade* with the *compagnie*, believing them to be the same.³⁰³ Yet during the Renaissance, it was difficult to separate the *compagnie* from the *contrade*; these terms often appear interchangeably in city documents. A *contrada* and a *compagnia* often shared a meeting

place, most often a parish church or its affiliated buildings, the *contrada* often “borrowing” the oratories of the *compagnie*, parish churches, and lay confraternities.³⁰⁴

To give an example, the Contrada of the Torre met in the oratory of the Compagnia of Saints Giacomo and Cristoforo before contracting their own oratory in the 1530s.³⁰⁵

Archivist Giovanni Cecchini theorizes that there were originally as many as eighty *contrade*, but that these reorganized into larger groups during the sixteenth century, reducing the total number to the seventeen that exist today.³⁰⁶ Each of the *contrade* are represented by a totem animal: Bruco (caterpillar), Lupa (wolf), Drago (dragon), Giraffa (giraffe), Civetta (owl), Nicchio (shell), Torre (the elephant with a tower on its back, formerly known as Lionfante³⁰⁷), Liocorno (unicorn), Montone (ram), Pantera (panther), Chiocciola (snail), Aquila (eagle), Oca (goose), Selva (rhinoceros)³⁰⁸, Onda (wave, symbolized by a dolphin), Tartuca (tortoise), and Istrice (porcupine). Some, such as the Drago and Onda, adopted their symbols from the *compagnie*, while others, like the Giraffa, named their *contrada* after exotic animals.³⁰⁹ A letter of 1546, written by the bookseller Cecchino, mentions all of the above *contrade* (with the exception of Tartuca, although this *contrada* is mentioned in festival descriptions as early as 1516)³¹⁰ participating in a procession for the Feast of the Assumption, illustrated in a painting by Vincenzo Rustici in the collection of the Banca Monte dei Paschi³¹¹ (fig. 13) An order issued by Violante de’ Bavaria, Governor of Tuscany, in 1729, fixed the names and established the boundaries of territories of the seventeen *contrade* that are still recognized to this day.³¹²

The *contrada* in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as in modern times, was central to a citizen’s religious and civic life. It was a remarkably democratic institution in

which all members, male and female, could participate. Then as now, those residing in the *contrada* held their baptisms, weddings, and funerals in the *contrada* oratories, and attended *contrada* meetings concerning participating in feast days and doing good works for their neighborhood. The Contrada of the Onda kept a book of deliberations that record meetings and lists of members in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This book of deliberations is the only one of its kind to survive,³¹³ and gives scholars a window into the life and function of a Sienese *contrada* during the early modern period, including accounts of the Onda's participation in palio races.

Spurred by post-Tridentine reforms that regularized religious confraternities,³¹⁴ Onda members drafted a statute of 1612 establishing the Compagnia of the Visitation in San Salvatore, the religious confraternity in which all *contrade* members were required to hold membership.³¹⁵ The statute established the various offices within the *contrada*, and the procedures for holding elections, and it appears that other *contrade* also elected Communion.³¹⁶ An orchard or vineyard left to the Onda by a Messer Francesco Faleri provided income to the fund dowries for poor girls who were chosen by lot each year at the Festival of the Visitation.³¹⁷ Members were exhorted to uphold moral standards in the *contrada* by not housing or renting to those who “weren't of a good or honest life.”³¹⁸ And the Priore, or head, was responsible for organizing masses to remember deceased *contrada* members.³¹⁹ There were even positions to which women could be elected.³²⁰ Since the *contrade* were determined by geographical location rather than class distinctions, their membership encompassed a cross-section of Sienese society that transcended social status and profession. Bakers, printers, barbers, shoemakers, painters, and carpenters³²¹ represented the artisan or guild professions, but other members worked

in scholarly or administrative positions, and some even were from Siena's powerful noble families. Members of the *contrada* elected officials and approved important decisions by a two-thirds majority, and at least twenty-four members had to be present at a meeting for a vote to take place.

Siena: the Contrada's Participation in the Palio in the Face of Florentine Domination

Florentine Takeover of Siena

In 1555, after years of resisting Florentine and Spanish occupation and trying to save itself by allying with French forces, Siena lost to the invading troops of Emperor Charles V. Charles V gave Siena to his son, Philip, who then sold the city to Cosimo I. Cosimo entered the city in triumph in 1561.³²² In her history of Siena, Judith Hook states that Cosimo's ambition was to replace "an urban culture with a regional one," which would assimilate Siena into the rest of Tuscany.³²³ Although many of the offices of the old government remained, Cosimo appointed all of the commanding officials. Cosimo I also demeaned the Sieneese by closing down the city's printing presses, taking control of its civic institutions such as the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, reducing the comune's offices and titles to ceremonial status, and refusing requests by the Sieneese to open a public bank. The Medici rulers placed their *palle*, their familial coat-of-arms, upon the facade of the Palazzo Pubblico.

Florence's occupation of the city also directly affected one of its oldest and most sacred of public religious celebrations: the offering of the tribute *ceri* to the Cathedral of the Virgin. Tributes from the Sieneese countryside no longer went to the Cathedral, but instead, were sent to the Florence for the Festival of San Giovanni Battista.³²⁴ The 1558 running of the Palio of the Assumption was postponed until August 19th, since just the day before, the Grand Duke Cosimo I had officially taken over the city.³²⁵ The Florentine

governors even regulated the cost of the palio banner that was awarded for the August palio; in 1590, the Balia petitioned the Governor to ask permission from the Grand Duke to increase spending on the Festival of the Assumption to 200 *scudi*. “Sua Altissima has looked at the account of the Pali of Florence [the tribute banners that Siena brought to Florence for San Giovanni] that are of gold *tela*, and they are less than one hundred *scudi*,” responded the Governor in a letter to the Balia, “nevertheless one must be content to spend up to 130 (*scudi*) for the costs of the trumpeters, tambourine, and musicians.”³²⁶

Clearly, it must have been difficult and humiliating for the Sieneese, so proud of their long tradition of the Festival of the Assumption, to submit to the Florentines in the practice of one of the city’s oldest and most treasured traditions. Michel du Montaigne, visiting Siena in 1581, noted that, although “the duke [Grand Duke Francesco de’ Medici] still allows the ancient mottoes and emblems to exist, and everywhere those ring of liberty,” the Florentines had removed and hidden the tombs of Montaigne’s fellow countrymen who died helping the Sieneese to resist takeover.³²⁷

In the face of such humiliation, the Sieneese might have gradually abandoned their centuries-old traditions. However, Florentine cultural domination appears to have had the opposite effect, as it ultimately strengthened the fervor with which the Sieneese conducted their religious festivals. It was the Sieneese *contrade*, not the Florentine Grand Duke or his appointed governors, who shaped the palio into its modern form. The seventeen *contrade* became increasingly involved in staging the spectacles for religious festivals and important events, and it is through their efforts that the Campo became the modern site for the palio.

Contrada Sponsorship of Their Own Palio Races

With Siena's government and official festivals now under control of the Florentines, the Sieneese expressed their resilience to foreign domination through their *contrada*'s initiation of their own festivals. Towards the end of the sixteenth century, there are documentary instances of a *contrada* sponsoring a horse in the official Assumption palio of August 15th.³²⁸ In addition, the *contrade* also began organizing their own palio races both in the Piazza del Campo and in other locations throughout the city, including *bufalate* (buffalo races) and *asinate* (donkey races),³²⁹ also referred to as the *palio dei somari*. The *contrade* began the practice of using the Campo as a "stadium" for racing, first with donkey and buffalo races, which led to the practice of running horse races.

As mentioned earlier, the *contrade* had been active participants in the animal hunts and bull fights that took place in the Campo in the late fifteenth century and throughout the sixteenth century. As the 1546 book of deliberations attests, the *contrade* were involved in the planning of these events. But ever since the government had banned the animal hunts in the Campo, the *contrade* needed to find new venues in which to participate, and the palio races soon took the place of the hunts. The staging of palio races using donkeys and buffalo had the advantage that *contrada* members had these livestock on hand, and did not require the pedigreed *barberi* that only the nobility and the wealthy could afford. *Contrada* members often loaned their animals for these spectacles: in 1641, for instance a member of the *Contrada* of the Onda volunteered his donkey for the palio run for Prince Matthias de' Medici.³³⁰ Through these races, the *contrade* could mimic the *palio alla lunga* of the nobles, yet do so in the territory of the people – the Campo.

It is interesting to note that many of the races in the Campo in which the *contrade* participated occurred for visits of Medici Grand Dukes and other prominent visitors. On the surface, these festivities appeared to honor the Florentine rulers, however, the true glorification was of the *contrade* themselves. The races, run past the façade of the Palazzo Pubblico, reminded the Florentine rulers that though the Medici arms were on the palace, the Sienese *contrade* were the true possessors of the Campo.

The first recorded *bufalata* to be run in the Campo was one won by the Contrada of the Oca on July 2nd, 1581.³³¹ On June 25, 1599, for the feast day of San Giacomo, the Contrada of the Torre ran a buffalo race in the Campo awarding a red brocade cloth to the winning *contrada*, the Oca.³³² In the *bufalate*, *butteri*, “cowboys” from the Maremma region south of Siena – rode buffalo around the Piazza while *pungolatori* (goaders) prodded the animals with sticks.³³³ In the museum of the Torre is displayed a cloth won in a *bufalata* (figs. 43 & 44), in 1599.³³⁴ The Torre also won a palio of *Damasco giallo* (yellow piece of damask silk) in 1602 in a *bufalata* run *alla lunga* to commemorate the marriage of a Signor Alessando Carli.³³⁵ Buffalo races also occurred sporadically for the Feast of the Assumption, including one in which the Onda participated in 1632.³³⁶ A *bufalata* was held for the visit of the Grand Duke occurred in 1631 or 1632, and was won by Tartuca.³³⁷ Thirty-six *bufalate* altogether are recorded in a fifty-one year period, with and the final one, run on November 3, 1650, was sponsored by Mattias de’Medici to honor his brother, Ferdinando II.³³⁸

The *contrade* also ran donkeys (*asini* or *somari*) in races held in the Campo. The Contrada of the Oca sponsored a donkey race on the first of May to honor its patron saint, Catherine.³³⁹ In 1596, the Onda Contrada sold ten *braccia* of a *drappetto fiorito*

(flowered cloth) won for a donkey race sponsored by the Nicchio *Contrada*.³⁴⁰ The Onda won the *corso de somari* held in 1613 for the visit of the Medici Grand Duke Cosimo II³⁴¹, participated in another race in 1636,³⁴² and sponsored a palio on September 8, 1641, in which they spent fifty *scudi* to make the palio cloth.³⁴³

Contrade also raced horses *alla lunga* through the city. The horses that participated in these races were often not the pedigreed *barberi* of the nobility, but horses of more common blood.³⁴⁴ The Contrada of the Aquila (eagle) sponsored an *alla lunga* race on August 17, 1581, in which a young girl, Virginia Tacci, rode.

The Oca (Goose) Contrada, whose oratory in the neighborhood of Fontebranda was built upon the remains of the childhood home of Saint Catherine, sponsored a horse race on the first Sunday in May to honor their patron saint.³⁴⁵ By the 1630's, the *contrade* were running horse races in the Campo.³⁴⁶ The Onda paraded through the city after winning a horse race run in the Campo on May 10, 1643, which celebrated the birthday of Prince Matthias de' Medici.³⁴⁷

Participating in both state-sponsored and *contrada* palio races involved appointing officials within the *contrada* to raise money and make arrangements for the palio races. Deliberations of the Onda Contrada show that they elected officials to help organize the Onda's participation in the races and ceremonial processions. Whenever the Onda received an invitation to race – whether from the city governors or from another *contrada* - or proposed to sponsor a race, they had to first put the decision up to vote of two-third's majority. Sometimes the *contrada* was too poor to participate, as many declined the city's invitation in 1602 to run in a palio race.³⁴⁸ The appointees of the *contrada*, known as *deputati* or *provveditori*, had the authority to tax Contrada members

to settle debts for participating in races and festivals.³⁴⁹ The *Provveditori* had to find money for palio participation, without digging into existing funds, such as those designated for renovations of the Onda's Chapel.³⁵⁰ In 1619, the Onda voted to elect members to solicit money from *contrada* members to pay back debts to Messrs. Francesco Vetroti and Marchantonio Sabatini for expenses incurred for a palio run for the visit of the Grand Duke.³⁵¹ In 1659, the Onda elected three *deputati* to help organize the Onda's participation in the July 2nd palio – electing one man to search for a horse, another as Lieutenant, and another as Sergeant.³⁵² The *contrada* also elected an *Alfiere*, who carried the Onda's banner in pre-race processions.³⁵³

One important decision that the Onda repeatedly debated was whether to run a horse lent by a *contrada* member, or to raise money to hire a horse and jockey. A Messer Lazzaro offered to obtain a horse for free for the Onda's participation in a palio of 1634.³⁵⁴ In 1643, the Contrada voted on appointing two men to oversee the running of a horse in the palio for Prince Matthias, exhorting them to “spend as little as possible to find a horse and for other expenses.”³⁵⁵ But sometimes it was worth the extra expense and hassle of raising money to hire a good horse and jockey. Priore Stefano Patriarchi, in deliberations on choosing a horse for the palio, reminded Contrada members that when he had served as a *provveditore* in the past, they had won the palio, hiring a horse and jockey for sixty-four *lire*, six *soldi*, eight *denari*. Although a Fausto Nini offered a free horse, the *contrada* ultimately elected to raise the money to run a better horse selected by Lepido Ciuffi.³⁵⁶

Prizes

Although running in palio races cost a *contrada* money, it could also bring material profit. The Onda voted that “anything obtained as a prize such as the Palio

[banner] should serve to honor our Altar and Chapel, and for no other purpose.”³⁵⁷

Beginning in the late sixteenth century, prizes were awarded to the *contrada* that had the most splendid display in the processions; in the 1581 Assumption festival, the Drago won a silver *collana* (necklace) and the right to release two prisoners as reward for their magnificent retinue. The Onda mentions *duo nappi d'argento* (silver cloths?), won for a donkey palio in 1613.³⁵⁸ *Masgalani*, silver trays, were awarded to the *contrada* with the *mas galano* (in Spanish, “most gallant”) company in the processions. Some of these early trays are displayed in the museum of the Contrada of the Torre; several have mythological themes, including the Rape of Europa by Zeus in the guise of a bull. (fig. 45) The prizes won could be kept by the *contrada* or sold. In 1669, the Onda voted to sell palio banners won in July 1666 and 1669 in order to raise money to make a pair of silver candelabra for their chapel.³⁵⁹

The *Carri*

For these festivals, the *contrade* constructed elaborate *macchine*, later known as *carri*, or floats, featuring pagan gods or allegorical figures, as well as representations of the symbolic animals belonging to the *contrada*. The processions included various floats (*carri*) of religious themes, as described in a published verse of 1506.³⁶⁰ Vincenzo Rustici's painting, inspired by Cecchino's description of an elaborate procession of 1546, shows several floats and *tinozze* made by the *contrade* in the shapes of animals. (fig. 13) Later floats presented mythological and allegorical tableaux, such as the float of the Contrada of the Torre illustrated in this 1632 print by Bernardo Capitelli. The float depicted Naval Fame and other personifications riding in a carriage surmounted by the Contrada's symbol of the elephant surmounted by a tower (fig. 46).³⁶¹ The first mention of these floats dates back to 1482, with the parading of a float of the Chiocciola in the

form of a snail, and a cart containing a giraffe (it is not clear whether this was a real giraffe or a model).³⁶²

A set of six etchings illustrating the *carri* of the *contrade* by the printmaker Bernardo Capitelli give us some idea of the grandiosity of some of these inventions. Capitelli's rendition of the Carro of the Onda (fig. 47), constructed for a *bufalata* of 1632, is described in the inscription on the print:

It was a ship on the ocean waves drawn by two marine horses, on the poop deck was the Tuscan sea, in the middle two Maritime nymphs, in the prow, a Venus with two cupids and outside the ship, Neptune around whom there were a number of Tritons, afterwards followed a buffalo representing a sea monster surrounded by other monsters tended by Proteus the sea shepherd. In the *corteggio* appeared Galatea with six sirens and the Rivers Ombrone and Arbia [rivers near Siena], many marine deities, freed slaves and some Turkish and Moorish characters, prisoners in the naval victories of the Grand Duke.³⁶³

A number of Siense *litterati* memorialized these *contrada* festivals and processions in verse, including Domenico Tregiani, who described the float of the Onda for the 1581 feast of the Visitation, filled with nymphs and with a buffalo covered in waves:

La prima fu che veder si facesse
Al gran Governator, e poi per Siena
Vestita a bianco l'onda che si messe
Chondute canne in mano, et essa piena
Di belle Ninfe, e la Bufala presse
Coperte a onde, et ella senza pena
Nel dosso si portava a occhi aperti
Di rosso Argo vestito, e tutti sperti³⁶⁴

The Onda's book of deliberations also records expenses for materials used to construct these floats. The deliberations of August 6, 1525 mention the payment for "la nave e fare la livrea per la festa di santa Maria d'agosto (for the "boat" and the livery for the feast of Santa Maria of August)," followed immediately after by an accounting of

expenses for constructing the *nave*. The expenses, totaling 143 *lire*, eighteen *soldi*, included payment for the wood to make the ship and for its painting, for the trumpeters performing upon it, for the making of a “rudder,” and the cost of hiring carters to pull the ship in the procession.³⁶⁵ In 1536, the Onda spent a total of seventy-nine *lire*, eleven *soldi* on an elaborate carro, made especially splendid due to the visit of the Emperor Charles V to Siena for the festival of the Assumption.³⁶⁶ The four men designated by the Onda to organize their participation in the Assumption festival collected money at a meeting from its members “per onorare la festa di Santa Maria d’agosto e per adornare e chomprare el charro si fe’ e altre spese (to honor the feast of Santa Maria of August and to adorn and buy the carro to be made and other expenses).”³⁶⁷ On August 10th of that same year, the *contrada* listed payments for various expenses relating to making the carro, including money to the painter Schalabrino “per dipentura del charro e delle tele coll’arme dello imperatore e dipentura della sedia stava in su charro and chapelli di chartone, doratora delle funi e le charriole del charro (for painting of the *carro* and of the canvasses with the arms of the emperor and painting of the seat on that *carro* and gilding of the tow ropes and *charriole* of the *carro*);” for a *timone* (rudder); and for six *braccia* of yellow satin for the canopy over the seat and for tapestry upon which to paint the Imperial eagle.³⁶⁸ In 1546, in which a hunt was staged in the Piazza del Campo for the Assumption, the Onda chose as its theme the goddess Diana’s killing of Actaeon, for there are payments to “uno giovane per aver portato una testa co’ le corna di cervi in testa inansi a la Diana in libriera (a youth for having carried a head with deer’s antlers on its head in front of the Diana in livery)” and to a Girolamo Galante *calsolaio* (shoemaker) for making two sets of gilt silver antlers, one for the youth wearing the deer mask and the

other for the actor playing Diana. They also paid a nun, Laura de la Rencine, for sewing the banner of the *contrada*.³⁶⁹ In Rustici's painting of the procession, the youth playing Actaeon wearing the deer head is visible on the left hand side of the painting (fig. 48), at the end of the procession following the carro and black-and-white banner of the Onda. Cecchino recounts that one hundred of the Onda paraded in the procession of that year, with many dressed as Diana's nymphs and shepherds.³⁷⁰

Running of the Palio *alla tonda* in the Piazza del Campo

The Piazza del Campo was the perfect site for the *contrade* to stage palio races, for it was a space imbued with religious and political significance. The Campo contained Jacopo della Quercia's fountain, the Fonte Gaia, as well as a chapel, both dedicated to the Virgin.³⁷¹ The Palazzo Pubblico, built by the Council of Nine in the fourteenth century during Siena's heyday, remained as a symbol of Siena's independence (figs. 48 & 49). And although Siena, unlike Florence and Asti, did not originate as a Roman colony and did not have any ancient buildings such as Verona's Roman amphitheatre, the Piazza del Campo functioned very much like a Roman amphitheatre in that it became a multipurpose venue for public spectacle (figs. 50 & 51).

As mentioned earlier, the *contrade* had participated in bull and animal fights in the Campo for the Festival of the Assumption since the end of the fifteenth century, so their presence in the Campo on festival days was not new. The *contrade*'s initiation of races in the Campo might be seen as an attempt to reclaim this civic and religious center of Siena for the Sienese people. By holding their processions and races in the Campo, the *contrade* showed to their Florentine dominators who occupied the Palazzo Pubblico that though Florence might rule Siena in name, they could not extinguish the Sienese spirit and traditions.

The *contrade*'s unofficial races also cemented the practice of using the Campo as a theatre for the palio races, and in the seventeenth century, they became officially sanctioned events. One of the problems with the official Assumption horse race, run *alla lunga* through the city's streets, was that it could not be viewed in its entirety, since it began in one place and finished in another. In fact, the successful holding of a buffalo race in the Campo in May 1605 for the visit of Pope Paul V prompted the *festaiuoli* to consider holding the official palio in the Campo that year to make the race more amenable to spectators.³⁷² In 1633, the official August 15th palio was held in the Campo, as illustrated by this print by Bernardino Capitelli.³⁷³ (fig. 52) The official August 15th palio of the nobility continued to be run through the streets of the city up until the nineteenth century,³⁷⁴ but in 1689, the office of the Biccherna regularized the annual running of the Palio of the Contrada in the Campo, to be run with horses on August 16th, the day following the Assumption.³⁷⁵ It is this palio, not the palio of the nobility, which has survived up until the present day.

The Palio of the Madonna of Provenzano, Symbol of Sieneese Resistance

In addition to the various palio races of the *contrade*, the seventeenth century gave rise to another palio race- that of the Madonna of Provenzano – held on July 2nd, the feast of the Visitation. In the neighborhood of Provenzano not far from the Piazza del Campo, there was a terracotta image of the Virgin mounted on a street corner. (fig. 53) In 1594, a Spanish soldier struck the image with his lance, damaging it. But almost immediately, his rifle backfired, killing him. The residents of Provenzano saw this happening as a miracle, and the image was venerated.³⁷⁶ Construction on a new basilica in Provenzano (fig. 54) commenced in 1602, and on October 23, 1611, the image was transferred into the new Basilica.³⁷⁷

Beginning in the last two decades of the sixteenth century, the *contrade* started running the Provenzano palio in the Campo on July 2nd,³⁷⁸ and the race was run annually from 1656 onwards, and in 1659, the Biccherna published a document officially recognizing the annual July 2nd palio and appointing *Signori della Festa* (Gentlemen of the Feast) to oversee the race's organization.³⁷⁹ The *Signori* invited the *contrade* to participate,³⁸⁰ and often, but not always, underwrote their expenses.³⁸¹ When money needed to be raised, each *contrada* would appoint *deputati* to solicit contributions from its members.³⁸²

From 1659 onwards, an image of the Madonna of Provenzano appeared on the palio banner,³⁸³ a practice that remained constant until the twentieth century. The Madonna of Provenzano palio celebrated Sienese resistance to foreign domination, much in the way that the initiation of the Palio of San Jacopo at the beginning of the previous century commemorated the city's repudiation of the Florentines at the Battle of Camollia. The Florentines may have taken away Siena's right to self-government, but the *contrade* kept alive the city's pride, identity, and traditions.

Virginia Tacci Rides for the Contrada of the Drago

Siena's pride in its traditions in the face of Florentine domination is well demonstrated by true story of a young female jockey who rode in the Assumption palio of August 15, 1581. In this race, sponsored by the Aquila Contrada in honor of Giove (Jupiter), the twelve-year-old shepherdess, Virginia Tacci, rode for the Contrada of the Drago.³⁸⁴ Her name is legendary in Siena, as I discovered when discussing her with a ceramicist on Via del Città who was a member of the Drago Contrada. Yet she is not a myth, and is documented in archival letters as well as verses dedicated to her. On the eve

of the race, Governor Federigo de Montauto, who lent his own horse for Virginia to ride, exhorted the skill and bravery of the young rider:

But among the most ridiculous and marvelous things seen [during the palio] is a young girl of about 14 years of age who is to ride a race horse (*barbaro*) and she rides with lightness and security that cannot be believed... an infinite number of people have recommended her as a rider, so much so that it seems that the other women are jealous of her, and that some of them desire to learn this art seeing that riding well is a good way to attract the attention of men. This young woman has begun to practice this art of race riding...not without manifest danger of breaking her neck...but she doesn't make any sign of falling, but rides with much artfulness and dexterity...she not only knows how to master and hold the mature and unbridled *barberi*, but also the hot-tempered and speedy colts, and that she is able to assert herself with many of them, such that tamed of their ferocity (*appetito*), they become gentle with her.³⁸⁵

Just as equestrian expertise helps her to tame even the most temperamental of young colts, Virginia's skill of race-riding, unusual for her sex at that time, captured the attention of men. Although Virginia did not win the race, she was paraded through the streets of Siena for her efforts.

Two poets memorialized Virginia in verse, and the imagery chosen celebrates her virginity as well as her virtue.³⁸⁶ An anonymous female poet recounts how Virginia's skill impressed the Governor so greatly that he lent his own horse for her to ride:

Ma'l giuditio d Huom solo illustre, e chiaro,
 Provi ciò a pieno, a I grossi ingegni, e loschi;
 Di quello; il cui Governo via piu caro
 Rende I'Imper del Gran DUCE de Toschi;
 Che veduto il gran pregio, & cosi raro,
 D'esta Vergin nudrita in aspri boschi,
 Sopra Destriero ad ogni prova buono,
 D'eccellente Destrier le fece dono.
 Non ha dunque Natura a noi negato
 Virtu, nè possa mai, DONNE leggiadre,
 Onde il maschio valor sia pareggiato,
 Anzi rese sue luci, & brevie, & adre.³⁸⁷

Virginia's virtue, the poet writes, a quality particular to women, is comparable to masculine valor. The poet Domenico Tregiani also celebrates Virginia in verses dedicated "In lode de virgin a tacei corsiera il Palio 'd Giove per il Drago" (in praise of Virginia Tacci rider of the Palio of Jupiter for the Drago):

Verginia tacei vestal pastorella
 Nata e nudrita in fra gl' Armenti e ville
 Di pover genitor senza che a ella
 Fussin tuon di Tamburi o suon di squille
 Ma ben d'animo forte, hor è ben qlla
 che a molti ha spento lor vive scintille
 Por 'ch' intenerà età di dodic' anni
 Corse al Palio di Giove e non fe' inganni

Tu santa Dea, ch'il tuo bel manto copre
 Quella che tiene il suo virgineo fiore
 Manda ti prego hor che mi vien in opre
 Il tuo soccorso al mio sovbio ardore
 Hor che nel tuo bel tempio vi si adopre
 Questa devota tua con tutto il core
 De la qual canti quanto n ho disio
 A tuo honor di Giove e suo e mio³⁸⁸

Both poets also compare Virginia to the female warrior virgins, Bradamante and Marfisa, of Ludovico Ariosto's epic chivalric poem, *Orlando Furioso*, and praise her virtue and courage.³⁸⁹ Tregiani compares her to *Marfisa altiera o Bradamante honesta* (stately Marfisa or honest Bradamante) also calling her a *Nuova Amazone... O pur qual semideo recinto in gonna* (New Amazon.. or otherwise that semi-divinity wearing a skirt).³⁹⁰ The female poet writes:

Maggior non si potea mostrar coraggio
 Di Lei; destrezza, nè mostrar maggiore:
 Non die già de la stirpe humil presaggio,
 Ma de lantico alto temineo ardore;
 Bradamante cittella, nè Marfisa,
 Poder di Lei mostrarsi in altra guisa.

These two poets chose to celebrate Virginia as a virgin warrior, comparing her to Bradamante and Marfisa, female warriors who fought in the crusades for the liberation of Jerusalem. Virginia rides not only for the Drago Contrada, but also for Siena itself. Just as the virgin warriors Bradamante and Marfisa had defended the Christian faith, Virginia, a contemporary Bradamante, displays the fierce Sienese identity in her brave act of riding in the palio. Far from being defeated by Florentine domination, the Sienese spirit survived, embodied by the courage of one young girl.

⁹⁴ A friend of mine, Alessandra Ballini, a native of Follonica (in the Maremma region) informed me that the small town of San Vincenzo, in the province of Livorno, holds a palio race for horses on the beach. It is held every year on the 16-17 April. Unfortunately, I have not found anything written on this race, although I do have a postcard showing the race taking place.

⁹⁵ In 2002, the Federazione Italiana per I Giochi Storici [Federation for Historic Games] listed 53 historical games and re-enactments held in Italian cities and towns. Giovanni Martinelli and Fabio Vitaletti, *Annuario 2002: Federazione Italiana Giochi Storici* (Firenze: Recanati, 2001).

⁹⁶ David Nicholas, *The Transformation of Europe 1300-1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁹⁷ Nicholas, 112.

⁹⁸ For more on the Strozzi family fortune, see Richard Goldthwaite, *Private Wealth in Renaissance Florence: A Study of Four Families* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 31-108.

⁹⁹ Michael Levey, *Florence: A Portrait* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 19.

¹⁰⁰ Ferdinand Schevill, *History of Florence from the Founding of the City through the Renaissance* (1936; New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1961), 284-309.

¹⁰¹ David Waley, *Siena and the Sienese in the 13th Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 28.

¹⁰² Nicholas, 107-108.

¹⁰³ The Sienese believed that their city had been founded by Senus and Ascius, sons of Remus, one of the legendary founders of Rome. Judith Hook, *Siena: A City and Its History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 6.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

¹⁰⁵ These families gained such prominence in the city that members of the Salimbeni were knighted in 1284 during the Feast of the Assumption. See Waley, 28-38.

¹⁰⁶ Hook, 18.

¹⁰⁷ Biccherna 698, fols. 126v and 128v, Archivio di Stato di Firenze, cited in Ascheri, in Ridolfi et al., 32. The document is reproduced in Latin as doc. 4, in the “Repertorio Documentario sulle Contrade e sulle Feste Senesi,” in Ridolfi et al., 520.

¹⁰⁸ A.M, Review of *Il Palio di Asti. Storia, vita, costume*, by Venanzio Malfatto, *Studi piemontesi* 13 (1984): 248-249.

¹⁰⁹ San Secondo was beheaded at Asti on March 30th, century unknown. His canonization took place on August 30, 1471. He is often represented as a knight on horseback. George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North West Italy, Saints in Italian Art*, (Florence: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1985), 586.

¹¹⁰ Nosari and Canova, 14

¹¹¹ *Statuti Veronesi* I, rubric 51, fol. 23r, [Archive not cited], in Nosari and Canova, 30, n. 2.

¹¹² San Giorgio was martyred on April 23, 303. He is the patron saint of armorers and sword-makers. Kaftal, 348-374.

¹¹³ The statute establishing the palio is in Book II, column 117, Archivio di Stato in Modena. See Visentini, 12-13. Dino Tebaldi assigns the date of 1287, while Visentini (pp. 12-13) gives the date as 1279. See Tebaldi et al., 9.

¹¹⁴ Seventeenth-century writer Luca Chiari mentions that a palio race was run in 330 CE upon the dedication of the Baptistery, thought to be a temple of Mars, to San Giovanni. However, since the Baptistery was not built until the eleventh century, there is doubt as to the historical accuracy of Chiari's claim. See Luca Chiari, *Priorista*, MS. II.I.262, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (BCNF). Historian Pietro Gori assigns the earliest reference to the festival of San Giovanni Battista to the reign of the Lombard queen, Teodolinda, who died in 628, but unfortunately does not give the citation of the source. Gori cites several early instances of the celebration of the festival from the seventh through twelfth centuries, including a dedication in 1177 of the two porphyry columns, still on the exterior of the Baptistery, that the Pisans presented to Florence during a short period of alliance. See Gori, 6-7.

¹¹⁵ San Zanobi was a patron saint of Florence and was also patron to the key, lock, and cauldron-makers. He died on May 25, 428, and his remains were transferred from San Lorenzo to the Duomo on January 26, 433. Kaftal, 1036. See also Chrétien, 23.

¹¹⁶ Santa Reparata was a third-century saint who was martyred on October 8th, is often represented holding a lily. She is a patron saint of Florence, and her remains are located in the Church of SS. Giovanni and Reparata in Lucca. Kaftal, 892.

¹¹⁷ Chronicler Matteo Villani records the earliest palio race as being run on October 8, 405. Luciano Artusi and Silvano Gabbrielli, *Le feste di Firenze* (Rome: Newton Compton Editori, 1991), 184. Loredana Maccabruni writes that the seventeenth-century writer, Scipione Ammirato in his *Istorie Fiorentine* also dates the earliest race to 405, yet she notes that the eighteenth-century historian L.A. Muratori [*Dissertazioni sopra la Antichità italiane*, vol. II, *Dissertazione XXIX* (Munich: Olzati: 1765), 22-23] reject this early date for lack of documentary evidence. See Loredana Maccabruni, “La ‘San Giovanni’ e l’eredità storica della festa. Il palio, gli omaggi, l’offerta,” in Pastori, 198, n.9.

¹¹⁸ However, the Palio of Santa Reparata did not cease, and it is documented in the sixteenth century among the palio races run in Florence. A letter, dated October 13, 1558, asks Grand Duke Cosimo I for permission to re-run the Palio of Santa Reparata. Apparently, due to the bad weather, one of the horses departed from the starting area and never completed the race. The owner of the horse contested the results, and asked for a rematch (which he was subsequently denied!). Lelio Torelli (Captain of Guelph Party) to Grand duke Cosimo I, October 13, 1558, Capitani di Parte Guelfa, Numeri Neri, 706, fol. 234, ASF.

¹¹⁹ Gori in Guasti, 8, cited by Rogers, 614.

¹²⁰ Trexler, 266.

¹²¹ I attended the festival in June of 1992 while a student in the Smith College Junior Year Abroad Program in Italy.

¹²² Artusi and Gabbrielli, 189.

¹²³ One of the Apostles, Bartolommeo was flayed and beheaded on the 24th of August. He is the patron saint of salt, oil, and cheese merchants in Florence. Kaftal, 138.

¹²⁴ San Crescenzo was a sub-deacon of San Zanobi. His feast day is April 19th, and his remains are buried in the Duomo in Florence. Kaftal, 298.

¹²⁵ San Savino was considered Siena's first bishop. In 1058, Sienese Bishop Antifredus obtained the relics of San Crescenzo for the cathedral. The connection between Saint Bartholomew and Siena is not known for sure, although relics of both this saint and Crescenzo may have been conserved in the crypt below the twelfth-century cathedral. Diane Norman, *Siena and the Virgin: Art & Politics in a Late Medieval City State*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1999), 35.

¹²⁶ Sant'Ansano, a noble from the prominent Roman family, the Anicii, was beheaded on December 1, 303 CE on the River Arbia near Siena. He is the apostle and patron saint of Siena, and his relics were transferred to the Siena Cathedral on February 6, 1107. George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting*, 60. A document from 1545 mentions a payment to a certain "Gino dipintore" of ten *lire*, forty *soldi* for the painting in gold of three palio banners, for the feast days of saints Ansano and Iacopo, and for the Assumption feast. Biccherna 365, fol. 32, ASS in Cecchini and Neri, 75, n. 233.

¹²⁷ Siena was not the only city to dedicate a race to the Virgin of the Assumption. A Ferrarese statute of 1287 (CXVII, "Quod in festo sancto Marie de medio augusto currant equi") mentions that eight days prior to the Assumption festival, the podestà of the city was to ask the councilors of the city whether or not to run the palio race that year. See Tebaldi, 10.

¹²⁸ Melissa R. Katz, "Regarding Mary: Women's Lives Reflected in the Virgin's Image," in *Divine Mirrors: the Virgin Mary in the Visual Arts*, Melissa R. Katz, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 96.

¹²⁹ As described in the document, each citizen, organized by their *contrada* or neighborhood, presented a candle to the Cathedral on the eve of the Feast, and on the feast-day itself, communities subject to Siena each presented an elaborate *fogliato*, or leafed candle, to the Cathedral, as well as smaller candles. The document of 1200 (Diplomatico, Opera Metropolitana, ASS) is described by Cecchini and Neri, 15-16 and is reproduced in the original Latin on pp.139-140.

¹³⁰ Cecchini and Neri, 8, also mentioned by Patrizia Turrini, "I Fili della Storia. Contrade e Palio nelle Fonti Documentarie," in Ridolfi et al., 286-287.

¹³¹ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 287. The document (Cecchini cites it as Biccherna 124, fol. 35 ASS, Turrini as Biccherna 124, fols. 186rv, but it appears to be the same document) is reproduced in part as Doc. 18 in "Repertorio Documentario," Ridolfi et al., 521 and in its entirety in Cecchini and Neri, 143-144. It lists expenses relating to the 1310 Festival of the Assumption, including "L libre a Salvi Orlando pelizario, a Lolo zendadaio, per uno paglio di sciamito foderato di vaio el quale si chorse el di di madona santa Maria d'aghosto, mutandosi da Fontebecci a Duomo, e detti denari paghamo sechondo la forma de lo statuto. (fifty *lire* to Savli Orlando the furrier, and to Lolo velvet-maker, for a palio of *sciamito* (?) lined with vairs'

skins, which [the race] is run on the day of Santa Maria in August, from Fontebecci to the Duomo, and this money we pay according to the statute).”

¹³² Cecchini and Neri, 19. A statute of 1262 (Statuti, 2, Dist. I, rub. 3, ASS in Cecchini and Neri, 19, n. 10) in a much older rubric, regulating the procession, ordered that the streets leading to the Campo from the Porta Camollia and Porti di Stalloreggi, be cleared of their low arches to make room for the processions.

¹³³ For more on the history and iconography of San Giorgio, see Visentini, 101-108.

¹³⁴ A transcription of this statute, titled “De cereo dando ecclesie Sancti Georgii in eius vigilia” with Italian translation by W. Montorsi, appears published in Tebaldi. 9.

¹³⁵ The Statute of 1476 is Chapter 41 of Book X of the Statuti Municipali. An Italian translation of this Latin statute appears in Visentini, 33-34.

¹³⁶ In 1476, the horse race was run along the Via Grande from the Borgo of the Contrada of the Pioppa to Castel Tedaldo. The donkey race started at Porta di Sotto and finished at Porta di Gusmaria. The men’s race went from Via San Pietro to Porta di Gusmaria, and the women’s race went for Via S. Maria del Buco to Porta Gusmaria.

¹³⁷ Visentini, 43-45.

¹³⁸ In the same year in which the Piemontese city of Asti revived its palio of its patron saint, San Secondo, Guido Angelo Facchini led the city of Ferrara in establishing the Palio di San Giorgio as an annual occurrence, with all four races run. The race is currently held the third Sunday in May rather than on the Saint’s natal day, in remembrance of the palio run in 1471 to celebrate Borso d’Este’s ascension as Duke of Ferrara. *Notizie Storiche*, Comune di Ferrara, Ente per il Palio, http://www.comune.fe.it/associa/ente_palio/storia.htm.

¹³⁹ Nosari and Canova, 47-48.

¹⁴⁰ “Il libro dei palii vinti dai cavalli di Francesco Gonzaga, 1512-1518,” an illuminated manuscript made for Marchese Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua, records the palio banners won by the Gonzaga horses, including eight palii of San Petronio won in Bologna from 1505 to 1518. See Malacarne, 88-95.

¹⁴¹ Heidi Chrétien devotes pp. 101-123 of her study of Florence’s Festa di San Giovanni Battista on a comparative look at Pistoia’s festival of San Iacopo.

¹⁴² San Zeno was the Bishop of Verona in the fourth century. Kaftal, 1096.

¹⁴³ Nosari and Canova, 33-34.

¹⁴⁴ The three Latin statutes appear reprinted in Gaetano da Re, “I Tre Primi Statuti sulle Corse de’Palii di Verona,” *Rivista critica della Letteratura Italiana* 8, no. 3 (1891): 82-83 (cited by Nosari and Canova). The originals of the first two statutes (the 1271 statute from the volume of Albertini Statutes, and the 1328 one from the Statutes of Cangrande I, ruler of Verona) are in the Biblioteca Campostrini, and the third of 1393 is in the Statutes of Gangaleazzo Visconti, conserved in the Communal Library in Verona.

¹⁴⁵ One was to be twelve *braccia* (around seven meters) high, the second was to be nine *braccia* (5.4 meters). Declaration from Duke Emanuele Filiberto of Savoy of May 20, 1545, Archivio Storico del Comune, Asti, reproduced and summarized in Malfatto, 13.

¹⁴⁶ These prizes appear listed in a payment document conserved in the Archivio Storico of Asti of May 1, 1656 reproduced in Malfatto, 16.

¹⁴⁷ Exhibition handout, exhibition on history of the Palio, September 2004, Palazzo Comunale, Asti, summary and excerpt of document from the Archivio Storico di Asti reprinted from article by Gian Luigi Bera, “Un’importante fonte iconografica per la storia del Palio,” *Il Platano* XXV (2000), II.

¹⁴⁸ Tebaldi, 19-21. Tebaldi cites several passages from the chronicles of Ugo Caleffini, including a passage from 1490 describing the prizes for the foot races.

¹⁴⁹ Cited in Rogers, 647-648. Rogers mentions a letter from Gezi Valdambri to Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena of June 24, 1490, in Fabrizio Cruciani, *Teatro nel Rinascimento, Roma 1450-1550, "Europa delle Corti" Centro studi sulle società di antico Regime, Biblioteca del Cinquecento 22* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1983), 209, that reads “Qui è celebrato san Giovanni egregiamente. Primo fu uno apparato del templo e delle strade superbissimo, con giganti e spiritelli: il giorno il palio di broccato, simile al nostro fiorentino. Furonci tre edifici bellissimi, con la nascita, la morte e la resurrectione di Cristo. La sera una girandola molto bella, e fu raptus Proserpine. Nè anco ci mancò el carro de’ matti, che fu cosa infinitamente voluptuosa; e tutto per opera de’ fiorentini. (Here the festival of San Giovanni is happily celebrated. First was a very splendid *apparato* of a temple and of streets, with giants and phantoms; on the day a brocade palio, similar to ours. There were three very beautiful edifices, with the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. In the evening there was a very pretty fire wheel, and the Rape of Persephone. They weren’t even missing a carro of crazies, that was infinitely voluptuous; and all the work of Florentines).” Rogers also cites an account from 1492 in Pio Paschini, *Roma nel Rinascimento, Storia di Roma 12*, (Bologna, 1940), 444-445.

¹⁵⁰ Nosari and Canova, 23, 28-29.

¹⁵¹ Nosari and Canova, 23. Originally the race went from Porta Mulina to the Piazza San Pietro, finishing in front of the old palace of the Bonacolsi family, which the Gonzaga had defeated. In the fifteenth century, the route of the race was changed so that it started at Porta Sant’Agnese and finished at the church of San Leonardo.

¹⁵² Cavriani, 3 and Malacarne, 9.

¹⁵³ “...Hebbero origine le feste di quest’anno, da un’ Palio che si corse per uso antico il giorno di San Bernardino...” Federigo di Montauto, Governor of Siena to Antonio Serguidi, secretary of the Grand Duke of Florence, August 14, 1581, Archivio Mediceo del Principato 1875, fol. 534, (microform) ASF.

¹⁵⁴ Cecchini and Neri, 57-58. Doc. XV in Cecchini and Neri (p. 160) reproduces a list of horses that ran in this palio race. This included runners owned by Sigismondo d’Este, Lorenzo de Strozzi, Maletesta of Cesena, Isotta di Malestesta of Rimini, Antonio Nanni (nephew of Pope Pius II), and the Cardinal of Colunia (Biccherna 969, fol. 2, ASS).

¹⁵⁵ Domenico Tregiani recounts in verse both the festival held for Saint Catherine in May and the procession and palio race held for the Assumption.

¹⁵⁶ Ingersoll, 101.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 276-277.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 271.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 303-306. Ingersoll cites the diary of a Johan Burchard, *Diarium, Sive Rerum Urbanarum Commentarii, 1483-1506*, L. Thuasne, ed. (Paris: 1883-85) III: 166.

¹⁶⁰ Michel de Montaigne, *Montaigne’s Travel Journal*, Donald M. Frame, ed. (1774; San Francisco: North Point Press, 1983), 82.

¹⁶¹ Deanna Shemek, 25-26.

¹⁶² Apparently Sant'Alo had to shoe a horse that was under the influence of the devil and kicked anyone who came near it. Sant'Alo cut the horse's leg off, put a shoe on it, and re-attached it. George Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting*: 332. Such a scene appears in relief below one of the guild niches on Or San Michele in Florence

¹⁶³ Captain of Guelph Party (Luca Fabroni?) to the Grand Duke of Florence, June 27, 1576, CPG, NN, 735, fol. 207, ASF.

¹⁶⁴ San Pietro Alessandrino, a former bishop of Alexander, was beheaded in 311 CE. He was considered by the Sienese as protector of the city from 1403 to 1500. See Kaftal, 818.

¹⁶⁵ Biccherna 307, fols. 27, 27v, 28, 28v, 30, 35, 38, 46, ASS records expenses for this festival from the year 1424, including payment for the making of a palio banner and for the *asta* (pole) on which it was mounted. Document cited in Cecchini and Neri, 131, n.115.

¹⁶⁶ Dundes and Falassi, 6.

¹⁶⁷ Sansedoni was born in Siena on April 16, 1220 and died in 1286. His remains are buried at the church of San Domenico. He was made protector of Siena for obtaining an interdict from Pope Gregory X for adhering to the Emperor Frederick's party. Kaftal, 30-32.

¹⁶⁸ Waley, 142-146, 165. On the beginning of the Sansedoni palio, Waley cites William Heywood, *Palio and Ponte* (London: 1904), 74-81.

¹⁶⁹ Doc. 113 (dated 1602-1604), Balia 189, fols. 65, 73v, 121v, 127, 172v-173, 204, ASS in "Repertorio Documentario," Ridolfi et al., 540.

¹⁷⁰ Biccherna 340, fols. 164v, 165, 166; Balia 36, fols. 12, ASS in Cecchini and Neri, 64. The race was run from Fontebecci, finishing at the northern gate of Porta Camollia. Biccherna 809, fol. 4, (6), ASS in Cecchini and Neri, 73.

¹⁷¹ Concistoro 959, fol. 26; Biccherna 355 XXV; Balia 86, fol. 2, ASS cited in Cecchini and Neri, 74; n. 215.

¹⁷² Saint James the Greater was beheaded by Herod Agrippa in 42 CE. His feast day is July 25th, the day that his relics were transferred to the church at Compostela, Spain. In Florence, he is the patron saint of furriers. Kaftal, 508-518.

¹⁷³ Concistoro 971, fol. 7v; Balia 94 fol. 92v, Balia 95, fol. 7v, ASS cited in Cecchini and Neri, 74-75, n. 217.

¹⁷⁴ Prior to the construction of the church, Giovanni di Lorenzo painted a banner for the lay confraternity of Saints Iacopo and Cristoforo with the Torre's symbol of the elephant with a tower on its back. Though this banner is now lost, it is recorded as having been kept in the contrada oratory for many years. Patrizia Turrini, "Dal Rinascimento all'Unità d'Italia: Comparse, Stemmi e Bandiere della Contrada della Torre," *Le Comparse della Torre dal Cinquecento al Duemila: Storia, Arte, Immagine*, (Poggibonsi: Carlo Cambi Editore, 2000), 19.

¹⁷⁵ Francesco Maria Ricci, *La Contrada della Torre* (Siena: Consorzio per la Tutela del Palio, 1991), unpaginated.

¹⁷⁶ This bell is decorated with the oldest datable image of the Torre's symbol - an elephant with a tower on its back - as well as with the image of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, under whose protection the

Sieneſe won the battle. F. Bisogni, *Del cataletto di Sant'Onofrio oſſia di Bartolomeo di David*, in *Scritti di ſtoria dell'arte in onore di Federico Zeri* (Milan: 1984), 386-387 cited in M. Ridolfi, M. Ciampolini, and P. Turrini, "Atlante Storico Iconografico," *L'Immagine del Palio*, 321. For more on the Torre bell, ſee Turrini, "Stemmi e Bandiere della Contrada della Torre," 19. Photos of the emblems on the bell are reproduced in "Atlante Storico Iconografico," Ridolfi et al., 321.

¹⁷⁷ Vincenzo Borghini records that two hundred thousand were killed. Borghini, *Dell'Origine di Firenze, Discorsi di Monsignor D. Vincenzo Borghini con annotazioni, Parte prima* (1584; Florence: Pietro Gaetano Viviani, 1755), 185.

¹⁷⁸ Borghini, *Dell'Origine di Firenze*, 186.

¹⁷⁹ Chiari, *Priorista*, fols.167rv.

¹⁸⁰ Concistoro 977; Balia 97 fols. 102, 133, 147, Balia 98, fol. 3, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 75, n. 218.

¹⁸¹ Turini, in Ridolfi et al., 290.

¹⁸² Visentini, 31.

¹⁸³ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 291. The race occurred on the Feaſt of San Bonaventura, which was on the Grand Duke's birthday. Deſcribed in Doc. 124, "Repertorio Documentario," Ridolfi et al., 541.

¹⁸⁴ "Laſſando un pocò da parte le materie arabiche, che havranno forſe gia molti giorni coſi infaſtedito V.S. nell'udirle, come me nello ſcriverLe paſſarò in raccontar qualche piccola parte della feſta il che ſi prépara in Siena il giorno dell'Assunta, per meſcolar le coſe alte con le baſſe, ce le ridicole con le gravi et abollir queſta Commedia con qualche piacevole intermedio." Montauto to Serguidi, Auguſt 14, 1581, AM 1875, 534, ASF.

¹⁸⁵ Cecchini and Neri, 15-16. The document that Cecchini cites about the feſtival of the Aſſumption of 1200 in Siena, diſcuſſed earlier in this chapter, ſpecifies a fine of twenty *ſoldi* for thoſe citizens who did not take part in the offering of candles. Chrétien (p. 37) notes that the Florentine citizens were alſo compelled by law to participate in the offertory ceremony or a fine was levied.

¹⁸⁶ For Florence's Feſtival of San Giovanni, there was traditionally alſo a proceſſion of the clergy on the morning of the 23rd, ſeparate from the *offerta* preſented in the evening. By the ſixteenth century, there was a proceſſion of clergy on each of the three days leading up to the feaſt day itſelf. See Trexler, 249. Chronicler Matteo Palmieri mentions that in 1454, the confraternities' proceſſions were moved back to the morning of the 22nd, but at ſome point, it appears to have ſhifted back to the 23rd. See Palmieri, in Guaſti, 21.

¹⁸⁷ Trexler outlines the proceſſion route on pp. 250-251.

¹⁸⁸ A Greek obſerver obſerved "hermits with beards, [who] walked with wooden feet on high (...*Ma imitavano pure gli Eremiti colle barbe; e camminavano co'piedi di legno in alto...*)". The viſitor attended the Council of Florence in 1439, where there was an attempt to unify the Orthodox Church with the Catholic Church. Chrétien (p. 35) mentions this writer, whoſe account is reprinted in Guaſti, 19-20, taken from Giovanni Lami, *Codices manuſcripti Bibliothecae Regii Taurinensis Athenaci per linguas digeſti et binas in partes diſtributi...Taurini 1749, ex typografia Regia, Nouvelle Letterarie pubblicate in Firenze l'anno 1754* (Florence, 1754), columns 177-179.

¹⁸⁹ See Giorgio Vaſari, "Life of Cecca, Engineer of Florence," *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, Gaſton du C. de Vere, trans., *Everyman's Library* vol. 129 (1912; London: David Campbell Publishers, 1996), I: 499-506. The excerpt in Italian appears in Guaſti, 58-63.

¹⁹⁰ The Florentine *braccio* measured about 58.36 centimeters. See Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence: An Economic and Social History*, xv.

¹⁹¹ Dati, in Guasti, 5.

¹⁹² Rogers, 217.

¹⁹³ Matteo Palmieri, in his description of the Festival of 1454, uses the term *edifizi* to refer to the representations of the confraternities. Chrétien refers to Palmieri's description on pp. 35-36. For the text of Palmieri's description, see Guasti, 20-23.

¹⁹⁴ Lami, *Codices manuscripti Bibliothecae ...* in Guasti, 19-20.

¹⁹⁵ "Poi ne seguiva il Trionfo d.llo Spirito Santo, il quale era un caro coperto da una nugola, e sopravi una palla grande bianca co colomba: la qual nugola era coronata da questi Angeli, cioè dall'Angelo Raffaello con vase in mano d'Alabastro, & otto tra Angeli, Archangeli, & Principati, che tra tutti nove figuravano nove chori, & le tre Terarchie, tutti vestiti di drappi, & oro, di diversi colori." *Descrizione de' Trionfi Mandati per I Giovani della Compagnia di San Bastiano nella procession di San Giovambattista nell'Inclita Città di Fiorenza. Il dì xxiii. di Giugno. 1576* (Florence: John Wolf, 1576), 3v, BCNF.

¹⁹⁶ Chrétien, 33-37. See also Dati in Guasti, 5. During the reign of Walter of Brienne, Duke of Athens, in the mid-fourteenth century, citizens presented their offerings organized by guild instead of gonfalone. After the expulsion of the Duke of Athens, the ordering was switched back to gonfalone. See Trexler, 221-222. Palmieri notes that in 1454, the confraternities and clergy processed on the morning of the 23rd, and the offerings of the Signoria and the sixteen gonfaloni and their confraternities took place in the evening. See Palmieri in Guasti, 23.

¹⁹⁷ Passage describing April 23, 1476, in Bernardino Zambotto, "Diario Ferrarese," excerpted in Tebaldi, 29. Zambotto notes that in this year, the *barberi* were not presented.

¹⁹⁸ Cecchini and Neri, 19.

¹⁹⁹ The *fogliati* would remain on the high altar for a year. Cecchini and Neri, 16.

²⁰⁰ Deliberations of the Concistoro of August 14, 1581, Concistoro 1281, fol. 17, ASS.

²⁰¹ Civai and Toti, *The Race of the Soul* (English edition), (Siena: Edizioni Alsaba, 2002), 49.

²⁰² Solemn masses would occur throughout the feast day, often in the city's cathedral, and civic officials were often in attendance. The Concistoro heard Mass in the Duomo of Siena on August 15, 1581. See Deliberations of the Concistoro of August 15, 1581, Concistoro 1281, fol. 17v, ASS. In Florence, masses occurred throughout the San Giovanni festivities, following each procession, and at three fixed times daily, in the cathedral of Santa Maria del Fiore. There were three Masses held on the feast day: at Midnight, dawn, and in the evening. Chrétien, 46.

²⁰³ Cecchino Cartaio, Aii.

²⁰⁴ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 288.

²⁰⁵ For more on the Festival of San Giovanni Battista, see Trexler, 240-270.

²⁰⁶ For more on the use of these *ceri* in the San Giovanni festival, see Paola Giorgi, "I *ceri* di San Giovanni," in Pastori, 69-79.

²⁰⁷ Zanobi Perini, "La Festa di Santo Giovanni Batista Che si Fa a Firenze," reprinted in Guasti, 9-17, from *I Manoscritti della Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, descritti da una società di studiosi* (Florence: Carnesecchi, 1881), II: 283.

²⁰⁸ This statute of 1337, from Statuti 26, Dist. 1, fol. 7v, ASS is reproduced as Document 7 in Cecchini and Neri, 147-150.

²⁰⁹ Balia 1103, ASS.

²¹⁰ "I Ceri soprascritti, che paiono torri d'oro, sono I censi delle Terre più antiche de' Fiorentini," Dati, in Guasti, 6.

²¹¹ "Sono intorno al gran piazza cento torri, che paiono d'oro; portate con carrette, e quali con portatori; che si chiamano Ceri, fatti di legname, di carta e di cera, con oro e con colori e con figure rivelate, vuoti drento; e drento vi stanno uomini che fanno volgere di continuo e girare intorno quelle figure." Dati, reprinted in Rogers, 619 and in Guasti, 6.

²¹² Pirolò, in Pastori, 85. Cambi's writings are conserved in *filza 375*, fol. 69, Carte Stroziane, ASF and this particular excerpt on the *ceri* appears in Guasti, 49.

²¹³ Thank you to Maria Day for bringing this to my attention.

²¹⁴ Chrétien, 39 and Cambi in Guasti, 49.

²¹⁵ "...Poi seguono I detti Palii, portati a uno a uno da un uomo a cavallo (quale uomo ha il cavallo covertato di seta, e quale no, come sono per nome chiamati: e vannosi a offerere alla chiesa di San Giovanni. E questi Palii si danno per tributo delle Terre acquistate dal Comune di Firenze e di loro Raccomandati da un certo temo in qua." Dati, in Guasti, 6.

²¹⁶ As part of the resolution of a conflict in 1386, the government of Florence required that the Count of Urbino present a palio banner worth one hundred florins for the Festival of San Giovanni Battista. "E deba ogni ano per sancto Giovanni oferare uno palio di fiorini cento d'oro, di sciamito, e uno chavallo chovertto di drappo vermiglio di fiorini cento d'oro." Anonymous, *Alle bocche della piazza: Diario di Anonimo Fiorentino (1382-1401)* (BNF, *Panciaticiano*, 158), Anthony Molho and Frank Sznura, ed. (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1986), 63.

²¹⁷ Chrétien interprets this cycle of paintings of the San Giovanni festival, painted around 1562, as emphasizing Cosimo I's absolute authority, using the festival for his own means of self-aggrandizement. Cosimo I chose to omit depictions of more traditional "Republican" aspects of the festival, such as the horse race. See Chrétien, 82-95. Giorgi notes that the *ceri* were collected and transported on various devices, known as *castelli*, *torretti*, or *barrelle*. See Giorgi in Pastori, 78.

²¹⁸ Schevill, 153.

²¹⁹ Pastori, 109-113, figs. 15-19.

²²⁰ Chiari, fols. 12, 36, 36v, 37, 37v.

²²¹ Roberto Ciabani, *Firenze: di Gonfalone in Gonfalone* (Florence: Edizioni della Meridiana, 1998), 164-165.

²²² Trexler, 260-261. Trexler bases his description on the order outlined by the chronicler, Matteo Palmieri, in 1454, which is the following: Parte Guelfa, palii, *ceri* of wood, *ceri* (lit candles), Zecca, prisoners, horses, Palio of San Giovanni, and the Signori of the Florentine government. Palmieri, in Guasti, 21-23.

²²³ Chiari, fol. 11v.

²²⁴ The palio banner may have been paraded through the city in the days prior to the race, since Matteo Palmieri recounts that a day was crushed in Prato ad Ognissanti (where the start of the race was) on June 17, 1467. Cited by Rogers, 632 and in Trexler, 240, n. 87, from Palmieri, *Historia Fiorentina*, ed. G. Scaramella, *RIS*, pt. 1, 185.

²²⁵ The object file records in the Bargello Museum in Florence mention that G. De Nicola identified the coats-of-arms on the *cassone* as being those of the Fini and Aldobrandini families. Giacomo di Berto Fini and Giacomina di Filippo Aldobrandini were married in 1417/1418, and De Nicola proved by identifying the coats-of-arms that the *cassone* was made for their marriage. See G. De Nicola, "Notes on the Museo Nazionale of Florence-VII," *Burlington Magazine* XXXII (1918): 218.

As to the attribution of the *cassone*, the object file mentions that De Nicola attributed it to Rosello di Jacopo Franchi, an attribution refuted by Schubring, *Cassoni* (Leipzig, 1923) and R. Van Marle, *The Development of Italian Schools of Painting IX* (The Hague, 1931), 100, but L. Bellosi ["Il Maestro della Crocifissione Griggs: Giovanni Toscani," *Paragone* 17 (1966), 54], E.P. Pillsbury [*Florentine Art in the Cleveland Collection – Florence and the Arts – Five Centuries of Patronage* (Cleveland Museum of Art, 1971), 4], and R. Freemantle [*Gothic Painters* (London, 1975), 496] all support the attribution to Toscani.

²²⁶ According to the museum's records, the *cassone* was restored in 1970 by Arretini and Fossati. There is significant paint loss particularly on the tribute banners, and the section to the left of the façade, colored in red, appears to have been painted over.

²²⁷ "...e sono di velluto doppi, quale di vaio, quale di drappo di seta; gli altri tutti sono di velluto o d'altri drappi o taffetà listrati di seta: che pare una maravigliosa cosa a vedere."

²²⁸ I have tried to match up these insignia with the coats-of-arms of various subject cities and towns illustrated in the *Priorista* manuscript in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence. The banner with the checkered cloth may be that of Pistoia, whose arms in the manuscript are checkered. Unfortunately, there are many insignia that have features in common (such as the rampant goat), so I need to do further research on these before coming up with definitive identifications.

²²⁹ I discuss the identification of these in more detail in Chapter 4. We know that the palio banner was included in this offering ceremony, as Matteo Palmieri mentioned in his *Historia Fiorentina* for the year 1454 that the banner was second-to-last in order of presentation to the Baptistery. See Palmieri in Guasti, 20-23, also cited in Rogers, 625-629.

²³⁰ Ciabini, *Firenze di Gonfaloni in Gonfaloni*, 55. I have seen remnants of this façade in the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Florence, including a figure of the reclining Virgin which once adorned the lunette. The façade was dismantled in 1587.

²³¹ Rogers, 216. See also Chrétien, 66.

²³² This is not entirely true, as Luca Landucci recorded that the canopy ripped during a thunderstorm on June 24, 1488, and as a result of the bad weather, the palio was not run. See Luca Landucci, *Diario fiorentino del 1450 al 1516*, (Florence: Ed. del Badia, 1883), 55, also cited and excerpted in Rogers, 638.

²³³ Vasari, 502-503.

²³⁴ This identification is offered in the Bargello's curatorial file on the work. Cities often employed jesters or clowns to perform during feast days; one is also visible in the foreground of the Uffizi painting of the *Offerta*.

²³⁵ Vincenzo Borghini, *Della moneta fiorentina, Discorsi*, 215.

²³⁶ Dati, in Guasti, 84-89; in Rogers, 619.

²³⁷ In 1324, the Arte de' Mercanti, one of the city's guilds, constructed a *ballatoio* (railing gallery) in the Baptistery to hold the palii and other offerings presented. Guasti, 18, cited by Rogers, 614-615. An anonymous chronicle describes how on January 21, 1389, a Siense priest stole the banners, the "drappo", a cross, and other items from the Baptistery, but these items were discovered the next day and returned the next day. See *Alle bocche della piazza*, 82.

²³⁸ After 1484, *ceri* and palii were no longer brought into the Baptistery. See Pirolo, in Pastori, 85. Luca Landucci noted in October 1484 that the Baptistery was cleared of offerings, in order to clean up the interior: "E in questo di', si cavò di San Giovanni e ceri e palii, e ordinorono che non vi stessino più. Feciolo nettare tutto, e ch'egli stessi così semplice senza quelle frasche; che prima vi si poneva tutta l'offerta di ceri e di palii, in modo che non si vedeva." Landucci, 49. Rogers includes in an appendix on pp. 636-637 a passage from Alamanno Rinuccini's *Ricordi storici* (translated from Guasti, *Le feste di San Giovanni Batista*, 18-19) from June 25, 1484, recording that "the signori of the Balia, ordaining that all the *ceri* and palii that had been given by the subjects of the Comune of Florence as *censo* to the church, and into which they had been placed, because it was judged that they comprised and occupied a great part of the beautiful church, they ought to be removed and put in another place, and likewise to have removed the many panels and pictures that had been placed on the columns or pilasters of the church..."

²³⁹ Paolo Pastori, "Le Feste Patronali fra Mito delle Origini, Sviluppo Storico e Adattamenti Ludico-Spettacolari," in Pastori, 20.

²⁴⁰ "Si faccia intendere a Ascanio Ballarini deputato che faccia levar la rena, o terra che è dalle stalle a piazza manetti, e la metta nella strada dove si deve correre, tutto d'ordine dell' Ill^{mo}." Entry of August 11, 1592, Balia 186, fol. 181, ASS.

²⁴¹ Entry of February 29, 1599, CPG, NN, fol. 170v, ASF.

²⁴² Dati, in Guasti, 8.

²⁴³ The race originally started in front of the Church of the Ognissanti, but was later moved further out to Porta al Prato.

²⁴⁴ Lelio Torelli to Cosimo I, October 17, 1558, CPG, NN, 706, fol. 234, ASF.

²⁴⁵ **The phrase giunse al palio (reached the Palio) appears in correspondence and chronicles to describe the winning of the palio race. For example, this phrase appears in a letter from Lelio Torelli to Cosimo I of October 17, 1558 describing a dispute over who had won the Palio of Santa Reparata (CPG, NN, 706, fol. 234, ASF).**

²⁴⁶ This detail comes from an *ex-voto* image in the Confraternity of the Santissima Trinità in Asti. In Siena, rules for the Assumption palio in Siena in 1592 mention the placement of a *filo* (thread) to mark the finish in the Piazza of the Duomo. Dati mentioned of the finish of the Palio of San Giovanni that "whoever reaches the palio gets it." Rogers, 621 from Dati, 84-89.

²⁴⁷ Landucci, 50: "Un altro anno, pure a Siena, gli fu fatto maggiore villania: che andando inanzi el cavallo di Costanzo un gittare di balestro, e giunto al palio, scalvacò e sali in sul palio. E giunse poi uno altro cavallo; e dissono che quello di Costanzo non aveva passato el palio, e che quell'altro l'aveva passato. E pero' lo dettono a quell'altro." The episode is mentioned by Mallett, 259.

²⁴⁸ "In caso che due barbari arrivasseno al filo in un medesimo punto devin correr di nuovo tutti," Rule from "Capitoli da osservarsi da quelli li quali vorranno correre con barbaro al Palio del Assunta nella Citta di Siena quest'anno 1592," Balia 830, fol. 37, ASS, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 164.

²⁴⁹ In late fourteenth century Siena, the palio banner was sometimes given back to the Biccherna following the race. See Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 288.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 288. Turrini cites a document (Consiglio generale 198, fol. 55, ASS; cited as Doc. 42, “Repertorio documentario,” Ridolfi et al., 525) that mentions the old custom of the victor of the Palio of the Assunta presenting 7 ½ *fiorini* to the Cathedral, to the carrier of the palio, to the family of the Signori, to the trumpeters, and to the custodians of the Biccherna. The victor in the palio of Sant’Ambrogio presented 4 ½ *fiorini* to the Basilica of San Domenico in Camporegio and to the other entities listed above. The Consiglio generale, on recommendation of the Biccherna, established that these required payments be lowered.

²⁵¹ Ciabani, *Firenze di Gonfaloni in Gonfaloni*, 7, 71-72.

²⁵² “...tirato da due cavalli covertati, col segno del Comune loro, e due garzoni che gli cavalcano e guidano.” Dati, in Guasti. 8.

²⁵³ Originally, the Florentine symbol of the comune was a white lily on a red background, but when the Guelph Party took over from the Ghibellines in the thirteenth century, they reversed the colors of the insignia and adopted it as their own to distinguish themselves from their rivals. The city henceforth used the insignia of the red lily against a white background. See Artusi, “Le insegne della città,” in Pastori, 61-67.

²⁵⁴ One early example, from 1425, includes a payment to “Leonardo Andrea tubbettus comune florentiae and for pennone facte et habite de mense Junii... in festo beati johannio batista (to Leonardo Andrea trumpeter of the comune of Florence and for pennants and costumes made for the month of June...in the festival of Saint John the Baptist).” “Exitus iunii et iulii generalis MCCCCXXV (1 June – 1 January 1425),” Camera del Comune, Camarlinghi Uscita 381, unnumbered page, ASF.

²⁵⁵ I have not been able to figure out what objects they are holding and in what activity they are engaged.

²⁵⁶ Shemek, 17-44.

²⁵⁷ I discuss jockeys in more detail in Chapter Five.

²⁵⁸ “...che dopo il corso di palii i vincitori se ne vanno triofando per tutto, visitando le contrade piu amiche, e tenendo quasi corte bandità, de vini, e tavolacci...” Federigo di Montauto, Governor of Siena to Antonio Serguidi (Secretary to the Grand Duke of Florence), August 14, 1581, Archiveo Mediceo del Principato 1875, fol. 534 (microfilm).

²⁵⁹ Entry of 1602, in Mario Ascheri, Alberto Cornice, Emilio Ricceri, and Armando Santini, *Memorie della Compagnia di San Salvatore Contrada dell'Onda Siena (1524-1764)*, *Fonti di Storia Senese* (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 2004), 38-39 (24r).

²⁶⁰ In Siena, prisoners were often freed in association with the Palio, and took part in the presentation of candles to the Duomo. See Cecchini and Neri, 37. Chrétien (p.40) mentions that prisoners in Florence were often released following the presentation of the Carro della Zecca to the Baptistery.

²⁶¹ Cecchini and Neri, 85. Cecchini cites two unspecified letters of 1581 by Federigo di Montauto, the governor of Siena, in the ASF’s Archivio Mediceo del Principato. I have located both of these letters, the one of August 14th mentioned above, in the AMP 1875, 534-535, the other dated August 16th, on p. 524 of the same microfilm reel. The Drago contrada was allowed to release a prisoner, and the Oca and Lupa *contrade* were selected to give dowries to two girls. The release of prisoners and presentation of dowries is also alluded to in Tregiani’s verse describing the festivities.

²⁶² "...aggiuntovi un ricco premio la dote similmente di due fanciulle che si trarranno a sorte delle nominate dalle contrade et il ricatto di dua prigioni." Montauto to Serguidi, August 14, 1581, AMP 1875, fol. 534 ASF (microform). The dowries, of 30 florins apiece, were given to girls from the Oca and Lupa. Montauto to Serguidi, August 16, 1581, AMP 1875, fol. 524, ASF (microform).

²⁶³ Tregiani, fol. 12.

²⁶⁴ Tregiani, fol. 43v.

²⁶⁵ In the deliberations of the Onda Contrada from 1576 to 1665, there are numerous mention of problems with prostitutes. Members of the Onda Contrada complained about the prostitution and bad language that was corrupting young people attending religious classes in the neighborhood, and petitioned the governor of Siena to pass laws restricting the prostitutes to the Salicotto neighborhood. Those renting apartments to prostitutes outside of this area could be fined as much as twenty-five *scudi*. Ascheri et al., 18-19, 93-103. One can still see today affixed to the wall of the Torre di Mangia a plaque from the seventeenth century mentioning the Granducal ban.

²⁶⁶ Chrétien, 32-33. Chrétien notes that by the sixteenth century, the *mostra* was often pushed back to June 20 or 21st. Cambi notes that the *mostra* of 1454 occurred on the 21st. See Cambi in Guasti, 20-21. The *mostra* is also mentioned by Dati in his *Istoria di Firenze* as occurring on June 23rd. See Rogers, 618 and Guasti, 5.

²⁶⁷ Perini, in Guasti, 10-11.

²⁶⁸ Trexler, 269.

²⁶⁹ Mention of the *provveditori* in Sienese documents appears as early as 1368. Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 288; Cecchini and Neri, 37.

²⁷⁰ "Lo Generale Consilio de la Campana et de L. per Terzo de la radota del comune di Siena fue in concordia, volve, stantiò, fermò et riformò...che si faccia festa et allegrezza ad onore et reverentia di Dio et de la beata vergine Maria ne la città di Siena, secondo che di volontà de l'officio de li signori Nove procederà et a loro parrà che si convenga. El quale palio li signori camarlengo et IIII. Provveditori del comune di Siena de la pecunia del detto Comune, senza alcuna altra provisione o vero stantimento comprare sieno tenuti et debiano con effecto." From "Di correre el paio ne la festa di sancta Maria del mese d'agosto," Statuti 19, Dist. I, Rubr. 586, ASS, reproduced as Document III in Cecchini and Neri, 142.

²⁷¹ Cecchini, 28. This statute, from Statuti 26, Dist. 1, fol. 7v, ASS is reproduced as Document 7 in Cecchini and Neri, 147-150.

²⁷² Concistoro 390, fol. 9, ASS mentioned by Cecchini and Neri, 49.

²⁷³ Deliberations of the Concistoro of July 14, 1581, Concistoro 1281, fol. 8, ASS.

²⁷⁴ Balia 830 fol. 37, ASS reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 164-165. Balia 830 contains a number of lists of regulations on the Palio of the Assumption from previous and subsequent runnings: 1590 (fol. 14), 1591 (fol. 35), 1593 (fol. 52), 1594 (fol. 63), 1595 (fol. 79), 1610 (fol. 43), and 1612 (fol. 44). The regulations remain similar from year to year, but the fact that they are restated points to the Balia's desire to maintain control over the running of the race.

²⁷⁵ In Florence, expenses are found in the exit ledgers of the Camera del Comune, the accounting office of the Florentine Republic. From a limited survey of account ledgers I have looked at prior to the Granducal period, I have found payments expenses for the Palio of San Giovanni from the following years: Camera del Comune, Notaio di Camera, Entrata e Uscita 15 (1464-1465, 65 (1487), CC NC EU 94 (1489). and CC NC EU 116 (1516), ASF.

²⁷⁶ Chrétien, 46.

²⁷⁷ “Addi 2 di Gennaio 1560... eletti festaiuoli di S. Giovanni per il perdono nominati per Andrea da Ricasoli e Andrea amadori,” Entry of January 2, 1560, “Giornale delle Faccende cotidiane del Cosolato dell'Arte de Mercantanti della citta di Firenze cominciato il di 5 del mese di Maggio MDLVIII ? [to 8 Sept. 1569],” Arte di Calimala 61, fol. 13, ASF.

²⁷⁸ This expense book, which is in the Archivio di Stato in Florence, is reproduced in Guasti, 50-58.

²⁷⁹ Cecchini and Neri, 46, 56-57.

²⁸⁰ Maccabruni cites a letter from Bartolomeo Concini to Luca Fabbroni of June 4, 1563, CPG, NN, 714, fol. 135 I, ASF. See Maccabruni, in Pastori, 199, n.15.

²⁸¹ Ciabani, *Firenze: di Gonfalone in Gonfalone*, 18.

²⁸² Luciano Artusi, “Le insegne della città,” in Pastori, 66.

²⁸³ Diane Finiello Zervas, *The Parte Guelfa, Brunelleschi & Donatello* (Locust Valley, NY: J.J. Augustin, Publisher, 1987), 59.

²⁸⁴ Maccabruni in Pastori, 199, n. 15. Maccabruni cites the Statute of 1335, Capitani di Parte Guelfa, Numeri Rossi 2, fol. 25v, ASF and mentions that the entire statute is reproduced by Francesco Bonaini, *Giornale Storico degli Archivi toscani* I (1857): 1-39.

²⁸⁵ On July 1, 1387, the Guelph Party presented several gifts to Bardo Mancini, who had served two months as Gonfaloniere of Justice, including a horse worth eighty florins with a covering bearing the arms of the Party, a lance, a shield, a helmet, and a cup. See *Alle bocche della piazza*, 74. The same account, on p. 101, mentions that the government of Florence and the Guelph Party each gave the Marquis of Ferrara two horses covered in scarlet as a gift during his visit of March 1391.

²⁸⁶ On February 8, 1386, the Guelph Party was one of three brigades that paraded through the city to mark the coronation of King Charles as King of Hungary. Their horses were covered with white drapes decorated with gold and purple angels, each holding a crown in hand. See *Alle bocche della piazza*, 61-62.

²⁸⁷ Trexler, 232.

²⁸⁸ The payment document mentions payment of twenty florins, four *denari* to a Nerio Cecchi Massario for “factura palii San Bernabo facti de mese junii ani 11 per anno 1422.” [Manufacture of the palio of San Bernabo for the 11 of June 1422]. “Exitus Generalis d’Mensi Junii et Julii. MCCCCXXII [June 1- July 31, 1422],” Camera del Comune, Camarlinghi Uscita, 376, fol. 3, ASF. San Barnaba was martyred by being burned at the stake. He was one of the seventy-two original disciples and may have been a relative of San Marco. His relics are in the Duomo in Florence. Kaftal, 25, 130.

²⁹⁰ “Risucitano un poco questo populo, abiano noi a diventare tutti frati?” in Landucci, 152.

²⁹¹ San Vittorio, who was martyred on July 28, 197, fixed the day of the celebration of Easter. His cult was popular in Florence. Kaftal, 1012.

²⁹² Zervas, 51. This race was still being run in 1555, as attests a letter from a Lelio T. to Grand Duke Cosimo I, July 11, 1556, CPG, NN 704, fol. 146, ASF.

²⁹³ Lelio Torelli to Grand duke Cosimo I, July 16, 1556, CPG, NN 704, fols.146, ASF; Torelli to Cosimo I, October 17, 1558, CPG, NN 706, fol. 234, ASF; Torelli to Cosimo I, May 13, 1560, CPG, NN 709, fol. 62,

ASF; Captain of the Parte Guelfa [Jacopo Danii ?] to Cosimo I, June 3, 1573, CPG, NN 729, fol. 123, ASF; Captain of the Parte Guelfa [Luca Fabroni?] to Cosimo I, June 27, 1576, CPG, NN 735, fol. 207, ASF.

²⁹⁴ Torelli to Cosimo I, May 13, 1560, CPG, NN 709, fol. 62, ASF.

²⁹⁵ “On October 13, 1558, the horses were awaiting the sound of the trumpet to start, when the mare suddenly ran off and did not return. After waiting a half hour in the rainy weather, the starter made the decision to send the three remaining horses on their way. The race was won by a Pistoian by the name of Niccolo Duzetti, but since the owner of the mare contested the unfairness of the race, Duzetti was not allowed to claim the palio, and it was kept in the Palazzo of the Parte.” Torelli to Cosimo I, October 17, 1558, CPG, NN 706, fol. 234, ASF.

²⁹⁶ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 260.

²⁹⁷ Each *compagnia* was headed by a *gonfaloniere* (standard bearer), and was divided into groups of 100 men, commanded by centurions. All the men in the contrada between the ages of eighteen to seventy joined the *compagnia*. Cecchini and Neri, 10-11.

²⁹⁸ In the early fifteenth century, the term *contrada* is often used interchangeably with *compagnia* and *schiera*.

²⁹⁹ “Et syndici contratarum civitatis Senarum teneantur invenire omnes cives et habitatores predictos sue contrate et specialiter cives forenses qui non venerint ad dictum festum et denunciare potestati.” Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 261. Turrini cites a document from the end of the thirteenth century is a copy of a preexisting statute dating from September 1200, in Diplomatico, Opera metropolitana, Archivio di Stato, Siena. Document 13, Statute of September 1200, Diplomatico, Opera metropolitana, ASS in “Reportorio Documentario,” Ridolfi et al., 521. The document is also reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 139-140.

³⁰⁰ “...quando questi Uomini non potevano resistere a girare saltavano dentro alla Tinozza per non essere strucinati da quell’inveleniti Tori, e dopo aver preso breve riposo tornavano a giostrare come prima.” (fol. 21v) “Relazione Delle Rapresentanze,” fols. 20v-21v.

³⁰¹ Brief summaries of Cecchino’s text are given as Doc. 94, “Reportorio documentario,” Ridolfi et al., 537 and on pp. 88-92 of Cecchini and Neri, and also in Marco Ciampolini/Sonia Corsi, “Reportorio delle Principali Feste delle Contrade nei Secoli XVI-XIX,” in Ridolfi et al., 219-221.

³⁰² This book of deliberations, “Registro dei quattro provveditori della festa, agosto 1546,” Balia 132 in the Archivio di Stato of Siena, has recently been published as Appendix IV in Savelli and Vigni, 265-287. I have also looked at the original document. Giovanni Mazzini has also analyzed this document in “Organizzazione e Radicamento delle Contrade nella Partecipazione alle Cacce del Toro,” in Ridolfi et al., 306-315.

³⁰³ Grassi, I: 11.

³⁰⁴ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 276-277 and Grassi, I: 15.

³⁰⁵ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 275. The first to build its own oratory was the Contrada of the Oca between 1464 and 1470. Grassi, I: 15-16. The Oca constructed the oratory in Fontebranda, on the site of the former home and wool-dying shop of the Benincasa family, following the canonization of Caterina Benincasa (Catherine of Siena) in 1461. The Onda Contrada constructed its oratory of San Salvatore in 1589. Turrini (p. 25) gives the date of the Oca’s oratory as 1464.

³⁰⁶ Cecchini and Neri, 14-15. Documents mention other *contrade*, such as the Leone (lion) and Vipera (viper). But these so-called “suppressed *contrade*” which are represented in the procession before the modern palio, were most likely sub-groups of one of the seventeen *contrade*. Grassi, I: 12.

³⁰⁷ *Lionfante* appears in documents as one term for the Torre contrada, a variation on the word *elefante*, or elephant.

³⁰⁸ In some documents, the Selva contrada is called *Rinoceronte*, or rhinoceros.

³⁰⁹ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 271-273. Turanni mentioned a giraffe given to Lorenzo de' Medici in 1487 by the Sultan of Egypt, Chajah Bey, illustrated in the manuscript of Sigismondo Tizio's *Historiarum Senensium*, Biblioteca Comunale Siena, MS. B.III.11, fol. 210.

³¹⁰ Tartuca was among the *contrade* that participated in a bull fight of 1516. "Relazione Delle Rapresentanze," fol. 21v.

³¹¹ Vincenzo Rustici, who did not witness the 1546 event, painted the scene later based upon Cecchino's description.

³¹² Grassi, I: 7.

³¹³ A transcription of the seventeenth-century documents was published by the Contrada dell'Onda in 1999. Contrada Capitana dell'Onda, *Libro secondo di deliberazioni 1604-1673*, Simonetta Losi, ed. *I Quarderni dell'Onda*, vol. 3 (Siena: Betti Editrice, 1999). According to Armando Santini, archivist of the Onda, the sixteenth century documents are currently being transcribed and edited, and will appear in print sometime in 2004.

³¹⁴ In the deliberations of June 20, 1605, members of the contrada discuss establishing and naming a Compagnia for the Contrada dell'Onda so that their chapel may issue indulgences. CCO, *Libro secondo*, 24.

³¹⁵ Mario Ascheri, Preface, Contrada Capitana dell'Onda, *Lo Statuto della Compagnia di San Salvatore nella Contrada dell'Onda (1612) e altri documenti*, Armando Santini, ed., *I Quarderni dell'Onda*, vol. 4 (Siena: Betti Editrice, 2003): 12-13.

³¹⁶ CCO, *Lo Statuto*, 27-28.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 37.

³¹⁸ "...non possa quelle appigionare né alluogare a persone che non sieno di buona e honesta vita." *Ibid.*, 35.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

³²⁰ For example, the entry of June 22, 1652 mentions selecting by vote a *Priora* (Prioress) among four women candidates. CCO, 89-80.

³²¹ Censuses of the Contrada dell'Onda from 1672 and 1670 appear in *Lo Statuto*.

³²² Hook, 194-195.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 198-199.

³²⁴ Civai and Toti 52.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 57. Also, Concistoro 1144, fol. 10, ASS, cited by Alessandra Gianni, "Araldica e allegoria nel drappellone," in Ridolfi et al., 132 and also by Cecchini and Neri, 81.

³²⁶ “S. Alt. ha fatto vedere il conto di questi Palii di Firenze che sono di tela d’oro, e non arrivano a cento scudi, non dimeno si contenta che per il suddetto si possa spender fino al cento trenta che costavano questi trombetti tamburini e musici e dice che cosi si faccia.” Balia 186, fol. 44, ASS, cited by Cecchini and Neri, 85.

³²⁷ Montaigne, 68-69.

³²⁸ A list of horses entered in the Palio of the Assumption of August 15, 1592 include this entry: “Del signor Lorenzo Lorenzetti da Orbatello, per la Contrada dell’Oca, leardo scuro col fanciullo sopra. (Of Signor Lorenzo Lorenzetti of Orbatello, for the contrada of the Oca, a dark gray with a jockey aboard).” Balia 830, fol. 41, ASS in Cecchini and Neri, 164-165.

³²⁹ The *asinate* involved riding donkeys around the Campo with opponents trying to unseat the riders. Heywood, 156-161, cited by Dundes and Falassi, 4-5.

³³⁰ Entry of August 15, 1641, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 75-76.

³³¹ Cited in “Repertorio delle principali feste...,” Ridolfi et al., 222-223 and mentioned in Tregiani, fols. 12-20v.

³³² Turrini, “Dal Rinascimento all’Unita d’Italia: Comparsa, Stemmi e Bandiere della Contrada della Torre,” 25. Turrini cites an undated manuscript in the Biblioteca Comunale in Siena, which I have also looked at, that chronicles the participation of *contrade* in city festivals. See “Relazione Delle Rapresentanze...,” fol. 30v.

³³³ A document from November 1650 sets the rules for a *bufalata* held for Mattias de’Medici, saying that the “cowboys that ride the buffalo can carry only spurs (I butteri che cavalcano le bufale possono portare solo gli sproni).” The document also mentions that the *contrade* “enter into the piazza in the assigned order at the eighteenth hour with there buffaloes and the twelve pungolatori (Che le Contrade entrino in piazza nell’ordine assegnato alle ore 18 con le loro bufale e I dodici pungolatori).” See Balia 833, fol. 40, ASS in Cecchini and Neri, 167-168.

³³⁴ The label in the museum reads: “Paliotto. Man. Italiano Sec. XVI. Lampasso di seta gialla a telaio in filo di seta, filo dorato e filo lamellare dorato cm. 180 x 89.” The palio was later used to adorn the front part of an altar. Although the cloth is badly faded, it appears to have a pattern in red against a yellow background. I was told by Francesco Fusi of the Torre Contrada that the banner had been won in a late sixteenth century *bufalata*. His comment is confirmed by Virgilio Grassi’s noting of a *bufalata* organized by the Onda Contrada of August 1, 1599, which was won by the Torre and the Lupa. See Grassi, I, 96 cited by Cairola, 115.

³³⁵ “A palio of the buffalo was run from the two gates, to the baths of S. Andrea (fù fatto correre un Palio colle Bufale dalle due Porte, fino alla Cura di S. Andrea).” “Relazione Delle Rapresentanze,” fols.31v, 32.

³³⁶ Entry of July 26, 1632, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 48-49.

³³⁷ See Doc. 123, “Repertorio documentario,” in Ridolfi et al., 541.

³³⁸ Turrini, “Dal Rinascimento all’Unita d’Italia,” 25.

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- ³³⁹ It was won by the Torre contrada. Cited in “Repertorio delle principali feste..,” Ridolfi et al., 222-223 and mentioned in Tregiani, fols. 5-5v.
- ³⁴⁰ Entry of February 17, 1596, Ascheri et al., 108-109 (150v).
- ³⁴¹ Entry of July 24, 1613, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 37.
- ³⁴² Entry of October 5, 1636, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 61.
- ³⁴³ Entry of August 18, 1641, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 76-77.
- ³⁴⁴ Cecchini mentions that the first *palio* race run with horses in the Campo occurred in 1583.
- ³⁴⁵ Tregiani, fols. 2-10v.
- ³⁴⁶ Grassi, I: 131. Grassi contends that the Capitelli print of a horse race taking place in the Campo illustrates the palio of the *contrade* held for Ferdinando II, but this actually depicts an official palio held on August 15, 1633.
- ³⁴⁷ Entries of May 7 and May 10, 1643, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 78-79.
- ³⁴⁸ These are recorded in G.A.Pecci, “Ristretto di tutto il rimanente che si contiene ne’ libri dell’archivio dell’illustrissimo collegio di Balìa, Parte II,” MS. C 27, fols. 936-937, ASS. See also Doc. 112, “Repertorio documentario,” in Ridolfi et al., 540. Reproduced also in Cecchini and Neri, 165-166.
- ³⁴⁹ A deliberation of July 24, 1613 mentions that the Provveditori of a race held in that year for the visit of Cosimo II de’ Medici had the authority to tax the houses of the parish to settle debts incurred. CCO, *Libro secondo*, 36.
- ³⁵⁰ Entry of June 20, 1605, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 21.
- ³⁵¹ Entry of November 10, 1619, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 43.
- ³⁵² Entry of June 28, 1659, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 114.
- ³⁵³ In the modern Siena palio, *alfieri* toss and twirl the Contrada’s banner in the procession preceding the race. Entry of August 1, 1632, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 49.
- ³⁵⁴ Entry of June 18, 1634, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 52.
- ³⁵⁵ “Avanti che andasse il partito, si rizò messer Stefano Patriarchi, e disse che sarebbe bene fare due omini per conto di questo fatto, aciò si vedesse chi si spendesse meno sia possibile per trovare il cavallo e fare altre spese.” Entry of May 7, 1643, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 78.
- ³⁵⁶ Entries of June 18, 1645 and July 9, 1645, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 83-85.
- ³⁵⁷ “. . .che il tutto ottenuto si di premio come di Palio, tutto devi servire per onorare il nostro Altare e Chappella e non altrimenti.” Entry of July 24, 1613, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 37.
- ³⁵⁸ Entry of June 24, 1613, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 37.
- ³⁵⁹ Entry of August 12, 1669, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 138-139.
- ³⁶⁰ *Festa che si fece in Siena a dì XV di aghosto MCVI* (Siena: Simone di Niccolò, 1506), reprinted in Catoni and Leoncini.

³⁶¹ The print is part of a series of six prints made by Capitelli to record the *carri* made by the *contrade* for a buffalo race held to honor Grand Duke Ferdinando II on October 20, 1632. Illustrated in “Atlante Storico Iconografico,” in Ridolfi et al., 342 and described on pp. 340-344.

³⁶² “Relazione Delle Rapresentanze...,” fols. 19v-20.

³⁶³ Bonaccorso, 344.

³⁶⁴ Tregiani, fol. 16.

³⁶⁵ Entry of August 6, 1525 and undated entry from 1525, Ascheri et al., 5-6 (2r, 2v).

³⁶⁶ See Cecchini, 75, n. 224.

³⁶⁷ Ascheri et al., 66-67 (58v).

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 67-68 (59r).

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 77-78 (67r).

³⁷⁰ Cartaio, unpaginated.

³⁷¹ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 290.

³⁷² Cecchini and Neri, 87-88. Cecchini reproduces a document on pp. 166-167 (Balìa 189, fol. 212v, ASS) in which this proposal was deliberated. It was suggested that the *barberi* run five or six times around the piazza, to equal the length of the *alla lunga* race from the Chiesa degli Angeli (near Porta Romana) to the column in the Piazza del Duomo. We are not certain whether the 1605 race was actually run in the Campo or not.

³⁷³ See Doc. 123, “Repertorio Documentario,” in Ridolfi et al., 541. Patrizia Buonaccorso believes that this print, although not dated, represents the running of the palio on August 15, 1633. See Bonaccorso, 71-72.

³⁷⁴ Cecchini and Neri, 124.

³⁷⁵ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 292. This first August 16th race was organized and paid for by the Contrada of the Istrice.

³⁷⁶ A. Lotti, “La Chiesa di Siena e i suoi vescovi,” in Betti I: 16.

³⁷⁷ Virgilio Grassi writes that Flaminio Rossi, in his *Storia delle Contrade*, erroneously concluded that a palio race with horses occurred in the Campo on October 13, 1611 to mark the transferal of the Madonna of Provenzano to the new cathedral. The transferal took place on October 23, not the 13th, and Grassi contends that there is no mention in the archival documents of the Balìa that a race occurred. See Grassi, I: 128-129.

³⁷⁸ Tregiani records one that occurred in 1581.

³⁷⁹ Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 291.

³⁸⁰ In 1659, the *Signori* invited the Onda contrada to participate. Entry of June 28, 1659, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 114.

³⁸¹ The Onda was invited to participate in the Provenzano palio of June 20th. Although the *Signori* offered to pay expenses, the Contrada elected to raise additional money among its members. Entry of June 20, 1660, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 116-117.

³⁸² The Contrada of the Onda appointed four *deputati* to go about the Contrada collecting money for the race. Entry of June 23, 1669, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 137. In an entry of June 20, 1667, the Priore of the Onda proposed that everyone should give money for the Palio of the Visitation, and it was decided that the Contrada should pay to hire the horse and jockey. Entry of June 20, 1667, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 130.

³⁸³ Balestracci, in Betti I: 22.

³⁸⁴ Tregiani's description is summarized in Doc. 102 in "Repertorio documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 538. Noteworthy of this particular palio race is that the horse belonging to the Contrada del Drago was ridden by a female jockey, Virginia Tacci, who finished third.

³⁸⁵ "Ma Tra le cose piu ridicole, et maravigliose che si vedono, e che una villanella d'anni 14 in circa ha da far correre un barbaro, et vi sta sopra con tanta securtà et leggiadria, che è cosa da non credere, ne mai cavalca, che non habbia seca(?) numero infinito di persone cosi ben raccomanda a quel atto del cavalcare, tanto che pare che l'altro donne gli portino invidia, et che alcune disignino di apprendere quel'arte vedendo che il cavalcar bene è buon mezzo per acquistare la grazia de gli (huomini?). Ha cominicato questa giovinetta a esercitarsi nel corso, e l'altro acorno: perche il cavallo sboccato dando à traverso sa là certe travi, non senza manifesto pericolo di rompersi il collo, ella non si mani (?) punto, ne fece segno di cadere, ma con mole'arte, e destrezza, lo corresse et ritenne difficilissimo per il sopradetto accaso à tale che a molti de maraviglia, ceda credere qualcosa della uccagna le donne comincono à fare di serciti, degli huomini, ma non gia a me, tenendo, ne senza qualche prova il proprio di simile, non solo dominare e fermare li maturi e sboccati barbari, ma ancora li arditi, et veloci polledri, di che poteva tal volta accertarsene molti, che tirati dall'appetito, procurano dolce farne prova con essa..." Montauto to Serguidi, August 14, 1581, AMP 1875, fol. 535, ASF (microform).

³⁸⁶ *Tregiani*, fols. 39-42, 48v and *Anonymous*, Stanze in lode della Fanciulletta, Nominata Virginia; Corridrice sopra il Barbero della Contrada del Drago, al Palio proposto dai Signori dell'Aquila; il di 15 d'Agosto 1581 (*Siena: alla Loggia del Papa, 1581*), BCS.

³⁸⁷ *Anonymous*, *Stanze in lode della Fanciulletta, Nominata Virginia...*, unpaginated.

³⁸⁸ *Tregiani*, fols. 39v-40.

³⁸⁹ Deanna Shemek mentions the popularity of Bradamante and Marfisa among women readers of *Orlando Furioso* on pp. 13-14 of *Ladies Errant*.

³⁹⁰ *Tregiani*, fols. 40-40v.

Chapter Three: Classical Resonance: the Palio and its Roots in Ancient Spectacle

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the palio race served as the culminating moment of a religious feast day. I have wondered how such a blatantly secular event as a horse race became to be associated with such a sacred event so rich in ceremony. Was the palio a new and utterly original phenomenon when first documented in the thirteenth century, or did it arise from an even older tradition?

I believe that the practice of running horse races in the context of a religious feast to be a vestige of the chariot races held in antiquity in Roman cities to commemorate pagan festivals.³⁹¹ First of all, the routes of Renaissance palio races show implicitly a connection to a city's Roman past. Secondly, other secular events of religious feast days, such as animal fights, hunts, combat with arms, and jousts, are reminiscent of the games held in antiquity in circuses and amphitheaters. Lastly, in the sixteenth century, there emerges a conscious association between the palio and the chariot races of antiquity, which included the staging of a new event for the feast of San Giovanni in Florence, the Palio dei Cocchi – a chariot race.

Tracing the Heart of the Roman City: the Route of the Palio

Both Paolo Pastori and Mark Rogers emphasize that the route of the palio followed the ancient *decumanus*, the main east-west artery of Roman Florence.³⁹² The historic center of Florence has the recognizable grid of streets preserved intact since its founding as the Roman colony, Florentia. The original location of the start of the palio was in the Piazza degli Ognissanti near the Arno River (fig. 55), and the race continued east following what is now the Via della Vigna Nuova, crossing Via dei Tournabuoni

where the western gate of the Roman city was once located. The route then passed through the Mercato Vecchio (Old Market), the oldest part of the city (present site of the Piazza della Repubblica) which, in antiquity, was once the site of a bath complex. The race then proceeded down the Via del Corso and Via degli Albizzi (fig. 56).

Florence was not the only city whose palio followed the path of the Roman *decumanus*. In the city of Asti in Piedmont, which was founded as the Roman city, Hasta, the route of the Palio of San Secondo began outside the Porta San Pietro, shown here in a detail from a painting of circa 1677, and proceeded along the road (now known as the Via Alfieri) that once was the Roman *decumanus* (fig. 58). The Palio of San Donato in Arezzo, a city famous for its Aretine-ware pottery during the early Roman empire, followed the ancient Via Romana through the city.³⁹³

The Via del Corso in Rome, site of the horse race run during *Carnevale*, extends from the Porta del Popolo to the Piazza Venezia. It was an ancient Roman thoroughfare called the Via Lata transformed by Pope Sixtus V into one of Rome's main arteries.³⁹⁴ During the Renaissance, two ancient arches spanned the Via Lata, indicating that it was a route for triumphal processions in antiquity, and the utilization of this road for spectacle carried into the Renaissance. The first arch, known as the Arch of Portugal, served as the starting point of the race of the Jews until it was demolished in the seventeenth century. The second arch, near the finish line near the Church of S. Marcello, was destroyed in 1491.³⁹⁵

Siena, despite its use of the Roman *lupa* as its symbol, had no Roman foundations. However, the route of the Palio of the Assumption followed parts of the Via Francigena, the main pilgrimage road linking Rome with northern Europe. The original

route ran from Fontebecchi, an area outside the Porta Camollia (fig. 58) north of the city, to the Duomo (fig. 59),³⁹⁶ and from 1389 onwards (fig. 60), the start occurred outside the southern gate at Porta Romana (fig. 61)³⁹⁷ in front of the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli, known as the Santuccio (fig. 62).³⁹⁸ The finish was also moved several times. A 1507 document cited by Turrini³⁹⁹ places the finish at the tower at Sant'Antonino, and in 1592, the race finished at a column at the entrance to the Piazza del Duomo.⁴⁰⁰

The conclusion that I draw from these examples is that the Renaissance palio followed the principal roads through the heart of the city, often coincident, in cities of Roman origin, with ancient roads. The races also began and ended at or near important landmarks or boundaries, such as the city gates or triumphal arches.

Connecting the Christian Feast Days to Pagan Deities and Festivals

Many of the patronal feast days celebrated in the Renaissance, as certain scholars have illustrated, coincide with important pagan feasts of the Roman calendar. Heidi Chrétien points out the Florentine festival of San Giovanni Battista corresponded with the Roman solstice festival of Fors Fortuna, which celebrated renewal and purification.⁴⁰¹ Shemek connects the themes of fertility and licentiousness present in the running of the foot races of San Giorgio to a number of Roman festivals, including a festival of wine held on April 23rd, which was associated with Jupiter and later the goddess Venus.⁴⁰²

Cities sometimes identified (often erroneously) churches dedicated to their patron saint with pagan temples. According to Chrétien, the ruling Guelph party favored San Giovanni because of his association with Florence's Roman origins, and Florentines believed that the eleventh century Baptistery of San Giovanni (fig. 63) had once been a pagan temple dedicated to the Roman war god, Mars.⁴⁰³ Florentine historian Vincenzo

Borghini (1515-1580) wrote in the sixteenth century that the Baptistery was originally built as a temple to Mars, part of the proliferations of these temples in the provinces during the time of the Emperor Augustus, who erected the Temple of Mars Ultor in Rome to commemorate his victory over Mark Anthony and the assassins of Julius Caesar. Borghini illustrated a reconstruction of the old temple in his treatise on the Roman origins of Florence, believing that the Christians had later converted the temple into a church, just as had been done in Rome to the Pantheon (fig. 64).⁴⁰⁴

Other cities claimed Roman origins for their principal churches. Even though we now know that Siena had no Roman foundations, the Siennese believed during the Renaissance that its Cathedral (fig. 65) dedicated to the Virgin stood on the former site of a Roman temple to Minerva.⁴⁰⁵

Another strong link between Christian feast days and pagan festivals is the prevalence during the Renaissance of secular competitions similar to those popular in antiquity. Although the palio race was by far the most common of these, other games, including fist fights, animal and bull fights, and jousts, augmented the feast days. The *gioco delle pugna* - fights conducted with fists or with simple wooden armor – were common occurrences in Siena and Florence on religious feast days until governments passed regulations banning them. In Siena up until the fifteenth century,⁴⁰⁶ participants from various *compagnie* - neighborhood militias – fought in the Piazza del Campo. These fights were so bloody that the *comune* had to issue decrees to stop them.⁴⁰⁷ An analogous problem existed in Florence, where armed groups from the *potenze*, neighborhood organizations, in which members fought and often maimed or killed each

other. The fights became so vicious in the later sixteenth century that the government had to issue many proclamations regulating the fights.⁴⁰⁸

During bull-fights (*caccie di tori*) and animal hunts (*caccie*), armed men hunted down and killed wild and/or domesticated animals (such as bulls or water buffalo) within a public piazza.⁴⁰⁹ In Florence, for instance, an anonymous chronicler described a hunt that took place for the Festival of San Giovanni Battista in 1387 in the courtyard of the Capitano del Popolo (within the Palazzo Vecchio) between three lions and a bull.⁴¹⁰ Bull fights were a popular occurrence in Siena particularly for the feast of the Assumption, from their inception in 1468⁴¹¹ to their eventual banning after 1597 as a result of the Council of Trent's forbidding of violent spectacles on feast days.⁴¹² Hunts occurred in the Piazza del Campo, a logical amphitheatre for such spectacle.⁴¹³ Decades before they ever took part in palio racing, the *contrade* were actively involved in organizing the annual hunts that occurred for the Feast of the Assumption, recorded in the paintings of Vincenzo Rustici.

Borghini, in his work on the origins of Florence, illustrates the foundations of a Roman amphitheater found beneath the houses just west of Piazza Santa Croce (fig. 66). He identifies the structure as a theater or circus,⁴¹⁴ and discusses the origins of the *Ludi Circensi* in Rome and the competition of the four circus factions. He also shows how the modern name for this neighborhood where the foundations were discovered, Croce a Trebbio, derives its name from the Latin *Trepudium*, the pounding or beating of hooves of the various beasts that participated in the games in the amphitheater. Borghini also acknowledges the connection in Roman times between the amphitheaters and the commemoration of public festivals:

Ma chi domandasse del bisogno, che avevano I popoli di queste fabbriche così magnifiche, e così grandi, io non saprei dire, se non che egli erano per I Giuochi e Feste pubbliche, che secondo quella loro Religione in alcuni giorni solenni avean vanamente dedicati a' loro vani Iddei, o nelle vittorie, ed altre comuni allegrezze solevano per rallegrare, e trattenere I popoli con ogni sorte di spasso, e di magnificenza sontuosissamente celebrare...⁴¹⁵

In Borghini's time, the piazza near the old Roman amphitheater was still a place of games and festivities, as evidence by this painting in the Ringling Museum, showing a game of *calcio* (soccer) that took place in the Piazza Santa Croce on May 4, 1589 for the marriage of Grand Duke Ferdinando I with Cristina of Lorraine.⁴¹⁶ (fig. 67)

In summary, the Renaissance city's streets, piazze, and even churches derived not only their form, but also their function or association, from Roman precedents, whether these were real, in the case of the amphitheater near Santa Croce, or imagined, such as the Temple of Mars on the site of the Florentine Baptistery.

The Sixteenth Century: Articulation of Origins of the Palio in Roman Chariot Racing

Florence and the *Palio dei Cocchi*: Revival of Roman Chariot Racing

In the sixteenth century, the Florentines initiated a new palio race, a chariot race known as the Palio dei Cocchi.⁴¹⁷ Cosimo I founded this new race in 1563 on the eve of the Festival of San Giovanni Battista, and spent 456 *lire*, one *soldo* to commission a red damask palio and to set up obelisks (referred to in the documents as *piramide* - pyramids) in the piazza in front of the Dominican church of Santa Maria Novella (fig. 69).⁴¹⁸ This new palio was modeled upon the chariot races held in the Circus Maximus in Rome. The two obelisks – alluding to the Egyptian obelisks on the *spina* in the middle of the Circus Maximus, were first made of wood, placed at the ends of the longer axis of the piazza. Marble obelisks, each one supported by four bronze turtles sculpted by the Flemish artist Giambologna,⁴¹⁹ replaced the wooden pyramids in 1608. Four *bigae*, or two-horse

chariots, but with four wheels instead of the two of their Roman antecedents, raced around the two *metae* for a palio of red damask and taffeta cloth with two stripes supplied by the Arte dei Mercantanti.⁴²⁰ Each of the four chariots was painted in the colors of one of the four factions that competed in the chariot races in Rome's Circus Maximus.⁴²¹

Montaigne witnessed the running of the Palio dei Cocchi in June 23, 1581, and recounted the exciting competition between the coach of the Grand Duke and that of the Strozzi family:

About the 23rd they had the chariot race in a beautiful large square, rectangular, longer than it is wide, surrounded on all sides by beautiful houses. At the end was placed a square wooden obelisk, and a long rope was attached from one to the other, so that people could not cross the square; and some men placed themselves across to reinforce the rope. All the balconies crowded with ladies, and in one palace the grand duke, his wife, and his court. The populace around the square, and on a kind of grandstand, as I was too.

Five empty coaches raced.⁴²² They were assigned their places by lot at one side of the pyramid. And some said that the outside one had the advantage, because it could make the turns more easily. They started at the sounds of trumpets. The third turn around the pyramid they started from is the one that gives the victory. The grand duke's coach was ahead all the way until the third lap. Here Strozzi's coach, which had been second all the way, with the horses given free rein, putting on greater speed than before and closing in, placed the victory in doubt. I noticed that the silence of the people was broken when they saw Strozzi coming close, and with shouts and applause they gave him all the encouragement possible under the eyes of the prince. And then, when the dispute and altercation came to be judged by certain gentlemen, and those favoring Strozzi referred it to the opinion of the populace present, there immediately arose from the people a universal shout and a public consensus in favor of Strozzi, who finally had it – contrary to justice, in my opinion. The prize would be worth a hundred crowns. I enjoyed the spectacle more than any other I had seen in Italy for its resemblance to the ancient type of race.⁴²³

Although no known images of this race exist from the sixteenth century, prints of c. 1617-1622 by Jacques Callot show the artist's renditions of the race run in the seventeenth century.⁴²⁴ (fig. 69)

Cosimo's introduction of the Palio dei Cocchi into Florence's most important religious festival was part of the visual propaganda casting himself in the image the Roman emperors. On the façade of the Uffizi, the massive office building designed by Vasari to house the administrative offices for the province of Tuscany, there is a sculpture by Vincenzo Danti showing Cosimo I in the guise of the emperor Augustus.⁴²⁵ Cosimo I also claimed the Palazzo Vecchio, formerly the seat of Florence's Republican government, as his own private residence, and decorated its rooms with frescoes of Vasari rich in imperial imagery, including a scene of the founding of Florence under Augustus.⁴²⁶ Cosimo's institution of a chariot race into the city's festival of San Giovanni Battista fits in perfectly with the imperial imagery of his government. The Grand Duke watched the race from a wooden viewing stand set opposite the façade of the church on the loggia of the Ospedale di San Paolo,⁴²⁷ and presented the palio banner to the winner, analogous to the viewing box in the Circus Maximus from which the emperor presided over the chariot races.

Heidi Chrétien has suggested that Cosimo's introduction of the chariot race to the Festival of San Giovanni was an effort to turn the city's Republican festival into a mere spectacle for the upper classes.⁴²⁸ Although the original palio race through the streets of the city still took place,⁴²⁹ Chrétien contends that the "imperial" chariot race upstaged the older horse race of the Republic. I disagree, however, with Chrétien that Cosimo I was trying to downplay the importance of the traditional San Giovanni palio. Each year, the Guelph Party ledgers consistently show more money spent on the banner for the San Giovanni palio than for the Palio dei Cocchi. Since so much was still spent on the banner for the traditional race, which still occurred on the feast day itself, I do not see the

initiation of the chariot race as necessarily a diminishing of the traditional race, but instead, as an increased emphasis on the Imperial aspects of the Grand Duke's public image.

Recognition of the Ancient Precedent of Chariot Racing

We also find in the writings of this period a conscious recognition and belief that the practice of running palio races derived from the chariot races of Roman antiquity.

Claudio Corte, in his 1562 treatise on riding, *Il Cavallarizzo*, writes:

Mi pare, non uscir d'ordine s'io vi dic' hora de' cavalli da correr palii secondo il costume c'hoggidi s'usa per tutta Italia. Ma prima devete anco sapere, che Vero Imperatore hebbe un cavallo chiamato Volucro della velocità sua incomparabile, di somma eccellenza. In honore del qual cavallo si cominciarono prima à correre i palii; essendosi prima corso con le carrette. Qui adunque hebbe principio & origine il corrersi de' palii: la causa perche si corrino credo che vi sia noto che non tanto per dar piacere al popolo con si bellissimo spettacolo, quanto che per far prova chi più de' cavalli in velocità vaglia, & chi più resista al corso.⁴³⁰

Corte clearly states that palio races began as the Roman chariot races, interpreting the palio races as a continuation of this ancient tradition.

Borghini also makes an explicit connection between the games of antiquity and the festivals of his present day. In his treatise on the Roman origins of Florence, Borghini describes the games of antiquity, including those of the circus:

Nel Circo, fuor degli spettacoli già detti delle fiere, si faceano più propriamente co' cavagli, e quelli specialmente delle carrette, qasi simili a questi, che oggi s'usano, e con voce oltramontana si chiamano chocchi, ma eran quelle con due ruote sole ordinariamente, e scoperti; ed il nome di biga, e di quadriga, era dal numero de' cavalli, e non delle ruote; come anocra nelle monete d'argento di quel secolo si può vedere, che assai ce ne sono ancora de' bigati, e de' quadrigati, che così dall'impronta, che elle aveano, si chiamavano, come altri vittoriati, e iatiti, perchè in quelli era improntata una vittoria, o troféo, ed in questi la parte dinanzi d'una nave.

Borghini goes on to explain the survival of the Roman games as modern festivals:

Di queste usanze ne sono oggi alcune rimase in uso tale quale egli è. I Gladiatori soli, crescendo la Fede nostra, a buon'ora furon per legge in tutto vietati, come

cosa non solo aliena dalla pietà Cristiana, ma degna d'essere da essa natura umana aborrita. Glis esercizi cavallereschi, torneare, e giostrare, ed I più piacevoli, che è l'armeggiare nelle comuni allegrezze, e feste, si usa ancora, e molto più si costumava al tempo de'nostri padri. Il correr de' cavalli al Palio, si è anche in alcune vittorie, e feste solenni mantenuto, siccome agli VIII. d'Ottobre, per dir d'uno, che è notabile per la rotta di Radagasio sotto Firenze con CC. migliaia di Gotti, sotto il secondo Consolato di Stilicone, che fu della Salute CCCV...⁴³¹

Both Corte and Borghini see the palio as a continuation of the Roman tradition, and as Borghini contends, the oldest palio race still run in Florence, of Santa Reparata, originated in late antiquity. Therefore, we have in the sixteenth century, an articulation of the palio's origins in the pagan festivals of ancient Rome, made visibly manifest by the running of the Palio dei Cocchi – a chariot race – in the Piazza Santa Maria Novella.

There are numerous similarities between the Roman chariot races and the Renaissance palio that show that they were related. First of all, like the palio races of the Renaissance, the chariot races of ancient Rome celebrated religious figures (pagan gods or saints) and marked military victories, and the races in both instances occurred on a set calendar of feast days.⁴³² Both involved a procession: the palio involving the presentation of tributes and palii, while the procession of images of the pagan deities preceded the races in the Roman circus.⁴³³ Both traditions had government or official sponsorship: city governments financed the palio races, while the Roman imperial state funded the circuses. And in both traditions, those in power watched the running of the races from positions of privilege: the Roman emperor from his imperial box in the circus, and the city officials from the palio cart placed at the finish.

Unfortunately, I have yet to find any writings prior to the sixteenth century that explicitly link the palio with the chariot races of Roman times. However, this is not to say that this connection drawn by sixteenth-century writers was just an antiquarian

fantasy. Although chariot racing died out in Italy around the fifth century, a strong circus tradition continued in the East, particularly in Constantinople, for centuries.⁴³⁴ As historians such as Borghini contend, palio races, such as the Palio of Santa Reparata in Florence, had been run in the cities for feast days, but perhaps we do not hear much about them until the thirteenth century if they originated as informal, impromptu competitions, not worthy of mention in city chronicles. The economic growth in the thirteenth century, brought about by the flowering of commerce and the population shift from the countryside to urban centers, resulted in the cities spending more money on their feast days and institutionalizing an existing tradition of presenting offerings and running races on feast days. Though the practice of running races for feast days originated in antiquity, it took the economic and cultural changes of the thirteenth century to give the palio the appearance and form that it would have throughout the Renaissance.

³⁹¹ For more on chariot racing in antiquity, see John H. Humphrey, *Roman Circuses: Arenas for Chariot Racing* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd, 1986) and Marcus Junkelmann, "On the Starting Line with Ben Hur: Chariot-Racing in the Circus Maximus," *Gladiators and Caesars: the Power of Spectacle in Ancient Rome*, Eckart Köhne and Cornelia Ewigleben, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 86-102.

³⁹² Paolo Pastori, "Le feste patronali fra mito delle origini, sviluppo storico e adattamenti ludico-spettacolari," in Pastori, 23 and Rogers, 212-214.

³⁹³ Nosari and Canova, 48.

³⁹⁴ For more on the history of the Corso, see Marina Moriconi, "Il Corso: Dal Carnevale alla festa politica," *La Festa a Roma dal Rinascimento al 1870*, in Fagiolo, I: 168-181.

³⁹⁵ Ingersoll, 273-274.

³⁹⁶ Turrini, Ridolfi et al., 287, as described in Document 18, Biccherna 124, fol. 186v, ASS in "Repertorio Documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 521.

³⁹⁷ The start was later moved inside the gate to the monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli, known as Santuccio. Turrini, in Ridolfi et al., 287-288, citing Doc. 39, "Repertorio Documentario," 524 summarizing a passage in the *Memorie* of G. Macchi (MS. D 107, fols. 858-859, and MS. D 109, fol. 271v, ASS), mentioning the moving of the start of the race.

³⁹⁸ Turrini, Ridolfi et al., 287.

³⁹⁹ The documents from August 17, 1507 (Balìa 53, fol. 53v and Balìa 253, fol. 239, ASS) are part of the deliberations of the Balìa, a panel of magistrates that was part of the Sieneſe government. Cited by Turrini as Doc. 76, “Repertorio Documentario,” Ridolfi et al., 535.

⁴⁰⁰ Cited by Turrini, Doc. 106 (Balìa document of August 14, 1592), Balìa 830, fols. 37, 41, “Repertorio Documentario,” Ridolfi et al., 539.

⁴⁰¹ Chrétien, 21.

⁴⁰² Shemek, 35.

⁴⁰³ Chrétien, 26.

⁴⁰⁴ Borghini, *Dell’Origine di Firenze*, 146-167. Borghini wrote a history of the Roman origins of Florence, *Dell’Origine di Firenze* (On the Origins of Florence), published poſthumouſly in 1584 as part of his *Discorsi* (Discourses) in Florence by Giunti.

⁴⁰⁵ Hook.

⁴⁰⁶ Cecchini and Neri, 29. Cecchini notes that the fights died out at the end of the fifteenth century. He reproduces a document of 1285 on pp. 150-151 (Consiglio Generale 29 fol. 56, ASS), one of the many bans that the Comune iſſued over the years againſt fights in the Campo.

⁴⁰⁷ Turrini, Ridolfi et al., 262.

⁴⁰⁸ Robert Ciabani, *Le Potenze di Firenze*, 38-41. Ciabani deſcribes a proclamation iſſued in 1577 that banned, among other things, uſe of arms or ſtones in fights.

⁴⁰⁹ Cecchini and Neri, 101 and Heywood, 153-156, cited by Dundes and Falassi, 4-5. Bull fights were run in the Campo from 1499 to 1597, and buffalo races from 1599 to 1650.

⁴¹⁰ *Alle bocche della piazza*, 74, cited alſo in Lucia Ricciardi, “*Col ſenno, col teſoro e colla lancia: Riti e giochi cavallereſchi nella Firenze del Magnifico Lorenzo* (Florence: Le Lettere: 1992), 117. It is not ſurprising that lions appeared in the hunt, ſince the lion was a ſymbol of Republican Florence the city kept theſe animals in an enclosure near the Palazzo Vecchio. Ricciardi, 118-119.

⁴¹¹ Mazzini, in Ridolfi et. al., 306.

⁴¹² See Turrini “Dall Rinascimento all’Unità d’Italia..”25 and “Relazione Delle Rapreſentanze...,”30.

⁴¹³ Cecchini and Neri, 73. Cecchini mentions a bullfight that occurred in 1516 for the Feaſt of the Aſſumption, in which eight *contrade* participated. This is deſcribed by the chronicler G. Pecci in *Memorie ſtoriche della città di Siena* vol. I, part I, p. 57.

⁴¹⁴ Renaissance antiquarians commonly miſtook amphitheaters for circuſes.

⁴¹⁵ Borghini, *Dell’Origine di Firenze*, 171-180.

⁴¹⁶ Arthur Blumenthal, *Italian Renaissance and Baroque Paintings in Florida Museums* (Winter Park, Florida: Cornell Fine Arts Museums, 1991), 22, no. 11. Thank you to Ann Wagner for bringing this painting to my attention.

⁴¹⁷ In the footnotes of the eighteenth-century edition of Borghini, the editor of the text ſpecifies that the term *Cocchi* was a foreign word brought to Florence from France, and Jacopo Soldani uſed the term in a

verse describing the entourage of carriages transporting Caterina de' Medici to France. See Borghini, *Dell'Origine di Firenzem* 184, n.1.

⁴¹⁸ Roberto Ciabani cites the initial date of the race as 1540 in *Firenze di Gonfalone in Gonfalone* on p.171 but does not give a source for this date. Pietro Gori (p. 232) gives the date of the initial Palio dei Cocchi as June 23, 1563. I've been able to verify the date by looking at the books of deliberations of the Guelph Party; in their 1563 book there is an entry for "...spese del presente anno 1563 per conto del palio de cocchi nuovamente ordinato da S. Eccellenza Illusstrissimo lire 453.1. per br 16 di Domasco rosso br 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ di taffetà per le piramidi sulla piazza di Santa maria novella, opere, et altro come alle Ricordanze C. 156 fiorini lire 453.1. (...expenses of the present year 1563 for the account of the Palio dei Cocchi newly ordered by His Excellency lire 452 soldi 1 for 16 *braccia* of red damask, 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ *braccia* of taffeta for the pyramids on the piazza of Santa Maria Novella, works, and others as recorded in the Remembrances on C. 156.)" CPG, NN 21, fol. 160v, ASF.

⁴¹⁹ Borghini, *Dell'origine di Firenze*, 184, n.1.

⁴²⁰ The description of the cloth is taken from the *Diario* of a "Settimani," cited in Gori, 232. Gori notes later on p. 234 that the palio was made of red damask, was worth 45 *scudi*, and was supplied by the Captains of the Guelph Party.

⁴²¹ See Gori 234. Pasquale Caracciolo mentions in his section on the Roman circus that the four colors of the Roman circus factions [Prasini (green), Russati (red), Albati (white), and Veneti (blue)] were also adopted by the Florentines "per giostrare" (to joust) the first of May. See Pasquale Caracciolo, *La Gloria del Cavallo* (Venice: Gabriel Giulio de' Ferrari, 1566), 93. See also Roberto Ciabani, *Firenze di Gonfalone in Gonfalone*, 171.

⁴²² I am not sure whether the participations of five chariots instead of four was a regular practice, or whether this is an exceptional case.

⁴²³ Montaigne, 140.

⁴²⁴ Two editions of this print were etched by Callot (one in 1617 in Florence and the second in 1622 in Nancy) as part of a series called the *Capricci*, dedicated to Don Lorenzo de' Medici, younger brother of the Grand Duke of Florence. Prints appear in many museum collections, including one from the Nancy series in the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC (Baumfeld Collection B-27, 899) and one in the Gabinetto delle Stampe e Disegni in the Uffizi Museum in Florence (n. 8656). See Giovanna Gaeta Bertelà and Anna Maria Petrioli Tofani, *Feste e Apparati Medicei da Cosimo I a Cosimo II: Mostra di Disegni e Incisioni* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 1969), 169 and H. Diane Russell, *Jacques Callot: Prints & Related Drawings* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1975), 18, 20-21.

⁴²⁵ Roger J. Crum, "'Cosmos, the World of Cosimo': The Iconography of the Uffizi Facade," *Art Bulletin* 71, No. 2 (June 1989): 237-253.

⁴²⁶ Janet Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984): 280-281.

⁴²⁷ Gori, 234.

⁴²⁸ Chrétien, 44-45.

⁴²⁹ Montaigne attended the San Giovanni palio of June 24, 1581, which was won by Cardinal de' Medici's horse. The prize was "200 crowns" [probably ducats]. Montaigne, 141.

⁴³⁰ Claudio Corte, *Il Cavallarizzo* (Venice: Giordano Ziletti, 1562), 98.

⁴³¹ Borghini, *Dell'Origine di Firenze*, 184-186.

⁴³² By the fourth century, there were one hundred seventy-seven feast days in Rome devoted to games and circuses. See Michele Salzman, *On Roman Time: the Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity*, (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1990) 120.

⁴³³ Writers such as Tertullian describe the processions that occurred at the opening of a race meet. See Tertullian, *De Spectaculis*, trans. Emanuele Castorina, (Firenze: La "Nuova Italia" Editrice, 1961), 407. The Circus Maximus in Rome also housed the shrines of some pagan cults; for instance, the cult of Consus (identified with Neptune), was located near one of the turning posts in the Circus Maximus. See Humphrey, 11.

⁴³⁴ For more on the history of the circus in Constantinople, see Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions: Blues and Greens at Rome and Byzantium*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

Chapter Four: The Appearance, Manufacture, and Significance of the Palio Banner in the Italian Renaissance City

Writing sometime between 1380 and 1405, Florentine chronicler Goro

[Gregorio] Dati described the appearance of the palio banner and cart at the annual festival of San Giovanni Battista, Florence's patron saint:

...Il quale è portato in sur una carretta triunfale con quattro ruote, adorna con quattro lioni intagliati che paiono vivi, uno in sur ogni canto del carro, tirato da due cavalli covertati, col segno del Comune loro, e due garzoni che gli calvacano e guidano. Il quale è molto grande e ricco Palio, di velluto chermisi fine, in due palii, e tra l'uno e l'altro uno fregio d'oro fine largo un palmo, foderato di pance di vaio e orlato d'ermellini, infrangiato di seta e d'oro fine; che in tutto costa fiorini trecento o più: ma da un tempo in qua s'è fatto d'alte'e basso broccato d'oro bellissimo; e spendesi fiorini secento o più.⁴³⁵

It is noteworthy that Dati, like many writers of his day, makes a point of emphasizing the cost of the banner. Three hundred florins was no meager sum: to put this figure in perspective, the money spent on the palio banner's production was equivalent to two thousand times the average daily wage of a laborer in 1380.⁴³⁶ The banner eclipsed in value even permanent and "traditional" art forms by well-established artists: to offer a comparison, in 1354, the wealthy Strozzi family paid the painter Andrea Orcagna only two hundred gold florins for creating the polyptych for their chapel in the church of Santa Maria Novella (fig. 70).⁴³⁷

Perhaps due to the ephemeral nature of the palio banners, and the scholarly bias towards the media of painting and sculpture, art historians have overlooked the importance of the palio banner to the Renaissance city. In fact, the banner was one of the most important objects commissioned by city governments, whose place in Renaissance art history should not be ignored. The richness of the banner – in cost,

materials, and symbolism – and the preservation of its basic form over centuries, express two major functions of the palio banner in the Renaissance city. City governments appropriated lavish sums and employed a whole army of craftspeople to make these palio banners as an expression of a city's economic power. If Florence could afford to spend hundreds of florins on an object whose practical function was tied to one specific day, it demonstrated to visitors and citizens alike the health of the city's economy. The utilization of rich brocade cloth in the banners' manufacture also expressed the thriving textile trade and manufacture within Italy, particularly in Siena and Florence. Lastly, the static design of the palio banner expressed the city's desire to maintain long-standing traditions and pageantry in the face of centuries of political change. In this chapter, I hope to reconstruct both the physical appearance and manufacture of the palio banner and its cart as well as explain its conceptual importance as a symbol of wealth, power, and victory. I also will provide my theory as to why so few examples of such an important object have survived to the present day.

The Silk Industry in Renaissance Italy

During the Renaissance, palio banners were manufactured predominantly from cloth made from silk fibers. The palio banner not only was a valuable prize, but also represented a lucrative industry that brought economic prosperity to cities throughout Italy. During the Renaissance, cities throughout Italy produced fine silk fabrics for trade on the international market. Merchants traded Italian textiles at international fairs in northern and central Europe, and exported cloth to England, Flanders, and even to the Islamic world. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries,

Florence was noted for its production of fine silk fabrics, particularly velvets and gold brocades. It is noteworthy that almost every Italian city that hosted a palio race during the Renaissance also had some local silk manufacture.

Silk – A Beautiful and Costly Fiber

Silk thread is derived from the cocoon of the silkworm, the larval state of the moth species *bombyx mori*. Silk has many advantages over other types of fibers that make it conducive to weaving luxury cloth. First of all, silk has a very long fiber length - each cocoon is made of a single thread measuring 500-900 meters. Secondly, silk fibers, when twisted together to form thread, are highly reflective of light. Lastly, silk is very strong, and only silk warp threads could withstand the wear caused in the weaving process of luxury fabrics such as damasks.⁴³⁸ Silk cloth was especially costly to make because of the labor involved in the many stages of production.⁴³⁹ The actual weaving of the luxury cloths – such as the brocades, damasks, and velvets used in palio banners- could take from four to five weeks for a simple taffeta to six months for brocade velvet.⁴⁴⁰

Origins of Silk Manufacture in Italy

The use of silk as textile fiber began in China began around 3000 BCE, but was not known in the West until the Chinese began exporting cloth during the Han Dynasty (202 BCE – 220 CE).⁴⁴¹ The Chinese guarded their secrets of silk production from exportation, making it difficult to establish silk manufacture in the Western World, until in 552 CE during the reign of Emperor Justinian, two monks allegedly smuggled contraband silkworms from China to Constantinople.⁴⁴²

Silk manufacture ultimately reached Italy through the separate yet often convergent traditions of the Byzantine and the Islamic worlds. Arab rulers

established the earliest Western center of silk production in Palermo in Sicily,⁴⁴³ and the Byzantines introduced the growing of mulberry plants to Calabria in southern Italy.⁴⁴⁴ In the eleventh century, the Norman emperor Roger brought Byzantine weavers from Thebes and Corinth to Palermo to work alongside the Arab weavers.⁴⁴⁵ From the eleventh and twelfth centuries onwards, the maritime cities of Venice and Genoa imported silk fabrics from their colonies established in Constantinople and Tyre (in North Africa).⁴⁴⁶ Both cities would continue to be important centers of silk trade and manufacture well into the Renaissance.⁴⁴⁷ During the Renaissance, both Venice and Genoa conducted a thriving textile trade with the Islamic world, exporting silks to Alexandria, Tripoli, Aleppo, Damascus and Constantinople.⁴⁴⁸

In the eleventh century, Count Bonifacio and his sister Mathilde established silk manufacturing in the city of Lucca, then capital of Tuscany. Silk weavers fled to Lucca in the thirteenth century following the Angevin conquest of Sicily, and by the end of the century, Luccan textiles were among the finest sold at the fairs of Champagne.⁴⁴⁹ During the Renaissance, Lucca still maintained a thriving silk industry, with sixteen hundred looms active in 1531, and *panno luchesino* was used in Florence in the sixteenth century for many of the palio races, such as those of Sant'Anna and San Bernaba.⁴⁵⁰ In the sixteenth century, Lucca along with Florence controlled the international silk market at Lyons.⁴⁵¹

Sericulture in Italy

Although most raw silk had to be imported, sericulture was also practiced in Italy. Farmers in many regions of northern and central Italy grew mulberry trees⁴⁵² – the preferred food of silkworms - wherever the climate permitted. In 1441, the Florentine government passed a law requiring peasant farmers to plant at least five

mulberry trees apiece,⁴⁵³ and mulberry numbered among the crops grown at Poggio a Caiano, Lorenzo de' Medici's country villa.⁴⁵⁴ Farmers grew mulberry in the central region of Tuscany;⁴⁵⁵ outside Milan and Como in Lombardy,⁴⁵⁶ and in Piedmont.⁴⁵⁷ In 1481, the Sieneese silk producer Nello di Francesco formed a company to plant over ten thousand mulberry trees in the Sieneese countryside.⁴⁵⁸ Laws often favored or protected local silk production.⁴⁵⁹ However, local markets could only supply a small portion of the needed silk, so manufacturers purchased most of their raw materials from Sicily and Calabria, regions with climates most conducive to growing the mulberry trees. During the sixteenth century, Florence imported much of its raw silk from Spain,⁴⁶⁰ facilitated by the marriage of Cosimo I with the Spanish Eleonora of Toledo.⁴⁶¹

The *Setaiuoli* (Silk Merchants)

Silk merchants, known as *setaiuoli*, controlled a centralized system of production. They purchased the raw silk, and then distributed it to the various workers who would unwind, twist, cook, and dye the raw fiber, and then spool and weave the cloth.⁴⁶² The *setaiuolo* would then send the finished product to market. It took an enormous amount of capital to buy the raw material and pay the workers, so it is not surprising that in many cities such as Lucca and Florence, many *setaiuoli* were also bankers or merchants.⁴⁶³ In Florence alone, such "big names" as the Medici, Strozzi, Antinori,⁴⁶⁴ Pitti, Salviati, and Capponi families invested in companies involved in the silk industry and in the trade of luxury items in general, particularly in the manufacture of gold thread. As Bruno Dini emphasizes, it was mercantile activity in the fifteenth century that ushered the greatest growth in silk production.⁴⁶⁵ Since many of these merchants and bankers had branches of their businesses at Lyons, the

site of one of the major international cloth markets of the fifteenth century, they had the infrastructure in place for selling the finished silk cloth to markets all over Europe.⁴⁶⁶ This activity is reflected in the payment documents for the palio, for cities sometimes purchased fabric and furs from bankers.⁴⁶⁷

During the Renaissance, Italy was the world's major producer and supplier of fine silk fabrics. The court of the Ottoman Empire was one of the greatest consumers of Italian silk cloth (particularly Florence gold brocades and velvets) in the fifteenth century. As illustrated recently in the *Palace and Mosque* exhibition at the National Gallery of Art, the Ottoman sultans so admired Italian cloth that they set up workshops at Bursa in Anatolia to produce velvets of similar types and patterns as those purchased from Italy (figs. 71 and 72).⁴⁶⁸

Italy also sold its cloth to the English court, and imported wool from the British Isles to make more common cloth. Northern Europe, particularly Flanders and Germany, also were major consumers of Italian cloth. Silk merchants such as Giovanni Arnolfini from Lucca⁴⁶⁹ (fig. 73) established firms in these northern cities that sold and took orders for fabrics produced in the workshops of Lucca, Florence, Genoa, Venice, and other cities.

The Silk Industry in Florence, Siena, and Other Cities

Florence

Florence became one of the major centers of silk production in Italy during the Renaissance. Statutes of the Florentine silk guild extend as far back as 1225. The industry was greatly amplified upon the arrival of skilled silk weavers who fled to Florence after the sack of Lucca by Pisa in 1316.⁴⁷⁰ In 1472, the chronicler Benedetto Dei reported eighty-three major silk workshops in the city, and by end of the

Florentine Republic, the city was producing 92,000 pounds of silk annually,⁴⁷¹ and in 1561 under Grand Duke Cosimo I, there were eighty-eight active workshops.⁴⁷²

When the French writer Michel de Montaigne visited Florence in 1581, he “saw the shops of the silk spinners; they have certain machines, by turning which one single woman can twist and turn five hundred spindles at once.”⁴⁷³

The silk guild, or *Arte di Seta*, also known as the *Arte di Por San Maria*, was one of the city’s most powerful guilds, and oversaw that cloth produced in the city adhered to dictated measurements and quality standards. Many types of silk cloth and velvets were produced in Florence, but the most famous were the *auroserici*, silk fabrics enhanced with gold thread, which dominated the world textile market during the Renaissance.⁴⁷⁴

Florence’s silk industry put the city in touch with cultures throughout Europe, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. Florence exported its fabrics to Flanders, England, and Spain,⁴⁷⁵ and in more limited quantities to Constantinople and Alexandria.⁴⁷⁶ The fifteenth-century workshop of Andrea Banchi was internationally known, and did business with customers “spanning an area from Constantinople to Bruges.”⁴⁷⁷ The Ottoman Empire was one of the greatest admirers of Florentine silk fabric, and in 1596, Grand Duke Ferdinando I signed a contract with the Ottoman sultan giving him access to Florentine production.⁴⁷⁸ The cloth industry generated tremendous wealth for Florence and other Italian cities during the Renaissance and brought these cities in contact via trade with the rest of Europe and the Islamic world.

Siena

The silk industry directly influenced Siena's development, and a local silk manufacturing industry – smaller than that of Florence, but still substantial – flowered in the mid-fifteenth century. The rise of the city of Siena in the late Middle Ages was due in part to its participation in the silk trade. Located along the Via Francigena, the main thoroughfare connecting France with Rome, Siena became a major stopping point in the Middle Ages for merchants traveling back and forth to France and Flanders each year to purchase fine fabrics at the cloth fairs. Merchants such as Pietro Bernardone, the father of Saint Francis of Assisi, made yearly trips northward to the cloth fairs from Assisi in Umbria, most certainly passing through Siena on his way.⁴⁷⁹ Merchants also purchased silk fabrics from the manufacturing centers of Florence, Lucca, and Venice.⁴⁸⁰ Siennese art in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, with its predominance of elaborate fabrics, reflects the influence of this trade, such as the lavish garments worn by the Virgin's attendants in both Simone Martini's and Duccio's versions of the *Maestà* (figs. 137 & 107). Although Siena's did not become a center of silk production until the fifteenth century, its economy in the late Middle Ages was based in part in the textiles through the woolen industry,⁴⁸¹ in which some of the city's most noted citizens participated. Beneath the museum of the Contrada dell'Oca in the Fontebranda neighborhood is still visible the house and workshop of the Benincasa family – the childhood home of Saint Catherine - a family of *tintori*, or cloth-dyers.

Siena did not start producing its own silk cloth until 1439, when the aforementioned Nello di Francesco enlisted the support of the Siennese government to

initiate a silk-weaving workshop. Florentine *setaiuoli* tried to muscle Sieneese weavers out of production, flooding the market with Florentine velvets and even setting fire to their looms. The Sieneese government responded by offering a subsidy of four *lire* for every forty *braccia* of damask produced by Sieneese workshops, and imposed a tax of four *soldi* on every *braccia* of silk cloth imported from other cities.⁴⁸² By the year 1461, Siena had its own silk-weavers guild, the Arte di Seta,⁴⁸³ and the silk workshops were located in the very center of the city near the Piazza del Campo.⁴⁸⁴ All Sieneese silk was marked with a special brand entrusted to the four *provveditori* of the Sieneese Biccherna, and taxes on foreign silks helped safeguard Sieneese silk.⁴⁸⁵ A statute of the silk guild from 1513 lists some of the fabrics made in Siena at the time, including *velluto* (velvet), varieties of *damaschino* (damask) and *tafettà*, four kinds of *broccato* (brocade), *cinti* (chinze), *raso* (satin), *brocchatello*, *muffato*, and *baldachino*.⁴⁸⁶ Following the Florentine takeover of Siena in 1555, the Sieneese silk industry experienced a slow decline in the late sixteenth and throughout the seventeenth centuries, despite granducal proclamations of 1564 and 1606 to protect local production, and could not compete with the textile industries of Florence and Pisa.⁴⁸⁷

Other Cities in Italy

Although none rivaled Florence in scope, many of the cities that ran palio races also developed a local silk industry of their own. Bologna was one of the earliest cities with documented silk production, with Francesco Borghesano of Lucca founding a workshop in 1272. Bologna became famous as the producers of *veli*, a type of lustrous silk cloth, and at the height of the industry in 1585, produced ninety thousand pounds of silk annually. Silk weaving in Verona dates back to the late

fourteenth century, and in 1568, there were eighty-eight weavers in the city's guild. In Ferrara, beginning with Duke Borso in the fifteenth century, the Este family supported a local silk-weaving industry. Mantua became an important producer of silk in the sixteenth century because of the initiatives of Federico II Gonzaga, who used subsidies to entice silk threaders and weavers to the city. By 1564, there were over a thousand workers operating in fifty workshops in the neighborhood of San Giorgio. Even the papacy made an effort to promote silk manufacture: as Pope Sixtus V launched an initiative in 1589 to bring silk weavers to Rome, which was cut short by the plague of 1591, but later attempts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries re-established the industry in the Holy City.⁴⁸⁸

Now that I have established the importance of silk manufacture to Renaissance Italy, it is easier to understand why a palio banner would be considered a meaningful and valuable prize for the races of the religious feast days. Not only was the palio banner an expression of economic prosperity, and the ability of city to spend lavish sums on valuable pieces of fabric, but also the city could often take pride in the banner's manufacture by local weavers.

The Format and Components of the Palio Banner

Last winter, while researching in Siena, I had the privilege of visiting the *musei* of the Contrade of the Oca, Torre, and Selva. Each *contrada* has such a museum attached to its oratory, in which are proudly displayed objects of importance to the *contrada*'s history. Perhaps the most cherished objects on display are the palio banners won for the races of July and August. The twentieth-century banners show the most remarkable variation in content, and employ a variety of artistic styles

ranging from neo-Renaissance to modern and pop styles, such as this banner from 1969 for an extraordinary palio commemorating the moon landing (fig. 74). The further back you go in time, the more uniform the decoration of the banners become. Some of the oldest palio banners from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries follow a general pictorial formula of showing the Ascending Virgin at the top of the Assumption palio banners (fig. 75) and the relic of the Madonna of Provenzano atop the banners for the July 2nd palio (fig. 76)

Renaissance palio banners, through the first half of the seventeenth century, were very different in appearance from later palio banners. The only common “thread” that Renaissance banners share with modern palio banners is that they were both manufactured from silk cloth. In the modern era, it is the image painted on the silk that gives the banner its identity as an iconographic and ceremonial object. But during the Renaissance, it is the fabric itself and the precious materials used to construct the banner, not the image depicted, which made the dominant statement, and that statement was wealth. The palio banner was a reflection of the wealth of a city that could afford to spend large sums on such ephemera, and for cities that had a thriving textile industry, a symbol of that city’s economy. This is not to say that the banners did not have figural or symbolic elements; most banners included a number of coats-of-arms, and sometimes images were painted directly onto the silk. There might be variations over time in the size, materials, and *fornimenti* (decorative elements) of the banner, but its basic format remained the same throughout the centuries. I believe that the persistence of this form is an effort by cities to maintain

tradition despite political upheaval and change. Recreating the banner year after year in a time-honored form is a way of connecting with the past.

Surviving Examples of Palio Banners

Unfortunately, very few examples of confirmable palio banners survive that date before the end of the seventeenth century. There are only two banners of which I am aware: the first, conserved in the museum of the Torre Contrada in Siena, is a silk banner won in by the Torre in a buffalo race in 1599 (figs. 43 & 44). In the Franchetti Collection of the Bargello Museum, there is a seventeenth-century pivial (cape) made from pieces of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista (fig. 77)

A set of coat-of-arms from a palio banner has also survived. Luigi Borgia has written an article on some coats-of-arms, made of painted silk and velvet, preserved in the Archive of the Guelph Party in the Florentine Archivio di Stato, which adorned a seventeenth or early eighteenth-century Palio of San Giovanni Battista. (figs. 78, 79 & 80)

A few painted images from the Renaissance through the seventeenth century also give us some idea of what palio banners would have looked like. The palio banner appears on two marriage chests by Giovanni Toscani, painted around 1419, one in the Bargello Museum showing the presentation of the palio banner to the Baptistery of San Giovanni (fig. 28), the other in the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 39), showing the placement of the palio cart and banner at the conclusion of the race in Piazza San Pier Maggiore.

In comparison to the banner on the Cleveland *cassone*, the palio banner shown in the *Priorista* manuscript, dating around 1630-40, has changed very little in basic

form; both banners seem to be made of gold brocade in pomegranate pattern traversed by horizontal and vertical bands (fig. 27). Another Palio of San Giovanni Battista, in red brocade or velvet, appears in a painting in storage at the Uffizi, dating to 1630-1640, by an anonymous artist depicting the ceremony of the offering in the Piazza della Signoria (figs. 14-16).

Written sources and archival documents also give an idea of the appearance of these banners. Chroniclers such as Gregorio Dati or poets such as Domenico Tregiani often mentioned or described the banners when recounting the events of a feast day. Payment ledgers are also useful in reconstructing the appearance of palio banners. Both the cities of Florence and Siena kept detailed accounts of all municipal expenses. These entries can provide information about what materials and artisans were involved in the banners' manufacture; expense records may include the kind of silk fabric purchase; the length, color, and/or weight of that fabric; costs of the materials and labor; materials used to line or decorate the banner; names of *setaiuoli* who sold the fabric; tax duties paid to import fabric from another city; and names of artists and craftspeople who sewed the banner, constructed or repaired the palio cart, specialized in making various decorations, or painted images on the banner. Some payment entries are brief while others are so detailed as to provide a clear picture as to how the banner may have appeared. Lastly, officials involved in the planning of the feast days, from offices such as the Balìa in Siena or organizations such as the Guelph Party in sixteenth-century Florence, mention the commissioning of banners in their deliberations and correspondence.

The table in figure 81 shows the distribution of records on the palio banners, arranged by city. Through entering this information into a database (described in my introductory chapter), I have been able to compare statistics on different palio banners from multiple cities and time periods. From this information, I have been able to come up with the following observations:

- Palio banners, especially those for the patronal feasts, were made of the most valuable luxury fabrics on the market, including damasks, brocades, and velvets.
- Most of the patterns illustrated in paintings and depicted on the surviving palio banners are variations of the “pomegranate” pattern popular on Renaissance-era luxury cloths. This pattern was among the most prestigious and costly to produce. The Franchetti pivial is made from a cloth of a “lanceolate” pattern deriving from Persian design.
- The height of the banner appears to be linked to the importance of the feast day. Palio banners for the feasts of patron saints, such as the Palio of San Giovanni Battista in Florence, are always taller than the palio banners for the feast days of other saints celebrated in the city.
- Based upon the group of data I have collected (the majority of which comes from Siena and Florence), red and gold were the most popular colors used for palio banners.
- In most cases, cities reserved the awarding of red and gold banners for the horse races. Other colors, such as green and blue, were regularly used for

the foot races involving humans, or races of other animals such as donkeys and buffalo.

Fabric

The palio banners presented for the horse races of feast days, particularly those of the major feasts, were made almost exclusively of the heavy silk brocades, damasks, and velvets that brought Italy such wealth. Although there are a couple instances of velvet banners being awarded for foot races, most of the time, they were described as made of *panno* (a generic word meaning cloth), *lana* (wool), or less-expensive silks such as *taffetà*. The pie chart in figure 82 illustrates the distribution of the primary fabrics (those used for the body of the banner, not the lining) used to construct the palio banner.

The Luxury Silks

Broccato (Brocade)

Silk brocade cloth, originally produced in the East, was characterized by a design created by a secondary weave attached to the background weave (*fondo*).⁴⁸⁹ Often, the secondary weave was executed in metallic thread - gold (*filato*) and even silver.⁴⁹⁰ Brocade velvets produced rich effects in contrasting the luxurious, textured pile against the smooth silk of the background, such as this example made in Florence during the second half of the sixteenth century (fig. 83)

Brocades, particularly gold brocades (*broccato d'oro*), were highly popular fabrics for palio banners of the patronal feasts, particularly the Palii of San Giovanni Battista in Florence,⁴⁹¹ San Giorgio in Ferrara,⁴⁹² and for the horse race at *Carnevale* in Rome.⁴⁹³ They were highly expensive fabrics: in 1589, the brocade used to make

the Palio of San Giovanni was the largest expenditure for the entire banner – eighty-eight florins out of a total of over 347 florins.⁴⁹⁴

Nineteen percent of the banners compiled in my database are brocades, and a several of the velvet banners are described as being of brocade velvet. In his description of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista illustrated in the *Priorista* manuscript is “Un Palio di broccato rosso col fondo d'Oro (a palio of red brocade with a background of gold),” verifying that the brocade design on this banner was picked out in red against a gold ground.⁴⁹⁵ In both the Cleveland and Bargello *cassoni*, the artist has applied gold leaf to represent the shimmer of the gold fabric. In the Cleveland *cassone*, the artist, Giovanni Toscani, appears to have stamped or traced the pattern into the surface of the gold leaf on the palio banner, suggestive of gold brocade.

Lampasso (*Panno Lucchesino*) & *Sciamito*

The Torre Museum banner is a silk *lampasso*, or *lampas*, characterized by multiple weaves tied together, usually on a base of heavy satin. The weave layer supporting the design is structurally separate from the ground. *Lampasso* resembles brocade in its appearance, but is half the cost.⁴⁹⁶ I have not found any mention of *lampasso* per se in the payment documents, but of *panno lucchesino*, which I believe may be the same fabric, since Lucca was noted for its *lampas*.⁴⁹⁷ *Panno lucchesino* was particularly popular for making the less prominent Florentine palii in the festival calendar, as it appears ten times in the payment documents for the Palio of San Bernaba in Florence from 1480 to 1604,⁴⁹⁸ eight for Santa Reparata, and seven times for Sant'Anna.⁴⁹⁹

One of the earliest recorded palio banners, of the Assumption from 1310, was made of *sciamito* (samite), a type of fabric also woven in Lucca in the thirteenth century.⁵⁰⁰

Velluto (Velvet)

Velvet was another popular fabric for palio banners. Of the ninety-one banners of the Assumption in Siena for which I have some description, twenty-six of these were made of velvet. Velvet was also used for the palii of *Carnevale* in Rome for the horse race (ten times), San Giovanni in Florence (eight times), and San Giorgio in Ferrara (four times).

Velvet is created using two weaves, one that serves as a background, the other being the *pelo* or pile.⁵⁰¹ The pile is made by passing the warp (horizontal) threads over metal rods, creating many small loops.⁵⁰² Cutting these loops with a knife blade produces *velluto tagliato* (cut velvet).

The documents even mention specialized types of velvet. A 1481 payment ledger recorded a payment of 183 florins for twenty-eight *braccia* of crimson *alto-basso* brocade velvet.⁵⁰³ *Alto-basso*, which means literally “high and low,” was a highly labor-intensive type of velvet in which the pile was cut at two to three different heights to create a “sculpted” effect, such as in this example of Venetian velvet from the second quarter of the fifteenth century.⁵⁰⁴ (fig. 84)

The play of shadows upon such velvet must have been especially dramatic and rich. According to Roberta Landini, these types of velvets of varying depths were not produced very often after the fifteenth century, since they required much time and skill to produce, and it became difficult to obtain the custom-manufactured rods used in making the velvet.⁵⁰⁵

Particularly noteworthy of many of the Renaissance velvets was the use of gold thread in their weave. Zambotto twice mentions a *panno d'oro arizato* presented for the Palio of San Giorgio in Ferrara.⁵⁰⁶ *Arizato* is most likely Ferrarese dialect for *aricciano* (curly), referring to a technique used on some Italian velvets woven with gold thread. Landini describes a type of *riccio d'oro* velvet, in which the weaver uses a hook to raise the thread at intervals, forming loops upon the surface of the velvet (fig. 85).⁵⁰⁷ This technique, known as *bouclè* or *allucciotature*, enhanced the color and reflectivity of the velvet. The San Giovanni pivial in the Franchetti is a *bouclè* velvet,⁵⁰⁸ its loops faintly visible in figures 86 and 87. Fanelli writes that during the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the brocade effects on velvets were only made using metallic threads, so they were extremely expensive to manufacture.⁵⁰⁹

Another type of velvet mentioned as the primary material for nineteen banners is *velluto alessandrino*, such as this example made in Florence or Venice in the third quarter of the fifteenth century (fig. 88). This was a blue velvet, probably named for the Egyptian city of Alexandria. Though not as popular as red or crimson for the major palii, it was used at least twice for the Palio of San Giorgio (in 1501 and 1503), once for the Assumption Palio in 1502, once for San Vittorio in 1513, four times for *Carnevale* in Rome, and five times in Bologna for the Palii of San Raffaele and of the Maddalena.⁵¹⁰

Damasco (Damask)

Damask is a silk fabric in which the design and the background are a single weave. The fabric is woven on both sides and is reversible (as opposed to brocade, which is made to be seen only from one side), as seen in this detail of two sides of a fifteenth-century satin damask (fig. 89).⁵¹¹ Its name, *damasco*, derives from the

Syrian city of Damascus where it was originally woven. Damask was used to make some of the less important palio banners, and I have not found any instances of it being used for the Palio of the Assumption or of San Giovanni Battista. It may not have been as costly as brocade (in 1589, it sold for eleven *lire*, fifteen *soldi per braccia*, as opposed to the twenty-two *lire* for the brocade for the Palio of San Giovanni),⁵¹² yet it was still a costly and beautiful fabric.

The earliest instance that I have found of a palio made from this fabric is a green damask palio awarded for San Bernardino in Siena in 1472,⁵¹³ and damask and *damaschini* palii were popular prizes for the palio races in which the *contrade* competed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁵¹⁴ Green damask palii also were awarded at Asti in 1507 and 1511, and at Verona, Imola, Cesena, and Faenza.⁵¹⁵ The Guelph Party in Florence ordered a red damask palio for the Palio dei Cocchi ever since its inception in 1563.⁵¹⁶

Raso (Satin)

Raso derives its name from Arras, an important Flemish center of textile production in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.⁵¹⁷ I have found nineteen instances of palio banners made primarily from satin, most from the inventory of Gonzaga palii in the *Libro dei palii vinti*. These include a crimson palio run in Brescia in 1486, four in Cervia from 1500 to 1510,⁵¹⁸ one of crimson satin for *Carnevale* in Verona of 1501, and one apiece in crimson satin for unspecified saints' days in Padua in 1508 and Florence in 1510.⁵¹⁹ The Gonzaga horses won palii of *raso lionato* in Asti and Bagnacavallo in 1508; *lionato* surely refers to Lyons, a major trading and manufacturing center for cloth.

Teletta

Teletta is among the *auroserici* (gold fabrics) produced in Florence. I have found mention of *teletta* exclusively for the banners made for the Palio of the Rotta (Vittoria da Marciano) held in Florence in the later part of the sixteenth century. A letter of 1556 from the Captain of the Guelph Party mentions a palio of gold *teletta*, costing 238 *lire*, that was seven *braccia* high, made for the previous year's race.⁵²⁰ Payments for a palio of *teletta d'oro tirato* (*teletta* of thrown gold), lined with taffeta, appear frequently.⁵²¹ *Teletta* was characterized by a supplemental weave of gold and silver upon a taffeta base,⁵²² and at around eighteen *lire*, ten *soldi per braccia*,⁵²³ was more costly than damask, but not as expensive, nor heavy, as brocade.

Secondary fabrics

Makers of palio banners also incorporated a number of smooth-surface fabrics, both for the main body of the banner and for secondary use in lining and bands. Florence was especially known for its smooth-weave silks, such as the aforementioned *raso*, *tafettà*, *ermisino*, *teletta*, and *cianbellotino*.⁵²⁴

Tafettà (Taffeta)

Tafettà was probably the most common secondary fabric used in banners as a lining material. It was woven of a fairly light⁵²⁵ and less expensive silk, of a simple weave of two weft and two warp threads.⁵²⁶ In Siena for the palii of the *contrade*, it was used as the primary fabric for palio banners,⁵²⁷ but appears fifty-three times in payment documents as a material for the lining or bands, the earliest reference dating back to 1405, when white taffeta was purchased to make the bands of the scarlet palio.⁵²⁸ The crimson velvet banner awarded in Rome for the horse race of *Carnevale* in 1487 had a green taffeta lining, and the race for mares, made of *pagonazzo*

(peacock) velvet, was lined with red taffeta.⁵²⁹ Payments for the Florentine palii of the sixteenth century regularly list payments for *taffetà per la fodera* (taffeta for the lining). Taffeta was considerably cheaper than the brocades and damasks – in 1589 it sold for five *lire per braccia*⁵³⁰ - and since it was a lighter material, could be used effectively as a lining material without adding additional weight to the already heavy banner.

An interesting footnote about the production of taffeta is that from the Quattrocento onwards, women participated in its weaving. Although female weavers were not large in number until the seventeenth century, they did exist, and Dini notes that in the middle of the Quattrocento, they could earn up to thirty-seven florins per year weaving taffeta. However, these women did not earn nearly as much as their male counterparts, who could earn up to 170 florins per year for weaving brocades.⁵³¹

Zendado (sendal)

Sendal (*zendado*) appears four times in documents as a material used for linings and for the *penoncello* (the top part of the banner), appearing early on in payment documents of the fourteenth and early fifteenth century. The 1321 palio banner of the Assumption had a border of sendal.⁵³² In 1326, there is a payment to Lolo Zendadaio for twenty-three *braccia*, one *quarro* of yellow sendal to line the crimson velvet palio, and two *braccia*, one *quarro* of sendal of *più colori* (more colors) to make the *penoncello*.⁵³³ I am not quite certain whether sendal was a specific type of fabric or was a generic term for a width of fabric, although it may have come originally from Asia Minor.⁵³⁴ *Zendadaio* appears in fifteenth century Sieneese documents to describe the fabric-seller who sold taffeta, sendal, and fringe for the palio banners. Fourteenth-century Luccan textile manufactures mention broad

and narrow sendals in their books of regulations, but the word *sendada* is applied to describe set widths of fabric of other weaves, such as Luccan *taffetà*.⁵³⁵ I have found no mention of sendal after the end of the fifteenth century.

Broccatello

Broccatello appears to have served as a “poor man’s brocade:” it had a silk armature, but the supplemental design weave was made of a less expensive fiber such as linen.⁵³⁶ An example of this fabric is this sixteenth-century chausable (*pianeta*) (fig. 90) belonging to the Selva Contrada, in which the main fabric is *broccatello* and the central section is made from velvet brocade *bouclè*. It was one of the many fabrics produced in Siena in the early sixteenth century,⁵³⁷ and its name suggests that it was used to create the effect of brocade without the expense. It appears twice in the documents as a material for making the frieze of the red velvet Palio of Sant’Alo in 1576, and a *broccatello* frieze of a palio appears in an Onda inventory of 1619.⁵³⁸

Ermisino (Ermisine)

Ermisine was a type of silk used for palio friezes and bands. Ermisine was the heaviest of all silks,⁵³⁹ thus making it impractical for use as the primary fabric for palio banners, so small quantities were used for friezes and bands. Since it was smooth and stiff, it would have been an easy surface upon which artists could paint coats-of-arms and other decorations. It appears ten times in payments for the Florentine palii from 1570 to 1599; the *ermisino per la banda* mentioned for the Palio of San Bernaba of 1589 cost about three florins for one *braccio* of fabric.⁵⁴⁰ The Onda Contrada also listed a frieze of red ermisine from the Palio of the Aquila in their 1592 inventory.⁵⁴¹

Palii for the Foot Races

Since the foot races held in Ferrara and Rome were not intended for participation of the noble classes, cities did not usually use the brocades and damasks intended for the horse races, but used less expensive silks or other types of cloth all together. I have found only one instance of a velvet palio awarded for a foot race, a green velvet banner one *canna* (reed)⁵⁴² in length awarded for the palio of the boys fifteen and younger for *Carnevale* in Rome in 1466.⁵⁴³ But more often, these palii were made of lighter silks and satins: the men's palio in Ferrara for San Giorgio in 1477 and the women's of 1478 was of *seta verde* (green silk),⁵⁴⁴ and the boys' palio in Rome of 1499 was of *rasata verde* (green satin).⁵⁴⁵ And some of these banners were not made of silk at all; the palio of the Jews of 1466 was made of three *canne* of *roccio* (rough fabric),⁵⁴⁶ and the asses', men's, and women's palii in Ferrara in 1488 were made from *pano di lana* (wool cloth).⁵⁴⁷ The women's race of 1490 had a first prize of seven *braccia* of white *pignola*⁵⁴⁸ and a second prize of *fustagno, seu flamegna* (perhaps a type of Flemish silk).

Pattern

Unfortunately, payment documents and historical descriptions of the palio banners do not mention pattern, so I can only speak about surviving examples of actual banners and depictions of the banners. However, an interesting observation can be made about both patterns present in these banners; both derive from motifs originating in the East, in Turkey.

Pomegranate

William Morris and his followers coined the term "pomegranate" motif to describe a pattern popular in Renaissance silk fabrics, and between 1420 and 1550, it

was the most common textile motif in Italy.⁵⁴⁹ “Pomegranate” should be understood loosely as describing a number of different repeating motifs – pomegranates, thistles, or palmettes – seen in various variations in Renaissance fabrics. A page from a 1408 bill of the Florentine *setaiuolo*, Francesco di Marco Datini, includes sketches of some of motifs produced on his fabrics, including the pomegranate/thistle in the upper right hand corner drawn for a gold brocade fabric (fig. 91).⁵⁵⁰

The pomegranate pattern originated in Turkey, where it is still present on embroidered textiles, as a symbol of fertility (fig. 92).⁵⁵¹ When silk-makers in Italy began to use it on brocades and velvet cloth, it acquired significance in the West as a symbol of Resurrection, and is often shown in conjunction with the Virgin,⁵⁵² as seen on this gold brocade cloth behind Vincenzo Foppa’s *Madonna and Child* from 1480. (fig. 93) and the drapery behind the Virgin in Fra Angelico’s *Madonna and Saints* (fig. 94). Brocades and velvets of this pattern became particularly popular among the Ottoman sultans, who ordered and imported large quantities of this cloth from Italy, particularly from Florence.

Fanelli has identified three distinct types of pomegranate-patterned silk cloth produced in Italy during the Renaissance.⁵⁵³ Early patterns (Fanelli Type II) were characterized by a rounded “lobate” motif aligned diagonally or vertically on bifurcated stems (fig. 95).

More difficult to manufacture were the asymmetrical pomegranate weaves (Fanelli Type III), composed of curved lines arranged on a diagonal axis connecting the pomegranates (fig. 71). The third type is an ogival structure (Fanelli Type I), in which the motif appears within a defined trellis (fig. 96), like the pattern depicted on

the palio banner on the Cleveland *cassone*. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, this trellis became even more stylized and defined, as in this *ciselè* velvet processional banner of Sant'Atto, preserved in the Cathedral of Pistoia (fig. 97).

The pattern on the *Priorista* palio banner clearly belongs to this third type, as does the pattern on the brocade banner in the Torre Museum. However, the central portions of the motif in the *Priorista* manuscript have been modified to incorporate the Medici *palle* (balls, on the coat-of-arms) into the pomegranate pattern.

The pomegranate pattern was the most difficult and expensive to weave, and thus, was reserved mainly for the most important occasions or for the clothing of the wealthy and powerful. Artists used the pattern in the context of rulership, such as Giovanni Bellini's portrait in the National Gallery of Art of Giovanni Emo (fig. 98), a high official in the Venetian government, or Bronzino's portrait of Eleonora da Toledo, Grand Duchess of Florence and wife of Cosimo I, in a black-and-white dress decorated with stylized pomegranates in shimmering gold brocade (fig. 99).

Those who saw the pattern upon the brocade and velvet palio banners would have recognized it as expressive of the wealth, magnificence, and power of the city.

Lanceolate

The only other example I have of the pattern used on palio banners is the lanceolate pattern present on the pivial made from the seventeenth-century Palio of San Giovanni (figs. 77, 86, & 87). Like the pomegranate, this pattern originated in the east, in Persia, and is characterized by stylized tendrils that curl outward from a central node.⁵⁵⁴

A “Big Deal”: Size and Dimensions

When I attended the palio in Siena in 1996, the palio banner was one of the few things that I could see clearly from my vantage point in the Piazza del Campo, its height upon the cart making it visible even in the densest of crowds. Likewise in the Renaissance, the height of the palio banners was truly breathtaking, with the largest extending almost twelve meters in height. Because of its exaggerated height, the palio banner towered about the heads of the people on foot and on horseback who participated in the processions, as illustrated in the Bargello *cassone*. As shown in the Uffizi painting, the palio banner greatly exceeded in height all of the smaller tribute banners brought by the tribute communities. Its sheer size not only expressed the dominance of the city that held the palio, but also had the practical function of providing a reference point for the processions. Participants in the offertory processions must have been able to see the banner very clearly even in a crowded street or piazza. Like the *giganti* and *spiritelli* – costumed characters that walked on stilts in the processions – the palio banner increased its visibility by traveling above the heads of the crowd. Since the rules of the palio races often required the winning jockey to touch or ride past the palio banner in order to be declared the winner, the height of the banner would enable them to see the finish clearly.

How do we know the heights of the palio banners? Archival documents, especially payment documents for the palio banners, often note the length in *braccia* of the primary silk fabrics used in making the banner. As a general rule, I believe the height of the banner was half the total length of the fabric purchased as the principal material for the banner. I have come to this conclusion by my discovery that the

width of these fabrics was quite narrow, necessitating the division of the length of fabric into two to form the two bands of the palio. The width of Florentine silk brocades and velvets – the kinds of fabrics popular for palio banners - averaged around one *braccio*, or fifty-eight centimeters, in the fifteenth century.⁵⁵⁵ The pivial in the Franchetti Collection is made from five strips of fabric each fifty-eight cm in width.⁵⁵⁶ We also know from Sieneese documents from this century that the central *fregio* (frieze) served a practical purpose of concealing the seam where two lengths of fabric were stitched together to form the bands.⁵⁵⁷ This is evident, too, in Florence, in 1556, the Palio of San Vittorio seven *braccia* high and was made using fourteen *braccia* of gold *teletta*.⁵⁵⁸ Therefore, we can estimate the height of palio banners by dividing the amount of fabric in half.

Judging from the data I have been able to collect, the tallest palio banners were the ones dedicated to a city's most important feast day – that of the patron saint or protector. In figure 100,⁵⁵⁹ I have displayed data on the number of *braccia* of silk fabric recorded in payment documents for making of the palio banners of the Assumption in Siena (pink line) and that of San Giovanni Battista (blue line) in Florence.

The earliest figure for the San Giovanni palio is twenty-eight *braccia* from 1480, for the probable height of fourteen *braccia*, or 8.12 meters, and this height remained very consistent throughout the sixteenth century, reaching a maximum height of 14 ½ *braccia* (twenty-nine *braccia* of fabric) in 1574. The earliest measurement I have for the cloth for the Assumption banner in Siena is for fifteen *braccia* of fabric in 1333, about 8 ½ *braccia*, or 6.6 meters tall. Over a period of a

century, the amount of fabric used in making the banner grew by leaps and bounds, reaching thirty *braccia* in 1447, for an enormous height of 11.7 meters! Perhaps the sudden increase in the size of the banner can be explained by the expansion of the Sienese silk industry: the Sienese no longer had to pay the hefty duties to import silk from Florence,⁵⁶⁰ and therefore could afford to make larger banners. During the last few decades of the fifteenth century, the Palio of San Giorgio in Ferrara awarded for the horse race was fourteen *braccia* in height.⁵⁶¹

Size was also an indicator of hierarchy and importance. The sizes of the banners for the patronal feasts tended to be bigger than those of more minor saints, and varied also according to the type of race or competition. In the sixteenth century, the Guelph Party, who was charged by the Grand Duke with organizing Florence's palio races, consistently ordered more fabric for the palio races of the Feast of San Giovanni Battista and for the feast day of their own patron saint, San Vittorio, than for banners for other feast days. Their expenses of 1574 record purchase of twenty-nine *braccia* for the Palio of San Giovanni Battista; sixteen for the Palii of the Cocchi (run the eve of the Feast of San Giovanni) and for San Vittorio; but only fourteen *braccia* for the Palio of Vittoria da Marciano and eleven apiece for the Palii of San Bernaba, Santa Reparata, and Sant'Anna.⁵⁶² When cities offered multiple banners as prizes for a number of races, the largest banners were reserved for the races of the *barberi* or for other animals, while smaller banners of less valuable materials were awarded for the other races. In Ferrara, authorities awarded a banner of fourteen *braccia* for the winner of the horse race,⁵⁶³ while the palio banners awarded for the donkeys' race and for the foot races for men and women were only half that size.⁵⁶⁴

This suggests that cities attached the highest prestige to the horse race, in which competed the animals owned by the wealthy and powerful.

Color Hierarchy: The Use of Color in Palio Banners

The cities that commissioned the palio banners also used color to indicate prestige and rank of importance of the palio banner. In figure 101, I show the distribution of the primary colors of the palio banners for which a color is recorded. From this particular sampling, red was by far the most popular color for palio banners, accounting for forty-two percent or 144 banners – almost half of the sampling.⁵⁶⁵ Gold was the second most popular, at seventy-six, or twenty-two percent. This is followed, in descending order, by green (thirty or nine percent), pink (twenty-seven or eight percent),⁵⁶⁶ yellow (nineteen or three percent), white (seven or two percent), and other colors (seventeen or five percent).⁵⁶⁷

Red and Gold

When represented in painting, red and gold cloth signified majesty and authority, in religious and secular contexts. Red and gold cloth appears frequently behind figures seated in majesty, such as the scarlet cloth in Paolo Veneziano's *Coronation of the Virgin* (1324) (fig. 106) in the National Gallery and the gold cloth on the Virgin's throne in Duccio's *Maestà*, (fig. 107) formerly on the altar of Siena's Cathedral. Cardinals and saints were depicted in red robes, such as Antonello da Messina's painting of *Saint Jerome in His Study*, and Pontormo clothed Cosimo de'Medici, *Pater Patriae* of Florence, in red in his posthumous portrait (fig. 105). Not only were these colored charged with this meaning, they were also eye-catching. Red and gold made the palio banners stand out against the buildings and crowds during the processions.

Cities appear to have reserved red and gold for their most important palio banners – those of the feasts of their patron saints. Florence favored gold fabric for the Palio of San Giovanni Battista, as shown in the table in figure 102.⁵⁶⁸ As mentioned earlier, Florence was the premier manufacture of gold silk fabrics. Given that Florence's wealth was founded in a large part on the banking industry, and its minted currency was the gold florin, it is not surprising that they would honor their patron saint with a gold banner.

The Florentines also used red, particularly red velvet brocades, for the Palio of San Giovanni. In the latter part of the sixteenth century, when the Florentine grand dukes entrusted the organizing of palio races to the Guelph Party, other palio banners for major feast days were made of red cloth. The Palio dei Cocchi, run on the eve of the Feast of San Giovanni Battista since its first running in 1563, was made of red damask.⁵⁶⁹ In 1576, the Arte dei Mercanti (Merchants' Guild) paid fifty ducats to have the Palio of Sant'Alò made of red velvet.⁵⁷⁰ Other palii were occasionally made of red cloth: the Palio of Sant'Anna appears twice in Guelph Party records as *panno rosso cremisi* (red crimson cloth),⁵⁷¹ as does the Palio of San Bernaba⁵⁷² and Santa Reparata.⁵⁷³ The Guelph Party's frequent use of red for Florentine palio banners may be due in part to the fact that red and white were its heraldic colors. Therefore, it is appropriate that for eleven out of thirteen recorded payments, San Vittorio, the patron saint of the Party, was honored with a palio of *velluto cremisi*.⁵⁷⁴

Often red and gold appeared in conjunction, with gold thread accenting details on red brocade or velvet, or gold brocade serving as a ground for a surface design in the red velvet. This is particularly evident in the Franchetti piviale made from the

San Giovanni banner, since the design is executed in red velvet against a gold background.

Siena and Ferrara preferred red to honor their patron saints, as shown in the pie charts in figures 103 and 104. Although the earliest recorded color for an Assumption banner in Siena (1317) is gold,⁵⁷⁵ by 1329, there is the first mention of the use of scarlet cloth.⁵⁷⁶ Henceforth, *scarlatto* and *velluto cremisi* (crimson velvet) appear frequently in payment documents and descriptions throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For instance, in 1454, representatives were sent to Florence to purchase five *canne* of *scharlatto* for the banner,⁵⁷⁷ *festaiuoli* placed orders with a silk merchant for crimson velvet in 1500,⁵⁷⁸ and in 1598, ordered *velluto cremisi* from the *setaiuolo* Andrea Armellini.⁵⁷⁹

Red was the preferred color for the Palio of Sant' Ambrogio that was presented each year in the latter part of the sixteenth century to the Church of San Domenico, the home church of Saint Catherine and one of the most important religious institutions in the city. There are six payments over a span of seven years to Armellini for crimson velvet for this palio banner.⁵⁸⁰

Beginning with the Palio of the Assumption of 1419,⁵⁸¹ the Sienese occasionally used *rosado*, or rose-colored silk cloth, instead of the usual crimson. As late as 1602, Armellini was paid for making a *rosado* palio to present to the Cathedral.⁵⁸² Although I am not certain why there was this occasional variation in the banner's color, one possible explanation may be that use of the color rose may have emphasized the iconographic relationship of the rose to the Virgin Mary.⁵⁸³

The D'Este presented palio banners of gold brocade cloth, often crimson gold brocade, to the winners of the horse race of San Giorgio; for instance, the chronicler Zambotto mentions a *pano doro cremisino* (cloth of crimson gold) awarded for the race of 1475 and the awarding of *brocha d'oro* (gold brocade) palio banners for the race of the *barberi* for San Giorgio in the 1490s.⁵⁸⁴ Chronicler Ugo Caleffini mentioned a palio of gold crimson brocade awarded for the Palio of San Bernardino in 1492.⁵⁸⁵

Cities reserved the colors red and gold almost exclusively for the races of the *barberi*, or for courtly competitions such as jousts, arms, and crossbow competitions, in which only the nobles competed.⁵⁸⁶ It is interesting to note that those who participated in these events were predominantly the nobility or wealthy merchants, who could afford to own *barberi* or had the courtly training to compete in jousts. Since cities wished to show off their wealth and prosperity to the wealthy and influential from other cities who ran or competed in the palio, what better way to express this than to award banners of the most expensive gold and crimson brocade, damask, and velvet? Gold and red convey majesty, authority, and power. Fabric of both colors appears often in the clothing of rulers, such as Giovanni Emo (fig. 98) or in Pontormo's posthumous portrait of Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici (fig. 105). Red and gold fabrics also appear often as backdrops in Italian paintings of figures in majesty, such as the scarlet fabric in Paolo Veneziano's *Coronation of the Virgin* in the National Gallery (fig. 106), or the gold fabric covering the Virgin's throne in Duccio's *Maestà* altarpiece (formerly in Siena Cathedral) (fig. 107). Therefore, red

and gold predominate in the palio banners of the horse races, where they greatly outnumber banners of other colors (fig. 108).

There is also a material explanation of the predominance of red for the palio banners of the most important feast days. Vermillion and crimson, along with green and black, were the most frequent colors seen in velvets.⁵⁸⁷ Red cloth was very costly because of the cost of the dye, which came from *grana* or *kermes*, ground-up cochineal insects imported from the East, or from the alum mined at Volterra in Tuscany.⁵⁸⁸ The use of this precious dye is evident in the many references to the *cremisi* velvet, brocade, and damask, and to taffeta and velvet *di grana*.⁵⁸⁹ Therefore, cities would have reserved red brocades and velvets only for the most important events.

The three instances I have been able to find where a red or gold palio were awarded for a competition other than a horse race or a joust/arms competition are for the buffalo and donkey races in Siena and the foot races for men in Rome and Ferrara. In sixteenth-century Siena, the *contrade* began running their own palio races, first with buffalo and then with other animals such as donkeys and later, horses, in emulation of the “official” palio of the Assumption. In particular, the *contrade* popularized the Feast of the Visitation on July 2nd, which honored the Madonna of Provenzano. In aspiring to mimic the Assumption palio, individual *contrade* sponsored races awarding banners of precious materials: Domenico Tregiani writes of the Istrice’s awarding of a gold brocade palio for a buffalo race held on July 2, 1581.⁵⁹⁰ The Torre Contrada sponsored a red velvet palio for a race run with buffalo on July 25, 1599, which was won by the Oca.⁵⁹¹ The only surviving Siennese palio

banner I have been able to locate, a yellow silk lampas banner worked with gold thread, was won by the Torre Contrada for a *bufalata* sponsored by the Onda Contrada in the Campo on August 1, 1599.⁵⁹² Some of these *contrada* palii enjoyed Granducal sponsorship: the Onda Contrada lists in an inventory a red damask palio awarded for a *corso dei somari* (asses' race), sponsored by the Grand Duke himself in 1616.⁵⁹³

In Ferrara and Rome, palii of *panno rosso* (red cloth) were the prizes for the foot races for men as part of the respective feasts of San Giorgio and *Carnevale*. Giovanni Burcardo records such races for Jewish men held in 1487 and 1499,⁵⁹⁴ and prizes for the races of the old men (*vecchi*) of fifty years or older in the same years.⁵⁹⁵ Zambotto and Caleffini record six palio banners awarded between 1475 and 1490 for races of mature men held for the Feast days for San Giorgio and for San Pietro Apostolo.⁵⁹⁶ Zambotto mentions that the men's palio, as well as those of the women and asses, are made from *lana* (wool),⁵⁹⁷ not the precious silk of the banner made for the horse race. Therefore, they were likely of much less monetary value than the banners awarded for the horse races, with the red color being mainly symbolic without the material value. One can detect an element of parody in awarding simple wool and cloth banners for these foot races, as if in recognition of the hierarchy of competitions for these feast days.

While the palio banners for men's races were mainly red in color, those for women, children, and young men were of different colors (fig. 109). Unfortunately I have no information on the color of the women's palio in Rome, but in Ferrara, the palio run for San Giorgio was usually green, although there is one instance of a white

cloth, *pignola bianco*, awarded as a second prize in 1490.⁵⁹⁸ Palio banners for races for young men, teenagers, and children were mainly green or *celeste*, sky blue, with single instances of pink and *cangiante* (changing colors).⁵⁹⁹

There is the most color variety among banners awarded for the buffalo and donkey races (fig. 110), including green, blue, yellow, and white banners.⁶⁰⁰

In summary, red and gold – signifying wealth and authority – predominated among the banners for the patronal feasts. In addition, these colors were usually reserved for the running of the horse race or for other courtly competitions.

Assembling the Palio: the Components of the Palio Banner and the Artists who Made Them

A Collaborative Effort

In *The Building of Renaissance Florence*, historian Richard Goldthwaite analyzes the organization of building projects in Renaissance Florence. Citing the building of the Ospedale of the Innocenti as an example, Goldthwaite presents the common practice during this period of a central committee overseeing the project contracting out the work to various artisans and craftsmen.⁶⁰¹

Today, Siena commissions an artist, either a local or international name, to paint the silk palio banner.⁶⁰² But during the Renaissance, like the building projects described by Goldthwaite, the making of palio banners was a collective effort, involving the participation of a number of specialized artisans. In the way that it was commissioned and made, the palio banner had more in common with the great public building projects of Renaissance Florence, than with other types of workshop-based commissions such as altarpieces or fresco cycles.

As I mentioned earlier in the chapter on the history of the palio, the governing bodies of the city, such as the Sieneſe Balia and Biccherna, appointed *festaiuoli* or *deputati* to oversee the organization of festivals, including the commissioning of palio banners. There is at least one instance of an artist being among those entrusted with this duty; Cecchini notes that in 1416, the Sieneſe painter Taddeo di Bartolo was one of the deputies of the feast.⁶⁰³ These officials, sometimes referred to in documents as *spenditori* (spenders), were authorized to use the government’s money to pay for expenses for the festival, including the banner. For the Palio of the Assumption of 1424 in Siena, the Biccherna reimbursed “Pietro di Nicholo spenditore,” for 780 *lire*, 4 *soldi*, spent on the feast of the Assumption.⁶⁰⁴ A ledger of the Sieneſe Biccherna from 1518 records the reimbursement of an “Antonio da Fagiano spenditore,” for twelve hundred *lire* “spent on the palio of Santa Maria of August...for that which has been spent [for] 30 *braccia* of crimson velvet, for vairs’ [skins], the frieze, bands, *napone*, ribbons, and lion.”⁶⁰⁵ The deliberations of the Balia from the sixteenth century record the electing of a pair of individuals to resolve accounts with the *setaiuolo* that made the banner.⁶⁰⁶

For Florence, I have found only scant information, prior to the mid-sixteenth century, on the appointing or election of officials to organize the feasts and commissioning of the palio. However, I have confirmed that the organization of these feasts was a government-funded undertaking. An entry from 1422, from the exit ledgers of the city’s accounting office, the Camera del Comune, records payment of expenses for the Pali of San Giovanni Battista and San Bernaba and the election of two *deputati* to organize the feast of San Bernaba.⁶⁰⁷ Through limited searching in the

Archivio di Stato in Florence, I have located payments for the Palio of San Giovanni in the exit ledgers of the Camera del Comune for the years 1475, 1477, 1481, 1489, and 1516.⁶⁰⁸ As mentioned in the historical chapter, in the mid-sixteenth century, Grand Duke Cosimo I transferred the duty of organizing the Palio of San Giovanni and other Florentine palii to the officials of the Guelph Party. The books of deliberations of the Party from this period contain *Stanziamenti* (transactions) at the end of each ledger, in which were recorded all together the payments for the palii of the previous year.

The *festaiuoli* and *spenditori* hired artisans, painters, and craftsmen that made the various components of the banner. Many of these payment documents are incredibly detailed, breaking down the payments to artists and craftsmen who worked on components of the palio banner. With this information, it is possible not only to learn the names of the components of the banner and guess at its construction, but it is also possible to learn which types of artisans contributed to the banner's manufacture. To make one banner, the city usually employed the following types of artisans:

- The *setaiuolo* sold the city the length of brocade, damask, velvet, or other material used to make the banner. In some instances, the *setaiuolo* also did the assembly of the banner, or made all of its components, but most often, this was entrusted to other people. *Setaiuoli minuti* specialized in making smaller items, such as ribbons and fringes, or sections of the palio, such as the *nappone* at the top of the banner.⁶⁰⁹
- The city paid a *banderaio* or *banditore* (banner-maker) to make the components of the banner, such as the central frieze, the *nappone*, and other

items. Sometimes more than one *banderaio* was paid for work on a particular banner, suggesting that certain workshops specialized in certain items, necessitating the hiring of more than one artisan.

- The gold for decorating the banners and gold thread (*filato*) came from the shops of the *battilori*, or gold beaters, or the *orefici* (goldsmiths).
- Carpenters and wood-workers (*maestri di legname*) made the *asta* of the palio and the finial on top, and also constructed and repaired the palio cart.
- The city employed artists (referred to often as *dipentori* in the documents) for a number of tasks, including the painting of the coats-of-arms on the bands of the palio, gilding and painting of the finial and *asta*, and of the palio cart.

Like the *banderai*, often more than one painter was hired.

- A *pellicciaio* or *vairai* supplied the furs to line the banner, and often also assembled the lining and sometimes the banner itself. Sometimes the city purchased the fur and other luxury items from a banker (*banchiere*).
- A *zendadaio* (sendal-seller), sold fabric used to line the palio or decorate the bands.

In Siena, the names of artists and artisans frequently reappear in payment documents over a period of decades, showing that the organizers of the feast tended to hire the same people year after year.⁶¹⁰ During the second half of the sixteenth century, the Sienese Balìa hired *setaiuoli* to make the banners of the Assumption, including the ones presented to churches (one for the Assumption, presented to the Duomo, and another for San Domenico, presented for the feast of Sant' Ambrogio Sansedoni). The Balìa worked with certain *setaiuoli* over a period of years:

Michelangelo di Salvador was hired four times between 1569 and 1585,⁶¹¹ Salvador Pini seven times between 1578 and 1592,⁶¹² Andrea Armellini fourteen times between 1598 and 1604,⁶¹³ Francesco Lunari twice, in 1582 and 1591,⁶¹⁴ and Camillo d'Agnolo Fini once in 1581.⁶¹⁵

Unfortunately, I do not have very much information on the artists hired in Florence, since I have only a few payment documents from the fifteenth century, and the payment ledgers from the sixteenth century of the Guelph Party rarely list the names of the artists and artisans in the payment documents.

For the Sienese documents, it is difficult to identify the painters named in the documents with the names of artists active during this period, since the payments usually only give the artists' first names with the generic suffix, *dipentore*. However, I made an exciting discovery in the Florentine archives: among the payments for the Palio of San Giovanni for 1516 there is mention of Francesco di Cristifano, the given name of the painter, Francabigio (1484-1525), who painted "two large arms" on the bands of the palio as well as the *asta* and the Florentine lily.⁶¹⁶ Francabigio was a contemporary of Andrea del Sarto and Pontormo, and worked with these two artists on decorating the Medici villa at Poggio a Caiano.⁶¹⁷ Pontormo himself worked on painting decorations for the feast of San Giovanni; attributed to him are six panels depicting scenes from the life of San Giovanni Battista (Visitation, Baptism of Christ, San Giovanni Battista, San Giovanni Evangelista, San Matteo, and San Zenobi) and seven small panels showing the games of putti.⁶¹⁸ (figs. 111-23) These panels were painted around 1514 to decorate the cart of the Zecca, which paraded in the Procession of the Offering, and an illustration of the cart or its successor appears in

the *Priorista* manuscript, which some scholars have pointed to when attempting to reconstruct the placement of the panels (fig. 27). The cart of the Zecca during this period was designed by the artist Cecca, who, according to Vasari, designed much of the ephemera for Florentine civic festivals.⁶¹⁹

During the Renaissance, artists like Francabigio painted a number of works on fabric for ceremonies and processions, and this sort of work was part of their training. In his handbook for craftsmen, Cennino Cennini included a section on painting and gilding silk (*zendado* – sendal – a type of silk), in which he described stretching the fabric onto which a gesso ground and mordant (for gilding) were applied. Cennini recommended varnishing the painted cloth since “sometimes these banners, which are made for churches, get carried outdoors in the rain.”⁶²⁰

Hopefully, further search of payment documents in Florence, Siena, and other Italian cities in which the palio was run will yield more names of artists and painters who worked on this ephemera. The participation of artists such as Francabigio, Cecca, and Pontormo in the making of the ephemera for the patronal feasts shows that the festival organizers regularly hired trained professionals, not just run-of-the-mill painters and craftsmen, to decorate the palio banner. As shown by Cennini’s handbook, learning how to make ephemera was part of artistic training, so most artists, even the most celebrated, would have participated in making festival decorations.

Reconstructing the Banner

Through comparing the few images of palio banners with written descriptions and details of payment documents, I have attempted to reconstruct the appearance of

the Renaissance palio banner. Figure 124 shows the components of a “typical” Renaissance palio banner made for a major feast day such as the Festival of the Assumption in Siena and that of San Giovanni Battista in Florence. The *asta*, or pole, is attached by cords or strings to the banner at its left edge, and is topped by a painted finial. Two cords, or *cordoni*, are attached to the *asta* to help control the vertical movement of the banner and to steady it. A central *fregio*, or frieze, divides the banner into two vertical *bande*, or bands. A stiff band, known as the *nappone* or *pennoncello*, transects the banner horizontally at the top, with the end of the *nappone* overhanging the edge of the banner. The inside of the banner is lined with a *fodera*, or lining, consisting of hundreds of vair or ermine pelts or a silk fabric such as taffeta. I do not know for certain what was on the reverse side of the banner, but since many brocades and velvets were woven to be seen only from one side, I suspect that there was some sort of backing of less expensive cloth.

Since I have no images of Sienese palio banners to work from, I have used a payment document from 1424 for the Palio of the Assumption to guide me in creating a reconstructive drawing of how this palio banner might have appeared (fig. 125). In Appendix I, I have reproduced the text of the payment document (as best I could transcribe it) in the original Italian, with a summary in English of each payment.

For this particular palio banner, nine craftsmen were involved in its making, while three other people were employed in obtaining cloth from Florence. A carpenter, Vincenzo de Nanni made the *asta* for the palio. Three painters were hired for various tasks: Lorenzo di Leonardo painted the *asta* and the lion finial, while Pirasso di Fienofino and Nicho di Lucca painted a coat-of-arms (*schudo delle arme*)

and also painted the pennants of the musicians of the Palazzo Pubblico. Bartolomeo di Ghinuzzo, a *zendadaio*, received money for black and white taffeta, for putting up the *asta*, for the frieze of the palio of Venetian gold, and for cords for the palio, as well as fringes and cords for the musician's pennants. He was also the one responsible for the *fattura* or making of the banner.

The banner was made of *scarlatto* – red silk or silk velvet – and had the lion, one of the symbols of Siena, painted on the top of the banner and as the carved finial. Since the lion insignia often appears alongside the black-and-white *balzana*, as shown on the façade of Palazzo Pubblico in this painting depicting the preaching of San Bernardino (fig. 126), I have included the *balzana* at the top of the banner. I do not know for certain what other arms might have been included, so I have made loose sketches of other city insignia [the Virgin enthroned between two angels, the *lupa* – symbol of the believed foundation of the city as a Roman colony, the *balzana*, and the old city insignia showing a castle (see figure 130)] that appear in the border of Simone Martini's *Maestà* in Palazzo Pubblico (fig. 137). I am also not certain what arms might have appeared on the *fregio*, so I have left them blank.⁶²¹

The Comune paid a Renaldo di Vanni di Salvi “Banchiere” (banker) for 756 vairs' skins for the palio. The furrier Francesco di Dino received money for the *cucitura* (sewing) of the palio, probably for attaching the fur lining. The banker Cecco di Tomasso and his brother received money for the scarlet cloth bought in Florence from the Company of Nicholo e Combio di Medio, probably a silk-dealer or manufacturer. Lastly, the city reimbursed a palace employee, Giacomo di Lorenzo “for his effort in going and returning from Florence for the cloth of the palio.”

It is interesting to note the involvement of the bankers in obtaining the more costly items such as the cloth and the vairs' skins. As mentioned earlier in my discussion of the silk industry in Florence, bankers were heavily involved in the silk industry since they had both the capital to finance the enormous start-up costs of a silk workshop and also had the business connections in multiple cities that aided in the selling of the finished product. It is likely that the bankers mentioned in this document used their connections in Florence to obtain the scarlet cloth. Bankers were also involved in the sale of fur; Turrini notes that for the 1489 Palio of the Assumption, Siena purchased the fur for the banner from the commercial company of Lorenzo de' Medici, whose family's fortune was founded upon banking.⁶²²

Asta, Finial, and Giglio

At heights of up to fifteen *braccia*, palio banners must have been unwieldy objects, and had to be secured to an *asta*, or pole.⁶²³ The *asta* can be clearly seen in the Cleveland *cassone*, along the left side of the banner. Four loops of gold cord appear around the length of the *asta*, attaching it to the banner. In the Uffizi painting (fig. 127), there are gold ribbons on the *asta*, and the left edge of the palio banner nearest the *asta* appears slightly scalloped, suggesting that the fabric has been tied to the pole along several points. The *asta* was mounted on the palio cart, and visible on the Cleveland *cassone* (fig. 40), right below the man in red holding one of the ropes, is a joint that allowed the *asta* to be pivoted forward, towards the oncoming horses. Since the palio races in some cities required the winning jockey to touch the banner in order to be declared the winner, it would have been necessary to lower it within reach of the contestants.

In both the Cleveland *cassone* and in the *Priorista* manuscript (figs. 40 & 27), two attendants stand in the palio cart holding onto two ropes secured to the top of the banner. By hanging onto the ropes, the attendants could attempt to control the banner's vertical and horizontal sway. Since it was often made of heavy velvet, brocade, or damask fabric, and was lined with several hundred ermine skins, the banner must have been quite heavy, making it necessary to use the cart to transport it.

Usually the *festaiuoli* hired one artisan to make the *asta* out of wood, and another to paint it. Another ledger from 1424 records payment of two *lire*, four *soldi* to a "Messer Vincenti di Nanni Maestro di Legniamе," a master carpenter, for the *asta* of the Palio of the Assumption, and another payment three months later of seventy-four *soldi* to a "Nanni di Grosseto Maestro d Legniamе" for the *asta* of the Palio of San Pietro Alessandrino.⁶²⁴ The same document records a payment of nine *lire* to a "Lorenzo di Leonardo depintore" for painting the *asta* of the palio and the lion at the top.⁶²⁵ Apparently the artisan often made the *aste* for several banners at one time, as an early Sienese ledger from 1326 mentions paying "Vanucio di Nicholucio barlettaio per quattro *asti*....e per una grande *aste* per lo palio," (Vanucio di Nicholucio the Barrel-maker for four *asti*, and for one large one for the palio).⁶²⁶ Florentine *aste* were also painted, as a 1481 account ledger records a payment to a "Cesare Sannus Pictore" (Cesare Sanno the Painter) for painting of the *asta*.⁶²⁷ The *asta* shown in Bargello and Cleveland *cassoni* is a dark blue or black, in the *Priorista* manuscript, it is gold, and the *asta* in the Uffizi painting is red. In 1516, the *asta* was painted red and decorated with *gigli* (lilies).⁶²⁸

A finial of civic significance appeared at the top of the *asta*: the one on the Cleveland and Bargello *cassoni* appears to be a lily, the symbol of Florence, and the illustration of the seventeenth century palio banners in the *Priorista* manuscript illustration and Uffizi painting show a miniature figure of Saint John the Baptist atop the palio banner, a finial used on the San Giovanni palio as far back as the early sixteenth century (figs. 127 & 27).⁶²⁹ For example, in 1405 and again in 1413, Siena paid a *Maestro Lando* for painting a rearing lion on the palio, which was the symbol of the Popolo. The Sieneese documents of the fourteenth and fifteenth century repeatedly mentions that the lion⁶³⁰ – a civic symbol of the Popolo, or people⁶³¹ atop the *asta* - was made of wood,⁶³² and Cecchini notes that the famous woodcarver, Domenico di Niccolo dei Cori, carved the lion on the 1429 Assunta palio.⁶³³ The *contrade* may have made their finials out of cheaper materials; the Onda Contrada recorded in a 1592 inventory “Un aste grande dipenta rossa e gialla cor un'aguila di chartone, guasta, che s'ebbe col sopradetto palio (a large *asta* painted red and yellow with an eagle of cardboard, broken, that we had with that above-mentioned palio),” won probably in the 1581 palio sponsored by the Aquila Contrada.⁶³⁴ Perhaps this finial was made of papier-mache instead of wood.

In Florence, payment documents regularly record expenses for making the *giglio*, or lily.⁶³⁵ On the Cleveland *cassone* (fig. 40), a figure in red (probably a Comune official) on the palio cart holds a red pole topped by a gilded lily. The lily, this time painted red and surmounted by a crown (signifying Medici rule) accompanies the palio banner and is held aloft by one of the attendants on the cart.

The *Carro* or Cart of the Palio

Because of the immense weight of the palio, it was usually carried upon the *carro*, or cart. The *carro* is clearly visible on the left-hand side of the Cleveland *cassone*, positioned at the finish of the Palio of San Giovanni in Piazza San Pier Maggiore (fig. 39). This particular cart was large enough to accommodate a number of people, and serves here as a temporary platform from which members of the government could watch the finish and from which the trumpeters of the city could perform (fig. 40). The cart is painted blue and decorated with the coats-of-arms of the city and of the Guelph party, and a red and white striped skirt partially conceals the wheels. Gilded lions, symbols of the Florentine Republic, decorate the front corners of the cart, and these are also visible on the cart shown in the Sala del Gualdrada fresco (fig. 18)⁶³⁶ The *Priorista* illustration (fig. 27) shows a slightly smaller cart, drawn by two horses, but bearing the same arms of the Popolo on its side within painted panels separated by gilded caryatids, and additional arms, including the *palle* of the Medici grand dukes, decorate the billeted skirt. It appears that this type of skirt was common on processional carts and floats during the Renaissance; it appears on the float of Venus shown in the scene almost directly above the depiction of the palio race, on the walls of the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara (fig. 128).

Payment documents in the Florentine archive include payments from 1516 to a blacksmith for the *ferramenti* (hardware) of the cart, to a carter for drawing the cart in the procession, and to a carpenter, Antonio Bustasasso, for accompanying the cart, perhaps to oversee any possible difficulties with its functioning.⁶³⁷ It is not said whether this carpenter worked on the construction for the cart, but considering that

carpenters and woodworkers were paid to make the *asta* for the palio, it is likely that they also made the cart.

Siena also used a cart to carry the Palio of the Assumption, although there is no visual evidence as to what it looked like, and the documentary evidence is sketchy as to the cart's appearance. Cecchini notes that the payment documents for the fifteenth century record the periodic expenses for repairing the palio cart and constructing a new one. When it was rebuilt in 1453, the city hired artists to paint the cart gold, silver, and blue.⁶³⁸ In the early fifteenth century, Cecchini identifies the palio cart as the "cart of Angels" described in city documents, on which children dressed as angels rotated on a device, and says that in 1438, it was replaced with a "chariot of Love."⁶³⁹ One can only speculate that the cart may have borne some resemblance to the elaborate chariots of love depicted on birth trays and marriage chests, such as these Florentine birth trays from the mid-fifteenth century showing Cupid atop a chariot of love (fig. 129). These fanciful depictions by artists of carts and floats must have been based, at least in part, upon the carts they would have seen on feast days on the streets of their cities.

Penoncello

At the top of the banner, complementing the vertical axis of the frieze, was a horizontal band that was also decorated. This element is clearly visible in the sixteenth century palio banner in the Torre museum, and though it is difficult to see in the photograph, the fabric used is a different pattern than that used in the rest of the banner. In all of the painted depictions of the palio banner, this top band overhangs the right-hand edge of the banner, probably by several feet. I have identified this element as the *penoncello* mentioned in payment documents.⁶⁴⁰ *Penoncello* translates

literally as “little pennant.” One can imagine the overhanging end of the *penoncello* swaying and flapping about in the wind, like the myriad pennants commissioned by the city for the festival day. The word *penoncello* disappears from the payment documents after 1347, so I am not absolutely certain what this part of the banner was called after this time. However, the word *nappone* – literally “big ribbon” – appears often in both Sieneese and Florentine documents, often in its singular form, and in the records of the Guelph Party, *nappone* occurs with frequency in lists of elements included in the payments for the banners.⁶⁴¹

I believe that the *penoncello* must have also had some sort of structural function in holding the palio banner erect. In 1326, the Sieneese paid “for two *braccia* and a *quarro* of sendal of many colors to make the *penoncello* at the top of the palio, costing eighteen *soldi*.”⁶⁴² For the Palio of San Giovanni of 1599, there is a payment for “1 ½ *braccia* of red and pagonazzo velvet at 19 *lire* per *braccia* for making the pocket that goes on the pole (*stile*) of the said palio.”⁶⁴³ Although this description is open to interpretation, it is easy to imagine that the velvet could have been used to fabricate the *penoncello*, with a *tascha* (pocket) at one end into which the *asta* could be inserted. If the velvet were doubled up in making the *penoncello*, its stiffness would help keep the banner aloft and prevent it from slumping downwards. In addition to providing some structural support, the color and/or fabric used for the *penoncello* contrasted against the fabric of the rest of the banner, clearly seen in the blue band at the top of the palio banners on the Cleveland and Bargello *cassoni* and in the Uffizi painting.

Fregio (Frieze)

The central vertical band, called the *fregio*, served two purposes: it covered the central seam where the two lengths of fabric were joined, and it also had a decorative function.⁶⁴⁴ Goro Dati describes the banner of the Palio of San Giovanni as being “of crimson velvet, in two palii, and between one and the other a frieze of gold one palm in width.”⁶⁴⁵ I interpret this to mean that the banner was made from two lengths of fabric, which were joined together in the middle by the frieze.

The frieze was usually placed only on one face of the banner. I have come to that conclusion by looking at the lengths of the friezes described in payment documents. Whenever the lengths of the *fregio* are recorded in payment documents, they are usually the same as the height of the banner (half of the length of fabric purchased).⁶⁴⁶ If the frieze were to be applied to both sides, it would have been necessary to order twice that length of frieze. However, one interpretation of a 1464 deliberations of the Sienese Biccherna over the Palio of the Assumption indicates that the frieze appeared on both faces of the banner.⁶⁴⁷ This is certainly a question that needs further investigation, and I hope to find further descriptions of friezes that would clarify their placement.

For the most precious palio banners, gold and metallic thread was used in making the *fregio*. For the 1477 Palio of San Giovanni, Filippo Antonio Mochi received payment for a gold frieze (*uno fregio de auro*).⁶⁴⁸ The visual evidence supports the archival information, as the artist of the Cleveland and Bargello *cassoni* has stamped the gold leaf applied to represent the frieze of the banner to suggest this gold braid. The *fregio* was expensive to make, since the materials had to be purchased from *battilori*, or gold beaters; a 1481 document for the Palio of San

Giovanni shows that 249 florins were paid to a “Andrea Arrighieri battilori” for the *filato* (gold braid)⁶⁴⁹ used to make the frieze.⁶⁵⁰ This term *battilori* is particularly significant in the history of the silk industry in Florence: as Dini writes, the *battilori* workshops made the *auroserici*, or gold silks, for which Florence would become internationally known, and by 1472, there were thirty such workshops in the city.⁶⁵¹

Festaiuoli could order the frieze from artisans specializing in the making of such items, such as the professional upholsterers who made the frieze of the Palio of the Assumption in 1464,⁶⁵² or the *banderaio* (banner-maker) hired to make the frieze of the 1599 Palio of San Vittorio.⁶⁵³ In Florence, the *banderai* had their shops in the Via dei Tavolini (Street of the Tables), named for the tables where these craftsmen displayed their wares.⁶⁵⁴

But in some instances, they hired nuns in convents and other religious institutions to make the frieze. In 1485, Siena paid 296 *lire* to a “Madonna dello Spedale” (possibly a nun from the Ospedale of Santa Maria della Scala, one of Siena’s major civic institutions),⁶⁵⁵ 263 *lire* of this for the gold itself, but only thirty-three for the actual assembly. For the 1489 Palio of San Giovanni Battista, there is a payment of forty-one *lire* to nuns of the Monastery of Le Murate for making the frieze.⁶⁵⁶ In 1516, the organizers in Florence paid thirty-two *lire* and sixteen *soldi* to the nuns of Le Murate for making the gold frieze for the Palio of San Giovanni.⁶⁵⁷ The nuns of Le Murate were famous during the Renaissance for their embroidery.⁶⁵⁸

Although the use of gold on palio banner friezes was most common on the palii of the patron saints, gold was also used on less important banners, such as the Palii of the Cocchi and of San Vittorio in Florence.⁶⁵⁹ Sometimes, in the place of

gold, other fabrics would be used to make the frieze; for the Palio of Sant'Alo of 1564,⁶⁶⁰ the red velvet palio had a frieze of *brochatello*, a type of silk cloth known for its delicate surface designs created by a supplementary weave on the surface of the cloth,⁶⁶¹ and in Siena, the frieze for a palio awarded for a *bufalata* of 1650 was white against crimson damask.⁶⁶²

Armi or *Scudiuoli* (Coats-of-Arms)

Small coats-of-arms were often placed along the *fregio* or on the top part of the banner, the *nappone*, or were painted directly onto the fabric of the bands.⁶⁶³ Arms are visible on the *fregio* of the palio banner on the Cleveland *cassone* (fig. 40), along the *nappone* of the banner on the Bargello *cassone*, and along both the *fregio* and *nappone* of the banner in the *Priorista* manuscript (fig. 27).

In Florence, the *armi* in most cases were symbols of the city and its various offices or political bodies. I have not been able to identify the arms on the *fregio* of the Cleveland *cassone*, but the arms on the *nappone* of the banner on the Bargello *cassone* (fig. 32) (from left to right) are of the following: a white cross on red, probably the symbol of the Popolo, one of the governing bodies of the Florentine government; the red lily against a white background, symbol of the city of Florence;⁶⁶⁴ the red eagle of the Guelph Party;⁶⁶⁵ and the crossed keys of Saint Peter. The device of the Popolo, and possibly that of the lily, appear on the *nappone* of the banner in the *Priorista* manuscript.⁶⁶⁶

By the addition of new coats-of-arms in the sixteenth century, the Palio of San Giovanni reflected the change in the Florentine government, from Republic to Granducal rule. The Medici grand dukes added their own coats-of-arms to the palio

banner alongside those of the city, and also those of the Hapsburg emperors which had put them in power.⁶⁶⁷

In Siena, coats-of-arms were also placed along the central *fregio* or at the very top of the bands. A payment document from 1326 specifies payment for seven *isquidi* (coats-of-arms) placed down the center of the banner,⁶⁶⁸ and another of 1438 records payment to a Giovanni D'Angniolo for the *scudiuogli*.⁶⁶⁹ Cecchini records that among the eighteen arms on the banner of the Palio of the Assumption of 1454 was the *balzana*, the black and white symbol of the city of Siena, and the lion, symbolic of the Popolo (people) (fig. 130).⁶⁷⁰ Historian Sigismondo Tizio records that in 1457, when the Sieneese were politically aligned against the Holy Roman Emperor, they replaced the silk imperial eagle on the top of the banner with the *lupa*, the she-wolf symbol of the Sieneese Republic.⁶⁷¹ Both Cecchini and Turrini cite a 1464 deliberations of the Biccherna, in which officials determined regulations for the length and width of the frieze as well as the coats-of-arms to be included: the frieze was to be fifteen *braccia* in length, with fourteen coats-of-arms, seven on each side, including the arms of the Comune, the Popolo, and of the Holy Roman Emperor.⁶⁷² It appears that the number of arms on the Assumption banner remained constant for some time, since a 1481 document records payment for fourteen coats-of-arms.⁶⁷³

Outside of Florence and Siena, I do not know very much about which arms were included on palio banners, except that the Palio of San Giorgio in Ferrara carried the arms of the Este family.⁶⁷⁴

There were several ways of making the arms that were placed on the *fregio* and *nappone*. Sometimes the city hired artisans to embroider the arms directly onto

the frieze. For the Palio of San Giovanni Battista, thirty-seven florins were paid to embroider ten *scudi* onto the frieze,⁶⁷⁵ and in 1599, a payment was made to a banner-maker for the frieze and *per ricamarci sopra l'arme* (for embroidering the arms on top).⁶⁷⁶ In Siena, Cecchini records that a woman, Orsina da Boccane, was hired in 1454 to embroider the eighteen arms for the Palio of the Assumption.⁶⁷⁷ In Florence in 1516, the *festaiuoli* paid a “Mona dea Nichemas(?)” for making ten *scudiccioli* for the Palio of San Giovanni.⁶⁷⁸ An example of gold thread embroidery can be seen in the cross embroidered on the green velvet in the upper portion of the *paliotto* illustrated as figure 84.

The term *appiccata* (attached or applied) occurs in payments for sixteenth-century palio banners, suggesting that sometimes the arms were made separately and attached to the frieze, somewhat like embroidered badges that can be sewn onto clothing.⁶⁷⁹ Unfortunately none of the arms from the sixteenth-century survive, but later versions give us some ideas of how they might have appeared and what materials were used to make them. Borgia has published two imperial crowns and four coats-of-arms that were taken off the Palio of San Giovanni Battista in 1748 (figs. 78-80). The devices of the Grand Duke of Florence, the Grand Duchess of Tuscany, Emperor Rudolf II and the King of Spain were painted onto a shield made of silk, surrounded by a frame of embroidered velvet.⁶⁸⁰

Bande (Bands)

I believe that the *bande* repeatedly mentioned in the payment documents were the two vertical lengths of cloth on either side of the frieze. These, too, were a field for decoration, and often included coats-of-arms or other decoration carrying heraldic meaning. Cities hired artists to paint the bands of the palio. Looking closely at the

very top of the palio banner depicted in the Bargello *cassone*, on either side of the frieze, it is possible to discern the outlines in the red bole (ground to which the gilding was applied) of one, and possibly two, oval coats-of-arms. These outlines indicate that the artist had meant to represent painted arms, but possible paint loss prevents us from seeing what they represented.

Because most payment documents mention only one frieze, I believe that most palio banners were divided into only two bands. However, in the late sixteenth and into the seventeenth centuries, some banners may have been fabricated with more than two bands. The banner next to the palio cart (perhaps a secondary banner presented to the Baptistery?) in the Uffizi painting (fig. 127) is divided by three friezes into four bands. And the Torre banner (figs. 43 & 44) is also divided by strips of ribbon into four narrow bands.

The archival evidence from both Florence and Siena documents the regular practice of hiring painters to paint the bands of the palio banner. Sometimes the artist was the same person who painted the *asta* and finial of the palio. In 1438, Siena paid Vico the Painter, who had also decorated the *asta* and finial, to also paint the lion of the Popolo on the bands of the palio.⁶⁸¹ In 1480, Florence paid a painter by the name of Cesare Sanno a total of 130 *lire* to paint ten coat-of-arms apiece on the bands of the Palii of San Giovanni and San Bernaba. He also painted 1795 gold lilies on the San Giovanni banner, and 960 on that of San Bernaba!⁶⁸² In 1489, Siena paid two artists for painting the bands of the Palio of Sant' Ambrogio,⁶⁸³ and in 1500, paid "Antonio dipentore" eighteen *lire* for painting the bands.⁶⁸⁴ And throughout the second half of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the

ledgers of the Guelph Party regularly record payments for painting, and sometimes gilding,⁶⁸⁵ the bands.

Documents also record numerous payments to *setaiuoli* and banner-makers for cloth for the bands of the palio. In 1419, there is a payment to Agniolo di Maestro Vanni Zondadaio for black-and-white taffeta (the colors of the *balzana*) for the bands of the Palio of the Assumption.⁶⁸⁶ Cities often paid a *banderaio* (banner-maker) for the bands of the palio, such as a Tommaso *banderaio* in 1480.⁶⁸⁷ and an Antonio *Banderaio* paid in 1489.⁶⁸⁸ In 1481, the *setaiuoli* Pietro Bertaldo di Corsini received a payment for nine *braccia* of Alexandrian taffeta for the bands,⁶⁸⁹ and Jacopo di Bonammi Piero and company received a payment for cloth “for the bands of the Palio of San Bernaba.”⁶⁹⁰ Three *braccia* of *taffetta pagonazzo* (peacock-colored taffeta), was used for the bands of the 1599 Palio of San Vittorio.⁶⁹¹ I have wondered why the organizers of the palio would pay for additional silk taffeta cloth for the bands when they were already spending so much on the damask, brocade, and velvet to make the banner itself. Originally I thought that the taffeta might have been used as a backing for the palio banner, but since the lengths of fabric purchased for the bands are rather short in comparison to the length of the fabrics used to construct the banner (nine *braccia* of taffeta vs. twenty *braccia* of velvet for the 1481 San Giovanni palio; three *braccia* of taffeta vs. sixteen *braccia* of velvet for the 1599 San Vittorio palio), it is unlikely that there was enough of it to use for a backing, so it may have been used as some sort of accent or border, or as a surface upon which artists could paint the arms. At the bottom of a list of expenses for the Palio of San Giovanni in 1589 is

perpignano, a type of inexpensive wool cloth, which perhaps served as a backing material.⁶⁹²

Fodera (Lining)

In the Cleveland *cassone* (fig. 40), just barely visible to the right of the figure in black holding one of the ropes, the lower corner of the palio banner is turned back, revealing several black-tipped ermine skins suspended from the lining of the palio banner.⁶⁹³ In the *Priorista* manuscript (fig. 27), the lower corner of the banner is also turned back, showing a lining of skins rectangular in shape, and the accompanying inscription reads that the banner is “lined everywhere with vair.”⁶⁹⁴ Throughout the history of the palio, the lining, or *fodera*, which was partially hidden on the back of the fabric (assuming that there was some sort of backing) was made up of hundreds of ermine and vairs’ skins.⁶⁹⁵ One can imagine that the hundreds of dangling skins shimmered and waved about as the banner was carried through the streets of the city, enticing viewers to marvel at its opulence, like the lining of a gown of a wealthy woman.

The pelts used on the palio banners were luxury items. The skin most frequently used to line the palio was vair, the highly-prized pelt of a member of the Russian or Siberian squirrel. The fur of this animal is bluish-gray, and the underside white.⁶⁹⁶ Vincenzo Borghini wrote that in Florence, vair was reserved by law only for the *vestimenti* (clothing) of the most important citizens, such as “Cavalieri, e Dottori, e persone di grado (knights, doctors, and people of status)” and that it was also the symbol of one of the seven guilds, the Arti di Vaiai, which at one time surpassed even the silk and wool guilds in stature. Vair also appeared as a symbol of

status on coats-of-arms, such as that of the Ugo family reproduced by Borghini (fig. 131).⁶⁹⁷

Payments for ermine skins appear less frequently, probably due to the high expense of this fur, and cities usually reserved ermine pelts for the more important palio banners, or used in combination with vair skins.⁶⁹⁸ The fur of the ermine, a type of weasel, turns white only in winter, and its pelts were particularly prized in the Renaissance as lining material for garments. Ermine lined the clothing of those in power, such as the state robes of the Venetian doges. Ermine was also a symbol of purity, as it was said that the ermine would rather die than soil its own fur.

During the Renaissance, pelts were often used as wall coverings, probably to help insulate against drafts, such as depicted in this fresco by Domenico di Bartolo in the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala in Siena, showing the care of the sick (fig. 132). Pelts also lined the walls of bedrooms and birthing chambers, as shown in this birth tray (fig. 133).

The practice of lining silk fabrics with skins is not exclusive to the palio, as evidenced by images from ceremonial contexts. Fur pelts line the baldachin under which Piero della Francesca's *Madonna del Parto* stands in the fresco at Sant Maria a Momentana in Monterchi (fig. 134).⁶⁹⁹ This birth tray from mid-fifteenth century Florence shows a Chariot of Love covered by drapery lined with ermine pelts (fig. 135).⁷⁰⁰

The sheer numbers of skins (*pancie*) used were staggering. In figure 136, I charted the numbers of skins recorded in documents for the two premier palii of Florence and Siena. Although early banners used only a few hundred skins, over a

period of two-and-three-quarters centuries, each city used an average of 693 skins per palio banner! Siena reached an all-time height in 1438, when it used 1450 vairs' skins for the Palio of the Assumption!⁷⁰¹ Florence never used quite as many as Siena for the Palio of San Giovanni Battista, but it reached its upper limit in 1593 when 756 vairs' skins and seventy-six ermine skins were purchased, for a grand total of 822.⁷⁰²

The festivals' organizers often ordered the skins through a banking firm, or directly from a *pellicciaio*, or furrier, or *vaiario* (vair-seller)⁷⁰³ who sometimes was also the one responsible for the *cucitura*, or sewing of the banner, as was a Francesco di Dino mentioned in the 1424 payments for the Assumption palio.⁷⁰⁴ The Sienese Biccherna often had to authorize the ordering of furs for the banner from Florence, as there was not always enough in Siena itself,⁷⁰⁵ and often paid the expenses for the travel to Florence to purchase the banners. One payment document from 1405 tells of the trouble and expense put into obtaining these materials:

Payment of August 5th for the palio offered for the festival of Santa Maria of mid-August, 75 florins, 22 *lire*, 11 *soldi* for 18 *braccia* of *scharlatto* bought in Florence for 8 florins a *canna*, and for 600 vairs' skins bought in Florence at 6 florins less 1/6 *canna*?, and for taxes for the vairs' skins in Florence of 1 florin per invoglio, and tax for the *scharlatto* of 22 *soldi*, and for transport 15 *soldi*, and one florin in expenses to Angiolo di Maestro Amerigo, and for 25 vairs' skins owed to Ventura di Fede 1 florin, 44 *soldi*...⁷⁰⁶

The skins were probably either sewn to the inside of the banner or glued; the payment for the 1500 Assumption palio to is for the *colazione* (*colla* in modern Italian is “glue”) of the skins to the bands.⁷⁰⁷

The weight of 1400+ skins hanging from the palio banner must have made it an extremely heavy object. In the Bargello *cassone*, the banner as it is being presented to the Baptistery of San Giovanni is held aloft by a gentleman riding a caparisoned

horse, so it must have been possible at this time to remove the *asta* of the palio from the cart for some ceremonies, but as more and more skins were used for the banner, the cart would have become essential for carrying the heavy banner around.

Fur linings appeared on the banners of the most important feasts, such as the Assumption, San Giovanni Battista, San Giorgio, and San Vittorio. However, fabric such as taffeta sometimes supplemented or substituted the fur as a lining for the banners.⁷⁰⁸

Frangie (Fringe), *Nappe* (Ribbons), and other Ornamentation

The banners also were adorned with other decorations included *frangie*, or fringe, *nappe* and *nastri* (ribbons), and *cerri* (braids). Payments for these items tend to be grouped together,⁷⁰⁹ since they were often ordered from the same *banderaio*, who specialized in making such items.⁷¹⁰

A strip of red silk fringe is visible above the four bands of the Torre banner (figs. 43 and 44), so it is likely that this was one of the places where the fringe was used. *Nappe* or *nastri* (ribbons) might be applied to the surface of the bands as an accent or decoration, or could be used to decorate the *asta*, as clearly visible in the Uffizi painting. Thirty-two silk cords (*cordone*) decorated the Palio of the Assumption in 1438.⁷¹¹ Colors were chosen to complement the color of the banner; in 1480, we find payments for twelve *braccia* of white and red fringe and thirty *braccia* of red ribbon for the Palio of San Bernaba.⁷¹²

Quite striking is the predominance of gold in manufacturing these decorations. Some palio banners must have rivaled the costumes of modern-day Las Vegas performers in their “glitter aesthetic!” Like the gold thread woven into brocades and velvets, the gold in ribbons, braid, and fringe would have refracted the light like gold

filagree, making the banner luminous and shimmering in bright sunlight. One can clearly see the gold fringe decorating the seam between the green and *alto-basso* velvet in figure 84. *Nappe di filaticcio*⁷¹³ (ribbons) were made from gold thread, and the documents for the 1405 Palio of the Assumption mention *dozine tre di verghole d'ariento* (three dozen golden threads) purchased from Agnolo di Maestro Vanni Zondadaio at thirteen *soldi* per dozen.⁷¹⁴

Payment documents for the Florentine palii of the latter part of the sixteenth century also mention payment for a *cerro* (braid) made out of gold cloth that is *applicato* (attached) to the cloth of the banner.⁷¹⁵ Because the *cerro* appears in documents along with the *fregio*, they were probably not the same thing,⁷¹⁶ and my guess was that it was some sort of surface ornament. The fringe was often made of many colors, including gold.⁷¹⁷ Even pearls could decorate the banner, as an Onda inventory records a banner won from the Aquila with a frieze “with all its adornments and pearls.”⁷¹⁸ Like a beautiful woman dressed for court, the palio banner did not venture out in public without being richly adorned.

The fringe, ribbons, and cords served as accessories that could give a new and fresh look to an older banner. During the latter part of the sixteenth century in Siena, the deliberations of the Sienese Balia show that the organizers of the Feast of the Assumption ordered one banner for the prize for the horse race, and another that was presented as tribute to the Cathedral.⁷¹⁹ Many of the deliberations of this period mention paying a *setaiuolo* each year to restore the banner of the Cathedral, adding such things as ribbons, new coats-of-arms, silk cords, and other items.⁷²⁰

Sewing of the Banner

Many of the payment documents record money paid for the *fattura* (making) or *cucitura* (sewing) of the banner – the actual putting together of its various components. Sometimes the *zendadaio*, from whom the frieze, lining fabric, and other accessories were purchased, assumed this task; in other cases, the *pellicciaio*, or furrier, did the assembly.⁷²¹ The Guelph Party regularly included *fattura* in the expenses for the Florentine palii, but did not specify who was paid for this work. In Siena at the end of the sixteenth century, it appears that the Balia simplified the process of commissioning a banner by settling accounts with a *setaiuolo* for the work, including the *fattura*, rather than trying to coordinate payments to a number of different artisans.⁷²²

In conclusion, what the documents tell us is that, from the fourteenth through the first part of the sixteenth centuries, the production of palio banners was a collective effort. *Setaiuoli*, banner-makers, furriers, goldsmiths, carpenters, and painters each specialized in making the components of the palio banner, each of which were assembled to make the finished product. In this respect, the banner was very much like other, large-scale “public” commissions of the period, such as the building of Florentine cathedral, in that the city employed diverse artisans in creating a cohesive whole.

The Palio Banner as a Symbol of Wealth

Cost

An expensive object to create, the palio banner was a tangible symbol of wealth and status. Around 1519, Francesco Gonzaga, Marchese of Mantua and racing aficionado, commissioned Silvestro Da Lucca and Lauro Padovano to

illuminate his “Il Libro dei Palii Vinti dai Francesco Gonzaga (Book of the Palii Won by Francesco Gonzaga)” with portraits of his champion racehorses. Below the little portraits of each horse is a list of the palii that he or she won. The listing of palii are grouped not by city or year, but by the type of fabric of the banner won. In all, the “Libro dei Palii Vinti” lists an incredible 196 palio banners won by the Gonzaga horses from 1499 to 1518.⁷²³ This emphasis on the type of fabrics won is indicative not just of the prestige of winning these palii, but their value as objects of luxury.

Payment documents and even city chronicles tell us the value of these banners. In Appendix II I have compiled a chronological table of palio banners for which I have been able to find information on costs.⁷²⁴ Early expenditures, such as the twenty-five *lire* established in 1306 in Siena for the Palio of Sant’ Ambrogio⁷²⁵ and fifty *lire* in 1310⁷²⁶ and 150 *lire* in 1337⁷²⁷ for the Palio of the Assumption, are fairly modest, but by the fifteenth century, grew in leaps and bounds to 375 *lire* fifteen *soldi* six denari in 1419,⁷²⁸ 461 *lire* twelve *soldi* in 1438,⁷²⁹ 600 *lire* in 1441,⁷³⁰ and 825 *lire* in 1453.⁷³¹ These leaps in money spent on the palio coincided with the birth and growth of Siena’s silk manufacturing industry. By 1500, the cost had nearly doubled, to *lire* 1113 *soldi* sixteen in 1500⁷³² and 1200 *lire* in 1518.⁷³³ The decline in money spent on the Assumption palio came after the Florentine takeover of the city, and for several years, the banners were restored rather than remade, and as mentioned in the historical chapter, the Florentine grand duke placed limits on what could be spent on the banners to no more than 130 *scudi*.⁷³⁴

For Florence, I have less data on the values of the banners in the late fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, but fairly complete payment records for the

latter part of the sixteenth century. The amounts spent on the San Giovanni appear to have been less subject to drastic fluctuations than what was spent in Siena.⁷³⁵ Dati tells us that the palio banner for San Giovanni (c. 1390-1410) was worth 300 florins but that the city had spent as much as 600 florins in previous years.⁷³⁶ Throughout the fifteenth century, the price of the Palio of San Giovanni appears rather stable, costing only fifty florins more towards the end of the century than it did at the beginning. A 1422 document shows that 200 florins, four *denari* were spent on the palio of Florence's patronal feast and twenty florins, four *denari* on the palio of San Bernaba.⁷³⁷ In 1475, the city spent 250 florins, 210 *lire*, six *denari* and in 1477, 220 florins 299 *lire*, sixteen *soldi*, eight *denari*.⁷³⁸ In the sixteenth century, Florence spent 630 *lire*, eighty-four *soldi*, nine *denari* on the Palio of San Giovanni in 1516, and an incredible 1989 *lire*, four *soldi*, ten *denari* in 1559.⁷³⁹ Payments for the last four decades of the sixteenth century and the first decade of the seventeenth century, range from a low of 291 florins one *lire* seventeen *soldi* ten *denari* in 1570 to 342 florins two *lire* eighteen *soldi* two *denari* in 1604,⁷⁴⁰ but averaging about 330 florins.

It is difficult to make comparisons between banner values from different cities and points in time, since I do not know the rates of inflation nor the relative values of Florentine and Siennese currency during this periods. However, by comparing the amounts spent on the banners to other works of art commissioned in these cities during this time period, it is possible to appreciate how valuable these banners were. In Siena, Simone Martini received a total of eleven florins, 202 *lire*, one *soldo*, and eight *denari* in payments between 1315 and 1322 for painting the *Maestà* fresco in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena (fig. 137).⁷⁴¹ Just ten years later, in 1332, the city spent

over 381 *lire* on the Palio of the Assumption.⁷⁴² In 1389, Bartolo di Fredi was promised a total of 130 florins in a contract for painting an altarpiece for a shoemakers' guild;⁷⁴³ the nearest comparison for a Palio of the Assumption is 1347, when eighty-three florins, fifty *soldi* were spent on the banner.

In Florence in 1485, the Florentine banker, Giovanni Agnolo de' Bardi commissioned a painting (now in Berlin) of the Madonna and Saints John the Baptist and Evangelist from Sandro Botticelli for his chapel in Santo Spirito. Recorded payments include seventy-five florins to the artist to complete the work, covering labor and supplies, and twenty-three florins, ten *soldi* to Giuliano da Sangallo for making the picture's frame.⁷⁴⁴ Seven years earlier, the city of Florence spent a total of 220 florins, 299 *lire*, sixteen *soldi*, and eight *denari* on the Palio of San Giovanni Battista.⁷⁴⁵ Between 1514 and 1516, Pontorno received a total of seventy *lire* for painting a fresco of the Visitation in the cloister of the Church of the Santissima Annunziata in Florence (fig.138).⁷⁴⁶ In comparison, the Palio of San Giovanni of 1516 cost a total of 630 *lire*, four *soldi*, nine *denari* to make.⁷⁴⁷

Even though the palio banner was an ephemeral object, cities spent lavish sums of money to create it, and in many instances as shown by some of the examples above, it was even more costly than more permanent forms of art such as an altarpiece or a wall painting. Simply put, the palio banner was not just a piece of fabric, but a work of art valued as highly, at least in monetary terms, as works in other media.

Fabric as a Luxury Item

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, the textile industry generated an enormous amount of wealth for the economies of Italian cities. The palio banners are

a reflection of this wealth, since they were most often made from the brocades, damasks, velvets, and *auroserici* which were the most labor intensive, and thus most expensive fabrics to produce, and were therefore affordable only to the most wealthy citizens, the same class of people who would have run horses in the palio races. These fabrics were signifiers of wealth and power in both social and religious contexts. Only the nobility, the ruling class, and wealthy merchants could afford to purchase these fabrics for clothing. Artists painted portraits of wealthy patrons dressed in these fabrics, such as Bronzino's portrait of Grand Duchess Eleonora da Toledo, wife of Cosimo I (fig. 99). Luxury fabrics formed part of the dowries of upper-class women,⁷⁴⁸ and would have been kept in the *cassoni* like those in the Bargello and Cleveland Museums. Cities such as Florence periodically passed sumptuary laws to regulate the wearing of luxury clothing.

The other major consumer of these fabrics was the church. Brocades, velvets, and damasks were used to make ecclesiastical garments or altar coverings.

Therefore, the winner of the palio not only was the recipient of honor in competition, having beaten his or her social and political rivals in a highly-public contest, but he or she also won a very costly prize made from the most expensive cloths. Contemporary writers and chroniclers such as Dati in Florence, Zambotto in Ferrara, and Burcardo in Rome, made it a point to include the monetary value of the banner in their descriptions of palio banners.⁷⁴⁹ This fixation on cost suggests that the cost of the palio banner was common knowledge to a city's citizens. For a period of time in the late fourteenth century, in recognition of the value of the cost to make the banner, the Sienese government charged the winner of the Palio of the Assumption

seven florins to claim the palio, resulting in many palio banners going unclaimed.⁷⁵⁰

Thus, the winner of the palio banner was not just receiving a piece of fabric decorated with symbols, but a luxury item worth a lot of money.

Recycling and Re-Use of the Palio Banner

The payment documents from the Sieneese and Florentine archives clearly establish the regular production of palio banners during the Renaissance from the most precious materials available. The fact that these cities would go to the trouble of commissioning the components of the banners from a number of artists at great expense shows that these were very important objects in the ritual life of the city. However, I was initially dismayed to discover how very few of the actual banners survive – just two (one banner from Siena and one from Florence) and some coats-of-arms removed from a seventeenth-century Palio of San Giovanni Battista. The museums of the Sieneese *contrade* preserve a number of palio banners painted on silk from the eighteenth through twentieth centuries, and I saw in the Cathedral of San Secondo in Asti a number of painted palio banners from the nineteenth century. But examples of the Renaissance palio banner, of the type described in the payment documents, are almost non-existent.

At first, I thought I could explain the rarity of surviving palio banners by the fragility of cloth, which is more subject to decay than the more durable media of painting and sculpture. However, many Italian museums, like the Museum of the Opera del Duomo in Siena, the Bargello Museum in Florence, and the Textile Museum in Prato preserve examples of brocade, damask, and velvet fabrics, some

very similar to the types of cloth used in the palio banners, as far back as the fourteenth century.

However, when I began reading the transcription of the book of deliberations of the Onda Contrada, I noticed a number of inventories list whole palio banners or disassembled pieces of them such as friezes, linings, and even pearls. A 1570 inventory lists a palio of taffeta of changing colors won in a foot race for the *densely di palazzo* (employees of the Palazzo Pubblico).⁷⁵¹ In a 1592 inventory, the Onda listed a palio of red *cianbellotino* cloth with a frieze won from a palio sponsored by the Pantera (Panther) Contrada, as well as separate frieze and *asta* painted black-and-white.⁷⁵² A frieze of flesh-colored taffeta of another palio won from the Pantera – possibly the same one – appears in the 1596 inventory.⁷⁵³ An inventory from 1619 lists pieces of palio banners, including seven *braccia* of a *brochatello* and ten small pieces of *taffeta chapellino* from the lining of a palio.⁷⁵⁴

The deliberations show that palio banners were often taken apart, and the banners or their components sold to raise money or settle debts. On February 17, 1596, the Onda record a sale of ten *braccia* of a palio banner of *drappetto fiorito e giallo* (flowered and yellow cloth), won in a donkey race sponsored by the Nicchio (Shell) Contrada. This money from the sale of the cloth went to pay the lime-dealer, Alissandro di Girolamo, for lime for the building of the new oratory, but the Onda retained the frieze.⁷⁵⁵

In the case of one particular palio banner, the Contrada gradually sold off its pieces over a period of years. The palio of the Aquila that the Onda won in August of 1581 (the race in which Virginia Tacci rode for the Drago) appears in the Onda

deliberations for many years. In 1581, an Onda member, Ferrante di Napoli, held the palio as collateral for the forty *scudi* the Onda owed him for settling a debt. On October 3, 1589, the Onda received forty *soldi* for selling seven *braccia* of gold and silk fringe “that was above and below the brocade frieze of the palio won from the Contrada of the Aquila.” On June 3, 1590, Onda voted to sell off the frieze and lining of what may have been the same banner, including the pearls that decorated the frieze in order to pay off a debt of thirty *lire* to the Contrada’s Chamberlain. On the 17th, the two men entrusted with selling the frieze sold the thirty-three pearls for fifteen *lire*, eight *soldi*, and four denari, and on the 30th, they sold the twelve *braccia* of the frieze and part of the lining for a total of fifty-two *lire*. Part of the taffeta lining was purchased by Salvador Pini, the *setaiuolo* who is mentioned in the documents of the Balia as having regularly manufactured palio banners of the Assumption. In a July 1, 1592 inventory, the Onda still possessed the *asta* and finial of the Aquila palio, and a small piece of pink taffeta “from the lining of the brocade palio,” and this *asta* is last mentioned in 1596, as *guasta* (broken).⁷⁵⁶

In Siena, some palio banners were divided among the winners of a competition or race. The prize for the *bufalata* of 1599 was shared by the Torre and Lupa Contrade.⁷⁵⁷ Providing that the banner now preserved in the Torre Museum (figs. 43 & 44) is indeed this same banner (as it is believed to be), the sharing of this banner may explain why the banner appears incomplete. Unfortunately, I was not able to examine the banner outside of its glass frame, but its dimensions (180 by eighty-nine centimeters) seem particularly short in vertical length, suggesting that what is preserved is actually the top part of the banner retained by the Torre.

Other examples of dividing banners exist. An entry of 1613 records an official *giuoco della pugne* (fistfight) sponsored by the Florentine governor in which the various Terzi (thirds of the city) participated. Città, the Terzo to which the Onda belongs, won a white taffeta banner as a prize, and the Contrade of Città divided up the banner, with the Onda and Oca sharing the banner, the Pantera getting the coats-of-arms and the *asta*, and Selvalta (Torre) claiming the frieze.⁷⁵⁸ In 1641, the Civetta Contrada divided the palio banner it won in a donkey race and donated the halves to the Churches of Sant'Ansano and Santa Caterina.⁷⁵⁹

The selling of banners was not a phenomenon particular to the *contrade*; other winners of palio banners sold their prizes for a handsome profit. Landucci recalls how his brother Costanzo sold a palio banner to the Aretines won by his horse Draghetto (for the Palio of San Vittorio in Florence for forty florins), and then won it back when Draghetto won the palio in Arezzo!⁷⁶⁰ Dati recalls that each year, the old palii presented the previous year by the cities and towns subject to Florence were removed from San Giovanni and re-used as “paramenti e palii da altari (wall-hangings and altarcloths)”, and some banners were sold on the corner!⁷⁶¹

It appears that the cloth from palio banners was recycled to make vestments, altarcloths, hangings, clothing, and even other palio banners. Trexler mentions the palii donated to the Baptistery of San Giovanni, including a palio sent by a Count Roberto, possibly donated following a race.⁷⁶² In 1561, shortly after the Florentine takeover of Siena, the new governor approved the expenditure for a palio of crimson velvet that re-used the frieze and the skins from the old palio.⁷⁶³ A 1486 inventory, published by Malacarne, lists several palio banners and their lengths in *braccia* that

the Gonzaga had won for various palio races. The palio banners of Florence, Bologna, Rome, Ferrara, Modena, and Mantua found second uses as *aparamenti* (hangings), *copertari* (coverings), and *testere* (headboards) for both large and small rooms, ostensibly in one of the Gonzaga palazzi in or around Mantua. One covering was made from a crimson palio from Florence, with a *balzana* (shield or central section?) of green velvet from the palio of the town of Gonzaga.⁷⁶⁴ The Gonzaga palii also were recycled as clothing: Cavriani notes a letter of 1496 from a servant of Francesco Gonzaga asking Isabella d'Este for “a *braccio* of the Palio of San Pietro to make a pair of sleeves.”⁷⁶⁵ Upon being elected Chamberlain of the Onda Contrada in 1567, Giovanni Fortuna received a palio of taffeta *cangiante* (changing colors) to make into a “*davanzale* for the altar of our Lady.”⁷⁶⁶ A 1616 Onda inventory lists a “red damask *davanzale* made from the Palio of the Piazza.”⁷⁶⁷

Now, the re-using of works of art to make new objects is certainly a familiar concept, particularly during the Renaissance, where artists recycled both motifs and materials from Roman antiquity. However, I can think of no other example of an art object as valuable as the palio that was made specifically with its deconstruction in mind. The banner's life as a whole and complete work of art was only important on the days leading up to the festival and on the festival itself. Once the festival was over, the banner had served its symbolic purpose, and was prized not for its iconographic or aesthetic significance, but for the value and usefulness of its material and components.

Returning to the question of why so few palio banners remain, I am proposing that there may be more palio banners in existence than we think; many survive as

vestments, wall-coverings, and fragments of fabric preserved in museums and churches. This *piviale* (cape) in the Franchetti Collection in the Bargello Museum (figs. 78, 86-87), is composed of five pieces of fabric from the Palio of San Giovanni Battista from late seventeenth-century Florence,⁷⁶⁸ and is made of gilded silver brocade fabric with a red velvet pile. In the Museo dell'Opera del Duomo in Siena, I have seen several pieces of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century brocade velvets in a pomegranate pattern that are identified as *paliotti* (altar-cloths) (fig. 139). Since these are made from the same types and patterns of cloths used in Renaissance palio banners, it is certainly possible that these were made from palio banners donated to the Duomo by victors of the palio race or from the old banners presented by the Balìa to the Duomo in the latter part of the sixteenth century. The Franchetti and Carrand Collections of the Bargello Museum in Florence have many examples of fifteenth-century Italian velvets, including those attributed to Florentine manufacture, in pomegranate design.

Although it may be difficult to match up surviving pieces of textiles with actual banners mentioned in the historical documents, the phenomenon of the recycling of the palio is an interesting aspect of artistic production during the Renaissance. Until the past few decades, when art historians have begun to explore the significance of ritual and ephemeral art, our concept of a work of art took as a given at least the intention of permanency. The palio banner challenges the traditional idea of a work of art. Though it was very costly to make, it was not meant to remain in its original form. Like the large building and decorative projects in other media, it was the product of many hands and talents. It was a very concrete, tangible

symbol of the wealth of the Italian silk industry, and in a sense, the materials that composed the banner were more significant than any symbolism depicted upon the banner. According to Alessandra Gianni, the more traditional banners made from precious textiles continued to be made in Siena in the seventeenth century to present to churches on feast days, but less valuable painted banners replaced the traditional banners as prizes for the horse race, with the earliest surviving example of these, in the museum of the Contrada of the Nicchio, dating from 1718.⁷⁶⁹ The “modern” palio banner of the eighteenth century onwards, where the image takes over the entire banner, and the silk fabric is merely just a support for the image.

The Meaning of the Palio Banner in Renaissance Culture

Now that I have outlined the palio’s creation as a physical object, I must try to answer the question of the origins of the palio banner, and what sort of resonance it might have held for the Renaissance viewer.

The Word *Palio* and the Palio Banner

The word *palio* derives not from the race or competition itself, but from the prize awarded, the palio banner. *Palio* emphasizes the visual and material aspects of the event; the palio was not simply a horse race, but part of a larger festival that involved the production of material culture – palio banners, floats, costumes, decorative candles, and many other objects. The banner appears in payment documents using the Latin *pallium* or the vernacular *palio* or *paglio*, and from the sixteenth century onwards, the word *drappo* is used interchangeably with *palio*.⁷⁷⁰

Current interpretations of the palio banner fall into three general categories: as a religious object, as an article of clothing, or as a military symbol or standard.

A *pallium* can be a generic term for a religious object, such as the cloth that is placed upon an altar. *Pallia* were presented as an offering to a new bishop.⁷⁷¹

Richard Trexler notes that palio banners offered to the Baptistery in Florence often were recycled as *pallia*, or altar cloths.⁷⁷² Duccio Balestracci describes the palio banner as a *vessillo prezioso*, referring to the Latin *vexillum* (standard, flag), which was used throughout the Middle Ages as a symbol of authority.⁷⁷³ When looking at altar cloths in church collections, I have noticed the use of the word, *paliotto*, to describe them.

Some scholars have interpreted the banner in the context of a garment. In their respective studies of the modern Siena palio, anthropologist Alan Dundes and historian Alessandro Falassi, as well as anthropologist Don Handelman, interpret the palio banner as holding both sacred and profane meaning. Alan Dundes mentions that the ancient Greeks and Romans used the word *pallium* to refer to a prostitutes' cloak.⁷⁷⁴ Handelman mentions that the word *pallio* may refer to a head cloth, similar to that worn by the Virgin Mary (protectress of the city of Siena), and suggests the Virgin's cloak, which is often shown covering or protecting the city of Siena. Images of the Virgin's cloak were common in the Renaissance, such as this 1506 woodcut showing the Virgin spreading her arms above Siena in a gesture of protection (fig. 140). *Pallio* also refers to a covering or baldachin, whose slang term *baldacco* means "bordello." Thus, the palio banner, according to Handelman's interpretation, is part of the Virgin Mary's sacred/earthy duality.⁷⁷⁵

Other scholars have linked the palio with military victories. Trexler supports a martial interpretation of the palio banner, since cities often awarded the cloth

banners that conquered territories had offered in tribute as prizes for races.⁷⁷⁶ Deanna Shemek, in her article on the Palio of San Giorgio in Ferrara, also gravitates towards a military interpretation of the origins of the palio, citing races that armies staged outside the walls of besieged cities throughout the fourteenth century. She cites a passage from the chronicler Villani about races staged in October 1330 by the Florentine army outside the walls of Lucca, in which twenty-five florins were awarded for a horse race, a *panno sanguigno* (bloody-red cloth) for the race of foot soldiers, and a sheepskin cloth for a race of the army's whores. Shemek also notes that an army's prostitutes would often carry the enemy's *palio*, or banner, upside-down, as a symbol of derision.⁷⁷⁷ Some have linked the palio banner to staged or ceremonial enactments of violence: Galeazzo Nosari and Franco Canova mention the medieval practice of awarding a *palio di tessuto* as a prize for jousts between knights,⁷⁷⁸ and we know that this practice was continued into the Renaissance, as cities occasionally sponsored jousts and tournaments where a palio banner was awarded as prize.⁷⁷⁹

Clearly, the palio banner, just by its nature of being awarded for a saint's day, carried some religious significance. As mentioned earlier, the pomegranate pattern used on many of the brocade and velvet fabrics acquired symbolism of Resurrection. Secondly, fabric appears as a backdrop for many Italian religious paintings, particularly paintings of the Virgin and Child seated "in majesty" upon a throne or dais. Thirdly, processional standards, images of saints painted onto cloth, were often paraded during religious processions or brought out for special occasions, such as the

standard of San Giovanni Battista shown at the far right of the Bargello *cassone*, or the standard of San Marco.

The concept of the palio banner as a garment is interesting but problematic. It is true that the luxury materials used for the banner also were used to dress the wealthy and powerful, and I can see that the sensuality of the materials might evoke images of the shimmering dress and fur lining of a woman's dress. Also, the brocades and velvets used in the banner were the type of fabrics included in a wealthy woman's dowry. As mentioned earlier, the feast day of a patron saint also included the distribution of dowries to poor women, but the awarding of these dowries were not connected to the awarding of the palio banner to the victor of the horse race, except in a metaphorical sense.

I also have a problem with Handelman's interpretation of the palio banner as the Virgin's cape/prostitute's cloak. While the banner may hold this dual meaning in modern-day Siena, I have found no mention in Renaissance sources describing the banner in these terms. Since palio banners were presented for a whole pantheon of saints, not limited to the Virgin Mary, I think one must be careful not to isolate the banner as an attribute of one specific religious figure.

The Roman Standard or *Vexillum*

The argument for a military origin of the palio banner is the most compelling, especially when one considers the similarities of the *asta* and finial of the palio to a military standard. Unfortunately, I have found very little on Renaissance military standards, but we know from paintings, such as this panel showing the Battle of Anghiari between the forces of Florence and Milan, that the armies of various cities painted the emblem of their city upon the standards – in this case the lily of Florence

and the viper of the Visconti of Milan (fig. 141). Piero della Francesca also depicted military standards, painted with an eagle and dragon, in his fresco of the *Battle of Constantine and Maxentius* in S. Francesco in Arezzo (fig. 142).

As discussed earlier, cities also put civic emblems on the palio banner, such as the Florentine lily or the lion of Siena, or, in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the coat-of-arms of European powers such as the Hapsburgs. The emblems indicated power and control.

I also find many similarities between the parading of the palio banner during Renaissance feast days and the appearance, use, and meaning of Roman military standards.⁷⁸⁰

- The primary function of the Roman standard was to identify the military legion. The units of the Roman imperial army also used their standards as a rallying point for members of the army so that the troops would not become lost in battle. Likewise, the exaggerated height of the palio banner provided a visual focus for those participating in the procession of offering during the feast day.

- Roman standards also had a religious function and when not in use, were kept in a *sacellum* (shrine), and were brought out for ceremonial occasions and sacrifices. They were also adorned with garlands and laurel wreaths. Likewise, the palio banner's creation and display was designated for a religious feast day, and it, along with the tribute banners of subject cities and towns, were offered to the church or cathedral of the saint whose feast was being celebrated. Payments for these feast days record morning spent on garlands (*ghirlande*) used in these processions.⁷⁸¹

Subject cities and towns adorned the tops of their tribute palii with flowering branches, as seen on the banners depicted in the Bargello *cassone* (fig. 31).

- Roman standards consisted of a sculpted figure –often an animal, such as an eagle, wolf, or minatour - atop a pole, as illustrated in this relief showing a tomb of a standard-bearer. The standards might also include human figures, such as portraits of the imperial family or figures of winged victories. An eagle, a peacock, a helmeted bust, and two full-length human figures appear atop standards in the first canvas of Andrea Mantegna’s *Triumphs of Caesar*, based upon Roman reliefs and descriptions of classical triumphs (fig. 143).⁷⁸² The *asta* of the palio was topped with a finial symbolic of the city, such as the Florentine lily, the Sienese lion, or the figure of San Giovanni Battista.

- The *vexillum* was a type of standard consisting of a small piece of cloth atop a pole, as illustrated here in an Antonine relief on the attic of the Arch of Constantine in Rome (fig. 144). The *vexillum* was used for signaling. A surviving *vexillum* found in Egypt is described as “...a piece of coarse linen fifty centimeters square with the remains of a fringe on the lower edge and a hem to take a transverse bar on the upper. The cloth has been dyed scarlet and bears an image in gold of a victory standing on a globe, but no lettering.”⁷⁸³ Although the object described is a far cry from the *braccia* of scarlet or gold cloth of the palio banner, both share some common features. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, many of the most important palio banners, like this *vexillum*, were red. Fringe decorated the palio banner, as well as images painted upon the bands.

The palio banner, therefore, is a Renaissance reinterpretation of the pageantry of Roman antiquity. In my historical chapter, I drew connections between the running of the palio in the Renaissance and the chariot races of Imperial Rome, most explicitly shown in the sixteenth century by Cosimo I's founding of the Palio dei Cocchi. However, there is nothing, to my knowledge, in the chariot racing tradition analogous to the palio banner – usually victorious charioteers won a purse of money and a palm branch. The sole symbolic use of cloth in the circus race was the presiding official's dropping of the starting cloth (*mappa*), to signal the beginning of the race. The Etruscans, who also had a tradition of running horse races, placed the prizes in a bronze cauldron or prize pot atop a wooden column, reminiscent of the *asta* used to hold the palio banner, but images of these prize pots do not depict any sort of cloth or banner.⁷⁸⁴

The Palio as a Classical Triumph

Yet the palio banner carries resonance of another spectacle from antiquity – the Roman triumph. The contemporary viewer of the palio, particularly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, may have recognized these pagan origins. In the *Priorista* manuscript, Luca Chiari describes how the first palio race was run in 330 CE, upon the dedication of the Baptistery, long believed to be a temple of Mars, to San Giovanni:

Nel tempo che il Gran Costantino si fece Cristiano, e deve Signoria e Libertà alla Chiesa, e fatto Silvestro Papa, Regno nel Papato in Roma palese a tutti?, e poi si sparse per Toscana, e per tutta Italia, e di poi per tutto il Mondo la verace fede di Gesù Cristo, e nella nostra Città di Firenze si cominciò a coltivare la vera Fede, e abbattere il Paganesimo, al tempo del Beato Teodoro Fiorentino, che fu nel 330, come fu Vescovo di Firenze fatto da Silvestro Papa, e del bello, e nobil Tempio de Fiorentini li usino il loro Idolo, il quale appellavano Iddio Marte, e posanto in su una Torre molto alta presso al fiume d'Arno, e non lo volsano rompere, ne spezzare, però che per loro antiche

memorie avevano, che il detto loro Dio Marte era consacrato sono Ascendente di tal Pianeta, che come fusse zono? la Città avrebbe gran danno, e gran mutazione, e con tutto che I Fiorentini di nuovo fussero divenuti Cristiani, ancora tenevano di molti Costumi del Pagnesimo, e tennero per gran tempo, e temevano fortemente il loro antico Idolo Marte, si erano ancora poco perfetti nella fede di Cristo per ciò fatto consagradino il Loro Tempio, et ordinindino a onore di Dio, e di S. Giovanni Battista, e chiamandolo Duomo di S. Giovanni; et ordinare che si celebrasse il di della sua Natività con grandissimo applauso, e che in quel di si corresse un Palio di velluto vermiglio, e nel mezzo una striscia d'oro con un giglio di rilievo, et il Palio fusse soppannato di pelle di Armellini... volsano poi che si crescessi detto Palio, e fussi tirato da due paia di Cavalli, cioe messo sopra un Carro trionfale, tirato da due paia di Cavalli coverati di rosso, enormi Gigli bianchi, che di poi si è permutato mediante la Parte Guelfa col farvi drento a detti panni il Giglio rosso, e l'Arme della Guelfa, et oggi di ne viene conto di detto palio il Capitani di detta Parte Parte, e lo mandano per tutta la Città ogni mattina, due giorni avanti, che si corra, ove da Popoli ne è mostrato molti Segni d'allegrezza, con sonare trombe, e le Donne corrino a detto Carro per fa toccare il Palio a loro Figliuoli in faccia per divozione di S. Giovanni Battista.⁷⁸⁵

Even if Chiari is historically incorrect in identifying the Baptistery as a Roman temple of Mars as it was commonly believed to be in the Renaissance,⁷⁸⁶ it is interesting that he sees the Palio of San Giovanni as a continuation of a pagan tradition. The parading of the palio banner of the city on a *carro trionfale*⁷⁸⁷ to the sounding of trumpets, is very much akin to the triumph procession of an Roman emperor. The reference to the palio cart as a *carro trionfale* is not Chiari's invention, but goes all the way back the fifteenth century, when Dati described the cart of San Giovanni Battista as a *carretta trionfale*⁷⁸⁸ and Zanobi Perini likewise elegized it in verse as a *carro trionfale*.⁷⁸⁹

Chiari follows his description of the parading of the banner with a description and drawing of the release of prisoners that was customary on the day of San Giovanni, as it was in other cities such as Siena. Chiari labels the drawing:

Prigioni, che si liberano la mattina di S. Giovanni Battista, e si liberano tutti di Limosine, e vanno a S. Giovanni con una Corona di Ulivo in Capo, e vanno

Dreto al Magistrato della Stinche a render grazie al Santo della perdonanz, e sono chiamati, come si chiama la Carro, et i Paliotti.⁷⁹⁰

The prisoners are released and, like the cart of the banner and the tribute banners of the subject cities and towns, are called forth to give thanks to the saint for their release. The parading of the palio banner through the streets is very much like the parading of the chariot of the Roman emperor through the streets of the city following a military victory, except in this case, the saint, not the emperor, receives the veneration and thanks.

The triumph is a recurring theme throughout the Renaissance. Alfonso of Aragon of Naples immortalized his triumphal entry into Naples with the sculptural program on the arch of the Castel Nuovo. As Heidi Chrétien has shown, beginning in the late fifteenth century, Florentine leaders staged triumphs in conjunction with the Festival of San Giovanni Battista, appropriating episodes from Roman history and imagery of rulership and empire. Lorenzo de' Medici staged a triumph of the Roman consul, Aemilius Paulus, for the festival of San Giovanni in 1491, which included fifteen decorated floats. As Chrétien has shown, Lorenzo employed the triumph as a statement of authority and power. In 1513, the city staged four triumphal entries on June 22nd, of Caesar, Pompey, Octavius, and Trajan, and in 1514, there were seventeen floats in the festival depicting the life of the general, Camillus.⁷⁹¹

Lorenzo's son, Pope Leo X, staged elaborate entries in Rome. In late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century Florence, artists created ephemeral arches and decorations for entries, such as shown in this etching of 1592 showing decorations erected for the arrival of the new Grand Duchess, Cristine of Lorraine (fig. 145).

The triumphal imagery in Petrarch's and Boccaccio's verse descriptions of processions inspired the images of the Triumph of Love on *cassoni*, as well as the floats paraded during feast days.

Although the horse race itself carries resonance of the imperial-sponsored chariot races of antiquity, the procession of the palio banner is very much in the tradition of the Roman triumph. The Renaissance palio may therefore be seen as a conflation of these two antique traditions. The palio banner became, in a sense, a stand-in for the saint and his or her protective power over the city. Like the Emperors of antiquity, the *palio* representing the saint and the city was paraded on the triumphal chariot. The palio banner was, on the feast day itself, one of the main protagonists of the festival, and through its precious and luxurious materials, a visible sign of the wealth and power of the city. When the feast day was over, the banner was then claimed by the victor of the race, its components to be re-used and re-distributed like the booty of war. As Richard Trexler aptly states in his discussion of the palii presented to the Baptistery:

Once it had been presented, once the quality of the relationship had been witnessed by third parties, the gift could be alienated. Thus the medium by which values were exchanged between men and with their saints was alienable once removed from the context of the contract. Only in that ritual was the medium sacred.⁷⁹²

In summary, the palio banner was a metaphor for wealth itself. The city spent incredible sums of money, employing artisans and purchasing the most expensive materials, for an object that was most often disassembled and re-used by the victor after the feast day was over. The banner signaled to all the city's prosperity, and led the patronal procession in triumphant celebration.

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- ⁴³⁵ Dati, in Guasti, 8. A translation into English of Dati's passage appears in Rogers, 617-621.
- ⁴³⁶ The average wage of a laborer in 1380 was 9.9 *soldi*. Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence*, 429, 436.
- ⁴³⁷ Gert Kreytenberg, *Orcagna's Tabernacle in Orsanmichele, Florence* (New York, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 33.
- ⁴³⁸ Richard L. Hills, "From Cocoon to Cloth. The Technology of Silk Production," *La Seta in Europa Sec. XIII-XX, Atti della "Ventiquattresima Settimana di Studi, 4-9 maggio 1992*, Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., *Serie II – Atti delle "Settimane di Studi" e altri Convegni 24* (Prato: Le Monnier, 1992). 59-90.
- ⁴³⁹ The fiber from the cocoons had to be unwound by hand, reeled onto a drum or spindle, "thrown" (twisted with other fibers into thread), dyed, and then woven into cloth.
- ⁴⁴⁰ Jordan Goodman, "Cloth, Gender, and Organization: Towards an Anthropology of Silkworkers in Early Modern Europe," in Cavaciocchi, 240.
- ⁴⁴¹ Hills in Cavaciocchi, 59.
- ⁴⁴² Madeleine Ginsburg, ed., *The Illustrated History of Textiles* (London: Studio Editions, 1991), 17-19.
- ⁴⁴³ Rosalia Bonito Fanelli, "Saggi introduttivi," *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento: collezioni Franchetti Carrand, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Prato, Palazzo Pretorio, September 24 1980-January 10, 1981*, 14.
- ⁴⁴⁴ Bruno Dini, "L'industria serica in Italia. Secc. XIII-XV," in Cavaciocchi, 91.
- ⁴⁴⁵ Fanelli, 14.
- ⁴⁴⁶ Dini in Cavaciocchi, 91.
- ⁴⁴⁷ Venice began manufacturing its own silk fabrics in the twelfth century, while Genoese production began in the thirteenth century. See Luigi Brenni, *La tessitura serica attraverso I secoli* (Como: Tipografia Editrice Ostinelli, 1925), 58, 107.
- ⁴⁴⁸ Dini in Cavaciocchi, 104-108.
- ⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 92-93.
- ⁴⁵⁰ Among many examples include the Palio of Sant'Anna of 1564, made with eleven *braccia* of the cloth (CPG, NN 22, fol. 461, ASF) and the Palio of San Bernaba of 1604 (CPG, NN 52, fol. 170v, ASF).
- ⁴⁵¹ Ginsburg, 22.
- ⁴⁵² Worms raised on mulberry leaves produce the best silk. See Hills in Cavaciocchi, 60.
- ⁴⁵³ Paola Marabelli, "La Seta a Firenze tra Cinque e Seicento: Cenni Storico Economici," *"Sopra Ogni Sorta di Drapperia..." Tipologie decorative e tecniche tessili nella produzione fiorentina del Cinquecento e Seicento*, Tamara Boccherini and Paola Marabelli, eds. (Florence: Maria Cristina de Montemayor Editore, 1993), 14.

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- ⁴⁵⁴ Philip Ellis Foster, *A Study of Lorenzo de' Medici's Villa at Poggio a Caiano* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1986), 61-74.
- ⁴⁵⁵ Francesco Battistini, "La gelsibachicoltura e la trattura della seta in Toscana (sec. XIII-XVIII)," in Cavaciocchi, 293-300. Some of the best areas were the Valdinievole, near Lucca, and the Valdelsa and Valdipesa near Siena.
- ⁴⁵⁶ Brenni, 4.
- ⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.
- ⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.
- ⁴⁵⁹ For instance, in 1545, Cosimo I passed laws imposing taxes on raw silk of state manufacture sold outside of Tuscany. See Battistini in Cavaciocchi, 296.
- ⁴⁶⁰ Sericulture was introduced to Spain after the Islamic conquest of the Iberian peninsula in 711. See Ginsburg, 19.
- ⁴⁶¹ Marabelli, in Boccherini and Marabelli, 14-15.
- ⁴⁶² Dini, 94.
- ⁴⁶³ Roberta Orsi Landini, "Renaissance Splendour: In Search of the Inevitable," (trans. from Italian), *Museo Poldi Pozzoli: Velluti e Moda tra XV e XVII secolo*, Annalisa Zanni, ed. (Milano: Skira Editore, 1999), 178.
- ⁴⁶⁴ Among the payments for the Palio of San Giovanni of 1516 is a payment to Nicholo di Antonori *banditore* and Company for the gold thread used to make the frieze of the palio banner. CC, NC, EU 116, fol. 41, ASF.
- ⁴⁶⁵ Dini in Cavaciocchi, 99-100.
- ⁴⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 119-121.
- ⁴⁶⁷ See document in Appendix I. The city of Siena paid a banker, Renaldo di Vanni di Salvi, for the 756 vairst skins for the Palio of the Assumption in 1424. For the 1465 palio banner of the Assumption, there is a payment to the Banco di Cinughi for sixty-five *lire* fifteen *soldi* for 450 skins and fourteen *lire* ten *soldi* for red taffeta "*pro la fodera palii festi nostri.*" Biccherna 779, fol. 5v, ASS mentioned and cited by Cecchini and Neri, 58.
- ⁴⁶⁸ Tim Stanley, *Palace and Mosque: Islamic Art from the Victoria and Albert Museum*, (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 2004), 123-125.
- ⁴⁶⁹ Frederick Hartt, *Art: A History of Painting Sculpture Architecture II*, fourth edition (1989; New York: Prentice Hall, 1993), 648. Fanelli notes that Luccan textiles were particularly prized in Burgundy, England, and France.
- ⁴⁷⁰ Brenni, 54.
- ⁴⁷¹ Dini in Cavaciocchi, 112-113.
- ⁴⁷² Brenni, 55.
- ⁴⁷³ Montaigne, 143.

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- ⁴⁷⁴ Dini, in Cavaciocchi, 120.
- ⁴⁷⁵ Marabelli in Marabelli and Boccherini, 15.
- ⁴⁷⁶ Dini in Cavaciocchi, 116.
- ⁴⁷⁷ Goodman, 237.
- ⁴⁷⁸ Tamara Boccherini, "La Produzione dei Tessuti di Seta a Firenze: Diffusione e Caratteristiche Tecniche e Tipologie," in Boccherini and Marabelli, 22.
- ⁴⁷⁹ Donald Spoto, *Reluctant Saint: the Life of Saint Francis of Assisi* (New York: Penguin Compass, 2002), 3-5.
- ⁴⁸⁰ Brenni, 98.
- ⁴⁸¹ Hook, 18.
- ⁴⁸² Brenni, 98-100.
- ⁴⁸³ Marco Ciatti, "Note sulla storia dei tessuti a Siena," *"Drappi, Velluti, Taffetà et Altre Cose" Antichi tessuti a Siena e nel suo territorio*, Marco Ciatti, ed. (Siena: Nuova Immagine, 1994), 17.
- ⁴⁸⁴ A plaque affixed to a building at the intersection of the Via dei Banchi di Sopra and the Via dei Banchi di Sotto attests to this fact.
- ⁴⁸⁵ Ciatti, 18-19.
- ⁴⁸⁶ *Riforma delli Statuti dell'Arte della Seta del 1513*, Arti 15, fol. 6, ASS. The list of fabrics are accompanied by the taxes paid for each to the guild. These statutes are cited and discussed by Ciatti on pp. 17-19.
- ⁴⁸⁷ Ciatti, 20-22.
- ⁴⁸⁸ Brenni, 39-42, 50-53, 69-74, 95-97, 111-115.
- ⁴⁸⁹ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, 160.
- ⁴⁹⁰ A silver brocade palio was awarded for the feast of San Pietro in Mantua in the early sixteenth century. *Il Libro dei palii vinti...*, in Malacarne, 90 (fol. 16).
- ⁴⁹¹ In 1475, Florence spent over 250 florins for a brocade palio. See Entry of June 30, 1475, CC, NC, EU 33, unpaginated, ASF. Almost a hundred years later, in 1574, the palio was still made of brocade. CPG, NN 32, fol. 171, ASF.
- ⁴⁹² Francesco Gonzaga's *barbero*, Mozone, won four gold brocade palii in Ferrara from 1500 to 1504 for the feast of San Giorgio. See *Il Libro dei palii vinti...*, in Malacarne, 90 (fol. 20).
- ⁴⁹³ The Gonzaga's *Renegato* won four gold brocade palii in Rome from 1508 to 1512. *Ibid.*, 89 (fol. 11).
- ⁴⁹⁴ CPG, NN 46, fols. 142v, 143, ASF.
- ⁴⁹⁵ Chiari, fol. 11v.

⁴⁹⁶ In 1589, eleven *braccia* of *panno lucchesino* for San Bernaba sold for twenty florins, five *lire*, fifteen *soldi*, as opposed to eighty-eight florins for the twenty-eight *braccia* of brocade for the Palio of San Giovanni. CPG, NN 46, fol. 144v, ASF.

⁴⁹⁷ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, 161.

⁴⁹⁸ The earliest payment, from 1480, is for twenty-nine florins, $\frac{1}{2}$ *soldi* for twelve *braccia* of *panno lucchesino*. CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 42v, ASF. The latest, for a total of twenty-nine florins, five *lire*, three *soldi*, four denari, is from 1604. CPG, NN 52, fol. 170v, ASF.

⁴⁹⁹ The earliest payment (CPG, NN 20, fol. 159, ASF) I have found is from 1562, and the latest, 1604.

⁵⁰⁰ Donald and Monique King, "Silk weaves of Lucca in 1376," *Opera Textilia Variorum Temporum*, Inger Estham and Margareta Nockert, eds., *The Museum of National Antiquities, Stockholm Studies 8* (Stockholm: Statens Historiska Museum, 1988), 75.

⁵⁰¹ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, 163.

⁵⁰² Hills, 76.

^{503c} *XXVIII braccis alti rubassi? cermisi brochati a fl. VI $\frac{1}{2}$ el braccio in tucto fiorini 182*" (twenty-eight *braccia* of alto-basso red brocade at $6\frac{1}{2}$ florins, in all 182 florins), CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 41v, ASF.

⁵⁰⁴ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, 163.

⁵⁰⁵ Roberta Orsi Landini, "Renaissance Splendour: In Search of the Inimitable," in Ciatti, 178.

⁵⁰⁶ The first mention is in 1475, and the second is undated. Zambotto, in Tebaldi, 13-14.

⁵⁰⁷ Landini in Ciatti, 179.

⁵⁰⁸ It is identified by Fanelli in *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento* as *bouclè*.

⁵⁰⁹ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, 19.

⁵¹⁰ "Il Libro dei Palii Vinti da Francesco Gonzaga," in Malacarne, 89-95.

⁵¹¹ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, 160. The earliest examples came from the Middle East in the fourth century. See Ginsburg, 213.

⁵¹² CPG, NN 46, fols. 142v, 143v, ASF.

⁵¹³ Allegretto Allegretti and Alessandro Sozzini, "Diario Senese (1550-1555)" MS. D 25, fol. 3, ASS.

⁵¹⁴ Tregiani describes damask palio banners awarded for races sponsored by the Oca and Nicchio in 1581. See Tregiani, fol. 8. A yellow damask banner was awarded for a bufalata run in honor of the marriage of Signore Alessandro Carli. *Relazione Delle Rapresentanze*, fol. 31v. The Onda recorded a number of *damaschino* palii in their inventories.

⁵¹⁵ "Il Libro dei Palii Vinti..." in Malacarne, 88-95.

⁵¹⁶ I have found seven instances of this red damask palio from 1563 to 1599 in the papers of the Parte Guelfa.

⁵¹⁷ Ginsburg, 30.

⁵¹⁸ These include palii, all of green satin in 1500, for San Bartolommeo in 1509 and 1510, and one for Santa Maria in September, 1510.

⁵¹⁹ “Il Libro dei Palii Vinti...” in Malacarne, 88-95.

⁵²⁰ Torelli to Cosimo I, July 11, 1556, CPG, NN 704, fol. 146, ASF.

⁵²¹ The 1562 banner cost 500 *lire* fifty *soldi*. CPG, NN 20, fol. 159, ASF.

⁵²² Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, 163.

⁵²³ This payment, from 1590, is for sixteen *braccia* of yellow *teletta* for a total of forty-two florins, two *lire*. The total cost of making the banner was seventy-seven florins, six *lire*, five *soldi*. CPG, NN 46, fol. 170v, ASF.

⁵²⁴ Boccherini, “La Produzione dei Tessuti di Seta a Firenze Diffusione e Caratteristiche Tecniche e Tipologie,” in Boccherini and Marabelli, 25. I have found only two mentions of *cianbellotino* palii, both in Siena: the Onda won a sea-colored palio in 1589, and a red palio in 1592 from the Pantera Contrada. See Ascheri et al., 86 (86v), 131 (209v), and 141 (217r).

⁵²⁵ The weight of the cloth depends on the thread count. In a table of silks produced in Naples in 1600, taffeta has a weave of only forty-five threads per *portata* (section of cloth), as opposed to damask at ninety threads and ermisine at 100 threads. See Portioli in Cavaciocchi, Table 2, 348.

⁵²⁶ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani di Rinascimento*, 162.

⁵²⁷ This includes a white *tafettà* banner won by the Terzo of Città for a fistfight in 1612, and a palio of changing colors run for the *donzeli di palazzo* in 1570. See Cavaciocchi, 42-42 (26r), 85 (86r).

⁵²⁸ Biccherna 291, fol. 57, ASS reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 159.

⁵²⁹ Burcardo, in Cruciani, 207.

⁵³⁰ Payments for Palio of Sant’Anna of 1589, CPG, NN 46, fol. 144v, ASF.

⁵³¹ Dini in Cavaciocchi, 114. For more on the division of gender in cloth production, see Goodman in Cavaciocchi, 229-245. Goodman maintains that female weavers were relatively uncommon in the fifteenth century, mentioning that Andrea Banchi’s Florentine workshop had only one female weaver, but notes that other workshops may have employed women in such tasks as narrow ribbon weaving.

⁵³² Cecchini and Neri, 24.

⁵³³ Biccherna 390, fol. 13v, ASS, reproduced and cited in Cecchini and Neri, 145-147.

⁵³⁴ Irina Konovolova mentions that a type of silk, *çedalini*, was manufactured at Caffa on the Black Sea in the late middle ages. See Konovolova, “Some Data about Silk-Weaving in Caffa in the XIVth through XVIth Centuries,” in Cavaciocchi, 335-338.

⁵³⁵ King, 75.

⁵³⁶ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, 160.

⁵³⁷ *Riforma delli Statuti dell'Arte della Seta del 1513*, Arti 15, fol. 6, ASS.

⁵³⁸ Captain of the Guelph Party [Luca Fabroni?] to the Grand Duke of Florence, June 27, 1576, CPG, NN 735, fol. 207, ASF. See also Ascheri et al., 146 (220v).

⁵³⁹ Saslow identifies *ermisino* as *sarsenet*, a lightweight silk, in his study of Florentine theatre costumes in the late sixteenth century. See Saslow, 61. However all other references to the fabric that I have found indicate that it was a heavy fabric. In a table of fabrics produced in Naples in 1573, the *ermisine* is the heaviest, at 100 threads per *portata* (quantity of fabric). See Rosalba Ragosta, "Specializzazione produttiva a Napoli," in Cavaciocchi, 339-349.

⁵⁴⁰ CPG, NN 46, fol. 144v, ASF.

⁵⁴¹ Ascheri et al., 141 (217v).

⁵⁴² I have not been able to find the equivalent modern measure for the *canna*.

⁵⁴³ Paolo dello Maestro, *Memoriale* (1466) in Cruciani, 122.

⁵⁴⁴ Caleffini and Zambotto, in Tebaldi, 23-24.

⁵⁴⁵ Burcardo, in Cruciani, 275.

⁵⁴⁶ Paolo dello Maestro, in Cruciani, 122.

⁵⁴⁷ Zambotto, in Tebaldi, 35.

⁵⁴⁸ I am not certain exactly what this is, although *pignola* may be a dialect variation on *perpignano*, a type of wool cloth.

⁵⁴⁹ Rosalia Bonito Fanelli, *Five Centuries of Italian Textiles: 1300-1800: A selection from the Museo del Tessuto, Prato* (Prato: Cassa di Risparmi, 1981), 35.

⁵⁵⁰ Bill dating November 1, 1408, Archivio di Stato di Prato, Archivio Datini 632, reproduced and transcribed as document 82 in Federigio Melis, *Documenti per la Storia Economica dei secoli XIII-XVI* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1972), 290-291. The fabric listed at the top of the page next to the drawing is described as "1 peza di zetani veluttato, campo vermiglio di grana e pollo [pelo] verde, con certi fiori di pello: cilistri e bianchi e con brocatti d'oro fine, d'uno ramo dissegnato dirinpeto (One piece of velvet satin, on a vermillion ground of red dye and green pile, with certain flowers of pile: *cilistri* and whites and with brocade of fine gold, of a branch designed and repeated)." Fanelli reproduces this bill as figure 12 on p. 524 of her article on the pomegranate pattern.

⁵⁵¹ Sheila Paine, *Embroidered Textiles: Traditional Patterns from Five Continents*, (New York, Rizzoli, 1990), 70. This example of embroidery is from a traditional *saz* embroidery in her personal collection.

⁵⁵² Fanelli notes that the Church Fathers saw pomegranate seeds as foretelling Christ's sacrifice. Mary is often shown in Renaissance painting holding a pomegranate, an allusion to her fertility. Rosalia Bonito Fanelli, "The Pomegranate Motif," in Cavaciocchi, 505-530.

⁵⁵³ *Ibid.*, 509.

⁵⁵⁴ Fanelli, *Five Centuries*, 178, cat. 48.

⁵⁵⁵ R. De Genaro, *Velluti: Museo Nazionale del Bargello*, (Florence: S.P.E.S., 1987), 10. De Genaro says that during the fifteenth century, Florentine velvets were fifty-eight cm in width, Genoese velvets sixty cm in width, and Venetian velvets sixty-three cm in width. I have also observed this among several pieces of velvet and brocade fabrics with a pomegranate pattern of definite or attributed Florentine manufacture (the type of fabric popular for use in palio banners) from the fifteenth century included in the exhibition catalog, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, edited by Rosalia Bonito Fanelli. Fanelli includes, along with the dimension of each piece or fragment of textile, the *altezza*, or depth (width) of the weave. For instance, Cat. 8 (pp. 40-41) a piece of Florentine worked velvet, circa 1440, in pomegranate pattern from the Collezione Franchetti (n. 116), has a width of fifty-eight cm (one Florentine *braccio*); Fanelli assigns another Florentine worked velvet (Cat. 10, pp. 44-45) from the mid-fifteenth century (Franchetti n. 59) a reconstructed width of fifty-eight cm; an ecclesiastical garment of the mid-fifteenth century, made of gold brocade velvet (Cat. 11; pp. 46-47; no. 77 Franchetti) with a width of fifty-nine cm; and a fragment of pomegranate pattern gold brocade velvet of Spanish or Italian manufacture (Cat. 12, pp. 48-49; Franchetti no. 133), circa 1480-1500, is fifty-eight cm in width. So it appears that at least during this time period in Florence, this type of cloth was usually produced at a one *braccio* width.

⁵⁵⁶ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del Rinascimento*, 136-137, fig. 56.

⁵⁵⁷ Both Cecchini and Turrini have noted that in the documents concerning the Palio of the Assumption in Siena of 1441 (Concistoro 453 fol. 24; Consiglio Generale, 221, fols. 32v, 33; ASS), the General Council decided to purchase thirty-two *braccia* of crimson velvet for the palio, and this was cut in half and sewn together to make a banner sixteen *braccia* high. The central seam was covered by the frieze. See Cecchini and Neri, 52, and Doc. 51, Turrini "Repertorio documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 526. Alessandra Gianni also mentions a document (Biccherna 760, fol. 2v, ASS) concerning the Palio of the Assumption of 1447 in which the frieze of the palio covered the central seam. See Gianni, "Araldica e Allegoria nel Drappellone," in Ridolfi et al., 132.

⁵⁵⁸ Lelio Torelli to Cosimo I, July 11, 1556, CPG, NN 704, fol. 146, ASS.

⁵⁵⁹ The information for the Sieneese banners derives from documents in the Sieneese Biccherna, ASS; that for the Florentine banners comes from the Archive of the Capitani di Parte Guelfa, Numeri Neri, ASF.

⁵⁶⁰ Several documents prior to 1447 mention importing silk and vairs' skins from Florence. For instance, for the 1405 banner of the Assumption, the scarlet cloth used to make the palio was imported from Florence, so transport expenses and taxes had to be paid, including twenty *soldi* in duties on the fabric. See Biccherna 291, fol. 56v, reproduced as Doc. XV in Cecchini and Neri, 158-159.

⁵⁶¹ Ferrarese chroniclers mention the heights of the palio banners for the various races run for the Feast of San Giorgio, including measurements of fourteen *braccia* for the horse race in 1475 and 1499. See Zambotto, excerpted and cited in Tebaldi, 13, 53.

⁵⁶² CPG, NN 32, fol. 171rv, ASF.

⁵⁶³ Zambotto recorded the awarding of a fourteen-*braccia* banner for the horse race in 1475, 1485, 1488, and 1499. See Zambotto in Tebaldi, 13, 34, 35, 53.

⁵⁶⁴ See accounts of 1477 and 1478 Palio of San Giorgio in Caleffini, in Tebaldi, 23-24.

⁵⁶⁵ I have categorized as red the colors *cremesi* (crimson), *scarlatto* (scarlet), *vermillion* (vermillion), and *rosso* (red).

⁵⁶⁶ Shades of pink mentioned in documents include *rosa* (rose), *rosado* (rose silk), and *incarnata* (flesh-colored).

⁵⁶⁷ These include two banners of *cangiante* (changing colors), and one apiece of *pavonazzo* (“peacock”), *fiorito* (floral), and silver.

⁵⁶⁸ Unfortunately, the Captains of the Guelph Party failed to record a color for most of their payments for the *brochato* (brocade) in sixteenth-century banners, so my data on color for this particular palio is especially sparse.

⁵⁶⁹ In the Archivio di Stato in Florence, I have found in the records of the Parte Guelfa from the latter part of the sixteenth century eight separate payments for the Palio di Cocchi specifying banners manufactured from *Domasco rosso*, for the following years: 1563 (CPG, NN 21, fol. 160v), 1564 (CPG, NN 22, fol. 461), 1570 (CPG, NN 28, fol. 170), 1574 (CPG, NN 32, fol. 171), 1589 (CPG, NN 46, fol. 143v), 1590 (CPG, NN 46, fol. 169v), 1593 (CPG, NN 48 fol. 139v), and 1599 (CPG, NN 50 fol. 171), ASF.

⁵⁷⁰ Captain of the Guelph Party to the Grand Duke of Florence, June 27, 1576, CPG NN 735, fol. 207, ASF.

⁵⁷¹ This occurs in 1559 (CPG, NN 17, fol. 159v) and 1574 (CPG, NN 32, fol. 171v), both in ASF. For other years, there are payments for *panno luchesino* (Luccan cloth), but color is not specified.

⁵⁷² The years are 1559 (CPG, NN 17, fol. 159v) and 1599 (CPG, NN 50 fol. 171v). In 1574, the Palio is made of *panno turchino* (turquoise cloth), while in other years, *panno luchesino* is used though the color not specified.

⁵⁷³ The years are 1558 (CPG, NN 706 fol. 234) and 1559 (CPG, NN 17, fol. 159v). As with the other two palio banners, turchino and panno luchesino are used in other years.

⁵⁷⁴ These start in 1559 with CPG, NN 17, fol. 159v. In 1555 and 1556, the palio was made from gold *teletta*. See Lelio Torelli to the Cosimo I, July 16, 1556, CPG, NN 704, fol. 146, ASF.

⁵⁷⁵ Biccherna 134, fol. 94, ASS, described and cited by Cecchini and Neri, 24.

⁵⁷⁶ Biccherna 162, fols. 112, 155v; 163 fol. XX, LXIII, ASS, mentioned and cited by Cecchini and Neri, 24.

⁵⁷⁷ Biccherna 307, fol. 28, ASS. Document mentioned by Cecchini and Neri, 131, n. 115.

⁵⁷⁸ “..a messer? Poggi? ? setaiuoli per br 30 di veluto cremexi a lire 14 per braccia lire 420...” (420 lire to Master Poggi? setaiuolo for thirty *braccia* of crimson velvet at fourteen lire per *braccia*) ASS, Biccherna 348, fol. CCXXXIII. Document cited by Cecchini and Neri, 69, n. 191.

⁵⁷⁹ Balìa 188, fols. 77rv, ASS.

⁵⁸⁰ This includes payments to Armellini of 1598 (Balìa 188, fol. 62v, 64v), 1599 (Balìa 188, fols. 110v, 114v), 1600 (Balìa 188, fol. 152), 1602 (Balìa 189 fols. 65, 73v) 1603 (Balìa 189 fol. 121v), and 1604 (Balìa, 189 fol. 172v, 173), ASS.

⁵⁸¹ Biccherna 302, fol. 37, ASS described by Cecchini and Neri, 45.

⁵⁸² Balìa 189 fol. 102v, ASS.

⁵⁸³ The rose as a symbol of the Virgin goes back to the Middle Ages. Marina Warner notes that in fifteenth-century Europe, there was the rise of the veneration of the rosary, and thus an increase of rose

imagery in the liturgy and in painting. See Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: the Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), 99-100, 307.

⁵⁸⁴ Zambotto mentions a palio of this description for 1490, 1491, and 1496. See Tebaldi, 13-14, 61, 64.

⁵⁸⁵ Caleffini, in Tebaldi, 39.

⁵⁸⁶ Leonardo da Sarzana described a gold palio awarded in Rome during Carnevale in 1492 for combat with arms to celebrate the Castilian conquest of Granada. See Leonardo da Sarzana, Letter of February 24, 1492 in Cruciani, *Teatro in Rinascimento - Roma*, 232. Zambotto describes a crimson velvet palio awarded for a joust on the day of Sant'Andrea in Ferrara in 1481. See Tebaldi, 21. Simone di Niccolò, in the verse account of the Sienese Feast of the Assumption of 1506, "Festa che si fece in Siena a di' XV di aghosto MCVI" described a red velvet palio awarded for a joust. See Giuliano Catoni and Alessandro Leoncini, *Cacce e tatuaggi: Nuovi ragguagli sulle contrade di Siena*, (Siena: Protagon Editori Toscana, 1993), 122.

⁵⁸⁷ Marco Ciatti, "Appunti per una storia dei tessuti in Siena e il patrimonio delle Contrade," *Paramenti e Arredi Sacri nelle Contrade di Siena*, (Florence: Casa Usher, 1986), 27.

⁵⁸⁸ Fanelli in Cavaciocchi, 523.

⁵⁸⁹ There are payments for *taffeta di grana* for the Palii of San Giovanni and San Bernaba of 1481. CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 41v, ASF.

⁵⁹⁰ Tregiani, 12.

⁵⁹¹ "Relazione Delle Rapresentanze," fol. 30v.

⁵⁹² See Grassi, I, 96, cited by Cairola, 115.

⁵⁹³ Inventory, July 18, 1616, Ascheri et al., 146, 220r.

⁵⁹⁴ Giovanni Burcardo, Entries for February 18, 1487 and February 3-4, 1499 in Cruciani, 206-207, 274-75.

⁵⁹⁵ Burcardo, February 18, 1487 and February 6, 1499 in Cruciani, 206, 275.

⁵⁹⁶ See Zambotto and Caleffini in Tebaldi, 14, 16, 29, 34, 61.

⁵⁹⁷ Zambotto on men's race for San Giorgio in 1488, in Tebaldi, 35.

⁵⁹⁸ Caleffini in Tebaldi, 15, 24, 61 and Zambotto in Tebaldi 14, 24, 29, 34.

⁵⁹⁹ These are based upon accounts of foot races in Ferrara, Rome, and a race for *donzeli di palazo* in Siena. Burcardo, in Cruciani, 206-07, 275; Caleffini, in Tebaldi, 16; Paolo dello Maestro in Cruciani, 122; Ascheri et al., 85 (86r).

⁶⁰⁰ Green or sky-blue banners were presented to the winners of the ass and buffalo races at Carnevale in Rome, white banners in Ferrara, and in Siena, a variety of colored damask, from floral and yellow, to the aforementioned red, or white. Burcardo, in Cruciani, 206-07, 275 and Paolo dello Maestro, in Cruciani, 122. Caleffini in Tebaldi, 15, 24 and Zambotto in Tebaldi, 24, 29, 34. A yellow palio won for a asses' race is mentioned in the entry of February 17 1596, Ascheri et al., 109 (150v). A yellow damask palio was awarded for a buffalo race on September 2, 1602. See "Relazione Delle Rapresentanze," 31v. Tregiani, 8. A white damask palio was awarded for a palio of asses sponsored by the Oca in May, 1581.

⁶⁰¹ Goldthwaite, *The Building of Renaissance Florence*, 162.

⁶⁰² The 2002 August palio banner, which I saw in the Museum of the Onda Contrada in January of 2004, was painted by Fernando Botero, and showed a rotund, double-chinned Madonna and three fat horses!

⁶⁰³ Cecchini and Neri, 45.

⁶⁰⁴ Biccherna 307, fol. 28, ASS cited by Cecchini and Neri, 131, n. 115.

⁶⁰⁵ "...Spesse del paglio di Santamaria da agosto ildi? lire mille dugento dodici per tanti sono spesa br 30 di velluto cremisi, per li vaii el fregio e bande e napone et nappe leone." Biccherna 332, fol. 33, ASS cited in Cecchini and Neri, 73, n. 208.

⁶⁰⁶ A deliberation of the Siense Balia of May 8, 1599 mentions the election of two officials, Diomede Cecchini and Fausto Saracini to settle the account with the *setaiuolo*, Andrea Armellini, for the making of the crimson velvet palio presented to San Domenico for the Feast of San Ambrogio. Balia 188, fol. 110v, ASS.

⁶⁰⁷ For 1422, the ledgers record expenses of 200 florins, four denari for the Palio of San Giovanni Battista, and twenty florins, four *denari*, for the Palio of San Bernaba. Camera del Comune, Camarlinghi Uscita 376, fol. 3, ASF.

⁶⁰⁸ Entry of June 30, 1475, CC, NC, EU 33; CC, NC, EU 37 fol. 43v, 44; CC, SC, EU 94, fol. 41v, 42; CC, NC, EU 116 fol. 40, 40v, 41, ASF.

⁶⁰⁹ For the 1481 Palio of San Giovanni in Florence, there is a payment to *Leonardo Giovanni setaiuolo minuto* for making the *nappone*. CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 42, ASF. Dini writes that the original silk shops in Florence were those of the *setaiuoli minuti*, who specialized in "*nastri di seta, frange, vergole, borse di seta e qualche taffetà*." (silk ribbons, fringes, threads, silk purses and some taffeta) He mentions the ten codici of such a *setaiuolo*, Bartolomeo di Vieri, dating from 1420-1427, in the Archives of the Ospedale degli Innocenti. A split occurred at the end of the fourteenth century, when the *setaiuoli grossi* began to organize large, decentralized workshops. By 1458, of the forty-eight *setaiuoli* in Florence, only nine were of *setaiuoli "a minuto"*. See Dini in Cavaciocchi, 110, 112.

⁶¹⁰ Lolo zendadaio appears in documents for 1310 [Biccherna 124, fol. 35 (186rv), reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 143-44] and 1326 [Biccherna 390, fol. 13v, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 145-147]. Angelo zendadaio appears in documents for 1405 [Biccherna 291, fol. 57, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 158-159], 1413 [Biccherna 298 fol. 58, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 44, n.106], and 1419 [Biccherna 302, fol. 37, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 45, n. 112]. Francesco di Dino pellicaio appears in 1419, 1429 [Biccherna 307, fol. 27v, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 131, n. 115.], and 1438 [Biccherna 312, fol. 70, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 52, n. 134], ASS.

⁶¹¹ This artisan was hired once in 1565 (Balia 175, fol. 120v), twice in 1569 (Balia, 177, fol. 22), and once in 1585 (Balia 175, fol. 116v), ASS.

⁶¹² Salvador Pini worked once in 1578 (Balia 181, fol. 34v), twice in 1579 (Balia 181, fols. 81v, 100v), once in 1582 (Balia 182, fol. 100), once in 1583 (Balia 182, fol. 183), once in 1591 (Balia 186, fols.85, 168v), and once in 1592 (Balia 186, fol. 182), ASS.

⁶¹³ Armellini worked twice in 1598 (Balia 188, fols. 62v, 64v, 77rv), twice in 1599 (Balia 188, fols. 110v, 114v, 127v, 130v), twice in 1600 (Balia 188, fols. 152, 171v, 178v), once in 1601 (Balia 189 fols. 24, 39, 40v), three times in 1602 (Balia 189 fols. 65, 73v, 89, 89v, 102v), twice in 1603 (Balia 189 fols. 111v, 121v, 143), and twice in 1604 (Balia 189 fols. 172v, 173, 190), ASS.

⁶¹⁴ He worked in 1582 (Balìa 182 fol. 126v) and 1591 (Balìa 186, fol. 168v), ASS.

⁶¹⁵ Balìa 182 fols. 51v, 52, ASS.

⁶¹⁶ ASF, CC, NC, EU 116, fol. 41. The *Priorista* illustration of the Palio of San Giovanni show that a gold lily on a pole accompanying the cart of the palio.

⁶¹⁷ James Beck, *Italian Renaissance Painting* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981): 438-439.

⁶¹⁸ These were preserved after the cart was dismantled in 1810, and the six panels and four of the putti panels are in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. Janet Cox-Rearick believes that three of the putti scenes may have been painted after Pontormo. There were also four scenes illustrating episodes from the life of San Giovanni, and two Medicean arms held aloft by putti, that were painted in the eighteenth century, which also decorated the cart. See Philippe Costamagna, *Pontormo* (Milan: Electa, 1994), no. 8, 108-111.

⁶¹⁹ F. Scalia first suggested this reconstruction in 1992. See Costamagna, 110 and Paola Pirolo, “Tre momenti...,” *La Festa di San Giovanni*, 86-87. The panels are illustrated on pp. 89-89, figs. 7 & 8.

⁶²⁰ Cennino d’Andrea Cennini, *The Craftsman’s Handbook*, Daniel V. Thompson, Jr., trans. (1933: New York: Dover Publications, 1960), 103-104.

⁶²¹ They may have been the personal devices of government officials.

⁶²² Turrini, Document 67, “Repertorio documentario,” in Ridolfi et al., 528.

⁶²³ *Asta* is the most common term used in documents, but Landucci uses the term *stanga*. See Landucci, 276. In some of the fifteenth century payment documents for the Palio of San Giovanni Battista, the *asta* is referred to with the Latin word *lancia* (there is a payment from 1477 to a “Messer Johannes fiorini 27 pro lancia lahorato (to Master Giovanni twenty-seven florins for a worked *asta*)”). See CC, NC, EU 37, 43v, ASF.

⁶²⁴ It is possible that the former carpenter was a member of the latter’s workshop, since the former’s name contains the surname “di Nanni.” Biccherna 307, fols. 27, 35, ASS. Document cited by Cecchini and Neri, 131, n. 115.

⁶²⁵ Lorenzo was also paid for painting the standard of the Captain of the People presented to the Duomo. Biccherna 307, fol. 27v, ASS. Over the years, the same artist hired to paint the *asta* also painted the finial; for instance, for the 1481 Palio of San Pietro Alessandrino, there is a payment “a maestro pavolo depentore per laste e leone de detto paglio (to Master Paolo the Painter for the *asta* and lion of the said palio).” Biccherna 335 fol. 76, ASS cited by Cecchini and Neri, 63, n. 173.

⁶²⁶ Biccherna 390, fol. 13v, ASS. Document reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 145-147.

⁶²⁷ “...pro lanca? lili dicti palii in tucto lire 11 soldi 11.” CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 41v.

⁶²⁸ The payment is to a “Francesco di Cristofano Dipentore” for “..lire xii sono per dipentura della stangha? rosso a gigli di detto palio et dipenture di altre stanghe et altre cose? (12 lire for painting of the stanga red with lilies of the said palio and painting of other stanghe and other things?).” ASF, CC, NC, EU 116, fol. 41, ASF.

⁶²⁹ Landucci writes in an entry of June 24, 1506, (p. 276) “E a di’ 24 di giugno, il di’ di San Giovanni, si ruppe una ruota al carro del palio di San Giovanni, quando andava alle mosse; e la mattina, quando ando’ a offerire el palio in su la piazza, cadde la crocellina di mano a San Giovanni che sta in su la stanga del palio. Parve a molti cattivo segno. (And on the day of June 24th, the day of San Giovanni, a

wheel of the cart of the Palio of San Giovanni, broke when it went to the start; and the morning that it went to offer the palio in the piazza, the little cross in the hand of St. John who stood on the *stanga* of the palio, fall. It seemed to many a bad sign.)”

⁶³⁰ In 1405, there is a payment “... per una aste grossa si fecie per ponare in sul charro et dipentura la detta et uno lioncello inarientato a maestro Lando in tutto lire cinque. (... for a large *asta* made to put on the carro and painting of the said *asta* and a little rearing lion, to Maestro Lando, *lire* cinque.)” Biccherna 291, fol. 56v, ASS. Document reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 158-159. In 1413, there is another payment “a maestro lando per un leone sta in su detto paglio lire 5 soldi 8, (To Maestro Lando for a lion that is on the top of the said palio, five *lire* eight *soldi*.)”

⁶³¹ A diagram of the lion coat-of-arms appears in *Gli Stemmi Senesi Antichi e Moderni estratti dagli studi del cittadiini del Gallaccini del Pecci e d'altri* (Siena: Litografia Cirenei, 1877), reproduced in Cairola, p.?

⁶³² A payment ledger from the 1438 Assumption feast records a payment to “per depentura lasta et lioncello per la banda et per lo leoncello di legname a vicho dipentore in tuto lire dodici (twelve *lire* in all to Vicho the Painter for painting the *asta* and the little lion for the band and for the wooden lion).” Biccherna 312, fol. 70, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 52, n. 134.

⁶³³ Cecchini and Neri, 49.

⁶³⁴ Inventory of July 3, 1592, Ascheri et al., 141 (217v). This appears to be from the palio banner won by the Onda in 1581, in the same palio race in which Virginia Tacci rode. Federigo da Montauto, the governor of Siena, mentioned in a letter of August 14, 1581 to Antonio Serguidi, the Grand duke’s secretary, “...finalmente la Contrada dell’Aquila, che per ere’ ripiena tutta de Gentilhomini, et haver per impresa l’uccello che regna tra gli altri, ha voluto eleggersi il piu’ solenne, e’ l’ piu’ celebre giorno della Citta, che e’ la festa di mezz’Agosto et honorarlo d’un palio superbo di broccato; che superi il valor’ di tutti gli altri... (...finally the Contrada of the Eagle, that is filled with gentlemen, and has as its coat-of-arms the bird that reigns over all others, wanted to elect itself the most solemn and celebrated day of the City, that is the festival of mid-August, and honor it with a superior palio of brocade, that exceeds the value of all the others...)” See Mediceo del Principato 1875, fol.74 (microform). Tregiani (fol. 48) also mentions in his verses on the festivals of 1581: “Finito il corso e la pista finita/Fu dato il palio d’oro al corridore/L’onda con l’altra bozza et infinita/Sel portò lieto in Santo Salvatore.”

⁶³⁵ The earliest instance I have found of a payment for the giglio is in the expenses for the Palio of San Giovanni Battista of 1475, Entry of June 30th, CC, NC, EU 33, ASF. In 1516, there is a payment of one florin to Bartolommeo di Sasso “orafo (goldsmith) per far una doratura del giglio del palio (to make the gilding of the lily of the palio).” CC, NC, EU 116, fol. 40, ASF.

⁶³⁶ According to a verse dating from 1407-09 by the poet Zanobi Perini, the four corners of the palio cart were decorated with lions (“Ch’a ogni canto ha guardia d’un lion”). Zanobi Perini, “La Festa di Santo Giovanni Batista che si fa a Firenze,” reprinted in Guasti, 9-17. Mark Christopher Rogers includes Perini as Doc. 8 in his Appendix V of his dissertation, pp. 616-617.

⁶³⁷ CC, NC, EU 166, fols. 40,40v, ASF. The ledgers of the Guelph Party also record numerous payments to carters for drawing the cart. See documents for 1599, CPG, NN 50 fol. 170v, ASF.

⁶³⁸ The cart was rebuilt in 1429 and 1453. See Cecchini and Neri, 49, 54.

⁶³⁹ Cecchini and Neri, 43, 52. I am not sure if I agree as to whether this cart was the one that carried the palio. Unfortunately, I have not yet looked at all the documents which Cecchini cites to see the precise wording of the description.

⁶⁴⁰ The word *spalliera* is used once to refer to this element. A payment document in Latin mentions a payment to a Tomaso Paolo banderaio “pro fattura de 3 scudi pro spalliera,” *Spalliera*, which in modern usage means headboard, derives from the Italian *spalle*, or shoulder.

⁶⁴¹ “A spese del presente anno 1570 in far' il palio di Santo Giovanni fiorini 291 llire 1. 19. 10 che tanti si sono pagati dadi 6 di giugno 1570 adultimo? del presente per valuta di br 28 di broccato fodera di dossi, oro per il fregio, giglio, et ermisino? per la banda, un nappone dipintura fattura et altro come particolarmente al risconto R _____ 142 fiorini 291. lire 1.17.10. (For expenses of the present year 1570 in making the Palio of San Giovanni 291 florins, one *lire*, nineteen *soldi*, ten denari that were paid from the 6th of June to the last day of the present year for the value of twenty-eight *braccia* of brocade lined with *dossi*?, gold for the frieze, lily, and ermisine for the band, a *nappone*, painting, making and other as particularly al risconto R 142).” CPG, NN 28, fol.169v, ASF.

⁶⁴² “...per due braccia e uno quarro di zendado di piue cholori che se ne fecie el penonciello da chapo el palio, costo' diciotto soldi.” Biccherna 390, fol. 13v, ASS, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 145-47. A slightly later document from 1347 mentions among the expenses for the palio banner *lo pennone di zendado* (a pennant of sendal). Biccherna 221, fol. CXVI, ASS, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 151-52.

⁶⁴³ “...lire 26 10? per valuta d br 1 ½ di velluto rosso anzi pagonazzo a lire 19 il braccio per fare la Tascha? che entra nello stile per detto Palio.” CPG, NN 50, fol. 170v, ASF.

⁶⁴⁴ In 1441, as Cecchini explains, the palio, “...was to measure 16 yards, but as the velvet was not broad enough they decided to buy 32 yards, to cut it into two equal parts, and sew them together, covering the seam with gold braid. It was then to be completely lined with fur and decorated with the usual braid, cords, tassels, and the silver lion, just as in the past.” Concistoro 453 fol. 24, Consiglio Generale 221, fols. 32v, 33, ASS; summarized by Cecchini and Neri, 52 and in Doc.51, “Repertorio documentario,” in Ridolfi et al., 526.

⁶⁴⁵ “...velluto chermisi fine, in due palii, e tra l'uno e l'altro uno fregio d'oro fine largo un palmo.” Dati in Guasti, 8.

⁶⁴⁶ There is a payment from 1500 to an artisan (the name is indecipherable) for forty-eight *lire* for the making of a frieze of fifteen *braccia*, for a Palio of the Assumption that was made with thirty *braccia* of fabric. See Biccherna 348, fol. CCXXXIII, ASS. Ledgers of the Guelph Party in Florence from the sixteenth century often record lengths for the *fregio* of half, or slightly less than half, of the length of fabric purchased to make the banner. For instance, for the Palio of Rotta da Marciano of 1590, the *fregio* is eight *braccia* for a palio made with sixteen *braccia* of fabric. CPG, NN 46, fol. 170v, ASF. In 1593, there is a payment for eight *braccia* of *fregio* for the Palio dei Cocchi, made from sixteen *braccia* of fabric. CPG, NN 48 fol.139v, ASF.

⁶⁴⁷ Biccherna 760, fol. 2v, ASS discussed by Cecchini and Neri, 53-44 and Turrini, Document 53, “Repertorio documentario,” in Ridolfi et al., 526. I have looked at the original document and tried to transcribe as much as possible, but do not have a complete transcription due to difficulties in deciphering the Latin and the handwriting. Judging from Turrini’s summary of the document, the frieze appears to have been on both sides of the palio banner, with seven arms on each side, but I will need to confirm this at a later date when I decipher the rest of the document.

⁶⁴⁸ CC, NC, EU 37, fol. 43v, ASF.

⁶⁴⁹ The term “*filato*” appears often in payment documents to describe the gold braid. Dini mentions (p. 106) that in 1432, gold and silver *filato* was one of the most important products of the Genoese silk industry and was used in the production of *aurosericci* (silk fabrics). A payment of 1589 for the Palio of San Giovanni Battista includes “fiorini 82. 4. 14 ___ br 6 q(*quarri*?) 5 di m (looks like elongated m)

d'oro filato e fattura del fregio (eighty-two florins, four *lire*, fourteen *soldi* for braccia six *quarri* five of gold thread and making of the frieze)." CPG, NN 46, fol. 142v, ASF.

⁶⁵⁰ CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 41v, ASF. Another document, from 1477, records a payment to a Filippo Antonio Mochi(?) "pro uno fregio de auro (for a frieze of gold)." CC, NC, EU 37, fol. 43v, ASF.

⁶⁵¹ Dini in Cavaciocchi, 111.

⁶⁵² The names of these men were Bartolomeo di Piero Piffaro, Bartolomeo Bambi and to Federigo di Federigo d'Allemagna. See Cecchini and Neri, 53-44 and Turrini, Document 53, "Repertorio documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 526.

⁶⁵³ CPG, NN 50 fol. 171, ASF.

⁶⁵⁴ Ciabiani, *Firenze di Gonfaloni in Gonfaloni*, 128.

⁶⁵⁵ "...a madonna maria?? madona dello spedale lire 296 soldi ? per l'oro del fregio e fattura et lire 263 per l'oro et lire 33 per la fattura e velo? per lo detto palio." Biccherna 339, fol. 164, ASS, cited by Cecchini and Neri, 64, n. 177.

⁶⁵⁶ CC, SC, EU 94, fol. 41v, ASF.

⁶⁵⁷ "Al monastero? et monache delle murate di firenze per xxxxi pli posto a memoriale X° di cassa a quaderno 26 sono per manifattura del fregio doro filato del palio di sangiovanni baptista del presente anno ? per stanzamento chome di sopra per V° lire 32 soldi 16." CC, NC, EU 116, fol. 40v, ASF.

⁶⁵⁸ I thank Dr. Mary Garrard for making me aware of the association of this particularly Monastery with embroidery.

⁶⁵⁹ Payments for the 1599 Palio dei Cocchi include "...lire 32 per braccia 9? di fregi doro di Cipri a fogliami di lire 6 il braccio.. (thirty-two *lire* for nine *braccia* of gold-leafed ? frieze of Cyprian gold at six *lire* per *braccio*) and payments for the Palio of San Vittorio specify "...lire 10 per braccia 2 d'oro di Cipri per fare il fregio. (ten *lire* for two *braccia* of Cyprian gold for making the frieze)." CPG, NN 50, fol. 171, ASF.

⁶⁶⁰ CPG, NN 735, fol. 207, ASF.

⁶⁶¹ Fanelli defines *broccatello* as "Tessuto operato con disegni dati da un effetto di raso a rilievo e da un effetto di trama lanciata, generalmente di lino, legata dall'ordito di legatura. Il fondo è creato da una trama lanciata in seta legata da una catena supplementare detta di 'pelino.'" See Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del rinascimento*, 160.

⁶⁶² "1650= Il di 9 = Nobre: di d° mese ed Anno fù ripetuta la detta Festa, e si corse per la prima volta il Palio con I Cavalli consistente in un Drappo di Damasco Cremisi con fregio bianco, e fodera di Taffetà bianca e nera." "Relazione Delle Rapresentanze," fol. 40.

⁶⁶³ I will deal with these coats-of-arms in the section of the bands of the palio.

⁶⁶⁴ Artusi explains that the Florentine symbol was originally a white lily on a red background, but upon the rise of the Guelph Party in 1251, the Guelphs reversed the color of this emblem, and the old symbol became equated with the Ghibelline party. Artusi, "Le insegne della città," in Pastori, 63.

⁶⁶⁵ These identifications are based on comparisons with a page of civic arms from an eighteenth-century manuscript attributed to the antiquarian Giovan Battista Dei (*Manoscritti* 471, " "Armi di Firenze, Città, Terre e Castelli, famiglie fiorentine," fol. 17r, ASF, reproduced in Pastori, 107, fig. 13.

⁶⁶⁶ The central coat-of-arms appears to be a human figure surmounted by a crown. I am not sure what this is.

⁶⁶⁷ Luigi Borgia has written an article on the imperial and Medici arms added to the Palio of San Giovanni. Borgia, citing a letter from Lelio Torelli of the Guelph Party to Cosimo I of May 13, 1560 (CPG, NN 709, fol 62, ASF) in which Torelli asks the Duke whether the arms of the King of Spain, Philip II, should be painted on the bands of the palio with the imperial eagle. It was decided to put the arms of the King without the eagle, since Philip II had not yet acquired the right after his father's death to use the imperial eagle. Francesco I, son of Cosimo I, reinstated the imperial arms of the Hapsburg rulers (of Maximilian II, then of Rudolf II upon his succession in 1576), which were included on the banner well into the eighteenth century. See Luigi Borgia, "Vicende di Alcuni Stemmi del Palio di San Giovanni (Secoli XVI-XVIII)," in Pastori, 243-249.

⁶⁶⁸ "...quindici soldi per sette isqudi che si posero ne la ghonnella del messo che recho' le novelle de legato." Biccherna 390, fol. 13v, ASS, reproduced as Document 26, "Repertorio documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 526 and in Cecchini and Neri, 145-147.

⁶⁶⁹ "...et per la banda e scudiuogli a giovanni dangniolo lire undici? soldi ?." Biccherna 312, fol. 70, ASS, cited by Cecchini and Neri, 52, n.134.

⁶⁷⁰ Cecchini and Neri, 55. This is for the Palio of the Assumption of 1454. Cecchini cites Biccherna 768, fol. 20; 767 fols. 21v, ASS.

⁶⁷¹ Sigismondo Tizio, "Historiarum Senensium," BCS MS. B.III.9, fols. 487-488, mentioned by Turrini, Doc. 57, "Repertorio documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 526.

⁶⁷² Biccherna 760, fol. 2v, ASS discussed by Cecchini and Neri, 53-44 and Turrini, Document 53, "Repertorio documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 526.

⁶⁷³ "...Augustino? Orsini? d Lotto pianellaio per 14 scudi per lo detto paglio." Biccherna 335, fol. 67v, ASS. Document cited by Cecchini and Neri, 63, n.173.

⁶⁷⁴ Caleffini, in Tebaldi, 15.

⁶⁷⁵ CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 41v, ASF.

⁶⁷⁶ "...fiorini 92 .2. 5. 6 per valuta di br? 17 doro filato a lire 11 1/3 latt quito? per il fregio di detto palio e per ricamarci sopra l'arme e per fattura desso." CPG, NN 50, fol. 170v, ASF. On p. 171 of this same document, there is a payment for embroidering four arms onto the Palio of San Vittorio.

⁶⁷⁷ Cecchini and Neri, 55.

⁶⁷⁸ CC, NC, EU 116, fol. 40, ASF.

⁶⁷⁹ A payment document for the 1589 Palio of San Vittorio includes a payment for "fiorini 1.3. 3. 4 per arme appiccata a fregio numero 4." CPG, NN 46, fol. 143v, ASF. See also CPG, NN 46, fol. 170, ASF for the 1590 Palio of San Vittorio.

⁶⁸⁰ Borgia, in Pastori, 243. Filippo Maria Guadagni, *provveditore* of the Office of the Captains of the Guelph Party, was ordered by the Florentine Secretary of State to remove the old coats-of-arms from the Palio of San Giovanni. Although not all these arms survived, Guadagni made sketches of all the arms. The surviving arms, and Guadagni's drawings of those which do not survive, are in the Archivio di Stato in Florence, in Capitani di parte guelfa, numeri bianchi, 16, "Lavori pubblici," and are reproduced by Borgia as figs. 77-86, pp. 252-256 of Pastori.

⁶⁸¹ Biccherna 312, fol. 70, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 52, n. 134.

⁶⁸² CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 41v, ASF.

⁶⁸³ "...a Giovanni dipentore per l'asta e liono dipenture di bande; Alexandro Sozini per banda, napa, fordamento e dipentura della banda." Biccherna 2, fols. 334v, 335, ASS, reproduced as Document 67, "Reportorio documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 528.

⁶⁸⁴ Biccherna 348, fol. CCCXXXIII, ASS, cited by Cecchini, 69, n. 191.

⁶⁸⁵ For the Palio of San Giovanni of 1599, there is a payment "...fiorini 19 4 17 6 per valuta di br 5 ½ di ermisino per la banda per br 1 ¼ di taffeta per guarnizione di vestiti de tutti che vanno col palio compresso fiorini 9 3 4? per pittura e doratura de la banda e del giglio." CPG, NN 50, fol. 170v, ASF.

⁶⁸⁶ Biccherna 302, fol. 37, ASS, cited by Cecchini and Neri, 45, n. 112.

⁶⁸⁷ "Tomasso pauli banderaio lire XVIII sunt pro factura bande palii Sancto Johannes baptiste."

⁶⁸⁸ "Ad antonio banderaio: per bande et altre a ?? detto lire 27." CC, SC, EU 94, fol. 41v, ASF.

⁶⁸⁹ "...pro braccia 9 alexandrini taffeta pro banda dicti palii a fiorini 4 1/3 la braccia." CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 41v, ASF.

⁶⁹⁰ "...per bande per il palio di san bernaba." CC, SC, EU 94, fol. 41v, ASF.

⁶⁹¹ CPG, NN 50, fol. 171, ASF.

⁶⁹² CPG, NN 46, fol. 141v, ASF. See Saslow, 61 for mention of *perpignano* in theatrical costume at the Medici court.

⁶⁹³ A thank you to Ann Wagner for pointing out this detail!

⁶⁹⁴ "...soppannato tutto di pelle di vaio." Chiari, fol. 11v. Vair pelts were often sewn together in shield-shaped pieces, the gray fur alternating with white. See R. Turner Wilcox, *The Mode in Furs: the History of Furred Costume of the World from the Earliest Times to the Present* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 17.

⁶⁹⁵ Usually, the quantity of ermine skins was quite small, since ermine was more expensive than vair. The Palio of San Giovanni of 1477 used seventy-nine ermine skins. CC, NC, EU 37, fol. 43v, ASF.

⁶⁹⁶ Wilcox, 17.

⁶⁹⁷ Borghini noted that in his time, the guild had gone into decline, and had "fallen into the managed of vile people," so the name of the guild had been changed to the Arte dei Pellicciai. Borghini, *Dell'Arme delle Famiglie Fiorentine*, 52-53.

⁶⁹⁸ The *Priorista* manuscript describes the Palio of San Giovanni Battista as "fusse soppannato di pelle di Armellini." Chiari, *Priorista*, fol 39v. The payment for the Palio of San Giovanni of 1599 includes payment for 505 vairs' skins at thirty-six *lire* per hundred and seventy-three ermine skins for thirty-four *soldi* for each one. CPG, NN 50, fol. 170v, ASF.

⁶⁹⁹ Illustrated as fig. 144 in Musacchio, 144.

⁷⁰⁰ The tray, by an anonymous Florentine, dates to c. 1450-60, and is in the Galleria Sabauda in Turin (inv. 107). See Vetrone, 156-57, cat. 2.8.

⁷⁰¹ Biccherna 312, fol. 70, ASS, mentioned and cited by Cecchini and Neri, 52, n. 134.

⁷⁰² CPG, NN 48 fol. 138v, ASF.

⁷⁰³ Payments for the Palio of San Giovanni of 1481 include a payment to a “Piero Giovanni Domenici rubi? vaiario.” CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 41v, ASF.

⁷⁰⁴ “A francesco di dino? peliciario ? ad detto lire sette demo conti, a giorgio? per chucitura ___del paglio di santamaria daghosto e per chose? d vi posero ? e so uscita de Camerlengi fo. 40 lire VII.” Biccherna 307, fol. 27v, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 115, n.131.

⁷⁰⁵ Cecchini and Neri, 49.

⁷⁰⁶ “(5 agosto) Al palio che s'ofare per la festa di madonna santa Maria di mezo aghosto a di' detto, fiorini setantacinque, lire vintidue, soldi undici, cioe' per braccia diciotto di scharlatto si chompro' a Firenze per fiorini otto canna, e per pancie seicento di vaio numero si chompro' in Firenze a fiorini sei meno uno sesto C., et per cabelle di detto vaio a Firenze fiorini uno per invoglio, e chabele de los scharlatto soldi vintidue, e per vettura soldi quindici, e per ispese Angniolo di maestro Amerigo fiorini uno soma,/ e per pancie vinticinque che mancharo a Ventura di Fede fiorini uno, soldi quantaquattro...” Biccherna 291, fol. 58v, ASS, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 158.

⁷⁰⁷ “...per la colazione panche li bandi detto palio lire 13. 3.” Biccherna 348, fol. CCXXXIII, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 69, n. 191.

⁷⁰⁸ For the 1487 Palio of Carnevale in Rome, the crimson velvet banner was lined with green taffeta. See Burcardo in Cruciani, 206-207. The 1599 Palio dei Cocchi had a lining of taffeta of *tre colori*. CPG, NN 50, fol. 171, ASF.

⁷⁰⁹ A payment for the Palio of San Vittorio of 1570 is for “...braccia 16 di velluti rosso cremisi oro di cipri fregio taffetà frange e nappe di Filaticcio arme fattura et altro.” CPG, NN 28, fol. 170, ASF.

⁷¹⁰ The payment document for the Palio of San Giovanni of 1481 include payments to a Tomaso Paolo banderaio for the silk for the bands.

⁷¹¹ “...et per trentadue cordone di seta et frangia per la banda da romano? per lire 19 soldi 16.” Biccherna 312, fol. 70, ASS, cited by Cecchini, 52, n. 134.

⁷¹² ASF, CC, NC, EU 44, fol. 41v.

⁷¹³ Payment for Palio of San Giovanni Battista of 1590, CPG, NN 46, fol. 169v, ASF.

⁷¹⁴ Biccherna 291, fol. 57, ASF, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 159.

⁷¹⁵ For the Palio of Sant'Anna of 1589, and many other Florentine palii of this period, the term *applicato* is used in conjunction with the *cerro* (“...un cerro applicato a detto palio, rimendatura di detto cerro...”). I have not been able to determine the meaning of *rimendatura*, but assume it has something to do with the preparation of the braid.

⁷¹⁶ Payment for Palio of Sant'Anna of 1570, CPG, NN 28, fol. 170, ASF.

⁷¹⁷ Payment for Palio of Sant'Anna of 1593. “...cosimo? Mannucci banderaio per br 9 di frangie di filaticcio di piu colori lire 9 la tutto.” CPG, NN 48, fol. 140, ASF.

⁷¹⁸ Inventory of June 3, 1590, Ascheri et al., 25, (14v).

⁷¹⁹ The Balia often make a distinction between the palio banners designated for the race (“Palio di broccato da corrersi”) and the “Palio di velluto Cremisi presentato al Duomo nella festa dell Assunta.” See Deliberations of July 1, 1597, Balia 188, fol. 29 and Deliberations of August 18, 1598, Balia 188, fol. 77, ASS.

⁷²⁰ Cecchini discusses this practice of mending the palio on p. 82. On the 27th of August 1565, two men elected by the Balia settled the account with a Michelagnolo di Salvatore setaiuolo to “...restaurar il palio di cordoni nappone armi et altro.” Balia 175, fol. 116v, ASS.

⁷²¹ In 1326, Lolo zendadaio received ten *soldi* for the *fattura*. Biccherna 390, fol. 13v, ASS, reproduced in Cecchini, 145-47. In 1413, Chimento pellicciaio was paid eighteen *lire* for the *fattura*. Biccherna 298, fol. 58, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 44, n. 106. In 1481, there is a payment of twelve *lire* to a Pietro di Biagio di Dino for *cucitura*; the profession of this artisan is not specified, but he may be a furrier, possibly a descendent of the furrier, Biagio Francesco di Dino, mentioned in the documents for the 1419 Palio of the Assumption. Biccherna 335, fol. 67v, ASS.

⁷²² Expenses for Palio of the Assumption of 1599, Balia 188, fol. 130v, ASS.

⁷²³ One of the many examples are on folio 15 recto and verso, the thirteen palii that “Armellino de la raza” won: 8 of crimson velvet in Bologna for San Petronio in 1509, 1510, and 1512; one in Rome for Carnevale of 1510; two in Florence for San Vittorio and Sant’Alo in 1510 and 1512; one apiece in Pistoia for San Giacomo, Sant’Onofrio, and San Bernaba in 1510, 1511, and 1512; a palio of gold cloth in Florence for San Giovanni in 1511, and one in gold brocade in Bologna for San Martino, 1512.” See the “Il Libro dei Palii Vinti...,” reproduced in Malacarne, 90.

⁷²⁴ Because of the nature of the payment ledgers, individual payments for work on the palio banners are not always grouped together on the same page or pages. Some of the documents I looked at were so difficult to decipher that I was not able to find and/or transcribe all of the payments with certainty, and for some banners, I only have payment information on one component (such as a frieze or cloth for the bands), but not for the whole thing. Also, because artisans were also paid for work on making other items for the festival, it is sometimes difficult to separate out what amounts went for the banner and what were spent on other items. Therefore, I have included in this table only the payments which appear to be complete, and which primarily deal with the work on the banner. I have put an asterisk next to payments where the total figure include some payments for non-palio work, or where it is not clear whether the figure included expenses beyond those of the banner.

⁷²⁵ Cecchini and Neri, 21.

⁷²⁶ Biccherna 124, fol. 35 (186rv), ASS, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 143-144 and Document 18, “Repertorio documentario,” in Ridolfi et al., 521.

⁷²⁷ Statuti 26, Dist. I, capp.3-14, fols. 9v-12v, ASS, cited as Document 27, “Repertorio documentario,” in Ridolfi et al., 522.

⁷²⁸ Biccherna 302, fol. 37, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 45, n. 112.

⁷²⁹ Biccherna 312, fol. 70, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 52, n. 134.

⁷³⁰ Cecchini and Neri, 52.

⁷³¹ *Ibid.*, 54.

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- ⁷³² Biccherna 348, fol. CCXXXIII, ASS, cited by Cecchini and Neri, 69, n. 191.
- ⁷³³ Biccherna 352, fol. 33, ASS, cited by Cecchini and Neri, 73, n. 208.
- ⁷³⁴ Balia 186, fol. 44, ASS, cited by Cecchini and Neri, 85.
- ⁷³⁵ I am not sure why this was so. Perhaps it may have to do with the fact that Florence was a major producer of textiles, and had ready access to the materials for the banner without having to worry about buying the material in foreign markets.
- ⁷³⁶ Dati, in Guasti, 8.
- ⁷³⁷ Camera del Comune, Camarlinghi Uscita 376, fol. 3, ASF.
- ⁷³⁸ Entry of June 30, 1475, CC, NC, EU 33; 37, fol. 43v, 44 and CPG, NN 17, fol. 159v, ASF.
- ⁷³⁹ CC, NC, EU 116, fol. 40rv, 41r, ASF.
- ⁷⁴⁰ CPG, NN 28, fol. 169v and 52, fol. 170, ASF.
- ⁷⁴¹ Excerpts from payment documents from Biccherna 142, 143, 144, 376, 377, 381, 383, ASS, in Alessandro Bagnoli, *La Maestà di Simone Martini* (Milan: Amilcare Pizzi, 1999), 160-161.
- ⁷⁴² Cecchini and Neri, 27.
- ⁷⁴³ Payment of April 25, 1389, Libro Nero, 1349-1409, 705, fol. 109r, Archivio dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena, reproduced in Patricia Harpring, *The Sieneese Trecento Painter Bartolo di Fredi* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1993), 167-168.
- ⁷⁴⁴ Payments of February 7 and August 3, 1485, *Libro di Entrata e Uscita, Quaderno di Cassa di Giovanni d'Agnolo de'Bardi* (1485-1487), segnato B, fols. 35r, 39v, excerpted in Guido Cornini, "Chronology," *Botticelli: from Lorenzo the Magnificent to Savonarola*, Daniel Arasse, Pierluigi De Vecchi, Patrizia Nitti, eds. (Milan: Skira Editore, 2003), 231. I am not sure whether Botticelli received any payments prior to this.
- ⁷⁴⁵ CC, NC, EU 37, fols. 43v, 44, ASF.
- ⁷⁴⁶ ASF, Corporazioni religiose soppresse dal governo francese (Corporazioni religiose soppresse), 119, *Entrata e Uscita del Camarlingo, Giornale D*, 1512-1516, fols. 149v, 161v, 165v, 192v, 200v, 202v, reproduced as Document 2, Elisabetta Tenducci, "Regesto dei documenti," in Costamagna, 339.
- ⁷⁴⁷ CC, NC, EU, 116 fols. 40, 40v, 41, ASF.
- ⁷⁴⁸ See Cristiane Klapisch-Zuber's chapter on Florentine dowries in the Renaissance, *La Famiglia e Le Donne nel Rinascimento a Firenze*, (Italian edition) Ezio Pellizer, trans. (Rome: Edizioni Laterza, 1988): 193-211.
- ⁷⁴⁹ Zambotto notes that the gold brocade palio awarded for the horse race of San Giorgio in Ferrara in 1488 was worth 100 ducats, in Tebaldi, 35. Burcardo mentions that the palio awarded for a arms competition held in Rome at Carnevale in 1492 was worth 200 ducats. See Burcardo in Cruciani, 232-235.
- ⁷⁵⁰ The Sieneese government reduced this fee to four florins. I am not certain as to when this practice of charging a fee was discontinued. See Cecchini and Neri, 38-41.

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- ⁷⁵¹ Ascheri et al., 85 (86r).
- ⁷⁵² Ascheri et al., 86 (c. 86v), 141 (217r). The entry mentions that the frieze and *asta* are “*del Pallio che la Contrada feccie corire e si dete a'Capucini.*” (of the Palio that the Contrada had run and gave at Capuccini).
- ⁷⁵³ Ibid., 85 (86r).
- ⁷⁵³ Ibid., 88 (87v).
- ⁷⁵⁴ Ibid., 146 (220v).
- ⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., 109 (150v).
- ⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., 20-21 (11v), 25 (14v), 87, 89-90 (102v), 136, (213v), and 141 (217v).
- ⁷⁵⁷ Grassi, I, 96 cited by Cairola, 115.
- ⁷⁵⁸ Ascheri et al., 42-43 (26r). This practice of dividing up the palio seems to have last into the eighteenth century. A very late entry from 1714, on pp. 57-58 (37rv), mentions the running of a brocade palio in the Piazza del Campo worth 100 *tolleri*. The winning *contrada* was to give to the *contrada* with the best *comparsa* (processional group) either thirty *tolleri* from the prize or eight *braccia* of the palio.
- ⁷⁵⁹ CCO, *Libro secondo*, 77 (43r).
- ⁷⁶⁰ Landucci, 50, mentioned by Trexler, 268-269.
- ⁷⁶¹ Dati in Guasti, 7, cited by Rogers, 619-620.
- ⁷⁶² Trexler, 269.
- ⁷⁶³ Balia 173, fol. 102, ASS, cited in Cecchini and Neri, 81, n. 260.
- ⁷⁶⁴ Antonio Schanzano to Francesco Gonzaga, November 23, 1486, Archivio Gonzaga, *busta* 2434, fol. 257, Archivio di Stato, Mantua, transcribed in Malacarne, 94-95.
- ⁷⁶⁵ Cavriani, 15.
- ⁷⁶⁶ Ascheri et al., 85 (85v).
- ⁷⁶⁷ “*Il davanzale dimascho rosso fatto del palio di Piazza.*” Ascheri et al., 143 (219r).
- ⁷⁶⁸ Fanelli, *Tessuti italiani del Rinascimento*, 136-137, fig. 56.
- ⁷⁶⁹ Gianni, in Ridolfi et al., 132. Gianni also cites Balestracci, 203-11.
- ⁷⁷⁰ Documents from the fourteenth [Expense document for August Palio, 1326, Biccherna 390, fol.75, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 145-146, ASS] and fifteenth [Expense document for August palio, 1405, Biccherna 291, fol. 56v, ASS reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 158-159] centuries refer to the palio banner as palio, sometimes spelled *paglio*. In the sixteenth century, *palio* [Luca Fabroni? to the Grand Duke of Florence, June 27, 1576, CPG, NN 735, fol. 207, ASF] is used interchangeably with *drappo* [Jacopo Dani? to the Grand Duke of Florence, June 3, 1573, Capitani di Parte Guelfa, Numeri Neri 729, fol. 123, ASF].

⁷⁷¹ As Mario Ascheri has pointed out, the bishops controlled Siena until the end of the twelfth century. Mario Ascheri, "Le Contrade: Lo Sviluppo Storico e L'Intreccio col Palio," in Ridolfi et al., 32.

⁷⁷² Trexler, 269.

⁷⁷³ Balestracci gives the example of the *vexillum* that Pope Leo III gave to Charlemagne. Balestracci, "Alle origini del Palio. Da festa come tante altre a Festa come nessun'altra," in Betti, I: 10.

⁷⁷⁴ Dundes and Falassi, 200.

⁷⁷⁵ Don Handelman, "The Palio of Siena," *Models and Mirrors: towards an anthropology of public events* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990): 121-122. Handelman also notes that modern-day Sieneuse use the slang *cencio* ("rag" or "faded woman") to refer to the palio banner.

⁷⁷⁶ Trexler, 263.

⁷⁷⁷ G. Villani, *Croniche*, book 10, 167 (355), cited by Shemek, 24.

⁷⁷⁸ Nosari and Canova, 3.

⁷⁷⁹ Zambotto records one such joust as occurring in Ferrara in 1481 for the Feast of Sant'Andrea, for which a palio of gold brocade was awarded. See Tebaldi, 21.

⁷⁸⁰ For more on military standards, see Graham Webster, *The Roman Imperial Army of the First and Second Centuries A.D.* (third edition) (1985; Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 133-139.

⁷⁸¹ Cecchini (p. 45) mentions money spent by the Sieneuse government for garlands for the Festival of the Assumption, and in the documents for the 1405 festival, there is a payment of six *lire* to Nanni di Cortona for the "ghirlande de la festa." Biccherna 291, fol. 67, ASS, reproduced in Cecchini and Neri, 159.

⁷⁸² For more on Mantegna's series, see Andrew Martindale, *The Triumphs of Caesar by Andrea Mantegna in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen at Hampton Court* (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 1979).

⁷⁸³ The standard is preserved in the Hermitage in Leningrad. See Webster, 139.

⁷⁸⁴ These prize pots are depicted on a terracotta frieze from Murlo. Humphrey, 9, 14-15, 87.

⁷⁸⁵ Chiari, fols. 39v, 40.

⁷⁸⁶ The Baptistery is a Romanesque building, dating to the eleventh century.

⁷⁸⁷ This term appears in descriptions of the palio cart throughout the Renaissance. cite Dati, etc.

⁷⁸⁸ Dati, in Guasti, 8.

⁷⁸⁹ Perini, in Guasti, 13.

⁷⁹⁰ Chiari, fol. 40.

⁷⁹¹ See Chrétien, 51-68. Martindale, 49. See also Rogers, 638-639 for primary documents describing this festival.

⁷⁹² Trexler, 268-269.

Chapter Five: The Palio Horse in Renaissance and Early Modern Italy

On the first Saturday in May 2002, a black horse sped to the front of the pack in the 128th running of the Kentucky Derby, winning America's most important race by four lengths. The horse, War Emblem, though American-bred, became the first winner of the Derby to be owned by an Arabian prince, the late Ahmed Salman of Saudi Arabia, who unfortunately passed away a few months after War Emblem's historic victory.

Saudi Arabia, a longtime ally of the United States, came under severe criticism and suspicion when it was discovered that many of the terrorists who participated in the September 11th attacks on America were Saudi citizens. When the heirs of Prince Salman heard this criticism, they responded by offering War Emblem as a gift to the families of the September 11th victims as a gesture of good will and sympathy. Although the offer was never finalized, this episode demonstrates how even in the modern world, the gift of a horse may be used diplomatically to strengthen relations between two countries.

The international nature of horse racing, and the utilization of horses for diplomatic means, is not a new concept. In Renaissance and early modern Italy, the palio, named for the precious banner awarded to victors, marked important occasions in the life of a city. Horses from a number of breeds competed in the palio, and like the textile trade discussed in the previous chapter, the importation of these animals forged contacts between Europe and the Islamic kingdoms in North Africa and Ottoman Turkey. Italian nobles used horses as diplomatic gifts to gain favor with the most powerful European courts of England, Spain, and France. The portraiture of individual horses not only reflected the prestige that these animals brought to their owners, but also showed changing attitudes towards the horse and its individual merits.

Although the horses in the modern Siena palio are owned privately and assigned to the various *contrade*, horses competing in Renaissance palio races belonged almost exclusively to members of the nobility.⁷⁹³ The Gonzaga family of Mantua was perhaps the most dominant player in palio racing. Lorenzo the Magnificent of Florence was an avid competitor in palio racing, as well as the Este family of Ferrara. The Aragonese King of Naples had a powerful stable and was a supplier of fast horses to the rest of Italy. Families such as the Gonzaga maintained breeding farms for raising and training their horses, and horses were also imported directly from Sicily, North Africa, Eastern Europe, and Turkey.

During the Renaissance and early modern period, palio racing impacted the Italian city on many levels, marking important days in the city's religious and cultural calendar, providing a "safe" arena for rivalry with families from other parts of Italy, and on the international level, bringing noble families into contact with foreign, including non-Western cultures in the pursuit of a fast palio horse.

Protagonists of the Palio: Owners and Jockeys

The Owners

Racing today, known as the "Sport of Kings," is still very much the domain of the princely, wealthy, and powerful. Such families as the Saudi princes and the Maktoums (the ruling family of the United Arab Emirates) dominate the European racing scene. In 2004, the Earl of Derby, whose family has raced horses for centuries, won a 2004 Breeder's Cup race in the United States, with the mare Ouija Board, and the Queen of England still maintains a racing stable. Prominent American breeders and owners have included names such as Alfred Vanderbilt, the Whitney family, and philanthropist Paul Mellon.

Likewise, in the Renaissance, only the noblemen or wealthy merchants could afford to own the expensive animals that competed. Owners entered their horses in the race by giving their names to the officials in charge of the festival. Several of these entry lists survive in the papers of the Sieneese Biccherna. Two lists from the years 1513 and 1514 show horses entered in the palio races of San Ambrogio, Santa Maddalena, and of the Assumption.⁷⁹⁴ The horses are identified by color and markings, and their owners are noted, as well as their jockeys.

Many of the most important political and cultural figures of the Renaissance were also racehorse owners. As Michael Mallett has shown in his article on the palio and politics in Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici was a passionate racing aficionado and one of his horses won the San Giovanni palio in 1479.⁷⁹⁵ The Este family of Ferrara was perhaps second only to the Gonzaga of Mantua in their pursuit of fine racehorses. Owners entering horses in the 1461 Palio of the Assumption in Siena included Sigismondo d'Este, Lorenzo de' Strozzi of Ferrara, Count Malatesta of Cesena, and Isotta, wife of Sigismondo Malatesta.⁷⁹⁶ Among the owners listed in the documents of 1513 and 1514 are the Marquis of Mantua (Francesco Gonzaga), the Duke of Urbino (Francesco Maria della Rovere), the Cardinal of Siena, and the Sieneese banking families of Francesco Petrucci and Augustino Bardi.⁷⁹⁷ Francesco Petrucci's horse won the Palio of Sant' Ambrogio in March of 1520.⁷⁹⁸ Like modern racehorses, whose jockeys wear the "silks" identifying the horses' owners, the Renaissance *barberi*, according to the sixteenth-century writer Michel de Montaigne, competed "with the colors of their masters, who are among the highest lords."⁷⁹⁹ These silks appear on the jockeys riding in

the San Giovanni palio in Florence, as depicted by the painting in the Cleveland Museum (fig. 39).

Although the nobility predominated in racehorse ownership, there are some instances of members of the merchant class and even artists racing palio horses. The Florentine spice-seller, Costanzo Landucci, brother of the chronicler Luca Landucci, raced palio horses and imported two *barberi* horses from North Africa, one of which, Draghetto, won twenty palio races.⁸⁰⁰ Sodoma (Giovanni Bazzi), a Sienese artist, owned a gray or roan horse who first competed in the Palios of the Assunta and of San Ambrogio in 1513 and a brown horse that competed in the Sant' Ambrogio palio. His gray horse won the Assumption palio in 1514. Given the increased social status accorded to artists during the High Renaissance, it is not surprising that Sodoma had the means to enter palio horses in these races.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century, institutions and groups also entered horses in the palio races. The Sienese *contrade* began holding their own palio races and even entered horses in the official palio races sponsored by the city. In 1592, the Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, one of the most important civic institutions of Siena, entered a horse in the official palio of the Assumption.⁸⁰¹ The religious confraternity of the Santissima Trinità in Asti entered a horse in the Palio of San Secondo in April of 1677.⁸⁰²

Horses gave their owners opportunities to compete indirectly with political adversaries. Michael Mallett illustrates the fierce rivalries between various families and how entering certain palio races may have helped to advance political objectives. Mallett recounts how Lorenzo de' Medici presented the ruler of Bologna, Giovanni Bentivoglio,

with one of his best *barberi*, Fulgore, who subsequently finished third in a race held in Ferrara in 1481. Although Bentivoglio had lost, he was pleased that Fulgore had finished ahead of the horse of his rival, the Malvezzi of Bologna.⁸⁰³ Mallett also mentioned that in 1483, the year in which Lorenzo sent his horses to Rome to compete in the palio races on the Via del Corso, the Florentine ruler was lobbying hard to have his son Giovanni (the future Pope Leo X) appointed to an ecclesiastical position.⁸⁰⁴

The owners may have viewed their racehorses as extensions of themselves. Through the speed of their steeds, they could defeat their political and social rivals in a sporting context. A victory in a palio of the patron saint of an enemy city must have proved particularly satisfying. In addition, owning a palio horse signified wealth and privilege, giving non-noble owners such as Costanzo Landucci and Sodoma a chance to elevate their social status through the accomplishments of their horses.

Jockeys

In Siena today, jockeys who ride in the palio often become household names and personalities, such as Andrea de Gortes, known as Aceto (Vinegar).⁸⁰⁵ Although we do not know much about the jockeys of the Renaissance, like their modern counterparts, they had colorful nicknames, such as Vinci Guerra (win the war), Speroni di Gallo (rooster's spur), and Vulpinus (fox) that connote craftiness and a combative spirit. Official documents written in Latin of horses entered in the palio races in Siena included exhortations in the vernacular to the riders to go out and win; one jockey is told "young man, hope in God and in Our Lady, go forward as is needed of you."⁸⁰⁶ Some of these documents, from 1513 and 1514, use the terms *ragazinus* or *ragazo* –youth- suggesting that teenagers or even children were employed to ride because of their small size. The unnamed riders mentioned in a list of horses entered in the Assumption palio of 1592 are

distinguished as *fanciullo* (youth), or *putto* (child).⁸⁰⁷ Virginia Tacci was only twelve years old when she rode for the Contrada of the Drago in the 1581 Palio of the Assumption! Women in the neighborhood of Borgo Grezzano in the Friulian city of Udine obtained permission to ride horses in a palio of their own in 1375.⁸⁰⁸ This race has been revived in modern times as the Women's Palio (Palio delle Donne) and is run on the second Sunday in September.

Jockeys were paid for their services, and in some cases, could dictate their rate of pay. In 1666, the Onda Contrada offered the jockey Pier Domenico da Barberino, who rode the winning horse for the Onda in the Palio of July 2nd, a choice of payment: ten *scudi* without tips, and what he ultimately selected - forty *lire* with tips included.⁸⁰⁹

The occasional practice of racing horses without jockeys seems to have begun sometime before the beginning of the seventeenth century. In a seventeenth-century print by Jacques Callot showing the start of a palio race in Florence at Porta al Prato, some of the horses are riderless (fig.36). A regulation of 1592 in Siena states that a *barbero* could compete with or without a rider!⁸¹⁰ Races with riderless horses become more common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, perhaps deriving from practices begun centuries earlier. Prints and paintings from the nineteenth century of the race on the Corso in Rome show riderless horses with spiked balls dangling to their sides to urge them forward;⁸¹¹ similar objects are displayed in the Museo of the Torre in Siena.

Breeds of Palio Horses

In today's world of horse racing, Middle Eastern owners such as Prince Ahmed Salman buy Thoroughbred racehorses not from their own nations, but from the stud farms and sales pavilions of England and the United States. Similarly, the Renaissance and

early modern Italians sought *palio* horses of the Renaissance primarily from Turkey and North Africa.

Occasionally an un-pedigreed horse of Italian origin would be victorious. Claudio Corte recalls in particular a roan bred by the Vetrallo stud, as well as a bay owned by the Duke of Udine:

Benche si trovino alcuni cavalli bastardi, & villanotti in Italia à questo mestiere perfettissime; & che vincano anco nel corso ogni sorte di Barbaro; ma sono rari; & io per me non n'ho veduti se non due in vita; li quali erano di somma perfettione nel corso, & ciascuno di loro vinse i palii in Bologna, Fiorenza, & in Roma, havendo sempre al contrasto barbari & altri cavalli eccellentissimi, & i più eccelenti che fossino in Italia. Et questi furono un caval leardo rotado della razza di Vetrallo: & l'altro baio non so di che razza si fosse, ma era di un Conte da Udine.⁸¹²

Although the occasional native horse would turn out to be a successful runner, the most popular breeds were of foreign origin, such as the *barberi*, or Barbs, of North Africa; the *cavalli turchi*, or Turkish horses; and the Irish *ubini*, or Hobby horses.⁸¹³

The *Barbero*, or North African Barb

Modern-day Sieneese still refer to their *palio* horses as *barberi*, even though the horses are usually pure of half-Thoroughbred in breeding. However, the *barberi* of the Renaissance were part of a distinct breed. The North African Barb, one of the oldest surviving breeds, is a compact animal with the ability to run fast over longer distances.⁸¹⁴

Barb horses are fairly small, measuring from 13.2 to fifteen hands at the withers (shoulder),⁸¹⁵ and are short-backed, having sixteen or seventeen rather than eighteen pairs of ribs. The croup (the downward-sloping part of the rump) is long and the tail set low.⁸¹⁶ Sometimes confused with another ancient breed, the Arabian horse, the Barb is distinguished from the Arabian in that the profile of its head is straight or convex, lacking the fine “dished” profile of the latter.

Representations of *barberi* horses in European art seem to confirm a general Barb type. Morel Favorito, one of the stallions depicted on the walls of the Sala dei Cavalli (Room of the Horses) in Mantua's Palazzo Te, (fig. 146) has a compact frame, a fairly plain head, and sloping croup. The roan Barb stallion named Paragon in a group portrait of horses belonging to the English Duke of Newcastle (c.1657-1658) (fig. 147) has similar conformation and appears to be quite a diminutive animal.⁸¹⁷

What little we know about the Barb horse during the Renaissance and early modern period comes from references and descriptions by sixteenth century writers. Pasquale Caracciolo, in his encyclopedic work on the horse, *La Gloria del Cavallo*, explains that all African horses are referred to as *barbari*, because they come from the region known at the time as *Barbaria*, and describes them as slender-legged, courageous, and high-stepping due to their sandy and hot environs.⁸¹⁸ In another chapter of this book, Caracciolo notes that the *barberi* are the ones best suited for racing.⁸¹⁹ In some cases, *barberi* were the only type of horse permitted to compete in certain races. In a list of rulings set out in 1592 for the Palio of the Assumption, the Sieneese magistrate's office, the Balia, regulated "...that no one could compete other than with a horse that was a true Barb."⁸²⁰

Sixteenth-century authors described the Numidian *barbero* as particularly swift. The North African-born writer, Leo Africanus, makes a distinction between Barb horses and other horses bred by nomadic tribes.⁸²¹ One type of *barbero*, raised by the Hafsid princes and the Arabian nomads living between the Atlas Mountains in Tunisia and the coast, was heavier but not as swift as their desert-bred counterparts. The Arabians who wandered the Numidian and Libyan deserts east of Tunisia "have likewise a great store of

horses, which in Europe they call horses of Barberie.” These horses, which Leo Africanus calls Arabian, are used for travel and warfare, and are “nimble, lively, and of spare flesh,” and are fed on camel’s milk. He mentions that some of the Arabian horses run wild, and that the fastest can outrun an ostrich.⁸²² Caracciolo mentions a Numidian horse that belonged to Lorenzo de’ Medici, celebrated in a verse by Poliziano whose speed “avanzava gli agelli e i venti; egli harebbe à cedere Cillaro e Pegaso; perche nel mezzo del corso non si potea co’ gli occhi scernere; se non quando si muovea del capo della Carrera;⁸²³ ò quando al proposto termine era giunto.”⁸²⁴

The Turkish Horse

But the *barbero* was not the only successful racing breed; the fleet *cavallo turcho* bred in territories belonging to the Ottoman Empire was another source of speed. By the early sixteenth century, the Ottoman Turks had captured Syria and a good part of the Middle East. Control over this region gave them easy access to purebred Arabian horses. The Ottoman Sultans forbid the export of purebred Arabians, and instead developed a breed of light horse descending from Arabian bloodlines (known as the Turk or Turcoman) for export and as diplomatic gifts. Because of their Arabian blood, the Turkish horses excelled at middle distances.⁸²⁵ Caracciolo notes that although almost all horses from the East are referred to as Turkish, they vary in quality and type. The best, coming truly from Turkey, are large, pretty, and swift, while there are less agile but gallant horses produced from crosses with horses from the areas conquered by the Turks - Croatia, Albania, and the southern Mediterranean. He observes that the Turkish horses are not very high stepping, have a bumpy trot, and move with their heads held high, due to the severe bit used.⁸²⁶ As for color, most are white, though some are chestnut and bay and a few rare ones, brown.⁸²⁷

In an album of drawings by the Mantuan artist, Filippo Orso, there are illustrations of two Turkish horses, a *Turcho d'Italia* with a saddle and caparison (fig. 148), and one labeled simply *un Turcho* (fig. 149) wearing a saddle with an arabesque design. The implication from the two labels is that the Turkish horses bred in Italy were of a slightly different conformation than those from Turkey, and the Italian horse is much deeper in the girth and has a more refined head in comparison to the more slender build and slightly convex profile of the Turkish horse. A bay Turkish stallion, Machomilia, appears at the middle left in the painting of the stallions of the Duke of Newcastle (fig. 147), and is larger and heavier in build than the Barb, Paragon.

Although the *turchi* served primarily as light cavalry horses, they also excelled as race horses. In the Gonzaga's correspondence, the *turchi* are repeatedly referred to as *corredori*, or runners.⁸²⁸ A letter from 1492 from the Doge of Venice, Agostino Barbarico, sends his representative, Alexio Becauti, to Constantinople to buy "boni cavali turchi corredori."⁸²⁹ Giovanni Menavino, a Genoese ambassador at the Turkish court, describes the Turkish horse as a *buon corridore* and notes its fine legs and hard, black hooves. He describes the Turkish horse as a light animal with a small head with large eyes, a long, high-crested neck, short ears, and a long tail.⁸³⁰ Ottaviano Bon, a Venetian ambassador to the Ottoman court, describes in the Sultan's stable of racehorses:

He hath also stables of stallions for race in Bursia, Adrianople, and in divers other places; from which are brought to Constantinople very stately colm; besides such as are continually sent him for presents from Cairo, Damascus, Bagdat [Baghdad], and other places by the *Bashaws*. He hath also many which fall to his share by the death of great persons: all which are horses of great price, and kept for his own use.⁸³¹

The Ottoman Sultans controlled such areas of the Middle East as Syria, known for breeding Arabian horses with ability to carry speed over a distance. Since laws forbade

the export of pure Arabians, the Ottomans sold instead half-blooded Turkish horses⁸³² that had enough “Arabian” stamina to compete in the longer palio races.

The *Ubini* (Irish Hobby Horse)

While the African Barberi and the Turchi excelled at longer distances, the *ubini*, or Irish Hobby horses, were excellent sprinters known for their ambling or pacing gait.⁸³³ A white Hobby horse appears in the center of this illumination, ridden by Art Macmurchada, King of Leinster, of the Harleain Manuscript which depicts the Earl of Gloucestershire’s military campaign in County Wicklow in 1399 (fig. 150). The diminutive Hobby is much smaller than the heavy chargers of the Earl of Gloucestershire on the left. The *ubini* were quite popular with the Italian nobles: Duke Francesco Sforza of Milan and Ercole and Alfonso d’Este of Ferrara sent representatives abroad to purchase *ubini* from the kings of England, and the Gonzaga received several gifts of *ubini* from King Henry VIII.⁸³⁴ Presence of *ubini* horses in Gonzaga stud books implies that they were part of their racing dynasty.

Races for Horses of Specific Breeds and Gender

In today’s racing world, only certain breeds of horses are bred for racing, and only compete in races against members of their own breeds. Quarter horses, which specialize in sprinting, race at short distances of a quarter mile or less; Thoroughbreds, who are bred to run longer, compete at distance ranging anywhere from five-eighths of a mile to two miles; and Arabians, who have the most stamina, excel at endurance races that can be a hundred miles or more. In the most of the major Renaissance palio races, horses of different breeds could compete together, but some regulations specified that only Barbs were eligible to enter. For instance, in the regulations for the Palio of the Assumption published by the Sieneese Balia, the first regulation dictates “no one can compete without

a true *barbero*.”⁸³⁵ However, some cities offered special races designated for certain breeds. At Roman *Carnevale*, there were separate races for Barbs and Jennets.⁸³⁶ Jennets, known in Italy as *zannetta* or *ginetta* (fig. 151) were prized saddle horses of Spanish origin, and the ancestors of the modern-day Andalusian and Lipizzaner horses. They were especially popular with the nobility as mounts for executing the complex movements of the classical school of riding, known as *dressage*. The *Carnevale* races are the only instance I have yet found of jennets being used as racehorses. Some races were designated for non-pedigreed, common horses, such as the *Carnevale* race of 1456 for “le iumente e cavalle de romani e forastieri (the geldings and mares of the Romans and foreigners).”⁸³⁷

Although some fillies and mares today run and win in open competition against males, most compete in races restricted to their own sex. Just as there are “distaff” races today, there were also races in the Renaissance for mares only. Caleffini records a race held for mares in 1475 for the feast of San Pietro Apostolo in Ferrara, and a race run on July 6, 1477 for the feast of San Antonio, for “le cavale non barbare (for the non-Barb mares).”⁸³⁸

These specialized races provided opportunities for horses to compete on equal footing against individuals of the same breed, where their abilities would be closely matched, and also gave ordinary people a chance to compete in minor palio races without having to own an expensive horse.

Trade and the Islamic World

The importation of horses was part of a larger trade that existed during the Renaissance between Italy and Hafsid North Africa and Ottoman Turkey. As mentioned

in the previous chapter, the Ottoman Empire prized the silk fabrics woven in Italian cities. Despite the cultural and religious differences and the ongoing war between the Ottoman Empire and Europe, bilateral trade existed and even thrived from the late Middle Ages onward.

The Hafsid Dynasty of North Africa

During the thirteenth through sixteenth centuries, the Islamic Hafsid Dynasty controlled most of North Africa and conducted trade with cities in Italy. The Hafsid Dynasty established trade relations with Italy's major Italian ports in the thirteenth century: commercial relations with Venice began as early as 1231, with Pisa in 1234, and Genoa in 1236.⁸³⁹ Under the Hafsid ruler Abu Faris, the region completed a trade treaty with Florence in 1423.⁸⁴⁰ Cosimo de' Medici of Florence signed a thirty-year trade contract in 1445 with the Hafsid dynasty.⁸⁴¹ Italian ships sailed out of the ports at Tunis, Oran, and other coastal cities. Unfortunately, trade in the Mediterranean during this period could be quite dangerous; both Turkish and Christian pirates plagued Hafsid ports with their attacks,⁸⁴² and European and North African ships faced dangerous travel conditions throughout the Mediterranean. North Africa was assumed by the Ottoman Empire in 1574, leaving the Hafsids power in name only.⁸⁴³

The area which is now known as Tunisia exported a number of products to Europe, including polychrome ceramic ware, coral harvested by divers off the coast, animals (including camels, mules, and horses), salt, spices, and alum (a substance used in the fixing of dyes in fabric, especially important to the textile industry in Tuscany).⁸⁴⁴ Because of the decline in domestic agricultural production (which resulted in periodic famines in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries), Hafsid North Africa imported oil, wheat, and other grains from Europe, and they relied considerably on the income from

taxes and duties on European exports.⁸⁴⁵ Gifts of exotic animals, including horses, were utilized by the Hafsid sultans to maintain positive relations with their Italian trading partners. The Hafsid ruler Abu Amir Utman regularly sent animals to Italy as gifts: in 1460, he sent *barberi* to Sigismondo Malatesta of Rimini.⁸⁴⁶ An anonymous Florentine chronicler mentions four horses, two camels, and eight falcons that the ambassador of the king of Tunisia presented to Emperor Charles V in Florence on May 2, 1536 as part of an annual tribute.⁸⁴⁷

The Gonzaga family⁸⁴⁸ of Mantua dispatched many representatives to Hafsid North Africa to purchase horses.⁸⁴⁹ The emissaries of Marchese Francesco Gonzaga imported *barberi* for his racing stable. Only colts and stallions could be exported, as the selling of mares and fillies was forbidden, and license had to be obtained in order to purchase these animals. Yet some letters do indeed mention the exportation of mares: for example, a letter from 1496 from the Gonzaga's emissary in Tunis notifies the Marchese that license has been obtained from the King of Tunisia to export *tante cavalle* (some mares).⁸⁵⁰ Importations continued into the sixteenth century; in 1525, Francesco's son, Federico Gonzaga, used the political influence of his brother Ferrante, an ambassador at the Spanish court, to obtain license for his agent to import horses from Oran.⁸⁵¹

The Ottoman Empire

During the Renaissance, Catholic countries of the West considered the Ottoman Empire a grave threat to Christianity, and during the Counter-Reformation, the Catholic Church encouraged Christian rulers to fight the westward advance of the "heathen" empire. The sixteenth century saw some major conflicts between Europe and the Ottoman sultans, with the most important European victory occurring in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. But few history books emphasize the trade and cultural exchange that

took place between Italy and the Ottomans.⁸⁵² Turkey supplied Europe with large amounts of grain and alum (used in the dying of cloth), and the Ottoman Empire obtained from Europe finished cloth and wine, among other products.⁸⁵³ Cultural exchange also flourished. Venetian artist Gentile Bellini spent time at the court of Sultan Mehmet II around 1480 and even painted the monarch's portrait.⁸⁵⁴ Turkish carpets appear repeatedly in Italian painting, and ceramic wares, such as the Iznik pottery, influenced the development of painted terracotta in Italy.⁸⁵⁵

Families such as the Gonzaga enjoyed favorable relations with the Turkish sultan, which came to their advantage in acquiring horses. Francesco Gonzaga came to the aid of an ambassador of the Sultan Bayezid II. The ambassador, named Dauzio, was robbed in Ancona on his way to Rome to deliver money to Bayezid's imprisoned brother, Djem.⁸⁵⁶ Francesco Gonzaga heard of Dauzio's plight and helped him complete his mission. He invited the ambassador to Mantua, and then assisted him in his return to Constantinople. The Sultan thanked the Marchese by sending him a boatload of Turkish horses. The Marchese responded by sending a boatload of Mantuan cheese to the Sultan! When the Venetians imprisoned Gonzaga in 1509, accusing him of treason, Sultan Bayezid intervened to free the Marchese.⁸⁵⁷

Sultan Bayezid's name appears in the Gonzaga correspondence pertaining to the importation of Turkish horses. Like the Hafsids, the Ottomans had strict rules about the selling of horses and, in certain cases, did not permit export abroad.⁸⁵⁸ Francesco's friendship with Bayezid II helped his representative, Bernardino Missaglia, obtain license to purchase eight mares and one stallion in September of 1491.⁸⁵⁹ The Gonzaga continued to receive other gifts of horses from the Ottomans; in a letter of May 22, 1492,

from the Governor of Herzegh (Bosnia-Herzegovina), Mustafa Begh, who due to his good relations with the Doge of Venice, gave Francesco Gonzaga, who was at the time captain of the Venetian forces, a gift of two horses as a token of friendship.⁸⁶⁰ Though the letter is composed and signed in Italian, it is signed also with the governor's name in Arabic script.

The Florentines also imported horses from Turkey. An account ledger in the Florentine archives includes a payment to an Alfonso di Michele *cavalcatore* for conducting Turkish horses for the Grand Duke of Florence from the Adriatic port of Ancona.⁸⁶¹

Some of the *turchi* were obtained not through diplomacy, but as spoils of war. Federico Gonzaga received two letters from one of his military captains Niccolo Rali, from Zava (Sava), in April and May of 1525. The Sava River is in Serbia, where in 1521, Ottoman Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent conquered the city of Belgrade as part of his campaign of westward expansion.⁸⁶² Gonzaga mercenary troops joined Imperial forces in the fight against the Turks. Rali mentions horses taken from Turkish prisoners, including a horse that he hopes to send the Marchese which is “el frate de quello Cavallo che l’anno passato madai a Tuo Sig^{ria} (the brother of that horse that I sent you last year).”⁸⁶³

The Use of Gift Horses in International Diplomacy

Stud farms throughout Italy produced high-quality horses of many breeds, which were sought after all over Europe. Horses became a source of pride and prestige for Italian noble families throughout Italy. Once they had obtained these valuable bloodlines from North Africa and Turkey, families established studs that specialized in breeding one or more kinds of horse. According to Caracciolo, the Gonzaga of Mantua were the

largest producers of horses on the Italian peninsula.⁸⁶⁴ Stud books in the Archivio di Stato in Mantua show that the Gonzaga bred several kinds of horses, including Barbs, Turks, and Jennets and kept careful records of the mares of each breed, the covering sires, and the colors and markings of the resultant foals.⁸⁶⁵ Books published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as this page showing brands of the Pignatelli family of Puglia and Basilicata in southern Italy (fig. 152), reproduce hundreds of brands used to designate horses of various families' or kingdoms' breeding programs.⁸⁶⁶ Each family developed their own brands to mark their horses, utilizing custom brands for each breed of horse they produced.⁸⁶⁷ The brands function as “coats-of-arms” for certain breeding programs, which are an extension of a noble family's prestige and glory. Families showed great pride in their horses, and were clear to make a distinction between the horses from *their* breeding programs and those of others.

In a letter to an unidentified “Cavalier de la Volta,” Marchese Francesco Gonzaga bragged about his breed of *barberi*, offering to send him his illuminated manuscript, “Il Libro dei Palii Vinti da Francesco Gonzaga,” in which his top runners were portrayed:

...My breed of *barberi* is good not only in comparison to Italian horses, but to Turkish, Moorish, and Indian horses, and to prove that this is true, I send to you Zohan Iacomo, my assistant and present trainer, with the book of *palii* won with my horses so that you may see if my breed deserves to be discounted as it seems to have been in the past; that this breed is praised and desired by the very King of France, the Catholic king [the King of Spain], [the kings of] England, of Turkey, of Hungary, and by many others, and finally by whomever else has knowledge of them...⁸⁶⁸

The stud books and brands promote and maintain “good breeding,” and in a sense, the horses becomes vessels for a family's own political ambitions.

Therefore, their horses were the ideal gift for Italian nobles to present to foreign sovereigns in order to advance their own political standing. Families such as the Gonzaga

or the Este of the Ferrara made their money as mercenary fighters, so their potential employment balanced upon their relationships with the courts of Europe.

The Gonzaga used their horses to gain favor with the French, Spanish, and English court. When Francesco Gonzaga's teenage son, Federico Gonzaga, spent time at the French court of Francis I in the early sixteenth century learning how to be a courtier, much of the correspondence between father and son mentions the French king's desire for Mantuan horses.⁸⁶⁹ The Gonzaga also presented horses to Emperor Charles V, for whom Federico later fought as a mercenary fighter, and at whose court Ferrante Gonzaga served. One letter mentions a bay Turkish horse of Gonzaga breeding that so pleased the Emperor that Ferrante gave the horse to him as a gift.⁸⁷⁰ But perhaps their most influential gift of their horses were those sent to the English court. In a letter of June 1, 1516, Francesco describes to Federico Gonzaga a colt born on the day of San Giorgio:

I tell you that the *razza nostra* (our breed) is in fuller flower than it has ever been and up until now we have eighty-one colts born this year, the most beautiful that we've ever had...Among these there is one very beautiful colt born on Saint George's Day. This one we want to give to the King of England because he was born on the day of that saint that is principally venerated in England...⁸⁷¹

The Gonzaga exchanged horses with the English King Henry VIII, sometimes as gifts, and sometimes in exchange for Irish *ubini*. In 1532, Federico made a historic gift of a stallion named Argentino and a band of *Barbero* broodmares to King Henry VIII, who wished to found a stud in his country.⁸⁷² The incorporation of the Gonzaga *barberi* into the royal studs of England may have even contributed to the development of the Thoroughbred racehorse. Historians of the breed such as noted twentieth century breeder, Federico Tesio, have theorized that the foundation mares of the Thoroughbred breed were descended in part by the horses the Gonzaga sent to England.⁸⁷³

Portraits of Racehorses and the Recognition of the Horse as Individual

The Italian nobility put incredible effort into their horses, so it is not surprising that they also hired artists to portray their most illustrious animals for posterity. Both texts and images identify individual palio horses by name. Not only does this equine portraiture indirectly glorify a noble family, but it also points to an increased cultural recognition during the sixteenth century of the horse as an individual.

The “Libro dei Palii Vinti da Francesco Gonzaga”

Francesco Gonzaga commissioned the aforementioned “Libro dei Palii Vinti da Francesco Gonzaga” to show his most illustrious *barberi* and the various palii they won. The manuscript is a small, intimate work, intended for the Marchese’s own personal enjoyment and, as his letter attests, for lending to other nobles as a “brag book.”⁸⁷⁴ We know from a letter from 1512 in the Archivio di Stato in Mantua that the Marchese commissioned Silvestro da Lucca, a debt collector, to organize the production of the book and hire the illuminator, Lauro Padovano.⁸⁷⁵ The frontispiece (fig. 153) shows a framed portrait of a chestnut horse, Daino Sauro, who stands against a backdrop of a cityscape (probably the center of Mantua) wearing only a red bridle with a curb bit.⁸⁷⁶ The framed portrait hangs beneath a classical arch inscribed with the Marchese’s name on it, supported by two marble columns with gilded pilasters. Two *putti* below flank a shield emblazoned with an emblem. Displayed on a plaque that appears tied to the two columns is a list of three palio races won by Daino Sauro - the gold palio of San Giovanni in Florence, the Palio of San Giorgio in Ferrara, and the Palio of San Leonardo in Mantua.

On each page of the “Il Libro dei Palii Vinti...” is a gilt-framed portrait of an individual horse, shown in profile with a placard displaying its name above. Silvestro da Lucca’s letter states that the Marchese desired the *barbari* to be portrayed *dal naturale*

(from life). Each horse wears a red bridle with a curb bit, and stands within a landscape, often in a road passing through a mountainous countryside or by a body of water (this choice may be determined by the fact that Mantua was surrounded by lakes). At least one horse, El Bayo Perla, (fig. 154) has an 'F' branded on his flank, to indicate Francesco's ownership. In the portrait of Isdormia Secondo, a jockey wearing striped pants and a helmet holds the gray horse (fig. 155). Although all of the horses are depicted in profile, some horses share identical poses. Around the outlines appear small pricks in the paper, which indicates that the artist may have traced various profiles multiple times, altering only the horses' coat color, markings, and direction of travel.

Despite the repetition of poses shown in the "Il Libro dei Palii Vinti..." the artist made some attempt to show distinguishing characteristics. Some of the gray horses are dappled, while some have uniform coats. The chestnut Serpentino has a luxuriant (possibly braided) mane (fig. 156). The list of victories below each horse records the place of victory, the type and color of palio won, the day, and the year. Gonzaga horses triumphed in cities throughout the Italian peninsula, including Padua, Cervia, Cesena, Imola, Bologna, Florence, Pistoia, and Roman Carnevale. Some horses appear to have run over a period of several years; for example, for El Turcho de la Raza (fig. 157), victories are recorded as early as 1508 and as late as 1511, in Padua, Bologna, Imola, Cervia, and Cesena.

The Sala dei Cavalli in Palazzo Te

The Gonzaga also had their palio horses portrayed in the frescoes decorating of the Palazzo Te in Mantua. The Palazzo Te was designed and built by the Roman artist and architect, Giulio Romano, for his patron, Federico Gonzaga, as suburban residence on the Isola del Te just outside the city. Romano built the palace using the old walls and

foundations of an existing villa and stable complex, and the Sala dei Cavalli occupies the main nucleus of the old complex (fig. 158).⁸⁷⁷

There are portraits of six horses frescoed on the wall of the Sala dei Cavalli. The horses, like the animals in the “Il Libro dei Palii Vinti...,” are framed by landscape vistas, and are placed amidst a *trompe l’oeil* backdrop of classical Corinthian pilasters, colored marble panels, and imaginary statues of Roman gods and goddesses, reliefs showing the labors of Hercules, and portrait busts depicting members of the Gonzaga family as members of the Roman imperial family. We know the names of two of the horses - Dario and Morel Favorito - from faded names painted on the plinths upon which the stallions stand, and the names of two others - Battaglia (fig. 159) and Glorioso (fig. 160) - appear in sixteenth-century drawings of the Sala by the artist Ippolito Andreasi.⁸⁷⁸ The four horses on the long walls wear bridles with plumes in their headstalls, and some also wear a *celata*, or diamond - shaped headpiece. These horses I have identified as *barberi*, since their headgear matches descriptions of bridles designated for the *barberi* in a letter from 1509 that lists “le robe de li barberi (the adornments of the *barberi*).”⁸⁷⁹ The two horses on the short walls, Glorioso and the unidentified chestnut stallion, are jennets, another breed that the Gonzaga raised at their stud farms (fig. 161).⁸⁸⁰

The portraits of the *barberi* may allude to passages from the Roman poet Virgil’s *Georgics*, which describe the qualities of the ideal stallion for siring war- and race-horses. Virgil was originally from Mantua, and a portrait bust rising from a fountain - identified as Virgil - appears in the adjacent Loggia of the Muses, within a painted lunette above the entrance to the Sala dei Cavalli.⁸⁸¹ The juxtaposition of the portrait busts to the equine portraits suggests that the Gonzaga saw their animals as “heirs” to the champions of the

ancient Circus Maximus, just as they saw themselves as “heirs” to the Roman imperial family. The images do not show generic animals, but are portraits of named individuals to whom the Gonzaga could point proudly. The fact that the Sala dei Cavalli was often used to host foreign dignitaries (including the Emperor Charles V) shows how important the Gonzaga’s horses were to the spreading of Mantuan fame. Thus, the Sala dei Cavalli functions as a gallery of *viri illustri* (the Gonzaga as rulers from antiquity) presiding over *equi illustri* (the *palio* horses in the guise of Roman circus horses). The fresco cycle belongs to the same tradition as the portraits of famous philosophers and thinkers in Federico da Montefeltro’s *studiolo* in Urbino’s Palazzo Ducale, or the Medici’s collection of artist self-portraits in the Vasari Corridor of the Uffizi.

The Return from the Palio by Giovanni Maria Butteri

The *palio* horses appear to have achieved a certain level of fame and would have attracted the attention of the citizens in the cities in which they competed. A late sixteenth century panel painting in the National Gallery of Ireland, *The Return from the Palio*, by Giovanni Maria Butteri⁸⁸² shows the victorious horse, Il Seicento (Six Hundred) (fig. 41). A groom leads Seicento down the crowded street, while spectators peer from windows to get a glimpse of the victorious steed. The horse appears to wear a special saddlecloth or mantel on its back with a coats-of-arms (too vague to be deciphered) and a border of gold lilies, the symbol of the city of Florence. Although the bridles of the horses in the Cleveland *cassone* are rather simple, some bridles were elaborately made, such as the bridle and caparison of black-and-white tafetta decorated with *sonaglieti* (bells) worn by the horse of the Onda Contrada in a *palio* of 1600.⁸⁸³

According to the sixteenth-century humanist Vincenzo Borghini,⁸⁸⁴ Francesco de’Benci paid six hundred gold coins for Il Seicento, spawning the phrase, “gli par essere

il seicento (he thinks he's worth six hundred),” signifying someone who parades in sumptuous clothing.⁸⁸⁵ Early in his artistic career, Butteri, trained in the workshop of Mannerist artist Alessandro Allori, and painted works on canvas to decorate ephemeral monuments for public festivals, for which Borghini devised the *invenzioni* (written descriptions).⁸⁸⁶ Due to the large size of the canvas, it is conceivable that Borghini commissioned the painting from Butteri as decoration for a public festival such as the feast day of San Giovanni Battista, thus commemorating this famous racehorse's victories in palio races.

Palio horses' participation in the feast day was not confined to the race; they also paraded in the processions of offering.⁸⁸⁷ In a detail of the Uffizi painting showing the gathering of floats in the Piazza della Signoria prior to the procession to the Piazza del Duomo, one can see several palio horses, (fig. 162) identifiable by the plumes on their headstalls, being led into the piazza on the left. Dati mentions that the *corsieri* (runners) who “have come to run in the palii” also participated in the offering to San Giovanni Battista.⁸⁸⁸

Humanization of the Race Horse

The naming of individual racehorses in the “Il Libro dei Palii Vinti...,” in the Sala dei Cavalli, and in Butteri's painting reflect an increasing recognition in the early modern period of the celebration of the horse as an individual possessing and expressing almost human qualities. Palio horses, like the Smarty Jones and Secretariats of today, were celebrities in the Italian cities, and chroniclers and writers remembered and recorded their names. The Ferrarese chronicler Zambotto records the name of Capriana, “the favorite horse of the Marchese of Mantua,” who won the Palio of San Iacomo Filippo in 1499 on a circular racetrack built by the Duke of Ferrara outside the city.⁸⁸⁹ The Siense

chronicler, Allegretto Allegretti, wrote of a Sienese horse named Morello who won the Palio of San Giovanni in Florence in 1471, won again in 1492 by another horse named Sannino, a Turkish horse bought in Constantinople by the brother of his owner, Niccolò di Lorenzo di Donato. Sannino beat the horse owned by Francesco Gonzaga, and the Marchese of Mantua was so impressed by the winner that he purchased him and the palio from Donato for 850 gold ducats, over 5525 Sienese *lire* in all!⁸⁹⁰ In his chapter on palio horses, Corte paints a verbal portrait of a particular winning horse of native stock:

...non so di che razza si fosse, ma era di un Conte da Udine. Il qual cavallo havea nel mezzo dell'inarcatura del collo un cerro di crini fatto à treccia,⁸⁹¹ che ce lo rivolgevano d'interno al collo una volta, & dipoi anco l'avanzo andava quasi à toccar terra: & era di sì grande velocità ch'io lo vidi il giorno di San Giovanni Battista in Fiorenza nel corso avanzan tutti gli altri cavalli, & barbari, di mezza carriera, dico di quella dove correvano tal giorno il palio; & pur c'erano barbari di Mantua, quelli del Duca di Fiorenza, & il Bonzaga barbaro famosissimo del Duca d'Urbino.⁸⁹²

Corte describes the luxuriant mane of the victorious horse as one might praise the hair of a beautiful woman. The horse has been able to overcome his ignoble beginning by defeating the pedigreed Barb, Bonzaga, belonging to the Duke of Urbino. A poem by D. Filippo Lapacini in the Gonzaga “Il Libro dei Palii Vinti...,” goes even further in its praise the victorious Mantuan horse, Daino Sauro:

Non Dayno o Pardo o fuggitiva fera
 nè sagitta da chorda a furia spinta
 nè fulgare dal ciel per l'aria tinta
 passò sì presto mai mattina ò sera

Nè Febo cho destrier de la sua spera
 la cui velocità già mai fu vinta
 nè vento che ogni forza ha sempre extinta
 mostrò furia nel mondo mai sì fiera

Come correndo fece il legier Sauro
 passando in mezzo la città del fiore
 per vincer del Baptista il premio dauro

Gloria del mio Francesco eterno honore
per cui Gonzaga dal mar Indo al Mauro
phama harà sempre del suo gran valore

Ponendoti le piume e l'ali adosso
tu hai fatto di te tal pruova Sauro
che sempre sen dirà dal Indo al Mauro
e l'uno e l'altro ciel ne sia percosso

Tu non fosti dal segno così presto mosso
che teco ti portasti il premio dauro
che tu sii vera gloria e ver restauro
del Duca mantuan dir non tel posso

Tu fusti honor di tutti li altri armenti
nel correre, e nel corso senza guida
vincesti senza dubbio tutti i venti

La virtù del Signor ch'in te si fida
s'è sparsa con rumor fra tante genti
che Turcho, Turcho, tutta Italia chrida.⁸⁹³

Lapacini compares Daino Sauro to the mythical winged Pegasus, and like a victory in battle, his winning of the prestigious Palio of San Giovanni Battista in the rival city of Florence brings fame to the Gonzaga. Not only is it noteworthy that this poem is being addressed to a horse, but the fact that God entrusts him with “virtue” acknowledges that an animal is capable of possessing positive human qualities.

The glorification of the palio horse is part of the individualization and even humanization of the horse that has its parallel in equestrian treatises of the early modern period. The publication of Federico Grisone's treatise on horsemanship, *The Rules of Riding*, published in Naples in 1550,⁸⁹⁴ marks the flowering of the art of classical riding. Grisone and his followers based their philosophies on horse training on the work of the ancient Greek general, Xenophon, who advocated training the horse through gentle persuasion. Although some of Grisone's training methods were quite harsh and even

cruel, at the same time, he expresses the interdependent relationship of man and horse: the horse should become one, in mind and body, with its rider.⁸⁹⁵ Subsequent sixteenth and early seventeenth century works on riding acknowledge the horse's ability to think and to learn. In discussion methods of training, riding masters such as the Neopolitan Pirro Antonio Ferraro, recall in depth experiences of working with individual horses, often mentioning them by name.⁸⁹⁶ Many authors such as spend a considerable time listing and describing courageous horses from history and the qualities they possessed.⁸⁹⁷

Horses, therefore, even in some sixteenth century minds, share many physical and emotional qualities with humans. As Caracciolo expresses so poignantly towards the beginning of *La Gloria del Cavallo*:

Ne maraviglia se n'è da prendere, havendo in molte cose il Cavallo somiglianza con l'Huomo, stando questi animali soggetti a tuttie que' medesimi affetti e morbid, a' quali noi stiamo; Eglino si sognano, come noi, & come noi nella vecchiezza manifestamente più che altri canuti divengono...Et benche questa & alcune altre conditioni, comuni habbiano ancor co' i Cani, come la fede, l'amore, & la memoria; tutta via dimostrano apertamente, ch'essi piu che altri, della natura nostra non solamenti participi siano, ma conformi. La qual conformità forse è cagione, ch'eglino sian de gli huomini tanto amici...⁸⁹⁸

Caracciolo expresses what seems like a radical idea for the sixteenth century, one that is supported by the portraiture of palio champions - that these horses, in spirit and nature, *resemble* humans.

Through their participation in urban spectacle, palio horses attained celebrity in and for themselves even while bringing fame to their owners. They served their owners by acting as gifts or by starring in a tradition of equine portraiture, but they also became individuated and valued personalities as a result. Palio horses were a point of connection between vastly different cultures because their beauty and speed were valued by civilizations in Catholic Italy and Muslim Africa and Turkey. It seems fitting that the

exchange of horses among these cultures led ultimately to the development of the modern breed of racehorse, the Thoroughbred, which continues to be a common passion for so many different nations because of its perceived courage, intelligence and personality.

⁷⁹³ There were exceptions- the Sienese artist, Sodoma, owned the horse that won the August 1514 Siena *palio*. See Cecchini and Neri 70.

⁷⁹⁴ The list of horses running in the palio of the Assumption in 1514 (Biccherna 974, fol. 124, ASS), which Sodoma's horse won, is published in Cecchini on p. 161. It is also reproduced as Doc. 79 in "Repertorio Documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 535. Another list (Biccherna 974 fol.124v, ASS) shows the horses that competed in the Palio of Maria Maddalena of 1514 (cited in "Repertorio Documentario" but not reproduced). Three other lists from 1513 (Biccherna 973 fols. 49, 49v, 50; cited in Cecchini but not reproduced) show horses competing in the palio races of Maria Maddalena, Sant' Ambrogio, and of the Assumption. Sodoma's gray horse competed in the Assumption palio, and his dappled gray (perhaps the same horse?) and brown horses competed in the Sant' Ambrogio palio.

⁷⁹⁵ Ser Giusto d'Anghiari, *Memorie*, MS II.ii.127, Florence, Biblioteca nazionale, cited by Mallett, 254.

⁷⁹⁶ Biccherna 969, fols. 2rv, 7, ASS, reproduced as Document 59, "Repertorio documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 527.

⁷⁹⁷ Biccherna 973, ASS lists horses entered in the Palii of Santa Maria Maddalena and Santa Maria dell'Assunta in 1513. Biccherna 974 lists horses entered in the Palio of Maria Maddalena.

⁷⁹⁸ Biccherna 811, fol. 8v, ASS, cited as Document 82, "Repertorio documentario," Ridolfi et al., 536.

⁷⁹⁹ Montaigne, 141.

⁸⁰⁰ Landucci, 39, 50 cited by Mallett, 254, 259.

⁸⁰¹ Balìa 830, fol. 41, ASS, document cited in "Repertorio documentario," in Ridolfi et al., 539, n. 106 and reproduced as Document 20, Cecchini and Neri, 164-165.

⁸⁰² Exhibition handout from Asti.

⁸⁰³ Mallett, 261.

⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁸⁰⁵ Civai and Toti, *Palio: the Race of the Soul*, (English edition) (Siena: Edizioni Alsaba, 2002), 162.

⁸⁰⁶ "...ragazzo spera indio et nostra donna fatti innanticheti bisogna," from Biccherna 974, ASS, fol. 123.

⁸⁰⁷ Balìa 830, fol. 41 in Cecchini and Neri, 164-165.

⁸⁰⁸ Nosari and Canova, 46.

⁸⁰⁹ Entry of July 3, 1666, CCO, *Libro secondo*, 127.

⁸¹⁰ “Ciascuno possa far correre il suo barbaro con fanciulli sopra o senza, secondo che li parrà (Anyone can race their Barb with a jockey or without, according to their wont.)” Balia 830, fol. 37, ASS in Cecchini and Neri, 164.

⁸¹¹ In the Museo di Roma in Trastevere, I saw two nineteenth-century prints that illustrated Carnival horses wearing these spiked balls. This includes *La corsa dei barberi* (1821) by B. Cradock and J.P. Bridges (MR 6372) and *Mossa dei cavalli in Roma* by an anonymous printmaker (MR 1473).

⁸¹² Corte 98r,v.

⁸¹³ According to Corte (p.98), the Barbs belonging to the Duke of Mantua were the best runners, but the Sorian (Spanish) and Scythian horses were also fast.

⁸¹⁴ Alexander MacKay-Smith, *Speed and the Thoroughbred*, (Lanham, MD: The Derrydale Press, 2000), 117.

⁸¹⁵ The hand, a term used for measuring horse height, is equal to four inches.

⁸¹⁶ Robert and Louise Painter, *International Society for the Preservation of the Barb Horse and Barb Horse Registry* (Midvale, Idaho: 1997), 7-8.

⁸¹⁷ This painting, by the Flemish artist Abraham van Diepenbeke (c.1593-1676), is reproduced on p. 76 of MacKay-Smith's book.

⁸¹⁸ Caracciolo, 315.

⁸¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁸²⁰ “...Che non possi correre alcuno se non con cavallo che sia barbero vero.” Balia 830, fol.37, ASS in Cecchini and Neri, 164-165.

⁸²¹ Leo Africanus, whose Arabic name was Hassan Ibn Muhammad al-Wazzin al Zayyati, knew the last of the Hafsid sultans, and after converting to Christianity, published a *Description of North Africa* in Bologna in 1524. Giancarlo Pizzi, *Tremila anni di storia in Tunisia*, (Jaca Book, Qualecultura, 1996), 279.

⁸²² “...the most certain triall of these horses is when they can overtake the beast called the Lant or the Ostrich, in a race, which if they be able to performe, they are esteemed worth a thousand ducats or a hundred camels.” Leo Africanus, *The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable Things Theirin Contained, Written by Al-Hassan Ibn Muhammed al-Wezaz al-Fasi, A moor, Baptised as Giovanni Leone, but better known as Leo Africanus*, trans. John Pory. Reprint of original edition of 1600. (NY: Burt Franklin, date?): 156-157, 942-943.

⁸²³ This may refer to the start of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista in Florence, which once started near the Ponte alla Carraia.

⁸²⁴ Caracciolo, 103.

⁸²⁵ MacKay-Smith, 122-124.

⁸²⁶ In many sixteenth and seventeenth century treatises on horsemanship and biting, certain bits are prescribed to correct the naturally high head carriage of the Turkish horse.

⁸²⁷ Caracciolo, 309.

⁸²⁸ Although *barberi* seems to be the most prevalent term in correspondence to describe palio runners, horses are also referred to more generically as *corredori* or runners. A letter of the first of August, 1512, discusses choosing a *buon cavallo corridore* for the Palio of San Leonardo. See Malacarne, 76.

⁸²⁹ Letter of May 12, 1492, b. 1423, AG, ASM, in Malacarne, 54.

⁸³⁰ Giovanni Menavino, *I Costumi et La Vita dei Turchi*, (Florence: Appresso Lorenzo Torrentino, 1551): 85-86. On pp. 112-113 and on p. 123, Menavino describes the organization of the Sultan's stables in Constantinople in vivid detail.

⁸³¹ Ottaviano Bon *The Sultan's Serraglio: An Intimate Portrait of Life at the Ottoman Court (from the Seventeenth-Century Edition of John Withers*, Godfrey Goodwin, ed., (1625; London: Saqi Books, 1996), 113.

⁸³² MacKay-Smith, 122-124.

⁸³³ MacKay-Smith, 30-31. Hobbies contributed much of the speed to the Thoroughbred bloodlines, and five Hobbies were exported to Jamestown, Virginia, in 1666, where they contributed to the establishment of the American Quarter Horse, who are the fastest horses in the world at a quarter mile distance.

⁸³⁴ MacKay-Smith, 24-26.

⁸³⁵ "1. – Che non possi correre alcuno se non con cavallo che sia barbaro vero." Balia 830, fol. 41, ASS reproduced as Document 20 in Cecchini, 164-165.

⁸³⁶ See Burcardo, in Cruciani, 271-278 and Penni, in Cruciani, 372-378.

⁸³⁷ Antonio de Muscianis, "Libro delle Spese per i Giochi del Notaio Antonio de Muscianis," Archivio Capitolino, Bacchanalia I, 215 sgg., in Cruciani, 79-89.

⁸³⁸ Caleffini in Tebaldi, 16, 23.

⁸³⁹ Jamil M. Abun-Nasr, *A History of the Maghrib*, (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), 140. Patricia Kozlik Kabra, "Patterns of Economic Continuity in Early Hafsid Ifrîqîya," Dissertation, History, University of California Los Angeles, 1994, 74.

⁸⁴⁰ Abun-Nasr, 148.

⁸⁴¹ Pizzi, 267.

⁸⁴² Ibid., 272.

⁸⁴³ Abun-Nasr, 169.

⁸⁴⁴ Kabra 197-199, 311.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid., 294-308.

⁸⁴⁶ Pizzi, 268.

⁸⁴⁷ Landucci, 372. Landucci died in 1516, but an anonymous chronicler continued his chronicle. The editor notes that a contract between Mulay Hassan, King of Tunisia, and Charles V established that every year the King was to give Charles V a tribute of six *barberi* horses and twelve falcons.

⁸⁴⁸ The Gonzaga were not the only family to import horses from North Africa: Lorenzo de' Medici is known to have sent his representative, Martino d'Arezzo, to Tunis to buy horses. Mallett, 258.

⁸⁴⁹ The most extensive documentation of importation of Barb horses that I have been able to find are the letters of the Gonzaga family in the Archivio di Stato of Mantua. Excerpts and entire letters appear in Giancarlo Malacarne's *Il mito dei cavalli gonzagheschi* and in Carlo Cavriani's *Le razze Gonzaghesche dei cavalli nel mantovano e la loro influenza sul puro sangue inglese*. Both Cavriani and Malacarne quote or reproduce in full letters from the Archivio di Stato in Mantua. I have cited these transcriptions in this paper. Translations from the original Italian into English are mine unless otherwise noted.

⁸⁵⁰ Malacarne, 51-52.

⁸⁵¹ R. Tamalio, *Ferrante Gonzaga alla Corte Spagnola di Carlo V*, Mantua: Gianluigi Arcari Editore, 1991), 54. Also cited in Malacarne 39-40, n.15.

⁸⁵² There is a recent publication that explores the subject of artistic contact between Europe and the East, which includes a chapter on equestrian imagery and the trade of horses with the Islamic World. See Lisa Jardine and Jerry Brotton, *Global Interests: Renaissance Art Between East and West* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2000).

⁸⁵³ For more on trade between Europe and the Ottoman Empire, see Kate Fleet, *European and Islamic Trade in the Early Ottoman State*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁸⁵⁴ See Chapter Four in Fortini-Brown.

⁸⁵⁵ For more on the mutual cultural influences between Italy and Ottoman Turkey, see Charles Burnett and Anna Contadini, eds., *Islam and the Italian Renaissance*, (London: Warburg Institute, 1999).

⁸⁵⁶ Djem, who tried to gain the Ottoman throne from his brother, was sent into exile in France and later in Italy, where Bayezid II paid the Papacy to have him held prisoner in Rome. See Sydney Nettleton Fisher, "Sultan Bayezid II and the Foreign Relations of Turkey: An Abstract of a Thesis," PhD. Dissertation, History, University of Illinois, 1935.

⁸⁵⁷ Malacarne, 96, n.14.

⁸⁵⁸ Fleet, 29-30.

⁸⁵⁹ Bernardino Missaglia to Francesco Gonzaga, September 25, 1491, Archivio Gonzaga, b. 795, fols. 33-35, ASM, in Malacarne, 52.

⁸⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 37, also cited in Malacarne, 53.

⁸⁶¹ "Entrata e Uscita della Depositeria Generale (March 1, 1564-Feb. 28, 1565)," Depositeria Generale 772, fol. 37r, ASF.

⁸⁶² Paul Coles, *The Ottoman Impact on Europe*, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1968), 82-83.

⁸⁶³ Letter of May 16, 1525, AG, b. 795, fol. 127, ASM.

⁸⁶⁴ Caracciolo, 323.

⁸⁶⁵ Stud book of 1540, AG, b. 258, ASM.

⁸⁶⁶ Pages of brands appear in Francesco Liberati's *La perfezione del Cavallo* (Rome: Francesco Corbelletti, 1639). Several books were published in the sixteenth and seventeenth century reproducing the horse

brands of various prominent Italian families. Other books are devoted entirely to the subject of brands, such as the *Libro de Marchi de cavalli con li nomi di tutti li Principi, & privati Signori, che hanno razze di Cavalli...* (Venice: Bernardo Giunti, 1589).

⁸⁶⁷ Liberati 93,106.

⁸⁶⁸ “La mia raza de barberi è bona per rendere conto non solum a cavalli italiani, ma a turchi, mori, et indiani, et in fede che ciò sia vero gli mando Zohan Iacomo mio alveo, presente exhibitore, col libro di palii viti con li mei cavalli a fine che la veda se la mia raza merita d’esser svilata come fa fece pare; che è laudata et desiderata per una de la singulari dal re di Francia, re Catholico [re di Spagna], d’Inghilterra, de Turchia, de Ungaria et da multi Reverendissimi Cardinali Illustrissimi Signori, et finalmente a qualunque altro che n’habbia cognitione...,” Francesco Gonzaga to Cavalier de la Volta, March 4, 1517, AG, b. 2924, c. 250, 2v., 3 r., ASM, reproduced in Malacarne, 86.

⁸⁶⁹ R. Tamalio, *Federico Gonzaga alla Corte di Francesco I di Francia nel carteggio privato con Mantova (1515-1517)*, (Paris: Honoré Champion Editeur, 1994), 86.

⁸⁷⁰ R. Tamalio, *Ferrante Gonzaga alla Corte Spagnola di Carlo V*, 153.

⁸⁷¹ “...ti avvisamo come la razza nostra è in maggior fiore che lo fosse mai et fin qui havemo 81 cavalli maschi nati quest’anno, gli più belli che uscessero mai...tra gli altri ne uno che nacque il dì di S.Zorzo beliss.o. Quello volemo donar al Re d’Anglittera per esser nato il dì di quel Santo che precipalmente è in veneratione in Anglia.” Cavriani, 23. The letter is in the Archivio di Stato in Mantua, although I do not have the precise citation.

⁸⁷² The correspondence surrounding the trading of horses with England are cited and discussed in Malacarne, 106-129.

⁸⁷³ Federico Tesio, *Breeding the Racehorse*, trans. Edward Spinola, (1958; London: JJ Spinola, 1994), 2-3. Tesio, who studied and wrote about the genetics of the Thoroughbred racehorse, was also one of the most influential breeders of the twentieth century. Most of the prominent racehorses of the modern day (including the great Secretariat) are descendants of two stallions, Nearco and Ribot, whom Tesio bred at his Dormello stud on the shores of Lago Maggiore in Italy. Tesio maintains that the prevailing theory that the Thoroughbred was produced from the three Barb and Turk foundation sires [the Goldolphin Barb, the Darley Arabian, and the Byerly Turk] crossed with native English mares was incorrect; the mares themselves were descendants of horses of Oriental blood, including the Gonzaga imports.

⁸⁷⁴ The manuscript is in a private collection. The “Libro,” referred to also as the “Codice dei Palii Gonzagheshi,” is illustrated in Chambers and Martineau, 147 and is also illustrated and discussed in Malacarne’s book.

⁸⁷⁵ Silvestro da Lucca in Mantua to Marchese Francesco Gonzaga, September 20, 1512, AG, b. 2485, ASM, in Malacarne, 87-88.

⁸⁷⁶ Although Daino Sauro is portrayed with a curb bit, which was the most popular bit at the time, Claudio Corte (98v) mentions a *filetto*, or snaffle bit, in his chapter on training and conditioning a palio horse.

⁸⁷⁷ For more on the conversion of the villa into a palace, see Amadeo Belluzzi and Walter Capezzali, “Le scuderie dei Gonzaga sul Te,” *Civiltà Mantovana* 42 (1973): 378-94 and Belluzzi and Capezzali, *Il Palazzo dei Lucidi Inganni: Palazzo Te a Mantova*, (Mantua: Centro Studi Architettura Ouroboros, 1976).

⁸⁷⁸ See Amadeo Belluzzi, *Palazzo Te a Mantova*, 2 vols., (Modena: Franco Cosimo Panini Editore S.p.a, 1998), figs. 215-217.

⁸⁷⁹ The trappings of the Barberi are described in a list that appears in a letter from Isabella d'Este Gonzaga [Federico's mother] to Berardo Ruta, May 26, 1509, AG, b. 2416, l. 205, 58, ASM, in Malacarne, 230), that is entitled "Nota de le robe de li barberi de veluto cremesino e verde, tempestati de tremolanti cum la impresa del Crosolo (Note on the Adornments of the Barberi of Crimson and Green Velvet, Studded with Shining Ornament with the Crest of the Crosolo)." The item, or list number, that describes the *pennacchi*, or feathers, reads "penachii sei verdi e rossi, cioè 3 celate e 3 per li testeri da li cavalli [six red and green feathers, that is, three (attached to) headpieces and three for the headstalls of the horses]." The above-mentioned letter of May 26, 1509 lists as an item, "brille 3 da barberi de tesuti de seta verde e cremesina cum li sonagli (three bridles of the *barberi* of crimson and green silk fabric with bells)."

⁸⁸⁰ The faint brand visible of the rump of the chestnut *zannetta* stallion, as well as the brand visible on Glorioso in the Andreasi drawing, resembles illustrations of *zannetta* brands in a Gonzaga stud book. The brands, found in documents in AG, b. 258, ASM, are reproduced in Malacarne, 102-103.

⁸⁸¹ The identification of this bust as the head of Virgil was made by Egon Verheyen, *The Palazzo del Te in Mantua: Images of Love and Politics*, (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press: 1977), 15, and others examples of this Virgil bust are given in Belluzzi I, 362.

⁸⁸² The undated painting is 51 ½ by forty inches in dimensions, and is no.1021 in the National Gallery of Ireland in Dublin, purchased from the collection of Captain R. Langton Douglas in 1940.

⁸⁸³ Ascheri et al., 109-110 (151r).

⁸⁸⁴ Vincenzo Borghini was a humanist and philologist at the Medici court and was one of the first lieutenants of the Academy of Design. Karen-edis Barzman, *The Florentine Academy and the Early Modern State: the Discipline of Disegno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 28-29.

⁸⁸⁵ Borghini, *Della Moneta Fiorentina*, 167. Mentioned by Federico Zeri, "La percezione visiva dell'Italia e degli italiani nella pittura," *Storia d'Italia, VI: Atlante* (Turin: Einaudi, 1976), 72. I would like to acknowledge Margaret Donnelly of the National Gallery of Ireland for sending me this excerpt from Zeri's article.

⁸⁸⁶ Rick Scorza, "Borghini, Butteri and Allori: a further drawing for the 1565 'Apparato,'" *Burlington Magazine* 137: 1104 (March 1995): 172-175.

⁹⁰ Landucci, 39, 50 cited by Mallett 254, 259.

⁸⁸⁷ Montaigne describes the horses parading with their jockeys besides the cart carrying the prizes for the Palio of San Giovanni Battista. See Montaigne, 141.

⁸⁸⁸ Dati in Rogers, 620.

⁸⁸⁹ Zambotto, in Tebaldi, 55.

⁸⁹⁰ Allegretti specifies that each ducat was worth six *lire*, ten *soldi*. Allegretti, fols. 3, 27v.

⁸⁹¹ The manes of racehorses were often braided, as visible in the manes of the horses depicted in the Cleveland cassone.

⁸⁹² Corte 98v.

⁸⁹³ D. Filippo Lapacini, "D. Philippi Lapacini in Laudem Sauri," "Libro dei palii vinti..." fol. 6 in Malacarne, 229.

⁸⁹⁴ Federico Grisone, *Gli Ordini Cavalcare* (Naples: Giovan Paolo Sukanappo, 1550).

⁸⁹⁵ Grisone, 12rv. “Et volete cavalcare, & star sopra di esso, non solo con animo grande, senza tema di lui: Mà far concetto, che egli sia con voi un’istesso corpo, di un senso, & di una volontà... (And you want to ride and stay upon him, not only with a grand spirit, without fear of him: But think also that he is together with you of the same body, of the same spirit, and the same will).”

⁸⁹⁶ Pirro Antonio Ferraro, *Cavallo Frenato* (Naples: Antonio Pace, 1602).

⁸⁹⁷ Some examples provided by Caracciolo are Alexander’s horse, Bucephalus; the human-handed horse of Julius Caesar, and Boristene, who belonged to the Emperor Hadrian. Carracciolo, 11-12.

⁸⁹⁸ Carracciolo, 7-8.

Conclusion

The Renaissance palio race is significant in that it perpetuated one of the secular elements – the horse race – of a sacred feast and celebration, echoing the *ludi circenses* of the pagan feast days of antiquity. By the sixteenth century, observers recognized and articulated the palio's connection to the cities' Roman pasts, whether real or imagined.

Renaissance Italy was not only the birthplace of modern riding, but also of modern racing. The palio also had direct implications for the history of the sport of horse racing. The desire to own fast horses spurred the development of networks of trade and exchange of horses with other European powers and with Islamic states in Turkey and North Africa. When the Gonzaga presented their gift of *barberi* breeding stock to King Henry VIII of England, they were contributing to a centuries-long genetic accumulation and mixing of Barb, Turkish, and Hobby bloodlines that would produce, in the eighteenth century, the English thoroughbred, the horse used in flat racing worldwide to this day.⁸⁹⁹

Today, Italian cities continue to celebrate the feast days of patron saints, even though centuries have passed since these feast days were first celebrated. On June 24, 1992, I witnessed the procession from the Piazza della Signoria to the Duomo of clergy and participants dressed in historic costume for the Feast of San Giovanni Battista, especially splendid that year due to the commemoration of the five hundredth anniversary of the death of Lorenzo de' Medici. The Sienese *contrade* still run two races annually, the palii of Provenzano and the Assumption, on July 2nd and August 16th each year. Ferrara runs its race for San Giorgio in late May, and Asti runs its palio of the *rioni* in September. Some have remarked that cities stage these festivals now to draw tourists, and certainly these events do attract people from all over the country and even the world. But having

attended the San Giovanni festival in Florence and the palio races in Siena and Asti, I believe that these festivals are at the very heart of these cities' identities. When I was in the stands watching the procession before the palio of Asti, a native of the city told me, in regards to the *rioni* who participate in this spectacle, "It takes a year for them to make the costumes. Tomorrow, they will start preparing for next year." Citizens expend an enormous amount of time, energy, and effort for a celebration that takes place on one day.

These festivals, of which the palio is a part, show a desire and need on the part of these cities to bring the past to life. The *rioni* of Asti each chose a theme from some aspect of history from the Middle Ages: San Damiano chose to represent the hunt and falconry (Fig. 163); Castell'Alfero, the children's crusade; and several chose to commemorate the weddings of rulers and nobles, such as the marriage of Margherita Asinari and Ubaldino de Ubaldinus (son of the Visconti captain, Gaspardo) in 1382.⁹⁰⁰ Not only did these themes conjure up the past, but also the forms of the ephemera created for the Palio. A *carro* of one *rione* (fig. 164), with its trophy-like edifice of gold, resembled closely the floats of the *contrade* visible in the painting of the 1546 procession in the Sienese Campo (fig. 48). The cart displaying the palio banner (fig. 9), was very similar to those used centuries ago.

Even during the Renaissance, forms of ephemera remain fairly constant over long periods of time, in this same effort to preserve the city's history. Although rulers and circumstances changed, the palio cart of San Giovanni in the seventeenth century (fig. 27) still displayed the insignia of the Florentine Republic, and the banner itself was still made from luxury fabrics.

The palio has survived as a continuous, though changed, tradition in Siena in part through this function of preserving the past. In the face of Florentine domination, the Sienese *contrade* sought to maintain their cultural independence by maintaining the pageantry and palio races of the city's glory days.

The Renaissance palio is significant not only in that it is a living tradition that still flourishes in many cities today, but also because the money and labor spent in the production of the palio banner causes us to reconsider the significance of ephemeral art. From Vasari onwards, Renaissance art historians have promoted the canon of monumental painting, sculpture, and architecture, but ephemeral and festival art was no less important. I have shown how cities often spent more on a single palio banner than other patrons spent to commission a panel painting or fresco by a well-established artist, in essence, paying a fortune for an object whose iconographic significance was tied to a specific moment in time – the feast day. Once that day was over, the palio banner was no longer valued as a cohesive work of art, but for its luxury materials, which could be reused, recycled, traded or sold as the victor wished. One banner became a microcosm of commerce that brought diverse cultures together through trade and generated patronage for the cultural and humanistic endeavors that made these cities great. The palio banner and the race are metaphors for the wealth, vitality, and resilience of the city itself.

⁸⁹⁹ As an interesting footnote to the contribution of Renaissance palio racing to the development of the modern racehorse, the Italian breeder and horseman, Federico Tesio (for whom a stakes race is still run annually at Maryland tracks in his honor), raised at his Dormello stud two of the most influential thoroughbred stallions of the twentieth century, Nearco and Ribot. Both were undefeated on the track, and sired numerous offspring. Ribot's grandson Pleasant Colony won the Kentucky Derby in 1981. And a large percentage of racing's champions – including American Triple Crown winners Secretariat and Seattle Slew - descend from the Nearco bloodline.

⁹⁰⁰ *Souvenir d'Asti 2004*, souvenir program (Asti: Comune di Asti, 2004), 20, 25, 29.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)
 Fig. 1: The Cart with the Palio Banner, Siena.



Fig. 2: Palio horse and jockey in the prova (trial race), morning of July 2, 1996, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)
 Fig. 3: Andrea del Castagno, *The Youthful David*, c. 1450, tempera on leather, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)
 Fig. 4: Francesco da Cossa and others, Detail from fresco showing the Palio of San Giorgio in Ferrara, Sala dei Mesi, Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara, c. 1469-70.



Fig. 5: Church of San Secondo in Asti.



Fig. 6: Palio banners and the cart of the palio in chapel in San Secondo.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 7: Palio for the race, Asti, 2004, Enrico Colombotto Rosso in publicity brochure.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 8: Palio for the church, Asti, 2004, Enrico Colombotto Rosso in publicity brochure.



Fig. 9: Procession of the palio cart in Piazza Alfieri before the Palio of Asti, September 19, 2004.

(Images removed for reasons of copyright)

Figs. 10 & 11: Bell in Torre contrada museum with symbol of elephant with tower on its back.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 12: Orphans of the Abbandonati orphanage carrying *barelle* with *ceri fioriti* from Luca Chiari's *Priorista* manuscript, c. 1630-1640, fol. 43v, BCNF.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 13: Vincenzo Rustici (1557-1632), *Procession of the Contrade in the Piazza del Campo, August 15, 1546* (after description by Cecchino Cartaio), oil on canvas, late 16th century, Collection of the Banca Monte dei Paschi, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 14: Oil painting showing the *Festa di Omaggio* of the Festival of San Giovanni Battista, Piazza della Signoria, Florence, c. 1625-50, inv. 1919, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 15: Detail of tribute palii of the subject cities and towns.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 16: Detail of palio cart and tribute palii of the subject cities and towns.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 17: Offerings of the tribute palii of Siena, *Priorista*, fol. 63v.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 18: Giovanni Stradano, *Homage to San Giovanni in Piazza della Signoria*, 1562, fresco, Sala di Gualdrada, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 19: Folio 41v showing Carro of the Zecca in Luca di Antonio Chiari, *Priorista*, c. 1630-1640, MS. II.I.262, Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 20: Cart of Montecarlo.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 21: Carro of Pescia.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 22: Carro of Barga.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 23: Carro of Montecatini.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 24: Carro of Montopoli.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 25: Engraving after the *Priorista* manuscript of the Martinella.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 26: Carroccio Fiorentino.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 27: Folio 39r showing Cart of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista in Luca di Antonio Chiari, *Priorista*, c. 1630-1640, MS. II.I.262, Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 28: Giovanni Toscani, *Cassone* Showing Presentation of the Palio to the Baptistery, Bargello Museum, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 29: Detail of tribute palii.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 30: Detail of tribute banners and coats-of-arms on canopy.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 31: Presentation of tribute palii to Baptistery. Note branches affixed to tops of banners.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 32: Detail of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista from the Bargello *cassone*.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 33: Display of banner, possibly standard of San Giovanni kept in Baptistery.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 34: *Procession into San Giovanni*, 1562, from Sala del Gualdrada, Palazzo Vecchio, showing detail of displayed banner.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 35: Drawing of a florin from the time of Boccaccio, in Borghini's *Della Moneta Fiorentina*.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig.36: Jacques Callot, *The Start of the Barberi in the Palio, Porta al Prato*, c. 1617-1622, etching, Gabinetto di disegni e stampe, no. 8653, Uffizi, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 37: Anonymous print by a follower of Callot showing the start of the palio at Porta al Prato, seventeenth century, etching, no. 116432, Uffizi, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 38: Detail of the finish of the 1677 Palio of San Secondo of Asti, from an *ex-voto* painting in the Confraternity of the Santissima Trinità in Asti.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 39: *The Running of the Palio*, cassone panel, Giovanni Toscani, early fifteenth century, tempera on wood panel, Cleveland Museum of Art.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 40: Detail of the Cleveland cassone showing the palio cart and banner.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 41: Giovanni Maria Butteri, *The Return from the Palio*, late sixteenth century, oil on canvas, no. 1021, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 42: Vincenzo Rustici, *Caccie di Tori in the Piazza del Campo of August 15, 1546*, late sixteenth century, oil on canvas, Banca Monte dei Paschi, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Figure 43: Palio banner won for *bufalata* of 1599, silk lampas, Museum of the Torre Contrada, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Figure 44: Palio banner in the Torre Museum won by the contrada in a *bufalata*.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 45: *Masgalano* in Torre Museum showing Rape of Europa (from November 3, 1650?).

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 46: *Carro della Torre*, Bernardino Capitelli (1590-1632), etching 1632, Biblioteca Comunale, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 47: *Carro della Onda*, Bernardino Capitelli (1590-1632), etching 1632, Biblioteca Comunale, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 48: Detail of person portraying Actaeon from Rustici panel. *Carro* and insignia of the Onda shown in upper portion of detail, from Civai and Toti, 78-79.



Fig. 49: The façade of Palazzo Pubblico and the Campo under snow, January 2004.



Fig. 50: View of the Campo, with campanile and dome of Duomo in the distance, January 2004.



Fig. 51: View of the Campo, showing curvature of surface of the piazza, January 2004.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 52: Bernardino Capitelli, Race in the Piazza del Campo of August 15, 1633, etching, Biblioteca Comunale, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 53: The Madonna of Provenzano, Fragment of sixteenth-century terracotta in reliquary of nineteenth century by goldsmith Giuseppe Coppini, Basilica of Provenzano, Siena.



Fig. 54: Basilica of Provenzano, Damiano Schifardini and Flaminio del Turco, architects, 1595-1611, Siena.



Fig. 55: Piazza of the Ognissanti, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 56: Florence, showing original route of palio from Piazza Ognissanti to Piazza San Pier Maggiore, along Roman *decumanus*.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 57: Horses entering city through gate by church of San Pietro, 1677 Palio of San Secondo of Asti, from an *ex-voto* painting in the Confraternity of the Santissima Trinità in Asti.



Fig. 58: Porta Camollia, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 59: Probable original route of Palio of the Assumption, starting at Fontebecci (off map, in direction of arrow), and Porta Camollia (circled), ending in the Piazza del Duomo.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 60: Subsequent probable route along the Via Roma/Francigena of the Palio of the Assumption, from Porta Romana (lower circle), then Santuccio (upper circle) to the Piazza del Duomo.



Fig. 61: Porta Romana, the southern gate of the city on the Via Roma/Francigena.



Fig. 62: Façade of the Monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli, known as Santuccio.



Fig. 63: Baptistery of San Giovanni as seen from Via dei Calzaiuoli. Duomo on right.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 64: Page from pp. 160-161 of 1755 edition of Vincenzo Borghini's *Dell'origine di Firenze* showing Pantheon juxtaposed to the Baptistery, believed by Borghini to be Roman Temple of Mars.



Fig. 65: Siena Cathedral as seen from San Domenico, January 2004.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 66: Diagram from Borghini, p. 171, tracing foundations of Roman amphitheater west of Piazza Santa Croce.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 67: 'Calcio a livrea' in Piazza Santa Croce, Anonymous Florentine artist, c. 1589, oil on canvas, Ringling Museum, Sarasota.



Fig. 68: Piazza Santa Maria Novella showing façade of church and two obelisks.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 69: Jacques Callot, *Palio delle Carrette (Palio dei Cocchi)*, c. 1617-1622, etching, no. 116, Gabinetto di Disegni e Stampe, Uffizi Museum, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 70: *Christ Giving the Keys to Saint Peter, with Saints*, Andrea Orcagna, 1357, tempera and gold on wood, Strozzi Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 71: Silk velvet of Italian manufacture, late 15th century, Victoria and Albert Museum.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 72: Silk velvet of Turkish manufacture (Bursa), 16th century, Victoria and Albert Museum

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 73: Jan Van Eyck, *Wedding Portrait (Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride)*, 1434, oil on panel, National Gallery, London.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 74: Banner for the extraordinary palio of September 21, 1969 (Palio della Luna), Marte (Mario Bucci), paint on silk, Museum of the Noble Contrada of the Oca, Siena.



Fig. 75: Image of the Virgin of the Assumption on the Palio Banner of August 16, 1879, painted on silk, Museum of the Contrada of the Selva, Siena.



Fig. 76: Image of the Virgin of Provenzano on the Palio Banner of July 2, 1865, painted on silk, Museum of the Contrada of the Selva, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 77: Pivial made from five pieces of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista, second half of seventeenth century, *bouclé* velvet brocade, Franchetti Collection no. 128, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Figure 78: Imperial arms of Rudolf II, taken from Palio of San Giovanni Battista, seventeenth or eighteenth century, velvet and painted silk, Archivio di Stato, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Figure 79: Arms of the King of Spain.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Figure 80: Royal and imperial crowns taken from the coats-of-arms shown above.

<u>City</u>	<u>Number of banners in database</u>
Asti	6
Bagnacavallo	2
Bologna	23
Brescia	1
Cervia	4
Cesena	2
Faenza	1
Ferrara	52
Florence	145
Gonzaga	6
Imola	5
Mantua	23
Modena	2
Padua	1
Piombino	1
Pisa	1
Pistoia	5
Reggio Emilia	2
Rome	45
Siena	138
Verona	2
<u>Total</u>	471

Fig. 81: Table showing number of palio banners, by city, for which I have information.

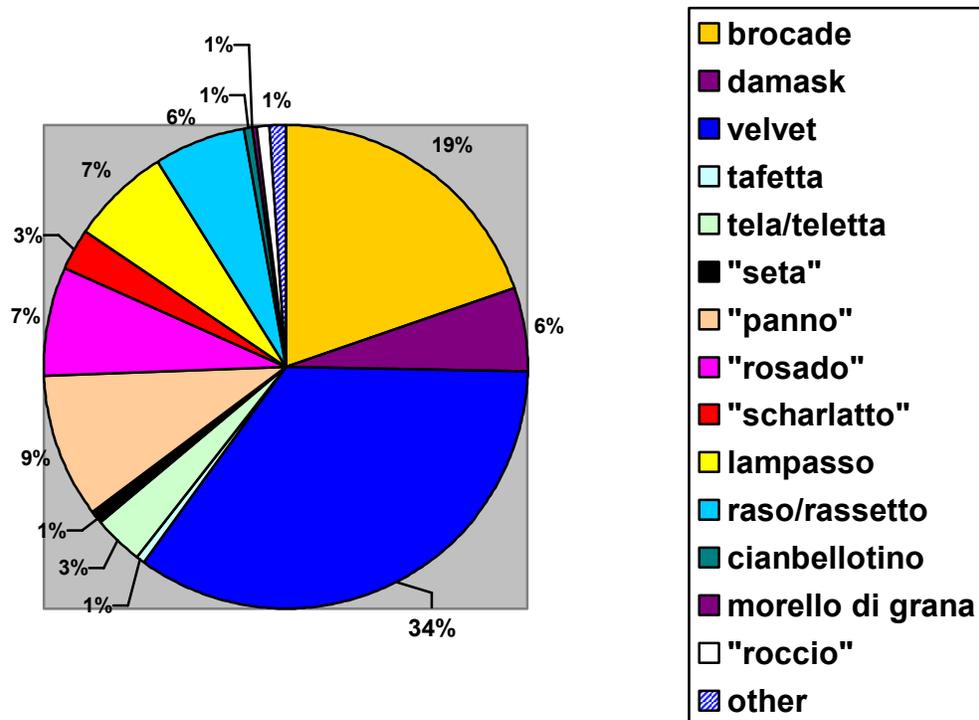


Fig. 82: Distribution of the Primary Fabrics of the Palio Banners.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 83: *Bandinella* (stole?), Cut brocade *bouclè* velvet, Franchetti Collection no.73, Florentine, second half of sixteenth century, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 84: Fragment of velvet from a *Paliotto* (Altarcloth), Venetian manufacture, second quarter of fifteenth century, Museo Poldi Pezzoli (no. 3203a), Milan.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 85: Loops of *bouclè* in gold thread on fifteenth-century brocade velvet.

(Images removed for reasons of copyright)

Figs. 86 & 87: Detail of *bouclè* on Franchetti piviale made from palio banner. The small loops are just barely visible in the photograph on the solid black sections of the leaves and within the circle in the center of the composition.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 88: Blue *velluto alessandrino*, third quarter of the fifteenth century, Venetian or Florentine, Carrand Collection no. 2350, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 89: Two sides of an Italian satin damask with pomegranate pattern, third quarter of fifteenth century, no. 75.1.224, Museo del Tessuto, Prato.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 90: Chausable (*pianeta*) of *broccatello* with central portion of velvet *bouclè* brocade, sixteenth century, Tuscan manufacture, Contrada of the Selva, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 91: Page from Francesco Datini's account book, showing drawing of pomegranate/thistle pattern in upper right hand corner.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 92: Drawing of pomegranate pattern on modern Turkish embroidered textile.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 93: *Madonna and Child*, Vincenzo Foppa, c. 1480, oil on wood, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 94: *Madonna and Saints (San Marco Altarpiece)*, Fra Angelico, c. 1438-1440, Tempera on panel, Museum of San Marco, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 95: Pomegranate pattern, with lily and thistle, of Fanelli Type II with bifurcated stem, cut velvet of two lengths, Florence, middle of fifteenth century, Franchetti Collection, no. 116, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 96: Early pomegranate pattern with ogival structure (Fanelli Type I), brocade cut velvet, first quarter of fifteenth century, Venetian manufacture, Franchetti Collection no. 622, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 97: Processional banner with embroidered medallion of St. Atto, Bishop of Pistoia, silk *ciselé* velvet, late sixteenth century, Florentine manufacture, Pistoia Cathedral.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 98: Pomegranate pattern on garment of *Giovanni Emo*, by Gentile Bellini, c. 1475-1483, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 99: Stylized pomegranate pattern on dress of *Eleonora da Toledo with Giovanni de' Medici*, Agnolo Bronzino, c. 1546, Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

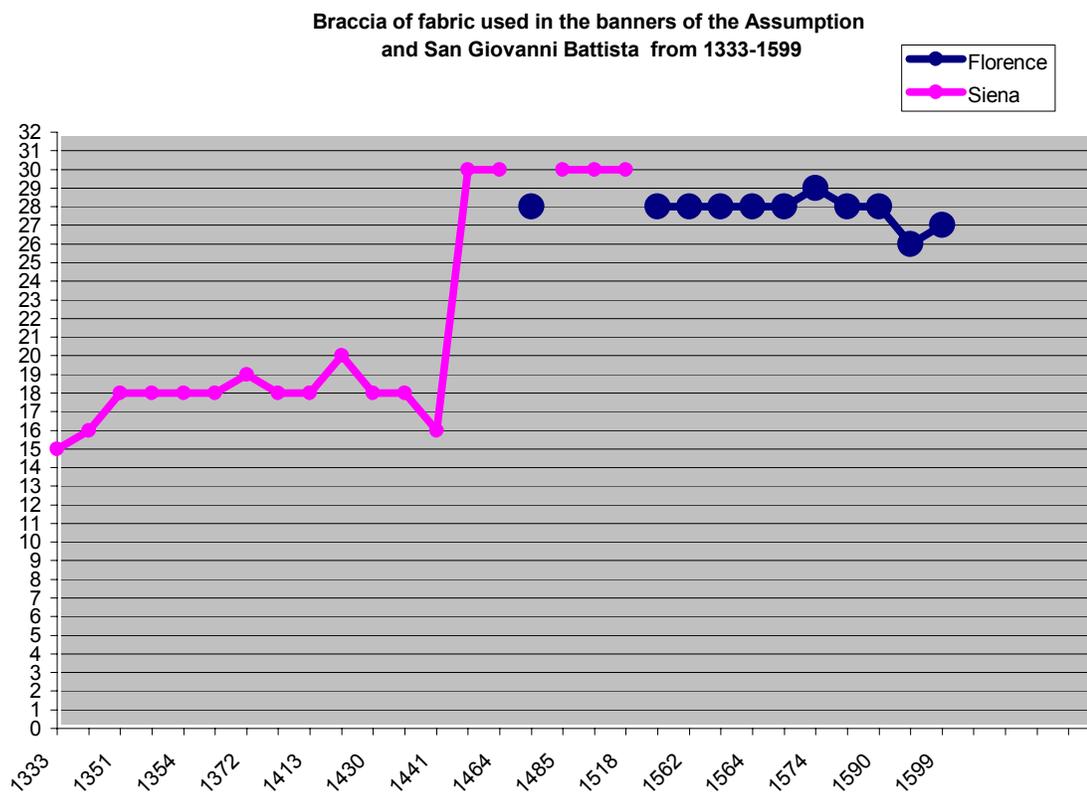


Fig. 100: Braccia of primary fabric used in the banners of the Assumption (Siena) and San Giovanni Battista (Florence) from 1333-1599.

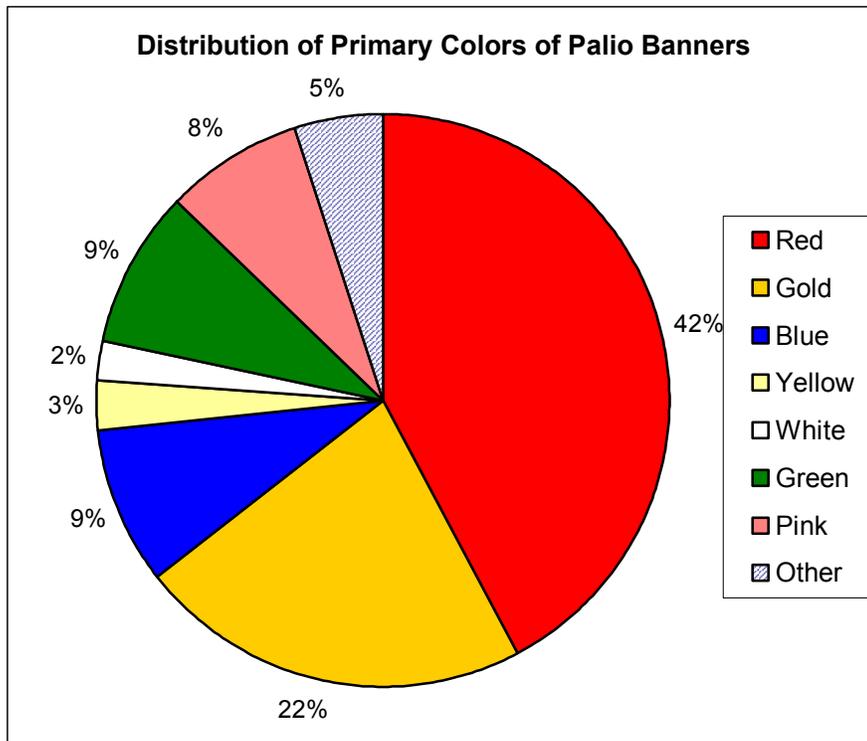


Fig. 101: Distribution of Primary Colors of Palio Banners.

Primary Colors of Palio of San Giovanni, Florence

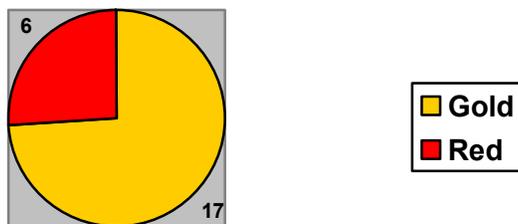


Fig. 102: Primary Colors of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista, Florence.

Primary Colors of Palio of Assumption, Siena

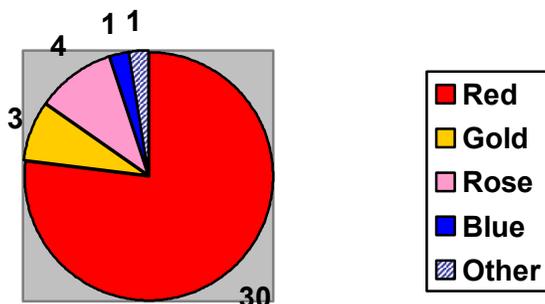


Fig. 103: Primary Colors of Palio of the Assumption, Siena.

Primary Colors for Palio of San Giorgio (Horse Race), Ferrara

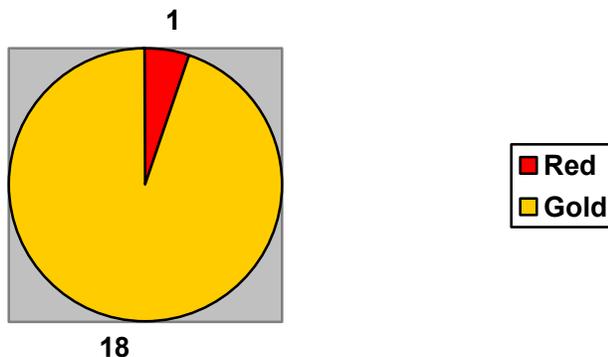


Fig. 104: Primary Colors for Palio of San Giorgio (Horse Race), Ferrara.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 105: *Cosimo il Vecchio de' Medici*, Jacopo Pontormo, c. 1518-1519, Oil on panel, Uffizi Museum, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 106: Scarlet fabric upheld by angels, *Coronation of the Virgin*, Paolo Veneziano, Tempera on panel, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 107: Gold cloth covering throne, *Maestà*, Duccio di Boninsegna, c. 1308-1311, Tempera and gold leaf on panel, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena.

Distribution of Colors for Palio Banners for Horse Races (including Palio dei Cocchi)

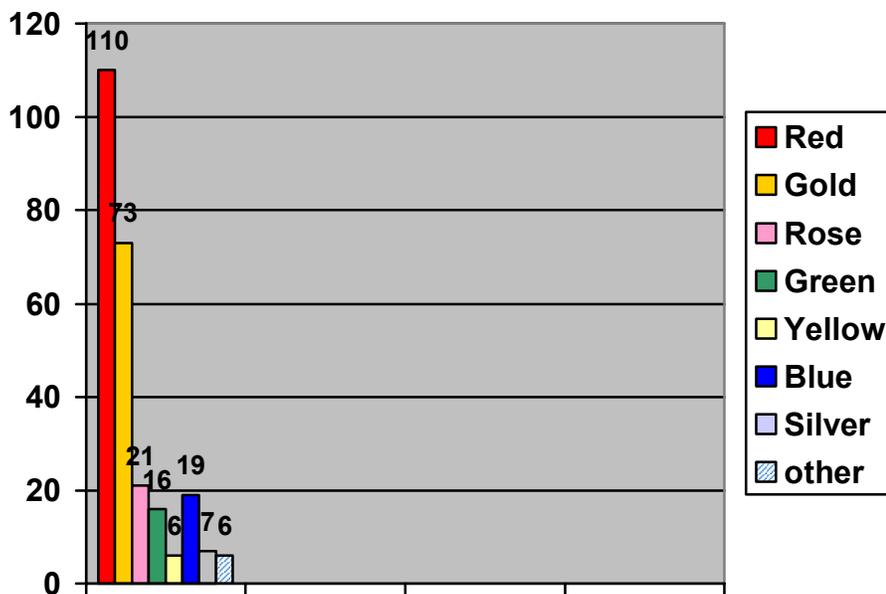


Fig. 108: Distribution of Colors for Palio Banners for Horse Races (including Palio dei Cocchi).

Distribution of Color for Palio Banners for Foot Races

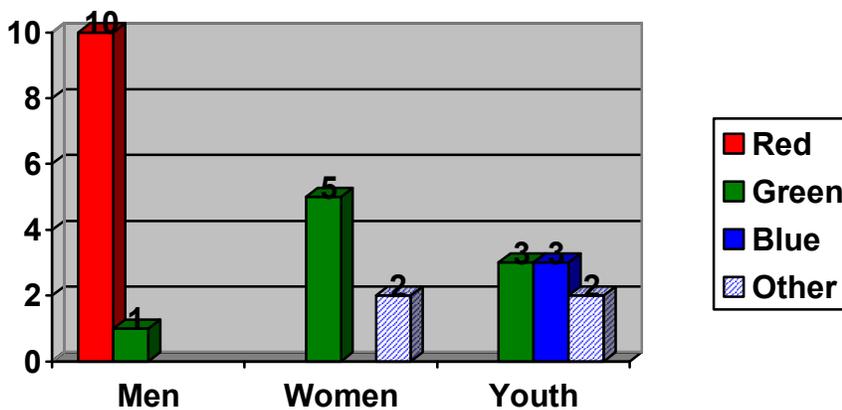


Fig. 109: Distribution of Color for Palio Banners for Foot Races.

Distribution of Banner Colors for Palio Races of Other Animals

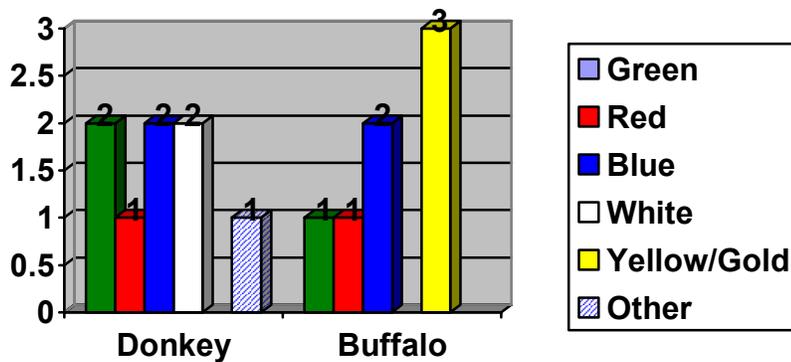


Fig. 110: Distribution of Banner Colors for Palio Races of Other Animals.

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Figs. 111-23: Panels by Jacopo Pontormo for the Florentine Carro of the Zecca.

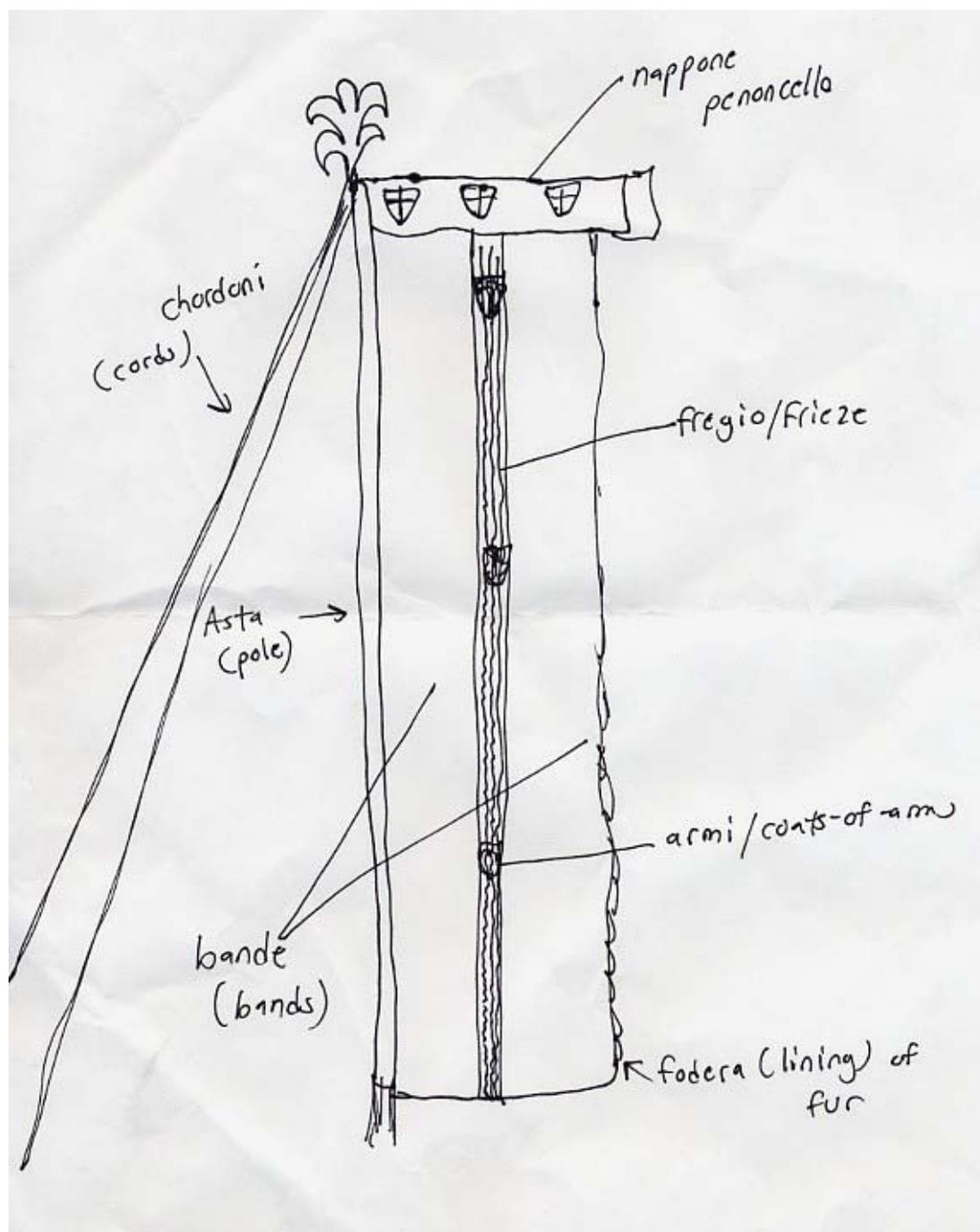


Fig. 124: Parts of the palio banner.



Fig. 125: Reconstruction of the 1424 Palio of the Assumption.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 126: *Balzana* and lion shield, coats-of-arms of Siena, on Palazzo Pubblico, from *San Bernardino Preaching before the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena*, c. 1448, San di Pietro, tempera and gold on wood, Sala Capitolare, Siena Cathedral.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 127: Detail of the palio banner and cart from Uffizi painting.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 128: Detail of Float drawn by swans, Francesco del Cossa, c. 1470s, Palazzo Schifanoia, Ferrara.

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Fig. 129: Birth tray showing *The Triumph of Fame*, Scheggia (Giovanni di Ser Giovanni), 1449, Tempera on panel, Historical Society, New York, no. 1867.5.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 130: Shield of the *balzana* (black-and-white in center), and old and new shields of the Popolo with lion against a red background, "Stemmi," Table 1 from "Gli stemmi senesi antichi e moderni estratti dagli studi del cittadini del Gallaccini del Pecci e d'altri."

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 131: Arms of Ugo family from Borghini, *Delle famiglie fiorentine*, 53.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 132: *Care for the Sick*, c. 1440-1447, Domenico di Bartolo, Fresco, Pellegrinaio, Hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 133: Fur wall covering in bed chamber, Scene of confinement room from a wooden childbirth tray, Masaccio, c. 1427, Tempera on panel, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 134: Fur lining inside baldachin (exterior of baldachin made of fabric of pomegranate pattern), *Madonna del Parto*, Piero della Francesca, c. 1455, Fresco, Santa Maria a Momentana, Monterchi.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 135: *Triumph of Love*, Birth tray, Florentine School, c. 1450-1460, Tempera on panel, Galleria Sabauda, Turin (no. 107).

Number of Vair and Ermine Skins used in the Palio of San Giovanni Battista (Florence) and the Palio of the Assumption (Siena)

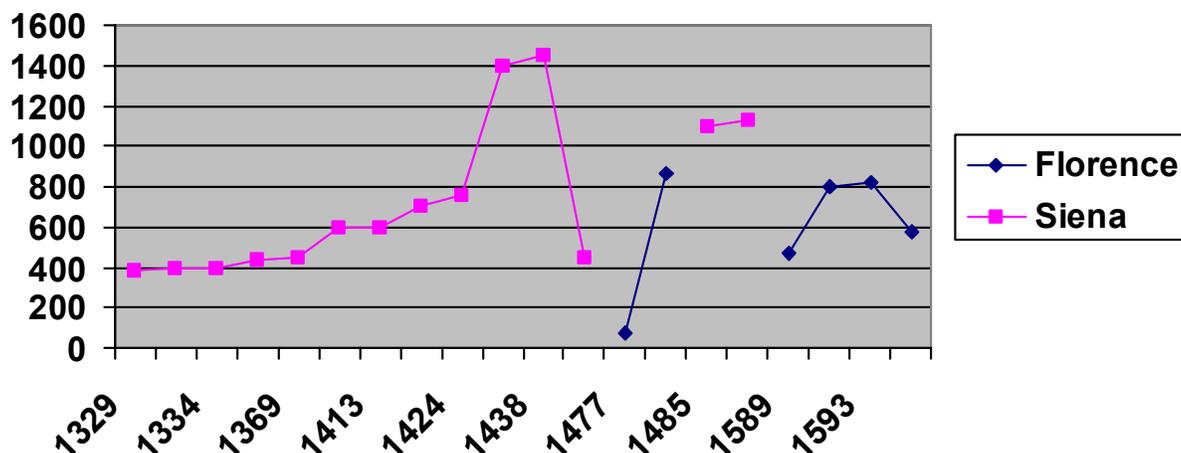


Fig. 136: Table showing number of vair and ermine skins used in the Palio of San Giovanni Battista and the Palio of the Assumption.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 137: *Maestà*, Simone Martini, 1315-1322, Fresco, Sala of the Consiglio Generale, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 138: *Visitation*, Jacopo Pontorno, 1514-1516, Fresco, Cloister, Church of the Santissima Annunziata, Florence.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 139: *Paliotto*, Velvet, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 140: Virgin spreading her cloak over the city of Siena, from cover of *Festa che si fece in Siena a dì XV di aghosto MCVI*, by Simone di Niccolò, 1506, Siena.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 141: Viper standard of Milan and lily standard of Florence, *The Battle of Anghiari*, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 142: Standards decorated with imperial eagle and with dragon, *Battle of Constantine and Maxentius*, Piero della Francesca, c. 1452-1457, Fresco, S. Francesco, Arezzo.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 143: Canvas I, *The Triumphs of Caesar*, Andrea Mantegna, 1482-1492, Royal Collection, St. James' Palace, London.



Fig. 144: *Vexilla* from Antonine relief on Arch of Constantine, Rome.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 145: *Street Décor for the Entry of Christine of Lorraine into Florence: View of the Entrance to Via del Proconsolo* (executed in 1592), etching, Private Collection, New York.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 146: Barb stallion, Morel Favorito, detail from the Sala dei Cavalli, Giulio Romano, c. 1527, Palazzo Te, Mantua.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 147: Roan Barb stallion, Paragon, at lower right, and Machomilia, bay Turkish stallion, middle left, *Horses of the Duke of Newcastle*, Abraham van Diepenbeke, c. 1657-1658.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 148: *Turcho d'Italia*, Filippo Orso, c. 1554, pen and ink on paper, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 149: *Un Turcho* by Orso.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 150: Art Macmurchada, King of Leinster, riding a white Irish Hobby horse, from Harleian Manuscript, 1399.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 151: *Ginetto natural di spagna* by Orso.

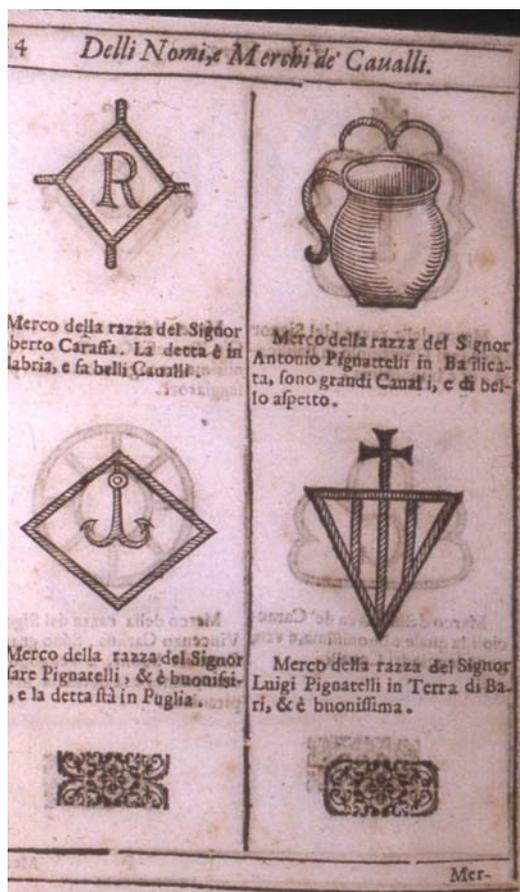


Fig. 152: Brands of horses owned by members of the Pignatelli family in Puglia and Basilicata in Francesco Liberati's *La perfezione del Cavallo* (Rome, 1639), courtesy of the National Sporting Library, Middleburg, Virginia.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 153: *Daino Sauro*, from frontispiece of the *Codice dei palii gonzagheschi*, Silvestro da Lucca and Lauro padovano, c. 1512-1518, manuscript, private collection.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 154: 'F' brand on El Bayo Perla.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 155: Isdormia secondo with jockey.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 156: El Serpentino balzano.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 157: El Turcho de la raza with list of victories in palio races.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 158: The Sala dei Cavalli, Giulio Romano, c. 1527, fresco, Palazzo Te, Mantua.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 159: Battaglia, a barb stallion.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 160: Glorioso, a jennet stallion.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 161: Chestnut jennet stallion in Sala dei Cavalli with brands of the Gonzaga on cheek and flank.

(Image removed for reasons of copyright)

Fig. 162: Detail of palio horses from Uffizi painting.



Fig. 163: The medieval sport of falconry, presented by the Rione of San Damiano during the procession before the Asti palio.



Fig. 164: *Carro* in the procession before the Asti palio.

Appendix I

Partial payments for the Palio of the Assumption, 1424,

Archivio di Stato, Siena, Biccherna 307 (cited by Cecchini 131, ff. 115)

c. 27 A messer vincenti di nanni maestro di legname adi 9 dagosto soldi quaranta quatro li demo conti per la asta avemo per lo paglio di santa maria dagosto prosimo e sono uscita? da Camerlengo? fo. 39 lire II?soldi IIII [payment to Master Vincenzo di Nanni, carpenter, on the 9th of August. of 44 *soldi* for the *asta* of the palio of Santa Maria of August (the Assumption)]

A Renaldo di vanni di salvi? banchiere? ad detto lire ottantasei soldi diciotto li demo per 756 pancie di vaio avemo da lui per lo paglio di santa maria daghosto le quali comprono da lui i signori quatro de quale delibr? per noi lire 80 frate antonio dandrea camarlengo del farlo? esso alui debitore? almemoriale de me scrittore fo. 77 lire 6 soldi 18 demo conto in mano di tonio loro rassier? e sono uscita de Camerlengo fo. 40 lire LXXXVI (86) soldi XVIII (18)

[payment to Renaldo di Vanni di Salvi the Banker? lire 86 soldi 18 for 756 vairs' skins which the 4 *provveditori* bought from him for palio of santa maria of August - Antonio of Andrea Camerlengo owes him 80 *lire*? on page 77; *lire* 6 *soldi* 18 we gave in hand of antonio?]

c.27v A francesco di dino? peliciaro ? ad detto lire sette demo conti, a giorgio? per chucitura ___del paglio di santamaria daghosto e per chose? d vi posero ? e so uscita de Camerlengi fo. 40 lire VII

[payment for 7 *lire* for sewing of something (skins?) of the palio of SM Agosto]

A lorenzo ? d leonardo? depintore a di 21 daghosto lire nove li demo conti per la depentura laste del paglio e per lo leone vista su e per depentura la bandiera del popolo ch si pone a duomo sono uscito da Camerlengi fo 41 lire VIII
(Payment to Lorenzo di Leonardo painter on 21 August of *lire* 9 for painting of the *asta* of the palio and for the lion seen above and for painting banner of the People)

A giachomo di lorenzo famiglio di palazzo di sotto ad 22 daghosto lire quatro li demo conti per detto de quatro di biccherna per sua fadiga di andare? e tornare? da fiorenza per lo panno del paglio a so uscita da Camerlengi fo 41 lire IIII
(payment to employee of palace of 4 *lire* for going to and from Florence to get cloth for palio)

c. 28r

A ciecho di tomasso e fratelli bancheri ad 25 daghosto lire cientoquarantasette soldi sette denari quatro lo demo conti per altrettanti ? ne pagono? in fiorenza a nicholo e chombio di medio? e conpagni per chane cinque di scharlatto? faremo? venir? per lo paglio d santa maria daghosto e sono uscita da Camerlengi fo 41 lire CXVII soldi VII denari 4

(payment on the 25 of August to Ciecho di Tomasso and Brothers Bankers for 147 *lire 7 soldi* for obtaining 5 *canne* of *scharlatto* in Florence from Nicholo e Chombio di medio for palio of SM Agosto)

A pietro di nicholo spenditore de nostri magnificenti signori, ad 27 daghosto lire setecentoottanta soldi quattro per altrettanti ? abbiamo posti debitori? a me memoriale d me scrittore fo 78 equali spesi in piu cose ? per la festa di santamaria daghosto cioe ad 15 del presente ? mese avemone pulizia dalochoncistoro ? per mano di signori Giovanni d signori antonio grenari notte e registrati? con ? a regholatori per mano di signori ? di pavolo turchi lire DCCLXXX soldi IIII
(payment to *festaiuolo* for expenses relating to festival)

c. 28v A Pirasso ? di fienofino e a nicho di lucha depentori adi detto lire vintisei demo a ciascheduno lire 13 conti loro mano so per la dipentura otto penoni di trombe e per quattro penoncelli per li pifari e nachori e per lo schudo delle larme si pose ne la banda del paglio d santamaria daghosto e sono uscita da Camerlenghi fo 42 lire XXVI
[payment to painters of 26 lire total (13 apiece) for painting shield of arms on band of palio banner of Assunta]

fol. 35 A Bartolomeo di ghinuzzo zendadaio ad detto lire trecentonovantuna e quale sono per oncie 41 @ lire 2 denari 6 di taffeta bianca nero ed _____ e per unasta lo eresse e per fattura 8 penoni di trombo e tre di pifari e due a le nachorer e per fattura el paglio e per oncie 13 per 2 braccia di fregio di oro viniziano e per oncie 8 @ lire 3 di chordoni per lo paglio e per oncie 63 per 2 br denari 9 di frangie e cordoni per li sopradetti penoni le quali chose avemo per la festa dela generosa vergine maria di mezzo aghosto prossima ? passata? per le trombe pifari nachorer di palazzo de nostri magnifici signori e per lo paglio de ssa festa e sono posti partitamente chedo ___ al memoriale di me fo 104 lire CCCLXXXI

[payments totaling 391 lire to Bartolomeo di Ghinuzzo Zendadaio for 41 ounces at *lire 2 denari 6* per ounce for white and black taffeta and ??? for an *asta* that he put up and for making of 8 pennants for trumpeters and three for piffers and two for *nachorini* (another type of musician) and for making palio and for 13 ounces for 2? *braccia* of Venetian gold frieze and for 8 ounces for lire 3 per ounce of cords for the palio and for 63 ounces for 2 *braccia* at 9 denari per *braccia* for fringes and cords for the above described pennants, these things we have for the feast of the generous Virgin Mary of the middle of August (next/past?) for the trumpeters, piffers, *nachorini* of the palace of our most magnificent *signori* (Palazzo Pubblico) and for the palio of the holy festival...]

Appendix 2

Chronological table of money spent on palio banners, by city, year, and festival.

City	Year	Festival	<i>Material</i>	Total Cost
Siena	1306	Ambrogio		25 <i>lire</i>
Siena	1310	Assumption		50 <i>lire</i>
Siena	1314	Assumption		50 <i>lire</i>
Siena	1332	Assumption		cost 381 florins 2 <i>lire</i> 0 <i>soldi</i> and 6 <i>denari</i> , and the skins cost 23 gold florins and 42 <i>soldi</i>
Siena	1337	Assumption		150 <i>lire</i> (regulation_
Siena	1347	Assumption	scharlatto	83 florins 50 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1390-1410	San Giovanni	crimson velvet	300 florins
Siena	1413	Assumption	scharlatto/taffeta	40 florins, 203 <i>lire</i> , 3 <i>soldi</i> , 7 <i>denari</i>
Siena	1419	Assumption	rosado/taffeta	375 florins 15 <i>lire</i> 6 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1422	San Giovanni		200 florins 4 <i>denari</i>
Siena	1438	Assumption	rosado	461 <i>lire</i> 12 <i>soldi</i>
Siena	1441	Assumption	crimson velvet	600 <i>lire</i>
Siena	1444	Assumption		*800 <i>lire</i>
Siena	1445	Assumption		*800 <i>lire</i>
Siena	1453	Assumption		825 <i>lire</i>
Siena	1453	Pietro Alessandrino		160 <i>lire</i>
Rome	1456	Carnevale		96 florins for three
Ferrara	late 15 th c.	San Giorgio	panno d'oro	150-200 ducats
Florence	1475	San Giovanni	brocade	250 florins, 210 <i>lire</i> 0 <i>soldi</i> 6 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1477	San Giovanni	velvet	220 florins 299 <i>lire</i> 16 <i>soldi</i> 8 <i>denari</i>
Siena	1481	Assumption	velvet	Total 1066 <i>lire</i> 1 <i>soldo</i> *
Siena	1481	Ambrogio		33 <i>lire</i>
Siena	1481	Annunciation		50 florins
Siena	1481	Pietro Alessandrino	rosado	189 <i>lire</i> * (approx. 158 <i>lire</i> for banner)
Siena	1487	Assumption		850 <i>lire</i> 12 <i>soldi</i>
Ferrara	1488	San Giorgio	gold brocade	100 ducats

Siena	1489	Assumption		425 <i>lire</i> , 6 <i>soldi</i> , 6 <i>denari</i>
Rome	1492	Carnevale (fights)		200 ducats
Siena	1500	Assumption	crimson velvet	1113 <i>lire</i> 16 <i>soldi</i>
Siena	1515	Assumption		800 florins
Siena	1515	Maddalena		360 <i>lire</i>
Florence	1516	San Giovanni	gold brocade	630 <i>lire</i> 84 <i>soldi</i> 9 <i>denari</i> *
Siena	1518	Assumption	crimson velvet	1200 <i>lire</i>
Siena	1545	Ambrogio		200 <i>lire</i> †
Florence	1555	San Vittorio	gold teletta	238 <i>lire</i>
Florence	1559	San Giovanni	brocade	1989 <i>lire</i> 4 <i>soldi</i> 10 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1559	San Bernaba	red cloth	183 <i>lire</i> 4 <i>soldi</i> 7 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1559	San Vittorio	red velvet	597 <i>lire</i> 6 <i>soldi</i> 3 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1559	Rotta/Marciano	gold teletta	570 <i>lire</i> 13 <i>soldi</i> 9 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1559	Santa Reparata	red cloth	171 <i>lire</i> 14 <i>soldi</i> 7 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1559	Sant'Anna	red cloth	171 <i>lire</i> 14 <i>soldi</i> 7 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1562	San Bernaba	panno luchesino	25 florins 6 <i>lire</i> 1 <i>soldo</i> 3 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1562	San Giovanni	brocade	304 florins 5 <i>lire</i> 25 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1562	San Vittorio	red velvet	91 florins 2 <i>lire</i> 7 <i>soldi</i> 6 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1562	Rotta/Marciano	teletta	78 florins 4 <i>lire</i> 15 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1562	Sant'Anna	panno luchesino	24 florins 3 <i>lire</i> 13 <i>soldi</i> 7 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1562	Santa Reparata	panno luchesino	24 florins 3 <i>lire</i> 13 <i>soldi</i> 7 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1563	San Bernaba	panno luchesino	181 <i>lire</i> 10 <i>soldi</i> 10 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1563	San Giovanni	brocade	578 <i>lire</i> 1 <i>soldo</i> 6 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1563	Rotta/Marciano	teletta	518 <i>lire</i> 5 <i>soldi</i> 6 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1563	Sant'Anna	panno luchesino	178 <i>lire</i> 11 <i>soldi</i> 10 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1563	Santa Reparata	panno luchesino	178 <i>lire</i> 11 <i>soldi</i> 10

				<i>denari</i>
Florence	1563	Palio of Cocchi	red damask	453 <i>lire</i> 1 <i>soldo</i>
Florence	1564	San Giovanni	brocade	298 florins 5 <i>lire</i> 19 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1564	Palio of Cocchi	red damask	76 florins 0 <i>lire</i> 17 <i>soldi</i> 8 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1564	San Bernaba	panno luchesino	207 florins 25 <i>lire</i> 5 <i>soldi</i> 20 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1564	San Vittorio	red velvet	82 florins 3 1 <i>lire</i> 13 <i>soldi</i> 6 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1564	Rotta/Marciano	gold teletta	22 florins
Florence	1564	Santa Reparata	panno luchesino	24 florins 5 <i>lire</i> 0 <i>soldi</i> 20 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1564	Sant'Anna	panno luchesino	24 florins 5 <i>lire</i> 0 <i>soldi</i> 10 <i>denari</i>
Siena	1566	Assumption		110 <i>lire</i> †
Florence	1570	San Giovanni	brocade	291 florins 1 <i>lire</i> 17 <i>soldi</i> 10 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1570	San Bernaba	panno luchesino	24 florins 4 <i>lire</i> 18 <i>soldi</i> 4 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1570	Palio dei Cocchi	crimson damask	51 florins 3 <i>lire</i> 17 <i>soldi</i> 1 <i>denaro</i>
Florence	1570	San Vittorio	crimson velvet	85 florins 2 <i>lire</i> 10 <i>soldi</i> 10 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1570	Sant'Anna	panno luchesino	22 florins 3 <i>lire</i> 14 <i>soldi</i> 7 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1570	Rotta/Marciano	yellow teletta	8 florins 4 <i>lire</i> 18 <i>soldi</i> 9 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1570	Santa Reparata	panno luchesino	20 florins 5 <i>lire</i> 7 <i>soldi</i> 1 <i>denaro</i>
Siena	1573	Assumption		130 <i>lire</i>
Florence	1576	Alo	red velvet	50 ducats
Florence	1583	San Vittorio		113 florins 0 <i>lire</i> 6 <i>soldi</i> 10 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1583	Rotta/Marciano		80 florins 6 <i>lire</i> 13 <i>soldi</i> 4 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1583	San Bernaba		26 florins 5 <i>lire</i> 10 <i>soldi</i> 1 <i>denaro</i>
Florence	1583	Sant'Anna		25 florins 1 1 <i>lire</i> 15 <i>soldi</i> 10 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1589	San Giovanni	brocade	347 florins 6 <i>lire</i> 1 <i>soldo</i> 10 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1589	Palio dei Cocchi	red damask	58. florins 5 <i>lire</i> 15 <i>soldi</i> 8 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1589	San Vittorio	crimson velvet	107 florins 4 <i>lire</i> 3

				<i>soldi 4 denari</i>
Florence	1589	Rotta/Marciano	yellow teletta	77 florins 6 lire 5 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1589	Sant'Anna	panno luchesino	24 florins 6 lire 4 <i>soldi 2 denari</i>
Florence	1589	San Bernaba	panno luchesino	25 florins 2 lire 19 <i>soldi 2 denari</i>
Florence	1589	Santa Reparata	panno luchesino	24 florins 6 lire 4 <i>soldi 2 denari</i>
Florence	1590	Assumption	tela	130 <i>scudi</i>
Florence	1590	San Giovanni	brocade	326 florins 0 lire 15 <i>soldi 6 denari</i>
Florence	1590	Palio dei Cocchi	red damask	55 florins 1 lire 18 <i>soldi 4 denari</i>
Florence	1590	San Vittorio	crimson velvet	100 florins 6 lire 18 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1590	Rotta/Marciano	yellow teletta	77 florins 6 lire 6 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1590	San Bernaba	panno luchesino	3 florins 1 lire 2 <i>soldi</i> 6 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1593	San Bernaba	panno luchesino	24 florins 1 lire 15 <i>soldi 10 denari</i>
Florence	1593	Santa Reparata	panno luchesino	22 florins 4 lire 12 <i>soldi 6 denari</i>
Florence	1593	San Giovanni	panno luchesino	333 florins 1 lire 16 <i>soldi 10 denari</i>
Florence	1593	Palio dei Cocchi	red damask	57 florins 0 lire 5 <i>soldi 4 denari</i>
Florence	1593	Palio of San Vittorio	red velvet	110 florins 0 lire 7 <i>soldi 6 denari</i>
Florence	1593	Rotta	teletta	77 florins 5 lire 16 <i>soldi 4 denari</i>
Florence	1593	Sant'Anna		1 florin 3 lire 1 <i>soldo</i> 6 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1597	San Giovanni		340 (<i>scudi?/florins?</i>) 3 lire 26 <i>soldi 16 denari</i>
Florence	1597	San Bernaba		25 (<i>scudi/florins?</i>) 1 lira 19 <i>soldi 7 denari</i>
Florence	1597	Sant'Anna		24 (<i>scudi/florins?</i>) 5 lire 6 <i>soldi 4 denari</i>
Florence	1597	San Vittorio		114(<i>scudi?/florins?</i>) 5 lire 13 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1597	Rotta/Marciano		50 (<i>scudi?/florins?</i>) 0 lire 12 <i>soldi 6 denari</i>
Florence	1597	Santa Reparata		21 (<i>scudi?/florins?</i>) 6 lire 28 <i>soldi 4 denari</i>

Florence	1597	Palio of Judges/Podesta		4 (<i>scudi</i> ?/florins?) 2 <i>lire</i> 12 <i>soldi</i>
Siena	1597	Assumption (for race)		130 <i>scudi</i>
Siena	1597	Assumption (for Duomo)	crimson velvet	120 <i>scudi</i>
Siena	1598	Assumption (for Duomo)	crimson velvet	125 <i>scudi</i>
Florence	1599	San Giovanni	red velvet	*339 (<i>scudi</i> ?/florins?) 4 <i>lire</i> 8 <i>soldi</i> 1 <i>denaro</i>
Florence	1599	Palio dei Cocchi	crimson damask	74 florins (<i>scudi</i> ?), <i>lire</i> 4 9 <i>soldi</i>
Florence	1599	San Vittorio	crimson velvet	116 florins (<i>scudi</i> ?) 4 <i>lire</i> 14 <i>soldi</i> 8 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1599	San Bernaba	crimson cloth	25 florins (<i>scudi</i> ?) 1 <i>lire</i> 13 <i>soldi</i> 4 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1599	Rotta/Marciano	yellow teletta	60 florins (<i>scudi</i> ?) 2 <i>lire</i> 20 <i>soldi</i>
Siena	1599	Assumption (for Duomo)	crimson velvet	130 <i>scudi</i>
Siena	1600	Assumption (for Duomo)	crimson velvet	130 <i>scudi</i>
Siena	1601	Assumption	crimson velvet	140 <i>scudi</i>
Siena	1603	Assumption (for Duomo)	crimson velvet	130 <i>lire</i> (<i>scudi</i> ?)
Siena	1604	Assumption (for Duomo)	crimson velvet	130 <i>lire</i> (<i>scudi</i> ?)
Florence	1604	San Giovanni		342 florins 2 <i>lire</i> 18 <i>soldi</i> 2 <i>denari</i> *
Florence	1604	Palio dei Cocchi		64 florins 0 <i>lire</i> 13 <i>soldi</i> 4 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1604	Sant'Anna	panno luchesino	29 florins 1 <i>lire</i> 3 <i>soldi</i> 4 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1604	San Bernaba	panno luchesino	29 florins 5 <i>lire</i> 3 <i>soldi</i> 4 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1604	Santa Reparata	panno luchesino	29 florins 0 <i>lire</i> 9 <i>soldi</i> 7 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1604	San Vittorio	crimson velvet	114 florins 6 <i>lire</i> 16 <i>soldi</i> 8 <i>denari</i>
Florence	1604	Rotta	yellow teletta	80 florins 5 <i>lire</i> 3 <i>soldi</i> 4 <i>denari</i>

* includes some other festival expenses

† for restoration of banner

Glossary of Terms

Word	Translation	Definition
<i>alessandrino.</i>	Blue.	Alexandrian blue, often used as a color for silk/silk velvet cloth of palio banners.
<i>alfieri.</i>	Banner-carriers.	Costumed banner-carriers who perform choreographed formations during processions, tossing banners into the air.
<i>alla lunga.</i>	At length.	Refers to a palio race run through the streets of the city, starting at one point and finishing in another.
<i>alla tonda.</i>	In the round.	Refers to a palio race that takes place in circular or oval space.
<i>allucciotature.</i>		A technique used on velvet in which loops of gold thread give a shimmering effect to the cloth's surface. Also known as <i>bouclè</i> .
<i>armi.</i>	Arms.	Coats-of-arms, affixed or painted upon the vertical and horizontal bands of the palio.
<i>asinata.</i>	Donkey race.	A palio race run with donkeys.
<i>asta.</i>	Pole.	A tall, vertical pole, made of wood and gilded and/or painted, to which the palio banner was affixed.
<i>auroserici.</i>	Gold silk fabrics.	Gold silk fabrics made during the Renaissance. Florence specialized in the manufacture of <i>auroserici</i> .
<i>balzana.</i>		The black and white coat-of-arms, symbol of the city of Siena.
<i>bande.</i>	Bands.	The two or more vertical sections of the palio banner, divided by the frieze.
<i>banderaio or banditore.</i>	Banner-maker.	A craftsman specializing in the making of banners and flags.

<u>Barbero.</u>	Barb.	A generic term used to signify a race horse competing in the palio, or a breed of horse originating in North Africa.
<u>barrelle.</u>	Litters.	Wooden litters or supports used to carry the large wax <i>ceri</i> in processions.
<u>batteria.</u>	Heat.	A preliminary race used to determine which horses should run in the final palio race. For the Asti palio, the top three finishers from the three heats compete in the final race.
<u>battiloro.</u>	Gold-beater.	A craftsman specializing in making objects from beaten gold and gold leaf.
<u>bouclè.</u>	Curled.	A technique used on velvet in which loops of gold thread give a shimmering effect to the cloth's surface. Also known as <i>allucciotature</i> .
<u>braccia.</u>	Braccio (literally, "arm," plural form).	A unit of measurement, approximately the length of a man's arm. One <i>braccio</i> in Florence equaled 58.36 cm.
<u>broccatello.</u>		A silk fabric similar to brocade, except that the supplementary weave creating the design is usually made of a less expensive fiber, such as linen.
<u>broccato.</u>	Brocade.	A type of luxury silk fabric in which the design is created using a secondary weave against the background weave. Usually the finished design is visible only on one side of the fabric.
<u>bufalata.</u>	Buffalo race.	A palio race run with water buffalo.
<u>Carnevale.</u>	Carnival.	A festival or series of festivals held in Christian countries on Fat Tuesday, before the period of Lent preceding Easter.
<u>caccia.</u>	Hunt.	A staged hunt, held in a public space such as a piazza, in which

		participants hunted bulls, buffalo, or wild animals, or where animals fought each other.
<i>carro.</i>	Cart, Chariot, or Float.	A ceremonial vehicle, usually drawn by horses or oxen, which carried the palio banner. A <i>carro</i> could also be any type of float or decorative cart used in processions.
<i>cassone.</i>	Marriage chest.	The marriage chest, commissioned at the time of a marriage, contained many of the items included in the young wife's dowry, including fabric, clothing, and jewelry.
<i>cavallerie.</i>		Chivalric manifestations held during the Renaissance, usually sponsored by a court, which included a dramatic plot and open-air stage sets.
<i>ceri.</i>	Candles.	Large, painted candles presented to a church during a feast day. In Florence, the word <i>ceri</i> also describes colorfully-painted contraptions made of wood or papier-mache, carried in processions. These were often filled with toys for children, and were broken apart.
<i>cerro.</i>	Braid.	A <i>cerro</i> often decorated the palio banner.
<i>cielo.</i>	"Heaven," canopy.	A large canopy spread over outdoor spaces for festivals.
<i>compagnia.</i>	Militia.	A confraternity or militia. In Siena, the <i>compagnie</i> aided the city in times of war, and established their own oratories and meeting places within their geographical neighborhoods.
<i>comune.</i>	City.	Term used for the Renaissance city and its governing body.
<i>contrada</i> or <i>contrade</i> (plural).	Contrada.	One of the seventeenth neighborhood organizations in Siena, which

		participate in the modern palio.
<i>cordoni.</i>	Cords.	Cords used to help stabilize the palio banner and control its movement.
<i>cucitura.</i>	Sewing.	Sewing.
<i>damasco.</i>	Damask.	Silk cloth, originally from Damascus in Syria, woven on both sides so that the design is reversible.
<i>decumanus.</i>		The main east-west artery of a Roman grid-plan city.
<i>denari.</i>	Denaro (plural).	From Arabic <i>dinar</i> . The smallest denomination of currency in Renaissance Italy. Twelve <i>denari</i> equaled one <i>soldo</i> .
<i>dipentore.</i>	Painter.	Painter.
<i>drappo.</i>	Banner/cloth.	In Siena, the word <i>drappo</i> is used interchangeably with <i>palio</i> in reference to the palio banner.
<i>ducati.</i>	Ducat (plural).	Type of currency used in many cities throughout Italy during the Renaissance.
<i>edifizi.</i>	Floats.	In Florence, the word <i>edifizi</i> describes colorfully-painted contraptions made of wood or papier-mache, carried in processions. These were often filled with toys for children, and were broken apart. <i>Edifizi</i> could also signify floats made by the confraternities.
<i>ermisino.</i>	Ermisine.	A heavy silk fabric.
<i>fantino.</i>	Jockey.	Rider in the palio race.
<i>festaiuoli.</i>	Festival organizer.	Officials appointed by city governments to organize feast days and palio races.
<i>fodera.</i>	Lining.	The lining of the palio banner, usually made of vair, ermine, or taffeta.

<i>filato.</i>	Metallic thread.	Thread, usually of gold, used to embroider fabrics.
<i>fiorini.</i>	Florin (plural).	Gold coin minted in Florence and used for commerce throughout Europe. The value of the <i>fiorino</i> was fluctuating and not constant.
<i>fregio.</i>	Frieze.	The central vertical section of the palio banner, often made of gold thread, onto which coats-of-arms were affixed.
<i>giglio.</i>	Lily.	The symbol of Florence. A sculpted <i>giglio</i> upon a pole accompanied the cart of the Palio of San Giovanni Battista.
<i>giostra.</i>	Joust.	An equestrian game, originating in the Middle Ages, in which knights on horseback fought each other.
<i>gonfaloni.</i>	Wards.	The neighborhoods of Florence.
<i>insignia.</i>	Ensign.	The flag carried by the <i>contrade</i> in processions, emblazoned with their symbol.
<i>lampasso.</i>	Lampas.	A silk fabric made of many weaves bound together. Originating in Lucca, some payment documents refer to lampas as <i>panno Lucchesino</i> (Luccan cloth).
<i>lire.</i>	Lira (plural).	Type of currency used throughout Italy during the Renaissance. One <i>lira</i> equaled twenty <i>soldi</i> .
<i>lupa.</i>	She-wolf.	The legendary wolf who nursed the twins, Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome. Traditionally a symbol of the city of Rome, Siena also adopted the <i>lupa</i> as a symbol due to the belief that the city had been founded by Remus' son, Senus.
<i>maestri di legname.</i>	Carpenter.	Carpenter.

<i>macchine.</i>	Float.	Floats created for processions; in particular, the large wooden animals made by the Sienese <i>contrade</i> .
<i>masgalano.</i>	Tray.	From the Spanish <i>mas galano</i> (most gallant), these silver trays have been awarded since the late sixteenth century to the <i>contrada</i> that has the most splendid contingent in processions.
<i>mortaretto.</i>	Gunpowder.	Gunpowder ignited to signal the start of a palio race.
<i>mossa.</i>	Start.	The beginning or start of a palio race, usually marked by the ringing of a bell or sounding of a mortar.
<i>mostra.</i>	Display.	Shops' displaying of wares during the day following a feast day.
<i>nappone.</i>	Big ribbon.	A horizontal band of fabric at the top of the palio banner, also known as the <i>penoncello</i> .
<i>nappe.</i>	Ribbons.	Silk ribbons used to decorate the palio banner and affix it to the <i>asta</i> .
<i>nugole.</i>	"Clouds."	Term used to describe the floats, or <i>edifizi</i> , of the confraternities used in processions. This term derived from the cotton wool (<i>bambagia</i>) used to make the clouds which decorated the floats.
<i>offerta.</i>	Offering.	Ceremony of offering candles, banners, and other tributes to a church or cathedral.
<i>oncia.</i>	Ounce.	Unit of measurement for weight.
<i>palio.</i>	Palio.	From the Latin <i>pallium</i> , meaning cloth. <i>Palio</i> had two meanings: it signified the silk banner awarded as a prize for a race or competition, or the race/competition itself.

<i>Palio degli Asini or Palio dei Somari.</i>	Palio of the Donkeys.	Palio race run with donkeys.
<i>Palio delle Bufale.</i>	Palio of the Buffalo.	Palio race run with water buffalo.
<i>Palio dei Cocchi or Carri</i>	Palio of the Coaches or Carriages	Chariot race held in Florence, beginning in 1563, around two obelisks in Piazza Santa Maria Novella. The race was run on the eve of the Feast of San Giovanni Battista.
<i>Palio delle Donne, Ebrei, Fanciulli/Fanciulle, Meretrici, Uomini.</i>	Foot races (for men, Jews, boys/girls, prostitutes, and men).	Foot races for people, divided by age and sex, held for feast days in conjunction with horse and animal races.
<i>panno.</i>	Cloth.	Often used as a generic term for any type of cloth.
<i>pellicciaio.</i>	Furrier.	Furrier or fur-seller.
<i>penoncello.</i>	Little pennant.	A horizontal band of fabric at the top of the palio banner, also known as the <i>nappone</i> .
<i>potenze.</i>		Neighborhood organizations of craftsmen and merchants in Florence, who participated in city festivals and set up “courts” upon platforms for viewing the palio races.
<i>prova.</i>	Trial.	One of the trial races leading up to the main palio race.
<i>provveditori.</i>	Organizers/accountants.	Officials appointed by city governments to organize feast days and palio races. Also refers to the four officials presiding over the Sienese Biccherna, or finance office.
<i>quarro.</i>		A unit of measurement smaller than a <i>braccio</i> (not sure of equivalent).
<i>raso.</i>	Satin.	A silk cloth originating in Arras, a

		center of Flemish textile production.
<i>raso lionato.</i>	Lyonese satin.	Satin originating in Lyons, France.
<i>rena.</i>	Sand.	Sand put down in the streets in preparation for the palio race.
<i>rione</i> or <i>rioni</i> (plural).	Neighborhood.	Twenty-one <i>rioni</i> , neighborhood groups, compete in the Palio of Asti.
<i>rosado.</i>	Rose silk.	Rose silk fabric used in the making of palio banners.
<i>saltimbanco.</i>	Acrobat.	An acrobat, jester, or entertainer hired by the city to entertain crowds during feast days.
<i>sciamito.</i>	Samite.	A type of cloth woven in Lucca in the thirteenth century.
<i>scharlatto</i> or <i>scarlatto.</i>	Scarlet.	Scarlet silk cloth used for palio banners.
<i>schudo</i> or <i>scudo.</i>	Shield.	Coat-of-arms.
<i>scudi.</i>	Scudo (plural).	Currency used in the sixteenth century in the Granduchy of Florence.
<i>seta.</i>	Silk.	A strong, flexible fiber made by the silkworm (<i>bombyx mori</i>), or the cloth made from this fiber.
<i>setaiuolo.</i>	Silk-worker or merchant.	The manufacturer and/or merchant of silk fabrics.
<i>soldi.</i>	Soldo (plural).	From the Latin, <i>solidus</i> . Type of currency used throughout Italy during the Renaissance. Twenty <i>soldi</i> equaled one <i>lira</i> . One <i>soldo</i> equaled twelve <i>denari</i> .
<i>spiritelli.</i>	Stilt walkers.	People in costume who walked upon stilts during processions.
<i>stemmi.</i>	Coats-of-arms.	Coats-of-arms or devices. Synonymous with <i>armi</i> .

<i>taffetà.</i>	Taffeta.	Silk cloth of the simplest weave, of two warp and two weft threads.
<i>teletta.</i>		Teletta was characterized by a supplemental weave of gold and silver upon a taffeta base.
<i>terzi.</i>	“Thirds.”	The city of Siena is divided into three geographical sections, called Città, San Martino, and Camollia.
<i>tinozza.</i>	Tub.	A large, hollow structure made in the form of a symbolic animal, used by the Sieneese contrade as a shelter during bull fights in the Piazza del Campo. Also known as <i>macchine</i> .
<i>trionfo.</i>	Triumph.	A staged triumphal entry into a city. Also used to describe a float or cart used in such a festival or in a procession of a feast day.
<i>Turcho</i> or <i>Turco.</i>	Turkish horse	A breed or type of horse descended in part from Arabian stock, of Turkish origin. Turkish horses were well-suited for light cavalry and also racing.
<u><i>Ubino.</i></u>	Hobby	A small, sprinting horse bred in Ireland and exported to Italy for racing.
<u><i>vaio.</i></u>	Vair.	The gray and white pelt of the Siberian squirrel, used to line clothing and wall hangings.
<u><i>vairaiò.</i></u>	Vair-seller.	Furrier specializing in the sale of luxury furs, such as vair (squirrel skins).
<i>velluto.</i>	Velvet.	A type of silk fabric, in which the warp (horizontal) threads are looped over metal rods to form the luxuriant pile.
<i>velluto aricciato</i> or <i>arizato.</i>	Curly velvet.	A type of velvet in which the loops of the pile threads are not cut. The technique of making loops from gold or metallic thread is referred to as <i>bouclè</i> or <i>allucciotature</i> .

<i>velluto alto-basso.</i>	“High and low” velvet.	<i>Alto-basso</i> is a labor-intensive velvet in which the pile is cut to varying lengths, creating a sculpted effect on the surface of the cloth.
<i>velluto tagliato.</i>	Cut velvet.	The loops of the secondary weave are cut.
<i>vexillum.</i>	Cloth.	Latin term for a military standard kept by Roman armies, consisting of a short length of cloth atop a pole.
<u><i>Zannetta or Ginetta.</i></u>	Jennet.	A breed of horse, originating in Spain, used primarily as a riding mount for equitation, ceremony, or war, but also as a race horse.
<u><i>Zecca.</i></u>	Mint.	The Florentine mint.
<u><i>zendadaio.</i></u>	sendal-seller.	A merchant/craftsmen specializing in the sale of cloth.

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