Beyond comparison: reconsidering the history of Italian city-communes (Pisa and Genoa, 11th-12th centuries)

by Alberto Cotza

Historiography has repeatedly emphasized the contraction of the spatial horizons of elite political action in 12th-century Italy. Within this framework of local geographies, cities and their territories appear as a constellation of small worlds undergoing transformation. As a result, scholarly debate has developed a research agenda grounded in the analysis of individual areas, subsequently subjected to comparison so that each investigation may acquire the analytical weight of a case study. Yet is this method sufficient to grasp the complexity of change in the central Middle Ages? Is it possible to conceive of an alternative approach to the study of 12th-century Italian geographies? Starting from an analysis of the formation of the communes of Genoa and Pisa in the mid-12th century, this essay reflects on one of the most significant consequences of central medieval transformation: the emergence of connected arenas. In examining urban elites operating within the same arena, comparative history proves to be an insufficient – and potentially misleading – tool. For this reason, the article argues for the development of new methodological approaches capable of producing a deeper understanding of the distinctive features of change in the central centuries of the Middle Ages.

La storiografia ha sottolineato a più riprese il restringimento degli spazi dell'azione politica delle élite nell'Italia del XII secolo. In un universo di geografie locali, le città e i loro territori appaiono così come tanti piccoli mondi in trasformazione. Il dibattito storiografico ha quindi sviluppato un questionario di ricerca basato sull'analisi di singole aree, da sottoporre alla comparazione perché ogni analisi acquisisca lo spessore di un caso di studio. È un metodo sufficiente per cogliere la complessità del mutamento pienomedievale? È possibile pensare anche a un'altra via per lo studio delle geografie dell'Italia del XII secolo? A partire dall'analisi della formazione

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dei comuni di Genova e Pisa attorno alla metà del XII secolo, questo saggio riflette su una delle conseguenze più importanti della trasformazione pienomedievale, cioè la formazione di ambiti di connessione. Nello studio delle élite urbane che si muovono all'interno di uno stesso ambito, la storia comparata non è uno strumento sufficiente e rischia di essere fuorviante. È necessario, per questo motivo, individuare nuovi metodi per capire più a fondo i caratteri originali del mutamento dei secoli centrali del medioevo.

Middle Ages, 11th-12th centuries, Pisa, Genoa, comparative history, connected history.

Medioevo, secoli XI-XII, Pisa, Genova, storia comparata, storia connessa.

1. *Introduction*

The spaces and temporalities of 12th-century communes constitute an indispensable topic for any volume devoted to the transformation of Italy in the central Middle Ages. This article approaches the issue through a guiding question: in what terms can space be considered a meaningful dimension for understanding the temporalities of these communes? It is useful to state at the outset what this study does not intend to do. It does not pursue an analysis of the communes based on a division of the *Regnum* into geographical areas within which to identify earlier or later communes, or different types of communes.[1] Much has already been written on this subject and, as will be argued here, it represents the outcome of a useful but traditional methodological perspective that now requires integration. Instead, this chapter investigates the geographies of the communes as a significant dimension for understanding the internal transformations of individual political communities.

This immediately raises a preliminary question: what were the communes' geographies? Beginning with the classic studies of Tabacco, 12th-century communes have come to be understood as a "local moment" in the history of the *Regnum Italiae*, within which communal history must be situated.[2] Historiography has repeatedly emphasized the local dimension of these communes, including in recent scholarship. In contrast to the already "provincialized" spatial range of action attributed to early medieval elites, the elites of the central Middle Ages are often thought to have operated within an even more restricted spatial horizon.[3] With little problematization – and only a few exceptions – the 'local dimension' has thus been understood as a narrow sphere: the city and its surrounding territory.[4]

At the same time, historians have sought a methodological way out of the proliferation of analytical studies devoted to individual cases. Paolo Cammarosano has effectively observed that

[1] Cammarosano, "Città e campagna;" Keller, "Gli inizi del comune;" Wickham, *Sonnambuli*.
[2] Tabacco, "Vescovi e comuni." See also Bordone, *La società urbana*.
[3] This is one of the major themes in Wickham's reconstruction in *Framing the Early Middle Ages*.
[4] Wickham, "The Feudal Revolution."

> *essa* [i.e. the historiographical debate] *non è ben attrezzata per la costruzione di una geografia dell'Italia comunale: ha oscillato invece sempre fra analisi di singole città ed aree, magari rivendicandone la peculiarità, e sintesi generali orientate per loro natura sull'assunto di fondamentali omogeneità di sviluppo: rispetto alle quali le situazioni specifiche sono state considerate alla stregua di varianti, anomali o magari nel rischioso segno interpretativo dell'arretratezza – che non è se non una maniera di prospettare uno svolgimento storico omogeneo, rispetto al quale le situazione individuali si caratterizzano in funzione di un maggiore o minore stadio di avanzamento lungo una traiettoria data.*[5]

From this follows the need to develop comparative approaches. If the communes were indeed a local phenomenon – detached from wider networks and broader dynamics – then the reasons for their transformation must be sought at the local level, and comparison becomes the primary tool for achieving a deeper understanding of their genesis.[6] Yet relatively little progress has been made, in the years separating Cammarosano's reflections from the present, with regard to comparative approaches. Nevertheless, the problem – more or less explicitly articulated – remains clearly present in the scholarship. Among the most significant contributions, the work of Enrico Faini deserves particular mention, insofar as it seeks, through the analysis of political lexicon, to identify the shared roots of a communal political culture.[7]

Perhaps, however, insufficient attention has been paid to the question of whether a comparative history of communal developments, taken on its own, truly constitutes the horizon within which the emergence of the communes can be most fully understood.[8] As this chapter argues, the comparative perspective is not misguided. Nonetheless, a more articulated reflection on the

[5] Cammarosano, "Città e campagna," 303.

[6] Among studies that have problematized the spatial dimension, the work of Enrico Faini is particularly significant. Faini has recently explored the possibility that the spatial horizons within which the lives of urban elites were articulated may have been conceived as broader than the strictly local arena (Faini, *Italica gens*; Faini, "Letteratura e politica"). A careful assessment attentive to both the variability and the problematic nature of the 12th-century spatial lexicon is offered by Guglielmotti, "Definizione e organizzazione." Maire Vigueur, *Cavalieri e cittadini*, 7-20, reflects on the problem of the strongly local character of studies on communal Italy as a specific issue within Italian historiography, through a comparison with the French and German models, which have favoured, respectively, the 'regional' monograph and the 'problem-oriented' monograph. In this discussion, however, the issues of comparison and connected history do not acquire a fully articulated methodological depth.

[7] Faini, "Il comune e il suo contrario;" Faini, "I consoli: incunaboli del comune?;" Faini, "Una parola contesa."

[8] An effective critique of comparison in relation to the documentary corpora of Lombard Italy – one that can also be extended to other chronological contexts – is offered by Loré, "Risks and Limits of Comparison." Medieval studies, however, have not debated the limits of comparison, nor explored alternative methodological possibilities, to the same extent as other chronological fields of the discipline, particularly modern and contemporary history. This seems to me a significant omission, especially given that one of the acknowledged founding figures of comparative history was himself a medievalist, Marc Bloch (Bloch, "Per una storia comparata"). It is precisely from Bloch that Sanjay Subrahmanyam departs, further articulating his perspective in the direction of connected history (Subrahmanyam, "Why Connected Histories?"). Although these problems arise at different scales for early modern and modern historians, a number of methodological questions are shared and would deserve more sustained discussion.

connections among city-communes, particularly in relation to their temporalities of formation, can render the picture more complex and open the way not only to comparison – which, as will be noted, has its own hermeneutic limits – but also to the identification of alternative spatio-temporal frameworks better suited to interpreting processes of transformation.[9]

In the following pages, this article addresses the issue by arguing that one of the causes – and at the same time one of the outcomes – of the transformations of the 11th and 12th centuries was the emergence of new arenas of interaction among urban elites, arenas that compel us to rethink what is meant by 'local.' This rethinking must avoid simplistic solutions. The challenge of defining space is not resolved by identifying broad and equally unproblematized dimensions within which to situate historical processes – such as "regions," the "Mediterranean", or the "world" – nor by the uncritical adoption of paradigms that privilege single aspects, such as interregional connections. Rather, this essay invites a more nuanced and conceptually rigorous engagement with the spatial dimension of social change.

Pisa and Genoa constitute two particularly suitable cases through which to develop this problem. At a specific moment in their history, in the 1130s and 1140s, both cities became key components of Pope Innocent II's effort to assert papal authority in Italy during the years of the schism of 1130. Involved in a complex project of pacification following the wars of the first three decades of the century, the political dynamics linking the two Tyrrhenian cities with the papacy – and also with the Holy Roman Empire – defined a coherent arena of interaction. Within this newly configured space, it becomes possible to explain more effectively than has hitherto been done the chronologies of change in both cities, which shared certain common features while also exhibiting significant differences rooted in their earlier contexts. This was, of course, an arena defined in and for a specific moment; yet it may nonetheless possess paradigmatic value for the study of analogous cases.

It is useful to clarify the perspective adopted here. As anticipated, this essay is grounded in a critical rereading of the paradigm of comparative history. From a comparative-historical standpoint, each individual city and its territory are studied as self-contained realities, with the aim of comparing similar developments that nonetheless have distinct origins. This is a necessary analytical method and, in some cases, the only one capable of giving proper analytical weight to documentary corpora that would otherwise remain isolated. It is not, however, the only possible approach – especially when examining realities that display such marked similarities in their chronological trajectories

[9] Cinzio Violante spoke of *ambiti*. See especially Violante, "Per una storia degli *ambiti*." For a historiographical framing of the concept of *ambito*, see Varanini, "Cinzio Violante," and Petralia, "Storie di strutture," 252-3, where the history of *ambiti* is interpreted in relation to the history of structures and to the introduction – alongside the latter – of a specifically spatial dimension.

as to suggest that at least some causes of change should be sought, though not exclusively, within networks that transcend the local dimension and within political spaces other than those habitually regarded as the 'natural' framework of communal life.

Contrary to what might appear, this essay does not constitute a critique of the study of the local dimension of processes of change in central medieval Italy. On the contrary, it should be clear from the discussion that the local dimension is essential to understanding the communes and that, when approached from a more articulated perspective, it can be further enriched. Rather, the essay challenges the assumption that the spaces within which processes of change unfold are given from the outset. Local, regional, or supra-regional spaces are not abstract containers within which the lives of individuals and social groups simply take place. In 12th-century Italy, transformation was so profound that, at certain moments, spaces emerged that should be understood as new arenas of action, decisive for grasping the dynamics of change. These were not necessarily institutional spaces, nor were they endowed with a fixed or stable character over time. On the contrary, the definitional and chronological flexibility of these new arenas constitutes one of the key factors to be taken into account in order to capture the complex and nuanced nature of change in the central Middle Ages.

Research of this kind ought, in principle, to be extended to the entire *Regnum*, through the identification of those arenas that functioned as decisive nodes of intersection for understanding shifts from one phase to another. The aims of this essay, however, are necessarily more modest. As noted above, it therefore limits itself to an analysis of the cases of Genoa and Pisa, with particular reference to the period roughly between 1130 and 1160. In the historiography of both cities, this phase is generally regarded as the moment when communal institutions began to operate in a new, more formalized manner. Why did change occur precisely at this time? Should it be understood as the necessary outcome of a longer process of transformation, or is it possible to define the causes of change more precisely? In addressing these questions, both shared elements and, above all, differences between the two cases will emerge – differences that constitute a privileged field of application for broader historical reflection.

The essay is divided into three main parts. The first (§2) is devoted to Genoa, the second (§3) to Pisa. The third (§4) offers an overall assessment, synthesizing the results of the two case studies in light of the initial questions that guide the analysis.

2. *Genoa*

Genoa was one of the earliest cities in which consuls appeared. Attested by Caffaro from 1099 onwards, an implicit reference in a document of 1098 suggests that shortly before that date the city assemblies were already being

led by consuls.[10] As in other cities of the *Regnum*, however, it is not always easy in Genoa to determine the precise scope of consular authority, despite the survival of relatively rich documentation. It should be emphasized that this documentation is largely "internal" in character and was assembled into coherent archival corpora only from the mid-12th century onwards, a process that inevitably introduced distortions of perspective. This is particularly evident in the case of Caffaro's chronicle and the *Liber Iurium*, compiled in the second half of the 12th century.[11]

One point, however, is reasonably clear. In the political vacuum created by the crisis of the *Regnum*, the Genoese consuls began to exercise judicial authority, in the form of the *lodo consolare*.[12] Such *lodi* are attested from 1104 onwards. The fragility of the power exercised by the Obertenghi margraves over Genoa contributed to a more rapid definition of new forms of authority than was the case in Tuscany under the Canossan margraves. The urban *vicecomites* themselves, organized on a consortial basis – as is evident from a well-known deed of 1052[13] between the bishop and the viscounts concerning the collection of tithes on the *pievi* – entered the consulate from the outset, relinquishing forms of political predominance that can instead be identified in the trajectory of certain branches of the viscounts in Pisa.[14]

The bishops constituted a point of equilibrium among the various social and political forces. Although in Genoa, as in Pisa, they exercised no public rights by virtue of a prior imperial grant – as was the case in some cities of the Po Valley – the bishops nonetheless were, and remained throughout the 12th century, powerful and influential figures, not least because of the vassalic ties that bound certain *cives* to the prelate.[15] It is no coincidence that attestations

[10] The standard point of reference for the origins of the commune of Genoa remains Bordone, "Le origini del comune," to which the following pages will refer for the reconstruction of the main developments. More recent research, which should also be taken into account for its reassessment of earlier scholarship, is provided by Filangieri, "Le 'origini' del Comune."

[11] For Caffaro, see Schweppenstette, *Die Politik der Erinnerung* and Guglielmotti, "La cronachistica." An edition of the *Libri Iurium* is provided by Rovere, *I* Libri Iurium; Pallavicino, "I *Libri Iurium*."

[12] Wickham, *Sonnambuli*, 164-9; Ruzzin, "I lodi consolari."

[13] Edition of the document is provided by Calleri, *Le carte del monastero di San Siro*, 76-9. See also Polonio, Costa Restagno, *Chiesa e città*, 46.

[14] The relationship between Genoa and the Obertenghi margraves in the 10th and 11th centuries cannot be reconstructed with certainty on the basis of the surviving documentation, which is extremely scant. Later, indirect testimonies offer only limited glimpses: for example, in the regulations concerning the location and number of slaughterhouses (1152), the urban *vicecomites* – who jointly held rights over the slaughterhouses – pledged to safeguard an otherwise unspecified *ius marchionum* (Petti Balbi, "I Visconti di Genova," 688). The documentation and the scholarly debate concerning the Genoese *vicecomites* are considerably richer: see Petti Balbi, especially the discussion on the charter of 1052 (693-9); Bordone, "I visconti cittadini;" and Filangieri, *Famiglie e gruppi dirigenti a Genova*, 30-62. For a comparison with Pisa, see Ronzani, "Le tre famiglie dei visconti."

[15] The standard study on Arialdo and, more generally, on the Genoese episcopate is Polonio, "Tra universalismo e localismo." Arialdo's earlier career and his appointment to the episcopal see are discussed in Lucioni, *Anselmo IV da Bovisio*, 163-71.

of consuls become more regular from the beginning of the 12th century, when Arialdo, a canon from Mortara, was placed on the Genoese episcopal see by the Archbishop of Milan. Arialdo's decisive intervention likely made it possible to overcome the turbulent political situation of the final years of the 11th century through a process of internal pacification, one that must have borne some resemblance to what occurred in Pisa at the time of the famous *lodo delle torri* associated with Daiberto. In 1133, moreover, the Genoese bishops were removed from the tutelage of the archbishop of Milan and elevated to archiepiscopal rank, with the grant of several Corsican dioceses – a crucial turning point to which this essay will return.

That the balance established under Arialdo constrained consular action is indirectly demonstrated by the fact that, in the first three decades of the 12th century, Genoese consuls strengthened their authority precisely during periods when the episcopal see was vacant. It was in phases of *sede vacante* that the consuls most clearly defined the institutional structure of their organization. We know, for instance, that from 1122 onwards – during the three-year vacancy between Otto and Sigifred – the consuls began to hold annual mandates (beginning on 1 February), and that from the same date they established, or at least attempted to establish, a chancery through the appointment of *scribani*.[16] A few years later, from 1130 onwards, following a decision evidently matured over the course of the previous year during the vacancy between Sigifred and Syrus, the consulate was divided into a *consulatus communis* and a *consulatus placitorum*, the latter articulated into district-based subunits. Each urban *compagna* – listed in detail by Caffaro in a passage of his *Annales* – thus had its own consuls of the *placita*, to whom complaints could be addressed in matters falling within their competence.[17] These phases of institutional acceleration during episcopal vacancies were not particularly traumatic, and the resulting changes were accepted by the newly installed bishops, who found city-communes somewhat stronger than those of their predecessors. Limited negotiations may nonetheless have taken place at certain moments, as suggested by the absence of consuls of the *placita* in the first years of Syrus' episcopate and by their definitive establishment from 1133 onwards.[18]

Beyond this chronological threshold, the consuls' capacity to present themselves as guarantors of political and social order underwent a qualita-

[16] Belgrano, *Annali genovesi*, 18. The sources, however, attest to the functioning of an early communal chancery only from a decade later than the date indicated by Caffaro.
[17] Belgrano, 24-5. It is noteworthy that the manuscripts of the *Annali* preserve a brief *notitia episcoporum* covering the bishops from Arialdo to Syrus, which records not only their names but also the length of the *sede vacante* between successive episcopates. The text is edited in Belgrano, 93-4. A commentary on the text, possibly attributable to Caffaro, is discussed in Schweppenstette, *Die Politik der Erinnerung*, 73-5.
[18] Caffaro himself informs us that the consuls of 1130 and 1131 were, like their predecessors, described as *de comuni et de placitis* (Belgrano, *Annali genovesi*, 26). The regular division between consuls of the commune and consuls of the *placita* begins only in 1133.

tive leap. It is to this phase that the first attestations of urban legislation belong - the earliest consular legislation in the entire *Regnum*, as emphasized by Chris Wickham.[19] Even more significant for understanding the break with the previous phase, however, is the fact that consular power attained such a level of recognition that even holders of rights of public origin, dating back to the earlier period, entrusted the protection of their fiscal and political prerogatives to the consuls. As we shall see, this situation differs markedly from that of Pisa and has not yet received sufficient attention in the historiography.

A case that clearly exemplifies this development concerns riparian toll rights (*ripaticum*) between the late 1140s and the early 1150s. For the entire first half of the 12th century, there is no trace of the *ripaticum* in Genoa – a right that in other cities was traditionally public and managed by the *vicecomites*.[20] A first, belated reference appears in connection with a dispute between Pisans and Genoese datable between February 1149 and January 1150.[21] In that year, the Pisans claimed exemption from paying the toll on certain goods (*lenae* and *sacri*) arriving respectively from Corsica and Sardinia. The matter was brought before the consuls, who decreed – on the basis of testimony provided by the *vicecomites* – that the Pisans were required to pay the toll. The fact that this testimony was produced by the *vicecomites* suggests that they themselves were among the interested parties, and that the right to collect the *ripaticum* had, at least in the recent past, been entrusted to them. Are the *vicecomites* to be identified with those who, in 1151, are described as *domini ripae*?[22] In the years immediately following 1149, the consuls were able to lease out shares of the *ripaticum* in order to repay debts incurred by the expeditions to Almería and Tortosa.[23] Rights over slaughterhouses, attested in 1152 as a viscountal prerogative and remaining in viscountal hands until the 13th century, were likewise placed under consular protection; in that year, the consuls decreed the relocation of the stalls.[24] It should be noted that in Genoa the viscounts were part of the consulate. They were therefore in a position to make decisions concerning rights they exercised, or had exercised, in the past.

Partly different is the case of the rights to appoint notaries and to emancipate minors and serfs. These rights could be exercised by the consuls, provided that the acts were carried out with the *auctoritas* of Philip of Lamberto.

[19] Wickham, *Sonnambuli*, 167. Faini, "Il comune e il suo contrario," 270-7, discusses the internal political dynamics of Genoa and their transformation in this period.
[20] The register of the archiepiscopal curia of 1143 (edited in Belgrano, *Il registro*) records another toll levied on the port, the *decima maris*, which belonged to the archbishopric but was granted, for certain shares, to specific families of the Genoese elite from the episcopate of Arialdo (from 1111 onwards). The toll was collected exclusively on Genoese ships. On the *decima maris*, see Boyd, *Tithes*, 197-8. No updated study exists on this intriguing levy.
[21] Rovere, *I Libri Iurium*, 15-6.
[22] Rovere, 213-4.
[23] Rovere, 186-8.
[24] Rovere, 230-2.

Philip is a figure worthy of particular attention.[25] A multiple-time consul, he probably acquired this authority – explicitly attested for the first time only in several acts of Giovanni Scriba's cartulary (1153-5) and later in the *Breve della Compagna* of 1157, confirmed in 1161 – from Lothair III, Conrad III, or perhaps Frederick Barbarossa.[26] Philip never explicitly refers to an imperial mandate, but he could not have received rights of a comital type except from public authority. Only after his death, probably in the early 1160s, did the commune begin to act as the sole authority in emancipations, thereby incorporating Philip's *auctoritas* through a clear transfer of powers. Prior to this point, the commune had not explicitly claimed Philip's *auctoritas*; on the contrary, it had placed itself in a position of defending it.

In Philip's case, the turning point of 1147 was crucial – a veritable act of communal protection in his favour. In the spring of that year, shortly before the departure of the Genoese army for the conquest of Tortosa in the early summer of 1147, Philip was accused by a group of Genoese of having caused, in some manner, the loss of their goods in Sicily. Faced with this accusation, the commune and the archbishop jointly compelled Philip to withdraw from all public office; shortly thereafter, however, the commune abruptly reversed course and rehabilitated him. Philip subsequently emerged as one of the leaders of the successful expeditions against Almería and Tortosa, celebrated by Caffaro in a historiographical work of some interest. Through this experience, Philip appears to have grasped the central importance of consular protection.[27]

The testimonies discussed above are significant insofar as they illustrate the consolidation of consular power through judicial practice. They also reveal the degree of trust placed in the consuls by individuals and groups who exercised public rights by virtue of communal authority and who, from a certain point onward, began to seek the commune's protection. At the same time, these testimonies remain sporadic: they surface only when one of the parties chose to appeal to the consuls.

Can we be more precise, then, about the period in which consular power had strengthened to the point that even rights of ancient public origin – held by influential family consortia such as the viscounts, or by prominent citizens such as Philip of Lamberto – were placed under its protection? A document that permits a more detailed reconstruction of the stages and nature of this process is a judgment of 1168. When carefully analyzed, it reveals that, in the perception of the protagonists themselves, the second half of the 1130s

[25] For a profile of Philip, see Filangieri, *Famiglie e gruppi dirigenti*, 114-21; information on Philip of Lamberto can also be found in Vitale, *Breviario* I, 27-8, II, 24-5.
[26] Rovere, *I «publici testes»*, 478, with n. 171 (here cited according to the pagination of the reprint). Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, *Codice Diplomatico*, 350-9 (see especially 355 for the passages concerning Philip of Lamberto). For a reassessment of the issue of *brevi* and statutes, see Guglielmotti, "Statuti liguri."
[27] The key stages of Philip's career would merit further investigation in a dedicated study. For the time being, see Filangieri, *Famiglie e gruppi dirigenti*, 114-21.

marked the moment at which communal political action had acquired a new and more robust form.[28]

Issued during a period of intense factional conflict triggered by the rivalry between Fulco de Castro and Rolando Avvocato (1164-9),[29] the judgment allows us to observe closely the emergence of the commune in Genoa over the preceding three decades and the ways in which this process was perceived by the actors involved. The text – introduced by a lengthy preamble that presents it as a veritable political programme[30] – is divided into two main parts, each articulated into numbered sub-sections (indicated here for clarity). In the first part (1), the consuls affirmed the validity of judgments concerning minors and their property issued over the previous twenty-five years, that is, from 1143 (1.1), and, more generally, the validity of all judgments issued by them "in defence of one or more persons" over the preceding thirty years, thus from 1138 (1.2). In the second part (2), the judgment affirmed the validity of all sales or transfers of property (*dationes*) involving minors carried out *per consules et per consulatus* in the absence of a guardian or curator (2.1). These transactions had subsequently been regularized, at an unspecified later moment, either through the appointment of a tutor or curator or through the presence of the father (2.2).

The core of the judgment concerns jurisdiction over minors and over legal acts carried out on their property, either by the commune acting in its capacity as guardian or by tutors and guardians appointed by the consuls. The aim of the judgment was to protect this jurisdiction from claims by those whose rights over minors or their property had been affected by the aforementioned judgments and provisions. Indeed, at the conclusion of the first part of the text (3), the consuls state that the judgments are to be considered valid "even if the provisions therein are not rendered in the form in which they are rendered and now enacted" (3.1). This formulation reveals one of the arguments employed by opponents to contest the consular provisions. At the conclusion of the second part, the consuls assert that the sales or transfers in question are to be regarded as valid "as if they themselves [i.e., the minors], having reached the age of twenty-five, had sold or transferred those properties in full" (3.2). According to the reaffirmed principle of the validity of legal acts performed over the past twenty-five years, such transactions could still be legally challenged and annulled, provided it could be proven that had been carried out "for usury" or were "false" (3.3). They could not, however, be declared invalid on the grounds of an alleged lack of legal foundation as such.

[28] Rovere, *I* Libri Iurium, 292-3.
[29] For a reconstruction of the context of this serious internal crisis, see Dartmann, *Politische Interaktion*, 190-8.
[30] Rovere, *I* Libri Iurium, 292: *Quod ideo factum est quoniam per emendatores brevium qui pro comuni totius civitatis utilitate electi fuerant et consuetudinem civitatis reformaverant, iuramento coacti fuerunt secundum modum et tenorem superius diffinitum laudare et in registro hoc facere scribere ac testari.*

When the individual elements are disarticulated, the judgment can be reconstructed diachronically as follows. In a first phase – at least twenty-five years earlier, but probably extending further back – the commune had begun to exercise directly the role of guardian, curator, or *mundualdo* (2.1), taking decisions concerning minors or their property (1.1) in a documentary form different from that employed in the present judgment (3.1). In a second phase, some transfers were carried out with the appointment of a guardian or in the presence of the minor's father (2.2). Such forms of regularization could not invalidate the original decisions taken according to earlier procedures. The transfers were therefore to be considered valid, as if executed by adults (*tanquam si ipsimet facti maiores viginti quinque annis legitime vendidissent vel in solidum tradidissent*) (3.2), and could henceforth be legally contested only on limited grounds (3.3). As is evident, this reconstruction deliberately sets aside the clause concerning the validity of judgments issued over the preceding thirty years (1.2).

The stratigraphy of the text allows the 1168 judgment with to be approached with particular precision. For the consuls, it was not merely a matter of certifying the legality of provisions concerning minors from 1143 onwards, but, more broadly, of securing their legitimacy to act as a public authority. It is in this sense that I would interpret the somewhat dissonant passage referring to all judgments *que a triginta annis retro facte sunt*. This clause introduces a broader chronological horizon – reaching back to 1138 – and does so without limitations as to subject matter. Inserted into a text otherwise concerned with other issues, it was clearly intended as a safeguard against further challenges. The apparent extraneousness of this clause to the main content of the judgment reflects the climate of anxiety in which the consuls were operating during the political crisis of the 1160s. Their concern was not limited to the possibility that provisions regarding minors or their property might be contested; rather, they feared that all judgments issued over the preceding thirty years could be challenged. It was in this context that the need arose to construct a legal instrument capable of defending the communal past.

What, then, had been the nature of consular power over the preceding thirty years? It consisted in a balance defined by the position of strength that the consuls' high social standing enabled them to exercise. The political crisis of 1164-9 exposed the vulnerabilities of a system that had already undergone a significant transformation in the 1130s-1140s and opened the possibility of alternative arrangements – arrangements that were not realized, but could have been. To be clear, this does not imply that prior to the 1130s-1140s the consuls exercised no power. As noted above, from the early 12th century they had already played a central role in conflict resolution – a marked contrast with contemporary cities in the *Regnum Italiae*. Yet it was only the specific conditions of the mid-1130s and 1140s that made possible a substantial strengthening of their position.

We are thus led to examine the context of the 1130s-1140s. What enabled the consuls to make a decisive leap in relation to the previous period, accumu-

lating sufficient prestige and authority to transform the nature of their power? The situation undoubtedly changed during the years in which Innocent II (1130-43) sought to impose peace between Genoa and Pisa. In order to bring an end to a war that had lasted for three decades, a broad and articulated cooperation within Genoese society was required – cooperation that only the consuls could ensure. At the same time, acting in close collaboration with the bishop, they became the point of reference for relations with the papacy, which now offered unprecedented opportunities for expansion in Corsica.

The process can be broken down as follows. The pacification concerned the wars between the two cities that had begun at the start of the 12th century over the granting of metropolitan rights over Corsica to the bishop of Pisa. Hostilities intensified particularly in 1127-9 following the decision of Honorius II (1126) to confirm the archbishop of Pisa's privilege as metropolitan over Corsica.[31] This decision ran counter to Genoa's expectation that the annulment previously arranged by Callistus II (1123) would be upheld.[32] Innocent thus felt obliged to bring about peace, not least because he bore the weight of his predecessors' failures. For this reason, the solution involved a new approach to peacemaking. Whereas earlier popes had attempted to resolve the Genoa-Pisa conflict by annulling or reissuing – on differing grounds – the original Urbanian disposition (1092) that had triggered the conflict,[33] Innocent instead positioned himself as a mediator between the two cities. He sought to establish a balance capable of satisfying both parties, while ensuring that each city determined the specific conditions under which the peace would be observed. The main phases of this programme were three:

1. The truce. Caffaro writes, with reference to 1130, that *eo tempore Innocentius fecit tregam inter Ianuenses et Pisanos per multa sacramenta ab utroque latere facta, donec a Francia papa rediret.* Despite its generality, this formulation points to the pope's explicit intention and to the direct involvement of the Genoese *militia* in enforcing the agreement, as suggested by the reference to *multa sacramenta ab utroque latere facta*. A reading of subsequent passages in the *Annales Ianuenses* supports this interpretation. In demonstrating the capacity of the city's political leadership to govern effectively, Caffaro notes that the consuls organized an anti-Pisan fleet in 1132, coinciding with Innocent's return to Italy, precisely as the pope had stipulated (*donec a Francia papa rediret*). Even the Pisan chronicles report no hostilities against Genoa in the years 1130-2.

2. The peace. With Innocent's return to Italy, the prospect of peace became concrete, facilitated in part by the election in Pisa in 1132 of Archbishop

[31] References to these wars – mostly won by the Genoese – are found exclusively in the Genoese chronicles: Belgrano, *Annali genovesi*, 23-4.
[32] For a brief summary of these events, see Ceccarelli Lemut, "La sede metropolitana di Pisa."
[33] Edited in *Patrologia Latina* CLI, 344-6. For the context of this privilege, see Ronzani, *Chiesa e 'civitas'*, 11-32.

Hubert, a Roman cardinal and early supporter of Innocent.[34] Through the mediation of Syrus and Hubert peace was concluded in Grosseto in 1133.[35] As is well known, a central feature of the settlement was the establishment of a new balance: the Urbanian concession was neither annulled nor simply reaffirmed, but rather reconfigured in key respects. The bishop of Genoa was granted the title of archbishop and metropolitan rights over half of Corsica, taken from Pisa in exchange for the submission of the diocese of Populonia and the legation over Sardinia.

3. Negotiations on conditions. In order to stabilize the agreement, in 1133 Innocent ordered the establishment of a commission elected by the Genoese but composed exclusively of Pisans – the party most dissatisfied with the loss of Corsica – tasked with assessing the damages inflicted by the Pisans on the Genoese, and vice versa. Only if this first commission failed was it envisaged that a corresponding body of Genoese, elected by the Pisans, would be appointed.[36] This second provision was eventually implemented, as demonstrated by the commitment made in April 1138 by the Pisan consuls to compensate for any damages, in the presence of both Pisan and Genoese witnesses who can be identified as members of the commission envisaged in 1133.[37] The Genoese representatives involved were all prominent consular figures: Bonvassallo di Oddone, Guglielmo Pevere, Guglielmo de Bombello, Guglielmo Piccamiglio, and Caffaro.

Unlike the efforts of his predecessors, Innocent's pacification penetrated society deeply and achieved a degree of stability that earlier initiatives had failed to secure. The direct involvement of the respective citizenries – from the oaths sworn in 1130 to the commissions operating in 1138 – also fostered processes of internal selection within Genoese society. In this sense, the consular *militia*, which played a key role in the negotiations, acquired credibility and trust through concrete action, thereby assuming a new political profile. The maintenance of peace was linked to opportunities for conquest in Corsica, which for the Genoese military elite as a whole represented a new prospect for enrichment. Around this nexus of peace and conquest, a new equilibrium emerged, marking a departure from the previous situation. Both the Pisan and Genoese chronicles report no conflicts between the two cities throughout Innocent's pontificate, a strong indication of the effectiveness of his initiative.

[34] On Hubert: Ceccarelli Lemut, "Per la storia della chiesa pisana;" Anzoise, *Pisa, la Sede Apostolica e i cardinali*, 174-95.

[35] The Peace of Grosseto is mentioned by Caffaro: Belgrano, *Annali genovesi*, 26. Insightful observations on the content and context of this peace can be found in Anzoise, *Pisa, la Sede Apostolica e i cardinali*, 88-92, to which reference is made for the essential bibliography.

[36] The text of the Peace of Grosseto can be found in Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, *Codice Diplomatico*, 75-7, in particular: *precipimus autem ut Ianuenses usque ad proximum Pentecostem absque malitia eligant quattuor Pisanos sapientes et discretos viros et precipimus ut illi quattuor iurent honorem, salvamentum et bonas antiquas consuetudines tam Ianueusium quam Pisanorum* [...] *Si vero de consuetudinibus questio emerserit quod isti quattuor et alii quattuor qui Ianue similiter constituentur, omnes simul aut maior pars eorum laudaverit irrefrngabiliter observetis.*

[37] Edited in Banti, *I Brevi dei consoli*, 114-6.

Within this horizon – supported by the pope and the respective militias – the position of the consular group in Genoa was strengthened internally. A similar process, with appropriate differences, occurred in Pisa.

3. *Pisa*

The case of Pisa differs in several respects. As in Genoa, it is important to recall the situation prior to the 1130s in order to understand the nature of subsequent change. Pisa was among the first cities of the *Regnum* in which consuls appeared: the earliest attestations date from 1080-85. It was only in the first decade of the 12th century, however, that the consulate acquired a 'political' significance.[38] Here too, as in Genoa, pacification promoted by the bishop – known as the *lodo delle torri* – played a decisive role.[39] The bishop established himself as the pivot around which political balances were constructed, acting as the guarantor of the "peace and concord" established in the *lodo delle torri*. Furthermore, he was the formal leader in Pisa's expeditions against the Muslims of Al-Mahdia (1087) and the Muslims of the Balearic Islands (1113-5), effectively serving as admiral of a fleet that was also commanded by the consuls.[40]

Unlike Genoa, the consuls in Pisa appear overall weaker and less influential. Sources from the first three decades of the 12th century indicate that they exercised no autonomous public rights. They did not collect taxes, which remained in the hands of the viscounts or the bishop, and, above all, they did not exercise justice in an exclusive manner, as was instead the case in Genoa.[41] The *proclamatio* of the free men of Casciavola (securely dated between 1098 and 1106) shows that the civic assembly (*commune colloquium civitatis*) could be assigned an arbitral role in disputes, in accordance with the provisions of the *lodo delle torri*.[42]

Conflicts among citizens could also be resolved through arbitration entrusted to individuals. Such a case is illustrated by an *arbitrium* recorded in a document of 1121.[43] In that year, Count Gerardo dei Gherardeschi and the archbishop of Pisa, Atto, were in a dispute over the ownership of parts of

[38] Ronzani, "Le prime testimonianze dell'attività dei consoli." As in the case of Genoa, there is no monograph on the city. The most extensive treatment of the commune of Pisa is Ronzani, "L'affermazione dei comuni."
[39] Edited in Banti, *I Brevi dei consoli*, 110-3. Commented on in Ronzani, *Chiesa e "civitas"*, 229-47.
[40] It is primarily the chronicles that inform us about these enterprises. A detailed analysis of this body of sources can be found in Cotza, *Prove di memoria*.
[41] For an overview of indirect taxation in Pisa, see Cotza, "Il ripatico," and the bibliography cited therein.
[42] Testimonies concerning the assembly's judicial function are extremely sparse. Reflections on arbitration as a means of asserting communal authority, with particular reference to the Pisan case, can be found in Menzinger, "Forme di organizzazione giudiziaria."
[43] Scalfati, *Carte dell'Archivio Arcivescovile 2*, 121-2.

the *curtis* of Cecina. The matter was resolved through the arbitration of Azzo Marignani – who was also consul that year – and Lanfranco di Gerardo of the da San Casciano family. Azzo did not act in his capacity as consul, although that title undoubtedly conferred prestige and authority; rather, he acted as an individual enjoying particular trust on the part of both parties. The document also reveals another important aspect of the procedure: the dispute had been submitted to the arbitration of these two prominent figures precisely in order to remove it from the jurisdiction of Benzo and Ughiccione, judges who would otherwise have adjudicated the matter in the absence of the parties' consent to arbitration.[44] The litigants thus sought to avoid a formal judgment in favour of a negotiated settlement, which they ultimately achieved.

Another avenue of justice was the regular trial presided over by judges. Evidence for this procedure is limited but nonetheless significant. A judgment of 1105 has recently resurfaced, allowing us to observe a non-arbitral form of dispute resolution in the early decades of the 12th century.[45] The case involved the powerful monastery of San Michele in Borgo and several private citizens over lands located north of the city. The monastery prevailed and preserved the judgment. This is the earliest extant judgment illustrating how a 12th-century city resolved disputes (alongside a Genoese judgment of 1104-5). Particularly noteworthy is the composition of the judging panel, which consisted of a new type of legal expert, the so-called "judges of the Sacred Lateran Palace". The designation itself signals the novelty of these figures within the urban judicial landscape. Whereas 11th-century judges bore titles common throughout the kingdom – typically *iudex* or *iudex sacri palatii*, referring to the royal palace at Pavia – the reference to the Sacred Lateran Palace marked a clear departure from both the kingdom's tradition and an earlier urban practice. This distinctive title was linked to an isolated 11th-century precedent in the case of a single judge, Theoderic, who may be regarded as the 'founder' of a new school. It is plausible that the first judges of the Sacred Lateran Palace attested in the 12th century – notably Hildebrand – were students under Theoderic. The documented favour enjoyed by Hildebrand with Bishop Peter (1105-18) facilitated the rapid ascent of his career and that of his pupils.

Scholars have speculated about who appointed these judges and, in the absence of any supporting evidence, have even posited the existence of papal privileges granting such powers to city bishops. Such hypotheses are unnecessary.[46] The networks of the judges of the Sacred Lateran Palace reveal not only their proximity to the bishop[47] but also their close ties to the consular

[44] Scalfati: *In quorum laudatione lis que erat inter archiepiscopum et comitem Gerardum de curte de Cecina posita fuit pro auferenda pugna que erat pro ipsa lite a Benthone et Ughicione iudicibus per sententiam data erat* [sic!].
[45] For what follows, see Cotza, "I giudici e la città."
[46] Hiestand, "*Iudex sacri lateranensis palatii.*"
[47] In the majority of documentary references, the judges of the Sacred Lateran Palace appear as custodians of the oath declarations that women were required to make before selling a property (in accordance with Liutprand's provision no. 22). It is therefore unsurprising that these judges

elite and to the viscounts.[48] One may therefore argue that the basis for their broad latitude of action lay precisely in an agreement among all the actors represented in the civic assembly, none of whom exercised direct control over the courts. At the same time, none of these judges belonged to the consulate – a significant detail that underscores their function as neutral arbiters.[49]

Things changed during the 1130s, when the consuls acquired increasing influence over judicial appointments. Whereas in the first three decades of the 12th century judges did not specify by whom they had been appointed and signed simply as *iudices*, from 1135 onwards – beginning with the earliest surviving judgment of the new type – judges acted with the explicit mandate of Uberto, the archbishop (1132/3-7), and the consuls (*ab Uberto divina pietate archiepiscopo et a consulibus electi*).[50] After Uberto's death, the consuls proceeded to appoint judges independently, revealing the provisional nature of the earlier arrangement. Under the archbishop's supervision, the consuls had succeeded in securing a role in judicial appointments; soon thereafter, they became autonomous.[51] Furthermore, among the various forms of justice attested in the early 12th century, arbitration entrusted to judges appointed by the consuls came to prevail, as if this procedure alone were capable of guaranteeing stable and reliable judgments.

What, then, had occurred in the meantime? Both the chronicles and the documentary record of Pisa provide far less detailed information than those of Genoa regarding the events of the 1130s. This discrepancy reflects problems in the transmission of memory and documentation, linked to the specific conjuncture of the fourth decade of the 12th century. Whereas the peace promoted by Innocent II opened unprecedented opportunities for Genoese expansion in Corsica, for Pisa it entailed a relative setback when measured against the balance had seemed definitively secured by Honorius II's resolution of 1126. Three Corsican dioceses assigned by Honorius II to the archbishop of Pisa were transferred to the archbishop of Genoa. Although the Pisan archbishop was compensated with primacy over Sardinia and with the diocese of Populonia-Massa, he was nonetheless compelled to relinquish rights that Urban II, Gelasius II, Callistus II, and Honorius II had repeatedly affirmed. For these reasons, it is likely that the Innocentian peace passed largely in silence in Pisan chronicles, unlike in Genoese ones, with only a few documentary traces surviving (e.g., the 1138 document recording the commission's work).

appear among the records of the urban church, the city's largest landowner and the institution that has preserved the greatest number of documents relating to land transactions.

[48] Archivio di Stato di Pisa, Olivetani, 1116, 16 November, shows the new judges at work at the *curtis* of the city's viscounts on the occasion of the manumission of a slave woman.

[49] With the exception of Ildebrando, *operaio* of the *Opera del Duomo*, who served as consul for an entire four-year term from 1118 to 1121. On his career, see Ronzani, "Dall'edificatio ecclesie all'Opera di S. Maria."

[50] Scalfati, *Carte dell'Archivio Arcivescovile 2*, 200-1.

[51] Scalfati, 231-2.

Nonetheless, the compromise embodied in the settlement required broad consensus within the city, especially among the *militia*, who stood to benefit most directly from expansion in Corsica. The Pisan *militia* placed their support for pacification in the hands of the archbishop at several stages (the 1130 truce, the 1133 commission, and the final 1138 commission). At the same time, Uberto also supported the consuls, thereby meeting what appears to have been a plausible demand: greater control over the administration of justice and a move beyond the equilibrium that had characterized the first three decades of the 12th century. This shift was gradual: initially, the judges appointed by the consuls were drawn from the ranks of the judges of the Sacred Lateran Palace;[52] shortly thereafter, the consuls began appointing additional judges, and over time the cohort of Lateran judges diminished, eventually disappearing by the second half of the 12th century.[53]

A fundamental difference with Genoa must be noted. Whereas the second half of the 1130s and the 1140s marked a decisive turning point in the strengthening of communal institutions in Genoa, in Pisa the process was characterized by irregular alternations of acceleration and stagnation. The underlying cause lay in the civic dialectic between the consuls and other groups that had historically remained outside the consular *militia*. Attempts by the consuls to further expand their authority were nonetheless made. For example, in 1139, the margrave of Tuscia, Ulrico, granted the consuls the right to collect the *ripaticum* and appoint the *ripari* should the current holders – previously appointed by other public actors, perhaps the viscounts – prove unsatisfactory.[54] This concession, however, had no practical effect. To obtain uncontested rights over the *ripaticum*, the consuls had to wait until a diploma issued by Frederick Barbarossa in 1162.[55] Already in 1139, moreover, the right to collect the *ripatico* had been granted independently by Conrad III to the archbishop, seemingly in direct opposition to the margrave's initiative. The royal diploma stipulated that *a quibuscumque petitur et exigitur, ab eo (i.e. by the archbishop) eiusque successoribus ad partem Pisane ecclesie petatur et exigatur.* thereby ensuring that even if the consuls succeeded in appointing the *ripari*, the resulting revenues would accrue to the bishop's treasury.[56]

[52] The first in this series of 'new judges' to appear alongside the judges of the Sacred Lateran Palace is Nerbotto (Scalfati, 231-2).

[53] As can be seen from Hiestand's table (Hiestand, "Iudex sacri lateranensis palatii," 68), the last judges of the Sacred Lateran Palace were appointed between the late 1140s and, at the latest, the very early 1150s (it being reasonable to assume that their appointment preceded by some months or years the date of their first documentary attestation). Once the careers of these judges had come to an end, no further judges of the Lateran Sacred Palace were appointed. The judges appointed by the commune in the 1150s and 1160s did not belong to the Sacred Lateran Palace.

[54] Scheffer Boichorst, *Zur Geschichte des XII. und XIII. Jarhunderts*, 403-4.

[55] Appelt, *Die Urkunden Friedrichs I. 1158-1167*, 199, granted the consuls *totum, quod prefata civitas vel quelibet persona habet et tenet de rebus regni, et totum, quod regno et imperio pertinet sive de marchia vel alio modo quoquo iure vel consuetudine vel per constituit retro a XXX annis vel pertinebit in civitate pisana et eius districtu per terras et insulas.*

[56] Scalfati, *Carte dell'Archivio Arcivescovile 2*, 238-40.

Another indicator of this uneven trajectory is the development, from 1140 onwards, of new legislation. A significant trace is provided by the residue of a norm later incorporated into the *Constituta* of the 1160s, regulating women's dowries, chronologically coinciding with developments in Genoa (1143).[57] This norm emerged precisely at the moment when the consuls had recently assumed control over the administration of justice through the appointment of city judges. A stratigraphic analysis of the *Constituta* does not allow us to trace this legislation further back, making this the earliest norm in the new Pisan legislation, even though the extant redactions date back only to the 1160s. At the same time, few norms can be placed between the 1140s and the early 1150s: the bulk of the *Constituta* appears to have been elaborated around 1155, during a phase of rapid acceleration that probably included the first, now-lost *brevia*.[58] In Genoa, by contrast, the consular *brevia* were first compiled in 1143 and already reflected an earlier process of stratification; the *brevia della compagna* are dated to 1157 and 1161.[59]

The trajectory of the Pisan consuls between the late 1130s and the 1140s should therefore be read in terms of denied political mobility. Unlike in Genoa, Innocent II's direct involvement of the *militia* in the broader Tyrrhenian pacification did not translate into a strengthening of communal institutions in Pisa. Nor was such an outcome inevitable. It represented only one possible trajectory – supported by certain segments of Pisan society – and was certainly not aligned with the pope's own objectives, which were guided by different priorities. Yet it was precisely during this period that the consuls redefined the horizon of their power, as traces visible in fiscal policy, the administration of justice, and legislative activity suggest.

Within this framework of denied political mobility, it becomes clearer why Pisa – unlike Genoa – experienced a violent internal struggle in 1153, pitting the consuls against Alberto Visconte, then the recognized head of a consortium that included the Visconti families and other allied individuals. This group formed the core of those who laid claim to the older public heritage and viewed the consulate with some suspicion.[60] The causes of the conflict remain unclear. Chronologically, it occurred between the death of Conrad III – who, as noted, had acted not in the consuls' interest but in favour of other actors – and Frederick Barbarossa's first descent into Italy. It appears that Alberto and his associates used their towers along the Via Burgi, extending as far as the head of the Arno bridge (today's Ponte di Mezzo), as bases for military action, employing weapons and hurling stones in open violation of Daiberto's *lodo delle torri*. The Visconti thus maintained a tangible military presence near the city's main bridge, where market activities took place and,

[57] Vignoli, *I costituti*, 95. See entry no. 38. On the corresponding situation in Genoa, see Bezzina, "Dote, antefatto, *augmentum dotis*."
[58] Banti, *I Brevi dei consoli*, 11 (and n. 9).
[59] Guglielmotti, "Statuti liguri."
[60] Banti, *I Brevi dei consoli*, 117-9.

in all likelihood, taxes on goods were collected. This assertion of Visconti control over the city markets was evidently unacceptable to the consuls.

The conflict ended with a victory for the consuls, who barred access to public office for all those who had acted against the consulate in support of Alberto and his associates and immediately took steps to consolidate the new order. From the early 1160s, for instance, the *Brevia* attest the presence of consuls of merchants, officials specifically responsible for commerce – an area that had previously not been directly managed by the consuls.[61] The consular regime also requisitioned the viscounts' public prerogatives, which were largely fiscal in nature, including rights over the *ripatico*, iron, foodstuffs, and foundries, and assigned them entirely to the commune.[62] The situation was thus very different from Genoa: in Pisa, consuls had never exercised a role as guardians of the *publicum*, a function that in Genoa has been identified as an original feature of the commune during the 12th-century transition.

Only after 1153 do we see the Pisan commune functioning in a new way: in the appointment of judges, now designated as "public", whereas those of the 1140s had been described merely as "of the commune"; in exercise of fiscal authority; in coinage; and in the initial elaboration of *brevia* and *constituta*, which could now be "published" and deployed as genuine statutory texts. As noted above, this transformation became fully explicit with the diploma issued by Frederick Barbarossa in 1162, which granted the commune – now bound to the emperor through *fidelitas* – all public property in the city dating back over the previous thirty years, including the authority to appoint judges and *mundualdi*.

4. *Genoa and Pisa: comparison and connections*

The cases of Pisa and Genoa, and their interconnections in the 1130s and 1140s, make it sufficiently clear that the processes shaping their political development cannot be interpreted solely as the outcome of endogenous transformations. Rather, we observe individual threads that, at certain moments, intertwine and give rise to something new. The local changes observable in both cities during the first three decades of the 12th century underwent a decisive acceleration during the pontificate of Innocent II. At that point, the pope's need for broad, socially stratified military support created the conditions for a more substantial involvement of the urban *militiae* than had previously existed. This process, in turn, triggered a new political and institutional pro-

[61] Banti, 50.

[62] Banti, 117: *Item, in totum illud quod prescripti vicecomites de ripa terre et aque; et de pesa centinarii ferri, et de fornariis et vinivendulis et olearіis, et de omnibus artibus soliti sunt habere et suscipere, et in castaldatum eos sic in perpetuum condemnamus, ut nichil iuris in eis ulterius habeant, et inde ab hac hora in antea nichil recipiant neque habeant, sed ea omnia nostre civitatis iuri publico damus, concedimus et in perpetuum vendicamus.*

tagonism on the part of urban groups that had long aspired to govern the city. The representatives of the older urban political class – the viscounts and those connected to them, who emerge most clearly from the sources – were no longer able to guarantee effective control over the city at a moment when the papacy required internal stability and military responsiveness.

The new context of the 1130s was further shaped by the presence of bishops – Siro in Genoa and Uberto in Pisa – who positioned themselves as mediators between societies undergoing transformation and the needs of the papacy. These actors, too, therefore contributed decisively to the reconfiguration of the political landscape. The outcomes of the strengthening of communal institutions in Genoa and Pisa differed because the contexts in which the consuls operated were themselves different. Nonetheless, it is precisely the legitimating support provided by the pope – at a time when the papacy was itself backed by imperial authority, notably Lothair III and Conrad III – that helps to explain why change occurred at that particular moment. The *pax Innocentiana* and the strengthening of communal institutions were thus inextricably linked. The prestige and honour accumulated by the consuls at this juncture help to account for the acceleration of the late 1130s and early 1140s and its open, not yet juridically defined character: in Genoa, this openness is clearly reflected in the attempted *revanche* of 1168; in Pisa, in the difficulties the consuls encountered in asserting themselves vis-à-vis other, stronger social groups.

Among the distinctive features of transformation in the High Middle Ages, the development of forms of local power – commonly interpreted as the communes – therefore represents only one dimension of a more complex process. These forms of local power were exercised within supralocal arenas that, at specific moments, constituted a decisive horizon of possibilities. The cases of Pisa and Genoa in the 1130s and 1140s demonstrate the vitality of this horizon. What is crucial to note is that the urban *militiae* did not conceive the construction of localized power as a political project in itself. Rather, they sought to construct effective power – power capable of being exercised firmly over the society they intended to govern. At certain moments, this meant operating in spheres broader and different from the strictly local one.

This perspective not only contributes to a better explanation of the processes that allow us to understand these transformations, but also has methodological implications. In a comparative historical reconstruction, the internal communal developments of the two cities would be studied independently and then compared as phenomena with distinct origins. While such an approach would be useful in some respects, it would be misleading in others because it would fail to explain why change occurred at particular moments. What we are dealing with here are processes of internal transformation that share the same genesis within a broader field of connections. Therefore, a strictly comparative perspective would be insufficient to grasp the interweaving of contemporaneous developments.

On a different, though complementary, level, a connected history of communal developments must be distinguished from the more conventional his-

tory of the circulation of models, people, and texts. The latter approach seeks to identify political, cultural, and social factors that move from one context to another and are adopted as models. Its underlying premise is that each context generates factors of autonomous development that can subsequently be transferred elsewhere, where they function as drivers of specific forms of growth. Even in this case, explanations of transformation ultimately tend to locate causality in endogenous processes. Yet the factors leading to the transformation of a society may emerge in the moment of encounter itself.

It is unnecessary to assume that the societies of 12th-century Italy were a collection of small, distinct worlds that can be compared or used as observation points for the circulation of models. Rather, they should be understood as internally differentiated societies of the kind described by Marc Bloch as "fractions of a single society which, taken as a whole, displays a high degree of unity".[63] The forces that produced unity within difference can be identified only if we seek to reconstruct not merely the individual threads that compose the skein, but the skein itself.

[63] Bloch, "Per una storia comparata," 107.

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