



ITALIAN AND ITALIAN AMERICAN STUDIES

HUMAN NATURE
IN RURAL
TUSCANY

an early modern history

GREGORY HANLON



Italian and Italian American Studies

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Gregory Hanlon

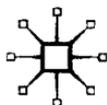
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Human Nature in Rural Tuscany

An Early Modern History

Gregory Hanlon

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HUMAN NATURE IN RURAL TUSCANY

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To the custodians of local history:
Loretta Roghi, Biblioteca comunale Torrita
Giovanna Piochi, Centro culturale Montefollonico
Don Aldo Franci, Archivio diocesano Pienza

Principal Publications by Gregory Hanlon

L'Univers des gens de bien: Culture et comportements des élites urbaines en Aquitaine au XVIIIe siècle (Bordeaux: Presses de l'Université de Bordeaux, 1989).

Community and Confessions in seventeenth-century France: Catholic and Protestant coexistence in Aquitaine (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993).

Twilight of a Military Tradition: Italian aristocrats and European conflicts, 1560–1800 (London & New York, University College London Press & Holmes and Meier, 1998).

Early Modern Italy 1550–1800: Three seasons in European history (London & New York, Palgrave-Macmillan, 2000).

Storia dell'Italia moderna 1550–1800 (Bologna, Mulino Editore, 2002).

Early Modern Italy 1550–1800: A comprehensive bibliography of titles in English and French, published electronically at www.earlymodernitaly.com, 9th edition, 499pp. and 10,097 titles, January 2006.

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Preface

This book originally set out to study the behavior of social elites in Siena, a project not dissimilar to one in Aquitaine that constituted my doctoral dissertation. Funded twice by the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, I conscientiously applied myself to explore a variety of urban records. But I gradually realized that Siena was too big and too “city” to study adequately, notwithstanding its modest size. The panoply of urban institutions generated mountains of paper of every description. Siena is an excellent place to take the measure of Italian institutions and society. While my work there resulted in two books, neither one was the local study I had set out to undertake.

From the moment I encountered the material from the fief of Montefollonico in the municipal library of Torrita, I realized that the dusty registers sitting on three short shelves enclosed the minutia of daily life lived almost four centuries ago. The diocesan archives of Pienza—newly reordered and catalogued by a young archivist, Giuseppe Chironi—supplemented the community documents with those of Counter-Reformation Italy’s influential and invasive religious administration. Sienese archival stacks contained the records of the Granducal and urban governments. With all these documents at hand, it became possible to attempt the ideal: undertake a *nominative* study of social behavior, that is, focus my attention on the individual actions of ordinary people.

The second transformation of this research sprang from my reacquaintance with the new behavioral sciences during a teaching semester at the Sorbonne in Paris in 1996. My doctoral work invoked briefly the ethology of Konrad Lorenz and his contemporaries, that is, the study of animal behavior. The two connected fields of evolutionary psychology and ethology provide a conceptual framework I can test empirically with the sources enumerated above. I have always been dissatisfied with the approach to behavioral history that posits culture as a kind of “black box” that admits a wide range of human behavior without explaining the reasons for it. Close work on religious history in early modern France (similarly a *nominative* study) taught me to be wary of doctrines and

discourses, justifications and beliefs. The building blocks of human life are universal: hierarchy and governance, cooperation and competition; reproduction; invention and adaptation. To explain the regularities and the variations of these central features of human existence, culture is only a proximate explanation, a slippery slope toward naive idealism. Better to seek the good reasons that people in contexts different from our own had for acting in ways that seem foreign to us. Raymond Boudon's classical rational-actor sociology combines here with the behavioral sciences to give depth to empirical research. Together they provide new *and better* ways of thinking about human existence.

The custodians of local history in Tuscany aided this research immeasurably. Tuscans enjoy a well-deserved reputation even in Italy for the vitality of their local cultural life. There are three persons whose assistance made diligent gleaning almost easy; *Don* Aldo Franci, now in his mid-90s, is the creator of the diocesan archive of Pienza, as well as the guardian of its treasures. In Torrita di Siena, librarian Loretta Roghi provided the welcoming atmosphere that made it possible to make the most of annual research trips. Giovanna Piochi, erstwhile director of the Centro Culturale Montefollonico, passionately contributed in ways too numerous to enumerate. The Sienese state archives were also an excellent place to work, rendered congenial by its director, Dr Carla Zarrilli, and efficient by its personnel, in particular Maria Assunta Ceppari (who helped familiarize me with Italian paleography) and Luciana Franchino (who was always willing to fetch me another bundle of documents). Local historians were good sounding boards for my various discoveries, Oscar Di Simplicio especially, but also Mario Ascheri and Neda Mechini. The mayor of Torrita, Montefollonico resident Paolo Pieranni, was also an enthusiastic backer of the project from its inception.

The results of this research were presented and discussed over several years of research seminars in Paris. Yves-Marie Bercé, Denis Crouzet, Alfred Soman, Jean-Michel Sallmann, and my former *maître*, demographer Jean-Pierre Poussou listened and questioned intelligently and provocatively, sending me back to broaden my material and double-check it before bringing it into print. Also in Paris, Mlle Blandine Duclap assisted in every way. Finally, P.M. Jones, Samuel K. Cohn, and Thomas V. Cohen at the universities of Birmingham, Glasgow, and York University (Toronto) respectively subjected the whole project to careful scrutiny and persuaded me to clarify and amplify its theoretical underpinnings. So this book, like most others, is a collaborative venture.

Measures and Values

Grain

Staiò	(4 quarti)	24.4 liters
Moggio	(8 sacca/24 staiò)	584.7 liters

Liquids

	<i>Wine</i> (in liters)	<i>Oil</i> (in liters)
Boccale	1.14	1.04
Barile	45.6	33.4
Soma	91.2	66.9

Coins

Crazie	1/12 lire
Giulio	8 crazie, or 2/3 lire
Paolo	8 crazie
Testone	24 crazie or 2 lire
Fiorino	4 lire
Scudo	7 lire

1 lire = 20 soldi = 240 denari

Land

1 staiò 0.32 acres

Introduction

Il campo non invecchia mai

(The field never grows old)¹

Imagine for a moment that we could roost patiently in a perch overlooking a village and its inhabitants just like Frans de Waal and his students spied for years on a pen of captive chimpanzees, marking every move of the occupants.² Montefollonico was just such an enclosure, despite its tumble-down wall and crumbling towers. From our perch we can jot down onto observation charts the comings and goings and the intense sociability of individual inhabitants. We can watch them organize themselves into groups and observe how they work—how they compete individually, with whom they reproduce, and how they raise their young. All of my subjects now repose in their graves underneath different churches, but in the village records they are very much alive and unaware of my presence.

Montefollonico was a typical central Italian *castello*, a hilltop community composed of two- and three-storey dwellings enclosed by a wall. Like most villages, Montefollonico was small, containing about 350 inhabitants within the walls and between 450 and 500 more circulating among the seventy-odd sharecropping farms around it. Forest and Mediterranean brush, called *macchia*, carpeted about a quarter of the territory beyond the walls, concealing a multitude of birds, foxes, and rabbits. This agricultural landscape, cultivated since Roman times, was continually evolving. In the sixteenth century, landlords portioned off the arable land into hundreds of small patches, enclosed them with hedges, and then planted each field with rows of vines and fruit trees, separating them by wider strips of grain or fallow land. A tight network of pathways veined the space between parcels.

Montefollonico's Renaissance appearance survives today. The village's configuration along a precipice emphasized the two prominent buildings at the summit: the parish church San Leonardo and a modest municipal building, the *palazzo*. Not far away, the mansion of the Landucci family, the principal noble family since Middle Ages, stood adjacent to the squat parish church of San Bartolomeo. Three fortified gates gave access to the village's two parallel streets. The easternmost gate Porta di Criano led

down to a chapel freshly erected just outside the wall, the Madonna del Criano (today called Triano). The southern Porta Nuova connected the tiny *piazza*, with its oven and tiny confraternity chapel, with a flat esplanade outside the walls where men gathered to bowl using wheels of cheese. Porta Follonica sat partway down the slope that led to the Val di Chiana. Pigeons guarded the seven towers watching over sections of the wall that had collapsed with time. The crumbling ramparts attested to the village's former role as a border strongpoint at the limit of the Sienese state, across from Florentine Montepulciano, before war annexed it to the new Grand Duchy of Tuscany. The village's principal inhabitants lived in spacious houses along the main street, *Via di Sopra*, close to San Leonardo, and around the *piazza*. More humble dwellings lined the portion of the same street descending to the western Follonica gate, and along the parallel *Via di Sotto*.³ Like every village, Montefollonico provided a rudimentary infrastructure. In 1676, the *palazzo*, where local councilors deliberated, contained two jail cells. There were two bread ovens, one in the square and another down the street nearer the Porta Follonica; a fountain with its trough near San Leonardo; a house for a minuscule hospital, another for the lay confraternity; and a tavern somewhere inside the walls whose exact location I could never ascertain. Outside the walls the community leased another inn, the Osteria delle Noci (Inn of the nut-trees), at the main crossroads north of town. It still operates there today.

This village did not suffer from isolation, overlooking as it did the roads connecting Rome with Siena, Florence, and Arezzo. From its ridgetop setting about 550 meters above sea-level, Montefollonico commands a wide sweep of territory. To the east, the panorama encompasses the marshy Val di Chiana and Lake Trasimene, and the Umbrian Apennines far beyond. To the west we can see Pienza and the lofty Monte Amiata behind it. Immediately to the south lies the medieval city of Montepulciano, stretched out atop an adjacent ridge. Our village relied upon neighboring towns for services it could not provide itself. Besides Montepulciano, which, with 3,000 inhabitants, was the lone city of the district, a number of larger *castelli* existed nearby. At the foot of the ridge lay Torrita di Siena, whose 600 clustered inhabitants and a thousand outlying peasants farmed a fertile soil. The small town of Sinalunga, containing perhaps 1,500 inhabitants and a wide selection of shops and services, leaned over the plain to the north. To the west, Pienza's elegant Renaissance streetscape showcased the little cathedral and the bishop's palace. The village's closest neighbor, the small, perched *castello* of Petroio, lay to the north. There were a handful of open hamlets too, just outside the boundaries of our village: Ciliano, Abbadia Cicille, and Palazzo Massaini. Around each cluster of houses lay scores of sharecropping farms of diverse size and consistency.

Montefollonico is a special place because papers that have defied time's accidents permit us to distinguish with uncommon detail the individuals who lived there for a period of fifty or sixty years. These sources constitute our perch overlooking the daily events in an ordinary village in mid-seventeenth-century Tuscany. The documents generated by the rural community of Montefollonico, conserved in the municipal library of Torrita, consist of the municipal records and deliberations, a land-tax register, the confraternity records, and the evaluation of property damage made by local assessors. To them we can add the papers generated by the feudal administration of the *marchese* Coppoli; the register of real estate transactions, and the abundant records of civil litigation and criminal justice. The diocesan archives in Pienza contain most of the typical documents penned by parish priests, as well as those drafted by the administrators who supervised them from the bishop's palace; parish registers of baptism, marriage, and burial; states of souls censuses and lists of youths receiving confirmation. The church retained sole jurisdiction over marriage, so hundreds of marriage contracts and inquests into marriage eligibility fill several bundles. The bishop's court meted out both civil and criminal justice to persons under church jurisdiction, so we possess full trials, petitions, and settlements reached before his judge, the diocesan vicar. Prying priests reported on illegitimate frequentations and warned people in writing not to overstep the bounds of decency. The bishop's administration solicited letters and reports from parish priests, and it interfered with local devotional bodies such as the confraternities. It supervised the recruitment and the training of priests, periodically checking their credentials. Bishops visited parishes on a fairly regular basis and drafted inspection reports. The diocesan authorities served as intermediaries between the village and more powerful ecclesiastical bodies beyond our district, such as the papal nuncio (ambassador) in Florence, and the formidable Holy Office of the Inquisition, so we have some papers originating there too.

Authorities in Siena, some sixty kilometers away, generated more documents. The vast notarial collection of public and private contracts includes testaments, postmortem inventories, and property leases. Important Sienese government committees retained jurisdiction over our village even after it became a fief. The *Quattro Conservatori* kept close watch over revenue collection, to prevent locally powerful individuals from diverting public assets to their private benefit. The governor of Siena was an alert overseer who could intervene to sort out problems of every description, in the interest of maintaining public order. Important functionaries occasionally crisscrossed the Sienese state to report on objective conditions far from the city. There are useful ancillary archives even

beyond those just mentioned. In Montepulciano, outside Sienese jurisdiction, the hospital recorded the delivery of little bastards our peasants abandoned there. The *marchese's* family left their own archives in the ancestral family seat in Perugia. In Florence, the Grand Duke served as arbiter of last resort. Taken all together these records afford us a much closer view of country life than historians usually get.

The pages that follow describe the everyday behavior of people in a bygone era and explain how their individual actions were, in their context, usually well-suited to achieving individual goals of survival and betterment. However, we must periodically look up from the faded ink of these dusty manuscripts in order to observe what researchers in other disciplines are learning. This "French" approach of explaining historical problems with insights from other sciences dealing with human behavior has proven extremely fertile in the recent past.⁴

Several schools of thought jostle for attention, however. Some writers see human behavior as something infinitely variable. Situations vary over time and place because the values people share are basically arbitrary.⁵ The most extreme cultural relativists maintain that, since we apprehend the world using intellectual notions that are specific to our time and place, cultures other than our own must be alien to our understanding. Members of other cultures (or even subcategories of our own society) are incommensurate "Others" whom we cannot presume to understand. This is a *consistent* argument, but if it were true then we would know nothing about anyone. There are a number of untenable assumptions built into all theories of cultural relativism, however. Their most serious shortcoming is that they cannot begin to account for the *constants* we find in human behavior. Theories that claim that our actions are guided by our beliefs alone rely on a very fuzzy concept of culture that takes no account of the way minds work.⁶ The "Other" is a fiction invented by philosophers and explains nothing at all. So the reader will see in the following pages that "culture" is a hypothesis I do not need. A growing number of anthropologists and sociologists argue that culture is an explanatory concept that has outlived its usefulness. It should be invoked more sparingly or else altogether discarded as obsolete.⁷ In place of these relativist abstractions based on cultural absolutes, we should substitute situational theories of social action that emphasize the good, objective reasons people have for the choices they make.

If our villagers are not "others," who are they? The short answer would be that they are rational agents, primarily. Rational choice theories are not new in the social sciences. A more satisfactory explanation for the behavior of Tuscan rustics would attempt to show how their actions were comprehensible, given the context of the specific individuals involved. Human beings everywhere calculate their interest, but they desire a variety of

rewards. People may not have sufficient information to determine which action is objectively the most fruitful to attain the goals they seek, and the most useful action for the individual may not be advantageous to them if most people acted likewise. It is possible that some choices are unconscious or not explicit in our minds, and other decisions are objectively mistaken, but the reasons behind them are probably not difficult to uncover.⁸ Actions can be spurred by emotions, too, but these are likewise universal in their range.⁹

The preceding paragraph implies that other people share our psychological makeup. A previous generation warned us about the fallacy of the universal man: in the past, people not only thought different things, they thought them differently.¹⁰ Jeffrey Weeks repeats Oscar Wilde's *boutade* that "The only thing that one really knows about human nature is that it changes."¹¹ If this were true, however, there should be some evidence from cognitive psychology showing that cerebral processes common in one part of the planet operate differently elsewhere. If human nature varies over time, surely it varies in space as well. To demonstrate the psychic diversity of *homo sapiens*, it would first be necessary to shine a spotlight on some *homo exoticus* still among us. On the contrary, Darwin, who was the first to undertake a world-ranging inquest on human emotions (in 1867), concluded from it "that the same state of mind is expressed throughout the world with remarkable uniformity; and this fact is in itself interesting as evidence of the close similarity in body structure and mental disposition of all the races of mankind."¹²

If behavioral traits governing status seeking, altruism, aggression, and sexuality—and the emotions connected to them—are not strictly cultural or learned, then they must be rooted in us biologically, in our genes. Genes are self-replicating molecules coding for proteins that in turn code for predispositions, such as temperament. Specific genetic accidents, called genotypes, appear continually in nature through the replication of DNA; they govern physiological processes and behavior patterns. These genotypes interact with the local environment and personal experience, producing phenotypes. Phenotypes that present advantages relative to other members of the population in a given context will reproduce better and will multiply over time to dominate the entire population, an advantage called "relative fitness."¹³ While these processes are rooted in our nervous systems, genes alone never determine our behavior. Action of every sort is strongly influenced by the details and nuances of context, by the environment and the experience of each individual.¹⁴ The human mind is a "fitness calculator," consciously or unconsciously adopting behavior adapted to goals and circumstances. But these individual goals are strongly conditioned by the necessity of maintaining linkages with other people.¹⁵

Why not incorporate the notion of human nature into our research strategy? Let us define it as a finite range of capacities and potentials imposed by our physiology (with its requirements of survival and reproduction), which is common to all cultures. While a working concept of human nature does not deny the existence of a multitude of human cultures, we can suppose that the emotions and mental processes of human beings everywhere can be explained by our biological heritage.¹⁶ This formulation, which is compatible with both the social sciences and the natural sciences, explains more phenomena with greater economy.¹⁷ This does not preclude a great deal of individual variation among people of the same culture. The mind is a system with many parts, with differing agendas and goals.¹⁸ The anthropologist Donald Brown has catalogued a great many features of existence that are common to all cultures, and his list of Human Universals demonstrates amply how much we share with all humankind.¹⁹ Among these traits is the ability of all peoples to use language to create abstractions, to describe, to motivate, to dissimulate or to mislead, to be funny, and to insult. People everywhere recognize the emotions behind facial expressions. Universal People have a concept of the self as a psychological entity that is different from others and is both a subject and an object. This self is neither a wholly passive pawn of social action nor is it seen a wholly autonomous entity. Universal People have a private inner life where they make plans, choose between alternatives, and make difficult and often ambivalent decisions. Universal People live in societies that are segmented by gender, by age, and by task. There are hierarchies and leaders everywhere, but the leader never has all the power. Nowhere do women rule over men, even in matriarchal societies, and women everywhere devote more time to nurturing the young. Universal People create laws and observe a number of rules governing people's insertion in perpetual social units, and they have a sense of rights and obligations attached to membership in them. Universal People also distinguish between right and wrong, recognize, and employ promises. People are both able to empathize with others, envy them, and take delight at their misfortune. People everywhere have concepts of property: both a kind of loose property to which many have access and a sense of private belongings. Universal People have beliefs in entities beyond the visible or the palpable, beliefs that we could qualify as religious or supernatural. People everywhere anthropomorphize, believe in things that are demonstrably false, and practice magic to sustain or increase life or to attract the attention of the other sex. People adorn their bodies everywhere, no matter how little they wear. They dance and make music, which employs melody, rhythm, repetition, and variation. They have an aesthetic sense they invest in objects of many kinds and admire the dexterity that produces them. Perhaps the strongest principle

guiding human action is reciprocity, a “tit for tat” reflex underpinning both conflict and cooperation.

Much of the insight into this part of human nature stems from the research of people who study subhuman species. If you want to understand humans, study apes, they say, and with good reason.²⁰ Animal behavior derives from the same combination of evolved tendencies, environmental modification, learning and cognition as human action.²¹ Primates are rational actors too, with motives and emotions that are not difficult to understand once we know the context of each of the individuals at hand.²² Living in small groups and dependent upon the perceptions of their peers in ongoing relationships, primates act knowing that a social contract binds them to each other. Apes display many kinds of intentional behavior, including alliance and coalition, deception and counterdeception, and revenge, reconciliation, and pardon. They clearly distinguish right and wrong action in a moral sense. By their memories of past events, and their ability to speculate on realistic future outcomes of their action, they enjoy a stable social order without the benefit of law. Our moral notions too are rooted in primordial emotions that regulate all social behavior, and they are not so very different from those prevailing among apes. They include friendship, sympathy, love, altruism, and esteem, and their opposites scorn, hate, egoism, greed, and vanity. Moral life is not comprehensible in cultural terms alone.²³

Let's return for a moment to the principal assumptions operating behind the empirical demonstrations that guide my understanding of Tuscan peasants. Cerebral mechanisms for thinking, feeling, and acting that are different from ours do not seem to exist.²⁴ That is because our brains, like the brains of other animals, are the product of a long evolution. One eloquent cognitive psychologist argues that our brains are as specialized and well engineered as our bodies; it is a precision instrument (likened to a Swiss army knife) that allows us to solve the problems presented in our environment.²⁵ Humans behave flexibly because we are programmed to do so. Reasoning, intelligence, imagination, and other such faculties are forms of information processing. Our minds are packed with combinatorial software that can generate an unlimited set of thoughts and behavior.²⁶ Nevertheless, there is much that we inherit. Conscientiousness, agreeableness, neuroticism, psychopathy, and deviance are substantially heritable.²⁷ Our species would not have survived, however, if it constructed categories that were permanently at odds with the reality around it. If our ancestors could not assess objectively the clues from the environment, or solve the problems of survival of the species over hundreds of centuries, we would not be here today. Steven Pinker concludes that “Humans achieve their goals by complex chains of behavior, assembled on the spot and

tailored to the situation. They plan the behavior using cognitive models of the causal structure of the world. They learn these models in their lifetimes and communicate them through language, which allows the knowledge to accumulate within a group and over generations.”²⁸ The brain has specialized parts that equip us with a visual system, language acquisition capability, common sense, and a wide assortment of emotions.²⁹ Evolution has enabled us to establish empathy and share information and impressions with other people, which is something we share with other higher organisms.³⁰ People everywhere have an innate capacity for empathy and sympathy that makes individual social action comprehensible to all, just as they possess a “machiavellian intelligence” capable of manipulating others’ sympathy for personal advantage. This makes it possible for us to project these assumptions onto the behavior of people in other times and places.

If the postulates of evolutionary psychology are correct, and I believe they are, we could apply them to any given society in history and understand better why people acted the way they did. It connects the physical sciences with the human sciences and explains the largest number of facts with the smallest number of assumptions. But why should we apply evolutionary psychology to history, you might ask? Is not evolutionary time, measured in tens of millennia, grossly incommensurate with historical time, which is measured in months or years? This would be a good place to evoke once again the lessons of French historiography. Fernand Braudel drew our attention to the existence of different timescales operating in every era, from the semi-immobile background of climate and geography to the constantly shifting events of politics. We cannot understand changes occurring in the scale of a lifetime without being conscious of the long-term context in which these lives were lived. The larger context sets the limits of what can and cannot occur or endure beyond the short term.³¹ The physical evolution of the human species is an event that took place over the very long term, but it influences our action and our outlook today. It is the ultimate “*structure de longue durée*.” I predict that insights derived from evolutionary psychology will transform the way historians understand not only family life, kinship, and sexuality, but also politics, violence, and cooperation. It suffices to look up for a moment from our archives, and then to scrutinize them afresh.³²

Historians have always worked from intuitive theories of human nature: social analysis would not be possible without one. This book proceeds from a conviction that all good history, like good literature, should address themes universal to human existence, in a way that connects humanity to all living organisms. Our villagers were equipped with the mental and emotional ability that we have. They assessed their predicaments just as well as we do. They grasped, individually, the range of actions

open to them, and the consequences their acts might entail. And their predicaments, by and large, were similar to ours. There are limits to our analogy of Tuscan rustics with de Waal's apes, of course. We see the context at one remove, in texts drafted at the time the events occurred, but their meanings are usually not difficult to infer. Our sample group in this unusual, self-contained laboratory is much larger than any ethologist's. Each of the 700 to 800 souls who lived in Montefollonico had many connections to other people, although many of them died very young. My study also covers over half a century, longer than all but a few of the lives I study. So many individuals crowd into my lens that it is often necessary to proceed statistically. Yet individuals mattered in a number of important ways. There was a variety of individual responses to different problems, just as there were individual inborn temperaments that owed little to life experience.

The countryside did not contain an undifferentiated mass of poor rustics. Village life encompassed an array of fine social gradations that everyone understood. Access to material resources varied widely from one social group to another, and among different individuals in each. Given that the population was too large to function as an informal unit, the heads of families vested some measure of authority into a select number of men and trusted them to wield power wisely and in the interest of the collectivity. That is perhaps the best place to begin.

Governance

The Community

Cent'ocche ammazzono un lupo
(a hundred geese can kill a wolf)

Governance denotes a manner or system of governing, that is, how members of a group apportion power and resources among themselves. Governance is universal, but its precise *modus operandi* is local and particular. I find especially interesting how the principles of power usually revolve around a simple dichotomy that everyone understands: participation and hierarchy. The principles are universally present, for every polity seeks some manner, according to the context, of finding the right balance between the two. Most societies exercise power through a consensus of what “works” in their context.

Montefollonico was a self-governing “community,” a corporate entity with its own institutions and statutes. While statutes varied in detail from one village to another, their framers intended that they would facilitate the peaceful coexistence of villagers not related to each other by blood. A *castello* was different from a Ligurian or Corsican kin-hamlet, where a small number of households—all related to each other through blood or marriage—managed their interests around a council table presided by a patriarch.¹ The smooth functioning of a settlement containing numerous unrelated families required maintaining a fine balance among competing interests. People understood that they were members of a permanent, structured group, however much they were also individuals pursuing their own private ends. The best way to achieve that equilibrium was to share power widely and to limit continuous holding of it to short periods. By rotating offices, people who exercised power carelessly or vindictively would soon be exposed to reprisals.² Power was best exercised with the

understanding that cooperation in the present would earn a credit of positive reciprocity repaid in future, while a slight would merit retaliation. This universal understanding is the foundation of social interaction and morality too, in primates as well as humans.³

Montefollonico's statutes were not especially confining, although they set out clearly the rules of membership in the community.⁴ In 1561, the Medici duke Cosimo I decreed that anyone who paid taxes to the community was eligible to hold local office, the articles excluding non-natives notwithstanding.⁵ Most other articles shared the same egalitarian inspiration. Families living in the village and paying taxes to it should share the responsibilities of community life, just as their residence entitled them to enjoy its benefits. We should not see in this principle the expression of an egalitarian ideal, but rather the desire to maintain an equilibrium among a host of families whose own resources varied a great deal. Most male heads of households were illiterate and depended upon more powerful persons for work and assistance. Nevertheless, numerous articles created mechanisms preventing one person or kin-group from dominating everyone else.

The ideals of village government were reflections of those prevailing in city-republics such as Siena, Florence, and Venice. A panel of influential citizens would make important decisions after discussing them before a larger assembly. The village council comprising one male per household assembled periodically to designate the local executive and to deliberate on local problems. We have fairly continuous records of the council meetings, drafted by notaries or more often by the local magistrate, who acted as chancellor.⁶ Every January the householders selected 24 councilors among the tax-paying householders (*allirati*). The councilors serving in any one year would have represented about 10 to 20 percent of all the households in the jurisdiction, and perhaps a third or more of the established *castello* households. Those who were not present usually had close relatives who were. A high quorum fixed at 18 members prevented a handful of diligent notables from making cozy arrangements among themselves. People who owned no property at all (and this included some sharecroppers) were not permitted to deliberate and vote as councilors, for they were likely to be recent arrivals who could always move elsewhere if they were unhappy with local decisions. This wide-based representation did not prevent a smaller number of men from wielding great influence within the council, for the wealth, the connections, the literacy, and even the probity of specific individuals was something villagers took into account when they cast their black and white beans. From a basket of names, councilors elected three priors to make executive decisions and to represent the community

for six months, as well as a treasurer (*camerlengo*) who would handle the communal funds and keep the accounts. Priors oversaw the smooth functioning of communal institutions. They were not usually permitted to reject the results of their election, although their remuneration of 4 lire hardly made it worth their while. If it were possible for them to shirk these responsibilities, villagers argued, the public weal would surely suffer. The burden could be a delicate one, for it entailed dividing up the village tax bill and allocating a portion of it to each household. Resident villagers owning property in the jurisdiction entertained a rough idea of the overall worth of each of their neighbors and the real ability of each to pay taxes. Moreover, the statutes empowered the priors to command inhabitants to undertake traditional *corvées*, or compulsory work details, such as fetching salt from the coastal salt-pans near Grosseto.

The key administrative officer in Tuscan communal government, however, was the treasurer or *camerlengo*, elected annually. These officers were almost always literate villagers capable of keeping financial records.⁷ The assembly designated by lot those few men considered capable enough of exercising it, and the Sienese government furnished the new official with a couple of pages of fine-print instructions. The *camerlengo* received all the money and grain due to the community into his own hands. It was his responsibility to lease the management of local resources at public auction, and to keep track of money still owing for them. He had to compile an inventory of all the movable goods belonging to the community at the onset of his tenure, and the statutes made him personally liable for their custody and conservation. Moreover, the *camerlengo* collected the taxes allocated to the community by the central government. This spared the central administration the trouble of creating its own tax personnel, but it further subjected this functionary to the close scrutiny of higher officials over whom he had no leverage. Given the range of responsibilities incumbent on this official, there were not many eligible candidates for the task, and even fewer were good at it. A few men filled the function two or three times, though never for consecutive years. Few treasurers possessed much of a fortune, and a couple of them look like straw men owning virtually nothing.⁸ The official received little monetary compensation for his trouble (a mere 12 lire). So, why would men accept the responsibility? Elena Fasano Guarini plausibly argues that the office gave village notables opportunities to grant their neighbors favors they could redeem in one way or another in future. Some preferred to incur personal debts to the central government (by their inability to raise all the money the village was assessed for), rather than compel their neighbors to sell property to pay their taxes, or inflict fines upon them. The system worked reasonably well in Tuscany because their local roots forced *camerlenghi* to use their discretion.⁹

With responsibilities came some perks. Only solvent residents active in local government were eligible to bid on the lease of public assets. Villagers preferred that people should take turns at it so that no one was allowed to alienate the public domain for short-term profit.¹⁰ To prevent the collusion between village officials and the wealthier leaseholders of public assets, the grand duke in Florence compelled the *camerlengo* to submit the community accounts to the Sieneese patrician magistrates responsible for the supervision of the countryside, the *Quattro Conservatori*.¹¹ These latter officials ensured that the assembly spent only in the community interest all the money passing through the treasurer's hands. They knew that the alienation or the long-term privatization of village assets would hinder the ability of the communities to pay their taxes in future. The grand duke also gave these Sieneese magistrates criminal jurisdiction over the administration of community property, so that they could prosecute village officials for bad decisions or sloppy bookkeeping.

The village council also elected some minor officials, all of whom would have to defend the public good from the egoism of individual families and arbitrate the competing interests that characterize all societies. These were rotating charges parceled out to householders of varying status. Local government in early modern Tuscany embraced a broad spectrum of matters we confide to public officials today: road infrastructure, property assessment, public health and welfare, education, justice and police. The *viario* reported on the state of the roads. These crude dirt tracks might become impassible if heavy rains or irresponsible sharecroppers diverted runoff water onto them. Two public estimators (*stimatori*) calculated for the court the value of buildings and damage to crops. Two *alliratori* consented to every change in the basic tax register, the *estimo*. The *grassieri* or *ponitori* examined beasts destined for slaughter and fixed a market price for the meat. Two *savi dei pupilli* oversaw the business interests of widows and minors, although the village magistrate made the decisions on their cases.¹² Other community employees held their jobs indefinitely. The community elected the schoolmaster, usually a priest, with the sizeable salary of 36 *scudi*, but its decision had to be ratified by the *Quattro Conservatori* in Siena. These were often hotly contested elections fraught with local politics, for the issue was usually whether or not to bestow the function on someone from the village. In 1635, a local youth lost out to his competition, because he was unable to enlist enough support. The next year, to circumvent hard feelings, the village council asked the *marchese* to recommend someone, but even so, the feudatory's outside candidate passed by a narrow margin.¹³

Employees of the court needed even greater consensus behind their activities than the elected officials, for the intrusive nature of their function and the indefinite duration of their tenure aroused strong emotions against them. Over time, with the collapse of local revenues, the community

combined the functions of the *nesso*, the constable, and the warden of the confraternity lands into a single, low-status person.¹⁴ The village *nesso* ran errands for the priors and for the magistrate for a paltry 10 lire a month. He performed other menial tasks such as cleaning the fountain, sweeping before the *palazzo*, tolling the bell calling the council to assemble, pacing the village to convoke people to meetings. The *nesso* announced the judge's decrees of truce in the village, shouting out the contents in the square before the *palazzo*, and before the houses of the adversaries, so that they would become common knowledge. Finally, he assisted the court constable in his daily rounds and delivered summonses to debtors, witnesses, and accused to appear before the court. It was a dangerous job for lowly individuals vulnerable to retaliation from outraged neighbors. Sandro di Francesco incurred the wrath of the irascible Pasquino Calcagnolo, receiving his summons on the village square: "What is this summons you're giving me?" Sandro offered his excuses, explaining that he had first been at his house to give it to his wife. "You're a sneaky one! I'll teach you (ti) to give me summonses!" said Calcagnolo, bit his finger in sign of certain vendetta, and then threatened to strike Sandro. The latter complained that he had been punched and similarly threatened by Pasquino in order to intimidate him and impede him from carrying out his work.¹⁵

Another judicial official in Tuscan villages was the *sindaco dei malefizi*, a public accuser. His office required him to reveal the existence of confrontations and to denounce them to the magistrate, in order to circumvent the participants' tendency to silence or *omertà*. Before the establishment of the fief in 1618, the district criminal magistrate, the *Capitano di Giustizia*, meted out justice from his seat in Pienza to a number of little villages such as Montefollonico. He could not possibly supervise such a large territory and so depended upon these informers for reliable information. People would not spontaneously report incidents that did not concern them personally, and passive silence was a reasonable reaction to events one did not control.¹⁶ Vulnerable individuals might be pressured not to report slights against them by better-connected neighbors. One night when her husband was away, Agnese Barbieri, called Bellows, awoke to find young Francesco Crotchi trying to break into her house. She scorned his offer of money for sex and sent him away with insults. Knocking on the door of single women at night was a serious offense, but Agnese waited more than a day before laying the complaint, after the *sindaco* had already reported it. Asked why she did not come sooner, she replied to the magistrate,

Because he frightened me!, so I didn't send for the sindaco to lay the quarrel. That's all I can say except that this morning, Niccolo Biagi came to my house, beseeching me to let it go, saying to me, "people will talk about you,

and if you hush it up, they won't, because I know that you're a respectable woman." I told him to get out of my way, that Justice has to punish him.

Faced with such interference, the *sindaco's* duty was to take the initiative and ensure that justice existed as a *public service*. In addition, he investigated complaints of *danno dato*, or damage to crops inflicted by animals and people. He also reported to the magistrate whoever neglected to report the amount of grain they planted.¹⁷ Spies had a bad reputation and people cast the word as an insult against someone who did not mind his or her own business. How could a misdeed matter to the *sindaco*, if it was none of his business? That ethos was perhaps suitable in hamlets comprised of kin factions recognizing little public authority. But by the seventeenth century and in larger villages, this reaction would have been archaic precisely because an elaborate apparatus of objective justice *did* exist. Obligated to render an oath of good conduct in Siena at the onset of their tenure, and liable to imprisonment for not reporting incidents, the *sindaci* worked conscientiously enough and people usually cooperated with them. One *sindaco* reported as a confrontation some horseplay between good friends, but the magistrate convoked the principals just to be certain.¹⁸ There were only two complaints against them, among about 450 criminal cases, for knowing about an incident without reporting it.¹⁹

The smooth functioning of municipal institutions also depended upon the levy of taxes on households and on the lease of local monopolies. Many villages situated in mountain districts exploited large tracts of forest or scrub. Common land in Montefollonico was reduced to a field planted with fruit trees and to rocky, brush-covered slopes where people could collect kindling and graze their livestock free of charge. Local monopolies leased to the inhabitants were never very lucrative, though the accounts booklets that have been conserved are sketchy to a fault.²⁰ The proceeds of community leases in 1631 were less than 60 lire for the year, and total casual revenues were barely 83 lire, half the annual income of a single sharecropper.²¹ The purchaser of the lease on the village tavern promised to provide bread, wine, and a bed for customers. The statutes required villagers to use the public ovens to bake the dough they made, if they had no oven at home, and each household paid a quota for the upkeep of the infrastructure. High fuel costs probably made it more economical for people to use the communal oven rather than their own, but it did not operate every day. Two *canovai*, designated after public bidding, promised to make additional white bread for sale at prices imposed by the priors and the magistrate. The priors also leased the butcher stall to local men, who promised to provide lamb, veal, and kid for set prices established by the village inspectors. Only for pork could they set their own prices.

The village *pizzicheria*, which sold salt meat, fish, and other delicacies, was not auctioned off. No doubt it was so marginal as to make up only part of the activity of the man running it. Finally, the community raised additional revenue by permitting people to cut lumber in the confraternity woodlots in a supervised manner.²²

The criminal and civil court records sometimes reveal how these institutions functioned. Some were fraught with politics of a serious kind. Early modern societies clearly understood the politics of bread. The *canovai*, who rented the oven for two lire a day, promised to provide the villagers with proper bread, but to keep the oven in working order was the responsibility either of the community or else of whoever farmed the village revenues.²³ The *canovai* promised to provide enough good-quality bread for any buyer, or else pay a 25 lire fine.²⁴ Usually the actual baking was done by the *canovai*'s wife. There were tricks to this trade in which no one was a professional. One customer warned the baker to make sure it was properly cooked: some baked the bread so quickly that the inside was still moist, resulting in a heavier weight by which it was sold.²⁵ Reacting to villagers' complaints, the constable and the judge would periodically inspect the bread weight and quality. Bernardino Biagi's wife Bartolomea Nannini produced bread so objectionable that her customers went to other ovens. She went looking for neighbors with unauthorized fresh bread to confront them.²⁶ The constable caught her father *maestro* Girolamo Nannini selling underweight bread and he had to pay a fine.²⁷ Another *canovai* Francesco Crocchi used the tribunal to defend his monopoly, lashing out at his brother Domenico for selling bread baked at home on a militia musterday, when profits would have been good. A few months later the constable denounced another *canovai* Tommaso Fei, for selling poor-quality bread to the public. The worst famine of the seventeenth century was just beginning, and the purchaser of the ovens was hard-pressed to make a profit between the high price of grain and the official price of bread.²⁸ When grain prices soared, the *canovai* could not produce bread unless they had previously stockpiled reserves, or else they bought grain on credit promising to pay later.²⁹ The village council could respond to emergency situations by dipping into known grain stocks of richer people for the public benefit.³⁰ Even in better years, the *canovai* did not always have enough bread available or else tried selling it for more than the authorized price.³¹ The priors sought to cancel the lease of one notable, the surgeon MarcAntonio Visconti. Pietro Crocchi charged that because of his frequent absences from town, Visconti only baked bread for the public every ten or twelve days.³² Everyone understood the tensions governing bread supply and the realities underlying it, for they all labored in the fields and could count the sheaves of grain for themselves. This is why humble people, in

their own interest and that of the collectivity, demanded action from village officials.

The butcher's stall operated on the same principles, but the politics of meat were not as dire as those governing bread. Local individuals who had money to invest or who enjoyed good credit took up the lease on the stall located next to the gate, where a butcher shop operates even today. The lessees speculated that a steady demand and a local monopoly would make the venture profitable.³³ Buying animals on credit, they sold retail to individuals on credit too.³⁴ They undertook to sell specific kinds of meat at set prices, after having animals inspected by village *ponitori* before slaughter. The community theoretically punished violations of these articles by a fine of 25 lire, but I have never found one being paid. The village *sbirro* pounced once in 1637, accusing Giacomo Crocchi of selling meat to several people for 8 quattrini (32 denari) a pound instead of 7, the price set by the two *ponitori*. A few months later, the *sindaco* once again called Crocchi to account for having sold his meat without having it inspected and priced by the village *ponitori*, "in contempt of us, the public officials."³⁵ Butchers also had to contend with competition from the *pizzicaiolo* who smoked and salted modest quantities of meat for sale to the public.³⁶ Authorities tolerated this in normal times but prohibited it in times of famine when the leaseholder risked insolvency. The village *ponitori* occasionally prohibited the sale of slaughtered animals they considered unsafe. Carlo Mazzoni slaughtered and butchered a reputedly diseased calf before anyone could see it. The *ponitori* declared the meat to be of wretched (*pessima*) quality and forbade him to sell it at the butcher stall. Mazzoni had reportedly slaughtered pigs in a similar fashion a few months earlier.³⁷ However, vendors could legally sell meat such as this (called *mala carne*) outside the village gate where consumers assumed the risks themselves. In this way, local authorities found a way to balance competing interests. The relative merits of regulation and market freedom is something people still debate. In a period of weak infrastructure and uncertain supply, regulation had a clear appeal to it. The *principle* of competition was not generally condoned by economists until the late eighteenth century when the greater availability of money, roads, and multiple suppliers made it more attractive. Consumers appreciated the stability of prices arrived at by some village consensus. Even suppliers favored regulation if it gave them greater assurance that they would recover their investment.

While the baker's ovens and the butcher stalls generated village revenues, it is clear that their smooth functioning was important for social peace, and that the fiscal aspect was not the only one that concerned the priors and the *camerlengo*. Nevertheless, the management of these assets required more expertise and a continuity that was longer than the short-term tenures that

the village officials could provide. In 1566, under the weight of debts from the disastrous Siena war, the assembly decided to consolidate all the revenues and expenditures of the community and lease them to the person who provided the best guarantees.³⁸ They felt that the management of public assets was better left to rural entrepreneurs, as long as the revenues they generated kept pace with expenditures. They farmed out the revenues for three years at a time until 1657, when the community took them back from bankrupt leaseholders. Arguments over who should pay for the upkeep of this communal infrastructure punctuate the records of the civil court.³⁹

The community administered pious or charitable foundations too, so annual elections in the village hall designated priors and *camerlenghi* for the institutions under their jurisdiction. Men let themselves be elected to manage the hospital, the Marian shrine just outside the walls, and a smaller shrine on the road to Petroio. The council also selected the Lenten preacher, although this was subject to various “recommendations” and eventually passed officiously to the *marchese’s* prerogative. One traditional privilege was the right to elect the parish priest of San Bartolomeo, for which leading families vigorously competed.⁴⁰ Village councils also designated managers for the hospital, which was more a place to dispense charity to migrant beggars and pilgrims than an institution designed to care for the sick. The hospitals of Tuscan towns were sometimes important institutions that made real demands on the time and the commitment of their administrators.⁴¹ Montefollonico’s hospital never acquired much significance.

The hospital’s insignificance contrasts starkly with the importance of the village confraternity, which existed principally to dispense charity and reinforce village solidarity.⁴² The lay confraternity was Montefollonico’s single most important landowner, possessing 6 of the 75 sharecropping farms or *poderi*, plus two fields and a vineyard in the fief, and two village houses. This institution provided considerable charitable relief, in the form of six annual dowries at 40 lire apiece, and cloth (or a modest sum destined for the trousseau, called the *gonnella*) to six other unmarried girls. Moreover, it subsidized the poor to pay the priests’ tithes and helped support the Franciscan monastery just outside the village. The community operated the confraternity at arm’s length from the priors by electing three managers, or *santesi*, every year, under a literate rector. In exchange for managing this enterprise for three years, the rector received money and food, besides getting 36 lire annually for a servant girl, another 20 lire for a farmhand (*garzone*), and a substantial clothing allowance for himself. After showing his accounts to two delegates selected by the priors, he submitted them to the Sienese *Quattro Conservatori* for closer scrutiny. The *santesi* who served alongside him did so out of piety, receiving only 2 giuli (1.3 lire) during the

harvest days when they collected grain and distributed alms.⁴³ The choice of rector had to be ratified by the *Quattro Conservatori* in Siena, and the governor of Siena would have to be informed too.

Nothing symbolized the moral community quite so starkly as the Confraternity. Managing it entailed making controversial decisions as to who was eligible for handouts. *Santesi* often weathered criticisms of showing favoritism, as did similar organizations elsewhere.⁴⁴ Francesco Misari, upset that he did not receive his quarter of grain like his neighbors, called them thieves in the street; “*ladroni canaglia*, you usurp everything for yourselves. What do you do with it besides having feasts? I have you in the ass!”⁴⁵ Because it redistributed wealth across most of the community, interest in the confraternity’s operations ran high. In 1630, following a mediocre harvest, the rector’s election took place in the presence of one of the *Quattro Conservatori* magistrates and the local judge, with 168 persons voting—virtually every household head in the jurisdiction!⁴⁶ Only a few people possessed the managerial expertise, and the social influence adequate to confront debtors and outside powers who wished to curtail its autonomy, so a narrow elite dominated its operations. Villagers confided its management for many years to noblemen Flaminio and Pietro Landucci. As hard times beset the region, the feudal tax collector, Rutilio Carpellini, undertook to manage it, following two unanimous elections in 1646 and 1649. But a drop in revenues forced the council to curtail the rector’s remuneration in 1652, after Carpellini’s death.⁴⁷ In 1666 the council elected Girolamo Moreschini, a noble physician, both to administer the confraternity and to provide free medical care in the bargain, all for a modest 36 scudi.⁴⁸

Reading the statutes, one imagines the political community in Montefollonico as a tight moral circle of personalities reliant upon local solidarities, with outside authorities providing only modest checks preventing overbearing individuals from imposing their law. Over time, however, the outside world impinged upon local politics in manifold ways. Siena erected its own statutes over the entire state in the early sixteenth century, invalidating local regulations when they ran counter to its interest. This preceded a gradual rationalization of local government that subjected the entire periphery to the center of decision in Florence.⁴⁹ Italian princes and republics also bolstered their powers of intervention by creating large peasant militias under their centralized command.⁵⁰ The grand duke raised one in his Siennese state not long after acquiring it. Until about 1650, the district’s militia bands mustered in the village every month, although not much training went on. Attendance at these musters was not very assiduous. One member commenting on a recent militia muster doubted that attendance was mandatory, since there were many no-shows.⁵¹ In 1676, no fewer than 115 men were enlisted

in the foot militia and 4 more in the cavalry, the figures are so high that I believe our militia district included neighboring hamlets too.⁵² Militia musters always invited trouble, for they assembled scores of men from the district, who competed in contact sports that, like boxing matches today, aroused the partisanship and bloodlust of armed onlookers. When militiamen from outside the district attended the feast of the Trinity in Montefollonico in 1637, a wrestling match degenerated into a general donnybrook where swords were drawn and an harquebus was brought into the fray. A few men ran off to seek asylum in the *palazzo*, while their pursuers hammered on the door with their weapons to get inside. The *commissario* charged fourteen “foreign” militiamen, primarily from Pienza and Sinalunga, after the incident. This misguided animus notwithstanding, the grand duke expected the peasant militia to maintain order in the countryside and arrest bandits. The magistrate called it out in 1620, ringing the alarm bells to muster the men, who then trooped off to seize a lone stranger who had no alibi.⁵³ In another instance two years later, the alarm only assembled eleven men, much to the disgust of the court constable.

Rustics coveted military status for the privileges it conferred, however. First, it raised them above their lowly station. Asked by the magistrate to state their name and occupation, militiamen commonly boasted, “I’m a soldier!” but then specified that they worked the fields for their livelihood. Militiamen could reject their nomination to low status and demeaning offices such as *sindaco dei malefizi*. Militia statutes permitted them to carry blade weapons in the village and draw them to defend their honor without committing an offence.⁵⁴ Francesco di Giovanni overstepped the bounds of tolerance by carrying around his farm a loaded harquebus with a lit wick. Clearly he intended to hunt, for he also had a net for trapping birds: the judge noted his weapons license and his militia status and let him go after imposing court costs on him.⁵⁵ Militiamen often tested the boundaries of their privileges and exemptions. People invoked their militia status to delay repaying their debts, for example.⁵⁶ Militia commitments sometimes took priority over justice, to Pasquino Calcenì’s benefit, when the *commissario* received instructions to release him from jail in October 1642 to help fight the war against the papacy.⁵⁷ The militia organization also required a small number of local officers depending on the granducal prerogative. Better-off villagers and their poor subordinates proudly served the grand duke as corporal, sergeant, and ensign, inserting themselves thereby in a “corporate” entity whose protection they enjoyed. When Lorenzo Barbieri, the *marchese’s* tax collector and the son of the richest man in town became captain of militia, he ceased to be addressed as a mere *spettabile*: henceforth he was *signore*.⁵⁸

Militia offices dilated further the diffuse political influence enjoyed by the better-off peasants and rural notables. Positions of *camerlengo*, village prior, and rector of the confraternity entailed a modicum of prestige and authority, limited by the privileges and opportunities available to the people subject to them. Militia functionaries never shrank from pulling rank. Leaseholders of the public monopolies acquired both status and modest revenues from their contracts. Office-holding in the village and confraternity government placed people continually in the position of making discretionary judgments. We will come back to the priests, who enjoyed privileges and authority of their own, and whose brothers and nephews figured among the local notability. Few people really stood out among the score of village leaders, however, and none wielded power with impunity. It is best not to describe this situation as egalitarianism, for little in the social behavior of individuals and families implies that they saw themselves as social and moral equals. Rather, what we see in Montefollonico was egalitarianism defined negatively, a republic designed to prevent one individual or family from acquiring too much power and sway over others. In most fifteenth- and sixteenth-century communities, competition among the principal kin-groups degenerated into bloody factionalism. Here, however, no alliance of families threatened to polarize the public weal.

The social space of the nobility in this village republic was always rather awkward, as it was in all towns with communal assemblies. Over most of northern and central Italy, noblemen considered themselves to be citizens of cities, and everyone expected them to identify more with the dominant city than with the villages from which they drew their revenues. Legally, nobles were citizens of the places where they paid their taxes. Montefollonico's noblemen paid most of their taxes in Siena, which made them eligible to sit in urban assemblies and to hold the more lucrative or prestigious offices in the city and its rural hinterland. Siennese law required noblemen to maintain an elegant house in one of the principal thoroughfares of the city. A poor noble was defined as one who had no wife, no children, no property, and no presence. Those stranded in Montefollonico were bachelor or junior members of minor families who could not afford to live decorously in Siena. About a fifth of the Siennese aristocracy subsisted with less than 100 *scudi* of declared annual revenue, and they often received much less. Many had mortgaged most of their fortune to pay off the dowries or debts of previous generations.⁵⁹

Noblemen never appear in village deliberations, nor did their neighbors ever elect them to village offices. They would not have deemed most local offices worthy of them. They were nevertheless stakeholders by virtue of their continuous residence in the village, and by virtue of the land they owned in the jurisdiction. Unlike France, where most nobles enjoyed a

whole array of tax exemptions accruing to their status, city governments in Italy constrained nobles to pay taxes on the *poderi* they owned and on the grain and grapes they cultivated. Nobles advanced candidates to the parish of San Bartolomeo and the school, and this preferment gave their clients an edge over rivals, if not the decisive advantage. People elected nobles to manage the confraternity and its considerable assets, and noblemen sometimes farmed village revenues (that is, they leased the management of them).

Not even all aristocrats were equal, however. The Landucci were the principal nobles of the village; their coat-of-arms and that of the community were identical. They helped found one of the lay companies, Santa Caterina delle Ruote, whose chapel contained the portraits of two beatified Landucci, that is, people whose exceptional piety the church officially recognized. The family helped launch the new chapel of the Madonna del Criano, where they erected an altar to celebrate masses for their ancestors. Their house, the largest dwelling in the village, contained an ample courtyard with a rare olive press. But these assets were vestiges of a glorious past. Once, in the days of the Sienese city-state, the Landucci were *padroni* of the little village, because the powerful factions they belonged to guaranteed them impunity in the villages where their power was entrenched.⁶⁰ Florentine conquest of the republic in 1555 and the declining resources of the Landucci house, both limited their freedom of action. Already in 1577, we see Fabio Landucci being recommended to the governor of Siena for preferment because he was someone with “very little means.”⁶¹ Members of the family sometimes competed against commoners for “ambassadorships” from the community, and they did not always win. A parish election in 1627 saw Leonido Landucci’s candidate for priest of San Bartolomeo prevail over the rich commoner Anacleto Barbieri’s by a single vote. Landucci parents sought benefices as knights of Malta and of Santo Stefano for the decent maintenance of their younger sons. On several occasions, the village assembly voted unanimously to select a Landucci priest as Lenten preacher (which paid a fat 40 lire honorarium). In 1697, there remained only one branch of the house in Siena, and the family had long since sold its dwelling in Montefollonico to the *marchese*.

Other noble families fared even worse, for why would they live in a *castello* far from the city if they could afford to flaunt their rank in the capital? The Foresi were an older house, whose unmarried males haunted the village at intervals. Giovanni Felice Foresi called in his debts and sold off his village assets in 1627.⁶² Grand duke Ferdinando II, as grand master of the order, appointed Ascanio Foresi as a Knight of Santo Stefano in 1641 at the age of 60, with no obligation to serve on the galley flotilla in Livorno. His nephew Aliprando succeeded him to the sinecure in 1663. At least

knights of Santo Stefano could marry. The family directed four bachelor sons to the Knights of Malta during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Those knights were an order of celibate warrior-priests waging war on Islam from their galley base in Malta, who in retirement managed portions of the substantial land holdings in Catholic countries. After the Foresi fortune evaporated early in the century, these expedients established sons without drawing upon the family's meager resources. The house extinguished before the century's end. Isolated and unmarried members of the Buonamici family lingered in the village as well, unable to afford city life. The Milandroni, who still lived in the village at century's onset, died out after a few decades, pursued by aristocratic creditors to the end. The Moreschini family, on the other hand, was new nobility, first sitting in Siena's governing body in 1590—after Adriano Moreschini made a fortune in medicine, a calling his descendants pursued without interruption for another century. Time tarnished the luster of their noble status: one descendant became an Augustinian monk; another, a parish priest of San Leonardo; and his brother, the village physician bartering medical expertise for a few *scudi* a year. The family survived, though, with one branch left on the family tree in 1697.⁶³

Even in hard times, the opinions of noblemen mattered in village politics, for they had friends in high places in Siena and Florence. Noblemen and their womenfolk therefore wielded considerable behind-the-scenes influence that we can understand only by looking at records of god-parentage or at places the law was served officiously, as in judicial arbitrations, or by witnessing legal documents. We must add them to the small crowd of individuals having some measure of influence in village life. They were fatter geese, perhaps, but still geese.

The Coppoli Fief

Non stanno bene due galli in un pollaio

(Two roosters should not share one henhouse)

Hierarchy is inseparable everywhere from the exercise of power, and the larger polities in Europe, Asia, and pre-Columbian America independently evolved political mechanisms that were remarkably similar in their workings.⁶⁴ That is because hierarchy, like reciprocity, is a human universal that everyone understands, and like reciprocity it functioned in clearly recognizable ways before humans ever emerged.⁶⁵ Inequality has many different origins, in intelligence and acumen, in wealth and connections, in good luck or good looks, in parental striving and sacrifices. Attempts to eradicate it

have failed utterly, for good reasons. No strictly egalitarian human society has ever existed, nor is one now on the horizon, though our own hierarchies are more complex and diverse than those of the past. Nobility was a legal convention that codified hierarchy in the cities of Antiquity, so that the status distinction would outlast the life spans of their holders. In medieval times, hereditary nobility afforded a modicum of stability in a very unstable period until such time that regional government controlled the countryside effectively. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the nobility monopolized access to government of the city and its surrounding rural hinterland. There is little evidence that villagers in the seventeenth century resented the presence or the influence of noblemen in their midst, for even impecunious nobles had their usefulness. Rustics and notables alike understood that social inequality is a fact of life. Hierarchy exists because it helps maintain social harmony by limiting competition, and it enables large groups of people to work toward common objectives. Subordinates derive benefits from recognizing hierarchies and working within them. Individuals continually judge the effectiveness of their superiors, though.

In Italian history, the social elites of unstable city-states often helped “tyrants” such as the Medici take power in order to put an end to incessant infighting between factions led by leading noblemen. Even many sixteenth-century Tuscan villages were rent by homicidal factions intent on controlling public assets for their private benefit. City-states such as the Siene republic sank into chaos, and the congenital disorder of republics like it made a mockery of the paper freedoms the statutes promised. The “despotism” of princes was an attractive alternative to violent disorder. There was no perceptible breakdown in the cohesion of the village assembly in Montefollonico or in the efficiency of its officers. Yet in 1618, Grand duke Cosimo II de’Medici decided to make the village the seat of a marquisate that he would sell to personalities at his court in Florence. The enfiefment sprang from an ongoing Medici policy whereby the sovereign exalted his own status by creating titled aristocrats to ornament his court.⁶⁶ In so doing, the prince *subordinated* the village community to a distant lord. How could the grand duke justify this to his Siene subjects, if indeed he ever consulted them on it?

In baroque Tuscany, the new fiefs enhanced the dignity of court aristocrats by giving them jurisdiction over peripheral and poor districts of the state, under the political supremacy of the grand dukes.⁶⁷ Cosimo I (1537–1574) created only four of them during his long reign, but he mistrusted aristocrats and their republican traditions. Grand Duke Ferdinando (1587–1609) created only three more. The later grand dukes Cosimo II (1609–1621), Ferdinand II (1621–1670) and Cosimo III (1670–1723) bestowed the lion’s share of feudal concessions, once the

Medici dynasty felt secure in its primacy. By the late seventeenth century, there were 22 old and new fiefs in the “Stato Nuovo” (the term used for the territories once part of the Sienese republic), for the most part small communities in southern districts that were close to the Maremma, around Monte Amiata, and along the border with the papal state. Altogether they contained no more than about 15 percent of the total population.⁶⁸ While the new fiefs were not established on an identical template, the Medici charters often stipulated generic conditions. Montefollonico’s articles were not dissimilar from the charter creating the fief of Montieri a few years later. For families such as the Florentine Salviati, already owners of substantial landholdings in fertile and well-populated districts, the acquisition of a mountain fief was not a wise financial investment. Even though the fief holders might have put their new jurisdiction to good economic use, what attracted them more was the baronial title and the jurisdiction they wielded over villagers.⁶⁹ This raised their profile at the court in Florence, where they competed with other noble houses for much more lucrative offices.

The policy of creating a titled aristocracy suited the taste of grand duke Cosimo II, and even more his mother, Christine of Lorraine, who identified with the political traditions of the great nobility of France. She was a power to be reckoned with, and her court favorites all bore titles.⁷⁰ Cosimo granted his mother a kind of personal ascendancy over nearby Montepulciano, which she visited with great pomp in 1612.⁷¹ The concession of Montefollonico in fief rewarded the faithful services of one of her French-speaking ladies-in-waiting, Claude d’Albon, who had married Camillo Coppoli, a Perugian soldier at the court. The investiture diploma of 2 November 1618, granted the title to her as well as her son Francesco, a young knight of Santo Stefano.

Who were the Coppoli, and what could Montefollonico mean to them? I have not found much information about them, either in Florence where they resided, or in the slim Coppoli archives in Perugia. Of Perugian origin, in the papal states, they claimed descent from Lombard warriors of the Dark Ages, for as such they belonged to a “race” of masters. The popes cast a number of factious Perugian nobles into the ranks of outlaws in the late sixteenth century. They killed time fighting the religious wars in France before returning home with pardons on French and Tuscan mediation, and the Coppoli were among them. The Medici grand dukes cultivated ties and sought the “affection” of aristocrats across a wide swath of the papal states, not just Perugia, but also Forlì and Faenza, Città di Castello, and other towns besides.⁷² Retaining the military services of experienced warriors from “foreign” parts was a common practice for princes before

the advent of standing armies.⁷³ Francesco senior was a captain (a status, not a rank) in the Medicean army. His son Camillo Coppoli figures on the list of knights of Santo Stefano who participated in the sack of Bona in North Africa in 1608, an adventure the Medici dynasty considered one of its most glorious military exploits. The Coppoli already possessed some *poderi* in the Maremma district near Grosseto in the early years of the seventeenth century.⁷⁴ While the feudal investiture acknowledged the pope to be the Coppoli's "natural" overlord, Francesco Coppoli (born 1598) and his mother spent most of their lives at the growing Florentine court. Most courtiers in Florence were non-Tuscan, and dependent on the goodwill of the Prince for their advancement. Francesco gradually climbed the ranks of the various dignities there, from a lowly page, to *Cameriere segreto*, to cup-bearer (*coppiere*: a pun on the family name and arms) in the *Guardarobba Maggiore*, to ambassador to Pope Urban VIII and to other princes. In 1650, Ferdinando II appointed him to the high station of *Maestro di Camera*.⁷⁵ He spent much of his life proclaiming his allegiance to the Medici, and to the primacy of his Florentine ties. He claimed that he rented his Perugian house out unfurnished, and that he was inscribed as a Florentine in the tax roles of the *Magistrato delle Riformagioni*.⁷⁶ He even consented to raise troops in 1643 for Tuscany in the Castro War against Pope Urban VIII.⁷⁷

The grand dukes expected noblemen who wished to remain courtiers to display themselves on state occasions at their own expense.⁷⁸ Only the wealthiest or the most spendthrift houses could compete. We can only speculate on Francesco's wealth. His mother's position of lady-in-waiting might have carried a pension commensurate to her rank, but many members of Cosimo II's suite received no stable recompense for their services. In addition to the property the Coppoli retained in Perugia (an urban palazzo and rural estates), and *poderi* in the Maremma, Francesco held the modest benefice pertaining to a knight of Santo Stefano, probably worth a few hundred *scudi*. His promotion to *Maestro di Camera* in 1651 brought with it a lifetime assignment on the *bandita* or pasture-land income in the Siense Val d'Orcia, with *taxable* revenues of 400 *scudi* (for real incomes were always higher).⁷⁹ The *marchese* eventually bought, or inherited four sizeable *poderi* in the jurisdiction of Pienza, at Palazzo Massaini (bordering on Montefollonico's territory), with a *declared* revenue of 172 *scudi* in 1693.⁸⁰ Finally, Francesco married Pellegrina Bentivoglio, a Florentine member of Bologna's preeminent aristocratic house (who never once figures in our sources). Her dowry would have augmented his assets considerably. These combined revenues placed the Coppoli far above the norm for urban nobility in cities such as Siena, and they dwarfed the income of bluebloods who lingered in our village.⁸¹

The charter of feudal investiture, dated 2 November 1618, spells out in considerable detail the *marchese's* rights, but they were hemmed in by a long list of conditions.⁸² Grand Duke Cosimo II, using the royal plural voice, emphasized the plenitude of his power and the irrevocability of his decision to erect the marquisate and accord its honors and prerogatives to the holder in perpetuity. Francesco Coppoli's title of *marchese* he shared with Claude Dalbon during her lifetime, but the fief and its title and prerogatives would then pass through the male line in order of primogeniture. Claude Dalbon's other child, a daughter, could only succeed to the title in the absence of a male heir through Francesco, and no other female could inherit it. The holder could not sub-infeud the marquisate (that is, to break up and sell individual rights to lesser nobles), which was to remain entire and indivisible as the prince established it. The document explicitly and repeatedly emphasized the grand duke's authority over his feudatory. The *marchese* could not pay homage to any other lord except the pope, his "natural" sovereign. He must present annually a symbolic silver chalice to the granducal treasury, in addition to paying the 6,000 *scudi* or 42,000 lire (not mentioned in the charter) that was the price of the fief. The grand duke reserved to himself military overlordship, with supreme command over the men enrolled in the foot and horse militia. The prince and his officials selected the officers of the militia bands without interference from the *marchese*. The charter spelled out in explicit terms that the new marquisate was not to disturb the institutional autonomy of the community or the workings of its institutions. He guaranteed this first by prohibiting the *marchese* from buying farms in his own fief, and acquiring his own sharecroppers. The *marchese* could not impose services on the community or the territory, nor exact anything not stipulated in the statutes and customs. He could interfere neither with the administration of communal property nor the levy of village revenues. These limitations rendered the feudal lord less economically powerful than untitled aristocrats holding large tracts of land in rural communities.⁸³

His ability to draw fees from his vassals was in fact quite limited. The *marchese* received the right to sell licenses to hunt and to fish (the latter redundant, given the fief's hilltop location); he held the *gabelle* (a generic term designating a value-added tax) on real estate contracts but had to fix the levy at the Siense level of 3 percent of the value of the property. The *marchese* acquired a number of other *gabelles*, on livestock sales (*pie tondo* or cleft foot), on wine (*mosti*), and on grain (*frumento*); he levied a *gabelle* on the value of wills; and he levied a similar tax on the transit of donkey-borne merchandise through the jurisdiction. However, the grand duke retained for himself the principal *gabelle*, that on salt, administered through the Salt Magistracy at Siena. Villagers would have to report to the

salt pans near Grosseto every year with their mules and donkeys to transport their salt home, just as before. The sole financial advantage for the inhabitants of the jurisdiction was their future exemption from *corvées* or compulsory work parties with their animals for the construction of fortresses at Sorano and Radicòfani.

The charter entitled Francesco Coppoli to wield judicial authority over the inhabitants of Montefollonico; this entailed the full range of civil and criminal justice (called *mero et misto imperio*) over the entire territory, first appeal, and *gladii potestate*, or the right to pronounce capital sentences on convicted wrongdoers. Possessing jurisdiction enabled the *marchese* to levy and appropriate fines and to confiscate the property of criminals through his court. The grand duke reserved the right to second appeal and served as the last resort as the duke of Siena, meaning that he could interfere in any trial. Condemned criminals could always petition him directly for pardon. *Mero and misto imperio* did not give the *marchese* a free hand, which seems to have been more common a century earlier.⁸⁴ He promised not to offer shelter or give refuge to people who had been decreed bandits elsewhere in the state. The *marchese's* magistrate had to consult the *auditore delle bande* (the militia judge) before passing sentence on militiamen, who constituted a large fraction of heads of households in the village and its district. The legal personnel staffing the feudatory's tribunal had no jurisdiction over Sienese nobles residing in the marquisate, and in practice, it did not touch their domestic personnel either, although the sharecroppers on estates owned by nobles figured often in criminal procedures. In exchange for the right to collect fines and confiscations, the *marchese* would have to pay for the judicial personnel, provide an adequate jail in the village palazzo and keep it in good repair. The magistrate (*commissario*) he placed there pocketed only the customary fees for administering justice, and the law required him to adopt the tariffs and even the formularies of the Sienese state.⁸⁵

The law did not allow Francesco Coppoli to instruct trials in person. The new master designated qualified officials, his servants, to distribute justice and to administer his interests in his place. They were outsiders by custom and by law, for only people with no kin in the community could be expected to take an objective view of the tensions there and so avoid joining one village faction against another. The inhabitants expected both the *marchese* and his magistrate to remain above the interests in play. The *commissario* sat at a bench recording the complaints of the *sindaco dei malefizi* and of villagers demanding justice, civil and criminal, and then instructed their trial.⁸⁶ He was subject not only to the instructions of the feudal lord, but also to the Sienese magistracy governing the administration of the rural communities, the *Quattro Conservatori*. Being a notary by

profession, or a career junior magistrate not well versed in jurisprudence, he did not devise the sentences himself but rather recommended them to an appeals judge, the *auditore* (residing in Siena and working on the *marchese's* behalf), who confirmed or modified the sentences as he saw fit after reviewing the trial transcript. These appeals magistrates were Sienese nobles who exercised judicial functions in the capital city and served the *marchese* in a part-time capacity. They were no doubt more important than they appear in our archives, and from time to time people mention that the *auditore* had summoned them to make peace with their enemies.⁸⁷ The *commissario* was nevertheless the judicial official our rustics dealt with on a daily basis. The 250 lire the statutes accorded him as salary were insufficient in themselves, so the *commissario* was entitled to a quarter of the fines handed down in sentences. This was not a large sum either.⁸⁸ The *commissario* was probably unable or unwilling to collect the entire fine from everyone. He augmented his modest income by serving as village chancellor and drafting official acts for the community, and he also drafted notarial acts for individuals, although people could employ other notaries. The bishop paid him to instruct trials and convoke witnesses for the infrequent cases destined to be judged by the diocesan vicar (the church court magistrate).⁸⁹ To assist him, the *commissario* employed a *fameglio di corte*, a *sbirro*, or a constable who helped the village *messo* deliver summonses, seize property for debts, surprise tax evaders and smugglers crossing the boundaries, and arrest wrongdoers. He was paid out of feudal rather than communal revenues.

Was it in the interest of the inhabitants of Montefollonico to be detached from their previous jurisdictions and handed over to the mercenary officials of an absentee court aristocrat? The fief would inevitably drain revenues from the village toward the court at Florence, whereas previously they flowed no farther than Siena where most village nobles resided part of the year. One risk for Montefollonico was that the *marchese* might not respect the terms of the charter and that he might interfere in village institutions or grate the sensitivities of local noblemen.⁹⁰ Some feudatories profited from abundant common land to graze their own livestock free of *gabelles*, or instead rented out pasture to other aristocrats to the detriment of the local population. At least in Montefollonico there was no danger of this. The commons was unable to sustain more than a handful of animals. The community's real common land was already incorporated into six *poderi* belonging to the confraternity, off limits to the *marchese*. Having no *poderi* of his own, no mills, no presses, no physical plant in the jurisdiction belonging to him, the *marchese* never figured as an economic agent distributing employment or favor. He did gradually acquire some real estate in the village. Around 1625, Coppoli purchased

the large house previously owned by Cesare Landucci, situated along the south wall, which was described as stately from the outside and very capacious inside. In our period the *marchese* visited only rarely, so the Landucci still maintained their residence there.⁹¹ He purchased another house containing stables for the judge's horse and a storage area for local grain, with a room overtop let out for free to a poor widow who would keep an eye on it. The honorific prerogatives the *marchese* exercised remained modest and usually went without comment by the priors. He permitted noblemen from Montepulciano to shoot rabbits and foxes freely in his fief without expecting them to acquire licenses from him first.⁹² People in the fief contacted him directly to obtain permits to hunt or to carry weapons, which he sometimes restricted by limiting to specific seasons or by placing certain game out of bounds.⁹³ He recommended outside candidates for Lenten preacher and schoolmaster (in both cases, usually ecclesiastics), but did not systematically appoint them. When he did present candidates, they were not invariably accepted locally. Not disposing of much in the way of brute force over his vassals, it was in Coppoli's interest to win over the allegiance of villagers, who had not asked for the fief's creation.

A generation ago, historians wrote of the creation of new fiefs as a backward step. Refeudalization enhanced the authority of powerful lords at the expense of the public good, and to the detriment of poor Italians. In fact, the impact of these new fiefs on the vassals has never been properly studied. Villagers knew exactly how the new situation might be used to their advantage, to give them something they did not enjoy before. The first benefit was justice, and the second was charity, and they were quick on the uptake for both. Having a feudal judge in the village, instead of relying on outlying tribunals, was a big improvement in their lives. Before 1618, magistrates in Pienza occasionally dispatched a notary to the village and asked people to come record their grievances.⁹⁴ People took their criminal complaints to the *capitano di giustizia* in Pienza if they wanted redress right away. For civil litigation (which was a daily affair), they had to plead their causes in Torrita. Both towns were hours away on foot. After the infeudation, the *commissario* resided most of the time in the village, and his absences from his bench were only episodic. People no longer had to wait several months before bringing forward complaints of *danno dato*.⁹⁵ Villagers immediately availed themselves of this new functionary's services.

Each *commissario* would have to find ways to impose his own authority, and particularly over preeminent households most likely to disrupt the peace. He usually solicited the active participation of the priest, the *marchese's* revenue collector, and members of the Landucci family to bolster his prestige. He had no business interfering in disputes concerning marriage, dowry settlements, or successions, which were "private" matters according

to the statutes.⁹⁶ Once he acquired personal moral ascendancy, he could help iron out these private conflicts in an officious manner. As “public persons,” the *commissari* could approve arbitrators and broker parajudicial solutions to family disputes, which would usually culminate in formal agreements called *lodi*. They could also represent the interests of heirs when they were minors.⁹⁷ Villagers sometimes solicited the *commissario* to represent their interests before urban tribunals in Siena. Whatever risk they represented by wielding too much arbitrary authority against personal enemies in Montefollonico was offset by their short tenure of a year or two, with the single exception of Corintio Benvenuti from Montalcino, who served more than a decade to everyone’s satisfaction. At the end of their term, the *commissari* were forced to submit to a *sindacato* in which any complaints against them could be aired. While no procedure seriously harmed any of the twenty-odd judges whose records I have used, the potential for trouble was always present.⁹⁸ Romano Lalli of Torrita, the first *commissario*, faced an array of eight villagers, several of them notables, who brought various complaints against him. The inquest passes to the *auditore* for a decision and we lose sight of the outcome.

The *marchese*’s muscle was the constable, or *sbirro*, long personified by Marcantonio di Paolo. He aptly conformed to the thuggish stereotype of a semidelinquent goon intermittently in trouble with his employer. Marcantonio was the only inhabitant to have spent time chained to a galley bench, for theft. Yet he was married, lived a rooted life in the community, and was not as abusive or *prepotente* as the little squads of *sbirri* employed by the *capitani di giustizia* of Pienza or Montepulciano, who strayed sometimes into the jurisdiction to seize debtors and their property.⁹⁹ Marcantonio’s insertion into the daily life of a small village deprived him of the impunity enjoyed by strangers from away.

The *marchese*’s servants defended his jurisdiction from encroachment by judicial officials nearby. The threats to it were not numerous. When two constables from Sinalunga arrived at a mill just inside the fief to arrest a suspect for attempted murder, the *commissario* proclaimed them outlaws. This was proforma outrage. One of them reappeared ten months later to be imprisoned for a few hours. Everyone accepted the fiction that he had come as a friend of the victim in a personal capacity, not as an agent of the court of Sinalunga.¹⁰⁰ In this and similar cases of “disturbed jurisdiction,” the governor of Siena and the grand duke issued instructions to respect the *marchese*’s prerogatives.¹⁰¹ On occasion, the wear and tear on the prison, or the inability of the *commissario* to pay a constable meant that the *marchese* would have to make other arrangements. In 1655, he passed an accord with the *Capitano di Giustizia* of Montepulciano, outside the Sienese state, to remit prisoners to the city dungeon (equipped with more adequate facilities

for torture) and have them interrogated by its chancellery.¹⁰² For a time, he depended upon their *sbirri* to make arrests in the fief. This was not an ideal situation, for prisoners paid the cost of their own seizure, and a simple arrest cost almost 33 lire, two months' wages for an agricultural worker! Those *sbirri* unleashed attack dogs on their targets and then bound the suspects in leg irons.¹⁰³ Having no constable, the *commissario* once asked the militia commander residing in Pienza to dispatch soldiers to him. So our fief was nested in a web of granducal jurisdictions. Far from escaping from the sovereign's tutelage, the feudatory could depend on help from above whenever he needed it.¹⁰⁴

Apart from the money from fines or court costs, the *marchese's* revenues were not collected by the *commissario* himself. His mandate was too brief to manage effectively the various taxes due to the lord. To collect these, the *marchese* appointed a business agent (*depositario*) from the community. In case of disagreement, tax evasion, or resistance, the *depositario* employed communal and judicial officials to levy the money forcibly.¹⁰⁵ Anacleto Barbieri, Francesco Coppoli's first official (often called a *gabellaio*, collector of *gabelles*), was an active village businessman with multiple interests. He was not a good choice, for villagers considered him to be too ambitious and inclined to chicanery.¹⁰⁶ The *marchese* dismissed Barbieri after about a decade (braving a lawsuit Anacleto launched against him) and confided the charge to an older and less assertive shoemaker, Rutilio Carpellini, who held the position for over two decades until his death in 1650 around the age of 80. Although he sometimes hired journeymen to help him, Carpellini was still an authentic shoemaker, who appeared before the *commissario* with his book of credits to collect payment for shoes from a variety of customers. The postmortem inventory of the movable estate he inherited from his brother in 1624 itemized the tools on his bench and noted some two hundred pounds of shoe leather piled on his floor.¹⁰⁷ Shoemaking was a low-status, mechanical trade, but Carpellini was nonetheless a man of means, declaring 1,500 scudi (10,500 lire) worth of assets in 1628.¹⁰⁸ While his handwriting was archaic and trembling, Rutilio's administrative abilities must have been adequate. We find him *camerlengo* of the community in 1632, rector of the Confraternity in 1635, a substitute for the *commissario* in the 1640s during the latter's periodic absences, and attorney and administrator for the convent of Franciscan friars, all in addition to being the manager of the *marchese's* money.¹⁰⁹ When he intervened to quiet disputes in the street, everyone knew he stood in high standing with the *marchese* and the sitting magistrate, and could act in the latter's stead for short periods in capacities outside the instruction of trials.¹¹⁰ The main evidence Rutilio was a good choice as *gabellaio* was that he figures more than any other man as godparent at baptisms.

He was popular well before the *marchese* promoted him.¹¹¹ People trusted him, consensually admitted his authority over them, and turned to him to arbitrate their disputes officiously.¹¹² Being the one permanent local agent of the *marchese*, Carpellini's function called for good personal and diplomatic skills that could reconcile the interests of the villagers with their *padrone*. After his death, Francesco Coppoli was initially at a loss on how to replace him, using instead the *commissario* or his brother until 1654. Fulvio Carpellini did not inherit his father's prestige. Anacleto Barbieri's son Lorenzo gradually assumed the leading role. Characteristically, the scheming old man prepared his son's rise by marrying his daughter Portia to Fulvio Carpellini.¹¹³ Within a few years, the mantle of leadership fell naturally on the shoulders of Lorenzo Barbieri, first as an agent (*attuario*) of the Sienese auditor, then as an agent of Sgr Francesco Landucci in his local lawsuits. He became village *camerlengo* for several years running after 1656, and finally *gabellai* in 1658. From around 1660, until the end of his life, Lorenzo Barbieri was top dog in his little village. In contrast, the Carpellini lost both their wealth and their status by century's end.¹¹⁴

The second benefit the villagers derived from the new situation was charity. Within months of his investiture, Coppoli responded to the impact of a difficult harvest by donating to needy households 8 *moggia* of grain—an amount equivalent to a month's grain supply for almost 200 people.¹¹⁵ He repeated the operation in 1626, lending 400 *scudi* to the priors to buy grain. For landowners, in exchange, he consented that they be allowed to export their grain in order to pay their debts. The following year he let himself be elected lifelong auxiliary of the local shrine, the Madonna del Criano, taking it under his protection. The *marchese* also lent money to village notables in difficult times: artisans Adriano Stellini and the pious blacksmith Camillo Penti who borrowed money during the 1648 famine were able to reimburse their loan in 1651, once the crisis had eased.¹¹⁶ By virtue of its universal intelligibility, paternalism was the most widespread political ideology in the premodern world. Both leaders and followers commonly adopt the metaphor of kinship in order to foster harmonious relations among unrelated households.¹¹⁷ Cecilia Nubola sums up the operating principle as it applied to the specific context of baroque Italy: "the prince is represented as the father of that group of families which makes up the state. His qualities must correspond to those of a good *paterfamilias*. Above all, he needs to be just and mindful of the wellbeing of those entrusted to his care in respect of 'natural' and given roles and hierarchies."¹¹⁸

Few people ever rejected Francesco Coppoli's jurisdiction. Evandro Selvi, the unruly son of village notables, was one of the few who did—maintaining that as a militia *enseign*, he was not subject to the *commissario*'s orders—and had the cheek to search out the magistrate with

his book of militia statutes in hand. Claiming to have the backing of the local militia commander, Selvi let himself insult the *marchese's* authority in public—"I have the marchese in the ass!"—calling the magistrate a "fucked goat." The *nesso*, who was afraid of him, described Selvi as an arbitrary person who beat his mother. The *auditore* charged him with truce breaking and imprisoned him at Montepulciano. Freed three months later, Selvi arrived before the *palazzo* at night, and when the door would not yield to his kicking, he stabbed it repeatedly with his dagger.¹¹⁹ Selvi disappeared soon after, and never returned. The other inhabitants voiced no misgivings about their lord, but they evaded the *marchese's* taxes whenever they could. The *pie tondo* could be avoided by moving the animals to free fairs at a distance from town, before selling them to a neighbor.¹²⁰ Buyers and sellers of real estate could declare to the *depositario* a false price much inferior to the real one. The *marchese* once protested his vassals' habit of forgetting to register their wills to the *commissario* (and paying the proportionate *gabelles*) and threatened that those not recorded would have their articles nullified.¹²¹ Attempts by local inhabitants and by outsiders to smuggle goods through the boundaries never flagged. People intercepted with their donkeys by the *sbirro* on the roads would sometimes swear they were on the way to the village to show their manifest and pay the *gabelle*. Others threatened the *sbirro* and the *nesso* who stopped them. These misdeeds did not imply that they rejected the lord's jurisdiction per se, for people cheated all their superiors, provided they enjoyed impunity.¹²²

Francesco Coppoli allayed his vassals' fears by emphasizing the paternalism that fiefholding fostered. The feudatory was especially tactful, even solicitous, toward the nobles who resided in his jurisdiction, not wishing to be seen as working against their status. Citizens of Siena paid some *gabelles* to the *marchese* (on real estate transactions, for example) but paid other *gabelles* to the Siense tribunals instead (*pie tondo*).¹²³ Nobles could neither be judged nor interrogated by the village *commissario*, but he requested their presence to lend solemnity to important legal occasions, such as the pronouncement of sentences (which occurred irregularly, dispatched in batches). Noblemen appeared sometimes as plaintiffs in criminal cases, seeking redress for indignities heaped upon them by lower-ranking neighbors, and the *commissario* wasted no time in seeking out and punishing the guilty parties. We see nobles as bystanders and mediators when confrontations erupted in the village square, but the *commissario* never convoked them officially to give an account, nor did he ever record their evidence given in conversation.¹²⁴ A witness reported Giulio Landucci's outrage after he had been clubbed on the head with a stick by the Torrita priest Bernardino Nucci, while his brother lunged at him with a knife.

These are things which will go right to the signor *marchese*, that we poor gentlemen can't live here any more, that outsiders especially want to subjugate us. The signor *commissario* has to punish this, and if he won't, I will go to the signor *marchese*, and the other one will be punished by the bishop, who did this to me for no reason, a blow that could have killed me!¹²⁵

Francesco Coppoli seems to have kept an eye open to cultivate patronage ties with these poor Sieneese noblemen. In one instance, he appointed Roberto Turamini as schoolmaster in the village, with a 36 *scudi* emolument. This was not an activity that he or his wife could have exercised in Siena without dropping out of the ranks of the nobility entirely.¹²⁶ Local nobles were not untouchable, however. Outsiders could appear before the *commissario* to press for payment from their noble creditors, after having obtained permission to do so from the *marchese's* secretary in Florence. Seizure of property from a local noble would have to pass through multiple channels—an order from the Merchant's Court in Siena would pass through the *marchese*, and then the *auditore*, then the *commissario*—before the constable was given his warrant for seizure, and this could take six months.¹²⁷

The parameters of leadership are universal in both humans and in primates: the avoidance of manifestly egotistical measures, sympathy for the weak, and readiness to take up the cause of subordinates mistreated by fate or others, a concern to control conflict, a readiness to turn the page, the ability to foster a sense of security in others.¹²⁸ By these criteria, it seems that Francesco Coppoli exercised his leadership role with considerable acumen. What appears continually in the judicial testimony of even low-born persons is an assurance that the *marchese* would protect them from injustice and persecution by local notables or by other delinquents accustomed to impunity. Seigneurs had good reason to be paternalistic in seventeenth-century Italy because disgruntled vassals who were not given *buona giustizia* might appeal over their lord's head. City officials and sovereigns keen on expanding their own jurisdictions might listen sympathetically to their complaints.¹²⁹ Failure to protect the weak from the strong reflected very badly on the *commissario*, who held his post in Montefollonico at the *marchese's* pleasure. Should local institutions and representatives fail to give them redress, vassals would turn to the *padrone* himself and triumph over their persecutors. "*La giustizia sara per tutti!*" exclaimed an adolescent stable-boy pressured by his employer to lie to the court. From the outset, Francesco Coppoli took an active role in sorting out trouble in his fief, and he intervened more as time went by. Bernardino Biagi trusted the lord would compel his father-in-law to make good on his wife's dowry.¹³⁰ A wife and mother warned the *commissario* that

the *marchese* could salvage her good reputation from a neighbor's slander if he would not. A village prostitute promised to go to the *marchese* in order to stop some local youths from harassing her. A younger son appealed to the *marchese* in order to have an older brother adhere to a pact of division between them.¹³¹ An old woman of good standing complained to the *marchese* because the parish priest dared to move her bench in church, on the pretext that it was blocking a passage.¹³² Like any sovereign, the feudatory could circumvent legal procedure by interrupting (*circondare*) trial proceedings and quieting disputes himself. Letters suspending trials conclude dozens of cases opened by the *commissario*. Who knows how many cases were never brought to the latter's attention? None who was not a Siense noble appears to have been immune from prosecution by his court, as shown by the sons and heirs of Anacleto Barbieri and Rutilio Carpellini repeatedly getting into trouble. Priests were not exempt from his watchfulness either, for the *marchese* could write letters to the bishop of Pienza or even to the papal nuncio in Florence, leaning on them to punish the misbehavior of delinquent priests. He always obtained quick results.¹³³ This was the exercise of "justice" in its larger, informal, and universal sense. So the passage of our village to an absentee Florentine courtier brought a host of benefits accruing to his active role as disinterested *padrone*.

With so many safeguards protecting the rights of vassals, was the purchase of the fief worth the expense for the *marchese*? It is impossible to approximate the fief's value in monetary terms. It is clear though, that the feudatory did not use his authority to milk the villagers by imposing fines, as Giorgio Doria claims the Doria did in his single Lombard example.¹³⁴ Some of the fine revenues he donated to the village hospital and to other charities. The incidence of *danno dato* and the *gabelles* on contracts both dwindled over time, reducing those revenues to small change. The best way to draw revenues from a fief was to try to maintain or increase its population, for a well-populated and prosperous fief would generate revenues from all the normal activities. If the *marchese* pressured his subjects in order to extract money from them, they could always move elsewhere. Furthermore, subjects had copies of the feudal investiture in their hands and were on the lookout for violations of the articles, as peasant assemblies were wont to do elsewhere.¹³⁵ It was easy for them to appeal to the governor of Siena or to the grand duke in Florence to protest against abuses, and we have examples of inquests on feudal abuses in other fiefs sympathetic to the plaintiffs.¹³⁶ Therefore, I see the infeudation of Montefollonico to this absentee courtier a kind of *progress* for its inhabitants with respect to their previous situation, which is how we must judge all change. We should not decry the enhancement of hierarchy in the seventeenth century by contrasting it with today's local democracy, for the contexts are very

different. Rather, we must compare the smooth-running Coppoli fief with the inward-looking and fractious kin-networks that competed for control over community assets, with little outside interference until that point.

The *marchese's* greatest advantage in buying the fief from the grand duke in 1618 was that he never actually paid full price for it. This was not untypical, for proximity to the sovereign allowed nobles to plead poverty or special consideration, excuses that were not always groundless. The recipients of a feudal charter owed the sovereign personal service at court. Ambassadorships were coveted offices, but they could cost the beneficiary dearly in outfitting fees not entirely reimbursed by the prince. In 1658, four decades after obtaining the feudal charter, Francesco Coppoli still owed over 5,000 *scudi* for it: that is, 3,000 *scudi* for the title of *marchese*, and a shade over 2,042 *scudi* for the jurisdiction, out of the original 6,000. No mention was made of interest payments on the principal outstanding over that time. He entreated grand duke Ferdinando II to waive the remaining sum in a petition. The prince waived 3,000 *scudi* off the debt, and declared himself content that Coppoli should pay 2,000 *scudi* shortly. Two weeks later, the *marchese* paid half that sum.¹³⁷ His slowness to comply with the granducal order was not exceptional. The charge that the Medici were indulgent toward court aristocrats appears to have been true in this case.

But then, Francesco Coppoli does not seem to have created problems for granducal authority. In Montefollonico, no bone of contention between the feudatory and his vassals emerged during the long tenure of the first *marchese*, who reigned until 1670. In an age of *signori*, the *marchese* was a minor star in the constellation, after the governor of Siena, the bishop of Pienza, and the grand duke himself. In medieval and early modern Europe, the mission of the prince was to maintain the equilibrium of state by protecting the weak. The *marchese* himself could not act with impunity without being accountable to the prince and his designated functionaries, who governed fortunate Tuscany by the same paternalistic principles.

Cooperation

Sociability

Piuttosto can vivo che leone morto
(Better to be a living dog than a dead lion)

Until fairly recently, humans everywhere lived in small communities such as Montefollonico whose members were locked into continuing relationships with each other.¹ People had to justify their every action to judgmental neighbors. Very few could dispense with a regard for fairness or equity, even with respect to their social inferiors, at the risk of arousing angry emotions and future retaliation.² While not everyone qualified as someone worthy of consideration, continuing residence, more than social status, constituted a family's most valuable asset. Most inhabitants of the *castello* had roots there by virtue of the plots of land they owned, and the community functions they served. Sharecroppers defied easy categorization. Some of them dwelled in a *podere* for a long time. The Malacarne cultivated Campocolli for generations: Livio Malacarne had been there at least fifteen years when he died in 1634 at the age of 80. His great-grandson Girolamo managed it still in 1655, and his sons Livio and Tomme were living there in 1677, without apparent interruption.³ They were not exceptionally fortunate.⁴ Several San Valentino sharecropping families still worked the same *podere* when the priest recorded their presence in states of souls lists in 1643 and 1677. An unlucky few wandered continually from one farm to another. If they attended mass at an outlying chapel, they would go only infrequently to the village.⁵ Bartolomea di Stefano plausibly lamented her isolation to the magistrate in order to justify her ignorance. In only seven years of marriage she had moved from Ceciliano near Torrita, to Pozzarello outside Montefollonico. She and her husband then took up the lease on Castiglione near Petroio, and later on, on Panzuolo, closer to Torrita. She claimed to have gone to the village on only four occasions in all that time.

Being rooted in communities and paying taxes there enabled solvent men to bid for the management of village assets and revenues, as we saw above. Villagers acquired tombs in the churches and instituted postmortem masses at their altars. Belonging to the community entitled even the poorest inhabitants to benefits disbursed by the confraternity. These village institutions were not so much devotional brotherhoods as expressions of Christian fellowship. The intention of the confraternity, revealed in the etymology of the word, stressed that all stable inhabitants of the village and its territory formed a kind of extended kin-group.

The ritual life of confraternities . . . was given over to the rites of fraternity: it educated members about the obligations of fraternal association and the meaning of brotherhood. They sought, through many kinds of reciprocity, to restore social harmony, to repair broken bonds, to remind brothers of the tight webs of reciprocity and of obligations enmeshing them all.⁶

Nothing tightened social bonds like community sharing. The ceremonies and benefits that refreshed these bonds included processions, tithing allowances, distributions of small quantities of wheat and wine, and, most importantly, dowry supplement awards to girls of marriageable age.⁷

Daily charity did not leave much public record. Every few months, a village councilor rose and explained to the assembly that a particular person was in dire straits and would benefit from some small disbursement from the community chest. This appeal to the *natural* empathy of neighbors almost always worked, for villagers no doubt enjoyed being virtuous, and people known for scandalous living were never proposed as beneficiaries.⁸ These gestures constitute a textbook illustration of Robert Trivers' theory of reciprocal altruism. Humans (and very few animal species) are inclined to extend to non-kin too the favors they grant to blood-relatives, in ongoing relationships where today's donor will be tomorrow's beneficiary.⁹ The moral order emerging from these ongoing exchanges is buttressed by a range of contingent emotions, such as liking those who are nice to us, anger at those who cheat us, gratitude and the desire to reciprocate, guilt and shame over transgressions both intentional and accidental.¹⁰ Criminal archives give a glimpse of a more informal kind of charity, often consisting in the lending of tools or household effects. The weaver Tommaso Fei lent a comb and a heddle (a weaving frame) to Girolama Biondi, a widow with children. We learn of it because he had to sue her to recover them.¹¹ People often bestowed gifts of food as well, like the neighbor who promised an old woman wine; it sufficed to come to the cellar with a jug to fetch it. Caterina Crocchi was given leave to pick vegetables from other people's gardens. Other poor people had permission to roam the woodlots of different

poderi to collect firewood.¹² The donor presented these concessions as acts of charity “*per l’amore di Dio*” that earned them a credit with God; sometimes they were simple tolerances, a kind of passive sharing with people whose benevolence they might one day need.¹³ Neither motive corresponds to altruism in its philosophical sense. The principles of reciprocity govern all social and political life.

The corollary to belonging to a community with limited resources was that people withheld these benefits from outsiders and recent arrivals. Gypsies were never part of the community, and even people who associated with them suffered scorn. People often accused gypsies of petty thieving. Anna di Santi missed her jewel-box in her basket after an encounter with a gypsy woman on the road. “Gypsy women are all thieves!” this sharecropper’s wife complained to the magistrate, but when the jewel-box turned up later, Anna came to apologize to the judge.¹⁴ Both men and women were reminded of their foreign origins whenever they overstepped the boundaries their neighbors recognized. Caterina Crocchi reproached a Torrita woman, the surgeon’s wife, for being a *forestiera* when she claimed a bench in church.¹⁵ Women moved to the village through marriage more frequently than men did. “If you were any good, your father would have married you in your own village,” Orsina Bazzi hissed.¹⁶ The outsider who leased one of the mills was refused confraternity grain on the village square by one of the administrators, Giuseppe Barbieri, who drew blood in the knife-fight that ensued.¹⁷ Schoolteachers often bore the brunt of organized hostility from the boys and their parents, and people subjected them to snide remarks, scurrilous writings displayed in public places, and nocturnal beatings.¹⁸ In the most outrageous case, the whole village victimized a monk from the papal states. Fra Benedetto Gubernale was invited to the village by the feudal lord and held a license from prince Leopoldo de’Medici to teach school while war raged between the grand duke and the pope. Local notables, young and old, stole his white wine and drank it merrily with their roast chestnuts in the tavern and mocked him in public when he complained about it. “What have I ever done to you, that you should do these things to me?” he wailed. Some local youths led by two priests, Giuliano Vettori and Leandro Buonamici, stormed his house one night, threatening to kill him if he did not flee.¹⁹ Then they surrounded the *sindaco dei malefizi* and brandished their weapons at him until he ran home to hide. The magistrate’s efforts to unmask the culprits suffered from the neighbors’ poor memories and an uncustomary disinclination to testify. The monk lamented to the diocesan judge, “it is little wonder, excellency, because all the schoolmasters who have been here suffered similar affronts, and they usually commit such disgraces (*sciaguratagine*).”²⁰ Most of the others suffered less cruelly or less directly, but many in the village considered the

schoolmaster's position and its substantial salary to be one of the functions only local people should fill.

You could ease your integration into the community by building kin-networks inside it. One path to local acceptance was to ask more established people to sponsor your children at the baptismal font. In Italy parents consciously employed this device to build alliances with officials and other influential people. Here we find yet another idiom of fictive kinship.²¹ In canon law, godparents became symbolic kin of the people they favored, and were bound by the same marriage prohibitions as blood kin. This bond cost either party very little, for the offspring of a higher-status family was not likely to marry a low-status person anyway, and I have not uncovered a single legacy to godchildren in over sixty testaments. If godparents did not confer material advantages on their wards, they nevertheless recognized the personal bond that conferred advantages on their lower-status "relatives."²² One peasant/artisan mobilized his godfather to stand guarantor for a loan, lending his "credit" to the operation.²³ Propertied men were always forming work parties for agricultural chores at wages fixed by custom. It would be in a peasant's interest to have a claim to priority over others in the village. Spiritual kinship with the landlord may have spurred a peasant to work more conscientiously than someone working just for a day's wage. Was this a form of exploitation? Probably not, if it provided him with more regular work. During harvest failures, villagers routinely placed their newborn children under the patronage of village nobles, priests, and magistrates, in a bid to elicit their pity.

Figuring as a godparent was a way of building political alliances in Renaissance Florence, writes Haas.²⁴ Parents there solicited several people simultaneously. In seventeenth-century Montefollonico, only one godparent figured at most baptisms.²⁵ People approached their friends and their social betters to stand godfather or godmother at the baptismal font. There is no clear gender alignment between the sponsor and the infant: parents approached the prospective godparent before they knew the sex of the baby. I would not hesitate to say that godparenting was a kind of popularity contest, where parents evaluated for their own reasons the suitability of the neighbors they knew. We can only guess at the specific reasons one person was chosen over another, but some eloquent patterns emerge. A survey of the 814 individuals who stood as godparents in over one thousand three hundred baptisms tells us quite a bit about village dynamics from the point of view of the parents.²⁶

Occasions of baptism were a good place for parents to make hierarchy work to their own advantage. They preferred to select men of status and influence if their social behavior was otherwise acceptable. The *marchese* figured only four times (with the *commissario* as a local proxy), for the

offspring of legal officials. Moneybags Anacleto Barbieri stood eleven times, but only rarely after he lost the *gabellai*’s position to Rutilio Carpellini in 1627. Anacleto’s son Lorenzo Barbieri, the preeminent villager by the 1650s, served godparent only eight times before 1666. Rutilio Carpellini, who still sewed shoes sitting in his doorway, appeared from the beginning of our baptismal register when he was still in his brother’s shadow, figuring 30 times until the end of his long life. Forty-one male nobles figured as godfathers, as opposed to only 20 females. The weight of the different Landucci branches varied quite a bit. Ten Landucci men accounted for 83 children: Flaminio Landucci served 24 times himself. The three Moreschini brothers—the priest Fausto, his brother the physician Girolamo (seven times), and the heir Francesco (four times)—enjoyed a high profile. Notoriously poor noblemen figured more rarely: the two Milandrone brothers appeared five times between them. Ascanio Foresi held a baby only twice. Nor did priests figure equally. Fausto Moreschini, who appeared 40 times, was the most popular godfather of all the men. Well-born priests such as Moreschini may have been the only male a village woman could approach outside her own kin. He was both knowledgeable and accessible, and his word carried weight with most people.²⁷ Some outsiders appear fully accepted by their Montefollonico neighbors. Cesare Mazzoni, the priest from Asciano presented newborns on 16 occasions, and his layman younger brother Girolamo on 14 more. Conspicuous piety counted too; the devout blacksmith Camillo Penti, from Monte San Savino, stood at the font 21 times for 14 different families, while Cristofano Selvi, a landowner, served on 13 occasions. Vincenzo Barbieri, for years the rector of the confraternity, officiated 13 times as well. These *maestri*, men of status, figured more prominently than their humble neighbors. Sharecroppers of exemplary piety were often elected godfather by other peasants: Francesco Terzuoli 16 times, Giovanni Maccioni 10 times, Niccolo di Matteo Biagi 18 times.

Just as interesting as those who figure often are those who rarely figure at all. Some village notables hardly ever held infants; was it because neighbors perceived them as unlucky? Arenio Barbieri’s assertive older brother Giuseppe cheated him of his inheritance, and one of his children was born blind and lame. When Arenio’s multifarious business activities collapsed, he was reduced to begging the community for charity. No one ever called him. Carlo Mazzoni, an illiterate stonemason rich enough to lease the village revenues may also have been perceived as unlucky. His brother-in-law’s son shot and killed his wife by accident. The disastrous downturn in his business fortunes and the forced sale of his assets at auction followed this tragedy. Villagers might scorn rich men too, if they placed their personal advantage high above their social obligations. Cristoforo Selvi’s grasping son-in-law Luca Romani, an organist from Pienza who

holds the record for initiating civil litigation, never served. Luca's delinquent son Evandro and Benedetto Stefanucci, an immigrant peasant who built a presence through thrift and chicanery, appeared only once each. Stefanucci drove his wife to request a separation from him. Valentino Rubenni, nicknamed "the Pope," a rich peasant who sued a woman for 2 lire, figured only once. Delinquents hardly ever figured, even though most of them came from established families in the *castello*. Young Francesco Crocchi and Ottaviano Nannini never held an infant at baptism, though both came from good families. Bernardino Biagi appeared three times, twice in more advanced age after he had mellowed, and played a salient role in the village confraternity. The delinquent priest Giuliano Vettori appeared twice as a youth, once for Bernardino Biagi's son. Giuliano's sordid behavior probably reflected badly on his father Paolo, a fairly wealthy man who only appeared once.

Godmothers did not wield much political influence, but there were favorite women just as there were favorite men among the 450 individuals officiating at the font. While it is easy to determine whom parents selected, it is never clear why they chose them and what possible relationship the godparents might have had with the infant in subsequent years. A husband's prestige mattered little: Rutilio Carpellini's wife Petra only officiated 5 times. The record for godparenting belonged to Maddalena Bertini, an outsider married to Cristoforo Selvi, village landowner and entrepreneur. This leading village *dévote*, a midwife and a healer, appeared no less than 48 times to hold an infant at the font. Even less exalted midwives officiated frequently: Aldabella di Pasquino, Domenica di Agnolo, and Lisabetta di Bernardino Gabbiai served on 10, 24, and 20 occasions respectively, more than most noblewomen. The eight Landucci women appeared half as often as their menfolk, for 36 times, with Volunnia Landucci being most assiduous with 13 presences. Signora Caterina Moreschini officiated 23 times in seven years; it is unclear whether this was because she was noble, or because she raised three well-educated, pious sons, or for both these reasons combined. Prosperous sharecroppers's wives, such as Lisabetta Venturelli and Oratile Lucarini, figured often. Neither social influence nor conspicuous piety explain these choices. It certainly helped to enjoy a good reputation, which for women meant chastity. Calidonia di Pietro and Margarita *la Signorina* both served early in their lives, before they became notorious. *La Lombardina* never appears, nor does Francesca *la Bugiardella*, both prostitutes. The formidable Maria Nannini, a woman of reputable family who bludgeoned a pestering child to death and suborned her *garzone* into perjury, appeared only once, though three of her sons became priests. Mothers of nasty sons and wives of disreputable husbands do not figure often either. Olimpia Pilacci, whose husband and three sons figure frequently in

criminal archives, appeared only once. Cristofana Vettori, mother of the delinquent priest, appeared but three times, and the saucy Aurelia Biagi four times.

More than material advantage, godparents owed protection to their wards. They were such useful “friends” that people designated another one of the same gender at the moment the bishop conferred confirmation.²⁸ Youngsters aged between six and twenty began to need a notable’s patronage more. Popular individuals would have had the chance to sponsor literally dozens of individuals, creating bonds with infants and their parents whose strength is difficult to assess. Godparenting was but one kind of patron-client relationship mimicking kinship that thrived in the diffuse solidarity of stable communities.²⁹

Names helped people to assimilate too. Medieval peasants only required one. When people lived for generations on the same land, a last name was superfluous, as the Christian name would be appended with the name of the land or the farm. Combining a given name with the name of the father and the grandfather allowed neighbors to connect a family with others and tabulate degrees of kinship. Old-timers could be trusted to approximate kinship degrees according to rules governing the attribution of first names (attributing the eldest male the name of his paternal grandfather, or his uncle, for example).³⁰ Perhaps sharecropping spurred the process of designating people by two names: a Christian name that people used with each other and a family name that separated them out from others. Surnames began to appear among the wealthier peasants in the fifteenth century, and although they became more systematic as time went on, a substantial minority of people in the seventeenth century still lacked such monikers. Nicknames sometimes palliated this deficiency. By the 1660s, at least four-fifths of our inhabitants would have carried a family name, though they and their neighbors, and literate record-keepers, did not always employ it.³¹

Names and reputations were public commodities. Whatever one’s status in this little world, there was no privacy in the common sense of the word, no anonymity, no freedom from the judgmental gaze of neighbors. Both good and bad news concerned everyone, if not directly, then people their relatives.³² Talking among neighbors helped share information and kept the channels of communication open. Domenico di Giomo kept to himself, he told the judge. He still felt compelled “to talk civilly with everybody, without discrimination,” and to give neighbors formal salutations on the rare occasions he encountered them.³³ People saluted everyone with a few non-committal phrases, such as “*dove vai?*” which did not commit anyone to anything. They assumed the other would not answer with a rude “none of your business!” These were people with whom one would deal with in future and it was best not to snub them. Escape from the sticky web of

interpersonal relations was impossible without leaving the village altogether. To protect the susceptibilities of neighbors, people employed various practices of address to denote respect or familiarity, beginning with a doff or a flourish of one's hat as a salute.³⁴ Toward people of property and distinction, underlings carefully calibrated upward the practices of address, by appending a title designating social class. *Maestro* graced the artisan "class": it applied to the blacksmith, the stonemason, or simply to those who enjoyed more stable revenues, even if they worked manually in a shop or in the fields. The wealthy Anacleto Barbieri bore it, as did Rutilio Carpellini, but the rich peasant Valentino Rubenni did not. *Ser* distinguished people with legal training who worked as notaries or who labored as subalternate personnel in district courts. *Signore* was a title reserved for the nobles or wealthy commoners with good social connections—this was until 1650, after which it spread more widely as a term of address. People addressed such notables in the third person, *vostra signoria*. By appending these marks of consideration, people attempted to capture and retain the goodwill of the more powerful person, still expecting that they would receive their full measure of consideration in return.³⁵

Talk vanishes. Criminal archives are precious in the way they capt snippets of conversation, unavailable in any other source. People talked in little clusters on the village square, at the gates, before the churches, on the roads, in the yard of a *podere*, at a *veglia*. Men and women talked about different things, but usually about what mattered most in their lives. Women talked more about their personal relationships and their hopes and fears for their families, their health, or the suspicious goings-on of neighbors, all presented as intractable problems (*guai*).³⁶ A friend was someone who unburdened herself; "she gave me her soul," said one about a close friend who betrayed her.³⁷ Women chose their friends selectively and enjoyed spending time with them, if only to sit on chairs in front of their respective houses. Women on less intimate terms gossiped as they stood waiting their turns to bake bread or beat their laundry at the trough, or as they spun thread in their rooms. Women also enjoyed easy access to each other's houses, to borrow this or that.³⁸ Church was a favorite locale for sociability after chores, where they could "accomplish their devotions" in small groups, chattering before and after the ceremonies. All were occasions to touch base with the neighbors, to confirm suspicious incidents or incendiary commentary.³⁹ Women's conversations were hugely preoccupied with family and maternity. From their point of view, what could have been more important? Men remained outside the exchange unless they happened by accident. In more than one trial, women warned even the parish priest to mind his own business and not to butt in.⁴⁰ No one but the *commissario* would criticize a man for passively watching a quarrel or a fight between women. *Maestro* Carlo

Lorenzoni at first pretended that he did not see the fight between Margarita Monaci and Fiore di Fulvio, but the magistrate jailed him to make him change his story, which he soon did, for he had no interest to protect either one: "I won't suffer on anyone's account!" While he witnessed the tussle, he did nothing to break it up, "because they were only women, and weren't talking to him."⁴¹

For men, friends were usually people with whom they did things. While this seems to be a universal trait, local conditions colored everything. In the Mediterranean basin, this male world was outside, in the street, on the square, at the gate, or else in some male locale, such as the tavern.⁴² Ledges built along the base of the church wall and the houses around the piazza allowed men to sit in the shade and talk of momentous events such as war, or of public issues such as village or confraternity administration, or of local pastimes such as hunting. Kinship was an important topic too.⁴³ Even noblemen discussed with rustics their own kin relations, for it was a facet of their political identity. Men discussed openly the dowry provisions of their neighbors at the mill while they watched grain being ground to flour. Militia musters assembled men from several villages; it was a place to exchange news, and to compete in races and wrestling matches. Above all, men talked of business, of *dare e havere*, the elastic cords of debits and credits connecting each of them with everyone else. It is more difficult to find the tone of conversation, but casual cursing does not seem to have been the rule among older men, who could be reproached in public for lapsing into it.⁴⁴ Male banter contained a lot of teasing and mock rudeness not customary among the women.⁴⁵ It has been written that gossip was a village unifier, in that it assumed a preexisting community for whom the information made sense. This outlook is too optimistic. In this intense exchange of information, each individual no doubt reported their own actions and words, and those of their kin and their closest allies in the most positive light possible, while denigrating rivals as roundly as they dared.⁴⁶ They would not hesitate to share their indignation with neighbors, to invite them to be on guard against the disloyal behavior of their adversary. Everyone had an interest to detect cheaters, so as not to expose themselves unwittingly to harm. The street served as a stock exchange in reputations.

Impression management for the benefit of one's neighbors made everyone attentive to their grooming and their appearance, which a hundred details make evident. Modern preconceptions about peasant dress are often "miserabilist"; that is, they take wretchedness for granted. The rare contemporary painters who depicted peasants often cultivated this condescending image for the amusement of their rich patrons. Where peasants commissioned their own images, however, such as the ones they left as votive (*ex voto*) offerings in shrines, the details of dress tell a different story. The

whiteness of one's linen, washed in appropriate tubs at home or at the village trough, advertised that grooming was important. These big tubs figure in most of the surviving postmortem inventories. The abundance and diversity of textiles coincided with the financial resources of each household, but people clearly conceived them as investments in presentability.⁴⁷ Men generally wore somber colors, at least more so than their womenfolk. Even sharecroppers owned several sets of woolen, linen, and mixed textile suits, and a few linen shirts. Men understood that proper dress imparted cues of status and decency. While they wore shirts and breeches of homespun in the fields, suits of wool and linen served better for public appearances.⁴⁸ Some accessories cost little, such as the rustic going a-courting who wore an expressive red ribbon around his hat, *alla brava*.⁴⁹ One young blacksmith's overcoat (*ferraiolo*) purportedly cost 12 *scudi*, the cost of two years' supply of bread!⁵⁰

The real treasure of fancy clothing belonged to women, often provided in the trousseau or *donamento* appended to the marriage contract. About two-thirds of the sharecropper inventories mention robes of various sorts (*sottane, spalagrembi, zimmarara, cammorina, gonnelle*) made of bright-hued silk, sometimes embroidered or otherwise ornamented with needlepoint designs (*racamata*). Gold cloth or ribbon trimmed the detachable sleeves and the headdresses that all grown women wore. The womenfolk of Vincenzo Lucarini, who worked on the large Oppiano *podere* for many years, possessed a gold-colored silk dress. Some of these treasures figure as "used" in the inventory, signifying that they were not just stored away in trunks for a rare occasion. Girls and women possessed plenty of accessories and jewels to enhance their attractiveness, such as silk flowers in children's hair, or necklaces of coral and pearl their mothers wore every day. Articles of clothing and accessories such as these represented months of income spent on their purchase, even if the women spent time sewing them.⁵¹ Hoards of coral and pearl necklaces, gold rings, and other trinkets appear in peasant inventories too, alongside the silver crosses and saints' medallions worn on chains to denote piety. Husbands "managed" this treasure, for they might have to pawn it to pay household debts. It constituted a cash reserve too.⁵² Families no doubt deprived themselves of other things in order to live with dignity and decorum, calibrated on the opulence of their superiors. This was not new in the seventeenth century.⁵³

If women wore ornaments to enhance their appearance, the men carried weapons whenever they could. Men joined the militia to raise themselves above the rank of peasants. Militiamen carried daggers as nobles carried swords, as a social sign of distinction and a vague menace that they would defend their honor from a challenge.⁵⁴ Others carried swords without being militiamen, take for instance Virgilio Pilacci, a notorious delinquent who

confessed to the judge, "I always carry a sword."⁵⁵ Men and youths carried swords and knives to games, to a *veglia*, to the village square, to religious processions. In a world where many struggled against grinding poverty, such details constituted markers of success that proved they were winning life's battle over misfortune.

Group leisure activity was another masculine trait. Men congregated to play outdoor games, such as the *cacio*, a kind of bowling using the small wheel of cheese as the disk, which also constituted the prize. The participants spiced up the stakes by gambling on the outcome. If they usually played these games at the village gate, the Porta Nuova, sometimes they gathered before the church too, in defiance of prohibitions aimed at removing idle talk and blasphemous utterances from the vicinity of sacred places.⁵⁶ Almost everywhere, leisure took the form of sitting around talking, eating, and drinking.⁵⁷ From the brief evocations of them we have, banquets of sausages and hams over a jug of wine at home or in the tavern characterized masculine gatherings

By mid-century, male notables sat tranquilly in threes and fours by the hearth fire, smoking their pipes, the first appearance of a modern vice.⁵⁸ The village tavern in Montefollonico—where married men took their meals over a pot of wine, gambled at cards and dice, caroused with guitars, and composed verses on absent individuals for the amusement of others—was more a place of dissolution, long managed by the disreputable Bernardino Biagi.⁵⁹ Masculine too was the nocturnal practice of wandering aimlessly (*a spasso*) around the village, either with a "Spanish" guitar to sing serenades outside a girl's house or for amusement. This intense nocturnal sociability of young men sometimes turned violent when the youths were bent on mischief or when the joking, the teasing, and the horseplay touched a raw nerve.⁶⁰

Mixed company frequented the *veglia*, an informal winter gathering in a house where the hearth warmed a steady flow of individuals. They seem to have been open-door affairs, economical on firewood, which combined winter chores with relaxed and garrulous sociability. People displayed differing abilities to make others feel comfortable in mixed company. Pietro, worker at Le Regge complained to his friend Meio, worker at Palazzone, that men and women sat rigid and embarrassed, looking for topics of conversation: "you see how they do the *veglie* here? The men are on one side, the women on the other, not like they do elsewhere, where everybody chatters."⁶¹ Music and dancing took place at some, where young males tried to outdo each other before their hosts and the young women present, sometimes lapsing into disparaging songs or challenging words that would have to be vindicated outside.⁶² Here in a crowded room the men could talk to women not their relatives. At the *veglia*, earnest conversations constituted courtship and the slightest affront to a lad in front of girls he wished to impress called for some retaliation.

In the small *castello*, these informal settings brought together people otherwise separated by considerable social distance. Nobles were too few in number to constitute their own group, so they frequented the games, the tavern, the public square, thereby establishing uneasy relationships with rustics. Noblemen condemned by their poverty to live in Montefollonico constantly risked losing face in encounters with low-born neighbors, few of whom depended upon them completely for their livelihood. Keenly aware of their own vulnerability, it was important for them, as the higher-ranking individual, to initiate expressions of goodwill. It helped to be active in community enterprises in capacities not below their status. The Landucci were pillars of the religious confraternities and patronized both the new Marian shrine and the Franciscan chapel.⁶³ The diffuse solidarity of village life provided a framework for this rough moral equality.⁶⁴ Noblemen hoped to extract continual confirmation of their social superiority in a hundred little gestures of submission, repaid with little favors. Giovanni Battista Landucci desired to preempt another client in the butcher shop, but he and his cleric friend Giuliano Vettori rioted when the butcher Giovanni Battista Magnoni snubbed him.⁶⁵ Few people defied nobles openly, however, preferring to cultivate the goodwill of well-connected superiors by being dogs instead of lions. Villagers used the term “friendship” to describe this relation of trust between people of starkly different status. Laborer Girolamo Rossi described villagers’ relations with the *cavaliere* Landucci in answer to the *commissario*’s query:

I am friends with them, and when he requests (*comanda*) that I go help in the country or for some other service, I serve him, and he often requests it. This winter, the signor *cavaliere* had conversation by night and day with the schoolmaster, with the Lieutenant (Lorenzo) Barbieri, with Rev. Giovanni Nannini and Rev. Giovanni Miseri, with Leonello Penti (the blacksmith) with Fulvio Carpellini, with Annibale Bai, with Flaminio Barbieri (Lorenzo’s brother), with Fantozzi (a merchant) and Alessandro Giannetti (the tailor), who all caroused (*hanno vegliato*) together at the *veglie* and other recreations that took place while the said signor Cavaliere was in Monte. I don’t know if he is enemy of Francesco Crocchi.⁶⁶

Others offered token services just to be helpful: Giovanni Battista Magnoni offered to run errands for Landucci noblemen on his trip to Siena. Did they need anything, he enquired? People would not have expected payment for such a trifle, but they tabulated these gestures anyway, for they implied reciprocal services in future. Vincenzo di Alessandro related that the canon Manello Tarugi, who had once been his *padrone* told him to “carry for me this hare to the *podere* called Faragatta in the district of Montepulciano. Being poor and having spent a day without eating, I carried

it for him hoping to get something for it.”⁶⁷ The logic of patron-client relationship is, after all, built on reciprocal self-interest. By acting cooperatively, people belonging to different social classes gained access to resources they would not have otherwise enjoyed.⁶⁸

For poor aristocrats, living in Montefollonico had its compensations, besides the ability to live cheaply. Villagers conceded a certain moral superiority to noblemen; the magistrate accorded them consideration. Noblemen and *maestri*, the two high-status groups, used their moral influence in commonplace ways to maintain village harmony. In at least nine trials, nobles intervened in street quarrels to “command” people to stop fighting, using their superior status much the same way as the parish priest did to calm the belligerents. They were also mediators of choice to settle disputes between kin, whose quarrels were not considered suitable for judicial arrangements. A good many “*lodi*” drafted by parish priests employed procurators and arbitrators of noble or notable background.⁶⁹ Moreover, since most people were illiterate, they required notaries, priests, and more worldly patrons to write things down for them, including their shop accounts and sharecropping books.⁷⁰

Notables were not alone in having status to uphold. In small communities, congregation and conversation continually reassessed the relative standing of everyone. Reputations were public commodities, traded like bills of credit on the market square. Information traveled quickly up and down the village streets, and from one *podere* to another, creating what contemporaries referred to as *pubblica fama*, something that everyone knew. Everyone needed fresh information on everyone else, in order to make their own plans. Gossip moved in little circles of daily banter, outward from its originators.⁷¹ People feared for their good reputation, and we encounter them searching for the source of a rumor concerning them.⁷² Outsiders needed to establish a reputation of their own if they wanted to remain in the village. It mattered a great deal to be thought of as one to whom others could extend credit. “You are a bad payer!” was one accusation that could not remain unchallenged. For even in a rural economy such as this one, people not only purchased on credit, they traded promises to pay just like city merchants. They also committed themselves continually to offer guarantees (*sicurtà*) on the credit-worthiness of third parties close to them.⁷³ Uncertain dates of payment were the norm, not the exception, in a world where no one could foresee the price of a commodity or the conditions of sale, making the payment of wages, payment on purchases, and payment of dowries very unpredictable. Montefollonico’s men (and sometimes women) continually engaged in the process of certifying credits and the ability of people to keep their word.⁷⁴ Credits and debits carried political baggage best calculated immediately. When Bartolomeo del Feliciaia the miller admitted to

Francesco Crotchi that he did not have enough money to buy a pound of bread, the latter offered him a couple of coins. Crotchi was too dangerous a person for one to enter into an obligation with, so Bartolomeo demurred, saying that when he needed to, he would “*fare capitale degli amici*.”⁷⁵

In a general way, a reputation for trustworthiness was the outcome of honorable behavior and a willingness to conform to community norms. The desire to maintain good standing among one’s peers is another human universal, which manifests itself in local norms. For seventeenth-century Italy, Claudio Povolo defines honor in men as courage, virility, and pride in the ability to provide for their families. In a face-to-face community with continuous interaction, men concerned for their reputation would defend their kin and carry out their threats, but they would also deal fairly and keep their promises. For women, honor resided in chastity and devotion to family. These gendered definitions were of necessity complementary, an understanding that each would commit these important assets to the other.⁷⁶ The ability to undertake right action in a public forum was something accessible to almost everyone. Having a good reputation lightened considerably the social stigma of poor people. There is no reason to doubt that most villagers shared these values, and there is no reason to think that their preoccupation with honor and the sensibilities of neighbors was an illusion. The tyranny of honor and social consideration made sense, because no one could succeed without friends.⁷⁷ Self-interest was not a simple thing to determine: short-term advantages would have to be reconciled with the importance of long-term acceptance by others, something evolutionary psychologists call a *tradeoff*. Egotistical behavior, or the lapses of family members, could besmirch one’s honor and cause a keenly felt sense of shame, but there were ways to remove the stain, and recover relative standing by besmirching rivals.⁷⁸

Collaboration

Assai mane fan presto il pane

(Many hands make the bread quickly)

Honorable conduct had everything to do with economic rationality as we understand it today. Patterns of cooperation, of competition, of reproduction are incomprehensible if separated from the harsh realities of traditional agricultural economics and the specific context of seventeenth-century Italy. Yet I would follow Jan de Vries and Philip Hoffman who think a single model is sufficient to understand economic life in the past as in the present.⁷⁹ While our basic unit of reference remains the individual, the family furnished both security and identity for each member; it governed itself

and projected its image onto the larger community.⁸⁰ This makes it anachronistic to rank a family socially by the economic activity of its head, where what really counted was the combined assets, talents, and connections of all.⁸¹

Rustics in Montefollonico who were not sharecroppers could either be fairly prosperous entrepreneurs living a semigenteel life in the *castello*, or they could be surviving from hand-to-mouth expedients. Land and houses were part of the search for security that planted families in specific localities. Stable families bought and sold land and houses routinely, according to their needs and abilities. Daughters frequently inherited small patches of land and houses in their marriage contract, and their fathers exhorted the grooms to spend their dowry cash on real estate, called *stabile*. Land was stable, relative to other forms of wealth that wore out with time. We have no *estimo* of property after 1598, making it difficult to establish with precision which inhabitants of the village owned land, and how much. In any case, the situation was continually changing. At the end of the sixteenth century, 143 non-noble families (*allirati*) owned taxable real estate in the jurisdiction.⁸² Since the tax role listed many adult males with their brothers as joint owners, it confirms that the great majority of stable families enjoyed land of their own. In 1598, fully 102 families owned 104 houses in Montefollonico and another 19 houses scattered in the countryside, a couple of which were deserted or ruined. A few more qualified as merely *caselle* or hovels. The land-sales register makes it clear that peasant land coexisted alongside the more substantial *poderi* owned by nobles and other city-dwellers.⁸³ Families were considered well-off if they owned 100 Florins (400 lire) of real estate, and fully 60 of the 143 families qualified. Most of the others possessed land or houses worth at least 50 florins, which gave them a cushion of security.

The market value of the land they owned varied considerably. To keep animals out, peasants had long practiced closing off their most prized productions inside a *chiusa* (enclosure) lined with hedgerow fertilized with precious pigeon droppings if these were available.⁸⁴ If they had to choose between giving up their grain fields or their vineyards, they abandoned the former. Vines suited these Tuscan hills, which produced the prized *vino nobile* of Montepulciano, worth transporting to distant places such as Rome.⁸⁵ A little vineyard of 300 plants covering merely a sixteenth of a hectare required only 3 days' hoeing annually, and gave 120 kg of grapes and almost 80 liters of wine.⁸⁶ A single hectare of choice vineyard belonging to the heirs of Nencio Nannini was estimated at 300 Florins. Few people chose to devote their land to a single crop, however. Around half (128/250) of the fields described in the *estimo* were tended by their owners in a carefully varied polyculture. This "promiscuous culture" combined vines, trees, and arable land for grain or pulses (i.e., beans, lentils, chick peas etc.), all in

the same field. Instead of planting grain in one patch, vines in another, and olives in a third, as modern agriculture has been doing since the introduction of the tractor and combine harvester, peasants lined their fields with fruit trees, then compartmentalized the land in swaths of grain-bearing stripes separated by several rows of vines and olive, fig, or mulberry trees.⁸⁷ Promiscuous culture was a sensible adaptation to Mediterranean ecological conditions, which helps explain its longevity. The various plants sank their roots into different layers of the soil, so they did not compete excessively for moisture and nutrients. Even better, the roots of trees and vines protected the hillsides from erosion. Winter ground temperature was substantially higher on these patches than on fields exposed to the elements, while shade from vines and trees sheltered grains and pulses from the summer sun and heat. Promiscuous culture made better use of the land, compared to leaving open or “naked” fields fallow. Landlords left half of the arable land fallow every year, instructing peasants to plough it repeatedly in order to restore the moisture and nutrients.⁸⁸ That resting field would still produce olives or grapes, cuttings for fuel, and leaves for fodder. Finally, placing several crops on a single plot insured against bad luck and the elements. If bad conditions harmed one crop, chances were that the others were less affected. Vineyards and olives cultivated alone accounted for another 44, mostly small, plots of land, while “naked” arable fields comprised 66 more. The tax role listed only two fields as specialized pasture land.

Landlords extended promiscuous culture in response to rising population in the sixteenth century. The crop variety impressed foreigners; wheat, barley, oats, spelt, millet, vetch, and sorghum for the grains; beans, chick peas, lupins, lentils, and peas as legumes; cabbages, squash, and melons were common vegetables; tree crops produced olives, figs, and other fruits—occasionally including edible chestnuts.⁸⁹ Peasants primarily grew wheat, and secondarily only minor cereals and legumes. Grain yields in this part of Italy were mediocre, running on average 4 times the seed, but they oscillated considerably depending on the vagaries of the climate.⁹⁰ In addition to producing food, Tuscan peasants cultivated industrial plants such as flax and hemp, and mulberry trees on whose leaves silkworms were fed. Saffron was a prized regional production for culinary use and as a dyestuff. Peasants and village entrepreneurs produced it on some considerable scale before 1640. Saffron required considerable kitchen labor to pluck the pestles from the crocus and to dry them on special racks, but some households produced important quantities of it.⁹¹ Most *poderi* produced olive oil. The small Tuscan trees gave only 5 to 6 kg of fruit on average. Instead of grouping the trees into orchards, peasants interspersed them with other crops. They carried the fruit to one of the few presses operating in the winter months, for these expensive machines required animal traction to turn the

screw. Landlords confined hemp cultivation to their best land; it provided local looms with raw materials for rough cloth and rope. The cut stalks macerated in pools of stagnant water until they decomposed enough to strip off filaments to spin. Flax and hemp did not require much labor to produce, so peasants could integrate its cultivation into the agricultural calendar.⁹² All of these products were purchased by the score of village entrepreneurs who brokered the supply of agricultural products to the cities.

One striking feature of life in Montefollonico was that everyone worked. Italians measured each passing day in hours after daybreak, with 12 daytime hours separating sunrise from sunset, and another 12 night-time hours beginning at dusk. Hours were long or short depending upon the season.⁹³ Oil for illumination was rare and expensive, so people began their tasks at dawn. The circumstances surrounding each criminal case allow us to see hundreds of men and women busy at their chores in the village and in the fields. The gender asymmetry to work reflected a sensible adaptation to each family's overall requirements. Autumn was the season of plowing and sowing for the men, which they accomplished bit by bit on the arable land. Following the oxen with the plow required three days' strenuous labor for every single hectare.⁹⁴ Fallow land required plowing several times throughout the year in order to clear the weeds and work the moisture under the topsoil. Working the land with hoes and spades produced more food in the end, but it took over ten times as long. Sowing seeds was another laborious chore, requiring a deft hand to scatter them evenly. With the onset of winter, men beat the olive trees with rods to collect the fruit on sheets spread out below. The principal winter chore involved rejuvenating the vineyard by planting an offshoot of an old vine into the earth next to it, and allowing it to grow its own roots, before detaching it from the mother plant. New growth required careful pruning of each stalk in order to concentrate the plant's nourishment in the remaining buds. This laborious and time-consuming operation, accomplished in wet, bone-chilling cold and bracing winds, required some skill with a pruning knife. The roots of each plant required hoeing and fertilizing, as did the supporting olive trees. In late winter, the men sowed the beans, peas, and vetch, then cleared the ditches and edged the fields to facilitate drainage. In spring, families dared not release the famished livestock from their pens into the planted fields, so men and boys issued forth with scythes to mow the first grass and hay, loading it onto shoulder harnesses to take back to the stalls. Summer brought the most intense work of all, to harvest the grain with a sickle one armful at a time. Men then threshed the grain stalks in the yard next to the farms by crushing them under a trestle drawn by oxen. They winnowed it there to remove the chaff, shoveled the kernels into sacks to weigh, then carried them to the mill one sack at a time to have it ground into flour. Men then

mixed the straw residue with animal excrement and spread the manure onto the fields from ox-drawn sleds. Hardly had the grain been stored in pits and attics in September that the fields fairly bustled with people harvesting grapes. The village assembly regulated access to the fields, the vines, and the trees in the weeks leading up to the official harvest date. In the meantime, apprehensive sharecroppers and landlords, stick in hand and dogs by their side, watched the fruit ripen on the vines and stood guard in order to prevent its theft by indelicate neighbors. For men were protectors and avengers, too. Everywhere, men accompanied the beasts of burden on their rounds, leading donkeys laden with grain and other merchandise along the roads and paths of the district, and taking them by the halter to more distant towns. Men also performed the forest work, climbing trees axe in hand to cut branches and strip leaves for animal fodder, collecting bundles of faggots, chopping and pruning branches into rods and stakes, hacking tree trunks into poles and beams for a multitude of uses. A few men tended furnaces producing charcoal for the communal ovens and glassworks. A brick and lime kiln also produced raw materials for local construction. The kiln was but a hole in the ground, lined with stones and equipped with feeders to supply the wood and oxygen.⁹⁵

Women appeared alongside the men only occasionally, on those days when every hand served to reap the grain or the grass from the fields, or to pick olives, chestnuts, or grapes. Women did much of the work weeding the grain fields in the spring and gleaned the summer straw from the fields to serve as animal fodder, or to substitute as fuel at home. They confined their forest work to gathering kindling. Wives and daughters usually worked closer to the hearth and in a different range of tasks. If they occasionally assisted the men with a hoe or a sickle, women appear more often in the criminal records milking the animals, minding the garden, or fetching water in jugs balanced on their heads. Women enjoyed sole jurisdiction over the poultry that roamed the streets and gardens of the *castello*, often scrounging food off the floors of houses. Women sold the eggs to neighbors for small change. In addition, they tended to the time-consuming chores of preparing food, washing clothes, spinning, weaving, and sewing, repairing the harnesses, baskets, and sacks for a new season.⁹⁶ Tending their children was an added distraction, to which we will return. One woman complained to the magistrate that being the only woman on a *podere* was taxing her strength: "I stay in my house doing my chores, and I mind my own business. I'm so tired for being alone in the house."⁹⁷

In the village too, work followed gender specializations. Wine-making took place in burrows underneath houses, called *cantina* or else in sheds at the back. Men produced both the stronger wine for commercial sale and the weak *acquata* or *vinello* for normal family consumption. The Landucci olive

press creaked to life for a few months every winter, when peasants brought their olives for pressing to a shed in the courtyard next to their mansion. Although Montefollonico was not a commercial hub, some men minded a shop, the butcher-stall, the blacksmith forge, and the *pizzicaiolo's* meager stocks of salt meat and fish. People inspected the pickings in the three or four houses with miscellaneous articles for sale. Men collected outside the village *palazzo* to dispatch administrative business and to clear their accounts with the magistrate and the *gabellai*, make their obligatory declarations, pay their taxes and fees, and organize the departure of their animals for the trip to the Grosseto salt-pans. Every village required a handful of artisans, such as the blacksmith, the shoemaker, the tailor, the stonemason, perhaps a professional weaver producing semifinished cloth for sale. The tailor needed only scissors, needles, and an iron to be able to fabricate presentable clothing.⁹⁸ The blacksmith produced an array of metal implements and blades with his forge, hammer, tongs, and bellows. Few village men confined their work to a single activity, though. In addition to shoeing the heavy livestock, the blacksmith was also a veterinarian of sorts, mending the wounds of men as well as animals. Versatility was surely a virtue, geared to ensure a family's survival. The 40-year old Taviano Nannini presented himself to the commissario to throw off the suspicion that he had burgled the Franciscan kitchen. He explained,

I am a soldier and a sergeant, sometimes I'm a blacksmith and sometimes I work on my land . . . Ten days ago I went with my horse (a donkey) to Foiano with the father Provincial and his companion (as passengers), and then I returned home to Montefollonico to be paid for it . . . I have 20 *staia* of land (just over two hectares) and my property with my wife's dowry is worth 300 *scudi*. This year I harvested 14 *staia* of grain and 5 some of wine. I do what I can, for the harvest I pay it with wine and with oil, of which I have about 3 *staia* and a half, and so I get by the best that I can. Sometimes I go to collect wood with my horse, which I pasture on my own land, sometimes I take on chores of my own and sometimes I help maestro Camillo, blacksmith, and for other business, I exercise my hoe.⁹⁹

Most women's work took place on the margins of a commercial economy, in household chores and in the myriad activities that helped make ends meet. Conversations echoed from the doors and windows of *castello* houses, where women stood with infants in their arms. Women gathered by the communal laundry trough outside the wall, or came to fill their jugs with water at one of several fountains. Occasional housework for neighbors was one way of supplementing income, but payment for this kind of service was very low.¹⁰⁰ Only twice do wetnurses appear in the records, given the tiny village market for their services and the distance of the *castello* from

the city. The records certainly understate the commercial activities of women. Many tended a beehive in the gardens next to their houses, consuming the honey but selling the wax. How often they sold the cheeses they made is anybody's guess. People sought them out when they wanted to buy a couple of eggs, or a handful of salt, or a pot of wine. Many nimble fingers prepared saffron. One or two wives of notables sold cloth from their houses, or ministered the bread oven leased by their husbands, and chatted with neighbors as they fed dough into its maw. Women dominated, numerically at least, the low-skilled tasks required by peasant manufactures. A few busied themselves weaving at a loom or beat and combed wool to prepare fleece for spinning thread. A loom cost only 15 lire, so they appear both in *castello* houses and on sharecropping farms.¹⁰¹ Most women spent long hours spinning thread from flax, hemp, or wool for home use. Perhaps the best illustration of the work of women in the textile industry at home would be their role in raising silkworms. At the end of April, while the crops ripened in the fields, women placed little pieces of linen containing larvae into their aprons to spur the maturation with their body heat, or else inserted them inside their mattresses. The newly hatched worms they laid onto wooden frames and deposited fresh leaves for them to eat. Periodically women removed the fetid worm excrement and assorted detritus and added new leaves, until the worms grew to maturity by the end of May. A new framework built of twigs gave the worms a support on which to spin their cocoons. After several days, minders placed the cocoons in the sun or in bread ovens to kill the chrysalides, sparing some to produce new eggs for the next year. At the end of the process, they carried the cocoons to owners of cauldrons in towns, where workers unwound them to make thread.¹⁰² Maddalena Selvi and her daughter Caterina Romani once identified themselves as "spinners," but the term was a bit disingenuous, as if they wished to feign humility. The Selvi were among the first brokers of mulberry leaves and silk spinning in Montefollonico, and the revenues they derived from it would not have been negligible at all.¹⁰³

Few of the tasks just enumerated needed much in the way of equipment, except perhaps winemaking that required expensive barrels. A poor family possessing a ladder, sickles and a scythe, a wooden pitchfork, a couple of hoes and shovels, some pruning knives, baskets and harnesses would be able to perform almost any task for anyone who wished to hire their services; and if several adults pooled their labor, they would do better than merely survive. Rural entrepreneurs did not need much capital, either. Most possessed only basic equipment and a donkey, but they could still flourish by renting mills, presses, and ovens. It would be inflating vocabulary to call them "bourgeois" or even "merchants," although a few families roosted not far below the lower rungs of the aristocracy. Some of them served as agents

and managers, taking in hand the planting and harvesting of crops, collecting the taxes, and commercializing the harvest for absentee noble or ecclesiastical landlords. These people were also likely to lease lands belonging to pious institutions, not extensive enough to consolidate into autonomous *poderi*. Landlords established leaseholding pacts called *censi* with entrepreneurs who promised to pay 7 percent of the property value in rent. They could work these lands themselves but often preferred to hire laborers at a half-lire per day. Living in the village, close to the lands they leased, these entrepreneurs supervised the work teams themselves. Each maintained his own small clientele of neighbors and relatives willing to work with him, for conscientious workers were always in demand. Leaseholders stocked wine and grain they could supply to a market and planned to make a modest profit.¹⁰⁴

A good work ethic even served aristocrats well. Noblemen, when they resided in the village, took an active hand in supervising their sharecroppers and in collecting and selling their produce. Noblemen enjoyed other forms of revenue, however, detached from agriculture. Many purchased state bonds, *luoghi di monte*, redeemable on request or on term. These bore 4 to 5 percent interest in the early seventeenth century. Living from one's rents and financial investments was an ideal situation for aristocrats, and the Italian bond market was still the most advanced in Europe.¹⁰⁵ Noblemen held a variety of administrative offices in Siena and its hinterland, if they were considered suitable for them. These brought them moderate prestige and an additional modest income. The grand duke reserved more prestigious posts for them, such as the "habit" admitting a nobleman to the order of Santo Stefano. This office required only a few years' residence in Pisa, but the income accruing to it lasted a lifetime. Two or three Landucci members of this military order lived in the village and concerned themselves principally with agricultural details. Regardless of the social level, everyone in Montefollonico worked in tandem with others, in an economic world built on exchange and complementarity of function. If landlords, workers, and middlemen all understood the need to cooperate with everyone else in order to flourish, they were certain to calculate their individual advantage in entering into the bargain.

Most economic exchange took the form of barter, but small coins in a variety of denominations passed from hand to hand. Money paid taxes, built a dowry, purchased the bolt of city-made luxury cloth and the jewelry that we find in postmortem inventories, or paid for evenings carousing in the tavern. In a bad year, cash reserves could buy provisions of chestnuts carried in from the Monte Amiata district. Men of every status needed to find some way of acquiring it. Seasonal work in the Maremma, the sale of grain, a barrel of wine or an animal, the dispatch of a packet of saffron, a few

days' work threshing grain or pruning vines all produced cash. Sharecroppers and *castello* dwellers alike hoarded up their coins in pots and hidden caches. It was best to keep one's finances a secret from prying eyes, and to pay debts and make expenditures only when necessary.

The preceding image is a stable one, and indeed, the rhythms of rural work had not changed much since the late Middle Ages. With the gradual decline of manufacturing costs in the early modern era, a traditional agricultural economy such as Montefollonico's provided fairly good results. In 1580, few areas were as commercially dynamic as central Italy, which was fairly bursting at the seams with people. The continual growth of cities and small towns, and the transferal there of the most important landowners brought about important changes in commercial agriculture. Absentee landlords could no longer supervise the work carried out daily on their land, and so needed to adopt a system that worked better for them. Long-term relationships with workers were preferable to short-term ones, for they reduced the uncertainty for both sides. The solution was sharecropping, in its Italian form called *mezzadria*. Sharecropping itself was not a recent invention. Its elegant simplicity, dividing a crop between the owner of the soil and those who tilled it, encouraged almost everyone to resort to it. Widows without menfolk to work for them, priests who lived off specific patches of land, and anybody who owned some property but had neither the time nor the energy nor the inclination to perform the work themselves could have the land worked by someone else without any cash expenditure.¹⁰⁶ The sharecropper needed some supervision by the landlord, to be sure, but if he produced little, he received little in return.

The late medieval novelty saw urban landlords combine adjacent parcels of land into a self-sufficient farm, a *podere*, and lease it for several years to a peasant family by a written pact. By the fifteenth century, the system flourished around cities in central and northern Italy. Sharecropping on *poderi* became the most widespread form of land exploitation there from the late sixteenth century until the advent of mechanized agriculture in the 1950s. In Tuscany, it accounted for 70 to 80 percent of all cultivated land. We should assume that any institution so durable must have been erected on solid foundations of a practical, not ideological, nature. Sharecropping was advantageous for noble landlords, especially urban ones, who could let out their lands and livestock to people of little means, while keeping the initiative. They depended upon the diligence of the sharecropping family to produce an adequate return on their land, and if they were unhappy with their performance, they could terminate the lease. If satisfied, they could keep them on the estate indefinitely.¹⁰⁷ Sharecropping also served the interest of the small tenant who could not afford to buy and feed oxen of his own.¹⁰⁸ Normally, the owners handed over the land and the house and paid half the

expenses of supplies, the tools, the seed grain, and farm animals, while peasants paid the other half and supplied the labor of their entire family. The landowner made a real investment in land and working capital.¹⁰⁹ The system was flexible enough to integrate new plants and products into the mix without disrupting its basic structure. The landlord often forbade the sharecroppers to work off the *podere*, but this entailed providing them with everything they needed to survive. Poderal sharecropping was nevertheless an urban invention, designed to produce everything an urban family might consume as well. The landlord or his agent retained the complete initiative of what was planted, and they instructed the tenant when to sell the surplus on city markets. The landlord could also authorize hiring day-laborers and adolescent farm-hands at low wages to help manage the work.¹¹⁰ When the landlord lived nearby, he paid careful attention to the work of his sharecropper and issued daily instructions. This made him a small-scale trader in agricultural commodities, either out of his barn or from city storehouses and attics. We find cases of sharecroppers acting in fiduciary roles, however, making grain and livestock sales on behalf of the absentee landlord. Noblewoman Penelope Buoninsegna trusted her sharecropper Vincenzo Gabbiai with the sale of a sizeable amount of grain, the cash from which he hid in a pile of straw on the barn floor.¹¹¹

Montefollonico's network of *poderi* was virtually complete in 1620. There was always some variation, whereby larger ones split up and smaller ones merged, but the total number never oscillated much from 75, ranging between 6 and 25 hectares each. Important landlords owned numerous *poderi* in several communities. The exemption of property owned by Sienese nobles from the *estimo* makes it impossible to fix precisely the degree of inequality of ownership in Montefollonico, but the seventy-odd *poderi* surely occupied the lion's share of the marquisate. We can derive a general idea of the structure of land ownership around 1660 from a surviving tax roster.¹¹² Of the 72 identifiable *poderi* owners, only one, Valentino Rubenni at Sant'Antimo, worked the land himself. Nobles held the largest share, with the Landucci alone owning a quarter of the farms. The Foresi, Buonamici, Buoninsegni, and Moreschini owned only eight *poderi* among them. Sienese nobles not resident in the village owned another 16 *poderi*, making 42 noble-owned farms in all, a clear majority. Ecclesiastical institutions, principally convents of nuns in Siena, Montepulciano, and Pienza, owned 13 *poderi*. Their administration also fell largely to Sienese nobles. About 10 percent of the *poderi* belonged to the community itself, via the confraternity, whose revenues funded so many charitable initiatives. Only eight *poderi* belonged to non-noble houses in the village; the Selvi and Mazzoni owned two small ones each, the Nutarelli, Barbieri, Carpellini, and Miseri possessed only one each. While individual families gained or lost

land, consolidated *poderi*, or split them up, this pattern remained substantially the same at the end of the century. This tabulation of ownership of individual farms is a bit misleading, however. If we look at the 14 *poderi* most heavily taxed in the 1660s, the village confraternity, local and Sienese nobles, and the religious institutions account for all of them.

In order to achieve the proper balance between land and workers, landowners periodically replaced the family working on their *podere*. This mobility of labor was critical to the working of the system. But this mobility did not disrupt family life, because the entire family moved together.¹¹³ The Sienese state's largest landowner, the Ospedale della Scala, regularly sent inspectors to assess each *podere's* productivity. If there were not enough adult men to produce grain for the city, the family would have to be evicted and a more suitable one brought in to replace them. Many broken families, deprived of a male breadwinner, withdrew from the farms to finish their days in poverty in the *castello*, surviving on the odd-jobs grouped communities offered.¹¹⁴ An appropriately sized family spared the sharecropper the trouble of hiring extra labor, although he might hire extra hands at key moments such as reaping. More often, the sharecropper hired a young lad, a *garzone*, to mind the livestock and to help with farm tasks. He sometimes paid their tiny salaries with second-hand clothing.

Podere sharecropping pulled the population down from its medieval *castello* dwellings and established it on self-sufficient farms. But the *podere* was often too small for the peasant family to live comfortably. The sharecroppers' chief headache was debt, particularly when grain prices sank after 1630. Cristoforo Selvi and his son-in-law Luca Romani quarreled often with their sharecroppers because Colombaio and Casaccie were the smallest farms, each six to seven hectares of partly wooded high-altitude land. Casaccie still yielded the sharecropper 131 *staia* of wheat, chick peas, and minor grains in a bumper year (1639), enough to feed ten people.¹¹⁵ A poor harvest would leave the sharecropper without enough grain to survive. He would need to borrow food and seed grain from the landlord's portion. Peasant families could compress their own consumption to escape debt, and sell off their own portion of the livestock or part of it along with much of their share of the wine and cheese, but many, perhaps most of them, owed money to their landlord. Sharecroppers went first to their *padroni* to request aid and loans. Common sense compelled the landowner not to refuse, even if reimbursement seemed unlikely, out of fear that desperate peasants might abandon everything and that it might be difficult to find replacements.¹¹⁶ The impact of this debt is difficult to gauge. Landlords sometimes appeared before the magistrate to exact repayment from former sharecroppers, for sums in the hundreds of lire.¹¹⁷ Taking a sample year, following the difficult harvest of 1626, just under a dozen cases of sharecropping debt came before

the village *commissario*. Giovan Felice Foresi brought forward six of those himself. He was in some difficulty and needed to mobilize all his credits to stave off bankruptcy. In three or four cases landlords employed the court to drive off the sharecropper. Cesare Landucci gave notice to Santi at Perezeta after complaining about his excessive cutting of trees on the *podere* woodland, for grazing other people's livestock on his land, and for raising other people's pigs there (no doubt sharing the "fruits") without asking permission. Driving sharecroppers from a *podere* and into another jurisdiction just made it harder for landlords to collect debts, however, and the heirs of indebted sharecroppers were free to repudiate their father's inheritance.¹¹⁸ There was also a legitimate fear on the landlord's part that the sharecropper might give up and leave the land untended. Fabrizio Landucci railed against Santi Morbidi who without warning left the Pozzo di Quà *podere* to take up another belonging to the sanctuary of San Biagio.¹¹⁹ Ongoing debt might have been a structural cost to the landlord as much as the sharecropper, if the latter could not reimburse him. It would pay to analyze the charitable clauses in Sieneese noblemen's wills to see how often they pardoned sharecroppers their debts as a pious gesture. Just as debts to shopkeepers formed part of a continuing relation between buyer and seller, to the buyer's advantage, landlords may have retained indebted families on their property in the hope of someday recovering their loan. Pardoning sharecropper debt was a way of maintaining a working relationship as well as clientage ties, which were often the same thing. Landlords probably pressed their tenants harder in the eighteenth century when the denser rural population made alternative reliable families easier to find. Sharecroppers' debts could not be liquidated by having them sow more seed, for grain was expensive to produce. A few good harvests could be costly for someone already with bulging stocks of grain to sell. The cereal production of the Sieneese territory declined even faster than the population, after international grain prices collapsed in the mid-seventeenth century. Landlords actively curtailed wheat-growing and thus limited the harvest to whatever they thought was adequate for peasant survival.¹²⁰

A more workable solution to recover credits was to allow tenants other means of making some money. Many sneaked off the *podere* to perform chores for someone else, a venial sin if it entailed work with hand tools, but a more serious one if the sharecropper rented out the landlord's ox team and pocketed the fee.¹²¹ More commonly, village entrepreneurs banded together the menfolk into work details to reap and thresh grain on Maremma estates.¹²² With a lira for each day's work—twice the going wage of work at home, and comparable to the wages of a skilled artisan in Siena—men returning from there could meet their most pressing payments.¹²³ We see one expedition to the estate of La Marsigliana to harvest

grain in mid-July 1631. A spry sextegenarian, Santi di Gilio, completed the 60 to 70-kilometer trip on foot in just two days!¹²⁴ Another group left just after the grape harvest in October 1646, following their Petroio “corporal,” *maestro* Giacomo Rossi. They planned to be gone only a week. Alongside the reapers, or *segatori*, provisioners took flasks of wine to sell to the coastal workers while other peasants made a lire or two by selling bread and other necessities to their work companions on the trip. Giacomo Crocchi, who leased the bread oven, helped at the butcher’s stall, and provided wood and charcoal for village ovens and forges, was a typical recruiter. He assembled 20 men to work five days in the Maremma at the end of August 1655.¹²⁵

Whatever the weight of debt they carried, sharecropping gave peasants access to land and large livestock for most of their lives. It turned them into versatile producers with a wide range of skills. Tempered by the paternalism of urban landlords, sharecropping was a form of agrarian capitalism well suited to early modern Europe.¹²⁶ It resolved the landlord’s moral hazard by having the tenant share the profits and losses in every harvest. The relation exploited sharecroppers if they could not escape from harsh provisions, but abandonment or repudiation of an inheritance occurred often enough to make the landlord wary of demanding too much. In the seventeenth century, peasant hands were cheap but not plentiful. Still, *mezzadria* required patience and a high degree of cooperation between landlords and their sharecroppers for work to proceed smoothly. Of the 500 criminal disputes in Montefollonico, only 11 revealed deep tensions between peasants and their bosses. Like disgruntled employees everywhere, resistance to the landlord could take the form of foot-dragging, dissimulation, desertion, pilfering, and so on.¹²⁷ Landlords had good reason to think their sharecroppers would hide portions of the harvest from them. The issue of respective rights could never be clearly resolved. Landlords enjoyed strolling out to their estates whenever they wished to pick fruit from the trees and vines, as it made their ownership real. Sharecroppers preferred to settle accounts in little ceremonies that separated their share out from their employer’s. Margarita, wife of Vittorio Monaci, ruptured the bond with her landlords Cristoforo and Maddalena Selvi, and their daughter Caterina, not merely by refusing to help them gather up their share, but by demanding an equal portion for herself. “You ought to tell us first if you want to pick chestnuts; don’t you think it’s right?” Caterina Selvi retorted, “If I’m on my own property, don’t I have the right to come when I want?” When Caterina asked Margarita to go pick some garlic for her, the peasant woman shot back, “whoever picked the chestnuts can go pick the garlic, since you come here with a bunch (*branchi*) of people!” This was not Margarita’s first quarrel with her *padroni*. A month before, she had tried to hide the dried chestnuts from Maddalena Selvi and took issue with rumors Caterina Selvi spread on her account. “She said that I am a slut (*porca*); I am a slut as much as she

is . . . I'm a slut as much as you (*te*) and a whore as much as you are!" and threateningly waved her stick at mother and daughter from her perch on the farmhouse balcony. Cristoforo Selvi complained of this outrage to the *commissario*, invoking the "good and holy laws" that would punish those who insulted their superiors, and the magistrate decreed her expulsion from the farm.¹²⁸

Reciprocally, difficult landlords would bully their sharecroppers with constant surveillance and continual reproofs. Much of the tension revolved around the need to integrate livestock into the agricultural system. Livestock-raising was crucial to traditional agriculture. Historians often neglect it, because government officials emphasized urban grain provisioning instead. Seventeenth-century landlords expanded animal husbandry, in part because falling grain production made room for other activities. Desplanques calls livestock a "necessary evil," required to draw the ploughs and fertilize the fields.¹²⁹ Animal husbandry ensured peasant survival when grain was scarce; they could sell livestock they did not consume. Bovine animals could pull plows, provide manure for the fields, and supply milk, meat, and hides. The tractors of their day, a team of oxen constituted tangible wealth. The Landucci sold a pair of oxen for 25 to 30 *scudi* per animal in 1624, each equivalent to the annual income of a sharecropping family.¹³⁰ Given that Tuscan soils were fairly loose, and that ploughs were lightweight implements, most *poderi* required only a pair of them.¹³¹ Large livestock was expensive to maintain, so owners rented cattle out continually for plowing, drawing sleds and more rarely carts, turning presses, and threshing (where they helped crush the stalks). Bovine animals were dear to peasants, who bestowed names on them and called to them while they worked.

Mules and donkeys shared these burdens. Owners prized mules for their capacity to carry heavy loads of 150 to 200 kg and they were surer and faster than donkeys. Horses carried weights as great as mules, were swifter and more docile, and could reproduce too, but these fragile animals required lots of water and precious cereals in addition. So, large animals such as these were not numerous and were very expensive. Peasants and landlords bought them at fairs in Montalcino and Radicofani, Sarteano and Foiano, where buyers and sellers converged from distant places.¹³² More widely seen and used because it ate much less, the donkey was the commonplace beast of burden, costing a few dozen lire depending upon its age and condition. There were scores of them in Montefollonico, and peasant families owning one rented it to neighbors as often as they could. Wheeled vehicles were a rarity in central Italy: carts appear only once or twice in Montefollonico documents.¹³³

People kept few animals for just one purpose. Pigs were the notable exception; peasants slaughtered these in January and February, and then put their salted flesh in skins. Hog producers required forest scrub, which fortunately for Montefollonico was not lacking.

The granducal census of 1640 counted only 40 pigs, proportionally only a third of the number found in France's wooded Perigord. *Podere* inventories imply that their numbers were far greater than reported figures.¹³⁴ Sheep were the most common livestock, and every *podere* bred a few of these polyvalent animals. An adult, fully grown sheep might have weighed only 10 to 13 kg, compared with the modern figure of 50 kg. Sheep yielded only 3 to 4 pounds of poor-quality wool used for making mattress stuffing and homespun, for these were not the prized, fragile merino sheep of the Mezzogiorno. They produced cheese primarily, the small wheels of *cacio pecorino* that played an important part in the peasant diet. Landlords and tenants prized sheep for their manure too, which contained a higher azotic and phosphoric acid content than that of horses or cattle. People occasionally fought over piles of manure mixed with straw. Goats were the archetypical peasant animal for they would eat almost anything and produced two kids every year. Their skins served to transport liquids, their fleece made rope, their melted fat made candles, and their meat fetched high prices. Widow Corintia Bai once sold a kid for 9.5 lire, more than the annual rent of a village dwelling!¹³⁵

People who did not own such animals needed to rent them, usually by a contract called the *soccida* or *stima*, enabling them to acquire a mixed herd. Valerio Sonnini rented from Anacleto Barbieri at Fellingine, a modest *podere*, four oxen, one donkey, and thirty-six sheep, for example.¹³⁶ Renting animals entailed the same moral hazards for landlords and tenants as renting land. The sharecropper tended to the feeding, to the birthing, milking, and shearing of the animals and shared the "fruit" in the form of newborns, milk, and fleece. Peasants could consume or sell their share as they saw fit. Some peasants took on more heads in spring in order to resell them fattened in fall, so it is difficult to fix the exact numbers they managed. One of the costs of raising livestock was salt, which spurred the animal's appetite, increased its fertility, and produced finer and more abundant wool. Salt was necessary to preserve the pork for the year, just as salt was an essential ingredient in making cheese. Since salt was a government monopoly, livestock-raising helped fill government coffers.¹³⁷

The drama of livestock-raising was that each head consumed annually eight to ten times its weight in plant matter. Large livestock required entire fields of grass and hay for their nourishment, and this explains why peasants left fallow so much land. They slaughtered calves very quickly in order to provide veal for the table and milk from the heifer. Despite the important place of livestock in the economy, little was grown specifically to feed them. Where scrub land was not abundant, their owners would have to find substitutes.¹³⁸ Feeding animals was the greatest strain on community life in early modern Europe, and it required the most attentive regulation to

avert conflict. After the grape harvest, the community declared the arable land “empty” or “vain” and the rights of landowners on it lapsed. Boys then led animals out to graze on the stubble and the weeds, apparently for free. Domenico d’Ascanio, *garzone* of Anacleto Barbieri, testified,

I mind the sheep, I take them out everywhere to graze, in particular at La Fratta, at La Lista, on the plain, and along the roads. I’ve never inflicted damage with them, but I can’t speak for others. I usually go out with others (*garzoni*), like those of Papi (Rubenni) or those of Valerio at the Colle. We see other people, like the women picking up wood, those who mind oxen, and other people along the roads.¹³⁹

Peasants also pastured animals on scrubland, where they scavenged the undergrowth and the tips of trees. Animals living in the underbrush and scrounging for food were scrawny and covered in sores. They spent the winter enclosed in stalls and pens, confined to tight spaces in unhygienic conditions, and fed on whatever plant matter their owners could afford. The lack of forage was especially critical in early spring, before the grass grew tall enough to scythe. Mediterranean peasants since antiquity stripped the branches of deciduous and even coniferous trees to provide winter fodder for them and planted elm trees along the edges of fields with precisely this aim in mind. The glands and leaves of oak, chestnut, and ash-trees, vine cuttings, grape residue, olive and nut mash, all constituted food for them. Men climbed trees to hack off branches or cut them at the trunk and then stripped the leaves and branches for fodder. Grazing infractions called *danno dato* multiplied between March and June, when women and children pulled up the grass everywhere they could and damaged the hedges that kept animals out of the planted fields. The rich and the poor often fought over straw; the rich for making manure, the poor for fodder and for fuel.¹⁴⁰

The only alternative to these expedients was to graze the animals on the Maremma coast. Transhumance was a well-organized process since the fifteenth century, when the Sienese state regulated it to raise revenue. The Maremma opened its pastures to flocks between 1st of September and 1st of May, under the aegis of the *Monte dei Paschi* bureaucracy. It generated thousands of *scudi* every year for the state. Landowners privatized much of the pasture they grazed on during the seventeenth century, with a corresponding loss to the exchequer. Private owners then rented their lands to grazers for whatever the market would bear. Every pasture yielded some “fruit” or another, whether it referred to grass, leaves, acorns, chestnuts, rosemary, or broom. Not many Montefollonico landlords owned flocks numerous enough to require transhumance, however. The Nutarelli are the only family that I find had such dealings with the *Monte dei Paschi*.¹⁴¹

Whatever the solution adopted, one gets the impression that there were too many animals relative to the forest, coppice woods, and pasture land in the district. So the damage inflicted by straying livestock was another structural feature of agriculture. Every civil register has pages and pages filled with *danno dato* complaints, and they constitute but a small portion of the total number of incidents. Most claims verified by village estimators ranged between 1 and 5 lire, but many single instances were far more serious. An errant donkey entered Fabrizio Landucci's garden next to his house, knocked over the barriers, and trampled cane fences, inflicting 35 lire worth of damage on four fig trees. An ox forced its way into the *chiusa* of Giovanni Battista Magnoni and ate saffron, vines, figs, and olives worth 25 lire—six months consumption of grain for an adult! Voracious goats constituted a Mediterranean ecological disaster. Domenico Goracci's 41 goats and a pig straying from Petroio inflicted 49 lire worth of damage to the woods of the confraternity, during the famine of 1649. These same goats soon after devoured 15 *staia* of grain, 23 pounds of flax, and 1 *staia* of seed in one day, and a furious *commissario* jailed Goracci for it.¹⁴²

Magistrates dismissed as disingenuous claims by peasants that their livestock did no damage to the neighbors' land. Most people found informal ways to compensate for damage so as not to involve the village assessors and the magistrate, which entailed additional costs and constituted an escalation of conflict. This reinforced their reputation for fair dealing in the community and imposed a moral obligation on others to deal fairly with them in turn. Much of the damage *was* unintentional: child custodians frolicked as the animals trampled the grain or chewed on tender vine-shoots. But many accusers argued that the damage was willful, that the youths herded their animals into protected zones, lifting barriers out of the way. So there existed a consensus on what was inevitable and what was cheating. Feeding animals, more than anything else, forced Tuscans to work cooperatively. The entire rural economy depended upon a myriad of mutually beneficial exchanges fostering cooperation and reciprocity among neighbors, landlords, and tenants. Nevertheless, the same people were deeply competitive and awaited occasions to seize the advantage.

Competition

A Civil Arena

Il lupo sogna le pecore, e la volpe le galline
(The wolf dreams of sheep, the fox of hens)

Humans, like primates, expect their fellows to cooperate and react with outrage when others do not conform to the rules. Is the desire for justice not another human universal? Anthropologists recognize an amazing diversity in laws and customs around the world, but they have good reason to think that an individual sense of justice emerges in early childhood, rooted in the same reciprocity that underpins daily collaboration.¹ Notions of right and wrong are rooted in our emotions. Virtually universal are rules forbidding killing members of one's group, stealing objects in others' possession, raping virgins, or seeking adulterous relations with married women. Universal, too, is the notion that individuals are responsible for many of their actions. We know that people everywhere deliberately lie, dissimulate, and otherwise cheat their superiors, their peers and their subordinates.² Cheating and deception come naturally, and everybody practices them to some degree. These tricks are held in check only by virtue of a universal vigilance against them, and by the implicit threat of vengeance. Not only do we resent the people who cheat us, we can also empathize with victims of violence or duplicity and feel delight in teaching the perpetrators a lesson.³ This sense of rules and the order that results from it certainly predates the elaboration of law, which is principally a codification of the informal rules humans and primates live by.⁴

In a regime of moral autarky, before the advent of efficient judicial institutions, families restored the balance through retaliation and vendetta. Vengeance, however, led to a never-ending cycle of violence between extended families and clienteles, and the cost of restoring the

equilibrium could be very high.⁵ In Europe, early feudal lords meted out more objective justice from their castles. Later, cities imposed their own tribunals on their rural hinterlands in the late middle ages to check endemic unrest, and to cast miscreants into urban dungeons. We must not assume that rustics always preferred to settle accounts among themselves. Tuscan peasants felt very strongly that they had rights that their peers and their social superiors must respect, and the magistrate and his court were bound to uphold them.⁶

All states recognized two variants of justice: civil (who owes what to whom) and criminal (who did what to whom). Rustics appeared routinely as plaintiffs in civil suits.⁷ Few peasants possessed any legal instruction in the proper sense, but they manned village councils and served occasionally as priors, village estimators, and *santesi* who helped administer the confraternity. They knew the procedural universe from watching and from participating themselves in local decisions.⁸ All heads of household declared their revenues: the amounts of grain they harvested or grapes they pressed. Many composed their testaments before the notary, argued the clauses of marriage pacts with their future in-laws, answered presentments to the court to discuss and compose their debts, and debated their share of a *danno dato* claim. Sharecroppers knew, and probably negotiated, the clauses of their sharecropping pacts and calculated mentally how they could soften its hard edges by turning the spirit and letter of the written instrument. If legal training was a rare commodity, legal intelligence was much more widely shared. People with little experience could always draw upon free legal advice from neighbors who were much more practiced.

In Italy, the reparative function of the judiciary prevailed over the punitive one, dovetailing neatly with the activity of confraternities and guilds to contain and settle conflict.⁹ Magistrates wielded various instruments to protect people from abuse by less scrupulous neighbors, without creating durable wounds in the public body. The *marchese* and his feudal officials could punish an offender to the full extent of the law—if they considered it salutary to do so. This would have been counterproductive to the peace-making process, however.¹⁰ The response to *danno dato* illustrates their propensity to de-dramatize routine discord. Low-level courts all over Europe resolved grazing misdemeanors and abusive exploitation of other people's property. In England, manorial courts made "presentments" of people charged with "hedgebreaking" offenses, that is, removing branches for fodder and fuel from hedges that kept foraging animals out of planted fields. The procedure allowed those charged to challenge their accusers, although they rarely did so.¹¹ In Tuscany too, hedgebreaking and abusive grazing were common offenses, but neighbors usually composed them without involving the village assessors. Even when apprised of an offense,

the magistrate decided not to proceed against the culprit if the parties could settle it out of court, for a few lire. Once a magistrate convoked the perpetrators, the affair became a low-intensity civil suit. Offenders paid court costs, paid the assessment of the estimators, paid for the damage inflicted, and paid modest fines too, pronounced without appeal to the *auditore*, all on the word of the *messo*, the constable, or the guard of the confraternity estates.¹² Only occasionally would magistrates consign culprits to jail, for negligent behavior causing great damage.

Sharecropping put half the loss to *danno dato* on the peasant cultivating someone else's land, so *mezzadri* were on the lookout for offenders. They stood to lose substantial income if neighbors exploited them unchecked. *Danno dato* incidents triggered about a third or a quarter of all assault and battery cases, including at least two homicides, both entailing axe blows to the head. Most perpetrators were mere boys, sometimes off playing while their animals strayed. They often lifted barriers and opened passages through hedges to sneak their animals into forbidden pastures at dusk.¹³ When the tenant caught one doing it, he rushed up to the youth and battered him with sticks or stones, felt to be a better lesson than a delayed denunciation to a patient magistrate. Lorenzo Chigiotti bludgeoned young Niccolo Pilacci after finding the latter's sheep in an enclosure that he was renting from Cesare Landucci and that he had planted in barley and pulses. Lorenzo initially denied hitting Niccolo hard enough to draw blood but justified himself anyway, "I had to get the sheep out of the enclosure, so that they didn't cause any further damage."¹⁴

Danno dato was the most contentious issue between neighbors arbitrated "civilly" before the village magistrate. Magistrates prosecuted as *danno dato* even the deliberate theft of crops in the fields. This cheating was quite clearly malicious, but only infrequently prosecuted by criminal procedures. It often resembles a passive form of sharing, similar to the tolerance of allowing women to pick vegetables in other people's fields. Mothers sometimes sent their children to pluck figs and grapes from a neighbor's enclosure.¹⁵ The children were caught and questioned, but their mother was never prosecuted. Landlords probably preferred to close their eyes to a misdemeanor committed by a social inferior. It gave them a moral credit they could redeem in future.¹⁶ The magistrate could proceed differently, if he wished, invoking the accused's diabolical spirit and criminal intent. Prosecuting *danno dato* cases criminally often seemed too rigorous, even if the victim was clearly upset. One farmhand, Domenico, out minding his master's sheep, crept into Benedetto Crocchi's vineyard and picked some grapes. The owner happened to come by and caught him in the act. "Thief, give me back the grapes you stole!" Domenico dropped two bunches and ran off with a handful of fruit, and in his panic, fled the

territory completely. No one doubted that these were premeditated thefts, often committed by seasoned cheaters.¹⁷ Other people—such as the poor woman who cut cabbages in the friars' garden at dusk—surprised in the act, sometimes fled the village fearing stern prosecution.¹⁸ In small communities such as this one, not many people routinely committed such depredations, but there were some. Scipione Barbieri, like many landlords, slept in his fields during the summer armed with a stout stick. He ambushed Paolo Finucci stealing his figs and had him cast into jail. A witness testified that Paolo boasted that he knew the whereabouts of all the fruit in Montefollonico. "Everybody knows that Paolo's a public fruit-stealer, so it must be true, and everybody complains about him." People were right to be indignant because Finucci was comparatively well-off; his wife's dowry was twice the village average.¹⁹ Yet the *commissario* launched a civil suit. He only handed down stiff fines on several occasions, augmenting them in the case of people living outside the jurisdiction (and presumably more difficult to prosecute).

Most other civil litigation reflected the use of judicial pressure by creditors against neighbors who owed them money, in a world where everyone owed debts to others and where people repaid them episodically. There was widespread suspicion that prosperous people built their fortunes by squeezing social inferiors in litigation, cheating them of their due.²⁰ "Go to justice!" was a taunt that people of the better sort hurled back against claims for payment. Studying civil cases quantitatively lets us see how the magistrate managed these financial wrangles. Affairs coming before his bench fell into several baskets. Landlords litigated with sharecroppers who cheated them, or used the court's solemn procedures to turf them out. Poor nobles and other landlords often lamented that sharecroppers were inveterate cheaters who had to be watched closely. Sometimes such cases passed into the criminal records.²¹ Brothers who exploited a *podere* in common might repudiate their share of a debt or a dowry portion accruing to a sibling once they split their inheritance, a favorite ploy.²² Debt recovery was the thorniest issue. Many debts were secured on third persons, who stood to have their own property seized on account of someone else's tardy payment. Villagers based their credit on the trustworthiness and the reputation of the borrowing party. Should the debtor die, or should some unforeseen event change the overall context of the debt relation, a creditor could sue to recover his property. He might be content to take instead other merchandise, or else credits the debtor held on other people. Creditors would also go to court to have the debt recognized by the tribunal, so that they might convert it into an asset they could spend.²³ They could press the judge to issue them a *gravamento*, by which the constable and the bailiff would confiscate the debtor's property. These pawns

would then be sold to pay the debt and the court costs too. Some men appeared often in court to demand small sums from an array of creditors without their reputation suffering from it; the shoemakers, blacksmiths, and butchers all operated in this manner. Nevertheless, there appears to be no direct relation between wealth and power, on one hand, and the inclination to sue neighbors to recover credits, on the other: Anacleto Barbieri and his son Lorenzo did not press the judge for action very often. The most litigious individuals figure as reluctant payers as well as impatient creditors. The same men figure often in the criminal registers too: Bernardino Biagi, Jacomo and Francesco Crocchi, Francesco Miseri, Scipione Barbieri.

Each party argued its case before the judge without the aid of lawyers, although probably not simultaneously in order to avoid heated exchanges arising from offended virtue.²⁴ Most commercial transactions in Montefollonico involved very paltry sums, and so the agents never committed the details to writing. Sharecroppers demanded small sums for unpaid wages from employers. Unpaid rent, recovery of a pawn, the retrieval of a tool, the remainder of an incomplete transaction would never justify a written notarial contract. The creditor had no proof to his claim other than his reputation for straight dealing. Creditors sometimes presented their case with the support of an account book, a ledger, or some other legal instrument. Many people kept shop books or sharecropping ledgers, less as an accounting tool than as a check against cheating. People who were unable to make the entries in their own hand turned to guarantors, relatives, or patrons who could. A few such books belonging to humble people survive: the carpenter Pierantonio Faluschi's book still has wood chips wedged between its pages. The sharecroppers Girolamo and Santi Maccari inserted a variety of documents and operations into the pages of their book.²⁵ Village artisans and leaseholders of communal assets routinely displayed these to the judge to collect payment from numerous clients at a time. For creditors these papers reduced the transaction risks considerably. Judges used these written "proofs" when they had them, but they accepted hearsay and witness reports too, all part of a *pubblica fama*.²⁶ On the basis of these documents and sworn testimony, the magistrate decided on the validity of the claim and then issued some execution warrant. Where issues of succession and tutelage prevented the judge from seeing clear in the murky depths of family secrets, he could ask the bishop to proclaim a *monitorio*. People with knowledge of suspicious actions (such as the theft of a receipt for dowry payments obliging the in-laws to pay the dowry twice over) could reveal them to the priest in the secret of the confessional.²⁷ Neighbors whispered there what they knew of family secrets.

To learn the identities of litigating parties, I have selected all the cases for several months of 1619 and five unexceptional years: 1627, 1635, 1644,

1655, and 1667.²⁸ There was little evolution—except that after 1650, the ecclesiastics, being more numerous than previously, appeared more often as instigators. What leaps to our attention is that people instigated civil proceedings against their equals, and their social inferiors, but only infrequently against their superiors. In 1627, 73 individual litigators brought claims against over twice as many defendants, though some people appeared several times. Four of the creditors and a larger number of defendants were women, not always widows or spinsters. Five of the 65 litigants in 1635 were similarly women. They might represent themselves or even their husbands, if absent. The ability of women to litigate varied a great deal with their social status, their wealth, and their connections—and no doubt with their strength of character too.²⁹ Lucilla di Marcantonio, the *sbirro's* wife, was twice agent and once a defendant in 1619 and appears twice more as an agent in 1627. Casually insulted once as a *moglie di sbirro*, Lucilla was no pushover. Fourteen noblemen brought claims in 1627 against two noblemen and a noblewoman, six men of the middling sort, and forty-one peasants (two of whom were women). Noblemen were not subject to the magistrate's authority but they could marshal the court against people who were. Pretia, wife of the sharecropper Vincenzo Mazzoni, complained to the judge that the Sgr Giovan Felice Foresi was not subject to the jurisdiction and that his complaint was illegitimate. She threatened to charge him with harassment (*molestia*).³⁰ Risky behavior on her part? Foresi was suing all his debtors in a desperate attempt to save his own patrimony. Portia di Adriano, another married woman, challenged a civil presentment from Sgr Flavio Buonamici. The entrepreneur Arenio Barbieri demanded "with all due reverence" that Buonamici prove his allegations more substantially.³¹ Still in 1627, men of the middling group too litigated often, with 23 individuals bringing suits against 11 men of the middling group and 52 peasants, 4 of them women. They prosecuted but a single noble and no ecclesiastic, who would not have accepted a challenge from a commoner before the *marchese's* magistrate. Finally, at the bottom of the hierarchy, 32 peasant litigants (including 3 women) sued 15 minor notables and 31 other peasants. The literate Benedetto Stefanucci managed multiple lawsuits simultaneously (seven as the creditor, twice as the debtor) in what appears to be a pattern of peasant chicanery.

After 1650, there was no fundamental shift in these patterns, even if ecclesiastical institutions and individual priests launched more suits. The confraternity launched a few cases in 1655 through its lay manager Francesco Crocchi. Twelve priests or representatives of urban pious institutions (of 66 individual litigants) brought suits against notables and sharecroppers almost equally. Four noblemen and three noblewomen availed themselves of the feudal magistrate, also roughly equally against

notables and peasants. Nineteen male notables brought suits against 25 notables (some figure several times) and 33 peasants. Finally, 26 individual peasant men brought their own cases to the magistrate, against 15 notables and 20 peasants. Rustics were not always socially isolated in these contests. Lucilla Ghezzi, orphan minor of humble background, asked the magistrate to designate someone to defend her legal interests before the court, and Fulvio Carpellini consented to do it, presumably as an act of piety.³² These samples tend to show that conflicts opposed people of the same social group and those in lower orders in a general tussle for resources.³³ To recover their property, peasants could and often did sue individuals somewhat more prosperous than themselves.

The notables took a severe beating during the mid-century economic crisis, reflected in a wave of suits against each other. Some of these suits revealed the plaintiff's desperation: Jacomo Crocchi's butcher bills of 7 April 1655 identified people owing small sums for meat consumed a long time ago.³⁴ Once creditors sensed that someone was on the verge of ruin, they advanced to claim their share. The wounded party would then strike back in countersuits to recover money owed to him. The bad situation of Carlo Mazzoni, a semiliterate stonemason who leased village revenues, is a good illustration. His revenue predictions proved too optimistic in the aftermath of the great famine. He figures as the party sued in 15 different instances, by a wide variety of people in Montefollonio and beyond. He brought forward eight suits against the baker, the butcher, the miller, and the tavern-keeper to recover his debts in turn. If he could not satisfy his creditors, there was a good chance he would spend time in debtor's prison. Imprisonment for debt was so common that there was little stigma attached to it. It was one way to pressure a creditor who might otherwise abscond and leave unpaid bills behind. The amount of the debt mattered little: Valentino Rubenni, the prosperous peasant, threatened Mariana Bazzi with imprisonment for unpaid rent worth less than two lire. Creditors menaced with prison debtors whose wives possessed enough property to satisfy the credit. Dowries were a way for couples to put part of their patrimony out of the reach of creditors. As property of the bride, its status was always ambiguous.³⁵ Placing a breadwinner husband in prison, and having him pay for his own incarceration usually convinced their wives to offer up their own assets voluntarily in exchange for his freedom.

There is not much direct information on imprisonment for debts in the civil justice registers, barely half a dozen cases of it for the five years mentioned above. The principal victims were residents whose business dealings took them farther afield, into the jurisdiction of the Sieneese *Corte di Mercanzia*, where debtors were routinely arrested. Nobility was no impediment to imprisonment for debt. Scipione Landucci and his brothers were

so burdened with debt that they decided to repudiate the paternal estate. His father's creditors clapped him into debtor's prison as soon as he returned from years of exile. He spent three years incarcerated in the aristocratic dormitory in Siena, while negotiating ways to extinguish his father's debts and in so doing become eligible to hold public office.³⁶ The Sienese salt tribunal held its distributors to ransom too; it confined Arenio Barbieri to the village *palazzo*, where he brought a cot and other necessities while he worked out a compromise.³⁷ Creditors imprisoned other Montefollonico notables outside the fief, such as blacksmith GiovanBattista Borri in Sinalunga. What can we conclude? Wealthy people used the courts disproportionately in order to defend their property, but the rules did not favor them exclusively: hence the public confidence in the institution of formal justice. We encounter this confidence in criminal justice too.

Criminal Process

The competitive ethic in this face-to-face community often resulted in criminal action. We are fortunate to possess an exceptional number of complete trials for our village, with the resulting sentences in most cases and their final mitigation by the *marchese*. The village *commissario* and the *auditore* in Siena were not the only magistrates with jurisdiction over Montefollonico's inhabitants. The diocesan vicar in Pienza prosecuted delinquent ecclesiastics. These trials record the dialogue between the magistrate and each of the parties in conflict, along with the depositions of the witnesses. Like most historical sources, the records are not transparent. Trial transcriptions yield only a partial and slanted picture of the prosecution of criminal disputes and the punishment of offenders.³⁸ Lurking behind the vivid procedures we possess, are all the criminal actions never denounced, or else denounced but never prosecuted. From the archives, we can only ascertain that people brought some cases to court without ever knowing what proportion they are of real offenses.³⁹ Criminal archives nevertheless lay bare the web of social relations existing in specific communities. Moreover, the trials teach us a great deal about judicial procedure, the practice of inquest and interrogation, the culture of the judges, the tenor of the sentences, the sensitivity to different crimes. Few of these cases required much preparation in legal theory. Magistrates often sought extrajudicial solutions to conflicts.⁴⁰ In any event, the *commissario* did not judge the case himself, properly speaking, even though he made his opinion clear to the *auditore* and suggested appropriate penalties. The *auditore* functioned much like a French royal judge, in that the magistrate making the final decision on guilt or innocence did not concern himself with prosecution.

The chief objection to those who reject counting and categorizing criminal cases in Ancien Regime judicial systems would be that in many ways, the mechanisms for deciding to prosecute offenses resemble our own. Today, police agents and public prosecutors with finite resources investigate some complaints over others, on the basis of their objective gravity or the keen emotions they trigger. In Montefollonico, there is every reason to think that people never reported the great majority of minor thefts. Indeed, some of the plaintiffs tell us so. The *commissario* prosecuted most such offenses civilly under the *danno dato* heading, even though the terms he employed—*rubbare*, *scarpate*—clearly denote criminal intent. Minor thefts, affairs of scolding and insults often appear in the registers, but the *auditore* did not punish them harshly, and sometimes he dismissed them as trifles not worth prosecuting. But it does not follow that he dismissed just as summarily cases of housebreaking and nocturnal theft, of “mugging” (called assassination), of cruel pranks, confrontations in village squares between armed males, symbolic attacks on persons of rank, homicides and near-homicides. I believe that the archives are a good reflection of the cases that provoked the most outrage in the victim, in the magistrate, and in the community at large.⁴¹

Apart from the nobles (who could be prosecuted in Siena—and often were), none was immune to prosecution. Humble people had immediate recourse to the tribunal to complain of their betters. Alessandro Fei, a simple *garzone* who was shaken up but not hurt in a *danno dato* confrontation, marched straight to the magistrate to complain against the priest Giovanbattista Barbieri, son of Anacleto, and brother of Lorenzo—three powerful men.⁴² Complained Fei, “I’m a soldier of His Serene Highness and I’m a respected man, and certain words must not be said to me!”⁴³ Since even known prostitutes went to the magistrate to curb the pranks played on them by local youths, criminal justice was not something intimidating to peasants in their communities. People perceived justice as a right, and they expected judges to dispense it to everyone equally. The demand for it underlay the juridical system.⁴⁴

The *commissario* usually composed criminal procedures in the first-person narrative of the participants, complete with the ruses, the outrage, the meanderings of people not used to giving formal testimony.⁴⁵ In a half-dozen instances, the accused and the witnesses answered insolently to the magistrate, who did not always respond to the provocation. The office of the *sindaco dei malefizi* put the burden of accusation on a public official, not the plaintiff, to circumvent a tendency to *omertà* and secret accommodation. We find a couple of cases in which more powerful people prevailed upon the *sindaco* not to lodge his complaint, but the *sindaco* felt strongly about justice too, and apparently had little to lose by defying his petitioners.⁴⁶

What is more, just to be safe, he brought forward incidents that resulted more from horseplay or accidents where the protagonists were clearly friends still, leaving it up to the magistrate to decide not to carry forward a charge after listening to the participants and recording their story.⁴⁷ The magistrate could also initiate proceedings on the basis of an anonymous denunciation, or on the advice of an unnamed “friend of the court” (probably a noble or ecclesiastic exempt from feudal jurisdiction), although this was not frequent.

The magistrate’s first concern was to prevent an incident from spinning out of control and giving rise to graver offenses that would polarize the village into warring factions. One instrument he wielded was the *pace e tregua* by which he ordered both parties in a dispute, and their relatives, to keep the peace on pain of an enormous fine. The purpose of this restraining order was to cut short a process that escalated to premeditated murder and to feud. These were not notarized agreements and must not be confused with peace accords, called *paci*, which tend to disappear after the late sixteenth century. Florentine *paci e tregue* were documents containing specific pacificatory articles, secured by a money bond posted by the guilty party or his guarantors.⁴⁸ In Montefollonico the *pace* was instead a decree that was broadcast aloud by the *messo* in the village minutes after an altercation.⁴⁹ He announced the magistrate’s suspension of arms first from the village *palazzo*, then repeated it before the house of the combatants, and finally at the oven in the village square. “I proclaimed it loudly, that is, since I had no trumpet, I shouted it loud.” Villagers within earshot asked for details they passed along quickly. By issuing the decree, the magistrate hoped to induce the victim and his family to reflect before acting out their outrage.⁵⁰ A fresh confrontation would entail heavy fines levied on the instigator on the grounds of truce-breaking. Ordering culprits to post large amounts of money as guarantees would simply not have been possible for anyone—for richer families were liable to larger fines. I have not found a single instance in which these monetary penalties were actually levied on those who dared defy the consequences. Of vendetta incidents there were several, one of which was fatal. Rinaldo Barbieri ambushed the *messo* and confraternity guard Domenico Barbieri with an axe when he was alone in the woods. Domenico had denounced Rinaldo for repeated *danno dato* violations. The *auditore* sentenced him to death in absentia, after he fled to Rome.⁵¹ Nothing resembling the durable feuds still common in Corsica ever occurred in Montefollonico, however. The array of draconian laws devised everywhere in the sixteenth century to summarily dispatch bandits fell into abeyance.⁵²

After dissuading any retaliation, the *commissario* moved beyond the *sindaco*’s report to record the victim’s complaint, and he examined the

wounds, if any, himself. In most cases, he described an array of bruises, scratches, and small cuts, which he sketched into the transcript. Where women were battered in places not normally uncovered, he deferred to the description of midwives. Serious cases he referred to a surgeon who pronounced a medical verdict on their gravity. A mortal wound was one from which one *might* die. The *commissario* asked the plaintiff to name the people who were present, and this gave him a short list of persons to summon, beginning with those closest to the affair. He questioned all of them in secret, after having them swear on the Bible to tell the truth. "I will tell you how it happened as if I were at my confessor's knee, I'll tell it true!"⁵³ Not every named witness was called. Women appeared unsystematically, depending on whether there were other people available. As a rule, women were not enthusiastic witnesses. They sometimes pleaded poverty, implying that their testimony would be less trustworthy. The magistrate could always detain them in order to loosen their tongue, as it happened with Domenica Fiducci, who dared not denounce the prominent villagers who tormented the schoolmaster monk until after two days of incarceration. "After I beseeched the angels to make me remember," she delivered up the names the *commissario* expected, though insisting that she learned it only through the Voice of the People.⁵⁴ Boys and young men, both victims and aggressors, suffered no such inhibitions. They were not usually informed of the reason they were called to testify—but it was an open secret. Sometimes the *messo* told them after reading the writ in the street before the house. The magistrate proceeded by compiling a list of questions requiring objective answers, first of all to establish the reality of the accusation, and then to determine the particulars. He did not often delve into the aggressor's motives, although people usually gave him one. The dialogue cast the complaint into a legal mould. The magistrate's questions probed whether or not blood was drawn, whether or not the victim had fallen, whether or not the blade had been unsheathed, or whether the culprit was a militiaman entitled to bear arms for his defense. These specific markers helped the *commissario*—and the appellant magistrate in Siena reading the transcript in order to assign a sentence—determine objectively the gravity of the offense.

In half a dozen cases, the judge dismissed the incident as unproven or as so trivial as to be not worth pursuing, but he was careful not to incur charges of denying justice. Once he heard the witnesses and ascertained the reality of the charge, the *commissario* summoned the accused. The law considered a refusal to appear in court to be a legitimate confession, and the judge could conclude immediately with a verdict of guilt. In a serious case of assault or vexation, the magistrate would order the constable to seize the accused and cast him into the cell under the *palazzo* floor. If he

would not confess right away, the magistrate put him back for a day or two before interviewing him again. If the culprit still did not give something approximating a confession, the *commissario* drew up a formal indictment on which to proceed.⁵⁵ Only after this stage could he confront the accused with the witnesses and their testimony and then torture the former to obtain a truer account. Why such emphasis on confession? It was something Catholics were required to perform, as something that would contribute to their salvation. A good reason for the *commissario* to seek a confession was that forensic science was extremely crude and witnesses' reports were often inconclusive. A good reason for the accused to confess was that the magistrate always rewarded it with a lighter penalty. If the testimony against the accused was not overwhelming, the *commissario* would be constrained to release him for lack of evidence. Should he let his animus against the offender inflect his judgment, the *auditore* or the *marchese* could always disown him and place him in an awkward position in the village.

Torture was not a punishment, but a rough manner of questioning.⁵⁶ Magistrates reserved it for offenses they considered heinous and meriting exemplary prosecution, but even then the law strictly regulated its application. Confessions under torture could not stand alone, but had to be corroborated by other evidence in order to obtain conviction. Most of its victims walked away without confessing, or judges assigned them a much lighter sentence. Of almost 500 criminal cases, we have only one interrogation under torture in Montefollonico, inflicted on a young widow who acted as an accomplice in the theft of grain from the *marchese's* reserve during the famine of 1648–1649. The amount of money involved was modest, a few dozen lire, but Rutilio Carpellini had lodged her there to keep watch over it.⁵⁷ Her real crime was betrayal of trust. She pinned the blame on an outsider, who gave her 5 lire to attend a *veglia*, so he could scoop the grain out through the cat's door with a fireplace shovel. In order to determine if she knew of any accomplices, the magistrate Simone Mangherini subjected her to the *strappado* for a few minutes. Asked if what she testified against Volunnio Bettiber was true (that he had knowingly purchased stolen grain), she cried, "Signor si!, My God, Jesus, help me! I told the truth, Signor si, Signor si! Jesus, Jesus!" Asked to give a more detailed answer, she continued, "Signor si, signor si, that's what I said, and I said it as the truth, and I maintain it, Jesus, Jesus, come Madonna del Carmine!" The *commissario* then instructed the *sbirro* to lower her gently and to readjust her arms. Magistrates tortured at least two men on charges of attempted rape in Montepulciano and Siena, where the dungeons were better equipped, but both eventually walked free after suffering months of confinement.⁵⁸

The testimony complete, judges counted their witnesses and their qualities and then drew upon their legal education to reach a verdict. Many trials (162 of about 450 procedures before the *commissario*) stopped before reaching this point. Often they aborted just after the denunciation, for lack of witnesses. Other times, some sort of compromise cut them short. Magistrates encouraged compromise, for if people pursued every altercation to its legal conclusion, the whole judicial system would become paralyzed.⁵⁹ The *marchese* intervened to resolve the issue personally in at least 14 cases, and the Siense *auditore* in two others. These resolutions and interventions notwithstanding, most trials concluded with a verdict, followed by a sentence. Almost 300 (295) sentences involving 416 defendants survive in our legal registers. The *auditore* found 176 accused not guilty, and absolved them. That left 240 more with a penalty pronounced against them. Six of the accused received a capital sentence, but I doubt an executioner carried even one of them out, since almost all had escaped, and the one who stayed was pardoned by the *marchese*. In a few cases, the *auditore* sentenced the culprit to a lengthy prison term, but few prisons were designed to hold people for long periods, and so Francesco Coppoli commuted those punishments to several months of exile instead. He also usually commuted the afflictive penalties of the lash and the *strappado*, once the victims consented to make peace. Eleven accused were let off without punishment on the grounds that it would harden them against their enemies.

Sometimes, the magistrate justified his sentences: that is, he referred to legal authorities in pronouncing guilt and assigning a penalty.⁶⁰ A favorite reference was Prospero Farinacci, whose *Praxica et theorica criminalis* (1616) provided a catalogue of offenses and their possible mutations. Providing so many “limitations” and “extensions” of a theoretical case, he invited judges to evaluate, distinguish, and otherwise split hairs to legitimize a sentence they devised themselves using their “arbitrary” power.⁶¹ Such arbitrary discretion liberated judges from applying the harsh sentences the legal codes recommended. The trend was toward softer sentences, and Farinacci gave magistrates good theoretical reasons to be clement. He expected them to judge the “animus” of the offender and the special circumstances of the crime. A nocturnal offense was more pejorative, since at night one could better presume evil intent.⁶² The sex of the offenders or the victims and their ages should influence them too. Judges treated both women and youths more leniently than adult men. Women’s quarrels never threatened to explode into homicidal retaliation, and only one woman was bold enough to strike a man with intent to do grievous harm. Children were similarly “irresponsible,” their passions were keener, and their interests

were more trivial. They did not yet function as “political” beings in the village arena.⁶³

The Gravity of Crimes

Tra asino e asino, non corron se non calci
(Between donkeys, only kicks prevail)

The sentences reflected the varying gravity of offenses in the minds of victims and magistrates alike. Their scale of values is easily comprehensible to us today. Smuggling harmed only the *marchese*. He ordered that people wishing to export grain, wine, or animals first buy a license from the *gabel-laio*, and that in times of penury no licenses would be issued. Villagers never denounced smugglers openly to the authorities. The 20 cases figuring in the criminal records usually stem from accusations by the constable, who hid by the road where animals laden with merchandise passed by. The sharecroppers intercepted on the roads were usually simple executants for noble or ecclesiastical landlords who intended to sell their products as they wished. Enea di Benvenuto trembled when the *sbirro* Marco intercepted him with his donkey on the road to Pienza, the latter warning that smuggling was punishable with the galleys. “What do you want?” argued Enea, “the grain wasn’t mine! I was just sent by a priest to take it to another priest.”⁶⁴ Few local people received any sentence at all for this offense, and penalties inflicted on outsiders could not be applied. In villagers’ minds, smuggling was not an offense likely to create bad feeling between neighbors. For his part, the *marchese* probably lacked the stomach and the resources to challenge rich churchmen who had their own champions at court. Better to close one’s eyes and accept the lesser evil.

People let pass many slights in order not to aggravate relations with their neighbors, like the woman who did not react until someone stole her wheat sheaves repeatedly.⁶⁵ People living in small communities hesitated to initiate quarrels that could one day haunt them. This discretion is particularly noteworthy regarding property crimes. Everyone was expected to aid their less fortunate brethren, *per l’amor di Dio*. When the sharecropper Niccolo di Matteo caught his neighbor Domenico di Vincenzo stealing honey from his beehives one night, the latter sought to elicit compassion from his victim. “The devil made me do it . . . brother, take pity on me, I did it out of necessity!” Niccolo refuted Domenico with his own argument. “You didn’t have to do it out of need, you ought to have come to me and asked me to lend it to you, and out of the love of God I would have helped you.” An abrupt refusal by Valentino Rubenni, the village’s richest peasant

to grant a loan of two *staia* of grain to his son-in-law Francesco Giannetti provoked an explosion of rage that bystanders considered justified. Rubenni paid for his tight-fistedness by being a favorite target for thieves, and by being shunned by people seeking godparents.⁶⁶

Hunger lowered the threshold of tolerance toward indelicate neighbors and swelled the number of *danno dato* complaints. Thefts prosecuted criminally multiplied. In years of hunger, property crimes became the most visible category. It is a trite observation to state that in times of extreme hardship, people stole in order to survive. But our documents are detailed enough and so nicely complemented by other sources that we can scrutinize this material more closely. Thefts constitute only 17 percent of all crimes denounced to the magistrate, or 83 of 487. This works out to only about three cases annually, although that figure increased dramatically during the famines. This proves that people denounced theft inconsistently in a normal year, because it provoked less indignation. There was a tacit understanding that neighbors could glean off fields just like animals, once families reaped the harvest. Villagers denied to strangers the tolerance conceded to neighbors. The *sbirro* caught Bartolomeo di Vincenzo from Montalcino in the vineyard of Meco Bello, picking figs. Bartolomeo reasoned that once the vines had been harvested, anyone could go in. The *commissario* clapped him in jail instead. This case notwithstanding, outsiders do not figure often as scapegoats made to mitigate local householders' fears that a crime wave was in process.⁶⁷

Only 10 percent (against 37 individuals) of the sentences for about 300 crimes relate to theft. The *auditore* found only 22 of the accused guilty; 5 saw at least three-quarters of their sentence pardoned by the *marchese*, usually after relatives intervened on their behalf. Of the remaining seventeen, two were fugitives who would never return to be hung, and one outsider was sentenced to exile. The punishment, such as it was, bore down on a dozen individuals. Even they were treated very differently. Two individuals escaped with three days exile. On six others, fines of less than 50 lire were imposed, and on one that of 100 lire, although these were not necessarily paid. During the famine, the *sbirro* subjected a half-dozen individuals to two brief hoists of the *strappado*, with the demand that they repay the damage. The magistrate inflicted exemplary punishment only on the *sbirro* himself, Marcantonio di Paolo, who served an unspecified time on the galleys in the 1620s.

Normally the *commissario* undertook no action beyond registering a complaint when the plaintiff could not identify witnesses, even when the accuser had a suspect in mind. Outside of famine times, the magistrates scrupulously observed whatever guarantees the law provided against the arbitrary arrest of stable residents, rich or poor. The most vulnerable poor

in Montefollonico were widows with children, or old and young women bereft of the wages of adult men. Few of them lived on sharecropping farms, which required reasonably intact families just to function normally. Most of them lived in the agglomeration, alongside more well-to-do households. The proportion of *castello* households headed by women with no adult sons constituted about a quarter or a fifth. We might reasonably assume that they or their children would steal occasionally foodstuffs in the countryside in order to survive.⁶⁸ The light penalties meted out on the few who figure in our registers suggest that it was worth taking the risk of getting caught.⁶⁹ When the famine worsened in the late 1640s, judges processed other women criminally for plundering gardens. Caterina, nicknamed *La Diavola*, was stealing about 25 heads of cabbage from the garden of the friars one evening in December 1648, when *maestro* Pietro Nutarelli happened upon her.⁷⁰ “*Bella cosa!*” he shouted, and she ran away, disappearing for several months probably anticipating rigorous treatment. People denounced women only infrequently, though, for two reasons. One was that petty thievery on their part did not elicit the same indignation in the victims. The other likelihood is that they were less liable than men to commit crimes, even those born out of desperation. None of the women appears as a recidivist.

Risky behavior everywhere is an attribute of males, especially young males, who show greater willingness to jeopardize their lives and fortunes in search of status and attention.⁷¹ Men always constituted most of the accused in cases of *danno dato*, even during the famine year of 1648–1649. Men made up the majority of thieves the *commissario* prosecuted criminally, too. When someone stole over 85 kilograms of wheat flour and 39 kilograms of millet from a mill one night in January 1653, the *commissario* proposed the names of needy people nearby who could be plausible suspects. The victim retorted that “sometimes, richer people are worse.” The sources corroborate this darker vision.⁷² We often equate misery with a propensity to steal, in a fairly mechanical way, as if need were sufficient motivation. This corresponds neither with patterns of delinquency, as they occur today, nor with the information obtained from the sources we have for Montefollonico. The dozen individuals who appear as suspects or accused on more than one occasion certainly do not conform to the image of the downtrodden poor, which probably prompted their victims to press charges. Most of the recidivist thieves in the *criminale* were married and had children. The great majority of them lived in the *castello* and participated in village institutions of the fief and the church. Their theft was not a desperate measure, but a predatory act. Lattanzio Pilacci and all his sons, Niccolo, Vincenzo, and Virgilio, for example, figured frequently. The *commissario* investigated Virgilio Pilacci after numerous people

complained that someone had stolen ripe grapes from their vines in September 1654. It had been a very cold year, and the grape harvest was meager. The *sbirro* described him as “universally decried in the whole village, as someone who practically lives from plunder.” Virgilio possessed a vineyard and land enough to produce 5 *some* (15 *staia*) of grain, only a third of what he needed to feed his wife and two small children, but he was capable of working for others. Villagers lined up to add their grievances, describing how he plundered other people’s woods for fuel. A village prior, Valentino di Rocco, lamented that Virgilio always went armed and unpunished, and since many people were afraid of him, none would testify against him. Everyone knew he was guilty, from the *voce populi*. In October, the *sbirro* finally received the order to seize Virgilio Pilacci but it was too late, since he had just packed up his belongings and fled the Marquisate.⁷³

Villagers subjected men such as these to close surveillance, which is a leitmotiv appearing over a dozen times in the criminal proceedings involving theft. When he realized that half a dozen sheaves of grain were missing from the sled on his field, Arenio Barbieri spent a night hiding nearby. He caught the sharecropper Agostino Gabbiai in the act early next morning.⁷⁴ At least a dozen victims went looking themselves for the culprits, aided by a sneaking suspicion. Cesare Bai thought at once that Francesco di Arenio Barbieri, a sometime stonemason, and his cousin Rinaldo Barbieri stole millet from his house while he was at a *veglia*, because Francesco knew where he hid his house key. Emboldened by the encouragement of his neighbors, who shared his suspicions, Cesare lurked around the entrance to Rinaldo’s house until he spotted his millet. He tricked Francesco into confessing the crime on the understanding that he would hush it up, but instead brought the *sindaco* to witness the grain’s restitution. “Now it’s known by the whole village, which is public.”⁷⁵ There were only three or four men at any one time who aroused such strong suspicions. Around 1620, the principal rogue was Bastiano Fanciulli, accused of burgling about 100 *scudi* from the shop of Anacleto Barbieri. Barbieri suspected Fanciulli because of his habit of wandering about with no ostensible purpose, his poverty (meaning that he had to work with his hands), and his bad reputation. A year later, he stood accused of important thefts in nearby Torrita, for which the court sentenced him in absentia to death.⁷⁶ In the 1630s, Pasquino Monaci, called Calcagnolo stepped into this role. He owned a significant amount of property but had a reputation for carousing and gambling at the tavern, and for visiting village prostitutes whenever he had money, while his wife went hungry.⁷⁷ Many people considered the village *sbirro* Marco di Paolo to be an inveterate thief, a reputation not aided by his role as someone who seized pawns from debtors.⁷⁸ As he was the sole

villager with a convict past, his neighbors were not about to forget it. People also ascribed thieving to character flaws in otherwise tolerable individuals. *Maestro* Ottaviano Nannini owned 300 *scudi* worth of property; he was a blacksmith who lived with his mother and children, while his brother was a priest.⁷⁹ Neighbors described him as a compulsive thief. Antonio Borzelli, an assertive day-laborer married to a woman called *La Bugiardella* (the liar), stood accused three times. Gregorio Sonnini stole beehives from two widows one night, leaving telltale clues of wax and dead bees on his doorstep. Witnesses described him as a carefree youth who did not like to work. He fled to the papal states, leaving his wife behind to cope as best she could in the house they owned.⁸⁰ Prosecution of repeat offenders such as these was a sensible reaction on the part of neighbors.

Theft almost always figures behind assault and battery in early modern criminal procedures, however. Just over half of all cases in the combined feudal and diocesan criminal archives, 263 out of 490, entailed an offense against a person, their body, or their reputation. When we remove from the tally the cases involving infractions against public order—such as those related to contraband, poaching, carrying unauthorized weapons, resisting arrest or seizure of goods, and harassment of women—this portion surpasses two-thirds. This frequency is quite typical of early modern criminal jurisdictions. It implies not that people did not often steal, but that victims were more inclined to denounce to the magistrate outrages against their persons. Violent crimes were also more frequent than today; we find five or six homicides and at least a dozen attempted murders among the criminal procedures in this single, tiny fief. The number of conflicts over the period would have to be augmented by a third to account for archival lacunae. Villagers reported violent altercations either to the *sindaco* or to the *commissario* roughly once a month. Were these crimes committed repeatedly by the same few individuals, or was aggressive behavior too widespread to be simple “deviance”?

Who were the aggressors? There were a lot of them, to begin with. Some 372 different individuals figure as participants in these conflicts. Of all the protagonists, 231 of them figure as the aggressor at least once, and 179 individuals figure as victims only. Violent behavior was not restricted to a deviant few. It was an instrumental manner of relating with one’s neighbors. Violence is part of our design, not a disease to eradicate. Humans and animals deploy violence to achieve specific ends. Frans de Waal sees *measured* aggression in primates and humans as a behavior that strengthens social bonds, since the threat of retaliation for slights usually leads to compromise and subsequent cooperation.⁸¹ Violence was an option available to almost all the men. Men had a near-monopoly on grievous and premeditated aggression, which is another human universal. Women figure

as aggressors in 24 cases however, about 10 percent. They were not insensitive to issues of status in the village and so occasionally put rivals down.⁸² After exchanging verbal sallies with their neighbors and scuffling with them—pulling hair, scratching, and biting—they rushed to the magistrate to display their scrapes and bruises. It was not infrequent for people of different social status to resolve their differences through force. There was some (often only slight) social disparity between the combatants in almost 30 percent of the cases, but it was not all one way. The aggressors enjoyed higher status than their victims in two-thirds of those cases (or one case in five of all conflicts); but in 10 percent of the disputes, humble people attacked their betters. One was more likely to be struck or insulted by a social inferior than sued by him. Vincenzo Parisi from Petroio admitted escalating his quarrel with Francesco Crotchi, who was his social better, if his moral inferior:

I am a creditor of Francesco for six and a half *paoli*, for the remainder of a lamb, which I asked for several times, but it was never possible to get paid, and today after he lavished me with words and chatter about paying me, I understood he was just fooling with me, and so we came to insults, and after he raised a spade to hit me, I drew my sword.⁸³

A number of the victims were noblemen. Sometimes the slight against them was an inadvertent slip, as when the son of a wealthy commoner remarked in conversation with some noble youths that the university scholarships for poor aristocrats made some of them insolent.⁸⁴ But on several occasions they aimed to cut to the quick; “these signori only buy liver—they never buy meat,” was village butcher Giovanni Battista Magnoni’s slur against Giovanni Battista Landucci, a slur that almost cost him his life.⁸⁵

Outsiders fought against local individuals in twenty-five cases, or roughly one in ten. It has been written that local tribunals often designated outsiders as preferential victims, easier to isolate and punish, because native delinquents had influential friends.⁸⁶ Outsiders were rarely strangers, but it usually took a long period of residence before people designated them as neighbors. Given the propensity of sharecropping to reshuffle populations periodically, 10 percent is not a high proportion. I would not conclude that the court treated outsiders more harshly. On the contrary, outsiders asked the court and its foreign magistrate to punish their aggressors. These outsiders were victims in 17 of the cases. Half of those figure in the years after 1645 when famine tested liberality of every kind and dissolved the cement of ordinary empathy. In a third of the cases, however, the outsiders were the aggressors. The surgeon Marcantonio

Visconti and the weaver Tommaso Fei were exiled to Montefollonico for bad behavior at home. Some—such as the Nucci brothers, a pair of Torrita notables who challenged and then battered a Landucci nobleman during a game of *cacio*—were there just for a day. Outsiders who were trying to earn a livelihood would be tested by the men of the village. This was the fate of the schoolmasters, the glassworks oven-tenders, and artisans working on special projects. Baldo Bruni understood the implications of his challenge, seeing his tormentors as delegates for the whole village: “*Monte! Monte!* You don’t know me!” the carpenter screamed, his gestures full of menace, biting his finger in a sign of certain vendetta. He would teach them what they could expect from him, that he would not turn the other cheek.⁸⁷

Baldo Bruni knew that the best riposte to a challenge in a small community was to strike back, preferably in a public manner that bystanders would remember, so that everyone would see he was a credible adversary to be respected.⁸⁸ Mediterranean societies all praised masculine toughness and courage, when it was combined with cunning and political astuteness.⁸⁹ The logic of standing one’s ground becomes clear when we plot the location of conflicts, which underlines the publicity of the action. Tuscans acted out their aggression exactly like their French contemporaries, in little rituals of communication addressed to everyone.⁹⁰ The *castello* and its immediate vicinity, such as the church of Criano and the playing field just outside the Porta Nuova figure in 153 out of 263 cases. Only 40 percent of these clashes took place away from the village itself, mostly on the margins between sharecropping *poderi*, on the roads and paths that veined the territory. Given that human density was greater in the village, and that a more intense sociability operated there, the magistrate’s bench still attracted peasants in good proportion.

Most of the cases reveal reasons for the confrontations. Determining motive was not always the magistrate’s concern. People—and the judges too, from their frequent comments—felt that provocations sometimes called for riposte. I have noted 237 motivations advanced in 229 affairs; 34 confrontations indicated no motivations at all. The reasons invoked are usually more complex than the words on the page imply, since people did not avow every animosity, but the ones they offered were good enough to give to the magistrate, even as a plausible lie. By far the most explosive situation was *danno dato*—for 57 cases, including two homicides. *Danno dato* lurks wherever someone attempted to prevent a neighbor from trespassing on their land, or where men came to blows over the refusal of one of them to negotiate a friendly damages settlement. *Danno dato* accounts for almost 30 percent of all confrontations. The other motivation most often advanced was a confrontation over money or some other disputed commodity, called *dare e havere*, cited in 46 instances. Normal economic

life entailed a vast circle of credit and delayed payment. Put together, conflict over property emerges in almost half the cases.

But interests come in several guises. Many apparently trivial altercations were pregnant with issues of social ranking. Pietro d'Orlando Andreucci lost his temper after a sharecropper neighbor Belardino di Giuseppe called him a spy. "He called me this to my face on the public square, in presence of my boss, so I got angry and having a stick in hand, for the defense of my reputation, and being an honored and respected person and not a spy, I gave him a few blows with it." Establishing the pecking order need not take the form of a physical challenge. It could instead entail mocking gestures and comments. Someone insulted Anacleto Barbieri by shooting his dog, decapitating it and slicing off its ears. Anacleto suspected their sharecropper Pasquino Biagi was the culprit, for Lorenzo beat him after an argument not long before.⁹¹ A good half-dozen incidents took the form of scornful inscription.⁹² Someone accused Scipione Barbieri, rector of the confraternity, of a variety of sins, in five rhyming stanzas, a few days after they wiped animal feces on the door and wall of his house. The schoolmaster priest Fabio Roncaglia was the butt of similar versification tacked up in the street. In 27 more instances, real combat erupted from play fighting. Boys often hurled stones or snowballs without malicious intent at first. Some gestures were cruel pranks: Bernardino Biagi broke a melon he was holding over the head of a peasant who asked him for payment.⁹³ Games of *cacio* or *druzzola* degenerated into quarrels a good dozen times, over the value of a shot, or the accidental or deliberate deflection of the wheel, or over payment of money won and the call to keep playing to win it back. These were all public events that put the participants on display before village notables and could result in loss of face for those unwilling to assert themselves. Saving face was an issue of real importance for men in Montefollonico and everywhere violence has been studied, for public opinion immediately magnified a retreat.⁹⁴

Most confrontations, whether accidental or premeditated, pitted individuals against each other. In almost a quarter of the cases, however, the aggressor did not act alone, but in the company of others, usually kinsmen. The person at a disadvantage reminded them of the obligation to fight fair—that is, one on one and between adversaries of similar size and age.⁹⁵ Over 50 cases entailed multiple attackers, sometimes arrayed in opposing teams. Defending parents and children from danger was the dominant situation. The great majority of allies were blood relatives, another behavioral universal that Martin Daly and Margo Wilson have encountered in modern times and in exotic locales. In contrast, brothers-in-law or sons-in-law account for only four coalitions, servants and masters for three, and coworkers for only one single instance. Wives joined their husbands in

only two cases. The tightest bond connected fathers and sons (11 instances), paternal uncles and nephews (5 instances), and brothers (14 cases). Mothers fought alongside their daughters in three cases, and sisters attacked someone together in a single case. Some fathers enjoying the cohabitation of adult sons made violent confrontation a family trait: Lattanzio Pilacci and his sons; Scipione Barbieri and his sons; Giacomo Crocchi easily rallied his brother's hothead son Francesco. News of one of them having a quarrel with a neighbor, would bring the others running with weapons in their hands. Parents also intervened in children's quarrels to bludgeon the youth who made their child cry: Maria Nannini chased a poor neighbor boy from house to house, pulled his ears, and beat him so badly that he died three days later, although the magistrate did not try her for homicide.⁹⁶

While the actions cited above all imply a relentless reproductive logic at the heart of evolutionary theory, their workings are often expressed in complex or indirect ways. In Montefollonico, belligerents rarely invoked issues of romantic rivalry: it appears only five times, but two of them were clear cases of attempted murder. Sexual innuendo unleashed powerful emotions in both men and women. Passing on salacious gossip and making aspersion on someone's sexual behavior appears in 8 percent of the cases. The magistrate considered harassment of women to be a grievous offense—even when they were known prostitutes, for their commerce served to attract the prurient curiosity of everyone.⁹⁷ Women figure sometimes as beating victims, such as Orizia Farnetani who speculated aloud in the street on the true paternity of a village notable seeking a wife.⁹⁸ The *veglia* was often the site of tense relations because sexual display lurked just underneath the cheerful banter. Young men played guitars and sang impromptu songs, which occasionally teased or otherwise disparaged rivals before young women. They competed to dance with women they hoped to marry. A wounding gesture, a bold word degenerated into an exchange of blows in the dark at parting time. On two occasions, women accused others of being witches, before blows were exchanged: it is quite likely that sentimental issues lurked behind the accusations, for love magic was witches' stock in trade.

As a rule, civil litigation did not erupt into confrontations prosecuted criminally. The five sample years drawn from the civil procedures mentioned above reveal only two corresponding clashes. Nevertheless, durable rivalries preceded many incidents whose origins we cannot elucidate if neither side revealed it to the magistrate. It is difficult to determine which event, or word, or indiscretion broke the camel's back and invited immediate retaliation. Most of the cases figuring in these archives are the result of some argument, a reciprocal exchange of claim and counterclaim,

reinforced by faces and gestures or the provocative challenge or “*mentita*”—“You’re lying in your throat!” or “I have you in the ass!” that threw down the glove. Girolamo Mazzoni, a notable, and his sharecropper Giuseppe di Virgilio made faces at each other, after quarreling over Giuseppe’s mishandling of a donkey and mixing the white grapes with the red.⁹⁹ These kinds of arguments, often short, preceded 201 of about 260 cases, a full three-quarters. The argument served to warn anyone within earshot of the impending danger. Witnesses close by usually intervened after the first blow to separate the combatants and calm them down. More explicit premeditation figures in 37 cases (about 14 percent), when the aggressor, usually carrying some kind of weapon, deliberately sought the confrontation. About a dozen victims complained that their aggressor had acted disloyally, a *tradimento*, luring them into an ambush by feigning friendliness. Straight dealing called for a more forthright challenge that echoed aristocratic language. A few hours after the families of Lattanzio Pilacci and Francesco Crocchi scuffled over the latter’s mistreatment of his wife, Niccolò Pilacci appeared before Jacomo Crocchi, brandishing his knife:

When I learned that Jacomo committed an affront against my father, together with his brother, it didn’t strike me as fair that these two young men should confront an old man, and so I sought him out on the square, and told him to draw his weapon, that I wanted a duel (*questione*) with him, that he shouldn’t have troubled an old man, and that I would give him satisfaction.

Jacomo drew his knife to meet the challenge, but notables on the square broke it up.¹⁰⁰

Whatever the pretext of the initial clash, repeat encounters with one’s adversaries increased the danger of committing an irretrievable act. Some young men living in the *castello* thought the stakes worth escalating, especially if they belonged to wealthier families and enjoyed the support of kinsmen and clients.¹⁰¹ Only a few risked murderous consequences, however. After Bernardino Biagi ratted on Lorenzo Barbieri’s nocturnal act of vandalism against the Landucci coat-of-arms, the rich man’s son retaliated by dismantling a barrel outside Biagi’s house, laying it out in the snow in a cruciform. None could ascribe a meaning to the gesture, but Biagi took up the challenge by setting fire to a haystack in a Barbieri stable sheltering dozens of animals. During the subsequent trial, Bernardino ambushed the noble cleric Leandro Buonamici at night with a stick, for having testified against him. Lorenzo soon surprised Bernardino in the street at dusk and grievously wounded him with axe-blows. The villagers talked and speculated but it was difficult to pin specific actions on the combatants. Lorenzo Barbieri, after enduring harsh conditions in prison, received a fine

of 600 lire and a year's exile. His father's plea brought him home after six months, and the two enemies lived in uneasy peace for decades thereafter.¹⁰²

This classic pattern of vendetta in Italian villages resulted in horrific homicide rates in previous centuries. Two or three other instances involving village leaders similarly stopped just short of homicide. The bishop's court frequently summoned Lorenzo's brother Giovanni Battista, to answer for clashes with various people. The priest once blocked Niccolo Pilacci's entrance into the church on the pretext of preventing crowding; and when the youth slipped by, he seized him, struck him, and threw him down the steps. A few weeks later Niccolo took a shot at Barbieri as he lay napping on a bench along a church wall. The arquebus misfired and the priest ran inside the church as Niccolo approached with an axe while his brothers, father, and mother looked on. Their respect for consecrated ground saved the young cleric's life.¹⁰³

Even in accidental encounters, men usually seized some kind of weapon. Most men bore arms some of the time, and some men bore them most of the time. Judicial officials often warned people with weapons to leave them at home and punished some offenders with fines.¹⁰⁴ Yet, of about 260 confrontations, arms were wanting in only one-quarter of them. I do not include the melon that Bernardino Biagi broke over a sharecropper's head, or the hair ribbon that Margarita Sestigiani used to strangle her newborn boy. When caught defenseless by an adversary, people often picked up stones, which figure 27 times. Defending oneself or attacking someone with an agricultural implement usually implies a lack of premeditation: the various pitchforks, sickles, flails and other brutal implements appear 21 times as weapons. Sticks too figure often, the stout kind that shepherds carried in the fields. These were properly speaking not weapons, however. An axe was different. Carried by most country people without attracting suspicion, it was a favorite offensive weapon, figuring in two homicides and several failed attempts. More often still, men drew knives, or placed their fingers on the handle without extracting it from the scabbard, which would add to the gravity of their offense. Militiamen enjoyed the right to bear these, and to draw them too, if someone besmirched their honor in public. Nonmembers wore them as often as they dared. These "swords of the people" were used no fewer than 56 times, often inflicting grievous harm.¹⁰⁵ Michele Barbieri tried to explain away the knife he drew in a village confrontation, on the grounds that it was properly speaking not a weapon. The *commissario* called the expert opinion of village nobles and an ex-soldier to examine the blade and its cutting edge before weighing the evidence.¹⁰⁶ Militia weapons proper were used too. Swords appear 25 times, and halberds 5 more. The *commissario* reminded Bernardino

Biagi that while carrying halberds was permitted on muster-days, he could not attack someone with it. He replied,

The halberd I took to defend myself and my honor, and I believed I had the right to do so. I took it to avenge myself, to defend myself from insult, having been provoked for years . . . It's not prohibited for a soldier to avenge himself and to defend himself from insult with a halberd as a soldier of His Serene Highness according to the latest statutes of militia.

The *commissario* absolved him of that charge. Protagonists such as the dreaded Virgilio Pilacci sometimes bore weapons casually in the village. In other instances, after an initial encounter, they ran home to get their weapons, telling their enemy to wait in the street until they returned. In a dozen more cases, people wielded the deadly arquebus, or musket, often kept on mantelpieces already loaded for opportune poaching. The supposed victims sometimes claimed that their enemy pulled the trigger but the weapon had misfired, or that the shot had missed. Fulvio Carpellini, rector of the Confraternity, claimed that the rich peasant Bernardino Rubenni fired at him with an arquebus after missing him with an axe, in a brief skirmish at the latter's *podere* over a few lires. There were no witnesses so we have no sentence.¹⁰⁷ So even in a relatively peaceful agrarian society, men cherished the right to bear arms.

Profiles in Crime

E cade anche un cavallo, che ha quattro gambe
(Horses fall too, though they have four legs)

Most men could expect to encounter violence in their lifetimes, so they often circulated armed in the anticipation of it. We might conclude, like Robert Muchembled, that “violence was not exactly a crime.”¹⁰⁸ But his conclusion is surely erroneous. In fact, violence aroused villagers more than any other transgression, and plaintiffs exhorted the *commissario* not to let their enemies get away with it. The problem lies perhaps with the assumption that since many people were violent, we should not brand anyone a criminal. Muchembled's sources are at fault here. We do not know who his wrongdoers were, or what their individual pasts were. Most social history suffers from the myth of the average man, which posits that ordinary people reacted in violent ways because circumstances forced them to do so.¹⁰⁹ Psychologist Marc Richelle considers this passion to discover “the average man” to be a tenacious error. Accounting for the variability of

human behavior makes for a more interesting and infinitely more plausible explanation.¹¹⁰ Jerome Kagan's research emphasizes the great diversity in emotional reaction from early childhood onward, while Hans Eysenck's studies of identical twin behavior explore the biological roots of personality and its implications for society.¹¹¹ Not being trained psychologists, Tuscan rustics just assumed that some people behaved in an arbitrary and antisocial manner and that if given the opportunity, they were likely to take advantage of their neighbors. No doubt they were correct.

A nominative study such as this one can determine who the principal culprits were, and whether or not there were archetypal aggressors or victims. A few people were victimized repeatedly, and turned to the magistrate to obtain redress. Some were poor sharecroppers, like Alessandro di Francesco, called Biancone, who figures as a plaintiff six times. Marco di Paolo, the *sbirro* is cited as an aggressor four times, but was a victim no fewer than twelve times. Being set upon by outraged householders was his occupational hazard. Rutilio Carpellini, the *marchese's gabellaio* figures four times as an assault victim, and as victim of theft in three additional cases. Valentino Rubenni, peasant landowner, similarly appears a victim of confrontations (four times) and theft (three times). Montefollonico's ambitious commoner, Anacleto Barbieri, figures as victim of confrontations six times, of theft, five times, and never once appears as an aggressor. Enemies attacked Domenico Crocchi, a village entrepreneur, on four occasions, and he never reciprocated. The archives are incomplete and lacunary, but nevertheless some distinct patterns emerge. Those bringing complaints most often to the magistrate were neither impotent paupers nor women. They may have been unpopular, although this was certainly not true in the *gabellaios* case. But they could strike back at their adversaries through the *marchese's* court.

Most of the men appeared as aggressors once or twice. In the world of small communities, facing one's enemies had some deterrent value. Tit-for-tat is a universal behavioral strategy that everyone understood. Better to forestall a greater slight by letting it be understood that one could avenge a minor one with force. De Waal is correct to see social intercourse everywhere based as much upon the shadow of conflict between individual interests, as on cheerful cooperation.¹¹² Since aggressive sociability springs from the same source as cooperative sociability, any attempt to eradicate aggression utterly is bound to fail. Individuals' reputations hinged on the perception that they could and would defend their interests.¹¹³ Nevertheless, a significant set of individuals appeared more frequently in the annals of crime. Their actions went beyond what villagers considered to be the legitimate assertion of their interests, and people considered them to be bad persons. Maurice Cusson's model of criminal

behavior, built on the characteristics of western societies, applies to baroque Tuscany too. He finds in most juvenile delinquents a pattern of poor rapport with parents and of antisocial actions on many fronts. Wild youths enjoyed each other's company—and the more they frequented each other, the more criminal situations resulted from it. If their parents and neighbors just shrugged off these childhood misdemeanors, the youths graduated to more serious crimes. Much recent literature dwells on individuals endowed at birth with personality traits characterized by low anxiety over bad behavior, and fearlessness in the face of authority that emerges at a very tender age.¹¹⁴ But a crime is also a “rational” act, whose perpetrators weigh the advantages and costs at the moment of its commission, even if their rationality usually operates on a short temporal horizon.¹¹⁵ With age and with children of their own to raise, the costs and consequences of criminal actions augment. For all but the most incorrigible, they are no longer worth the trouble they entail.

In order to illustrate the pertinence of Cusson's model, I have selected the 20 individuals whose frequent appearance makes them stand out amongst their neighbors. The number of times they were cited is subject to caution, for gaps in the records, periodic absence from the village, and the terminus of trial data in 1665 all result in underestimations. This rogue's gallery sheds much light on the dynamics of rural life in early modern Italy. Some of these individuals were real criminals, by any definition of the term. Nine, most of whom lived in the village proper, fall into this category. We do not have an equal amount of information on everyone, but patterns emerge nevertheless. Eight of them were men. They stand out because they committed crimes of diverse nature. They appear in the criminal registers from adolescence onward, and before that they sometimes figure in civil cases stealing fruit from trees. Decried by villagers for their loutish insolence and *prepotenza*, all of them displayed an ardent desire to get even with their adversaries. The *commissario* tried most of these men at least once for murder or attempted murder, usually committed in vendetta. Let us examine them individually.

Bernardino Biagi was still in his teens when his father, village stonemason Pietro, died. His mother Aurelia was the village scold, brought repeatedly into court for creating turmoil with her tongue. The *marchese's* *auditore* sentenced her to a very heavy fine of 50 scudi, had her whipped, and then exiled her briefly from the village in 1625.¹¹⁶ Much younger than her first husband, Aurelia married a Neapolitan man in her mature years after her sons had married, and she moved away without leaving any trace in the records thereafter. The two Biagi boys who remained in the village, Bernardino and Niccolo, remained close throughout their lives. They figured repeatedly in nocturnal pranks, once grievously wounding a *sbirro*

from Montepulciano who had come to the village to arrest another man. They also consorted with wild boys Giuliano Vettori and Lorenzo Barbieri who had well-connected parents. Confined to a cell after pulling away the wooden steps from Girolama Biondi's house, and pressed for a confession, Bernardino tried to finger Lorenzo for other misdemeanors not under investigation. It marked the onset of a vicious cycle of vendetta lasting for several years. Bernardino Biagi was arrested repeatedly thereafter, for theft, contraband, inciting a riot, harboring bandits, and frequent armed clashes. The constable Pietro di Lorenzo elaborated on Biagi's behavior for the benefit of a new *commissario* after one incident.

Bernardino Biagi always has business with the court. He's a poor man with wife and children, but since he began to deal with the Torritans (bandits) he has as much money as he needs, and I don't know where he gets it, for he has no other business but the tavern, and he gambles all day during Carnival and Lent alike, and people think badly of it. People note that he was a poor man, who had been exiled, who returned and who was seen spending and lending money, and sheltering bandits carrying prohibited weapons.¹¹⁷

Bernardino was twice victim of attempted murder. He mellowed a bit with age and eventually played a salient role in confraternity and devotional life in the village. His neighbors never entrusted him with important functions in local government such as *camerlengo* that his literacy and economic activity—he was innkeeper, agricultural entrepreneur, wartime sutler for the army—would have authorized.

The adolescent Lorenzo Barbieri behaved similarly. The *auditore* convicted him of sneaking into church at night and smashing the Landucci coat-of-arms with a hammer and sentenced him to two years' incarceration in the galley port of Livorno in 1634. The *marchese* pardoned Lorenzo soon after, and so he haunted the village until he made an attempt on Biagi's life with a halberd in a nighttime ambush. This cost him at least six months' exile in addition to a fine. Lorenzo better directed his aggression thereafter, though he brutalized his sharecropper on at least one occasion. Margarita Sestigiani claimed he raped her, and he once ambushed a priest too curious about his nocturnal visits to a village prostitute. With moderation and his father's support, Lorenzo flourished, inheriting the mantle of respectability. He became community *camerlengo*, lieutenant, then captain of the village militia band, and ultimately *gabellajo*. He upheld the Barbieri status as the foremost non-noble family in Montefollonico.

If Lorenzo Barbieri enhanced his status by challenging the Landucci, Giuliano di Paolo Vettori advanced with impunity in their shadow. His parents lived adjacent to the Landucci mansion and Giovanni Battista

Landucci became his close companion. Giuliano lodged in the Landucci palace in Siena while a student at the college and seminary, in exchange for teaching the boys how to read and write. He shocked both judicial and ecclesiastical authorities from a tender age with his insolent demeanor as a witness in crimes involving other people—during one interview, he threatened the judge with impeachment! Later, he consorted with Bernardino Biagi in nocturnal prowling, looking for mischief to commit. Notwithstanding this unpromising beginning, his family earmarked enough property for him to become a cleric, which allowed him to return to the village in the capacity of a parish priest. His name comes up repeatedly in the vicar-general's criminal court in Pienza, for a variety of reasons. Not only did he pressure women for sex: the papal Inquisition investigated him in association with a false demonic possession, for trying to persuade the demon to tell him how he could seduce Bernardino Biagi's wife Bartolomea. Vettori tried to murder village enemies with a musket at least three times (Giovani Battista Magnoni in 1635, Taviano Nannini in 1652, and Antonio Penti at an unspecified date). After his attempt on Magnoni, the bishop exiled him from the diocese for 10 years, but he reappeared as parish priest at San Valentino in 1639 and soon thereafter slipped back into Montefollonico, violating the terms of his exile. The bishop's court tried Giuliano anew for keeping firearms in his possession. Various people made offhand comments on his wayward behavior, and he was easily the most depraved priest in the village. After he made the attempt on Nannini's life, the *marchese* made a personal appeal to the bishop to be strict with him. Consequently, the bishop deprived him of his benefice for several years.

Slightly younger than those three were Pasquino di Bastiano Monaci and Virgilio Pilacci, both of whom occupied a slightly lower rung in the hierarchy. Pasquino Monaci, called Calcagnolo, confronted his neighbors only as the occasions arose. Godfather to one of Bernardino Biagi's children, he eventually clashed with him with weapons in the street over payment for some saffron. Virgilio began his career in crime as one of three or four bullyboy sons of Lattanzio Pilacci. The brothers and their father tended to confront their adversaries as a group. Prosecuted for premeditated attempted murder at least twice, Virgilio never lost this penchant for armed confrontation. In addition, he routinely plundered the fields and fruit-trees of his neighbors and burglarized their homes. The magistrate finally called witnesses to compile some kind of a record of his misbehavior without making a formal accusation.¹¹⁸

In the mid-to-late 1640s several more youngsters regularly defrayed the judicial chronicle. Evandro Selvi, son of landowners Luca Romani and Caterina Selvi, challenged his neighbors on several occasions and dared the magistrate to do his worst. The *nesso* he brutalized, Alessandro Bazzi, gave

a more extended commentary to the new *commissario* on his bad behavior and revealed some of the protection he enjoyed.

This ensign is a young man here in Montefollonico who likes to wander around and commit pranks, but if he had been punished when he fired that harquebus at the melon, this would not have happened, and when I carried the summons to him on that account, he threatened to skin me with a knife, and this is proof that he is an arbitrary person who doesn't fear God or Justice. When he swung at me with his knife he said nothing and I said nothing, and then he challenged me, saying to me, "if you tell the action like it was, I will punish you in a way that will hurt you." I know he is a person who has been tried several times on several accounts, and once I heard with my own ears that he said "You ugly whore!" to his mother, and I heard him blaspheme too, saying 'Potta di Dio' and other things. I have heard tell that he doesn't respect his mother, and they say that he kicked her, and if Your Lordship wishes to learn more, he should examine the neighbors . . . However, Anacleto Barbieri came to me after, and he was glad when I wouldn't lay a complaint. Several people said to me, "don't lay a complaint, we will get his family to make it up to you," but Anacleto did nothing about it. I was really upset over it, that he was in prison such a short time, and then I thought better about it and recalled what he had said to me. I'm afraid however what will happen once he gets out of prison, and I'm afraid of his friend, the priest Matteo (Barbieri), for they are one soul and one body.

The *auditore* fined Selvi a record 100 *scudi* for his attempt on Bernardino Biagi's life, and he disappeared soon after being released from his Montepulciano prison six months later.¹¹⁹ Francesco di Domenico Crocchi emerged as the violent henchmen of his uncle Giacomo. His father appears to have been an eternal victim, but Francesco decidedly took another tack. He appears in almost as many crimes as Bernardino Biagi, over a shorter period, including two attempted murders of village adversaries. Rinaldo Barbieri, who lived in the Osteria delle Noci outside the *castello*, appeared less often but had an even shorter local career. The *sindaco* who witnessed him returning the millet stolen from Cesare Bai, repeatedly accused him of inflicting damage on the woods near his house. Rinaldo finally retaliated by murdering his accuser with an axe in an ambush. He then ran off to Rome never to return.¹²⁰

Of the eight men cited here, five belonged to the village elite. All of them figured as youthful delinquents, and judges tried all of them for a variety of misdeeds. The lone woman's profile is a bit different. Margarita Monaci appeared as a protagonist on several occasions, from the first years of her marriage to late middle age. She was sharecropper Vittorio Stellini's wife at first, working the farm with him and his father, before moving onto the

little *podere* owned by Cristoforo Selvi. She first appears in the criminal archives as the target of an attempted rape, but that case had murky aspects to it, because—by her own account—the alleged rape followed some initial sexual banter that leads me to suspect she already had some reputation. Many of the Selvi sharecroppers had reason to complain of the landlord, but Margarita crossed the line when she chased her landlady out of a chestnut tree and pelted her with insults: *porca padrona!* A few years after their eviction, we find them in the *castello*, where Margarita had a nickname of her own, *la Signorina*, a tart tongue, and a reputation of prostitution. What made her different from the handful of other women who lived from prostitution was that her husband still lived with her. She scolded one priest in the street for making some hopeful advances, and when he called her a whore she called his mother the same and carried the cause to the bishop's court to a successful conclusion.¹²¹ Nevertheless witnesses confirmed her reputation with testimony concerning Pasquino Calcagnolo's nocturnal habits. She remained determined to protect her public reputation, so that she could make her daughter a nun. Margarita sliced a neighbor woman's shoulder with a sabre for gossiping about her. After she exchanged similar reproaches with the village *shirro* Marcantonio di Paolo, she clubbed him over the head with an iron bar when his back was turned.

Marco was talking with *donna* Silvia, saying that I was a spy, and told her "whore this, and whore that." I didn't reply to words like that, but then when he came to demand the frying pan and started calling me names, I gave it to him, and then he called me more names, that I won't repeat here since we've made peace, but I know what they were, then I got mad and did what you know. Oh, what a row, yes, signor *commissario*, you know the worst since everyone in the neighborhood talks, and especially the Signora Moreschini, and my daughter who's a virgin, think of it!¹²²

Margarita continued to live by selling her sexual favors well into middle age, after her husband died. She eventually married off her daughter to a complete outsider with a substantial dowry.

Criminals such as these did not stand apart from the rest of the population, however. Their actions differed only in degree from their neighbors. At least another ten individuals figured repeatedly in the criminal court archives for similar behavior that sometimes included attempted murder. We could use the contemporary term for it, *prepotenza*, a compulsion to have one's way by force or threats. We have seen Bastiano Fanciulli, a villager of middling status, a repeat offender in crimes of theft. Two more seminotables, Tommaso Fei, a weaver, and Marcantonio Visconti, a surgeon, exiled to Montefollonico for crimes elsewhere, appear accused of a handful of crimes each, including attempted rape, assault and battery, and

assault with a weapon. One village blacksmith, Giambattista Borri, figured repeatedly in minor scuffles with men and women in his neighborhood, people who accused him of drunkenness and verbal excess. Niccolo Pilacci, brother of Virgilio, appeared a number of times as an aggressive youth and the *marchese* exiled him after what constituted his sixth conviction, at least. Giovanni Battista Barbieri, Lorenzo's brother, committed his first criminal offense while still a boy.¹²³ He grew up to become an arrogant parish priest prone to striking his adversaries. He once avenged himself on the aged and devout matron Maddalena Selvi by denouncing her to the Inquisition for superstition. Michele Barbieri rushed to his father Scipione's aid in repeated encounters with weapons in hand, and once defied his enemies with a musket. Francesco Misari used his notable status in the village to extract wealth and power. He challenged the village priors, the confraternity, and its rector, he then lampooned village notables with derogatory verse when they denied him handouts meant for the poor. Ottaviano Nannini grew up in one of the village's more powerful families and figured in a number of altercations with his neighbors even as a boy.¹²⁴ His enemies made at least one attempt on his life. Ottaviano neglected or squandered his inheritance to the point of surviving by transporting goods with his donkey. He made a partial recovery in the 1660s, inheriting the estate of his brother, a parish priest. Only one delinquent individual was a sharecropper, Bastiano di Francesco, called *il Volpe* (the fox). He had a penchant for practical jokes and nocturnal pranks that landed him in trouble repeatedly. These people committed more than their fair share of crimes in Montefollonico, roughly a third of all offenses. Almost all were men. Most belonged to the best families, living in the village and subject to the demands of honor and reputation, which made them prone to escalating an incident and getting even. Not one was considered wretched. These were the people that magistrates were expected to tame, to intimidate, and to punish. Did they?

Studies of punishment emphasize that it is most effective when applied frequently and consistently.¹²⁵ Harsh penalties not only dissuade criminal actions, they also reinforce the respect for the law among those who obey it. Not punishing a serious offense with a penalty calibrated on the gravity of the transgression demoralizes both the victims and the bystanders, and it rightly inspires in them contempt for judicial process.¹²⁶ We do not know enough about sentencing and effective punishment in early modern society, but we do know something about the way it worked in Montefollonico. It is unlikely that any capital sentence handed down to a criminal was ever carried out. Exile was a fairly harsh punishment, appropriate for poor people such as *la Signorina*, whose blow to the constable cost her only 15 lire in fines but six weeks' exile. The fines most culprits paid may only have been the part

(a quarter) that the *commissario* pocketed. The *auditori* sometimes recommended corporal punishment that dishonored the victim, but the *sbirro* did not often inflict it, either because the culprit escaped or because the *marchese* remitted it. Like patrons everywhere in Italy, Francesco Coppoli routinely mitigated the heaviest fines, the floggings, and the extended periods of exile in order to curry favor with his subjects, once the culprits had committed themselves to make peace with their enemies (*havendo la pace*).¹²⁷ The victims and their families seem to have consented to this last provision, on pain of displeasing the feudal lord and his magistrates. They likely reasoned that their personal rancor might lead them to isolation in the future, and their present enemy might one day become an ally. Having vindicated themselves in court and being promised that the culprit would make good on the damages, it was to their advantage to consent to peace.¹²⁸

If the heaviest penalties prescribed by the law were rarely applied, it does not follow that criminals operated with impunity. In the age of princes and *padroni*, the law was more of a bargaining framework than a draconian code. Each mitigated the rigor of the laws by receiving petitions from below.¹²⁹ How many judicial decrees were meant to be applied to the letter? Far from constituting power in themselves, laws simply guided personal discretionary authority wielded in the interests of stability. The logic of making exceptions proved that the patron exercised real power: it was a way of winning the loyalty of his subjects by showing that he cared for their welfare. It showed subjects that hierarchy was working in their best interest by mitigating the harshest sentences once some form of peace was reached with the injured party.

More than the severity of the punishment, it was the certainty of it that dissuaded would-be offenders from committing crimes in future.¹³⁰ Nobody could commit serious crimes with impunity, be they priest or nobleman, for above them throned the *marchese*, the bishop of Pienza, the governor of Siena, and the grand duke, who all considered the maintenance of public peace as the cornerstone of their office. Perpetrators of a violent act or a significant theft were first punished with flight, then with arrest and imprisonment for days, sometimes weeks or months. The accused had to pay the costs of their own incarceration and maintenance, the expense of their trial, and damages to the victim. The *marchese* and *gabellajo* always expected them to pay the quarter of the fine owing to the magistrate. In the interim, they could not work. Advancing age and a greater stake in maintaining the peace no doubt inculcated in most of them, including Bernardino Biagi and Lorenzo Barbieri, a desire to turn a new leaf and mend their ways. By then, most of them had established families of their own to insert into village society.

Reproduction

Sexual Destinies

Of all the human universals rooted in biology, surely one of the most significant ones is the permanence of two sexes, male and female. It has been written that sexual identities are just the product of learning, and that they are not naturally part of our destiny.¹ Surely this is an illusion, a willful blindness to the role of hormones and anatomy, as well as a denial of the work of generations of anthropologists. Gender categories are universal because they mesh with the way the world works.² In all human cultures, males and females are seen as having different natures. Sex roles dominate the working world: everywhere, women take more responsibility raising children, and men dominate the public and political realms. These differences are rooted in the way the brain develops, for male and female sex hormones affect the organ throughout life. In all cultures, men are more aggressive, are more prone to stealing, and compete with other males for power and sexual access to women.³ This does not preclude that people in each society articulate the complementarity of men and women in different ways, for genes do not operate independent of cultural environment. Nevertheless, in every society, people pair off into couples in early adulthood and apply some of their time and much of their interest to the other sex, which culminates in reproduction. In the sense I use it here, reproduction embraces not just the sexual act, but also the heavy responsibility of admitting new lives into the world, and tending them until they become autonomous.

Italians knew that sex differences were fundamental to social life. Everything conspired to keep men and women apart from each other. The sexual division of labor conformed to a natural specialization of tasks in an agricultural economy. Men tilled the fields, performed the heavy labor, and managed the family's relations with the outside world. Women tended the

smaller animals, the garden, and the innumerable chores of the household and engaged in childrearing. With such clearly defined roles came a separation of interests and horizons. Women might not require much male support if they could cultivate simple gardens themselves and spin or weave. It was usually possible for them to *survive* without a male breadwinner in baroque Tuscany, though they would not *flourish*.⁴ Sedentary agricultural societies such as those of early modern Europe, with their reliance on heavy livestock and extensive grain cultivation, intensive commercialization, and bureaucratic control, made the contributions of men crucial to the survival of children.

Marriage is yet another human universal, emerging from the different reproductive interests of men and women. Men can impregnate any number of women, should they have the opportunity to do so, and young women attract them especially. There is no biological impediment preventing a man from flitting from one young woman to another in search of short-term enjoyment. Women, conversely, are only likely to raise a few children to adulthood, and must invest enormously in terms of time, energy, and resources for each one. It is in the woman's interest to exact some enduring commitment from a man to contribute to her support and that of her children, in exchange for continuous and exclusive sexual access. These reciprocally exploitive sexual strategies provide children with two parents.⁵ Matrimony compels men to commit to a woman and their children for the long term. For this to work, the man needs to be reasonably certain that the children he provides for are his own. Why should he remain if he believes otherwise?

Our recently acquired technological ability to separate sex from reproduction has removed the underpinnings from early marriage, but in the seventeenth century, these were still very solid. The path to matrimony in Tuscan villages was straight and narrow, even by early modern standards. Italians knew that a girl's chastity would be exposed to the wiles of more sexually assertive males, particularly if she were young and naive to their ways. For the girl and her family, the consequences of an unwanted pregnancy were very serious. Even if they gave up the baby to a foundling hospital, the mother would have demonstrated her poor judgment to the entire community and her subsequent suitors might be less appealing or/and more exacting on the dowry. For everyone close to her, a girl's good reputation was a *capital* to safeguard, to spare the family from having to raise children of uncertain or unworthy paternity, and to enable them to choose the best possible groom for her. Everyone expected her to manage her sexuality wisely in her own interest.

Men and women inhabited largely different spaces everywhere in Europe. Nevertheless, the relative integration of the sexes common to

northern Europe gradually gave way to increasing segregation as one moved south. The intermingling of sexes, not so unusual even in Mediterranean France, was much less typical of Italy as a whole, where the entire community supervised such relations.⁶ In nearby Corsica, and in the southern Italian regions, where government was weak, families imposed a death sentence on men who seduced and abandoned daughters. Islanders deemed it best to erect very high social walls between men and women to minimize the carnage that vendetta entailed. In northern and central Italy, the consequences were not as dire, but work and sociability still separated the sexes. Between them, there was not much banter or aggressive ogling, and a man's impertinent gesture could bring him before the *commissario*. Fulvio Carpellini pinched the buttocks of a Landucci servant in the street. After she whirled around and smacked him, he chased her into a nearby house, but soon repented the action to the magistrate.⁷ Youths did not pair off before marriage with a public suitor, although widows sometimes did. Most references to courting males depict them in groups of three or four, trooping to the house of the *innamorata* (the love-struck one) to sing serenades under her window.⁸ They gained entry to the winter *veglia* still in their little groups, to play music and dance under the watchful gaze of family and neighbors. It was there that they competed and sometimes fought among themselves for a girl's attention. As everywhere, the first *overt* moves belonged to the man, which placed him in a situation wherein he risked embarrassment. He could be certain that the girl and her friends would be evaluating his performance with respect to other males, and it was crucial for him not to look foolish in their eyes. In front of girls one was courting, teasing by a rival or even a friend was especially mortifying. Aquilante di Marcantonio felt humiliated when his friend wandered off with the guitar halfway through his song. Ridolfo Venturelli attached a fox-tail to his hat in order to impress a young woman he was courting, and bludgeoned the prankster who removed it.⁹ Impromptu singing on the part of boys at a *veglia* easily turned to teasing and mocking that ended in assertive youths hurling insults at one another and drawing their swords. For the evidence in the trials is clear: young men sported swords and daggers in their courtship visits to attract attention, even when they were not militiamen entitled to wear them. The boys' apparel also broadcast their amorous attentions; at the *veglia*, where he hoped to win a girl's hand against his rival, Agnolo Gabbiai sported a hat with a red ribbon around it (*alla brava*).¹⁰

If males made the first overt moves, females dressed to attract their gaze. Their clothes covered them, though, from head to foot. Even the *commissario* could not defile their naked bodies by examining their wounds himself. Girls and young women displayed themselves first and foremost

by their apparel, headdress, and accessories. Postmortem inventories of Montefollonico sharecroppers reveal surprising amounts of silken finery and jewelry that corroborate the observations of travelers that peasant girls in Italy dressed like ladies in other countries. Wedding gowns routinely cost the equivalent of 60 days' labor and often much more, in excess of 10 percent of the dowry amount—and this was excluding the jewels that were added on. Too young to bind up their hair or wear a kerchief, preadolescent girls could adorn their head with silk flowers.¹¹

Courtship was the tacit rationale for a picturesque ritual called the *calendimaggio*, a spring festivity in which young men went at dawn to suspend a *maio* (flowered branch) with a ribbon on it at the door of their heart's desire. Girls emerged from church in procession honoring Our Lady of the Snows singing "May songs" before clusters of young men and other bystanders of both sexes watching them intently.¹² Rituals such as these helped spur the creation of couples without compromising the reputations of individual girls. Little knots of adolescent boys and girls then gathered to converse in the street in view of everyone. One year, some spontaneous swordplay erupted after one of the boys spilled wine down the front of a girl's dress in the street, and it ceased only when one of her gallant defenders wounded her by accident.¹³ The *calendimaggio* was sufficiently charged with erotic intent to be banned in 1691 by a decree of Cosimo III, who also outlawed nocturnal serenades as immoral.¹⁴ More generally, the priests kept an eye on everyone's frequentations and intervened each time they thought it necessary to dampen public lubricity. The bishop once issued an order to the glassmaker to cease fabricating little obscene objects that the men no doubt found amusing.¹⁵

Openly amorous relations between unmarried youths were not unknown. Cesare Dreuli stole a heavy stone flowerpot with blooming violets in it off the priest's garden wall and staggered with it for several kilometers to the *podere* of his sweetheart. He explained, "When I carried it I was really sweating, so much that you could wring the sweat out of my stockings." The girl's brother, finding the gallant gesture ridiculous, retorted, "you must be crazy."¹⁶ Lovelorn exuberance on the part of Tuscan peasants should not surprise us, for their emotional makeup was identical to ours.¹⁷ Both men and women allowed themselves to get their hopes up. They sometimes channeled into spiteful gossip their disappointment at being spurned. Leandro Buonamici, the impecunious nobleman with minor clerical orders, along with his friends, sang witty songs about Margarita Romani, whose bourgeois mother married her off to a notary from a nearby village, when he wanted Margarita for himself. Caterina Selvi qualified his lyrics not as obscene, but rather as "stupid and foolish," next to the coarser lyrics that his friends Fulvio Carpellini, Lorenzo

Barbieri, and Domenico Magnoni sang in refrain. Their choir resembled a charivari that males in small communities acted out to stigmatize the marriage of a girl to an outsider.¹⁸

These incidents reveal that young people often selected their mates themselves, before asking their families to provide resources for them. But, in this sedentary agricultural society, no one conceived of marriage as an institution uniting two *individuals*. Family members were on the lookout against unwelcome suitors. No doubt, the tightest controls governed the wealthiest families, but this does not signify that humble families operated on laissez-faire principles. Sometimes they beat their daughters and sisters to thwart marriage projects of which they did not approve. Lucrezia Doveri sobbed for her dead parents after one of these beatings, administered by her brother Livio. He berated her for not living with him, and for going day and night into other people's houses. She grumbled too, calling him "Barbarossa," after a famous Barbary corsair, and denounced his behavior to both the *commissario* and the *auditore* in Siena. Lucrezia maintained that her suitor Lorenzo (called Gazzara, or Noisy), was "well-born, respectable and my equal," and that Livio's honor was just a pretext to avoid paying the 50 Florins he would have to release as her dowry.¹⁹ Young women—or "girls," in the parlance of the time—could force their parents' hand by submitting more or less publicly to their suitor. Only one such cause ever appears in Montefollonico, however. Porzia Medaglini laid rape (*stupro*) charges against Enea di Giovanni, a 40-year-old widower, after her daughter Margarita went home with him one night and stayed there for two or three days. He had sought her hand in marriage, and her mother perhaps consented, but a canonical impediment stood in the way of the union. The fact that Margarita was over age 25 was not enough to persuade the diocesan vicar-general to grant Enea a dispensation to marry her. Confessing to sexual relations was one tactic employed by those wishing to force the church's hand, though the *commissario* needed to confirm by her testimony that penetration had occurred. "I was a virgin, and the first time I did evil with him *was* in my house, and he deflowered me on the floor." Asked how she knew he deflowered her, she replied, "I felt wet, though I didn't see any blood. It didn't hurt at all, but I didn't enjoy it either." Enea confirmed her account, that she let him in the house in her mother's absence, and that he took her there eight or nine times. He gave her no money, but exchanged with her a promise of matrimony instead. This confession deprived Margarita of her honor in a way that made any other marital choice unrealistic for the foreseeable future. The vicar-general refused to be manipulated, however, and Margarita's mother had Enea condemned by the court to dower her in case some other suitor should seek her hand in marriage.²⁰ Bartolomeo Sodi thought it was worth

tarnishing his future spouse's reputation by bragging that he bedded her. He intended that the story would drive off his rival, Agnolo Gabbiai, who almost killed him in reprisal.²¹

Young people took few such liberties, whatever difficulties they encountered in contracting legitimate marriage. The girls, especially, were careful of their honor. According to law, a woman's virginity was a commodity confided to her safekeeping, but the legal responsibility for defending it resided with her father and brothers.²² This seems anachronistic today when autonomous individuals consider sex to be distinct from marriage and childbearing. In the seventeenth century, the whole village collaborated to establish reasonably accurate reputations for each girl, for a groom needed to know that he could trust his prospective bride's good judgment. Sensible girls feared that this powerful gossip mill could damage their chances of a good marriage in very real ways. Every year the village assemblymen voted on which twelve of a score of young candidates should receive charity from the confraternity toward their trousseau (called the *gonnella*) and their dowry. There is no trace of debates airing in public specific stories involving any one girl, for each had her defenders in the assembly, but the council register recorded the competition scores in tallies of white and black beans.²³ Neither the high scores nor the low ones correspond to social rankings based on property. Rich parents did not subject their daughters to such scrutiny, but comfortable families qualified for these endowments and took their chances. The assemblymen were certainly informed of the particulars by their wives and daughters. Villagers might have a high opinion of girls who later disappointed them. Girolama Biondi, Margarita Gabbiai, and Margarita Sestigiani scored high before they became sexually active and finished in the judicial archives. Girls with low scores would have to settle for less. Margarita Misari's father Giulio was reasonably well-off but she scored the lowest in 1640 and 1643. Only weeks after the second vote, she married the violent sharecropper and future murderer Rinaldo Barbieri. The two daughters of Paolo Farnetani figured at the bottom of the heap in two elections. Caterina Farnetani wed the very turbulent Francesco Crocchi in 1659. A neighbor woman once called Dorotea Mazzoni a witch: at age 33, the oldest bride I have encountered, this sharecropper's daughter married an outsider.

Salacious gossip about the sexual straying of neighbors was a standard feature of village talk for it established a moral pecking order that ranked the virtuous more highly. Women's verbal sparring usually highlighted accusations of this sort.²⁴ The most frequent accusation was that unidentified men with dishonorable intentions, called *bertoni*, crept into women's houses at night, or engaged in furtive sex with them in isolated ditches or behind bushes. A woman who forfeited her good name this way was just

asking for trouble. Francesca Borzelli's neighbors testified that women who let their honor lapse attracted males like flies to dung and were only getting the attention they deserved. "I think that if she were a clean-living woman, she wouldn't be going to Justice so often," sniffed Lucia di Pasquino. Their troubles were a rough justice that served to remind everyone of the value of a good reputation. We saw how Margarita Medaglini's gamble to obtain a dispensation to marry Enea di Giovanni failed miserably. Giving up a public reputation of virginity—or even just the benefit of the doubt—was tantamount to an invitation for other men to seek sex with her, since none would marry her now, and take care of her (which was the same thing). Within months of the rape trial, her mother brought charges against four armed men who tried to break into her house near the Porta Follonica and drag Margarita away. They would have broken down the door had not the nobleman Bernardino Landucci and the priest Giuliano Vettori intervened.²⁵ She also attracted the attention of Giovanni Battista Landucci and Vettori, whom the *sbirro* found one morning in a drunken slumber on the steps of her house, after they were unable to gain entry.²⁶ There are other sad examples. Margarita Sestigiani, a girl of 18, recently orphaned of her father, claimed she was raped by Lorenzo Barbieri in the fields distant from the village.

I was deflowered by Lorenzo Barbieri at Ponticello, on the path to his podere at Felline . . . I don't know who saw or if anyone heard when Lorenzo forced me, he took me and threw me on the ground, saying that he would skin me, and threatened to hit me if I talked, and so I didn't say anything. And then one evening they whistled and knocked, (Lorenzo) with Evandro Selvi, and I wouldn't open the door, that I respected the house of the Signore Marchese (who owned the house they were living in) . . . Don't tell my mother or my brother, for the love of God, signore commissario, don't tell them!

Margarita admitted to having sex with several other unnamed persons and then hid the pregnancy that ensued.²⁷

Completed rapes do not appear often in the documents, and their real number cannot even be guessed. People presumed soldiers were more dangerous than villagers, who were bound by a myriad number of ties to their neighbors.²⁸ The law considered the rape of a virgin to be an offense worthy of punishment on the galleys, if the woman enjoyed a good reputation. Most of the potential victims could also count on male reprisals of some sort.²⁹ The exiled weaver Tommaso Fei (who was married) ambushed Arsilia di Virgilio fetching water, seized her around her neck, and kissed her forcibly, then pulled off her coral necklace as he tried to cast her to the ground. She escaped to the house of her brother-in-law, who confronted

Fei with his sword. Her brother Giovanni Battista marched to Tommaso's house with his sword, daring him to step outside. He immediately brought the case to the *commissario* and the girl recounted her story from her bed to the sympathetic magistrate. He instructed her mother to examine her body for signs of assault, but she found no marks. Judges wanted proofs of the reality of the offense before they admitted the accusation, fearing that machinations on the woman's part could destroy an innocent man. The law eventually released Fei, but only after holding him for months in a Siena prison, where the *auditore* subjected him to torture.

Fear of what the tongues of Montefollonico would say combined with the equally sensible fear of being pregnant and spurned by the guilty party, which would seriously compromise the woman's expectations even if she remained with her family. Consequently, premarital sex was relatively rare. Prenuptial pregnancies become visible by counting time from the wedding to the first baptism. For 201 couples married between 1611 and 1666, only three baptisms ensued in the following eight months, a prenuptial conception rate of 1.5 percent. Rates for France in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries varied between 4 and 8 percent, whereas between a quarter and a third of English brides went to the altar pregnant.³⁰ Children born out of wedlock were therefore an infrequent event. A man who reneged on his promise to marry a girl could not easily be compelled by law of church or state to wed her. Before the recent advent of DNA testing, it could only have been her word against his. The priest recording the baptism usually decided that the paternity was uncertain. Few unmarried mothers dared accuse a man before the magistrate or the bishop's court of fathering her child. Would it not be in her interest to lay the accusation on the most convenient individual? How could she prove the charge? Who could believe the word of a woman who had thrown away her honor, especially when such lapses were rare? But the community could have its way nevertheless. If the girl and her family enjoyed a good reputation, the young man risked imperiling his own. Where male heads of families evaluated girls' reputations at the urns every Christmas, they evaluated men's reputations every day. A breach of promise could deprive men of work opportunities or credit guarantees, especially if the more powerful landowners and their wives took the girl's predicament to heart.³¹ The continuous parish baptismal registers and the criminal archives combined identify only 12 baptisms of bastards between 1611 and 1666, out of 2,013 infants receiving the sacrament. Most unwed mothers lived in the Follonica section of the castello, where the poorest and most vulnerable people congregated. Two of the mothers, both village prostitutes, appeared twice. These baptized bastards were not all from local mothers; Faustina d'Agnolo from Pienza may have had her child baptized at San Valentino to escape the stigma the event would

occasion at home. But just as outside examples contaminate the Montefollonico statistics, so it is probable that kinfolk carried local bastards to nearby jurisdictions to escape publicity. The nobleman Ascanio Foresi brought his servant all the way from Siena to have her give birth in the village. Not only did he recognize the paternity; he had Rutilio Carpellini stand godparent to the little bastard girl. The proud father was the only man to accept paternity, apart from one man cryptically called Pietro in the baptismal register. We know little of the fate of the infants. Margarita Sestigiani unsuccessfully hid her pregnancy and strangled her baby just after she gave birth to him in a stable. Another died only two hours after he was born. People carried at least two more to the foundling hospital San Cristofano in Montepulciano where their prospects for survival were not good. None of the christening lists identifies bastard children, nor do they ever figure on the states of souls censuses. Whether or not the child remained with its mother, the neighbors were unlikely to forget the event and enthusiastically made capital out of the mistakes of others.

Marriage was the central event in a woman's life, if she cherished her good reputation. Marriage gave her more autonomy than she enjoyed in her parents' house, and conferred a measure of social consideration too, enhanced further after she bore her first child. Perhaps she would have a good marriage, defined as a *status* (unlike in the modern West where we consider marriage more like an ongoing but transitory *relationship*), which provided her with security, prestige, children, and tranquil cohabitation. And, at least during the first half of the seventeenth century, almost all women married, if only because being an aging *figlia* was not an enviable destiny.³² According to the states of souls lists for the three parishes San Leonardo, San Valentino, and San Bartolomeo, recorded in 1648, 1655, and 1677 respectively, a total of four women above the age of 20 had not yet married. Two of those lived on a *podere*. Agnesa, daughter of Antonio del Ricciarello, a poor man, was still unmarried at 26 in 1677. One unmarried woman, the servant of Giovanni Cosimo Landucci, may have considered this function to be her permanent station.

Marriage required long-term planning that both families committed to a written contract. Parents still living applied for village dowry allotments and proclaimed the dowry expectations to prospective grooms after the girls reached age 16 or 17, in the relatively clement decades before 1645. We catch only glimpses of negotiations behind these marriage pacts. Sometimes grooms made straightforward proposals to the women they sought, as in the ill-fated case of Lorenzo Gazzara to Lucrezia Doveri.³³ Fewer than half the brides still had fathers, at any period, and brothers usually did not wield enough authority to stand in their way. Brides with

fathers at their side almost always enjoyed larger dowries with respect to orphans. Parents assembled assets in the form of fields, parts of houses, and portions of furniture whose total value they never stipulated, and over which they retained usufruct rights until they died. Establishing one daughter was not so difficult, if it entailed only redirecting the dowry the bride's mother brought into the household. If there were more than one daughter, or if there were children from two different mothers or fathers, the arrangements could become complicated. Like aristocrats, peasants avoided cumbersome dowry payments by resorting to fascinating strategies of multiple marriages, especially before 1650 when we have five "double-marriages": a brother and sister marrying a sister and brother. The dowry amount stipulated in the contract was a legal fiction, since the dowry given out to the sister came back to the brother.³⁴ These account for only 10 marriages out of 269, so they were not commonplace.

The marriage contract did not necessarily emancipate the newlyweds, if the parents invited them into their household. Grooms often committed themselves to caring for the bride's family in the bargain. No doubt, this often happened officiously, without the benefit of a written document. But the marriage contract was a convenient place for the bride's parents to provide for their own future. Sixteen contracts carried this provision, while three more contained the groom's promise to feed, clothe, and guide (*governare*) a child or two from his bride's previous marriage until they were older; 15 was the age of autonomy specified in one contract. Sharecroppers almost never resided with their father-in-law, but nine brides moved in with their husband's father, or more often, his younger brother.³⁵ *Castello* households followed other principles: of seven cases of complex households, only three cohabited on the male side. In the remaining four cases, the groom moved in with his father-in-law, and not always because there were no other heirs. According to a rule long practiced by the aristocracy, estates could pass to a nephew on the female side if he consented to abandon his patronym and to adopt his maternal uncle's identity. Village notables acted similarly. When Luca Romani from Cortona married Caterina Selvi and moved in with her father, Cristoforo, neighbors called his children Selvi for the next generation. Caterina kept her property pretensions alive through civil litigation on her own initiative. Luca Romani, qualified professionally as an organist, was an unpopular man who could never garner enough prestige for his patronym to supplant his father-in-law's. The same fate befell Paolo Vettori's son-in-law Giacomo Crocchi, even though he was a prominent villager and onetime *camerlengo*. The priest omitted his patronym and his children's on the states of souls roster of 1648.³⁶ Francesco Pentì married the daughter of his colleague Girolamo Nannini, and they worked the smithy together. Francesco

expected to inherit all the capital (worth a healthy 300 florins) when his father-in-law died.³⁷ The bride's widowed mother used the marriage contract as a social security arrangement too, remaining with her daughter either in her own house, or in the dwelling of her son-in-law, "in the place of mother," as one pact put it. One groom promised to pay a substantial *vitto* (pension) if ever his mother-in-law should decide to move out.³⁸ The bride's mother promised in exchange that he would inherit all her property if the couple were good and avoided acts of ingratitude! Documents such as these hint at the influence of elderly mothers and mothers-in-law and explain why we rarely find them living on their own. Even when the mother did not cohabit with her married daughter, she was usually close by, detaching part of her dwelling for the new couple and remaining next door.³⁹

The great majority of parents released the dowry bit by bit, over five, ten, or even fifteen years, if indeed they ever acquitted them entirely. Few parents placed stacks of good coin on a table at the moment the groom offered the ring. They limited their cash provisions to a small portion of the total—say 10 percent—while the remainder constituted a debt on which they paid interest after several years. Many dowries took the form of small monetary installments paid at irregular intervals, often recorded by the priest at the bottom of the contract. When the father died, the brother assumed the responsibility for continuing these payments, though he might have daughters of his own to dower. Because so many pacts contained complicated arrangements, I am convinced that many dowry portions were pious wishes, especially for the poorest parents. Five of the marriage contracts hint that litigation potential poisoned the dowry package; most grooms were told they must defend their portion from *molestia* with their own resources. Since dowry tensions were rife and numerous, then why not repudiate the agreement? Dowry payments were no different from the multitude of other debts that bound people to each other. They always involved outsiders who witnessed the contracts and signed for the parties, in addition to the parish priest who drafted it. To go back on one's word was a dangerous precedent to set, especially if the one who signed the pact was a Landucci, or any of the prosperous Barbieri, the *gabellai* Carpellini, or other pillars of the confraternity. The potential for losing face (and future patronage) was considerable. Much better to continue to pay, or pretend to pay, debts owing to siblings.

Why bother with dowries at all? Modern developments have distanced us from what would have been considered their obvious advantages. Repeat childbearing and fearsome rates of infant mortality no longer characterize married life. Today, higher education levels and a low birth rate give women unprecedented work opportunities outside the home. Much greater life spans make it possible for people to save up over many years for

their old age, and heavy taxes levied on high incomes enable welfare states to palliate the most serious social problems. All these and more were lacking in the seventeenth century. In an agricultural world where women worked at the margins of the wage economy, and where many married while still in their teens, they could not possibly accumulate their dowry on their own, save in exceptional circumstances: Caterina di Jacomo Monaci brought 10 years of a servant's salary to her older and well-established husband, Valentino di Rocco.⁴⁰ A dowry worth 300 to 400 lire constituted a protective cushion against the deprivations of widowhood, which could intervene at any moment. While the money was paid to her husband or his father, it belonged by law to her, and she recovered it automatically upon widowhood. Dowries were an adaptive mechanism making it possible for parents to transfer wealth to their daughters at the time of their peak fertility, without compromising their own welfare. Dowries helped ensure the survival of her offspring, just as passing real estate to sons increased their chances of success.⁴¹ We can only guess what proportion of the estate typically went to the daughters in dowries, but it appears to have been substantial.

Because the dowry protected vulnerable people from destitution, it proved the charitable legacy of choice. Tuscans offered a wide assortment of dowry supplements to establish girls from poor families. Patrons included the grand dukes, city governments, and village councils operating through confraternities. Only rich families whose members performed no manual labor, or comfortable families free from debts, were considered ineligible. The great majority of brides in Montefollonico were considered poor under this definition, and most of them went to the altar with the 40 lire provided by the confraternity.⁴² Paternal and maternal uncles sometimes offered up a few florins each "for the love of God." The phrase denotes that they were not legally responsible to dower the bride and could not be sued for nonpayment. Childless aunts appear only in two or three cases to provide portions. A bride's other possibility—but this was infrequent—was to combine her salary with charity from the same employer. A Florentine orphan girl went to the altar with a modest dowry of 60 florins provided by her employer, the noble Borghesi family; half of it was her salary and the remainder was a gift. Since servants' wages were low, offset by the employer's feeding and lodging them, only older brides would have accumulated anything substantial. One bride went to the altar with 100 florins given by the Landucci, "for the love of God," although such a large amount implies that she had been an employee in some special capacity. Dowry portions given as pious charity were also a commonplace bequest in aristocratic testaments. Signora Domenica Cinuzzi provided three donations worth 10 florins each to local girls, who also qualified for

an equivalent amount from the local confraternity. The bride's brothers sometimes committed themselves to finding such sources of charity, especially if their own resources were negligible.

Dowries enabled girls to marry young, often to men substantially older and more settled.⁴³ Youthful marriage spurred population growth from the aftermath of the Black Death in the fourteenth century until the onset of the great famines in 1590, but even after the population began to decline, brides still went to the altar young. For those who married between 1630 and the mid-century famine, mean age at first marriage was a youthful 20.2. Bartolomea Nannini was only 14.5 when she wed Bernardino Biagi in 1632. Fully a third of the brides had not completed their eighteenth birthday. Their husbands were generally a few years older, either still working alongside their fathers on a *podere* or managing one themselves. On the *poderi* of San Valentino and neighboring Ciliano parishes in 1643, wives were on average eight years younger than their husbands: almost a quarter of them were fifteen years younger or more. The greatest discrepancies saw widowers marry young brides soon after burying the mothers of their children.⁴⁴

Marrying someone outside the community was commonplace in the *mezzadria* system. Of the 278 grooms identified in the parish registers, 40 percent originated in parishes outside the fief. Most took their bride home to their native parish after the wedding, which tended to fall into the winter months before Lent, or else in May or June before the heavy harvest work. Other grooms were recent arrivals settling into local *poderi*. Only 7 percent of the brides who were wed in a local ceremony originated from elsewhere. Both the immigrant brides and the newlyweds brought home by their husbands originated in most cases from the local dioceses of Pienza and Montepulciano.

The bride moved into the groom's house with her household equipment, whatever furniture her parents could spare, and her *donamenti*: dress, jewelry, and trousseau, the value and consistency of which varied according to her status. Women spent several years sewing and embroidering the clothes that were part of it.⁴⁵ Domenico Monaci compiled a list of these articles when his daughter Lisabetta married the son of a comfortable sharecropper, Jacomo Lucarini, in 1626: a half-dozen dresses of good material; 4 pairs of sleeves; 14 shirts, most of which were new; 10 new dresses (*spalagrembi*); cotton handkerchiefs and kerchiefs; napkins and tablecloths; 5 bonnets, of which 2 were of brightly colored silk, and a coral necklace; as well as a chest (*forziere*) to put them in. Compare this to the gifts her husband received from his father when he left home to set up house on a *podere* alongside his brother-in-law: a large barrel; over a thousand liters of wine; wooden planks; 4 beehives; an assortment of shovels,

hoes, and other agricultural implements; a table and a bed; a young donkey; 4 sheets and 5 shirts; sacks, smaller casks, and other assorted containers, two good suits with stockings, glass bottles, jugs and vases, plates and glasses, some raw hemp and linen, a pitchfork, two knives and a sword; and almost a hundred lire in cash.⁴⁶ Between them, a cornucopia of peasant wealth!

Parish documents do not often tell us much about living conditions, however. The court archives underline the shabby condition of many of the village houses and the *poderi* alike. Thieves easily removed bricks from the walls to creep inside locked dwellings. Doors and floorboards often contained gaping holes. During the day, the doors and windows would have been open not only to people, but also to hens and pigeons wandering through the rooms. Postmortem inventories give us more detail not only for poor sharecroppers but for village notables too, whose possessions constituted a fairly accessible lifestyle model. The activities of cooking, cleaning, and sociability with neighbors took place in the kitchen hearth, which was often large enough to sit in. A fully equipped hearth included a spit for roasting meat, together with heavy pots and pans nearby. Bread, beans, wine, and cheese were the dietary staples of most people, augmented by the poultry and eggs raised in most courtyards.⁴⁷ Bread was the crucial staple since the Middle Ages.⁴⁸ The essential piece of furniture in every kitchen was the *madia*, a trough for preparing bread dough. Though the tomato belonged to the future, many distinguishing traits of modern Tuscan cuisine were already in place. Every kitchen possessed a cheese grater, since the little wheels of *cacio pecorino* were consumed as a condiment. More affluent villagers expressed their wealth on the table with crockery. Every household possessed multiple plates and bowls, but the richer ones owned scores of pieces, with both white and glazed crockery and terracotta pots and jugs, as well as glasses and pitchers. Simone Berardi, father of a parish priest, owned silver forks and spoons, in poor condition and stored away in boxes. The richer villagers distinguished their homes with substantial pieces of furniture: tables with feet carved as lion's paws, armoires placed against the wall alongside weapons racks. Modest families generally slept in a single large chamber adjacent to the kitchen, with their effects stored nearby in trunks. There was a confusion of purposes for single rooms, but beds were already important and imposing objects of furniture—the best ones supporting big mattresses stuffed with feathers, encircled by curtains, and topped with a canopy. Poverty entailed being cold. The typical hearth fire, fed by straw and branches, dwindled to a bare flicker providing little light and no noticeable heat.⁴⁹ Houses contained a variety of implements such as bedwarmers to economize on precious fuel. In addition to the kitchen and a sleeping chamber, many houses

contained an underground *cantina* to store wine barrels and a porch or shed to store equipment. Most *castello* dwellings possessed a garden too, abutting against the village rampart. *Poderi* houses left fewer records, since they did not belong to local householders, and sharecroppers occupied them for shorter periods. The surviving buildings today have been modified substantially over the centuries, but we still derive from them an impression of solid sufficiency by early modern standards.

Workable Families

Piante tante, spighe poche

(So many stalks, so few kernels)

Marriage was central to women's existence because it was not distinct from childbearing, at least not intentionally so. Usually it was not long before the bride could boast she was pregnant. Almost half of the brides (44 percent) gave birth within a year of their wedding. Pregnancy was not without its risks; Alessandra di Giovanni Battista's pregnancy impressed the *commisario* enough to record her large belly, "which frightens women and makes them think about their conscience."⁵⁰ We never capture the birthing process in conventional sources. The priest recorded the midwives' identity only when they baptized newborn infants in peril of dying before the church ceremony could be arranged. Aldabella di Pasquino was one of these, baptizing seven infants. Midwives were matronly figures, women of experience rather than skill, who applied little charms to ease the birthing pangs.⁵¹ Their origins seem to have been diverse, from women such as Calidonia di Pietro Gabbiai on the disreputable margins of society to the pious notable Maddalena Bertini-Selvi.

Repeat pregnancies and births were the best way for a mother to ensure her comfortable retirement in old age, should that happy event transpire. As in most of the developing world today (where infant mortality is still relatively common), having numerous children was a wise investment in the future. So many children! And yet a married couple's reproduction was no sure thing. Despite the conscientious ministrations of the midwives, a high mortality rate for children and parents alike meant that women would have to marry young and bear children repeatedly just to replace the adult population. Mario Breschi estimates rates of infant mortality (those dying in their first year) at between 150 and 220 for every 1000 live births in the seventeenth century: staggeringly high rates in our time, these are surely too low.⁵² Mortality rates were so high that the population would have looked quite young. On the 19 *poderi* in the parish of San Valentino

in 1655, 18 contained a total of 65 children, who constituted something like two-thirds of the entire parish population. Almost a third (31) was below the age of 10. Conversely, only two adults were over 59 years old, and only 11 (barely 10 percent) had reached the age of 50. This parish's youthful face reflected a rebound from terrible famines. The age distribution in San Bartolomeo parish in 1677 was more typical. On the *poderi* there, peasants had an average of 3.2 living children if one discounts adult co-sharecroppers. This included an assortment of *garzone*: nieces and especially nephews who moved in to keep the farm productive. Forty (47 percent) of 85 people were youngsters below age 20, and only 19 percent were below the age of 10. Here, 15 percent of the population was over the age of 50, and 6 percent over the age of 60. The *castello* population was a bit different, for it attracted an older population. Of the 112 people living there, 40 percent were below the age of 20, and 20 percent were under the age of 10, while 16 percent had reached the age of 50, and 10 percent had passed the age of 60.

I am certain that Breschi's rates of infant mortality are too low because they do not account for infanticide. Neglect, abandonment, and the deliberate killing of newborn babies by their mothers is something we encounter in all human societies, and in some animal species as well. Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, in their landmark study of homicide, note that when women kill, the victims are most likely to be their own children.⁵³ The cases of infanticide *prosecuted judicially* are gloomily similar: the mothers were girls of stable family who had been seduced and abandoned, and who resolved to hide their pregnancy and their shame. In Montefollonico, only Margarita Sestigiani went to this extremity. Pretending at first to the magistrate that the baby boy was stillborn, Margarita soon changed her story and in a long, teary lament covering several pages she confessed to strangling the big healthy newborn with her blue hair ribbon. The magistrate consigned her to the city prison at Montepulciano and she disappears from view.⁵⁴

My first suspicions that *married* women might have been killing their infants arose from studying behavior during the famine of 1648–49. Unlike unwed mothers, married women who would kill their children did not hide their pregnancies. They did not need to adopt a course of action prior to the moment they chose to keep the child and could weigh their own and their family's circumstances when the time came. Parents could pretend that their child was stillborn or died immediately after birth, because the thing was common enough.⁵⁵ Comparing the sex of baptized children gives us the best insight into infanticide. Fashioning age pyramids from the states of souls registers for the three parishes just for the *poderi* where priests consistently recorded people's ages, we find only 5 percent

more males than females in the parish of San Bartolomeo in 1677, in a generation after the great hunger. On *poderi* farms in San Leonardo parish in 1648, on the cusp of the famine, there were 14 percent more males than females. For San Valentino in 1655, however, the deficit of females was fully 34 percent! The greatest imbalance was in the youngest ages, with the greatest disparity (6 females/12 males) among those between the ages of 5 and 9. If San Valentino represented roughly one-seventh of the total population, it is not unreasonable to suspect that parents snuffed out the lives of one or two score of their babies, primarily female, during the famine of 1648–49. Some of these children, again probably female in majority, might have been left with the San Cristofano hospital in nearby Montepulciano.⁵⁶ Other infants might have been carried to Siena, to the hospital of Santa Maria della Scala, which received a couple of hundred children every year from the city and the entire state. The scale of the tragedy in 1648–50 would have swamped such institutions, however. The worst years tended to follow bad harvests. In a number of these years, 1617, 1629, 1635, 1647, and 1658, the ratio of males to females at baptism was over double, and it was almost double in several more years. There were two years when girls' baptisms outnumbered boys, by 50 percent or more, as in 1623 and 1634, but occasional swings both ways was normal in a population oscillating between 700 and 850 people. The years where the sex imbalance of baptized infants was greatest did not always coincide with high grain prices; low prices could be a curse to peasants if they had debts to pay.⁵⁷ The high index of masculinity in the 1680s occurred in years where no harvest shortage troubled people's lives, but grain prices reached their nadir. Nevertheless, these great imbalances disappeared in better times.

Let us examine a large portion of the childbearing couples in Montefollonico, record the number of baptized children born to them, and then note the frequency of their births. This procedure affords us a much closer look at the parents whose lengthy birth intervals look suspicious, if the reader will follow me through a brief demonstration in figures. We have 116 continuously resident couples that display intergenetic intervals (time between births) ranging from 30 to 48 months. Why such a limited frame? In a world of frequently malnourished peasants and near-universal maternal breastfeeding, it seems best not to assume some kind of birth control being used within two and a half years of the previous baptism. If parents were not killing newborns, then the gender balance of the last-baptized and the next-baptized should be near parity. We have 134 binary relations or couples of births on each end of the gap, between the harvest years 1616 and 1663. The index of masculinity of the previous-born child was 135, well above the natural rate of 104; the index of the next-born was less pronounced, at 123, but still significantly abnormal.

We can examine the problem more closely by counting the gaps between births, relative to the number of live births in the same period. While the long intergenesic intervals we see in the 1620s and early 1630s did not comprise more than 10 percent of the number of live baptisms, those of the late 1630s correspond to a third of live births. The 11 couples with suspicious gaps between their baptisms during the great famine of 1649 and 1650 correspond to only 19 live baptisms in the same period. Among them, their previous baptized infant was male in fully 10 of 11 cases, while the next-born was male in 8. These figures signify that parents wished to enhance the chances of survival of their previous-born son at the expense of babies born not long thereafter; and then tended to prefer a son for the next child they decided to keep. And who were these parents? Among the 11 families with long intergenesic intervals, we find one local businessman, Giacomo Crocchi, whose wife Lisabetta Vettori was the sister of a parish priest. This couple already had two children. Crocchi had leased village assets, such as the butcher-stall, and took up leases on agricultural land.⁵⁸ The famine conjuncture hit him very hard; we see him suing villagers for small purchases of meat made much earlier. Another couple a little above the peasantry was a literate stonemason, *maestro* Niccolo Biagi, and his peasant wife, Faustina Barbieri. Biagi's affairs had been deteriorating for a number of years, and Niccolo's elder brother Bernardino bought much of his property years earlier in what looks like a loan with land as collateral.⁵⁹ The other parents were all peasants of diverse assets and resources. Niccolo Pilacci lost both his parents during the famine. Margarita di Giuseppe bore 12 *baptized* children to her sharecropper husband Luca Barbieri, several of whom later married. This couple's reproduction was already assured. These couples seemed to ease the survival of their families by killing the newest members.

Anthropologists frequently encounter infanticide because raising children is just one of the tasks that married women perform. A child requires a long-term investment in food, attention, and time from mothers, who have to make tradeoffs between their own subsistence and reproduction. Moreover, mothers had to evaluate their children's chances for survival immediately after birth, in a world where at least half of baptized offspring would die before they could marry and reproduce in turn. Mothers had to make this choice before beginning lactation, which transformed them physiologically and emotionally. Once the mothers became attached to their baby, and the babies reciprocated, it became more heartrending to abandon them. This dilemma is quite universal in human societies and so has less to do with gender ideologies than with the physiology of lactation.⁶⁰

Historians sometimes evoke a "mentality" that makes it possible for parents to think that abandoning or killing girls was normal, but the

concept of mentality is purely tautological—that is, we explain a seemingly strange behavior by postulating that people had a different mindset from ours. It would be better to search for the good reasons people had for acting as they did. Why the parental preference for boys? In Italy, having mostly boys conferred several advantages. Sharecropping families tried to do better than simply balance arms to mouths, as they put it. The men produced grain and wine, the saleable crops. Women performed a range of useful functions, but their contribution to the production of essential foodstuffs was secondary. Moreover, girls required dowries that were far higher than what their earnings could provide. Peasant sons *brought* dowries to their parents. Parental acumen could be crudely tabulated in the cumulative dowries of several sons, offset by only one dowry to pay out. For parents, having boys entailed other advantages too. Italian children did not live separately from their aged and widowed mothers; sharecropper widows clearly preferred to live with sons more than daughters. Among *poderi* families in San Bartolomeo and San Valentino parishes, mothers living with married sons numbered 15; only 1 mother, who had no sons, lived with her daughters. Sons were material and emotional security in old age, and Italian mothers enjoyed high status in the household betrayed by any number of offhand references in judicial documents and marriage contracts. We should not see mothers as being disinterested beings. As much as their husbands, they had good reasons for wanting boys.

There is an interesting wrinkle, however. Most stratified human societies practice hypergamy, wherein women frequently marry men of higher social status than themselves. Early modern Italians did as much. Aristocratic families destined half or more of their daughters to convents in the seventeenth century. Conversely, the more sons a high-ranking family had, the better its chance at social consolidation or advancement.⁶¹ Hypergamy allowed rich commoners to creep into the aristocracy via the marriage of their daughters to well-born men. Sociobiologists see this practice as an adaptive mechanism easing the tensions between social superiors and their underlings, for low-status people could hope to have high-status grandchildren. While it was in the interest of powerful people to procreate sons who would in turn beget heirs (unlike their daughters), it was on the contrary in the interest of poor people who desired heirs to have multiple daughters. Many women went to the altar without substantial dowries, replacing recently deceased sharecroppers' wives, for example, whose widowers were burdened with children. A handful reproduced outside the bounds of holy matrimony, usually impregnated by men of higher status. While sharecropping families seemed to resort to infanticide most often, and clearly preferred boys, they were not the poorest people in the community. The landless inhabitants (called *pigionali*, or renters), widows,

and isolated individuals residing in the *castello* agglomeration were the true poor. In 1702, we have for the combined parishes of San Leonardo and San Bartolomeo only 9 well-off families in the *castello* with only 4 boys and 5 girls under the age of 10. Their poorer neighbors, on the other hand, had only 12 boys for 28 girls in the same age group! At first sight, the numbers suggest that poor families neglected their male children at the expense of the female ones.⁶²

The church certainly opposed infanticide, in principle, but we should not give undue weight to intellectual preferences. What could churchmen do to curtail the practice? Early in the seventeenth century, the priest baptized only a minority of infants on the day they were born.⁶³ The church shortened these delays to help parents decide to keep their infant. The church also considered putting a child in bed with the mother to be a serious sin that only the bishop could absolve.⁶⁴ The church encouraged desperate parents to abandon infants at the door of a foundling hospital, such as the one in Montepulciano.⁶⁵ Only a few infants were left each year for the whole district, however. There is not much evidence that the ministrations of priests had much effect. Bishops or their emissaries conferred the sacrament of confirmation on those children who survived early childhood. Between 1587 and 1730, we have eighteen confirmation lists for Montefollonico. The normal ratio of boys to girls past age five would probably be at or below 100. In 1638, the index of masculinity was only 67. In some years, the index was close to natural levels, at 102.5 in 1677, 106 in 1625 and 1642, and 109 in 1599. But the aftermath of more difficult years revealed stunning disproportions of male and female juveniles. The index of masculinity was 142.5 in 1613 (when the bishop confirmed over 200 children), 125 and 123 in 1632 and 1636 respectively, reflecting the more difficult years of the mid- to late-1620s; 185 in 1646, 170 in 1654, and 136.5 in the kinder 1660s. Such consistently high rates of masculinity show that parents were making hard choices about which children to raise to adulthood. And the profile we find there is reproduced with subtle variations in the communities nearby.⁶⁶

It looks like the infanticide of legitimate infants at birth before their baptism was a routine response to hard times in early modern Tuscany, and no doubt elsewhere. In bad years, it might have corresponded to a quarter or a third of live births. It seemed to persist longest among sharecroppers, but the practice was no doubt widespread and may explain the gradual decline of population across much of Italy during the long seventeenth century, from 1590 to 1730.⁶⁷ Like our routine modern recourse to abortion, most people could live with infanticide as an unpleasant fact of life. Whether with boys or girls, we do not find in Tuscany a quick replacement of dead children after a harvest failure. Parents were making fatal

choices to construct a workable family out of the material that nature bestowed on them.

Workable families drew their identities and their strength from past generations. The names that godparents bestowed were already designated by the parents mindful of family history. Many parents followed simple rules, but they are not always apparent and there existed a variety of practices. Tuscany occupies an intermediate position between the considerable predictability of names bestowed in the Kingdom of Naples, and the wide variety available to French parents.⁶⁸ Italian parents bestowed a different name for each living child and never transmitted their own names to their children. As in Naples, Tuscans named the first-born son after a grandfather. Luca di Agnolo Barbieri used Agnolo for his first-born, and Giuseppe, the name of his father-in-law, for the second son, which implies that both parents had some say in the matter. Giovanni di Bernardino Rubenni, who had four sons by his wife Giulia di Giovanni, used both Bernardino and Giovanni, this last a reference to the grandfather, not the father. Just as frequently, parents bestowed the names of uncles or brothers on the father's side. Pietro Bai never used his father's name Millo for his three sons, but he conferred names of brothers or uncles instead, Annibale, Cesare, and Niccolo. Benedetto di Ascanio Stefanucci made repeated attempts to keep family names alive; he never used Ascanio, but attempted Niccolo twice, Camillo twice, Cassandra twice, and applied Claudio, his first wife's father's name, once. Noblemen behaved like their commoner neighbors. Flavio Buonamici tried Leandro three times and Francesco twice, to keep the names alive. The influence of outside events or of naming fads was very muted. One of the Landucci sons carried the name Cosimo hyphenated to another; this was a nobleman's political homage to the ruling Medici. Someone bestowed the unusual name Mattia during the Castro War of 1643, where Prince Mattia de' Medici, governor of Siena, commanded the Tuscan army. Fulvio Carpellini and his wife Ottavia Gazzari must have been desperate to have children. Ottavia gave birth to Domitilla almost three years after her marriage; the baby died in infancy, but several years later, she gave birth to a Pellegrino and a Pellegrina in 1646 and 1647 respectively. These unusual names hint that a pilgrimage to a holy shrine cured her sterility.⁶⁹

There was no single family model. The states of souls tell us something about household sizes and their structures. There was a permanent contrast between the *podere* households and *castello* families. Only one *podere* contained no children. There was on average 7.15 children on the others, including the *garzone* and hired labor. For the combined parishes of San Valentino (1655) and San Bartolomeo (1677), only two were occupied by people of a single generation, on small holdings. Three-quarters of them

contained two generations, whether elderly parents with adult children (sometimes married but without living children) or younger parents with children as a classic nuclear family. The remaining quarter of the *poderi* united three generations under the same roof, as elderly *capocasa* (aged mothers) lived alongside their grandchildren. None contained more than three generations. Men practically always headed the household. When widowed mothers were still alive, they were listed below the active sons. More complex households contained one or more married sons in the house, and a confusing assortment of children and grandchildren. The priest listed the hired help last, whatever their age. These *garzoni* (for the great majority were boys) numbered 20 to 35 individuals drawn from poor *castello* households. They were never younger than nine years old: and before the mid-century famine pushed the age at marriage upward, very few were older than twenty.

The *castello* agglomeration contrasted rich families and poor ones. Richer people had larger families in both cities and villages.⁷⁰ The 12 families of notables in San Leonardo parish boasted an average of 3.7 dependent offspring each, including some adults and grandchildren. The poorer families, often fatherless, contained only 1.8 children on average. Children sometimes figure in households that appear to be assemblages of more distant relatives, people whose relationship to the *capofamiglia* is unclear. In an era where the principal social safety net comprised of relatives, large families were tangible wealth and strength. Fragile blood-ties signified vulnerability.⁷¹ Almost a third of the households contained persons of just one generation. Some of these consisted of well-to-do bachelors living with a servant (there were but five servant women in the parish). Only three households contained three generations.⁷² The bulk (two-thirds) of the *castello* households were made up of two-generation families, though a good portion of these were headed by widows with small children and a few aged widows lived with adult children.⁷³ Very few people in Montefollonico lived alone in their room, whatever their social status.

Families were made more workable by this internal cohesion and some self-sacrifice. Not only were the families unequal with respect to each other, even the members within each of these hierarchically structured families were unequal among themselves. The household was not an egalitarian structure, and the documents reflect both law and custom. Fathers enjoyed full legal power over their children for as long as they lived under his roof. But we would be mistaken to view domestic authority as an unbending patriarchy passing from father to son. The states of souls sometimes reveal power relations in the household.⁷⁴ Scribes always listed the patriarch first, then his "consort," followed by the eldest son, and by the other children in order of their age. The variations on these themes

were quite numerous, if the document's order is indeed a faithful reflection of local perceptions. In the *castello*, Paolo Vettori's married daughter Lisabetta lived with her parents. Her husband's name, Giacomo figures after hers, his surname omitted. Next came Lisabetta's younger brothers, and Lisabetta's children ended the list. This pattern emerges in other households too. Vincenzo Ciacci, aged 70, and his wife, Maddalena, aged 62, were listed as *capocasa* and *consorte* respectively. Two daughters followed, by order of age: Laura, a widow, aged 30, and Portia, aged 28. Her husband Michelagnolo came last, bearing no last name. The position of the mother varied depending on her age and social integration, but she usually wielded no little influence. Sulpizia Mazzoni, a notable's widow, was listed as *capocasa* ahead of her adult son *maestro* Carlo, a stonemason, and his sister Lucrezia. Carlo's marriage would eventually lift him to head status.⁷⁵

Social life as a whole was articulated around the production and conservation of children. Evolutionary psychologists often speak of the "inclusive fitness" of individuals: it includes the "nepotistic" behavior of those who sacrifice their own chance of raising children and yet proffer precious assistance to the offspring of close relatives.⁷⁶ This behavior was very common in Montefollonico. Unless they were orphaned, Tuscan children would remain under their parents' tutelage until they married. We find them in their late 30s and early 40s, still not married, living on *poderi* and in village houses. Whether sons of sharecroppers or village notables such as Lorenzo Barbieri, adult sons were in an awkward position, for they could not marry, enter into contracts, or engage the assets of the house until their fathers emancipated them formally.⁷⁷ Younger daughters could be expected to assist their parents and sisters-in-law until they themselves married and moved away. Many mothers benefited from the assistance of such close kin as "helpers" to raise her children. Grandmothers could still fulfill this role.⁷⁸ Rich families could hire servant girls or wetnurses; the latter were not numerous, but they allowed the mother to become pregnant again much sooner. Resident male kin strengthened the reproducing line too. Bachelor brothers were the most precious aids: their wages contributed mightily to the prosperity of the whole household and they bore their share of the burden of representing the family's public interest to the community. This would end when the brother decided to pull his portion from the estate worked in common, and to move away. Priests were different, because the church imposed celibacy upon them. Matteo Barbieri lived with three brothers and his aged mother without any kind of division.⁷⁹ When the priest was an outsider, he often brought his whole family with him to share the fruits of his benefice.⁸⁰ His income usually helped send a nephew to college or to a seminary. The death of an ecclesiastic uncle or

brother could transform the prospects of penniless youths or middle-aged men who had never advanced on their own.⁸¹

Universally, parents care profoundly and often selflessly for their children, with huge behavioral consequences.⁸² The blood bonds of nepotism have no counterweight in other forms of social solidarity. It may be a universal among living creatures, great and small.⁸³ Parents owed their children bread, guidance, and protection. Protection was not a vain concept, and fathers and mothers frequently exercised it by thrashing neighbors and their children who threatened their offspring.⁸⁴ Aurelia Biagi dismissed her irate neighbor, the smithy Giovanbattista Borri, for his inability to provide for his family: "he's a worthless wretch (*sciaurato*) who doesn't keep his family with him, but spreads them out among other people, given that he has so little honor." The solidarity of older children benefited both their siblings and their parents.⁸⁵ Fathers interceded for their sons to mitigate judicial condemnations, pledged their good behavior on pain of heavy fines, and negotiated peace with their sons' enemies.⁸⁶ For sons this state of protection could lead to an almost permanent state of subordination, if fate blessed their father with long life. Adult sons gradually took on their own responsibilities under their fathers' roof. Anacleto Barbieri's power stemmed in large part from the activities of Lorenzo, who managed his *poderi*, served the marchese as *gabellai*o, and acted as an intermediary between the community and the Sienese and Tuscan institutions above it; and from the activities of Giovanni Battista, the parish priest of San Valentino and San Bartolomeo. Both sons lived with Anacleto, took his affairs to heart, and defended his status against challengers.⁸⁷ Fathers and brothers never really relinquished their role of protecting the girls, even after marrying them off. Lattanzio Pilacci rushed to Francesco Crocchi's house after the latter hit his wife, Lattanzio's daughter, for wasting money. "I say it's an ugly shame to hit a woman. Come down here, you wretch!" His sons Carlo and Niccolo stood by with stones in hand, as the men scuffled. Francesco's brother Jacomo fetched his sword and ran to the altercation. The priest Cesare Mazzoni hurried to break them apart.⁸⁸ Mothers wielded substantial influence too. Camillo Penti defied the wishes of his mother and brother Francesco and married without their consent, instead of living in submissive docility with them.⁸⁹ The bad feelings that resulted prompted his departure. The influence of mothers over their daughters is more difficult to trace, for it remained outside the world of written documents, and daughters rarely left their parents' dwelling before marriage.

Children were also socialized by other children. We rarely see the girls, but boys roamed everywhere in tight bands. Certainly the boys who frolicked with each other away from parental supervision instructed each other on the prickly demands of the honor ethic their peer group enforced

more rigidly than the strictest father. Their horseplay and play-fighting sometimes entailed durable wounds, but boys strove for acceptance and for status in these groups right up until they married. Many a parent—stern fathers included—waited long into the night for his son to come home, fearing that some young delinquent might have involved him in trouble, and they had good reason to be afraid.

Parents not only sheltered, fed, and protected their children, they educated them too. I find no example of fathers instructing girls, who spent their time close to their mothers in household tasks, and they only occasionally tended animals in the fields when they were older. For them, tradition guided their education and their upbringing entirely. Boys followed their fathers, if they were not *garzoni* on a *podere*, but there was always the chance that reading could open new vistas for them. We have one glimpse of a father teaching his son the catechism outside in the street.⁹⁰ Many fathers sent their boys to school to learn to read and write. Ascanio Diami, a well-to-do villager, hoped the infeudation of the village would permit a threefold increase in the schoolmaster's salary from the confraternity revenues, to attract someone learned enough to "tame (redurre) the boys . . . and by means progressing in knowledge, they become men of good quality, apt to be useful to themselves and to their community (patria)."⁹¹ Many literate villagers criticized the shortcomings of itinerant schoolmasters such as the monk Fra Benedetto Gubernale. "You don't teach the catechism to the youths (ragazzi), or grammar, either. You're only good at gambling!" cried their ringleader, Giuliano Vettori.⁹²

There is no convenient document allowing us to determine levels of literacy in a systematic way, but the marriage contracts are probably the best. At the foot of the short acts he penned, the priest asked the parties to append their signatures. Notaries wrote marriage contracts only for the rich, so the bundle of 269 contracts for Montefollonico contains none from elite families, but those of well-to-do artisans and peasants figure prominently. When neither spouse nor their parents and relatives could sign, other parties—such as the local noblemen, or village notables such as the Barbieri—signed the document in their stead. If it is not possible to extrapolate literacy statistics from them, we still see who could sign their names and who could not.⁹³ Of the 268 contracts, we have 20 signatures from future husbands, but not a single one from the brides. One might object that they would require a male stand-in for the legal act. But some brides were widows free to marry who they chose. Many widows negotiated the marriage of their daughters, and both future spouses were considered contracting parties, properly speaking, and the document's wording reflected this. Illiterate parties invited people to sign for them, and this was universal for the women. For illiterate husbands, the signing party was

usually a notable, but sometimes a brother or a father, which suggests that literacy was a family asset, not an individual's. The priest Luca Formichi signed for his brother Andrea, who was about to receive a very substantial dowry of 1,200 lire. Clearly the parents invested heavily in the education of the priest, not that of Andrea, who would inherit most of the family estate and sire heirs.

The businessmen were almost all literate; Vincenzo, Scipione, Arenio, and Anacleto Barbieri, *capocasa* of four distant branches of the same patronym appended their signatures to a host of documents. The Carpellini, Nannini, Selvi, Nutarelli, Vettori, and Mazzoni could sign, as could the surgeon Marcantonio Venturi. The one who could not, stonemason Carlo Mazzoni, lost almost everything after he invested in village revenues in the 1640s and 1650s. There was widespread literacy among the artisans who frequently dealt in leases and other contracts; the Biagi brothers Bernardino and Niccolo could both sign; weaver Tommaso Fei; the blacksmiths Camillo Penti and his troubled rival Giambattista Borri; the shoemaker Lodovico Demone; the sometime butchers and *pizzicaoli* Giacomo Crocchi, Giovanni Battista Magnoni, and Francesco Miseri. This skill they transmitted to their sons or nephews.

More interesting still, because it was infrequent, was the literacy of peasants. There was something unseemly about it in the minds of many people. Caterina di Paolo disapprovingly recounted how Gregorio Sonnini sat beside the hearth with his wife, silently reading some papers he had in hand. When the *sbirro* and the *nesso* walked in to investigate a theft, "Gregorio didn't say anything, he just trembled and trembled and dropped the writings on the floor."⁹⁴ Benedetto di Ascanio Stefanucci could sign his name, a skill he exploited in his frequent lawsuits. The brothers Giacomo and Domenico Catinai signed their marriage contracts; but literacy did not prevent Giacomo from dying of hunger in the great famine. Antonio Lucarini, the long-term sharecropper of the large Oppiano *podere*, could sign his name, but his sons could not. Of the richest peasants, the Rubenni, only Bernardino could sign his contract. His richer brother Valentino never appears as a signatory. I would guess that literacy rates for men in Montefollonico ran in the order of 10 percent overall; they were much lower for sharecroppers, at around 5 percent.⁹⁵ I suspect that the ability to write for countrywomen was common only in the aristocracy. The number of persons who could read, but not write, was surely greater, but they are impossible to identify. Would the frequent election of pious notables as godparents allow village women to tap their ability to read?

Giovanni Levi maintains that we lose sight of the true structure of early modern Italian families if we do not look beyond the single household. There is much merit in this statement, but like all generalizations, we must

nuance it. Evolutionary psychology postulates that our solidarities and our attachments wane relative to the distance of consanguinity.⁹⁶ Parents had a lifelong interest in their children's welfare, and fathers hoped the workable family they knew would endure after their deaths. There are a score of occasions in the land-sale register, where land and buildings pass between brothers in fictitious sales that masked an act of charity.⁹⁷ Pasquino di Bastiano Calcagnolo vented frustration at how he deserved better from his brother Agnolo after having saved him from ruin.⁹⁸ Siblings, while they cooperate with each other more than with outsiders, also compete with each other for parental resources. Not many orphans were taken in by relatives; those who were did not always find peace there. Portia Barbieri complained that her aunt's *stranezze* (caprices) drove her from her paternal uncle's house, but the aunt was not a blood-relative.⁹⁹ Relations among adult siblings are hard to trace and are more visible among men than among women.

Paternal testaments often exhorted the sons to pool their resources and to live in harmony, working in common to dower their sisters. Divisions among brothers, however, often exploded in bitter squabbles leaving traces in the criminal archives—especially when each had their own children to nourish, and thus fresh and more compelling loyalties.¹⁰⁰ Magistrates were loathe to interfere in these disputes and prevailed upon priests and nobles to intervene informally instead. Arenio Barbieri wept when he described his predicament to the *commissario*, after he fought with his brother Giuseppe over a pile of straw. The latter threatened to kill him,

My brother is so angry because we have only a few effects in common, and we have to divide it. There have been several compromises with Gentlemen and persons priestly and friars, and he, arbitrarily as if there were no Justice, never let me have my share. I told him that I wanted to go see the signor auditore (in Siena) . . . and of the things planned by the auditore nothing happened . . . I have never been able to have my share, neither in my mother's lifetime nor even after she died, so that I am still living in a house Giuseppe owns, and he wants me to pay rent on it, while he has a house, a vineyard, a field and a shop, and while I ask for my due civilly through respectable people, Giuseppe my brother wants to kill me.

Arenio added menacingly, "With all due respect I protest to Your Lordship that if you do not advance or bring this case forward, I will go complain to the Signore Marchese that I am unable to get good justice!" The case was accommodated by order of the *auditore* Marzocchi and so never came to a judicial conclusion. Issues such as these usually fell outside the judiciary's mandate to keep justice between families, although siblings sometimes brought their civil and criminal disputes to judges to arbitrate. To acquire

enough information to make their case, individuals could seek a *monitorio*. With the bishop's authorization, parish priests warned all those aware of irregularities to come and recount it in confession, on pain of excommunication.¹⁰¹ Magistrates much preferred that relatives should compose their differences through a *lodo*, arbitrated by notables and drafted by priests. Eight of these survive: they all refer either to dowry payments or to the division of parental estates and the assumption of the debts accruing to them.¹⁰²

At least brothers could ordinarily flee acrimonious situations by going their separate ways. They would always be genetically close. One of the most dangerous family disputes was the troubled marriage, for the church, although it allowed separation of persons and property, did not allow divorce. The human species is everywhere moderately polygynous, and everyone in Montefollonico understood this. The church wished to prevent older, more powerful men from abandoning wives close to their age with the aim of beginning afresh with younger women, which is the most widespread situation in anthropological literature.¹⁰³ It also forestalled women repudiating unsuccessful husbands in the hopes of attaching themselves within or without marriage to higher-status men. The church saw monogamy as a powerful tool by which to share the reproductive potential and to diminish social tensions simultaneously, but its success in applying it depended on the relative strength of the institution over the power of social elites. One pacification strategy the church employed was to force people to marry outside their circle of kin. The result was to create a multitude of blood ties through stable populations, thereby reducing the potential for violence. The church could also annul a marriage if its celebration in some way violated canonical requirements, as when parents forced a girl into matrimony against her consent. I have found no such procedure in Montefollonico. More often, the church separated estranged spouses, although it was not frequent. Cassandra Nannini left her husband Benedetto Stefanucci and attempted to recover her dowry through the court.¹⁰⁴ The motives for the breakdown are not clear, but there was an important disparity in age between them, and Benedetto was a very litigious peasant. He twice named his daughters by Cassandra after his first wife.¹⁰⁵ But a marriage regularly contracted lasted a lifetime for one of the spouses. Some men were not model husbands and just shrugged when their neighbors gossiped about them. Bastiano Monaci, called *Calcagnolo*, notoriously beat his wife and spent his money on wine and prostitutes.¹⁰⁶ A shoemaker's assistant wounded his wife with a knife after she berated him for going to the tavern; both he and his wife dismissed it afterward as an accident, and the magistrate hesitated to take it farther—and the couple never figured again.¹⁰⁷ Wives would also justify their collaboration in a

crime on the pretext that their husbands would hit them if they demurred.¹⁰⁸

Spousal solidarity was held in place by considerable outside pressure. Not many people were above being harmed by salacious gossip. Honor in small communities existed in fixed quantities: what one person lost, the neighbors gained by publicizing the misdeed. Powerful men were sometimes the object of scurrilous writings pinned to their door at night, but this concerned their business dealings and their lawsuits, not their matrimonial fidelity. When gossip swirled around married women, the potential for trouble was magnified. Magistrates were advised to proceed in adultery cases with extreme caution, and to not allow denunciations of it to be reported by anyone outside the immediate family, for only close kin were likely to be truthful about something that dishonored them so deeply. The late sixteenth-century Sieneese magistrate Giulio Nori noted that it was legal for a husband or father to kill the seducer of his wife or daughter if he caught him in the act, and to kill her too. Some legal textbooks recommended death by stoning for both guilty parties. However, Nori reminded his readers that adultery did not disturb the public peace if the family hushed it up, and advised magistrates that they should not rule too harshly.¹⁰⁹ Early seventeenth-century magistrates such as Cospì recommended that the judge keep the interest of the woman charged with adultery at the forefront and that he proceed only after consulting the prince or a government minister. We have no record of serious physical altercations between men on this account, for zealous reaction on the part of the husband confirmed the rumors in the eyes of the neighbors. They must have savored the cheek of Vittorio di Sandro, Margarita *la Signorina*'s husband, who challenged the priest Ludio Bartolomei in the bishop's court for making advances to her: "because he is a poor but honored man, he demands that the court defend his honor against *maestro Ludio*."¹¹⁰

Judicial practice punished the woman's adultery, principally, with a fine—or with relegation to a monastery (at her husband's expense) in cases where it obtained a conviction. The existence of this "double standard" of sexual responsibility is sometimes held to be a cultural artifact. Keith Thomas argued this explicitly, writing that "society" directed men and women and trained up its daughters to tolerate men's frailties, although he conceded that this attitude had a very long pedigree in Europe and could be found in many other societies too.¹¹¹ But reifying society (or "culture" in modern parlance) will not do. We must look elsewhere for an explanation for a social phenomenon so widespread and tenacious. The reason for the discrepancy in the prosecution of female adultery over male adultery is obvious. In the absence of artificial forms of birth control, illicit sexual relations produced children of illegal or uncertain paternity—children whose

very survival was an affront to the husband. Sexual straying among married individuals triggers powerful and universal emotions in both men and women, but their reactions are not identical.¹¹² Women could object to a husband's absence from the home, and to his diversion of household resources to another bed. Clashes among women on these grounds never entailed the use of weapons or rent the village into homicidal factions. When Domenica, wife of blacksmith Camillo Penti learned from a neighbor that her husband lusted after Faustina, wife of Niccolo Biagi, she lay in ambush for her rival behind the village wall and battered her. But fights such as these were without other consequences.¹¹³ Women who enjoyed good reputations *deserved* the support and protection of their husbands and kin, and *expected* to be *honored* by their husbands and children in their old age. Both the church and the state recognized that a married woman had a monopoly on her husband's resources and commitment, and they put a straying husband in his place by banishing the offending woman. On the other hand, loose talk about a woman's adultery was held liable to drive a husband to kill his wife, create bad blood between families, and sully the good name and paternity of the children simultaneously. Only the adultery of women was likely to disrupt the public peace.¹¹⁴

When a man's suspicion focused on his wife, the result was acrimony, heightened vigilance, seclusion, and beatings that reveal the emotional power of jealousy. The bishop's court summoned parish priest Alessandro Giannetti after he berated Livia Crocchi in the street for the rumors about her adultery. Giannetti first warned her brother-in-law, the notable Scipione Barbieri, instructing him to inform Livia of the village talk, without telling her husband Benedetto. Barbieri exploded, "I want to know who is spreading this chatter, and I want you to tell me!" The priest claimed that he had to say something, because people noticed that *maestro* Baldo Bruni, a carpenter from Montepulciano, frequented her house too much. She, not her husband, brought a charge of slander against the priest, claiming he called her a "whore" and a "cow," and the court reprimanded him for his indiscretion.¹¹⁵ Some of the complaints against abusive husbands leave the impression that these men had good reason to feel vulnerable. Women whose husbands left the village to work in distant parts—often for weeks together—moved in with their relatives for the security of their persons and their reputation and might be blamed if they did not. Still, some women attracted gossip. Francesco Fidi's young wife Virginia appears several times in murky circumstances. Her Sicilian husband, who had business in the Maremma, once ordered her out of the house and insulted her within earshot of her paternal uncle, who came to her defense. Fidi later denied his remarks to the judge. Neighborhood women were not slow to spread stories about her. "I'm a better woman than you!" (employing *te*

instead of the more polite *voi*), she warned old Maddalena Selvi. She promised that when her husband came back, he would do up Selvi's head for the holidays. But still the gossip swirled around her. The irascible Giovanbattista Borri called her *disonorata* in the street, and once more she defied him to prove it.¹¹⁶

Few situations were as fraught with potential for explosive violence as sexual jealousy in a married couple. Domenica di Biagio attracted the jealous ire of her husband Adriano di Paolo, not long after she brought a stalking charge against a neighbor, Benedetto di Gilio, while Adriano was away in the Maremma. The *commissario* cast Benedetto in jail until his accuser admitted that she was anxious in her husband's absence, and was no longer certain that anybody knocked on her door. A year later, her husband inflicted a brutal beating on her, assisted by her young stepson, while the farmhand looked on. The magistrate, who was professionally inured to bad behavior, called this battering "an ugly action the likes of which are not to be inflicted on an enemy." Adriano repented after his arrest, and the magistrate released him.¹¹⁷ Why were the men so touchy? Evidence from at least three of these turbulent marriages implies that the husbands were older than their wives by a number of years, either because they had been previously married, or because they were already established with business interests elsewhere at the time they married young women.¹¹⁸ The husbands' periodic absence for weeks at a time added to their vulnerability, since their wives might be seduced by men more attractive than themselves.¹¹⁹ Men who knew that their wives had cheated on them could not launch an accusation without weighing the consequences of attacking a more powerful man who had friends and relatives who would rally to his defense. Competitive neighbors were not slow to remind a man how his wife's adultery diminished him in their eyes. "You are a goat, and you have horns, and from your horns, you can make knife handles, and I took your wife home twice having found her fucking with *bertoni*!" taunted Vincenzo Filippi to his adversary Vincenzo Venturelli.¹²⁰ Francesco Penti came to blows with his sister-in-law after she flashed the symbolic sign of horns at him.

Being cuckolded was not a symbolic shame for men. Bringing up one's own children entailed a life of scrimping and sacrifice, a continuous investment of time, of energy, and of worry. Bringing up the children of a rival male was shame compounded daily by injury, especially if neighbors' tongues wagged about it. Rival males were all around them. Magistrates took women's complaints against stalkers very seriously. Agnese, called Bellows, steeled herself to denounce young Francesco Crocchi after he crept into her house while her husband Pietro del Bravo was away in the Maremma. "Do me this service!" he wheedled. "I took a stick and waved it at him; then he said, consent to my wishes, or I'll skin you. I got angry and

answered, you worthless *disonorato!* . . . leave this house, I am a respectable woman and am astonished at you!" "I've liked you for a long time," continued Crocchi. "I only like my husband!" To which he responded, "If you want, you can come to the Costa and stay three or four days, and there are four more of us waiting for you." "Get out, scoundrel, I'm a respectable woman and I want that my husband should always go with an open brow!" Crocchi jingled coins in his pocket. "Although I am poor, I don't need your money." She began to cry out and he left, warning, "If you talk or denounce me, I will skin you wherever I find you." "I'll send you to the galleys! Justice must punish him!" she ordered the magistrate. "He wanted to take away my honor, something that nobody ever did, and I've always been and am now a respectable and honored woman, as everyone knows!"¹²¹

Crocchi knew, however, that poor women such as her would sometimes trade a good name for food, clothing, and protection. The richer inhabitants of the village, such as Lorenzo Barbieri, were most commonly cited as people who frequented them. At two lire each time (an amount mentioned twice), sex with consenting women was a luxury that only the better sort could afford. It was not a vice they kept to themselves. Men trooped in threes and fours to the houses where they hoped to get lucky. To ward off some of these tensions, the priests kept close watch on illicit sexuality in the village and issued discreet summonses to suspects without arousing the publicity a trial would occasion.¹²² For the little diocese, the bishop's tribunal issued such warnings once every two weeks, ordering men not to frequent specific women and commanding straying women to quit the diocese immediately on pain of excommunication. A large proportion of offenders were priests, designated only by their initials and their parish. Most of our priests figure at least once.

Passing On

Vigna piantata da me, moro da mio padre, olivo da mio nonno

(The vine, I planted; the mulberry by my father, the olive by my grandfather)

It is inappropriate to dwell too long on family feuds and troubled marriages, for these cases left the most documents. Insisting upon their exemplary nature would be much like studying marriage and childhood today solely from the sordid contents of family court archives. The testament is a much better place to see an individual's social network at life's conclusion. Like the marriage contracts, testaments secured the survival of

the elderly and of the unmarried children. We do not have many wills for Montefollonico; the 65 documents I have found emanate from men and women in almost equal proportions. Testators usually dictated them to the notary when at death's door, and most of them had dependents they wished to provide for. Like the marriage contract, the testament was the product of long reflection, modified to reflect life's accidents. As in most of southern Europe, custom commanded that sons inherited the land and daughters were dowered, so parents designated unmarried daughters' portions in the instrument. It did not pay to concentrate the wealth into the hands of a single male or female heir, however, for—in an era of high mortality—there was no guarantee that one branch of the family would flourish and multiply relative to another. Whatever the careful plans laid by parents in their testaments, and their exhortations to maintain concord and community among the heirs, adult siblings went their separate ways once they were married and founded families of their own. But while sons inherited, and they generally did so in equal portions, they often saw little of it until the surviving parent died. Regardless of the legal status of property ownership, elderly people did not relinquish their patrimony without exacting some guarantees from their children. Spouses granted their survivor the usufruct or enjoyment of the entire estate, usually without any obligation to keep records of their management. On occasion, husbands made their wives the universal heir, and both inserted terms of endearment into the instrument, thanking their spouse for devotion and services.

Not everyone needed to make a will. Succession operated according to fairly simple customary rules. One could make a will in order to break with custom—but few people innovated here. Inheritance practices are best understood from the predicament of individual testators. The situation of men and women was not the same, nor was the position of parents identical to those who were dying childless and without grandchildren. Among men, testaments citing children and those without such heirs are almost equally divided: 17 had children, 16 did not. Men with children or grandchildren conformed to the traditional pattern. Sometimes the parents had already established one of their sons, but I have not found a single case of material discrimination against one son, even in the aristocracy, unless that offspring had joined a religious order and took a vow of poverty. Rather, fathers used the testament to compensate younger sons in some way to offset having invested in the education or establishment of an older sibling. There was one exception. The miller Girolamo del Filicaia disinherited his son Bartolomeo for refusing to pay for his release from debtor's prison or to give him food during the famine. The beneficiary was not kin, but Leandro Buonamici, a poor noble condemned by poverty to live as a bachelor cleric with his mother in Montefollonico.¹²³

The chief beneficiary of a man's will was almost without exception his wife. The widow almost always saw her discretionary power increase, even though the death of her spouse was a cruel blow to her material well-being. Qualifying her *donna e madonna*, husbands granted their wives near-total control over the administration of their estate as long as they did not remarry, in order to aid their children's survival.¹²⁴ Only Scipione Barbieri subjected his wife to the administrative tutelage of a male relative, but in doing so he assigned her a *vitto* (pension) by which she could live autonomously if she chose. These husbands did not intend to control their wife's fidelity beyond the grave, but wanted to guarantee that their estate would pass to the couple's children and not be usurped by a second husband. Sometimes these bequests were poisoned gifts encumbered with debts that the designated heir could repudiate. Noble Anton Maria Foresi protected his wife by restoring her dowry and granting her usufruct of the rest; he foresaw that his principal heir, Dr. Anton Maria Tolomei, might not want to inherit his debts, and substituted his brother-in-law as universal heir if Tolomei declined.¹²⁵

Men with no children could still be expected to make testaments as their property was vulnerable to competing claims, and customary rules were less constraining. Some practices were widely observed. Of six married men, four made their wife the universal heir, which was much more than just the right to retrieve their dowry and their personal effects before moving back to their father's house. Other widows received their dowry, their *donamenti* (trousseau), their jewels, and the usufruct of the joint estate until they married someone else.¹²⁶ Of the sixteen childless testators, five were bachelors; two of those were wealthy notables, whose celibacy allowed nephews to marry in their place: take for instance Gabriele Moreschini who left his property to his married brother Adriano.¹²⁷ Most of these childless men designated their nephews as if they were sons, dividing up the estate equally among the boys. The girls were less often mentioned. The priests willed their estates to brothers or nephews, on the side of their male relatives if there were any, and on their sister's side thereafter. Cesare Mazzoni bestowed his substantial share of the estate on the sons of his brother Girolamo, and dowered the daughters with several hundred florins each.¹²⁸ One man left his property to the local shrine, the Madonna del Criano, after apportioning furniture and sundries to his widow. We cannot always determine the exact kinship relation of the principal beneficiary, but it is still easy to generalize that succession rules helped kin proportionally to their blood proximity to the testator. So we are best served not by imagining tight male lineages surviving over generations, but rather of the predominance of "ego" and of his immediate offspring. Each generation repeated afresh the process of passing on its patrimony in ways that would help its children (and its genes) prosper and multiply.

Women's social situation differed from that of the men. Of the 31 who made testaments, only 6 had living children or grandchildren. The rest were more at liberty to spread their estate among elective recipients, and testaments are a good place to uncover the network of personal attachments that connected adult women. Women's wills often multiplied recipients of particular bequests that rewarded friends and servants for affection. Women with children or grandchildren invariably designated them as universal heirs, but they selected the sons before the daughters. Amidei Branchini designated her aged husband Anacleto Barbieri as her heir, but she substituted her three sons after his death in the same sentence. She specified that her property would be divided among the sons equally, even though Flaminio had left Montefollonico long ago.¹²⁹ There are no "typical" testaments in this small pool of women with children. Olimpia di Bernardino, a poor woman, was freshly widowed when she gave birth to her daughter 24 years previous; she gave the infant over to relatives, while she hired herself out as a wetnurse and a servant. Her daughter, who eventually married a blacksmith's son, inherited her widowed mother's life savings.¹³⁰ When Zifile di Giovanni Bazzi made her testament, she left her infant grand-daughter Caterina in the hands of the noble Landucci, using the language of piety and protection to beseech them to look after the infant.¹³¹

Women with no children were freest of all. In most cases, they had little property to bequeath, but this was not always true; 10 of the 25 were married—their husbands either inherited their estate outright or received the usufruct of it, a symmetrical provision to the one figuring in men's testaments. Lucilla di Vincenzo allowed her husband the usufruct only as long as he remained a widower. These women were less attached to lineage than their husbands; they had moved from one patrilineal household into another and established new loyalties. Nevertheless, a large majority of women left either the usufruct or the principal succession to blood kin, and most of the remainder confided their property to their husbands. The great originality of testaments of women who had no children was their propensity (in 6 out of 25 cases) to designate religious institutions as their principal heir, and religious sanctuaries figure as important beneficiaries in some others. Doniella and Niccola Lorenzoni, two young (and presumably healthy) sisters making a joint testament in 1678, passed half their estate to their maternal uncle, a parish priest, and left the other half to celebrate masses for the souls of their parents.¹³² Noblewoman Penelope Buoninsegni dictated no fewer than seven testaments between 1622 and 1642, naming and replacing heirs and beneficiaries at whim. She finally granted her sister the usufruct of three *poderi*, but placed the trusteeship entirely into the lap

of her Sienese confessor with no strings attached, confident that he would dispose of them judiciously. Such wills might reflect the greater piety of women, but the rising age at marriage resulted in a greater number of unmarried women with few lineage obligations.¹³³ The age of marriage was rising because times were becoming harsher.

Invention

The analysis so far has hardly taken the passage of time into account. And yet it governs everything. Change is a universal process for humans, who have no equal in the animal kingdom when it comes to adaptability.¹ This truism does not explain why small, simple societies tend to become larger, more complex ones. Adaptation to changing circumstances does not necessarily denote progress, but who can deny the cumulative growth of social complexity in every human group over the last 15,000 years? Humans have a longer period of dependency than any other primate, the most complex kin structures, and the widest generational overlapping, all of which help to transmit information and “social intelligence.” This social intelligence becomes more accurate with usage, because humans everywhere display the same reflective rules of thumb that enable us to correct mistakes. Robert Wright invokes three important cognitive features that fuel invention: a genetic predisposition to want to understand how the world works; language, which enables us to strike bargains and share knowledge; and the universal desire to win the esteem of our peers, superiors, and subordinates, which works to reinforce the group to which we belong. Humans are gregarious social animals who compete for prestige and status, and their emulation generates key discoveries whose effect is to ratchet upward the number of individuals and the complexity of their societies over time.² No doubt different peoples progressed (I use this word consciously) at different speeds, depending upon their numbers, their population density, the ease of communication and transport, and their ability to defend themselves or to conquer others.³ History, then, seems to move eerily along in a single general direction that the philosopher Peter Singer calls the “expanding circle” that moves outward from families and clans to tribes and nations. Over time, this ring of solidarity has expanded outward from chiefs and aristocrats to embrace property holders, women, prisoners of war, and the mentally

handicapped. All have become worthy of moral consideration and enter our circuits of reciprocity.⁴ These theories of invention help us explain the situation of rural Tuscans trying to resolve their predicament several centuries ago.

Economic Collapse

Le disgrazie sono come le ciliegie, una tira l'altra
(Misfortunes are like cherries: pulling one brings another)

Early in the seventeenth century, Italians still led Europeans in economic development. Their high-quality urban manufactures found markets all over Europe and beyond. Italian merchants were intermediaries between European and Middle Eastern markets, while bankers financed war and trade throughout the vast Spanish empire. Beginning in 1618, the Thirty Years War (which would not terminate for Italy until 1659) abruptly ended this situation and hastened the onset of relentless economic decline. Italy's traditional customers abroad were no longer willing or able to purchase the expensive, labor-intensive products of urban artisans.⁵ After a decade of economic malaise, a brutal epidemic of bubonic plague swept away a quarter of the population of northern Italy in 1630. Another plague pandemic in 1656 killed a comparable portion of people in Genoa, Rome, and southern Italy. Endless war worsened the situation and impeded any quick recovery, for Italian states subsidized on a large scale the military operations of the Spanish and Austrian Habsburgs. They lost millions of *scudi* in war damages and through loss of investment opportunity and suffered outright loss of capital when the king of Spain repudiated his debts in massive, repeat bankruptcies.⁶ In Tuscany, the crisis of 1619–1623 marked the end of the long Renaissance expansion. Customs duties on exports in 1630 were only half the level as those of 1615. The next three decades brought plague, then famine, and finally prolonged hunger on a scale not seen for hundreds of years.⁷

The sharp decline of urban industrial production is relatively easy to chart. We are not as certain about the evolution of the rural economy. Peter Musgrave suggests that the countryside still experienced a measure of prosperity.⁸ He is not alone in seeing the seventeenth century as a period of economic “restructuring,” from a regime dominated by city artisans producing luxury objects for export, to one based on widespread semiskilled manufacturing in small towns and country workshops, producing goods for local consumption. An official inspection tour of the Sienese state in 1676 did not neglect to note the thriving manufactures in small towns such

as Montalcino, Piancastagnaio, and Castel del Piano. There were similar examples all over northern and central Italy.⁹

Throughout southern Europe, people became poorer as the population contracted. In Spanish Old Castile, the population declined by almost a third between 1590 and 1630, but the modest households lost their land to richer ones, and people trafficking in agricultural products lost their livelihoods.¹⁰ Something similar happened simultaneously in most of Italy. Local studies of agricultural economies in north-central Italy all stress the sharp population decline there.¹¹ The Florentine state's population continued to expand moderately until the census of 1622, after which it began to recede. In the Sienese Stato Nuovo, the population peaked before the end of the sixteenth century, falling from 140,000 inhabitants in 1589 to 120,000 people in 1612 and 113,000 in 1640. It was surely substantially lower after the famine of 1648–1650.¹² The populations of Montepulciano and Pienza fell by more than half in the 150 years after 1590.¹³ Continuous population decline over two generations underscores that this was not a Malthusian crisis, that is, too many people competing for access to scarce agricultural land. In a Malthusian crisis, the survivors of famine and epidemic live much better than before, because they enjoy access to more land and work. Rather, population decline reflected a deepening economic malaise, depressing both the cities and the villages that fed them.

Historians sometimes attribute the decline to a shrinkage in crop yields consequent to a cooling climatic trend, called the “little ice age.”¹⁴ The worst years brought warm, wet, lingering winters.¹⁵ Fields giving six grains for every seed before 1590 yielded only four in the seventeenth century, and often less than three. Some think that the new promiscuous cultivation cast too much shade on the fields and prevented the grains from ripening, for grain yields did not improve until the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Whatever their origin, harvest shortfalls triggered outbreaks of typhus that could double the annual death toll. Although the Rickettsian bacillus spread from person to person via head lice, which everyone possessed, typhus was a social epidemic primarily, closely tied to the standard of living of a population. Malnutrition rendered a person much more susceptible to being stricken by it and to eventually dying from it.¹⁷ So the price of grain served as a barometer of material well-being. Giuseppe Parenti compiled very complete series of grain prices in Siena, where Montefollonico landlords sent their surplus. The price of a *staio* of grain (a *staio* fed one person for a month) oscillated considerably from over 120 *soldi* during the difficult years of the 1590s to 90 or 100 *soldi* in the late 1620s and early 1630s. Prices then plummeted to between 45 and 50 *soldi* (2.5 lire) in the late 1630s and early 1640s, which was a mixed blessing for peasants. Those prices doubled from that low level in 1645 and 1646 when the pinch first

started to be felt, and then almost doubled again, to 165 *soldi* in the year after the harvest of 1648. But the annual mean masks the extremes. The monthly mean passed from about 75 *soldi* in the first half of 1645 to 100 *soldi* in the first half of 1647. The harvest of that year was so mediocre that the price of wheat surged to 120 *soldi a staio* just after the harvest, to 150 *soldi* at the time of the 1648 harvest. Following another poor crop, the price pushed upward to 160 *soldi* in September, to 170 *soldi* by January 1649, and to 190 *soldi* in May and June, before tumbling by over half in the weeks following. The harvest of 1652 was also deficient, so prices jumped back up to almost 150 *soldi* before the next one. Never again would wheat prices reach such heights, although in 1678 and 1716 they briefly hovered around 140 *soldi a staio*. People would adjust to the high price of wheat by reducing their consumption, and by consuming inferior foodstuffs such as chestnuts, barley, and millet. Inevitably, the high prices entailed brutal consequences.¹⁸

To pay for grain, people sold whatever assets they had. Owning property protected peasants from exploitive contracts, for tilling their own soil furnished them with a safety margin. In Montefollonico, the land tax register (*gabella dei contratti*) recorded the accelerated transfer of land and houses to new owners with every crop failure. Smallholders gradually lost their stakes in bits and pieces to wealthier neighbors. Sellers frequently inserted clauses in the contract entitling them to recover their land within a couple of years of its sale, but such an event rarely occurred. There were spurts of land sales in 1627, and then more between 1629 and 1632, in the aftermath of bad harvests. A couple of bad years occurred in the early 1640s, caused this time by extremely *low* agricultural prices, which prevented people from paying debts with the proceeds of their crops. The most sustained real estate transfers, both in number and in value, ran from 1647 to 1651, as people sold their rows of vines, their fields, their cellars, their back yard gardens, their houses, and finally even the rooms in which they lived. A respectable house and its garden cost between 600 and 700 lire; a humble village *casalino* sold for a mere 42 lire or three months' agricultural wages. In the 1630s and 1640s, people sold off parts of dwellings in which they owned a share, for sums equivalent to a few weeks' wages. Women, widows, and heirs appeared almost twice as often as vendors than as buyers (84/45), especially in the most desperate years between 1647 and 1651. Everything that could be sold was gone. Then the number of sales collapsed, leaving the impression of exhaustion. A decade later, new land sales signaled the bankruptcy of village entrepreneurs who could no longer stave off their creditors. Land values in the 1650s were minimal; for decades thereafter, the value of land and the frequency of its sale remained low. The clauses in the contract providing for the eventual recovery of the property fell into disuse in the 1640s, since its probability seemed derisory.

The famine of 1648 was the worst to strike early modern Italy. Coming after two mediocre years, the harvest failure in Montefollonico tripled the annual tribute to death in the village, with respect to the previous 15 years.¹⁹ A judicial inquest on the death of Jacomo Catinaï, whose body was found inside a mill on 21 November 1648, learned that poverty forced him to send his wife back to her mother's house with the children. He seemed dazed and deaf when neighbors spoke to him, a mere shadow of his former self.²⁰ Hunger's harvest is most visible where two or three people died in the same house within weeks of each other.²¹ Famine hit the *castello* smallholders especially hard. The victims included at least six male heads of families, sometimes accompanied to the tomb by their children and their widows. People also succumbed to hunger in San Bartolomeo and San Valentino parishes. If the increase in burials there matched those in S. Leonardo, the fief would have lost at least 70 people (10 percent) to famine alone, exclusive of the 20 to 40 newborns smothered by their mothers. San Bartolomeo fell from 346 individuals in 1638 to just 251 by December 1650, a drop of over 27 percent. In the smaller parish of San Valentino, situated entirely outside the walls, the number of inhabitants dropped from 128 in 1643 to 103 in 1655, a decline of almost 20 percent, once the demographic recovery had begun. The number of conceptions in those years plummeted by half or two-thirds, likely caused by amenorrhea, the suspension of menstruation due to prolonged fasting.²² Montefollonico's population of about 700 persons in the early 1650s was smaller by 17.5 percent with respect to 1638.²³

Malnourished people often migrated to find temporary relief in Montepulciano, Siena, or Florence, where the magistrates assigned wealthy families quotas of poor people to nourish. By attracting famished peasants into the cities (what else could they do?), authorities unwillingly triggered hygienic disaster there.²⁴ The suspension of nonessential purchases brought city manufacturing to a halt, so artisans boarded up their shops. A Florentine chronicler described the crowds of famished refugees who congregated around churches and whose cries made it impossible to hear mass in peace:

It's heart-wrenching to see by the roads hundreds and hundreds of poor women and children who look like mummies, so consumed are they by deprivation and hunger, and covered with scabs . . . and we also see that illness strikes those who did not suffer (hunger), and they die too, and I think that of one hundred (who fall sick), fifty of them die, and in some villages and hamlets, more than half have died.²⁵

Hunger and mortality persisted into 1650, making rural labor scarce and not always sufficient to harvest the crops.

These were positive checks on overpopulation, Malthus would have said. Yet why did a smaller rural population not profit from the decline to live more at their ease? The answer lies in classic economic theory. Montefollonico farms supplied food to markets in Siena and the Val di Chiana towns. Consumers of the late sixteenth century could afford to pay high prices, 5 lire or more for a 50-pound sack of wheat, and so landlords provided the goods. Tuscan peasants still owned a substantial amount of land and could sell their own surplus, or part of their portion harvested from sharecropping estates, in order to buy fancy textiles, jewelry, crockery, and other luxuries. Once the city looms fell silent, the unemployed artisans could no longer pay such high prices for bread.²⁶ When grain prices began to sag after 1630 and later fell much further in the second half of the seventeenth century, peasants became too poor to constitute a domestic market for regional manufactures. We see a vicious circle of economic regression.

Observers noted the paradox that hard times were characterized by cheap food.²⁷ Grain, after all, was an expensive commodity to produce. Owners of *poderi* in Montefollonico planted it both to feed their sharecroppers and to supply the city. But city markets were in the doldrums. Over the century, the per capita consumption of both grain and meat declined by significant amounts in Florence.²⁸ Extreme poverty afflicted Siena too, and the urban population contracted even more quickly than the rural one.²⁹ As prices of grain declined, poverty spread: they were highest in the 1620s, before the massive downswing following the plague pandemic. Apart from sharp upturns following a spate of bad weather, prices continued to decline until well into the eighteenth century. It was therefore not possible to prevent famine by sowing more grain, for a bumper crop could bankrupt the landlord who owned it!³⁰ Instead, landlords cut back on the seed their sharecroppers planted every year.³¹ Landlords cut back on saffron production too, which had been an important cash crop in the first half of the century. It was heavily reliant on labor, and there were too few hands now to process the flowers.³²

Were these catastrophes the birthing pangs of a more capitalistic agriculture, destined to enlarge the economic circle to include new partners farther afield? Domenico Sella sees the collapse of urban industry as the precondition for the growth of protoindustry—the manufacture of simpler goods by peasant families when the crop cycle permitted it—in the countryside.³³ Landlords coped by planting more leguminous crops such as beans and vetch to feed the sharecropping family.³⁴ Most extended their vineyards. Tuscan landlords specialized in commercial wine-growing in the Chianti hills, at Montalcino and around Montepulciano.³⁵ We should not attribute this novelty to wealthy landlords alone. Peasants preferred to

keep their small vineyards and sold their grain fields instead, when they had the choice, for they wished to take advantage of the market trend too. Judging by the increase in glass production and the transport of wine, more of it found a market outside the village. Furnaces producing glass bottles increased in number in the decades after 1640, and the two glassworks operating seasonally at Montefollonico and Trequanda employed over 200 people.³⁶ Administrators never specified who made what, but I suppose that women wove the wicker baskets that protected the flasks and bottles that were transported by donkey, while men burned charcoal to fuel the furnace. The shift to wine and protoindustry illustrates a growing tendency to utilize peasant labor over a greater portion of the year.

The greatest opportunity for “wobble room” in a depressed economy came from the extension of silk production. Landlords began planting mulberry trees around the silk-weaving city of Lucca in the late middle ages, and the practice spread throughout northern Italy. Urban manufactures produced a wide array of silk cloths woven from thread produced or brokered by rural entrepreneurs. By 1610, Florentine investment in the new silk sector overshadowed the declining medieval woolen cloth industry, and the demand for thread continued to grow to the point where, in 1663, the silk industry occupied 15,000 people in the capital.³⁷ In Siena, a modest silk industry produced velvets and ribbons. Mulberry trees multiplied in our Val di Chiana district to feed the looms. Planting trees on the edges of fields or in promiscuous culture with other crops, landlords and sharecroppers split the leaves between them, although in portions to the advantage of the former. Peasants could also plant trees of their own in their gardens or around their tiny enclosures. Sharecroppers could either raise their own silkworms or sell bags of leaves to other producers. The trees required very little monetary investment, although—like vines and other fruit trees—they needed extensive pruning every several years. Each might yield on average 150 kg of leaves, worth about 1 *scudo* in revenue. Even if the sharecropper kept only a quarter of the production for himself, the 30 trees on a typical *podere* left him with 60 to 70 lire net. From the 1620s at least, village notables, including Margarita and Caterina Selvi, Bernardino Biagi, and Lorenzo Barbieri, brokered the sale of mulberry leaves.³⁸ They supplied cocoons to town artisans equipped with cauldrons to unwind them and compose the thread. Arenio Barbieri and his wife Solima operated one of these cauldrons on the village square for a few years, until they sold it in 1648.³⁹ Montepulciano counted 5 such specialists in 1674, and 20 in 1711.⁴⁰

This new economy’s features were put into place in the seventeenth century: by 1825, statisticians counted 2.8 million vines, 8,000 olive trees, and 4,500 mulberry trees around Montepulciano, and a flourishing glass

industry to provide bottles for the wine.⁴¹ Still, innovations such as these did not entirely compensate for the relentless deflation (falling prices) that was sucking capital out of the economy. Throughout Italy, agricultural domains leased at 7 percent interest in the first half of the century found few takers at 5 percent after 1650.⁴² When Montefollonico peasants sold their land before mid-century, purchasers often took the opportunity to round out their own domains by adding land of their neighbors. This practice ceased altogether by the late 1670s, when grain prices hit the floor. Why extend one's property if the investment brought no gain?⁴³ Landlords melded their domains into fewer *poderi*, producing less food.⁴⁴ The size of sharecropper households shrank correspondingly, from 6.2 persons in 1638 to 5.6 in 1702.⁴⁵

The great famines accelerated economic transformations but there is little indication that people's lot improved. How can we measure their distress? Marco Cattini counsels us to examine rates of conception, but these are biased by widespread infanticide in hard times. The increase in the number of migrants would be a good hardship indicator.⁴⁶ Migration of indebted peasants was a typical feature of economic collapse in sharecropping regions.⁴⁷ With the collapse of the population and the indigence of the survivors, Francesco Coppoli sought to repopulate his fief as quickly as possible. In 1650, he issued a decree that people who fled into his jurisdiction to escape civil debts contracted outside of it could live unmolested in their persons and their property.⁴⁸

Other signs of hard times abound. Cautious young adults and their parents delayed marriage as long as possible, or they abandoned those plans completely. If the mean age of women marrying before the 1640s tended to be just over twenty, those marrying in the 1650s and 1660s were four years older! Husbands were still several years older than their brides.⁴⁹ Maria Fubini Leuzzi notes that around 1600, one in ten recipients of a Florentine dowry award was too poor to wed within the time allotted. By 1690, over a fifth of the dowry awards were left unclaimed by candidates the charities approved.⁵⁰ The states of soul census lists for San Leonardo and San Bartolomeo in 1702 account for just over 600 individuals, including close to thirty unmarried women older than twenty. They were not all destitute. The priest Formichi lived with two unmarried sisters. One of the daughters of Lorenzo Barbieri was still unmarried in her thirties. Those who did marry, wed later in life.

Aristocrats adopted similar policies of retrenchment in order to safeguard their patrimonies. About ten Sienese noble families disappeared every decade between 1620 and 1740, thanks to the practice of curtailing marriage.⁵¹ In Montefollonico, the Milandroni, the Foresi and eventually the Moreschini too died out completely. Despite this process, or probably

because of it, a new pattern of land acquisition emerged in the second half of the century as the surviving noble houses recovered lost ground—23 noble purchases were offset by only 4 sales.⁵² The agrarian crisis of the aristocracy bottomed out, probably because viable alternative investments for them disappeared. Banking institutions reduced the rates they paid to investors, beginning around 1660 and continuing to the end of the century, when they did not suspend payments altogether.⁵³ A list of *poderi* and their owners in 1694, compiled to levy a new tax, reveals a gradual spread of ecclesiastical landowning, with priests and religious holding 18 farms, a quarter of the total. The noblemen's share dwindled to only 38 properties; if the Landucci declined slightly to 15, other village aristocrats disappeared entirely. Sienese noble families accounted for 23 others, about a third of the total. The confraternity still held six *poderi*, and one more belonged to the confraternity of neighboring Torrita. The number belonging to village notables remained almost identical at nine, but four of them belonged to Niccolo Magnoni, whose brilliant legal career in Siena enabled him to acquire the Foresi estates.⁵⁴

Unrelenting deflation compromised all the projects and investments of those who leased property and revenues. People may have cooperated more to avoid costs they bore lightly beforehand. The frequency of *danno dato* denunciations collapsed after the famine, since the accused were too poor to pay the sums involved.⁵⁵ To cut costs, the village assembly substantially reduced the remuneration for the rector of the confraternity, chopping his grain allowance by half, and his wine by a third.⁵⁶ Provisioners and tavern-keepers subject to recovering *gabelle* for the government overestimated their revenue forecasts. People who had purchased village revenues, mills, and butchers' stalls quickly acquired debts they could not pay. Heirs of village *camarlenghi* found it difficult to close their accounts. The widow of Giacomo Crocchi owed the *Dogana* (the Sienese Customs bureau) 451 lire several years after her husband was *camerlengo*.⁵⁷ Sharp tax increases beginning in the late 1630s reduced people's net incomes still further, making it more difficult for them to meet their commitments. The downfall of the entrepreneurs is visible in the land tax register. Francesco Misari, Francesco Crocchi, Bernardino Biagi, Fulvio Carpellini (the *gabellai*'s son), Paolo Vettori, Caterina Selvi all alienated land, and in some cases their estates were auctioned off on the order of the Salt Gabelle bureau in Siena.⁵⁸

If wealthier villagers succumbed to revenue shortfalls, what must it have done to the poor? People who worked for wages suffered from the ambient poverty, even if each lira bought more grain than it did half a century earlier. Daily wages outside harvest time for rural laborers hovered around half a lira (10 *soldi*). A woman who helped her neighbor part time received 1 lira per week in food and in kind.⁵⁹ Wages of adult males

could attain 1 lira a day in harvest season, but the cost of bread still consumed most of the wage of an individual with three additional persons to feed, and people did not find paid work every day. Annual rent for a small house was a minuscule 7 lira, but numerous peasants could not meet their rent payments and had to move away.⁶⁰ The first mention of an abandoned house in the *gabella dei contratti* occurs in 1660. By 1676, senator Gherardini counted 28 ruined and uninhabited dwellings in the *castello* alone, one in four or five. He attributed the ambient poverty to the fact that the land belonged to either nobles or ecclesiastics, and that only five or six other families owned substantial holdings of their own. By 1692, when a new tax on *poderi* occasioned a new inquest, 31 individuals and pious organizations owned all 72 *poderi*. Only four non-noble laymen living in the jurisdiction owned a *podere* of their own.⁶¹ So industrial decline and the great famines polarized and simplified rural society between a landed elite and a landless peasantry, where the lucky ones were sharecroppers. There was little people could do to offset this process, except maybe pray.

The Church Triumphant

Quando il grano è nei campi, è di Dio e de' santi

(When the grain is in the ground, everything depends on God and the Saints)

As Italians shifted their wealth and their aspirations from this life to the next, the church expanded. An irrational reaction? Edward O. Wilson claims that “the predisposition to religious belief is the most complex and powerful force in the human mind, and is an ineradicable part of human nature.”⁶² We have lost the context of early modern religion, before the Enlightenment took the terror out of hell, and before modern science and the welfare state homogenized the life experiences and expectations of most people. I see little reason to decry religion as a harmful illusion, even if no claim to eternal life is true. Religion provided direction and stability in individual lives, it infused society with a sense of community and it promoted a broad range of prosocial attitudes and practices: everything from obligatory days of rest, to monogamy. Religious teachings sensibly condemned violence and avidity, promising punishment for sinners and rewards for altruists in the afterlife. Religious strictures and pious institutions enhanced the social integration of the poor and the sick. In a world of short life expectancies, death could come at any age, in every social class. People reasonably conceived of their very existence as one in which the earthly portion was but a brief chapter in a longer story. They protected

themselves in this world by adhering tightly to their family and its patrons. They could propitiate powerful friends in the form of saints in the next world to call upon in time of need. It does not follow that people “believed” all religious precepts in an uncomplicated way.⁶³ In the seventeenth century, there was no viable alternative to a religious conception of existence: that is, while atheists did indeed exist in villages as in universities, there was no compelling correctness in their skepticism.

Traditional Catholicism placed great emphasis on devotions to extraterrestrial powers. Individuals and collectivities strove to propitiate them in order to achieve some beneficial effect. The Madonna loomed large in this picture; she was not so much a friend as a Divine Mother who possessed boundless maternal empathy. She elbowed most of Her lesser competitors out of the picture after 1550. Most of the devotional circles and burial societies in Montefollonico consecrated themselves to Her cult. The other devotional companies placed themselves under Her protection too: the Madonna del Rosario in San Bartolomeo and the Madonna of the (umbilical) Cord in San Gismondo. Similar altars existed in every community. The baroque chapel of the Madonna del Criano surged out of the ground between 1607 and 1608. The miraculous image of the Madonna it sheltered remained a favorite destination for religious legacies and beautification funds. Local nobles provided significant amounts of money and time to embellish the church and manage its property.⁶⁴ Marchese Coppoli marked his solidarity with his vassals by making his own contribution to the shrine, and the village council unanimously elected him perpetual manager (*operaio*) in 1627.⁶⁵ If *noblesse oblige* guided aristocratic charity, we should not underestimate the popular appeal of this devotion. In our small sample of seven people who willed their estates by testament to a religious institution, three designated the new church. Many others made it the object of specific legacies. Art objects (whose manufacture and appreciation constitute another human universal) heightened the special nature of sacred places.⁶⁶ Each new inventory of the chapel’s effects was longer than the one that preceded it. The 1675 inventory included six reliquaries, two pairs of silk angels, along with a cluster of silver *ex voto* offerings, and some *ex voto* paintings celebrating the miracles operated by the Virgin. The 1680s saw the nadir of grain prices, but managers still found money to decorate the church with important paintings to place behind the altar bordered by sculpted gilt frames.⁶⁷

In Catholicism, divine power emanates from special places where the saints work their wonders more efficaciously. People undertook processions and pilgrimages to those sites to capture this power for their benefit. Typically, these shrines were situated close to the walls of towns and villages, such as the Madonna del Criano. The roadside chapel on the way to

Petroio, which I first encounter in 1636, was also consecrated to the Madonna.⁶⁸ Close by, shrines to the Madonna delle Grazie outside Montepulciano and the Madonna della Quercia near Lucignano attracted pilgrims from the entire district. Even more famous were the Madonna di Seggiano across the Val d'Orcia, and the recent Madonna del Provenzano shrine in Siena.⁶⁹ Villagers could go farther away: the register of miracles for the Madonna della Quercia shrine outside Viterbo, over a hundred kilometers south, records pilgrims from Montefollonico. The most celebrated shrine in Europe sheltered the Virgin's house at Loreto near Ancona, and it too attracted our villagers.⁷⁰ With so many listening posts, the Virgin crowded out other saints. Testators invoked few individual saints besides the Madonna. Priest Giovanni Nannini invoked five different saints in his will in 1673, but he was living in the more highly charged religious atmosphere of Siena.⁷¹ Saints lingered on in medallions carried around the necks of women and children. A baby confided to the hospital wetnurse Veronica Fei by her gypsy mother sported medallions of S. Lodovico and S. Elena to ward off evil.⁷²

Women adhered more closely to this religion of "devotions" than men, and they frequented churches more assiduously. But they were not necessarily more docile to priestly direction.⁷³ Women seized the occasion whenever the priests let loose their grip. Midwives administered emergency baptism to infants whose lives were in danger of slipping away before a church ceremony could be arranged, and they did so with alacrity. Both rectors of San Leonardo did their best to inhibit this practice. Women pressed forward during the New Year's ritual at the confraternity to receive the *Acquarella* (diluted wine), while rich matrons assisted the distribution.⁷⁴ Girls sang "May songs" in a special mass at the church of the Madonna that announced their marriage eligibility to the community.⁷⁵ Women sited family benches in church, particularly in San Bartolomeo near the altar of the Rosary, and disputed its emplacement with their neighbors.⁷⁶

Their enthusiasm contained elements the clergy called superstition. Two young sisters bludgeoned with a rock another girl coming out of mass at San Valentino, to avenge being called witches.⁷⁷ The reputation did not cling just to peasant girls. The Sienese branch of the papal Inquisition summoned old Maddalena Selvi to Pienza in 1659. A landowner, a broker of silk leaves, and a midwife, she was the village's most popular godmother; one daughter was a nun in the convent of San Carlo at Pienza and another married Luca Romani, an organist. The Holy Office summoned her granddaughter Margarita Romani alongside her to answer to charges of superstition. Maddalena explained that she kept a written prayer from her mother, who in turn received it from the general of the Franciscans in

Florence. She had it read to her (for she declared herself illiterate) whenever she was in pain. She also admitted to making signs of the cross and saying the Hail Mary over people who suffered from *risipola*, an acute inflammation of the skin: "One after the other I apply to that spot an egg yolk, *rosado* oil, woman's milk and lettuce, as I was taught by one doctor Valentini in Montalcino." Margarita possessed a little pouch with her "devotions" in it that she had received from her aunt in the convent, but claimed she could not read their contents. "I had them copied at Radicòndoli while I was there with my husband who was the (judicial) vicar for that place . . . At Radicòndoli I gave them to four or five women (to help soothe the pangs of childbirth). Some it helped, others it didn't. For me it didn't help."⁷⁸ Therapeutic magic was extremely commonplace in central Italy. The Inquisition also monitored reports of suspicious entities. The widow Margarita di Bernardino claimed she was possessed by a devil called *Bufalo*, which called for exorcism by a priest. Giuliano Vettori interrogated *Bufalo* on the way he might seduce Bernardino Biagi's wife Bartolomea. *Bufalo* would not cooperate in an immoral scheme, for Bartolomea was a good woman. "Why can't I use your help to achieve my desire?" harangued Vettori. "You must have changed your nature now, since you are always supposed to deceive good people. Begone, instead of joking with me, or else teach me the way to do this evil so that I can find the way to achieve my end!" When *Bufalo* would still not comply with an act that would offend God, Vettori concluded, "Now I know you aren't for real!" The Inquisition agreed, trying Margherita for feigning possession, and it prosecuted Vettori too.

Chapels and parishes had different functions. Parishes were administrative jurisdictions whose principal priest held a benefice or revenue attached to his position. He performed a number of obligatory functions: celebrating mass on Sundays and on the many feast days, overseeing catechism instruction, administering the sacraments of baptism, hearing confession and bestowing penance, giving communion, celebrating marriage, and conferring extreme unction on every member of his congregation. Priests obtained their benefices from various patrons, only rarely the bishop. The canons of the Pienza cathedral appointed the rector of San Valentino, and for a long time they took six-month turns serving it. (Canons were wealthy priests who collectively, in their chapter, administered large churches and the lands attached to them.) The Augustinian monks of San Martino in Siena selected the rector of San Leonardo, the largest parish. A parishioner's assembly *elected* the rector of San Bartolomeo. In 1618, only San Valentino was a *pieve*, with a baptismal font. The bishop erected San Leonardo as *pieve* in 1625, to reinforce parish-based devotion.⁷⁹

The bishops' activism animated a long period of church reform and growth we call the Counter-Reformation. Spurred by the Protestant challenge, Catholic authorities pursued sensible reforms enhancing church discipline and cohesion. The Council of Trent rehabilitated the old doctrines and channeled popular piety in an orthodox direction. Protestant sympathizers fled Siena by the time the Council of Trent finished its sessions in 1563. Reinvigorated piety fueled a massive building boom of shrines, and new vocations swelled the religious orders in the subsequent decades. Few towns benefited as much from the resurgent church as Montepulciano that was home to several cardinals, including the powerful future saint Robert Bellarmine. Raised to the level of a diocese only in 1561, Montepulciano was a major building site: a new cathedral, a Jesuit church and college, the Conventual Franciscan chapel, and other monuments were built from scratch or were restructured extensively.⁸⁰ This building boom threatened to come to a halt in the mid-seventeenth century, as the whole district reeled from the consequences of famine and deflation, but the bishop levied new taxes in 1653 and 1665 to keep the workers busy.⁸¹

Bishops monitored the growth of the religious institution and of its revenues as the buildings rose. They undertook periodic "pastoral visits" designed to bring autonomous entities of the church under their purview and obedience.⁸² Giovanni Spennazzi in April 1638 examined closely Montefollonico's confraternity, listed its revenues, and admonished its lay administrators to distribute them more effectively to the poor.⁸³ Girolamo Borghesi in May 1670 documented the private masses celebrated at the various altars in the churches and chapels under his purview (that is, excluding those of the friars' chapel of San Gismondo). With respect to the clerics, he verified their titles, determined their attributions, and noted the income of their benefices.⁸⁴

Pienza was a small diocese of barely 30 parishes, only recently detached from Montalcino. It lost over a quarter of its population between 1589 and 1737, yet it registered striking growth in the number of secular clerics (that is, ecclesiastics not members of religious communities living apart from society). Elite families of the diocese turned the parish churches in towns into collegiate churches managed by chapters of richly endowed canons. During the bleakest two decades of economic decline, the number of fat new benefices doubled to 120 positions.⁸⁵ Montefollonico conforms to the pattern: the bishop's inspection of 1613 mentioned only three priests, two of whom had rural roots. That made one secular cleric for about 300 inhabitants. When Bishop Borghesi lined up Montefollonico's churchmen in 1670, there were ten clerics, including four holding minor orders and still too young to be priests: a rate of about one for 75 inhabitants. They included two nobles and seven sons of village notables. The most

lucrative benefice brought the holder 40 *scudi* annually, which was ample for a single man, but it was not a fortune. Those without a proper benefice celebrated postmortem masses at individual altars. Modest incomes such as these still attracted families struggling to remain solvent. From 1613 to 1649, eight candidates from the village received clerical orders from the bishop of Pienza (this excludes local youths ordained by other bishops). Giovanni Biagi was the son of the stonemason Pietro and the elder brother of Bernardino; Giovanni Rubenni came from peasant stock; Alessandro Giannetti was the tailor's son. Matteo Barbieri, Giovanni Battista Barbieri, and Giuliano Vettori were sons of village entrepreneurs and landowners, while Leandro Buonamici was a noble youth living with his mother. From 1650 to 1669, another 16 youths from the village received their ordination in Pienza. A few, such as Giuseppe Girolamo, Giovanni Battista, and Domenico Mazzoni, came from dynasties of priests; Eustachio Nutarelli belonged to the group of local landowners with college educations. Members of families, such as Vincenzo Crocchi, Giovanni Miseri, and Mariano Bai, hard hit by the economic collapse appear too. Giovanni and Giovan Andrea Penti were blacksmiths' sons, as was Giovanni Magnoni; Giovanni Battista Ciacci and Biagio Falciani had sharecropper fathers.⁸⁶

Parents diversified their sons' careers in order to maximize success, and most well-off families steered at least one of their sons into holy orders. Anacleto Barbieri's offspring conform to the model too closely for it to be mere coincidence; Flaminio left home for Siena and Rome; Lorenzo managed family assets in the village, while Giovanni Battista became parish priest, even though he was temperamentally unsuited for it. Similarly, Fausto Moreschini lived with his brother Girolamo, a medical doctor confined to village practice. Each candidate to the priesthood required an adequate means of subsistence, in the form of a benefice, an office, or a private income.⁸⁷ Families incorporated property as a cleric's dowry, the congruous portion, the assets of which remained under the family roof. A few families specialized in producing priests. Giovanni Nannini was rector of San Bartolomeo in 1613. Giovanni Battista Nannini held title to a simple altar in the same parish in 1670, living not far from his uncle Taviano, the sometime blacksmith. Taviano's brother, another Giovanni Battista Nannini, held the rural benefice of Ciliano and served as schoolmaster in Petroio. A priest's benefice gave whole families financial security. The Mazzoni moved to Montefollonico from Asciano when Cesare obtained his title to San Leonardo: the father and brother of Paolo Schiavi arrived from Cortona; the family of Luca Formichi moved into the *podere* next to San Valentino.⁸⁸ Not all candidates intended to be full-fledged priests, however. For Leandro Buonamici, clerical status was just a pasture that put his meager fortune beyond the reach of state taxation.

Judging by the growth in the number of priests and in the property transferred to the institution and its servants via charitable bequests, the church seemed immune to economic crisis. Sam Cohn estimates from Sieneſe testaments that by 1750 the value of pious gifts was eight times higher than it was in the late 1500s.⁸⁹ Thanks to *mortmain* rules (by which no property entering the religious domain could ever return to secular use), bequests of land could never be sold to a layman. I doubt the ecclesiastics were constrained much by the *marchese's* regulations forbidding the export of grain and animals in hard times. The church was rigid on the principle of exempting from taxes all foodstuffs destined to feed members of pious organizations.⁹⁰ It was well known, too, that ecclesiastical institutions practiced contraband on a large scale.⁹¹ Ecclesiastics were often exempt from *gabelles* and other taxes, and so retained more of their income than laypeople. Rich convents and monasteries lent their income to private individuals at rates of interest inferior to official lending institutions, the Sieneſe Monte Pio or the Monte dei Paschi. Lucia Bonelli-Conenna evaluates the consistency of Sieneſe real estate transfer to the church at 270,000 *scudi* during the difficult 1650s. From 1668 to 1693, another 250,000 *scudi* worth of land and houses passed to ecclesiastical institutions. Not all church acquisitions figure in the local land tax register, which leads me to suspect that the *marchese* exempted them from the *gabelle*. In this, he would have favored the church and its mission just as the grand dukes in Florence conceded similar exemptions to institutions they considered worthy of support.⁹² In 1692, ecclesiastical entities possessed more than a fifth of all the *poderi* in the state. By the eighteenth century, Italian governments would be searching for ways to downsize the church.

Ecclesiastical landlords came in several sorts. Individual priests accounted for five *poderi*. The Sieneſe nuns of San Girolamo, San Niccolò, and Santuccio also owned *poderi* in Montefollonico. The nuns of the Man'Agnesa hospital in Siena demanded substantial sums from their sharecroppers after the mediocre harvest of 1647. Valerio Sonnini owed more than 500 lire to them, and Domenico Miseri, who must have been trafficking agricultural products, they sued for over a thousand lire in money and foodstuffs.⁹³ The nearby shrine of San Biagio owned one *podere*, as did the rich Benedictine monks of Monte Oliveto. The Augustinian fathers of San Martino in Siena, owners of large *poderi* in Montefollonico, figure among the principal landowners. Peasants did not consider these monks as benevolently as they considered mendicant friars, who begged for sustenance from door to door. An exasperated sharecropper ambushed one Augustinian nobleman of the congregation of Lecceto, Carlo Spannocchi (residing at their *podere* to supervise the harvest work), asking, "What are you trying to get out of me, Father?" Pietro del Riccio

pinned the monk to the ground, and made him beg for his life, before neighbors came running to separate them.⁹⁴ Ten years later, a glassworker quarreled with the Augustinian prior of Montepulciano over a puppy and then battered him with a stick. The monk granted him forgiveness when the man asked for it, but laid a complaint with the magistrate nevertheless: “for I freely pardoned him as I would for anyone to God’s justice, but I want Justice to have its place.”⁹⁵

Perhaps people perceived too keenly the contradiction between Christ’s exemplary poverty, and the business acumen of monastic landlords. Monks without property enjoyed greater resonance with country folk. Various orders of Franciscans crisscrossed the zone, living from the alms people placed in their sacks. Capuchin friars made Montepulciano their bridgehead into Tuscany, setting up an important convent on a hilltop outside town where they trained their novices.⁹⁶ We know little about the Observant Franciscans in Montefollonico, apart from the fact that they established San Gismondo in 1528. Monitoring the friars is difficult because regular clergy were not subject to a bishop’s authority, so prelates from Pienza never inspected the monastery on their visitations. Local residents attended the friars’ masses and frequented them for confession, instead of going to parish priests who knew them better.⁹⁷ The little monastery begins to appear more frequently at mid-century, because it hired Rutilio Carpellini to manage its legal affairs.⁹⁸ It survived pope Innocent X’s campaign to reduce the number of small convents.⁹⁹ The four or five friars in the cells of San Gismondo after 1650 supplemented the secular clergymen serving the rural community. It is likely that there was one clergyman for fewer than 40 inhabitants toward 1670, each exercising some influence and control over laypeople.

Priests were technicians of prayer and of soul repair, who heard confession and exacted calibrated penance that admitted sinners to annual communion.¹⁰⁰ The parish priest was also the guardian of religious orthodoxy, but we should avoid limiting our interest to orthodoxy alone. Jean-Pierre Deconchy argues that the orthodox group compensates for the rational fragility of its information by the vigor of its regulation. Rather than expect people to continually reiterate orthodox prescriptions, the organization condoned passive acceptance of them and then pounced on people who strayed.¹⁰¹ It was crucially important for the church’s ministers to be adequately educated in the verbal virtuosity of the faith. This work seemed largely accomplished in seventeenth-century Italy. Clerics then transmitted the message of eternal salvation in a way that made sense to most individuals. Priests were also village peacemakers who rushed to separate combatants, who stood witness to peacemaking agreements, arbitrated compromises, and brought future in-laws to agreement over marriage pacts.

Priests and their allies in commanding positions in lay society bound people more closely to rites and rules, something they justified by the same kind of paternalism that governed political power and social patronage.¹⁰² Every state official from the grand duke downward saw himself as a parental caretaker of the faith and of good morals.¹⁰³ For both Catholic and Protestant Europe historians label this process *social discipline*: the imposition of a “virtuous circle” (*Di Simplicio*) denoted by a heightened sensitivity to sin.¹⁰⁴ People saw individual good conduct as the true basis of social harmony and welcomed repressive action against habitual offenders. Churchmen had a relatively accurate perception of human nature but they waged constant war against it. The institution excommunicated anyone who struck a cleric, of whatever status.¹⁰⁵ The process then began in earnest when church tribunals launched actions against the priests themselves, and then extended their initiatives to embrace the entire population. By doing so, they no doubt expanded the moral circle again.

While the church succeeded in fortifying the dignity of clerics by these measures, not all priests were equally effective. What made an effective priest in a village such as Montefollonico? The two most influential ones were both rectors of San Leonardo: Cesare Mazzoni (1625–1638) and Fausto Moreschini (1638–1688). A good pedigree was crucial, for they would have to thwart the interests of important people and extract credits and legacies from the reluctant descendants of pious benefactors. Mazzoni may have been a cousin or brother of Domenico di Cristofano Mazzoni (1602–1681), posted to the Montepulciano Capuchin convent in 1621 as Silvestro d’Asciano. The Capuchin was an assistant to Antonio Barberini, elevated to the rank of cardinal after his uncle Maffeo Barberini was elected pope Urban VIII in 1623.¹⁰⁶ Cesare’s brother Girolamo moved to Montefollonico with him and anchored their presence with real estate and political action on the village council. Fausto Moreschini was the offspring of a recently ennobled family that possessed only modest wealth. His uncle Adriano Moreschini was also a notable Capuchin friar. Moreschini stepped into Cesare Mazzoni’s place almost as soon as the bishop ordained him and he held the village’s principal benefice until his death in 1688.¹⁰⁷

These two charismatic figures stand in stark contrast to most other ecclesiastics holding benefices there. People expected their priests to be available to administer sacraments to them and went over their heads if their conduct was wanting.¹⁰⁸ The disciplining campaign against priests was in high gear by the 1630s. The vicar-general convoked almost all our priests to his criminal court in Pienza, but they were not all equally depraved. The troubles of Ludio Bartolomei, rector of San Bartolomeo, stemmed from the consensual sexual relations he was enjoying with *Giomma la Lombardina*, and from a shouting match he had with

Margarita *la Signorina*. Suspended and fined, Ludio repented and the bishop restored him quickly to his post.¹⁰⁹ The bishop disciplined other priests for making public insinuations on women's failings that the victims took to the court for redress.¹¹⁰ These were minor sins next to those of Giovanni Battista Barbieri, who exercised his strident *prepotenza* against men and women of every status. The vicar-general summoned him to answer criminal charges in Pienza at least nine times over a 30-year period. Barbieri was a choirboy next to his contemporary Giuliano Vettori, who first appears as a brazen youth in the 1620s. His demeanor shocked both the diocesan judge and the village *commissario* in cases where he was merely a witness. Vettori went on to elicit fear and loathing across a large portion of the community, though he held the cure of San Valentino from the canons of Pienza for a few years and won the election to be rector of San Bartolomeo—no doubt with Landucci support. The Holy Office of the Inquisition tried Vettori for at least two offenses. The bishop finally deprived him of his benefice after his third attempt on someone's life.¹¹¹ Ecclesiastical judges sentenced offenders more leniently than state officials and were reluctant to inflict corporal punishments. Unlike the lay courts, however, the bishop's concern was to punish sin, not restore order. Hence, no infrajudicial mechanisms encouraged litigants to settle out of court, and the likelihood of a condemnation was much greater. Few clerics received complete absolution.

Much of our information on the clergy's shortcomings comes from other priests, backed by members of their congregations who corroborated the complaints. Acrimony among village priests was the rule, not the exception. They squabbled over money and tithes, first of all. Giovanni Battista Barbieri scuffled with Moreschini over grain for their respective sacks during a ceremony held in the confraternity granary where the three curates collected tithes. He followed Moreschini outside hurling insults at him and swore he would get even.¹¹² Animositities flared anew in April 1654 when someone nailed up a defamatory placard against the new schoolmaster and curate of San Bartolomeo, Fabio Roncaglia, that began, "*becco, porco, pidocchioso*" (billygoat, swine, fleabag)." Neighbors recounted how Roncaglia had quarreled with Moreschini over the case of a Jew and other matters the previous fall. Rumors held that Moreschini dictated the content of the placard to a San Gismondo friar, who served as scribe. The village school was often a subject of contention among the priests.¹¹³ A month later, Bernardino Biagi began arguing with the schoolmaster in the street, fearing that he would be accused of writing the placard. Never very subtle, the pious Biagi added, "You are an ass and I stand by it . . . I sent my children to the school and you couldn't teach them." When Roncaglia retorted, "You are a bastard and a mule!" Bernardino rushed home to get his musket and

advised the priest to do the same, which he did. Neighbors kept them apart, though Francesco Crocchi egged Bernardino on.¹¹⁴ These conflicts among priests simmered until 1662 at least, when a Franciscan friar chosen by the vicar-general brought the three curates, Moreschini, Barbieri, and Luca Formichi to an accord. It gave Moreschini precedence over the other two in processions and in seating. However, whenever all three were called to officiate at feasts and funerals, the benefactor was to rank them. The document then established which priest was to celebrate which feast day. To celebrate additional masses one had to pay extra, so priests disputed these too.¹¹⁵

Catholics did not suffer wayward priests willingly. Asked if he considered Matteo Barbieri's struggle with Francesco Crocchi to be a public scandal, Ludio Bartolomei confirmed it, "I think so, absolutely, because there were certain women there who were muttering, 'Oh, what a charming priest!'"¹¹⁶ Many of the plaintiffs were women. Giovanni Battista Barbieri provoked several complaints about his uncontrolled anger toward parishioners at San Valentino. A sharecropper's wife he insulted, Caterina Doveri, marched straight to Pienza to lay her complaint: "I only desire that Justice should take place."¹¹⁷ She had already warned the vicar-general that Barbieri threatened an unnamed enemy from the pulpit, swearing that the individual would not find a protector powerful enough to protect them from his vengeance. Caterina Malacarne could not bring herself to confess to him, or to send her daughter, and they went to other confessionals despite Barbieri's threats. He must have known of the mutterings against him for he warned her, "You won't chase me from this parish!"¹¹⁸

Already, by mid-century, no priest, no matter how well connected, was immune to disciplinary proceedings. The disciplinary pyramid's base stretched clear across Tuscany. Above the bishops throned the papal nuncio, or ambassador, who resided near the court in Florence. This Roman dignitary enjoyed easy access to both *marchese* Coppoli and the grand duke. Fausto Moreschini's sordid quarrels with Giovanni Battista Barbieri in 1652 over their respective portions of the tithe soon led to graver charges.¹¹⁹ In November 1653, Moreschini admitted to the bishop's court that he had received notice not to frequent a certain woman, but the name was not specified: "I understood that it was the wife of Bernardino Biagi." Two years later, tongues wagged that he frequented the house of the widow Caterina Nutarelli, where he taught the catechism and letters to her children or just sat next to the hearth to talk. Summoned to explain his persistence, Moreschini at first denied he frequented her house; then he explained how innocuous it was:

she is already mature, she is an honored woman and very respectable, and she has never given a hint of scandal, but rather edification, and she often

frequents the Holy Sacraments and does good works, and she is very vigilant to educate her children by sending them each evening to San Leonardo to say the rosary to the Holy Cross.

Moreschini then shifted the blame onto his accusers, charging that they were unhappy with his precedence, and that they were animated by a spirit of vendetta. The schoolmaster Roncaglia had become an enemy of the widow Nutarelli, who removed her children from his school: "Everything stems from the malice of these priests!" Moreschini continued to deny the charges with perfectly plausible rebuttals. The papal nuncio, however, dispatched a letter to the bishop of Pienza to have him disciplined: "for public edification and correct behavior I love in everyone, but more particularly in my ministers . . . and if you judge it necessary, communicate to him my authority that I confer on you . . ." ¹²⁰

The most intriguing confirmation of this clerical backbiting arose when it was time to replace Moreschini in 1688. Orazio Ghezzi was a shoemaker's son, whose family came to Montefollonico after the great famine. His humble background no doubt irritated many, for he held the most important benefice. An unsigned report sent to the nuncio a few months after his installation demanded his removal on the grounds that he was "so incompetent and unlettered that he doesn't know how to read the Holy Mass, and was subjected to insufficient examination on the grounds of the indisposition and great age of the bishop of Pienza, who could not attend the session . . . and due to the poor training of the examiners he passed, although with one unfavorable vote . . ." The petition went on to complain of such deficiencies in training as to cause daily scandals and beseeched the nuncio to order the bishop of Pienza to resubject Ghezzi to a proper examination. Ghezzi's response in October aligned 27 parishioners in his favor, 10 of whom could sign their names. The nuncio suspended him from the post nevertheless and ordered him reexamined by clerics selected by the archbishop of Siena. After Ghezzi passed this new test, the bishop reinstated him. ¹²¹ What are we to make of this? Infighting among priests was a basic feature of village life, and appeals to higher authority were a standard weapon. Ghezzi's adversaries knew to go over the head of the bishop of Pienza to get results.

Above the nuncio lurked the Holy Office of the Inquisition, a Roman committee with jurisdiction in affairs of the faith over everyone below the rank of pope. Adriano Prospero calls it the only truly centralized power in early modern Italy. ¹²² It instructed parish priests in Montefollonico to copy out complete sentences against high-profile offenders such as Galileo and Miguel Molinos and affix them to the door of the church. More prosaically, the tribunal picked up rumors of wrongdoing of local people and solicited

further information from notables who served as local chancellors, such as Fausto Moreschini, secretary for Montefollonico. In January 1643, the tribunal instructed him to take down testimony from a boy and a girl who accused one of the monks at San Gismondo of pressuring them in the confessional to have sexual relations with him. The gist of Fra Arcangelo's conversation with Caterina Giannetti, the tailor's daughter, sounded suspicious to her from the outset: "this wouldn't please God with any person, especially not with a priest, and I would be committing an offense against God," she replied. A neighbor reminded her of the Inquisition's rules: whoever was aware of a similar offense and did not report it was liable to excommunication. Abuse of the confessional, along with magic and blasphemy, was a serious offense in the eyes of the Holy Office. The tribunal did not move against a suspect before it informed the papal nuncio and received the grand duke's permission to proceed. It soon summoned Father Arcangelo da Seggiano to the Inquisition's seat in Siena.¹²³

Local priests, kept well in hand by the hierarchy, were now bent on indoctrinating and disciplining the entire population. Visiting bishops expected each rector, the principal priest in a parish, to show them the registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials. These enabled priests to reckon degrees of kinship between prospective spouses and to determine whether the parties were eligible to marry. The states of souls lists compiled periodically by parish priests satisfied the bishop that all adults had taken Easter confession and communion and that the youths had received confirmation. The states of souls register was an important sixteenth-century innovation because people with declared enemies were ineligible to receive communion. It identified potential targets for peacemaking to the clergy.¹²⁴

Policing tells us nothing about how the clergy reshaped the beliefs and religious practices of Catholics, however. Purgatory is perhaps the most important reference in popular religion. It was a temporary hell that cleansed the souls of sinners who would still be redeemed. Purgatory gave the Catholic religion a softer edge than its Protestant rivals. People performed good works during their lifetimes so that they might leave it more quickly after their death. Their exertions could also redeem the sins of other people, their blood kin principally. Any worthy act would weigh on the scales of salvation. The church marketed a range of products to both rich and poor, who could participate to the measure of their means and their apprehensions. The institution of postmortem masses was one such instrument, whose increasing frequency we confirm in testaments. They offered people the chance to redeem their souls from Purgatory, and they subsidized the sustenance of a clergyman in this world.¹²⁵

More truly innovative was the way the church hierarchy sponsored new confraternities to promote private meditation, interior discipline, and

correct belief. They were vastly different from those promoting solidarity and charity run by village councils. Bishops promoted the first without hesitation and kept a much closer watch over their operation.¹²⁶ The Company of Santa Caterina in the church of San Leonardo, whose male and female members wore tunics, was one of the oldest. It boasted affiliation with the Archconfraternity of the Cross in Rome. The decorations and devotional paraphernalia displayed on its altar impressed the bishop in 1670.¹²⁷ The same company maintained from public donations another lavish altar in the same church, dedicated to Saint Anthony of Padua, patron saint of farm animals. San Leonardo also housed a Name of God confraternity, whose promoters thought it would curb blasphemy and promote peace. Bishops favored the brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament, such as the Company of the Corpus Domini in San Bartolomeo, whose altar the visiting prelate praised.¹²⁸ We have for this company the articles as they stood in 1730. Its 40-odd members were required to pay 1 *paolo* (just over half a lira) of dues every year. With every member's death, each brother added another *paolo* and employed the total sum in postmortem masses for his or her benefit.¹²⁹ Rosary confraternities, promoted by Franciscan preachers, were often attached to altars specialized in post-mortem masses. The Madonna del Rosario chapel in San Bartolomeo promoted alternating prayers, the Hail Mary and the Our Father, with contemplative pauses to aid meditation on Catholic mysteries. Its company maintained a lavish altar that contrasted vividly with the shabby one tended by Giovanni Battista Barbieri.¹³⁰ Another company formed around 1675 under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin in the church of the Virgin at Follonica outside the village. It limited itself to 30 members paying 10 soldi each as an entrance fee, the equivalent of a day's labor for a male fieldworker. It too celebrated the passing of each member with post-mortem masses at 10 soldi from each survivor.¹³¹ All these confraternities marshaled money for chapel decoration, under the watchful scrutiny of the Quattro Conservatori who were keen to prevent public funds from being squandered on prestige projects for the well-to-do.¹³²

Brotherhood processions constituted visible signs of public spirit and personal piety, at least for the benefit of neighbors and social betters. Processions expressed social ranking and status in public ways and strengthened the individual bonds with other members who promised to support and respect them. Belonging to confraternities and participating in the increasingly numerous functions they entailed, under the leadership of priests and monks, were fully rational acts. However, we risk being fooled by the expressions of unity emanating from the normative texts, for people brought their worldly ambitions, their hierarchies, and their nepotism into the groups to which they belonged. The company of Santa

Caterina seethed with competition among the leading families for ascendancy. Cristoforo Selvi incited young Lorenzo Barbieri to smash the insignia of the company because it carried the arms of the Landucci on it.¹³³ Someone threw stones at the men gathered in devotion at night before the chapel of the Corpus Domini in April 1637, hitting some of them.¹³⁴ The rivalry between the two brotherhoods erupted in a near riot on Good Friday in 1640, as Ludio Bartolomei assembled everyone for the procession down to the Madonna del Criano. The vicar-general's arbitration revealed that the Company of the Corpus Domini was founded in 1571, replacing one dedicated to the cult of San Bernardino of Siena that had failed to protect the village from the mid-century catastrophes. The brotherhood undertook a cost-benefit analysis of that saint's cult and decided to venerate a more powerful patron, yet its members claimed precedence over Santa Caterina by virtue of the antiquity of the cult of San Bernardino. A few sexagenarians testified that the Corpus Domini had always marched on the right side, in and out of buildings, as a sign of its antiquity. Sexagenarians belonging to Santa Caterina replied that they often led the way. The members of the latter company made much of their affiliation with the Roman Archiconfraternity, and two of their members always stood by the consecrated host with their torches. The bishop's order gave the Corpus Domini precedence, where earlier no systematic ranking existed.¹³⁵

Village piety was subject to another influence, almost invisible in diocesan archives: the effect of friars. Franciscan friars served in villages such as Montefollonico as confessors and preachers.¹³⁶ Their exhortations triggered the first wave of renewed piety in the sixteenth century. Franciscan education was often spotty, but their superiors expected them to edify people by example, first, and by their preaching, second. Capuchins (the most extreme branch of the Franciscan family created in 1528) from Montepulciano were very active in the zone. Its young novices collected alms from *castello* and *poderi* homes in the whole district. The novitiate also hosted one of the first formal city missions we encounter in our district, in 1667.¹³⁷ Even if missionaries never set up camp in Montefollonico, our villagers traveled to neighboring localities to participate in these events.¹³⁸ The impact of missionary zeal is difficult to gauge. The Capuchin Vincenzo da Isolano was a freelance specialist of pacification missions. The order's chronicler claims he extinguished vendettas with an elevated host at Sinalunga around 1641. "I have such faith in this Christ, that if you do not reconcile with your enemies, God will strike down your house," he thundered, and the house was held to shake. A single oration was enough to conclude 18 notarized peace treaties at the church entrance, with nine more before the end of Lent.¹³⁹ I suspect the presence of similar small-scale

missionary enterprises in the late 1630s, early 1640s, and again in the early 1660s, for we find a flurry of Francesco or Francesca in the baptismal register in those years, and the diabolical possession of Margherita di Bernardino. Full-fledged missions were a later development. Specialized monks of the Lazarist order set up headquarters in Perugia in 1675 and in the following decades averaged seven rural missions every year. A Jesuit contemporary, Paolo Segneri developed a set routine. With permission from the local bishop, three or four priests set up a winter camp for several weeks. Local friars and parish priests assisted them in hearing confession and forming processions. They measured their success in terms of the number of full confessions they heard. This was the “sign” that the person was ready to commit to more sweeping behavioral changes. This method of first committing people to a painless declaration of intention before pressuring them to change their behavior was psychologically quite sophisticated; today we call it the “foot-in-the-door” technique. By this and other techniques of persuasion they pressured individuals to curb their hate and make peace with their enemies.¹⁴⁰

Schoolmasters continued where missionaries left off, attempting to inculcate civility and self-control into their charges. Children learned not only letters there, but also cardinal Bellarmine’s catechism and a whole code of precepts compiled for their intention. Erasmus of Rotterdam compiled the most important of these before Rome consigned his work to the Index, but the Siennese monk Orazio Lombardelli produced a booklet inspired from it that pedagogues widely used in Italy.¹⁴¹ Many small details testify to the church’s taming of local villagers, who could not fail to see the advantages of Christian brotherhood themselves. Bernardino Biagi gradually became a village *dévol*, volunteering to help Moreschini say mass at a *podere* altar.¹⁴² Pious references permeate the criminal archives after mid-century. Caterina di Domenico Bazzi made peace with noble Leandro Buonamici, pardoning the latter’s insults in a church ceremony, with two priests, Camillo Penti, a pious smithy, and Caterina Gabbiai, a midwife, all witnessing the reconciliation.¹⁴³ The magistrate profited from the heightened religious climate to remind witnesses that perjury was not just a crime, it was a mortal sin.¹⁴⁴ Francesco Dreuli, set upon by Francesco Crocchi near a roadside cross, embraced it crying, “blessed cross, You save me!”¹⁴⁵ Leonello Penti cringed when someone told his father he had urinated against the confraternity wall, underneath a statue to the Virgin Mary.¹⁴⁶ Small anecdotes, perhaps, but telling glimpses of a more pious and policed community. Imagine the pressure the church could bring to bear on those individuals who shrugged off its doctrines as trumpery!

Yet when we examine the testaments, we find many different responses to imminent death. We have 63 testaments dating from 1609 to 1691, with

most dating from the 1630s and 1640s. There were equal numbers of male and female testators (several testaments were joint instruments). Only a few peasants living on *poderi* made them, and they tended to be richer than their neighbors. The notaries hastily scribbled a series of replies to their questions concerning the all-important legacies and made sure there was at least one universal heir who would inherit all the unspecified rights accruing to the estate once the legacies were paid out. Although the scribes tacked on the introductory pious clauses afterward, the documents reveal a diversity of individual choices. The Rosary and Holy Name confraternities with their repetitious prayers appealed more to women (14) than to men (2). The designation of the Franciscan convent of San Gismondo and its altar of the Cordone attracted three male notables and two women; the altar of the Corpus Domini that extinguished feuds received alms from six men and two women. Some individuals desired to be interred in a family tomb, with their ancestors, or with their children. Over a third of the testators just left these details up to their heirs.¹⁴⁷ Very few people preplanned their funeral ceremony, even when they were rich. The most elaborate details, and by far the most numerous pious legacies, were made by Gabriello Moreschini, uncle of the future parish priest. He was as incautious with his money in death as he was in life, for the debts he left behind filled many lines.¹⁴⁸ A humble widow, Maddalena di Camillo wished to be buried in a white robe, with torches at the end of her bier. The silence of most others does not imply indifference to ritual, for most village adults belonged to the companies that took care of such details.

Mass legacies are a better sign of belief in Purgatory, for testators had to leave money expressly for that purpose, entrusting it to their heirs that the request would be carried out. Barely half the testaments left such provisions, however, and only 18 testators left provisions for annual masses, usually in small numbers. The self-indulgent Gabriello Moreschini ordered at least 25 annual masses to be sung until the end of time at a number of different locations in Montefollonico and Siena. Four or five masses annually were enough for people of modest means. Others just left a few lire for masses to be celebrated until the money ran out. The priest Giovanni Nannini wanted 200 of them. The artisan Benedetto Crocchi left money for a hundred masses, as did a relatively poor widow, Olimpia Demone. Valentino di Rocco, with a nice touch, asked for one mass annually for 33 years, the age of Christ crucified. Seven testators assigned the bulk of their estate to postmortem masses to commemorate their existence. Six of those were women who had few family ties or lamented that they were the last alive.

The absence of any pious concern is striking in many of these instruments, however. Cesare Mazzoni, the model parish priest of San Leonardo,

left no provisions for pious legacies or for masses, leaving only a lifetime pension for his servant on the condition that she not ask for back salary. His brother and heir Girolamo Mazzoni likewise left no special clauses in his will 20 years later: yet three of his four sons became priests! Giovanni Misari, another priest, ensconced in Siena just left a bit of money for statue ornaments in Montefollonico. Neither Rutilio Carpellini nor his wife left money for masses or made any special legacy. The aristocrat Artemia Landucci left no money for such trifles: her estate supported the offspring of a son who had become an Augustinian monk, and who deprived his children of their settlements in doing so. Similarly Leonido Landucci wished to leave every penny to his sons. Amidea Branchini, wife of Anacleto Barbieri, left no money for masses or donations but made special provisions for her firstborn Flaminio, who was in no condition to fend for himself. Scipione Barbieri, a hard-headed businessman who became rector and manager of the village confraternity, left no money for any pious purpose. He had five sons, however. The documents tell us that wills balance personal hopes of salvation against the desire to shield surviving blood relatives from poverty and future vulnerability. The expanding moral circle could not suppress nepotism.

Making Tuscans

The political realm was another circle whose expansion proceeded apace with the others, but more quietly. Jean-Claude Waquet characterizes the Medici state as one in which the desire for stability preceded every other ambition.¹⁴⁹ It rings true for the marquise of Montefollonico, too. The economic crisis weeded out some families previously ascendant, and it pushed many notables' sons into religious vocations. New names appeared more frequently among the inhabitants of the *castello* and *poderi* alike: the Fantozzi, Ghezzi, Ciacci, Farnetani. Judging by the states of souls for San Leonardo and San Bartolomeo in 1702, few *castello* notables could trace their patronyms to 1600 or even 1630. The hardest fate befell the Carpellini. Rutilio's son Fulvio was *camerlengo* in 1660 and still owned property evaluated at 12,000 lire. After his death in 1679, his heirs relinquished their real estate and the entire family lost status. Bernardino Carpellini, born in 1660, bore no title in 1702, not even *maestro*. His brother Francesco was a household servant in *casa* Venturini.¹⁵⁰ Even the noble families had changed. The surviving branches of the Landucci moved back to Siena, their fortunes consolidated. The large house next to San Bartolomeo was still *casa* Landucci in 1702, inhabited by an estate agent. It was called Casa Coppoli by 1732: the house was the *marchese's*

only property in the village when the grand duke suppressed the fief in 1749.¹⁵¹

Economic decline and the social polarization that ensued concentrated power in the hands of fewer people. Whereas in 1620 many individuals had some voice in the village community, everything now conspired to make a few well-placed individuals more powerful. Everywhere in Europe, the notables who counted were those best able to mediate village interests with outside authorities. Giovanna Benadusi has examined this process closely in the nearby Casentino district. In Poppi, notables pursued marriage strategies designed to conserve their assets over the long term. By mid-century, they were reaching out to make matrimonial alliances with notables from other villages and with city officials.¹⁵² The rise of Lorenzo Barbieri illustrates this process in Montefollonico. Anacleto lost the post of *gabel-laio* to the more congenial and less ambitious Rutilio Carpellini in 1626 or 1627. Unlike his brother Giovanni Battista, Lorenzo learned to control his aggressive passions and assumed the direction of the family estate alongside his father, who lived to advanced old age. Old Anacleto Barbieri prepared the ascent by marrying his daughter Portia to Fulvio Carpellini in 1651. Lorenzo cast his net of relations outside the fief around the same time, becoming lieutenant of the militia band in 1650, a move that earned him the title of *signore*. He rose to the level of captain of militia by the 1670s, which gave him purview over bands outside the fief. A bachelor until his forties, Barbieri married a woman from outside the village who bore him several children in the 1660s. *Camerlengo* for several years in the late 1650s, the official the Medici government entrusted as the tax collector, rector of the confraternity, agent of the feudal *auditore* and the Landucci, correspondent with the Sienese tax administration, Lorenzo crowned his ascent by becoming the marchese's revenue agent (*depositario*) around 1658. He made a good impression on the visiting senator Gherardini in 1676.¹⁵³

This gradual concentration of power in local elites entailed the risk that they would privatize village resources for their own benefit. Aware of the danger, grand duke Cosimo I created the Quattro Conservatori to safeguard communal assets, by disallowing the alienation of common lands and expenditures they judged not in the public interest.¹⁵⁴ This committee's tutelage over the local community was not unlike an adult's over a minor, yet another realm of paternalism. Milking public assets was always easier for rich or well-connected families than for others, especially if they could afford to pay the rental proceeds to the local treasury. A rare tax roster we have for 1676 itemizes the dues owed by each *podere*, and the dues in grain imposed on the *prese* (common lands rented out to individuals). Land rented to 34 individual tenants returned revenues equivalent to the

poderi taxes, if we convert their grain rents into cash.¹⁵⁵ Six aristocrats among the 34 tenants contributed about 40 percent of the income. Those not well-off still comprised a majority (20 tenants), but altogether they paid only a small amount to the community.¹⁵⁶

While nobles milked public assets to top up their evaporating private revenues, the Medici maintained the state's receipts by increasing taxes. The proceeds of taxes paid to the Depositeria treasury of Siena reached their peak around 1580, but their intake dropped to merely 60 percent of that amount by 1636.¹⁵⁷ The collapse of export duties and sales taxes after 1618 seriously compromised Tuscan revenues. Spain and Austria squeezed millions of *scudi* in war subsidies from the Medici between 1625 and 1642, and could not reimburse them.¹⁵⁸ The massive shift of property to the church contracted the tax base still more. The grand dukes repaired the fiscal damage by instituting single new taxes in small doses. The challenge of all taxation was to find people who could afford to pay it. A sweeping census of people and livestock undertaken in 1638 aimed to provide a more accurate basis of calculation for new taxes, which increasingly included the clergy too.¹⁵⁹ Ferdinando II halved the tax exemptions for militiamen in 1632, for they normally belonged to the more comfortable peasantry.¹⁶⁰ The rich inhabitants of every community were instructed the year after to pay the salt consumption of the poor.¹⁶¹

Government authority in Tuscany was never entirely pyramidal not only because the church wielded so much autonomous power, but also because the Medici respected the privileges of the medieval republican families in the dominant cities.¹⁶² Cosimo I de' Medici and his descendants raised themselves above the medieval republican committees by incremental reforms. Without creating a large and invasive bureaucracy intent on confiscating power to the capital, like the kings of France, the grand dukes gradually co-opted local decision-making elites into their service. They confided tax collection not to a new class of state officials as in France, but instead to the village *camerlengo*.¹⁶³ Reforms enacted between 1561 and 1588 strove to pattern the Sienese institutions on Florentine ones, without ever melding the two distinct states. The grand dukes then slowly emasculated the committees of elected aristocrats by appointing qualified civil servants to work with them.¹⁶⁴ By 1640, there were about a hundred permanent administrative offices in Siena not reserved for nobles, and this number increased thereafter.¹⁶⁵ Aristocrats could hold these offices too. The modest salaries they provided compensated for declining grain prices, falling rates on state bonds, and the scarcity of worthwhile commercial ventures. Like the "habits" of the knights of Santo Stefano and church benefices, government offices provided stable, secure incomes and gave their holders jurisdiction over subjects too. Since not all the Sienese

aristocrats were wealthy enough to be eligible (*riseduti*) for the most important positions open to them, they settled for office-holding as an attractive alternative.¹⁶⁶ The *Quattro Conservatori* tribunal mirrors the evolution nicely: initially composed of four Sienese patricians designated from Florence, the grand duke appointed a permanent chancellor and several secretaries who guided their proceedings.¹⁶⁷ Non-nobles also used their legal training to serve in various official capacities, as village chancellors or notaries attached to the tribunal of a *podestà*. Uliviero Nutarelli and Marcantonio Palusi, both of Montefollonico, took periodic leave to hold such offices elsewhere.

To be eligible for these offices, and in order to pursue a career in Siena or in Florence, candidates needed proper legal training. The granducal administration encouraged access to higher education for noble and commoner families alike. The rush of aristocrats into institutions of higher learning is particularly striking after 1650. One noteworthy institution was the college for nobles, a Jesuit-run secondary school under state patronage, reserved for aristocrats. In addition to the standard humanities program (in Latin) all such colleges offered, the curriculum of the Collegio Tolomei offered instruction in the social graces young men would need to exercise power in polite society. Only 30 percent of the pupils there belonged to local families, but similar institutions existed in other Italian cities and Sienese youths studied elsewhere.¹⁶⁸ The state reserved its best positions for men holding university degrees in law. Granducal bursaries made places available to study at the two authorized institutions, the University of Pisa and the Sapienza in Siena for students from the hinterland and poorer families in the capital.¹⁶⁹ A select number of poor Sienese nobles, and an equal number of commoners, were eligible to receive Mancini scholarships for university study. A committee evaluated the revenues, the debts, and the number of children of the parents applying for the assistance.¹⁷⁰ Some local lads benefited from it because Matteo di Scipione Barbieri criticized the insolence it bred in them: "You other (nobles) usually get Mancini scholarships," he complained to a knot of notables, indicating Fausto Moreschini and Pietro Landucci, "that make you insolent." All the young noblemen in town assembled in the street outside his house and hurled stones and insults at him and his father.¹⁷¹ "There was Sgr Flaminio (Landucci) and his brother Pietro, and Sgr Ascanio Foresi with a polearm, and Sgr Giovanbattista Vieri, Enea Buonamici and Leandro, his brother the priest, and the priest Moreschini with Francesco, his brother," a roll-call of impoverished aristocrats. University education offered them some hope of social advancement. Typical of educated noblemen of modest background, Guglielmo Moreschini distributed his medical knowledge for a pittance via the confraternity in the 1660s. The trend professionalized

a large portion of the aristocracy and incited nobles to vie for stable positions in the Medici administration. It also provided a modicum of social mobility for gifted commoners too.¹⁷² Bernardino Biagi sent his son to college in Siena, as did Scipione Barbieri and Anacleto Barbieri. It is not outrageous to assume that children and adolescents from Montefollonico frequented the Jesuit college in Montepulciano. The city government did its best to protect it from the consequence of declining revenues in the 1670s.¹⁷³ The shining example of social mobility would be Niccolò Magnoni (born in 1652), son of the notary Domenico (born in 1629), in turn, son of the unlettered blacksmith and butcher Giovanni Battista Magnoni. Niccolò earned a law degree in Siena, and by the time of his death in 1727, was considered by his contemporaries to be a leading light in jurisprudence.¹⁷⁴ The aristocratic chronicler noted with a tinge of irony that he was able to accumulate not a little real estate by arguing high-profile cases. By 1692, he already owned four *podere* in Montefollonico, of the nine commoners possessed.

Medici rule enjoyed a broad consensus in Siena by the seventeenth century, although no doubt much of that stemmed from a natural tendency to defer to an established authority that had succeeded in restoring order. The dynasty rallied the adhesion of Siennese aristocrats without reservation when it dispatched the adolescent prince Mattias, younger brother of grand duke Ferdinand II, to fill the office of governor of Siena. The governor was the sovereign's representative. Before Mattias, these officials were simple dignitaries whose power was more formal than real. The granducal administration saddled governors with a secretary in Florence and required them to inform the prince of every significant issue in the state. Governors often complained that Florence left them in the dark or that it made decisions on Siennese matters without consulting them first.¹⁷⁵ The respect accorded the governor increased immensely with the arrival of a Medici prince, nephew of the Holy Roman Emperor. Mattias imparted an aura of courtliness in which local aristocrats desired to bask. Together with his Florentine officials, the tax officer (*Depositario*), and a legal officer (*Auditore*) who constituted a board of supervision called the *Consulta*, Mattias oversaw all the machinery of government of the Siennese state, including the fiefs. He functioned much like an Austrian archduke.¹⁷⁶

The grand dukes exercised some of their power from strong citadels that even today bear their blazons. Besides the citadel on the edge of the Siennese ramparts, they erected a compact fortress at Radicofani, and another at Sorano. Grosseto, a fortress of some importance, and the medieval castles crowning Montalcino and Montepulciano housed more soldiers under granducal command. Yet the whole Medici army would not have amounted to more than a few thousand men who functioned more as

security guards than as combat-ready soldiers. The largest contingents of them garrisoned Livorno and Florence. A roster for the entire Sienese state in 1699 totals just over four hundred men, quite insufficient to impose obedience by armed force.¹⁷⁷ On the contrary, the Medici appealed to the military instincts of their subjects and placed weapons in their hands. For nobles, they created the order of the knights of Santo Stefano, operating a galley flotilla from Livorno to combat Moslem corsairs. The 369 Sienese knights the grand duke (as grand master of the order) admitted between its foundation in 1562 and 1699 include four Montefollonico nobles. Ascanio and Aliprando Foresi, admitted in 1641 and 1663 respectively, were too old to train for combat. The grand duke awarded them the “habit” as a sinecure. Antonio di Leonido Landucci joined in 1639 at age 18, with the obligation to serve on the galleys for several years. Leonido di Lorenzo Landucci, admitted in 1687, was only 12 years old.¹⁷⁸ The knights were more of a patronage tool than a military force.

The Tuscan peasant militia was also more a virtual weapon than a deterrent to the grand duke’s enemies. Early in the seventeenth century, its strength might have crossed fifty thousand, but these were merely paper soldiers.¹⁷⁹ In 1699, the militia bands in the Sienese countryside alone numbered over five thousand *descritti*. Militiamen received cursory training in the use of pikes and muskets, but like their peers across Europe, they never formed an efficient military body, if only for lack of a real military threat.¹⁸⁰ Whatever its deficiency as a military instrument, the militia focused the leadership role on the grand duke. He nominated its cadres and placed all its members under his privileged jurisdiction.¹⁸¹ In Montefollonico, it is impossible to know exactly how many men served in it, but it was a significant fraction of the men aged between 16 and 45. There was always a village corporal of militia, as there was an ensign (*alfiere*) and a lieutenant, appointed from the better families.

The one war that threatened the state was a unifier of some significance, because it centered Tuscan loyalties on the Medici dynasty against a foreign enemy and briefly erased the grand duchy’s internal borders.¹⁸² The Castro War (1642–1644) pitted Tuscany and its allies Parma, Modena, and Venice against the papal states under Pope Urban VIII Barberini. Montefollonico had a balcony seat to watch the operations unfold on the Umbrian frontier, where the governor of Siena mobilized about ten thousand troops in the summer of 1643. Mattias was an experienced, if uninspired, commander who had served as an Imperial general in Germany for most of the 1630s. Tuscan officers in Imperial and Spanish service came home to help fill out his units, and even the *marchese* Coppoli raised a company of troops from his own revenues to fight his natural ruler, the pope.¹⁸³ Montepulciano hosted prince Mattias, his general staff, and mounted escort, while troops

took up quarters around the sanctuary of San Biagio, with the task of finding draught animals and fodder for them. Enterprising sutlers, one of whom was Bernardino Biagi, reported to the camp with provisions loaded on donkeys.¹⁸⁴ Villagers served as sentries and escorted provisions, assembled for musters and drilled in formation. Some of them enlisted as soldiers in the regular army, as only one of the eight infantry regiments was comprised of foreign mercenaries.¹⁸⁵ Prince Mattias's force quickly seized the Umbrian border towns and pressed on toward Perugia, routing the papal army at Mongiovino. Our patriotic villagers laid siege to the unpopular schoolmaster monk from the papal states, serving in the village on the *marchese's* invitation. "Vatti con Dio, Papalinaccio!" they cried, while Giuliano Vettori hammered on the monk's door. Vettori fetched the corporal Vincenzo Barbieri to beat his drum and rouse the militiamen from their beds, the former then seized an axe to smash down the door, crying, "Open up, cazzo, I want to have your (ti) head!" When Vettori hammered on Moreschini's door, where the terrified monk took shelter, the rector called out, "maestro Giuliano, I won't open to you." Vettori threw back a telling phrase, "I'm not maestro Giuliano, I'm Giuliano Vettori, vassal of his Serene Highness!" The *commissario* was away at the time, but informed of the incident the very next day he took measures to prosecute the delinquents.¹⁸⁶

With the war's end in the winter of 1644, Ferdinando II disbanded his army. It occasioned debts that he would have to manage with heavier taxes and so he sought new sources of income that tapped the revenue of privileged entities. Tuscany levied more taxes on the church than most other Italian states, principally *gabelles* (value-added taxes) assessed at lower levels with respect to laymen. Under Cosimo III (who reigned from 1670 to 1723), often stigmatized as a prince too docile to papal policies, the Tuscan church paid more than ever to the granducal treasury.¹⁸⁷ Florence auctioned off the first state monopoly on tobacco to tax farmers in 1645, along with other new taxes that subjects of the *marchese* were required to pay. The Sienese magistracies governing orphans, the Salt Tax, the Customs Bureau, and the other *gabelles*, all possessed jurisdiction in Montefollonico.¹⁸⁸ It was the site of one of the customs points of the Sienese state, though the village *camerlengo* or the *gabellaio* probably collected the money from merchants and transporters with their pack-animals.¹⁸⁹ Other taxes struck poor households. Ferdinando II imposed an *estimo* on grain and wine production in the Sienese state in 1668, and Cosimo levied a new tax on flour mills in 1678.¹⁹⁰ Florence made communities collectively responsible for their taxes, because there was no way the state could verify with precision the revenues of individual households.¹⁹¹ Granducal decrees periodically increased the salt *gabelles*.¹⁹² Yet the absence of a long war spared the Medici the pain of overhauling the way they collected taxes.

When Prince Mattias died in 1667, Florence saw no need to dispatch another governor to oversee the Sienese *Consulta*. Cosimo III dispatched Florentine senator Bartolomeo Gherardini, a respected *auditore*, on a fact-finding mission throughout the state and each of the fiefs to collect information on the workings of the public administration. Cosimo conferred on Gherardini the task of examining the statutes and mechanisms of all 127 communities in the *contado*, to study the conflicts between communities and to examine any litigation between communities and individuals in them. He paid careful attention to the workings of justice, its accessibility, and its efficiency in the hinterland. Finally, in 1681, he drew up a list of recommendations to improve the general efficiency of the Sienese administration.¹⁹³

The microreforms that ensued replaced the benign feudalism in Montefollonico with a benign absolutism, careful to balance the interests of Florentine nobles, Sienese nobles, and commoners.¹⁹⁴ The secular stability of the granducal state, as Waquet reminds us, was not synonymous with immobility. Tuscany was well-run by the standards of the time. At the top, Ferdinando II and Cosimo III adopted more personal ruling styles, relayed increasingly by professional bureaucrats steeped in law, supplementing patrician committees jealous of their republican past. While none of the old institutions disappeared, the grand dukes became the pivot around which the administrative system turned. What could be more logical than the decision by Cosimo III, in 1685, to withdraw the right of appeal in fiefs from feudal judges and to place it instead in granducal hands? The instructions of feudal magistrates in the Sienese state were henceforth subject to revision by the *Auditore fiscale* in the *Consulta*. This gave the *marchese's* subjects permission to petition the grand duke *paterfamilias* directly for benefits of all kinds. This measure reaffirmed that the Medici prince was the ultimate sovereign of all the fiefs.¹⁹⁵ The *marchese* Francesco Coppoli died in 1670. His subjects never ceased being loyal to the Medici dukes, and they returned gradually to the larger polity.

Conclusion

Imagine again that from some celestial perch we could watch the actions and reactions of our descendants. What would we see? They will probably possess machines of stupefying power and rapidity and listen to outlandish music. Their moral circle might embrace animals, to make vegetarians of us all. But once the novelty wears off, we might recognize the same human universals that we see around us in the developed world today, as well as in baroque Tuscany or any other historical time and place one might choose. Instead of imagining change as a linear march toward a new dawn, we should instead imagine it as a metamorphosis, wherein we retain our nature even as we change. Culture does not liberate us from our animal status, for even animals have cultures. The birds, whales, and chimpanzees who adopt new songs, tools, or manners of communicating do not cease to be animals, with a nature of their own.¹⁹⁶ If one could pardon my paraphrasing the Italian idealist philosopher Benedetto Croce—who argued that all History is Contemporary History, in that it draws its pertinence from the need we have today to understand the processes in the past—I would venture here that all history is Universal History, part of the larger project of unifying the social sciences to determine the nature of *homo sapiens*.

Steven Pinker itemizes some of these human universals in his refutation of the ineluctability of a Utopian future that so many people equate with invention and change. People will still identify first and foremost with their families and seek to bestow special advantages on their kin to the best of their ability. Economic life will continue to revolve around reciprocity or exchange, more than on communal sharing. We will recognize distinct inequalities of power and wealth among individuals and families, though the range of inequality will certainly vary from one place to another. Individual and collective outbursts of violence will still occur, for the same reasons as today, even though its frequency and its ferocity will vary greatly from one part of the world to another. Individual people will still think and react as we do, in gendered roles, and display a similar enormous range of talents and handicaps. Religion will still be around, as will superstition, for people will still all die. For these are the permanent features of the human animal.

Our ancestors resembled us so much in their psychic makeup and their social predicaments, that it is entirely legitimate to seek to empathize with them. I hesitate to make the same claim for our descendants, however, for the rapidity with which we are acquiring genetic knowledge signifies that we may soon be capable of devising alterations of gene complexes. Edward O. Wilson, writing in the 1970s, assumed that this capability was still far away. But now, in the new millennium, we are approaching the moment when we might at last be able to engineer a new humanity.

Notes

Introduction

1. The proverbs in this book, whose origins are never documented, are all extracted from *Cultura contadina in Toscana: Il lavoro dell'uomo* (Florence: 1982).
2. Frans de Waal, *Chimpanzee politics and Peacemaking among primates* (Cambridge MA: 1989).
3. Two descriptions, almost a century apart, underline the unchanging features of the village. Archivio di Stato di Siena (hereafter ASS), Ms D 82, Visita Gherardini (1676), ff. 153–65; and Ms D 70, *Le memorie storiche, politiche, civili e naturali delle città, terre e castelle che sono, o sono state suddite della Città di Siena; Raccolte dal Cav. Giovanni Antonio Pecci, Patrizio Senese*, parte quarta, pp. 391ff (after 1758).
4. Jacques Revel, “Les sciences historiques,” *Epistémologie des sciences sociales*, Jean-Michel Berthelot, ed. (Paris: 2001), pp. 21–76; and Robert Franck, “Histoire et structure,” *ibid.*, pp. 317–56.
5. Stephen K. Sanderson, *The evolution of human sociality: A Darwinian conflict perspective* (Lanham MD and Oxford: 2001), p. 30.
6. Adam Kuper, *Culture: The anthropologist's account* (Cambridge MA: 1999), pp. xi–xiv.
7. Gisli Pálsson, “Introduction,” *Beyond Boundaries: Understanding, translation and anthropological discourse*, G. Pálsson, ed. (Oxford: 1992), pp. 1–40, 31; see also Martyn Hammersley, *What's wrong with ethnography?* (London: 1992).
8. Raymond Boudon, *Le juste et le vrai: Etudes sur l'objectivité des valeurs et de la connaissance* (Paris: 1995), pp. 17–28, 265.
9. Raymond Boudon, “Action,” *Traité de sociologie*, R. Boudon, ed. (Paris: 1992), pp. 16–18, 34–44; see also Sanderson, *The evolution of human sociality*, pp. 100–107; Robert H. Frank, *Passions within reason: The strategic role of the emotions* (New York and London: 1988).
10. David Hackett Fischer, *Historians' Fallacies: Toward a logic of historical thought* (New York: 1970), pp. 204–5.
11. Jeffrey Weeks, *Against Nature: Essays on history, sexuality and identity* (London: 1991), p. 86.
12. Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the emotions in Man and animals* (New York: 1899), pp. 15–17.

13. Anthony Walsh, *Biosociology: An emerging paradigm* (Westport CT and London: 1995), p. 20.
14. Frank, *Passions within reason*, pp. 4–20.
15. Brown, *Human universals*, pp. 94–107; Sanderson, *The evolution of human sociality*, p. 124.
16. Walsh, *Biosociology*, pp. 1–4, 9.
17. Ian Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (Cambridge MA: 1999), p. 220.
18. Steven Pinker, *The blank slate. The modern denial of human nature* (New York: 2002), p. 40.
19. Donald E. Brown, *Human universals* (Philadelphia: 1991), in particular the final chapter on Universal People, pp. 131–50; a longer, updated list appears in Pinker, *The blank slate*, in appendix, pp. 435–39; see also R.A. Hinde, “A biologist looks at anthropology,” *Man*, N.S. vol. 26 (1991): 583–608.
20. Angelo Tartabini, *Una scimmia in tutti noi* (Milan: 2001), pp. 1–5.
21. Frans de Waal, “Introduction,” *Tree of origin: What primate behavior can tell us about human social evolution* (Cambridge MA: 2001), pp. 1–10; see also Jerome Kagan, *Three seductive ideas* (Cambridge MA: 1998), p. 191.
22. Frans de Waal, *Good natured: The origin of right and wrong in humans and other animals* (Cambridge MA: 1996); see also *Peacemaking among primates* (Cambridge MA: 1989).
23. Tartabini, *Una scimmia in tutti noi*, pp. 91–94.
24. Robert Frank, *Passions within reason: The strategic role of the emotions* (New York and London: 1988); see also Jean-Didier Vincent, *Biologie des passions* (Paris: 1986); Gustav Jahoda, *Psychology and anthropology: A psychological perspective* (London: 1982), p. 235.
25. Pinker, *How the mind works* (London and New York: 1997), pp. 182–88.
26. Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The modern denial of human nature* (London and New York: 2002).
27. *Ibid.*, p. 260.
28. Pinker, *How the mind works*, p. 186.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 30; see also Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, *Human ethology* (New York: 1989), p. 66; also, Brown, *Human Universals*, p. 84.
30. John Ziman, “No man is an island,” *Hermeneutic philosophy of science. Van Gogh’s eyes and God: Essays in honour of Patrick A. Heelan, S.J.* (Dordrecht: 2002), pp. 203–18.
31. Franck, “Histoire et structure,” *Epistémologie des sciences sociales*, p. 342.
32. For an important attempt to study a historical society in these terms, see Abel Alves, *Brutality and benevolence: Human ethology, culture and the birth of Mexico* (Westport CT: 1996).

1 Governance

1. For a glimpse of life in kin-hamlets and scattered houses, see Osvaldo Raggio, *Faide e parentele: Lo stato genovese visto dalla Fontanabuona* (Turin: 1990), p. 48.
2. On the universality of “tit-for-tat” reasoning, see Lyall Watson, *Dark Nature: A natural history of evil* (New York: 1995), p. 83.

3. For a good overview of the logic of reciprocity in primates and its relation to our own rules, see Frans de Waal, *Peacemaking among primates* (Cambridge MA: 1989), pp. 42–49; on the applicability of “tit for tat” strategies, see Robert Wright, *The Moral animal: Evolutionary psychology and everyday life* (New York: 1994), pp. 191–209, 256–57.
4. On the universality of these concepts of corporate entities and the responsibilities they carry, see Michel Verdon, *Contre la culture: Fondement d’une anthropologie sociale opérationnelle* (Paris: 1991), p. 204; and Donald Brown, *Human Universals* (Philadelphia: 1991), pp. 135–39.
5. ASS Statuti Montefollonico: The statutes of Montefollonico, dating from the fourteenth century, were last revised in 1560, shortly after the conquest of the Sienese state by the Medici and approved anew in 1604.
6. For the workings of village government, department by department, see Andrea Giorgi and Stefano Moscadelli, *L’Archivio comunale di Sinalunga: Inventario della sezione storica* (Siena: 1997).
7. Elena Fasano Guarini, “Camerlenghi ed esazione locale: Delle imposte nel Granducato di Toscana del ‘500–’600,” *La Fiscalite et ses implications sociales en Italie et en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Rome: 1980), pp. 29–49.
8. ACT 9, Libro delle memorie della comunità di Montefollonica; Giovanni Battista Magnoni was only a blacksmith, but served twice. In bad years, particularly, only men of no means would accept to serve, like Luca Barbieri in 1648, a sharecropper with many children, or Niccolo Biagi in 1650, who had already dilapidated his inheritance. In 1646, 1647, and 1649, all hard years for everyone, there is no mention of a camerlengo being elected at all, even though the priori were designated as usual.
9. Luca Mannori, *Il sovrano tutore: Pluralismo istituzionale e accentramento amministrativo nel principato dei Medici, sec. XVI–XVIII* (Milan: 1994), pp. 265–72; see also Fasano Guarini, “Camerlenghi ed esazione locali,” op. cit.; The Sienese magistrates did not often “break” the camerlengo to collect the money, and our village owed 735 lire in back taxes just to the Quattro Conservatori in 1640; see Lucia Bonelli-Conenna, “Crisi economica e demografica dello Stato senese agli inizi del XVII secolo,” *Contadini e proprietari nella Toscana moderna*, vol. 1 (Florence: 1979), pp. 495–533; and G. Pardi, “Entrate dello Stato senese nei secoli XVI e XVII,” *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, vol. 32 (1925): 151–62.
10. These mechanisms are described with finesse by Mannori, *Il sovrano tutore*, pp. 195–97.
11. Sandro De’Colli, “I Quattro Conservatori dello Stato Senese,” *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, vol. 22 n.s. (1963): 29–43; also Carla Zarrilli, “Quattro Conservatori,” *Leggi, Magistrature, Archivi: Repertorio di fonti normativi ed archivistiche per la storia delle giustizia criminale a Siena nel Settecento*, S. Adorni-Fineschi and C. Zarrilli, eds. (Milan: 1990), pp. 65–75.
12. This has left no other archive than a list of expenditures for a single orphan girl.
13. ACT 7, Libro di Consiglio, 1624; and ACT 9, Libro di Consiglio, fo. 191, 8 September 1652.
14. ACT 651 (Civil): 5 October 1666.

15. ACT 599 (Criminal): 10 January 1638.
16. For example, ACT 593 (Criminal): 22 March 1619; ACT 593 (Criminal): 25 June 1619.
17. ACT 602 (Criminal): 24 February 1643.
18. ACT 594 (Criminal): 18 February 1620.
19. ACT 594 (Criminal): 20 March 1621.
20. ACT 13, Libri del Camerlengo 1600–1698 (21 booklets).
21. ACT 13, Libri di Camerlengo.
22. For an overview of these practices, Marco Bicchierai, *Beni comuni e usi civici nella Toscana tardo medioevale: Materiali per una ricerca* (Venice: 1994), pp. 25–31.
23. ACT 631 (Civil): 27 September 1635.
24. ACT 629 (Civil): 17 July 1635.
25. ACT 593 (Criminal): 30 April 1619.
26. ACT 630 (Civil): 29 October 1637.
27. ACT 630 (Civil): 16 and 17 December 1637.
28. ACT 638 (Civil): 17 March 1647, and ACT 641 (Civil): 28 October 1648.
29. ACT 645 (Civil): 25 February and 9 September 1655.
30. ACT 7, Libro di Consiglio, f. 143, 26 September 1621.
31. ACT 648 (Civil): 18 July 1661; Domenico Crocchi and Annibale Bai were denounced for not having enough bread for everyone; on 26 September, they were charged with selling it for 16 pence (denari) a pound instead of the regulatory 14 pence.
32. ACT 640 (Criminal): 14 June 1648.
33. ACT 605 (Criminal): 27 January 1649.
34. ACT 638 Civile, 20 May 1647.
35. ACT 630 (Civil): 18 September 1637 and 7 February 1638.
36. ACT 599 (Criminal): 9 February 1637: The wife of a notable, Maria Nannini was convicted of selling salt pork at 2 *crazie* a pound (58 denari, or just under 3 soldi) to individuals from her home. Although she was guilty, the *marchese* pardoned her after she addressed him a petition.
37. ACT 608 (Criminal): 4 September 1655.
38. ASS Ms D82, Visita Gherardini (1676), ff. 153–65.
39. ACT 614 (Civil): 24 February 1619. Similar issues were often the object of litigation: for example, ACT 631 Civile, 23 and 27 April 1636; also ACT 629 Civile, 31 July 1635.
40. ACT 8 Libro delle Memorie, 1 March 1618. Seventy households cast beans in this election, which roughly equals the dimension of the parish.
41. Ildebrando Imberciadori, “Spedale, scuola e chiesa in popolazioni rurali dei secoli XVI–XVII,” *Economia e Storia*, vol. 3 (1959): 423–49.
42. Christopher Black, “Confraternities and the parish in the context of Italian Catholic Reform,” *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France and Spain*, JP Donnelly and MW Maher, eds. (Kirksville MO: 1999), pp. 1–26; see also Ronald F.E. Weissman, “From brotherhood to congregation: Confraternal ritual between Renaissance and Catholic Reformation,” *Riti e rituali nelle società medievali* (Spoleto: 1994), pp. 77–94.
43. ASS Ms D 82, Visita Gherardini.

44. Angelo Torre, "Il consumo di devozioni: Rituali e potere nelle campagne piemontesi nella primà meta del Settecento," *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 20 (1985): 181–223.
45. ACT 599 (Criminal): 7 February 1638.
46. ACT 9, *Libro di Consiglio della Comunità di Montefollonico*, 8 December 1630.
47. ACT 9, fo. 148v.
48. ACT 8, *Libro delle Memorie della comunità di Montefollonico*, f. 243v.
49. Mario Ascheri, "Gli statuti di Siena e la distrettualizzazione giudiziaria dello stato," *Leggi, Magistrature, Archivi: Repertorio di fonti normativi ed archivistiche per la storia della giustizia criminale a Siena nel Settecento*, Sonia Adorni Fineschi and Carla Zarrilli, eds. (Milan: 1990), pp. 9–31.
50. Arnaldo d'Addario, "I 'Capitoli della militia' e la formazione di un ceto di privilegiati alla periferia del principato mediceo fra XVI e XVII secolo," *Studi in onore di Leopoldo Sandri*, vol. 2 (Rome: 1983), pp. 347–80.
51. ACT 596 (Criminal): 24 December 1626.
52. ASS Ms D 82, Visita Gherardini; ACT 607, 20 June 1652; Pietro di Agnolo, attended musters from Palazzo Massaini.
53. ACT 594 (Criminal): 7 October 1620.
54. ACT 594 (Criminal): 13 February 1622.
55. ACT 596 (Criminal): 11 February 1627.
56. ACT 614 (Civil): 14 February 1619, Pietro Crocchi tried to delay repayment of a three-year debt.
57. ACT 602 (Criminal): 13 August 1642.
58. These ranks do not imply that their holders had somehow become true soldiers, for this was at best a part-time function, usually untested in war. One author who takes this appellation too literally is Giovanna Benadusi, "Rethinking the state: family strategies in early modern Italy," *Social History*, 20 (1995): 157–78.
59. Maria-Assunta Ceppari Ridolfi, S. Massia, Patrizia Turrini, "I 'Riseduti' della città di Siena in età Medicea (1557–1737)," *Libro di Leoni* (Siena: 1996), pp. 505–28; see also Oscar Di Simplicio, "Nobili e sudditi," *ibid.*, pp. 70–129.
60. On the power of village nobles with the growing anarchy of the Sienese aristocratic republic, see Judith Hook, *Siena and the Renaissance State*, *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, 1980, pp. 107–22.
61. Fabio Bertini, *Feudalità e servizio del Principe nella Toscana del '500: Federigo Barbolani da Montauto, governatore di Siena* (Siena: 1996), p. 288.
62. ACT 622 (Civil): 14 and 28 April 1627 and 26 June 1627.
63. Ceppari Ridolfi, Massai, Turrini, "I 'Riseduti' della città di Siena," *Libro di Leoni*, pp. 505–28.
64. For a global vision, Robert Wright, *Nonzero: The logic of human destiny* (New York: 2000); for a single example, Abel Alves, *Brutality and benevolence: Human ethology, culture and the birth of Mexico* (Westport CT: 1996).
65. Frans de Waal, *Chimpanzee Politics: Power and sex among apes* (New York: 1982) and by the same author, *Good Natured: The origin of right and wrong in humans and other animals* (Cambridge MA: 1996), pp. 92–99; for human societies alone, see Michael Argyle, *The Social psychology of everyday life* (London: 1992), pp. 194–201.

66. Stephen Epstein, "The peasantries of Italy, 1350–1750," *The peasantries of Europe from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries*, T. Scott, ed. (London: 1998), pp. 75–110, loc. cit. pp. 79–80.
67. Epstein, "The peasantries of Italy, 1350–1750," op cit.
68. Ildebrando Coccia, "Concessioni feudali medicee," *Rivista Araldica*, vol. 60 (1962): 121–30, 240–45, 297–303; Serena Burgalassi, "I feudi nello Stato senese," *I Medici e lo stato senese, 1555–1609: Storia e territorio*, L. Rombai, ed. (Roma: 1980), pp. 63–74; Irene Polverini Fosi, "Un programma di politica economica: Le infeudazioni nel Senese durante il principato mediceo," *Critica Storica*, vol. (1976): 660–72.
69. Irene Polverini Fosi, "Feudi e nobiltà: I possessi feudali dei Salviati nel Senese, sec. XVII–XVIII," *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, vol. 15 (1975): 239–74.
70. Franco Angiolini, "Dai segretari alle "segretarie": uomini ed apparati di governo nella Toscana medicea," *Società e Storia*, vol. 58 (1992): 701–20.
71. Piero Tiraboschi, "Una visita dei Granduchi di Toscana a Montepulciano: 2–14 ottobre 1612," in Spinello Benci, *Storia di Montepulciano* (Verona: 1968), pp. 311–15.
72. A complete list of knights of Santo Stefano, with their dates of admission and their city of origin can be found in Gino Guarnieri, *L'Ordine di S. Stefano nei suoi aspetti organizzativi interni sotto il gran magistero Mediceo*, 4 vols., vol. 4 (Pisa: 1966).
73. Gregory Hanlon, *The Twilight of a military tradition: Italian aristocrats and European conflicts, 1560–1800* (London and New York: 1998), pp. 235, 244.
74. Luigi Bonazzi, *Storia di Perugia, dalle Origini al 1860* (Città di Castello: 1960, first published in 1879), pp. 191–207, 267; on the background of the Coppoli, Erminia Irace, *La nobiltà bifronte: Identità e coscienza aristocratica a Perugia tra XVI e XVII secolo* (Milan: 1995), p. 83.
75. ASPg, *ibid.*; on the structure of the Medicean court in Florence, Marcello Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca: Forme e simboli del potere mediceo fra Cinque e Seicento* (Rome: 1994); and Hélène Chauvineau, "Ce que nommer veut dire: les titres et les charges de cour dans la Toscane des Médicis, 1540–1650," *Revue Historique*, vol. 304 (2002): 31–49.
76. Archivio di Stato di Perugia (hereafter ASPg), Famiglie perugine 40; Coppoli; f. 7.
77. ASPg, Famiglie perugine 38; Coppoli, f. 25.
78. Fantoni, *La Corte del Granduca*, pp. 108–11.
79. ASPg Famiglie Perugine; Coppoli, busta 5: Registro di memorie e istrumenti, Patente 14 October 1651; on the relation between declared and real revenues, Jean-Claude Waquet, *Le Grand-duché de Toscane sous les derniers Médicis* (Rome: 1990), pp. 250–67.
80. Lucia Bonelli-Conenna, *Il contado senese alla fine del XVII secolo: Poderi, rendite e proprietari* (Siena: 1990), p. 189.
81. Oscar Di Simplicio, "Sulla 'nobiltà povera' a Siena nel Seicento," *Bullettino senese di Storia Patria*, vol. 88 (1981): 71–94.
82. ACT 8, Libro delle Memorie della comunità di Montefollonico, ff. 82–88; this document was confirmed by new decree of 7 February 1623, Archivio di Stato di Firenze (hereafter ASF), Auditore delle Reformagioni 211.

83. Irene Polverini Fosi, "Proprietà cittadina e privilegio signorili nel contado senese," *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, 1980, pp. 158–66.
84. On feudal justice in a small fief not far away in Papal Latium, see Marina D'Amelia, *Orgoglio baronale e giustizia: Castel Viscardo alla fine del Cinquecento* (Rome: 1996).
85. This is confirmed by a surviving printed subpoena issued in 1636, wherein the term Capitano di giustizia was simply stroked out, and the title of the marchese and his court penned overtop; ACT 632 (Civil): loose sheet.
86. ASS Manoscritto D82 Visita Gherardini (1676), ff. 153–65; Terra di Monte Follonica.
87. Giovanni Accarigi came from an old noble house that produced knights of Malta and university professors in Parma. Antonio Marzocchi belonged to a judicial family only recently ennobled. Giuseppe Pinocci also belonged to the Siense nobility, though I have no information on his house. See in the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena (hereafter BCIS) B. V. 25, mss., *Compendio Istorico di Sanesi Nobili* (1695) by the abate Sestigiare, and a contemporary published work by Giovanni Battista Bartali, *Diario Sanese* (Siena: 1699), appendix on noble families; an example of their intervention, ACT 596 (Criminal): 1 January 1626, between Francesco Misari and Jacomo Crocchi.
88. It is possible to make a rough estimate of the amounts from the lists of sentences, where we have them. In 1621, 1633, and 1638 the fines owed to the tribunal after the *marchese* accorded his mitigation amounted to 221, 375 and 545 lire respectively. Additional *danno dato* fines amounted to 148 lire in 1625, but these diminished considerably later. See ACT 594, 597, and 599 (Criminal) respectively, for the criminal sentences; ACT 620 (Civil) for *danno dato* fines.
89. ADP 953 Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 7 June 1647.
90. It has been written that feudatories did not respect the contracts of investiture, but it is not clear what evidence there is for the claim: Irene Polverini Fosi, "Un programma di politica economica: le infeudazioni del Senese," *Critica Storica*, vol. 13 (1976): 76–88.
91. ACT 596 (Criminal): 16 November 1625.
92. ACT 596 (Criminal): 30 December 1625.
93. ACT 600 (Criminal): 25 February 1638; ACT 640 (Criminal): 7 and 22 May 1650.
94. Ubaldo Morandi, "I giudicenti dell'Antico stato senese," *Quaderni della Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, vol. 17 (1962): 5–78.
95. ACT 614 (Civil): 24 March 1619.
96. ASS: Stato, Statuti dello stato no. 76 Montefollonico, fo. 16.
97. The examples are many. For example, ACT 621, 17 February 1625.
98. ACT 8, Libro delle Memorie della comunità di Montefollonico, 18 June 1620; For similar judicial structures operating in southern Italy, see Tommaso Astarita, *Village justice: Community, family and popular culture in early modern Italy* (Baltimore: 1999), p. 54.
99. ACT 598 (Criminal): 26 May 1636 and ACT 600 (Criminal): 3 April 1637.
100. ACT 594 (Criminal): 22 December 1621 and 5 January 1622.

101. ACT 609 (Criminal): 21 September 1655 and ACT 611 (Criminal): 23 September 1664.
102. ACT 609 (Criminal): 12 January 1656.
103. There are a number of examples of their forays into our jurisdiction: ACT 598 (Criminal): 26 May 1636; ACT 600, 3 April 1637; ACT 604, 27 August 1645; ACT 640, 7 May 1650; ACT 609, 21 September 1655; ACT 609, 28 March 1656.
104. ACT 605 (Criminal): 14 November 1648.
105. For example, ACT 597 (Criminal): 28 November 1633.
106. For Anacleto Barbieri's lawsuit against *marchese* Coppoli, claiming damages, ACT 160 Libro dei contratti, p. 33, 29 March 1631.
107. On active shoemaking, ACT 604 (Criminal): 10 September 1646; ACT 617 (Civil): 5 November 1624.
108. ACT 596 (Criminal): 13 August 1628
109. ACT 631 (Civil): 1 September 1635; ACT 636, 26 June and 22 November 1644; ACT 637, 13 September 1647.
110. ACT 603 (Criminal): 26 February 1644 and ACT 604 (Criminal): 20 August 1645.
111. ADPienza 1685, Battesimi San Leonardo.
112. For example, ACT 631 (Civil): 31 March 1636.
113. Fulvio Carpellini remarried with Portia Barbieri on 7 April 1651, within two years of his father's death, ADP 1684, Matrimoni a San Leonardo.
114. ACT 647 (Civil): September 1658, first reference to Signore Lorenzo Barbieri, both camerlengo and *depositario* of the *marchese*.
115. ACT 7, Libro della comunità di Montefollonico, fo. 127, 29 May 1619 and fo. 176, 29 June 1676.
116. ACT 644 (Civil): 11 October 1651.
117. On this universal tendency, see Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Human family systems: An evolutionary view* (Westport CT: 1979), pp. 208–9.
118. Cecilia Nubola, "Supplications between politics and justice: the northern and central Italian states in the early modern age," *International review of social history*: Supplement vol. 9, no. 46 (2001): 35–56; for the universal pertinence of the metaphor, see Steven Pinker, *The Blank Slate: The modern denial of human nature* (London: 2002), p. 247.
119. ACT 604 (Criminal): 10 September 1646; ACT 640 (Criminal): 23 September and 27 March 1648.
120. ACT 602 (Criminal): 1 February 1643.
121. ACT 638 (Civil): Bandi, f. 147, 13 October 1646.
122. ACT 630 (Civil): f. 12, 20 September 1637; ACT 601, 28 December 1640 and ACT 607 (Criminal): 1 February 1653.
123. ASS Ms D 82: Visita Gherardini, ff. 153–65.
124. ACT 598 (Criminal): 25 August 1636.
125. ACT 596 (Criminal): 4 January 1626.
126. ADP 426 Processetti matrimoniali, 28 September 1662.
127. ACT 622 (Civil): 26 January and 3 February 1627.
128. Tartabini, *Una scimmia in tutti noi*, pp. 97–107.

129. Maria Teresa Bobbioni, "Conflittualità e amministrazione della giustizia in un feudo padano tra la fine del '500 e il primo trentennio del '600," *Persistenze feudali e autonomie comunitative in stati padani fra Cinque e Settecento*, G. Tocci, ed. (Bologna: 1988), pp. 151–66; Angela Maria Girelli, "Il problema della feudalità nel Lazio tra XVII e XVIII secolo," *Studi Storici Luigi Simeoni*, vol. 36 (1986): 109–31; D'Amelia, *Orgoglio baronale e giustizia*, pp. 93–103; Morandi, "I giudicanti dell'Antico stato senese," loc. cit. 30–34.
130. ACT 629 (Civil): 8 July 1635.
131. ACT 598 (Criminal): 12 December 1635 and 11 January 1636; ACT 595 (Criminal): 5 July 1624 and 21 August 1624.
132. ADP 536 Carteggio di cura S. Bartolomeo, Letter from Rev. Giovanni Battista Barbieri, 22 May 1659.
133. ADP 955 Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 25 June 1652.
134. Giorgio Doria, *Uomini e terre di un borgo collinare* (Milan: 1968), p. 278.
135. Caroline Castiglione, "Political culture in seventeenth-century Italian villages," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, vol. 31 (2001): 523–52; she carries this further in "Adversarial Literacy: How peasant politics influenced noble governing of the Roman countryside during the early modern period," *American Historical Review*, vol. 109 (2004): 783.
136. For example, ASS Capitano di Giustizia di Siena 666, Partecipazioni, 23 August 1667, for abuses committed by the brother-in-law of the marchese in the fief of Fighine.
137. ASPg, Fondo Famiglie Perugine, Archivio Coppoli, busta 5; Registro di memorie e istrumenti. Supplica 16 August 1658.

2 Cooperation

1. Donald Brown, *Human Universals* (Philadelphia: 1991), p. 107.
2. Gerold Mikula, "Justice and fairness in interpersonal relations: Thoughts and suggestions," *The Social dimension: European developments in social psychology*, H. Tajfel, ed. (Cambridge: 1984), pp. 204–27.
3. Information on sharecroppers is not concentrated in one kind of document. Judicial documents often situated witnesses and litigants by name and podere, but not in any systematic way. Priests recording baptisms and burials connected names with poderi in a similar haphazard fashion. Information on the Malacarne comes from the states of souls of the parish of San Valentino, ADP 2115.
4. Vito Caiati, "The peasant household under Tuscan mezzadria: A socio-economic analysis of some Siense mezzadri households, 1591–1640," *Journal of Family History*, vol. 9 (1984): 111–26.
5. ACT 597 (Criminal): 22 September 1633.
6. Ronald F.E. Weissman, "From brotherhood to congregation: Confraternal ritual between Renaissance and Catholic Reformation," *Riti e rituali nelle società medievali* (Spoleto: 1994), pp. 77–94, loc. cit. p. 86.

7. For the use of kin terminology to justify social solidarity, see van den Berghe, *Human family systems: An evolutionary view* (Westport CT: 1979), pp. 208–9; for an idea how it might have evolved, see W.C. McGrew, *Chimpanzee material culture: Implications for human evolution* (Cambridge: 1992), p. 114.
8. Jerome Kagan, *Three seductive ideas* (Cambridge MA: 1998), pp. 153–60.
9. Robert Trivers, *Social Evolution* (Menlo Park CA: 1985), pp. 361–62.
10. Pinker, *How the mind works*, pp. 403–5.
11. ACT 629 (Civil): 8 August 1635.
12. ACT 599 (Criminal): 16 December 1637; ACT 602, 21 October 1643; ACT 611, 12 November 1664.
13. Bruce Winterhalder, “A marginal model of tolerated theft,” *Ethology and Sociobiology*, vol. 17 (1996): 37–53.
14. People often accused gypsies of petty thieving; one was Veronica Fei, bludgeoned by her neighbor, Niccolo Pilacci after she called him a gypsy companion, and a *furbaiccio ladro*: ACT 606 (Criminal): 16 March and 14 May 1650. For Anna di Santi, ACT 611 (Criminal): 10 October 1664. On the ethological principles underlying this behavior, see Frans de Waal, *Good Natured: The origin of right and wrong in humans and other animals* (Cambridge MA: 1996), p. 30.
15. ACT 607 (Criminal): 1 January 1652.
16. ACT 593 (Criminal): 30 April 1619; Orsina di Pollonio Bazzi vs Aurelia di *maestro* Pietro Biagi.
17. ACT 593 (Criminal): 18 January 1619; Stefano di Lorenzo miller, vs. Giuseppe di Rinaldo Barbieri.
18. ACT 594 (Criminal): 4 April 1623: In one example, *maestro* Ruggiero Branchini, brother-in-law of Anacleto Barbieri was ambushed by a few sword-wielding youths one night.
19. ACT 603 (Criminal): 3 January 1644: Local priests mounted attacks on ecclesiastical schoolteachers from outside on other occasions too, seeing the function as rightfully theirs. On the unifying function of mockery and persecution, see Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, *Human Ethology* (New York: 1989), p. 315.
20. ADP 952 Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 5 January 1644.
21. van den Berghe, *Human family systems*, pp. 209–20.
22. For a fascinating parallel in apes, who curry favor with high-status members of the group via their infants, Tartabini, *Una scimmia in tutti noi*, pp. 80–85.
23. ADP 2657: *Libro di ricordi di Pierantonio Faluschi, legnaiolo*.
24. Louis Haas, “Il mio buono compare: Choosing godparents and the uses of baptismal kinship in Renaissance Florence,” *Journal of social history*, vol. 29 (1995): 341–56.
25. Godparenting has not been studied much in a systematic nominative way, save by Gérard Delille, “Le projet Manduria. Notes pour une étude du pouvoir local aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles,” *Società, congiuntura e religiosità in Terra d’Otranto nel XVII secolo* (Galatina: 1990), pp. 155–70; for another village context of godparenting, see Tommaso Astarita, *Village justice: Community, family and popular culture in Early Modern Italy* (Baltimore: 1999), p. 131; for Renaissance Florence, Haas, “Il mio buono compare,” *Journal of social history*, vol. 29 (1995): 341–56.

26. All the godparenting information is provided in the baptismal register for the two pievi: ADP 2085, Libro de battezzati della pieve S. Valentino and ADP 1685–1687 Libro dei battezzati della pieve San Leonardo.
27. These relations were widespread in Italy, and endured until this century; see A.L. Maraschini, *The study of an Italian village* (Paris and The Hague: 1968), pp. 200–34.
28. ADP 1003 to 1111: *Cresimati di Montefollonico, 1625–1654*.
29. S.N. Eisenstadt and L. Roniger, *Patrons, clients and friends: Interpersonal relations and the structure of trust in society* (Cambridge: 1984), p. 15.
30. Gérard Delille, “Le système de transmission de prénoms en Italie du Sud aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles,” *L’Uomo, Società, Tradizione, Sviluppo*, vol. 7, no. 1–2 (1983): pp. 65–91; ACT 596 (Criminal): 13 August 1628.
31. Duccio Balestracci, *The Renaissance in the fields: Family memoirs of a fifteenth-century Tuscan peasant* (University Park PA: 1999; first published in 1984), p. 24.
32. Maurice Cusson, *Croissance et décroissance du crime* (Paris: 1990), p. 66.
33. ACT 593 (Criminal): 4 October 1619; also ACT 597 (Criminal): 14 May 1634.
34. Marco Cattini, *I contadini di San Felice: Metamorfosi di un mondo rurale nell’Emilia dell’età moderna* (Turin: 1984), pp. 241–47; Michael Argyle notes that people of all classes possess a range of speech styles they consciously adopt to seek approval from others; the polite speech style toward social superiors frequently appears in reports of conversation in judicial testimony; see Michael Argyle, *The Social psychology of everyday life* (London: 1992), pp. 25–26.
35. Marzio Barbagli, *Sotto lo stesso tetto: mutamenti della famiglia in Italia dal XV al XX secolo* (Bologna: 1984), pp. 297–307; on functions of polite address in Europe, Maria Sifianou, *Politeness phenomena in England and Greece* (Oxford: 1992), p. 83.
36. Criminal testimony sometimes evokes these conversations of women sitting before the hearth, “*ragionare di diverso particolari conforme al solito delle donne*”; ACT 597 (Criminal): 22 December 1637; the term also comes up in a conversation between two prosperous men sitting on the doorstep, “*ragioniamo i nostri guai*,” ACT 598 (Criminal): 10 May 1636. For similar scenes in Calabria, see Tommaso Astarita, *Village justice: Community, family and popular culture in early modern Italy* (Baltimore: 1999), p. 135.
37. ACT 630 (Criminal): 16 December 1637, loose page; and ACT 599 (Criminal): 16 December 1637 for one close pair.
38. ACT 640 (Criminal): 9 February 1648.
39. ACT 607 (Criminal): 13 January 1653.
40. ADP 949 Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 11 March 1625; and ADP 957 27 July 1660.
41. ACT 606 (Criminal): 25 May 1651.
42. David Gilmore, *Manhood in the making: Cultural concepts of masculinity* (New Haven: 1990), pp. 30–55.
43. One convenient place to find reports of conversations and matters that conversations dealt with are the short investigations to determine if someone was

- free to marry, compiled by the parish priest whenever someone married outside their community. These are found in the diocesan archives, ADP 420, 423, 424, 425, 426 Processetti.
44. ACT 601 (Criminal): 21 June 1639: Francesca d'Acchille Del Francia interpellated *maestro* Giovanni Battista Magnoni twice for public swearing (*cazzo, coglioni*) and asked a neighbor at the well to report it to his wife in order to make him stop it. When she reproached him for it in the presence of the *marchese*, he followed her home and hit her there.
 45. The martial posturing of rustics must have given rise to intense teasing. Incidents emerge from criminal procedures several times, for example, ACT 602 (Criminal): 20 September 1643; ACT 603 (Criminal): 26 February 1644, after Gregorio Del Francia aged 14 said of the recruits on the square "I think they're all rabble (*fagioli*).” On mock rudeness in male conversation, Argyle, *The social psychology of everyday life*, p. 25.
 46. On gossip in a positive light, Max Gluckman, "Gossip and scandal," *Current anthropology*, vol. 4 (1963): 307–16 and Chris Wickham, "Gossip and resistance among the medieval peasantry," *Past & Present*, vol. 160 (1998): 3–24; for another view, Wright, *The Moral animal*, pp. 207–9, 265–69.
 47. Lucia Carle, *La Patria locale: L'identità dei Montalcinesi dal XVI al XX secolo* (Venice: 1996), p. 127, for a nearby confirmation. Most of the inventories are conserved to support the claims of minors, or were compiled following a violent incident in which the culprit might be punished with confiscation of his goods. See ACT 617 and ACT 8.
 48. Paolo Malanima, *Il lusso dei contadini: Consumi e industrie nelle campagne toscane del Sei e Settecento* (Bologna: 1990), pp. 25–33.
 49. ACT 608 (Criminal): 9 February 1655.
 50. ACT 598 (Criminal): 26 December 1636. Francesco Penti, who owned it, was one of four brothers who managed a village forge.
 51. Marriage contracts for Montefollonico were usually drafted by the parish priest, not the notary. Hundreds of them figure in the single bundle, ADP 801 Scritti matrimoniali. These rarely specified the details of the bride's trousseau or donamento, an example of which is contained in the Carte di curia for San Leonardo. Lisabetta di Domenico Monaci took to her marriage to a well-off sharecropper a dozen shirts and 10 new dresses (*spalagrembi*), five bonnets of which two were colourful silk ones; ADP 534 Carteggio di Curia S. Leonardo, 22 February 1627. Testaments also enumerate the occasional treasures of peasant wives and daughters, though there is no single repository for them. Papers concerning the fief contain a few, ACT 8. For a comparison with the small town of Montalcino nearby, see Carle, *La patria locale*, pp. 127–39.
 52. Renata Ago, "Oltre la dote: I beni femminili," *Il lavoro delle donne*, A. Groppi, ed. (Bari: 1996), pp. 164–82, for Rome; Piergiovanni Mometto, "Vita quotidiana e cultura materiale. Uomini, ambiente e materia in una comunità rurale," *Dueville: Storia e identificazione di una comunità del passato*, C. Povoletto, ed. (Vicenza: 1980), pp. 665–729, p. 702, for a rural example in the Veneto.
 53. Similar peasant propensity for luxury display in the fifteenth century is noted in the book by Maria Serena Mazzi and Sergio Raveggi, *Gli uomini e le cose nelle*

- campagne fiorentine del Quattrocento* (Florence: 1983), pp. 20, 230; for the universality of this behavior, see Steven Pinker, *How the mind works* (London and New York: 1997), pp. 499–502.
54. Giancarlo Baronti, *Coltelli d'Italia: Rituali di violenza e tradizioni produttive nel mondo popolare* (Padua: 1986), p. 9.
 55. ACT 603 (Criminal): 1 January 1644.
 56. ACT 598 (Criminal): 31 December 1636; ACT 601 (Criminal): 4 March 1640; ACT 603 (Criminal): 1 January 1644; ACT 611 (Criminal): 28 January 1663; ADP 953 (Vicario criminale): 16 October 1641; on the frequency of these games as a pretext of violence, see Ottavia Niccoli, *Il seme della violenza: Putti, fanciulli e mammoli nell'Italia tra '500 e '600* (Bari: 1995), p. 153.
 57. Argyle, *The social psychology of everyday life*, p. 103.
 58. Banquets appear only occasionally, ACT 596 (Criminal): 31 December 1625; ACT 598 (Criminal): 11 January 1636; the first reference to tobacco is ADP 955 (Vicario criminale): 9 January 1657.
 59. ACT 607 (Criminal): 3 August 1654.
 60. ACT 594 (Criminal): 3 October 1621; ACT 594 (Criminal): 9 February 1622; magistrates often assumed that people out at that hour could be up to no good. See Luigi Lacchè, "Loca occulta. Dimensioni notturne e legittima difesa: per un paradigma del diritto di punire," *La Notte: Ordine, sicurezza e disciplinamento in età moderna*, M. Sbriccoli, ed. (Florence: 1991), pp. 127–40.
 61. ACT 607 (Criminal): 17 November 1651; ACT 608 (Criminal): 9 February 1655.
 62. ACT 608 (Criminal): 9 February 1655.
 63. On the political function of confraternal leadership, see Angelo Torre, "Politics cloaked in worship: State, Church and local power in Piedmont, 1570–1770," *Past & Present*, vol. 134 (1992): 43–92, loc. cit. p. 50; and also by Torre, "Il consumo di devozioni: Rituali e potere nelle campagne piemontesi nella prima metà del Settecento," *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 20 (1985): 181–223.
 64. Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, clients and friends*, p. 15.
 65. ADP 951 (Vicario criminale): 6 August 1635.
 66. ACT 609 (Criminal): 20 April 1656; on these kinds of relations in the anthropological literature, Gustav Jahoda, *Psychology and Anthropology: A psychological perspective* (London: 1982), pp. 156–57.
 67. ACT 607 (Criminal): 10 February 1653.
 68. Eisenstadt and Roniger, *Patrons, clients and friends*, p. 213.
 69. A half-dozen of these are contained in ADP 534, Carteggio di cura San Leonardo, between 1607 and 1630.
 70. Duccio Balestracci, *The Renaissance in the fields: Family memoirs of a fifteenth-century Tuscan peasant* (University Park PA: 1999), p. 6; some local account books kept in several hands, ADP 2657: Libro di ricordi di maestro PierAntonio di Matteo Faluschi, woodworker (1614–1628) and ADP 2655: Libro di memorie e ricordi di Girolamo e Santi Maccari (1604–1695).
 71. On the importance of gossip and pubblica fama in medieval Tuscany, see Wickham, "Gossip and Resistance," 3–24.

72. Wright, *The Moral animal*, pp. 263–86; example of confronting the rumour mill, ACT 607 (Criminal): 13 January 1653.
73. On credit and reputation in the Roman economy, see Renata Ago, *L'Economia barocca* (Rome: 1998), pp. 38, 59–60.
74. *Ibid.*, 103–8.
75. ACT 607 (Criminal): 13 January 1652.
76. Claudio Povolo, “Entre la force de l’honneur et le pouvoir de la justice: le délit de viol en Italie (XIVe–XIXe siècles),” *L’Infrajudiciaire du Moyen Age à l’époque contemporaine: Actes du Colloque de Dijon, 1995* (Dijon: 1996), pp. 155–64.
77. Carle, *La patria locale*, pp. 250–53; see also Jon Elster, *Local justice: How institutions allocate scarce goods and necessary burdens* (New York: 1992), p. 5.
78. On the manipulation of honor, the most engaging analysis is Elizabeth S. Cohen and Thomas V. Cohen, *Daily Life in Renaissance Italy* (Westport CT: 2001), pp. 90–100; on its underlying logic universally, Wright, *The Moral animal*, pp. 189–202.
79. Jan de Vries, “Economic growth before and after the Industrial Revolution: A modest proposal,” *Early Modern Capitalism: Economic and social change in Europe, 1400–1800* (New York and London: 2001), pp. 177–94; Philip Hoffman, *Growth in a traditional society: The French countryside, 1450–1815* (Princeton: 1996).
80. Two important works on peasant lives in village settings are Cattini, *I contadini di San Felice*, op. cit.; Giovanni Levi, *Inheriting power: The story of an exorcist* (Chicago: 1988, first published in 1985).
81. Stuart Woolf, *The poor in Western Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries* (London: 1986), p. 6.
82. ACT 11: Allirati, 1598, ff. 106–94.
83. For a comparable situation in Emilia, see Maria Teresa Bobbioni, “Aspetti del paesaggio agrario e della proprietà terriera nel ducato di Parma tra ‘500 e ‘600: San Secondo Parmense, 1564, 1598, 1607,” *Rivista di Storia dell’Agricoltura*, vol. 20 (1980): 107–24.
84. Desplanques, *Campagnes ombriennes; contribution à l’étude des paysages ruraux en Italie centrale* (Paris: 1969), p. 227.
85. Benci (S) *Storia di Montepulciano* (Verona, 1968, first published in 1646), p. 3; for their commerce in Umbria, Gabriele Metelli, “L’alimentazione del ceto nobile e delle classi meno abbienti a Foligno tra Cinque e Seicento,” *Alimentazione e nutrizione, secc. XIII–XVIII: Atti delle Settimane di Studi*, vol. 28: *Istituto di Storia Economica Francesco Datini di Prato*, S. Cavaciocchi, ed. (Florence: 1997), pp. 867–76.
86. Ildebrando Imberciadori, *Amiata e Maremma tra il IX e il XX secolo* (Parma: 1971), p. 289.
87. Desplanques, *Campagnes ombriennes*, p. 180.
88. *Ibid.*, p. 440.
89. Desplanques, *Campagnes ombriennes*, p. 334.
90. ASS Ms D82, *Visita Gherardini* (1676): ff. 153–65.
91. Lucia Bonelli-Conenna, *Il contado senese alla fine del XVII secolo: Poderi, rendite e proprietari* (Siena: 1990), p. 25; Bernardino Biagi’s family was one producer, ACT 606 (Criminal): 4 November 1650.

92. On hemp and flax, see Malanima, *Il lusso dei contadini*, p. 69.
93. Silvia Mantini, "Notte in città, notte in campagna tra Medioevo ed Età moderna," *La Notte: Ordine, sicurezza e disciplinamento in età moderna*, Mario Sbriccoli, ed. (Florence: 1991), pp. 30–45; see also Michael Talbot, "Ore italiane: The reckoning of the time of day in pre-Napoleonic Italy," *Italian Studies*, vol. 40 (1985): 51–62.
94. Annie Antoine, Jean-Michel Boehler, and Francis Brumont, *L'Agriculture en Europe occidentale à l'époque moderne* (Paris: 2000), p. 190.
95. Balestracci, *The Renaissance in the fields*, p. 85.
96. Gabriella Piccinni, "Le donne nella mezzadria toscana delle origini: Materiali per la definizione del ruolo femminile nelle campagne," *Ricerche Storiche*, vol. 15 (1985): 127–82.
97. ACT 594 (Criminal): 15 May 1622, testimony of Lisabetta, sister-in-law of Rocco di Paolo.
98. Mometto, "Vita quotidiana e cultura materiale," *Dueville: Storia e identificazione di una comunità del passato*, p. 687.
99. ACT 611 (Criminal): 30 October and 4 November 1662.
100. ACT 651 (Civil): 18 June 1667.
101. Malanima, *Il lusso dei contadini*, p. 59.
102. Francesco Battistini, *Gelsi, bozzoli e caldaie: L'industria della seta in Toscana tra città, borghi e campagne (secoli XVI–XVIII)* (Florence: 1998).
103. ACT 631 (Civil): December 1635.
104. The records of civil litigation bulge with references to such transactions, conducted on credit. See also ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 632: Andrea Moroni. A few acts from 1647 to 1648 depict several of these entrepreneurs; Bernardino Biagi, a mason's son and wartime sutler; Valentino Rubenni, the only peasant to own a *podere* of his own; Francesco Miseri, sometime butcher. Biagi's lease on 18 staia of polyculture land from the nuns of San Carlo in Pienza yielded the landlord only 42 lire annually. Rubenni's lease on the whole *podere* of Sant'Antimo provided the nuns with only 91 lire.
105. Luciano Pezzolo, "Elogio della rendita. Sul debito pubblico degli stati italiani nel Cinque e Seicento," *Rivista di Storia Economica*, vol. 12 (1995): 283–328.
106. ACT 595 (Criminal): 6 October 1623: Sharecroppers liked to collect all the fruit at once and apportion the landlord's share out of it. Small landowners often preferred to collect baskets at a time and to take them home, making accounting for quantities and portions more difficult. See, for example, Corintia Bai tussling with Francesco and Domenico Crocchi and their mother while picking the grapes from Corintia's vines.
107. Hoffman, *Growth in a traditional society*, pp. 65–71.
108. Giuliana Biagioli, "The spread of mezzadria in Central Italy: A model of demographic and economic development," *Evolution agraire et croissance démographique*, Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, ed. (Liege: 1987), pp. 139–54.
109. Balestracci, *The Renaissance in the fields*, p. 18.
110. Philip Hoffman, *Growth in a traditional society*, pp. 67–69. The French situation is quite similar to the Italian one; see also Desplanques, *Campagnes ombriennes*, pp. 178–83.

111. ACT 593 (Criminal): 24 December 1619.
112. Parish registers sometimes appended the owner's name after indicating specific *poderi*. Some tax lists of the *Imposta Universale* (after 1638) did so too, but none ever indicate the identity of all the landlords at one moment before the new tax imposed at century's end.
113. Emmanuel Todd, "Mobilité géographique et cycle de vie en Artois et en Toscane au XVIIIe siècle," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, vol. 30 (1975), pp. 726–44.
114. Gabriele Metelli and Luisiana Metelli, "Il retroterra del crimine," *Criminalità a Foligno nella seconda metà del XVI secolo: Quaderni monografici di "Proposte e ricerche"*, vol. 18 (1995): 29–49.
115. ACT 601 (Criminal): 10 October 1639.
116. Jean-Louis Gaulin and Francois Menant, "Credit rural et endettement paysan dans l'Italie communale," *Endettement paysan et crédit rural dans l'Europe médiévale et moderne*, M. Berthe, ed. (Toulouse: 1998), pp. 35–67.
117. ACT 622 (Civil): 19 November 1626–16 November 1627.
118. Mazzi and Raveggi, *Gli uomini e le cose nelle campagne fiorentine*, p. 104.
119. ACT 622 (Civil): 2 May 1627: on debt as an incitation to the buyer to continue his patronage to the seller, see Renata Ago, *L'Economia barocca*, pp. 59–60.
120. Giuseppe Parenti, *Prezzi e mercato del grano a Siena (1546–1765)* (Firenze 1942), pp. 160–61; Oscar Di Simplicio, "Due secoli di produzione agraria in una fattoria del Senese, 1550–1751," *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 7 (1972): 781–817.
121. ACT 614 (Civil): 2 November 1619.
122. Ildebrando Imberciadori, *Amiata e Maremma tra il IX e il XX secolo* (Parma: 1971), p. 79.
123. Romolo Camaiti, *Statistiche bancarie ed economiche al principio del XVII secolo* (Siena: 1969), p. 41.
124. ACT 626 (Civil): and ACT 638, 19 October 1646.
125. ACT 645 (Civil): 1 September 1655.
126. Epstein, "The peasantries of Italy, 1350–1750," *The peasantries of Europe from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries*.
127. I allude here to the work of James C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance* (New Haven: 1985): for him, all interclass tension is ultimately political. But intraclass tension is never explored.
128. ACT 594 (Criminal): 10 September 1622.
129. Desplanques, *Campagnes ombriennes*, p. 374.
130. ACT 20, Stracello di Stime.
131. Antoine, Boehler and Brumont, *L'Agriculture en Europe occidentale*, p. 190.
132. ACT 614 (Civil); Balestracci, *The Renaissance in the fields*, p. 81.
133. Imberciadori, *Amiata e Maremma tra il IX e il XX secolo*, p. 286.
134. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
135. ACT 614 (Civil): 22 February 1619.
136. ACT 598 (Criminal): 12 January 1636.
137. Jean-Marc Moriceau, *L'Elevage sous l'Ancien Régime, XVIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: 1999), p. 19.

138. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–15; The author studies stock-raising in Corsica and Provence, where conditions were similar to Central Italy.
139. ACT 596 (Criminal): 2 January 1637.
140. For livestock raising in Tuscany, see Danilo Barsanti, *Allevamento e transumanza in Toscana: pastori, bestiame e pascoli nei secoli XV–XIX* (Florence: 1987).
141. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
142. ACT 20; Stracello di Stime; ACT 641, 22 April and 24 May 1649.

3 Competition

1. Margaret Gruter, “An ethological perspective on law and biology,” *The sense of justice: Biological foundations of law*, R.D. Masters and M Gruter, eds. (London: 1992), pp. 95–105; also Frans de Waal, “The chimpanzee’s sense of social regularity and its relation to the human sense of justice,” *ibid.*, pp. 241–55.
2. Donald Brown, *Human Universals* (Philadelphia: 1991), pp. 131–41 on Universal People.
3. Raymond Boudon, *Le juste et le vrai: Etudes sur l’objectivité des valeurs et de la connaissance* (Paris: 1995), pp. 221–32.
4. Tartabini, *Una scimmia in tutti noi*, p. 52.
5. For an overview, Alfred Soman, “Deviance and criminal justice in Western Europe, 1300–1800: An essay in structure,” *Sorcellerie et justice criminelle: Le Parlement de Paris (XVIe–XVIIIe siècles)* (Hampshire UK: 1992), pp. 3–22.
6. Ubaldo Morandi, “I giudicanti dell’antico Stato senese,” *Quaderni della Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato*, vol. 17 (1962): 5–58.
7. Giorgio Doria, *Uomini e terre di un borgo collinare* (Milan: 1968), pp. 241ff.
8. Tommaso Astarita, *Village justice: Community, family and popular culture in Early modern Italy* (Baltimore: 1999), pp. xxi–xxii.
9. Luciano Allegra, *La città verticale: Usurai, mercanti e tessitori nella Chieri del Cinquecento* (Milan: 1987), pp. 208–19, 223.
10. Soman, “Deviance and criminal justice in Western Europe.”
11. Marjorie McIntosh, *Controlling misbehavior in England, 1370–1600* (Cambridge and New York: 1998), pp. 34–35.
12. ACT 620 (Civil): fo. 90–97, contains a list of 68 sentences for danno dato between March and October 1625, usually ranging from about 1 to 6 lire. Danno dato fines were once an important source of revenue, but quiet accommodation gradually reduced these to very little; see Morandi, “I giudicanti dell’antico Stato senese,” *op. cit.*, p. 18.
13. ACT 594 (Criminal): 12 May 1621.
14. ACT 641 (Civil): April and May 1649.
15. ACT 626 (Civil): 14 September 1632.
16. Bruce Winterhalder, “A marginal model of tolerated theft,” *Ethology and Sociobiology*, vol. 17 (1996): 37–53.

17. ACT 620 (Civil): 5 October 1623.
18. ACT 605 (Criminal): 4 December 1648.
19. ACT 626 (Civil): 9 July 1631; the marriage contracts for Montefollonico are all contained in a single archival bundle, ADP 801, Scritti matrimoniali. Paolo Finucci's contract is dated 3 September 1616.
20. ADP 953 Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 1 November 1641.
21. ACT 616 (Civil): 16 August 1622; ACT 594 (Criminal): 10 September 1622 and ACT 601 (Criminal): 6 March 1641.
22. ACT 622 (Civil) contains several instances of it in a few months: 19 November 1626, 17 February and 8 April 1627.
23. Renata Ago, *Economia barocca: Mercato e istituzioni nella Roma del Seicento* (Rome: 1998), pp. 38, 103–4.
24. On the mind's tendency to overrate our virtue, Steven Pinker, *The blank slate* (London and New York: 2002), pp. 265–73.
25. ADP 2657, Libro di ricordi di maestro Pierantonio di Matteo Faluschi, legnaiolo (1614–1628); and ADP 2655, Libro di memorie e ricordi di Girolamo e Santi Maccari (1604–1695).
26. Chris Wickham, "Gossip and resistance among the medieval peasantry," *Past & Present*, vol. 160 (1998): 3–24; centuries later, summary civil procedure obeyed similar precepts, see Simona Cerutti, "Giustizia e località a Torino in età moderna: Una ricerca in corso" *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 30 (1995): 445–86.
27. ADP 948, 950, 971 (Vicario criminale) contains a small collection of 15 monitori. Other similar documents appear in diocesan papers regarding marriages, ADP 365 Atti matrimoniali.
28. ACT Civile 614, 622, 631, 636, 645, 651.
29. The ability of women to litigate in their own name is also attested in Maria Biscardo, "La condizione della donna nel '600 e '700," *Dueville: Storia e identificazione di una comunità del passato*, vol. 1, C. Povolo, ed. (Vicenza: 1980), pp. 604–26.
30. ACT 622 (Civil): 7 August 1627.
31. ACT 614 (Civil): 10 August 1619; and ACT 616 (Civil): 20 November 1622.
32. ACT 651 (Civil): 23 May 1667.
33. Luciano Allegra, "Oltre le fonti criminali: Chieri nel '500," *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 17 (1982): 265–74.
34. ACT 645 (Civil): 7 April 1655.
35. Renata Ago, "Oltre la dote: I beni femminili," *Il lavoro delle donne*, A. Groppi, ed. (Bari: 1996), pp. 164–82.
36. ASS Concistoro 2662: Memorie di famiglie nobili, 1629; see also Ago, *L'Economia Barocca*, p. 72.
37. ACT 638 (Civil): 30 June 1647.
38. Soman, "Deviance and criminal justice in Western Europe," op. cit.
39. Mario Sbriccoli, "Fonti giudiziarie e fonti giuridiche. Riflessioni sulla fase attuale degli studi," *Studi Storici*, vol. 29 (1988): 451–501.
40. Edoardo Grendi, "Sulla storia criminale: risposta a Mario Sbriccoli," *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 25 (1990): 269–75.
41. For a development of this argument, see Maurice Cusson, *Croissance et décroissance du crime* (Paris: 1990), pp. 16–25; for its application to early modern

- Italy, see my survey article, "Violence and its control in the Late Renaissance: An Italian model," *A companion to the worlds of the Renaissance*, G. Ruggiero, ed. (Oxford: 2002), pp. 139–55.
42. ACT 597 (Criminal): 28 September 1633.
 43. ACT 611 (Criminal): 26 July 1666.
 44. Romani, "Criminalità e giustizia nel ducato di Mantova," op. cit., p. 611.
 45. Astarita, *Village justice*, op. cit., p. xviii.
 46. ACT 640 (Criminal): 29 September 1647.
 47. For example, ACT 594 (Criminal): 18 February 1621.
 48. John K. Brackett, *Criminal Justice and Crime in Late Renaissance Florence 1537–1609* (New York: 1992), p. 90.
 49. ACT 604 (Criminal): 10 September 1646.
 50. Steven Pinker, *How the mind works* (London and New York: 1997), pp. 412–13, explains the universal logic of revenge.
 51. ACT 605 (Criminal): 18 November 1648.
 52. Gabriella Santoncini, "La legislazione premiale dello stato fiorentino nei secoli XVI–XVIII," *Le politiche criminali nel XVIII secolo: "La Leopoldina": Criminalità e giustizia criminale nelle riforme del '700 europeo, vol. 11*, L. Berlinguer, ed. (Milan: 1990), pp. 3–42; on the elaboration of draconian procedures against banditry, Luigi Lacchè, *Latrocinium: Giustizia, scienza penale e repressione del banditismo in Antico Regime* (Milan: 1988).
 53. ACT 596 (Criminal): 24 December 1626; exhortation of Girolamo di Bernardino.
 54. ACT 603 (Criminal): 3 January 1644, testimony of 7 January.
 55. Already in the 1880s, French jurist A. Esmein described the Italian procedure in the age of Claro and Farinacci, *A history of continental criminal procedure* (Boston: 1913), pp. 288–94; instructions for humble village magistrates in this vein appeared in Tuscany beginning in the late sixteenth century. Giulio Nori's, *Criminalista, secondo* (Siena: 1581) and *Criminalista quarto* (Siena: 1583) was one. See also by a granducal secretary, Antonio Maria Cospi, *Il giudice criminalista* (Florence: 1643).
 56. Paolo Marchetti, *Testis contra se: L'imputato come fonte di prova nel processo penale dell'età moderna* (Milan: 1994), pp. 64–75.
 57. ACT 605 (Criminal): 23 January 1649.
 58. ACT 594 (Criminal): 24 May 1622; and ACT 600 (Criminal): 21 February 1638.
 59. Soman, "Deviance and criminal justice," op. cit.
 60. ACT Civile 626.
 61. Giorgia Alessi, *Processo per seduzione: Piacere e castigo nella Toscana Leopoldina* (Catania: 1988), p. 92.
 62. Mario Sbriccoli, "Nox quia nocet. I giuristi, l'ordine e la normalizzazione dell'immaginario," *La Notte: Ordine, sicurezza e disciplinamento in età moderna*, M. Sbriccoli, ed. (Florence: 1991), pp. 9–19; see also Luigi Lacchè, "Loca occulta. Dimensioni notturne e legittima difesa: per un paradigma del diritto di punire," *ibid.*, pp. 127–40.
 63. Ottavia Niccoli, *Il seme della violenza: Putti, fanciulli e mammoli nell'Italia tra '500 e '600* (Bari: 1995).

64. ACT 596 (Criminal): 26 September 1625.
65. ACT 604 (Criminal): 17 July 1646.
66. ACT 594 (Criminal): 24 November 1621 and ACT 607 (Criminal): 8 June 1653.
67. ACT 602 (Criminal): 21 October 1643 and ACT 599 (Criminal): 17 October 1637.
68. ADP 1704, *Status animarum S. Leonardo*; ADP 1680, *Status animarum S. Bartolomeo*.
69. ACT 604 (Criminal): 23 September 1647 and ACT 616 (Civil): 29 August 1622.
70. ACT 605 (Criminal): 4 December 1648.
71. Pinker, *The blank slate*, p. 345.
72. ACT 607 (Criminal): 13 January 1652 (1653); On the pertinence of this model of deviance, see Maurice Cusson, "Déviance," *Traité de Sociologie*, R. Boudon, ed. (Paris, 1992), pp. 389–422.
73. ACT 608 (Criminal): 24 September 1654.
74. ACT 595 (Criminal): 5 August 1623.
75. ACT ACT 640 (Criminal): 29 November 1647.
76. ACT 593 (Criminal): 21 November 1619 and ACT 594 (Criminal): 23 November 1620.
77. ACT 599 (Criminal): 22 October 1637.
78. ACT 598 (Criminal): 13 November 1635 and ACT 599 (Criminal): 28 November 1637.
79. ACT 611 (Criminal): 22 October 1662.
80. ACT 640 (Criminal): 9 February 1648.
81. Frans de Waal, *Peacemaking among primates* (Cambridge MA: 1989), p. 15; see also Pinker, *The blank slate*, pp. 314–26 for a more extended discussion.
82. ACT 594 (Criminal): 7 October 1622 and ACT 607 (Criminal): 1 January 1652.
83. ACT 611 (Criminal): 9 November 1664.
84. ACT 600 (Criminal): 23 February 1639.
85. ADP 951 Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 6 August 1635.
86. Luciano Allegra, "Oltre le fonti criminali," op. cit.
87. ACT 596 (Criminal): 24 December 1626; these menacing gestures and facial expressions are evoked in a number of cases: ACT 593, 21 November 1619; ACT 596, 28 July 1627; ACT 600, 30 November 1638; ACT 604, 2 October 1645; ACT 606, 3 December 1650; ACT 608, 27 January 1655.
88. On the universal emotions guiding vindictiveness, Pinker, *The blank slate*, p. 182.
89. On Mediterranean agonistic behavior, David D. Gilmore, *Manhood in the making: Cultural concepts of masculinity* (New Haven: 1990), pp. 30–55; Satoshi Kanazawa and Mary C. Still, "Why Men commit crimes (and why they desist)," *Sociological Theory*, vol. 18 (2000): 434–47.
90. Gregory Hanlon, "Les rituels de l'agression en Aquitaine au XVIIe siècle," *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, vol. 40 (1985): 244–68.
91. ACT 606 (Criminal): 3 October and 12 November 1650.
92. ACT 596 (Criminal): 15 August 1625 and 4 January 1626; ACT 593, 21 February 1634; ACT 600, 4 January 1639, 7 February, 19 February, and 23 February 1639; and ACT 607, 8 April 1654.

93. ACT 601 (Criminal): 24 August 1640.
94. Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, *Homicide* (New York: 1988), pp. 124–30.
95. ACT 593, 4 October 1619; ACT 596, 8 July 1628; ACT 597, 20 June 1633; ACT 598, 24 January 1636; ACT 601, 11 April 1639.
96. ACT 594 (Criminal): 20 July 1621; Maria Nannini, several of whose sons became priests, had several encounters with the magistrates, but was never harshly punished.
97. One widow, Gioma di Matteo Biondi, called La Lombardina (after her stonemason father's birthplace) complained several times to the magistrate to defend her, even though her liaisons were public knowledge. ACT 597 (Criminal): 22 December 1637 and ACT 598 (Criminal): 12 December 1635. In the latter instance she threatened to denounce the magistrate to the marchese if he would not defend her against the youths who pulled the wooden steps away from her house one night.
98. ACT 611 (Criminal): 21 August 1663.
99. ACT 604 (Criminal): 2 October 1645.
100. ACT 598 (Criminal): 25 August 1636.
101. Julius R. Ruff, *Violence in early modern Europe* (Cambridge and New York: 2001), p. 82.
102. ACT 598 (Criminal): 11 January 1636 (two cases); 10 May 1636; 25 February 1637; ADP 951 Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 26 February 1637.
103. ADP 951 Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 7 April 1637 and ACT 598 (Criminal): 31 May 1637.
104. ACT 594, 4 April 1623; ACT 600, 25 February 1638; ACT 603, 1 January 1644; ACT 609, 21 September 1655.
105. On the role of knives in rural society, see Giancarlo Baronti, *Coltelli d'Italia: Rituali di violenza e tradizioni produttive nel mondo popolare* (Padua: 1986).
106. ACT 600 (Criminal): 25 February 1638.
107. ACT 606 (Criminal): 9 August 1650.
108. Robert Muchembled, "Anthropologie de la violence dans la France moderne (XVe–XVIIIe siècles)," *Revue de Synthèse*, vol. 108 (1987): 31–55: "la violence paraît partie de la sociabilité 'normale' . . . assurant un rôle de régulation sociale des désordres liées à l'agressivité enracinée en chaque individu."
109. Maurice Cusson, *Croissance et décroissance du crime*, op. cit., pp. 35, 50–57; see also Adrian Raine, *The psychopathology of crime: Criminal behavior as a clinical disorder* (San Diego: 1993).
110. On variability in human behavior generally, see Marc Richelle, "Eloge des variations," *Universel et différentiel en psychologie*, J. Lautrey, ed. (Paris: 1995), pp. 35–50.
111. Jerome Kagan, *Galen's prophecy: Temperament in human nature* (New York: 1994); H.J. Eysenck, *Crime and Personality*, rev., ed. (London: 1977).
112. De Waal, *Peacemaking among primates*, p. 232.
113. Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 125–29.
114. Kagan, *Galen's prophecy*, p. 31.
115. Cusson, *La croissance et décroissance du crime*, op. cit., p. 43.
116. ACT 621 (Civil): 26 May 1625.

117. ACT 600 (Criminal): 24 February 1638.
118. ACT 608 (Criminal): 24 September 1654.
119. ACT 640 (Criminal): 28 March 1648.
120. ACT 605 (Criminal): 18 November 1648.
121. ADP 950 Vicario diocesano (Criminal): 28 August 1632.
122. ACT 604 (Criminal): 25 August 1645.
123. ACT 596 (Criminal): 2 June 1626.
124. ACT 600 (Criminal): 20 February 1639.
125. Linda Molm, "The structure and use of power: A comparison of reward and punishment power," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 51 (1988): 108–22; and by the same author, "Is punishment effective? Coercive strategies in social exchange," *Social Psychology Quarterly*, vol. 57 (1994): 75–94.
126. Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, p. 246.
127. Dennis Romano, "Quod sibi fiat gratia: Adjustment of penalties and the exercise of influence in early Renaissance Venice," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, vol. 13 (1983): 251–68.
128. On reconciliation behavior in primates too, Tartabini, *Una scimmia in tutti noi*, pp. 57–60.
129. Nubola, "Supplications between politics and justice" op. cit.
130. Cusson, *Croissance et décroissance du crime*, pp. 96–104.

4 Reproduction

1. Jeffrey Weeks, *Against nature: Essays on history, sexuality and identity* (London: 1991), pp. 68–69.
2. Steven Pinker, *How the mind works* (London and New York: 1997), pp. 307–8.
3. Pierre L. van den Berghe, *Human family systems: An evolutionary view* (Westport CT: 1979), p. 68; see also Christopher Badcock, *Evolution and individual behaviour* (Oxford: 1991), pp. 125–28; R.A. Hinde, "A biologist looks at anthropology," *Man*, N.S. vol. 26 (1991): 583–608; Martin King Whyte, *The status of women in preindustrial societies* (Princeton: 1978); Pinker, *The blank slate*, pp. 346–48.
4. Rebecca Emigh, "The gender division of labor: The case of Tuscan smallholders," *Continuity and Change*, vol. 15 (2000): 117–37.
5. Helen Fisher, *Histoire naturelle de l'amour* (Paris: 1994), p. 323.
6. Sandra Cavallo and Simona Cerutti, "Onore femminile e controllo sociale della riproduzione in Piemonte, tra '600 e '700," *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 15 (1980): 346–83.
7. ACT 607 (Criminal): 2 November 1653.
8. ACT 593 (Criminal): 30 April 1619.
9. ACT 601 (Criminal): 11 July 1639.
10. ACT 608 (Criminal): 9 February 1655.
11. ACT 595 (Criminal): 27 December 1623.
12. ACT 595 (Criminal): 4 May 1623.
13. ACT 601 (Criminal): 26 May 1641

14. Giorgia Alessi, *Processo per seduzione: Piacere e castigo nella Toscana leopoldina* (Catania: 1988), p. 36.
15. ADP 955 Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 30 December 1658.
16. ACT 596 (Criminal): 4 July 1626.
17. On universal courtship behavior, Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, *Human ethology* (New York: 1989), pp. 72, 239–42.
18. ADP 953 Vicario diocesano (Criminal): 22 April 1649.
19. ACT 595 (Criminal): 28 May 1624.
20. ACT 601 (Criminal): 13 February 1641.
21. ACT 608 (Criminal): 9 February 1655.
22. Alessi, *Processo per seduzione*, p. 123.
23. ACT 8 and 9, Libro delle memorie del comune di Montefollonico: These elections took place around every Christmas.
24. ACT 640 (Criminal): 4 November 1647.
25. ACT 601 (Criminal): 7 June 1641; and ACT 602 (Criminal): 13 August 1642.
26. ADP 950 Vicario diocesano (Criminal): 12 February 1631.
27. ACT 604 (Criminal): 23 May 1646.
28. ACT 602 (Criminal): 1 October 1643.
29. ACT 600 (Criminal): 21 February 1638.
30. Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Les amours paysannes (XVIe–XIXe siècle)* (Paris: 1975), p. 159; for Britain, see G.R. Quaife, “The consenting spinster in a peasant society: Aspects of premarital sex in “Puritan” Somerset, 1645–1660,” *Journal of Social History*, vol. 11 (1977): 228–44; Rosalind Mitchinson and Leah Leneman, *Girls in trouble: Sexuality and social control in rural Scotland, 1660–1780* (Edinburgh: 1998); and Jean-Pierre Poussou, *La terre et les paysans en France et en Grande-Bretagne aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: 1999), p. 359.
31. In Tuscany, Lucrezia Troiano, “Moralità e confini dell’eros nel Seicento toscano,” *Ricerche Storiche*, vol. 17 (1987): 237–59; for a comparison with Piedmont, see Cavallo and Cerutti, “Onore femminile,” *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 15 (1980): 346–83.
32. Maria Biscardo, “La condizione della donna nel ‘600 e ‘700,” *Dueville: Storia e identificazione di una comunità del passato*, vol. 1, C. Povolo, ed. (Vicenza: 1980), pp. 604–26.
33. ACT 595 Criminale; 28 May 1624.
34. ADP 801, Scritti matrimoniali. Marriage contracts entailing modest dowry sums were habitually drafted by the parish priest, not a notary, who charged a greater amount for the service. This single bundle contains 268 of them drafted between 1610 and 1667.
35. ADP 2115 Stati degli Animi San Valentino (1655); ADP 1680 Stati degli Animi San Bartolomeo, 8 January 1677.
36. ADP 1704, Status Animarum, S. Leonardo (1648)
37. ADP 801, Scritti Matrimoniali: 29 March 1636.
38. ADP 801, Scritti Matrimoniali: 19 May 1643.
39. ADP 801, Scritti Matrimoniali: 7 October 1641.
40. ADP 801 Scritti matrimoniali; 17 September 1643.
41. van den Berghe, *Human family systems*, p. 100.

42. Maria Fubini Leuzzi, "Caratteri della nuzialità femminile in Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III attraverso lo studio delle doti granducali," *La Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III: Atti del convegno di Pisa-Fiesole, 1990* (Florence: 1993), pp. 81–112; and by the same author, "Dell'allogare le fanciulle degli Innocenti: Un problema culturale ed economico, 1577–1652," *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo, e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna*, Paolo Prodi, ed. (Bologna: 1994), pp. 863–99.
43. The broad outline of demographic and family structures in the Tuscan countryside in the Renaissance is contained in the work by David Herlihy and Cristiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families: A study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427* (New Haven: 1985, first published 1978).
44. These ages are indicated in the states of souls: ADP 2115, San Valentino, 1643 and 1677; ADP 1512, Ciliano, 1643; ADP 1680, San Bartolomeo, 1677.
45. Carle, *La Patria locale*, pp. 138–39.
46. ADP 534, Carteggio di Curia San Leonardo, 22 February 1626 and 22 December 1629.
47. Gabriele Metelli, "L'alimentazione del ceto nobile e delle classi meno abbienti a Foligno, tra Cinque e Seicento," *Alimentazione e nutrizione, secc. XIII–XVIII: Atti delle Settimane di Studi, vol. 28, Istituto di Storia Economica Francesco Datini di Prato*, Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed. (Florence: 1997), pp. 867–76.
48. Maria Serena Mazzi and Sergio Raveggi, *Gli uomini e le cose nelle campagne fiorentine del Quattrocento* (Florence: 1983), pp. 218–23.
49. Lucia Carle, *La patria locale*, pp. 143, 325; see also Paolo Malanima, *Il lusso dei contadini: consumi e industrie nelle campagne toscane del Sei e Settecento* (Bologna: 1990), pp. 17–20.
50. ACT 604 Criminale, 12 March 1645
51. Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Archivio della Congregazione della Dottrina della Feda (ACDF), Fondo/Siena 44, pp. 87–91, 9 June 1659. My fulsome gratitude to Oscar Di Simplicio who sent me his transcription of this document.
52. Mario Breschi, "L'evoluzione della mortalità infantile," *Vita, morte e miracoli della gente comune: Appunti per una storia della popolazione della Toscana fra XIV e XX secolo*, C. Corsini, ed. (Florence: 1988), pp. 95–107.
53. Martin Daly and Margo Wilson, *Homicide* (New York: 1988), p. 50.
54. ACT 604 (Criminal): 28 May 1646.
55. For the late nineteenth century in Siena, stillborn children account for 7.5 percent of all births. See D. Ottolenghi, "Studi demografici sulla popolazione di Siena dal secolo XIV al XIX," *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, vol. 10 (1903): 297–358. Bills of mortality in London count 3.7 percent of births as stillborn in the years 1707–1711, Peter Hoffer and N.E.H. Hull, *Murdering mothers: Infanticide in England and New England 1558–1803* (New York and London: 1981), p. 186.
56. Archivio Comunale Montepulciano: Spedali Riuniti 01776: *Giornale dello Spedale S. Cristofano*, 1645–1650; for abandoned infants, Spedali Riuniti 01768: *Giornale*, 1613–1617.
57. Property sales can be followed pretty accurately as the lord pocketed 3 percent of the value of the transaction, which was continuously recorded in a thick

- register, ACT 160, *Libro dei contratti* (1619–1700); for grain prices, see Giuseppe Parenti, *Prezzi e mercato del grano a Siena (1546–1765)* (Florence: 1942); the book contains in appendix continuous series of prices for the Sienese state, and episodic population figures for rural communities.
58. Crocchi's widow spent years trying to balance these debts by negotiating their schedule with the Sienese state. See ASS Governatore 469; *Correspondenza*, 17 February 1659.
 59. ACT 160 *Gabella dei contratti*, 27 February 1637 and 5 February 1638.
 60. This is the argument of the compelling survey of Sarah Blaffer Hrdy, *Mother Nature: A history of mothers, infants and natural selection* (New York: 1999).
 61. The work of Renata Ago explores this field specifically. See "Young nobles in an age of absolutism: Paternal authority and freedom of choice in 17th-century Italy," *A History of Young People in the West: vol. 1: Ancient and Medieval Rites of Passage* (London: 1997), pp. 283–322; For the pattern in Siena, see my article, "The decline of a provincial military aristocracy: Siena 1560–1740," *Past & Present*, vol. 155 (1997): 64–108, esp. 96–98.
 62. The theory is cited in many places. An elegant and forceful explanation of it can be found in Wright, *The Moral Animal*, pp. 172–73. It originates in a short article by R. Trivers and D. Willard, "Natural selection of parental ability to vary the sex-ratio of offspring," *Science*, vol. 179 (1973): 90–92.
 63. Mauro Scremin, "Il destino del corpo e dell'anima. Pietà e attitudini religiose nel mondo contadino in età moderna," *Dueville. Storia e identificazione di una comunità del passato*, vol. 2, C. Povoio, ed. (Vicenza: 1985), pp. 1175–216.
 64. ADP 152: Carteggio del Vescovo Gioia Dragomani, Letter from the pievano of Torrita, 20 May 1613.
 65. Archivio Comunale Montepulciano, Spedali Riuniti 01776: Giornale dello spedale S. Cristofano, 1645–1650.
 66. For a complete demonstration, see my article in *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 113 (2003): 453–98.
 67. Lorenzo Del Panta, *Una traccia di storia demografica della Toscana nei secoli XVI–XVIII* (Florence: 1974), pp. 17–41.
 68. Jacques Dupâquier, "Naming practices, godparenthood and kinship in the Vexin, 1540–1900," *Journal of Family History*, vol. 6 (1981): 135–52; Gérard Delille, "Le système de transmission de prénoms en Italie du Sud aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles," *L'Uomo. Società, tradizione, sviluppo*, vol. 7 (1983): 65–91.
 69. An alternative explanation could ascribe these unusual names as homage to the marchese's spouse, Pellegrina Bentivoglio.
 70. For the rarity of extended families among the poor in Italian cities, see Marzio Barbagli, *Sotto lo stesso tetto: Mutamenti della famiglia in Italia dal XV al XX secolo* (Bologna: 1984), p. 166.
 71. Arthur Imhof, *Lost Worlds: How our European ancestors coped with everyday life and why life is so hard today* (Charlottesville VA: 1996), p. 15.
 72. Andrea Menzione, "Composizione delle famiglie e matrimonio in diversi gruppi contadini nella Toscana del secolo XVII," *Popolazione, società ed ambiente: Temi di demografia storica italiana, secc. XVII–XIX* (Bologna: 1990), pp. 187–211.

73. ADP 1680 Stati delle Anime, San Bartolomeo; see also Marco Della Pina, "Famiglia mezzadrile e celibato: le campagne di Prato nei secoli XVII e XVIII," *Popolazione, società ed ambiente*, pp. 125–40.
74. On the ordering of household members, Tommaso Astarita, *Village Justice: Community, family and popular culture in early modern Italy* (Baltimore: 1999), p. 129.
75. ADP 1704: Stati delle Anime, San Leonardo.
76. Robert Trivers, *Social Evolution* (Menlo Park CA: 1985), p. 57.
77. Carle, *La patria locale*, p. 281.
78. Hrdy, *Mother Nature*, p. 91.
79. ADP 953, Vicario diocesano (Criminal): 7 June 1647.
80. There are at least three examples in Montefollonico: Alessandro Giannetti, Cesare Mazzoni and Luca Formichi.
81. ASS Notarile, Post-Cosimiano Originale 1296: Niccolo Magnoni; 8 October 1673.
82. Daly and Wilson, *Homicide*, pp. 90–95; see also Steven Ozment, *Ancestors: The loving family in old Europe* (Cambridge MA: 2001), pp. 79, 109.
83. Pinker, *The blank slate*, p. 245.
84. ACT 597 (Criminal): 20 June 1633 and 29 June 1633; ACT 594 (Criminal): 20 July 1621 and 1 August 1621.
85. ACT 600 (Criminal): 23 February 1638.
86. ACT 593 (Criminal): 24 December 1619.
87. ADP 953, Vicario diocesano (Criminal): 1 November 1641.
88. ACT 598 (Criminal): 20 August 1636.
89. ACT 598 (Criminal): 26 December 1636.
90. ACT 595 (Criminal): 2 April 1624.
91. ACT 7, Libro della Comunità di Montefollonico: f. 123, 26 December 1618.
92. ACT 603 (Criminal): 15 February 1644.
93. For a good example of this statistical approach to literacy rates, François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et Ecrire*, 2 vols. (Paris: 1977).
94. ACT 640 (Criminal): 9 February 1648.
95. ADP 801, Scritti matrimoniali.
96. Michael Argyle, *The Social psychology of everyday life* (London: 1992), pp. 39–40, 60.
97. ACT 160 Libro dei contratti.
98. ACT 598 (Criminal): 13 February 1637.
99. ACT 595 (Criminal): 4 May 1623.
100. ACT 595 (Criminal): 5 July 1624. For other cases, ACT 596 (Criminal): 16 August 1628; ACT 598 (Criminal): 13 February 1637; ACT 600 (Criminal): 28 April 1638; ACT 605 (Criminal): 18 October 1649; ACT 608 (Criminal): 10 November 1654.
101. I have located 18 of these inquests, all in the Archivio Diocesano Pienza, 365 (Atti Matrimoniali), and ADP 950, 948, 953, 955, 971 (Atti criminali).
102. Those conserved in judicial archives are inserted in ACT 621 (Civil): f. 36 and f. 123; the remainder were drafted by parish priest Cesare Mazzoni, ADP 534, Carteggio di cura S. Leonardo (1607–1630).

103. Fisher, *Histoire naturelle de l'amour*, pp. 68, 204.
104. There is very little literature on this topic in Italy. The important exception is Oscar Di Simplicio, *Peccato Penitenza Perdono, Siena 1575–1800: La formazione della coscienza nell'Italia moderna* (Milan: 1994), pp. 312–89.
105. Louis Haas, *The Renaissance man and his children: Childbirth and early childhood in Florence, 1300–1600* (New York: 1998), p. 84.
106. There are several cases in the trial proceedings; ACT 606 (Criminal): 25 May 1651; and ACT 599 (Criminal): 22 October 1637.
107. ACT 601 (Criminal): 5 May 1640.
108. ACT 640 (Criminal): 9 February 1648.
109. Giulio Nori, *Criminalista, secondo* (Siena: 1581), p. 90.
110. ADP 950 (Vicario Criminale): 28 August 1632.
111. Keith Thomas, "The double standard," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 20 (1959): 194–216; a more recent take on this is Bernard Capp, "The double standard revisited: Plebeian women and male sexual reputation in early modern England," *Past & Present*, vol. 162 (1999): 70–100.
112. Luci Paul, Mark Foss, Mary Ann Baenninger, "Double standards for sexual jealousy: Manipulative morality, or a reflection of evolved sex differences?," *Human Nature*, vol. 7 (1996): 291–324.
113. ACT 599 (Criminal): 16 December 1637; on this case, a loose sheet inserted in ACT 630 (Civil): 16 December 1637.
114. Antonio Maria Cospì, *Il Giudice criminalista* (Florence: 1643), p. 395.
115. ADP 949, Vicario diocesano (Criminal): 11 March 1625.
116. ACT 593 (Criminal): 24 December 1619 and 8 July 1621; ACT 595 (Criminal): 21 and 22 August 1624.
117. ACT 594 (Criminal): 16 August 1620 and 18 August 1621.
118. On the violent manifestations of male sexual jealousy, see David M. Buss and Todd K. Shackelford, "From vigilance to violence: Mate retention tactics in married couples," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 72 (1997): 346–61.
119. G. Metelli and L. Metelli, "Il retroterra del crimine," *Criminalità a Foligno nella seconda metà del XVI secolo* *Quaderni monografici di "Proposte e Ricerche"*, vol. 18 (1995): 29–49.
120. ACT 594 (Criminal): 20 March 1621; for Penti, ACT 598 (Criminal): 26 December 1636.
121. ACT 603 (Criminal): 30 June 1644.
122. ADP 895, 896, and 897, Registro di precetti saltuari.
123. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 679, Pietro Nutarelli, 6 April 1650.
124. Giulia Calvi, *Il contratto morale: madri e figli nella Toscana moderna* (Bari: 1994), p. 19.
125. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 1296: Niccolo Magnoni, 22 May 1685.
126. Carle, *La patria locale*, p. 256.
127. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 463, Oliviero Nutarelli: 18 August 1612.
128. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 463, Oliviero Nutarelli: 29 September 1633.

129. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 845: MarcAntonio Palusi, 21 April 1666.
130. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 783, Martorelli: 18 May 1640.
131. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 463, Uliviero Nutarelli: 13 June 1638: Caterina Bazzi was not a Landucci godchild.
132. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 959, Nutarelli: 6 June 1678.
133. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano, Originali 702, Giovanni Giacomo Marzocchi: 6 April 1623–19 February 1642.

5 Invention

1. Dominique Lestel, *Les origines animales de la culture* (Paris: 2001), p. 208.
2. Robert Wright, *Nonzero: The logic of human destiny* (New York: 2000), pp. 19–20, 43–50; see also Nenad Miscevic, *Rationality and cognition: Against relativism-pragmatism* (Toronto: 2000), pp. 177–81.
3. Wright, op. cit., p. 214.
4. Steven Pinker, *The blank slate* (London and New York: 2002), pp. 167–68, 320.
5. The most recent formulation of this argument is Paolo Malanima, *La fine del primato: Crisi e riconversione nell'Italia del Seicento* (Milan: 1998). For a pioneering analysis, see Ruggiero Romano, "L'Italia nella crisi del secolo XVII," *Tra due crisi: L'Italia del Rinascimento* (Turin: 1971), pp. 187–206.
6. Luciano Pezzolo, "Elogio della rendita. Sul debito pubblico degli Stati italiani nel Cinque e Seicento," *Rivista di Storia Economica*, 12 (1995), pp. 283–328.
7. Claudio Rotelli, "Indici della crisi economica della Toscana nel Seicento," *Studi in onore di Gino Barbieri: Problemi e metodi di storia ed economia*, vol. 3 (Milan: 1983), pp. 1325–1343; see also Rita Mazzei, "The decline of the city economies of central and northern Italy in the seventeenth century," *Journal of Italian History*, vol. 1 (1979): 197–208.
8. Peter Musgrave, *The early modern European economy* (New York: 1999), p. 123.
9. Carlo Marco Belfanti, "Rural manufactures and rural proto-industries in the 'Italy of the cities' from the 16th to the 18th century," *Continuity and Change*, vol. 8 (1993): 253–80.
10. Annie Antoine, Jean-Michel Boehler, Francis Brimont, *L'Agriculture en Europe occidentale à l'époque moderne* (Paris: 2000), p. 172.
11. Three book-length studies; Marco Cattini, *I contadini di San Felice: Metamorphosi di un mondo rurale nell'Emilia dell'età moderna* (Turin: 1984); Giorgio Doria, *Uomini e terre di un borgo collinare, dal XVI al XVIII secolo* (Milan: 1968); Frank McArdle, *Altopascio: A study in Tuscan rural society, 1587–1784* (Cambridge: 1978).
12. Lorenzo Del Panta, "Il popolamento e la dinamica demografica dello stato fiorentino e dello stato senese tra il 1550 e il 1620," *Genus*, vol. 32 (1976): 71–90.
13. Spinello Benci, *Storia di Montepulciano* (Verona: 1968, first published in 1646), p. 132; and Emanuele Repetti, "Montepulciano," *Dizionario geografico-fisico-storico della Toscana* (Florence: 1839), pp. 178–88; for Pienza, Gaetano Greco,

- “La diocesi di Pienza fra XVII e XVIII secolo,” *La Val d’Orcia nel medioevo e nei primi secoli dell’età moderna: Atti del convegno 1988* (Rome: 1990), pp. 447–90.
14. Arthur Imhof, *Lost worlds: How our European ancestors coped with everyday life and why life is so hard today* (Charlottesville VA: 1996, first published 1984), pp. 87–88; see also Richard M. Smith, “Periods of ‘feast and famine’: Food supply and long term changes in European mortality, c. 1200 to 1800,” *Alimentazione e nutrizione, secc. XIII–XVIII: Atti delle settimane di studi, vol. 28, Istituto di Storia Economica F. Datini di Prato*, Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed. (Florence: 1997), pp. 159–86.
 15. Giuseppe Parenti, *Prezzi e mercato del grano a Siena (1546–1765)* (Florence: 1942), p. 161.
 16. Henri Desplanques, *Campagnes ombriennes: Contribution à l’étude des paysages ruraux en Italie centrale* (Paris: 1969), p. 380; on population densities, p. 498.
 17. Lorenzo Del Panta, “Dalla mortalità epidemica alla mortalità controllata,” *Vita morte e miracoli di gente comune: Appunti per una storia della popolazione della Toscana fra XIII e XX secolo*, Carlo Corsini, ed. (Florence: 1989), pp. 66–94, loc. cit. p. 78.
 18. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
 19. ADP 1686, *Libro dei morti S. Leonardo*.
 20. ACT 605 (Criminal): 21 November 1648.
 21. ADP 1686, *Libro dei morti di S. Leonardo di Montefollonico*; ADP 2084 and 2096, *Libro dei morti di S. Valentino*.
 22. ADP 1688, 1689, 1690, Battesimi (Pieve San Leonardo); 2093 (Pieve San Valentino).
 23. For the population of San Leonardo, ADP 1704 *Status animarum* 1655; for San Valentino, ADP 2115, *Status animarum* 1643 and 1655; for San Bartolomeo, ADP 536, *Carteggio di Cura*, 30 May 1638 and 10 December 1650.
 24. For Florence; Carlo Cipolla, *Contro un nemico invisibile: Epidemie e strutture sanitarie nell’Italia del Rinascimento* (Bologna: 1985); Massimo Livi Bacci, *La Société italienne devant les crises de mortalité* (Florence, 1978); Daniela Lombardi, “La demande d’assistance et les réponses des autorités urbaines face à une crise conjoncturelle: Florence, 1619–1622,” *Mélanges de l’Ecole Française de Rome*, vol. 99 (1987): 935–45; for Siena, Irene Polverini Fosi, “Lo stato e i poveri: l’esempio senese fra Seicento e Settecento,” *Ricerche Storiche*, vol. 10 (1980): 93–115; and “Pauperismo ed assistenza a Siena durante il Principato mediceo,” *Timore e carità. I poveri nell’Italia moderna* (Cremona: 1979), pp. 157–164.
 25. Giovanni Balduino, *Quaderno: Peste, guerra e carestia nell’Italia del Seicento*, Brendan Dooley and Barbara Marti Dooley, eds. (Florence: 2001), pp. 107–12.
 26. Jan de Vries makes the argument to explain phases of economic growth, but we could easily invert it. See his article, “Economic growth before and after the Industrial Revolution: A modest proposal,” *Early Modern Capitalism: Economic and social change in Europe, 1400–1800*, M. Prak, ed. (London and New York: 2000), pp. 177–94; see also Stephen Epstein, “The peasantries of

- Italy, 1350–1750,” *The peasantries of Europe from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries*, T. Scott, ed. (London: 1998), pp. 75–110.
27. Richard M Smith, “Periods of ‘Feast and Famine,’” *Alimentazione e nutrizione*, pp. 159–186, loc. cit. p. 176; see also Luigi Bonazzi, *Storia di Perugia, dalle origini al 1860* (Città di Castello: 1960, first published in 1879), p. 296.
 28. Anna Maria Pult Quaglia, “*Per provvedere ai popoli*”: *Il sistema annonario nella Toscana dei Medici* (Florence: 1990), pp. 168, 213.
 29. Irene Polverini Fosi, “Pauperismo ed assistenza a Siena durante il Principato mediceo,” *Timore e carità*, pp. 157–64: A census of the Terzo di San Martino in 1698 described more than half of the population as poor; see also Lorenza Del Panta, *Una traccia di storia demografica della toscana nei secoli XVI–XVIII* (Florence: 1974), p. 61.
 30. Parenti, *Prezzi e mercato del grano*, appendix: Prezzo medio mensile del grano sul mercato di Siena.
 31. Di Simplicio, “Due secoli di produzione agraria,” *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 7 (1972): 781–817.
 32. Lucia Bonelli Conenna, “Un contado per la nobiltà,” *I Libri dei Leoni: la nobiltà di Siena in età medicea (1557–1737)* (Siena: 1996), pp. 170–99.
 33. Domenico Sella, *Crisis and continuity: The economy of Spanish Lombardy in the seventeenth century* (Cambridge MA: 1979), pp. 105–29.
 34. Andrea Menzione, “Riordinamenti culturali e mutamenti strutturali nelle campagne toscane fra XVII e XVIII secolo,” *La Toscana nell’età di Cosimo III* (Florence: 1993), pp. 19–32.
 35. The quantities may still have been modest: for Montalcino, which made a famous muscatel wine, reported production was only 86 litres/inhabitant: Lucia Carle, *La Patria locale: L’identità dei Montalcinesi dal XVI al XX secolo* (Venice: 1996), p. 58.
 36. Bonelli Conenna, “Un contado per una nobiltà,” *I Libri dei Leoni*, pp. 170–99.
 37. Francesco Battistini, *Gelsi, bozzoli e caldaie: l’industria della seta in Toscana tra città, borghi e campagne (secc. XVI–XVIII)* (Florence: 1998), p. 65.
 38. ACT 622 (Civil): first mention; then ACT 631. ACT 645 (Civil): Lorenzo Barbieri, broker in silkworms.
 39. ACT 602 (Criminal): 16 July 1643: “la bottega di Arenio dove si tira la seta”; and ACT 607, 8 April 1654.
 40. Battistini, *Gelsi, bozzoli e caldaie*, pp. 196–99.
 41. Repetti, “Montepulciano,” *Dizionario Geografico Fisico Storico della Toscana*, pp. 178–88.
 42. Pezzolo, “Elogio della rendita,” *Rivista di Storia Economica*, vol. 12 (1995): 283–328.
 43. ACT Gabella dei contratti, 1619–1700.
 44. The small podere of Capraia was abandoned by 1653; neighbors looted it and stripped it of its iron fittings, ACT 607 (Criminal): 23 January 1654.
 45. ACT 8, fo. 204, for 1638; for 1702, ADP 1704, S. Leonardo, and ADP 1680, San Bartolomeo; see Lucia Bonelli Conenna, *Il contado senese alla fine del XVII secolo: Poderi, rendite e proprietari* (Siena: 1990), p. 37.
 46. Cattini, *I contadini di San Felice*, p. 147; for conceptions, p. 88.

47. McArdle, *Altopascio*, p. 104; Cattini, *I contadini di San Felice*, pp. 147, 216.
48. ASS Quattro Conservatori 1751, 29 October 1650.
49. For similar findings elsewhere in Tuscany, see Andrea Menzione, "Composizione delle famiglie e matrimonio in diversi gruppi contadini nella Toscana del secolo XVII," *Popolazione, società e ambiente: Temi di demografia storica italiana, secc. XVII–XIX* (Bologna: 1990), pp. 187–211.
50. Maria Fubini Leuzzi, "Caratteri della nuzialità femminile in Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III attraverso lo studio delle doti granducali," *La Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III*, pp. 81–112.
51. George Baker, "Nobiltà in declino: il caso di Siena sotto i Medici e gli Asburgo-Lorena," *Rivista Storica Italiana*, vol. 84 (1972): 584–616; see also Sam Cohn and Oscar Di Simplicio, "Alcuni aspetti della politica matrimoniale della nobiltà senese, 1560–1700 circa," *Annali della Facoltà di Scienze politiche dell'Università di Perugia*, vol. 16 (1979–80): 313–30.
52. ACT 160, *Libro dei contratti*.
53. N. Mengozzi, *Il Monte dei Paschi e le sue aziende: compendio di notizie storiche e statistiche (1472–1912)* (Siena: 1913), pp. 116–36: for all of Italy, Pezzolo, "L'elogio della rendita," op. cit.
54. Bonelli Conenna, *Il contado senese alla fine del XVII secolo*, pp. 173–74.
55. Morandi, "I Giudicanti dell'antico Stato senese," 5–78.
56. ACT 9, Libro di Memorie, f. 243; the reduction seems to have been prompted by a decree from the Quattro Conservatori of Siena, published 30 May 1652.
57. ACT 160 *Libro dei Contratti*; sales by Francesco Misari, 26 September 1655; by Fulvio Carpellini, 28 October 1658, 10 February 1659, 2 November 1660, 8 December 1661; Francesco Crocchi, 1 June 1666.
58. ACT 160, *Libro di contratti*; Caterina Selvi, 3 July 1663; Paolo Vettori, 6 September 1663; for a similar process in the Veneto, Claudio Povolo, *Dueville. Storia e identificazione di una comunità del passato* (Vicenza: 1985), p. 748.
59. ACT 651 (Civil): 20 June 1667.
60. ACT 651 (Civil): 22 June 1667.
61. Bonelli-Connena, *Il contado senese*, pp. 28–48.
62. Edward O. Wilson, *On Human Nature* (Cambridge MA: 1978), pp. 169–70.
63. Imhof, *Lost worlds*, pp. 126–37; on religion's utility, Wright, *Non-zero*, p. 90; on the problem of the term belief, Rodney Needham, *Belief, language and experience* (Oxford: 1972), pp. 5–15; for problems of studying belief historically, see my book, *Confessions and Community in 17th century France: Catholic and Protestant coexistence in Aquitaine* (Philadelphia: 1993).
64. ACT Opera Triano 2, ff. 1–80.
65. ACT 7, Libro della comunità di Montefollonico, f. 182.
66. Pinker, *The blank slate*, 405–12.
67. ACT Opera Triano 11; numerous details on decoration (1676–1698), ff. 45–95.
68. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano Originali 866, Giovanni Landi; 20 August 1658, Francesco di Giovanni, called Tafano.
69. Alessandra Gianni, "Dagli oratori alle case: diffusione e memoria dei culti nelle stampe popolari a Siena," *Quaderni di Storia Religiosa* (2001): 301–25.
70. ACT 598 (Criminal): 26 December 1636; ACT 611 (Criminal): 4 October 1662.

71. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano Origanli 1296, Niccolò Magnoni: 8 October 1673, M.R. Sgr Giovanni Nannini.
72. ACT 606 (Criminal): 15 March 1651.
73. Michael Argyle, *Social psychology of everyday life* (New York: 1992), p. 143.
74. ACT 603 (Criminal): 1 January 1643.
75. ACT 595 (Criminal): 4 May 1623.
76. ACT 607 (Criminal): 1 January 1651.
77. ACT 611 (Criminal): 22 September 1663.
78. Archivio della Congregazione della Dottrina della Fede (Vatican), Fondo/Siena, 44, 87–91; 9 June 1659; I wish to express here my fulsome gratitude to Oscar Di Simplicio, who sent me this text. See also Oscar Di Simplicio, *Inquisizione, stregoneria, medicina: Siena e il suo stato (1580–1721)* (Siena: 2000).
79. Christopher Black, “Confraternities and the parish in the context of Italian Catholic reform,” *Confraternities and Catholic Reform in Italy, France and Spain*, JP Donnelly and MW Maher, eds. (Kirksville MO: 1999), pp. 1–26.
80. Repetti, “Montepulciano,” *Dizionario geografico, fisico, storico della Toscana*, p. 187.
81. “Deliberazioni della comunità di Montepulciano,” in S. Benci, *Storia di Montepulciano*, pp. 331–37.
82. Angelo Torre, “Politics cloaked in worship: State, church and local power in Piedmont, 1570–1770,” *Past & Present*, vol. 134 (1992): 43–92.
83. ADP 40, Visite di Giovanni Dragomano; ADP 43, Visite pastorali dell’anno 1638, B.M. Joannes Spennazzi Episcopus Pientinus, pp. 16 ff.
84. ADP 54, Acta visitationem diocesis Pientine, B.M. Hieronymus Burghesius, ff. 15v.–23r.
85. Gaetano Greco, “La diocesi di Pienza fra XVII e XVIII secolo,” *La Val d’Orcia nel medioevo e nei primi secoli dell’età moderna: Atti del convegno 1988* (Rome: 1990), pp. 447–90.
86. ADP 78 and 79, Acta Ecclesiastica: Ordinationes: the candidates from Montefollonico appear few next to those from the larger communities such as Torrita, Sinalunga, San Quirico, and Pienza.
87. Rosa Martucci, “De vita et honestate clericorum: La formazione del clero meridionale fra Sei e Settecento,” *Archivio Storico Italiano*, vol. 144 (1986): 423–67.
88. Gaetano Greco, “Istituzioni ecclesiastiche e vità religiosa nella diocesi di Colle in epoca medicea,” *Colle di Val d’Elsa: Diocesi e città tra ‘500 e ‘600*, Pietro Nencini, ed. (Castelfiorentino: 1994), pp. 139–71; also by Greco, “Fra disciplina e sacerdozio. Il clero secolare nella società italiana dal Cinquecento al Settecento,” *Clero e società nell’Italia moderna*, Mario Rosa, ed. (Roma-Bari: 1992), pp. 45–113.
89. Cohn, *Death and property in Siena*, p. 210.
90. Roberto Bizzocchi, “Politica fiscale e immunità ecclesiastica nella Toscana medicea fra Repubblica e Granducato (s. XV–XVIII),” *Fisco, religione, stato nell’età confessionale*, H. Kellenbenz and P. Prodi, eds. (Bologna: 1989), pp. 355–85.
91. Carla Zarrilli, “Lo stato ed i contrabbandieri: la violazione del monopolio del sale nel Senese all’inizio del XVIII secolo,” *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*,

- vol. 98 (1991): 195–214; Jean-Claude Waquet, “Aux marges de l’impôt: Fraudeurs et contrebandiers dans la Toscane du XVIIIe siècle,” *La Fiscalité et ses implications sociales en Italie et en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: Actes du colloque de Florence, 1978* (Rome: 1980), pp. 75–94.
92. Bonelli-Conenna, *Il contado senese alla fine del XVII secolo*, p. 28 and p. 60.
93. ACT 638 (Civil): 2 November 1647.
94. ADP 955 Vicariato Diocesano (Criminal): 27 July 1652.
95. ACT 611 (Criminal): 13 October 1662.
96. Benci, *Storia di Montepulciano*, p. 133; on Observant Franciscans, Anna Maria Amonaci, *Conventi Toscani dell’Osservanza Francescana* (Florence: 1997), p. 59.
97. ACT 596 (Criminal): 9 August, 20 October and 24 December 1626.
98. ACT 611 (Criminal): 22 October 1662; theft in the monastery.
99. Emanuele Boaga, *La soppressione innocenziana dei piccoli conventi in Italia* (Rome: 1971); see also Vasco Neri, *Monticchiello: storia di una comunità* (Siena: 1975), p. 75.
100. Giovanni Pellizzari, “Chiesa e mondo contadino nei secoli XVI–XVIII,” *Dueville: Storia e identificazione di una comunità del passato*, vol. 1, C. Povoletto, ed. (Vicenza: 1980), pp. 521–603.
101. Jean-Pierre Deconchy, *L’Orthodoxie religieuse: essai de logique psycho-sociale* (Paris: 1971), p. 221.
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103. Marcello Fantoni, “Il bigottismo di Cosimo III: Da leggenda storiografica ad oggetto storico,” *La Toscana nell’età di Cosimo III*, pp. 389–402.
104. Oscar Di Simplicio, “La giustizia ecclesiastica e il processo di civilizzazione,” *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, vol. 97 (1990): 1–45.
105. ACT 604 (Criminal): 27 August 1645; ADP 951, Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 22 February 1637; and ADP 955, Vicario Diocesano (Criminal): 23 November 1654.
106. Fr. Sisto da Pisa, *Storia dei Cappuccini toscani*, p. 560.
107. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 307.
108. Greco, “Fra disciplina e sacerdozio,” *Clero e società nell’Italia moderna*, pp. 45–113.
109. ADP 950 Vicariato diocesano (Criminal): 28 August 1632 and 12 June 1635; Margarita claimed that when she once asked him to hear her confession, he replied, “I would rather mount you than confess you.”
110. ADP 949 Vicariato diocesano (Criminal): Alessandro Giannetti, curate of San Bartolomeo in February 1625; and ADP 953 (Criminal): Leandro Buonamici, tonsured cleric, 22 April 1649.
111. ADP 955 Vicariato diocesano (Criminal): 25 June 1652, attempted murder of Ottaviano Nannini.
112. ADP 954 Vicariato diocesano (Criminal): 7 January 1652.
113. ACT 607 (Criminal): 8 April 1654.

114. ACT 607 (Criminal): 1 May 1654. The trial was settled out of court by the Marchese, letter dated 6 March 1655.
115. ADP 779 Fede diverse: 28 March 1662.
116. ADP 953 Vicariato diocesano (Criminal): 9 July 1643
117. ADP 955 Vicariato diocesano (Criminal): 3 May 1651.
118. ADP 955 Vicariato diocesano (Criminal): 20 May 1650.
119. ADP 954 Vicariato diocesano (Criminal): 7 January 1652.
120. ADP 250 Carteggio del Nunzio: Letter to the bishop of Pienza, 27 June 1656.
121. The entire dossier is contained in ADP 250 Carteggio del Nunzio: *Sopra l'insufficienza del prete Orazio Ghizzi*.
122. Adriano Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: 1996), p. 74.
123. ADP 324 Sant'Ufficio: 7 January 1643 and 6 and 7 April 1643; for an overview of their concerns, see by Adriano Prosperi, "L'Inquisizione in Italia," *Clero e società nell'Italia moderna*, pp. 275–320, and by the same author, "Vicari dell'Inquisizione fiorentina alla metà del '600: note d'archivio," *Annali dell'Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico in Trento*, vol. 8 (1982): 275–302; and also by Prosperi, *Tribunali della coscienza: Inquisitori, confessori, missionari* (Turin: 1996), p. 230.
124. John Bossy, *Peace in the post-Reformation* (Cambridge: 1998), p. 6.
125. Susan V. Nicassio, "For the benefit of my soul: A preliminary study of the persistence of tradition in eighteenth-century mass obligations," *Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 78 (1992): 175–96; see also Samuel Cohn Jr., *Death and property in Siena, 1205–1800: Strategies for the afterlife* (Baltimore: 1988), pp. 4, 166–74.
126. Ronald Weissman, "From brotherhood to congregation: Confraternal ritual between Renaissance and Catholic Reformation," *Riti e rituali nelle società medievali* (Spoleto: 1994), pp. 77–94.
127. The embellishment of the chapel by Domenico Fantozzi figures in a trial, ACT 603 (Criminal): 3 January 1644.
128. ADP 54: Visitation of bishop Girolamo Borghesi, May 1670.
129. ADP 537: Confraternità del Corpus Domini.
130. Pellizzari, "Chiesa e mondo contadino," *Dueville: Storia e identificazione di una comunità del passato*, p. 582; and Mauro Scremin, "Il destino del corpo e dell'anima. Pietà e attitudini religiose nel mondo contadino in età moderna," *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 1175–216.
131. *Capitoli da Osservarsi dai 30 Fratelli della Compagnia della Gloriosissima Vergine, detta a Follonica*, D.O.M., published Siena 1675, copied 10 July 1751.
132. Luca Mannori, *Il sovrano tutore: pluralismo istituzionale e accentramento amministrativo nel principato dei Medici, sec. XVI–XVIII* (Milan: 1994), p. 166.
133. ACT 593 (Criminal): letter from Sgr Flaminio Landucci, 21 February 1634.
134. ACT 598 (Criminal): 17 April 1637.
135. ADP 592: Atti riguardanti il clero, enti ecclesiastici e laici, 17 March 1640.
136. Owen Chadwick, *The Popes and European revolution* (Oxford: 1981), pp. 225–37.

137. Sisto da Pisa, *Storia dei Cappuccini toscani*, vol. 1, pp. 419, 512.
138. Luigi Mezzadri, "Le missioni popolari dei lazzaristi nell'Umbria (1675–1797)," *Vincent de Paul: Actes du Colloque internationale d'Etudes Vincentiennes, Paris sept. 1981* (Rome: 1981), pp. 310–61; and also Armando Guidetti, *Le missioni popolari: I grandi gesuiti italiani* (Milan: 1988), pp. 115–24; also, David Gentilcore, "Adapt yourself to the people's capabilities: Missionary strategies, methods and impact in the kingdom of Naples," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. 45 (1994): 269–96.
139. Sisto da Pisa, *Storia dei Cappuccini toscani*, p. 543.
140. John Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation*, pp. 26–28; on the psychological mechanisms they invoked, Charles Kiesler, *The Psychology of commitment: experiments linking behavior to belief* (New York: 1971), p. 15; and Charles Kiesler and Sara Kiesler, *Conformity* (Menlo Park: 1969), pp. 16, 28, 51; and Robert-Vincent Joule and Jean-Léon Beauvois, *Petit traité de manipulation à l'usage des honnêtes gens* (Grenoble: 2002), pp. 139–44.
141. Ottavia Niccoli, "Creanza e disciplina: buone maniere per I fanciulli nell'Italia della controriforma," *Disciplina dell'anima, disciplina del corpo e disciplina della società tra medioevo ed età moderna* (Bologna: 1994), pp. 929–63.
142. ACT 606 (Criminal): 3 December 1650.
143. ADP 955 Vicariato Diocesano (Criminal): 23 June 1650.
144. ACT 606 (Criminal): 7 November 1650.
145. ACT 611 (Criminal): 28 October 1664.
146. ACT 609 (Criminal): 20 April 1656.
147. On female attachment to confraternities generally, Samuel Cohn Jr., "Donne e controriforma a Siena: autorità proprietà nella famiglia," *Studi Storici*, vol. 30 (1989): 203–24.
148. ASS Notarile Post-Cosimiano 463, Oliviero Nutarelli; 18 August 1612, Gabriello Moreschini.
149. Jean-Claude Waquet, "Politique, institutions et société dans l'Italie du 'Seicento,'" *L'Italie au XVIIe siècle* (Paris: 1989), pp. 15–133; and Waquet, *Le Grand-Duché de Toscane sous les derniers Médicis* (Rome: 1990), p. 43.
150. ADP 1680, Stati delle anime San Bartolomeo, 1702; ADP 1704, Stati delle anime San Leonardo, 1702; for the Carpellini fortunes, ACT 160 Gabella dei contratti, 28 October 1679 and 28 April 1682.
151. Giuseppe Caciagli, *I Feudi medicei* (Pisa: 1980), p. 53.
152. Giovanna Benadusi, "Rethinking the state: family strategies in early modern Italy," *Social History*, vol. 20 (1995): 157–78; for Piedmont, Giovanni Levi, *Inheriting power: the story of an exorcist* (Chicago: 1988, first published 1985), pp. 100–20; and in the Langhe district, Angelo Torre, "Il consumo di devozioni: Rituali e potere nelle campagne piemontesi nella prima metà del Settecento," *Quaderni Storici*, vol. 20 (1985): 181–223. Something similar was afoot in southern Italy among the noble families dominating the agrotowns, studied by Gerard Delille, "La paix par les femmes," *Alla Signorina: Mélanges offerts à Noelle dela Blanchardière* (Rome: 1995), pp. 99–121; electoral procedures in nearby Sinalunga reveal a small group of notables wielding greater power in the seventeenth century; see Andrea Giorgi and Stefano Moscadelli,

- L'Archivio comunale di Sinalunga: Inventario della sezione storica* (Siena: 1997), p. 20; and Neri, *Monticchiello*, p. 44.
153. On the use of this position to gain local influence, see Elena Fasano Guarini, "Camerlenghi ed esazione locale: delle imposte nel Granducato di Toscana del '500-'600," *La Fiscalité et ses implications sociales en Italie et en France aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (Rome: 1980), pp. 29–49, loc. cit., p. 33.
154. Mannori, *Il sovrano tutore*, pp. 157–68; on the creation of the committee and its structure, Danilo Marrara, *Studi giuridici sulla Toscana medicea: contributo alla storia degli stati assoluti in Italia* (Milan: 1965), p. 97.
155. ACT 10: Tasse dell'anno 1676 da pagarsi, fo. 21–26. I have converted the grain to 60 soldi a *staia*, from Parenti.
156. For the concentration of these 'preselli' in the hands of the wealthy, Mannori, *Il sovrano tutore*, p. 197.
157. G. Pardi, "Entrate dello stato senese nei secoli XVI e XVII," *Bullettino Senese di Storia Patria*, vol. 32 (1925): 151–62.
158. Jean-Claude Waquet, *Le Grand-Duché de Toscane sous les derniers Medicis* (Rome: 1990), p. 120.
159. Bizzocchi, "Politica fiscale e immunità ecclesiastica," *Fisco, religione, stato nell'età confessionale*, pp. 355–85.
160. *Ibid.* p. 374; for privileges of militiamen, Arnaldo d'Addario, "I 'capitoli della militia' e la formazione di un ceto di privilegiati alla periferia del principato mediceo fra XVI e XVII secolo," *Studi in onore di Leopoldo Sandri*, vol. 2 (Rome: 1983), pp. 347–80.
161. *Istruzioni per li Signori capitani di Giustizia, podestà, commissarii, vicarii e uffitiali dello Stato di Siena, per l'osservanza degl'Ordini in materia di sale e grascia* (Siena: 1682).
162. Mario Ascheri, "Siena senza indipendenza: repubblica continua," *I Libri dei Leoni*, pp. 8–69.
163. Mannori, *Il sovrano tutore*, p. 265.
164. This process has been expertly analyzed by R. Burr Litchfield, *Emergence of a bureaucracy: The Florentine patricians 1530–1790* (Princeton: 1986), pp. 69–76.
165. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
166. Danilo Marrara, *Riseduti e nobiltà: Profilo storico-istituzionale di un oligarchia toscana nei secoli XVI–XVIII* (Pisa: 1976), pp. 108–111.
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Note: Names in italics designate salient individuals or families in Montefollonico.

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