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Knowledge and Thinking in Renaissance Florence: A Computer-Assisted Analysis of the Diaries and Commonplace Books of Giovanni Rucellai and his Contemporaries

Doctor of Philosophy in History Dissertation

University of Oxford, Balliol College

Oxford

September 2013

Short Abstract

This thesis investigates cognition and knowledge in a rich selection of late medieval Florentine commonplace books (*zibaldoni*) and diaries (*ricordanze*) with a special focus on Giovanni Rucellai's *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. In Chapter Two a new methodology, named Mental Model Framework in History (MMFH), is elaborated. By studying mental processes such as categorisation and decision making, MMFH enables us to study cognition in historical documents. The dissertation is based on a computer-assisted analysis described in Chapter Three . This has brought together a number of technologies (Natural Language Processing, Semantic Web, Text Encoding Initiative) and used them according to the interpretative goals of the MMFH. Chapter Four investigates the knowledge-constructing practice of late medieval Florentines, and concludes that commonplace books and diaries were tools of information management and knowledge transmission. The core chapters study four domains of thinking: space, time, agency and perception. Chapter Five analyses social recognition and judgement in Renaissance Florence and reveals how a new ethical thought took shape, one that prepared the transition to capitalism. By applying decision and game theory, Chapter Six examines horizontal friendship, a bond that functioned as an informal but risky social insurance in Florence. Chapter Seven studies how Florentines used superlatives to construct a hierarchy of the world, with Florence on the top. This was the manifestation of a fierce competition within and outside the walls of Florence, competition that strongly influenced the social and physical environment of the city. By studying selection, periodisation and causal reasoning, Chapter Eight pinpoints the gradual secularisation of the conception of time. The thesis concludes that the late medieval revolution in information culture marked by the gradual transition from an overwhelmingly oral culture to an increasingly literate culture produced quantitative and qualitative changes in human thought. This largely contributed to the birth of modern thought, and to the late medieval transformation of the social and physical environment.

Long Abstract

This thesis investigates cognition and knowledge in a rich selection of published and unpublished late medieval Florentine commonplace books (*zibaldoni*) and diaries (*ricordanze*) with a special emphasis on Giovanni Rucellai's *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. While *ricordanze* are relatively well studied sources of the Florentine Renaissance, the extant 500-600 *zibaldoni* have been largely overlooked by previous scholarship. Florentines used *ricordanze* and *zibaldoni* to construct, store and transmit their knowledge and experience. They thus allow us to study human cognition through historical documents, which is the goal of this doctoral dissertation.

Chapter Two addresses a key methodological challenge. How can historians study human cognition and knowledge through documents from the past? The chapter points out that this question is deeply related to the main methodological problems of postmodern historiography. By drawing on the Copernican-turn of Kant and the ideas of contemporary philosophy of mind and language, a new methodology, named Mental Model Framework in History, is elaborated. The model studies mental processes such as decision making, categorisation, and causal reasoning, in historical documents. The main and the broadest research question of the model is, how did historical actors understand and act in their physical and social environment?

The study of thought processes in Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale* necessitated the adoption of computing tools, which are presented in Chapter Three. The methodological model required the semi-automatic extraction of entities from the intellectual world of Giovanni's manuscript, the visualisation of the relationship between entities, and the querying of the text in terms of semantic and linguistic categories. The chapter records how the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* was encoded in TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) XML and transformed into a semantically and grammatically annotated corpus. The commonplace books and the diaries of Giovanni's contemporaries were catalogued in a database, which is also presented in this chapter.

Chapter Four raises the question, how do late medieval Florentine commonplace books and diaries reflect their compiler's or owner's thinking and knowledge? First the functions that the compilers gave to these documents are studied. This reveals that these documents were used as tools of information management and transmission. Second, the contemporary notion of authorship is surveyed. The heart of the matter is that these documents are often collections of texts and textual fragments written by earlier – and sometimes celebrated - authors. In terms of our modern notion of authorship, commonplace books are not original compilations. But through the study of the contemporary notion of authorship and the culture of *loci communes*, the chapter points out that the compilers regarded the reuse of textual fragments as an original creative activity in its own right. They reused textual fragments written by others to communicate their own ideas or to construct their own experience and knowledge. The chapter concludes that the birth of literacy and the wide diffusion of this knowledge-constructing practice contributed to the rise of ego as an independent reference point against traditional *auctores*.

Chapter Five studies social perception in the mind-set of Florentines. It investigates how social judgement and recognition functioned in Giovanni's and his contemporaries' diaries and commonplace books. Precisely, five qualities are in the centre of the chapter: male and female beauty, wealth, poverty, and reputation. The value of the four social qualities assessed by Giovanni and some but not all his contemporaries was significantly different to that assigned to them by Christian tradition. Wealth became a positive quality, and involuntary poverty was perceived as a morally and materially negative state. Male beauty and fame were positive qualities. Female beauty and involuntary poverty continued to be judged in terms of the Christian value system. In the face of that Christian value system, what justified the positive evaluation of these qualities was their social and agency-related functions. For instance, reputation coordinated decision processes. Male beauty also had social functions, which greatly influenced visual culture. The negative perception of poverty was fostered by the sayings of ancient authors, which circulated widely in Renaissance Florence. Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and other *ricordanze* certainly reflect intense social conflict. However, we can also find the substantial presence of different strategies to reduce the tensions between different social groups. Florentine commonplace books convey not only a negative image of the poor but also a recognition of the wider social problem and the unequal nature of human society. These documents also present strategies intended to ease social tensions and sustain social cooperation, which was in fact the cornerstone of the Florentine economy in the period the Renaissance. Finally, the chapter takes into account how contemporaries communicated wealth and reputation, and discovers how artistic patronage was rooted in economic and social behaviour.

Chapter Six applies decision and game theory to study Giovanni's and his contemporaries' conception of friendship. In his *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, Giovanni outlined a dilemma and decision situation that raises the question, how should one react to and handle the request of a friend? To resolve the dilemma, Giovanni outlined possible strategies. The chapter analyses the rationales, outcomes and risks that Giovanni attributed to each strategy, and explores Giovanni's and his contemporaries' conception of friendship. Previous scholarship has often identified friendship as a vertical social bond relating patrons and clients. The chapter argues that a horizontal bond of friendship also existed. This functioned as an informal social insurance, which involved risk and uncertainty. The chapter studies those strategies that Giovanni and his contemporaries used to face this risk, and explores the heterogeneity of the category *amico* in late medieval Florence.

Chapter Seven is based on a phenomenon that was revealed throughout the analysis of Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and other similar documents. Giovanni frequently used superlative linguistic structures such as 'Florence is the most beautiful homeland of the world.' He and his contemporaries consciously constructed a hierarchy of the spatial world and projected their own homeland to the top of this hierarchy. Thanks to the recent proliferation of digital archives, the extraction of superlatives from large textual corpora, such as Early English Books On-line, and the analysis of similar hierarchies will be shortly possible. But what can hierarchies constructed by means of superlatives tell us about historically specific thinking? In the context of late medieval Florence, the hierarchy of the spatial world in the mind-set of Florentines was in fact the mental manifestation of and a reaction to the fierce economic, cultural and intellectual competition that dominated late medieval and early modern Europe. The formalisation of the superlatives in the *Zibaldone*

Quaresimale enables is to study how Florentines conceived the 'global space' and this competition. The chapter studies how in the fifteenth century, they saw and made contact with the global competition that was taking shape outside the walls of their city, in the macro-world. Most importantly, the chapter reveals how the world within the city walls, in the micro-world, was transformed as a result of the economic, intellectual and cultural competition in the macro-world, and due to the peculiarities of the information culture and the economic structure of late medieval Florence. For instance, the competition in the macro-world resulted in the appearance of a patriotic and civic ethos in fifteenth-century Florence, one that emphasised the significance of participation. It also contributed to the acknowledgement and recognition of artists and intellectuals.

Chapter Eight studies the conception of historical time. It analyses how the so-called Renaissance sense of the past appeared in diaries and commonplace books. This is a paradigm elaborated by Peter Burke and others. In brief, it claims that the conception of historical time and history became secularised in the course of the last centuries of the Middle Ages. The chapter analyses three time-related mental operations in Giovanni's and others' diaries: selections of key turning points in historical time, the division of historical time into sequences (periodisation), and causal reasoning and explanation in the context of historical events. The chapter concludes that for Florentines, the history of salvation, the framework underlying the medieval conception of time and history, had no or very little significance in the perception and selection of the key turning points in time. However, the providential framework had an on-going presence in periodisation and causal reasoning. The chapter concludes that in the mind-set of everyday people there was only a gradual secularisation of the conception of time and history.

The thesis concludes that the transition from oral to literate culture produced quantitative and qualitative changes in human thought. As a result of the diffusion of literacy and the subsequent accumulation of information and knowledge, not only did the size of knowledge grow but significant structural changes in the knowledge can also be observed. The late medieval information revolution in Renaissance Florence allowed the rise of new reference points such as ego, antiquity, and homeland. The rise of these new reference points enabled the birth of pluralism, pragmatism, cultural heterogeneity, and strategic thinking.

Acknowledgements

This research started in the summer of 2005 in Geneva, where I accidentally 'met' Giovanni Rucellai, the main character of the thesis. The 'meeting' in 2005 has been followed by a number of longer or shorter field trips in Florence and in Milan. My research in Italian libraries was generously funded by the fellowship of the Italian State (2006), the Brassey Fund and the Christina Drake Fund (2010), the Arts and Humanities Research Council (2011), the Royal Historical Society and the Isaiah Berlin Fund (2012). A short but productive visit in the Colombina Library, Seville was supported by a travel grant of the Santander Bank (2012). Thanks to three academic project grants (2010, 2011, 2012) from Balliol College, I could order the reproduction of manuscripts and archival materials, which largely contributed to this dissertation. In the academic year 2011 / 2012 I lived in the Stiftung Maximilianeum, Munich, which allowed me the studying of the manuscript collection in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek. I am particularly indebted to the Stiftung Maximilianeum for providing me with a perfect environment where I could focus on my research. During my field works, I got huge amounts of help from the staff of libraries and archives. I am truly thankful for their patience and help. The owners of two private archive gave me access to their collections and helped me to explore their collection.

I am deeply grateful to the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Andrew Balint Charitable for funding my Doctor of Philosophy Studies at the University of Oxford, Balliol College. The last year of my doctoral research was financed by the Bryce Scholarship of the Faculty of History, University of Oxford, which enabled me to finish my dissertation.

As the reader shall see, the dissertation is based on many different academic disciplines. This multidisciplinarity is thanks to conversations with friends, colleagues, and teachers whose names cannot be enumerated here. Most importantly, between 2009 and 2013 I lived in Holywell Manor, the Graduate Centre of Balliol College. By living with a great variety of students, I encountered many different fields that significantly shaped my thought and research. Finally, the dissertation largely draws on my studies of philosophy and linguistics at the Eotvos Lorand Science University in Budapest between 2001 and 2006. Thanks to the support of my parents, I could devote much time and energy to the study of the most fundamental questions I am addressing in the thesis.

Finally, I am the most thankful to my supervisor, Nicholas Davidson who guided me throughout my Doctor of Philosophy research and who patiently read and commented this thesis.

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List of abbreviations

AMS: Archivio Michon-Pecori, Carmignano

- Giraldi: Fondo Giraldi

ASF: Archivio di Stato di Firenze

- CS: Fondo Carte Strozziane

- Monticelli: Fondo San Pietro a Monticelli

AR: Archivio Rucellai, Florence

Balliol: Balliol College Library, Oxford

BL: British Library, London

BNCF: Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze

- Land. Fin.: Landau-Finaly

- Magl.: Magliabechiano

- Pal.: Palatino

- Panc: Panciatichiano

- Pal. Bald.: Palatino Baldovinetti

- BR: Banco Rari

-If not otherwise marked: Nazionale or Principale

Bodleian: Bodleian Library, Oxford

- Can. It.: Canonici Italiani

Braidense: Biblioteca Braidense, Milan

BSB: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich

-Ital: Codices Italici

Colombina: Biblioteca Colombina, Seville

Dresden: Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Dresden

Innocenti: Archivio dell'Ospedale degli Innocenti, Florence

- Est: Estranei

Laurenziana: Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, Florence

-Acq. e doni: Acquisti e doni

- Conv. Soppr: Conventi Soppressi

- Plut: Plutei

Marucelliana: Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence

Moreniania: Biblioteca Moreniana, Florence

Riccardiana: Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence

Trivulziana: Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan

A note about requesting data used in the dissertation

This thesis draws on a large digital data set described in Chapter Two. Access to some of these data can be requested from the author who can be contacted through gabor.toth@maximilianeum.de. The author reserves the right to decline a request.

I. Introduction: Information revolutions in the late Middle Ages and in the twenty-first century

The incomprehensibly long and complex evolution of humankind teaches us an important lesson: revolutions in information culture and communication were always followed by deep and far-reaching transformations in the human understanding of the world, and in the social and economic organisations of humans. The most significant turning point of evolution was the gradual development of human language, which enabled community life, transmission of experience, etc. The second major landmark of evolution was the genesis of writing, which gave birth to the first human civilisations in Mesopotamia. The emergence of the Gutenberg-Galaxis gave rise to pre-modern sciences, to industrial revolution, and to the subsequent social and economic changes. Finally, in the last decades digital technologies have been revolutionising our understanding of the physical and biological universe, and are transforming our everyday life. But the history of human information culture had another revolution, one that is generally not mentioned as a revolution, though, as I shall seek to demonstrate in this thesis, the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern period was by and large due to the revolution of information culture that was taking shape in the last centuries of the Middle Ages.

This revolution was in fact a very obvious advance. From the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, more and more people could read and write in the urban centres of medieval Europe such as London and Florence. The first literate societies were born.[1] Of course, they were not literate societies in terms of our modern standards; but if compared to earlier periods, when the vast majority of the population was illiterate, the rise in the number of people who could read and write was more than substantial. One of those cities where the number of literate persons was very high was Florence.[2] It is very difficult to estimate the exact level of literacy in the Tuscan city state. According to the fourteenth-century chronicler, Giovanni Villani, 8,000-10,000 boys and girls learned to read in schools, which suggests that

1 H. Graff, 'On Literacy in the Renaissance: Review and Reflections', in *The Labyrinths of Literacy: Reflections on Literacy Past and Present* (Pittsburgh, 1995), pp. 144 - 150.

2 A complete bibliography about literacy in late medieval Florence cannot be given here. The following works are only examples of a large scholarship about this topic. R. Witt, 'What did Giovannino Read and Write? Literacy in Early Renaissance Florence', in I *Tatti Studies* 6 (1995), pp. 83 - 114. R. Black, 'Education and the emergence of a literate society', in *Italy in the Age of the Renaissance,* ed. J. Najemy, Oxford, 2004, pp. 18 - 37. P. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore, 1989).

80 per cent of the population was literate.[3] Perhaps Villani's figure is an exaggeration.[4] But what is particularly telling about the level of literacy is the sheer number of extant documents from pre-1500 Florence. For instance, as Federico Melis revealed, the Datini Archive (today part of the State Archive in Prato), which holds the documents of one merchant's company, that of Francesco Datini, from a period between 1384 and 1411, contains around 150, 000 letters.[5]

The most important achievement of Florence in this period was that it was not only the intellectual, artistic and economic elite who could read and write. The surviving sources suggest that women, artisans, and peasants could possess these skills too.[6] Finally, what also clearly indicates the exceptionally high level of literacy in Tuscany, is the number of surviving Florentine commonplace books (*zibaldoni*) and diaries (*ricordanze*) produced by a great variety of people from different social and economic backgrounds. Today there are approximately 1,000 late medieval Florentine documents of this kind dispersed all over the world.[7] The exceptionality of this figure can be understood if it is compared to the number of similar documents from contemporary Europe. For instance, the number of existing commonplace books from medieval England is around fifty.[8]

The expansion of literacy had some straightforward and logical consequences in Florence and in other big cities of Europe. First, late medieval urban Europe saw the gradual transition from an overwhelmingly oral culture to an increasingly written culture. The amount and the complexity of information that can be preserved and transmitted in oral culture is obviously very limited. Accordingly, the transition must have opened new horizons by giving way to the accumulation and transmission of more sophisticated and larger amounts of information than before. Later in this thesis we shall see examples of information that could not be preserved through oral tradition.[9] The multiplication of available information created new challenges as

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3 Black, 'Education and the emergence of a literate society', p. 83.

4 See, Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy*, pp. 71 - 86.

5 F. Melis, *Aspetti della vita economica medievale* (Siena, 1962), pp. 3-28.

6 G. Brucker, *Florentine Voices from the Catasto, 1427-1480* (Florence, 1994), p. 139; L. Kaborycha, *Copying Culture: Fifteenth-century Florentines and their Zibaldoni* (Berkeley, 2006), p. 49.

7 The number of existing *zibaldoni* can be only estimated. My non-comprehensive study of the catalogues of Florentine libraries make me think that there are around 500-600 existing *zibaldoni,* which corresponds to Lisa Kaborycha's estimation (information based on personal communication). In 1980 Fulvio Pezzarosa made a list of those *ricordanze* that had been quoted or published. This list contains 330 items. However, there is still a great number of unpublished and unstudied *ricordanze*. G. M. Anselmi, L. Avellini, and F. Pezzarossa, *La "memoria" dei mercatores: tendenze ideologiche* (Bologna, 1980).

8 See a list of "good examples of late medieval British commonplace books" in D. R. Parker, *The commonplace book in Tudor London* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 11 - 12.

9 For example, see Chapter VII. Section 6.1. and 6.2.

well. As a result of the 'information boom', new tools or the adapting of old tools were necessary to cope with the flood of information. The introductory section of Chapter Eight will provide evidence of how contemporaries themselves experienced the information overload and the multiplication of tasks. Finally, thanks to the skills of writing and reading, not only a narrow elite but a relatively large portion of the society could now construct and pass on its *own* knowledge and experience. People from various social backgrounds started to write diaries with the purpose of recording information that was essential in their everyday life.[10] But in what ways was human thought transformed in late medieval Florence as a result of these changes?

This question is even more puzzling in the light of the changes that were taking shape in the last two centuries of the Middle Ages and in the early modern period. Scholars have described many different phenomena that, according to their interpretations, followed the end of the Middle Ages. Burckhardt argued for the birth of the individual during the Italian Renaissance.[11] According to Max Weber, the end of the Middle Ages brought about rationalisation and disenchantment (*Entzauberung der Welt*).[12] Hans Baron found the roots of modern republicanism and participatory democracy in the Florentine Renaissance. Others such as Werner Sombart saw the last centuries of the Middle Ages as a transitional period preparing modern capitalism.[13] Jaques Le Goff has held that a new conception of time was born in the fourteenth and fifteenth century.[14] If the lesson about information revolutions that we learn from the history and evolution of humankind is true, there must be links between the rise of literacy in urban Europe and the late medieval transformation of the social and economic world described by these and other scholars. The transition from oral to literate culture must have transformed the human understanding of the world not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. In other words, not only did the size of knowledge grow, but also its structure changed.

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10 Examples from the German speaking world are in Haus- und Familienbücher in der städtischen Gesellschaft des Spätmittelalters und der Frühen Neuzeit, B. Studt ed. (Cologne, 2007). English examples are in Parker, The commonplace book in Tudor London. Further examples can be found in J.S. Amelang, *The flight of Icarus: artisan autobiography in early modern Europe* (Stanford, Calif, 1998).

11 J. Burckhardt, *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* (Frankfurt am Main, 1989).

12 M. Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf* (Munich, 1930).

13 W. Sombart, *Der moderne Kapitalismus. Historisch-systematische Darstellung des gesamteuropäischen Wirtschaftslebens von seinen Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1928).

14 J. Le Goff, 'Au Moyen Age : temps de l'Église et temps du marchand', *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 15 (1960), pp. 417 - 433.

To find these links and to answer the question above, this doctoral thesis does not investigate the history of literacy directly, nor does it focus on literacy only in the sense of the ability to read and write. Neither does it study the social and cultural history of reading and writing. It rather regards literacy as an array of skills that enable humans to process, organise, and most importantly construct written knowledge and information. Consequently, the chapters of this dissertation examine on the one hand the practice of knowledge construction in a rich selection of well-known and less well-known or completely unknown[15] Florentine diaries and commonplace books. On the other, by studying four key domains of knowledge (space, time, agency, and perception), the dissertation aims to uncover the qualitative changes in human thought that this knowledge-constructing practice brought about. The core chapters analyse cognitive processes by means of the knowledge transmitted in the *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* of Florentines.

The main protagonist of this thesis is Giovanni di Pagolo Rucellai (1403-1481) who compiled the so-called *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* a towering example of the late medieval Florentine *zibaldone* tradition.[16] By means of this manuscript Giovanni wanted to transmit his experience and understanding of the world to his two sons, Bernardo and Pandolfo. The MS *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* which is today preserved in the family archive of the Rucellai,[17] is an extraordinary cultural map that treats almost all aspects of the contemporary understanding of the world, ranging from medical knowledge to history and philosophy. The computer-assisted analysis of Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is the gate that will open the way toward the knowledge that Giovanni's contemporaries gathered in their own diaries and commonplace books.

Thanks to William F. Kent's excellent essay, 'The Making of a Renaissance Patron', we know the main episodes in Giovanni's life.[18] He was born into a prestigious Florentine merchant family. The Rucellai had belonged to the Florentine economic and political elite since the

15 In 2011 I visited the private archive of the Michon-Pecori family and studied its collection of *ricordanze.* As the owner of the archive informed me, I was the first person to study these documents. I am the most thankful to dr Elisabetta Insabato (Soprintendenza Archivistica per la Toscana) for calling my attention on this collection.

16 Some parts of the codex were first published by Giuseppe Marcotti in the nineteenth century. Later, the celebrated German art historian Aby Warburg published Marsilio Ficino's letter to Giovanni Rucellai about Fortune. In 1960, the Warburg Institute published a selected edition of the codex. Aby Warburg, 'Le ultime volontà di Francesco Sassetti', in Aby Warburg, *Opere I*, ed. M. Ghelardi (Torino, 2004), pp. 452 - 461; G. Marcotti, *Un mercante fiorentino e la sua famiglia nel secolo XV* (Florence: Nozze Nardi-Arnaldi, 1881); G. Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', in *Giovanni Rucellai Ed Il Suo Zibaldone*, ed. A. Perosa (London, 1960).

17 I am the most thankful to the Rucellai family, who gave me access to this extremely precious manuscript. The transcription of the unpublished parts of the codex was carried out on the base of two microfilm copies, deposited in the Florentine Sate Archive and in the Library of the Warburg Institute.

18 F. W. Kent, 'The Making of a Renaissance Patron of the Arts', in *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone 2*, ed. Alessandro Perosa, (London 1981), pp. 9 - 91. The following summary is based on Kent's work.

beginning of the fourteenth century. Giovanni's life began unluckily, however. His father, Pagolo, died in 1406, when Giovanni was still very young. According to Kent, he was raised by his maternal uncle, Agnolo Pandolfini (1360-1446), a prominent figure of the Quattrocento. In 1431 he married the daughter of an iconic figure of the Renaissance, Palla Strozzi (1372–1462). Giovanni's father-in-law was a fabulously rich banker, an influential politician, a writer, a philosopher and a collector of ancient manuscripts. But the marriage turned out to be not as beneficial as it first might have seemed. As a result of his opposition to the Medici, Palla was exiled from Florence in 1434 and spent the rest of his life in Padua. Because of his close tie to the Strozzi, Giovanni became a politically marginalised figure of his city. Despite the fact that in the 1450s he was one of the richest persons of Florence, he did not hold any important political office until the 1460s. In the 1450s, he started to establish a series of marriage alliances with the families of important Medici partisans such as Luca Pitti. Later, in 1461, his son Bernardo (1448-1514) married the daughter of Piero di Cosimo de' Medici marking the end of Giovanni's marginalization. Archival sources studied by Kent tell us that Giovanni was an influential merchant and banker who actively participated in international trade. Apart from what we can learn from the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* we do not know much about his everyday life or the details of his business career. Unfortunately his personal archive was dispersed. What eventually immortalised Giovanni was his building programme. Giovanni commissioned the facade of Santa Maria Novella, the family chapel in San Pancrazio and the Palazzo and Loggia Rucellai. Later we shall learn more about Giovanni's life, though a detailed contextual analysis of the knowledge recorded in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and the biography of Giovanni is not possible due to lack of sources.

To identify the peculiarities of the thought and knowledge of Giovanni and his contemporaries, I shall occasionally apply a comparative approach in this thesis. I shall sporadically use three non-Florentine diaries. The Library of Balliol College, University of Oxford, keeps one of the oldest English commonplace books. Balliol, MS 354, from the first half of the sixteenth century, is the notebook of a grocer, a certain Richard Hill, from Tudor London.[19] This extremely fragile manuscript contains a large amount of practical information, recipes, poems, and chronicles, but very little personal information about Hill

19 Some parts of the manuscript has been published but the entire codex is still unpublished. I examined the original manuscript, but I used a typewritten transcription deposited in the Balliol College Library to study its content . See the description of the codex in R. Mynors, *Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Balliol College Oxford* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 352 - 354.

himself. The second manuscript used here occasionally for comparative purposes is the notebook of a certain Simone di Muronovo, most probably a notary from Verona. This unpublished and rich compilation is today in the collection of the Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan.[20] Finally, I shall sometimes make reference to a recently published Swiss diary or *Familienbuch* authored by a father and his son, Hans Vogler the elder (1442-1518) and Hans Vogler the younger (1498-1567) from the St. Galler Rheintal.[21] The Voglers belonged to the elite of their hometown; they held public and administrative offices in the city council and in the cloister of Altstätten. During the Counter-Reformation Hans Vogler the younger was exiled from the Rheintal, and worked as administrator in different parts of Switzerland and in Alsace. Their *Familienbuch* (today in the collection of the Zentralbibliothek, Zürich) contains a family chronicle, a large amount of wisdom literature and miscellaneous notes.

Strangely, in the 21st century we find ourselves in the same shoes as Giovanni, the Voglers and their contemporaries 500 years ago. Thanks to the rise of the virtual world, the volume of information accessible to us is increasing daily. A simple analogy can highlight this drastic increase. In the eighteenth century, the *Encyclopédie* was compiled with the purpose of putting the entire knowledge of humankind together. Today the *Encyclopédie* is only a tiny piece of the infinitely large set of information accessible to any users of the World Wide Web.[22] Again, if the lesson of history and evolution is true, the rise of the virtual world will bring about far-reaching mental, social and economic transformations. The history of the hard sciences has already demonstrated this. It would be impossible to enumerate all the scientific innovations in physics, biology, medicine that could not have happened without the help of computers and computing technologies. Our knowledge of the physical universe has changed not only in a quantitative but also in a qualitative sense. By contrast, it is difficult to find any similar achievements in the humanities. Neither can this doctoral research claim an achievement of this kind. But the author hopes that his work can be a valuable contribution **to** the question: how will the application of digital tools produce new understanding in the humanities?

In summary, this dissertation studies the knowledge system produced by the information revolution in the fourteenth and the fifteenth century, drawing on the tools with which the

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20 See the description of this manuscript in *Catalogo dei codici manoscritti della Trivulziana,* ed G. Porro (Turin, 1884), p. 472.

21 *Das Familienbuch Hans Voglers des Älteren und des Jüngeren aus dem St. Galler Rheintal,* ed. A. Renggli (Basel, 2010).

22 See the online edition, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/did/index.html, accessed 16, July, 2013.

information revolution in the twenty-first century has provided us. This is a ‘loop,’ one that Escher drew on his *The drawing hands* (1948). The information revolution in the twenty-first century will be used to understand the information revolution in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, which will again help to understand better the information revolution in the twenty-first century.

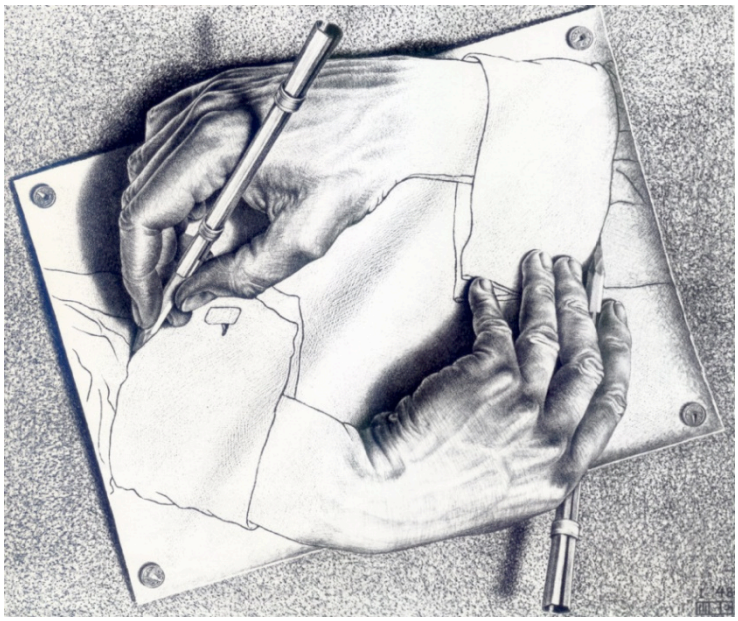


Figure 1: M. C. Escher, *The drawing hands* (1948).

II. Methodology: Cognition, Knowledge, Language and History

1. Introduction

> This book was ordered and written for me, Giovanni di Pagholo di messer Pagholo Rucellai (..) I began it for giving my sons, Bernardo and Pandolfo, information and instruction about many things that, I believe, can be useful for them.[1]

Giovanni began the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* with these words. His intention is explicit: collecting, organising, and transmitting knowledge to his sons. He was not the only one to undertake such an enterprise in late medieval and early modern Europe. From London to Florence people compiled commonplace books, diaries, *Hausbüchern*, *zibaldoni, livres de raison,* and *ricordanze.* In this thesis, I shall often name the authors of these compilations everyday or ordinary people to distinguish them from intellectuals who wrote for a wider public. Unlike intellectuals, they took up their pens with the purpose of storing and passing on knowledge and information that could be used in everyday life. The surviving late medieval and early modern diaries provide a unique opportunity to investigate human cognition and everyday knowledge through historical sources. But this enterprise raises numerous methodological and theoretical questions. To mention a few:

- What is cognition and everyday knowledge in historical context?
- What is the exact goal of the historical examination of human cognition?
- How can historians survey everyday knowledge and thinking in historical documents?

These questions match the challenge of the twenty-first century: big data. Today many of the early modern and late medieval diaries are available in electronic format. How can we use large digital datasets to reconstruct the belief systems of these diarists?

In this chapter, I shall elaborate a methodology and a theoretical framework to study cognition in historical documents. I name this methodology *the mental model framework in history* (MMFH). Not only should MMFH answer the questions above, it should also offer solutions to the existing methodological and theoretical problems of historical research. In the first section, I therefore outline the four key challenges of post-modern historical research and

1 'Questo libro fu ordinato et scripto per me, Giovanni di Pagholo di messere Pagolo Rucellai (..) il quale o principiato per dare notitia et amaestramento a Pandolfo et a Bernardo miei figluoli di più chose, ch'io credo abbia a essere loro utile.' Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 1.

present their relationship to cognition and knowledge. In the following sections I shall return to the very roots of human cognition. This will help me to define a set of basic premises that will form the core of MMFH. Following this chapter, I shall treat how these premises directed the creation of a digital environment and toolset designed to uncover Giovanni's thinking and knowledge as they are represented in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. Finally, by drawing on the core premises of MMFH, in the main chapters of this doctoral dissertation, I shall use and test the methodology in practice.

2. The four challenges of post-modern historical research

Today historical research has four different but interconnected methodological challenges. I believe that any new methodological framework must take into account of them, and offer a solution to them. The MMFH cannot be an exception. Yet the presentation of the four problems will also allow me to demonstrate how the study of cognition and knowledge are already embodied in previous historiographical investigations, which provided inspiration for the development of MMFH. At the same time, this thesis cannot devote space to a detailed demonstration of the most recent historiographical debates in this area. It limits itself to the explanation of the four problems and their relationship to cognition and knowledge.

2.1. Experience is mediated through predefined categories

To reconstruct the past, historians use a great variety of source materials, among which probably the most appreciated are written documents such as letters, memoirs, chronicles that eyewitnesses created to record and to describe events, places, people and so on. Conceptualising these sources as windows, through which historians can explore the past, is questionable.[2] The heart of the matter is an epistemological problem, which questions the

2 See for instance Roland Barthes' points about the epistemological problems related to the discourse of history and its relationship to the reality. R. Barthes, 'Le Discours de l'histoire', *Information sur les sciences sociales* 6 (1967), pp. 65 - 75. Ankersmit offers a complete discussion of the problem of representation in historical research, F. R. Ankersmit, *Historical Representation* (Stanford, 2001).

possibility of reconstructing the past. Even the most genuine descriptions, made with the an explicit intention to narrate what happened, are merely accounts of what one person experienced. They do not, therefore, give access to the past as it was but as it was seen by one person. Experience about the world is always mediated and constructed in terms of the pre-existing categories in the mind of the experiencer.

The field that has had to cope most urgently with this epistemological problem is Gender Studies. Accounts from the past often disguise, marginalise, and sideline social groups and ethnic minorities such as women, homosexuals and blacks because they were outside the prevailing cultural and social category system. As Joan Scott has pointed out, the use of the experience of historical actors as evidence is not only misleading but also illusory. It is misleading because it gives access not to *the* reality but to *a* reality which is the result of interpretative processes in the human mind. Experience is never transparent: it is always dominated by the mind-set of the experiencer. And it is illusionary because it displays the world as factual and objective by obscuring what the prevailing social and cultural categories did not cover.[3] Accordingly, the main methodological question in Gender Studies is how to make visible what is invisible, how 'to render historical what has hitherto been hidden from history.'[4] Scott provides one answer to this dilemma:

> Experience is at once already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted. (..) The study of experience, therefore, must call into question its original status in historical explanation. This will happen when historians take as their project not the reproduction and transmission of knowledge said to be arrived at through experience, but the analysis of the production of that knowledge itself.[5]

A possible way to gain access to the knowledge systems of the past is to reconstruct how the prevailing concepts of an epoch influenced the understanding and world view of historical actors. On the continent, the German Conceptual History (*Begriffsgeschichte*) school, most importantly Reinhart Koselleck and Jost Trier, studied the past through the conceptual resources of a given society, through the continuities and innovations in the meaning of principal concepts.[6] According to Koselleck, the 'social and political conflicts of the past

3 J. Scott, 'The evidence of experience', *Critical Inquiry* 17 (1991), pp. 773-797.

4 Ibidem, p. 775.

5 Ibidem, p. 797.

6 M. Richter, *The history of political and social concepts : a critical introduction* (Oxford, 1995), p. 10; J. Trier, *Der deutsche Wortschatz im Sinnbezirk des Verstandes; die Geschichte eines Sprachlichen feldes* (Heidelberg, 1931).

must be interpreted and opened up via the medium of their conceptual limits and in terms of the mutually understood, post-linguistic usage of the participating agents.'[7] Concepts are not simply indicators: for Koselleck, they determine 'a particular horizon for potential experience.'[8] In the Anglophone world, the Cambridge School, and especially the works of John Pocock and Quentin Skinner, have had a similar agenda. They also focus on the analysis of political concepts and the way they have changed throughout human history. As Skinner claims in a chapter of his *Visions of Politics*, 'I strongly endorse the belief that we must be ready as historians of philosophy not merely to admit the fact of conceptual change but to make it central to our research.'[9] Koselleck, Trier, and Skinner are surely correct: the semantic structure of concepts must reflect the belief systems of the past. But this leads to two further questions.

First, how can we use computing tools to reconstruct, visualise, and map semantic structures in texts? Chapter three will answer this question. And second, how can knowledge systems, including conceptual resources, be studied in their dynamics? By this I mean that historians must be able to observe how knowledge *functioned*. Later in this chapter I shall give a further explanation of this dynamic analysis, which will be presented in the different chapters of this thesis.

2.2. Anachronism

If human understanding of the world is constructed in terms of culturally and historically specific categories, then historians can understand the documents of the past only through their own predefined categories. The analysis of past knowledge structures and conceptual systems is ultimately not possible, because in order to interpret them, historians can apply only their own contemporary category system, which inevitably leads to anachronism. If the conceptual apparatuses of historical times are incommensurable and incompatible, historians

7 R. Koselleck, 'Begriffsgeschichte and social history', in R. Koselleck, *Futures past: on the semantics of historical time* (Cambridge (Mass), 1985), p. 79.

8 Ibidem, p. 84.

9 Q. Skinner, *Visions of politics 1*. (Cambridge, 2002), p. 196.

cannot have access either to the past or to the knowledge structures of historical times. The only solution to this contradiction is proving the existence of universal categories and putting them at the centre of historical examinations.

2.3. Language, context, and the semiotic challenge

Il n'y a pas de hors-texte, a famous sentence by Jacques Derrida, sums up an argument that seriously undermines the epistemological status of historical research.[10] Ferdinand de Saussure had earlier defined the meaning of linguistic signs without assuming referentiality.[11] According to him, language is a network of signs in which the meaning of an element lies in its relationship to other signs. Language is thus a closed system of codes without reference to extra-linguistic phenomena. Perception, cognition, imagination - in fact, all human activities - are mediated through linguistic structures. As the historian Gabrielle Spiegel has put it, 'language precedes the world by constructing it according to its own rules of signification.'[12] Historians can access the past only through textual documents, namely, through language. They can interpret texts and documents only as a network of arbitrary signs, but without being able to decode the meaning of these signs outside the text. Consequently, if the semiotic argument is right, historians are unable to study the world outside texts. We shall later return to the semiotic argument.

2.4. Individual and collective, particular and general

If records from the past give access to the world as it was perceived by an individual, then historical research is confined to the history of many individual perceptions. If the conceptual

10 J. Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, tr. by G. C. Spivak (Baltimore, 1976), pp. 158 - 159.

11 F. de Saussure, *Cours de linguistique générale* (Paris, 1972).

12 G. Spiegel, 'The social logic of the text', in G. Spiegel, *The past as a text* (Baltimore, 1997), p. 4.

system of each individual is necessarily different, the comparative analysis of belief systems is not possible. The analysis of collective and general (i.e. the study of the ethos, culture or the *Zeitgeist* of a period) is thus possible only if we can identify universal elements of human cognition alongside which different individual belief systems can be compared.

This short, and by no means exhaustive, survey has showed how cognition and knowledge are connected with the core methodological problems of historical research. Historians have to develop methods and theories to study the evidence of cognition and knowledge in historical documents.

3. Cognition and the world

The previous section has argued that the epistemological challenge undermining an uncritical use of historical evidence, and the seemingly unavoidable anachronism of historical research, spring in fact from a single problem: the individual human mind actively structures its perception of the world by means of a pre-defined schema; to conceptualise perception as if it were a passive mirror on the real world is therefore a mistake. It is now generally agreed that the mind structures the perception of the world. Numerous articles and studies taking this position could be quoted. In this section, I draw on the ideas of Immanuel Kant, who was the first major philosopher to claim that the content of human perception is not by any means the product of an identical and transparent imprint of the external world. The ideas of Kant can provide us with the basic elements of a solution to the four challenges listed above, and so to a definition of the basic premises and questions of MMFH.

In his *Critique of the Pure Reason*, the German philosopher claimed that in the process of perceiving the world, the 'object (as an object of the senses) conforms to the constitution of our faculty.'[13] In other words, the (sensual) world as it appears to us, is the result of our mind's structuring operation. This is the essence of what Kant called the Copernican turn. The negative consequence of the Copernican turn is that 'we can never get beyond the boundaries of possible experience.'[14] The human understanding of the world is limited: since

13 I. Kant, *The Critique of the Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. by P.Guyer and A. W. Wood (Cambridge, 1997), p. 110.

14 Ibidem, p. 112.

it is constructed by the mind, it can never have an understanding of the world itself (the thing in itself, or *Ding an sicht*) independently from the structuring operation of the mind.[15] Accordingly, Kant shifted all human investigation from the world itself to the cognitive processes which constitute experience, or in the Kantian term, the sensual world. Nevertheless, this shift does not question the possibility of an objective knowledge about the world and does not cut humans off from each other. The cornerstone of Kant's critical philosophy is that experience is always constructed by the categories of space and time, which are *a priori*, universal and independent of any historical time. According to Kant, this ensures that the human understanding of the world is objective, as all humans share the same cognitive apparatus.[16]

While Kant's major concern in the *Critique of the pure reason* was the perception of the physical world, the historian's field of interest tends to be the perception of the social and cultural world. Nevertheless, the cultural and social world becomes intelligible, as does the physical world, through the structuring operation of the mind. This is the first and essential premise of the MMFH, which also supplies one of its core research questions:

• How did the mind construct a meaningful and intelligible universe?

Here we meet the real challenge. Kant managed to develop *a priori*, universal schemata that, he believed, direct the perception of the physical world. But these schemata hardly tell us anything about the cultural world. Therefore, the key to the epistemological challenge of history is whether there are parallel features to the Kantian *a priori* schemata that shape an understanding of the social and cultural world. I have elaborated two key arguments supporting the existence of universal schemata in the understanding of the cultural and social world.

1. An evolutionary argument (the diachronic development of knowledge):

> The 5000-year long history of human civilisation has a characteristic that distinguishes humans from their ancestors living in any earlier period of evolution and from other species as well: this is the capability to accumulate and transmit knowledge. Only thanks to the ability to transmit and reuse knowledge constructed in the past, is it possible that each generation does not have to restart the construction of knowledge necessary to cope with its environment. This process of knowledge

15 'Our rational cognition reaches appearances only, leaving the thing in itself as something actual for itself but unrecognized by us.' Ibidem.

16 Ibidem, p. 111.

accumulation and transmission is therefore diachronic. But only by supposing universal structures in the mind can we explain this diachronic development of knowledge. If the conceptual apparatuses of different historical times were incompatible, the diachronic development would not be possible. I shall later explain how this highly abstract concept can be useful in practice.

2. A social co-existence argument (the synchronic development of knowledge):

Humans are independent agents with their own intentions, goals, and interests. Nevertheless, human society is a functioning organism where individual interests and intentions are in a certain sense harmonised and coordinated. At the most abstract level, therefore, the contradiction between collective and individual can be resolved only by supposing a universal cognitive apparatus that functions as a substratum for human co-existence.

In summary, in this section I have defined the basic premise of MMFH: that the human mind constructs a meaningful universe around humans. This supplies one of the main research questions of MMFH: how did a historical mindset construct an intelligible universe? Second, I have constructed two concepts: the diachronic and synchronic development of knowledge. Both presuppose the existence of universal mental schema, independent of space and time. Both will have an important role in setting up the agenda of MMFH.

4. Perception and agency

To explain the process of human cognition, I shall conduct a simple thought experiment in this section, though this will lack the rigour of philosophy. The thought experiment will produce a simplified model of cognition, on which further premises of MMFH will be based.

Objects and living bodies have no inherent properties by means of which humans are able to understand the cultural context in which they exist. Although some philosophers have claimed that physical properties such as shapes, colours and so on, are inherent, they are by no means sufficient to understand the broader cultural context of objects and people. For instance, the function of objects or the motivation and intention of people that constitute their

cultural context, can hardly be regarded as inherent. It is the human mind that ascribes these features to the objects of perception.

An essential feature of a mental representation is that it does not stand alone. For instance, when one perceives a table, the mental representation of the table does not include only the table itself: the table is placed in space and time; it might have a specific function, or a history. Around the mental representation of the table, there is therefore a physically invisible, albeit mentally present, array of features. In my interpretation, the process through which the representation of an objector person, (or any other elements of the perception), is connected to other representations in the mind and becomes meaningful is culturally constructed. This process is in fact a distinctive characteristic of the human mind. As experiments with chimpanzees have shown, a fundamental difference between their cognition and the human understanding of the world is that chimpanzees are unable to perceive the invisible forces and relations in the world, or to interpret other living bodies as intentional agents.[17]

To put this argument another way, consider the following example:

> Person A sees person B on the street. Person A is capable of finding more or less successfully person B´s place in the society, and to ascribe goals, features and motives to Person B, even if neither goals nor features and motives are explicitly present in the situation.

A's experience of B becomes intelligible when it is related to other types of representations, of goals, motives or space. In short, the key element of cultural perception is the bringing into use of various pieces of information, not explicitly present in a situation but stored in the human mind, in order to interpret an actual experience. The current situation is understood, in other words, with the help of other knowledge stored in the mind, which enables the experience to be mediated.[18] Consequently, cultural perception is a complex process through which the external world is transforming into an intelligible whole. It is the act of relating representations with each other, and involves numerous sub-processes, including:

- Categorisation
- Attribution
- Temporal and spatial anchoring

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17 M. Tomasello, *The cultural origin of human cognition* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 19 - 21.

18 This is the message of the oft-quoted words of Bourdieu: 'The objective universe is made up of objects which are the product of objectifying operations structured according to the very structure which the mind applies to it.' P. Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of a Practice* (Cambridge, 1977), p. 91.

Thus, the fundamental question of MMFH (How did the mind construct a meaningful and intelligible universe?) leads to a set of sub-questions based on the processes just described:

- How did historical actors categorise their fellow citizens?
- How did social categorisation function and change in a given historical setting?
- How did historical actors anchor themselves and their environment in space and time?

But humans do not only *perceive*, they also *act* in the world. Broadly speaking, humans transform the physical and social environment around themselves continuously, and respond to external stimulus. Humans are obviously not automatons. The process of agency cannot be described as a series of merely unconscious responses to external stimulus. Agency involves the activation of stored knowledge, as does perception. For instance, spatial behaviour such as movement in space necessitates stored knowledge about the environment. And agency prompts the second fundamental question of MMFH:

- How did humans act in and transform their environment?

This question in turn involves the study of a number of agency-related processes, for instance:

- decision making
- goal setting
- risk management
- spatial behaviour

In summary, the core of the modern conception of mind is that its function is not limited to input-output or stimulus-answer. Instead, the mind processes the incoming information (perception) and elaborates adequate responses (agency). In addition, there is a further constituent of cognition, the stored knowledge, which is itself continually modified, reorganised, and enriched by new information.[19]

Having outlined this basic model of cognition consisting of three groups of processes (agency, perception, modification) and the stored knowledge involved, we have to examine their historical dimension and the questions they pose for historical research.

19 See, *A companion to cognitive sciences*, ed. W. Bechtel and G. Graham (Oxford, 1999), pp. 1 - 105.

5. Knowledge and history

First I examine the historical dimension of stored knowledge, the large set of information about the world that each person has in the mind. The MMFH does not of course study the biological, psychological or physical aspects of this information set. Instead, it supposes that throughout human history individuals, such as Giovanni and his contemporaries, compiled a sample of this information set with the purpose of passing it on. To be able to ask questions of this type of data, we need a simple premise about what knowledge is on the most abstract level.

The simplified model of cognition outlined above implied that stored knowledge is a set of information applied to understand or to act in the environment. Accordingly, the MMFH regards knowledge as a toolkit that humans *use* to cope with and navigate in their environment. This is another central premise of the framework. For MMFH, the history of human knowledge is not the history of abstract ideas but the history of a tool. Such a functional analysis of knowledge has two benefits. First, it can reveal a good deal of illuminating information about the social and physical world in which that knowledge was meant to operate. I shall draw on this idea in Chapter Four. Second, by conceptualising knowledge as a toolkit to change and manipulate the environment, one can use the historical study of knowledge systems to contribute to an understanding of the relation between the material and the intellectual world. This in turn provides another key question for MMFH:

- How does knowledge, a set of purely mental phenomena, transform the physical world?

This question will, for instance, be the core of the core of the Chapter Seven, which examines how mental hierarchies transform the physical and social environment. Since the emphasis is on transformation, use and function, studying knowledge systems as toolkits is different from the analysis of the historical context of knowledge systems. The MMFH does however also recognise the significance of context, and so raises a further question:

- How did the physical, social and economic environment influence the knowledge systems?

All this adds two further points to the agenda of MMFH, and more generally to cognitive history. First, cognitive history must study how historical actors themselves understood the human-environment relationship. Second, by using historical data, historians can contribute to the general and theoretical understanding of the relationship between material and mental. This is in fact one of the biggest challenges of both Sciences and Humanities in the twenty-first century. The functional analysis of knowledge outlined here is an approach that can move Humanities research in this direction.

Returning to the diachronic development of knowledge, MMFH regards human history as a continual accumulation, modification and transmission of knowledge. It is a process characterised by continuity and discontinuity, by losses and rediscoveries of past knowledge systems. Most importantly, the knowledge inherited from the past is modified, updated and reused to resolve the problems of the present. This diachronic element provides MMFH with some further research questions, on which I shall return in various chapters of this dissertation:

- how is the knowledge from the past *reused* and modified in terms of the material and intellectual needs of the contemporary world?
- how do knowledge systems of different historical times become contemporaneous? how do they interact with each other?

It poses another question, too, that will be in the centre of the Chapter Four:

- what strategies does a given person or a community adopt to transmit, construct and store knowledge?

Instead of attempting to define what stored knowledge means at the level of an individual person, the MMFH gives a set of negative and positive features. Stored knowledge is certainly *not*:

- a priori, or innate
- universal, i.e. valid independently of space and time
- unchangeable
- individual
- collective

However, stored knowledge certainly *is*:

- private
- individual
- collective
- flexible, subject of continual change and redefinition
- contradictory

- holistic

The negative and positive features obviously lead to paradoxes:

Paradox 1: Individual knowledge is necessarily collective. Without supposing this, social co-existence is not possible (see the argument in section 2.4.). Nevertheless, each person is an independent agent, he or she must have therefore an individual and unique knowledge system, though one that shares certain elements with the collective.

Paradox 2: The function of stored knowledge is to assist in transforming the world into an intelligible whole. Stored knowledge can thus provide humans with certainty. On the other hand, knowledge is flexible, often contradictory, subject to change and redefinition. Knowledge is uncertain. Human freedom, and the ability to adapt to a changing environment, cannot be explained without supposing the flexibility of knowledge.

The goal of MMFH is not to resolve these paradoxes at a theoretical level. Giddens, Foucault, Bourdieu, and much earlier Hegel, all attempted this.[20] But by making them the subject of historical examination, MMFH studies these highly theoretical problems in practice and with the help of real data. The two paradoxes thus add new items to the agenda of cognitive history. First, instead of imposing a false homogeneity on a heterogeneous set of individual knowledge systems, gathered for instance from the diaries of several different persons, the goal of MMFH is to identify and analyse the integrating and the disintegrating forces within a set of individual knowledge systems. Second, instead of supposing that the knowledge system of a person is consistent, the MMFH wants to explore the inconsistencies, internal contradictions and fractures, and conceptual limits within each given knowledge system.[21]

Finally, holism is not perhaps an obvious characteristic of stored knowledge. But knowledge used in everyday life cannot be divided into sub-disciplines or branches. Our earlier thought experiment demonstrated that the key characteristic of a mental representation is that it can be related to other mental representations. For instance, a simple physical object can have a

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20 Hegel tried to resolve the first paradox by supposing that individual beliefs, ideas and actions are merely manifestations of a general principle, the Spirit. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the philosophy of world history*, ed. R. F. Brown, P. C. Hodgson (Oxford, 2011). Similarly, Foucault put the general (discourse) in the centre of his investigation. Following his 'death of the individual,' here were significant efforts to understand and explain, in the words of Marshall Sahlins, 'the dual existence (structure and individual) of culture.' For instance, Bourdieu developed the concepts of habitus and harmonization to resolve the contradiction between collective and individual knowledge in his Outline of a Theory of a Practice.

21 My ideas on this subject have been largely influenced by William Sewell, though that American historian applied them to redefine the concept of culture. He advocated the study of the ways by which cultural coherence is achieved, dissolved and sustained. W.Sewell, 'The Concept(s) of Culture', in *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the Study of Society and Culture*, eds. V. E. Bonnell and L. Hunt (Berkeley, 1999), pp. 35 - 61. See also B. Shore, *Culture in mind: Cognition, Culture, and the problem of meaning* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 304 - 305.

function in the social world, it must be related to perception, and it can have spatial and temporal attributes. How then is it possible to apply a holistic approach in historical investigation? How can we explore the way different domains of knowledge are interconnected? These questions lead us to the last section of this chapter.

6. Mental operations and linguistic structures

This chapter has not yet answered an important question. *How* can historians answer the questions raised in the previous sections? *How* do texts reflect cognition? 'How' will be at the centre of this last section.

As I have already suggested, the solution of the epistemological challenge of history depends on whether we can identify universal elements in human cognition. Stored knowledge is definitely not universal, but there are reasons to suppose that certain mental *operations* are in fact universal. To prove this, I shall use a linguistic argument, one that will also show how we can use texts to study cognition.

Human language constantly changes in space and time. Specific meanings of words disappear while new meanings emerge. But there are elements of human languages that do not change. For Chomsky, these universal elements are the morphosyntactic structures.[22] According to Ray Jackendoff, the same semantic primes can be found in all human languages.[23] The MMFH claims that different human languages use the same set of basic logical and semantic operations, such as spatial and temporal anchoring, causal relations, goal setting, the construction of mental hierarchies, and so on. The universality of these operations is demonstrated by the fact that they are used in many different human languages independently of space and time. What for instance guarantees the universality of causal reasoning? - the fact that even though everyday people in the Middle Ages may not have referred to it in these terms, through language they could and in fact did use causal reasoning. In the last years

22 N. Chomsky, *Knowledge of Language: Its Nature, Origin and Use* (New York, 1986).

23 R. Jackendoff, *Semantics and Cognition* (Cambridge (Mass), 1983).

cognitive historians of science have also been using mental operations, such as analogy formation and categorisation, as primary means of analysis.[24]

MMFH also holds that the main function of logical and semantic operations in any text is relating textual entities (objects with which the intellectual world of a text are populated) to each other. The historically specific meaning of a given textual entity lies in its relationship to other entities. What is universal but at the same time historically and culturally specific in a text is the way a given logical and semantic operation functions. For instance, in Chapter Seven, I will focus on superlative structures. The logical operation that distinguishes certain entities and projects them to the top of a hierarchy is universal. Consider the following two assertions, one from the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and one from the Chinese equivalent of Twitter (WEIBO) :

- Palla Strozzi is the richest person of the world
- Baoli is China's largest arms dealer[25]

What is culturally specific in these two assertions is not the semantic and logical operation (i.e the construction of a hierarchy), but the entities and the properties that the operation uses, and the way they are related to each other. By putting semantic and logical operations at the centre of historical investigation, it is possible to resolve the problem of anachronism. Universal semantic and logical operations can bridge the gap between different conceptual systems. Furthermore, the essence of these operations is that they connect elements of completely different knowledge domains to each other. Through them the holistic aspect of a belief system can be revealed. But for this, there needs first to be a defined relationship between logical and semantic operations and mental operations. Second, it is necessary to determine how a text is related to cognition and to the extra-textual world. And finally, I need to present an argument that supports a rejection of the semiotic position and the *Sapir–Whorf* hypothesis, which will be explained later.

We can observe two analogies between mental operations and logical-semantic operations. First, mental operations belonging to perception or agency can be reduced to logical-semantic operations used in texts. For instance, Chapter Five will study social judgement. An elementary constituent of this mental operation is ascribing qualities to agents. This is in fact

24 N. J. Nersessian, *Creating scientific concepts* (Cambridge (Mass), 2008); H. Andersen, P. Barker, and X. Chen, *The cognitive structure of scientific revolution* (Cambridge, 2006).

25 Posted by user id 2685246833 on 20130211165437 in response to post id 3544531376708373. Data collected by Gilian Bolsover, who shared it with me.

a linguistic operation based on a predicate-adjective relation. Not only can mental operations be reduced to linguistic operations; there is a second important analogy between them. As I have argued earlier, mental operations involve establishing relations between representations of entities, which is the key function of logical-semantic operations as well. Both a textual entity, and the representation of a real world entity, become meaningful thanks to their relation to other representations.

To see how we can use these analogies, consider this thought experiment:

> We have a text *TX,* which was written by person *P* with the explicit intention of making a description of the world around him (henceforth *WO).* We can make the following assertions:
>
> - *TX* is a world in itself, which can be named story world (*SW).*
> - *SW* is a set that contains entities.
> - The entities in *SW* are related to each other with the help of semantic and logical operations.
> - *SW* has a structure, which is the network of entities constructed with the help of linguistic operations.

Does the structure of *SW* correspond to the way *P* cognised *WO*? Do the causal, spatial, temporal and other relationships between entities in *SW* correspond to the way *P* saw the relationships between entities in *WO*? By studying the way that logical-semantic operations function in *TX,* can we observe the way that mental operations function in *P's* mindset?

The answer of semiotics would be a definite no. Semioticians do not believe that linguistic structure reflects structures in the extra-textual world. They argue that logical operators in texts arrange purely linguistic signs that have no necessary relation to the world outside the text. But if this argument is accepted, it is impossible to explain the diachronic development of knowledge. If texts cannot convey anything about the world outside texts, how can they be the medium of knowledge transmission and accumulation? A diachronic development is possible only if there are vehicles to store and pass on information. Oral culture is clearly not suitable to store complex information. But texts and textuality have proved to be highly efficient tools of information transmission. Consequently, the claim that a text cannot convey information outside itself is false. The textual universe, *SW,* and the reality, *WO,* about which *TX* conveys information are interdependent. *SW* is a historically and culturally specific configuration of *WO*. So what can we learn about the thinking that constructed *SW?*

According to the *Sapir–Whorf* hypothesis,[26] we can never access the thinking that constructed *SW* because of linguistic relativity. In brief, the hypothesis claims that speakers of different languages think in a different way. But what does it mean to 'think in a different way'? It means that the same semantic and logical operators function differently. Operators relate different entities in a different way, and thus construct a culturally and historically specific world. The result of semantic-logical operations is thus relative; but the operations themselves are not. Consequently, culturally specific thinking can be studied by observing the way that universal mental operations function in a text, i.e. the way that they relate entities to each other and construct a meaningful universe. The main goal of MMFH is not to study the extent to which a textual world (*SW)* corresponds to an objective reality (*WO)*, but rather to examine *how* an objective reality is constructed. Returning to the example cited above, 'Palla Strozzi is the richest man of the world': the question is not whether Palla Strozzi was in reality the richest man of the world. Raising a question of this kind would be a positivist approach. Instead, MMFH studies the historically and culturally specific process of ascribing qualities to agents. The historically specific thinking of *P* lies in the way he related agents and qualities to each other.

As a whole, therefore, MMFH accepts the position sustained by cognitive linguists. Language usage reflects the conceptual system. A text is a specific cognitive construction, which also reflects the conceptual system of the author.[27] In the case of a text such as *TX*, the way the textual entities are related to each other in the text must represent the way the compiler conceived the causal, behavioural and many other types of relations in the real world outside the text. Studying cognition in a text is possible by investigating mental operations (reduced to logical-semantic operations) that relate (textual) entities to each other.

7. Conclusion and practical tasks

This chapter, and the *mental model framework in History* (MMFH), envisages five core areas of research for cognitive history. The first is the study of perception that raises and answers

26 See the summary in V. Evans and M. Green, *Cognitive Linguistics, An introduction* (Edinburgh, 2006), pp. 95 - 101.

27 L. Talmy, *Toward a Cognitive Semantics* (Cambridge (Mass), 2000), p. 419; D. Herman, *Story Logic, Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 2002), pp. 8 - 20.

the question, how did a historically and culturally specific human knowledge system assist in constructing an intelligible universe? The second area is agency, which examines the problem of how humans acted in their physical and social environment. The third field of investigation is the relationship between the mental and the material, which involves the question, how did human knowledge systems, purely mental constructions, transform the physical and social environment? The fourth area studies the problem of the general and the particular. It compares different knowledge systems to uncover the integrating and disintegrating forces within a culture, understood as an abstract set of all knowledge systems of a given historical time. And the final key area of cognitive history is studying how a given community reused the knowledge of the past to face the challenges of the present.

To investigate these areas, MMFH observes the functioning of universal mental processes in texts. An essential premise of the model is that the thinking evidenced in a text is a process that relates entities from different domains of knowledge to each other. By exploring the network of relationships between textual entities, the framework studies cognitive processes such as temporal and spatial anchoring, social judgement and causal reasoning. Their universality is evidenced by the fact that they can be expressed with logical/semantic operations used by many different human languages independently of space and time. For instance, perception is uncovered by observing how the processes of categorisation, judgement and recognition are functioning. In practice, this dissertation studies how specific textual entities (agents, qualities, verbs, etc) were related to each other by Giovanni and his contemporaries in documents written with the purpose of passing on knowledge. The focus on mental processes has two further benefits. Although they make use of different contents (i.e. different entities), the very same mental operations can be found in contemporary German and English diaries. Different conceptual systems can thus be compared by means of mental operations; so MMFH has a solution to the challenge of anachronism. Second, mental processes relate different knowledge domains to each other; they can therefore enable a holistic approach that uncovers how (for instance) the patronage of art is rooted in economic and social behaviour.

But MMFH requires the completion of some very concrete tasks, which can be resolved only with the help of computers. It demands the identification and extraction of all - textual - entities that populate the intellectual world of a text. Simply extracting single words from texts is not enough. Words must be organised into groups that enable a quick and efficient

information retrieval. And this group organisation must be based on non-subjective categories such as grammatical function. An entity can have many different occurrences within a text; the researcher needs to find all of them - the cornerstone of the holistic approach. To study how entities are related to each other, i.e. how mental operations function in a given text, researchers must understand and analyse how the author himself related them. This must be of course visualised. Mental operations in texts make up patterns. For example, the pattern that can be used to study social judgement is a sequence consisting of an agent and certain qualities. The researcher needs to identify these sequences and patterns in texts. The next chapter will demonstrate how the combined use of Natural Language Processing, Text Encoding and other technologies can fulfil these requirements.

III. Methodology: The computer assisted analysis

1. Technical Requirements

The methodological model outlined in the previous chapter imposed several requirements that only the use of computers could fulfil.[1] It necessitated an *inventory of the entities* in the intellectual world of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. Even though the totality of entities present in a given text is hardly accessible, an attempt to create an inventory for this text was nonetheless worthwhile and necessary. A concordance would not have been enough (see Section 3 of this chapter). The model then required methods to organise, filter and query this inventory. Since the framework is intended to examine the structure of knowledge, there was a need to organise the entities in classes. The model also required the recording (and visualising) of how the entities are related in the text. Finally, in order to save time, some of these requirements had to be fulfilled by semi-automatic procedures.

In total, the framework imposed six main technical requirements:

1. Creating an inventory of entities which contains each meaningful word of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[2] The words must be organised under their dictionary forms and with reference to different sections of the manuscript.[3]

2. Querying the inventory of entities in terms of grammatical categories. Since different grammatical categories cover different aspects of human knowledge and thinking, the use of them to find domain-specific data was particularly important. For instance, agency can be reconstructed by focusing on verbs; psychological features and attributes are typically located among adjectives.

3. Querying the inventory in terms of semantic domains.[4]

4. Collocation analysis by using semantic and grammatical patterns together.

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1 This chapter draws on an article to be published in the *Journal of Literary and Linguistic Computing*. It was originally presented in the conference *InterFace*, held at University College, London, in 2011.

2 To determine which words were meaningful, a negative definition was applied. Meaningful words are lexemes that do not fall under any of the following categories: logical operators; specifiers or modifiers of adjectives and nouns, lexemes used to express anaphoric or cataphoric references; prepositions.

3 Giovanni himself divided the manuscript into entitled sections. He also added a table of contents to the manuscript.

4 A semantic domain or field is "a group of words closely related in meaning, often subsumed under a general term. For example, the words in the field of color in English fall under the general term color and include red, blue, green (..), and dozens of others." A. Lehrer, *Semantic fields and lexical structure* (New York, 1974), p. 1. See the way semantic domains were identified in Section 4.

5. Setting up an optimised search engine. Due to the fact that the Italian language uses suffixes, and the manuscript was written with an irregular orthography, a simple word search could hardly help to find all occurrences of an entity.

6. Organising the entities in a taxonomy, recording and visualising the relationships between them.

In the following two sections, I shall focus on how the combined use of different technologies, such as TEI mark-up and Natural Language Processing, fulfilled these requirements. Readers interested in the practical application and the first results of the project are advised to go to the sixth section of this chapter.

2. Technical Solutions

The goal of the first phase of the research was to make an appropriate digital format from the full text of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. Both the published and the unpublished parts of the codex were transcribed and encoded according to the TEI P5 Guidelines. The mark-up was meant to capture the basic textual components of the codex, such as the paragraph structure and the original divisions interposed by Giovanni himself. I also encoded the physical layout of the manuscript including initials, spaces, corrections, additions and deletions and alteration of hands. Neither critical apparatus nor editorial corrections were added to the encoding. The only editorial element that I used was the TEI <unclear> tag. This was meant to mark those words or passages where due to palaeographical difficulties a secure transcription was not possible.

To add a linguistic and semantic annotation, a stand-off mark-up was applied in a MYSQL database. In contrast to inline mark-up, this method stores data about XML elements in a different location.[5] Each word in the transcription was wrapped around with the TEI <seg> element. A unique ID was given to each <seg> based on its position in the text. After this all <seg> elements were migrated to a MYSQL table. The records in this table and the original XML file are related to each other by means of the unique ID.

5 See a detailed description of stand-off mark-up in TEI Consortium, eds. "16. 9 Stand-off Markup" *TEI P5: Guidelines for Electronic Text Encoding and Interchange.* [2.6.0]. [20th January 2014]. TEI Consortium. http://www.tei-c.org/release/doc/tei-p5-doc/en/html/SA.html#SASO ([23, Januray, 2014]).

There were two reasons for the decision to apply a stand-off mark-up. First, the mixing of the mark-up that represents the physical layout with linguistic and semantic annotations would have resulted in a complex XML file. The different layers of annotation would have certainly overlapped. Generally, the main benefit of stand-off mark-up is that it enables the complete separation of different layers of annotation. Second, due to the lack of proper resources and support, querying and processing the XML file would have been far more difficult than working with a MYSQL database. Only the use of a native XML database, such as eXist, might have resolved these performance issues. The preferred processing tool was, however, PHP and its DOM, LIBXML and XSLT extensions. Finally, the semantic and linguistic training of the corpus was also easier in MYSQL.

For adding linguistic annotation, a part-of-speech tagger, named TREETAGGER, was applied.[6] This program gave part-of-speech and lemma information about each word of the manuscript. TREETAGGER uses a text file as an input. This was generated from the MYSQL database. The benefit of TREETAGGER is that in case of ambiguity it gives all possible lemma and part-of-speech information with a probability.[7] As we shall see later, this information was particularly useful when handling linguistic ambiguity. The output format of TREETAGGER is again a text file, from which a new MYSQL table was generated.

This table (henceforth *token table*) contains 132,495 tokens (23% of the tokens were unknown to the tagger). From the token table a *type table* was created (15,634 types, of which 47% were unknown to the tagger). The type table might function as a concordance if it were related to the token table. However, to create the inventory of entities, I needed to organise the tokens under dictionary forms not types, and according to their occurrences in different sections of the manuscript. There was also the requirement to filter the dictionary forms in terms of their semantic domains and grammatical categories. The difference between my inventory of entities and a concordance is that the latter is only a list of words, whereas the former is an organised and filterable whole.

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6 TREETAGGER was developed by Helmut Schmid at the Institute for Computational Linguistics of the University of Stuttgart. It can be used to tag texts in several languages and it is freely available for research purposes. Further information can be found on http://www.ims.uni-stuttgart.de/projekte/corplex/TreeTagger/ (accessed 30 November 2011). H. Schmid, 'Probabilistic Part-of-Speech Tagging Using Decision Trees', in *Proceedings of International Conference on New Methods in Language Processing* (Manchester, 1994); H. Schmid, 'Improvements in Part-of-Speech Tagging with an Application to German', in *Proceedings of the ACL SIGDAT-Workshop* (Dublin, 1995).

7 The tagger examines the surrounding words, and gives the probability on the base of this. However, since many words in the *Zibaldone* were written with a non-conventional orthography, the tagger could not give reliable information about probabilities; this feature was therefore not used in the grammatical annotation.

As a first step, the following approach was applied. A script took each type from the type table; it browsed its occurrences in the token table and collected all possible lemma and part-of-speech information that the tagger provided; it added this information to the type in the original type table. This method had a reason and some consequences. The type table was controlled and edited manually. Those types that did not give any information about the intellectual world of the text, were eliminated. In addition, both lemma and part-of-speech information were added to the types that the tagger did not know. The manual control of the types (15,634 records) was significantly faster than the revision of all tokens (132,495 records) would have been. At the same time, the fact that in the final and controlled version, the lemma and part-of-speech information are attached to the type and not to the token, has an important consequence, for this approach resulted in the loss of the grammatical information in context. In many cases the database can give only ambiguous results. However, the database has information about whether a type, and consequently also a token, is ambiguous. After the manual control, only 12% of the types and 16% of the tokens remained ambiguous. If a type has more than one lemma, then it is automatically classified as ambiguous data. This enables the user to eliminate ambiguous results from queries or to distinguish it visually from the non-ambiguous data. Another consequence of attaching linguistic information to the type, is that the corpus cannot be used for quantitative analysis.

From the lemma information of the type table, a *vocabulary table* was created, one that functions as the list of entities in the manuscript (6,080 records: verbs, nouns, adjectives and adverbs make up the 80%, 4,910 entries). Each record of the vocabulary table contains a dictionary form (a lemma), and its possible grammatical categories. TREETAGGER uses 45 different tags (the 'Penn treebank tagset'), which were reduced to seven categories: verb, noun, pronoun, adjective, proper name, operator and number. The vocabulary table is related to the token table.[8] Accordingly, each word of the manuscript has its corresponding dictionary form. In fact, the inventory of entities consists of two tables and another one that relates them:

1. a vocabulary table: lemmas and their possible grammatical categories.

8 For instance, the vocabulary table contains the lemma *rifare.* This verb appears in the corpus in inflected forms, which are *rifatta, rifatto, rifà, rifaceano, rifare*. These inflected forms are stored in the type table. The token table contains the concrete occurrences of these forms in the corpus.

2. A token table: all words of the manuscript with data about their position (section, paragraph, position of the word within the entire codex).[9]

Again, as a consequence of the practice described earlier of attaching lemma and part-of-speech information to the type, a token can be related to more than one entry in the vocabulary table, i.e. it can have various dictionary forms.

The inventory of entities is visualised as a tree, the branches of which are the tokens, arranged in terms of the sections of the manuscript (see figure 1). This gives a clear but tentative overview of all important entities in the codex. It also helps the reader to track their migration within the intellectual world of the manuscript.[10] However, a limitation of this method is that the unit of meaning is a word, which is problematic in certain cases, as for instance when names of individuals consist of two words. The tree can be filtered in two different ways. First, it is possible to visualise only the elements of a given grammatical category. Second, it can be queried in terms of 143 semantic domains. Finally, a search tool was also set up which, due to the combined use of the token and vocabulary tables, finds suffixed forms and synonyms.

The semantic annotation was added by using the lexical database of the Italian WordNet project.[11] This database contains semantic information for 58,000 Italian word senses, 41,500 lemmas and 32,700 synsets. Words are organised in terms of synonym sets and semantic domains. The vocabulary table and the WordNet wordlist were joined, as a result of which semantic information was added to 4,137 records (68%) of the vocabulary table. Additionally, by using the synonym set information of the WordNet database, I could also group the elements of the vocabulary table into synonym sets. However, it must be noted that the WordNet database has been created for modern Italian; in many cases, therefore, it did not provide accurate information. Nevertheless, taking into consideration that the training process necessitated a few days of programming and the result still significantly helps to map certain semantic domains such as ‘building’ and ‘animals’, the usage of the WordNet vocabulary proved to be a beneficial tool. It can be useful for digital projects where manual annotation is not possible but users need tools to navigate in the intellectual world of texts.

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9 The position can be used for collocation analysis.

10 Similarly, by clicking on any word of the manuscript in the browser, a pop-up window appears and shows all occurrences of the entity in the manuscript.

11 I used the licensed version of the MultiWordNet 1.39 release. For further information, see http://multiwordnet.fbk.eu (accessed 30 November 2011). E. Pianta, L. Bentivogli and C. Girardi ‘MultiWordNet: Developing and Aligned Multilingual Database’, in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Global WordNet* (Mysore, 2002). C. Fellbaum, *WordNet: an electronic lexical database* (Cambridge (Mass), 1998).

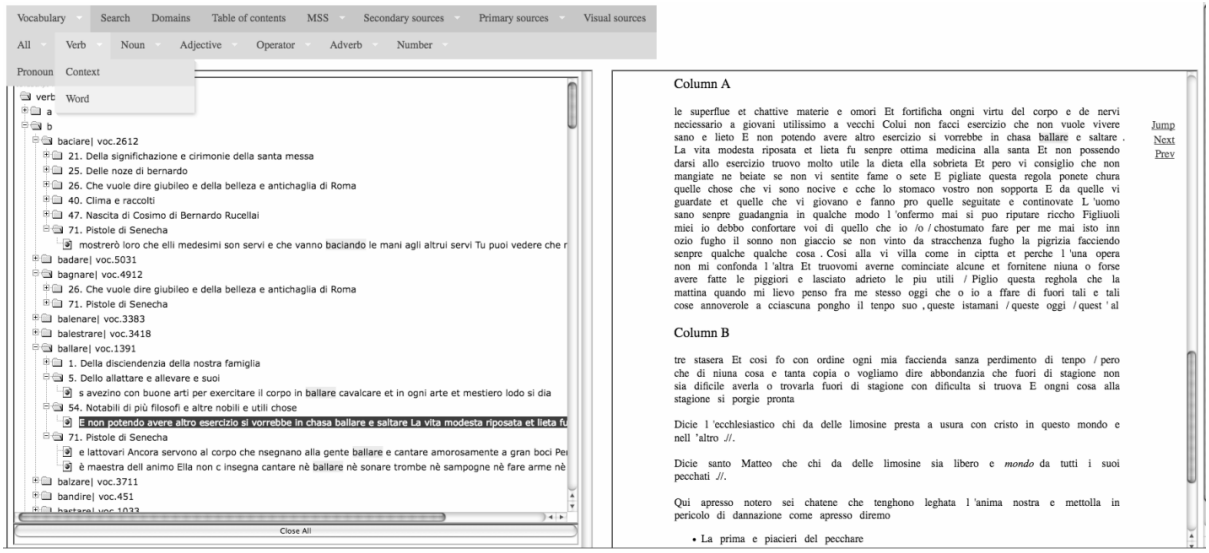


Figure 1: *Vocabulary* or inventory of entities and the text of the manuscript as they are visualised in a browser.

By using the elements of the vocabulary table (the entities) as instances, an ontology in OWL is being built. This is meant to record and visualise the knowledge system as it is described in the manuscript. The ontology building process is explained through a practical example in the sixth section of this chapter.

Finally, the entire technical process was complemented with the creation of mathematical graph objects. This process is, however, presented in Chapter Eight as it was developed to resolve research questions related to the conception of time.

3. Integrated Research Environment

Like other projects in humanities, this research involved work with data from primary, secondary and visual sources. An *integrated research environment* (see figure 2.) was built up to store and link notes. Information from different types of sources was encoded in XML. For this a similar schema to the TEI manuscript description module was developed. I also catalogued seventy Florentine commonplace books in TEI XML.

As a whole, the integrated research environment contains five main blocks: primary and secondary sources, the text of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, visual sources and the catalogue of the manuscripts. These blocks can be linked to each other. At the top stands the inventory of entities described above. This can be also linked, and thus serves as a topic map for the five blocks. Each entry in the inventory has a direct link to its definition in the Treccani on-line dictionary.[12] Creating external links pointing to any elements of the environment would be possible; however, this was not set up. To integrate the ontology I use the OWL API.[13] The entire project is visualised in a browser by means of HTML, XSLT, PHP and various javascript plugins.

Making notes about secondary and primary sources by using a predefined XML structure has several benefits. First, as a result of the applied XSLT stylesheet, the output format is automatically a clear and easily browsable HTML file. Second, thanks to marking-up bibliographic data, names, places and other type of information, I can extract annotated data from my notes. Finally, since human memory has limited capacity - one can hardly remember each piece of information in an extensive set of notes- the topic map provides enormous assistance. When reading about anything that is related to any aspect of Giovanni's diary, I made a link to the inventory or to the text of the manuscript. Later, when writing about a given topic, I could easily retrieve all primary and secondary sources which in some way relate to that topic. At the same time, the disadvantage of the use of XML is that the schema, stylesheets and the query mechanism had to be developed.

The integrated research environment is very similar to a powerful WIKI or a CAQDAS software. Different types of data, stored in MYSQL, XML and OWL, are visualised and linked to each other. Since it was developed according to the specific requirements of this research, however, it is much more flexible than these tools. Automatic concordance is a general feature of CAQDAS programs. This is particularly useful but far from sufficient for the comprehensive analysis of a text. A common problem of both WIKIS and CAQDAS programs is that they do not enable users to train their data. This was a key step in setting-up my digital environment. Another concern of digital humanities is the reusability and the

12 http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/ (accessed 30 November 2011).

13 M. Horridge, and S. Bechhofer, 'The OWL API: A Java API for Working with OWL 2 Ontologies', in *OWLED 2009, 6th OWL Experienced and Directions Workshop* (Chantilly, Virginia, 2009); M. Horridge, B. Sean, and O. Noppens,'Igniting the OWL 1.1 Touch Paper: The OWL API', in *OWLED 2007, 3rd OWL Experienced and Directions Workshop* (Innsbruck, 2007); S. Bechhofer, P. Lord, and R. Volz, *Cooking the Semantic Web with the OWL API* (Sanibel Island, Florida, 2003).

dissemination of the information. Neither CAQDAS programs nor WIKIS can guarantee this. Only the application of standards can assure that the data can be reused in the future. Similarly, tagging and linking are common features of annotation tools. It is nonetheless questionable how links and tags can be migrated from one program or file system to another. Finally, as I shall argue later, the construction of a digital environment must be directed by a theoretical model; this necessitates a great deal of flexibility that the software does not allow.

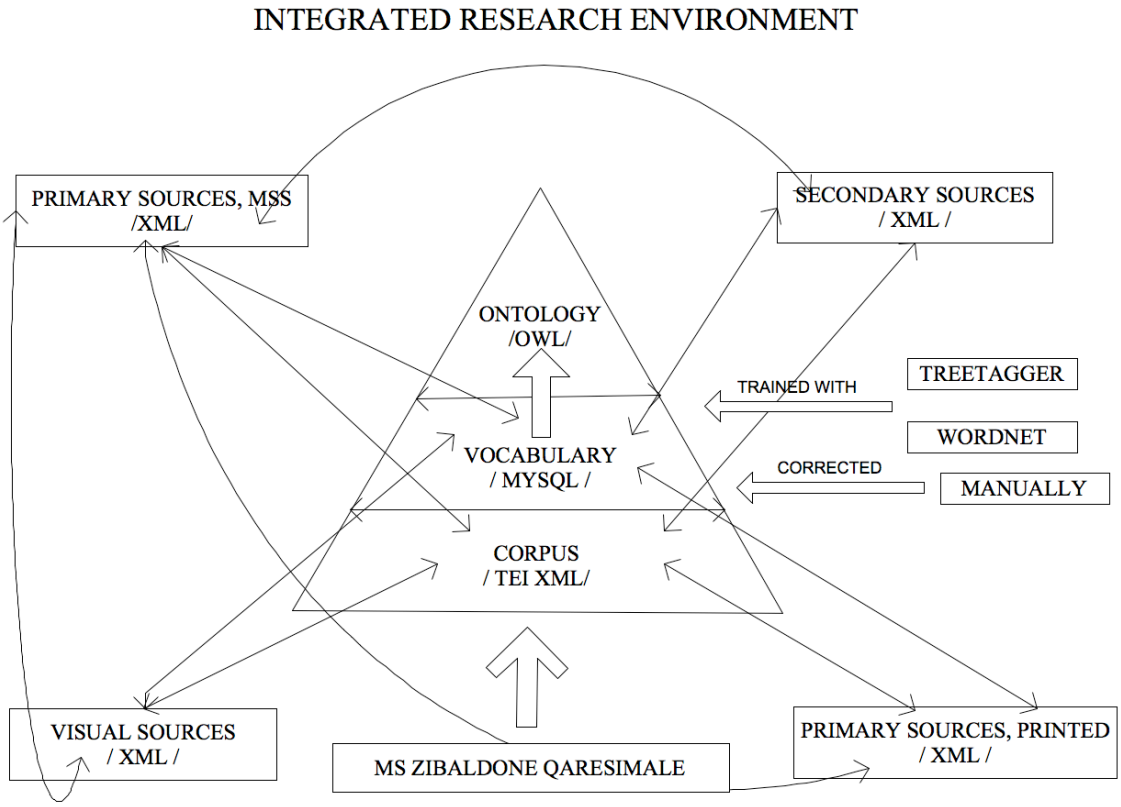


Figure 2: The information architecture of the research.

4. Practical Application

By applying a wide range of computing tools, I created a complex digital environment, which fulfilled the requirements presented in the third section. The published and the unpublished parts of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* were digitised using TEI XML allowing the text to be viewed in a browser. An inventory of entities was set up attempting to record all entities in the intellectual world of the manuscript. Each entity has a direct link to its occurrences in the text. As a result of the semantic and grammatical annotation described in the third section, the inventory can be queried in terms of grammatical and semantic categories. As I shall explain in this section, the entities in the inventory are the constituents of an OWL (Web Ontology Language) ontology. This models the knowledge that Giovanni wanted to transmit by means of the manuscript. The opening of the digital environment to wider public access is currently under development.

How can this digital environment be used in everyday practice? How does it change the methods generally applied in humanities? Finally and most importantly, how can it assist in producing new insights into the past? To answer these questions I shall demonstrate the steps taken to resolve a concrete research problem: the analysis of social perception in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale.*[14]

4.1. Elaboration of a theoretical framework

The solution to each research problem is directed by a theoretical and methodological framework, just as for the entire project. This defines the necessary data to resolve the research problem. Most importantly, it functions as a tool to interpret the data. As I shall argue, this step is the key to producing new insights.

14 The entire problem is studied in Chapter V.

Throughout the analysis of Giovanni's social perception, I studied two mental operations. A. Social Judgement: I investigated those properties that Giovanni used to judge himself and other persons. B. Categorisation: I identified the categories that he used to group the actors of his social world. I also examined the criteria system of the categorisation process, and his personal attitude toward groups. To study social perception, I needed the following data from the manuscript.

1. Properties used to characterise individuals
2. Persons whom properties were ascribed to
3. Labels describing groups of people
4. Actions ascribed to actors

4.2. Gathering the data

By using the inventory of entities, and executing semantic and grammatical queries, I retrieved the data within a few hours.

4.3. Processing the data (1): building a taxonomy

The previous step produced a large amount of data. There was a need to group this under different categories, which also reflect the structure of Giovanni's belief system. For this purpose, an OWL ontology was developed.[15] Putting it as simply as possible, an ontology in information science is a formal representation of a domain such as space. It consists of classes (different types of spaces, such as cities and countries), which are organised in a hierarchy. The classes are populated by concrete instances (individuals in OWL): for example, an instance of the class 'City' would be 'Munich'. I use the entities from my inventory as instances of the ontology (see the technical details later in this section).

I grouped the entities describing human properties into five classes: spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional and social properties. As a result, I have a clear overview of the features that Giovanni used to judge humans. By applying the Javascript Infovis Toolkit (JIT)

15 The development of the ontology will be subject of a later publication.

and the Java Universal Network/Graph Framework (JUNG), I visualise them as a graph in a browser. I also use, for example, the class of physical properties to retrieve all such features in the manuscript.[16] Eventually, this ontology should replace the previously described WordNet semantic vocabulary. An additional goal of the ontology development is creating a semantic database for Old Italian.

4.4. Processing the data (2): recording the relations between entities

Social judgement means using certain properties as points of reference to evaluate humans. These properties have distinct values and functions in a community. Accordingly, my main question was: what values, beliefs and functions did Giovanni and his contemporaries associate with a given property? To answer this question, I had to retrieve, record, and visualise the way Giovanni's text related a property to other types of entities (such as practices and individuals) in different contexts of the manuscript.

For instance, figure 1 in Chapter Five visualises which properties Giovanni used to describe his relatives.[17] One of the central properties on this graph is 'famous [*famoso*]'. Why was reputation a salient property for Giovanni? What specific functions did he associate with reputation?

This is the point where the power of the digital environment becomes evident. Reconstructing the contexts where 'famous [*famoso*]' and its synonyms are used took just a few seconds. After retrieving all occurrences of 'famous' and its entire synonym set, I recorded the relationship between reputation and other entities in the ontology. Another feature of formal ontologies is that they contain not only classes and instances but also relations (object properties in OWL) by means of which one can make a statement such as 'Palla Strozzi has Property beautiful.'

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16 To browse the OWL ontology I use the OWL API, which 'is a Java API and reference implementation for creating, manipulating and serializing OWL Ontologies.' See http://owlapi.sourceforge.net/ (accessed 30 April 2012). The results that the OWL API produces are transformed into JSON format that JIT uses as input. The webserver and the OWL API communicate through an XML/JSON bridge, which is managed by PHP. See the description of JIT at http://thejit.org/ (accessed 20 April 2012), and JUNG at http://jung.sourceforge.net/ (accessed 25 April 2012).

17 See Chapter I, Section 2.

To be more specific concerning technical details, this statement, also called a triple, has the following structure visualised on figure 3.

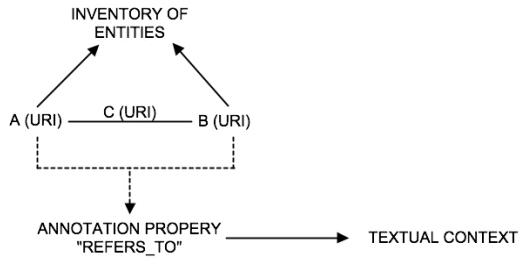


Figure 3: The structure of a triple in the ontology and its relationship to the text of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and to the inventory of entities.

A and B are OWL individuals; C is an object property. The URI of each OWL individual points to the unique ID of the corresponding entity in the inventory. As a result, I can filter the inventory through the ontology. I can, for instance, retrieve all persons. This function is similar to an index in a book. However, in an index the entries are separated. Readers are unable to search for complex patterns such as "those textual places where a person has physical properties." In my ontology, each triple has an OWL annotation property, named 'REFERS_TO', which points to the textual places that the triple describes. Thus, I use the relations in the ontology as patterns to retrieve concrete textual locations.[18]

Returning to the question why 'famous' and reputation were salient properties for Giovanni, the mapping of their network of relations revealed interesting results. It pinpointed that reputation functioned as a reference point in strategic decisions. Giovanni's text suggests that economic and social behaviour was shaped by the relationship of the outcomes to an external reference point, reputation.[19]

Secondly, it led to a pattern that is common in natural languages but scarcely studied from the perspective of cognition. In several textual places, Giovanni attached spatial extension to properties. For example:

1. Palla Strozzi is the richest person in the *Christian world*.
2. Cosimo de Medici is the richest person in the *Italian peninsula.*

18 Again, in practice, the OWL API is used to parse the ontology.

19 See the analysis of this point in Chapter IV. Section 4.2.

3. Messer Bencivenni di Nardo had excellent reputation *in Florence*.
4. Palla Strozzi had excellent reputation *inside and outside Florence*.

What do these statements tell us about human cognition generally, and specifically about the world of fifteenth-century Florence? The digital environment helps to find and pinpoint these statements; but only the interpretative framework can answer such questions.

The framework predicted that properties used for social judgement are not homogeneous sets. They may have an internal typology. Moreover, they are often measured on reference scales. Giovanni in fact used spatial extension to measure the reputation of an individual. By means of space, he further established an internal taxonomy of 'famous.' Similarly, he used spatial dimension as a mental clue to distinguish different types of 'rich.'[20]

The goal of this chapter is not to complete a comprehensive analysis of Giovanni's social perception. With this single example, I wanted only to underline the absolute importance of a theoretical framework in both creating a digital environment and interpreting the data it produces. The computer-assisted analysis can lead to surprising data, but new insights are down to the framework.

In summary, knowledge, and also the intellectual world of a text, is a complex network where potentially anything can be related to anything. The digital environment helps to retrieve any element of this network in a fast and efficient way. The ontology is a tool to record the structure of the network. Obviously, an ontology cannot be a perfect representation of the intellectual world of a text. It is in fact only a simplified and interpreted representation of information expressed in textual contexts. A formal language will never be able to capture the entirety of human language; but this is not its function. Again, it is a tool to store the structure of a network. It is an aid to retrieve passages, and to navigate in the intellectual world of a text. Capturing the entirety of language, and interpreting it in its historical and social context, are the tasks of the researcher.

20 Again, see the entire analysis in Chapter II.

5. Conclusions

From the very beginning of this project, I wished to understand the intellectual world of Giovanni's diary as much as possible. Due to my holistic approach, I wanted to explore each significant domain of human knowledge in the codex. Since the *Zibaldone* consists of 253 folios, a 'traditional' targeted reading might have enabled me to study only a limited number of domains.

I set up the inventory of entities, and I imposed a linguistic and semantic layer on it. Temporal and financial constraints meant that I could apply only a semi-automatic training of the data, which resulted in 60-70% accuracy. However, this not completely accurate data proved to be an excellent aid. I used grammatical and semantic patterns together in an efficient way to mine domain-specific information about human knowledge in a large amount of data.

The implementation of a semantic and grammatical layer is essential for every digital textual archive. Students of humanities and social sciences often search for patterns such as 'properties ascribed to humans' or 'functions of spaces'. A simple key- or wordsearch and concordance are never sufficient to match these patterns. And manual semantic and linguistic annotation is not feasible for either a large or a small project. The only possible route is semi-automatic annotation. Nevertheless, this will never produce a completely accurate set of data that both users and developers should accept.

Generally, I believe that the task of developers is to pre-process raw data in a semi-automatic way: adding linguistic and semantic annotations, making collocation analysis possible, etc. The users' tasks are to elaborate interpretative frameworks, and to create and run procedures (writing specific scripts, making ontologies, visualising data, analysing collocations) to retrieve the data that their theoretical model requires. Due to the experimental nature of this project, the author of this thesis was both the developer and the user. The information processing in large humanities projects should however be similar to that of hard sciences where groups of researchers organise, pre-process and refine raw data coming from

experiments, while other groups elaborate models and methods to retrieve and analyse that data.[21]

Today this ideal might seem to be utopian. Digital libraries with extremely high potentials offer only very limited query options, and lack a semantic and linguistic layer. This is understandable. Again, manual annotation is not feasible, and a not completely accurate data set that a semi-automatic annotation could produce is not acceptable to users and developers. Furthermore, users do not have the necessary training to match and use linguistic and semantic patterns to extract information from large corpora. Finally and most importantly, I think, humanities still lack a comprehensive theoretical model that could produce a new understanding from this new type of data.

21 I am grateful to the physicist, Paolo Gandini, for several stimulating conversations on this.

IV. Constructing, organising and passing on everyday knowledge in late medieval Florence[1]

1. Introduction

Late medieval urban Europe saw a spectacular rise of literacy, which gave birth to new documents and genres. Among them, commonplace books (*zibaldoni* in Italian) and diaries (*ricordanze* and *ricordi*) written by everyday people, artists and scientists are particularly interesting. They can give insight into the knowledge system, thinking and experience of such people. Nevertheless, there is no agreement about the significance of these documents, and how they reflect the thought and the knowledge of their compilers. Scholars such as Michael Clanchy and Armando Petrucci have regarded medieval commonplace books as inexpensive mini-libraries reflecting the interest of the compilers or owners.[2] Others, such as Mary Carruthers, have seen them as instruments for studying and memorising information.[3] In this chapter I shall take a similar position. By analysing the knowledge-constructing practice and conception of authorship of Giovanni and his contemporaries, I hope to show that commonplace books and diaries were tools to store, organise and pass on information, knowledge and experience.

The heart of the matter is that in terms of the modern notion of authorship, commonplace books cannot be regarded as original compilations. The owners who diligently collected and copied texts written by others into their commonplace books can hardly be considered the authors of those books. And previous scholarship did not regard Rucellai's *Zibaldone Quaresimale* as an original work. In 1960, a selective edition of the codex was published by the Warburg Institute.[4] According to Alessandro Perosa, the editor, the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* reflects Rucellai's personality through his selection of texts, his questions, and the way he reacted to the cultural and political situation of his time.[5] This suggests that

1 The core of this chapter is based on G. M. Toth, ''Using culture', Giovanni Rucellai's knowledge constructing practice in the MS *Zibaldone Quaresimale*', *CEU Annual of Medieval Studies* 16 (2010), pp. 142 - 154.

2 A. Petrucci, 'Reading and writing in volgare in Medieval Italy', in *Writers and readers in Medieval Italy* (New Heaven, 1995), p. 181; M. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066 - 1307* (Oxford, 1993), p. 83.

3 M. Carruthers, *The book of memory* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 175 - 176.

4 G. Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', in *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone 1*, ed. A. Perosa (London, 1960).

5 Perosa, 'Lo Zibaldone di Giovanni Rucellai', p. 105.

Rucellai's own intellectual contribution to the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* consisted largely in collecting and selecting texts by others. Fulvio Pezzarosa saw the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* as an enormous 'stock of memory' but not as a tool to pass on knowledge.[6] However, as we shall see, in different parts of the *Zibaldone,* Giovanni explicitly claimed that he was the author of the manuscript.[7] This raises a crucial question that previous scholarship has not answered. What conception of authorship did the compilers of these commonplace books have? How did they see their own intellectual contribution?

2. The various functions of *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze*

The basic assumption of this chapter is that *ricordanze* and *zibaldoni* were practical instruments of information management and transmission. The question I shall examine in this section is, what functions and purposes did the compilers of *ricordanze* and *zibaldoni* attribute to these writings? Did they also see them as tools of information management? Generally, what types of information were they seeking to transmit?

Zibaldoni and *ricordanze* seem to be two different genres, but this is not always the case. There are many manuscripts that bear the stamp of both, or of other genres such as memoir, learning manual and recipe book. In reality, there is a wide spectrum, one extremity of which is the account book containing only economic data, named *libro di dare e avere.*[8] This was limited to the recording of the income and the expenses of a person, including lists of debtors and creditors. But from the fourteenth century we can find new types of entries, such as civic matters, births, and marriages, in the traditional *libri di dare e avere*.[9] Account books containing not only economic information but also entries on private and public life are called *ricordanze* or *libro di famiglia*.[10] In the words of Lauro Martinez, *ricordanze* are 'chronicles of a man's career in public life, an account of administrative tradition, and the

6 F. Pezzarosa, 'La memoralistica fiorentina tra Medioevo e Rinascimento', *Lettere italiane* 31 (1979), p. 113.

7 'Righordo delle ragioni e chagioni per le quali Giovanni di Pagholo Rucellai, auctore di questo libro debbe ringraziare Idio.' Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. XXI.

8 A. Castellani, *Nuovi testi fiorentini del Dugento* (Florence, 1952), p. 5.

9 Today the best study that follows the fourteenth-century evolution of the *ricordanze* is P. J. Jones, 'Florentine families and Florentine diaries in the fourteenth century', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 24 (1956), pp. 183 - 205.

10 See, A. Cicchetti and R. Mordenti, 'La scrittura di libri di famiglia', in *Letteratura italiana III, Le forme del testo II: La prosa*, ed. A. Asor Rosa (Turin, 1984), pp. 1117–1158.

place of the family in the history of the Commune.'[11] The other extremity of the spectrum is the inexpensive mini-library consisting of the favourite readings of a person or a family. But the surviving examples of the two genres usually fall between the two extremities. Commonplace books often contain texts that are normally part of diaries. Giovanni's *zibaldone* is a typical example of this. The manuscript has several features in common with *ricordanze*, although not a chronological structure. Giovanni's codex is in fact a mixture of a *ricordanze* and a *zibaldone*. There are also *ricordanze*, such as the one written by Filippo di Bernardo Manetti (BNCF, MS Magl. VII. 1014),[12] that contain content usually present in commonplace books. To understand the functions of these documents, Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and other manuscripts must be studied as points on the spectrum; this can also uncover how these genres influenced each other and converged in real life.

Zibaldoni are generally described as disordered and heterogeneous textual collections. This, for example, is the definition of *zibaldone* given by Armando Petrucci: they are manuscripts 'written in cursive and containing an astonishing variety of poetic and prose texts ... which were juxtaposed apparently without any specific criteria.'[13] At first glance, the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, which Rucellai himself calls 'a salad of various ingredients,'[14] creates a similar impression. However, the study of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and other contemporary Italian commonplace books has revealed that compilers did often have a set of criteria when putting their *zibaldoni* together, and sometimes a pre-defined program that directed their selection of texts.

The selection of texts was on occasion driven by the desire to instruct their heirs and the future generation. In his introduction on the first folio of the codex, Rucellai envisages the goal of his compilation: 'I started this book to give information and instructions about many things to my sons, Bernardo and Pandolfo, that can be useful for them.'[15] Rucellai's educational purpose makes the heterogeneous content of the manuscript an organic whole. The keyword of Rucellai's program is utility. The texts were not therefore assembled spontaneously, without any selection criteria; indeed, each one serves a function. The

11 L. Martinez, *The Social World of Florentine Humanists* (London, 1963), p. 54.

12 Manetti's *ricordanze* contains for instance horoscopes, copies of letters, Petrarch's *Trionfi,* copies of public speeches etc.

13 Petrucci, 'Reading and Writing in *Volgare',* p. 181. For further meanings of *zibaldone,* see Perosa, 'Lo Zibaldone di Giovanni Rucellai', pp. 103 – 104.

14 'Una insalata di più erbe.' Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 1.

15 'il quale (Zibaldone Quaresimale) o principiato per dare notitia et amaestramento a Pandolfo et a Bernardo miei figluoli di più chose, ch'io credo abbia essere loro utile.' Ibidem.

intention to instruct and transmit practical and useful knowledge is also explicit in Paolo da Certaldo's late fourteenth century *zibaldone,* known as *Libro di buoni costumi*. Paolo asked his future readers (friends, his brother and son, and neighbour) to put his advice into practice.[16] Another, much later (1517) compilation (BNCF, MS Land. Fin. 56), whose didactic purpose is clear, is a short miscellany of instructions written by a certain Alessandro Caccini for his son, Giovanni.

The intention to instruct heirs and the future generation relate the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and the compilations of Certaldo and Caccini to the tradition of *ricordi*, which represent another point on the spectrum.[17] As opposed to *ricordanze* that contain mostly economic and sporadically autobiographical and civic accounts, *ricordi* are memoirs of historical and family events without entries containing economic information. Education and instruction were in part the purpose of these writings as well. For instance, Giovanni Morelli made clear that he was writing the fourth part of his memoir (1393 - 1411) to instruct his sons with the *exemplum* of the past.[18] Fragments of memoirs written with the purpose of giving advice to the future generation also circulated in late medieval Florence. For instance, Gino Capponi (1350?-1421), a prominent figure of pre-Medici Florence, wrote a short memoir in which he summarised his experience of politics.[19] Another fragment of advice is the one that Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici (1360?-1429), the founder of the Medici Bank, left. According to the tradition, Giovanni di Bicci passed on his advice to his family just before his death.[20] Why did others such as Rucellai, Morelli, and Capponi, opt for written communication to pass on this information? To put in another way, how did they see the difference between oral and written tradition?

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16 Paolo da Certaldo, *Libro di buoni costumi* (Progetto Biblioteca Italiana, Università degli Studi di Roma 'La sapienza') (http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/xtf/view?docId=bibit001248/bibit001248.xml&chunk.id=d6127e124&toc.id=&brand=default, accessed, 10 May, 2011); published in *Mercanti scrittori: ricordi nella Firenze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, ed. V. Branca (Florence, 1986).

17 Usually, the works of the *mercanti-scrittori* such as Bonaccorso Pitti or Giovanni Morelli are called *ricordi*. C. Bec, *Les Marchands Ecrivains* (Paris, 1967), pp. 49 – 53.

18 'Nella quarta e utima si farà memoria di certi gran fatti avvenuti alla nostra città e a noi, (..) intramettendo le dette parti fra l'altre materie come accadrà ne' tempi, isperando che il frutto pervenga ai termini iscritti di sopra e utimamente volendo in parte ammaestrare i nostri figliuoli o veramente nostri discendenti per vero asempro e per casi intervenuti a noi.' Giovanni Morelli, *Ricordi* (Progetto Biblioteca Italiana, Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza') (http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/xtf/view?docId=bibit000286/bibit000286.xml&chunk.id=d3685e122&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default, accessed, 10 May, 2011); published in *Mercanti scrittori: ricordi nella Firenze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, ed. V. Branca (Florence, 1986).

19 An English translation of Capponi's *ricordi* is in R. Sereno, 'The ricordi of Gino di Neri Capponi', *The American Political Science Review* 52, No. 4 (Dec., 1958), pp. 1118 - 1122. The original text was first published in *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, Volume 18 (Milan, 1731).

20 'Memorie di Giovanni d'Averardo detto Bicci de' Medici', in *La Toscana illustrata nella sua storia,* ed. A. F. Gori (Livorno, 1755), pp. 189 - 190.

A long sentence in a short anonymous memoir about the history of the Tornaquinci family gives a clear answer:

> Perche per lungho spatio pel pocho vivere de' piu degli uomini la memoria e ll'aver a richordanza delle cose antiche molte volte mancha e viene meno se lla scrittura non sochorre perche si schiffino errori che potrebono avenire per non sapere delle chose passate.[21]

This unknown compiler highlights the uncertain and unreliable nature of oral tradition. On the one hand, what made oral tradition uncertain was the extremely high level of mortality. Fathers could not be sure whether they would be able to pass on their wisdom in person. Giovanni's father, Paolo Rucellai, died in 1406 when Giovanni was only three years old. We do not know if Paolo left a similar compilation to the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, but Giovanni might have learned about the uncertainty of oral tradition. On the other hand, oral tradition was less accurate, something contemporaries were of course aware of. Diarists often warn their readers if the source of their information is oral tradition. Phrases such as 'as I heard' are recurrent. Recording oral tradition in permanent form was in fact a key motivation that made Florentines take up their pens. Doffo di Nepo Spini began the narration of the history of his family emphasising his own responsibility in recording the information he had in his head.[22] But the Tornaquinci memoir pinpoints another key function of both *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze,* which is the intention to transmit the experience of the past, and to ensure continuity between different generations, between the past and the present. This continuity has many different facets, which are present in both *ricordanze* with *zibaldoni.*

The desire to ensure continuity regarding the position of a family in political life sometimes appears in both *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze.*[23] By studying Giovanni's ancestral portraits, the contemporary reader of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* could immediately place the Rucellai family on the political palette of the fourteenth century. In brief, the fourteenth century elite of the city consisted of two groups: magnates or *grandi* (old noble families, who had directed the city before 1293) and non-magnates or *popolani* (the merchant elite). Giovanni's

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21 'Because of the large space and the short life of individuals, the memory and the recall of old things is often lost or reduced unless they are written down, for writing can be enable us to avoid mistakes that can happen if we do not know about the things of the past'. C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Les doubles fonds de la consorteria florentine: les Tornaquinci de Florence entre XIVe et XVe siècles', in *Alberto Tenenti. Scritti in memoria*, ed. P. Scaramella (Naples, 2005), p. 403.

22 ASF, CS, II. 13, f. 16r.

23 Some scholars have argued that the extraordinary proliferation of *ricordanze* was due to political instability during the Renaissance. A. Bellavitis and I. Chabot, 'People and property in Florence and Venice', in *At home in renaissance Italy,* ed. M. Ajmar-Wollheim and F. Dennis (London, 2006), p, 85.

description of his ancestor, Messer Bencivenni, as being the defender of the lower social groups refers to the non-magnate position of the Rucellai lineage. Giovanni's reference to the ancestors' role in the expulsion of the duke of Athens depicts the family as the defender of the Commune's freedom.[24] By the same token, in his *ricordanze* written at the beginning of the sixteenth century, Francesco Baldovinetti noted that one of his ancestors, Mariotto di Niccolo Baldovinetti, was a member of the *balia* that exiled Cosimo de' Medici in 1433.[25] In other words, he conveyed that his family had been anti-Medici in the 1420s and early 1430s.

Ricordanze frequently contain information about the biological history of a family, for example, dates of birth and death, genealogies, etc.[26] *Ricordanze* had in fact the role of a civil register of death, marriage and birth.[27] By contrast, only rarely do Florentine *zibaldoni* provide their readers with this type of data. Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, though, seems to be an exception in this respect. As we shall see later, Giovanni did not speak about the dates of birth of his children and other family members, but he did add two genealogical tables to the *Zibaldone Quaresimale.* Similarly, the *Zibaladone Quaresimale* describes the wedding of Giovanni's son, Bernardo, and the birth of Giovanni's grand-son, which again are frequent themes in *ricordanze.* The use of commonplace books to record personal data of this kind was not rare outside Florence. The compiler of the mid-fifteenth-century *zibaldone* from Verona (Trivulziana, MS, 964), Simone di Muronovo, noted the births of his children and the deaths of his parents.[28] As a whole, data maintaining information continuity in the biological history of a family tend to have been stored in *ricordanze* rather than in *zibaldoni,* though counterexamples such as Giovanni's compilation certainly existed in Florence as well.

What is however not rare in either *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* is the presence of copies of documents. Sometimes compilers of *ricordanze* state that their work is the summary of many different documents. The Colombina Library keeps an unpublished Roman diary (circa 1490) by a certain Bernardino de Amodeo, who states that he is making a copy in his diary of notes

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24 In 1342, Walter of Brienne, heir of the Athenian duchy, was invited to rule Florence. However, after 10 months, he was exiled from the city because, according to tradition, he deprived the city of its liberty. See for instance, Villani's comments on the duke: 'E nota che come il detto duca occupò con frode e tradigione la libertà della republica di Firenze il dì di nostra Donna.' (Progetto Biblioteca Italiana, Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza') (http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/xtf/view?docId=bibit000293 /bibit000293. xml&chunk.id=d3700e14476&toc.depth=1&toc.id=d3700e14201&brand=default, accessed, 1 December, 2011); published in G. Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. G. Porta (Parma,1990).

25 BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 8r.

26 We shall later see numerous example in Shapter VIII. Section 2.1.

27 C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Name "Remade": The transmission of Given Names in Florence in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century', in C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985) , p. 289.

28 Trivulziana, MS 964, f. 64r.

that he and his ancestors made of certain events in Rome.[29] Similarly, at the beginning of his *memoriale,* Francesco Baldovinetti claims that his writing is based on many different records of his family.[30] Copies of testaments and inventories of books and artistic objects can be found in *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* alike. The famous scribe, Niccolo Pollini, and Giovanni copied book inventories and testaments into their *zibaldoni*.[31] By contrast, Andrea Minerbetti and Lapo di Pacino da Castelfiorentino used their *ricordanze* to preserve an inventory of their household property.[32] At the same time, copies of public documents are much more frequent in *zibaldoni*. An example of a *zibaldone* functioning as a container of public documents is the *Mescolanze* of Michele Siminetti, who copied letters sent to the *Signoria* into his *zibaldone*.[33] *Zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* were thus used as instruments to ensure continuity in documentary history: *zibaldoni* tended to store public documents, while *ricordanze* were used to keep private documents.

A similar distinction can be seen in the economic domain. The primary function of *ricordanze* is to record the income and expenditure of a businessman or of a family. As father and son often continued the same *ricordanze*, the goal of these documents was to ensure economic continuity between generations.[34] The Baldovinetti *memoriale* allows us to observe how this continuity functioned in real life. The Florentine National Central Library keeps another Baldovinetti *ricordanze*, the MS Pal. Bald. 37 (serie *Grande Formato)*, a fourteenth-century account book of Francesco's ancestor, Niccolo Baldovinetti. A comparison of the two manuscripts reveals similarities in content; most probably, Niccolo's fourteenth-century *ricordanze* was one of the sources of Francesco's early sixteenth-century *memoriale*.[35] Unlike *ricordanze, zibaldoni* usually have no reference to private economic affairs,[36] but sometimes

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29 'In questo libretto farro recordo io Bernardino de amodeo de alcune cose le quale ho trovate esser state notate da miei precessori et de certe cose che sono accadute in roma ad tempo mio delle quale i vari libretti ne aveva facto ricordo.' Colombina, MS 5-2-10(3), f. 1r.

30 This is what Francesco says about the sources of his *memoriale*: 'le varie e molte ischriptture e vari luoghi dov'io avuto a chavare le infrascripte cose.' BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 1r.

31 For Pollini's activity, see A. de la Mare, 'New Research on Humanistic Scribes in Florence', in *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento, 1440–1525: un primo censimento*, ed. A. M. Garzelli (Florence, 1985), p. 463. His *zibaldone* is the BNCF, MS Magl. VIII, 1282. Giovanni copied his own testament, and one by his ancestor, Ugolino di Nardo di Giunta: AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 3rA - 3rB, f. 69v. The *Zibaldone Quaresimale* also contains an inventory of the artistic objects that Giovanni had in his house: Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 23.

32 See the analysis in Chapter VII. Section 6.2.

33 Dresden, MS OB 44, ff. 38v - 44r.

34 A published example is the *ricordanze* of the Corsini. *Il libro delle ricordanze dei Corsini (1362-1457)*, ed. A. Petrucci (Rome, 1965).

35 In Francesco's *memoriale,* from f. 24r to f. 26r there is a summary of the economic history of the Baldovinetti family. This records the most important financial transactions, sales and purchases of the family from 1331 until the mid-fifteenth century. A non-exhaustive comparison of this entry in Francesco's *memoriale* with the *ricordanze* of Niccolo reveals that Francesco most probably used his ancestor's diary as a source. See, BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 37, Grande Formato, f. 17v.

36 Perhaps this is a Florentine characteristic. The *Zibaldone da Verona* for instance contains a great deal of economic data such as transactions and purchases. Trivulziana, MS 964, ff. 73v - 74v.

they contain economic data related to public life.[37] As a whole, both *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* served as containers of different types of information that could ensure and maintain continuity in the biological, political, and documentary history of a family.

Both *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* were tools to note and transmit personal experience as well. Even though, as Lisa Kaborycha has noted, *zibaldoni* generally lack an individual voice,[38] we can find examples of *zibaldoni* where one can hear the voice of the compiler. Giannozzo Salviati recorded for instance his travel experience. In his *zibaldone,* written around the 1480s, he left a detailed account of the itinerary of his pilgrimages.[39] Another Florentine, Giovanni Pigli, noted a visit of the Emperor John VIII to his house.[40] The personal experience of Giovanni Rucellai is an essential constituent of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* as well. Giovanni's pilgrimage to Rome, and his election as *accoppiatore*, are narrated in the manuscript.[41] Similar themes appear in the *ricordanze* of Doffo di Nepo Spini who recounts his travel to Rome with Florentine ambassadors.[42] Personal experience can sometimes take the form of personal wisdom. Giovanni for instance tells his sons how he schedules his days, and how he behaves with friends and domestic servants.[43] Commonplace books and diaries were instruments for constructing a self-identity and self-image. We shall later see why this was a crucial element in the transition from the Middle Ages to the early modern period.

Beyond the chronological structure and the lack of economic data, what generally distinguishes *zibaldoni* from *ricordanze* is the presence of a great variety of theoretical and practical wisdom. Unfortunately, the enormous corpus of knowledge recorded in the surviving Florentine *zibaldoni* has never been fully explored. This dissertation permits the presentation of only a few interesting pieces of this gigantic mosaic. A good example of a collection of practical knowledge is the BNCF, MS Pal. 793. This fifteenth-century manuscript, written in a *mercantesca* hand, brings a great variety of practical information together. The MS contains horoscopes (22v - 23r), an agricultural calendar (43r - 45r), and predictions about the year according to the day on which the first day of January falls (21r -

37 See the analysis of this in Chapter VII. Section 7.

38 L. Kaborycha, *Copying Culture: Fifteenth-century Florentines and their Zibaldoni* (University of California Berkeley Ph.D. thesis, 2006), p. 21.

39 BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, ff. 21v - 25r.

40 This is analyzed in Chapter VII. Section 6.2.

41 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 67 - 75; AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 68vA - 69rA.

42 ASF, CS, II. 13. f. 32r.

43 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 10 - 13, pp. 18 - 19.

22r). The compiler copied a medical text about how to diagnose diseases from urine (29r - 30r), and another about the humoural complexions of man (30r - 31v). Finally, the MS contains a treatise on apiculture (1r - 11r). Another collection of practical knowledge is the BNCF, MS II. IX. 154, a fifteenth-century codex written by a *mercantesca* hand. It contains a rich collection of recipes (1r - 19v), and a description of different works belonging to everyday household management (20r - 24r). Finally, this unknown compiler recorded practical instructions on how to address people of different rank in a letter (63r - 66v). Advice regarding the improvement of rhetorical skills, such as the unpublished ones in Giovanni's *zibaldone,*[44] and samples of public speeches abound in *zibaldoni.*[45] This and other practical knowledge was recorded deliberately; as I shall point out in the core chapters of this thesis: it all had functions in everyday life.

Many *zibaldoni* consist of theoretical texts that helped people to understand the environment around themselves, to conceptualise uncertainty, and to adjust their social behaviour. The so-called *Zibaldone Andreini* (Laurenziana, MS Conv. Soppr. 148.2), is a miscellany of this kind. This giant fifteenth-century manuscript consists of 'scientific' texts about the reason of thunders, rain, earthquakes, and the size and the form of the Earth. It also contains descriptions of virtues, series of questions and answers to them. The *Zibaldone Andreini* is one of the richest stocks of information surviving from fifteenth-century Florence; though its intellectual content remains unstudied.[46] The reasons will be explained later. The reader can appreciate the wealth of information present in this manuscript in figure 1, which shows the contemporary table of contents. As opposed to the *Zibaldone Andreini,* however, where each chapter is a short coherent narrative, other *zibaldoni* passed on wisdom in the form of collections of *sententiae,* which will be studied in the second half of this chapter.

It is clear that sometimes the intention of the compiler of a *zibaldone* was not to pass on knowledge but to amuse himself and the future reader. This is the case of a certain Antonio del Farese who, as the colophon says, wrote his *zibaldone* for his own pleasure and for the consolation of the reader.[47] Interestingly, the compiler of a medical *zibaldone* (Riccardiana,

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44 The *Zibaldone Quaresimale* has a chapter entitled *Delle parti che vuole avere un bello dicitore*, that enumerates the key skill of a good orator. AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 33vB.

45 See for instance, BNCF, MS Pal. 791; BNCF, MS Pal. 522; BNCF, MS Pal. 706.

46 Some parts of the manuscript have been studied from a philological perspective, but to my knowledge there are no studies on the intellectual world of the codex see the bibliography of the manuscript in the on-line catalogue of the Laurenziana library, (http://opac.bmlonline.it/, accessed, 19, August, 2013).

47 'Questo libro iscrisi io antonio del farese scripto per suo dilecto per no(n) stare otioso nel 1433 quando fu chastelano al (..) che colui il quale la leggie ne possa avere consolatione.' Riccardiana, MS 2224, f. 1r.

MS 2350) also equated the act of writing with pleasure. In the introduction to the manuscript, he declares that he has recorded texts that pleased him.[48] In reality, literary texts and poems copied for pleasure are often mixed with practical and theoretical wisdom and religious texts. For instance, the fifteenth-century *zibaldone* (BNCF, MS II. X. 57) of a certain Stuffa di Domenico della Stuffa is a collection of poems, prophecies and a text attributed to Aristotle.

Finally, there are *zibaldoni* that are generally considered to be 'laboratories' of artistic production. The most famous of course are the *zibaldoni* of Boccaccio, which functioned as a personal archive- in the words of Raul Mordenti, as a *libro-archivio d'autore*.[49] A less well-known one is the *zibaldone* (Laurenziana, MS Temp. 2) of the poet, Antonio Pucci, published under the title *Libro di varie storie*.[50] Apparently, the *zibaldone* of Bonaccorso Ghiberti (BNCF, MS BR 228), with its sketches and calculations, also served as a 'laboratory' of real life artistic production.

In summary, *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* are highly heterogeneous genres, which in real life often converge. There is however one key element that connects them: the intention of the compiler to store and pass on knowledge.

48 'Qui incominciano parecchi trattati di libi tratti di piu libri e quali e piaciuto a mme scrittore di scriverlli.' Riccardiana, MS, 2350, f. 1r.

49 R. Mordenti, 'Problemi e prospettive di un' edizione ipertestuale dello zibaldone laurenziano', in *Gli zibaldoni di Boccaccio : memoria, scrittura, riscrittura : atti del seminario internazionale di Firenze-Certaldo, 26-28 aprile 1996*, ed. M. Pichone, C. Cazale-Berard (Florence, 1998), p. 364. The *zibaldoni* of Boccaccio are Laurenziana, MS Plut. XXIX.8, Laurenziana, MS Plut. XXXIII.31, BNCF, MS BR 50. The Laurenziana, MS Plut. XXIX.8 was published in *Lo Zibaldone Boccaccesco, Mediceo-Laurenziano Plut. xxix. 8* (Florence, 1914).

50 A. Pucci, *Libro di varie storie,* ed. A. Varvaro (Palermo, 1957).

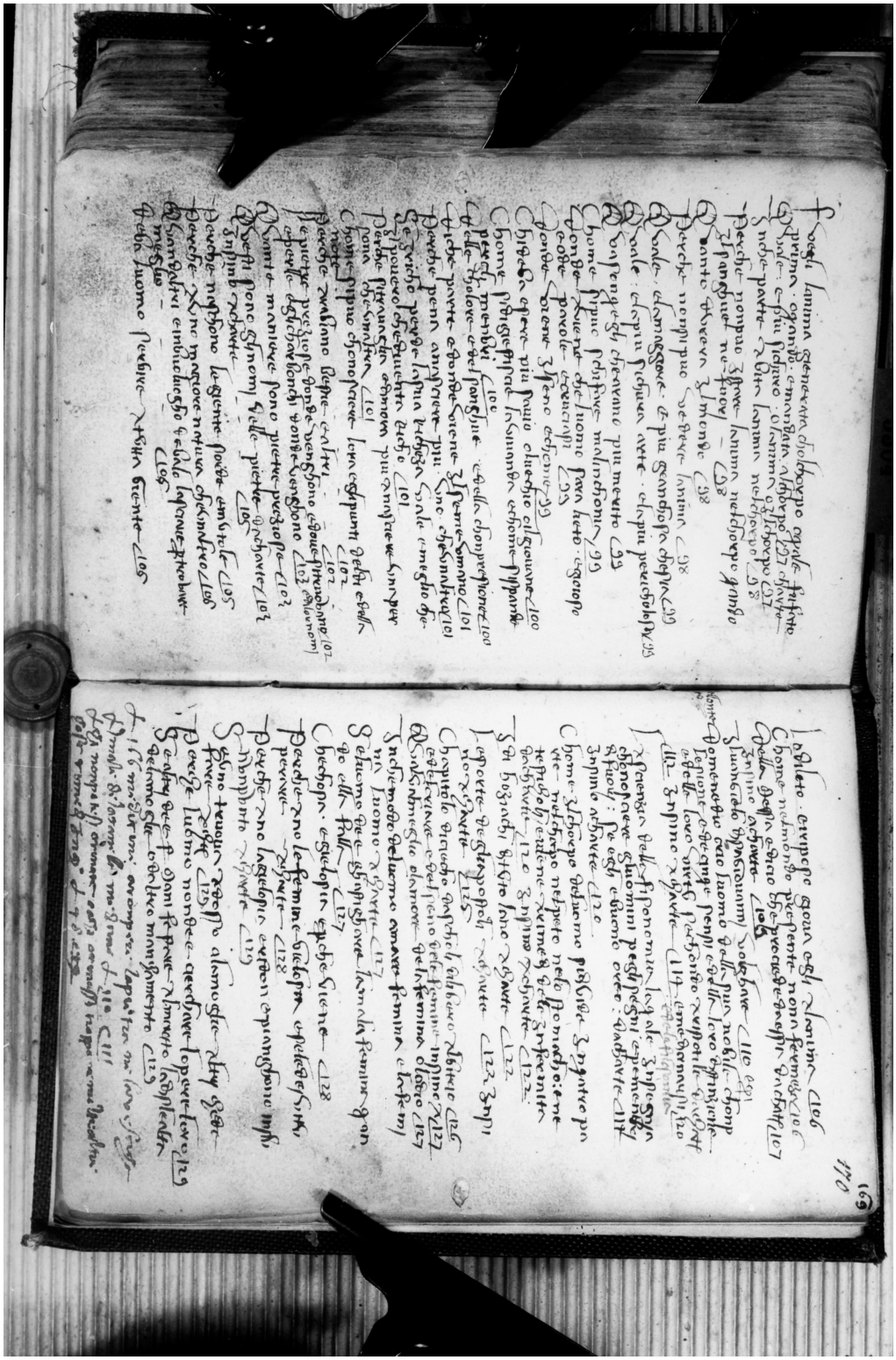


Figure 1: A fifteenth-century ‘stock of knowledge’, the contemporary table of contents of the *Zibaldone Andreini*, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, MS Conv. Soppr, 148.2, f. 170r.

3. The genesis of the Zibaldone Quaresimale

Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale* has a noticeable feature that distinguishes it from other *zibaldoni.* While the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* was written by professional scribes, other *zibaldoni* were usually written by the owners themselves in *mercantesca* script.[51] At the same time, several marginal notes in the manuscript are Giovanni's own hand,[52] which can be identified by reference to autograph letters.[53] These notes revise and update the content of the codex, and indicate that Rucellai actively participated in compiling the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[54] The reason for commissioning professional scribes to write the codex may have been the gradual diffusion of a new manuscript model developed by Poggio Bracciolini, Niccolò Niccoli, and others, which resulted in the appearance of the humanistic cursive in less luxurious manuscripts by the second half of the Quattrocento.[55] Giovanni's first scribe, for example, used a humanistic cursive, which might have given cultural and social prestige to the manuscript book. *Zibaldoni,* unlike *ricordanze,* were meant for wider circulation among relatives and friends;[56] consequently, manuscript books written by professional scribes might have contributed to the social prestige of their owners. But this also implies that Giovanni had to collect the texts and prepare an exemplar that his scribes used later, since patrons generally had to provide their scribes with the parchment or paper and the exemplar.[57]

Documentary evidence suggests that Rucellai had another notebook in which he might have prepared the *Zibaldone Quaresimale.* The BNCF, MS Magl. XXV. 636 contains autographs of Rucellai's son, Bernardo, and probably comes from the circle of the Rucellai family. The section from f. 36r to f. 55v of this codex has been thought to be a sixteenth-century copy of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[58] The title of this section, however, which states that it was

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51 A. Petrucci, 'Reading and Writing in *Volgare* in Medieval Italy', p. 199.

52 For instance, AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 4r, f. 6r, f. 61r.

53 See for example ASF, CS**,** III. 120. 310r. A list of letters by Giovanni is in F.W. Kent, 'The Letters Genuine and Spurious of Giovanni Rucellai', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 37 (1974), p. 342.

54 Giovanni's enthusiasm for editing the *Zibaldone* seems to have decreased with the passing of time. While the oldest parts of the codex, the so-called *Zibaldone Vetus,* which was probably finished by the early 1460s, contains numerous interventions by Rucellai, the later sections contain fewer and fewer. Perosa called the sections written by the scribes A and B *zibaldone vetus*, which ranges from the first folio to f. 84. Folios 3, 61, 71, 49r–50v are not part of the *vetus* as they were left blank by scribes A and B. A. Perosa, 'Prefazione', in *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone 1*. (London, 1960), pp. XII – XIII.

55 de la Mare, 'New Research', pp. 417 – 420.

56 Kaborycha, *Copying culture*, pp. 88 – 91.

57 de la Mare, 'New Research', p. 444.

58 Perosa, 'Prefazione', p. XI. See also the unpublished inventory of the Fondo Magliabecchiano.

copied from a *zibaldone* written by Giovanni Rucellai,[59] raises some doubts. First, Rucellai was the owner and not the scribe of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. Second, the scribe forgot the adjective *quaresimale*, which had an important role in fifteenth-century administrative culture. Adjectives added to traditional names such as *libro* and *zibaldone* served as unique identifiers meant to distinguish similar types of manuscripts in the archives of merchants.[60] Unfortunately, Rucellai did not give any explanation for why he named the manuscript *zibaldone quaresimale* in the introduction on the first folio.[61] In fact, the content of the manuscript has no apparent connection with Lent (*Quaresima* in Italian). According to Giuseppe Marcotti, a nineteenth-century historian, the adjective *quaresimale* refers to Rucellai's intention to educate his sons, that is to say, the *Zibaldone* was dedicated to contemplation and study, rather like Lent.[62] Lent is of course the period of forty days of spiritual preparation for Easter; as an analogy, the adjective *quaresimale* may thus signify Rucellai's intention to prepare his sons for their future life.

Moreover the BNCF, MS Magl. XXV. 636 contains a textual variant that could not have been copied from the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. From f. 42r to f. 46r it contains a chronicle which can be found in two versions in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. From f. 60r A to f. 61r B, the first scribe recounted the history of Florence from 1400 to 1423. Later, the second scribe, from f. 71r A to f. 78v B, rewrote the same chronicle in a different orthographic pattern and continued the narration until 1457. The BNCF, MS Magl. XXV. 636 also contains the chronicle from 1400 to 1457, but in the orthographic pattern of the first scribe, whose own version, however, ended the narration with the events of 1423. Consequently, the BNCF, MS Magl. XXV. 636 may have been copied from another notebook of Rucellai which might have served as an early draft for the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[63]

All this implies that well before the compilation of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* Rucellai had been collecting sayings and texts into a now-lost notebook that his scribes later used. Like Boccaccio's *zibaldoni,* this lost notebook may have served as a laboratory for further works. However, unlike Boccaccio, Rucellai did not prepare the usual literary product, but another

59 'Nota di piu cose trassi di uno zibaldone scripto da Giovanni di Pagolo Rucellai.' BNCF, MS Magl. XXV. 636, f. 35v.

60 Cicchetti and Mordenti, 'La scrittura di libri di famiglia', p. 1119.

61 'Il quale libro si chiama Zibaldone quaresimale.' Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 1.

62 G. Marcotti, *Un mercante fiorentino e la sua famiglia nel secolo XV* (Florence, 1881), p. 28.

63 Unless parts of the chronicle written by the first scribe have been lost.

zibaldone. That is to say, the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is not the result of extemporaneous collecting and copying, but of conscious planning and creation.

Conscious planning can be also seen in Giovanni's organisation of the manuscript. In contrast to many other *zibaldoni,* the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is divided into chapters, the titles of which appear in the contemporary table of contents. Moreover, introductory notes by Rucellai himself precede several chapters, expressing either his personal opinion or a general presentation of the chapter's topic. Giovanni was however not the only one who divided his *zibaldone* into chapters and added a table of contents to it. So did Michele Siminetti and the compiler of the *Zibaldone Andreini*, both mentioned earlier. The function of the table of contents is clear: it helps the reader to browse the content, and to retrieve information easily. This further supports the assumption that Giovanni assembled texts for everyday use. And the idea of a program, and of conscious planning and production, can be seen too in Giovanni's editorial decisions, which structured and connected the different pieces of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.

4. Using and manipulating textual fragments

Perhaps the most interesting parts of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* are those which depict the Florentine social world.[64] However, as Perosa pointed out in his selective edition, Rucellai's descriptions consist of borrowings from different medieval and humanist works. In a similar way, the *Zibaldone Andreini* is a collage of texts such as the pseudo-Aristotelean *Secretum Secretorum,* and Brunetto Latini's *Tesoretto*. The reason why the large corpus of Florentine *zibaldoni* has so often been overlooked is that they are often reproductions of existing texts. This leads back to the main question of this chapter: how do *zibaldoni* express the compiler's own point of view? Moreover, how did Rucellai's contemporaries and readers see this form of 'plagiarism'?

In fact, Rucellai did not just copy his borrowings word by word; he also rewrote them. His account of the Florentine social world contains passages from the late-thirteenth-century florilegium, *Fiore di virtù*, and from the pseudo-version of Leon Battista Alberti's *I libri della famiglia*, known as *Del Governo della famiglia*.[65] The sentences of these works were however used as constituents of a new narrative. The extracted passages do not just follow each other; they are logically related, and thus make up a new, coherent narrative. To understand Rucellai's method of rewriting I compared the extracts from *Del Governo* in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* with BNCF, MS Pal. 789, which contains the entire version of the *Del Governo*. Rucellai mixed passages from different parts of the *Del governo* to create his own version. Furthermore, he also changed the syntactic structure of the inserted passages; sometimes he changed the subject or added new adverbs and adjectives. An essential component of his rewriting was omission. Sometimes he excluded important arguments of the *Del Governo*. And finally, among the passages from *Del Governo*, one can find quotations derived from the *Fiore di virtù*. His way of rewriting, then, consists of the following aspects: omission, the insertion of new elements, changing the order, changing the syntactic structure of the original sentences, compressing the original content, and associating passages from different works. These modifications suggest an intentional rewriting. Rucellai's version is

64 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 2 – 13.

65 Alberti's masterpiece was forgotten for centuries; instead, a rewritten and simplified version of the third book of the *I libri della famiglia* circulated among Florentines, which was attributed to Rucellai's maternal uncle, Agnolo Pandolfini. This was first published as *Trattato del governo della famiglia di Agnolo Pandolfini colla vita del medesimo scritta da Vespasiano Bisticci* (Florence, 1734). See also J. Ravenscroft, 'The Third Book of Alberti's Della Famiglia and its Two *Rifacimenti*', *Italian Studies* 29 (1974), pp. 44 – 50.

unique and cannot be found in any existing copies of the *Del Governo*.[66] It is therefore reasonable to suppose that Rucellai carried out this rewriting himself.

Giovanni's rewriting practice may seem strange in the modern world, but using sayings, proverbs, and passages authored by others as constituents of texts has a long tradition going back to antiquity. Sayings of famous authors expressing widely accepted wisdom were named commonplaces or *loci communes.* Aristotle, in the *Topics,* defined *topoi*, that is to say commonplaces, as speeches-within-speeches which are arguments that can be used to build or amplify texts.[67] These general arguments, expressing universally applicable ideas, were essential elements of rhetoric and dialectic. In his *De Inventione* Cicero describes *topoi*, i.e. *loci communes*, as an indispensable component of court speeches and instruments of persuasion.[68] Quintilian in the *Institutio oratoria* defines *loci communes* as 'weapons which we should always have stored in our armoury ready for immediate use as occasion may demand.'[69] During the Middle Ages they were essential elements of letters, poems, sermons, and biographies. They also functioned as mnemonic devices. As Joan Marie Lechner says, 'these places or topical headings were referred to as cell and receptacles in which memorable sentences were hidden, and in which excerpts taken from reading were noted down for future use.'[70] At the same time, the notion of commonplaces was changing in the Early Modern period. Their original rhetorical context was extended to constructing scientific, moral and other type of knowledge. While in antiquity and the Middle Ages commonplaces served as rhetorical devices, in the Early Modern period they also meant concrete facts and data that scientists, and philosophers recorded in their notebooks for further use.[71]

Borrowing ready-made arguments or passages authored by others was also widely practiced by the Italian humanists. For instance, borrowed passages from Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* appear in humanist books like Piccolomini's *De liberorum educatione* or in the *Vita Civile* by Matteo Palmieri.[72] Italian humanists were the first to reflect critically on the acceptable use of others' passages. Petrarch warned his contemporaries that the writer should

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66 See the manuscripts of *Del Governo* in *Leon Battista Alberti. Censimento dei manoscritti,* ed. L. Bertolini (Florence, 2004).

67 J. M. Lechner, *Renaissance Concepts of the Commonplaces* (Westport, 1974), p. 3.

68 Cicero, *De inventione,* II. XV. 50. See also II. XXVI.

69 'Arma sunt haec (loci communes) quodammodo praeparanda semper, ut iis, cum res poscet, utare.*'* Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, II. I. 12.

70 Lechner, *Renaissance concepts of the Commonplaces,* p. 70.

71 A. Blair, 'Humanist Methods in Natural Philosophy: The Commonplace Book', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 53 (1992), pp. 541 – 551.

72 F. H. Colson, 'Introduction', in Quintilian, *Institutionis Oratoriae* (Cambridge, 1924), pp. LXV – LXIX.

not only collect sayings of the ancients but also transform them according to his own purposes. In a letter to Boccaccio he compared the good writer to bees who do not just collect flowers, but also use them to make something more precious.

> We should write in the same way as bees make honey, not preserving flowers, but turning them into honeycombs, so that out of many and varied resources a single product should emerge, and that one both different and better.[73]

A few decades later another Italian humanist, Gasparino Barzizza (1360–1430) dedicated an entire treatise, *De imitatione,* to the different, accepted and non-accepted, uses of others' passages.[74] In Barzizza's work the use of others' passages is a means of imitation; however, in a similar way to Petrarch, Barzizza did not accept a word-by-word borrowing. Following Seneca, Barzizza emphasised that those who use others' passages must change the sentences and the words so that they do not seem to be borrowings.[75] In short, starting from antiquity, the use of other authors' passages as ready-made arguments, rhetorical embellishment or a means of education and imitation was widely accepted and practised. It is impossible to know whether Rucellai was aware of the cultural background of commonplaces. One thing is certain, however: once a quotation was transformed and inserted into a new context, it was considered the compiler's own.

Giovanni may have learned about the method of collecting sayings and using them to construct a narrative from his teachers. It is not known exactly what kind of education he received; most probably as a child of a wealthy family, he had private tutors. The curriculum of contemporary private education is unclear, but students in the Latin grammar schools were often asked to extract sayings from Latin works and to use them to compose new texts.[76] This practice of extracting and collecting sayings evolved from education to everyday reading culture. The humanist, Guarino da Verona, advised Leonello d'Este to assemble sayings and record them in his notebook for further use.[77] Many others followed Guarino's advice;

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73 'Ut scribamus scilicet sicut apes mellificant. non servatis floribus sed in favos versis, ut ex multis et variis unum fiat, idque aliud et melius.' F. Petrarch, *Familiarum rerum libri*, XXIII. 19, in F. Petrarca, *Prose,* ed. G. Martellotti *et al* (Milan, 1955), pp. 1018 - 1020, quoted in A. Moss, *Printed Commonplace-books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (Oxford, 1996), p. 51.

74 Barzizza's *De Imitatione* was published as the appendix of in G.W. Pigman, 'Barzizza's Treatise on Imitation', *Bibliothéque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 44 (1982), pp. 349 - 351.

75 'Dicit Seneca ad Lucilium quod imitatio non debet esse echo, id est: quando volumus imitari, non debbemus accipere recte litteram sicut stat in illo libro in quo volumus imitari, sed debemus mutare verba et sententias ita quod non videantur esse illa eadem quae sunt in ipso libro.' Ibidem, pp. 349 - 350.

76 R. Black, *Humanism and Education in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 323 – 324.

77 'Has ad res salubre probstumque praestatur consilium, ut quotiens lectitandum est paratum teneas codicillum tanquam fidelem tibi depositarium, in quo quicquid selectum adnotaveris describas et sicuti collectorum catalogum facias.' *Epistolario di Guarino Veronese II,* ed. R. Sabbadini (Venice, 1916), p. 270.

Michele Siminetti for instance copied sayings from the *Letters* of Seneca in a section of his *Mescolanze*, named *Notabili tracti dalle pistole di Senecha.*[78]

The culture of commonplaces also helped to organise information. The extracted passages from the works of famous authors were sometimes grouped under thematic headings such as friendship, love, beauty, etc. Whenever the owner of a commonplace book needed passages to speak or write about, for instance, friendship, he or she could easily retrieve passages treating this topic. An excellent example of a commonplace book organised with topical headers is the *zibaldone* of Pietro Bembo's father, Bernardo Bembo (1433-1519). The manuscript contains two alphabetical topical indices, which are followed by sections or chapters each consisting of a thematic collection of saying from antique, medieval and renaissance authors.[79] Bernardo was an active diplomat, who almost certainly used his commonplace book to compile his orations and letters. The MS 5-6-8 of the Colombina library was copied by a German priest, who created an alphabetical topical index at the beginning of his manuscript.[80] From the mid-fifteenth century, print culture adopted the technique of topical indexes, which gave birth to printed commonplace books. All this helps us to reconstruct the process of creating the *Zibaldone Quaresimale.*

78 Dresden, MS OB 44, f. 216r.

79 BL, MS ADD. 41068 A.

80 This is what we can read about the owner on 8r: 'Et ego indignus sacerdos scilicet Bartolomeus de Almania provincia de Saxsonia scripsi et complevi in vigilia sancti Michaelis anno domini 1466.' Colombina, MS 5-6-7.

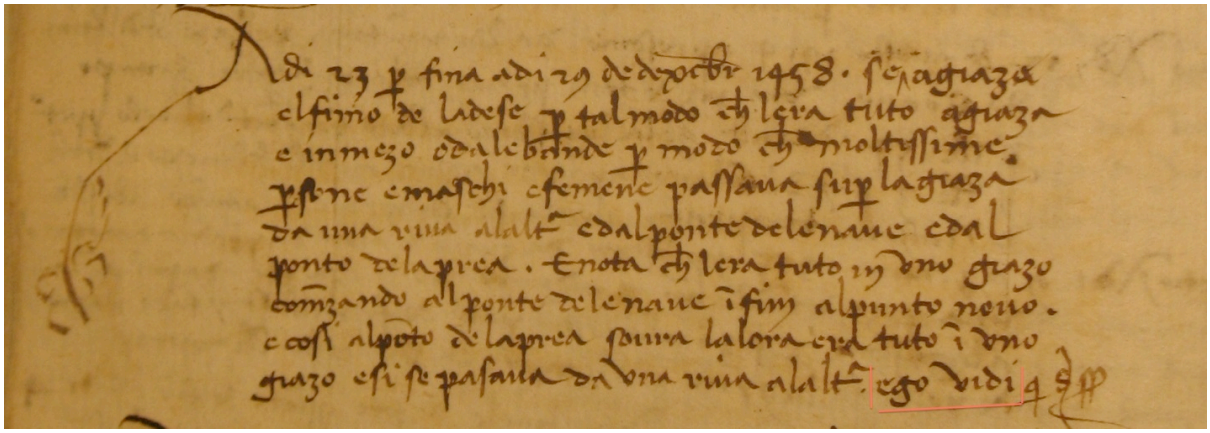


Figure 2: ‘Ego vidi’, the ego of the compiler as a reference point (text highlighted by Gabor Toth), *Zibaldone da Verona,* Biblioteca Triulziana, MS 962, extract from f. 67v.

First, Giovanni may have created thematic lists of sayings in his lost *zibaldone*; then, by reworking them, he used these modified sayings as building blocks for compiling the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. In other words, the history of some textual fragments in the manuscript has two different aspects. First, an original author such as Seneca or Alberti wrote them as part of an organic work. Second, Rucellai extracted, rewrote and inserted them into the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. Most importantly, he recontextualised them. He reused for instance one passage of Seneca to convey the ideal behaviour toward domestic servants.[81] In terms of our modern notions of authorship, which focus on creating new artefacts, this second aspect cannot be interpreted as a creative activity in its own right. In contrast, as we saw above, Rucellai’s contemporaries regarded such modification and use of others’ words as an acceptable activity which is part of authorship. Rucellai also regarded himself as the author of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. The last entry of the table of contents is in his hand, and provides a title for the last section of the manuscript ‘Memory of the reasons and motives why Giovanni di Pagolo Rucellai, *author* of this book, must thank God.’[82] Moreover, he gave the impression that the author of the rewritten texts was himself. He often addressed his sons by their names; where ‘you’ refers to the sons, the ‘I’ necessarily refers to Giovanni himself. Consequently, for the contemporary reader, he was the author.

81 See the analysis of this on in Chapter V. Section 5.1.

82 ‘Righordo delle ragioni e chagioni per le quali Giovanni di Pagholo Rucellai, auctore di questo libro debbe ringraziare Idio.’ Rucellai, ‘Zibaldone Quaresimale’, p. XXI.

In fact, Rucellai might have had in mind a notion of authorship in terms of which the intellectual contribution of author lies not in creating new artefacts, but in using, manipulating and more importantly, putting textual fragments into the one's own disposition. This last feature guarantees that even though the texts were not written by, but only used and modified by, Rucellai, they express, indeed, his own ideas. I name this authorship 'indirect authorship' since the texts express Rucellai's ideas in an indirect way, that is to say, through his method of modification and use.[83] This is a strategic use of culture, throughout which the circulating texts become means of communication expressing the intention, ideas, experiences of an everyday actor. In addition to Giovanni's *Zibaldone,* another example presenting this strategic use of culture is the late fourteenth-century French advice book known as *Le Menagier de Paris,* the unknown author of which also often rewrote his borrowings to create an image of himself.[84] The French sociologist Michael de Certeau notes that culture has two sides. One side is a publicly available system of meaning. The other is a hidden consumption through which the everyday actors use and manipulate this system of meaning according to their goals, desires or intentions.[85] Generally, this hidden consumption remains invisible to posterity. Creative practices, such as Rucellai's rewriting, reflect this important field of human culture. They further reveal how knowledge of the past was reused to tackle the challenges of the present.

5. Dialogues between the *auctores* and the self

The *Zibaldone Quaresimale* does not only consist of rewritten texts. Rucellai also inserted longer extracts from various works without modifying them or giving the impression of being their author. Some parts of the codex resemble the form of collections of *sententiae* where quotations from different authors, separated by empty space, follow each other. Again, in

83 In the context of the *Summa* of Saint Antonius, Peter Howard gave an excellent description of the originality of the compilation that reuses textual fragments authored by others."Secondly, in content the Summa, like all of its genre, displaying as it does the medieval penchant for auctoritates, is a redaction. To the modern mind this means anything from a dismissively derivative work to something that is totally plagiarised. But redaction implies a pattern of thought, of selection, consistent with a world view which in itself implies a philosophy or, as in this instance, theology. Because of the level of consciousness of the redaction itself, even large slabs of the writings of others - signalled haec ille - must be taken seriously as indicating something of the redactor's, that is Antonius' stance." P. F. Howard, *Beyond the written word: preaching and theology in the Florence of Archbishop Antoninus*, 1427-1459 (Florence, 1995), p. 70

84 G. E. Bereton and J. M. Ferrier, 'Introduction', in *Le Menagier de Paris*, ed. G. E. Brereton and J. M. Ferrier (Oxford, 1981), p. XXXVII.

85 M. de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (London, 1984), p. 12.

terms of the modern notion of authorship, these quotations do not reflect Rucellai's original ideas. Moreover, by also recording their authors, Rucellai does not even try to present himself as the author. To reflect on this problem, I examine one of Rucellai's accounts on *Fortuna* and *virtù*.

The opposition of *Fortuna* to *virtù* was undoubtedly one of the most important issues in the intellectual life in the Italian Renaissance. From Petrarch to Castiglione, almost all thinkers reflected on the question of whether a virtuous man could overcome the power of Fortune. Rucellai inserted several texts which seek to answer this question. Here I will examine one of these texts, which seems to be related to traditional medieval rather than humanistic culture.

From f. 16r B to f. 20v B, the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* contains a section called 'Della Fortuna' in the table of contents. Preceding this section is an introduction in which Rucellai presents the topic and informs the reader that he will enumerate various opinions of different authors about Fortune.[86] The first sub-section attempts to answer the question of what Fortune and accident are.[87] A passage from the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle reveals that the notion of accident is only a product of human imagination which cannot find the cause of an event and therefore calls it an accident.[88] Rucellai quotes another passage from Boethius which also stresses that the notion of accident is merely the product of the human brain.[89] The conclusion of the first sub-section is that Fortune refers to a causality that is hidden from people's eyes.

However, the main question is whether man can comprehend this hidden causality. The answer to the second sub-section is a definite 'no': man is not able to understand the invisible causality of the world. Rucellai inserted some passages from Canto VII of the *Inferno* (VII, 67-85), in which Dante describes Fortune as a celestial intelligence who represents the will of God on Earth; her intervention is necessary for men who will never be able to understand the cause of events in the world. By contrast, the final sub-section is a chapter on hope which proves that prudence, virtue, and good government can resist the power of Fortune. Rucellai copied a long quotation from the thirteenth- and early-fourteenth-century physician and poet, Francesco degli Stabili, also known as Cecco d'Ascoli (1257-1327), who was burned in

86 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 103.

87 Ibidem.

88 Ibidem, p. 104.

89 Ibidem.

Florence for heresy. The passage from the second chapter of the first book of his famous *Acerba etiam* discusses the ideas of Canto VII of the *Commedia*.[90] In contrast to Dante, Cecco speaks about a deistic God, who, after creating the world, left creatures to themselves; thus, they can choose their own fates.[91]

In addition to various *auctores*, one also hears Rucellai's personal opinion in the introduction preceding the section about Fortune which claims that good government, wisdom, and prudence can keep capricious events under control.[92] In fact, Rucellai is not only a narrator who simply introduces the topic, but also an autonomous point of reference among the several *auctores*. Throughout the Middle Ages, the individual's position in respect to the *auctores* was subordinate.[93] However, as Laurel Amtower, a historian of reading culture, has pointed out, 'by the Late Middle Ages the individual has both the ability and the duty to engage texts analytically and to question or doubt those opinions that may turn out to be dangerous or false.'[94] Rucellai does not question the opinions of the *auctores,* but by juxtaposing them against each other, he offers his sons various interpretative positions, including his own. Thus, the sayings of the *auctores* represent points of perspective; they are the subjects of a sophisticated discursive game. It is worth comparing Rucellai's account of Fortune with another collection of sayings. The fifteenth-century, and probably Florentine, BNCF, MS Magl. XXI. 90 contains a short account on friendship.[95] Here, the sayings of the *auctores* are assembled under a common topic; they are part of a thematic list. In contrast, Rucellai creates a dialogue between the *auctores* by juxtaposing their ideas, and adds his own position as a reference point.

The use of an ego as a reference point in the face of *auctores* has further significance to the knowledge constructing practice. As we have already seen, with the help of diaries and commonplace books everyday people were transmitting their very own individual experience to others. In the introduction to his chronicle, Giovanni thought it important to declare that

90 F. Stabili, *L'Acerba*, ed. A. Crespi (Ascoli Piceno, 1927), pp. 171 – 189.

91 'Non fa necessità ciaschun movendo, ma ben dispone creatura humana per qualità, qual l'anima, seguendo l'albitrio, abandona e fassi vile.' Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 107.

92 Ibidem, p. 103.

93 A. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* (London, 1984), pp. 10 – 11.

94 L. Amtower, *Engaging Words: The Culture of Reading in the Later Middle Ages* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 2.

95 BNCF, MS Magl. XXI. 90, ff. 202r – 203v.

this was the history of Florence as he experienced it.[96] The importance of an ego as a reference point can be clearly seen in the memoirs of Simone di Muronovo from Verona. In a short entry he narrates that in October 1458, the River Adige was frozen and people could cross it on foot. After narrating this event, he added the short Latin phrase: *ego vidi* (see figure 2). The birth of ego as a reference point in the face of *auctores* is what makes the practice of rewriting texts acceptable. The compiler had the authority to rewrite, modify, and reuse textual fragments to communicate his or her own ideas.

In fact, the intellectual world of the entire *Zibaldone* can be seen as a dialogue in which texts of a culture interact with each other. This interaction is completely controlled by Rucellai, who thus used texts not only to transmit a representation of himself and the contemporary social world, but also to provide his sons with different perspectives on philosophical, ethical, and other questions.

6. Conclusion

The spectacular rise of literacy and the subsequent transition from oral to written culture opened new perspectives to Florentines and other citizens of urban Europe. They started to construct and pass on their own knowledge and experience, for they adopted an existing knowledge-constructing practice, the tradition of commonplaces (*loci communes*), which had its origins in antiquity and dominated western culture until the 18th century. To record and communicate ideas, beliefs, social practices, and experience, this information culture drew on the creative use of older texts and traditions. Contemporary notions of originality and contribution cannot be conceptualised by means of our modern conception of authorship. Compilers had a conception of authorship that I name indirect authorship, which consists of copying, recontextualising, modifying, and juxtaposing textual fragments. What we have learned about the content of diaries and commonplace books is that they were deeply functional compilations. Both theoretical and practical texts in these documents in fact had functions in everyday life. Commonplace books and diaries were not ad-hoc collections of

96 ‘Et però io Giovanni di Pagolo di messer Pagolo Ruciellai farò qui apresso memoria di quelle ch'io o vedute e intese chome di sotto dico.’ Rucellai, ‘Il Zbaldone Quaresimale’, p. 44.

texts but tools for information management. How can posterity analyse the knowledge transmitted through these documents? The next chapters will provide an answer.

V. Perception: Social judgement and categorisation

1. Introduction

Late medieval Florence was by no means the harmonic or ideal place that a common conception of the Renaissance might suggest. Anthony Molho has spoken about the 'class consciousness and class conflict, which are evident in contemporary documents.'[1] Drawing on extensive evidence, Molho argued that social order was maintained 'through the constant employment of force, the exemplary and frequent punishment of those tempted to violate the social order.'[2] In contrast, William Kent emphasised that class relations were reciprocal: labouring classes did participate in the history of the city, there was a close tie of interdependence between patricians and the *popolo minuto*, and late medieval Florence was characterised by a positive easing of social tension.[3] John Najemy has emphasised that the fifteenth century witnessed the extension of the political class, which resulted in a system of consensus politics. Thanks to the electoral reforms in 1380s and 1390s, the political arena opened to middle class citizens. The idea of political equality took shape from the beginning of the fifteenth century.[4] At the same time, as Gene Brucker has argued, the expansion of the political class was controlled by an 'inner circle' of the *reggimento*; the equality hardly existed in reality.[5] Finally, what made the relationship between social groups even more complex was that the success of Florentine economy was by large due to the cooperation of merchants, bankers, and artisans.[6] Kent, Molho, Najemy, Brucker, and others studied the Florentine social world through institutions, broader structures, and social control.[7] This chapter examines the social world from another angle by analysing thought processes such as social judgement and recognition. Most importantly, the chapter reveals how Giovanni's and others' social judgements were embodied in the belief system, social reality and the

1 A. Molho, 'Cosimo de' Medici: Pater Pariae or Padrino?', *Stanford Italian Review,* 1 (1979), p. 9.

2 Ibidem, p. 32.

3 F.W. Kent, ' "Be rather loved than feared": class relations in Quattrocento Florence', in *Society and individual in Renaissance Florence*, ed. W. J. Connell (Berkeley, 2002), p. 28.

4 J. Najemy, *Corporatism and consensus in Florentine electoral politics*, 1280-1400 (Chapel Hill, 1982), p. 312.

5 G. A. Brucker, *The civic world of early Renaissance Florence* (Princeton, 1977), p. 265.

6 G. Brucker, *Renaissance Florence* (Berkeley, 1983), p. 89.

7 For a review of earlier scholarship on social perception, ibidem, pp. 12 - 16.

challenges of economic life. The ultimate goal of the chapter is to discover some elements of Giovanni's value system.

As has been explained in Chapter Two, I use my Mental Model Framework in History to take a holistic approach that permits the discovery of connections between different domains of knowledge. In practice, this means that the interpreter can explore how contemporaries themselves connected various domains such as agency and social qualities. This holistic approach raises, for instance, the following rarely studied questions:

- how did economic behaviour influence the value system, and *vice versa*?
- how was the patronage of art rooted in social perception?
- what impact did the discovery of antiquity have on the value system?

Chapter two has also suggested that a holistic investigation of knowledge systems is possible through the analysis of mental processes. In this chapter, I shall focus on two sub-processes of perception, social judgement and categorisation, by means of which I shall explore the connections between economic and social behaviour, belief system and agency. We cannot expect Giovanni or any everyday actor to make explicit assertions of their own values and systems of categorisation. Values and categories must therefore be studied dynamically, i.e. by the way they were used. The focus on social judgement and categorisation makes a dynamic analysis of values and categories possible.

The study of social perception in an early modern society has significance for the wider study of human cognition, for conceptualising society in terms of social classes is a modern approach, a product in part of Marxist theory: the concept of class did not exist in fifteenth-century Florence. In the absence of that concept, how did fifteenth-century Florentines categorise themselves and their fellow citizens?

2. Method and Data

A community has a set of social, moral, physical and other types of qualities, such as ‘generous‘, ‘trustworthy’, and ‘handsome’; social judgements involve the selection of certain qualities and their attribution to people. But social judgement is much more than simply ascribing properties. Qualities have four key characteristics, which make up the core sections of this chapter:

1. Qualities can have positive or negative connotations

Social judgement involves a measurement or assessment, in terms of the connotations ascribed by the ethical standard(s) prevailing in the wider society of the time. This aspect of social judgement is related to another mental operations from the domain of social perception: social recognition. In the first section of this chapter, I shall use this mental operations to explore Giovanni’s value system.

2. Qualities have functions

There must be certain reasons why a quality is significant in a given society. Qualities have specific functions: in other words, they have transformative potential in the social world. By means of a certain quality, an individual can, for instance, change what others think about him or her, or influence the decisions of others. The functional facet of qualities helps to explain how social perception was related to agency.

3. Qualities imply actions and vice versa

Qualities allow the drawing of inferences. If person A has qualities C and D, he or she is expected to perform actions F and G. Around qualities there is therefore an array of - historically and culturally specific - expectations. The investigation of typical actions associated with qualities will reveal the relationship between different social groups.

4. Qualities must be constructed and communicated

Qualities are not straightforward or automatic. Even though they may be inherited and transferred (we shall see some examples later), they still need to be communicated. This aspect of social qualities helps us to explore the link between social perception, agency, and the patronage of art.

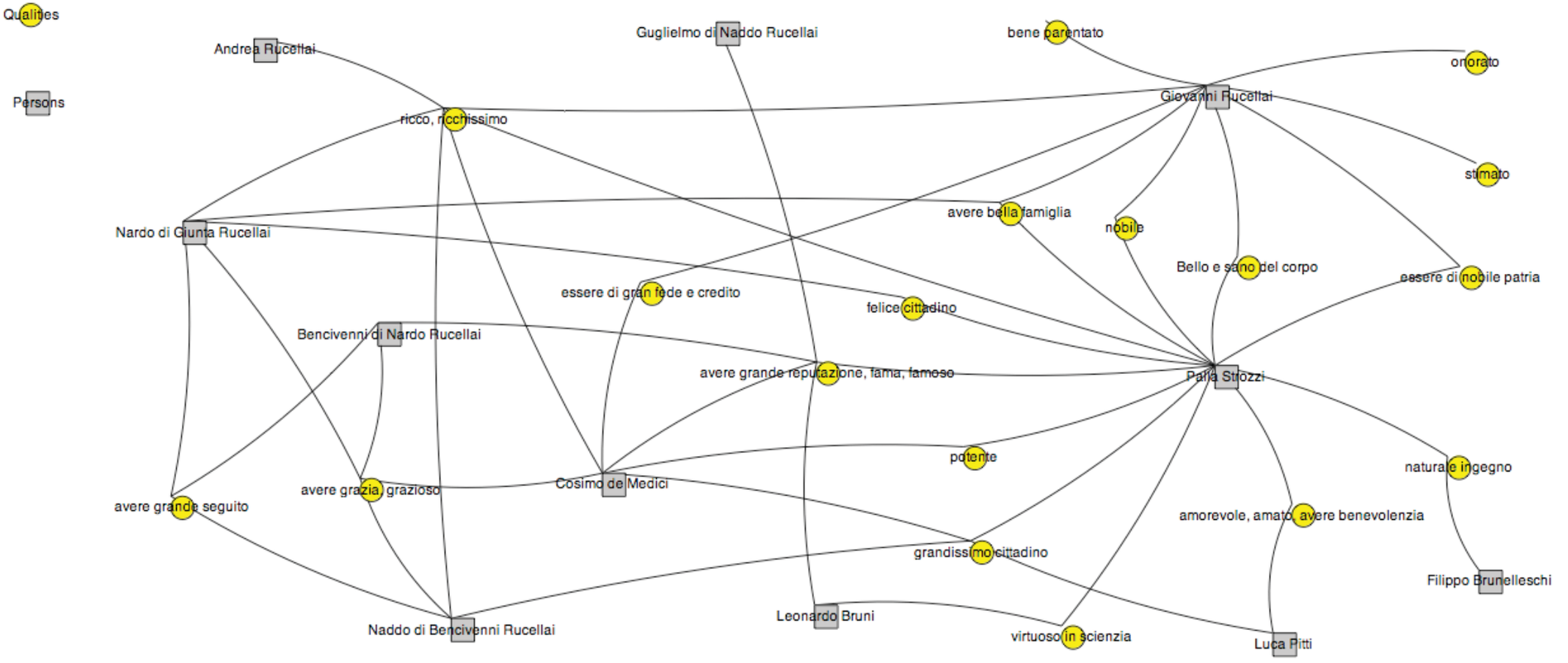


Figure 1: Key qualities and agents in the MS Zibaldone Quaresimale (henceforth Graph 1).

Even though the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* contains assessments based on many different qualities, my investigation here is limited to four key qualities: poor (*povero)*, rich (*ricco)*, famous (*famoso)*, and beautiful / handsome (*bello*). The choice of these four was motivated by the fact that they are salient features not only in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* but also in other contemporary diaries. Furthermore, these four qualities raise questions that scholarship has not yet answered.

Giovanni's commonplace book contains idealised descriptions or written portraits of persons such as his ancestors and his well-known contemporaries. Each description of course includes a reference to one or more qualities. These data were recorded in the OWL ontology. This can be seen on the Graph 1 (figure 1), which visualises the key qualities of these persons and Giovanni himself in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale.* In practice, figure 1 renders and help us to understand the following textual phenomenon. If a given quality is ascribed to a given individual, there is an edge between the vertices representing them. For instance, Giovanni used the quality *essere di gran fede e credito* in the description of himself and Cosimo. This is why the vertex representing that quality is linked to vertices representing Cosimo and Giovanni. So, on the one hand, the graph gives a clear overview of the qualities ascribed to each given agent, while on the other, it reveals both overlapping and distribution. Giovanni often used the same qualities to describe different agents: graph sheds light on the agents who shared qualities. Finally, the graph allows us to observe a quantitative phenomenon. Vertices representing qualities with high number of outgoing edges are '*avere grande reputazione, fama, famoso*' and '*ricco, richissimo*'; though they are just ahead of '*avere grazia*' and '*grandissimo cittadino.*'[8] Consequently, they are the properties that Giovanni mostly used to judge his contemporaries positively. By contrast, '*bello*' has fewer outgoing edges, and is thus not particularly salient in Giovanni's *Zibaldone* (though as I shall shortly demonstrate, it is a feature that other Florentines applied extensively in their social judgements). In brief, the visualisation reveals textual phenomena that can be difficult to uncover with the use of close reading alone, or to explain with words.

To investigate social categorisation, I identified those words that denote social groups in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. The result was surprising. Giovanni mostly used two labels to describe groups of people: the poor (*povero*) and the rich (*ricco*). These labels might seem to

8 When speaking about vertices, I shall refer to a given vertex by using its label between quotation marks.

be stereotypical and without any particular meaning. However, a detailed examination of the corpus has revealed that they were labels associated with a wide range of connotations and actions, and a typology. Furthermore, if one looks at descriptions of individuals in late medieval Florentine diaries, the salient physical properties that one can often find are beauty and health. Surprisingly, perhaps, these are mainly ascribed to men. Giovanni described his father-in-law, Palla Strozzi, as a person with a handsome and healthy body, and with a beautiful family.[9] Giovanni similarly characterised himself as one who was always healthy and who had a beautiful family.[10] In contrast, he provided some remarks about some female family members and ancestors, such as his mother, wife or daughter-in-law, but he never used any physical property to characterise them.[11] Female beauty is in fact mentioned only once in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, and in a negative context, to which I shall return later. And as opposed to beauty, human ugliness is completely absent from the corpus. A similar pattern can be seen in the mid sixteenth-century diary of Paolo di Messer Donato Velluti, who also applied beauty as a descriptive element of his male ancestors, whereas, with one exception, he did not use beauty to characterise his female ancestors or family members.[12] Male beauty is the salient feature in the early sixteenth-century memoir of Francesco di Giovanni Baldovinetti, too: he described his maternal and paternal uncles, Niccolo Baldovinetti, Piero Accolti, and Bernardo Accolti, *detto* L'Unico Aretino (1458-1535), all churchmen, as beautiful men (*uomo bellissimo*).[13] Finally, male beauty is a recurrent feature in Vespasiano Bisticci's *Vite* (circa 1480).[14] Beauty was thus an expected and widely recognised feature of men.

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9 "In questo tenpo abbiamo veduti quattro notabili cittadini e dengni di memoria, cioè messer Palla di Nofri degli Strozi con tutte e sette le parti della filicità, cioè di dengnia patria, di nobile e gientile sangue, virtuoso inn iscienzia in greco e in latino, huomo di grandissima grazia, bello del corpo, bella famiglia e ricchissimo di riccheze bene aquistate, che in radi si truova tante parti di filicità quante furono in llui." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 78rB [seg.53.1.500]. Each word in the electronic transcription of the Zibaldone Quaresimale has a unique ID. The code between square brackets is this unique ID. Readers can request access to the transcription from the author and use this unique ID to read the passage quoted in this dissertation.

10 Ibidem, f. 227r [seg.73.2.28], f. 62rA [seg.30.6.23].

11 See, f. 62r [seg.30.10.90 and seg.30.10.7], 5rB [seg.1.21.153].

12 In fact, Paolo's diary is an addition to the diary of Donato Velluti, and it was published in *La cronica domestica di Messer Donato Velluti*, ed. I. del Lungo and G. Volpi (Florence, 1914). Beauty is the property of his uncles, Andrea, Raffaello and Antonio Velluti, see p. 321, p. 326 and p. 331.

13 BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 11v, f. 21v, f. 22r.

14 Bisticci used beauty to describe men like, such as Piero de' Pazzi, Donato Acciaiuoli or Matteo Palmieri. Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Vite di uomini illustri del secolo XV* (Florence, 1859), p. 372, p. 350, p. 500.

3. Data retrieval with methods of corpus linguistics

My close reading of Florentine *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze,* and the visualisation of key social qualities in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* (figure 1), has focused the analysis of social perception on qualities such as *povero, ricco,* and *famoso* that Giovanni and his contemporaries frequently ascribed to agents. The interpretative model provided both the research questions and the theoretical background, while various corpus tools have helped to retrieve the data that are studied in the rest of this chapter.

The next subchapter investigates how Giovanni evaluated certain social qualities. How did he (for instance) judge qualities such as *povero*, *ricco* and *bello*? Were they positive or negative features for him? The lemmas *povero* and *povertà* have 95 individual occurrences in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. The main problem that information-retrieval had to solve was: how can we find those occurrences or passages where information about the evaluation of poverty can most probably be found. Collocation analysis helped to find these passages in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[15] Figure 2 visualises those adjectives that appear around *povero* within a distance of five words. *Crudele*, *vergognoso*, and *invidioso* suggest a negative perception of poverty. In practice, by clicking on any edge of the graph, a pop-up window opens and shows the passages where a given collocation can be found. As a whole, collocation analysis and visualisation give an overview of the usage of words, and enable a quick and effective retrieval of textual contexts according to certain types of usage.

The interpretative model implies that qualities and categories are not homogeneous sets. A key task was therefore to identify those textual contexts that contained information about the internal variations of the qualities I have focused on. In the corpus of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* there is information about the various morphological forms of each lemma and their occurrences within the text. For instance, *ricco* has the following morphological forms in the corpus:

ricca, riccha, ricche, ricchi, riccho, ricco, richa, riche, richi, richissimo, richo

This list made me raise the question: what is the difference between *richissimo* and *richo / riccho / ricco?* As the reader shall see in the next subchapter, the analysis of passages where

15 See the detailed description of how mathematical graphs meant to visualize collocation were constructed in Chapter VIII Section 2.

these morphological variations occur revealed the heterogeneity of the social group that the word *ricco* describes.

At the same time, a method that investigates the use of certain words has a downside. If an author uses a great variety of synonyms, studying a given lemma cannot give a complete picture of the usage. For instance, one can express human beauty with different words. Lemmas in the corpus of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* are therefore grouped into synonym sets. This allowed the examination not only of *bello* but also of its synonyms appearing in the corpus.[16] Finally, to get an even more complete picture of human beauty and more generally of physical and psychological features used to characterise humans, words belonging to the following semantic domains were also investigated:

> Anatomy, Art, Biology, Body Care, Fashion, Person, Psychological Features, Sexuality[17]

In summary, the methods described here helped to retrieve information in a quick and effective way. The interpretation however rests on the theory treated in the previous subchapter and the close reading of textual contexts that were found with the help of corpus tools. Why were *vergnognoso* and *domandare* ascribed to *povero?* What action does *domandare* denote? How can we interpret the way *fama* shaped decisions? The computing tools used in this thesis can pinpoint tendencies and patterns in the data, but cannot answer questions of this kind.

16 The following synonyms of *bello* were studied: *forte, ricco, notabile, sereno, buono*.

17 The concrete lists of words belonging into each semantic domain are in the Appendix Section 2.



Figure 2: Adjectives around *povero* within a distance of five words.

4. Evaluation, measurement, typology of qualities

Qualities can have positive or negative associations depending on the ethical system used to evaluate them. For instance, in an early sixteenth-century Florentine *zibaldone* written by Alessandro Caccini to instruct his son, Giovanni, we can read the following words about wealth:

> Chi pone nelle richezze el suo desio e nel charnale diletto a perso l'intelletto e lla memoria.[18]

> Oggi s'e savio riccho e bello e forte domani non sarai nulla.[19]

By contrast, Giovanni inserted wealth, earning and spending money into a list that enumerates the joys of the world.

> Nel numero de gran piaceri e gran delecti che gli uomini abbino in questo mondo (..): Servire a dio e fare opere d'essere /o/ vero credere d'essere in sua gratia. L'essere virtuoso. L'avere praticha di qualch'arte o vero mestiero. L'avere signoria. Le richezze.[20]

While for Caccini wealth had negative moral connotations, for Giovanni it was a positive value. The goal of this section is to explore some features of Giovanni's value system by studying how he evaluated poverty, wealth, reputation, and beauty. I shall draw on another feature of social qualities, too: that they are not homogeneous. An examination of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* reveals for instance that *povero* and *ricco* both had a complex typology. Through the analysis of this typology, I shall be able to identify data about the process of social categorisation as well.

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18 BNCF, MS Land. Fin. 56, f. 12v.

19 Ibidem, f. 12r.

20 They are the pleasures and delights that people have in this world (..). Serving God and making works that are in His Grace (or at least believing so). Being virtuous. Being experienced in an art or craft. Possessing power. Wealth. AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 35rB [seg.17.2.30].

4.1. Evaluation and measurement of poverty

On folio 48r of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* we find a categorisation of the poor.[21] Giovanni's text distinguishes three different types of poor:

- *poveri communi*: pilgrims and hermits[22]
- *poveri verisimili*: people who were once rich and then impoverished, and are ashamed to beg[23]
- *poveri stremi*: people who beg publicly for alms[24]

This typology follows the traditional medieval categorisation of the poor, which took shape after the birth of the mendicant orders, but which also has Biblical roots. It makes a sharp distinction between voluntary (*poveri communi*) and involuntary poverty (*poveri verisimili* and *poveri stremi*). The former was considered to be a positive state; as another context of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* says, voluntary poverty (*povero di volonta per l'amore di Dio*) is one of the seven beatitudes.[25] In another fifteenth-century MS, which contains a more verbose description of the seven beatitudes, voluntary poverty is named *povertà di spirito*, which is an allusion to the words of Christ: 'blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matthew 5:3).[26]

By contrast, Giovanni and many of his contemporaries judged involuntary poverty in terms of a value system that is far from the tradition of the New Testament. Giovanni's text, for instance, associated involuntary poverty and impoverishment with shame, and encouraged the help of those who impoverished:

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21 This folio belongs to a chapter that Giovanni entitled *Più variate cose* (ff. 47r A - 48r B)*;* it is an unorganised collection of quotations and notes. The categorisation of the poor is attributed to a certain father Girolamo.

22 'Frati romiti et pellegrini.' AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 48rA [seg.24.13.2].

23 'Persone da bene venuti in poverta che si vergognavano di domandare limosina.' Ibidem.

24 'Quelli che vanno in publico domandando limosina.' Ibidem.

25 The list of seven beatitudes is a rewritten version of the eight beatitudes in the Bible (Matthew 5:3). In Giovanni's version, the eighth beatitude ['those who are persecuted for righteousness'] is absent, the order of the beatitudes is changed, and the words of Christ are paraphrased. The enumeration of the seven beatitudes is part of the chapter *De comandamenti di Dio*. Ibidem, f. 45rA [seg.23.14.2].

26 BNCF, MS Pal. 685, f. 97r. See also, 2 Corinthians 8.

A poveri vergognosi gia stati richi et venuti in poverta si richiede dare limosina in grosso.[27]

Others repeatedly told their readers that there is not any greater sorrow than becoming poor.[28] The compiler of the didactic work known as *O sommo padre celestiale* (around 1450) also has a comment on involuntary poverty and impoverishment. He warns the reader that he who wastes what he should not, lives and dies with great shame.[29] Another consequence of poverty was marginalization. Giovanni tells his sons that they should choose rich rather than poor friends.[30] And in another part of the *Zibaldone,* he uses the words of Cassiodorus to describe the poor man who is chased away by his brothers and abandoned by his friends. "Frategli del povero lo discacciano e gli amici da lungi si partono da lui."[31] Donato Velluti's story about his distant relative, Piero di Ciore di Pitti, seems to corroborate Giovanni's application of the words of Cassiodorus as a description of his contemporaries' attitude to impoverishment. In brief, Piero di Ciore spent all his inheritance, lived in misery, and when he died, his relatives did not even attend his funeral.[32] As Gene Brucker summarised the story of Piero di Ciore, 'Florentines displayed little charity or pity toward the fallen.'[33]

There is a historical reason why impoverishment was associated with shame in late medieval Florence. Social historians have noticed an economic and social fluctuation among the Florentine elite, families rose and fell.[34] Contemporaries themselves complained about the difficulty of keeping wealth. Giovanni warned his sons that nothing was more fragile than wealth.[35] In the prologue of his *I libri della famiglia* (1430 - 1440), Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472), the descendent of a failed family, recalled those numerous 'ruined' families who had fallen.[36] In other European countries and city-states where social status was determined by descent and privileges, impoverishment did not necessarily bring about the complete loss

27 One must give alms generously to the shameful poor who were once rich and then impoverished. AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 48rA [seg.24.16.40].

28 'Niuna e maggiore tristizia che essere istato in beatitudine e venire in poverta.' BNCF, MS II. IX, 42, f. 12r; 'Nella miseria la vita e noia.' BNCF, MS Pal, 600, f. 115r.

29 *Governo della famiglia: 'O sommo Padre Re celestiale*' (Venice: Johannes Leoviler de Hallis, about 1485), f. 2r. See also the BNCF, MS II.IX. 154, ff. 58r - 61r.

30 "Et vogliate più tosto amici virtuosi che richi, et anche vogliate più tosto amici fortunati che infortunati et poveri." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 11rA [seg. 4.1.30], f. 48rA [seg.24.16.40].

31 The brothers of the poor chase the poor away, and old friends abandon him. Ibidem, f. 23vB [seg.8.41.55], f. 38rA [seg.20.9.422].

32 *La cronica domestica di Messer Donato Velluti*, pp. 137 - 138. Quoted by .Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*, p. 106

33 Ibidem.

34 Martines, *The social world*, p. 351; Brucker, *Renaissance Florence* p. 94

35 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 27vA [seg.10.1.1223].

36 'Quante si veggono oggi famiglie cadute e ruinate.' Leon Battista Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, ed. R. Romano and A. Tenenti (Turin, 1969), p. 21.

of status. The social status defined through descent did not directly depend on financial state. For instance, the Venetian patriciate included some poor families who however retained their status and their political privileges. By contrast, in Florence, as a result of the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* (1293 / 1295),[37] the magnates, whose status was hereditary, were excluded from the political arena; the social status of the "new" nonhereditary ruling elite was a question of perception, which largely depended on the financial situation.[38] Beyond the material misery, impoverishment signified loss of status, social degradation and marginalization.

Another characteristic feature of the poor presented in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is envy.[39] Given that envy was one of the mortal sins which, as a passage of the *Zibaldone* demonstrates,[40] Giovanni was of course aware of, his ascribing this feature to a particular social group reflects a seriously negative judgement. The fourteenth-century merchant, Paolo da Certaldo made the claim, 'filthy is the poverty that originates in greed, and more filthy still is the greed of the poor.'[41] The association of the poor with envy and greed most probably has its origin in sayings attributed to antique authors, such as Seneca and Aristotle. Giovanni and other Florentines often copied advice from classical texts on how to endure poverty. Giovanni copied the words of Seneca, for example, behind which lie the ideas of Stoicism: poverty is not bad as long one does not desire more than one has.[42] When making extracts from Seneca's *Letters to Lucilius*, the attention of another Florentine, Michele Siminetti, was taken by a passage expressing the same idea: poor is the person who desires more than he has.[43] Desire, envy, and poverty are connected in a passage of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, one that is attributed to Aristotle: the poor man thinks continuously about the wealth of others.[44] Scholars have identified a significant shift in the conception of poverty in the course of the fourteenth century.[45] Perhaps the earliest example of the description of poverty as a state

37 See the historical details on the *Ordinamenti* on in Chapter VIII Section 2.2.

38 J. Najemy, *A history of Florence 1200-1575* (Malden, MA, 2006), p. 38.

39 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 12. See also, AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 23rB [seg.8.34.168].

40 Ibidem, f. 45rA [seg.23.8.2].

41 'Sozza cosa e la poverta la quale nasce de la ghiottonia; e sozzissima cosa e la ghiottonia del povero.' Paolo da Certaldo, 'Libro di buoni costumi', in *Mercanti scrittori: ricordi nella Firenze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento,* ed. V. Branca (Milan, 1986), p. 12.

42 "Della poverta conta Seneca e dice colui che si contenta di quello che gli a non /e/ povero ma colui che piu desidera sempre /e/ povero ./." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 23vB [seg.8.39.2].

43 'Et che cholui non e povero che ha pocho ma povero e cholui che piu desidera.' Dresden, MS OB 44, f. 216r.

44 "Aristotele diesse colui non /e/ povero il quale /a/ poco ma colui che piu desidera pero che niente gli monta per avere l'arche piene e gram palazi e grande rendita se gli raguarda e pensa all'altrui richeze e se gli non conta i beni che gli a acquistati ma quegli che sono aqstare." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, 25rA [seg.8.56.6].

45 M. Mollat, 'De Dante a Coluccio Salutati, discussions sur la pauvreté a Florencee', in *Études sur l'histoire de la pauvreté*, ed. M. Molllat (Paris, 1974), pp. 637 - 659.

leading to moral corruption is the sonnet *Molti son que' che lodan povertate*, formerly attributed to Giotto.[46] One hundred years later, one of Poggio's interlocutors in the *Dialogus contra avaritiam* explicitly criticised the poverty of the mendicant orders as well, claiming that they are hypocritical and only pretend to be poor.[47]

On the other hand, this discursive tradition meshed with a more recent historical tradition. The memory of the Ciompi revolution of 1378, the biggest conflict in Florentine history between the poor and the rich, remained vivid for the entire Quattrocento. Giovanni, some of whose ancestors were confined or excluded from the list of officeholders during the revolt,[48] thought it important to repeat the history of this event. He inserted the chronicle by Domenico Buoninsegni (1384?-1466) entitled *Historia Fiorentina* (around 1460) (without however naming the author) into the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[49] The contemporary marginal notes added to this chronicle in Giovanni's manuscript can help to uncover the elements of this event that captured Giovanni's attention. From folio 110v to 112r, Giovanni's text reports the events of 28 June, 1378, the most terrifying day of the rebellion, when the *popolo* looted and burned the houses of the rich. Three words are repeated several times on the margins of the manuscript: *arsione* (arson)*, rubamento* (loot)*, furore del popolo* (anger of the *popolo*). The historical experience of the rich seems to have sustained the negative perception of the poor well into the following century.

But this negative perception was also reinforced by the contemporary reality. Giovanni depicts an extremely pessimistic image about the general condition of the poor. In different contexts and by using the words of other authors, he characterises the situation of the poor as cruel:

> Quanta /é / la miseria e la conditione del povero crudele che segli domanda di vergogna si confonde e segli non domanda in poverta si consuma ma pure la fame a domandare el constrigne.[50]

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46 'Di quella povertà ch'è contro a voglia, non è da dubitar ch'è tutta ria, che di peccare è via, facciendo spesso a' giudici far fallo; e d'onor donna e damigella spoglia, e far furto, forza, e villania, e spesso usar bugia, e ciascun priva d'onorato stallo.' *I poeti minori del Trecento,* ed. by N. Sapegno (Milan, 1952), p. 364.

47 P. Bracciolini, *Dialogus contra avaritiam*, ed. G. Germano (Livorno, 1994), p. 115.

48 A. Acciaioli, 'Cronaca', in *Rerum italicarum scriptores, 18-Parte 3, Il Tumulto Dei Ciompi,* ed. L. A. Muratori (Città di Castello, 1917 - 1934), p. 37 and p. 34.

49 D. Buoninsegni, *Historia Fiorentina* (Florence, 1581).

50 How cruel are the misery and the conditions of the poor, if he asks something, he gets confused because of the shame, if he does not ask (the help of others), he wears out in the poverty, but hunger makes him request the help of others. AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 21rA [seg.8.19.13]. See also, f. 20vB [seg.8.2.65], f. 38rA [seg. 20.9.392].

Giovanni even says that a poor person suffers so much that it would be better for him to die than to live in misery.[51] In the light of the well-known research of Christiane Klapisch-Zuber and David Herlihy on the Florentine *catasto* of 1427, this pessimistic representation of poverty is not surprising. Those two scholars explored the intense poverty in the territory of the Florentine dominion. Although the results of their research should be treated with caution given the problems associated with data drawn from the *catasto*, their findings nonetheless indicate very well a wider development in the late medieval Florentine republic. Their research suggested that the annual income of 50% of the population was barely enough to support one person, and that a further 20% might have had only a modest living standard.[52] In terms of occupation groups, that lower 50% included mainly labourers, peasants, and some artisans.[53] Other social historians such as Franco Franceschi and Giovanni Cherubini have also pointed to a dramatic rate of poverty among labourers and peasants.[54]

Giovanni's *zibaldone* highlights two concrete aspects of poverty that made the life of the *povero* cruel, and help us to identify which occupational groups the label *povero* might have referred to. Giovanni's text identifies starvation as one of the distinctive features of poverty.[55] San Bernardino da Siena also pinpointed starvation as a major characteristic of the conditions of the poor.[56] This originated in a familiar economic predicament. The wages of labourers did not match the rate of inflation: in times of war, which occurred frequently, economic crisis, or harvest failure, the price of wheat and food could increase so dramatically that the poorest 50% of the population could not afford to feed themselves.[57] An interesting entry in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, in Giovanni's own hand, highlights this problem. The note, a copy from the *ricordanze* of an old peasant's grandfather, reports that in 1370 there was such a great shortage of wheat that its price rose to 40 *soldi* (probably by *staio*), whereas those who worked in the textile industry earned only 20 *soldi* a week.[58] The starvation of peasants had

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51 "Chi vive povero in questo mondo patisce molto necessita e soffera molti stremi bisogni e meglio gli sarebbe morire." Ibidem, f. 20vB [seg.8.2.82].

52 D. Herlihy and Ch. Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families : a study of the Florentine catasto of 1427*, ed. C. Klapisch-Zuber (New Haven, 1985), p. 104.

53 Ibidem.

54 F. Franceschi, *Oltre il 'tumulto' : i lavoratori fiorentini dell'Arte della Lana fra Tre e Quattrocento* (Florence, 1993), pp. 286 - 300. G. Cherubini, *L' Italia rurale del basso Medioevo* (Rome, 1984), pp. 119 - 138.

55 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 38rA [seg.20.9.392].

56 'Essi (i poveri) muoiono di fame, di freddo, non hanno abiti con cui vestirsi; le figlie zitelle rimangono relegate in casa con le vesti stracciate che a stento coprono la carne, timide e vergognosose non hanno il coraggio di comparire davanti a nessuno.' San Bernardo da Siena, *Sermo* XLVI, 52, quoted in C. Casagrande and S. Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali: storia dei peccati nel Medioevo,* ed. S Vecchio and J. Baschet (Turin, 2000), p. 32.

57 See also, Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore, 2009), p. 362.

58 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 38r [seg.74.1.1]. I am thankful to Davide Speranzi to his help in interpreting this difficult entry.

similar causes. In late medieval Tuscany one could distinguish two types of peasants: those who cultivated their own land (mostly in the mountains), and those who lived from sharecropping, whom I shall discuss later.[59] Both groups had very limited cash income; in periods of drought, for instance, they had serious difficulty purchasing what they could not produce themselves.

The second aspect of poverty that Giovanni discusses in different parts of his diary can be summarised as the defenceless situation of the *povero* in the face of nature. On folios 66r to 67r, Giovanni composed a short chronicle about the weather between 1467 and 1471. Here he noted that in 1469, many people died in both the countryside and the city; the cause, he said, was a shortage of firewood.[60] In economic terms, therefore, the reason was the same as for starvation: an essential product was lacking, its price rose, and it thus became unavailable for the poor. This is a point that San Bernardino also documented by stating that the poor die because of the cold.[61] The *Zibaldone Quaresimale* finally provides a further example of the helplessness of the poor in the face of the power of nature. Various *ricordanze* contain an entry about an extraordinary storm or most probably a tornado in 1456.[62] Giovanni's account of the event is perhaps the longest available. He lists meticulously all the damage that the tornado caused. What is striking in his report is that most of the persons who died were peasants, and it was mostly their properties that were damaged.[63]

As a whole, what made poverty so dramatic in late medieval Florence and also elsewhere in Europe was the hopeless situation of the poor against the power of nature, and the caprices of domestic economy. The occupational groups which were affected most by these problems were peasants and manual workers. Poverty was judged negatively in fifteenth-century Florence because of their obviously perilous living conditions, and the stereotypes (envy, greed) about the poor that were transmitted through sayings of ancient authors.

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59 G. Cherubini, *Le campagne toscane alla fine del Medioevo* (Pistoia, 1982), p. 6.

60 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 66vA [seg.40.4.5].

61 San Bernardo da Siena, *Sermo XLVI*, 52.

62 'Runina e Tempesta mai simile veduta' as Giovanni di Francesco says in his *ricordanze*, which contains also a longer account of the event. ASF, CS, 16 BIS, f. 23r. See also the BNCF, MS II. IV. 128, ff. 96r - 99r.

63 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 78 - 80.

4.2. Evaluation and measurement of wealth

To describe wealth, Giovanni used two labels, *ricco* and *ricchissimo*. What might have been the perceived differences between them? How was wealth measured and judged?

The usage of the two labels can help to answer this question. Giovanni characterises the wealth of four persons by means of *ricchissimo*: his father-in-law, Palla Strozzi, Cosimo de' Medici (and his ancestors), Andrea Rucellai, and Naddo di Giunta Rucellai. There is no evidence for the wealth of Giovanni's two ancestors; but we know that members of the Strozzi and the Medici families paid 2.6% and 1.9% respectively of the total taxable capital of Florence in 1427. Palla's family was by far the richest in 1427, and the Medici were the third richest after the Bardi.[64] What is even more telling for an understanding of Giovanni's distinction between *ricco* and *ricchissimo* is that in 1427 Palla's net capital was 101,422 florins whereas the net capital of the 89% of his 'rich' fellow-citizens from the Santa Maria Novella quarter was under 10,000 florins. These statistics and rankings were however not available to contemporaries. So what alternative rating scale did they apply to measure wealth, and to distinguish different groups of the rich?

To identify the scale that Giovanni adopted, we need to consider the various reference systems in which *ricchissimo,* the top of the rating scale, appears to be the highest point. Consider the following four assertions by Giovanni:

1. Palla is the richest man in the entire Christian world.(R3)[65]
2. Cosimo is the richest in the Italian peninsula. (R2)
3. Cosimo is the richest in Florence. (R1)
4. Cosimo is the richest among all Christians. (R3)[66]

In these assertions, Giovanni used three reference systems: the Christian world (R3), the Italian peninsula (R2), and Florence (R1). The use of these three reference systems to

64 Herlihy, Klapisch-Zuber, *Tuscans and their families,* p. 100.

65 "Io ebbi solo una donna figluola di messere palla di nofri degli strozzi per nome Jacopa et nel tempo che io la tolsi che fu del mese di maggio nel 1428 decto messere palla era il piu potente et maggiore cittadino della terra nostra et il piu richo era opinione che tutto il cristianesimo non avessi cittadino più richo di lui." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 5vB [seg.1.21.146], see also, 75vB [seg.51.45.4].

66 "Il quale chosimo e suo figluoli erano cittadini molto potenti e di grandissima grazia ofagiuntoe di fama e riputazione chosi dentro come di fuori el fra grandissima e della nostra citta e ghoverno d'essa disponevano come sendone signori a bachatta la richezza loro era smisuarato molto maggiore sanza conperazione che quella di messer palla e le muragle loro ne fanno dimostrazione che basterebbono a uno re di chorone tiensi questo oppenione che mai in alchuna citta del christianesimo per uno cittadino piuto fu mai il maggiore ne dal tempo di Romani in qua non se ne trovo mai alchuno di tanto richezza ne di tante buone condizioni." Ibidem, f. 5vB [seg. 1.23.111], f. 62rA [seg.30.7.78], f. 75vA [seg.51.48.4].

measure wealth projects three points on the rating scale of material wealth, each denoting different group of the rich. R1 indicates a fortune, which is significant in Florence but not necessarily considerable when compared to wealth in the entire Italian peninsula or in the Christian world. R2 describes a group of the wealth whose assets can be considered among the greatest in the Italian peninsula. Finally, R3 indicates a wealth that is among the largest in the entire Christian world. In fact, Giovanni was not the only one to differentiate different groups of the wealthy. In his chronicle, Benedetto Dei (1418–1492) also distinguished two groups of *ricchi*. He lists 82 families under the category of *maggiori ricchi.*[67] Clearly, this group did not cover the entire Florentine group of wealthy, as in another part of his chronicle Dei declared that there were 365 lineages (*casate*) in Florence.[68]

The use of these three perspective systems, on the one hand, suggests that the focal point of Giovanni's rating of wealth was whether an individual was involved in international trade or not, and to what extent. This must have been a key criterion to distinguish sub-groups of the *ricco.* On the other, it indicates the extreme differences that characterised that group. One of Giovanni's notes clarifies how contemporaries saw these differences. In 1474 Giovanni suffered a notable failure because his business partner, Ridolfo Paghanelli, swindled him, causing a loss of 20 000 florins. After this, he wrote in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* that 'from rich I became poor.'[69] Obviously, he was not in effect poor after this loss;[70] but he did not belong to the group of *ricchissimi* anymore. However, the difference between *ricco* and *ricchissimo* could have been so large that the former seemed to be poor in comparison to the latter.

The fact that he used wealth for social recognition indicates its weight in his value system. To make the point that this elevation of wealth is far from the thought of contemporary Christian moralists, we might consult the advice of the famous fifteenth-century archbishop of Florence, Saint Antoninus or Antonino Pierozzi (1389 - 1459), according to whom God does not distribute temporal goods as a recognition of personal merit. Those who believe that

67 B., Dei, *La cronica dall'anno 1400 all'anno 1500,* ed. R. Barducci (Florence, 1985), pp. 85 - 86.

68 Ibidem, p. 81.

69 Rucellai, '*Zibaldone Quaresimale*', p. 122.

70 After this loss, Giovanni was helped out by his Medici *parentado*; Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici bought some of his lands, one of them in Poggio a Caiano, where a little later Lorenzo built one of his most spectacular villas. Kent, 'The making of a Renaissance patron of the arts', p. 6.

when they have more goods, the better they are, therefore commit the sin of pride.[71] Similarly, wealth cannot be the source of happiness, since the love of temporal goods leads to the sin of avarice.[72] Using wealth as the measurement of greatness and excellence, and regarding it as source of happiness, as Giovanni did, were highly reprehensible.

4.3. Measuring reputation

Giovanni did not evaluate reputation explicitly. However, he did use reputation in a similar way to wealth as a measure of social recognition. This suggests that it had a positive value for him.

Florentines often added a spatial attribute to the reputation of a person. By speaking about the *fama* of Palla and Cosimo, Giovanni emphasised that they gained an excellent reputation (*fama*) outside and inside (*dentro come di fuori)* Florence. In his *memoriale,* Francesco di Giovanni Baldovinetti also used this expression to describe the reputation of his ancestors.[73] By contrast, Giovanni limited the spatial dimension of his ancestor Messer Bencivenni's *fama* to the city of Florence alone.[74] So what did *dentro come di fuori* mean in the context of *fama*?

Reputation is made up by a set of information that the members of a community have about a person, institution, company, etc. If the reputation of members of a community is defined by reference to a spatial expression such as *dentro come di fuori,* we can speak about the operational space of reputation. Giovanni thus defined two operational spaces for reputation. Florence and the world beyond the walls of Florence. The two operational spaces functioned

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71 Antonius of Florence, 'Confessionale', in *Libretto della dottrina cristiana* (Rome, 1485) f. B 5v. This passage might show Antonino as a churchman who was hostile to the new ideas that were taking shape in Renaissance Florence. However, the place of Antonino in the Florentine Renaissance has been subject of scholarly debates. Peter Howard has argued that through his preaches Antonino significantly contributed to the cultural and artistic flourishing of fifteenth-century Florence. By contrast, Ulrich G. Leinsle has pointed out that Antonino's thought was deeply doctrinal. For instance, in his *Summa theologica moralis,* by rewriting the words of St. Thomas, he disapproved scientific investigation that tried to go beyond the limits of human thought. Leonardo Cappelletti has revealed Antonino's critical attitude toward humanism. P. Howard, *Creating magnificence in Renaissance Florence* (Toronto, 2012). The following works were all published in *Antonino Pierozzi OP (1389-1459): la figura e l'opera di un santo arcivescovo nell'Europa del Quattrocento : atti del Convegno internazionale di studi storici (Firenze, 25-28 novembre 2009)*, ed. L. Cinelli and M. P. Paoli (Florence, 2012). P. Howard, 'Antonino e la predicazione nella Firenze rinascimentale', pp. 340; U. G. Leinsle 'Arti e scienze nella Somma teologica di sant'Antonio', p. 367 and p. 380; L. Cappelletti, 'La noetica di Antonino Pierozzi', p. 293.

72 Ibidem, f. H 3r.

73 BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, ff. 6v, ff. 7r - 7v.

74 "Messer bencivenni di nardo e vogliamo dire cenni di nardo innanzi che si facesse cavalieri fu potentissimo cittadino et di grande seguito et grande riputatione nella nostra citta et ebbe grandissima gratia maximamente da mercatanti." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 3vA [seg.1.14.25].

as mental clues to classify the *fama* of a person. In other words, Giovanni and his contemporaries distinguished two types of reputation, one that went beyond the walls of Florence, and another that was limited to the city.

This classification system is similar to the one we have found in terms of wealth. The three groups of *ricco* distinguished with the help of three reference systems can be in fact divided into two subgroups: those whose activity was limited to the city, and those who were active outside the city. For this latter group, establishing an international reputation was not only a question of prestige but also a necessity. A key challenge of the international merchant activity was that companies and banks needed much larger investments than they could obtain within the walls of their hometown: Florentine companies and merchants accepted deposits from Italian and European feudal lords, ecclesiastics and rulers as well as from Florentines.[75]

4.4. Evaluation of beauty

Beauty was another key constituent of positive judgement.[76] Apart from the obvious aesthetic value of physical attractiveness, what beliefs determined this 'cult of beauty'? And how can we explain the lack of references to the beauty of women?

European culture had a long tradition of assuming a strong tie between internal qualities and physical appearance, or between body and soul; one that goes back to Aristotle's *De Anima*.[77] Cassiodorus, for instance, held that the appearance is the mirror of one's soul and gave a long description of how to recognise a good man from his countenance, walking and so on.[78] In the fifteenth century, Marsilio Ficino gave a new impetus to this belief. Through his extended network of correspondence and teaching, he influenced the mind-set of many Florentines regarding the perception of body, beauty and health. In a letter, most probably sent to Cosimo

75 P. Spufford, *Power and profit : the merchant in medieval Europe* (New York, 2002), p. 22.

76 See the evidences quoted earlier in this Chapter in Section 2.

77 *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. C. B. Schmitt *et al.* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 467.

78 Cassiodorus, 'On the Soul', in Cassiodorus, *Insitutions of Divine and Secular Learning and On the Soul*, trans. J W. Halporn (Liverpool, 2004), pp. 271 - 273.

de' Medici and Bernardo Bembo, Ficino argued that each aspect of the human body reflected an aspect of the mind.

> The form of the body, as best it can, represents the form of the soul; thus liveliness and acuteness of perception in the body represents, in a measure, the wisdom, and fair sightedness of the mind; strength of body represents strength of mind; health of body, which is determined by the proportions of the body and a becoming complexion, shows us the harmony and splendour of justice; also, size shows us liberality and nobility.[79]

In the same letter, Ficino drew the conclusion that beauty conveyed an internal splendour, whereas a deformity of the human body indicated vice. As Chastel has noted, beauty was not only a privileged value for Neo-Platonists, it was also associated with moral values.[80] For Ficino, and most probably for other Florentines too, physical beauty implied outstanding moral qualities.[81] An inscription on the reverse of Leonardo's portrait of Ginevra de' Benci (today in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC) summarised this belief: 'VIRTUTEM FORMA DECORAT'. The physical appearance of a person was thus believed to express his or her internal qualities. The beauty represented in portraits, which will be analysed in the next section, and in written depictions of ancestors and fellow citizens, was most probably meant to communicate the possession of moral excellence.

Even though the phrase *virtutem forma decorat* is here inscribed on the reverse of a female portrait, written sources suggest that such reasoning was valid only in case of male beauty. The evaluation of female beauty was in fact debatable; there is a contradiction between the appearance of female beauty in material and visual culture and the way female beauty is described in written sources. Surviving portraits give evidence of the importance of female beauty. Women were depicted in a highly idealised way, of course, with a beautiful and healthy body.[82] By contrast, written sources emphasise female modesty and the potential danger of female beauty, which is a contrast between social norms and prescriptive expectations. For instance, Vespasiano da Bisticci, who, as we have seen earlier, often referred to the beauty of the famous men of his time, gave advice to Caterina de' Portinari,

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79 M. Ficino, *Letters Book*, Vol. IV (London, 1975), pp. 66 - 67. Quoted in D. Hemsoll, 'Beauty as an aesthetic and artistic ideal in late fifteenth-century Florence', in *Concepts of beauty in Renaissance Art*, ed. F. Ames-Lewis and M. R. Rogers (London, 1998), p. 71.

80 A. Chastel, *Art et humanisme a Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique* (Paris, 1959), p. 279.

81 See some features of the contemporary conception of beauty later in this chapter.

82 See a wide range of examples in *Gesichter der Renaissance: Meisterwerke italienischer Portrait-Kunst*, ed. K. Christiansen and P. L. Rubin (Munich, 2011).

the widow of Agnolo Pandolfini, on how a woman should behave. According to Bisticci, a modest woman should avoid vanity, fine clothes, or any ornaments of the body, adding that Caterina should ornament her body or face not with cosmetics but with modesty and honour.[83] The didactic work entitled *Avvertimento di maritaggio* warned the reader that the richness and the beauty of an evil woman is great madness (*gran follia*) and moral corruption.[84] As Catherine King has also noted, there is a contradiction between the image of the ideal women that one can see in manuals of conduct and treatises, and their real-life activity.[85] While male beauty was evaluated as a positive value, therefore, female beauty was considered to be a potential danger, which, unlike male beauty, might also be the sign of moral corruption.

These negative beliefs associated with female beauty can be understood only in the light of chastity, the most important female virtue of the medieval world. Sexual relationships outside marriage were equally sinful, according to Christian morality, for men and women. But for women they had another consequence, one that determined her and her family's future life. Loss of chastity meant that a woman could not marry, for she could no longer guarantee the purity of her future husband's line; in other words, she was excluded from the marriage market; she might even have difficulties entering a convent.[86] In a society where families were related through marriage alliances, this was a notable loss. Beauty did not count too highly in marriage negotiations, therefore, but it posed a serious risk in the view of fathers and husbands who had the responsibility of guarding the chastity of their daughters and wives. This risk shaped not only the negative beliefs attached to female beauty, but also determined the age of female marriage. Florentine fathers sought to marry off their daughters as young as possible, typically between the age of 13 and 20.[87] By contrast, men got married at 30.[88] A fifteenth-century horoscope reveals the expected conduct of a beautiful woman, and the difficulty she had to face.

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83 'Esortazione di Vespasiano alla Caterina de' Portinari, donna d'Agnelo Pandolfini', in *Miscellanea nuziale Rossi-Teiss*, ed. C. Merkel (Bergamo, 1897), pp. 221 - 222.

84 'La ricchezza e la bellezza della ria femina è gran follia e grande magagna.' *Ammaestramento a chi avesse a tor moglie* (Lucca, 1859), pp. 7 - 8. It is not known where, when and by whom this work was written. The editor refers to BNCF, MS Magl. XXXV. 113 as the source of his edition.

85 C. King, *Renaissance women patrons : wives and widows in Italy c. 1300-c. 1550* (Manchester, 1998), p. 20.

86 M. L. King, *Women of the Renaissance* (Chicago, 1991), p. 29.

87 A. Molho, *Marriage alliance in late medieval Florence* (Cambridge, Mass, 1994), p. 139.

88 C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'State and Family in a Renaissance Society, The Florentine Catasto of 1427 - 30', in C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985), p. 19.

> The woman who is born in the given month (May) will be quite beautiful, and she will be desired by a lot of people, but with the constancy of her soul, she will refuse all acquaintances.[89]

Giovanni speaks about female beauty only once in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, and then in the context of chastity. He tells a story about Hippocrates, whose chastity and continence were tempted in vain by a beautiful woman.[90] Female beauty was seen as posing a potential risk for male chastity, and thus for the reputation of the family.

But Giovanni's silence becomes clear only through another aspect of the relationship between men and women. The appearance, the body and the clothing of wife and daughters were the subject of their husband's or father's control.[91] The humanist Donato Acciaiuoli (1429-1478), by rewriting the well-known *Lettera a Raimondo*,[92] gave advice to Giovanni about household management, including several points that treat the question of clothing, and indicating that this was controlled by the husband.[93] Boccaccio's story of Griselda (*Decameron*, X, 10) also illustrates how the husband controlled the physical appearance of his wife. This final story in the *Decameron* tells of the strange marriage of the peasant girl Griselda and the rich Marquis Gualtieri. The capricious husband decides to test the patience of the silent Griselda, who is forced to exchange her dress several times in the novel. In the nuptial rite the dressing of the bride was a rite of passage by means of which the husband introduced the wife into his kin group, and demonstrated his right over her.[94] Griselda's forced transformation symbolises his husband's control of her physical appearance. How was this situation viewed by women themselves?

In the corpus of Florentine *zibaldoni* that I have examined, there is one manuscript that can give an answer. BNCF, MS II.II. 89 is a fifteenth-century devotional anthology commissioned

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89 Riccardiana, MS 1258, f. 90v.

90 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 97r [seg.63.97.4].

91 King, *Renaissance women patrons,* p. 23.

92 The *Lettera a Raimondo* was certainly the most popular text on domestic economy in late medieval Italy; numerous manuscripts (for instance, BNCF, MS Magl., VIII, 1282, 14r-15v, BNCF, MS Pal., 359, 94v-95v, Marucelliana, MS C 242, 135v-139v) contain a variant of this text. After the birth of printing it was published many times. A modern but not critical edition with a short introduction is in *Prosatori minori del Trecento I., Scrittori di religione*, ed. Don Giuseppe de Luca (Milan, 1954), pp. 817 - 824.

93 "La vesta troppo bella presto viene a noia a vicini."AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, 93v [seg.63.1.560].

94 C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Griselda Complex: Dowry and Marriage Gifts in the Quattrocento', in *C. Klapisch-Zuber, Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985), p. 225.

by Mona Ghostina for her and her daughters' consolation.[95] It contains a section entitled *I dodici amaestramenti che lla savia donna diede alla figluola sua,* in which Mona Ghostina warned her daughters that if the husband should see his wife more adorned than he likes, he might become suspicious.[96] Through this text Mona Ghostina encouraged her daughters to accept the control of their husband and to be obedient.

On the whole, then, there was an essential difference between the evaluation of female and male beauty. While male beauty was a public value, female beauty and the physical appearance of women was subject to male control, and belonged firmly within the private sphere. The judgement of female beauty in written sources was thus close to the Christian ethic, which condemned vanity and immortality. By contrast, vanity did not count in the more positive evaluation of male beauty.

However, the focus on *bello/bella* can be misleading, if female beauty was communicated with different terms. As the following examples suggest, there was no significant difference in the way male and female beauty were communicated in written sources in the vernacular. In the fourteenth-century *ricordanze* of Donato Velluti, there are several descriptions of women. To convey the beauty of his female ancestors, Donato used a similar vocabulary as with his male ancestors. His standard term to express male and female beauty was in fact *bello/bella.*[97] Another, real-life, example is Bernardo Machiavelli's remark on the wife of his relative, Nicolo d'Alessandro Machiavelli. One day, Bernardo's wife discovered that one of their young servants was pregnant. The servant said that the father was Nicolo, with whom she had had a liaison earlier. Bernardo did not want to believe this, since, in his words, Nicolo had a young and beautiful wife ('donna giovane e bella').[98] In her letters, Alessandra Strozzi also used the adjective *bello* to characterise both women and men.[99] These examples suggest that there was no fundamental difference in the vocabulary used to express male and female beauty.

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95 'Questo libro a ffatto scrivere Mona Ghostantia donna fu di Benedetto Cicciaporci, el quale alibro a ffatto fare per consolatione dell'anima sua secondariamente a chonsolazione delle sue figluole.' BNCF, II.II. 89. f. 144r.

96 'Dichoti ch ttu ti ingengni di mantenere la tua persona frescha e bella adorna e netta che sia honesta sanza alchuno caso disonesto o brutto adornamento inpero che quando il tuo marito ti vedessi disonestamente ornare olra al suo piacere legiermente ti potrebbe avere in odor e sospettare.' Ibidem, f. 21r.

97 *La cronica domestica di Messer Donato Velluti*, p. 48., p. 72., p. 84., p. 97.

98 Machiavelli, *Libro di ricordi*, pp. 80 - 81.

99 A. Strozzi, *Lettere di una gentildonna fiorentina del secolo 15 ai figliuoli esuli,* ed. Cesare Guasti (Florence, 1877), p. 386. p. 446. p. 562.

4.5. Summary

The value of the four social qualities – poverty, wealth, fame, beauty – assessed by Giovanni was significantly different to that assigned to them by Christian tradition. Wealth became a positive quality, and involuntary poverty was perceived as a morally and materially negative state. Similarly, male beauty and fame were positive qualities. At the same time, however, when judging female beauty and involuntary poverty, Giovanni and his contemporaries continued to apply Christian tradition. How did Giovanni and his contemporaries resolve this apparent contradiction? How could two different ethical systems co-exist next to each other?

Our study of typologies has provided the answer. As we have seen, Giovanni distinguished two different types of poverty, voluntary and involuntary poverty, and could thus apply two different ethical systems to judge variations of poverty. By the same token, a different ethical system was applied to evaluate male and female beauty. Accordingly, the two ethical systems were not in fact contradictory; rather, they complemented each other.

5. The function of properties

Wealth, a good reputation, and beauty remain important qualities in the modern world. But why did Giovanni and his contemporaries use them to describe themselves, their ancestors and other actors of their social world? What were their functions in fifteenth-century Florence? What desires and reasons drove people to achieve them?

5.1. Community and afterlife functions of wealth

Wealth of course made possible a higher living standard. What this meant in practice in the fifteenth century will be discussed later in Chapter Seven.[100] Beyond that, however, private wealth had a specific community function, as a result of which it became a key constituent

100 See Chapter VII. Section 6.2.

not only of social judgement but also of social recognition. This community function of wealth can be approached through an important example of the self-identity of Florence. Giovanni inserted Goro Dati's *Istoria Fiorentina* (1409) into the *Zibaldone* (though without naming the author), a long paragraph of which is dedicated to explaining why Florentines were more prosperous than their neighbours. The passage depicts an idealised image of the city as a community of rich and generous people. By comparing Florence to other Italian states, Dati concludes that the distinctive feature of the city is the practice of *misericordia* and the love of the poor.

> Se gente sono al Mondo dove queste virtù sieno sono i Fiorentini perchè intra loro si trovano 1'opere della misericordia e l'amore del prossìmo e de poveri e la giustizia e l'onore delle Chiese di Dio più che in ciascun altre nazioni.[101]

Other passages in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* similarly describe Florence as a place where charity has an extraordinary importance. On f. 67v, Giovanni underlies that there is no city in the world that has so many hospitals, and on f. 78v he uses the wealth of Florentine hospitals and churches to demonstrate the superiority of the city. In fact, in the medieval West, Florence had by far the highest number of charitable institutions such as hospitals and confraternities, including the first foundling hospital, the *Ospedale degli Innocenti*. Both the high standard of care in the Florentine hospitals, and their architectural beauty, were exceptional in late medieval Europe.[102] As John Henderson's research has revealed, 'all the major new institutions for the sick poor, widows and orphans dating from between the Black Death and 1450 were funded by single bequests of affluent individuals.'[103] Private charity, an essential element of the city's self-identity, presupposed private wealth and ascribed a communal function to it.

The community function of private wealth can be clearly seen in *De Avaritia* (1428/1429) by Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459). One of the protagonists of Poggio's dialogue, Antonio Loschi, argues that the desire for accumulation (i.e. the desire to become rich) is, in fact, part of human nature, and the motor of human civilisation and progress. If the desire for accumulation were not common, there would be no generosity or *misericordia*, and the city

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101 If there are people in the world among whom these virtues do exist, they are the Florentines; because for them works of misericordia, the love of fellows, the poor, and justice, as well as the honour of the Church of God, are more important than for any other nation. AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 187v [seg.72.100.473]. G. Dati, Istoria di Firenze (Florence, 1735).

102 J. Henderson, *The Renaissance Hospital, Healing the body and healing the soul* (New Haven:, 2006), p. 36.

103 Ibidem, pp. 88 - 89.

would be less beautiful. In his view, therefore, wealth is necessary for the city and for civic life.[104] This community function of private wealth had a significant role in the transformation of the contemporary value system. This may seem to be a contradiction: *misericordia* is a Christian term used to refer to the obligation to help the poor. But here the Christian understanding is used to justify what might otherwise be judged a sinful desire to accumulate goods. I shall elaborate later on this contradiction.

The afterlife function of wealth and fame seems equally contradictory. Giovanni copied into his text the testament of one of his ancestors, Ugholino di Nardo di Giunta Rucellai, who, as did many of his contemporaries, left his wealth to a hospital for the salvation of his own and his brother's souls, ordering that beds should be bought for the poor.[105] This type of charitable activity was of course only affordable for the more affluent members of the community. But there was a further, more profane, aspect of the fifteenth-century Florentine strategy for the afterlife, one that was available only to very wealthy citizens. Such men wanted to secure a continuing presence on Earth even after their death. No one described how to fulfil this desire better than Petrarch and Boccaccio:

> Vidi da l'altra parte giugner quella (fama) che trae l'uom del sepolcro e 'n vita il serba.[106]

> Che la vita nostra, che altro che brieve esser non puo nel mortal corpo, si perpetuerà nella laudevole fama.[107]

To what extent do these words express Giovanni's ideas as well? As both the frieze of the Santa Maria Novella (begun c. 1458), which today carries his name, and his words in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* make clear, one of the goals of his patronage of art was to keep his memory and fame alive.[108] Wealth and reputation thus enabled contemporaries to achieve two desired goals: not just the salvation of their souls, but also an ongoing earthly presence after their death.

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104 P. Bracciolini, *Dialogus contra avaritiam*, pp. 113 - 118. As the compiler of another fifteenth-century zibaldone has put, 'misericordioso cittadino e consolatione della citta.' BNCF, MS Palatino, 600, f. 116v.

105 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 69v [seg.49.2.108].

106 F. Petrarca, *Trionfi*, ed. by G. Bezzola (Milan, 1957), p. 38.

107 G. Boccaccio, *Decameron*, ed. V. Branca (Milan, 1986), p. 802.

108 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 121.

5.2. Agency-related and juridical functions of reputation

Reputation had agency-related functions whose purpose becomes clearer in the light of some characteristics of Florentine economic life. From the end of the thirteenth century, *compagnie* or partnerships became the dominant form of economic activity. While in the early fourteenth century, Florentine *compagnie* such as the Bardi and the Peruzzi operated over a lengthy time span, this changed after the crisis of the 1340s. In the fifteenth century, partnerships lasted for a relatively short period and involved only a small number of partners.[109] To understand why *fama* was a salient property for Giovanni and others, it is important to underline the non-static nature of these partnerships, which had implications for the entire economy. The continual birth and dissolution of partnerships made economic life extremely dynamic, and compelled the protagonists to communicate their trustworthiness continuously by maintaining an excellent reputation, and to control the trustworthiness of others through their reputation. Furthermore, as was pointed out earlier, partnerships often accepted investments from external depositors, which motivated entrepreneurs to enhance their own reputation. This dynamic Florentine economic life had another peculiarity, too, which further increased the significance of *fama* and trustworthiness. Although partnerships were bound together by joint operations, contracts and overlapping ownerships, these complex networks in fact lacked any formal structure that might have provided them with an institutional cohesion.[110] What held together and coordinated this expanding network? What helped to manage the risk that players had to face in their everyday activity? The answer to these questions is again trustworthiness, conveyed through reputation.

Is the practice of relating trustworthiness, reputation and economic activity a modern process, or did contemporaries in the fifteenth century already associate them? Giovanni certainly considered trustworthiness a key element of economic activity.[111] He related reputation and trustworthiness by suggesting to his sons that they should keep themselves informed about the trustworthiness of other merchants. He defined the act of gathering information about the

109 Goldthwaite, *The economy of Renaissance Florence*, pp. 64 - 70.

110 By the fifteenth century guilds had lost their original functions, and merchants could be member of guilds such as the Cambio, the Calimala, and the Por Santa Maria; paradoxically, however, any merchant who wanted to pursue business activity outside Florence did not have to be member of a guild. Essentially, the court of Mercanzia regulated economic activity. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, pp. 108 - 114.

111 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 6, p. 19.

trustworthiness of other merchants as a means to reduce risk.[112] Nothing highlights the significance of trustworthiness better than the fact that in several contexts of the *Zibaldone*, Giovanni used it as constituent of his self-identity, claiming that due to his numerous partnerships he had earned an excellent *fede* and *credito.*[113]

Giovanni's text documents how reputation shaped decisions related to economic and public activity. Several passages of the manuscript demonstrate that *fama* was used by agents as a reference point in decisions and dilemmas. When speaking for instance about the question whether office-holding is beneficial or not, Giovanni ponders the different outcomes of the dilemma in terms of how they contribute to *fama*.[114] He further suggests that each step in business activity should be judged in terms of its consequences for *fama.*[115] In another part of the manuscript he claimed that for artisans a good reputation was much more important than wealth.[116] Paolo da Certaldo made the same point: it is better to have a good reputation than to be rich.[117] By visualising the possible outcomes of the dilemma concerning material wealth and *fama*, figure 3 reveals how *fama* shaped economic behaviour.

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112 "Molti danni di falliti si riceve per non domandare et non investighare et non provedere, et però, figluoli miei, abiate del domandatore et non vi curate perciò essere tenuti inportuni. Domandate spesso in mercato de' vostri pari mercatanti et altri giovani et sensali chi v'è che ssie spesso pigliatore o datore di denari o chi comperi a denari contanti o termine et chi è di buono governo et chi il contradio. Ancora, quando de giovani mercatanti tornano di fuori, chi da Vinegia, chi da Roma, chi da Ginevra, chi da Bruggia fatevi loro incontro con fare loro motto, rallegrandovi della tornata loro, et domandategli di novelle, et infine tirategli da parte, quando fussino in conpagnia d'altri. Esaminategli molto bene delle cose del paese, et quanti mercatanti fiorentini cioè compagnie vi sono, et chi sono e' più creduti, et discorrendo i meno creduti, et chi fa più facciende, et chi è a go verno della tale ragione' et chi della tale, et chi e tenuto il più valente, et chi v'è ch'abi fatto bene o abbi avute perdite in mare o in terra o in falliti o in sicurtà le facessono et in quello si travaglia ciaschuno o di mercantie o di cambi, et di che ragione mercantie." Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 6.

113 "Fu molto chommendato el decto G. Rucellai nell'avere saputo nel suo decretio aquistare di guadagnare richezze, credito et fede et molto piu fu chomendato nel sapere di spendere per dalla sua richezze e nelle chose narrato di sopra Si dice volgarmente ch'egli é fatica a sapere bene spendere che e non é minor virtu il saper conservare sapere che guadagnarsi". AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 3r B [seg.1.10.19], f. 66r A [seg.39.1.77]; Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 117, p. 120.

114 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 39-43.

115 Ibidem, p. 8.

116 Ibidem, p. 5.

117 ``Meglio e l'uomo avere buona fama in questo mondo che aver un gran tesoro.' Certaldo, *Il libro di buoni costumi,* p. 13. Quoted by T. Kuehn, 'Fama as a Legal Status in Renaissance Florence', in *Fama*, *The politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* ed. by Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail (Ithaca, 2003), p. 32.

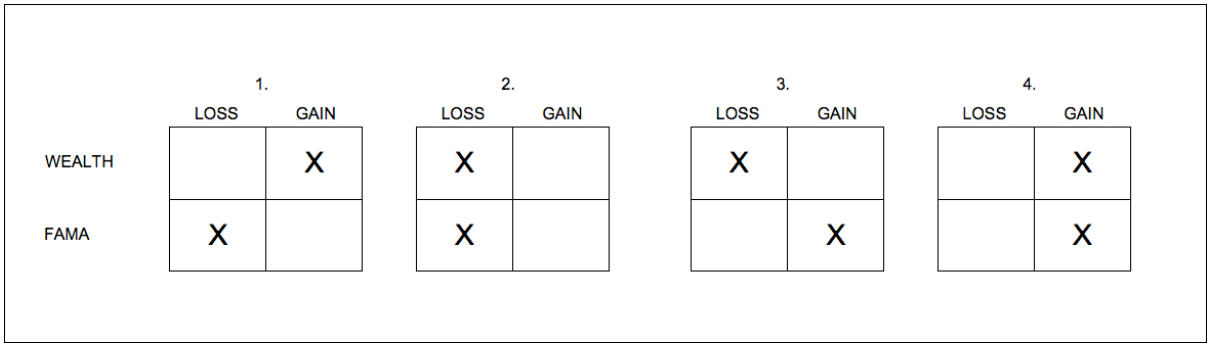


Figure 3: The relationship of *fama* to decisions in economic activity.

1. A gain in terms of material wealth and a loss in terms of *fama*. As both Giovanni and Paolo da Certaldo made clear, this outcome was undesirable.
2. A loss in terms of both wealth and fama. Obviously undesirable.
3. A loss in terms of material wealth and a gain in terms of *fama*. As we have seen, the loss of money was associated with shame, so this outcome was also most probably undesirable.
4. A gain in terms of both wealth and *fama*: the only option seen as wholly desirable.

The fact that for Giovanni and Paolo da Certaldo only the fourth scenario was likely to be acceptable makes it evident that the ideal economic behaviour was not driven solely by the value of the highest expected financial outcome, but by the relationship of the possible outcome to an external reference point, fama. As the prospect theory of Tversky and Kahneman has claimed, what is important in a decision is whether a possible outcome is a gain or loss from a specific reference point.[118] This can be the status quo or another target of the decision maker. For Giovanni, the status quo was maintaining his own fama, and his objective was to increase it. In a similar fashion, fama functioned as a reference point in the perception of individuals. Giovanni advised his sons to collect up-to-date information about other merchants,[119] for, as Giovanni Morelli put, one should do business only with those who had a good reputation.[120] In short, in fifteenth century Florence "knowing each other was a skill necessary for survival as well as prosperity."[121]

118 D. Kahneman and A. Tversky, 'Prospect theory: An analysis of decision under risk', Econometrica 47 (1979), pp. 263 - 291.

119 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 6.

120 'Fa le tue faccende con persone fidate e che abbino buona fama e sieno creduti.' (Progetto Biblioteca Italiana, Università degli Studi di Roma "La Sapienza") (http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/xtf/view?docId=bibit000286/bibit000286.xml&chunk.id=d3685e122&toc.dept h=1&toc.id=&brand=default, accessed, 13 October, 2011). Published in G. Morelli, 'Ricordi', in Mercanti scrittori: ricordi nella Firenze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento, ed. V. Branca (Florence, 1986).

121 P. L. Rubin, *Images and identity in fifteenth-century Florence* (New Haven, 2007), p. 5.

We should not forget the juridical aspects of reputation, though Giovanni did not speak about this explicitly. In everyday life, *fama* was a body of information about a person; and in the courtroom it described that person's legal status. As Thomas Kuehn has put it, 'just as freedom, legitimacy, or adulthood permitted certain rights and actions, so did *fama*.'[122] Although social *fama* was not directly linked to legal *fama*, in practice it did play an important role in the courtroom. Social *fama* could construct a presumption of guilt or help in disputes. Giovanni was perhaps thinking about this latter function of *fama* when he stated that it can help one to defend oneself from one's enemies.[123] But the main difference between juridical *fama* and the *fama* of the street was that the former was constructed by jurists, whereas the latter was determined by the acts of an individual and his social background and self-representation together.

5.3. Social functions of male beauty

A *novellla* by Franco Sacchetti (c.1330-c.1400) illustrates in an indirect way the significance of physical appearance. The 74th novel of the *Trecentonovelle* tells the story of a particularly ugly notary with yellowish skin, who was sent as an ambassador to Bernabo Visconti (1323-1385). In the words of Sacchetti, the Milanese ruler 'received the ambassador as he deserved'; because of his short stature and ugliness, he was cruelly mocked. The conclusion that Sacchetti draws from the story is that ambassadors should be wise, careful and of good appearance, otherwise they undermine the honour of those who send them.[124]

The concept of male beauty was connected to public performance. The life of the Florentine elite involved numerous activities, such as public speeches, representing the Commune as ambassadors, or negotiating in disputes, where one had to impress other people or gain the favour of other citizens. Graph 1 demonstrates how important *avere grazia* and *avere benevolenza,* i.e. to be popular and loved, were. How could one achieve this? Ficino, in the

122 Kuehn, 'Fama as a Legal Status in Renaissance Florence', p. 27.

123 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 9.

124 'Vogliono essere attempati e savi, e apparenti altrimenti chi gli manda n'ha poco onore, e vie meno eglino che sono mandati.' F. Sacchetti, *Il Trecentonovelle*, ed. E. Faccioli (Turin, 1970), p. 191.

letter quoted earlier, claimed that the possession of physical beauty could secure the admiration of others. Giovanni ascribed the adjective 'beautiful' to the orator (*bello dicitore*) when speaking about the qualities that one who aimed to make public speeches had to have.[125] The Florentine conception of male beauty must therefore be understood as charisma, compelling presence and solemnity.

5.4. Summary

Reputation, wealth, and beauty were all related to agency. They assisted in establishing a person's status. They shaped decisions and strategies, and they helped to achieve desired goals which were in the interest of the community and of the agents as well. Their community-related functions were what assured their positive evaluation and significance in social recognition and judgement. To be a successful and acknowledged member of the community, one needed to possess these qualities. At the same time, their connections to agency have not yet been fully explored, for in the corpus of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* we can observe several key actions ascribed to *povero* and *ricco,* which will be the subject of the next section.

6. Actions and states ascribed to *povero* and *ricco*

Possessing a certain quality implies actions, states, and additional attributes. For instance, in modern English usage, if a person is generous (A), he or she is likely 'to give money, help, kindness etc. especially more than is usual or expected'(B).[126] According to first-order logic, the logical relationship between A and B is 'if A then B.' In other words, B can be inferred

125 "Ancora si dice che uno bello dicitore vuole avere cinque parte cio: Grande memori, Audaci, Ordine, Pronunti, Gesti." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 33vB [seg.15.1.7].

126 Definition copied from the Cambridge Dictionaries Online (http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/generous_1?q=generous, accessed 6. August, 2013).

from A. The logical chain between A and B is of course culturally specific, and it must be, on the one hand, shaped by the social reality, while on the other, it must reflect the qualities and actions expected from the person possessing B.

Giovanni's *Zibaldone* contains data about the qualities and actions ascribed to *povero* and *ricco*. How were these qualities embodied in contemporary social reality? How did they contribute to the negative value of *povero* and the positive value of *ricco?* Ultimately, the answers to these questions will reveal information about how Giovanni saw the relationship between these social groups.

6.1. Dare and domandare

In many passages of the *Zibaldone,* asking (*domandare*) is an activity ascribed to the poor.[127] By contrast, the activity associated with *ricco* is giving (*dare*).[128] The *Zibaldone* does not say much about what the poor asked for, and what the rich gave. Given this lack of specific detail about the object of *dare* and *domandare,* we must look to previous scholarship to provide us with information about what *dare* and *domandare* might have meant in the context of the relationship between *povero* and *ricco.*

What marked that relationship in the Florentine *contado* was the sharecropping (*mezzadria*) system. Landlords provided peasants with land, who in exchange gave back half of the crop to the landlords. Even though most of those who lived from the *mezzadria* probably had a better living standard than independent peasants, the system locked the renter into a subordinate position. One of the reasons for this was that, as I mentioned earlier, the renter's only income was the remaining half of the crop, which in bad years was not enough to live on. Thus, it became more common for landlords to provide loans for their renters, which created a high level of indebtedness in the *contado*.[129] In the words of Christiane Klapisch-

127 "Papa Innocentio disse / o / quanta /é / la miseria e la conditione del povero crudele che segli domanda di vergogna si confonde e segli non domanda in poverta si consuma ma pure la fame a domandare el constrigne." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 21rB [seg.8.19.35.seg.8.22.18], f. 24rA [seg.8.47.11], f. 38rA [seg.20.9.397], f. 48rA, [seg.24.14.15, seg.24.15.10, seg.24.16.59].

128 "Poveri vergognosi gia stati richi et venuti in poverta si richiede dare limosina in grosso et che se ti domandono uno fiorino che si debba darne loro due." Ibidem, f. 48r A, [seg.24.16.51], f. 21r B [seg.8.7.3].

129 Cherubini, *L' Italia rurale,* p. 131.

Zuber, the mezzadria "wove a network of obligations."[130] For instance, in 1478 Bernardo Machiavelli noted a typical *mezzadria* agreement in his *ricordanze*, which beyond the usual details of the sharecropping arrangement contains also an immediate loan that Bernardo had to give his renters who were indebted to their previous landlord.[131] Giannozzo of Alberti's *I libri della famiglia* similarly complained about the peasants who were always asking for a loan, or dowries for their daughters, and so on.[132] By the fifteenth century, due to the peculiarities of the *mezzadria* system, a client-patron relationship had developed in the Florentine *contado*. The poor had to ask their rich landlords for loans and assistance in different affairs. The relationship between them was unequal: the *povero* had a clearly subordinate position in respect to the *ricco.* Nothing is more telling about this subordinate position than that in the absence of any surname, workers and renters were identified by the name of their landlords.

A similar network of dependence developed in the city, which can be also described by the coupling of *dare* and *domandare*. Most of Florence's economic production was based on the textile industry, where from the fourteenth century the so-called putting-out system was widespread. Although the big textile companies owned the raw material, they were not involved directly in the production of the cloth; instead they out-sourced the different production phases to artisan manufacturers.[133] At first glance this fragmentation of the production system might seem to provide a sort of freedom to the artisans; in reality, however, their prosperity continued to depend on the relationship they had with the wealthy owners of the central firms. Indebtedness was thus dramatic among workers and artisans.[134] The structure of the Florentine guild system further increased the subordinate positions of workers and artisans. By the fifteenth century, Florentine guilds had lost their original functions and were gradually developing into political institutions.[135] As Richard Trexler has noted, 'the gild was not the occupational organisation it seemed, but a filter mechanism for controlling access to political life.'[136] Guilds were essentially political organisations where

130 C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'State and Family in a Renaissance Society', p. 15.

131 B. Machiavelli, *Libro di ricordi*, ed. C. Olschki (Florence, 1954), pp. 80 - 81.

132 Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, p. 134.

133 Goldthwaite, *The economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 317.

134 Franceschi, *Oltre Il 'Tumulto',* pp. 280 - 287.

135. Brucker, *Renaissance Florence,* p. 89.

136 R. C. Trexler, *Public life in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1980), p. 15.

membership depended on personal connections. Artisans aspiring for membership or for any public office were therefore constrained to ask for the help of richer citizens.[137] Workers had no guild membership, so they also needed the assistance of more influential citizens in any public matter.[138] Taken together, the *mezzadria* system in the countryside, the putting-out system in the city, the peculiarities of the guild system, and widespread indebtedness resulted in an unequal social system between rich and poor.

What is very telling about the unequal relations between the poor and the rich is that the sources often imply that the poor could be the target of mockery. At one point in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, by using the words of Cassiodorus, Giovanni suggests that if a poor man is swindled he is a subject for derision.

> Cassiodoro disse se l' povero sara ingannato ogni huomo se ne ridera e se favellera da niuno sara inteso ella suo parola ben savia da ogniuono sara ripresa.[139]

Other *zibaldoni* similarly imply that the poor could be the target of mockery. The BNCF, MS Pal. 763 even warns, for example, that the rich and powerful should not make a mockery of poor people.[140] A similar passage can be read in the BNCF, MS Pal. 359, which advises the reader not to tease either the poor or the rich.[141]

At the same time, according to Giovanni the rich viewed the poor with fear and suspicion. He tells his sons for instance that the rich are molested and persecuted by the poor, who are the enemies of the rich.[142] A similar fear can be seen in the advice of Giovanni Morelli: 'Be careful with your workers,' 'do not trust them,' 'do not want to see them unless it is necessary.'[143] How did Giovanni explain the enmity between the poor and the rich?

On folio 12v of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, a theory about the reason for the conflict between the rich and the poor is presented. In brief, he suggests that land was initially the

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137 J. Najemy, *Corporatism and consensus,* p. 301.

138 Although Anthony Molho has suggested that workers were outside the client-patron relationship, other historians such as Francesco Franceschi have argued that the client-patron system characterised the world of manual workers as well. Franceschi, *Oltre il Tumulto*, p. 311; Molho, 'Cosimo de' Medici: Pater Pariae or Padrino*?',* p. 32.

139 Cassiodorus said, if the poor is swindled, everybody will deride him, if he is telling (about it), no one will pay attention to it; even if his words are wise, everybody will reproach them. AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 23vB [seg.8.41.5].

140 BNCF, MS Pal. 763, f. 160r.

141 BNCF, MS Pal. 359, f. 94r.

142 "Aristotele disse che chi é richo truova piu amici che non vuole e che i richi sono molto invidiati e che comunemente i poveri sono nimici de richi adunq le richezze sono assidiate da tutti." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 22vB [seg.8.31.24], f. 12vB [seg.4.6.176].

143 Morelli's advice is quoted in Cherubini, *Italia rurale*, pp 138 - 139.

possession of all humans. This, however, caused conflicts between humans, and the 'dominion over things' (*signoria delle cose)* was introduced. As the poor are aware that what the rich possess is in fact theirs, they dislike the rich and are envious.[144] The exact origin of this theory, which is similar to modern social contract theories, is unclear. The poet, Antonio Pucci (?1309-?1388) also copied it into his *zibaldone.*[145] Pucci's source was the thirteenth-century Florentine intellectual Bono Giamboni's *Della miseria dell'uomo,* which is a vernacular translation of *De miseria humanae conditionis* by Pope Innocent III.[146] Giovanni's source is unknown. Nevertheless, what is important is that he recognised social conflict, and, as the theory indicates, the unjustifiable nature of inequality.

To avoid conflicts with the poor, Giovanni suggested specific strategies. He argued that by means of charity the rich can reduce social tensions and gain the favour of the poor.[147] 'Be rather loved than feared,' this was his advice, copied from Seneca, on the appropriate behaviour toward servants.[148] The compiler of another fifteenth-century *zibaldone,* the BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, also noted that it is much more secure to be loved than hated.[149] This was the strategy that Cosimo and later Lorenzo de' Medici followed. They sought the benevolence of the *popolo* through charitable activity and the support of confraternities.[150] *Misericordia* was thus not only a Christian obligation but also a social practice to manage social conflicts and tensions.

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144 'la terra et le possessioni et l'avere, le quali cose sono tutte terra, si sono comuni tra tutte le genti, secondo le ragioni naturali, ma perche delle dette cose comuni nascevano molte discordie e erano neghettite et abandonate, si fu trovato et ordinato per le genti la signoria delle cose, accio che quelle discordie et negligentie cessassero. Et conoscendo il povero secondo natura che ['l] richo atiene alcuna cosa di suo ragione, se gli porta molto aschio et invidia, onde i richi sono molto perseguitati et molestati.' Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 12.

145 Pucci, *Libro di varie storie,* p. 102.

146 B. Giamboni, *Della miseria dell'uomo*, ed. F. Tassi (Florence, 1836), p. 74.

147 "E'a de colui che vuole essere cortese donare et spendere del suo avere, la onde gli richi ne sono molto amati." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 12rA [seg.4.6.59].

148 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 13. The same sentence can be found in the 47th Letter of Seneca to Lucilius, which Giovanni copied to folio 147r A [seg. 71.9.1249].

149 BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, f. 12r.

150 Kent, 'Be rather loved than feared.' See a different view on this in Molho, 'Cosimo de' Medici: Pater Pariae or Padrino*?'*.

6.2. Summary

Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and other *ricordanze* certainly reflect intense social conflict. What I want to emphasise here, however, is the substantial presence of different strategies to reduce the tensions between different social groups. In effect, we have found not only a negative image of the *povero* but also a recognition of the wider social problem and the unequal nature of human society. The presence of strategies meant to ease social tensions could have various motivations: the Christian norm of *misericordia*, the social expectation of charity, the fear of punishment in the afterlife; but what was most important was probably the need to sustain social co-operation, and thus the economic well-being of the city. The extraordinary success of the Florentine economy was largely due to the co-operation of different social groups which took shape within the complex network that dominated the economic and social system. But, paradoxically, by creating an unequal relationship system, this co-operation undermined itself. As we have seen, Giovanni was aware of this inequality, and therefore suggested strategies to balance it. In the light of this, the negative perception of poverty becomes more understandable. Poverty produced not only physical misery but also social subordination and a humiliating status.

7. Communicating qualities

Qualities need to be communicated: one needs to ensure that members of the community have information about one's qualities. On the basis of the findings of the previous sections and Graph 1, we know what Giovanni and other fifteenth-century Florentines wished to communicate to their community:

- wealth, affluence
- trustworthiness, moral excellence
- being an acknowledged member of the community
- generosity

How did Giovanni and his contemporaries think these qualities could be communicated? It is first necessary to examine what Giovanni thought about the status of reputation, i.e. the extent to which reputation was heritable and transferable.

An individual's reputation was bonded to the *fama* and honour of his kin group. As social historians have argued, in late medieval Florence family was a corporate unit, which mediated between society and the individual.[151] Family members were linked through numerous channels, most importantly through the honour of the family, which was a collective and symbolic capital of a family. As Thomas Kuehn has argued, honour expressed the common interest that related kins.[152] Giovanni dedicated the entire first chapter of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* to a summary of all the constituents of his family's honour in a short history of the family, including a genealogy, and list of office holders. [153] Consequently, *onore* was the result of 'accumulation,' and believed to be heritable. Conversely, the reputation of a family, through which its *onore* became public, was also heritable. Giovanni told his sons that fathers were expected to support their sons with their own reputation.[154]

But Giovanni also urged his sons to establish their own reputation,[155] which was essential for several reasons. After the death of their father, brothers in Florence (unlike Venice and Genoa) did not work with a shared family investment; it was more common to divide up the father's portfolio.[156] And in order to set up and run an independent business, one had to establish one's individual own reputation. In addition, an individual's position within the kin group was defined by how he could contribute to the *fama* of the entire group. At this point, it is worth looking at Graph 1 again (see p. 77). What is striking is the more or less equal number of kin and in-laws such as Palla Strozzi, Cosimo de' Medici and Luca Pitti. The fame of these persons contributed, in fact, to the fame of Giovanni, who proudly wrote in a marginal note in his own hand on f. 5v that since his grandfather, members of his line had made marriages with the most important Florentine families. The fame of the relatives by marriage contributed to the status of an individual and his line within the entire kin group,

151 Martines, *The social world*, p. 50, quoted in T. Kuehn, 'Honor and conflict in a fifteenth century florentine family', in *Law, family & women: toward a legal anthropology of Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1994), p. 131.; Brucker, *Renaissance Florence,* p. 91.

152 Ibidem, p. 135.

153 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 1r - 6v.

154 Ibidem, f. 79r B [seg.54.5.43].

155 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 9. See the importance of individual talent in Brucker, *Renaissance Florence,*, p. 95.

156 Goldthwaite, *The economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. 72.

though this was not directly shared with other kin members. The fact that *fama* was partly a result of an accumulation process, and that it could be increased through the reputation of relatives by marriage and friends, implies that it was thought to be not just heritable but transferable. It was thus not only an abstract set of information but a piece of social capital that one could use in everyday interactions. Its concrete value was given by the fact that one person could contribute to the reputation of another through his own reputation.

The fact that agents were expected both to establish their own reputation and to contribute to the reputation of their kin and relatives by marriage explains why Florentines paid such attention to the communication of qualities. How could a person communicate his affluence and generosity, a picture of his social network, his moral excellence and position in the social world? Various forms of patronage of art provided agents with a wide range of tools to communicate these qualities.

Fifteenth-century Florence witnessed an extensive programme of palace, villa, and garden building by private citizens.[157] The analysis of several key passages of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* which will be presented in Chapter Seven, has revealed that contemporaries held two key beliefs in the context of reputation and investment in sumptuous estates such as palaces and gardens:

1. A palace increases the reputation of the builder
2. A palace increases the popularity of the builder[158]

Investment in luxurious estates also communicated wealth and economic power. In addition to the assertion of one's prosperity, buildings had another function, which brings us back to the afterlife function of reputation that we have already discussed. Giovanni did not forget to speak about the fragility of *fama.* On folio 79v of the *Zibaldone* he enumerated six things that could induce humans to commit a sin. The third entry of this list is the fear of 'returning goods and reputation' (*restituire roba e fama*), which literally means being deprived of reputation and goods. This implied the need to carve *fama* into stone, and preserve or accumulate it for later generations. Spatial objects could of course satisfy this desire. As

157 For instance, the Palazzi Pitti, Medici, Rucellai, and Tornabuoni were all built in the fifteenth century.

158 See the analysis of these beliefs in Chapter VII. Section 4.2.

Patricia Rubin has stressed, 'construction, decoration and display are instruments of status and affirmation of a desired status quo.'[159]

The need to communicate social qualities gave birth also to private and public portraits, meant to convey to others those positive qualities that contemporaries liked to evaluate in written sources. Although the history of portraiture went through significant changes during the Renaissance, it had two prevailing characteristics. First, most of the surviving portraits lack the depiction of undesirable physical features: the colour of both male and female sitters' skin is always pale; their face is depicted without wrinkles or any blemish.[160] There was a canonical form of beauty to which each portrait had to correspond. Women, for instance, were depicted with high forehead, pale complexion and long neck.[161] The profile format, which dominated the portrait painting of both women and men in the fifteenth century, was the perfect means to underline these features. This format rendered the sitter sculpturesque and immobile, and communicated power and solemnity to the viewer. The reason why profile format was fashionable is still a matter of discussion; some historians have argued that it was the continuation of the positioning of donor portraits, while others have claimed that it was popular as a result of the recent discovery of antique medals.[162] Thanks to these characteristics, early Renaissance portraits displayed the sitters in a highly idealised way without striking individual features.[163] The depiction of subjects with a perfect body, communicating their health and beauty - the features that Giovanni and other Florentines were keen to ascribe to their ancestors in their diaries – was one means of that idealization. But, how can we verify whether Giovanni's conception of beauty matched the beauty depicted on portraits?

Another instrument of idealisation, and the second prevailing characteristic of Florentine portrait painting, which also communicated the beauty of the sitter to contemporary viewers,

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159 P. L. Rubin, 'Art and the imagery of memory', in *Art, Memory and Family in Renaissance Florence,* ed. G. Ciappelli and P. L. Rubin (Cambridge, 2000), p. 68.

160 One of the few exceptions to this is Ghirlandaio's *Old Man and his Grandson* (today in the Louvre) where the old man is depicted with a bulbous nose.

161 P. L. Rubin, 'Florenz und das Portrait der Renaissance', in *Gesichter der Renaissance*, p. 4.; P. Simons, 'Portaiture, Portrayal, and Idealization', in *Languages and images of Renaissance Italy*, ed. A. Brown (Oxford, 1995), pp. 266 - 273.

162 This discussion is very well summarised in A. Wright, 'The memory of faces' in *Art, Memory and Family in Renaissance Florence,* ed. G. Ciappelli and P. L. Rubin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 98. The three-quarter format became fashionable only in the second half of the Quattrocento; the profile format, however, remained the standard way of depicting women in the entire century.

163 Sometimes, inscriptions were added, as in the case of the portraits of Matteo (Andrew W. Mellon Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC) and Michele Olivieri (Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, Virginia), which identified the sitters. Later, by the end of the Quattrocento, portraits had become more personal due to the use of background scenes and symbols. See for example, Perugino's Portrait of Francesco delle Opere (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence)

was the use of perfect and symmetrical proportions.[164] As two passages of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* indicate, Giovanni's conception of beauty was also associated with perfect proportions.

> La deformita et l'esser brutto del corpo interviene per qualunche disordine di membro, cioe qualunque membro sta nel corpo indecentemente fa l'uomo essere deforme, et la beleza non nascie se ogni membro non' e bene proportionato et colorato.[165]

These words are from a letter written by the humanist, Donato Acciauoli, to Giovanni, who copied the entire letter to the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[166] But he used *ben proporzionato* in another context of the manuscript as well, which he most probably composed himself. To describe the beauty of the garden of his villa in Quaracchi, he wrote that all decorative elements of the garden are *ben proporzionati*.[167]

Accordingly, the way the subjects of Florentine portraits were depicted matched the patrons' conceptions of beauty. As historians of art have often reminded us, this way of depiction expresses the expectations and taste of the sitter as well as of the patron;[168] they wanted to see themselves or their family members in this highly idealised way, with a perfect body and perfect proportions. Contemporary German portraits, by contrast, lack this type of idealisation, or they had a different type of idealisation. It seems that in northern Europe, neither patrons nor artists thought it important to hide blemishes and imperfections such as wrinkles, stubble, baggy eyes or the disproportion of face and neck.[169] The reason late medieval Florentine patrons laid such stress on the depiction of a perfect body, and generally on human beauty, was that male beauty was – as we have already seen - associated with moral excellence, solemnity, and commanding presence, all necessary elements of being successful in social and economic life; though as to female portraits this reasoning could have

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164 N. Haughton, 'Perceptions of beauty in Renaissance art', *Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology* 3 (2004), p. 233.

165 'The deformity and the ugliness of the body is the result of the disorder of any body part, namely, any body part, which is improper, makes the man distorted; beauty does not come about if all body parts are not well proportioned and coloured.' Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 99 - 100.

166 In his letter, Acciauoli tried to answer the question whether acting well or badly is easier. He argued that the morally bad action is easier, since this, just as human ugliness or the deformity of human body, can be realised in many different ways whereas the good, just like the right proportion of the body, is possible in only one way. Perosa gives a thorough philological analysis of Acciauoli's letter, Perosa, 'Lo Zibaldone di Giovanni Rucellai', p. 144; Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 164 - 165.

167 Ibidem, p. 22.

168 M. Baxandall, *Painting and experience in fifteenth century Italy* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 4 - 14.

169 For instance, Der Feldhauptmann Graf Hans von Rechberg (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Gemäldegalerie), Meister des Hutz-Bildnisses. Bildnis eines Mannes mit Rosenkranz (Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Gemäldegalerie), Bildnis eines Mannes mit Nelke (private collection), Bildnis eines Mannes mit Bolzen (private collection). See these and other paintings in *Dürer - Cranach - Holbein, die Entdeckung des Menschen: das deutsche Porträt um 1500,* ed. S. Haag *et al.* (Munich, 2011), pp. 55 - 77.

hardly been valid. The depiction of human faces without imperfection and feeling was, then, meant to highlight the moral elevation and the nobility of the sitter.[170] In other words, physical excellence communicated moral excellence.

In effect, portraits, and thus beauty as well, had both private and public functions; they had to impress family members, friends, and the wider social world.[171] Portraits that were hung on the walls of Florentine homes they commemorated the ancestors, and, just like the written portraits in the *libro di ricordanze*, created an archetype of an ideal person. On the other hand, they could also be viewed by friends and visitors, and thus communicated the glorious past to non-family members as well.[172] But one must not forget about a further type of portrait painting, the donor portraits on frescoes in family chapels, such as the Tornabuoni chapel in Santa Maria Novella or the Sassetti chapel in Santa Trinita, both by Ghirlandaio and his workshop. These were also idealised figures, which expressed the beauty of a person to the entire Commune; they thus declared and brought to memory the status, the power, and the moral values of the sitter and his family. They visualised and made public the message of the written portraits in the *libro di ricordanze, bell'uomo* with *bella famiglia*.

Through the 'cult of beauty', social perception had a strong impact on contemporary medical and material culture. A recurrent feature in recipe books are the instructions on how to create make-up. The fifteenth-century Riccardiana MS 2350 contains two recipes for make-up, and another one for how to remain healthy.[173] The late fifteenth-century Braidense MS AC. IX. 30 also gives advice on how to make ointment that can give white colour to the face.[174] The sixteenth century Moreniana MS Moreni 160, a *Libro di segreti,* contains recipes for how to colour the face.[175] If one looks at the inventory of a wealthy Florentine household, the number of clothes and textiles among the objects that a family possessed is towering. An excellent example of this is the inventory or *masserizie* in the *ricordanze* of the Medici partisan, Puccio Pucci, who listed fourteen gowns (*cioppa*), thirty shirts, dozens of different types of hats and many other types of clothes just in the room of his son, Piero, and his

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170 L. M. Sleptzoff, *Men or supermen?: the Italian portrait in the fifteenth century* (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 39. See also, L. Campbell, *Renaissance portraits : European portrait-painting in the 14th, 15th and 16th* centuries (New Haven,1990) and Keith Christiansen and Stefan Weppelmann (eds.), *The Renaissance portrait : from Donatello to Bellini* (New Haven, 2011).

171 Rubin, *Images and identity*, pp. 5 -6.

172 Wright, 'The memory of faces', p. 88.

173 Riccardiana, MS 2350, f. 78r and f. 81r.

174 Braidense, MS AC. IX. 30, f. 13r.

175 Moreniana, MS Moreni, 160, f. 36v.

daughter-in-law.[176] The description of the marriage of Giovanni's son, Bernardo, to Nannina de' Medici demonstrates the importance of clothes and the extraordinary attention paid to dress. Most of the marriage gifts were clothes and textiles, and there is a marginal note dedicated to a detailed description of the clothes and jewels that Nannina received.[177] Again despite the fear and risk associated with female beauty, there was an extraordinary attention to the physical appearance of men and women in Renaissance Florence.[178] As in his *Three Books on Life,* Ficino claimed, for the intellectual perfection of humans, care of the body and health was as important as intellectual and moral development.[179]

8. Conclusion

Through the analysis of social judgement, recognition, and categorisation this chapter has uncovered information about Giovanni's value system. Wealth, reputation, and male beauty were regarded as positive values; poverty was seen as a morally corrupt state. Data found in other commonplace books and diaries have suggested that Giovanni's views were in accordance with the values of many of his contemporaries, though certainly not with all. Evidence gathered from the widely-read writings of the archbishop of Florence, Antonino Pierozzi, another contemporary of Giovanni, clearly indicate that his value system contrasted with aspects of the Christian tradition, including the evaluation of poverty and wealth evident in the New Testament. This supports the findings of scholars such as Werner Sombart and Ruggiero Romano who argued that ethical thought was slowly moving toward a pre-capitalist value system.[180] But this chapter has provided answers to three questions that previous scholarship has not raised. First, if the Christian ethical system could not justify these values, what could have justified the negative perception of poverty, and the positive perception of wealth, reputation, and male beauty? Second, this alternative value system led to social conflicts, and a series of contradictions within the dominant belief system: how were they

176 'I beni della famiglia di Puccio Pucci. Inventario del sec. XV', in *Miscellanea nuziale Rossi-Teiss*, ed. C. Merkel (Bergamo, 1897), pp. 170 - 176.

177 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 48v [seg.25.1.538].

178 Rubin, *Images and identity*, p. 6.

179 M. Ficino, *Three books on life*, ed. and tr. Carol V. Kaske, and John R. Clark (Binghamton, N.Y., 1988), p. 109.

180 W. Sombart, *Il Capitalismo moderno* (Turin, 1967), p. 315; R. Romano, 'I libri della famiglia di L. B. Alberti', in R. Romano, *Tra due crisi: L'Italia del Rinascimento* (Turin, 1971), pp. 143 - 145.

resolved? Finally, and most importantly, it is impossible to claim that Giovanni and his contemporaries were indifferent toward religion; they were indeed deeply religious. How could they hold beliefs that were apparently incompatible with the doctrines of their religion?

Imagining the process of justification as a triangle helps to answer the first question. The analysis of Giovanni's conception of poverty has revealed that he was deeply aware of the dramatic material (starvation, helplessness in the face of the nature, etc.) and social conditions (subordinate position in the client-patron system) of the poor. Their situation was of course already dramatic before the fifteenth century, but as a result of the rise in wider living standards in the late medieval period, their relative position worsened even further. In the face of this social reality (one vertex of the triangle) a positive evaluation of poverty was not acceptable. By contrast, wealth, reputation, and male beauty all had functions in the contemporary social world. Reputation was used in strategic decisions; beauty as a form of self-representation was used to communicate affluence and moral excellence. Beauty understood as solemnity and commanding presence had a key function in public performance. Beyond that it increased the quality of life, while wealth was related to a strategy for the afterlife. Function is thus the second vertex of the triangle, one that certainly contributed to the justification of the new value system. Finally, the third vertex is the rediscovery of ancient authors who gave credence to a more positive perception of wealth and reputation, and a more negative perception of poverty. The metaphor of the triangle thus demonstrates that the three vertices (social and material reality, the social function of qualities associated with the better off, and the influence of classical authors) could provide a justification for a new ethos taking shape in late medieval Florence.

This chapter has therefore revealed a series of conflicts and contradictions. There was an apparent social conflict between the groups of *ricchi* and *povero.* The evaluations of voluntary and involuntary poverty were in opposition. Conceptions of male and female beauty were also antithetical. There was a contradiction too in the use of the Christian notion of *misericordia* to justify the non-Christian enthusiasm for accumulation and wealth. Again, how were these inconsistencies resolved?

On the level of the mental world, some of these contradictions were resolved with the help of different modes of categorisation. Male and female physical appearance, and voluntary and involuntary poverty are different categories, and were judged in terms of two separate value

systems. The resolution of the contradiction between the non-Christian respect for accumulation and its justification by reference to the Christian virtue of *misericordia* is more complex. To ease social conflict between rich and poor, Giovanni suggested that his sons should use their wealth to practise the virtue of *misericordia,* charity and generosity. Consequently, what justified accumulation was its capacity to enable actions that could in turn ease tensions between different social groups. The heart of the matter is that the Christian concept of *misericordia* changed. While it continued to be a moral obligation that assured the salvation of one's soul, it also became the cornerstone of a social policy meant to ease social tensions. But behind all this there was a much more fundamental novelty that accompanies transition to capitalism: pragmatism. Justifying priorities and behaviour by reference not to values but to functions, utility, and the capacity to resolve real life problems is in fact deeply pragmatic. Pragmatism provided the freedom to reconfigure existing values, and to adopt to the changing predicaments of the market, an essential element of capitalist thought. Pragmatism provided flexibility, as a result of which religious doctrines and everyday values could be more easily reconciled. Forty years after Giovanni began to compose the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, Savonarola rebelled against the pragmatism of the Florentine elite. His reform failed. A few years later an even more deeply pragmatic ethical thought took shape in the works of Machiavelli. It had however been present in the Florentine mind-set since the fourteenth century.

VI. Agency: Coping with uncertainty in late medieval Florence

1. Introduction

Preparing for the challenges of an uncertain future is a natural human effort. This preparation is a complex decision process: agents work out possible strategies, examine the gains and losses that each strategy can bring, and use rationales to evaluate them. Even though human decision-making is a mental operation directed by the knowledge system of an individual, rarely can historians observe the way the knowledge system influenced decisions, beliefs and expectations about different options.

A hitherto unpublished section of Giovanni's diary offers a valuable insight into a strategic decision-making under uncertainty. In the chapter entitled 'About spending moderately and serving friends and relatives' Giovanni outlined a decision situation that involved a dilemma: how should one react to and handle the request of a friend? To answer he delineated three possible strategies, including the rationales, risks and the possible outcomes of each strategy.

To analyse the three strategies I have applied game and decision theory. This has revealed that Giovanni and most probably also his contemporaries conceptualised their network of friendship as an informal insurance system, one however that involved a risky investment and a decision under uncertainty. First, I shall present the decision situation and the knowledge-constructing practice that Giovanni used to describe this. I shall then examine friendship as a strategic interaction and as a relation of interdependence. Second, I shall study the strategies that Giovanni suggested to secure the uncertain investment of friendship. Finally, by examining the rationales and the reasoning behind each strategy, I shall focus on how the knowledge system might have influenced the decision mechanism. This will help us to understand better the contemporary social category of 'friend', and explore a contradiction between Giovanni's belief system and the expectations of his social world.

Theory and practice can be very different. Giovanni described the three strategies without giving any real life example. In this sense, his explanation is merely theoretical. To examine how the beliefs that he wanted to convey to his sons appeared in real life, I shall occasionally

draw on the correspondence between a less well-known Florentine, Bartolommeo Cederni (1416-1482) and his friends.[1]

As a whole, friendship in late medieval Europe was significantly different from our modern conception of friendship. How can we explore previous conceptions without imposing our modern ideas on them? This is the challenge for every type of historical research. To find a solution to this methodological problem, I shall focus on the risks, gains, practices and beliefs that Giovanni and his contemporaries associated with friendship.

2. The decision situation and the knowledge constructing practice

The chapter entitled 'About spending moderately and serving friends and relatives' occupies five double-columned folios of Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[2] This clearly indicates that the question how one should handle the request of a friend was a serious matter of concern for him. He divided the chapter into two sub-sections, each dedicated to the description of a possible strategy. For a complete understanding of the strategies, I quote the introduction he added before each sub-section.

> Strategy 1 (henceforth S1 or *moderate spending*): 'Faro qui appresso nota di piu auctori che anno detto dello spendere moderatamente del fruire gli amici e parenti.'[3]
>
> Strategy 2 (henceforth S2 or *spending more than is reasonable*): 'Ora si fara nota di detti di piu autori che anno scripto dello spendere con largeza e del servir gli amici con grande liberalita forse piu che non richiede la ragione.'[4]

1 Bartolommeo was an 'everyday' actor of the Florentine Renaissance. He came from an unknown family without substantial wealth and power. In most of his life he was a bank employee who occasionally held some public offices. His exceptional correspondence informs us that he was a very well connected person of his time, and had a well situated position in the client patron network of the city. For instance, he certainly knew Giovanni Rucellai. In the words of F. W. Kent, he was a 'specialist in the brokerage of patronage and friendship.' F.W. Kent, *Bartolommeo Cederni and his friends: Essay* (Florence, 1990), p. 41.

2 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 20vB - 25rB.

3 'Here I will mention several authors who have talked about moderate spending and about benefiting from friends and relatives.' Ibidem, f. 20vB [seg.8.1.1]

4 'Now I shall mention several authors who have written about spending with generosity and about serving one's friends with great liberality, perhaps more than is reasonable.' Ibidem, f. 22v B [seg.8.30.1]

> Strategy 3 (henceforth S3 or *rejection*): This choice is the rejection (*negare* as Giovanni says) of a friend's request. It is not outlined as systematically as S1 and S2, but presented in two different chapters of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[5]

Since Giovanni did not explicitly opt for any of the three strategies, the decision situation seems to be an open-ended dilemma with two foci: 1. When can one turn down the request of a friend? 2. What is the right scale of the aid that one should give a friend?

To give guidance to his sons, Giovanni created two thematic lists (S1 and S2) of sayings from different medieval and antique authors. The two lists make up the chapter 'About spending moderately (..).' The previously quoted words were meant to introduce the two lists. As I have earlier proved, Giovanni communicated his ideas by using the sayings as building blocks.[6] Again, this is a knowledge constructing practice that is difficult for the modern reader to grasp. From our point of view, this is not an original intellectual activity; it is merely a passive reproduction. Nevertheless, in terms of the knowledge constructing practice, the so-called culture of commonplaces (*loci communes*), that dominated the European scientific and literary production from antiquity to the seventeenth and eighteenth century, this was regarded as an original activity. In brief, scientists, philosophers or everyday people and students collected sayings and grouped them under thematic headings such as friendship, love or enmity. To compose their own works, they reused them as building blocks. Most probably Giovanni also collected quotations or *sententiae* of different authors about friendship, then by making use of them he described the two strategies, S1 and S2.

The modern reader might find also other peculiarities in Giovanni's dilemma. Why was a fifteenth-century Florentine merchant seriously worried about the right behaviour toward his friends? Who were the friends of Giovanni?

Scholars have traditionally seen *friend* or *amico* as a label denoting essentially the protagonists of the client-patron system.[7] According to this view, friendship was a vertical network of persons through which the less powerful members of the community sought the protection and patronage of influential citizens. Patrons helped their clients in public affairs or in case of financial difficulties, and clients recompensed this with small favours.

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5 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 10 - 11; AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 22v B [seg.8.31.53]

6 See Chapter IV.

7 For instance, Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*, p. 99; D. V. Kent, *Friendship, love, and trust in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge MA, 2009), p. 57 and p. 22; R. F. E Weissman, *Ritual brotherhood in Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1982), p. 28.

Friendship was also an important constituent of political life: friends or clients supported their patrons in public life in exchange for protection. For instance, as Dale Kent has demonstrated, Cosimo de' Medici got into power because he was by far the most successful at building and maintaining an extensive network of clients.[8] Recent scholarship has revealed that friendship had an important role in business organisations as well.[9] 'Friend' was thus a central social category present in all segments of the society. Perhaps the fundamental difference between the conception of friendship as an emotional bond and the one that defined the client-patron relation is that the latter is thought to have been an asymmetrical relation in terms of the distribution of power; clients had a subordinate position in respect to the patron's status.[10]

In the client-patron network Giovanni had a top position. As he also said, he preferred to act as a patron and not as a client.[11] At the time of the composition of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* (1457), he was one of the richest persons of Florence, though, due to his close ties to the exiled Strozzi family, he was a politically marginalised figure in the first half of his life. The wider political arena opened to him only in the 1460s after his son's, Bernardo's, marriage with Nannina de' Medici, the grand-daughter of Cosimo. In the absence of political power, Giovanni established himself by building an extensive network of clients in his local neighbourhood. As F. W. Kent, the author of an excellent study on Giovanni's life, has argued, he 'was an important man in his own right, the head of his own small pyramid.'[12] But this does not explain why Giovanni, a powerful person, was concerned with the right way to handle requests from his friends and relatives. Generally, conceptualising friendship only as a vertical relation where the distribution of power was asymmetrical leads to difficulties.

Documents such as correspondences between friends show us that friendship based on mutual love and emotions also existed. A famous example is the friendship between the merchant from Prato, Francesco Datini, and the Florentine notary, Lapo Mazzei, that the two men, in the words of Richard Trexler, built and maintained 'upon utility, social position, and

8 D. V. Kent, *The Rise of the Medici: Faction in Florence*, 1426-1434 (Oxford, 1978).

9 J. F. Padgett and P. D. McLean, 'Economic credit in Renaissance Florence', *The Journal of Modern History* 83 (2011), pp. 39-41.

10 P. McLean, *The art of the network: strategic interaction and patronage in Renaissance Florence* (Durham, 2007), p. 22; Molho, 'Cosimo de' Medici, pater patriae or padrino?', p. 16.

11 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 23rA.

12 Kent, 'The making of a Renaissance patron of the arts', p. 72.

rhetoric, as well as upon feeling.'[13] The correspondence of Machiavelli with Francesco Vettori "displays a combination of intimate familiarity and unresolved tension, of the sort that can only happen between friends."[14] Another Florentine, Michele Siminetti, noted in his diary some examples of perfect friendships in the ancient world such as the one between Theseus and Peirithous or Achilles and Patroclus.[15] These idealised friendships were far from the client-patron relationship. Michael Rocke studied another facet of Florentine friendship,one that was not necessarily related to the client-patron relationship. In his *Forbidden Friendships* Rocke discovered "the extensive and multifaceted networks of associations and friendships among sodomites."[16]

The analysis of Giovanni's decision situation has put light on friendship as a horizontal tie. In this relationship the distribution of power was symmetrical. As opposed to the vertical friendship of the client-patron relation, the horizontal friendships between people of equal social standing involved different tasks, risks, and objectives.

3. Horizontal friendship, a risky investment

To interpret the decision situation and the power relation between the participating agents, I shall apply the basic concepts of game theory. This raises a high number of hitherto unstudied questions. Which outcomes are associated with the different strategies? Whose interest dominated the decision situation? What rationales were used to evaluate the strategies? What is the expected behaviour of the interested agents? Most importantly, what risks did Giovanni and his contemporaries have to face by helping their friends?

The figure 1 captures the structure of the decision situation. As an initial step (in T1), a friend (henceforth B) asks the service of another friend (henceforth A). Giovanni gave account of three strategies, and two sub-strategies among which the decision maker, A, could choose.

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13 Trexler, *Public life*, p. 133.

14 J. Najemy, *Between friends: discourses of power and desire in the Machiavelli-Vettori letters of 1513-1515* (Princeton, 1993), p. 9.

15 Dresden, MS OB 44, f. 26r. I was unable to find the exact source of Siminetti's list of perfect friendships. Cicero also spoke about a list of famous friendships but without giving names, Cicero, *On Friendship,* 4.15.

16 M. Rocke, *Forbidden friendships: homosexuality and male culture in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford, 1996), p. 189,

S1: moderate spending
S2: serving more than reasonable
S3: the rejection of B's request
S3[1]: the explicit rejection of B's request
S3[2]: the strategy to make B refrain from making his request

Not only did Giovanni take into account the pros and cons of these three strategies but he also evaluated the possible reactions of B to each step. To anticipate the result of my analysis, the final outcome of each strategy depended on B as well. Hence, Giovanni described a strategic interaction in which the outcome of an agent's (A) action was determined by the expectations and reactions of another agent (B). The difference between a simple action and a strategic interaction is that in the latter in order to achieve the desired goal, the agent must take into consideration the beliefs, the possible steps, and the expectations of other agents as well. Game is a technical term to describe interactions where the outcome depends on the interest of multiple agents, named players.[17] Giovanni described a two-person game where, as I shall prove here, A had to take account of B's interest and reaction.

A central element of game theory is the study of the possible risks and rewards or losses and gains that a given step may bring to the players. The figure 1 highlights also this aspect of each strategy. If A choses either S1 or S2, he necessarily had a symbolic or material loss at the moment of the decision (T2). *F* is the variable that describes the requests of a friend. As the graph on figure 2, which visualises the semantics of friendship in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, shows,[18] *f* covered various services such as loans and giving gifts.[19] Secondary and other primary sources offer an even wider spectrum of activities that friendship involved, for instance, mediation in disputes,[20] negotiation of marriages,[21] or providing friends with news.[22] Sometimes friends acted as lenders or guarantors, arbiters, and godfathers.[23] If *f* was

17 The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy offers a very good introduction to game theory. Ross, Don, 'Game Theory', *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2011 Edition), ed. E. N. Zalta, (http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/game-theory/, accessed, 13 July, 2012).

18 In the first phase of my research I transformed the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* into a linguistic corpus. By drawing on this, I mapped all textual places where 'amico' occurs in the manuscript. I recorded the way 'amico' is related to other entities, such as actions, events and properties, in an OWL (Web Ontology Language) ontology. The graph is the result of visualising the ontology with the help of the Java Universal Network / Graph Framework. This image enabled me to understand the overall structure of Giovanni's conception of friendship.

19 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 10.

20 L. Mazzei, *Lettere di un notaro a un mercante del secolo XIV: con altre lettere e documenti*, ed. C. Guasti (2 vols, Firenze, 1880), II. pp. 50-56.

21 Kent, *Friendship, love, and trust*, p. 106. See also another analysis of the services that the Medici offered to his friends in Kent, *The Rise of the Medici,* pp. 83 - 104.

22 *Bartolommeo Cederni and his friends, Letters to an obscure Florentine*, ed. G. Corti and F. W. Kent (Florence, 1990), p. 83; J. Najemy, *Between friends,* p. 18.

23 C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Kin, Friends, and Neighbors: The Urban Territory of a Merchant Family in 1400', in C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985), p. 89; see also C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Name "Remade" p. 288.

a financial aid, then by following either S_1 or S_2, A had expenditure in T_2. If B asked for A's mediation in a public or private affair, A had to use his own network to ask a favour from another person; accordingly, A found himself in the position of B in another game. What is important to underline is that the game did not give any immediate gain to A. At the moment of the decision (T_2), A's reward was in fact only a promise depending on the uncertain future.

Agents asking favours were of course aware of this. In 1446 Bernardo Serzelli, a friend of Bartolommeo Cederni, sent a long letter asking him for numerous favours. He concluded his letter by alluding to the future when he would be able to recompense the help of Cederni:

> Come vedi, io piglio troppa sicurta in te di faticarti. Priegoti non ti rincresca; potrei ancora tanto vivere, ch'io mostrerei quanto mi fosse suto caro.[24]

As several passages of the *Zibaldone* and other diaries imply, the main reward of A was that if he got into trouble, B was supposed to help him. For instance, this and the following passage support the idea that by means of friendship agents could prepare for economic and other type of misfortunes.

> Si come del campo senza siepe sono tolte et portate via le cose, cosi sanza gli amici perde le richezze.[25]

In an often used passage, Giovanni and some of his contemporaries distinguished *f,* the service given in case of necessity, from other activities, such as establishing and maintaining friendship.

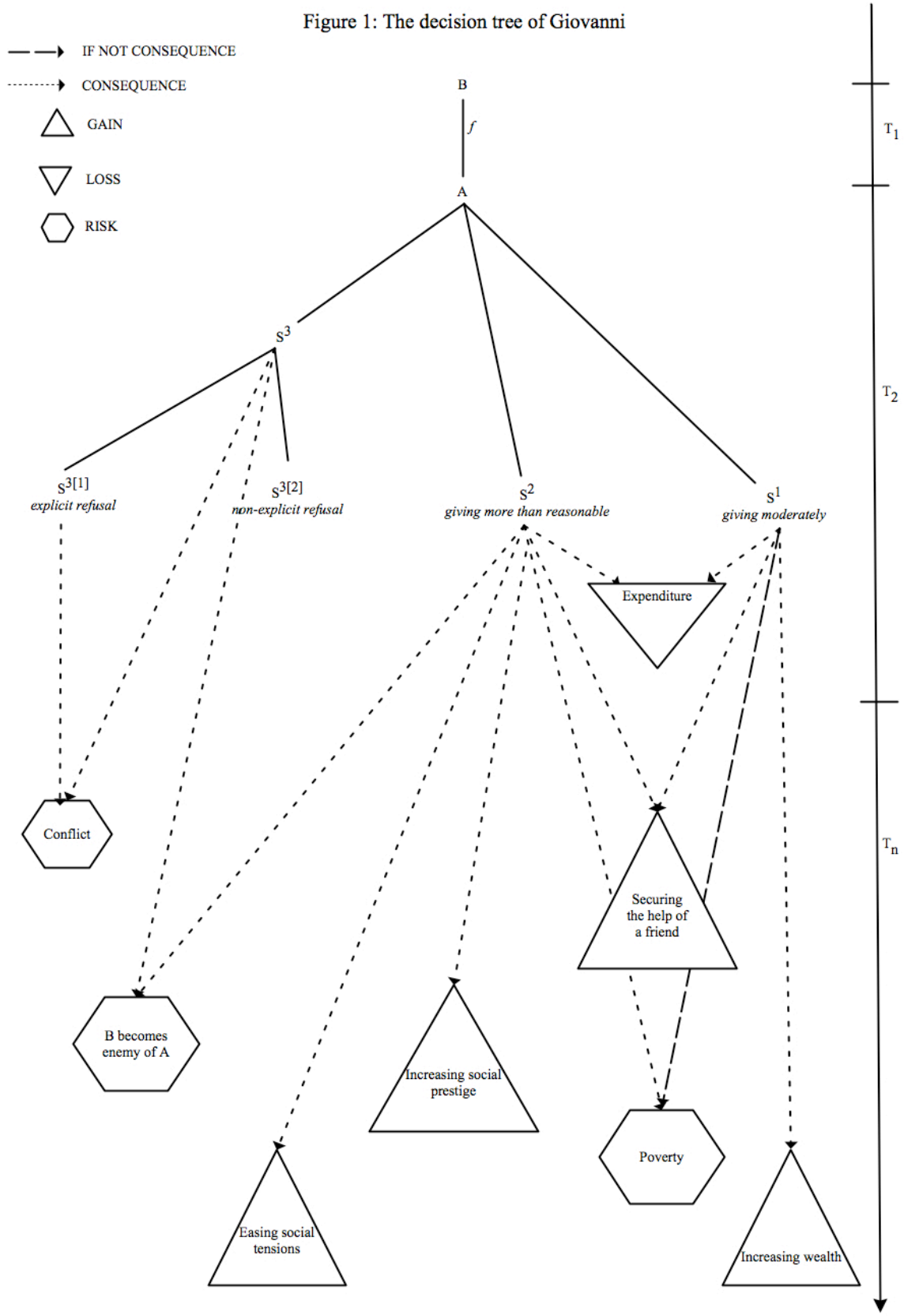
> Sappi che gli amici s'aquistano e mantengono per tre cose la prima honorandogli in presenza la seconda lodandogli in absenzia la terza servendogli a bisogni.[26]

24 'As you can see, I am asking your effort as I really trust you. I am asking you not to be disturbed because of this; I can still live so long that I will be able to show how dear you were to me.' Ibidem, p. 62.

25 'Just as from a field without hedgerows things are taken away, similarly someone without friends loses his wealth.' Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale,' p. 12.

26 'You must know that one can make and keep friends through three things: first by honouring them when they are present, second by praising them when they are absent, third by serving them in case of need.' AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 21rB [seg.8.3.1]; BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, f. 16r.

Figure 1: The decision tree of Giovanni



As the graph visualising the semantics of friendship (see figure 2) in the *Zibaldone* shows, Giovanni and his contemporaries consistently associated friendship with economic failure and success. In terms of the logic that he and others kept repeating, *f,* the request of a friend, was justified only in case of real need.[27] This was one of the underlying rules of the game, the violation of which on the part of B justified S_3, the rejection of the request.[28] Giving to a person who did not actually need it was considered to be an irrational step.[29] Even though letters between friends tell us that in real life the aid of a friend could be recompensed through smaller favours, the Cederni correspondence give us several examples when agents sought to communicate their request as *bisogno*, or they gave long descriptions to explain why their request was a case of need.[30]

Consequently, the reward of A was related to an unpredictable point (T_n) in the future and A could claim it only in case of need (*bisogno*). From A's point of view, giving aid to a friend (S_1 and S_2) was a risky and uncertain investment. Just as in the case of a modern insurance policy, at the moment of the decision A could not be sure that his investment would produce a return, or in other words, that his loss in T_2 would be recompensed in T_n.

An interesting letter written by a certain Salvestro de Cica to Cederni gives insight into the concerns that friendship as an investment involved. The following scenario can be reconstructed from the letter: Cederni was approached by two powerful citizens concerning an affair that remains unfortunately unclear.[31] In my interpretation, they requested a favour from Cederni who was hesitating whether to do it. He thus asked the advice of de Cica. By presenting several arguments, de Cica was trying to convince Cederni to 'let them (the two powerful men) take care of him [*liberamente rimetiti nele braccia loro*].'[32] Some of his arguments deal with the moral qualities of these persons, we shall return to them later. The others treat the future. In de Cica's view, Cederni should not doubt that if these persons 'start a common affair, it will get to the desired goal and end' [*non dubitare che dando eglino*

27 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 12; Paolo da Certaldo, 'Libro di buoni costumi', p. 21.

28 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 10.

29 'Dare a chi non a bisogno é come spandere acqua in mare.' AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 21vB [seg.8.11.33].

30 *Bartolommeo Cederni and his friends*, p. 62, pp. 71 - 72, pp. 75 - 77.

31 See Kent's description, Ibidem, p. 22.

32 Ibidem, p. 60.

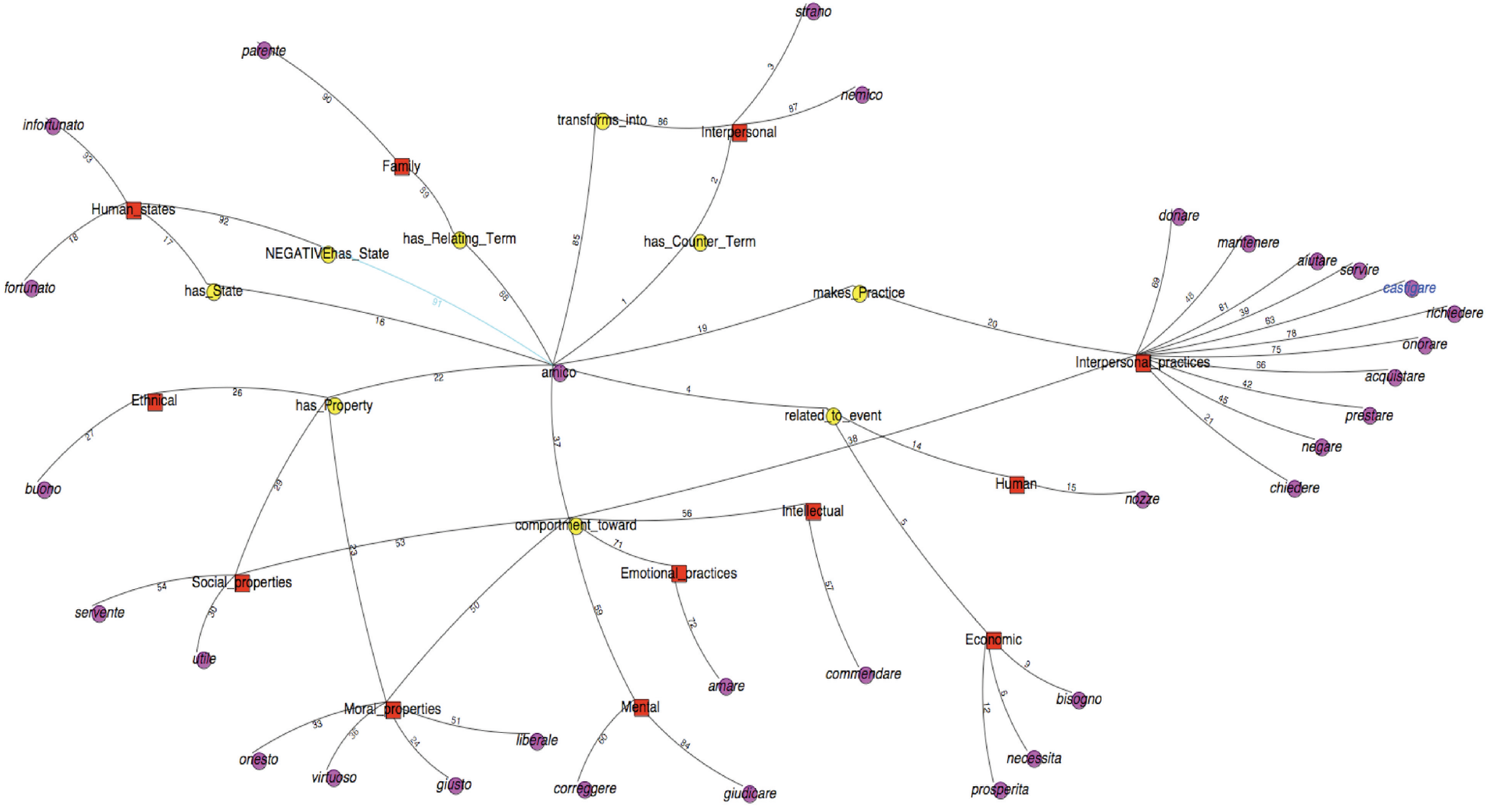


Figure 2: The visualization of the semantic field of amico.

principio a' fatti loro e tua, che non volesi dar loro mezo e fine].[33] What was this desired goal? De Cica answered with a complicated sentence:

> E questo sarebbe e per gravezza che s'avesse a porre e per ongni altro tuo bisogno, darti quuello [sic] aiuto e favore dove bisongniasse, chon quella h[o]nesta che richiedessi la materia che fusse tua chonservazione che non sarebbe altro che fare loro faciende propie.[34]

Finally, de Cica reminded Cederni about the uncertainty of the future, and the need to be prepared against it. As a whole, the words of de Cica support our results: the main reward of friendship as a strategic interaction was the promise that friends will help in the uncertain future, though, as the hesitation of Cederni indicates, this was not straight-forward. It remained a risky transaction.

As well as the possible losses that the strategies could lead to, increased the difficulties that the decision maker, A, had to cope with. The main risk that he had to face was the loss of B's friendship or his transformation into an enemy. Since in many passages, Giovanni encouraged his sons to avoid any conflicts and enmity,[35] this was the worst possible outcome from A's perspective. His underlying interest was in maintaining the friendship by all means.[36] If we look at the other main social category of late medieval Florence, 'enemy' [*nemico*], this becomes understandable. The abundance of surviving sources suggest that *nemico* was in fact as important as *amico.* Family conflicts, disputes among neighbours, political and economic clashes were all constant elements of social life. The heart of Giovanni's dilemma is that all available strategies could lead to the non-desired outcome that B became the enemy of A.

From the perspective of B, S3, the rejection of his request, was the worst strategy; there is thus no need to explain why this might have led to the loss of friendship. It is more interesting to examine how in Giovanni's view S2 ('serving more than reasonable'), the best option for B, would bring about this outcome:

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33 Ibidem.

34 'This would be - in case of either a forced tax or any need (bisogno) that you might have - giving you the help or doing the favour that were necessary with the honesty that your problem would require for the survival, which would be nothing else than them attending to their business.' Ibidem.

35 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale,' p. 12 ; AR MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 21r B, f. 24r B [seg.8.11.33]. Also a list of sententiae, entitled 'Tutte le chose che l'omo chonviene fare' in the Colombina, MS 5-3-25(5) suggests a series of social practices to avoid conflicts. See ff. 1r - 7r.

36 In several passages, Giovanni suggested strategies to maintain friendship, Ibidem, f. 24r B.

> Tanto piu [B] hodiano (sic) quanto piu debbon dare pero che colui c'acatta piccola quantita diventa debitore ma colui che acatta grande diventa nimico.[37]

Human networks have a key feature: if there is no equilibrium or reciprocity in the exchange of resources, certain members of the network, the debtors, get into a subordinate position. This is the pattern that characterised the client-patron system. But through this sentence Giovanni consciously opted out of the client-patron relation. He encouraged his sons to maintain equilibrium. In terms of the reasoning applied in this sentence, the disequilibrium in friendship involved the risk of hatred from the part of B. On the one hand, enmity was an obvious risk that A wanted to avoid. On the other, an emotionally unstable friendship could not function as a reliable insurance; the reward of the transaction was even less certain. As we have also seen in the Chapter Five, which treats the social categories of 'poor' and 'rich,' Giovanni and his contemporaries saw vertical relations burdened with tensions and dangerous emotions. Agents were therefore interested in keeping up not only vertical but also horizontal friendships where the distribution of power was symmetrical. So was Giovanni, who had friends from lower social groups, as well as from his own social milieu.[38]

This interest also indicates the strategic interdependence of A and B. Since A's overall goal was to keep up the equilibrium and maintain the friendship, the final outcome of the game was a product of B's reaction as well. A had only partial control of the outcome; to achieve his desired goal, securing the friendship of B or avoiding any conflict with him, he had to take B's interests into consideration.

The examination of S_3, *rejection,* can shed further light on the extent to which B controlled the game. S_3 is the choice that enabled A to defer and to quit the game. By choosing S_3 A could avoid any immediate loss, although, as Giovanni warned his sons, this option involved the same risk as S_2 and S_1: B could become the enemy of A.[39] The question for Giovanni was how A could quit the game without taking this risk. He outlined two possible strategies. $S_{3[1]}$ is turning down the request of B face-to-face. Giovanni did not suggest this strategy because it might lead to the non-desired outcome of hostility.[40] He opted for $S_{3[2]}$. This consists of

37 'The more they[B] hate you, the more they owe you, since one who gets a small amount becomes a debtor but one who gets a big amount becomes an enemy.' AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 24r B.

38 Kent, 'The making of a Renaissance patron', pp. 73 - 74.

39 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 10 -11.

40 Ibidem, p. 11.

practices, such as simulation, or temporisation, that were meant to make B refrain from his request.[41] In addition to the avoidance of enmity, there was another reason why A could not quit the game by following S3[1]. He had a key interest that determined the entire transaction: maintaining his reputation. By opting for S3[1] he could imply an avariciousness that, as Giovanni says, could destroy his reputation.[42] What clearly indicates the significance of B in the transaction is that in Giovanni's account A had very limited possibilities to quit the game. Giovanni depicted a noncooperative game, the outcome of which was not the result of negotiation.

Giovanni's dilemma highlights the risks of friendship as an informal insurance system. It was an essential social tie that enabled agents to prepare for economic and social crisis (*bisogno*, as they said). A metaphor in the *ricordanze* of Filippo di Bernardo Manetti, the brother of the famous humanist, Giannozzo, illustrates perfectly the defenceless situation of a person who lacked this essential social tie: 'Those who have no friends are sluggish and without life.'[43] Friendship was nevertheless merely an informal relationship. Players had no institutional guarantees, such as notarial acts, that might have assured a recompense for their services.

4. Strategies to secure the informal network of friends

In the absence of institutional guarantees, one can expect that players used alternative strategies to secure and control the trustworthiness of other players. Before carrying on with the analysis of Giovanni's decision situation, I examine social practices such as selection, judgement and categorisation that were all important means to reduce the risk of the players.

What was the ideal friend like? Figure 2 makes visible those properties that Giovanni ascribed to the category of *amico.*[44] His template of ideal friend can be divided into two dimensions, material and moral. Qualities such as *giusto*, *buono*, *virtuoso*, and *onesto* make up the moral dimension. Characteristics such as *ricco* and *fortunato* constitute the material

41 Ibidem, p. 10-11.

42 "Nulla si truova tanto contradia alla fama e gratia degl uomini quanto l'avaritia ne col corpo ne colla mente mai riposa l'avaro." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 24v A[seg.8.52.1].

43 'Chi non a amici e torpo e senza vita.' BNCF, MS Magl. VII. 1014, f. 19v. A similar idea is reported by Paolo da Certaldo, 'Libro di buoni costumi', p. 39 and p. 9.

44 See the nodes around 'has_Property' on figure 2.

dimension of the template. The following passage reveals how Giovanni saw the relationship of the two dimensions to each other:

> Et vogliate più tosto amici virtuosi che richi, et anche vogliate più tosto amici fortunati che infortunati et poveri.[45]

This sentence describes a preference hierarchy or pyramid. At the bottom of the pyramid we find poverty, which is rejected as opposed to wealth. On the one hand, this preference indicates very well the economic nature of the relation between friends, and the negative perception of poverty. On the other, it leads us to the intrinsic difficulty of friendship as an insurance system, one about which many contemporaries complained. The same Filippo di Bernardo Manetti who noted that people without friends are sluggish recorded bitterly the following sentence:

> O quanti amici e quanti parenti si trovava l'uomo nel felice stato non respirando li contrari venti.[46]

Also another diarist recorded a similar message.

> Tu ch a danai vedi ch ai cento amici ghuarda ben cio che dici ch il danaio perde tali amici perde.[47]

Filippo had good reasons to note such bitter words. He inherited an enormous fortune that he gradually lost, as he said in his tax report in 1446, due to the insupportable forced loans.[48] In late medieval Florence friends and forced loans were interrelated. The amount of tax that one had to pay was defined by a small committee in each district. As documentary evidence indicates, influential citizens often asked their friends to intercede with tax-assessors.[49] Apparently, Filippo lacked friends who could help him, or his enemies, Luca Pitti and Niccolo Soderini, were stronger. The fact that many different people copied the *sententiae*

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45 ‘ You should want rather virtuous than rich friends, you should similarly want rather lucky than unlucky and poor friends. ‘ Rucellai, ‘Zibaldone Quaresimale,’ p. 10.

46 ‘Oh how many friends and relatives one found in a happy state without noticing adverse winds.’ BNCF, MS Magl. VII. 1014, f. 11r; the same passage can be found on the binding of the Colombina, MS 7-1-48. Giovanni Morelli quoted the Latin version of this passage, ‘tempore felici multi nominantur amici; Dum Fortuna perit nullus amicus erit.’ Giovanni Morelli, *‘Ricordi’,* in V. Branca (ed.), *Mercanti scrittori: ricordi nella Firenze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Milano, 1986), p. 202.

47 ‘You who have money you see that you have a hundred friends, be careful what you say, those who lose money, lose such friends, too.’ BNCF, MS II. X. 57, f. 2r.

48 ‘La mia sustanzia e chonsumato nella inchomportabile gravezze’, quoted in L. Martinez, *The social world*, p. 134.

49 *Bartolommeo Cederni and his friends,* p. 70.; Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, T*uscans and their families*, p. 4.

expressing the idea that the number of friends decreases proportionately with the loss of wealth implies that this could have been a common experience. The difficulty is obvious: one needs the assistance of friends in time of crisis when, however, agents tend to forsake their friends.

This contradiction also explains why moral qualities were preferred to material properties. Agents seeking to build a network of friends could use only moral properties as guarantees. Particularly telling is the use of honesty as a highly expected and prized property. Apart from truthfulness, this had some further connotations that the *Zibaldone* documents. On f. 35v Giovanni made a list of supreme goods according to certain philosophers. One of the entries of this list is honesty as the supreme good of the world.[50] He also copied a letter of Seneca (*Epistulae morales ad Lucilium*, LXXIV) in which the Roman philosopher claimed that honesty implied security and stability, the most important properties that an ideal friend had to possess.[51]

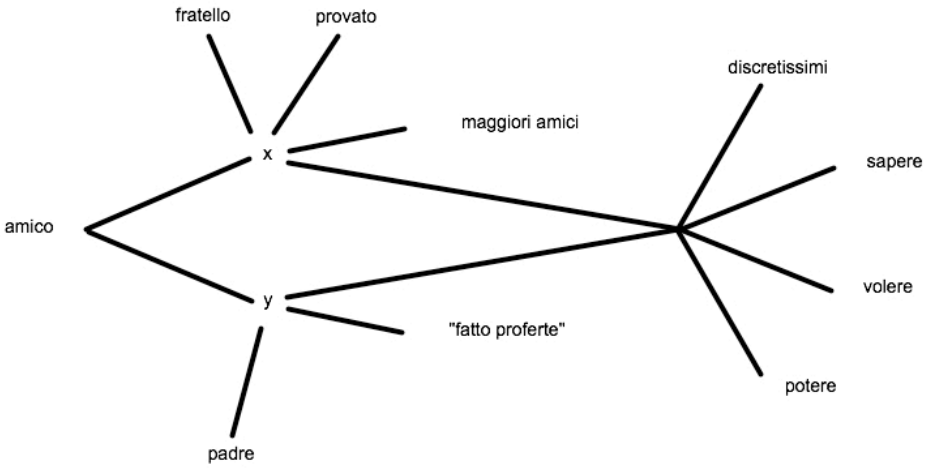


Figure 3: The description of two friends (x,y) in a letter by Salvestro de Cica to Bartolommeo Cederni.

50 "Epicuro el sommo bene pose nelle volupta del corpo (..) Aristotelle nell onesta e nella virtu pose il sommo bene." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 35v B [seg. 18.14.66].

51 Ibidem, f. 156v.

The use of moral properties to reduce risk gave specific tasks to agents. The *Zibaldone* and other sources encouraged their readers to evaluate and judge their friends continually. As Giovanni wrote, a rich person cannot commit a bigger mistake than to consider as friends those who are in fact not his friends.[52] The unknown owner of another diary, the BNCF, MS Pal. 600, similarly noted that one must always judge one's friends.[53] Another typical task that contemporaries frequently emphasised was the testing of friends.[54] For instance, in his *ricordanze*, the chronicler, Benedetto Dei created a long list of 'tested friends.'[55] Although sources do not explicitly mention it, we have good reasons to think that the most important task of the players was continually categorising their friends. *Amico* was in fact a super category that covered a wide range of sub-categories. *Buoni amici, amici provati, vero amico* were all sub-categories of the label *amico.* Since Giovanni consciously used these terms to designate specific types of friends, they were all meaningful and widely understood subsets of the category *amico*.

The letter by Salvestro de Cica, which we have already seen, can demonstrate how this categorisation functioned in real life.[56] To convince Cederni about the trustfulness of the two powerful citizens (henceforth X and Y), De Cica gave a detailed description of them. In other words, he categorised them by means of a mutually understood template (the figure 2 attempts to reconstruct this template). After declaring that both X and Y were members of the category *amico,* de Cica began to use a series of sub-categories. While X belonged to the sub-class of *maggiore amico,* Y had the status of ordinary *amico.* To enhance the positive perception of X, de Cica put in action the sub-category we have just examined: X was a tested friend. By contrast, Y was not a member of the class of *amico provato,* though he had just offered his services *(fatto proferte* (sic)), which supported his trustfulness. He also considered it important to inform Cederni about the nature of the bond between him and X and Y. To describe the distribution of power in his relationship with them, he applied the terminology of kinship. De Cica regarded X as his brother and Y as his father. Here I think *fratello* might have referred to a horizontal tie, whereas *padre* denoted a vertical friendship.

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52 Ibidem, f. 24r B.

53 BNCF, MS Pal. 600, f. 116r.

54 "Saprete del vostro esserne massai a voi molto di rado molto pocho bisognera prouvare / o / richiedere gli amici." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 23rA [seg. 8.31.143]; BNCF, MS PAL. 600, f. 120r; Certaldo, 'Libro di buoni costumi', p. 43.

55 B. Dei, *La cronica*, p.137.

56 *Bartolommeo Cederni and his friends*, pp. 59-60.

Even though X and Y were members of different sub-classes of *amico*, they had some common qualities such as *discretissimo*. They fulfilled the requirements of *amico* by possessing the three essential properties of this category: moral excellence (*volere*), intellectual abilities (*sapere)*, power within the community (*potere*).[57] One element is absent from the description of X and Y, however. This is love. Perhaps *fratello* and *padre* were meant to communicate emotions, though, for some reason de Cica omits to make explicit reference to emotions. I shall return to this question later.

De Cica's letter demonstrates that categorisation, testing and evaluation of friends were not rhetorical terms but real life activities, all parts of friendship as a strategic interaction. Agents had to master these practices to participate successfully in the complex and risky market of friendship. The great number of surviving similar documents in the Florentine archives begs further research on how these practices worked in real life interactions. Research of this kind could also enhance our understanding of human risk and risk management.

5. Rationales and reasoning applied in the decision

In addition to the possible outcomes and the interests of the players, a decision frame has other essential constituents: the rationales and the reasoning applied to justify the available choices.[58] A decision situation becomes a dilemma when each strategy seems to be equally rational. In this case we can speak in terms of conflicting rationales. The decision situation described by Giovanni is a perfect example of this. According to his belief system both S1 and S2 could seem to be rational choices. The analysis of this phenomenon will uncover a contradiction between his belief system and his social environment. At the same time, a knowledge system offers many different rationales that the decision maker can apply; the use of a given rationale is a question of choice. Rationales are in fact filters through which the decision maker conceptualises his decision. The exploration of the filters that Giovanni

57 'I' non o due huomini in tutta la terra, di chi faccia tanta istima e ch'i servissi piu volentieri ch' e sopradetti, perche i' loro e potere e spare e volere.' Ibidem, p. 60.

58 See also E. Shafir, I. Simonson, A. Tversky, 'Reason-based choice', *Cognition* 49 (1993), pp. 11 - 36.

selected will give us further information about his conception of friendship. Finally, this last section has another aim, the study of the reasoning mechanism in the decision process.

First I examine what might have justified A's decision to quit the game. From a cognitive point of view the question is what rationale determined the decision between S3 and (S1 or S2). Giovanni reflected on this problem.

> Ma quando da lloro [amici] fussi richiesti di cose che vi fusse troppo sconcio o troppo danno, giudico che non sia male a negarlo perche deb'io avere piu caro l'utile loro che'eglino il mio?[59]

This sentence implies that the decision situation had two possible reference points: the interest of A (*utile mio*), and the interest of B(*utile suo*). The decision between S1 and (S2+S3) largely depended on whose interest was preferred by B. As the second part of the sentence underlines, if the request of B exceeded what A could offer or if it was harmful for him, two things were implied:

> 1. For B his own interest was more important than the interest of A. In other words, B did not take into consideration the interest of A. As Giovanni made explicit, this was unacceptable. Hence, B broke the rule of the game, which was a step that justified the decision of A to quit the game.

> 2. If A fulfilled a request of B which was more than he could offer, this would imply that A preferred the interest of B to his own interest, which was also unacceptable.

This explains how A's decision was influenced by the question of whose interest dominated the interaction.

59 But if they [friends] asked me things which were too excessive or too harmful, I think that refusing [their request] is not wrong, why should their interest be dearer to me than my interest to them? Ibidem, p. 10.

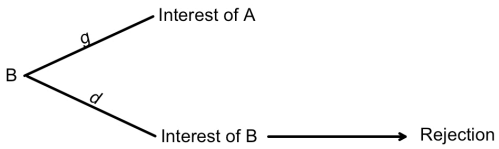


Figure 4: The decision of B.

But by fulfilling a request that used the interest of B (*utile suo*) as the preferred reference point, A could however loose his initial dominance. He would get into a subordinate position. This was an outcome that A had to avoid.

The dominance could not be of course measured in terms of mathematical figures. By choosing either S_1 or S_2, in T_2 A necessarily had a loss, and B had a gain. Most probably, from A's point of view, the dominance meant that his loss must be in equilibrium with B's gain. Game theorists might call this a minimax strategy, since it sought to minimise the maximum loss of A. By contrast, the expected behaviour of B was minimising his own possible gain.[60] What is striking in this reasoning is its ego-centric and non-altruistic nature. Instead of selflessness or mutual love, the respect of A's interest was what co-ordinated the game.

This reasoning also reveals the limits and the fragility of friendship. As the figure 4 shows, B could choose either *g* (A's interest is the reference point) or *d* (B's interest is the reference point). The fact that only *g* was accepted is somehow obvious. As contemporary diaries kept repeating, asking for what the other could not give or what was harmful made no sense.[61] What is not obvious is that Giovanni did not offer the option of negotiation. Why did *d* imply the need of quitting the game? Why was 'the asking only what the other can give' such a fundamental rule that its breaking lead to the rejection of the request?

60 Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale,' pp. 10 - 11.

61 Ibidem, p. 12. Similar advice can be found in the BNCF, MS Pal. 600, f. 117v.

For *g* had another consequence. Giovanni suggested that if B chose *g,* he had to be re-categorised. B lost his status as *buon amico*, which is just another way to signal the loss of trust.[62] It seems that friendship as a game was directed by rigid and complicated rules; players had to be cautious not only in fulfilling but also in asking favours. Again, in the light of the contradiction I have just mentioned, this is understandable. Friendship was an essential constituent of social life but one that lacked institutional control and guarantees. The need to control the market of friendship made the players sensitive. The lack of institutional control was counterbalanced with a complex set of tacit and shared rules that co-ordinated friendship as a strategic interaction.[63] I think the reason why sayings, quotations and proverbs proliferated in merchant diaries is that people were seeking to transmit this shared understanding to the following generations. Friendship was in fact an extremely fragile social bond, the successful management of which meant a serious challenge for the players.

If the reasoning applied to decide between S3 and (S2 or S1) is consistently used to evaluate S1 and S2, then S2 could be eliminated as an irrational choice. S2 is the strategy that claims that one should 'serve his friends with a generosity that is more than reasonable.' Apparently, this contradicts the rationale prescribing that the loss of A must be in equilibrium with the gain of B. In addition, as earlier said, S2 could lead to negative outcomes such as loss of friendship and poverty. Hence, in terms of losses, S2 was the worst strategy. S1, 'giving moderately to friends' was, by contrast, the strategy of equilibrium where B had a minimum reward and also the loss of A was minimised. If S1 was the most beneficial why did Giovanni treat the seemingly not reasonable S2? Because both S1 and S2 were rational choices. To judge them, different but equally important rationales were used. To justify 'the moderate help,' S1, Giovanni invoked an economic credo:

> E massai dico che sono quelli i quali usono le cose come e quando e quanto basta e non piu all avanzo serbono.[64]

62 Ibidem, pp. 10-11.

63 Paul D. McLean's *The art of the network: strategic interaction and patronage in Renaissance Florence* (Durham, N.C., 2007) offers a valuable insight into the tacit and shared knowledge that determined the correspondence between friends.

64 And massai are those who use resources as and when and as much as is necessary and they do not keep more on the side. AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 20v B [seg.8.2.146].

Massaio (or thrifty in English) here[65] describes those persons who follow the economic strategy immortalised by Leon Battista Alberti in his *I libri della famiglia.* In brief, this prescribed accumulation, and justified any expenditure only in case of necessity.[66] As Alessandro Perosa has proved, Giovanni used the passages, such as the one on *masserizia,* of a pseudo version of Alberti's work (the so-called pseudo-pandolfinian version) to compose some sections of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[67] However, this text does not invoke the economic credo of *masserizia* to regulate the relationship between friends. It was Giovanni's own idea to apply an economic strategy to justify a decision concerning friendship. He similarly borrowed the sayings of antique authors (Aristotle, Ovid, Seneca the Younger and others) to construct the other rationales of S1:

1. If one does not follow S1, he takes the risk of impoverishment.[68]
2. S1 is the strategy by means of which one can increase his wealth. [69]
3. Keeping wealth is much more difficult than creating it.[70]

This is the strategic use of culture I have mentioned in Chapter Two**.** Giovanni in fact *reused* the passages of the ancients to present S1. The originality lies in the way he combined them. We can therefore raise the question, what do these rationales tell about *his own* conception of friendship?

The rationales dominating S1 reflect the economic and instrumental context of friendship. Fear of poverty and loss, and the focus on accumulation present S1 through an economic frame. Although sayings expressing the love of friends circulated widely in late medieval Florence,[71] Giovanni did not select any of them to judge S1, S2 and S3. Nevertheless, in

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65 *Massaio* and *masserizia* had many different meanings. Generally, *masserizia* meant household management. Sometimes it was used to describe all the properties one had. *Massaio* is a person who does household management in a perfect way.

66 The study of this economic strategy is beyond the scope of this chapter, see R. Romano, *'I libri della famiglia di Leon Battista Alberti'* in R. Romano, *Tra due crisi: l'Italia del Rinascimento* (Torino, 1971), pp. 139 - 147.

67 A. Perosa, 'Lo Zibaldone di Giovanni Rucellai', p. 115.

68 "E ciascheduna cosa che si da agl'indegni si perde e chi spreza la richezza sua oltra modo tosto viene alla amara riva della poverta e tal re non é re ma pupulatoro della republica e guastatore del regno."AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 21v A [seg.8.8.107], "Anchor disse che chi non serve misura nello spendere suol suol presto impoverire," f. 21v B [seg.8.13.45], "Chi non obserba misura nello spendere suolo presto impo verire e chi vive povero in questo mon do patisce molto necessitá e soffera molti stremi bisogni," f. 20v B [seg.8.2.65].

69 "Rade volte si truova l'uomo largho et richo pero che la richezza non cresce per do nare ma cresce per aunare e ritene re e mantenere." Ibidem, f. 22r B [seg.8.24.20].

70 "Non si sa quanto / é / utile il danaio risparmiato ne con quanta industria e fatica s'aqsta," Ibidem, f. 22r B [seg.8.21.22], "Anchor disse che chi non serve misura nello spendere suol suol presto impoverire," f. 21r A [seg.8.13.45], "Ovidio disse che mantenere le cose aqstate non é minor virtu che di nuovo aqstare,"f. 21r B[seg. 8.6.4].

71 For instance, the fifteenth century BNCF, MS XXI 90, ff. 54r - 55v contains a thematic list of sayings about friendship, entitled 'Decti e sententie sopra l amiatia di piu savi philosophi.' A recurrent element of this list is the connotation of love and friendship. Similarly, the sayings on the f. 116r of BNCF, MS Pal 600 relate friendship and love.

another part of the *Zibaldone,* he described friendship as a source of pleasure.[72] Others also spoke about companionship as an enjoyable social activity. Paolo da Certaldo advised his readers to invite their friends and neighbours to eat sometimes together.[73] When making a mini-portrait about his grand-father, another Florentine, Francesco di Giovanni Baldovinetti noted bitterly that Guido Baldovinetti was much more interested in spending time with his friends than in honor and office holding.[74]At the same time, Giovanni was not the only Florentine to present friendship in an instrumental context. As Christiane Klapisch-Zuber has remarked, "with Morelli as with his contemporaries, kinship, friendship and his neighbourliness are (..) always evaluated in terms of their social utility."[75] The contradiction between friendship as an emotional bond and as a utilitarian-instrumental tie leads to the intrinsic difficulty that scholarship on early-modern friendship has always had to and still has to face. How could friendship involve mutual love, emotions, economic interest, client-patron relationship, asymmetric and symmetric power distribution at the same time?

Conceptualising the category of *amico* as a heterogeneous and fuzzy set enables us to resolve this contradiction.[76] As I have argued, in the mind of contemporaries *amico* was a super-category that incorporated many different sub-categories. A category is a set of possible attributes organised under a common label. In this sense, *amico* was a set of different traits such as 'onorato,' 'ricco,' or 'acting in case of necessity.' Each sub-category of *amico* was made up by a given group of traits. The fuzziness is given by the fact that sub-groups could overlap by activating common features. (See the phenomenon of overlapping on figure 2). Human categories should not be viewed as rigid classes defined by necessary and sufficient conditions.[77] I contend that love and emotions were possible but not necessary traits of the fifteenth-century Florentine conception of friendship; though they were certainly highly appreciated and desired properties. Probably in the mind-set of Giovanni and his contemporaries there was a sub-category of those *amici* to whom they were attached

72 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 34r B [seg.17.2.44].

73 Paolo da Certaldo, 'Libro di buoni costumi', p. 31.

74 BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 9r.

75 C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Kin, Friends, and Neighbor',, p. 68.

76 See the fuzziness of human categories in E. Rosch, 'Principles of categorization' in E. Rosch, and B. Lloyd (ed.) *Cognition and categorization* (Hillsdale, 1978), pp. 35-36.

77 H. Andersen, P. Barker, and X. Chen, *The cognitive structure of scientific revolutions* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 11.

emotionally, but the absence of the emotional factor in the decision frame indicates that love was not a necessary condition to be member of the category *amico*.

The reasoning applied in S1 has another aspect that is particularly telling about the difficulties that agents involved in the network of friends had to face. This is the 'if not S1 then impoverishment' logic. To justify S1 Giovanni kept repeating that by not following this strategy one took the risk of impoverishment.[78] Loss and risk aversion, and the search for stability are the behavioural patterns that are emerging from the reading of S1. Was friendship such a risky interaction that it could really lead to impoverishment? Without decisive documentary evidence we can make the following hypothesises:

1. In the absence of emotional filters, friendship tended to be an open network. Giovanni himself encouraged his sons to regard all 'good man' as friends. The template we have earlier seen was less exclusive than an emotional filter would have been.

2. As diaries often say, the more powerful a person was, the more friends he had.[79]

3. The refusal of a request was possible but risky.

We have no data about the frequency of requests that a person had to handle weekly. But the surviving correspondence suggests that a powerful person such as Giovanni Rucellai had to manage a significant number of requests on a weekly basis. This might have cost a lot of time, energy and money, which explains why Giovanni suggested the minimax strategy. The difficulty of friendship was given not only by the risks that we examined earlier, but also by the fact that agents were required to put enormous effort into it. The excessive giving to friends was indeed a strategy that threatened economic stability.

After all, S2 ('spending more than reasonable') seems to be completely irrational. The conflict between S2 and S1 lies in the beliefs and social expectations around the moral category of generosity. To justify morally that one should help his friends only in a modest way (S1), Giovanni invoked the Aristotelean conception of liberality, which is based on the calculus of a person's merits:

78 See footnote n. 69.

79 For instance, Colombina, MS 5-3-25(5), f. 11v. Paolo da Certaldo, 'Libro di buoni costumi', p. 39.

> he [the liberal man] will give to the right people, the right amounts, and at the right time, with all the other qualifications that accompany right giving;[80]

Again, it is important to underline that Giovanni did not follow Aristotelean ethics; he just *used* the Aristotelean conception of liberality. By contrast, S2 is becoming reasonable because of three beliefs:

1. The more generous one is, the more distinguished a member of the community one is. Generosity is the most appreciated social property.[81]

2. By means of generosity one can increase the number of his friends.[82]

3. Courtesy, which is according to Giovanni giving generously, is a social practice that can ease the tensions between rich and poor. [83]

Historians have often described late medieval Florence as a competitive society, which raised many expectations. One of them was liberality that incorporated a number of activities such as giving help to friends. Practising liberality in an excessive way promised the outcome of social distinction, which was obviously desired in this competitive atmosphere.[84] Besides, social competition motivated agents to extend continually their network of friends. S2 promised also this outcome. In Giovanni's social environment S2 was a rational strategy since it held the probability of outcomes that were necessary elements of social status. While S1 was rational in a material or financial sense, S2 was reasonable in terms of the prevailing social expectations. Should one prefer economic stability or social prestige? Giovanni did not give an explicit answer to this question; there is instead a laconic statement in the *Zibaldone:* rarely can one find a rich and generous man.[85]

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80 Nicomachean Ethics, IV. 1. Translated by W. D. Ross. See Giovanni's version, AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 21vB.

81 **"**Quanto e maggiore lo stato e la potenza dell'uomo liberale tanto piu largha e piu excellente e piu utile per ragione di carita," AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 21v B [seg.8.12.15]; "Tulio disse niuna cosa e piu dolce ne migliore ne piu degna di maggiore honore che la larghezza e la liberalita." Ibidem, f. 23r A [seg.8.33.57].

82 "Anche per la cortesia sachatta molti amici e parenti e d'altri benivoglienti assai per lo mezo de quali si difende le sustanze e le richezze." Ibidem, fo. 23v A[seg. 8.34.258]. See also the analogy with the eagle, the most generous animal, that is always followed by other animals. fo. 24r B [seg.8.49.6].

83 "Ancora fa bisogno all uomo richo essere cortese e usare cortesia per cio che la cortesia /e/ la piu nobile virtu e la piu bella che l'uomo richo possa avere in se e ausarla richiede molto senno e misura," Ibidem, fo. 23v A [seg.8.34.1].

84 According to the *Nicomachean Ethics* excessive liberality is in fact the virtue of magnificence (IV.2). From 1429 the work of Aristotle was available in the translation of Bruni. Although the difference between magnificence and liberality was treated in works such as Palmieri's *Vita Civile*, in the *Zibaldone* of Giovanni the virtue of magnificence is not present. See also G. Guerzoni, 'Liberalitas, magnificentia, splendor: The classic origins of Italian Renaissance Lifestyles', *History of Political Economy,* 31, (1999). p. 357.

85 'Rade volte si truove un uomo ricco e largo.' AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 22r B [seg.8.24.1].

Finally, there was another factor that influenced the decisions about friendship. This is the perceived correlation of friends and kin. A reading of fifteenth-century sources reveals an interesting phenomenon: when making assertions about either kin or friends, Giovanni and his contemporaries consistently attached behaviours and properties to a single group, '*amici e parenti'*. In reality, this was two groups, but by ascribing a number of common attributes to both, in the mind-set of contemporaries there was very probably a strong correlation between them. Similarly, letters between friends often used the fictive language of kinship to address friends.[86] The correlation has a cognitive consequence: the beliefs and rules related to a given category should be valid to its correlated categories. Giovanni made explicit that S2 was the right comportement toward kin,[87] which as a consequence of the correlation implied that S2 was the appropriate strategy toward friends as well. Again, a dilemma: should one prefer economic stability or follow the moral obligation of helping friends and kin?

There are some fundamental differences between scientific and popular knowledge systems. The former is expected to be a coherent and consistent whole, whereas the latter is merely an inventory of possible and sometimes contradictory beliefs and rules. Scientific knowledge must be valid independently from space and time, while popular knowledge is valid only in a given cultural set. Giovanni's effort to find the best strategy to respond to a friend's request indicates very well the inconsistent and contradictory nature of a popular belief system. To define the right behaviour toward friends, he contrasted different reference systems such as economic stability, social status, or moral obligations. Nevertheless, he did not explicitly declare which reference system should be favoured. The question how one should handle a friend's request remained open, and the decision between S1, S2 and S3 depended on the given situation. Competing rationalities bring about flexibility in human decisions. But this has a price: uncertainty.

86 McLean, *The art of the network,* p. 15.

87 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 22v B [seg.8.30.37].

6. Conclusion

Risk and uncertainty are unfortunately constant and universal elements of human existence. Each culture develops its own measures to secure itself against the challenges of the social and natural environment. Fifteenth-century Florentines established a network of persons, *amici*, one that functioned as an informal social insurance system. As Giovanni's dilemma has revealed, this network was an extremely complex set of relations, the management of which expected some deeply strategic thinking from the participating agents. Fragility, mutual interdependence, the struggle for dominance, the fear of loss and enmity, the need to maintain reputation were all factors that increased the complexity of friendship. To be a successful member of this network, agents had to perform continually complicated tasks such as categorisation, judgement, and selection. What is the difference between our modern category of 'friend' and the one that late medieval Florentines had in their mind?

I think the difference lies in this complexity and in a paradox: friendship was a means to prepare for the challenges of the uncertain future, an effort that nonetheless lead to a series of risky and dangerous decisions under uncertainty. Strangely, it was a relation that could promote and at the same time threaten economic and social stability. It is undeniable that also today friendship is an important tool to manage social or economic crises, but hardly does it involve the risks that Florentines had to take by being an active member of the network of *amici*.

VII. Space: The hierarchical and vertical organisation of mental spaces and spatial objects

1. Introduction: the problem posed

Since Jacques Le Goff's and his colleagues' seminal work on the urbanisation of medieval French cities, historians have often attempted to reconstruct urban networks and their dynamics over a longer time span.[1] To study how the hierarchy of urban centres was changing in transitional periods, it is common practice to rank settlements in terms of cultural, demographic and economic indicators.[2] However, historians have only rarely asked the question, how did historical actors themselves view the hierarchy of space? What indicators did they use to rank settlements?

These questions have been raised as a result of a data-driven approach. The other core chapters of this thesis are based on already existing historiographical problems. By contrast, this chapter draws on a simple observation. When I started to gather data about the space structure in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* first I detected the key spatial objects and spaces (see the discussion of terminology below) in the corpus. This led me to the discovery that they are frequent constituents of superlatives. For instance, one can read the assertion 'Florence is the most beautiful homeland of the world' in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. This sentence claims that from the perspective of beauty Florence has the highest position in the hierarchy of homelands. Many similar superlative assertions, of course with different content, can be found in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* which all together construct a hierarchy of spaces, with Florence on the top of the hierarchy. Figure 1, a cognitive map, visualises how Giovanni divided the world into meaningful units.[3] This is a traditional map as far as it reconstructs the horizontal organisation of the world. However, through the close reading of the superlatives, another, vertical, organisation of space has emerged. This is tentatively visualised on the

1 J. Le Goff, 'Ordres mendiants et urbanisation dans la France medievale', *Annales* 25 (1970), pp. 924 - 946.

2 For instance, É. François, 'The German urban network between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries: cultural and demographic indicators', in *Urbanization in history: a process of dynamic interactions*, ed. M. van der Woude *et al.* (Oxford, 1990), pp. 84 - 100.

3 As a first step, all spatial units were extracted from the corpus of the *Zibaldone*. As a second step, to find the divisional units of cosmic space, the institutional units, such as 'gonfaloniere' or 'vescovado', were eliminated. In this way, the set of categories contained in the map was finalized. The map is rendered in this circular shape because of a map that I found in Laurenziana, MS Plut. 90. Inf. 47, f. 205r. See figure 3.

figure 2. As a whole, how can we use a collection of superlatives that constructs a hierarchy to study certain aspects of a historically specific thinking?

In the light of recent and future technological developments, this question is much more important than it might seem. For instance, thanks to the Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP) the full texts of thousands of early modern English works are freely available.[4] This collections allows the study of how superlative structures, and the subsequent hierarchies, changed in the course of 250 years in thousands of texts. We are thus able to observe a phenomenon, about the historical implications of which we have no or very little information.

There are however a couple of things we know about superlatives and the hierarchies they construct. First, studying them with a positivist approach is senseless. Asking whether assertions such as 'Florence is the most beautiful homeland of the world' is true is a pointless exercise. Second, superlative structures are key constituents of many, if not all, human languages. They can therefore be treated as universal. Third, superlatives are the verbal expressions of a hierarchy of entities in the world. Ranking or hierarchizing entities is a universal mental process, albeit the content of ranking is obviously culturally shaped. The human mind constructs an intrinsic hierarchy of entities and then projects it on the world outside. Even though the hierarchy of entities is a mental phenomenon, it must have impact on the physical and social world, for instance through decision making and goal setting.

To get closer to an understanding of superlatives, hierarchies and their relationship to human cognition, we need a terminology by means of which we can describe the individual elements of a superlative pattern. After having collected all superlative assertions from the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, I formalised and arranged them in a mini corpus (see some of them in the Appendix), henceforth the dataset for this chapter. This is the formalised structure of a superlative:

f(x)(g) -> y
Florence (f) is the most beautiful (x) homeland (g) in the world (y).

Superlatives thus consist of four variables:

4 See the description of the Text Creation Partnership and how to access the collection, http://www.textcreationpartnership.org/, accessed 16, February, 2013.

y: spatial reference system, a mental space, which incorporates all *g*s, and in which *f* has the highest position.
f: the measurement object, which occupies a top position in the given spatial reference system (*y*).
g: the type of measurement object.
x: the measurement property along which *y* has an internal hierarchy: *f* has the highest property *x* in *y*.

To mine information relevant for historical research from the dataset, one needs to identify patterns and groups in the data. As the measurement property has a link with traditional scholarship, I concentrated on it when searching for patterns. As with indicators used for ranking urban centres, the measurement property is applied to grade spaces. The measurement properties that Giovanni applied to construct the hierarchy of his spatial world can be organised into groups, which will make up the sections of this chapter.

1. Intellectual achievements
2. Beauty of spatial objects
2. The factual and numeric attributes of spatial objects
3. Economic performance and well-being of citizens

At first glance, these patterns do not seem to be far from the modern indicators that we use to classify countries, for instance. But what did they mean to Giovanni and his contemporaries? How are they related to other domains such as agency? What impact did they have on the physical reality? On the base of what information was for instance the state of economy judged?

Finally, in this chapter I shall use a specific terminology to speak about space. I often speak about 'mental spaces'. In this chapter I study the network of associations attached to spaces. These networks do not have an existence outside one's mind; I therefore name the spaces that emerge from the network of associations mental spaces. Second, I distinguish spaces and spatial objects. The latter denotes buildings and other objects that can be defined with the help of an ostensive definition. The former describes larger spatial units, such as cities, countries and continents, the ostensive definition of which is not possible. In this chapter I shall often speak about the micro- and the macro-world. This corresponds to the medieval space structure by which space is divided into two essential units: inside and outside the city walls, or *dentro e fuori* as Florentines said.[5]

5 See also Chapter V. Section 3.3.

2. The historical and philological context of the data

Before the analysis of the data, it is necessary to present its historical and philological context. Superlative structures can be found in many different parts of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* but most of them are from two texts. Giovanni inserted two panegyrics of his city into the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* both meant to demonstrate the absolute top position of Florence in the hierarchy of the macro-world. One of them, most probably authored by Giovanni himself, celebrates his own historical time and emphasises the cultural, social and economic achievement of the Tuscan city state.[6] The second text is by Mariano Salvini, bishop of Cortona. According to the introductory words preceding the panegyrics of Salvini, Giovanni heard it, most probably as a speech, from the bishop in July, 1469 and later inserted it into the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. The text describes the most important Florentine churches and claims that each is the most beautiful and the richest in the religious order it belongs to.[7]

Giovanni was not the only Florentine to compile texts that claim the superiority of his city. Both panegyrics in the *Zibaldone* belong to the long tradition of *laudes civitatum* and *mirabilia urbis,* genres that flourished in medieval Florence and elsewhere in Italy and Europe.[8]

6 This section of the codex is entitled *Chome l'eta nostra dal 1400 in qua s'abbi da contentare piu che alchun'altra eta che ssia mai stata a Firenze per gli tenpi passati*. Since it is part of the most ancient section of the codex, it was most probably written in the 1450s. Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 60 - 62. See also Perosa, 'Lo Zibaldone di Giovanni Rucellai', p. 128.

7 Giovanni gave the title *Elogio di Firenze e delle sue chiese* to this chapter. Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 65 - 66.

8 See a list of praises of different European cities in K. Hyde, 'Medieval descriptions of cities', *Bulletin of the John Ryland Library* 48 (1965 - 1966), pp. 338 - 340. A non-Florentine example of the poetic *laudatio* traditionis an anonymous poem from the fifteenth century in BSB, MS Ital. 230 (f. 10r.), one that praises the beauty of the island of Sicily.

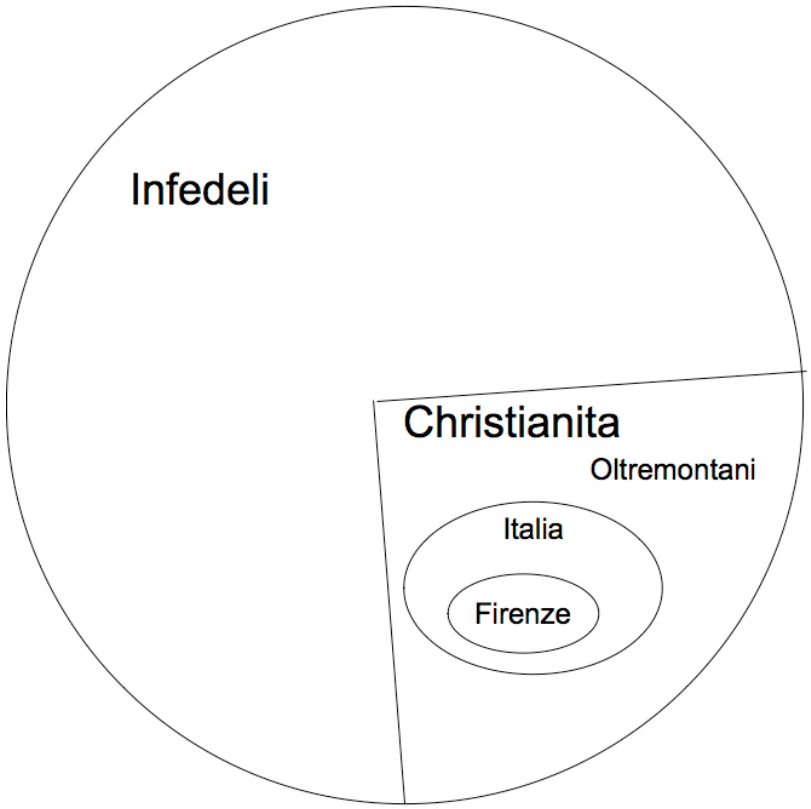


Figure 1: The cognitive map of the world.

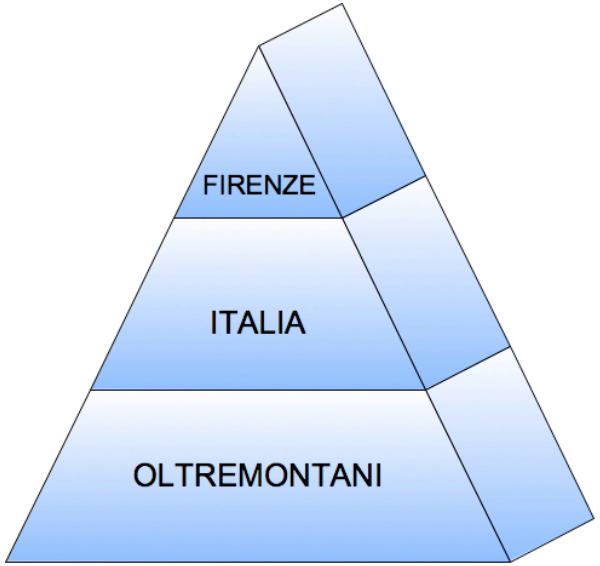


Figure 2: The hierarchy of mental spaces in the MS Zibaldone Quaresimale.

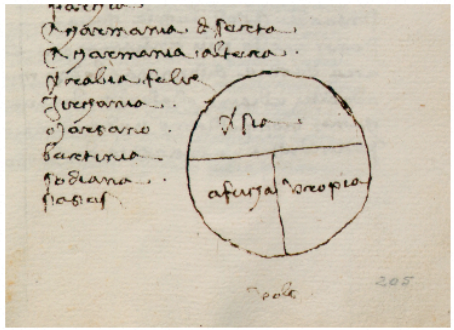


Figure 3: Extract from the MS Laurenziana Plut. 90. Inf. 47. 205r.

Like the two panegyrics in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, these texts enumerate the notable buildings in a city, and the wealth of her citizens. What distinguishes Florence from other European cities is the extraordinary popularity of these genres and the fact that many different people, artisans, intellectuals, and merchants, compiled and copied panegyrics. Florentine *zibaldoni* contain different *laudationes* texts. Particularly frequent are the speeches of Stefano Porcari (died in 1453), the Roman diplomat best known for his plot against Pope Nicholas V, who served as *capitano del popolo* in Florence in 1427 and 1428. He addressed several speeches in those years to the Florentine people in which by using the traditional elements of the *laudatio* genre he praised the virtue and wisdom of Florentines. The number of current manuscript witnesses of Porcari's speeches indicate that these texts were popular among the Florentines.[9] Another - unpublished - example of the *laudes civitatum* can be found in the *zibaldone* of Giannozzo Salviati who compiled a praise of his own neighbourhood, Santa Croce, in Florence.[10] Laurenziana, MS Plut. Inf. 47, a typical vernacular anthology, contains a long and anonymous fourteenth-century poem (henceforth, *Laurenziana Laudatio*) that, in addition to the traditional description of the beauty of Florentine buildings, enumerates the most important Florentine families.[11] The most celebrated fifteenth-century *laudatio* is of course the *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis,* written by Leonardo Bruni at the beginning of the 15th century.[12] Bruni's work is an important moment in the history of *laudes civitatum* for, like Giovanni's praise of his age, it is not a list of facts like its earlier predecessors but a complete narrative inspired by the *Panathenaicus* of Aelius Aristides. Bruni's *Laudatio* has been the subject of a long historiographical debate, one of the key questions of which was what might have motivated Bruni to compile this work.

The historiographical debates around Bruni's work have revealed the intellectual context of the *laudatio* genre that can function as a starting point for this analysis of Giovanni's spatial hierarchy. Hans Baron saw Bruni's *Laudatio* as 'the most complete expression of the new

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9 For instance, Laurenziana, MS Plut. 43.17; Laurenziana, MS Plut. 90 sup. 63; Laurenziana MS Plut. 61.26; BNCF, MS Magl. VII. 1014. The speeches were published in *Orazioni di Buonaccorso da Montemagno, il giovine : con le Rime di Buonaccorso da Montemagno, il vecchio* (Naples, 1862), pp. 16 - 59.

10 BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, ff. 17v - 18r.

11 Laurenziana MS Plut. 90 Inf. 47 is a fifteenth-century *zibaldone* that contains for instance Brunetto Latini's *Tesoretto*, Leonardo Bruni's *Life of Dante* and *Petrarch*, and various poems of Antonio Pucci. The poem glorifying the beauty of Florence (119r-121r) has no title; it is introduced with the words, 'Qui comincia le belleze di firenze.'

12 The chronology of Bruni's work has been much debated in the last decades. Hans Baron argued that Bruni's *Laudatio* was written after 1402 as a result of the Visconti wars. According to Jerrold E. Seigel, since in the *Laudatio* Bruni did not mention that Giangaleozzo was dead, it was most probably written before 1402. H. Baron, *The crisis of the early Italian Renaissance: Civic humanism and republican liberty in an age of classicism and tyranny* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 178 - 189; J. E. Seigel, ''Civic Humanism' or Ciceronian Rhetoric?: The Culture of Petrarch and Brun', *Past & Present* 34 (1966), p. 20. I shall cite the following edition of Bruni's work: L. Bruni, 'Elogio della città di Firenze', in *Leonardo Bruni, Opere Letterarie e politiche,* ed. P. Viti (Torino, 1996), pp. 563 - 649.

complex of politico-historical ideas' that he named civic humanism.[13] By contrast, other scholars have argued that Bruni's compilation was rather a rhetorical exercise in which he gathered the traditional elements of the *laudatio* than the expression of a novel political or philosophical credo. According to Jerrold Seigel, Bruni, who wanted to follow Salutati as a state chancellor, compiled the *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis* with the purpose of gaining the favours of Florentines.[14] Paolo Viti has more recently emphasised the propagandistic and ideological characteristics of Bruni's *Laudatio.*[15] Similar explanations cannot however be applied to private *laudationes* such as the ones compiled by Giovanni and Salviati. Propaganda and ideology could hardly have led them to put their own panegyrics together. But the historiographical debate on civic humanism has resulted in an important observation about Bruni's *Laudatio,* one that can help us to interpret Giovanni's spatial hierarchy as well.

> The *Laudatio Florentinae urbis* and the *Funeral Oration for Nanni Strozzi* are both examples of epideictic rhetoric. In epideictic rhetoric, as Bruni himself said with specific reference to the *Laudatio*, what counts is not truth but telling your audience what they want to hear.[16]

Accordingly, the selection of given elements, in the case of both Bruni's and Giovanni's *laudatio*, reflects what was desired and expected by the author and his imagined audience. Like the hierarchy of mental spaces, a panegyric is an idealised universe that cannot be studied with a positivistic approach. However, one can examine the strategy that the compiler followed to construct this idealised universe, and the way this is related to the contemporary belief system, to agency, and to the social, intellectual, and material world.

In summary, the hierarchy of spaces and the top position of Florence are mainly but not exclusively based on two texts of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale.* Both texts are panegyrics, a genre that had a big success in late medieval Florence. Even though this genre was popular in other European countries as well, in Florence it was particularly widespread. As Giovanni's and Salviati's example indicate, people sometimes compiled their own panegyrics for their own 'personal' or 'family' use. In the next sections I shall also reveal why Florentine people

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13 Baron, *The crisis*, p. 163.

14 Seigel, 'Civic Humanism', p. 25.

15 P. Viti, 'Il primato di Firenze' in P. Viti, *Leonardo Bruni e Firenze: studi sulle lettere pubbliche e private* (Rome, 1996), pp. 3 - 91; See also his introduction to the edition of Bruni's *Laudatio Florentinae Urbis* in Bruni, 'Elogio della citta di Firenze', p. 563.

16 J. Hankins, ''The 'Baron Thesis' after Forty Years and some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56 (1996), p. 325.

were keen on copying and compiling panegyrics and on constructing a hierarchy of the world with Florence on the top of it.

3. Intellectual achievement

A cultural and intellectual ranking of the macro-world certainly existed in the mind-set of Giovanni and his contemporaries. He proudly claimed that the most outstanding scholar of the world and the Italian peninsula, Leonardo Bruni, had lived in Florence. In the same passage he declared the intellectual superiority of Italy saying that the best scholars of the world lived in Italy.

> Messere Leonardo di Franciescho Bruni d'Arezo, niente di meno cittadino fiorentine, dottissimo inn iscienzia più che niun altro cittadino che mai avesse la nostra cipttà. Dicievasi al tenpo suo che in tutto l'universo mondo non erano più singhulari huomini inn iscienzia che inn Italia, et che il più singulare d'Italia era in Firenze, cioè detto messere Leonardo.[17]

We read in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* that Italians exceeded *oltremontani* in the profession of arms, too, thanks to their intelligence and tactical skills.[18] To underline the artistic achievement of Florence, Giovanni described Brunelleschi as the most distinguished architect of his time.[19] But Giovanni's *Zibaldone* is not the only Florentine document to give evidence of an intellectual ranking. In the preface of his *Vite*, Vespasiano Bisticci praised the intellectual achievements and excellence of Florentine artists and scholars, and aimed at perpetuating their memory through his work.[20] Luca Landucci recorded the death of Lorenzo il Magnifico and stated that he was the most glorious and the richest person of the world, one who was also a 'wise head'[*savia testa*].'[21] Throughout the Quattrocento different people, men of learning and everyday actors with varying social backgrounds, proclaimed the intellectual and cultural superiority of Florence. The fact that the reference systems that

17 "Messere Leonardo di Franciescho Bruni from Arezzo, (but a Florentine citizen as well) is highly skilled in science, more than anyone else who has ever lived in our city. People said in his time that in the entire universe there were no more outstanding men in science than those living in Italy, and the most outstanding scholar of Italy lived in Florence, and this is messer Leonardo." Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 54 - 55.

18 Ibidem, p. 60.

19 Ibidem, p. 60.

20 Bisticci, *Vite*, p. 32.

21 L. Landucci, *Diario fiorentino dal 1450 al 1516*, ed. J. Del Badia (Florence, 1883), p. 65.

Giovanni applied to point to the excellence of Italian and Florentine intellectuals and artists are the world and Italy indicates that in his mind-set there was indeed a hierarchy of spaces in terms of cultural and intellectual achievements.

First I shall study how interstate conflicts, propaganda and information culture fostered the establishment of this hierarchy. I shall then investigate how the intellectual ranking of the world reshaped the social world with a special emphasis on the self-representation of Florentines in visual and in written sources. Third, I shall scrutinise how Giovanni used antiquity as a point of reference to measure intellectual achievement, and the way this affected the appearance of the everyday physical environment.

3.1. Intellectual competition in the macro world

The declaration of intellectual and cultural superiority was a constant element in conflicts between Italian states. Interstate correspondence reveals that territorial expansion and disputes were often complemented with intellectual clashes, such as that between Florence and Lucca, in 1432.[22] This phenomenon is definitely not an innovation of the Quattrocento; political and territorial conflicts were already accompanied with intellectual clashes in earlier periods in the Middle Ages. However, thanks to the rise of literacy, from the late Trecento these intellectual battles were fought before the eyes of the wider social world in Florence.[23] The study of *zibaldoni* demonstrates that the weapons of intellectual conflict in the macro-world - correspondence between city states - had a wide circulation not only among the ruling elite of Florence. In the 1460s, Giovanni Pigli transcribed several letters addressed by Bruni to Francesco Sforza (1439) and to the Duke of Mantua, and other letters sent by Gian Galeazzo Visconti (1390) and Francesco Sforza (1443) to the Florentine Commune, and the Commune's responses.[24] In the 1450s, Michele Siminetti copied the same exchange of letters

22 Bruni composed the *Difesa contro i riprensori del popolo di Firenze* to answer the criticisms of those who condemned Florence for her attack of Lucca. The work was sent to the Commune of Lucca, who answered the claims of Florence with a letter sent to the Imperial Court. J. Hankins, *Humanism and platonism in the Italian Renaissance* (Rome, 2004), p. 23.

23 I have no information about the circulation of documents related to territorial conflicts in other Italian city-states.

24 BNCF, MS II. IV. 128, ff. 16v - 17r, ff. 25r - 31v, ff. 33v - 34v, f. 81v.

between the Commune of Florence and Visconti as Pigli did.[25] The diary of Benedetto Dei contains less sophisticated letters, some of them most probably compiled by Dei himself, than the ones authored by humanist chancellors. The letter he sent to Lucca in 1479 is particularly revealing about the importance of claims of intellectual superiority. By describing Lucca as unintelligent, crazy, and false, the author was trying to humiliate the enemy both intellectually and morally.[26] The fact that Florentines could and did continue to reproduce the medium of these intellectual conflicts even many decades later demonstrates how diligently these documents were preserved, valued and transmitted. On the base of the wide dissemination of these letters, we can assume that very similar ideas circulated by word of mouth as well.

Such correspondence was in fact addressed to both the enemy and the citizens of Florence. Leaking these documents, and making them available in the vernacular, was in fact in the interests of the oligarchy, for they served to convince the wider social world about the justice of the territorial conflict in which the Commune was engaged. In his *Zibaldone,* for example, Giovanni complained about the financial burdens that wars imposed on citizens.[27] By allowing these letters to circulate, the ruling elite could justify the high cost of wars and the subsequent forced loans.

Human intellect counted not only on the level of rhetoric but in real-life diplomatic and military conflicts; contemporaries knew this very well. Giovanni had an interesting comment on the war between Pisa and Florence in 1405 and 1406.

> Nel 1405 e 1406 avemo la guerra di Pisa, quando ce ne insingniorimo, che prociedette dalla grazia di Dio e dal *buono governo* et *grande ingiengnio* de' nostri cipttadini.[28]

In Chapter Eight I shall return to this passage. What is important here is that Giovanni and his contemporaries knew very well what Machiavelli recorded better than anyone else: the position of a city-state in conflicts was the result not only of its economic and military power

25 Dresden, MS OB, 44, ff. 46r - 48v. The Latin version of the letter exchange was published in L. A. Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum scriptores* XVI (Milan, 1730), pp. 815 - 817.

26 Dei, *La cronica*, pp. 179 - 180.

27 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 9.

28 Ibididem, p. 44.

but of the intellectual capacities of its leaders. Interstate conflicts were in fact highly complex diplomatic games where the outcome depended on the intellectual power of the players.

The fact that position in the macro world was largely based on intellectual power had an impact on the micro world. It further contributed to the emancipation of intellectuals and artists, which had already begun with Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio during the Trecento. Numerous written and visual examples demonstrate that cultural, intellectual and artistic performance was a key constituent of social recognition. Just as in the macro world a city could be believed to exceed others in terms of its cultural and intellectual achievements, so in the micro world one could distinguish oneself through intellectual and artistic excellence.

Luca Landucci made a list of the noble and wise persons of his time. In addition to Cosimo de' Medici, and the saintly archbishop of Florence, Antonino Pierozzi, Landucci included painters and sculptors in his list of the most notable Florentine persons.[29] So did Benedetto Dei, who concluded his enumeration of Florentine painters with the claim that these artists made the whole of Italy prosperous.[30] A rather long entry in a fifteenth-century *priorista* manuscript, today in the Bavarian State Library, shows us how the anonymous compiler saw the place of intellectuals such as Coluccio Salutati in his micro world. He wrote a detailed note on the death of the humanist chancellor; what illustrates his appreciation of Salutati is his comment that Salutati's death was a 'big loss of our community' [*gran danno della nostra communita*].[31]

Visual evidence reveals how wealthy citizens used their personal links to intellectuals to showcase their own social weight. Francesco Sassetti decided to add the portraits of Luigi Pulci and Poliziano to the *Confirmation of the Franciscan Rule*, a fresco painted by Ghirlandaio, in his family chapel in Santa Trinita. Similarly, Ficino, Landino and the painter himself appear on the frescos (*Apparition of the Angel to St. Zechariah* and *The Expulsion of Joachim from the Temple*) by Ghirlandaio in the family chapel (*Cappella Maggiore)* of Giovanni Tornabuoni in Santa Maria Novella. We can find similar examples from the early Quattrocento. According to some scholars, Alberti and Brunelleschi are portrayed on the

29 Landucci, *Diario fiorentino*, pp. 2 - 3.

30 Dei's list of Florentine painters cannot be found in his *cronaca* kept in the Florentine State Archive and published in the quoted edition. The BSB, MS Ital. 160, contains a late copy of texts attributed to Dei. His list of Florentine painters and the claim that they made Italy prosperous is on f. 136v.

31 BSB, MS Ital. 170, f. 92r.

Raising of the Son of Theophilus and St Peter Enthroned in the Brancacci chapel.[32] Portraits of famous Florentine intellectuals also appeared in the domestic sphere. Around 1448 Filippo Carducci commissioned Andrea del Castagno to decorate the loggia of his villa at Legnaia with portraits of famous men such as Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio.[33] The linking of family representation to intellectuals can be observed in written sources as well. At the beginning of his *ricordanze* Francesco Baldovinetti boasted that Dante had recalled his family, then named Giuda, in the *Paradiso* (XVI, 123).[34] In his *Zibaldone*, Giovanni Rucellai proudly recalled how Leonardo Bruni had congratulated him after his marriage with the daughter of Palla Strozzi, who is presented as one of the most important intellectuals of his time.[35] Finally, one must remember that this extraordinary appreciation and appropriation of intellectual achievement could have been fostered not just by the circulating inter-state letters but by the works of the humanists themselves, such as the exceptionally popular biographies of Petrarch and Dante by Bruni.[36]

All this evidence indicates a new status for artists and intellectuals in the community. While in Florence we can definitely observe a very wide-spread recognition of artists and intellectuals, to my knowledge in other European cities neither do inventories of artists and intellectuals appear in private documents nor are their portraits added to public depictions of citizens. Intellectuals and artists achieved a new position in the community thanks to their contribution to the place of Florence in the intellectual and cultural competition of the world, and the subsequent imagined hierarchy of spaces along intellectual and cultural achievement.

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32 J. Joannides, *Masaccio and Masolino: a complete catalogue* (London, 1993), p. 136.

33 These portraits are known as Castagno's cycle of *Illustrious men and women* or as the *Legnaia cycle*. The portraits are today in the *Uffizzi.*

34 BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 1v.

35 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 5rB - 5vA.

36 The high number of surviving manuscript witnesses of these biographies indicate their extraordinary popularity. J. Hankins, *Repertorium brunianum : a critical guide to the writings of Leonardo Bruni. Volume I*, *Handlist of manuscripts* (Rome, 1997), p. 264.

3.2. Measuring intellectual excellence and its impact on the everyday environment

But intellectual ranking and achievement necessitate a point of reference against which they can be measured. Giovanni was not silent on this. To prove the genius of both Brunelleschi and Bruni, he used antiquity as his reference point. He claimed that the artist was the most outstanding architect since the Romans, and the humanist the most notable scholar since Cicero.[37] By the same token, antiquity was the point of reference for measuring intellectual achievement in the macro-world. 1477 was an important date in the history of cultural diplomacy. In that year Lorenzo de' Medici decided to assemble a collection of vernacular, mainly Tuscan, poems and send it as a gift to Frederick of Aragon, the future king of Naples. The so-called *Raccolta Aragonese* was put together with the purpose of demonstrating the intellectual and cultural achievement of Florence through the works of the best poets, who, according to the preface of the collection, made poetry flourish again after the loss of the intellectual and moral achievements of antiquity.[38] We can see an interesting analogy: the rebirth of antiquity in Florence was meant to spotlight the cultural and intellectual superiority of the city in the macro-world, and the achievement of the intellectuals and the artists was measured and recognised in terms of their contribution to that rebirth. Antiquity was thus seen as a golden age from an intellectual and cultural point of view; its rebirth in Florence was considered to be the return of this golden age.

Regarding antiquity as the culmination of human civilisation was a common belief throughout the Middle Ages. What was new in late medieval Florence was the act of relating social recognition to antiquity in the wider social world and the appearance of the legend of a golden age in everyday vernacular texts. Although the first generation of humanists favoured Latin against the vernacular, ancient texts were increasingly made available in the vernacular. Household inventories reveal that relatively humble members of the Commune purchased and read ancient authors.[39] The *Zibaldone Andreini* gives an interesting insight into how the idealised perception of antiquity was constructed in vernacular texts that Giovanni may have

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37 Rucellai, '*Zibaldone Quaresimale'*, p. 61.

38 *Prosatori volgari del Quattrocento*, ed. C. Varese (Milan, 1955), pp. 986 - 987. The preface of the collection is attributed to Poliziano.

39 For instance, the private archive of the Michon-Pecori family keeps the *ricordanze* of a certain Lorenzo di Francesco Guidetti. In this extremely rich but hitherto unpublished and unknown diary, there is a list of books that Guidetti purchased or borrowed from his friends. Among the books we can find numerous works by Cicero, Livy, Vergil, Seneca, Horatio, and Juvenal. AMP, Giraldi, Ricordanze di Francesco Guidetti, ff. 39r - 39v.

read. The unknown compiler of this *zibaldone* paraphrased the words of Cicero about prudence. According to him, prudence is a skill 'to distinguish good from bad.'[40] Following the ideas of the Roman author, the compiler also enumerated the three parts of prudence (memory, providence, and foresight), but added a comment that cannot however be found in Cicero's text, one that pinpoints how antiquity was idealised and viewed in the fifteenth century. The compiler said that the *antichi* possessed all three of these skills.[41] The following words by Bruni express a very similar perception of antiquity:

> Romani, gente più elevata di ogni virtù, potente, straordinaria saggezza, il più nobile popolo del mondo.[42]

The use of antiquity as a reference point to measure intellectual and cultural achievement had significant effects on the physical environment. The new architectural style that Giovanni described as *alla romanesca* could become so popular only thanks to the almost automatic association of antiquity with moral and intellectual excellence.[43] Compared to earlier periods or other contemporary European states and cities, what was a significant novelty in Florence is that a wide circle of people regarded antiquity as a synonym of moral and intellectual excellence.

This association also explains the appearance of antiquity in the domestic sphere, again a significant novelty in the European context. There were two very typical objects in late medieval Florentine households: marriage chests (*cassoni*) and birth-trays (*deschi da parto*). These objects were among the first ones on which profane, non-religious, narrative painting appeared. Beside the stories of Petrarch and Boccaccio, antique themes, such as the Judgement of Paris, the Rape of the Sabine Women, Phyllis and Aristotle, frequently served as subjects on these decorated objects. *Cassoni* and *deschi da parto* were usually gifts, through the decoration of which the donor communicated a message to the recipient.[44] Whatever message each singular story was meant to convey, antiquity made an appearance on these objects in the human interactions of everyday life. As in the context discussed above of the intellectual and cultural ranking of the macro-world, so in the everyday physical

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40 'Disciernere lo bene dal male.' Laurenziana, MS Conv. Sorpr., 148, 2, f. 11r. See the *De Inventione*, II, 53.

41 Ibidem.

42 The Romans were the most noble people of the world. They had all virtues, they were powerful and particularly wise. Bruni, 'Elogio della città di Firenze', p. 597.

43 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 60 - 61.

44 E. Welch, *Art and Society in Italy 1350 - 1500* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 283 - 284.

environment antiquity communicated the intellectual excellence and the cultural prestige of the patron, the donor, and the owner of an object. As antiquity was used to measure intellectual achievement in the macro-world, so in the micro-world it was used to communicate prestige and power.

3.3. Summary

The imagined intellectual hierarchy of spaces in the mind-set of Giovanni and his contemporaries is the manifestation of an increasing intellectual competition in the macro-world. On the one hand, this has its origins in interstate conflicts, which frequently involved the declaration of intellectual and cultural superiority. On the other, intellectual power and capacity had a significant role in territorial and diplomatic conflicts. As existing Florentine commonplace books show, people were well informed about intellectual clashes in the macro-world. As a result of the increasing intellectual competition in the macro-world, the social weight of intellectuals and artists also significantly increased. In Florence, giving birth to two unique material and visual phenomena in contemporary Europe. On the public self-representations of wealthy citizens in family chapels or churches, not only family members and friends but also artists and intellectuals are depicted. Another novelty was the emergence of antiquity in the everyday domestic sphere. As the achievements of the ancients were applied to measure intellectual and artistic achievement, this communicated cultural and social prestige in everyday life. Nevertheless, this section has mainly focused on intellectual and cultural achievements; only a few words have been said about art and artistic achievement, which is the theme of the next section.

4. The beauty of spatial objects and the aesthetic hierarchy of spaces

In his *Zibaldone* Giovanni asked a question that seemingly remained unanswered: what is the most beautiful thing that exists?[45] The question is preceded by a common formula: 'if you want to know those things that are said below, open the named book on page..'[46] Unfortunately, we do not know which memorial book Giovanni was referring to here, and the number after the abbreviation for *carta* cannot be seen anymore.[47] Other passages of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* however answered his question. For instance, on folio 67rB one can read that 'there is no other church in the Carmelite order that is more beautiful than Santa Maria del Carmine of Florence.'[48] On f. 67vB the reader meets the claim that Florence is the most beautiful homeland of the world.

> La città di Firenze è la più bella, più nobile, più gentile che città del mondo, per modo che i Fiorentini ànno la più dengna patria che abbi tutto il Christianesimo.[49]

We can thus infer that in his mind-set beauty was a quality according to which the macro world was hierarchized.

Likewise, beauty was used to construct the hierarchy of spaces within the city walls. Giannozzo Salviati, who was also curious about the most beautiful thing that God had created,[50] introduced the *laudatio* of his own neighbourhood, claiming that the Santa Croce is the most beautiful *quartiere* of Florence.[51] The centrality of beauty as a key quality of spatial objects can be seen on figure 4 as well. This graph visualises some Florentine spatial objects in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, their types (in the centre of the graph) and the qualities that Giovanni ascribed to them. The fact that the vertex *'il più bello'* has the highest number of edges (i.e. it is the quality related to the highest number of different spatial objects) indicates

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45 The question is part of the unpublished chapter entitled *Del volere sapere piu variate chose* (ff. 29rB - 30rA), and appears on f. 29vB.

46 'E volendo sapere le cose che si diranno appresso andrete al detto libro a c.' Ibidem.

47 The examination of the codex with an UV lamp was not possible; it is therefore impossible at present to judge whether numbers after the abbreviated form of *carta* had never been added or have just faded.

48 'Non si trova più bella chiesa nell'ordine di charmellini che quella di santa maria del charmine di firenze.' Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 65.

49 The city of Florence is the most beautiful, the most noble, the most kind city of the world, so that Florentines have the most respectable homeland that the entire Christianity has. Ibidem, p. 66.

50 'Vorrei sapere qual fu la piu bella chosse che iddio faciessi mai, fu l ordine.' BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, f. 17v.

51 Ibidem.

its importance. As a whole, according to Giovanni's reasoning, Florence held the top position in the aesthetic hierarchy of the macro world due to the beauty of her buildings.

Like culture and intellectual performance, beauty and art had significance in the macro world. Luca Landucci described the visit of Pope Leo X (1513-1521) in Florence in 1515. In Landucci's words, the Commune spent an incredible amount of money to embellish and decorate the city. According to his account, several thousand people were working on breathtakingly beautiful decorative objects, such as columns, arches, paintings, placed in different parts of the city.[52] What indicates how he and his contemporaries became acquainted with the aesthetic hierarchy of the macro-world is his comment on the artistic preparations before the visit of the Pope.

> E non credere che niuna altra città o signoria del mondo avessi potuto o saputo fare tale apparecchiamento. [53]

The study of the concrete historical reasons for the Florentine Commune's investment of a fortune to embellish the city on the occasion of the Pope's visit is not the subject of this thesis. Instead, I shall study why wealthy Florentines used their own resources to embellish the city, and how the hierarchy of spaces along the quality of beauty drove their investment in extremely costly palaces and patronage of art.

4.1. Effect of the aesthetic hierarchy on the social and material world

It is undeniable that from the 1440s wealthy Florentines spent an enormous amount of money on the embellishment of their city and on the building of palaces and private residences. Excessive private artistic patronage is another feature that distinguishes late medieval Florence from other European cities. In his *The building of Renaissance Florence,* Richard Goldthwaite explained this unique phenomenon by reference to the humanist value of

52 Landucci, *Diario fiorentino,* p. 353.

53 Do not believe that any other city or signoria of the world could have been able to undertake such preparations. Ibidem.

magnificence. In his view, 'Florentines built to make a statement, for their contemporaries and for all time, about their magnificence,' and to display their wealth.[54]

For instance, to illustrate how much of his financial resources Giovanni spent on artistic patronage, it is worth recalling the most important stages of his program. His building campaign dated back to the late 1420s when his family began to purchase the properties around the family residence on Via della Vigna. As Brenda Preyer has revealed, by 1452 the purchased properties were gradually remodelled and transformed into a single living quarter. After 1455 a five-bay facade, perhaps planned by Alberti, was added to the Rucellai complex, which gave birth to the prestigious palace of the family.[55] Later between 1465 and 1470 the facade was extended. Giovanni was responsible for three further commissions as well: the facade of Santa Maria Novella (began in 1458) traditionally attributed to Alberti, the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre in San Pancrazio (finished in 1467), and the *loggia* of the family palace (1463-1466).

By analysing Giovanni's will of 1465, Kent has concluded that his building program was driven by 'the desire to assert and affirm his own importance during his lifetime and beyond' and to make a 'public point about his personal worth, taste and distinction and to transform his uncertain position in Cosimo's Florence.'[56] But how could a building program assure one's place in Renaissance Florence?

54 R. A. Goldthwaite, *The building of Renaissance Florence: an economic and social history* (Baltimore, 1982), p. 111.

55 B. Preyer, 'The Rucellai Palace', in F.W. Kent, et al., *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone: A Florentine Patrician and his Palace* (London, 1981), pp. 160 - 171. See the questions related to the attribution of the facade, ibidem, pp. 184 - 190.

56 Kent, 'The making of a Renaissance patron', p. 53.

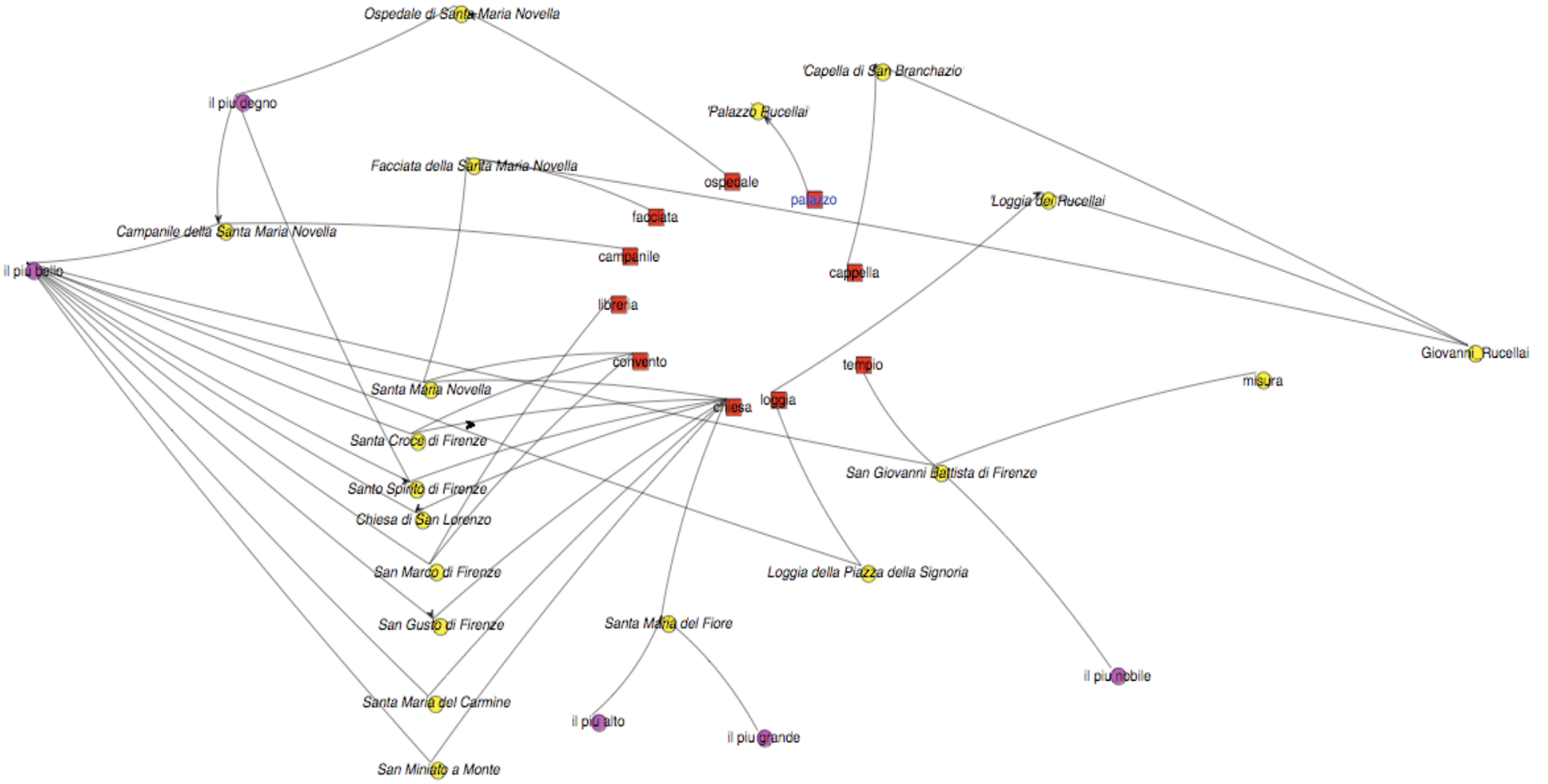


Figure 4: Spatial objects, their attributes and relationship to Giovanni Rucellai, henceforth Graph 1.

This question is even more intriguing in the light of an alternative tradition that disapproved of the excessive building activity of Florentines. It is true that humanists, such as Poggio Bracciolini, Matteo Palmieri, and even the archbishop of the city, Antonino Pierozzi, encouraged the contribution of the citizen to the beauty of the city;[57] Giovanni and Salviati however recorded another credo that restricted building activity to the realm of necessity:

> Due cose principali sono quelle che gli uomini fanno in questo mondo La prima l'ongienerare La seconda l'edifichare Ma san bernardo dicie che si debbe hedifichare piu per neciessita che per volonta.[58]

Donato Acciaiuoli gave similar advice to Giovanni:

> Se tu vuoi edificare casa fa che la necesita t'induca e non la volonta.[59]

This advice, which was certainly not followed by Giovanni, in fact echoed one of the most popular works of late medieval Europe, the anonymous *Lettera a Raimondo.*[60] The building activity that was not driven by everyday needs or that served luxury purposes was disapproved in terms of Christian priorities. The chronicler Giovanni Villani also disapproved of the excessive building activity of his time.[61] What supported and justified then what might seem an excessive commitment to artistic patronage?

Graph 1 can answer this question. It reveals an interesting aspect of the way the aesthetic hierarchy of spaces shaped social perception. It is worth examining the shortest path between the vertices *'Giovanni'* and *'il più bello'*, which goes through the vertex '*Santa Maria Novella.*' This path makes use of two edges that visualise the content of two assertions from the *Zibaldone Quaresimale.*[62] The edge between '*il più bello*' and '*Santa Maria Novella*' is based on a passage from Mariano Salviati's panegyrics and datable to 1469. This edge represents the assertion that *Santa Maria Novella* is the most beautiful church belonging to a mendicant order.[63] The second edge that relates '*Giovanni*' and the '*facciata della Santa*

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57 Bracciolini, *Dialogus contra avaritiam*, p. 118; M. Palmieri, *Vita civile,* ed. G. Belloni (Florence, 1982), p. 183; Howard, *Creating magnificence,* p. 108.

58 'There are two main things that people do in this world: The first is engendering [procreating], the second is building. But Saint Bernard says that one should build rather for necessity than for desire.' AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 83vA, [seg.61.18.20] and also BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, f. 12r.

59 If you want to build a house, the necessity and not your will should drive you.AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 93v [seg.63.1.672].

60 *Lettera a Raimondo*, p. 822.

61 Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, XII. 94.

62 The third edge between '*Santa Maria Novella*' and '*Facciata della Santa Maria Novella*' is not explicitly asserted in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*; it is an inferred relation in my ontology.

63 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 65.

Maria Novella' is based on Giovanni's will from 1465, representing the assertion that Giovanni was responsible for the facade of the church.[64] We can thus reconstruct the following editorial process. By inserting his will into the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* Giovanni reported the results of his own building program by 1465. Later he added the panegyrics of Salviati that celebrated, on the one hand, the top position of Florence in the hierarchy of the macro-world, and on the other, Giovanni's own contribution to this. Consequently, to show the importance of his building activity and his own social weight to the audience of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* Giovanni drew on a text that glorified the position of Florence in the aesthetic ranking of the world.

A building program could transform one's place in the community of Florence through the contribution to her beauty, and through the contribution to her position in the hierarchy of spaces along the property of beauty. Benedetto Dei wrote a revealing note about the relationship between beauty, wealth, and contribution. This revealing note in his diary is introduced with these words, which are followed by a list of Florentine private palaces, and churches.

> Florentie bella a fatto al tenpo di Chosimo de' Medici (..) 33 muraglie grandissime e di gran fama e di grandissima ispesa. E per groria e onore di loro e del popolo fiorentino, Benedetto Dei ne dara piene notitia a cchi verra drieto a tal nazione e a tale eta. Fra di fuori de la citta e drento inprimamente.[65]

Dei enumarated the 33 famous and most highly-priced buildings of Florence to make a record of the glory and the honour of the buildings and the Florentine *popolo* in the macro- (*fuori de la citta*) and micro-world (*drento*). The insistence on the contribution to the imagined top position of Florence in the aesthetic hierarchy of spaces was thus a medium to express power, status, and wealth. This is also demonstrated by the patronage of Cosimo and Lorenzo de' Medici who devoted an enormous amount of money as well as energy to the embellishment of Florence. Their patronage concentrated not only on their own local neighbourhood but on the entire city. In addition to the contribution to the honour of the *popolo fiorentino,* Giovanni gave further reasons why he too invested a significant amount of wealth in patronage.

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64 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 3rB.

65 In the time of Cosimo de' Medici (..) beautiful Florence constructed 33 large, very famous and very expensive buildings. And for their glory and honour, and that of the Florentine *popolo*, Benedetto Dei will provide information about this for those who are coming after this nation and epoch. Outside and firstly inside the city. Dei, *La cronica,* p. 86.

> Tutte le sopra dette chose [the buildings that Giovanni had constructed] m'anno dato e danno grandissimo chontentamento e grandissima dolcezza, perche raghuardano in parte all' onore di Dio e all'onore della citta e a memoria di me.[66]

Giovanni's words highlight how the interest of the *popolo fiorentino* (achieving a top position in the aesthetic hierarchy of spaces) and his own personal interest (perpetuating his memory) met. But his words also point to the honour of God, which is the explicit rejection of the traditional - Christian - credo that restricts human activity to the realm of necessity, and condemns luxury expenditure.

On the whole, therefore, one of the reasons for the excessive patronage of art in fifteenth-century Florence, is that the public perception of a citizen or an entire clan was largely determined by their contribution to the beauty of the city.

4.2. Aesthetic hierarchy of spaces and the belief system

The study of those qualities that co-occur with beauty in the text of Giovanni's manuscript reveals a very similar reasoning to the one we have just described in Chapter Five. The frequent co-occurrence of different types of qualities with the same spatial objects suggests a relation between them. As figure 4 indicates, beauty co-occurs with positive properties such as *degno* and *nobile.*[67] For instance, Florence is the most beautiful, the most noble, and the worthiest city of the world. The co-occurrences of aesthetic and positive social properties with spatial entities suggests that in the belief system of Giovanni and his contemporaries there was an assumed correlation between the architectural beauty of a city and the positive qualities of its citizens. This reasoning can be seen in Bruni's *Laudatio* where the splendour of the city and the moral excellence of her inhabitants go hand in hand. To illustrate how the physical appearance of Florence reflects the qualities of her inhabitants, Bruni applies the

66 All the things mentioned earlier gave me and continue to give me satisfaction (...) because they concern the honour of God, the honour of the city and my own memory. Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 121.

67 Giovanni gave the following three definitions to dignità on f. 36rB [seg.19.3.7] of the Zibaldone Quaresimale: "E nobili e potenti dicono la degnita essere posta nelle abondanti faculta e nelle famiglie generose e antiche./. I popolari dicono nella humanita e benigna conversatione del libero e pacifico vivere."

parent-children metaphor: just as some children share similarities with their parents, the noble city of Florence shares similarities with her inhabitants.[68] We have noted a similar way of thinking in Chapter Five, where the physical beauty of a man was believed to indicate his moral excellence. An analogous reasoning might be applied to the assessment of a space: the aesthetic beauty of a city was believed to be the visible sign of the qualities of the people who populated it.

A similar reasoning can be seen in a rewritten passage from Cicero in Giovanni's *Zibaldone*. The passage was inserted immediately after Giovanni's description of his villa. It thus demonstrates how he used and reinterpreted the words of the Roman orator to justify his own building activity. The passage reveals an assumed logical relation between the beauty of a spatial object and the moral and social credit (*onore, grazia* and *benevolenza*) of its builder. The extract from the *De Officiis* narrates the story of Gnaeus Octavius.[69] The Roman Consul had built a beautiful palace that was 'full of dignity and reputation.' Not only was this beautiful palace an enormous honour for Gnaeus Octavius but also significantly increased his social credit.[70] But Giovanni's passage omits the admonishment that Cicero added to the anecdote:

> The owner should bring honour to his house, not the house to its owner. [71]

Without the Roman philosopher's warning, Giovanni's rewritten version implies that the beauty of an architectural site can represent the reputation and dignity of its builder and potentially increase his or her social and moral credit.

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68 Bruni, 'Elogio', p. 571.

69 "Tulio nel primo chiamato de offitie dice lui avere inteso essere stato honore grandissimo agneo ottavio cittadino romano per la edificazione d'uno bellissimo palazzo edificato a roma nel monte palatino. E avendo detto tulio a scrivere al figliuolo ch'era iniustidio ateneper inanimarlo alle virtudi con esempli de magnanimi e virtuosissimi huomini." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 63vB [seg.31.20.26].

70 'Lo quale palazzo era pieno di riputazione e di degnita (..) che fu chagione di farli aquistare nel populo grandissima benevolenza e grazia.' Ibidem.

71 *De Officiis*, Book I, XXXIX.

4.3. Summary

The macro-world was characterised by an aesthetic and artistic competition, which was again expressed through the aesthetic hierarchy of spaces. By contributing to the imagined position of Florence in this competition, one could distinguish oneself in the micro-world. This luckily met the desire of the elite, who wanted to increase its reputation and perpetuate its memory. The beauty of public, private and sacred buildings was indicators of prestige in the micro-and the macro-world. But beauty is subjective. What objective indicators of prestige were recorded by fifteenth-century Florentines?

5. Objective data about spatial objects and their place in the hierarchy of mental spaces

Beauty is of course not a measurable or comparable quality. Perhaps for this reason numerical and factual attributes of spatial objects and spaces, such as their size, are recurrent themes in the *zibaldoni* of Giovanni and others. The owners of these documents gave extra attention to these data, some of which were meant to position a spatial object in the hierarchy of the world.[72]

5.1. Numerical attributes of spatial objects

Florentine diarists often recorded the size of important buildings in Florence and in other cities. The last folio of the fifteenth-century Riccardiana 1258 contains a list of some churches in Florence and in Rome with their height, width and other types of quantitative data (See figure 5).[73] Likewise, Giannozzo Salviati inserted a list of the most important

72 Numerical descriptions of spaces such as buildings can be found in diaries from other European countries. Richard Hill listed for instance the number of parish churches and towns in early sixteenth-century England, and the width and length of his homeland. Balliol, MS 354, p. 211 in the unpublished transcription of the codex.

73 Riccardiana, MS 1258, f. 136v.

Florentine and Roman churches and their physical parameters into his *zibaldone*.[74] So did Michele Siminetti who also included a list of the city gates, the number of towers and the size of the city wall in Rome.[75] In a similar fashion, the Laurenziana panegyric contains quantitative data such as the size of the Florentine city wall, and the number of city gates, towers, and churches in Florence.[76] In Giovanni's *zibaldone* we can meet a very similar description, one that takes into account the number of hospitals and churches as well as the city gates in Florence.[77] Instead of examining whether these data corresponded to the reality, my question is, what did numeric attributes of spaces communicate to readers and compilers of commonplace books?

A possible, albeit speculative, answer is that numerical attributes of spatial objects and spaces functioned as 'objective' and measurable indicators of both the size of a given space and its prestige. What suggests that numeric attributes functioned as prestige indicators is that Giovanni's *Zibaldone* used these data to prove the top position of Florence in the spatial hierarchy. The panegyric of Mariano Salvini claimed that Florence was the city that had the largest number of monasteries and hospitals.[78] The text also stated that *Santa Maria del Fiore* was the largest church of the world.[79] As Trevor Dean has noted, "the numbers and size of gate-towers were a source of pride, an expression of beauty, force, and economic power."[80]

Information about the population of a city was not available; what could however give an 'objective' picture of the size of a population was the number of churches. Neither did contemporaries always have information about the physical size of a city; the number of wall towers was an easily perceivable and verifiable piece of information that would provide an indication of this. As we shall see later, economic performance and wealth were also important measurement properties in the hierarchy of spaces. A clearly visible sign of a city's prosperity was the size of its cathedral and the important churches in a city. They represented

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74 BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, ff. 46r - 47r.

75 Dresden, MS OB 44, f. 85r and ff. 207v - 208r.

76 Laurenziana, MS Plut. Inf. 47, f. 119r.

77 "E nella detta cipta di firenze sono XII porte braccia LXX l'una e larghe braccia XX E intorno alle mura sono torre altre braccia XL luna e lle mura sono altre braccia XXX e grosse braccia e 1/m Sono nella detta citta di firenze circha /a/ 116 tra chiese e spedali dove si dicie messa La chiesa di santa maria del fiore overo di santa liperata si fondo nel 1298 e insino a questo tenpo che ssiano nel 1449 vise speso mille dugiento migliaia di fiorini cioe uno milione e dugiento migliaia di fiorini Il chanpanile di detta chiesa e alto braccia ciento cinquanta E chosto ciento cinquanta migliaia migliaia di fiorini che ongni braccio intorno intorno chosto f. mille fondossi detto chanpanile nel 1334" AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 81vB [seg.59.1.115].

78 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 65 - 66.

79 Ibidem, p. 65.

80 T. Dean, *The towns of Italy in the later Middle Ages* (Manchester, 2000), p.5.

the economic welfare, and so potentially the power, in other words the prestige, of a city. It is possible that for this reason Florentines recorded diligently how much the price of some spatial objects such as the main cathedral cost.[81]

Contemporary paintings and maps of cities could indicate how numerical spatial attributes that were included in written documents appeared in the real landscape. In the 1470s Francesco Rosselli engraved the *Veduta della Catena*, a realistic representation of Florence. The *Veduta della Catena* suggests why the numbers of wall towers and city gates were taken to be so revealing of the size of a city. For when looking at the *Veduta della Catena*, what stands out is the extraordinarily long perimeter of the city, a perimeter that indicates the size of its total area as well. How long was its perimeter in reality? And how large was its area? Viewer of the *Veduta*, and contemporary visitors to Florence, could not easily answer those questions; but he could count the number of wall towers or city gates, which would give an approximate but still realistic picture of the length of the city's perimeter as well as its size. Hartmann Schedel's World Chronicle also contains purposeful but imaginative depictions of late medieval Italian and other cities. Most of Schedel's illustrations in fact follow schematic and stereotypical templates. By studying these templates made by two artists, Michael Wolgemut and Wilhelm Pleydenwurf, I have tried to understand how the physical attributes of spaces as discussed above distinguished visually between centre and periphery. The short and tentative answer is that illustrations rendering less important cities such as Verona and Padua contain only a few churches and towers whereas big centres such as Florence and Venice are visualised with a much higher number of churches and towers.[82] This suggests that the two artists used the numeric attributes of spaces we have seen in written sources as visual clues to indicate prestige.

81 For instance, BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, f. 16v; BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 33r; AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 81vA.

82 Hartmann Schedel, Liber chronicarum (Nürnberg, 1493), f. 68r, f. 44v, f. 80r.

5.2. Factual attributes of spatial objects

When searching data about the temporal dimension of spatial objects in Giovanni's *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and in other *zibaldoni,* I encountered three types of factual attributes that the compilers of my sources recorded:

1. The year of the foundation of a church, or the beginning of the construction of a spatial object.[83]
2. The founder of a church, or the year of consecration of a church and the person who consecrated it.[84]
3. Actors of the macro-world (emperors, archbishops, popes) and famous persons (poets, popes, captains etc.) who were buried in a church at a certain point of time or who visited a church.[85]

A common feature of the patterns is that they all document the relationship of a spatial object with an actor of the macro-world. Just as with the numerical attributes of spatial objects, the factual data might have operated as indicators of prestige. Presumably, they spread through oral tradition, but their frequency in diaries suggests that there was a need to record and pass them on to future generations.

A plausible explanation of this need is that by constructing a 'verifiable' and 'objective' hierarchy of spatial objects, particularly churches, these data had a role in the competition between wealthy Florentines to control urban space. Giovanni recorded that Florence had 116 churches. As with the hierarchy of the macro-world, we can assume that in the mind-set of Florentines and others, there were key attributes along which they perceived and hierarchized these 116 churches.[86] We do not have concrete information about this. But there is one factor that may have made the existence of a hierarchy of this kind necessary: the frequent competitions in Florence over patronage of family chapels.[87]

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83 BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, f. 16v, f. 19r, f. 20v; BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 26v; Landucci, *Diario fiorentino*, p. 2; AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 81v [seg.59.1.175], 99v [seg.59.1.175].

84 BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 26v, f. 28v; AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 98v, f. 81v [seg.59.1.175], f. 99v [seg.64.42.33]; Dresden, MS Ob 44, f. 85v.

85 BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 32v, f. 27r, f. 35v; BNCF, MS II. II. 127, f. 36v; Landucci, *Diario fiorentino*, p. 338, p. 3; AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 98r, Rucellai, '*Zibaldone Quaresimale*,' p. 45.

86 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 81vB [seg.59.1.115].

87 Najemy, *A history of Florence,* p. 323; Rubin, *Images and identity*, pp. 6-7.

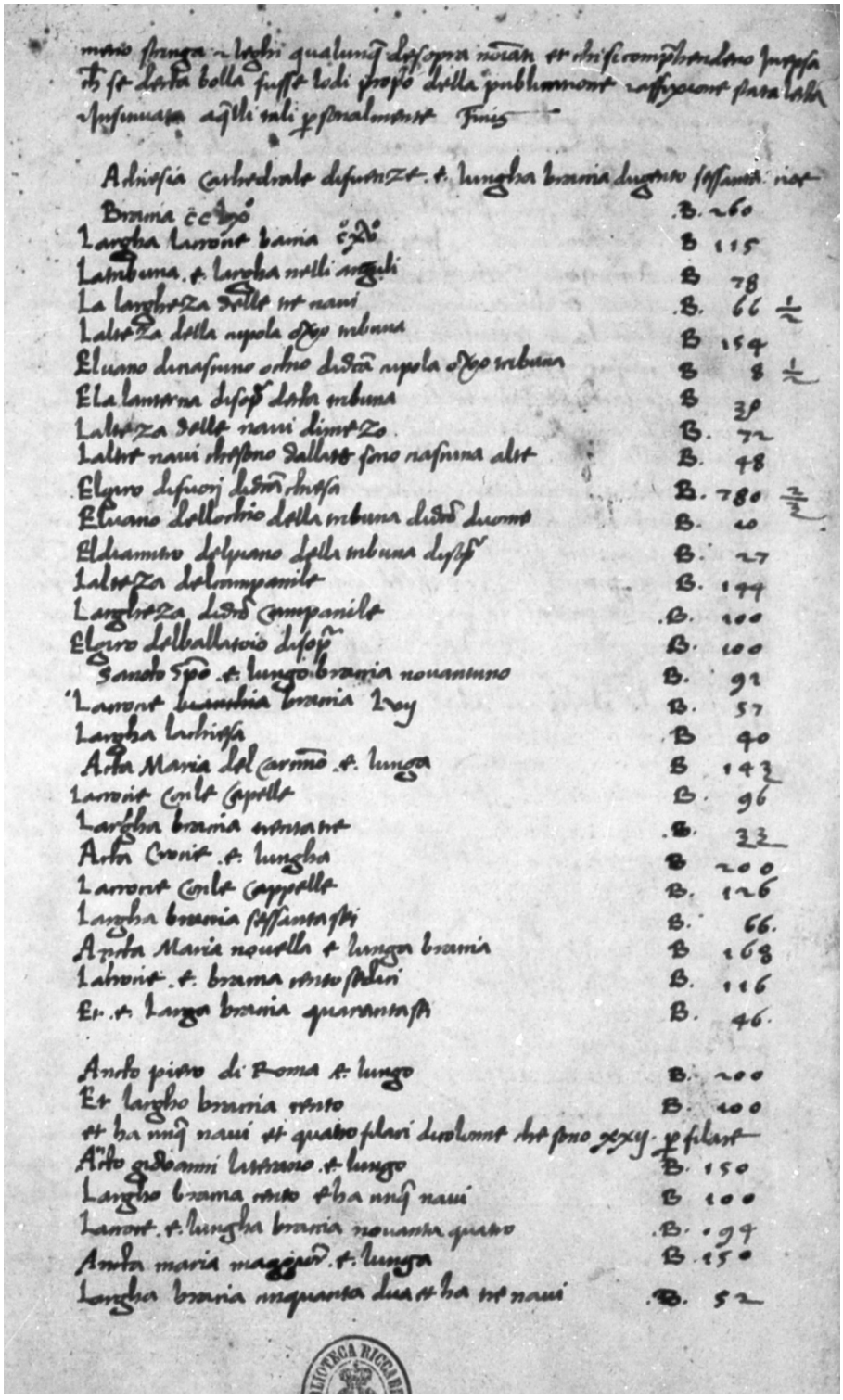


Figure 5: Spatial objects and their numerical attributes in a fifteenth century *zibaldone,* Riccardiana, MS 1258, f. 136v.

Giovanni noted in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* how his family's right to exercise patronage in the Santa Caterina chapel of Santa Maria Novella was questioned in the first half of the fifteenth century.[88] Another dispute is the one between the Sassetti, Tornabuoni and Ricci over the patronage of the main chapel in Santa Maria Novella.[89] Yet there was a market of the rights of patronage, and impoverished families often 'sold' their family chapels. This competition and market suggest that agents would have had to classify and hierarchize churches in terms of certain properties. The extent to which such numerical and factual qualities of churches may have directed real-life actions and choices needs further research.

The interest of humanists in precise and factual information about space can provide further explanation for the function of numerical attributes of spatial objects in vernacular diaries. One of the earliest known collections of city maps was produced in the second half of the fifteenth century in Florence. This collection was created by Pietro del Massaio (active 1458-72) and added to several manuscripts (Vat. lat. 5699, 1469, Vat. Urb. lat. 277, 1472, BN. Lat. 4802) containing the Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Geography*. As Naomi Miller has pointed out, Massaio's maps have some characteristics that distinguish them from any earlier city maps: improved orientation, emphasis on proportion and measurement, precise description of the relationship between buildings, use of a coordinate system and scale.[90] Massaio's maps were in fact created with the scientific exactitude that Alberti promoted and demonstrated in his *Descriptio Urbis Romae.*

> Using mathematical instruments, I have recorded as carefully as I could the passage and lineamenta of the walls, the river and the streets of the city of Rome, as well as the sites and locations of the temples, public works, gates and commemorative monuments, and the outlines of the hills, not to mention the area which is occupied by habitable buildings, all as we know them to be in our time. Furthermore, I have invented a method by which anyone, even a man endowed with only an average intellect, may make both exceptionally easily, and also very accurately, depictions on any surface, however large. It was some intellectuals, friends of mine, who moved me to do this, and I thought it good to assist their studies.[91]

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88 "E me paruto di dover fare la sopradecta memoria della cappella di sancta maria novella perche egli e stato openione di cierti che la non si murassi per noi." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 4 vB [seg.1.20.1].

89 P. Simons, 'Patronage in the Tornaquinci Chapel, Santa Maria Novella', in *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy* ed. F. W. Kent and P. Simons (Oxford, 1987), p. 225.

90 N. Miller, ' Mapping the city: Ptolemy's Geography in the Renaissance ', in *Envisioning the City*, ed. D. Buisseret (London, 1998).

91 L. B. Alberti, *Leonis Baptistæ Alberti Descriptio urbis Romae*, ed. J. Boriaud and F. Furlan (Firenze, 2005), p. 117.

In this key passage of the *Descriptio Urbis Romae*, Alberti distinguished two different groups who might be interested in the method by means of which one can make precise and exact descriptions of cities: intellectuals, who encouraged him to experiment the mathematical method to study the structure of urban space, and people with 'an average intellect'.[92] Why was factual knowledge about a given space important for them? On the one hand, maps such as the ones created by Massaio served 'the growing demands for trade and travel in an age of conquest and exploration.'[93] On the other, as Miller has argued, these maps, and the factual information about space that they convey, expressed civic pride.[94] The factuality of maps created with scientific exactitude communicated the growth and power of a city in an unquestionable way. All this supports the hypothesis that factual data about spatial objects in the *zibaldoni* functioned as an objective descriptor of the power, wealth, and size of Florence and other cities.

5.3. Summary

Why did Florentines give an extra attention to the recording of factual and numerical attributes of spatial objects? A tentative explanation is that they were objective indicators of prestige in the macro- and micro-world. This is also supported by the fact that in Giovanni's *zibaldone* quantitative data of spatial objects were used to construct the hierarchy of spaces. The number of hospitals, the size of churches, the cost of their construction were all visible barometers of economic prosperity, which is the topic of the last section of this chapter.

92 Most probably Giovanni did not know the *Descriptio Urbis Romae*. Even though he added a description of Rome to the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, as Perosa has argued, he drew on the tradition of *Libri indulgentiarum et reliquiarum*, i.e. on descriptions of Rome made for pilgrims. Strangely, the name of Alberti does not appear in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. For instance, Giovanni did not include the humanist in his list of the most notable persons of his time. See, Rucellai, *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* p. 61 and pp. 67 - 82.

93 Miller, ' Mapping the city,' p. 35.

94 Ibidem, pp. 65-66.

6. The economic hierarchy of mental spaces

A number of assertions in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* indicate that in the mind-set of Giovanni there was an economic hierarchy of the social and spatial world. On folio 82vB, London is said to be the richest city in Christendom, and Damascus the wealthiest settlement of the non-Christian world [*infedeli*].[95] Florence did not therefore hold the top position in the hierarchy of the richest cities. Nevertheless, as we have seen in Chapter Five, according to Giovanni and his contemporaries, the richest person of the world, Cosimo de' Medici, lived in Florence. The use of wealth and economic performance as a variable to rank cities is not surprising from a merchant-banker. Furthermore, the fifteenth century saw a fierce economic competition between city-states in the macro world.[96] There are two main questions that previous scholarship has not addressed, ones that *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* can enable us to answer.

First, the economic ranking of spaces and the assessment of the domestic economy must have been based on what were seen as objective pieces of information. In the previous section, we have seen examples of factual data about spatial objects; what types of factual data about the economy of Florence and other cities were recorded by Giovanni and his contemporaries? Detailed studies on how fifteenth-century Florentines monitored the economic situation of their city and of the broader world, and which information they used to make that assessment, do not exist. A comprehensive analysis of those questions is beyond the scope of this chapter, but Giovanni's *Zibaldone* and other documents can offer a useful insight. Second, what did wealth, understood as well-being, mean in fifteenth-century Florence?

95 "Diciesi che la piu riccha ciptta che abbia il cristianesimo e londra e la piu riccha cipta che ssi tra gli infedeli e domascho." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 82vB [seg.61.2.1].

96 Goldthwaite, *The building of Renaissance Florence,* p. 32.

6.1. Factual data about the economy

Florentines had detailed information about the income of their own city and of other Italian cities. Giovanni says about the time in which he lived that the revenue of Florence had never been larger, though he does not provide concrete figures.[97] By contrast, in his chronicle he gives information about the expenses of the city during different wars, for instance during the war between Florence and Filippo Maria Visconti from 1423 to 1428.[98] Information about the city's revenues probably circulated through oral tradition. The fiscal activity of the city-state was administered and managed by the Officials of the Monte *(Ufficiali del Monte*), who were selected from skilled merchants, and who probably leaked information about the current fiscal situation. Similarly, members of other city councils might have released fiscal data. Information about the revenues of other Italian cities was also in circulation. From the chronicle of Goro Dati, which Giovanni copied into his *Zibaldone*, we learn that the income of Milan was 500,000 florins during the rule of the Visconti.[99] It is interesting to see that in the 1450s Giovanni was able to reproduce fiscal data from the 1420s. This suggests that he collected and recorded fiscal information that was in wider circulation. We can assume that he compiled these data because they were useful in his everyday business activity, for instance, to decide about investment strategy or to have a clear picture about the global and local economic situation.

Ricordanze suggest that merchants regularly noted the price of services, objects, and food. Account books that recorded the expenses and the incomes of economic and business activities were widespread throughout contemporary Europe. But Florentines extended the culture of account books to the entire domestic sphere, "the worth of things was constantly calculated to the last denaro."[100] They kept records of the price of the everyday objects that they possessed. "" The silk manufacturer Lapo di Pacino da Castelfiorentino, whom I shall discuss at greater length in the next section, compiled a long inventory of all the household

97 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 66.

98 Ibidem, p. 46.

99 "Ecco la nobile Città di Milano per igual parte de due frategli cioè l entrata e rendita che si dicea essere cinquecento migliaia di fiorini l anno." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 179r [seg.72.1.59].

100 Rubin, *Images and identity*, p. 39.

items in his possession; most importantly, he included the price of each object.[101] Numerous similar examples could be cited.[102] The price of everyday services, such as wet-nurses and barbers, were also noted.[103] In his *ricordanze* Francesco di Antonio Giraldi set aside an entire folio for the price of wine, corn and beans in 1436, though he later omitted to add specific figures, or they are no longer visible.[104] Luca Landucci's diary also contains many references to the price of food. Even though the number of existing *ricordanze* written by more humble Florentines is very small, circumstantial evidence, such as resolutions of city councils, suggest that some peasants also kept account books.[105] Thanks to this meticulous administration, Florentines had in fact a rich and complex set of information to judge the economic situation and to notice the smallest changes in domestic economy.

We have good reason to think that they also monitored and reflected on long and short term economic tendencies. From folio 66rB to folio 67rA Giovanni inserted an account into his *Zibaldone* that describes how cold, drought, snow and other natural catastrophes determined the quality of the crops and wine, and their price in certain years between 1458 and 1474.[106] The account contains some marginal notes by Giovanni's own hand recording the price of wine.[107] We can find similar data in other diaries as well. Luca Landucci gave consideration to how and why the price of food began to increase as a result of the news of the arrival of the Pope and the French King.[108] Interestingly, one cannot identify similar reasoning in either the diary of Simone di Muronovo from Verona or the *familienbuch* of the Vogler family from the Rhine Valley in Switzerland. Simone noted that in February 1432 it was so cold that most of the olives desiccated; but he did not consider the impact of this on the subsequent price.[109] The Vogler *familienbuch* contains entries describing meteorological observations and the

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101 Innocenti, Estranei, 12592, *Libro di ricordanze di Lapo di Pacino da Castelfiorentino*, ff. 41r - 43v. I am most thankful to Doctor Lucia Ricciardi, the curator of the Archivio dell'Ospedale degli Innocenti, for sending me a photographic reproduction of these folios.

102 See for instance the earlier quoted *inventario* of Puccio Pucci. 'I beni della famiglia di Puccio Pucci. Inventario del sec. XV,' in *Miscellanea nuziale Rossi-Teiss.*, ed. C. Merkel (Bergamo, 1897), pp. 170 - 176.

103 Innocenti, Estranei, 12592, f. 39v; Francesco Castellani, *Quaternuccio e giornale B* (Progetto Biblioteca Italiana, Università degli Studi di Roma 'La Sapienza') (http://www.bibliotecaitaliana.it/xtf/view?docId=b ibit000575/bibit000575.xml&chunk.id=d4423e122&toc.depth=1&toc.id=&brand=default, last accessed, 13. October, 2012), published in F. Castellani, *Quaternuccio e giornale B*, ed. G. Ciappelli (Florence, 1995).

104 AMP, *Ricordanze di Francesco di Antonio Giraldi*, f. 2v.

105 In August 1487, the *Consilio del Cento* discussed the problem of how tax collectors might assess the assets of peasants in the Florentine *contado*. Tax collectors were warned to examine thoroughly all written documents of peasants, who were obliged to submit their own writings (*scrittura loro*). BSB, MS Ital. 202, ff. 61v - 62r.

106 Perosa described this account as 'memorie del Rucellai sulle condizioni climatiche e la produzione agricola.' Perosa, 'Lo Zibaldone di Giovanni Rucellai,' p. 120.

107 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 66vA and f. 67rB [seg.40.12.97, seg.40.5.83].

108 Landucci, *Diario fiorentino*, p. 351.

109 Trivulziana, MS 962, f. 63v.

impact of the weather on the quality of wine in a given year, but these notes do not contain information about prices.[110]

Thirdly, sources make clear that Florentine merchants monitored inflation and deflation in the wider market by receiving, sending and recording information about the prices of different products. The Marucelliana, MS C 286, a fifteenth-century *libro di mercanzia,* contains copies of letters reporting the price of spices and textiles in Florence and in Venice, as well as the exchange rates in different European cities.[111] As Giovanni's *Zibaldone* contains references to variations in other parts of Italy, we can assume that he had up-to-date information about the economic situation in much of the peninsula.

Finally, Florentine diaries and letters frequently record the price of government bonds and the current interest rate.[112] Giovanni's notes on this data are revealing because they let us see how he used them as indicators of the economic situation. To describe the prosperous times between 1413 and 1423, he tells his sons that Florence had 72 banks, and the Commune had very few military expenses; most importantly, he gives information about the price of bonds and the interest rate. The so-called *Monte Comune*, funded public debt, had a relatively high price, 62 florins, and the interest rate was very low, 3.75%.[113] How do we know that this was a high price of *Monte Comune* bonds? After describing the war before the Treaty of Lodi (1454), Giovanni noted the price of state bonds (10, 11, 12 most probably florins) had never been lower before.[114] As a consequence, the price and interest rate of government bonds that Florentines often recorded were important not only for investment but also for having a clear and objective picture about the actual state of the economy.

The economic ranking of cities was thus based on a more or less objective set of information. This short survey can give only a hint of the information culture on which the economic activity of Florentines was based. This is undoubtedly an area that needs further research.

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110 *Das Familienbuch Hans Voglers des Älteren und des Jüngeren aus dem St. Galler Rheintal,* ed. A. Renggli (Basel, 2010), p. 131 and pp. 341-347.

111 Marucelliana, MS 286 C, ff. 70r - 71r.

112 See for instance, BNCF, MS Magl. VII. 1014, 29r; *Bartolommeo Cederni and his friends*, p. 100.

113 Rucellai, '*Zibaldone Quaresimale*', p. 46. According to Molho, the average interest rate paid for the Monte Comune was 6% per year. A. Molho*, Florentine public finances in the early Renaissance, 1400 - 1433* (Cambridge, MA, 1971), p. 72.

114 Ibidem, p. 53.

6.2. Well-being of a city and its citizens

The study of economic ranking has raised a key question: according to Giovanni, how did prosperity produce a higher living standard? Quality of life as a collection of factors that determine the well-being of citizens is of course a relative concept. It depends on perceptions and preferences.

To emphasise prosperity, Giovanni praised the internal and external design of Florentine palaces, and the objects [*masserizie*] that wealthy Florentines possessed and accumulated within the walls of their palaces.[115] An inventory of household items in the *ricordanze* of Andrea di Tommaso Minerbetti can help us to reconstruct what Giovanni might have thought when he claimed that his contemporaries had more *masserizie* than any generation had had before them.[116] The first thing that strikes the reader of the Minerbetti inventory is the presence of a large number of luxury or decorative objects. For instance, in Andrea's private or matrimonial room [*camera mia*], among many different objects, we find four paintings, three portraits and another painting depicting Saint Sebastian, a gilded mirror, and a birth tray.[117] A second characteristic that stands out from Andrea's inventory is the spaciousness of the Minerbetti palace. The inventory enumerates twenty-two different rooms in the house. This suggests that quality of life was associated with two features of the domestic sphere: spaciousness and internal decoration. However, when speaking about quality of life, one must raise an important question: to what extent did decorated interiors and spaciousness characterise the life style of less wealthy persons than Giovanni Rucellai or Andrea Minerbetti?

Even though, as I have said in Chapter Five**,** the city was characterised by a dramatic poverty, the higher standard of living indicated by spacious and decorated interiors was not limited to a narrow circle. Fifteenth-century urban Europe saw a revolution in this regard. By the end of the century the mass production of artistic and everyday objects had developed in many urban centres of Western Europe, which made well-decorated interiors affordable beyond the

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115 "Meglio forniti di masserizie che a niuno altro tenpo in cipttà e in contado con chopia di panni d'arazo, spalliere e panchali, e con molte ischiave più che ne' tenpi passati." Ibidem, p. 61.

116 Rucellai, '*Zibaldone Quaresimale'*, pp. 60 - 61. The inventory of Andrea Minerbetti is in the Laurenziana, MS Acq. e Doni, 229 / 2, ff. 47v - 51r.

117 Ibidem, ff. 48r - 48v.

wealthiest members of the society.[118] Florence was a pioneer in this process. Michele da Firenze, Donatello and other Florentine sculptors gave rebirth to clay sculpture that allowed a cheap mass production of devotional objects, busts and sculptures.[119] But objects made from terracotta were popular among wealthy costumers as well. In the inventory of Andrea Minerbetti one can find numerous terracotta objects - for instance, a painted bust in the *camera cortina* of the palace.[120] By looking at fifteenth-century wedding chests (*casssoni*) and birth trays (*deschi da parto*), two very typical objects in the Florentine domestic sphere, one thing becomes evident: there was a market for both luxury and cheaper versions. One can for instance distinguish roughly finished utility *cassoni* from the painted, sometimes gilded, ceremonial *cassoni*.[121] The *deschi da parto* were used by different members of the society too, such as butchers, notaries and bakers.[122]

Numerous documents demonstrate that decorative objects were affordable for artisans. From the testament of a certain Giovanni del Chiaro (1424), a goldsmith, we know that his studio was decorated by paintings and luxury objects such as an ivory intarsia table.[123] In the private room of Lapo di Pacino da Castelfiorentino (1413) there were two mirrors, one of them gilded, a painting and an enormous carpet.[124] These documents of the early Quattrocento prove that the growth of living standards measured by the presence of decorated interiors had already began in pre-Medicean Florence. This was possible because both extremely precious objects and those that only imitated them were available on the market.[125]

Similarly, documents suggest that the domestic sphere of Florentines outside the circle of the wealthiest became larger. The apothecary Luca Landucci reported in his diary that a fire destroyed his three bedroom house in 1507.[126] To illustrate the size of a modest home, consider the anecdote that Giovanni Pigli recorded in his *Zibaldone*.[127] On 27 July 1439,

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118 Nicholas, *Urban Europe,* p. 185.

119 Welch, *Art and Society in Italy*, p. 56.

120 Laurenziana, MS Acq. e Doni, 229 / 2, f. 49v.

121 G. Hughes, *Renaissance cassoni: masterpieces of early Italian art : painted marriage chests 1400-1550* (Sussex, 1997), p. 22. The Museo Stefano Bardini has a rich collection of less decorated utility *cassoni*.

122 Ibidem, p. 116.

123 This was published in M. Spallanzani, *Ceramiche orientali a Firenze nel Rinascimento* (Firenze, 1978), p. 154.

124 An extract from Lapo's *inventario* was published in ibidem, p. 151.

125 D. L. Bemporad, 'Suppellettili preziose nella casa fiorentina del Quattrocento' in *Itinerari nella casa fiorentina del Rinascimento*, ed. E. Nardinocchi (Florence, 1994), p. 66.

126 Landuci, *Diario fiorentino*, p. 285.

127 BNCF, MS II. IV. 128.

Giovanni met his fellow citizen, Angelo di Jacopo Acciauoli, on the main square of Peretola, a settlement a few miles outside Florence. Angelo was returning from Pistoia and told Giovanni:

> I come from Pistoia and Prato in the suite of the emperor of Constantinople, who wanted to go to see Pistoia and the Girdle of Our Lady at Prato, and I was assigned to his suite by the Signoria. And because the hour is late for us to get to Florence to eat, and he is tired and such, as you know, I wanted to put him up in the church until this evening.[128]

This is what Pigli answered:

> Messer, I am at home alone. If our house should be adequate to receive so great a lord, it would give the utmost pleasure, but I must warn you that there is nothing at home except beds and the four walls of the house.[129]

According to the anecdote, the emperor and his suite, 40-50 persons, went to Giovanni's house and spent the afternoon there. What becomes clear from the story is that even though the house was modest, it could host the entire suite of the emperor. Such a spacious and decorated interior was obviously not affordable for the majority of the population, but the number of those who could afford it grew significantly in the fifteenth century.

To emphasise the wealth of Florence, Giovanni praised the internal decoration of Florentine churches.[130] From a twenty-first century viewpoint, the relationship between the wealth of a city, its quality of life and the internal decoration of its churches is not self-evident. How did the interiors of sacred spaces mirror the wealth of a city? A long entry in the *ricordanze* of Lapo di Pacino da Castelfiorentino provides an answer. The silk manufacturer enumerated all the objects that he had donated to the 'Frati di San Francesco di Chastello Fiorentino' from the early 1410s to 1431.[131] The long list includes a stained glass window, friezes, an antependium and numerous other decorative objects. In the course of twenty years, the artisan clearly spent a significant amount of money on artistic patronage. The internal decoration of the *Chiesa di San Francesco* was thus a visible and public indicator of his own private

128 Quoted in K. M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571) vol. 2, The fifteenth century* (Philadelphia, 1978), p. 63.

129 Ibidem.

130 'Le chiese e spedali più ricchi che a niun' altra età, e meglio fornite di paramenti d'oro e di seta ricchi e arienti, e copiose di frati e preti e simili cose e bene vicitate, e gli uomini e donne con più divozione alle messe e a' divini ufici che non si costumava per lo passato.' Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 44.

131 Innocenti, Estranei, 12592, ff. 52v - 53r. Most probably, the church mentioned in the diary of Lapo corresponds to the still existing Chiesa di San Francesco in Castelfiorentino.

wealth. By the same token, the internal decoration of all Florentine churches was an indicator of the wealth of the entire community. Finally, the patronage of Lapo shows us that artistic patronage was in fact affordable to less wealthy members of the Commune. The patronage of Felice Brancacci is even more telling in this context: Felice, who generously funded the decoration of the well-known Brancacci chapel in Santa Maria del Carmine, was ranked only 516th (!) in the list of the most wealthy taxpayers in the city in 1427.[132]

The diary of Lapo di Pacino leads us to another indicator of wealth and living standards that was salient for Giovanni: private and public feasts.[133] The artisan recorded his second marriage with a certain Monna Pippa in 1411. After a short narrative description of the marriage, Lapo meticulously recorded the full costs of the wedding, including the price of food and clothes.[134] So did Giovanni in his *Zibaldone*, noting not only the marriage gifts that his son, Bernardo, and his bride, Nannina de' Medici, received but also the cost of each individual item he had himself bought for the wedding.[135] The recording of marriages was a common element in late medieval diaries.**[136]** Simone da Bartonuovo from Verona and the Voglers from the Rhine Valley both recorded marriages in their family.[137] But detailed lists of the costs of the weddings seem to be present only in Florentine *ricordanze*. The noting of marriage gifts can perhaps be explained in terms of anthropological theories of mutual obligation.[138] But this hardly helps to clarify why Florentines considered it important also to include the cost of each item they had purchased for a wedding and non-Florentines did not.[139]

Weddings were both private and public events. They showcased the wealth of the families of the two spouses.[140] The *Cassone Adimari* (c.1450, Florence, Galleria dell'Accademia), attributed to Lo Scheggia, documents very well how a private festivity, most probably a wedding, was in fact public. The painting shows a Florentine piazza with a huge tent under which richly dressed men and women are dancing. This private festivity was a moment to

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132 Joannides, *Masaccio and Masolino*, p. 314.

133 'Le spese di giostre, nozze e altre feste si sono fatte molte ricche e magnifiche più che a niun altro tenpo.' Rucellai, '*Zibaldone Quaresimale'*, p. 62.

134 Innocenti, Estranei, 12592, f. 60r.

135 Rucellai, '*Zibaldone Quaresimale*', pp. 31 - 32.

136 C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Griselda Complex', pp. 218 - 224.

137 Trivulziana, MS 964, 70v; *Das Familienbuch Hans Voglers,* p. 61.

138 For instance, M. Mauss, *The gift* (London, 1990), pp. 13-14.

139 C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Zacharias, or the Ousted Father: Nuptial Rites in Tuscany between Giotto and the Council of Trent', in C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985), p. 182.

140 Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*, p. 120.

celebrate wealth publicly.[141] Through this detailed breakdown of costs, Florentines could document the pomp of a wedding.

Likewise, public festivities were moments to celebrate and demonstrate the wealth of the Commune as a whole to citizens and to foreigners. They were essential elements of the city's honour.[142] But public festivities offered a possibility to showcase private wealth as well, however small it was. It was a common custom during festivities for both rich and less wealthy citizens to put some of their carpets in windows. The fact that descriptions of public festivities, such as the festivity of Saint John, are particularly frequent in diaries indicates how important they were in the life of the city. Among the many festivities that Florentines celebrated, one, the *giostra*, mentioned by Giovanni as well, seems to have been especially important for contemporaries, for we often meet descriptions of jousts in *ricordanze*. For instance, Giovanni di Niccolo Giraldi made a detailed note of a *giostra* on 22 February, 1446.[143] A similarly detailed entry about a joust from July, 1473 appears in the *ricordanze* of a certain Lorenzo di Francesco Guidetti. The entry in his diary shows us how wealth and jousts were related in the mind-set of contemporaries. To describe the joust, Lorenzo used the same attribute that Giovanni did to characterise the feasts of his time: *ricchissimo*.[144] In the words of Giovanni:

> Le spese di giostre, nozze e altre feste si sono fatte molte ricche e magnifiche più che a niun altro tenpo.[145]

6.3. Summary

What proves that the indicators used by Giovanni to measure well-being corresponded to the ones through which his contemporaries perceived welfare? The fact that Giovanni's indicators of well-being (*masserizie,* public and private feasts, etc) in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* overlap with entries (inventories of objects, costs and description of feasts, descriptions of artistic patronage) in *ricordanze,* ones that recorded a person's well-being and

141 See an analysis of nuptial rite in fifteenth Florence in Klapisch-Zuber, 'Zacharias, or the Ousted Father', pp. 186-187.

142 Rubin, *Images and identity*, p. 5.

143 AMP, Giraldi, *Ricordanze di Giovanni di Niccolo Giraldi*, f. 20v.

144 AMP, Giraldi, *Ricordanze di Lorenzo di Francesco Guidetti,* f. 43r.

145 'The expenditure on jousts, weddings, and other feasts were much richer and more magnificent than at any time (earlier)'. Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 62.

financial situation. These constituents of well-being provided agents with goals and desires to achieve and gave grounds for the use of economic resources on luxury, accumulation and festivities. The use of affluence for specific luxury purposes such as building of palaces or purchasing given objects cannot be explained only by fashion and the abundance of money; the common conception of well-being was an equally important factor in the transformation of the urban landscape and the domestic sphere in Renaissance Florence.

7. Conclusion

In this chapter we have studied a practical but at the same time also highly abstract problem. The analysis of the cross-cultural linguistic pattern of superlatives in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* has led to the discovery that Giovanni and his contemporaries perceived the wider world around themselves in terms of an intellectual, financial, and aesthetic hierarchy. This was in fact the mental manifestation of the fierce economic, cultural and intellectual competition that dominated late medieval and early modern Europe. I name this competition global as it involved players from many different parts of the known world, though certainly not from the entire *globus.* Scholars such as Richard Goldthwaite and Peter Spufford have already pointed to an increasing economic competition between Italian, Hansa and Dutch cities. Others such as Garrett Mattingly have uncovered how inter-state relationships were transformed into complex diplomatic and intellectual games. This chapter has studied how fifteenth-century Florentines saw and made contact with the global competition that was taking shape outside the walls of their city, in the macro-world. Most importantly, the chapter has revealed how the world within the city walls, the micro-world, transformed as a result of the economic, intellectual and cultural competition in the macro-world, and the peculiarities of the information culture and the economic structure of late medieval Florence.

The focus on superlatives in Giovanni's and others' diaries has helped to observe the mental reaction of Florentines to this global competition. They constructed a hierarchy of the spatial world and projected their homeland to the top of this hierarchy. They declared the cultural, artistic and intellectual superiority of Florence. This is of course a purely mental phenomenon, which had however far reaching consequences in the social and material world.

The competition in the macro-world resulted in the appearance of a patriotic and civic ethos in fifteenth-century Florence, one that emphasised the significance of participation. Hans Baron was perhaps the first to call our attention to this. But he explained the birth of the civic ethos by the conflict with Milan and by the rediscovery of antique texts. Most probably both had a role in the formation of a patriotic spirit, but I argue that the main reason was the global competition that had been taking shape since the end of the thirteenth century, and the particular position of Florence in this competition. My study of *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* has shown that everyday people knew about the intellectual battles and the cultural, artistic competition in the macro-world. The economy of the city was almost entirely based on the global market, on import and export, and on international banking. As a result, a significant portion of the Florentine population was directly or indirectly involved in the economic competition in the macro-world. Obtaining a better position in the global competition was in the interest of the community as a whole. But it was in the interest of wealthy and less wealthy merchants and artisans, in other words, of the individual members of the community as well. The interest of the community and the interest of the individual luckily met, which encouraged civic ethos and participation.

The interest of the community was to communicate economic, intellectual and cultural power to the world outside its walls. The means were artistic patronage designed to embellish the city, or investing in grand building programs such as the restructuring of the *Santa Maria del Fiore* in the first half of the fifteenth century. The interest of the citizen was to communicate his affluence to his fellow citizens, and to perpetuate his memory by investing in costly building programs such as the one by Giovanni. Achieving a higher quality of life, understood as spacious decorated interiors, and pricy feasts, was also in the interest of the individual members of the Commune. As a consequence, the traditional –largely Christian - economic credo, which restricted building to the necessary and disapproved of luxury, lost its influence. Contribution to the beauty and the power of the Commune, i.e. to its position in the competition of the macro-world, was what justified luxury and excessive patronage. The competition in the macro-world, and the subsequent hierarchy of spaces in the mind-set of Florentines, thus had a strong impact on the urban landscape and on material culture; they drove real change in the construction of the physical environment.

Through the significance of these contributions, the competition in the macro-world caused changes in the Florentine society as well. In the last two centuries of the Middle Ages, artists and intellectuals became widely acknowledged members of the Commune, for the position of the city in the global competition depended on their achievements. As the analysis of diaries and commonplace books has shown, Giovanni and his contemporaries knew this very well. The acknowledgement of artists and intellectuals led to a unique phenomenon in fifteenth century visual culture: their appearance in the public depiction of wealthy citizens. How did other communities react to the global competition? How are changes in material culture and social life deducible from the global competition in the macro-world? They are questions that need to be addressed by future scholarship.

Finally, this chapter has raised the methodological question of how one can use a collection of superlatives extracted from a historical corpus to study specific aspects of historical thought. Most probably, the hierarchy of entities that are constructed through superlatives is the expression of competition in other historical settings as well. The reference systems in superlatives reveal the spatial dimension of competition. The measurement qualities in superlatives are indicators of key social values. But as we have seen in this chapter, the hierarchy of entities is embodied in the belief system, in the social reality, and in information culture. It gives aims to agents, and determines their desires and intentions. Through the study of superlatives and hierarchies we can thus explore the connections between different domains of knowledge and study them with the holistic approach I outlined above in Chapter Two.

VIII. Time: the Renaissance sense of the past and present?

1. Introduction

Chontro del tempo non truovo difesa
Che mi vegio invechiare al mio dispetto
E pocho valmi verso lui chontessa[1]

In 1464, a certain Benedetta, the wife of Piero d'Antonio Niccoli, concluded her *zibaldone* with this short poem. Benedetta's anxiety about time is not an isolated phenomenon. Similar concerns abound in late-medieval Italian diaries. As the unknown compiler of a Colombina MS puts it, there is not any greater sorrow than seeing the loss of time.[2] Diarists often echoed the poems of Petrarch when complaining about the fleetingness of time and life. So did the anonymous compiler of another Colombina MS and Filippo Manetti, who both copied extracts from Petrarch's *Triumfi.*[3] The compiler of the Colombina MS inserted other poems of Petrarch too, such as the emblematic *La vita fugge, et non s'arresta una hora* (*Rerum vulgarium fragmenta,* CCLXXII) into his diary.[4] By borrowing the words of Alberti, Giovanni advised his sons how they should manage their time (*masserizia del tempo*). According to him, time is the most precious thing of the world, and one must be very careful not to waste it. Giovanni suggests to his sons that they should schedule their day as he himself does: every morning they must plan their day, and in the evening instead of having rest they must think of what they did during the day and what they forgot to accomplish. As a conclusion he adds that one can always sleep and have rest, but the opportunity that time gives (*stagione del tempo*) never returns.[5] Whether the practice suggested by Giovanni corresponded to his own practice in reality cannot be decided, but we can find similar advice in other diaries as well.[6] How should we explain this anxiety about time and time-

1 I cannot find any protection against time, I see myself getting older, and I have few ways to cope with her. Riccardiana, MS 1429, f. 136v.

2 "Non e magor dollor a chi piu vede cha perder el tempo quando sen avede." Colombina, MS 5-3-25(5), f. 7v.

3 BNCF, MS Magl. VII. 1014, ff. 16v - 18v; Colombina, MS 7-1-48, ff. 46r - 59v.

4 Ibidem, f. 104v.

5 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 8.

6 BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, f. 13r; Colombina, MS 5-3-25(5), f. 4r; Colombina, MS 5-2-29, ff. 106r - 108v.

management? How are they related to contemporary conceptions of time? How did Florentines see and conceptualise the past of their family, their city, or the entire world?

Historians and philosophers such as Benedetto Croce, Karl Löwith, Peter Burke, Gabrielle Spiegel, and Jaques Le Goff have investigated medieval and Renaissance conceptions of time, though not necessarily in the context of the sort of documents that form the subject of this thesis. They have all called our attention on a shift or a series of shifts in the conception of time that lead to the birth of modern historical thought.[7] The Christian conception of time, which dominated the medieval world view until at least the fourteenth century, is linear in that it leads to an endpoint, the Last Judgement. Earthly time, in other words time seen as the history of salvation, is not the time of humans; it belongs to God, who directs the changes in history. This understanding had some conceptual consequences that determined the way that three time-related mental operations functioned:

> Selection: certain points in time became salient because of their role in the history of salvation.
>
> Periodization: the division of historical time into agreed units was determined by the providential framework of history.
>
> Explanation and causal reasoning: events and developments in time were explained in terms of the will of God; divine providence gave meaning to human history.

By drawing on sources belonging to high culture, scholarship has hypothesised that the conception of time and history became increasingly secularised from around 1300. From the late Middle Ages, it is argued, events in history were seen as salient not simply because of their role in the history of salvation. A new type of periodization appeared. The course of history or changes in historical time were believed to be determined not so much by God but by economic, social and human factors. As a result of this shift in the conception of time and history, the functioning of the three mental operations listed above was also transformed. But the consequences of this shift for the thinking of everyday people has not been explored, nor whether it led to any significant existential concerns.

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7 The following short summary on the medieval conception of time and history and its shift in the fourteenth and fifteenth century is based on the following works: J. Le Goff, 'Merchant's Time and Church's Time in the Middle Ages', in *Time, work & culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 29 - 34; G. M. Spiegel, 'Historical Thought in Medieval Europe', in L. Kramer and S. Maza (eds), *A Companion to Western Historical Thought* (Oxford, 2006) (accessed 08 June 2013, at http://www.blackwellreference.com/subscriber/tocnode.html?id=g9781405149617_chunk_g97814051496177); K. Löwith, *Meaning in history; the theological implications of the philosophy of history* (Chicago, 1949), pp. 182 - 203; B. Croce, *Teoria e storia della storiografia* (Bari, 1920), pp. 183 - 203; P. Burke, *The Renaissance sense of the past* (London, 1969), pp. 1 - 19. See too Peter Burke, 'The Renaissance Sense of the Past Revisited', *Culture and History* 13 (1994).

This last question and contemporary conceptions of time more generally can be studied through the analysis of the three mental operations, which will make up the three sections of this chapter. However, as the reader will see, this survey will also open up a series of related discussions such as the conceptions of war and family, and information culture.

Literary theory provides us with another method to uncover changes in human thought. The investigation of how a genre such as the chronicle changes can be an indicator of more general tendencies. As the literary historian, Franco Moretti, has reminded us, genres are "morphological arrangements that last in time, but always for some time."[8] According to Moretti, the change of a genre is due to the transformation of the contemporary reality and *mentalité*, which a genre cannot any longer express or describe.[9] Two chronicles that Giovanni added to his manuscript will allow us to reflect on how the genre of chronicle was changing in the last centuries of the Middle Ages. One of them, authored most probably by Giovanni himself, narrates the key events of Florence and the world from 1400 to 1457.[10] The *Zibaldone* contains another chronicle, entitled *De fatti di Firenze*, that narrates the history of Florence and the world from 450 to 1336.[11] The following subchapters will have recourse to these two texts when studying and comparing the short and long-term public memory. Nevertheless, thinking cannot be studied through one genre. To draw more general conclusions, we need to compare thinking as manifested in works of different genres.

The three thought processes mentioned earlier will help to overcome genre constraints.[12] 'A literary genre is a recognisable and established category of written work employing such common conventions as will prevent readers or audiences from mistaking it for another kind.'[13] These common conventions govern subject, style, and form. Comparing works of different genres by means of common subjects and topics can therefore be problematic. A given topic may be absent from a written piece not because the author did not think it important or neglected it on purpose but because of genre constraints. For instance, the lack

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8 F. Moretti, *Graphs, maps, trees: abstract models for a literary history* (London, 2005), pp. 14.

9 Ibidem, pp. 35 - 64.

10 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 44 - 55.

11 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 98r - 100r.

12 Generally, in Florentine *zibaldoni* genre constraints operated to a less considerable degree than in other forms of knowledge production. In *zibaldoni* genres were in fact fluid. As we have seen in Chapter Three, poems and proverbs were used as building blocks of narratives. Memoirs were inserted into genealogies, and vice-versa. I think that this fluidity of genres is a product of the conception of authorship that, as again was observed in Chapter Three, lies in the free reuse of texts.

13 C. Baldick, "Genre", in *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Oxford, 2008), (accessed 08 February 2014, http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780199208272.001.0001/acref-9780199208272-e-493).

of allusion to God in a personal memoir may be attributed to the fact that reference to God is traditionally not part of this genre, and not to the author's deliberate intention to neglect Him. However, genre does not constrain thought processes. Causal reasoning and temporal anchoring are independent from genre constraints. Works of different genres are in fact comparable by means of thought processes. My analysis will therefore include texts such as the genealogy of Giovanni's family and biographies of his ancestors.[14] On the other hand, I will also draw on the personal records that Giovanni dispersed in various parts of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. As a whole, this group of texts constitutes the long-term private memory.

Finally, if seen from the secularisation of knowledge construction in a more general sense, the assumed transformation of the conception of time and history leads to an intrinsic difficulty.[15] It is undeniable that before the late medieval period, the production of written works, including chronicles and *historiae*, was dominated by clerical authors. The fact that works written before 1300 were deeply influenced by Christian historical thought is the logical consequence of the clerical status of authors. The late medieval and early modern period witnessed the tendency for knowledge to be increasingly produced by lay authors, whose world view was less related to the Christian conceptions of time and history. What may seem to have been a change in the belief system - i.e. the transformation of the conception of time and history - was perhaps merely a result of the change of the status of authors who influenced the production of knowledge.

Previous scholarship has however revealed that the change of the conception of time and history can be seen in both clerical and lay knowledge construction. In the Florence of the early Trecento, we can find lay authors, such as Dante Alighieri (c. 1265 - 1321), Giovanni Villani (c. 1275 - 1348), and Dino Compagni (c. 1255 - 1324), whose conception of time and history was deeply shaped by the history of salvation. By beginning the narration with biblical times, for example, Villani's *Nuova Cronica* placed the history of Florence in the larger history of salvation. In the *Nuova Cronica*, God often intervenes in human affairs;

14 Extracts from this section of the *Zibaldone* can be found in a very rare nineteenth-century edition: G. Marcotti, *Un mercante fiorentino e la sua famiglia nel secolo XV* (Florence, 1881). As this was not available to me during my analysis of the conception of time, I shall use my own transcription of the *Zibaldone* when making references to this section. In the contemporary table of contents, this opening chapter is entitled *Della disciendenzia della nostra famiglia de' Ruciellai et d'altre cose degnie di memoria di nostri antichi* (ff. 1r - 6v).

15 On the process of secularization, see R. Fubini, *Umanesimo e secolarizzazione da Petrarca a Valla* (Roma, 1990).

though Villani did not ignore human and technical factors when explaining events.[16] A Providential framework is also present in the *Cronica* by Dino Compagni.[17] On the other hand, in the last century of the Middle Ages, and at the beginning of the early modern period, clerical authors such as Paolo Sarpi (1552 - 1623) investigated history not as the history of salvation but as the succession of events directed by humans.[18] One cannot forget that numerous humanists were in fact churchmen. For instance, as Le Goff has pinpointed, Alberti, a humanist as well as a priest, was among the first to speak about time as the time of humans and not of God, or the history of salvation.[19] All this suggests that an evolution in the concepts of time and history cannot be attributed solely to a shift of the status of the authors who dominated knowledge production.

2. Selection of events and temporal frameworks

The past in its entirety never exists. What one knows about it is always the result of a conscious and unconscious, culturally shaped process of selection and transmission. The salience of an event and its presence in the historical memory is determined by the schemas or frameworks that one already has in mind. Simplifying this as much as possible, a given event is remembered and recorded because of a set of reasons. I use the term 'temporal frameworks' for the group of reasons that make an event significant and worthwhile for the future. A point in time thus becomes distinct for an individual because of the operating temporal frameworks in his or her mind-set.

The framework that determined the salience of events in medieval chronicles is their role in the history of salvation. The most important moments of history were believed to be the

16 Well-known example include the explanation of the bankruptcy of the Florentine *compagnie* in the 1340s. On the one hand, Villani explains this by the divine intention to cleanse Florentines from their sins. On the other, he also presents technical, economic, and historical reasons for these failures. *Nuova Cronica*, XIII. 55. Another example is the explanation of the flood in 1333. XII. 1. and 2.

17 See for instance the *Proemio* of the First book of his *Cronica*. D. Compagni, *La cronica di Dino Compagni*, ed. F. Vallardi (Milano, 1905), pp. 1 - 2.

18 *Historia del Concilio Tridentino. Nella quale si scoprono tutti gl' artificii della corte di Roma, per impedire che né la veritá dogmi si palesasse, né la riforma del Papato, & della chiesa si trattasse. Di Pietro Soaue Polano* (London, 1619)]. See further references to Sarpi in Croce, *Teoria e storia*, p. 207 and Burke, *The Renaissance sense of the past*, p. 90. Burke treats the conception of history in the works of clerical authors in Burke, *The Renaissance sense of the past*, pp. 32 - 90. Sarpi: *Ripensando Paolo Sarpi : atti del Convegno internazionale di studi nel 450° anniversario della nascita di Paolo Sarpi* , ed. C. Pin, P.M. Branchesi, and T. Agostini (Venice, 2006).

19 Le Goff, 'Merchant's Time and Church's Time', pp. 33 - 34.

Creation, the birth of Christ and (in the future) the Last Judgement. During the Renaissance, however, new frameworks, such as cultural and local history, started to operate. The new schemas transformed the process by which events were selected in the memory by singling out other types of events as key turning points or periods of history. For instance, to distinguish the importance of historical periods, Petrarch applied a framework that one can describe as the examination of history that was shaped by a cultural or intellectual approach. He did not judge Antiquity in terms of its place in salvation history but in terms of its cultural and intellectual achievement.[20] Another new framework appearing in the late Middle Ages was local history that, as opposed to the universal histories of earlier times, examined the past of a city or a region.[21] What temporal frameworks shaped the selection by Giovanni and his fellow citizens of reference points in time? Why were certain moments important for them?

To study temporal frameworks operating in a historical actor's mind-set, the recurrent patterns in his or her description of key turning-points need to be explored. The researcher has to be able to reveal those actors, acts, and events that the author or compiler, Giovanni in our case, regularly attached to various moments in history. Once they are uncovered, it is possible to interpret the frameworks that made them salient. The following exercise was set up to meet this challenge.

The linguistic corpus derived from the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* was transformed into a mathematical graph.[22] Each lemma in the corpus became a vertex of the graph object. The attributes of vertices are the grammatical categories of the corresponding lemmas. The edges represent the co-occurrences of tokens,[23] (belonging to given lemmas represented by the vertices) in the original text within the distance of five words.[24] The distance was however changed and modified according to the requirements of the experiment. This method can be termed a 'visual collocation analysis' that draws heavily on graph theory.[25] To help readers not familiar with natural language processing and graph theory to understand the experiment, I here demonstrate the method through a simple - fictive - example.

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20 Burke, *The Renaissance sense of the past*, pp. 21 - 23.

21 Ibidem, p. 27.

22 This dissertation does not have space to include an introduction to graph theory. Readers without a prior understanding of the basic concepts of graph theory are asked to consult web tutorials or R. J. Wilson, *Introduction to Graph Theory* (New York, 1985).

23 Tokens are individual occurrences of words in a linguistic corpus.

24 A sentence is a sequence of words. The distance between two words in a sequence is the number of words between them, plus one.

25 To create the graph objects, a specific program was written using the Java TinkerGraph library. The program transformed the linguistic corpus into a graph object stored either in GML or GraphML. The manipulation of graph objects is executed with the Python Igraph library. The graphs are visualised with Gephi.

Example 1:

> In [in] 1486[1486] there[there] was[be] a[a] war[war] in[in] England[England].
> In[in] 1520[1520] there[there] were[be] wars[war] in[in] France[France].

The strings between brackets are lemmas (i.e. dictionary forms). Words preceding the brackets are tokens. Figure 1 visualises collocates within a distance of five words. Nevertheless, what we can see on figure 1 is far too complex to analyse. To study the recurrent patterns in time, we do not need the vertices "them", "in" or "a." It is possible to simplify the network by creating a subgraph that contains only points in time, nouns, and the edges between them. This is what we can see on figure 2. At the same time, the graph on figure 2 also shows the downside of the method. On the second graph, there is an edge between "France" and "1520" but there is no edge between "1486" and "England." The reason is that the graph in figure 2 represents co-occurrences in a window of five words, and the distance between "1486" and "England" is six. I shall return to this problem later and propose a solution.

Figure 3 visualises the co-occurrences of nouns and years, and figure 4 shows the relationship between verbs and years in the corpus of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. The weight of edges in both graphs is the number of co-occurrences of tokens belonging to the same lemmas. Consequently, edge weights can be used to detect frequent repetitions in the corpus. The size of vertices is adjusted according to their degree. This is the parameter that describes the number of edges that a vertex has. In simple terms, if a vertex representing a given noun in Graph 1 has a large size (see for instance "morire" on Graph 2), it means that the noun is related to many different years; consequently, it is a recurrent element in time. After looking at Graphs 1 and 2, it is worth reformulating the questions of this section. What explains the high degree or the large size of nodes (i.e the fact that they are related to many different points in time) of vertices such as "giungere," "cominciare" or "gonfaloniere di giustizia"?

In brief, my analysis of Graphs 1 and 2, and the close reading of *ricordanze* and *zibaldoni*, have led to the discovery of five principal temporal frameworks, as a result of which specific points in time became distinct for Giovanni and some of his contemporaries.

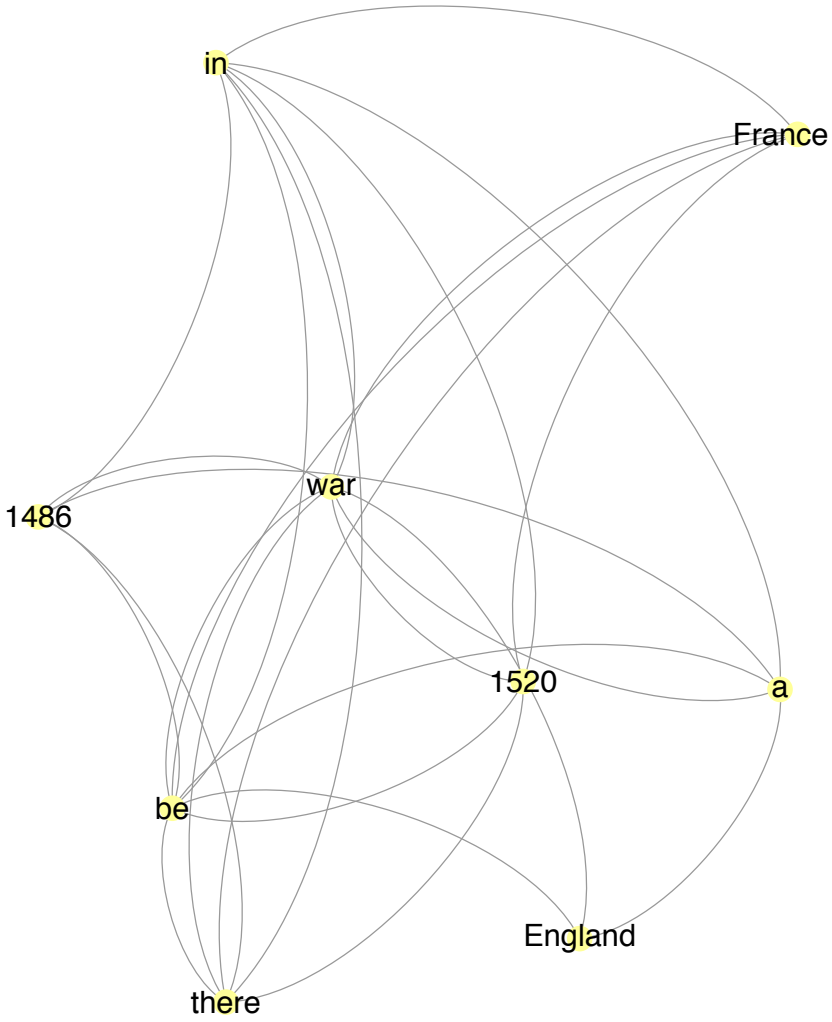


Figure 1: The visualization of the co-occurrences of words in Example 1 within a distance of 5.

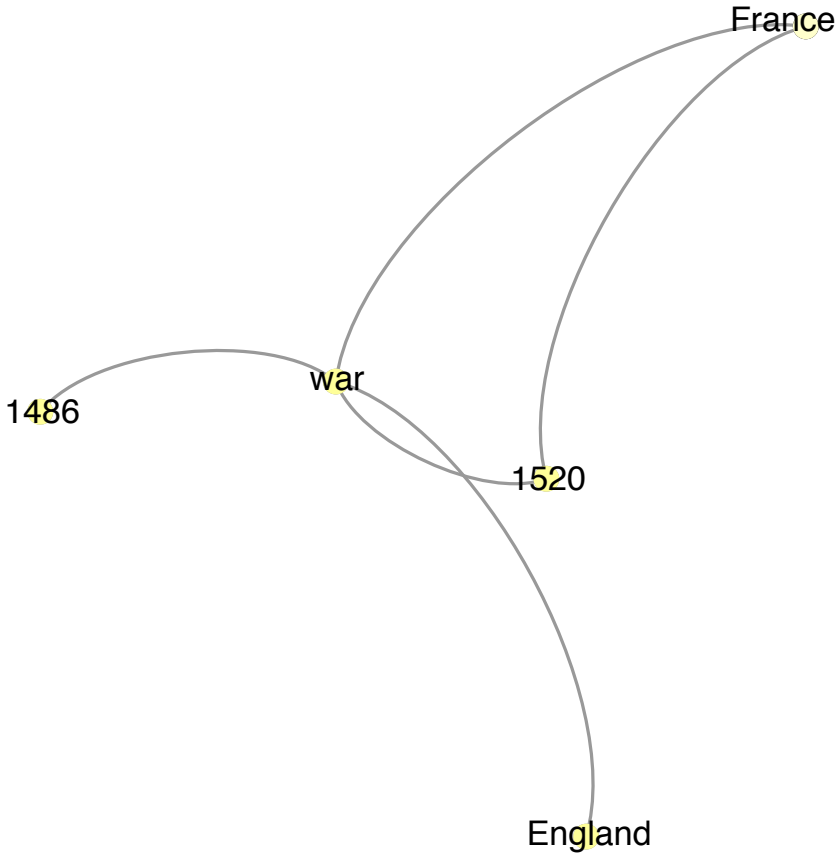


Figure 2: The visualization of the relationship between numbers and nouns in the Example 1.

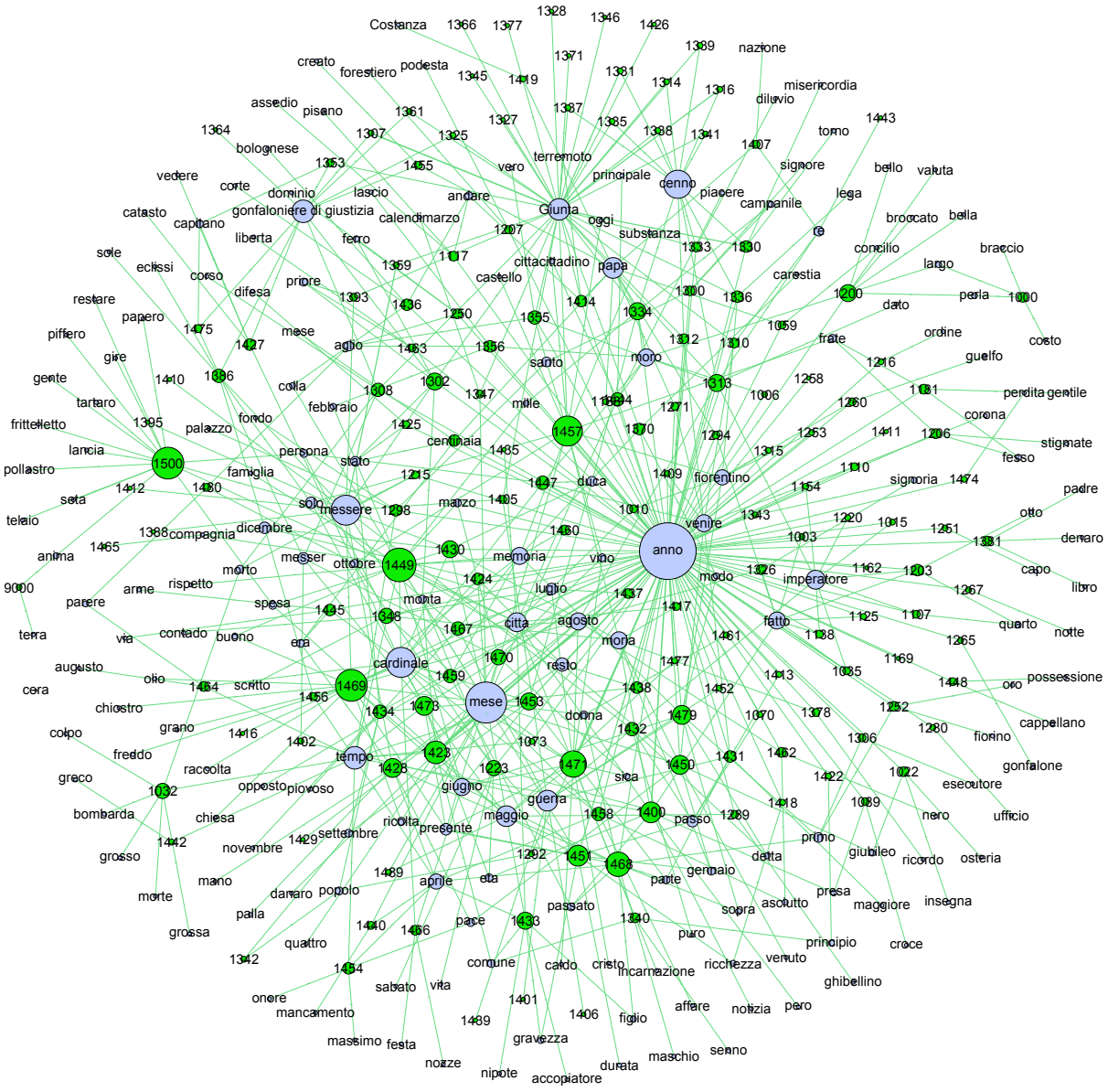


Figure 3: The visualisation of the co-occurrences of nouns and years (distance = 5) in the corpus of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, henceforth Graph 1.

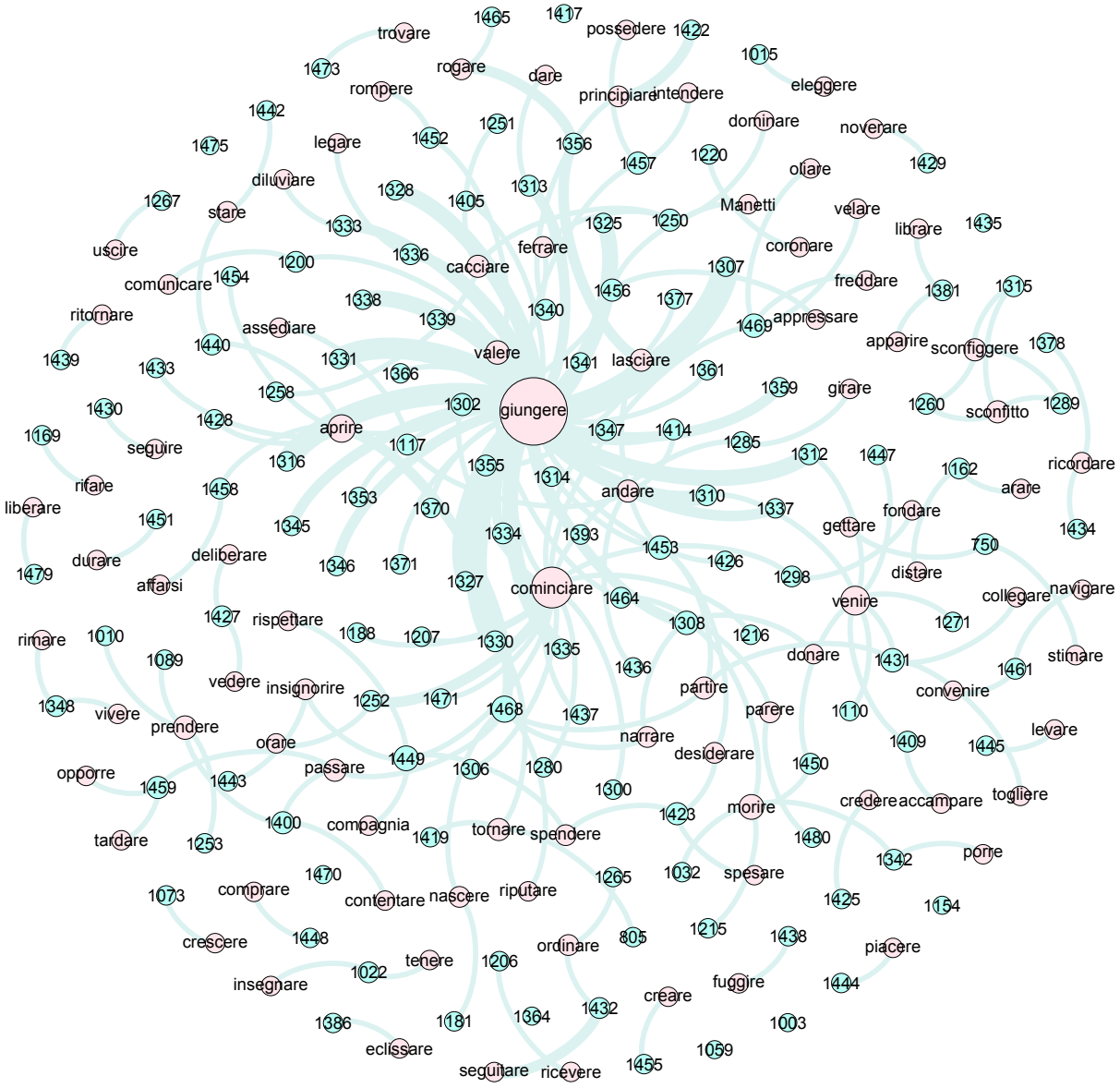


Figure 4: The visualisation of the co-occurrences (distance = 5) of verbs and years in the corpus of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*, henceforth Graph 2.

2.1. Biological time of the family

Biological events, such as death and birth, are recurrent elements of *ricordanze.* Records of childbirth in diaries follow the same pattern. Florentines noted the date of birth, the date of baptism, and the date when the child was sent to a wet-nurse; occasionally, we read the names of godparents, and the cost of a wet-nurse.[26] One finds a slightly different pattern in the diaries of Richard Hill and the Voglers. They consistently noted the names of godparents, but recorded neither the day of baptism nor the cost of the wet-nurse.[27] Disease and deaths in the family are also frequent themes. The *ricordanze* of Tommaso di Giovanni contain an unusually long description of the death of his daughter and grandson, both in the plague of 1450.[28] Tommaso also recorded a rare, rather than typical, event in the history of medieval medicine, the recovery of his wife from a skin infection.[29] An outstanding but hitherto unpublished source for the history of emotions is the account of Filippo Manetti's mourning for the death of his son and his "dear wife who was the dearest thing in life."[30] Finally, Recco Capponi's note about the death of his father turns our attention to an interesting constituent of the conception of time. Like many others, Recco recorded the exact hour of his father's death.[31] Florentines often noted the exact hour of death and birth: how did they know this? Most probably texts, such as the one in the *Zibaldone Andreini,* were in circulation that gave instructions "how to know the exact time and the point of day and night."[32]

Unlike traditional *ricordanze*, the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is reticent about the biological history of the Rucellai family. The reader is not told about the date of birth of Giovanni's sons and daughters. Giovanni does not even record his own date of birth. After the death of his wife, Iacopa di Palla Strozzi, which for some reason Giovanni did date, he reported that she lived approximately (*circa*) 55 years; but he was apparently unable to give her exact age.[33]

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26 For instance, BNCF, MS Magl. VII. 1014, ff. 23v - 24r; Innocenti, Est, 12592, f. 39v; ASF, Monticelli, 153, f. 18r. C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Childhood in Tuscany at the Beginning of the Fifteenth Century ', in C. Klapisch-Zuber, *Women, Family and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago, 1985) , p. 100.

27 Balliol, MS 354, f. 17; *Das Familienbuch Hans Voglers*, pp. 61 - 83.

28 ASF, CS, 16 Bis, f. 11r.

29 Ibidem, f. 15v.

30 "Mmia chara donna piu chara che cosa io avessi del mondo." The ricordanze of Manetti contain a letter that he wrote to a certain Frate Stefano. This is Manetti's answer to an earlier letter from Frate Stefano in which he consoled Manetti after the loss of his son. Manetti's response is a genuine contemplation on death and his feelings after the loss of his beloved son. BNCF, MS Magl. VII. 1014, ff. 33r - 34v; the quotation is from f. 34v.

31 ASF, Monticelli, 153, f. 15r.

32 The short text in the *Zibaldone Andreini* is entitled *Chome si puo chonosciere l ora e gli punti del di de la note,* Laurenziana, MS Conv. Sorpr. 148, 2, f. 102r.

33 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 119.

Neither did he date the deaths of his father and mother, though he briefly mentioned them.[34] At the same time, we cannot say that there was a complete silence about the biological history of his family, for Giovanni did note the birth of his grandson, Cosimo di Bernardo Rucellai.[35] What can explain Giovanni's silence about the biological history of his family? Why did he overlook some deaths and births in his family? Why was the birth of his grandson a key turning point worth recording?

As we have seen in Chapter Four**,** the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is somewhere on the middle of the spectrum between *zibaldoni* containing the favourite readings of a person and *ricordanze.* Giovanni's codex is a selection or summary of the most important information he wanted to pass on to future generations. Giovanni's silence on biological events indicates that this set of information did not belong to the data that he regarded as the most important ones. By contrast, the birth of his grandson had a distinct function in the collective history of the Rucellai family and in Giovanni's life. The son of Giovanni's son, Bernardo, and Nannina de' Medici was the symbol of Giovanni's tie to the Medici, and so to the entire *reggimento.* It was a key event for Giovanni, who after 30 years had become a politically and socially acknowledged member of the Florentine political elite. The birth of Cosimo di Bernardo was thus an important element of the collective honour of the Rucellai. Giovanni's selection of events from the biological time of his family seems to be pragmatic and functional. He selected what had a function in the world around himself.

Despite the abundance of biological events*,* a similar tendency can be observed in *ricordanze* as well, one that became apparent after studying the family-related notices in the Vogler *Familienbuch*. The fundamental difference between Florentine *ricordanze* and the Swiss *hausbuch* is that the two Voglers kept detailed records of the biological events and marriages of their extended and acquired family.[36] By contrast, Florentines - and Richard Hill from London, too - limited their records to their close family only. So we find the following types of information in the Vogler *hausbuch*:

1. the death of relatives such as grandfathers, sisters- and brothers-in-law, brothers and sisters
2. the birth of nephews and nieces
3. the wedding of sisters and brothers

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34 Ibidem.

35 Ibidem, p. 35.

36 *Das Familienbuch Hans Voglers*, pp. 61 - 82.

By contrast, Giovanni did not mention any events related to his brothers and their families. While he did record in a marginal note in his own hand the marriages of his sons,[37] there is a complete silence about the daughters, and about their children and husbands. What this implies is that events related to female relatives and to his extended family were not key turning-points for him. The silence about female family members can be explained by the patrilineal structure of the Florentine society. But in the light of the wide range of scholarship emphasising the on-going importance of kinship in the fifteenth century, the lack of information about the biological history of his extended family in Giovanni's *zibaldone* and in other *ricordanze* is puzzling. By studying the structure of the Rucellai lineage, for example, Bill Kent has underlined that the "closest family feelings were aroused by these very near kinsmen." [38] Like the Capponi and Ginori, the Rucellai lived in the same *quartiere,* many of them in the same household. The kinsmen sold properties within the lineage and sought to keep wealth within the family, a strategy that Giovanni himself encouraged. But if these 'closest family feelings' related to kinsmen, how can we explain Giovanni's and others' silence about the deaths, marriages or births of those kinsmen?

The Janus-faced nature of kinship and family solidarity was pointed out by Klapisch-Zuber in her *Kin, Friends, and Neighbors: The Urban Territory of a Merchant Family in 1400*. Her analysis of Lapo di Giovanni Niccolini dei Sirigatti's *ricordanze* has uncovered that even though Lapo often gave help to his kins, "traces of positive sentiments toward his close kin are hard to find in Lapo's book." Of course, as Klapisch-Zuber has also emphasised, the fact that these sentiments do not appear in the *ricordanze,* does not mean that they did not exist.[39] Other historians such as Thomas Kuehn and Gene Brucker have unveiled the disintegrating forces that operated against family solidarity.[40]

The exclusion of the extended family suggests egocentrism, which is also supported by a genealogy that the elderly Giovanni Rucellai inserted into the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. In 1476 Giovanni compiled an exhaustive list of his *parentado,* which Anthony Molho and his

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37 "Et come si puo intendere per quello che scritto di questa carta e pare che la chasa nostra da ciento d'anni in qua fatti e principali parentadi della citta prima messer paolo mio avolo con messer donato aciauoli paolo mio padre con messer [veri de medico]. io con messer palla delli strozzi bernardo mio figluolo con piero di chosimo de medicij che in quelli tempi tutti sono stati e primi pandolfo mio figluolo con bonacorso di messer lucha pitti chome detto di sopra." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 5vB.

38 F.W. Kent, *Household and lineage in Renaissance Florence : the family life of the Capponi, Ginori, and Rucellai* (Princeton, 1977), p. 293.

39 Klapisch-Zuber, 'Kin, Friends, and Neighbors', p. 78. See also the remarks on "what questions generally obstructed the solidarity and confidence normal among close kin" on p. 77.

40 G. Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*, p. 98,; T. Kuehn, 'Honor and conflict' p .130-140.

colleagues analysed and compared with an earlier genealogy appearing on the first folios of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*.[41] The earlier genealogy is agnatic: apart from some exceptions, we are not told about wives and marriage alliances. The later genealogy, however, is cognatic, and follows a very specific logic. Giovanni starts with his grandmother, enumerating her brothers and sisters, including their wives, husbands, and children. He repeats the same pattern in the case of his mother, wife, and two daughter-in-laws. The entire later genealogy is centred on these five women and their families. There is a complete silence, however, about Giovanni's uncles, aunts, sisters and brothers. Molho gave a complex explanation for this pattern. But what is important for us is the exclusion of brothers, sisters, uncles, in other words the conscious exclusion of Giovanni's extended family. For as a result of this exclusion, the ego of Giovanni and his own descendants are the foci of the second genealogy.[42]

This short survey of how biological events were selected in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and in other contemporary diaries, has revealed an egocentric tendency and functionalism. But the silence on the extended family led me to discover the atemporality of the long term history of wealthy Florentine families. For instance, as with many similar documents in Florentine *ricordanze,* Giovanni's earlier genealogy is patrilineal; it records the succession of fathers and their sons.[43] Wives and daughters were "mentioned only when the alliances they helped to acquire had been particularly useful to the lineage,"[44] which sheds light on another facet of functionalism. Its key feature is that it is not anchored in time: it is atemporal. In his long family chronicle, Donato Velluti admits that he has no information about the year of death of his ancestors. He also speaks about the marriages of his antecedents but without dating them.[45] On the binding of a fourteenth-century Minerbetti *ricordanze,* a later hand has compiled the short biography of a certain Andrea Seddo, most probably a Minerbetti ancestor. In the absence of information about the date of death, the compiler left an empty space; though the space itself might indicate that the compiler expected to have a date to add at some future point.[46] Neither did Giovanni provide his readers with information about the

41 A. Molho *et al.* 'Genealogia, parentado e memoria storica a Firenze nel XV secolo', in *La memoria e la città. Scritture storiche tra Medioevo ed età moderna*, ed. F. Pezzarossa (Bologna, 1995), pp. 244 - 270. The appendix of this article contains the transcription of the two genealogies.

42 Ibidem, pp. 242 - 243.

43 See for instance a similar genealogy in the *ricordanze* of Doffo di Nepo Spini, ASF, CS II. 13, f. 16r.

44 C. Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Name "Remade",, p. 284.

45 *La cronica domestica di Messer Donato Velluti*, p. 9.

46 Laurenziana, MS Acq. e Doni. 229 / 1.

dates of birth and death of his fourteenth-century ancestors in the short portraits he wrote about them.[47] But in the lack of biological events related to common ancestors, what anchored a Florentine kin-group in time? What ensured the temporal continuity in the succession of ancestors?

2.2. Time of the family, time of the Commune

This is the point when visualisation and graph theory can help us. Tables 1 and 2 show a ranking of the most recurrent verbs and nouns on Graphs 1 and Graph 2 respectively. Vertices were ranked in terms of their degree, i.e the number of co-occurrences they have with years. At the top of the Table 1 there are four words related to the long term history of the Rucellai family: "gonfaloniere di giustizia", "Giunta", "Cardinale", "Cenno."[48] The last three words are the name of three ancestors of Giovanni, who lived in the fourteenth century. The co-occurrence of all four words with different points in time is visualised on the figure 4.[49] Graph 3 thus raises a number of questions. Why were these particular years salient for this Florentine family? The time span of the vertices around "Giunta" is more than one hundred years, so how can that be explained?

These questions can be answered by an examination of the historical and philological context of the data visualised in Graph 3.[50] Most of the edges linking points in time with "Cenno", "Cardinale", and "Giunta" are based on a text on ff. 6 recto and verso of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. This section of the codex is a list of those Rucellai who held the office of *priore*

47 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 3vA- 4vA.

48 *Mese, tempo,* and *messere* are considered to be "noise" in the data, as their recurrence does not give any particular information about the temporal frameworks.

49 Graph 3, a subgraph of Graph 1, is in fact the union of the neighbourhood of the vertices "gonfaloniere di giustizia","Cenno", "Giunta" and "Cardinale." The neighbourhood of a vertex is the network of the vertex itself and those vertices that are direct neighbours of the vertex. If the depth is larger than one, for instance two, the network contains not only the neighbours but also the neighbours of the neighbours. The union of two graph objects corresponds to logical disjunction.

50 If one opens the graphs in a web browser and clicks on any edge, with the help of a pop-up window one can immediately see the contexts of the co-occurrences that are visualised by the edges. This dissertation does not give space to the complete explanation of the technical process enabling this. In brief, graphs in GML are exported into SVG format; the result is modified with the help a python script.

and *gonfaloniere di giustizia* between 1302 and 1457.[51] The reason why Giunta, Cardinale and Cenno so frequently co-occur with calendar years must be sought in the contemporary onomastic conventions. Each man had a Christian name, and also bore the name of his father, grandfather and so on.[52] From a genealogical point of view, therefore, the frequent co-occurrence of the words "Cenno", "Cardinale", and "Giunta" with points in time indicates that their descendants were successful in obtaining key positions in the *Signoria.* The years that are related to them on Graph 3 were significant moments because a member of the Rucellai clan held either the office of *priore* or *gonfaloniere di giustizia*.

The full significance of these years can be understood, however, only in the light of the atemporal nature of the long-term biological history of elite Florentine families. The years when ancestors held offices gave the skeleton or the chronology of the history of a family. For instance, the first concrete moment in the history of Giovanni's family is the year 1302, when the first Rucellai held the office of *priore*.[53] The years on Graph 3 anchored Giovanni and his family in remote time, and, as the graph shows, the onomastic tradition ensured continuity between different points in time, and assured the surviving of the hereditary name as an indicator of social rank.[54]

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51 *Priore* and *gonfaloniere di giustizia* were the most important offices in Florence after the constitutional reforms at the end of the thirteenth century. The *priori* represented the industrial and commercial guilds. There were first three *priori,* later six, and eventually eight after 1432. After the rise of the Medici, they did not represent anymore the guild, a the election was controlled by the *Reggimento*. The office of the *gonfaloniere di giustizia* was established in 1289. From 1306 the *gonfaloniere* was the head of the communal government.

52 A. Molho, 'Names, memory, public identity in late medieval Florence', in *Firenze nel Quattrocento* (Rome, 2006), p. 97; Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Name "Remade" ', pp. 283-309.

53 "Cotero qui appresso tutti quelli che sono stati dello ufficio de S. priore et gonfaloniere di giustitia della nostra famiglia de rucellai et ne tempi che sono stati cominciando nel 1302 infino a questo anno 1457." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 6rA [seg.1.24.1]

54 Klapisch-Zuber, 'The Name "Remade"', p. 283.

Table 1, Ranking of vertices of Graph 1 in terms of their degree

Label	Degree
anno	105
Giunta	37
mese	21
messere	15
cardinale	15
cenno	14
tempo	11
gonfaloniere di giustizia	11
maggio	10
guerra	10
papa	10
citta	9
imperatore	9
memoria	8
moro	8
venire	8
giugno	8
fatto	8
moria	8
agosto	8
fiorentino	7
aprile	7
resto	6
presente	5
dicembre	5
passo	5
messer	5
solo	5
centinaia	5
luglio	5
santo	4
primo	4
duca	4
re	4
aglio	4
stato	4

Table 2, Ranking of vertices of Graph 2 in terms of their degree

Label	Degree
giungere	37
cominciare	17
venire	8
aprire	7
morire	5
prendere	4
valere	4
andare	3
cacciare	3
lasciare	3
partire	3
passare	3
sconfiggere	3
sconfitto	3
tornare	3

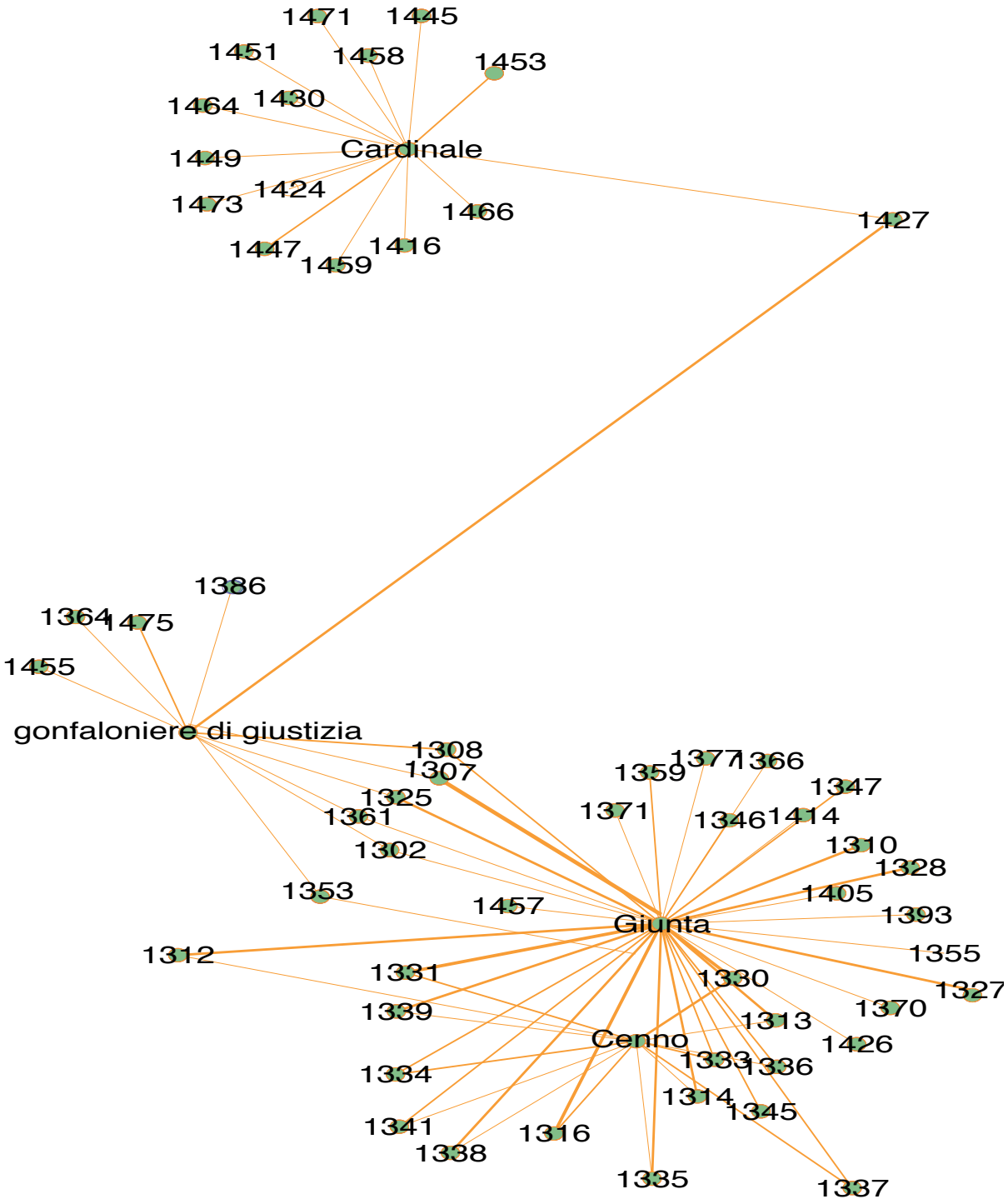


Figure 5: The visualisation of the union of the neighbourhood (depth = 1) of vertices "Giunta", "gonfaloniere di giustizia", "Cenno", "Cardinale", henceforth Graph 3.

But the points in time when family members and ancestors held offices also represent the eternal dimension of family time. As Anthony Molho has noted, "names and coats of arm belonged to the totality of the [Florentine] family in its eternity."[55] So did specific moments and events, such as exile, in the history of a family, which had consequences to all future male kin. For instance, BNCF MS, Panc. 116 contains a document that enumerates those families that were declared to be "grande" (i.e. member of the magnate group)[56] in 1343, a label that, as the source itself states, included sons and all future male descendants (*figli e descendenti in perpetuo per linea masculina*).[57] Among those moments that were of crucial and permanent significance in the history of a family, the years when kin held the office of *priore* and *gonfaloniere di giustizia* were perhaps the most important ones. A person's social position in late medieval Florence was largely determined by the number of times his ancestors had held these offices: this was a measurement of honour.[58] The lists of officeholders in *ricordanze* were therefore intended to pass on this information to future generations. Giovanni was by no means the only Florentine to compile and include such a list. Francesco Baldovinetti and Andrea Minerbetti both compiled lists of the members of their families who had held public office.[59] The list in the Baldovinetti *memoriale* indicates the importance of the first year when an ancestor held a public office: figure 6 shows how Francesco made this item on the list of *gonfalonieri* and *priori* visually, and perhaps also mentally, salient. But how did the broader social world influence the use of years of office-holding as key temporal anchors?

On the one hand, the office holding of ancestors was a barometer of a person's and a clan's social capital.[60] It was a measurement of a family's involvement in the history of the Commune. On the other, the sequence of officeholders was a lens through which contemporaries viewed the history of Florence. It is believed that each wealthy Florentine household possessed a very specific manuscript, the so-called *priorista*.[61] In these

55 Molho, 'Names, memory, public identity', p. 96.

56 It is not easy to define *grandi* as it does not correspond to any modern category. In brief, it describes those families and their descendants who governed Florence before the so-called *Ordinamenti di Giustizia*, a series of statutory laws introduced between 1293 and 1295. The *ordinamenti* excluded *grandi* from political life, and gave power to the so-called *popolari*. After the short rule of the Duke of Athens (1343) in Florence, the *grandi* managed to return to power, but they were defeated soon after by the *popolo* in 1378. The *ordinamenti* were reintroduced, and numerous families were again declared to be *grand*i. See Villani, *Nuova Chronica* 13, XXIII.

57 BNCF, MS Panc. 116, ff. 71r - 75r.

58 Martinez, *The social worl*d, p. 106.

59 BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, ff. 5v - 6r; Laurenziana, MS Acq. e Doni. 229 / 2, f. 41r.

60 Brucker, *Renaissance Florence,* p. 91.

61 See a non-exhaustive list of *priorista* mss in the Florentine State Archive in Martinez, *The social world*, p. 47.

manuscripts, often compiled over several generations, the names of those citizens who held the office of *gonfaloniere di giustizia* or *priore* were recorded in two month cycles. Most importantly, Florentines also added the key events that had happened in their city. Some of the *priorista* manuscripts have been published, but most of them, such as the *priorista* mentioned in Chapter Seven in the Bavarian State Library, are still unpublished.[62] This library keeps another, sixteenth-century, MS that can throw light on how the public memory stored the first year of office holding of a given family, and the number of times a member of the family held a key office. The BSB, MS Ital. 201 is an alphabetical list of Florentine families. Next to each family name there are four pieces of information:

1. First year when the family provided a *priore*
2. First year when the family provided a *gonfaloniere di giustizia*
3. The number of *priori* a family provided
4. The number of *gonfalonieri di giustizia* a family provided

All this implies that, by the same token that the years of office-holding made up the skeleton of the history of a family, so the sequence of officeholders was, in a term coined by Gabrielle Spiegel, a perceptual grid through which contemporaries conceived the history of their city.[63]

62 The most famous published *priorista* is Pagolo di Matteo, Pietriboni and Matteo di Borgo Rinaldi, *Priorista: 1407-1459*, ed. by J. A. Gutwirth and G. Battista (Rome, 2002).

63 The American historian defined perceptual grid as a structure "which directed the historian's glance at relatively fixed categories of human experience and governed both the nature of his perceptions and the manner he transmitted them." G. Spiegel, 'Genealogy, Form and function in medieval chronicles', in *The past as a text* (Baltimore, 1997), p. 107.

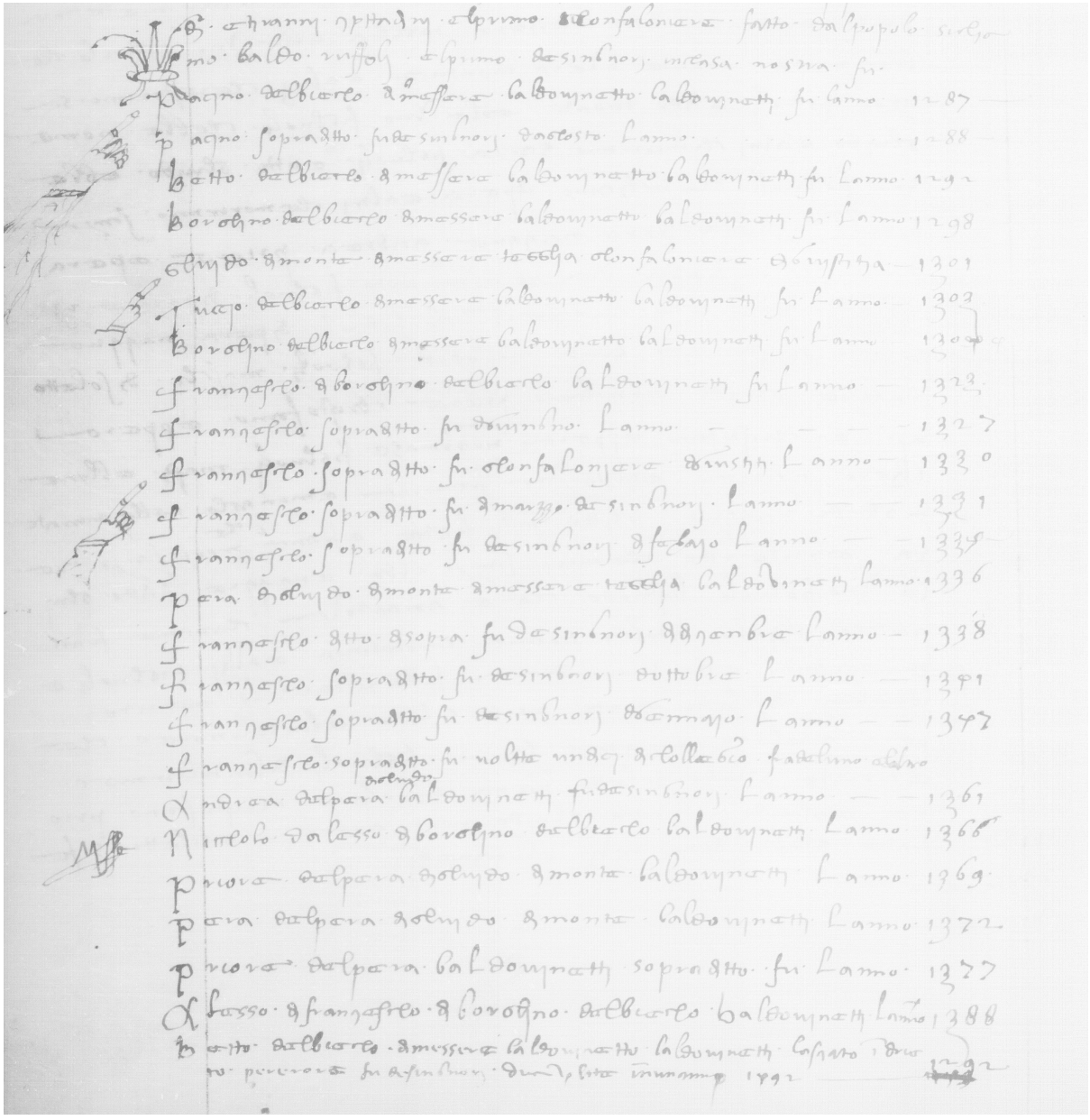


Figure 6: The visual salience of the first year when an ancestor of a Florentine family held a public office, detail of the BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 5v.

Participation in the public and political life of the Commune was a decisive point not only in the history of a family but also in a person's private life.[64] Between the entries regarding economic activity, accounts of contributions to diplomatic missions or office holding appear frequently in *ricordanze.* For instance, Doffo di Nepo Spini narrates that in 1406 he was the member of the Florentine mission sent to the funeral of Pope Innocent VII. For him this was an event that must remain in the memory of his descendants forever.[65] And as other *ricordanze* show, the family did retain a memory of such events, just as the chief officials and ambassadors were remembered in the public memory of the city.[66] The compiler of the *priorista* MS in Munich immortalised the names of those who participated in diplomatic missions.[67] Complete lists of Florentine ambassadors who were appointed in the fourteenth and fifteenth century were also in circulation.[68] In terms of public activity, Giovanni's own life was atypical. Because of his close tie to the exiled Strozzi, he did not hold any of the chief public offices until the beginning of the 1460s.[69] In the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* one can find only one elaborate description of office holding. In 1471 Giovanni was elected to be an *accoppiatore,* an official who supervised the election of other officials. His enthusiasm about the "most beautiful and the most honourable office"(*el piu bello e il piu dengno huficio*) assures us how important this event was in his life.[70]

As a whole, from the long-term historical memory of his family, Giovanni recorded only those events, such as the years of office holding of ancestors, that belonged to the collective honour of the Rucellai and had a long-term impact on its future. Similarly, from his own life, Giovanni recorded only those events that were in some way related to his own and his descendants' honour and prestige. This suggests an instrumental conception of kinship. Kin were related to each other by a shared social capital rather than by mutual love and emotions. Perhaps the 'closest family feelings' that Kent emphasised were not as close as demographic and economic data alone might suggest. Or was the purpose of *ricordanze* and *zibaldoni* not

64 See Najemy's excellent analysis of an entry on office holding in Goro Dati's *Libro Segreto*, Najemy, *Corporatism and consensus,* pp. 302 - 303.

65 ASF, CS II. 13, f. 32r.

66 For example, Francesco Baldovinetti inserted a short 'biography' of his fourteenth-century ancestor, Niccolo Baldovinetti. The key points remembered from the life of Niccolo are the years when he held offices such as *podestà* and *capitano*, or when he was appointed to be ambassador or orator. BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 6v; Laurenziana MS Acq. e Doni, 229/1, notes on the back binding of the MS. See also Trexler's analysis on the ritual of ambassadorial missions in Trexler, *Public Life,* pp. 290 - 297.

67 For instance, BSB, MS Ital. 170, f. 103v.

68 See for instance BNCF, MS Panc. 116, ff. 719 - 740.

69 See the description of this problem and the way Giovanni could remain a financially influential figure in Kent, 'The making of a Renaissance patron', pp. 27 - 30.

70 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 68vA - 69rA; the quotation is from f. 69rA [seg.43.1.58].

to record love and emotion? The silence on extended kinship cannot itself demonstrate that mutual love among kin did not exist. But the silence is indicative, which must be addressed by future scholarship.

2.3. Movements in space

In Table 2, there is a group of verbs (*andare, partire, venire, tornare)* that makes up a recurrent pattern both in the long- and in the short-term public memory. I term this pattern 'movement in space'. To be able to construct a full picture, I have had to modify the exercise presented earlier. The limitation of the use of collocation analysis to explore recurrent elements in a textual dataset is that this method cannot give information about words that are outside the distance within which collocates are studied (see again Example 1 above, and the explanation for why "1486" and "England" are not there related). The edges on Graphs 1 and 2 show only the collocates that are within the distance of five words. If the distance, for instance, between *venire* and *1454* is greater than 5, then the relationship between them is not visualised. How can we map and visualise those collocates that fall outside the standard distance of five words?

The so-called annalistic structure of the chronicles in Giovanni's *Zibaldone* allows us to tackle this challenge. An entry in a chronicle consists of a year and the subsequent description of the events that happened in that year. Consequently, I needed to construct a graph object that contains *all* the relations between years and words from the descriptions, independently of their distance from the years. Figure 8 helps to understand and imagine this. A special algorithm was elaborated and run on data derived from historical texts in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* that have an annalistic structure.[71]

71 These chapters of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* were included: *Della pestilenzia del 1348 ed altre morìe* (ff. 25vA - 26rB), *Della medesima materia*, (ff. 71rA- 75vB), *De fatti de Firenze* (ff. 98r - 100r), *Ricordo dal 1470* (f. 226r), *Clima e raccolti* (ff. 65rB - 67rA).

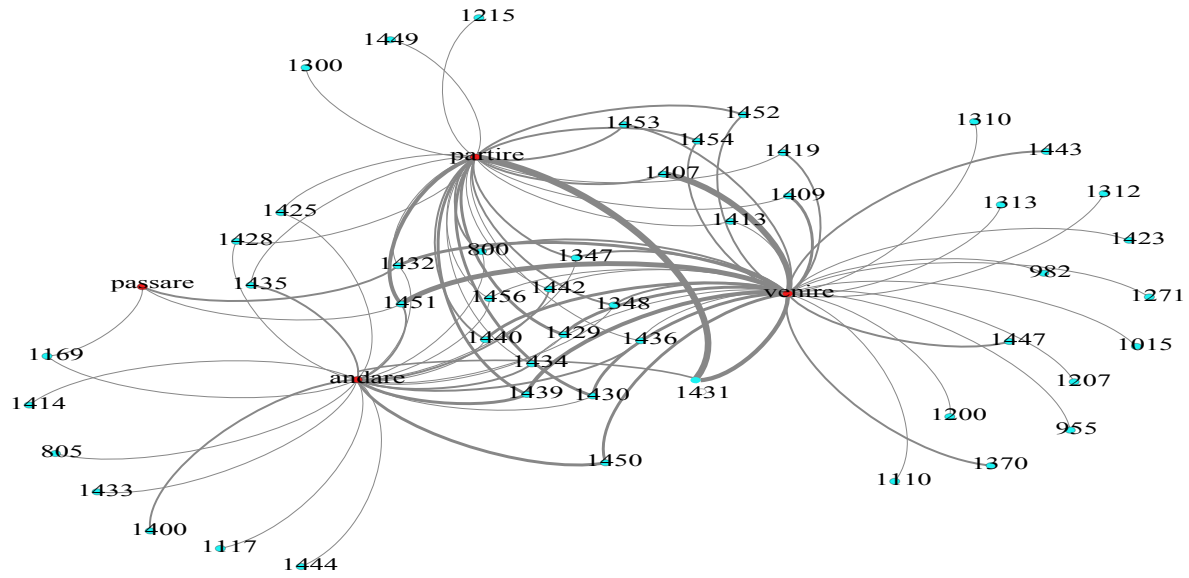


Figure 7: The visualisation of the temporal distribution of the pattern “movement in space”.

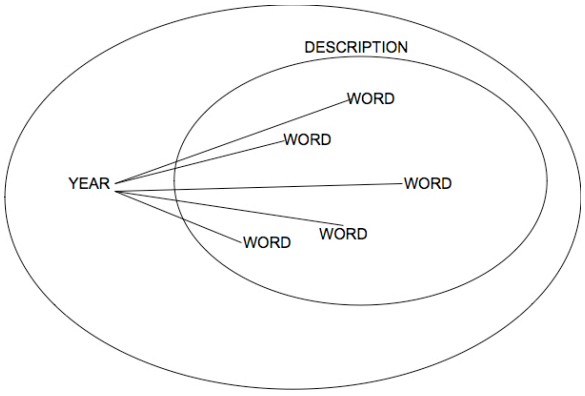


Figure 8: An annalistic entry in a chronicle, a visual aid.

The longest entry in the selected chapters of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is 514 words long. First, I created a graph object that covers all collocates within the maximum distance of 514 words but not outside the boundary of an entry. Second, I created two subgraphs of this graph, which include vertices representing either years and nouns or verbs and years, and edges between years and nouns or years and verbs.[72] In the following two sections I shall draw on these two latter graph objects, which were further divided into subgraphs.

Figure 7 visualises the union of the neighbourhood of three vertices "partire", "andare" and "venire."[73] The reader can see how recurrent the pattern "movement in space" was. The analysis of these data has led to the discovery that in Giovanni's *zibaldone* one regularly encounters the following types of information:

- Movement of the Holy Roman Emperor in space
- Movement of the Pope in space
- Arrival of important persons in Florence

Why was this information important for Giovanni and his contemporaries? Why did the historical memory retain them? Why did these events become notable points in time?

In most cases the information about the movement of a historical actor in space is associated with the history of Florence. In 805 Charlemagne, who, according to Giovanni's text, was returning from Rome to France (sic), visited Florence.[74] In 1434 Pope Eugenius IV, who had to escape from Rome because of a revolt, went to Florence.[75] We can observe a similar selection process to the one that underlined the family-related temporal framework. The visit of the emperor or the pope was a glorious moment for the city. The historical memory retained those events that increased the collective honour and prestige of the Tuscan city. The spatial centrum of world history described by the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is Florence; Giovanni viewed that history through the local history of his own city. We shall see later how the fact that Giovanni viewed the history of the world through the local history of Florence transformed his periodization of historical time.

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72 In practice, the JAVA TinkerGraph and the Python IGraph libraries were used.

73 From the graph object mentioned above three subgraphs were created, ones that are the neighbourhood of "andare," "venire," and "partire." The three graphs were subsequently joined. This can be seen on figure 7.

74 "Anni 805 tornando esso charlo da roma per andare in francia entro in firenze el di di pasqua di resuresso E fecievi molti kavalieri e fecie di grandissime feste." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 98r [seg.64.7.2].

75 "Anni 805 tornando esso charlo da roma per andare in francia entro in firenze el di di pasqua di resuresso E fecievi molti kavalieri e fecie dissgrandissime feste." Ibidem, f. 72vB [seg.64.7.2].

Visits of emperors, dukes and popes were memorable for another set of reasons, too. *Ricordanze* help us to understand why these events became distinct and salient points in time.[76] In 1451, on his way to Rome, Emperor Frederick III (1440-1493) visited Florence. Tommaso di Giovanni, whose diary has been quoted several times, left an unusually long account of this event, which allows us to imagine the usual scenario of the arrival of such an important guest as the emperor.[77] Before his arrival, all officials and the archbishop of Florence gathered at the San Gallo Gate. When the emperor and his large entourage ("2230 cavagli" as Tommaso notes) arrived, Frederick first greeted the archbishop by kissing his hand. After this, officials greeted the emperor, who then processed into the city. Tommaso wrote an account of the itinerary of this procession and described the clothes of the emperor and his suite. The entry in Tommaso's *ricordanze* indicates that these events were of great import for the local economy. We learn that all hotels and many private houses were occupied by the suite of the emperor, and that everybody paid correctly for the accommodation. Tommaso shares with the reader where the most distinguished members of the emperor's suite were lodged. For the Florentine elite this was an excellent occasion to showcase its wealth and economic power. Finally, even though Tommaso does not mention it, emperors who visited the city were often dubbed citizens. The visit of emperors, pope and other important persons thus had impact on the social, economic, and political life of Florence. In addition, these events broke the monotony of everyday life and caused a general excitement that many different diaries record. Imperial visits were key events in other parts of Europe as well. In his *Liber Gestorum* Bernhard Rorbach from Frankfurt made a detailed description of the visit in [1474] of the same Frederick and his son, Maximilian, to the German city.[78] Bartolomeo di Simone Muronovo from Verona left an account of the visit of Pope Pius II to Mantova in 1459.[79]

76 See further descriptions about the arrival of foreign guests in Trexler, *Public Life*, pp. 297 - 330.

77 ASF, CS, 16 BIS, f. 14r.

78 *Frankfurter Chroniken und annalistische Aufzeichnungen des Mittelalters*, ed. R. Fronig (Frankfurt a. M., 1884), pp. 198 - 201.

79 Trivulziana, MS 964, f. 68r.

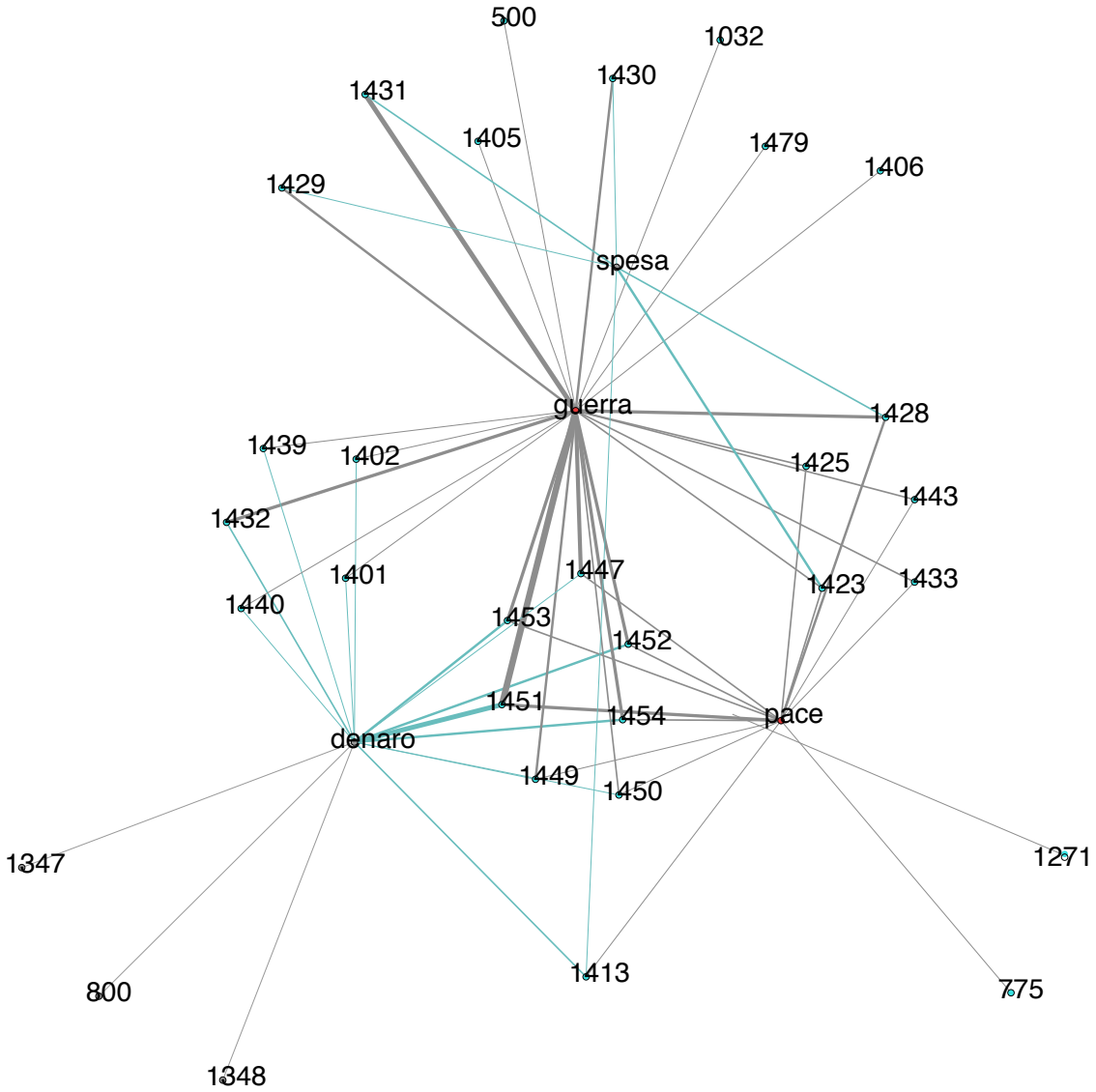


Figure 9: The visualisation of the temporal distribution vertices “guerra”, “pace”, “denaro”, “spendere”, henceforth Graph 4.

2.4. War and peace

Graph 4 demonstrates the temporal distribution of two events: war (*guerra*) and peace (*pace*). The visualisation enables us to discover a dichotomy between the long- and the short-term historical memory. While the history of the fifteenth century as narrated in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is characterised by numerous wars, the earlier history does not contain any warfare. But before examining this dichotomy, we need to uncover the reasons why war and peace were salient for Giovanni.

One possible way to do this is to isolate the words that, on the one hand, regularly co-occur with *guerra* and *pace,* and on the other, have no or very few occurrences outside the entries that mention *guerra* and *pace*. In more technical terms, one should retrieve those words that are highly correlated with *guerra* and *pace* but not with other words. To accomplish this task another algorithm was written, one that has produced some revealing results.

Graph 4 enables us to see that *spesa* and *denaro* are highly correlated with *guerra* and *pace*. They occur *only* in those entries of Giovanni's chronicles that speak about war and peace. As I have noted in the Chapter Seven, Giovanni often mentioned the economic effects of wars, such as price rises.[80] This suggests that Giovanni viewed war primarily through an economic optic; and this is supported by other passages in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* and by other *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* as well. Filippo Manetti listed five ways by which one might lose one's wealth, one of which was war.[81] The danger that war threatened posed a dilemma for Giovanni: should one invest one's wealth in estate and land, or should one keep it in money (*denaro*)?[82] Even though lands and properties were more secure than money, they could be easily destroyed in wartime, as Giovanni warned his sons.[83] He also noted bitterly how difficult it was to keep wealth because of the frequency of wars and the subsequent forced loans.[84] Saying this, he certainly had the example of his father-in-law, Palla Strozzi, in mind. As he remarked in the first chapter of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale,* Palla had lost his fortune

80 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 50 p. 45. p. 53.

81 "Per cinque modi ai roba consumata la gola el giuco luxuria e la guerra quinta sie femmina malnata." BNCF, MS Magl. VII. 1014, f. 19v.

82 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 8.

83 "Non voglio però negare che le possessioni non siano cose più ferme, più durabile, più sicure, benché alle volte sono dalle guerre, da' nimici con fuocho, con ferro disfatte et anichilate." Ibidem, p. 9.

84 "Pandolpho et Bernardo, e' mi pare utilissimo da dovervi ricordare, che nella nostra città di Firenze si conservano et mantengono le richezze non con pichola dificultà ma con grandissima. Et questo per cagione delle guerre spesse et quasi continue del comune, dove bisognano fare grandissime spese et il comune bisogna che ricorra a' suoi cittadini con porre loro delle gravezze et prestanze assai."Ibidem, p. 9.

because of forced loans, which made wartime economically challenging to all citizens.[85] All this suggests that Giovanni did not conceive war as an emotional cataclysm involving victims, death and human tragedy but as an economic trouble.

The algorithm detecting correlated words with *guerra* and *pace* has revealed another interesting phenomenon: danger (*pericolo*) and fear (*paura*) appear only in those entries of chronicles that speak about war; these two words are absent from the long-term historical memory, i.e. from the chronicle narrating the history of Florence until 1336. The fact that danger and fear were associated only with external threats may be an indicator of internal stability. But were wars in effect the only danger to the stability of the city? Does the fact that Giovanni's *zibaldone* does not mention war and danger when narrating the pre-1400 history of Florence mean that there were neither wars nor any danger threatening the stability of the city?

I have observed in an earlier chapter that fifteenth-century Florence was characterised by social tensions. And earlier centuries certainly did not lack internal and external conflicts. Again, we see that the selection of points in time as usually significant was driven by the desire to draw a "glorious" picture of Florence and its history.

2.5. Plague pandemic, death and natural catastrophes

Plague pandemic, death and natural catastrophes are, not surprisingly, key elements of Giovanni's narration of Florentine and world history (see figure 10). What is however surprising is that they are presented from not an emotional but a statistical and functional angle.

I have already mentioned that the deaths of famous persons (popes, soldiers, emperors, poets) often appear in Florentine chronicles.[86] But their deaths are not described as a human tragedy. The focus of the description is the recording of the place where they are buried. I have also pointed out that this might have established a hierarchy of sacred spaces in Florence.[87] On the

85 Ibidem, p. 63

86 Chapter VII, Section 5.2.

87 Ibidem.

other hand, the presence of the physical remains of famous persons established a perpetual connection of the city with world history. Again we can see that events are selected because they have a function in the present and in the future. The death of famous persons at a given point in space and time most probably operated as an indicator of prestige and power. Relics were also indicators of power and prestige, though, unlike remains of un-sainted humans, they offered the city protection and assistance, as did some sacred images**.** As Patrick Geary has reminded us, the translation or theft of relics was often related to the desire to increase communal prestige such as in the well-known case of the translation of the body of Saint Mark to Venice.[88]

Emotional and sentimental elements are completely absent from Giovanni's accounts of plague and natural catastrophes. This is striking when Giovanni's *zibaldone* is compared to the Vogler *Hausbuch*. Where the Swiss diary often names the victims of catastrophes such as plague pandemics and thunders,[89] Giovanni's diary is silent. The *Zibaldone Quaresimale* contains an account of the plague pandemic in 1348 and 1349, authored by Giovanni's grandfather, Paolo di Bingieri Rucellai.[90] Presumably, the Rucellai family lost many of its members during the plague, but we do not hear about them. Giovanni also made his own accounts of plague pandemics but he confined them to statistical data, i.e the number of persons who died per day.[91] The lack of named victims is even more evident when the extraordinary storm of 1456 is recorded. We know that on the day following the catastrophe, Giovanni rode out to the countryside to look at the damage and noted those who died.[92] While the extraordinary storm is remembered in his chronicle, detailed records of victims are absent.[93] Tommaso di Giovanni noted the same event without naming any victims.[94]

The comparison of Florentine *ricordanze* with the Vogler *hausbuch* helps to detect another interesting silence in the diaries produced in Tuscany. The two Voglers often speak about the death of ordinary people in their local community, and about murders and executions.[95] The diary of Bernhard Rorbach from Frankfurt also includes a separate entry about executions.[96]

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88 P. Geary, *Furta sacra: thefts of relics in the central Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1978), pp. 87 - 88.

89 For instance, *Das Familienbuch Hans Voglers*, pp. 136 - 137.

90 AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, ff. 25vA - 26rA.

91 Ibidem, ff. 26r A - 26 r B.

92 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', pp. 78 - 82.

93 Ibidem, p. 55.

94 ASF, CS II. 13, f. 23r.

95 For example, *Das Familienbuch Hans Voglers*, pp. 136 - 137. p. 91., p. 137., p. 115.

96 *Frankfurter Chroniken*, pp. 196 - 197.

By contrast, Florentines rarely speak about crime.[97] We rarely even read about the death of ordinary fellow citizens, such as neighbours. It seems that Florentines did not consider these events worth recording in documents of this sort. Likewise, as mentioned earlier, what is absent from the presentation of times of war is any emotional or social trauma.

2.6. Summary

The history of salvation did not play any role in Giovanni's and his Florentine contemporaries' selection of events considered worth recording and transmitting for future generations. Instead, the prestige and honour of their families and their city was what made certain historical events salient for them. The comparison of the way the selection process of events operated in Florentine *ricordanze* and in the Swiss diary of the Vogler family from Rhine Valley casts light on two aspects of thinking in late medieval Florence. First, we have again seen pragmatism and functionalism. Historical memory was constructed in terms of the needs of the present and the future. Second, there was a very strong tendency toward idealisation. The dark side of the past and the present was consciously neglected.

97 Perhaps for this reason historians of crime used mostly court records as source material. See an extensive bibliography about research on crime in late medieval Italy in T. Dean and K. J. P. Lowe, *Crime, society, and the law in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 4. - 6.

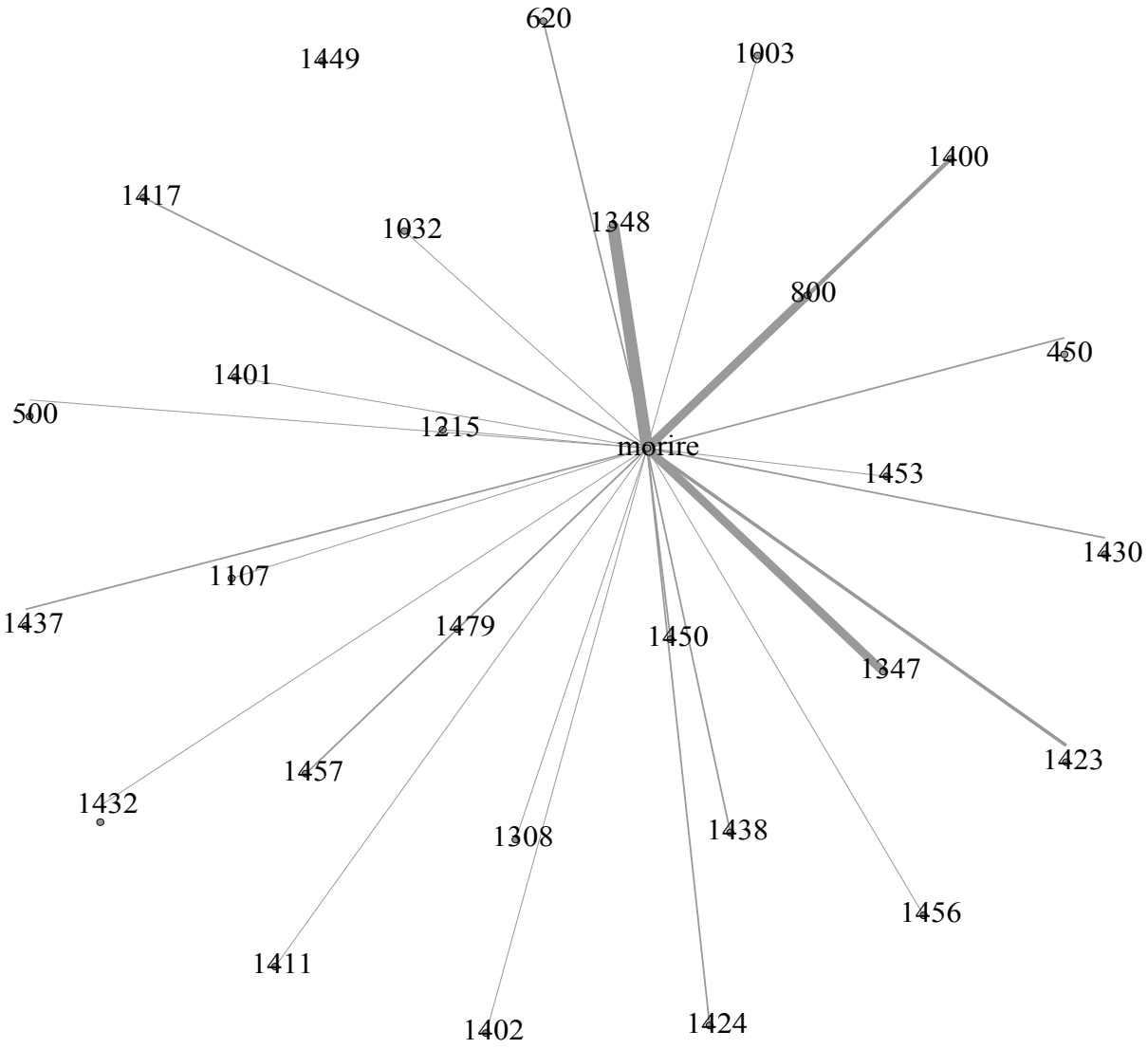


Figure 10: The collocation of *morire* and years.

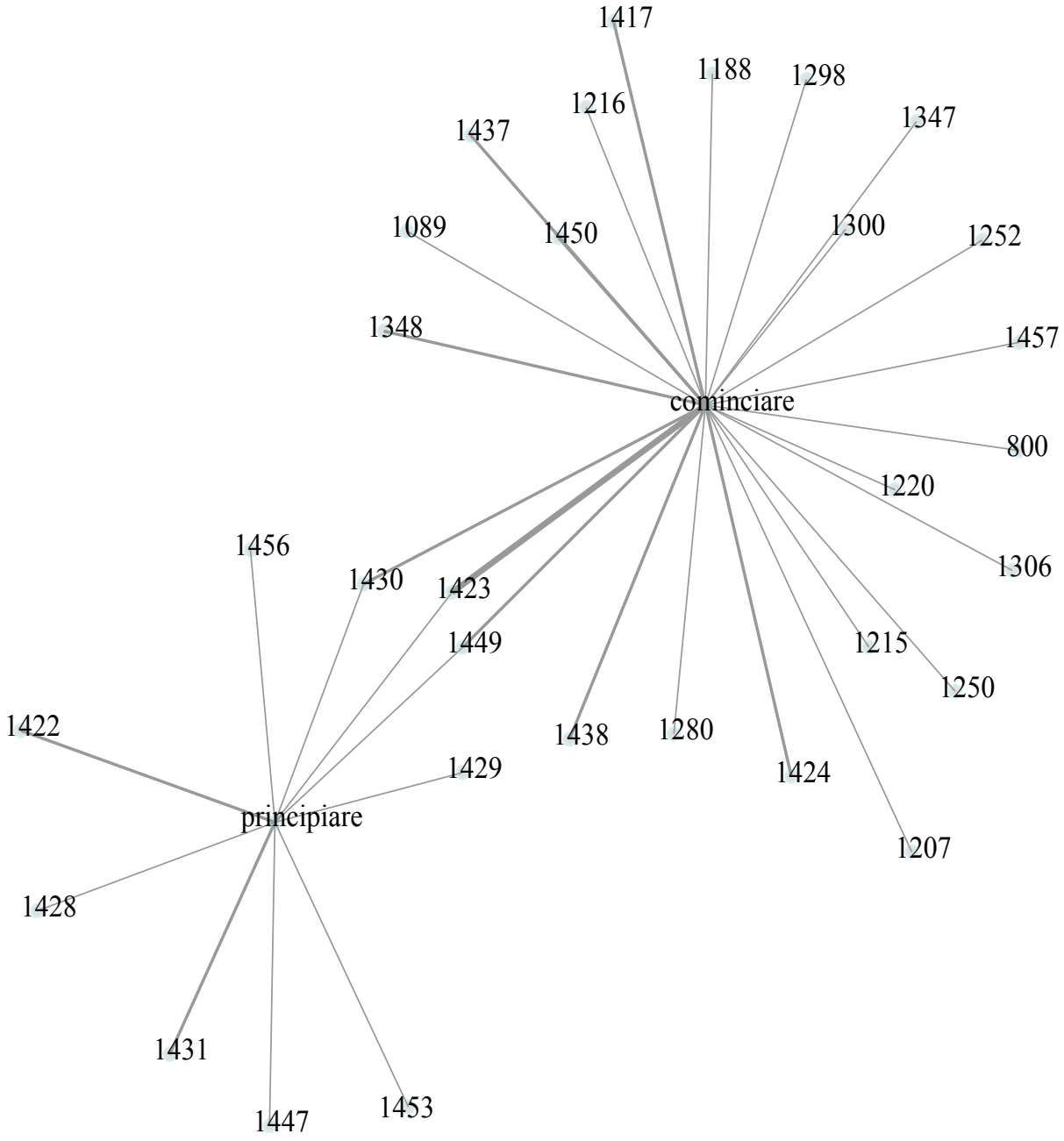


Figure 11: The visualisation of the temporal distribution of *principiare* and *cominciare*.

3. Periodization

The heart of the conception of time is periodization, the division of time into a sequence of identifiable units. It may seem that everyday people were not interested in this. However, surviving sources demonstrate that there was in fact a wide interest in periodization. What did they see as the key periods of human history?

Giovanni's and his contemporaries' answer to this question helps to investigate a key claim of previous scholarship. According to Le Goff and Burke, the medieval world was atemporal or timeless, since people did not have a sense of change.[98] Here we cannot study whether this claim is accurate in the context of the period preceding the fifteenth century. But we can examine how Giovanni and his contemporaries viewed previous historical times, and whether they perceived them as something different from the present.

Christian theology has a periodization system that goes back to *De catechizandis rudibus* by Augustine. Traditionally, the history of humans was divided into six periods, named *aetates mundi.* The delimiters of the six periods are the births of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and David, the Babylonian captivity, and the birth of Christ. But, Christian tradition had another periodization, often referred to as the *Vaticinium Eliae*, which was remembered by Giovanni as well,[99] and which divided salvation history into three eras:

1. *Ante legem*, from Adam to the promulgation of the law by Moses
2. *Sub lege*, from Moses to Christ
3. *Sub gratia*: the time since Christ

The Christian periodization system started to change during the late Middle Ages (though Joachim had already reworked the three ages in the twelfth century), which was an important step toward the secularisation of time and history. In the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* there is a section entitled "The calculation of the years from the beginning of the world until 1470" that enumerates the most important turning points of history with the number of years between

98 Burke, *The Renaissance sense of the past*, p. 1. and p. 6.

99 "La leggie della natura che su quella d'adamo duro anni.La leggie della scripttura che fu quella di di moises di davit et degli altri profeti e servi di dio duro anni. La leggie della grazia che fu e de quella del nostro singniore Jesu insino al presente di e durata anni 145"AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 83rB [seg.61.13.2].

them.[100] A Latin version of the same text can be found in the introduction of Matteo Palmieri's *Liber de temporibus*.[101] Another vernacular copy of the same text appears in the *zibaldone* of Giannozzo Salviati.[102] Although this chronology gives information about the length of time between the birth of the Biblical figures listed above and the Babylonian Captivity, it inserts new, non-Scriptural delimiters into the history of the past:

- the Trojan War
- the life of Julius Caesar
- the foundation of Florence
- the present, in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* 1470

The *zibaldone* (1464) of the Sienese mercenary, Antonio di Cecco Rosso Petrucci, contains a similar text, entitled *Dies seculi, a constitutione mundi,* which also complements the traditional scheme of the *sex aetates* with new events:[103]

- the death of Alexander the Great
- the first Olympic Games

Richard Hill inserted a chronology of the world into his commonplace book (before 1536). His periodization follows the scheme of the *sex aetates,* though it makes reference to a significant moment in the history of England:

> Fondacion of ye church of sent poulis in london by king athelberd.[104]

These texts reveal three aspects of the change of the conception of time. First, secular and pagan events are taken to be as important turning points as the birth of Biblical figures. Second, events of local history start to operate as delimiters of periods. And third, the present itself is seen as a distinct point in history.

Local history was also seen as a succession of periods marked by changes of institutions, political structures and economic innovations. As figure 11 shows, *cominciare* and *principiare* are two recurrent elements of history in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. The analysis of figure 11 has revealed that the birth of new institutions was seen as a significant turning

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100 The original title is *Computo degli anni dal principio del mondo sino al 1470*. Ibidem, f. 70r.

101 It is unclear whether Giovanni and Salviati used a vernacular version of Palmieri's text or they used a another text, which was the source for Palmieri as well. M. Palmieri, *Liber de temporibus*, ed. G. Scaramella (Città di Castello, 1906), p. 7.

102 BNCF, MS II. IX. 42, ff. 14r - 14v.

103 Bodl., MS Canon. It. 50, f. 214v.

104 Balliol, MS 354, f. 102r.

point in the history of the Commune. For instance, the custom of inviting a *podestà* began in 1207;[105] 1250 gave birth to the division of the city into *gonfaloni*.[106] Giovanni provided his readers with information about other aspects of the political history of his city too. We get to know that 1300 was the beginning of the conflict between the White and the Black,[107] and elsewhere in the text we are told about the beginning of the conflict between the Guelfs and Ghibellines.[108] Giovanni also recorded changes in economy: 1252 was the year when Florentines started to mint golden Florins,[109] and the gold thread was first produced in 1422.[110]

All this supports the findings of previous scholarship, which identified the most characteristic element in the Renaissance sense of the past as the birth of the modern sense of anachronism. According to Peter Burke, medieval people lacked a sense of anachronism: they did not see the past as a period necessarily different from the present. As they were not aware of institutional, political, and social change in history, their conception of time was atemporal.[111] We cannot here deal with the question whether this claim is correct in a more general sense. However, one thing is sure. As the analysis above has shown, Giovanni and his contemporaries were aware of continual political, social and economic change in history. For them the past was different from the present.

Finally, to what extent did the status of original authors, together with genre constraints, determine the content of the texts that this subchapter has examined? Texts describing the key periods of human history in commonplace books that I have quoted in this subchapter have two characteristics. First, they appear in the form of individual chapters or entries. They are not part of a narrative, or any established genre. Most probably, they had been extracted from chronicles, and later they started to circulate separately. Hence, they 'lost' their genre constraints, and became subject to rewriting. The second characteristic of these texts is that

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105 "In firenze era stato prima el ghoverno de quatro chonsoli essendo la cipta a quartieri Chonsiglo di sanatori che erano ciento buoni huomini e poi che la cipta venne a sesti furono sei chonsoli e facievano la giustitia e tutto il ghoverno era in loro e durava uno anno e poi anni 1207 chominciarono ad'avere podesta forestieri." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 98r [seg.64.30.53].

106 "Anni 1250 furono chacciati di firenze i guelfi E in detto anno si feciono e ghonfaloni e furono XX E chominciassi el palagio del podesta e le torru alte si recharono d'abraccia 120 a braccia 50 cioe braccia L cioe le torri de privati ciptadini che erano per la citta." Ibidem, f. 98r [seg.64.33.16].

107 "Anni 1300 si chomincio in firenze la parte de bianchi e neri per chagione de chancillieri di pistoia." Ibidem, f. 99v [seg.64.49.1].

108 "Anni 1215 fu morto messere buondelmonte la mattina di resurrectione a pie del monte del ponte vechio e allora chomincio la divisione in firenze di parte guelfa et ghibellina." Ibidem, f. 98r [seg.64.31.2].

109 "In firenze si comincio a battere i fiorini d'oro nel 1252." Ibidem, f. 81rB [seg.59.1.57].

110 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 46.

111 Burke, *The Renaissance sense of the past*, p. 1.

they circulated without being ascribed to any author. These two characteristics made it possible for texts presenting the key turning points of human history to be freely rewritten according to the ideas of the compilers of commonplace books. Consequently, neither genre constraints nor the status of the original authors determined their content.

4. Explanation and causal reasoning

History is a process of continual change. The question I shall address in this section is: how did Giovanni explain change in History? This leads to a much broader question: what forces drove nature and human affairs according to Giovanni's belief system?

Scholarship has suggested that the answers to these questions were significantly transformed by the Renaissance.[112] Medieval chronicles applied the providential framework to the explanation of events. History was believed to be driven by God, which had two consequences: first, events and acts were explained in terms of his will; second, history was characterised by the continual intervention of God, mainly through punishments and miracles. Peter Burke has argued that medieval historical thinking also lacked middle range explanations based on the state of economy.[113] Events were explained in terms of either individual or divine causes. All this started to alter in the fourteenth century. History was viewed as a process of continual change driven by a multiplicity of economic, individual, political, and social factors. Economic explanation and the use of personal experience and evidence appeared in historical writings of well-known authors such as Guicciardini and Machiavelli. In this section I shall examine if this development can be traced in the thought of everyday people.

As the chronicles in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* reveal, the outcomes of human actions are frequently the result of God's intervention, but also at the same time of the power of human intellect. In Giovanni's thinking, the cause of the victory of Florence over Pisa at the beginning of the Quattrocento was the intervention of God *and* the good government and

112 This short summary is based on studies quoted in Section 1of this chapter.

113 Burke, *The Renaissance sense of the past*, p. 77.

intellectual power of the Florentines.[114] In another chapter, after outlining the ideal comportment of employees, Giovanni notes that by following his advice and with the help of God, his sons can be certain of success in business.[115] God's believed role in business activity is also attested by the usual introductory formulas of *ricordanze*, which ask for God's and the saints' assistance;[116] though it is difficult to decide whether these were merely rhetorical formulas. Finally, it is worth recalling Giovanni's own memories of his successes in business. In the chapter entitled *"*About the reasons why Giovanni Rucellai must be grateful to God" Giovanni recalled all his achievements in business, private and public life. He considered it important to declare explicitly that all his successes in life were first of all thanks to God and not to his own efforts.[117] Accordingly, in the domain of human actions we cannot see a complete secularisation. The outcome of human agency was determined by God and human efforts together, which I name co-determination.

The belief in God's intervention was, on the one hand, fostered by religion, and on the other, by public rituals. In 1455, Florentines celebrated victory over the Ottomans with processions.[118] Similarly, the peace treaty between Venice, Florence and Filippo Maria Visconti in 1428 was celebrated with jousts, bonfires and processions.[119] The end of plague pandemics was also lionised with religious processions. The most memorable one was the co-called "year of the whites" (*anno dei bianchi*) in 1400, which is remembered by Giovanni as well. According to a contemporary account by a certain Andrea Stefani, the archbishop of Florence and the *Signoria* ordered that all survivors should dress in white and visit nine sacred places around Florence for nine days.[120]

As opposed to human affairs, in the domain of natural catastrophes and disease, divine intervention is at the centre of causal reasoning. The reason for the end of the plague pandemic in 1349 was the grace of God.[121] One hundred years later Giannozzo Manetti

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114 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 44.

115 Ibidem, p. 5.

116 For instance, Lapo di Pacino dal Castelfiorentino begins his *ricordanze* with the following words."Al nome di Dio e di Vergine maria e di tutte la celestiale chose di paradiso e di santo lorenzo e santo lionardo (..) ci dieno grazie di guadangnare in tutte le chose in che noi aquateremo." Innocenti, Est. 12592, f. 1r.

117 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 120.

118 ASF, CS, 16 BIS, f. 21r.

119 BNCF, MS Pal. Bald. 44, f. 34r.

120 The account of Andrea Stefani is in the Marucelliana, MS C 152, ff. 54r - 54v. Extracts were published in *Note e documenti di letteratura religiosa*, ed. U. Scoti Bertelli (Florence, 1908).

121 "Grande moria per tutta italia piacque a dio in kalen d'agosto di levarci d'adosso questa pestilentia di che lui sia sempre lodato et ringratiato." AR, MS Zibaldone Quaresimale, f. 26rA [seg.9.2.496].

(1396–1459), the brother of the often quoted Filippo, sent an account of earthquakes in Naples to the Florentine government. Giovanni copied this letter into his *Zibaldone.* After narrating the damage caused by the first earthquake, the humanist concluded that it was only thanks to God that there was no more serious damage after two later, smaller earthquakes.[122] Giovanni copied another account of the same catastrophe made by his brother, Paolo. What we learn from this letter is that people regarded the earthquake as the judgement of God.[123] Likewise, in Florentine diaries deaths, disease and recovery are frequently described as God's decision.[124] On the whole, the domains that were characterised by God's active intervention indicate the boundaries and the limits of human knowledge systems. God's intervention was recognised in those events that humans were unable to explain.

Nevertheless, the causal reasoning relating to natural catastrophes started to change toward "scientific" ideas and co-determination. The *Zibaldone Andreini* explains earthquakes by the movement of water under the ground.[125] Co-determination in the explanation of plagues can be traced in an anonymous text in a late sixteenth-century composite MS in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze (BNCF, MS Pal. 956). This codex contains a chronicle of pandemics in Florence. In his introduction to the chronicle, the compiler left a detailed explanation of the reasons for the disease. On the one hand, plague pandemics can be attributed to God, who sends tribulations with the purpose of liberating people from their sins or punishing them. On the other hand, as the compiler makes explicit, plague pandemics have earthly reasons: too many people living in one place, lack of hygiene, etc.[126] A few folios later we can read a "scientific" explanation based on the theory of humours.[127] Medical advice, such as diets, in fact abound in Florentine *zibaldoni*.[128] This indicates that from the fifteenth century a gradual process of secularisation was taking shape in the causal reasoning related to natural events.

As a whole, according to Giovanni's reasoning, the outcome of an action can be attributed in part to human effort, and in part to God. This does not support the findings of scholarship that concentrates solely on high culture. While in the works of Machiavelli, Bruni, and

122 Rucellai, 'Il Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 57.

123 Ibidem, p. 58.

124 For instance, BNCF, MS Magl., VII. 1014, f. 46v.

125 Laurenziana, MS Conv. Sorp., 148. 2, f. 94r.

126 BNCF, MS Pal. 956, f. 1r.

127 Ibidem, ff. 6r - 10r.

128 For instance, BNCF, MS Pal, 704, ff. 38v - 39r; BNCF, MS II. X. 57, ff. 97r - 97v; Moreniana MS 160, ff. 123r - 128r.

Guicciardini there is a significant increase of human power as the central moving force in history, this cannot be observed in Giovanni's belief system. But before concluding this chapter, we should raise a final question. Scholars have noticed that from the fifteenth century the application of social, economic and political structures appeared in the explanation of historical events. Can we observe a similar phenomenon in Giovanni's thinking?

The answer is a definite no, because in most cases, the reader of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* is not provided with any detailed explanation of a given event. The most revealing examples are Giovanni's comments about the movements of rulers and governments. The decisions of historical agents often lack motives, reasons, and goals. A good illustration of an event without explanation is the offensive of the king of Naples, Alfonso V (1442-1458) against Florence in 1447. Giovanni did not give any explanation of the attack against his homeland; indeed, he emphasised that the King came to Central Italy without any reasons.[129] By contrast, Machiavelli provided an explanation based on the power game between the Italian city-states, and on the long and short term goals of the players. After the death of Filippo Maria Visconti in 1447, there was a power vacuum in Lombardy. Despite the peace signed at Ferrara (1447), the Serenissima began a campaign in Northern Italy to occupy the territories belonging to Milan. Alfonso also sought to take advantage of the vacuum. He began a campaign in Central Italy, intended to secure the occupation of Lombardy.[130] Why could not Giovanni give an explanation to this event that had happened only few years before the compilation of the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*? In the lack of evidence, it is impossible to answer this question.

As to genre constraints, the form and the structure of the two chronicles inserted into the *Zibaldone Quaresimale* resemble, but at the same time differ from, the chronicles of earlier times. Even though the structure of Giovanni's compilation is annalistic, it lacks the universal framework of chronicles that began the narration with biblical times. The first chronicle tells the history of Florence from 450 BC, and the second chronicle narrates the local events from 1400. A feature that relates Giovanni's chronicles to the medieval tradition is the intervention of God in human affairs, and the lack of broader social, economic, and political interpretation of events. Nevertheless, apart from God's occasional intervention, miracles and legends,

129 "Nel 1443 s'insingniorì il re d'Araona della cipttà di Napoli e di tutto il resto del reame, et di poi l'anno 1447 venne in persona con circha 10 in 12 mila persone tra pie e a cchavallo contro di noi in un punto preso sanza alcuna ragione o chagione," Rucellai, 'Zibaldone Quaresimale', p. 50.

130 N. Machiavelli, 'Istorie Fiorentine', in *Tutte le opere*, ed. M. Martelli (Florence, 1971), p. 774.

which are frequent themes of medieval historical writings, are absent from the two chronicles in the *Zibaldone Quaresimale*. Nor does the reader meet symbolic interpretations, which point to a tendency toward historical realism. In summary, this suggests that the genre of chronicle was slowly being transformed. Some of the genre constraints dissolved, while others remained firm. If we accept that a genre is undergoing changes when it cannot any longer express contemporary thinking and reality, then the slow transformation of the genre of chronicle indicates the gradual metamorphosis of concepts of time and history in the late medieval period.

5. Conclusion

In this chapter we have studied how the so-called Renaissance sense of the past - a term coined by Peter Burke - and present appeared in Florentine commonplace books and diaries. The analysis of three mental operations, selections, periodization, and explanation, has only in part confirmed the results of Burke and others, who claimed the gradual secularisation of time and history, and the development of the modern sense of the past in late medieval Europe.

For Giovanni and his contemporaries, the history of salvation, the framework underlying the medieval conception of time and history, had no or very little significance in the perception and selection of the key turning points in history. In the examined commonplace books and diaries I could observe two principal temporal frameworks: the history of the family, and the history of the city. The *modus operandi* of these two frameworks had a common characteristic. The significance of events in the past and the present was given by their contribution to the honour and prestige of the city and the family. As the comparison of Florentine diaries with German *Haus*- and *Familienbücher* has helped to point out, the dark side of the world was not recorded and remembered by Florentines: executions, criminality, deaths in the wider community, defeats in wars, were neglected from the historical memory. Idealisation was thus the dominant force driving the construction of historical memory.

The providential framework had an ongoing presence in periodization and causal reasoning. The *sex aetates mundi* remained the perceptual grid through which Giovanni and his contemporaries saw the history of the world. However, events related to local and antique history, as well the present, were also inserted in the scheme of *sex aetates mundi.* As to causal reasoning and explanation, the study of *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* cannot entirely confirm the findings of previous scholarship. Historical, and particularly natural events, such as catastrophes, were often attributed to humans and God together. In Giovanni's *zibaldone*, as well as in other late medieval texts, one can see that the outcome of actions was believed to be co-determined by divine forces and humans. Returning to the main question of this chapter, why did all this lead to anxiety about time?

As scholarship has already noticed, in the late Middle Ages earthly time, which had been earlier thought to be the time of God, became the time of humans. This brought about the responsibility to use time properly. I cannot verify whether people felt this responsibility before 1400, but as the sources quoted in the introduction indicate, Giovanni and his fellow citizens were completely conscious of this responsibility. This was not only a theoretical or philosophical question; time and time-management were real-life concerns. As a result of changes in information culture, Florentines, and probably others as well, experienced the multiplication of daily and business tasks to be accomplished. To be a successful person, one needed to manage one's time carefully, a constant difficulty that people had to face in their everyday life. It is no wonder they were anxious about time and time-management.

Finally, the fact that history gradually became the history of humans had a price: the loss of certainty and security. In the history of salvation, the goodness of God is what directs human affairs. Even if a given event seems to be bad, it is part of a positive process directed by a positive force. The secularisation of history might therefore have made it more difficult to view history as a wholly positive process. As we have seen, Giovanni and his contemporaries knew very well that human history has seen more prosperous and less prosperous times, and the catastrophic loss of ancient culture. What assured them about the prosperity, the political and economic stability of tomorrow? The development of historical consciousness might have opened new horizons, but at the same time created new anxiety.

IX. Conclusions

The main research question of this doctoral dissertation was: how did the late medieval revolution in information culture marked by the gradual transition from an overwhelmingly oral culture to an increasingly literate culture transform the human understanding of the world in Renaissance Florence? In this thesis, literacy is regarded as a skill that enables humans to process written information, and my main question therefore implies a number of further questions. How did late medieval Florentines *use* their skills of reading and writing to organise and construct their own knowledge and experience? What knowledge did they record and transmit to the following generations?

To answer these questions, the thesis has studied a rich sample of knowledge that late medieval Florentines stored and passed on in their *ricordanze* and *zibaldoni.* Most importantly, it has drawn on an analysis of the knowledge that Giovanni Rucellai transmitted through his *Zibaldone Quaresimale.* As Chapter Three argued, *ricordanze* and *zibaldoni* were tools of information and knowledge management used by merchants, artisans, and artists. It has also been noted that these documents were seen by contemporaries themselves as a medium to record existing oral tradition. The core chapters of the thesis focus on the analysis of the knowledge that Florentine *ricordanze* and *zibaldoni* contain. Chapter Seven and Eight have demonstrated how these documents were used to construct spatial and temporal information about the world. Chapter Five and Six provide evidence of how knowledge about the social world was constructed in these historical sources. The analysis of *zibaldoni* and *ricordanze* can thus give an answer to the question posed by the methodology of this research, the Mental Model Framework in History: how did the people of the past understand and act in the world around themselves?

The short and concise answer to the main research question is that the boundaries of knowledge significantly broadened. On the one hand, this was a quantitative phenomenon. From around 1300 the number of those who could read and write started to increase. Not only the economic and intellectual elite (merchants, notaries, etc.) of the city, but also more humble citizens, now had access to texts and written information. On the basis of the extant *zibaldoni,* we can assume that there was a large circulation of vernacular texts and cheap manuscripts. Consequently, the size of the knowledge that even a humble person could attain

increased. As we have seen in Chapter Nine, the temporal boundaries of knowledge also expanded. The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gave birth to vernacular family and city chronicles. People had more information about the history of their city, their family and the entire world. Likewise, the spatial boundaries of knowledge were expanded. By the fifteenth century Florentine merchants established agencies in many different parts of the known world. Between the city and the its diaspora there was a continual flow of information, which could come to existence only thanks to the development of a written culture. In addition, texts such as travel accounts and descriptions of pilgrimage, were widely circulated and read. But as the analysis of Giovanni's and his contemporaries' knowledge and thinking has shown, human knowledge changed not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. The late medieval information revolution allowed the rise of new reference points such as the ego, antiquity, and the homeland.

Written culture provided people with sophisticated tools to construct a self-image. Giovanni Rucellai, Benedetto Dei, Lapo di Castelfiorentino, Buonaccorso Pitti or the Voglers from Switzerland used their commonplace books and diaries to fabricate an ego. On the other hand, the new information culture allowed them to record, reflect on, and pass on their *own* personal experience. In the context of medieval culture, this had a far-reaching consequence. As Chapter Three has suggested, the rise of an ego as a reference point led to a new attitude toward *auctores.* The individual had the freedom to question, modify and discuss the ideas of *auctores*. The birth of this new attitude is generally associated with Petrarch and his conversation with Augustine in the *Secretum* (between 1347 and 1353). But as the analysis of Giovanni's and his contemporaries' knowledge constructing practice has showed, by the fifteenth century this new attitude toward the *auctores* had became wide-spread. The freedom to select from, rewrite and change existing ideas largely contributed to the pluralistic and pragmatic nature of the thinking in Renaissance Florence.

Like his contemporaries, Giovanni Rucellai was a deeply Christian person. How could he then hold beliefs that were incompatible with his religion? How could he associate poverty with greed, envy, and shame? How could he use wealth and fame to measure human excellence? Because his thinking was shaped by the presence of many different values and ideas from which he had the freedom to choose. He also had the freedom to reconfigure traditional values in terms of his own and his family's accumulated experience. This is what

we have seen clearly in Chapter Four: traditional Christian ideas and practices such as *misericordia* or the fear of the afterlife coexisted with incompatible social practices such as for instance the pursuit of earthly fame. All this opened the way toward a more heterogeneous and essentially pluralistic culture.

Pragmatism and functionality are two characteristics that we have often encountered in our analysis of Giovanni's and his contemporaries' knowledge and thinking. In the last chapter we saw that historical memory was constructed in terms of the needs of the present and the future. They excluded from the historical memory those things that had no function in the present. Chapter Three revealed that what justified the sinful desire to accumulate wealth was its function in the social world. Similarly, even though the desire to gain earthly fame was sinful, reputation was what coordinated economic life, which again justified this otherwise reprehensible desire. The pragmatism that assesses social practices not on the basis of moral norms but in terms of function and utility is related to the freedom of the compiler of commonplace books who could freely select what he or she needs.

In addition to the ego, the other new reference point in Renaissance Florence was antiquity. A regard for antiquity as the culmination of human civilization was not restricted to the Italian humanists, though. The key novelty of Renaissance Florence was, I think, that *both* highly qualified intellectuals, the humanists, *and* everyday people reused antiquity for the purposes of the present. In this thesis, we have found extensive evidence of how antiquity appeared in the commonplace books of everyday people. Events related to antiquity were for instance viewed as turning points of human history. Antiquity was not only a remote historical time but a reference point to measure intellectual and artistic achievement in the present. The cult of antiquity reshaped the everyday living environment. It appeared on utility and on decorative objects. Why did the cult of antiquity become a widespread social phenomenon in Florence? Because a high number of antique texts translated into the vernacular were put into circulation. Thanks to the skills of reading and writing, these texts were available to the more humble members of the community.

But the rise of antiquity as a reference point had another cause that leads us to a further key characteristic of the thought that was taking shape in Florence. Late medieval Florence was a highly competitive society. It was competitive before 1300, as well, of course; but by the fifteenth century the nature of the competition had changed. The early centuries were featured

by bloody clan rivalries, the outcome of which was down to physical power, i.e. the number of followers and their strength. For a number of reasons such as the promulgation of the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia* and the banning of clan rivalries, from around 1300 the competition began to transform into complex intellectual and economic games in which the outcome largely depended on the intellectual power of the players. As Chapter Five has shown, what coordinated economic and social competition was reputation and trustworthiness. Chapter Five and Chapter Seven have both concluded that the appearance of antiquity in different forms of artistic patronage was a way for Florentines to communicate intellectual and cultural power. This also pinpoints how the information revolution in late medieval Florence influenced the physical environment. The cult of antiquity reshaped the style of palaces and paintings because antiquity was associated with prestige in the broader social world.

The fifteenth-century economic and social competition was characterized by deeply strategic thinking, which is also related to the information revolution. In this thesis, we have found evidence for strategic thinking in the domains of the economy and social interactions. On the one hand, strategic thinking involves the calculation of long- and short-term tendencies and consequences. For instance, in Chapter Seven, we have seen examples of economic reasoning taking both short- and long-term tendencies into account. Strategic thinking also means that the decision maker does not follow a simple maximax tactic. Instead, it reflects on all possible outcomes, and most importantly considers the interest of other players as well: in other words, it seeks to find an equilibrium. Chapter Six has revealed this reasoning in the context of horizontal friendship. A similar reasoning was identified in Chapter Five, which examined the relationship between the poor and the rich. Giovanni suggested social practices that could help to ease social tensions, and maintain the social cooperation between the wealthy and the poorer members of the community. The ability to process and organise written information enabled a much higher level of reflection. This also made the consideration of long- and short-term consequences and tendencies possible, which are key elements of strategic thinking.

Competition was present, however, not only within the city walls of Florence but in the world outside the city. As previous scholarship has revealed, late medieval Europe saw a fierce economic, cultural and diplomatic competition. As Chapter Seven has indicated, the difference between Florence and other city states was that in Tuscany a significant slice of the

community had information about this. This knowledge about the 'global' competition in the known world led to the rise of the third reference point, *patria,* which manifested itself in the conscious projection of Florence to the top of the hierarchy of the spatial world. Chapter Seven has also suggested that this mental hierarchy fostered participatory citizenship and triggered changes in the social world and in visual culture.

As in the case of other information revolutions throughout human history and evolution, the late medieval information revolution, featured by the transition from oral to literate culture, triggered fundamental qualitative and quantitative changes in human knowledge and thought, and contributed to the transformation of the social and physical environment. This hypothesis has been demonstrated in this thesis through the examination of the knowledge transmitted in various late medieval Florentine commonplace books and diaries. Pluralism, pragmatism, strategic thinking could have hardly become wide-spread without the ability to process and organise complex sets of written information. The question how the spread of these skills transformed the human understanding of the world elsewhere in late medieval Europe remains open.

Appendix

Superlative structures in the MS Zibaldone Quaresimale

1. Firenze (nobile) —patria→ mondo

2. Firenze (degna) —patria→ mondo

3. Citta di Firenze (degna) —patria→ Christianesimo

4. Citta di Firenze (bella) —patria→ Christianesimo

5. Citta di Firenze (bella) —patria→ Universo mondo

6. Citta di Firenze (degna) —patria→ Christianesimo

7. Leonardo Bruni (dotto in scienzia) —cittadino fiorentino→ Firenze

8. Leonardo Bruni (singulare) —uomo→ Italia

9. Italia (has i piu singulari uomini in scienza) → Universo mondo

10. Palla Strozzi (felice) —uomo→ Firenze

11. Palla Strozzi (felice) —uomo→ Mondo

12. Citta di Firenze (nobile) —patria→ Christianesimo

13. Cosimo de' Medici (ricco) → Christianesimo

14. Cosimo de' Medici (has buone condizioni) ⟶ Christianesimo

15. Cosimo de' Medici (ricco) ⟶ Italia

16. Cosimo de' Medici (has piu grande reputazione) ⟶ fouri Firenze

17. Santa Maria Novella (bello) —chiesa / convento→ Ordine dei Predichatori nel Christianesimo

18. Santa Maria Novella (bello) —chiesa / convento→ Ordine dei Predichatori nel Christianesimo

19. San Marco (bello) —librerie / convento→ Ordine dei Predichatori nel Christianesimo

20. Nunziata di Firenze (ricco) —convento→ Ordine dei Servi

21. Firenze (quantita) —degni monasteri→ [mondo] alcuna citta

22. Firenze (quantita) —degni ospedali→ [mondo] alcuna citta

23. Contado di Firenze con palazzi e case (bello) ⟶ [mondo] alcuna citta

24. Loggia della Piazza della Signoria (bello) —loggia→ [mondo] alcuna citta

25. Sapienza di Studio (bello) ⟶ [mondo]

24. Londra (ricco) —citta→ christianita

25. Damascus (ricco) ⟶ infedeli

List of words belonging to semantic domains studied in the context of human beauty

Anatomy:

ampolla, anguinaia, arco, bacino, barba, base, becco, bocca, cambio, camera, carnale, carne, cavo, cieco, ciglio, cintola, condotto, corbello, corno, corona, corpo, corporale, Coscia, costa, cuore, cupola, dente, digiuno, dotto, estremita, faccia, fallo, feci, fianco, figura, flagello, fossa, fronte, fusto, gamba, ginocchio, giuntura, gola, grasso, grembo, inchiostro, interiora, lacrima, lato, lingua, Martello, massa, materia, membro, morto, naso, nervo, orecchia, orecchio, organo, osso, palatino, palla, pelle, petto, polso, processo, radice, retto, schiena, sedere, seme, setola, smalto, spalla, stomaco, sudore, tratto, tromba, vago, vaso, velare, ventre, verga, viso, vita, volta, volto

Art:

arte, bandiera, bottega, buffone, compagnia, creatore, croce, crocifisso, dipingere, disegnare, disegnatore, disegno, divo, esecutore, fare, giullare, grana, immagine, insegna, macchia, maestro, mosaico, pittura, posare, prova, rappresentare, rappresentazione, ritrarre, scultore, scuola, studio, tesoro, titolo, veduta, verso

Biology:

anello, bagnare, Colonia, crescere, digestione, discendenza, eguale, eredita, famiglia, femmina, femminile, generare, generazione, gettare, invecchiare, maschio, mascolino, maturare, morte, mostro, nascere, naturale, ordine, origine, orinare, rimettere, sanguinare, secreto, sputare, stillare, stirpe, tenace, tossire, uovo, virile, vita

Body Care:

adornare, barbiere, cipolla, Colonia, comporre, crema, dimagrire, lampada, lavare, Nardo, pettinare, pettine, radere, sbarbare, smalto

Fashion:

abbondante, abito, benda, berretta, braca, calza, calzare, cambio, camicia, casco, cintola, coda, collarino, comodo, costume, cotta, cuffia, cupola, divisa, Domino, fazzoletto, ferrare, gamba, guaina, guardaroba, insieme, laccio, manica, mantello, manto, mettere, moderno, mora, moro, nappa, Polo, polso, pomo, prodigalita, provare, saio, stola, suola, tenuta, tintore, veste, vestire, vestito

Person:

adulatore, agente, aggiunto, aiuto, amante, amato, ambasciatore, amica, amicizia, amico, amore, anima, antecessore, anziano, appassionato, arbitro, arrivato, artefice, asino, assente, assiso, autore, autorità, avaro, avversario, avvocato, balia, bambino, bella, bellezza, bello, benefattore, bestia, bisognoso, bocca, bue, buffone, buono, campione, cane, cannone, capitano, capo, caporione, caro, casa, casalinga, cattivo, cavaliere, cima, cinico, collegato, compagno, compare, competente, concorrente, concubina, confidente, conoscente, conoscenza, conservatore, consigliere, contadino, copia, creatore, creatura, cupido, dannato, danneggiato, datore, demonio, deputato, detrattore, diavolo, difensore, diletto, disordinato, domestico, donna, eccellenza, esaminatore, esperto, faccia, fallito, famiglia, famiglio, fanciullo, fattore, fedele, femmina, fesso, fetente, figlia, figlio, figliolo, filosofo, forestiero, fratello, fusto, gente, gentildonna, gentiluomo, ghiottone, gigante, giovane, giudice, giullare, goloso, grande, guardia, guardiano, guida, ignorante, immortale, infante, inferiore, ingegno, ingrato, innamorato, Innocente, intellettuale, invitato, lavoratore, legnaiolo, lettore, madre, maestro, maggiore, maldicente, malfattore, malvagio, mangione, maritata, martire, maschio, masnadiero, matto, mattone, membro, merlo, meschino, messo, migliore, miserabile, moderno, moglie, mondo, mortale, morto, mostro, mulattiere, nemico, nessuno, noia, noioso, nome, notabile, numero, omino, operatore, oratore, ozioso, padre, padrone, palla, papa, parlatore, partigiano, partito, patito, pauroso, perdente, persona, pesce, peste, piaga, piccino, piccolo, pigro, pilastro, platonico, pollastro, pollo, popolo, possessore, potente, povero, preda, principale, procaccia, promesso, pubblico, pupillo, ragazzo, re, ricco, richieditore, riguardatore, rimbambito, rosso, salvatore, saputo, scemo, schiavo, scienziato, sciocco, sconosciuto, scrittore, scrivano, seguace, seguito, semplice, serpente, sguattero, sicuro, signore, sole, sorella, sottoposto, spione, spiritato, sposa, sprovveduto, stolto, stordito, strano, suocero, superiore, sventurato, svogliato, tale, temerario, terremoto, tesoro, testa, testimone,

titolare, tormento, trombone, tutore, uditore, umano, uomo, vanaglorioso, vandalo, vecchio, vedova, vedovo, vetraio, vicino, vile, villano, vincitore, vinto, voce, volontario, zia, zio

Psychological Features:

abbattere, accendere, accidia, addolorare, affanno, affetto, affezione, affliggere, albergare, allegrezza, allegro, alterigia, amaro, ambizione, ambizioso, amore, amorevolezza, angoscia, angosciare, anima, animare, animo, appetito, ardimento, ardire, ardito, aria, arrogante, arroganza, arrossire, asperitá, asprezza, astinente, attento, audacia, avarizia, avvilire, baldanza, beatitudine, bene, beneficenza, benevolenza, bonta, burbanza, caldamente, calore, capriccio, carica, cautamente, cautela, cavalleria, civile, codardia, colpa, commuovere, compassione, condotta, confondere, conforto, confusione, consideratamente, considerazione, contentamento, contento, continenza, coraggiosamente, coraggioso, cortese, cortesia, coscienza, Costanza, cotta, crucciare, cruccio, crudelta, cupidamente, cupidigia, debole, debolezza, degnazione, delizia, desiderio, destare, Determinazione, devozione, dignita, diletto, diligentemente, diligenza, disagio, disciplina, discrezione, disio, disonesto, disordine, dispiacere, disposto, dispregio, dolore, esaltare, fame, fantasia, fare, favore, fede, felicita, ferire, fermezza, fiducia, fiero, fine, follia, forza, freddo, fuoco, furia, furore, gaudio, gelosia, gentile, gentilezza, ghiottone, giocondita, giocondo, gioia, giudizio, gola, golosita, grazia, grillo, Gusto, impaccio, impaurire, impeto, incitare, inclinazione, indulgenza, industria, infelicita, ingiuriare, ingratitudine, intemperanza, intenerire, invidia, invitare, ira, lealta, letizia, longanimita, luna, magnanimita, malizia, malvagita, mancare, maniera, mansuetudine, martoriare, meraviglia, merce, miseria, misericordia, modestia, modesto, modo, muovere, natura, negligente, negligenza, noia, nutrire, obbediente, odio, offendere, orgoglio, orgoglioso, pace, passione, paura, paurosamente, pauroso, pazienza, pena, penitenza, pensiero, pentimento, perdita, peso, piacere, piano, pieta, pigrizia, provare, provocare, prudenza, qualita, rabbia, rammaricare, rapace, refrigerio, ribelle, riconoscenza, rigore, rincrescimento, rispetto, ritenere, rivoltare, saggiare, sapienza, schifo, scioccare, sciocchezza, sconcio, sconforto, scuotere, scuro, sdegno, selvatico, sentimento, sentire, sicuramente, sicuro, silenzio, sinistro, smontare, sobrieta, soddisfazione, soffrire, solennita, solitudine, sollevare, sostegno, spaventare, spaventato, spavento, speranza, spirito, spronare, stanchezza, stima, stimolare, stoico, sufficenza, superbamente, superbia, superbo, sviare, tedio, temere,

terribile, terrore, testare, timore, toccare, tormentare, tormento, tranquillita, tratto, travagliare, tristezza, turbamento, turbare, ubbidiente, ubbidienza, umile, umore, valore, vanagloria, vanita, vergogna, vile, villania, villano, volentieri, volonta, , Sexuality, , baciare, castita, casto, chiavare, diverso, finocchio, ingannare, licenza, onesto, puro, tradire, venire, vergine, violentare, virile, virtu

Sexuality:

baciare, castita, casto, chiavare, diverso, finocchio, ingannare, licenza, onesto, puro, tradire, venire, vergine, violentare, virile, virtu

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