



EARLY MODERN HISTORY: SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Oswaldo Raggio

FEUDS AND STATE  
FORMATION, 1550–1700

The Backcountry of  
the Republic of Genoa

GENERAL EDITORS: RAB HOUSTON AND EDWARD MUIR



# Early Modern History: Society and Culture

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Oswaldo Raggio

# Feuds and State Formation, 1550–1700

The Backcountry of the Republic of Genoa

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Cover illustration: Perseus turning Phineas and his Followers to Stone by Luca Giordano (1634–1705), oil on canvas, c.1680–85. © IanDagnall Computing / Alamy Stock Photo

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*For Rosasilvia*

*Though he was thus sequestered, and like the other landed gentlemen of Scotland, stripped by the late Act of Parliament of legal powers, he still exercised a patriarchal justice in his clan.*

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Kidnapped*, chap. 23, “Cluny’s cage”

## PREFACE

Writing a new preface after twenty-seven years is a difficult and perhaps narcissistic exercise. During the summer when I submitted the typescript to my publisher, my daughter (to whom I had dedicated the book) was born, and now Rosasilvia, after completing a degree in chemistry, is finishing a doctorate in materials science and engineering (nanostructured, polymeric, and composite materials). Hers is a new intellectual world, far from my humanities.

The cultural climate of that summer was that of the 1980s, of experimentation and risk-taking, which sometimes took shape in the form of new scholarly approaches to research. From a historiographic perspective, these were the years when microhistory took off. This was a method that was destined to be met with open hostility in the world of Italian academics. Interest in anthropology and the social sciences, or in themes that had hitherto been ignored, was considered extravagant by a great many Italian historians. It might be that the experimental attitude of the microhistorians also uncovered a new political sensibility, through the idea of subverting a hierarchy of relevance or a certain kind of historiographic common sense.

The site of discussion and experimentation for this new historiographic practice was the journal *Quaderni storici*, and for some years this new approach was developed as a collective project within the journal.<sup>1</sup> I participated in a meeting of the editorial board of *Quaderni storici* for the first time in Genoa in 1982, after having spent two years in Paris studying

<sup>1</sup> E. Grendi, "Ripensare la microstoria?" *Quaderni storici* 86 (1994): 539–49.



Napoleonic-era investigations of local society for a research project that I subsequently discontinued. I had read studies of *histoire sérielle*, but also Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Georges Duby, Witold Kula, Norbert Elias, Natalie Zemon Davis, and Carlo Ginzburg (*The Night Battles*). As I reflect from a distance, it is clear that these books were works of history, methodology, and social theory, but at the time I was only aware of this in a confused kind of way.

In 1977 I had published an article from my master's thesis in an issue of *Miscellanea Storica Ligure* that was edited by Edoardo Grendi and entitled "Studi di micro-analisi storica [Studies of historical micro-analysis]," but only later did I understand that this issue of a local history journal (which included works by young students of Giovanni Levi) had been a small piece serving in the construction of a new paradigm. Thereafter I began my doctoral thesis, working in a number of different archives and reading deeply in the literatures of political anthropology and the anthropology of complex societies. At the European University Institute I was able to present and discuss the thesis with a committee whose members included the anthropologist John Davis.<sup>2</sup> I had discovered the lessons of social anthropology through the filter of Edoardo Grendi.<sup>3</sup> I had also read Pierre Clastres,<sup>4</sup> but the society that I was studying was stratified and inequalitarian. If I were rewriting the book today, I might engage with James Scott,<sup>5</sup> and perhaps above all I would try to endow the work with a broader and more profound perspective: such concern is prompted by more recent reading in history and archaeology.<sup>6</sup> I would also deepen the investigation of the production/construction of the historical documentation, and the extraordinary density of the sources. These must be seen as the registration, attestation, claiming, and certification of rights and privileges, but also as instruments that transformed the reality of facts, events, and social

<sup>2</sup> J. Davis, *People of the Mediterranean: An Essay in Comparative Social Anthropology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> *L'antropologia economica*, ed. E. Grendi (Turin: Einaudi, 1972); E. Grendi, *Polanyi. Dall'antropologia economica alla microanalisi storica* (Milan: Etas libri, 1978).

<sup>4</sup> P. Clastres, *La Société contre l'État* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1974).

<sup>5</sup> J. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), and id., *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> A. Shryock and D. L. Smail, *Deep History. The Architecture of Past and Present* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011); T. Earle, *How Chiefs Come to Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

configurations. I also would integrate the world of things and material culture into the reconstruction of social and political relations, a theme that absorbed my attention during the decade following the book's publication.

During the mid-1980s I helped edit an issue of *Quaderni storici* whose title ("Conflitti locali e idiomi politici [Local conflicts and political language]") and cover image (Luca Giordano, *Perseus Turning Phineas and His Followers to Stone*, 1680, The National Gallery, London—a work probably commissioned by a Genoese patron) I still like very much.<sup>7</sup> As the foreword indicated, the project's goal was "to gather together and highlight the immediate links that existed in every situation between the production of sources, the procedures described in them, and the crucial points of social tension that generated them."<sup>8</sup> But I especially remember working on this issue with Sandro Lombardini and Angelo Torre, in Turin on Corso Einaudi, in a house at Nervi, and in the tiny Ligurian village of Semorile which then became for a few years the editorial address of *Quaderni storici*. As I recall the long hours spent editing, the discussions, the conversation, and the epistolary correspondence, it feels like I am in the midst of a historiographic and autobiographic microhistory. At any rate, those were the research endeavors and discussions that inspired this book, a sociopolitical microhistory that reconstructs the social and political dynamics of a valley, for the series "Microstorie."<sup>9</sup>

Examining a valley evokes the idea of reducing the dimensions of the object of study, and of history on a small scale. Within the workshop of historical microanalysis, the decision to reduce the scale of observation was borrowed from social anthropology, and driven by a desire to locate a space within which different historical phenomena could be reconstructed. These included interpersonal relations, the choices confronting individuals and social groups, and the mechanisms and dynamics of social change. But above all this approach permitted one to experiment with analytical

<sup>7</sup>See M. Helston, *Luca Giordano: Perseus Turning Phineas and His Followers to Stone*, exhibition at The National Gallery, London, 26 June–26 August 1985 (London: National Gallery Publications Department, 1985); P. Boccardo and C. Milano, "I Luca Giordano di Genova. Dai Grillo ai Balbi ai Durazzo," in *Luca Giordano 1634–1705*, ed. N. Spinosa, Catalog of the Exhibition (Naples, 2001), 222–25.

<sup>8</sup>*Quaderni storici* 63 (1986): 681–85.

<sup>9</sup>The series directed by Carlo Ginzburg and Giovanni Levi for the publisher Giulio Einaudi from 1981 to 1991.

methods and to put interpretive categories to the test.<sup>10</sup> The prefix “micro-” has been misunderstood: that which characterized Italian micro-history was not scale of observation, but analytical perspective, detailed empirical exploration, intensive research on primary sources, articulation and verification of new questions, and theoretical awareness. In a theoretical-practical essay published by Grendi in 1977, we read that “social microanalysis is more tied to the character of the evidence under examination than to the size of the social area as such.”<sup>11</sup>

The microscopic research of microhistorians has made sense, and continues to make sense, to the extent that it has been inspired by questions of general interest and by a comprehensive perspective. The research that resulted in this book was an effort to look with fresh eyes at a general problem, indeed a classic and well-trodden one within European and Italian historiography, that of the “formation of the modern state.” The backcountry of the Republic of Genoa was a laboratory for gauging the weight and significance of two elements which, according to Charles Tilly,<sup>12</sup> have characterized the construction of the modern state: judicial administration and fiscal extraction. On the book’s cover I again used a detail from a painting by Luca Giordano; this one is *Allegory of Peace*.<sup>13</sup> The book’s theme was not in fact violence or vendetta, which were always ritualized, but the very complex possibilities of peace/pacification, before and after the Reformation.<sup>14</sup> The instruments employed in this respect were arbitration and compensation. Local elites found models—among practices including predation, brokerage, and Imperial legitimation—in the lords and families of the Imperial fiefs of the Apennines. They negotiated with the Genoese elites and produced priests and notaries. Bandits were also a precious resource for them. The best-defined forms of relation and interaction between center and periphery, within a stratified and discontinuous fabric of fluid jurisdictions and segmented residential

<sup>10</sup> O. Raggio, “Microstoria e microstorie,” in *Storia e politica*, ed. G. Galasso (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2013), 806–11.

<sup>11</sup> E. Grendi, “Micro-analisi e storia sociale,” *Quaderni storici* 35 (1977): 506–20, citation from 519.

<sup>12</sup> *The Formation of National States in Western Europe*, ed. C. Tilly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

<sup>13</sup> Genoa, Galleria Nazionale di Palazzo Spinola. This is one of the great paintings executed by Giordano between 1670 and 1680, on the themes of violence and justice.

<sup>14</sup> J. Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation*, The Birkbeck Lectures (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

topographies, were constituted by spaces in which arbitration intervened. Such spaces were generated by conflicts and managed both by Genoese officials and by local notables and notaries, who translated a whole set of local practices into judicial procedures. In the same way that acts of possession (which were necessarily repetitive) constituted a way of attesting to and confirming jurisdictional claims, they also constituted a shared practice and language. When I wrote the book, I believed that these were general characteristics (with local forms and variations) of early modern European political configurations, and I continue to think so.<sup>15</sup>

The perspective and perhaps the methodological relevance of this study was a result of an intensive, close-up, microscopic investigation. Later I read, with delight, a passage of Marcel Mauss that would have been very useful to me: the deep study of a specific case is sufficient, more than a host of observations or endless deductions, to prove a very general law (“l’analyse d’un cas définis peut, mieux que des observations accumulées ou des déductions sans fin, suffir à prouver une loi d’une extrême généralité”).<sup>16</sup>

I later wrote another book on a very different topic (the love of collecting and aristocratic culture, which seems to be a theme of cultural history), but I followed, or at least tried to follow, a methodological path that I had learned and tried out in the 1980s. Studying the material culture of the Genoese aristocracy, which was situated within a very dense network of commercial ties on a European scale, was also a way of building a bridge between social history and cultural history.<sup>17</sup>

But this book, the one published in 1990, was partly, and more or less successfully, the result of things that I had learned over the course of a decade, through reading and discussions, and in ways that were

<sup>15</sup> The idea of the “composite state” as a historical category was taken partly from Helmut Georg Koenigsberger, who coined the term, and in part I attempted to develop it in more detailed fashion: H. G. Koenigsberger, “*Dominium Regale* or *Dominium Politicum et Regale*,” in id., *Politicians and Virtuosi. Essays in Early Modern History* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1986). My effort to come to terms with the European historiography on the early modern state was published in O. Raggio, “Visto dalla periferia. Formazioni politiche di antico regime e Stato moderno,” in *L’Età moderna. Secoli XVI–XVIII*, vol. 4 of *Storia d’Europa*, ed. M. Aymard (Turin: Einaudi, 1995), 483–527.

<sup>16</sup> M. Mauss, “Essai sur les variations saisonnières des sociétés eskimos. Étude de morphologie sociale” (1904–05), in id., *Sociologie et anthropologie* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), 389–475, citation from 475.

<sup>17</sup> O. Raggio, *Storia di una passione. Cultura aristocratica e collezionismo alla fine dell’ancien régime* (Venice: Marsilio, 2000).

disorienting, surprising, and often unexpected in long years of working in the archives (those cited in the footnotes): the Genoese state archives, but also in places where I was the only person doing research, such as the municipal archives of the town of Rapallo and the notarial archive of Chiavari. There I experienced the curiosity and emotion of being the first person ever to open a bundle or register that had been sealed in the seventeenth century. This itinerary through different archives was the means that enabled me to construct a documentary series, to get outside of the text of political and judicial narratives, and then to get back in. Most of the chapters/themes of the book are the product of empirical research and concrete analysis more than theoretical disquisitions. I used the judicial sources intensively, not only in order to shed light on individuals and social groups that are often excluded from historical accounts, but also to reconstruct the densest possible set of relations between center and periphery and to identify the political idioms, whether different or shared, that emerged from the language of the records themselves. Globally, I explored the different ways by which both concrete material resources and symbolic ones were used to construct social relations and political configurations. Such resources included land and houses, the control of circuits of commercial exchange (grain/olive oil), dowries and matrimonial exchanges, the division of inheritance, surnames, natural and fictive kinship, religious practices and jurisdictional privileges, festivals and dances, enmities and feuds. By studying how resources like these were implicated in the production of social and political relationships, we improve our understanding of our own world, and of worlds different from ours. But this last idea is one that I came to appreciate more clearly a few years after having completed the book.

There is a long historiographic tradition of studying feuds, a topic that has undergone a number of theoretical shifts and been written about in a variety of ways since the 1950s. In 1990, research on feuds in Europe still found a point of reference in the functionalist (?) paradigm of Max Gluckman and in the powerful humanistic idea of “peace in the feud.” His *Past and Present* article of 1955 was dense with significance, perhaps also in the context of the Cold War.<sup>18</sup> After 1990 there was a proliferation of

<sup>18</sup> M. Gluckman, “The Peace in the Feud,” *Past and Present* 8 (1955): 1–14. For a critical discussion, see S. D. White, “‘The Peace in the Feud’ Revisited,” in *Making Early Medieval Societies. Conflict and Belonging in the Latin West, 300–1200*, ed. K. Cooper and C. Leyser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

new studies on the theme of feud and vendetta during the medieval and early modern periods, from *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking* and *Mad Blood Stirring* to *Vengeance in the Middle Ages* and *Making Early Medieval Societies*.<sup>19</sup> It seems to me that many of these works focused increasingly on the aspects of rancor, anger, hatred, blood vengeance, and violence in general. Undoubtedly, violence has a history and a present reality; it is part of our world. Jeppe Büchert Netterstrøm has linked the recent studies back to a new cultural history which is said to have theoretical and methodological roots in narrative history, social constructivism, and microhistory<sup>20</sup>; in fact, these are historiographic approaches and intellectual trends that are quite different from each other. It seems to me that, when one considers as an ensemble the studies published after 1990, one can identify two different interpretive perspectives: feud as a ritual, legal, political, and economic process; and feud as an emotional response, as a hard-wired and uncontrollable impulse. There appear to be ambiguities and risks in this second perspective: are feelings and emotions social and cultural products that result from specific configurations and social interdependencies (as Norbert Elias has taught us), or are they subconscious and abstract, biological universals, and involuntary? In a very original work of research on Marseille, Daniel Lord Smail placed emotions and sentiments at the center of his interpretation of the sources in order to explain conflicts and the use of the court system and the consumption of justice. In Smail's telling, judicial tribunals functioned as theaters for emotional responses.<sup>21</sup> But some of the studies inspired by this "emotional turn," in harmony with certain theories and hypotheses in neuroscience, view feud/vendetta as "compulsion," "somatic gesture," "a form of human behaviour," or even

<sup>19</sup>W. I. Miller, *Bloodtaking and Peacemaking: Feud, Law, and Society in Saga Iceland* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); E. Muir, *Mad Blood Stirring. Vendetta and Factions in Friuli during the Renaissance* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); *Vengeance in the Middle Ages*, ed. S. A. Throop and P. R. Hyams (New York: Routledge, 2010); *Making Early Medieval Societies*. See also S. Carroll, *Blood and Violence in Early Modern France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), which is especially important for his critical use of the sources.

<sup>20</sup>J. B. Netterstrøm, "Introduction: The Study of Feud in Medieval and Early Modern History," in *Feud in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. J. B. Netterstrøm and B. Poulsen (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2007).

<sup>21</sup>D. L. Smail, *The Consumption of Justice: Emotions, Publicity, and Legal Culture in Marseille, 1264–1423* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2013).

“irrational behaviour.”<sup>22</sup> Might this constitute a postconstructivist stance? These interpretive perspectives have typically been rooted in the study of literary and narrative sources, perhaps according to the idea that expressive phenomena reflect, express, or generate social relationships. For this way of seeing things, one could profitably re-examine older scholarship, such as the cultural interpretation of Clifford Geertz or a splendid study by Natalie Zemon Davis on the rituals of violence in sixteenth-century France.<sup>23</sup>

I have not worked on the topic of the feud since the late 1980s, and at the time I did not have a historiographic appreciation for the subject of human emotions. As I re-read my book, I found echoes of emotional life in the sources, but they are individual, contextual (generated by forms of everyday sociability and by the competition for resources), and relational.<sup>24</sup> Emotions were evoked, described rhetorically, and transcribed. The conclusion that I had reached was that the feud (*inimicitia*, or enmity) became a historical document when it was registered and written down by the judicial tribunal.

What I attempted to do was to identify a collection of social practices including local micro-conflicts, feuds, and interventions by central authorities (which resulted in the generation of a body of documentation) and to engage in an exercise of dense contextualization. The theme, as indicated above, was not violence or vendetta, but kinship as a stratified social formation. The kin group's roles were political, economic (involving the management and distribution of resources), and fiscal. It navigated centripetal and centrifugal forces as it mediated communications and exchange with wider society and with the institutions of the Republic of Genoa. In doing so, I also critically discussed the model provided by Charles Tilly, in

<sup>22</sup> See S. D. White, “The Feelings in the Feud: The Emotional Turn in the Study of Medieval Vengeance,” in *Disputing Strategies in Medieval Scandinavia*, ed. K. Esmark, L. Hermanson, H. J. Orning & H. Vogt (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>23</sup> C. Geertz, “The Growth of Culture and the Evolution of Mind” (1962) and “The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man” (1966), in *The Interpretation of Culture* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1973); N. Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence,” in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975).

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, the feelings expressed by Arghenta Consegliero in her mournful testimony-confession (Chap. 9), or the emotions of the widows in the same chapter, note 70. See also the emotional rhetoric in public rituals of pacification and reconciliation ceremonies (Chaps. 9 and 10).

his analysis of state formation in Western Europe, and the neo-Weberian institutionalist approach to the study of state-building and legitimacy.

I don't know if the things that I learned through the studies that I carried out in the 1980s are still useful and serviceable. My research path since then has been fairly erratic, as I have satisfied various areas of curiosity and invaded different disciplinary fields (most recently archaeology, a kind of variation on the theme of my discovery of anthropology thirty years ago), motivated by the conviction that disciplinary boundaries should still be more porous than they are.<sup>25</sup> But I believe that the book's method and its execution are still solid. The historiographic challenge presented by microhistory has had significant reverberations on an international scale, and these continue today. In one of the most recent historiographic turns, microhistory has been linked to global history.<sup>26</sup> Over the course of this period, the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, and forms of scientific exchange and communication, have been radically transformed by new technologies. A new wave of interest in microhistory has led to the creation of an international network of scholars who carry out research in this field.<sup>27</sup> This group finds thematic unity around "the craft of microhistory," but its obvious general theme is simply "the craft of history."

I am very grateful to Matthew Vester, who was able to capture the meaning of my writing from the 1980s, and the subtleties of numerous quotations from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century archival sources. I also wish to thank Edward Muir, who generously promoted the publication of this translation.

Genoa, Italy

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<sup>25</sup> O. Raggio, "On the Condition of Dialogue between Sister Disciplines. Forty-Four Years after Marshall Sahlins' *Stone Age Economics*," *Quaderni storici* 151 (2016): 247–66 (article published as part of a forum, "On History and Archaeology").

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, E. Rothschild, *The Inner Life of Empire. An Eighteenth-Century Story* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011). This discussion remains open, and strikes me as very interesting: F. Trivellato, "Is There a Future for Italian Microhistory in the Age of Global History?" *California Italian Studies*, special issue "Italian Futures," ed. Albert R. Ascoli and Randolph Starn 2, 1 (2011), permalink: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0z94n9hq>; C. Ginzburg, "Microhistory and World History," in *The Cambridge World History*, 6, pt. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 425–55.

<sup>27</sup> Microhistory Network, created in 2007: [www.microhistory.eu](http://www.microhistory.eu).



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Semorile, August 1989

# CONTENTS

<b>1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Local Practices and State Authority: Reflections on the Criminal Policy of the Genoese Oligarchy</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>A Local Universe and Its Horizons</b>	<b>61</b>
1	<i>The Political System of the Communities and the Quartiere of Oltremonte</i>	63
2	<i>The Village of Monleone and the Fopiano Kin Group</i>	75
3	<i>Customs and Political Manipulation</i>	82
<b>4</b>	<b>The Land and Residential Patterns</b>	<b>91</b>
1	<i>Chestnut Trees: The ‘Olive Trees’ of the Backcountry</i>	92
2	<i>Subsistence Economies between Ownership and Possession</i>	96
3	<i>Distribution of Land Ownership and Kin Groups</i>	106
4	<i>Villages and Kin Groups: Settlement Patterns</i>	112
<b>5</b>	<b>In the Fontanabuona: Forms of Social Exchange and Kin Group Relations</b>	<b>121</b>
1	<i>Elements for the Biography of a Leader</i>	122
2	<i>Dowries and Matrimonial Exchanges</i>	135

<b>6</b>	<b>Circuits of Exchange</b>	151
1	<i>Commercial Transit and International Relations</i>	153
2	<i>Olive Oil Production and Commerce as One Form of Integration</i>	155
3	<i>Brokers and Contraband</i>	158
4	<i>Grain Trade: Marketplaces, Brokers, Millers, Bakers, and Retailers</i>	162
5	<i>Kin Groups, Friendship, and Commercial Exchange</i>	169
<b>7</b>	<b>The Construction of Social Reality</b>	173
<b>8</b>	<b>Events and Political Narratives</b>	181
1	<i>Local Conflicts and High Politics</i>	183
2	<i>The Borgo and the Villages: Resources and Social Fields</i>	197
3	<i>The Civil War and the “Diabolical Ancient Factions”</i>	202
4	<i>Between Center and Periphery: Government by Factions and Pacification</i>	211
<b>9</b>	<b>Bandits</b>	215
1	<i>“Companies” and Factions</i>	222
2	<i>Argbenta Consegliero</i>	225
3	<i>Stefano Repetto: An Economy of Banditry?</i>	230
4	<i>Silk Velvet Weavers and the Bandits: The De Martino of Lorsica</i>	235
5	<i>Alessandro Arata: Bandits and Diggers</i>	243
<b>10</b>	<b>Politics within Kin Groups (1565–1665)</b>	249
1	<i>Community, Parish, and Kin Groups</i>	256
2	<i>History of a Feud</i>	260
3	<i>The Principali and the Feud: Kin Group Configurations, Both Vertical and Horizontal</i>	271
	<b>Appendix: Property Distribution within Certain Fontanabuona Kin Groups According to the 1641 Caratata (from Chap. 4)</b>	283
	<b>Index</b>	289

## LIST OF FIGURES

Fig. 3.1	The “community of the <i>borgo</i> ” of Rapallo, the Fontanabuona Valley, and the Ligurian Apennines	64
Fig. 3.2	The <i>Oltremonte</i> district and the political institutions of the “community of the <i>borgo</i> ” of Rapallo	68
Fig. 4.1	Percentages of chestnut and non-chestnut parcels in the Fontanabuona parishes, 1641	93
Fig. 4.2	The stem family of Stefano de Martino	113
Fig. 4.3	The stem family of Stefano Pendola	114
Fig. 4.4	Kin groups and residence in the parishes of Cicagna and Orero in the mid-seventeenth century	116
Fig. 5.1	The family of Galeazzo Arata in the early 1600s	133
Fig. 5.2	A model of reciprocal dowry exchange	139
Fig. 5.3	Marriage exchanges among the Malatesta, Segaro, and De Martino	141
Fig. 6.1	The circuits of exchange between the Ligurian coast and the Po Valley, and between the Fontanabuona and the coastal towns (ca. 1500–1700)	168
Fig. 8.1	The <i>borgo</i> of Chiavari in the late seventeenth century (based on a contemporary ink drawing)	182
Fig. 8.2	Kin groups, leagues and factions in the <i>borgo</i> and vicariate of Chiavari in the mid-sixteenth century	190
Fig. 8.3	Genealogy of the factions, ca. 1200–1700	198
Fig. 8.4	The civil war (1575) factional alignments and their territorial expression	206
Fig. 9.1	Companies and factions in the Fontanabuona, late sixteenth century	224
Fig. 10.1	Feuds and kin group alignments in the Fontanabuona, 1565–1665	250

# LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Bandits in the communities of the Republic of Genoa, 1660–1710	56
Table 3.1	The population of the Fontanabuona, 1535–1646	62
Table 3.2	Payers of the personal tax in Rapallo, ca. 1650	67
Table 3.3	“Expenses” of the community of Rapallo for 1611	84
Table 3.4	Wealth of Fontanabuona <i>principali</i> (1626), official and local estimates	86
Table 4.1	Distribution of parcels according to type of cultivation and estimated worth (in <i>lire</i> ) in the Fontanabuona, 1641	92
Table 4.2	Kin group members as percentage of all landowners in the Fontanabuona parishes, 1641	108
Table 4.3	Numbers of landowners, by kin group-surname, registered in the 1641 <i>caratata</i>	110
Table 4.4	Distribution of real estate among kin groups of the parishes of Cicagna and Orero, 1641	111
Table 5.1	Forms of dowry payment in the Fontanabuona (1570s–80s and 1630s–40s), percentages of all contracts	137
Table 5.2	Lengths of terms for dowry payments, 1639–45	142
Table 5.3	Dowry values in the Fontanabuona, 1639–45	143
Table 6.1	Rapallo and Fontanabuona merchants in the seventeenth century	159



## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction

1. This research project focuses on the problem of local politics in a traditional society. The larger context is the Republic of Genoa between the sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries; the particular example comes from a portion of eastern Liguria.

The events related here stem from the heart of the historical period whose raw material has been fashioned by historians into one of the most important processes of European history: the ‘formation of the modern state’. Indeed, according to this formulation the state and the political structures of the Old Regime constitute a central historiographic problem. But it did not take long for this theme to acquire the status of a paradigm according to which all political phenomena and social movements in general were interpreted—often in a one-directional way. The study of heterogeneous and multiform political realities on the ground has been sacrificed, at least in part, so that state formations, norms, and institutions could receive attention. This has meant eliminating from historical analysis many forms of political aggregation and integration, along with the social actors who animated them. The angle of observation employed in such studies attends almost exclusively to the processes by which central powers were reinforced and ‘modern’ institutional forms were constructed, resulting in a partial or deformed image of the constitution and transformation of the legitimacy of public authority.

Italian historiography has focused above all on institutions, on measuring the growth of the state's organs and functions, and on the long-term tendencies of politico-administrative centralization. Studies of territorial administration and organization, taxation, and judicial systems have been guided by this perspective. However, such work has devoted little or no attention to the concrete, everyday ways in which relations of power and authority were articulated; to social practices and exchanges; to relations between groups and individuals; or to conflicts and the frequently tight connection between processes of social differentiation and integration. With a few exceptions, research has continued to employ, with varying degrees of awareness, a model whose basic characteristics had been delineated by Federico Chabod between the 1930s and the 1950s for the Milanese state.<sup>1</sup> Any case that did not seem to include elements that anticipated the modern state was time and again declared to be archaic or marginal.

Italian history is characteristically polycentric history, with very diverse forms of territorial integration and many kinds of power configurations. It thus invites us to check and refine influential paradigms and broad categories of analysis. Beyond the realm of Italian history, the social sciences have constructed a variety of models for examining the problem of the 'formation of the modern state' and the reach of 'government' in Old Regime society. But these models have generally privileged the state formations that, through a long process of 'evolution', eventually made it to the present day—the handful of survivors from among the hundreds that had existed in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Europe.<sup>2</sup>

While it may be true that some studies have stressed the 'resistance' encountered by the processes of state centralization, such work has also underestimated the great variety of historical situations, cultures, forms of

<sup>1</sup> According to Chabod's model, the development of the state was common to the various European realities, and was measured by the growth of the institutions and functions of central power and by the formation of a bureaucracy. Its frame of reference was the constitution of royal absolutism. See also the collected studies in *Scritti sul Rinascimento* (Turin, 1967) and *Lo Stato e la vita religiosa a Milano nell'epoca di Carlo V* (Turin, 1971). On Chabod's importance for recent historiography see E. Fasano Guarini's introduction to the volume *Potere e società negli Stati regionali italiani del '500 e '600* (Bologna, 1978), 7–47, in which a work by Chabod of 1958 ("Usi ed abusi nell'amministrazione dello Stato di Milano a mezzo il '500," in *Studi storici in onore di Gioacchino Volpe per il suo 80° compleanno* [Florence, 1958]) is referred to as an indication of "continuity" (14).

<sup>2</sup> This is also the case for the important studies edited by Charles Tilly in *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton, 1975 [Italian edition published in 1984]).

daily life, and local dynamics and practices over which the centers of government were said to have affirmed their own authority and legitimacy. Similarly overlooked has been the ability of communities and local social formations to condition and manipulate governing practices and political ideas, while also formulating questions and articulating responses. Other dimensions to the state-centered interpretive scheme are its evolutionary or functionalist bent and its theories of acculturation. These claim that the expansion and consolidation of state power rendered local worlds progressively homogeneous, destroying cultural differences and imposing new hierarchical systems of communication and exchange. Ways of life and practices that were not captured by this process lost their value for historiographic investigation; even if they left significant documentary records, they were obliterated or liquidated as residual.

This unilateral and elitist viewpoint is perhaps even clearer in the realm of political history: the dominant historiographic approach seems at best to acknowledge local responses by the ‘forces of resistance’ to a political competition that is essentially defined by its ‘central’ or ‘high’ quality.<sup>3</sup>

Resistance, anomalies, residuals, marginal cases: these are concepts that, frequently associated with dichotomous oppositions—between state and society, state and community, center and periphery, high and low<sup>4</sup>—have eliminated from historical investigation and empirical verification significant portions of past reality. But these very cases, apparently marginal ones, when investigated deeply and in microscopic fashion, can be symptomatically valuable. They can reveal more broad and general historical realities, and they can ultimately play a decisive role in verifying and questioning interpretive categories and established models, even creating new ones. This problem is central for my book, and in the following pages I

<sup>3</sup> However, a critical assessment of the notions of popular and elite (or dominant) culture, along with the study of practices, concrete forms of communication, and social conflicts (including the rediscovery of the event as a mirror of broader realities) seem to have radically transformed perspectives for reconstructing political action. For an interesting example of political history—that combines the history of an event, biography, the reconstruction of a context, and an effort to situate political happenings within social structures, see E. Barnavi and R. Descimon, *La Sainte Ligue, le juge et la potence* (Paris, 1985).

<sup>4</sup> Generally, binary classifications flatten out a multiform world, cancelling out anything that they fail to incorporate. Dichotomous kinds of explanation have also characterized research on “peripheral centers” and numerous recent community studies. These interpretive models have recently been critiqued on the basis of case studies from the medieval and early modern periods in a special issue of *Quaderni storici* (issue 63, 1986) entitled *Conflitti locali e idiomi politici*.



will seek to explain why. I will begin with the broadest context: the Genoese state during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

2. The case of the Republic of Genoa does not seem to fit any model of the modern state that has been developed to this point, nor does it correspond to the kind of regional state that is usually seen (albeit in very diverse territorial configurations) as prevalent in early modern Italy.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps representations of the Genoese state as marginal or curious help explain why it has not attracted scholarly interest in investigating and identifying its original characteristics. But in what terms, precisely, was the Genoese case anomalous?

The historiography is just about unanimous in considering 1575 to be the pivotal year in Genoese history. That year's civil war between the new (*Nuovi*) and old (*Vecchi*) nobles took place in the city and in some of its hinterlands, constituting a point of reference for the local political developments described in this book. The shockwaves sent by this event throughout Europe,<sup>6</sup> together with similar events in other states (the French religious wars, the Dutch revolt, and the disputes between the 'young' and 'old' patricians in Venice from about the same years),<sup>7</sup> help

<sup>5</sup> See G. Chittolini, *La formazione dello Stato regionale e le istituzioni del contado* (Turin, 1979). In this work, the *contado* is the terrain on which institutional state-building is verified. Here, the problem of state-building is addressed according to a Weberian perspective of disciplining and the acquisition of a monopoly over the legitimate public use of force (viii). The definition of the regional state as the main kind of state formation in Italy is also found in Fasano Guarini (*Potere e società negli Stati regionali*, 20). In a recent programmatic article, Chittolini takes up the theme of the growth and concentration of state powers, or the increasingly regulatory ability of the prince, as his principal research question. According to this perspective, the various elements recently uncovered in new community studies and in research on local social formations would be viewed with respect to the history of the state and its long-term evolutionary trends. Conflicts would be understood as problems of public order, on the scale of the state. See G. Chittolini, "Stati padani, 'Stati del Rinascimento': problemi di ricerca," *Persistenze feudali e autonomie comunitative in stati padani fra Cinque e Seicento*, ed. G. Tocci (Bologna, 1988), 9–29, esp. 25–27.

<sup>6</sup> This event was promptly mentioned by Jean Bodin in his *Les Six livres de la République* (Paris, 1583), 956–58 (whose original edition was published in 1576). The first Italian translation was published in Genoa in 1588 by Lorenzo Conti (*I sei libri della Repubblica ...*) but the section relating to Genoa and the events of 1575 (book six, pp. 620–24, "Della Repubblica di Genova") was altered by the translator.

<sup>7</sup> On Venice, see G. Cozzi, *Il doge Nicolò Contarini. Ricerche sul patriziato veneziano agli inizi del Seicento* (Venice-Rome, 1958). On the Italian patriciates see the summary by Cesare Mozzarelli, "Stato, patriziato e organizzazione della società nell'Italia moderna," in *Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico in Trento* 2 (1976): 421–512.

explain why the conflict of 1575 touched off a long political debate, from multiple perspectives, over the nature and history of the Republic. The main point of discussion was how to define the social boundaries of the nobility in the city's official registry, but this was inseparable from a problem raised in almost all political writings: the influence and significance of factions in Genoese history and forms of government. 'Universal factionalism' (*l'universal delle fattioni*) was perceived as a structural element of the Republic's political life, and historical narratives of the city revolved around the 'civil discords' (*discordie civili*).<sup>8</sup> Even in the writings of Andrea Spinola, which articulated a perspective and a critique from within the early seventeenth-century oligarchic government, the term 'Factions' (*Fattioni*) occupied a significant position: "We Genoese are by nature factionalistic, and ready to create [factions] where none exist."<sup>9</sup>

Genoese factionalism depended on "the public things." This is because the nobility were not a homogeneous group, or "a certain virtue of issue [*la schiatta*], and of blood." Rather, they were the total number of those inscribed ("nobility by pen" is what the anonymous author of the *Dialoghi sopra la Repubblica di Genova* (1623) called it). This made them a kind of civil nobility defined by the monopoly of public offices, linked to administration and government, such that differences between those inscribed were more of a political nature than anything else. But factions were also rooted in behaviors that were private and family-oriented, expressed in ceremonial practice and sociability whose sites were urban and separated: *alberghi* (topographical associations of family members and clans), *conventicole* (political cliques), loggias, and the porticoes of San Pietro and San Luca (near piazza Banchi).<sup>10</sup> The simultaneously horizontal and vertical

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, *Rellatione di Genova* (1597), in the Archivio di Stato di Genova (hereafter, ASG), Manoscritti e libri rari, ms. 117 (the *Rellatione* has been attributed to either Matteo Senarega or Giacomo Mancini), and also the anonymous *Dialoghi sopra la Repubblica di Genova e suo governo, origine tanto delle famiglie vecchie, come nuove, et altri particolari* (1623), in ASG, Manoscritti e libri rari, ms. 859. See also the works by C. Costantini, F. Vazzoler, C. Bitossi, R. Gallo, and D. Ortolani in *Dibattito politico e problemi di governo a Genova nella prima metà del Seicento*, special issue of *Miscellanea Storica Ligure* (7, 2 [1975]).

<sup>9</sup> Andrea Spinola, *Ricordi*, Biblioteca Universitaria di Genova, ms. B. VIII, 25–29. See C. Bitossi, "Andrea Spinola. L'elaborazione di un 'manuale' per le classe dirigente," in *Dibattito politico*, 115–75; Andrea Spinola, *Scritti scelti*, ed. C. Bitossi (Genoa, 1981). Spinola wrote in around 1620.

<sup>10</sup> The term *portico* was understood at the time as an expression that was the equivalent of *fattione*. A nice description of porticoes as an element of urban architecture is found in the *Dialoghi* (see note 8).

character of the internal divisions of the nobility (the latter linked to “family mixing,” kinship links, and expectations about being inscribed) created a situation in which the entire social fabric of the city was marked by alignments whose mutual hostility varied in intensity. On the other hand, the factional division of the nobility and the “disunion” among the houses were perceived not only as dangerous elements (“the deadliest venom in a Republic”), but also as elements of an equilibrium sustaining a peculiar kind of Republic. This double division prevented the largest and most powerful houses from either erecting a tyranny over the city, or enabling a foreign prince to seize control through open support of their faction. In the *Dialoghi* an “ancient proverb” is cited: “Only the Genoese themselves are capable of conquering Genoa.”

But early modern observers also sought to reconstruct an historical process. The *Rellatione* claimed that the 1528 reform of Andrea Doria had been “the seed of the unrest of 1575.” According to this view, Doria’s project (which had been to pacify and unite the nobility by transforming the family clans [*alberghi*] from private associations of families into public institutions, and to aggregate the noble houses into twenty-eight clan groupings [*alberghi*])<sup>11</sup> failed due to the continued solidarity and endogamy among the old families.<sup>12</sup> The *Vecchi* had refused to mix with the aggregated families; indeed, as a sign of distinction they began to draw up genealogical charts and submit them for the Senate’s approval.<sup>13</sup>

Factions reemerged in the mid-sixteenth century with the conspiracy of Gian Luigi Fieschi, and in more traumatic fashion in 1575, when proof of

<sup>11</sup> These were the largest families who had at least six houses in the city: the twenty-eight *alberghi* made up of around 600 surnames. See G. A. Ascheri, *Notizie storiche intorno alla riunione di famiglie in Alberghi a Genova* (Genoa, 1846).

<sup>12</sup> This assessment had already been suggested by Uberto Foglietta, *Della Repubblica di Genova libri due* (Rome, 1559).

<sup>13</sup> In the second half of the sixteenth century, the provincial nobility was also engaged in constructing family trees that in some cases went back to the year 1000. A significant example is offered by the noble houses of Chiavari: the Ravaschiero, Rivarola, and Della Torre. In the genealogical tree of the Della Torre, submitted to the Senate for approval in 1591, the founding forefather was noble Coruvulus de Turris, who was alive in the year 1000 (Archivio Storico del Comune di Chiavari, Fondo Maschio-Torre). In the *Dialoghi* of 1623, the objection made to the proposal to “make marriages in order to bring about an atmosphere of peace, and to create kinship ties together, so that ultimately the blood will be mixed” was that “the root always remains.” This was an argument that was very similar to what we will find in the kin groups of eastern Liguria.

their pervasive character was seen in the role of the “plebeians,” who “had the temerity to create deputies, send them to the Senate [...], form associations, hold assemblies [...] and take up arms.”<sup>14</sup>

Not even the compromise reached at Casale in 1576, ending the civil war through the mediation of Cardinal Morone and other ambassadors, was able to guarantee a single noble order. The *Leges novae* formally sanctioned the unity of the nobility as superior to factions and their associated colors. They ascribed to the nobility the characteristics of a group of “governing citizens,” marking them off with institutional and social boundaries (related to the compatibility between noble status and the exercise of certain professions). Over the longer run, the formation of an oligarchic elite—a governing group that was more compact, unified, and coherent in terms of wealth, and whose members shared offices in a more or less egalitarian fashion<sup>15</sup>—was probably not effected through political and institutional reforms. Rather, it more likely resulted from the transformation of the nobility’s economic activities (shifting from commerce to finance), from the decline of kinship and vertical solidarities within *alberghi*, from the consolidation of horizontal links, from the formation of a stratum of “poor nobles,” and perhaps from the growing acceptance of an idea of nobility based on the model that prevailed elsewhere in Europe.<sup>16</sup>

3. But what were the implications of this process, which took place against a backdrop of traditional culture, for the governance of communities in Liguria?

A more complete response to this question will be proposed in Chap. 8, through a direct observation of the ways in which the political dynamics of the city were perceived and reformulated by local society. But it is immediately apparent, and of great historical significance, that in the Genoese case the development of oligarchy and the centralization of authority in the city was not accompanied by the formation of an independent public administration. If one considers the role of Genoese banker-financiers in the European world economy during the early seventeenth century, taking into account their social mechanisms and their practices of

<sup>14</sup> *Rellatione*.

<sup>15</sup> See C. Bitossi, “Famiglie e fazioni a Genova 1576–1657,” *Miscellanea Storica Ligure* 12, 2 (1980): 59–135; G. Doria and R. Savelli, “‘Cittadini di governo’ a Genova: ricchezza e potere tra Cinque e Seicento,” *Materiali per una storia della cultura giuridica* 10, 2 (1980): 277–355.

<sup>16</sup> E. Grendi, “Capitazioni e nobiltà genovese in età moderna,” *Quaderni storici* 26 (1974): 403–44 (also in id., *La repubblica aristocratica dei genovesi* [Bologna, 1987], 13–48).

government, one finds continuities rather than paradoxes and contradictions with respect to earlier developments. The early modern Genoese state preserved, or even accentuated, those elements which seem to have been its “original characteristics.” That is, it remained the private state of an aristocracy that acquired, over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the appearance of an oligarchy.

Without a doubt, the ideal state of the Genoese noble houses was neither an absolute state nor a regional one. Their political imagination was informed more by the Empire and the Spanish imperial system, of which Genoa was an economic and military component, and which coincided with the realm of financial activity of Genoese elites. Thus, Andrea Spinola was able to write, most concisely, that Spain was both the north wind and the anchor of the Genoese ship.

4. As I will seek to demonstrate below (in Chaps. 2 and 3), the regime that Genoa built on Ligurian territory was more than anything one of “indirect governance.” Relations between the city and its Dominion were based on agreements and privileges, on the explicit or implicit acceptance of customary norms and practices, and on the continued vitality of institutions whose existence was presupposed by those customary norms and codified in local statutes. That Genoa fits neither the classic model of city/*contado* relations, nor the model of the regional state, is confirmed by a simple observation of Ligurian geography, its forms of residential settlement, its communication routes, the orientation and direction of its exchange circuits (which were not very coherent and only weakly oriented toward Genoa), and its administrative setting, which was disrupted by fiefs and enclaves alongside communities with broad immunities.<sup>17</sup>

Political treatises, memoirs, letters of judges and commissioners, and proclamations from the early modern period exhibit a pessimistic consensus regarding Genoese subjects, a judgment that seems linked to a general attitude toward society and men. For example, the *Rellatione* of 1597 recounts that

<sup>17</sup> M. Aymard, “La transizione dal feudalesimo al capitalismo,” in *Storia d’Italia. Annali*, vol. 1, *Dal feudalesimo al capitalismo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1978), 1131–92; Chittolini, *La formazione dello Stato regionale*. In the 1620s–1630s, when the nobility was struggling with the European monarchies and engaged in a diplomatic effort to obtain royal rank and symbols, Genoa enclosed itself within its walls (isolating itself from the three nearby *curiae*, or districts, of Bisagno, Polecevera, and Voltri); these walls were imposing and indefensible in equal measure; see E. Poleggi and P. Cevini, *Genova* (Bari, 1981).

Genoa can boast little of its people, both for the reasons given above [the militia are formed by “local men of little or no valor and experience {who} do not want to be commanded by any but their own”], and because all of its vassals are more deeply committed to the parties of the Adorno, or Fregoso ... than the inhabitants of [the city of Genoa] themselves.<sup>18</sup>

But this passage reveals above all a significant parallel between the sociopolitical characteristics of Genoa and the communities, a sort of common language. Indeed, the elite, the lineage groups, and the population of the walled towns of Rapallo and Chiavari, centrally located in the area studied by this book, were organized into factions. The Adorno and Fregoso “parties” were also spread throughout the valleys of the backcountry, while in the towns notables of competing colors (green or turquoise) vied for public offices. The *alberghi*, kinship associations and family groupings that took up a shared name, symbols, emblems, and colors, were widespread in the communities of eastern Liguria, including in Rapallo<sup>19</sup>; they were part of the local cultural system. Numerous families from the towns shared in the “nobility” of their relatives who had emigrated to Genoa and been inscribed in or linked to the twenty-eight *alberghi*. The noble houses had many “plebeian relations” in the backcountry villages.<sup>20</sup> Genealogists sought to confirm the supremacy of their

<sup>18</sup> *Rellatione*; Adorno and Fregoso are the names by which the Genoese factions are traditionally referred.

<sup>19</sup> See *Famiglie nobili orionde da Rapallo, e sua giurisdizione c'hanno in diversi tempi governato la Ser.ma Republica di Genova. Con loro Arme, e distinzion' de' Colori* (seventeenth century), in Biblioteca della Società Economica di Chiavari, ms. 3.Y.II.21. This anonymous manuscript may safely be attributed to Gio Agostino Molfino, a jurist of Rapallo, and was written during the later decades of the 1600s. In a letter of 1694, Molfino wrote to Gio Carlo Canitia in Cadiz that “for many years, I have collected Historical Memoirs, with great difficulty and at great expense.” See also Angelo Della Cella, *Delle famiglie indigene, avventiccie, nobili, popolari, estinte e vigenti a Chiavari* (eighteenth century), *ibid.*, ms. 3.C.II.I, and Carlo Garibaldi, *Memorie di Chiavari sino al 1800* (eighteenth century), *ibid.*, ms. 3.J.III.12.

<sup>20</sup> *Famiglie nobili*. Gio Agostino Molfino reconstructed the stories of about 100 families from the jurisdiction of Rapallo who were registered as nobles or tied to the Genoese *alberghi* (but in a letter, he writes that he had traced down about 300). Among these were thirteen families originating from the backcountry valleys, “where there are many that are not registered” who according to Molfino boasted kinship ties with noble citizens (in Genoa, a few decades earlier, it was said that “there are an infinite number of Spinola who dig the dirt up in those mountains”). Various families from Rapallo had taken part in the creation of the large *alberghi* of the De Franchi and the Giustiniani during the fourteenth century. Molfino’s

kin groups through appeals to antiquaries, tradition, and continuity with a partially mythic past. But the elite of the towns also shared notions of nobility as elaborated by Genoese political tracts. In 1597 a “respectable” bourgeois of Rapallo, Filippo Merello, pieced together his family tree and wrote to his son in Madrid about desiring to be inscribed in the nobility, pointing out that “the name of nobility is not born of superiority, but is the name of Faction.”<sup>21</sup>

In this respect, therefore, the links and similarities between center and periphery were strong, and offer an overall picture of fragmented power and authority. The *Dialoghi* of 1623 claimed that Genoa did not have a “state government” since it was missing a hierarchical political organization of prince, corporate bodies, and subjects. In 1651 a commissioner declared that the greatest (insurmountable, in fact) obstacle that he encountered in the *Levante* communities [that is, those to the east of Genoa] was the division of the *paesani* “into faction-like kinship groups.”<sup>22</sup> And it was in matters such as these that the administration of criminal justice took on central significance and overlapped with the task of governing the communities.

5. In the city, the most important innovation of the *Leges novae* of 1576 had dealt with precisely this problem of criminal justice and the relationship between judges and political authority. The creation of a criminal court (*Rota criminale*) of foreign (non-Ligurian) jurists extracted jurisdictional power from the Senate and from the various citizen magistracies in Genoa and in the three neighboring administrative districts. This was certainly a radical solution that altered relations between the nobles and the

genealogical and antiquarian research, mixed together with historical reality, myth, and invention, probably resembled that carried out by (or for) many European patriciates during that time period. But the aim of Molfino’s documentary excavation was to reconstruct the ties between the kin groups of Rapallo and the Genoese nobles registered in the *Liber Civilitatis*, thereby shedding light on the common matrix of local and Genoese society. This matrix, as we will see, was also the foundation of the principle by which social relations were classified—the kin group (*parentella*). Seventeenth-century Genoese commissioners seemed to have borrowed this notion from local contexts that had not experienced a transformation similar to the oligarchic one of the city-capital, and whose traditional sociopolitical forms were stronger and more active. In around 1620, Andrea Spinola expressed his hope for a process of territorial integration through marriage (*Ricordi*, entry entitled “Maritar le figlie per le Riviere”), and also proposed the creation of kinship ties between the *portici* in order to create unity in the city (*ibid.*, entry entitled “Matrimoni”).

<sup>21</sup> The letter is inserted into the manuscript of Gio Agostino Molfino cited in note 19.

<sup>22</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1116.

communities throughout the territory. In fact, one of the new rules required important judges who were noble citizens to submit to the *Rota*'s decision in all capital cases, and in cases involving potential sentences of exile or being sent to the galleys. But within a few years the traditional distribution of judicial privileges between the magistracies and the Senate was reinstituted,<sup>23</sup> and the governing councils (*Collegi*) had reacquired "supreme power" by enforcing judges' decisions and especially by nominating commissioners. This was in fact a double restoration, both of the traditional arrangement of a plurality of magistracies each with its own prerogatives and competencies, and of the political prerogatives of the nobility and its role in arbitration. Even in the constitutional scheme established by the *Leges novae*, the jurisdictional field had been left undefined, and open to the discretionary power of the Senate.

In 1612, Andrea Spinola diagnosed the Republic as a labyrinth of laws,<sup>24</sup> and this is confirmed both by the large number of decrees and ordinances discussed by the *Collegi* and by the creation of temporary institutions and authorities.<sup>25</sup> Further, the negotiation of settlements, given the variety of realities, facts, political circumstances, and diverse forms of local life in Liguria, required expedients and compromises that provided a sufficiently elastic foundation for resolving disputes. The long seventeenth-century debate over bandits and the collective responsibility of their "kin" (which will be examined in the next chapter) is the clearest example of the constant adaptation of norms and procedures to fit local social realities.

Norms and judicial practices developed according to the governing experiences of the community of judges and the activities of itinerant functionaries (commissioners). The Genoese protagonists of these processes were noble citizens, often endowed with extraordinary authority and cognizance. The commissioners in particular were the political force designed to disentangle the legal labyrinth ("ordinary justice"), to work out discrepancies between codified law and local custom, and to arbitrate and pacify in ways that reinforced the image of reciprocity between the prince (Genoese sovereignty) and local society. The space in which commissioners exercised their powers of arbitration was essentially a political space: as we will see, these agents did not really engage in fact-finding

<sup>23</sup> See R. Savelli, "Potere e giustizia. Documenti per la storia della rota criminale a Genova alla fine del '500," *Materiali per una storia della cultura giuridica* 5 (1979): 33–66.

<sup>24</sup> Andrea Spinola, "Discorso sopra il presente governo di Genova," in *Scritti scelti*, 79.

<sup>25</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1027, ff.



missions or systematically explore juridical principles. Rather, they sought to identify, comprehend, and give direction to conflictual processes, and to impose public arbitration and pacification upon them. The recourse to coercion (prison, torture, property confiscation, and banishment), and the *exemplum* of public executions were merely the means of facilitating this procedure. Tearing down houses, cutting down trees, destroying harvests, and sowing salt in the fields were the means employed by those who were “inexpert in the art of governing.”<sup>26</sup>

Andrea Spinola hoped to see fewer but clearer laws and the elimination of superfluous decrees for the Ligurian *Riviera*, but also recommended that commissioners and judges should dress modestly, “never wearing even a minimal thread of color,” and that they should not become involved in local “rivalries.” They should consider as sacred the “immunities, privileges, and agreements of the localities.”<sup>27</sup>

6. The administration of justice (which was tightly linked to the exercise of arbitration) and pacification were undoubtedly the most peculiar aspects of the relationship between Genoa and local societies. Commissioners favored pacification because their armed forces were insufficient and their financial resources scarce. Reaching a compromise in disputes and feuds was the only effective way of penetrating local power arrangements and directly influencing the mechanisms of political competition in the community. Peace (*pas*) was an inseparable, coincident element of justice, and was a constant requirement for communities in which rival kinship groups lived face to face, and even literally next door to each other. In judicial practice and procedure, official verdicts and mediation were hardly ever significantly opposed to each other, and verdicts were certainly never issued in the name of an abstract form of justice. Sometimes coercion was used to encourage parties to resolve disputes peacefully, and verdicts almost always included compensation and satisfaction for each party. In this sense, judicial practice turned into political practice, and into

<sup>26</sup>This was the judgment of the commissioner Ambrosio Lomellino in 1580; see ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 512.

<sup>27</sup>Andrea Spinola, “Scritto che può servire a coloro che vanno a governare in vari luoghi della Republica” and “Delli comissari,” in *Scritti scelti*, 273–86. Andrea Spinola shared his colleagues’ pessimism about the Republic’s subjects, and was aware of the difficulties faced by Genoese officials who sought to impose their system of authority over the communities: “One must know ... that the men of these places, and especially those who try to assert themselves, are experts in laying traps to capture the officer’s will, and in taking their measure and judging them from head to toe” (*ibid.*, 274).

a tool of governance and legitimation. What is perhaps even more interesting is how trials took the form of investigations in the field: through the examination of suspects and dozens of witnesses (or more) for each case, commissioners and judges focused on a local reality that was not accessible through other instruments. Negotiations and peace agreements that intertwined and were overlaid onto judicial procedures and verdicts brought to light the dialogical character of the surviving historical documentation.

Throughout the early modern period, peace settlements “with the satisfaction and compensation of those who were offended” remained the bedrock and required principle for the pursuit of the “public good.” Legal codifications as a way of establishing general rules of behavior were an aspect of this political practice. Through local tribunals—in which judicial procedures often had a collective nature, with the active involvement of all of the “kin,” neighbors, and household heads of a parish—juridical discourse and language had the capacity to provide direction for social relations. But each case had a local history that was only partly uncovered by the exercise of justice. In this way, the rules, like the formal resolution of cases, were constructed on a fragile foundation of induction. Other means such as anonymous letters, secret testimony (drawn from the model of the Inquisition), spies, and rewards were also employed. This was not so much in order to reconstruct what really happened—Genoa recognized that the parties involved, kinship groups, and local leaders and jurists were extraordinarily capable of manipulation and of “criminal dexterity”—but in order to undergird a difficult process of communication between the authorities and civil society.

7. From the late sixteenth century on, Genoa paid more and more attention to the communities within its territory. As was probably the case in every Old Regime society,<sup>28</sup> judicial practices and the organization and administration of criminal justice were the most important manifestations of state-building. The urban oligarchy reserved for itself the “supreme authority in criminal matters” and through its commissioners, who submitted only to the political principle (the *Principe*, in a metaphoric and symbolic sense), it sought to overcome both the jurisdictional fragmentation that was characteristic of traditional societies and the system of local political competition that tended toward the dispersion of power or

<sup>28</sup> See G. Cozzi, *Repubblica di Venezia e Stati italiani. Politica e giustizia dal secolo XVI al secolo XVIII* (Turin, 1982). In Venice, the oligarchic model with the idea of justice as a political instrument was embodied by the Council of Ten (*ibid.*, 147–216).

factional aggregations. The Republic's only strategy with respect to kin groups—the most important form of identity and sociopolitical organization as far as the context of this study is concerned—was to pacify them. Was this an opportunistic way for it to validate and legitimate its own governing hierarchy? There is some evidence that could support this hypothesis; but, as we shall see, the reconstruction of relations between the authorities and local society sheds light above all on a double process of exchange. On the one hand Genoese officials<sup>29</sup> translated into judicial procedures a set of practices that implied an entire local social organization. They also sanctioned, through criminal statutes, the collective responsibility of the “kin by blood and family name,” recognizing kin groups as a social and cultural fact. On the other hand, within the communities the reception of state law was instrumentalized, resulting in internal processes of legitimation or even an interpretation of state law according to native statutes or customs. But these elements were tightly interwoven, in the sources and in practice, making it impossible to identify a clear distinction between the two legal traditions, the “community law” and the “state law.”<sup>30</sup> And at this level of observation, the Genoese anomaly no longer seems so anomalous.

Historically the relationship between Genoa and local society could be described as a process of progressive reciprocity. The total picture that becomes visible through the microscopic observation of a local universe is not that of an authority and of an official culture that imposes its own criteria on subjects and their popular culture, but is one of cultural exchange.

<sup>29</sup> Commissioners had almost exclusively judicial functions and never became financial administrators or tools of administrative centralization as they did in seventeenth-century France; see R. Mousnier, “Recherches sur la création des intendants des provinces, 1643–1648,” in *Forschungen zu Staat und Verfassung. Festgabe für Fritz Hartung* (Berlin, 1958) (Italian trans. in *Lo stato moderno*, vol. 3, *Accentramento e rivolte*, ed. E. Rotelli and P. Schiera [Bologna, 1974], 107–26). But see also R. Harding's important book *Anatomy of a Power Elite. The Provincial Governors in Early Modern France* (New Haven and London, 1978), which linked the birth of the intendants to procedures for conflict resolution. For an Italian case study, see S. Lombardini, “La costruzione dell'ordine: governatori e governati a Mondovì (1682–1687),” in *La guerra del sale (1680–1699)*, ed. G. Lombardi, 3 vols. (Milan, 1986), 1: 179–227.

<sup>30</sup> B. Lenman and G. Parker, “The State, the Community and the Criminal Law in Early Modern Europe,” in *Crime and Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500*, ed. V. A. C. Gatrell, B. Lenman, and G. Parker (London, 1980). In this dichotomous model, the “law of the state” implies a radical acculturation of its subjects.

This institutional context was one of jurisdictional pluralism and labyrinthine laws and decrees, but also of the arbitration of public authority (also expressed through the constant undervaluation of the role of jurists). This setting profoundly marked the social configuration in which forms of alliance and territorial solidarities and conflicts traced a field of political ties and power relations that were irregular and non-hierarchical. During the seventeenth century, the urban oligarchy established a monopoly of the most important public offices and set up relations of negotiation and continuing reciprocity with local society. These relations were intermittent, though: the Republic's commissioners were itinerant functionaries who moved for weeks at a time from the nucleated towns where they were quartered into the outlying villages. Commissioners were escorted by Corsican soldiers and assisted by a notary and a scribe, and sometimes by some of the local notables (when word arose of a feud between kin groups). Even though relations between the authorities in Genoa and local society were thus somewhat discontinuous, they created a kind of sediment of laws, customs, norms, and practices, a combination of images and conflictual representations of reality, a *bricolage* in which elements of the local cultural fabric retained a determinant weight.

8. But it is probable that all of this was not peculiar to the Republic of Genoa, and that analogies could be identified in other contexts and forms of governance during the early modern period. The Genoese state apparatus has from time to time been judged as inconsistent, archaic, and marginal—a model that would seem too unusual to be included in the “process of modern state-building.” This tendency is perhaps based on a prejudice that is rooted in a research perspective that tends to focus on the growth of institutions and on the functions of centralized power, privileging the state dimension (or the fetish of the state) over the territorial dimension, and a synthetic viewpoint over interactions and social exchanges that were dense and complex. As is well known, the institutional structure of the oligarchic Republic fell into a long period of decay and immobility, apparently without leaving a trace, on the eve of the nineteenth century. I would like to think, however, that the reader will find, through an examination of the forms of political aggregation, in the social practices and ideas about government described in this book, the general outline of a Mediterranean model of society and state, with resemblances and ‘family ties’ to other structures and relational modes stretching beyond the boundaries of seventeenth-century Liguria.

9. The goal of these quick references to the physiognomy of the Genoese oligarchy is to shed light on the political language that the Republic employed in its governance of the communities. But as I began bit by bit to gather documentation and to confront different sources (Chap. 2), I realized that the possibility of a deep understanding of concrete social processes, and of constructing a solid base from which I could then identify affinities and similarities, was tied to a close examination of circumscribed phenomena. A different scale of observation became necessary.

For these reasons, the field of analysis in this book is not a state formation, but the particular case of a local society and the interactions between this microscopic universe and central institutions. Essentially, I have tried to do two things: to explain a specific context through a series of local and supra-local interrelations, and to explain social and political phenomena in connection with local forms of knowledge and classification. The objective is to observe from below both the daily experience and behavior of people and social groups, and the least explored rhythms of high political history.

Since the scale of observation and the sources that I have studied have determined the book's structure, I will now turn my attention to these two issues—which are continuously linked in the book—beginning with the sources.

10. Among the communities in Liguria during the early modern period, the district around the towns of Rapallo and Chiavari, and especially the central valley of Fontanabuona, prevailed upon me due to the wealth, accessibility, and substantial coherence of the sources. More specifically, what pushed me to outline the spatial and temporal frame of the research project was a set of dense and homogeneous documentation that was somewhat unusual: next to a small number of administrative and fiscal records I found a great pile of quasi-judicial records, produced by intervening Genoese officials, that permitted me to study forms of conflict and local solidarities, and with interactions involving larger society and state institutions. Criminal records and the chronology of judicial decisions—produced by a specific interdependence between social groups, power centers, juridical-administrative institutions, and public authority—seemed to me from the beginning to be the best sources for reconstructing a complex universe of social practices and discourses.

Judicial documents, traditionally studied to reconstruct the normative system and legal practice, to write the history of judicial and administrative

institutions, or to identify behavioral patterns, are used here to shed light on a double context of social relations and exchange between groups and individuals in local society and public authorities (judicial tribunals, and Genoese magistrates and commissioners). These are contexts that overlay and intertwine with each other, whose tight links were fundamental to the production of the sources themselves, as we shall see.<sup>31</sup>

But another and perhaps more important research possibility offered by criminal records is to use the testimonies of the witnesses who crowded the courts in order to uncover a set of normal daily practices that are rarely visible in other sources. As we will see with respect to feuds, bandits, or illegal economic activity like smuggling, the chronology of judicial decisions offers an echo and concrete signs of phenomena and behavior that were very widely diffused.

Individual judicial cases are only apparently exceptional<sup>32</sup>; rather, they often illuminate a complex and stratified cultural reality, or relational universe, whose various facets can be reconstructed with the help of other sources. The proper work of the historian is indeed to confront the existence of various kinds of records, to measure them against each other, to interpret them, and to verify them. I hope that this research project will make it clear that if one wishes to reconstruct the political dynamics and governance of Old Regime societies from a non-elite perspective, one must make deliberate decisions about which records and contexts to study. Such decisions should be driven by the issue of which sources best reveal the situation and the social dynamics of the time.

It is also the case, as I have said, that for Genoese officials criminal justice was both a tool of communication and governance and the best means of gaining access to the reality of local societies. Thus, one of the guiding threads of this book is precisely the awareness of a rapidly growing set of records and judicial decisions within a circumscribed space and timeframe

<sup>31</sup> There has recently emerged a new interest in relations between juridical history and the social sciences; see for example *Storia sociale e dimensione giuridica*, ed. P. Grossi, Acts of an international conference held in Florence, 26–27 April, 1985 (Milan, 1986), in which the option of either a social history that studies judicial documentation and analyzes juridico-institutional issues, or a more refined institutional history, remains completely open.

<sup>32</sup> On this issue and similar ones developed in preceding paragraphs, see the reflections of E. Grendi, “Micro-analisi e storia sociale,” in *Quaderni storici* 35 (1977): 506–20, esp. 512, and also C. Ginzburg and C. Poni, “Il nome e il come: scambio ineguale e mercato storiografico,” *Quaderni storici* 40 (1979): 181–90, esp. 187–88.

as an interpretive key and explanation both of a local society and of more broad social, political, and institutional phenomena.

The ‘exceptional’ is perhaps such only on an *événementiel* level or with respect to the superficiality of judicial chronology. The event itself—both small and large events, such as the Genoese civil war of 1575 described below—if contextualized, dissected, and examined closely in all of its aspects—can be a lens through which one can view a clear image of reality and of deeper, more general structures.<sup>33</sup> This point is in turn closely tied to the scale of observation.

The microanalytic approach seemed to me the best one for drawing out shifts, protagonists, and unknown or undervalued social forms and phenomena. It is the choice of an environment in which it is possible to observe persons and groups, the protagonists of the historical process. Microscopic research can enable us to find that which disappears or is invisible from a broader optic. It can provide the materials needed if the study of broad problems is to be sustained. It can suggest new topics, whether compatible or incompatible to one’s initial hypotheses. It can discover forms of relevance and social mechanisms that were completely different from those discussed on a macroscopic level. It can provide material for comparison, underlining both affinities and resemblances as well as differences and contrasts; this is crucial if one believes, as I do, that a key task of historical analysis is to reconstruct concrete social practices and diversities.<sup>34</sup>

11. This investigation is divided into ten chapters. The second chapter contains a description of the policies of the Genoese oligarchy between the late sixteenth and the late seventeenth centuries, showing how criminal policies and pacification were the main instruments by which oligarchic

<sup>33</sup> See the observations of G. Duby, *Le dimanche de Bouvines* (Paris, 1973) (Italian trans. *La domenica di Bouvines* [Turin, 1977]), esp. 9: “since the event is in itself extraordinary, the exceptionally deep traces that remain of it are echoes of things which, in ordinary life, are not discussed or rarely mentioned; *these clues gather together, in a specific place and time, a bundle of information on ways of thinking and acting*” (my emphasis). See also N. Zemon Davis, *Le retour de Martin Guerre* (Paris, 1982) (Italian trans. *Il ritorno di Martin Guerre* [Turin, 1984], in which see especially the afterword by C. Ginzburg).

<sup>34</sup> Issues of documentation, of the ways in which facts are manifested in different contexts, and of the scale of observation are at the center of the famous (and very rich in terms of research suggestions, which even today have only been partly pursued) essay by M. Bloch, “Pour une histoire comparée des sociétés européennes” (1928), in *Mélanges historiques* (Paris, 1963), 1: 16–40 (Italian trans. in *Lavoro e tecnica nel Medioevo* [Bari, 1977], 29–71, esp. 35–36).

power and the “*potestà del Principe*” were legitimated over the course of the period. A very significant aspect of the relationship between Genoese authorities and the communities throughout the territory was the translation into judicial procedure of a set of practices tied to local social organization. The connection between elements of political debate in Genoa, the refining of tools of governance, and the concrete experiences of Republican officials in local societies brings to light the dialogical character of the sources. The latter describe and delimit an environment of social exchange in which certain institutions take form (magistrates with *braccio regio*, or coercive authority; commissioners; the Committee against Bandits, etc.), and in which experience is acquired in the procedures of mediating conflict. The chronology roughly matches the ‘Genoese century’ as described in overviews of European history, when Genoa was one of the centers of the world economy.<sup>35</sup> The spatial setting is the entire territory of the Republic, but this context limits itself progressively—according to the sources—to the specific area that will be examined more closely. The wide-angle view (to use a film metaphor) is frequently interrupted by foregrounds and close-ups that prepare the way for a more contextualized deciphering of representations and people.

The third chapter introduces the reader to a local universe that, with a change in perspective, becomes also the site from which more external and distant horizons can be viewed. Here one finds the description of the political system of the community, its spatial dimension, territorial asymmetries, the interweaving of formal and informal powers, and the crucial role played therein by kinship configurations—which from this point on will figure centrally in the book’s narrative strategy. Then, by using cadastral and notarial records, the investigation swiftly becomes micrometric and structural. The fourth and fifth chapters offer a quantitative and morphological analysis of landownership distribution, settlements, and exchanges. Social cohesion and integration were grounded on these, but

<sup>35</sup> F. Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II* (Paris, 1949) (Italian trans. *Civiltà e imperi del Mediterraneo nell’età di Filippo II* [Turin, 1953]); I. Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, vol. 1, *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1974) (Italian trans. *Il sistema mondiale dell’economia moderna*, vol. 1, *L’agricoltura capitalistica e le origini dell’economia-mondo europea nel XVI secolo* [Bologna, 1982]); F. Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme, XV<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, vol. 3, *Les Temps du monde* (Paris, 1979) (Italian trans. *Civiltà materiale, economia e capitalismo (secoli XV–XVIII)*, vol. 3, *I tempi del mondo* [Turin, 1982]).



so were competition and feuds. The full significance of the ethnographic description contained in this central part of the book will become apparent in the last chapters, in which many of the elements highlighted earlier will appear again in the reconstruction and explanation of political events and happenings. The everyday and structural framework overlaps in fact with the contexts in which the judicial sources were produced, and the historical-political field acquires depth and significance as it relates to the lives of kin groups in the villages of eastern Liguria.

Chapter 6, focused on commercial exchanges, opens up local society to wider society. This opening is problematic and is further explained in Chap. 8, dedicated to the history of political developments. Here, the notion of ‘event’ becomes a key for the reconstruction of a collective public stage—shared between the town of Chiavari and the backcountry valleys—and for a local de-codification of the themes and language of high politics. It is precisely the time line of political and judicial events, which is the documentary basis of the following chapters, that makes possible a reconstruction of both events and conflicts, and of local and supra-local relational structures. This time line helps us to identify the concreteness of social processes through fragmentary evidence of the lives of men and women, and to identify the categories and principles that informed the construction of a peculiar social reality (this problem is confronted in Chap. 7, which is a kind of transition between the static description of the community and the narrative of events).

After we pull all of these threads together and weave them into a tight, thick fabric, we find that that which at first glance might seem exceptional begins to seem more normal.

12. To produce this fabric I studied, in particular, trial transcripts, witness testimony, judicial decisions, the acts of commissioners, and legal peace agreements. But I also made ample use of the correspondence of Genoese officials and letters from “subjects” to the Senate. I turned to notarial acts to uncover the world of everyday transactions. I tried to employ a narrative technique that shows how the object of analysis was constructed bit by bit. I ask the reader to follow the event narrative with patient attention; this was constructed by selecting items from within a great mass of judicial material, so that I could understand the ways in which the “subjects” of the Genoese perceived and constructed the local social reality that served as a framework for their relations with the representatives of the *Principe*.

As I constructed the book I tried to depict the links between persons, groups, things, events, and representations as fluid but continuous. I employed few general categories, in order to underscore the significance that derives rather from the presentation of the evidence and the sequence of events. Significance is generated by the context, or better yet, by a plurality of connected and layered contexts, in which a local category—the kinship group (*parentella*)—permits a glimpse into a “way of life,” into the groups and characters who animate it, but also into the heart of the processes through which the oligarchic Republic was formed.

It seems to me that the close study of a local universe offers the possibility of reconfiguring the historiographic model that I mentioned at the beginning. Here, politics grow from below, at the community level, around kin group alliances and by creating factions that instrumentalize high politics, institutions, judicial structures, and central powers for purposes of legitimation. In everyday interactions, the foundational forces of political and historical movements take shape. The study of dispute settlement, of judicial administration, or of taxation sheds light on the ways in which forms of governance were influenced by local practices. In the same way as central institutions, but from another perspective, local social formations—kin groups—were also constituted, reproduced, and themselves created a peculiar form of territorial organization through a process of continual communication between “center” and “periphery.” The Genoese model of the state is a system of interactions that reflect forms of local organization no less than they reflect the initiative of the *Principe*.

**13.** This research benefited from techniques and reconstructive methods developed by community studies. Some of the concepts employed here and numerous interpretive suggestions were derived from political anthropology. But I looked at the community as a holistic set of problems with more than one dimension, and as an environment in which I could observe and assess relations linking different social groups, and the forms and language in which these relations were perceived and expressed themselves. In contrast to community studies that focus on solidarity, I zeroed in on elements of tension and the role of conflicts, and specifically on the institution of the feud in building particular forms of hierarchic cohesion and wider social reality. Some work in political anthropology has been very helpful to me in reflecting on the theoretical implications of empirical

research and the transformation of paradigms,<sup>36</sup> in shifting the spotlight, from different or uncommon angles, onto topics that have been obscured in the past, and in looking for clues to new questions<sup>37</sup> that can be asked of historical records that, as I collected them bit by bit, risked becoming too familiar.

<sup>36</sup>This history of political anthropology coincides substantially with the history of how the structural-functionalist paradigm was gradually superseded, beginning with what can be considered the foundational text of this discipline: *African Political Systems*, ed. M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard (Oxford, 1940). The construction of new interpretive categories arose through the multiplication of ethnographic studies and the shifting of attention toward complex societies. Something similar happened in historiography with the discovery of new themes and the tendency to study non-privileged social groups. The encounter between history and anthropology took place precisely on these grounds. For some of the most significant works of political anthropology see the notes for Chaps. 8 and 10. Generally, see J. Vincent, "Political Anthropology: Manipulative Strategies," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 7 (1978): 175–94.

<sup>37</sup>On this point see the observations of A. Momigliano, "Rapporto provvisorio sulle origini di Roma" (1962), in *Storia e storiografia antica* (Bologna, 1987), 211–12.



## CHAPTER 2

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# Local Practices and State Authority: Reflections on the Criminal Policy of the Genoese Oligarchy

Although they are most bitter enemies toward each other, bandits usually have the Policy of uniting in a vendetta against whomever kills one of them. Not only amongst peasant farmers, and other stupid country folk, but even amongst those of a better condition [there prevails] a diabolical concern for one's reputation, [and a belief] that no other kind of infamy is as bad as killing, persecuting, or denouncing bandits. Thus, they also, in the name of the vendetta, refrain from taking advantage of an enemy being banished, preferring to tolerate long imprisonments, large fines, tortures, and the destruction of their houses, rather than cooperate in some way that advances the cause of Justice.<sup>1</sup>

Gio Francesco Spinola, the general commissioner against bandits, based this description of moral cohesion on his direct experience as Genoa's representative in eastern Liguria. As we shall see, this cohesion was only partially visible in the social practices of those who inhabited the communities of the Genoese Republic. Still, the image offers an effective example of the difficulties of a centuries-long process of acculturating the "subjects."

Throughout the early modern period, local forms of government and judicial administration in the Republic's territory reflected the weak

<sup>1</sup>ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 117, letter of Gio Francesco Spinola to the *Collegi*, 11 October 1651.

political integration of the communities.<sup>2</sup> Liguria had a polycentric character: there were multiple ties with the center, but they were rarely coordinated or hierarchical. The local elites never organized as a governing group, remaining instead a set of “*principali*”<sup>3</sup> in constant competition with each other. The real government was local and constituted by a conflictual articulation of formal and informal political mechanisms.

At the start of the early modern period, the forms of urban sociopolitical organization (the *alberghi*) resembled those of rural Ligurian society (kin groups), but they evolved differently. Only in the capital and in a few coastal towns did vertical solidarity decline and a more restricted governing oligarchy emerge (along with horizontal solidarity).<sup>4</sup> Political authority was centralized in Genoa (whose example does not correspond to Chabod’s model administrative development) and relations between the various power centers were simultaneously redefined. This process is probably what brought to the fore the problem of how to govern communities and local realities that were culturally ‘other.’

Local societies were stratified and divided into groups, coalitions, and rival factions. At the same time, though, they displayed a cultural homogeneity that expressed itself in relation with the outside world and the central government. The cultural code of the communities, whose positive and negative markers were good reputation and infamy—as noted by Gio Francesco Spinola in the mid-seventeenth century—was shared by both “stupid country folk” and “those of a better condition,” that is, by notables. In this sense, Spinola’s representation of “bandits” serves as a metaphor for local societies or even more generally for the whole social body of the Republic.

<sup>2</sup> State formation was always rooted in the dominant forms of private association. I do not believe that the model of the regional state (described by Chittolini in *La formazione dello Stato regionale*) could ever fit the Republic of Genoa, not even in the sense of a contractual division of power between the center and peripheral areas, or between the city and the *contado*.

<sup>3</sup> leaders / chiefs / headmen.

<sup>4</sup> See Grendi, “Capitazioni e nobiltà genovese.” On the *alberghi* see id., “Profilo storico degli Alberghi genovesi,” in *Mélanges de l’Ecole Française de Rome* 87 (1975): 241–302 (now in *La repubblica aristocratica*, 49–102). On Ligurian society outside of Genoa, in addition to the works of Edoardo Grendi cited below see F. Robin, *Sestri Levante. Un bourg de la Ligurie génoise au XV<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Genoa, 1976). In Sestri, in the late fifteenth century, notaries used the term *alberghi* to refer to the broad kin group. See also F. Moscatelli, “Territorio e popolazione nell’alta val di Vara: Varese Ligure in età moderna,” *Miscellanea Storica Ligure* 5 (1975): 103–66.

Beginning in the last decades of the sixteenth century, the correspondence and memorials written by Genoese authorities were filled with observations that stigmatized the practices of local societies and emphasized their strange cultural traits. In 1573 the *podestà* of Roccatagliata declared that the men of his jurisdiction “do not fear justice, are by nature rude, and their women are even more beastly.”<sup>5</sup> One of his successors wrote in 1576 that “these people are impassioned by their animal-like factions.”<sup>6</sup> In 1579 the commissioner Gio Batta di Negro complained from Pianezza in the Fontanabuona Valley: “I find myself here along in a valley of barbarians ... who are inclined toward evil and dominated by their passions.”<sup>7</sup> Another commissioner, in 1598, attributed the violence of those who lived in the vicariate of Chiavari to “the air and the customs of the country.”<sup>8</sup> In 1606 the author of an anonymous letter turned to a curious ethnographic comparison to describe the behavior of the inhabitants of a village of the Polcevera Valley, just a few miles from Genoa. The writer, almost certainly a Genoese citizen, projected onto these villagers ideas linked to far-off peoples: the “subjects,” he wrote, were responsible for carrying out “the most barbarous outrages ... worse than those Africans who eat each other.”<sup>9</sup>

Local “custom” was especially strongly stigmatized for the administrative and governmental practices associated with it. In 1572 the *podestà* of Sestri Levante denounced the town council for being comprised of 150 “idiots, fishermen, and vendors ... who, with great confusion ... only seek to block good order from being established.”<sup>10</sup> According to a memorial written by the *podestà* of Castiglione in 1579, the officers there were elected in church on Christmas Day, resulting in the selection of “the ones

<sup>5</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 496.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., filza 500.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., filza 512.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., filza 571.

<sup>9</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1561. The use of stereotypical concepts or categories derived from other contexts for the purposes of comparing and contrasting different cultures and social practices is underscored by T. Todorov, *La conquête de l'Amérique. La question de l'autre* (Paris, 1982) (Italian trans. *La conquista dell'America. Il problema dell'altro* [Turin, 1984]). See also the recent study by G. Sider, “When Parrots Learn to Talk, and Why They Can’t: Domination, Deception, and Self-Deception in Indian-White Relations,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 29 (1987): 3–23. Throughout the early modern period in Europe, the idea of “barbaric customs” appears to have been linked to processes of politico-administrative centralization.

<sup>10</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1392.

who are most boastful and yell the loudest.” In the same community the officers then met in a tavern where the archive was kept at the back of the store.<sup>11</sup> In 1583 the election of officers in Chiavari produced “fights,” and the rebirth of the “abominable plague of faction.”<sup>12</sup> In the same town, in 1591, the council elections degenerated into a violent exchange of insults and bloodletting, and similar episodes were recorded during the meetings of the *parlamento* presided by the town captain.<sup>13</sup> In the early seventeenth century, town council meetings at Chiavari, Santa Margherita, and Nervi “fomented partisanship” through the public display of the flags and “colors” that served as factional symbols.<sup>14</sup>

But what relationship was constructed and asserted between these realities, their representation and the images created of them by the Genoese officials, and state authority? In what ways and on what level was the authority of the *Principe* manifested and affirmed?

1. Our attempt to respond to these questions begins with a consideration of Genoese political events during the last decades of the sixteenth century, focusing especially on the factional conflict among the nobility that erupted in 1575. Between the spring and fall of that year, centuries-long divisions and more recent inter-noble disputes publicly exploded. The civil war between the *Vecchi* and *Nuovi* nobles spread from the city to some of the other Ligurian communities, forcing the great European powers (Spain, the Empire, the Holy See, and France) to engage diplomatically, but directly. The political and military confrontation, which called into question the institutional form and international position of the Republic, was resolved by an agreement at Casale Monferrato in 1576. This accord pacified the nobles, reorganized the governing group (perhaps more accurately, created a political oligarchy), provided for the publication of the *Leges novae*, and approved a comprehensive reform of criminal justice.<sup>15</sup>

Beginning in these years especially—and we will return to this key historical moment often in the pages that follow—Genoa began to focus more and more closely on the governance of its communities. This was

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., filza 1437.

<sup>12</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Politicorum, busta 1650.

<sup>13</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 550.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., filza 609.

<sup>15</sup> On these issues and episodes, see V. Vitale, *Breviario della storia di Genova*, 2 vols. (Genoa, 1955); C. Costantini, *La Repubblica di Genova nell'età moderna* (Turin, 1978); R. Savelli, *La Repubblica oligarchica* (Milan, 1981).

also the beginning of the debate about justice and “bandits,” a debate that continued to evolve and in the mid-seventeenth century produced the remarks of Gio Francesco Spinola cited in the opening of this chapter.

The Genoese governing elites were characteristically cosmopolitan and their destinies were linked to those of the great European powers with whom they allied themselves. They had constructed their own political unity, beginning with the reforms of Andrea Doria in 1528, through a long process of peace-making and aggregation. The oligarchic government of the seventeenth century emerged from repeated factional conflicts that had culminated in the crisis of 1575. This cultural backstory seems to have inspired and guided the policies by which the Republic intervened in the local communities. From the late sixteenth century to 1650 or so, the urban elites were committed to a project of administrative centralization. They rediscovered in the rest of Ligurian society forms of private association and political groupings—such as kin groups, factions, and conventicles—that were ultimately not very different from those of their own urban sociopolitical tradition.<sup>16</sup>

State-building and administrative centralization seem to have been driven not by pressing fiscal needs,<sup>17</sup> but rather by political interests in a context involving other Italian states and European powers, Spanish pressures on the Republic’s borders (the most noted cases being those of Finale and the Lunigiana), the Imperial fiefs in the Apennines, and internally, great feudal landowning families.

But the ambitions of the urban oligarchy ran into a wall of real territorial structures that were the unintended consequences of Genoa’s medieval expansion, which had been effected through conquest and negotiated acquisition. Territorially, the Republic was shot through with a patchwork of fiefs, enclaves, and communities enjoying special status. The political organization of the territory was divided into vicariates, captainates (districts headed by a noble Genoese officer), and *podesterie* whose

<sup>16</sup>This topic is addressed by Grendi in “Profilo storico degli Alberghi” and in “Le conventicole nobiliari e la Riforma del 1528,” *Rivista Storica Italiana* 78 (1966), now in *La repubblica aristocratica*, 105–38.

<sup>17</sup>Tax collection from the territory was certainly not crucial for the financing of public expenditures; in this sense Genoa perhaps displays similarities to Venice. The real problem seems to me to have been Genoa’s efforts to assert full sovereignty with respect to Italian states and to the Empire. As is well known, Genoese nobles engaged in diplomatic initiatives during the first decades of the seventeenth century in order to secure “royal honors” for the Republic.



administrative, judicial, and military functions were neither homogenous nor hierarchically configured. But above all, local political life tended to disperse power, or expressed itself in supra-local forms of organization like factions.

Against this backdrop, the organization and administration of criminal justice in the territories during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries became a key axis by which the Genoese state expanded and was legitimized.

2. Beginning in 1578, commissioners against bandits were sent to the areas that had seen fighting during the civil war of summer–fall 1575: the valleys just behind the city and the communities of the *Levante* (eastern Liguria). These commissioners were given “authority, power, and *balia*” to issue decisions for the

prosecution, capture, punishment and elimination of bandits, vagabonds, assassins, highwaymen, homicidal thieves and their accomplices, criminals, executors and abettors ... shameless people and scoundrels, bandits and other persons who, masked or disguised, or with false beards or other methods for not being recognized, go about stealing and preying on the country and carrying out every kind of evil act.<sup>18</sup>

There was undoubtedly a connection between the crisis of 1575 and the fresh outbreak of banditry. In the communities of the *Levante* (in 1578 the area to which the commissioners were sent was situated between the Bisagno Valley, Montoggio, Roccatagliata, Recco, Rapallo, and Chiavari), the costs of the war were borne almost completely by local fighters who were recruited and organized by local “captains.” After demobilization a portion of the rural population gathered again into units. This kind of phenomenon has been identified throughout early modern Europe.<sup>19</sup> But the situation described as alarming by the Genoese officials reflected an endemic state of affairs: the civil war had only increased the

<sup>18</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1429; *ibid.*, Rota Criminale, filza 1224.

<sup>19</sup> See for example J. M. Beattie, “The Pattern of Crime in England 1600–1800,” *Past and Present* 62 (1974): 47–95; D. Hay, “War, Dearth and Theft in the Eighteenth Century: The Record of the English Courts,” *Past and Present* 95 (1982): 117–60; J. Sundin, “Bandits and Guerilla Soldiers. Armed Bands on the Border between Sweden and Denmark in Early Modern Times,” in *Bande armate, banditi, banditismo e repressione di giustizia negli stati europei di antico regime*, ed. G. Ortalli (Rome, 1986), 141–66; J. S. Koliopoulos, “Military Entrepreneurship in Central Greece during the Greek War of National Liberation (1821–1830),” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 2 (1984): 163–87; A. Blok, “I Bokkerijder

range of opportunities for bandits and augmented their numbers. It renewed preexisting local conflicts between extended kin groups and opposing factions and made them more acute and dramatic.<sup>20</sup>

The presence and role of bandits in local microcosms depended both on internal conflicts and on relations with the wider society, where it was linked to vast and powerful protection networks.<sup>21</sup> The protectors and “supporters of bandits” included “relatives” who refused to collaborate with judicial officials and *principali*, who could be notables, faction bosses, merchants and tavern-keepers, or individuals who held political and religious office. The local power networks defined by these relationships and solidarities now began to take up a position of opposition with respect to state authority.

3. The Republic’s criminal statutes, like other similar records, captured the significance of these social relations. The numerous headings dealing with bandits focused particular attention on “relatives,” “supporters,” “assistants,” “followers,” and “abettors.”<sup>22</sup> The statutes did not identify a specific crime in this regard—in Old Regime penal doctrine neither the *crimen* of banditry nor that of participation in an “armed gang” existed<sup>23</sup>—but pointed instead to a set of practices, social behaviors, and relations between authorities, groups, and civil society. The ban affected a great variety of individuals found guilty of an enormous range of specific crimes: there were “temporary” bandits, “relegated” bandits, and “capital” bandits, the latter of which were categorized in four “classes” according to the seriousness of the infraction, how dangerous they were, how many people had testified against them, the decision of the authority in charge, and recidivism. Failure to respect the ban could lead to charges of rebellion and *lèse majesté*, with appropriate ceremonial form for the eventual public torture.

(1730–1774). Artigiani, ambulanti e brigantaggio nell’area della Mosa,” *Quaderni storici* 63 (1986): 875–95.

<sup>20</sup> See O. Raggio, “La politica nella parentela. Conflitti locali e commissari in Liguria orientale (secoli XVI–XVII),” *Quaderni storici* 63 (1986): 875–95.

<sup>21</sup> For specific examples, compare A. Blok, *The Mafia of a Sicilian Village, 1860–1960* (New York, 1974) (Italian trans. *La mafia di un villaggio siciliano, 1860–1960* [Turin, 1986], 91 ff.); L. Lewin, “The Oligarchical Limitation of Social Banditry: The Case of the ‘Good’ Thief Antonio Silvino,” *Past and Present* 82 (1979): 116–46.

<sup>22</sup> *Criminalium Iurium Civitatis Genuensis Libri Duo* (1557). I refer here to the published edition, with additions, of 1653.

<sup>23</sup> M. Sbriccoli, “Brigantaggio e ribellismi nella criminalistica dei secoli XVI–XVIII,” in *Bande armate*, 479–503.

Still, the laws (statutes, edicts, pronouncements, etc.) always assumed that bandits were powerless and that they could not survive unless they were tied into a wide network of protection headed by “kin” and coordinated by “supporters” who often sat atop the social hierarchy due to their status and wealth. “Neighboring princes” and “nearby” feudal lords also belonged to this protective shield, as local history thus became intertwined with high politics, resulting in an intense and delicate diplomatic game.

The Senate’s orders to the commissioners reinforced their duty to intervene in “places suffering from discord amongst the local inhabitants.” They were to “castigate the delinquents,” but above all to make peace. Their highest priority was to make decisions in disputes in order to “secure peace between the kin groups.” Only peace could give new life to the judicial system, and thereby to state authority. The concepts of peace and justice were almost always linked, and the theme of peace-making was politically significant in the broadest way. It was a central component of Genoese criminal policy, it often overlapped with the theme of governance, and it highlighted (as we will see through an examination of a series of local events) the continuous relations between local groups and notables. Such relations were asymmetrical and antagonistic, but at the same time dialogical and permissive of exchange.<sup>24</sup>

The general problems that thus confronted state authority and local powers related to the governance of the communities and the legitimation of central power—the *potestà del Principe*, in the language of the Genoese magistrates.<sup>25</sup> Not by chance, the forces tasked with cleaning up the bandit problem and making peace among the kin groups grew directly out of the oligarchy’s political power. The discourse about “bandits” was simultaneously, and more generally, a discourse about the society comprised of the state’s territories. The commissioners appointed by the

<sup>24</sup> On this issue, work in anthropology has been very important; for a recent study see A. Arno, “Structural Communication and Control Communication: An Interactionist Perspective on Legal and Customary Procedures for Conflict Management,” *American Anthropologist* 87 (1985): 40–55. A good synthesis of the various analytical perspectives is found in the foreword by Sally Humphreys to a special issue of *History and Anthropology* 2 (1985): 241–64. On dialogue as a “crucial force for creating form,” see M. Bakhtin (Bachtin), “La parola nel romanzo,” in *Estetica e romanzo* (Turin, 1979), esp. 92 ff.; English trans. “Discourse in the Novel,” in *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays* (Austin TX, 1981), esp. 284 ff.

<sup>25</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1029. The theme of political legitimation with respect to banditry is central to the study of B. D. Shaw, “Bandits in the Roman Empire,” *Past and Present* 105 (1984): 3–52.

Senate had full powers and “special oversight” in relation to local judges and officials; in the language of the time, their position was superior to ordinary justice.

Studying bandits thus helps us to reconstruct the actions taken by the oligarchic government and outline its institutional profile. But it also enables us to study community ethnography and local practices. As I follow the evolution of central organizational structures—which culminated in the creation of a special magistracy (the *Giunta* against bandits) in the mid-seventeenth century—I will occasionally identify cases for which the documentation is most dense and articulated. In so doing, I will try to link the local level to the variegated forms of a process of social communication in which the history of judicial events played a central role.

4. In the communities that form my field of analysis, kinship represents the context and language through which social and political relations are articulated and expressed. In the realms of economics, politics, and religion, kinship—though without serving as a universal model in every community in the Republic—was an important organizing force and a key principle that oriented and guided individual behavior, giving significance to relationships. Social actors exercised their agency, in the first instance, as members of the kin group with which they shared a surname and lived in the same cluster of houses or village or parish. The relation between social representations and individual or group behavior was not linear, but marked by ambiguities, conflicts, and discord. However, the evidence shows that it was particularly active and direct in situations of conflict between different kin groups and (as we will see below) in public situations and relations with institutions. Trial records from 1665 provide an example that helps clarify the individual/kin group relation and the way in which individuals perceived and conceptualized social life. Francesco Montoggio and Gio Batta Montegrifo appeared before the general commissioner against bandits (who suspected them of having participated in a feud and provided support to bandits and their kin groups) and made virtually identical declarations: “In the places, or villages, of the Riviera when a person from one kin group [*parentella*] or surname is enemy of another, the kin groups join together even if they are not united by blood.”<sup>26</sup> This testimony contains an important piece of information: the kin group was not a simple biological fact but a social unit and an idiom through which binding ties could be constructed. This reality was

<sup>26</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1254.

confirmed, from the perspective of Genoese authority, by an account submitted by the commissioner Ambrosio Lomellino in 1580. Even eighty years earlier, his formulation is surprisingly similar to that of the two suspects from 1665: “When someone from one kin group is offended by someone from another one ... all those from the offended kin group are resentful against any and every person from the other kin group that they claimed had offended one of their own.”<sup>27</sup>

The judgment of Ambrosio Lomellino about these social behaviors is perfectly consonant with the images of social extraneousness mentioned above: “truly barbarous customs ... like beasts.” It is still important to note here, though, that this universe of local practices was translated by Genoa into formal judicial procedure. The solidarity—often constructed through concerted action—that tied all of the “kin” together in feuds or in support offered to bandits became, from the perspective of Genoese criminal statutes, the collective responsibility of all of the “kin” for bandit activity:

The kin ... both of the same surname and kin group of these [bandits], as well as others, *and also those of the same surname and kin group* [parentella], *even if they are not relatives* [parenti] ... must pay all of the damages, expenses, and interests, that said robbers and assassins or bandits might cause in the Dominion of the Republic to those who suffer the damages, in addition to the wages of the soldiers, police, and servants.

This principle was also valid for the peace agreements and for the security pledges imposed as guarantees and demanded in the event of “peace-breaking.”<sup>28</sup> The written peace accords established through the mediation of public authorities represented a contract between the parties in conflict (kin groups) and the state. The peace agreement forgave the less serious infractions and the kin groups undertook to distance their bandits from the Republic’s territory. Genoa asked the “kin”—who thus became the special interlocutors of the commissioners—to see to it that the provisions were respected, and to expel the bandits.

<sup>27</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1445. Ambrosio Lomellino was commissioner-general against bandits in the *Levante*.

<sup>28</sup> *Criminalium Iurium*, chap. C, “Propinquos exulem, et de parentela eorum teneri ad damna ab illis illata,” and chap. LXI, “De rumpente pacem vel indutias.”

The prizes distributed for the capture or killing of contumacious bandits<sup>29</sup> also functioned as a public sanction of accords that were drawn up to address private and familial conflicts. The prize was an indicator of collaboration with state justice and could also be issued in the form of clemency for bandits who killed other bandits. Bans were lifted when bandits of “equal, or greater infraction” were killed, and “regardless of inequity between the infractions.” It was also possible to use one’s clemency in order to have another bandit liberated. This variety of solutions reveals the experimental quality of the Republic’s policy and the variety of local situations. Prizes and clemency were also aspects of a contract between the authorities and civil society. The theoretical aspect of this issue was made explicit in a text written by a jurist for the *Inquisitori* (magistrates) of state in 1698:

The clemency that is granted to a suspect who reveals and makes clear the infraction and those who committed it is a *contract* that is drawn up between the *Principe*, who has absolute authority in the matter, and the suspect, whose obligation it is to fulfill every condition contained in it, and on the other side, when these conditions are fulfilled, the contract is to be rigorously respected.<sup>30</sup>

In fact, the contract with the “subjects” always engaged a more or less vast network of local relations and tended to recalibrate the honor structure and the political asymmetries of this complex society. Being liberated from the ban was always a function of the offended party establishing peace (which was authenticated by a public decree) or by the commitment—with a guarantee from “kin”—not to reside in or re-enter the place where the offended party or their heirs lived. Further, bandits were excluded from the possibility of clemency, at least normatively, for the murder of citizens inscribed in the book of nobility, for infractions within the walls of the capital city and its suburbs, for infractions against state officials, for the homicide of close kin, and for *lèse majesté* (secular or divine). Also excluded were servants accused of robbing or murdering their masters, counterfeiters, homosexuals, etc.; that is, those who had been banned for crimes against the state, authority, or family. The exclusion also applied to all offenses that assaulted one’s honor: clubbings,

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., chap. CIII, “De praemio occidentis rebellem, vel capite damnatum, exulem capientis.”

<sup>30</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 126, emphasis mine.

facial wounds, beltings, and throwing trash or excrement against people or the doors of their houses.<sup>31</sup>

Considering these aspects all together, one may affirm that juridical formalization both reflected and constructed social reality. The adaptation of norms and procedures to different local realities was part of this process and was brought to light precisely through the different penal practices applied by the commissioners who were dealing with the bandits and their kin.

5. In early April 1580, the commissioner Gio Batta di Negro captured two “capital” bandits, Nicolino Canezza and “the Graffignotto,” in the backcountry of Rapallo. After a long interrogation session and the application of torture, Di Negro obtained a confession of their misdeeds, had them dragged to the place of execution “tied to a mule,” and had them hanged “by the throat.” On May 2 the commissioner wrote to the Senate that

today I put to death Nicolino Canezza and the Graffignotto, and in order to make a better example I had said Canezza placed on the hill of Our Lady of Rapallo, where some of his crimes had been carried out, and placed the said Graffignotto in a well in the midst of the Lavagna valley.

At Roccatagliata and at Lorsica—two villages which were occupied for a few days by Corsican soldiers—the same commissioner had two houses where bandits had been living burned to the ground, and was able to “discover” two more of their “supporters.”<sup>32</sup>

The *exemplum* of executions was not the only manifestation of the authority of the *Principe*, however. On the contrary, Genoese officials often encouraged peaceful agreements and mediation. In 1578–79 another commissioner coordinated a peace agreement between kin groups in the Fontanabuona and Lavagna valleys. The accord specified where the bandits would be sent, and when and how they would be sent away (to Corsica, to western Liguria [the *Ponente*], and to cities in the Po Valley).<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup>These crimes were considered more serious for the shame that they caused than for material damage; see *Criminalium Iurium*, chap. XXXV, “De percudentibus baculo,” and ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1030.

<sup>32</sup>ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filze 508 and 515.

<sup>33</sup>ASG, Rota Criminale, filze 1223–24; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filze 512–13; *ibid.*, Senato-Atti, filze 1434–35.

Those who took the initiative to open talks—which were long, difficult, and ambiguous—with local officials or Genoese magistrates were frequently the bandits' relatives, or even the bandits themselves. The bandits asked for safe passage and promised to turn over other bandits or facilitate their capture in exchange for clemency. In summer 1579 Nicolino Consigliero presented the captain of Chiavari with the head of Michele Capellino, a bandit of about sixty years of age. As he entered the citadel of the walled town of Chiavari, Nicolino was accompanied by seven bandits armed with arquebuses, while another squad of bandits was stationed at the town gates.<sup>34</sup>

In May 1579 the commissioner Pietro Maria de Ferrari lifted the ban from three bandits of the Boitano and Leverone kin groups who had turned over the decapitated heads of another three bandits. When the blood was cleaned off and they were exposed in public, numerous witnesses identified the three young bandits: Stefano Barbazelata, "about twenty-five years old, with a bit of beard and a long, brownish face"; Bartolomeo Fopiano, "also known as Bino Carnesalata, about twenty-three years old, with a bit of beard and light skin"; and Gianone Fopiano, a twenty-two-year-old "clean-shaven with white skin." In fact, the three had been killed in a "skirmish" between rival bands. Their decapitated heads had been found a few days later at the scene of the fighting, in front of a cave on the Barbagelata mountain.<sup>35</sup>

Bandits also appear in the sources as signatories of peace agreements between kin groups that had been mediated by commissioners or judges. In 1579 twenty-two bandits furnished with safe conducts were present for a general peace accord between twelve kin groups from the parish of Bavari, signed at Fontanegli by 195 household heads, one Sunday afternoon "at Vespers." The bandits named in the agreement received as a "benefit" the withdrawal by their accusers of all "disputes, accusations, and denunciations ... and over any trial or sentence resulting from them, and any ban that had been proclaimed." The accusers also forgave every injury and offense by the kin groups that were party to the agreement. In the presence of the commissioner and witnesses the bandits embraced and exchanged the kiss of peace with the household heads of the kin groups

<sup>34</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1223 and *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 507. The Capellino and Consigliero kin groups had not adhered to the general peace agreement brokered by the commissioner Pietro Maria de Ferrari in summer 1578.

<sup>35</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 513 and *ibid.*, Senato-Atti, filza 1434.



that had previously been their enemies.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, in 1571, the representatives of fifteen kin groups from the judicial districts of Recco and Rapallo and the Imperial fiefs of the Trebbia Valley, together with the bandits from the same kin groups “came to a good, true, and friendly peace ... and drank from the same cup.”<sup>37</sup> In 1606 the bandits of the Benvenuto, Olcese, and Castagnola kin groups from the parish of Sori agreed, according to a peace proposal made in the presence of arbiters appointed by the Genoese Senate, to serve the sentence of banishment to the kingdom of Naples. Their promise to leave for exile within a month’s time was guaranteed by a security pledge of 1,000 gold *scudi* “from each kin group [*parentelle*] from which said lawbreakers came.”<sup>38</sup>

6. In the 1580s, the Genoese magistracies established an “extraordinary tribunal” against bandits.<sup>39</sup> The goal of the new urban oligarchy in the capital was to establish “supreme authority in criminal matters.”<sup>40</sup> The reforms of the criminal justice system then being carried out tended to reinforce the exclusive political prerogatives of the Genoese nobility with respect to those who were not listed in the official register of nobility, and to limit the role of the *Rota criminale* (criminal court), which had been created in 1576 and was staffed by non-Genoese judges.<sup>41</sup> Significantly, the reforms dealt with the crime of *lèse majesté*, the punishments for offenses committed against “ministers” of the Republic, the appointment of commissioners, and the granting of armed assistance to judges.<sup>42</sup>

Further, the administrative reorganization of the Republic’s territory, by which some of the judicial districts became captainates, entered into the same logic. The creation of the captainates of Polcevera in 1582 and Bisagno in 1598 removed these two strategically important areas just above the city from the criminal jurisdiction of the *Rota*. Instead, they fell under the authority of captains, Genoese nobles frequently empowered

<sup>36</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1437.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., filza 1455. The peace agreement was signed at Casanova in the Malaspina fief and ratified by the Republic.

<sup>38</sup> ASG, Notary Bernardo Zerbinò, filza 1: “Instrumentum pacis inter Benvenutos, Urcisos et Castagnola,” 16 April 1606. There were 101 men, including bandits with safe conducts, who agreed to this accord.

<sup>39</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1027 ff.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., busta 1029.

<sup>41</sup> See Savelli, *La Repubblica oligarchica* and id., *Potere e giustizia*.

<sup>42</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1027.

with the authority to use coercive power, appointed by the Senate.<sup>43</sup> The arguments driving this move focused on issues of “partisanship,” bandits, and the “preservation of justice.” The same themes were sounded when the districts of Novi, Recco, Brugnato, and Rapallo—areas that were similar in many ways to the Polcevera and Bisagno valleys—were restructured in the first decade of the seventeenth century.<sup>44</sup> In each case, administrative-territorial reform was modeled after the captainate-vicariate of Chiavari<sup>45</sup>—the most important town of the *Levante* Riviera, situated in the area most affected by banditry, with the most salient characteristics of a feud-based society.

All of these communities, especially their territorial offshoots in the backcountry, were criss-crossed by important transit routes, commercial and otherwise, heading toward the Po Valley. Or, they were locations that bordered feudal territories.<sup>46</sup> These areas were just a few miles from the city walls of Genoa, or right behind the largest coastal towns of the *Levante*. They had a reputation for being homes to strong kin groups, the foundation on which local power structures and notables were built and sustained. The *principali* were household heads who held community charges and public offices, dominating local resources by their prestige and positions. They also belonged to “large kin groups”—vast clientele networks of “kin” and followers, of lenders, and often of bandits.

7. The pacification of kin groups, the governance of the communities, and relations with neighboring princes were the three challenges that Genoa confronted in the late sixteenth century—issues that were indissolubly intertwined with each other and with the bandit problem.

The patrician monopoly of public office brought the Genoese nobles who had been appointed as commissioners into direct contact with local realities. In 1584 Pietro Maria de Ferrari was appointed commissioner-general for the entire dominion, but established his headquarters in the *Levante*, at Chiavari.<sup>47</sup> Another commissioner, Stefano Camogli, was given the task of assisting De Ferrari by hunting down bandits beyond the

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., buste 1027–28.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., buste 1028–29.

<sup>45</sup> There are explicit references in *ibid.*, buste 1027 and 1030.

<sup>46</sup> Other areas where specific interventions were made included the *podesteria* of Varese, which was traversed by mule roads leading to Parma and Piacenza, bordering on the territories of Count Landi, and Sarzana in the easternmost part of the *Levante*, contiguous to the Imperial fiefs of the Lunigiana.

<sup>47</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 103.

borders of the Republic and seeking to obtain extraditions and “memo-randa of understanding” from neighboring princes.<sup>48</sup>

The border areas and the Apennine fiefs were vital spaces for the bandits. Their importance for the communities and the people of the Riviera was tied to the traditional orientation of commercial traffic toward the Po Valley. For Genoa, the significance of these areas was primarily political. Pressured by commissioners or forced by local enmities to abandon their villages and houses, the bandits found refuge and work in the Imperial fiefs where they were employed by the lords as servants, toughs, and mercenaries. These lords used them to organize and protect contraband, to raid other feudal nobles, and to harass the shepherds who pastured livestock in common lands in the area (such as the border between Compiano and Varese, between the Aveto Valley and the valleys behind Chiavari, and between Torriglia and Roccatagliata). They also helped to enforce the lords’ justice. Negotiations and epistolary exchanges between princes and states revolved around the problem of sovereignty, as all sides engaged in intense diplomatic maneuvering. In this part of the Apennines, sovereignty belonged to dozens of feudal lords situated in as many territorial fiefs. The concessions made by these lords to the Republic always reserved and emphasized the formal respect of the lords’ jurisdictional prerogatives and their “territorial superiority.” Genoese commissioners could enter into the fiefs to follow and capture bandits, “with the exception of those banned from the Dominion of the Most Serene Republic who were domiciled and lived peacefully in said Jurisdiction of Ours, supported and protected by Us.” This clause applied for the important fief of Santo Stefano d’Aveto, given to the Doria by Charles V, but also for other lords such as Francesco, Damiano, and Pier Batta Fieschi, co-lords of Savignone.<sup>49</sup> Thus, some bandits who were exiled with their families could declare that they had become subjects of a new prince. Without a doubt, the great political fragmentation of the Apennine area favored the bandits: “superiority” over fiefs and territories whose possession was contested or for which an Imperial declaration was pending had to be continuously reaffirmed through acts of jurisdiction. In 1584, a judge in Torriglia, who served the marquis of Pregola (a member of the Doria family), complained that the Genoese and the Milanese entered into the territory of the

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., filze 103 and 1226; *ibid.*, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1557.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. On the Imperial fiefs in the Apennines, see A. Sisto, *I Feudi imperiali del Tortonese* (sec. XI-XIX) (Turin, 1956).

marquisate to pursue bandits “without encountering jurisdictional opposition” over the area.<sup>50</sup>

With respect to high politics, bandits operated in the shadow of the pro-Imperial and pro-French alignments and, in a diverse framework of changing alliances and conspiracies, were alternately recruited and protected or persecuted by princes. Counts and lords, wrote the commissioner Stefano Camogli from Bettola in October 1584, used the bandits “for their disorderly appetites.”<sup>51</sup> For this reason he sought to bypass the feudal lords and, “as quietly as possible,” opened direct talks with Milan and with the duke of Parma. Camogli received permission from Duke Ranuccio Farnese to interrogate Juanino Bacigalupo, who had been banned from Chiavari in 1578. The commissioner later declared to have gotten nothing from the examination because he had no authority (the review of the case and the final decision remained in the hands of the duke). In fact, Bacigalupo confessed under torture to twenty-eight murders, but all had been committed outside of Genoese and ducal territory and were thus exempt from prosecution.

Still, the long confession of Juanino Bacigalupo is rich with details about the vast number of possibilities offered by the feudal lordships to bandits from the Republic. After he left Carrasco (a village near Chiavari where he had been living with his relatives) to avoid capture, Juanino—who demonstrated a perfect understanding of the political geography of the area between Liguria and the Po Valley—served Giovan Battista Doria, marquis of Santo Stefano d’Aveto. He then entered the service of Count Albertino Caracciolo, and then of Pietro Francesco Nivelli (in his house in Piacenza). Along with other bandits, he raided the lands of Count Claudio Landi and of the marquis Malaspina-Degli Edifici. He had a “*parlamento* [meeting]” with the Spinola lords, thanks to a safe-conduct procured for him by Giovan Battista Doria. During his seven years under the ban he re-entered Genoese territory many times. There he visited relatives, recruited other bandits, and joined up for short periods with bandit groups dedicated to stealing silk, velvet, and livestock and extorting merchants and muleteers.<sup>52</sup> He even got married and had a daughter who was a few

<sup>50</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 103.

<sup>51</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1557.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., “Processo, ò vero esame di Juanino Bacigalupo” (17 July to 4 November 1584). The merchandise stolen by the bandits was stashed at Cabanne in the Aveto Valley and in the Verzi Valley. At Cerignale (in the jurisdiction of the Doria family), a “market” was held of velvet stolen in Liguria.

months old. Following talks with the Genoese, the duke of Parma issued a proclamation requiring Genoese bandits to leave his state, so Juanino took refuge at Bettola, on the advice of the lady Fulvia Nivella. When he was captured he had been getting ready to leave for Flanders in the company of his lord. His interrogation lasted for almost four months and finished without a sentence, revealing that Juanino still had friends and protectors. Many people whom he had served tried to get him released, especially the Caracciolo counts and other “principal men of this state,” who pressured the duke for his freedom. Stefano Camogli wrote to De Ferrari that Juanino “has support everywhere, and was so well treated and received such medical attention that ... if he had been a saint, he would not have received more favors.”<sup>53</sup>

The exiled Genoese bandits whom Juanino knew were organized into rival *compagnie* under the command of bosses (Pantalino Massa and Antonio Pozzo—described as “devils in human form”—Battino Bazzorro and Bacchione Longinotto) who led raids, oversaw the distribution of loot, and negotiated with feudal lords. Their remarkable mobility across areas that were extremely fragmented politically, together with their vast networks of friends and protectors, explained how they were able to avoid capture, at least for long periods of time. When, for example, the duke of Parma issued a decree of expulsion, one part of the Genoese bandits passed over to the service of Count Claudio Landi, who had just returned from “Germany” and was gathering men, supplies, and munitions for an attempt to recapture Borgotaro, which had submitted to Farnese control after the rebellion of 1577.<sup>54</sup>

The question of relations with neighboring princes—and the possibility for the bandits to find safe refuge—remained an open one throughout the seventeenth century. In 1653 the *Giunta* against bandits contacted

<sup>53</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 103. Friendship and generosity were part of the relationship between lords and bandits: in late September 1584, a Malaspina marquis made available to Pantalino Massa (one of the most famous Genoese bandits of the late sixteenth century, who was ill and perhaps wounded) a horse, and a “castle-like fortified house” that the Corsican soldiers were unable to enter, despite their efforts (ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1557).

<sup>54</sup> Ibid. Genoese bandits also came to the Taro Valley from Antibes, where they had taken refuge, after Genoa had asked the *Parlement* of Aix to extradite them. The commissioner Lorenzo Conte had made the request, which was mediated by Giulio Doria, lord of Dolceacqua and brother-in-law of the governor of Provence. On the Landi “state” and Borgotaro, see G. Tocci, *Le terre traverse. Poteri e territori nei ducati di Parma e Piacenza tra Sei e Settecento* (Bologna, 1985).

sixty-seven feudal lords and co-lords (who might have held most, half, two-thirds, and sometimes five-twelfths of the fief depending on their jurisdiction and the revenues), requesting permission to investigate.<sup>55</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century Genoa attempted to negotiate with the emperor for the acquisition of the “territorial superiority” over the Apennine fiefs. In earlier years as well, the Republic had acquired fiefs and membership in feudal consortia in order to extend its own dominion into the transit areas leading toward the Po Valley, so that it could fight banditry more effectively. Indeed, the fiefs were arranged in a kind of long arc along the borders of the Republic, so that “the delinquents can reach safe territory within two or three hours.”<sup>56</sup> But the political significance of the centuries-long history of these negotiations was two-fold: internal (linked to relations with the great Genoese families who themselves held fiefs in these very areas) and international (related to ties with regional states, European powers, and to efforts by the Genoese nobles to attain royal rank). In 1652 the general commissioner against bandits Negrone di Negro concluded that negotiations with the duke of Savoy were good, those with the duke of Florence were difficult, and those with the “ministers” of Spain were awful.<sup>57</sup> The constantly shifting scenarios of political alignments, diplomatic efforts, wars, and competition for control of the fiefs continuously created new opportunities for the Genoese bandits at the regional level.

But in the Apennine fiefs the bandits were hosted not only by the lords, but also by their “kinfolk.” Numerous family groups residing in the Genoese villages were probably originally from the feudal territories. The Garbarino—ensconced in dense groups in hamlets situated between Chiavari and the Bisagno Valley—came from the high valley of the Trebbia. Some of the kin groups of the backcountry of Chiavari and Rapallo, including the Fopiano, Casazza, Barbazelata, Connio, Prianegra, and Rovegno, maintained close relations with those who shared their surnames in the marquisates of Pregola, Torriglia, and Ottone. There, the Genoese bandits found asylum in fortified villages and buildings that “were not

<sup>55</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1117. On the Imperial feudal ordinance, see K.O. von Aretin, “L’ordinamento feudale in Italia nel XVI e XVII secolo e le sue ripercussioni sulla politica europea,” *Annali dell’Istituto italo-germanico in Trento* 4 (1973): 51–94.

<sup>56</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1117.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

houses but towers,”<sup>58</sup> along the muleteer paths that linked the Ligurian coast to the Po Valley cities. Kin solidarity was tied up in and overlapped with the events and dynamics of political history and—this is a key point—stretched across the jurisdictional borders of states and fiefs. Kinship ties thus determined, conditioned, and complicated relations between states and princes. As we have already seen, kin groups from different jurisdictions were party to the general peace agreements; indeed, the participation of everyone (including the bandits) was seen by Genoese authorities as indispensable for the creation of a true and honest peace.<sup>59</sup>

8. Internally, within communities, dealings with bandits that resulted in accusations, trials, and guilty sentences (such as banishment, exile, galley service, property confiscation, etc.) were never individualized procedures. Rather, the bandits’ kin, followers, and supporters were usually principal actors and main characters in these dramas. A vast and heterogeneous network of people engaged in patron-client or factional relations were thus implicated. At the forefront were always the “kin.” In 1584 the commissioner-general determined that it was necessary to “restrain the kin [of the bandits], that is, their father, brother, and at least as far as their first cousins.”<sup>60</sup> But in practice the umbrella of responsibility extended to include all the “kin,” by blood and surname. This is confirmed, as we have seen, by the language in criminal statutes, decrees, and letters patent addressed to the commissioners. A law of 1613 ordered investigating officials in cases of violent deaths to specify the name, surname, status, and age of all the “kin who stood to inherit ... in order that justice would not be frustrated, especially when a peace agreement or clemency is at issue.”<sup>61</sup> The burden of compensation could in fact fall upon the heirs and all the “kin,” even fictive kin with neither consanguineal nor affinal ties.

Local society traditionally regulated violence via mechanisms of reciprocity and compensation within kin groups whose tentacles often reached throughout the area. In this way, the relationship between individual and

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., filza 103 and Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1558. On the Garbarino see notes 37 and 67. In 1584 the bandits from the backcountry of Chiavari, closely pursued by Corsican soldiers, withdrew with their wives and children into the Imperial fiefs “where they had relatives” (ibid.).

<sup>59</sup> In 1596 the captain of Chiavari judged the peace agreement between the Cella and the Bacigalupo to be “imperfect ... because those Cella who lived in the marquisate of San Stefano were not involved in the discussions” (ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 563).

<sup>60</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 103.

<sup>61</sup> For the text of this law, see *Criminalium Iurium*, chap. II.

state authority and the judicial system was mediated by a vast system of family and kinship. I have already alluded to this crucial phenomenon: Ligurian society was characterized by a diversity of local forms of social affiliation and political aggregation, each linked to particular expressions of individual and collective identity. These political arrangements and identities were articulated and divided in different ways within a complex set of social organizational possibilities.<sup>62</sup> These included communities, parishes, *universitates* (assemblies) of household heads that met in front of the church or in its courtyard, villages, neighborhoods, kin groups, factions, conventicles, devotional associations, and groups defined according to the age of their members or to occupation. In the midst of these associational forms, the expansive kin group described above occupied a central and pervasive position in some areas. We know how this category was perceived by direct protagonists and Genoese authorities, by the social actors and by outside (at least in part) observers. The context in which we grasp this category and are able to explore it (through the sources and documentary clues available to the historian) is, however, always that of confrontation and interaction—more or less direct—between local society and the state, between natives and commissioners.

9. The bundles of archival documents that deal with bandits were produced and assembled in order to verify the legitimacy of their requests for liberation (being freed from the ban), and deal both with single individuals and with their kin groups more generally, and with rival kin groups.<sup>63</sup> The criminal careers and judicial histories of individual bandits were interwoven, and were typically driven by kin group relations. Such relations included “enmities” between kin groups, as revealed in documents such as arbitration records, peace agreements, and contracts with institutions.

In 1610 a proposed law required bandits’ kin—which meant those “of the surname and kin group, even if they were not relatives”—to pay the expenses of the commissioner and to provide compensation for the damages caused by bandits. In so doing, the law registered a common practice.<sup>64</sup> Approved and inserted into the criminal statutes, the law guided

<sup>62</sup>The problem of constructing a typological model on the basis of a set of fundamental social elements and chains of local combinations and variations was articulated by C. Geertz in “Form and Variation in Balinese Village Structure,” *American Anthropologist* 61 (1959): 991–1012.

<sup>63</sup>See numerous bundles in ASG, Senato-Atti, including filze 1701–02, 1705, and 1708–10 (for the years 1608–10).

<sup>64</sup>ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1030.



Genoese penal policy for the rest of the century. The preamble of chapter “C” of the criminal statutes reads:

Even though for many years many provisions and orders have been issued in order to eliminate banditry ... and to this end many diligent efforts have been made by us, including offering generous rewards, the appointment of Commissioners, and the continued dispatch of Corsican soldiers to the Countryside, the boldness and insolence of these villains has nonetheless increased to the point that they have almost no fear of justice nor of its ministers, and instead, they spite and mock it, and with great damage to the public and private peace, they continue to infest the country.

In response the Genoese magistracies approved the principle of the collective responsibility of the “relatives” and of a generalized reciprocity.

Efforts were made to extract from the communities and their formal administrative organs the revenues needed to pay the salaries of the Corsican soldiers, and to lodge and provision the commissioners and their assistants. It was difficult to accomplish this through distributions made according to usual tax assessments (that is, on the basis of registers that gave estimates of landowners’ wealth). This difficulty pushed Genoa to turn directly to the “relatives” of bandits who refused to submit, freeing from this burden those people who lived “peacefully and quietly.” For example, the expenses of the commissioner to the *Levante* Riviera for the month of January 1584 amounted to 815 *lire*, to be divided among the communities situated between Recco and Castiglione, bordering the area infested by bandits.<sup>65</sup> But the collection process became practically impossible and sparked conflicts between and within the communities. The coastal towns and their representative assemblies had tried to require the entire sum to be paid by the villages in the backcountry from which, it was said, the bandits originated. Some of the villages declared themselves to be “mortal enemies” of the bandits and accused neighboring villages. The *podesteria* of Castiglione, where the bandits had definitely received food and lodging, was exempt from having to make any payments due to an old statutory privilege; at any rate, the individuals there who had assisted the bandits claimed to have been “forced” to do so. Resistance against authority and the judicial system also expressed itself in collective forms—even if internally conflicted and divided—against the burden of quartering

<sup>65</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 103.

commissioners and contributing to their expenses. With respect to these two problems of coercive and judicial power, two vital elements in the process of state formation (as the dominant historiographic view teaches us), Genoa pushed for the direct engagement of kinship groups.

10. In some cases the Genoese were able to cooperate with villagers who acted out of self-interest. In 1607 a squadron of bandits of the Rovegno kin group from the Recco Valley was operating along the mule paths leading toward Lombardy. These men were based in the farmhouses (*cassine*) along the border with the Bisagno Valley and were said to have ties to certain bourgeois merchants from Rapallo, to the vassals of the Sforza, to the counts Dal Verme, and to the monastery of Montebruno. Thanks to this support the bandits evaded capture and, in response to the measures taken against their kin by the commissioner, blocked the grain traffic from the Po Valley toward Chiavari, where the commissioner was headquartered.<sup>66</sup> Corsican soldiers occupied the village of Aveno, the *vil-lage lignager* of the Rovegno, supported by a “company” of the Garbarino kin group, opponents of the Rovegno in a long-standing feud affecting both Genoese territory and the Imperial fiefs.<sup>67</sup> Only on this basis was the captain of Recco able to have squads of men, from almost all of the villages of his jurisdiction, elected to act against bandits, with permission to bear arms. The captain, who was an open partisan of the anti-Rovegno faction, had all of the lands of the bandits confiscated in mid-July, just after the grain harvest. But neither the officers of Recco nor the rest of the inhabitants of Aveno and nearby villages were able to collect the rents of the confiscated lands or to purchase the grain or the chestnuts produced that summer and fall, “for fear of being killed by the bandits” or incurring the enmity of their relatives. The Rovegno placed scarecrows in their fields and raised the guard at harvest time. The only alternative left to the commissioner was to try to “reach an agreement, and pacify the enmity and hate that has reigned for so many years and through so many deaths

<sup>66</sup> On 18 October the captain of Chiavari declared: “this poor Jurisdiction, which has no commercial traffic other than that with Lombardy, will be ruined” (ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 598).

<sup>67</sup> The onomastic symbiosis between these family names and the villages of Rovegno and Garbarino in the Trebbia Valley is worth noting. For abundant documentation on the conflicts between these two kin groups see ASG, Senato-Atti, filze 1402 and 1455; *ibid.*, Notary Desiderio Cangialanza, filza 1 (1604–11); and Archivio Storico del Comune di Rapallo (hereafter, ASCR), Extraordinarium, reg. 3 and Criminalium, reg. 4.

between these [the Rovegno] and the Garbarini family.”<sup>68</sup> In November 1607 the commissioner Bartolomeo Mainero entrusted the property confiscated from the bandits to kin, in exchange requiring them to house and lodge ten Corsican soldiers in Aveno. Of the thirteen Rovegno household heads involved, one, named Stefano, was “exempted [from this burden] because he was so poor.”<sup>69</sup> The cycle of conflict did not end, however, and the echoes of these events sounded beyond the Recco Valley. In 1608 a wine merchant and a livestock owner from Rapallo obtained a permit to carry arms because they had to travel through the villages inhabited by the Rovegno.<sup>70</sup> A similar concession was made to six Garbarino household heads so that they could confront the “danger and peril” that they experienced living “in the midst of said Rovegno their enemies.”<sup>71</sup>

In 1651, at Neirone, Giovanni Schiappacazze murdered Antonio Valente, a bandit “of the highest order,” accused of carrying out thirty-eight homicides over the course of twenty-four years. Giovanni displayed Antonio’s head in the public square and then requested that, in exchange and with the approval of local officials, his brother Giacinto be released from the galleys. He also offered to “scour the countryside, and keep it free from bandits,” and to that end formed a squad whose members included two of his brothers, two other Schiappacazze, Gio and Giulio Barbero, and Benedetto Leverone. He asked for permission to bear arms and for a salary for him and his companions of 20 *lire* per month. The *Giunta* against bandits gave him a three-month appointment. The commissioner Gio Francesco Spinola favored this move because, as he wrote, from this point on the Schiappacazze will be forced to be perpetual enemies of the bandits “in order not to lose their friends, life, and reputation all together.” A month later, an anonymous letter from a “*homo da bene*” in the name of “the entire People of Neirone” asked the Senate to cancel the liberation of Giacinto. The letter listed and documented his crimes, denounced his supporters and their “schemes,” and described the new dangers that they posed to the “poor families” of Neirone. The author also threatened that “it would be better for him if he were not released, because many people had a need to kill him.”<sup>72</sup>

<sup>68</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 598.

<sup>69</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1692 and *ibid.*, Notary Bernardo Zerbino, filza 2 (1607–18).

<sup>70</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1693.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, filza 1709.

<sup>72</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1117.

These and other examples shed light on how very permeable Genoese policies were with respect to local practices and the strategies of the groups in conflict with each other in the communities. Many first-hand accounts (especially from the communities of the *Levante*) show strong similarities in how they describe interactions between local societies and state authority between the late sixteenth and late seventeenth centuries. The judicial practices and criminal policy of the Genoese did not eliminate conflicts but rather enriched them by adding new elements, contributed to the polarization of the factions, and probably intensified the cultural differences and stratification within the communities.

11. Despite the centralizing policies of the Republic over this long period of time, from the late sixteenth to the late seventeenth century, the general context remained one in which the communities enjoyed ample administrative autonomy. The Genoese regime was more than anything one of “indirect government.”<sup>73</sup> The roles and positions that constituted the administrative and political framework of the communities were still filled by people recruited at the local level. Officers, mayors or syndics, authorizing officials, chancellors and scribes, estimators, censors, treasurers, tax farmers, tax collectors and cashiers, heralds, public health officers, agricultural inspectors, and so on were always natives. These officials were partly subjected to the control and authority of regulatory officials and magistrates appointed by Genoa. The offices, though, whether elected or not, were generally monopolized by leading local figures (*principali*), who simultaneously represented a power dynamic that weakened state authority and served as necessary interlocutors for the Genoese. Ethnographic evidence similar to that which I cited at the beginning of this chapter testifies to the diffusion and continuity of these local practices of governance. In 1578 the *podesteria* of Godano was “in the hands of a few.”<sup>74</sup> At Santa Margherita in 1610 about ten “*capezoni*” traded positions with each other each year.<sup>75</sup> In the first decades of the seventeenth century the Sturla Valley

<sup>73</sup> On this concept, which derives from political anthropology, see in general F. G. Bailey, *Stratagems and Spoils: A Social Anthropology of Politics* (New York, 1969) (Italian trans. *Per forza o per frode. L'antropologia sociale e le regole della competizione politica* [Rome, 1975]). In early modern Europe, an important example of indirect government is offered by Scotland; see J. Wormald, *Court, Kirk and Community* (London, 1981). Another form of indirect governance is that of the French prebendary lordships during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

<sup>74</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1426.

<sup>75</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 609.

was dominated by a few *principali* from the same kin group, “who bullied and enjoyed a numerous following as if they were Knights, either because of their money, or their ability to get their way in the Chiavari court” (this testimony reveals the link between formal and informal powers).<sup>76</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century it was said that the true judges in Chiavari were a handful of wealthy olive oil merchants.<sup>77</sup> And in 1670 the “ordinary government” of the Bisagno Valley at San Martino d’Albaro was in the hands of “the most prominent people in terms of kin group, business dealings, and credit.”<sup>78</sup>

The Republic’s authority in the communities was constituted essentially by captains, Genoese nobles who enjoyed criminal jurisdiction in blood-related offenses and whose functions were mainly judicial. It was also represented by commissioners who enjoyed “the highest power [*suprema potestà*]”—as was continuously the case in some of the *Levante* communities from the late sixteenth century on.

This last detail coincides with the fact that the administration of criminal justice was the fulcrum of state expansion. But at the local level Genoa had no stable military structures independent of the communities. The judges had access to one or two sergeants and at most ten to fifteen assistants (to take the example of the territorially vast captainate-vicariate of Chiavari) who were not all native to the area. The militia were always local formations, organized and commanded by native captain-notables. Militia members (those listed on the registers) were recruited from among men aged between seventeen and seventy years; they were given the important privilege of bearing arms. Even the anti-bandit companies, set up in some communities in the early 1600s and in others around 1650, were composed of household heads from local parishes, neighborhoods, and villages.

The maintenance of public order was normally delegated to administrative units. According to the statutes, communities, *universitates*, neighborhoods, and villages were responsible “all together” for local order. When bandits entered their administrative territory, all men were to arm themselves, gather at the sound of the bell, and capture or kill the bandits. But this norm was interpreted according to local codes of classification, which included kin groups, residential proximity, friendship, and enmity.

<sup>76</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 127.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., filza 1116.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., filza 180.

The result was a gap between norm and behavior that casts a clear light on power relations, the local history of bandits and their kin, their prestige and “*fama*,” and their status.

12. It was indeed the case that cultural opposition was constantly mediated and re-elaborated by concrete social practices. Collaborating with the judicial system brought a “stain of infamy,” as Gio Francesco Spinola noted, and could touch off a feud, but it was also part of the strategy by which actors in a conflict sought supremacy or legitimation. In addition to this, peace-making efforts arbitrated by external authorities were often required by groups that lived face-to-face, or by their neighbors.

The state’s military weakness partly explains the negotiated form of relations with the local elites who controlled the numerous and well-armed “mobs.” The Corsican soldiers who escorted the commissioners—about a hundred in the case of the most extensive operations—were employed above all to force kin groups and the “partisans” to open peace talks. Coercion was thus a key element of the mediating role of the institutions. “I think that I can say that I have dealt with the enmities in the Sturla valley in such a way that peace will not fail to be established, if the promises made to me are respected,” wrote the commissioner Bartolomeo Imperiale from Borzonasca in 1597.<sup>79</sup> In 1598 another commissioner, Paolo Salvago, sent a memoir from the village of Bargagli:

From the time that I entered the village until I reached the said place I did not encounter anyone on the road. I then had a discussion with four or five from the *paese* who told me that all the people had taken up arms because of their enmity, since none of them trusted each other, that everyone stayed at home with the doors locked, and would not go out anywhere, and that here the only thing that can be heard all day long is gunshots.

The commissioner crossed the deserted village, stationed his Corsican soldiers, attached proclamations to the doors, and ordered the few old people whom he encountered to call together the *principali* of the village, “with whom I intend to hold talks.”<sup>80</sup>

In 1607 two hundred men from six kin groups of the parish of San Vincenzo di Favale, divided into two factions, lodged bandits in their houses, went to church armed with arquebuses and pikes, and heard Mass

<sup>79</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 568.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., filza 571.

“with their guns cocked.” To avoid any more serious outbreaks, the captain of Chiavari called a meeting of the men “with the most authority” from each kin group “to settle them down together.” These men promised, with a security pledge of 500 *scudi* for each of them, not to carry weapons in the church (the villagers also promised to observe this) and to see to it that the bandits were removed from Genoese territory. The contract was to be valid for three years.<sup>81</sup> At the end of that period it could be renegotiated and renewed with the approval of both sides.

13. This model of relations between institutions and local societies guided the criminal policies of the Genoese and their efforts to reinforce structures in the Republic’s peripheries during the seventeenth century.

The lists of bandits by jurisdiction, community, parish, neighborhood, and village that were produced in the years 1617–20 during the commissariat of Gio Batta Adorno and Giulio Cesare Lomellino<sup>82</sup> were integrated with the lists of “relatives.” The judicial records of the bandits were placed alongside indications concerning their family status, physical appearance (very detailed), and relatives. The age, profession, residence, degree of kinship with the bandits (with the usual distinction of blood relations and kin who shared a surname), and estimated wealth of each kinsman was listed. Let us look at a few examples. Giacomo Mangino, “banned for life,” son of Vincenzo and Minolla Casazza, deceased; about thirty years old, “of large stature, with a reddish beard”; originally from the village of Monteghirfo, but resident for the past three years of the territory of Prince Doria where he lodges with his maternal kin; married to Pomina daughter of the deceased Giacomo Casazza; at Monteghirfo, where he returns at harvest time, he still has property worth about 600 *lire*. His closest relatives numbered seven persons and resided at Monteghirfo; there were ten who shared his surname (the lists always only provide the names of male adults); these were aged between twenty-five and seventy years and individually held property worth between 200 and 2,000 *lire*; beside two names appears the phrase “has no property [*non vale nulla*].”<sup>83</sup> Bartolomeo Canevale, “*bandito capitale*” from Zoagli, had fifty-eight relatives whose property was worth 37,850 *lire* and eleven relatives of the same surname

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., filza 598.

<sup>82</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filze 1237–38.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., filza 1237. The ‘vital statistics’ of Giacomo Mangino also contain the names of maternal relatives and those of the wife: there were another fifteen Casazza household heads residing in the Aveto Valley.

whose property was worth 11,000 *lire*.<sup>84</sup> Ambrosio Queirola from Rapallo, “banned for five years,” had only nine “relatives,” who were all poor.<sup>85</sup> Brothers Giuliano, Stefano, and Sentino Casazza, “*banditi capitali*,” had twenty-eight close relatives who resided in the parish of Cicagna and ninety-four “kin who shared their surname” spread across a vast area between the Bisagno, Trebbia, and Aveto valleys (Imperial fiefs) and Rapallo.<sup>86</sup>

These lists were drawn up with the assistance of local officials, close relatives, older people (who were perhaps the only ones familiar with all the kin ties), and parish priests (in a few cases). They revealed the most reliable networks of solidarity on which the bandits could rely and identified all the “kin” who could be held to account for the bandits’ criminal enterprises or required to underwrite peace agreements and pledge security.

14. In the mid-1600s an effort was made to create a central criminal archive of banditry. The judges, after completing their year of governance in the communities, were to draw up a list of the notable bandits, kin, adherents, and supporters. The names of the bandits were then gathered in alphabetical order in a register held by a chancery official.<sup>87</sup> This was a necessity that flowed from the experiences of administrative justice in the communities: when the magistrates returned to Genoa in late May, portions of their documentary production—case files, interrogation transcripts, notices, proclamations, testimonials, and defense statements—were dispersed in the hands of vicars, accountants, and court notaries. This bureaucratic activity resulted in the production of the Catalogues of Bandits, as we shall see.

In 1651 a special magistracy, the *Giunta* against bandits, was created to balance the ongoing needs of governance in the communities with the effort to centralize information. A president chosen from among the members of the Genoese governing councils was assisted by a commissioner-general and five former judges in the largest communities and the ones most afflicted by banditry: Polcevera, Bisagno, Chiavari, Sarzana, and Savona.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1040.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., and Rota Criminale, filza 1116.



The new officials were supported by a unified military structure and formed the bridgehead of a project to control and discipline the most violent forms of local political competition. They tried to limit the ability of kin groups and nobles to act freely, to stop the disorders and the misbehaviors during the community assemblies and meetings of the *universitates*, and to regulate the election of local officials and the drawing up of militia rolls. These efforts were systematically resisted, however, at every level of the local social structure. Some communities even opposed the appointment of a *campanaro* whose job was to ring the tocsin with a hammer (“*dare la stromitta*”), because—as the household heads of Recco argued—the bells belonged to everyone and it was “against the custom of these people, according to which each person had this job individually when the time came to ring them.”<sup>89</sup>

The Genoese courts offered privileges and protections to the captains against bandits and to the bell-ringers—“by their nature hateful positions”—but overall the documentation of the following decades shows that local resistance remained deep and widespread. The men of Novi were mocked “with jeers calling for decapitation” when they turned over two bandits. The inhabitants of the Sturla Valley, in the Chiavari backcountry, were “divided amongst themselves in factions, but were almost all united against the fisc and the Justice system.” In 1670 the villages of Chiavari responded to a request from the commissioner by sending fifteen “useless” men who “vanished” at the sight of bandits. In Rapallo “the mobs of bandits are more numerous than the court.” In the Polcevera Valley and at Ottaggio and Busalla, the people would not denounce the bandits “in order not to anger their *Padroni*.” The household heads of Levanto “promise a lot but then do what they want.” Inhabitants of the Bisagno Valley “are totally enemies of justice.” Finally, the “wealthier persons” (merchants and transporters) of Montoggio negotiated with the bandits to secure open roads for their mules and merchandise. How could one trust the *paesano* who was a friend or relative of the bandits or who feared them? The commissioner-general Ambrogio di Negro asked himself this question in 1669.<sup>90</sup>

15. By the late 1600s, despite their century-long experience, the reinforcement of central government bodies, and a long internal debate within the urban oligarchy, Genoa’s ability to intervene territorially did not seem

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filze 1117, 1173, 180–84.

to have improved. Even the language of the proclamations, official orders, letters sent to commissioners, and memoirs drawn up by judges resembled that used during the late sixteenth century. These similarities, which stand out in the vast collection of documents, seem to be linked to the circumstances and contexts in which these interventions took place. The debate that followed the creation of the *Giunta* against bandits in 1651–52 seems to have reconfirmed a traditional point of view, based on custom: peace, with “compensation, and adjustments made for those offended,” was necessary for the “public good,” because “if peace agreements are not made, vendettas and perpetual enmity will follow.” Other approaches had been tried out, with negative results: condemnations for the contumacious “created more bandits”; secret testimony (like anonymous letters) “produced the greatest impostures and false accusations”; and the “sale of banishments” and rewards had the effect of “collecting money from wealthy bandits” while emptying the treasury of the *Camera*.<sup>91</sup>

In the first place the problem of the “kin” remained. Genoa gave full authority to the commissioners of the *Giunta* to deal with them and, if appropriate, to “inconvenience them.” “The close relatives of famous bandits,” wrote Gio Francesco Spinola in a memoir to the *Giunta*, “appear to the peasants as if they were noble gentlemen.”<sup>92</sup> Spinola’s intuition was that the bandits could function as a resource for their kin with respect to conflicts, power struggles, and local social life.

In 1673, in order to make peace between the Aste and Passalacqua kin groups and to force them to disengage from the bandits, the commissioner-general Gio Maria Spinola quartered Corsican soldiers in their houses in the village of San Martino di Noceto, near the town of Rapallo. The relatives of the bandits were required to provide the Corsicans with food and lodging, a mattress, olive oil, candles, wood, and twelve *soldi* per day. The peace negotiations with the *principali* of the two kin groups began a few days later. After a month, a *pax* was reached and underwritten by all the men of the two groups: forty-five Passalacqua and forty-six Aste promised “*in solidum*” to keep a perpetual peace and pledged security for the bandits who were transferred to one of the *Giunta*’s fortresses.<sup>93</sup> The commitment to respect the peace agreement and to keep the bandits away was formalized by a peace ceremony held on a Sunday morning after Mass in

<sup>91</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1040.

<sup>92</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1116.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., filza 1257.

the presence of witnesses who included the commissioner, a notary, and two notables from Rapallo. This promise, together with the collective security pledge that placed a lien on specified property, provided the strongest ties between local society and the Republic, in this case and others.

The commissioners' pacification policies legitimated the state's intervention in the social life of the communities, but at the same time they reinforced local forms of political organization.<sup>94</sup> The influence and role of local social units such as kin groups (as a corporate association) and villages (as a residence- and neighborhood-based form of solidarity) within the political and administrative articulation of the communities revealed how superficially imposed the official political-administrative framework was that was directly controlled by the center. During these same years (the second half of the seventeenth century), numerous decrees from the Senate delegated to the kin groups of the villages near Rapallo—the town where the captain resided and the seat of the *parlamento*, the official body of governance for the communities—the task of assessing fiscal burdens and distributing expenses.<sup>95</sup> This seems to have been the most effective way of ending the disorders that followed every general fiscal assessment, property seizure, and imprisonment. It also facilitated the tax collection process interrupted by such conflicts. But this practice, which also included the election of village and chapel officers (the latter were parish-like administrative units),<sup>96</sup> reinvigorated local expectations and reanimated a social conscience of the territory whose expression extended to the level of administrative jurisdiction. The cultural horizon of these local practices was that of custom. In a different context, in 1638, the household heads of a few villages of the Fontanabuona Valley affirmed that “from oldest memory the practice has always been to assign the real and personal public [fiscal] obligations ... kin group by kin group.”<sup>97</sup> But the value of these

<sup>94</sup>To paraphrase F.G. Bailey, one might say that that the encapsulating of local societies into the framework of the state took place without the rules of political competition being transformed; see Bailey, *Stratagems and Spoils*.

<sup>95</sup>ASCR, *Actorum Communitatis et Universitatis Rapalli*, filze 6–7. The *avarìa* was a tax whose burden was distributed mainly to property owners (two-thirds of the total owed) but also as a poll tax (one-third of it was collected from men aged between seventeen and seventy); see Chap. 3.

<sup>96</sup>ASCR, *Elezione Agenti Borzoli*, 1640 et seq.; *ibid.*, *Amandolesi*, 1651 et seq.; *ibid.*, *Olivastro*, 1624 et seq.

<sup>97</sup>ASCR, *Foliatium Communitatis Rapalli*, filza 1; *ibid.*, *Avarie d'Oltremonte*, filza 1.

customary practices was affirmed through references, in concrete and symbolic terms, to the current structure of social organization.

16. The picture sketched thus far incorporates realities that were not perfectly homogenous, and it certainly does not reflect the situation in all of the Republic's territory. Undoubtedly, in other Ligurian communities, there prevailed other forms of social organization and political competition that were not focused on kin groups and their representation.<sup>98</sup> It is also true that the communities of western Liguria (the *Ponente*) rarely appear in the documentation that I have studied and were wealthier, more actively engaged in commerce, and less fiscally burdened due to their privileges and arrangements with the Republic.

Andrea Spinola, a direct observer of the circumstances that I have described and a leading participant in the political debates in Genoa, suggested that there was a geography of banditry that resembles the one reconstructed here. In his *Ricordi*,<sup>99</sup> the entry "Bandits" directs one to the entry "Factions," and factions—characterized by the "madness of the Green and the Turquoise," the colors that distinguished the opposing alignments—were prevalent especially on the *Levante* Riviera. Spinola then mentioned the role of kin together with that of the "cappellacci" (members of the popular faction in Genoa, for which there was also an entry in his *Ricordi*) and the feudal lords—these were the most important figures in the bandits' world.

But what position did the bandits hold in local society, and why were they particularly active in some communities and not others?

The Catalogues of Bandits (which I analyzed for the period from 1660 to 1710; see Table 2.1)<sup>100</sup> classified all individuals who were sentenced to punishment ranging from a few years' expulsion to hanging, a large majority of whom were contumacious, as "bandits." The variety of punishments obviously denotes a great diversity of criminal behavior, and the bans

<sup>98</sup> See E. Grendi, "Il sistema politico di una comunità ligure: Cervo tra Cinque e Seicento," in *Quaderni storici* 46 (1981): 92–129; id., "La pratica dei confini: Mioglia contro Sassello, 1715–1745," *Quaderni storici* 63 (1986): 811–45.

<sup>99</sup> Andrea Spinola, *Ricordi*.

<sup>100</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, regg. 1025–26: "Index Bannitorum." The distinction between *Ponente* and *Levante*, indicated in Table 2.1, corresponds to classificatory criteria and to contemporaries' and Genoese authorities' understanding of the territory (the *Dominio*). They also distinguished a third area called 'Oltregiogo' (which included Ovada, Novi, and Gavi). The Catalogues of Bandits are structured according to these divisions, as are, at least for the sixteenth century, correspondence and Senatorial edicts.

**Table 2.1** Bandits in the communities of the Republic of Genoa, 1660–1710

<i>Community/jurisdiction</i>	<i>Official with jurisdiction</i>	<i>Number of bandits</i>
<i>Ponente (western Liguria)</i>		2,592
Ventimiglia	Captain	98
San Remo	Commissioner	147
Triora	Magistrate ( <i>pretore</i> )	153
Taggia	Magistrate	63
Pieve di Teco	Captain	123
Toirano	Magistrate	50
Porto Maurizio	Captain	144
Diano	Magistrate	2
Albenga	Commissioner	4
Alassio	Magistrate	13
Zuccarello	Commissioner	56
Pietra	Magistrate	64
Vado	Magistrate	11
Savona	Governor	349
Varazze	Magistrate	91
Stella	Magistrate	20
Sassello	Commissioner/magistrate	84
Voltri	Captain	128
Sestri Ponente	Captain	96
Polcevera	Captain	438
Ovada	Captain	183
Novi	Captain	272
Gavi	Commissioner	3
<i>Levante (eastern Liguria)</i>		2,255
Bisagno	Captain	329
Montoggio	Magistrate	17
Roccatagliata	Magistrate	40
Recco	Captain	169
Rapallo	Captain	204
Chiavari	Captain	466
Varese	Magistrate	68
Sestri Levante	Magistrate	3
Godano	Magistrate	22
Levanto	Captain	278
Spezia	Captain	319
Portovenere	Magistrate	13
Sarzana	Commissioner	327
<i>Total</i>		4,847

issued systematically by different authorities produced the leaders and followers of bandit groups, but not with the same intensity everywhere. The macroscopic aspects of the bandit phenomenon are evident: the numbers indicate that banishment was commonly applied by judicial authorities, especially by the captains who governed towns and the most territorially extensive communities. (This criminal policy was the subject of a long debate among the Genoese governing elites; in the mid-seventeenth century, as I have noted, its efficacy was challenged.) But beyond this, the quantitative data are silent.

Still, an initial finding can be extracted from this statistical picture. It shows that bandits were ubiquitous, but strongly concentrated in the communities and areas where Genoa intervened, from the late sixteenth through the late seventeenth centuries, with commissioners who had “extraordinary powers” and where the Republic carried out a specific criminal policy. Forty-five percent of bandits—and among them most of the “capital bandits”—were concentrated in the central-eastern area, between the Polcevera Valley and the valleys of the Chiavari district. These were the most important areas of transit toward the Po plain, where communities were dominated by organized kinship structures and bordered on the Imperial fiefs.<sup>101</sup>

Thus, the bandits did not inhabit a “world turned upside down.”<sup>102</sup> Their position was in large part internal to the social structure of the local communities.<sup>103</sup> Bandits included wealthy millers and poor shepherds,

<sup>101</sup> After 1575 the commissioners were sent almost annually to the communities between the Bisagno Valley and Chiavari, and quite frequently to the easternmost *Levante* (La Spezia and Sarzana) as well; see ASG, Rota Criminale, filze 1221–69 (for the years 1578–1702). In the *Ponente* only a few ‘particular’ commissioners were sent out, with limited charges (to attend to a conflict between the communities of Cosio and Mendatica in 1639, for example, or in response to riots following from grain shortages in San Remo, Ventimiglia and Triora in 1648); see *ibid.*, filze 1250–51.

<sup>102</sup> This definition, borrowed in part from Bakhtin and from structuralist semiotics, is found in Ju. M. Lotman and B.A. Uspenskij, “Il ‘degradato’ (izgoj) e il ‘degradamento’ (izojnicesstvo) come condizione socio-psicologica nella cultura russa precedente al regno di Pietro I,” in Ju. M. Lotman, *La semiosfera* (Venice, 1985), 165–80. Making almost exclusive use of folklore sources, E. J. Hobsbawm offers a similar interpretation of the *haiduk* of the Balkans; see *id.*, *Bandits* (London, 1969) (Italian trans. *I banditi. Il banditismo sociale nell’età moderna* [Turin, 1971]).

<sup>103</sup> I reconstructed one of these local contexts in “Parentele, fazioni e banditi: la val Fontanabuona tra Cinque e Seicento,” in *Bande armate*, 233–75; see also R. Comaschi, “Strategie familiari, potere locale e banditi in una comunità del contado bolognese del XVI secolo,” in *Bande armate*, 225–32.

unemployed weavers, former soldiers, muleteers, porters, and smugglers. These people tended to distinguish themselves from the “zappatori” (those who hoed) and peasants tied to agricultural work. When they organized themselves into squads they were able to exercise autonomous control of certain spaces with respect to kin groups and village communities, but never definitively. Their reintegration in local power conflicts was effected through persistent solidarity with family, kin, or occupational group, or through contractual arrangements with a variety of actors. These could include faction bosses, *principali*, priests (who, thanks to ecclesiastical privilege, represented one of the most consistent points of contact with the bandits), commercial middlemen (merchants who traded in olive oil, wine, grain and livestock; also tavern-keepers, miller-bakers, and retailers), the feudal lords of the Apennines who engaged in an economy of theft, and also Genoese nobles who owned country villas on the coast and in the valleys just behind the capital city.<sup>104</sup> One can see that it was not by chance that the bandits provided an indicator for the nature of interactions between local and supra-local powers. In the central-eastern Ligurian context that the criminal records have disclosed to us, bandits were numerous not only in the mountains of Montoggio and Roccatagliata (places that Genoa had brought under its dominion only in 1547 after the Gian Luigi Fieschi conspiracy) but also in the coastal commercial towns and even just outside the city walls of Genoa. Above all, the ubiquity of the bandits extended to the entire social body of the Republic. Perhaps in this respect the image offered by Gio Francesco Spinola that I cited at the beginning of this chapter acquires its weightiest significance.

For these reasons criminal policy was the crucial instrument of oligarchic power, and the essence of the “*potestà del principe*.” The object of this policy’s intervention and control was not a single segment of society, a particular group or infraction, but civil society itself, or at least entire local societies and/or complex and stratified relational contexts.

The chapters that follow take up the study and interpretation of the mechanisms by which a local society in the Ligurian *Levante* functioned. This will provide the focused field of observation within which we can test

<sup>104</sup> An anonymous letter dated 12 August 1620 claimed that the commissioner of Bisagno “went with the flow” and, in order to avoid getting tangled up in the enmities of his fellow noble citizens, refrained from encircling their villages on the Albaro hill where the bandits had taken refuge (ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1656). A research project on noble banditry would be worth the effort.

and verify the problems and general hypotheses developed in this introduction to the Genoese oligarchy's policies. A different scale of analysis is required to understand, in concrete terms, the social and political processes concerned.





## A Local Universe and Its Horizons

Many of the developments that I will describe in the following chapters were staged in the ‘theatre’ of the Fontanabuona Valley and performed by its inhabitants. Just a few kilometers away from the towns of Rapallo and Chiavari, and at a few hours’ distance from Genoa, the Fontanabuona stretched along the Lavagna River, roughly parallel to the Mediterranean coast. The simultaneous territorial proximity to the ‘center’ and apparent distance created by local customs and norms are characteristic elements of Genoese history. The historical documentation surrounding this community offers the best opportunity to verify some of the hypotheses and conjectures developed in Chap. 2.

The Fontanabuona, however, was not an autonomous community. From the late thirteenth century on it was administratively dependent on Genoa,<sup>1</sup> and in the late sixteenth century it became one of the six *quartieri* (districts) of the *podesteria* of Rapallo.<sup>2</sup> It included eleven chapels (corresponding to the eleven parishes and their subordinate churches) and about sixty villages and hamlets. These were located mainly in the valley bottom

<sup>1</sup>Historical events in the Fontanabuona have been described by a local historian of the early twentieth century; see R. Leveroni, *Cicagna. Appunti di storia religiosa e civile* (Chiavari, 1912).

<sup>2</sup>The other districts, which were all in the coastal zone, were Borgo, Borzoli, Amandolesi, Olivastro and Pessino. The community was absorbed into the Genoese state by means of this division into districts and chapels.

**Table 3.1** The population of the Fontanabuona, 1535–1646

	1535		1607		1646	
	<i>Hearths</i>	<i>Hearths</i>	<i>People</i>	<i>Hearths</i>	<i>People</i>	
Cicagna				234	1,422	
Orero				102	561	
Sogio				65	375	
Canevale				32	190	
Coreglia				64	333	
Dezerega				36	199	
Favale				111	584	
Lorsica				100	519	
Verzi				84	417	
Moconesi				70	343	
Gattorna				16	80	
Total	300	560	3,700	914	5,023	
% increase		86.7		63.2	35.7	

and on the south-facing slope of the mountain north of the valley, between the narrow, terraced plots overlooking the river and the Apennine passes, and along the two mule paths leading to Parma-Piacenza and Lodi-Milan. The residence pattern of small and very small clusters of houses scattered around parish seats was peculiar to central-eastern Liguria, that is, roughly the area located between the Polcevera Valley and Sestri Levante.

For the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries demographic data are scarce and nonhomogeneous, but when they are examined diachronically they indicate the kind of strong population growth that occurred throughout the Republic, although to a somewhat lesser degree (see Table 3.1).<sup>3</sup> The average number of persons per hearth (6.6 in 1607 and 5.49 in 1646) and the young age of the population are known from information gathered by Cardinal Durazzo during his pastoral visit of 1646, when he distinguished between “Communion-aged persons” and “persons unable to receive Communion.” The latter numbered 1,965, or 39 percent of the total population. Nonetheless, these data are too general to do more than

<sup>3</sup>The sources are: for 1535, Agostino Giustiniani, “Descrittione della Lyguria,” in id., *Castigatissimi Annali* ... (Genoa, 1537); for 1607, the Republic’s census in ASG, Manoscritti e libri rari, ms. 218 and id., Senato-Litterarum, filza 600; for 1646, Archivio della Curia Vescovile di Genova, “Visita del Cardinale Durazzo.” The overall comparison for the Republic as a whole between 1535 and 1607 is in E. Grendi, *Introduzione alla storia moderna della Repubblica di Genova* (Genoa, 1976), 48.

define the scale of local human relationships either at the administrative level (the *quartiere*) or, for 1646, at the parish level.

Still, as we will soon see, what is particularly important for our study is kin group size in relation to that which can be considered the basic residential unit, the village. Before examining this aspect of the Fontanabuona—and the crucial problems of its internal socio-territorial organization—it would be useful to reconstruct its administrative situation within the Genoese state and its role within the local political system (Fig. 3.1).

## 1 THE POLITICAL SYSTEM OF THE COMMUNITIES AND THE *QUARTIERE* OF OLTREMONTE

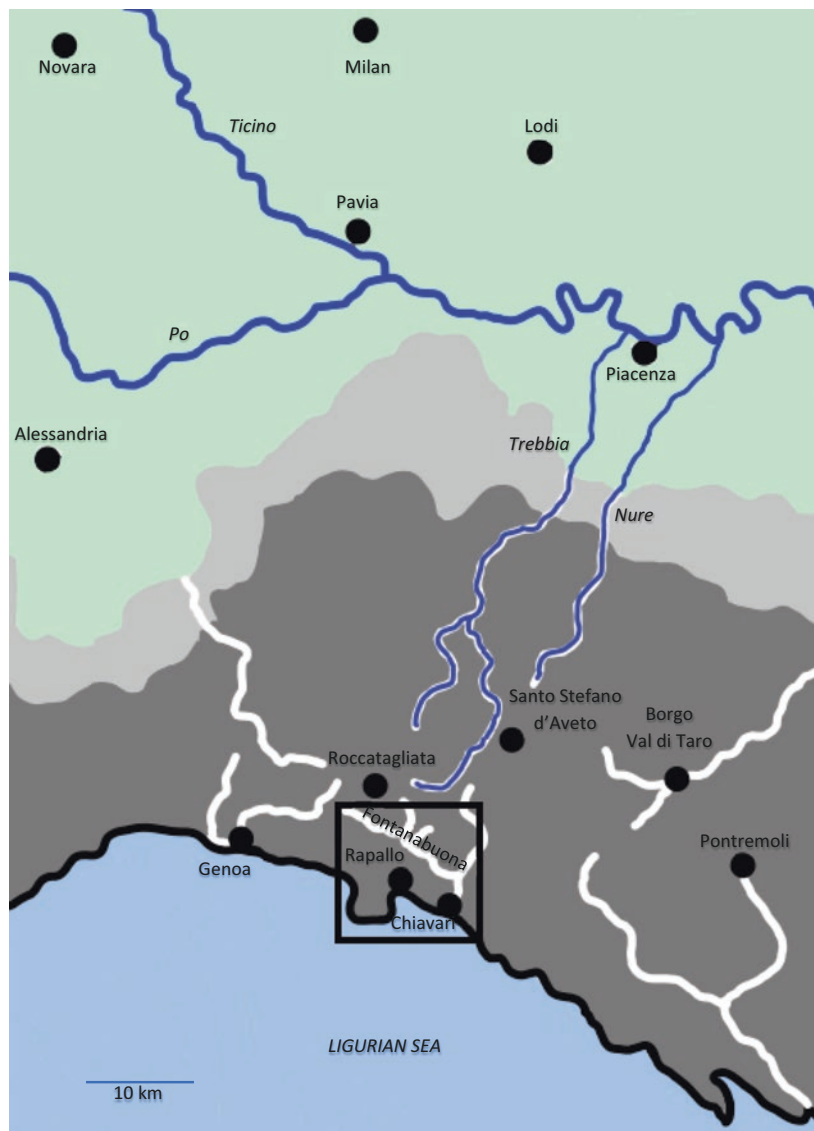
When the Fontanabuona became part of the administrative organization of the *podesteria* of Rapallo as one of its six *quartieri*, it was given the name of Oltremonte (beyond the mountain), which indicated its clear separation from the coastal area where the other districts were located.

In his *Descrittione della Lyguria* of 1535, the Genoese humanist Agostino Giustiniani wrote that

the *Podestà* of Rapallo itself administers justice to the men of the Fontanabuona, which is a valley in the *Levante* a number of miles from the Bargagli valley, and includes about three hundred hearths. Some of the peasants call it the Lavagnina valley after the river that flows through it, which empties into the wide, old Lavagna river. This valley is eight miles away from the *borgo* of Rapallo, is well populated, and includes many scattered villages that are not too far from each other.<sup>4</sup>

Let us begin with Giustiniani's first observation: the administration of justice in fact defined the most important and continuous ties between the people of the valley and external political powers. Indeed, the historical sources that are available to us, besides the notarial records, are almost all judicial records. These were produced at different levels and were not always hierarchically related to each other in terms of their authority. They represented a consistent element of the relations between governors and governed. These relations, based on the justice system, were far more important than those tied to taxation, as we began to see in the second chapter.

<sup>4</sup>Giustiniani, *Castigatissimi Annali*; see also D. Galassi, M. P. Rota and A. Scrivano, *Popolazione e insediamento in Liguria secondo la testimonianza di Agostino Giustiniani* (Florence, 1979), 140–41 for the Giustiniani quotation.



**Fig. 3.1** The “community of the *borgo*” of Rapallo, the Fontanabuona Valley, and the Ligurian Apennines

The formal politico-administrative framework in which the Fontanabuona was situated was defined by Genoese legal articles. In the sixteenth century the key actors in the governance of Rapallo were the *podestà* (the local representative of the Republic whose office lasted for one year, from the beginning of June to the end of the following May), and the officers—prior, subpriors, two counselors, and five representatives of the *quartieri* outside of the town walls—who together formed the *parlamento* that met periodically in the *podestà*'s residence. The *podesteria* was itself part of a broader administrative unit, though. The main task of the *podestà* was to administer justice, but criminal jurisdiction for offenses involving the spilling of blood belonged to the captain of the nearby community of Chiavari (seat of the vicariate), who was a Genoese noble and a higher-ranking magistrate. Whenever the surgeon referred a case deemed dangerous or possibly dangerous (“cum *periculo*” or “cum *aliquo periculo*”), the on-site examinations and related salaries belonged to the captain who asserted authority over the case and oversaw the trial.

The manner in which competencies and institutional power structures within the community were conceptualized and represented was concisely expressed in a memoir written by Captain Paolo de Franchi in 1583, in the context of a dispute with the *podestà* of Rapallo. De Franchi wrote that “the nature of the infraction is what distinguishes between jurisdictions” and that “in situations where a crime involving the spilling of blood might be at issue, the captain of Chiavari must hear the case and issue the sentence, without the involvement of the *podestà*, who must limit himself to pecuniary crimes. He then added that the captain was “the one sent by the *principe* to be the head and superior officer,” who has at his disposal an “expert in the law and many officials,” while on the other hand “these *podestà* [are] without officials, counsel, or frequently knowledge or virtue.”<sup>5</sup> The image constructed by De Franchi recalls the competition for offices between “*nobili*” and “*popolari*” in Genoa,<sup>6</sup> which continuously generated conflicts of authority at the local level. De Franchi's representation also highlighted the limits of the community's authority, while revealing the room for maneuver that this configuration of institutional powers created for social groups and actors. I will return to this theme below.

<sup>5</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 524.

<sup>6</sup> See Grendi, “Capitazioni e nobiltà genovese”; Bitossi, “Famiglie e fazioni a Genova”; Doria and Savelli, “‘Cittadini di governo’ a Genova.”

From the perspective of the inhabitants of Oltremonte, the landscape of external powers thus consisted of the *podestà* and *parlamento* of Rapallo, the captain and the vicar of Chiavari, and at the highest level (mediated by opaque hierarchies), the Genoese authorities (the *Principe*): the Senate, the criminal *Rota*, the commissioners, and the judicial magistracies.

The valley's parishes and villages formed an articulated socio-territorial space, but in the *podesteria* as a whole the most common category of classification was based on the opposition town/village: a binary that constituted a traditional and generalized *topos* of early modern Ligurian politics and culture. This ideological scheme reflected, as we shall see, social arrangements of significance, solidarities of residence and status, political asymmetries, and diverse ecological contexts and densities of wealth. However, it was not always operational and was relevant mainly in an abstract sense, in terms of how space was conceptualized. Not every inhabitant of the villages was a "*villano*," or worse, "idiot"; there was also an elite in the villages, and the village assembly of household heads was a leadership group that was partly autonomous with respect to the *parlamenti* of the two towns and capable of engaging in dialogue and negotiation directly with the *Principe*. The village notables—like the farmer-"*villani*"—had multiple ties with inhabitants of the towns. We will look at these issues more closely later; for now let us return to our general observations about the Fontanabuona.

On one side was Rapallo, a relatively wealthy town of merchants, boat owners, shop owners, tavern-keepers, artisans, fishermen, and especially sailors. Its population was 350 hearths and 1,665 people in 1607, with about 250 houses in the mid-seventeenth century. A list of Rapallo inhabitants who paid the personal tax, drawn up in the mid-seventeenth century, offers a partial picture of the occupational structure of the town (see Table 3.2).<sup>7</sup> Rapallo had a castle on the sea, and the town was only partly surrounded by a wall and open toward the hills and the "mountain road." Officials were elected there and the *parlamento*, in which Oltremonte was represented by its own syndic, met in the house of the *podestà* in order to discuss expenditures and establish general categories for assessing taxes and special subsidies. On the other side was Chiavari, a walled town with

<sup>7</sup> ASG, Manoscritti e libri rari, ms. 218 and Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 767, "Libro della nuova Caratata del Borgo osia luogo di Rapallo." Of the taxpayers listed, 132 persons "can neither read nor write," and ninety-seven were able to hold public office (ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 770).

**Table 3.2** Payers of the personal tax in Rapallo, ca. 1650

Sailors	46	Pasta-makers	6	Surgeons	2
Shoemakers	17	Grocers	5	Barbers	2
Bakers	15	Produce dealers	5	Agents/brokers	2
Businessmen ( <i>negozianti</i> )	12	Butchers	4	Second-hand dealers	2
Tailors	12	Mercers	4	Fruit sellers	2
Weavers	10	Smiths	4	Fry cooks	2
Tavern-keepers	7	Boat owners	3	Contractors	1
Carpenters	7	Soap makers	3	Candle makers	1
Porters	7	Pharmacists	3	Soldiers	1
Notaries	6	Fishermen	3	Yarnmakers ( <i>stoppierei</i> )	1
Rentiers	6	Clerks	3	Launderers	1
Masons	6	Day laborers	3		

a moat, castle, citadel, tower, *piazza*, and streets lined with porticos and loggias. It was surrounded by gardens and farmers' houses built up against the castle walls, and by the houses of fishermen, shipwrights, and tanners clustered together in the "*capo di borgo*" suburb. The walls entirely surrounded the town, limiting its growth and separating it completely from the countryside and its villages. Its internal architecture reflected its position as a provincial capital: walls, porticos, and loggias expressed the town's power and status. Altogether, according to the 1607 census, the walled town had 300 houses with 613 hearths and 1,991 inhabitants.<sup>8</sup> Chiavari was home to merchants, boat owners, notaries, and a few noble houses that continued to enjoy, in the seventeenth century, complete fiscal immunity of a sort that distinguished its members from other townspeople ("*borghesi*"). This urban structure was similar to Genoa's in many ways. Chiavari was in every sense the main town of the *Levante* and one of the most important in the Republic. As a seat of the vicariate it had criminal jurisdiction in blood-related offenses over a huge region (from Montoggio to Castiglione), at least until the first decade of the seventeenth century. It provided a model of governance for the communities and in this sense, as I indicated in the last chapter, it was used as an example by the Genoese oligarchy for the judicial and administrative reorganization of the territory in the early seventeenth century (Fig. 3.2).

The Fontanabuona (like the Lavagna Valley and its continuation toward Chiavari, and like the Sturla Valley, which branches off toward the interior)

<sup>8</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 600 and id., Magsitrato delle Comunità, reg. 713 (*carrata* of 1612).

	Territorial-administrative organization			Political organization	
I	captainate <i>podesteria</i>	=	Chiavari Rapallo	↑	captain (jurisdiction in capital cases) <i>podestà + parlamento</i>
II	<i>quartiere</i>	=	Oltremonte		valley council
III	chapels/parishes	=	11		assembly of household heads
IV	villages	=	around 60		kin groups

**Fig. 3.2** The *Oltremonte* district and the political institutions of the “community of the *borgo*” of Rapallo

was separated from the two towns by a strip of hills (ca. 600 m in altitude) covered with olive groves. This was a rich, productive area in which the *borghesi*, who owned the best lands, extended their dominance. The peasant-farmers were tied to them as factors and as clients: renters, laborers, debtors, or otherwise dependents—including for protection. Even if these lands, which included some vineyards, were not immediately viable for commercial production, there was strong pressure from surrounding society to make use of them. Some of the olive groves on the hills above Rapallo, for example, were “villa lands” belonging to townspeople or Genoese *Cittadini*, usually noble, and over the course of the seventeenth century the number of noble-owned, tax-exempt parcels grew—at the expense of the small landowners. Additionally, it should be noted that the Republic purchased (at an administratively fixed price) a quarter of the olive oil produced by these properties, for consumption in Genoa.<sup>9</sup>

One of the distinctive characteristics of the Fontanabuona (and the other internal valleys of the Chiavari district), was its location on marginally productive land.<sup>10</sup> Here there was no trace of bourgeois or urban-owned property, beyond a few miniscule parcels located between Oltremonte and the Borzoli district, or of pressures from outside society. The economic arena was totally dominated by local notables. All decisions concerning land came from inside the villages or the parishes of the valley.

The sources from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries create a recurring image of the poverty of the backcountry valleys, “all of the country’s wealth being located in the coastal towns.”<sup>11</sup> This image needs

<sup>9</sup> For this issue see my article “Produzione olivicola, prelievo fiscale e circuiti di scambio in una comunità ligure del XVII secolo,” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 22 (1982): 123–62.

<sup>10</sup> I derive the concepts of “marginally productive land” and the “marginality of land” from E.R. Wolf, “Tipi di comunità latino-americane,” in *L’antropologia economica*, ed. E. Grendi (Turin, 1972), 67–94.

<sup>11</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 515 (for the year 1580).



to be clarified and reassessed, as does the equally stereotyped one of the villages as a world of “weed pullers,” “idiots,” and “low-class people.” It is nonetheless certain that the ecological contrast between the coastal area and the interior valleys was stark, and that the availability of resources and the means to exploit them were very different.

The formal political system reflected this asymmetry. The *parlamento* was a political structure that was superimposed on places like the Fontanabuona. The issue of the appropriate representation of the “men of the villages” was something that mainly concerned the villages along the coast, which were more sensitive to issues of public expenditure and taxation: where public funds should be spent, how the fiscal burden for regular taxation and other kinds of payments should be distributed, and especially, how payment of the olive oil tax should be structured.<sup>12</sup> When the *Articles of the Community of the Town of Rapallo* were revised in 1636, the “*borghesi*” challenged the way in which the villages of the four districts surrounding the walled town (Borzoli, Amandolesi, Olivastro, and Pessino) were represented. They argued that the village lands belonged for the most part to “the men of the walled town ... [who were] more honest and less liable to be corrupted.”<sup>13</sup> But Oltremonte was absent from the discussion, an absence that had been, until that time, practically systematic when it came to meetings of the *parlamento*. Between 1588 and 1601 the valley never nominated its own representative, and subsequently it rarely participated in deliberations (only 5 percent of the time between 1613 and 1627).<sup>14</sup> The Fontanabuona had also been opposed to the apportionment of the fiscal burden, and the tax collector from Rapallo was manhandled on several occasions. But the strongest disagreements related to the principle of collective responsibility “as a whole” for community debts and for the payment of excise taxes. Rapallo purchased, at a discount, the right to collect excise taxes and then auctioned off subcollector posts to town notables, giving them authority to imprison those who could not pay. It was around this issue that the Fontanabuona refused, in 1605, to pay the

<sup>12</sup> Raggio, “Produzione olivicola.”

<sup>13</sup> ASCR, Libro Rosso, I, c. 123v.

<sup>14</sup> ASCR, Distagli della Magnifica Comunità di Rapallo, reg. 1. Decisions still took effect if there were only five votes in favor, “even in cases when one of the district representatives could not or decided not to participate” (ASG, Manoscritti e libri rari, ms. 763, “Capitoli della Comunità di Rapallo.”)

town's agent "that portion which belonged to him," mistreating the police officer and the assistant who had accompanied him.<sup>15</sup>

A request made to the Senate of the Republic (on behalf of the Fontanabuona, though the signatories are unknown) constituted a semi-official response to this situation. "The men of the Fontanabuona," read the supplication, "do not want to fall into the hands of the men of Rapallo, who are interested in nothing less than squeezing them dry [*asciugarli il sangue*]." <sup>16</sup> The fiscal assessment of the territory of Rapallo was based on a general estimate of property values and divided into sixty "*caratti*," distributed among the walled town and the districts according to specific assessments. The sixteen *caratti* assigned to Oltremonte amounted to 28 percent of Rapallo's general expenditures, compared to 22 percent for Borzoli, nineteen for Pessino, thirteen and a half for Amandolesi, twelve for Olivastro, and only five and a half for the walled town.<sup>17</sup> In 1611, for example, expenses on the balance sheet totaled 12,592 *lire*, of which 3,532 *lire* represented Oltremonte's contribution, according to the fixed assessment levels. The people of the Fontanabuona considered this fiscal system iniquitous and rapacious.<sup>18</sup>

The archives offer no traces of a *caratata*, the tax register that listed estimated property values and served as the only solid basis for fiscal apportionments, for years prior to 1641. Apparently neither Rapallo nor Genoa was able or willing to impose one, or they failed in their efforts to do so—without local collaboration it was technically impossible to describe the boundaries of property and estimate its value. Only in the middle of the seventeenth century was Rapallo able to acquire a complete list of the names of men between seventeen and seventy years old, divided by kin groups, whose property was subject to taxation or who owed a head tax.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>15</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1674. The *sindaci* of the Fontanabuona accused the tax farmer of the *borgo* of having increased their tax bill, committed other infractions when collecting payments, and imprisoned debtors.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. Genoa made a record of the fact that "those of the Fontanabuona are usually not forthcoming and unwilling to pay," and then authorized each of the districts to appoint their own tax farmer.

<sup>17</sup> ASCR, Distagli. Due to overlapping criminal jurisdictions, the Fontanabuona owed 225 *lire* to Chiavari annually.

<sup>18</sup> ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 835. In 1608 a request from the villages of Chiavari described a similar situation: the vicariate was divided into ten "parts," but nine were located in the villages, such that the *borgo* only paid 100 *scudi* out of 1,000 owed for the vicariate (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1696).

<sup>19</sup> ASCR, Avarie d'Oltremonte, filza 1.

The most obvious indicator of this inability was the almost continuous absence of Oltremonte's representative, or "six [*sei*]," from the meetings of the *parlamento* in the walled town, due to lack of interest in the issues being discussed there. At least this was the official explanation given in the minutes of the meetings.

In concrete terms, the Fontanabuona was almost totally disconnected from the central question of how the olive oil tax would be distributed, and less directly involved than the coastal villages in the conflicts that continually flared up over the assignment of responsibility for public expenses and debts. Thus far we have looked at general factors, but there were also other dynamics internal to the valley that combined to determine relations with the walled town.

The agent, or 'six,' from Oltremonte at the *parlamento* of Rapallo was to be elected by the Valley Council, which comprised the representatives of the eleven chapel-parishes and was formally the body of self-governance for the valley. In each sector the electoral system reproduced on a small scale that which took place in the walled town for the election of the community officers. Each year "during the week of the nativity of Our Lord," the household heads of each chapel-parish met to elect their official council members.<sup>20</sup> The election began as soon as two-thirds of the men had gathered, or according to custom, fifty men. The names of all those present were placed in a container and the first eighteen drawn at random nominated "all those men of said Chapel, who seem to them able and sufficient to be *sei*, and council members." These were then voted on, the names of the six men who obtained the most votes were again placed in a container, and the first two drawn became the two council members, the first drawn also participating in the Valley Council. The same system was used to nominate agents and officials empowered to enforce the statutes, "administer good justice," collect ordinary fiscal contributions, and identify *mestrali* (censors) whose job was to fix administrative prices, check weights and measures, and oversee retailing. The Valley Council, formed by the first eleven people whose names had been pulled out of the hat, in turn nominated the district's representative (*sei*) to the *parlamento* of Rapallo. It also identified the general officers of the valley (censors and

<sup>20</sup> I have not been able to locate the statutes of Oltremonte, but besides those of Rapallo described above, see those of the chapel of Sant'Ambrogio (district of Borzoli), approved by the Senate in 1608; ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1694. The statutes of Chiavari of 1582 are in *ibid.*, filza 1643.

assessors), whose names were again chosen randomly from a new set of names of household heads from the parishes.

References to the activation of this complex lottery- and election-based procedure are rare and episodic. Archival evidence becomes more frequent from the mid-seventeenth century but reveals practices and processes that diverge considerably from the articles and statutes. Without a doubt, the rules of political competition were continuously manipulated and renegotiated in the towns as well. In Rapallo the electors were “few in number and all from their party” or “from the same alignment.” Under the pretext of avoiding disorders they closed the door of the meeting room, leaving latecomers (and a majority of household heads) outside and began the procedures even without a quorum. Outgoing officers seized for themselves the right to elect new ones, or to stand again themselves as candidates. The exclusion from public office of “those who can neither read nor write, porters, butchers, sawyers, bakers, bread-sellers, sellers of second-hand items, sailors, lock makers, masons, drink sellers, leather workers, carters,” and of shopkeepers who were compared to idiots, helped create an oligarchy that would be denounced by the end of the seventeenth century. In 1695 the *borghesi* of Rapallo were “concentrated in a few families” and among those admitted to public office “there were few who did not have kinship ties with each other, either by blood or affinity.”<sup>21</sup> But in the Fontanabuona it was much clearer that these kinship ties constituted the social and cultural matrix of the political process in all its forms and manifestations. It was precisely due to this administrative asymmetry that residential and kinship solidarities become visible—solidarities that nourished collective identities and oriented social experience.

As was the case in many other Ligurian communities, political positions in the Fontanabuona were systematically monopolized by a few kin groups, and officers’ authority was always tied to the power of their kin networks. Between the 1620s and the 1680s, two-thirds of the representatives of the *parlamento* of Rapallo were members of the Arata, Casazza, and Cavagnaro families. They all came from large kin groups, had valuable property holdings, and belonged to a particular political alignment (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3 and Fig. 10.1). But the best-documented aspect of this dynamic is the nomination for tax collectors: this is where one sees most clearly the close

<sup>21</sup> ASG, Manoscritti e libri rari, ms. 763. In 1636 it was claimed that the town’s agents easily corrupted those of the districts “by means of friendship, interest on debts, and many other things” (ASCR, Libro Rosso, I, c. 123v).

link between kinship, residence, and administrative practices. The kinship-village relationship demolished and substituted itself for the broader associational and politico-administrative formation represented by the assembly of household heads of the chapel-parish. To elect executive officers and tax collectors for the chapels, as many lottery boxes were created as there were kinship groups or villages, and the public contributions or other taxes were often apportioned within each kin group. Each group presented its household heads and delegated part of them to stand for election as tax collector and for the internal apportionment. The implications are obvious: this practice reinforced the strong hierarchical cohesion of the group and probably helped defend its poorest members, who were thus protected from a direct and traumatic interaction with state institutions and the possibility of incurring external debt. In general, this fiscal policy played a key role in the search for security and protection that guided kin group strategy.<sup>22</sup> In light of this fact we can interpret the surprising declaration of Batta Fopiano, confirmed by other witnesses in 1653:

The custom of our valley of Fontanabuona is that the lands that are sold, bartered, or in any way alienated, continue to pay taxes to the collectors from those kin groups in which name they are registered, and even if an exchange of property is contracted, the tax is always paid to the first collector, and this is the truth of it.... Because I have property that was acquired from other kin groups, and although I am a Fopiano I pay the tax for that property to the collectors from the kin groups where the property originated, and this is the practice that is observed by everyone in this valley.<sup>23</sup>

The other criterion mentioned above, beside the kin group, is that of residence. The basis for the creation of the election box (“*bussolo*”) was the association between surname and village, but the fiscal grouping could sometimes be a family branch and sometimes a neighborhood (“*vicinia*”). In this way, different kin groups could coordinate with each other to nominate a collector and to apportion the fiscal burden, or a single kin group could create multiple election boxes and elect as many collectors as there were subgroups of their kin residing in distinct villages or hamlets. The fiscal solidarity of the kin groups could also extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries: in 1637 Pantalino Connio from the village of Coreglia collected the public contributions owed by his “kin” from the nearby cap-

<sup>22</sup> These are key themes in G. Levi, *L'eredità immateriale* (Turin, 1985).

<sup>23</sup> Archivio Notarile di Chiavari (hereafter, ANC), Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1786.

tainate of Chiavari, as well as from other “kin” in the feudal territory of Santo Stefano d’Aveto—sixteen miles away from Coreglia.<sup>24</sup> But at the same time, fiscal obligations could generate processes of socio-territorial fragmentation. This is what happened, for example, in the chapel of Canevale in the mid-1600s. “For several years now,” declared officials from Rapallo,

the men, or some of them, from said chapel have coordinated amongst themselves to identify within said chapel three fiscal districts, one called *Del Piano*, the other *Canevaro* and the third *Valle Fredda*, and have distinguished [in these places] the real estate from moveable property and expenses ... thus separating out different interests.<sup>25</sup>

This fiscal practice was described as customary “from ancient times,” and was recognized and legitimated by Genoa with Senatorial decrees. It was perhaps the only way for the Republic to ensure revenue collection and to avoid sharper conflicts in the communities. Outside of the Fontanabuona similar practices could be found in different contexts and time periods, either as customs or as innovations that expressed the power dynamics of internal conflicts within villages or neighborhoods, or between villages and towns. In 1580 a decree of the Senate entitled “On the value of collecting revenues by kin group [*pro exigenda avarias in parentella*]” had authorized the kin groups of the coastal town of Santa Margherita to “collect and have collected taxes from individual kin groups by a member of said kin group.”<sup>26</sup> In 1638 an analogous decree was issued by the captain of Rapallo in support of the Queirollo, Chichizola, and Paramino kin groups from the chapel of San Maurizio di Monti, “since there had been fights and disorders between the kin groups of said chapel ... subject to the condition, however, that the present decree not serve as an example for other chapels.”<sup>27</sup> In the following decades, though, other kin groups of the villages of Rapallo acquired this privilege to exempt themselves from the collective responsibility of meeting the debts of their chapels, and from confiscation and imprisonment.<sup>28</sup> Still, in Fontanabuona this practice

<sup>24</sup> ASCR, Avarie d’Oltremonte, filza 1.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1442.

<sup>27</sup> ASCR, Actorum Communitatis et Universitatis Rapalli, filza 1.

<sup>28</sup> In 1648 the taxes of the chapel of San Maurizio di Monti were apportioned separately by the Pendola, Castagneto, Bezassa and Chichizola, Castruzzo, and Queirollo kin groups (ASCR, Elezione Agenti di Borzoli, filza 2). In 1671 the twenty-nine household heads of the Molfino kin group of San Massimo enjoyed the “ability to appoint a separate family tax

seems to have expressed a centuries-old custom and was also applied to the nominations process for most public offices; there are numerous examples of local variations. In 1647 the Queirolo of the “middle village” of Coreglia met to nominate their “representative,” after having first “set aside any hate or love whatsoever.” In 1653 “all of the men of the Costa kin group” of Moconesi were called together to make “a new election box for said kin group.” In the same year, at Favale, three “election boxes” were created: one for the village of Giare (Boitano and De Benedetti kin groups); one for the Cordano, Segaro, Cavagnaro, and Chiereghino kin groups; and a third for the village of Monteghirfo (Garbarino and Bruxa kin groups). In the same year in the chapel of Cicagna seven “election boxes” were made: one for the Malatesta kin group from the village of Trino; one “on behalf of the Casazza”; one “on behalf [of the village] of Isolalonga” (Boitano, Gnecco, and Mangino kin groups); one for “the usual Leveroni”; and three for the Fopiano kin group.<sup>29</sup> The story of the Fopiano is very interesting and is worth a closer look.

## 2 THE VILLAGE OF MONLEONE AND THE FOPIANO KIN GROUP

In the mid-seventeenth century the Fopiano kin group from the parish of Cicagna was divided into four territorial branches, each corresponding to a virilocal residence group. In his study of the diocese of Salerno, Gérard Delille referred to such structures as “lineage blocks [*quartieri di lignaggi*].”<sup>30</sup> About fifty household heads of the house (*casata*)<sup>31</sup> were spread across the village of Mortasco on the right bank of the Lavagna

collector each year” (ASCR, Elezione Agenti di Olivastro, filza 2); a similar privilege was conceded to the Solimano, Devoto, and Queirolo kin groups of San Lorenzo. In 1704 three decrees were issued in favor of the Pastene and Orezzi kin groups of the village of Lanzi (chapel of San Pietro di Novella), authorizing them to create “separate” tax registers (ASCR, Actorum Communitatis, filza 7).

<sup>29</sup> The examples are all taken from ASCR, Avarie d’Oltremonte, filza 1.

<sup>30</sup> G. Delille, *Famille et propriété dans le royaume de Naples (XV<sup>e</sup>–XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Rome, 1985) (Italian trans. *Famiglia e proprietà nel Regno di Napoli* [Turin, 1988]). However, Delille’s model is almost entirely constructed around demographic and economic variables, and kin group behaviors are explained with reference to the reproduction of a kinship and social system based on lineage groups. As I will try to show, kinship was both an articulated and stratified reality, and a language (or idiom), and together these two dimensions permitted the construction and representation of binding and exclusive relations, through kin groups functioning as social, political, and ceremonial units.

<sup>31</sup> The terms *casata* and *parentella* were used as synonyms, but the first was less frequent, and was sometimes substituted by the term *famiglia*—in the following example all three

River and the two sections of the village of Monleone (Monleone d'Alto, or Castello, and Monleone da Basso) on the river's left bank. In the first decades of the century the three kin branches (a fourth branch resided in the villages of Piancassolo and Isolalonga) constituted a single fiscal group, apparently cohesive and solid. But by the middle of the century increased tax pressure brought to light the different demographic and economic profiles of the three branches, and in particular the asymmetry between the Fopiano of Mortasco and those of Monleone. Mortasco counted only five household heads, of whom two were "poor," while the *principali* and the rest of the household heads of the kin group were densely clustered in the two sections of Monleone. The identity and residential solidarity of the Fopiano was in fact closely tied to this village, located a short distance from the parish church of Cicagna, which was in many ways one of the most important villages of the Fontanabuona. Monleone was perhaps the main market village for the backcountry of Rapallo and Chiavari. The weekly grain and olive oil market which was held there was frequented by the miller-bakers of Cicagna, the local population, merchants from the two walled towns, and Lombard merchants and muleteers managing about 200 mules.<sup>32</sup> The village's strong sense of identity was also tied to an historical tradition, which was updated and reinvented precisely in the mid-1600s. The houses of Monleone d'Alto were built near the ruins of the castle that had been destroyed by the Genoese in the late fourteenth century. Part of the lands surrounding the village, which all belonged to the Fopiano, paid dues to the abbey of San Fruttuoso. A house in Monleone da Basso served as the office of a notary, Bartolomeo Fopiano, and not far from there was located the half-ruined church of San Vittore, which was said to have predated the parish church of Cicagna. In these very years the Fopiano of Monleone were in open competition with the wardens of the church in Cicagna, San Gio Batta. The former wanted to use donations by the kin group to rebuild San Vittore and to endow a chaplaincy for Francesco Fopiano, archpriest of Cicagna. This was a way to represent symbolically the autonomy and cohesion of the village, which had been built around the kin group, and to display the political and eco-

terms are used to designate the ensemble of the household heads whose surname was Fopiano.

<sup>32</sup> There are scattered references for various years between 1570 and the late seventeenth century; see ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 512; *ibid.*, Antica Finanza, filza 668; ASACR, Foliatium Communitatis Rapalli, filza 1.



conomic prestige of this branch of the Fopiano.<sup>33</sup> Mortasco, on the other hand, was a small village on the poor side of the valley between the chestnut groves and the woods, and the Fopiano who lived there were weed-pullers, shepherds, charcoal-makers, and “bandits,” and their wives thread-spinners.

This clear difference between residence locations is apparent in the mechanism by which the tax burden was distributed within the kin group, as managed by the *principali* of Monleone. The social pre-eminence of the kin group’s stronger branches, the group’s hierarchical character, and the limits to the group’s solidarity were all masked by a kind of political arithmetic that divided contributions and other fiscal burdens into three equal parts among the three branches of the Fopiano in Mortasco and Monleone. This mechanism tended to reinforce the bargaining power of the Fopiano of Monleone with respect to Rapallo and Genoa, while penalizing the weaker branch.

A request made in 1651 by Rolandino Fopiano, household head from Mortasco, reflected both the internal context described here and the broader context of the negotiated fiscal relationship between the kin groups and the Republic. In the name of the other household heads of Mortasco, Rolandino invoked “distributive justice” and asked to be able to form a separate “election box.” The supplication was received by the procurators of the Republic who granted authorization for each of the three branches of the kin group to apportion their contributions separately.<sup>34</sup>

The proliferation of such phenomena clarifies how contact between the Genoese and the local communities was mainly mediated by corporate groups and their leaders. Kin groups displayed considerable elasticity. Their configuration (somewhat like that of the villages, hamlets, and neighborhoods), and in a general sense the boundaries and hierarchy of social and territorial spaces, all resulted from both internal conflicts and interactions between local society and the state. The examples offered here point to a model that explains how social and territorial groups were transformed—a model differing both from diffusionist ones (in which the pro-

<sup>33</sup> ANC, Notary Bartolomeo Fopiano, filze 2717–18; Leveroni, *Cicagna*. I reconstructed village structures from the *caratata* of 1642: ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 769. The Fopiano had seven houses in Mortasco, thirty-one in and around Monleone, and thirteen in Piancassolo and Isolalonga; all of the kin group’s lands were concentrated in the area between these villages.

<sup>34</sup> ASCR, Avaric d’Oltremonte, filza 1.

cess of acculturation was perfectly received), and oppositional ones. Administrative organization was the outcome of a continuous process of adaptation between the pressures exerted by the center and the flexible responses of local societies. In order to communicate and negotiate with the communities, and to find local support, the Genoese employed the same language that structured social relations among the natives—the language of kin groups.

But in the communities kin groups were also a principle of social stratification. The differentiated control of material, political, and symbolic resources was a key element of the local response to the center. It was also crucial for the drawing of geographic and social boundaries around kin groups and their branches, and for the continuity of particular lineages.

A century later, in 1759, a commissioner from the Bank of San Giorgio established himself in Monleone in order to “collect the excise tax on grain.” Since 1624 the milling tax had been included in the general apportionment, but its collection had followed a tortured path. An investigation in 1709 by the Republic in the *Levante* showed that apportionments varied considerably from one year to another or were not even carried out due to conflicts and fights between kin groups, villages, and neighborhoods. Furthermore, almost everywhere, doctors, notaries, surgeons, and “officers” were exempted from tax payments. In Monleone da Basso the commissioner met a hostile environment and was prevented from carrying out his duties. The Genoese magistrates responded to a request from the bank by sending twelve Corsican soldiers to the Fontanabuona to assist and protect the commissioner. As had been the practice in such situations for at least a century and a half, the soldiers were to be given room and board at the community’s expense in Monleone. The commissioner then complained that the Corsicans and their corporal had been lodged in a single room together that leaked when it rained. But his most trying task was to resolve an apportionment conflict between the upper and lower village that would remain open for thirty years—almost until the end of the Republic itself.<sup>35</sup>

The conflict soon narrowed in on the parish of Cicagna. The Republic’s Magistracy of Community Affairs received a request from the other ten parish-chapels to exempt them from having to pay any expenses for the

<sup>35</sup> We are fortunate to have found, gathered in a single bundle, a portion of the documentation produced by the 1709 investigation and all of the documentation on the Fontanabuona from 1759 to the end of the century; see ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, filza 499/2.

commissioner and the Corsicans. At this point the dispute was over the position of Monleone within the chapel of Cicagna, but it also had wider reverberations. Monleone “was not a community in and of itself,” as the Genoese magistrates had suggested, but a “district” of the parish of Cicagna. This was the position taken, for reasons that were at cross purposes with each other, by the Fopiano and the chapel officers. The case demonstrated the strange sensitivity of Old Regime communities to jurisdictional questions and related privileges. If it had been recognized as having “community” status, the village of Monleone would have had the right to its own representative in the Valley Council. To address this problem the entire Valley Council met in the village of Follo, near Cicagna, and decided to approve a subsidy of 400 *lire* to send two councilors to Genoa for talks with the central authorities. They proposed to spread the payments for this subsidy across all of the villages of the Fontanabuona except for Monleone, which, they stressed, was already obliged to pay for the Corsican soldiers and the milling tax. (The agreement reached in Genoa eliminated any doubt about the notion of ‘community’ and confirmed the customary administrative arrangement.) But at the last moment the entire controversy reverted to issues internal to the parish of Cicagna and assumed a form that made it impossible to collect any kind of tax.

In 1760 there were 160 persons (*teste*) in Cicagna who were liable for payment of the fiscal contribution and other extraordinary taxes. Again appealing to the decree of the Genoese magistrates, however, the parish officers argued that the expenses for the Corsicans and the commissioner were the unique responsibility of Monleone and its forty-four persons—this interpretation, for various reasons, was rigorously shared by all of the notaries and a portion of the valley’s “officials.” At this point the conflict shifted to the level of the village. While Monleone indeed counted forty-four persons, they were divided among three “places”: Corte, with eleven families “or houses” and sixteen *teste*; Monleone d’Alto or Castello, with seven families and eleven *teste*; and Monleone, which in the mid-seventeenth century was referred to as Monleone da Basso, with fourteen families and seventeen *teste*. The household heads of Corte and Castello considered themselves separate bodies (“*corpi*”) and, also citing the Genoese magistrates’ decree, claimed that only Monleone da Basso was the “place that was required, according to the decree, to support the burden.” They also pointed out that in the past the lists of the *teste* were distinct from each other. The Fopiano continued to be in 1760, as they had been in the mid-seventeenth century, the dominant kin group in Monleone

with nineteen household heads. They were also probably among the leading protagonists in the weekly grain market held at the Pian di Mercato, near the church of San Vittore. The kin group accused the notary Gio Andrea Porcella, chancellor of the Fontanabuona, of having falsely represented their wealth, protesting that at Monleone there were only “fifteen impoverished families.” They presented favorable testimony from another notary, Carlo Antonio de Ferrari, which affirmed that “they were all poor, with few exceptions, and they survive either by piecemeal work in the towns and elsewhere, or by hard agricultural work.”

This thicket of accusations and counterclaims, the literal interpretation of the decree, and the presence of a squad of “bandits” near Monleone created a complete stalemate and in practical terms made tax collection impossible. The calculation of the sums to be apportioned is revealing in this respect. In 1760 the wages, board, and lodging for the Corsicans amounted to 654 *lire*. If the distribution were made among the forty-four *teste* of the three “neighborhoods” of Monleone, each *testa* would have to pay 14.17.3 (in *lire*, *soldi*, and *denari*, twenty *soldi* per *lira* and twelve *denari* per *soldo*). This amount was considered exorbitant given that the usual fiscal contribution was 2.17.8. The same amount apportioned across the seven *teste* of Monleone da Basso would amount to a contribution of 38.9.5 per *testa*, in addition to the usual tax. The Republic’s own Magistracy of Community Affairs adjudged this sum to be “impossible to bear.” The withdrawal of the Corsican soldiers was made contingent upon a formal promise by the Fopiano that the commissioners would be able to carry out his duties freely, but no member of the kin group appeared before the captain of Rapallo.

The Monleone case spurred an investigation into tax-collecting procedures; the process was said to be carried out “more verbally than according to an arithmetic count.” However, the eight notaries of the valley refused to turn over or have their account books audited. This was in 1774.

In 1780 a new commissioner escorted by Corsican soldiers installed himself in Monleone, again in order to try to collect the milling tax. This excise tax was one of the most important components of the fiscal receipt, and the Fontanabuona controlled, as we will see, a large part of the grain traffic from the Po Valley toward the coastal towns. But the milling tax was one part of a combined, overall community tax assessment whose apportionment escaped every oversight effort. This time the decree from the Genoese magistrates directly addressed the Fopiano and specified that the

apportionment should be made “on the real estate located in said place of Monleone, which was owned by the persons of said place who resided there.” The game of interpreting the decree and exempting one’s group from it began again, this time at the micro-level of the village-market and the Fopiano kin group. Those who owned property in the area of the village “but did not live there” asked to be exempted from the burden (some declared that they had recently moved to Castello, or had just sold their property). The son of the notary Bartolomeo was exempted because he lived and worked in Genoa as a “scribe” of the Magnificent Francesco Maria Piccaluga. The notaries Gio Ambrogio and Bartolomeo were exempted according to custom, and others according to their extreme poverty. This was in 1787.

In 1793 the Valley Council unanimously presented a request “against certain burdens and prejudices in the assignment of fiscal contributions” perpetrated by the officers of Rapallo. The contested amount was for 3,173 *lire* and had to do with the auditing of accounts “that have not been given, and cannot be given, for the community of Oltremonte.” The supplication also complained about the sums demanded for other matters. For example, the contribution for Nostra Signora di Montallegro “had never been made” by Oltremonte since “the Fontanabuona provides for its own [religious] functions.” The same went for the Christmas bonfire (“those of Rapallo should not carrying out pompous and luxurious ceremonies at the expense of the poor people”); the guard of Capo di Monte, which was in the territory of the walled town; the straw bundles for the bonfire of the feast of San Giovanni (24 June) (“each place within the Most Serene Republic burns trees and bundles of straw in honor of the Saint, but they pay for it themselves”); the salary of the medical doctor (“the poor people of Fontanabuona either die like animals or if they want [the doctor] they pay for him”); the surgeon of the tribunal; the expenses for the Magnificent Citizens, “who own property only in the territory of Rapallo and not in Fontanabuona”; the agents “who are paid by the Fontanabuona itself”; the novena of San Biagio and that of Corpus Domini (“the churches of the Fontanabuona pay for these functions themselves”); and the expenses for the Magistracy of Community Affairs (1,710 *lire*), to which Oltremonte claimed not to have to contribute. The Fontanabuona’s demands of autonomy—administrative, cultural and ceremonial—were almost absolute.

These last events took place four years prior to the dissolution of the Genoese aristocratic Republic.

### 3 CUSTOMS AND POLITICAL MANIPULATION

Since the fifteenth century there had been formal juridical and administrative statutes for the Fontanabuona, but these had been largely imposed from the outside and never acted upon. The valley's position within the *podesteria* of Rapallo was in reality ambiguous and superficial. Beginning in around 1570 the office of representative of Oltremonte in the *parlamento* was held by a notable from the walled town of Rapallo, which, since it was divided into two parts (*Levante* and *Ponente*), had two syndics.<sup>36</sup> Supported by testimony from other officials, the *podestà* declared in 1572 that "it had never been the practice to make public cries or proclamations for any cause whatsoever in the Fontanabuona valley." He added, however, that this was not a good reason for the "men of Fontanabuona" to claim ignorance about the matters in question.<sup>37</sup> But in the same year, a notable from the villages near Chiavari, Davide Vaccà, a legal scholar and future *doge* of the Republic, made the case that "the place of Fontanabuona [is] almost a separate jurisdiction unto itself," and that, accordingly, "the proclamation and prohibition made in Rapallo does not constrain the men of said jurisdiction, and does not permit them to be bothered or harmed."<sup>38</sup> In 1577 the syndics of the walled town itself appeared before the Genoese commissioner Lorenzo Negrone, who had been sent to Rapallo to certify the process of nominating officials, and challenged Oltremonte's right to have a *sindico*, claiming that the valley had never had one and had never "had its voice heard [*dato voce*]." Carlo Lencisa was a notary from Rapallo who held the seat in the *parlamento* that had been left vacant by the absence of the Oltremonte delegate. He stated that "said valley of Fontanabuona [is] divided into two parts, and each part manages its own affairs." The household heads of the parishes of Canevale, Coreglia and Dezerega met at Calvari in a "chamber [*sala*]" belonging to the noble Della Torre family in order to elect their officers, and they considered themselves a separate "jurisdiction." All of the sources agree that the inhabitants of the Fontanabuona were part of a different, hidden system.<sup>39</sup>

This sixteenth-century customary status retained much of its influence and worth throughout the seventeenth century. In their administrative

<sup>36</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 506.

<sup>37</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1392.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1414; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 506.

relations with Rapallo, the *principali* and the household heads of the Fontanabuona kin groups continued to claim the support of the “ancient customs” and practices dating back to “time immemorial.”

From the perspective of Rapallo’s own system of territorial administration, the Fontanabuona was a “backward” sector whose autonomy threatened Rapallo’s political unity and gave a bad example to other subordinate areas. However, it was also useful to point fingers at the Fontanabuona whenever there was a fiscal conflict or debt dispute between Rapallo and Genoa. Let us recall that in the early seventeenth century the household heads of Oltremonte were required to make tax payments amounting to 28 percent of the total expenses on the balance sheet. Still, in 1610 the new captain of Rapallo wrote to the Senate complaining that “it is impossible to collect the ordinary contribution due to the bad character of these people.”<sup>40</sup> The expense budget for 1611<sup>41</sup> shows, especially for the salary category, the change in the administrative structure following the transformation of the *podesteria* into a captainate in 1608 (see Table 3.3). The total expenses of 12,518 *lire* from 1611 (an increase from barely 4,759 *lire* in 1588),<sup>42</sup> grew even more in following decades, both because of the introduction of new excise taxes (the milling tax and the olive oil export tax, which were inserted into the overall contribution amounts) and because of the appearance of one-off taxes, the extraordinary expenses for the general commissioners, and especially those for quartering the Corsican soldiers.

These developments—Genoese fiscal centralization, the political reorganization of the communities, the introduction of new excise taxes, and increased oversight of local public finance as sanctioned by the creation of the Magistracy of Community Affairs in 1624—all obviously had varying impacts on the groups and territorial formations that made up the diverse social fabric of the community. In general, though, they paralleled a growing level of conflict in local societies.<sup>43</sup> Without a doubt they increased opportunities for notables from the walled town who became revenue col-

<sup>40</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 610.

<sup>41</sup> ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 835.

<sup>42</sup> ASCR, Atti notarili di Carlo Lencisa, filza 10.

<sup>43</sup> In 1614 the newly appointed captain ordered the notaries to turn over copies of sales contracts and tax assessments for the previous ten years and ordered inhabitants to report all of their property holdings (ASCR, Criminalium, filza 15). In 1621 the inspectors (*sindicatori*) authorized officials to break down the doors of tax debtors who refused to give entry to collectors (ibid., filza 19).

**Table 3.3** “Expenses” of the community of Rapallo for 1611

<i>Kind of expense</i>	<i>lire-soldi-denari</i>
Direct contribution	3,359.15.7
Galley tax	780.2.6
Olive oil tax	650
Maritime transit tax ( <i>ripe minute</i> )	1,595.12.6
Inspectors' tax	80
Tax for the Albenga castle	10
Captain's salary	1,100
Salary for the court scribe	400
Acquisition of three galleys	390
Care of four young bastards	156
Messenger of San Giorgio	8
Salary of police chief and eight assistants	1,680
Salaries for five messengers	440
Jailor's salary	120
Rent of inspectors' house	60
Sori guard	60
Capo di Monte guard	30
Straw, wood, oil, and beds for Corsican soldiers	557.10
Lodging for Corsicans	55
Flour for Portofino castle	20
Captain's transport cost to Portofino	24
Lodging for captain	130
Lodging for militia sergeant	50
Scribe's salary	40
Salary for attorney of the poor	25
Oil and wood for Portofino castle	25.2.10
Treasurer's salary	500
Doctor's salary	100
Dispatch rider's salary	50
Total	12,518.3.5

lectors, tax farmers, or receivers for olive oil payments. Such people could gain, beyond their salaries, extra profits by delaying their remittances, manipulating public funds, and lending money to the community (at a 30 percent interest rate in 1622) to help pay the collective debt.<sup>44</sup> On the one hand, olive oil merchants and millers were able to shift the oil and flour taxes to the community as a whole by incorporating them into the overall contribution. However, on the other hand, disagreements over the appor-

<sup>44</sup> ASG, Antica Finanza, filza 1398.



tionment of expenses and debts generated an explosion of claims for fiscal autonomy by various neighborhoods, districts, villages, and corporate groups. The state's interlocutors in the community were the local elites—although these were socially and spatially diversified within the walled town and between the walled town and the villages—the merchants engaged in brokerage activities, or corporate entities like the kin groups.<sup>45</sup>

The Fontanabuona was certainly also characterized by internal resistance that was articulated and differentiated. As we have seen, the protective mechanisms of the kin groups were fairly elastic. The separation between the chapels of Canevale, Coreglia, Dezerega, and all of the others was maintained until the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>46</sup> In 1624, right when the milling tax was introduced, the powerful millers from Cicagna had the order issued by the captain of Rapallo affixed to the trees in the woods instead of to the doors of the churches (a gesture that symbolically nullified the public act) and added the new tax to the general sum collected “from the men and the commonality.” Their action was supported by the bakers, the retailers, and the female bread-sellers, but was denounced to the Genoese Senate by the household heads of the parishes who were not involved in milling or bread production.<sup>47</sup> In general, though, the most common and widespread form of resistance was that of “keeping things secret [*occultamento*].” When Genoa imposed a new tax on “principal producers” in 1626, officials from the walled town declared that they had “no knowledge of the resources of the inhabitants” of Oltremonte. Without their *caratata* (assessment registers) for reference, even an approximate estimate of real estate wealth would be practically impossible. The captain was forced to accept the values proposed by the syndics of the valley with respect to eighteen *principalì*. The taxable average wealth amount was just over 6,000 *lire*, which was the threshold above which taxes could be imposed. However, the central authorities reconfigured the estimates, increasing them an average of 234 percent; the names of the *principalì*, and the official and local estimates are depicted in Table 3.4.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> In general, this situation informs state-building models such as those described in Tilly's edited volume *The Formation of National States* by showing how state structures could develop simultaneously and in close interdependence with informal local structures.

<sup>46</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filza 6353; *ibid.*, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1809.

<sup>47</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1828.

<sup>48</sup> ASG, Finanza Pubblica, filza 2604. The captain wrote that “I summoned the officials and collectors from all of the villages, ordering them to show me their registers, so that I

**Table 3.4** Wealth of Fontanabuona *principali* (1626), official and local estimates

<i>Name</i>	<i>Official estimate of total worth (lire)</i>	<i>Local estimate</i>
Giulio Garbarino	26,000	10,000
Pietro Fopiano	25,500	7,000
Carlo Fopiano	25,500	6,000
Agostino Fopiano	20,000	6,000
Agostino Casazza son of Vincenzo	24,200	7,000
Agostino Casazza son of Antonio	30,300	10,000
Carlo Arata	21,300	6,000
Gio Batta Arata (notary)	20,500	6,000
Benedetto Arata	20,000	6,000
Steffano Dezerega	23,500	7,000
Gio Ferraro	22,200	7,000
Ambrosio Cavagnaro	20,300	6,000
Steffano Cavagnaro	20,300	6,000
Agostino and Gio Malatesta	20,800	6,000
Agostino Volpone	20,300	6,000
Nicolino Gnecco	20,600	6,000
Agostino Mangino	20,300	6,000
Bernardo de Martino	20,000	6,000

Not even the assessment register for 1641 made things any easier. In the mid-seventeenth century officials from Rapallo again complained that the inhabitants of the Fontanabuona “did not submit estimates of their wealth, and did not pay individual taxes or fees, as do the other inhabitants

could see if these would clarify matters ... but I discovered that they collect in a confused way, not based on proper registers or documentation, but according to what they have done for the past hundred years.” Table 3.4 lists the wealth of the *principali* from the Fontanabuona in 1626, first showing their total worth as estimated by central authorities, and then the wealth estimate of local officials and confirmed by the captain. In the town of Rapallo there were forty-one people who owed a direct tax, with an average assessed worth of 38,000 *lire* (13,000 according to the local assessment); seventy-two people in the other four districts owed payments on an average worth of 25,000 *lire* (8,000). The *principali* of the Fontanabuona thus stood up well in a wealth comparison to the elites from the coastal areas of the captainate. The wealth of the *principali* of Chiavari, which was the third wealthiest town of the Republic (after Savona and Taggia) was more consistent: there, 131 persons were assessed on a combined wealth of 3,945,000 *lire*. For the general situation of all of the Ligurian communities, see E. Grendi, “La distribuzione della ricchezza privata nel territorio della Repubblica dei Genovesi attorno al 1630,” *Miscellanea Storica Ligure* 15, 1 (1983): 301–13.

of this captainate.”<sup>49</sup> In 1651 Genoa required the officials of Rapallo to “draw up a description” of all of the inhabitants of Oltremonte subject to taxation and to list their property. Only some of the chapel officers submitted a list of 786 men between the ages of seventeen and seventy years of age, subdivided by kin group.<sup>50</sup> To confront the Genoese requests and “to remove and circumvent the abuses and other things that have happened in the Oltremonte district,” the captain tried to require the valley household heads to elect their officials in his house in Rapallo. But in 1655 the Magistracy of Community Affairs was forced to recognize that nothing had changed and that “the Council of Fontanabuona ... and thus the assessors of the valley, continued to use the one same notary who is also from the valley, which led to great disorders and damages, given the passions and particular interests operative there.” Both the captain and the Genoese officials alluded to the conflicts and challenges in the district. But when they were called to Rapallo, the syndics refused to “carry out this duty” of employing a notary who was an outsider or rotating notaries annually. Rather, they requested permission to “return to their earlier practice.”<sup>51</sup>

In all of the cases described above the fiscal issue was closely tied to the problem of formal governance. The situation in the Fontanabuona probably resembled that of all early modern rural societies and shows how fiscal extraction—even at modest levels compared to other Italian or European contexts—and governing structures embodied the asymmetrical relationship with state authority. But in the early modern period the development of state formations depended in large measure on the reactions and responses of local societies. In this sense the case of the Fontanabuona, which might at first seem marginal, can be illuminating.

The Genoese territorial regime was definitely not homogeneous and indeed presented notable local variations. More than anything it was a

<sup>49</sup> ASCR, *Actorum Communitatis et Universitatis Rapalli*, filza 1.

<sup>50</sup> ASCR, *Avarie d'Oltremonte*, filza 1. The lists of the inhabitants were drawn up mainly by collectors from the kin group; more specifically, by collectors from the various territorial sections of the kin groups. The lists would be expanded in subsequent years and the numbers of persons subject to taxation would be fixed at 970 in 1657; this would serve as the only basis for tax apportionment from then until the fall of the Republic. In 1793 agents from the Fontanabuona asserted their “privilege and long-standing custom [of apportioning the fiscal burden amongst themselves], on the basis of 970 taxable units as established in the year 1657” (ASG, *Magistrato delle Comunità*, filza 499/2).

<sup>51</sup> ASCR, *Avarie d'Oltremonte*, filza 1.

kind of “indirect government” that was almost entirely administered by locals and founded on the more or less explicit recognition of privileges and customs. And in the communities, the concepts of custom and tradition were consciously employed in order to maintain and legitimize local autonomies and practices, or to assert control over change.<sup>52</sup>

Between 1570 and 1655 many things changed, as we will see, but the Fontanabuona preserved almost intact its mimetic abilities. Even over a long period marked by stark internal conflicts the valley community—as it was configured for an outside observer—displayed, at least with respect to the two issues mentioned, a tight cultural homogeneity and a strong impermeability. The meetings of the *parlamento* in Rapallo never had a ceremonial significance or a scenographic, political-theatrical influence that could support a broad consensus. If anything, the meetings degenerated into fights when the excluded and the “idiots” tried to participate in them. Unlike the town of Santa Margherita and some of the coastal villages, the Fontanabuona made no effort to use the *parlamento* to challenge the hegemony of the Rapallo notables.

As we have seen for the case of the village of Monleone and the Fopiano kin group, the general situation did not change even in the next century. In 1655 there were three notaries who competed for local office: Lorenzo Leverone (who had held office for two decades), Bartolomeo Fopiano, and Gerolamo de Ferrari. De Ferrari declared his intention to renounce the office that would fall to him according to the rotation that had been imposed by the Magistracy of Community Affairs and the captain of Rapallo because the chapel officials refused to acknowledge his position. In 1771 there were eight notaries in Oltremonte, and they were all heirs of their families’ professional tradition: Lorenzo and Gian Giacomo Leverone (father and son), Gian Bartolomeo Fopiano, Ferdinando and Girolamo de Ferrari (father and son), Prospero and Gian Andrea Porcella (father and son), and Martino de Martino. Despite harsh conflict between kin groups for public office, they all affirmed together, in 1774,

the most ancient and respected custom of the Community of Fontanabuona, which has been certified many times by Decrees of Your Most Illustrious Lordships, and by the repeated decisions of this Community, that the regis-

<sup>52</sup> On the issue of how custom and tradition were used for purposes of political legitimation see the essays in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (Cambridge, 1983) (Italian trans. *L’invenzione della tradizione* [Turin, 1987]).

ters of public contributions and other communal affairs should always be kept by native [*nazionali*] notaries, taking turns, which enabled these inhabitants to live in perfect peace, and that no foreign [*estero*] notary would be able to keep these registers, or to defraud, by so doing, not only the native notaries, but also the other individuals of this community.<sup>53</sup>

Compared to the previous century, the language with which the socio-cultural reality of the Fontanabuona was represented had only changed by virtue of its emphasis (significant in itself) on the concept of “community” and on the “native” or “national” character of the notaries.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, images of the valley’s cultural identity were fairly frequent in the discourse employed by inhabitants, whether *principali* or *contadini*, in the witness testimonies delivered to notaries or to the tribunals of Rapallo and Chiavari. A homogeneous image of the Fontanabuona, but with negative connotations, was also offered by the Genoese magistrates and commissioners and, two centuries later, by French officials and travelers. Similar images would also be taken up again by local historians between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The idea of a generous autonomy for the valley was built, in part at least, on such images. The valley’s inhabitants described dowry and trousseau, inheritance practices, the selling of property and the payment of taxes, harvesting chestnuts, and the distribution of water by mills “for the use of our valley of Fontanabuona.” The Genoese described the “evil character of the people,” bandits and contraband. But this idea of autonomy was also constructed through a historical memory that was partly a shared heritage and partly manipulated by kin groups and local *principali* who added layers of their own genealogical and mythical memories. The notion of self-governance had probably taken root in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries during the conflict for control of the valley between the Malaspina lords of Monleone and the Genoese. After 1389 Cicagna had also briefly served as a seat of the *podesteria* separate from Rapallo. Then Genoa dismantled the castle of Monleone and over the course of following centuries incorporated the territory into what became the district of Oltremonte.<sup>54</sup>

It is significant that these issues came to the fore in the early seventeenth century when Genoa was transforming the *podesteria* of Rapallo

<sup>53</sup> ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, filza 499/2.

<sup>54</sup> Leveroni, *Cicagna*.

into a captainate and seeking to impose more centralized control over fiscal extraction, political competition, and judicial administration in the communities. Still, as we will see, the apprehension and manipulation of historical memory took place in a context of sharp internal conflict. This memory was appropriated above all by a local faction that could point to material evidence and claimed to have “documents.” The conflicts and violence that accompanied and determined this process expressed both internal power relationships and local opposition to new forms of social and political life.



## CHAPTER 4

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# The Land and Residential Patterns

Both the topographical line and the administrative boundary that separated the Fontanabuona from the coastal districts coincided with the ridge of the “mountains,” beyond which the agrarian landscape did not look out over the sea and was dominated by chestnut groves, woods, and meadows. These agrarian features also existed on the seaward side of the hills, but there they functioned as a kind of complement to olive orchards. Within the valley bottom of the Fontanabuona and on the steep, partly terraced hillsides that climbed up to the first summit of the Apennines, olives could not really be cultivated. There, near the villages and in the isolated hamlets, rather than olive presses one encountered “*seccarezzi*,” or sheds for drying chestnuts.

The main historical source for reconstructing the agrarian landscape and residential patterns is the *caratata*, the register of property descriptions drawn up in 1641. Study of this documentation permits the reconstruction of the shell, or material structure, inside of which we can then observe social and political behaviors of groups and individuals. The following paragraphs will analyze closely the ecological context, the demographic units, and the distribution of people across the valley’s space. By first identifying these basic elements, we will then be able to see how they fit into a possible explanation of the local intensity of phenomena such as feuds and bandits. Such phenomena also existed on a more widely diffused level, but there they were also more dispersed and hidden, and thus partly removed from the documentation.

# 1 CHESTNUT TREES: THE ‘OLIVE TREES’ OF THE BACKCOUNTRY

Analysis of the data included in the 1641 *caratata*<sup>1</sup> shows that parcels of land on which only chestnut trees were cultivated amounted to 43 percent of the total estimated value of the property, accounting for 48.6 percent of all of the parcels described (see Table 4.1). But chestnuts were also the main crop in parcels where multiple crops were grown, and in plots near houses. More rarely were chestnuts combined with olive trees and grapevines. Overall, chestnut trees accounted for around 65 percent of agricultural wealth. The most incisive indicator of the chestnut tree’s dominance,

**Table 4.1** Distribution of parcels according to type of cultivation and estimated worth (in *lire*) in the Fontanabuona, 1641

	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>% of total number</i>	<i>Estimated worth</i>	<i>% of total worth</i>	<i>Average worth per parcel</i>
Land + buildings <sup>a</sup>	1,302	21.5	390,683	39.7	300
Chestnut <sup>b</sup>	2,945	48.6	423,334	43.0	144
Chestnut + other <sup>c</sup>	381	6.3	37,509	3.8	98
Vines + other <sup>d</sup>	427	7.0	59,307	6.0	139
Olives + other <sup>c</sup>	255	4.2	35,028	3.6	137
Meadow	297	5.0	24,251	2.5	82
Field for cultivation	232	3.8	7,248	0.7	31
Oak groves	80	1.3	3,329	0.3	42
Wild land <sup>f</sup>	52	0.9	1,595	0.2	31
Other <sup>g</sup>	86	1.4	2,301	0.2	27
Total	6,057	100	984,585	100	163

<sup>a</sup>Houses, parts of houses, huts, sheds, mills (51), hulling mills (4), sawmills (1)

<sup>b</sup>Includes drying bins for chestnuts, when they are not linked to houses or huts

<sup>c</sup>Wild land, fields, meadows, oak groves

<sup>d</sup>Wild land, fields, meadows, oak groves

<sup>e</sup>Meadows, fig trees, chestnut trees, oaks

<sup>f</sup>Wooded or uncultivated land

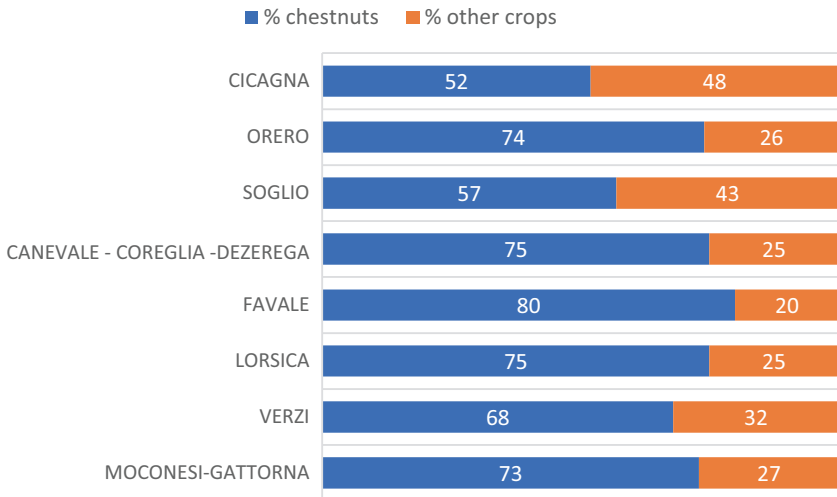
<sup>g</sup>Fruit trees (walnut, apple, pear, cherry, hazelnut), figs, vegetable gardens, uncultivated land, unspecified

<sup>1</sup>ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 768–69. The title of this section was suggested to me by Diego Moreno’s article, “Querce come olivi. Sulla rovericoltura in Liguria tra XVIII e XIX secolo,” *Quaderni storici* 49 (1982): 109–36.



particularly given the impossibility of correlating estimated value with parcel size, is offered by the relative number of parcels (see Fig. 4.1, where the percentages are calculated according to the total number of parcels after excluding those with built structures, 4,755 parcels out of 6,057 total). Further, most of the parcels held by the owners described in the estimates featured chestnut trees exclusively or mostly. For example, in the parishes of Orero and Cicagna only sixty-one (12.5 percent) of the 486 owners did not have parcels with chestnut trees. These exceptions were a handful of wealthy owners from Pianezza and Ponte whose lands were surrounded by gardens and vines, and about forty owners of very little property who were co-heirs or heirs not yet emancipated from their fathers' authority (and whose individual worth was under fifty *lire*).

Chestnut groves, or "*terra castaneativa*," and their products were the most commonly mentioned items among the transactions and exchanges registered in the notarial acts. In-kind payments for rented parcels were normally made in "dried and cleaned" chestnuts. At the time of the chestnut harvest small-scale owners paid their debts and offered collateral for



**Fig. 4.1** Percentages of chestnut and non-chestnut parcels in the Fontanabuona parishes, 1641

new loans. In the notaries' papers one finds indications of the sale of future crops, as one did for olive oil.<sup>2</sup> Finally, ecclesiastical lands, which were fiscally exempt, were always comprised of *terra castaneativa*.

Chestnut trees were terraced or protected by edging, grafted, pruned, and fertilized, and equipped with drying bins, sheds, and pits for burning the shells. They represented a form of cultivation that probably required a similar effort and continuity of labor to that of olive trees. Like the olive trees in the hillside villages overlooking the sea, chestnut trees could be found close to houses and churches.<sup>3</sup> Outside of the valley bottom, all of the villages were immersed in chestnut groves. This was a reality that marked the entire backcountry beyond the towns of Rapallo and Chiavari.

The most frequent rural crimes in the Fontanabuona were thefts of chestnuts, chestnut wood, and chestnut boughs. Owners classified the "damages caused" by such crimes as "serious." All chestnut groves were "posted" or "the objects of proclamations [*gridati*]"—that is, they were off-limits to the pasture of goats, sheep, cows and pigs, especially in summer and autumn months.

The chestnut tree provided not only the nutritional foundation for rural inhabitants—dry green chestnuts, chestnut flour—but also the wood most often used in carpentry, the frames and trellises ("*carasse*") for supporting grape vines, firewood, and wood for charcoal-making. Furniture, tables, and most domestic tools were made with chestnut wood, as were the pallets used for storing grains, flour, and beans, and the storage containers for the wedding trousseau. Basket-makers used the young shoots and the bark. In late autumn the dry leaves were gathered and kept inside to make beds for the livestock stabled during the winter. Flutes played at festivals and dances were manufactured out of chestnut shoots. There was a range of uses for the chestnut tree and its products—certainly more than that offered by the olive tree.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> One example: on 12 August 1628 Stefano Barbazelata, from the village of Favale, "promised to give and deliver to Jacobino Cavagnario son of Stephano ... nineteen *staria* of chestnuts" by Christmas, in exchange for forty-four *lire*. If the consignment were not made "the agreement would constitute a loan by said Jacobus of said chestnuts, with interest and damages paid by said Stefano" (ANC, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1783).

<sup>3</sup> There are numerous examples in ASCR, Diversorum, reg. 1 ff.

<sup>4</sup> On the chestnut tree in Liguria in the early modern period see M. Quaini, *Per la storia del paesaggio agrario in Liguria* (Savona, 1973); D. Moreno, "La colonizzazione dei 'Boschi d'Ovada' nei secoli XVI–XVII," *Quaderni storici* 24 (1973): 977–1016; G. Doria and G. Sivori, "Nell'area del castagno sulla montagna ligure: un'azienda tra la metà del Seicento

For this reason the social practices linked to chestnut cultivation had important symbolic meanings. In many notarial transactions dried chestnuts functioned as currency. Production estimates, threshing, gathering, and drying were collective activities that gave significance to social relations of kinship or friendship within villages and parishes. A ritual practice was described by a witness in 1612: "From the month of October ... those who are not enemies go to see each other's chestnuts and sometimes eat some."<sup>5</sup> Between October and November emigrants, exiles and bandits came back to their villages for the chestnut harvest. According to custom, "the fruit of the chestnut trees from one side and the other of the boundary" was gathered jointly by the owners of contiguous chestnut parcels.<sup>6</sup> The planting of chestnut seedlings in uncultivated or communal land served to sanction the appropriation and individual possession-taking of those places, and these actions were closely scrutinized by the entire village community. In 1611 a squad of armed household heads from the village of Costalunga reaffirmed their collective right of access to the common lands of Valle Fredda by uprooting and leaving scattered on the ground the chestnut trees that had been planted there by an individual from the village of Canevale. This reprisal was undertaken a just few days before the harvest was to begin.<sup>7</sup>

In the Fontanabuona, as was generally the case in all of the valleys of the Ligurian backcountry, chestnut trees were endowed with the weight and significance that olive trees had in the coastal area.<sup>8</sup> The main difference related to their commercial role: chestnut production offered fairly little of exchange value beyond local markets. Dried chestnuts and chestnut flour were certainly sold in the coastal towns and in the Genoese market, and they were probably also exported. In the late sixteenth century, in fact, the Republic prohibited their "extraction" outside of Genoese

e la fine del Settecento," *Quaderni storici* 39 (1978): 937–54; P. Di Stefano, "'Castagneti aggregati a massarie': trasformazioni nella castagnicoltura a Voltaggio nella seconda metà del '700," in *Studi in memoria di Teofilo Ossian De Negri*, vol. 3 (Genoa, 1986), 124–37.

<sup>5</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 5.

<sup>6</sup> ASCR, Diversorum, reg. 12 (1638–39).

<sup>7</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 4.

<sup>8</sup> In four coastal districts of the captainate of Rapallo, during the same period, parcels in which chestnut trees were the dominant crop accounted for 17 percent of all parcels. The most important crop by far were olive trees, which were dominant in 56 percent of the parcels; see Raggio, "Produzione olivicola."

territory after having ordered a production count in the communities.<sup>9</sup> But their main importance was local, where they were the principal resource, and as such, at the center of economic and social relationships. A well-documented case from the high valley of the Sturla, which intersected the Fontanabuona, demonstrates this. There, the main actors in the commercialization of chestnut products were the few wealthy landowners and lenders who, in a good year, collected in their storehouses hundreds of *rubbi* (about fifteen pounds per *rubbo*) of chestnuts received as in-kind rent payments for small parcels of land, or as debt payments.<sup>10</sup> Independent owners of small or minute properties might be able to use occasional chestnut surpluses to trade for other goods or products in the shops of the walled towns, but at the level of single nuclear families direct consumption, especially during the winter months, always took precedence over sale and exchange.

It was also difficult to trade chestnuts for wheat or other grains, for which they functioned as the main substitute. The chronic Ligurian deficit of grain production was especially acute in the *Levante* and in the mountain areas. The few estimates that exist for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries align perfectly with those from the Napoleonic period: on the hills and valleys around Rapallo and Chiavari the total production of bread-making products could sustain the area for only three or four months, and only during good years. This was a long-term structural characteristic that drove, as we will see, both a specific system of subsistence and commercial exchange, and a peculiar form of social organization.

## 2 SUBSISTENCE ECONOMIES BETWEEN OWNERSHIP AND POSSESSION

For the Fontanabuona, the *caratata* of 1641 does not list any “sown land” of the sort that appears at the same period for the coastal area. Despite this lacuna, two kinds of grains were indeed cultivated in the Fontanabuona, *tosella* and *scandella*. Along with rye, these grains—which were particularly resistant and did well in hilly areas with poor soil—were

<sup>9</sup> In 1582 Rapallo issued a prohibition against “extracting” chestnuts; see ASCR, Inutilium, filza 5.

<sup>10</sup> See O. Raggio, “Mutamenti di proprietà e contratti agrari nel Chiavarese, 1544–1714: l’espansione dei domini in due famiglie,” *Miscellanea Storica Ligure* (Studi di micro-analisi storica) 9 (1977): 51–81.

sown between the olive trees and the vines, sometimes also in the chestnut groves, and on wasteland prepared for temporary cultivation through slash-and-burn techniques.<sup>11</sup> Beans, peas, squash, cabbage, and other vegetables were grown on the same lands and in the gardens interspersed with houses in the bottomlands along the Lavagna River. These were the most common ingredients in the rural diet, along with figs, which were grown everywhere, dried, and then eaten.

It is impossible to establish how much space was occupied by grapevines in the 427 parcels of mixed cultivation which, like the 255 parcels with olive trees, were characterized by a high average value per parcel (see Table 4.1). There were rows of vines in almost all of the parcels near houses, but it is impossible to distinguish or specify amounts. Similar considerations apply also for olive trees. In 1652 there were nineteen owners of lands with olive trees that could produce more than two barrels of oil (the quantity considered sufficient for annual consumption by a family), and the annual production of these owners was estimated at ninety barrels.<sup>12</sup> In general, wine and oil were consumed by the producers. Although oil production was insufficient to meet local demand, part of the wine produced in the Fontanabuona was sold to the numerous taverners and innkeepers in the valley.

Walnuts, apples, pears, cherries, plums, and hazelnuts were grown around houses and along the borders of parcels. These were the final elements in the valley's "domestic" agriculture, along with oak trees, whose wood was prized. These were described in the *caratata* in great detail, whether they were grown in "woods" or as isolated trees within chestnut groves, olive groves, or meadows.<sup>13</sup>

The 297 parcels of meadow marked the agricultural boundary between the domesticated and the wild. They were used for pasture, but especially for the harvesting of hay and grass. From time to time small parts of meadows were also sown with wheat or rye, or plants for forage (a few

<sup>11</sup> On this practice of temporary cultivation, which involved cutting down parts of wooded lands and burning bushes and undergrowth, see D. Moreno, "Geografia storica dei sistemi agro-silvo-pastorali mediterranei: un invito all'indagine sul terreno," *Libera Università di Trapani* 4, 10 (1985): 125–58 and id., "The Agricultural Uses of Tree-Land in the North-Western Apennines since the Middle Ages," *Beiheft zur Schweizerischen Zeitschrift für Forestwesen* 74 (Zürich, 1985): 77–89. In general, see E. Sereni, *Terra nuova e buoi rossi* (Turin, 1981): 3–100.

<sup>12</sup> ASCR, Ripartizione tassa dell'olio, filza 1.

<sup>13</sup> On oak cultivation in Liguria, see Moreno, "Querce come olivi."

“accusationes” listed in court registers from Rapallo denounced the theft of grass, hay, chickpeas, and wheat from “meadows”). Along the Lavagna in particular, meadows contained rows of vines, and on the highest hills, fruit trees. They were also routinely mentioned in connection to parcels dedicated to “mixed agriculture” (chestnuts, vines, or olive trees, each combined with other crops; see Table 4.1).

The fifty-two parcels of wasteland, whose average value was estimated at the lowest levels, constituted the fragments, in the form of individual property, of a basic resource for the valley economy. These lands made up about a third of the valley’s territory, and in the *caratata* they are almost all listed under the heading *comunaglie* (common lands).

The common lands seemed to express the summit of local autarky. The Genoese commissioner charged with overseeing the compilation of the *caratata*—a work actually carried out, for each parish-chapel, by locals—limited himself to copying in the registers a synthetic formula that translated the unified declaration of the local estimators, and that underscored the total collective autonomy of the parishes in the management and use of this resource: “the commons of the whole said chapel [or, “of the men of the parish”] in the form in which they have been enjoyed in the past, without prejudice to any third party.”

The purpose of the *caratata* was in fact to identify the value of the landed property of the inhabitants of each parish for the purposes of apportioning the property tax—the *avaria*, a direct tax created in 1403—that was imposed on the districts of Genoa’s direct dominion. Two-thirds of this fiscal burden was assigned to property, and one-third was a poll tax. This formed the basis of a significant measure of fiscal extraction.<sup>14</sup> Local estimators thus indicated, for each parcel, the name of the owner and the owners of contiguous parcels, the agricultural nature of the parcel, the kinds of built structures (if any), the toponyms in which the parcel was located, and an estimated value that was then usually adjusted and transformed by Genoese officials into “cameral” monies of account. But the commons, as collective property, were exempted from this direct taxation. The formula that I described above was repeated for all nine common areas in the Fontanabuona, described as belonging to the totality of the “men” of the chapels of Cicagna, Moconesi (commons that were also

<sup>14</sup>This was the calculation of G. Felloni, *Distribuzione territoriale della ricchezza e carichi fiscali nella Repubblica di Genova (secc. XVI–XVIII)*, Ottava Settimana di Studio ‘Francesco Datini’ (Prato, 1976), typescript.

“enjoyed” by the household heads of Gattorna and Casareggio), Verzi, Favale, Lorsica, Soglio, Canevale, and Dezerega. If necessary, the commons could provide local revenue to respond to community debts or extraordinary expenses. The Republic’s 1611–14 investigation of the “income and expenses” of the communities seems to have excluded this fact, the records stating that “the community has no income and its expenses are divided amongst the townspeople and inhabitants of the land, by head and property amounts.”<sup>15</sup> This confirms, however, that the management of communal property was completely autonomous. But what forms did this management assume? And what was the nature of the property? On the latter point the investigation offers some clues. The commons of the nine parishes contained “wild lands,” but above all “wooded lands” and “long-term fallow land.”

Brush land (*selva*) and woods (*bosco*)<sup>16</sup> provided a great range of natural resources, whose reproduction was partly determined by human activity in the woods. Mushrooms were linked to chestnut cultivation or to cyclical coppicing; gorse shrubs, whose shoots were used to tie vine branches, were domesticated and pruned annually. These lands thus played an important role in subsistence and in the daily food intake of village inhabitants, both rich and poor. They provided crucial items such as firewood or wood for agricultural uses; hay, grass, and forage for stabled livestock; and acorns from various kinds of oak trees. But they also offered wild edible greens, mushrooms, morels, strawberries, other berries, snails, small game, aromatic and medicinal herbs, tannin, myrtle leaves for tanning, plant fibers, compost, and scented oils. These were all products that were not only consumed locally, but also found their way to town markets. The woods also sheltered charcoal and lime furnaces and caves from which stone and slate were extracted.

Gathering activities in the woods and from the commons coexisted with the pasture of goats, sheep, cows, and pigs, which constituted the most widespread and perhaps most important use of this collective resource. Most people were probably peasant-shepherds who integrated agriculture, herding, and forestry activities as the basis for the subsistence of all nuclear domestic units. Activities linked to the woods could also have significant commercial outlets, however, and in fact this sheds light on

<sup>15</sup> ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 835.

<sup>16</sup> The two terms were probably used to distinguish coppices and forests; see Moreno, “Geografia storica.”

conflicting interests within parish or village communities. In 1638 the village of Moconesi was divided between those who pastured animals and collected resources “for their own use,” and those who, on a temporary basis, exploited the commons to cultivate rye, oats, barley, faro, and “mixed grains” (by making temporary fields), or who made charcoal or cut wood “for sale.” The former stressed the subsistence needs and self-consumption by family units. The “use for their own households” was the customary principle that should regulate access to the commons. The concept of “*consumar in casa sua*” excluded the exploitation of collective resources for commercial purposes.<sup>17</sup>

This was a typical dispute among seventeenth-century Ligurian communities, and perhaps indicated processes of social differentiation and the growth of contacts with town markets. But the different ways of using the commons—in particular, grazing and temporary cultivation—normally coexisted within sylvo-pastoral systems. Such systems were not homogeneous and were typically subjected to multiple forms of use and exploitation that ranged from self-consumption to commercialization. Wastelands were also marked by the practices and knowledge of Mediterranean polyculture.

The investigation of 1611–14 indicated the existence of “fallow lands” in the commons of two-thirds of the Fontanabuona parishes, which causes one to suspect the cultivation of crops on a quasi-permanent basis. Grains were probably sown according to a system of long-term rotation. Again, the “accusationes” mention wheat, *tosella*, *scandella*, barley, and chickpeas being cultivated in “fallow lands.”<sup>18</sup>

There were a number of houses and outbuildings in the commons that were linked to the practice of summer pasturing and also used as temporary residences. These seasonal habitations on the “mountains” of the

<sup>17</sup>ANC, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1790. Reconstructing the internal economic dynamics of domestic units would require demographic sources (birth registers) and family records. For a model of how a Ligurian family farm operated, specifically with respect to demographic structure and labor investments, see G. Levi, “Famiglie contadine nella Liguria del Settecento,” in *Miscellanea Storica Ligure* 5, 2 (1975): 207–90. See also D. Moreno, “Per una storia delle risorse ambientali. Pratiche agro-silvo-pastorali e copertura vegetale in alta val di Vara,” *Quaderni storici* 69 (1988): 941–79, esp. 952, table two, “Schema di accesso alle risorse in regime forestale e in regime consuetudinario per una azienda familiare della alta val di Vara.”

<sup>18</sup>ASCR, Diversorum, various registers. See E. Canale, “Territorio e criminalità rurale nel capitanato di Rapallo tra ‘600 e ‘700 (MA thesis, University of Genoa, 1985–86).



Fontanabuona were often mentioned in the criminal records of cases against shepherds or bandits. A more direct discussion can be found in the description of the commons of Roccatagliata, which were contiguous with those of the Fontanabuona. The common lands of the villages and kin groups of Roccatagliata were “wastelands and animal pastures,” which were partly wooded with oaks and temporary fields, “with a number of stables in them, where some people live during the summers.”<sup>19</sup>

In general, it is quite difficult to reconstruct the means by which the common lands were managed and to understand what part of the population or which social groups had access to them, for which uses, and with which limitations or obligations. In other communities the full possession, which was said to have gone back to a feudal investiture or to “immemorial” custom, belonged to one or more kin groups. This was also quite probably partly the case in the Fontanabuona. For sure, the commons of the village of Castello (in the parish of Favale) belonged to the Cordano and Stanghellino kin groups, and other kin groups enjoyed use rights to the commons bordering Roccatagliata, where “each one knew what was his.”<sup>20</sup> On the opposite side of the valley as well, on the hills above Rapallo, the commons of the parish of San Maurizio di Monti belonged to over two hundred men from the Oneto and Casaretto kin groups.<sup>21</sup>

There were thus two kinds of common lands. The first was a kind of general commons, as was the case with those of Moconesi, about which all of the household heads of the parish were called together in 1638 to share their views, and as a “congregation” decided to name two field guards to carry out surveillance. For the second kind, possession of the commons was transferred from generation to generation to specific family groups. But in both cases, the various possible uses of the commons were related to social stratification and ownership of “domestic” lands. The gathering of wild fruits and dry wood were activities that were closely tied to the subsistence regime of poor peasant farmers, but livestock-raising, grazing, and transhumance were activities situated between self-consumption and commercialization, which established contacts between different social groups. Possession of pasturelands opened exchange possibilities with shepherds from valleys farther inland, and with townspeople from the

<sup>19</sup> ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 775 (year 1584).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 4–5; ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1720; *ibid.*, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 717 (year 1611–13).

coast. Pastures could be rented out to shepherds from the Trebbia Valley, or flocks could be shifted from one area to another according to reciprocal seasonal agreements. “Foreign” livestock could be stabled during the winter and their manure could be used as fertilizer or sold to those with gardens in Chiavari, Rapallo, or even San Remo.<sup>22</sup> Relations with the “*borghesi*” who owned livestock were contractually regulated. Sheep, goats, and sometimes cows were transferred from the coastal area to the mountains between spring and autumn, or even kept there permanently according to written agreements that established how cheese, wool, lambs, and kids would be divided between owners and peasant-shepherds at different times during the year. Similar agreements took place among valley inhabitants. Notaries drew up contracts that dealt with a maximum of twenty-five animals each, and usually with four or five. But the kin groups and families that possessed the commons could accumulate multiple agreements and organize the pasture collectively, often assigning oversight of the animals to women, young people, “servants,” or ‘milk-children’ (who had been raised in the families of their wet nurses). In October 1621 Antonio, Rolandino, and Gio, household heads of the Cordano kin group, pastured “more than 400” sheep, goats, and cows on the common lands of Favale. When the animals trespassed on domestic property and chestnut groves, a long series of complaints about damages were lodged with the court at Rapallo.<sup>23</sup>

The commons could function as a cohesive element and as a source of political-administrative identity for kin groups, villages, or parishes that enjoyed rights to exclusive and customary use. But they could also create divisions and internal conflicts within communities, between contiguous communities or different jurisdictions, and between a community and the state. In the Fontanabuona the internal conflict in the parish of Moconesi corresponded to the conflict between the Connio kin group from the village of Pianmegorino (chapel of Orero) and a portion of the household heads of Soglio over the exclusive possession of the commons situated on the border between these two parishes. In 1576 the household heads of six kin groups from Soglio (Paramino, Ghirardello, De Negri, Malatesta, Favale, and Casella) gathered together “in the name of and each one representing all of their kin groups” in order to regulate access to the contested commons. The “solemn” contract prevented outsiders from

<sup>22</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1802 (year 1620).

<sup>23</sup> ASG, Diversorum, reg. 5.

pasturing, and limited the right to gather resources from the commons—only things necessary “for one’s own use” could be collected. The household heads also decided to prohibit any person from “producing charcoal or having it made, or cutting down turkey oak trees.” A fine of ten gold *scudi* would be imposed for infractions, to be collected by the lord’s fisc.<sup>24</sup> In this way the *università* of household heads from Soglio reinforced its cohesion as it confronted the claims of the Connio. In 1608 the household heads of the Connio kin group set fire to “the wooded mountain” and destroyed the temporary fields there in order to challenge the “acts of possession” carried out by those of Soglio. According to the declaration of Batta Paramino, a household head from Soglio, the Connio entered into the commons yelling “mother fuckers from Soggio come on, come on.”<sup>25</sup> After litigation was launched against them at Chiavari, the household heads from Pianmegorino assembled according to traditional custom as “over two-thirds of the said men of said village of Pianmegorino.” In the name of the whole village, they nominated noble Giuseppe Castagneto of Rapallo as their syndic and procurator to carry out their defense against “the men and *universitas* of the chapel of San Michele di Soglio.” In the meantime the household heads of Soglio had chosen as their procurator noble Bernardo Ravaschiero of Chiavari and had received a decision favorable to them from the captain of Chiavari.<sup>26</sup> The witnesses offered by the Connio were all household heads from the parish of Orero, and they all declared that the “wild” lands in question—“a parcel of wooded land with turkey oaks and other trees” that bordered the “summit of the mountain,” the chestnut groves of the Connio, and the domestic lands of some inhabitants of Soglio—

had always been held, possessed, and used by the said men of Chiambogolino [Pianmegorino], without anyone voicing opposition until now ... and they had made temporary fields, sowed, pastured their animals, and carried out other acts of possession, acting as the true owners of their things act ... in the absence of any contradiction by the men of San Michele di Soglio.<sup>27</sup>

Rights were founded upon repeated acts of possession, which also served to define jurisdictional boundaries. These acts of possession fueled

<sup>24</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Angelo della Cella, filza 3426.

<sup>25</sup> ASCR, Extraordinariorum, reg. 1.

<sup>26</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filza 6351.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

a decades-long dispute that involved a village, a kin group, two parish-chapels, and notables from the two walled towns. Ten years later, both household heads from the villages of Soglio and the Connio would again claim the right to burn the “woods of the commons,” in order to “slash and burn, make temporary fields, and sow them with rye.” All who burned and cultivated parts of the commons considered themselves “owners.”<sup>28</sup>

Such practices and exclusive acts of possession were in fact elements that permitted the certain establishment of borders between states. Conversely, disputes and controversies limited both the identity of local settlements and the sovereignty of princes.<sup>29</sup> Large tracts of borderlands between the territory of the Republic and the Imperial fiefs of the Trebbia Valley were, precisely, common lands that were possessed entirely or partly by household heads from Genoese villages. In the seventeenth century, when judges and commissioners visited the border areas—always accompanied by locals who were familiar with the area—they drew attention to the question of whether the commons were exploited exclusively by subjects of the Republic, or whether they were shared with the subjects of neighboring princes. They also described in meticulous detail the temporary fields and outbuildings constructed by inhabitants of the villages near Chiavari and Rapallo, which served as clear proofs of the villagers’ full possession of the territory.<sup>30</sup> In 1589 the *podestà* gathered together the men from the villages of Orero, Lencisa, and Lorsica in order to describe the borders between the *podesteria* of Rapallo and the Doria fiefs. He asked them

which of them knew with greatest certainty how to establish the border dividing the said jurisdiction from that of other foreign lords, and they said that Bernardo Martino, Pasqualino Segà, and Gulielmo Martino knew full well how to discuss this matter, because since they had been boys they used and enjoyed their own lands there, and took their animals to pasture in the places that they will show [to the officials], and had always heard other old

<sup>28</sup> ASCR, Extraordinariorum, reg. 9.

<sup>29</sup> See Grendi, “La pratica dei confini.”

<sup>30</sup> See the visits of the borders of Chiavari and Rapallo in ASG, Archivio Segreto-Confinium, filze 22, 26, 58, 109; see also ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 579 on the construction of outbuildings in the high Sturla Valley in 1600. These structures, built in stone with roofs of wooden beams covered by straw, were used to shelter livestock, for cheese-making, and as residences during the months of summer pasture (May–September). On these aspects, see ASG, Archivio Segreto-Paesi, busta 301.

people says where the border was, which is well known and manifest and certified by all others around there.<sup>31</sup>

In 1601 the captain of Chiavari described the borders between his jurisdiction, the *podesteria* of Rapallo, and the Doria fief of Santo Stefano d'Aveto in the following terms:

Crossing the waterway in front of us, we passed through Cabanne, Parasolo, and Ventarola, villages of Santo Stefano, and passing through the place called "L'aqua del batesto" as far as the place where the men of Porcile, village of the Sturla valley, come to sow and pasture, even though it is held to be part of the jurisdiction of Santo Stefano, and walking toward the "Monte del Dente" through the mountains of Lichiorno and Ramaseo, where the men of said village of Porcile, as far as it can be understood, have always pastured their animals, and also the men of Chiechero, village of the Lavagna valley ....

But rights to the common lands along the borders were contested by those of different jurisdictions, and in a letter to the Senate dated 22 July 1601 the same captain wrote that

I don't know how important this visit might be with respect to the foreign princes, because the fact that I might say and write one thing about the Republic's borders being these or those, in the absence of any representative of the bordering princes who confirms these things, will not be able, in my view, to establish or strengthen the rights and claims of the Republic.<sup>32</sup>

Thus, in general the opportunity to benefit from the possession of the commons was strictly tied to one's belonging to a kin group or a residential group that coincided with a village or group of contiguous villages and hamlets. Effective use rights over lands that were considered inalienable (it was said that they could not be sold or traded) corresponded to the social and juridical status of being a resident in a village and member of a kin group. The certainty of such rights derived from the acts of possession that the inhabitants of the place repeated "for as long as can be remembered"

<sup>31</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 571. Witnesses even remembered exact locations of places whose names were "now erased by time."

<sup>32</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Confinium, filza 26; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 582.

and that every individual had learned from boyhood when they were grazing animals.

In a similar way, ownership rights were also closely linked to social and juridical status, as a function of the internal relations within a vast network of kinship ties. Men owned land and other property, exchanged property, and shared labor insofar as they were “kin” or members of a hierarchy of kin groups.

### 3 DISTRIBUTION OF LAND OWNERSHIP AND KIN GROUPS

The distribution of “domestic” land can be reconstructed only by reference to the *caratata* of 1641. This register was never revised, though, or even updated with additional volumes, so all that can be extracted from it is a static image, a kind of snapshot, dating nonetheless from the heart of the period covered by my research.

The 6,057 parcels into which the territory of the Fontanabuona was fragmented belonged to 2,027 owners. Among these were churches, chapels, monasteries, religious who owned property, and “free” owners. In all, there were 218 tax-exempt parcels with an estimated combined worth of 34,243 *lire*, belonging to forty-five entities and persons.<sup>33</sup>

The fragmentation of individual property was especially pronounced when it came to estimated wealth of between 600 and 2,000 *lire*. Proprietors whose total wealth was in that range owned an average of five parcels; above that range proprietors owned eight parcels on average (the highest levels of fragmentation were registered for the parish of Lorsica, where owners whose worth ranged from 2,000 to 4,000 *lire* held an average of fourteen parcels). In the first category the average value per parcel was 237 *lire*, in the second category it was 437 *lire*. But this kind of general and particular fragmentation was found within significant blocks of property held completely by kin groups. About 70 percent of parcels, and almost all parcels with houses, bordered completely or partly on other parcels held by “kin.” That is, among their neighbors there was at least one person with the same surname. Statistical analysis of some of the

<sup>33</sup>The value of these properties was equal to 3.5 percent of the total estimated worth, which was a fairly low percentage compared to the 11 percent for the coastal area. Ecclesiastical lands, all of which were constituted by “chestnut groves,” accounted for almost half of the exempted properties, and numbered twenty-five parcels belonging to fourteen head priests in parishes (ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 768–69).

evidence from the *caratata* sheds light on the clear predominance of a limited number of kin groups that came together in well-defined spaces within a parish or in contiguous parishes (see Table 4.2). There were 1,996 owners listed in the *caratata* registers; they corresponded to 166 different surnames. Sixty-one of these surnames were carried by a single, isolated property owner. Twenty-seven surnames grouped together, in generally contiguous fashion, 71 percent of all of the property owners (see Table 4.3).

For a more detailed analysis of the very tight nexus between kin group, residence, and the coherent distribution of lands belonging to those with the same surnames, it is helpful to narrow the field of observation to the two contiguous parishes of Cicagna and Orero. These parishes covered a large part of the valley bottom and the lowest part of the hillsides on the left bank of the river. They included twenty-five villages and hamlets and again as many single or lone clusters of houses, with 336 hearths and 1,983 people registered in the middle of the seventeenth century. I chose this area because it was the most densely populated and was in some ways the political and religious center of the valley, staging many of the events described in this research.

There were only eleven owners of isolated parcels who did not reside in the two parishes. Of these, six had no property elsewhere in the entire valley, and three did not have “kin” even in neighboring communities. From the opposite perspective, the seven kin groups with the greatest number of owners and more than ten houses held 74.7 percent of the parcels, 80.3 percent of the houses, and seventeen of the twenty mills on the Lavagna River and its tributaries. These kin groups accounted for 74.9 percent of all of the property owners and 77.8 percent of the community’s total estimated wealth. Thus, in every respect, the portion of the real estate controlled by these extended kin groups was more than 70 percent (see Table 4.4).

This sort of arrangement, with few differences, was also typical of other parishes in the valley. If the dominance of a few kin groups was less clear for Soglio and Moconesi, there was a single kin group in Lorsica—the De Martino—that held 80 percent of all of the property (in terms of estimated value). Landownership thus determined the main social groupings, but wealth differences between members of individual kin groups were very significant. In 1641, in the valley as a whole, around 70 percent of property owners held land whose total estimated value was under 600 *lire*.

**Table 4.2** Kin group members as percentage of all landowners in the Fontanabuona parishes, 1641

<i>Kin group</i>	<i>% of landowners</i>	<i>Kin group</i>	<i>% of landowners</i>
<i>Cicagna</i>		<i>Orero</i>	
Fopiano	30	Arata	39
Casazza	21.5	Connio	18
Leverone	9	De Benedetti	7.5
Malatesta	8.5	Brichetto	5.5
Arata	6	Gnecco	5
Porcella	5	Nassano	5
Mangino	4	De Martino	3
Gnecco	4	Casaretto	3
Carraro	2	Prianegra	1.5
Garbarino	1.5	Malatesta	1.5
Consigliero	1.5	Cavagnaro	1.5
Boitano	1	Cella	1.5
Rapusso	1		
Other (15)	5	Other (13)	8
<i>Soglio</i>		<i>Canevale-Coreglia-</i>	
		<i>Dezerega</i>	
Ratto	14	Queirolo	14
Connio	12	Dezerega	12.5
Gnecco	8	Noziglia	6
Lavezzo	7.5	Cassina	5
Torre	7.5	Sorracco	4
Costa	7.5	Noce	4
Ghirardello	5.5	Connio	4
Pareto	3.5	Canevale	2.5
Raggio	3.5	Borzese	2.5
Paramino	3	Merello	2.5
Bizio	3	Bardi	2.5
Arata	2.5	Franega	2
Di Negro	2	Pareto	2
Lagomarsino	2	Rozoagni	2
Cademartori	2	Castagneto	2
Cella	2	Crovo	1.5
Simonetti	1.5	Bianco	1.5
Favale	1.5	Ratto	1.5
Brichetto	1	Pendola	1
Rocca	1	Cagnone	1
De Martino	1	Machiavello	1
		Arata	1
Other (19)	8.5	Other (85)	24

*(continued)*



**Table 4.2** (continued)

<i>Kin group</i>	<i>% of landowners</i>	<i>Kin group</i>	<i>% of landowners</i>
<i>Gattorna-Moconesi</i>		<i>Verzi</i>	
Dondero	21	Cavagnero	48
Barbero	18.5	Garbarino	19.5
Ferraro	10	Guainasso	5
Connio	7	Porcella	0.4.5
Giuffra	6.5	Malatesta	4
Rossasco	6	Fopiano	3
Costa	4.5	Bacigalupo	2.5
Casazza	4	Guano	2
Casella	3.5	Dezerega	1
Musante	3.5	Rapusso	1
Fopiano	2.5	De Benedetti	1
Pessia	2.5		
Maggiolo	1.5		
Gattorna	1.5		
Bixio	1.5		
Other (16)	6	Other (15)	8.5
<i>Favale</i>		<i>Lorsica</i>	
Cordano	18	De Martino	68.5
Garbarino	12.5	Segaro	12
Boitano	12	Crovo	4
Pessolo	8	Repetto	4
Chiereghino	7.5	Ferretto	3
Mangino	7.5	Pessolo	1.5
Consigliero	6	Cordano	1
Stanghellino	5.5	Sbarbaro	1
Barbazelata	4		
Bruxa	3.5		
Giannino	3		
Volpone	3		
De Martino	1.5		
Guainasso	1.5		
Crovo	1.5		
Other (12)	5	Other (9)	5

The distribution of land ownership was similarly configured within each kin group (with noteworthy variations from 50 to 90 percent, however). Thus, a high percentage of owners of small and very small amounts of property had to depend on other sources of revenue.

The representation of social stratification that can be developed on the basis of the *caratata* evidence is fairly crude. We only have formal titles to

**Table 4.3** Numbers of landowners, by kin group-surname, registered in the 1641 *caratata*

<i>Kin group/no. of owners</i>	<i>Kin group/no. of owners</i>	<i>Kin group/no. of owners</i>	<i>Kin group/no. of owners</i>	<i>Kin group/no. of owners</i>			
De Martino	132	Barbazelata	11	Croce <sup>a</sup>	3	Viale <sup>a</sup>	1
Fopiano	115	Nassano	11	Basso <sup>a</sup>	3	Vaccaro <sup>a</sup>	1
Connio	97	Paramino	10	Trabucco <sup>a</sup>	3	Amandolesi <sup>a</sup>	1
Arata	96	Raggio	10	Solaro <sup>a</sup>	3	Argiroffo <sup>a</sup>	1
Cavagnaro	93	Musante	10	Pietranegra	2	Avansino <sup>a</sup>	1
Casazza	86	Canevale	10	Cappellazzo	2	Baghino <sup>a</sup>	1
Garbarino	74	Pessia	9	Garibaldo	2	Balbi <sup>a</sup>	1
Dondero	64	Borzese <sup>a</sup>	9	Graffigna	2	Botto <sup>a</sup>	1
Barbero	57	Merello <sup>a</sup>	9	Macera	2	Baliano <sup>a</sup>	1
Queirolo	49	Volpone	8	Poggio	2	Barrile <sup>a</sup>	1
Dezerega	45	Repetto	8	Agno <sup>a</sup>	2	Contestabile <sup>a</sup>	1
Ratto	44	Ferretto	8	Arena <sup>a</sup>	2	Crescia <sup>a</sup>	1
Cordano	44	Franega	8	Bafico <sup>a</sup>	2	Chichizola <sup>a</sup>	1
Malatesta	46	Cella	8	Boero <sup>a</sup>	2	Cogorno <sup>a</sup>	1
Gnecco	42	Bruxa	8	Monteprovenza <sup>a</sup>	2	Canessa <sup>a</sup>	1
Leverone	37	Bardi <sup>a</sup>	8	Serro <sup>a</sup>	2	Carrega <sup>a</sup>	1
Boitano	35	Giannino	7	Semorile <sup>a</sup>	2	Chiesa <sup>a</sup>	1
Costa	34	Rapusso	7	Sanguineti <sup>a</sup>	2	Carreghino <sup>a</sup>	1
Ferraro	31	Rozoagni	7	Rivarola <sup>a</sup>	2	Calignano <sup>a</sup>	1
Mangino	30	Castagneto	7	Rosso <sup>a</sup>	2	Castruzzo <sup>a</sup>	1
Porcella	27	Carraro	6	Tassara <sup>a</sup>	2	Campodonego <sup>a</sup>	1
Segaro	22	Di Negro	6	Pedeverzi	1	Fasseto <sup>a</sup>	1
Consegliero	22	Cademartori	5	Pietra	1	Gardella <sup>a</sup>	1
Pessolo	21	Bacigalupo	5	Valle	1	Gron dona <sup>a</sup>	1
Noziglia	21	Casaretto	5	Baratto	1	Ghignolo <sup>a</sup>	1
Lavezzo	20	Lagomarsino	5	Canevaro	1	Guano <sup>a</sup>	1
Giuffra	20	Bianco <sup>a</sup>	5	Gazzolo	1	Isola <sup>a</sup>	1
Rossasco	19	Cagnone	4	Grosso	1	Luzeto <sup>a</sup>	1
Torre	19	Favale	4	Morinello	1	Lencisa <sup>a</sup>	1
Cassina	17	Gattorna	4	Pagano <sup>a</sup>	1	Linata <sup>a</sup>	1
Chiereghino	17	Maggiolo	4	Pezale <sup>a</sup>	1	Massone <sup>a</sup>	1
De Benedetti	17	Canale <sup>a</sup>	4	Pittaluga <sup>a</sup>	1	Maggiocco <sup>a</sup>	1
Pareto	17	Molfino <sup>a</sup>	4	Peirano <sup>a</sup>	1	Moneglia <sup>a</sup>	1
Ghirardello	16	Machiavello <sup>a</sup>	4	Pietracaprina <sup>a</sup>	1	Mariano <sup>a</sup>	1
Crovo	15	Pendola <sup>a</sup>	4	Robbo <sup>a</sup>	1	Muza <sup>a</sup>	1
Noce	14	Simonetti <sup>a</sup>	4	Sartore <sup>a</sup>	1	Nizelio <sup>a</sup>	1
Sorracco	14	Vallebella	3	Sbarbaro <sup>a</sup>	1	Norero <sup>a</sup>	1
Stanghellino	13	Sacco	3	Siutto <sup>a</sup>	1	Montebruno <sup>a</sup>	1
Bixio	12	Rocca	3	Sturlese <sup>a</sup>	1	Ottone <sup>a</sup>	1

*(continued)*

**Table 4.3** (continued)

<i>Kin group/no. of owners</i>	<i>Kin group/no. of owners</i>	<i>Kin group/no. of owners</i>	<i>Kin group/no. of owners</i>
Brichetto	12 Peccorino	3 Succone <sup>a</sup>	1 Tassorello <sup>a</sup>
Casella	11 Agrofoglio	3 Taglia <sup>a</sup>	1 Viano <sup>a</sup>
Guainasso	11 Oneto <sup>a</sup>	3	

<sup>a</sup>Owners not resident in the parishes of Fontanabuona

**Table 4.4** Distribution of real estate among kin groups of the parishes of Cicagna and Orero, 1641

	<i>Landowners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated worth</i>
Fopiano	99	207	51	3	52,666
Arata	83	270	59	5	72,942
Casazza	70	137	37	2	28,393
Leverone	30	77	24	3	11,299
Malatesta	29	91	18	1	18,355
Connio	29	131	17	1	17,495
Gnecco	21	52	18	2	12,285
Mangino	15	40	7	—	9,395
Porcella	14	29	2	—	3,176
De Benedetti	12	36	4	—	4,917
Nassano	9	39	8	2	11,578
Brichetto	9	25	4	—	2,415
Cavagnaro	8	9	1	1	2,030
Boitano	6	15	4	—	2,839
Consegliero	6	13	2	—	1,315
Carraro	6	14	2	—	937
Casaretto	5	26	5	—	6,970
De Martino	5	13	2	—	5,270
Garbarino	5	8	5	—	2,150
Other (18)	21	60	9	—	7,920

property, and the size of the parcels is not known. Above all we do not know how many people had no property, and how many owners of very small amounts of property worked as laborers or on informal terms for wealthier property owners. However, the examples from this chapter in the appendix (“Property distribution within certain Fontanabuona kin groups according to the 1641 *caratata*”) show what the distribution of material wealth was like among individuals and household heads who

considered themselves “kin,” or members of a corporate group, with respect to the wider context of social and political relations.

The hierarchic cohesion around the *principali*, which manifested itself in interactions with the outside and, as we will see below, in conflicts between and within different kin groups, thus had a material basis in the unequal distribution of land. Small-scale landowners situated within the diverse group of those whose wealth was estimated to be below 600 *lire* were probably the first clients of the richest landowners within each kin group and in territorial spaces inhabited predominantly by “kin.”

This last observation leads to a consideration of the problem of residential arrangements and forms of habitation. In an article published in 1936, Marc Bloch observed that “counting individuals and their places of residence is useful, counting families would not be less useful, and describing the operation of groups of people who lived and worked together would be even more useful.”<sup>34</sup> In the next section I will try to follow this precious advice.

#### 4 VILLAGES AND KIN GROUPS: SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

The formation of new family stem groups did not take place through segmentation or breaks, but rather happened from within old stem groups. The system of residence was patri- and virilocal: the male sons who were universal heirs either remained in their father’s houses as heirs of an undivided patrimony or, after the property was divided and they married, resided in “portions of the house” or in contiguous houses. Among the 1,996 property owners described in the *caratata*, 210 were heirs (brothers or cousins) who held lands and houses that were undivided. In the village of Isolalonga three brothers, Stefano, Francesco, and Bartolomeo Mangino, sons of Agostino, lived in three houses that were adjacent to each other and whose estimated value ranged from 700 to 800 *lire* each. In the village of Molino the four sons of Giulio Garbarino lived in four contiguous houses that were each estimated to be worth 350 *lire*. In Coreglia five cousins of the surname Noce lived in five neighboring houses, each valued at 120 *lire*, surrounded by parcels of land “planted with grape vines and other fruit.” In Soglio there were four brothers who inherited the patrimony of the deceased Michele Lavezzo (a “property with chestnut

<sup>34</sup>M. Bloch, “Les paysages agraires: essai de mise au point,” in *Annales d’Histoire Economique et Sociale* 8 (1936): 256–77.

trees, house, vineyard, and other fruit trees” worth 1,260 *lire*) and who lived under the same roof. In the village of Trino the three sons of Agostino Malatesta and the three sons of Giacomo Malatesta lived in six houses all next to each other. Co-residence under the same roof produced multi-structured families both horizontally and vertically. The *famiglia* of Stefano de Martino (see Fig. 4.2), who, in a notarial act of 1644, was identified as a head (*capo*) of a stem group, provides a good example.<sup>35</sup>

In Stefano’s house there was also a *fameglio* (servant), Cesare Giannino. A notarial act was drawn up on the occasion of the division of the property between the brothers following the marriage of Andrea and Bianca, but it was a division in loco and formed new family nuclei without interrupting their co-residence. Stefano’s patrimony consisted of three contiguous parcels of land treed with chestnuts and a “holding with four houses” that formed a single structure. In practical terms, besides the daughters who were given their dowries and excluded from the inheritance, the only male who would abandon the co-resident stem group would be Gianni, a priest. Following the constitution of the patrimony, Gianni would move to become resident priest at the church of San Vincenzo di Favale. Even larger, with twenty mouths to feed, was the *famiglia* that *messire* Stefano Pendola from the village of Monti “had to carry on his back, and governed, and maintained in his house”<sup>36</sup> (see Fig. 4.3).

These were the families of the *principali*, but stem families that were smaller, with little land and only one house, practiced similar forms of resi-

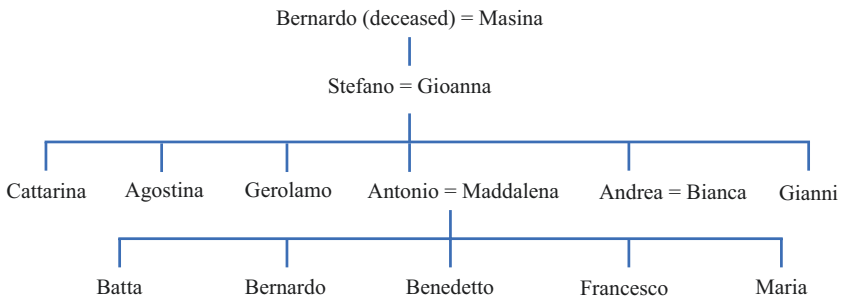


Fig. 4.2 The stem family of Stefano de Martino

<sup>35</sup> ANC, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1809.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

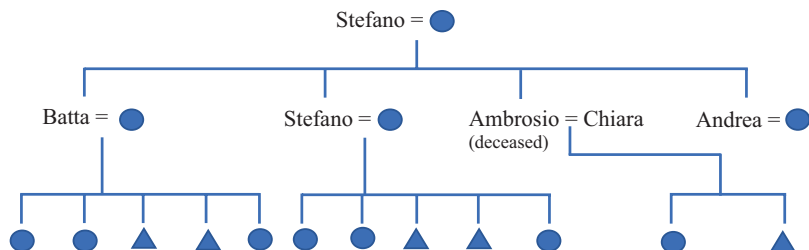


Fig. 4.3 The stem family of Stefano Pendola

dence and inheritance. After dividing the inheritance, married brothers could continue to cohabit, perhaps building an addition to the paternal residence or a new hearth.<sup>37</sup> The availability of houses and lands, and the demography of conjugal nuclear units and of the entire stem group, were definitely elements that rendered these practices very malleable.<sup>38</sup> The life cycle of co-resident brothers and cousins was marked by early deaths, judicial misadventures, bans and territorial exclusions, and by definitive emigration which, at the moment when property was divided, presented itself as expulsion. In wills, for example, cases in which one of the sons was excluded from the inheritance because he was declared “absent” or “dispersed” were not unusual.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup>New family nuclei would continue to live in the same structure, either expanding or dividing the paternal residence. In the parishes of Cicagna and Orero, for example, of the 279 houses listed in Fig. 4.4, forty-six were really “portions of houses,” and combined with the houses were forty-two “small houses” that were certainly inhabited, at least in part. The lofts were shared or divided into “portions.” Groups of houses and “portions of houses” shared one or more ovens located on a “*piazza*.”

<sup>38</sup>Exchanges and bequests between different family units and branches of wider kin groups, between siblings, cousins, uncles/aunts, and nephews/nieces, together with residences under separate but contiguous roofs, point to the need for a deeper investigation of family structures that takes into account the shared demography and life cycles of all of the co-resident or “kinship” groups. Using the typology of Peter Laslett—even in its second version—would arbitrarily simplify the problem; see R. Wall, J. Robin and P. Laslett, *Family Forms in Historic Europe* (Cambridge, 1983) (Italian partial trans. *Forme di famiglia nella storia europea* [Bologna, 1984]). For an important critical overview of studies on family and kin groups, see S. Yanagisako, “Family and Household: The Analysis of Domestic Groups,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8 (1979): 161–205.

<sup>39</sup>The mobility and migration of young people who were not yet legally independent, especially of younger brothers, was a phenomenon which I am not able to quantify, but which was surely important. It is certain that there was an emigration toward the Po Valley,

But the concept of co-residence included another dimension: the dominant kin groups were in fact constituted by a number of stem families that gave form to scattered nucleated settlements that were linked to each other and even adjacent in a way, separated only by parcels of land that belonged to them. Such configurations of land and houses, considered together, formed territorial spaces that were substantially homogeneous—this is what I have called blocks (*isole*) of kin group property. The reproduction of the internal hierarchy, and the transmission of status, property, and political authority were processes that took place inside of the large group of kin who were coresidents or neighbors. In such spaces, the internal hierarchy of each of the main corporate groups corresponded to a social hierarchy ordering groups of different sizes, whose wealth levels varied considerably.

Figure 4.4 is based on evidence from the *caratata* of 1641; it offers a graphic representation of part of the data contained in Table 4.4. The parish churches of San Giovanni Battista of Cicagna and of Sant’Ambrogio d’Orero were the two centers of gravity for a constellation of villages and hamlets scattered across the valley bottom and the chestnut-covered hillsides. As I showed in the previous chapter with the case of Monleone, village identity was tied to the kin groups that resided there and enjoyed property rights and political power. This was also true when the inhabitants of a village did not all belong to the same kin group. The very size of the groups whose members shared a patrilineal descent—that is, kin groups—was one of the key elements determining hierarchy and social distinction in the villages. Isolated nuclear families were in relationships of alliance with or dependence on the *principali*. Villages could be independent political units (in administrative or fiscal terms),<sup>40</sup> but more often

part of which was directly tied to commercial exchange circuits (see Chap. 6), and there was also an emigration of young apprentice weavers and porters (*camalli*) toward Genoa. As we will see, bans and temporary expulsion orders affected almost every family group; expelled persons often decided to relocate definitively to one of the Po Valley cities, to Livorno, to Corsica, or to Provence. There was also a local mobility of young *famegli* (domestic servants and shepherds) who served the *principali*.

<sup>40</sup>A key aspect of village identity was its territorial extension, to which a dominant kin group was linked; this idea was sometimes supported by a founding myth. The concepts of village and kin group were not completely separable, such that relations between villages—whether on the scale of the parish or that of the community—generally paralleled relations between the kin groups that resided in them. The grain consignments of 1629–30 (when there were shortages) to the Republic’s Grain Office (*Ufficio dell’Abbondanza*) clearly indicate the association between the village (*villa*) as an administrative and fiscal unit and the kin group (*parentella*) as an ensemble of hearths belong to those sharing a surname: village of Molinazzo / Leverone kin group; village of Trino / Malatesta kin group; village of Cò de Verzi / Porcella kin group; village of L’Acqua / Cavagnaro kin group; village of Cornia /

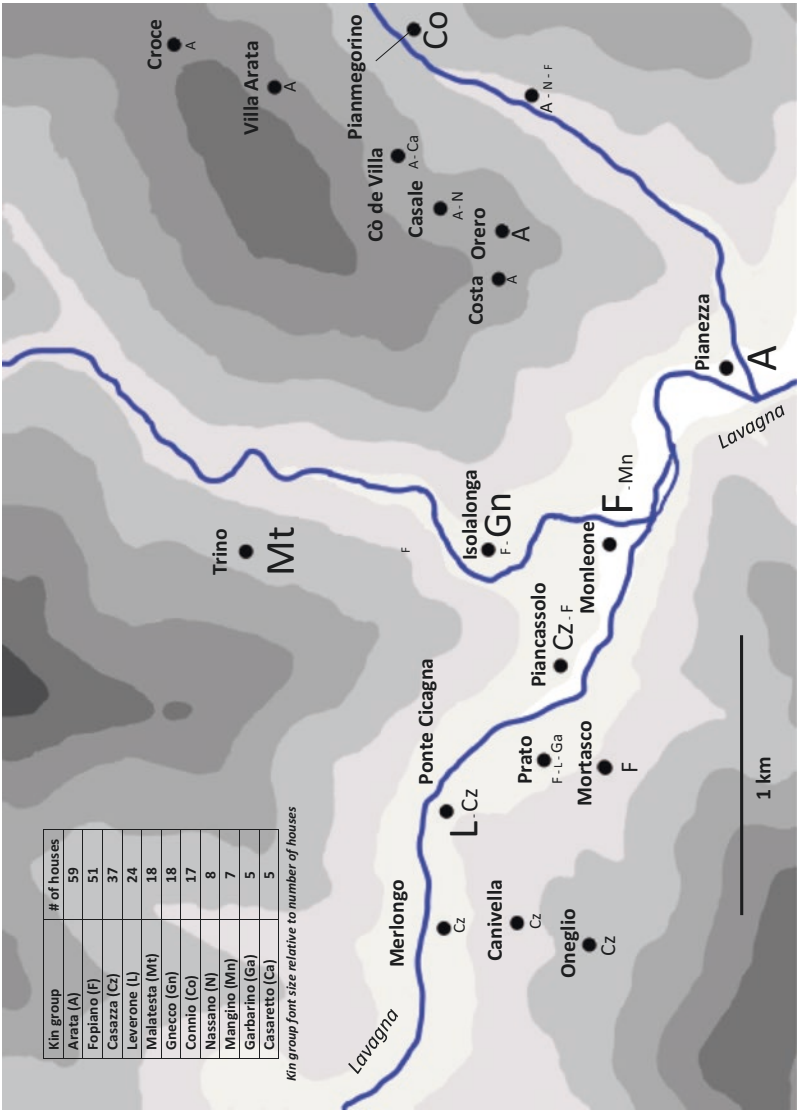


Fig. 4.4 Kin groups and residence in the parishes of Cicagna and Otero in the mid-seventeenth century



they were part of a territorial structure that included clusters of villages, hamlets, and farmsteads. The general framework of relations between these villages and residential clusters was a relatively orderly and lasting<sup>41</sup> hierarchy of alliances and rivalries between groups that were closely incorporated. These groups constantly competed with each other and formed (as we will see in Chap. 10) political and factional alignments of broader dimensions.

In the valley bottom of the parish of Cicagna, almost bordering the captainate of Chiavari, the village of Pianezza was densely inhabited by the Arata clan (eleven houses grouped around the “*palazzo*” of Galeazzo Arata), who also lived in five nearby hamlets (Soria, Pendora, Casale, Casa de’ Menni, and Chiapparino—another eleven houses all together). The Arata were also the dominant kin group in the contiguous villages of the parish of Orero, along the Isolana creek and the “mule road” (Isolana, Castagneto, Orero, Costa, Lencisa, Croce, Villa Arata). On the same slope of the valley, part of Isolana and Casale della Chiesa were inhabited by the Nassano (eight houses). At Cò de Villa five houses belonged to the Casaretto. In the most isolated village of Pianmegorino seventeen of nineteen houses were inhabited by the Connio—a kin group that settled in compact units also in the nearby parish of Soglio (village of Barbarasco) and on the other side of the valley in the parish of Moconesi (in the villages of Pezzonasca and Terrarossa). On the valley bottom, toward the church of Cicagna, settlements ran up against each other, but retained the same characteristic aggregations of “kin.” The Fopiano, as we have seen, were concentrated in the two neighborhoods of Monleone, in the village of Mortasco, and in smaller units in the villages of Piancassolo and Isolalonga. The Casazza were ensconced in the contiguous villages of Oneglio, Canivella, and Merlongo (where they possessed seventeen out of nineteen houses), in Corte (twelve houses), and in a small nucleus of eight houses near Ponte, where the Leverone had eleven houses. The Leverone also had the largest number of houses in Molinazzo and a portion of those in Molino, on the Lavagna River. The Gnecco and the Mangino lived interspersed with each other in the villages of Isolalonga and Casale

Dondero kin group; village of Pian di Mercato / Fopiano kin group; village of Isolalonga / Mangino, Gnecco and Crovo kin groups; village of Gattorna / Rossasco and Gattorna kin groups (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1885; ASCR, Criminalium, filza 22; ANC, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1784).

<sup>41</sup>The map of alignments, understood as a network of friendships and enmities, remained generally stable during the period 1550–1650; see Chap. 10.

(twenty-five houses). The Garbarino were in Molino and the Porcella were in Casanuova. Along the other “mule road” that linked the market-village of Monleone with Lombardy, the Malatesta owned and inhabited all of the houses of Trino and two nearby hamlets, and the Boitano were in the village of L’Acqua. These were the kin groups (as is made clear in Table 4.4) that held the majority of the material resources in territorial spaces that were substantially homogeneous. The small isolated units—owners of one or two houses and of few parcels of chestnut groves—were linked through marriage to these kin groups. This was the case of the Rapusso with the Arata in the area of Pianezza, of the Brichetto with the same Arata in the villages around Orero, of the Prianeagra and the Connio at Pianmegorino, of the Carraro and the Casazza at Oneglio, and also of the Porcella with the Leverone in the villages around the church of Cicagna. At Pianmegorino, Pietro and Bartolomeo Prianeagra each owned a fourth of a house and three parcels of land with chestnuts and were in-laws of the Connio. At Oneglio Domenico Carraro, owner of half of a house and two parcels of chestnut-covered land, was married to a daughter of the Casazza. Similar relations tied together the Porcella, whose most numerous concentration of landowners lived in the parish of Verzi, and the Leverone in Cicagna. Cohabitation, repeated marriage exchanges, and economic ties gave these kin groups a homogeneous configuration. In 1610 the captain of Rapallo declared that the Leverone and the Porcella were “the same thing.”<sup>42</sup> The captain had observed how the two groups behaved politically in the feud between the Fopiano and the Casazza, and saw how affiliations had been assimilated by the kin groups.

Aggregation with the dominant kin group could be sanctioned more formally when sons-in-law took up their spouses’ surnames and incorporated themselves into her stem family. The documentation from the Fontanabuona offers only one case of this, which still seems very significant. In around 1570 Filippino Pachiugo, originally from the Trebbia Valley (in the Doria fief), married Geronima Connio from the village of Pianmegorino and went to live in the house of his parents-in-law. Filippino and Geronima had a son named Galeazzo who, in the early seventeenth century, married Rosina Connio. Galeazzo, together with his brothers Paretino and Francesco, took the surname Connio. In public acts the

<sup>42</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 610. Similarly, in 1623 Angelo Maria Arata, son of notary Gio Batta, observed that the Porcella “are like the Leveroni” (ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, busta 1566).

three brothers appear with the double surname Connio-Pachiugo. The non-agnatic sociocultural character of aggregation to the Connio kin group from Pianmegorino became clear in a dispute between “kin” and in-laws in 1611. Before the tribunal in Rapallo, Gregorio Connio declared with respect to Galeazzo that “my brother-in-law is of the Connio kin group [*“del parentado Connio”*], and the Pachiugo one, which is all the same thing.” Lazaro Connio, for his part, said that the three brothers “sometimes call themselves Pachiugo and sometimes Connio.” Negrino and Rolandino Connio specified that Galeazzo and Francesco “call themselves Connio when they are on good terms with the Connio, and Pachiugo when they are on good terms with the Pachiugo.”<sup>43</sup> Until the 1630s Galeazzo was registered in the Rapallo court documents as “Connio, or Pachiugo,” but by mid-century, in the sources that I have consulted, no trace was left of the Pachiugo surname.

<sup>43</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 4–5. For examples of surnames changing in the sixteenth-century kingdom of Naples, see Delille, *Famiglia e proprietà*, 205–06.



## In the Fontanabuona: Forms of Social Exchange and Kin Group Relations

The forms into which kin groups were organized territorially, as described in the previous chapter, resulted from local practices of inheritance and dowry. That is, they were generated by mechanisms of land distribution and marriage exchange that implicated in different ways all of the nuclear family units and branches of “kin.” These social practices tended to create solidarity in relations with other kin groups and with the outside world. Such relations were both collective and hierarchical. Members of the wide kin group had an economic and political point of reference in a strong family branch and in the household heads described by the sources as *principali*. We have already partly alluded to this issue in the case of the Fopiano kin group of Monleone.

In 1641 the Arata were among the most numerous, territorially extensive, and wealthy kin groups (in terms of landownership). Their position, as described in the *caratata*, was the product of decisions and actions taken over the course of generations, and of a group policy (and politics) for which clues appear in the sources beginning in the mid-sixteenth century, when the Arata *principali* were already solidly situated in the valley. This kin group will serve as an interpretive thread over several of the next chapters. The different contexts in which we will find its members will enable us to shed light on elements of both strength and weakness of the kin group as a form of social aggregation and as a support structure for the strategies of nuclear units and stem families.

For decades prior to 1641 the center of gravity for the Arata had been Pianezza, where family members resided and held property (chestnut groves and gardens) along the Lavagna River and in adjacent hamlets. In Pianezza the houses and mills grouped around a large house—“called the Palazzo, which served as the Commissioner’s residence when one was in Fontanabuona”—and around the oratory of Sant’Antonio and San Rocco belonged (partly undivided) to the sons and grandsons of Galeazzo and Gio Batta. These were the two *principali* and protagonists of valley political life from the 1570s until around 1620. Galeazzo and Gio Batta left their heirs a material inheritance but also social capital in the form of relationships and prestige. The sum of their experiences is in many ways paradigmatic and will guide our examination of the social exchanges that flowed between kin and between different kin groups in the Fontanabuona.

## 1 ELEMENTS FOR THE BIOGRAPHY OF A LEADER

The point of departure for this investigation is the political chronology of the civil war of 1575, to which Chap. 2 has already referred. This chronology shows the Fontanabuona allied with the new nobles (*Nuovi*). Between summer and autumn 1575 the captain who organized the peasant militia after having sworn obedience to the commissioner Giacomo Facio was Galeazzo Arata. During the months of the war, Galeazzo laid the foundation for his future public career, helping to reinforce the prestige and political power of his wider kin group.

Galeazzo was one of the most important notables of a numerous and rich kin group which, as we have seen, was compactly settled in Pianezza, one of the villages of the parish of Cicagna, and in the villages of the parish of Orero. The latter were situated along the “mule road,” one of the two transit routes that tied the valley bottom to the Apennine passes and thence, through the Aveto Valley, to Parma and Piacenza. Like his two brothers Carlo and Rolandino and along with the notary Gio Batta Arata, Galeazzo was a sort of local leader. His authority and prestige were rooted in his role as a mediator between the community and the state, and in his commercial activity and landownership. In this sense Galeazzo’s biography is exemplary: his public activities are all significant and reveal a tight interweaving of economic activities and more exquisitely political operations. Let us observe a few developments.

In 1575 Galeazzo was among the signatories of a request submitted to the *podestà* of Rapallo and the Senate of the Republic that sought special

permission (and exemption from a newly published order) for the inn-keepers and tavern-keepers of Pianezza and Orero to “accept as guests and provide food for the muleteers ... who carry every kind of provision into Lombardy.”<sup>1</sup> He was supporting the interests of his kin, who owned and managed taverns along the “mule road.” Indeed, he owned at least three mules and a tavern at Pianezza himself.<sup>2</sup> In early 1575 the *podestà* of Rapallo called him the most expert and capable assessor, or property-value estimator, of the entire jurisdiction. He was a collector of the “*ripe minute*” excise tax.<sup>3</sup> In the valley, with his brother Carlo and other relatives, he performed the functions of arbiter and peacemaker.<sup>4</sup>

The kinship group’s real wealth was represented by a tight web of local and supra-local relations, the clearest evidence of the former being found in the notarial records that show the Arata as parties to transactions or witnesses. This might explain the homogeneity, at least provisionally, of the pro-*Nuovi* alignment and the hegemonic position of Galeazzo in the Valley Council during the war. In any event, this experience undoubtedly sanctioned the role of the Arata as privileged interlocutors with outside institutions.

The peasant militia led by Galeazzo had a firm hold on the northern borders of the Fontanabuona, considered by the *Nuovi* to be the key to the defense of Genoa herself, since from the Fontanabuona access could be had to the Bisagno Valley and thence to the city walls.<sup>5</sup> At Borzonasca, in the Sturla Valley, this militia repelled the advance of the “German” mercenaries hired in Milan by Gio Andrea Doria. They also burned the mills at Carasco that provided the flour for the *Vecchi* at Chiavari, fought alongside the commissioner Facio for the “recapture” of Rapallo, and liberated Borzonasca for a second time.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1392.

<sup>2</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filze 6371–72; ASG, Notai Giudiziari, filza 596/2; *ibid.*, Senato-Atti, filze 1426, 1454.

<sup>3</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 500.

<sup>4</sup> There are some examples in ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 4.

<sup>5</sup> This interpretation is obviously biased, since it is based almost entirely on the documentation produced by the *Nuovi*’s commissioners, but it gives an idea of Galeazzo’s horizons and of the way in which at least part of the valley’s population, perhaps the majority, viewed relations with the outside world.

<sup>6</sup> These events were referenced in a supplication submitted by the “*sindaci*” of the valley to the Senate in early 1576 in which they requested the suspension of debt payments and tax payments that had been apportioned by Rapallo officials: “In these public disorders and armed operations, their said community had been subject to unending suffering and burdens

In late October 1575 Galeazzo was officially received in Genoa. His activities, truth be told, were not always transparent: the commissioner Facio did not trust him, suspecting him of playing a double game and “negotiating secretly with Doria” in order to secure the release of eight mules that had been seized from his relatives at Santo Stefano d’Aveto.<sup>7</sup> Facio seemed bothered by Galeazzo’s success and jealous of the one whom he had personally appointed as captain and to whom he had administered the oath. In mid-October the commissioner had asked Galeazzo to go to the Sturla Valley “with as many men as possible.” Ten days later it was Galeazzo who made a formal request to the Valley Council to have Facio send him over two hundred Corsican arquebusers, “because the enemies are near.”<sup>8</sup>

Over the course of subsequent decades, relations with local elites continued to be characterized by issues of trust and were contractual in nature. These elites enjoyed ample freedom to take initiatives. During these years other commissioners were sent to the *Levante* by the new Genoese oligarchy to make peace among the kin groups and to try to bring an end to the civil war that continued to smolder across the territory. It was precisely during this period that Galeazzo hosted the Genoese commissioners<sup>9</sup> in his “palace” on the public square of Pianezza, “where the market is held.” In 1588 he was a creditor of the town of Rapallo, along with other tavern-keepers of his kin group, for having provided lodging and board for the Corsican soldiers who accompanied the commissioners.<sup>10</sup> From 1576 to 1613 he rotated as captain of the militia with his brother Carlo and with Giuliano della Torre, son of the noble Ottaviano.<sup>11</sup> Also with Carlo he was one of the first captains of the anti-bandit companies created by the valley in 1611, whose members were recruited on the basis of their kin

which proved very costly to them, since in addition to having had to pay for over 100 guards to stand watch at the passes and keep soldiers from coming in ... the whole valley has remained in arms and all of the factions have gone twice to Chiavari and twice to Leivi and Carasco, and once to Borzonasca, when the Germans were routed, and they also went to help recover Rapallo, and in all of these factions there were always numerous well-armed people who went, up to a thousand in all, at their own expense” (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1436).

<sup>7</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 503.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1224; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filze 507–08; *ibid.*, Senato-Atti, filza 1429.

<sup>10</sup> ASCR, Atti notarili di Carlo Lencisa, filza 10.

<sup>11</sup> ASCR, Inutilium, filza 6; *ibid.*, Militie, filza 1.

affiliation.<sup>12</sup> Other relatives of Galeazzo, besides his brothers Carlo and Rolandino and the notary Gio Batta, also held office, had access to public resources, and acted as political brokers. At the turn of the seventeenth century and in subsequent decades, for example, numerous Arata accompanied magistrates on their visits to border areas, acting as information providers and witnesses.<sup>13</sup>

The parallel economic activities of Galeazzo, his brothers, and their “kin” were documented in the notarial registers of Gio Batta Arata and Gio Angelo della Cella, a notary from the Aveto Valley at whose side Gio Batta had begun drawing up official documents in the 1570s.

As we will see in the sixth chapter, in the Fontanabuona the Arata helped organize and manage the trade that sent olive oil and soap from Rapallo toward the Po Valley, a trade that also included contraband, a commercial mainstay of the backcountry valleys. These activities were carried out thanks to the continuous and homogeneous territorial control exercised by the kin group over the “mule road” leading from Pianezza across the Ventarola pass and into the Po watershed. Also crucial were an efficient logistical structure and contractual relations, reinforced by trust, with the merchants of Rapallo. In the late sixteenth century there were at least five Arata besides Galeazzo who owned taverns and mules: Gio (at Pianezza), Tomaxino and Paolo (at Orero), Battino (at Croce), and Nicolao (at Lencisa).<sup>14</sup> Tavern-keepers provided food and beds to merchants and muleteers, sold goods for consumption (a large portion of the provisions for the villages passed through their hands), lent small sums of money, and were accused of usury. But taverns were also places where contraband was organized and both transport laborers and “bandits” (who provided armed escorts for merchants and muleteers) were recruited.<sup>15</sup>

It is more difficult to assess the relationship between the Arata and the wealthy oil merchants of Rapallo. “Partnership commerce”<sup>16</sup> might

<sup>12</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, filza 14; ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1237.

<sup>13</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Confinium, filze 26, 58.

<sup>14</sup> ASG, Notai Giudiziari, filza 596/2 (year 1572); Senato-Atti, filza 1426 (year 1579) and filza 1454 (year 1581).

<sup>15</sup> Examples can be found in ASG, Senato-Atti, filze 1392, 1395 and *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 497. There are also many examples in the criminal registers of the court of Rapallo.

<sup>16</sup> See M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (Chicago, 1972) (Italian trans. *L'economia dell'età della pietra* [Milan, 1980], 272–310), and in general the model of Karl Polanyi, *The*



describe the model, based as it was on the exchange of service and favors, trust, the availability of logistical structures and escorts, reciprocal advantages, and credit. These relations existed within the overall ecological framework described in the third and fourth chapters, also including exchanges beyond the local context. In 1581 witnesses in a contraband trial testified in defense of Nicolao Arata, a tavern-keeper and mule owner from the village of Lencisa. They declared that Nicolao was a trader (*negoziante*) and that “the merchants [of Rapallo] who know him have lent him faith and credit ... as a merchant and a man who trades.”<sup>17</sup> This definition placed him on the same level as his partners from Rapallo. This fact seems very significant to me, as does the description of about ten Arata (including Galeazzo), in notarial acts from the late sixteenth century, as “public traders known to all.”<sup>18</sup>

Overall, brokerage activities and the opportunities offered by interregional commercial transit probably formed the foundation of the material wealth of Galeazzo and other *principali* in the valley. The preeminence of the Arata was tied to this chain of activities. Their links outside of the valley were constituted in part by members of the kin group, who were present in Rapallo, Genoa, and Livorno, which was one of the centers of the maritime grain trade. The Arata’s position was also rooted in their offices and political functions as notables in Pianezza. The “palace” on the market square of this village in the valley bottom symbolized the local power of the kin group. When it opened its doors from time to time to Genoese officials it also became the symbol of the Republic’s authority and of the (ambiguous) political mediation carried out by the Arata with respect to the outside world and its institutions. All of this truly increased the prestige of the kin group, but also stoked the enmity of their adversaries. Significantly, as we will see, the Arata’s leadership over the valley would be violently contested in the early decades of the seventeenth century, when the Genoese would acquire a more continuous presence and other kin groups and *principali* would appear on the local political scene.

In the world of everyday relations, exchanges between the Arata and the inhabitants of the parishes of Cicagna and Orero were rooted in the land. Within the Fontanabuona, land was economically significant, forming the fragile foundation of auto-consumption and familial subsistence.

*Livelihood of Man* (New York, 1977) (Italian trans. *La sussistenza dell'uomo* [Turin, 1983]).

<sup>17</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1454.

<sup>18</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Angelo della Cella, filze 3425 ff.

But the local elite may have understood the importance of property in terms of the relationships that were constructed, mediated, and reinforced by it. Galeazzo and his brother Rolandino (and other Arata) appear frequently in the notarial acts as lenders and participants in transactions involving land. What mattered in these agreements was not only the acquisition of land, but—even more—the cultivation of prestige and ties of alliance and loyalty (whether personal or kinship-based) afforded by such accords.

In the general context of village and parish life, or that of neighboring villages and parishes, economic ties between the *principali* and small or very small landowners were based on land and the organization of agrarian production. These economic ties were intertwined or coincided with ties based on residence, neighborhood, kinship, and personal relations of friendship and political alliance (both within and outside of the corporate kin group). The overall framework that emerges is not that of a community that was structured, circumscribed, or closed, but of an open field of discontinuous relations between individuals and families, kin groups, or neighbors. Beginning in the 1570s, Gio Arata and his sons Galeazzo and Rolandino lent, borrowed, and rented land. They also purchased it in ways that consolidated these networks of clientage, dependence, and alliance, and created new ones. The most common kind of land transaction was the mortgage, or sale with a right to repurchase (*vendita a riscatto*). In 1570 Antonio Ratto, from the village of Soglio, sold Galeazzo “a meadow with olive trees” for 100 *lire*. The sale was really fictitious and resulted from an agreement about one or two previous loans for which the meadow had served as a security guarantee. The price of the meadow was high since there were olive trees in it, but it was evidently related to the size of the debt. Confirmation of this is provided by other two contracts drawn up on the same day. In the first one, Antonio agreed to pay six *lire* per year to rent the meadow from Galeazzo for two years (this amount was equivalent to the usual interest rate, which was considered “fair” by all parties). In the second contract, Galeazzo declared having received fifty *lire* from Antonio, but this agreement and the payment involved a third party—Battista Arata from the village of Pendola, near Rapallo, who in turn owed seventy *lire* to Galeazzo but decreased this amount through Antonio Ratto’s payment.<sup>19</sup> Also on the same day, another Ratto, Blasio, likewise

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., filza 3427, nos. 10–12. The practice of selling with a right of repurchase is described for the Venetian area by G. Corazzol, “Prestatori e contadini nella campagna fel-

from the village of Soglio, sold “a parcel of olive grove” to Galeazzo for 100 *lire*, and immediately thereafter agreed to rent it from Galeazzo for 6 *lire* per year, just as Antonio had.<sup>20</sup> These transactions were between kin groups more than between individuals. In fact, the Ratto were neighbors of the Arata. The two lived in contiguous villages; the houses of Soglio, where the Ratto were the dominant kin group (see Table 4.2) could be seen from Pianezza, and the Arata land bordered that of the Ratto. The two kin groups were also joined in a solid political alliance. The Arata brothers had very similar economic and political relations with another kin group in the valley, the Casazza from the villages of Cicagna. Their economic transactions related not only to land but also to another important local resource: livestock. In 1570 Rolandino Arata gave a cow to pasture for six years to Rolando Casazza from the village of Monleone. In 1576 Galeazzo sent two cows to Leonardo Casazza from the village of Ponte.<sup>21</sup> Credit networks also seemed to be linked in similar ways: in 1570 Pasquale Casazza from the village of Ponte confessed that he owed seven *scudi d'oro* to Giovanni Arata of the village of Pendola; among the witnesses who certified the debt was Rolandino Arata.<sup>22</sup>

Similar transactions were carried out within the Arata kin group and across its various territorial segments, whose fulcrum was, quite often during this period, the family of Galeazzo. In 1569 Filippo and Gio Arata of the villages of Lencisa and Croce sold two parcels of land to Rolandino. In 1570 a land exchange between Domenico and Rolandino functioned to satisfy a debt, and in the same year Giovanni from the village of Arata declared a debt of seventy *lire* owed to Galeazzo. In 1569, Bernardino signed a contract with Rolandino, on the porch of Galeazzo's house at Pianezza, to sell a mule and its tack for a price of forty *scudi d'oro*; Rolandino then immediately resold the mule to his other brother Battino for the same price. In 1570 Giuliano from the village of Lencisa confessed that he owed ten *boggirole* of dried chestnuts to Rolandino, and Bernardino

trina intorno alla prima metà del '500,” *Quaderni storici* 26 (1974): 445–500 and in *Fitti e livelli a grano. Un aspetto del credito rurale nel Veneto del '500* (Milan, 1979). L. Allegra describes the practice for the area near Chieri (Piedmont) in *La città verticale. Usurai, mercanti e tessitori nella Chieri del Cinquecento* (Milan, 1987), 45 ff. For Ligurian examples see my “Mutamenti di proprietà e contratti agrari nel Chiavarese.”

<sup>20</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Angelo della Cella, filza 3427, no. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., no. 40 and filza 3426, no. 137. More commonly, agistment contracts were for sheep and goats.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., filza 3427, no. 103.

from the village of Orero declared a debt of thirty-four *lire* toward Galeazzo. In 1571 there was another declaration of debt owed by Battino of the village of Pendola to Galeazzo.<sup>23</sup>

The various intertwined elements that together help to explain the authority of Galeazzo, his brothers, and his “kin” in the valley were thus numerous. They included the variety of activities in which they were involved; their entrepreneurship (linked to the transit trade) and their economic engagement on a regional level; the totality of the underground ties on the local level to which the notarial records attest, if only at isolated moments of visibility; and the ability to govern and manipulate public social relations—together with their interactions with commissioners and external institutions. To all of this must be added the prestige and patrimony of relations that the notary Gio Batta, *capo* (head man) of the other branch of the Arata of Pianezza (who operated his notarial practice from a room of Galeazzo’s “palace”) brought to the kin group by virtue of his office. Together with his two sons he would be, as we shall see, one of the protagonists of political developments in the Fontanabuona during the first half of the seventeenth century.

The internal organization of the Arata kin group was no different from that of other kin groups resident in the Fontanabuona or nearby areas, even if in certain respects (including those described above) they were characterized more clearly by the political and entrepreneurial activities of some of their members. Other aspects of their organization seemed more clearly significant or apparent because the sources refer so frequently to the Arata kin group, compared to others, given their constant movement across such a widespread area. But in general, the configurations and structures of the kin groups were genetically linked, in terms of their normative models and prescribed relationships.<sup>24</sup>

The crucial elements that ensured the power and public preeminence of the kin group included cooperation between the branches and nuclear families within the group, an internal hierarchy—visible through very great disparities of property and wealth (see the appendix), and

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., filza 3420, nos. 132, 156; *ibid.*, filza 3427, nos. 12, 14, 17, 106, 125; *ibid.*, filza 3421, no. 137.

<sup>24</sup> The similarities between the various configurations of kin groups, like that between kin groups and the Genoese *alberghi*, can be described as “family resemblances,” to use the expression of L. Wittgenstein (*Ricerche filosofiche*, Italian trans. [Turin, 1967], para. 65–67). On the problems of formal “connections,” see Wittgenstein, *Note sul ‘Ramo d’oro’ di Frazer*, Italian trans. (Milan, 1975), 28–29.

subordination to the authority and decisions of the *principali*. Some of these elements and their interrelationships are documented in the last wills of kin group members. These describe the clear desire to avoid the excessive fragmentation of property, by restricting access to property to male sons and identifying one of them as the headman of the branch. The numerous clauses of the wills aimed to guarantee this kind of inheritance. In particular, they regulated the difficult period between the death of the father, the emancipation of all of the sons, the dowry provision for the daughters, and the eventual property division among the brothers (which did not necessarily contradict a unified management of the entire holdings), until new leadership of the branch emerged. Generally, the “perfect sharing of property” was expected until the point at which all male sons were adults and emancipated, and in some cases emancipation was fixed for the age of twenty-eight. The mechanisms that regulated inheritance were tutorship, usufruct (for widows),<sup>25</sup> entail, and an active role by the paternal uncles. During this period the brothers, perhaps in association with their paternal uncles, their mother “dressed as a widow,” and their nephews, were expected to “live in perfect communion as young people ... not only holding all of the property as undivided, but otherwise living, as it is said, on the same bread and wine, sharing everything, each taking part in every profit and loss.”<sup>26</sup> Such descriptions were rarely included in the wills themselves, but their status as local custom was frequently confirmed by numerous witnesses. Universal heirs were instituted “as members of the branch and not as individuals [*in stirpem et non in capita*].” While this was the normative model that molded the structure of the population, the practices and concrete choices that governed inheritance in different familial and patrimonial situations were caught between local custom and the juridical norms that anticipated equal, partible inheritance. The essential problem was how to construct solidarity that was hierarchical along with “strong” nuclei of lineage aggregation. This problem repeated itself with every generation: if a headman of the branch was

<sup>25</sup> Testaments provided that the widow could continue to live in the house of testator with his universal heirs, sharing the property and wearing a widow’s clothing, enjoying the usufruct of the property or part of it, and if that were not possible, benefiting from a guarantee of food and lodging.

<sup>26</sup> “Living in complete communion means collecting all credits together, and living in a unified way ... and means that each one accepts that which the other one does” (ANC, Notary Vincenzo Marré, filza 5643).

missing, some of its members bound themselves to another branch in order to reinforce the kin group politically.

“Living *in fresca* (holding property in common)” could generate dangerous conflicts among brothers, and it was especially such cases that led to a roughly egalitarian division of the family patrimony. In 1578 the Negri brothers of Carasco attributed a more general significance, linked to current events, to their decision to carry out an equal division of their property. Giuliano (the eldest), Bernardo, and Benedetto had inherited the entire patrimony from their father Bartolomeo in 1565, as “universal heirs, each one for a third, subject to the condition that they could not divide the property of this testator before twelve years had passed after the death of this testator.” As executors of his will Bartolomeo had named three members of the Negri kin group along with his wife Nicoletta. Over the course of the following decade, Giuliano imposed himself as the manager of the collective patrimony, and had “purchased some property and contracted some debts, all in his own name.” In 1578 the three brothers declared their renunciation of living “*alla fresca*” and their desire to “effect a division, because in today’s world living *in fresca* and communally tends to bring with it, quite often, discord, fights, and scandals amongst brothers.” Through the mediation of the executors of the will, they carried out the division (but not in equal parts), furnished dowries for their sister Salvaggia, and set aside a fourth part of the patrimony for the usufruct of their mother Nicoletta.<sup>27</sup> Neither the family branch nor its property broke apart, however, because the three brothers continued to live as neighbors in three sections of the house. It should also be noted that the division took place after the first-born Giuliano had already emerged as *de facto* head of the branch, the legal initiative to act having been taken by him, in fact—though only after having had repeated disagreements with his younger brothers.<sup>28</sup>

In general, the effective functioning of this sufficiently flexible mechanism of inheritance was guaranteed by the fact that it was carried out over

<sup>27</sup> ANC, Notary Benedetto Bacigalupo, filza 3142. In 1576 the heirs of the deceased Agostino Connio decided to divide their previously shared patrimony “so that litigation and disputes that might arise soon after the death of their father could be avoided” (ANC, Notary Gio Angelo della Cella, filza 3246).

<sup>28</sup> The model of holding things in common still retained its central importance, at least as a general point of reference; in the mid-eighteenth century it was still described as the dominant model in the nearby Sturla Valley (ANC, Carte delle famiglie Bernero e Marré, fascicolo 1451).

a long period of time and by the systematic exclusion of the women's material inheritance. Women's dowries, received almost always in the form of cash from fathers or brothers, were transferred to another branch of another kin group. But the topic of dowries will be addressed below.

Wills thus established the means by which the patrimony was to be inherited, and reiterated both the privileged lines of direct descent and exclusions. They also often contained important clues about testators' concerns for the broader kin group. Within the various branches and family nuclei of the kin group, household heads and *principali* developed strategies that were deeper and less documented.<sup>29</sup>

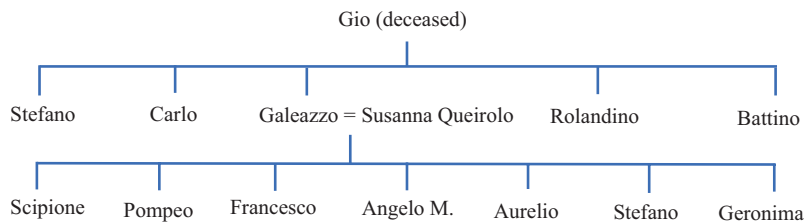
The will of Galeazzo Arata was notarized by Gio Batta on the porch of the "palace" of Pianezza on 18 September 1607<sup>30</sup> in the presence of Galeazzo's brother Carlo, his sons Angelo Maria and Aurelio, and four witnesses (two Arata and two Brichetto).<sup>31</sup> The presence of his brother, sons, and other "kin" give the will the feeling of a kind of family compact, probably discussed by the kin group "council,"<sup>32</sup> and certainly approved by those present before being registered by the kin group's notary. At the heart of Galeazzo's intentions was his *de facto* choice of his two sons (Aurelio and Angelo Maria, who witnessed the act) as his privileged heirs (see Fig. 5.1). In a sense, this decision seems to have been taken for granted, given the preceding public appearances of these two sons in notarial acts and on the political scene. Galeazzo's other sons were assigned a kind of "dowry" which seems to have excluded them from the direct management of the estate in the future, or at least to have subordinated them to Aurelio and Angelo Maria. Pompeo and Gio Francesco received a mill from their father, Scipione received 1,500 *lire* and a house with two lofts "for his portion," and the sixth son, Stefano, was considered "lost" (either an emigrant or a bandit). His wife, Susanna Queirolo, was required to live for the rest of her natural life "in widow's dress" and received

<sup>29</sup> The notarial documentation obviously gives a skewed view of the whole picture, in that many phenomena—the relationship between social forms and these records, between norms and behavior, the interpretation of norms, and an evaluation of events on the basis of their correspondence to prescriptive rules—are highlighted only in the cases of conflict that led participants to have acts produced.

<sup>30</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filza 6350.

<sup>31</sup> The Brichetto were the Arata's neighbors in the villages of the parish of Orero.

<sup>32</sup> The "council" was comprised of the household heads who met to discuss issues that affected the whole kin group: marriages, the apportionment of fiscal obligations, a feud, paying security for bandits, and peace accords.



**Fig. 5.1** The family of Galeazzo Arata in the early 1600s

(together with their only daughter Geronima, who seems to have been destined to remain unmarried since she was not dowried and her brothers not required to give her a dowry) the usufruct of a house with a loft and drying shed together with two small parcels of chestnut grove. These parcels were in Pianezza and Coreglia, where Susanna had been born and still had a large group of “kin” who were close allies of the Arata.

Galeazzo satisfied his obligations to the broader kin group with a bequest of twenty-five *lire* to the “[unmarried] daughters of the surname and kin group of Arata.”

Giving a sum of money or a small portion of landed property to the “poor young girls [not yet married] of the kin group” is a clause that appeared frequently in the last wills of household heads, and not only of the *principali* or the wealthiest. In 1575 Rolandino Casazza gave a dowry not only to his daughter Lazarina, but also to three other “daughters” from his kin group.<sup>33</sup> In 1580 Stefano Cassina from Dezerega left property in usufruct for the poor daughters of the Cassina kin group, and thirty *lire* specifically to his niece (or granddaughter) Marietta.<sup>34</sup> In the same year, Zanino Arata from Cicagna bequeathed twenty-five *lire* to two poor Arata daughters to be identified from among those “who are close and of the same blood.”<sup>35</sup> In 1618 Bartolomeo Cavagnaro of Verzi “left to all of the legitimate females born or to be born in the future, forever, who descend from the deceased Pellegro Cavagnaro, his paternal ancestor, 100 Genoese *lire* for each one of them when they marry.”<sup>36</sup> In 1636 Angeletta,

<sup>33</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Angelo della Cella, filza 3425.

<sup>34</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filza 6325.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., filza 6360. Bartolomeo Cavagnaro was a wealthy *principale*, but the sum of his bequests (400 *lire* to his sister, two *quarti* of oil for the lamp of the Most Holy Sacrament in the churches of Orero and Verzi, and the celebration of ten Masses each year for twenty-five



daughter of the deceased Agostino Ratto of Soglio, asked for her dowry (or “subsidy”) as a “daughter of the branch and descent of former Petro Ratto, who had made a bequest for daughters to marry.” Witnesses declared that “the daughters of this village of Soglio who are from the Ratto kin group had always taken the offering left by said former Pietro, and this is publicly held to be the case, and recognized by all as such.” Angeletta took advantage of the dowry of her “paternal ancestor” and married Benedetto Gnecco.<sup>37</sup> In 1641 Scipione, Sebastiano, Lazaro, Ambrogio, Silvestro, Michele, Vincenzo, and Gio Batta Cassina made a pact concerning “the former bequest made by the deceased Batta Cassina for the young, poor, and unmarried girls of the Cassina family.”<sup>38</sup> In the *caratata* of 1641 four pieces of property were listed as belonging to the “poor young daughters” of the Dezerega, Castagneto, Cassina, and Peccorino kin groups.<sup>39</sup> The consistent factors were thus kin group, marriage, the “poverty” of the girls to be married, and specifications that seem to have privileged consanguinity or a particular line of descent. The more general social significance of these private dowry funds was attested by a public proclamation issued by the captain of Rapallo in 1634. He announced that, according to the last will of Paolo Canale, all of the poor girls married in the “village of Zoagli” in 1633 could request their dowry by presenting, within fifteen days, evidence of their marriage.<sup>40</sup>

In his 1607 will, Galeazzo Arata sacrificed Geronima for reasons unknown, and did not have other daughters to be dowried. But he did add a bequest of twenty-five *lire* to the daughters of Oliviero and Batta Arata. During the same year, using part of this dowry fund, Oliviero’s daughter Agostina married Batta Brichetto.<sup>41</sup> As we have seen, the Brichetto also witnessed the registration of Galeazzo’s will, and their houses were interspersed with those of the Arata in the village of Orero.

years) also resulted from the fact that he did not have male children. For this reason, his patrimony (lands, houses, and mills) devolved to the son of Lorenzino Cavagnaro.

<sup>37</sup> ANC, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1809.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., filza 1791.

<sup>39</sup> ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 168–69.

<sup>40</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, filza 24. The characteristics of these dowry funds, which were the same kinds as those used by the Genoese *alberghi*, made it clear that they differed from the public institutions that existed in some Italian cities of the same period; see for example A. Molho, “Investimenti nel Monte delle doti di Firenze,” *Quaderni storici* 61 (1986): 147–70.

<sup>41</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filza 6350.

Other stipulations of Galeazzo's will were his burial in the parish church of San Gio Batta of Cicagna, celebration in the same church of six Masses each year for four years, and a bequest of a chestnut grove to the oratory of Pianezza, which was a kind of private chapel of the Arata kin group.

## 2 DOWRIES AND MATRIMONIAL EXCHANGES

A dramatic letter from Geronima, widow of Stefano Arata, was delivered to the captain of Chiavari in 1607 (the same year as Galeazzo's will). It shows the impact of the rules of patrilineal descent, hierarchic organization, and stratified kin group relations. The case also demonstrates that conflict was inherent within the internal structure of kin groups. Family cohesion was a process that involved tensions and violence—a factor that tended to be hidden by kinship language and other representations of reality. The widow, who signed the bottom of the supplication, wrote that

my husband Steffano d'Arata was murdered by his close Arata relatives, and four years ago our son Battino was also killed by his Arata kin. Nicola Arata, also called "the little knife," murdered another of our sons named Nicollino, his own cousin in the flesh, since Nicola's father was Steffano's brother. These killings were all done so that they could take our property, as is the custom amongst the Arata kin in the Fontanabuona, and specifically in the village of Lencisa, where they take possession by force without any written authorization, chasing away the poor women and daughters while declaring that all of the property belongs to the males of the Arata kin group. But about four years ago, when they had murdered my last male child, Benedetto de Arata, brother of said Nicollino, "the little knife," forced his way into my house, knocking down the door, and violently chased me and my daughter out of our house. I was defending myself as well as I could but in the end, when he was threatening to kill me, I decided to abandon the house and most of the implements, with all of the lands and woods. I have had to live as a vagabond until now despite the fact that the deceased Steffano, my husband, had left me the usufruct for my lifetime of a lot of property that he had bequeathed, because it suited him, to my daughter whom I had given in marriage at Lencisa, and who was never able to receive anything from this inheritance. Neither my daughter, nor her husband, nor I had ever wanted to talk about this or to seek a legal remedy, despite that fact that we have our wills [copies of Stefano's will] and that our property has been brutally taken from us.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>42</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1690.

This might be an exceptional case, at least in terms of the enormous violence involved. Or perhaps the legal tribunals were simply unaware of such cases, and thus neither noted nor documented them. Geronima Arata stressed this very point. The central issue in the case seems to have been the rights of Geronima, her daughter, and her son-in-law to maintain possession of Stefano's inheritance. While Geronima's supplication probably dramatizes her story as a widow and mother, it was certain that the "males" and *principali* of the kin group, who "were much more feared than were the courts,"<sup>43</sup> exerted very close control of property devolution. During the same time period, Francesco Arata, who was also from Lencisa, accused his "kin," and especially his brothers Nicolino and Benedetto, of having tried to steal his property and wounding him by stoning. Francesco, like the deceased Stefano, was apparently "well-off": he had a tavern where he lodged merchants and muleteers, a mule used for trading wine with Vignale in the Lavagna Valley, and a house with a portico and land. But he also had four married daughters and had involved his sons-in-law in his business dealings. Unsurprisingly, these sons-in-law were standing next to him when he gave his testimony to the captain of Chiavari.<sup>44</sup> The two cases were very similar and probably linked to each other. The violent reactions of a core group of "kin" were not motivated only by greed, but also by a desire to prevent outsiders from acquiring rights over kin group property.

These examples lead one to conclude that the dowry funds (the bequests for the "poor young daughters") were an important resource controlled by the *principali* of the kin group that served as another element of their patronage. An investigation of brides' dowries, in the normal context of marriage exchanges, and of the ways in which dowry payments were effected, shows how every effort was made to anchor the property within the framework of the kin group and around male lineages. The almost systematic exclusion of women from material inheritance, together with the extended time frames assigned for dowry payments, made it possible to prevent landed property from leaving the kin group while also asserting close parental control over marriage alliances. Table 5.1, calculated from a comprehensive sample of 368 dowry contracts, shows that from the late

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. After these threats, merchants and muleteers abandoned Francesco's tavern and began frequenting Nicolino's establishment.

**Table 5.1** Forms of dowry payment in the Fontanabuona (1570s–80s and 1630s–40s), percentages of all contracts

<i>Form of payment</i>	<i>1579–85 (177 dowry contracts), %</i>	<i>1639–45 (191 dowry contracts), %</i>
Money	72.3	72.2
Money and land	9.6	12.6
Land	18.1	15.2

sixteenth through the mid-seventeenth centuries brides' dowries were constituted in cash over 70 percent of the time.<sup>45</sup>

The rule according to which brides received property that was understood to be held in trust for the kin group was broken only when those who constituted the dowry had no cash at their disposal, and this was made explicit in the contract. This seemed to be the case especially when, following the father's death, the task of constituting the dowry fell to the brothers who were universal heirs (or, less frequently, when this was the responsibility of other kin). In Cicagna in 1639, for example, Batta Mangino and his brother Agostino established a dowry of 400 *lire* for their sister Masina, who was marrying Angelo Maria Fopiano. However, since they did not have "ready cash" they gave to Angelo Maria half of a house with a courtyard, stable, and portico and a vineyard next to it. Since his half was estimated to be worth 550 *lire*, Angelo Maria promised to pay the difference within three years.<sup>46</sup> In the same year, Gio Fopiano assigned for the dowry of his sister Teodora a piece of property "near the house, with a vineyard," but the contract provided for the repurchase of the property within six years.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Domenico Connio, whose daughter Brigida was to marry Gioanni Perazzo, assigned to the future bride—"not having ready cash"—a chestnut grove, but the same contract specified that he could rent the property from his daughter for eleven *lire* per year, and eventually repurchase it.<sup>48</sup> Andrea Noce, brother of Catta, made out a dowry contract that transferred a chestnut grove worth 400 *lire* to Giacomo Noziglia, but stipulated that Andrea could rent it for fourteen *lire* annually, for seven years, and then repurchase it by paying a fifty-*lire*

<sup>45</sup>The sources are: ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filze 6324–30 (for the years 1579–85); *ibid.*, ANC, Notary Bartolomeo Fopiano, filze 2717–23 (for the years 1639–45).

<sup>46</sup>ANC, Notary Bartolomeo Fopiano, filza 2717, 2 March 1639.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, 30 April 1639.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 31 July 1639.

installment each year at Christmas.<sup>49</sup> In 1640 Giovanni Chiereghino assigned a dowry of 800 *lire* to his niece Nicoletta, to be paid over an eight-year period. The same contract gave Giovanni, as a donation *inter vivos*, a chestnut grove and meadow that Nicoletta's deceased father had left her for her dowry.<sup>50</sup> These examples express the essence of the sixty-one dowry contracts involving real estate and the forty-one mixed contracts (that included both property and cash) that I examined. They show that although land played an important role, in many cases, in the constitution of dowries, it was never alienated definitively, but rather served as a guarantee of a future cash payment to be made when conditions permitted, functioning as a kind of security.<sup>51</sup>

Providing dowries and making marriage arrangements were often opportunities (in addition to their great ceremonial significance) for solidifying transactional chains and preexisting, open interactions—which were sometimes “unwritten,” as indicated by testimonies given in unresolved, decades-old disputes—in ways that tended to maintain rights over land within the circle of the kin group and its male lineages. On 8 January 1641 the Mangino brothers (Franceschino, Nicola, and Batta) gave to their sister Lucia, who was to marry Andrea Dezerega, a dowry in the form of a chestnut grove worth 395 *lire*. Three days later, Rolando Mangino gave a dowry to his sister Geronima—a parcel near the house, with chestnut trees and a meadow, worth 350 *lire*—for her marriage to Stefano Mangino. But the two parcels remained in the hands of the Mangino, both because of the marriage between “kin” (Geronima and Stefano), and because of a series of transactions carried out on the same day (11 January). Gio

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 6 September 1639.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., filza 2718, 25 April 1640.

<sup>51</sup> This model of dowering was probably shared throughout Liguria (see the case of Cervo studied by Grendi in *Il sistema politico di una comunità ligure*, where the average dowry amount was much higher, though), and was fairly close to that described by G. Delille for the area around Salerno (*Famiglia e proprietà*). In the Piedmontese case studied by G. Levi, land played a more dominant role; see “Terra e strutture familiari in una comunità piemontese del ‘700,” *Quaderni storici* 33 (1976): 1059–1121. This was also true for the Apulian case studied by Delille, “Dots des filles et circulation des biens dans les Pouilles aux XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles,” *Mélanges de l'Ecole Française de Rome* 95, 1 (1983): 195–224. Other examples from southern Italy can be found in the same number of the *Mélanges*. The ethnographic-comparative analysis of J.R. Goody and S.J. Tambiah simplifies the overall picture of variation and regional articulations by insisting on the centrality of land with respect to dowry practices “in Italy.” See Goody and Tambiah, *Bridewealth and Dowry* (London, 1973) (Italian trans. *Ricchezza della sposa e dote* [Milan, 1981], 24).



Fig. 5.2 A model of reciprocal dowry exchange

Mangino (Stefano's father) sold the parcel assigned to Lucia to Cesare Mangino for 350 *lire*, and then he sold the parcel assigned to Geronima to Benedetto Mangino for the same price.<sup>52</sup> A similar transaction between "kin" designed to prevent the alienation of property was recorded in the same year at Moconesi, when Gio Agostino Gattorna gave his sister Agostina, who married Domenico Soracco, 100 *lire* and a parcel near a house with a small dwelling on it. But in the very same dowry contract, Gio Agostino sold the land that he had just assigned to his sister to Lorenzo Gattorna.<sup>53</sup> Also in the same year, on 1 October, a dowry contract was immediately followed by three other closely linked contracts of exchange, debt obligation, and sale. The brother of Susanina Ferretto gave his sister, who married Angelo Maria Chiereghino, a meadow and field called '*il Chiosello*' that was worth 350 *lire*. Immediately thereafter, Dionisio Chiereghino, Angelo Maria's father, traded *il Chiosello* to Bernardino Ferretto for a chestnut grove. The same Bernardino declared that he would repay 100 *lire* to Dionisio Chiereghino. Finally, Simone Ferretto, Susanina's brother, sold part of *il Chiosello* to Bernardino Ferretto.<sup>54</sup> These four contracts do not shed light on every move and motivation implied by the series of transactions, but their overall significance is quite clear: providing a dowry, especially when land is involved, was never an isolated transaction and always involved "kin."

The dowry could be situated within a schema of perfect reciprocity. This was the case in the marriage between Batta Bacigalupo and Agostina Boitano, which was con-celebrated with that of Agostina's brother and Batta's sister, with reciprocal dowries of 400 *lire* (see Fig. 5.2).<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> ANC, Notary Bartolomeo Fopiano, filza 2719, nos. 23–25.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., nos. 44–45, 20 January 1641.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., nos. 396–99.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., filza 2717, nos. 2–3, 2 January 1639.

An identical case and arrangement of marriage exchange between the families of Gio Fopiano and Nicola Gnecco of Cicagna was described by witnesses in 1644 as a “trading of dowries.”<sup>56</sup> In another such case from 1643, the dowry exchange involved the children of the deceased Alessandro Arata and those of the deceased Batta Casaretto.<sup>57</sup>

In other cases marriages were at the center of series of transactions involving several branches or kin groups. An especially elaborate example is provided by the eight contracts between the Segaro, the De Martino, and the Malatesta, all drawn up on 29 April 1640 by the notary Bartolomeo Fopiano. The sequence was as follows. The brothers Gioanni, Stefano, Antonio, Angelo Maria, and Bartolomeo Segaro, sons of the deceased Luca, registered a “division” of their paternal inheritance—a rich patrimony of six houses and twenty parcels of land grouped around the village of Figarolo. In so doing they also constituted a dowry, partly in cash (190 *lire*) and partly in a chestnut grove worth 108 *lire* for their sister Sebastiana, engaged to Nicola de Martino. Nicola de Martino then sold the same chestnut grove to Gioanni Segaro for 108 *lire*. Then Nicola’s brother Benedetto de Martino received a payment of 100 *lire* from the Segaro brothers. Then Gioanni Segaro promised to pay his brother Antonio fifty *lire* within two years. Then Angelo Maria Segaro promised to pay the same brother Antonio thirty *lire* within the same time frame. Then, Rolando Malatesta provided a dowry of 300 *lire* for his sister Maddalena, who married Gioanni Segaro, and himself married Cattarina (Sebastiana’s younger sister), who brought a dowry in the same amount. This amounted to a dowry exchange between Rolando Malatesta and the six Segaro brothers. The witnesses of the eight contracts variously included Stefano Segaro, Luca Casazza, Angelo Maria Segaro, and Benedetto and Nicola de Martino, that is, the same protagonists (with the exception of Casazza) involved in the transactions. Marriage exchanges among the Malatesta, Segaro, and De Martino are depicted in Fig. 5.3.<sup>58</sup>

The case of the Pessia, Costa, and Valente from the village of Cornia was similar. In 1640 Raffaellino Valente, the universal heir of the property of the deceased Bartolomeo Costa, assigned a dowry of 1,000 *lire* (a very large dowry for the Fontanabuona) to Geronima Costa, bride of Stefano Pessia. The witnesses to the dowry contract were Agostino and Giulio

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., filza 2722, no. 23.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., filza 2721, nos. 482–83.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., filza 2718, nos. 192–99.

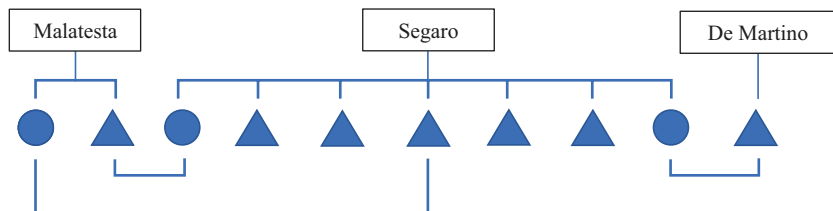


Fig. 5.3 Marriage exchanges among the Malatesta, Segaro, and De Martino

Valente. On the same day, Oliviero Pessia, father of the groom, sold to Raffaellino Valente a parcel with a house and vineyard, another house with a garden, and a parcel near a house with olive and chestnut trees, all for the price of 1,300 *lire*. This sum matched Geronima's dowry plus the restitution of the dowry (300 *lire*) of Nicoletta, wife of the deceased Bartolomeo Costa.<sup>59</sup> The figure of Raffaellino as the eldest head of the Cornia branch of the Valente emerged again four years later when he oversaw a marriage exchange between the Valente and the Bacigalupo. On 12 May 1645 Stefano Valente son of the deceased Alessandro married Masina, daughter of the deceased Galeazzo Bacigalupo. Simultaneously, Maria, daughter of the deceased Nicolino Valente married Batta Bacigalupo, son of Vincenzo. Raffaellino constituted the dowry for Maria, and as tutor of the minor children of the deceased Nicolino he certified their credits. With the approval of Stefano Valente he sold to Batta Bacigalupo the chestnut grove that Masina Bacigalupo had received as a dowry from her brother Gio.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., nos. 231–32.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., filza 2723, nos. 259–64. Dowry trading took place not only in the exchange of sisters but also, as in the case cited above, in marriage exchanges between different branches of two kin groups; see the examples in *ibid.*, nos. 212–13, 275, 305. That dowry trading was taking place is clarified by the drawing up of contracts on the same day, in the presence of the same witnesses, which testified to the close ties that existed between the different marriage transactions within and between kin groups. For example, on 7 January 1579, in the village of Serra, Lodixio Crovo son of the deceased Bertone married Augustina daughter of Vincenzo Guainasso, and the witnesses were Merino Crovo son of the deceased Zanetino and Stefano Crovo son of Zanetino. On the same day, Merino Crovo son of the deceased Zanetino married Angierata daughter of the deceased Antonio Crovo, witnessed by Vincenzo Guainasso (Augustina's father) and, again, Stefano Crovo son of Zanetino (ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filza 6324, nos. 62, 64).



**Table 5.2** Lengths of terms for dowry payments, 1639–45

<i>Term length</i>	<i>No. of contracts</i>	<i>Term length</i>	<i>No. of contracts</i>	<i>Term length</i>	<i>No. of contracts</i>
Immediately	24	5 years	7	11 years	4
On request	1	6 years	14	12 years	3
1 year	2	7 years	15	13 years	1
2 years	3	8 years	27	14 years	1
3 years	5	9 years	4	15 years	1
4 years	14	10 years	12		

In all of the cases described here the constitution of the dowry and the marriage exchange served as the fulcrum and catalyst of a series of transactions, based on frequently complex reciprocal arrangements within branches and kin groups or between branches of different kin groups. These transactions tended to redefine the positions of the social actors and enable the male lineages (particularly the nuclei of the *principali*) to retain their full control, in various ways, of the landed property. Especially when the father's authority was absent, the dowry contract highlights elements of a broader social contract between brothers, between uncles and nephews, and between “kin” in general.

Similar exchanges within the kin group as a whole also occurred when dowries were paid in cash—about two thirds of the cases, as we have seen (Table 5.1). But it must be noted that in addition to creating affinity and alliance between two kin groups, marriage exchange set up a debt relationship between the group that gave away the bride and the group that received her. Only small portions of cash dowries were paid at the time of marriage. Usually the bride's family immediately provided the trousseau (the “*bancale guarnito*,” or wedding chest) and a third of the sum promised, with a commitment to pay the balance within a certain number of years.<sup>61</sup> In the 138 dowry contracts drawn up between 1639 and 1645 the

<sup>61</sup> The trousseau, which was part of a “bench,” had an average value of fifty *lire* and always included an assortment of garments, such as “two skirts of *cadisio* [caddis, a fabric made of worsted wool and silk], one green and the other blue, two *bambasine* [bombasine, another textile combining wool and silk], a doublet, one of *firorella* [yet another precious tissue]” (1640); “a dress, two *bambasine*, a blouse, a piece of homespun cloth, another blouse, another dress of *cadisio* ... dresses garnished according to the style of the Fontanabuona valley” (1641); “five dresses of soft cloth, a *cadisio*, three *bambasine*, a doublet, six blouses” (1643); a blue *bambasina*, a white one, some fabric in the loom, one colored gold and the other *cadis*, and this to be delivered immediately after the wedding, and a homespun dress,

**Table 5.3** Dowry values in the Fontanabuona, 1639–45

<i>Dowry value (lire)</i>	<i>Number of contracts</i>	<i>Dowry value (lire)</i>	<i>Number of contracts</i>
100–200	5	600–700	10
200–300	36	700–800	1
300–400	71	800–900	4
400–500	38	900–1,000	1
500–600	21	1,000–1,100	4

terms for satisfying the debt were extended to a maximum of fifteen years (see Table 5.2), with annual payments. But in practice the term could reach twenty-five or thirty years, or the dowry debt could even become part of an inheritance. The average value of Fontanabuona dowries (in cash, in mixed format, or in property) was 170 *lire* in the late sixteenth century and 380 *lire* in the mid-seventeenth century. By the mid-seventeenth century, the value of dowries had increased (see Table 5.3).

Often, when the person assigning the dowry was a father who was old, the burden of completing the payment of the dowry passed on to his sons, who took up the responsibility collectively, or according to various arrangements indicated by clauses in the father's testament or in the dowry contract itself.<sup>62</sup> Another important ongoing tie, as far as inheritance was

and the other two soft, according to Agostina's taste, with six blouses and other things to look nice" (1645). The most important shift between the late sixteenth century and the mid-seventeenth century was in the almost total disappearance of the *antefactum* (the marriage gift) that appeared in almost all of the marriage contracts of the earlier period (usually at a value of twenty-five *lire*), and only once in the later period. On an earlier transformation of the *antefactum seu donationem* (the formula used in dowry contracts in the Fontanabuona) in customary law, see M. Bellomo, *Ricerche sui rapporti matrimoniali tra coniugi* (Varese, 1961). For Genoa, Diane Owen Hughes stresses the direct link between the decline of the marriage gift and the concession of the dowry by the lineage in the twelfth century; see D. Owen Hughes, "Urban Growth and Family Structure in Medieval Genoa," *Past and Present* 66 (1975): 3–28; id., "Struttura familiare e sistemi di successione ereditaria nei testamenti dell'Europa medievale," *Quaderni storici* 33 (1976): 929–52; id., "From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe," *Journal of Family History* 3 (1978): 262–96.

<sup>62</sup> For example, in 1580 Bernardo Arata left a testament with the notary Gio Batta in which he named his sons Nicola and Domenico as his universal heirs. He left his other son, Batta, who was "absent," three parcels of land and a house. He "dowered" his daughters Luisina, Gieronima, and Agostina with 250 *lire* plus their trousseau "to be financed by the land" that remained temporarily, undivided, in the hands of the brothers. A clause provided that Batta would be able to have a third of this land if he were willing to "pay out" a third of the sum for the dowries (ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filza 6325).

concerned, between family branches or between the kin groups of the bride and groom, was created by the fact that the dowry continued to be linked to the bride's kin group, according to the dowry restitution clause that appeared in all marriage contracts.<sup>63</sup>

The fact that women were generally excluded from the maternal inheritance did not mean that the relationships created between kin groups through marriage exchanges were any less important or sensitive. Disputes over dowry payments or dowry restitution immediately resonated with the public, drawing in the entire kin network and becoming political controversies. Notwithstanding that fact that many contracts and provisions had been agreed to orally, notarial acts that outlined dowry arrangements and marriage transactions were rich in detail and carefully preserved by notaries, who had special inventories for such records that were constantly updated with notes about payments made or any changes made to the dowry agreement. Marriage effectively created, reinforced, or renewed economic and political relations and tied kin groups together. The dowry was the material and symbolic basis of these relations. Against this backdrop, marriages often served as ceremonial sanctions for peace agreements, being legitimized by the "kin group council" and by formal public authority. But the new debt relationship created by the dowry could both promote political cohesion and lead to conflict.

The marriage relationship, like friendship or neighbor relations (or, as we saw in the Chap. 2, relations with institutions, whether judicial or fiscal) referred not to individuals, since individuals existed above all as members of a group. Further, the relationships of alliance and affinity created by marriage involved not only the kin groups who were exchanging women. Because every marriage ordained a certain kind of relationship between "kin"—especially when it coincided with the passing on of an inheritance or a division between brothers—and generated emotional and

<sup>63</sup>The restitution of the dowry also involved a broad group of kin. In 1640, for example, after the death of his daughter-in-law Bianchinetta, Pietro Zerega restored to Francesco Zerega (Bianchinetta's brother) 100 *lire* that Bianchinetta had received as her dowry from a paternal uncle (ANC, Notary Bartolomeo Fopiano, filza 2718, no. 419). In 1642, Nicoletta Chiereghino, widow of Batta Valente, made a second marriage to Antonio Dondero and received as a dowry from her uncle 850 *lire* that the Valente had just returned to her. In reality, though, her uncle had only paid the Valente 200 *lire*, and the new dowry contract required the payment of 850 *lire* in ten years. Further, on the same day, Nicoletta's uncle registered the satisfaction of a credit of thirty-six *lire* that he held with respect to Benedetto Dondero, one of the witnesses to the marriage contract (*ibid.*, filza 2720, nos. 100–01).

political significance, every marriage also involved the judgment and interests of the entire village community or parish-*universitas*.

Marriages contracted by an exchange of verbal promises (*"per verba de praesenti"*) resulted from agreements and negotiations between the heads of households, family branches, and kin groups. The "kin group council," presided by *principali*, met in order to "marry a daughter."<sup>64</sup> Each new matrimonial alliance acquired significance with respect to specific situations and interests. However, the need to win over supporters for the match while also maintaining patrilineal ties and a corporate identity could easily lead to tension and conflict, whether among "kin" or, especially, between the parents of the spouses and between in-laws. Such disagreements could spill over from the already broad context of relations between two groups into the social and political relations of the village, parish, and community. Many feuds originated in such a way, as part of a process that transformed private controversies into public and political conflicts, eventually resulting in the intervention of institutional powers.

In November 1608 the captain of Rapallo, Paride Fiesco (who, besides being a judge had also been named by the Senate as "Commissioner against bandits, robber assassins, and highwaymen"), launched a prosecution of Geronimo and Agostino Badaracco, Bartolomeo de Martino, and Geronimo Rocca, for having "aided, abetted, and given favor to bandits." The accusation was supported by Giovanni Connio, a miller from Pianmegorino, who directed a particular complaint against Geronimo Rocca for having on many occasions welcomed to his tavern in Calvari a squadron of bandits from the Fontanabuona and from the Aveto Valley. Of particular interest to us here, though, are the ties between the accused and the witnesses for the prosecution, as well as the defense mounted by Geronimo Rocca. Rocca declared that he had a deep enmity with Giovanni Connio

because he wanted to marry a daughter of mine to his son, and I gave her to him, and they promised to meet together on the day of the Cross, but they did not come ... and later I married my daughter [to someone else] one Sunday morning, and said Gio Cunnio came to me after the dinner, along with his brothers and his sons, to try to take her away from me, and this is how we became enemies.

<sup>64</sup>I have not found specific documents relating to the meetings of household heads; only a number of scattered references. The one cited in the text is in ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1224.

If a marriage promise that was not kept was at the root of the enmity between the Connio and the Rocca, it was an inheritance dispute that drove another witness for the prosecution, Geronimo Solari, to testify against Geronimo Rocca. In this case, Rocca defended himself by reconstructing the private motives for this enmity and explaining that “Geronimo Solari is not my friend [because] one of my nephews died in my house, and left part of his property to my wife, and the nephew who died was of the Lagomarcini family, and now this Solaro has allied himself with three or four Lagomarcini.” Relations of kinship and affinity between the others who were examined in the case were positive in nature: Geronimo and Agostino Badaracco were relatives, and Bartolomeo de Martino was the son-in-law of Geronimo Badaracco.<sup>65</sup>

In early 1609 the same captain, Paride Fiesco, tried to discern the reason for a feud between the Garbarino and the Giuffra (on one side), and the Casella and the Rovegno (on the other side), kin groups from the parish of Moconesi, the *podesteria* of Roccatagliata, and the Trebbia Valley. To this end he called to Rapallo various household heads from the four kin groups, along with some of their neighbors from the villages of Moconesi. A few weeks earlier, at Moconesi itself, Bartolomeo Casella had been murdered. Batta Casella, Bartolomeo’s brother, explained the reasons for the “blood enmity” between his kin group and the Garbarino in the following terms: “Gio Francesco from Montebruno had promised to give a daughter of his in marriage to my brother Bartolomeo, along with a dowry of 100 *scudi* and an initial dowry payment of 100 *lire*.” But the promise was only partially satisfied; Gio Francesco made an initial payment of only forty-four *lire*. Batta continued: “And so said Bartolomeo took the money and kept it for six or eight days, and then he brought it back and said ‘Father-in-law, if you would like to give me what you promised, I am ready to do what I had promised you.’” Bartolomeo had given his father-in-law eight days to transfer the entire sum promised, but Gio Francesco got very upset and took the forty-four *lire* back, “and he told my said brother Bartolomeo ‘My daughter is not crooked or lame,’ and then left.” According to Batta Casella, this caused Bartolomeo’s murder, which was not carried out directly by the Garbarino but by one of their adherents, Stefano Giuffra. Indeed, after Bartolomeo’s death, Orazio Garbarino had given to Stefano Giuffra an article of clothing, a belt, and an arquebus.

<sup>65</sup> ASCR, Extraordinariorum, reg. 3. The trials contained in the series Extraordinariorum were launched by judges empowered with “royal coercive power [*braccio regio*].”

"And I," said Batta Casaella, "think that the only reason why he gave said clothes and arquebus to him was for payment for the death of my brother." The enmity between the Garbarino and the Rovegno had similar origins. Again, following a dispute over a dowry payment, Gioseppino Rovegno was said to have killed, with the help and full solidarity of his "kin," his two brothers-in-law, brothers of Orazio Garbarino. Thus, the role of Orazio in both episodes explains the symmetrical alignment of the four kin groups in the feud.<sup>66</sup>

Many of the links and some of the testimony in these two situations are difficult to interpret, but the key point in each case is that each individual is at the center of a web of kinship ties. Within this web, marriage and dowry were among the most important factors of division or integration with respect to the wider fabric of social relations. Relations between kinship groups had an almost immediate political impact, and indeed determined to a large degree the groups' political roles within the community. The effect of these relations depended on the power, cohesion, and territorial extension of the kin groups in question. The genealogical position and social status of the individual kin group members who were involved in matrimonial exchanges also affected the influence of kin group relations on marriage choices and alliance strategies.

The patrilineal structure of society was sustained by virilocal marriages (which were necessary for the maintenance of the kin group's territorial cohesion and for the reproduction of meaningful and socially recognized ties), and by strong endogamy within the village, the parish, and the group. Due to these latter factors, the "marriage market" was quite restricted. Options were forcefully determined by political alignments, and there was surely intense competition. Out of the 368 marriage exchanges that I have studied from the late sixteenth through the mid-seventeenth century, only twenty-two (6 percent) were exogamous with respect to the geographic and administrative area of the valley community. But, especially if one considers the environment of the village or neighborhood and of the wider kin group, a more focused picture emerges of the strong overlap between norm, practice, and social structure. Marriage exchanges

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. Reconstructing the judicial process presents, as is always the case, many grey areas. Witnesses described two compact alignments, and the vicar complained that the neighbors in particular were simply reciting "the usual song that they learned by memory from someone else involved in the trial." This suggests that all the inhabitants of the villages of Moconesi were engaged more or less directly in the case.

and reciprocal dowries took place within a human landscape of villages or contiguous villages. Thirty-four marriages were made between “kin” and twenty-seven between consanguineous relatives or affines, with subsequent requests for dispensation from ecclesiastical authorities. When marriage exchanges extended to a wider area, they tended to renew ties between allies or different territorial segments of the same kin group, especially toward the Trebbia Valley and the Imperial fiefs (of Montebruno, Cassingheno, Casanova, and Rovegno—that is, along the commercial transit routes toward the Po Valley).

Marriages within the wider kin group and between consanguineous relatives were probably the best guarantees of the groups’ political and patrimonial cohesion. They also made it possible to strengthen ties between different branches of the same kin group,<sup>67</sup> especially because these marriage exchanges took place in very restricted territorial and social spaces (within the same villages and neighborhoods), and linked contiguous kin groups and branches that were engaged with each other economically and politically, through ties of solidarity, patron-client relations, and dependence. It seems necessary to think about these social exchanges as part of a system, of which marriages constituted only a part, albeit an important one, in order to explain the specific residential patterns that I described in the fourth chapter. These complex and hierarchical relations, which developed both within the dominant kin groups and in those that were less organized and had fewer resources, expressed themselves through the residential structures of the villages and hamlets (see Fig. 4.4).

The sociopolitical logic of marriage exchanges in the Fontanabuona sheds light on and explains a system of alliances in contrast to the model of exogamous marriage in places where (as was the case in our example) women were excluded from the landed inheritance and given cash dowries,

<sup>67</sup> The necessary reference is to the book of R. Merzario, *Il paese stretto. Strategie matrimoniali nella diocesi di Como, secoli XVI-XVIII* (Turin, 1981). I have described what I believe to be indicators of widespread behaviors that together molded the structure of the population and the community, but I do not think that I can reconstruct perfectly coherent systems, nor can I single out general rules of matrimonial exchange. The notarial records of the Fontanabuona from the years 1576 to 1645 contain twenty-seven requests for matrimonial dispensations. Of these, twenty-four were for consanguineous kin and only three for affines. Of the former, ten were for couples related in the fourth degree, ten for the third or fourth degree, three for the third degree, and one for the second or third degree. These requests were made due to the “poverty and distress of the place,” the difficulty in finding a spouse of “similar degree and condition,” and the fear of scandal when the betrothed had already “copulated together.”

and thus where there was no risk of an excessive fragmentation of family property.

Cohesion of the kin group and territorial preeminence offered not only political, but also economic advantages. The latter flowed from landownership (which was fragmented, but clustered in compact units), the organization of agrarian production on the basis of cooperation and work exchanges, and especially from an active and coordinated intervention within the commercial circuits that crossed through the valley. This last problem is the focus of the next chapter.





## CHAPTER 6

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# Circuits of Exchange

One of the chief characteristics of the life and economy of early modern Ligurian communities was the structural scarcity of grain production. Estimates from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are rare, but line up perfectly with the statistical inquiries made during the Napoleonic era. In general, in a good year, local production could meet local needs for two or three months, and for a shorter period in mountain areas.<sup>1</sup> Another characteristic (which was shared by many Mediterranean regions and communities) was the tight interdependence of ecologically diverse areas: a rich coastal strip backed up against mountains and valleys that were especially poor from the perspective of food production. In these latter areas, grain scarcity was only partly compensated by the production of chestnuts and grains other than wheat, and was exacerbated by the absence of oil and wine (whose presence in the coastal zones ensured the possibility of obtaining grain provisions through commercial exchange) and by lack of access to the sea (where fishing and maritime transport offered other resources). Being cut off from these possibilities thus had a dramatic impact on communities like the Fontanabuona.

<sup>1</sup>For the sixteenth century, the situation of self-sustaining production is described in the *caratata* of 1531; see ASG, Manoscritti e libri rari, ms. 797; also G. Gorrini, *La popolazione dello Stato Ligure nel 1531 sotto l'aspetto statistico e sociale* (Rome, 1933). For investigations by Napoleonic-era officials, see Archives Nationales (Paris), F10 353, 413, 429–30; *ibid.*, F11 424, 426; *ibid.*, F20 160; ASG, Prefettura Francese, pacco 1356.

The problems of subsistence and economic integration are at the heart of the historical and anthropological literature dealing with peasant societies and the unavoidable ties between local communities and the rest of society.<sup>2</sup> Economic relations with the outside world were driven by various factors: local initiatives, decisions or pressures from central governments, or changes in international markets.<sup>3</sup> The forms acquired by these relations, however, were always closely tied to systems of stratification, social organization, and local cultures. They were also inseparable from the political, administrative, and fiscal relations between the locality and external centers of public authority.

In Ligurian communities, subsistence was linked to commerce and exchange. Genoa depended almost entirely on maritime imports and enjoyed access to distant grain markets. However, the main preoccupation of the city-capital was to ensure the provisioning of its own urban population<sup>4</sup>—with the attendant political and administrative course-shifting that was typical of the Old Regime<sup>5</sup>—which meant that it only played an episodic role in redistributing grain toward its hinterlands.<sup>6</sup> The communities were thus forced to see to their own direct provisioning, activating a series of exchange circuits that were relatively autonomous. The absence of an integrated economic structure—an indicator of a more general lack of political integration—resulted in a polycentric territorial organization within the Republic. It also determined the central role played by the coastal towns, where an elite of merchants and brokers sought to monopolize grain provisioning and the commercialization of limited local resources (oil and wine).

In the following pages I will try to highlight the connections between ecology and production, social structure, settlement types, and the nature of economic exchange in the areas near Rapallo and Chiavari. The ethnographic investigation (based on a set of documentation that is truly quite poor, fragmented, and dispersed) confirms the role of the coastal towns

<sup>2</sup>For a summary of studies of Mediterranean communities, see D.D. Gilmore, "Anthropology of the Mediterranean," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 11 (1982): 175–205.

<sup>3</sup>See J. Davis, *People of the Mediterranean* (Italian trans. *Antropologia delle società mediterranee. Un'analisi comparata* [Turin, 1980]).

<sup>4</sup>See E. Grendi, "Genova alla metà del Cinquecento: una politica del grano?" *Quaderni storici* 13 (1970): 106–60, now reprinted in id., *La repubblica aristocratica*, 172–223.

<sup>5</sup>See for example S. Kaplan, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy in the Reign of Louis XV* (The Hague, 1976).

<sup>6</sup>In cases of famine (e.g., in 1629–30) or plague (such as in 1657).

and merchants. But it also shows that even the mountain communities, which were more marginal and poor in terms of productive capacity, operationalized their strategic position and forms of social organization in order to play a central role in the activation and control of exchange flows, which would become their most important resource.

## 1 COMMERCIAL TRANSIT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

In December 1583 two merchants from Rapallo, Lorenzo Boglio and Gervasio Pessia, were riding their mules back from Parma, where they had sold a load of oil and soap. As they crossed the border area between the Aveto Valley, which was a fief of the Doria family, and the Fontanabuona, they were escorted by *messire* Paolo Gerolamo della Cella, Antonio della Cella, and “ten or twelve men from the Della Cella kin group,” who were armed with arquebuses. Thanks to their protection, the two merchants were able to cross the Ventarola pass and enter Genoese territory safely, despite an attack from a squadron of nine bandits led by a household head from the Malatesta kin group. Along the “mule road” that descended toward the valley bottom of the Fontanabuona they stopped for breaks in the taverns owned by the Arata in the villages of Croce, Orero, and Pianezza. For the last part of their trip along the “mule road” leading toward the town of Rapallo they were accompanied by “three young men from the Queirolj kin group,” but near “Madonna di Monte” they were attacked a second time and robbed by four armed bandits.<sup>7</sup> This all happened in the final section (about ten miles long) of one of the main transit routes linking the coastal towns of the Ligurian Levante to the Po Valley. The entire sixty- to seventy-mile-long trip took four or five days walking or riding a mule. Once beyond the Genoese border, it took travelers through the politically fragmented and competing areas of the Imperial fiefs.

The small groups and caravans of merchants and muleteers who traveled the roads and paths toward the Po plain were constantly threatened by possible attacks from bandit groups. These operated, for the most part, around the intersections of the mule paths and on the mountain passes, frequently and rapidly moving from Genoese territory into the feudal

<sup>7</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1226; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 524.

enclaves where they enjoyed protection and safe refuge.<sup>8</sup> In the absence of reliable institutional guarantees, the regular practice of commercial activities required a set of strong personal relationships of alliance, friendship, and collaboration with the kin groups and feudal lords located along the transit routes, close to the Apennine passes and the internal valleys. Bandits robbed and collected protection money from merchants and transporters, but their attacks were in fact targeted and selective. The logic of their violent actions reflected, as we will see, their ties of collaboration and dependence with notables and brokers from the backcountry and with the feudal lords.

Let us take a close look at the protagonists in the events that I recounted above. Lorenzo Boglio and Gervasio Pessia were two of the wealthiest merchants of the town of Rapallo. They owned many mules, at least three soap factories, and warehouses and shops in which they gathered the oil produced in the hills around the town and other oil imported from western Liguria.<sup>9</sup> The Della Cella were a kin group entirely located in the border villages between the Aveto Valley and Genoese territory. By virtue of an ancient feudal investiture issued by the Malaspina (recognized and reconfirmed by the Doria), they enjoyed territorial privileges, and were thus considered a “lordship,” operating as tax collectors for the Doria marquis.<sup>10</sup> They collected tolls on merchandise in transit, but their principal activity, at least from the perspective of Genoese authorities, was to protect their allies, the merchants of Rapallo and Chiavari, to organize contraband, and to scare off competitors.<sup>11</sup> In the previous chapter I alluded to the ties between the Della Cella and the Arata, and between the Arata and the Queirolo. Recall that the notary Gio Batta Arata had been an apprentice of the notary Gio Angelo della Cella, and that Galeazzo Arata had married Susanna Queirolo. The continuous socioterritorial structure that supported and facilitated the commercial activities of the

<sup>8</sup> On the Apennine fiefs, see Sisto, *I feudi imperiali*. Some of the small lordships in the area where Genoese territory, the duchy of Parma, and the state of Milan came together practiced an economy of robbery. On the attitudes of the bandits in such areas, see Chaps. 2 and 10.

<sup>9</sup> ASCR, Borgo di Rapallo, reg. 38.

<sup>10</sup> See Sisto, *I feudi imperiali* and G. Fontana, *Rezzoaglio e Val d'Aveto (Cenni storici ed episodi)* (Rapallo, 1940).

<sup>11</sup> During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Genoese commissioners pointed to the village of Cabanne as one of the main centers of organizing contraband oil and re-purposing stolen merchandise. The village was located at the intersection of all of the mule paths leading toward Parma and Piacenza, in the center of the lands held by the Della Cella.

merchants of Rapallo thus depended on ties and reciprocal relations between these three kin groups. A kind of reciprocity also characterized the selective relations between these kin groups, others from the Fontanabuona, and the merchants of Rapallo. To organize the export of oil and soap, the merchants depended on the infrastructure and services that villagers from the backcountry were able to offer thanks to their strategic territorial position and labor availability. The commercial flows of specialized goods produced abroad provided important occupational opportunities to tavern-keepers and mule owners, as well as to a host of muleteers, porters, young armed men, and “bandits” recruited by local brokers and employed in the transport trade and as escorts along the Apennine paths.

Commercial transit thus encompassed a structure of interpersonal relationships that entailed complex territorial articulations. The key elements of this system of reciprocity and its spatial dimension included the supra-local nature of exchange, the traditional orientation of the coastal towns of the *Levante* toward the Po Valley, and the dependence of these towns and their backcountry on foreign grain provisioning.

## 2 OLIVE OIL PRODUCTION AND COMMERCE AS ONE FORM OF INTEGRATION

The oil that made these exchange circuits possible was produced on the terraced hillsides surrounding the coastal towns, but was also imported in large quantities (including lower-grade oil that was then transformed into soap) from western Liguria (the *Ponente*), Monaco, Apulia, and Spain, partly by commission of Genoese nobles.<sup>12</sup> The imported oil was added to the locally produced kind or substituted it (depending on the level of local production—which in some years barely satisfied local consumption), thus ensuring a continuous flow of oil toward the Po Valley.

Between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Rapallo's production was estimated to be about 8,000 barrels (one barrel held about sixty-six liters) in a good year. This was a theoretical amount because there was strong variation in olive production; the trees had cycles of non-production and were very sensitive to climatic events (freezes, hail, wind, etc.). Still, in a good year, once the amount of oil owed to the Republic for the city's

<sup>12</sup> See Raggio, “Produzione olivicola.” Direct or indirect participation by Genoese *cittadini* indicates that the export circuits from Rapallo toward the Po cities were well used.

provisioning was deducted (about a fourth of the production was purchased at an administrative price that was always below the “market price”), and local consumption was taken into account (this amounted to about 3,600 barrels in the early seventeenth century), the community had a marketable surplus of about 2,500 barrels.<sup>13</sup> However, as has been noted, the flow of oil toward the cities of the Po Valley was supplemented by large quantities of imported oil as well. Quantitative data are hard to find, but there are indications that the oil loaded onto mules at the gates of the coastal towns was mostly “foreign.” This fact defined the merchants of Rapallo as operators in an international market, either in the sense that they were the first-hand protagonists in this traffic, or because they functioned as brokers for Genoese nobles. For example, in 1572 Antonio Vallebella and Gio Pessia declared that they traded in oil as “agents” of the nobles Raffaele Spinola and Raffaele della Torre. In late June 1627 the ship captain Michele Celle unloaded ninety-seven barrels of oil at Rapallo that had been shipped from Celle Ligure, in the *Ponente*, on behalf of the noble Marc’Antonio Marelllo, a Rapallo merchant. In the days that followed the oil was entrusted to seventeen muleteers (twelve of whom were from the Fontanabuona) who transported it toward Lombardy. Between July 25 and August 18 of the same year, 368 barrels of oil purchased in the *Ponente* by Rapallo merchants and Genoese citizens crossed the Fontanabuona on 152 mules. In 1636–37, 20 percent of the oil stored in Rapallo warehouses was imported. During these same years the wealthiest merchant of the town, Marc’Antonio Merello, commerced mainly in oil from Apulia, partly on behalf of the “Magnificent” Gio Maria Spinola.<sup>14</sup>

Still, in every case the commercial oil, whether produced locally or imported, passed through the hands of the town’s merchants; the Genoese fiscal imposition targeted, as we shall see, the “rich merchants.” In Rapallo the merchants acquired the bulk of what the small landowners from surrounding villages produced, thanks to mechanisms of credit and advance sales by which they lent consumables or cash in exchange for promises to deliver given quantities of oil from future harvests. Olive oil was the real wealth of the coastal area, and in relations between peasant producers and bourgeois merchants it often functioned as money. The rate of exchange

<sup>13</sup> During the same period Chiavari produced a maximum number of about 15,000 barrels. The town’s 1582 statutes specify that the work of the *censori* consisted of “measuring and weighing the merchandise arriving from Lombardy, and the oil that was exported there” (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1643).

<sup>14</sup> ASG, Antica Finanza, filze 668, 1046, 1053.

between oil and cash—along with the relation between auto-consumption, surplus oil, and the price of wheat and other grains—were probably the key elements defining the asymmetry between town and village. Notaries registered the amounts owed by oil producers, and the protagonists in these documents were the bourgeois merchants. Loans ended their terms either at Christmas or “*ad voluntatem*,” and the price paid for oil was determined “by the merchants of Rapallo.”<sup>15</sup> Debt could also affect an entire village. In 1573, for example, the household heads of the village of San Maurizio di Monti submitted a request to the *podestà* of Rapallo for a safe conduct to last six months: hail had destroyed the entire olive harvest in a year that had promised to be exceptional (Monti’s oil production had been estimated at 800 barrels) and the small producers had gone into debt in previous months with the merchants of Rapallo “based on the olive harvest.”<sup>16</sup>

With the same mechanism of credit and advance sales, the merchants who administered the farming of the in-kind tax payments deliverable in Genoa also regulated relations with individuals who owed oil taxes, and who made their payments “in wheat, rye, textiles, and other merchandise.” Alternatively, these tax payments could be added to other debts or obligations within a system of clientage.<sup>17</sup> As was the case in Chiavari, the *borghesi* of Rapallo also owned the best olive groves in nearby villages, along with the olive presses.<sup>18</sup> Their social role was thus based on an inextricable link between the control of production, ownership, taxation, and commercialization, and ties with the peasants in terms of credit and clientage.

<sup>15</sup> For some examples see ASCR, Atti notarili di Carlo Lencisa, filza 10; ANC, Notary Carlo Lencisa, filze 2132 and 2133; *ibid.*, Notary Gio Batta Borzese (1578–1603); ASG, Antica Finanza, filza 1053.

<sup>16</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 496.

<sup>17</sup> ASG, Antica Finanza, filza 1398. Genoa formally prohibited merchants from competing to be assigned tax farms, but it was recognized that only “wealthy merchants” had the resources that could guarantee that expected tax revenues would be forthcoming. The merchants who acquired such farms for sums in kind owed to the Genoese grain office were able to negotiate the times and forms in which these consignments would be delivered. They could purchase oil in the *Ponente* (an area that specialized in olive production, whose levels routinely exceeded local demand), delay consignments, and in the meantime warehouse all of the smaller amounts of locally produced oil while paying a “supplement” (which they then shifted to the taxpayers) for each barrel that they failed to deliver. Their authority extended to the point of being able to imprison villagers who owed them payments.

<sup>18</sup> ASCR, Caratata of 1647, reg. 12, 23, 29.

Beyond the coastal area, the commercialization of olive oil was a process that was quite clearly separate from its production and warehousing in the town, and linked the merchants to the population of the backcountry valleys. This integration can be seen as one examines the exchanges that occurred between different ecological zones.

### 3 BROKERS AND CONTRABAND

There was a swarm of activities that supplemented the fragile agrarian subsistence economy of the internal valleys: household silk weaving by commission of Genoese silk merchants, spinning and weaving Lombard linen, producing mixed homespun cloth for local and regional markets, and producing charcoal and wood implements. Key among these practices were the activities linked to the transit trade and the oil-grain exchange circuits.

We can be sure that almost all of the oil stored in the cellars and warehouses of the Rapallo merchants was set aside for export to the Po Valley, and in particular to Parma, Piacenza, and Lodi via the Fontanabuona Valley. Once they left the Aquilonare gate, the muleteers climbed the “Monti road,” descended again toward Coreglia, and then on the Fontanabuona Valley bottom picked up the two “mule roads” that crossed Orero and Favale, rising over the Apennine passes into the Aveto Valley and the Trebbia Valley.

Valley inhabitants provided logistical structures (taverns and shelters for mules and merchandise), transporters, and escorts. But these activities were coordinated by the valley *principali* in the villages located along the mule paths. These men seem to have transformed themselves, over the course of the seventeenth century, from mediators and commercial partners into direct protagonists, equal to the *borghesi*, in the olive oil trade. The numbers of them who were described as merchants (or “*publice et palam negocians*”) increased continuously (see Table 6.1).<sup>19</sup> The documentation seems to indicate that there was a close link between this phenomenon and the practice of contraband. From the 1620s on, both the commissioners of the Oil Magistracy and the judges saw a connection between the commercialization of oil and the contraband trade. In 1623 a commissioner claimed that the Fontanabuona Valley was one of the places in Liguria where contraband was most widespread, “due to the fact

<sup>19</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, filza 19; *ibid.*, Ripartizione tassa dell’olio, filza 1.



**Table 6.1** Rapallo and Fontanabuona merchants in the seventeenth century

	<i>Rapallo</i>	<i>Fontanabuona</i>
1618	54	7
1652	31	21
1659	51	24
1662	49	39
1664	58	49
1674	42	50

that they border Lombardy, giving easy access to Lombard muleteers.”<sup>20</sup> In 1665, officials from Rapallo declared that “all the oils from this jurisdiction are transported to that valley [the Fontanabuona] and sold,” noting also that the importation of oil “was negotiated by the men of the Fontanabuona.”<sup>21</sup> These are two isolated statements, but they are substantially confirmed by a great number of accusations and trials.

The contraband trade was based on the desire to avoid payment of excise taxes and tolls, and to circumvent periodic export prohibitions. Olive oil was in fact the territory’s only valuable resource, and the only one that Genoa subjected to a network of controls and direct taxation. The sixteenth-century statutes of the Oil Magistracy were updated during each decade of the following century, until the great freeze of 1709 destroyed olive production throughout Liguria for many years to follow. These statutes prohibited the export of olives and oil prior to declaring production amounts and consigning what was owed for tax purposes, usually at the beginning of May, but sometimes through the month of June. Following this declaration and payment, export licenses (for “*estrazione fuori Dominio*”) of limited duration (fifteen days, for example) were issued to individuals, subject to a tax per barrel of oil exported (thirty *soldi* in 1635). Contraband was incentivized by the bourgeois merchants and by Genoese citizens themselves who owned olive groves in Rapallo or speculated in Mediterranean commerce, but it reinforced the role of kinship groups and mediators who operated from their bases in the backcountry valleys. In an extremely competitive commercial context, contraband was one of the main sources of revenues for some of the inhabitants of the Fontanabuona.

<sup>20</sup> ASG, Antica Finanza, filza 1053.

<sup>21</sup> ASCR, Foliatium Communitatis Rapalli, filza 1.

We can acquire glimpses of these illegal activities through the criminal records in particular. Porter-smugglers and “bandits” recruited by brokers in the mountain valleys traveled along paths in the woods that paralleled the established muleteer routes. They traveled with weapons and could rely on a dense web of protectors and informers. Let’s look at a few examples. At Isolana, in the summer of 1572, the police chief of the tribunal of Rapallo caught three muleteers from the Arata kin group “without certification,” leading three mules loaded with seven containers of oil. The muleteers discharged their arquebuses as they resisted efforts to seize their load, and were supported by “many people who arrived with rocks in their hands.”<sup>22</sup> In May of the same year, Gio Pessia was stopped as he was leaving Rapallo with three *balle* of soap and eight *some* of oil loaded onto seven mules, with an escort of four young men. He declared that he was going to Pianezza and was transporting “foreign” oil on behalf of noble members of the Spinola and Della Torre families.<sup>23</sup> In 1575 Battino Arata, Marco Arata, and Batta Queirollo were convicted of trading oil without a license.<sup>24</sup> Also in that year, the captain of Chiavari proposed to create a new kind of license for transporting oil within his jurisdiction, “from place to place.” This was a response to the fact that merchants and muleteers would declare that they were taking oil to the Fontanabuona or the Sturla Valley, but from there would arrange for the illegal export of the oil.<sup>25</sup> In 1576 Ercolino and Paoletino della Cella were halted by the police chief in Fontanabuona with three mule loads of oil that they were transporting by commission and with the permission of the Doria marquis.<sup>26</sup> Smugglers from Chiavari also flowed into the Fontanabuona. In 1579, just a few miles from Chiavari in the village of Carasco, the police chief was put to flight by “nine or ten young armed men” escorting two muleteers, having been informed of the police chief’s arrival by a tavern-keeper.<sup>27</sup> In 1593 Batta Cademartori was stopped at Calvari in the Lavagna Valley, and attempted to bribe the police with five or six *ducatoni* to let him on his way. The same police official was confronted and threatened a few hours

<sup>22</sup> ASG, Notai Giudiziari, filza 596/2.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1412; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 503.

<sup>25</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 500.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., filza 499.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., filza 507. Innkeepers and tavern-keepers were the crucial brokers in these operations, and were at the center of many networks of social and economic relations. They were also often themselves protagonists in the contraband trade.

later by a squad of men carrying arquebuses and swords who were escorting nine mules loaded with oil.<sup>28</sup> Threats, corruption, and ties to the elites of Chiavari helped the Bacigalupo of Carasco organize the contraband trade on behalf of the “wholesale merchants.”<sup>29</sup> In 1608 the police chief of Chiavari managed to sequester five *some* of oil in the Fontanabuona, but only because the muleteers who had hidden their load in a stable had been “sold out” by some of their competitors.<sup>30</sup> In the same year the muleteers who were carrying Paolo Pessia’s oil tried to bribe the police chief with cash.<sup>31</sup> Beginning in the 1620s, the fiscal pressure from the Republic of Genoa increased notably, but the contraband trade merely expanded along with it. In 1624 the captain of Rapallo himself was among those accused of turning a blind eye to illegal exports in exchange for money and gifts.<sup>32</sup> On 6 June 1625, the police chief was in the hills above Rapallo where he stopped a group of muleteers and merchants, along with their armed escorts from the Fontanabuona. The arquebuses of these escorts enabled the muleteers to continue along their route toward Piacenza. A trial was set in motion a few weeks later, and those indicted included Aurelio Arata, who declared that he was a merchant of grain, rice, and wine, and a mule owner involved in trade with Bobbio and Piacenza in Lombardy; Gio Andrea and Rolandino Arata, merchants from Pianezza and Orero; Teramo Cagnone, from Rapallo, who claimed to be a merchant of rice, grain, cheese, and linen who owned three mules; and Ambrosio Cagnone and Venturino Canessa, also from Rapallo, who claimed to be porters.<sup>33</sup> A month later the same police chief was traveling along the creek that flowed into Rapallo when he stopped another porter who also claimed to be working for the same Teramo Cagnone and for Pellegro Arata.<sup>34</sup> On 22 August, still in 1624, three muleteers from Rapallo were transporting oil and soap to the Fontanabuona—where they claimed to intend to trade it for milled wheat—on behalf of three merchants of the *borgo*, Pantalino Merello, Giovanni Cagnone, and Simone Pessia, when they were likewise halted.<sup>35</sup> Aurelio Arata was again accused of smuggling in 1628; in his

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., filza 555.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1693.

<sup>31</sup> ASCR, Extraordinariorum, reg. 1.

<sup>32</sup> ASG, Sindicato di Riviera di Levante, filza 931.

<sup>33</sup> ASCR, Extraordinariorum, reg. 20.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

deposition he claimed to be a merchant of oil, grain, rice, linen, and cheese, and an owner of six mules.<sup>36</sup> In 1632 two other smugglers, Felino and Ambrosio Arata, declared that they drove mules for Gio Pessia, but were also merchants in their own right.<sup>37</sup>

The common and persistent factors in the cases that I have highlighted include the direction of the transit (toward the Po plain, through the Fontanabuona), the presence of armed escorts, the close collaboration between merchants from Rapallo and merchant-muleteers from the Fontanabuona, the presence of the same surnames (Arata, Pessia, Cagnone, etc.), and a partial overlap in the same persons of the oil/grain exchange circuit.<sup>38</sup> This last indicator requires us to complicate the model that has been described so far, and permits us to explain, at least partly, the selective partnership ties that brought together the merchants from the coastal town and the interior valleys in a social logic of exchange.

#### 4 GRAIN TRADE: MARKETPLACES, BROKERS, MILLERS, BAKERS, AND RETAILERS

In contrast to other Ligurian communities whose grain provisions arrived mainly by sea, Rapallo and Chiavari depended almost completely on transit with the Po Valley. But Lombard grain did not arrive directly into the two towns; its path toward the coast made stops in the backcountry valleys, at weekly markets and annual fairs.

In the hills and valleys behind the coastal towns there were a number of village marketplaces that filtered the grain provision of the coastal area. From west to east, these villages included Roccatagliata (in the high Fontanabuona Valley), Monleone and Pianezza (in the Fontanabuona), Borzonasca (Sturla Valley), Carasco (Lavagna Valley), and Varese (Vara Valley). The walled towns on the coast that received grain thereafter included Recco, Camogli, Santa Margherita, Rapallo, Chiavari, Lavagna, and Sestri Levante. The market villages were all located in the backcountry, near the passes or at the intersection of mule roads that tied the coastal

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, reg. 21.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, reg. 26.

<sup>38</sup> Merchandise transported in each direction offers a clear indicator of the commercial asymmetry between the Ligurian coast and the Po cities. The muleteers who left from Rapallo and Chiavari carried, almost exclusively, oil and soap, and sometimes citrus fruit. The muleteers from the Po Valley carried, on the other hand, along the same roads, grain, rice, linen, hemp, fabric, cheese, leather, aged meat, fuses, and gunpowder.

zone to the Po plain. Roccatagliata was the seat of a weekly market frequented by Lombard muleteers from Lodi, Voghera, and Varzi who reached out from the market at Torriglia (in the Imperial fiefs) into Genoese territory.<sup>39</sup> Monleone and Pianezza each hosted two weekly markets where, from the late 1500s until 1700, there were more than 200 Lombard mules loaded with wheat and other grains.<sup>40</sup> Muleteers from Bobbio and Santo Stefano d'Aveto made their way to Borzonasca and then continued toward Carasco, a village located four miles from Chiavari at the intersection of two mule roads.<sup>41</sup> Varese had a weekly market and an annual fair that lasted three days and attracted merchants and muleteers from Parma, Piacenza, Bardi, and Compiano.<sup>42</sup> All these villages were situated within an arc of about fifty kilometers from each other. Their importance as marketplaces is partly explained by their geographic position and the strong pull of the food demand exerted by the coastal towns. But attention to the specific forms assumed by transit practices and communications between the valleys reveals the active and fully deliberate role of local groups and entrepreneurs who employed a cohesive and stratified kinship system to control the territory, often through conflict and violence, and extract as many advantages as possible from the inflow of externally produced resources.

The Bacigalupo of Carasco constructed their fortune as oil merchants and wheat and flour brokers partly thanks to their possession of a mobile bridge across the creek that separated the Lavagna Valley from the town of Chiavari. In 1578 officials from the town accused them of forcing Lombard muleteers to stop in Carasco for several days, especially in winter and spring when the creek was high, "spending a lot of money for lodging, or selling their goods there for lower prices that were fixed by two or three rich people from that place."<sup>43</sup> Only after this intervention did some of the grain arrive at the market square of Chiavari. In 1604 the Council of Chiavari proposed the construction of a stable bridge at Carasco and the opening of a new "Lombardy road." This generated violent opposition from the Bacigalupo and from representatives of the villages around Carasco, leading to internal conflicts among the population of the Lavagna

<sup>39</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1412; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filze 505, 508, 530.

<sup>40</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 512; *ibid.*, Antica Finanza, filza 668; ASCR, Foliatium Communitatis Rapalli, filza 1.

<sup>41</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1448; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 512.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filze 534–35.

and Sturla valleys which controlled two alternate routes.<sup>44</sup> The conflict demonstrates that without the transit traffic and contraband, some villages might not have been able to exist in their current form.<sup>45</sup> This dynamic also serves as an analytical key for reading the rivalries and alliances among kin groups. Dominant kin networks had an extensive territorial structure or formed partnerships with groups toward the Po or toward the coast, along the commercial routes. For example, the Della Cella had strong ties with the Arata and were thus able to lead their mules from the Aveto as far as Rapallo. Without a doubt, their age-old enmity with the Bacigalupo was based on their desire for exclusive control of the other commercial route that linked Chiavari (where branches of both kin groups resided) to the Aveto Valley, via Carasco and the Sturla valley. Indeed, their feud often interrupted the transit flow and led to the renegotiation of relations both between kin groups in the backcountry and with Chiavari, whence criminal justice was exercised. In these cases, officials from the towns complained about “grain shortages,” recognizing their strong dependence on provisions from the Po and the urgency of “pacification.”

Backcountry communities thus took advantage of their control of communication routes. However, their active intervention in the flow of external resources was also based on a dense infrastructure of water mills, designed partly for milling chestnuts, but especially for the wheat that arrived from the Po Valley. The high valley of Recco counted thirty-seven mills; the Fontanabuona had forty-eight; the Lavagna Valley thirty-two; the Sturla Valley sixty-one; and the Graveglia Valley forty-five—all of which were active for almost the entire year.<sup>46</sup> In contrast, the coastal area had few mills, and these were inactive for the four to six months of the year when there was no water to drive them.

Along with the context provided by ecological and infrastructural conditions that facilitated cereal milling, the specific case of the Fontanabuona

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., filza 589. The various positions were supported with conflicting supplications submitted by townspeople, merchants, muleteers, porters, and administrative representatives from the villages.

<sup>45</sup> Some local historians have explained the disintegration of valley communities and the transoceanic emigration of the nineteenth century by pointing to the end of the commercial traffic linking the towns to the Po Valley; see Leveroni, *Cicagna* and Fontana, *Rezzoaglio e Val d'Aveto*.

<sup>46</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 514, “Nota de molini che sono nella Podesteria di Recco” and “Descrittione de molini che sono nel Vicariato di Chiavari” (year 1580); *ibid.*, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 768–69.

shows how labor opportunities provided by the exchange circuits—and in general terms, by relations with outside society—were closely tied to the existence of local entrepreneurs. Four kin groups (the Arata, Fopiano, Leverone, and Casazza) owned sixteen of the forty-eight mills in the valley, concentrated in the parish of Cicagna, near the village-markets of Monleone and Pianezza. These kin groups were divided by age-old conflicts. More important, though, as far as relations between the inhabitants of Cicagna and the outside world were concerned, was the fact that the kin groups monopolized not only the milling of Lombard grain, but also bread-making and retail bread sales across a very wide area, including in the main coastal towns of the *Levante*. “The men of the village, or chapel, of San Giovanbatta of Cicagna in the Fontanabuona valley make bread for sale and transport it to Sestri, Lavagna, Chiavari, Rapallo, Santa Margherita, Portofino, Camogli, and Recco, and each of these places overflows with their bread every morning.”<sup>47</sup>

There were 48,418 inhabitants of the area encompassing these towns (8,592 hearths—about 20 percent of the Ligurian population) at the beginning of the seventeenth century.<sup>48</sup> The main markets for the bread produced in Cicagna were Chiavari and Rapallo, and it is significant that these towns had a number of *fidelari* (pasta-makers) but very few bakers.<sup>49</sup> The 1607 Chiavari town statutes instituted a Grain Office and regulated the production and sale of “*buffetto*” bread (soft and of high quality), but left completely open the sale of “white bread produced in Cicagna.”<sup>50</sup> In 1622 Rapallo officials asked the Senate to create a Grain Office and a wheat magazine, lamenting and denouncing their food dependence on the Monleone market and the miller-bakers of Cicagna.<sup>51</sup> In subsequent years the same officials attempted in vain to redirect the flow of grain toward the walled town and to prevent access to the Monleone market by purchasers from other jurisdictions.<sup>52</sup>

This crucial function of provisioning both the two walled towns and the wider coastal area gave the miller-bakers of Cicagna—who along with the merchants were typically the wealthiest persons in the valley—extraordinary

<sup>47</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1828.

<sup>48</sup> ASG, Manoscritti e libri rari, mx. 218; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 600 (1607 census).

<sup>49</sup> ASCR, Actorum Communitatis et Universitatis Rapalli, filza 4; *ibid.*, Censaria, filza 1.

<sup>50</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1691.

<sup>51</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, filza 19.

<sup>52</sup> ASCR, Actorum Communitatis Rapalli, filze 1–3.

power. This power was rooted in the networks of kinship and clientage involved in the milling of grain and the production and distribution of bread. Despite sharp conflicts dividing them, they functioned in practice as a *clique* that was able to impose its own leadership over a large part of the Fontanabuona. When Genoa extended its excise tax on milling (two *soldi* per *mina*) in 1624, the millers were able to transfer its imposition to the entire valley community, having it assigned “to individuals and communities.” They did this, in the words of the household heads of the parishes in which there was no milling or bread production, “so that they would not have to bear the burden, but only enjoy the profits.”<sup>53</sup> The strategy of the miller-bakers was in fact supported by the retailers and bread sellers—men, young people, and women who left Cicagna every morning at dawn with baskets full of white bread, headed toward the coastal towns.<sup>54</sup>

Ties to Rapallo oil merchants and credit were probably crucial for the valley’s relations with outside areas, although such ties are difficult to document and reconstruct, the sources being quite reticent about them. However, within the valley the social context that supported the miller-bakers was the wide kinship group, as we have seen with respect to the protection of transit and contraband. Mills and bread ovens were used and managed as common property. Ovens were located in the “squares” in the middle of clusters of houses belonging to kin and neighbors. In many cases, mills belonged to “undivided” groups of household heads (or to fathers and sons, uncles and nephews) and their exploitation rotated on a yearly or even weekly basis (if water levels were low) from one member to the next.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>53</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1828. In a supplication submitted to the Senate, representatives of the parish chapels of Soglio, Canevale, and Coreglia claimed that the millers, “due to the size of their business and milling operation, are required to pay the said gabelle,” but that “they organized themselves, and on their own initiative without the involvement of eleven other chapels ... appointed an agent in the name of the whole valley who asked the district representative [*sei*] about it, and one of these millers then secretly requested that the gabelle be assigned to real estate, and not to milled grain, and Your Most Serene Lordships then ordered that a public proclamation be made, and they cleverly arranged that the herald who made the proclamation did so in the woods and bushes, so that no one heard it, such that their unfair scheme succeeded, with them milling and becoming rich while the poor who have just a bit of land have to pay taxes on it.”

<sup>54</sup> On Wednesdays and Saturdays, which were market days at Rapallo, the departure from Cicagna took place at the fourth or fifth hour of the night “to sell bread to the tavern-keepers” (ASCR, Extraordinarium, reg. 9). In 1618, the police chief of the court of Rapallo visited Cicagna and wrote that “just before daybreak the bread sellers had already left” (*ibid.*, reg. 8).

<sup>55</sup> This sociable exchange seems to have led in the direction of an equitable distribution of income, and was described in 1631 by a few observers in Cicagna as a normal practice in the valley (ANC, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1809).



The territorial organization of bread sales mirrored the residential patterns of the kin groups and the state of their interrelationships. The result was a division of sales districts, according to a logic in which the role of credit and town-village relations might also have played a role. It seems that each kin group had a relatively stable set of clients, but there was constant competition to defend one's established retail outlets and to acquire new markets. For example, in the late sixteenth century the Leverone, "who make bread for sale in Chiavari," feared attacks and reprisals from other kin groups (the Fopiano and the Barbazelata), with whom they were feuding. They thus employed large armed escorts between Cicagna and Carasco, and at a certain point when they were practically besieged in their houses, they even had children transport their bread.<sup>56</sup>

Bread was baked at night and selling it the next day was an activity carried out mainly by women,<sup>57</sup> even if female bread sellers were almost always accompanied by a male retailer who carried the heaviest loads, and by young armed men. Local entrepreneurs and rich millers gave this work to "poor relatives," to women, and to young unmarried men. The poorest and least fortunate members of the kin group were recruited by the *principali* for the most humble or riskiest tasks (working as escorts, for example). But the recruitment of retailers, transporters, and sometimes "bandits" also took place outside of kin networks. The squads of bread sellers that roamed the roads leading to the walled towns, as identified in the criminal records (the only sources that describe them in action), were often mixed. Being able to offer this labor opportunity was a key element in the creation of broader networks of alliance and clientage, constituting one of the sources of the social prestige and power enjoyed by the local *principali*.

<sup>56</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1427; also other examples in ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 1–10 and *ibid.*, Extraordinarium, reg. 1–31. Credit probably carried a similar weight: in 1618 a bread retailer, Giulio Garbarino, declared that his cousins had not carried bread to Rapallo for a long time "because they owed money there," and that, instead, they were selling at Santa Margherita, Portofino, and Camogli (ASCR, Extraordinarium, reg. 9).

<sup>57</sup> ASG, Antica Finanza, filza 822, testimony of female retailers. In the mid-seventeenth century some of these women declared that they had purchased bread on credit, on the basis of a down payment, in order to resell it in the town. One woman claimed having made fourteen to twenty *lire* per day, and another eight *lire* every other day. On the role of women in this kind of commercial distribution, see S.W. Mintz, "Men, Women, and Trade," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13 (1971): 247–69.



**Fig. 6.1** The circuits of exchange between the Ligurian coast and the Po Valley, and between the Fontanabuona and the coastal towns (ca. 1500–1700)

In this configuration of economic activity, the land and those who worked it shift to the background. The foreground is dominated by merchants, mediators, tavern-keepers, and millers. Supported by a particular form of local social organization, a relatively wealthy elite was able to establish itself in an ecologically poor environment, through brokerage activities with two different outside societies<sup>58</sup> (Fig. 6.1).

<sup>58</sup> See Chap. 3, Table 3.4, for the list of “principal producers” in 1626.

## 5 KIN GROUPS, FRIENDSHIP, AND COMMERCIAL EXCHANGE

Generally speaking, weekly markets and annual fairs were peaceful spaces and moments, and were open to everyone, from “foreigners” to the population of the villages and walled towns. The autumn fair of Varese Ligure was attended by merchants and muleteers from Parma, salesmen from Compiano, and grain dealers from Chiavari and Sestri Levante. Lombard merchants and muleteers sold wheat and other foodstuffs at the market of Torriglia, both to the inhabitants of the Imperial fiefs of the Trebbia Valley and to people from the villages of Recco and the high Fontanabuona Valley. The Monleone market was crowded with residents of the coast and the valleys, and saw the highest volume of transactions in the months following the harvest and pressing of olives. In fact, at this market there were direct exchanges of oil for grain, in which merchants, traveling salesmen, millers, bakers, and retailers participated.<sup>59</sup> There was very strong competition, however, to control the mule roads and monopolize transportation services. Moreover, there was a constant danger of “bandit” attacks and extortion along the transit routes.

Merchants from the walled towns “cheated the excise tax,” but “since they were men who needed to keep the roads open for their commercial activity, they did not bother or disadvantage anyone.”<sup>60</sup> The significance of this observation is that the merchants maintained ambiguous relations with the “bandits” or even colluded with them. In the absence of institutional guarantees, the merchants needed armed escorts, and when their commercial

<sup>59</sup> ASG, Antica Finanza, filza 668. Peace in the marketplace was also guaranteed when the market was situated at the center of a territory inhabited by feuding groups, as in the case of Monleone. Markets in towns were also open to everyone. Public authorities wanted to restrict “idiot” peasants who were accused of “doing stupid things” in taverns from having access to these markets, but the total freedom of movement of men and merchandise was defended by merchants, who dominated the councils of the two towns. In 1579 a request to open the town gates to all of the “villagers” was signed by 116 merchants, shopkeepers, and artisans of Chiavari (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1439). The language of the Chiavari merchants mirrored that of the statutes that established the market in Sarzana in the same year: “In order that each person might be able freely to enjoy the advantages of said market ... it shall be permitted to each person of any rank and condition to transport, carry, and export to and from said market any kind of grain, vegetable, wine, oil, small or large livestock, merchandise, and goods” (ibid.). Free access to the town markets was also guaranteed by the concession of safe conducts. The town merchants, butchers, and some retailers were even given the right to carry weapons, at least as far as the town gates.

<sup>60</sup> This was the observation of a Genoese commissioner at Recco in 1675 (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 182).

partners were not kin, maintaining the traffic flow depended on good relations with the population of the backcountry valleys, relations that were regulated by reciprocity and the exchange of gifts and favors. The case of the Pessia and the Cagnone of Rapallo offers a paradigm of this dynamic. In the late sixteenth century the two families established their commercial success through the oil and soap trade, exchanging these products for wheat in the Po cities, and through their collaborative and benevolent relations with the kin groups of the Fontanabuona (the Queirollo and the Arata) and of the Aveto Valley (the Della Cella). As we have seen, the Della Cella provided armed escorts against “bandits” on the Apennine passes or negotiated conditions with squad leaders so that the merchants could pass through unharmed. But the boundary between friendship, commercial savvy, and trickery was very ambiguous. In 1584 Giovanni Pessia left money and gifts (including a pair of green trousers) at the tavern of Belletto della Cella, for the “youths” of the Della Cella kin group and for the “bandits,” in exchange for a promise that his muleteers would not encounter any problems on the road to Piacenza.<sup>61</sup> But in the following years, Giovanni Pessia and Bernardo and Pietro Cagnone complained that “despite these gifts” their muleteers were extorted; they accused the Della Cella of playing a double game. A bandit who was captured by the police of Rapallo and interrogated by a Genoese commissioner confirmed their suspicions: the oil robbed from the muleteers who were working for the three Rapallo merchants had been re-sold, with the complicity of the Della Cella, to Rolandino Arata.<sup>62</sup> An entire network of relations was thus fractured by betrayal. In following decades these relations continued to deteriorate, and by the mid-seventeenth century the Pessia declared that they had been forced to halt their commercial traffic with Piacenza and Parma due to their enmity with the Della Cella.<sup>63</sup>

The enmities and feuds that defined the human and territorial boundaries of kin groups in the backcountry also oriented relations with the merchants of the coastal towns. Friendship and enmity defined the success or exclusion of merchants, determining transit routes and the direction of commercial flows. Surviving evidence attests unanimously to the fact that bandits, prior to robbing muleteers, asked “What is your kin group?” or “For whom are you working?” Economic and commercial transactions were in the first instance social relations.<sup>64</sup> The conflictual use of resources

<sup>61</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1226.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., also ibid., Senato-Litterarum, filze 526, 542.

<sup>63</sup> ASG, Antica Finanza, filza 668.

<sup>64</sup> My interpretation is inspired by *Trade and Market in the Early Empires*, ed. K. Polanyi (New York, 1957) (Italian trans. *Traffici e mercati negli antichi imperi* [Turin, 1978]) and by

and communication routes was one aspect of the complex relations between the kin groups of the backcountry. Merchants had to take this into account if they wanted to have “an open road.”

This situation also defined more general relations between the villages and the walled towns. As a group the communities of the backcountry excused themselves from direct fiscal extractions over the course of the seventeenth century and maintained a powerful contractual influence with the politico-administrative elites of the towns, the seats of local government. The constant threat that they held over the heads of the town dwellers was to close off the commercial transit routes. This is what happened, for example, in 1579 after the Genoese commissioner Pietro Maria de Ferrari set up his headquarters in the Fontanabuona with two hundred Corsican soldiers.

The men of Fontanabuona, moved by some particular plan of theirs and spurred on by neighboring powers, decided to remove commercial relations from this place [Rapallo] completely, and posted large numbers of men on the mountain of this *Podestaria*, to prevent any wheat, chestnuts, or other things from arriving here.

Significantly, the assignment of negotiating with the “men of Fontanabuona” in the name of the Rapallo Council was given to *messire* Teramo Cagnone, merchant.<sup>65</sup>

Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*. In the backcountry of the Ligurian towns, and generally in the Apennines, the territorial segmentation of kin groups and the networks of alliances along the transit routes were the key power structures that controlled the flow of resources. An example of alliances whose significance were both economic and political and extended across different ecological zones is offered by A.R. Vinogradov, *The Ait Nahir of Morocco. A Study of the Social Transformation of a Berber Tribe* (Ann Arbor, 1974).

<sup>65</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 512. The central role of transit and the forms of resource control that I have described for a specific area were probably characteristics that were shared across the entire politically fragmented Apennine zone, extended from Piedmont to Lucca. See, for example, A. Torre, “Elites locali e potere centrale tra Sei e Settecento: problemi di metodo e ipotesi di lavoro sui feudi imperiali delle Langhe,” *Bollettino della Società per gli Studi Storici, Archeologici ed Artistici della Provincia di Cuneo* 89 (1983): 41–63; S. Lombardini, “‘Quand ... ‘il Mônduî u sia senza bandî, ‘l mônd u i a da finî.’ Appunti per un’ecologia politica nell’area monregalese nell’età moderna,” in *Valli monregalesi: arte, società, devozioni*, eds. G. Galante Garrone, S. Lombardini and A. Torre (Vicoforte, 1985), 189–212; Tocci, *Le terre traverse*; M. Berengo, *Nobili e mercanti nella Lucca del Cinquecento* (Turin, 1965).



## The Construction of Social Reality

Thus far, my discussion of these developments and their historical context has sought to employ interpretive categories derived from the local culture, from historical accounts, from practices described or discussed in the sources, and from the judicial record. The category “kin group” (*parentella*) was expressed by witnesses with the phrases *parentella*, *parentado*, *casata*, and sometimes *famiglia dei*..., and it is the one that emerges most prominently from the documentation. It seems to unify and tie together the various social phenomena that I have been able to observe. In Chap. 2, the kin group was described as the most important point of reference in interactions between Republican authorities and the communities with respect to the administration of justice and peacemaking efforts. In Chap. 3 I reconstructed, for the more circumscribed context of the Fontanabuona, the role of kin groups as collective actors in the politico-administrative structure of the local community. Here I explained how the collective (“*in solidum*”) fiscal responsibility of the locality served to define kin groups’ contours, their hierarchical cohesion, and even the forms of territorial segmentation that they assumed. In Chap. 4 the notion of the extensive kin group was used to measure the distribution of land and resources and to reconstruct the logic of residential organization in villages and scattered hamlets. Next, the world of kinship was analyzed as the central factor for family branches and nuclear families as they planned for inheritance and the transmission of their status to future generations, through dowry practices and marriage exchanges—both for individuals seeking to make

public or professional careers, and for those seeking help and assistance. Finally, Chap. 6 showed how legal and illegal access to external resources was regulated by kinship ties and the links between the structure of long-distance commercial exchange and the territorial and entrepreneurial organization of a certain number of corporate groups. The character of kinship was thus pervasive, infiltrating almost every field of social life. In sum, it can be said that kinship was the context and language through which social and economic relations were expressed.

Without a doubt, for all community inhabitants and for the Genoese commissioners, the kin group was the classificatory principle for an ensemble of relations and links that derived from agnatic ties. We have encountered the assimilation between kin group and surname both in the expressions of local social actors and in formal juridical language that placed blood kin and relatives who shared a surname on the same level, defining for each individual a circle of “kin” (often vast) who were responsible for each other. This was thus the general significance that protagonists gave to the category “kin group.” They thought about their reciprocal relations, distinguished between persons, and ordered their social relations and daily practices in terms of this category.

The criterion of the shared surname—which aggregated and established behavioral norms for a group of people whose relations were arbitrary from the perspective of blood ties—was certainly the most peculiar aspect of the cultural and social organization of the local communities.<sup>1</sup> It was also an aspect that shed light on the analogy between kin groups and the *alberghi*—the key form of sociopolitical and topographical organization in Genoa during the early modern period. This analogy suggests that there was an historical connection that remains to be reconstructed. But perhaps the most interesting point is that research on the empirical data revealing the social and cultural character of kinship formations demolishes the ethnocentric assumption<sup>2</sup> that kin ties were exclusively biological and that the main function of the kin group was to reproduce itself.

<sup>1</sup> However, as I have noted, this was not the case everywhere in Liguria. The historical records do not shed light on the Republic’s entire territory, but if we take the peace agreements as indicators, the idiom of the ‘kin group’ appears to have been dominant in the valleys just behind Genoa and in almost all of the communities in the *Levante*, both in mountainous and coastal zones. For the *Ponente* I have found some evidence from the areas near Triora, Taggia, and Pieve di Teco. But research that examines the notarial and criminal records simultaneously, confronting them with cadastral sources and demographic data in order to illustrate local practices and social language, remains to be carried out.

<sup>2</sup> On this issue, see the studies on kin groups as symbolic systems, especially those of David M. Schneider who wrote an excellent synthesis: *A Critique of the Study of Kinship* (Ann

The Ligurian sources show that *parentella* emerged as a social construction and as a *habitus* that was capable of producing and structuring practices and representations,<sup>3</sup> and of orienting individual and collective behavior. The different meanings of kinship as a set of references and identities were manifested succinctly in the disputes and conflicts recorded by judicial tribunals. I will now try to illustrate these observations through two examples.

1. Between late August and late December 1577, the captain of Chiavari, Domenico Centurione, collected a number of depositions surrounding the last phases of a feud between the inhabitants of the villages in the parish of San Vincenzo di Favale and those of Santa Maria di Lorsica.<sup>4</sup> On 25 August, Martino Barbazelata declared that Battista Barbazelata, a seventy-year-old man, had been murdered. He had been shot twice by an arquebus on the eve of the feast of St Bartholomew while he had been cutting hay for his animals in a meadow owned by his neighbor from the village of Monteghirfo, Pasqualino Barbazelata. He later died from his wounds. Martino accused fourteen young men “of the De Martini kin group” of this crime. They had been armed with arquebuses and daggers, but he could not identify them by name because they wore masks and fake beards, as all of the other witnesses confirmed (some of these witnesses were “secret”—their names having been left out of the criminal registers). Vincenzo Cordano, one of Battista’s neighbors, had run to help him but was assaulted himself and only escaped with a severe wound to his right shoulder. The De Martino youths came from Lorsica and had been widely seen passing through the villages of Verzi and Ballano. This was an unusual route to take, and the longest possible way of reaching Favale from Lorsica. “They traveled in a great hurry,” and as they were nearing the villages of Favale the Barbazelata and Cordano women ran to warn their husbands in the fields, so that they could escape. No one recognized them, but in the villages of Favale “everyone said publicly that [the intruders] had been the De Martini.” When asked “what was the reason for which the said [De Martini] killed the said Battista,” a Barbazelata woman replied simply, “there was a dispute between them

Arbor, 1985). On the need to build a model in which the “natives” conceptualize and employ the category of kinship (and as the basis for comparing different ethnographic data), see R. Needham, *Remarks and Invention: Skeptical Essays about Kinship* (London, 1974).

<sup>3</sup> See P. Bourdieu, *Esquisse d’une théorie de la pratique* (Geneva, 1972). The concept of *habitus* (defined by Bourdieu as a system of dispositions) can express several things: the matrix of perception and actions, the result of an organizing action, and a way of being.

<sup>4</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1434, copy of the records of the trial held at the court of Chiavari.



about certain killings that had taken place.” After having killed Battista, the De Martino proceeded toward the village of Trino and along the way ran into the priest Battista Barbazelata, who had perhaps already been notified about the attack and was on his way to perform last rites for his “relative.” “They told him,” declared a woman from the Cordano kin group who had observed this interaction while pasturing some cows on the common lands belonging to her *parentela*, “that they had killed his said relative and that he could go see him and blow into his ass [*boffare nel culo*].” The De Martino then advanced toward the house of another Barbazelata. “They all marched to my house,” said Pasquale, “and told me ‘Good friend, let us tell you something...,’ and I was afraid of what they wanted to do to me so I got ready to run, and then one of them shot an arquebus at me, and by the grace of God they missed me.”

At dawn one day in late December, another squad of young people made three arquebus shots at twenty-year-old Benedetto Barbazelata, from the village of Acereto. The barber-surgeon wrote up a report as Benedetto languished for five days before dying on the wooden ladder to which his relatives had attached him to transport his body. The police chief of the court of Chiavari ritually examined the corpse and authorized its burial in the church of San Vincenzo. The next day, “at around the time of the Hail Mary,” a new gang of young men carrying arquebuses blocked the funeral procession of the Barbazelata and the Cordano, which was being led by Benedetto’s brother Giacomo. Giacomo later declared that

these men began to provoke said (deceased) brother of mine with dishonest words, calling to him “Oh Bendetto, if you were not raised up [*sollato*] by your wife you won’t rise up ever again!” And they also insulted his wife, calling her “whoring pig, fucking cuckold [*porcha bagascia, becha fotuta*]” and shooting their arquebuses ... so that on that day we were not able to carry the dead person to the church.

The aggressors were not recognized, but the Barbazelata and the Cordano had no doubts, and other witnesses from the villages of Acereto and Priagna all declared to the captain of Chiavari that “throughout the village everyone says publicly that they were the De Martini.”<sup>5</sup>

The most interesting aspect of this account is the way in which the direct protagonists and their neighbors represented social relations. The conflict involved all of the relatives sharing a surname—all of the De Martino on

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

one side and all of the Barbazelata and the Cordano on the other. The backstory of the events described above helps us to understand the process by which this social reality was constructed. The enmity between the De Martino and the Barbazelata was ancient, but the feud had exploded, theatrically, two years earlier. A group of De Martino had murdered Alessandro Barbazelata in front of the door of the church of San Vincenzo di Favale “just before the Most Holy Sacrament was to be elevated.” The men who had been at Mass, mostly Barbazelata and Cordano kin, had chased after the De Martino and in the scuffle that followed a Cordano was also seriously injured. The Barbazelata and the De Martino then reached a peace agreement, which was concluded before the notary Gio Angelo della Cella in 1576, through the mediation of four arbiters from outside kin groups. The peace had been ratified by fifteen De Martino household heads, “in the names and on behalf of each and every person of the De Martino kin group.” The Barbazelata household heads approved the agreement as well, also in the name of their minor sons, at a meeting held within the territory of the village of Monteghirfo, on the property of the deceased Alessandro Barbazelata.<sup>6</sup> The peace had apparently resolved the conflict and the trial scheduled at Chiavari was dismissed. However, as the facts of August–December 1577 indicate, what this entire development accomplished, more than anything else—including in the eyes of the other village residents—was to draw boundaries between the worlds of different kin groups.

2. In the evening of 9 September 1612 Agostino Boitano was killed by an arquebus shot fired by unknown assailants in the village of San Maurizio di Monti, which was located along the mule-road leading from Rapallo into the Fontanabuona Valley. Boitano, a bread retailer, had been returning to Favale with others from Rapallo. He had just given eyewitness testimony to the captain concerning a fight which had broken out at the feast of the “Madonna of August” in the parish of Moconesi. As he was mortally struck, Agostino stood in front of the property of Giovanni Castagneto. As he lay dying, Cesare Boitano, who knew the Castagneto, cried out in vain for Giovanni’s mother Giulia to “bring for the love of God a bit of sugar.” Agostino died soon thereafter, and his companions and relatives gathered up the body and decided to spend the night in the village of Monti. All of the inhabitants of the village (which numbered ninety hearths and 409 persons in 1607), except for Giovanni, came to see Agostino and began formulating hypotheses and making accusations. The

<sup>6</sup>ANC, Notary Gio Angelo della Cella, filza 3426, no. 572.

place and the factual dynamics quickly focused suspicions and accusations against Giovanni Castagneto. Two Corsican soldiers stationed at San Maurizio declared having seen Giovanni act in a threatening way, on several occasions, with his arquebus in hand. A few days later, Angeletta admitted to the court of Rapallo that her husband Giovanni might have fired because he thought that someone was stealing his grapes. But Giovanni refused to appear in court and doubts remained. The uncertainty was reflected by the fact that the inhabitants of Monti began to divide themselves, as the trial continued, into two clearly opposing alignments. One side accused Giovanni, but the other offered testimony that questioned the truthfulness of his “enemy” accusers.<sup>7</sup>

Until this point the unfolding of the episode followed a fairly common path: the witnesses were the spokespersons for the solidarities and the hostilities within the village, or they hid themselves behind “what was publicly said,” while the causes and the possible true motivations behind the action attributed to Giovanni remained unknown. What added particular ethnographic significance to this seemingly usual case was the unanimous testimony that the Boitano offered before the captain of Rapallo. In the name of all of the Boitano, Francesco and Sansonino formally declared that they had nothing against Giovanni Castagneto, observing that “if he did it, he did it as a crazy person.” They added forcefully and in a way intended to be the last word on the topic that “we are not on our guard against anyone except for the Foppiani.”<sup>8</sup> “To be on one’s guard against [*guardarsi*]” and “to be suspicious of [*stare in sospetto*]” were the expressions commonly used to describe the collective attitude of a kin group involved in a feud. The referential context for this social discourse was in fact the enmity that had existed between these two Fontanabuona kin groups for several decades.<sup>9</sup> In the San Maurizio di Monti episode the concern of the Boitano was probably to avoid the creation of new enmities, especially in a strategically located village along the road that they

<sup>7</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1720 and ASCR, Extraordinarium, reg. 7. All inhabitants of the parishes and villages, and not only those who gave testimony in judicial tribunals, knew the origin, the kin group, and maybe even the genealogies of the persons whom they encountered almost every day. They knew where to place them in the webs of relations and in alignments based on friendship or enmity “from times immemorial.” The rhetorical image that resulted helped create an image of unchangeable stability in the social structure, in which the destinies of particular individuals lost their importance.

used every day on their way to sell bread in Rapallo. The testimony of Angeletta was also plausible: it was in fact customary for men to arm themselves and stand watch over their grapevines in the weeks just before the harvest. But the collective declaration of the Boitano operated within the critical context of the judicial system to shift the focus deliberately to a different set of relevant relationships. In so doing they offered an image of a social world whose plot centered on relations between kin groups.

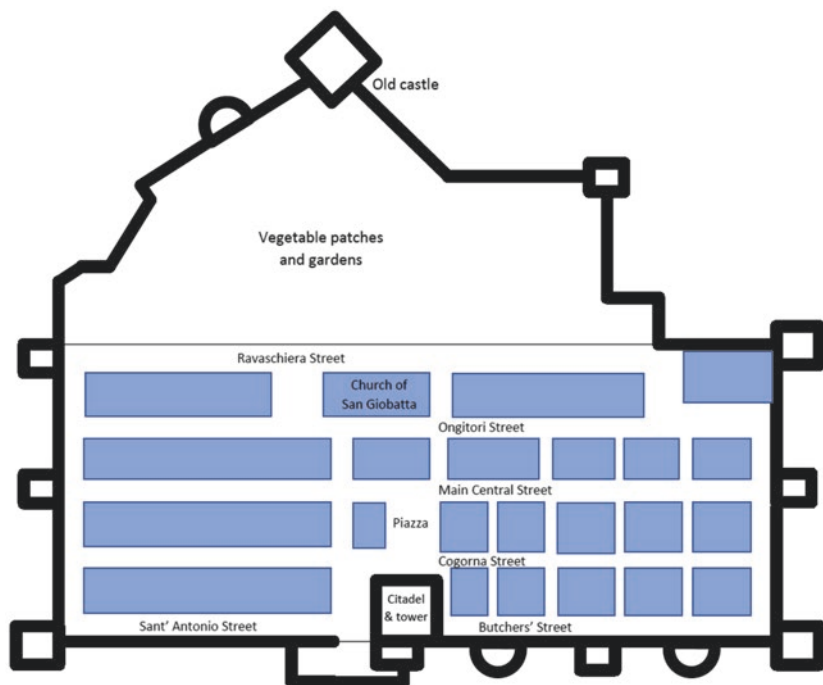
In these two examples, the language of kinship provides the principles on which social reality was constructed and represented, and also offers a guide to everyday practices. Kinship discourse also serves as a key for understanding political action: the most voluminous documentary records are precisely those that highlight the political significance of the extensive kin group in various ways—through the ceremonial arrangements surrounding peace agreements, or as a backdrop and support of authority and power, or in the formation of factional alignments. In the chapters that follow I will reconstruct the framework of political competition at the community level, attempting to show how politics were locally generated, around kin group alliances and through the creation of factions that instrumentalized ‘high politics’ in order to legitimize themselves.



## Events and Political Narratives

If the walled town of Rapallo served as a reference point for the Fontanabuona in administrative, fiscal, and commercial (both small-scale and large-scale) terms, then the valley's political pole of attraction during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was Chiavari—the main stage for the theatre of power and the display of public authority. Chiavari's citadel was the residence of the captain, a Genoese noble, and of the vicar (*vicario*), whose exercise of capital jurisdiction extended over the Fontanabuona (the valley's chapels were required to pay 250 *lire* each year for the salary of the *bargello* [police chief] and his assistants). This walled town, whose doors were locked after sundown, was like a provincial capital. Its 1588 street plan (see Fig. 8.1) clearly shows its separation from the surrounding countryside (*contado*), where people resided in villages, hamlets, and scattered clusters of houses. But Chiavari was also the focal point and gathering place (at least partly) of a vast area situated between the sea and the Apennine fiefs, a fragmented and heterogeneous field of action for kin groups that presented themselves as informal political forces. These kin groups acted within networks of alliance and opposition that were both local and supra-local, producing both integration and disintegration.

The conflicts that lacerated the Republic's political life during the sixteenth century reveal the profile of factional alignments. These were not only conjunctural, but embodied a web of clientage ties, bonds of kinship, and contractual arrangements linking the walled town, the hill villages,



**Fig. 8.1** The *borgo* of Chiavari in the late seventeenth century (based on a contemporary ink drawing). Source: ASG, *Senato-Litterarum*, filza 539 (dated 1588)

and the backcountry valleys, while cutting across institutional and administrative asymmetries. Both the criminal records and the political narrative allow us to see these local alignments in action, through conflict and solidarity, and to identify some of the basic elements of their relational structure and their forms of expression. The political dimension and its historical narrative document the way in which local society was connected to wider society, as we have seen in the commercial realm.

The pages that follow examine these matters as a way of reconstructing the overall framework of local powers, their territorial articulation, and the forms and language of political competition. Our goal is to shed light on the factors that shaped the political and cultural horizon of the Fontanabuona, which will then resume its place at the center of our investigation.

## 1 LOCAL CONFLICTS AND HIGH POLITICS

A trial from 1552 demonstrates with great clarity how the walled town of Chiavari and the territory just outside its walls was organized into factions.<sup>1</sup> The dispute seems to have begun with an anonymous accusation by someone who turned out to be the noble Ambrogio Rivarola. He wrote a letter that made its way to the captain; in it he argued that the town's population was organized into political cliques, or conventicles (*conventicole*) and divided into "leagues" (*lighe*). The claim about the secret cells was made at the height of an intense power struggle among the noble houses of Chiavari, but its political significance was also tied to its questioning of whether full Republican sovereignty was being effectively exercised. The identity of the letter's author was soon discovered.

Under subsequent questioning, Ambrogio Rivarola admitted to having written the letter "to save my life and for the peace of the country [*paese*]." Eleven years before, his house had been surrounded and sacked by a company of bandits admitted into Chiavari by "various persons who belong to these leagues."<sup>2</sup> These same *lighe*, added Ambrogio, had been prohibited by Genoa in 1549,<sup>3</sup> but had never been eliminated and, indeed, were "as alive as ever." He now feared that he would be attacked again.

The captain (Andrea Spinola) was offended by the fact that a local noble had "interfered" in his duties. On the basis of Ambrogio's testimony and other collected information, the captain launched a formal case of *lèse majesté* in the town's citadel "against people from Chiavari, for having received bandits in their houses, and for flags found in these houses displaying the insignia of the king of France." It was this last accusation that led to the *crimen lesae maiestatis* charge, and that injected into the local arena the symbols of high politics.

Behind Ambrogio's denunciation stood the ongoing rivalry between the two most important noble houses of the walled town—the Rivarola and the Ravaschiero—and the ties between the latter and the Fieschi

<sup>1</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, busta 2965.

<sup>2</sup> This probably had to do with the banishment of Crovo, an episode tied to the noble Ravaschiero family; see G. Pessagno, "Le bande di Val di Sturla," *Gazzetta di Genova* (1915–17).

<sup>3</sup> The law regarding the "*conventicules*," which had been included in the Doria reforms of 1528 was later renewed in 1530 and 1541, and probably promulgated at Chiavari in 1549; see *Criminalium Iurium*, "De conventiculis, et coniurationibus non ineundis"; also Grendi, "Le conventicole," 105–06.

counts, whose fiefs had been confiscated following their anti-Doria, pro-French conspiracy of 1547. The houses of the Ravaschiero filled an entire street below the castle and behind the church of San Giovanni (see Fig. 8.1). Under the porticos and loggias of “Ravaschiera Street” members of the kin group allegedly organized the “*Fregosa*” faction and fomented revolt against the sovereignty of the Prince (that is, the Republic). But these provincial nobles, who were riotous and wealthy (members of each of the main noble families were engaged in Genoese financial affairs elsewhere in Italy), were not the only protagonists of the conspiracy or of the intense local conflicts.

The information provided to the captain and collected during the trial paints a clear picture of how Chiavari’s kin groups were all aligned into two factions. These factions were linked to the backcountry villages and valleys and took up identifiable organizational forms and ceremonial practices. The *Fregosa* faction was pro-French and the *Adorna* faction was pro-Spanish, and kin groups formed the basis of each, according to shared surnames. Each kin group had a boss, or colonel, and different kin groups joined together in leagues (*lighe*). There were at least seven of these inside and outside the walled town, each also led by an elected chief, and they configured themselves into the two factions. The vertical organization of the factions was described by the captain, who had been indirectly accused by Ambrogio Rivarola of having failed to enforce the 1549 decree against secret cells. Pressured by the Genoese Senate, he drew up a memorandum indicating that

in the Vicariate of Chiavari there is an alliance system [*conligatione*] of six or seven leagues, which are formed of many, many kin groups, and each one of them has its heads, many of whom are residents of this city [Genoa] and Chiavari, who receive obedience. I think that these leagues can call together more than two thousand men who can wear armor. Each league belongs to one or another faction. These leagues always aided each other, whether rightly or wrongly, and for every hundred instances of public disorder, members of these leagues were responsible for ninety-eight of them. Amongst themselves they have *instrumenti* [written agreements] to help each other, and to be able to spend as much as it pleases their chief to spend.<sup>4</sup>

The clearest indicators of a relatively stable and sophisticated system of factions are the references to the role of bosses who directly managed shared cash resources and, especially, to the *instrumenti* and ties with

<sup>4</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, busta 2965.



Genoa. This system crossed over into the local political arena. The *lighe* were also the equivalent of secret cells, precisely the target of the Republic's law against associations, noble or otherwise, based on "pacts" and self-government: "conventicles, or conspiracies, or federations that are commonly called leagues."<sup>5</sup>

An outline attached to the captain's memorandum lists ninety-one kin groups organized into nine leagues and two factions. Faction *A* was formed by seventy-one kin groups united in five leagues, and faction *B* was formed by twenty kin groups and four leagues. But the factions, added the captain, acted "with widespread communication involving various other kin groups" as well. This pyramidal organizational structure covered and divided the whole urban fabric of the Chiavari, extending from there to the nearby town (*borgo*) of Lavagna and to the villages just behind the castle: Ri, Rivarola, San Pietro di Canne, Caperana, Sanguineto, and more inland to Cogorno and Carasco, even as far as the edge of the Fontanabuona and the Sturla Valley. At least one of the factions had numerous adherents in the backcountry valleys. The bandits who had sacked the house of Ambrogio Rivarola had been recruited in the Graveglia, Sturla, and Lavagna valleys, and in the Fontanabuona, seemingly brokered by the Bacigalupo. The latter were simultaneously league bosses in Chiavari and the dominant kin group in the village of Carasco, a kind of pivot point for all of the internal valleys of the vicariate.

As often happens, the trial provided more details about one than the other faction. The power imbalance was very clear, and Ambrogio Rivarola sought justice from the captain, seeking to make him both a party in the case and an ally. He was not an anonymous witness, but he was still reticent. His immediate goal was to relieve the pressure exerted by his adversaries and prompt the local institutions and authority to attend to the matter. Then, under questioning, he only named his enemies from the "countryside"—for everything else took refuge behind hearsay. He perhaps feared being drawn into Genoa's investigation of the factional problem, all the more so since the inquiry had become a trial for *lèse majesté* and rebellion. Still, his testimony included a sketch of the ceremonial practices and alliance rituals of the leagues. Ambrogio stated that even

<sup>5</sup>This law dated from 1530 and was incorporated into the criminal statutes; see *Criminalium Iurium*. Note also the summarized definition of *conventicula* offered by Andrea Spinola: "This word *conventicola* is understood in a negative sense, that is, as a gathering of men under the pretext of leisure or perhaps some religious purpose, but really for the sake of seditious ends, to effect a change in the State" (*Ricordi*, entry for "Conventicole").

after the decree of 1549 “the same people who had been in the leagues met together and bonded over food and drink.” The meetings and meals in the homes of the heads of the *borgo*’s leading families offer analogies, at least morphologically, with the sociability of the *alberghi* and associations of the Genoese nobles from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries.<sup>6</sup> These analogies were also apparent in the forms of “*colleganza*” (fellowship) between kin groups. In cultural and political terms, forms of sociability such as insignia and “colors” were crucial elements of factional identity. Through insignia and high political references, or mythico-symbolic ones to the Adorno and Fregoso families (borrowed from the history of factional struggle in Genoa), each group stressed its own internal cohesion and its differentiation from outsiders, all the while gathering supporters. Such references to exogenous events, together with discourses borrowed from high politics, constituted a particular style of socialization and group cohesion among faction members. These representations were the glue that held together alignments otherwise marked by private, family tensions and by competition for political positions.

It was thus from this context that the trial for *lèse majesté* was launched in the “great room” of the citadel of Chiavari in August 1552. The trial was doubtlessly influenced by elite politics and Genoa’s position on the chessboard of European diplomacy. As some of the witnesses declared, the French flags had been carried to Chiavari seven years earlier—these were the years that separated the conspiracy of Gian Luigi Fieschi from the letter of Ambrogio Rivarola. Just a few months before the Chiavari trial began, another one had been held in Genoa: a *lèse majesté* trial against Scipione Fieschi (Gian Luigi’s brother), who had been involved in a new conspiracy by his brother-in-law Giulio Cibo and had taken refuge at the court of King Henry II of France.<sup>7</sup> What immediately catches one’s attention in these matters is the conscious political manipulation exercised by Rivarola, who chose the most advantageous moment for sending his letter and pushed all of the right buttons to provoke an institutional intervention at the highest level. Without ignoring the factors from the wider world that broke into the local situation, I will try to explain the sociopolitical mechanisms by which the factions were mobilized.

<sup>6</sup>See Grendi, “Profilo storico degli Alberghi genovesi.” The Chiavari statutes of 1582 included prohibitions directed toward young people and “*garzonetti*” against attending such meetings; see ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1643, Capitoli della comunità di Chiavari, chap. 28, “Delle loggie, logieri et giuocatori.”

<sup>7</sup>Trial records in ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, busta 2964.

Everyone involved in the trial declared, in suspiciously unanimous fashion, that the French flags (some witnesses identified three, others five) had been recovered from French galleys that had wrecked on the coast. They were then taken to Chiavari and Lavagna by soldiers serving on the Republic's galleys or by smaller coastal boats and were sold to residents of the two towns for about forty *soldi* each. This was the story told by the first witness, Dario Borelli, on 24 August. Dario was a "soldier of the Most Illustrious Seigniory [the Republic of Genoa]" and he admitted owning a French flag, which he claimed to have received from the "*patrone* Fabiano" of Chiavari. Fabiano had supposedly found it together with others in a bag on the beach of Viareggio "where the galleys had wrecked." But Dario did not attribute any particular significance to the French flag, and used it only for militia musters when, he claimed, "there were none others available." In fact, he had raised it at the last muster because "the *borgo* of Chiavari did not have a flag, but those of the *capo di borgo* had one." Competition between neighborhoods was an element that contributed to defining factional configuration.

In response to the other questions and challenges made by the captain, who wanted to know "the truth of these cells and leagues," Dario "persisted in his denials." He did admit, however, that three flags were in the hands of Agostino Bachio of Lavagna, Geronimo Ravaschiero, and another person from Chiavari whose name he forgot. Of the three, the most important figure was undoubtedly Ravaschiero, who was immediately subjected to a long interrogation (while his brother Agostino, who was also being sought for questioning, had fled toward Rome and Naples).<sup>8</sup> As this testimony was being gathered, an anonymous letter arrived, signed by the "*volgo*" (the people), accusing Ravaschiero of being the head of the *Fregoso* faction and of owning a crossbow. Like Dario Borelli, Ravaschiero boasted of his military service to the Republic, declaring that "I would serve no other, no matter how much money were offered to me." Ambrogio Rivarola had also accused him of owning a crossbow, "fearing that he could easily use it to harm someone, including me ... due to past disagreements between us." The captain asked Ravaschiero "if in his house or elsewhere he had offensive or defensive weapons," and "where he kept said standard or banner." Geronimo acknowledged that he had three arquebuses, two spears, a sword, a dagger, and a drum, but justified his possession of these items by pointing out that they were "all weapons and

<sup>8</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 435, no. 60.

things pertaining to soldiering.” He admitted that for eight or nine years he had had a French flag in his house, which he kept as a trophy from when “His Excellency the Lord Prince [Doria] captured those four French galleys from Magdalon [d’Ornesan, corsair, brother of Bertrand d’Ornesan, admiral of Francis I’s Mediterranean fleet] at Nice.” He was not, however, able to name witnesses, except for a boat owner from Portovenere who could not be found. During a delay in proceedings, the captain (Spinola) wrote to the Senate that Geronimo “cannot avoid suspicion since he is related by marriage to certain members of the Fregoso family who serve the king [of France].”

As the questioning of Geronimo continued, Borelli was examined for the second time and the captain had Agostino Bachioco and Antonio Maxena of Lavagna arrested. In their houses were found three more flags “without staffs.” At this point the line of questioning became increasingly specific and calculated. The first question asked of everyone was whether they had participated, during the previous year, in any meetings, around the castle, on the sea, or in other parts of the town, of people “who spoke about the prosperity of the king of France and the bad luck of the emperor.” The captain also wanted to know if others in the *borgo* had French flags, if the accused had participated in meetings at people’s houses, which kin groups belonged to the cells and the leagues, and on what occasions the flags were carried in public, unfurled, on staffs. Obviously, no one gave an affirmative answer to the first question, since a confession would amount to an explicit acknowledgement of the crime of *lèse majesté*. But the captain’s persistent interrogation led to the discovery of other information and brought new suspects into the courtroom for questioning. Geronimo Ravaschiero said that for Carnival he had lent the flag to “those of the *cò del borgo*,” the neighborhood below the castle walls, just behind “Ravaschiera Street.” He also said that he had heard “the news that was publicly circulated about the fortunes of the emperor and the king.” He eventually admitted that he had gathered together people in his *loggia*, but “to stay up and gamble with women and men who were family relations and friends.” He did not know anything about the existence of cells “anywhere in the district of Chiavari.”

Dario Borelli testified that Cesare della Torre, member of another of the town’s noble families, and Lazaro and Gio Batta Bacigalupo also possessed flags, thus increasing the number of those brought in for questioning. But the most interesting confessions were those of Agostino Bachioco, a butcher from Lavagna. Agostino had received a flag—“a

standard commonly called *fatto a liste* that was white, turquoise, and yellow—from a sailor. He carried it on several occasions to the “musters” and thus became the standard-bearer, also lending it to Antonio and Francesco Gatto and to Ottaviano della Torre for the musters. Other flags were cut and sewn by women in Lavagna and then sorted in Chiavari. Agostino was also forthcoming with respect to the factions, claiming that “in this area [*terra*] there are many who are of the Guelf faction and have sympathies for the French party,” but adding that “I take care to mind my own business.” The captain insisted: “Asked to name the kin groups [*parentellas*] that are commonly said to be Guelfs, the witness replied ‘They are said to be the Morchi, Argirofi, the della Petra, and various others as is well known.’” He denied being part of a cell, but named friends who regularly attended cell meetings: the aforementioned Antonio Gatto, Rolando Zenogio, and Lorenzo Bafico, who were automatically placed on the list for questioning. The interrogation of Antonio Maxena, a mason from Lavagna in whose house two flags were found, identified Batta Bachiooco as another cell member to be questioned.

At this point we can compare the names that have appeared thus far with those of the kin groups listed in the faction descriptions drawn up by the captain. They all belong to the Guelf, *Fregosa*, and pro-French faction. In particular, the Gatto, Zenogio, and Bacigalupo are indicated as league heads (see Fig. 8.2).

This configuration is confirmed and completed, in a way, through the third interrogation of Dario Borelli, whom the captain must have identified as the weak link in what must have looked more and more like a conspiracy against the Republic. Dario revealed that he was a nephew (or grandson) of the Ravaschiero, but tried to convince the captain that he did not have the stature to be a “*capelazzo*.” Then, perhaps realizing that he had made a dangerous declaration, he added that “*capelazzo* means that you are the head of a party, and I know that now there aren’t any but that in the past there used to be.” The captain pressed his questioning and Dario admitted that, again—“in the past,” Chiavari had been divided into Adorno and Fregoso factions. As if freeing himself from a heavy weight he said “don’t look at me, because I am on my own, but look at those whose shoulders are larger than mine and who are enemies of the Republic.” This confession confirmed the captain’s suspicions. A day later, on 28 August, he questioned Dario for the fourth time. On the basis of testimony gathered secretly from the “*patrone* Fabiano,” the captain challenged Dario’s first version of how he had come into possession of the flag.

Faction A <sup>a</sup>			
<i>League of the Bacigaloni</i> <sup>b</sup>	<i>League of the Podestà</i> <sup>c</sup>	<i>League of the Zenogij</i> <sup>d</sup>	<i>League of the Honeti</i> <sup>e</sup>
Bacigaloni	Podestà	Zenogij	Honeti
Boffi	Pinere	Rebexoni	Descalci
Parpalioni	Re	Gandolfi	Negri
Caferata	Picieri	Gatti	Cazareti
Bogiani	Montearsici	Devoti	Cazaregij
Granelli	Lanata	Brixolara	Signeghi
Raffi	Paterin	Gazoli	
Lagori	Trabuchi (della Chiapa)	Fossati	
Mangini		Pichetti	
		Barberi	
		Dalla Noce	
<i>League that is publicly called "League"</i> <sup>f</sup>			
Cassinelli	Vignoli	Loxi	Mosti
Costa	Mofiti	Cazelli	Berici
Castagnini	Galiardi	Merendoni	Morchi
Giancheti	Grafigna	Petra	Frugoni
Brignardelli	Banchalari	Chiapa	Bargoni
Panexi	Bonaparte	Vermi	Marino
Sturla	Goimondi	Pinaschi	Merli
Merlini	Binelli	Cressi	
Boleri	Giambrini	Valle	
Bigini	Bruschi	Gropo	
Faction B <sup>g</sup>			
<i>League of the Solari</i> <sup>h</sup>	<i>League of the Vachari</i>	<i>League of the Linali</i>	<i>League of the Celaschi</i> <sup>i</sup>
Solari	Vachari	Linali	Cella
Canneva	Bafichi	Sambuxeti	Sanguineti
Nespoli	Maxena	Thescona	Barbagelata
Merizi	Montanari		Morinelli
Trabuchi			Locij
Rocha			Levagij
Monteverdi			

<sup>a</sup> All of these houses are in the same faction.

<sup>b</sup> And other kin groups as seen in the peace agreement, drawn up by Lorenzo Sorba, with the Celaschi.

<sup>c</sup> And various other houses.

<sup>d</sup> And various other kin groups as seen in the peace agreement with the Celaschi.

<sup>e</sup> And other houses.

<sup>f</sup> And other houses that coordinate closely with the said league ... which is a recently-formed league, and after the death of Count Fieschi they allied with the League of the Gateschi in Lavagna and Cogomo.

<sup>g</sup> These leagues are all in the same faction.

<sup>h</sup> Along with other houses as seen in the peace agreement signed with the Bacigalupi in Genoa.

<sup>i</sup> And other kin groups as indicated by the peace agreement made with the Zenochij.

**Fig. 8.2** Kin groups, leagues and factions in the *borgo* and vicariate of Chiavari in the mid-sixteenth century

Dario had hoped, in vain, that his former patron “would look out for me” and begged:

There was no malice in me—I have decided to tell the truth, which is that I had received [the flag] from Bartolomeo Zenogio ... who delivered it into my hands under the portico in front of my house ... I had asked for it

because I wanted to have it ready to be able to carry the flag when the muster was held ... because I wanted to be made the standard-bearer, as I had been another time.

The flag was “one of those fighting ones that were flown on the galleys and was of three different colors ... that is, black, grayish-red, and white.” Dario then purchased a staff from Gio Battista Bacigalupo for thirteen *soldi* and a few days later he and Bartolomeo Zenogio participated in the muster of Captain Geronimo Ravaschiero on the town square with a “black and white Fregoso flag.” Bartolomeo Zenogio’s father was the second captain of the militia and the head of the “League of the Zenogij” that brought together eleven houses and kin groups from “*cò de borgo*” and from the lower Sturla Valley.

The rest of the interrogations add little to the narrative, but they reveal a broader network of kin, friends, allies, and dependents who lent and exchanged flags, with Geronimo Ravaschiero always playing a central role.<sup>9</sup> Ravaschiero admitted having “publicly” lent out the flag and the drum, to those of the “*cò de borgo*” and “members of the night watch” in particular. In his defense he claimed that recently, after a trip to Genoa (where he certainly had influential friends and informers), he had tried to convince his friends from Chiavari and their relatives “that they should get along with everyone because the time of the factions has passed and everyone needed to remain united under the Most Illustrious Seigniorship [of Genoa].” This might have been more than simply an expedient deposition; at any rate, Geronimo’s declaration and his expressed wish for pacification paralleled Genoese concerns, which were conditioned by the international context. Their main objective was precisely to pacify the territory or at least to establish a balance of power that neutralized the subversive tendencies of the local elites whose actions could be quite damaging to the authority of the Prince (that is, Genoa).

The trial examined here permits us to check, at least partially, how people were mobilized and political propaganda was used. The French flags adopted by the Fregoso faction were passed around among the heads of kin groups, leagues, and neighborhoods (Francesco Gatto, who was also questioned, was for example “the head of those of *cò de borgo*”). The flags

<sup>9</sup>I have reconstructed the entire episode on the basis of the trial records and correspondence with the Senate; see ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, busta 2965 and *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 435.

were exhibited on every public occasion, such as militia reviews, “musters for the Turks,” Holy Week processions, and the “representations” of St Francis (the sacred performances of the Passion and Resurrection, carried out by the confraternities and religious associations). They were displayed in windows and were lent to youths for Carnival and to those who hoped to become standard bearers.<sup>10</sup> All those questioned under suspicion of *lèse majesté* admitted, almost spontaneously, to engaging in these ceremonial aspects of politics.

In this way, factional symbols were circulated among individual members of different occupational and generational groups that spanned the entire hierarchy of the *borgo*; that is, between people otherwise divided by social condition and status. The itineraries of the flags reveal certain characteristics of the relations between leaders and followers and give clues about the leaders’ policies. For example, they uncover ties between nobles, boat owners (*patroni*), sailors, captains, soldiers, and aspiring standard bearers or drummers—in an historical and social context in which many work opportunities were linked to maritime navigation and militia service. In the same way, the “parties” served as political links between the countryside and the town. As we will see, analogous and even clearer relations of dependence and exchange of services tied the “*borghesi*” to the kin groups and men of the hillside villages surrounded by olive groves and vineyards that backed up against the town walls.

But what did the Fieschi, the king of France, and the emperor have to do with this scenario? In reality, concrete and material elements were linked to symbolic and ideal factors, and were manipulated in order to construct a profile of the factions and the local and supra-local environments in which they recruited followers and took action.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> As has been noted, the militias were completely local bodies, organized and led by natives. Andrea Spinola wrote about them in his *Ricordi* under the entries “Bande, ò siano militie” and “Rassegne,” explaining that “an effort is made, when musters are held, to keep the members of the unit from igniting the madness of the factions through conspicuous feathers, colors, and clothing that, by expressing their partisanship, might turn the crowds against each other” (Spinola, *Ricordi*).

<sup>11</sup> Factions have been an important theme within post-structuralist political anthropology since the 1960s; see for example the essays edited by R. Firth in *The British Journal of Sociology*, special issue *Factions in Indian and Overseas Indian Societies*, 8, 4 (1957); B.J. Siegel and A.R. Beals, “Pervasive Factionalism,” *American Anthropologist* 62 (1960): 394–417; R.W. Nicholas, “Factions: A Comparative Analysis,” in *Political Systems and the Distribution of Power*, ed. M. Banton (London, 1965); id., “Segmentary Factional Political Systems,” in *Political Anthropology*, eds. M.J. Swartz, V.W. Turner, and A. Tuden (Chicago,



Substantive and concrete concerns can be identified beginning with the Fieschi themselves. For centuries they had been lords of a vast territory stretching from Lavagna to the Apennines which, as late as the mid-sixteenth century, the Imperial vicar Gomez Suarez de Figueroa defined as the “Fieschi state.”<sup>12</sup> Even if their fiefs were progressively limited to the Apennine zone, one branch of the Fieschi continued to reside near the towns of Lavagna and Chiavari, where they preserved widespread political influence and ties of fidelity from a portion of those inhabiting the hillside villages. One of these very villages—Cogorno, which had been a stronghold at one time—was highlighted during the 1552 trial as one of the bases of the “conspiracy.”<sup>13</sup> It was certainly one of the places where bandits were recruited for a plan to enter Chiavari and carry out the conspiracy—a fact that leads us directly to the Fieschi.

A new trial was initiated in the fall to examine some of the actors who had already been investigated for *lèse majesté*. It targeted people from Cogorno and Santa Giulia (villages around Lavagna), Rivarola and Carasco (villages near Chiavari), sons and the brother of *messier* Andrea Fiesco, and *messier* Marsilio Fiesco, “doctor of laws.”<sup>14</sup> The bandits recruited from these villages and from the valleys deeper in the backcountry (the Sturla Valley and the Fontanabuona) were led by Massimo della Petra of

1966); J. Bujra, “The Dynamics of Political Action: A New Look at Factionalism,” *American Anthropologist* 75 (1973): 132–52. In these and other studies factions are described as informal, spontaneous groups that are organized for specific, limited purposes in a local political arena. The case of complex societies in early modern Europe was different in many ways; see the important study by H.K. Koenigsberger, “The Organization of Revolutionary Parties in France and the Netherlands in the Sixteenth Century,” *Journal of Modern History* 1955 (republished in *Estates and Revolutions. Essays in Early Modern European History* [Ithaca and London, 1971]). See also *Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities, 1200–1500*, ed. L. Martines (Berkeley and London, 1972); and J. Heers, *Parties and Political Life in the Medieval West* (Amsterdam, 1977) (Italian trans. *Partiti e vita politica nell’Occidente medievale* [Milan, 1983]). In the context that I have studied, the dominant language was that of kinship, whose strong normative content dominated political competition and the formation of alignments. Factions were permeated with the enduring interests of kin groups, which often transcended local political and economic arenas. Factions were not simple constructions put into place by the nobility either; while dichotomous ideological positions were defined through manipulating language and principles associated with ‘high politics,’ adherents were always mobilized via kinship relations or from within a hierarchy of kin groups.

<sup>12</sup> See M. Spinola, L.T. Belgrano, and F. Podestà, *Documenti ispano-genovesi dell’Archivio di Simancas, Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 8 (Genoa, 1868), 80.

<sup>13</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 435, no. 83.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, nos. 123, 128.

Cogorno. They were “accompanied” by men from the hamlets of Mosti (Cogorno) and Frugoni (Santa Giulia), and by “factional adherents” from Rivarola, including Massimo and Francesco Cassinelli “a.k.a. the Moro” and Martino Sanguineto. The bandits were lodged by Reverend Rolando Bacigalupo at Carasco, in the church of San Colombano and the oratory of Caperana. They joined forces with the Fieschi at Santa Chiara, near Genoa. But before these preparations could actually place anyone inside of the town gates, the conspiracy died out. As Rolando Bacigalupo declared under questioning, the conspirators “fell into disagreement”<sup>15</sup>—perhaps because they were faced with local or external events that they could no longer control, certainly due also to internal discord—and withdrew to the Fontanabuona and thence to Lombardy.

The itinerary of the conspirators and bandits was a reflection of territorial solidarity and ties of neighborhood and kinship that, while not easy to understand in every respect, still reveal important regional connections, especially with the Lombard fiefs and with Genoa. While the bandits waited at Santa Chiara before getting the call to arms, another Cassinelli (Gio Antonio) had gone with one of the Frugoni “to meet Mr. Gioanne Panexio, their friend,” according to the testimony of Reverend Rolando.

But let us return to the Fieschi and in particular to the “doctor of laws” Marsilio, whose experience is an effective illustration of the power base and charisma of the Fieschi in the town and the villages. His case is directly linked to the *lèse majesté* trial. Some of the “village men” charged with having “received” the bandits protested to the captain of Chiavari in “a document that was very technical and hairsplitting [*assai cavillosa*].” As the captain explained to the Senate, “I asked them who had written this text for them, and they replied that they had been taken to Mr. Marsilio Fiesco, who drew it up for them. I asked them what they had given to him in payment, and they told me that they hadn’t given him anything.”<sup>16</sup> The mediation between the “village men” and Marsilio was carried out by the heads of the Chiavari factions who reassured the accused “by telling them, come with us, so that we can have Mr. Marsilio Fiesco help you, and he won’t make you pay anything, but will help defend you in any way possible.”

<sup>15</sup> At the center of the “discord” was the reverend Bacigalupo himself, who was ambushed by the fugitive bandits while he was on his way to celebrate Mass at San Colombano in the Lavagna Valley (*ibid.*)

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 123. Among those questioned was also Agostino Fiesco, who was freed on 15 September after Simone Ravaschiero offered to pay a security guarantee of 1,000 *scudi*.

The role of Marsilio, who had previously held various public offices in the Republic, offers another confirmation of the stable and sophisticated organization of the Chiavari factions. The *principali* had indeed underwritten a “policy” according to which they committed to making an annual contribution of a certain number of gold *scudi* “to provide for the expenses of said Mr. Marsilio and thus of all of his adherents, that is, of his kin relations.”

Among the underwriters were the very same factional heads who, according to the captain, had already also committed to financial support for a police captain who belonged to the Mosto kin group from Cogorno.<sup>17</sup> These faction leaders included Geronimo Ravaschiero; Gio Batta Giustiniano; Gio Batta di Gaudio; Gasparo, Desiderio, Battista, and Pietro Agostino Sanguineto; Gio Battista Ravenna (brother-in-law of Gasparo Sanguineto); and Gieronimo and Lorenzo Ferechio. The Sanguineti, wine merchants and tavern-keepers at Cogorno, played a central role in organizing the underwriting for Marsilio and the corruption of the police chief, Mosto.

Resources (in this case, the wine trade) and public offices were two elements that always underpinned factional mobilization.<sup>18</sup> The attempt by the pro-French faction to hold offices transformed the institutional arena

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> The struggle for offices was a constant element that mobilized factions to form. In 1583 a Genoese official wrote that “the appointment of officials in this Riviera is almost always an occasion for building up and expressing undying enmities amongst the locals, and has led to (and continues to create) an infinity of disorders, and has even renewed factionalism ... not only at the moment when the magistrates are appointed, but ahead of time, when meetings are held all over concerning elections, and these meetings are toxic occasions, especially in small communities, where every bone of contention is dredged up and the competition has higher stakes than in the cities. In various ways pressures are brought to bear to force the choice of this person for *priore* or that person for *mestrale*—of a particular faction—while others who are no less devious try to engineer the opposite. And this is not only a matter of this abominable plague of Adorno, Fregoso, and other factions, but also for various other evil ends. ... And beyond the inordinate damage to the poor communities caused by these disorders, it happens that many powerful people involved in the commerce of grain and other foodstuffs, who often hold many positions in councils and as magistrates, do their best to see that no Grain Office is created, or if for some reason one has to be established, they make sure that it is placed under the direction of one of their kinsmen or adherents. ... Others, equally as powerful, who gather or store large amounts of wine or oil use the same techniques to make sure that the inspectors are either their clients or are persons of such weak abilities that they can be tricked ... and can make purchases at unheard of prices” (ASG, Archivio Segreto-Politicorum, busta 1650, “Discorso intorno alle refforma delli magistrati delle riviere”).

into one of the main fields of battle. One should keep in mind that the coercive power of the captain consisted, in total, of a police chief and about ten assistants. This underscores the gravity of the accusation that the police chief had looked the other way, “in exchange for drink and because of kinship ties,” when his relatives, with the Sanguineti and the Verme (another kin group from the villages around Chiavari), had participated in the festival of Santo Lucrezio at Cogorno and that of San Lorenzo at Lavanga while armed with arquebuses and crossbows. During these very months a violent conflict between the officers who regulated commerce and the town councilors was said by the captain Andrea Spinola to have stemmed from the “hatred and malediction [that the townspeople had] amongst themselves.” This particular conflict grew out of a permit granted by the regulatory officials to Gio Battista Ravenna, enabling him to carry refuse out of the town.<sup>19</sup> The dispute revolved around who had the jurisdiction to issue this authorization, a matter which implicated the “honor and authority” of the protagonists, and evidently also the person directly concerned, who was one of the Fregoso faction heads. At the peak of the conflict all symbolic weapons were employed: reciprocal attacks on honor multiplied, the captain’s property was smeared with waste,<sup>20</sup> and public accusations of rape and sodomy were traded.<sup>21</sup>

The solution envisaged by the captain was to reinforce institutional power and shield it against corruption, while also seeking an agreement between the kinship groups, thus breaking up the factional alignments. Andrea Spinola requested that justice be administered only in the walled town. This made it necessary for those accused of crimes to go to the citadel, where he had a courtroom constructed for the judge (*vicario*), who had previously been forced to “travel across the country” to hear cases, and thus had been subjected to all sorts of pressures, requests for favors, and bribe attempts (with wine and invitations to dinner): “things that usually, as it is often said, have their effect on men and even the gods.”<sup>22</sup> But during the same period, an anonymous letter to the Senate accused Dario Borelli of having been seen in the great room of the citadel “asking for

<sup>19</sup> Night soil was sold to vegetable-growers, who used it as fertilizer.

<sup>20</sup> This was an offense to the symbol of the prince’s power, and to the prince’s very honor. The captain sent the Senate a summary of the facts, along with a colored design of the soiled property; see ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 435.

<sup>21</sup> For example, Maria Sanguineto accused Bartolomeo Rivarola and Simone Cella of rape; see *ibid.*, nos. 108, 111.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, no. 120.

favor from the Lord Captain ... said Dario having been heard boasting about having a collection of the best wines of Chiavari.”<sup>23</sup>

The trials against the Fregoso faction seem, nonetheless, to have opened doors for the Rivarola and their adherents. In order to finance the construction of a new house for the captain and the building of the new courtroom for the vicar, the town council, presided by the prior Vincenzo Rivarola, decided “with the sign of an olive branch,” (a peace symbol) to sell the office of secretary (*la scrivania*), which would be purchased by Giuseppe Rivarola.<sup>24</sup>

## 2 THE *BORG*O AND THE VILLAGES: RESOURCES AND SOCIAL FIELDS

The factional organization that I have described was characteristic of the urban fabric of towns like Chiavari and Rapallo where horizontal and vertical relations were very dense, competition for offices was sharp, and the elites were tied into political and economic networks at a regional level.

During the early modern period, the *principali* of opposing families and factions developed their own ideologies and political discourses. These were influenced by the configuration of external powers and by the factional competition that lacerated the political life of sixteenth-century Genoa. Family leaders thus sought to construct and legitimate their social leadership on a scale that transcended the local context. The alignments that resulted arranged themselves into two parties, more or less: pro-French Fregoso and pro-Spanish Adorno, which a few decades later became Blues (*Turchini*) and Greens (Fig. 8.3). The hierarchic cohesion of the factions was based on contractual elements, economic relations of dependence or cooperation, notions of fidelity and protection, and on loyalties that were more transitory. Symbolically, this political cohesion was represented by flags, standards, and “colors.” For this reason, public proclamations and peace agreements stressed the prohibition against displaying “signs,” “colored uniforms,” “pennants,” “banners,” and flags.

The relationship between the political field and the economic field posed a fundamental problem. It is extremely difficult to identify the areas of specialization of various families, but each leading one in Chiavari counted a core group of notaries and law graduates (“*spectabiles*”) among

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., no. 121.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., no. 154.

**Fig. 8.3** Genealogy of the factions, ca. 1200–1700

A	B
Guelfs	Ghibellines
Blacks ( <i>Neri</i> )	Whites ( <i>Bianchi</i> )
Fregoso	Adorno
<i>Nuovi</i>	<i>Vecchi</i>
Blues ( <i>Turchini</i> )	Greens ( <i>Verdi</i> )

its numbers. Other family members were merchants, boat owners, and middlemen—typical figures in a town that was known in the *Levante* for its commercial vocation, and in the rest of the Republic for its strong concentration of private wealth.<sup>25</sup>

In order to stockpile oil and wine, and to smuggle oil into Lombardy and the duchy of Parma, the merchants had to be able to rely on the complicity of regulatory officials and police chiefs, in addition to the active collaboration and protection of the inhabitants of the internal valleys along the mule roads, as we saw in Chap. 6. Controlling municipal offices was also necessary to be able to trade freely in grain from Lombardy or to import it by sea from Livorno.<sup>26</sup> Elections for grain storage officials produced endless rounds of balloting: townspeople “never agreed to submit to the authority of the *Abbondanza*, which is not surprising since most of them are continually involved in grain trading.”<sup>27</sup> Some families naturally

<sup>25</sup> ASG, Finanza Pubblica, filza 2604.

<sup>26</sup> The situation of the town of Rapallo was very similar; there also, merchants opposed the creation of a Grain Office and challenged the authority of the inspectors.

<sup>27</sup> This declaration dated from 1607 (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1691). In 1579 the conflict opposed a portion of the merchants against the officials of the Grain Office. Among the merchants who asked for complete freedom to trade grain were the Ravenna and the Zenogio, who had been heads of the Fregoso faction in the mid-sixteenth century. At Chiavari there were two weekly markets of Lombard “provisions.” While it is impossible to quantify the amount of traffic, it is significant that in 1579 Giulio Ravenna and Alessandro and Lorenzo Zenogio asked for “the authority and charge to make any sort of purchases of these provisions” in exchange for the promise of transporting to Genoa half of the Lombard grain whose acquisition was negotiated on the town square (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1437). In 1607, the baking of *buffetto* bread “is overseen and arranged by upstanding Citizens involved in this business on their own account” (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1691). In Rapallo and Santa Margherita as well, the Adorno and Fregoso factions coagulated around the struggle over offices and taxes. At Santa Margherita, in 1599, the arena of conflict was the *Casaccia di San Bernardino*: the farmers of the tax on wine, grain, and the import-export trade were all of the Fregoso faction, and all were required to purchase from them, while free trade with Livorno was prohibited. But these tax farmers were accused of being “innovators,” apostates and scoundrels, and were expelled from the *Casaccia* with the public ritual burning of the cape with a torch made from grape vines. The Adorno controlled the priory of the *Casaccia*

specialized in certain activities, but the factions organized themselves and fought with each other around this basic array of resources.

The more direct relations between the townspeople and the peasants and small property owners from surrounding villages, on the other hand, revolved above all around land. The dominant form of contract in the hillside olive groves and vineyards—in Chiavari and also in Rapallo—was sharecropping, and a large portion of the 18,000 barrels of oil and the 13,000 *mezzarole* of wine produced during a good year were gathered into the warehouses of the *borgo*.<sup>28</sup> The land was, in any case, the most solid guarantee for loans, credit, and clientele-building. Credit was recorded in the notarial records in the form of debts incurred or receipts for seed, grain, or other consumables, and was hidden in contracts for land sales with rights of repurchase, or in sales of oil, wine, or chestnut futures. In general, just about every transaction between “*borghesi*” and the villages related to an exchange of oil in which monetary values may have functioned as a mere unit of measure.<sup>29</sup> But the credit extended was

and defended the custom of free trade. The Fregoso asked for the resignation of the prior, who was accused of colluding with bandits and smugglers from the Fontanabuona and the Aveto Valley, and of being “the most subtle sodomite that there is in the world” (ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 576).

<sup>28</sup> The production estimates are from 1574; see ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 497. In the mid-seventeenth century, wine production was estimated at 15,000 *mezzarole* (ASCR, Actorum Communitatis Rapalli, filza 1). The Genoese estimate of oil production in the late sixteenth century was surely too high; at any rate, during the seventeenth century the production of wine increased while that of oil decreased to about 12,000 barrels at mid-century. Sharecropping contracts gave landowners possession of about two thirds of oil and wine production, but sharecroppers frequently renounced their own third in exchange for grain and seeds, or to pay debts (it was said that the sharecropper kept for himself only the cloudy oil and the wine from the second pressing). Naturally, there were also wealthy land-owning villagers, who were tied to the urban market through association or competition with the *borghesi*.

<sup>29</sup> In 1578 and 1589, in Rapallo and Chiavari, loans in kind were prohibited, as were sales of futures and “oil contracts,” but they continued to take place (even if they stopped appearing in notarial registers). The “Proclamations concerning the oil contracts” issued at Rapallo and Chiavari in 1589 took up a decision of the *Minor Consiglio*: “that it will be illegal for anyone to make any contract, for a sale, or purchase by loan or in kind, or by exchange, or in any other form whatsoever, in order to acquire any amount or quantity of oil except for a true purchase of actual oil that is transferred and consigned, and the same is to apply for any other thing that is exchanged, for the real price in each case, and when this is not respected the contract will be invalid and the creditor will not be able to collect anything from the debtor” (ASCR, Inutilium, filza 6). The main preoccupation of the Genoese was always the provisioning of the city, and in this respect the main competitors of the Oil Magistracy were perhaps the rich merchants themselves—at least those who did not control the farms for the

probably only the final act of a series of transactions that were not recorded by the notaries and that were not only economic in nature. Still, credit relations were not always usurious, univocal, or rigidly limited to a dichotomy between *borghesi* and villagers.

The sharecroppers and “men of the village” often stood at the forefront, shoulder to shoulder with the townspeople, when fights broke out with rival groups in the streets of the *borgo*, or during festivals—which were crucial moments for the reaffirmation of the social, territorial, and ceremonial supremacy of one’s house or faction. In the villages of Ri, Sanguineto, and Leivi, where the *borghesi* owned a fair amount of property, there were violent altercations after some villagers’ cellar doors were ripped off their hinges or their cellars were looted. A letter written by the captain Gio Francesco Scaglia to the Senate in 1624 outlines a usual sequence of events during a factional battle at Chiavari (the letter also incidentally confirms the continuity of factional conflict over a long period):

On the next to last day of Carnival ... Gio Carlo Bacigalupo, on a whim, decided to confront and break up a dance party that was being held in the public road in the suburb of Ruinà. So he went there for this purpose, protected by some kin and friendly allies (of whom there were more than a few, since he is a wealthy person). He sent a man from his village who was one of his renters into the middle of the party to ask to dance, even though there were persons of stature who had been there before him. And since he was not immediately given permission to dance, this man grabbed the instrument from the person who was playing, cut the strings and broke the instrument, and then started mixing it up with those standing nearby. Three of the young bystanders, one a Della Cella and two Rivarola, started to demonstrate their indignation against this person, but right away Gio Carlo and other Bacigalupi and their supporters intervened on the villager’s behalf. The disquiet then turned into a fight between factions and colors, and on one side and the other a great crowd of people began to assemble, as many ran to the spot and took up weapons.

On the following day the faction heads gathered together “a great number of men” from the villages, “followers of the blues” and “followers of the greens,” arousing an intense “commotion” in the entire vicariate, such as had not been seen for forty years. The case demonstrates the seam-

consignment of payments in kind—who exported oil to Lombardy and to Parma and Piacenza. Relations between villagers and merchants from the towns were also entirely based on credit, as can be seen from the account book of a grocer from Chiavari preserved at the Notarial Archive of Chiavari.



less communication that had been created between different social strata in the context of factional strife. The defense of the villager, whom the captain had imprisoned, was taken up by Battino Bacigalupo, a

close relative of Gio Carlo ... as wise and astute a man as there can be who lays out his facts and knows how to spin things most excellently. His dexterity enabled him to take the position of the main criminal attorney who practices in the tribunal of the citadel, and he increased his reputation considerably by knowing how to shape and turn, with artifice, his cases in a way that best suited him, and to turn disputes to his benefit.<sup>30</sup>

As we have seen in other cases as well, the *principali* provided protection and legal guarantees to their followers in ways whose effectiveness is difficult to determine. Clearly, though, the mobilization of ties between town and villages, effected by the *principali*, was always closely linked to kinship. The coastal villages, like those in the more internal valleys, were inhabited by large kin groups that were both cohesive and stratified. The wealthiest household heads could be engaged in commercial partnerships with the merchants from the town (as in the case of the Sanguineti, winegrowers in Cogorno), while their poorer relatives worked the fields for the same townspeople. The sharecropping contracts privileged ties of kin or neighborhood, and these coincided, partly at least, with credit networks and helped demarcate the faction's area of recruitment and influence.

Between the *borgo*, the hills, and the internal valleys, enmity between kin groups helped feed the factions. An aerial photograph of the web of social ties stretching across the entire vicariate would show us a leopard skin pattern with traversed by threads of discontinuous relations and lines of force that could be colored green and blue. The spatial configuration of the factions, and the surprisingly vast ripple effects of every micro-conflict, depended both on alliances and on the close ties between territorial segments of kin groups. Of the kin groups listed in Fig. 8.2, for example, the Zenogio lived both in Chiavari and in numerous villages of the Sturla Valley (the fortified village of Borgonovo where they owned ten houses and a *palazzo*, Mezzanego, Montemoggio, Pontegiacomo, Corerallo, and Forca). The Bacigalupo were in the village-*borgo* of Carasco where they owned 80 percent of the houses, in the Lavagna Valley, and in the Fontanabuona. The Cella were in the villages of the high Sturla Valley

<sup>30</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, busta 1566. This example shows, among other things, how the alignments in the field coincided perfectly with those from 1552.

(Reisasca, Giare, Bertigaro, and Porcile) and in the villages along the border with the Doria fief. The Sanguineti were in the Lavagna Valley, and at Sanguinetto, Leivi, and Cogorno.<sup>31</sup> In the tax registers and the peace agreements the family name is almost always linked to a topographical or toponymic reference. In places where it is possible to compare assessment registers (as in the *borgo* of Chiavari, and in the Lavagna and Sturla valleys), or fiscal lists (as for Rapallo) from different time periods, evidence for the continuity of these residential structures is abundant and very clear. This territorial articulation of kinship groups permitted not only widespread political influence, but also, as we will see below, the control of strategically significant locations and routes and access to a broad and differentiated array of resources. Thus, for example, different individuals from the Cella kin group remained in contact with each other while working as notaries, serving on the citizen council at Chiavari, working as merchants in the same place, and acting as tax farmers and muleteers in the Aveto Valley.

The age-old factional alignments were, effectively, closely linked to the demographic and economic continuity of the families. This continuity was based on a perfect assimilation between surname and kin group, and on co-residential solidarity or ties between nucleated settlements. The political unity of the wider kin group was based on these elements and on enmities—but also on dispute resolution and peace agreements. Adherence to leagues and factions was also ironically tied to these latter elements (see for example the reflections of the captain of Chiavari written in the margin of his rubric of the 1552 factions, in Fig. 8.2). It follows from this that, as far as I have been able to reconstruct from the Chiavari documentation during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the rare cases of movement from one faction to another involved kin groups rather than isolated individuals.

### 3 THE CIVIL WAR AND THE “DIABOLICAL ANCIENT FACTIONS”

From the perspective of the history of events, the civil war of 1575 sheds an unusually powerful light on the social and politics dynamics of local societies, helping to understand why, both before and after the event, the

<sup>31</sup> I have reconstructed the territorial distribution of the kin groups on the basis of the *caratate* of 1612–13 and 1641 (ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 712, 718) and evidence included in numerous peace agreements, generally undersigned by all of the kin groups’ territorial segments.

Genoese were limited to constructing ephemeral peace agreements rather than more durable alternatives.

Kin groups, factions, and communities were mobilized not so much by loyalty as by rivalry between kin groups and neighboring communities. The interpretation of local conflicts as mere extensions of the conflict between old and new nobles in Genoa flattens out or negates the ways in which social relations and local customs were expressed—despite the fact that these had, in my view, a determinant impact. Indeed, the political crisis that split the city-capital and the Genoese elite helped feed the tensions that already proliferated among the *principali* and the kin groups, crystallizing the smallest and most peripheral rivalries. As in 1552, external events uncovered local power structures, orienting the formation of dichotomous alignments. These could be used by regional actors as tools for cohesive or bellicose ends, in order to legitimate supra-local political idioms.

It was certainly not by chance that Chiavari and Rapallo were more affected by the civil war than any of the other Ligurian communities outside of the capital. An important conjunctural factor was the occupation by Gio Andrea Doria, leader of the *Vecchi* and the exiles, of Chiavari (where Gio Battista Doria was named governor), followed by his attempt to capture Rapallo as well. On 25 September 1575 the *borgo* of Chiavari swore a loyalty oath to its new leader; Carasco and the entire Sturla Valley followed suit soon thereafter.<sup>32</sup> In this way, the *Vecchi* guaranteed their control of the strategic area between the sea and the Imperial fiefs, one of the main transit routes toward the Po Valley, which they could use to import provisions and mercenaries recruited in the duchy of Milan. In any event, between summer and fall 1575, the entire administrative territory of the two towns was dominated by opposing alignments that linked themselves to the *Vecchi* and the *Nuovi*.

The costs of war were sustained almost entirely by the inhabitants of the Riviera (the *paesani*), but the war was described by the protagonists as a continuation of violence between factions.<sup>33</sup> Correspondence between the commissioners of the *Nuovi* shows that the interests and objectives of the local population only coincided occasionally with those of the Republic, and that their allegiance to one or the other of the noble alignments was

<sup>32</sup> ASG, Notary Giacomo Villamarino, filza 22. The Bacigalupo were the ones engineering the loyalty oaths in Carasco and the Sturla Valley.

<sup>33</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filze 1412, 1436.

merely tactical. What really held the factions together were the “enmities” and “ancient hatreds” between kin groups. The overlap between local conflicts and the political crisis in Genoa quickly revived the nightmares about the Adorno and the Fregoso (“the two monsters *Adornaria* and *Fregosaria*”),<sup>34</sup> whose names were pasted onto those of the *Vecchi* and the *Nuovi*. External events provided an especially useful political language for the extension of territorial groupings, and one which was cleverly manipulated to this end by the *cappellazzi* (faction chiefs).

Let us take an example. A few months prior to the civil war, on 23 January 1575, the captain of Chiavari sent to the Senate a letter outlining information collected on Bartolomeo Zenogio, accused not only of being one of the *cappellazzi* of the Sturla Valley, but also of having murdered a pregnant niece as part of a feud.<sup>35</sup> The captain had tried and failed to apprehend him, and then imposed a security guarantee of 500 *scudi* on his relatives. When Gio Battista Doria occupied the town of Chiavari, Bartolomeo offered his services to him. In Doria’s name he raised a company of a hundred *archibugieri* from among the kin groups of the lower Sturla Valley, and together with the Bacigalupo of Carasco promoted the swearing of the loyalty oath to the *Vecchi* by valley officials. He skirmished with the household heads of nearby valleys (Garibaldo and Lavagna), whose *cappellazzi* had organized forces and sworn loyalty to the *Nuovi* commissioners. Alongside the Bacigalupo he fought to defend Carasco, a village of strategic importance for the provisioning of Chiavari, and one that had been faithful to the *Vecchi* and Doria from the start. In early December, as peace talks in Casale Monferrato were already underway, Bartolomeo was captured by the *Nuovi* commissioner Nicola Garibaldo, but released soon thereafter in respect of the forthcoming peace agreement. The next year he was again accused of being the captain of a company of “bandits and scamps” who “tormented” the Sturla Valley. In 1578 he was at the head of a squad of fifty arquebuses which, once again flanked by the Bacigalupo of Carasco, engaged in a feud fueled by a potent mix of old and new “enmities” combined with the after-effects of the civil war.<sup>36</sup> Recall that the Zenogio were already factional heads at Chiavari in 1552, and that another Bartolomeo was the head of a league of eleven kin

<sup>34</sup> These were the words of the commissioner of the *Nuovi*, Nicola Garibaldo, in a letter to the Senate (ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 503). The same expression was used in *ibid.*, filza 554.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, filza 500.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, filze 506, 508; *ibid.*, Senato-Atti, filza 1437; *ibid.*, Rota Criminale, filza 1224.

groups—the *ligha de Zenogij* (see Fig. 8.2). Parenthetically, a problem to resolve is the fact that in 1552 the Zenogio had belonged to the pro-French, Fregoso faction—this is perhaps evidence of how local groups instrumentalized supra-local alignments for their own benefit. Indeed, in 1592 the Zenogio were at it again, but this time as protagonists in a revolt of the subjects of the Doria marquis at Santo Stefano d’Aveto, in which Bartolomeo’s son played a leading role.<sup>37</sup>

In Rapallo, where the *Nuovi* commissioner Giacomo Facio set up his base of operations, the situation remained fluid until late September when, following an attempt by the Doria galleys to lead an amphibious assault, the leaders of the pro-*Vecchi* faction were arrested and tried. The commissioner accused this group of “conspiracy” in early October. He claimed that the Chichizola, the Borzone, the Torre, and the Pessia (families of oil and soap merchants who owned soap manufactures and tanneries) “led assemblies of people ... and told them that now that things are hanging in the balance it is time to show our strength.” The conspirators counted on “friends” in the nearby *podesteria* of Recco and on the support of the *podestà* of Rapallo, who had tried to convince the town council to grant an official reception to Gio Battista Doria. Following the failure of the sea landing, their property was confiscated and divided among their adversaries. They revenged themselves two years later, though, by having a squad of “bandits” recruited in the Fontanabuona execute reprisals.<sup>38</sup>

In the Lavagna Valley the alignment that favored the *Nuovi* was led by the captains Ottaviano della Torre and Antonio Solaro. Della Torre was a noble and Solaro headed a large, powerful kin group. The two of them gathered together a small army of kin, clients, and peasants, legitimizing their role by swearing a solemn oath in the hands of the commissioner Facio.

But the breakdown in Fig. 8.4 only reflects the territorial dimension of factions that were temporarily hegemonic; once the war was over in Genoa and the general commotion subsided, these apparently united groupings fragmented into myriad micro-conflicts.

Local captains enjoyed broad autonomy in conducting military operations and reprisals. This fact, together with the contractual nature of their relationships with the commissioners, reveals the fragility of Genoese control

<sup>37</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 554; *ibid.*, Archivio Segreto-Confinium, filza 22.

<sup>38</sup> The inventories of confiscated property are in ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filze 500, 503; the 1578 trial against the “bandits” is in *ibid.*, Senato-Atti, filza 1429.

VECCHI	NUOVI
Chiavari	Fontanabuona
Carasco	Lavagna valley
Sturla valley	Graveglia valley

**Fig. 8.4** The civil war (1575) factional alignments and their territorial expression

over the Ligurian communities. In a letter dated 6 October, Giacomo Facio stressed the need to secure the obedience of the population and to appoint leaders (*capi*) who were recognized as such locally, but then lamented that “I have little faith that this will happen.” He expressed his hopes for victory in a letter dated 10 December, writing that “I would desire to fight and win, and to preserve that small measure of honor that I have acquired for myself.” But these hopes were tied to “the help of the peasants,” whose “instability” he highlighted on several occasions. What is more, central authority itself was not only divided into factions, but each of the two noble alignments was itself fractured by internal conflicts. The rivalry between the *Nuovi* commissioners Giacomo Facio and Nicola Garibaldi thus characterized the whole course of the war and the truce talks with Gio Battista Doria. Each one of these men sought prestige and the honor of victory entirely for himself,<sup>39</sup> while local leaders acted autonomously, launching negotiations on their own initiative with multiple interlocutors. In early October, for example, leaders from the Lavagna Valley (Ottaviano and Pasquale della Torre, and Antonio Solaro) reached an agreement with the town council of Chiavari and with Gio Battista Doria for the “extraction” of wine produced on the hills of Leivi and in the Graveglia Valley.

The provisioning of grain and flour—a crucial problem for both the *Vecchi* and the *Nuovi*, and especially for the two coastal towns—was tightly controlled by local groups. This function was traditionally carried out by mediators from the internal valleys (see Chap. 6), but the pressures of war gave it symbolic significance. When the “men of Fontanabuona” burned the mills at Carasco in late October, their objective was not only to prevent the provisioning of Chiavari, but also to assert their authority in the traditional rivalry for the control of transit and the monopoly of milling grain.

<sup>39</sup> “I humbly request,” wrote Nicola Garibaldi on 8 December, “that you would do me the favor of appointing me in this town of Chiavari, so that I can leave a record of accomplishment, and I hope that your Most Illustrious Lordships would permit me to govern there for a year so that you will be praised for having established better government in said place” (ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 503).

The Fontanabuona itself played a principal role in these complicated events. Here, as elsewhere, the outbreak of war produced an alignment that extended its hegemony, creating an illusion of unity among the population of the valley in support of the *Nuovi*. But in the months and years that followed, this image would be undone, even if the idea of fidelity to the “true Republic” and communitarian language would continue to be used and manipulated by a portion of the local elite. We will return our focus to the events of the Fontanabuona in the following chapters.

The political narrative offers few clues about what happened in Chiavari while it was occupied by the *Vecchi* during the months of the civil war, but as soon as the town gates were re-opened following the peace accord that the Genoese nobles signed at Casale, conflict re-ignited. In May 1576 the captain sent the Senate a description of the factional disputes destroying the town where he was supposed to be governing and administering justice on behalf of the Republic. His chief accusations were directed against “various kin groups” that, in his telling, had formed *conventicole* “because they intend to cause tumults and stir up, once again, the diabolical old factions.” Their leaders had mobilized “in the guise of an army ... more than 150 armed men who came from all over the countryside.” The captain seemed to be especially concerned about the fact that even the “least noteworthy peasants” who lived in the villages were divided into factions, and that “they are split into two sides, and not only these villagers but also the townspeople, whose favors then enable the villagers to maintain their reputations.”<sup>40</sup> Here, as in Rapallo, the “favors” had to do with credit and agrarian contracts, which provided an element of vertical cohesion between the townspeople and the villagers that could have immediate political ramifications. This is confirmed by a judicial investigation against the Bancalari and the heads of five other kin groups, an account of which was sent to Genoa in January 1577. The document explains that these

assemblies and cliques intended to create tumults and provoke sedition, and to commit great evils to the harm and detriment of justice and the Republic. They wish to elevate the Fregoso faction against the Adorno faction, crying out “*Cala fregosi cala fregosi*.” They made these factions and conventicles in Fontanabuona, Sanguinetto, San Pietro delle Canne, and Capellane, and led them to Chiavari, crossing through the center of the *borgo*, in order to set up an army near the sea, at the place which is commonly called the Marina

<sup>40</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1436; *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 500.

of Chiavari, and at Rupinaro, even going as far as said San Pietro and then went back to Lavagna, and thence returned to the said *borgo*, surrounding it, and throwing the townspeople into confusion, so that it was necessary to close some of the town gates in Chiavari.<sup>41</sup>

The area through which the army of the *conventiculae* traveled coincided substantially with the territorial extension of the factions described in the trial records of 1552.

This image of a besieged *borgo* of Chiavari was circulated again a few months later in a letter from the vicar, who described “large squads of villagers with arquebuses who regrouped and drew closer to the towns,”<sup>42</sup> but this was a partisan and rhetorical image which sought to elevate the center of local government above the rest of society. A more measured and accurate depiction is provided by the general remarks that opened an account from May 1576: “The discords that took place in the city [Genoa] had an impact on the Ligurian Rivas and their inhabitants, and especially on Chiavari.” By “discords,” the captain meant the political conflicts between the *Vecchi* and the *Nuovi* nobles and the civil war of the year before. The pacification of the Genoese nobility was not followed by a similar peace agreement that took hold in the society of the *Levante*, where the end of the civil war was an opportunity for protagonist groups to renegotiate their relations with local centers of public authority and with the Genoese state. The tax question was at the forefront of these discussions. Here also an opposition between villages and towns took shape, as the villages of Chiavari refused to contribute to the expenses sustained by the *borgo* during the war (5,000 *lire*). To avoid the accumulation of interest, the Chiavari town council decided on 6 July 1576 to assign payment responsibility only to inhabitants of the *borgo*, also including the first five members of the council, the “*franchi*,” household heads with more than twelve children, those with university degrees, and the decrepit and those missing limbs—all of whom were traditionally exempt.<sup>43</sup> A controversial analogous case was offered by Rapallo and the Fontanabuona, and opposed those of Rapallo to those of the coastal town of Santa Margherita (the “Margaratini”). In every case, Genoa supported the claims of the villagers and, in the name of the fidelity that the “*paesani*” had always demonstrated toward the “true Republic,” the new oligarchy also authorized the suspension of debt payments for six months or one year.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 506. “*Cala fregosi*” was the cry used by members of the Fregoso faction to rouse themselves for an encounter. Literally the expression referred to the action by which the arquebus was readied for firing.

<sup>42</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 506.

<sup>43</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1436.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., filze 1412, 1419, 1436.



But the village/town opposition is just one of the ways in which community tensions and the complex relationship between community and state expressed themselves. The communitarian language and the idea of village unanimity concealed a reality that was deeply conflictual, even if instrumentalized and manipulated by a portion of the local elite, whether in the villages or the towns. The requests submitted by the villages near Chiavari, for example, were signed by David Vaccà and by the noble Ottaviano della Torre, in their roles as “procurator and *sindico* of the men and the community of the Lavagna valley.”<sup>45</sup>

In fact, the captain and commissioner Gaspare Oliva, sent to Chiavari in order to pacify the town and its villages, had found “a country that remained very unsettled and disorganized because of the factions.”<sup>46</sup> He approached the matter in the only way available to him: a strategy that alternated between confrontation and negotiation with the factions themselves, according to changing circumstances. At first, he had tried to promote specific peace agreements and to avoid “vigorous sentences.” He had offered himself as an arbitrator and had achieved a few successes, but only “as the opportunities presented themselves, and despite individual enmities.” He had freed all of those who had been imprisoned, trusting in their promises and commitment to work for “public peace.” But then he realized that the factions had “already imbedded themselves deeply in the people’s hearts,” and to re-establish order he began to support, openly, one of the factions. In the preface to the sentence that brought an end to a trial (whose transcription register was over 500 pages long), he eliminated the possibility of an appeal by the Bancalari and their adherents, who had been accused of having “assaulted” the Brignole and their “companions.” The Bancalari, who were publicly supported by the noble Pietro Ravaschiero (the legal consultant for the Fregoso faction in the case), had requested the intervention of the *Sindicatori* of the Rivas. They also accused Gaspare Oliva of having “exceeded the limits of justice” and violated the *Leges novae*. At the same time, they mobilized the army of their adherents in large parts of the vicariate’s territory.

The political significance of the sentence for power equilibria in the *borgo*, between the two kin groups and the factions, is obvious. But the most interesting aspect of the episode is the way in which it was reflected

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., filza 1419.

<sup>46</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 500.

almost instantaneously, as in a kind of electrical circuit, within other contexts outside of the *borgo*, such as local micro-conflicts and kinship disputes. Fights broke out between the Solari and the Oneto, from the “suburb” of Rupinaro and from San Pietro di Canne, between the Solari and the Sanguineti of the village of Leivi, and among kin groups in the Fontanabuona and the town of Lavagna. These were all rooted in a network of alliances and oppositions that covered almost the entire territory, for which Chiavari served as the concrete and symbolic center of power and public authority. The investigation of January 1577 mentioned above captures concisely but effectively the quasi-ritual significance of the itinerary followed “in army-like fashion” by the villagers’ faction around the walls of the *borgo*.

These were not marginal phenomena or happenings that were strictly tied to the specific conjuncture of the civil war; rather, as we have seen in the events of 1552, they were symptomatic of something deeper and more generalized. The repeated references to cells or small groups call to mind a type of organizational structure which existed well before 1575, was relatively stable and institutionalized,<sup>47</sup> and continued to dominate the political scene in the *borgo* and villages in subsequent decades. In 1605 the Cella launched an assault on the Rivarola in the public square of Chiavari. This attack, wrote the captain,

filled not only the opposing faction but all of the other families of the place with great disgust ... and revived the old hatreds and malevolence. This is clear since not only can it be read plainly in men’s faces and behavior, it is also evident in those of their wives and young children, who speak about it publicly, and speak over each other, showing the most passionate anger against each other.

This caused a general commotion, added the captain, into which was drawn the relatives and allies of each side from the mountain districts across the vicariate.<sup>48</sup> Similar episodes would be recorded in 1624 and 1632, when the kin groups from the *borgo* and the villages were divided between Greens and Blues, “colors ... which encompass almost the entire country.”<sup>49</sup>

<sup>47</sup> See Grendi, “Le conventicole nobiliari.”

<sup>48</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 591.

<sup>49</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1566, 1568.

#### 4 BETWEEN CENTER AND PERIPHERY: GOVERNMENT BY FACTIONS AND PACIFICATION

The axes of the factional alignments were constituted by the *principali* from the great kin groups”—like the Bacigalupo or the Zenogio—“who were rich and had many favors to grant,” and to whom “other colonels [heads of smaller kin groups] were tied.”<sup>50</sup> This definition was given by a witness in the 1552 investigation against the Reverend Rolando Bacigalupo—“a factional person, or head of a faction” in Chiavari and in Carasco. Taking advantage of his ecclesiastical judicial exemption, and of the immunity of holy places, Father Rolando had given refuge to bandits being pursued by magistrates and commissioners in the churches and oratories of the Lavagna Valley—an action that was repeated by other leaders and kin groups in 1575, 1605, 1624, and 1632. This practice had a general significance and corresponded to a mode of political organization that was operational, at different scales, both in center and periphery. Inter-family rivalries, together with the social practices associated with and produced by them, such as competition, arbitration, peace agreements, compensations, alliances, marriage exchange, and the symmetrical factional differentiations,<sup>51</sup> characterized both Genoese society and those of outlying territories in the Republic. On the level of ideas and governing practices the clearest divergence probably occurred in the years immediately following the crisis of 1575, with the ripening of an oligarchic project and the consolidation of a select leadership within the urban aristocracy.<sup>52</sup> The idea of governance by factions remained robust in Genoa, though, at least until the end of the sixteenth century, and in local societies (at least in that examined by this study) throughout the seventeenth century and beyond. Even after 1575 the new oligarchic governing group in Genoa, which according to the language of the Casale accords was supposed to represent the definitive transcendence of

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., busta 2965.

<sup>51</sup> The concept of symmetrical differentiation as a form of group interaction was explored by G. Bateson, “Culture Contact and Schismogenesis” in id., *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (San Francisco, 1972), first published in *Man* 35 (1935) (Italian trans. in *Verso un’ecologia della mente* [Milan, 1976], 101–14). See also id., *Naven: A Survey Suggested by a Composite Picture of the Culture of a New Guinea Tribe from Three Points of View* (Stanford, 1958), first published in Cambridge in 1936 (Italian trans. *Naven* [Turin, 1988]); see also other works by the same author.

<sup>52</sup> See the interpretation of the authors cited in Chap. 3, note 6.

factionalism and “colors,”<sup>53</sup> could continue to be viewed as a faction. An anonymous, undated letter, but very probably from 1595, versifies as follows:

O Lords of the new faction, unite, unite your people as much as you can,  
 Because you have been sold by the *principali* of the faction that opposes  
 you and is your enemy,  
 And in this way, beware all of you, and let the people beware, if this evil  
 wish of theirs comes to fruition.<sup>54</sup>

The judicial system obviously constituted one of the main arenas of competition in factional struggles. In the early seventeenth century Andrea Spinola saw the centuries-long tradition of factional division within the Republic, along with the weakness of public authority with respect to “private persons,” as insurmountable obstacles to the administration of criminal justice.<sup>55</sup> As we have demonstrated in Chap. 2, the Genoese authorities working in an alternating mode of confrontation and common cause with the local factions, grasped the crucial significance of how strife between kin groups and factional organization were two sides of the same coin. In summer 1552 the captain of Chiavari’s plan to bring peace to the *borgo* involved calling together the adherents of various leagues “family by family, and man by man, [and requiring them] to promise and pledge security, that they would withdraw from these leagues, and that they would never, nor would their heirs, assist them by means of their property or their lives.” Should they continue to assist the leagues their property, including their wives’ dowries, would be confiscated. At the end of December during the same year, the captain learned of a fight in which Giuseppe Cella and Pietro Agostino Sanguineti beat each other with clubs. He deplored the new “ruination of this place [due to] the large kin groups of each of these men,” and to the general “commotion” that this episode caused within and outside of the *borgo*.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup>The government’s intent was already expressed in the constitutional laws of 1528 and in the laws concerning conventicles of 1530 and 1541, as well as in a host of proclamations and decrees.

<sup>54</sup>ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1560.

<sup>55</sup>Andrea Spinola, *Ragionamento sopra il provvedere agli abusi della giustizia criminale in Genova* (1618 or 1619), cited by Savelli, *Potere e giustizia*, appendix. See also the entry “Autorità criminale” in Spinola’s *Ricordi*.

<sup>56</sup>ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 435. Cella and Sanguineti had quarreled with each other and had appeared before the court, each one with his own witnesses, simply to put on display the widespread support that each enjoyed.

Pacification was re-proposed as practically the only strategy for intervening, albeit with a greater level of force, after 1575. The coordinated intervention by the Genoese enables us to map the *principali* and the dominant kin groups throughout the entire vicariate. In the citadel of Chiavari the judges and commissioners negotiated peace agreements between the Basso and the Schiaffino of Camogli; the Lusseto and the Chiavario (enemies “from ancient times”); the Costa, Tassara, Ratto, Garbarino, and Canessa (who, “as the wealthiest and most powerful, take first place in all of the councils”) of Rapallo; the Rovegno and the Lagomarsino; the Solaro, Oneto, and Bafico of Rupinaro; the Sanguineti, Solaro, and Castagnola of the villages of Chiavari; the De Martino, Barbazelata, Pessolo, Fopiano, and Leverone of the Fontanabuona; and the Oneto and the Marré of the Sturla Valley. Each case and each feud revealed a socio-territorial reality, and a field of forces in conflict.

Judicial authority was a constant interlocutor/ally that was necessary in a way. The citadel, the house of the vicar or the commissioner, and the tribunal were all part of a public arena in which groups fought each other or sought out a solution to their struggles. This arena also served as a site where the “public rumor [*pubblica voce*]” was amplified or crystallized. In particular, the *borgo* of Chiavari was the institutional setting where social tensions could be reordered, and as such it served as a ceremonial space of extraordinary public relevance, not only for the town itself but also for the villages and for kin groups from the mountain districts. This function seemed to be constantly missing from the more formal representative institutions, such as the *parlamento*.

In the ceremony of pacification, the kin groups presented themselves as unified and cohesive, and willing to yield to the emotions of public ritual, but also as negotiators who insisted on conditions and caveats. The peace agreement between the household heads of the Basso and the Schiaffino “was carried out with so much love that they hugged each other with tears in their eyes.” The Leverone and the Fopiano made peace, but refused to lay down their arms. The accord between the Costa and the Canessa included “other kin groups” as well. When the Canessa and the Garbarino arrived at the town gates to negotiate an agreement, they were all armed and deployed “in military order, like an army.” The Rovegno and the Lagomarsino were organized in “squares of pikemen [*in quadriglie*]” and consented only to discuss a truce. Both the Rovegno and the Garbarino (kin groups from the *podesterie* of Recco and Roccatagliata, of Rapallo,

and of the Fontanabuona) included in their discussions their “relatives” from the Imperial fiefs of the Trebbia Valley.<sup>57</sup>

It was unavoidable that criminal justice and the institutional practices of pacification reflected this labyrinth of alliances and oppositions. Here one finds kin groups that were jealous of their rights and territorial privileges and fiercely competitive, and political connections that tended to result in a fragmentation of power and authority. Whether before or after 1575, “there is no place on either Riviera where all of the kin groups had not pledged security guarantees to prevent them from attacking each other, and nevertheless, the brawls and fighting continue.” Thus wrote the *podestà* of Recco, who was trying to bring peace between the Basso and the Schiaffino.

In this context, in the summer of 1578, Genoa appointed a commissioner to oversee the defeat of the “bandits” and the pacification of the Lavagna Valley and the Fontanabuona, where, due to conflicts between the kin groups, “Mass has not been celebrated for months.”<sup>58</sup>

<sup>57</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filze 500, 506; *ibid.*, Senato-Atti, filza 1436.

<sup>58</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 512; *ibid.*, Rota Criminale, filza 1224. Feuds prevented peaceful co-existence in parishes and made it impossible to carry out religious and ceremonial practices. In this respect, see the observations of J. Bossy, “The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe,” *Past and Present* 47 (1970): 51–70 (Italian trans. in *Le origini dell'Europa moderna*, ed. M. Rosa [Bari, 1977], 281–308). Bossy stresses that “the great obstacle to Tridentine uniformity was not individual backsliding or Protestant resistance but the internal articulations of a society in which kinship was a most important bond and feuding was, in however conventionalized a form, a flourishing social activity” (55).



## CHAPTER 9

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# Bandits

The commissioner Pietro Maria de Ferrari installed himself in the Fontanabuona with 200 Corsican soldiers in late summer 1578. Just a couple of weeks earlier the “peasants” of the nearby Lavagna Valley had forced de Ferrari to beat an abrupt retreat toward Chiavari.<sup>1</sup> When he returned to the backcountry he entered the Fontanabuona on horseback, preceded by drummers and an imposing escort, banners flying, and went to live in the “*palazzo*” of Galeazzo Arata at Pianezza. The “bandits” had withdrawn to the mountain summits.<sup>2</sup> His experience on the ground quickly taught him how difficult it was to disentangle the two charges given to him by the Senate: suppressing the bandits and criminals and pacifying the kin groups.<sup>3</sup> “Everyone had dealings and interactions with the bandits,” he observed. Almost everyone was armed, and many people had used their arquebuses in the “skirmishes” that had taken place off and on all summer long.<sup>4</sup> The valley was full of “bandits,” who were “supported by their relatives and friends who led the factions”—everyone was a “bandit” or a “criminal.”<sup>5</sup> The captain of Chiavari reached a similar conclusion during the following year, writing to the Senate that

<sup>1</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1224.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1429. The commissioner was supposed to see to it that “the men leave their weapons and return to their farming and their business.”

<sup>4</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 507.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., filza 508.

here, we must begin as soon as possible to destroy the bandits' houses, and cut down their trees and vines, without taking into account *fideicommissi* [entails that would have required the property to pass undivided to heirs], dowries, or creditors who were often fictional ... so that their wives and children will not be able to continue to enjoy their property and, undoubtedly, provide them assistance. Because they will often go from one house to another and be received and supported in this way, and then they can withdraw outside of our Jurisdiction at their convenience.

What is more, the heads of the bandit groups "cannot truthfully be called only bandits but are really partisan leaders."<sup>6</sup>

The "bandits" provided the pretext for an unusually massive intervention by Genoese authority, at least compared to past government action. These bandits were individuals who had been tried and condemned in absentia. Lists with their names had been posted in "the usual places": the market square, church doors, intersections of public roads, and so on. Their banishment exposed them to a greater level of retaliation by their enemies, who could murder them without fear of prosecution. Still, they remained in the valley, in their houses, under the protection of vast networks of kinship solidarity. The Genoese attributed to these network disorders, "*maleficio*," violence, and danger for travelers, while recognizing their function in a social context of disagreements and "peasant discords" embodied in kin group conflict.<sup>7</sup> Fifteen kin groups counted bandits among their number (thirty-eight bandits total were identified in a 1578 list),<sup>8</sup> but about ten of the "worst offenders" belonged to two kin groups locked in a feud—the Fopiano and the Leverone—and the others were their allies. Some bandits were "partisan bosses," that is, leaders of the kin groups and alignments that opposed each other.

The first accounts and impressions that the commissioner Pietro Maria de Ferrari sent to the Senate were marked with pessimism. "The enmities between the men of this valley are so virulent that pacifying them will be a

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., filza 512.

<sup>7</sup> For example, in the official letter sent to Pietro Maria de Ferrari on 15 July 1578 in ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1429.

<sup>8</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1224. The kin groups were as follows: Fopiano, Leverone, Consegliero, De Martino, Boitano, Scarlasato, Casazza, Capellino, Barbazelata, Porcella, Garbarino, Pezzolo, Malatesta, Crovo, and Barbero. Five bandits from the Fontanabuona were also included in a general list of fifteen "capital bandits" that was published in Genoa and posted in all of the *Levante* communities. On the Fontanabuona bandits in the late sixteenth century, see G. Pessagno, *I Banditi della Fontanabuona 1578–1581* (Chiavari, 1939).



most difficult undertaking. Every day they commit murder against each other, without the least amount of respect for God or for justice,” he wrote. “The bandits patrol the summits of these mountains, and see everything from there,” but unfortunately, “one can hardly chase after them there.”<sup>9</sup> The Corsicans had tried to follow some bandits who were withdrawing toward the Ventarola pass, but they were forced to halt when confronted with the open hostility of the inhabitants of the villages of Giare and Arena, and of the shepherds in that area. Pietro Maria disagreed, however, with those officials who had stressed the need to “uproot” houses and trees—he considered them inexpert in the art of governing. It seems certain that at first he collected information from the Arata, from whom he rented the attic and a room in the “*palazzo*,” and he had negotiated for the lodging and provisioning of his Corsican escort with innkeepers from the Arata kin group. (It is difficult to understand the level of ambiguity and instrumentality implicit in the position and actions taken by the *principali* of Pianezza; they seem to correspond to the anthropological image of two-faced Janus, as the events to be narrated in the next chapter will make clear.)

From Pianezza the commissioner had begun to exercise his functions as an arbiter and had opened talks with the *principali* of the valley’s other kin groups. He was not able to secure a general peace agreement (as desired by the Senate) before moving to Chiavari, “forced out by bad weather,” at the beginning of winter. He was able, though, to take advantage of the divisions and internal conflicts within the valley and had identified some interlocutors, other than the Arata, in one of the “parties.” This enabled him to capture and punish some of the bandits, who had been secured and transferred to him by other bandits in exchange for safe conducts or judicial exemptions. His political pragmatism and ability to sort out the complicated reality that other Genoese officials had described as a world of “barbarians” impervious to rational discussion was noticed by his superiors. In 1579–80, he was given the prestigious assignment of commissioner-general for all territories within the Republic.<sup>10</sup>

But this was not the end of the story. Direct intervention by the Genoese grew increasingly frequent in subsequent years and had a noticeable impact on power relations and equilibria in the Fontanabuona, and on the forms of reciprocity that regulated positive or negative interactions

<sup>9</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 507.

<sup>10</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filze 103, 1226.

between broad groups of kin. The public proclamations issued in Pianezza on 4 September 1578 assigned punishments, to be determined by the commissioner's discretion, against those who were found to have had any kind of contact with the bandits. Those who kept inns and taverns were especially targeted. Bandits' kin were also to be held responsible "as far as first cousins or those once removed, and all those of the kin group" were required to pay damages and expenses. Wearing disguises, masks, or false beards was prohibited, and a reward of twenty-five *lire* was established for denouncing those who did such things. Walking in the street after dusk ("after the bells had rung") without a light was prohibited. Every man was required to run to the nearest church and ring the bells when bandits were seen, and to pursue them and capture them. To this end they were permitted to carry arquebuses, and a fine of 200 *scudi* was to be applied for failure to carry out these orders. Another proclamation approved by the Genoese courts commuted the sentence of banishment for seven capital bandits (Battino and Cardarino Leverone, Stefeano Paramino, Federico Garbarino, Michele Capellino, Stefano Barbazelata, and Giuliano Fopiano), if "one of them were to kill another one of them." On this basis, which created broad room for maneuver for all of the local social actors, the commissioner negotiated with the *principali* of the kin groups.

The question of the "bandits," together with that of the security pledges imposed as part of peace agreements or as guarantees for those who had been expelled, thus became crucial. The kin groups that were associated with too many bandits became exposed, at a certain point, to an intolerable level of internal and external pressure. In any event, the level of local conflict began to skyrocket.

These issues will be analyzed in the next chapter and have been mentioned here to provide an overall sense of the context in which the bandits were operating, a context that also produced the sources employed by this study in order to analyze the bandits' roles and behaviors. As was described in the second chapter, criminal policy provided the lexicon and the mechanism for communication and interaction/confrontation between Genoa, local society, and local power brokers. Punishing "bandits" enabled the Prince (the Republic) to express its authority and to make public its commitment to "provide for, as is our duty, the peace of many people who have been harmed by these offenders and their actions which are more those of animals than of men."<sup>11</sup> This was an issue over which the

<sup>11</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1451, "Crida per conto de banditi" (year 1581).

Republic's legitimacy was being tested. But the rhetorical norms were typically limited to the preambles of the printed public proclamations. The legal and judicial practices were above all political practices, and were in large part determined by local social processes and by the even more detailed dynamics of community conflicts.

This reality was much more complex than a simple, clear opposition defined as local society versus the state. An important indicator of this fact was that the bandits of the Fontanabuona who were captured, interrogated, tortured, and finally dragged "behind a mule" to their execution during the 1580s almost all belonged to the same "party." They did not find themselves in the hands of the commissioner or the executioner thanks to the abilities of the Corsican soldiers—who were badly paid, afraid of the bandits and their relatives, and unfamiliar with the territory—or due to their own lack of experience. Rather, they were denounced and handed over ("sold" is the expression most often used) by their adversaries, or in a small number of cases, sacrificed by their own relatives or companions. In a similar context (the Recco Valley, which was not distant) during the same years, another Genoese commissioner declared crudely that the real objective of those cooperating with the judicial process was to "make [their enemies] suffer." These informants were "persons who had been bodily harmed or who had lost property to the bandits, and sought revenge through the application of justice."<sup>12</sup> This instrumentalization of justice was echoed by "enormous impostures and false accusations," and by the empty promises of bandits' relatives. As Pietro Maria de Ferrari wrote to the Senate in 1584, on the occasion of his second mission to the Fontanabuona,

the relatives have taken their time, but I am afraid that they are not acting with sincerity, but are only taking advantage of these offers [to expel the bandits from Genoese territory] while they bide their time until the Commissariat ends its term, hoping that by doing this they will be able to free themselves from burdens, as they have done on other occasions.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 512.

<sup>13</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 103. The "enormous impostures and false accusations" were incentivized by the system of rewards. The Genoese dealt with this problem repeatedly in the seventeenth century, but recognized that "no one wants to become their [the bandits'] enemies, or to alienate their relatives or supporters, or be marked as infamous ... unless such information is almost violently extracted through the enticement of the reward" (Biblioteca Civica Berio, Genoa, Misc. Gen. B.206.42, *Repubblica di Genova. Legge che stabilisce premi contro i banditi*, 13 August 1652).

The “perverse effects”<sup>14</sup> of Genoese judicial policy had a direct influence on the criminal documentation; indeed, they formed the basis of the process by which the sources were produced. The dynamics of local conflictual alignments and strategies of manipulating the judicial process created a disconnection and a discontinuity (but how wide?) between social practices, everyday behaviors, and judicial accounts. When analyzing such accounts, and the confessions included in them, one must continually keep in mind both general and specific contexts. This kind of reflection is particularly important for narrative testimonies, in which the weight and influence of community alignments were strong.<sup>15</sup> The interrogations of bandits had strange characteristics, moreover. Commissioners tried to obtain full confessions in order to support and justify punishment that they hoped would serve as an example, even if they did not plan to stage theatrical, public executions as was the case in some other European states. But commissioners were also interested in trying to reconstruct the bandits’ networks of relations, among kin and faction members, which almost always intersected or coincided with political alignments and local power configurations. They pursued this objective both by application of torture (*tratti di corda*) and through promises of freedom. Normally, capital punishment was applied only for the “most horrendous” crimes. Executions and the public exposure of corpses were infrequent, for two reasons. First, the capture of capital bandits was rare. Second, Genoese officials were more interested in finding issues over which they could negotiate agreements with bandits’ kin and village *principali*, and opportunities for doing so, than in trying to employ fear of a public execution as a means of psychological coercion.

The bandits interrogated by the commissioners Pietro Maria de Ferrari and Gio Batta di Negro in the Fontanabuona during the 1580s were minor personalities, and lower-level protagonists in the conflicts between valley kin groups. But precisely for this reason their testimony is important. Interrogators threatened them with being impaled “by the throat,” isolated, and deprived of the support of their companions and sometimes

<sup>14</sup>This concept is used by R. Boudon to describe the problem of analyzing social change in *Effets pervers et ordre social* (Paris, 1977).

<sup>15</sup>Favorable witnesses were used not so much for their depositions on the facts as to show the support enjoyed by the party in question and to demonstrate the “good reputation” of the accused. On the other side, the number of hostile witnesses and “public rumor” had the juridical value of proofs. For different examples of utilizing criminal records, see the special issue of *Quaderni storici* 66 (1987) dedicated to *Fonti criminali e storia sociale*.

of their kin—for this very reason, perhaps, they ended up in places like the attic of the Arata house in Pianezza which the commissioner had set up as a prison, or the citadel of Chiavari.<sup>16</sup> But their questioners also solicited them persistently, asked crafty questions, and offered forgiveness. In response to this treatment, and after having been “stripped, “bound,” and “stretched [on the rack]” a few times, the bandits began to name persons with whom they were “*in societate*” and described bits of their lives, offering details about their daily activities. In the pages that follow I will piece together these autobiographical fragments and information about the bandits’ networks in order to study, from a more prosopographical perspective, problems that have been highlighted in previous chapters.

The broad context—that of complex society—in which the bandits operated was constituted by the interweaving of family or kin dynamics and power dynamics, situated between local history and high politics. The power relationships at issue were local, oriented by kin groups and factions. But they were also expressions of state authority and jurisdiction, seigniorial-feudal domination, and ecclesiastical influence. The role of bandits in local communities can be explained to a certain extent, but only in general terms, with reference to feuds (which constantly reshaped social relations and provided cohesion to alignments), the weakness of the political center and its coercive force (which was a constant factor for Liguria throughout the early modern period), and the high level of interpersonal, face-to-face violence that characterized Old Regime societies.<sup>17</sup> Until now we have encountered bandits in conflicts between kin groups, in the context of competition for power and local resources, and in illegal activities related to circuits of exchange. The confessions made to commissioners in the late sixteenth century recount individual stories that include elements of all these overlapping realities. But there is also another aspect that comes to the fore in some of the depositions, and in the bandits’ behavior. Organization into companies, a high level of mobility, a skilled use of weaponry, and a vast network of supra-local and diversified relationships permitted the bandits to carve out—at least in some circumstances and

<sup>16</sup>The commissioners were lodged at Pianezza in the “palace” of Galeazzo Arata. The bandits were interrogated and tortured in the attic of the same “palace.” To assist him in torture procedures and with capital punishments, Pietro Maria de Ferrari employed a Moorish slave named Alí. On the role of the Arata and the significance of these events for the power balance among the valley’s kin groups see the next chapter.

<sup>17</sup>See the summary-discussion by L. Stone, “Interpersonal Violence in English Society 1300–1980,” *Past and Present* 101 (1983): 22–33.

situations—an autonomous space with respect to the cohesive structures of kinship and village. They could thus remove themselves from the most restrictive territorial ties and from community control. This phenomenon might explain the ambiguity of their role and position in the structure of local society. We remain in the dark, though, about many things related to the bandits, due in some measure to the selection and assembly of the documentary record,<sup>18</sup> or to the undecipherable spaces of individual experience in the past.

## 1 “COMPANIES” AND FACTIONS

Before examining the bandits’ confessions and shifting from a general but crude discussion to a consideration of specific cases, it seems useful to mention another element in the overall context: ties between the Fontanabuona bandits and the factions in Rapallo and Chiavari. This is an important factor because it enables us to explain the territorial reach of these factions and the “favors” that the bandits enjoyed even in the criminal tribunals of the towns, which made it difficult for the Genoese officials to gather information. Let us examine two roughly contemporary examples, which also seemed to convey a sense of defiance toward Genoese authority. In early summer 1579, while the commissioner was in Genoa to transmit a personal report to the courts there, a company of thirty or thirty-five bandits from the Fontanabuona “stationed themselves” in Chiavari, in the tavern of Ercolino della Cella, for over a month. When the commissioner returned he launched an investigation that obtained different stories of what had happened. Many of them, though, accused the police chief, the officials, and the captain himself (the Magnificent Antonio Grimaldi) of having “tolerated” and “worked with [*praticato*]” the bandits.<sup>19</sup> It turned out that the company was comprised of bandits from the Leverone, Porcella, Barbero, Consigliero, and other kin groups, and had received from the captain, thanks to the mediation of Andrea Vaccaro (a faction head in the *borgo*), a safe conduct enabling them to remit the severed head of Michele Capellino, a seventy-year-old capital bandit. Nicolino Consigliero had killed the old bandit and had

<sup>18</sup> Here I have in mind the observation of Ludwig Wittgenstein on historical explanation as “one way of gathering data” (Wittgenstein, *Note sul ‘Ramo d’oro’ di Frazer*, 28).

<sup>19</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1223.

obtained a special safe conduct permitting him to “bring with him any bandits and non-bandits up to the number of fifty if that many are needed, under condition that said bandits not enter the *borgo* of Chiavari.” The text of the safe conduct was read aloud publicly one Sunday morning, by the priest of the parish of Sant’Andrea di Verzi, who was a relative of the Porcella bandits. The inhabitants of the villages of Leivi, Costasecca, Ri, Bacezza, and San Pietro di Canne, which all clustered around the *borgo*, had seen the company pass by with its macabre trophy. Some of the bandits halted with their weapons in these villages, whose local officials received an order from the captain to “let them be.” The bandits, and especially the “young ones who claimed to be of the Leverone kin group,” boasted about having received a collective “remission” from the Republic “for having killed bandits ... and [they] stayed in Chiavari for about a month and a half, walking around publicly in the *borgo*, with people shaking their hands to congratulate them on their remission.” One witness, Lorenzo Lanata of Bacezza, reported having seen them “negotiate and do business daily with the police chief of Chiavari, eating and drinking together.” A few months later, in April 1580, a similar episode played out again, this time with Rapallo as a ‘public theatre’ of sorts. The protagonists on this occasion were members of a different company of thirty bandits from the Fontanabuona and the townspeople who adhered to a different faction. On Holy Thursday bandits from the Fopiano, Garbarino, and Capellino kin groups came into town on the “*strada di Monti*” with weapons in hand, remaining there until late at night, while the *podestà* was away. They were “given the warmest possible welcome, as friends,” by those townspeople who were “of their party, and highly partisan within the factionalism that dominates this country these days.”<sup>20</sup>

These ties between bandits and townspeople—ties that were in both of these cases translated into a kind of public representation—constituted an extension of the economic links between the kin groups of the valley and the merchants of the towns. The bandits’ organization into companies (often headed by “party bosses,” as has been explained) essentially paralleled the dichotomous configuration of the factions, in both the towns

<sup>20</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 515. An anonymous denunciation outlining what happened on 4 April 1580 accused the *podestà* of having tolerated the presence of the bandits when he came back to the town at around midnight.

and the villages. Precisely in 1580 the captain of Chiavari explained, in a letter attached a list of about sixty bandits active in the vicariate, that in the Fontanabuona

[the bandits] are divided, into one party headed by the Leverone and amongst them Battista and Stefano, still accompanied by Agostino Lercaro, who has been and remains an excellent traveler’s guide [*stradarolo*], and who has accumulated wealth and gathered a following, and also in their company is Battista son of Gio Maria del Sollaro of Leivi, whose kin group is numerous and highly regarded in this country..., and in the other party are the Barbazelata, Fopiani, Casazza, and their dependents, and amongst them is their principal head Federico Garbarino, but for months now they say that he has withdrawn into the state of Prince Doria where he got married, and from their group I think that the boss remains Giuliano Fopiano, and this party has ties with those of Nervi.<sup>21</sup>

If the “ties” with Nervi, the Lavagna Valley, Roccatagliata, and Bargagli (through Agostino Lercaro) show the supra-local character of the companies, the cores of the bandit groups belong to the kin groups and the neighborhood clusters from the parish of Cicagna: the Leverone and the Fopiano, the Porcella, the Casazza, and the Garbarino (see Chap. 4, Table 4.2). The transfer of consignments between Federico Garbarino and Giuliano Fopiano is one of the elements at the root of the feud between the Fopiano and the Leverone (the “principal” kin groups of Cicagna), which would freeze into place the alignments in the valley during the first decades of the seventeenth century (Fig. 9.1).

**Fig. 9.1** Companies and factions in the Fontanabuona, late sixteenth century



<sup>21</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 514. A list of bandits from the area between the Val Bisagno and Chiavari, drawn up by the commissioner Ambrosio Lomellino during the same year, included 125 names, a third of which were from the Fontanabuona.



But the criminal records also show how these alignments emerged both from local conflict and from interactions with the judicial system and external institutions. The “partiality” of judicial personnel<sup>22</sup> was compensated by the legitimizing practices of kin groups that collaborated with the commissioners, albeit in instrumental and ambiguous fashion. Note that in the example described above, the bandits captured in the 1580s were almost all from the company and faction led by the Leverone.

## 2 ARGHENTA CONSEGLIERO

The first confession that enabled Pietro Maria de Ferrari to reconstruct the organizational scheme of the Leverone company was not provided by a bandit but was extorted from a bandit’s mother. Arghenta, from the village of Favale, was the wife of Lorenzo Consigliero and the mother of a very young bandit, Nicolino, who was the one who carried the head of Michele Capellino to Chiavari in summer 1579 in order to obtain remission from the ban.

The interrogation of Arghenta was held in early September 1578 in the attic of Galeazzo Arata’s house at Pianezza and was organized around a single piece of evidence. She had been denounced, probably by the head of the *fraveghi* [goldsmiths] guild, for having sold a silver chalice that was “broken into pieces” in Genoa. This was prohibited, as she had been told by one of her relatives, Bernardo Consigliero, who was a resident of Genoa. The bandit Rosso Leverone, nephew of another bandit named Il Moro, had forced her to sell the chalice, which had been stolen from a church. Arghenta claimed to have done it because she had feared for her life. “They had shot at me with arquebuses before,” she claimed, adding that “they promised to give me a pair of shoes if I went and sold the chalice in Genoa.”<sup>23</sup>

The Consigliero owned five houses, a mill, and various parcels of land in the parishes of Favale and Cicagna, but Arghenta was a poor woman. For some months after her son joined the Leverone bandits and her husband moved away from Favale, she kept a tavern in her house. At many

<sup>22</sup> In 1584 the Doria “princess” justified her refusal to issue permission to Pietro Maria de Ferrari to pursue bandits in the territory of Torriglia by claiming that “all of the bandits should be pursued, and not only those of one faction” (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1224).

<sup>23</sup> The interrogation of Arghenta, from which all of the following citations were taken, is in ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1224.

points in her testimony Arghenta seemed to want to emphasize her poverty, like when she said that she had gone to Ponte Cicagna to receive the chalice from Rosso Leverone and had brought along with her a small niece “dressed in rags,” or when she accused the wives of the Leverone of owning beautiful linens and stolen jewelry (as we will see below).

Arghenta’s confession gives us glimpses of the dense context of quotidian social relations—daily life in spaces of sharp competition marked by violent outbreaks. This context was often targeted by public proclamations which were founded upon Counter-Reformation principles and issued by judges and commissioners on behalf of the Republic.<sup>24</sup> Arghenta’s house-tavern in Favale was frequented mainly by youths and bandits. Her son Nicolino brought the Leverone company there on several occasions during the summer. “In my house,” she reported,

they slaughtered two calves [which had been stolen from Nicola Stanghellino, a farmer-shepherd from Favale] and pilfered provisions and ate and took a number of chickens ... I sold them bread and wine and must have about three *scudi* left in payments from this company.

But then she added a statement, contradicting herself: “For many months they have not come to my house, going instead to Lorsica, to the house of Bregida de Martini, and to the house of Chiechino delli Crovi in

<sup>24</sup> Brawls and violence were quite regular occurrences during religious festivals, dances, and tavern banquets. Such fights were unexceptional, not the result of anomie, and were almost always tolerated by local authorities. Custom and the general excited state of the participants secured for them a kind of impunity. Judges tried to prevent more serious disorders by prohibiting the carrying of weapons—which in everyday life were tolerated or even authorized for personal defense, and not only for socially privileged groups—on feast days. But this effort ran up against such things as the customary practice of accompanying the canopy or the statue of the saint in processions with arquebus salvos. Still, toward the end of the sixteenth century, prohibitions were increasingly frequent and rigorous, and were extended to dances, games, ambulatory wine sellers, and *musette* (musicians). The proclamations issued by the Republic were perfectly harmonious with the prescriptions of the diocesan synod of 1588 which, in a chapter entitled “On the reverence to be exercised in churches and sacred places” that referred generally to the bull of Pius V, prohibited “in particular dances and taverns that are closer than thirty paces (of five palms each) to a church” (ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1027). The main target of the proclamations were taverns, the center points of sociability and of many local and supra-local economic exchanges. The official role assumed by religious values tied the “public good” to the “preservation of houses and families,” as can be seen in the proclamation issued by the captain of Chiavari in 1579, in which the prohibition against swearing and frequenting taverns features alongside those against playing dice, keeping arquebuses at home, “carrying standards,” and “interacting with bandits” (ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 513).

Figarolo [a village belonging to the parish of Lorsica].” Bregida and Chiechino (whose mention by Arghenta automatically placed them on the list of persons to be interrogated) also ran taverns during the summers. They were not, however, among those who kept taverns with a regular license and who were thus required to pay the galley tax to the Republic.<sup>25</sup> Then Arghenta stopped speaking, abruptly and stubbornly: “I can say nothing more except that which I have already told you.” She denied, in particular, having ever possessed or seen “silk cloth, linens, and shirts” that the bandits were said to have stolen during their raids, or knowing who in the valley might have them.

But four days later Arghenta was transferred to Chiavari and locked up in the citadel, “in the torture room.” Under interrogation for a second and third time, and under extreme duress, Arghenta gave in, pleading “let me down and I will tell the truth.” She tried her best to defend her husband and her son, insisting that “they never went along with said robber bandits to steal anything as far as I know, but went with them when they were fighting skirmishes.” She did, however, reveal the names of all of the band’s members: Rosso, Meneghino, Cardanino, Battino, Cesare, and Strozo Leverone; Scarabino, Gioannetino, and Battolino de Martino; Venturino and Batté Porcella; Scipione and two other Barberos; Giovanni Crovo; Gallo and Travaglinio Boitano; Nicolino and Bozino Canessa; Drietta, Musetta, and Andrea Scarlasato; Domenico Rizzo; and Gio Consigliero. Arghenta’s sentiments toward the bandits must have been ambivalent from the start. She declared that

all the bandits took advantage of my house very much, and they are well-dressed and have beautiful shirts and linens, which I saw at Lorsica, and which are each four *tele* in length and broad. ...They never do anything other than gamble and then they go to rob things. ...They promised me a pair of shoes, but they did not give them to me.

During the previous summer the company had stolen textiles, linens, shirts, and jewels from some Genoese vacation homes in the Bisagno Valley, and they took silks and velvet directly from the looms in a few houses in the Recco Valley. Part of the loot was sold in Pavia, part was distributed among

<sup>25</sup> In the first half of the seventeenth century there were twenty tavern-keepers from the Fontanabuona who paid the galley tax, but the number of those who occasionally ran their businesses without licenses, such as during the summer or in their own houses, rose to at least forty. Between 1595 and 1630 there were about twenty tavern-keepers from the valley, including three women, who were involved in criminal cases in Rapallo. The lists of the tavern-keepers who paid the galley tax are in ASCR, Criminalium, filza 35.

the bandits' relatives in the Fontanabuona,<sup>26</sup> and part was entrusted to a few tavern-keepers, among which were Chiechino Crovo and Bregida de Martino. The De Martino, weavers who worked for Genoese silk merchants, had acquired all the velvet and silk. The best jewels and linens had ended up with the wives of the Leverone. Arghenta had only received a shirt, a collar embroidered in red, the promise of a pair of shoes and the broken chalice to sell—which had by then cost her imprisonment and torture. In anger mixed with jealousy, Arghenta asked her interrogators to summon the Leverone wives for questioning, accusing in particular Pomina wife of Batta, Maxolla wife of Domenico, and the wife of Rosso. They are the ones, she said, who have the tablecloths, the silk shirts, the linens, and the jewels.

At this point Arghenta also revealed her difficult position within the network of kinship and marriage that tied together various members of the company. Arghenta was the sister-in-law of Meneghino Leverone, one of the heads of the company, but she was before all else a Fopiano, forced to choose between solidarities and loyalties that were at that moment opposed and irreconcilable.<sup>27</sup> She had in fact been present in the village of Ballano when the Leverone divided the loot and sold part of the tablecloths and linens stolen in the Bisagno Valley, but at a certain point she had been chased away. "I think," she declared to the commissioner, "that they made me leave because I was the daughter of a Fopiano." She had then gone back to Favale and told everything to her husband, who beat her with a club. She was thus by herself when she was arrested.

The interrogation was completed on October 2 and Arghenta was condemned to the stocks, the punishment assigned to those convicted of robbery. She was to be "whipped through the town of Chiavari and its *borgo*, and from there led to the pillory of said place and placed in the stocks, and left there for one hour." She was released on October 8 with a bail of 240 *lire* paid by noble Ottaviano della Torre.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Beyond the members of the company, Arghenta named about twenty inhabitants of the valley, both men and women.

<sup>27</sup> I have not been able to reconstruct with greater precision the ties of Arghenta with her kin group of origin, but it is clear that the feud between the Leverone and the Fopiano and the conflict between the two companies led by these kin groups (in early March 1579 they engaged in a night battle near the village of Castello—see ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 513) forced the woman to choose sides. Arghenta must have had difficult relations with the relatives of her husband: three first cousins of Nicolino "enjoyed" his property after he and his father Lorenzo were banned (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1226).

<sup>28</sup> The nobles Della Torre from Calvari, a village on the border between the captainate of Chiavari and the *podesteria* of Rapallo, carried out formal and informal political and judicial functions in the Lavagna Valley and in the chapels of Soglio, Canevale, and Coreglia. But

The sociability of the Leverone company included the regular frequentation of taverns, banquets during religious festivals (Arghenta described one for the feast of San Rocco), vagabondage, aggressivity, and “skirmishes” with other companies. These practices were similar in some ways to those of the youth groups of twelfth-century northwestern France described by Georges Duby, and of sixteenth-century France studied by Natalie Zemon Davis.<sup>29</sup> But these two examples, which relate to the case of the Fontanabuona, were perhaps more instructive for their differences than for their similarities. The companies of the Fontanabuona were not age-specific organizations, nor were they restricted to those who were celibate or younger sons (although in some groups such were the majority), but they included wider and more stratified segments of the village population, or even entire lineages or kin groups, as in the case of the Leverone. The term ‘company’ (*compagnia*) was commonly used to designate groups involved in a variety of activities: mixed groups of youths and adults that gathered for festivals and which, from May to October, moved from one parish to another for dances and celebrations; groups that organized the winter vigils, the Carnival celebrations, the rite of the *frasche* in May (a spring holiday)<sup>30</sup>; groups of kin carrying arms, in military formation, who participated in the feasts of Ascension and Corpus Domini at Cicagna<sup>31</sup>; squads of kin and neighbors who exchanged labor services, for cutting the

among their “clients” were also the Consigliero and other kin groups from the Fontanabuona. As it will be recalled, Ottaviano had been one of the captains during the civil war. In summer 1578 he and Pasquale Casazza, Carlo Fopiano, Galeazzo Arata and Simone Queirolo had held talks with the commissioner about the conditions necessary to bring peace to the valley. They obtained a “pardon and absolution” for all inhabitants of the Fontanabuona parishes who had “interacted and done business with the bandits” or who had taken part in the “skirmishes.” In part, the agreement was reached in order to avoid “creating an infinite number of bandits.” The official Rapallo residence of Pietro Maria de Ferrari was the house of *messire* Antonio della Torre (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1224).

<sup>29</sup> G. Duby, “Dans la France du Nord-Ouest au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle: les ‘jeunes’ dans la société aristocratique,” *Annales ESC* 19 (1964): 835–46 (Italian trans. in id., *Terra e nobiltà nel medio evo* [Turin, 1971], 135–48). Younger sons, gathered together in “companies,” were key element of feudal aggressiveness; see also N. Zemon Davis, “The Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France,” *Past and Present* 50 (1971) (Italian trans. in id., *Le culture del popolo* [Turin, 1980], 130–74).

<sup>30</sup> There was a customary practice of planting foliage in front of the door of adolescent girls’ houses (or a smelly bush if the girl’s morality was questionable). In the Fontanabuona, the entire group of neighbors participated in this ritual. In one case, at Lorsica, they planted a tree “whose nickname was the *Baciatroia* [kiss the whore]” in front of the house of a young widow (ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 32).

<sup>31</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 1.

hay or gathering chestnuts for example; squads of household heads who engaged in temporary cultivation of common lands; military-type groups who, organized by a corporal or colonel, gathered together the kin involved in a feud (discussed in the following chapter); and finally, units bound together by kinship, marriage, or territorial ties that engaged in bandit activity and extorted from merchants, and which remained within families, kin groups, and village communities.

The common elements of these companies were the ties of kinship, marriage, or neighborhood; the broad kin group as a recruitment base; the strongly competitive context in which they operated, whether in daily activities or in illegal ones; and the close relations between individuals placed under the ban (who were often married and had fixed residences in their birth villages) and the rest of the population—but in terms of the fairly rigid relations determined by factional alignments and enmities between dominant kin groups. The history of the companies and the narrative content of the bandits' interrogations can thus shed light on some of the overall characteristics of local society, of what we can define as a "way of life."

### 3 STEFANO REPETTO: AN ECONOMY OF BANDITRY?

On the basis of Arghenta's confession, Pietro Maria de Ferrari launched a "search" for the bandits and their relatives. He inspected the houses of the tavern-keepers and occupied the village of Lorsica for several days, tearing the roofs off of two houses belonging to close relatives of Scarabino, in order to force the De Martino to hand over the bandit. He managed to capture Gio Consigliero, a distant relative of Lorenzo and Nicolino, who had (since the events narrated by Arghenta) reinforced their ties to the Leverone and seven other "bandits." But he could not lay his hands on the Leverone, who, under pressure from the Corsican soldiers and the company of the Fopiano, withdrew into the Imperial fiefs of the Trebbia Valley. They returned at nighttime and then more permanently in early winter, when the commissioner returned to Chiavari and was then replaced by Gio Batta di Negro.

The Fopiano took advantage of the situation: the *principali* of the kin group negotiated the exile of two of their bandits with the commissioner.<sup>32</sup> They also obtained safe conducts and permission to carry arms for the

<sup>32</sup>The security guarantee for the Fopiano bandits exiled at Savona was underwritten by Galeazzo Arata (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1437).

others, and with the Barbazelata they began pursuing the Leverone company, but could not capture any of them.<sup>33</sup> There was a series of “skirmishes” on the mountains near Favale, where a feud between the De Martino and the Barbazelata was in full force, but the fighting only slightly affected the area around Cicagna where the Leverone and the Fopiano lived in contiguous villages and hamlets, and where the Monleone market remained full of merchants, muleteers, and retailers.

In general, the commissioners’ initiatives (and the Republic’s claims) were always subordinate to the local dynamics: pacification did not work, and none of the alignments in the field prevailed. The level of conflict thus grew exponentially, and three different commissioners took their turn at Pianezza between 1579 and 1581,<sup>34</sup> rotating through the lodgings provided by the Arata.

By January 1580 Pietro Maria de Ferrari was named commissioner-general and appointed to coordinate the state’s interventions throughout the *Levante*, which included negotiating with the lords in the Apennine fiefs. The house that he had occupied in Pianezza became the residence of Gio Batta di Negro, “a young person without governing experience” according to the official who followed him three months later, Ambrosio Lomellino, who also accused Di Negro of having given free rein to the Corsican soldiers.<sup>35</sup> But let us return to the interrogations of the bandits.

Stefano Repetto “who went by the name of Marcho,” was captured with the help of a “spy” and questioned by Di Negro in late January.<sup>36</sup> His confession, which ultimately failed to save him from being executed, revealed a number of details about an economy of banditry that was oriented around commercial brokerage. Marcho was accused of having given food and hospitality to bandits. The police chief had searched his house and found leftovers of a pig that the Leverone band had stolen from

<sup>33</sup> In February 1579 the Fopiano company was ambushed on the village square of Castello; ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 513.

<sup>34</sup> In 1581 the number of Fontanabuona bandits included in the “classifications,” indicating that their capture or killing would earn a reward or the lifting of one’s own status as a bandit, increased to twenty-four (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1451, “Crida per conto de banditi che si ammazzeranno l’un l’altro”).

<sup>35</sup> “The Corsicans were perhaps worse than the bandits,” wrote Ambrosio Lomellino to the Senate, “because they go freely into any house, stealing property where they find it, and they are all dressed like princes. Just as the kingdom of Naples is almost a colony of the Spanish, so it seems to me that the Fontanabuona is a colony of the Corsicans” (ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 515).

<sup>36</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1223.

Agostino Stanghellino. Repetto declared that “my skill is in knowing how to run a tavern.” He had relatives in the high valley of the Sturla and in the Aveto Valley, but he had lived in Favale for three years, where in addition to keeping a tavern he farmed the lands of Lorenzo Consegliero, the husband of Arghenta (this particular detail was provided by Gio Consegliero a couple of weeks later, and according to Gio this was the reason why Marcho could not turn down the bandits’ request for hospitality).<sup>37</sup> Di Negro subjected Marcho to torture, and as he hung by his arms from the beams of the attic he told of how he had heard the bandits—the same ones denounced by Arghenta—talking as they warmed themselves next to the fire in his house/tavern. They “were discussing some kind of big robbery.” He had never been a member of the bandit company, but had “understood” that the grain taken from the merchants and muleteers at the Scoffera and Ventarola passes had been partly divided up at Moconesi and Verzi and partly milled by Lorenzo (Locino) Consegliero, at his mill on Malvaro Creek, near Favale.<sup>38</sup> On the Ventarola pass, where the mule road came from Pianezza, through Orero, and led into the Aveto valley, the bandits had on several occasions “plundered [*spoliato*]” the muleteers of the Cagnone and Pessia kin groups (merchants from Rapallo; see Chap. 6). The bandits later began exacting a kind of toll on the merchandise in transit. As Marcho Repetto was put to the cord a third time, he gave up his insistence that he had never participated in robberies and plundering, and admitted that “we had taken a fee from the Cagnoni, and it was collected by Locino and other bandits and they gave me a cut of two *scudi*.”

The pivot points of this economy of plunder were the mills and the tavern-keepers. To the names of Chiechino Crovo and Bregida de Martino, Marcho added those of Bino Boitano, who kept an inn in the village of Arena, near the Ventarola pass, and Bertone Canessa, whose establishment was at Arboccò, a village in the hills above Rapallo. These men offered places for socializing, food, wine, and keeping warm in cold weather. They

<sup>37</sup> Ibid. Gio Consegliero indicated that Lorenzo was the head of the bandits. Gio was interrogated in Pianezza, “in the room with the chimney of the house of the noble Galeazzo Arata,” on 2 March. He offered an account of the feud between the De Martino and the Barbazelata that had taken shape two years earlier, when Stefano Barbazelata had shot his arquebus at Raffaele de Martino while the latter attended Mass at the church of San Vincenzo in Favale. In other matters, he confirmed what Marcho Repetto had said in his confession.

<sup>38</sup> Lombard muleteers used the road that linked the market of Monleone and the pass of the Scoglina, via Favale. The mills were concentrated in the villages of Castagnelo, Acqua, and Follo.



also guaranteed the transformation of stolen goods, or at least their quick recycling: Lorenzo Consegniero milled stolen grain and Marcho Repetto had salted at least half of the pig robbed from Agostino Stanghellino. The economy of banditry incorporated the subsistence of entire family units, as in the case of the Consegniero and the Leverone. The women argued about the “jewels” and the linens that were four *tele* long, but with the stolen textiles they also sewed trousers and heavy jackets, while the bread-sellers hid gunpowder for the arquebuses in their bread baskets.<sup>39</sup> A logic of direct, immediate consumption, as in the case of small thefts of courtyard animals roasted in the taverns, coincided with a market logic of accumulation.<sup>40</sup> On a wider scale the companies’ activities often intersected or coincided with contraband, and fueled real, periodic local markets, such as those at Cerignale in the Trebbia Valley,<sup>41</sup> or Cabanne in the Aveto Valley,<sup>42</sup> where there were warehouses of stolen goods.

The bandits thus operated in a vast area stretching from the coastal towns to the cities of the Po Valley. As we saw in Chap. 6, this area was held together by exchange circuits of oil and grain. Within the socio-economic and territorial hierarchy situated between the two endpoints of the commercial traffic, the bandits’ points of reference were the merchants of Rapallo and Chiavari, the tavern-keepers and mediators from the Fontanabuona (and other internal valleys), the feudal lords, and their own relatives who lived in the villages of the Trebbia Valley<sup>43</sup> or had emigrated to the Po cities.<sup>44</sup> The bandits were part of the normal, everyday

<sup>39</sup> Testimony of Nicolino Canessa, a bandit from the Leverone company (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1223).

<sup>40</sup> Maurice Aymard raised the issue of a monetary economy of banditry in his discussion at a conference in Venice in 1983; see *Bande armate, banditi, banditismo*, 505–11.

<sup>41</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1557.

<sup>42</sup> Testimony of Nicola Cella, capital bandit of the Leverone company (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1226). A portion of the stolen merchandise was sold in Lodi and Pavia, according to the testimony of Cella and of Arghenta Consegniero.

<sup>43</sup> In Chap. 2 I drew attention to the onomastic ties between the kin groups of the Fontanabuona and the villages of the Trebbia Valley, and to the constant interactions between kin groups’ various territorial segments. Other examples include the villages of Connio, Priancgra, Foppiano, Donderi, and Barbieri.

<sup>44</sup> Bits of evidence regarding these relations between emigrant “kin” can be found in the interrogation records of Stefano Cassina, a bandit from the parish of Dezerega who had joined the Leverone company in 1618 (ASCR, Extraordinarium, reg. 9; in this connection see my “Parentele, fazioni e banditi,” 270–71). There is some indication of a seasonal or permanent emigration to the Po Valley during the sixteenth century. Marco Epis has indi-

experience shared by all the kin groups, of every generation and from every village. In general terms, they expressed an economic and social system based on competition between corporate kin groups and the embeddedness of such competition in the structure of the Genoese state, as described in Chap. 2. The bandits were neither vagabonds nor uprooted people, even if the sources point to the presence of “street people [*stradaroli*]” (those who were referred to by the criminal norms of the Old Regime as particular types of *crassatores*)<sup>45</sup> from the Trebbia Valley who formed part of the companies of the Fontanabuona. Most of the “bandits” had numerous kin groups at their backs, and also families, lands, and houses,<sup>46</sup> along with small or large entrepreneurial or commercial activities. For example, Stefano Leverone, one of the company’s leaders who was captured and then escaped in 1580, made a living “practicing commerce.” The inventory of the property confiscated from him is very rich when compared to the postmortem inventories that can be consulted among the notarial records.<sup>47</sup>

The relative autonomy of local society was based on the same mechanisms that incorporated it into wider political and economic systems. That is, it was based on the interweaving of local and outside powers and on a set of social relations that guaranteed access to external resources. Significantly, another element of the bandit economy was constituted by

cated to me the presence of co-resident and cohesive emigrant groups from the Fontanabuona and the Trebbia Valley in Lodi during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

<sup>45</sup> See Sbriccoli, “Brigantaggio e ribellismi nella criminalistica,” 483.

<sup>46</sup> See the cases that I reconstructed in Chap. 2. Information on the bandits from the *Levante* communities and their kin was collected by the commissioners Gio Batta Adorno and Giulio Cesare Lomellino in 1617–20; see ASG, Rota Criminale, filze 1236–37.

<sup>47</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1223, “Inventarium de bonis” dated March 1580. This document was drawn up by the *pretore* of Rapallo according to the order of the commissioner Gio Batta di Negro. Property in the house of the fugitive Stefano Leverone included “four *caratelli* and one barrel of wine; a small barrel; a barrel of oil; a funnel; two quarter-barrels; a ladle; a wooden bucket and a copper one; an oil pump and a water pump; a small barrel of oil; a barrel of salted fish; a piece of salted meat; half a *mina* of flour; a balance with weights; a copper plate; a copper basin; a copper pot and two iron chains; a pan for cooking fish; a pan for cooking chestnuts; a mortar; a wooden table; another table; a table with twenty leftover pieces of bread; four chairs; four stools; three wooden stools; five benches; two chests with cupboards; a camp bed; a big sack; a quilt; a blanket; two *arbaxo* blankets; two heavy wool coverings; a pair of black trousers; two pairs of blue undergarments, one pair of red, and one pair of yellow; a woven jacket; a woman’s taffeta hat; two women’s collars; two iron boxes; a collar of black leather; a pin; a candelabrum; a mirror; an axe and a hatchet; various bundles of wood; a pitchfork; a dagger; a pike.” Stefano was thirty-two years old.

protoindustrial activities tied to urban entrepreneurs and distant markets—activities that made subsistence possible for many families in the Fontanabuona and other communities in the *Levante*.

#### 4 SILK VELVET WEAVERS AND THE BANDITS: THE DE MARTINO OF LORSICA

In Arghenta's confession and in those of the bandits captured during the 1580s, the accounts of robberies of silk velvet, which seem to have been a specialized practice of the bandits, constantly pointed fingers at the De Martino of Lorsica, whether as direct protagonists in the thefts (Battolino and the brothers Scarabino and Gioannetino) or as those who acquired the stolen merchandise (Geronimo, Michele, Gio, and Battolino's uncle Bernardo). The velvet problem and its relation to the De Martino highlights the sharp local competition surrounding the production of luxury items, as well as the recurring conflict between wealthy and poor weavers. It also sheds light on the kinds of conflict that divided the De Martino kin group internally, between rich and poor relatives. The measure of wealth and authority within the kin group was the number of looms operated and weaving commissions received—relationships with other kin groups in the valley were based on these factors. A number of interpretive challenges are offered by this case, the first of which relates to this particular form of protoindustrial activity.<sup>48</sup>

The ruralization of the production process of a delicate luxury good like silk velvet is a rare phenomenon in the history of the European textile industry. In the sixteenth century, and perhaps earlier, this process involved the coast and a few internal valleys of eastern Liguria. According to the declarations of Genoese silk manufacturers, in 1582 there were 159 weavers in the Fontanabuona. The number of looms must have been even higher because some weavers had two or even three, along with apprentices.<sup>49</sup> But during the late sixteenth century the Genoese silk industry

<sup>48</sup> I use this expression in a slightly different sense than did Franklin Mendels, who first proposed the concept and tied it to the phase that preceded industrialization (F. Mendels, "Proto-industrialization: The First Phase of the Industrialization Process," *Journal of Economic History* 32 [1972]: 241–61). The debate and empirical checks that followed were focused above all on the eighteenth and nineteenth century.

<sup>49</sup> Archivio Storico del Comune di Genova, Magistrato della Seta-Pratiche diverse, filza 600. Young people worked as apprentices both in Genoa and in the valley, as one can see from *acordacio famuli* contracts drawn up by local notaries.

entered a period of decline,<sup>50</sup> and as we will see below this crisis even found an echo in the confessions of the weaver-bandits. In the Fontanabuona the De Martino brokered relations with the Genoese silk merchants. Work commissions were given to the wealthiest weavers of Lorsica—those who had more than one loom and apprentices, and who put work out to other weavers in nearby parishes and in the Lavagna Valley. The latter were the ones who suffered when commissions from Genoa began to slow, or arrived inconsistently. We also know that amongst the spinners, both in Genoa<sup>51</sup> and elsewhere,<sup>52</sup> it was normal practice to keep for personal use leftover, discarded silk, or even to steal. Silk thus expropriated from the merchant fueled a kind of alternative market. Something similar took place in the Fontanabuona with the finished product. In this case the protagonists were the bandits and unemployed weavers, with the active or passive complicity of the wealthier weavers. Pieces were cut directly from the looms and sold or given for safekeeping in the valley. If they were not re-appropriated by the weavers who had suffered the theft, they were later sold on Lombard markets, in Cerignale (where, as has been mentioned, there was a “market” for stolen Ligurian velvet) and in Pavia.

An obvious question is why, notwithstanding the thefts and clipping, the silk that had been spun in the city continued to be put out for weaving in the valleys of the *Levante*, Fontanabuona in particular. Various factors combine to produce a plausible explanation, even if some of the links need to be completely reconstructed. First, there was an early emigration from the valleys around Chiavari to Genoa of people who went to work as apprentices in Genoa, according to recruitment patterns that followed kinship ties.<sup>53</sup> Second, the weavers in Genoa had always presented a social and political problem, especially during the civil war of 1575 and after the

<sup>50</sup> See G. Sivori, “Il tramonto dell’industria serica genovese,” *Rivista Storica Italiana* 84, 4 (1972): 893–944.

<sup>51</sup> G. Ghiara, “Filatoio e filatori a Genova tra XV e XVIII secolo,” *Quaderni storici* 52 (1983): 135–65. The cases before the Silk Magistracy have been studied by C. Buffoni, “Il problema del controllo del lavoro nell’industria della seta a Genova tra 1500 e 1600,” (MA thesis, University of Genoa, 1973–74).

<sup>52</sup> C. Poni, “Misura contro misura: come il filo di seta divenne sottile e rotondo,” *Quaderni storici* 47 (1981): 385–419.

<sup>53</sup> See “Maestri e garzoni nella società genovese tra XV e XVI secolo,” in *Quaderni*, Centro di studi sulla storia della tecnica del CNR, vols. I–IV (Genoa, 1979–82); G. Casarino, “Note sul mondo artigiano genovese tra i secoli XV e XVI,” in *La storia dei Genovesi*, vol. 6 (Genoa, 1987), 253–79.

plague. In 1580 the transfer of guild activities from the city to outlying territories was seen as a way of “freeing the city from the burden of dyers, spinners, and other manufacturers, who are too numerous and almost all poor people.”<sup>54</sup> Third, the weavers of the *Riviera* worked almost exclusively on more traditional textiles (velvet and damask), while the international market was experiencing the success of the “new draperies” and the merchant groups in the city disagreed about new manufacturing possibilities.<sup>55</sup> Finally, in Genoa the immigrant artisans who had by now established residence there played the role of mediators between their communities of origin (for example, the De Martino from Lorsica and the Fontanabuona and the Solaro from the Lavagna Valley). They became, in turn, smaller-scale entrepreneurs, acquiring shops and dye-works and distributing work commissions (which were discontinuous and probably not always in harmony with the cycles of agrarian work) to relatives and adherents. The entrepreneurial role of these brokers expressed itself at the local level through ties of kinship as labor tasks were distributed and apprentices and helpers were hired.

But the cases that I have reconstructed on the basis of the criminal documentation draw attention to two phenomena above all. In the communities of the *Levante* the distribution of protoindustrial labor privileged kinship and neighborhood ties, following networks of credit, marriage alliance, and factional alignment. At the same time, the wealthiest weavers within these contexts of privilege and exclusion, who had access to vertical relations both inside and outside of the communities, were constantly subject to intense pressure from their “relatives,” from poor or unemployed weavers, and from bandits.

Many of these factors can be identified in the career of Stefano de Martino, who was accused of having done business with the bandits and was interrogated in Genoa in October 1578.<sup>56</sup> Stefano had a house in Lorsica with two or three looms for velvet weaving. A young “worker,” Sabadino Boitano, lived with him. He gave pieces to weave to one of his neighbors, Lorenzo de Benedetti, and also to the Cademartori, in the Lavagna Valley. He had work relationships with Lombard merchants and on several occasions had purchased flax which was woven by the wife of Lorenzo de Benedetti. He had been of legal age for sixteen years, was

<sup>54</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1445.

<sup>55</sup> Ghiara, “Filatoio e filatori,” 145–46.

<sup>56</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1224.

married, and had a daughter. His father Pasquale had left after having divided his patrimony of lands and houses amongst his five children. Stefano directed the business and in exchange paid his father a pension of “twelve *libbre* or six *bogiole* of chestnuts per year.” The police chief had arrested Stefano in a house in Genoa, to which he had relocated a few months earlier, and where he owned a small shop for dying silk. He was accused of having purchased several pieces of stolen velvet from bandits, and of having sold to them four parcels of chestnut grove and a small house prior to his departure from Lorsica.

Stefano’s response to the first accusation was most definite: “If I am ever found to have purchased any piece of velvet or other thing [from bandits], then go ahead and hang me.” He defended himself with respect to the charge of selling property to the bandits by claiming that they had forced him to do so: “He was residing in that place [Lorsica] and had no other choice but to do what the bandits asked, because otherwise they would have burned his house down with him inside it.” The bandits, he claimed, “came to see him several times, in groups of twenty, twenty-five, or thirty people ... and he sold said land and house to Scarabino de Martino for 1,500 *lire*.” This money enabled him to move to Genoa, and except for 100 *lire* which he had paid to the Cademartori brothers in the Lavagna Valley, all of the money was spent in the city to make a number of silk purchases from three silk-makers (Pelegro Costa, Genesio Semino, and Giuseppe Cané), and to buy six *mine* of grain from the miller Giacometto Caprile. He also bought a bed “and some silverware and other household items.” After acquiring these things, a small sum of money was left, with which he claimed to have “gambled and whored.” (Asked with which prostitute he had been, he responded that it did not seem right to reveal such things). Then he began his weaving work and sold various pieces “in the black style” to Giuseppe Cané and to *messier* Andrea Giesa. When he was arrested he had thirty-seven gold *scudi* and thirty *lire* on his person.

At this point the interrogator wanted to know more about Scarabino and the ties of solidarity between other De Martini and the bandits. Stefano admitted only that he had heard that the money paid by Scarabino had come from a robbery against the “*ordinario*” of Milan (the regular Milan-Genoa postal service). However, some of his other responses indicate that his interactions with the bandits had not ended with his transfer to Genoa. After he had arrived in the city, Bartolomeo Crovo came to see him with a message from his family, his father, and his brothers. Gio de

Martino and various women of their kin group (whom the commissioner suspected of contraband trade in gunpowder between the city and the Fontanabuona) came to see him. So did Bissolero de Martino, Scarabino's father, accompanied by Chiechino Crovo (the tavern-keeper from Figarolo whom Arghenta had denounced), "who had a daughter who was married to said Scarabino the bandit." But here the investigation ended. Stefano was handed over to the commissioner Pietro Maria de Ferrari, "who began proceedings against him," and his attempt at social advancement probably ended here.

A few days later, the commissioner occupied the village of Lorsica and began negotiating with the *principali* of the De Martino kin group for the consignment of the bandits who "had taken refuge on the mountain tops." On November 15 he wrote to the Senate that the De Martino "had begun to make efforts to clear out the bandits from near their residence" and had turned over the head of "Orseghino, called Scarabino, their relative."<sup>57</sup> Was this a solution that the commissioner had imposed by force, through his threat to bring the De Martino to trial as "supporters of the bandits," or the resolution of an internal dispute within the kin group and their network of allies?

The backstories of what happened to Stefano, Scarabino, and Battolino de Martino (who would be killed in early 1579), are partly revealed through a repeat investigation of the De Martino that began in 1580. Like Stefano in the 1578 trial, Michele (Stefano's brother, also a velvet weaver), Geronimo, Bernardo, and Martino (father of Battolino) were accused of having done business with the bandits of the Leverone company, and in particular with Scarabino, Battolino, and Gioannetino. The trial thus reconstructed the events that had taken place two years earlier. What follows are the elements synthesized from the four confessions.<sup>58</sup> Bissolero kept a tavern in Lorsica together with Battolino, who traded oil and wine. After Scarabino's marriage to the daughter of Chiechino Crovo, the son-in-law and father-in-law formed a partnership to manage their taverns at Lorsica and Figarolo. Then Battolino was placed under the ban, accused of having killed Benedetto Barbazelata on Christmas Eve. But he remained in Lorsica with the full support and protection of his "relatives," who were

<sup>57</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 508.

<sup>58</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1223. The interrogations of the De Martino were held in Pianezza, in the house of Galeazzo Arata, in February-March 1580. The four De Martino were close kin, Bernardo and Martino being brothers.

all engaged in the feud with the Barbazelata. Later, together with Scarabino, Battolino joined the company of the Leverone and the bandits began frequenting the taverns of Lorsica and Figarolo. They probably sold velvet stolen during raids against villages near Rapallo and in the Recco valley from members of the De Martino kin group who were weavers. This was followed by a strike that hit the jackpot: in early 1578 Battolino, Scarabino, and about ten “companions” robbed the “*ordinario*” of Milan, near the Giovi pass, and took away the enormous sum of 10,000 *scudi*. The De Martino collected 2,000 *scudi* for their part when the loot was distributed. Scarabino had financed the Genoese adventure of Stefano in exchange for land and the house, which he had paid for in gold *scudi* “of various mintings.” The sale contract was notarized in regular form by the notary Gio Angelo della Cella, in the name of Scarabino’s father, Gio a.k.a. Bissolero, but the sale price was far greater than the real value of the property. Battolino also began to engage in commerce, in the name of his father (Martino), as a lender and purchaser of land and houses. He lent money to Bernardo de Martino, Gio de Martino, Corseghino de Martino, Gio Volpone, Massimo Cavagnaro, and the Cella of Cabanne. He also purchased property from Rebello, Lorenzo, and Lazaro de Martino and bought a house from Sartore de Martino. The contracts for these transactions were always drawn up in his father’s name by the notaries Antonio della Cella and Gio Batta Arata.<sup>59</sup>

But this unexpected availability of cash threw the kinship hierarchy out of balance and undermined solidarity, as the visits by the bandits were ever more frequent and aggressive, and the pressure on the wealthy weavers and *principali* became unsustainable. For example, Geronimo declared that Scarabino and Gioannetino were his enemies “who want to ruin my life so they can get their hands on the little property I have.” Relations with the Crovo of Figarolo were also damaged. Another Geronimo de Martino, to whom Stefano Crovo owed money, gave his claim to Scarabino. He, in turn, took a group of bandits to Stefano’s house on multiple occasions to try to collect the money “and once they raped and used force against Pelina his daughter.”<sup>60</sup> After the commissioner occupied Lorsica

<sup>59</sup> “Since he was a bandit,” declared Battolino’s father, “I am the one who had the documents notarized by Gio Batta Arata.”

<sup>60</sup> Precisely in order to smooth over these differences Bartolomeo and Chiechino Crovo had gone to Genoa in 1578 to visit Stefano de Martino. But in 1580 the De Martino and the Crovo “held each other to be capital enemies and they are held as such in the Fontanabuona



the “council” of the De Martino kin group decided what would happen to Scarabino. A month later the bandit was killed by Lorenzo and Stefano de Martino in Lorsica’s main road “in the middle of the night, under a brightly shining moon.”<sup>61</sup> Battolino was also forced to leave the village, and took refuge at Cabanne in the Aveto valley, where he entrusted his savings (600 *scudi*) to the Della Cella. Shortly before his own murder, in early 1579, he gave fifty *scudi* to Paoletino della Cella in order to obtain letters patent from Gio Batta Doria that would permit him to reside in the marquisate for the long term.<sup>62</sup>

The events described here did not, however, weaken relations between the De Martino and the Leverone, and did not cause the company to dissolve. Indeed, new members from the two kin groups continued to enter the company’s ranks. New recruits included unemployed weavers and apprentices, retailers, muleteers, and tavern-keepers. The overlapping solidarities between such people still seemed to coincide with those of the broader kin group, and on a wider scale than that defined by friendship or enmity between specific groups of relatives.<sup>63</sup> Thirty-eight years later, the elements contributing to the company’s cohesion had not changed. The new organizational structure of the squad led by the Leverone and the De Martino can be outlined on the basis of the 1618 confession of Stefano Cassina, a capital bandit from the village of Dezerega.<sup>64</sup> Stefano had been an apprentice weaver in Lorsica, where he had worked for the De Martino and for a Genoese merchant, but then lost his job and became a soldier (“because,” he said, “my boss [*padrone*] was the standard-bearer”). In the course of a feud between his relatives and the Dezerega he was banned and emigrated to Crema, where he held took a number of different jobs. He returned to the Fontanabuona when the two kin groups made peace with each other, but shortly thereafter the peace was “broken.” Stefano began to spend time with the bandits in the houses of Michele Leverone and

and everyone who knows them considers them in this way” (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1223).

<sup>61</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1434.

<sup>62</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1223 and *ibid.*, Senato-Litterarum, filza 515.

<sup>63</sup> In the Mediterranean world the case of nineteenth-century Greece offers a good example of the intimate ties between bandits and kin groups; see T. Gallant, “Greek Bandits: Lone Wolves or a Family Affair?” *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 1 (1988) and J.S. Koliopoulos, *Brigands with a Cause. Brigandage and Irredentism in Modern Greece 1821–1912* (Oxford, 1988).

<sup>64</sup> ASCR, Extraordinariorum, reg. 9.

Cesare Porcella at Cicagna, and in Francesco de Martino's house in Lorsica. In May 1618 he was captured by Lorenzo Dezerega and handed over to the court in Rapallo. After being tortured he named his companions and "supporters [*fautori*]," which included the rector of the church of San Gio Batta of Cicagna, to whom he had been introduced by his comrade Grixo Leverone and who provided the bandits with bread, wine, cheese, and wax candles.<sup>65</sup> During the months that followed, eleven alleged "supporters" were arrested and sent to prison in Genoa; some of these identified their occupations. Batta de Martino was a weaver for the Vignoli and the Calderari (Genoese merchant families) and had six looms for weaving taffeta in his house. Franchino de Martino, who had been an apprentice alongside Stefano Cassina and Agostino Porcella and was then banned and exiled to Corsica, wove with his father Raffaele. Together with others from Lorsica he transported fabric to Genoa. Battista Leverone had learned how to weave in Battino Porcella's house and in Genoa, where he had lived for a long time. He had been unemployed for a month because "Raffaele Montoggio, my merchant, did not give me any work because he told me that he had none to give." Battista's brother was a tavern-keeper. Scipione Leverone was a muleteer. Carletto Porcella was a "relative of the same kin group" as Agostino Porcella, a bandit in Corsica, and "traffics in things [*spaccia*] at festivals." Cesare Porcella was a "villager," but knew how to work "professionally quite well, as an honest man." Only Andrea de Martino and Pelegro Leverone were "men who used a hoe [*zappa*]." Andrea Rovegno, another *zappatore*, had been building a mill on his property in the village of Campodezasco when he was arrested.

Clearly, this interweaving of ties was based, in almost equal parts, on kinship, alliances, and an articulated economic space. It was sustained by dense brokerage relations with Genoa, in a context of strong competition in which manufacturing activities were central. Thirty years after Stefano's confession, the De Martino continued to serve, ambiguously, as the main figures in a situation that resembled the one just described. This continuity was based on an important occupational and functional specialization of the kin group from Lorsica, on a kind of monopoly of apprenticeship possibilities, and on ties to Genoa which provided commissions for work to be done in the home.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>65</sup> In 1621 the bandits were staying in the rectory of the church (ASCR, Criminalium, filza 19). For a comparable episode from 1608, see ASCR, Extraordinarium, reg. 1.

<sup>66</sup> In 1649 Michele, Bernardo, and Ambrosio de Martino had just returned to Lorsica from Genoa, where they had been working as velvet weavers and silk dyers, when they were

## 5 ALESSANDRO ARATA: BANDITS AND DIGGERS

We can be certain of the close interaction between companies and kin groups. But for some, and especially for young people, membership in an armed band could mean being able to live one's life more freely, in a space of autonomy with respect to the kin group or village community—that is, those dense networks of relations that both guaranteed protection but were also restrictive—and with respect to one's status or socially ascribed condition.

In general, the bandit's status did not presuppose exclusion from the dominant social hierarchy; rather, it distinguished him from the farmers (*zappatori*) who were tied to the land. Young bandits, or those who associated with them, behaved in ways, engaged in activities, and exhibited characteristics that made them stand out from the rest of the village population. They dyed their faces, used fake beards and moustaches, and wore masks and large hats that covered their faces.<sup>67</sup> The winter garments, brown blended wool cloaks, and heavy moleskin cloaks that they wore were probably worn by every peasant, but the bandits also had colored shirts and silk kerchiefs around their necks or in their hair, with a feather. The bandits-brigands were active at night when they attacked the houses of wealthy landowners and weavers. They lay in wait at the most isolated and hard-to-reach stretches of the mule-paths so that they could ambush merchants. They met in clearings in the woods or in ditches far away from residential areas so that they could divide their loot. When they were hunted by Corsican soldiers or other enemies they lived in the forest and slept in farmhouses or caves, or even in chestnut drying sheds on the edges of villages.<sup>68</sup> In case of capture or torture they carried with them small bottles of poison, along with sacred images or objects, hidden in inside pockets of their coats.<sup>69</sup> Carrying weapons was not a particular characteristic of

accused of “having traded a lot of silk and other things with the bandits” (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1116).

<sup>67</sup> In 1669 the commissioner-general Ambrogio di Negro would publish a proclamation that prohibited the wearing of “large hats that one could pull down to cover one's face” (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1256). I have reconstructed the behaviors and attitudes of bandits on the basis of the criminal documentation; the following examples are taken from ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1223–24, 1226.

<sup>68</sup> In May 1598 the captain of Chiavari wrote that “the time will soon come when it will be more difficult to capture them, because the chestnuts are starting to produce leaves, and they will soon be able to find things to eat in the countryside.” The leafy woods offered a safe refuge for the bandits for many months during the year (ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 571).

<sup>69</sup> A small image (“a flyer that is presumably used by the guilty to avoid confessing their crimes”) depicting in ink the cross and the words “heli heli lamas tadabani” (reproducing the

bandits, since every villager had at least an arquebus and dagger in his house. But the bandits were extremely obsessive about their weapons: they all had wheel lock arquebuses, which were the most modern guns of the time, and during long trips in the woods and over the mountains they carried them in cases made out of leather and badger skin. Sheltered from the rain in sheds up near the high pastures, they took apart and cleaned their guns. The band leaders and famous bandits had arquebuses with silver “locks,”<sup>70</sup> and band members traded the components of their guns with each other—breeches or locks—that they had acquired in Lombard cities or from Genoese artisan gunsmiths. The bandits and young people displayed their guns at festivals and in taverns, where sometimes the best weapons were gambled for in card or dice games. When testimony was given, distances were measured in terms of arquebus shots.

cry of Jesus on the cross just before he died—“*Elí, Elí lamà sabachthaní?*”) is preserved in the Archivio Storico del Comune di Rapallo, attached to the trial records of 1628 against Tomaso Molto (ASCR, Extraordinarium, reg. 23). Tomaso was an extraordinary bandit figure, who had been arrested by the police chief of Rapallo, where he lived with his second wife and a son and worked as a blacksmith. He had been accused of numerous robberies in the shops and the villages near the town, and of the murder of Cattarina Noce, who had been drowned in a barrel of oil. The evidence against him was that “he does not work at his profession” and that despite the fact that he barely had 150 *lire* worth of property, and did not have a “business, active profession, or work dealings,” he “is involved in wholesale trading and spends a lot of money ... gambling and eating with his friends.” During his second day in prison he had his wife bring him “the book that he is used to reading in the evening”—the guard brought it to the captain who identified it as “that work by Ariosto” (*Orlando Furioso?*), and found between its pages the “flyer” described above. Following interrogation and torture, Tomaso confessed that he had stolen seven *otri* of oil but defended himself by claiming that he had done so on orders from the Arata of the Fontanabuona. Specifically, he accused Aurelio Arata, son of the notary Gio Batta from Pianezza. He claimed to be a skilled gambler: “I usually play *primera*, *frosada*, *verdina*, three sevens [all card games], and *rigorello* even though that is a cheese wheel game” (a game involving the rolling of a mold for a round of cheese toward a specific point). He boasted of having worked for and earned the trust of Lady Giovanna Lomellini, a Genoese noblewoman, who had credited him 448 *lire* for having rebuilt her vegetable patch and the garden of her villa near Rapallo after the nearby creek had overflowed. The trial concluded by condemning Tomaso to be hanged. Aurelio Arata was also questioned but released soon thereafter with a security payment of 1,000 gold *scudi*.

<sup>70</sup>In 1615 a widow from Monti gave to her cousin, who was a bandit, an arquebus with a silver “lock,” so that he could avenge her husband who had been killed in a feud. Benedettina, widow of Pantalino Chichizola, was then accused and tried for having said publicly “that she wanted to dress in red so that she could have her revenge” (ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 6). Evidence of similar interventions in feuds by widows can be found in other trial records. For example, also in 1615, Bernarda Norero, widow of Nicola Canale, accused Gio Carignano before the Rapallo court as follows: “Last night I dreamed that my said husband had come back to life joyously, and then Our Most Holy Lady came too, and told me ‘Bernarda, Gio Carignano is the one who burned your house down and killed your husband’” (*ibid.*)

The great mobility and broad networks of relations, both horizontal and vertical, local and supra-local, exploited by the bandits were certainly resources that the *zappatori* and agricultural laborers did not have.<sup>71</sup> The common defense given by country people who were accused in court of having provided food, lodging, and information to the bandits was one that reflected a widespread view of the group: they claimed that they feared the bandits, and that they, poor villagers who “carried themselves with their hoe in their hands,” had no other choice but to do what the bandits demanded. This image of the bandit was linked to another image, whether real or mythical, of social advancement.<sup>72</sup>

But alongside the theme of social distinction, other elements were present in the confessions and testimonials: “disgust” with one’s father and disputes with one’s kin group.

Alessandro Arata was the object of an exchange between princes: in February 1578 Marquis Gio Batta Doria turned him over to the Genoese authorities in exchange for noble Geronimo Marini, who had been accused of a conspiracy against the marquis himself. Alessandro, who for his part had been accused of belonging to the Leverone company, was locked up in the citadel of Chiavari. As his interrogation began in mid-April,<sup>73</sup> he was still wearing the trousers of red damask that he had had made on the occasion of a wedding between a bandit of the Canessa family and the daughter of Mariotto Rovegno (also a bandit, then in prison), an occasion in which the entire Leverone company had participated. At first he denied everything and followed what must have seemed the most obvious line of defense: not only had he never associated with bandits, but he was their enemy, since the Arata are the enemies of the Leverone. Even at the most recent feast of the Ascension, he claimed, the two kin groups “were in dispute.” He declared that he had two houses, three parcels of chestnut grove, and a “vineyard house” at Orero (in fact this was an undivided

<sup>71</sup> The concept of “tactical mobility” was used by E.R. Wolf to explain how peasants were recruited into revolutionary movements; see his *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1969) (Italian trans. *Guerre contadine del XX secolo* [Milan, 1971]).

<sup>72</sup> For example, in 1608 witnesses against Geronimo Solari, a bandit from the Lavagna Valley who was tied to a company from the Fontanabuona, declared that he “*faceva l'arte di Michelasso* [was a good-for-nothing] and now runs a tavern and is also a tailor” (ASCR, Extraordinarium, reg. 3).

<sup>73</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1527. The bulk of the testimony of Alessandro Arata would be confirmed by another bandit of the Leverone company, Antonio Giudice “the weaver,” in 1581 (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1457).

property that he held with his brothers). He asked that his relatives be called to Chiavari, and in particular an uncle, Gio, “who will help me.” But none of the Arata came to assist him, and the court of Chiavari heard no witness who testified in his defense.<sup>74</sup>

After having been tortured, Alessandro revealed some of the things that had happened to him during the previous three years. He had known the bandits for a while, but only after the death of his father had he begun to associate with them regularly. Within a few months he had spent an inheritance of over 100 *scudi* (a kind of “dowry” that excluded him from the management of the paternal holdings, which had been entrusted to his brothers) by “gambling and eating at the tavern,” in his words. After this, he became a member of the company, working for them as a tailor. “They brought me stolen fabric and I made things out of it, and I made them jackets and trousers,” shorts and stockings. He did this for the group first in Fontanabuona, Soglio, and Lorsica, and then in the Spinola fief on Milanese territory, at Busalla, and at Priosa in the Aveto valley.

All of the Leverone were part of the company, as were two Canessa brothers from the villages of Rapallo, the De Martino, three from Busalla, Stefano Paramino, a landowner from Soglio who was “rich with 12,000 *lire*,” and others. The core of the band fluctuated between twelve and thirty-two people, including “bandits and non-bandits.” Specific actions were organized by a boss chosen from a small circle by the “council” of the bandits. After the loot was distributed (in unequal parts according to an internal hierarchy), the non-bandits were “released from service [*licenziati*].” Mobility amongst the members of the band was related to territorial mobility, which as we have seen was at a very high level. For a while, Alessandro maintained contacts with some of the Arata from Orero: a cousin, Gio Batta, “who carried bread to sell here in Chiavari, and he is wealthy, and lives well”; and an uncle, Giacomo, “who goes around

<sup>74</sup> Some motives of young bandits were probably also to be found in forms of familial and parental organization, matrimonial and inheritance practices, and the management and distribution of kin group resources. These issues could produce “disgust” with one’s father or brothers. It is certain that the behaviors of young people and “sons” were often stigmatized by Genoese authorities: in 1595 the captain of Chiavari negotiated with the older men and fathers of the Fontanabuona to find ways for them to “restrain their sons and grandsons” (ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 563). It would be useful to investigate the role of younger sons, especially in large families. We know for sure that, at least when young men went for long periods as bachelors, waiting for inheritance, and then experiencing an undivided family patrimony, they tended to engage in very risky outside activities, such as smuggling and serving as armed escorts of merchants and muleteers.

repairing mills.” Alessandro had also lived in Genoa with one of his neighbors from Orero, Antonio Brichetto, who trimmed velvet and fished for coral at Tabarka (an island off the Tunisian coast whose coral concession was held by the Lomellino family). He then joined the Leverone in a large-scale robbery of a rich shopowner of Rapallo; the bandits entered the *borgo* at night, killed *messire* Antonio Forno, and then looted his shop.<sup>75</sup> The bandits withdrew to the hills between Rapallo and the Fontanabuona and divided the stolen goods there. Alessandro got thirty *libbre* of things, including “twenty-six *libbre* of gold and silver, and some cash.” But this event created an enormous “*commotione*” amongst the townspeople, and the concern spread to Chiavari and Genoa. Alessandro took refuge at Piacenza, and with his part of the loot he bought a taffeta hat and took up lodgings at the tavern of the Three Kings. He looked for work, without success. Finally he returned to the Aveto valley, where he was “sold” to the police chief of Chiavari.

In late April, without anyone intervening in his defense or offering a security guarantee for his release, Alessandro was transferred by boat to Rapallo. He was hanged from the Ponte della Paglia, not far from the shop of the deceased *messire* Antonio Forno.

Although the story of Alessandro Arata is perhaps an extreme example, these stories together describe a local social space, portions of which are illuminated and uncovered through conflicts and the subsequent interrogations carried out by the Genoese commissioners. The individual accounts vary in a range of ways, but they share a basic matrix and are linked in their representation of at least two basic aspects of social structure: solidarity within family and kin groups, and rivalry between corporate groups. The problems created by the latter are at the center of the historical interpretation of the sources analyzed in the following chapter.

<sup>75</sup> These bandits were supported by a portion of the townspeople; in fact, they claimed that they had been recruited by Antonio Forno’s numerous enemies in the *borgo*. Indeed, Antonio had acquired part of the property confiscated from various townspeople by the Adorno faction after the civil war of 1575.



## Politics within Kin Groups (1565–1665)

Criminal sources and the event narratives conveyed in them enable us to reconstruct and explore the relational structure of the kin groups and local politics in the Fontanabuona, just as they did for bandits and factions in the *borgo* of Chiavari. Through these records we will also look at conflict and solidarity in villages, parishes, and the broader configuration of supra-local powers and authorities.

Figure 10.1 shows that some feuds and some alliances were multigenerational, lasting for centuries. It also points to enmities between smaller sets of kin. These were articulated and took shape around the feuds, albeit in ways that were discontinuous and intermittent. Another element that comes to light through Fig. 10.1 (which certainly suffers from gaps in the documentation) is that enmities and alliances radiated from strong groups<sup>1</sup> and circumscribed territorial contexts—formed by parishes or clusters of villages and neighboring hamlets. These included the parish of Cicagna (where the Leverone, Porcella, Fopiano, Casazza, and Arata kin groups were located) and the villages located between the parishes of Favale and

<sup>1</sup>The concept of a ‘strong group’ refers to a corporate group that establishes its own borders and maintains tight control over its members. Mary Douglas explored this concept, which she derived in part from Basil Bernstein; see M. Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (London, 1970) (Italian trans. *I simboli naturali* [Turin, 1979], chap. 4) and id., “Cultural Bias,” in *The Active Voice. Essays* (London, 1982) (Italian trans. in *Antropologia e simbolismo* [Bologna, 1985], chap. 9).



Year	Feuding kin groups*		Sources <sup>+</sup>	Year	Feuding kin groups*		Sources <sup>+</sup>		
1565	Leverone	vs	Casazza <i>Fopiano</i>	RC 1220	1608	Leverone	vs	Fopiano Casazza	LS 602 AS 1691, 1697, E 1
1566	Boitano	vs	Cordano <i>Pessolo</i>	RC 1220	1610	Leverone	vs	Arata <i>Porcella</i>	AS 1709
1575-77	Leverone	vs	Fopiano		1611	Leverone	vs	Casazza	LS 610
	De Martino	vs	Barbazelata <i>Consegliero</i>	LS 500		Boitano	vs	Fopiano	AS 1714
	Boitano	vs	Garbarino	AS 1436		Leverone	vs	Fopiano	AS 1716
	<i>Barbero</i>		<i>Capellino</i>	LS 506		<i>Porcella</i>		<i>Casazza</i> <i>Garbarino</i>	AS 1720 C 4, E 5
			<i>Cordano</i> <i>Casazza</i>		1612	Leverone	vs	Arata	
1578	Boitano	vs	Bruxa			Boitano	vs	Fopiano	C 5
	Leverone	vs	Fopiano	AS 1427		Barbero		Dondero	
	<i>Porcella</i>		<i>Pessolo</i>	AS 1429		Giuffra	vs	Maggiolo	
	Boitano	vs	Barbazelata <i>Fopiano</i>	AS 1434 LS 507	1615	Leverone	vs	Arata Fopiano Casazza	C 6
			Barbarino	LS 508		Pessia		Casella	
	Porcella	vs	Fopiano Barbazelata Capellino	RC 1223 RC 1224		Giuffra	vs	Casella	
1579	Boitano	vs	Fopiano	AS 1434		Cassina	vs	Casazza	
1580	Leverone	vs	Garbarino		1617-18	Boitano		Fopiano	
	De Martino	vs		RC 1223		Queirolo	vs	Casazza	E 7, E 8 E 9
1582	Leverone	vs	Fopiano	LS 521		De Martino		Segaro	
1583	De Martino	vs	Barbazelata Cordano <i>Crovo</i>	RC 1226		Cassina		Dezerega	
1584	De Martino	vs	Fopiano Cordano	RC 103	1623	Leverone	vs	Arata Fopiano <i>Casazza</i>	S 1566 LS 666
1595	Boitano	vs	Barbazelata <i>Chiereghino</i>	LS 563	1626	Leverone	vs	Casazza	E21
1599	Leverone	vs	Arata	C 2	1627	Gnecco	vs	Arata <i>Fopiano</i>	E 22
1601	Boitano	vs	Fopiano		1628	Ghirardello	vs	Arata <i>Paramino</i>	RC 1245
	Porcella	vs	Barbazelata	LS 583		<i>Gnecco</i>			
	De Martino					<i>Nassano</i>			
1604	Leverone	vs	Fopiano	LS 589		<i>Connio</i>			
1607	Giannino	vs	Pessolo	AS 1671	1629-30	Leverone	vs	Casazza	E 23 E 24
	Giannino	vs	Pessolo		1632-33	Porcella	vs	Fopiano	E 26
	Boitano	vs	Cordano	LS 598		Leverone		Arata	E 28 C 8
	<i>Consegliero</i>		<i>Chiereghino</i>	AS 1692	1635-36	Porcella	vs	Fopiano	AS 1964
	<i>Stanghellino</i>		<i>Mangino</i>			<i>Risso</i>		Casazza	AS 1964
						<i>Scarlasato</i>		<i>Cavagnaro</i>	LS 717
						<i>Pessia</i>		<i>Bacigalupo</i>	
					1665	Leverone	vs	Fopiano	RC 1173 RC 1254

\* Allies in italics.

<sup>+</sup>Sources: AS = ASG, *Senato-Atti*; LS = ASG, *Senato-Litterarum*; RC = ASG, *Rota Criminale*; S = ASG, *Archivio Segreto*; C = ASCR, *Criminalium*; E = ASCR, *Extraordinarium*

**Fig. 10.1** Feuds and kin group alignments in the Fontanabuona, 1565–1665

Lorsica (home of the De Martino, Barbazelata, Boitano, Pessolo, Consegliero, and Cordano kin groups).

Village populations were divided by conflicts, but without creating organized factional alignments as in the town of Chiavari. During the

seventeenth century, the political history of the Fontanabuona overlapped, for the most part, with that of the kin groups residing in the nucleated villages of the valley bottom, between Pianezza, the village market of Monleone, the village of Ponte with the chapel of San Gio Batta of Cicagna, and the territory of Roccatagliata (which had been in Genoese hands for only a few decades). But the enmity that set the Leverone and the Porcella against the Casazza and Fopiano was already “ancient” in 1564. A judicial account from that year describes the feud as a ‘social drama,’ whose distinctive elements were the highly ritualized behaviors of the protagonists and the universal participation of all of the “relatives,” both men and women.<sup>2</sup> On one Sunday in February Jacomo Casazza and Peregro Leverone, young sons of two household heads, challenged each other “to a fight” with swords on the Gallinaria plateau in the territory of Roccatagliata. They left their houses with their weapons and breastplates, followed by “quite a few kin” also carrying arquebuses, crossbows, spears, daggers, hatchets, stones, clubs, and wearing capes. The witnesses from each side described, in mirror images, the field of battle with the kin and allies arranged in compact groups—“as is commonly said, on one side and the other”—and “crying out Kill and Burn ... and they made an enormous racket.”<sup>3</sup> This was a theatrical, bloodless challenge, “in the midst of which,” declared Pasquale Casazza, “no harm was done.” A brawl eventually broke out, but it was later, at the hour of the Hail Mary, and not there but at the houses at Ponte, where Crovo Leverone “still wanted to say certain things, such as ‘there are some shits who wanted to challenge us to fight but then they couldn’t follow through.’” On that very evening the Leverone and the Casazza held peace talks, but there were new confrontations during the night and the following days. The Fopiano also took up arms “in favor” of the Casazza, while the Leverone were supported by the Porcella. Accused of having “broken” the peace, the Casazza countered that “it was a peace to which we had not sworn, not having drunk wine over it, and was without consequence.”

<sup>2</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1220. For the concept of ‘social drama,’ formulated by Victor Turner at the beginning of the 1970s, see the discussion by A. Cohen, “Political Symbolism,” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8 (1979): 87–113.

<sup>3</sup> This scene resembles that described by Antonio Cesena in a splendid chronicle about Varese Ligure, in which historical reconstruction is blended together with a foundation myth; see *Relatione dell’origine, et successi della terra di Varese* (1558)—a copy from 1683 is preserved at the Biblioteca della Società Economica di Chiavari (ms Z VI 29).

As we have already seen, the external boundaries of kin groups were marked out precisely by these public procedures: the confrontation, the peace and its being “broken,” and the unified testimony given before the judicial tribunal. The spatial dimension of these boundaries consisted of the clusters of villages and adjoining fields around the church of San Gio Batta.

The conflicts, both small and large, that continued over the course of subsequent decades followed this pattern of rivalries and alliances, especially the ever-closer ties between the Leverone and the Porcella, whose core group of kin was in the parish of Verzi. During the civil war of 1575 two *principali* of the Fopiano and the Casazza, Carlo and Pasquale, marched alongside Captain Galeazzo Arata and the *Nuovi* with squads of men and weapons. During the summer of 1578 these three men, along with Ottaviano della Torre and Simone Queirolo, negotiated with the commissioner Pietro Maria de Ferrari for the pacification of the Fontanabuona and the Lavagna Valley. “Ottaviano and his companions” asked for “full pardon” in the name of all the *universitates* of the household heads of the parishes, thereby acquiring broad political legitimacy.<sup>4</sup> But the “enmities” remained vibrant, and while the anti-bandit commissioners came and went at Pianezza, the profile of the alignments became clearer. The opposing side was dominated by the Leverone, who no longer participated in the negotiations, but maintained strong ties with one of the factions that was active in the towns of Rapallo and Chiavari. Thus, by late 1578, the Fopiano had laid siege to the Leverone in the village of Ponte, and in 1580 an entire line of the Leverone (brothers and cousins “from the same lineage and house”) were placed under the ban.<sup>5</sup> These events coincided with the feud in the villages of Favale and Lorsica between the De Martino and the Consigliero (on one side, allies of the Leverone), and on the other side, the Barbazelata, Pessolo, and Cordano.

In this scenario the Arata were without a doubt the strongest and most hierarchically cohesive group. Their networks of relations were the widest and most diffused, and they were the least involved in local conflict. The *principali* who resided in Pianezza were integrated into extra-local circuits and had direct relations with the Genoese, whom they hosted in their “palace.” But they also had great moral authority among the valley population. Their prestige was tied to the public activities of Galeazzo, the

<sup>4</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1224.

<sup>5</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1462.

notary Gio Batta, and others who monopolized what were perhaps the most important positions and offices, since they dealt with everyday activities. That is, they acted as legal and financial guarantors, as arbiters and mediators, and as appraisers and witnesses. They considered themselves “neutral persons” and represented themselves as being above the parties, speaking on behalf of the “men of the Fontanabuona” in political relations with outside powers. Still, they undoubtedly had underlying hostilities and a deep enmity with the Leverone. The two kin groups had been in dispute at the Feast of the Ascension in 1577, and in 1578 the company of Battino Leverone (consisting of Battino, eight of his relatives, and five Porcella) had murdered Giacometto Arata.<sup>6</sup> But until the first decade of the seventeenth century the criminal records offer no evidence of open conflicts in which the Arata were directly involved.

After 1585 the commissioners left Pianezza, moving on to oversee the pacification of Chiavari and the Sturla and Recco valleys, and the documentation became more sparse and episodic. During these years the agent of *Oltremonte* left the *parlamento* in Rapallo, the police chief was prevented from entering the Fontanabuona, and the public proclamations and notifications of the “categories of bandits” could be affixed only to church doors in Cicagna, Moconesi, and Soglio, referred to as “transit points.”<sup>7</sup> Our information about the alignments of the 1590s comes from two trials initiated by the court of Rapallo in 1596 in response to public rumors “against unknown persons from the Fontanabuona valley.”<sup>8</sup> The configuration revealed by these documents differed, however, from the factions and cells that met together in the *loggie* of the *borgo* of Chiavari during the same years, moving through the streets “like an army.” Instead, the Rapallo court records show a choreographing of kin groups in what were probably the most important contexts and public and ceremonial spaces. These were the feasts of Ascension and Corpus Domini at Ponte-Cicagna in the rural church there, or in the “mother” church of San Gio Batta located on the right bank of the Lavagna River, almost at the foot of the bridge that united the two banks and gave the village its name.

<sup>6</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 508. The Leverone and the Arata were expressions of two simultaneously existing but distinct models of interdependence, one based on aggression and the other on manipulation; see R. Bendix, “Compliant Behavior and Individual Personality,” *American Journal of Sociology* 58 (1952): 292–303.

<sup>7</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 540.

<sup>8</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 1, “Contra incertos vallis Fontis bone, Rapalli et Rechi,” 25 May, and “Contra diversos homines vallis Fontisbonis et Rechi,” 15 June.

In his written summary of the oral testimony given concerning what happened on the day of Ascension, the *podestà* of Rapallo indicated that, surrounding the church of Cicagna

it happened that, in a tumultuous and partisan way, a great number of men armed with harquebuses, daggers and other weapons were circulating and standing with their weapons in said place where a festival was being held. They were grouped family by family, each of them with their head, and were from different villages and chapels of said valley, from Recco, the *borgo* of Rapallo, and other villages on this side of the mountain. It almost seemed by their actions and gestures that they held the other residents of said place, who were dancing there, in disdain, and it almost seemed like they had come down with so many men armed as they were, in order to carry out some daunting act ... and all the more since each of them, upon arriving at the festival, fired their arquebuses, and likewise, after one of these had finished dancing they all fired their arquebuses and made loud noises.

The scene at the feast of Corpus Domini three Sundays later was just about identical, except that there were more “*fameglie*” present, as if to stress the greater importance of devotion to the body of Christ.

On both occasions the account of the *podestà* of Rapallo tended to sketch a picture of the crime of sedition (“having the people take up weapons and provoking partisanship against the interests of public peace”). But over the course of the trial only some of those who were summoned to the *borgo* made declarations that supported this charge. Some people who were at the festivals described the sequence of the arrival of the companies of kin (“*parentadi*”) who were all armed and under a leader’s direction. They identified by name, surname, kin ties, and village or parish of origin, within a crowd of “more than 700 persons,” the companies on the church square and around the area marked off for dancing. Their testimonies suggested that the confrontation had a ritualized character, in which supremacy was asserted symbolically by taking one’s turn in the dance and in the arquebus salvos.<sup>9</sup> The most prominent aspect of the event was precisely

<sup>9</sup>This practice was normal and widespread. Even those who carried the staffs supporting the canopy over the Most Holy Sacrament and the companies that followed the processions took turns firing arquebus salvos. In 1576, the future *doge* of the Republic David Vaccà, acting as the procurator of the men of Borzonasca, described this practice as “a very ancient custom, not only in said place, but through the entire Jurisdiction of Your Illustrious Lordships” (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1576, “Supplicatio nonnullorum de Borzonasca”). For other examples see ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 497.

this publicly demonstrated cohesion of the kin groups. But when one compares and weaves together the various depositions given to the court of Rapallo, with attention to omissions, the order in which the companies are described, and the emphasis on certain names, one can uncover the outlines of two alignments. These groupings piece together the puzzle of the kin groups and intersect with those who organized the festivals and dances and with the resident population of the parish.

The celebrations of Ponte-Cicagna were organized by sharecroppers, tavern-keepers (at least six of whom had stable businesses—Gieronimo Leverone, Bastiano Leverone, Steve Leverone, Zane Leverone, Luisa widow of Francesco Leverone, and Giacobbo Casazza—and also a few itinerants, including the head of the Boitano company and one De Martino), the dance managers (three Fopiano and one Casazza), and the musicians. The collective points of reference for the residents were either the parish or the kin group; in the judicial narrative it was the latter that catalyzed the broader alignments. Better yet, it was precisely before the *podestà* and in relation to the judiciary that the rivalry between the kin groups of Cicagna manifested itself and gave form to the factions. (The two festivals took place without incidents—only during Ascension did the Cademartori of Soglio and the Cassina of Dezerega “confront each other and say many nasty things to each other,” in the words of Gio Arata, one of the officers of the Cicagna chapel.) During testimony, the Casazza and the Fopiano were the ones who insinuated that “said men came to carry out some momentous plan, and to divide the country against itself in partisan fashion, since everyone belonged to a faction.” They accused the Leverone and the Porcella, their traditional adversaries, and then also the Boitano and the Giannino of Favale, the De Martino of Lorsica, the Barbero of Moconesi, the Rovegno of Aveno (a village in the Recco Valley), and a group of notables from the town of Rapallo, of meeting together in the tavern of Luisa Leverone to plan this deed.

In fact, there were old enmities and competition between the kin groups of Cicagna, and there was also cultural rivalry between the parish of San Gio Batta and the other parishes of the Fontanabuona. The chapel of Cicagna was the seat of the market of Monleone and enjoyed a monopoly of grain milling and bread making. It was also the most ceremonially important parish: on the days of Holy Saturday and Corpus Domini all of the parish priests from the Fontanabuona came there to celebrate and participate in processions “in the vestments of their parish,” as an act of customary homage to the old mother church where baptisms were held.

The archpriest of San Gio Batta had “rights” over the funerals celebrated in the subordinate parishes. The chapter of the Cicagna church had enjoyed, and continued to claim, the privilege of naming rectors for the other parishes.<sup>10</sup> Without a doubt, Ponte-Cicagna was a very important ceremonial arena for these reasons. But this situation did not reflect so much a religious hierarchy or a certain configuration of the community (as in the Corpus Domini procession, for example), but rather the presence and public role of the kin groups, which, as we shall see, were the protagonists in the religious life of the parishes. The ceremonies of the kin group took precedence. At the two feasts described above, in 1596, participants also included the Barbazelata of Favale, the Cavagnaro of Verzi (a village near Ballano), the Connio of Orero (the village of Pianmegorino), the Casella of Moconesi, the Della Torre of Calvari (led by *messire* Pasquale, son of Ottaviano), and the Scarlasato of Roccatagliata: all were armed, and under the orders of a leader.<sup>11</sup>

In this case, truth be told, religious conflict and devotional competition were barely mentioned. The attention of every witness seemed to be focused on the dance and on the confrontation between the companies of kin groups. These problems came into the open as a result of the institutional and jurisdictional shifts of the first decade of the seventeenth century, shifts that partly rearranged the internal borders of the valley and its position within the administrative structure of the Republic.

## 1 COMMUNITY, PARISH, AND KIN GROUPS

In 1608 the administrative structure of the community of Rapallo underwent an important change: the *podesteria* became a *capitanato*; that is, it was placed under the authority of a noble magistrate and separated, with respect to capital crimes, from the vicariate of Chiavari.<sup>12</sup> This transformation was largely the result of a new political situation in Genoa, but there were also exclusively local reasons for it. On the one hand, the case of Rapallo can be understood as part of the process of reorganization

<sup>10</sup> Leveroni, *Cicagna*, 52; A. Ferretto, “I primordi e lo sviluppo del Cristianesimo in Liguria e in particolare a Genova,” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 39 (1907): 171–877, esp. 600–01 on the chapel of Cicagna.

<sup>11</sup> Kin groups from other jurisdictions replicated this structure; such was the case of the notables of Rapallo, who were all friends of the Leverone, and whose leader was Franchino Pareto (according to the testimony of Tomasino Leverone).

<sup>12</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1029; *ibid.*, Legum, A II 2.

undergone by the Republic's Dominion between 1580 and 1610. This transformation meant that following the reform of 1576, the Senate reacquired its own exclusive political and judicial privileges, with offices and charges divided among the nobility.<sup>13</sup> The official reasons for this change were described in Chap. 2: the “preservation of justice” and public order, along with the urgent need to “respond to the excesses committed by bandits.” On the other hand, the factors that contributed to this administrative shift at the local level were, probably in equal degree, the commercial development of Rapallo and the demands for jurisdictional autonomy made by the town council—demands that were reinforced by frequent conflicts with Chiavari during the first decade of the seventeenth century. It seems in fact that the institution of the *capitanato* had been requested by “the men of the place.”<sup>14</sup>

For certain, the focus of everyone's attention was the Fontanabuona. In late 1608 a group of “agents and *borghesi*” from Rapallo thanked the Senate for having appointed “a Captain who was a person of prudence and integrity, from whom we hope to have excellent leadership.” They also asked that the nearby *podesteria* of Roccatagliata, which was governed by a *podestà* “who was completely weak,” be incorporated into the new administrative unit. This would prevent Roccatagliata from becoming a “gathering place and nest of wicked men ... evil enemies of God and ministers of ugly Satan” who come from the Fontanabuona.<sup>15</sup> We can see, through this legitimating language, the asymmetries and territorial conflicts that were described in Chap. 3. The political reorganization of the community created, in fact, a series of offices and benefits that were the almost exclusive prerogative of the *borghesi*. But it also generated greater expenses and new taxes that were distributed across every administrative district (*quartiere*) and village according to the principle of collective responsibility “as a whole.”

For this reason, the fact that rivalries between kin groups or villages and neighborhoods in the Fontanabuona also configured themselves as jurisdictional conflicts (both lay and ecclesiastic) seems significant. Competition between groups had always had a territorial dimension. The collective points of reference were solidarities of residence, property rights over contiguous land, acts of possession, and surname. The parish church was the

<sup>13</sup> On this last aspect see Bitossi, “Famiglie e fazioni a Genova.”

<sup>14</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Propositionum, busta 1029.

<sup>15</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1695.



symbolic element of a collective identity that was wider than the residential areas where they were located: parishes were always tied to villages and hamlets. The parish church could be the center of gravity, but in some cases it was de-centered with respect to other places tied to it, or relatively isolated from scattered residential clusters. Alongside the mother church there were also suffragan and subsidiary churches, and chapels.

As a result of the institutional shift and the ongoing redefinition of how the *quartiere* of Oltremonte would integrate within complex society, the parish—as the seat of both the religious community and the *universitas* of the household heads—became an increasingly important political arena. It is probably in this context that we should interpret the various efforts to secede from parishes: during the first two decades of the seventeenth century the ecclesiastical geography of the Fontanabuona changed radically from its medieval configuration.<sup>16</sup> In 1598 Favale was separated from Verzi and acquired its own rector. Immediately thereafter the inhabitants of the villages of the high Malvaro Valley began construction of a new church.<sup>17</sup> In 1603 the church of Orero was detached from that of Dezerega and made into a new parish by Archbishop Orazio Spinola. In this case, the initiative was supported by both *universitates* and motivated by the fact that the churches were separated by the Lavagna River and were three miles apart, preventing them from being served by a single parish priest. The agreement was undersigned by Nicolino Arata in the name of the household heads of Orero and by Simone and Pietro Dezerega and Nicolosio Cassina “as procurators of the men” of the village of Dezerega, who also committed themselves to building a rectory and providing the oil for the lamp of the Most Holy Sacrament.<sup>18</sup> During the same year, Lorsica requested separation from Sant’Andrea di Verzi. In a meeting in the house of Michele de Martino, fifty household heads from the villages of Lorsica (forty-five of whom were from the De Martino kin group) decided to set aside chestnut groves as a benefice for the new priest, “wishing to support said chapel, for the maintenance of the priest who would take care of said chapel, *in perpetuo*.”<sup>19</sup> In 1604 a dispute arose between Coreglia and Canevale over the oratory of San Contardo at Pian di Coreglia, halfway between the two villages, where “festivals and dances are usually held.”

<sup>16</sup> Ferretto, “I primordi e lo sviluppo del Cristianesimo,” 599–610.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 605.

<sup>18</sup> ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filza 6346.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., filza 6370, “Dox Capelle S.te Marie de Ursica.”

Eleven household heads from Coreglia gave testimony about the symbolic subordination of Canevale to their village: according to ancient custom, the priest who celebrated Mass in the oratory always left from the church of San Nicolò of Coreglia in his vestments, as the bells of the church were rung.<sup>20</sup> In 1610 construction of the new parish church of Orero was begun.<sup>21</sup> In 1621 Cornia was detached from Cicagna.<sup>22</sup> In 1622 the secession of Canevale from Coreglia put an end to this dispute over ceremonial precedence with respect to the oratory of San Contardo.<sup>23</sup> The secessions and the creation of new parishes were accompanied by the reconstruction or redecoration of churches,<sup>24</sup> and by the renovation and embellishment of liturgical instruments.<sup>25</sup> This was all certainly the result of Counter-Reformation efforts to reinforce rural parishes, the application of Tridentine norms, and attempts by ecclesiastical authorities to oversee local practices through episcopal visitations (in 1582 the Apostolic visitor had ordered the destruction of the altars of the church of San Gio Batta of Cicagna because they were “indecent”).<sup>26</sup> However, the documentation that I have been able to consult reveals above all the influence of local initiatives by villages, kin groups, and household heads.<sup>27</sup>

Religious rituals and ceremonial preeminence were crucial elements of territorial jurisdiction. But territorial dismemberment and creating parishes could also lead to the division of administrative functions, an autonomous fiscal status (which is what happened between Canevale and Coreglia), and the inclusion or exclusion of villages and hamlets with respect to the *universitas* and to peace accords (as happened, between 1598 and 1603, for Favale and Lorsica with respect to Verzi). For dominant

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., filza 6347.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., filza 6352.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. The territory of the parish of Cornia was administratively subject to the *podesteria* of Roccatagliata, but it was an enclave within the territory of the community of Rapallo, between Cicagna and Gattorna.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., filza 6363.

<sup>24</sup> In 1677, in the “Ristretto delle chiese rurali di Levante” by Rev. G. Caviglia, almost all the churches are described as “new” or “restored”; see L. Saginati, “Aspetti di vita religiosa e sociale nelle campagne liguri: le relazioni al Magistrato delle chiese rurali,” *Atti della Società Patria di Storia Ligure* 19 (1979), appendix II.

<sup>25</sup> This can be seen in the inventories of the churches of Moconesi, Orero, and Dezerega, drawn up in 1618, 1632, and 1642 (ANC, Notary Gio Batta Arata senior, filza 6363, and *ibid.*, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1809).

<sup>26</sup> Cited by Leverone, *Cicagna*; the visiting official was Monsignor Francesco Bossio.

<sup>27</sup> The diocesan archive can be consulted, but it is very difficult to access.

kin groups these developments ensured that one of their members would become parish priest, creating the possibility of a landed patrimony that was tax exempt. Local custom, as across Liguria, was to appoint only local priests. Priests were, as we will see more clearly in the following section, a key element of the local elite. They constituted a group with strong generational traditions (nephews typically replacing uncles), and their authority depended both on ecclesiastical jurisdictional privilege and on the power of their kin group.

The historical process whose basic stages I have summarized here was characterized by a high level of conflict, both between kin groups and villages whose symbolic points of reference were located in different churches (as in the case of the churches of Verzi, Favale, and Lorsica and of the Barbazelata, Cordano, and De Martino kin groups), and within single parishes. Such conflict continued after the new ecclesiastical borders were established. The parish was not a place of unanimity; rather, it was among those places that were at stake in local conflicts, a public space where kin groups represented their prestige and political weight in ceremonial fashion.<sup>28</sup> Thus it was that the centuries-long feud pitting the Leverone and Porcella against the Fopiano and Casazza expressed itself most powerfully on the ceremonial level and in the fight over the rectorship of the parish of San Gio Batta in Cicagna.

## 2 HISTORY OF A FEUD

It is not easy to reconstruct clearly and completely either the dense network of ties and exchanges that united kin groups and renewed old alliances, or the language and means by which disputes and enmities were perpetuated.<sup>29</sup> As we have seen with respect to dowries (in Chap. 5), the

<sup>28</sup> On this issue, Angelo Torre's work, which is based on ethnographic Piedmontese materials from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, also highlights significant territorial and regional variations; see "Le visite pastorali. Altari, famiglie, devozioni," in *Valli monregalesi*, 148–87; id., "Il consumo di devozioni: rituali e potere nelle campagne piemontesi della prima metà del Settecento," *Quaderni storici* 58 (1985): 181–225.

<sup>29</sup> There are numerous anthropological studies and models relating to these problems. The collection of ethnographic data on complex societies in early modern Europe is not as rich, but see the syntheses of J. Black-Michaud, *Cohesive Force: Feud in the Mediterranean and the Middle East* (Oxford, 1975); J. Wormald, "Bloodfeud, Kindred and Government in Early Modern Scotland," *Past and Present* 87 (1980): 54–97 (now in *Disputes and Settlements. Law and Human Relations in the West*, ed. J. Bossy [Cambridge, 1983]); and id., "An Early Modern Postscript: The Sandlaw Dispute, 1546," in *The Settlement of Disputes in Early*

same social institution could both facilitate integration and generate disputes. Friendship and hostility often played complementary roles. An enmity that had existed “from immemorial times” could be ended, at least temporarily, by a public peace accord, a wedding, the ritual exchange of flasks of wine between the parties, or by eating from the same plate. Feuds were constantly moderated by local arbiters (“*amicabiles compositiones*”), or by negotiations, peace agreements imposed by judges and Genoese commissioners, or simply the same demands of a daily life that was lived out face to face. But above all, enmity and manifestations of hostility were taken on as collective responsibilities by all members of the extended kin group. Individual and collective behaviors, in friendship and enmity, were ritualized and tended to consecrate and legitimate the very external (and arbitrary) borders of the group, in a political and juridical sense.<sup>30</sup> But these processes did not take place only in a local setting that exhibited strong cultural cohesion. They also resulted from continuous interaction and coexistence with the institutional apparatus, the judicial role of the towns’ courts, and the commissioners’ roles of arbitration and pacification that were superimposed—even in coercive fashion—over customary ways of settling disputes. The feud was an institution and a principle of social organization that had particular rules and norms of behavior, and that assigned to each individual a circle of relatives who were responsible for him. It defined the edges of social groups and relations, perpetuating them as in a system of debts and credits, and was one form through which conflicts were resolved. But local society did not define itself only through the feud. Rather, the coexistence of the feud, the customary procedures of compensation, and the state’s judicial and legal structures together

*Medieval Europe*, ed. W. Davies and P. Fouracre (Cambridge, 1986), 191–205. I was not able to consult K.M. Brown, *Bloodfeud in Scotland, 1573–1625: Violence, Justice and Politics in an Early Modern Society* (Edinburgh, 1986). For two studies of Italian cases that employ different approaches see F. Piselli and G. Arrighi, “Parentela, clientela e comunità,” in *Storia d’Italia. Le regioni dall’Unità a oggi: La Calabria* (Turin, 1985), 367–493, and A. Torre, “Faide, fazioni e partiti, ovvero la ridefinizione della politica nei feudi imperiali delle Langhe,” *Quaderni storici* 63 (1986): 775–810.

<sup>30</sup> Arnold van Gennep defined these social practices as “rites of separation”; see A. van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (Paris, 1909) (Italian trans. *I riti di passaggio* [Turin, 1985], 33–34). The theme of group cohesion and continuity, which was tied to the concept of classification, was revised and expanded by Van Gennep in *L’état actuel du problème totémique* (Paris, 1920), esp. 344 ff. On the political and juridical meanings of the ‘rites of passage’ see P. Bourdieu, “Les rites comme actes d’institution,” *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 43 (1982): 58–63.

constituted hybrid normative systems that were contradictory or opposed to each other, but that could still be used as alternatives. What is more, the feud became an historical document when it appeared before the judicial tribunal.

In fact, as I tried to show in Chap. 2, it is not possible to distinguish clearly between two normative systems (“community law” and “the law of the state”) and specific social practices. Norms and behaviors are always both present on the historical stage, where they exist in a constant state of tension and correlation. All these elements provide a political significance to relations and exchanges between kin groups, and explain their successes and failures, their ascendancy and fall. The pages that follow attempt to retrace an itinerary that was rooted in the sixteenth-century events that have already been narrated.

At the beginning of the 1600s, the Leverone and the Fopiano—“families that were extremely numerous in the Fontanabuona ... and former enemies”—were described as “friends, and related to each other.” In the eyes of the captain of Chiavari, marriage exchanges between the two families guaranteed their pacification and the extinction of their “ancient enmity.”<sup>31</sup> A new cycle of conflict was heralded by the nighttime killing of a dog belonging to the Leverone of Ponte. “Public rumor” attributed responsibility to the Fopiano. The Leverone said nothing, but the captain of Chiavari and the court of Rapallo, in 1604, noted with apprehension the warning signs. A few months later Simone Leverone, nephew of Stefano (one of the *principali* of the kin group), was murdered. He was

cruelly wounded in the stomach and died during the fourth hour of the night ... as he returned with his arquebus from watching over the house of one of his aunts. He was ambushed as he passed through some woods where there were enormous chestnut trees. He survived for an hour and a half after having received an arquebus shot, but could not identify his attacker, because he had not recognized him, and could not even name a possible suspect.

The *vicario* who was visiting the Fontanabuona confirmed this version of what had happened, but also informed the captain that “some people cannot help but suspect that this came from the Fopiano, who had been enemies of the Leverone in the past.” In particular, suspicion began to

<sup>31</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 589.

focus on Agostino Fopiano, “as rich a tavern-keeper as there is in this country,” who had been wounded in the thigh by an arquebus shot the year before. At the center of the feud were thus the very *principali* of the two kin groups, even if the captain considered these suspicions unfounded, judging that “it is unreasonable that one who is so wealthy would want to ruin things for himself to no good end.”<sup>32</sup>

These murmurings manifested themselves publicly and were brought into focus in a supplication written by Stefano Leverone, head of his kin group, to the captain of Chiavari and to the Genoese Senate<sup>33</sup>:

For a while until now the boldness and insolence of some men and kin groups of the Ponte di Cicagna of Fontanabuona has grown, such that others who simply wish to attend to their work and live in peace, giving honor to God and service to the Prince, are being threatened and having property stolen and lives harmed. These victims are afraid to stand up to their attackers, because if anyone gets in their way they are killed, either during the night or during the day. And since these are evil men, it is difficult to distinguish their crimes, since they threaten everyone, and the poor people don't dare say anything. A few months ago Rolandino and Bino Boitani, two brothers, were taken forcibly from their houses by two Fopiano who promised them no harm but then took them away and murdered them. Despite the fact that this was a most atrocious case that also involved the breaking of a promise, only one person was banned because of it, since everyone was afraid to testify against them. Likewise, Stefano Malatesta, from the same place, was killed in front of the door of his own house at night by the same people, even though he had never had anything to do with them except that he did not want to and could not provide them with goods and money to supply their greedy demands. Again, despite this event a clear accusation was never made, because everyone is afraid of being harmed by them if they speak up. This happened to Stefano Barbazelata, a poor youth, who, despite the orders of the magnificent *Podestà* of Roccatagliata, of the magnificent Captain of Chiavari, and even of Your Most Serene Lordships, was robbed

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. As in other similar cases, the court of Chiavari made records of a sequence of events whose interpretation was closely tied to the local “public rumor.”

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. Stefano's letter was probably written in the first half of September 1604; on 27 September Genoa granted to the captain of Chiavari “in said affair, coercive power [*braccio regio*], and extraordinary authority.” In this case, the scenographic details, the topographical data, and the placement of persons and authorities in local developments had important political significance: the letter wove the plot around the death of Simone Leverone, rooting it in everyday social relations in the parish of Cicagna and relations with public authorities.

of his property and authority by them, who chased him out of his house. Now, to keep from dying he goes begging, and suffers in every way. The poor people of these places have been reduced to this state, and those who wish to live in peace and do not do what the Fopiano kin group [*parentela*] tells them to do are immediately murdered without the judicial system becoming aware of the case, or being able to identify and punish a perpetrator. As a result many people from this place have been murdered, and most recently Simone Leverone, according to the shared agreement among the Fopiano, with whom he had interacted daily, like a brother and close friend. This is a very cruel case that merits severe punishment, but despite this those who planned and carried out this attack are unperturbed, since having executed and ordered other murders, they know very well that the ordinary judicial system will not be able to shed light on the case, even though no one else but them could be responsible. For these reasons, Stefano Leverone, uncle of said Simone, gives notice of these events to Your Most Serene Lordships, and begs them to provide for the case through extraordinary means of justice.

The rhetorical structure of Stefano Leverone's letter replicated that of the supplications submitted by backcountry communities, whether signed or anonymous, that sought relief from the highest courts, and the authority of the Prince (the Republic) itself, in response to damaging local conflicts. The cultural code employed by the request is already familiar to us: Stefano denounces the overweening power of the Fopiano and lists the allies of his own kin group: the Boitano, the Malatesta, and the Barbazelata. In this way, the most immediate impact of the feud was to outline the boundaries of the social fields in the parish of Cicagna, and in the first instance the boundaries between the two kin groups. The murder of Simone, decided by the "council" of the Fopiano, shattered the cognatic ties that had united them to the Leverone, on which their daily interactions had been based. The act had a clear symbolic meaning; Simone had been murdered as he was leaving a house belonging to the Fopiano, where he had participated in a vigil. The feud then redefined broader alignments and reaffirmed the two kin groups' leadership, or rather, their competition for leadership over the social fabric of the parish chapel. The most obvious change with respect to the 1580s was the fact that now it was the Leverone who were calling for official judicial intervention.

From this moment, and in parallel with the institutional shifts described in the previous section, the feud affected every aspect of local political and ceremonial life. The contest for control of the parish of San Gio Batta was

the center around which broader factional alignments formed. At the start of the century the priest of Cicagna, Francesco Garbino, was supported by the Fopiano and the Casazza and was accused by the Leverone of having used the rectory as a safe haven for bandits.<sup>34</sup> Garbino died in 1608 and the vicar named a “foreign” rector, Guglielmo Canneva, to replace him—despite the pretensions of Stefano Casazza, a very young priest who was the nephew of Garbino and supported by the Fopiano-Casazza “faction.” After a year, though, Canneva was “forced” to leave Cicagna and was succeeded by Stefano Leverone, “to the great disgust” of the Casazza and Fopiano.<sup>35</sup> In 1610 the priest Stefano Casazza led the household heads of his kin group as they took up weapons and surrounded the church, preventing Stefano Leverone from celebrating Mass. The Leverone wrote to the Senate that Stefano Casazza was a “young priest who thinks only about carrying pistols and wheel lock arquebuses, raping poor maidens, and carrying out other disorders—exactly the opposite from [Stefano] Leverone, who is religious in all goodness.”<sup>36</sup> All the priests of the vicariate of Chiavari were aligned in factions, “showing themselves to be more instigators of fights than pacifiers of them, but they especially show that they pay little attention to Justice and to the laws ... acting as if each one of them were a law unto themselves, without taking anyone else into account.”<sup>37</sup> At Cicagna, “even the priests go around with weapons, accompanied by many followers.”<sup>38</sup> Stefano Casazza took up a charge as rector of the parish of Sant’Andrea at Verzi, where the Porcella, allies of the Leverone accused him of “lodging” bandits. Meanwhile, in Cicagna the Leverone and the Fopiano adopted the practice of entering into the church by two doors opposite each other, deploying themselves at Mass with their arquebuses.<sup>39</sup>

The struggle also involved public and institutional offices. In 1611 the new captain of Rapallo promoted the creation of “companies against

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., filza 602.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., filza 610.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. The impossibility of celebrating the Mass was the clearest indicator of the radical nature of the conflict and of the divisions in the parish community. The sacrifice of the Mass was in fact, since the Middle Ages, the symbol of reconciliation; see J. Bossy, “The Mass as a Social Institution, 1200–1700,” *Past and Present* 100 (1983): 29–62.

<sup>37</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 598, letter from the captain of Chiavari.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., filza 610.

<sup>39</sup> As late as 1912 “these two gates were called ‘the Foppiano gate’ and ‘the Leveroni gate,’ respectively” (Leveronio, *Cicagna*, 126).



bandits” in the valley, consisting of eight men with a leader, from each parish chapel.<sup>40</sup> The company of Cicagna was organized by Battino Porcella and was composed entirely of household heads from the Leverone and Porcella kin groups. Their first action “against bandits” was an attack, supported by the police chief of the court of Rapallo, against the village of Mortasco “where everyone is a Fopiano.”<sup>41</sup>

But perhaps the most important public function was held by notaries. The situation in the Fontanabuona—where Gio Batta Arata had enjoyed an exclusive monopoly on the office of notary for almost thirty years—was anomalous compared to other Ligurian communities, including nearby valleys, where notaries were numerous. Now, while the Leverone and the Fopiano readied two of their own to be named as notaries, a series of accusations was launched against the moral integrity and professional honesty of Gio Batta; that is, against “his honor.” Specifically, Gio Batta was accused of having drawn up sale contracts in women’s names, without their relatives’ consent.<sup>42</sup> This was a serious accusation, one that could generate a public “commotion.” Gio Batta, who declared that he would “rather lose his life than remain deprived of his honor,” called to his defense several witnesses from the valley, notaries from the *Collegio*, two “gentlemen” from Chiavari, and notaries and scribes from the court of Rapallo. The supplication of Gio Batta that these accusations be put to rest was accompanied by a letter of recommendation from noble Manfredo Ravaschiero, but the prestige of the Arata was already damaged. Immediately thereafter the Arata were drawn into the conflicts between kin groups and became aligned with one of the factions.

The first documented open conflict took place at the feast of Corpus Domini at Ponte-Cicagna in 1612. The Arata, led by Aurelio, son of the notary Gio Batta, with the Garbarino and the Casazza at his back, aimed their arquebuses threateningly toward a company of Leverone and Porcella, accusing them of wanting to “be the bosses of the festival.”<sup>43</sup> The theatrical setting of the competition and the confrontation between “kin

<sup>40</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, filza 14.

<sup>41</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 4. On the same night another squad made up of members of the Leverone and Porcella kin groups attacked the houses of the Fopiano in Monleone.

<sup>42</sup> The sales were tied to dowry contracts. For the Gio Batta Arata dossier, see ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1709.

<sup>43</sup> “Immediately everyone took up weapons, the Leverone and the Porcella on one side and the Garbarino, Arata, and Casazza on the other, and everyone raised their guns, some using trees for support and others walls, and took aim with their barrels pointed at each other, ready to fire” (ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 5).

groups” anticipated how radical the struggle between the groups would become during subsequent decades. From this point on the Arata were increasingly involved in trials for brawling, calumny, and “injurious words.”<sup>44</sup>

In around 1620 Lorenzo Leverone began to notarize acts in a house in Monleone, next to the houses of the Fopiano. Lorenzo was a notable who was not wealthy; he owned only about 300 *lire* worth of meadowland at Pian di Mercato where he had his office. He had the solid support of his relatives in Ponte and of the Porcella, though, even if the recognized head of the kin group was still Reverend Stefano. This was probably the apogee of the local influence of the Leverone. In 1622, in fact, the Fopiano acquired the rectorship of the parish of Cicagna, which they held securely until 1684 (Reverends Francesco, Agostino son of Rolando, and Agostino son of Simone, all of Monleone). They also raised up a notary, Bartolomeo, who began to draw up acts in Monleone in 1636. Stefano Leverone, who does not seem ever to have been named vicar, took over the parish of San Martino of Dezerega. In Cicagna, Francesco Fopiano celebrated the sacraments accompanied by two clerics who were his nephews, and who also carried arquebuses, “dressed as soldiers.”

While conflict and competition for offices was polarized ever more around the Fopiano and the Leverone, the Arata of Pianezza took a public initiative aimed at reaffirming their role as peacemakers and their leadership over the valley (their kin group had property and houses in two parishes, but the *principali* of Pianezza had their tombs in the church of San Gio Batta). In 1623 Angelo Maria, son of the notary Gio Batta, wrote a letter to the Senate denouncing the aggressive acts of the Leverone “both in church and in the markets.” He claimed that the Arata

had never before been involved in discords or disagreements with any kin group, but had always been those who tried to broker agreements whenever they heard of strife, and each Captain who has been here in Rapallo, over many years past, can attest to this. These captains, when they were trying to establish peace accords by the power of the Most Serene Senates, always stayed in the house of the Arata when they came to the Fontanabuona, in order to minimize their inconveniences and so that they would be in a position to negotiate with everyone, since the Arata were neutral persons [*“persone neutrali”*] who did not lean more to one side than the other.

<sup>44</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 5 and ff.

He asked the Senate to call a meeting of all the household heads of the kin groups (twenty-five Arata, fourteen Casazza, sixteen Fopiano, thirteen Leverone, and three Porcella, who “are like Leveroni”). Finally, he asked that his initiative remain secret, “so that none of them discover what I’m doing because my own family would hate me as much as the others [for doing this].”<sup>45</sup> This last affirmation offers a glimpse of an internal conflict within the Arata kin group regarding which strategy to pursue. As we will see in the next section, the entire process described here was also marked by conflicts among relatives. But as the conflict grew harsher, the kin groups tended to rally around their *principali*, in territorial spaces that were increasingly well defined.

During the course of their conflict with the sharecroppers of Cicagna, the Fopiano of Monleone discovered the ruins of the church of San Vittore—which they claimed had predated the existing church—and began working on a plan to rebuild it, making it larger than San Gio Batta. The church would indeed be built, in the years around 1640, thanks to bequests left by members of the kin group.<sup>46</sup> Using other bequests and property, in 1646 the Fopiano also created a chaplaincy.<sup>47</sup> The ceremonial offensive launched by the Arata took place at just about the same time: in 1631 the notary Gio Batta received permission from Archbishop Domenico de Marini to rebuild and enlarge, at his own expense, the oratory of Saints Antonio and Rocco in Pianezza (the oratory was attached to the “palace” that used to belong to Galeazzo). After construction had been completed, in 1646 the Arata requested that Pianezza be erected into a separate parish from Cicagna. At this point, though, Archbishop Stefano Durazzo, who had at the time been visiting the parishes of the Fontanabuona, closed the chapel. But in 1667 the fiscal officer of the Genoese Curia reported that “the altar was well decorated” and that “in said church there were tombs where bodies were buried.”<sup>48</sup>

After 1620 there were ever more conflicts in the area of the villages between Monleone and Ponte. Angelo Maria Arata’s proposal for a peace-making initiative fell on deaf ears, and every institutional effort at arbitration failed as well. The Arata, however, took up leadership of an alignment that was increasingly broad-based, in opposition to the Leverone

<sup>45</sup> ASG, Archivio Segreto-Secretorum, filza 1566.

<sup>46</sup> ANC, Notary Bartolomeo Fopiano, filza 2718.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., filza 2725.

<sup>48</sup> The episode was reconstructed by Leveroni, *Cicagna*, 63–64.

and the Porcella. The captain of Rapallo, in correspondence with the Senate, described “the large and powerful kin groups” that engaged in armed confrontations with each other on an almost daily basis.<sup>49</sup> In 1630 Francesco Leverone declared that his relatives were in “mortal enmity” with the Arata, Fopiano, Casazza, Cavagnaro and Bacigalupo.<sup>50</sup> The conflict culminated during Holy Week of 1653, when the sons of the notary Gio Batta Arata led eighty-six men from these five kin groups in an assault on the house of the notary Lorenzo Leverone and against the houses of the Leverone and the Porcella at Ponte. All of the *principali* of the kin groups participated in this cruel attack: Aurelio and Gio Andrea Arata, the notary Bartolomeo Fopiano, and the priest Pasquale Leverone, nephew of Reverend Stefano; that is, “the bosses who, on the advice of their councils, shamefully foment these disturbances.”<sup>51</sup> At the sides of the Leverone and the Porcella who were besieged in their houses at Ponte and Molinazzo were the Scarlasato and the Rizzo, from the *podesteria* of Roccatagliata.

After this enormous show of force, which prevented the celebration of Easter, the two sides began to negotiate a peace accord. In late April the Arata and the Leverone accepted an agreement, in the presence of the captain of Chiavari. “More than sixty people were involved,” wrote the captain, “between these leaders and their adherents.”<sup>52</sup> The peace was short-lived, however; in early July there followed another collision between the Leverone and the Casazza at a festival in Ponte. The clearest indicator of the conflict’s deep roots was the perfect cohesion of the lines around each kin group: “when one person has an argument, the entire kin group is drawn in.”<sup>53</sup> At this point the person who brokered a general peace accord was the most famous Genoese jurist of the early modern period, Tomas Oderico, author of an instructional manual for Genoese officials in the Republic’s dominions,<sup>54</sup> and captain of Rapallo since June 1635. Oderico took up residence in the Fontanabuona “to settle the place down,

<sup>49</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 666. The sequence of the conflicts between the Cicagna kin groups is outlined in ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 7–8 and in *ibid.*, Extraordinarium, reg. 14–17, 20–28.

<sup>50</sup> ASCR, Extraordinarium, reg. 28.

<sup>51</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, reg. 8 and *ibid.*, Extraordinarium, reg. 28; ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1964 and Senato-Litterarum, filza 717.

<sup>52</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 718.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> *Il Perfetto Giusdicente* (1646), republished in 1730. See O. Cartaregia, “Il perfetto Giusdicente: Tomaso Oderico,” *Miscellanea Storica Ligure* 12, 2 (1980): 7–58.

persuading those who had been harmed to submit everything to the judicial system.” But he then admitted that all of his efforts were in vain “because the men of the Fontanabuona are by nature proud, rambunctious, and vindictive, and their promises are not to be trusted ... and they trick you, pretending falsely to want to submit to the good deliberations of the one who governs them.”<sup>55</sup> This diagnosis of the impossibility of establishing some kind of governance over the local political competition by means of ordinary justice led to the proposal for a magistracy of the highest instance. In 1636 the Senate sent the Magnificent Giulio Cesare Lomellino and the nobles Gio Carlo Federici and Gio Domenico Pallavicino to the valley. The pacification process, however, fully confirmed the role of the *principali* of the kin groups, along with their authority and legitimacy. The direct representatives of the Prince held talks with the representatives of each kin group. The continued dominance of this logic of local social relations is easily perceived in a letter by Lomellino describing his interlocutors in the Fontanabuona:

They are the chief persons from each kin group, in terms of both their authority and their property. ... Those involved in the peace talks are the wisest and oldest, those held in highest esteem, and those with the most resources from these families. They are also, and this is what is most important, those who most love peace and reason, compared to the others with whom I have negotiated.<sup>56</sup>

The most elaborate plan for a peace agreement, which was submitted to the *Collegi* for their consideration, was proposed by Domenico Pallavicino. He suggested that

any one or two persons from said kin groups pledge security guarantees in the amount of 1,000 *scudi* for the observation of this peace accord, on behalf of their own kin group only. That is, for the Arata kin group Captain Aurelio and Alessandro would stand as security, and for the Fopiano misters Agostino and Bartolomeo, for the Cavagnaro misters Gio Batta and Ambrosio, for the Casazza misters Agostino and Batta, for the Bacigalupo misters Giacomo and Rolandino, for the Pessia Captain Gervasio, for the Leverone misters Cesare and Lorenzo (notary), for the Porcella misters Carlo and Gio Antonio, for the Rissi Agostino, and for the Scarlasati mister Pasquarino.

<sup>55</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 717.

<sup>56</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1964.

He also proposed the appointment of four peacemakers, elected by the kin group heads, with the charge of “pacifying any disgust, or rumor” that could arise after the accord was established, and of reaching a majority agreement regarding culpability and punishment (the payment of a security guarantee) to be imposed on peacebreakers. Finally, Pallavicino also proposed the election of four other peacemakers, two “from the band [*banda*] of the Casazza” and two “from the band of the Leverone.”<sup>57</sup>

Like feuds, peace accords required all members of the kin group to cohere strongly around their *principali*. Through the process of arbitration, Genoese officials “gave their promise” to the parties and legitimated the intervention of the state and the Prince’s authority, but at the same time they legitimated the role of the notables and reinforced the key form of local sociopolitical organization: the kin group.

In subsequent decades the enmity between the Leverone and the Fopiano, as represented symbolically by the two doors on either side of the altar of Our Lady of Miracles in the church of San Gio Batta of Cicagna (in front of which peace accords were celebrated), continued to be a reference point and catalyst for political events in the Fontanabuona. In 1666, for example, an anonymous letter that was clearly inspired by the Leverone denounced the excessive power of the Fopiano and of the “three Fopiano priests living in the archpresbyteriate of Cicagna, causing the entire valley to be up in arms.”<sup>58</sup> In 1912 a local historian from Cicagna, the priest Romeo Leveroni, identified the feud between these two kin groups as the guiding thread of the history of the Fontanabuona.<sup>59</sup>

### 3 THE *PRINCIPALI* AND THE FEUD: KIN GROUP CONFIGURATIONS, BOTH VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL

The chief criticism made by the Genoese magistrates regarding Gio Domenico Pallavicino’s pacification plan was as follows:

Some will agree to serve as security guarantees for their kin groups, but for many groups it will be difficult to find people to make guarantees for others. This is because the one providing the security is wealthy, and by making a

<sup>57</sup> “For the preservation of the peace in the Fontanabuona valley established by Lord Domenico Pallavicino, in the name of the Most Serene Senate, between the Arata, Fopiano, Cavagnari, Casazza, Bacigalupi, and Pescia families on one side, and the Leverone, Porcella, Rissi, and Scarlasati families on the other side” (ibid.).

<sup>58</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1173.

<sup>59</sup> Leveroni, *Cicagna*.

promise for the kin group he is also promising for someone who has absconded. Such deserters then extort payments from the said wealthy people by threatening to commit acts that will make them lose their security guarantees.<sup>60</sup>

This objection sheds light on a very interesting problem: even the legitimacy of the *principali* and the hierarchical cohesion of the kin groups were the result of a complex and conflicted social process.

Solidarity among kin stemmed from shared material, symbolic, and juridical interests. However, as we saw in Chap. 4, property ownership was distributed very unequally, and was a crucial element of stratification, including in areas where the kin group's property holdings were most concentrated and contiguous. Tax registers show that property was concentrated in just a few family branches (e.g., the Arata of Pianezza, the Fopiano of Monleone Castello, and the Leverone of Ponte) and in the hands of their *principali*: merchants, millers, tavern-keepers, priests, and notaries. These were professions that were passed on from generation to generation within the powerful lineages, from father to son or uncle to nephew. The tax registers do not give any information about the various forms of association and collaboration between land-owning nuclear families, or about the dense network of exchanges between wealthy and poor relatives. Further, as can be deduced from other sources, the individual's identification with the corporate group was generally very strong. But the preeminence of the kin group over single nuclear families and individuals—which was the most peculiar characteristic of local society—facilitated not only protection and social promotion, but also social exclusion.<sup>61</sup>

This last aspect expressed itself with particular clarity in the public domain, in conflicts that brought the entire kin group into the judicial process.

We have been able to observe the role of an elite, in terms of wealth, public offices, and jurisdictional privileges. Other protagonists of the first order were the “bandits,” created by feuds in continuous fashion, whose activities were crucial in driving factional conflict forward. We must now try to understand what kinds of exchanges took place within kin group configurations. Forms of vertical integration, policies followed by bosses and the adherence of their followers, and the overall level of internal cohesion were also equally important basic elements that explain the kin groups' successes and failures.

<sup>60</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1964.

<sup>61</sup> On this issue see Levi, *L'eredità immateriale*.

After 1608 the judicial system, in a formal sense, had a stronger presence in the Fontanabuona. The authority and competencies of the captain of Rapallo were concentrated in a more focused area compared to the captain of Chiavari's previously much wider territorial reach (from Roccatagliata to Moneglia), which had also constantly generated jurisdictional conflict with the *podestà* and the community officials who had been part of the Republic's largest vicariate. The denunciations and accusations that were logged daily into the criminal registers of the Rapallo tribunal after 1608<sup>62</sup> brought to light myriad micro-conflicts between neighbors, villages, and kin groups. But they also embodied the tensions and rivalries amongst "kin," whether close or distant. The denunciations submitted from within the valley could reveal tensions tied to the use of communal resources, the hereditary transmission of property, or the marriage strategies of various branches and nuclear families within the kin group. Or they could indicate conflicts over ways of understanding and practicing kinship solidarity ("being with one's kin") or confronting public obligations (such as tax payment, pledging security, providing for commissioners' expenses, or offering compensation for offenses caused and "expenses" for peace agreements). The latter derived from the principle of the collective responsibility of all relatives ("of the same surname, and kin groups"), as sanctioned by Genoese criminal statutes. Disputes between kin could be settled by the "council" of household heads or by arbiters, described as "neutral," chosen from outside of the kin group.<sup>63</sup> But recourse to the judicial system

<sup>62</sup> In Rapallo there are four series of criminal registers with initial entries from a close range of dates: "Criminalium" (1596), "Diversorum" (1602), "Extraordinarium" (1608), and "Visitationum" (1608). 1608 was the date when the captainate was created in Rapallo, and the last two registers document cases that required the captain's intervention. Denunciations for micro-conflicts were typically registered in the "Criminalium," where 115 out of the 162 denunciations for crimes in the Fontanabuona between 1596 and 1615 originated from within the valley itself.

<sup>63</sup> Many agreements were reached orally, "without writing," but the parties also frequently turned to notaries. This is how an arbiter, Bartolomeo Fopiano, described a reconciliation between two brothers in dispute in 1640: "There having been a disagreement for several months between Agostino Mangino son of the deceased Rolandino and his brother Batta, for claims made by each side that are not clear to me, I offered my assistance, along with my brother Gotardo, to help them reach an accord as follows. Agostino should give back and return to said Batta his brother tables and other furnishings ... which he did, in our presence. We then directed Batta to give and bring to Agostino certain loads of stones, and should pay him the half of the expenses, damages, and interests that Agostino would be forced to sustain with respect to the litigation that said Batta had submitted some days ago before the Criminal Court of Rapallo, and each side having done as described they were satisfied, and accepted



was just as frequent (as in the example cited in the footnote—this could have been a tactic used to press for an agreement), and institutional intervention was practically inevitable when the conflict opposed two branches or two territorial segments of the kin group. Conflicts among kin help us, at any rate, better to understand feuds and the pacification process brokered by magistrates and commissioners.

In peacemaking a crucial problem which was rarely mentioned in the public records was that of deal-making within the kin groups, between branches, nuclear families, and household heads of various ranks, whose careers and fortunes were different, and who might have been motivated by shared political interests but often lacked genealogical ties. Such internal differences determined the range of critical points at which the political cohesion of the corporate group could possibly rupture.<sup>64</sup> In peace accords negotiated by Genoese authorities, some of which were imposed by force—and in which a commitment by all of the “kin,” both close blood relatives and distant kin or those who shared the surname, was required—the unity of the group was guaranteed by the *principali* who invested a portion of their wealth, prestige, and public relationships to this end. The “richest relatives” obligated their property to “provide a security guarantee,” thus assuming a *de facto* role as leaders given the principle of the collective responsibility “*in solidum*” as sanctioned by the criminal statutes, Senatorial decrees, and the notarial acts signed by the parties and

everything” (ANC, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1786). The arbiter-mediator had to “give his word” to each side and propose remedies that found reciprocal “satisfaction.” This role was the prerogative of local notables, whose moral authority was constituted by the techniques employed, their rate of success, and the dense networks of relations that centered on them. In Genoese Corsica, a society of feuds that strongly resembled the Fontanabuona, the arbiters, or “*paceri*” were also called “*parolanti*” (J. Bousquet, *Le droit de la vendetta et les paci corses* [Paris, 1919]).

<sup>64</sup> See in this respect the important essay of P. Bourdieu, “Les usages sociaux de la parenté,” in *Le sens pratique* (Paris, 1980), 271–331, which offers a penetrating critique of structuralist theory, esp. 285: “The mere genealogical tie never predetermines completely the relationship between the individuals linked by it. The extent of practical kinship depends on the ability of the members of the official unit to overcome the tensions generated by competing interests within shared endeavors of production and consumption, and to maintain practical relations that conform to the official self-representation that every group that thinks of itself as integrated displays. This allows members to benefit from the advantages that every practical relationship offers, along with the symbolic gains that flow from socially-recognized approval of actual practices that conform to the official representation of such practices; that is, the social ideal of kinship.”

ritually touched by them as a peace symbol.<sup>65</sup> In this way the *principali* also legitimated their social leadership on a broader scale, even if their demagoguery was aimed primarily at the “bandits” and the “poor relatives” who were also their most important clients. Those who underwrote peace agreements pledged themselves, usually, “both in their own and private names, and for their respective families ... in the name and place of the others,” including those absent. If the contract were underwritten by all of the household heads or by the representatives of each branch, the phrases relating to the “breaking of the peace” provided that payment of the security guarantee affected in the first instance the “malefactors,” and then those closest to them “according to degrees of kinship ... that is, first the malefactors and those who refused to observe the accord, and if they were absent or had no property, their closest agnatic kin, and lacking any, the rest of the kin group.” The variety of language employed was in fact an indicator of the level of vertical cohesion within the kin group in question.

The commissioners followed the principle of “using the person as capital” and sought to collect security guarantees from the *principali*, all the while claiming that the “poor” were extorting money from the “rich” by threatening to do things that would force them to lose their deposits.<sup>66</sup> What was happening in local practice? The records make it clear that in some cases the internal asymmetries of the kin groups and their genealogical ties were manipulated or concealed in order to avoid payment of the security deposits. In many other cases, though, the “breaking of the peace” and the failure to observe banishments or particular elements in the agreements touched off deep disputes between blood relatives and kin who shared a surname, between those who “lived a life of ease” and those who “had no worth,” and between different territorial segments within a kin

<sup>65</sup> The peace agreements describe in detail the reconciliation ceremony, and in particular some characteristic gestures: embraces with tears in one’s eyes while “touching the written document” in front of public authorities. The signing of the peace accord was followed by religious rituals and banquets.

<sup>66</sup> In 1607 the captain of Chiavari mediated a peace accord between six kin groups from the parish of Favale and then imposed on each kin group a collective security payment of 500 gold *scudi*. But he also observed that “one could fear that such an agreement could lead to greater disorders, since good and peaceful people who possess some property would be ready to pay the required security payment and observe the agreement, but since in each one of these kin groups there are many poor people, it is a danger that the latter seek to extract payments from the others, as they are now saying they will do, by threatening to carry out crimes and forcing them to have to pay the security” (ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1692).

group. With this in mind, let us re-read, from an internal perspective, a few of the episodes described in this and previous chapters.

In 1581 the De Martino kin group was ordered to pay a compensation of 400 *lire* to Francesco di Negro, of the village of Soglio, for the theft of a quantity of velvet allegedly carried out by Scarabino de Martino. As responsibility for this payment was being divided among members of the kin group, the group itself broke into two parts. Lodisio de Martino, in the name of twenty other household heads, submitted a request to the Senate that the sentence be limited to “the closest relatives of said Scarabino, some of whom are his first cousins and others uncles, since said Lodisio and his companions are poor beggars who have no other kin relations to said Scarabino beyond sharing the De Martino surname.” Michele “and his companions” (seven household heads), for their part, argued that “according to the sentence, the said payment should be divided amongst all of the men of the said De Martino kin group of said village [Lorsica], since it is neither just nor honest that said seven persons bear the entire burden themselves, but that each one should pay the part he owes.”<sup>67</sup> The issue of genealogical distance also animated a conflict between two branches of the Leverone kin group, which was ordered in 1582 to pay 200 *scudi* according to the section of the criminal statutes entitled “On failure to observe an edict of exile.” The “kin of the same surname [as the bandits]” argued that the punishment should be entirely assumed by those relatives “of the same branch and house” as Meneghino and Rosso Leverone (capital bandits). They pieced together their genealogy and showed that their relation to the guilty parties was so distant that they could “contract marriage together with them without any obstacle.”<sup>68</sup> They acknowledged that there was a tie of kinship between them, but claimed that it could not be proven, since “it was so ancient, that proof of the genealogy of the persons in question they would need witnesses who were a hundred years old or more.” In order to settle the conflict and rebuild the political unity of their kin group, the Leverone ultimately decided to “set aside their love, based on blood, and every other natural affection,” and deliver up the head of the bandit Rosso.<sup>69</sup> In both of these

<sup>67</sup> ASG, Senato-Atti, filza 1455.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., filza 1462.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., filza 1461. The close relatives of the bandit “begged all of their friends, and especially the Malatesta, to kill said bandits.” They thus reinforced their alliance with the Malatesta, who took advantage of the “reward for killing a rebel” and freed one of their own relatives who was a bandit.

cases, the *principali*, under the internal pressure of kin and allies and the external pressure of the judicial institutions, themselves shouldered the burden of security guarantees and reconciliation. In so doing they reconfirmed their authority and established themselves as the points of reference and power brokers for the whole society, on the local and the supra-local levels.

The sacrifice of bandit relatives was an extreme solution. In the intricate configuration of internal and external relations, the poor relatives and the bandits were able to negotiate their position within the kin group and to secure help and protection for themselves. They did this by threatening to “break the peace” and thus force the payment of the security deposit, but also by appealing to the judicial system or engaging in violence, and especially through contributing to the political and military power of the corporate group. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the bandits from the Garbarino and Connio kin groups could count on a safe haven amongst their relatives in the Imperial fiefs, and in some cases they moved there with their families.<sup>70</sup> The Leverone and Porcella bandits purchased, with their relatives’ help, properties in the *podesteria* of Roccatagliata. They also avoided the confiscation of their property by using entails or false sales agreements, or by launching reprisals against potential purchasers of property that had been sequestered by the Genoese fisc.<sup>71</sup> The defense of the Casazza bandits was organized militarily by the “kin group council,” which nominated a *Coronello* to lead the effort.<sup>72</sup>

But the context in which the classificatory system based on the *parentella* (the broad kin group) was most coherent, and in which the social life of each individual was dependent on his belonging to a corporate group, was the context of the feud. Feuds regulated and described relations between kin groups, but also determined or renewed the political cohesion within kin groups. Feuds often forced all members of the kin group into a kind of solidarity that enabled the group to channel its tensions

<sup>70</sup> In the mid-seventeenth century, the Connio of Pianmegorino held lands in Cassinghenò (in the jurisdiction of the Doria prince), where they sowed rye and *leme* (chickling vetch) each year, which “can’t be sold but they want each person in the family to be able to work.” The lands were left undivided by a paternal ancestor, “so that if it should happen that one of his descendants who lived here should encounter some kind of legal condemnation, he could withdraw to that place and work the land without having to wander abroad” (ANC, Notary Lorenzo Leverone, filza 1809).

<sup>71</sup> ASG, Magistrato delle Comunità, reg. 775; *ibid.*, Rota Criminale, filza 1237.

<sup>72</sup> ASCR, Criminalium, filza 19 and ASG, Diversorum Collegi, filza 47.

outward and to reaffirm loyalties toward their *principali*. A witness observed in 1618 that “usually what happened in the Fontanabuona is that when someone was accused of a homicide, the others from the same kin group as the accused were all held suspect.”<sup>73</sup>

All of this explains both the symmetry of the “dead” and their cyclical-ity. A feud, which was “an enmity from times beyond remembering,” could “sleep” for decades and even generations, periods during which (as the commissioners observed and as the notarial records indicate), kin groups did business with each other, negotiated, and “made ties to each other.” But when the feud broke out again, it embodied the intervening restructuring of equilibria between the groups. It tended to satisfy (or block) aspirations of social mobility, both remodeling the boundaries of the kin group toward the exterior, and redefining internal relationships between branches and territorial segments, both vertical and horizontal. The feud was thought of and lived out as something that was “interminable,”<sup>74</sup> and memories of the “dead” were a crucial element of the kin group’s collective and mythical identity. Protagonists and witnesses, along with neighbors and “public rumor,” dated these enmities to “times beyond memory,” describing them as “very ancient things.” They linked ongoing conflicts to things that had happened to “ancestors” thirty or forty years earlier and declared that “when a murder took place between kin groups, even if a peace were established, there remained nonetheless an element of dissatisfaction,” and “war in the heart.”<sup>75</sup>

This vision of the world and these representations of social relations enabled each generation and various branches of the kin group to reinterpret enmity and to manipulate their historical-genealogical or mythical memory.<sup>76</sup> In this way the feud could sanction and legitimate, with respect

<sup>73</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1237, testimony of Sansonino Giannino and of Francesco Arata regarding the feud between the De Martino and the Segaro of the village of Lorsica, which involved about a hundred men from the two kin groups.

<sup>74</sup> Black-Michaud, *Cohesive Force*.

<sup>75</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1237. This expression demonstrates a surprising resemblance to the way in which the Nuer describe feuds, in what is to me one of the most beautiful works of anthropology (in terms of its description of men, animals, and the organization of space and time): E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People* (Oxford, 1940) (Italian trans. *I Nuer: un'anarchia ordinata* [Milan, 1975], esp. 211, for the concept of “having war in one’s heart”). On the close link between individual memory and group belonging/collective memory, see M. Halbwachs, “La mémoire collective et le temps,” *Cahiers Internationaux de Sociologie* 2 (1947).

<sup>76</sup> One witness’ interpretation of the feud between the Corziglia and the Schiappacasse-Gardella of Roccatagliata in 1618 is exemplary: “It is my judgment and belief that they are

to the broad kin group, the creation of new leadership and the emergence of a new guiding lineage, according to the logic of the generational rotation of authority—which implied tension and conflict. But in a society in which violence was regulated by the principles of collective compensation and shared responsibility by all of the kin with respect to the state's justice, even the poor peasants and the bandits enjoyed “the right to feud.”<sup>77</sup> They could apply moral pressure to the stronger lineages and their “principals” who had some reciprocal obligations toward them. An example of this kind of scenario is provided by the Fopiano at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Three bandit brothers (Rolandino, Gio Batta, and Manfrino) and some “youths” were engaged in a violent dispute with the elder heads of the kin group, Bastiano and Carlo, whom they accused of having failed to provide them with sufficient help and protection. Eventually, Rolandino was given a death sentence for having wounded Bastiano with an arquebus, and Manfrino was accused of having aggressed and struck Carlo in public, on a Sunday morning at the hour of the Mass. “One can suspect,” declared the captain of Chiavari, “that this followed from the anger that this Rolandino and his three other brothers had toward said Carlo, who had helped the fisc in this case [against Rolandino].”<sup>78</sup> Almost at the same time, though, the feud with the Leverone was reopened, and the “ancient enmity” permitted the kin group to rebuild a sense of unity. The Fopiano bandits found a safe refuge in the rectory of the church San Gio Batta, and the new *principali* assumed

capital enemies because, according to what I heard from my father when he was alive, for a very long time the ancestors of said Corziglia and others murdered a number of Schiappacasse and Gardella in a mill.’ *Interrogatus*. How does the witness know that now, said Corziglia who had not even been born at that time would actively harm, with words and weapons, said Schiappacasse and Gardella, and that they would be their capital enemies? *Respondit*: ‘I don’t know his heart, but I think that for myself, if someone killed my people, I would not have a good heart toward him.’” Another witness declared that “in those parts, when a death takes place, they never forgive [the perpetrator]” (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1237). The witnesses had learned from the time they were children to distinguish between and classify social relations among individuals on the basis of their belonging to a kin group and to ancient friendships or enmities. As is generally the case in oral societies, history was passed down by means of genealogies, and it was these rather than specific events that “kept alive the memory of social relations” (J. Goody and I. Watt, “The Consequences of Literacy,” in *Literacy and Traditional Societies*, ed. J. Goody [Cambridge, 1968], 27–68, esp. 31–33).

<sup>77</sup> According to O. Brunner, peasants did not possess “as a general principle” the right to engage in a feud; Brunner distinguished between a “right to feud” linked to territorial claims and “blood enmity.” See O. Brunner, *Land und Herrschaft* (Vienna, 1939) (Italian trans. *Terra e potere* [Milan, 1983], 87–102).

<sup>78</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 598.

a fully legitimate leadership role within the kin group. This role was reinforced in subsequent years by the extension of the conflict to include other kin groups, the creation of factional alignments, and negotiations with the commissioners.

On the one hand, then, the constant pursuit of security<sup>79</sup> and individuals' strong identification with the kin group constituted the most effective glue holding hierarchical relations together. On the other hand, the *principali* were expected to organize reciprocal services, ensure the protection of the weakest, and control the centrifugal forces that threatened to pull the group apart. The success or failure of the kin group as a whole—measured in terms of the micro-changes that had crucial significance for the life of the community—depended on their ability to perform these tasks. These processes implied interactions on at least three levels, each of which was full of tensions: within the broad kin group, between kin groups, and with state institutions. In the history of the Cicagna feud, the position of the Casazza as followers resulted from the absence of Casazza notables who were able to transform the group's demographic power into political influence and prestige, ensuring an effective means of mediating with outside forces. The Casazza were a kin group with “millions of members,” but they resided on the poor side of the valley and were especially destitute of *principali*. In 1610 the wealthiest household heads refused to pay security guarantees “on the pretext, as they said, that in this kin group there are some who are too dissolute.”<sup>80</sup> In 1617 the Casazza counted nine bandits and twenty-two people under investigation for having supported bandits.<sup>81</sup>

Relations between the kin groups always had political significance—both in feuds and in marriage exchanges or public rituals<sup>82</sup>—and this was reinforced by the ways in which groups were integrated into the rest of society, especially through the contractual mechanisms that regulated the justice system via sentences and peace accords. The main corporate groups had their being in this universe of local and supra-local relations, relations on which their legitimate political dominion was

<sup>79</sup> This is the organizing idea of Levi, *L'eredità immateriale*.

<sup>80</sup> ASG, Senato-Litterarum, filza 610.

<sup>81</sup> ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1237.

<sup>82</sup> See the synthesis of G. Balandier, *Anthropologie politique* (Paris, 1967) (Italian trans. *Antropologia politica* [Milan, 1969]).

founded. But the kin groups whose *principali* succeeded in instilling administrative and political cohesion to an ensemble of “relatives” whose genealogical ties were largely arbitrary<sup>83</sup> but whose members recognized and accepted the principle of hierarchical solidarity, were the kin groups that prevailed.

In this way the category of ‘kin group’ (*parentella*) (as a principle for constructing a social reality on the basis of classifying relations between persons and groups) provided a language for politics. It constituted a kind of matrix for a local reworking of politics and history.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> In 1617 the “Casazza kin group” was composed of 123 male adults. If one considers the ‘ego’ to be four first cousins who were bandits (sons of brothers = the stem family of the villages of Cicagna), the “kin” were classified as follows: twenty-eight “very close kin under the orders of the same Colonel [military head],” twenty-three of whom resided in the parish of Cicagna, two in Genoa, one in Savona, and two in Livorno; and then ninety-five more distant kin, or people who shared the same surname, of whom twenty-five lived in the Fontanabuona, thirty-six in the rest of the captainate of Rapallo, twenty-two in the Trebbia valley (which belonged to the Doria prince), nine in San Martino d’Albaro, two in Genoa, and one in Torriglia. It should be noted that the context of this classification is the relationship with the judicial system and the institutions of the Republic—the list of the 123 Casazza kin, which also includes some indications on the age and wealth of individuals, was drawn up by the commissioners Gio Batta Adorno and Giulio Cesare Lomellino on the basis of information gathered in Cicagna, in particular from the priest Luchino Casazza. An afterword stresses that “each of the individuals listed above belongs to the Casazza kin group” (ASG, Rota Criminale, filza 1237).

<sup>84</sup> Local history is constituted by kinship relations, which are also the key to reading universal history. The system of alliances and enmities that serves as the foundation for this way of understanding the world, social relations, and historical continuity became a kind of residual structure probably only in the nineteenth century. This shift resulted from the politico-administrative transformations following the fall of the Republic, economic changes (the end of the trans-Appennine commercial system) and the great trans-oceanic emigration that emptied the valleys of eastern Liguria. These are the central themes reflected upon by the local historian Romeo Leveroni at the beginning of the twentieth century (in *Cicagna*). Leveroni (a priest) argued that the formation of factional alignments (Greens and Blues) in the valley during the seventeenth century essentially mirrored the long enmity between the Leverone and the Fopiano (*Cicagna*, 126). In 1939 another local historian, Giuseppe Pessagno, compared the kin groups to the Genoese *alberghi* and to Scottish clans: “*Parentela* was to us what the clans were for Scotland: groups of families, interests, and clients” (*I banditi della Fontanabuona*, 22).



# APPENDIX: PROPERTY DISTRIBUTION WITHIN CERTAIN FONTANABUONA KIN GROUPS ACCORDING TO THE 1641 *CARATATA* (FROM CHAP. 4)

## 1. The Arata kin group (parishes of Cicagna and Orero)

<i>Estimate category (lire)</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated value</i>
0–100	8	13	–	–	595
100–200	10	15	1	–	1,235
200–400	11	19	5	1	2,840
400–600	12	38	7	1	6,476
600–800	8	35	6	–	6,162
800–1,000	5	19	4	–	5,082
1,000–1,200	6	18	6	–	6,150
1,200–1,400	4	17	3	–	5,225
1,400–1,600	7	29	7	1	10,281
1,600–1,800	3	12	4	–	5,140
1,800–2,000	3	18	4	–	5,736
2,000–3,000	3	8	4	1	7,830
3,000	3	29	8	1	10,190
Total	83	270	59	6	72,942

## 2. The Fopiano kin group (parish of Cicagna)

<i>Estimate category (lire)</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated value</i>
0–100	17	19	1	–	971
100–200	15	20	1	1	2,392
200–400	21	35	9	–	6,851
400–600	12	31	8	–	6,120
600–800	14	29	8	–	10,310
800–1,000	5	12	5	1	4,620
1,000–1,200	5	18	5	–	5,552
1,200–1,400	5	21	7	1	6,460
1,400–1,600	–	–	–	–	–
1,600–1,800	3	14	3	–	5,080
1,800–2,000	–	–	–	–	–
2,000–3,000	2	8	4	–	4,310
3,000	–	–	–	–	–
Total	99	207	51	3	52,666

## 3. The Casazza kin group (parish of Cicagna)

<i>Estimate category (lire)</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated value</i>
0–100	15	16	1	–	660
100–200	14	19	4	–	2,480
200–400	16	28	10	1	5,800
400–600	12	38	9	–	6,379
600–800	5	12	4	–	4,195
800–1,000	4	9	6	1	3,750
1,000–1,200	2	8	2	–	2,346
1,200–1,400	1	4	1	–	1,325
1,400–1,600	1	3	–	–	1,458
1,600	–	–	–	–	–
Total	70	137	37	2	28,393

## 4. The Leverone kin group (parish of Cicagna)

<i>Estimate category (lire)</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated value</i>
0–100	5	7	3	–	334
100–200	9	15	5	–	1,138
200–400	7	19	4	–	2,165
400–600	2	6	4	2	1,042
600–800	3	11	4	–	2,080
800–1,000	1	6	1	1	1,040
1,000–1,200	2	10	3	–	2,250
1,200–1,400	1	3	–	–	1,250
1,400	–	–	–	–	–
Total	30	77	24	3	11,299

## 5. The Porcella kin group (parishes of Cicagna and Verzi)

<i>Estimate category (lire)</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated value</i>
0–100	10	11	1	–	580
100–200	4	8	4	–	748
200–400	4	10	–	–	1,158
400–600	3	17	2	–	1,370
600	1	11	–	–	650
Total	22	57	7	–	4,506

## 6. The Malatesta kin group (parishes of Cicagna and Verzi)

<i>Estimate category (lire)</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated value</i>
0–100	13	13	2	–	780
100–200	2	2	–	–	400
200–400	4	17	2	1	1,400
400–600	8	25	5	–	3,845
600–800	6	26	5	–	4,265
800–1,000	4	13	3	–	3,780
1,000–1,200	1	2	–	–	1,200
1,200–1,400	1	2	–	–	1,260
1,400–1,600	1	4	1	–	1,560
1,600	–	–	–	–	–
Total	40	104	18	1	18,490

## 7. The Cavagnaro kin group (parish of Verzi)

<i>Estimate category (lire)</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated value</i>
0–100	26	31	6	–	1,450
100–200	16	33	9	–	2,635
200–400	12	35	6	–	3,775
400–600	7	28	6	–	3,460
600–800	3	14	4	–	2,035
800–1,000	5	23	7	–	4,624
1,000–1,200	4	15	4	–	4,391
1,200–1,400	4	19	3	1	5,195
1,400–1,600	1	2	1	–	1,600
1,600–1,800	3	18	6	–	5,180
1,800–2,000	3	20	3	–	5,670
2,000–3,000	1	2	–	–	3,000
3,000–4,000	2	8	4	–	6,220
4,000	1	2	4	–	6,000
Total	88	250	63	1	55,235

## 8. The De Martino kin group (parish of Lorsica)

<i>Estimate category (lire)</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated value</i>
0–100	36	41	2	–	1,790
100–200	15	32	10	–	2,490
200–400	23	79	16	1	6,585
400–600	14	85	18	5	7,274
600–800	8	66	6	–	5,520
800–1,000	8	65	9	–	7,006
1,000–1,200	3	31	5	–	3,295
1,200–1,400	–	–	–	–	–
1,400–1,600	2	21	2	–	2,910
1,600–1,800	2	14	2	–	3,410
1,800–2,000	1	13	2	–	1,960
2,000–3,000	2	28	4	–	4,432
3,000–4,000	1	13	3	–	3,305
4,000	2	39	6	3	14,270
Total	117	527	85	9	64,247

## 9. The Segaro kin group (parish of Lorsica)

<i>Estimate category (lire)</i>	<i>Owners</i>	<i>Parcels</i>	<i>Houses</i>	<i>Mills</i>	<i>Estimated value</i>
0–100	3	4	–	–	150
100–200	7	15	1	–	930
200–400	5	22	3	–	1,576
400–600	4	12	4	–	1,940
600	1	17	2	–	2,650
Total	20	70	10	–	7,246

# INDEX<sup>1</sup>

## A

- Acereto (village), 176
- Acqua (village), 115n40, 118
- Adorno (Adorna), 9, 184, 186, 189, 195n18, 197, 204, 207
- Adorno, Gio Batta, 50, 234n46, 281n83
- Affinity (in-law), 144, 146
- Aix, 40n54
- Albaro (hill), 58n104
- Alberghi*, 5–7, 9, 9n20, 24, 24n4, 129n24, 174, 186, 186n6, 281n84
- Alí (Moorish slave), 221n16
- Allegra, L., 128n19
- Amandolesi, 69, 70
- Angeletta (wife of Gioanni Castagneto), 133, 134, 178, 179
- Antibes, 40n54
- Apennines, xii, 27, 38, 41, 58, 62, 64, 91, 122, 154, 155, 158, 170, 181, 193, 231
- Apprentice, 154, 235–237, 241, 242
- Apulia, 155, 156
- Aquilonare (gate in Rapallo), 158
- Arata, Agostina (daughter of Bernardo), 134, 139, 143n61, 143n62
- Arata, Alessandro, 140, 141, 243–247, 245n73, 270
- Arata, Ambrosio, 162, 270
- Arata, Angelo Maria (son of Gio Batta), 118n42, 132, 267, 268
- Arata, Aurelio (son of Gio Batta), 132, 161, 244n69, 266
- Arata, Batta (son of Bernardo), 134, 143n62
- Arata, Battino, 128, 129, 135, 160
- Arata, Battino (from Croce), 125

<sup>1</sup> Note: Page numbers followed by ‘n’ refer to notes.

- Arata, Battino (from Lencisa, son of Stefano and Geronima), 253  
 Arata, Battino (from Pendola), 128, 129  
 Arata, Battista, 127  
 Arata, Benedetto (from Lencisa, brother of Francesco and Nicolino), 135, 136  
 Arata, Benedetto (from Lencisa, son of Stefano and Geronima), 136  
 Arata, Bernardino (from Orero), 128  
 Arata, Bernardo (father of Nicola and Domenico), 143n62  
 Arata, Carlo, 122–125, 132  
 Arata, Domenico (son of Bernardo), 128, 143n62  
 Arata family, 72, 117, 121, 128, 160, 217  
 Arata, Felino, 162  
 Arata, Filippo, 128  
 Arata, Francesco (from Lencisa, brother of Nicolino and Benedetto), 136  
 Arata, Galeazzo, 117–119, 122–129, 132–135, 154, 215, 221n16, 225, 229n28, 232n37, 239n58, 252, 268  
 Arata, Geronima, 133, 134, 136, 138, 139  
 Arata, Geronima (daughter of Stefano), 135  
 Arata, Giacometto, 253  
 Arata, Gieronima (daughter of Bernardo), 143n62  
 Arata, Gio, 127, 128, 255  
 Arata, Gio (from Croce), 128  
 Arata, Gio Andrea, 161, 269  
 Arata, Gioanni, 128  
 Arata, Gio Batta (notary), 85n46, 103n26, 118n42, 122, 123n2, 125, 129, 132n30, 134n41, 137n45, 141n60, 143n62, 157n15, 244n69, 253, 258n18, 259n25, 267–269  
 Arata, Gio Francesco, 132  
 Arata, Giovanni (from Arata), 128  
 Arata, Giuliano (from Lencisa), 128  
 Arata, Luisina (daughter of Bernardo), 143n62  
 Arata, Marco, 160  
 Arata, Nicola (from Lencisa, cousin of Battino), 125, 135  
 Arata, Nicola (son of Bernardo), 143n62  
 Arata, Nicolao, 126  
 Arata, Nicolino (from Lencisa, brother of Francesco and Benedetto), 136  
 Arata, Nicolino (from Orero), 258  
 Arata, Nicollino (from Lencisa, son of Stefano and Geronima), 135  
 Arata, Oliviero, 134  
 Arata, Paolo, 125  
 Arata, Pellegro, 161  
 Arata, Pompeo, 132  
 Arata, Rolandino, 128, 161, 170  
 Arata, Scipione, 132  
 Arata, Stefano, 132, 135, 136  
 Arata, Tomaxino, 125  
 Arata, Zanino, 133  
 Arbiter (peace-maker), 123, 177, 217, 261  
 Arbitration, xii, xiii, 11, 12, 15, 43, 211, 261, 268, 271  
 Arboccò (village), 232  
 Archive  
     archival, xvii, 43, 72  
     cadastral source, 174n1  
     criminal record, 16, 58, 174n1, 253  
     criminal register, 175  
     documentation, 52, 152  
     notarial records, 199  
 Arena (village), 217, 232  
 Argirofi family, 189  
 Ariosto, Ludovico, 244n69  
 Arno, A., 30n24  
 Arrighi, G., 261n29  
 Ascheri, G.A., 6n11

- Ascoli, Albert R, xviin26  
 Assemblies, 7, 43, 44, 52, 66, 73, 103,  
 200, 205, 207, 222  
 Aste family, 53  
 Auto-consumption, 126, 157  
 Aveno, 45, 46, 255  
 Aveto valley, 38, 39n52, 51, 122, 125,  
 145, 153, 154, 158, 164, 170,  
 199n27, 202, 232, 233, 241,  
 246, 247  
 Aymard, Maurice, 233n40
- B**  
 Bacezza (village), 223  
 Bachioco, Agostino, 187, 188  
 Bachioco, Batta, 189  
 Bacigalupo, Batta (husband of  
 Agostina Boitano), 139  
 Bacigalupo, Batta (son of Vincenzo,  
 husband of Maria Valente), 141  
 Bacigalupo, Battino, 201  
 Bacigalupo family, 201  
 Bacigalupo, Galeazzo, 141  
 Bacigalupo, Giacomo, 270  
 Bacigalupo, Gio (son of Galeazzo),  
 141  
 Bacigalupo, Gio Batta, 188  
 Bacigalupo, Gio Carlo, 200, 201  
 Bacigalupo, Juanino, 39, 39n52, 40  
 Bacigalupo, Lazaro, 188  
 Bacigalupo, Masina (daughter of  
 Galeazzo, wife of Stefano  
 Valente), 141  
 Bacigalupo, Rolandino, 273n63, 279  
 Bacigalupo, Rolando, 194  
 Bacigalupo, Vincenzo (father of  
 Batta), 134, 141  
 Badaracco, Agostino, 145, 146  
 Badaracco, Geronimo, 146  
 Bafico family (from Rupinaro), 213  
 Bafico, Lorenzo, 189  
 Bailey, F.G., 47n73, 54n94  
 Baker, 72, 85, 162–169  
 Bakhtin, M., 30n24  
 Balandier, G., 280n82  
 Ballano, 175, 228, 256  
 Bancalari family, 207, 209  
 Bandits (against bandits), 19, 23, 28,  
 31, 32n27, 36, 40, 41, 45, 46,  
 51–53, 145, 266  
 Banishment (exile/ban), 11, 12, 29,  
 33, 35, 36, 39, 42, 43, 57, 95,  
 203, 216, 218, 225, 230, 239,  
 252, 276  
 Banton, M., 192n11  
 Barbarasco (village), 117  
 Barbazelata, Alessandro, 177  
 Barbazelata, Battista, 175, 176  
 Barbazelata, Benedetto, 176, 239  
 Barbazelata family, 216n8, 250, 260  
 Barbazelata, Martino, 175  
 Barbazelata, Pasquale, 176  
 Barbazelata, Pasqualino, 175  
 Barbazelata, Stefano, 35, 94n2, 218,  
 232n37, 263  
 Barbero family, 216n8, 222  
 Barbero, Scipione, 227  
 Barbieri (village), 233n43  
 Bardi, 163  
 Bargagli, 49, 63, 224  
 Bargello (police chief), 181  
 Barnavi, E., 3n3  
 Basso family (from Camogli), 213  
 Bateson, G., 211n51  
 Bavari (parish), 35  
 Bazzorro, Battino, 40  
 Beals, A.R., 192n11  
 Beattie, J.M., 28n19  
 Belgrano, L.T., 193n12  
 Bellomo, M., 143n61  
 Bendix, R., 253n6  
 Benvenuto family, 36  
 Bertigaro, 202  
 Bettola, 39, 40  
 Bezassa family, 74n28



Bisagno valley, 28, 37, 41, 45, 48, 52, 57n101, 123, 227, 228  
 Bitossi, C., 5n8, 5n9, 7n15, 65n6, 257n13  
 Black-Michaud, J., 260n29, 278n74  
 Bloch, Marc, 18n34, 112, 112n34  
 Blok, A., 28n19, 29n21  
 Blues (Turquoise), 9, 55, 189, 197, 200, 210, 281n84  
 Bobbio, 161, 163  
 Boccardo, P., xiv  
 Bocconcelli, Marina, xix, 207  
 Bodin, Jean, 4n6  
 Boglio, Lorenzo, 153, 154  
 Boitano, Agostina (wife of Batta Bacigalupo), 139  
 Boitano, Agostino, 177  
 Boitano, Bino, 232, 263  
 Boitano, Cesare, 177  
 Boitano family, 35, 75, 250, 264  
 Boitano, Francesco, 178  
 Boitano, Gallo, 227  
 Boitano, Sabadino, 237  
 Boitano, Sansonino, 178  
 Boitano, Travaglino, 227  
 Border, 27, 38, 41, 42, 45, 97, 102, 104, 105, 123, 125, 153, 154, 159, 202, 256, 260, 261  
 Borelli, Dario, 187–189, 196  
 Borghesi (townspeople), 67–69, 72, 102, 157, 158, 192, 199, 199n28, 200, 257  
 Borgonovo, 201  
 Borgotaro, 40, 40n54  
 Borzoli, 61n2, 68–70, 71n20  
 Borzonasca, 49, 123, 124n6, 162, 163, 254n9  
 Borzone family, 205  
 Bossio, Francesco (Monsignor), 259n26  
 Boudon, R., 220n14  
 Bourdieu, P., 175n3, 261n30, 274n64  
 Bousquet, J., 274n63

Braudel, F., 19n35  
 Bread, 85, 130, 165–167, 179, 226, 233, 234n47, 242, 246, 255  
 Bribe (corruption), 160, 161, 196  
 Brichetto, Antonio, 247  
 Brichetto, Batta, 134  
 Brichetto family, 118  
 Brignole family, 209  
 Broker, 152, 154–156, 158–168, 218, 237, 267, 277  
 Brown, K.M., 261n29  
 Brugnato, 37  
 Brunner, O., 279n77  
 Bruxa family, 75  
 Buffoni, C., 236n51  
 Bujra, J., 193n11  
 Bureaucracy, 2n1, 51  
 Busalla, 52, 246

## C

Cabanne (village of Santo Stefano d'Aveto), 39n52, 105, 154n11, 233, 240, 241  
 Cademartori, Batta, 160  
 Cademartori family, 237, 238, 255  
 Cadiz, 9n19  
 Cagnone, Ambrosio, 161  
 Cagnone, Bernardo, 170  
 Cagnone family, 162, 170, 232  
 Cagnone, Giovanni, 161  
 Cagnone, Pietro, 170  
 Cagnone, Teramo, 161, 171  
 Cagnoni family, 232  
 Calderari family, 242  
 Calvari, 82, 145, 160, 228n28, 256  
 Camogli, 39, 162, 165, 167n56, 213  
 Camogli, Stefano, 37, 39, 40  
 Campodezasco, 242  
 Canale, E., 100n18  
 Canale, Nicola (husband of Bernarda Norero), 244n70  
 Canale, Paolo, 134

- Cané, Giuseppe, 238  
 Canessa, Bertone, 232  
 Canessa, Bozino, 227  
 Canessa family (from Rapallo), 213, 246  
 Canessa, Nicolino, 227, 233n39  
 Canessa, Venturino, 161  
 Canevale, Bartolomeo, 50  
 Canevale (chapel), 74, 85, 99, 166n53, 228n28, 258  
 Canezza, Nicolino, 34  
 Canitia, Gio Carlo, 9n19  
 Canivella, 117  
 Canneva, Guglielmo (priest of Cicagna), 265  
 Capellane, 207  
 Capellino family, 35n34, 216n8, 223  
 Capellino, Michele, 35, 218, 222, 225  
 Caperana (village), 185, 194  
 Capo di Monte, 81  
 Captainate (capitanato), 27, 36, 74, 83, 86n48, 87, 90, 95n8, 117, 228n28, 256, 257, 273n62, 281n83  
 Caracciolo, Albertino, 39  
 Caracciolo family, 40  
 Carasco, 123, 124n6, 131, 160–164, 167, 185, 193, 194, 201, 203, 203n32, 204, 206, 211  
 Caratata, 70, 85, 91, 92, 96–98, 106, 107, 109–112, 115, 121, 134, 151n1, 283–287  
 Carignano, Gio, 244n70  
 Carnival, 188, 192, 200, 229  
 Carraro, Domenico, 118  
 Carraro family, 118  
 Carroll, S., xvn19  
 Cartaregia, O., 269n54  
 Casa de' Menni (hamlet), 117  
 Casale della Chiesa (same as Casale?), 117  
 Casale (hamlet), 117  
 Casale Monferrato, 26, 204  
 Casanova, 36n37, 148  
 Casanuova, 118  
 Casareggio, 99  
 Casaretto, 101, 117  
 Casaretto, Batta, 140  
 Casarino, G., 236n53  
 Casazza, Agostino, 270  
 Casazza, Batta, 270  
 Casazza family, 41, 72, 117, 118, 128, 165, 216n8, 224, 249, 251, 255, 260, 265, 268, 269, 280, 281n83, 284  
 Casazza, Giacobbo, 255  
 Casazza, Giuliano, 51  
 Casazza, Giacomo, 251  
 Casazza, Lazarina, 133  
 Casazza, Leonardo, 128  
 Casazza, Luca, 140  
 Casazza, Luchino (priest), 281n83  
 Casazza, Minolla, 50  
 Casazza, Pasquale, 128, 229n28, 251, 252  
 Casazza, Rolandino, 133, 270  
 Casazza, Rolando, 128  
 Casazza, Sentino, 51  
 Casazza, Stefano (priest), 51, 265  
 Casella, Bartolomeo (brother of Batta), 146  
 Casella, Batta (brother of Bartolomeo), 146, 147  
 Casella family (from Moconesi), 102, 146, 256  
 Cash  
     coin, 212  
     gold, 36, 103, 142n61, 195, 238, 240, 244n69, 247, 275n66  
     silver, 225, 244, 244n70, 247  
 Cassina, Ambrogio, 134  
 Cassina family, 133, 134, 255  
 Cassina, Gio Batta, 134  
 Cassina, Lazaro, 134  
 Cassina, Marietta, 133  
 Cassina, Michele, 134

- Cassina, Nicosio, 258  
 Cassina, Scipione, 134  
 Cassina, Sebastiano, 134  
 Cassina, Silvestro, 134  
 Cassina, Stefano (from Dezerega),  
     133, 233n44, 241  
 Cassina, Vincenzo, 134  
 Cassinelli, Francesco (aka the Moro),  
     194  
 Cassinelli, Gio Antonio, 194  
 Cassinelli, Massimo, 194  
 Cassinghen, 148, 277n70  
 Castagnelo (village), 232n38  
 Castagneto family, 74n28, 117, 134,  
     177  
 Castagneto, Giovanni, 177, 178  
 Castagneto, Giuseppe, 103  
 Castagneto (village), 117  
 Castagnola family, 36  
 Castello (parish of Favale), 101  
 Castiglione, 25, 44, 67  
 Castruzzo family, 74n28  
 Cavagnaro, Ambrosio, 270  
 Cavagnaro, Bartolomeo, 133, 133n36,  
     270  
 Cavagnaro family, 72, 75, 115n40,  
     256, 269, 270, 286  
 Cavagnaro, Gio Batta, 270  
 Cavagnaro, Jacobino (son of Stefano),  
     94n2  
 Cavagnaro, Lorenzino, 134n36  
 Cavagnaro, Massimo, 240  
 Cavagnaro, Pellegro, 133  
 Cavagnaro, Stefano (father of  
     Jacobino), 94n2  
 Caviglia, G. (priest), 259n24  
 Cella, Giuseppe, 212  
 Cella, Nicola, 233n42  
 Cella, Simone, 196n21  
 Celle Ligure, 156  
 Celle, Michele, 156  
 Centurione, Domenico, 175  
 Ceremony  
     ritual, xv, xvi, xviii24, 95, 185,  
         198n27, 213, 229n30, 259,  
         260n28, 261, 275, 275n65,  
         280  
     stage/staging/staged, 20, 61, 181,  
         220, 260, 262  
     theatre, xv, 61, 181, 223  
 Cerignale, 39n52, 233, 236  
 Cervo, 138n51  
 Cesena, Antonio, 251n3  
 Cevini, P., 8n17  
 Chabod, Federico, 2, 2n1, 24  
 Charles V, 38  
 Chestnut, 45, 77, 89, 91–99, 102,  
     103, 106n33, 112, 113, 118,  
     122, 128, 133, 135, 137–141,  
     151, 164, 171, 199, 230,  
     234n47, 238, 243, 243n68, 245,  
     258, 262  
 Chiapparino, 117  
 Chiavario family, 213  
 Chichizola family, 74, 74n28, 205  
 Chichizola, Benedettina (wife of  
     Pantalino), 244  
 Chichizola, Pantalino (husband of  
     Benedettina), 244n70  
 Chiechero, 105  
 Chiereghino, Angelo Maria (son of  
     Dionisio, husband of Susanina  
     Ferretto), 139  
 Chiereghino, Dionisio (father of  
     Angelo Maria), 139  
 Chiereghino family, 75, 138  
 Chiereghino, Giovanni, 138  
 Chiereghino, Nicoletta, 138  
 Chiereghino, Nicoletta (widow of  
     Batta Valente, wife of Antonio  
     Dondero), 144n63  
 Chieri, 128n19  
 Chittolini, G., 4n5, 8n17, 24n2  
 Cibo, Giulio, 186

- Cicagna (parish), 51, 75, 76, 78, 79, 85, 89, 93, 98, 107, 111, 114n37, 115–118, 122, 126, 128, 133, 135, 137, 140, 165–167, 166n54, 166n55, 224, 225, 229, 231, 242, 249, 251, 253–256, 256n10, 259, 260, 263n33, 264–268, 271, 280, 281n83, 283–285
- Civil society, 13, 29, 33, 58
- Clan, 5, 6, 117, 281n84  
*See also* Kinship
- Clastres, Pierre, x
- Cliques (conventicle), 5, 166, 183, 207  
*See also* Factions
- Clothing  
 blouse, 142n61, 143n61  
 cloak, 243  
 dresses, 12, 132, 142n61, 244n70  
 garment, 142n61, 243  
 hat, 71, 234n47, 247  
 jacket, 233, 234n47, 246  
 jewel, 226–228, 233  
 kerchief, 243  
 linen, 158, 161, 162, 162n38, 226–228, 233  
 shirt, 227, 228, 243  
 short, 246  
 stocking, 246  
 trouser, 170, 233, 234n47, 245, 246  
 trousseau, 89, 94, 142, 142n61, 143n62
- Coastal (coast, Riviera), 24, 31, 37, 38, 42, 44, 55, 58, 61, 61n2, 63, 68, 69, 71, 74, 80, 86n48, 88, 91, 95, 95n8, 96, 102, 106n33, 151–153, 155, 156, 158, 162–166, 162n38, 168–170, 174n1, 187, 195n18, 201, 203, 206, 208, 209, 214, 233, 235, 237, 247
- Cò de borgo (neighborhood in Chiavari), 191
- Cò de Verzi (village), 115n40
- Cò de Villa (village), 117
- Cogorno (village), 185, 193–196, 201, 202
- Cohen, A., 251n2
- Comaschi, R., 57n103
- Commercial  
 exchange circuit, 8, 115n39, 152, 155, 158, 162, 165, 233  
 transit, 126, 148, 153–155, 170, 171, 171n64
- Commons (common land), 38, 98, 100–102, 104, 105, 127, 176, 230
- Communities, 3, 3n4, 4n5, 7–14, 12n27, 16, 19–21, 23, 24, 26–28, 30, 31, 37, 38, 42–44, 47, 48, 50–52, 54–58, 57n101, 61, 61n2, 63–75, 77–81, 83–85, 88–90, 95, 96, 99–102, 107, 115n40, 122, 123n6, 127, 145, 147, 148n67, 151–153, 152n2, 156, 162, 164, 164n45, 166, 171, 173, 174, 174n1, 179, 195n18, 203, 206, 209, 216n8, 219–222, 230, 234n46, 235, 237, 243, 256–260, 264, 265n36, 266, 273, 280
- Community Affairs, Magistracy of, 78, 80, 81, 83, 87, 88
- Compensation, xii, 12, 13, 42, 43, 53, 151, 211, 225, 261, 273, 276, 279
- Compiano, 38, 163, 169
- Composite state, xiiin15
- Confiscation, 12, 42, 74, 277
- Connio, Agostino, 131n27
- Connio, Brigida, 137
- Connio, Domenico, 137
- Connio family, 41, 102–104, 117–119, 146, 233n43, 277

- Connio, Geronima, 118  
 Connio, Giovanni (from Pianmegorino), 145  
 Connio, Gregorio, 119  
 Connio, Negrino, 119  
 Connio-Pachiugo, Francesco, 118, 119  
 Connio-Pachiugo, Galeazzo, 118, 119  
 Connio-Pachiugo, Paretino, 118  
 Connio, Pantalino, 73  
 Connio, Rolandino, 119  
 Connio, Rosina, 118  
 Consegliero, 233  
 Consegliero, Arghenta (née Fopiano, wife of Lorenzo), xviii, 225–230, 233n42  
 Consegliero, Bernardo, 225  
 Consegliero, Gio, 227, 230, 232, 232n37  
 Consegliero, Lorenzo (aka Locino, husband of Arghenta), 225, 230, 232, 232n37, 233  
 Consegliero, Nicolino, 35, 222, 230  
 Conte, Lorenzo, 40n54  
 Conti, Lorenzo, 4n6  
 Cooper, K., xivn18  
 Corazzol, G., 127n19  
 Cordano, Antonio, 102  
 Cordano family, 75, 101, 102, 175–177, 250, 252, 260  
 Cordano, Gio, 102  
 Cordano, Rolandino, 102  
 Cordano, Vincenzo, 175  
 Coreglia, 73–75, 82, 85, 112, 133, 158, 166n53, 228n28, 258, 259  
 Corerallo, 201  
 Cornia (village), 115n40, 140, 141, 259, 259n22  
 Corpus Domini, 81, 229, 253–256, 266  
 Corsicans (Corsica), 15, 34, 40n53, 42n58, 44–46, 49, 53, 78–80, 83, 115n39, 124, 171, 178, 215, 217, 219, 230, 231, 231n35, 242, 243  
 Corte (fraction of Monleone), 79, 117  
 Corziglia family (from Roccatagliata), 278n76, 279n76  
 Cosio, 57n101  
 Costa, Bartolomeo (husband of Nicoletta), 140, 141  
 Costa family (from Cornia), 140  
 Costa, Geronima (wife of Stefano Pessia), 140, 141  
 Costalunga, 95  
 Costantini, C., 5n8, 26n15  
 Costa, Pelegro, 238  
 Costasecca (village), 223  
 Counter-Reformation (Tridentine), 214n58, 259  
 Cozzi, G., 4n7, 13n28  
 Credit, 48, 126, 128, 130n26, 141, 144n63, 156, 157, 166, 167, 167n56, 167n57, 199–201, 200n29, 207, 237, 261  
 Crema, 241  
 Crimes, rural, 94  
 Criminal court  
     criminal justice, 10, 13, 17, 26, 28, 36, 48, 164, 212, 214  
     criminal policy, 18, 23–59, 218  
     criminal records, 16, 17, 58, 101, 160, 167, 174n1, 182, 220n15, 225, 253  
     criminal sources, 249  
     criminal statutes, 14, 29, 32, 42–44, 185n5, 186n6, 273, 274, 276  
     penal, 29, 34, 44  
     Rota, 11, 36, 66  
 Croce (village), 117, 125, 128, 153  
 Crovo, Angierata (daughter of Antonio, wife of Merino), 141n60  
 Crovo, Antonio (father of Angierata), 141n60  
 Crovo, Bartolomeo, 238, 240n60  
 Crovo, Bertone, 141n60

- Crovo, Chiechino (father-in-law of Scarabino de Martino), 228, 232, 239, 240n60
- Crovo family (from Figarolo), 239, 240
- Crovo, Giovanni, 227
- Crovo, Lodixio (son of Bertone, husband of Augustina Guainasso), 141n60
- Crovo, Merino (son of Zanetino, husband of Angierata), 141n60
- Crovo, Pelina (daughter of Stefano), 240
- Crovo, Stefano, 240
- Crovo, Stefano (son of Zanetino), 141n60
- Crovo, Zanetino (father of Merino), 141n60
- Cultural exchange, 14
- Custom (customary), 8, 11, 14, 15, 25, 32, 52–55, 61, 71, 73–75, 79, 81–90, 95, 100–103, 130, 135, 143n61, 179, 199n27, 203, 226n24, 229n30, 254n9, 255, 259–261
- D**
- Dal Verme counts, 45
- Dance (dancing), xiv, 94, 200, 226n24, 229, 254–256, 258
- Davis, John, x, xn2, 152n3
- Davis, Natalie Zemon, x, xvi, 18n33, 229, 229n29
- De Benedetti family, 75
- De Benedetti, Lorenzo, 237
- Debt, 69, 71, 72n21, 73, 74, 83–85, 93, 96, 99, 123n6, 127–129, 131, 139, 142–144, 157, 199, 199n28, 208, 261
- De Ferrari, Carlo Antonio, 80
- De Ferrari, Ferdinando, 88
- De Ferrari, Gerolamo, 88
- De Ferrari, Girolamo, 88
- De Ferrari, Pietro Maria (De Ferrari), 35, 35n34, 37, 40, 171, 215, 216, 216n7, 219, 220, 221n16, 225, 225n22, 229n28, 230, 231, 239, 252
- De Franchi family, 9n20
- De Franchi, Paolo, 65
- Delille, Gérard, 75, 75n30, 119n43, 138n51
- Della Cella, Angelo (18th-c. author), 9n19, 125
- Della Cella, Antonio, 153, 240
- Della Cella, Belletto, 170
- Della Cella, Ercolino, 160, 222
- Della Cella family (Cella family), 153, 154, 154n11, 164, 170, 200, 241
- Della Cella, Gio Angelo (notary), 103n24, 125, 126n18, 128n20, 131n27, 133n33, 154, 177, 177n6, 240
- Della Cella, Paoletino, 160, 241
- Della Cella, Paolo Gerolamo, 153
- Della Petra family, 189
- Della Petra, Massimo, 193
- Della Torre, Antonio, 229n28
- Della Torre, Carlo, 124
- Della Torre, Cesare, 188
- Della Torre family, 6n13, 82, 160
- Della Torre, Giuliano, 124
- Della Torre, Ottaviano (father of Pasquale), 124, 189, 205, 206, 209, 228, 252
- Della Torre, Pasquale (son of Ottaviano), 206, 256
- Della Torre, Raffaele, 156
- De Marini, Domenico (archbishop), 268
- De Martino, Ambrosio, 242n66
- De Martino, Andrea, 242
- De Martino, Bartolomeo, 145, 146
- De Martino, Batta, 242

- De Martino, Battolino (son of Martino, nephew of Bernardo), 227, 239
- De Martino, Benedetto (brother of Nicola), 140
- De Martino, Bernardo (brother of Martino, uncle of Battolino), 240
- De Martino, Bregida, 228, 232
- De Martino, Corseghino, 240
- De Martino (family), 107, 140, 141, 175–177, 213, 216n8, 228, 230, 231, 232n37, 235–237, 239–242, 239n58, 240n60, 246, 250, 252, 255, 258, 260, 276, 278n73
- De Martino, Francesco, 242
- De Martino, Franchino (son of Raffaele), 242
- De Martino, Geronimo, 240
- De Martino, Geronimo (creditor of Stefano Crovo), 240
- De Martino, Gianni, 255, 278n73
- De Martino, Gio (aka Bissolero, father of Scarabino), 238, 240
- De Martino, Gioannetino (son of Bissolero, brother of Scarabino), 227, 235
- De Martino, Lazaro, 240
- De Martino, Lodisio, 276
- De Martino, Lorenzo, 240, 241
- De Martino, Martino (brother of Bernardo, father of Battolino), 88, 175, 239–241
- De Martino, Michele (son of Pasquale, brother of Stefano), 239, 258, 276
- De Martino, Nicola (brother of Benedetto, husband of Sebastiana Segaro), 140
- De Martino, Pasquale (father of Stefano and Michele), 176, 238
- De Martino, Sartore, 240
- De Martino, Scarabino (aka Orseghino, son of Bissolero, brother of Gioannetino, son-in-law of Chiechino Crovo), 227, 230, 235, 238–241, 276
- De Martino, Stefano (son of Pasquale, brother of Michele), 113, 237–239, 240n60, 241, 242
- Descimon, R., 3n3
- De Turrìs, Coruolus, 6n13
- Devoto family, 75n28
- Dezerega, Andrea, 138
- Dezerega family, 82, 85, 99, 133, 134, 233n44, 241, 258
- Dezerega, Lorenzo, 242
- Dezerega, Pietro, 258
- Dezerega, Simone, 258
- Dezerega (village), 241, 258
- Dialoghi sopra la Repubblica di Genova* (1623), 5
- Di Gaudio, Gio Batta, 195
- Di Negro, Ambrogio, 52, 243n67
- Di Negro, Francesco, 276
- Di Negro, Gio Batta, 25, 34, 220, 230–232, 234n47
- Di Negro, Negrone, 41
- Disguises (fake beard), 28, 218
- Di Stefano, P., 95n4
- Dolceacqua, *see* Doria, Giulio (lord of Dolceacqua)
- Donderi (village), 233n43
- Dondero, Antonio (second husband of Nicoletta Chiereghino), 144n63
- Dondero, Benedetto, 144n63
- Dondero family, 117n40
- Doria, Andrea, 6, 27
- Doria family, 38, 39n52, 153
- Doria, G., 7n15, 50, 65n6, 94n4, 104, 105, 118, 124, 154, 160, 183n3, 188, 202, 204, 205, 224, 225n22, 277n70, 281n83
- Doria, Gio Andrea, 123, 161, 203

Doria, Gio Battista (Gio Batta Doria),  
203–206, 241, 245  
Doria, Giovan Battista, 39  
Doria, Giulio (lord of Dolceacqua),  
40n54  
Douglas, Mary, 249n1  
Dowry, xiv, 89, 113, 121, 130–149,  
173, 212, 216, 246, 260, 266n42  
Duby, Georges, x, 18n33, 229,  
229n29  
Durazzo, Cardinal, 62  
Durazzo, Stefano (archbishop), 268  
Dutch revolt, 4

**E**  
Earle, T., xn6  
Ecclesiastical land, 94, 106n33  
Ecology, 66, 69, 91, 126, 151, 152,  
158, 164, 168, 171n64  
Einaudi, Giulio (publisher), xin9  
Election box, 73, 75, 77  
Elias, Norbert, x, xv  
Emigration (immigrant), 114,  
114–115n39, 164n45, 233n44,  
236, 237, 281n84  
Enmity  
  enemies, 23, 31, 36, 46, 52, 95,  
  124, 145, 178, 185, 189, 212,  
  213, 216, 219, 219n13, 240,  
  240n60, 243, 245, 247n75,  
  257, 262, 279n76  
  hate, xv, 45, 204  
Epis, Marco, 233n44  
Esmark, K., xxiii  
Ethnography, 20, 22n36, 25, 31, 47,  
  152, 175n2, 178, 260n28,  
  260n29  
Evans-Pritchard, E.E., 22n36, 278n75  
Event, x, 1, 3n3, 4, 4n6, 18, 18n33,  
  20, 21, 26, 30–32, 42, 46, 61n1,  
  81, 107, 123, 123n6, 131,

132n29, 154, 155, 177,  
181–214, 217, 218, 221n16,  
230, 239, 241, 247, 249, 252,  
254, 262–264, 263n32, 271,  
279n76  
Execution(s) (capital punishment),  
220

**F**  
Fabiano (boat owner from Chiavari),  
187  
Facio, Giacomo (commissioner),  
122–124, 205, 206  
Factions  
  factionalism, 5, 195n18, 212, 223  
  *fattione*, 5n10  
  political alignment, 41, 72, 147,  
  220  
Family, xii, 5, 6, 6n11, 6n13, 9, 9n20,  
  10, 14, 27, 33, 38, 41, 43,  
  45n67, 46, 50, 58, 72, 73,  
  74n28, 79, 80, 82, 88, 96, 97,  
  100–102, 100n17, 112–115,  
  114n37, 114n38, 115n39, 118,  
  121, 122, 127–129, 131–133,  
  135, 142, 143n61, 144–146,  
  149, 153, 160, 170, 173, 184,  
  186, 188, 197, 198, 202, 205,  
  210, 212, 221, 226n24, 230,  
  233–235, 238, 242, 245,  
  246n74, 247, 254, 262, 268,  
  270, 272–275, 277, 277n70,  
  281n83, 281n84  
  *See also* Kinship  
Farnese family, 40  
Farnese, Ranuccio, 39  
Fasano Guarini, E., 2n1, 4n5  
Favale, 75, 94n2, 99, 101, 102, 158,  
  175, 177, 225, 226, 228, 231,  
  232, 232n37, 232n38, 249, 252,  
  255, 256, 258–260, 275n66



- Federici, Gio Carlo, 270  
 Felloni, G., 98n14  
 Ferechio, Gieronimo, 195  
 Ferechio, Lorenzo, 195  
 Ferretto, A., 256n10  
 Ferretto, Bernardino, 139  
 Ferretto, Simone (brother of Susanina), 139  
 Ferretto, Susanina (sister of Simone, wife of Angelo Maria Chiereghino), 139  
 Festival  
   Ascension, 229, 245, 253–255  
   feast, 81, 175, 177, 226n24, 229, 245, 253, 254, 256, 266  
 Feud (vendetta), xii, xiv–xvi, xxv, 12, 15, 17, 20, 21, 23, 31, 32, 37, 45, 49, 53, 91, 118, 132n32, 145–147, 164, 170, 175, 177, 178, 204, 213, 214n58, 216, 221, 224, 228n27, 230, 231, 232n37, 240, 241, 244n70, 249–252, 260–281  
 Feudal, 27, 30, 37–41, 55, 58, 74, 101, 153, 154, 221, 233  
 Fictive (as in ‘fictive kin’), xiv, 42  
 Fief  
   count, 80, 96, 277  
   lord, xii, 30, 38–41, 55, 58, 154, 233  
   marquis, 38, 39, 40n53, 245  
   princess, 225n22  
   *See also* Feudal  
 Fieschi, Damiano, 38  
 Fieschi family, 183, 186, 192–194  
 Fieschi, Francesco, 38  
 Fieschi, Gian Luigi, 6, 58, 186  
 Fieschi, Pier Batta, 38  
 Fieschi, Scipione, 186  
 Fiesco, Agostino, 194n16  
 Fiesco, Andrea, 193  
 Fiesco, Marsilio, 193–195  
 Fiesco, Paride, 145, 146  
 Figarolo, 239  
 Figarolo (village), 140, 227, 240  
 Finale, 27  
 Finance, 7, 8, 12, 14n29, 27n17, 83, 143n62, 184, 195, 197, 240, 253  
 Firth, R., 192n11  
 Flag(s), 26, 183, 186–192, 197  
 Flanders, 40  
 Florence, 2n1, 17n31, 41, 63n4  
 Foglietta, Uberto, 6n12  
 Follo, 79, 232n38  
 Fontana, G., 154n10, 164n45  
 Fontanabuona, 16, 25, 34, 54, 57n103, 61–74, 61n1, 70n15, 70n16, 70n17, 76, 78–83, 78n35, 85–89, 86n48, 87n50, 91–98, 100–102, 106, 108–109, 111, 118, 121–149, 151, 153, 155, 156, 158–162, 164–166, 168–171, 173, 177, 178, 181, 182, 185, 193, 194, 199n27, 201, 205–208, 210, 213–215, 216n8, 217, 219, 220, 222–224, 224n21, 227n25, 228, 229, 229n28, 229n30, 231n34, 231n35, 233–237, 233n43, 234n44, 239, 241, 241n60, 244n69, 245n72, 246, 246n74, 247, 249–253, 255, 257, 258, 262, 263, 266–271, 271n57, 273, 273n62, 274n63, 278, 281n83, 283–287  
 Fontanegli, 35  
 Fopiano, Agostino, 139, 228, 263, 270  
 Fopiano, Agostino (priest, son of Rolando, from Monleone), 267  
 Fopiano, Agostino (priest, son of Simone, from Monleone), 267  
 Fopiano, Angelo Maria, 132, 137, 139, 140, 267

- Fopiano, Bartolomeo (aka Bino Carnesalata), 35
- Fopiano, Bartolomeo (notary), 76, 77n33, 81, 88, 131, 137n45, 140, 144n63, 269, 270, 273n63
- Fopiano, Batta, 73, 138, 139, 270, 273n63
- Fopiano, Carlo, 122–125, 132, 229n28, 252, 270, 279
- Fopiano family, 41, 73, 75–81, 88, 117, 117n40, 118, 121, 140, 165, 167, 213, 216, 216n8, 223, 224, 228, 228n27, 230, 230n32, 231, 231n33, 249, 251, 252, 255, 260, 262–271, 266n41, 279, 281n84, 284
- Fopiano, Francesco (priest), 76, 178
- Fopiano, Gian Bartolomeo, 88
- Fopiano, Gianone, 35
- Fopiano, Gio, 46, 102, 125, 137, 140, 141, 232
- Fopiano, Gio Ambrogio, 81
- Fopiano, Gio Batta (brother of Rolandino and Manfrino), 122, 125, 129, 132, 266, 270, 279
- Fopiano, Giuliano, 51, 124, 128, 131, 218, 224
- Fopiano, Gotardo, 273n63
- Fopiano, Manfrino (brother of Rolandino and Gio Batta), 279
- Fopiano, Roland (father of Agostino, from Monleone), 211, 267
- Fopiano, Rolandino, 77, 102, 127, 128, 279
- Fopiano, Rolandino (brother of Gio Batta and Manfrino), 122, 125, 127, 279
- Fopiano, Simone (father of Agostino, from Monleone), 264, 267
- Fopiano, Teodora, 137
- Foppiano (village), 233n43, 265n39
- Forca, 201
- Forno, Antonio, 247, 247n75
- Fortes, M., 22n36
- Fragmentation, 10, 13, 20, 38, 40, 74, 98, 106, 130, 149, 152, 153, 171n65, 181, 205, 214, 221
- France (French), xvi, 4, 14n29, 26, 47n73, 89, 183, 186–189, 191, 192, 193n11, 229
- Fregoso (Fregosa), 9, 9n18, 184, 186–189, 191, 195n18, 196, 197, 198–199n27, 204, 205, 207, 208n41, 209
- Frugoni (hamlet of Santa Giulia), 194
- G**
- Galassi, D., 63n4
- Galasso, Giuseppe, xiin10
- Gallant, T., 241n63
- Gallinaria plateau, 251
- Gallo, R., 5n8
- Gambling, 188, 227, 244, 244n69, 246
- Garbarino family (from Moconesi), 146
- Garbarino, Federico, 218, 224
- Garbarino, Gio Francesco (from Montebruno), 146
- Garbarino, Giulio, 112, 167n56
- Garbarino, Orazio, 146, 147
- Garbino, Francesco (priest of Cicagna), 265
- Gardella family (from Roccatagliata), 279n76
- Garibaldo, Nicola, 204, 204n34, 206, 206n39
- Garibaldo valley, 204
- Gatrell, V.A.C., 14n30
- Gatto, Antonio, 189
- Gatto family, 189
- Gatto, Francesco, 189, 191
- Gattorna, 99
- Gattorna, Agostina (sister of Gio Agostino, wife of Domenico Soracco), 139

- Gattorna, Gio Agostino (from Moconesi), 139  
 Gattorna, Lorenzo, 139  
 Gavi, 55n100  
 Geertz, Clifford, xvi, 43n62  
 Genoa (Genoese, Republic), ix, xii, xiin13, xvi, 1, 4, 4n6, 5n9, 8–10, 8n17, 12–15, 19, 23–27, 24n2, 24n4, 27n17, 32, 37, 38, 40n54, 41, 44, 45, 47, 48, 51–53, 55–58, 61, 65, 67, 68, 70, 70n16, 74, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 98, 115n39, 123, 124, 126, 143n61, 152, 157, 157n17, 159, 161, 166, 174, 174n1, 183–187, 191, 194, 197, 198n27, 203–205, 207, 208, 211, 214, 216n8, 218, 222, 225, 235n49, 236–238, 240n60, 242, 242n66, 247, 256, 263n33, 281n83  
 Genoese civil war (1575), 18  
 Germany, 40, 123, 124n6  
 Geronima (from Lencisa, wife of Stefano Arata), 118, 133–136, 138, 139, 141  
 Ghiara, G., 236n51  
 Giannino, Cesare, 113  
 Giannino family, 255  
 Giannino, Sansonino, 278n73  
 Giare, 75, 202, 217  
 Giesa, Andrea, 238  
 Gilmore, D.D., 152n2  
 Ginzburg, Carlo, x, xin9, 18n33  
 Giordano, Luca, xi, xii, xiin13  
 Giovi pass, 240  
 Girls (daughters), 133, 134, 229n30  
 Giuffra family (from Moconesi), 146  
 Giuffra, Stefano, 146  
 Giulia (mother of Gioanni Castagneto), 177  
*Giunta* against bandits, 31, 40, 46, 51, 53  
 Giustiniani, Agostino, 62n3, 63, 63n4  
 Giustiniani family, 9n20  
 Giustiniano, Gio Batta, 195  
 Gluckman, Max, xiv, xivn18  
 Gnecco, Benedetto, 134  
 Gnecco family, 75, 117, 117n40  
 Gnecco, Nicola (from Cicagna), 140  
 Godano, 47  
 Goody, J.R., 138n51  
 Gorrini, G., 151n1  
 Governing councils (*Collegi*), 11, 51  
 Graffignotto, 34  
 Grain, xiv, 45, 57n101, 58, 76, 78, 80, 94, 96, 100, 115n40, 126, 151, 152, 155, 157, 161–169, 162n38, 166n53, 169n59, 195n18, 198, 198n27, 199, 199n28, 206, 232, 233, 238, 255  
 Grain Office (Abbondanza), 115n40, 157n17, 165, 195n18, 198, 198n26, 198n27  
 Graveglia valley, 164, 206  
 Greece, 241n63  
 Greens, 9, 94, 99, 142n61, 170, 197, 201, 210, 281n84  
 Grendi, Edoardo, x, xii  
 Grimaldi, Antonio, 222  
 Grossi, P., 17n31  
 Gruner-Schlumberger, Anne, xix  
 Guainasso, Augustina (daughter of Vincenzo, wife of Lodixio Crovo), 141n60  
 Guainasso, Vincenzo, 141n60  
 Guns  
   armed, 49  
   arquebus, 35, 49, 146, 147, 153, 160, 161, 175–178, 187, 196, 204, 208, 208n41, 215, 218, 225, 226n24, 232n37, 233, 244, 244n70, 251, 254, 254n9, 262, 263, 265, 267, 279  
   crossbow, 187, 196, 251  
   dagger, 175, 187, 234n47, 244, 251, 254

- gunpowder, 162n38, 233, 239  
 pistols, 265  
 spear, 187, 251  
 sword, 161, 187, 251  
 weapons, 50, 160, 169n59, 187,  
     196, 200, 215n3, 223,  
     226n24, 243, 244, 251, 252,  
     254, 265, 266n43, 279n76
- H**  
 Halbwachs, M., 278n75  
 Harding, R., 14n29  
 Hay, D., 28n19  
 Hearths, 62, 63, 66, 67, 107, 114,  
     115n40, 165, 177  
 Heers, J., 193n11  
 Helston, M., xin7  
 Henry II (king of France), 186  
 Historical memory (immemorial), 89,  
     90  
 Historiography ((local history)), ix–xii,  
     xiiin15, xiv–xvii, 1–4, 2n1, 13,  
     21, 22n36, 30, 45, 49, 61n1, 89,  
     164n45, 221, 271, 281n84  
 Hobsbawm, E.J., 57n102  
 Holy See, 26  
 Holy Week (Holy Thursday, Easter),  
     192, 269  
 Honors, 33, 81, 196, 196n20, 206,  
     263, 266  
 Household heads (head man), 13, 35,  
     37, 43, 46, 48, 50n83, 52, 54,  
     66, 71–73, 74n28, 75–77,  
     76n31, 79, 80, 82, 83, 85, 87,  
     95, 99, 101–104, 111, 121, 132,  
     132n32, 133, 145n64, 146, 153,  
     157, 166, 177, 201, 204, 208,  
     213, 230, 251, 252, 258, 259,  
     265, 266, 268, 273–276, 280  
 Humphreys, Sally, 30n24  
 Hyams, P.R., xvn19
- I**  
 Identity, 14, 43, 72, 76, 89, 102, 104,  
     115, 115n40, 145, 175, 183,  
     186, 258, 278  
 Il Moro (bandit), 225  
 Imperiale, Bartolomeo, 49  
 Imperial (Empire, emperor), xii, 8, 26,  
     27, 27n17, 36, 37n46, 38, 41,  
     41n55, 42n58, 45, 51, 57, 104,  
     148, 153, 163, 169, 188, 192,  
     193, 203, 214, 230, 277  
 Indirect governance (Indirect  
     governance), 8, 47, 47n73,  
     88  
 Inheritance, xiv, 89, 113, 114, 121,  
     122, 130–132, 135, 136, 140,  
     143, 144, 146, 148, 173, 246,  
     246n74  
 International markets, 152, 156,  
     237  
 Interrogation, 34, 39, 40, 51, 170,  
     187–189, 191, 219, 220,  
     221n16, 225, 225n23, 227,  
     228, 230, 231, 232n37,  
     233n44, 237, 238, 239n58,  
     244n69, 245, 247  
 Isolalonga, 75, 76, 77n33, 112, 117,  
     117n40  
 Isolana (creek and village), 160  
*In solidum*, 53, 173, 274
- J**  
 Jurisdiction, xii–xiv, 9n20, 10, 11,  
     13, 15, 25, 36, 38, 39n52, 41,  
     42, 45, 48, 50, 54, 65, 67,  
     70n17, 73, 79, 82, 102–105,  
     123, 159, 160, 165, 181,  
     196, 216, 221, 256, 256n11,  
     257, 259, 260, 272, 273,  
     277n70  
 Jurist(s), 9n19, 10, 13, 15, 33, 269

Justice, xii–xvi, xiin13, 2, 10–14,  
13n28, 14n29, 16–21, 17n31,  
23, 25–33, 36, 38, 42–45, 47–51,  
57, 63, 65–67, 90, 114, 144,  
147n66, 164, 173, 175, 178n9,  
179, 185, 196, 207, 211–214,  
217, 219, 220, 225, 251, 252,  
255, 257, 261, 262, 264, 265,  
270, 272, 273, 277, 279, 280,  
281n83

## K

Kaplan, S., 152n5

### Kinship

“kin,” 11, 30, 32, 33, 37, 42, 51,  
53, 73, 74, 106, 107, 112,  
117, 119, 121, 125, 129, 132,  
133, 136, 138, 139, 142, 144,  
145, 148, 174, 233n44,  
281n83

kin group, xvi, 27, 63, 101, 121,  
153, 173, 181, 215, 249

kinfolk, 41

*parentela*, 176, 264

*parentella*, 10n20, 21, 31, 32,  
115n40, 173, 189, 277, 281

relatives, 9

Koliopoulos, J.S., 28n19, 241n63

Kula, Witold, x

## L

L'Acqua, 115n40, 118

Lagomarsino family, 213

Lanata, Lorenzo, 223

Landi, Claudio, 39, 40

Landi, Count, 37n46

Lanzi (village), 75n28

Laslett, Peter, 114n38

La Spezia, 57n101

Lavagna River, 61, 63, 75, 97, 107,  
117, 122, 253, 258

Lavagna valley, 34, 67, 105, 136, 160,  
162–164, 185, 194n15, 201,  
202, 205, 206, 209, 211, 214,  
215, 224, 236–238, 245n72, 252

Lavagnina valley, *see* Lavagna valleys

Lavezzo, Michele, 112

### Law

codification, 8, 10, 13

legal, 11, 14

League, *see* Factions

*Leges novae*, 7, 10, 11, 26, 209

Legitimate (Legitimacy), xii, xvii, 1, 3,  
4n5, 13, 14, 21, 28, 30, 43, 49,  
88, 133, 144, 179, 197, 203, 219,  
252, 261, 270, 272, 278, 280

Leivi, 124n6, 200, 202, 206, 210,  
223, 224

Lencisa, Carlo, 82

Lencisa (village), 104, 117, 125, 126,  
128, 135, 136

Lenman, B., 14n30

Lercaro, Agostino, 224

Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel, x

*Lèse majesté*, 29, 33, 36, 183, 185,  
186, 188, 192–194

Levante (eastern Liguria), 1, 6n13, 9,  
20, 23, 28, 235, 281n84

Levanto, 52

Leverone, 265

Leverone, Bastiano, 255

Leverone, Batta (husband of Pomina),  
228

Leverone, Battino, 253

Leverone, Benedetto, 46

Leverone, Cardarino (Cardanino), 218

Leverone, Cesare, 227

Leverone, Domenico (husband of  
Maxolla), 228

Leverone family, 35, 117, 118, 165,  
167, 213, 216, 222–226,  
229–231, 233, 239–241,  
245–247, 245n73, 249, 251,  
255, 260, 262, 264–272, 276

- Leverone, Francesco (husband of Luisa), 255, 269  
 Leverone, Gian Giacomo, 88  
 Leverone, Gieronimo, 255  
 Leverone, Grixo, 242  
 Leverone, Lorenzo (18th c.), 88  
 Leverone, Lorenzo (notary), 73n23, 85n46, 94n2, 100n17, 113n35, 117n40, 134n37, 167n55, 259n25, 269, 270, 277n70  
 Leverone, Luisa (wife of Francesco), 255  
 Leverone, Maxolla (wife of Domenico), 228  
 Leverone, Meneghino (brother-in-law of Arghenta Consegiro), 228, 228n27, 229  
 Leverone, Michele, 241  
 Leverone, Pasquale (priest, nephew of Reverend Stefano), 269  
 Leverone, Pelegro/Peregro, 242, 251  
 Leverone, Pomina (wife of Batta), 228  
 Leverone, Rosso, 226, 276  
 Leverone, Scipione, 242  
 Leverone, Simone (nephew of Stefano), 262, 263n33, 264  
 Leverone, Stefano (uncle of Pasquale, priest of Cicagna, then Dezerega), 265, 267  
 Leverone, Stefano (uncle of Simone), 264  
 Leverone, Steve, 255  
 Leverone, Strozo, 227  
 Leverone, Tomasino, 256n11  
 Leverone, Zane, 255  
 Leveroni, Romeo (20th-c. historian), 271, 281n84  
 Levi, Giovanni, x, xin9, 138n51  
 Lewin, L., 29n21  
 Leyser, C., xivn18  
 Lichiorno (mountain of), 105  
 Lineage (patrilineal), 9, 75, 75n30, 78, 115, 130, 135, 136, 138, 142, 143n61, 145, 147, 229, 252, 272, 279  
 Livorno, 115n39, 126, 198, 198n27, 281n83  
 Lodi, 158, 163, 233n42, 234n44  
 Lombardi, G., 14n29  
 Lombardini, Sandro, xi, 14n29  
 Lombardy, 45, 45n66, 118, 123, 156, 156n13, 159, 161, 194, 198, 200n29  
 Lomellini, Lady Giovanna, 244n69  
 Lomellino, Ambrosio, 12n26, 32, 32n27, 224n21, 231, 231n35  
 Lomellino, Giulio Cesare, 50, 234n46, 270, 281n83  
 Longinotto, Bacchione, 40  
 Loot, 40, 200, 227, 228, 240, 243, 246, 247  
 Lorsica, 34, 99, 104, 106, 107, 175, 226, 227, 229n30, 230, 235–242, 242n66, 246, 250, 252, 255, 258–260, 276, 286, 287  
 Lotman, Ju. M., 57n102  
 Love, xiii, 75, 177, 213, 270, 276  
 Lucca, 171n65  
 Lunigiana, 27, 37n46  
 Lusseto family, 213
- M**  
 Madonna di Monte, 153  
 Madrid, 10  
 Magdalon (d'Ornesan), 188  
 Mainero, Bartolomeo, 46  
 Malaspina-Degli Edifici, marquis, 39  
 Malaspina lords, 89  
 Malatesta, Agostino, 113  
 Malatesta family, 75, 102, 115n40, 118, 140, 153, 216n8, 264, 276n69, 285

- Malatesta, Giacomo, 113  
 Malatesta, Maddalena (sister of Rolando, wife of Giovanni Segaro), 140  
 Malatesta, Rolando (brother of Maddalena, husband of Cattarina Segaro), 140  
 Malatesta, Stefano, 263  
 Malvaro  
   creek, 232  
   valley, 258  
 Mancini, Giacomo, 5n8  
 Mangino, Agostino, 273n63  
 Mangino, Agostino (from Cicagna), 137  
 Mangino, Bartolomeo, 112  
 Mangino, Batta (brother of Nicola and Franceschino), 138  
 Mangino, Batta (from Cicagna), 137  
 Mangino, Benedetto, 139  
 Mangino, Cesare, 139  
 Mangino family, 75, 117, 117n40, 138  
 Mangino, Franceschino (brother of Nicola and Batta), 138  
 Mangino, Francesco, 112  
 Mangino, Geronima (sister of Rolando, wife of Stefano), 138, 139  
 Mangino, Giacomo, 50, 50n83  
 Mangino, Gio (father of Stefano), 139  
 Mangino, Lucia (sister of Franceschino, Nicola, and Batta), 138, 139  
 Mangino, Masina (from Cicagna), 137  
 Mangino, Nicola (brother of Franceschino and Batta), 138  
 Mangino, Rolandino, 273n63  
 Mangino, Rolando (brother of Geronima), 138  
 Mangino, Stefano, 112, 138  
 Mangino, Vincenzo, 50  
 Marina of Chiavari, 207  
 Marini, Geronimo, 245  
 Market, 39n52, 76, 80, 95, 99, 100, 124, 126, 147, 152, 156, 158, 162, 163, 165, 166n54, 167, 169, 169n59, 198n27, 199n28, 216, 231, 232n38, 233, 235–237, 255, 267  
 Marré family (from the Sturla valley), 213  
 Marriage  
   matrimony, xiv, 135–149, 148n67, 246n74  
   wedding, 94, 142, 142n61, 245, 261  
 Martines, L., 193n11  
 Martino, Bernardo, 104  
 Martino, Gulielmo, 104  
 Massa, Pantalino, 40, 40n53  
 Mass (Sacrament), 177  
 Material culture, xi, xiii  
 Mauss, Marcel, xiii, xiiin16  
 Maxena, Antonio, 188, 189  
 Meadow, 91, 97, 98, 127, 138, 139, 175, 267  
 Mediterranean, 15, 61, 100, 151, 159, 188, 241n63  
 Mendatica, 57n101  
 Mendels, Franklin, 235n48  
 Merchant(s), 29, 39, 46, 48, 52, 58, 66, 67, 76, 84, 85, 125, 126, 136, 136n44, 152–163, 157n17, 164n44, 165, 166, 168–171, 169n59, 195, 198, 198n26, 198n27, 199–200n29, 201, 202, 205, 223, 228, 230–233, 236, 237, 241–243, 246n74, 272  
 Merello, Filippo, 10  
 Merello, Marc'Antonio, 156  
 Merello, Pantalino, 161  
 Merlongo, 117  
 Merzario, R., 148n67

- Mestrali* (censors), 71  
 Mezzanego, 201  
 Microhistory  
     microanalysis, xii, xxiii, 18  
     microscopic, xii, xiii, 3, 14, 16, 18  
 Milan (Milanese), 2, 38, 39, 123,  
     154n8, 203, 238, 240, 246  
 Milano, C., xin7  
 Militia, 9, 48, 52, 122–124, 187, 191,  
     192, 192n10  
 Miller, W.I., xvn19  
 Mills, 89, 107, 122, 123, 132,  
     134n36, 164–166, 206, 225,  
     232, 232n38, 242, 246, 279n76  
 Mintz, S.W., 167n57  
 Moconesi, 75, 98, 100–102, 107,  
     117, 139, 146, 147n66, 177,  
     232, 253, 255, 256, 259n25  
 Molfino family, 74n28  
 Molfino, Gio Agostino (jurist), 9n19,  
     9–10n20, 10n21  
 Molho, A., 134n40  
 Molinazzo, 115n40, 117, 269  
 Molino, 112, 117, 118  
 Moltedo, Tomaso, 244n69  
 Momigliano, A., 22n37  
 Monaco, 155  
 Moneglia, 273  
 Monleone, 75–81, 77n33, 88, 89,  
     115, 117, 118, 121, 128, 162,  
     163, 165, 169, 169n59, 231,  
     232n38, 251, 255, 266n41, 267,  
     268, 272  
 Monleone da Basso (fraction of  
     Monleone), 76, 78–80  
 Monleone d'Alto (fraction of  
     Monleone, aka 'Castello'), 76, 79  
 Montallegro (church), 81  
 Montebruno  
     fief, 148  
     monastery, 45  
 Monteghirfo, 50, 75, 175, 177  
 Montegrifo, Gio Batta, 31  
 Montemoggio, 201  
 Monti (village), *see* San Maurizio di  
     Monti (chapel)  
 Montoggio, 28, 52, 58, 67  
 Montoggio, Francesco, 31  
 Montoggio, Raffaele, 242  
 Morchi family, 189  
 Moreno, Diego, 92n1, 94n4, 97n11,  
     100n17  
 Morone, Cardinal, 7  
 Mortasco, 75–77, 77n33, 117, 266  
 Moscatelli, F., 24n4  
 Mosti (hamlet of Cogorno), 194  
 Mosto family, 195  
 Mousnier, R., 14n29  
 Mozzarelli, Cesare, 4n7  
 Muir, Edward, xvn19, xvii  
 Muleteer(s) (mule), 39, 42, 58, 76,  
     123, 125, 136, 136n44, 153,  
     155, 156, 158–163, 162n38,  
     164n44, 169, 170, 202, 231,  
     232, 232n38, 241, 242, 246n74
- N**  
 Naples, 36, 119n43, 187, 231n35  
 Napoleonic period, 96  
 Nassano family, 117  
 Needham, R., 175n2  
 Negri, Bartolomeo (from Carasco),  
     131  
 Negri, Benedetto (from Carasco), 131  
 Negri, Bernardo (from Carasco), 131  
 Negri family, 131  
 Negri, Giuliano (from Carasco), 131  
 Negri, Salvaggia, 131  
 Negrone, Lorenzo, 82  
 Neighbor, 13, 49, 106, 115, 127,  
     128, 131, 132n31, 144, 146,  
     147n66, 166, 175, 176, 229,  
     229n30, 237, 247, 273, 278



- Neighborhood, 43, 48, 50, 73, 74,  
     77, 78, 80, 85, 117, 127, 147,  
     148, 187, 188, 191, 194, 201,  
     224, 230, 237, 257  
 Neighboring prince, 30, 37, 38, 40,  
     104  
 Neirone, 46  
 Nervi, xxv, 26, 224  
 Netterstrøm, Jeppe Büchert, xv  
 Nice, 188  
 Nicholas, R.W., 192n11  
 Nicoletta (wife of Bartolomeo Negri),  
     131, 138, 141  
 Nivella, Fulvia, 40  
 Nivelli, Pietro Francesco, 39  
 Nobility, 4–11, 6n13, 8n17, 9–10n20,  
     26, 27, 27n17, 33, 36–38, 41,  
     48, 52, 53, 58, 58n104, 65, 67,  
     68, 82, 103, 122, 124, 155, 156,  
     160, 181, 183–186, 183n2, 188,  
     192, 193n11, 203, 205–209,  
     228, 228n28, 232n37, 245, 256,  
     257, 266, 270  
     *See also* Fief  
 Noce, Andrea, 137  
 Noce, Catta, 137  
 Noce, Cattarina, 244n69  
 Noce (family), 112  
 Norero, Bernarda (wife of Nicola  
     Canale), 244n70  
 Notable(s), xiii, 9, 15, 24, 29, 30, 37,  
     48, 51, 54, 66, 68, 69, 82, 83,  
     87, 88, 104, 122, 126, 154, 255,  
     256n11, 267, 271, 274n63, 280  
 Notaries, xii–xiv, 15, 19, 20, 24n4, 51,  
     54, 63, 67, 76, 78–82, 83n43,  
     87–89, 93–95, 102, 113,  
     118n42, 122, 123, 125–127,  
     129, 132, 132n29, 143n62, 144,  
     148n67, 154, 157, 174n1, 177,  
     197, 199, 199n29, 200, 202,  
     234, 235n49, 240, 244n69, 252,  
     266–270, 272, 273n63, 274, 278  
 Novi, 37, 52, 55n100  
 Noziglia, Giacomo, 137  
 Nuer, 278n75  
*Nuovi*, 4, 26, 122, 123, 123n5,  
     203–208, 204n34, 252  
  
**O**  
 Oderico, Tomas (jurist), 269,  
     269n54  
 Oil Magistracy, 158, 159, 199n29  
 Olcese family, 36  
 Oligarchy  
     patrician, 4, 37  
     patriciate, 4n7, 10n20  
     politico-administrative elite, 171  
     urban aristocracy, 211  
 Oliva, Gaspare, 209  
 Olivastro, 69, 70  
 Olive (oil), xiv, 48, 53, 58, 68, 69,  
     71, 76, 83, 84, 94, 125,  
     155–159  
 Oltregiogo, 55n100  
 Oltremonte, 63–75, 71n20, 81–83,  
     85, 87–89, 253, 258  
 Oneglio, 117, 118  
 Oneto, 101, 210, 213  
 Orero, 93, 102–104, 107, 111,  
     114n37, 115–118, 122, 123,  
     125, 126, 129, 132n31, 133n36,  
     134, 153, 158, 161, 232,  
     245–247, 256, 258, 259,  
     259n25, 283  
 Orezzi family, 75n28  
 Ortalli, G., 28n19  
 Ortolani, D., 5n8  
 Ottaggio, 52  
 Ottone, 41  
 Our Lady of Miracles (altar in church  
     of San Gio Batta of Cicagna),  
     271  
 Ovada, 55n100  
 Owen Hughes, D., 143n61

## P

- Pachiugo family, 119  
 Pachiugo, Filippino, 118, 119  
 Pacification (pacify)  
     dispute settlement, 261  
     peace accord, 270, 271  
     peace agreements, 208, 211, 213  
     peace settlements, 13  
 Palazzo (of Galeazzo Arata-also  
     palace), 117, 215  
 Palazzo Spinola, xiin13  
 Pallavicino, Gio Domenico, 270, 271,  
     271n57  
 Panexio, Gioanne, 194  
 Paramino family, 74, 102, 103  
 Paramino, Stefano, 218, 246  
 Parasolo (village of Santo Stefano  
     d'Aveto), 105  
 Parish, 13, 31, 35, 36, 43, 48–51,  
     61–63, 66, 68, 72, 75, 76, 78,  
     79, 82, 85, 93, 95, 98–103,  
     106–109, 106n33, 111, 114n37,  
     115–118, 115n40, 122, 126,  
     127, 135, 145–147, 165, 166,  
     175, 177, 178n9, 214n58,  
     223–225, 227, 229, 229n28,  
     233n44, 236, 249, 252,  
     254–260, 263n33, 264, 265,  
     267, 268, 275n66, 281n83,  
     283–287  
 Parker, G., 14n30  
*Parlamento*, 26, 39, 54, 65, 66, 69,  
     71, 72, 82, 88, 213, 253  
*Parlement*, 40n54  
 Parma, 37n46, 62, 122, 153, 154n8,  
     154n11, 158, 163, 169, 170,  
     198, 200n29  
 Parma, duke of, 39, 40  
 Passalacqua family, 53  
 Pastene family, 75n28  
 Patron (padron, client), xi, 42, 148,  
     190  
 Pavia, 227, 233n42, 236  
 Peasant (peasant-farmer, *contadino*),  
     23, 53, 58, 63, 101, 122, 123,  
     152, 156, 157, 169n59, 199,  
     205, 215, 243, 245n71, 279,  
     279n77  
 Peccorino family, 134  
 Pendola, Stefano, 113, 114  
 Pendola (village), 74n28, 127–129  
 Pendora (hamlet), 117  
 Perazzo, Giovanni, 137  
 Pessagno, 281n84  
 Pessagno, Giuseppe, 183n2, 216n8,  
     281n84  
 Pessia family (from Cornia), 162, 170,  
     205, 232, 270  
 Pessia, Gervasio, 153, 154, 270  
 Pessia, Gio, 156, 160, 162  
 Pessia, Giovanni, 161, 170  
 Pessia, Oliviero (father of Stefano),  
     141  
 Pessia, Paolo, 153, 161  
 Pessia, Simone, 161  
 Pessia, Stefano (son of Oliviero,  
     husband of Geronima Costa), 140  
 Pessino, 61n2, 69, 70  
 Pessolo family (from the  
     Fontanabuona), 213, 250, 252  
 Pezzonasca, 117  
 Piacenza, 37n46, 39, 62, 122,  
     154n11, 158, 161, 163, 170,  
     200n29, 247  
 Piancassolo, 76, 77n33, 117  
 Pian di Coreglia, 258  
 Pian di Mercato (grain market in  
     Monleone), 80, 117n40, 267  
 Pianezza, 25, 93, 117, 118, 122–126,  
     128, 129, 132, 133, 135, 153,  
     160–163, 165, 215, 217, 218,  
     221, 221n16, 225, 231, 232,  
     239n58, 251–253, 267, 268, 272  
 Pianmegorino (aka Chiambogolino),  
     102, 103, 117–119, 145, 256,  
     277n70

- Piazza Banchi (in Genoa), 5  
 Piccaluga, Francesco Maria, 81  
 Piedmont, 128n19, 171n65  
 Piselli, F., 261n29  
 Podestà, F., 193n12  
 Podesteria (*podestà*), 25, 37n46, 44,  
     47, 61, 63, 65, 66, 82, 83, 89,  
     104, 105, 122, 123, 146, 157,  
     171, 205, 214, 223, 223n20,  
     228n28, 254–257, 259n22, 263,  
     269, 273, 277  
 Polanyi, Karl, 125n16, 171n64  
 Polcevera valley, 25, 52, 57, 62  
 Poleggi, E., 8n17  
 Political anthropology, x, 21, 22n36,  
     47n73, 192n11  
*Ponente*, 34, 55, 55n100, 57n101, 82,  
     155, 156, 157n17, 174n1  
 Poni, Carlo, 17n32, 236n52  
 Ponte della Paglia (near Rapallo), 54,  
     127, 152, 240, 244n69, 247  
 Pontegiacomo, 201  
 Porcella, Agostino, 242, 270  
 Porcella, Batté, 227  
 Porcella, Battino, 242, 266  
 Porcella, Carletto, 242  
 Porcella, Carlo, 252, 270  
 Porcella, Cesare, 227, 242, 270  
 Porcella family, 115n40, 252, 266,  
     266n41, 285  
 Porcella, Gian Andrea, 88  
 Porcella, Gio Andrea, 80  
 Porcella, Gio Antonio, 270  
 Porcella, Prospero, 88  
 Porcella, Venturino, 227  
*Porcile* (pig-sty), 105, 202  
 Portofino, 165, 167n56  
 Portovenere, 188  
 Possession, acts of, xiii, 103–105  
 Po valley, 34, 37–39, 41, 42, 45, 57,  
     80, 114–115n39, 125, 148,  
     153, 155, 156, 158, 162–164,  
     162n38, 164n45, 168, 203,  
     233, 233n44  
 Pozzo, Antonio, 40  
 Pregola, marquis of, 38, 41  
 Priagna (village), 176  
 Prianegra, Bartolomeo, 118  
 Prianegra family, 118  
 Prianegra, Pietro, 118  
 Priest (reverend), 269  
*Principali* (bosses), 29, 58  
*Principe* (Prince, i.e., Republic of  
     Genoa), xii, xvi, 1, 4, 13, 15, 20,  
     21, 24n2, 26, 30, 33, 34, 65, 66,  
     161, 184, 187, 191, 218, 264  
 Priosa, 246  
 Privilege, x, xiv, 2, 8, 11, 12, 44, 48,  
     52, 55, 58, 74, 75n28, 79,  
     87n50, 88, 123, 132, 134, 154,  
     201, 214, 226n24, 237, 256,  
     257, 260, 272  
 Prizes (for actions against bandits),  
     33  
 Property, 12, 42, 46, 50, 51, 54,  
     54n95, 68, 70, 72–74, 81,  
     83n43, 87, 89, 91–93, 96, 98,  
     99, 102, 106, 106n33, 107,  
     109, 111–115, 122, 123, 127,  
     129–131, 130n25, 133–140,  
     142, 143, 146, 149, 166, 177,  
     196, 196n20, 199, 200, 205,  
     205n38, 212, 216, 219,  
     228n27, 231n35, 234, 234n47,  
     238, 240, 242, 244n69, 246,  
     247n75, 257, 263, 264, 267,  
     268, 270, 272–275, 275n66,  
     277  
 Protoindustry, 235, 237  
 Provence, 40n54, 115n39  
 Provision, 32, 44, 123, 125, 130, 144,  
     151, 152, 155, 156, 162, 164,  
     165, 198n27, 199n29, 203, 204,  
     206, 217, 226

## Q

*Quaderni storici*, ix, ixn1, xi, xin8,  
xiin11, xviin25, 3n4, 7n16,  
17n32, 29n19, 29n20, 55n98,  
92n1, 94–95n4, 100n17, 128n19,  
134n40, 138n51, 143n61, 152n4,  
220n15, 236n51, 236n52,  
260n28, 261n29

Quaini, M., 94n4

*Quartier*, 61, 63–75, 133n36, 257,  
258

*Quartieri di lignaggi* (lineage blocks),  
75

Queirolo, Ambrosio, 51

Queirolo, Batta, 160

Queirolo family, 74, 74–75n28, 75,  
154, 170

Queirolo, Simone, 229n28, 252

Queirolo, Susanna, 132, 133, 154

## R

Raggio, Osvaldo, xiin10, xiiin15,  
xiin17, xviin25, 29n20, 96n10,  
155n12

Ramaseo (mountain of), 105

Ranger, T., 88n52

Rapallo, xiv, 9, 9n19, 9–10n20, 10,  
16, 28, 34, 36, 37, 41, 45, 46,  
51–54, 61, 63–72, 71n20, 74,  
76, 77, 80–89, 86n48, 94, 95n8,  
96, 96n9, 98, 101–105, 104n30,  
118, 119, 122–127, 123–124n6,  
125n15, 134, 145, 146,  
152–162, 154n10, 155n12,  
162n38, 164–166, 166n54,  
167n56, 170, 171, 177–179,  
181, 197, 198n26, 198n27, 199,  
199n29, 202, 203, 205, 207,  
208, 213, 222, 223, 227n25,  
228–229n28, 232, 233, 234n47,  
240, 242, 244n69, 244n70, 246,

247, 252–257, 256n11, 259n22,  
262, 265–267, 269, 273,  
273n62, 273n63, 281n83

Rapusso family, 118

Ratto, Agostino, 134

Ratto, Angeletta, 133, 134

Ratto, Antonio, 127

Ratto, Blasio, 127

Ratto family, 128

Ratto, Pietro, 134

Ravaschiero, Bernardo, 103

Ravaschiero family, 183n2, 184, 187

Ravaschiero, Geronimo, 187, 188,  
191, 195

Ravaschiero, Manfredo, 266

Ravaschiero, Pietro, 209

Ravaschiero, Simone, 194n16

Ravenna family, 198n27

Ravenna, Gio Battista, 195, 196

Ravenna, Giulio, 198n27

Recco, 28, 36, 37, 44–46, 52, 162,  
164, 165, 169, 170n60, 205,  
213, 214, 219, 227, 240,  
253–255

Reciprocity, 11, 14, 15, 42, 44, 139,  
155, 170, 217

Regional state (Italian states), 4, 4n5,  
8, 24n2, 41

Reisasca, 202

Religious, xiv, 4, 29, 31, 81, 106, 107,  
185n5, 192, 214n58, 226n24,  
229, 256, 258, 259, 265, 275n65

Rellatione di Genova (1597), 5n8

Repetto, Stefano (aka Marcho),  
230–235, 232n37

Residence (residential), 50, 62, 65, 66,  
73, 75, 77, 100, 104n30, 107,  
112, 114, 114n37, 114n38, 116,  
122, 127, 181, 229n28, 230,  
231, 237, 239, 257, 269

Rivarola, Ambrogio, 183–187

Rivarola, Bartolomeo, 196n21

- Rivarola family, 197  
 Rivarola, Giuseppe, 197  
 Rivarola, Vincenzo, 197  
 Ri (village), 200  
 Rizzo, Agostino, 270  
 Rizzo, Domenico, 227  
 Rizzo (Risso) family (from Roccatagliata), 269  
 Robin, F., 24n4  
 Robin, J., 114n38  
 Rocca, Geronimo, 145, 146  
 Roccatagliata, 25, 28, 34, 38, 58, 101, 146, 162, 213, 224, 251, 256, 257, 259n22, 263, 269, 273, 277, 278n76  
 Rome, 187  
 Rossasco family, 117n40  
 Rota, M.P., 63n4  
 Rotelli, E., 14n29  
 Rothschild, E., xviin26  
 Rovegno, Andrea, 242  
 Rovegno family (from Moconesi), 41, 146  
 Rovegno, Gioseppino, 147  
 Rovegno, Mariotto, 245  
 Rovegno, Stefano, 46  
 Ruinà (suburb of Chiavari), 200  
 Rupinaro, 208, 210, 213
- S**
- Safe-conduct, 39, 157, 217, 222, 223, 230  
 Saginati, L., 259n24  
 Sahllins, M., xviin25, 125n16, 171n64  
 Salerno, 75, 138n51  
 Salvago, Paolo, 49  
*San Bernardino, Casaccia di*, 198n27  
 San Biagio (feast of), 81  
 San Colombano (church at Carasco), 194  
 San Contardo (oratory at Pian di Coreglia), 258, 259  
 San Fruttuoso (abbey), 76  
 San Gio Batta (San Giovanbatta, San Giovanni Battista - church in Cicagna), 76, 115, 165  
 San Giorgio, bank of, 78  
 San Giovanni (church in Chiavari), 184  
 San Giovanni (feast of), 81  
 Sanguinetto (village), 185, 200  
 Sanguinetto, Battista, 195  
 Sanguinetto, Desiderio, 195  
 Sanguinetto, Gasparo, 195  
 Sanguinetto, Maria, 196n21  
 Sanguinetto, Martino, 194  
 Sanguinetto, Pietro Agostino, 195, 212  
 Sanguinetto/Sanguinetti family (from Cogorno), 185, 195, 196, 201, 202, 210, 213  
 San Lorenzo, 75n28, 196  
 San Luca (in Genoa), 5  
 San Martino (church of Dezerega), 267  
 San Martino d'Albaro, 48, 281n83  
 San Martino di Noceto, 53  
 San Massimo, 74n28  
 San Maurizio di Monti (chapel), 74, 74n28  
 San Michele di Soglio (chapel), 103  
 San Nicolò (church in Coreglia), 259  
 San Pietro (in Genoa), 5  
 San Pietro di Canne, 185, 210, 223  
 San Pietro di Novella (chapel), 75n28  
 San Remo, 57n101, 102  
 Santa Chiara (place near Genoa), 194  
 Santa Giulia (village), 193, 194  
 Santa Margherita, 26, 47, 74, 88, 162, 165, 167n56, 198n27, 208  
 Santa Maria di Lorsica (parish), 175  
 Sant'Ambrogio (chapel in Borzoli), 61n2, 69, 70, 71n20  
 Sant'Ambrogio (church in Orero), 115  
 Sant'Andrea (parish of Verzi), 223, 258, 265

- Sant'Antonio and San Rocco  
(oratory - also Saints Antonio and Rocco), 122, 229, 268
- Santo Stefano d'Aveto (San Stefano),  
38, 39, 42n59, 74, 105, 124,  
163, 205
- San Vincenzo di Favale, 49, 113, 175,  
177
- San Vittore (church in Monleone), 76,  
80, 268
- Sarzana, 37n46, 51, 57n101, 169n59
- Savelli, Rodolfo, 7n15, 11n23, 36n41,  
65n6, 212n55
- Savignone (fief), 38
- Savona, 51, 86n48, 230n32, 281n83
- Savoy, duke of, 41
- Sbriccoli, M., 29n23, 234n45
- Scaglia, Gio Francesco, 200
- Scale of observation (scale of analysis),  
xi, xii, 16, 18, 18n34, 59
- Scarlasato, Andrea, 227
- Scarlasato, Drietta, 227
- Scarlasato family (from Roccatagliata),  
256, 269
- Scarlasato, Musetta, 227
- Scarlasato, Pasquarino, 270
- Schiaffino family (from Camogli),  
213
- Schiappacazze family, 46
- Schiappacazze, Giacinto, 46
- Schiappacazze, Gio, 46
- Schiappacazze, Giovanni, 46
- Schiappacazze, Giulio Barbero, 46
- Schiera, P., 14n29
- Schneider, David M., 174n2
- Scoffera pass, 232
- Scogliina pass, 232n38
- Scott, James, x, xn5
- Scrivano, A., 63n4
- Security pledge (security guarantee),  
32, 36, 50, 54, 127, 194n16,  
204, 214, 218, 230n32, 247,  
270–272, 274, 275, 277, 280
- Segà, Pasqualino, 104
- Segaro, Angelo Maria (son of Luca),  
140
- Segaro, Antonio (son of Luca), 140
- Segaro, Bartolomeo (son of Luca),  
140
- Segaro, Cattarina (daughter of Luca,  
wife of Rolando Malatesta), 140
- Segaro family, 75, 287
- Segaro, Giovanni (son of Luca), 140
- Segaro, Luca, 140
- Segaro, Sebastiana (daughter of Luca,  
wife of Nicola de Martino), 140
- Segaro, Stefano (son of Luca), 140
- Semino, Genesio, 238
- Senarega, Matteo, 5n8
- Senate (of Genoa), 10
- Sereni, E., 97n11
- Serra, 141n60
- Servant, 32, 33, 38, 102, 113, 115n39
- Sestri Levante, 25, 62, 162, 169
- Sforza lords, 45
- Sharecrop, 199–201, 199n28, 255, 268
- Shaw, B.D., 30n25
- Shepherd (pasture, pasturing), 94, 97,  
99–105, 128, 176, 244
- Shryock, A., xn6
- Sider, G., 25n9
- Siegel, B.J., 192n11
- Silk velvet (velvet), 39, 235–242
- Sisto, A., 38n49
- Sivori, G., 94n4, 236n50
- Six (sei), 71
- Smail, Daniel Lord, xn6, xv
- Smuggling (contraband), 38, 58, 89,  
125, 126, 154, 154n11,  
158–162, 160n27, 164, 166,  
198, 233, 239
- Social exchange, 15, 19, 121–149
- Soglio, 99, 102–104, 107, 112, 117,  
127, 128, 134, 166n53, 228n28,  
246, 253, 255, 276
- Solari, Geronimo, 146, 210, 245n72

Solaro, Antonio, 205, 206  
 Solaro, Battista, 224  
 Solaro family, 205  
 Solaro, Gio Maria, 224  
 Solimano family, 75n28  
 Soracco, Domenico, 139  
 Soria (hamlet), 117  
 Sori (parish), 36  
 Sovereignty, 11, 27n17, 38, 104, 183, 184  
 Spain (Spanish), 8, 26, 41, 155  
 Spinola, Andrea, 5, 5n9, 8, 10n20, 11, 11n24, 12, 12n27, 55, 183, 185n5, 192n10, 196, 212  
 Spinola family, 55, 160  
 Spinola, Gio Francesco, 23, 23n1, 24, 27, 46, 49, 53, 58  
 Spinola, Gio Maria, 53, 156  
 Spinola, M., 193n12  
 Spinola, Orazio (archbishop), 258  
 Spinola, Raffaele, 156  
 Stanghellino, 101  
 Stanghellino, Agostino, 232, 233  
 Stanghellino, Nicola, 226  
 Starn, Randolph, xviin26  
 State formation  
   central government, 152  
   centralization, 2, 27  
   centralized control, 90  
   centralizing, 47  
   central organizational structures, 31  
   contraction of state powers, 4n5  
   early modern state, 87  
   formation of the modern state, xii, 1, 2  
   state-building, xvii, 4n5, 13, 27, 85n45  
   state institution, 16, 73, 280  
 Stem group (stem family), 112–114  
 Stone, L., 221n17  
 Sturla valley, 47, 49, 52, 67, 104n30, 105, 123, 124, 131n28, 160,

162, 164, 185, 191, 193, 201–204, 203n32, 213  
 Suarez de Figueroa, Gomez (Imperial vicar), 193  
 Subsistence, 96–106, 126, 152, 158, 233, 235  
 Sundin, J., 28n19  
 Supra-local, 16, 20, 28, 58, 123, 155, 181, 192, 203, 205, 221, 224, 226n24, 249, 277, 280  
 Surname, xiv, 31, 32, 41–43, 50, 51, 73, 76n31, 106, 107, 112, 118, 119, 133, 162, 174, 176, 184, 202, 254, 257, 273–276, 281n83  
 Swartz, M.J., 192n11  
 Sylvo-pastoral, 100  
 Symbolism (symbol), 251n2

## T

Tambiah, S.J., 138n51  
 Taro Valley, 40n54  
 Tassara family (from Rapallo), 213  
 Taverns, 26, 123, 125, 136, 136n44, 145, 153, 158, 169n59, 218, 225, 226n24, 227, 229, 232, 233, 239, 240, 244, 245n72, 247, 255  
 Taxation, 2, 21, 63, 69, 70, 87, 87n50, 98, 157, 159  
   fisc, 52, 103, 277, 279  
   fiscal extraction, 98  
   gabelle, 166n53  
   tax collector, 47, 69, 72, 73, 74n28, 154  
 Terrarossa, 117  
 Testimony, 13, 17, 20, 31, 48, 53, 80, 82, 89, 136, 138, 147, 167n57, 177–179, 178n9, 183, 185, 187, 189, 194, 220, 226, 233n42, 244, 252, 254, 259

- Throop, S.A., xvn19  
 Tilly, Charles, xii, xiin12, xvi, 2n2  
 Tocci, G., 4n5, 40n54  
 Todorov, T., 25n9  
 Torre, Angelo, xi, 171n65, 260n28, 261n29  
 Torriglia, 38, 41, 163, 169, 225n22, 281n83  
 Torture, 12, 23, 29, 34, 39, 78, 219, 220, 221n16, 232, 242, 243, 244n69, 246  
 Trebbia valley, 36, 45n67, 102, 104, 118, 146, 148, 158, 169, 214, 230, 233, 233n43, 234, 234n44, 281n83  
 Tribunal, xv, xvi, 13, 17, 81, 89, 119, 136, 160, 175, 178n9, 201, 213, 222, 252, 262, 273  
 Trino, 75, 113, 115n40, 118, 176  
 Triora, 57n101, 174n1  
 Trivellato, Francesca, xviin26  
 Tuden, A., 192n11  
 Turks, 192  
 Turner, Victor W., 192n11, 251n2
- U**  
 Uspenskij, B.A., 57n102
- V**  
 Vaccà, Davide, 82, 209, 254n9  
 Vaccaro, Andrea, 222  
 Valente, Agostino, 140  
 Valente, Alessandro (father of Stefano), 141  
 Valente, Antonio, 46  
 Valente, Batta (first husband of Nicoletta Chiereghino), 144n63  
 Valente family (from Cornia), 140, 141  
 Valente, Giulio, 140–141  
 Valente, Maria (daughter of Nicolino, wife of Batta Bacigalupo), 141  
 Valente, Nicolino (father of Maria), 141  
 Valente, Raffaellino, 140, 141  
 Valente, Stefano (son of Alessandro, husband of Masina Bacigalupo), 141  
 Vallebella, Antonio, 156  
 Valle Fredda, 74, 95  
 Valley Council, 71, 79, 81, 123, 124  
 Van Gennep, Arnold, 261n30  
 Vara valley, 162  
 Varese, 24n4, 37n46, 38, 143n61, 162, 163, 169, 251n3  
 Varzi, 163  
 Vazzoler, F., 5n8  
*Vecchi*, 4, 6, 26, 123, 203, 204, 206–208  
 Venice, 4, 4n7, 13n28, 27n17, 57n102  
 Ventarola (village of Santo Stefano d'Aveto), 105  
 Ventimiglia, 57n101  
 Verme family, 196  
 Verzi, 39n52, 99, 118, 133, 133n36, 175, 232, 252, 256, 258–260, 265  
 Vester, Matthew, xvii  
 Viareggio, 187  
 Vicariate, 25, 27, 65, 67, 70n18, 184, 185, 190, 200, 201, 209, 210, 213, 224, 256, 265, 273  
 Vignoli family, 242  
 Villa Arata (village), 117  
 Vincent, J., 22n36  
 Vineyard (vines, wine), 68, 113, 137, 141, 192  
 Vinogradov, A.R., 171n64  
 Virilocal, 75, 112, 147  
 Vitale, V., 26n15  
 Voghera, 163  
 Volpone, Gio, 240  
 Voltri, 8n17  
 Von Aretin, K.O., 41n55



**W**

Walled town(s) (i.e., Rapallo and Chiavari), 9  
 Wall, R., 114n38  
 Wasteland, 97, 98, 100, 101  
 Watt, I., 279n76  
 Weaves, 20, 237, 242, 255  
 Weber, Max, xvii  
 White, S.D., xxiii  
 Widow(s), xvin24, 130, 130n25, 135, 136, 144n63, 229n30, 244n70  
 Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 129n24, 222n18  
 Wolf, E.R., 68n10, 245n71  
 Women (wives/wife), 20, 25, 102, 132, 135, 136, 144, 148, 166, 167, 167n57, 188, 189, 227n25, 228n26, 233, 234n47, 239, 251, 266  
 Woods (wooded), 77, 85, 91, 94, 97, 97n11, 99, 101, 135, 160, 166n53, 234n47, 243, 243n68, 244, 262  
 Woolf, Stuart, xix  
 Wormald, J., 47n73, 260n29

**Y**

Yanagisako, S., 114n38  
 Young people, 102, 114n39, 130, 166, 176, 186n6, 235n49, 243, 244, 246n74

**Z**

Zappa  
   agricultural laborer, 245  
   diggers, 243–247  
   hoe, 242  
 Zenogio, Alessandro, 198n27  
 Zenogio, Bartolomeo, 190, 191, 204  
 Zenogio family, 191  
 Zenogio, Lorenzo, 198n27  
 Zenogio, Rolando, 189  
 Zerega (Dezerega), Bianchinetta  
   (daughter-in-law of Pietro, sister of Francesco), 144n63  
 Zerega (Dezerega), Francesco  
   (brother of Bianchinetta), 144n63  
 Zerega (Dezerega), Pietro (father-in-law of Bianchinetta), 258  
 Zoagli, 50