

Introduction: locating communities in the early modern Italian city

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From late antiquity until the nineteenth century the Italian peninsula was made up of numerous states and city-states, governed as republics, or ruled by kings, dukes or popes. While diverse attempts were made to unify these disparate political entities through language and culture, or warfare and realpolitik, the dominant situation was one of intense rivalry and intermittent conflict. That uniquely Italian idea of *campanilismo*, or pride in one's own bell-tower, was borne of this continuous rivalry. It encapsulates an important concept, that local pride was inscribed in the physical fabric of the city, that a bell-tower could stand for a collective sense of one city's self-image and that this was expressed and calibrated in relation to neighbours, who were usually rivals. It is within this frame of references that much recent scholarship on urban image and identity has focused, teasing out the intentional distinctions that were drawn socio-politically and culturally, between the major centres of the peninsula.¹ Such a process has significantly altered the view, dominant until quite recently, that style in art and architecture followed a single evolutionary route that passed from one place to another, as each lived a 'golden age' that defined a single 'urban' school – Siena, Venice, Florence, Rome, Bologna. In its place, a more nuanced view of how each centre fostered, reacted, responded and

*This collection originates from discussions between Guido Rebecchini and Fabrizio Nevola, initiated in Siena in 2006–07, and developed through a number of sessions we organized at the Renaissance Society of America annual conference in Chicago (April 2008). The various logistical complexities of editing the collection resulted in the decision that I should write the introduction, but Guido has remained a key participant in the editing process, and generously provided some of the original archival examples discussed below. I would like to thank Tom and Elizabeth Cohen for their active support and careful criticism of this introduction and the collection as it developed, and for kindly agreeing to offer a postscript to it.

¹ From a growing bibliography in this vein see, for example, P. Fortini Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio* (London and New Haven, 1988); E. Welch, *Art and Authority in Renaissance Milan* (New Haven and London, 1995); S.J. Campbell, *Cosmè Tura of Ferrara: Style, Politics, and the Renaissance City, 1450–1495* (New Haven and London, 1997); L. Syson and D. Gordon, *Pisanello: Painter to the Renaissance Court* (London and New Haven, 2001); S.J. Campbell and S.J. Milner (eds.), *Artistic Exchange and Cultural Translation in the Italian Renaissance City* (Cambridge, 2004).

adopted innovation and change has come to the fore.² In a generation of scholarship that followed Michael Baxandall's ground-breaking *Painting and Experience*, the idea that Renaissance Italians consciously fashioned urban images and identities has entered the mainstream. Scholars have put artworks and buildings back into close relation with the social contexts of their production and have asked how they worked in relation to their users and viewers.³

That urban identity was consciously forged by means of visual, ritual and socio-political strategies is, by now then, widely accepted. Furthermore, as Peter Burke has influentially argued, social identity was often most emphatically expressed through the creation of differences and distinctions between rival neighbours.⁴ Belying the few kilometres that separate them, that Florence and Siena had quite distinct modes of stylistic expression can now be explained by conscious choices exercised by patrons, for whom difference was an extension of *campanilismo*.⁵ Much the same might be said for the unique characteristics of cities such as Mantua and Verona, for instance; though the cities are very close, the former forged an architectural identity that looked primarily to Rome through intermediary figures such as Alberti and Giulio Romano, while the latter had its own architectural models in Venice and the Veneto.⁶ The power and significance of creating a sense of place and of local identity, invested in images, has therefore done much to accentuate differences between cities, challenging the previously dominant scholarly paradigms that tended to consider Renaissance cities in relation to Florence first, and later Rome.

This scholarly reappraisal of the urban identity of each centre has tended to highlight the collective process of representation; nevertheless, within each city were numerous communities, each of which strove to assert its own identity by adopting a distinctive visual language. Thus, at the smaller scale, within the city, a variety of sub-communities or collectivities existed and sought representation on the urban stage. For that same rivalry which fashioned urban identity contributed to a similar process at a local

² S.J. Campbell and S.J. Milner, 'Art, identity and cultural translation in Renaissance Italy', in Campbell and Milner (eds.), *Artistic Exchange*, 1–13; P. Fortini Brown, 'Renovatio or Conciliatio? How renaissances happened in Venice', in A. Brown (ed.), *Language and Images of Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 1995), 127–54.

³ An exemplary use of Baxandall's approach, which develops his methods subtly and in great detail, is P. Rubin, *Images and Identity in Fifteenth-Century Florence* (London and New Haven, 2007).

⁴ P. Burke, *The Italian Renaissance: Culture and Society in Italy* (Cambridge, 1986), 130–42, and more in general in his *What is Cultural History?* (Cambridge, 2004).

⁵ The point, for example, was at the heart of the exhibition L. Syson *et al.* (eds.), *Renaissance Siena: Art for a City*, exhib. cat. (London and New Haven, 2007), a major shift from the artist-based approach of the earlier ground-breaking show on the same subject, K. Christiansen, L.B. Kanter and C.B. Strehlke (eds.), *Painting in Renaissance Siena, 1420–1500* (New York, 1988).

⁶ B. Furolotti and G. Rebecchini, *The Art and Architecture of Mantua: Eight Centuries of Patronage and Collecting* (London 2008).

level; within the city walls gathered a multiplicity of other communities: religious, national, industrial, familial or commercial, to name but a few. 'Community' is an essential, yet complex and ambiguous concept, and the way in which groups regulated membership, defined their social and spatial boundaries of operation and interacted with other groups have all been used by scholars to help pin down the 'collective solidarities and identities' that help define them.⁷ Cities, in turn, are complex organisms, whose social constituents and architectural forms articulate variety as well as conformity to collective representation. In its social and cultural expression a city is a 'mosaic of worlds', of disparate and overlapping individuals and groups, whose collective identity is most easily observed from the outside or during times of crisis or conflict.⁸

In early modern Italy, as Edward Muir has so clearly shown, at such times, individuals could appeal to the unifying ideal of 'comune', calling on a collective idea of community that was the final resort for the exercise of justice.⁹ It was in this way that the small town of Buia fiercely expressed its sense of community; although it was a subject town of Udine, its local identity and shared sense of belonging set it apart as a community in its own right. Muir's study helps us to think about the way that communities can operate at different interconnected levels, so that a single individual will naturally enough contribute to more than one community; in mathematical terms we could say that such forms of 'belonging' can operate as subsets, which often overlap as in a Venn diagram.¹⁰ Such was obviously also the case in larger urban realities. Thus, a citizen of Siena was part of the urban community of citizens, of one of the city's three administrative *Terzi* and local districts; he would be part of a parish (whose boundaries rarely coincided with those of the administrative districts); he would be perhaps part of a large family clan, or live under the shadow of patronage and protection of one; he might adhere to a lay religious community or confraternity; he would probably also be a member of a guild professional organization; he might have a role in some

⁷ P. Burke, *Languages and Communities in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2004), 5, specifically within the context of a study of cultural self-representation. A helpful survey is K. Lynch, *Individuals, Families and Communities in Europe, 1200–1800: The Urban Foundations of Western Society* (Cambridge 2003).

⁸ The 'mosaic of worlds' is proposed as a metaphor by Peter Burke in his *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern History. Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge, 1987), 7–8.

⁹ E. Muir, 'The idea of community in Renaissance Italy', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 55 (2002), 1–18.

¹⁰ On the boundaries and intersections in the definition of community, dependent upon analysis first advanced by Georg Simmel, see K.E. Spierling and M.J. Halvorson, 'Introduction: definitions of community in early modern Europe', in K.E. Spierling and M.J. Halvorson (eds.), *Defining Community in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2008), 7–8. This theme of mixing or overlap emerges also in Burke, *Languages and Communities*, 5–7. Coming at the issue from the perspective of 'neighbourhood', but identifying close overlaps with 'community', is the collection edited and introduced by D. Garrioch and M. Peel, 'Introduction: the social history of urban neighborhoods', *Journal of Urban History*, 32 (2006), 663–76, at 664–6.

government office.¹¹ This complex interconnected web of belonging had practical effects in everyday life, through the need to negotiate the duties of participation that each membership required.

This was also of course true for larger urban centres, where the sense of belonging to a social group needed to be continuously negotiated with other, often overlapping communities. In the early 1530s, for instance, the citizens of Rome lived in a precarious state owing to the consequences of the recent Sack (1527) and of other calamities and the city was often the theatre of violent fights between native citizens and other national communities, the Spanish in particular.¹² On one such occasion, a Roman nobleman killed the servant of a Spanish gentleman who had allegedly offended him and both had to leave the city.¹³ Tension remained, however, and the local authorities decided that an armed man should be stationed in every house – either a native Roman, or at least an Italian – who was to be ready, at the slightest sign of disorder, to run into the street and scream ‘Roma, Roma, Italia, Italia’. Upon hearing this alarm, all armed men were to congregate at the house of the ‘caporione’ (head of the *district*), who would then intervene to settle the situation. This account brings to life that ‘mosaic’ of communities that interacted in urban centres, each carrying its own identity: here native Romans and other Italians joined together, beyond any local *campanilismo*, to react against a foreign community with which communication was difficult both owing to the memory of the recent experience of the Sack, which must have been inscribed in the mental and physical topography of Roman people, and for linguistic and cultural reasons. Being Roman, or a citizen of Rome, was here clearly defined through conflict, and the terms by which membership was defined were national and linguistic, and were marked out in turf control, manifest in the public streets. In this example, drawn from a time when the social, economic and physical nature of Rome had been severely challenged, the idea of ‘community’ served to re-establish the identity of the city as a whole.

Nevertheless, it was more common that each particular subset of community would be spatially articulated in the physical fabric of the city, as buildings, neighbourhoods, streets and districts were ‘tagged’ to various user-groups; variety, rather than homogeneity, was the norm. To a large extent, city dwellers had to navigate the visually charted waters of overlapping and sometimes rival claims, expressed spatially

¹¹ For a more detailed reading of membership in Siennese society and religious iconography, see F. Nevola, ‘Civic identity and private patrons in Renaissance Siena’, in Syson *et al.* (eds.), *Renaissance Siena*, 16–29, esp. 21.

¹² See also G. Rebecchini, ‘After the Medici. The new Rome of Pope Paul III Farnese’, *I Tatti Studies*, 11 (2007), 147–200.

¹³ Archivio di Stato di Mantova (ASMn), AG, b. 881, c. 448r–v, Fabrizio Pellegrini to Federico Gonzaga from Rome, 8 Jan. 1532, ‘che a ogni piccolo grido o rumore si gridi “Roma, Roma, Italia, Italia” et si riducano a casa del loro caporione, di modo che è pericolo un giorno non naschi qualche desordine’.

by innumerable visual signs.¹⁴ Thus, for example, the streetscape of early modern Rome was richly layered with coats of arms and inscriptions put in place by families, popes, civic authorities, religious confraternities and so forth, each of which marked ownership but also made a visual claim on the public spaces on to which their buildings projected.¹⁵ Such was the case for magnificent symbolic monumental areas, as at the Capitoline Hill, whose complex and contested symbolism was directed at proclaiming both the independence of the Roman Republic and the papal ambitions over it.¹⁶ Similar patterns appeared in more private sites. In order to set his family palace, with its conspicuous coat of arms, at the centre of a beautified and easily controllable portion of the city, Pope Paul III Farnese attempted to appropriate the Via Monserrato by straightening it.¹⁷ This grand urban design would have required the partial demolition of the English hospice of the Most Holy Trinity and St Thomas (later the Venerable English College). The project was eventually abandoned because the English community in Rome successfully opposed the pope's plans by menacing to make of it an international political incident.¹⁸ In this instance, then, the pontifical and familial ambitions of the Farnese clashed with the long-established presence of the English nation around its hospice there.

As this last example illustrates, urban public space was a major arena in which communities marked their presence and, in some instances at least, iterated or contested relationships between themselves and their rivals. In the pages that follow we turn our attention to this spatially elaborated idea of community, with a series of articles that consider the outward, physical, artistic and architectural expression of communities within the Renaissance urban polity. In this volume, the authors highlight specific examples, or subsets, of the multiplicity of urban communities active and present within the larger urban whole. These groups of city inhabitants formed self-contained communities, which often employed similar strategies to express their own presence within the urban fabric as did the ruling institutions in the fashioning of collective urban identity, with the specific end of differentiating themselves from one another

¹⁴ From a variety of studies on early modern Rome, two that address this variety of overlapping jurisdictions and semiotics are C. Burroughs, *From Signs to Design: Environmental Process and Reform in Early Renaissance Rome* (Cambridge, MA, 1990), and L. Nussdorfer, *Civic Politics in the Rome of Urban VIII* (Princeton, 1992).

¹⁵ A sample of this complexity of overlapping 'visual claims' can be had for one street in L. Salerno, L. Spezzaferro and M. Tafuri (eds.), *Via Giulia: una utopia urbanistica del '500* (Rome, 1973).

¹⁶ For a political reading of the architectural and sculptural symbolism of the Capitoline Hill, see, among others, Burroughs, *From Signs to Design*.

¹⁷ The strategy resembles the better-known and successful intervention on the via Baullari; see L. Spezzaferro, 'Place Farnèse: urbanisme et politique', in *Le Palais Farnèse* (Rome, 1981), vol. I, 85–123, at 115–23.

¹⁸ ASMn, AG, b. 1911, c. 53r, Nino Sernini to Cardinal Ercole Gonzaga from Rome, 5 Feb. 1541. For a discussion of this document, see Spezzaferro, *Place Farnèse: urbanisme et politique*, 114. For the hospice, see M.E. Williams, *The Venerable English College, Rome: A History* (Leominster, 2008), 1–9.

within it. In this respect, then, the sophisticated use of visual imagery that characterized the forging of city identities can be seen to permeate urban societies, as foreigners (nation groups), professionals, religious groups, political factions, all marked out their presence in the built environment through clustering, architecture, heraldry, ritual practices and so forth.

Each of our contributors focuses on one group within the city; its social constituency is considered and placed firmly into the physical context of the city-as-stage, where its collective identity is enacted, either permanently through architecture or ephemerally through rituals. The goal thus has been to bridge the gap between disciplinary approaches and questions common among urban social historians, and those of historians of architecture and urbanism.¹⁹ We seek out the same nuance and subtlety that might be inscribed in the architectural detailing of palace façades built along city streets, as might be also found in the testamentary wranglings of members of the urban patriciate, for both are expressions of a process that had its practical consequences in the built fabric of the city.²⁰ Thus, as our title indicates, our concern has been to bring together the social concept of community, with the spatial determinant of location.

The question of space, and the way that human agency constructs it to inscribe meaning on to physical environments or places, has come under intense scrutiny for early modern Italy in recent years.²¹ Likewise, the boundaries between spaces, and especially between public and domestic space, have been the object of growing interest, with an increasing awareness of the permeability (hence the abandonment of public-private contrast, in favour of public-domestic) between them.²² In a recent example, Flora Dennis has shown that what may appear at first to be the secure, unassailable and privately controlled space of the domestic interior, could be entered and invaded by sound, as occurred with the *mattinata* songs addressed to remarrying widows and widowers, as a challenge to

¹⁹ This is evidently an aim not unique to this collection! Two issues of *Quaderni Storici* have recently been entirely dedicated to such issues, although as often, the material that they publish is predominantly post-1600; see C. Olmo, 'Premessa: morfologie urbane', *Quaderni Storici*, 125 (2007), 341–54, and M. Barbot, 'L'abitare in città: un concentrato di storie', *Quaderni Storici*, 127 (2008), 283–300.

²⁰ An exemplary study along such lines is J. Connors, 'Alliance and enmity in Roman baroque urbanism', *Romisches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, 25 (1989), 207–94.

²¹ Central to the summary definition of space offered here, is H. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford, 1991); emblematic in this regard is the collection edited by J.T. Paoletti and R. Crum, *Renaissance Florence. A Social History* (Cambridge, 2006), which though declaring to be a 'social history' in the title, is predominantly a multi-author enquiry into the varieties of 'space' as they occurred in Florence.

²² The work of Elizabeth and Thomas Cohen has been particularly innovative in this area, see for example, E. Cohen and T. Cohen, 'Open and shut: the social meanings of the cinquecento Roman house', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 9 (2001–02), 61–84; more recently, and from the perspective of a historian of music, see F. Dennis, 'Sound and domestic space in early modern Italy', *Studies in the Decorative Arts*, 16 (2008–09), 7–19; see also B. Preyer, 'Planning for visitors at Florentine palaces', *Renaissance Studies*, 12 (1999), 357–74.

decorum and to the honour of the household and the individual.²³ Here the street became a site of mediation between the smaller community of the household and the wider neighbourhood community that participated in the songs. That architectural surfaces do not necessarily equate with hard physical boundaries has thus opened up new research questions, a number of which emerge in the articles that follow.

The public space of streets emerges in many of the articles in this collection as a principal *locus* for the performance and working out of social relations in the early modern city. Their inherent kinetic qualities were harnessed to ritual uses by a range of actors, ranging from the urban collective, as sanctioned and organized by central political or religious authorities, to far more localized groups that made up the polity.²⁴ Given the potent physical and social dimensions of the street, it is remarkable that it has received scant attention from both social and architectural historians, although in introducing a recent collection Riitta Laitinen and Thomas Cohen have pointed out that it is a 'very concrete, very sensory, thoroughly textured urban environment'.²⁵ That volume sets the street at the centre of an enquiry into the social relations that developed around this particular arena of mediation between public and domestic space. Here, on the other hand, we have chosen to focus on the visual strategies – which could be architectural and urbanistic, but could also involve other areas where material culture intersects with social practices, such as sumptuary laws or ephemeral performances – employed in the pursuit of mediation/negotiation/conflict between groups, and how these articulated their identities with respect to the urban collective.²⁶

The first two articles examine the material and ceremonial culture of the artisan classes, constituencies often overlooked in studies of art and visual production. David Rosenthal explores the means by which in Renaissance Florence the lower-class communities of German and Italian wool weavers, united as the brigade or *potenza* of Biliemme (Bethlehem), marked their

²³ Dennis, 'Sound and domestic space', 14–16. This promising line of enquiry has recently been taken up in this journal by K. Colleran, 'Scampanata at the widows' windows: a case-study of sound and ritual insult in cinquecento Florence', *Urban History*, 36 (2009), 359–78.

²⁴ One of the most sophisticated readings of urban space in relation to ritual in this period is R. Ingersoll, 'Ritual use of public space in Renaissance Rome' (University of California Ph.D. thesis, 1985); a collection that owes much to Spiro Kostof's study of urban form in relation to ritual is Z. Çelik, D. Favro and R. Ingersoll (eds.), *Streets. Critical Perspectives on Public Space* (Berkeley, 1994). R. Laitinen and T.V. Cohen (eds.), *Cultural History of Early Modern European Streets* (Leiden, 2009), published first as a Special Issue of *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 (2008), 3–4, have indeed addressed some of the themes of our collection specifically from the point of view of the street, and with a pan-European remit.

²⁵ R. Laitinen with T.V. Cohen, 'Cultural history of early modern European streets – an introduction', in Laitinen and Cohen (eds.), *Cultural History*, 204; the early modern Italian street is the main focus of Fabrizio Nevola's ongoing research project, *Street Life in Renaissance Italy* (which will be published by Yale University Press).

²⁶ On the historiographic distinctions around 'negotiation' and 'resistance', see Laitinen with Cohen, 'Cultural history', 199–202.

neighbourhood presence both by annual carnival celebrations and through their 1522 commission of an unusually large and impressive street tabernacle from Giovanni della Robbia. Through these activities the men of Biliemme, who were mostly foreigners, found a strategy for enhancing their public visibility within the larger community of Florentine artisans. To enact their sense of belonging, they adopted the confraternal forms of association common to their class. Employing permanent and ephemeral means to enact its collective presence on the city stage, a disenfranchised minority marked its physical space in ways that were usually reserved for the elite.²⁷ This public performance of *potenza* identity through art commissions and shared rituals has much in common with the strategic domestic displays of material goods among the artisan class of sixteenth-century Siena, discussed by Paula Hohti. Her article looks at how some members of the community of Sienese artisans, using a few works of art and a small range of ornamental goods, tried to ascend the social ladder through imitation of their social betters. The role of material objects in defining individual, familial and collective elite identity in early modern Italy has been the subject of much recent research, which is here used to help define the domestic behaviour of the frequently overlooked urban communities of artisans.²⁸ On special occasions, their usually sober domestic spaces could be transformed into more dignified environments, thanks to the use of the *credenza* and the display of decorative objects. Here, the performance of community membership is restricted to domestic rituals that took place in the interior of artisan homes, where the agency of objects functioned to blur the boundaries between communities and sometimes to facilitate social ascent.

The next three articles show how the aesthetic construction of controlled spaces for the display of art figured in social politics. Describing the middling ranges of the social scale, Barbara Furlotti's article considers merchant-antiquarians in sixteenth-century Rome. At this time, antiquities were one of the most desired commodities, sought after by elite collectors throughout Italy. Usually unearthed by common labourers, these objects needed knowledgeable brokers to reach potential elite buyers. Furlotti shows how a restricted group of specialists, who often teamed up as small companies (as in the case study of the Stampa brothers), moved

²⁷ The manner in which the *potenze* transferred strategies for group representation has been explored in detail in D. Rosenthal, 'The genealogy of empires: ritual politics and state building in early modern Florence', *I Tatti Studies*, 8 (2000), 197–234, and 'Big Piero, the empire of the meadow and the parish of Santa Lucia: claiming neighborhood in the early modern city', *Journal of Urban History*, 32 (2006), 677–692.

²⁸ Such strategies of use are also explored in S. Cavallo, *Artisans of the Body in Early Modern Italy: Identities, Families and Masculinities* (Manchester, 2007); for the elite paradigms see also F. Dennis and M. Ajmar-Wollheim (eds.), *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2006). See for example the recent collections: M. Ajmar-Wollheim and F. Dennis, 'Introduction: approaching the Italian renaissance interior: sources, methodologies, debates', *Renaissance Studies*, 20 (2006), 623–8, and R.J.M. Olson, P.L. Reilly and R. Shepherd (eds.), *The Biography of the Object in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Maldon and Oxford, 2005).

with ease between the public arena of the piazza where the objects were first sold and the courtly spaces of their collectors. As a mediating group, antiquarians were not associated with a specific place, but operated across social and architectural boundaries and were required to negotiate goods and identities, both for themselves and for their clients. Such merchant-antiquarians illustrate the sort of skills that were needed to negotiate what are too often perceived as impermeable boundaries – social and physical – between communities. They were facilitators who operated precisely at the intersection of otherwise separate groups.²⁹ In so doing, they eroded those hard boundaries, with the inherent potentialities for social mobility on the one hand, and cultural subterfuge on the other.

Stephanie Hanke's Genoese merchants, by contrast, were intent upon bolstering, displaying and controlling their status within the city and among visitors to it, through their careful patronage and regulation of access to the distinctive grottoes in the gardens of their palaces. This was a rather more common strategy for defining inclusion/exclusion from a group, and was most famously employed by the patrons of the antiquarian villas of sixteenth-century Rome.³⁰ Focusing on the ways in which choices of architectural patronage served to define membership of a particular community, the article highlights how a specific architectural artefact can be considered as a means through which the community of wealthy merchants and bankers defined itself in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Genoa. Here, then, the elite merchant community is defined by ownership of a particular luxury object, and clientage relationships are visually manifest by the granting of access to these exclusive sites.

It is to this same process of selection that operated around material objects and buildings that Flaminia Bardati's article also turns. She considers what at first sight might appear to be an obvious community, unified by national ties (like the Germans in Rosenthal's article), of the French cardinals in Rome between the second half of the fifteenth and the mid-sixteenth centuries. Belying expectations, these cardinals tended not to cluster residentially with the many French nationals in the city of Rome; rather their high status and loyalty to the French crown set them apart. Their choices conformed to patronage models prevalent among the College of Cardinals, while also asserting their special status as privileged subjects and representatives of the French king. The French cardinals

²⁹ Some parallels might be observed here to the way that recent work on Renaissance pharmacies has 'borrowed' the paradigms developed for later discussions of the coffee-house; for which see F. de Vivo, 'Pharmacies as centres of communication in early modern Venice', *Renaissance Studies*, 21 (2007), 505–21, at 506–7, and in the same journal S. Cavallo and D. Gentilcore, 'Spaces, objects and identities in early modern Italian medicine', 473–9, and E.S. Cohen, 'Miscarriages of apothecary justice: un-separate spaces of work and family in early modern Rome', 480–504.

³⁰ See most recently for these K.W. Christian, *Empire without End. Antiquities Collections in Renaissance Rome c. 1350–1527* (New Haven and London 2010).

in Rome represent a fairly small subset at the intersection between the curial elite and the community of French expatriates; their choices of residence, their cultural consumption and their patronage all reflected the dual nature of their Roman careers. By the mid-sixteenth century, however, the cardinals stood out, Bardati argues, for their exclusive model of consumption and display, specifically for the costly development of sophisticated villa complexes, to which access was tightly regulated.

The last three articles focus on cultural displays in public streets where social promiscuity could pose special challenges. A preference for restricted access to carefully designed environments like villas and grottoes is perhaps more understandable when we consider the intense contestation of Rome's main streets, discussed by Valeria Cafà. Her article shows how Roman aristocrats and prelates competed to build their palaces along the central via Papalis, so that these buildings might feature prominently during that street's many ceremonial processions. Collective patronage patterns are here probed to assess the extent to which the public space of the street emerged as a primary site for conflict between the long-established noble families of Rome, and the new yet powerful and wealthy church hierarchies. By articulating the social conflicts between these two distinct elite communities, this study reveals how even in the design and construction of such permanent artefacts as palaces, a prominent location might become the motive for division, and problematizes the overlapping definitions of community and neighbourhood.

While in Rome the primary ceremonial axis was a site for the contestation between native and non-native elites, in republican Siena, as Philippa Jackson shows, ritual and conflict might be more subtly played out in public space through dress. In Jackson's article, sumptuary rules and conspicuous display through clothing were the means by which urban groups performed their individual and collective identities in public. Legal restrictions of various kinds aimed at controlling displays of magnificence, especially by women. These sumptuary rules reflected ongoing tensions between, on the one hand, the aspirations of noble families that, as a social group, repeatedly sought to dominate the city by establishing a courtly culture and, on the other, the republican values upon which the city government rested. Infringement and enforcement of legislation that controlled dress in public space (as well as within the domestic interior), traces the transformation of the city's socio-political structures through the early sixteenth century.

The final article returns to the streets of Florence to look at how public performances of music and songs might serve in the self-definition of social groups. Rosenthal's ceremonial bands of artisans asserted their own ritual control over urban space by aping their superiors in establishing neighbourhood 'kingdoms' or even 'empires'. Inversely, Philippe Canguilhem shows how Duke Cosimo de' Medici appropriated the tradition of the popular brigades' *canti de' mestieri* by staging his

pageants in public, outside the court. In this way, Cosimo's courtiers, a subset of the Florentine aristocratic elite, made themselves visible within the urban fabric of streets and squares as they performed a new genre of sophisticated songs and music, often mounted on horseback and dressed in splendid attire. By subtly adapting established customs to craft an image of the city in line with his aristocratic aspirations, Cosimo's musicians thus managed to transform the city's soundscape and gradually to replace plebeian traditions with courtly ones.

This collection brings together a broad selection of studies, by scholars of varied disciplinary backgrounds, whose work draws from a diverse range of cities and crosses various social groups. The articles deal with palaces, gardens and grottoes, songs, pageants and carnivals, dress and textiles, the antiques trade, and the material goods and ritual practices of artisan communities. Each case uncovers how particular groups performed or displayed their community memberships within the urban environment. Each article, moreover, reveals the significance of place in the definition and modification of group identities, and in particular the agency of ritual practices in the articulation of socio-spatial relationships. Space, as Henri Lefebvre so influentially argued, is produced by the meaningful interaction between people and place; for historians, ritual practices offer privileged access-points to that interaction, where the seams of relationships can more clearly be detected and their significance effectively teased out.