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Defeat and Re-Playing Renaissance Civic Identity: The Academy of the Intronati in Siena

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UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

DEFEAT AND REPLAYING RENAISSANCE CIVIC IDENTITY:
THE ACADEMY OF THE INTRONATI IN SIENA

By

Carolyn Zimmerman

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty
of the University of Miami
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Coral Gables, Florida

December 2015

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THE ACADEMY OF THE INTRONATI IN SIENA

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Defeat and Replaying Renaissance Civic Identity:
The Academy of the Intronati in Siena.

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The study of how a literary academy shaped the transition of a sixteenth-century Italian republic into a subject city and defined the subsequent evolution of civic life. This transition involved a complete reimagining of what constituted a meaningful life, placing new importance on intellectual activities, cultural innovation, and rhetorical fluency. In this shift, the Intronati attempted to relegate traditional political activities to a secondary position, implicitly arguing that it was cultural leadership that should determine elite status in any society, rather than traditional political positions. This new vision of civic identity required the active participation of women, who were expected to attain the same level of education and embody many of the same behavioral norms as did men. The members of the Intronati – and affiliated women – used activities such as intellectual parlor games, theater, comportment treatises, orations, dialogues, and other literary pursuits to develop these ideas and broadcast knowledge of their new priorities to an educated elite throughout the Italian peninsula. The efforts of the Intronati foreshadowed the revolutionary salons of eighteenth-century France, which many historians identify as important catalysts in the transition to modernity. This project rethinks the crisis of sixteenth-century Italy that saw once proud and independent city-states fall to larger powers from throughout Europe.

Dedicated to my grandparents,
Max and Connie Clouse,
who taught me the true meaning of love.

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Introduction
C'era una volta a Siena:
Myth-making and Resistance in the Tuscan Hills

The general period of crisis that disrupted nearly every aspect of life in sixteenth-century Italy and Europe caused many individuals to re-evaluate their priorities in life and find creative ways to respond to the political, cultural, and religious turbulence surrounding them. In the once-powerful Tuscan hill town of Siena, a group of leading aristocratic and intellectual men reacted by founding a literary academy, the Accademia degli Intronati di Siena, in 1525. Siena itself had been in a period of long decline by 1525, but the city's prospects only grew worse in the early decades of the Intronati. Between 1552 and 1555, the Sieneese fought a defensive war against the combined forces of the Florentine republic and the Holy Roman Empire. This war left Siena subjugated, destroyed, and the aristocrats who had previously defined their superiority based on active participation in civic matters without a purpose in life. They now existed in an inherently inferior position – unless they could redefine what it meant to be important figures on the Italian Peninsula. In the academy, they sought to do just that. There, they found distraction, as well as a forum to creatively reshape their identities as leaders in a new age. Members of the Intronati attempted to redefine concepts of what comprised a meaningful life around intellectual merit and literary accomplishment; rhetorical wit and fluency; and cultural leadership based on innovation. Including women in their endeavors, these new ideas were revolutionary while also balanced with gestures towards traditional ideals. The efforts of the Intronati were part of the general European reaction

to the crises of the sixteenth century. Still, to understand these efforts, one must first understand Siena's history, including the perseverance that characterized Sieneese attempts to retain independence and their historic glorification of women.

Refashioning Retreat as Relocation

On April 21, 1555, the defeated French commander Blaise de Monluc departed Siena with a ragged crew of approximately 2000 French soldiers and Sieneese citizens. This motley group made their way to Montalcino, a Tuscan hilltop town that had remained largely unaffected by three years of warfare and the eighteen-month siege that had decimated its larger neighbor. The Republic of Siena, a commune with a history that stretched back to 1167, had been defeated by the combined forces of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, the Florentine Medici family, and a large ensemble of mercenary troops from throughout Europe. Though it had been an independent republic in name only during the decades leading up to 1555, this defeat marked the official end of the city's sovereignty. Sieneese territory fell into the hands of Charles V, who bestowed the land upon his son Philip (soon to be King Philip II of Spain).¹ In July 1557, Philip sold Siena to the city's ancestral enemies: the Florentines, led by Cosimo de' Medici. The city would never again be independent. This, however, was not the full story – nor even the end of the republic itself.²

¹ As Philip was then King of England through his marriage to Mary I, Siena was a territory of the English crown briefly during this period.

² For more on this and general Sieneese history, particularly related to Siena's increasingly factional divisions and the guardianship of Charles V, see Giuliano Catoni, *A Short History of Siena* (Pisa: Pacini Editore S.p.A., 2000); Judith Hook, *Siena: A City and its History*. (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979); Langton Douglas, *Storia politica e sociale della Repubblica di Siena*. (Rome: Multigrafica Editrice, 1969); Alessandro Orlandini, *Piccola Storia di Siena: Dalle Origine al Terzo Millennio* (Siena: Protagon Editori, 2006); Fabrizio Nevola, *Siena: Constructing the Renaissance City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

Rather than accepting their devastating (and obvious) defeat, the 2000 men and women who followed Monluc to Montalcino formed a new government: the Republic of Siena, retired to Montalcino. As such, they resumed administrative activities, even coining new money under this name. And there they remained until the Peace of Cateau-Cambresis in August of 1559 finally forced them to acknowledge Florentine rule.³ As Judith Hook has observed, this Montalcinese attempt to constitute a republic-in-exile showed an impressive and “continued belief in the ideals which some Sieneese believed to have been at stake during their struggle with Charles V,” yet also demonstrated “little understanding of reality.”⁴ In Montalcino, these Sieneese exiles engaged in self-deception that bordered on myth-making as they imagined their own sovereignty, even after the fall of their republic. This defiance and refusal to accept frustrating political developments epitomized the experience of Siena and many Sieneese institutions throughout much of the sixteenth century. Paralleling the Montalcinese efforts, the Academy of the Intronati Intronati emerged in the sixteenth century, practicing similar forms of deception while continuing centuries-old Sieneese traditions, particularly those that promoted women as intellectual models and cultural leaders.

On the surface, the academy did not appear to have anything to do with politics. Indeed, it proclaimed that it existed in a world apart from the everyday, indifferent to worldly affairs. Beneath a façade of indifference, however, the Sieneese Intronati worked within the confines of a complicated political environment to redefine Sieneese civic

³ Modern Montalcinese, of course, continue to revel in the fact that they were never defeated militarily during the age of Florentine expansion. What is overlooked in this telling of the story is that Florence never actually attempted to seize what was seen as a small and fairly insignificant territory with some curiously defiant Sieneese hiding within.

⁴ Judith Hook, "Habsburg Imperialism and Italian Particularism: The Case of Charles V and Siena," *European History Quarterly* 9 (1979): 283-312.

identity. This new conception of Sienese identity, centered on a new set of values, revolved less around traditional republican ideals and, instead, focused on a new cultural leadership that, ostensibly, existed separate from the political world. Creating this new identity, the Intronati engaged in a form of myth-making themselves, as they visualized a world in which they could redefine civic values – within Siena and throughout the peninsula – simply by proclaiming new priorities.

Because of the aristocratic status of its members, even after 1555, intellectual and political spheres naturally and repeatedly crossed paths within the Intronati in interesting and informative ways. Members challenged the political, religious, gendered, and sexual values that defined Sienese civic life. Because of these challenges, the Intronati frequently drew the ire of Florence and the Catholic Church, which was increasingly concerned with religious, as well as cultural, uniformity as reforming voices from northern Europe challenged its authority. Ignoring these disciplining voices, however, the members of the academy (just as the rebels in Montalcino) continued to insist on their own reality. The Florentine state had virtually ignored the Montalcinese. However, they recognized that under the playful and literary mask worn by the Intronati a more challenging and dangerous group thrived. In recognition of this threat, Cosimo de' Medici ordered the group disbanded. This censorship illustrates the potential power of such a group. Still, the story of the Intronati is a complex one that can only be understood by going back even further and putting this story in context with the long history of Siena before its fall, and, particularly, the stories the Sienese told themselves about this history. Just as the myths told by the Sienese about their own origins and history required self-deception and aggrandizement, the Intronati presented a misleading image of themselves

based on many of the same stories and beliefs. The following discussion will provide background for these connections.

Under the Shadow of Montaperti

Throughout Renaissance Italy, beliefs – whether in the realities of current events, historical affairs, or origin myths passed down as fact – were powerful forces. In Siena, especially, belief was a powerful tool that shaped the way individuals and communities interacted with their environments. After the fall of Siena, the Academy of the Intronati seemed to self-consciously take charge of this practice, manipulating memories of their own history while also molding the identity of Siena itself out of these developing myths. They attempted to position the city and the academy as a guiding force for all of Italy during a period marked by revolutionary events and ideologies. Redefining *virtù* and honor, they embraced a cultural philosophy that included women as important figures in what they understood to be a meaningful life, focused on academic and cultural accomplishment. Doing so, the Intronati self-consciously embraced the new, effectively distinguishing their aims from those that historians identify as humanists. This was a typically Sieneese practice that seems to go back to its earliest inhabitants.

Many stories exist to explain the origins of Siena, built on the three low ridgelines that meet in the center of the city. The primary account tells of the two sons of Remus, one of the twins who, after being nursed by a she-wolf, founded Rome. This story claims that upon Remus's death, his sons Senius and Ascius fled the eternal city, one on a black horse and one on a white, until they settled at what is now Siena. Upon arrival at this site, Senius lit two sacrificial fires to thank the gods Apollo and Diana for their safe escape from Rome. Black smoke rose from the fire dedicated to Apollo and white from that to

Diana. Based on this story, the Sienese coat of arms is simple, a solid white on the top over an equally solid black on the bottom. According to these stories, Siena took her name from Senius. By connecting the origin of Siena to the origin of Rome, the story gave legitimacy to the Tuscan town as well.

Though this is the primary origin story for Siena, others exist as well. Another myth holds that, in ancient times, three warring tribes lived on each of three hills that connected in the center of what is now Siena. In this story, these tribes maintained the lowest area between the three – what is today the grand Piazza del Campo, the focus of social and civic life for the city – as a place of peace. These three hills now form the organizational units of the city, called *terze*.⁵ A final mythical story that remained central to Sienese visions of the city, for which they were mocked by the likes of Dante, was the legend of the river Diana. The Diana was thought to be an underground river that, despite the lack of any evidence of its existence, they believed to flow beneath the foundations of the city. This river, the story explains, is why the original inhabitants settled on the Sienese hills. It does not explain why no trace of the river remained.⁶ Despite this rich mythical tradition, the only thing we know for certain is that Etruscans settled the area in the middle of the first millennium BCE. Just like so many other elements of Sienese history, evidence for much more than this comes primarily from stories told much later.

A clearer picture of Sienese history emerges in the medieval period. In 1167, Siena declared independence from the governorship of a local bishop. By 1180, the city

⁵ These are the Terza di San Marino, the Terza di Camollia, and the Terza di Città – the latter frequently referred to as the oldest part of the city.

⁶ “*Tu li vedrai tra quella gente vana che spera in Talamone, e perderagli più di speranza ch’a trovar la Diana,*” Dante, Purgatorio XIII. Talamone, now in the province of Grosseto, was Siena’s primary sea port, located in the agricultural area called the Maremma. See also: Douglas, *Storia politica e sociale della Repubblica di Siena*, 73-77. Ferdinand Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Mediaeval Commune*. (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909), 115.

had its own constitution and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa confirmed their right to self-rule and Siena quickly became one of the most powerful, well-connected cities in Tuscany. Much of Siena's development during this period was directly related to a pilgrimage and trade route that passed through its center. The Via Francigena was the most important route of its kind that connected Rome to the north, including the fairs of Champagne. In the north of Italy, this route connected with another road that led through the Veneto and the areas that are today Austria, Germany, and Poland, thereby linking Siena to these far-flung places as well.

Siena thrived economically during these early centuries. Silver mines in Sieneese territories allowed the fledgling state to mint its own coins within several years of declaring independence. In the early thirteenth century, the Sieneese established banking offices throughout Europe, financing the affairs of kings and merchants. Beginning in the 1230s, the client that perhaps increased their stature the most was the papacy. Between approximately 1250 and 1270, they served as the primary papal bankers; the Piccolomini and Buonsignori families became particularly noted for these banking activities. Though they served the Vatican, the Sieneese were officially Ghibelline in loyalties – that is, they generally supported imperial policies. With their mercantile and banking interests, combined with their ties to the papacy and the empire, the Sieneese were extraordinarily well-connected. As Sieneese income grew, the population similarly exploded between 1250 and 1328 from approximately 15,000 to 50,000; estimates place the population on the eve of the Black Death as high as 60,000. Including the population of the surrounding *contado*, these estimates easily place the population of Sieneese territory at over 100,000.⁷

⁷ Hayden B. J. Maginnis, *The World of the Early Sieneese Painter*. (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001). Orlandini, *Piccolo Storia di Siena*.

In the middle of this rapid expansion, the Battle of Montaperti in 1260 was perhaps the most defining moment in Sienese history prior to 1555; indeed, it remains central to Sienese identity even today. On Thursday, September 2, 1260, Florentine troops approached the Sienese fortress at Montaperti and demanded that the Sienese surrender. City representatives returned to Siena with this order and recommended that the city acquiesce. After days of praying, however, the Sienese decided instead to unite as a city and offer the keys of the city gates to the Virgin Mary. Placing themselves under her protection, the fate of Siena was in divine hands. Refusing to surrender to the Florentines, they went to battle on Saturday in what was the largest battle to ever take place in Tuscany, involving almost 80,000 men.⁸ Despite every expectation, the Sienese emerged victorious. This victory, however, did not last long as the Sienese fell to the Florentines at Colle di Val d'Elsa in 1269. In spite of this turn of events, Montaperti was and remains a defining moment for Siena. Significantly, the first book published in Siena was *La sconfitta di Monte Aperto*, in 1502, and modern Sienese continue to unite in memory of the battle. The Battle of Montaperti would prove to be the last time that the Sienese defeated the Florentines, and battles between these two neighbors were not rare.

Still, their most successful political regime was yet to come. Even when compared to other Italian city-states, the political situation in Siena was especially tumultuous. Though some historians have described the Sienese republic as “simple,” the republic went through a complex series of organizational systems that favored and excluded various families and factions in different periods.⁹ One historian even used Siena to

⁸ Most sources agree on this figure, though the size of the armies may be exaggerated, another mythological element of these stories.

⁹ That is to say, that the republic “rested upon a direct hierarchy of government between capital city and subordinate communes, in contrast to the triangular relationships between capitals, subject cities, and the

exemplify the factionalism that weakened many European states during the medieval and early modern periods.¹⁰ Between 1287 and 1355, however, the government of the *Nove* ushered in a period of remarkable stability and urban development. The Nine Governors and Defenders of the Commune was comprised of members of the Siena nobility and *popolo grosso* who were elected for two months.¹¹ In this system of governance, fifty-three magnate families were excluded from most offices; lawyers were also prevented from participation.¹² At the same time, the *Nove* needed support from many of these same powerful families in order to enforce its policies, giving magnates more influence than they would have otherwise. This was a fraught system and street warfare erupted frequently, particularly between two powerful families, the Tolomei and Salimbeni.¹³ Despite the conflicts experienced under the *Nove*, this regime was especially adept at utilizing tax incomes for the advancement of Sieneese urban planning, including the creation of a water supply system widely renowned for its technological significance and beauty; advancing the university; and constructing various public works including the Palazzo Pubblico, its Torre del Mangia, and the Piazza del Campo. The cathedral also

latter's *contadi*, or between princely overlords, quasi-autonomous city-states, and their dependent territories." Tom Scott, *The City-State in Europe, 1000-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 103.

¹⁰ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West: 1400-1700*. (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 12.

¹¹ For more on the Nine, see William M. Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena Under the Nine, 1287-1355*. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1981), especially 23-116.

¹² Theoretically, these families were excluded from political power as they were not eligible to hold offices in the government. However, these families generally had extraordinary wealth and therefore continued to hold some influence in the city.

¹³ As an indication of the legitimizing power of ancient bloodlines, the Tolomei of Siena claimed to be descended from the Ptolomies of Egypt. In a 1318 rebellion involving the butchers' guild, the Tolomeis were implicated. For more on this, see Timothy Hyman, *Sieneese Painting: The Art of a City-Republic (1278-1477)* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2003). In what is perhaps a sign of the seemingly eternal nature of Sieneese conflicts, the two principle squares on the main thoroughfare in the northern part of the city today, barely a hundred meters apart, are named after these two ancient families.

expanded under their rule.¹⁴ While the *Nove* defined the city physically, their rule was marked by much street-level violence. Later generations, however, would ignore these hostilities and paint Siena under the *Nove* as a serene republic rivaling that of Venice.

Even under the *Nove*, however, Siena was subjected to a series of disasters, undercutting the city's stability and forever changing its trajectory. Like elsewhere in Europe, the plague of 1348 was disastrous. In Siena, it killed at least one half of the population. This outbreak proved destructive to more than just the population. One of the massive architectural projects begun in Siena under the *Nove*, the expansion of the Cathedral, had just begun when the plague hit in 1348. This expansion would have made the Cathedral the largest in all of Christendom; most importantly, of course, the Sienese Cathedral would have become larger than Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence. One wall of the expansion was completed prior to the outbreak, effectively halting construction. In the ensuing centuries this one wall, jutting out from the hilltop Duomo, served as a continual reminder to the Sienese of their failed ambitions. Though the plague returned in 1363, 1374, 1383, 1389, and 1399-1400, continuing to ravage the population, the damage had been done. Siena did not regain its pre-plague population until the twentieth century.

This failure to rebuild was not for lack of trying, however. As the city attempted to recover, the *Nove* were forced to raise taxes, making them exceedingly unpopular. In 1355, (Emperor-elect) Charles IV of Luxembourg arrived, lodging in the city with his army. His participation was instrumental in staging a coup that ended the reign of the *Nove* and brought a new regime to power. This new system was that of the *Dodici*, the

¹⁴ For more on the water supply system, see Michael P. Kucher, *The Water Supply System of Siena, Italy: The Medieval Roots of the Modern Networked City* (New York: Routledge, 2004). For more on the university (the first in Tuscany), see Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 45-56.

Twelve, which proved to be more open to the *popolo*, including artisans and shopkeepers.¹⁵ Rule by the *Dodici* lasted only to 1368, followed by the *Riformatori* (1368-85) and the *Priori* (1385-99). Each of these regimes were relatively independent from magnate influence, leading to repeated rebellions from these families and increased instability within the city. These rapid changes each effectively marked a step in the long march of decline that only culminated in the wars of 1552-1555. Still, each regime change was an effort to reclaim the glory and strength from the time of the *Nove*.

Political decline only exacerbated further crises in the Sieneese territory. Decades of near continual mercenary warfare caused financial strain, as did years of bad harvests and famine. Pilgrims and the money associated with them fled Sieneese territory as banditry and other criminal activities made the region increasingly dangerous.¹⁶ In 1399, Siena submitted itself to the rule of the Milanese tyrant Gian Galeazzo Visconti, though his death in 1402 effectively reinstated Sieneese sovereignty.¹⁷ A period of relative stability followed. In the fifteenth century, Siena began to reemerge as a city of stature, culminating in the election of the Sieneese Enea Silvio Piccolomini as Pope Pius II in 1458. Though the Catholic Church was no longer the unrivaled political power it had

¹⁵ For a full account of this coup, see Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune*, 299-314.

¹⁶ Between the first raid in 1342 and their submission to Visconti in 1399, Siena experienced at least 37 individual raids. Though these raids did not technically constitute warfare, they were very expensive for the Sieneese as they had to continually come up with bribes and extortion payments in order to avoid war. William Caferro compares the Sieneese experience with mercenary raids in the fourteenth century to the Cold War, as both involved “continuous and debilitating military expenditure without declared warfare.” (xvi) Caferro speculates that not only did Siena’s location on the Via Francigena between Florence and Rome (both of whom employed mercenaries frequently) contribute to the frequency with which they were raided, but that the sheer “visual opulence” created under the *Nove* made Siena a tempting target for a thief of any method. William Caferro, *Mercenary Companies and the Decline of Siena* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). See also Anabel Thomas, *Garrisoning the Borderlands of Medieval Siena: Sant’Angelo in Colle: Frontier Castle under the Government of the Nine (1287-1355)* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011).

¹⁷ For more on the campaigns of Gian Galeazzo Visconti and the ambitions of the Milanese state, see Guido Ruggiero, *The Renaissance in Italy: A Social and Cultural History of the Rinascimento* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), especially 169-179, 188-9, 199, 321.

been in previous centuries, it was still a formidable institution and this leadership brought renewed political potency to Siena. In addition to canonizing the Siennese Catherine di Giacomo di Benincasa (better known as Catherine of Siena), Pius II also sent much money to Siena, allowing the city to pursue building projects similar to those that had brought glory to the city under the *Nove*.¹⁸

Over these frequently chaotic developments, the shadow of Montaperti loomed large. As Brad Franco points out, the stories about Siena's triumph in 1260 echo many of the same principles endorsed by Ambrogio Lorenzetti's famous frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena, *The Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, completed in 1340. At Montaperti, Franco says that "every class of society played a role in saving Siena: rich bankers, merchants, artisans, women, the elderly, clerics, as well as the city's civic and religious leaders."¹⁹ In the Lorenzetti frescoes as well, men and women are seen within the city walls and in the countryside working for the good of the commune and celebrating its achievements.²⁰ These shared ideals hint that the story of Montaperti may have been written (or at the very least polished) in the century after the battle itself. Indeed, Franco finds that it was not until the fifteenth century that the Legend of Montaperti solidified and the key donation to Mary was written into local chronicles of what remained the high point in Siennese military history – 1260. The Siennese reportedly placed their city in the hands of the Virgin at least four more times, repeatedly coming together to seek the protection of that paragon of feminine virtue. The last of these

¹⁸ I will discuss the significance of Catherine of Siena in establishing a tradition of strong women in Siena in Chapter Three. For more on her, see Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1987).

¹⁹ Brad Franco, *The Legend of Montaperti*. (Siena: Betti Editrice, 2012), 31.

²⁰ For more on the frescoes, see Ruggiero, *The Renaissance in Italy*, especially 69-72.

donations took place in 1555, during the siege that finally led to the end of the Republic of Siena.²¹

Particularly in context of Florence's inexorable advances into Siennese territory over the next three centuries, the tale of Mary coming to Siena's rescue at Montaperti seems to be a strange exception and, due to that, a product of civic pride. However, it is likely just a story. Franco demonstrates that there is little historical evidence indicating that the Siennese ever donated the keys of the city to the Virgin Mary leading up to Montaperti and that some of the primary characters in the story probably never existed at all. Instead, there is plenty of evidence of general Siennese devotion to Mary in the centuries leading up to Montaperti, as it was in many cities throughout Catholic Europe.²² Due to the general silence in the sources regarding this specific event, it seems as if the key donation should be read in the same manner as the Siennese origin myths. This story, rather than tying Siena to Rome, connected the city with the Virgin Mother while also emphasizing the heroic actions of the Siennese in overcoming their foes, the Florentines.²³ This belief in the power of unity is one that would ring true throughout the sixteenth century, in the final decades of the Republic. As with so many other elements of Siennese history, later interpretations of Montaperti and the collective memory of the battle proved to be more influential than the actual events themselves.

²¹ John Koenig, "Mary, sovereign of Siena, Jesus, King of Florence: siege religion and the ritual submission (1260-1637)," *Bullettino senese di storia patria*. (2008): 43-163.

²² Indeed, this Marian devotion when back to at least 913. For a full analysis of the evidence, see Franco, *The Legend of Montaperti*, 14-20. For arguments that the traditional narrative is correct, see Patrizia Turrini, "La memoria senese di Montaperti," in *Montaperti: per I 750 anni dalla battaglia: aspetti della guerra e della pace nel Medioevo: incontro italo-danese*, ed. Mario Ascheri (Florence, 2010), 75-115; Diana Webb, *Patrons and Defenders: The Saints in the Italian City States* (New York: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996), 251-275; Gerald Parsons, *Siena, Civil Religion, and the Siennese*. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 1-31.

²³ Franco comes to similar conclusions, 35.

Following the turmoil of the 1480s, the *Nove* returned to power for one last attempt to make Siena great. Shortly thereafter, a member of the *Nove* named Pandolfo Petrucci emerged as a leader and combined his personal control of military and finances with several strategic foreign alliances and assassinations to assume a position as virtual tyrant of the city by about 1500. Petrucci was an extremely savvy ruler but, as Machiavelli famously warned regarding self-made rulers, this was unfortunately not a hereditary ability. After his death in 1512, Petrucci's position passed to his inept son Borghese. Despite the ineptitude of Pandolfo's heirs, the family maintained control of Siena until 1524, until almost the exact moment that the Intronati emerged as a literary coalition comprised primarily of members of Siena's political and noble elite.

Today, there is no sign remaining of the castle at Montaperti, having been destroyed by the Florentines in the battles of 1552-1555. Sieneese animosity directed towards the Florentines continues to this day. The rivalry, however, is complicated and its significance cannot be overstated. Much of this animosity is based on stories that may have more base in myth than reality. This does not mean that they are any less important or make the case of Siena unique during this period. This same antipathy towards Florence colored the experiences, attitudes, and behavior of many Sieneese during the pre-modern era and, particularly, shaped the development of the Academy of the Intronati.

Origins of the Academies

The Academy of the Intronati was part of a long tradition of academies that went back to ancient times. The word "academy" originated with the group of philosophers that orbited around Plato in the Athenian Grove of Academe. However, the concept evolved drastically prior to the early modern period. Proto-academies, with little structure

and fewer governing regulations, began appearing in the fifteenth century.²⁴ Academies flourished in the sixteenth century, developing more organization. Many had political connections and patronage. In Florence the Accademia Fiorentina, founded on November 1, 1540, under the patronage of Cosimo de' Medici and led by Marsilio Ficino, was decidedly inspired by Plato and the original Academy. Even with such impressive ties, this academy is the matter of much modern scholarly debate, as some argue that the Accademia Fiorentina never existed as an academy at all. James Hankins argues that when Ficino spoke of Cosimo de' Medici's desire to "form a kind of academy," he was using the word "*academia*" to mean *libri platonici*. However, it does seem that a group identifying itself as an academy met in Florence with the support of the Medici.²⁵ Many other groups that called themselves academies were temporary, informal gatherings in which professional and amateur scholars met to exchange ideas.

Considered in this context, the case of the Accademia Fiorentina illustrates the fact that, due to the diversity of academies, generalizations are difficult and terminology is important. The word poses difficulties for modern scholars in other ways as well. Frequently, "academy" refers to formal educational institutions, such as universities.

²⁴ Michele Maylender's five-volume encyclopedia on Italian academies is still unrivaled in its scope as a primary source on many of these groups. Though much of his information relies on later, secondary material, and should be used with discretion, it is a vital source when beginning an investigation into any of these groups. Michele Maylender, *Storia delle Accademia d'Italia* (Bologna: L. Cappelli, 1926-1930).

²⁵ John Hankins, "The Myth of the Platonic Academy of Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 44 (1991): 429-475. For more information about humanists related to Florentine academies and political thought, see Felix Gilbert, "Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari: A Study on the Origin of Modern Political Thought," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 12 (1949): 99-131. For a further discussion of the cultural milieu of the Accademia Fiorentina, see Deana Basile, "*Fasseli gratia per poetessa*: Duke Cosimo I de' Medici's Role in the Florentine Literary Circle of Tullia d'Aragona," in *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler. (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), 134-147. Another Florentine academy, the Accademia della Crusca plays an important role not only in the history of Italian academies but also the ascendancy of the Tuscan dialect. They wrote the first comprehensive dictionary of Tuscan in 1612. In 1783, the Accademia Crusca, along with other academies, merged with the Accademia Fiorentina. Accademia della Crusca, *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca, con tre indici delle voci, locuzioni, e proverbi latini, e greci, posti per entro l'opera* (Venezia: Giouanni Alberti, 1612).

However, academies in the sixteenth century (particularly in Italy) frequently formed in direct opposition to universities and their strictures. Usage of the word “academy” in this project reflects early modern understandings of the word and does not indicate university affiliations. Rather than using the modern “academician,” however, I will use the Italian “*accademici*,” the word they used to describe themselves, to indicate members of academies similar to the Intronati.

Elsewhere in Italy, academies also received support and encouragement from political leaders. In Naples, King Alfonso I encouraged the creation of the Academia Pontaniana.²⁶ While some academies received similar political support, they also served as important sites for opposition. Frances Yates argued that while the same Academia Pontaniana was popular under local rule, it was also "a refuge from the confusion, later developing into foreign tyranny" of the Spanish.²⁷ This observation pertains especially to the Intronati during Siena’s sixteenth-century period of political rupture. As local governments increasingly lost their independence throughout Italy during this period, academies channeled frustrations elites experienced at the loss of real political power into strategies to redefine nobility and civic life. These strategies eschewed traditional political life, a pathway now closed to these *accademici* in any case, and redefined honor and *virtù* in new ways.

Many academies required their members to adopt academic pseudonyms in academic settings. On the surface these pseudonyms, which generally reflected

²⁶ Jerry H. Bentley, *Politics and Culture in Renaissance Naples* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987), 57 and 94.

²⁷ In her essay, Frances Yates decried in 1949 the lack of a cohesive and modern history of Italian academies, calling for someone to fill this void. To this date, her cry has not been answered. Frances Amelia Yates, "The Italian Academies" in *Renaissance and Reform: The Italian Contribution*, ed. Frances A. Yates. (London: Routledge, 1993), v. 2, 6-29.

something about the member named, seem to be further evidence of a separation from everyday affairs. Already by 1468 *academici* in Rome used these names.²⁸ While implying that the academy was a space apart from the external world, these names also presented *academici* with a form of cover for activities that would, in normal circumstances, be politically dangerous. The names were a mask under which the *academici* could pretend to exist in a fictional, ludic world while deeply questioning the limits of their real-world circumstances.²⁹ While these academies proved less formal and regulated than those in Tuscany, the fifteenth-century Roman academies served, as John D'Amico has importantly argued, "as both the regulators of opinion and the disseminators of opinion among the Roman humanists."³⁰ Academies served as places of social cohesion and encouraged the deployment of ideas formulated by their members. These possibilities are crucial to understand the role that academies played shaping informal reactions to political change or stagnation. Academic responses could quickly turn into real challenges through the actions of the influential men that comprised these groups.

Sixteenth-century Italian academies reflected further developments as well. In 1976 Richard Samuels argued that they played an important role in shaping the intellectual and cultural life of their age in ways that modern scholars had not understood or sufficiently probed. He argued that by using the vernacular, rather than the traditional Latin of early humanists and the universities, academies spread the fruits of their work, both innovative and traditional, to a wider audience than universities and traditional

²⁸ David S. Chambers, "The Earlier 'Academies' in Italy" in *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. D. S. Chambers and F. Quiviger (London: The Warburg Institute, 1995), 7. On the Roman academies, see R. J. Palermino, "The Roman Academy, the Catacombs and the Conspiracy of 1468," *Archivum historiae pontificiae*, 18 (1980): 117-55; John F. D'Amico, "The Roman Academies" in *Renaissance Humanism in Papal Rome*, ed. John F. D'Amico. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 89-111.

²⁹ This, I believe, is similar to the purpose of comedic characters in *Intronati* theatrical productions and dialogues throughout the sixteenth century, which I will discuss in Chapter Five.

³⁰ D'Amico, 91.

intellectual groups had reached. Thus, they formed a new model for later intellectual organizations. Particularly in the case of the *Infiammati* in Padua, usage of the vernacular language proved essential to distinguish academies from contemporary universities. In Padua, however, this choice unfortunately seems to have contributed to the academy's quick dissolution.³¹

Arguments for the importance of the vernacular did not begin with the *Infiammati* and did not end with their demise. Usage of the vernacular, some argue, actually originated with the *Intronati* of Siena, spreading to Padua when an *Intronato* named Alessandro Piccolomini (*Il Stordito*) moved there for study at the university.³² Indeed, he was one of the founders of the Paduan academy. Though the *Intronati* closed several times in periods of crisis, it proved more resilient than the *Infiammati* and helped to usher in a new age of academies in Italy. This age corresponded with the disappearance of the city-states that had previously defined the organization of life on the Italian peninsula. At least for some noblemen, these academies became central to re-thinking concepts of what a meaningful life entailed while developing a new cultural leadership based on intellectual merit. For the *Intronati*, this raised the possibility of retaining a position of high status based on their cultural fluency even as their republic collapsed around them.

By the middle of the sixteenth century, “the academy” had changed drastically from the original Platonic idea and took many forms. Some characteristics, however,

³¹ Richard Samuels demonstrates that the *Infiammati* was so radically popular that it drew a large audience of foreign university students whose Italian was too poor to follow academic work in the vernacular, leading to the group quickly dissolving and merging back into the traditional university, where Latin was king. The use of the vernacular in academic settings, however, was another indication that *accademici* were to avoid subjects such as law and theology already sufficiently covered in academies. BNCf, *Filze Rinuccini*, 10, f. 4. c. 7. Richard S. Samuels, "Benedetto Varchi, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement," *Renaissance Quarterly* 29:4 (Winter 1976): 599-634.

³² This Piccolomini was of the same Piccolomini family that had gained much wealth through their earlier banking activities and that birthed two popes.

persisted. Yates defined the academy simply, as “an institution devoted to research, or to the perfection of some art.”³³ Most academies had a broad purpose, beyond simply bringing together a group of like-minded, educated intellectuals to meet at certain times to discuss their works and ideas. Many had a standard meeting place, though these ranged from *palazzi* to their gardens, from courts to catacombs, and from private homes to designated rooms in public spaces.³⁴ Many groups met informally and had no written set of rules or guidelines. As the sixteenth century progressed, however, these groups increasingly became well-structured institutions with an explicit purpose and rules requiring participation from their members. The Accademia degli Intronati di Siena was an important part of this development.³⁵

L'Accademia degli Intronati di Siena

According to Siennese lore, six noblemen founded the Academy of the Intronati in 1525 after a law professor confronted them for not taking their legal studies seriously enough.³⁶ Focusing on various literary pursuits they were, apparently, distracted from law. This professor called them "Intronati," which English-speaking scholars have

³³ Yates, 6.

³⁴ Chambers summarizes the main characteristics of an academy as: "Networks of literary associates and friends, informal groupings - often short-lived - located in a particular city, villa, palace or household: these seem to provide the commonest pattern or model promoting use of the word 'academia' from the late fifteenth century." Chambers, "The Earlier 'Academies' in Italy," 13.

³⁵ Indeed, in Scipione Bargagli's 1569 *Delle lodi dell'accademie*, he claimed that the form of the Intronati was based on the Platonic model of academies. Using Eric Cochrane's translation, this model came from the “virtuous conversations for the comfort, utility, and recreation of this our mortal life” between Plato's associates, “among peaceful woods and pleasant fields...a mile away from the city of Athens.” Eric W. Cochrane, *Tradition and Enlightenment in the Tuscan Academies (1690-1800)* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 23. See also, Hook, *Siena*, 208.

³⁶ This may have been a trope in Italian academies and deserves further examination. Lorenzo Lenzi of the aforementioned *Infiammati* faced criticism from his uncle Cardinal Niccolo Gaddi for neglecting his legal studies while participating in academic activities. This could be related to the admonition by Sperone Speroni and other like-minded *accademici* that the academy was not suited to study or discussion of law. It does seem to echo the Intronati vision that the academy was a place of aristocratic play in contrast to the world of work (including legal work) outside the academy. This instance was mentioned in Samuels, "Benedetto Varchi, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement," and Florinda Cerreta, *Alessandro Piccolomini* (Siena: Accademia degli Intronati, 1960).

translated variously as "Dazed," "Stunned," "Bewildered," "Thunderstruck," and a variety of other derisive adjectives. The Sieneſe embraced the insult, taking this humorous title as their own, and met under the emblem of the *Zucca*, or pumpkin.³⁷ Representing the academy, the complete emblem featured a pumpkin with two pestles and the motto "*Meliora Latent*," or "the better things are hidden [within]."³⁸ Combined, these referred to the practice of storing salt in a hollowed pumpkin and also the Tuscan proverb that a man with no brains "has no salt in the pumpkin."³⁹ I will discuss these representations more thoroughly later in this dissertation. Here, they indicate that the external presentation of the Intronati and their literary works did not reflect their true content; the husk of the pumpkin hid the quality and quantity of refined salt stored within.

Coming directly out of a university encounter, in some ways the foundation of the Intronati represented many elements of academic life in early modern Italy. Though many of these groups had their own constitutions and formal rules, they existed outside

³⁷ *Zucca* may be literally translated as a squash or, specifically, a pumpkin. However, as the *Zucca* of the Intronati is used much more metaphorically to represent the umbrella under which all Intronati interacted and directed the glory of their action towards, I am leaving the word untranslated here to represent a much greater concept than a winter gourd. Instead, it was a representative idea, a husk that contained, and hid, the endeavors of the academy.

³⁸ The motto and emblem are described in the earliest extant copy of the Intronati constitution from 1532. BCS Y.I.1. A later sixteenth-century document containing another copy of the Intronati constitution along with various other bureaucratic documents related to the academy is named, to this day, the *Zucchino*. BCS Y.I.3. In many ways, therefore, the pumpkin served as a true emblem representing the academy and using it as an interpretive tool is therefore justified.

³⁹ For a contemporary citation of the proverb, see Luca Contile, *Ragionamento di Luca Contile sopra la propriet  delle imprese con le particolari de gli Accademici Affidati et con le interpretationi et croniche* (Pavia: Girolamo Bartoli, 1574), 41v. For a further discussion of other possible meanings of the pumpkin and pestle emblem see George McClure, "Heresy at Play: Academies and the Literary Underground in Counter-Reformation Siena," *Renaissance Quarterly* 63:4 (Winter 2010): 1155-1156. Frances Yates took the Intronati explanation of the motto and emblem more literally, explaining "It was a domestic custom in their part of the world to store salt in that useful kitchen utensil the mortar, in order to keep it dry and fresh. We are to understand that the mortar shown in the device has salt in it, though we cannot see the salt, for, as the motto explains, the better things are hidden. It was the intention of the *accademici* to express by this device that, though they might be in appearance rude and simple, like the humble mortar and pestle used by the cook for preparing food in the kitchen, yet they contained hidden within them the salt of true wisdom, and that they proposed by their continuous literary labours and virtuous resolution to refine and purify this native wisdom, just as rough lumps of salt are broken up and refined when they are crushed by pestles in a mortar." While this is the direct translation of the Intronati message in these representations, I contend that the deception went even deeper. Yates, "The Italian Academies," 11.

of the university system. No formal education was necessary to be considered an *academico* of note and many of the groups, including the Intronati, were made up primarily of those frequently referred to as humanists. Even if the above anecdote describing the foundations of the academy is apocryphal, the Intronati used the story to position themselves in opposition to universities as an alternative and inherently less formal option for intellectual pursuit. The story, and their very name, also represents the generally playful nature of the academy's members. These *academici* worked to combine pleasure and more serious intellectual endeavors in their activities. The Intronati's existence outside formal political spaces, along with its ludic nature, allowed it and its members to be important civic actors during the upheavals that marked the academy's adolescence without drawing unwanted attention to the many subversive elements of their activities by pursuing them in an ostensibly apolitical forum.

In many ways, then, the Intronati forms part of a development parallel to the rigid disciplines of the university, even as the academy emerged out of the same university setting. Academies provided a communal space for men of learning to exercise their intellectual skills with like-minded individuals. In many places, however, this development involved far more. Particularly in places like Siena, where defeat destroyed long traditions of republicanism as the city assimilated into a foreign state, something needed to arise to replace the unifying features of the *patria*. Earlier republican traditions had provided a means for the ruling class to both work towards the continual betterment of the city while also demonstrating to the population their continued superiority. Civic rituals allowed them to display themselves and their brilliance. When defeat destroyed these opportunities, elites needed an alternative forum to display their superiority. As the

Republic of Siena slowly but inexorably devolved into a collection of bitterly opposed factions and ultimately fell under Florentine rule, the Academy of the Intronati emerged to assume that role.

In many ways, this evolution seems inevitable. For what were the Italian city-states other than the product of medieval noble families who had banded together to, somehow, form a governing body accepted by the rest of the population? These nobles ruled due to their perceived natural superiority. They also helped to define the character of the lands they controlled. This civic identity shaped perceptions of the city and its people and how they interacted with the world around them. It also positioned them in the broader world. As the Republic grew increasingly inept, the Academy of the Intronati emerged as a new association of aristocrats that sought to lead the city, even if only informally. This new congregation of leaders was explicitly separate from the political world as they worked to create a new civic identity that did not rely on political rule. Instead, they attempted to mold a cultural leadership that continued to justify their positions at the top of society.

This new identity created a new set of values for the elites of Siena. In many ways, this new identity and forum was more expansive than earlier conceptions. Because participation was no longer tied directly to the government, the meetings of the academy allowed for the contribution of those formerly excluded from leading roles within the city – notably, elite women. Women had played significant roles in Sienese life for centuries. Indeed, in Lorenzetti's *Good Government*, women are seen not only dancing, making music, and chatting with one another, but also as taking public, if admittedly not governing, roles. And, of course, Justice is a woman. One should not, however, make too

much of this iconography; these were common tropes in medieval and Renaissance Italy. The Intronati, however, encouraged women to participate fully in most of its activities. Indeed, some argued that the Intronati should use Tuscan instead of Latin specifically to allow women, who did not always have access to Latin educations, to actively participate in academic activities. Using the vernacular also served to symbolically separate the intents of the academy from those of the university. After the fall of Siena, many members of the academy subtly shifted their focus toward efforts at reconfiguring local civic identity away from a traditional, paternalistic republicanism and toward one grounded in academic accomplishments that, importantly, also included women. In this way, it differed significantly from the previous manifestation.

Particularly after 1555, Intronati usage of the term *patria*, traditionally indicative of one's homeland – here, the Republic of Siena – became more ambiguous. Instead of referring to the city, it seems to refer more generally to an association chosen voluntarily by its constituent members, one that nourished and protected the men (and women) within its embrace. As the Sieneese republic became increasingly impotent, unable to defend itself against foreign powers, the idea of a republic also transformed. It no longer referred to a type of government but rather to an institution similarly supported by the intellectual and propagandistic contributions of each of its members. Here, that was represented by an academy, the Intronati. The republic, as a governing institution, could no longer be the cohesive force that it once was. Instead, the Academy of the Intronati emerged as the new core feature of civic identity, or at least so its noble members believed.

The activities of the Intronati were designed to foster intellectual skill and rhetorical wit while also providing amusement. At the same time, the academy increasingly emphasized these merits of the mind as central to noble life on the Italian peninsula – and not only within the academy. Not content to isolate themselves and develop these in private, the Intronati also spread knowledge of their activities in published literature and through partnerships with other academies, virtually broadcasting their superiority to the rest of the continent. A central element of this message was that their academic skills and mental dexterity were qualities that should replace political leadership. In their willingness to think forward toward the future, they departed drastically from traditional Renaissance ideals that relied on the rebirth of ancient archetypes and practices. Perhaps even more remarkable was their inclusion of women in these activities. Echoing Plato, some members even argued that women would have been just as capable of ruling in a republic, if only they enjoyed the same educational opportunities as did men. Historians frequently argue that these statements were merely rhetorical games, not reflective of actual beliefs. However, the consistency and frequency of these arguments belie this interpretation. Rather, the Intronati viewed women as important, active participants in these newly redefined visions of honor, *virtù*, and happiness.

In *Power and Imagination*, Lauro Martines described a “concentration of tremors” that created a crisis in art, religious feeling, and, moreover, imagination in sixteenth-century Italy due to the various chaotic cultural shifts during the century. He depicted authors retreating “into imagination, seeking ideal models, perfect solutions, alternate worlds, or merely building castles in the air” in order to escape the devastating

reality around themselves.⁴⁰ Other modern scholars have also addressed the impact of late Renaissance crises during this period. Konrad Eisenbichler writes, "In times of crisis, when the fabric of a male-dominated society begins to be torn apart, women appear through the tears in the fabric to reveal, as in a slashed Renaissance sleeve, both their brilliance and their skills."⁴¹ The emergence of the Academy of the Intronati was part of this reaction, fine-tuned to a Sieneese noble public. This chaos was clearly not unique to Siena. Though this will be the subject of a future study and further research remains to be done, I expect that many of the same trends I found here would be recognizable in other failed republics throughout the Italian peninsula.

Revealing the Deceived as the Deceivers

In this project, I use the experience of the Academy of the Intronati, before and after 1555, as a window into the crises of sixteenth-century Italy. The first chapter, "A Tangle of Cocks for Siena: Hope and the Origins of *L'Accademia degli Intronati*," compares the stated mission of the Intronati, as articulated by some of the very earliest members in their 1532 Constitution, with the beliefs of the *academici* as demonstrated in the writings of two of its earliest members, Antonio Vignali and Alessandro Piccolomini. Vignali gained notoriety for a pornographic dialogue that seemed to condone, even encourage, the pleasures of sodomy. Piccolomini, on the other hand, was an archbishop, deeply concerned with the image of Siena, the Intronati, and local women. Later Intronati would use him and his writings as ideal examples for their generations to follow. The Intronati Constitution demanded that its members remove themselves from the affairs of

⁴⁰ Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 296.

⁴¹ Konrad Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen: Women, Politics, and Poetry in Sixteenth-Century Siena* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 234.

mankind and the world of politics. But below the surface of Vignali's pornographic *La Cazzaria* lay a sharp political satire that attacked the factionalism current in Siena, claiming that this factionalism is what had nearly brought the city to its knees.

Piccolomini did not bother to pretend his compositions were anything but what they were: political commentaries. The first of his two orations discussed in this chapter targeted the same factionalism as had Vignali, pleading with the citizens of all of the city's *monti* to set aside their differences and protect the city from its external enemies. In Piccolomini's second oration, immediately after the capitulation of Montaperti in 1559, he accepted Florentine rule while arguing for the importance of the Intronati and other similar groups in the reconstruction of a still resilient, though subjugated, Siena. These documents allow us to see behind the façade of an academic ideal that even the founding generations of *accademici* did not intend to satisfy. Instead, members the Intronati sought to build a new ideal, encouraging cultural leadership to replace republican *virtù* as its leading principle.

In "The Salt in the Pumpkin: Leadership and Play in Post-Republic Siena," I examine one type of academic activity meant to shape the Intronati and visiting interlocutors into this new ideal: intellectual parlor games. In what might be called the ludic twist, scholars across a variety of disciplines are beginning to explore the important role of games in early modern society. In sixteenth-century Siena as the Sieneese and, particularly, the Intronati, began adapting to a world in which they no longer exercised republican sovereignty, games assumed a significant role in exploring alternative constructions of identity and values that were not dependent on access to political power. The genre of games allowed for a variety of otherwise unacceptable actions and

arguments to be presented under the guise of play and rhetorical debate. In games, participants could play with ideas of social equality and, occasionally, superiority based on oratorical expression, even when visiting dignitaries were present. Analyzing two significant treatises on games written by the biological and academic brothers, Girolamo and Scipione Bargagli, I argue that parlor games played a crucial role in the Intronati response to the collapse of the Sieneſe republic.⁴² Both brothers set their treatises in the context of the fall of Siena, either in the final days of the ſiege or in the years following Siena’s fall. Juxtapoſing theſe playful activities with the collapse of the republic, the Bargagli brothers ſought to ſhow how to rebuild the academy and the city itſelf in a new manner. They experimented with defining new ideals of a cultural leadership characterized by novelty and intellectual accompliſhment, rather than republican traditions. In games, the Intronati explored ways to emphasize the importance of cultural leadership, even implying that it was more important than political leadership and ſovereignty. This required them to create a contemporary myth regarding conceptions of *virtù*, diſtinct from thoſe long conſidered important.

In the next chapter, I focus on the role of women in Sieneſe history and, ſpecifically, within the framework of the Intronati in “A Criſis of *Virtù* on Display: The Appearance of Stability and a Falsely Feminized Academy.” Siena had a long history of glorifying powerful women. This tradition reached its apex during the firſt decades of the Intronati’s exiſtence, partially due to their own contributions. Various Intronati argued that women were capable of much more than the opportunities open to them in ſixteenth-

⁴² Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo de’ giuochi che nelle vegghie ſaneſi ſi uſano di fare del Materiale Intronato*. (Siena: Luca Bonetti, 1572). Modern publication: Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo de’ Giuochi che nelle Vegghie Sanesi ſi Uſano di Fare*, ed. P. D’Incalci Ermini (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1982). Scipione Bargagli, *Trattenimenti dove da vaghe Donne, e da giovani huomini rappreſentati ſono honeſti e dilettevoli giuochi*. (Venice: Bernardo Giunti, 1587).

century Italy allowed. In some forums, the Intronati seemed to present Sieneese ladies as hyper-masculinized, organizing in battalions to construct a fortress in defense of the city. These “masculine” wartime efforts complimented other traditionally feminine actions during times of war, such as pelting attacking soldiers with rocks thrown down from the city’s walls. In addition to these extreme cases, the Intronati presented women in more traditional contexts as well, describing them as proper mothers, raising their children and organizing the household while maintaining their beauty for display. Neither behavioral extreme was judged aberrant, nor were the extremes mutually exclusive. Rather, the Intronati portrayed women as capable of behaviors that demonstrated their *virtù*-osity as Sieneese citizens, regardless of their sex. In virtual speaking tours at other Italian academies, members of the Intronati specifically broadcast knowledge of their women as representative of the city as a whole: intelligent, proactive, and beautiful. As the Intronati prepared to enter a new world, marked by their leadership in novel cultural practices, they presented Sieneese women as the face of their city and important to the unique cultural life within the walls.

“Alessandro Piccolomini’s Measure of a (Wo)Man: The Central Roles of Happiness and *Virtù* in Nobility” narrows the focus on women to address the writings of one academician: Alessandro Piccolomini. In two very different works, he provided a nuanced discussion of the role of women in the noble world. *La Raffaella*, a dialogue, initially reads as a satire in the vein of Antonio Vignali’s *La Cazzaria*. In fact, it offers a more serious argument about the necessity of love and happiness in the lives of both noblemen and noblewomen. Only with both, Piccolomini argued, could they truly have a meaningful life. Modern scholars tend to dismiss Piccolomini’s *La Raffaella* as quasi-

misogynistic and simply evidence of the literary ambitions he pursued during his leisure time. However, many of its arguments tie in closely with those of a second, much more serious work. His *Institutions of All of the Life of a Man Born Noble and in a Free City* is an in-depth comportment and educational treatise written to prepare noble youths for a full life of civic responsibility and happiness. The work relies on the assumption that *virtù*-ous happiness was necessary to find satisfaction in life and for noblemen to reach their full potential. Many of his arguments regarding how noblemen should relate to noblewomen, along with the best characteristics of both, are very similar in the two works. However, modern scholars accept this latter document at face value. In this chapter, I first compare Piccolomini's position in these texts before arguing that, in many ways, his muse Forteguerra was the ideal Renaissance human, utterly independent of her gender, sex, or sexuality, at least in the eyes of the Siennese Intronati and their most prolific member.⁴³

The story of the Intronati was not without its tribulations, even apart from the wars of the 1550s. In either 1563 or 1568, Cosimo de' Medici ordered that all academies in Siena be closed, effectively ending the development of the Intronati as the primary forum of intellectual life in the city. The exact nature of this order is unclear, but we do know that academies were not allowed to reopen until 1603. Even in the sixteenth century, the Intronati placed unusual importance on new cultural practices and novelty

⁴³ Alessandro Piccolomini, *Dialogo della bella creanza de le donne* (Venetia: per Curtio Navò e fratelli, 1539). The earliest publication with the modern accepted title is: Alessandro Piccolomini, *La Raffaella, ovvero, Della bella creanza della donne: dialogo*. (Milano: Daelli, 1862). There also exists a very stilted and awkward English translation, published: Alessandro Piccolomini, *Raffaella of Master Alexander Piccolomini or rather a Dialogue of the Fair Perfectioning of Ladies. A worke very necessarie and profitable for all Gentlewomen or other*, trans. John Nevinson (Glasgow: Robert MacLehose and Company Limited at the University Press, 1968). The translation Nevinson uses for "Intronati" is "Thunderstricken." Alessandro Piccolomini, *De la Institutione di Tutta la Vita de l'Homo Nato Nobile e in Città Libera* (Venetij: Hieronymum Scotum, 1543).

for its own sake. In the seventeenth century, these trends became more clear in the academy's reformation; so, too, did the imagery of the academy as the *patria* of its members. To mark the re-opening of the Intronati in 1603, Scipione Bargagli presented the *Oration in Praise of the Academy of the Intronati*. As had the academy's 1532 constitution, this later document outlined the goals of the group, now interpreted by the later generation's members. My final chapter, "Naturalizing the Academy: Birth, Death, and Rebirth in the Intronati," examines this later oration to show how Scipione consciously manipulated the memory of the early academy to focus less on the oral traditions of its meetings and more on its literary and theatrical output. It is no coincidence that these works found a larger audience outside of Siena than did other compositions by the *academici*. Of course, the meetings that had so clearly defined academic life in the early years, due to their orality, left no evidence either for historians or contemporary Italians. In this chapter, I argue that Scipione's *Oration*, focusing on the literature and theater of the academy, is evidence that he, as spokesman for the group, intended that the Intronati develop a higher profile outside Siena. With this greater audience, the Intronati could display the new civic and cultural ideals prioritized in the academy and position themselves as leaders in a new aristocratic world. Had they done this, they would have continued the myth of Sieneese superiority developed in so many of its origin stories. Ultimately, this effort failed.

The Intronati in Historiographical Debates

Since the advent of the term in the nineteenth century, historians have labeled members of the Intronati and other late Renaissance literary academies as "humanists." Despite its seeming breadth the label "humanism" is actually quite restrictive even if we

take it to mean, as it usually does, “a course of study and a certain kind of citizen.”⁴⁴ For contemporaries, the label “humanist” was frequently a complimentary one, referring to a highly educated, self-identified and self-selected literary elite. Finely trained in classical Latin, Greek, and the classics, they embodied common beliefs that the ideals represented by ancient times and cultures were archetypes they should strive to imitate. But by combining all members of this intellectual elite under the umbrella term of “humanist,” we run the danger of assuming that they all had the same agenda, and that they were all working together for the same general goals. As Guido Ruggiero persuasively argues in *The Renaissance in Italy*, however, those who have traditionally been labeled “humanists” should instead be seen as individuals participating in a series of discourses in a related set of debates.⁴⁵ The Intronati did engage with these debates. However, their priorities were very different from what many historians identify as the priorities of humanists. They rejected the idea that in order for society to move forward toward stability, they had to look backwards to the ideals of the ancients. Indeed, while contextualizing their own cultural movement in the classical debates of their contemporaries, they supported a different intellectual program that emphasized distilling the vernacular tongue into a language superior to classical precedents. They also used nontraditional activities such as games to reshape cultural priorities, and stressed the role of women (generally excluded from humanistic debates in Latin) as models in developing a new world focused on rhetorical skill, wit, and intellectual play.

Rather than focusing exclusively on the past, the Intronati embraced the “new” in many of their cultural exercises. This was especially true in documents (including their

⁴⁴ Martines, *Power and Imagination*, 192.

⁴⁵ Ruggiero, *The Renaissance in Italy*, 205. For more on Ruggiero’s re-visioning of “humanism,” see 206-211.

formative constitution) that sought to define the academy and its goals. This emphasis on a new future focusing on novelty existed in early Intronati documents but the theme of innovation became more pronounced in the post-republic years. Rather than working for a reformation of the world according to an ancient ideal, they seemed to recognize that times had changed and that they would need to change as well – or face the same end as did their independent republic: besieged, nearly destroyed, and absorbed into a foreign power. To move forward, the Intronati thus embraced a philosophy that their intellectual forefathers had previously rejected as wrong and even dangerous. This transition was more than an intellectual shift. It required a complete re-orientation of cultural values that defined those at the front of this creative, academic world as leaders. After 1555, this became even more important as the noble *academici* could no longer prove their worth through participation in the local republican government. Instead, they explicitly argued in published works and even in lectures to other academies that all Italians embrace new ideas of nobility and *virtù* dependent on academic skill. By focusing on these new cultural practices, the Intronati would become the leaders of a new world, a rebuilt Siena serving as a literal city on a hill, providing an example to all others on the Italian peninsula and, in some form or another, throughout the western world.

Since J. G. A. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment*, historians have (generally) accepted that the civic republicanism that flourished in Renaissance Italy – particularly, Florence – traveled north and then across the Atlantic to influence the founders of the United States of America. Based on this argument, the “civic humanism” of the Italian Renaissance did not end there but helped propel the Atlantic world into the modern age.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ John Greville Agard Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975). See also: D'Amico, *Renaissance*

However, this study and many that followed end their attentions with the decline of Italian city-states. What my project has made clear, however, is that ending the story there is pre-emptive. It ignores a different, though related, group of voluntary associations that emerged out of the ashes of Italian city-states and also, in their time, moved north to influence the development of Enlightenment French salons, which had their own well-known revolutionary effects. In many ways, literary academies like the *Intronati* were merely another form of voluntary associations, just as republics had been at their inception. These associations formed a cohesive identity for the leading members of one place that helped to shape civic identity and values. This development shaped communities, just as traditional republican ideology had in an earlier age, and proved to be just as influential.

Publishing books on the role of women in early modern Europe has nearly become a cottage industry. However, much work remains to be done. Rather than looking exclusively at conceptions of femininity and the role of women, my dissertation looks at the interaction between notions of femininity and masculinity within the sixteenth-century academy and finds remarkable similarities. Male members of the academy argued that women could not only serve as muses for other academicians, but that they should also serve as behavioral models for the men. This implies that behavioral models for men and women did not differ as extensively as generally assumed. While modern historians are beginning to acknowledge that women did begin to appear in traditionally masculine settings, particularly in publication, during the Renaissance, my research further

Humanism in Papal Rome. James Hankins. *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). William Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968).

questions the idea that we should identify these as masculine spheres at all. Though the situation in Siena may have been heightened due to the concentration of political and religious crises there, it seems unimaginable that the Sienese experience was entirely distinct from the rest of the Italian peninsula.

Though questions about humanists, republicanism, and women are traditional historiographic debates (though in many cases there are fresh perspectives in the literature), the importance of games in early modern society is a new topic. Though this is emerging in a variety of disciplines, the most significant work related to this dissertation is George McClure's *Parlour Games and the Public Life of Women in Renaissance Italy*. He argues that "the flowering of games promoted a cultural renewal for a certain class of women" in sixteenth-century Siena.⁴⁷ While I agree with this, I find his interpretation of the insertion of women into these academic activities to be part of a shift in Siena into an "apolitical, ludic, 'feminized' state [compared] to Florence's aggressive, powerful, ducal state" to be a misrepresentation of post-1555 political life in Siena.⁴⁸ Rather, the games were part of a transition in politics that placed more importance on the traditionally-conceived apolitical world of play and academic leisure. The appearance of games as irrelevant to formal affairs is the very thing that provided games their power – this appearance disguised the dangerous ideas regularly explored in the games. Disagreements such as this are exactly what will make this fresh field of study exciting moving forward.

⁴⁷ George McClure, *Parlour Games and the Public Life of Women in Renaissance Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), xv.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, xii.

Conclusion

In sum, my dissertation studies the transition of a sixteenth-century Italian republic into a subject city and the involvement of a literary academy in the subsequent evolution of civic life. The *Intronati* played a decisive role in constructing the response of Siena's intellectual elite to this defeat and subjugation. I argue that the *accademici* and affiliated women actively sought to redefine Sieneese civic identity after the 1555 defeat as one based on wit, knowledge, and rhetorical skill developed in academic activities, such as parlor games, rather than the strong republican traditions they had previously used for self-glorification. Some members of the academy were known for their transgressive religious beliefs and sexual acts while others were at the forefront of the sixteenth-century philosophical and literary world. The women active in academic life were, of course, praised for their beauty but male observers spent far more time discussing their intellectual merits. Combining the study of a local crisis and the repercussions of movements disrupting the lives of Europeans throughout the continent (such as the Reformation), my dissertation provides a valuable and instructive look at an experience common to sixteenth-century Italians: defeat and reconstruction. It also definitively demonstrates that early modern Europeans placed great political importance on many activities currently dismissed by many historians as apolitical and unimportant, such as games, theater, and literature.

Chapter One

A Tangle of Cocks for Siena: Hope and the Origins of *L'Accademia degli Intronati*

Orare. Neminem laedere.
Studere. Nemini credere.
*Gaudere. De mundo non curare.*⁴⁹

Pray. Study. Rejoice. Trust no one. Believe no one. Care nothing of the world. With these guiding "universal precepts," the Accademia degli Intronati set themselves apart from mundane affairs, intentionally alienating themselves from the chaos raging throughout Siena. Or so they wanted observers to believe. As their republic collapsed under the strain produced by centuries of internal factionalism, and new external pressures from the centrifugal forces redefined sixteenth-century Italian political, religious, and cultural life, this apparent dissociation allowed them freedom to grow. In many ways, however, this distance was simply a rhetorical strategy. It allowed the Intronati to experiment with methods of responding to the variety of disciplining influences challenging the future of the Sieneese without appearing to contest the legitimacy of new policies and ruling institutions. The ludic nature of the Intronati,

⁴⁹ Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena (BCS), Y.I.1 f. 3. This is the earliest extant copy of the Intronati constitution, or *capitoli*, dated to 1532, though some scholars cite the year 1531. Though the foundational year of 1525 is accepted in this dissertation, there is also some debate on the exact year the Intronati formed as some historians cite 1527 rather than 1525. This dissertation assumes the earlier year. However, neither of these contested dates would change the arguments made here and it is enough to recognize that the Intronati had existed for several years prior to the writing of this version of the constitution. Though the precepts are in Latin, Scipione Bargagli argued in his *Oratione in lode dell'Accademia degli Intronati* that this was simply to add authority to the guidelines, rather than as an indication that work should be done in Latin. Rather, he argued that it was the vernacular Tuscan that necessitated work, polish, and embellishment in the academy. Nino Borsellino, *Commedia del Cinquecento* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1962), 461.

evident even in the academy's founding Constitution, facilitated this feigned disinterest that protected them from external censure, freeing them to go about their academic, and political, agendas in relative safety. As the republic collapsed around them, the Intronati developed new conceptions of *virtù* and honor that allowed them to construct a cultural leadership that replaced the earlier political leadership exercised by the aristocratic members.

The unstable conditions in Siena and its uncertain status on the Italian peninsula were crucial in defining the Intronati's founding ideologies. The height of the city's strength and influence as a powerful banking and trade city, one that continually engaged in urban projects whose mere existence proclaimed the might and serenity of the city, had long passed. Pressure from mercenary troops had eaten away at the city's wealth.⁵⁰ The stability provided by one tyrant gave way with his death to internal strife that soon drew Charles V to the Tuscan hills. In order to protect its citizens from the violence that emerged when factional conflict boiled over and blood spilled onto the streets, the Holy Roman Emperor established a permanent garrison within Sienese city walls.⁵¹ Increasing regulations coming from the Vatican put pressure on the questionably heterodox amongst the city's population, as it did throughout Christendom.⁵² This culminated in the republic's 1555 fall to the combined forces of Charles V and the Tuscan state based in Siena's centuries-long rival to the north, Florence. It was in this atmosphere that a group

⁵⁰ William Caferro, *Mercenary Companies and the Decline of Siena* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); Langton Douglas, *A History of Siena*. London: John Murray, 1902; Anabel Thomas, *Garrisoning the Borderlands of Medieval Siena: Sant'Angelo in Colle: Frontier Castle under the Government of the Nine (1287-1355)* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011); Ferdinand Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Mediaeval Commune* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909).

⁵¹ Judith Hook, *Siena: A City and its History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 181-189. Tom Scott: *The City-State in Europe, 1000-1600*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Christine Shaw, *Popular Government and Oligarchy in Renaissance Italy* (Boston: Brill, 2006).

⁵² Mark Taplin, *The Italian Reformers and the Zurich Church, c. 1540-1620* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2003).

of intellectuals chose to make a show of stepping away from the world, appearing to retreat to an academic realm theoretically set apart from the tumultuous reality raging within and around the Republic of Siena, to write a new narrative defining nobility.

With a roster of influential Sieneese men, actually separating the academy from the revolutionary developments outside its doors was never a possibility. Instead, these conflicts shaped not only the actions of many of its members and their literary creations but also created a desire to explore paths of resistance in the ostensibly apolitical world of the Intronati. Within the academy, activities they claimed to be entirely separate from the "real" world outside its doors actually responded to and found ways to subvert that same world. The academy's literary and frequently ludic activities redefined Sieneese civic identity and values in ways that challenged external efforts to subordinate Siena.

The founding myth of the Intronati was crucial in creating the image of a group that was not dangerous; if this was just a group of "Dazed" or "Bewildered" men that cared more about literature and pleasure than more practical legal studies, what harm could they possibly do? Their emblem and motto, however, demonstrate that this façade may be just that, feigning complete removal from the world of politics and civic life. Declaring *Meliora Latent*, that the better, more important parts of academic life were hidden, the Intronati indicated that this disinterest was false. Their *Zucca*, unlike the empty-headed pumpkin in the proverb, was far from empty. As supposedly empty-headed university students, the founding Intronati established themselves in opposition to traditional humanist disciplines, making a powerful gesture that confirmed that they would be an institution apart. Further, the tone of this origin story creates a playful impression of the group. Though the roster listed men with serious influence in the civic

and religious world outside the academy, this group did not take themselves too seriously. The *academici* meant to have fun while playing with their own learning, redefining consensus realities concerning what it meant to be an Italian nobleman in the combustible sixteenth century.

A Family Affair

A voluntary association of literary-minded individuals, the Academy of the Intronati was also, in many ways, a family affair. Many of its members hailed from the same biological family while marriage and god-parentage frequently connected members to others within the academy. There were particularly strong ties between the most influential members of the Intronati. Within the academy existed a different kind of family: a brotherhood of academicians linked through common intellectual and cultural political interests. The Intronati Constitution itself described the academy in familial terms, as a "union," for just as "children are under the care of the same mother, all of the Intronati are under the benevolence of their glorious *Zucca*." As "loving and dear brothers," they must "not only take care not to offend one another but also to defend [their brothers] when someone would offend them," particularly, of course, when the offense could also cause insult to their mother, the *Zucca*. Described in later Intronati literature, these ties were more than theoretical. Just as brothers would, *academici* held "clothes, books, horses, houses, villas, and other things between them in common," as members used the possessions of another without seeking out permission of the "owner."⁵³ In this way, brothers and cousins, godfathers, family friends, and even possible lovers interacted in an academic family with other noblemen and women of scholarly merit.

⁵³ Girolamo Bargagli, 1572, 113.

This imagery of the academy as a brotherhood was, of course, in addition to those traditional family ties. The Bargagli and Piccolomini clans are illustrative of these families and brief biographies of several key men from these families provides an introduction to the type of individuals who constituted the Intronati roster.⁵⁴ The Bargagli family specifically seems to have been fairly typical of Intronati families. Though noble and influential within the city, they had no great power outside Siena. Parents Giulio Bargagli and Ortensia Urgurgieri had five children, including three sons that played important roles in sixteenth-century Siennese academic, legal, and political developments: Girolamo (1537-1586), Scipione (1540-1612), and Celso (1543-1593). The oldest two brothers both became active within the Intronati. Girolamo, as the eldest brother, was the first to come of age and join the academy. He began an initially productive literary career before abandoning these pursuits in favor of a legal profession; it was as a sort of apology for this departure that he wrote his best-known work, a games treatise titled *Dialogo de' Giuochi che nelle Vegghie Sanesi si Usano di Fare* that outlined game theory and methods of game play within the Intronati before and after the fall of Siena.⁵⁵ He also wrote the serious comedy *La Pellegrina*, which will be discussed thoroughly later in this dissertation.⁵⁶ The middle son, Scipione Bargagli, is best known for his text on the

⁵⁴ While the Intronati was primarily a masculine academy, there are some notable exceptions. Laura Battiferri is the first woman listed in *I Tabelloni*, a membership roster of the Intronati, and is shown to have joined in 1557. On this roster, the names, admission dates, and academy pseudonyms are listed. Curiously, in 1696, different dates begin to be given for admission and the granting of an academic pseudonym, which is generally several years after the general admission. What this seems to indicate is that the adoption of a pseudonym was a separate, more advanced, level of membership. Battiferri received a pseudonym (*l'Aggratiata*), but one can speculate that other women were quasi-members of the Intronati and did not attain this full status that included a pseudonym and therefore were not listed in the records. Interestingly, there is also evidence that other Siennese literary academies began accepting women as members in a sort of curious retaliation for the Intronati's acceptance of Battiferri into their ranks.

⁵⁵ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo de' Giuochi che nelle Vegghie Sanesi si Usano di Fare*, Ed.P. D'Incalci Ermini (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1982).

⁵⁶ Girolamo Bargagli, *La Pellegrina, commedia di m. Girolamo Bargagli, Materiale Intronato*. (Siena: Luca Bonetti, 1589). Girolamo Bargagli, *La pellegrina*, ed. Florinda Cerreta (Firenze: Olschki, 1971);

Sieneſe dialect, *Il Turamino*, and his own games treatiſe, *I Trattenimenti*, along with ſeveral works on *impreſe* (a form of clever artiſtic rendering of personal mottoes and characteristics) and a hoſt of other treatiſes on academies and various ſubjects.⁵⁷ He was alſo active within the Accademia degli Acceſi, founded in 1558, where he was elected *Duce* – the leader, a poſition in many academies referred to as the prince. Celſo, for hiſ part, was alſo briefly a member of the Acceſi and ſerved as a law profeſſor at the University of Siena and as chair of the law department at the University of Macerata. Another ſon, Claudio, is mentioned leſs frequently in records and correſpondence while a ſiſter appears even leſs frequently.⁵⁸ Throughout the literary careers of the firſt three brothers, they maintained active roles in the urban government and formal educational institutions. However, they remained relatively unknown outside Siena.

The Piccolomini family, inſtead, were one of the leading noble families of Siena and many held notable poſitions within the church hierarchy. They alſo drew wealth from a long tradition of banking; the earlieſt registers of family wealth in Siena, from 1453, liſt members of the Piccolomini family as among the wealtheiſt in the city. They were a part of the old *Gentilhuomini* faction compoſed of ancient families that had held much power

Girolamo Bargagli, *The Female Pilgrim (La pellegrina)*, trans. Bruno Ferraro. (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions Canada, 1988).

⁵⁷ Scipione Bargagli, *Il Turamino, ovvero Del parlare e dello ſcriver ſaneſe del cavaliere Scipion Bargagli*. (Siena: per Matteo Florimi, in Banchi, 1602). Scipione Bargagli, *I trattenimenti di Scipion Bargagli, dove da vaghe donne, e da giovani huomini rappreſentati ſono honeſti, e dilettevoli giuochi, narrate novelle, e cantate alcune amoroſe canzonette*. (Venetia: Bernardo Giunti, 1587). Scipione Bargagli, *I trattenimenti*, ed. Laura Riccò. (Roma: Salerno editrice, 1989). Scipione Bargagli, *Dell'impreſe di Scipion Bargagli gentil'homo ſaneſe alla prima parte, la ſeconda, e la terza nuovamente aggiunte: dove, doppo tutte l'opere coſi ſcritte a penna, come ſtampate, ch'egli potuto ha leggendo vedere di coloro, che della materia dell'impreſe hanno parlato; della vera natura di quelle ſi ragiona*. (Venetia: Francesco de' Franceschi Senese, 1594).

⁵⁸ For further information on theſe brothers, ſee BCS P.IV.27, num. 3, f. 1v; Bruno Ferraro's introduction to hiſ translation of *La Pellegrina; Trattenimenti LXXIX-LXXXIV*

in the city for centuries.⁵⁹ Just as Siena itself mirrored its origin story on that of Rome, the Piccolomini family claimed that their strength also came from Roman origins. Fittingly then, two Piccolomini held the highest position available in the church there. Enea Silvio Piccolomini had become Pope Pius II in 1458 and, in more recent history, Francesco Piccolomini had become Pope Pius III in 1503. The latter's rule lasted less than a month before his untimely death, at which time, of course, rumors that he was poisoned began to circulate.⁶⁰

Back in Tuscany the most prolific of the Intronati hailing from the Piccolomini clan, Alessandro (1508-1579), received his first church benefice at the age of nine. Through family connections, he then served as bishop of both Montalcino and Pienza before becoming Archbishop of Patraso in 1540 and co-adjutant of the Archbishop of Siena the following year.⁶¹ Though groomed from an early age for an ecclesiastical career, his literary output was exceptionally diverse, including translations of canonical classics, a guidebook for the ways a nobleman should live his life, a satirical dialogue on the best behaviors for noblewomen, several plays, sonnets, astronomical and geographic treatises, at least one oration on the state of Siena in the years preceding 1555, and many lectures on a wide range of topics. He also played an important role in connecting the Intronati with other academicians throughout the peninsula and introduced the Siennese authors to various printing presses in Venice. Crucial for these connections was his

⁵⁹ Other families generally included amongst those leading Siennese economic and political life throughout the medieval and Renaissance periods are the Tolomei, Malavolti, Salimbeni, Saracini, Angiolieri, Buonsignori, and Gallerani. During that 1453 tally, the wealthiest man in Siena is listed as Matteo di Galvano Bichi. He does not enter our story.

⁶⁰ Most of these rumors include Pandolfo Petrucci, that successful tyrant of Siena. A future study may unveil the inspirations Petrucci and other Siennese may have had to kill a man of their own city who had risen to the most powerful position within Church hierarchy.

⁶¹ See Florinda Cerreta, *Alessandro Piccolomini*, 3-6, for a discussion of his various siblings. Various sources cite the number of children as numbering anywhere between eleven and fourteen.

membership in the Accademia degli Infiammati in Padua, which he helped to found while attending the university there.⁶² While the sheer volume of his literary output made him unique amongst the Intronati, he was also unique in that (due to his pre-ordained ecclesiastical career) he was not active in the civil government of Siena.

Alessandro's cousin Marcantonio (1505-1579) is interesting for nearly opposite reasons: though he served as the central figure in two of the most important Intronati dialogues from this period (Girolamo Bargagli's *Dialogo* and Antonio Vignali's *La Cazzaria*), he himself seems to have written very little at all – or, at least, not much that was distributed outside of the academy and has survived until today. Indeed, in her introduction to the modern publication of his extant dialogue, Rita Belladonna remarked that he is known much more as a character than as a writer, and it will be as an ideal representation of an early Intronato that he will frequently be discussed here.⁶³ The dialogue mentioned above, referred to as the *Ragionamento*, is his only major work that has survived to the present day. In it, he demonstrated the capacity of women to engage in conversation regarding philosophy and a wide number of other subjects not typically seen as being within the scope of the female intellect. Apart from this dialogue, several of his poems appeared in published collections during his lifetime and a manuscript copy of a lecture praising a Siense woman exists in manuscript form in the Intronati library of

⁶² Perhaps his most important connection to the Venetian publishing world, the then-editor of the famous Giolito press in Venice, Lodovico Dolce, was most likely a member of the Infiammati as well. Ronnie Terpening shows that the primary evidence of Dolce's membership, however, comes in a letter from Benedetto Varchi (an Infiammato), when the latter referred to the group as "nostra accademia." Regardless, this was a short-lived academy and the affiliation would not have been for long. Ronnie H. Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce, Renaissance Man of Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 192 n. 66. For general info on Alessandro Piccolomini, see Florinda Cerreta, *Alessandro Piccolomini: Letterato e Filosofo Senese del Cinquecento*. (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1960); Hook, *Siena*; Giuliano Catoni, *A Short History of Siena* (Pacino Editore S.p.A., 2000); Fabrizio Nevola, *Siena: Constructing the Renaissance City*. Diana Robin, *Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007).

⁶³ Rita Belladonna, "Gli Intronati, Le Donne, Aonio Paleario e Agostino Museo in una Dialogo Inedito di Marcantonio Piccolomini, Il Sodo Intronato (1538)," *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 99 (1994), 48.

Siena. This lack of a great corpus of work, however, does not mean that he did not have a busy life. Rather, after his tenure as a student of law at the University of Pisa, he returned to Siena where he was convicted of a homicide in 1545, though not much is known regarding the crime.⁶⁴ Following that brush with the law, he worked as secretary for various prelates, sat at the Council of Trent, worked within the government of Siena after the fall to Florence, and was ordained priest in 1570 before dying in 1579.⁶⁵ Even as he spent less time in Siena in his later years, having followed his younger cousin into a career in the church, he remained a central figure in the consciousness of the academy. It does seem to be due, at least part, to his limited opus that he was able to serve as a representative figure of a founding father and the ideals of the early academy.⁶⁶

Of the four academicians discussed so far, only Marcantonio Piccolomini was amongst the six founders of the Intronati. Most accounts agree that Antonio Vignali (1500-1559) was the driving force behind the academy's formation, though he quickly fled Siena for reasons of his own safety by 1532. He is best known for a pornographic satire of the tumultuous Sieneese political world that will be discussed later in this chapter, in which Marcantonio played a crucial role.⁶⁷ Another archbishop from the Piccolomini family, Francesco Bandini Piccolomini, along with Francesco Sozzi, Giovan Francesco Franceschi, and Alessandro Marzi comprised the other four founders. All noblemen, four had been legal students – that is, the two Piccolomini, Franceschi, and Marzi – and they

⁶⁴ The conviction is mentioned in an inventory of the Piccolomini family. BCS P.IV.14 274r.

⁶⁵ Due partially to Marcantonio Piccolomini's large shadow in the Intronati, Konrad Eisenbichler refers to him as one of the most interesting and controversial men of sixteenth-century Italy and calls for a monograph studying "this eclectic and fascinating figure." Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*, 298-299 n. 49

⁶⁶ For more on Marcantonio Piccolomini, see Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*; Robin, *Publishing Women*, 130-136.

⁶⁷ For more on Vignali, see Antonio Vignali, *La Cazzaria: The Book of the Prick*, ed. Ian Frederick Moulton. New York: Routledge, 2003, 12-21. The earliest known extant manuscript is in Spain: Badajoz, Spain, Biblioteca Publica, Barcarrota MS I.

were all deeply connected to the various institutions of governance, religion, and economic structure in Siena during the sixteenth century. Perhaps for this reason, the Intronati Constitution forbade discussion of politics and religion within the academy. As we shall see, however, the academicians found creative ways to sidestep this prohibition through various methods of dissimulation and other masks that disguised their true intents and sentiments.

As each Intronato had his own family name outside the academy, each adopted another name within the academy, generally a one-word pseudonym meant to reflect some part of their personality or behavioral characteristics. Some have speculated that Vignali's nickname, *l'Arsiccio*, or the Burned One, is either an allusion to his burning sexual passion or an allusion to a physical deformity of some variety. In an account from 1637, Guido Pancirolo described him as "the primary instigator, [who] was accounted almost a monster because of his deformed body, but nevertheless he had a brilliant spirit, however badly housed."⁶⁸ We do not, however, have corroborating evidence about Vignali's physical appearance, nor clarification of what sort of deformity to which Pancirolo referred. Similarly, Marcantonio Piccolomini's academic name of *Sodo Intronato*, the Hard or Firm One, could either allude to his impressive intellect or a more physical (and sexual) attribute. Of course, these various interpretations were not mutually exclusive. Many of these academic names are playful, mocking the member whom they identify.⁶⁹ As with many things associated with the Intronati, what the names appeared to

⁶⁸ Translation is Moulton's. Moulton, 13-14. Guido Panciroli, *De claris legum interpretibus* (Venetiis: Marcum Antonium Brogiollum, 1637).

⁶⁹ Co-founder Giovan Francesco Franceschi was named *il Moscone*, which can indicate a large fly or a pesky suitor. Fellow co-founder Francesco Sozzi's *l'Importuno* implies an obnoxious character, obtrusive and meddlesome, though when appearing as diligence, this may have been a positive trait for an Intronato to have. The final founder, Alessandro Marzi, had a more obscure name: *il Cirloso*. Amongst other early members, we find The Eccentric (*il Bizzarro*, Marcello Landucci), The Silly/Unreliable One (*il Balordo*,

be on the surface may have represented characteristics of the members, but things were often much more complex than they appeared from the outside.

Contributing to the familial sense of the academy was the tendency for *academici* to credit the academy with their literary products, rather than claim authorship individually. Many of the Intronati were notable and influential outside the academy, and yet they frequently avoided praise for their own work. In this vein Girolamo Bargagli wrote in his games treatise that many Intronati "pleased themselves that their individual efforts were sent out [into the world] under the universal name of the Academy," rather than under his own name.⁷⁰ The work, then, was intended to bring honor to the academy rather than its constituent individuals. Even when a singular name was attached to a work it was frequently the individual's academic name, reminding the reader of the association. As will be discussed later, part of this tendency could be due to the vastly different ideas of authorship current in the early modern period. However, it also points to the general aim of *academici* to strive for glory for the academy over fame for themselves. After the fall of the republic in 1555, this continued perhaps even more strongly as the academy began to replace the republic as the general unifying and identifying corporation for the educated noble population of Siena.

Also central to the Intronati were ideas of friendship, love, and happiness. Indeed, Alessandro Piccolomini dealt with these big issues in his *Institutions*, a guidebook on

Sinolfo Petrucci), The Sleepy/Dopey One (*l'Addormentato*, Nastoccio Saracini), and The Toy/Plaything (*il Balocco*, Febo Tolomei). Mixed in, however, are more serious or traditional names: The Thoughtful One (*il Pensoso*, Lattantio Landucci), The Fussy One (*il Schizzinoso*, Agostino Crudeli), and The Fantastic One (*Il Fantastico*, Bernardino Cartari – one of the few names with a capitalized definite article). For a full list of members and their names, see L. Sbaragli, "I 'Tabelloni' degli Intronati," *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 1 (1942): 177-213. They are also included in manuscript form in *Il Zucchini* at BCS Y.I.3 and other buste in this series.

⁷⁰ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo de' giuochi che nelle vegghi sansei si usano di fare del Materiale Intronato*. Siena: per Loca Bonetti stampatore dell'Eccel. Collegio de' Sig. Legisti, 1572, 113.

how to live a noble life in a free city that will be addressed much more thoroughly in chapter four of this dissertation. Containing important arguments on the nature of friendship, which were ultimately the ties that bound the *academici* together, it reveals much regarding the characteristics of the group. Though the Intronati used analogies of family and brotherhood, and some were biologically related to one another, the academy was, on its most basic level, a fellowship of friends – friends who had similar intellectual interests and demonstrated the desire to further these in communion with like-minded men – that included both men and women. As Piccolomini described, the basis of friendship was love, which he defined as the desire for good things to come to the person who was loved, claiming that friendship, at its core, was nothing other than benevolence.⁷¹ True friendship, he argued, required constant work and devotion – as, we will see, did the relationship that he described a nobleman should have with his beloved, and his academy. To maintain a friendship, Piccolomini wrote, friends should communicate every aspect of their life to one another, unveiling every care and thought, always desiring to come closer together. He argued that they should eat and sleep together, always be sweet to one another, and not disdain the opinion of the other in conversation.⁷² Every personal relationship, then, required the work that the Intronati argued in their very constitution was needed to maintain the integrity of the academy. These bonds were also instrumental in new ideals regarding nobility and a meaningful life developed by the Intronati.

⁷¹ Alessandro Piccolomini, *De la Institutione di Tutta la Vita de l'Homo Nato Nobile e in Città Libera*. (Venetij: Hieronymum Scotum, 1543.185r

⁷² Ibid, 191r

Framing the Intronati Constitution: Ideals

In many of their practices, the Intronati were just part of a long tradition of academies that evolved as time went by. That, however, has not discouraged the standard battles waged by historians determined to declare the primacy of their research subject and this seems to be especially true in the study of Italian academies. A product of his times, Armand De Gaetano in 1968 not only implied that the Umidi's Accademia Fiorentina was the first of its kind, he also argued that it was this academy that "fathered the Italian language and the education of the middle class and waged a systemic battle against its opponents."⁷³ More conservatively, he argued that the academy was a central force in developing this vernacular language as a medium for intellectual work. Others have claimed the short-lived Inflammati in Padua to be the most influential and important of the Italian academies, given its impressive roster and the conversations that it sparked regarding language and academic merit.

Many make similar claims in the scholarship on the Intronati as well. This could be due to the fact that the modern academy controls access to their archive today, in the public library of Siena governed by the current generation of Intronati. Therefore any scholar of the Intronati is indebted to the modern group. Of the academy's proponents, Conor Fahy is perhaps the most vociferous, claiming that it was "the first body in which contemporaries fully perceived the institutionalization and socialization of the academy," which he defined as "a cultural institution devoted to the study of literature and related

⁷³ Armand L. De Gaetano, "The Florentine Academy and the Advancement of Learning through the Vernacular: The Orti Oricellari and the Sacra Accademia," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 30:1 (1968): 20.

topics."⁷⁴ Many of the claims of Intronati primacy, including Fahy's, rest on the existence of one document: the Constitution. It defined the academy's purpose, outlined rules of comportment and subject matter, and created various offices for the maintenance of the academy. Preserved as the first in a series of primary sources regarding the daily functions of the Intronati at the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena, the earliest extant copy of the constitution dates to 1532, several years after the academy's foundation. In it, we find the earliest statements regarding the idealized purpose of the academy. In the Constitution, we can see how the academicians envisioned their group at both practical and ideological levels – indeed, how they hoped it would develop.

The story of the dazed law students does not make an appearance in the Constitution. Instead, it begins by describing the setting in which the founders formed their academy, explaining the need for such a group. According to this document, "In the time that the barbarian armies summoned discord from the most extreme parts of the west and entered into the holy house of God," literary activities were banished from the minds of all Italians, not just Tuscans, leaving room only for thoughts of war.⁷⁵ With this perspective, some "gracious minds" (*gentili spiriti*) of various learning began considering those things that were most "useful and necessary to the life of men," knowledge of which made life "noble, worthy, and deserving above all others." These subjects,

⁷⁴ Conor Fahy, "Women and Italian Cinquecento Literary Academies," in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, ed. Letizia Panizza. (London: Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2000), 438-9. Frances Yates also cited the Intronati as the first in Italy (and, he speculates, the world) that called "itself by a symbolical name, to elect officers, and to ordain for itself social laws." Frances Yates, "The Italian Academies" in *Renaissance and Reform: The Italian Contribution* (London, 1993), v 2, 13. Richard Samuels has cited the *Infiammati* (while attributing his argument to Benedetto Varchi (1504-1565) in a lecture given to the *fiorentina*) - though Samuels does then circle back around to admit that the *Infiammati* was partially modeled on the *Intronati*, and other scholars have made arguments for the subjects of their own studies. Richard Samuels, "Benedetto Varchi, the Accademia degli Infiammati, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement," *Renaissance Quarterly* 29:4 (1976): 599-634.

⁷⁵ This allusion to the 1527 sack of Rome is the primary piece of evidence used by those who argue for the latter date (compared to 1525) as the origin of the group.

including not only "philosophy but also of humanity (*humanita*), law, music, poetry, arithmetic and universally all of the disciplines and all of the liberal and gracious arts," eventually gave the newly-formed congregation the power to comment on and work in all literary studies.⁷⁶ With this ambitious goal in mind, it is not surprising to note that the Constitution also began with what proved to become rare in later Intronati documents: a prayer. From "the highest, indescribable God," they asked for grace to lead them in their *imprese* – a term that not only referred to the various emblems and other visual representations of the academy but frequently to all their enterprises in general.⁷⁷ As will become clear, the Intronati apparently meant to study and debate every subject under the heavens and thus it is no wonder that they appealed for divine assistance.

Following this introduction, the Constitution initiated a metaphor that ran not only throughout this document, but also through much other Intronati literature: that of a fruitful garden, fertilized by the dedicated work of the members of the academy. For after the Intronati began their labor, and "tasting how sweet were the fruits of this divine crop they had reaped," they knew that their literary products would earn them "immortal fame." However, because they also saw the "damages and dangers" that "due to their ignorance faced humans, they thought to find ways and orders" that threatened their harvest of academic work in order to prevent this destruction. The determined group of scholars, seeing these dangers, decided to form a congregation that, for the sake of their intellects, would leave behind all "tedious and rude (*schivi*) thoughts and all of the other cares of the world" to protect and nourish their garden. Just as the garden was to be composed of the various literary fruits of the subjects listed above, the Intronati stated

⁷⁶ Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena (BCS) Y.I.1 f1v.

⁷⁷ BCS Y.I.1 f. 1r

their intention to focus on all three languages used by the intellectuals of their day: Italian, Latin, and Greek – while "reading, debating, composing, interpreting, and writing," nurturing the growth of their fields.⁷⁸ Thriving with products from the various disciplines, these fields would come to represent all of the learning of their day and lead Italian *academici* into an age of the mind beginning just as the age of republican sovereignty collapsed throughout the peninsula.

Even after this section on the academy's lofty goals, the next passage that reverses one of the "universal precepts" listed at the beginning of this chapter is striking. Briefly introducing academic life, the Constitution explicitly stated their "firm resolve to feign not to trust and not to care about anything else in the world."⁷⁹ In this one word, "feign" (*fingere*), we may find the true intents of the academy. In the midst of turmoil, a period in which not even the sacred house of God in Rome was safe from attack and looting, the Constitution acknowledged that the Intronati, comprised of an elite group of powerful men in both politics and religion, served the purpose of providing an alternate world, away from the harsh reality of the day. In the academy, they indulged themselves and their every intellectual interest while appearing to act in a forum that was entirely distinct from their quotidian lives, and various real-world crises, outside the academy. Only, this was not the reality. Instead, this was all about appearances: the group was only to *feign* not to care of the world outside the academy. Rather than actually setting up a space separate from the mundane, the academy became a sphere in which appearances were to be deceiving, in which real concerns were masked by academic pursuits. Though the

⁷⁸ BCS Y.I.1 f. 1v. Most likely, it is this section of the Constitution that misleadingly led Chambers to refer to the Intronati as a "trilingual" group. Though each language is given equal import in this section of the Constitution, the majority of Intronati documents indicate that Tuscan was to be privileged above all others. Chambers, "The Earlier 'Academies' in Italy", 13.

⁷⁹ BCS Y.I.1 f. 1v, 2v.

Intronati claimed that they existed apart from the world of wars and political intrigue, even in their very constitution they admitted that their actions could easily represent more than academic life. With this deception in mind, we can crack the husk that playfully disguised the broader interests of the Intronati under the shell of their maternal *Zucca*.

Other word choices throughout the Constitution prove interesting for similar reasons. After the initial description of the academy, the document introduces the group: the "*compagnia* of the Intronati."⁸⁰ The term *compagnia* is as ambiguous a term in modern Italian as it was during the early modern period. While it can mean "fellowship" or "companionship," which both seem like appropriate representations of the group, it can also mean "company," a term that in English as well can refer to either a business entity or a theatrical group. In this choice, the drafters of the Constitution seemed to acknowledge that this was to be a multi-faceted group intended to be active in a variety of worlds – and that their products would also be similarly complex. Even as modern scholars argue about the intended early modern meaning of the term *accademia* and the activities of groups that described themselves as such, it seems as if *compagnia* was used in a similarly indefinite manner in the sixteenth century as well.

Those commandments, however, remain. "Pray. Study. Rejoice. Trust no one. Believe no one. Care nothing of the world."⁸¹ In a discussion of the election and duties of various offices, which will appear below, the document demands that these precepts, established after long debate (apparently by either the founding members or a group comprised of other very early members of the academy), be obeyed. The first three, of course, are not surprising. This was, after all, a group of individuals that we can assume

⁸⁰ BCS Y.I.1 f. 1v.

⁸¹ FN 1.

were both intellectually curious and religiously devout – even if the ways they expressed their religiosity were at times deemed heretical by the church. However, the last three precepts strike one as somewhat dissociative, particularly in the pre-fall world of the founding years of the Intronati. Certainly, factionalism had been undermining attempts at glory in Siena for generations and a Spanish garrison under the authority of Charles V was soon to be necessary simply to maintain peace in the streets. But this was a group that pretended to be separate from these terrestrial cares. Could the command to neither trust nor believe anyone be an admonition to be inquisitive of everything? Or was it more than this? And while a separation from the post-1555 world, in which the Sieneese had lost their sovereignty, would be unsurprising, why was this first generation of Intronati so determined to create a wall against the cares of the world? These are questions that can only be answered through a deeper analysis of the actions and writings of the Intronati in the years falling between their foundation in 1525 and Siena's loss of sovereignty in 1555.

The established historiography seems to accept these stated purposes of the academy on the surface, without acknowledging that the Constitution presented at least one of the precepts as a thing meant to be feigned. That omnipresent academic encyclopedian Michele Maylender argued that in the Intronati there was "a group of noble souls, outstanding in various branches of learning, who...desired to found a society...which leaving aside all troublesome and wearying problems, and every other worldly care...should devote itself solely to the study of literature...and from their firm intention neither to intervene in nor to concern themselves with anything else in the

world."⁸² Judith Hook argued that the organization of academies in Siena was a major structural change in the city, necessitating an extraction of noblemen from urban economic and social activities, drawing a solid line between the world of the Intronati and the world of Siena.⁸³ However, this makes the distinction far too clear, as many of the academicians did not in any manner withdraw from their responsibilities in the outside world. Alessandro Piccolomini would even tie participation in the political realm of a republic to gaining entrance to heaven in the afterlife in his 1542 *Institutions*.⁸⁴ In fact, many of the Intronati maintained very active political, social, legal, and religious presences in the mundane elements of civic life away from the academy and it was due to this continual civic involvement that challenges birthed through academic methods would then spread to the political world outside academic walls. If anything, it seems that it was exactly because of the economic decline that the Sieneese pushed harder to develop their cultural practices and broadcast their academic achievements.

The Constitution continued these contradictions in the next passage. Following the renewed admonition to care nothing of the world, it immediately stated that they should, indeed, "show clearly and in public some of their works...[while] honorably and thoughtfully discussing" the same, for "the glory of the *Zucca*" – their insignia.⁸⁵ Significantly, public perception of the academy remained important. Particularly in these first years of the academy, though continuing throughout the sixteenth century, their desire to demonstrate great erudition and intellectual accomplishments to the world

⁸² Michele Maylender, *Storia delle Accademie d'Italia*, 5 vol., Bologna, 1926; iii, 355-6 - translation is Hook's, 166.

⁸³ Hook, *Siena*, 165-7.

⁸⁴ Alessandro Piccolomini, *Institutione di tutta la vita dell'uomo nato nobile, e in città libera* (Venetiis: Hieronymum Scotum, 1542).

⁸⁵ BCS Y.I.1 f. 2v

external to the academy was strong. However, this may have been a matter of some contention, as the Constitution's description of the Treasurer included the decree that his duties included "guarding all of the compositions and all of the money" of the academy – compositions listed first.⁸⁶ While the Intronati seemed to have been intent to broadcast the knowledge of their great accomplishments, they were also concerned to keep them close, perhaps with the fear that a different group or individual might claim authorship of their efforts.

The question of language received much attention in various sixteenth-century academies and intellectual circles; the Constitution engaged with this debate as well. Throughout the sixteenth century, the Intronati were widely known to profess the importance of work in the local Tuscan language, which they argued was the superior form of Italian, particularly when advocating for the inclusion of women in academic activities. Of course, those troublesome precepts were written in Latin. Scipione Bargagli, however, argued that this was not an indication that Latin should be given precedence over the vernacular. Instead, he maintained that the Intronati used Latin in these precepts solely for the purpose of lending authority to their message.⁸⁷ Though the Constitution did not limit academic activities to the Sienese dialect, or even the Tuscan language, they used the vernacular in nearly every other known Intronati activity and piece of literature.

As we have seen, the Constitution did include Latin and Greek as languages for use by the Intronati. Later in the Constitution, however, as the day-to-day business of the

⁸⁶ BCS Y.I.1 f. 3r.

⁸⁷ See Footnote 1 of this chapter for more on Scipione Bargagli's explanation for using Latin in the precepts.

academy was introduced, Greek was dropped from the list of academic languages.⁸⁸ Instead, "as the industry of the Intronati daily grew greater and the desire to learn and show the effects of their virtuous intentions" spread, "new compositions and new works (*imprese*)" in Latin, such as "Dialogues, sermons, epistles, orations, eclogues, couplets, epigrams, and other works of genius, just as in the Tuscan language, in prose and in rhyme," were limited to those languages that originated in Rome.⁸⁹ Though the reasoning behind this shift is not clear, it could be that the Intronati never intended to use Greek frequently (or at all) in academic activities. Instead, they may have included the language in the Constitution simply to suggest that the learned members were perfectly capable of working in that language as well. Finally, serving as further evidence of the academy's intention to primarily use the Tuscan language, is the fact that the Intronati wrote the body of the Constitution itself in this language rather than the Latin of the precepts. Considering this, it seems that the academy was meant to function primarily, if not exclusively, in Tuscan from the very beginning. Choosing to conduct their affairs primarily in Tuscan was another step that further distanced them from traditionally-conceived humanist practices. Focusing on Tuscan, the Intronati also set themselves apart from the formal political world.

The Greatest Tangle of Pricks There Ever Was

Featured in the list of different types of literature produced by the Intronati, dialogues became a major part of their literary output. In dialogues, the Intronati found a

⁸⁸ Indeed, Alessandro Piccolomini argued in his 1542 *Institutione di Tutta la Vita de l'Homo Nato Nobile e in Città Libera* that, due to the many subjects that a nobleman should learn and the shortness of life, young men (that is, younger than ten) should only focus on Tuscan and Latin - Greek could be skipped as many of the classical Greek works were available in Tuscan and Latin translations. However, once their formal education began, they should then become familiar with the language, though they should not dedicate excessive time to its study. The implications of this argument from a supposed humanist will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Four. (Piccolomini, *Institutione*, 10v-11r; 65v, 175r.)

⁸⁹ BCS Y.I.1 f. 3r.

genre that readily facilitated the discussion of various viewpoints on diverse matters in the chaotic decades after their formation, when many of these subjects could have caused problems for the members. Dialogues were a popular genre in sixteenth-century Italy and many authors composed them in other languages as well – notably, in Latin – though the Intronati adhered to their use of Tuscan for their dialogues. In dialogues, the men would voice ideas that may have been contrary to what was expected or accepted, even if in the end it was required that they officially "decide" for the accepted argument. These were literary compositions expressly meant for publication and dissemination. As such, in the tumultuous world of sixteenth-century Siena, the Intronati could not risk challenging the religious hegemony of the Catholic Church. After 1555, they would also have had to self-censor in order that they not offend their new rulers. When the Intronati used dialogues to discuss challenging ideas, the interlocutors could easily decide on the “safe” argument in the end. Doing so, the Intronati performance of cultural orthodoxy would remain intact. At the same time, the format allowed them, perhaps, to make a more persuasive argument of a more heterodox nature. While allowing the academicians to voice taboo opinions, dialogues also allowed them to have fun with matters fit for serious debate, as seen in one of the earliest extant (and indeed most famous) Intronati compositions, Antonio Vignali's *La Cazzaria*.

Many of the responses the Intronati made to the external world in which they lived were subtle, such as those made by academicians in many of their theatrical productions and literary works. Others, such as a political oration of Alessandro Piccolomini's that will be discussed shortly, were less subtle but more tactful, appealing to the noblemen amongst whom the Intronati moved. Some academic members, such as

Vignali, were neither. Though he probably intended *La Cazzaria* only for private circulation amongst the Intronati and their friends, it provides a dangerously critical perspective regarding the apparently futile political mess of the Sieneese civic landscape. On the surface, it was a vulgar piece of near pornography. However, the shock caused by its subject hid highly critical, political messages between the lines. In perfect Intronati form, Vignali feigned that the document only discussed bodily, sexual matters. In reality, it was the political message hidden within that proved to be his primary focus.

Ian Frederick Moulton, who published an English translation of the work, describes *La Cazzaria*, which he translates as *The Book of the Prick*, as "a text which in terms of Italian Renaissance culture can seem almost disturbingly unique."⁹⁰ However, it concerned issues that were very common throughout the Renaissance period and can be used to shed light on the personality of the early academy and its members, along with how they related to the world outside academic walls. *La Cazzaria* may also shed light on the meaning of Vignali's academic pseudonym as The Burned One. As described above, this name could refer to either a physical deformity or his sexual appetite. While it could easily be an allusion to both, the content of *La Cazzaria* may incline one to believe the latter. In explicit form, *La Cazzaria* demonstrates the function that this genre of writing could serve, and the type of relationships the *academici* may have had with one another.

Written in the form of an erotic dialogue between two founding academy members, Vignali and Marcantonio Piccolomini (in one of the latter's better known appearances as an academic "character"), it ostensibly debates questions of base bodily and sexual functions. In fact, it also allegorically attacks the same factionalism Alessandro Piccolomini would criticize later in his *Orazione della Conservazione della*

⁹⁰ Moulton, 2.

Salute della Città di Siena (Oration on the Conservation of the Wellbeing of the City of Siena). In many ways, Piccolomini's text confronted the same issues as *La Cazzaria*, simply with a more tactful approach. In a prefatory note reminiscent of the prologue of many Renaissance comedies, Intronato Marcello Landucci tells of his discovery of the dialogue in Vignali's study. Intrigued, he decided to submit it to the Archintornato for his amusement. If we are to believe the preface, supposedly written by Landucci, the appointed leader of the academy talked of nothing else but the circumstances of fucking, which Landucci claims to be the primary subject of this dialogue.⁹¹ He also included a request that the Archintronato soon return it to Landucci so he could replace it in the study. Of course, while he may have included this instruction to reinforce the impression that he carried off the text without Vignali's permission, though this is unlikely what actually happened. This note would also have served as an implicit reminder to other Intronati, to whom the dialogue would likely have been circulated, that it should not be released to the general public. While this request was probably based on the sexual content that colors *La Cazzaria*, the little book can instead tell us a lot about the purposes of the academy and the civic environment in which it was set.

Beginning the dialogue, Vignali expressed his disgust that the seemingly innocent Piccolomini admitted his ignorance at a dinner party earlier in the evening. Someone at the dinner had asked why the balls do not enter the cunt or the asshole during sex and Piccolomini had no explanation. This was a problem. For, as Vignali argued, though "it may be shameful and disgraceful to start talking of indecent things like fucking and buggery and to fill your mouth with cocks, cunts, assholes, and such...no matter how

⁹¹ Rather than using more clinical terms to refer to the various genitalia and sexual acts described in *La Cazzaria*, I will use the terms that more closely approximate those used in the text in an effort to provide a more accurate representation of the tone of the work. Vignali, *La Cazzaria*, 74.

ugly and vulgar a thing is, it is more vulgar and ugly not to be knowledgeable about it."⁹² Particularly as "fucking is the most natural thing in the world and necessary to our existence," and "since common, stupid people believe that students ought to know everything – no matter how trivial – whether it applies to their profession or not," Vignali was embarrassed for Piccolomini's ignorance. Particularly problematic was the possibility that Piccolomini's ignorance would reflect poorly on Vignali. The rest of their conversation, recorded in the dialogue, was meant to cure his lack of knowledge.⁹³

These brief introductions shed light upon two important things. First, and most obviously, was the belief that scholars should be informed on any subject that could arise, on any spectrum – though this also seems to be part of the satire that runs throughout the dialogue. While Vignali never specifies that his lessons were meant for Intronati, the dialogue took place between Intronati members, regarding a conversation that occurred at an Intronato's home, and likely featured other academy members beyond these three. Therefore, we can make the assumption that when Vignali said "scholars" he referred to *academici* of the Intronati. While the academy itself centered on literature and similar pursuits, *academici* had the responsibility to educate themselves in a much broader array of subjects. Importantly, Vignali implied that *academici* should be free to impress the common, stupid folk in addition to their brothers in the academy: appearances, always, were to be maintained. The second revelation has to deal with attitude. As will become clear, *La Cazzaria* was more than a simple discussion of sexual matters and preferences. Rather, it was a political allegory that revealed "the greatest tangle of pricks there ever

⁹² Ibid, 75.

⁹³ Ibid, 76.

was" – that is, the mess that political factionalism had made of Siena.⁹⁴ Vignali found no more appropriate way to discuss problems in contemporary Siena than a headless body politic comprised entirely of sexual organs continually in the midst of screwing one another (and themselves) over. By focusing on vulgar sexual and bodily acts, Vignali further positioned himself (and the Intronati) in direct opposition to standard humanist dialogues which favored flowery language, rhetorical flourishes, and logical debate of more sterile issues than farts, fucks, and piss. As a member of the Intronati, Vignali could take more liberty with his writing, demonstrating that his academic *virtù* was unrestricted by rules meant for more pedestrian humanists.

Though *La Cazzaria* is amusing when read on the surface, it is much more revealing when this allegory is illuminated. Throughout most of the medieval and early modern period, Siena was divided into four factions, or *monti*. In his translation, Moulton identified the various body parts with these factions. Cocks (*Cazzi*), as the only animal that can move without bones, represented the historically dominant *Monte dei Nove* (The Nine).⁹⁵ This faction was in power through the majority of Siena's golden age and was responsible for much of the architecture and art for which Siena is still known today. This *monte* was divided into two groups: the Big Cocks (those aligned with the Petrucci and therefore a much more potent force in the city) and the Little Cocks, who had less sway. The *Gentilhuomini* (Gentlemen), as befitted a faction that contained old families that frequently lived in the same palazzi, were represented by the Balls (*cogliononi*), "by nature timid and fearful, fond of peace and quiet."⁹⁶ Finally came the Assholes (*culi*) for the

⁹⁴ Ibid, 74.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 84.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 134.

Monte del Popolo and the Cunts (*potte*) for the *Riformatori*⁹⁷ – that is, those that were frequently left to respond to the more virile actions of the older two *monti*. Vignali himself was a member of the *Nove* – that is, a prick – and Piccolomini, as a member of a family that brought forth popes and other powerful men, was a member of the *Gentiluomini*. Therefore, *Sodo* (Piccolomini), contrary to what his academic pseudonym would imply, was a Ball and left out of both the cunt and the asshole; he was also left out of most of the action in the 'tangle of pricks' that constituted the Sieneese political scene in the early sixteenth century.⁹⁸ Again, Marcantonio Piccolomini's exclusion from conflict and a minimal literary legacy allowed him to serve as a blank canvas upon which the ideas of others could be drawn.

Vignali's ideas regarding the proper intention of government and justice were remarkably selfless as he saw the crux of both to revolve around "considering the good of others equally with one's own." Indeed, "If the Cocks of whom I intend to speak had well understood this they might have followed a civil and honorable way of life, respecting others as much as themselves, enjoying companionship, honor, and reputation without harm, in the favorable and peaceful state which their fortune or industry had earned them." Unfortunately, this was not the case. Instead, they were no longer held "to be upright and in great repute," nor "caressed, openly seen, and welcomed by Cunts, Assholes, and every courteous person." Now, they would "go miserably dispersed throughout the world, exiled and hated for their vanity."⁹⁹ Instead the various *monti*, constituting opposing elements of the body politic, were left attempting to find a way to organize and run the city, all while missing one crucial piece: the head. They were

⁹⁷ Also divided into two groups: the Ugly Cunts and (the largely extinct) Beautiful Cunts.

⁹⁸ Ibid, 26-35.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 125.

perfectly capable of reproducing the problems that had come to define the city, but without the means to rectify the situation.

As Alessandro Piccolomini would later cite Sieneese factionalism as the cause for the republic's decline in his more serious critique of Sieneese political life, Vignali also found fault with the way the factions interacted. In his presentation, however, the problem was that the Cocks (that is, the *Nove*) cared only for tyranny, a system that, Vignali claimed, always failed due to the greedy nature of tyrants. Instead, the Cocks of Siena were "often depicted holding their eyes and ears closed with their hands so they will not see or hear anything unpleasant."¹⁰⁰ Through this greed and willful ignorance, the *Nove* had created enemies of the other factions and weakening the city. A Great Cock (most likely Pandolfo Petrucci – the same tyrant who was rumored to have poisoned the more recent Piccolomini pope) emerged from the mess and began mistreating not only the Assholes and the Cunts but also other Cocks, who then aligned themselves with the other groups in order to conspire against him.¹⁰¹ This led to "a tangle of Cocks that even Saint Francis couldn't find his way out of" and doomed the city to chaos.¹⁰² The conspiracy continued in secret, unbeknownst to the Big Cocks, as "no one saw the ill will that can be hidden behind beautiful flowery words" – perhaps a nod at his own disguised messages.¹⁰³ While on the surface the dialogue is a discussion of fucking, shitting, and other bodily functions, frequently put forth in such a manner that seems only intent to amuse or shock the reader, this early and well-read Intronati dialogue was much more than filth more fitting to a schoolboy than a serious intellectual. Instead, it delivered a

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 125.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 126-127.

¹⁰² Ibid, 130.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 134.

harsh attack on the state of the Republic of Siena. At times, Vignali shed his subterfuge in order to make his arguments more explicit, perhaps hoping this would keep the dialogue from being dismissed as trash. These revelations, however, emerged later in the text when a more critical reader may have given up reading of buggery.

In the dialogue, Vignali presented the basic three options of governance that other treatises of the period discussed – that is, principalities (those tyrannies that he argued always fail), oligarchies, and republics. Through the voice of a moderate Cocks, Vignali differed from arguments made by other Intronati and reported republics as the worst possible form of governance. He claimed that they would only lead to "uncertain and universal government, where the fools have as much authority to judge as the wise do." Instead, given that experience was the best and most practical education, he argued that leaders should be elected from each of the factions and hold office for life. Vignali did, however, allow for the removal of officers who acted inappropriately.¹⁰⁴ In Siena, unfortunately, the rest of the Cocks had refused to debase themselves to a position of equality with other factions and the discord continued. Speculating that the actions of the Big Cocks could lead to an invasion from foreigners, another interloper in this dialogue within the dialogue suggested that all of their kind be destroyed. And so it continued, as dangerous attributes were assigned to each of the factions and peace could not be found.

While Vignali's discussion of the specifics of civic factionalism within the city was masked in this allegory of sexual organs, his commentary on academic life and the issues discussed in relation to it was much more straightforward. At least in this pre-fall period, it seems that there was no danger in celebrating these institutions. His implied criticisms of standard humanists, however, were more subtle. Though he wrote *La*

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 144.

Cazzaria in the style of medieval scholasticism, *quaestiones*, in which the questions are featured in the margins, he contrasted the dry traditions of university and humanistic training with new academic practices of the *Intronati*.¹⁰⁵ Approximately midway through the dialogue, after very thorough responses to such questions as "Why, as Soon as a Man Has Shit, He Looks at the Turd,"¹⁰⁶ "Why Jerking Off Was Invented,"¹⁰⁷ and "Why Cocks Are Made with a Bump,"¹⁰⁸ Vignali took a sharp turn toward more traditional questions, including one that was hotly debated in many academies and elsewhere throughout Italy, though rarely in such a direct manner: "Why Common People Cannot Understand the Beauty of the Tuscan Language."¹⁰⁹ Though Vignali wrote *La Cazzaria* in the Tuscan dialect (for private circulation, of course), in this section he described another book he was writing, *Lumen Pudendorum*,¹¹⁰ a three-volume work in which he would chronicle his extensive knowledge of the cock, cunt, and asshole – again mocking traditional humanistic discourses by juxtaposing them with the more playful (and vulgar) work of the *Intronati*. However, he planned to write this in Latin, for two reasons. "First, to protect the virtue of women, which I have always valued so highly that, if the greatest necessity had not constrained me, I would never have wanted to fuck around with them at all" – a backhanded compliment if ever there was one.¹¹¹ Secondly, so that certain "vulgar, hypocritical idiots who paid more attention to their natural inclinations than to

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 22-23 and Paul F. Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002, 151-2.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 95.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 107.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 112.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 122.

¹¹⁰ Also, of course, mocking widely distributed Latin texts. This text, to this historian's dismay, was apparently never completed (or possibly began) and we can only speculate as to what its contents would have been.

¹¹¹ This also alludes to one of the rationales for conducting academic activities in Tuscan, which was to allow women who were not normally educated in Latin to participate. However, it implies that even then, some subjects were not fit for their ears.

the causes and origin of things would not be able to attack it as a shameful book when they saw words like 'cock,' 'cunt,' 'asshole,' 'balls,' 'assfuck,' and other similar terms, which the book is completely full of." Instead, the unworthy who could not read Latin would not recognize the content and, as Vignali assumed that those who could read Latin would be desirous of such knowledge, "so that anyone who is able to understand it will take pleasure from it,"¹¹² those worthy and interested would have access to his vast knowledge. It is unclear at this point if he was still discussing Sieneese politics or had simply begun discussing ways of attaining sexual satisfaction. By simply suggesting that he might write such a vulgar tome in Latin, however, Vignali again took direct aim at his traditional colleagues and their serious studies with clever, if obscene, irony.

While mocking traditional learning and humanistic discipline, throughout *La Cazzaria* Vignali alluded to the beneficial nature of the intellectual refinement and performance that took place in groups such as the Intronati. As he described it, "This labor of ours, with all our learning, is of no profit if it does not please our listeners. To have great wisdom and not be able to show it is worse than not having it at all. There is no joy is [sic] having great knowledge in one field if you cannot find men of the same profession to speak with."¹¹³ However, he argued that this group interaction could have consequences. While working with others within the academy would bolster the learning of individuals, mistakes made by any member, as Piccolomini apparently made when he admitted his ignorance at the dinner party, would reflect badly upon the entire group. Vignali was doing more than just helping a friend out when taking the time to thoroughly discuss the reasons for his mistake: he was also looking out for himself and other

¹¹² Ibid, 114-115.

¹¹³ Error in translation. Ibid, 80.

Intronati. In his words, "I have my own shame to think of, because anyone who knows me to be your close friend, and who sees us together all day, and who hears that, when you were asked about these things, you had to knowledge of them, will immediately assume that I am afflicted by the same error."¹¹⁴ Due to these affiliations, semi-private means of normalizing behavior were especially important, as will be discussed in the following chapter on parlor games played in Intronati evening gatherings.

Additionally, Vignali argued that the nonprofessional nature of literary academies could only aid the quality of the achievements made by the *academici*. He reasoned, "if anyone devotes himself to study because he needs to earn his bread, you know he will never achieve anything worthwhile, because study should be a delight and not a necessity. Otherwise he will never seek to know more than what he needs to get some little thing he wants; and thus from the very outset, knowledge is parted from learning, and a liberal art is made a mechanic one. This is why today one cannot find anyone who has profound knowledge, such as the ancients did."¹¹⁵ Instead, foreshadowing the things that were to come in the following decades, Vignali claimed that "the clever and subtle things in which we are wiser than the ancients all have to do with making money, dominating others, and similar things; and all depends on this, because wealth has placed its feet on virtue's neck. A man can have all the knowledge in the world, but if he has few worldly goods he is despised and seen as a fool."¹¹⁶ Rather than becoming more learned and developing ways to live in peace, as the academicians in so many ways argued was necessary, they saw that their contemporaries only developed ways to destroy one

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 96.

¹¹⁵ Interestingly here, Vignali does allude to the superiority of the ancients, a foundational element of the standard Renaissance humanistic thought that Vignali so virulently and tactlessly opposed.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 118-119.

another, frequently to gain more property and money. This was, to Vignali, one of the main problems that cursed life outside the academy while threatening the activities of the Intronati within – and why a constitution was necessary to protect the interests of the *accademici*.

Though *La Cazzaria* was in many ways representative of Intronati thought and the playful nature of their work, it diverged greatly from most of their other literature on one topic: women. Though the Intronati were famously accepting of women during their own time, so much so that modern historical studies generally remark upon it, this notorious earliest example of Intronati literature was not favorable to their sex, generically, bodily, or intellectually. Though Vignali did acknowledge that amongst noblewomen, "women of some intelligence" did exist, he immediately claimed through his own character in the dialogue that "their honor and dignity" existed "only in being able to get fucked secretly."¹¹⁷ Even in this satirical and pornographic dialogue they could gain such honor in no other manner. Vignali did acknowledge throughout the dialogue that these women did prefer speaking to noblemen with "their beautiful conversation, their sweet words, their pleasing entertainments, [and] their jokes and amorous pleasantries" more than fornicating, a preference he presented favorably. However, even this was based on their relationships with men, as he did not allow for the creation of these intellectual products by women themselves. As a final insult, he wrote that not even the Devil could drive the stench out of the Cunts, that a woman's menstrual flow marked the purging of an infected wound that would never heal.¹¹⁸ This seems to indicate that he saw their inferiority as a

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 77. This ability to keep extramarital relationships a secret is a topic that returns in later writings of Alessandro Piccolomini, including his own almost pornographic dialogue, *La Raffaella*.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 135-136

natural part of their biology, rather than a result of the societal challenges that other *academici* would describe, such as their inability to attain a formal education.

Vignali had a better impression of noblemen. Specifically, he claimed that "the cock is such a perfect thing that the philosophers have never been able to imagine perfectly what matter it is made of" and what it could do.¹¹⁹ As he described it, the cock was capable even of moving without bones, something of which no other animal, as he deemed it, was capable. As with the stench of female genitalia, this natural virility of the cocks was granted to them by birth rather than experience. Further arguing for the superiority of men, Vignali presented sodomy as his preferred sexual act, even when it was with a woman. As he explained, this was because sodomitical sex with a woman while pregnant would prevent the creation of monsters with extra arms and legs by providing an alternate receptacle for male sperm, preventing it from contaminating a growing fetus. This, of course, did fit remarkably well with current ideas about the creation of monsters, though his preference seems primarily due to his predilection toward anal sex rather than a fear of corrupting a fetus.¹²⁰

Throughout *La Cazzaria*, Antonio Vignali mockingly stressed the inferiority of women. Other *academici*, however, argued that the primary purpose of many Intronati

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 83-84

¹²⁰ Vignali's argument falls directly in line with the literature on early modern monsters, which states that these creatures were interpreted as punishments from God of the parents, who had sinned in some way – likely due to engaging in reproductive acts when reproduction was not possible. Ottavia Niccoli, "'Menstrum Quasi Monstrum': Monstrous Births and Menstrual Taboo in the Sixteenth Century," in *Sex and Gender in Historical Perspective*, eds. Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero. (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990). They may be "doubly monstrous," even, by bearing a false resemblance to another species, as monstrosity in some cases was defined by not looking like one's parents. Huet shows that the imagination of pregnant women was enough to cause their fetuses to turn into monstrous creatures. Marie-Helene Huet, *Monstrous Imagination*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993). Finally, though Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park argued that "Monsters inspired repugnance because they violated the standards of regularity and decorum not only in nature, but also in society and the arts," this abhorrence shifted to wonder as monsters became subject to scientific inquiry by the end of the sixteenth century. Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), 176-212.

activities was to entertain the women that would attend. In the standard Intronati presentation, of course, the inspiration women provided for *academici* justified these attempts to please women. Following these general Intronati practices, Antonio Vignali later dedicated a lesser-known dialogue, *Dulpisto Dialogo*, to Aurelia Petrucci.¹²¹ This dialogue was in almost every possible way a very typical, non-controversial Renaissance text on friendship and unrequited love, presenting women in a much more positive light. This dissonance may be evidence that Vignali received criticism as a result of his presentation of women in *La Cazzaria* and that he wrote this dialogue to satisfy protestors. Dedicated on May 20, 1540, in Siena, *Dulpisto Dialogo* could have been an apology for *La Cazzaria*. However, this was nearly thirteen years after he had supposedly fled the city and we have no evidence that he ever returned. Signing this dialogue, clearly intended for distribution, from Siena, and as *Arsiccio Intronato*, it seems as if Vignali may have been trying to rehabilitate his image. It may also have been to rejuvenate the reputation of the academy itself, which was increasingly coming under fire from the Vatican for the heretical beliefs of several individuals in its roster. If this theory is correct, it is further evidence that important figures in Italy took the literary work of the Intronati very seriously indeed, even before the fall of Siena in 1555.

There is another, perhaps more controversial explanation for Vignali's *Dulpisto Dialogo*: that it was not his at all. Scholars generally accept that Antonio Vignali left Siena in 1527 and yet this dialogue is dated 1540, signed in Siena. There are two manuscripts of the dialogue extant today. One is in Florence, the other in Parma. The manuscript at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze claims to be an original.

¹²¹ BNCF Nuovi Acquisti 1248. Another manuscript exists at the Biblioteca Palatina di Parma (ms Palatino 297) and The dialogue is also available in a modern edition: Antonio Vignali, *Dulpisto Dialogo*, ed. James W. Nelson Novoa, Anexo de la revista Lemir.

However, the handwriting contained in this manuscript does not resemble Vignali's handwriting contained in documents attributed to him at the Intronati library in Siena. Instead, it bears a remarkable resemblance to the hand of one Alessandro Piccolomini. I have not had the opportunity to consult the manuscript in Parma. However, if it provides evidence that Vignali did not write it either, this dialogue may instead be evidence that the academy, loyal almost to a fault, was trying to pave the way for Vignali's return to Siena by composing a work that would not cause offense, putting his name on it, and hoping that this would indicate that the man had reformed. As the political situation in Siena worsened, the Intronati may have hoped for a return of their intemperate founder.

Regardless of the purpose of this later dialogue, Vignali's experience illustrates the dangers of flirting with forbidden subjects and behaviors. Just seven years after playing an instrumental role founding the Intronati, Vignali fled Siena and would not return for the remainder of his life while working variously throughout the rest of Italy, Spain, France, and as far north as Germany. Yet, he remained in close contact through correspondence with many Intronati, notably the Bargagli brothers. His epitaph cites his friendship with Marcantonio Piccolomini, indicating that various members of the Intronati were content to remain in contact with the firebrand without much (if any fear) of repercussions. The epitaph also names him as an Intronato and citizen of Siena – with his academic status given pride of place.¹²² Some scholars have speculated that Vignali's

¹²² Ian Frederick Moulton provides a translation of this epitaph in his introduction to *La Cazzaria*: “Whoever you are, if you are devout, do not hold back your devoted tears. Here lies Antonio Vignali, Arsiccio Intronato, Citizen of Siena, a man of sharp and admirable wit, dedicated above all to letters, painting, and the plastic arts. He was exceedingly well-disposed to such pleasing trifles. He lived fifty-eight years, four months, and thirteen days, and died six days before the Nones of April, 1559, with his companion from Petra to Mauritius, Senator and Bishop of Vigevano, his dearest friend Senator Marcantonio Piccolomini himself, his closest colleague, attending and following. It is difficult to determine who is sadder – the one dead, or the one living.” Moulton specifies that the Latin is faulty in places and so some parts of the translation are uncertain. Even with this in mind, however, the dedication between these

self-induced exile was due to dissatisfaction with the increasing imperial control of the city. However, as documented by various sources, Vignali ended his life serving under King Philip II in the Spanish court which, as Moulton points out, would have been a strange place of employment had he earlier fled the city to avoid the Spanish.¹²³ Instead, it seems more likely that the wide distribution of *La Cazzaria*, a satirical dialogue in which he both virulently attacked the factionalism current in Siena and openly glorified the pleasures of sodomy, was the more likely cause of his rapid departure. Neither of these potentially scandalous issues, however, discouraged the remaining Intronati from loudly proclaiming his achievements. Scipione, in fact, glorified Vignali more than any other *academico*, with the possible exception of Alessandro Piccolomini, in his 1603 *Oratione in lode dell'Accademia degli Intronati*, which proclaimed the achievements of the early academy.¹²⁴ Demonstrating an impressive loyalty to "fallen" members of the academy, this oration shows that even the scandalous Vignali retained his position as an esteemed founder in the eyes of later generations. In their estimation, his literary skills and cultural contributions legitimated his continued importance in the memory of the academy. The importance of such memories to this later generation of *academici* will be the topic of the final chapter.

partners may imply a relationship deeper than friendship and academic affiliation and deserves to be addressed in a closer study of Piccolomini's life. Moulton, 21 and 66 n. 23. Also Isodoro Ugurgieri Azzolini, *Le pompe sansei, o' vero relazione delli uomini, e donne illustri di Siena, e suo stato* (Pistoia: Pier' Antonio Fortunati, 1649), Part I, 575.

¹²³ Vignali, 20.

¹²⁴ Scipione was still comparatively young at 63 when he gave this oration upon the re-opening of the academy following a ban on academies by Cosimo de' Medici. BCS L.VIII.41 *Oratione In lode dell'Accademia degli Intronati; fatta e recitata dallo Schietto, Accademico Intronato, Nel nuovo Risorgimento della detta Accademia il di XIII di Dicembre M.D.III*. Scipione Bargagli, *Trattenimenti*, 20.

A Return to the Intronati Constitution: Academic Life, Practically Political

Though the Constitution begins by outlining the ideological foundations of the academy, a good majority of the document is an outline of practical issues, including a detailed description of various offices with a discussion of how each position is appointed and its responsibilities. It begins with the highest position, that of the Archintronato.¹²⁵ As "the base and head of such a great and praiseworthy group," the election of this position was not to be left "to Fortune, which is the enemy of good order and of well-done things." Fortune, the Constitution explains, frequently "places in high and sublime positions unworthy people while setting aside the honorable, deserving, virtuous, and *gentili spiriti*."¹²⁶ Even before the fall of Siena, these *academici* were no supporters of Fortune or her outcomes. Instead, the Archintronato would be chosen by a gathering of the entire academy, as a matter deserving of great thought. A secret ballot would determine who the next head of the academy would be – for the subsequent two months, that is.

Short tenures such as this were common in the literary academies of the sixteenth century and were an indication of several elements of the position. First, the Archintronato had many responsibilities and the very busy *academici* frequently would not have had the time required for an extended stay in this position. For this reason, to assist the Archintronato and take his place in the event of an absence were two *Consiglieri*, whose term would reflect that of the Archintronato. It also, I believe, was another indication of the democratic nature of many of the academies. Just as all members were eligible, with this rapid turnover many *academici* would receive the

¹²⁵ In the language of Vignali's body politic, applied to the academy, the Archintronato was the head and intelligence of the academy.

¹²⁶ BCS Y.I.1 f. 4r.

opportunity to "rule." Finally, ritual played a large role in the life of an academy. Frequent elections and the subsequent rite of induction would have been a symbolic reminder of the ideals of the academy and its mission.¹²⁷ This also paralleled governmental administration, another indication that the Intronati consciously intended the academy to begin replacing the republican government (and its administration) with this new literary group.

After the election, a simple ceremony took place in which the scepter of the position was handed to the newly elected head of the academy, who would repeat the responsibilities of the office spoken by the retiring leader.¹²⁸ After his election, the new Archintronato would gather the *academici* every Sunday to meet and "read, debate, and defend exercises of virtue, bringing peace and union to all of the Intronati, exhorting and inspiring them towards scholarly works and praiseworthy and polite customs."¹²⁹ Each member, whether old or new, was required to submit "some composition, according to his profession" for every meeting – apparently requiring each member to write something new on a weekly basis.¹³⁰ At these meetings, the Archintronato would initiate and regulate the activities conducted, maintaining order. According to the Constitution, these meetings over which the Archintronato would preside would be the foundation for academic life. However, we have no evidence that the meetings took place as outlined; no record of them exist in the Intronati archive today. Indeed, if every member presented

¹²⁷ A similar position in the *Infiammati*, that of the *principe*, or prince, was gradually extended from a two month position to a four and from there to six months as the election process and ceremony required much time and resources. As in the case of Sperone Speroni, who almost had to be physically brought to Padua in order to begin his stint as *principe*, it may have been in this academy that the position was seen as too intensive and *academici* wanted to avoid the responsibilities of the office. Samuels, "Benedetto Varchi, the *Accademia degli Infiammati*, and the Origins of the Italian Academic Movement," 602-604.

¹²⁸ BCS Y.I.1 f. 9v-10r.

¹²⁹ BCS Y.I.1 f. 4r.

¹³⁰ It does seem, however, that this was an ideal rate of productivity and that each member did not come close to submitting work this frequently. BCS Y.I.1 f. 9r

every week, as mandated by the Constitutions, the meetings would have been prohibitively long, indicating perhaps that these guidelines really were not meant to be followed. By focusing on the meetings the Constitution may have been intended to distract from the actual content of Intronati discussions and plans.

Continuing to focus on the dry, procedural details of academic life, the Constitution continued outlining the offices. Next was that of the *Censori*, elected for six months, who was responsible for reviewing the work of the other Intronati, guiding them in crafting clear and well-written compositions of every variety. Given the diverse interests of the academy, the duties required of these men were also quite extensive. An index of lectures given by the Intronati during the years in question does not exist. However, the interests of the Accademia Fiorentina were similar to those of the Intronati and a list compiled by Armand De Gaetano of the primary subjects of their lectures during the Cinquecento may be illustrative of the range covered by the Intronati as well.

Their lectures covered:

the color of the eyes, anatomy and physiology, love, dreams, grammar, the soul, law and justice, free will, fortune, fate, the elements (earth, water, air, fire), friendship, envy and jealousy, Providence, beauty, honor, the sports on the moon, monsters, medicine (for and against), peace and concord, how the earth was inhabited, human and divine happiness, infinity, eternity, the sentiments and senses, ideas, divine and human intelligence, fame, eloquence, sculpture and painting, the Bible, nature, comets, predestination, nobility, size of the heavens, size of the earth, size of the planets, arms vs. law, arms vs. letters, the sea, rain, the tides, perfection of the universe, time, laughter, metaphors, cause and effect, affections (attributes), the qualities of Hell, [and] money.¹³¹

While the academy existed apart from the university, these lectures must have constituted an education in their own right. At the same time, by its very breadth this list indicates the upper-class status of the members of the academy: not focused on simple matters of

¹³¹ De Gaetano, "The Florentine Academy and the Advancement of Learning through the Vernacular: The Orti Oricellari and the Sacra Accademia," 44

survival (those concerns that would have consumed the energies of the lower classes), they were free to exercise their curiosity and play with matters of more intellectual interests. Though this demonstrated their superiority to the lower classes even in the first decades of the academy, this wealth of interests and ideas regarding their natural superiority would become crucial as the Intronati attempted to instigate a shift toward a new cultural republicanism after 1555, replacing political control with cultural leadership.

Next, the office of the *Letto* required "a great quietness of soul" and would serve "under the prudence and will of the Archintronato" for a period no greater than one month. He was in charge of determining what the various Intronati members should read during the Sunday meetings. The Treasurer was then responsible for securing and protecting both compositions and money. Because of the trust required for this office, the Constitution stated that the position would require an extensive search process. Due to this intensive procedure and, perhaps, due also to a scarcity of suitable candidates, this office was elected for a period of one year, the longest appointed position. The Treasurer was explicitly instructed that he was to maintain the financial assets of the Intronati while not spending the funds without approval from the entire group. Regarding the literary products, he "in no way [was to] show or give copies to anyone, intending to keep [these works] private." Finally, the Treasurer organized the distribution of the compositions to the *Censori*, ensuring proper flow of 'intellectual property' within the group and, at the end of the year, would present the account books to his replacement.

The Constitution also placed great importance on the next office, that of the *Cancelliere*, as "the most useful and most necessary, amongst the others of the greatest importance and, for this reason, this election...required the most diligence" of all the

elections. The *Cancelliere* served for six months and was required to attend every meeting of the Intronati, taking notes of all "counsels and deliberations, of all lectures and new *intelletti*," keeping record of all complaints and punishments, passing on to the Treasurer any funds received. Tellingly, this was the only position that came with its own sigil, implying an at least symbolic importance. Unfortunately, however, these treasurers' notes have not been discovered, if they ever existed in the first place. Instead, keeping a close record of these meetings and other academic affairs may have been another ideal that was never fully intended to be followed. This could also indicate that the rest of these offices, so clearly delineated in the Constitution, may also have been more for show, as evidence of the serious work done within the academy, a sign that they had their own important work to do and were therefore not interested in the cares of the world outside.

Finally, the Constitution introduced honorary members, and the office of the *Bidello* – a custodian who ensured that meeting rooms were properly prepared. As "the most base office," its recipient would only maintain this position for two months. A primary purpose of this position was to "maintain humility, supporting obedience and consequently the dignity" of the *academici*. Lastly, on "the day of the *Zucca's* exaltation" (the second of May - the anniversary of the Intronati's formation), six new *Censori Maiali* would be elected with the authority to further "correct and refine, to append, to approve and disapprove of" the Intronati's compositions.¹³² The modern academy translates the title of this office as "Proof-Reader," though the literal translation is "Pig Censors." I have been unable to determine the origin of this term, nor discover other places where it was used. This may have been another humble position, meant to further dull any sharp egos within the group. At the same time, it made fun of their jobs and, perhaps, hinted at

¹³² BCS Y.I.1 f. 4v-7r.

a lack of power in the position, attempting to censor writers with their own strong opinions and aims. Regardless, for a comparatively small group, this number of offices must have meant that most Intronati would regularly serve in one of these positions and, thus, contributed to a sense of loyalty to the academy and its purposes.

After this description of the various offices, the Constitution continued with several stipulations. Minus the office of the *Lettore*, a person had to wait an entire year before he could hold a specific office again. No one person could hold two offices at the same time. To avoid confusion, no one could speak without the permission of the Archintronato and, when speaking, the person must "show reverence, speak briefly and also peacefully." The punishment for breaking these prohibitions consisted of monetary penalties to be paid to the Treasurer.¹³³ With this teamwork, the Intronati together would strive to distill the academic activities (that is, exercises in nearly every intellectual forum imaginable at the time) into those of the highest quality that would do the academy great honor when presented to the world.¹³⁴ It was this dissemination, perhaps, that would be the most important activity of all: unless Intronati works were circulated outside the academy, they would do nothing to increase the fame of the Sieneese which, particularly as time went by, became one of the highest priorities of its members.

In this manner, the *academici* were to run and maintain the academy in good faith. Next, the Constitution began limiting the subjects appropriate for discussion within the academy. For the most part, these regulations reflected general concerns common during sixteenth-century Italy. The first, for example, specified that the Intronati were to "always render gracious praise and honor" towards God and his mother the Virgin Mary. Those

¹³³ Financial records of the early Intronati are also unavailable, so it is unclear whether these fines were ever collected.

¹³⁴ BCS Y.I.1 f. 7v.

who blasphemed were to face a judgment specified by deliberation of the assembled academy. The following rule returned to the original precepts, as the Constitution specified again that "those who look for immortal fame for their studies or erudition" must seek "to be separate from all of the cares of the world, and particularly from those [issues of] state that are more serious, troublesome, and most dangerous." According to this section, thoughts regarding these matters were utterly contrary to the intentions of the academy, being the "greatest enemies of the health" of academic accomplishment. Therefore, it was "expressly prohibited...to collegially dare to think of good or evil things" regarding the state and, within the confines of the academy, to become involved in these matters.¹³⁵

These admonitions closely resemble those that have already been presented as actions to feign. The same disclaimer, though, is not present in this section, which also specified harsh punishments. If a member were to break this rule by flirting with political ideals in an academic setting, in order to keep him from exposing the group to penalties from the state the misbehaving Intronato would be immediately expelled from the group. With this penalty, it seems that contaminating the academy with matters of state was at least presented as more serious than even committing blasphemy against God himself, an action that carried a lighter penalty. Though Vignali's *La Cazzaria* and Alessandro Piccolomini's *Oratione* (to be discussed shortly) were, respectively, not intended for common distribution and not composed under the umbrella of the *Zucca*, it is still significant that both commentaries of note on the state of Siena between 1525 and 1555 were authored by active Intronati, belying this separation of academy and state. Again, this is an indication that the stipulations of the Constitution were more for show than for

¹³⁵ BCS Y.I.1 f. 7v-8r.

use as actual guidelines. This display was important in the highly-charged Sienese political world before and after 1555, but it may also be evidence of that new cultural leadership the Intronati hoped to attain. Publicly, at least, it was their intellectual and other cultural activities they were meant to broadcast, rather than the presence of the politically-entrenched membership.

Indeed, as Nerida Newbiggin points out, "the *accademici* themselves *were* the politicians of Siena in this period."¹³⁶ She argues that it was because of the support of individual *accademici* given by Charles V that the Intronati received financial support from the *Balia* for several comedies prepared by the Intronati during the early period. It does, however, seem more likely that this support was due simply to who they were: powerful community members in Siena. Chronologically, the Intronati received funds in January 1529 to produce a play for a visit of Charles V – one that did not actually transpire but was nonetheless planned. In 1531, after the Spanish commander Don Lopes moved out of the Palazzo Salimbeni in the center of Siena, the Intronati were granted his rooms for their use.¹³⁷ They were then given funds for carnival of 1532 to produce a comedy in a theater within the Palazzo Pubblico itself. These funds were administered by

¹³⁶ Nerida Newbiggin, *Gli ingannati con Il sacrificio e la canzone in morte di una civetta* (Siena: Accademia senese degli Intronati, 1984), 124.

¹³⁷ It is interesting to note that this same palazzo is now the global headquarters of the Monte dei Paschi bank, which claims to be the oldest continually-operating bank in the world and has also, until scandals in recent years have threatened the financial basis of the bank and also its respectability within the city, largely ran many of Siena's civic functions and hosted many entertaining events for the Sienese and tourists alike. It was also out of one of its highest windows that an executive of the bank jumped to his death in 2013. The Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena, the main public library currently administered by the Intronati and housing their archive, is located just down the hill on the Via della Sapienza, the Street of Wisdom or Learning, which extends directly from the Piazza Salimbeni.

a treasurer for the republic, Andrea Landucci, who happened to be an Intronato himself.¹³⁸

Newbigin also examines the role of politics in three Intronati plays (*I prigionieri*, *L'Aurelia*, and *Gli Ingannati*), arguing that the presence of political themes and subthemes in these comedies belied the Intronati admonition against engaging with politics. Even in these activities that were ostensibly only meant for entertainment, the Intronati received financial and practical support from the acting government and was therefore inextricably intertwined with the state – the same that they, theoretically, must avoid in all matters. This did not sit well with an academician of at least one other academy – Agnolo Spannocchi, an *Acceso* – who complained that while the Intronati were given a palazzo for their use, the Accesi received nothing of the sort.¹³⁹ The support of the Intronati that the Sienese government gave the academy does not compare, however, to the papal sponsorship secured by the Accademia Fiorentina, which was regularly patronized by the Medici.¹⁴⁰

Similarly providing evidence that a separation between the academy and the state was not entirely possible were those individual Intronati who held direct positions in local politics, concurrently with their academic affiliations, and the role that the academy itself played in reshaping conceptions of civic identity and *virtù* both before and after the fall of the Republic. Rather than just a group that acknowledged that they lived in a world

¹³⁸ ASS *Balia* 100 f. 38v and 50r; *Balia* 103 f. 167 v; *Balia* 105 f. 15v and f. 46v; *Balia* 291 f. 14r and 40r; *Balia* 1013 f. 9v and 11v. Newbigin, *Gli ingannati con Il sacrificio e la canzone in morte di una civetta*, 124-125.

¹³⁹ Girolamo Bargagli, *I Trattenimenti*, 1989, XX.

¹⁴⁰ De Gaetano, "The Florentine Academy and the Advancement of Learning through the Vernacular: The Orti Oricellari and the Sacra Accademia," 26-27. Earlier in the century, Pope Leo X had sponsored the Accademia Fiorentina with 50 florins a year. For a discussion of the *sacra poesia* this inspired, see Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Studies in Renaissance Thought and Letters* (Rome: Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 1956), 328-336.

shaped by the political revolutions of their day, the Intronati themselves were political agents. This included serving various roles within the Sienese government, which must have limited the ability of Intronati to dissociate themselves from political thoughts while involved in the academic setting. In all things, it seems, the academy was never quite what it appeared to be.

Alessandro Takes Aim: The State of the Republic

Perhaps the best example of an Intronato explicitly involving himself in Sienese political commentary comes from that most-famous *academico* himself, Alessandro Piccolomini. While studying in Bologna in 1543, he composed an oration in response to the deteriorating political situation in Siena. His purpose seems to have been to provide advice to his fellow *senese* on how to protect their city from collapse. Titled *l'Orazione della Conservazione della Salute della Città di Siena (Oration on the Conservation of the Wellbeing of the City of Siena)*, he addressed it to four individual Sienese men: Orlando Mariscotti, Girolamo Piccolomini, Pietro Benassi, and Marc'Antonio Pannilini. This selection was not arbitrary. Each man came from a different faction within the city and it was the strife between these groups that Piccolomini believed presented the greatest danger to the future of Siena. In order for Siena to remain independent, he argued, these four factions would have to learn to put their differences aside for the common good.

Piccolomini himself had not lived in Siena for many years, and was not be able to return to the city to deliver his *Orazione* personally. Still, in various ways throughout his absence he demonstrated that his thoughts remained with the city. Initially in Padua to study at the university there, he became a founding member of the *Accademia degli Infiammati* and developed ties with nearby Venetian publishing houses, where he

published several of his works. Importantly, these publications were exclusively dedicated to Sieneese individuals; almost without exception, he dedicated his work to specific Sieneese women. As the modern publisher of Piccolomini's *Orazione*, Eugenio Refini, wrote in his introduction to the work, "In the liminary thresholds of the texts, in fact, Piccolomini always portrayed an ideal and harmonic description of his companions and of the noblewomen at the center of Sieneese academic life and...of the Republic of Siena."¹⁴¹ These dedications presented a markedly different image of Siena than the one he described in his *Orazione*. Instead, the Siena of this text was marred by internal strife that threatened the security and the independence of the republic. Writing to the four men listed above, Piccolomini explained that "not being present in Siena to recite [this *Orazione*], I thought to address it to you, not just because you are good citizens and lovers of the *Patria*, and great enemies to civil discord," but also because he hoped that they would join with him and "one day see all of the Citizens of the same desire, most united, with all Civil hatred removed, to happily lead our days" in peace.¹⁴² Though in his many published dedications he described a harmonious city in which men and women excelled in academic pursuits, he clearly felt that the strife within the city was preventing Siena from reaching her potential.

Even though he was not in the city, Piccolomini argued that it was "the duty of a man born in a free City as I am," regardless of profession and all other ties, to warn and counsel of dangers facing his city.¹⁴³ Interestingly, Piccolomini chose to use the same phrase here to describe his dedicatees as men "born in a free City" that he used in the

¹⁴¹ Alessandro Piccolomini, *Discorso fatto in tempo di Repubblica per le veglianti discordie de' suoi cittadini*, ed. Eugenio Refini and Franco Tomasi. (Siena: Accademia senese degli Intronati, 2008), 5.

¹⁴² BCS A.VI.22 f. 1-2.

¹⁴³ BCS A.VI.22 f. 3

instruction manual, *Institutione di tutta la vita de l'huomo nato nobile, e in città libera* (*Institutions of all of the life of a nobleman born in a free city*). He had published that treatise a year earlier, in 1542, through his connections in Venice. Dedicated to Laudomia Forteguerra and her son Alessandro Colombini, it outlined the proper ways of comportment, education, and every other element of a properly raised nobleman's life (one who was born in a free city, that is) and will be analyzed extensively in the fourth chapter of this dissertation. The guidebook was widely read within Siena and throughout the peninsula. Choosing to use the same turns of phrase and rhetoric, Piccolomini here seems to imply that this oration was part of the general responsibility of every man born in a free city, expected to do his best to look out for the maintenance of peace in the city – and subtly pointing out that he was holding himself accountable to these same responsibilities.¹⁴⁴

Piccolomini did not write this address as an *Intronato*: significantly, it is one of the only documents of note written by an *academico* that did not specify his academic affiliation. Instead, with this unusual move Piccolomini seemed to dissociate himself from academic and factional loyalties, serving as an example of the changes he was begging of his fellow Sieneese. Describing the threats to the city, he acknowledged that yes, the walls of the city were strong and built to last. However, he argued that there needed to be other walls, "these not of rock or stone like the former, but so much stronger," as the disorder within Siena was a much greater threat to the health of the city than the external dangers the physical walls protected against. These other walls, he wrote, were "constructed of prudent laws, those against hidden dangers, and the

¹⁴⁴ This theme of duty towards the *patria* is echoed by Girolamo Bargagli when explaining why he decided to write his games treatise, as will be seen in the next chapter. In it, however, after the fall of Siena, Bargagli felt this duty was toward his academy, rather than the city.

malicious acts of bad citizens;" these were the walls that were most important. Both forms, of course, required careful attention by custodians of the city.¹⁴⁵ However, the government had not been able to appropriately maintain these laws and, Piccolomini argued, it was not "the defeat of our armies, nor the sacks nor the pestilences, nor the famines, nor the ruin of the countryside, nor similar other reasons that were the principle reason behind the city coming to disorder, but the division of our minds, the discord of our hearts" that led to the need for change within the city.¹⁴⁶ For these reasons, he argued that it was necessary for the Sieneese to put aside their differences and recreate a strong republic within the city.

As we have seen, both Antonio Vignali and Alessandro Piccolomini focused on the factionalism that destroyed Siena internally. Both, however, discussed general elements of sixteenth-century political life in Siena. In Piccolomini's *Orazione*, he described the four types of men that he believed made up a city. These types included those who built the city as patrons and magistrates; those involved in the armies that defended the city from internal and external threats; artisans; and those that produced food.¹⁴⁷ These were unrelated to the four groupings of citizens within Siena he faulted for the disastrous state of Siena's factions. Perhaps in outlining these other categories he attempted to demonstrate that factional divisions did not matter as much as those required in order for a city to properly function.

Similar to Vignali, he also briefly discussed the three basic forms of government: rule by a prince, oligarchy (*Stati di Ottimati*), and republics. Admitting that they were all admirable in their own ways, when laws and institutions were not corrupt, Piccolomini

¹⁴⁵ BCS A.VI.22 f. 10

¹⁴⁶ BCS A.VI.22 f. 45

¹⁴⁷ BCS A.VI.22 f. 10-11

argued that republics were the form most natural and, because of this, were the safest form of governance because they were most easily reconstructed once broken.¹⁴⁸ Because of this, it was especially troublesome that the Sienese republic had become such a mess, and why Piccolomini felt that his pleas to reconcile would have been useful. He warned that if the factionalism current in the city was not soon rectified, the Sienese would in shortly "see the city in fire, sacked, and immersed in blood: to see wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters fall to the libidinal urges of the enemies: to see your virgins forced, convents raped, sons cut to pieces in the arms of their mothers: in sum, to see our belongings, honor, and blood in the hands of our enemies."¹⁴⁹ These words would become terrifyingly prophetic in the next decade. Though Vignali and Piccolomini here disagreed on the best form of government, they both argued that the traditional conflicts between factions were the cause of the rapid decline of the city. As Intronati, they persisted to call for political reform, even while these actions violated their Constitution.

However, the external actors Piccolomini discussed were to rapidly change their positions in relation to Siena in the subsequent years. He wrote that while the factionalism of Siena was not the fault of the current citizens, that this strife had been continuing for centuries, it was nonetheless the duty of the citizens to correct the harm that had come to Siena due to these conflicts.¹⁵⁰ Imploring the Sienese to acknowledge that they needed help to regain peace within the city, Piccolomini recalled how, several years earlier, "Charles V, without taking his sword out, with piety and *virtù*, as the most effective defender of liberty, placed himself between [Sienese] discord" to create peace in the city. However, Piccolomini warned the Sienese that there would not always be a

¹⁴⁸ BCS A.VI.22 f.14

¹⁴⁹ BCS A.VI.22 f. 41

¹⁵⁰ BCS A.VI.22 f. 27

Charles V to protect them, that they needed to find a way to cure the conflict of the *monti* and reconstruct a government that could peacefully rule.¹⁵¹ While their ancient laws had been held up as examples to world, they would now have to follow a new, unused road under the guidance of the Holy Roman Emperor in order to regain such glory.¹⁵²

Piccolomini did not cite the academy once throughout this *Orazione*, though allusions throughout note "the most learned men" found abundantly in the city who may be able to lead Siena out of its troubles. He also cited "knowledge" as the most important thing that would preserve the city's freedom.¹⁵³ Other tropes of academic life also appear throughout the text. Just as the Intronati embraced new ideas and practices, in opposition to the general Renaissance tendency to continuously return to ancient ideals, Piccolomini advised the Sienese "to always imagine new ways to live in peace," and to always focus on those ideas.¹⁵⁴ Rather than continuously returning to ancient practices for their own sake, the ideal was now turned on the maintenance of peace, one that encouraged innovative methods of thinking and achieving that security. The Sienese, Piccolomini argued, had two choices. The first was to continue along the path they had been walking, towards misery and destruction, the second to abandon the factions that had defined civic life in Siena for so long and to transform the city into a peaceful commune, rich in intellectual and cultural life, that would provide an example to all the world.¹⁵⁵ Just as Europe would soon begin a period dedicated to reform, Piccolomini believed that the Republic of Siena, in these years preceding its fall, required a similar effort. Following this period, the Intronati became an alternative *patria*, a group that unified Sienese

¹⁵¹ BCS A.VI.22 f. 60

¹⁵² BCS A.VI.22 f. 43

¹⁵³ BCS A.VI.22 f. 53-54

¹⁵⁴ BCS A.VI.22 f. 61

¹⁵⁵ BCS A.VI.22 f. 73

noblemen (and, of course, affiliated women) against foreign oppression, rather than against one another.

In a later oration, in 1559, Alessandro again painted a harsh picture of the city. Because of the war, he said, religion, "the sciences, arts, honorable customs and good behaviors are lacking, and, instead, the contempt of God, ignorance, abuses and the rage of the insolent" had risen; "holy law and every good order are rendered useless, unbridled freedom and every impolite disorder rise up on their feet, justice has fallen to the ground," causing all Sieneese citizens to lose every joy and even their beautiful palaces to crumble.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps because some felt that Siena would never regain her previous glorious state, Alessandro felt the need to outline the benefits of peace, of which there were many: "peace brings every good thing, restores every loss, protects every part of our life, from [that of the] spirit to the sciences, nourishes the arts, gives life to laws, brings abundance, leads to every new wedding," and generally benefits every element of life – all of which would seem to be common sense.¹⁵⁷ Above all, however, it seems as if the primary benefit Alessandro saw of the peace offered by the leadership of Cosimo was the ability to re-open the academy. In this new age, he envisioned the Intronati as the driving force behind Sieneese intellectual life which, without the academy, would perish. His goal, he explicitly stated, was for a "renewal of the past glory" of the academy.¹⁵⁸ This is the same goal that a fictionalized version of his cousin Marcantonio would advocate in Girolamo Bargagli's 1563 treatise on game play in Siena, and it is to this renewal through game-play that I will turn in the next chapter.

¹⁵⁶ BCS C.IV.4 231r-231v.

¹⁵⁷ BCS C.IV.4 233r.

¹⁵⁸ For further discussion of this, see Marie-Françoise Piejus, "Varietà: *L'Orazione in Lode delle Donne* di Alessandro Piccolomini." *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 170, no. 4 (1993), 409-410.

By the time of Cateau-Cambresis, and this oration, Siena had already been in the possession of Florence and the Medici for slightly more than two years (Philip of Spain having sold Siena to the Florentines in July of 1557). Though in the 1559 oration Alessandro characterized this transition to Florentine rule a "miraculous moment," bringing a resurrection of life and hope, Alessandro had waited over two years to make this observation, perhaps waiting to see if the Republic might re-take its homeland.¹⁵⁹ This homeland, according to Alessandro, was famous throughout Italy for being fertile for "fine and illustrious intellects." Though he admitted that not all of these minds came from the Intronati, he claimed that a "good part of the people that are held in some regard" were, indeed, "nourished" under the sign of the Intronati.¹⁶⁰ It is, however, significant that Alessandro only discussed the Intronati after the fall of Siena, rather than in the earlier oration. This inclusion in the latter oration points to the general trend of noblemen affiliated with the academy viewing their Intronati affiliation as, at the very least, equal to their connection to Siena after 1555.

Before 1555 Alessandro Piccolomini urged his fellow *senese* to abandon the factionalism that divided the city. After 1555, however, he quickly (though possibly only publicly) abandoned the idea that Siena could ever again regain political sovereignty and independent stability. Instead, he identified Cosimo I de' Medici, the Duke of Florence, as the only man who could bring salvation to the city ravaged by the "rabid cruelty" of the war.¹⁶¹ It was in his ostensible effort to identify Cosimo as Siena's savior that he wrote the later oration, an *Oration of Peace*, and presented it to the Intronati on August 13, 1559. Just months after the surrender of the Republic of Siena retired to Montalcino, the

¹⁵⁹ BCS C.IV.4 237v

¹⁶⁰ BCS C.IV.4 241r

¹⁶¹ BCS C.IV.4 232r.

timing of this oration may be suspicious. Had he truly felt that Cosimo was the only option for peace, why did he wait until there was literally no holdout for hope of Sienese sovereignty, even in the mountain enclave of Montalcino, to say so? Particularly given the Intronati habit of dissimulation, the timing of this oration may cause doubt that he believed rule by Florence was the only choice left for the Sienese. Even if his support for Florentine rule at this late date was sincere, he may have yet believed, as did other *academici*, that the academy and its leaderships should replace the republic as a unifying institution for the aristocratic members of the Intronati.

Instead of hoping that Siena would regain its sovereignty, Alessandro's 1559 oration was, instead, part of a broad shift within the Intronati and Siena to redefine themselves primarily in an academic manner, releasing earlier pretensions to being the home of a perfect republic, superior for this fact, and a political example to all. As we shall see, this was only the beginning of this shift to a new academic republicanism, one that would be present in many pursuits. Importantly, in this oration Alessandro left the gender of those who had gained fame outside of Siena due to their academic merit ambiguous. This may be evidence that, even at this early state, that much of the fame Siena had gained for the “illustrious minds” bred within the city was due, rather than to men such as the members of the academy, to the city’s women. Even at this early stage in Siena’s reconstruction after 1555, then, he may have recognized that these women would play an important role as the Intronati attempted to reshape the future of academic life on the peninsula around their own leadership.

The Constitution as a Disciplining Force

In the works of Antonio Vignali and Alessandro Piccolomini, we see that Intronati admonitions to its members to avoid entanglement with political affairs were not assiduously obeyed. Given that those orders were ignored, perhaps the other rules included in the Constitution were as well. Yet it included them nonetheless. The next rule seems logical, forbidding members from engaging in injurious actions against other Intronati or foreigners while in the group. It was especially important not to offend foreigners, as "not only did the founders of this congregation think that the exercises of our studies are useful and pleasurable to ourselves, imparting immortal fame upon our souls," they were also intended "to give delight, consolation, and pleasure to others."¹⁶² Because of this, *academici* were to avoid bringing offense to anyone, domestic or otherwise. The reasoning behind this commandment was probably multifaceted. Most obviously, in order to earn that immortal fame that the Intronati so desired they had to ensure not to offend any of those powerful people who could disseminate news of their studies and accomplishments – particularly powerful foreigners, such as the seemingly omnipotent Medici of Florence. This was part of a conscious positioning of the *academici* so that they could guide others and spread news of their glory. As Antonio Vignali argued about knowledge in *La Cazzaria*, "This labor of ours, with all our learning, is of no profit if it does not please our listeners. To have great wisdom and not be able to show it is worse than not having it at all."¹⁶³ Girolamo Bargagli also argued that one of the things

¹⁶² BCS Y.I.1 f. 8r

¹⁶³ Vignali, *La Cazzaria*, 80

necessary in order for the academy to thrive as it had in its early years was the protection of those who governed.¹⁶⁴ Obviously, offending them would not achieve this aim.

Throughout the Constitution, the Intronati proclaimed that they were meant to guide foreigners and other non-members to greater intellectual perfection by the example of their leadership. However, there were also strict rules requiring secrecy regarding what happened in closed academic meetings. In chapter eighteen of the Constitution, the penalty for repeating things that were done or said in Intronati meetings to non-members, outside the embrace of the *Zucca*, was expulsion from the academy – the same penalty given to those that brought matters of state into academic activities. Given the apparent role of leadership the Intronati wished to serve, there are two possible reasons for this commandment. First, it could be that they wanted to maintain a certain *sprezzatura*; that is, they wanted their achievements to appear effortless to those who might wish to emulate them. Intriguingly, however, this regulation could also be an indication that activities within the academy were not completely what they appeared to be: instead, they may have covered subversive thought and even possibilities for revolutionary action under the guise of academic life and entertainment.¹⁶⁵ These juxtaposed regulations, however, many indicate something even more important. On many subjects, the very constitution of the Intronati contradicted itself, creating a confusing tangle that could easily be interpreted in a variety of ways, thus allowing for greater flexibility within the academy.

¹⁶⁴ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 52-53.

¹⁶⁵ BCS Y.I.1 f. 8v.

Many transgressions, including the failure to pay dues, were punished more harshly than blasphemy.¹⁶⁶ While it may be tempting to suggest that this indicates that secrecy, timely payment of dues, and other matters were deemed more serious than not blaspheming God, it may instead simply be indicative of the status and privilege of the *academici*. The Intronati were aristocrats and, with blasphemy as well as many other transgressions, punishments were based on status just as much as on the act itself. Particularly in the case of a group of intellectuals who regularly engaged in rhetorical play, it seems as if blasphemy may have been interpreted as part of this play, rather than evidence of heretical beliefs. However, this same play may have contributed to the inquisitorial examinations faced by future academic generations later in the century.

Who the *academici* were is an important consideration: not just anyone could be an Intronato. Membership, just like the elections for the various officers, required great deliberation, though there were several basic rules. A prospective member must be at least twenty years of age.¹⁶⁷ After approaching the Archintronato with his "fantasy" (that is, of becoming an Intronato), the collected members of the academy would vote whether or not to approve the individual's request. The results of each election would be offered at the next meeting, followed by a newly elected Intronato's choice of an academic pseudonym and a ceremony of entrance. The new member was then allowed four months to submit his first composition to the *Censore* for examination.¹⁶⁸ Unfortunately, the manuscript page containing the description of the induction ceremonies is damaged and a

¹⁶⁶ BCS Y.I.1 f. 9r

¹⁶⁷ This regulation is presented by some modern scholars for the earlier (1525) date for the foundation of the academy. Alessandro Piccolomini was not born until 13 June, 1508, which would have made him 17 in 1525. If the academy had been founded in 1527, he may have been close enough to the age requirement to allow him to join in the academy, which these same historians expect he would have. Either foundation date, however, would have made Piccolomini too young for membership, which is what makes the attention this debate has received a bit spurious.

¹⁶⁸ BCS Y.I.1 f. 9v

section missing so we cannot determine exactly what these ceremonies would have looked like. However, it is clear that this ceremony, though more elaborate than that which ushered in a new Archintronato, was also not overly complicated. The new member would approach the Archintronato with two promoters, at which point he would declare his loyalty to the academy and explain the meaning of his chosen name.¹⁶⁹ These explanations are no longer extant but many have an obvious meaning or meanings, as discussed earlier. A ring would then be placed on the finger of the newly inducted member, in essence marrying him into the brotherhood, and a crown of ivy placed on his head. This last element echoed traditions of placing laurel wreaths on the heads of university students at graduation, signifying their entrance into the academy and the beginning of their work, creating material for the weekly meetings.¹⁷⁰ Though some academic traditions and rituals such as this mirrored those of the university, they were still distinct. In this case, the crown of foliage indicated that the individual was passing into something, rather than moving beyond it, graduating into a new phase of life, when he would play with learning already attained in his aristocratic upbringing. Again, academic life seems to consciously diverge from that of the university.

New inductees may have been given extra time to submit their first compositions because of the high standards to which they were held. Because of these standards, it may have been tempting to "borrow" material from other authors. As Adrian Johns has argued, authorship (as well as standardized reading) is culturally constructed and terms such as 'publisher' and 'author' to discuss figures in the early modern period are

¹⁶⁹ See footnote 22 for some of these names.

¹⁷⁰ BCS Y.I.1 f 10r

anachronistic.¹⁷¹ While he deals largely with print books, particularly related to the scientific world of the early modern period, these ideas are important when looking at the written word in a variety of fields during the early modern period. Certainly, William Shakespeare did not credit the *Intronati* when he largely "borrowed" much of his *Twelfth Night* from their *Gl'Ingannati*. This sort of imitation was not seen as plagiarism in the modern sense. Instead, works were loosely exchanged, frequently in manuscript form, and it was not uncommon for individuals to present the (perhaps slightly revised) work of other authors as their own. Of course, this did not mean that one could outright "borrow" the entire content and arguments of someone else's work, present them as their own and not expect conflict, as we will see in Chapter Four with Alessandro Piccolomini.

In the *Intronati*, however, such behavior was expressly forbidden. As written in the Constitution, because "all of our actions are grounded with the intention of acquiring fame and honor through honorable and virtuous matters," and based on the idea that "the most condemnable vice is theft," anyone that "would dare to present some work that was not his own, or from a patron that did not intend for it to be" presented to the academy would, again, receive that ultimate penalty: expulsion. From that point on, they would only be able "to attend [the academy] as a foreigner."¹⁷² This was one of several places in which the Constitution refers to those who were expelled from the academy as "foreigners" (*forestiere*), implying some negative connotation to the term. This trend does seem to belie the implications of rule sixteen, punishing he who would dishonor any foreigners. This rule, the penultimate of the Constitution, also points to the importance the *Intronati* placed on new intellectual work and establishing their own merit in novel

¹⁷¹ Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1998).

¹⁷² BCS Y.I.1 f. 10v.

ways. Rather than recycling the old to fit into dusty clichés or arguments, a key element Intronati activities was innovation. More than just about anything else, the importance given to innovation came to play a significant role in the academy. After the fall of Siena, the noble Sieneese members of the academy began to argue for the importance of designing new cultural practices, not only for themselves but also in order to broadcast them to the rest of the world. In this, the Intronati were to be leaders as the western world emerged into a new age, defined more by intellectual merit and cultural leadership than by the imitation of classical precedents. In many academic documents, the Intronati mocked traditional “humanists” while defining themselves in opposition to humanistic practices. Still, this importance placed on the new was perhaps the most significant departure from Renaissance ideals. It was an indication that, at least in this one small Tuscan town, a group of Italian intellectuals were ready to embark upon a journey that would lead them away from The Old and turn towards a New that would ultimately lead the continent toward what we define as “modernity.”

But all of this was yet to come. The Intronati constitution was a hopeful document, constructing the foundation of an academy that could serve as an intellectual outlet and brotherhood for those noblemen who fell under the protection of the *Zucca*. As more of a suggestion than a rule, the writers of the Constitution concluded by reminding the reader that l'Accademia degli Intronati was not founded with the sole purpose of engaging in “laborious studies” and other serious matters. Instead, the academy was also intended allow one to enjoy "pleasurable things and delights." For this purpose, and as a final rule, the Constitution recommended that the outgoing Archintronato "gather together familiarly at some point to eat," with either his *Consiglieri* or all of the

academici as a whole, to show his love for them. Of course, it would not be as easy as simply throwing a meal together. Instead, it would be a challenge. Allowing two kinds of meat – one roasted and the other boiled – *in una forgia* – they could be served with "pepper and fruit but all other things they intended to prohibit."¹⁷³ As always, nothing could be interpreted simply at face value – even the simple act of eating could be turned into a game and a challenge.

Conclusion

If one believes Intronati documents, the founding generation formed the academy as a way to withdraw from the chaos of the external world to a more contemplative life of academic achievement and ideas. However, *academici* and the academy itself remained closely entwined with the broad political crisis experienced by Siena in the early decades of the academy. Though the group claimed that discussion of politics and religion was forbidden, this was merely a cover for a truly revolutionary debate that disguised the challenges posed by ostensibly apolitical activities within the Intronati. While these activities truly were not political as traditionally conceived, they attempted to move past the political as the primary measure of superiority. Even before the Republic of Siena fell in 1555, the *academici* of the Intronati worked to demonstrate their legitimacy as leaders of society based on their cultural and intellectual accomplishments, rather than the sovereignty of their state. This was a radical re-conceptualization of what really mattered in life, a new vision of the *vita attiva* that had the potential to revolutionize the early modern world.

Though these ideas developed throughout the century, even in the foundational Constitution we find traces of these re-visionings, these re-formations. Though these

¹⁷³ BCS Y.I.1 f. 10v

trends were all “re-“ words, these goals did not involve a simple return to earlier models. Instead, they involved fundamental shifts of purpose, new definitions of honor and *virtù*, along with a re-organization of society and re-definition of what mattered in life. Later chapters will continue examining this shift, focusing primarily on games, theater, orations, and the role of women in academic circles. In informal activities, and through formally invisible actions, the men and women of the Intronati redefined what it meant to be noble, productive individuals in their world.

Chapter Two

The Salt in the Pumpkin: Leadership and Play in Post-Republic Siena

The intellectual parlor games played by the Academy of the Intronati and affiliated women perfectly demonstrate the meaning of the motto “*Meliora Latent.*” Combined with the image of the pumpkin and two pestles, the complete *impresa* implied that under the surface of Intronati activities there existed a wealth of hidden meanings and agendas. This was perhaps most true of Intronati games. In games, the hidden content included experimentations with new cultural forms as the Intronati explored ideas that had the potential to revolutionize the Renaissance world. In this vision, cultural leadership would become more important than traditional political power. Games served as a forum that allowed the Intronati to re-conceptualize *virtù* and even nobility in ways that encouraged ideas of Sieneese superiority, even after their political defeat. Combined with theater, literary compositions, and other academic activities, games frequently allowed the Intronati to externally appear accepting of disagreeable political and religious changes while hiding criticism and challenges under seemingly innocuous facades. Games were also suited for developing the rhetorical skill necessary to lead in the new world, based on intellectual skill and *virtù*, as the Intronati deemed it. Through these games, the Academy of the Intronati developed new ways to define themselves that did not depend upon the active civic republicanism that had played such a significant role in the lives of the Sieneese prior to 1555.

Across a variety of disciplines, scholars in the modern world increasingly recognize that games and other forms of play are valuable interpretive tools in cultural studies. This is especially true in the historiography of early modern Italy. Significantly, George McClure's recent book *Parlour Games and the Public Life of Women in Renaissance Italy* examines the "ludic triangle" that connected the real lives of women affiliated with Sieneese academies, "their ludic lives in this liminoid realm of the parlour game," and other writings about the women and the games they played.¹⁷⁴ McClure argues that the academic games provided a space in which women could achieve some sort of recognition for their intellectual prowess and rhetorical skill. However, he finds the participation of these women in academic games in post-republic Siena to be a sign of the Intronati's abandonment of the traditional political realm while Siena became an "apolitical, ludic, 'feminized' state to Florence's aggressive, powerful, ducal state."¹⁷⁵ In contrast, I read the public distance the Intronati created between themselves and traditional politics as part of their effort to develop a new cultural order in which Siena and the Intronati led rather than passively followed the Florentines. Though women were involved in this effort, it was still an active, aggressive attempt by the aristocratic Intronati to continue their role as leaders at the top of their society. If the inclusion of women in game-play and academic life in general was evidence of Siena's developing disconnect with the traditional political realm, as McClure claims, it seems unlikely that Cosimo de' Medici would have ordered the closure of all Sieneese academies or issued a ban on all forms of games in the 1560s. Instead, I find the presence of women in Sieneese

¹⁷⁴ George McClure, *Parlour Games and the Public Life of Women in Renaissance Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), xiv.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, xii.

game-play to be evidence of an evolution of political and social realities that Cosimo found troubling and dangerous.

McClure's book primarily addresses the role of women in Intronati life. He does maintain that many other sixteenth-century Italian authors who addressed games, such as Innocenzio Ringhieri, Stefano Guazzo, and Bartolomeo Arnigio kept to a socially conservative model of gameplay, explicitly connected to reality. However, he argues that the Intronati embraced a more amorphous model that required the creation of a separate reality, one that ran parallel to the "outside" world without ever actually interacting with it. Indeed, his argument aligns with what Girolamo Bargagli and other Intronati loudly proclaimed to the outside world. As with so many other Intronati activities, though, it is important to remember that admonition in the Constitution to *feign* to care nothing of the world. While keeping this and the Intronati *impresa* in mind, an analysis of Intronati games literature demonstrates that under academic games, as with many of their other activities, lay a hidden, underlying meaning. In addition to delighting the players, they also served as a space for the former political leaders of Siena to display their continued cultural leadership. Rather than a "parallel" world, Intronati games intersected with, and responded to, the real one outside academic walls. In the Intronati, *academici* crafted new ideas regarding civic identity and provided a space to practice the behaviors that would support the values encouraged by this identity. As the games served a pedagogic purpose, they also emphasized that these aristocrats did not need to work at learning. Instead, they were playing at and playing with a level of learning that would have been out of reach to members of lower classes and many other nobles. In this new, post-republic world where participation in governmental activities could no longer provide evidence of their

superiority, games were a place where *academici* could prove that they still deserved to be positioned at the top of society.

Games: An Overview

Games came in many forms and took place in a variety of settings. Frequently, they occurred in academic *veglie*, which Maria Galli Stampino defines as "evenings of discussion and entertainment that at times included plays that were either read or performed."¹⁷⁶ To the *Intronati*, plays were just one of many types of games and will be considered in tandem with "games" as intellectual activities that involved learned rhetoric, prowess, and competition between participants. These games ranged widely in levels of seriousness. At one end of the spectrum, some resembled what a modern reader recognizes as remarkably similar to the children's game *Telephone*. In this game, one person whispers a word or phrase into his or her neighbor's ear and it is passed around a circle in this manner, as the final person tells the group the often drastically transformed words he or she heard whispered.¹⁷⁷ Others are far more serious and frequently role-play activities involving civic government, such as suing another party. Still another type, which are perhaps the most common games addressed in other sixteenth-century games treatises, simply provided a space in which to debate philosophical questions. Many games of this variety encouraged debates on two common themes: whether it was better for a woman to be loved by a man of letters or arms, and if it was more admirable for a

¹⁷⁶ Maria Galli Stampino, "Alessandro Piccolomini's *Raffaella*: A Parody of Women's Behavior and Men's Dialogues," in *In Dialogue with the Other Voice in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Literary and Social Contexts for Women's Writing*, eds. Julie D. Campbell and Maria Galli Stampino (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011), 89.

¹⁷⁷ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo de' Giuochi che nelle Vegghie Sanesi si Usano di Fare*, ed. P. D'Incalci Ermini. (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1982), 59.

woman to have a beautiful body or mind.¹⁷⁸ In this type of game, participants would practice their rhetorical skills while arguing first one and then another response, focusing less, it seems, on their actual beliefs than on how wittily they could argue their point. In all of this, the players learned and practiced skills that would aid in their development as active individuals in their broader urban environment, particularly in the post-republic age.

The intellectual parlor games of the Intronati had always been a significant feature of academic activities, particularly in their *veglie*. Other academies played similar games, before and after this period. However, it was not until after the fall of Siena that two academic and biological brothers, Scipione and Girolamo Bargagli, wrote extensive treatises focusing on these games. These treatises, consisting of several hundred pages each, are very different in tone and structure but, combined, they outline a framework for a basic game theory.¹⁷⁹ Using Marcantonio Piccolomini as a stand-in for himself while representing the first generation of Intronati, Girolamo's treatise describes game-play in the early decades of the Intronati and provides instruction on how to play one hundred and thirty distinct games while explaining their intrinsic value. These games were wide-ranging in nature, but many seemed to serve very practical purposes. The games that required players to role-play quotidian activities allowed them to practice and perfect rhetorical strategies for these occasions in the real world while being judged on their effectiveness. In these games, they displayed prowess in ritualistic social activities.

¹⁷⁸ This is a "game" mentioned in Intronati literature and also the best-known of sixteenth-century Italian games treatises, Innocenzio Ringhieri's *Cento giuochi liberali*. Innocenzio Ringhieri, *Cento giuochi liberali et d'ingegno, novellamente da m. Innocentio Ringhieri gentilhuomo bolognese ritrovati et in dieci libri descritti* (Bologna: Anselmo Giaccarelli, 1551).

¹⁷⁹ Scipione Bargagli, *Trattenimenti dove da vaghe Donne, e da giovani huomini rappresentati sono honesti e dilettevoli giuochi*. (Venice: Bernardo Giunti, 1587).

Others allowed them to display knowledge of classical literature to their peers, demonstrating both their education and the ease with which they manipulated aspects of their learning in conversation. The games also presented opportunities to impress a possible patron. This was tricky as many of the games assumed a role of equality amongst the players even, explicitly, when "a prince" was amongst their ranks. Given the inclusion of women in the games, they also provided many opportunities for courtship, following the same patterns displayed with possible patrons. Finally, the games were part of a general Intronati attempt to redefine their own and Sienese identities by focusing on intellectual merit and rhetorical skill, rather than participation in the republic, and in this manner continued to claim a form of dignity separate from political sovereignty.

The word for game, *giuoco* (today, *gioco*), was a broad one and could be used to describe many things. It could indicate something intended as a joke. In *Dulpisto Dialogo*, the ostensible author Antonio Vignali used this meaning frequently. Given the nature of the pornographic *La Cazzaria*, the regularity of the word in the suspiciously orthodox later dialogue could lead one to believe that it was this latter document that should be taken as a joke. In *Dulpisto Dialogo*, *giuoco* frequently refers to activities meant simply to pass the time, those that did not serve a serious purpose, or the games that *Fortuna* played on powerless mortals.¹⁸⁰ In Intronati documents after 1555, this usage of *giuoco* was largely absent. Still, this early usage implied that games were not to be taken seriously (or rather very seriously if played by *Fortuna* - though hers may appear to be thoughtless and random) further supported evidence that *giuochi*, even in this later period, were only meant as play, traditionally conceived. With this assumption,

¹⁸⁰ Antonio Vignali, *Dulpisto Dialogo*. Ed. James W. Nelson Novoa. 2007. Examples include "per modo di giuoco" and "per giuoco" (17) and "così si prende giuoco talor di noi la Fortuna" (19) and others throughout the text.

games were not questioned. Instead, they could serve as a cover for serious discussions that allowed participants, namely the Intronati, to challenge the new expectations of servitude and political impotence that their new position as subjects of the Medici required.

Another word that appears frequently in discussions of Intronati games and other ludic sixteenth-century activities is “*impresa*,” used above to refer to the emblem and motto that represented the academy. Modern art historians frequently use the term to describe similar symbolic drawings and mottoes that represented individuals. As Dorigen Caldwell defined them, *imprese* “were personal devices, expressing some personality trait, thought or intention of their bearers, through the ingenious coupling of a typically quite concise image with an equally brief motto.”¹⁸¹ Though these *imprese* were similar to emblems, as Caldwell describes, early modern viewers saw them as distinct and nearly superior to emblems. Emblems, he writes, “also combined both word and image; but they were devised to convey a universal moral message, while *imprese* were seen as expressing ideas in the mind of the individual.”¹⁸² In 1574, Luca Contile argued that the Intronati invented academic *imprese*. However, as with many other academic activities, it was a genre widely used and discussed throughout the sixteenth-century in Italy.¹⁸³ The

¹⁸¹ Dorigen Caldwell, *The Sixteenth-Century Italian Impresa in Theory and Practice* (Brooklyn: AMS Press, Inc. 2004), xi. On *imprese*, see also Roberto Paolo Ciardi, “A Knot of Words and Things!: Some Clues for Interpreting the *Imprese* of Academies and Academicians,” in *Italian Academies of the Sixteenth Century*, ed. D. S. Chambers and F. Quiviger. (London: The Warburg Institute, 1995); Jennifer Montagu, *An Index of Emblems of the Italian Academies* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1988); and a host of sixteenth-century Italian treatises too long to list here, but including Scipione Bargagli’s *Dell’impresa*. Venetia: Francesco de’ Franceschi Senese, 1594.

¹⁸² Ibid, xii.

¹⁸³ Luca Contile, *Ragionamento di Luca Contile sopra la proprietà delle imprese* (Pavia, 1574), f. 41v. Frances Yates argues that it was important that these *imprese* were of material objects, as “Academicians are imperfect beings seeking perfection, like matter seeking its perfect form. Their *impresa* should therefore be of a material object which yet somehow implies the search for improvement or perfection.” Frances Yates, “The Italian Academies” in *Renaissance and Reform: The Italian Contribution* (London, 1993), v 2, 18.

Intronati, however, did spend much energy attempting to define guidelines for the creation of these images, both in the Bargagli treatises on games and elsewhere. In the context of academic games, these two terms were frequently reciprocal, as *impresa* was also used more generally to describe specific works and activities. In this manner, *giuochi* (plural) were forms of *impresa* (singular) while constructing *imprese* (plural) was a specific type of *giuoco* (singular).¹⁸⁴

Imprese, and games, allowed individuals to express something about themselves in clever ways that required a set knowledge base in order to properly interpret them. In this way, they were a form of code, only translatable by their peers. In many ways, then, this construction of identity through socially-negotiated norms fits very well with Guido Ruggiero's ideas regarding "consensus realities," which he describes as "imagined realities, but no less true for that." In his words, they "were built up, reinforced (or disciplined), and shared by the various social groups with which an individual interacted in the Renaissance."¹⁸⁵ Identities, in this formulation, were therefore malleable, and varied between the various networks in which one existed simultaneously. This is important because it indicates that, within the group identity formed and advertised by the Intronati, individuals had their own identities as well. This counters traditional historiography that claims that individuals in the Renaissance did not have a sense of self apart from the group. What makes the identities the Intronati created through *imprese*, games, and their academic pseudonyms so interesting in context of "consensus realities"

¹⁸⁴ Interestingly, as we will see in the subsequent chapters, *imprese* were an important part of the stories told glorifying certain Sieneese women for their militaristic bravery during the siege of 1554-1555. This association implied that these women, even in their supposedly masculine actions in defense of the city, existed on a higher level in the world of the mind.

¹⁸⁵ Guido Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 8 and 21.

is the externality of these identities. They were created in, and understood by, other *academici*, but many were also broadcast to the world outside the academy. They were meant to create one identity for themselves, to be read by all who had the proper cultural knowledge to “read” the images, presentations, and names, while the Intronati themselves sought to spread this ability further outside academic walls.

By 1555, games were already an important part of life for Italians. Though this chapter primarily discusses intellectual parlor games, more physical games, including predecessors of soccer, were similarly central to early modern life. Those games faced regulations similar to those policing the games of the Intronati in the initial decades of Medici rule over Siena. Perhaps the ubiquity of games during this period contributed to their ability to serve as a safe forum to which the Intronati could retreat when faced with creating a new identity and place in the world after 1555. Using parlor games that had previously been used primarily to pass the time and for other leisurely pursuits, the post-republic Intronati consciously used these activities as a way to challenge their new condition of inferiority and to playfully construct a new self-identity and academic identity focused on intellectual ability, rhetorical skill, and general academic merit. Including women in this forum, this new academic and cultural leadership underscored their efforts to forge a new cultural leadership, differing further from the earlier paternalistic republicanism that had defined life in the Republic. Through these *giuochi*, the Intronati worked to build a new consensus reality regarding the true place of aristocrats that was not dependent on participation in urban governance.

The Bargagli Brothers: Scipione

Though the Intronati and other academies had been playing intellectual parlor games for decades prior to 1555, it was not until this post-republic period that *accademici* codified them in almost encyclopedic fashion. In a seemingly strange juxtaposition, both of the Bargagli brothers positioned their treatises and their games in response to the devastation of the warfare and siege. Scipione set his *De' Trattenimenti* during the siege itself, in Carnevale of 1555, just months before Siena's capitulation.¹⁸⁶ This placed it directly in the middle of the most deadly part of the siege, when people were starving on the streets and even children were forcibly removed from the city as useless mouths. This expulsion was part of Piero Strozzi's strategy to stretch the food stores within city walls for as long as possible by reducing the population of the city from 30,000 mouths needful of victuals to 10,000. This strategy would have allowed the city's stores of bread to last four months instead of, I calculate, just over one month.¹⁸⁷ Many of these individuals deemed useless were the young, infirm, elderly, and women – though many women had already proven their worth in defense of the city.¹⁸⁸ Given the defenseless nature of these individuals, the Florentine response to these expulsions was even more brutal. In other sieges (notably that of Pisa), the Florentines had provided shelter for these *bocche inutile*, or useless mouths. Instead, as the war of Siena drug on, and in an attempt to crush the spirit of the Sieneese, they ordered the slaughter of the expelled individuals in order to discourage the Sieneese from continuing this strategy and prolonging their resistance.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ When mentioned in modern literature, this title remains untranslated but can be read as *Entertainments* or *Amusements*.

¹⁸⁷ Archivio di Stato di Firenze (ASF), Mediceo del Principato 1865 f. 253.

¹⁸⁸ Courtesans, however, were listed as "useless" for the defense of the city in a census conducted in 1553. ASS, Balìa 951.

¹⁸⁹ ASF, Mediceo del Principato 1856 f. 173v, 174v, 182r; Roberto Cantagalli, *La Guerra di Siena (1552-1559)* (Siena: Accademia Senese degli Intronati, 1962), 333-339.

By placing the games in the midst of this wartime starvation, Scipione had the opportunity to explicitly recall the cruelties ordered by their Florentine foes, contrasting this brutality with more civil Sieneese pastimes. By setting this playful gathering in the midst of extreme suffering, Scipione also placed his work in line with that of Boccaccio, whose storytellers in the *Decameron* escape a plague-infected Florence for the Tuscan hills, where they amuse themselves by telling stories while their fellow Florentines suffered and died. Though in the case of Siena violence defeated play, it seems as if Scipione used the setting of his treatise to argue for the superiority of Sieneese ludic life over Florentine oppression.

Those that remained inside Siena and survived the siege, such as those described in the *Trattenimenti*, seem to have been traumatized by their sacrifice of these innocents for the purpose of stretching their food stores a bit longer.¹⁹⁰ Girolamo set his treatise in a similarly painful period, after the destruction of the siege, as the academy attempted to rebuild explicitly because it had disbanded during the war. However, the juxtaposition of misery and play is especially striking in Scipione's work. In it, the nine fictionalized young men and women were in the midst of this suffering and, one may assume, probably facing a shortage of food themselves. Still, these men and women withdrew

¹⁹⁰ The formation of the *Quattro sopra le bocche inutili* is contained in the Archivio di Stato di Siena in the Balìa 826 and refers to their actions during the siege in *Balìa* 155, 157, and 158. In several sources, it appears that Cosimo I de' Medici gave the explicit orders to slaughter these so-called "useless mouths" in order to discourage the Sieneese from expelling these individuals from the city in order to force a more rapid consumption of the already-dwindling victuals within the city walls. In his *Diario delle cose avventute in Siena: dai 20 luglio 1550 ai 28 giugno 1555*, a recollection of the daily events during the wartime period, Alessandro Sozzini spends a significant amount of time on the fates of these useless mouths which were expelled by the thousands to either starve to death or be killed by the Florentine troops. The thousands who starved to death within the city walls, in comparison, barely receive recognition. Alessandro Sozzini, *Diario delle cose avventute in Siena: dai 20 luglio 1550 ai 28 giugno 1555*. (Firenze: Gio. Pietro Vieusseux: 1842).

from the suffering of the siege for the sake of diversion, amusing themselves as their compatriots perished in the streets surrounding them.

A traditional interpretation of games may best explain why these besieged noblemen sought amusement in a time of such extreme trial. Though I will soon concentrate on the didactic purposes of these games, they also served this other very practical purpose. They provided a pleasant distraction from the many unpleasant realities of sixteenth-century Siena. As discussed in the introduction, Lauro Martines argued that many individuals in the upper classes found solace from the crises of the period by retreating into various creative alternatives to the real world.¹⁹¹ Literature and other intellectual retreats served as several of these alternatives – and these included academic parlor games. They were meant to divert the participants, giving them something new and more agreeable to consider while, for a moment at least, forgetting the less pleasant reality. For this purpose, as fellow *senese* starved to death in the streets, Scipione described these youths as retreating to a space where they could hide from the horrors outside. In what Laura Riccò called "a dialectic between sweetness and bitterness,"¹⁹² Scipione, in his words, wove together the "siege, so very miserable and uncomfortable," with "some delightful and pleasant games...like those that sustained the city of Siena not many years past."¹⁹³ Scipione acknowledged that this seemed an unlikely pairing. However, he reminded the reader that celebration was all the more sweet after such

¹⁹¹ Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 296.

¹⁹² Scipione Bargagli, 5 FN 6. Laura Riccò was the editor of the 1989 publication of *I Trattenimenti* in addition to being a noted scholar on Siennese theater.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

troubling times.¹⁹⁴ While games allowed the Intronati a safe space in which to challenge ideas of subordination, they also provided a temporary refuge from suffering.

Still, one of Scipione's contemporaries could not abide by the seemingly offensive setting. In a letter contained in the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena, Scipione responded to Alessandro Tessauro's criticisms that such a meeting would be inappropriate and implausible during the siege. Interestingly, in his response, Scipione indicated that Tessauro had not had permission to read the work, that the *Trattenimenti* had been circulated without his knowledge. This may indicate that he was aware that the events described in his work may have been seen as inappropriate by some.¹⁹⁵ To Tessauro, Scipione admitted that the work may be controversial, given that the memory of freedom, and its loss, was so fresh in the minds of the Sieneese. He also acknowledged that such a reminder could incite fresh hatred against the Florentines. Instead, Scipione cited the *Decameron* in his own defense, specifically setting the *Trattenimenti* in the same tradition.¹⁹⁶ Just as Boccaccio's storytellers escaped Florence during the Black Death of 1348, Scipione's retreated to a private residence to escape the destruction and horrors of Siena during the siege. As Boccaccio's youths did not intend to offend anyone, and Boccaccio's intentions were not to cause harm, Scipione argued that the *Decameron* was not scandalous. Similarly, he argued, the Sieneese should not view the young men and

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 6.

¹⁹⁵ "uscita fuore senza mia saputa" BCS P.V.16 c. 12r (underlined in source).

¹⁹⁶ Rather than citing imitation as his inspiration, Scipione maintained that the event did take place, but not in public; that it was between few individuals rather than a multitude; during the day rather than at night; and was not planned but a fortuitous occasion. All of this was meant to provide evidence of the authenticity of the conversation recounted. As Boccaccio's *Decameron* was already a well-known classic and the early modern world did not concern itself with rooting out plagiarism, Scipione could have easily just pointed to the classic text as a model, thus justifying the questionable basis of his story - particularly as his brother Girolamo had already included the *Decameron* among the canon of classics in his *Dialogue* (ex: G Bargagli, p 56-57). Instead, he felt the need to maintain that the contents of his story had actually occurred. (BCS, P V 16, num. 1 c. 12r)

women in his *Trattenimenti* as indecent.¹⁹⁷ Instead, these young men and women were simply trying to find ways to comfort themselves for, as Scipione asked in this letter, "Who does not know the power of an ancient custom or habit?"¹⁹⁸ They were looking back to the old, to what was comfortable and normal, to give them strength as they attempted to survive the harsh siege imposed by the Florentines.¹⁹⁹ In this manner, Scipione alluded to humanistic interests and practices that, in this context, would protect the dignity of his work.²⁰⁰

Interestingly, the critique that Scipione seems to have taken most seriously in his rebuttal regarded where and how the games discussed took place. In the letter, Scipione clarified that "this delightful assembly" did not take place in a "public space, but private; not in the open but secret; not planned but fortuitous: not in the night, but in the day; between a few rather than with many people."²⁰¹ His brother Girolamo's treatise, on the other hand, would soon emphasize the inclusion of "everyone" and the open nature of these games – for those of proper status, of course. Underlying both of these statements is a crucial assumption: in both cases, games were only intended for those who, providentially, had been born into the correct class, had the proper background education, and could then secret themselves away in order to participate in these games that, at least in the post-republic period in Siena, came to help define and guide every element of

¹⁹⁷ BCS P.V.16 c. 12r-12v.

¹⁹⁸ BCS P.V.16 c. 12v-13r.

¹⁹⁹ Scipione's *Trattenimenti* is also very similar to Innocenzio Ringhieri's *Cento giuochi liberali*, presenting games primarily as discussion prompts and providing many examples of the subsequent debate that closely resemble those of Ringhieri. Innocenzio Ringhieri, *Cento giuochi liberali, et d'ingegno, Novellamena da M. Innocentio Ringhieri Gentilhuomo Bolognese ritrovati, & in dieci Libri descritti*; Bologna [per Anselmo], 1551.

²⁰⁰ Still, it may be telling that the youths were anonymous, rather than fictionalized, and identified, versions of real people.

²⁰¹ BCS P.V.16 c. 13r. Presumably, the reason why this section of the letter is mentioned so frequently in works that address Scipione's *Trattenimenti* is that it is mentioned in a footnote of the 1989 edited publication, particularly since most of the authors, including McClure, erroneously locate this letter at BCS P.V.16 c. 2r (as indicated in the 1989 footnote) when the letter is really at P.V.16 c. 12r-14r.

noble life in Siena. No longer could men like Alessandro Piccolomini write explicit guides for the life of noblemen in these cities. Instead, the salt of the games was shadowed in deception; their true purposes kept out of the reach and vision of the everyman, whether they were to take place hidden away during the siege or in the noble public of the academy. It was within this protected group that the Sieneese worked first to distract themselves and then to redefine who they were and what should define a meaningful life in the post-republic world.

Throughout Scipione's *Trattenimenti*, his fluency with literary tropes of his day is obvious. Unfortunately, his over-use of these influences gives the document a highly derivative feel and diminishes its usefulness as insight into Intronati ideas regarding game-play or identity. Instead, given its setting, it served as a forum for Scipione to imply criticism of the new rulers of Siena without explicitly attacking the current organization of power. It also set the stage for his brother's games treatise, which would outline how the academy was to rebuild itself and, by extension, how the city would do the same. Scipione's treatise is thus a fitting introduction to the role of games in early modern Siena while his brother's demonstrates the true potential of games in early modern Italy.

The Bargagli Brothers: Girolamo

Girolamo Bargagli set his creatively-titled *Dialogue of Games Played in Sieneese Evening Gatherings*, describing games played by the Sieneese in evening gatherings, during the recovery years after the siege. This temporal location allowed him to present the games as important tools in the reconstruction of the academy by a new generation of Intronati after it had been abandoned during the crisis of 1553-1555. His treatise explored many more games than that of his brother. As an indication of the direction the academy

would begin moving in this second age, Girolamo argued through his fictionalized version of Marcantonio Piccolomini that the academy would gain glory not through looking backwards to the classical ideals whose emulation marked much of the Renaissance, but rather by looking forward towards innovation. This treatise proved to have a much wider readership than that of his brother, which Scipione acknowledged in an *Oration* of his own decades later. That oration will be discussed more extensively in the last chapter. For now, it is enough to note that Scipione presented Girolamo's text as intentionally spreading Intronati practices, and fame, far and wide. He claimed that it "filled the principle Cities of Italy, and the most noble Courts of the Italian Princes . . . [with] Gaming."²⁰² In this manner, Scipione presented games as a tool through which Intronati practices found their way into diverse and widespread political forums while positioning the Intronati as models of proper comportment and intellectual debate.

In Girolamo Bargagli's *Dialogue*, the fluid boundaries between the academic and the external worlds become clear. Other modern scholars have discussed the academies as a place where the elite would adopt and perform certain roles, presenting their intellectual ingenuity and wit. Julie Campbell, a scholar of gender and literary academies, calls this a "rhetorical space," in which one entered a "performance mode" while taking on a set academic persona. As men and women entered the academy, Campbell argued, they transitioned into this mode and, in a sense, became characters specially created for the rhetorical space.²⁰³ At least for the Intronati, however, it is clear that these two spaces, that of the external, "real" world, and that of the academy, were not entirely separate.

²⁰² Scipione Bargagli BCS L.VIII.41 *Oratione In lode dell'Accademia degl'Intronati; fatta e recitata dallo Schietto, Accademico Intronato, Nel nuovo Risorgimento della detta Accademia il di XIII di Dicembre M.D.III*, f 17

²⁰³ Julie Campbell, *Literary Circles and Gender in Early Modern Europe: A Cross-Cultural Approach* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 74.

Though the Intronati may have wished people to think that the games existed in an entirely alternate reality, the games in Girolamo's *Dialogue* provided a space to play with dangerous ideas regarding challenges to their new subordinate positions. Games also presented opportunities to negotiate individual identities while contesting consensus realities, playing at life and learning in a more liberated manner than standard humanistic pursuits and university study allowed. These developments were not restricted to the academy but, rather, influenced life, perceptions, and performance beyond academic walls.

While the *veglie* were not public activities, as the popular classes were excluded, they were *de facto* a noble public. In this space the elites – those men who had previously governed the city (and the women beside them) – could interact and, together, address the changes required by the new world in which they found themselves. Existing apart from the everyday, the Intronati and affiliated individuals were able to construct, negotiate, and practice the performance of their roles for the world external to the academy without the repercussions likely if they were to challenge these roles in the "real" world.²⁰⁴ These reconstructions of behavioral and deference models were then dispersed in the environment external to the academy, making these "leisure time" activities quite important to the civic world outside the Intronati. In dispersing knowledge of these activities, Girolamo's treatise helped to demonstrate that the former political leaders of Siena continued to deserve a place as cultural leaders in the new, post-republic age.

The dialogue genre was especially appropriate for the purposes of challenging new behavioral paradigms and developing a new standard for noble life in post-republic

²⁰⁴ Indeed, some Intronati used the language of the stage to describe the world, as Alessandro Piccolomini spoke of "this stage of the world" in a lecture given to another academy in 1541. BCS BP 1560, 4v.

Siena. As Virginia Cox describes in her book *The Renaissance Dialogue*, the genre not only represented the discussion within the text itself, but was also a highly communicative form relative to the social matrix of its world, "representative of a communicative process" and "a communication itself," "simultaneously part of a fictional conversation and actual literary exchange."²⁰⁵ As she argues, the dialogue was "conceived of by the humanists as a 'provocation' to the reader: a form of argumentation which deliberately eschewed the self-sufficiency of the treatise form, and actively challenged its readers and critics to pursue the quest it had begun."²⁰⁶ Given the vast spectrum of dialogues written during the sixteenth century in Italy, she acknowledges that generalizations regarding the genre are impossible. Some, she writes, were monologues in disguise: only one argument was put forth as a serious option. In some of these dialogues, readers were only that – a literary audience that absorbed the words of the author. In others, however, the reader took on an arbitrational role, making determinations regarding the arguments made by the disputants. Citing Lord Shaftesbury, Cox notes that some have argued that in true dialogues the author is annihilated as the reader analyzes the arguments made by the various characters on their own merit, without the influence of the author him or herself. Cox argues that, by generally deciding on one point of view by the end of the document, dialogues served as a conservative force that reinforced a status quo resembling that of the established orthodox culture.²⁰⁷ In the *Intronati* dialogues, however, the genre frequently served more progressive purposes. Many did ultimately decide upon more commonly acceptable arguments. However, this

²⁰⁵ Virginia Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue: Literary dialogue in its social and political contexts, Castiglione to Galileo* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 5.

²⁰⁶ Cox, *The Renaissance dialogue*, xii.

²⁰⁷ Cox also intriguingly argues that the decline of dialogues toward the end of the sixteenth century in Italy was caused by the general "desiccation" of oral culture that the advent of the printing press led to.

was frequently simply for the sake of displaying public acquiescence to regulations and expectations while also providing a venue to voice more heterodox views. Through dialogues, the Intronati helped present new ideas for the future of Siena and the academy that would allow them cultural independence from Florence while appearing to protect the status quo. Viewing Intronati dialogues in this context, Girolamo's *Dialogue* seems almost revolutionary.

Girolamo began with a brief history of the academy, explaining why the academy had devolved to its decrepit state. According to him, "because of the travails of war and the decline of ancient *virtù* and valor, the original spirit of the *veglie* has begun to deteriorate too much."²⁰⁸ Because he had witnessed the former glory of the academy, he claimed that he felt responsible to bring this glory back to the new Intronati. He felt that he owed "some debt to our Academy of the Intronati" as, "with great fondness, [it] first introduced [me]...to the example and words of many truly great scholars, always animated and inflamed by *virtù*." In his mind, it would have "seemed too ungrateful on my part...if I did not leave some index of my gratitude, for others to see some part of those great delights that at certain times entertain our Academy."²⁰⁹ In a traditional Renaissance republic, Girolamo would have felt a similar duty to serve his state, the Republic of Siena. Now, however, the role of the city had been replaced by the academy and the obligations he would have earlier felt to Siena were now directed at the Intronati.

While reconstructing the Intronati in the evolving world of post-republic Siena, it makes sense that the new, youthful generation of the Intronati would look back at their forebears to provide guidance in this matter. In the fictional world of the *Dialogue*, these

²⁰⁸ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 46.

²⁰⁹ Ibid, 46-47. Contributing to Girolamo's feeling that he owes the academy something may be his decision to largely leave the academy behind in pursuit of a legal career.

men did just that. Passing through Siena in these bleak years, Marcantonio Piccolomini stopped to pay his respects to these youths – and, in this *Dialogue*, became Girolamo's spokesman. Finding that they sought guidance, he advised, "You, new Intronati, need two principal things to sustain...the former name of the Intronati: first is the protection of those who govern, while the other is the favor of the most important women...who display themselves full of modesty, honesty, and respect; also, they are enemies of gossip and scorn."²¹⁰ To maintain themselves in good favor with these remarkable women, "above all when you organize the events, banquets and gatherings...give them some pleasant amusement with splendid games, various inventions and novel entertainment."²¹¹ This emphasis on women is reinforced throughout the *Dialogue*. Women frequently served as arbiters in the games, instructing men how to correctly behave when they got out of line, particularly while role-playing everyday activities and courtship rituals.

These games were performances on multiple levels. At the same time, issues of performance were not confined to the fictionalized discourse that took place within its pages. Writing the *Dialogue*, Girolamo was engaged in a performance all his own. It was an act that had many rules to abide by. Demonstrating his own fluency and skill in the games and describing the expectations of noble behavior, he was not simply describing how these games were to transpire. He was also attempting to achieve those two things Marcantonio argued would aid and protect the academy: the protection of princes and the adoration of women. Though not published until 1572, Girolamo completed the manuscript in 1563, at which point it was widely circulated. Dedicated to Isabella de'

²¹⁰ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 52-3. Curiously, the tendency of women to gossip is one of the complaints Marcantonio Piccolomini's brother Alessandro Piccolomini was recorded to have filed regarding the more fair sex. While Alessandro Piccolomini argues extensively that women were capable of serving as role models for men, they too had some faults.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, 53.

Medici, she received it during Carnival of 1564. Combining the goals of attaining the protection of women and princes, Girolamo wisely chose a female dedicatee who had a very strong connection to the new men who governed. Girolamo's own performance, charming the ladies who might read his treatise, did not end with this dedication.

Throughout the *Dialogue*, many games focused on male attempts to properly court and win the affections of women. Writing the *Dialogue* as he did, Bargagli was also playing his own game, performing the role of fawning admirer of all women, demonstrating to the new Intronati yet another way to properly please individual women. Writing the book, he did his best to be politically safe, creating a document that was reconciled with Florentine rule, even as he and his academic brothers maintained correspondence with men exiled from Siena for political and religious reasons.²¹²

Requirements of Play

Girolamo Bargagli's game book was many things. However, its most important characteristic was kept just out of sight, hidden by declarations that came close to but never fully revealed the true intention of the *Dialogue* and the games it described. Many of the games focused on courtship and how to please a woman, as would be expected. What may be surprising, however, is the role that women played in these games and, in general, how much they participated in the games. Almost without exception, the roles played by the men and women present during the games are without differentiation. No

²¹² Perhaps most notably, Antonio Vignali (a founding Intronato and author of *La Cazzaria*) maintained active correspondence with the Bargagli brothers and other Intronati members remaining in Siena after he fled in 1532. Fausto Sozzini, second generation Intronato and founder of the heretical Socinianism, ended up in Poland, by way of Transylvania. After founding a church there, his life ended quickly after a mob attacked him in his home. Aonio Paleario, though not a member himself, was closely associated with several members and was executed in 1570 in Rome for heresy. Rita Belladonna, "Gli Intronati, le donne, Aonio Paleario e Agostino Museo in un dialogo inedito di Marcantonio Piccolomini il Sodo Intronato (1538)," *Bullettino senese di storia patria*, 99 (1992), 59-90. Mark Taplin, *The Italian Reformers and the Zurich Church, c. 1540-1620*. (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003).

one, male or female, was allowed to sit quietly on the sidelines without taking part. Knowledge of how to play the games, then, was important because, as Antonio Vignali argued, when one did not have it he or she was forced to stand on the sidelines and shamefully confess their ignorance, which would reflect poorly on all affiliated with that person.²¹³ Participation in the games, as we shall see, was crucial.

Girolamo Bargagli claimed to feel that he owed something to the Intronati. He did not think he was alone in this. Throughout the *Dialogue*, he argued for the active, involved participation of both male members and female participants in the *veglie*. This participation was part of their service to the academy. He wrote that to be valuable members of this *patria*, the Intronati must contribute to its greatness, rather than simply sit back and absorb the efforts offered by other actors in the grand intellectual dance of these gatherings. In a colorful example of Bargagli's insistence that members participate, he argued through Piccolomini, "just like some people who in their festivals use drink and drunkenness for joy are wont to think poorly of those who do not want to drink, so it is in pleasant conversations and games of reason with those who withdraw themselves...and do not want to play their part."²¹⁴ While sentiments such as this existed in Intronati literature prior to the war, arguments to this effect became more common and much stronger in the post-republic years as the Intronati began to take the place of the republic as the focus of feelings of civic obligation. Just as in a republic everyone had their role to perform and each performance was necessary for the proper functioning of the city, individuals attending *veglie* were not to sit back and relax while enjoying the hard work of their peers. Everyone, including the women, had their responsibilities.

²¹³ Vignali, *La Cazzaria*, 80.

²¹⁴ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 139.

The vigor with which Girolamo discussed this need for the participation of everyone involved, points to the purpose of Intronati activities. If only a active handful of members and affiliated women participated, the games would not have served their goal, which frequently seems to have been to prepare participants for everyday life. If the *academici* did not participate, this would not have succeeded. It is possible that when Girolamo's Marcantonio referred to "the original spirit of the *veglie*" that had been lost in the destruction of the wars, he referred to an increasing tendency of would-be participants declining to partake of academic activities. The *Dialogue*, of course, was meant to encourage the rebirth of a vigorous academy to lead Siena into a new age and a new leadership amongst Italians. Here, the *Dialogue* implied that the level of passivity present in the post-1555 academy would make re-growing the academy impossible. Perhaps it was because of this inaction that the participation of women was so important: they needed to serve as inspiration for the men who not only sought to impress them but also, in a more traditional interpretation of Renaissance masculinity, to prevent the women from appearing superior.

One particular game, "Desires," is a direct example of another role women were to play. In it, as Marcantonio Piccolomini explained, "each person would propose a name, or vice, or virtue, or some other quality, such as constancy, or secrecy, or courage, and other such things" that they desired. Once each person had named that thing they wished for, Piccolomini said, if he were "playing the master of the game, I would take one of those revealed desires, and suggest that it be used to attain another desire, as it would be good to have one of the virtues that had already been put on the table." To give an example of how this game would be played, Piccolomini told of a time when "using a

desire that someone here already offered, that he wanted to acquire the graces of a woman, I could say that for this, it is good to have the trait of secrecy."²¹⁵ Of course, one of the main functions of the academy was to provide an arena for debate, and this debate took place in the games as well. Providing a forum for this, Piccolomini then posed that another player could argue that "it is not secrecy, but courage, that is best" to attain the graces of a woman. Next, others would pose their suggestions and the game would proceed, as a dialectic of desire and pleasure, as "the games grow and transform."²¹⁶

After describing "Desires," Marcantonio Piccolomini thought back to one of the perhaps many times that he had previously played this game and recounted, "I remember very well that during this game, a young man claimed 'My desire is that my love would be a mind reader, so that she should would know on her own [the nature of] my desire, which I do not have the courage to say.'" A woman participating in the game could not let this pass, and Piccolomini recounted that to this she replied, "This is a sign that what you want is not honest, if you are afraid of revealing it."²¹⁷ One can imagine a few good-natured snickers or guffaws following this exchange but, as amusing as this game may have been to play, or even read about today, it reveals much about the nature of male and female relationships in the *veglie* of the Intronati. In this game, when a male participant, most likely a member of the academy, made allusions to a desire that he dare not name, it was a woman that corrected him, reprimanding him for inappropriate speech. This role of women as judges repeats throughout the *Dialogue*.

²¹⁵ Piccolomini's suggestion that secrecy would best gain the favor of women aligns with the arguments his cousin Alessandro made regarding relationships between men and women in two of his works, as we will see in Chapter Four.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 64-65.

²¹⁷ Ibid, 65.

As they did in the *Courtier*, women in the *Dialogue* judged which behaviors were deemed appropriate, interpreting whether or not men were correctly performing their roles. Significantly, not a single time in the *Dialogue* was a woman reprimanded for her words or actions. Instead, they remained pure and perfect, thus reinforcing the legitimacy of their corrections. There may be another reason behind this avoidance of correcting women in the *Dialogue*. As we will see, many of the games described within had sexual undertones. In others, men made allusions to sexuality or uncouth jokes. As Castiglione argued in the *Courtier*, it was much more difficult for women than men to reclaim their reputations if their honor was sullied or their names otherwise questioned. While the *veglie* theoretically existed in a world separate from the everyday in this noble public, reputations here were made and broken, further indicating their importance to life outside academic walls.²¹⁸

The world of the Intronati and its *veglie* seems at many times to have been a microcosm of the Sienese civil and elite environment, a place where people learned how, and sometimes why, to behave in certain ways. In the world of urban government, it is easy to see how men may not have wanted to make a habit of correcting the behaviors of one another; such corrections may have been seen as impolite, as crossing some boundary of polite decorum. Men may have learned how to act in the *veglie*, but they may also have learned how to sit by and not tell others how to act: someone else was to do that, someone whose actions within the academy would be less likely to create problematic

²¹⁸ Here, we see a woman playing the moral guardian, instructing a man how he should not behave, but there may be many more issues underpinning this story. Importantly, it was a young man – a *giovane* – that misspoke, only to be corrected by a vigilant female interlocutor. I would like to explore the relationship between youth and misbehavior in academic life in the book version of this project.

prejudices or grudges that could pass into the political reality outside of the literary circle – that is, women.

“Desires” illustrates many elements of Intronati game play. The foundation of Marcantonio’s story relied on a man offering up his desire and a woman correcting him. Games also required the participation of at least three individuals, all with specific roles. Generally, each role could be played by either a man or a woman. In this game however, Marcantonio Piccolomini specifically referred to himself as the "Signore," or master, of the game. It seems odd that in this one game, he readjusted the title from "maestro," the previously used name that seems to have served an ambiguous gender, to "Signore." This is the only game in which I have found this substitution. Even though it was specifically a man who led the game, and a male youth that spoke out of turn, it was a woman who corrected the youth's errors. While it may have been inappropriate for a woman to encourage participants to think about their desires, it was still a woman who regulated the desires once spoken. In his regulation of the rules of this game, Bargagli ensured that it would be difficult, if not impossible, for the honor of women to be sullied during the *veglie*.²¹⁹ Finally, however, the most important part of any one player’s success in this game rested on his or her articulation of their responses. In this game, as in so many others, rhetorical skill was crucial. Just as in the new world the Intronati envisioned, rhetoric was the key to success and the games allowed the players to develop their talents.

²¹⁹ The role of women in the Intronati, Siense academies, and Siena as a whole will be discussed much more extensively in Chapter Three. Particularly demonstrated during their (at least reputed) actions during the siege of 1554-1555, sixteenth-century Siense women had a much more active and perhaps "masculine" role in Siena than throughout the contemporary Western world. This may have been due to the liminal state Siena and the Siense existed in during this period as it seems that by the Intronati's reformation in 1603 Siense women had begun to fit a more typical mold than in this earlier period.

Many other games role-played how to correctly perform actions in the civic world outside the walls of the academy. An example of this is the seventh game of the *Dialogue*, “*Del Podestà*,” “so called as a *podestà* is created, and everyone goes in front of the person to bring action, for wrongs and offenses, against the person from the group that they felt they received [this wrong from].” The *podestà* would then bring forth the person accused of the crime, listen to their defense, and, based on the circumstances, make a judgment. Marcantonio here recalled that in this game one frequently heard complaints put against beautiful women. For him, a highlight of the game was to listen to “the witty responses that the women speak in their defense.”²²⁰ Though posed with a complaint that was not traditionally political, the games even here allowed the Intronati to engage with women on matters of love and attention. In other places throughout Europe, much of this practice and actual courtship rituals would have taken place in courts. However, Siena never had a court of its own. Instead, Intronati *veglie* replaced courts and, in this game at least playfully, love (and perhaps lust) was put forth in front of an entirely different kind of court. Putting courtship and desire on the academic stage, the group could also regulate love and lust – a role played by courts in other cities. Particularly in this tumultuous time, academies became disciplining institutions that both normalized behavior and also helped to polish conduct and rhetoric to prevent individuals from embarrassing the group outside its walls. This was particularly true in issues related to gender.

While I focus on the more serious, instructional aspects of games and game-play, these were also, in a perhaps overly obvious way, games meant to be fun, to help pass the time, and, frequently, to bring laughter to the participants. As Marcantonio Piccolomini

²²⁰ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 63.

explained in the *Dialogue*, "Well-considered games have three parts: the proposition, action (or the process of gaining one's desire), and satisfaction."²²¹ Generally, it was in the middle section of the game, the action, in which we find the pedagogic element of games. Most games required at least three players, each performing a different role. He described these three roles as "the master of the game, the player [here, players], and the judge."²²² Like all romance languages, Italian nouns have gender. In the original Tuscan, all of these roles were masculine. While both men and women played the games described in the *Dialogue*, the Intronati rarely differentiated between the roles meant for men and women because, generally, there was no difference. Rather than arguing that the masculine titles here are evidence of a misogynistic, patriarchal society, I see this as evidence of how integral the participation of both genders was in these games. Both sexes were equally necessary for their successful performance and specification of which gender was to perform which role was unnecessary.

Religion

The games were also an opportunity to practice proper religious behavior and display fluency in doctrinal issues while displaying knowledge of pagan religious tales and belief. During a period of strict reform in the Catholic Church as well as a flourishing humanist movement with its disciplining of intellectual life, Girolamo here resembled a talented performer walking a tightrope between orthodoxy and deadly heterodoxy. Earlier in the *Dialogue*, Girolamo described a young Intronato, Lelio Maretti, providing the gathered Intronati with a spectacular (though pagan) analogy for the absence of the games in post-siege Siena. "Having been absent because of the long war, the games,

²²¹ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 77.

²²² *Ibid*, 77.

almost like those men who disappeared after the flood, we find all of the arts that had developed into fine games in ruin. Then we, like a new Deucalion, now show how to play the games that prior to the flooding of the war had arrived in such perfection."²²³ Here, he took one of the most recognizable moments of the Old Testament, that of the great flood, and rather than using the Biblical figure of Noah, he instead substituted the Greek equivalent. In Greek mythology, Deucalion and his wife were the only human survivors of a great flood. Similar to the Biblical version, they were saved because the protagonist's father (here, Prometheus) forewarned him of the impending flood, giving him time to build a large boat in which to await the appearance of dry land. The only difference in the broad narrative of this story is the absence of animals to repopulate the earth's fauna. Rather than following the story condoned by the Catholic Church, he instead chose to demonstrate his classical learning of the Greek pantheon. Because this was just a metaphor, Maretti probably did not worry about being subjected to accusations of heresy. In such a time of turmoil, however, it was a curious choice.

In other cases, it is clear that the Intronati, particularly Marcantonio Piccolomini, whom Lelio Maretti had already referred to as the Academy's Plato (further evidence of the importance of classical learning), was very anxious to adhere to Church orthodoxy.²²⁴ In a tangent related to those games that were unacceptable for the Intronati he stated, "The games that displease me the most are those that make a joke out of our religion, those in which sacred things are placed in the middle of the mundane, profaning and putting them to bad use, like a stumbling block."²²⁵ Orthodox Catholicism co-existed with a world informed by and told through the lens of the pagan pantheons. However, for

²²³ Ibid, 54-5.

²²⁴ Ibid, 55.

²²⁵ Ibid, 82.

the Intronati members, whose behavior was antithetical to many common societal norms and expectations, religion itself was something that should not be made light of, even rhetorically. This is particularly remarkable when one takes into account the number of members later accused of and persecuted for heretical beliefs. Instead of demonstrating belief in pagan deities, this reliance on classical gods was merely evidence of their humanist educations that balanced out their novel activities with a manageable level of tradition and novelty.

While displaying their humanist educations, it does often seem that in the games, the Intronati mocked the strict boundaries of humanist scholarship, blurring the lines between what was a legitimate intellectual pursuit and what was meant only as play. The rhetorical displays central to their efforts may actually explain why the use of pagan stories by the Intronati would not have presented doctrinal issues for the group. As aristocrats, the *academici* were judged by a different standard than the average population and blasphemy was not quickly suspected of a group of nobles who regularly played with words and learning. As long as the members made clear that they were not claiming that these gods existed (let alone had terrestrial power), their stories were simply rhetorical tools that could be used to demonstrate learning and wit. In an oral culture based on verbal exchange, these talents were virtues, not heresy. Again, the Intronati did not have to work at their education. Instead, they were playing with it in a display of rhetorical dexterity that did require practice – but, due to the regular practice they had through Intronati activities, they could make it seem as if these skills came naturally. Through this performance, the Intronati displayed their "natural" superiority over foreign interlocutors.

Still, religion was a dangerous subject for play. The thirty-fourth game of the *Dialogue* presents an example of a dangerous entanglement of the sacred and the mundane. Roughly translated as “Loving Hell,” participants were to pretend that they had passed into the “other life,” where they faced Charon and Minos. Then, “Every soul must say what sin it committed because of love, for which it would be damned to hell.”²²⁶ At this point, the participant playing Minos would condemn the soul to the penalty it deserved. Marcantonio Piccolomini disapproved of this game for two reasons. He explained, “Not only do I not like this game because it seems to me that it makes fun of the bitter pains of hell that the Holy Scriptures continually place before our eyes for fear of wickedness, but also because it puts in practice saying things that in other ways mock theological concepts.”²²⁷ While Marcantonio acknowledged that when one is in love, it may seem as if one's heart is suffering the fires of hell, it confused younger members to think that that is all hell is. Rather, he reminded his audience, “the greatest penalty of the damned is to be deprived of the face of God.”²²⁸ Clearly, this was not something that “Loving Hell” taught the players. In other games, such as “Monks and Brothers Distributing Offices,” Marcantonio reasserted this commandment, that sacred things needed to be respected, even in games, not mocked or placed in the middle of temporary terrestrial conditions.²²⁹ Many of these games, which had clearly been played and well-developed by either the *Intronati* or other groups, relied on a basis of pagan theology and its pantheon of gods. However, it was not on these grounds that Piccolomini objected to

²²⁶ Ibid, 82.

²²⁷ Ibid, 82.

²²⁸ Ibid, 83.

²²⁹ Ibid, 84.

the games. Rather, they were offensive due to doctrinal issues challenging the true nature of sin and punishment.

Doctrinal beliefs of the Intronati, as manifested in this commentary on games, generally conformed to Catholic teachings. Rather than an academy pushing against the boundaries established by an outside institution or traditional cultural norms, as we see in many other areas, what we have is a reflection of sixteenth-century religious culture, balanced with the humanist education and discipline of the participants. While the *veglie* of the Intronati were a separate space in which members and affiliated women could act in ways that were not acceptable in the "real" world outside of the academy, the norms, regulations, and reality of this same outside world seeped into these games and provided a unique way to determine the boundaries of acceptable comportment in the Italian Renaissance. This outward acquiescence was likely due to the increasingly strict surveillance of the Catholic Church after the challenges posed by the Reformations of the north. The complications instead come from the simple inclusion of these inappropriate games in an instructional treatise that simultaneously advised against participating in such unworthy games while providing instruction that could guide individuals in playing the same games. While Girolamo performed his instructional role correctly, advising readers against participating in these dangerous games, games that could in the view of the Catholic Church threaten the safety of their eternal souls, he allowed for knowledge of these games to continue. At the very least, these games allowed players to ignore Catholic doctrine, at least for the sake of play.

The Princes

Remembering that Girolamo Bargagli wrote the *Dialogue* to help the Intronati, and by extension, Siena, rebuild after the siege and its new status as a dependent city, it is not surprising that he discussed the subject of foreign powers and princes. While Girolamo Bargagli wrote the *Dialogue*, ostensibly, for the benefit of the Sienese Intronati, he also acknowledged that it was important to have the support of these princes and that these games would be presented to foreigners. Just as women were to serve as examples for the men, the Intronati and their games were to serve as examples for visiting foreigners. Indeed, it seems as if the original pre-siege intent of these games may have been simply to impress foreigners. As Marcantonio argued, this discourse on games was to be "a usage model of our celebrations, not only for foreigners that have never seen them, but at the same time for us, to preserve them for later times."²³⁰ After the Sienese fall from independence, the Intronati became even more concerned about being seen as leaders in cultural and academic practices.

During the post-war period, the Intronati began accepting non-Sienese members, such as the Duke of Amalfi, Alfonso di Roano, who was connected through marriage to the Piccolomini family but not a resident of Siena.²³¹ While Bargagli acknowledged that these games were necessary to gain the support of the noblewomen, the Intronati also used these games politically. Piccolomini recommended that the best way to gain the protection of a prince was to powerfully demonstrate one's personal *virtù*.²³² By including powerful princes in their *veglie*, the Intronati demonstrated their *virtù* and glory. This could help attain that second aim Piccolomini mentioned in the introduction: acquiring

²³⁰ Ibid, 46.

²³¹ BCS Y.I.3. Also, L. Sbaragli, "I 'Tabelloni' degli Intronati," 177-213, 238-267

²³² Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 53.

the protection of those who governed, both internally and externally, even with their new status of subject city. Just as in *The Prince* Niccolò Machiavelli offered his analysis of the actions of powerful men as an offering to please Lorenzo de' Medici, in parlor games the Intronati could demonstrate to visiting princes and other dignitaries their most significant, perhaps superior, possession: their rhetorical skill and wit. In the age of a new cultural republicanism the Intronati hoped to usher in, this sort of display was to supplant demonstrations of political prowess and leadership.

Beyond attaining princely protection, the presence of foreigners in the *veglie* helped to spread knowledge of their polished games and the Intronati's fame – including, the Intronati must have hoped, recognition of their cultural and intellectual superiority. Because "foreigners didn't yet have experience of the games from us, no matter how learned and ingenious, it is with great difficulty that they know how to find a game of value and know how to execute it in a laudable manner."²³³ The Intronati were to teach them how this was done. Here, the Intronati – men and participating women – were expected to serve as examples for those who had not been enlightened by their learning or games. The Intronati consciously placed themselves as instructors for those visiting Siena from foreign lands, both Italian and from areas further abroad. By announcing their cleverness to the world, they maintained some sense of dignity and provided justification to the Florentines that they should be allowed to retain their unique cultural practices. These games, they argued, benefitted not only themselves but also the educated population of Europe. It could also, one may assume, contribute fame to the Florentine city-state, an idea that the Intronati may have encouraged. One may believe, however,

²³³ Ibid, 124.

that the primary intent of the Sienese was to gain glory for themselves rather than for their ancient rivals and recent oppressors.

While discussing the participation of political superiors in games, elements of possible challenge emerged in Bargagli's discussion. Issues of status and position were evolving on the peninsula. In the games, some expressed fear that tensions between individuals of different status could arise. During the *Dialogue*, a young Intronati named Pirro Saracini pointed out that all of the games discussed seemed to have taken place between individuals of equal status. This led him to ask Piccolomini, "But what happens when one plays, intervenes in, or judges a game in the presence of princes and of great men, or of princesses and great women, which could easily happen; in what manner should we play?"²³⁴ Piccolomini's response was simple. "Just like at a masquerade, if one knows the masked person is the prince, none the less one pretends not to know him, when a great man is found in the *veglie*, almost as if covered by the games...you pretend not to recognize him."²³⁵ This is one of the rare times in the *Dialogue* that anyone explicitly acknowledged that there was an element of pretend in the enactment of the *giuochi*. Even when one knew the identity (and superiority) of one's opponent, he or she was to pretend not to know. Doing so, participants played at equality, allowing the players to imagine an environment in which they could interact on an even playing field. This gave the players the freedom to play with ideas of social equality that they would not have had in another space. In this way, the games provided participants with a place to negotiate, at least imaginatively, social change. While feigning that the academy was simply a performance space, the Intronati also began to establish that in this world of the mind, surpassing the

²³⁴ Ibid, 198.

²³⁵ Ibid, 199.

world of politics, social status was no longer as important as intellectual wit and academic achievement.

As they challenged the superiority of princes, the Intronati demonstrated through their actions that they were indeed worthy of the prince's admiration – and protection. While Bargagli wrote the *Dialogue*, ostensibly, for the benefit of the Sieneese Intronati, he argued that the academy needed the protection of those who governed and it seems as if Intronati were used for this purpose as well. Through Piccolomini, Bargagli recommended that the best way to gain the protection of a prince was to give him one's essays and other literary works, demonstrating one's *virtù* and innate value.²³⁶ Similarly, by including powerful princes in their gatherings, the Intronati demonstrated their *virtù* and skill through intellectual play and banter, aiding them in acquiring the protection of those who governed, even while playing at being their equals. Through these games, then, they also provided examples of cutting-edge cultural practices, aiding their attempt to become leaders and guides in novel forms of behavior for others throughout the continent.

The answer to Pirro Saracini's question sums up many of the tropes present throughout the *Dialogue*. In many ways, games taught the participants how to maintain a facade of the established hierarchy that organized all matters of Renaissance life. This was a negotiated hierarchy and the boundaries that structured it could be, even briefly, abandoned if the situation arose. However, these temporary roles had to be well-planned and acted or someone would be there to put the deviant in his (or her) place. These transitional moments seem to represent many elements of play life that transcended the academic walls in particularly unique or stressful incidents. The siege was one of these

²³⁶ Ibid, 53.

times, in which the stories tell us that women led their sisters into military battle, fighting heroically alongside their brothers. Were a woman to grasp at such a masculine position in the everyday world, she would have met resistance. Games existed in a specific space, apart from the quotidian existence, in which the normal order of things was reinforced but the rules of that other life were malleable elements of play. This malleable nature is what made game play such a powerful tool in the reformulation of civic identity after 1555.

Marcantonio Piccolomini's response indicates another element of these games, that of testing the boundaries of status and role. Even if only imagining that an inferior and superior could interact on an equal playing field, the participants allowed themselves to play with ideas of social mobility and cultural practices that they would not have in another space. In this way, the *veglie* provided participants with a place to negotiate, at least imaginatively, social change. The change that they foresaw included them at the forefront: leading a drive that turned away from classical ideals and toward a new world in which superiority was defined by innovation and novelty, rather than conformity. Even after their political fall, the Intronati could lead Siena into a new and powerful form of cultural leadership.

Innovation and Identity

In constructing their new, post-siege identity, the Intronati and the Sieneese had many developments to keep in mind. Their new identity was to be a continuation of their former selves, but adapted to fit their new positions. In their self-fashioning, the Intronati stressed their continued cultural superiority over surrounding towns, academies, and the Sieneese lower classes and would no longer mark them as superior. In their new efforts,

they also had to evolve from the previous generation of Intronati, as behaviors and games practiced by this earlier group had since spread to the lower classes. In multiple manners, the *Dialogue* aided the Intronati in constructing a new identity based on academic participation rather than republican virtue and, above all, deserving of cultural leadership.

The *Dialogue* is saturated with examples of the Intronati's need to stand at the cultural cutting edge and thus the social peak of society. This was especially important after the siege as Florence had proven its military dominance while also taking away Sieneese claims to political superiority. In order to maintain a sense of dignity and purpose, the Sieneese Intronati had to embrace novel ideas. Describing civic life, Marcantonio Piccolomini remarked, "In truth, I always prefer that in masquerades, in tournaments, and in other public spectacles, that one would always look to be first to stand out with novelty and the expectations...so that for those who adopt the style later, others are tired of the look, and they are not showered with attention."²³⁷ Given that he made this observation in a discussion of games, it can safely be assumed that Piccolomini was implying that this novelty was important during game play – even as traditional practices, games, and values were to be maintained. Though the Intronati positioned themselves to lead other nobles, Marcantonio also wanted the Intronati to guide the common people through their cultural leadership, arguing that "When I say games, I think of the games that are intended for public performance, those already staged, those called secular that are played every hundred years, those intended to cheer and delight the people."²³⁸ In their refinement, the Intronati were to lead not only their peers but also those inferior to them from the ruin of previous generations. This was not a philanthropic

²³⁷ Ibid, 94.

²³⁸ Ibid, 68.

desire. Instead, Intronati attempts to introduce their practices to foreigners and commoners was only meant to make them look better and gain more influence.

While developing new cultural practices and shaping a new cultural identity around them, the Intronati made a marked shift from standard Renaissance values. "Renaissance," of course, means rebirth, indicating a focus on the old and a reformation of an earlier, perfect time, as represented in classical sources and the Bible. Any changes away from these precedents were viewed as a degeneration of society and were to be avoided at all costs. New developments (of which there were many) were almost always re-framed as a return to the traditional – a reformation of manners, culture, and religion. Justifying change as reform or reformation served as legitimation and explanation. This was intentionally misleading. The Intronati self-consciously moved away from tradition and embraced the new, presenting themselves as cultural leaders for a new era. In this new period, they worked to shift importance away from classical precedents and toward a focus on academic achievement and cultural leadership. Girolamo Bargagli's *Dialogue* was not the only piece of Intronati literature that argued for a shift toward the novel and Chapter Five will provide a much more in-depth discussion of Sieneese efforts attempting to initiate innovation in this post-republic period.

Clearly, then, the Intronati attempted to develop with the times and fashion. They hoped to be agents of change themselves, self-consciously creating their own consensus realities defining their position in the world. While this embrace of novelty allowed them to be guides for other academies and peoples, it presented difficulties for the Intronati of the *Dialogue*. Because many of the games played by the early Intronati were no longer acceptable in the new age, this document could not merely be a guide to playing old

games in a new era. As the games developed over the decades, those that had grown old or plebian were sifted out. This allowed for the continual construction of a new foundation of social behavior and the establishment of new norms of status and standards. Sometimes, the rationale for eliminating these games came from their supposed origins in the peasantry and lower classes of the city. These games were unacceptable for the new Intronati. Instead, as the Intronati created and performed "comedies, public productions, and Tuscan poetry and prose" in order to save both Siena and Tuscany from baseness, they were to focus on new, refined games.²³⁹ Presenting their games and other so-called leisure activities to the people of Siena and visiting foreigners, they hoped to gain renown far and wide for their well-polished games and rhetorical prowess. By engaging in a continual process of development in their own activities, they demonstrated that they were the leaders of such cultural endeavors and that outsiders, including the conquering Florentines, should look to them as examples. Properly performed and marketed, these games were not just status symbols that served as counterweights to their newly dependent state but also agents of construction while disciplining new forms of culture and status.

While the Intronati aimed to become a visible presence of the most recent cultural developments, they also had to pay attention not to regress into games that may have been acceptable to earlier generations of the academy and elite in general but no longer were deemed appropriate. One such game is "Letting the Bird Peck at the Fig," which Guido Ruggiero examined in *Machiavelli in Love*. While many of the Intronati games flirted with love and romance, this is one of the few that was explicitly sexual in nature: even in modern Italian, the word used here for bird (*uccello*) is slang for penis and fig

²³⁹ Ibid, 67

(*fico*) for vagina. Using Ruggiero's translation, it was played as follows: "each woman takes a certain fig...and each man a certain bird and one man says, 'I would like my bird to peck such and such a fig.' And the woman who hears her fig named answers, 'My fig will not be pecked by that bird. And when it is...pecked, I would like it to be pecked by that other bird.'" Ruggiero argued that this game, in the end, "was about sexual identity – it was a way of publicly displaying Renaissance 'heterosexuality.'"²⁴⁰ Just like many of the other games in the *Dialogue*, "Letting the Bird Peck at the Fig" enabled practice in self-presentation and conformity to societal norms and requirements. As the Intronati played this and other games, they learned to perform their roles even as they attempted to recreate these same identities in novel ways.

Particularly interesting to this study, however, is what Marcantonio Piccolomini said after his explanation of the game. "Similar activities, to be honest...are dishonorable for noble ears. Moreover, I do not like it when between noble and equal people, games are proposed in which... [the players metaphorically] stain or smear their faces; instead, these games should be played more in the villages between peasants than in the city between noble people."²⁴¹ While acknowledging that this was one of the games that had been played by noble people in the past, possibly even by the Intronati, he did not approve of it. This explanation conflated an illicit game played by nobles with the base and inappropriate behavior of peasants, who Bargagli and the Intronati intentionally excluded. Comparing it to sully noble faces with filth, Marcantonio Piccolomini felt strongly that games of this nature should be left for the filthy masses, particularly important as the Sieneese were placing so much emphasis on their cultural superiority.

²⁴⁰ Ruggiero, *Machiavelli in Love*, 19.

²⁴¹ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogue*, 80.

Even as the reader saw that they should not play these inappropriate games, however, the instruction provided in the *Dialogue* would allow those previously unfamiliar with these “dirty,” “nasty” games with the instruction necessary to play them. This apparent contradiction is important and points toward a hidden agenda in the *Dialogue*.

Dirt, filth, and cleanliness were important matters in Renaissance life. Douglas Biow argued in *The Culture of Cleanliness in Renaissance Italy* that cleanliness was a disciplining value judgment, reflecting on "self-fashioning, self-respect, self-discipline, self-value, status, social distinction, and artistic or oratorical originality, self-expression, and innovation."²⁴² He argued that to the Renaissance Italian, spotlessness had implications for topics as diverse as poetry and politics. It was thus not a small slight that Marcantonio Piccolomini would relate an undesirable game to filth and the lower classes. Alessandro Piccolomini, Marcantonio's cousin, also instructed in his *Institutions* that cleanliness of body was important to a nobleman. We do not know if this game would have been discussed in the *Dialogue* had female characters been present in the discourse or if it would have been deemed inappropriate in such a mixed setting. Perhaps if women were present, it would have been one of them that pointed out the inappropriateness of such games. Regardless, the *Dialogue* states that these sexually suggestive games that had been appropriate for earlier generations of nobility were no longer fitting for the Intronati. This can be interpreted as evidence supporting Norbert Elias' theory of a civilizing process, in which the upper classes continuously refined their behavior in order

²⁴² Douglas Biow, *The Culture of Cleanliness in Renaissance Italy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 17.

to differentiate themselves from the lower classes that were always following quickly down the same cultural path, attempting to gain the prestige of their social betters.²⁴³

When thinking about the civilizing process thesis in regard to the *Dialogue* on games, the element of performance in regulating comportment and consensus realities comes into sharper focus. Behavioral distinctions based on gender, class, age, and any number of other variables were not "natural" (as even these early modern instructors seem to acknowledge), and individuals must be taught to conform to the constructed expectations of each of the many positions within a society. In this sense, behavior was fundamentally the performance of a role – one that was assigned at birth, inherited by blood, but not based on genetic strength or merit. The games were an arena in which to practice the proper performance of the behaviors expected and required of these positions. They were also, due to their placement apart from the "real" world of politics, civic society, and religion, a place where these individuals could safely test the boundaries of their behaviors while challenging and negotiating the placement of these boundaries. That is, the games allowed participants to test and not just teach; a place to challenge the consensus realities, important determinants of aristocratic status and place, created by their subjugated positions. Games were not simply pedagogic tools. Rather, they were valuable spaces in which to shape, practice, and then deploy new formulations of a post-republic civic and academic identity meant to position the Intronati at the head of a new drive towards modernity.

²⁴³ While there have been many insightful criticisms of Elias's civilizing process theory, in broad strokes it frequently has merit and helps to explain certain cultural phenomena, including the leadership of the Intronati in a new, post-republic age.

Pushing the Limits of Acceptability

Clearly, the games discussed in the *Dialogue* could be politically, culturally, and religiously dangerous. While many involved courtship rituals, even these frequently pushed at acceptably limits. One of these possibly troublesome versions of this type of game involved palm reading – “*della chiromanzia.*” In it, “a man is sent to look at the hand of a woman, who after a little consideration, says something regarding the woman that has already happened, and something else that will happen in the future, naming a mound or a line that promises or threatens this” in order to describe “the vitality, the mind, and similar” things regarding the individual players.²⁴⁴ In some places, palm reading was practiced as a form of witchcraft but this is not one of the games that Marcantonio couches as inappropriate. However, as Guido Ruggiero shows in his *Binding Passions*, palm reading could also be seen as a type of learned magic that was not necessarily punished by the Church.²⁴⁵ Particularly when used as a rhetorical device, then, the *Intronati* were unlikely to face scrutiny over such a game. By not providing instruction on how to interpret the readings, the *Dialogue* indicated that they were not predetermined, part of a grand universal design that wrote the future upon the hands of the men that inhabited it (thereby avoiding charges of heresy). Instead, this game was part of the nearly universal practice of prospective mates attempting to flatter one another, as the palms could be read however one wished. While not a form of dangerous palm reading that might border on witchcraft, by manipulating his or her reading of a partner's

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 74.

²⁴⁵ See Guido Ruggiero's *Binding Passions* for a court case from earlier in the century in Venice that shows that, for the Catholic Church, palm reading was not necessarily seen as witchcraft, but as a type of learned magic. As Ruggiero shows with the case of Fra Aurelio, palm reading could be relatively acceptable when engaged in out of intellectual curiosity rather than as a profession (193). Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 175-221.

hands a player would determine his or her own future in the eyes of their Intronati colleagues – while also stealing a chance to make physical contact with a person of one's desire.

In the *Dialogue*, Marcantonio Piccolomini claimed that “Loving Hell” was not appropriate because it mocked religion. As he argued, games that misrepresented the gospel made hell seem less miserable, and therefore less of a punishment. “Letting the Bird Peck the Fig” was not appropriate because it resembled lower-class activities. Therefore, Intronati members should not play it. However, the *Dialogue* does provide instructions to play each of these supposedly inappropriate games. Unlike Antonio Vignali's *La Cazzaria* (whose sodomitical themes may have caused the author to flee the city), Girolamo Bargagli's *Dialogue* was meant to be published. People far and wide were supposed to read it. How would it have looked if the church examined this guide and saw that Bargagli seemed to encourage his peers to mock religion? Bargagli had to at least claim that these games were unacceptable. The Intronati and other elites reading the text, however, may have taken these admonishments with a wink and a nod, knowing that Bargagli was simply protecting himself by discouraging their play.

On the other hand, perhaps Girolamo Bargagli really did feel that these games were inappropriate and should not be played due to their questionable implications. In that case, it is more curious why he should have provided instructions on how to play them. Perhaps he understood that knowledge of these games already existed, and that people would play them whether he liked it or not. If he included “Loving Hell” in his book, at least he had the chance to regulate how this game was taught. If he could not prevent people from engaging in certain practices, he may as well attempt to keep them

as harmless as possible. In the end, Bargagli performed his role correctly: explaining why these games should not have been played was a demonstration of his acceptance of the hierarchical norms and accepted behaviors of his rank and position. Even if he felt these supposedly inappropriate games were fun, instructional, or for any other reason should be played by the *Intronati*, his public performance demonstrated that he conformed to his role in the social hierarchy and encouraged others to do the same, even if quietly undermining and challenging these same understandings. Rhetorically, Girolamo rejected these games in order to establish a disciplined elite, in terms of religion and sexuality, but the *Dialogue* seems to indicate that true elites, those that excelled in games of wit and skill, could play beyond their own established discipline. The ultimate goal of *Intronati* games, then, was not to learn proper behavior in order to skillfully perform these expected actions in front of a critical public eye. Instead, the goal was to learn these behaviors so well as to manipulate them to their own purpose and advancement. Doing so, the *Intronati* would become true leaders in a new cultural order.

Regulatory Measures

While Girolamo's *Dialogue* contained many games that read as role-playing proper behaviors and activities for the real world, Scipione's initially seems to be much different. As in Innocenzio Ringhieri's *Cento Giuochi Liberali*, most of the "games" seem instead to be discussion prompts. These games were not intended to shape the behavior of the *academici* as much as the role-playing of games. However, this type of game play may be even more indicative of the emphasis of the new culture that evolved after the fall of Siena. On the largest stage they knew (that of the European continent), the Sieneese had been destroyed. Their republic, their pride and joy, was gone. They had to rebuild,

physically and otherwise.²⁴⁶ In doing so, they had to redefine and create a new civic identity and a new masculinity defined around intellect and rhetorical skill. This was the role of games in post-republic Siena: to help define and create men who would still be powerful cultural agents during a period in which liberty was naught but a memory. Games placed importance on properly articulating arguments, developing rhetorical flourishes, and impressing one's learning upon a participatory audience because this was how the Intronati chose to differentiate the new, but still superior, Sienese men from their Florentine counterparts – after the Florentines had destroyed and embarrassed the Sienese on the traditionally masculine battlefield. Cultural domination did not require an undefeated military but, instead, a brilliant mind and a sharp tongue.

The Florentines were not blind to these efforts. Many of the games discussed in the two Bargagli treatises are intellectual in nature and involve detailed knowledge of literature already deemed classic, the inner workings of local government, and high-culture methods of pursuing women. They also included games that were not nearly as traditionally academic, including those involving dice, cards, and even Tarot.²⁴⁷ Just a year after Cosimo closed Sienese academies in 1568 he banned "all games in writing, pledge, and *credenza*, under grave financial and honorific penalties."²⁴⁸ He issued these bans in nearly the same breath as he forbade such overtly hostile actions as homicide,

²⁴⁶ An entire busta in the Archivio di Stato di Siena is dedicated to preparing Siena for the formal entrance of Cosimo I in 1537. While it includes discussions of entertainments for the event (including a mention of some conflict regarding the allocation of wood as many Sienese were looking for wood to rebuild their homes and other structures while the Intronati wanted this wood to construct the stage for a comedic performance in honor of Cosimo), a striking percentage of the preparations focus on beautifying the cobbling of the road and facades along the Via Francigena, the road upon which Cosimo would make his entry. It is clear that the Sienese Balìa was determined not to allow Cosimo and his attendants to see the destruction wrought by his armies and those of his allies - the Sienese found dignity in holding up appearances. At some point after defending this dissertation, I would like to look at this material more closely for a future publication. Archivio di Stato di Siena (ASS), Balìa 173.

²⁴⁷ Game 55, *De' dadi* (Of dice), Girolamo Bargagli, 106. Game 56, *Della Bassetta* (Of the sideboard), Girolamo Bargagli, 106. Game 57, *De' Tarocchi* (Of Tarot), Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 107.

²⁴⁸ BCS, Bargagli-Petrucci 1717, 91.

rebellion, and forming armies against him. Games, the prohibition stated, constituted "an abuse so pernicious, and of great detriment" that led to "the game players so drunk and blinded by the game, that, not having money" to play, they would promise future "great sums of money, possessions, and other items," putting them impossibly in debt and causing many problems for the city.

Most of the general prohibitions against games seem to focus on gambling involving the exchange of money, thereby sidestepping Florentine taxation and possibly creating hardships for those gambling what meager earnings the players may possess. However, the same word, *giuochi*, was used to indicate everything from gambling during card games to the intellectual parlor games favored by the Intronati. This unclear word choice may have been intentional as it allowed for some flexibility regarding what games were actually forbidden, and to whom. In 1569 the Florentines issued a follow-up ban to clarify that "all games of every type" were forbidden for all types of men, including "clergymen," specifically stipulating that "Knights (*Cavalieri*), Doctors, Attorneys, and all other types of magistrates and office-holders in any way paid or otherwise compensated by the most Serene Prince of Tuscany" caught playing games would be suspended for six months, followed by a loss of every honor and office provided by the same source for any recidivism.²⁴⁹

An undated ban against games and gambling houses, however, shows that there may have been strong protests against the blanket terms of the 1569 proclamation. Published in a collection of similar declarations in 1584, this document allows "true Gentlemen" an exception to the general ban against gambling; as long they gambled only for their "pleasure" (*diporto*), with fellow gentlemen "gathered to pass the time, to play

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 52-53.

these games...without prize, fraud, or deception," with "pure intentions, healthy intellect, and without any quibbling," Florence would allow them to play.²⁵⁰ The declaration went on to clarify that the intention was not to prevent artisans and others from playing games in their "gardens, homes, or loggias" – as long as the gathering did not exceed four individuals, and that there would be no prize involved, and the games did not involve dice or cards.²⁵¹ For whatever reason, the Florentines felt the need to loosen the initial bans. Still, by limiting the size of groups allowed to play games most Intronati games were still deemed illegal.

Even this minor relaxation did not last long. Once again in 1589 the Grand Duke issued another proclamation to restate bans "already published in Siena in the year 1579" (possibly the ones just discussed), declaring that everyone, "of any station or condition that dares or presumes to play with cards or dice of any sort in the home, outside, or otherwise, faced the penalty of twenty-five *scudi* and two strikes of the whip." If the same person were caught playing with these objects a second time they would receive twice the previous penalty while a third time would receive this increased punishment along with "arbitration by those who judge."²⁵² While this seems unrelated to the Intronati, the condemnation of other, non-academic forms of game play, the following sentence provides clarification. In it, the Florentines stated that they hoped these bans may prevent "scholars from doing more damage in the future."²⁵³ The ban does not specify what damages the "scholars" had done and I have not discovered indications elsewhere of what they may have been. Instead, this oblique statement implies that the Florentine overlords

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 133.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 133

²⁵² BCS, Bargagli-Petrucci 1726, 10r

²⁵³ Ibid, 10v.

had caught on to the dangerous lines of thought that games had encouraged in the Intronati and wanted them gone.

Clearly, the Florentines felt that games of all varieties could be dangerous, though perhaps some more so than others. If anything, academies appeared to be even more dangerous than games as, without exception, Cosimo banned each of these groups in 1568. The Florentines only allowed them to reopen in the seventeenth century, when the seeds of dissent feared in the sixteenth century had grown sterile. Given the serious punishments for academic activities, an umbrella term under which games took up plenty of space, and the primary purpose of many of these games (that is, courting women), one questions the purpose of such extreme actions against academies. How could questions of courtship, love, and, in general, pleasing women challenge a political institution? That is, of course, unless academic activities were a facade for something greater, for actions more dangerous than demonstrating how to make women (and princes) look kindly upon *academici*. McClure argues that after Siena's fall the city became a feminized, apolitical state in contrast to Florence's masculine, dominant presence. It does seem clear that Siena and the Intronati did in fact take a step back from an active traditionally political life. However, the conclusion that this represented a feminization of the men involved misrepresents the goals of the academy after 1555. It does appear that ideals of masculinity changed in the aftermath of Siena's collapse into those based on academic merit rather than political potency. If “political” is defined simply as having set power within a community, the Sieneese Intronati inhabited a very political space indeed.

We can only speculate about the reasons that caused Cosimo to ban games and academic gatherings. Still, the timing is suspicious. Academies were closed in 1568 and

the first of the game bans released in 1569. While Cosimo may have seen games in general as directly related to academies such as the Intronati, it is clear that these orders were part of a larger cultural movement on behalf of the Florentines to prevent activities that may be dangerous to their interests. Clearly, the Medici rulers saw that these pursuits could have severe political repercussions and felt that the easiest way to prevent them from burbling forth was to wipe them out entirely.²⁵⁴

Prior to 1555, Siense noblemen valued an active civic and paternalistic republicanism as central to their lives as men of a certain status in a free city. Their actions in relation to the urban environment defined who they were and many even felt that these actions were not choices but indeed duties that were required of them, in exchange for everything that the city had done for them and their families. In Girolamo's treatise, we have already seen a similar sense of obligation. He felt that he owed something to the academy in return for everything that it had provided him over the years. One of the primary stated goals of the dialogue was to please women, inserting them into academic life and the recovery of the academy after 1555. Fittingly, this pursuit required the use of rhetorical skill and displays of the classical educations that the *academici* had attained by virtue of having been born noblemen. These were the traits that the Siense would use to become leaders in the post-republic age. Instead of masculine *virtù* lying in traditional political skill or power, it now lay in academic performance and the pleasure of women. Rhetorical prowess was critical to these efforts

²⁵⁴ For information on the Florentine Pianigiani, who did conspire to overthrow the Medici, see Domenico Zanrè, "Ritual and Parody in Mid-Cinquecento Florence: Cosimo de' Medici and the Accademia del Piano," in *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici*, ed. Konrad Eisenbichler. (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), 189-204.

and it is no coincidence that the games developed the same skills needed in their vision of the new age.

Conclusion

Through Marcantonio Piccolomini, Girolamo Bargagli had urged his Intronati brothers to refine their skills so much that they could impress foreigners with their skill and influence their cultural practices, hoping that others would follow their lead. To a certain extent, these efforts worked. Throughout Europe at important events and gatherings, games played prominent roles. Games were part of the formal entrance celebration and rituals that welcomed Juan de Austria to Naples in 1572.²⁵⁵ They also featured prominently in the 1608 double wedding that joined Margherita of Savoy to Francesco Gonzaga and Isabella to Alfonso d'Este.²⁵⁶ Games were included in the 1565 wedding of Francesco I de' Medici to Johanna von Habsburg-de' Medici in Vienna,²⁵⁷ played at the Court of Henry II in France,²⁵⁸ and at the Spanish Court in Madrid.²⁵⁹ In each of these instances, games played important roles in political events. At other times, however, the games did simply pass the time in much less formal affairs, such as when the Count and Countess of Lemos were "besieged" by five days of rain in their home in Caserta.²⁶⁰ While it is doubtful that Scipione's nine Sieneese youths truly besieged during Carnival of 1555 would have considered heavy rain worthy of the name "siege," games truly did pass from one end of the social spectrum to the other. When the *academici* trained in the Intronati had the opportunity to display the agility of tongue developed in

²⁵⁵ ASF Mediceo del Principato 4026 f 113

²⁵⁶ ASF Mediceo del Principato 2962

²⁵⁷ ASF Mediceo del Principato 4473 f 575

²⁵⁸ ASF Mediceo del Principato 4849 f 279

²⁵⁹ ASF Mediceo del Principato 4959 f 1089; 5046 f 168

²⁶⁰ ASF Mediceo del Principato 4087 f 416

games during these events with foreigners, it would have brought much praise to themselves and to the Intronati. They had spent a great deal of time polishing their verbal skills and ready wit, allowing them to appear more impressive in these events than the Florentines who would have spent much energy in traditional governance, rather than develop their ludic strategies. Or so the Sieneese may have hoped.²⁶¹

After the fall of Siena, the Sieneese were left with a hole to fill, that of the *patria* they had served for centuries and that had become an integral element of their culture and identity. In a variety of manners, the noble members of the Intronati directed their energies to academic pursuits in order to develop a new civic identity that would redefine their priorities; it would also, if their efforts caught on elsewhere, create a new culture for noble Italians and position the Sieneese Intronati as the leaders in this new world. By changing the consensus realities in which they operated, relating honor and *virtù* to academic pretensions, they implicitly argued that they were most fit to lead the cultural world of what we now call the (late) Italian Renaissance – or Rinascimento. These were concepts espoused by the Intronati prior to 1555, though more aggressively promoted in the post-republic era that followed. They sought to redefine the entire concept of what a meaningful life was, shifting their focus from service and loyalty to the *patria* to an aristocratic life that cultivated happiness out of intellectual play and cultural refinement. Games became tools used by the Intronati to develop these concepts while also practicing the skills that this new leadership would require.

²⁶¹ This is also the same period in which more physical games, such as those resembling modern soccer, were regulated within the city, as seen in the Sieneese Balia, which declared "non si giocasse ala palla al maglio e ala druzzola da Casa Agazzari fino ala Chiesa di S. Lorenzo per honor dle Monache de s. lorenzo" on March 15, 1559. This was expanded several days later to include a ban everywhere in the city, aside from "nela strada di fontanello" due to the inconvenience that playing the game presented to others. This is specified to include everyone, indistinguishable of status. ASS Balia 170 25v-26r, 38r.

Much of these efforts undermined the new Florentine rule of Siena. In order to rule, the Florentines needed the Sieneese to accept the legitimacy of their direction. By arguing that cultural leadership was more important than political sovereignty, the Intronati delegitimized Florentine domination. The many efforts of Cosimo de' Medici and his advisors to regulate game-play and academic life in Siena demonstrates that they recognized the threat that these developments posed. From the academy, the Intronati attempted to redefine, reshape, and redeploy earlier understandings of Sieneese civic identity, social status, and acceptable forms of behavior for the city while at the same time challenging – or at least out-maneuvering – Florentine rule and restrictions. In the world of post-Republic Siena, the well-worked salt of Intronati games became more powerful than the external appearance of the pumpkin.

Chapter Three

A Crisis of *Virtù* on Display: The Appearance of Stability and a Falsely Feminized Academy

*"Most of the women are well learned and write excellentie well bothe in prose and verse, among whom Laudomia Forteguerra and Virginia Salvi did excell for good wittes."*²⁶²

The entire sixteenth century was a period of crisis for Siena and the Academy of the Intronati. During the first half of the century, factionalism threatened to destroy the city to the point that Charles V and his armies had to be called in to maintain the peace. The 1550s, of course, were a disaster as Siena was embattled and then besieged, the population and the physical city itself left decimated. What followed were "the forgotten years," in which the city and the academy struggled to rebuild themselves while forming a new civic identity and source of pride – but these efforts ultimately ended in a whimper.²⁶³ Attempting to maintain a facade of stability and the appearance of *virtù*, the Sieneese Intronati turned to women for aid. Tying the beauty of these women to the physical beauty and academic success of Siena, the Intronati co-opted a long-held Sieneese tradition of retreating to the support of women during tumultuous times. Women, particularly those affiliated with the Intronati, embraced this opportunity, as they always had, and gained a public persona unusual in the pre-modern world.²⁶⁴ In an inherent

²⁶² Sir Thomas Hoby, *The Travels and Life of Sir Thomas Hoby, Kt of Bisham Abbey, Written by Himself, 1547-1564*. (London: Offices of the Society, 1902), 19. Referenced in Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*, 161.

²⁶³ Judith Hook, *Siena: A City and its History* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), i.

²⁶⁴ Ultimately, this agrees with arguments made by Konrad Eisenbichler, who describes women emerging during times of crisis in male-dominated societies, and by George McClure, who tied the Intronati "promotion of women, both within the ludic world and without" to "the dramatic role Sieneese women played in the defence of the city in the siege of the 1550s." However, my argument goes deeper, presenting Sieneese women as central to the presentation of the city and the academy itself, which connected their

contradiction, these women were held to be champions of virtue while frequently admonished to put on false displays that hid their true intentions – demonstrating their true *virtù*-osity. From their beginnings, the Intronati viewed women as partners in their efforts to become cultural leaders of Italy and Europe, despite (and in some ways to spite) their political problems.

In many ways, crisis defined the Sieneese experience from the medieval period through to the sixteenth century. In particularly catastrophic times, the Sieneese frequently sought for (and received) aid from many women, both mortal and sacred. These moments included the 1260 Battle of Montaperti, the 1348 outbreak of the Black Death, and the War of Siena in 1552-1555. In these extreme times, women provided protection, spiritual guidance, and general support. While early examples of the important role of women in Siena were primarily religious, later relationships with women were decidedly secular and occasionally militaristic. In the post-republic era, women became instrumental parts of the developing vision of a new aristocratic society based on academic cultural leadership. The Intronati veritably advertised this as a newly feminized academy. This was intentionally misleading. Though not traditionally political, the new leadership targeted by the Intronati would place them at the head of cultural refinement and progress. By redefining what was meaningful in life, the Intronati placed intelligent and witty women beside themselves, hoping to lead the peninsula into a new age of cultural innovation.

beauty and intellectual skill with the beauty and glory of the city and the academy. Konrad Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen: Women, Politics, and Poetry in Sixteenth-Century Siena* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 234; George McClure, *Parlour Games and the Public Life of Women in Renaissance Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 29.

A Tradition of Sieneese Women in Notably Masculine Roles

Siena's relationship with two female Catholic saints served as a foundation for this tradition in Siena. Throughout Europe, the Virgin Mary was a powerful symbol of sanctity and religious femininity. In Siena, she played an even more substantial role in local public culture that cannot be over-emphasized. During four separate periods of crisis, beginning with Montaperti in 1260 and ending with the fall of the republic in 1555, Siena dedicated herself to the Virgin Mary in ritual submissions. John Koenig described these events as rituals that "turned 'gods' (Christ and/or His mother) into earthly rulers."²⁶⁵ While other cities also engaged in such ritual submissions to Mary, Koenig found that Siena was the only city to engage in a ritual submission more than once and, in each of these instances, the Sieneese placed their city in the hands of Mary.²⁶⁶ Gerald Parsons also found the civic religion of medieval and early modern Siena to be inextricably tied to the Virgin. Focusing on community experiences and activities, Parsons describes the unifying role of Mary in Siena as unique even on that most Catholic of peninsulas.²⁶⁷

The ritualistic dedications described by Koenig became especially powerful in the sixteenth century and involved many members of the community, not just the men. In the 1527 dedication, Koenig argued that a specific Sieneese woman played a uniquely

²⁶⁵ John Koenig, "Mary, sovereign of Siena, Jesus, King of Florence: siege religion and the ritual submission (1260-1637)" *Bullettino senese di storia patria* (2008), 43-163. For more on general Sieneese crises in the medieval period, see William Caferro, *Mercenary Companies and the Decline of Siena* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). See also Anabel Thomas, *Garrisoning the Borderlands of Medieval Siena: Sant'Angelo in Colle: Frontier Castle under the Government of the Nine (1287-1355)* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2011).

²⁶⁶ Throughout Italy, Mariology was very important during this period. While many cities paid particular devotion to Mary, many also had significant female saints and cults associated with civic religion, particularly during the centuries prior to Trent as the Catholic Church struggled to maintain influence on popular, local religious practices.

²⁶⁷ Gerald Parsons, *Siena, Civil Religion, and the Sieneese*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004.

powerful role. That time, Margaret Bicchi received a visitation from Mary herself, specifying changes to be made in the ritual.²⁶⁸ Koenig argues that Bicchi played the same role that Girolamo Savonarola, a male priest and radical reformer, had played three decades earlier in Florence during a period of crisis in that city. In Siena, however, a humble woman played this role as divine intermediary, communicating with the mother of Christ who also served as the spiritual sovereign and protector of the city.²⁶⁹ Even when the communication had the potential to save or destroy the entire city, Siena was a city that listened to women. This moment coexisted with important time in the history of the Intronati as well. Just two years after the foundation of the Intronati, Bicchi's moment of influence is representative of a general milieu of powerful women. As the Academy of the Intronati took its first wobbly steps, it increasingly encouraged outsiders (and perhaps even themselves) to identify the academy with the Sienese women whose triumphs and accomplishments the *academici* broadcast throughout the sixteenth-century academic world.

Mary, of course, is an almost supernatural character in Catholic belief. While the placement of Siena under the protection of a female sovereign is interesting, the Virgin Mary was an extraordinary figure whose gendered self was shaped by standards that no other woman could ever realistically live up to. The second important figure, however, was a local Sienese woman and, while extraordinary, would have been a more approachable model for civic life in Siena. She was Catherine di Giacomo di Benincasa, better known as Catherine of Siena. Born a twin in 1347, she was one of the youngest of

²⁶⁸ The primary change was a shift from a dedication to the Virgin of the Assumption to the Immaculate Mary.

²⁶⁹ For more on Savonarola, see Lauro Martines, *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for the Soul of Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

twenty-five children of a cloth-dyer in Siena. Her twin died while still an infant. From an early age, Catherine began receiving visions of Christ before becoming a tertiary of the Dominican order. Ultimately, after receiving the stigmata, she ritually wed Mary's son Jesus, using his foreskin as her ring. Born during the Avignonese exile of the papacy, she played a significant role convincing Pope Gregory XI to return to Rome in 1377. Three years later, after years of subsisting only on the pus oozing from the wounds of lepers, she died at the age of thirty-three. Influential beyond Siena, she remains one of the two patron saints of Italy, along with the male Francis of Assisi. In Siena, however, she remained an especially dominant figure throughout the early modern period.

Tracing the tradition of strong female figures in Siena, Catherine is an especially important figure. As Caroline Walker Bynum argues, the role of food as sustenance and symbol was especially powerful for religious women during the medieval period. Both as a domestic product and in the production of breast milk, food was inherently tied to femininity. Particularly for Catherine of Siena, Bynum finds “that her (predominantly male) advisers and followers saw not eating, eating, and feeding as highly significant aspects of her impact on others,” and that food “was *the* central metaphor in her prolix metaphorical writing.”²⁷⁰ Because her relationship with food (and thus her femininity) was such a significant feature of her religiosity and public persona, it seems especially significant that Catherine was an important part of the evolution of formidable women playing important roles in Sieneese cultural life. While prominent Sieneese men would later broadcast the accomplishments of their female counterparts to the outside world, these actions were part of a long local tradition of promoting remarkable women.

²⁷⁰ Caroline Walker Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987, 166. For more on Catherine and the role of food in female sanctity, see 165-180.

Such traditions were logical precursors of the stories that emerged of female heroism in the War of Siena against Florence and the Holy Roman Emperor. As these stories go, when foreign powers gathered threateningly in the area around Siena, the Sienese came together to build up fortifications for the defense of their city. The danger facing them was so great that the factionalism that had challenged civic unity for centuries melted away and everyone, regardless of age, status, and condition, came together to work as one to defend their *patria*. This unity was important. However, the element of female heroism emerges time and again as the most striking theme in these accounts. These stories repeatedly describe the actions of Sienese women, selflessly gathering to toil in defense of the city. Their acts, so the stories continue, brought tears to the eyes of all on-lookers and inspired the men to work with even greater dedication. Climaxing, the stories describe three glorious bands of women gathering, each numbering approximately three thousand, comprised of women from both noble and artisanal backgrounds. A noblewoman led each battalion, the leaders dressed in the colors of her district, carrying mottoes representative of the same.²⁷¹ The women in these groups carried bundles of branches to a site along the city walls, just west of the Porta Camollia on the north end of the city, where they constructed a fort to aid in the defense of Siena. While working, they cried out "*Francia! Francia!*" out of respect for their foreign supporters. This fort still stands today, an overgrown ruin, with a plaque identifying it as the "*fortino delle donne*," a reminder of the gallantry of these ladies.

Stories of these courageous women come from diverse sources. However, as with the vast majority of stories told about Siena's past – from its foundation by the twin sons

²⁷¹ The three administrative districts of Siena were called *terze* and included the *Terza di San Marino*, the *Terza di Camollia*, and the *Terza della Città*. For background on the development of these *terze*, see Judith Hook, *Siena: A City and its History*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979, 8-10

of Remus to the serenity of the glorious republic that governed a peaceful city until the brutal Medici clan came and tore it all asunder – these appear to be, largely, mythic accounts. The earliest, nearly contemporary account we have of the female-led battalions of women during the War of Siena comes from 1553.²⁷² The historian Marco Guazzo identified these woman as "la Signora Forteguerra," who wore purple and held a purple flag with the motto "As long as it is the truth;" "la Signora Fausta Piccolhuomini," who wore red and held a flag of the same color with a white cross and the motto "As long as I do not throw it [away];" and "la Signora Livia Fausta," wearing white and holding a white flag with a palm and the motto "As long as I might have it."²⁷³ Under their command, other women brought bundles of wood to construct their fortress, and the city followed in their example. Though this is the earliest account we have of the event, Guazzo admitted that he heard the story secondhand and it contains several logical inaccuracies undermining their believability.²⁷⁴

In his memoir, the French general Blaise de Monluc included a story similar to the one told above, with only slight deviations: Piccolomini wore pink rather than red, they carried picks, shovels, and baskets, along with their bundles of wood, and he does not describe the shouts of "France! France!" that Guazzo included. This omission is notable because, as a French general, this chant would have justified his presence and

²⁷² This account was published the same year. Marco Guazzo, *Cronica di M. Marco Guazzo. Ne la quale ordinatamente contiensi l'essere de gli huomini illustri antiqui, & moderni, le cose, & i fatti di eterna memoria degni, occorsi dal principio del mondo fino a questi nostri tempi. Prima Editione* (Venetia: Appresso Francesco Bindoni, 1553).

²⁷³ Translations of the mottos from Eisenbichler, 154-155. The mottos in the original Guazzo read as follows: "Pur che 'l sia il vero," "Pur che non lo butto," and "Pur che l'habbia."

²⁷⁴ Eisenbichler notes that as each of these women was most likely leading their *terza*, and Laudomia and Fausta are presented carrying the colors of the other's *terza*, Guazzo most likely reversed the colors, creating a slight inaccuracy. Eisenbichler also notes that in Guazzo, the first name of a "Signora Forteguerra" is not provided but historical records do not provide evidence for another lady Forteguerra and, particularly as other accounts of the siege, including that of Monluc, identify the woman as Laudomia, so we may assume that this woman was indeed our gender-bending heroine. Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*, 154-156

reflected well on the French, the intended readership of Monluc's memoir. He included several details left out of Guazzo's account, including that the women shortened their skirts in order to hasten their work. Monluc admitted that he had not yet arrived in Siena to witness this event, but assured the reader that those who had told him that they had never seen such a beautiful thing in all of their lives. While he was not there to witness this event, he did have the opportunity to meet all three of these women at a later point and was, apparently, greatly impressed by them.²⁷⁵ These stories then, from the very beginning, seem less important as testaments to what actually happened in Siena than as evidence of how the Sieneese wanted their defensive actions to be remembered as representative of the city. Lacking a firsthand account, it seems as if these accounts developed at the time in a conscious myth-making campaign to glorify Sieneese women and equate their bravery with that of the city.

Though there are many of these second- and third-hand accounts of the bravery of the women at the walls, the silence of first-hand accounts is troubling. The main primary source regarding the events within the city walls of Siena during the 1550s is the aptly titled *Diary of the things that happened in Siena: 20 July 1550 to 28 June 1555*, by Alessandro Sozzini.²⁷⁶ Though he wrote the diary several decades after these events, he was an eyewitness to the battle preparations and siege. In compiling the diary, he claimed to refer to his own recollections and notes, documents of the remnant government that

²⁷⁵ It seems unlikely that Monluc would have himself created this story of the Sieneese women had he not been told something that resembled the story he tells in his memoir - he would have had no reason to create such a story of feminine bravery. However, it is plausible that those (Sieneese men) who told him the tale created it in order to reflect well on their city. If this is the case it does not diminish the import of the story as it was still what was chosen to represent the Sieneese and their actions during the siege. Blaise de Monluc, *Blaise de Monluc all'assedio di Siena e in Montalcino, 1554-1557* (Siena: Edizioni Cantagalli, 1992), 129-130

²⁷⁶ Alessandro Sozzini, *Diario delle cose avvenute in Siena: dai 20 Luglio ai 28 Guigno 1555*. (Firenze: Gio. Pietro Vieusseux, 1842).

survived in Siena during this period, and consulted with others who had also been present in order to most accurately describe the last years of the Siennese republic. The diary provides incomparable details regarding the various assaults, defensive strategies, food shortages and the continual price inflation on basic food items (many of which were soon unavailable), fights that broke out in the streets as the tensions from the siege grew, and the so-called "useless mouths" that were expelled from the city, much to the anguish of those who had to send them to near-certain death.²⁷⁷ Though Sozzini did include descriptions of various instances in which women worked to defend their city, he did not mention this coordinated effort on the part of Siennese women to build the fort. Given that the actions of these three "battalions" of women had already become a part of local lore, it is surprising that Sozzini did not choose to describe the event – unless, of course, he knew it did not happen. Similarly, another eyewitness to the wartime preparations, Angiolo Bardi, who also mentions women aiding in the construction of various forts, neglected to mention anything about the anecdote above.²⁷⁸

Stories of general female heroism during this period do abound. In Monluc's memoir, he described even the non-noble women as behaving bravely in the face of death. One example of these women was Caterina Fontebrandese, who he presented as a model of a feminine valor that allowed for the adoption of masculine military actions. According to the story, Caterina's brother was a guard. Prior to a shift one evening, he became ill. Rather than allowing her brother to report for duty while sick, or

²⁷⁷ Though during other sieges the Florentines had ordered for these *bocche inutili* to be protected, in Siena Cosimo ordered them killed, in order to discourage the Siennese from continuing this survival strategy, hoping to receive a quick surrender of Siena. Instead, the Siennese fought on and those who lived through this brutal period were left with many feelings of guilt, as if they had engaged in a symbolic cannibalism of those expelled from the walls.

²⁷⁸ ASS, MS D 50, f 288v-289r.

embarrassing himself by admitting that he was ill, Caterina took his clothes, and attempted to disguise herself as her brother and work his shift in his place. Despite her attempt, the disguise failed and she was discovered. Rather than being shunned for transgressing gendered behavioral boundaries, however, she was honored and sonnets were written about her courage. Based on these stories and his later interactions with these women, Monluc testified to the broad courage of the Sieneese women. In his memoir, he devoted an entire section to them, referring to their "masculine vivacity of spirit" and, in a later section, favorably compared Sieneese women to the entire population of Rome in their ability to defend their respective cities.²⁷⁹ It is important that male observers, both local and foreign, commented on Sieneese women not for their feminine beauty and accomplishments but, explicitly, for their militaristic achievements and masculine activities. This was not a reflection on the feminization of the men but, rather, the bravery and courage of Sieneese women while working to protect their city. As we will see in academic sources, many men affiliated with Siena presented the actions of women as ideal examples of Sieneese *virtù*, not solely feminine *virtù*.

The frequency of women in tales of traditionally masculine activities during the war is striking. Still, multiple sources describe them in traditional terms, based on their appearance. Though more women than men were expelled during the early months of the siege as useless mouths, upon whom the Otto della Guerra did not want to waste food, the women who demonstrated their worth (frequently based primarily on their personal stores of food), and were allowed to remain in the city, suffered for it – just as did the men. In early January of 1555, Sozzini remarked that men and women both were made "very

²⁷⁹ Also cited in McClure, *Parlour Games*, 50.

weak due to the hardships that continual guard duty" required, only made worse by the absence of adequate food and beverage.²⁸⁰ On this same day, he remarked that the noblewomen one would see on the street, due to the travails of over a year of siege, were unrecognizable versions of their former selves. Paralleling the women's loss of beauty with the damage sustained by the city (which would take years to rebuild), Sozzini frequently appears to connect the physical appearance of Sieneese women with the honor of Siena itself, as if the two were indistinguishable elements of one another.²⁸¹ While the actions of women during the war represented the actions of all *senese*, witnesses also tied the appearance of women to the presentation of the city in ways that they did not regarding appearances of men.

This was true after the surrender as well. In his diary, Sozzini described the capitulation of Siena to Florence on the 25th of April. His accounts included the Florentine notification that any Sieneese actions not complying with surrender would result in the beheading of the offending individual. Immediately after describing the terms of this submission, Sozzini launched into a description of the physical results of the siege on the bodies of men and women. He described that both men and women, equally, were "completely transformed, all thin and pale due to the continual hardships" they had endured simply to survive the siege. He claimed that it was especially important to recount that in all of Siena, there were no "more than three or four women in their original images" – all of the other women who had survived had been deformed by their

²⁸⁰ Sozzini, *Diario*, 344.

²⁸¹ In my future project on the preparations made in the city for Cosimo's entrance, I would like to explore discussions of individuals preparing themselves as well.

experiences.²⁸² Again, this discussion of their horrendous physical transformation is one of the only places in which Sozzini singled out women, while directly using their physical appearance as reflections of the harm done to the city itself. Almost without exception, just as Sozzini described the actions of men and women as nearly indistinguishable, he did the same when describing the effects of war on the men and women of Siena. Men and women all fought desperately for their survival in whatever ways they could, making the same efforts and sacrifices, and men were not degraded by the fact that these women were capable of the same actions.²⁸³ While Sozzini mourned the loss of beauty of those who survived he also mourned the loss of the city's beauty as well, in the very same terms and the same context. In these descriptions, it becomes clear that Sozzini correlated female appearance and presentation with the image of Siena as a city. Notably, the feminine beauty of Sieneese women did not detract from their military strength or courage.

In other aspects as well, the decline of women in the war seems representative of broader themes. Sozzini described their decline not simply due to insufficient nutrition and the absence of jewelry and other adornments worn during times of peace. He also

²⁸² This section of Sozzini's *Diario* is cited in many sources and Diana Robin provides a translation in her *Publishing Women* that is quite moving and eloquent but, because of this eloquence itself, is not in keeping with the matter-of-fact style of writing Sozzini implements throughout the text to describe the events of the siege, including these final days. These translations are my own. Sozzini, *Diario* 398-399. Diana Robin, *Publishing Women: Salons, the Presses, and the Counter-Reformation in Sixteenth-Century Italy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2007), 124-125.

²⁸³ Frequently, the instances in which men and women are described behaving differently during the war took place outside of Siena, such as when on April 17, 1553 in the castle of Castiglione di Val d'Orcia contained both men and women when attacked by the imperial army and the women were protected by guards in a room while the men, we assume, engaged the assailants. (Sozzini, 116) At the same time, Sozzini also describes cases outside of Siena in which women fought alongside men – as in the case at the fortress of Santa Colomba where, on March 21 1554 farmers and women, explicitly without the aid of men, fought the enemies. (Sozzini, 190-1) Similarly, women and children were both forcefully expelled from the city (most likely to either starve to death or be slaughtered by Cosimo's direct order) as useless mouths. However, many women remained in the city, declared useful, and the descriptions of these women were remarkably similar to those of their male counterparts.

claimed that the inability of women to study during the siege had negative impacts on the broader population.²⁸⁴ Alessandro Sozzini was not a member of the Intronati. Yet he still associated Sieneese women with academic merit. Again, this decline of their intellectual spirit was echoed by the absence of academic life as many members of the academies had fled the city. Those that were left had more pressing concerns than maintaining a properly-functioning academy. Members of the Intronati would later describe this period as a dark time for Siena and the academy, partially due to the absence of academic activities and literary study. Here, then, we have evidence that both within and outside the academy, the Sieneese saw learning as important for women as well as men.

Battalions of women, brought together by noblewomen wearing the colors and mottoes of their districts, probably did not gather as the stories claimed. Still, these stories feature strongly in the accounts of the war, regularly presenting women as heroic figures. Many described themselves as amazed by the tenacity of women, that they took up the same exact duties as did the men, accepting as fact that they were valuable contributors to the survival of the city. Though the defense of the city failed, they did not blame this defeat on the actions of women. After 1555, these stories were not silenced but, rather, promoted as evidence of the strength of the women. This feminine strength was presented as a defining characteristic of the city of Siena itself. Though these stories were, at best, glorified and exaggerated representations of actual events, they do begin to illustrate how the beauty, intelligence, and courage of Sieneese women was connected to the identity of the city itself – a practice the Intronati had already begun co-opting. For Siena and the Intronati, women were not solely beautiful adornments to compliment their

²⁸⁴ Sozzini, *Diario*, 344.

own accomplishments. They were also aggressive defenders of their city, not simply passive, traditionally feminine figures. Even as the Sieneſe and the Intronati increasingly used women to represent the city and its intellectual life, then, this was not a standard feminization of either. As the ſixteenth-century Sieneſe formed and developed theſe mythological accounts of women – from centuries earlier and their own contemporary accounts – it is clear that it was important for them to remember women ſerving an active, aggressive role in historical civic memory. Rather than a feminization, this was a powerful new representation of ſtrength in beauty, wiſdom, and courage. Theſe tropes were common in the literary world of the Intronati as well.

Sieneſe Women in a Literary and Political World

Modern ſcholars are increasingly ſtudying the extraordinary role of women in Siena in the years ſurrounding the fall of the republic in 1555. Konrad Eisenbichler's book *The Sword and the Pen* is perhaps the moſt notable of the recent works, an invaluable introduction to the broad group of women engaged in the intellectual circles of Siena during the middle of the ſixteenth century. He finds the Sieneſe women were unique from other female writers in Italy during the period due to their "active involvement in the political, religious, and ſocial queſtions of the time."²⁸⁵ Other ſcholars argue that our histories of theſe diſcourſes generally neglect the role of women due more to the biases of later historians than to the abſence of women in ſixteenth-century debates. Still, women in Siena were uniquely more viſible and vocal than elſewhere. Using a handful of women from a much larger group of active female poets in Siena during the mid-ſixteenth century, Eisenbichler convincingly demonstrates that women not only ſerved as catalysts and inſpiration for the work of men, but alſo had very active

²⁸⁵ Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*, 3.

informal poetic careers themselves. Particularly important was the fact that their poetry did not focus exclusively on their experiences with love, rebuffing a criticism that had long been used to dismiss the writing of women during this period and to justify their exclusion in studies of general Italian literature.²⁸⁶

Other recent works focus on specific elements of the role of women in early modern Italy. George McClure's *Parlour Games and the Public Life of Women in Renaissance Italy*, which featured prominently in the previous chapter on games and subterfuge in the cultural life of the Intronati, is another of these recent books. He argues that the ludic world of the *veglie* was a space for "cultural renewal for a certain class of women" in a "literary realm" that allowed them to create a new and powerful form of agency and voice in a world traditionally dominated by men.²⁸⁷ Other historians and scholars of the Italian literary tradition, such as Diana Robin and Virginia Cox, have connected the unique role of women in Siena to a burgeoning network of female writers in Italy who not only corresponded with one another (and literary men of note) but also increasingly published their own works in the burgeoning print industry.²⁸⁸

The presence of women in remarkably visible literary, political, and cultural positions was not unique to the experience of Siena in the sixteenth-century. Contemporary with the period of crisis in Siena, women rulers took power as rulers in their own right as well as serving as regents for their underage children. Notable women elsewhere ventured into diplomatic actions, exemplified by the Salt War letters of Vittoria Colonna, who helped to shape the religious reform movements of the same age.

²⁸⁶ Eisenbichler, 4-5, 216. Eduardo Magliani, *Storia letteraria delle donne italiane: Le Trovatrici – Preludi – Trecentiste – Quattrocentiste – Cinquecentiste* (Naples: Antonio Morano, 1885), 174-175.

²⁸⁷ McClure, xiv-xv

²⁸⁸ Robin, *Publishing Women*, 124-59. Virginia Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy, 1400-1650* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 81-3, 105-7.

Circles of reformers frequently merged with literary salons and academies, representing parallel social and cultural associations that existed separate from court life and state institutions. Of course, many of these groups did disguise interests in both traditional political life and religious debate – and challenge. At the same time, the connections these groups fostered led to the publication in Venice (and elsewhere) of anthologies of vernacular poetry authored by women, creating a wide readership for these previously ignored women.²⁸⁹

In “humanistic” networks, writers participating in the *querelle des femmes* debated the role and nature of women, evolving somewhat as women made advances in traditionally masculine forums. Though the *querelle* involved real debate, it was also used as the basis for rhetorical arguments made more to demonstrate one's learning and rhetorical skill than to actually argue a point. By the sixteenth century, both men and women had contributed to this debate, tending to focus on the nature of women rather than more practical points regarding their actual behavior. Of course, the question was a favorite of literary academies such as the Intronati. Julie Campbell argues that it was the very ludic nature of academic activities that facilitated debates on questions including the *querelle des femmes*. Borrowing language from Lorraine Code, she calls these groups “liminal rhetorical spaces” that allowed for the inclusion of women in “the humanist play

²⁸⁹ Though Sharon Jansen argues that focusing on the handful of women that ruled implies that these were the only women that mattered to power politics in Early Modern Europe, she focuses on the debates caused by the ascension of this group. Interestingly, she sees the pamphlets that attacked these women as a separate debate, apart from the larger humanistic debate on women. Though it paralleled the decline in women in academic and literary settings during the seventeenth century, she argues that the decrease in female rulers during the seventeenth century was due to the development of patriarchal politics, though I see this as a continuation of trends already extant in the sixteenth century. Sharon L. Jansen, *Debating Women, Politics, and Power in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008). For the role of publishing women in religious reform movements and forays into political diplomacy, see Diana Robin, *Publishing Women*.

of ideas."²⁹⁰ Academies served as venues for debate and collective activity in which performances, as in theater, were judged and behavior regulated.

It was the very ludic and liminal nature of these spaces that allowed them to develop as safe places in which to confront the new and to challenge unsatisfactory developments in the world. It also, as Campbell agrees, allowed for the entry of women into serious philosophical and political conversation. What was unique to the Academy of the Intronati was the level of crisis the Sieneese experienced that provided an atmosphere in which the rhetorical became practical – or at least practice for the practical. At the same time identity itself became less practical and more rhetorical, or at least based on rhetorical skills. In this, the male members of the academy and the women of the *veglie* developed a unique relationship that they attempted to spread into the world external to the academy. The men themselves chose to revel in these actions, using new and challenging ideas about femininity to complement their own self-images and self-presentation of their masculinities. Using the actions of women to advertise the activities of their academy, the male Intronati encouraged outsiders to view the group as feminized. It would be dangerous, however, to assume that this indicated an intentional move away from the political realm. Instead, it was a re-evaluation of the power of cultural leadership that de-emphasized the importance of political leadership. In this, it was a redefinition of what constituted a meaningful life that included women at previously unseen levels.

Women Emerge in the Sieneese Political Sphere

One of the most overt and public roles women played for the *academici* of the Intronati was as dedicatees for their published works. As an expressly public gesture,

²⁹⁰ Julie Campbell, *Literary Circles and Gender in Early Modern Europe: A Cross-Cultural Approach*. (Burlington: Ashgate, 2006), 11. Lorraine Code, *Rhetorical Spaces: Essays on Gendered Locations* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

these publications were intended to draw attention to the women who circled the academy. They also served to encourage the readers to identify these talented women with the accomplishments of the men, in a way tying together the women and masculine literary productions. When the female dedicatees had literary works of their own, male authors frequently mentioned these works, serving to connect the male authors with these works as well. Of course, by dedicating works to an individual the author would have hoped to gain the favor of that person. Dedications to women, while common throughout Italy in the sixteenth century, were complicated and illustrate many facets of public literary lives during this period.

One of the women featured repeatedly as a dedicatee of Intronati works was Aurelia Petrucci (1511-1542) who, despite her powerful familial connections, was an interesting choice for the honor. Though not having the public position of the male *academici*, Aurelia inserted herself into the same public debate regarding Siennese political stability as had Antonio Vignali and Alessandro Piccolomini. She also publicly criticized the factionalism that threatened to destroy Siena prior to the final fall of the city in 1555. In 1535, Aurelia took to poetry to reprimand the Siennese:

Where is your valor, beloved Homeland,
That, wretched, you forget the servile yoke,
And in your breast you nourish only discordant thoughts,
Prodigal with what's bad, stingy with what's good for you?

Learn, careless, from the mistakes of others
Where civil discord leads, and punish in yourself
Those false and evil spirits now united
Only to bring you harm and bitter servitude.

Draw your scattered limbs into a single body,
And let one just will be everyone's law,
For only then will I call you worthy of valor.

As it is, I fear – or rather, see – that you will live
 In grief, wretched, always full of woe,
 For this is what happens where discord reigns.²⁹¹

Clearly, Aurelia blamed the same internal factionalism as had both Alessandro Piccolomini and Antonio Vignali – directly or through analogy – as the reason why Siena was losing control of the productive and peaceful republic which the city had for so long projected to the world. Without resolution of these conflicts, Aurelia gave the same warning as had the two male Intronati: only further harm would come unless the city resolved its issues.

Thriving on the edge of Intronati life, Aurelia Petrucci serves as an example of the interconnectedness of the political and academic worlds in Siena. She is also representative of the porous nature of gendered boundaries that existed during this period, at least in Siena. Herself the granddaughter of the powerful tyrant Pandolfo Petrucci, she was related to the Piccolomini family on her mother's side. Her sister Agnese married into the notoriously heretical Sozzini family, marrying Alessandro Sozzini (brother of Lelio). Agnese and Alessandro gave birth to Fausto Sozzini, one of the more notorious heretics of Counter-Reformation Italy whose theological beliefs led him to exile in Poland, where he died in 1604.²⁹²

Many male authors dedicated important works to Aurelia throughout the first half of the sixteenth century. Mariano Lenzi argued in his 1535 publication of Leone Ebreo's *Dialoghi d'amore* that Aurelia should serve as an example for men as well as women to

²⁹¹ The translation is Konrad Eisenbichler's. Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*, 73.

²⁹² Influenced by his uncle Lelio Sozzini, Fausto founded the theologic movement of Socinianism that rejected Orthodox Catholic views of salvation, the trinity, and Christ's divinity. For more, see John Jeffries Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). Mark Taplin, *The Italian Reformers and the Zurich Church, c. 1540-1620* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2003). Delio Cantimori speculates that it was because of the Intronati's close association with Fausto Sozzini that the academy was closed in 1568. Delio Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento*. (Florence: Sansoni, 1939).

lead their lives – as Alessandro Piccolomini would do with Laudomia Forteguerri shortly after.²⁹³ Antonio Vignali (the author of the *La Cazzaria*) dedicated his 1540 *Dulpisto Dialogo* to her as well. In contrast to the pornographic satire for which he is better known, *Dulpisto* was much less controversial, even tame by most standards. In it, he discussed the ways to achieve the love of a woman and in the dedication Antonio refers to Aurelia's "more demanding studies," an indication that she was involved in some form of serious study.²⁹⁴ As I speculated in the first chapter, however, the academy may have written *Dulpisto Dialogo* and identified it with Vignali as an attempt to pave the way for his return to Siena. If this is true, it would also indicate a high regard for Petrucci by the Intronati. Bartolomeo Carli Piccolomini also dedicated his translation of the fourth book of the *Aeneid* to Aurelia.²⁹⁵ Partially due to these many dedications, Claudio Tolomei (poet, intellectual, and former representative of the Republic of Siena to France) wrote to her from Rome in 1539 with a gift of his *Versi e regole della nuova poesia toscana*. Finally, Alessandro wrote in his 1542 funeral oration on the occasion of Aurelia's death that, even though she was a woman, Aurelia would have been wonderful in public office as "if there is any part in a woman that is not good, that part was not in her."²⁹⁶ This clearly presented Aurelia as an exceptional case. It is also significant that by posing this as a hypothetical situation, Alessandro allowed that the vast majority of women did not

²⁹³ Mariano Lenzi himself was the nephew of Claudio Tolomei, an intellectual and poet who once served as the representative of the Republic of Siena in France. Leone Ebra, *Dialogues of Love*, trans. Cosmos Damian Bacich and Rossella Pescatori. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009.

²⁹⁴ Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*, 68; McClure, *Parlour Games*, 40-41; Robin, *Publishing Women*, 149.

²⁹⁵ The third book was translated by Bernardino Borghesi and dedicated to Giulia Petrucci the fifth by Aldobrando Cerretani to Girolama Carli Piccolomini, and the sixth by Alessandro Piccolomini was dedicated to Frasia Venturi, who we will meet later in a discussion of Marcantonio Piccolomini's dialogue.

²⁹⁶ Eisenbichler, 94-95 - his translation. BCS C.VI.9 29r-37v.

actually have this bad part. Seemingly, then, Alessandro Piccolomini thought political offices should be available for women to fill.²⁹⁷

Aurelia Petrucci was not the only woman in Siena to produce political poetry during this period. Another who experienced the repercussions of her work was Virginia Martini Salvi. We know that she was married to Matteo Salvi in 1534 or 1535 and was most likely still alive when she published a poem in 1571. To add difficulties to research on this Virginia Salvi, another Virginia Salvi lived in Siena during this same period. That Virginia Salvi also wrote poetry. Our Virginia's family came from the *monte dei Popolo* – at least on her mother's side – which differentiated her from many of the men and women in this project whose families had been wealthy and powerful members of other factions. The family that she married into, the Salvi, was notoriously unruly, though it seems her husband was one of the less troublesome members of the family.²⁹⁸ Virginia herself was arrested in 1546 for composing poetry critical of the Sienese government though released upon orders of Charles V. After 1552, Virginia wrote sonnets praising Henri II and Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, Henri's representative in Siena. Her sonnets, unlike Aurelia's, ignored the factionalism in Siena and envisioned a glorious future with the French. These sonnets circulated around Italy and Europe, further contributing to her growing notoriety and network of connections. Soon thereafter, Virginia left Siena under apparently hostile circumstances as she was never allowed to return to her home city. In attempts to curry support, she wrote countless letters and paid literary tribute to Cosimo I, Henri II,

²⁹⁷ For more on Aurelia Petrucci, see James Nelson Novoa, “Aurelia Petrucci d’après quelques dédicaces entre 1530 et 1540,” *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 109 (2004), 103-26.

²⁹⁸ As an example, Matteo's brother Giulio was *gonfaloniere* of the *terza* of Camollia upon Charles V's entrance in 1536 and helped welcome into the city during his formal entrance through the gate of Camollia, but was then named *capitano del popolo* after the expulsion of his troops in 1552. This position of power, however, did not save his, and his brother's, execution in June of 1553 for a conspiracy to turn Siena over to Florence.

Catherine de' Medici, Margaret of France, and many others, alternately requesting aid in her return to Siena and help in freeing Siena from Cosimo I. She was seen as enough of a threat – and, one speculates, a nuisance – that none of these powerful individuals responded to or aided her in any way. She was, as Eisenbichler describes, nonetheless a powerful example of a Sieneese female poet with a wide range of connections whose poetry focused on much more than love and a beloved.²⁹⁹

Dedications were a place in which a person could publicly flatter another for a variety of reasons. Flattering the dedicatee, an author might hope to gain the patronage of that person (or someone related to the individual), or to spread word of the laudable aspects of a certain person or group of people. The Intronati frequently used this latter strategy, which served as an indirect form of advertisement. Frequently, these dedications broadcast word of the merits of Sieneese women. Particularly with the growing use of the press, these dedications were used in new and inventive ways to send a message without being overt about it. In the next chapter, we will see another example of a woman who was frequently the recipient of dedications by members of the Intronati: Laudomia Forteguerra.

Women in Intronati Dialogues

In the unstable early decades of the Intronati, dedications were important genres, complementing the primary writing but still independent of the works they introduced. Dedications allowed writers to broadcast the merits of potential patrons and advertise the achievements and qualities of Sieneese women who were, increasingly, the public face of the city and the academy. Dialogues served similar purposes. They allowed the author to

²⁹⁹ For a broader summary of Virginia Martini Salvi's life, see Konrad Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*, 165-214. See also Cox, *Women's Writing in Italy*, 106-122; Robin, *Publishing Women*, 51-57, 72, 118-120, 151, 158; McClure, *Parlour Games*, 227 n. 108, 271 n. 24.

make arguments that would not otherwise be seen as acceptable, posing ostensibly heterodox arguments as the voice of a devil's advocate. Girolamo Bargagli did this in his games dialogue, detailing the many games that were no longer appropriate for noblemen to play in an effort, he claimed, merely to document games that were previously played by their peers as we have seen. The genre also allowed for the insertion of women into debates that others may have imagined as too complex or otherwise inappropriate for women. These fictionalized accounts of conversations frequently featured women behaving in unexpected ways. Other women appear in the dedications to the same dialogues, seemingly making a double argument for a contemporary re-examination of gendered expectations by members of the *Intronati* and readers of their compositions.

Marcantonio Piccolomini wrote one of these dialogues.³⁰⁰ Though he had a busy political and ecclesiastical career, the dialogue in question took place before his many professional accomplishments. Written in 1538, Marcantonio set it on the day of *Ognisanti* in 1537, when Girolama Carli Piccolomini and Laudomia Forteguerra met one another in the streets near the Duomo of Siena.³⁰¹ At this time, Girolama convinced Laudomia not to go to church but, rather, move to Girolama's home for an important conversation. They were to discuss if nature created a perfect woman by chance or, rather, if such a creature were the result of heavenly design – similar to conversations facilitated by traditional Renaissance games. In many ways, these dialogues served purposes similar to the *giuochi*.

³⁰⁰ The full dialogue is published in Rita Belladonna, "Gli *Intronati*, Le Donne, Aonio Paleario e Agostino Museo in una Dialogo Inedito di Marcantonio Piccolomini, Il Sodo *Intronato* (1538)." *Bullettino senese di storia patria* 99 (1994): 48-90.

³⁰¹ Girolama Carli Piccolomini was also the dedicatee of Aldobrando Cerretani's translation of the fifth book of the *Aeneid*.

In the beginning stages of this conversation, Girolama and Laudomia suggest that Frasia Venturi (the dedicatee, by no coincidence) fulfilled all ideals of femininity, even serving as "a true mirror of our city" – that is, for the entire population, not just the women.³⁰² Though this was a passing comment, it again hints that many Sieneese – at least those connected with the Intronati – associated accomplished women with representations of the city as a whole. Significantly, Marcantonio also wrote a biography of Frasia, which exists in manuscript form in the Intronati library in Siena.³⁰³ While Frasia unfortunately missed the majority of the conversation in Marcantonio's dialogue, only arriving in the final pages, the interlocutors referred to her time and again as a beautiful woman who represented the same values important to the Intronati and the Sieneese; she was an ideal who all should strive to imitate. Some modern scholars remark that the pretense for this conversation was frivolous. However, the nature of female perfection as a subject was quite in fitting with the general trends of humanistic debate and concern for manners of comportment common to the period. Even so, the discussion did evolve from this initial purpose to more general philosophical interests and, finally, to the religious questions that would soon bring the attention of the Catholic Church to Siena.

Even though the dialogue included religious positions of questionable orthodoxy, the dialogue is fairly unremarkable as a discussion of various popular topics. The two primary interlocutors – Girolama and Laudomia – visit several of the core arguments regarding each subject in turn, summarizing the primary positions of well-known debates

³⁰² Belladonna, 61. Frasia is the same woman to whom Alessandro Piccolomini dedicated his translation of the sixth book of the *Aeneid*. Frasia Venturi is the subject of a biographical oration also written by MarcAntonio Piccolomini. In it, as Konrad Eisenbichler discusses, MarcAntonio made particular point to draw attention to her size: though Frasia apparently had very lady-like proportions, she was much larger than her fellow noblewomen. At the same time, she was very light and graceful in movement - along with her beauty and intelligence, of course. He made particular note of her hands as being especially refined in gesture.

³⁰³ For the biography, see BCS P.V.15 n. 7 f 142r-171v.

and demonstrating little original thought. This lack of unique argumentation does not, I believe, indicate that the male Marcantonio Piccolomini did not respect the women enough to attribute clever arguments to these women. Perhaps he had none of his own to assign to these women. On the other hand, by featuring women debating important issues, Marcantonio did illustrate something almost revolutionary. He presented two and then three women who were fully capable not only of understanding some of the most important intellectual and theological arguments of the day, but who were also well prepared to debate their merits. Had Marcantonio chosen to write the dialogues featuring two or three men, it would have been utterly unremarkable. Instead, he made the conscious decision to use the dialogue to demonstrate how intellectually capable the women of Siena were while describing Frasia Venturi as representative of the city as a whole.

The arguments in Marcantonio's dialogue were well-known. Still, they were dangerous in the years of the increasingly critical Inquisition. And the discussants were not simply female characters, but three real Siennese women debating matters of theology which occasionally trespassed into the heretical. Therefore, it would have been dangerous not only for Marcantonio to write, but for these women to have been featured as well.³⁰⁴ As Diana Robin argues, these arguments contain many commonalities with the *spirituali* movement at the time, with which the Aragona and Colonna salons of southern Italy regularly flirted. The movement was typified by a belief in inner faith, arguing that Catholic rituals and other aspects of orthodox doctrine were false. These beliefs were

³⁰⁴ See Cox, *The Renaissance Dialogue*, 8-10, for the differences between fictional and documentary dialogues.

dangerously similar to the Protestant arguments that were already splitting the Catholic Church.

Choosing the particular women he “cast” as interlocutors, Marcantonio did not shy away from these controversies. Girolama herself was the wife of Bartolomeo Carli de' Piccolomini, author of *Regola utile e necessaria a ciascuna persona che cerchi di vivere come fedele e buon Cristiano*. As both Rita Belladonna and Diana Robin note, this work was dangerously similar to Juan de Valdès' heretical *Alfabeto Cristiano*.³⁰⁵ Due to this marriage, Girolama's reputation was likely tarnished. However, perhaps in an effort to rehabilitate her name, in the dialogue Piccolomini assigned the orthodox arguments to her. This left the heterodox arguments to Laudomia, continually positioned as the embodiment of Sieneese virtue and *virtù* by Marcantonio's cousin Alessandro. As such, by assigning the dangerous arguments to her voice, Marcantonio may have intended to give them more weight. This could have been dangerous for Laudomia. As we will soon see, she already hovered on the edge of acceptable behaviors. Adding “heretic” into the mix of her possible titles could have been enough to condemn her in the eyes of the church – particularly as a woman. Instead, at least in Siena, she remained glorified and presented as an ideal to both male and female *senese* during her own lifetime and after.

In addition to demonstrating the capabilities of these women, Marcantonio's dialogue provides further evidence that conversations between women such as this, debating very serious topics, were regular occurrences in Siena during this period. Girolamo's dialogue presented evidence that women were encouraged – required, even – to speak in front of a mixed audience in that noble public venue of evening *veglie*.

³⁰⁵ Belladonna, 49.

Marcantonio's dialogue provides further evidence of these activities. Early on, Girolama recollected a "most singular woman" (Frasia, of course) who had given a remarkable speech during a *veglia* the previous year. Though this *veglia* was not explicitly associated with the Intronati, participants played many games and participated in conversations similar to those held in Intronati gatherings. In addition to speaking themselves, in this instance women also found themselves the subject of somewhat informal presentations on their great worth. During the same *veglia* in which Frasia spoke, a nobleman spoke at great lengths in front of the assembled men and women regarding the many fine qualities of the evening's host: Camilla Saracini. Reputedly, he was so well-spoken that neither the men nor the women in the audience wanted to interrupt him for over an hour. In this fine presentation, the nobleman argued that Camilla's mind was just as excellent as her physical beauty, even as his fellow Sieneese frequently described the city in the same manner.³⁰⁶ The *veglie* described in Girolamo Bargagli's *Dialogo* are generally associated with the Intronati. Here, the academy was not mentioned, an indication that these gatherings were also regular features of non-academic life in Siena. Because of this, the full title of Bargagli's treatise is more appropriate than generally recognized: it was a list of games played by the Sieneese, not exclusively by the Intronati. The city held the same games and values represented by the academy in high esteem. This included embracing the value of women. In this case, the fact that the host was a woman foreshadows the salons that would become instrumental political venues in eighteenth-century France.

Other historians have attempted to explain the presence of and participation of women in this curious dialogue, some with more success than others. Rita Belladonna indicates that this dialogue is merely another indication of the Intronati's advancement of

³⁰⁶ Belladonna, 62.

the vulgar Italian language, which opened up literary culture to women and others without a classical education.³⁰⁷ Robin connects the presentation of intellectually astute women with the academy's religiocultural politics, writing "While the dialogue spread abroad the fame of the *Intronati* and the serious nature of the subject matter its members engaged, at the same time it promoted the image of Sieneese women as public intellectuals and active producers of culture. It was to three literary women that Piccolomini delegated the job of exonerating the *Intronati* from charges of heresy. And yet, while Girolama Carli de' Piccolomini's speeches promulgating the *Intronati*'s reputation as impeccably orthodox prevail, Laudomia Forteguerra's siren songs of the *spirituali* continue to haunt it."³⁰⁸ Going further, I believe this dialogue is more evidence of the self-conscious deception present in much *Intronati* literature. It presented the *virtù*-osity of Sieneese women while protecting the academy's reputation through a thin veil of subterfuge. By using women as the discussants in this dialogue, Marcantonio Piccolomini removed the blame that could be directed towards him for voicing heterodox views, instead posing them in a fictionalized interaction that did not involve him at all. This allowed him a forum in which to safely make arguments deemed inappropriate by the Church.

Just as Girolamo Bargagli ostensibly argued that many of the games he described in loving detail in his *Dialogo* were inappropriate, Piccolomini gave voice to *spirituali* sentiments that challenged orthodoxy while protecting himself by ultimately, in this fictionalized conversation between women, deciding against Laudomia Forteguerra and "her" heterodox beliefs. The conversation in the dialogue ultimately decides in favor of Girolama's orthodox arguments. Still, Belladonna (and I) argue that Laudomia's

³⁰⁷ Ibid, 50

³⁰⁸ Robin, 307n26.

heterodox views represented the official voice of the Intronati on controversial issues regarding predestination, free will, and the existence of purgatory.³⁰⁹

Marcantonio's dialogue concludes on a final note that may have invited rebuke, as he indicated that women gained great pleasure by engaging in the rhetorical combat represented by conversations such as this. Remarking with regret that though there were still many things that she would like to discuss, Frasia noted that the day had turned to night and their exchange must end. Particularly as she missed the majority of the conversation, she stated that "to tell you the truth, I would like that we find ourselves together again soon," when these intellectual conversations may continue.³¹⁰ Her tone indicates that these conversations, which so closely resembled the conversations between male Intronati, were regular elements of the lives of the women of Siena as well. The interlocutors in the dialogue, written by a man and featuring women, did not explicitly mention *academici* or make an argument regarding the inclusion of women in academic life. Nonetheless, it demonstrates that another member of the Piccolomini clan felt women were fully capable of engaging in the intellectual activities generally associated with men – or, at the very least, that he wanted it to appear that he did. Implicit in this composition is the argument explicitly made by Alessandro on multiple occasions that women would be the intellectual equals of men – if only they had the same opportunities as did noblemen, particularly those active in academic life in sixteenth-century Siena.

Alessandro Joins the Debate

Joining the general debate on the value of women and further demonstrating his agenda for the advancement of women, Alessandro Piccolomini published his own

³⁰⁹ Belladonna, 56.

³¹⁰ Belladonna, 90

oration titled *Orazione in lode delle donne* (*Oration in Praise of Women*) with the Giolito press in Venice. It was included as an appendix to their 1545 publication of the translation of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa's famous Latin treatise on the same subject, *De nobilitate et praecellentia foeminei sexus*.³¹¹ Lodovico Dolce, with whom Piccolomini had close connections through the Accademia degli Inflammati in Padua, facilitated this publication. Because of this pairing, some attributed the translation of Agrippa's treatise to Piccolomini. However, Marie-Françoise Piejus demonstrates that the translation was actually done by Francesco Coccio.³¹² Published after Piccolomini returned to Siena, he probably wrote this oration prior to his initial departure from Siena in 1538. Though he wrote that he intended to present the *Orazione* to the Intronati, it is unclear whether this intention came to fruition.³¹³ Regardless, Piccolomini both composed and published his *Orazione* while he was living in Siena, though likely during two separate periods of residence. In context of the active role played by women in Siena, this was unlikely a coincidence.

Echoing the message of several plays and the *Sacrificio* (which he wrote during the same decade) that will conclude this chapter, Alessandro Piccolomini claimed to write the *Orazione in lode delle donne* to demonstrate that the *academici* had not behaved generously towards women in recent years. Beginning the *Orazione*, Piccolomini directed

³¹¹ Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *Della nobiltà et eccellenza delle donne, dalla lingua francese nella italiana tradotto. Con una oratione di m. Alessandro Piccolomini in lode delle medesime* (Venice: Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari, 1545). The texts were also published together by the same press in 1549. Both are available at the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena at R IX 035 and R IX 033, respectively. For the sake of clarity, all citations here will be to the original 1545 edition. For an introduction to and transcription of the Oration, see Marie-Françoise Piejus, "Varietà: L'Orazione in Lode delle Donne di Alessandro Piccolomini." *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana* 170, no. 4 (1993): 524-51. On Lodovico Dolce, see Robbie H. Terpening, *Lodovico Dolce, Renaissance Man of Letters*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

³¹² Piejus, 524, and S. Bongi, *Annali di G. Giolito* (Rome: Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, 1890), I, 77.

³¹³ Piejus speculates that a delayed publication was required for Piccolomini to attain sufficient fame through his *Raffaella* (1539), *Amor Costante* (1540), and the *Institutione di tutta la vita dell'uomo nato nobile, e in città libera* (1542).

his discussion to the Intronati, explaining that "the talk today in praise of women [is intended to] show you the true path to reach Heaven."³¹⁴ As God had provided women as testament to true beauty and bliss, he argued that men must continually proclaim their glory during the mortal life in preparation for the life after. Though the truth of this seems self-evident to Piccolomini, he admitted that if the other *academici* behaved in this ideal manner his *Orazione* would be unnecessary, perhaps alluding to some disagreement within the academy on the subject of women. Still, it is possible that the Intronati had actually been respectful toward women, simply not to the level Piccolomini desired. Instead, at least rhetorically, the Intronati needed a reminder of the importance of the women in their midst. Intending to articulate "the gentleness, the humanity, the courtesy, the greatness of soul and of the other unique virtues that they demonstrate," Piccolomini admitted that no man could speak too highly of their sweetness. Even for those men not blinded by their passions, he claimed that there would never be enough words to describe their beauty.³¹⁵

Though Piccolomini argued that women were superior to men, he insisted that this fact should not be offensive to men. Instead, he claimed that while women were "in every virtue much more excellent than men," men were made more glorious and noble by the presence of these outstanding women – just as compliments made regarding an emperor's men made the ruler more magnificent in turn.³¹⁶ Here, again, the *virtù* of women reflected glory on the men they were affiliated with – that is, the Sienese Intronati. Though much Renaissance literature, even that of some Intronati, cited women as prone to gossip, Alessandro instead characterized women as most loving and kind,

³¹⁴ Agrippa, *Della nobilita et eccellenza delle donne*, 29r.

³¹⁵ Agrippa, 29v

³¹⁶ Agrippa, 30r

while arguing that most men were full of jealousy and were frequently slanderous in nature.³¹⁷ In this *Orazione*, Piccolomini argued that the primary goal of humankind should be the preservation of the human race. Coupled with his argument that women were more perfect than men, he heavily implied that the continuation of the human race required more than simply reproduction. It also required nutrition (importantly, through breastfeeding) and guidance – both of which were provided by women. Therefore, it follows that women were ultimately more important to the survival of humankind than men and thus – it seems – their glory must be demonstrative of the glory of the city from which they came.

As an oration written by a man for the purpose of glorifying women, this text is not unique to the sixteenth century in Italy. What is rare, however, is the format. Generally Renaissance texts written with this purpose were simply long lists of women who served as examples of excellence.³¹⁸ In the *Orazione*, however, Alessandro chose a more abstract approach to rationalize the worth of women. Accepting the traditionally misogynistic argument of "all of the philosophers" (particularly Aristotle) that women were more naturally inclined to sexual and emotional appetites, he then argued that this actually reflected well upon them. Even though women were born with greater drives toward sin, he claimed that he and his fellow *academici* observed that women were nonetheless more morally continent than men. This fact provided evidence to their glory, as they must tirelessly use their sharp reason to defeat their appetites – testament to the

³¹⁷ Agrippa, 32v

³¹⁸ See Robin, *Publishing Women*, 137. Though Piccolomini's *Orazione* did not include such a list, a similar one is included in the second volume of Ugurgieri-Azzolini's 1649 *Le pompe sanesi, o: vero relazione delli huomini, e donne illustri di Siena, e suo stato*.

strength of their wills.³¹⁹ Generally used as evidence of female inferiority, then, this logic instead testified to the superiority of women as they must daily exercise moral restraint more regularly than men. Turning to Plato, Alessandro then concluded this line of reasoning with the statement that women were just as capable of ruling in a republic as men because of this self control. While other examples of Renaissance literature feature the theme of women controlling their lustful appetites (perhaps most notably in Castiglione), this final conclusion is nearly unique. The Intronati promoted aggressive, active women who could rule politically. At the same time, the Intronati viewed women as important figures in their goal of refashioning of Italian culture into a new version that, in itself was post-political, still involved rule – if only cultural – by the Sienese Intronati.

Again re-interpreting traditional arguments, Alessandro admitted that women were in temperance more cold than hot. Rather than a fault he provided an alternate explanation, that this was further evidence of their prudence. As he argued, because of their “coldness,” they were “less boisterous, and more quiet,” capable of more wisely considering the intricacies of the world with subtle nuance, more capable of penetrating deep issues with their “intellectual *virtù*” – even at the level of politics in states and principalities.³²⁰ Their delicate nature and beauty, he continued, inflamed men and encouraged them to love and obey women, just as rulers required the same obedience. In this way, then, the interactions between men and women allowed them to practice the obeisance that would befit their actions in the state. Though Alessandro did acknowledge that men frequently wasted time and money trying to please women, he argued that this was the fault of men, rather than women. Indeed, it would be better to blame God for

³¹⁹ *Oratione* 31r and Piejus, 527-8. See also Robin, 137.

³²⁰ Agrippa, 31v

granting women the beauty that so enthralled men. Therefore, he argued, men should not blame women for their own actions.³²¹ Here, Piccolomini reversed the standard descriptions of inferiority and superiority between the sexes that generally reflected positively on men, rationalizing that the same arguments traditionally put forth to define men as superior were actually indications of the more perfect nature of women.³²² It followed then that the *virtù* of women ultimately benefitted men, teaching them how to more appropriately behave in moral spheres as well as how to advance the interests of the state and the continuation of humankind itself.

Connecting the beauty, virtue, and *virtù* of women to the glory of God, Alessandro argued that men must praise and serve women to demonstrate their service to God and their acceptance of his divine order.³²³ In this argument, Piccolomini provided a more utilitarian purpose for the support and inclusion of women in nearly all elements of noble, intellectual life in sixteenth-century Italy: as the peninsula seemed to be entering a period of chaos, this help was of great value. In this tumultuous world nearly every element of life, including the Church's supposedly immutable laws, were being refined and manipulated. Women, as representations of God's glory through their beauty and greater perfection, were metaphorical guides to salvation. They were also individuals who, in their own right, could provide entertainment and inspiration to men as they found themselves through this confusing period. As representations of the divine order of God and the aristocratic *virtù* that the Intronati believed would allow them to become leaders in a new world of cultural refinement, noble women were crucial players in the areas of life that really mattered.

³²¹ Agrippa, 33r-33v

³²² Piejus makes a similar argument in "Varietà."

³²³ Agrippa, 31r-31v

Theater, the Intronati, and Mixed Messages to Women in Comedic Prologues

Michael Bristol writes of theater, "the institutional setting of a performance informs and focuses the meaning of a dramatic text and facilitates the dissemination of that meaning through the collective activity of the audience...Because of its capacity to create and sustain a briefly intensified social life, the theater is festive and political as well as literary – a privileged site for the celebration and critique of the needs and concerns of the polis."³²⁴ This was extremely true in Siena of the sixteenth century. As we have already seen, many forms of Intronati literature were used to great benefit as pedagogic tools for both men and women. This continued in their theatrical productions – a fact that they made no effort to hide. On the stage, most notably in comedies, the Intronati presented plays that frequently involved women crossing standard gender norms in heroic fashion to their own benefit, all while the prologues appealed to the women in the audience to be kinder to the men present, and live up to the expectations their female forebears had established. While I will discuss the various Intronati plays in further depth in the final chapter of this dissertation, it is worth briefly noting several important points regarding these plays as they were one of the most public examples of male *academici* interacting with affiliated women. If one accepts my argument that the Intronati frequently tied representations of women to that of the city itself, one can read the beseeching prologues of Intronati comedies as efforts to entreat Siena to emerge from the chaos of the day, inviolable and supreme.

The comedy that the Intronati remain most known for today is the jointly-written *Gl'Ingannati (The Deceived)* and it is indeed from this play that Laura Giannetti derived

³²⁴ Michael Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England*. (New York: Routledge, 1985), 3.

the title of her book on gender and sex in Renaissance Italian comedies, *Lelia's Kiss*.³²⁵ In her masterful book, Giannetti examines the implications of this kiss, one between two women which, though one is disguised as a man, both women found intense enjoyment. Significantly, this includes Lelia herself, who was fully aware that both individuals engaged in the kiss happen to be female.³²⁶ In this play, Lelia cross-dresses as a man in order to win back the love of her beloved – a man – only to become his go-between with his new beloved, the female recipient of Lelia's kiss. All of this, of course, is quite wayward but, instead of being shown as a failed woman, Lelia's *virtù* is exalted and, by the end of the play, she is rewarded with her desire and the comedy ends with the standard finale to a Renaissance comedy: a wedding, this time between her and her male beloved.

What is important to this discussion of *Gl'Ingannati*, however, is how the play was introduced to the audience, comprised both of men (including many *Intronati*, one may assume) and women. However, the introduction to the play only addresses the women in the group. Between allusions to the political crisis in Siena, the orator acknowledged to these “most noble ladies” that they had recently “learned that they [the male *Intronati*] no longer wanted to run after you or have anything to do with you, like those who no longer want to be bitten, chewed, and cut to the quick by you.” Now, however, the orator intended to make peace between the ladies and the *academici* as these men, with much sexual innuendo, had lost their vim without the presence of the women. As they were in the audience, however, the beauty of the women had blinded the men to what transpired on the stage – the primary reason this orator addressed only the

³²⁵ Laura Giannetti, *Lelia's Kiss: Imagining Gender, Sex and Marriage in Italian Renaissance Comedy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

³²⁶ *Ibid*, 4-6, 49-61.

women present. The introduction also served as a warning to the women, an instruction for them to pacify the men before they were lost for good – a warning that the men would take their "wit" elsewhere.³²⁷ Given the heavy innuendo and context, it seems that this threat was not meant to be taken at face value.

While this introduction provides a summary of the state of relations between men and women in Siena at the time, it also provides evidence that the plays were at least jokingly presented as pedagogic tools by the Intronati themselves. In closing the introduction, the orator told the audience that they may learn two things from the play: "how important good fortune and the right moment are in love, and how important patience accompanied by good advice is." Of course, these were important things to learn, but here it seems more interesting who the instructors in these lessons were to be: "two young girls" who would "demonstrate this with their wisdom, and by following their wisdom you will benefit as well."³²⁸ Countless Intronati documents implied that women were important guides for men in comportment and morality. In this instance, of course, the Intronati provided the instruction (for it was them, after all, who wrote the play). Still, they filtered this instruction through the example of young women, in a sense tying pedagogy with femininity yet again.

The Intronati submitted their plays as pedagogic tools in other productions as well. Once again, Alessandro Piccolomini was a main protagonist of this conversation. Uniquely, two prologues from early productions of his 1544 *L'Alessandro* survive today and we can learn much from an examination of each, which were meant to frame the way the audience received the production. In the first version of the prologue, Piccolomini

³²⁷ Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero, *Five Comedies of the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 206-209.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 209.

claimed that "people of all sorts will be able to derive models for their own behaviour from it" – again, an explicit argument for a didactic purpose for the play. While these models were ostensibly for both the male and female members of the audience to follow, they contained far more examples for men. For example, in the first prologue, Piccolomini claimed that "Fathers will learn not to be too strict, but reasonably lenient towards their sons; sons, on the other hand, will learn to be obedient and respectful." These models were not just for familial relations, though, as "old men will give up their greed for gold and their lack of discretion towards the young; masters will learn not to trust all their servants blindly; young men burning with love's desires will not rashly set their honour and their lives at stake." After this laundry list of things that men could gain from the play, however, the introduction continued to argue that women could learn to "adorn their beauty with chastity and gentleness" – not quite the exaggerated pedagogical source the play was for men. Generally, the prologue argued that "all kinds of people may derive some advantage from [the play]."³²⁹ As we saw with the games in chapter two, Intronati plays, though not traditional educational tools, were meant to enlighten and to provide models upon which both Sieneese men and women could shape their conduct.

Piccolomini dedicated this play, as with most of the other extant Intronati plays, to the women of Siena. The tone of this prologue is slightly different, however. These women, it seems, had let Alessandro down in recent years – or so he claimed. As he described in the prologue, the women "used to be the wisest and wittiest in the world," though some now had "become so foolish that they have said the Intronati would do better to give the money they spend on their play to some big fat friar, so that he will read

³²⁹ Alessandro Piccolomini, *L'Alessandro*, trans. and ed. by Rita Belladonna (Ottawa: Dovehouse Editions for Carleton Centre for Renaissance Studies, 1984), 22. Translations are Belladonna's.

them the edifying rules of his order and so that he may flaunt a better pleated, more sweet-smelling frock." This comment humorously illustrated his displeasure with a current trend in behavior and dress of Sieneese women, as they abandoned intellectual and literary pursuits for religious devotion. While intriguingly placing women in the center of the culture wars of the sixteenth-century, Alessandro continued to position these women on the more orthodox side of the parallel religious revolutions that were in the process of disrupting the order of Christianity at a European-wide level. As the Intronati tended to associate the activities and status of affiliated women with themselves and the city itself, this may represent an attempt to associate themselves with an orthodox position as well.

While many members of the Intronati were known to push the boundaries of acceptable religiosity, as it was seen by the Catholic Church, Alessandro painted an image of Sieneese women that would have pleased the Catholics, though one which the Intronati were disappointed by. The Intronati's skepticism regarding the established Church appeared in the following section of the prologue. Here, Alessandro described these newly-stray women, explaining that "those ladies fail to realize that it is much more useful to see a play than to hear the sermons of some vain affected friar, who will fill people's head with trickery and heresy."³³⁰ At least jokingly, then, this is evidence that Alessandro saw more heresy in official Church propaganda than in Intronati theater that could have scandalized the viewer. While the Intronati themselves were frequently known for their theatrical productions, a genre of literature and entertainment that was widely criticized for its deception, the Intronati found fault with the religious institution for doing the same – but in a space where this deception was not acceptable. The prologue concluded that the women who chose sermons over theater were "the same

³³⁰ Ibid, 23.

ladies who add that they would rather die than take part in such frivolities and who make other equally absurd foolish remarks."³³¹ Though Piccolomini and others frequently dedicated their literary and other productions to the women of Siena, and in the dedications of various publications widely broadcast the beauty and morality of these same women, theater was a space in which the women were regularly admonished for their behavior, a trope that will be taken up shortly in the Intronati's quasi-theatrical *Sacrificio*. It is not without irony, then, that Alessandro faulted actual sermons for their dishonesty while at the very same time sermonizing in his own work, disguised on the stage.

However, it appears that it was not the women who misbehaved in that original production. Instead, the men had been disruptive and rude. For in the second prologue, the speaker apologizes that the play had not been changed at all from the first production. He says that the Intronati were not "so arrogant that they would not have followed some well-meant suggestions, but not a single gentleman has appeared to offer any."³³² Perhaps this was because, being so disruptive in the previous showing, not even a single true gentleman had paid enough attention to offer these improvements. Instead, he dismissed the only people that had offered response as pedants with bad advice, many of whom were simply looking to learn more ways of making love in the plays. This was not worthy of Intronati time as the prologue stated that "The Intronati will answer them nothing except that, if they knew why comedies were originally created and accepted in republics and in well-ruled principalities, they would not ask such silly questions." This specification that theater had been accepted in places of good governance is important.

³³¹ Ibid, 23.

³³² Ibid, 25.

Spoken at the same time that Piccolomini and others were striving to gain just that for Siena, the performing Intronati presented plays as a useful tool in this political reconstruction, hoping to lead even before hope was lost for a Sieneese political leadership of the peninsula. While mocking those thoughtful enough to comment on the play encouraged one to read (and hear) the prologue as satire, it seems as if this humor may have disguised political commentary yet again.

The messages from the two prologues for *L'Alessandro* were contradictory, providing different views on the merits of the play. One may therefore argue that these plays were meant to teach nothing at all. However, I find the fact that both address the instructive element of plays to be significant. Both prologues take for granted the fact that audience members may look to the performances for instruction – or at least models – pointing to the fact that this was a common occurrence, at least in their works. Both also seem to mock the audience for doing so. Even in their complaints about the poor critical responses to the first performance, Alessandro claimed that unworthy audience members had wanted to learn something from the play – to be better lovers. In later years, members of the academy would cite these plays as central to the legacy of the early Intronati. The plays were dedicated to women, performed for their sake, and presented as sources of instruction, teaching the women how to better represent the Sieneese outside the theater. Whether or not the audience paid attention, however, was another matter entirely.

Just as the games of the Intronati reflected upon the culture of Siena, they plays did as well. They echoed lessons to be performed on the worldly stage, rather than the theatrical one. As theater came from a tradition of well-run republics, and provided a space to glorify the women that represented the Intronati to observers from outside Siena,

these plays were incredibly important for the academy. More than mere entertainments, they were public *giuochi* meant to show off the achievements of the academy and their world, while at the same time teaching that same worldly audience. The prologue declared that those who knew the origin stories of the genre of comedic performance knew "that comedies are meant to be a mirror to human life, by means of which all vices are exposed so that, once known, they may be avoided." The first prologue we have for *L'Alessandro* argued that many examples of good behavior would appear in the play, and the audience could mold their own behavior upon these examples. In the second prologue, after the audience had ignored the teachings of the first performance, the orator argued the exact opposite: comedies, at least this one specifically, were a place that bad behavior was portrayed and the exact opposite was learned. This was the behavior to distill out of their culture, rather than the distilled actions towards which the audience should strive.

Others, the prologue continued, "will object that this play is too bitingly critical." However, the prologue dismissed this as having "only been raised by those who have seen their own fault criticized and whose injuries cannot heal unless they are smart a little."³³³ Interestingly, then, it is both pedants and the unintelligent that were attacked here in the second prologue: those who were too stupid to correct their own behaviors and those who were too stupid to be properly intellectual about the production. Yet again, the rhetoric of the *Intronati* is inconsistent, perhaps evidence that the plays themselves were not meant to be specifically pedagogic. Rather, *Intronati* plays mocked what others thought was foolish and wrong while knowingly winking at the importance of Siene

³³³ Ibid, 26.

women. Intronati superiority, so it would seem, was so established that they felt confident joking about it.

The messages of the comedic prologues are varied and contradictory. Two things remain constant, however: one way or the other, the orator refers to the instruction the plays – and by extension, the Intronati – could provide for the audience members. Though not from a pulpit, the Intronati were sermonizing to an audience, positioning themselves as leaders and sources of guidance. The second constant is equally important. Just as the Intronati placed themselves as leaders in these prologues, they also argued for the power and importance of women. Women, in these plays and other Intronati work, were mirrors of the city of Siena, projected for the outside world to view, admire, and emulate.

Il Sacrificio

The prologues to Intronati comedies reflect a great deal of information about the intention and attitude of the early academy. In published accounts, at least one of these prologues had its own prologue: the *Comedia del Sacrificio de gli Intronati*. Composed for performance during Carnival of 1532, along with *Gl'Ingannati*, the two works were published together in the first ever publication of Intronati works in 1537. Even though the very name identifies *Il Sacrificio* as a comedy, modern scholars have not viewed it as such in recent literature. Though a unique form of theater, this work involved many of the same tropes as did Intronati comedic plays, and responded to some of the very same complaints present in their theatrical prologues. Still, it remains unique. The work, composed in verse, describes a festive occasion upon which the members of the Intronati, all male, gathered together to throw an item from their beloved that they held most dear

into the “flames of Minerva.” This action, ostensibly, was meant to encourage *academici* to abandon their efforts towards love and to firmly rededicate themselves to studious and philosophical work. That is, the ceremony was to embrace the same activities established in the Constitution as the core purpose of the academy. Ostensibly intended to draw the male members of the academy away from the women who seem to have distracted them from their studies, it was instead an excuse for the men to do the exact opposite.

Similar to many other examples of Intronati literature, *Il Sacrificio* was a ludic document used to entertain while also providing insight into the underpinnings of Siense noble culture. Rather than drawing men away from the women with whom they interacted, it drew women towards them in order to engage them with the comedy *Gl’Ingannati*. As one historian writes, “the verses are not serious: they are a provocation to women, and when the prologue to *Gl’Ingannati* then would turn back to the women, they would have needed to feign provocation in order to continue the game.”³³⁴ Rather than allowing women much time in which to feign offense, the Intronati immediately followed this performance with that of the comedy, itself composed and defined by deception. Again, deception is in the very name. *Il Sacrificio* served the purpose of offending the women affiliated with the group of men in order that the same group may then work to set things aright, to heal the injury they had caused. As such, the coupling of *Il Sacrificio* with *Gl’Ingannati* is crucial to understanding its function in the oeuvre of Intronati works.

Beginning *Il Sacrificio*, the deep melancholy of the Intronati is elaborate and unbelievable, exaggerated to the point of comedy. The items offered for sacrifice are varied. Some offered items as simple as rings and flowers, others “a handkerchief wet

³³⁴ Belladonna, XVI.

with tears,” “four sonnets sent from [the *academico*’s] woman,” or “a book of his compositions in praise of his Woman.”³³⁵ Of all of the sacrifices, it is perhaps that of Marcantonio Piccolomini that seems most representative. Citing his resentment of heaven for his misadventures, he offered a lock of hair into the flames. Claiming "this is the hair, and this the snare (*laccio*)/that gripped my heart tight," he cited the power of love and of women, which together had rendered him feeble. However, this was not entirely the fault of women. On this night, he recognized his "past errors" and with "intense ardor" he claimed to be prepared to rectify them then and there. From that moment forward, he would "dedicate every thought to more beautiful and worthy work."³³⁶ Just as the city of Siena bred fertile minds and creative spirits, even in their “abuse” the women also inspired men to be their best selves, for their own benefit and for the sake of their *patria*.

In all of this, *Il Sacrificio* represents many Intronati tropes. In passing, George McClure argues that it reflects the “sexual dimension” of many of the early Intronati’s activities, as they addressed and appealed to women.³³⁷ What he labels a sexual dimension – which one may interpret as part of courtship rituals – is an important part of *Il Sacrificio*. However, it reveals a much more complex relationship between men and women than this statement allows. Aristocratic women were an important part of cultural and civic life in Siena, secure enough in their standing that Intronati mockery of their abuse did not threaten their positions. As a pre-introduction, *Il Sacrificio* made necessary the plea for forgiveness provided in *Gl’Ingannati* and continued the playful and productive relationship between noble men and women in Siena. For the Intronati, even

³³⁵ Accademia degli Intronati, *Comedia del Sacrificio de gli Intronati, Celebrato nei giuochi d’un Carnevale in Siena* (Vineggia: Apresso di Agostino Bindoni, 1550). BCS Bargagli-Petrucchi 1638.

³³⁶ Ibid, 12 (my numbering).

³³⁷ McClure, *Parlour Games*, 34.

before 1555, intellectual play involved many elements of courtship. At times, this play reflected on their political environment. Most critically, this form of play demonstrated their new understanding of what comprised a meaningful life, one that privileged cultural innovation and a playful leadership, inspired by any excuse.

Conclusion

The relationship of the Intronati to the women of Siena was complicated. On one hand, the Intronati saw women as representative of intellectual glory and the physical beauty of the city. However, that same city that they had presented as inviolable and resistant to the chaos of the external world would soon fail them, succumbing to the combined forces of the most powerful political agent in Europe and the seemingly inevitable expansion of the Florentine state. At the same time that members of the academy clamored to gain recognition and praise for the women of Siena, as symbolic of all that Siena represented, after 1555 it was difficult to disassociate that city with failure. Thus the Intronati relationship with women was fraught. While they desired to proclaim the glory of their women (and thus themselves and their city), they had also been betrayed by the same system that had made those women great. Still, complaints about women were primarily relegated to materials meant solely for internal circulation and entertainment – even Antonio Vignali's *La Cazzaria*, after all, was not intended to be seen by outside eyes, at least if one is to believe Vignali's words. To foreigners, the Sieneese Intronati maintained a uniform stance. Sieneese women were all that the city and her citizens could ever be: *virtù*-ous examples of proper behavior, safeguards of wisdom, and flawless in appearance.

Konrad Eisenbichler contends that the political chaos that defined the early decades of the Intronati contributed to the emergence of exemplary women poets there in the 1530s and 1550s.³³⁸ However, women in Siena had always been exemplary, and presented as ideals not only for female virtue but also as go-betweens for the angelic protectors of the city and as militaristic heroes who would give everything, up to and including their lives, for the continued sovereignty of Siena. The Intronati adopted these tropes but the *academici* did not create them. The fact that Siena had only declined since its height in the fourteenth century only made this a more available trope for the early Intronati. While many of the *academici* utilized these ideas in their writings, none embraced the potential of Sieneese women as much as Alessandro Piccolomini, who will be the focus of the next chapter.

³³⁸ Eisenbichler, *Sword and the Pen*.

Chapter Four

Alessandro Piccolomini's Measure of a (Wo)Man: The Central Roles of Happiness and *Virtù* in Nobility

In many ways, members of the Intronati throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries presented Alessandro Piccolomini as representative of the ideal *academico* and his arguments as reflecting the general beliefs of the academy itself. Therefore, a modern scholar can look at Piccolomini as a spokesperson for the academy and his writings as indicative of general Intronati beliefs. Particularly given his representative role in Intronati intellectual life and the central role of women in the academy and his philosophy, it is especially curious that in two of his major works, from 1539 and 1542, he presented seemingly contradictory views about women.

Piccolomini's latter work, the *Institutions of All of the Life of a Man Born Noble and in a Free City*, is the better known and was perhaps the most influential of all of his publications. Written as an instruction manual for Laudomia Forteguerra's newborn son (his own godson) Alessandro Colombini, it provided the young Alessandro with a step-by-step instruction manual for comportment, education, and civic priorities during every stage of his life while maneuvering the intricacies of Siennese civic culture as a nobleman.³³⁹ Published almost immediately, Piccolomini intended that it also instruct other noblemen how to live proper, happy, and productive lives. With at least fourteen different publications in the sixteenth century alone, the *Institutions* became one of the most influential of the sixteenth-century comportment treatises. Yet few remember it

³³⁹ Alessandro Piccolomini, *De la Institutione di Tutta la Vita de l'Homo Nato Nobile e in Città Libera* (Venetij: Hieronymum Scotum, 1543).

today. Still, the treatise can be very instructive for the modern scholar of sixteenth-century Italy. The *Institutions*, and the writings related to it, create a distinctive image that correlates learning with education but also with pleasure, civic responsibility, and romantic love. In this, Alessandro's *Institutions* mirrors the written and performed values of the Academy of the Intronati, tracing academic goals and pretensions back to infancy.

In the *Institutions*, Piccolomini advocated that all noblemen in free cities embrace the same values advocated by the Academy of the Intronati. In this way, Alessandro Piccolomini broadcast knowledge of Intronati priorities and standards to the literate elite throughout the Italian peninsula. In this manner, he cleared the way for the creation of a new cultural program that would cement the Intronati, and affiliated women, in what they saw as their rightful place at the forefront of society, independent of their political position. Though the *Institutions* was one of the rare documents published by a member of the academy that did not explicitly connect itself with the group, it was an important part of the Intronati's mission to spread knowledge of their redefined vision that placed renewed importance on academic values such as rhetorical skill and learned discourses.

Piccolomini's *La Raffaella: Or, Rather, a Dialogue of the Fair Perfectioning of Ladies* was the opposite of the *Institutions* in nearly every way – and yet it echoes several of the key arguments in significant manners.³⁴⁰ While the *Institutions* targeted young noblemen, Piccolomini instead wrote *La Raffaella*, ostensibly, as a guidebook for noblewomen. Piccolomini explained that if he dedicated the work to one particular

³⁴⁰ Alessandro Piccolomini, *Dialogo della bella creanza de le donne*. Venetia: per Curtio Navò e fratelli, 1539. The earliest publication with the modern accepted title is: Alessandro Piccolomini, *La Raffaella, ovvero, Della bella creanza della donne: dialogo*. Milano: Daelli, 1862. There also exists a very stilted English translation, published: Alessandro Piccolomini, *Raffaella of Master Alexander Piccolomini or rather a Dialogue of the Fair Perfectioning of Ladies. A worke very necessarie and profitable for all Gentlewomen or other*. Trans. John Nevinson. Glasgow: Robert MacLehose and Company Limited at the University Press, 1968. The translation Nevinson uses for “Intronati” is “Thunderstricken.”

woman, it would imply she needed guidance in all of the subjects discussed. He worried this may imply imperfection about a singular woman he meant to glorify in a dedication. Instead, he dedicated it generally to all "young, noble, and beautiful women."³⁴¹ Rather than saying that all women could benefit from the entire work (which may have implied that all women were thoroughly deficient), he argued that his female readers could pick out the elements of the conversation that would be beneficial to themselves, leaving the rest to others. As we will see, some of his advice was quite scandalous. Perhaps in response to criticism related to this, three years later in the *Institutions* Piccolomini dismissed this work as something he wrote solely "in jest and for fun."³⁴²

However, a comparison of the two documents demonstrates that many of his arguments in the two works are complimentary. Because they were meant to, respectively, address men and women these works provide further evidence that Piccolomini viewed a meaningful life for men and women in remarkably similar ways. Comparing the two works, it seems clear that they demonstrate a close relationship between Sieneese noblewomen and noblemen during this tumultuous period and a claim that each required the other to properly develop the *virtù* that would allow the Sieneese to become cultural leaders of a new age, even before the fall of the Republic. At the same time, *virtù* was frequently unrelated to what we might call virtue, as defined by what the Church declared to be proper behavior.

The seemingly contradictory messages in these two works make the similarities more striking and reflect a common characteristic of early Intronati literature. While many works glorified the female sex for their beauty and intellect, Intronati authors also

³⁴¹ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 29.

³⁴² Piccolomini, *Institutions*, 204r.

frequently admonished women for their inappropriate behaviors. The most common behaviors they cited in these critiques were a tendency towards gossip and immodest actions. These rebukes generally appear in the prefaces to plays, such as those discussed in the last chapter. Composed for an audience of the Sieneese, and particularly of Sieneese women, the prefaces were not intended for a wider distribution and readership. For a more local audience, Piccolomini may have felt such admonishments would not harm the reputation of Siena and its women. As Piccolomini chose to publish *La Raffaella*, he intended that a broader audience read it. In it, Alessandro encouraged women to behave in manners that would be considered provocative even when compared with those behaviors for which the comedy prologues faulted them. Specifically, Piccolomini encouraged women to behave immodestly (while making it appear that any immodesty was accidental) in order to seduce men into becoming their lovers. This would have been clearly scandalous, and Piccolomini's retraction in the *Institutions* provides evidence that it did cause some outrage. However, in the *Institutions*, Piccolomini also encouraged noblemen to discretely engage in affairs of the heart. Still, it seems as if it was only *La Raffaella* that aroused anger regarding these proposed extramarital affairs – an unsurprising double standard.

Retracting *La Raffaella*, Piccolomini in essence dismissed the earlier dialogue as an elaborate form of play in its own right. Reading these two instructional works against one another, however, one finds that there are many similarities between the two. Piccolomini's instructions regarding the ideal mate for both men and women are curiously similar in the "serious" text and the "joking" dialogue, and there is no indication that his *Institutions* were also meant solely for jest. By comparing the two, one can

conclude that though parts of *La Raffaella* may have been a bit of an exaggeration, others seem to be accurate reflections of Alessandro's ideal image of men and women – and their relationships to one another. Both texts addressed ideas of what comprised a meaningful life. For men and women, the attainment of love and happiness was central to this effort. However, in both texts he argued that true love could not be found in marriage. According to Piccolomini, neither men nor women could achieve their full potential without the inspiration of their beloved. These arguments indicate that he believed extramarital relationships between men and women were critical not only for their own happiness but also foundation blocks necessary in order to build and thrive in a new cultural world based on intellectual merit. Only with love could men or women become truly productive members of their society.

The indomitable presence of one woman looms over both of these texts: Laudomia Forteguerri. Of all of the notable women of sixteenth-century Siena, particularly in the works of Alessandro Piccolomini, Forteguerri emerges time and time again as a representation of ideal femininity while also appearing as a model for men. In our own time as well, she receives more attention than any of her contemporary Siennese women. Of archival material on Laudomia, we have little. In 1515, we know that she was born into one of the most prominent and powerful families in Siena, the Forteguerri, who also had marital ties to another that needs no introduction: the Piccolomini. To the side of her entry in the baptismal registries, though crossed out, a notation written in a contemporary hand reads "unique in all the world and of uncommon beauty."³⁴³ Married in her late teens to Giulio Cesare di Alessandro Colombini, she had three children with

³⁴³ ASS Biccherna 1134 f. 253r. Konrad Eisenbichler found this same note and included it in his *The Sword and the Pen*, 103.

him and, after his death, she remarried into yet another powerful family with Petruccio Romulo Maria Petrucci in 1544. She also appears in various literary sources and her bravery and leadership during the siege of 1554-1555 is widely proclaimed, as we saw in the last chapter. After this, she vanishes from the records. The conclusion that historians have been forced to make is that Laudomia Forteguerri, as so many others, died as a result of the battle raging around her, dying just as the republic did the same.³⁴⁴ Though Laudomia and her son led remarkable lives, it is as a character in the writings of Alessandro Piccolomini that Forteguerri becomes an invaluable exemplar for understanding the role of women in sixteenth-century Siena and the Academy of the Intronati.

Uniting the Nobleman and the Cuckolding Temptress

Divided into ten books, Alessandro's *Institutions* is, as Conor Fahy called it, "a verbose and tedious work."³⁴⁵ Yet as an instruction manual for the life of well-born men, it is highly representative of the age. Continually, it reflects and reinforces the academic milieu of Siena that embraced women in arenas still widely closed to them elsewhere in sixteenth-century Italy – and that would quickly become nearly inaccessible in the decades following the consolidation of power in Tuscany that deprived the Sieneese of

³⁴⁴ Cerreta states definitively that this was the case but does not cite evidence, 31 n18. As Eisenbichler points out, however, in May 1556 Giuseppe Betussi listed Laudomia in his description of the thirteen most beautiful Italian women at the time and we could also assume that she must have still been alive at this point. Eisenbichler, 160-161. Even if she did survive the siege, which does seem unlikely, she must have died shortly thereafter. Also doing the Forteguerri family great honor during the siege, Laudomia's brother Niccodemo was a popular captain in Siena during the conflict with Florence, appearing frequently in the records of the *Balia*. Though she presumably died, Niccodemo continued to serve as one of six captains appointed to defend Siena, continuing his service in the Republic of Siena Retired to Montalcino. Ultimately, however, he did concede leadership to Florence and ended his career representing the new rulers in Siena. Niccodemo also served as the Sieneese ambassador to Rome under the Montalcinese government and held a number of positions under Florence after 1559, including gonfaloniere in 1573. For more on Niccodemo, see Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*, 135-136 and 314 n. 70, and Sozzini, *Diario*.

³⁴⁵ Conor Fahy, "Love and Marriage in the *Institutione* of Alessandro Piccolomini," in *Italian Studies presented to E. R. Vincent*, ed. C. P. Brand et al. (Cambridge: Heffer, 1962), 121.

their sovereignty. His presentation of women in *La Raffaella* is also significant. Though Piccolomini claimed to write this earlier work as a joke, the argument that was most controversial appeared in both documents. In both, he argued that true love was incompatible with marriage. Yet, he argued that true love was critical to the proper development of both noblemen and noblewomen. With these preconditions, they should therefore look for it outside of matrimony. The only difference, as we will see, is that in the *Institutions* the relationship between the lovers was to be purely spiritual. In *La Raffaella*, however, it was to be a passionate and physical affair. Indeed, the primary purpose of this work seems to be instructing a virtuous young wife in the ways of adultery. The *Institutions*, instead, was not a book dedicated to love and ideal relationships with women, and in this chapter I will contextualize Piccolomini's controversial argument by summarizing the surrounding sections of this treatise. In the end, I will argue that, given the similarities between many of the most extreme arguments in *La Raffaella* and those he made in his more serious *Institutions*, it would be dangerous to accept that Piccolomini wrote the earlier text entirely as a joke.

In many ways, the *Institutions* is representative of Alessandro's literary career. He dedicated it to the same woman whose presence seems to have shaped his entire literary oeuvre during this period, Laudomia Forteguerra. He then published the treatise through his friend Lodovico Dolce's publishing house in Venice, where he printed much of his work during this period of his professional life. In many ways, it is also typical of most Intronati literature published for the consumption of foreigners. This work, and most of the others, were testaments to the perfections, beauty, and intelligence of Sieneese women

and ignored the same faults he had criticized them for when writing specifically for an audience of Sieneese men and women.

Yet, when comparing the work to other literature from the sixteenth century, it is notable in many ways. Perhaps most important here is his repeated and deep advocacy of the virtue and *virtù* of women. Just as in other Intronati literature, Piccolomini emphasized that women were ideal images of nobility. Here more clearly, and frequently, than anywhere else, Piccolomini presented the idea that the noble-born men of Siena would do best, in every way, to imitate the actions and behavior of the women of Siena. Specifically Alessandro Colombini, seemingly destined for a famous life in local politics and literature, should model his behavior on the comportment of Piccolomini's muse, Colombini's own mother. As the frontispiece of the book declares, he intended this work to instruct the younger Alessandro on the proper life of a nobleman in a free city. Indicating traditional humanist influences, Piccolomini wrote that he structured the book "peripatetically and Platonically" while moving through such subjects as "ethics, economics, and parts of politics," along with everything else needed to work towards "a perfect and happy life."³⁴⁶ Though working with humanistic tropes, this wildly successful book, as we shall see, made arguments that, like other Intronati works, called on the reader to abandon the more stale elements of humanism. Dedicated to Forteguerra and for the use of her son, the *Institutions* went through at least fourteen Italian editions along with three separate French translations and one Spanish edition in the sixteenth century alone – proving its influence outside of the academic arenas of Siena and Padua.³⁴⁷

³⁴⁶ Piccolomini, *Institutions*, 1r.

³⁴⁷ Cerreta, 184-186

Piccolomini's insistence that noblemen could (and should) model their behavior on women was significant and widely read outside the confines of Siena as well.

While *La Raffaella* was controversial because of its arguments supporting extramarital sex, Piccolomini was criticized for the *Institutions* as well. His fellow Infiammato Sperone Speroni claimed that Piccolomini plagiarized the chapters on family and love from an unpublished dialogue of his own, which he then published.

Coincidentally, these are the same two chapters that the editor of the 1543 edition claimed in the preface to have found so remarkable to cause him to publish the book.

Others have analyzed the similarities and differences between these two texts and I will not review the arguments here in detail. Quickly, while there are some similarities, there are enough unique arguments in Piccolomini's *Institutions* to demonstrate that, though he may have been informed and influenced by the work of Speroni, the conclusions are his own.³⁴⁸ What this scandal does tell us, however, is Piccolomini's perhaps surprising arguments about love and marriage in the *Institutions* were not unique to Alessandro and the Sieneese Intronati. Instead, the same arguments were being made more widely – and individual noblemen wanted recognition for their authorship. While their contemporaries and modern scholars frequently argue that the Intronati were uniquely progressive or unorthodox, some of their more remarkable positions held sway elsewhere in Italy.

The *Institutions* may have gained more recognition, but *La Raffaella* had more of the playful attitude of other Intronati works and engages with many of the same tropes.

As we have already seen, particularly in the paired *Sacrificio* and *Gl'Ingannati*, frequently a male author or authors would begin a work claiming that he or they wanted

³⁴⁸ For a further discussion of these arguments, see Fahy, "Love and Marriage" 121-135, and Florinda Cerreta, *Alessandro Piccolomini*, 47-48. Sperone Speroni, *Apologia contra il giudizio della Canace*.

to write the work as a means of apologizing to women for some wrong committed to them by an Intronato or another member of the male sex. In *La Raffaella*'s prologue, Piccolomini ruefully acknowledged that many men, "blinded by the light of their intellects," had offended the honor of ladies, "involving themselves in such vile mud and ugly stains" by making disrespectful statements in regard to these women. Piccolomini insisted, however, that not all men were so ignorant. "Because of his [own] nature" as "a good man" (*uomo da bene*), he felt obligated to defend the honor of women. However, he also claimed to know that this was ultimately unnecessary, as women, "with their shields of *virtù*," were perfectly capable of "defending [them]selves against anything." Indeed, Piccolomini claimed that "the point of venomous tongues" could not so much as scratch the shields that women carried to protect their minds and integrity. However, given the virulence of some attacks on women, Piccolomini feared that his efforts were "not completely in vain."³⁴⁹ Set directly in the tradition of Intronati literature, engaging women as a means of drawing them into the game of the composition, Alessandro wrote this as a playful document that also reveals important aspects of the relationship of the *academici* to women.

Many men, Piccolomini acknowledged, thought very little of the women who might be reading his *La Raffaella*. He wrote that these men would claim that the ideas he presented as the words of women could not possibly have come from the female sex. Though he, as a man, was indeed the author of this book, Alessandro insisted that these men were incorrect, arguing that he could offer "infinite examples that they [these men] deceive themselves and that women are capable of discussion and judgment, of providing counsel and predicting the outcome in any case of importance, just as well as could men."

³⁴⁹ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 2001, 27-28.

If either side had an advantage, he argued, it would "lie with the women."³⁵⁰ Again, in the text that Piccolomini would later claim should not be taken seriously, we find that he made the same arguments as in many of his other works – the same implicit arguments made by his cousin Marcantonio in his own dialogue, discussed in the last chapter. Additionally, the arguments echoed those Alessandro would present in a lecture to the Accademia degli Inflammati on the poetical accomplishments of Laudomia Forteguerra, which we will see later in this chapter. While one may doubt the sincerity of Piccolomini's arguments in *La Raffaella*, this lecture appears to have been quite important in the life of the Paduan academy. Given the many commonalities between this and other works by Alessandro, it seems a re-reading of this playful dialogue is in order, particularly in comparison with the *Institutions*.

Finding Virtù through felicità

Introducing the *Institutions*, Alessandro described sitting in a garden, under a veil of ivy, happily contemplating both the thirty-first Canto of Dante's *Paradiso* and the angelic beauty and sharp mind of Laudomia Forteguerra. Interestingly, this is the canto in which Dante finds that Beatrice had left him, her presence in paradise replaced by that of an older man. The man explains that Beatrice had departed in order to take her rightful place on a celestial throne. From her perch Beatrice smiled at Dante, but then turned away from him, to instead look upon the heavens. This, however, did not decrease Dante's adoration of Beatrice, who he only saw as more worthy of his affection. On the occasion of Laudomia's new motherhood, the parallels between Beatrice's departure from Dante and Laudomia's further cementing her position in the Colomibini family are striking.

³⁵⁰ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 2001, 29.

In the introduction, Piccolomini wrote that it was while thinking of this canto that he received a letter from Laudomia's brother Niccodemo. This letter contained the happy news of the birth of Laudomia's son Alessandro Colombini, so named after his godfather Piccolomini. The elder Alessandro described this moment as a happy one, remarking that "this Child (*Fanciullo*) would have to be similar to his mother, and consequently happy and perfect."³⁵¹ Upon the wonderful news of this birth, Piccolomini found himself at a loss as to what he could present to his infant godson as a baptismal gift. Strangely, he said that he found that there was no established tradition throughout Italy for such an occasion. His final decision seems counter-intuitive. Throughout this book and in other sources, Piccolomini wrote that the young Alessandro Colombini would only need to follow the example of his mother (who was approximately twenty-seven years old at the time) in order to determine how to behave and comport himself. Yet, recognizing that such an effort would be "superfluous," he set about writing a guidebook for his godson. It would have the "guts (*viscere*) of Aristotle and Plato," followed by a description of the typical phases of a normal life, and would be, in sum, an instruction manual on how to find *felicità* in life.³⁵²

Just as *virtù* is frequently translated simplistically as "virtue," *felicità* tends to be written as "happiness" in English. While this is one of the many facets of the word's connotation, and the primary modern meaning, the effect of the word in these sixteenth-century Sienese sources is far more complicated. Happiness and pleasure were elements

³⁵¹ Piccolomini, *Institutions*, 4v

³⁵² Ibid, 5r. This is also the occasion upon which he was to revise some of the statements he made in *La Raffaella*, writing "E insieme con questa occasione, mi son ritratto di molte cose, che per scherzo scrissi già in un Dialogo della bella Creanza de le Donne, fatto dà me più per un certo solazzo, che per altra più grave cagione, come molto miei amici ne pon far fede." (5v) As we will see, however, the ideas presented here are not thoroughly incompatible with those from the former work.

of its meaning. Going further, however, it also meant something more like a balance of pleasure and productive action. These elements come out in discussions of the ideal nobleman both within and outside the academy. While we have seen pedagogy presented by the Intronati in playful manners, in games and theater, Piccolomini presented the idea of learning and education as intrinsic to both pleasure and civic engagement. Modern scholars frequently discuss the role of *virtù* in Renaissance visions of productive lives.³⁵³ In Piccolomini's discussion, *felicità* and *virtù* are related, as the former added a level of playfulness and pleasure to the standard presentations of the responsibilities of noblemen. Separating the *academici* of the Intronati from the *academici* of the standard humanist schools of sixteenth-century Italy, this group was playing at learning and their performance of nobility as much as other groups took formal instruction and noble life as very serious endeavors indeed. Thus, their aristocratic status and position at the head of society was only confirmed.

For Alessandro Piccolomini, a man with a promising literary and ecclesiastical career, to so closely relate happiness and conduct seemed natural. Arguing that honor was tied to *virtù*, and that every form of happiness consisted of *virtù*, this was a guidebook on how to be a *virtù*-ous citizen as much as anything else.³⁵⁴ With this in mind, Piccolomini's discussion of an active civic life comes into new light, as it was only with this life that a man could fully realize his potential and, simply, true happiness. Aiding

³⁵³ As often as it is discussed, most scholars argue that it is untranslatable and definitions are not simply, as the word meant different things in different settings. In his survey of the Renaissance, Guido Ruggiero explains that "*virtù* stressed reason, moderation and self-control sliding toward cunning and *furbizia* (cleverness that is slightly immoral, self-serving, yet effective), essentially the values of an urban elite that could be shared widely in an urban environment, where older feudal noble values of direct confrontation, violence, and manly force were increasingly seen as disruptive and dangerous to a civilized existence." (16) *Virtù* was knowing how to act in order to achieve the best results, even if that meant behaving in less than virtuous manners.

³⁵⁴ Ibid, 14v.

the body politic was a necessary afterthought. Because of this, Piccolomini's insistence that the young Alessandro Colombini could learn everything he would need to know about proper comportment and action from his mother has interesting implications for Renaissance civic life as much as images of masculinity and femininity. However, it is clear that *felicità* and *virtù* were closely related ideas and both contributed to pleasure and productivity in the academic and urban environments. With this in mind, the purpose of the *Institutions* makes more sense.

As is clear in the full title, the *Institutions of All of the Life of a Man Born Noble and in a Free City*, Alessandro Piccolomini argued that his main intent was to guide his godson through his discovery of human happiness. In order to begin this instruction, his first "book" generally described the possibilities of happiness and the forms that it could take during a mortal life.³⁵⁵ The later chapters, then, continued to grow more specific and examined each of the various phases and responsibilities of life more closely.³⁵⁶ Of course, the entire work was intended for those lucky enough "to be born in a well-guided republic" – but it was not only intended for terrestrial happiness.³⁵⁷ Instead, it was also meant to guide the nobleman in attaining the graces of "the homeland of heaven" (*la patria del cielo*), where a greater happiness, impossible to find on earth, would be achieved.³⁵⁸ Tellingly in this early discussion, even when describing life after death, Piccolomini chose to use rhetoric taken from republican virtue, tying the actions of men within their *patria* on earth to those in the life after, implying a connection between civic

³⁵⁵ Alessandro Piccolomini divided his *Institutions* into large sections which he called *libri*. Each of these *libri* he divided into smaller parts.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 11r.

³⁵⁷ Elsewhere, Intronati stated that in broadcasting the glory of women, they were worshipping the god who made them in such a divine image. *Ibid*, 10r.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 10v.

actions on earth and attainment of God's eternal reward. However, Piccolomini did take pains to indicate that the advice he presented in this text only related to the mortal life, stating that "the Civil or Moral Science" was "the most principal over all the other human sciences."³⁵⁹ Implicit in this was the acknowledgement that once the afterlife in God's arms was attained one would have different guidelines by which to live.³⁶⁰ Instead, Piccolomini focused on attaining terrestrial happiness, through civic duty and moral probity, which would in turn lead to this celestial promised land.

In his various representations of Laudomia Forteguerra in the *Institutions*, Alessandro Piccolomini focused both on her "bodily beauty" (*corporal bellezza*) and her example as "a woman more than mortal," a "true example of divinity, scorner of every baseness, guide of every well-performed act." Finally, Alessandro tied her divinity to her physical nature and he described her face as one "most similar to the angels."³⁶¹ So, while the traditional tropes of feminine physical beauty are present in Piccolomini's praise of Forteguerra, she served as much more than a lovely item upon which to gaze. Increasingly, Piccolomini emphasized her role as a guide (particularly to her masculine child) in the text.³⁶² Beauty, however, was not irrelevant to this pedagogic purpose as Piccolomini told Forteguerra, "your beauty lights in me the desire to do well."³⁶³ While her behavior may serve as an example for the young Alessandro to mold his own actions on, her beauty could cause even grown men to strive to be better representatives of their own sex. The *virtù* that such a desire caused would then increase a man's potential for

³⁵⁹ Ibid, 13r.

³⁶⁰ Indeed, after death the worthy soul may no longer need guidance as it had spent its entire time on earthy preparing for the afterlife.

³⁶¹ Ibid, 15v.

³⁶² Ibid, 17r.

³⁶³ Ibid, 18r.

reaching heaven. Thus, a woman's beauty and *virtù*-ous actions could both save souls and build stable republics on earth. Though in the first book Piccolomini only put Forteguerra forth as a possible model, he argued in the second book that the behaviors and manners of many mothers could also serve as examples for noblemen.³⁶⁴ Though Laudomia was generally praised and used as an example, the beauty of all women, in Piccolomini's eyes, could inspire mortal men to be better citizens on earth.

This representation of Laudomia, at first glance, makes Piccolomini's choice of a very different woman to guide a younger woman in *La Raffaella* surprising. As the dialogue begins, we find a young, recently married noblewoman named Margarita encounter an older, impoverished but similarly noble woman, Raffaella. Margarita claims that she had great respect for Raffaella, who always appeared to be religious and chaste in behavior. Raffaella, who plays a maternal role throughout the dialogue, laughed at this. She did acknowledge that yes, she was frequently seen with her prayer beads and attending mass. As she explains, however, this was only to seek forgiveness for her many sins. Chief amongst these sins, she claimed, was her own purity when she was a young woman. That is, Raffaella held the fact that she had not taken full advantage of her youth to attain bodily pleasure to be a sin – probably not one that the young Margarita would have imagined. In order to help Margarita avoid this "sin," Raffaella instructed that young women should frequent celebrations and feasts, dress well with tasteful jewelry, find the love of one man, and "look to be taken as both beautiful and wise."³⁶⁵ These initial instructions were unremarkable. However, it quickly becomes obvious that this advice was only to instruct a woman how she should appear, rather than how she should

³⁶⁴ Ibid, 26r.

³⁶⁵ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 2001, 38.

truly behave in secret. In her advice, Raffaella emphasized the role of deception in creating a façade of compliance and proper behavior in the same way that the Intronati did in much of their actions and literature.

Margarita could not believe what Raffaella was telling her. She found her advice troublesome, objecting that many of these activities could easily lead to sinful behavior. Raffaella fully admitted this danger. However, she also argued that while it would be preferable for one to lead a life perfectly free of sin, a sinless life was hardly possible. Therefore, it was best that women, while still young and most capable of finding pleasure, should take advantage of their many opportunities to enjoy life. In this way, then, a woman would have plenty of opportunities, later in life when pleasure was not so available, to seek forgiveness from God and avoid the clutches of the devil.³⁶⁶ The alternative was to wait to become an old woman like Raffaella herself, regretting her lack of youthful indulgences. To emphasize this correlation between sin and a pleasant life, Raffaella began to use the terms *peccato* (sin) and *piacere* (pleasure) interchangeably, implying that without sin there was no pleasure – and, equally, that there was no pleasure without sin.³⁶⁷ In this, Raffaella sounded a great deal like Pietro Aretino's Nanna, who acknowledged that because all women (due to the requirements of the day, not due to any inherent fault of their own) would inevitably sin, it was better that a young woman become a whore and be honest about her life. Though Aretino's work was exaggerated to

³⁶⁶ Ibid, 38-39. Interestingly, Raffaella uses the less common term for the devil, *Santanasso*. The name *Santanasso* bears striking resemblance to the name of Siena's earliest patron saint, Sant'Ansano. This saint was a noble Roman who had been baptized by his nurse, Saint Maxima. When his secret Christian faith was discovered, he was tortured and taken prisoner in Siena, where he continued to preach and convert the Sieneese from his prison cell until his execution in 304. His feast day continues to be celebrated by an elaborate procession of the *contrade* of Siena through the city and into the Duomo in which the flags of each *contrada* are erected. This choice in terminology could be yet another criticism from Raffaella of standard morality in Siena, equating a patron saint with the devil himself.

³⁶⁷ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 2001, 41.

a pornographic extreme, his work also provided important commentary on the possibilities women had in the Renaissance.³⁶⁸

This discussion is further evidence that the concept of *virtù* was not necessarily equivalent to our virtue. Raffaella's recommendations hinge on the secrecy of a young woman's sins, rather than simply the sins themselves. By ensuring that the sin remained secret, Margarita would not disturb her reputation and her neighbors, as peers, would continue to view her as a proper, devoted, happily married young woman – exactly who she should be, given the consensus realities she negotiated on a daily basis. The deception necessary for such deceit would, inherently, require a large helping of Renaissance *virtù*, to craftily maintain a lustfully sinful life without being discovered. In the *Institutions* and *La Raffaella*, happiness was a fundamental necessity for a meaningful life for both men and women. With *virtù*, both men and women could only attain this happiness through the discovery of a proper lover. Just as the Academy of the Intronati needed women in order to thrive, so did individual noblemen need women – and their *virtù* – to be fully productive members of society. Thus, while the two works do seem at odds with one another, they are instead expressions of the same *virtù*-osity, as the appearance of a sinless life was more important than living a life actually free of sin. More importantly, in both works true love was the key to *virtù* and the model for a happy life. For most men, then, that meant that a happy, productive life in the Renaissance required a close connection to a woman and vice versa. Given this, the efforts of the Intronati to include women in all aspects of life are even more significant.

³⁶⁸ Pietro Aretino, *Sei giornate*, ed. Guido Davico Bonino. (Torino: Einaudi, 1975).

Education

Throughout the *Institutions*, Alessandro frequently cited Aristotle and Plato as inspiration for his thoughts on the proper development of young noblemen living in free cities. This was a symptom of his own education and intellectual framework. However, it was also a reflection on his views on proper education, that noblemen should be familiar with these classical authors as well. For a noble's early education, however, he offered more basic admonitions. Regarding children under three years of age, he argued that it was especially important for them to get proper nourishment and that they should avoid the consumption of wine – or, at least, strong wine – to avoid illnesses. This abstinence also brought moral strength, preparing the child for more difficult things later in life.

Arguing that children should learn "to tolerate those things that are difficult" in order that they could then "tolerate those discomforts that occur during wars in defense of the *patria* or faith," Piccolomini prepared aristocratic men from their earliest childhood to prioritize the health and well-being of their *patria* over their own comfort.³⁶⁹

Arguing that the *patria* and faith were the two things that a nobleman must learn to protect, Piccolomini again connected proper education and correct behavior to support of the republic and religious fortitude. In no place in the *Institutions*, however, did he specify that by "*patria*" he meant the Republic of Siena. Instead, speaking more generally, he seems to refer to either the commune or other associations that a noble might belong to – including the Intronati. Particularly in this discussion of education, this ambiguity is important.

³⁶⁹ Piccolomini, *Institutions*, 27v. In the book version of this project, I will have a significant section on Scipione Bargagli's *Turamino* and its relationship to contemporary language debates. In the context of this dissertation, however, engaging with such an extensive literature was not feasible.

At this early age, between three and five years, Piccolomini wrote that a child must also be educated in the language of their own *patria*. Of course, this provided the opportunity for Piccolomini to praise the Tuscan language as superior to every other, being most "pure, sweet, easy, and beautiful in sound."³⁷⁰ Thus regarding language, Piccolomini told Colombini that he was fortunate to have a mother who spoke the tongue so well that he had no need to look further for example. As skill with words and rhetorical dexterity were foundational in the new cultural regime the Intronati desired to initiate, this characterization of Forteguerra is especially complimentary.

Above all things, Alessandro Piccolomini's *Institutions* may be read as an admonition that a nobleman's ultimate responsibility in life was to find happiness through proper education and behavior. However, not all of this could be learned. Instead, some elements were determined by the character and actions of an individual's parents – specifically, the individual's mother. Also important, parents helped to determine who their child would spend time with throughout their minority, leading up to and including the selection of a spouse. At the earliest stages, the parents were instrumental in finding the correct friends for their child. Alessandro argued that games, just as in the adult life of *academici*, were important in the development of children, and should be "played not far from the eyes of the mother, and with children not only equal in age, but of equal nobility and with similar education." Nobility was tied to honor and *virtù* – a trait that, while passed down from one generation to the next, needed careful protection as young children developed into happy noblemen active in the public life of their city.

In addition to avoiding improper partners in play, mothers must also guard their children from conversing with "people of servile blood or in other manner vile and

³⁷⁰ Ibid, 29v-30r.

vulgar." They must also keep their children from being exposed to stories that involved vice – that is, stories which might influence children to begin moving down dangerous paths.³⁷¹ Particularly given the lascivious content of much Intronati literature, to which Piccolomini contributed, this is curious to note. It does imply that these early years were crucial for developing a moral character that could withstand immoral influences. On the other hand, these statements may simply reflect hypocrisy on Piccolomini's part or his adherence to the rhetorical requirements of the genre. Intentionally or not, this is further evidence that all was not always what it seemed to be in the Intronati.

At the age of five, three adult figures competed for the child's instruction. At this age, Piccolomini indicated that the father could now begin to serve as an example for the child – though at this age it was a tutor would assume the primary responsibilities regarding the upbringing of a child. Reflecting this, the tutor received much more attention in sections of the *Institutions* regarding the upbringing of children than does the father.³⁷² Of course, Piccolomini may have ignored this particular father, the husband of Laudomia Forteguerri, due to his feelings regarding the mother. Still, Piccolomini did claim to write this treatise for the general education of many noblemen and their children, rather than just Alessandro Colombini. Of the three adult figures in the child's life, however, it is clear that in Piccolomini's mind the mother played the largest role in guiding the proper comportment and education of her child. At this early stage, mothers would regulate the behavior of their sons. Once they became men of the Intronati, this role passed on to noblewomen affiliated with the academy. At all ages, women helped

³⁷¹ Ibid, 30r-30v, 33v-34r.

³⁷² Ibid, 24v-35r.

shape the development of noblemen and fostered the proper development of their *virtù*, all while making life more pleasant.

While Piccolomini never explicitly mentioned literary academies or the Intronati in the *Institutions*, he included allusions to the academy throughout the book. These allusions began, as may be expected, with this discussion of the proper education of young children. Referring to one of the guiding universal precepts of the Intronati, Piccolomini stated that children should learn not to care "about the things of the world." A short while later he wrote that "the best part of man is called the intellect," indicating the importance of the sphere in which the Intronati existed.³⁷³ While Piccolomini framed the *Institutions* as a guide for the proper education of a nobleman in the political sphere of his *patria*, the republic, it was also clearly meant to shape the kind of intellectual who would do well in the literary world of the academy. Particularly in the years after 1555, when the formal republic of Siena (even that in Montalcino) no longer existed, this would become important as the academy replaced the republic as the central defining element in the lives of the *accademici*.³⁷⁴ Even in these discussions, Piccolomini still cited Forteguerra as the model upon which Colombini should mold his behavior.³⁷⁵

Piccolomini did not explicitly argue in his *Institutions* that a man should dedicate himself to the academy as one does to a government. Instead, he was clear that the defining purpose of a nobleman's education was to train that man to contribute, in all ways, to the entire urban environment. This comes into focus in the third book, in which Piccolomini discussed the formal education of a nobleman. In this discussion, he placed

³⁷³ Ibid, 31r, "de le cose del mondò non curi;" 38v.

³⁷⁴ Similarly, just as Scipione Bargagli argued that the Intronati precepts were written in Latin in order to provide them with legitimacy, Piccolomini titled many of the various chapters of the *Institutione* in Latin, perhaps aiming to grant them the same form of legitimacy.

³⁷⁵ Ibid, 32r.

greater importance on what he called the *Filosofia attiva*, including ethics, economics, and politics, than on the natural and divine sciences or math. Constructing the proper education of noblemen in this manner, he indicated that it was more important to develop skills that could benefit the organization of the urban world, rather than those meant more to observe the world instead of impact it.

During a child's education in the *filosofia attiva*, the student would develop his *virtù*. Explicitly, Piccolomini argued that it was "applying this *virtù* of yours, to the government and the rule of your home" and also towards "the needs of your own Republic" that would ultimately help to attain his final aim: *felicità*.³⁷⁶ These characteristics, developed through education and modeling behavior on one's mother – that is, her "honesty, usefulness, and fairness" – were what "in good part the health of the Republic depends upon."³⁷⁷ Just as the attainment of "happiness" in the lives of young noblemen reflected on more than their emotional state, it also contributed to more than just the quality of life for these individuals: *virtù*-ous happiness was the rock upon which the health of the city rested.

This was not true only for noblemen. Though Piccolomini dedicated the *Institutions* to a male child and its title indicates that it was intended to aid in their development, Piccolomini rarely specified the sex of the instructee. Just as Girolamo Bargagli had done in his *Dialogo*, Piccolomini only specified that his instructions were for noblemen when he discussed how they were to relate to noblewomen. His lack of specificity throughout the majority of the text is further evidence that these guidelines also pertained to the education and social development of female children – who were to

³⁷⁶ Ibid, 48v-49r.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, 54r.

become the behavioral models for men. These women, of course, would need an education similar to that of noblemen in order to provide later generations with examples on how to best behave.

In the book on education, Piccolomini argued that the *virtù* gained through education and proper childhood instruction facilitated the young nobleman in becoming an active member of his civic environment and, at the extreme, to learn how to avoid betraying his *patria*.³⁷⁸ These themes continue in the subsequent book, the fifth of ten, which described the specific forms of *virtù* expected from noblemen. In this book as well, the focus remained on the *patria* and was dedicated to the forms of *virtù* that honored and sustained the Republic. The first *virtù* Piccolomini cited was *fortezza*: a personal fortitude and strength to withstand assaults, both moral and physical, on one's person. It included the willingness to die in defense of both the *patria* and God. In this section, Piccolomini also discussed temperance, continence, liberality, magnanimity, gentleness, affability, truthfulness, and urbanity. In all of these things, Colombini could look to his "most honorable mother, woman most rare, woman most beautiful, woman finally in every degree of perfection most perfect" for example.³⁷⁹ Importantly, Piccolomini described Forteguerra as a most perfect woman in all regards – not a most perfect being for her perfection of masculine characteristics and strengths. Rather, she represented the perfection of humankind. Particularly in the context of her son's advancement in the urban world, and in defense of the *patria*, Piccolomini solidified the idea that, even in politics a most perfect, womanly woman was the best example a young nobleman could look to for guidance. Not because she was different from the feminine ideal but, instead,

³⁷⁸ Ibid, 86r.

³⁷⁹ Ibid, 106v.

because of her perfection as a woman, Laudomia's behavioral example would arm Colombini with the skills necessary in the same world of politics, traditionally interpreted as a masculine sphere, completely disconnected from the world occupied by women in early modern Europe.

After leading with *fortezza*, the *virtù* to which Piccolomini gave the most attention was that of *urbanità*. Significantly, this was also the quality that Piccolomini most related to women. He wrote that urbanity, a form of what he called civil courtesy, was useful in all environments, while emphasizing the urban nature of the ideal life in the Renaissance. Very similar to earlier ideas of *civiltà*, *urbanità* points to the superiority of the culture of Renaissance cities.³⁸⁰ This *virtù* not only enabled a nobleman to avoid making others uncomfortable, but it also increased the enjoyment of all activities – including, one has to note, playing games. Related to *urbanità*, Piccolomini argued that on all occasions, a nobleman should work to "distance himself from every foul and immodest ugliness, particularly if one finds oneself in the presence of women."³⁸¹ Piccolomini's almost over-the-top praise of Laudomia Forteguerra in this section, the most elaborate of the entire text, further supports the relationship of women with *urbanità*. Here, Piccolomini wrote that from Forteguerra, with "the most beautiful intelligence and invincible honesty, I [have] heard born witty remarks and sharp and most talented and many other things full of delight spoken" that, "combined in her, [form] a true sign of great justice and honesty" that, "like the other *virtù*, so in this" served as a true example for Colombini, with which he could provide himself solace and example.³⁸² As Piccolomini discussed Forteguerra's command of language and rhetorical ability, she served as an example of the very same

³⁸⁰ For more on *civiltà*, see Ruggiero, *The Renaissance in Italy*, 15, 107-118.

³⁸¹ *Ibid*, 120r.

³⁸² *Ibid*, 121r.

oral skills and wit polished in *Intronati* games. Once again, the goals of the academy and the individual seem entwined.

Throughout the *Institutions*, Piccolomini also implied that women had much more control over men than generally recognized. However, it is also important to note that, in this treatise at least, Piccolomini presented women themselves as a reason that men needed to behave. Everyday interactions between men and women are, of course, largely absent from the historical record. However, the fact that Piccolomini presented *urbanità* as the most important *virtù* to possess when around women provides important insight into these otherwise invisible interactions. Women were to provide examples of behavior to men, while their presence alone also encouraged them to use the tools gained in their education to behave with great civility and respect, aiding exchange of every variety. This tact would, ultimately, also contribute to the stability of the *patria*.

Concluding this section of his *Institutions*, Piccolomini included a short segment on the characteristics that men should avoid. These pair nicely with those Piccolomini had earlier discouraged in *La Raffaella*. He admonished the noble reader of his treatise to avoid indignation, envy, pity, and impiety.³⁸³ In *La Raffaella*, he had the eponymous character argue that these same characteristics in a man would make him a poor lover and also, in general, a poor man indeed. While *La Raffaella* may have been written in jest, these similarities do provide evidence that, at least in part, sections of the dialogue can be used to provide insight into actual desire, romantic and platonic, whether the desire originated in a man or a woman. In Piccolomini's presentations, the same characteristics that would make a man an ideal lover would also enhance his civic prowess.

³⁸³ Ibid, 122v.

Piccolomini also presented the ages of a man's life in similar ways in both *La Raffaella* and his *Institutions*. In both, he identified hope as a marker of youth, arguing that "the life of young men [features] more hope of [what is] to happen than from the memory of the past" and shapes the mind of these individuals.³⁸⁴ This, he explained, was related to the fact that youths had not lived long enough to have the substantial, and frequently bitter, memories of older men while, hopefully, having many years to look forward to in the future rather than fixating on the disappointments of the past. Because of this, Piccolomini explained, youths focused on the possibilities of the future. In comparison, he argued, old men looked backwards, inevitably toward their own failures. They lived almost entirely in their memories, because they had already seen with their own eyes the majority of what they were to see, and they did not have nearly as much to look forward to. This, Piccolomini explained, was why the past always seemed better to them than the present age.

His arguments in *La Raffaella* are very similar, though the exact age spans he discussed did vary slightly. In his *Institutions*, Piccolomini argued that the peak period of a nobleman's life came between thirty and forty (or, he allowed, possibly fifty). He claimed that during this period, a man's experience and hope existed in a perfect balance, between two ends of a spectrum, while "youth is too acerbic and new" and "*vechiezza* too mature and full of rot."³⁸⁵ In *La Raffaella*, he argued that the ideal age was, specifically, twenty-seven or twenty-eight.³⁸⁶ This overly specific detail might suggest or reflect the jesting nature of the dialogue. Though Piccolomini did, then, settle upon different years in the two documents, his arguments in the two works parallel one another closely. When

³⁸⁴ Ibid, 143v.

³⁸⁵ Ibid, 144v-146r.

³⁸⁶ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 95.

supporting a younger ideal age in *La Raffaella*, Piccolomini would have been younger (approximately thirty-one) than he was when he pushed those years back a bit in the *Institutions* (when he would have been approximately thirty-four). Interestingly, these two age ranges for the ideal lover would have placed a nobleman just before and after the ideal ages for marriage. This complements his argument in *La Raffaella* that Margarita should choose an unmarried man with whom to begin her affair, and also provides more evidence that Piccolomini viewed physical love as more fitting for unmarried men than for those properly tied to a wife.³⁸⁷

Age was also significant in the development of the academy. As established in the first chapters of this dissertation, the evolution of the Intronati throughout the sixteenth century was marked by a shift from hope for the future towards memories extracted from a glorified past. I will further develop this shift in the final chapter. First published in 1542, Piccolomini's *Institutions* constitute a part of the early life of the academy. Though he never actively identified himself as an Intronato in this quite verbose document, its purpose was to serve as a guidebook that would both aid in developing a noble youth into a proper nobleman and, with the skills and behavior perfected with its aid, a proper *academico*. Finally, it is representative of the trend towards hope that defined the early years of the academy and can therefore be read as a part of early Intronati literature, even if not expressly identified as such. While many Intronati documents from later in the century looked back to the initial years of the Intronati prior to the fall of Siena,

³⁸⁷ Piccolomini did not specify an ideal age for women in either work. This could be evidence that he believed all women had equal potential to benefit men or a general desire not to write anything that could harm or offend individual women. Finally, as an important goal of the Intronati was to please women, he would not have wanted to alienate any one particular segment of the female sex.

idealizing the past into a utopia that never really existed, these early documents visualized that utopia as yet to come.

Women (and Love) Explode Upon the Stage

Illustrative of Piccolomini's desired role for women, the longest chapter of the *Institutions* focused on the noblewomen that seemed to define the life of proper noblemen. In this chapter, Piccolomini argued that conversations with women were not only necessary in life but they were also the most honest entertainment that one could ever achieve, leaving men breathless and inspired. Piccolomini did admit that some men faulted women because of the weakness of their bodies, and he agreed that the female body was naturally weaker than the male body. However, as we have seen before, Piccolomini reversed the significance of this fact. Citing Aristotle's *Ethics*, he argued that "according to diverse respects, women and men are found of equal perfection."³⁸⁸ As evidence of this, he cited the sonnet written by Laudomia Forteguerri, "deprived of every imperfection however small."³⁸⁹ This, no doubt, was the same sonnet which he presented to the *Infiammati* in Padua. In that lecture, he argued that women were confined to lower intellectual heights than men due, not to their own merits, but because of a society (led by men) that prevented them from receiving the same formal education as did men. Piccolomini maintained this argument from his lecture in the *Institutions* as well. While his lecture was singly intended to argue for the inclusion of women in an intellectual setting, the *Institutions* was not. Because this was a book on all aspects of life for noblemen, his inclusion of the same argument in the *Institutions* indicates how central it was for his conception of the ideal life.

³⁸⁸ Ibid, 151v.

³⁸⁹ Ibid, 152r.

Following this discussion regarding the equality between men and women, Piccolomini told his readers that men should work to maintain a large number of virtuous women in their city. In a city populated by virtuous men, without virtuous women, men had to strive to improve women in order to attain their own happiness. This argument explicitly required the advancement of women in order for men to reach their highest possible achievements. When women more closely fulfilled their potential, conversation with women requiring true wit and intelligence would be possible – and only within this advanced yet honest conversation could true happiness be found.³⁹⁰ Again, the *Institutions* returned to the basic argument that the quality of women determined the quality of life for men. This was a reciprocal relationship between men and women that encouraged individual happiness, which then contributed to civil unity and vibrancy.

Love played a significant role in both of these works by Alessandro Piccolomini. In *La Raffaella*, the very impetus for the discussion was the nature of Margarita's marriage. Raffaella admitted that she had assumed it to be one of marital bliss. This assumption was based on how little she had seen of the younger woman since her marriage. The older woman believed this absence was due to Margarita's voluntary enclosure in her home, with her husband, engaging in all manner of conjugal happiness. Because Raffaella assumed that the younger woman's marriage was a traditionally happy and successful one, the idea of discussing the subject bored her and she attempted to avoid the conversation. This immediately changed, however, when Margarita revealed that this was not the case. Instead, her husband regularly left for months on end. Due to this, Raffaella assumed that the young husband had turned himself into a "contented cuckold." The reader does get the impression, however, that Margarita had not yet

³⁹⁰ Ibid, 153v.

invested her husband with this title but that her unhappiness might soon lead her to make the designation official. Raffaella was offended by the fact that Margarita's youth was going to waste due to her husband's absence. However, arguing that "the caresses and pleasures with a husband are much more insipid and useless than playing with nuns," it seems that even if Margarita's husband had been catering to her every carnal desire, Raffaella would have been displeased with the situation.³⁹¹ In her eyes, a young woman needed to have many more opportunities for pleasure in life than a husband could possibly provide.³⁹²

In *La Raffaella*, much of Piccolomini's advice regarding marriage was also quite practical, and a great deal of Raffaella's advice concerned the daily governance of a household. While Piccolomini (through Raffaella) argued that the husband was, of course, responsible for bringing home an income, he argued that it was the housewife who ruled the home. In this conception, a wife should oversee the daily administration of a household. Indeed, through Raffaella, Piccolomini argued that "the administration of the house...when well guided, is the greatest of ornaments of a gentlewoman," and will bring her the esteem of all those who bear witness to the well-ordered home. Because of this, a woman was not to sleep late but to rise early to see that everything was in its place and to instruct the servants on the day's work. When her husband returned home from work, she was at least to feign happiness to see him. This was particularly important if he brought home a foreigner (*forestiero*). In this case, she was to be a proper hostess, quickly offering food and beverage from the kitchen. In everything, this woman (argued Raffaella) must do her best to make it appear that everything she did was for the benefit

³⁹¹ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 2001, 43.

³⁹² By "young woman", Raffaella specifies later that she refers to women who have not passed their thirty-second year – quite old, actually, by Renaissance standards. (74)

of her husband, their children, and their home.³⁹³ This section, then, sounds highly typical of the expectations of female responsibilities in the home – during this period and many others.

Because there were always watchful eyes and loose tongues about, Raffaella also instructed that a gentlewoman should avoid behaving in ways that would bring criticism and scandal, about even the smallest action or word. Principally, she argued, a woman should avoid lying and weaving tales – the gossip Alessandro faulted women for in other contexts. Because of this danger, Raffaella advised that it was best "to speak little and with wariness." Most of all, she must never show frustration with her husband.

Demonstrating annoyance with one's husband, Raffaella warned, could cause unwanted chatter and attention.³⁹⁴ Again echoing Castiglione and many others before him, Piccolomini warned through Raffaella that for a woman "honor or blame does not principally consist of the things that she does or does not do, but rather what one believes she did or did not do."³⁹⁵ It was important for the Renaissance woman, in Siena as elsewhere, to appear modest in all ways and, always, to demonstrate compliance with the norms of the day. This was particularly true even (or especially) if, as Raffaella advised, that woman was disguising a secret life under the facade of religious devotion. Again, particularly for women, what one seemed to do was more important than what one actually did as she negotiated the requirements of the consensus realities of her day.

Of course, all of this proper behavior was to be a façade for the sinful, passionate life that Raffaella encouraged young women such as Margarita to engage in. Raffaella argued that the physical body was a reflection of proper femininity. Because of this, she

³⁹³ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 2001, 74-77.

³⁹⁴ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 2001, 79-80, 82.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 84

instructed Margarita to make every effort to put it on display, rather than keeping it guarded. Depending on the setting, she explained, these displays could be done in various ways. For instance, in the case of early morning visitors, a lady could feign to have "just risen from bed and not had time to tie up her clothes, and thus she can make known that her breast is rounded and remarkable" without the need for supporting undergarments. Similarly, she could do the same when playing in the snow or the water, needing to disrobe to dry herself. Instead, she could also choose "to bathe herself in such an hour and in such a place that through some cracks someone can view her" while naked. Doing all of this, however, it was important for the lady to show *sprezzatura*. She must appear as if she were not making an effort in any of these actions and that the physical revelations were purely accidental. Similarly, Raffaella argued that a woman's beauty must at least appear natural – that her appearance and grace (just like that of Castiglione's courtier) derived more from nature than from art. Along with this effortless grace, she must also seem honest: if "caught" in the aforementioned activities, she should take care to appear embarrassed and, if she was capable, make a show of blushing. Importantly, the woman should avoid being discovered too many times in states of uncertain dress because it would give away the game. For above all else, Raffaella argued, honesty (or the perception thereof) was to be prized in a woman's actions and being.³⁹⁶

Raffaella instructed that these exhibitionist flirtations were not to be the end of a woman's interactions with men they were interested in. Horrifying Margarita, Raffaella revealed that this charade was for one purpose: to successfully take a lover. Otherwise, she argued, "everything else that we have said would be for naught."³⁹⁷ Though Raffaella

³⁹⁶ Ibid, 70-71.

³⁹⁷ Ibid, 86.

seemed to take for granted the fact that marital relations would not lead to true love, she did argue that it was only with love that all of those beautiful physical and behavioral characteristics that she had so striven to instill in Margarita would be enhanced. Without a lover, she argued, "the celebrations, balls, games, meetings, *veglie*, *virtù*, beauty...are like a beautiful house in the winter without a fire or like a mass without the paternoster." Life in general, according to her, would be improved when love – and the physical act of it – was added to the picture.³⁹⁸ Given that marriage, in Raffaella's estimation, was loveless in nature, it was the responsibility of noblewomen to seek out a true lover.

This search, however, was not to be a simple matter. Instead, it required great deliberation and art – particularly for the woman, as it was her who risked the most if an extramarital affair were discovered. To aid in the search, Raffaella described to Margarita the many kinds of men she, as a young woman, should avoid considering, just "as women would flee a serpent." The first sort were men of excessive youth, those not passing their twentieth or twenty-second birthday. Raffaella explained that a woman might be attracted to these men and that they were quite physically capable of performing the duties that would give women pleasure. However, she argued that these youths would not have the experience necessary in order to keep the affair a secret for more than a few days. The love affair proposed by Raffaella was to be for life – three days simply would not do. Lamentable for Raffaella was the fact that it was very rare to find one youth in a thousand that was not "foolish, proud, unscrupulous, dull, a boaster, overly sumptuous, scandalous, and poorly mannered."³⁹⁹ The main purpose, Raffaella explained, of learning the skills and behaviors described earlier in the text was to avoid the detection of these love affairs.

³⁹⁸ Ibid, 87.

³⁹⁹ Ibid, 88-89.

Given this, boastful youths would not work. In the *Institutions* as well, Piccolomini argued that love affairs were to last a lifetime, and therefore it was even more important to keep them safe from discovery.

Old men, however, had their own problems. While they had the experience their younger counterparts lacked, they also knew too many tricks to take advantage of young women. Additionally, their many experiences with women left them angry, with "cruel tongues" that were filled with jealousy. Just as Raffaella had some choice words to describe young men, regarding older men she asked "why would a beautiful young woman want the love of a white-haired, drooling, foul, fungal, story-telling old man with rank breath and a thousand other problems that would make a dog vomit and do penance without a sin?"⁴⁰⁰ According to this, then, an older man would be equally unappealing for Raffaella's purposes. Ideally, as we have already seen, the lover Margarita and other fair young ladies should find would be between the ages of twenty and thirty-five, but closer to twenty-seven or twenty-eight.⁴⁰¹ Once again, this description of an ideal lover reflects those Piccolomini presented in his *Institutions* three years later. Just as Raffaella told Margarita that old men were foul and not appropriate lovers due to their bitterness (among other things), Piccolomini later wrote that old men (that is, those over 50), had been deceived so much in life that they no longer trusted many people. Thus, while their desire might be greater, recognizing that their time left to indulge in their every craving grew shorter with every passing day, they spent too much time living in the memory of their younger years.⁴⁰² Again, the arguments parallel one another.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, 90-92.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, 95.

⁴⁰² Piccolomini, *Institutions*, 145r-145v.

Alessandro Piccolomini's ideas about marriage were complicated, however. This discussion in *La Raffaella* was, ostensibly, for the edification of the married Margarita. He implied that other married young women should also seek out lovers. However, Raffaella recommended against pursuing married men. Primarily, she claimed that this was related to the belief that this lover should be for life. She worried that when a man was continually around his wife (be her beautiful or ugly), with whom he raised a family, it was natural for him to begin feeling a form of amorous affection for her.⁴⁰³ Even though she admonished Margarita for the need to feign love for her soon-to-be cuckolded spouse, it seemed equally natural to Raffaella that the wife would not actually develop real feelings of love for her husband. Given this, Margarita could completely, though secretly, devote herself to her lover – and she must find a man who would devote himself equally to her. Finally, married men were dangerous because it would be difficult to keep their wives from developing suspicions regarding the relationship. If his wife discovered the affair, she would undoubtedly cause a scandal that would tumble the carefully-constructed house of cards erected to protect the appearance of a woman's honesty.

Raffaella also argued that foreign men were dangerous as lovers. Pointedly, she specified that this was particularly true about those men who had arrived in Siena in recent years. Written in 1542, this was in the early years of the Spanish garrison's presence in Siena – a presence that ultimately led to the fall of Siena. This may be an allusion to the reputation of these soldiers as a stereotypically lusty bunch, as seen in *Intronati* theater. In what may also have been commentary on current events, Raffaella continued to warn Margarita away from men who had great power within the city.⁴⁰⁴ For

⁴⁰³ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 93.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 94.

this point, Raffaella did not provide an explanation. Instead, she indicated that Margarita was perfectly aware of several situations in which love affairs involving powerful men in the public view were not kept hidden and the problems that ensued.

At this point in the dialogue, Margarita seemed to become a bit tired of their conversation. She was bored of hearing about which men she should avoid and, rather, desired instruction regarding whom she should approach for this extramarital affair. Of course, Raffaella would have these men be everything that the others were not: noble, clean, mature and "well-made," discreet and skilled at dissimulation, but also, and most importantly, "a defender of the honor of women and principally of his [woman]." As a man who spent great energies throughout his intellectual career campaigning for the promotion of women, one must yet again be suspicious that perhaps Alessandro Piccolomini was presenting himself as an ideal secret lover – though at 31, he would have been just beyond the ideal age for such a pairing.

Once begun, the woman involved in a relationship had many responsibilities. Of course, she must not attract the suspicions of her husband or others. Thus, she must outwardly display her love for her husband and avoid discussing her lover in order that she not accidentally reveal her true feelings about him. If written communication were ever necessary between her and her lover, she should choose the service of a male, rather than a female, servant as a go-between. Significantly, this last bit of advice reveals Piccolomini's perceptions of lower-class women. While most of his writing presupposes that noblewomen were perfectly capable of intelligence and honor, his description of serving ladies presented virtually the opposite view. They, he implied, were generally dim-witted and thus might accidentally reveal the secrets of their mistresses. Alternately,

they could easily grow angry and, intentionally, reveal these secrets in revenge. He described male servants, on the other hand, as loyal, regarding base revenge as far below even their station. He also implied that these serving men knew that if they were to serve disloyally, their lives might be forfeit – a penalty that did not seem to apply to women. In either case, however, Raffaella discouraged Margarita from resorting to any form of written communication due to the many possible ways the contents of written messages might be revealed.

As Piccolomini began concluding his little work, he had Raffaella clarify to the dumbfounded Margarita, yet again, that the her intent was not to suggest a more spiritual encounter. Instead, once an affair was initiated, when the lovers found themselves together in secret, they were to give themselves "with all of the soul, with body, with thoughts and with everything else" to one another. This did, however, serve as another opportunity to remind Margarita (and the reader) that if the affair were discovered, the honor of the lady involved would be irreparably tarnished, while publicly gifting her husband with those metaphorical horns. All of this could be avoided if only the affair was kept secret.⁴⁰⁵

The dishonesty of marriage was a rhetorical trope during the Renaissance, as Aretino provided perhaps the most intense critique of marriage in his *Ragionamento*. When considered from this perspective, Piccolomini's advocacy of extramarital affairs may not seem quite so radical, particularly if we are to view *La Raffaella* as satirical. However, he continually insisted in even his more serious works that men needed women in order to find happiness and become the best, most productive versions of themselves via true love. Just as the *Intronati* aimed to help the Sieneese develop a new civic identity

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid, 95-107.

to attain glory apart from political independence, as traditionally envisioned, women aided in the same development. Perhaps unsurprisingly then, in *La Raffaella* Piccolomini seems to be very aware of quite practical female concerns, such as how much cloth a proper dress should contain,⁴⁰⁶ the methods by which women can modify old dresses in order to make them appear new,⁴⁰⁷ and recipes for face creams and instructions on how to apply make-up.⁴⁰⁸ He included page upon page of instructions on how to appear a proper wife and lady.⁴⁰⁹ While this advice regarding a woman's conduct and dress may have been useful, the length of these sections and the details contained within demonstrate Alessandro Piccolomini's extensive knowledge of the trivial elements of a woman's life and, one may conclude, the importance he placed on them. In the idealistic visions of Piccolomini and the Intronati, women played a crucial role in developing the *virtù* and global presence of noblemen and the academy itself. As the concept of a meaningful life transformed from service and loyalty to the republic to one defined more by aristocratic play and courtship, women became much more central to public life in this transitional period. Piccolomini's discussions of love in the *Institutions* only support these conclusions.

La Raffaella was not the only place he discussed the relationship between lovers – or, at least, between beloved aristocrats. In the *Institutions* as well, Piccolomini discussed the relationships between lovers, providing some of the most interesting moments of the

⁴⁰⁶Ibid 48. According to Raffaella, a dress should contain no less than 16 *brazze* of cloth - approximately 20 yards.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, 50. These include dying dresses, turning them inside out, the addition of detailing in the cut of the dress, and things along these lines.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, 56-59. The ingredients range from honey and flowers, salts and sugars, to pigeons, pearls, and various seafoods.

⁴⁰⁹ In the book project following this dissertation, I hope to compare his instructions from *La Raffaella* to actual contemporary guides for dress-making, hygiene, and other feminine projects in order to determine if these were accurate or satirical.

treatise. This is also where he placed his retraction for some of the arguments he made in the earlier *La Raffaella*. Piccolomini wrote that he had composed the earlier dialogue as "a joke, and for a game, just as at times one does in short stories" in order "to give a certain amusement to the mind" that was too frequently serious.⁴¹⁰ In delegitimizing *La Raffaella*, he compared his efforts to those of Boccaccio, just as Scipione Bargagli had when facing criticism for the setting of his games treatise. With this preface to his discussion, one expects that his presentation would be markedly different in the *Institutions*. Instead, the arguments are again quite compatible. Paired with the penultimate book of the *Institutions*, focusing on a man's wife and the running of their household, these two sections of the treatise present a thorough picture of Piccolomini's vision of relations between the sexes. Together, these two "books" (the longest two of the entire work) present the marital bond as a practical one that provided a foundation for governing of the home, while claiming that men (and women) could only find their true love outside of this marital partnership. It was another woman, the true beloved, who Piccolomini argued would inspire a man to reach his full potential in life.

Just as Piccolomini spent a great deal of time explaining how a woman should select a lover in *La Raffaella*, he also placed great importance on the process of selecting a lover in his *Institutions*. In this section on true love, he touched on many of the same arguments that he made through *Raffaella* about the need of discretion in these endeavors. Just as he had instructed noblewomen in the earlier dialogue to seek out noble, well-behaved, discreet men, these same characteristics appeared in Piccolomini's instructions to men in the *Institutions*. Here, however, the relationship was to be a purely spiritual rather than a physical affair. The dedication a man must show to his lover was

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, 231r-231v.

no less for this, however. As he wrote, lovers were to love one another "with all of the heart, and if they are at a distance, with thoughts, and with the hearts most joined to live and at all of the hours" seek to be together "not only with their minds joined," but also "to look at one another and drink up with their eyes the ideas of the heart."⁴¹¹ Through this, the lovers would begin to uncover the soul of their beloved and their dedication would become ever more deep. Rather than all of this work and commitment dedicated to the attainment of physical union, as in *La Raffaella*, here love was to be perfectly spiritual. In this state, "they are not to say or do anything dishonest or immodest"⁴¹² and be careful to bring no reason for shame or embarrassment to either person. In this, we finally have the one true distinction between Piccolomini's arguments in *La Raffaella* and his *Institutions*. However, both arguments were framed with the idea that happiness was central to noble life and, only through the attainment of *felicità* could one truly demonstrate *virtù* and be fully productive members of society.

In many ways Piccolomini claimed that friendships and romantic love had many similarities. Both were "honest, useful, and delightful."⁴¹³ In the *Institutions*, he argued that neither was based on a physical union. The main difference between friendship and love, according to Piccolomini, was the desire to join with the beloved: not a physical connection but the more complicated joining of two spirits.⁴¹⁴ While a man may be tempted, Piccolomini explained, to pursue a physically beautiful woman due to her bodily characteristics, he argued that the beauty of a potential beloved's soul was more important than that of her body. However, he did allow that outward beauty could be an indication

⁴¹¹ Piccolomini, *Institutions*, 231v.

⁴¹² Ibid, 231v.

⁴¹³ Ibid, 212v.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid, 214v-215r.

of internal characteristics as "most times, following the course of nature, external beauty is a representation of that within."⁴¹⁵ This argument tied Piccolomini's continual descriptions of Forteguerra as "the most beautiful woman" even more closely to his descriptions of her mind and heart.

Unfortunately, much of Piccolomini's discussion regarding the differences between a beloved woman and a wife remains purely theoretical: Piccolomini never married. Therefore, we have no descriptions by him of a wife to compare to his frequent exultations of Laudomia's merit. In his repeated fixations on the mother of his godson, it does seem safe to believe that he saw her as his beloved – at least during this period. Perhaps because of the dangers associated with revealing Laudomia as such, the *Institutions* contained a much more theoretical framework than the practical guide provided to noblewomen in *La Raffaella*. Considering his unmarried state, Piccolomini may have taken his own advice, preferring to truly love only worthy and beautiful women, rather than participate in Aretino's dishonest institution of marriage. With the inspiration of a proper muse, he could be inspired to live up to his own potential, serving his city and academic brethren. Judging by his literary output and clerical career, one may speculate that he succeeded. Though purely theoretical, an analysis of his thoughts on marriage still proves fruitful.

Though his beloved was to inspire him to greater achievements, Piccolomini argued that a man should also love his wife. But, he argued that this would be a different kind of love that there existed different kinds of love for different relationships. The true love that he described in book nine of the *Institutions*, he argued, could not be felt for

⁴¹⁵ Ibid, 214v. This restates what Piccolomini said earlier in the text, that "the dignity of the soul follows the excellence of the body" (64r) – this was important, apparently, for the nobleman to keep in mind both in his own early education and when choosing a spouse.

more than one person at any given time. This was for several reasons. Primarily, he argued that being in love with more than one woman at the same time would injure the original, truly beloved woman because she would presumably be true to her beloved and would not love another. Importantly, this true love was a lifetime bond with another person, one that required the gifting of one's soul to the beloved – and a man (or a woman) had only one soul to give.⁴¹⁶ Though Piccolomini believed that this true love could not exist in a marital relationship, he did not intend to argue that there could not be some form of marital affection between spouses. As he introduced the following, and final, chapter on marriage, Piccolomini explained that many forms of love existed. As an example, he presented the relationship a man would have with his prince: "if loving a woman, I were to equally serve and love some prince, this would not be to the detriment of the beloved woman." Instead, he explained, there were many forms of *benevolenza*, some of which were more accurately called reverence, or something similar, rather than "love."⁴¹⁷ The existence of these different kinds of love, however, did not mean that wives would be unhurt if they were to discover that their husbands were in love with some other woman.⁴¹⁸ This spiritual love, then, just as the physical love found in *La Raffaella*, would need to be kept secret. While Piccolomini did argue that a man could develop quite fond feelings for his wife, it would be a different kind of love, more an affection than a spiritual union. As long as this affection was not flaunted in front of his beloved, his marital feelings would not detract from the more intense love felt for the beloved.

⁴¹⁶ Piccolomini, *Institutions*, 228v

⁴¹⁷ Ibid, 247v.

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, 248r.

In both works, Piccolomini spent much time explicating the reasons a person should devote such great energy to attaining happiness, rather than something more quantitative. Similarly, he also spent much time justifying the need for love. As *virtù* and honor were wrapped up in happiness, love encapsulated these ideas and traits as well, and he asserted, "love then is your refuge and sustains all of your *virtù*." In the end, then, love was necessary for any man or woman to reach their full potential. Because of this, Piccolomini instructed that nothing should prevent the hearts of the beloved from joining one another, "not the jealousy of the spouses, not the partition of walls, not the spaces of the mountains, not the water of the sea, not hundreds of miles, not rivers, hills, valleys, plains, forests."⁴¹⁹ Rather than a frivolous thing desired only by doe-eyed youths for their own ideas of romance, love was a crucial part not only of happiness, but also of active participation in the civic world. Even love, however, would not allow a man to reach true perfection: this, Piccolomini argued, was not possible in the terrestrial *patria*. Instead, it was only available in the eternal city in heaven – the attainment of which, he argued in his *Orazione in lode delle donne*, required men to dedicate themselves to the beauty of women.⁴²⁰ On earth, the setting of both texts, Piccolomini presented two versions of love, both representing different literary tropes. In *La Raffaella*, he participated in a novella traditions that often seemed to equate love, lust, and sexual pleasure. Three years later, he shifted to a more moral and spiritual perspective in the *Institutions*, presenting women as ideal muses with whom to form spiritual unions. Both demonstrated his own literary breadth and his complex ideas about the relationships between men and women. In each, happiness and intellectual play advanced both sexes and their communities.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 232r.

⁴²⁰ Ibid, 216r. Mis-numbered in the 1542 edition as 126r.

Alessandro's Beloved

Piccolomini began the *Institutions* with high praise for Laudomia Forteguerra. Throughout the text, his words to and about her only became more complimentary and enthusiastic. As one may expect, these testaments to her beauty and intelligence reached yet another pinnacle in his discussions of love. There, he wrote to Colombini that "to know your most beautiful mother Madonna Laudomia, whose eyes, whose face, whose words, whose gestures, whose laugh, and whose movements" were "sweet, lovely, and pleasing," was nearly divine. Moreover he enthused that all of her parts were truly honest, sincere, and filled with majesty and modesty – so much so that any man who saw them would shiver, "rejoice, enjoy, and appreciate" her. The same man would become happy and honored, simply by watching her, as through her countenance and actions she "almost transforms into more than a man."⁴²¹ Here, then, Piccolomini moved beyond his arguments that women could be (and that some were) the equal of men. Here, he argued that they were actually superior to men. In most places, Piccolomini placed women in the same sphere as men, rather than comparing the two sexes. Here, he did compare Forteguerra to men in general – but stressed her ability to be even better than a man, given that her equality had already been fully established.

Tellingly, immediately after flatteringly describing Colombini's mother, Piccolomini shifted to a discussion of his own experiences with love. They had been less than satisfying. Though certain that he did love a woman, he did not know if she returned his love. His doubt was especially painful because, he argued, in order to truly love, and experience true happiness, love must be reciprocated.⁴²² In this discussion, Piccolomini

⁴²¹ Ibid, 240v-241r.

⁴²² Ibid, 244v.

did choose (wisely, given his earlier discussion on the importance of discretion in matters of love) to leave the identity of his beloved unknown. Unfortunately, it seems as if Piccolomini had not yet found true love and happiness and was thus incapable of becoming the most perfect version of himself possible – even as he wrote this treatise as a guide for uncovering all of these possibilities.

In both the *Institutions* and *La Raffaella*, Piccolomini placed great importance on the process of selecting a lover. In both, he argued that the identity of one's beloved was not predestined, but, rather, that one would need to choose the individual. If fate controlled this pairing, he argued, one would not invest the time and effort necessary to maintain a relationship and one would not be obligated to truly love the other.⁴²³ Instead, it was the very element of choice that solidified the bond. In *La Raffaella*, Piccolomini argued that women would need to spend a great deal of time observing the actions and comportment of a prospective lover to ensure that he would be capable of keeping their affair a secret. There is no similar admonition in the *Institutions* – perhaps because, at least on the surface, this was only to be a spiritual and honest affair of the heart, rather than a physically amorous relationship. It does seem significant that in these two texts the only explicit admonition to appear honest was directed at the woman – echoing the traditional argument represented by Castiglione yet again, even in a document that inherently argued for the equality of women.

Though Piccolomini maintained that true love was impossible to find with one's spouse, he also argued that it would take just as much work to find a proper wife as it did to find a proper beloved. As the primary purpose of the marital relationship was to produce children, the most critical characteristic of a prospective wife was her nobility. A

⁴²³ Ibid, 236r-241r.

woman's nobility must be equal to that of her husband as, Piccolomini argued, both the mother and the father passed down their nobility to their children. This contradicted an argument made by many at the time that nobility came only from the father. This dual reception of nobility, he stated, was a fact well-known to Venetian gentlemen, though he provided no explanation for this statement.⁴²⁴ It may allude to Venetian laws requiring both the mother and father to be of noble lineage to pass nobility on to their children.⁴²⁵ Discussing the actual relationship between husband and wife, Piccolomini was very practical. This relationship, rather than based on the continual development of loving feelings and thoughts, was solely concerned with running a household – which, of course, he argued in *La Raffaella* was a woman's responsibility. In both documents, Piccolomini articulated his belief that maintaining a façade of love and devotion between spouses was necessary in order to maintain peace in the household. Therefore, while attaining true love was required for a nobleman to become truly happy – and truly *virtù*-ous – maintaining the façade of marital harmony was required to form a strong household, thought by many to be a fundamental building block in civic life as well.

The conversation between the two noblewomen in *La Raffaella* ended with one final indication that everything Piccolomini wrote was not always as it seemed, and may provide more insight into Piccolomini's own relationship with Forteguerra. In the beginning of the dialogue, Raffaella attempted to avoid the conversation regarding "proper" femininity, claiming she had many chores to accomplish that day, only giving in when Margarita admitted her true desperation. At the end of the conversation, however,

⁴²⁴ Ibid, 251v-255v; Piccolomini had earlier in the *Institutions* referred those who deceived themselves that in taking ignoble women as consorts they would still be capable of producing noble children. (148r)

⁴²⁵ For more on this, see Joanne Ferraro, *Marriage Wars in Late Renaissance Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Stanley Chojnacki, *Women and Men in Renaissance Venice: Twelve Essays on Patrician Society* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000).

Margarita reminded Raffaella of those tasks she had mentioned. Instead of hurrying after them, Raffaella demurred, saying that they could wait until the following day. At the same time, Raffaella left Margarita with one last bit of information: the name of a man who fit the many requirements set forth for a lover and, fortuitously, one who had secretly revealed his love of Margarita to Raffaella. Sending the unhappily married young woman off to begin an affair, one wonders if this was the purpose of their encounter from the beginning. Perhaps the conversation was arranged by the suitor for just this purpose. Or, stepping back from the dialogue, perhaps *La Raffaella* itself was a product of Piccolomini's own pursuit of a woman, as he so closely resembled the characteristics of the ideal lover. Then again, perhaps he had truly written *La Raffaella* with the sole intention of passing his time and the book disguised no ulterior purposes at all. Such a simple purpose, however, seems very unlike the Piccolomini we have seen in his many works.

In contrast, to conclude the *Institutions*, Alessandro Piccolomini returned one last time to a memory of Laudomia Forteguerra, again relating it to Dante. He recalled a day when, while visiting Siena, he came upon Forteguerra at the home of her brother, Niccodemo, as the two sat with Scipion Guglielmi. In conversation, the three were debating literature. Quietly, Piccolomini listened to Forteguerra as she expounded upon the ninth canto of Dante's *Paradiso*. In this canto Dante encountered Cunizza, who identified herself as a lover but also offered insightful political commentary. While Piccolomini listened to Forteguerra and her interlocutors, he claimed to have "heard said many marvelous things" by the woman, equal in quality to what he had heard from other well-read and scientific minds. According to him, she demonstrated "a sublime judgment,

combined with acute talent, and shrewd diligence" that, with "the beauty of her mind, and the divinity of her judgment, joined with her polite manners, gestures, words, and grand movements, astonished every man" who had the honor of encountering her. In his description of Forteguerra, the joy she took in this scholarly conversation was clear.⁴²⁶ Throughout the *Institutions*, Piccolomini had claimed that Forteguerra was the most noble woman who could serve as a model for her son's every behavior. However, on this final page, he chose to recall a scene that clearly tied Forteguerra to the efforts of the Intronati. Rather than continue in his standard praise, he left the reader with a reminder, hinting that women could thrive in an academic environment such as that which the Intronati were trying to construct. Again, the life of the nobleman was entwined both with the academic world and with the women who inspired and drove the efforts of the male members of the academy. Though Piccolomini declined to specifically discuss the academy in his *Institutions*, his experience with the Intronati and those affiliated with the group clearly informed his discussion of the education and development of a proper sixteenth-century Italian nobleman, and the importance of love in his life.

Alessandro Piccolomini claimed that he wrote *La Raffaella* as no more than a joke. Indeed, some of the implications do seem to contradict his other works. Maria Galli Stampino argues that *La Raffaella* is a misogynistic text representing the opposite rhetorical point he argued in, amongst other texts, his *Oration in lode delle donne*. Instead, she argued that it best serves as evidence that he used the debate on women as a rhetorical exercise, rather than as evidence of his own beliefs.⁴²⁷ Given his later

⁴²⁶ Piccolomini, *Institutions*, 247v.

⁴²⁷ Maria Galli Stampino, "Alessandro Piccolomini's *Raffaella*: A Parody of Women's Behavior and Men's Dialogues," in *In Dialogue with the Other Voice in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Literary and Social Contexts*

retraction, one might conclude that Piccolomini had been criticized for the unorthodox work. Indeed, in the introduction to the dialogue itself, Alessandro acknowledged that there was a section that might surprise women, particularly those dutifully going about the daily tasks required by their status as women. This section is the one in which he argued that each noble-born woman "should, with great skill, elect one lover in all of the world and, together with him, enjoy the love secretly until the end" – and that this lover could not be her husband.⁴²⁸ However, this was one of the several sections that foreshadowed arguments he would make in his *Institutions*. In the latter work, he also acknowledged that one's spouse might not be one's true love – but that this was not a reason to give up on true love. Instead, men should pursue it secretly while maintaining a facade of prudence. While it may not have been acceptable for Alessandro to publicly argue that women pursue an extramarital relationship, this repetition of the same argument belies the statement that *La Raffaella* was only a joke. Similarly, many of his arguments in this work include statements indicating that if husbands treated their wives better, then their wives would treat them better. From this perspective, this text does not seem to provide evidence for even rhetorical misogyny.

Eighteen years after initially publishing his *Institutions*, Alessandro Piccolomini greatly modified the text and republished it as the *Institutione morale*.⁴²⁹ While it included many changes, the most notable were those related to ideas of love – particularly regarding platonic love between unmarried men and women. In these

for *Women's Writing*, eds. Julie D. Campbell and Maria Galli Stampino. Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2011, 95.

⁴²⁸ Piccolomini, *La Raffaella*, 30.

⁴²⁹ Alessandro Piccolomini, *Della institutione morale di m. Alessandro Piccolomini libri XII. Ne' quali egli levando le cose soverchie, & aggiugnendo molte importati, ha emendato, & a miglior forma & ordine ridotto tutto quello, che già scrisse in sua giovenezza della Institutione dell'huomo nobile* (Venetia: appresso Giordano Ziletti, 1560).

revisions, Piccolomini stepped back to argue that these relationships were immoral. We can speculate that several developments explain his change of heart. Of course, Piccolomini was eighteen years older and had perhaps grown more conservative in his thinking. Additionally, in the same year that Siena fell, Piccolomini had become a priest and spent many years in Rome working closely with church officials. This undoubtedly close connection with official church doctrine may have caused him to rethink his ideas on extramarital relations – or, at least, his public stance on them. His distance from Siena may also explain his shift: in Siena a unique relationship existed between men and women. Familiarity with these relationships may have influenced his thinking, while distance led him to see things differently. Finally, the fate of Laudomia Forteguerra was undoubtedly a factor. Though we may never know exactly what happened, to Piccolomini's muse and, perhaps, platonic love interest, she seems to have died during the siege of Siena, prior to the city's fall in 1555. With this death, a possible incentive for his arguments may also have also died.⁴³⁰ In the early years of the academy, when Alessandro Piccolomini served as a representative of the ideal *academico* and Siennese intellectual, we have found much evidence that he supported uniquely reciprocal relationships between men and women. Though this intellectual exchange between the sexes may have been unique to this period of decline in Siena, it is significant that a man so connected to the learned world of the day would pose such a radical reconceptualization of gendered relations, in jest or otherwise.

Laudomia Forteguerra as Representation of Ideal Siennese *Virtù*

Just like Marcantonio Piccolomini, Laudomia may serve as a more valuable analytic tool as a character, rather than as an individual. Laudomia's first literary

⁴³⁰ For another discussion of Piccolomini's reasoning behind these changes, see Fahy, 129-130.

appearance was in the work of Marcantonio himself, in his 1538 untitled dialogue discussed earlier featuring Laudomia as one of three interlocutors discussing various matters of philosophy and theology – traditionally masculine subjects. Two years later, Laudomia was the dedicatee of Alessandro's astronomical treatise, *Della sfera del mondo e le stelle fisse*, in which he wrote of finding her sitting in the hottest part of the day in a garden (under a laurel tree, of course) with other noblewomen, "debating many learned and philosophical things" until they finally reached the subject of "divine things," as well as the various celestial bodies in the sky. At this point, as Alessandro recalled, Laudomia lamented the fact that she "had been born [a] Woman." Because of her sex, she had not been able to dedicate years to the "esteemed study and honorable science" that she was otherwise inclined to enjoy. Alessandro followed this by referring to her "truly wise soul," allowing that even without the formal education Laudomia wished for, she had always impressed him with her ideas.⁴³¹ In order to make scientific texts and work more accessible to her and other women, then, Alessandro decided to publish works on topics generally presented in Latin, such as astronomy in *Della sfera del mondo*, in the Tuscan language.

Alessandro Piccolomini's enthusiasm regarding Laudomia Forteguerra's work was not confined to simple translations and dedications. He also presented a lecture to the Accademia degli Infiammati (the Academy of the Inflamed) in Padua about a sonnet of Laudomia's on February 6, 1541. Fittingly, when Marcantonio da Carpi published the lecture, he dedicated the publication to "scholars of Tuscan matters."⁴³² Though

⁴³¹ Alessandro Piccolomini, *Della sfera del mondo*. (Venice: al Segno del Pozzo, 1540), unnumbered pages, introduction. The dedicatory letter is dated the tenth of August, 1539, from the Villa di Valzanzibio.

⁴³² Alessandro Piccolomini, *Lettura del S. Alessandro Piccolomini Infiammato fatta nell'Accademia degli Infiammati. M.D.XXXXI* (Bologna: per Bartholomeo Bonardo & Marc'antonio da Carpi, 1541), 2r.

Alessandro gave the lecture in Padua, addressed to the current "prince" and other "most honorable and noble" members of the academy there, and it was published in Bologna, the topic was purely Tuscan, and, specifically Siennese in both subject and tone.⁴³³ This lecture is the one extant example we have of Alessandro Piccolomini's orations presented to the *Infiammati*, an academy which he helped found, and the subject of this lecture seems significant. It seems that of all the elements of *Intronati* life, which must have influenced his vision of this new academy, the one that he viewed to be most important during this period was the participation of women in their intellectual activities. As Virginia Cox discusses, commentaries on poetry were already common among the *Infiammati* (though the academy was still very young). Previously, however, these discussions had focused exclusively on the work of male writers. Cox herself argues that Alessandro's choice to present *Laudomia's* work likely had a "patriotic dimension, underlining Siena's precocity in the cultivation of female talent – a process in which Siena's own literary academy, the *Intronati*, had played a decisively proactive role."⁴³⁴ After all, many of the academy's activities were shaped around the cultivation of female intellectual skill for the express purpose of representing the *Intronati* and Siena itself with the accomplishments of these women. Though Piccolomini was active in a new, foreign, academy when he wrote and delivered this lecture, he was still dedicated to the goals of his home academy in Siena.

No doubt many factors influenced Alessandro's decision to lecture the *Infiammati* on *Laudomia's* merit. However, when the lecture was published several months later, he claimed that he had not consented to the publication. In the tradition of self-effacement,

⁴³³ The equivalent of the *Archintronato*, the *Infiammato* prince was the head of the academy and served a term of several months.

⁴³⁴ Cox, 107

he implied that the lecture was not actually all that good and, as the publication proclaimed his Infiammati affiliation, it was thus an embarrassment to the group.⁴³⁵ Given that he had already, of his own volition, presented it to his esteemed colleagues in the Paduan academy, it does seem doubtful that Alessandro truly believed his lecture to be of inferior quality. It does, however, raise questions regarding the proper setting for praising female poets. Was their work deemed appropriate only in literary groups that had already pushed the envelope on the social acceptability of women but not to the general public? Particularly with the increased attention many members of the various academies received for heterodox leanings, they may have wished to keep these more "progressive" elements of their activities in the safety of this officially private and protected space, even as it served as a noble public space.

The sonnet Piccolomini's lecture discussed had already received a certain level of notoriety for its apparent romantic content, perhaps providing further evidence of the unsuitable nature of this lecture for general public consumption. Modern scholars have used this same sonnet as evidence that Laudomia had romantic feelings towards the illegitimate daughter of Charles V, Margaret of Austria. Margaret, the subject of five of Laudomia's six surviving sonnets, had made such an impression upon as she passed through Siena that the latter desired to express her dedication in poetic form.⁴³⁶ Some contemporaries accepted that these sonnets demonstrated her romantic love toward the emperor's daughter. Those who actually knew Laudomia, however, persisted in calling

⁴³⁵ Cerreta, *Alessandro Piccolomini*, 273. See also Eisenbichler, *The Sword and the Pen*, 115-116.

⁴³⁶ The traditional story holds that at this first meeting in 1536, Laudomia would have been twenty and Margaret thirteen, though Eisenbichler has shown that it is much more likely that the meeting actually took place three years earlier as Margaret was on her way to Naples for education prior to her marriage into the Medici clan. Thus, Laudomia was seventeen and Margaret only ten. While only three years' difference, this change in dating does have important implications for any arguments regarding sexual attraction between the two women, even if one-sided. See Eisenbichler, 101-163, for these discussions and Laudomia's sonnets.

this love a holy, pure love – similar to the love that Alessandro had advocated for in his *Institutions* that one should cultivate with an extra-marital but platonic beloved.⁴³⁷

Intriguingly, then, one must consider the possibility that in matters of love, Alessandro did not identify gender as a crucial determinant. While responsibly married to a man and productively bearing children in his name, Alessandro presented Laudomia's love for Margaret in the same complimentary terms as he did the ideal, spiritual love between men and women in his guidebook. In the end, in many ways, Laudomia represented a curious figure that lived to perfection the life of both a man and a woman. This duality may have strengthened her position as an example for both sexes – her son only the most visible.

The lecture itself began with a long prologue discussing the many contradictions in life, in one place remarking that "During war we most fervently await peace, and in peace [we fervently await] war"⁴³⁸ – a sentiment that must have had special resonance in Siena in the next decade, as survivors thought of the actions that led up to that most devastating of Sieneese wars. After an introduction including the standard praises, claiming that Laudomia Forteguerra had the most noble blood, a rare beauty, perfect

⁴³⁷ Konrad Eisenbichler and Diana Robin vocally stand on either side of the debate regarding Laudomia Forteguerra's sexuality and her attraction to Margaret of Austria. Eisenbichler argues that Laudomia's sonnet to Margaret describing her love for the daughter of Charles V, combined with Alessandro Piccolomini's "outing" (Eisenbichler's term) of Laudomia during his lecture on the same sonnet to the *Infiammati* is irrevocable evidence of a strong lesbian identity that was acknowledged during her own time and that the silence on the matter up until the modern day was simply a matter of prudishness. Robin, on the other hand, sees the rhetoric used by Laudomia in this sonnet instead as evidence of the tropes of neoplatonic love common to the period. Unless further evidence appears, however, we will never know the truth behind this speculation and it is perhaps safer to follow Robin's argument that Laudomia was merely expressing her admiration of Margaret, perhaps even an attempt to curry support through Margaret's many political connections, rather than an expression of romantic or sexual longing. Ironically, this assumption would support Eisenbichler's argument in *The Sword and the Pen* that the Sieneese female poets of sixteenth-century Siena were interested in more than love in their literary efforts. It should also be noted that Eisenbichler provides Robin as an evidence of the poor scholarship done on Laudomia when Robin describes Laudomia recruiting women to join her company against the forces of the enemy. Clearly, even to this day, Laudomia retains the power to incite strong emotions. Eisenbichler, 163, about Robin, 126.

⁴³⁸ Alessandro Piccolomini, *Lettura*, 5r

judgment and behavior, Piccolomini then made an interesting comment: he specified that, at the most, Laudomia was only twenty or twenty-one years old.⁴³⁹ Even with his supposedly deep knowledge of the woman and her work, he preferred to feign that he was unsure exactly how old she was. We may assume, however, that this was merely to impress upon the audience the virtuosity of a youthful Laudomia, as she would have actually been twenty-five or twenty-six at the time of his lecture. In front of an audience comprised of individually well-respected and powerful men he chose to argue, as was common for the Intronati, that women were capable and worthy poets and scholars. This advertisement for her merits was also an advertisement for the success of the Intronati. If they could help a woman achieve equality, surely they were fit candidates to lead a cultural revolution.

Alessandro Piccolomini's lecture concluded with three sonnets to Laudomia Forteguerra – one written by himself, one by his fellow Inflammati Emanuele Grimaldi, and one by the notorious Benedetto Varchi. These poems indicate the desire of these three men to further their academic and intellectual engagement with Laudomia.⁴⁴⁰ Particularly notable here is the fact that Grimaldi and Varchi were not members of the Intronati, or even Sieneese. Perhaps this was evidence of the success of the Intronati desire to spread knowledge of the glory of Sieneese women and, generally, their academic practices. Foreigners such as Sir Thomas Hoby (including the quotation that begun the last chapter), the publisher of Piccolomini's *Institutions*, Ottavio Scoto (who described her as the most beautiful woman he had ever seen but lamented that he was not able to see her debate – as it was word of her rhetorical skill that had led him to seek out the

⁴³⁹ Ibid, 6v.

⁴⁴⁰ Alessandro Piccolomini, *Lettura*, 17v-18r.

meeting in the first place), and the Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (who claimed to have extended his 1541 stay in Siena on account of her), are all signs of this wide success in marketing Laudomia Forteguerra as representative of a new behavioral ideal, even though her actions frequently did not conform to standard Renaissance Italian ideals of feminine behavior.⁴⁴¹

Laudomia's response to this campaign, if any, has been lost to history. There is no evidence that Laudomia responded to Alessandro's efforts. Konrad Eisenbichler remarks that there is no evidence that Laudomia ever acknowledged his existence – though one may argue that in choosing Alessandro as the godfather to her son, she did indeed recognize him.⁴⁴² While this silence in the sources makes any attempt to speculate about their relationship difficult, it is certain that Laudomia served as a muse to Alessandro. We cannot know if he had true designs to acquire her favor, or love. Perhaps this absence in itself is evidence of how well she maintained the discretion recommended by Alessandro himself. His later behavior does seem to be that of a jilted lover. Upon Laudomia's remarriage into the Petrucci family in 1544, Alessandro dedicated no further work to her and even composed an angry sonnet as a spurned lover which historians generally understand to refer to Laudomia's hypothetical rejection of him as a lover or beloved.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹ For these accounts, see Eisenbichler, 161

⁴⁴² Eisenbichler, 26

⁴⁴³ One of several sonnets about rejected love, there is not definitive evidence that this poem was written about Laudomia. The fact remains that Alessandro did not dedicate anything to her after her second wedding and, in other sources, his anguish is evident. Titled "To a Woman Inconstant, False, and Completely Faithless," Eisenbichler translated it as: "The moon shone high and bright up in the heavens/With all her rays (I turn cold at the thought)/When full of tears, your eyes fixed hard/Upon my face, your arms around my neck,//You swore, alas, that ere your flame for me/Should be put out, cold ice itself would burn;/But then, barely a month after I left,/You, wicked woman, broke your word.//I do not know who chased me from your heart/And proudly now believes in your unfaithful/Words, and has not yet had time to learn.//But be he who he may, handsome, learned,/Wise, if he now laughs with you of me,/He soon will cry and then I'll laugh at him." Eisenbichler, 142.

Given the lack of concrete information on Laudomia Forteguerri, and the almost super-human figure she played in Sieneese cultural life prior to 1555, she was one of the most intriguing women of sixteenth-century Tuscany. Because of this, there has been much speculation regarding her, her actions, and her sexuality. For us, of course, these speculations are not nearly as important as what Intronati portrayals of her tell us about gender in sixteenth-century Siena. Her beauty was broadcast to the world, of course. However, what most people noted the most about her, and what drove foreigners to seek her acquaintance, were her accomplishments of the mind. Other women were sought out for such reasons, such as Tullia d'Aragona. Many of these other women, however, were transgressive in other regards as well. Even in the case of d'Aragona, it seems her sexuality was her most magnetic feature.⁴⁴⁴ Instead, Laudomia was lauded for her accomplishments that defied standard expectations of the female gender and this only exploded with her overtly masculine activities during the siege. Perhaps for the early Intronati (or at least for Alessandro Piccolomini) gender stereotypes were simply not as important as they were elsewhere. In Laudomia Forteguerri, contemporaries saw the ideal *senese*, regardless of her biological sex. Intellectually vibrant, she inspired others to follow her example and, perhaps most notable of all, took pleasure in her scholarly activities, just as *academici* were to find pleasure in their own academic and civic pursuits.

⁴⁴⁴ Interestingly, one developing feature of the Renaissance in Italy involving gender relations was notably rare in Siena during the cinquecento: the courtesan. While prostitution, of course, was a thriving business, even famous courtesans such as Tullia d'Aragona did not find a receptive audience in this city of women while other cities, such as Venice and Florence, were renowned for their celebrated courtesans. It is possible that as women were already such an intrinsic part of public life in Siena that courtesans of her stature were simply unnecessary. Evidence of some women who were at least identified as courtesans, even if their professional activities more closely resembled that of a lower-status prostitute, can be found in the census records of Siena during the siege, though these women were apparently not notable enough to receive comment and interaction with the Intronati.

Conclusion

This project focuses on the Intronati of Siena and their role in the imploding life of the urban world within that city. The environment there was unique, and the curiously progressive way in which *academici* and male Sienese citizens oriented themselves in relation to the women there was very unusual. Because of this, it would be easy to dismiss the developments that occurred within the academy as an anomaly in pre-modern Italy – one that is interesting but of little relevance to the historical study of the period in general. There is some evidence, however, that trends within the Intronati do reflect those arising in comparable social situations elsewhere. Perhaps more important, however, is the fact that the Intronati and the Sienese in general consciously attempted to spread these practices, often seen as anomalous, to others and similarly shaped their own, masculine, identities on the actions and identities of Sienese women. As fate would have it, Laudomia Forteguerra frequently served as the vehicle for these early efforts. This does not, however, represent a feminization of Sienese males. Instead, it represented an active, intellectually aggressive *virtù* that could be embodied by witty, learned men or women.

On the most basic level, Piccolomini wrote the *Institutions* as a guidebook to instruct young men (and, as I argued here, women) born to noble parents to develop into proper noblemen (and noblewomen). This nobility both necessitated and encouraged happiness, a foundational part of success. As we have seen, however, it also served another purpose. In addition to developing personal *virtù*, Piccolomini instructed his readers to strive to protect the sanctity of their peaceful city and its idealized institutions and citizens. However, as we saw in Piccolomini's own *Oratione* on the state of the republic in the first chapter, the world he wrote of never existed. Instead, this city that

which he instructed his godson and others to dedicate themselves to needed construction rather than maintenance. In sum, though Piccolomini may have been serious in his intentions for the treatise, it was a work of fiction. That does not mean, of course, that Piccolomini's instructions and insights were any less important or well-meaning. Instead, his romanticization of Siena, education therein, and nearly everything else touched upon in the treatise makes his presentation of gendered expectations even more significant. In the *Institutions*, Piccolomini outlined a world that he wished existed, one that appointed women a significant and active role in civic politics and the education of noblemen.

Chapter Five

Naturalizing the Academy: Birth, Death, and Rebirth in the Intronati

Apart from the fate of Laudomia Forteguerri, the most recurring mystery of the sixteenth-century Intronati is perhaps how and exactly why Cosimo, in 1563 or 1568, closed all Sieneese academies. Though the records from the Medici periods of Florentine history are well-preserved in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze (and many have made their way online through the Medici Archive Project), the order for these closures has eluded historians for centuries. What we do know, however, is that for approximately four decades closely following the collapse of the Republic of Siena the academies in Siena were outlawed. Between this closure and the 1603 re-opening, the Intronati worked behind the scenes (as always) to construct a public identity for the academy, hoping that the Accademia degli Intronati would continue developing as a cultural leader in the post-republic era. This new identity was in many ways more conservative and less subversive than Intronati self-presentations in the early decades of the academy. By 1603, the academy could only attempt to re-write their own history, brushing over the more dangerous elements of their group's heritage and try to derive glory from the literary successes of their forefathers. Efforts towards a new cultural leadership had sputtered, with the closure though they retained hope that, as all of Italy recovered from a turbulent century, this leadership could be regained.

Cosimo himself was not always hostile to the idea of academies – in fact, he frequently pushed for their development and advocated for their projects. The Accademia

Fiorentina had activities similar to those of the Intronati, such as translating classical works into Tuscan and writing new compositions in the vernacular. When the academy was not productive enough, Cosimo himself chastised the membership. In 1563, he helped form the Compagnia ed Accademia del Disegno for select painters, sculptors, and architects – three groups that had never been previously affiliated. Indicating the extent of his interest in the group, Cosimo himself personally approved each member, at least initially.⁴⁴⁵ With these two organizations, Cosimo demonstrated his support of academies as part of a general project encouraging a vibrant cultural life in sixteenth-century Florence.

In the 1550s, however, Cosimo had an experience with another academy that may have shaped his views regarding the danger of academies in his territory. The membership of this group, the Accademia del Piano, should have been the first sign indicating that this academy may be dangerous. Comprised almost entirely of traditional enemies of the Medici (including the notorious Pazzi family), they seemed to organize their activities specifically to incite the ire of the Florentine ruler in various manners, including the dates chosen for celebration. In 1556, Cosimo's secretary Lorenzo Pagni wrote to inform him of the suspicious things he had seen and heard regarding the group. He particularly found the symbolic gestures in Pianigiani gatherings to be suspicious, as Pagni interpreted them as mocking the Medici. Specifying that they met "*sotto colore di*

⁴⁴⁵ For more on Cosimo's patronage of the Compagnia ed Accademia del Disegno, see Karen-edis Barzman, "The Accademia del Disegno and Fellowships of Discourse at the Court of Cosimo I de' Medici," in Konrad Eisenbichler, ed, *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), 177-188.

passatempo," Pagni clearly did not feel that this group was harmless or merely focused on leisure-time activities.⁴⁴⁶

Pagni found the continually increasing size of the group to be particularly concerning, as more and more men joined the association. Cosimo replied that the group's expansion was exactly why he was not concerned. As he wrote, as long as the Accademia del Piano's activities were not "mixed with affairs of the state," he would not take action against them. In response, Pagni grew more concerned, associating the activities of the Pianigiani with those associated with the assassination of Cosimo's predecessor Alessandro. Cosimo was still unconcerned, saying that in times of republican governance, such groups should be allowed, even encouraged. Arguing that "Florentine brains" were not idle, Cosimo wrote that it was best to allow academic activities to continue as an outlet for their creativity.⁴⁴⁷ The size of the group itself would be his security, for he believed that the larger an association, the more likely a developing plot against the state would be revealed by a nervous conspirator. This was the same argument Niccolò Machiavelli made in his *The Prince*, which had been circulating in Florence for over four decades. Though these activities were disrespectful, we can extrapolate that Cosimo felt that they were less dangerous than if they were suppressed, which might actually foment a serious revolt. This assumption, much to Cosimo's dismay, proved

⁴⁴⁶ Directly translated, "under the cover of pastime," this implies that their activities feigned to be unimportant, meant solely to pass the time, though they had more sinister purposes.

⁴⁴⁷ Letters contained in Michele Maylender, *Storia delle accademie d'Italia*. v. 4 p. 280-284. Also discussed in Domenico Zanrè, "Ritual and Parody in Mid-Cinquecento Florence: Cosimo de' Medici and the Accademia del Piano," in Konrad Eisenbichler, ed, *The Cultural Politics of Duke Cosimo I de' Medici*. (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2001), 197.

incorrect when a conspiracy against the Medici was discovered in 1559, leading to the executions of several Pianigiani.⁴⁴⁸

Though Cosimo's patronage of other academies continued after this event, the conspiracy hatched by the Pianigiani might have played a role in his 1568 decision to revoke the Sieneese right to assemble in academic settings. Unfortunately, this closure was not very well documented. One of the clearest statements we have comes in a document from the Sieneese Accademia dei Rozzi in the same year as the Intronati's reformation, 1603. Using McClure's translation, "In 1568 there reigned in our city of Siena many academies and societies...which...were all made to close down in deference to our masters [and] now with the good graces of these same [masters] the society of the Rozzi was reconstituted and they began to gather the day of 31 August 1603."⁴⁴⁹ The lack of explicit documentary evidence regarding the suspension of academic activities is curious. Because of this absence, I believe the closure of Sieneese academies was due to a somewhat informal request by the Medici, or someone on their behalf, rather than a formal order. It does appear that the Intronati had a difficult time reforming after the devastation of 1555. This lack of academic vitality may have made a formal declaration unnecessary and could also explain why we have no evidence of a vocal resistance on behalf of the Intronati.

Increasing anti-heretical pressures also likely contributed to both the academy's difficulties in reforming and Cosimo's efforts, whatever they may have been, to close the academy's doors. Indeed, McClure speculates that the closure of Sieneese academies was part of Cosimo's campaign to clear Tuscany of heresy, and to be declared Grand Duke of

⁴⁴⁸For more on the Pianigiani, see the full essay, p. 189-204. I have been unable to discover what happened to l'Accademia del Piano after 1559 but it seems like these executions also marked the end for the academy.

⁴⁴⁹McClure, *Parlour Games*, 81. Mazzi, 93; 93 FN 1; BCS Y.II.27 f71.

Tuscany, a title eventually granted by the pope.⁴⁵⁰ While I agree that religious motives were factors for Cosimo, I believe that the potential political challenge posed by the Intronati would have influenced his decision. The memory of the Pianigiani incident would still have been fresh in his mind and fears of political disruption must have been important contributing factors as well. Whatever the cause, we do know that for at least thirty-five years the Academy of the Intronati was formally suspended, though members of this and other academies continued to meet during this period in what McClure has referred to as a "Literary Underground."⁴⁵¹

The academy's closure further disrupted efforts towards self-determination by the Intronati. After 1555, they no longer had an independent republic to glorify. The aristocratic republic of letters they had created in the Intronati, replacing a badly divided republic with a noble, literary tradition was now formally removed from their realm of possibilities as well. When the academy reopened in 1603 it was, at least in theory, unencumbered by such earlier constructions of Sieneese and Intronati identities. Still, when creating a new image – and a new purpose – for the academy, they continued to draw upon memories of the early academy. The choices made in this renewal tell us much about the legacy of the early academy. The new ideas about cultural influence that shaped the identity and goals of the early Intronati, substantially based on academic accomplishment, rhetorical skill, and cultural leadership, rather than earlier traditional imaginings of republican duty and civic participation, remained. By arguing for these

⁴⁵⁰ McClure, *Parlour Games*, 81-84.

⁴⁵¹ For a further discussion of the various extant sources regarding the closure of the academies, see George McClure, "Heresy at Play: Academies and the Literary Underground in Counter-Reformation Siena," *Renaissance Quarterly*, Vol. 63, No. 4, Winter 2010, 1201. Most of these sources come from later periods and include circumstantial speculation.

goals, the early Intronati had attempted to delegitimize political power as culturally significant.

Cosimo's formal or informal suspension of the academy proved that political might still mattered. As Girolamo Bargagli argued, they still needed the protection of the prince. Upon the reformation of the academy in 1603, extant members showed a remarkable desire to emphasize continuity with the early version of the academy in republican Siena. Now, however, they demonstrated a more submissive relationship with Florence. These displays seem to have consciously distorted the memory of the early academy in order to allow for a recreation of the Intronati on their own terms.

Paradoxically, the renewed Intronati defended their claims for seeking out innovation and the new by invoking the traditional ideal of a return to first times; in this case, the first times of the Intronati. These efforts only increased in 1603 after its long hibernation. By focusing on admonitions to embrace and cultivate the novel as central to the memories of the early academy, they provided legitimation that fit earlier Renaissance models. The term "Renaissance," of course, means rebirth – rebirth of an older, more perfect time, as described in classical and biblical sources, before a perceived degeneration of society that corrupted institutions and values. In a sense, this examination of the past was itself a form of memory, and it was this memory that ultimately shaped noble life in Renaissance Italy. As city-states collapsed and ideas of traditional civic humanism were no longer as valuable, however, imitating the past became less appealing. Still, many groups maintained this drive to realize a true rebirth of these ancient ideals. Of course, even while aiming to reform, these groups self-consciously shaped their memories of the earlier, more perfect times. This was especially true in Intronati

presentations of their academic forefathers – that is, the generation of Intronati active prior to Siena’s defeat. While looking back, they reflected their adapted memories of the past on their hopes of a stronger future. This future would in some ways mirror this original past but the distortions provided in this new, modified re-imagining were ultimately more significant. Crucially, they identified the academy and the practices associated with it as natural, part of the pre-ordained order of life. By blocking the academy, they argued, Cosimo had prevented Siena from growing to the heights it was born to reach.

Constructing a New Old Intronati and a New Italy

1603 was not the first time that the Intronati endorsed the “new” as desirable. We have already seen how Girolamo Bargagli endorsed *veglie* and other social gatherings as occasions in which to develop new cultural practices and display them for other noblemen and women. In his *Dialogue*, he argued that games, and the participation of women, were central to the success of the academy. As a reminder, the author Girolamo and his fictionalized Marcantonio Piccolomini argued that, "You, new Intronati, need two principal things to sustain...the former name of the Intronati: first is the protection of those who govern, while the other is the favor of the most important women."⁴⁵² In this argument, it is important to recognize both his identification of this younger generation as explicitly new and that he identified maintaining the old *name* of the Intronati as the goal. He did not argue that the new Intronati should work to exactly replicate old Intronati practices. Indeed, he argued that the old practices of the Intronati were now too antiquated for current use. Instead, to attain the favor of those women, "above all when you organize the events, banquets and gatherings...give them some pleasant amusement

⁴⁵² Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 52-3.

with splendid games, various inventions and novel entertainment."⁴⁵³ In this section, the "new" came in two varieties: the new, younger generation of the Intronati and the new styles of entertainment used to satisfy women. With these new men, new styles of entertainment would emerge to lead the *academici*, the academy, and, through them, the city of Siena to a new glory defined in new ways, once shaped by the ideal expression of civic humanism in the Republic.

Games were not the only place in which Girolamo, through Marcantonio, saw the importance of the new. Other, examples of the Intronati's need to stand at the cultural cutting edge saturated the *Dialogue*. As we have seen, Marcantonio explained that "In truth, I always praise, that in masquerades, in tournaments, and in other public spectacles, that one would always look to be first to stand out with novelty...so that for those who adopt the style later, others are tired of the look, and they are not showered with attention."⁴⁵⁴ His intention was that the Intronati would be on the cutting edge of all social fashions, which he clearly understood to be evolving constructs. Rather than seeing this as a downfall, a constant devolution away from that original, perfect ideal, he saw that evolution as a good thing, an area where *academici* should lead. By promoting novelty and directing Siense cultural developments through example, the Intronati (former leaders of local politics and still important figures in religion and the literary world) demonstrated that they still deserved a position as social and cultural elites. In this way, the Intronati was to lead the post-1555 world to a new reality in which the state itself was less important and *virtù* would be demonstrated through academic merit and intellectual accomplishment.

⁴⁵³ Ibid, 53.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid, 94.

Comparing the Intronati constitution to Scipione Bargagli's 1603 speech at the reopening of the academy, we can see how the academy defined itself and envisioned its future in these two different periods.⁴⁵⁵ Their first constitution was a hopeful document: it attempted to give form to a literary academy, possibly inspired by their law professor's critique of their legal studies. This constitution presented meetings of the academy as the central element of academic life; much of the document simply listed guidelines designed to fully realize the potential of these meetings. It outlined their ideal structure while ensuring that the *accademici* would be properly prepared to engage civilly with one another at these regular events. While *accademici* prepared written works outside the academy for discussion at the meetings, it was the discussion itself that seems to have been the focus of the early academy. As the *accademici* and later scholars argued, the most important elements of Intronati life were to be found in the meetings. Indeed, this was true in a variety of academies. As Claudia di Filippo Bareggi has argued, because many academies did not publish anything at all, "the core of their efforts remained the meetings themselves."⁴⁵⁶

However, later generations of the Intronati focused on other things when looking at the early years of the academy. They chose to write their legacy not based on the meetings that were the foci of the early Intronati but rather the literary and, particularly, the theatrical productions of the first generations of *accademici*. When Scipione presented his oration at the re-opening of the academy, he chose to focus on these successful literary ventures and the accomplishments of several founding members rather than the

⁴⁵⁵ BCS L.VIII.41 *Oratione In lode dell'Accademia degl'Intronati; fatta e recitata dallo Schietto, Accademico Intronato, Nel nuovo Risorgimento della detta Accademia il di XIII di Dicembre M.D.III.* Scipione Bargagli. For the constitution, see BCS Y.I.1.

⁴⁵⁶ Claudia di Filippo Bareggi, "Cultura e società fra Cinque e Seicento: le accademie," in *Società e Storia*, 12 (1983), 664.

content of Intronati meetings. This de-emphasized the quasi-democratic nature of the academy as a group while focusing on the leadership and triumphs of individual *academici*. He did not acknowledge that this was a change in focus. Nonetheless, this change demonstrates a shift in priorities of the academy away from those that had defined the early institution, away from private gatherings of intellectuals, and towards outward displays of their prowess.

As the Constitution was a forward-looking document, it outlined how the academy would ideally thrive and leave its mark on the world. However, many academic documents written after 1555 are generally backward-looking, celebrating the memory of the early years of the academy. While this initially appears to be typically Renaissance, looking back at an earlier, more perfect time, the characterization of the early academy belies this assumption. In this new document, Scipione discussed memories of the academy as he would like them to be remembered, while reflecting these forward and planning to regain the splendor of those days, all while continuing to place importance on the new. This new academy would be a hybrid of old academic practices set within the requirements of the old, an evolution from the original fertile roots of the Intronati. Fittingly, the *academici* saw this in terms of growth as well.

The same metaphor of plant life and growth that we saw in the Constitution and other Intronati documents throughout their lifetime appeared in this oration as well. Introducing the *Oration*, Scipione began by describing the pain felt when one witnessed "some noble work of Nature [perish], or some great creation of art that has been used up," arguing that the only consolation for this would be to see that item rebuilt to its

former glory.⁴⁵⁷ Clearly, given the occasion and the subject of the *Oration*, this noble structure was meant to be the academy – a most noble and, apparently, natural work of art, cultivated by the early *academici*. At the same time, he argued that freedom, the ability to live one's own life, was the thing most worthy of jealous and covetous thoughts in all the world. For decades, it seems, the *academici* were unable to live up to this ideal but now, happy and content, they could return to their own former practices, those of the "*Academici* of the Intronati, worthy of every honor."⁴⁵⁸ In re-opening the academy, the Intronati could grow new intellectual crops, fertilized by the traditions of the academy, and harvest the fruits of their labor for their own profit.

After many years "buried in the dark," they were uncovered, exposed "to their clear and shining light of reason, newly uncovering their high intellect." Now, in 1603, the Intronati were to return to their previous glory – a return this that would last "not for years, but centuries."⁴⁵⁹ Implicit in this was the idea that the *academici* needed the academy in order to reach their full intellectual potential. Following this argument, during the decades of closure Florentine policies effectively intellectually stunted those who would have otherwise been fertilized by the academy. The Intronati were buried in darkness, only now to emerge and blossom with the spring of the academy's reopening.

Their academic life, however, would not flourish naturally with the reformation of the academy – instead, this event simply marked the beginning of a "journey to the academic practices and their virtuous exercises," given energy by "suns like that of Prudence, of Justice, as of love, and benevolence over the beloved people, explaining the

⁴⁵⁷ BCS L.VIII.41, f 1.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid, f 2.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid, f 1.

light of its fair grace."⁴⁶⁰ The light of such suns, Scipione wrote, would enable the Intronati to serve as guides to the common folk. They would teach the glory of the academy to those set apart from the *academici*, helping to guide all men to the intellectual heights to which they themselves had grown. This brought to the "hearts and minds [of *academici*] incredible pleasure and boldness."⁴⁶¹ But it would not be solely for their own pleasure. By successfully inspiring others to follow their paths, they would pull all of Siena, and then all of Italy, to their own new heights as well.

Re-establishing the academy would take great work. As Scipione claimed, during the "long, deadly age, [the academy] was so much diminished." That age had passed, however, and the new group came together on this occasion in 1603, "with much happy playfulness (*giocondità*)" to reform the academy to its early glory.⁴⁶² As with many other elements of Intronati life, particularly those during the political upheavals of the sixteenth century, playfulness was here juxtaposed with more serious elements of the Intronati experience, as a way of heightening the apparent pleasure grown by the academy as an oasis in a sea of suffering. Just as the relationship between pleasure and misery was related in the treatises on game play, this ludic culture was to revive the Intronati in Siena after decades of a diminished existence. Again, Siennese happiness and accomplishment were related and opposed to Florentine tyranny and destruction.

The tribulations that Scipione referred to included those that directly led to the fall of the Republic of Siena and the closure of the academy. Importantly, he connected this development to a general time of crisis for the Italian people. By summoning the memory

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid, f 2.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid, f 2.

⁴⁶² Ibid, f 3. It is important here to note that he uses the term "academic people" (*accademiche persone*) rather than a gender-determinative descriptor, as this seems to allow for an inclusion in this statement of those that were affiliated with the group but not necessarily members themselves, such as women.

of the invasion from the north, in which "the most cruel Barbarian armies" invaded Italy, "penetrating even unto the sacred dwelling of the Vicar of Christ," he tied the experience of the Intronati to that of all Italians, uniting them all in their experiences and their memories of the tumultuous sixteenth century. Doing so, he positioned them not just amongst the Sienese but amongst all Italians. These "discords, tumults, and wars," he wrote, left "lying broken your [the Intronati's] most worthy studies of literature, and broke more beautiful and virtuous practices."⁴⁶³ By reopening the academy, Scipione proclaimed that the purpose of the academy was "to return to the life of men, the knowledge of their own wellbeing, the intelligence of nobles, and other worthy things, to render them in this life more happy and perfect." By polishing the intellectual activities of nobles, they would work to attain a "form of balance, noble edifices, to found and lift up a Congregation (*Congregatione*) of people." The academy would then take "all of the thorny, cutting (*mordaci*), and harmful thoughts, and sift out of them all of the tiresome, slight, and vain worldly cares."⁴⁶⁴ This was not just for the Intronati, but for all Italians. Their potential success promised hope for a new, peaceful age in which "intellectual activities" would provide balance and an outlet for all. And, of course, the Intronati would lead the way, as did their forefathers.

With such distractions out of the way, and with the "firm intention of making works of the most beautiful exercises, of the most perfect and most serious letters, like Greek and Latin, and still the vulgar Tuscan," the academy could be reborn.⁴⁶⁵ Because "the natural language, noble, and graceful, with the passing of time has grown somewhat wild," he included Greek and Latin for academic usage. Though this *Oration* was meant

⁴⁶³ Ibid, f 4.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid, f 4.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid, f 5.

to celebrate the early academy while reviving the same institution, these reservations about the vernacular language were a marked shift away from the early Intronati, who saw classical languages as closed to women and limited by humanistic traditions. Although embracing the ludic culture of the early decades of the Intronati, this seventeenth-century rebirth was far more traditional in intent than their forefathers. They were not to abandon this wild “new” language, though, as Scipione argued that the academy could help polish the Tuscan tongue and again make it worthy of academic use. Here, Scipione identified reforming and elevating the vernacular language as one of the “new” items on the academy’s agenda. The early Intronati had refined the Tuscan tongue but, just as the intellects of Sieneese men had grown rusty during the dark years without the academy, the fields of intellectual fruits and even the language that fertilized them had, through a lack of gardening, become useless. The Intronati would work to save their world from this disrepair.

Scipione wrote that in this renewal the academy was convening for "the third time."⁴⁶⁶ There are a couple possible explanations for this. He may have been placing the Intronati in the same lineage as the Accademia Grande, which predated the Intronati but had been closed by the date of the latter's foundation in 1525. Alternately, he could have been referring to the informal pause in academic activities that took place due to the battles of 1552-1555 and the decade of turmoil that followed. Importantly, however, Scipione still argued for that original intent of the academy as outlined in the Constitution: to put aside worldly cares in the pursuit of scholarly advancement. Here, however, there was no indication that this separation was to be feigned. After mocking the awkward and overly serious humanists in the original years of the Intronati (as

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, f 4-5.

Scipione himself did in his games treatise), the new Intronati saw this traditional scholastic world as the only place where they could achieve the status they felt they rightly deserved. By speaking of a renewal, ignoring the unofficial academic activities that did take place during the period of absence, Scipione called for a future of traditional literary life for the academy. In his literary life, they could gain the glory previously derived by the noble Sienese through republican virtue, guiding the ravaged peninsula into their academic utopia.

Re-Presenting Siena and the Intronati

In 1603, after several years acting as "vagrant philosophers," these "intellectual pilgrims" gathered anew "to trace the footsteps of the wise, ancient philosophers, expressing their most serious thoughts, and the most true nature of these matters, under some veil." These veils, according to tradition and Bargagli, were to include "Emblems, Symbols, Riddles, and Hieroglyphs."⁴⁶⁷ As the initial formation of the academic emblem and motto alluded to the hidden meanings of Intronati activities, as the shell of the dried pumpkin hid the refined salt within, it would be easy to assume that this would continue to be the ideal of the reformed academy. However, this was not the case. In his description of the *Zucca* and the salt, he stated that as "the Pestles crush and refine the Salt," so it was intended that the Intronati "firmly...and with vigilance and effort together with literary studies, every hour further refine and with continual virtuous acts, make the greatest perfection" of the academy.⁴⁶⁸ Comparing the academy to a "sweet yoke, supported at the neck by [their] very choice," he indicated that this would not be an easy endeavor but, instead, one that would require serious though pleasant work by all

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid, f 5, f 7.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid, f 8.

involved.⁴⁶⁹ Crucially, it would be productive work as they harvested the fruits of their intellectual toil. Nowhere did he hint that the *academici* were to feign disinterest in the real world, nor did he allude to non-academic activities. Scipione probably avoided discussion of subversive elements in Intronati activities in order to avoid disturbing what was undoubtedly a vigilant Medici gaze. Still, there had always been indications in early Intronati writings that deception underlay many of their activities. In this *Oration*, however, Scipione avoided any suggestion that this practice would continue in the new age. Of course, given the inherent nature of deception in the life of the early academy, this may have been assumed.

Games and emblems had played an important role in early Intronati development and come to symbolize the hidden purposes of academic activities. They appeared in Scipione's 1603 *Oration* as well. Rather than discussing his own games treatise, however, he hearkened back to the messages his brother Girolamo offered in his *Dialogo*, particularly in regard to the novelty of the games. In the *Oration*, Scipione specifically highlighted the new cultural inventions of the Intronati games. He agreed with his brother that the Intronati were meant to entertain "lively and noble Women" with forms of dance, song, and other activities that had never before been seen, developing "new and singular manners." He also turned to his brother's treatise for an explanation of how these activities could be combined with games – and how they were used to spread the fame and practices of the Intronati throughout the rest of Italy. As he described, from the gatherings of the Intronati the activities spread and "filled the principle cities of Italy, and the most noble courts of the Italian Princes," where, "like new," they were used to

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid, f 5.

entertain esteemed participants.⁴⁷⁰ Even as Girolamo argued in the years immediately following the fall of the Republic of Siena, Scipione maintained that the spread of games and other “leisurely” activities of the Intronati allowed the Sieneese to maintain a cultural leadership that was different from the civic traditions that had developed in the previously republican city. Again, Intronati games, women, and the new were inextricably combined as central to the Intronati effort to maintain cultural leadership of the Italian peninsula after the fall of Siena itself. While the undertones of challenge and deception were now gone, these activities would have demonstrated that the nobles who had earlier ruled politically were still fit to rule, at least culturally.

In the *Oration* of 1603, Scipione emphasized the Sieneese location of the Intronati, as a crucial defining element in their formation and success. He described the academy as a living thing, soaring upwards into the heavens. While the Intronati grew sky-ward, however, he argued that it was in "the most sweet and most fertile hills in which your *patria* is located." He described this vibrant land that "produces and nourishes singular intellects" the minds of the Intronati, "learning the highest sciences." These same lands "give birth to and bring up the Intronati and [other] bright minds." Just as lakes and seas did with fish, the forests did with their animals, and all living creatures in other natural places, so the Sieneese hills fertilized the brilliant minds of the Intronati.⁴⁷¹ In this new academic *patria*, the natural world was given precedence, continuing to imply that the Intronati themselves were a natural phenomenon, fed by the land and the sky. By focusing on the land in which both the Intronati and Siena developed, rather than the governing body of either the Sieneese or the Florentines, the academic works were

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid, f 16-17.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid, f 9.

necessarily separated from political issues and debates. Instead, the *patria* to which Scipione referred was the academy itself, rather than the former republic of Siena.

Still, the Intronati needed intellectual freedom provided by the government to thrive. Though Scipione connected the academy to both the heavens and the earth, he did not mention Siena or the Florentines as the *Oration* progressed into the world of men. Instead, Scipione generically argued that the academy depended on "the quality of the public government, under which we all live; of Princes that are good, just, liberal, lovers of the *belle lettere* and of the studious."⁴⁷² Coming after decades of closure due to the judgment of a prince, it is hard to read this without interpreting it as a judgment against the Medici who had not been just in their laws – and a suggestion that the current generation of rulers were different by allowing their reformation. Given their situation, Scipione seemed to be contrasting the experience of control by a "prince" to their more favorable experience under what he may have seen as a true republic, as he argued, that it was under "a worthily amiable communal government of this City that this Academy took its life."⁴⁷³ The Intronati, re-emerging after decades as a potentially underground group, accepted that they must be more moderate than they had been before. Still, they remembered that it was not until an unjust prince had seized power in Siena that their initial life was suspended.

Scipione never specified exactly what happened to cause the academy's earlier life to be cut short. Addressing an audience of Intronati on the explicit occasion of the academy's new start, he never mentioned the reason why they needed to reform, why the Intronati had been hibernating in the Tuscan hills for so many decades. This was an

⁴⁷² Ibid, f 9.

⁴⁷³ Ibid, f 10.

interesting choice. As we saw in earlier chapters, *academici* used various facades to disguise alternative purposes of the academy and its activities. However, this subterfuge was rarely acknowledged openly and many forms of deception and challenge only become apparent when analyzing recurrent themes in Intronati practices. Even before the ban on Sieneese academies, the Intronati knew that their gatherings could easily bring the ire not only of the Florentines but also the primary regulatory body of the day, the Church. Scipione did not openly express his dissatisfaction with certain elements of the history of the Intronati – in this case, he simply skimmed over the fact that the academy had not been allowed to assemble for close to half a century. Instead, he left an unspoken message of judgment against the Florentines. In their years away from an active public life, they had learned that tact was necessary in order to survive.

The idea that the academy could be a new republic (though under the rule of a Prince, of course, as well as an academic prince in the Archintronato) runs throughout this passage. Other *academici* and other academies had used similar terms to describe similar groups. Sperone Speroni, the noted Infiammato with whom Alessandro Piccolomini worked extensively during his years in Padua, had done so years earlier. During an oration regarding his election as *principe* of the Infiammatti, Speroni promised to observe the laws of the academy "as a good and true prince of this new republic, not just for the six months that I command but also for the remainder of my life."⁴⁷⁴ In an age in which republics were increasingly being snuffed out throughout the peninsula, a new form of republican life based on academic brotherhood was growing, fertilized by soil containing the rotting remains of former city-states.

⁴⁷⁴ Of course, this was after Sperone resisted travelling to Padua at all in order to be sworn into this position. Sperone Speroni, 1989, III: 251-252

Around the time of the Intronati's suppression, Scipione's brother Girolamo had written that academies needed two things to survive: the "first is the protection of those who govern, while the other is the favor of the most important women."⁴⁷⁵ Scipione seemed to remember this passage as he passed directly from his discussion of the necessity of support from either princes or republics to the role of women in the health of academies. On "the occasion of the planting of the academy and its taking root," he wrote, "the beauty and the elevated minds of noblewomen" served as a "not slight" inspiration for the founding Intronati, comparing this relationship to that of Plato to Aspasia and Diotima.⁴⁷⁶ Doing so, he not only tied the role of women within the academy to the ancients, thereby giving legitimacy to this practice, but in his manner of doing so he hearkened back to earlier works of the Intronati, a demonstration of his desire to return to the original intents and purposes of the academy at least in this area, but with limits. Women played important roles as muses, guardians of moral character, and judges for the Intronati throughout the sixteenth century. In this refounding, women were to continue as important figures. However, as Scipione focused on how they inspired the *academici*, rather than their own intellectual activities, he cast them in a more traditional role. Editing out the progressive arguments of the early Intronati, he ignored their own intellectual activities and potential.

Still, his discussion of women may have been considered controversial in his day. For a variety of possible reasons, historians have noted that women throughout the peninsula took a decided step back from the intellectual stage in the seventeenth century. Instead of continuing to focus on women, Scipione turned to less problematic subjects for

⁴⁷⁵ Girolamo Bargagli, *Dialogo*, 52-3.

⁴⁷⁶ BCS L.VIII.41, f 10.

the academy. As the Constitution of the Intronati called for members to study nearly every subject under (and including) the sun, Scipione argued that members should study: "the highest and most beautiful exercises, and most fine languages: and likewise with the most ingenious poetry, and of other equally eloquent artifices, without neglecting astrology, cosmography, history...and of other literary accompaniments...and nothing less than the so noble, so profitable moral doctrines."⁴⁷⁷

Scipione had argued much of this earlier, leading a reader to speculate regarding why he felt it important enough to restate what he had already said – or to quickly distract from the earlier role of women. Directly following a discussion of the importance of women to the academy, it could be that Scipione intended this *Oration* to provide a more conservative guideline for academic activities than the actions and activities of the early generation. The Intronati was now to serve as the literary academy it claimed to be, rather than an inspiration for radical social change – though the focus on academic life itself could have radical purposes. By avoiding some of the more revolutionary aspects of that life in order to satisfy any Florentines or other outsiders in the audience, he would have avoided suspicion. However, as the seventeenth-century Intronati maintained a more conservative presence than had the academy of the sixteenth century, this gave them the potential to serve as cultural guides for all, including the Florentines. Focusing on the literary practice of the academy, just as outlined in the Constitution, he argued that in meetings, *academici* were "to read lectures, debate the conclusions, engage in discourses, to recite elegant Orations [such as the one he was delivering to this audience], well-educated poetry," and the like – all pre-submitted to the *Censori*, of course. The logistics

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, f 12.

of the reformed academy were not to change, though it seems the very personality of the Intronati had grown mild and tame over time and many hardships.⁴⁷⁸

Playing on Stage

Throughout Scipione's *Oration*, he consciously and explicitly relied on the history of the academy and its memories as he attempted to shape its future. While the more serious purposes and practical considerations of that past were clearly important, he did not want the academy to forget that the previous generation of Intronati had been considerably active during that annual period of topsy-turvy celebration, Carnival. Particularly, Scipione focused on theater as the primary legacy of the early Intronati. Fittingly, the event Scipione recalled in order to demonstrate the carnevalesque element of their past was what the Intronati remain most known for today: theater and, specifically, their play *Gl'Ingannati*. Frequently, the language the Intronati used to describe their theatrical endeavors was very similar to that they used to describe their games but, as we have found, that does not mean that either was not taken seriously. Rita Belladonna's words describing their theater, as written in "an atmosphere of enlightened dilettantism," could just as easily describe their games.⁴⁷⁹ Scipione described that Intronati plays were "done in gaudy [fashion], for art, adorned and on a public stage, but no less worthy [for it, such as] our most pleasant Comedy entitled *Gl'Ingannati*," continuing to claim that in artfulness and gracefulness of style it was representative of the best of those seen throughout Italy at the time.⁴⁸⁰ In Scipione's *Oration*, both theater and games continued to be important vehicles for the transmission of Intronati practices and fame. Already by this point, *Gl'Ingannati* was widely accepted as the academy's greatest

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid, f 14.

⁴⁷⁹ Belladonna, 8.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid, f 16.

work from their early years. Focusing on that play in his *Oration*, Scipione helped to ensure that this would remain to be true. And in many ways, he succeeded.

To this day, *Gl'Ingannati*, or *The Deceived*, is the best-known comedy written and produced by the Intronati. Many speculate that William Shakespeare largely imitated this play in his own *Twelfth Night*. It is fitting that, to mark the newly completed renovation of the Teatro dei Rinnovati in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico in 2009, a local theater group staged a modern production of *Gl'Ingannati*. First written to be performed for carnival of 1532, it seems the authorship was a group project of the Intronati, rather than an individual composition. As was typical of Intronati comedies, the play was dedicated to the women of Siena as an apology for the actions of *academici* in a sacrifice to love staged earlier in the year – the same *Sacrificio* discussed in the third chapter.

The orator of *Gl'Ingannati*, who implied that he was not an Intronato himself, admitted that it might be a strange play but that the women for whom it was written and performed should enjoy it nonetheless. Introducing the play, he claimed that the Intronati had "shoved me out here as their ambassador, orator, legate, lawyer, or poet" – that is, he was all of those things that the Intronati were and claimed to be interested in themselves.⁴⁸¹ In this forum, however, it seems as if it was not suitable for them to represent themselves as such, as in this game they posed as miserable supplicants, begging for some reprieve by the women. Addressing them, the orator explained that the play was titled *The Deceived* not because the women have ever fooled the Intronati, but instead "because almost all of the characters involved are deceived."⁴⁸² For a group that

⁴⁸¹ Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero, Ed. and Trans., *Five Comedies from the Italian Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 206.

⁴⁸² *Ibid*, 207.

embraced an origin story that involved their illustrious yet dazed founding fathers, it is curious indeed that they would not want to be seen as deceived as well.

The matter of deception, however, may be more complicated than this. By bringing the attention of the audience to the title of the play, the *Intronati* seemed to broach the idea that other deceptions may be present in the comedy as well. Though set in Modena, *Gl'Ingannati* addressed many contemporary Sieneese concerns. This same orator, several moments later, announced that yes, there was a Spaniard in the play "whose strange talk will ruin your pleasure a bit and make it hard to follow our plot." The women were advised, however, to ignore him – ostensibly due to the strange language he spoke that they could not follow. Importantly, however, in the play the character of the Spaniard spoke a mixture of Italian and Spanish that the women would have been able to understand – language was clearly not the reason they were to ignore him. Instead, the orator told the ladies to only concern themselves with the Italians on stage. Though they may have Spanish interlocutors, the orator claimed that Italians were the only people that mattered. Still, they set the play at the same time that factionalism in Siena threatened the city's stability and just several years before the Sieneese requested the aid of the Spanish Charles V to maintain peace within the city walls. By ignoring the Spanish character, the play may also have been requesting that the Sieneese audience ignore their need for the Spanish, to ignore the chaos of their city while imagining it to be the serene republic described in many utopian statements.

The play itself shares many characteristics with other Renaissance Italian comedies. It opens with an older man, Gherardo, discussing his upcoming nuptials with the young daughter, Lelia, of his friend Virginio. Gherardo is concerned with getting his

hands on Lelia quickly, before Virginio changes his mind. She, unbeknownst to Gherardo, had already fallen in love with a man closer to her age, Flamminio, who happens to be infatuated with another woman, Isabella. In an effort to remain close to Flamminio, Lelia has disguised herself as a man and found a way into Flamminio's service. There, she serves as his go-between, carrying messages between him and his beloved who, thinking Lelia a man, promptly falls in love with her.⁴⁸³ At this point, Lelia's twin brother, Fabrizio, having been way-laid by the siege of Rome several years earlier in 1527, finally returns to Modena. Lelia's plan begins to unravel as several people uncover her subterfuge and, at this moment, Virginio mistakes Fabrizio for Lelia in disguise and locks "her" up with Isabella for safekeeping. Isabella, of course, believes Fabrizio is really Lelia's masculine alter ego, seduces him, and gives him the gift of her maidenhood. Shortly thereafter all is revealed, Fabrizio weds Isabella and Flamminio, so taken with the loyalty of Lelia and her *virtù*, immediately weds her – effectively freeing her from her betrothal to the flummoxed Gherardo. Thus, in predictably Renaissance fashion, the comedy ends with a wedding.

Initially, *Gl'Ingannati* appears to be predictable in many other matters as well, containing many other common characteristics of sixteenth-century Italian comedies: cross-dressing and deception, youths making fools of the elderly for love and lust, sexual and gender-based transgressions, displays of *virtù* by unexpected characters, a pedant pedaling his wares (that is, his learning) with unfortunate results, concerns with dowries, convents, honor, changing cultural norms, and representations of religious individuals

⁴⁸³ For more about this relationship, see also Laura Giannetti's *Lelia's Kiss: Imagining Gender, Sex, and Marriage in Italian Renaissance Comedy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), particularly pgs 51-54.

(and monuments) not appearing religious at all.⁴⁸⁴ However, a closer reading of the play reveals tensions in the Sieneese sociopolitical world in the early days of the Intronati.

Though the plot of *Gl'Ingannati* is highly convoluted, the action develops quickly as the play builds to a final revelation of the various deceptions. However, in the middle of the comedy, the action pauses for a very long scene that does little to develop the plot itself but, rather, provides the playwrights with ample opportunity to mock various peoples. In the scene, Fabrizio (the long-lost twin of Lelia) has just entered Modena and he, a servant, and his tutor (aptly named The Pedant) seek both food and lodging. Representatives of two inns, the Mirror and the Joker, both try to sell their accommodations to the trio by advertising, respectively, "sweetbreads, mortadella, wine from the mountains, and above all you'll enjoy fine, delicate things" and "lots of food and you can forget delicate things."⁴⁸⁵ The travelers are tired from a long day and just want food. Fabrizio's servant claims that "too many fine things are for the Florentines."⁴⁸⁶ In context, the implication is clearly that more sensible folks enjoy living life and indulging in its pleasures while the Florentines are too concerned with pretenses to enjoy such things.

The Florentines were not the only people insulted in the subsequent rapid-fire round of stereotyping. The name of one potential inn, The Joker, is used with particular relish. Laura Giannetti and Guido Ruggiero point out in their translation that, as the Joker (*Matto*) "was the wild card in many card games and cards were often played at inns, the name would have indicated a congenial if not overly fine inn. The Italian term conveys all three meanings – wild card, joker (trickster), and fool – and the ambiguity is regularly

⁴⁸⁴ For a deeper discussion of many of these issues, see Giannetti and Ruggiero, particularly xxiv-xxix.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid, 244-245.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid, 245.

played for a laugh."⁴⁸⁷ As the subsequent dialogue reveals, all of these meanings were at play in *Gl'Ingannati*. First, the players take one more jab at the Florentines, saying that in the last three years the Florentines had switched from patronizing the Mirror to the Joker. As Giannetti and Ruggiero also point out, at the first production of this play in 1532, the Florentines had been back under control of the Medici family for exactly three years. This then was probably not a coincidence.⁴⁸⁸ While the Intronati surely had their reasons for mocking the Florentines during the original production of *Gl'Ingannati*, Scipione's intention in focusing on this play in 1603 seems to have had similar motivations.

This is just the beginning of the stereotypes, however. The Germans were said to go to an unrepresented inn named the Pig, the Neapolitans to another named the Love, the Spanish to the Bandit – all revolving around current stereotypes regarding these groups.⁴⁸⁹ Additionally, while "some old cardinals out of habit have stayed [at the Mirror]...all the new ones belong at the Joker."⁴⁹⁰ This is clearly an allusion to corruption charges frequently levied at the Catholic Church just as the northern Reformation was getting under way. The Sieneese themselves, and the Intronati particularly, came under frequent scrutiny for their radically heterodox beliefs and many in the following decades fled Italy to avoid persecution for heresy.⁴⁹¹ After this pandering to stereotypes, one innkeeper did feel the need to clarify that not all visitors to Modena stay at these establishments. The exception, he says, are "the Sieneese, who are so friendly with the Modenese that when they visit they have a hundred friends who put them up in their

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid, 245 FN 50.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid, 245 FN 53.

⁴⁸⁹ Giannetti and Ruggiero explain that Germans were frequently represented as pigs and the Neapolitans broadcast themselves as talented lovers. 246-248, FN 56, 57, 61.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid, 247.

⁴⁹¹ While this dissertation largely avoids the doctrinal issues involved in Intronati literature and activities, there is much interesting material and much work remains to be done on the religious leanings of the academy.

homes."⁴⁹² Similarly, they were reputed several scenes later to be "great lovers of law and fair play and friends of our city and above all else good men."⁴⁹³ While some Intronati messages required gestures towards subtlety, they were welcome to openly praise themselves, to themselves, in these same activities, at least in theatrical or fictionalized manners.

The Pedant is an interesting character in *Gl'Ingannati* for several reasons. The play, and thus the character, came from the imaginations of *academici* who surely had the presence of mind to be aware that many of their own activities might be considered by many as quite pedantic.⁴⁹⁴ Even with his obnoxious usage of Latin, the Pedant is a somewhat likable fellow, following his pupil through war and other dangers, and expressing his desire to return home. For, he claims, "there is not a sweeter thing that one's fatherland."⁴⁹⁵ This is something that must have fallen upon sympathetic ears in the Sienese audience during the original performance as it became increasingly likely that their city might be lost and, already, many had undergone alternating periods of exile, according to which group controlled the city at any given moment. The character of the Pedant is both a representation of the positive characteristics of intellectuals (that is, stands-in for the Intronati), particularly due to his loyalty, and also a mockery of the stereotypical representation of scholars, as found in Scipione's *Trattenimenti*, attempting to demonstrate their superiority as intellectuals.⁴⁹⁶ The Intronati were those that played

⁴⁹² Ibid, 248.

⁴⁹³ Ibid, 262.

⁴⁹⁴ For a discussion of the stock character of the pedant in Renaissance theater and the self-referential and self-mocking nature of this character in many comedies, see A. Stauble, "Una ricerca in corso: il personaggio del pedante nella commedia cinquecentesca" in *Il teatro italiano del Rinascimento*, ed. Maristella de Panizza Lorch, Milan 1980

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid, 243.

⁴⁹⁶ That is, "like birds (*augelli*) that do not dare to see the rays of the sun, spend most of their time shut up in their dark rooms, racking and cracking their brains over their subtle studies, tedious and bizarre, and

with learning while also reveling in classical education and retaining a self-derogatory humor. They were poking fun at themselves while also poking fun at stereotypical academics, whom the Pedant represented. It was with a knowing wink and a smile that this character existed.

After spouting incorrect Latin quotations in conversation (which the Intronati would never do), the Pedant's antics began to grate on the nerves of his colleagues and he was verbally accosted: "Hey! Pedant, archpedant, pedant, greatest pedant! Is there any insult worse than 'pedant'? Is there any worse type? Is there a greater fraud? Is there a worse profession? Maybe it wouldn't be so bad if they didn't go around all puffed up because others call them 'Messer So and So' or 'Professor Such and Such,' or if they deigned to respond to someone who doffs his hat to them before they're a mile past. 'Good day to you, Sir Crap, Sir Turd, Professor Diarrhea, Sir Shit!'"⁴⁹⁷ Clearly, the Intronati did not intend to be this sort of pedant and perhaps that was their point in casting this pedant as such a stock character, to demonstrate what they were not. The Pedant's interests in young boys was also typical of stereotypes about traditional humanists. As the purpose of this play was to appeal to the women they had "offended" in the sacrifice, this stereotype was not one that they would want to associate with themselves.

Many other characters in *Gl'Ingannati* show a decisive self-consciousness about their own identities and actions, as demonstrated by a fretful Virginio, who fears that his dishonor may become known. In addition to becoming "the subject of common gossip; to be unable to show my face in public; to be pointed out by children in the streets; to be

when they do leave, appearing poorly dressed, disordered, and with sloppy hair and beard, frowning eyes, foul faces and looking almost dazed, they wander about" aimlessly." Scipione Bargagli, *Trattenimenti*, 106.
⁴⁹⁷ Giannetti and Ruggiero, 259.

held as a warning by the old," he also feared that he would be "put in a comedy by the Intronati."⁴⁹⁸ Here we see the Intronati's tendency to not take themselves all that seriously – at least on the surface. They were fully capable of poking fun at themselves. Here, the authors – that is, the Intronati – seem to admit that they use real events for inspiration in the construction of their comedic and perhaps other literary efforts. They also encouraged the perception that their judgment was a matter of value.

For the Intronati, comedies were a multi-purpose genre, similar to games. While they were a place in which to use stereotypes to mock groups with whom they had conflict or rivalries, they were also used politically as ways to appeal to those in power for their favor. Frequently, this was done by presenting these comedies for production at notable events such as visitations and weddings. Such was the case with Alessandro Piccolomini's first comedy, *Amor Costante*. Scipione felt this comedy significant enough to include in his 1603 *Oration* as well. He wrote there that "upon the coming of Charles V into this Country, to help represent a sign of honorable joy," the Intronati planned to stage the play.⁴⁹⁹ Even in comedies composed for political reasons, however, many of the stock characters and characteristics common in other Intronati theater remained constant. In an introduction to Piccolomini's *Discorso*, Eugenio and Franco Tomasi described Intronati theatrical productions as a "literary game for the female public."⁵⁰⁰ Composed in 1531 – that is, the same year Piccolomini became a member of the Intronati – at such a young age, *Amor Costante* would have been quite the introduction to the international

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid, 248-249.

⁴⁹⁹ BCS L.VIII.41, f 26.

⁵⁰⁰ Refini and Tomasi, 4

theatrical and political stage had the production gone as planned.⁵⁰¹ Unfortunately, the plans fell through and Piccolomini's comedy was not performed to welcome Charles V to Italy.

Intronati comedies also served as academic currency with other literary groups throughout the peninsula. Significantly, Scipione wrote that Alessandro Piccolomini composed the play *L'Alessandro* for presentation to the "*Padovani*" – that is, the *Infiammati*.⁵⁰² Described above, the *Infiammati* were a contemporary group located in Padua that, some speculate, ran its course quickly specifically because of their desire to imitate the Intronati and conduct their affairs in the local dialect. Curiously, while Scipione attested that Alessandro wrote *L'Alessandro* for "the *Padovani*," modern scholars have speculated that the play could have been an attempt on his part to resurrect the Intronati itself, claiming that the academy had already gone into decline.⁵⁰³ Indeed, we know that Alessandro was present in Siena when he wrote the play, between stints in Padua and Rome. By ignoring this possibility as the inspiration behind Piccolomini's play, Scipione may have been attempting to brush over the fact that the Intronati had ever been anything but lively and robust during their initial years. Continuing the Renaissance practice of "borrowing" from other literary products, much of *L'Alessandro* is borrowed from various tales in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. In turn, it was also "borrowed" by other playwrights for their own comedies, most notably George Chapman's *May-Day* at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In their comedies, the Intronati succeeded in

⁵⁰¹ Andrea Baldi, *Tradizione e Parodia in Alessandro Piccolomini* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore, 2001). Cerreta, *Alessandro Piccolomini*.

⁵⁰² BCS L.VIII.41, f 26-27.

⁵⁰³ Belladonna,

creating works that would spread their name and knowledge of their accomplishments far and wide. Perhaps this was why Scipione chose to focus on the academy's plays.

Returning to Scipione's *Oration*, it seems significant that Scipione chose not to name the *Infiammati*, instead referring to them as *Padovani*. Alessandro's involvement with this group was important, well-known, and the academy itself had received much attention by 1603 – even though it had lasted for only a short time. Indeed, Scipione barely referred to this production of the comedy before immediately continuing to say that *Alessandro* "was then heard as well in many other principle Cities of Italy, and finally in King Henry the Second of France's own room."⁵⁰⁴ Even while ushering in the reopening of the Academy of the Intronati (which he, of course, mentioned by name), Scipione attempted to distance the group from other academies while connecting them with courts and other noble, even royal, organizations throughout the rest of the continent. With this shift, Scipione provided more evidence that, even in this new founding after a long hibernation, the Intronati saw themselves on par with external political institutions rather than other academies.

As with the other Intronati plays, *L'Alessandro* also presented a unique and important insight into Sienese life during the early days of the Intronati. Interestingly for this play, we have two prologues extant from two separate performances of *L'Alessandro* by the Intronati for its audiences. As in *Gl'Ingannati*, the first prologue is explicitly given by a man claiming not to be an Intronato himself but rather sent by the Intronati to present the play to the women in the audience. The play, he says, was named after the character *Alessandro*, who does not play a great role in the comedy. The orator expressly declines to explain why such a minor character provided the name of the play. Some have

⁵⁰⁴ BCS L.VIII.41, f 27.

speculated that the Alessandro in question was a stand-in for the playwright, as a voice of reason in this story of intrigue and deception. The plot centers on two star-crossed lovers who had been separated at a young age in Palermo and, as luck would have it, both found themselves living in Pisa disguised as the opposite sex. In yet another instance of sexual desire believed to be placed on a member of the "wrong" sex, the lovers once again become enraptured with one another, even in their respective disguises. In the end, all is revealed and they, along with other characters of *virtù*, come to a happy conclusion. Gender confusion is a common theme in Intronati comedies, as characters frequently found themselves experiencing sexual desire for an individual they believed to be of their own sex. This left them somewhat troubled but finally accepting of their feelings. While gender confusion and perceived same-sex desire was common in these early comedies; here it seems to further the argument that in many situations in early Intronati life, men and women were frequently interchangeable.

Written in 1545, some have argued that *L'Alessandro* is evidence of Alessandro Piccolomini's support for Cosimo I's rule of Pisa and evidence that he believed Siena would do well to submit themselves to the Medici before situations in the city became more dire. The evidence of this is slight and seems more inspired by supporting arguments generally unrelated to Siena or the Intronati.⁵⁰⁵ Instead, the prologues provide more evidence about the environment of Siena where the play was performed. Focusing on the unsatisfactory interactions between men and women at the time, these prologues

⁵⁰⁵ Included in the evidence is Messer Fabrizio's statement that "Fine minds are flourishing in this new age." (Belladonna, 71 and footnote 48) There is no context that Fabrizio is referring to the city itself, a new age following Pisa's fall to Florence, or any mention of Cosimo or his policies. Instead, it seems more likely that Alessandro was referring to something with which he had personal experience, such as universities and academies throughout the peninsula, the networks of scholars that they facilitated, and the intellectual milieu in which they increasingly thrived.

also provide an interesting insight into some of the religious quarrels of the day in Siena. Addressing the many people who claimed comedies were inappropriate for one reason or another, the prologue asks why those who generally prayed at Santo Spirito at that time of the evening, those who had been so vocally opposed to the play, were in the audience, apparently enjoying it just as much as any other person. A Dominican church, Santo Spirito was the center of the *giovannelli* who were instrumental in bringing Aonio Paleario to trial for heresy.⁵⁰⁶

Public Relations for the Intronati

While Scipione focused on comedies in his *Oration*, he also discussed other genres of writing intended to spread knowledge of Intronati accomplishments throughout Italy. To bring further glory to the academy, Scipione cited the many volumes of collected poetry that had included works by the Intronati.⁵⁰⁷ All of these products were significant to the external perception of both the academy and the city of Siena, intended not just to entertain themselves and foreigners alike but also to spread knowledge of their great and glorious academy. In lectures outside of the Sienese academic setting, individual Intronati also found other ways to proclaim the superiority of everything *senese* and, increasingly, this meant discussions of the powerful intellects and strength of character of their women. In these forums, women affiliated with the Intronati were not only presented as rivaling the men in their literary production but also in their military might, as tales continued to develop regarding the three noblewomen who led battalions of their fellow women in defense of the city during the wars of 1552-1555.

⁵⁰⁶ Salvatore Caponetto, *Aonio Paleario (1503-1570) e la Riforma protestante in Toscana* (Turin: Claudiana Editrice, 1979).

⁵⁰⁷ BCS L.VIII.41, f 27.

While Scipione took pains throughout the majority of his *Oration* to not discuss other Italian academies, instead focusing on Intronati relationships with political figures and organizations, he eventually gave space to non-Sienese academies. This was in an effort to demonstrate that the Academy of the Intronati held a rightful place "amongst the principle voices" of academies on the peninsula. According to Scipione, the Intronati constantly studied the other Italian academies in order to compare themselves and imitate their positive traits while also recognizing their weaknesses. Amongst the academies Scipione included "the Infiammati of Padua," specifying that their own Alessandro Piccolomini had helped to found this group. Earlier, Scipione had referred to this group simply as the Padovani as he attempted to show the Intronati's rightful place amongst the political elite. Here, however, and perhaps due to the association of Piccolomini with the group, Scipione claimed that if there was ever anything bad to say about the Infiammati, it had never come to his ears. He relegated all other academies to items on a list, including "the Affidati of Pavia, the Insensati of Perugia, the Innorminati of Parma, the Gelati of Bologna, the Alterati of Florence, the Incitati [of Rome], the Rinovati of Rome, the Catenati of Macerata, and that [academy] in Genova of the Risvegliati." He acknowledged that in his own time there were many others that he had not named. However, Scipione claimed his only purpose in listing these groups was to "declare how beautiful, how good, how worthy, how pleasant, how honorable, [and] how true" were those academies the early academy associated themselves with. Therefore, merely acknowledging that they existed sufficed. By simply listing these groups, he minimized their accomplishments, particularly in comparison with the extensive achievements of the Intronati Truly, he wrote, there were "many, many private people from various countries,

and nations" involved in "serious sciences, that honor the name of the Intronati."

Similarly, there were many "great men with *gentilezza di sangue*" that regarded the Intronati with great valor.⁵⁰⁸

In 1603, as Scipione Bargagli celebrated the re-opening of the academy, he also mourned the many years that had gone by without the Intronati to inspire intellectual development and collaboration. This was particularly visible, he argued, for those traveling through Siena. As he complained, "many voices in this time pass through the city, [and] from the mouths of all," the Sieneese seemed to want to display their ignorance.⁵⁰⁹ Of course, it was for the purpose of guiding these ignorant foreigners that many earlier Intronati documents argued that they needed to include visiting dignitaries and other traveling *academici* in their activities. While these "foreigners" may have been able to read a select amount of academic literature at their leisure while at home, it was only in the academic meetings of the Intronati that they could witness the true spirit of the academy and the rhetorical excellence that they encouraged. In his final years, having seen his city fall and his academy closed, Scipione was disappointed in the intellect of those drawn to Siena. Both in the founding period and in later iterations of the academy, the intent was to keep the *academici* themselves from becoming ignorant. While he repeatedly underlined this purpose in his 1603 *Oration*, this reborn academy still wanted to serve as cultural leaders, long after the political fall of Siena.

⁵⁰⁸ BCS L.VIII.41, f 33-35. Scipione continued to name some of these men: "Pavol Giovio; da loro lo Scelto dinominato: fu di questi ne' primi anni Teofilo Coccaio; l'Estremo; Alfonso Duca d'Amalfi; il Desiato; Alfonso Marchese del Vasto, il Pomposo; il Principe di Salerno; l'Ostinato; Mons.ri di Tolone; il Tacito; il Sig.e Camillo Colonna l'Affadigato; il Sig.e Ernando di Mendozza; il Proveduto." Many of these are academic names from other groups and I have not yet had the opportunity to determine the identities of many of them. However, it is obvious in this context that they were important men and that the Intronati audience listening to Scipione would have recognized the members of this list.

⁵⁰⁹ BCS L.VIII.41, f 6.

In conclusion to the *Oration*, Scipione returned to the metaphor of plant life. Calling on the current generation of *academici*, he appealed for action in promoting the academies and, "since the land is arable," called for the Intronati to leave behind the years in which the fertile soil was left to lie dormant, resuming to work and "exercise it with the hoe and the spade." Looking at the previous years of Intronati life as example, the new academy would lead to a pleasant return to the activities and works of literature that had made the academy so fruitful in the previous century.⁵¹⁰ Scipione Bargagli's *Oratione in lode dell'Accademia degl'Intronati* was a call to action, a forum for waxing poetic about the vitality of the original academy, and a way to position the Intronati, and Siena, in the new academic and political world in which they found themselves. In 1603, the academy remained a unified alternative to political entanglements, one that provided the potential for individual *academici* to differentiate themselves from the masses of Italian aristocrats and to prove their worth in an entirely different arena than the traditional political realm.

The Death of an Ideal: The Passing of Alessandro Piccolomini

While Scipione Bargagli's 1603 *Oration* was a perfect excuse to present his idealized memory of the original years of the Accademia degli Intronati, it was not the only time he presented such an oration featuring complimentary remembrances of the early Intronati. Twenty-four years earlier, Scipione had presented an oration on a much less ideal occasion: the death of his friend and fellow Intronato Alessandro Piccolomini. For Scipione, it was an opportunity to praise the man who, more than any other, represented the ideals which other *academici*, in Siena and elsewhere, strove to imitate. This oration, however, rather than ushering in a new age of academic glory, marked the

⁵¹⁰ BCS L.VIII.41, f 41.

passing of an age, even after that age had been officially banned by the Medici. Coming over a decade after the closure of Sieneese academies, Alessandro Piccolomini's death and this oration still proclaimed the worth and power of such institutions and the values they instilled.

Noting that his eyes had barely dried from grieving the loss of Alessandro's cousin Marcantonio, earlier in 1579, Scipione set out to describe the accomplishments and impact of the younger Piccolomini. This death oration, in many ways, formed the foundation of how others were to remember the noted *academico*, cleric, scientist, playwright, poet, and general man of letters. The suspension of the academy certainly colored this oration. Because of it, Scipione could not explicitly address this death oration to his fellow Intronati. However, a great deal of it focuses on Alessandro's academic accomplishments and, like he would do again in 1603, he placed his theatrical compositions on center stage. Though originally composed for a local Sieneese audience, it was quickly published by a press in Bologna the same year, and copies made it as far abroad as France.⁵¹¹

From the beginning, Scipione spoke in grand terms, calling for his listeners to cease their tears and sobs in order that he may describe how, when the heavens opened and Alessandro Piccolomini was born, this was not just a great gift for the Piccolomini family but, rather, "our *patria*," along with all of Tuscany and Italy.⁵¹² Consistent with the teachings of the Intronati from the Constitution on, Scipione argued that the nobility of a man does "not have origins in, nor consist of, the antiquity of his ancestors," nor was nobility something that grew naturally in a certain geographic area, as a gift of *Fortuna*.

⁵¹¹ Scipione Bargagli, *Oratione di Scipion Bargagli Nella morte del Reverendissimo Mons. Alessandro Piccolomini Arcivescovo di Patrasso, & Eletto di Siena, & c.* (Bologna: Per Giovanni Rossi, 1579).

⁵¹² *Ibid*, f 3r.

Rather, nobility consisted of the *virtù* that one used in his or her work "uncovering the goodness of the soul, the force of the heart, the sharpness of the spirit," and the many other qualities that, through proper nourishment, would earn a man nobility. Of course, he did claim men could benefit by the *bellezza di sangue* of his ancestors and glory in the nobility of both his father and, importantly, mother.⁵¹³ In this oration on the life of Alessandro Piccolomini, Scipione echoed the basic tenets of the Intronati, putting Alessandro forth as an example of one who epitomized the need to continually better oneself while honoring the accomplishments and legacy of his well-known family.

Though Scipione stressed that Alessandro's nobility was due to his own discipline and endeavors in the various fields of study appropriate to a man of his station (poetry, rhetoric, philosophy, mathematics, astrology, and the others listed in Alessandro's *Institutione*), Scipione rhetorically asked how "the young Alessandro obtained the desire for true knowledge, for noble worth." For Scipione, the answer was clear: the credit for Alessandro's desire for learning, which led to his nobility, was owed to the most shrewd members of the Intronati.⁵¹⁴ Implying that without the academy, Alessandro would have done nothing with his life, Scipione made a strong argument that the current closure of the academy was harmful not only to the members themselves but also to their contemporaries who would have benefitted from their accomplishments. Here as well, Scipione did not specify how or why the academies were closed. In Scipione's words, during his life Alessandro had "passed from a life of near ignorance to that of science, changing his own name to that of *Stordito*." Scipione explained that Alessandro chose this name for himself after becoming stupefied by a subject he uncovered in his studies.

⁵¹³ Ibid, 3v-4r.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid, 4v.

Not wanting to feel so ignorant again, he continued his work, which led naturally to his desire, above all else, to cultivate the Tuscan language and promote Tuscan authors.⁵¹⁵ Further tying academic learning to virtuous life, Scipione claimed that the thirst that led Alessandro to desire "to leave the house to learn science" also led to his acquisition of "wisdom and prudence."⁵¹⁶ Clearly, the effects of the academy benefitted Alessandro personally but also had the potential to generally benefit all of society as well.

Throughout the oration, Scipione's analysis of Alessandro's life turned on his successes and *virtù*, providing evidence that Alessandro gained nobility for himself, rather than relying on the antiquity of his family's noble blood. As evidence for this, Scipione used Alessandro's family name to emphasize the distinction. Discussing Alessandro's role in the success of the Academy of the Inflammati in Padua, as well as the praise given to the various schools, streets, and theaters he touched there, Scipione described "the most great *virtù* of this *PICCOLHOMO*."⁵¹⁷ Coming from the words for "small" and "man," Scipione singularized the typically plural family name to again emphasize that all of the great works of Alessandro were the result of a mortal man's dedication to bettering himself. Without this effort, Alessandro would have remained small and insignificant. Through his hard work, which was only possible due to his affiliation with the Intronati, Alessandro became much more than a small man. Rather, he became an example of what would happen if an *academico* used the Intronati properly as a tool to benefit his own learning. If done properly, his learning would naturally and positively influence those that he encountered. It was a reciprocal relationship, as each individual Intronato would feed his learning back into the academy in order to further the

⁵¹⁵ Ibid, 5r.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid, 5v.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid, 6v.

learning of his fellow *academici* through the weekly meetings and work submissions. It was this serious work, done in the playful setting of the academy, that would benefit not only individual members but the rest of the society in which they lived. Academies led to more *virtù*-ous citizens and stronger cities.

This was, of course, a difficult idea to pose during this period of the academy's formal closure. While the academy could no longer meet, however, it is clear throughout Scipione's oration that its members still thought of themselves as such, and would continue to frame themselves in this light. Though they could no longer gather officially under the protective husk of the *Zucca*, they could still refine their interior salt, still provide new alternatives in a world that continually seemed to take away what they had gathered and distilled, even when time continued to take even the lives of those who had initially breathed life and vibrancy into the academy.

In closing the oration, Scipione described the last sickness Alessandro experienced prior to his death. In Scipione's telling, Alessandro knew from the very onset that this sickness would be a mortal one – perhaps demonstrating that the academic learning achieved in partnership with the academy could lead to knowledge more functional than the philosophy of Aristotle or the movement of the heavens. Accepting his impending death, Alessandro's end served the same role as did his life: as an example for other *Intronati* to follow.

Alessandro Piccolomini and Scipione Bargagli were both noted "first generation" members of the Academy of the *Intronati*. This oration did more than provide testament to the life and proper death of Alessandro. It also illustrated the success that involvement with the *Intronati* could lead to and the deep friendships it would foster. Also included

were gestures towards the new priorities of Siennese noblemen in their new post-republic age. Scipione argued that Alessandro Piccolomini and, by extension, all noblemen were responsible for establishing the very nobility that set them apart from the general *popolo* – a nobility not a hereditary gift provided by blood. Even as the Intronati remained closed, Scipione attempted to shift the mental gaze of his audience towards what the future might hold, to what they might earn for themselves, their brothers in the academy, and, finally, Siena itself.

As a city, they could no longer work to establish their worth through centuries-old traditions that had brought Siena glory in the past. The Intronati had helped to establish a forward-thinking approach to individual and collective responsibility. By continually striving to achieve and learn more, by working incessantly to become more noble, even up to his death, the memory of Alessandro Piccolomini became a reminder of the unknown possibilities that work within the academy made possible. In this way, the very memory of the academy and the example of the first generation of *academici* redirected the gaze of this new generation. It instructed them to quit looking to the past, even past themselves and to the ancients upon which the Renaissance world had been modeled, and to a new future that they could create for themselves that did not rely upon a traditionally republican foundation to achieve fame and, with it, legitimation as proper, *virtù*-ous noblemen. Memory itself became a tool for the new.⁵¹⁸

⁵¹⁸ Dedications in various forms to deceased members of the Intronati and the women affiliated with them are peppered throughout the entirety of the Intronati archive at the Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati di Siena. For poetry (and dialogue in poetic form) dedicated to the memory of Scipione Bargagli, see BCS H.X.12 55r-156r. Throughout this section are similar dedications to his wife Ortenzia at the time of her death and Aurelia Borgesi, the wife of Bellisario Bulgarini. On the death of Antonio Vignali, see BCS L.XI.43 31v

The Legacy of the Women at the Walls⁵¹⁹

As the founding generation of Intronati, and those who knew them personally, passed on, the stories told about the tumultuous period in the middle of the sixteenth century began to take on the feel of legend. Though memories of the male members of the Intronati did come up in these tales, the most significant, and widespread, stories that were told about that generation were those about the women affiliated with the academy. Notably, these frequently involved the "women at the walls" who had defended Siena against the combined armies of Cosimo I and Charles V. While it appears that the wartime stories told about the actions of these women were not based entirely on historical events, the fact that they continued to inspire later generations of Intronati is significant.⁵²⁰

George McClure argues that the mythology that developed around these actions was entwined with the Intronati's historiography of their own parlor games.⁵²¹ He ties the actions of these women leading up to and during the siege of Siena to games through the use of mottoes that each woman carried with her during their militaristic campaign, which were connected to the colors they wore and the sigils they carried. He goes so far as to speculate that it was because of the tradition of *imprese* in academic activities and other Sieneese games that the women may have been inspired to act in the defense of the city in the first place. As evidence, he cites the seventeenth-century Intronato Girolamo Gigli, who described the Sieneese "Amazons" who carried "each her own conceived

⁵¹⁹ "The women at the walls" is George McClure's name for these women. McClure, *Parlour Games*, 48-54.

⁵²⁰ See chapter three for earlier accounts of these women.

⁵²¹ George McClure, *Parlour Games*, 48.

device, [which had been] explicated in the amorous parties."⁵²² Gigli here implies that the mottoes and sigils of the women were those that came from the Intronati *veglie* discussed in the earlier chapter on games. The creation of *imprese* were indeed a part of these gatherings, though there is no evidence to suggest that these symbols supposedly held by the women during the construction of the fortress were specifically derived from these events. However, it is evidence that the activities associated with Intronati games did transcend academic walls (or at least were understood to), even (or especially) during periods of crisis. Also important here was the identity of the man who received this letter from Gigli: a Florentine, the librarian Antonio Magliabechi – evidence that a member of this later generation of Intronati continued to promulgate the stories of the bravery of Sienese women and connect them with activities of the Intronati, even to the descendants of those whom the women at the walls had fought against. Gigli himself most likely did not make the initial speculation that the actions of these women during the conflict were related to Intronati games. Rather, it seems like something that would have been encouraged by the early Intronati themselves. Finally, his observation that these were “amorous” parties seems to allude to the fact that women were involved in these events and, perhaps, that this was no longer the case.

Looking back on the “women at the walls” from the present day, it may seem like these women were challenging notions of femininity, blurring the lines between what it meant to be a proper woman with actions of the traditional man. Contemporaries noticed this as well – and, significantly, lauded their behavior, rather than condemning it. In this case as well as many others discussed throughout this dissertation, women served as

⁵²² Ibid, 51-52. McClure is citing Centorio's account, which includes this letter. Original sources: BCS Y.I.3 128r-129r.

examples to the men. Crucially, even later Sieneese men wanted their readers to think that women led men on the battlefield in militaristic actions – and that this did not threaten their own masculinity. Because of their example, Centorio argued, "all the gentlemen started to do a similar thing and every day there came forth some leading figure with his insignia to the fort in imitation of those valiant women."⁵²³ In this way, even the clergy were led to aid in the defensive efforts.

Other later accounts of Sieneese history demonstrate the continued desire of Sieneese men to glory in the "masculinity" of their women, such as Isidoro Ugurgieri Azzolini's 1649 study of Sieneese cultural history, *Le Pompe Sanesi*.⁵²⁴ Himself a Sieneese *academico* in the Accademico Filomato (an affiliation given nearly equal status in his title page with his professorial responsibilities), it is notable that in the middle of the seventeenth century, a period when many historians have claimed women were no longer considered as notable academic and political creatures, he proclaimed that there were Sieneese women of note, along with men, that should find their place in local histories. Notably, a large percentage of the women discussed by Azzolini came directly from the Bargagli games treatises. When discussing Intronati parlor games, particularly those from Girolamo Bargagli's treatise, Azzolini added responses by female interlocutors not included in the treatise. McClure concludes that these responses must have been passed down through some sort of oral tradition, indicating that individual sessions of these games had lived on for a long period of time. Given that *Le Pompe Sanesi* came nearly one hundred years after the *Dialogo*, however, it seems unlikely that particular retorts during game-play would continue to have such a hold on future generations. Instead, it

⁵²³ Centorio, 6, cited in McClure, 52.

⁵²⁴ Isidoro Ugurgieri Azzolini, *Le Pompe Sanesi, ovvero relazione delli huomini e donne illustri di Siena, e suo stato*. (Pistoia: Pier' Antonio Fortunati, 1649). BCS SS B 0292-SS B 0293.

seems that Azzolini was speculating about the fictionalized exchanges originally put forth by Girolamo, indicating continued interest and thought regarding these games – an important phenomenon in itself.⁵²⁵

Ugurgieri Azzolini included Laudomia Forteguerra, the Intronati-affiliated woman around whom the most intrigue remains, as the twenty-ninth entry in his list of notable Sienese women. While he acknowledged that she was known for the "*conformità* of [her] studies," he first identified her as having been "tenderly loved by the great Alessandro Piccolomini." After he mentioned her studies, he continued to list times when Piccolomini discussed her in his published works.⁵²⁶ This implies that, by the seventeenth century, even a man who found women important enough to list in a cultural history of Siena thought of them primarily in context of their relationships with and importance to men. Indeed, the encyclopedic entries of women come toward the end of the second and last volume of his work. Admittedly, he did identify many other women by their learning and literary achievements – a Porzia Pecci was, in fact, specifically noted for her skill in the games of Intronati *veglie*, at times embarrassing even learned male members of the academy.⁵²⁷ However, it remains significant that at this later date Azzolini presented the woman whom Alessandro Piccolomini used as an example of female accomplishment as important primarily because of her relationship to him as a beloved muse.

The most intriguing thing about all of these stories is their continuity, even up to the present day. While the challenging aspects of the first generations' academic activities may have faded over time, the Intronati in Siena and other men that commented on them

⁵²⁵ McClure examines *Le Pompe Sanesi* in his section of *Parlour Games and the Public Life of Women in Renaissance Italy* that addresses the formation of Siena's first academy composed entirely of women, the Assicurate. See McClure 123-125 for section on Ugurgieri Azzolini.

⁵²⁶ Ugurgieri Azzolini, 2:403

⁵²⁷ Ugurgieri Azzolini, 2:398

continued to tie the gender-deviant behaviors of these women not only to the academy and their parlor games (again, pointing to the importance of games over time) but also to the history of Siena itself. While Siena failed as a republic and the Intronati failed to attain their desired position of social and cultural leadership throughout Europe, they maintained their self-identification as uniquely tied to their defiant past.

Conclusion

Throughout Scipione Bargagli's 1603 *Oratione in lode dell'Accademia degl'Intronati*, a surprising theme emerged. Written on the occasion of the refounding of the academy, considering the literal interpretation of the full title and given the context of the occasion, one might reasonably expect that this was a document meant to clarify the actions of the early academy and to guide the new generation into virtually picking up the institutions of its first years and planting them in the hopefully still fertile soil of the early seventeenth-century Tuscan hills. This, after all, was also the intent of Girolamo Bargagli's games treatise. As we have seen, though, even in that earlier dialogue Girolamo made it clear that the old was not always superior and that the Intronati should be on the cutting edge of culture. Scipione's *Oration* continued in this tradition. Speaking of the products of the early *academici* as having years earlier already become ancient (perhaps, one wonders, even replacing in importance the products of those held to be "true" ancients in Renaissance theory), Scipione called on his audience not only "to polish the old" exercises of the academy but also to replace these, consumed by rust, with "the new."⁵²⁸ Using the seeds of previous actions, they were to grow a new, fresh academic sprout from the fertile Tuscan soil. While this would resemble the previous academy, the reborn Intronati would have a new life and new characteristics as well.

⁵²⁸ BCS L.VIII.41, f 2-3.

Though the Intronati changed a great deal during its initial century, as the city of its birth went through countless travails and challenges, one thing that remained constant over time was the idea that the academy was natural. In this chapter, we saw this in the plant imagery of Scipione Bargagli's 1603 *Oration*. Alessandro Piccolomini also described the proper upbringing and education of noblemen, along with health and beauty, as completely natural in his *Institutions*.⁵²⁹ This was a metaphor but also evidence of his belief that some locations were more intellectually fertile than others. He wrote that it was important for a *città nobile* to have such natural blessings as fertile land, bountiful air, and similar natural things. The inhabitants should also come from that city, rather than be unnatural transplants from other places. In remarkably anthropological terms, he described those in Siena as indigenous people (*indigeni*) who had "no other vocabulary than our own."⁵³⁰ Of course, these were not just any people, but noble people. Defining nobles based on their ambition, Piccolomini wrote that they were never satisfied with what they had, but always intent on improving upon that thing.⁵³¹

Alessandro's ideas here curiously balance the old, the new, and the natural. While noble cities were to be populated by the same individuals and families that had always resided there, bringing in very few new people (and the ideas and practices that they would bring), they were, instead, to continue enhancing their own language and practices. This seems very similar to the method of distillation Girolamo Bargagli described in his discussion of games played in Intronati *veglie*. In his games, just like in Piccolomini's presentation of life in a noble city, the new was to grow out of the old but only through dedicated tilling, fertilization, and harvest.

⁵²⁹ Alessandro Piccolomini, *Institutions*, 138v.

⁵³⁰ *Ibid*, 147r.

⁵³¹ *Ibid*, 148r-148v.

The sixteenth century saw the formation and the fall of the Academy of the Intronati. As part of a larger trend towards founding academies throughout the peninsula, the Intronati were typical. Still, the circumstances of Siena made the experience of the Intronati unique. Because of the experience of their own particular defeat, the purpose of the academy was re-examined and re-imagined. The academy began as a space that was a place to play with challenging ideas of cultural resistance. Increasingly, as the republican tradition was destroyed, it became a more important institution that unified the Intronati brethren and fertilized ideas for a new cultural leadership based in the soil of an academic garden. This new ideology was based around a fellowship of *academici* working toward similar goals of local glory and renown, growing and flourishing in the fertile ground of Siena. Dialogues, orations, plays, and games were an important base for the discussion and dissemination of these developments. During the post-republic age in Siena, the Intronati used these academic products to develop ways to redefine themselves that allowed the Sieneese to retain ideas of sovereignty, power, and influence even after their formal political strength was destroyed. While efforts to secure a position of cultural leadership on the Italian peninsula ultimately failed, the case of the Sieneese Intronati presents a poignant example of the experience of failure in sixteenth-century Italy and an example of the creative ways nobles found to retain some semblance of legitimacy and potency in the face of political defeat by foreign powers.

Conclusion
E vissero tutti tristi e discontenti.⁵³²
The Failure of an Academic Experiment

The Academy of the Intronati emerged out of an intellectual tradition that modern historians generally accept as rejecting the new and emphasizing a vision of change that privileged a return to ancient times and verities. The academy was a response to this tradition, rejecting the rigidity of university life while mocking stereotypical humanists, sometimes blatantly, for their impracticality and narrow visions. The Intronati responded critically to many other elements of the sixteenth-century European existence as well. Arising in a period of crisis for Siena and Europe, the experience of the academy reflects many of the conflicts and debates of the era, including but not limited to the questions regarding the proper place of women in aristocratic and intellectual spheres; the position of nobles in newly subordinated city-states; the role of education in noble life; the struggle of the Catholic Church to retain religious hegemony on the continent; and, though of perhaps less obvious significance, the importance of play in establishing behavioral norms and in pedagogic exercises. Because of the placement of the members of the Intronati in this matrix of tribulations, this group is significant for more than its role in the history of academies on the Italian peninsula. Instead, this group demonstrates how one community responded to the various failures that defined the experience of many throughout the peninsula during this period. Had they succeeded in their quest, the Intronati would have created a new conception of a meaningful life that would have made

⁵³² Any they all lived miserably ever after.

many of these earlier failures irrelevant. Instead, the Intronati (and Siena) faded into obscurity.

Calling themselves *academici*, the Intronati's rejection of the traditional academy and standard intellectual stereotypes is perhaps most obvious in their many conscious decisions to distance themselves from the standard ways of thinking and living a meaningful life. Beyond their representations of pedants in their comedies, the *academici* did not mince words when describing the clichéd scholar. In Scipione Bargagli's words, these men were "like birds (*augelli*) that do not dare to see the rays of the sun;⁵³³ [they] spend most of their time shut up in their dark rooms, racking and cracking their brains over their subtle studies, tedious and bizarre, and when they do leave, appearing poorly dressed, disordered, and with sloppy hair and beard, frowning eyes, foul faces and looking almost dazed, they wander about."⁵³⁴ A humorous description such as this may be unsurprising from a group of intellectuals with pretensions to cultural leadership identifying themselves in a mockingly self-deprecating manner as "dazed." Still it is evidence that the Intronati clearly desired to consciously evolve past such dull stereotypes. These stereotypes would particularly not do if the Intronati were to prove that they, as Sieneese aristocrats (and yet still members of academy), deserved to be positioned at the forefront of society and culture, even after they lost political independence and position.

Other *academici* presented some scholars in a more favorable light. Several of these complimentary presentations, without coincidence, argue that the best scholars were

⁵³³ That is, the gaze of their beloved.

⁵³⁴ Scipione Bargagli, *Trattenimenti*, 106. The use of *augelli* could also significantly have the secondary meaning here of "prick," as *ucello* does in the game discussed above and the description of scholars here brings to mind a very different and disquieting image when that alternate meaning is kept in mind.

ideal lovers for women. Even Antonio Vignali, in his notoriously misogynistic *La Cazzaria* presented such scholars in this way. There, Vignali wrote that a discouraged Marcantonio Piccolomini complained, with a certain irony, "it seems to be that most women go around snatching up stupid men, and the more clumsy and brutal the men are, the more it pleases them. I think they hate educated men as much as they can, and I've never found any scholar who was fortunate in love. That's why when I've found myself among women, I've always tried to seem as foolish as possible." Antonio Vignali, perhaps surprisingly, came to the defense of women, claiming that when looking for a lover "women of some intelligence" kept in mind "their honor and dignity, which consists only in being able to get fucked secretly." Concerning the search for a lover, this meant that the intelligent women would not "want the men who fuck[ed] her to proclaim the fact in the barbershop or the piazza, nor to have her deeds debated in bakers and laundries, nor to be slandered and pointed at." Instead, considering "the wit necessary to find hidden ways and means, one [of these women] will only look among educated men, who always apply themselves to such activities with an excellent and keen wit." With this in mind, these reputable women would look to educated men every time.⁵³⁵

Even in that obscene, pornographic dialogue, themes present in other Intronati documents emerge. Vignali argued that, in addition to knowing how to disguise fornication, scholars were not only "valorous and great," but also "esteemed for their beautiful conversation, their sweet words, their pleasing entertainments, their jokes and amorous pleasantries, which noble and refined ladies enjoy even more than fucking." Indeed, even with sex itself, a woman may find herself bored after completing the sex act

⁵³⁵ Antonio Vignali. *La Cazzaria: The Book of the Prick*, trans. and ed. Ian Frederick Moulton. (Taylor and Francis: New York, 2003), 76-77.

with an uneducated man. "A scholar, on the other hand, would have a thousand witty sayings, a thousand little tales of love to entertain her, and to make the time between one fuck and the next seem brief and joyful."⁵³⁶ So, even in sex (a game in and of itself, it seems in many Intronati documents), we find an Intronato arguing that the scholars (clearly referring to members of the academy in this dialogue) were superior to the lesser-educated specifically because of their ability to dissemble, to disguise what was truly transpiring. This strategic wit, a kind practiced in Intronati games (which themselves seem more alluring to women than copulation), was a skill of the highest esteem, distinguishing the Intronati from more boring, traditional academics. Even in this light-hearted description of the benefits of scholarly life, Vignali presented the Intronati as deceptive, skilled in rhetoric, and aware of how to navigate life in sixteenth-century Italy to their individual benefit.

The *academici* of the Intronati did not want to be like the stereotypical, bumbling scholar from Scipione Bargagli's description. Yet, they also saw benefits to a certain academic discipline, both in regards to their relationship with women and also as they attempted to position themselves as leaders in a new world of cultural leadership. Establishing this position would not be easy. Still, they could not make an obvious show of working towards this status, as that could undermine their legitimacy as the rightful holders of that position. They had to appear naturally deserving of the position. Thus they had to work at developing the traits necessary for that status while appearing not to work hard – exercising a certain *sprezzatura* in their learning. The academy itself was a playful group that encouraged its members to play with a level of learning that would not have been possible without the formal educations allowed for by their high birth and noble

⁵³⁶ Ibid, 78.

status. At the same time, the rhetorical skill and wit necessary in this new image of nobility and cultural leadership did require dedicated work and training. It was not to appear serious, however, and this is where the role of games and other forms of play came in.

The parlor games of the Intronati were meant to be pleasant, but also intended, in Scipione Bargagli's words, for those who wanted to "acquire the spirit of a noble person" and gain the soul and the favor of the thing that they love. In the games, they must also "be able to and know how to render clearly one's desire in a clear and comprehensible manner."⁵³⁷ As Scipione stated clearly and comprehensibly, then, the skills polished in the games would benefit the gamers not only in the world of play but in the world outside it as well. The games helped develop a new measure of status in courtship during demonstrations of knowledge and *virtù*. With these skills, the *academici* would be everything that the stereotypical scholar was not. The games, then, educated men to appear superior to the stereotypical scholar outlined above. Without this preparation other academics would have been unable to present a decent image of himself, let alone represent his academy in a complimentary light. Though presenting oneself in good form was important, this was not a matter for serious work. The *academici* of the Intronati were seriously dedicated to not taking their studies too seriously, something for which they faulted stereotypical humanists. The men (and women) of the Intronati were beyond the need for such tediousness. Their goal was to lead culture, not to hide behind it.

Particularly after 1555, this leadership was critical in their efforts to create a new world in which the aristocratic members of the Intronati would continue to lead, even after the fall of their republic. The collapse of the Republic of Siena was yet another

⁵³⁷ Scipione Bargagli, 93.

significant moment marking the end of the era of Italian city-states that had defined the centuries of the early *rinascimento*. The Sieneese were not the only population in this period seeking to redefine who they were in a way that allowed for them to rediscover some sense of dignity. In this way, the Intronati of Siena joined the politically displaced elites of formerly republican aristocrats around the peninsula. This was a disorganized collection, needful of a leader to define a new meaning for their lives. The Intronati believed themselves fit for this role. They deserved to lead exactly because they left behind the strict confines of the university and humanist disciplines and moved beyond the requirements of a civic world that no longer existed. If their new age of cultural leadership was to begin, a complete rethinking of what constituted the most important elements of life was needed, along with a re-visioning of who deserved to lead. These changes required new understandings of *virtù* and honor based on new cultural models that privileged rhetorical wit, literary achievement, and cultural novelty. They still valued the *filosofia attiva* over a more contemplative life. However, this new philosophy highlighted active involvement in academic and high cultural affairs over political participation.

Academic activities, particularly the intellectual parlor games of the Intronati, helped develop the skills necessary for this new leadership. In the games, *academici* practiced nonchalantly demonstrating their educations and their own rhetorical fluency while role-playing how to engage in everyday affairs in their city. While the early academy focused on the activities that took place in meetings, particularly perfecting the literary products of its members, the later academy focused on polishing the cultural fluency of the younger generations. This molded them to be ideal cultural leaders in a

new regime in which these individuals would guide all in the destabilized Italian peninsula into a new, post-republican world. All the while, the games flirted with dangerous subjects such as religious heterodoxy and even forms of social equality independent of political positions. The very ludic nature of the games sheltered the members of the academy from facing scrutiny about the dangerous implications of their play. In all of this, Intronati parlor games presented the members of the academy with opportunities not only to practice the skills necessary to assume the positions they imagined but also provided them shelter as they played with ways to legitimate these new positions as more important than political standing.

These new positions would not be developed alone, however. Perhaps most fundamental in the shift of priorities seen in Intronati documents was the idea that happiness, and even love, were central not just to a pleasant life but also to fully achieving one's potential in that life. Particularly for the most well-known and influential of the early Intronati, Alessandro Piccolomini, a meaningful life based on love, happiness, and *virtù* were parallel and partnered characteristics required for an individual nobleman (or noblewoman) to achieve his (or her) greatest potential. In order to contribute to his *patria*, a nobleman must be satisfied in all other elements of his life. Reciprocally, developing the *virtù*-osity necessary for this potential would make a nobleman happy, further building his potential. Perhaps most critically, however, throughout Piccolomini's discussions of happiness and a nobleman's position in the urban environment, he argued that the presence and active involvement of inspiring women was central to achieving this hypothetical status. In order for men to fully represent all masculine ideals, they needed women to serve as inspiration and guides.

Crucially, in many Intronati documents, these women were held to the exact same standards as men and, mirroring the requirements of men, also needed the presence of noblemen to reach their own potentials. While many scholars have been distracted by the scandalous argument that finding a lover was important for both men and women, the fact that women were an instrumental piece in Intronati constructions of the public persona of noblemen cannot be understated.

In many ways, then, women played a crucial role not only in the day-to-day activities of the Intronati but also in their re-imagining of what a meaningful life entailed. Clearly, they were an important part of the love and happiness required in this new vision of a meaningful life. But they were important not only due to their potential to aid men in becoming the best that they could be. The Intronati also understood these women, themselves, to be fully capable of making their own intellectual and political contributions. This is seen perhaps most clearly in Alessandro Piccolomini's *Orazione in lode delle donne*. While its subject was not unique in sixteenth-century Italy – praising women was a common rhetorical exercise in oral exchanges and printed documents throughout this period – the format is distinct. Many other examples of praise directed at women simply listed remarkable women and their accomplishments. These lists generally included their poetic works and, also, their relationships with notable men. This Siense version, however, was different. Rather than drawing the reader's attention to women that were exceptional because of their literary exploits, Piccolomini's oration argued that women, in general, were superior to men. Because of this, they were perfectly capable of succeeding in realms more normally deemed as only appropriate for men – such as politics and science. In fact, they should be given opportunities to do so. Finally, in their

perfection and beauty they represented the glory of God and the achievements of local communities, including the Intronati of Siena. These arguments for the equality and inclusion of women were not a feminization of the group, as has been claimed, but, rather, a radical reformulation of the gender dynamic of the civic, academic, and cultural worlds.

This was a remarkable argument, and one put forth by the member of the academy that the Intronati themselves often chose to represent them on a wider stage, Alessandro Piccolomini. This was not the only time that the Intronati consciously challenged accepted norms and cultural arrangements. In many places, the group was remarkably open about the subversive nature of many of their activities, embracing the disguise of illicit activities and dangerous thought under more suitable pretenses. These disguises helped the players learn and practice their everyday roles and even allowed them to imagine and create new, alternative roles that might one day usurp the traditional ones they rehearsed. They were also tools to spread knowledge of their progressive practices, particularly relating to women, and to legitimize their unique cultural practices to their new political masters, the Florentines. They demonstrated that, though conquered, the Intronati remained impressively Siennese and had much to offer Florence and the rest of the European elite. Perhaps most importantly, however, they served as a space in which the Intronati could finesse their new identities, as subjugated Siennese but also as men who defined themselves through their allegiance to their literary academy, rather than their fallen city. They rediscovered and demonstrated their superiority through intellectual merit rather than political sovereignty.

In all of these developments, the Academy of the Intronati in Siena represented revolutionary new ways of looking at, and participating in, the rapidly changing world of sixteenth-century Italy. New constructions of noble identity and ideas reshaping what represented a meaningful life carried the Intronati away from traditional representations of republican *virtù* and citizenship. Instead, the academy focused on cultural innovation and leadership that would position the men (and women) of the Intronati at the forefront of a new age. This new age, intriguingly for the modern historian, foreshadowed movements towards the new aristocratic world that would be labeled the *ancien regime*. But these new identities and new priorities firmly rested in old Sienese traditions, placing more importance on the stories that they told about themselves than the reality in which they actually lived. While they may have succeeded, temporarily, in convincing themselves that they remained at the forefront of cultural life on the Italian peninsula, and perhaps the European continent, this remained largely a myth they told themselves. Inevitably, the façade erected in this myth-making process crumbled, just as the shell of the *Zucca* had failed to protect the Intronati throughout much of the second half of the sixteenth century. While the Intronati failed at their mission, it was in this failure that they ultimately represented the conflicting cultural impulses that defined a century shaped more by defeat than victory.

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