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The Artistic and Sociological Imagery of the
Merchant-Banker on the Book Covers of the Biccherna
in Siena in the Early Renaissance

by

Donna Tsuruda Baker

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

The Artistic and Sociological Imagery of the
Merchant-Banker on the Book Covers of the Biccherna
in Siena in the Early Renaissance

by Donna Tsuruda Baker

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee
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Between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, the account covers of the Biccherna, Siena's foremost financial and administrative office, bore painted decorations and inscriptions. The wooden covers are deemed unique and unprecedented, but most studies have dealt with the attribution of selected covers, not their genesis and development as a whole. This dissertation tests the assumption that they lack a geneology by proposing to establish a place for them within larger historical and artistic contexts.

The focus of the study is the principal and most ignored group of images, which began as a portrait of a seated official in 1258 and evolved into a genre-like office scene in the fourteenth century. Its most salient feature is the handling of money by the Camarlingo (treasurer). Because the Biccherna's key officials were prominent merchant-bankers, the depiction of money in light of traditional medieval attitudes is discussed, as are the changing ideas about wealth, profit, usury, and

citizenship. In Siena, these emerging sentiments were promulgated by its officials, whose depiction on the covers as virtuous public servants were in part inspired by the hagiographic *exempla* used in popular sermons of the period.

In order to decipher their embedded messages, the scenes on the covers are compared with *exempla* and Italian miniatures of money transactions in the *Decretum Gratiani*. The investigation includes certain portraits that are combined with inscriptions: Roman consular diptychs, ecclesiastical and judiciary seals, and *pitture infamanti* (defaming pictures used as a form of public punishment). The office scene is also examined in relation to Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescoes in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena.

By integrating its socio-historical context with a visual analysis, the scene can be perceived as a didactic instrument used by the officials to persuade, validate, and legitimize their function and status. That the scene emphasized the role of the officials as communal leaders is reinforced by an examination of its disappearance and a comparison with the Medicean themes on sixteenth-century covers. The study ends with a suggestion that similar scenes appearing later in northern art may have had Italian connections.

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Introduction

First mentioned in documents of the twelfth century, the Biccherna was the most important financial and administrative office of the ancient Republic of Siena.¹ It was headed by a Camarlingo (chamberlain or treasurer) and four Provveditori (provisors or administrators), who controlled the city's revenues and expenditures. Their positions evolved from feudal times when the Camarlingo, known as *camerarius* or *camarlingus*, was in charge of annexing tributes, and the Provveditori were once the "boni homines," leading citizens who looked for new sources of income for the city's coffers. Early in the thirteenth century, these separate magistracies were combined to form the core duties of the Biccherna.² In the communal period,

¹Information about the organization and the election and duties of the officials of the Biccherna can be found in: Archivio di Stato di Siena, *Archivio della Biccherna del Comune di Siena, Inventario*, Rome, 1953; William M. Bowsky, *The Finance of the Commune of Siena, 1287-1355*, Oxford, 1970; L. Borgia, E. Carli, M. A. Ceppari, U. Morandi, P. Sinibaldi, and C. Zarrilli, *Le biccherne: tavole dipinte delle magistrature senesi (secoli XIII-XVIII)*, Rome, 1984; Alessandro Lisini, *Le tavolette dipinte di Biccherna e di Gabella del R. Archivio di Stato in Siena*, Siena, 1901; Ubaldo Morandi, *Le biccherne senesi: le tavolette della Biccherna, della Gabella e di altre magistrature dell'antico stato senese conservate presso l'Archivio di Stato di Siena*, Siena, 1964; Enzo Carli, *Le tavolette di Biccherna e di altri uffici dello Stato di Siena*, Florence, 1950; Ronald W. Lightbown, "The tavolette di Biccherna of Siena," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* II (1963): 292-301.

²Ubaldo Morandi, "Le istituzioni," *Le biccherne: tavole dipinte delle magistrature senesi (secoli XIII-XVIII)*, 2.

the Camarlingo retained responsibility for the public treasury, and the Provveditori constituted one of the major offices that ranked with the signory.³ The accounting records of these officials were turned over to the General Council for approval at the end of six-month terms, but if any discrepancy were found in the ensuing audit, they were held personally liable for the missing funds.

Today the Biccherna is best known for the decorated covers that held those accounts.⁴ Beginning with the first cover of 1258 and continuing in a relatively unbroken series until the final one for the years 1677-82, they bore datable inscriptions which were useful for documenting the appearance and development of various pictorial themes, such as portraits, historical, religious, and allegorical subjects. These dates were also be helpful for reconstructing the movements and/or stylistic evolution of important Sienese artists such as Duccio, Giovanni di Paolo, and Sano di Pietro. Enzo Carli notes that other art historians have studied those covers attributed to the most

³Daniel Waley, *Siena and the Sienese in the Thirteenth Century*, Cambridge, 1991, 57.

⁴In addition to the works already cited, the decorated covers are treated in Archivio di Stato di Siena, *Le sale della mostra e il museo delle tavolette dipinte. Catalogo*, XXIII, Rome, 1956; David Diringer, *The Illuminated Book: Its History and Production*, New York, 1967, especially pp. 335-38; A. Geoffroy, "Tablettes inédites de la Biccherna et de la Gabella de Sienne," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire publiés par l'École Française de Rome*, 1882, 403-34; Giuliano Pinto and Ubaldo Morandi, "Le belle tasse," *Franco Maria Ricci* 16 (1983): 33-54.

well-known artists while neglecting the others,⁵ and although he observes that scant attention has been given to the covers' general paternity or their importance as works of art in themselves, like his predecessors, he is primarily concerned with questions of attribution. Furthermore, since he considers the painted book covers to be unprecedented, and subsequent studies have not questioned this assertion, inquiries into these areas have so far been precluded, with the result that the group has generally been regarded as an interesting curiosity, lacking vital connections to either past or contemporary developments. The office scene, in particular, has been overlooked or disregarded.

To rectify the omission, this study examines the office scene and its predecessor, the Camarlingo at his table. I propose that the officials used the covers as a vehicle for legitimizing their function and status as officials, as individuals, and as a group, which requires an understanding of their social, economical, and political worlds. Carrying out the investigation from both artistic

⁵The contents of the account ledgers are also informative. Records show that Duccio received payments in 1279, 1285, 1287, 1291, 1292, 1294 and 1295 for painting tavolette covers. With the possible exception of the 1294 cover, which displays four heraldic shields, they are all lost, along with 12 painted chests he is documented in the Biccherne's account book for 1278 as having painted. See Enzo Carli, "Gli artisti," *Le biccherne: tavole dipinte delle magistrature senesi (secoli XIII-XVIII)*, 22. Many of the ideas expressed in this essay are based on his earlier work, *Le tavolette*, 1950.

and sociological viewpoints, the aims of this dissertation are to explore the officials' rationale for wanting them painted in the first place, to determine what messages are embodied in the scenes, and finally, to analyze the means used to convey them. The success of the imagery to convey a specific nexus of ideas depended upon the utilization and modification of traditional motifs and the incorporation of contemporary artistic developments as well. Hopefully, this investigation will not only serve to situate the painted book covers properly in their historical and social contexts, but also to integrate them into the artistic milieu of their period.

The organization and operations of the Biccherna is discussed in the first chapter, as is a brief, general history of the book covers. The second chapter is devoted to the earliest painted cover of 1258, which shows the Cistercian Camarlingo, don Ugo, seated as in author portraits. Prototypes were readily available since the antique pagan motif had been transformed by the early Middle Ages into images of various patristic authors and saints, especially as the evangelists, who were often depicted in the act of writing at the front of their gospels. For important liturgical copies, the evangelists might even be placed on the cover as part of richly bejeweled and figured bindings (fig. 83), thus becoming a possible model for the figure on the bicchernal ledger.

The examination entails a broader search for prototypes among figured bookbindings and certain products where images and inscriptions are paired, such as are found on Roman consular diptychs and medieval seals, all of which could be found in ecclesiastic environments. It seems more than coincidental that the earliest painted bicchernal cover appears with the appointment for the first time of a monk as Camarlingo. In addition to visual similarities, the accounting ledgers are comparable to consular diptychs in that they function as commemorations for public officials, and to seals in that they verify the contents of the documents to which they are affixed.

Using the main iconographical elements--the portrait, aedicule, and table strewn with money--that appeared on the remaining covers issued from the Camarlingo's office in the Duecento (fig. 3), the third chapter examines traditional attitudes and imagery of money and the money handler. That some specific purpose or message stood behind the new design is evident from its repetition on almost every surviving ledger of the period.⁶

The depiction on these covers of money handling as a respectable activity represents a new iconographical motif.

⁶The single exception is the cover of 1273. It shows a Podestà (?) passing a sentence on a criminal. The interior scene was obviously painted at a much later date, perhaps in the sixteenth or seventeenth century according to Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, "Le tavole dipinte," *Le biccherne: tavole dipinte delle magistrature senesi (secoli XIII-XVIII)*, 54.

Since the majority of the Biccherna's officials were involved in commerce and/or banking at the highest levels, they had good reason to promote a new and positive image of themselves. But in order to do so, negative attitudes about money itself and those who dealt with it that had been formed in the early Middle Ages had to be overturned. The abhorrence of money had been actively encouraged by the Church, which associated money with sin and evil, as the sculptural programs of its edifices (fig. 120) and illuminated manuscripts (fig. 121) demonstrate. Perhaps Giotto's visualization of the sin of usury and its expiation in the complex cycle at the Arena Chapel in Padua (1305-06, fig. 122) best sums up the traditional and principally moral attitudes about wealth still prevalent at the beginning of the fourteenth century.

The discussion is continued in the fourth chapter, where the transformation from an agrarian to a commercial economy provides the background against which shifting attitudes towards profit and labor, an urban lifestyle, and a new model of civic virtue are treated. In spite of the Church's condemnation of usury and led by Italian city-states, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century European business was conducted on principles of interest and credit. In the thirteenth century, Siena was arguably the premier banking center of Europe; its bankers not only possessed the most advanced banking methods, but they

enjoyed a huge advantage as bankers to the papacy, collecting monies and rent throughout Europe on behalf of the Vatican. Sieneese businessmen in this highest tier were justifiably proud of their achievements, wealth, and power. Excerpts from letters and books written by Italian businessmen are included to document the changing perceptions and values.

Chapter four concludes with an investigation of the relationship between usury and the concept of justice, since beyond avariciousness or uncharitableness, usury, because of its inherent selfishness, was considered to be a sin against justice,⁷ the paramount virtue in communal Italy. In Ambrogio Lorenzetti's frescoes (1338-39, fig. 131) in Siena's Palazzo Pubblico,⁸ the central figure is Justice, who dispenses its two types as they are described by St. Thomas Aquinas in his commentary of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*.⁹ Commutative justice is based on the

⁷John T. Noonan, Jr., *The Scholastic Analysis of Usury*, Cambridge, MA, 1957, 30.

⁸For interpretations of the frescoes see: Nicolai Rubenstein, "Political Ideas in Sieneese Art: The Frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and Taddeo di Bartolo in the Palazzo Pubblico," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21 (1958): 179-201; Uta Feldges-Henning, "The Pictorial Program of the Sala della Pace: A New Interpretation," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972): 145-62; Randolph Starn, "The Republican Regime of the 'Room of Peace' in Siena, 1338-1340," *Representations* 18 (1987): 1-31; Chiara Frugoni, *A Distant City: Images of Urban Experience in the Medieval World*, Princeton, 1991.

⁹Rubenstein, 183.

maintenance of equality between persons, whereas distributive justice takes into consideration the dignity or position of the person and involves the allocation from a common stock of things to persons entitled to them.¹⁰ The office scenes painted on the covers can be interpreted as being part of this system; they not only make visible the magistracy's function of receiving and paying out funds, but also that its officials are working for the Common Good, an idea that formed another cornerstone of communal government.

During the course of the Trecento, the Camarlingo's image borrows a new narrative mode from monumental art, increasing its informational content in the process. By 1339 the scene definitely takes place inside an office (fig. 19); subsequently, office equipment, scribes recording transactions in ledgers, and clients could often be included, while coins or sacks of coins always were. The very fact that this theme recurs regularly--many art historians would say even monotonously--into the fifteenth century suggests that it was considered as a successful means of communication. Now unequivocally depicted at work in the bicchernal office, the magistrates are presented as diligent executors of their duties and as exemplary citizens. For a group who could not openly advertise themselves as the merchants and bankers they were without

¹⁰Noonan, 298; Frugoni, 122.

risking scrutiny by the Church for suspected usurious practices, the cover design offered a safe outlet for self-recognition and validation.

Whereas the sociological portrait of the merchant-banker formed in the two preceding chapters reveals the traits they wished to advertise, in the fifth chapter, the examination concentrates on the means used to transmit these qualities by comparing them to possible literary and artistic models, such as *exempla* and juridical imagery. *Exempla* were brief, dramatic narratives used to preach moral messages in sermons and speeches.¹¹ Usury had become a favorite theme by the thirteenth century, and in most cases, the usurer's fate was his consignment in Hell. However, another category of *exempla* offered a more likely candidate for emulation: hagiographic stories, with their combination of biographic, panegyric, and didactic materials. Stories of the saints' lives made up the largest and most important group;¹² in Jacopo da Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* or *Golden Legend* (c. 1260), so named because of its lasting popularity, the saints are brought to life as paragons of heroic virtue.¹³ *Exempla* are especially

¹¹Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages*, New York, 1988, 13.

¹²Carlo Delcorno, *Exemplum e letteratura tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Bologna, 1989, 26.

¹³William Granger Ryan, trans., Introduction, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, by Jacobus de Voragine, Vol. I, Princeton, 1993, xiii, xvi.

important to the book covers for allowing the presentation of the officials to the public in an analogous manner. Visually, this was accomplished by adapting the iconography developed in judiciary *exempla* in illuminated copies of the *Decretum Gratiani*, the most distinguished and authoritative law book in use throughout western Europe.¹⁴ Many of the cases treated by Gratian involve money; a relevant example for this paper is *Causa XIV* in which clerics are admonished to abstain from usury or other monetary transactions. Miniatures produced in fourteenth-century Italian manuscripts display an avid interest by the artists to include genre scenes. In several of these Italian examples, not only is an exchange of money shown, but the figure behind the counter or seated at a table carries out the transaction in actions comparable to that of almost every image of the working Camarlingo (fig. 175).

However, the most important illustration in any copy of the *Decretum* stressed the dispensation of law by the rightful authorities, the representation of which was borrowed from the *traditio legis* motif. The bicchernal officials, also wishing to confirm their authority, found adaptable patterns not only in the *Decretum*, but on juridical seals as well.

Pitture infamanti,¹⁵ an interesting category of public

¹⁴See Anthony Melnikas, *The Corpus of the Miniatures of the Manuscripts of Decretum Gratiani*, 3 vols., Rome, 1975.

art meant to punish criminals, uses similar components as the covers--image and inscription--while simultaneously inverting the purpose. Given the medieval habit of pairing opposites, as contraries they would reinforce the interpretations offered for the office scene. It is noteworthy that *pitture infamanti* were effectively used for crimes involving business and banking, such as bankruptcy or embezzlement.

The sixth chapter discusses the events and social changes that occurred in sixteenth-century Siena and the effects they had on the imagery of the covers. The group of covers dating from the Medicean subjugation provides an interesting contrast with the group of office scenes, for the changes in subject matter not only reveal the Biccherna's own loss of importance, but also of that of the entire Sieneese upper class. The differences, I believe, emphasize the role played by the earlier series in promoting a certain self-image by the officials represented.

The last area of my investigation touches upon the connection and even possible migration of the "office" iconography to northern Europe where half-length images of merchants and moneychangers became popular from the

¹⁵See Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Pictures and Punishment: Art and Criminal Prosecution during the Florentine Renaissance*, Ithaca, 1985 and Gherardo Ortalli, "*pingatur in Palatio*": *la pittura infamante nei secoli XIII-XVI*, Rome, 1979.

fifteenth century. The realms of the Italian merchant and Flemish artist mingled in Bruges, where, for example, the artist Jan van Eyck painted two portraits for the Lucchese merchant Giovanni Arnolfini. As noted by Raymond de Roover, Italian merchants played a key role in the exchange of artistic ideas between Flanders and Italy.¹⁶

In the seventh chapter, the motives and methods behind the formulation of the Camarlinghi portraits and office scenes are brought together in a summary of the sociological and artistic processes involved. As a group, the cover designs identified and validated the contents of the ledgers, commemorated the officials, and legitimized their activities and positions. They additionally persuaded the viewer to approve how duties were being performed, while reminding the official of his oath of service.

Working within a predominantly chronological framework, socio-historical contexts and visual analysis are intertwined to present a case explaining the genesis, development, and functions of this group of covers. In addition, several subjects, such as Roman consular diptychs and seals, are treated at various moments in the study,

¹⁶Raymond de Roover, *Money, Banking and Credit in Mediaeval Bruges: Italian Merchant-Bankers Lombards and Money-Changers: A Study in the Origins of Banking*, Cambridge, MA, 1948, 22.

where they, hopefully, add new perspectives to the examination at hand and emphasize the importance of their own contributions to the formation of the bicchernal scenes.

Although the office scene is but one of several subjects painted on the covers, I chose to focus on it for a variety of reasons, not the least of which was because it had been previously dismissed as boringly repetitive and uninteresting. In addition, it presents itself, together with its immediate predecessor, the Camarlingo's portrait of the Duecento, as a continuous series whose development can be traced. Many of the cover designs not discussed in this thesis, on the other hand, are unique and do not offer grounds upon which general conclusions about the men who commissioned them can be made. These considerations, when combined with the fact that money handling is emphasized in the scenes, not only point to the scene as a significant demonstration of the Biccherna's operations, but also as an informative expression of the socio-political aims of its officials. Of all the themes depicted on the covers, it most accurately reflects the Biccherna as an office and underscores its leading role in the affairs of the Republic of Siena.

Chapter One

The Biccherna and its Book Covers

The Biccherna

Tucked away on an upper floor of the Archivio di Stato in Siena is a remarkable collection of paintings, some hung on walls, others in glass cases. They are known as the painted *tavolette di Biccherna* in commemoration of Siena's main financial office, the Biccherna. Although examples from other magistracies are also represented, the custom was begun by Bicchernal officials, and it is their covers that form the core of the permanent display. Part of their fascination lies in the fact that as covers of mundane accounting registers, they are nevertheless embellished with a variety of religious, historical, and allegorical scenes in a practice that, like the Biccherna itself, managed to survive for more than four centuries. In addition, the dates they bear make them immensely useful to the study of Sieneese art. The glass protects the oldest covers, whose dimensions correspond to the size of the account sheets and whose thickness helped to contain those unbound parchment pages. However, by 1460 the tavolette were being painted specifically to be framed and hung on the walls of the office and, consequently, their dimensions began to grow.

In view of the vast literature regarding the

organization and functions of the Biccherna,¹ the relevant information for this study is summarized as follows. The first time the word *Biccherna* appears in a document is the late twelfth century.² Until the rise of the government of the Twenty-Four Priors around 1240, it was the most important administrative office of the republic and its officers were supreme in all areas of finance.³ That is not to say that the Biccherna did not retain its importance as the central office of finance, but its power was gradually curtailed as some of its prerogatives were shifted to other magistracies. Once completely in control of receiving and making all payments, in the late thirteenth century another office, the *Gabella generale*, was formed to collect some of

¹For additional information regarding the organization and activities of the Biccherna and Gabella, see Archivio di Stato di Siena, *Guida-Inventario dell'Archivio di Stato*, I, Rome, 1951; Enzo Carli, *Les tablettes peintes de la "Biccherna" et de la "Gabella" de L'ancienne Republique de Sienne*, Milan, 1951.

²Lisini, iv, n. 1. The word first appears in a document of 1193 as *Actum in Bacherna senensium* and in a later document of 1197 as *Actum in Bicherna sancti Pelegrini, Ildebrandinus Mellucze, magister Fortis, Guelfus camerarius et Surichinus de Biccherna, rogatis testibus*. Giovanni Cecchini discusses the possible origin of the word *Biccherna* in the introduction to the *Archivio della Biccherna*, x. He suggests that it is derived from the Byzantine term *Blacherne*, which designated a quarter of Constantinople where the public offices were located. In the 1193 Siense document, *Bakerna* was used to indicate the location of the government offices, and only later signified a financial office.

³E. Armstrong, "The Siense Statutes of 1262," *English Historical Review* 15.57 (1900) 9.

the revenues owed to the republic.⁴ Expenditures, however, continued to be the exclusive domain of the older institution. Many of the Biccherna's other responsibilities were related to its financial obligations and included the provision for the city's safety and beautification, as well as the maintenance of its water, transportation, and defense systems. Salaries paid to city employees, teachers of the Studio, ambassadors, and others had to be claimed at its small offices, located on the ground floor of the Palazzo Pubblico, where fines, fees, and direct taxes were also collected.⁵ Weapons, official weights and measures, and a chained copy of the constitution kept for the public's reference were likewise

⁴The oldest statute of the Gabella dates from c.1298, although the institution is much probably much older. See *Guida-Inventario*, 223. According to Bowsky, *Finance*, 115, "it included every form of communal taxation not based upon the *lira* or *estimo*, as well as all forced loans." Gabelles included direct taxes and indirect taxes on consumer goods, contracts, salaries. The *lira* was a method of evaluating wealth for direct taxation, 70.

⁵Carli, *Les tablettes*, 6, lists the varied occupations in the pay of the commune included the Podestà's spies, guards of fountains, gates, and bridges, artists and sculptors, architects, magicians and astrologers, and aid to beggars and the poor. For information about the Palazzo Pubblico, see Aldo Cairola and Enzo Carli, *Il Palazzo Pubblico di Siena*, Rome, 1963, 26. The construction of the Palazzo Pubblico was completed between 1309-1310. Lightbown, 292, believes that the Biccherna moved to its new offices at the end of the thirteenth century. For information regarding earlier sites of the Biccherna, see Lightbown, 292, and also Lisini, iv, notes 2 and 3. Waley, *Siena and the Sienese*, 58, believes that at any given time the city employed over 200 men in middle-ranking jobs alone, who would all go to the office of the Biccherna for receiving payment.

maintained there.⁶

The Biccherna's numerous activities were supervised by a group of elected officials known as the *Quattro Provveditori*. Their office had evolved from the *boni homines*, men from magnatial families who, in the eleventh century, advised the bishop, signed contracts with feudal landowners, and presided at town meetings.⁷ The term *Provveditori* is first mentioned in a contract of 1169 in reference to their task of creating sources of revenue for the then quickly expanding commune.⁸ They were nominated by the General Council to serve six-month terms beginning on the first day of January or July, although by 1310 the choice was being made by the inner circle of the ruling elite, the *Nove* or Nine.⁹ Perhaps to guard against domination by any single family or faction, elected officials could neither serve until after a eighteen-month interval nor hold office simultaneously with another member of his family.¹⁰ The *Provveditori* belonged to Siena's most important and wealthiest families as evinced by the

⁶Bowsky, *Finance*, 11.

⁷Morandi, "Le istituzioni," 6; Ferdinand Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Medieval Commune*, New York, 1909, 49.

⁸Morandi, "Le istituzioni," 2.

⁹Bowsky, *Finance*, 3.

¹⁰Bowsky, *Finance*, 4.

appearance of their coats of arm on the covers.¹¹ On the other hand, the Camarlingo was often chosen from one of the religious houses, usually from the nearby Cistercian abbey of San Galgano or from the Umiliati.

The earliest mention of a *camerarius* is in a document of 1127; at that time it signified the person in charge of handling all incoming revenue.¹² By the late thirteenth century, however, that function had been given to the Provveditori, while the Camarlingo undertook the responsibility for the safekeeping of the funds and for all payments made by the Biccherna. He was nominated directly by the *Concistoro*,¹³ or signory, and his semester in office coincided with those of the Provveditori. Under the Twenty-Four, the Camarlingo was given greater political authority when the Podestà was absent from the city, at which time he and the judge of the commune acted jointly as substitutes.¹⁴ The five officials also were empowered to appoint a large number of minor officials and commissioners.¹⁵

¹¹For the somewhat lax use of heraldry by Italians, see Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy 1300-1600*, Baltimore, 1993, 168-69. On the *stemmi* appearing on the covers, see Borgia, 321-73.

¹²Morandi, "Le istituzioni," 2.

¹³*Archivio della Biccherna*, xii.

¹⁴Morandi, "Le istituzioni," 4.

¹⁵Armstrong, 9.

Complicated systems of checks and balances and record keeping were devised in an effort to prevent fraud and embezzlement within the Biccherna. The Camarlingo could not make disbursements unless two Provveditori were present to give their authorization and the sum paid out was listed in the account books of each office by their own notaries. The Provveditori, in turn, could not accept any monies unless there were at least two of them present. When a transaction was made, it was immediately recorded in their account book along with a notation on the purpose of the payment and the names of the Provveditori acting as witnesses. The next day the money was reassigned to the Camarlingo and duly recorded by the notary assigned to him by the Concistoro;¹⁶ each transaction of receipt and payment was listed daily for the entire six months.¹⁷ By providing checks against the entries in each other's books, all five officers were responsible for the money. At the end of their terms, the two books were audited and the officers held liable for any discrepancies found in them. At this time, the books were also examined to see if the expenditures had been for the good of the city; if not acceptable, the Camarlingo and the Provveditori were again obliged to make necessary reimbursements.¹⁸ Finally, they

¹⁶Lisini, vi; Bowsky, *Finance*, 8.

¹⁷Morandi, *Le biccherne senesi*, 19.

¹⁸*Archivio della Biccherna*, xiv.

were handed over to the General Council for review and approval. Should there still be lingering suspicions of dishonesty, their lives could be forfeited, as was the case in 1355 of Messer Giovanni dell'Acqua, who was decapitated.¹⁹

A third set of accounts, the daily record of payments, debits and credits called the *Memoriali*, was kept by the notaries and scribes. Whereas the scribes only took care of the accounting entries, the notaries had other important functions. They authenticated documents coming from the office, made sure that all operations were performed according to the statutes, and were required to report any irregularities.²⁰

From the middle of the fourteenth century, Siena suffered through a series of epidemics, famines, economic crises, and political upheavals. Magistrates of the Biccherna and Gabella came to be accused of dishonesty, corruption, and favoritism, so that in the overthrow of the regime of the Nine in 1355, the offices of the Biccherna were attacked as well.²¹

By this time, some of the duties had already been transferred to other offices. The storage of state-owned

¹⁹Carli, *Le tavolette*, 10.

²⁰Lightbown, 293.

²¹William M. Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena Under the Nine, 1287-1355*, Berkeley, 1981, 303, 305.

weaponry, for example, had been given to the *Operaio della Camera del Comune*.²² In 1360, the Gabella began collecting all payments made to the state except for fines and taxes, which remained in the hands of the Biccherna; the main difference between the two organizations lay in the Biccherna's authority to make all payments, a responsibility not shared by the Gabella.²³ Sometimes the Biccherna was given new responsibilities as in 1375 when it became a watchdog against fraud in the collection of loans and other revenues. During the last quarter of the fourteenth century, it was given the authority to order the demolition, repair, or reconstruction of houses and towers.²⁴

Throughout the fifteenth century, its importance continued to decline. Finally, after the Medici took over in 1555, the Biccherna was put directly under the control of the Grand Duke, who personally chose the Camarlingo. Eventually, the Provveditori were chosen by lot in the General Council from a pool of men who were deemed suitable by the governor.²⁵ During the last two centuries of its existence, the Biccherna was left in charge of the city's

²²Lisini, viii.

²³*Archivio della Biccherna*, xxi; Carli, *Les tablettes*, 6.

²⁴*Archivio della Biccherna*, xxiii.

²⁵Morandi, "Le istituzioni," 10.

decoration and the Palio,²⁶ the famous horse race that is still held twice each summer. Finally, in 1786 Peter Leopold suppressed the Biccherna altogether, and the Gabella in 1808.²⁷

The Book Covers

The use of wooden tablets as book covers by important municipal offices seems to have been customary in the Sienese State as was the idea of decorating them. Based on archival information from 1203, the earliest markings consisted of either simple designs which gave the books their names, i.e., the book of the Rooster, Dragon, or Crossbow, or letters of the alphabet, presumably for identification and filing purposes, since similar markings were found both on pouches holding public documents and on the cassoni in which the pouches and registers were stored.²⁸ The oldest surviving covers bear dated inscriptions that identify the contents of the registers and administrators of the office; these are the covers of the Biccherna.

The oldest Biccherna cover from 1258 features an image of the Camarlingo seated at a desk with an open book and an inscription in the top half of a wooden board, 35.9 x 23.5

²⁶*Le sale della mostra*, 94.

²⁷Lisini, viii, ix.

²⁸*Le sale della mostra*, 131.

cm. (14 x 9 inches, fig. 1). The next surviving cover, from 1263, displays the heraldic shields of the Provveditori currently holding office (fig. 2). The two are similar in size, in the disposition of the design on the upper half of the board, and in the lack of decoration on the bottom half. Whereas in most cases, the leather straps which once held the parchment sheets between the boards have disintegrated,²⁹ the means by which they were fastened across the middle of each cover is visible and marks the division between the decorated and plain areas. A cover from the following year shows the Camarlingo in an aedicule seated at a table with an open book, a bag, and some coins (fig. 3). For the rest of the thirteenth century, the surviving covers indicate that the coats of arms of the Provveditori or the seated Camarlingo were the designs of choice.

The inscription on each cover was fairly standard, giving the title of the ledger, the names of the Camarlingo or Provveditori, and the date, which in the Duecento was usually written in terms of the Podestà's dates in office. By the dawn of the Quattrocento, the names of the scribe and notary were added. Typically the inscription would begin with phrases such as "libro di . . ." or "questo è libro de l'entrata e de l'escita . . ." as on the

²⁹For an example of a cover with its surviving leather strap, see figure 13.

Biccherna cover of 1329 (fig. 17):

QUESTO È LIBRO DE L'ENTRATE DE LA BICCHERNA DEL
 COMUNE DI SIENA AL TEMPO DI DONO NICOLAO, MONACO
 DI SAN GALGANO CAMARLENGO, DI NADDO DI MISSERE
 STRICCHA, ACOLINO DI GADDO MALAVOLTI, CECO DI
 CURADO PICOLIUMINI E (a) DI TURINO GHELLI,
 SIGNORI QUATRO DA CALENDE LUGLIO A CALENDE GENAIO
 ANNO DETTO, ANNO DOMINI .MCCCXXVIII. ³⁰

At the end of the semester, after having the registers recopied from the vernacular on paper into Latin on parchment and then covered with the decorated boards, the Camarlingo and Provveditori submitted them to the General Council for review and approval. However, at least by 1314, the contents in the two separate books had become practically identical so that they were combined in a single volume. The covers reflected this change with a similar union of their respective iconographical motifs (fig. 13).³¹ The combination of the Camarlingo at work, coats of arms, and inscription became an enduring theme for the Biccherna covers; nineteen of the twenty-three examples

³⁰Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 84. I have translated the passage as: "This is the book of receipts of the Biccherna of the commune of Siena for the term of Dono Nicolao, monk from San Galgano, Camarlingo, of Naddo di Striccha, Acolino di Gaddo Malavolt, Ceco di Curado Picoliuomini, and (of) Turino Ghelli, four lords, from the calends July to the calends January of the said year of the Lord 1329."

³¹Morandi, "Le istituzioni," 3.

from the Trecento depict it. During the next century, the theme is repeated on only three of thirteen covers, and twice more on covers from the Gabella.

The Gabella was headed by its own Camarlingo, or Giudice Esecutore (executive magistrate), and three other esecutori,³² who copied the Biccherna's practice of decorating ledgers sent to the General Council for approval. The earliest example from the Gabella dates from 1291 and depicts three coats of arms above an inscription written in the vernacular (fig. 9). Of the five Gabella covers from the Trecento, one features a seated Camarlingo, three have religious themes, and the fifth is the political allegory of the "Good Government of Siena" (1344, fig. 22), ascribed to Ambrogio Lorenzetti.³³ From the Quattrocento, eighteen of the Gabella's covers survived compared to the Biccherna's twelve. For both magistracies, religious themes or current events seem to have been preferred.

During the course of the fifteenth century, the office scene is depicted only five times. The 1402 Biccherna cover gives us the most detailed glimpse into the narrow office (fig. 36), where we see the long counter, two open cassoni (one beneath a barred window), and the Camarlingo with his notary attending to three clients. The counter is scattered with ink wells, pen sharpeners, and accounting

³²*Guida-Inventario*, 224.

³³Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 96.

sheets while on the wall behind the officials is a row of registers or documents bearing the stemma of Siena. The next appearance of the scene about fifty years later presents an interesting change; replacing the realistic scene with its wealth of details is a type with fewer genre elements but with a new symbolic content, which presumably reflected the anxiety of the Sienese during this unsettled period in their history.³⁴ The Biccherna cover from 1451 juxtaposes two scenes, one depicting the Camarlingo washing his hands and the other, the Virgin hovering above Siena in a protective gesture (fig. 42). For the cover from the following year (fig. 43), the Virgin is shown with various saints and beati, watching over the officials at work, and in the later Gabella covers of 1468 (fig. 48) and 1474 (fig. 50), allegorical figures, first of Peace and War, then of Good Government, act as guardians for the just discharge of duties.

Several important decisions pertaining to the covers were made in the Quattrocento. In 1412 the Concistoro had to limit the amount paid for a cover to one gold florin, since the lively competition between the two financial offices for securing the most beautiful covers by important artists had gradually raised the cost of production.³⁵ However, in 1433, the lengthening of the Camarlingo's time

³⁴Morandi, *Le biccherne senesi*, 14.

³⁵*Archivio della Biccherna*, xiii, n. 1.

in office to one year required that only a single tavoletta be commissioned annually.³⁶ Most significant was the decision made between 1457-1459 to treat the covers as real paintings meant to be hung on a wall.³⁷ Whether the determination was made simply in order to protect the covers from damage due to constant handling,³⁸ or because the switch from parchment to paper meant that leather or vellum bindings could be used in place of the heavy wooden boards,³⁹ the covers became separated from the account books. The cover from 1460 (fig. 45), at 59 x 40.5 cm (23 x 16 inches), is not only larger than any of its predecessors, but it is also framed. Freed from their original purpose, the paintings sometimes came to assume horizontal formats or to bear inscriptions unrelated to the office, as exemplified in the Biccherna cover of 1533 (fig. 58). The large, framed painting measures 62.3 x 79.5 cm (24.5 x 31 inches); its inscription refers to a naval battle fought in Peloponnesus and the officials identified solely through their *stemmi*.

³⁶Lightbown, 296. The Esecutori of the Gabella had already been turning in a single ledger annually. Also see Giulio Prunai, "The 'Tavolette della Biccherna e della Gabella' of the Old Sienese Republic," *Terra di Siena IV* (1950) 21.

³⁷Carli, *Le tavolette*, 14.

³⁸*Le sale della mostra*, 134.

³⁹Lightbown, 298.

The commemoration of a naval victory belongs to the tradition of depicting current events that goes back at least to 1433 with the image of the Coronation of Emperor Sigismund for the Biccherna (fig. 37). The 1460 Biccherna cover discussed above shows the papal coronation of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini as Pius II and the 1467 cover remembers the year's disastrous earthquakes (fig. 47). According to the diary of Alessandro Sozzini, the tavolette of outgoing Camarlinghi commemorated some noteworthy event that occurred during their term in office.⁴⁰

With the Sienese loss of independence, the duties of the Biccherna and Gabella, as well as the election of their officials, were transferred to and directed by Florence. The designs on the covers reflected Siena's new dependence on the Medici regime. Not only were Medicean political and personal events celebrated, such as the 1560 cover trumpeting Cosimo I's entry into Siena (fig. 65) and the 1588-1589 cover honoring the wedding of Ferdinando I and Cristina di Lorena (fig. 67), but the Medici arms were almost always prominently featured, sometimes within the main scene itself, at other times in the border, surrounded by the smaller stemmi of the officials.

Whereas the last known surviving painting of the Gabella, 1610 (fig. 69), follows the usual form, the last

⁴⁰Geffroy, 427; Lightbown, 298.

two "covers" of the Biccherna were large paintings on canvas. San Carlo Borromeo, canonized in 1616, is commemorated in the painting for 1616-1619 (fig. 70), San Galgano on Montesiepi, for 1677-1682 (fig. 71). It seems appropriate that this brief outline should end with the image of the twelfth-century saint since my investigation begins at the abbey of San Galgano.

Chapter Two

The Don Ugo Cover

Although various administrative books had been used by the Biccherna since at least the beginning of the Duecento and were distinguished by simple designs on their covers, the Camarlingo's ledger of 1258 would appear to have had the first painted cover (fig. 1). The author of the small, rectangular painting, one Gilio di Pietro, is noted in bicchernal records.¹ In this rather modest image, to use Enzo Carli's words, Gilio has seated the Camarlingo at a desk examining an open book with the inscription: IN A[NNO] .MCCLCVIII.² Could the appearance of the portrait on the cover in 1258 be related to the fact that it was also the first year in which a monk served the commune as the Camarlingo for the Biccherna?³

Don Ugo di Azzolino degli Ugurgeri came from the

¹Carli, "Gli artisti," 21. During the Duecento, the names of artists responsible for the tavolette are found in bicchernal records, but seldom thereafter. Records show that Gilio was paid five soldi for this work, but more importantly, he is the earliest known Sienese painter whose name has survived.

²Alternatively, the inscription may read, IN A[NNO] .MCCLVII, its poor condition and renovation making a more precise reading difficult. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 42.

³Ferdinand Schevill, "San Galgano: A Cistercian Abbey of the Middle Ages," *American Historical Review* 14 (1908) 29. In 1258, monks from San Galgano were also given the authority to direct the workshop of the Duomo, see Giuseppe Amante and Andrea Martini, *L'abbazia di San Galgano: un insediamento cistercense nel territorio senese*, Florence, 1969, 35.

Cistercian abbey of San Galgano,⁴ the construction of which began in 1218.⁵ Although located in a wild and isolated environment, the new monastery grew wealthy from papal privileges and imperial gifts so that it soon became the most important Cistercian abbey in Tuscany, its monks renowned for their number and piety.⁶ The main occupation of the monastery's population was manual labor, but this was mostly delegated to uneducated lay brothers, or *conversi*, who entered the Order as adults. They toiled as

⁴Don Ugo is listed in Document XX of the Provveditori di Biccherna in the Archivio di Stato in Siena, which names the monks from San Galgano serving as Camarlinghi for the Commune of Siena and is published by Antonio Canestrelli, *L'abbazia di San Galgano*, Florence, 1896. For information on the abbey of San Galgano, also see Vito Albergo and Renzo Vatti, *La splendida storia dell'eremo e dell'abbazia di San Galgano*, Florence, 1989; Emilio Bassi, *L'abbazia di S. Galgano in Val di Merse. I Cistercensi. Monte Siepi*, Siena, 1975; Balduino Gustavo Bedini, *Breve prospetto delle abazie cistercensi d'Italia*, Rome, 1964.

⁵Amante and Martini, 51-85: An earlier chapel had been built on Monte Siepi above the Val di Merse where the Abbey was later constructed. Built in 1185, the circular chapel enclosed both the sword-in-rock shrine associated with the legend of San Galgano and the body of the local saint (d. 1181). By this time, the shrine had already been donated to the Cistercians by the bishop of Volterra, in whose diocese the area lay. A small, adjoining chapel was completed in 1340 and houses frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and his workshop. For the frescoes, also see George Rowley, *The Gothic Frescoes at Monte Siepi*, Cambridge, MA, 1930. The monk in charge of constructing the new abbey, a Johannes, had recently completed the building of Casamari (1217), the mother house of San Galgano and itself founded by monks from Clairvaux. San Galgano represents the introduction of Gothic architecture into Tuscany.

⁶Bedini, 94. Between 1233 and 1337, colonies of its monks were sent out to occupy centers near Pisa, Lucca, Florence, and Siena.

farmers, sheep raisers, weavers, tanners, smiths, millers, masons; above all, they labored to make the land productive by reclaiming swamps and devising systems for irrigation. The monastery attracted men of quality from every walk of life, including many from the Sienese nobility, to become lay or spiritual brothers, since besides being a religious retreat, the new abbey acted as a school and library.⁷ Many of its monks had been trained in specialized fields such as architecture, hydraulic engineering, medicine and pharmacy; others became judges, lawyers, notaries, and administrative managers--fields and skills which made them invaluable to the public life of Siena. By the second half of the thirteenth century, San Galgano had become a major economic and political ally of Siena; the monastery provided agricultural products and men of skill and knowledge to the benefit of the commune, and, in return, Siena supplied the monastery with many of its lay brothers, and its military forces protected the abbey. A testimony to the close ties between the Abbey and Siena was the election of many of its monks as Camarlingo for the city's Treasury.⁸

In 1257 the burgeoning commune requested the services of a competent and trustworthy monk to act as Camarlingo

⁷Schevill, "San Galgano," 28; Canestrelli, *Documento XVIII*, lists law books donated to the Abbey in 1262. For a discussion on a scriptorium previously misidentified as the refectory, see Albergo and Vatti, 30.

⁸Amante and Martini, 99-100.

for its important financial magistracy, the Biccherna. Don Ugo became the first monk to leave the monastery to take up this post, a position which the Sieneese tried to make more attractive to the unwilling appointee by renting a house for him and his servant near the Biccherna's office at San Pellegrino.⁹ He remained in Siena as Camarlingo until the end of 1262; Cistercians continued to be chosen for the post until 1375, and especially between 1275 and 1349.¹⁰

The similarity of the seated Camarlingo to the author portrait is immediately apparent. It was a venerable motif used in manuscript illustrations since Greco-Roman times and kept alive throughout the Middle Ages most notably as portraits of the seated Evangelists. Examples are found in the Ebbo Gospels (816-35, fig. 74) from the Carolingian period and a tenth-century manuscript of the *Acts of the Apostles* from Constantinople (fig. 75). Components of the iconography, the seat, podium, lectern, writing implements, and book, were also adapted to portray less exalted personages, from the scholar Cassiodorus dressed as the Old Testament prophet Ezra in the frontispiece of the *Codex Amiatinus* (c. 700, fig. 76) to the anonymous monk and scribe pictured on the frontispiece of the Toledo Bible in the Pierpont Morgan Library (1226-34, fig. 77). A finely

⁹Morandi, *Le biccherne senesi*, 9. Don Ugo's reluctance to accept the post stemmed from the practice of taking an oath of office, which violated his religious vows.

¹⁰Canestrelli, 126.

wrought and detailed author portrait from the tenth century depicts Pope Gregory I the Great (540-604, fig. 78) seated and writing in a book inspired by the dove at his ear. Three scribes below copy the text; a heavy acanthus pattern enframes the scenes. However, in this case the image has migrated from the pages of the manuscript to the exterior of the book and is carved out of ivory. It thus represents an important connection to the Biccherna cover in terms of both iconography and also as a means of decorating a book cover, or, at the very least an exterior surface, that ultimately goes back to Roman and Late Antique consular diptychs, such as those of Boethius (AD 487, fig. 79) and Anastasius (AD 517, fig. 80).

Medieval Bookbindings

There are several factors which would suggest that an investigation of the Biccherna cover in relation to other medieval book covers is desirable. First of all, the painted wooden cover does not seem to have been the norm even in the early stages of the development of the codex when leather bindings were most commonly used. There is mention of an extant third-century codex with a leather cover¹¹ and references in letters of St. Jerome to jeweled

¹¹Svend Dahl, *History of the Book*, New York, 1958, 26.

bindings in the fourth century.¹² Some of the earliest extant covers were found in Egypt, where books were being collected in Coptic monasteries since the second century, although the wooden or papyrus boards were usually covered with tooled leather.¹³ The only mention of an early painted wooden cover is made by Paul Needham concerning the Freer Gospel of the sixth century. It has portraits of the Four Evangelists, two on each cover, but it is possible that they were added in the following century.¹⁴ Perhaps painted covers simply did not survive as well as their leather counterparts. In the West, the first known leather cover was found on a Gospel of St. John (fig. 81), found in the tomb of St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, who died in 687.¹⁵ Its decorative system of interlace patterns set within rectangular boundaries is similar to the coeval *Carpet Page* in the Book of Durrow (fig. 82). Until c. 1150, books were transcribed and assembled in monasteries mainly for the use of its monks so that for the most part they were not embellished.¹⁶ Covers were composed of wooden boards and

¹²Victoria and Albert Museum, *A Picture Book of Bindings. Part I: Before 1550*, London, 1933, n.pag.

¹³Paul Needham, *Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings, 400-1600*, New York, 1979, 7; Dahl, 27.

¹⁴Needham, 10.

¹⁵*Le livre au Moyen Âge*, N. p., 1988, 77.

¹⁶Michael Olmert, *The Smithsonian Book of Books*, New York, 1995, 10.

were ordinarily covered with plain parchment or leather. However, Italian monastic books sometimes had half-bindings, in which the front part of the boards was left uncovered, but generally they were likewise left undecorated.¹⁷ When they were decorated, leather covers were often tooled or stamped according to methods that had been in use in Coptic monasteries. Titles were occasionally written directly on the leather, although it was much more usual to write it on a piece of parchment afixed to the board with brass studs.¹⁸ Alternatively, titles could be written on their bottom- or fore-edges since books were laid on their sides facing outward;¹⁹ from the tenth century onwards, the fore-edge began to be decorated.²⁰ Medieval books commonly had clasps that helped to keep the vellum pages flat; otherwise they would have tended to curl. Bosses in the center and at the corners protected the upper covers against wear and the bottom covers were normally left plain for the same reason. When paper replaced parchment at the end of the Middle Ages and heavy wooden boards were no longer necessary, lightweight cardboard covers became common.

¹⁷Edith Diehl, *Bookbinding: Its Background and Technique*, New York, 1930, 83.

¹⁸*Le livre*, 77.

¹⁹Dahl, 63; Diehl, 64.

²⁰Cyril Davenport, *The Book: Its History and Development*, New York, 1903, 142.

Since the first painted bicchernal cover does not conform to the traditional pattern of medieval book cover production, a different model must be sought. Figured designs were found on certain important and cherished books, which were distinguished from ordinarily bound books by the costly materials used on their covers. Just as illuminations enhanced the pages, the addition of gold, silver, precious gems, enamelwork, and ivory carvings enriched the exteriors of liturgical books, their sumptuousness placing them in a separate category from other products of monastic scriptoria.²¹ An example is the gem-encrusted *Codex Aureus* of St. Emmeram (c. 870-80, fig. 83) depicting Christ in Majesty, scenes from the Life of Christ, and the Four Evangelists. Paul Needham calls these luxurious creations "treasure bindings," which originated as privately owned, Late Antique products and wound up in monasteries and cathedrals, where they became liturgical equipment and part of the "treasure" of the church.²² Sometimes chained to the lecterns on which they were kept, these books were touched and handled only in the most reverential manner.²³

²¹*Le livre*, 95. Monks copied and read edifying sacred and profane texts for spiritual exercise.

²²Needham, 21-22.

²³W. M. Ivins, Jr., *A Guide to an Exhibition of the Arts of the Book, New York, May 12 through September 14, 1924*, New York, 1924, 77.

Consular Diptychs

Although ivory carving was also an important industry in Byzantium, where it was fashioned into such objects as icons, caskets, diptychs and triptychs, in the West, since the Carolingian period, its primary use was as plaques to be inserted as decorative elements in book covers.²⁴ Many Byzantine and Late Antique ivories were converted to this purpose, although they were sometimes dismantled before being reused. The so-called Barberini diptych from the sixth century (fig. 84)²⁵ and a fifth-century cover in the Cathedral Treasury of Milan with scenes from the Life of Christ (fig. 85) are early examples of the five-panel format which was emulated later, as on the book cover from St. Aegidien from the end of the twelfth century (fig. 86). On their own, ivory diptychs were sometimes used for carrying liturgical music in processions,²⁶ or in other instances, were inscribed with the names of the living and

²⁴Archer St. Clair and Elizabeth Parker McLachlan, eds., *The Carver's Art: Medieval Sculpture in Ivory, Bone, and Horn*, Rutgers, 1989, 3.

²⁵For the Barberini Diptych as a consular gift to the emperor, see Edward Capp, Jr., "The Style of the Consular Diptychs," *Art Bulletin* 1 (1927):62-63; as a display for the emperor, see St. Clair and McLachlan, 24; as possible book cover, see A. M. Cust, *The Ivory Workers of the Middle Ages*, London, 1902, 25-27.

²⁶Walters Art Gallery, *The History of Bookbinding 525-1950 AD*, Baltimore, 1957, 1. Also see Ernst Kantorowicz, "Ivories and Litanies," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942): 56-79.

dead to be read during the Mass. The fifth-century consular diptych of Boethius seemed to have been employed in this manner. Whereas the exterior of the leaves bears carved portraits of the Roman consul (fig. 79), their interiors are painted with scenes of the Raising of Lazarus on the left and Saints Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory on the right (fig. 87). In addition, there are inscriptions, that like the paintings above them, were added in the seventh century.²⁷ In use continuously from the ninth to the eighteenth centuries, from the thirteenth century, they could include prayers for the entire community.²⁸ On the back of the consular diptych of Flavius Taurus Clementinus (AD 513), the Greek inscription added in the eighth or ninth century includes a dedication to Pope Hadrian and to the Church or Convent of St. Agatha.²⁹ Consular and other diptychs, then, could be used in their entirety as independent covers in an ecclesiastical setting despite their secular origin and themes.³⁰

²⁷Giulia Bologna, *Illuminated Manuscripts: The Book before Gutenberg*, New York, 1988, 58.

²⁸*Le livre*, 78.

²⁹George C. Williamson, *The Book of Ivory*, London, 1938, 133.

³⁰Sometimes diptychs were altered, such as the consular diptych in the Cathedral Treasury at Monza, in which the consul has been transformed into St. Gregory. He has been given a tonsure and his scepter turned into a cross, but still wears consular robes and carries the *mappa circensis* in his upraised right hand. The consular's companion image

Largely because they were donated to and utilized by the Church, some thirty consular diptychs from the fifth and sixth centuries AD still survive.³¹ Diptychs were commissioned by each of the two consuls upon their election to this most prestigious office, which gave them the legal right to wield authority over the Senate and administer justice.³² They had the right to issue them as gifts to friends and important personages. The size and material varied according to the status of the recipient. For lower-ranking recipients, the gift took the form of a medallion that was either inscribed or bore the bust of the consul, which was surrounded by a foliated scroll;³³ the costliest and most ostentatious--the large, five-panel pieces--were presented to the emperor. The fifth-century pieces displayed greater variations in iconography. On the two halves of his diptych for example, Boethius, is shown standing on one side and seated in the other (fig. 79),³⁴

has been turned into King David. Other than consular forms, diptychs might have celebrated festive events such as marriages or serve as votives. Examples include the Nicomachi-Symmachi and the Asclepius-Hygieaia diptychs, both from the late fourth century. See Cust, 22-23, 31-33.

³¹Nancy Netzer, "Redating the consular ivory of Orestes," *Burlington Magazine* 125 (1983) 265.

³²Williamson, 132.

³³Cust, 19.

³⁴For a discussion on the differences between the diptychs of the fifth and sixth centuries, see Capp, "The

but by the sixth century, the standard iconography for both panels was to depict the consul dressed in the ceremonial *toga picta* (fig. 80), seated on a cushioned curule chair and presiding at the circus games, which he sponsored in celebration of his inauguration. In his left hand he holds a sceptre, while in his upraised right hand he holds the *mappa circensis*, or handkerchief, used to signal the start of the games. Chariot races, animals, or other circus activities take place in the lower portion of the panels, and while these two scenes of the diptych differed from each other, that of the consul had become near duplicates. The consul's name was always inscribed on the upper leaf or cover of the diptych and on the other, his titles along with commemorative inscriptions or devices.³⁵

The consular diptych is considered to be the ancestor of the codex, which appeared about the first century AD.³⁶ In turn, it is descended from small and portable Greco-Roman writing tablets or *pugillares*.³⁷ Students and clerks as well as rich and cultured persons carried them. If covered with ivory, leather, or perhaps a luxurious

Style"; also Ernst Kitzinger, *Byzantine Art in the Making: Main lines of stylistic development in Mediterranean Art, 3rd-7th Century*, Cambridge, MA, 1980.

³⁵Cust, 5.

³⁶*Le livre*, 30.

³⁷David Diringer, *The Hand-Produced Book*, New York, 1953, 29.

textile, the wooden tablets could be hung at the waist.³⁸ They could be used singly or with as many as eight leaves hinged together, when they were called *codices*, or tree trunks, that is, books made of wooden tablets. Diptychs consisted of two such tablets hinged together, their insides hollowed out to hold a layer of wax as a reusable surface for writing with a stylus. A narrow rim enframing the rectangular tablet confined the wax within its borders, although in place of wax, polished gesso was sometimes used for the writing surface, in which case the ink could be washed off, and the tablet reused.³⁹ *Pugillares* were indispensable for school exercises, notes, lists, and early drafts of literary compositions. They were particularly useful for accounting, judicial, and such administrative purposes as recording legal contracts of sale or hire. In Pompeii, a group of tablets excavated from a banker's house was comprised of receipts from his business as a contractor for the city. Other diptychs and triptychs from the first three centuries AD record the full texts of contracts and were signed by witnesses. After the tablets were closed and sealed, an abbreviated version or summary was put on the outer faces, thus making it unnecessary to open the document unless a dispute arose.⁴⁰

³⁸ *Le livre*, 31.

³⁹ Diringer, *Hand-Produced Book*, 29.

⁴⁰ Bologna, 17.

Diptychs were widely used as handy notebooks in ancient times as well as in the Middle Ages, but perhaps owing to the decline of an urban society that was sustained by business and commerce, fewer wax tablets survive from the fourth to the twelfth centuries. They did become more common again beginning in the seventh century when they were used for computations and notes;⁴¹ Charlemagne is said to have used one to practice writing. Later, the cloth-trimmer Benedetto di Bartolomeo wrote on his wax tablet the open-air sermons given by San Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444).⁴²

The typical consular diptych (fig. 80) and the don Ugo cover (fig. 1) have in common the purpose of commemorating terms in office by means of a tablet in which a representation of the donor is its most prominent feature. Each is accompanied by an inscription that identifies the year according to the tenure in office of the chief magistrate of their respective governments, that is, the consul himself in the late Roman Empire, and the Podestà in the medieval commune of Siena. The inscription on the don Ugo cover reads:

⁴¹*Le Livre*, 30. According to Alexander Murray, *Reason and Society in the Middle Ages*, Oxford, 1978, 172, arithmetic calculations were done on slates up to the fifteenth century, bringing up the possibility of a connection between function and usage of wooden boards for the covers.

⁴²Bologna, 17.

LIBER CAMERARII TENPORE DOMINI BONIFATI DOMINI
 CASTELLANI DE BONONIA SENENSIS POTESTATIS IN
 ULTIMIS SEX MENSIBUS SUI REGIMINIS.⁴³

In reference to their respective positions, the ceremonially garbed consul officiates at the circus, whereas the tonsured and habited don Ugo sits quietly before an open book. An interesting question arises regarding a possible attempt at portraiture. In the case of the consular diptychs, a certain degree of individualization has been detected,⁴⁴ but the likelihood for the don Ugo cover remains more conjectural. Records indicate that for four and a half years, or nine terms, don Ugo served consecutive terms as Camarlingo. Unfortunately, none of those tavolette have survived.

Seals

The last category of images to be investigated in

⁴³Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 42. It can be roughly translated as, "The book of the treasurer at the time of Lord Bonifati, Castellan Lord of Bologna, Podestà of Siena in the last six months of his reign."

⁴⁴Netzer, "Orestes," argues that the Orestes ivory (AD 530) should be considered as a diptych originally belonging to Clementinus (AD 513), and whose details, including the recarving of the consular portrait, were altered to agree with its new identity. Portraiture in conjunction with the consular diptychs and bicchernal covers is discussed in the next chapter.

relation to the don Ugo cover is the seal,⁴⁵ an artifact widely used since at least the fifth century BC as property marks⁴⁶ or for validating documents. In the ecclesiastical group, the oldest extant papal seal matrix, circular in form and made of lead, belonged to Adeodato I (615-618) with an image of the Good Shepherd on one side and on the reverse side an epigraph with the words, DEUSDEDIT PAPAE ("God granted to the Pope," fig. 88).⁴⁷ Soon, bishops and other dignitaries adopted the practice since the management of their jurisdictions necessitated the sending of mandates, summons, and other official correspondences, all of which were routinely handled by subordinates; the required proof of authorization was provided by the seal. During the high medieval period, bishops used signet rings for making wax imprints and metallic matrixes for lead seals. The custom spread through the religious bureaucratic system so that various orders, confraternities, and other religious corporations eventually had their own seals. Abbots, priests, and

⁴⁵The primary source is found in the work of Giacomo C. Bascapè, *Sigillografia. Il sigillo nella diplomatica, nel diritto, nella storia, nell'arte*, Milan, 1969. Also see his article, "Lineamenti di sigillografia ecclesiastica," *Scritti storici e giuridici in memoria di A. Visconti*, Milan, 1955.

⁴⁶William H. Desmonde, *Magic, Myth, and Money: The Origin of Money in Religious Ritual*, New York, 1962, 112-13.

⁴⁷Bascapè, "Lineamenti," 59.

friars utilized personal seals as well.⁴⁸

Inscriptions formed an integral part of seal designs. Although papal stamps and those that imitated them had one or more lines of inscriptions in the central portion of the design, it was always more usual to place it around the perimeter (fig. 89). The legend often consisted of the name and office of the appointee with perhaps an additional devotional phrase, *Dei gratia*, for example, being a particularly popular motto in the thirteenth century.⁴⁹ If the image were of a patron saint, the names of the patron and sometimes that of the city or convent were inscribed.

The earliest ecclesiastical seals had designs of classical forms consisting of monograms, inscriptions, saints, the cross, or other allegorical images, each possessing a precise, iconographically important meaning. Among the various categories in which Giacomo Bascapè has divided the surviving seals, of particular relevance to this study is the "effigy" group, which is comprised of portraits of the office-holder or of patron saints (fig. 90).⁵⁰ Portraits of bishops began appearing in the tenth

⁴⁸Bascapè, "Lineamenti," 103-05.

⁴⁹Bascapè, "Lineamenti," 75.

⁵⁰Bascapè, "Lineamenti," 89. The categories are based on the model formulated by A. Coulon, "Elements de sigillographie ecclesiastique française," *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France* XVIII (1932). They are: 1) prototypes; 2) "effigy" types; 3) hagiographical types; 4) monumental or topographical types; 5) heraldic types; and 6) emblematic types. Bascapè in *Sigillographia*, 89,

century, but by the twelfth century, the practice was extended to include cardinals, prelates and patron saints, who, throughout the thirteenth century, were most often shown as upright or seated full-length figures.⁵¹ The rarity with which sitting abbots are depicted probably indicates the association of the cathedra with bishops, although priests and friars sometimes appear seated at a reading desk in the act of studying or teaching (fig. 89). Theologians, doctors of law, canonists, ecclesiastical judges and notaries were also portrayed seated at a lecturn or desk (fig. 91). This latter group is derived from the author portrait, whereas the frontal pose of the seated bishop uses the model of the enthroned Christ or emperor (fig. 92). St. Bernard's own seal shows a frontal figure with a writing tablet and stylus.⁵²

The use of seals was not restricted to the Church; communes employed them as signs of their own authority as well as to ratify laws and contracts made in their name. Seals, moreover, functioned as symbols of power. Siena had

devises a five-category system: 1) sacred and other human figures; 2) animals and plants; 3) views of places; 4) heraldic; and 5) others, including symbolic and insignia denoting guilds or professions.

⁵¹Bascapè, "Lineamenti," 63, 96.

⁵²T. A. Heslop, "Cistercian Seals in England and Wales," *Cistercian Art and Architecture in the British Isles*, Cambridge, MA, 1986, 268. Owing to the universality of the Church, ecclesiastical seals were exchanged within and among the orders throughout Europe and the Near East.

probably adopted a civic seal by 1186 in recognition of its autonomy. A surviving bronze matrix from the beginning of the Duecento depicts a fortress-like structure encircled by the words, "VOS VETERIS SENE.--SIGNUM NOSCATIS AMENE," advising the beholder to take cognizance of the seal of beautiful, old Siena (fig. 93).⁵³ By 1266, a new type depicting the Virgin and Child evolved (fig. 94); it was remade in 1298 by Guccio di Mannaia the famed Sienese goldsmith, documented from 1292-1318, who created the chalice donated by Pope Nicholas IV (1288-1292) to San Francesco in Assisi. Guccio's now lost seal is thought to be faithfully reproduced under Simone Martini's *Maestà* (1315) in the Palazzo Pubblico. Sadly, the seals Guccio is documented to have had carved for the Camarlingo of the Biccherna have also perished, so now we can only guess that it resembled the cover design.⁵⁴

That the image of the Camarlingo may have functioned as a seal is bolstered by the depiction of the *stemmi* on the covers of the Provveditori's ledgers (fig. 2).⁵⁵

⁵³ *Il sigillo a Siena nel Medioevo. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, 25 Febbraio - 19 Marzo 1989.* In the catalogue, the seal in the first entry from the beginning of the thirteenth century may have copied the design of an earlier one. Its "veduta" of Castelvecchio, the primitive nucleus of the city, is perhaps the earliest of the topographical type found in Tuscany.

⁵⁴ Bascapè, *Sigillografia*, 211.

⁵⁵ It should be remembered that until about 1314, the Camarlingi and Provveditori turned in separate ledgers to

Following the opinion of Raymond de Roover that seals were often used in place of signatures,⁵⁶ it seems reasonable that the portrait on the one and the heraldic devices on the other each signified an honorable fulfillment of their sworn duties.

the General Council at the end of their terms.

⁵⁶de Roover, *Bruges*, 190.

Chapter Three

The Portraits of the Camarlingo in the Duecento

Except for the period between 1257 and 1350 when monk Camarlinghi were preferred, Siena's wealthiest and most powerful families supplied the Biccherna with its highest officials.¹ The cover from 1264 shows the lay official Ildibrandino Pagliaresi seated in a marble-columned structure covered by a tile roof (fig. 3). A circle of coins, a closed sack of money, and an open book lie on the table in front of him, while a stemma is displayed next to the picture. This scene diverges from the generic author portrait used for its predecessor, the don Ugo cover, in an apparent attempt by the artist to relate the image more directly to the Camarlingo's primary duty as the commune's top financial official. It is not improbable that don Ugo himself had commissioned a cover with the new theme since between 1258 and 1262 he served nine times as Camarlingo. This conjecture is strengthened by the fact that the artist responsible for the Pagliaresi cover was Dietisalvi di Speme, who not only painted 29 of the Biccherna's tavolette between 1259 and 1288, but was, moreover, solely responsible for every cover painted between 1259 and 1272.²

¹Even monk Camarlinghi often belonged to the Sienese aristocracy. See Amanti and Martini, 41. Lay and religious officials were chosen alternately from 1262 according to law. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 46.

²*Il gotico a Siena: miniature, pitture,oreficerie, oggetti d'arte. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico. 24 luglio - 30*

Therefore, he could have been given as many as eight commissions by don Ugo alone, provided that a painted cover was ordered for each term. The consecutive commissions could also have given the opportunity for the artist to develop the iconographical scheme that was to become traditional.

The new iconography consisted of the Camarlingo seated in a small aedicule, handling coins on a table. It was used to decorate the ledgers submitted by the Camarlinghi to the General Council for the rest of the Duecento. Although the covers exhibit minor variations in the treatment of these key elements,³ the frequent repetition of these motifs invites further investigation.

Portraiture

As limited as the quest for fame may have been during the Middle Ages, there were means of satisfying one's desire for recognition. Artists and scribes, for example, managed to insert their names in their work,⁴ and members of

ottobre, 1982, Florence, 1982, 37. Five covers survive, one of which simply pictures the stemmi of the Provveditori.

³The most notable variation occurs in the cover from 1296 on account of the placement for the first time of the scene in the lower half of the board. The cover came from the Ramboux collection but is deemed to be authentic. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 68.

⁴See Heinrich Klotz, "Formen der Anonymität und des Individualismus in der Kunst des Mittelalters und der

aristocratic families used heraldic devices as means of identification and status. Gerard Burian Ladner states that in true portraits images representing definite persons implied an identity of time and place, and, above all, the intention to portray.⁵ Andrew Martindale defines a portrait as a "life-like characterization of the face of a living person presented as a self-contained image."⁶ If the don Ugo cover of 1258 is an early attempt to reproduce the physiognomy of the sitter (fig. 1),⁷ it follows that its successors were also meant to be portraits, however remote, as Ladner points out, the likeness might be.⁸ Despite the lack of other representations of these officials, a comparison of sorts can be made of the above-mentioned Ildibrandino Pagliaresi cover with those from 1270 (fig. 4) and 1282 (fig. 8), all painted by Dietisalvi. Dressed as a

Renaissance," *Gesta XV* (1976): 303-12. Most of his examples are religious in context and consists of artists' inscriptions or funerary monuments, on which family crests were often used as a means of personal identification.

⁵Gerard Burian Ladner, "The 'Portraits' of Emperors in Southern Italian *Exultet* Rolls and the Liturgical Commemoration of the Emperor," *Speculum* 17 (1942) 182, 186.

⁶Andrew Martindale, "Heroes, Ancestors, Relatives and the Birth of the Portrait," *Painting in the Palace: Studies in the History of Medieval Secular Painting*, London, 1995, 100.

⁷Cristina de Benedictis, "Pittura e miniatura del Duecento e del Trecento in terra di Siena," *La pittura in Italia: il Duecento e il Trecento*, Vol. I, 1985, N.p., 1986, 325.

⁸Ladner, 182.

lawyer or notary, Ildibrandino is small and puppet-like with features so lacking in individuality that to call it a true portrait seems questionable. In 1270, however, Dietisalvi handled the figure of Ranieri Pagliaresi in less wooden fashion. The Camarlingo turns his head so that his profile is emphasized against the darkened interior of the arch. Finally, the face of don Griffolo on the 1282 cover suggests a real person to a much greater extent than either of the Pagliaresi portraits.⁹ Like Ranieri, don Griffolo is busy with the coins and sack, but now the artist brings us closer for a better view of the Camarlingo and his activity. Our attention is drawn to the official's face, which, like Ildibrandino's, is presented in three-quarter view but contrasted against the dark background as in Ranieri's image. In these three covers, we not only see that the artist has made adjustments in size, color, and figural poses, but that he has also endowed the faces with what seems to be a progressively greater sense of individuality. This advancement could be cited as demonstrations of the artist's growing skills, a greater interest in the individual, and the development of art in

⁹The difference may reflect Dietisalvi's advancing skill, but the style also seem different. Critics, however, maintain it belongs to Dietisalvi. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 62. This panel also formed part of the Ramboux collection. Whereas the alteration of the inscription has been noted, the catalogue entry says nothing about the painting itself, which in the reproduction appears to have been restored.

the thirteenth century based on the imitation of life.¹⁰ In addition, David Diringer considers the pictures of the Camarlinghi of the Duecento as ranking "among the earliest attempts at individual portraiture in the history of Italian art."¹¹

Martindale proposes that portraiture was first found in institutional contexts. Citing such examples as the thirteenth-century royal effigies at St. Denis near Paris and the painted portraits of the doges in the Ducal Palace in Venice of the next century, he recognizes their role as "celebrating the antiquity of the institutions concerned."¹² In this light, the ledgers of the Provveditori and the Camarlinghi perhaps should likewise be understood as more than commemoration of the individuals, denoted by the heraldic devices of the former and the portraits of the latter. The covers simultaneously serve as monuments to the Biccherna itself, which had been established at the beginning of the republic and remained the sole financial office of the commune throughout most of the Duecento. As such they recall the historical importance of the magistracy as well as underscoring its vital, continuing relevance to Siena. To borrow Martindale's words, the covers can be viewed as examples of "an institution [the

¹⁰Martindale, 90.

¹¹Diringer, *Illuminated Book*, 336.

¹²Martindale, 99.

Biccherna] asserting an historical perspective."¹³

It seems likely that Dietisalvi, Rinaldo,¹⁴ and Guido di Graziano¹⁵ intended to portray the various Camarlinghi as both individuals and as symbols of the Biccherna. This was achieved by combining a portrait with a stereotypical setting and pose. In this regard, the figures in the covers from 1276 (fig. 5), 1278 (fig. 6), and 1280 (fig. 7) are striking for their identical habits, gestures, and postures. Possible models for them were near at hand, such as on the Reliquary shutters (c. 1260, fig. 95) painted by Guido da Siena.¹⁶ Actually, the motif was widely used and adapted to suit a variety of narrative situations, although the inclined head and gesturing hands may have originated in images of the Virgin Hodegetria, a type which seemed to have been extremely popular with thirteenth-century Tuscan

¹³Martindale, 83.

¹⁴Rinaldo is the author of the cover from 1278 according to payment records in the Biccherna. Other records, now lost, give some indication of his importance as a painter during the later Duecento. The only work securely attributed to him is the cover, which belonged to the Ramboux collection at one time. See Anna Maria Giusti, "Una Biccherna del 1278," *Commentari* XXV (1974): 275-77; also Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 58.

¹⁵An artist possibly identified as Guido di Graziano is attributed for the covers of 1276 and 1280. The Provveditori's cover for 1294 is assigned to Duccio di Boninsegna since records show that a payment for it was made to a painter named Duccio. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi and Zarrilli, 66. The artists of some of the other surviving covers remain anonymous.

¹⁶James Stubblebine, *Guido da Siena*, Princeton, 1964, 4, 21-23.

artists. Our artists adapted well-known models for a new purpose: to show money handling positively. Their origin in a religious context helped to make the new imagery respectable and acceptable.¹⁷

Such a combination of the individual with the typical descends ultimately from the consular diptych. Diptychs made in the sixth century AD incorporated certain elements: an inscription at the top, the enthroned consul in triumphal costume, and a scene from the circus at the bottom. Within this formula sometimes substantial variations could occur in the details--the scene shown at the bottom, for instance, or the figures flanking the consul--but more importantly, the consul's facial features could be individualized. Nancy Netzer demonstrates how the consul Orestes was obliged to change the portrait face on the diptych of Clementinus when he reused it because it had been individualized for the previous owner (figs. 96, 97).¹⁸

Somewhat analogous to those variable elements in consular diptychs are the architectural structures depicted on the covers. The many dissimilar structures could not all (if any) be faithful reproductions of the actual

¹⁷For the use of religious prototypes in vernacular art, see Michael Camille, "Seeing and Reading: Some Visual Implications of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy," *Art History* 8 (1985) 42. For the notion of decorum, see Salvatore Settis, "The Iconography of Italian Art, 1100-1500," *History of Italian Art*, vol. II, Cambridge, 1994, 239-42.

¹⁸Netzer, 270.

Biccherna office.¹⁹ Perhaps they served as a symbolic signal that an activity was taking place indoors²⁰ or to differentiate it from the business of the money-changers, who utilized tables but conducted trade in open-air workshops in the manner of artisans.²¹ It might be that in communal art the structure could designate an "official": the Biccherna's statute of 1298 is decorated with a miniature showing the Camarlingo, the Provveditori, and clerk seated at a table under a similar structure (fig. 98).²² Similarly, the Camarlingo and other magistrates of the Arte della Lana are pictured in separate aedicules in a miniature of that Arte's constitution (1292, fig. 99).²³ On the north wall of the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua is an

¹⁹Documents show that rent was paid for the building to be used by the Biccherna and other government offices since at least the end of the twelfth century. When the other offices moved to new sites in 1275, the Biccherna remained until its transfer to the Palazzo Pubblico in the fourteenth century. See Lisini, *Le tavolette dipinte*, iv; iv, notes 1-3. Lisini suggests that the arch represents the office of the Biccherna, an hypothesis retained in Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 46.

²⁰Otto Demus, "The Dawn of European Painting," *Byzantine Art and the West*, 1970, 228: in Byzantine art interiors of buildings are indicated by showing the exterior view of a special grouping of architecture and by curtains draped over or between them. In Bonaventura Berlinghieri's *St. Francis*, 1235, the Byzantine practice is followed in the lateral scenes.

²¹Jacques Le Goff, *Marchands et Banquiers du Moyen Âge*, Paris, 1972, 37.

²²*Il gotico a Siena*, 63-64.

²³*Il gotico a Siena*, 59.

image identified by Eva Frojmovič as *Justice with a Steelyard*, who is "seated on a pew-like bench surrounded by weights and measures", its tall back decorated with pilasters and an entablature for an appearance that is similar to the Camarlinghi's aedicules (fig. 100).²⁴ In the Palazzo della Ragione, wooden benches with desks of this type were used as the seats from which criminal and civic deliberations, including financial matters, were made.²⁵

In artistic representations in general, such a construction enframed the figure and helped to relate it to its environment, be it a page in a manuscript or the surrounding architecture. By the mid-thirteenth century, its use, as well as that of similarly functioning niches and canopies, was firmly established in art. Examples are found in a variety of media and contexts such as the Early Christian sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (AD 359, fig. 101) and the silver and bronze *Shrine of the Three Kings* by

²⁴Eva Frojmovič, "Giotto's Allegories of Justice and the Commune in the Palazzo della Ragione in Padua: A Reconstruction," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 59 (1996): 24-47. 1306-09 are the years she considers most likely for the painting of these frescoes. The main difference is that in the Paduan fresco, the seat and desk form a unit, whereas in the Camarlinghi's covers, a table is set before the aedicule. The fresco has been extensively repainted in the eighteenth century, but the author is confident that it is an accurate reconstruction, 35.

²⁵Frojmovič, 25-26. The association of the structure with judicial functions may be appropriate for Siena as well. Justice, judges, and the Biccherna are discussed in chapter five.

Nicholas of Verdun (c. 1190-1230, fig. 102). An image strikingly similar in appearance to our group is the statue of Virgil in Mantua (c. 1227, fig. 103); the poet and patron saint of the city is portrayed as a seated scholar in a columned niche surmounted by an arch, his hands resting on the desk.

Early Money

The most important recurring element in this group of Duecento covers is money, shown as coins spread out or separated into piles on a table.²⁶ On the Ildibrandino Pagliaresi cover of 1264 (the earliest extant version of this particular iconography, fig. 3), the coins are visible through the exterior of the bag sitting on the table. While the object he is holding in his left hand is unidentifiable, the fingers of his right hand, enlarged to draw attention to it, are emphatically pointing to a page of his open book. Beginning with the 1270 cover (fig. 4), the next to come from the Camarlingo's office, the official is usually depicted holding an empty moneybag in one hand and handling coins with the other. This very action is repeated in nearly every subsequent cover until the disappearance of this group altogether after 1474 (fig.

²⁶The table or bench with its display of money and records was used by the ancient Greeks and known as the *trapeza*, translated into latin as *bancus*. See Robert S. Lopez, "The Dawn of Medieval Banking," *The Dawn of Modern Banking*, New Haven, 1979, 1-23.

50). It is very different in spirit than other medieval visual representations of money, where the reading is usually negative and, therefore, hardly usable for the kind of self-image the Camarlinghi would have wished to project. In order to appreciate the momentousness of these humble images in which money is given respectability, a brief discussion on the origin of money, how it was perceived and treated in art during the Middle Ages follows.

It has been said that money was invented by merchants to facilitate exchange,²⁷ but its most ancient precursor was the sacrificial meal. An animal, usually a bull of a certain value, was sacrificed, its roasted parts carefully distributed among the participants according to each recipient's worth and status; priestly officials received the more honored parts, while the smaller portions were given to the members of the citizenry as legal payment by the state for contributions made to it. To receive a portion of the sacred flesh was a symbol of citizenship that in the recipient engendered feelings of affection, loyalty, and spiritual bonding. Gradually, symbolic sacrifices, at first in the form of miniature victims or implements of the ritual and later as coins, were substituted for the animals. Like the animals they replaced, they became sacred units of value which were used

²⁷Banque Nationale de Paris, *Art and Money*, 7.

as a medium of exchange.²⁸

Early coins thus functioned as rewards or gifts distributed by the state. As special souvenirs, coins sometimes were imprinted with the portrait of the king, some of whose *mana*, or power, was transferred to them, making them magical charms that could bind their owners to the king. Early Christian and Byzantine pilgrims similarly believed in this kind of contagious magic as the surviving tokens, amulets, and icons testify.²⁹ Icons in the shape of *imagines clipeata* particularly resembled coins. In the Middle Ages it was behind the distribution of coins which were designed to protect the owner from plagues.³⁰ All of these beliefs mingled in the concept of the Eucharist wafer. Like a coin, it was shaped and imprinted with a symbol of Christ and then eaten in order to share in the spirit of Christ.³¹

Another antique custom that contributed to the

²⁸Desmonde, 115-19. For this and the theories discussed below, the author relies on the studies of Bernhard Laum.

²⁹Gary Vikan discusses the belief in amuletic tokens, whose healing powers are derived from having had direct contact with its holy source and the related group of objects in which power is generated through the image in *Byzantine Pilgrimage Art*, Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982. Also see his article, "Art, Medicine, and Magic in Early Byzantium," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 38 (1984): 65-86, which focuses on pilgrimage eulogia specifically concerned with healing.

³⁰Desmonde, 126.

³¹Marc Shell, *Art and Money*, Chicago, 1995, 14-15.

development of the coin as a monetary unit was its use as a sort of ticket or token, which were frequently made of metal. In the Augustan period, the *tesserae*, as they were called, were given to the poor who could exchange them for food or money, or even give them away. As a means of identification, they commonly signified membership in religious groups. Other tokens were used for admission to the games in Rome or the theater in Greece; corporations (religious industrial organizations similar to medieval guilds) gave them to members as admission tickets to sacred meals and rituals. Wealthy Romans gave them to their clients, who could exchange them for real money.³² Their medieval counterparts were the *mereau* or *jeton de présence*, given to members of the clergy for having participated in various duties. They were also distributed as entrance tickets to Eucharist ceremonies or as proof of having attended such ceremonies.³³ Like their ancient predecessors, the *mereau* could be given as alms to the poor who reimbursed them for food.³⁴

In the Greco-Roman world, coins were thought to have been struck first in Lydia, and, although not all mints were exclusively religious enterprises, there was always a strong association between coinage and religion. The word

³²Desmonde, 130-31.

³³Shell, 17.

³⁴Desmonde, 132.

money, in fact, "stems from *Moneta*, a name of the goddess Juno, in whose temple Roman money was minted."³⁵ Banking itself was believed to have originated in temples, whose treasuries, enriched by bequests and the pilgrim trade, were utilized by priests in banking and commercial enterprises. The temple of Diana at Ephesus, for example, loaned out money for overseas trading ventures.³⁶ Later, Cistercian abbeys accepted money or precious objects deposited by laymen, which were often reinvested as loans.³⁷ Monks at San Galgano were granted the privilege to mint small change.³⁸

Ancient markets organized around religious festivals are analogous to the fairs held throughout medieval Europe. The term "fair" comes from the Latin *feria*, or holy day because they were first tied to the feast of a saint. They had acted as centers for commercial and financial exchanges for all of Europe since at least the post-Carolingian period, and by 1190 the cycle of Great Fairs in Champagne was well established.³⁹ Sieneese merchants actively

³⁵Desmonde, 124.

³⁶Desmonde, 113, 175.

³⁷Louis J. Lekai, *The Cistercians: Ideals and Reality*, Kent, 1977, 392.

³⁸Albergo and Vatti, 24.

³⁹Rosalind Kent Berlow, "The Development of Business Techniques Used at the Fairs of Champagne from the End of the Twelfth Century to the Middle of the Thirteenth Century," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, Vol.

participated at the Champagne fairs, where the primary business by the second half of the thirteenth century was financial. Fairs were organized in such a way that in one location or another, one of them was almost always in operation. Significantly the peak of its flowering, from the beginning of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the fourteenth century, coincided with Siena's own period of greatest prosperity.⁴⁰ Among the great Sieneese companies frequenting the fairs at Champagne was the Bonsignori's *Gran Tavola*; for much of the first half of the Duecento, it operated as the most powerful banking company in Europe and was tied to the papal curia.⁴¹

Money and the Medieval Mind

With the disintegration of political unity in the western Roman Empire in the fifth century, commerce and the circulation of currency had also nearly disappeared.⁴² Agriculture became the main activity and land, the measure

III, Lincoln, 1971, 7.

⁴⁰Anna Gramiccia, ed., *Banchieri e mercanti di Siena*, Rome, 1987, 11.

⁴¹Gramiccia, 37.

⁴²The economic situation in the Roman world had become desperate before the fifth century, which had resulted in the debasement of the imperial coinage, the scarcity of coins, and the rise of substitute forms of currency such as tallies and coupons. See Gino Luzzatto, *An Economic History of Italy from the Fall of the Roman Empire to the Beginning of the Sixteenth Century*, London, 1961.

of wealth, as the use of coins dwindled in a post-Roman economic system based on payment in product and barter rather than money. People became unaccustomed to dealing with specie; it became scarce, strange, and suspect. When metallic money did reappear along with a rejuvenated exchange economy--minting resumed as early as the eighth century in many Italian centers⁴³--the coin became problematic. In part, suspicion of money was tied to questions regarding the value and possible falsification of a coin: had it been clipped or worthless dross added to make up the loss in weight?

Coins were also closely associated with pagans. Previously, Roman emperors had been pictured as god-men, the veneration of which had been encouraged by the imperial cult. His image appeared on coins as well, which were sometimes treated as icons or as magical charms. Towards the end of the seventh century, when Justinian II placed an image of Christ on the imperial coin (fig. 104), both emperor and Christ were being represented, a cause for tension and confusion that contributed to the Byzantine Iconoclasm.⁴⁴ Money was uncomfortably similar to Christ in possessing a dual nature; it was both a commodity and a medium of exchange, or matter and spirit, and as such, was

⁴³Luzzatto, 28.

⁴⁴Shell, 12. For his discussion of the dilemma caused by Christian intertwining of ideas about money with religion, see 6-51.

to be feared as "an architectonic principle competing with God."⁴⁵ Money, then, was put in opposition to God, necessarily viewed as evil and the devil's instrument by traditional moralists: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).⁴⁶

By association, the merchant was as tainted as his money. Traders of the Late Antique and early Middle Ages were hated because they exploited wealthy and poor customers alike. The Church viewed their profiteering as *turpe lucrum* (ill-gotten or shameful gain) and equated it with usury. This attitude was based upon an anti-commercial morality formulated in the Early Christian and patristic periods and supported by the Bible, patristic texts, and conciliar documents as they were interpreted by contemporary ecclesiastical authorities. Biblical quotations marshalled to attack usury included the injunction in Deuteronomy 23:19: "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury." Another passage, cited since the first ecumenical council of Nicea, 325, was Psalm 15. It asks, "Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? . . . *He that putteth not out his money to*

⁴⁵Shell, 15.

⁴⁶Le Goff, *Your Money*, 10-11.

usury."⁴⁷

The first medieval definition of usury was "where more is asked than is given"; those who did so were guilty of seeking *turpe lucrum* and committed the sin of avarice or uncharitableness.⁴⁸ These were the sentiments of St. Augustine, who further declared that avarice was the inordinate desire for anything.⁴⁹ Whereas usury had been forbidden to clerics since the Council of Elvira (c. 300), under Charlemagne it became an offense against the state. Afterwards legislations against usury were promulgated by both secular and religious authorities and the prohibition applied to clerics and laymen alike. The growing problem was addressed in synods and councils. Excommunication of lay usurers, along with requirements of full restitution, were called for in the Synod of Pavia (850); the Third Council of the Lateran (1179) excommunicated and denied Christian burial to manifest usurers and refused the

⁴⁷For a discussion of the early literature concerning the prohibition of usury, see Noonan, *Scholastic Analysis of Usury*, especially the first chapter, which I have closely followed. Also see Benjamin N. Nelson, *The Idea of Usury: From Tribal Brotherhood to Universal Otherhood*, Princeton, 1949.

⁴⁸Noonan, 15. The definition was given in the Nynweger capitulary of 806.

⁴⁹Lester K. Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom," *American Historical Review* 76:1 (1971) 19.

usurer's offerings as well.⁵⁰ Books of Canon Law, for example Gratian's *Decretum* (c. 1140), explicitly condemned usury. In the following century, scholastics devoted large sections of their *summae* to the problem.

By the late twelfth century, usury came to be more precisely defined as "whatever is demanded in return in a loan beyond the loaned good itself."⁵¹ A quotation from the New Testament is finally invoked by Urban III (1185-87) in the *Decretales* (V:19:10, *Consuluit*) with a citation of the words of Christ, "Lend freely, hoping nothing thereby" (Luke 6:35). The command became one of the most powerful weapons used by scholastic writers in their campaign against usury.⁵² Luke 6:35 made even the hope for gain forbidden on the grounds that it would be moral usury. Anti-usury measures became more strenuous as the sin of avarice, which had been relatively unimportant in an agrarian society, grew in prominence in conjunction with the revival of urban centers, trade, and the emergence of an incipient capitalist economy. Usury came to be defined as illicit profit occurring only in cases of loans, but it was embedded in a number of other business practices, including credit sales, *cambium* or foreign exchange,

⁵⁰Jacques Le Goff, ed., "Introduction: Medieval Man," *Medieval Callings*, 1987, Chicago, 1990, 28.

⁵¹Noonan, 20.

⁵²Noonan, 15-20.

interest-bearing shares in the public debt, and restitution of ill-gotten gains.⁵³ Other newly invented forms of economic procedures, such as partnerships and maritime insurance, for example, were considered to be licit.

Scholastics led the battle against usury, using for weapons the Bible, Roman law, and their own rational investigations. Peter Lombard (c. 1100-c.1164) lumped usury with fraud and theft, and, therefore, prohibited by the commandment against theft; Peter Comestor (d. 1179), allowed the Jews to take interest from non-Jews in order to avoid the greater evil of taking usury from their own brothers. In this he was followed by William of Auxerre (d. 1230/1232), who also said that the practice of usury was a sin *in se* and *secundum se*.⁵⁴ The leading scholastic theologian was St. Thomas Aquinas (1226-1274). He incorporated Aristotelian ideas to arguments developed by other theologians in formulating an authoritative case against monetary usury.⁵⁵ However, these ideas were never gathered in a single study but are sprinkled throughout the *Summa theologica* and other works. From the *Commentum in quatuor libros sententiarum* (1254-1256) comes the standard axiom of Roman law that in a *mutuum*, or loan, ownership is

⁵³Raymond de Roover, *San Bernardino of Siena and Sant'Antonino of Florence: The Two Great Economic Thinkers of the Middle Ages*, Cambridge, MA, 1967, 1.

⁵⁴Nelson, *Idea of Usury*, 9-12.

⁵⁵For these ideas, see Noonan, 51-58.

transferred. His main argument, used in all his later works (*Summa theologica*, *De Malo*, *Ill Quodlibetales*, and *In Psalmos Davidis*), is based on the view that in a *mutuum*, money is infertile and does not reproduce itself.⁵⁶

Astensanus (d. 1330), whose hometown of Asti boasted many international usurers, provides a conventional list of arguments on the unnaturalness of usury used by scholastics:

- (1) usury is a contract of cupidity, not of necessity;
- (2) it is against the nature of money, which is consumed in use;
- (3) it is against charity;
- (4) it is the taking of a neighbor's labors;
- (5) it is profit taken from a thing which bears no fruit;
- (6) it is the taking of another's goods.⁵⁷

However, in order to keep in step with the transformation in business, scholastic authorities modified the theory, often in separate treatises devoted to usury. One of the first, *De usuris* (1278), was written by Giles of Lessines, a Dominican disciple of St. Thomas, who notes that in some credit transactions, time does add to the worth of goods and it is then permissible to charge more.⁵⁸ Peter John

⁵⁶Le Goff, *Your Money*, 29.

⁵⁷Noonan, 64-65.

⁵⁸Noonan, 63.

Olivi (1248-1298) distinguished between usury and legitimate compensation (*interesse*) as well as between juridically sterile money (*pecunia*) and economically fertile capital (*capitale*).⁵⁹

A little more than a century later, San Bernardino of Siena contributed to the usury theory in a series of sermons, *De Contractibus et Usuris*, as did Sant'Antonino of Florence (1389-1450) as part of his *Summa theologica* or *Summa moralis*, which enjoyed popularity into the seventeenth century.⁶⁰ Their importance is due in part to the work they did in synthesizing the usury theory,⁶¹ and to their "efforts to reconcile the bourgeois belief in profits and a free market with the theological theory of a just price."⁶² In formulating their theories the two Tuscan saints were able to draw upon their commanding and intimate

⁵⁹Julius Kirshner and Karl F. Morrison, eds., *Readings in Western Civilization. Medieval Europe*, Chicago, 1986, 313.

⁶⁰Noonan, 73-75.

⁶¹de Roover, *San Bernardino*, 10. San Bernardino borrowed sections of a utility theory from a treatise by Olivi, *Quaestiones de permutatione rerum, de emptionibus et venditionibus*. See de Roover, *San Bernardino*, 19 and R. A. Shoaf, *Dante, Chaucer, and the Currency of the Word: Money, Images, and Reference in Late Medieval Poetry*, Norman, OK, 1983, 187.

⁶²Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins: An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature*, Michigan, 1952, 91. The statement was made in reference only to Sant'Antonino, but is equally, if not more, applicable to San Bernardino.

knowledge of the banking and commercial industries in Siena and Florence. San Bernardino conceded that trade was legitimate and an evil only if practiced unlawfully or deceitfully, and that merchants were useful to the common weal.⁶³ Sant'Antonino borrows from Thomas Aquinas the notion of a legitimate profit from trade, with the qualifications that the gains be moderate and for the purposes of supporting "one's family according to social status, the relief of the poor, or the welfare of the community lest there be a lack of vital supplies."⁶⁴

While the scholastic attitude towards trade may have tempered with time, nevertheless, the two saints remained steadfast in their condemnation of practices regarded as usurious. San Bernardino took a particularly strong position regarding a causal relationship between usury and charity.⁶⁵ In general, charity was given only to persons of good reputation and standing, the innocent, and the holy;⁶⁶

⁶³de Roover, *San Bernardino*, 10-11: To San Bernardino business practices were illicit if carried on by unauthorized persons at inappropriate times or in holy places. Useful businesses included the manufacture, transportation, and distribution of goods. Thomas Aquinas had previously acknowledged the usefulness of merchants in providing the community with indispensable commodities from abroad.

⁶⁴de Roover, *San Bernardino*, 14.

⁶⁵For San Bernardino's beliefs on charity and usury, see Noonan, 72-74.

⁶⁶Brian Pullan, "Support and Redeem: Charity and Poor Relief in Italian Cities from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Century," *Poverty and Charity: Europe, Italy*,

in situations involving loans, however, the idea of charity was limited to certain cases in which the borrower was in extreme distress and made a personal request. San Bernardino's definition went beyond this restricted sense so that a charitable person was one who lent gratuitously all money not necessary for his own existence. But, in his opinion, charitableness had been replaced by the desire for the profit made on a usurious loan, a loan which only impoverished the poor borrower further. As for the poorest, they should be receiving alms, not loans. Observing his fellow Sieneese, he concluded that avarice in the form of usury was an evil disease destroying charity and infecting entire cities. The saint especially assailed the usurer, who by having caved into his own desire for gain, committed the cardinal sin of avarice and in so doing, doomed himself to Hell. As we shall see below, the terrible fate of the usurer was a favorite topic in his sermons.

Imagery of Avarice and Money

Designated as the root of all evil (Timothy 6:10), avarice was denounced by Peter of Compostela as a "corruptor of morals, source of evil, mother of vices, she that gave birth to usury."⁶⁷ Following both the medieval

Venice, 1400-1700, Aldershot, Gr. Britain, 1994, 181.

⁶⁷Little, 24.

habit of thinking in terms of opposition and contrasts and St. Augustine's division of "the world into two mutually exclusive conceptions of Caritas and Cupiditas,"⁶⁸ the vice of avarice was often juxtaposed with Caritas, the "mother of all the virtues."⁶⁹ Early penitentials presented moral lessons that often began with phrases such as "by contraries . . . let us make haste to cure contraries and to cleanse away the faults from our hearts and introduce the virtues in their place. . . ."⁷⁰ This habit prompted Alain of Lille to see as the remedy for avariciousness the penance of charitable giving,⁷¹ which fulfills that aspect of Charity called Misericordia, the giving of aid to one's neighbors. The increased importance of charity in the thirteenth century is tied to the growth of cities, the rising numbers of the urban poor, the stress on poverty by the mendicant orders, and in the opinion of Richard A. Goldthwaite, "to provide a rationale for the proper uses of

⁶⁸R. Freyhan, "The Evolution of the Caritas Figure in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* II (1948) 72.

⁶⁹The primary sources on the treatment of the virtues and vices are Adolf Katzenellenbogen, *Allegories of the Virtues and Vices in Medieval Art From Early Christian Times to the Thirteenth Century*, 1939, Toronto, 1989; and the previously cited articles by Little, "Pride Goes Before Avarice," and Freyhan, "The Evolution of the Caritas Figure". Also useful are Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins* and Jennifer O'Reilly, *Studies in the Iconography of the Virtues and Vices in the Middle Ages*, New York, 1988.

⁷⁰O'Reilly, 95.

⁷¹Little, 23.

wealth."⁷²

Avarice and Charity are also frequently paired in art, as in the sculptural programs of the great Gothic cathedrals of Notre Dame and its dependents. At Amiens, where the Virtues and Vices in bas-relief medallions replicate their models at Notre Dame, Charity is a seated personification, while Avarice is shown as a figure filling or closing the lid of a coffer (fig. 105).⁷³ In the widely disseminated and influential *Somme le Roi* (1279),⁷⁴ written by Frere Lorens for Philippe III of France, the tradition of pairing virtues with scenes depicting the action of their opposing vices is continued: in a late thirteenth-century manuscript, Charity clothing the poor is countered by Avaritia, a man adding to his already full coffer while being goaded by two devilish accomplices (fig. 106). Sometimes this male figure is identified as "Usure."⁷⁵ In a closely related manuscript, Charity again clothes the poor as Avarice sits at his desk (fig. 107). In this miniature,

⁷²Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and the Demand for Art in Italy, 1300-1600*, Baltimore, 1993, 204.

⁷³Émile Mâle, *Religious Art in France, Thirteenth Century: A Study in Medieval Iconography and Its Sources of Inspiration*, Trans. Dora Nussey, London, 1913, 109.

⁷⁴For a discussion on the Virtues and Vices represented in the *Somme le Roi*, see Rosemond Tuve, "Notes on the Virtues and Vices," II, *JWCI* XXVVI (1964): 42-72; also Vincent Moleta, "The *Somme le Roi* from French Court to Italian City-State," *Patronage and Public in the Trecento*, Florence, 1986, 125-58.

⁷⁵Freyhan, 81.

a single devil reclines on its cupboard, offering a bag of coins to the miser, who refuses to use any of it to replace his tattered clothes. An Italian copy depicts Avarice as a Florentine merchant-banker pouring his bag of coins onto a counting table (c. 1320, fig. 108). This image is placed above a larger image showing two examples of mercy.⁷⁶

Avarice was also commonly paired with Largitas (Liberality), as in the fifth-century poem by Prudentius, the *Psychomachia*, in which man's soul is fought over by battling pairs of Virtues and Vices. The poem was very popular in the Middle Ages, appealing as it did to medieval man's obsession with vice and sin.⁷⁷ Whereas Prudentius's classification of the Virtues and Vices were later replaced by other systems, including the Seven Deadly Sins, from the twelfth century on, its vivid and adaptable imagery derived from classical exemplars was retained.⁷⁸ The warrior Virtues, for example, were transformed into knights when the fighting pairs were adapted for illustrating the late twelfth-century *Hortus Deliciarum* of Herrad of Landsberg (d. 1195, fig. 109).⁷⁹ In an eleventh-century *Psychomachian* manuscript (fig. 110), the combatants are dressed in contemporary costume and the struggle thus more closely

⁷⁶Moleta, 137-38.

⁷⁷Le Goff, *Medieval Callings*, 28.

⁷⁸O'Reilly, 41.

⁷⁹Katzenellenbogen, 10.

related to the everyday world. The illustration shows Operatio (Good Works or Largitas) in the guise of a nun, first spearing an avaricious townswoman whose money bag is tied at her waist, and then emptying the contents of the sack into the outstretched hands of the needy. As part of a thirteenth-century program of Virtues and Vices in the chapter house of Salisbury Cathedral, the triumphant Largitas pours heated coins down the throat of Avarice in an action that "resembles the punishment of the miser in scenes of the Last Judgement" (fig. 111).⁸⁰ The Largitas-Avarice scene is similar to the late twelfth-century image at Laon Cathedral in that victory over the vice is completed by means of a long-handled ladle (fig. 112). Whether identified as Caritas or Largitas, the figure opposed to Avarice sometimes distributes the hoarded goods, as in the above-mentioned Psychomachian manuscript illustrated with nuns and townswomen. Caritas giving alms out of a strong-box is depicted on a capital in the monastery church of Cluny (c. 1095); at Sens Cathedral (c. 1200), the image of Avarice trying to close the lid of a chest with the weight of her body is faced by that of Largitas generously opening two boxes of treasures (fig.

⁸⁰Rosalie B. Green, "Virtues and Vices in the Chapter House Vestibule in Salisbury," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* XXXI (1968) 151.

113).⁸¹ The actions of the two Virtues represent those rare occasions when money is not devilish, since in these instances it has been rehabilitated to perform a remedial role.

At Sens, Largitas is seated in the center of an eight-lobed circle, her arms lightly resting on the opened lids of two chests. Below the full coffer are sacks containing more treasures. Her frontal and formal pose imitates the images of Christ in majesty that, as Katzenellenbogen demonstrates, was taken over for static representations of the virtues. Of interest is the display of treasure because it recalls an earlier use of this iconographical motif in Roman art. It is seen, for example, in the *congiarium*, or donation, relief on the Arch of Constantine (fig. 114), in which the seated emperor ceremonially distributes coins to members of the Senate and the citizenry. The formal pose is also used for the representation of the princess Anicia Juliana on the dedication page of the Vienna *Dioscurides* (fig. 115). She distributes gold coins while seated between the personifications of Prudence and Magnanimity, who carries more coins in her lap. At the bottom of the consular diptychs of Orestes and Clementinus (figs. 96, 97), the

⁸¹Katzenellenbogen, 53, notes 1 and 77. Avaritia as a man collecting treasures is contrasted to the opposite actions of Largitas in the window of the choir apse of Lyons Cathedral (c. 1220), 83, n. 1.

distribution is made by two youths who pour the coins from large sacks. In each case, however, the action signifies the largess of the emperor, princess, or newly elected officials.

The condemnation of avarice was not only depicted in terms of a battle or defeat at the hands of an adversary. When it came to the portrayal of money and the money handler, the horrific imagery was guided by the Church's utter condemnation of money and belief in its power to corrupt and destroy its owner. Artists pictured Avarice and its fellow Vices in the form of debased, subhuman creatures. Even in the Prudentian tradition, they could be visualized as goblin-like creatures, as in a Psychomachian manuscript from the Carolingian period (fig. 116).

Although much smaller than their cuirassed opponents, the Vices' unruly hair, tattered clothing, and variety of weaponry are meant to suggest their ferocity and wildness in order to convey "the idea of evil as a living force."⁸² However, their appearance is less than menacing when compared to the later figuration of Avarice's bestial nature as it was magnified by a Romanesque sculptor on a twelfth-century capital at Autun: the prominent features of the gnomish figure include the moneybags clutched in each hand, a gaping mouth, and squatting pose (fig. 117). One of the more graphic group of images decrying the status

⁸²Katzenellenbogen, 7.

of money as filth is found in the marginalia of Gothic manuscripts, where men and apes defecate or vomit coins (fig. 118).⁸³ A similar, if not more disgusting, scene is depicted by Taddeo di Bartolo (c. 1360-1426) in the Duomo of San Gimignano, where, as punishment for avariciousness, a fat, naked usurer lies on his back swallowing gold coins being defecated by a demon squatting over him (fig. 119).⁸⁴

"From the moment of the usurer's death, the moneybag can play nasty tricks on his cadaver . . .".⁸⁵ This theme was popularized as an *exemplum*, a brief and entertaining anecdote used in sermons as a means of illustrating doctrine for the general public. Jacques de Vitry (d. 1240?) wrote a series of sermons known as the *Sermones vulgares* meant for clerics and laymen. They were categorized according to their intended audience; in a sermon aimed at merchants and money-changers, he writes:

A Usurer on his death bed made his wife and children swear to fulfill the following command: to divide his property into three parts, one for his wife on which she could remarry, one for his sons and daughters, and one to be buried with him in a bag hung about his neck. This was done, but the family wanted to obtain again the money

⁸³Little, 38.

⁸⁴Edgerton, 68.

⁸⁵Le Goff, *Your Money*, 34.

buried with the usurer, and opened his grave at night. They fled in terror at seeing demons filling the dead man's mouth with red hot coins.⁸⁶

The rich man, miser, usurer, merchant, and Jew were all attacked as specimens of avariciousness. When drawn from life, the typical image is of a rich man in the act of counting his money, placing it in a chest or safe, or clutching his moneybag.⁸⁷ On a capital in the church at Orcival, Puy-de-Dome, such a figure is labeled as *Fol dives* (rich madman).⁸⁸ Sometimes the purse is hung at his belt or around his neck as described by Dante during his tour of Hell:

but I noticed
that from the necks of each a purse hung
which had a certain color and design
and on which it seemed that their eyes
feasted.⁸⁹

Eternal punishment in Hell as the ultimate destiny of

⁸⁶Thomas Frederick Crane, ed., *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry*, Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967, 203.

⁸⁷Little, 37.

⁸⁸Katzenellenbogen identifies him as a miser, 59, n. 3; Le Goff as a usurer in *Your Money*, 34.

⁸⁹Dante, *Inferno*, Canto XVII, 55-58; quoted in James H. Stubblebine, ed., *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, New York, 1969, 108.

misers and usurers was often graphically depicted. In the above-mentioned *Fol dives* capital, the fat usurer clings to his moneybag even while devils grab him by the hair or poke him with their pitchforks.⁹⁰ In a relief sculpture on the Church of Maria Assunta, Fornovo di Taro (fig. 120), the miser's punishment is meted out in accordance with the medieval judicial concept of *contrapasso*. In this system whereby immediately at death "the damned are punished by becoming unchangeable in their iniquity,"⁹¹ the miser or usurer is weighed down by moneybags, one suspended around his neck, and a strongbox across his shoulders. The burden is increased by a large demon pressing his full weight on the box. In the illustration of the Last Judgement from the *Hortus Deliciarum*, a monk, moneybag in hand, awaits his turn to have his mouth filled with fiery coins by gleeful demons (fig. 121).

This was exactly the fate that at the dawn of the Trecento Enrico Scrovegni, the richest man in Padua, had wished to avoid for himself. His father, Reginaldo, was immortalized by Dante as the arch usurer in the *Inferno*:

And one who had a white sack marked
with an azure pregnant sow,
said to me, "What are you doing in this

⁹⁰Le Goff, *Your Money*, 34.

⁹¹Anthony K. Cassell, *Dante's Fearful Art of Justice*, Toronto, 1984, 9.

hole?

Now go away and, since you are still

alive,

know that my neighbor Vitaliano

will sit here on my left side.

With these Florentines I am a Paduan;

many times they deafen my ears,

shouting, 'Let the sovereign knight come

who will bring the pouch marked by three

groats.'

Then he twisted his mouth and stuck out his

tongue

as an ox does to lick its nose.⁹²

Along with wealth, Enrico would have inevitably inherited his father's sin; only through an act of atonement would he be able to escape eternal damnation and procure his father's release from Purgatory as well. To this end Enrico built the Arena Chapel between 1303-1305, dedicated it to the Virgin of Charity, and had Giotto paint its murals (fig. 122).⁹³

⁹²Dante, Canto XVII, 65-76; quoted in Stubblebine, 109.

⁹³In addition to the previously cited bibliography in the Introduction, see Ursula Schlegel, "On the Picture Program of the Arena Chapel," *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, 182-202; Jonathan B. Riess, "Justice and Common Good in Giotto's Arena Chapel Frescoes," *Arte cristiana* LXXII (1984): 69-80; Settis, "The Iconography of Italian Art," 119-259; Charles Harrison, "The Arena Chapel: patronage and authorship," *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art,*

Usury as a mortal sin is a key theme in the fresco cycle. In the lowest registers along the south and north walls the opposing Virtues and Vices are painted in monochrome. For the first time in painted cycles, Charity is paired with Envy (Invidia), who, borrowing Avarice's main attribute, clutches a sack of money with one hand (fig. 123).⁹⁴ Standing in fire, she has long ears and horns; a serpent emerges from her mouth and turns to strike her. Charity instead tramples sacks of money (fig. 124). She offers a burning heart towards heaven with one hand and in the other holds a bowl of fruit symbolizing her twofold nature, love of God and love for one's neighbor (Misericordia or Eleemosyna).⁹⁵ According to Settis, "it is not the amassing of wealth that is condemned, but the

Society and Religion, 1280-1400, Vol. 2, Ed. Diana Norman, New Haven, 1995, 83-103. Harrison writes that Enrico's father, Reginaldo, is the usurer from Padua who speaks to Dante in the seventh circle of Hell and is identified by his stemma, an azure pregnant sow on a white ground (Canto XVII: 64-70), 88. Robert H. Rough discusses Enrico's deception in leading Pope Benedict X to believe that he, Enrico, built the church at his own expense. See his "Enrico Scrovegni, the *Cavalieri Gaudenti*, and the Arena Chapel in Padua," *Art Bulletin* LXII (1980): 24-35.

⁹⁴Beginning with Giotto, Invidia replaces Avaritia in Italian cycles as the aspect of Charity emphasized shifts from *Caritas Misericordia* to *Caritas Amor*, whose corresponding vice, Odium, is an element of Invidia. For the explanation of this idea, see Freyhan, 82.

⁹⁵See Freyhan, "Evolution of the Caritas Figure," for a discussion on the dual nature of Caritas and its visual representation.

damaging greed that is never satisfied."⁹⁶ Not avarice but covetousness is emphasized⁹⁷.

That usury is singled out for vilification is evident in the choice and placement of motifs within the pictorial program. Conspicuously placed on the triumphal arch is *The Betrayal of Judas* with its depiction of Judas selling his Lord for a sack of silver at the urging of the Devil at his back (fig. 125). It is set directly opposite the vignette in Hell showing his punishment as part of the scene of *The Last Judgement*, which takes up the entire west wall. Judas hangs nearby three naked misers or usurers who themselves hang by the strings of their moneybags (fig. 126). Below them, devils lead other men, who are unwilling or unable to relinquish their sacks of money, away from the redeeming Cross and into the bowels of Hell. These unfortunates are contrasted by the group of larger figures who occupy the corresponding space on the heavenly side of the Cross and whose members include Enrico Scrovegni, the Virgin and two saints (fig. 127).⁹⁸ The large scale, pious pose, and very

⁹⁶Settis, 225.

⁹⁷Leonetto Tintori and Millard Meiss, "Observations on the Arena Chapel and Santa Croce," *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, 209.

⁹⁸Schlegel draws attention to the placement of the two groups, 187. The saints are variously identified as St. Ursula and St. John by Schlegel, 192; but as the Annunciate Virgin and the Archangel Gabriel by Dorothy C. Shorr, "The Role of the Virgin in Giotto's *Last Judgement*," *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, 173. Shorr follows the identifications made by I. B. Supino, *Giotto*, Florence,

presence of the donor in a central position in *The Last Judgement* scene is unprecedented; not only is it a self-aggrandizing image, but it also serves to alienate him from the usurers physically, psychologically, and socially. Enrico had sought to distance himself from the taint of usury by ceasing its practice and by joining the lay order of the Cavalieri di Santa Maria, membership to which usurers were barred.⁹⁹ Unlike the unrepentant usurer, who is doomed to torture by reason of his greed, Enrico is saved through his generous donation of the church, as its acceptance by the Virgin makes clear. Her approval, however, had been conditioned by the Paduan's recognition and confession of the errors of his ways, which Ursula Schlegel believes, are represented in the two scenes juxtaposed on the triumphal arch, *The Betrayal of Judas* and *The Visitation* (fig. 128): "Enrico confesses this guilt because he recognizes Christ and thereby also the Church and its laws, very much as Elizabeth, on the other side of the arch, recognizes Mary and the Son she carries."¹⁰⁰

The preoccupation with the sin of usury is also evident in the choice of scenes included in the

1920. For other identifications, see Shorr 173, n. 18.

⁹⁹Schlegel, 188 and n. 17.

¹⁰⁰Schlegel, 188-89. The significant location and meaning of *The Betrayal of Judas* (*The Pact of Judas*) is also noted by Stubblebine, "Giotto and The Arena Chapel Frescoes," *Giotto: The Arena Chapel Frescoes*, 85.

Christological cycle on the side walls. The scene, *The Expulsion of the Merchants from the Temple* (fig. 129), is suggestively placed adjacent to *The Betrayal of Judas* in a pairing that, as Leonetto Tintori and Millard Meiss note, is reinforced by the presence in both scenes of the same conspiratorial group of men, one of whom is paying the traitor the bag of coins.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the two scholars suggest that the conspicuous absence of money-changers in the *Expulsion of the Merchants* implies a connection between the expelled merchants and Enrico's father. Elaborating upon this hypothesis, Robert H. Rough believes that Saint Anselm of Lucca (d. 1086) provided a possible textual reference in a sermon on the Expulsion.¹⁰² Although St. Anselm attacks simony, the practice of buying and selling ecclesiastical promotion or privilege, it is similar to usury inasmuch as both involve the misuse of money for personal gain. St. Anselm uses a lengthening rope as a metaphor for the accumulated sins with which the sinner hangs himself: "those who, by adding sin to sin, and making something like the longest possible rope for themselves by their recklessness, do not fear to be damned by the terror of judgment. . . ." Giotto may have then borrowed the motif or it may instead represent a modification of that established iconography in which a

¹⁰¹Tintori and Meiss, 212.

¹⁰²Rough, 28.

moneybag hangs from the neck of the miser. Moreover, the iconography may reflect a contemporary form of public punishment. At the end of the sixteenth century, Annibale Carracci sketched the execution by hanging of a thief, the stolen purse suspended by a rope from his waist (fig. 130).¹⁰³ As a disgraceful and humiliating way to die, hanging was rarely depicted in Christian art, and, therefore, eminently suitable for representing that enemy of the Church, Judas.¹⁰⁴ In the fourteenth century anyone who strayed from God for money was considered to be a traitor like Judas,¹⁰⁵ who was called a thief by St. Matthew.¹⁰⁶ The close connection between usury and theft is made with great clarity in an *exemplum* in the *Sermones vulgares*:

A priest refused to bury the body of a usurer, one of his parishioners, who had died without making restitution. The friends of the dead man insisted upon his burial, and the priest, to get rid of their further importunities, said to them

¹⁰³Edgerton, 142. Public hangings were used for those who disturbed the peace, for criminals of low status, or for those committing particularly repugnant crimes.

¹⁰⁴Edgerton, 148.

¹⁰⁵James G. Czarnecki, "The Significance of Judas in Giotto's Arena Chapel Frescoes," *The Early Renaissance* (Acta V, 1978): 35-47.

¹⁰⁶Cassell, 47, citing Matt 26:15: What will you give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they appointed him thirty pieces of silver."

after prayer: "Let us put his body upon an ass, and see the will of God. Wherever the ass shall carry it--to the church, or cemetery, or elsewhere, there will I bury it." They did so, and the ass, turning neither to the right nor to the left, bore the body without the town to the place where robbers were hanged, and shook it off on a dunghill under the gibbet, and there the priest left it with the thieves.¹⁰⁷

The hanged Judas may be comparable to Enrico's father,¹⁰⁸ but in the scenes of *The Pentacost* and the apostles seated with Christ in *The Last Judgement*, the guilty Judas has been replaced by another figure, the Apostle Mathias. "Through him, Judas' apostleship is passed on and cleansed of the stain of Judas' sin."¹⁰⁹ The substitution parallels Enrico Scrovegni's inheritance from his father in that wealth and social position--but not guilt--were passed on to the son. Enrico probably considered his self-glorification to be justified since it was by his efforts that the family has been purified.

In the Scrovegni Chapel, usury and the usurer are

¹⁰⁷Crane, 206, Exemplum CLXXVII.

¹⁰⁸Schlegel, 187. The comparison is made on the basis of location and grouping of Enrico kneeling with the Blessed with that of Judas and the misers and usurers in Hell.

¹⁰⁹Czarnecki, 43.

attacked on the basis of conventional religious arguments while, at the same time, images of money handling are minimized. Perhaps it would be unfair to contrast the frescoes with the Biccherna covers since myriad themes can be presented and interrelationships suggested in a cycle that are impossible in individual pictures. However, some remarks would seem to be germane: first, there is a difference in their natures--the one necessarily conforming to traditional religious values, the other invented to reflect a new, worldly outlook; second, the intention of the patron, with Scrovegni striving to better only his own social and political position,¹¹⁰ whereas the goals of the Biccherna officials do not seem to have been as limited.

Conclusion

In summary, at least from 1264 artists of the covers of the Biccherna sought to formulate a satisfactory image that depicted the office of the Camarlingo in a meaningful way. Throughout the second half of the thirteenth century, the key iconographical elements included the official, an architectural setting, and a table with coins. But herein lay a difficulty, for the fundamental artistic challenge was rooted in old attitudes regarding money and the money-

¹¹⁰ Enrico Scrovegni aspired to political office. See Jonathan B. Riess, "Justice and Common Good in Giotto's Arena Chapel Frescoes", *Arte cristiana* LXXII (1984): 75 and 80, n.48.

handler: money was evil and those who dealt with it did the Devil's work. Tension between ancient views and new reality grew as a commercial economy developed throughout Europe and money came to play an increasingly important and visible role in revitalized urban centers, particularly in Italy. Avarice rose to a prominent position in the list of vices; it most commonly came to be associated with, and depicted, in terms of money and treasure. Censured by both Church and State, usury and the usurer continued to be the focus of attack even as new economic practices were invented, not necessarily to circumvent the law, but to meet the demands of business practices growing ever more complex. Scholastics were slow to temper their assault, however, as the persistence of the negative imagery of money indicates. Enrico Scrovegni was able to overcome his usurious legacy only by renouncing it. For the Sienese Camarlinghi the situation was different in that they often belonged to families who not only headed great mercantile-financial firms, but could already claim membership in its ruling elite. Their goal was no less than to fashion a new, desirable image for themselves as responsible money managers to counter the usual, damaging ones instituted chiefly within a religious and moral framework. They must have felt that their objective had been achieved, since every cover repeated the same design. To ensure its acceptance, established models were utilized for the

various components in order to impart to the entire design qualities that were simultaneously decorous and authoritative. Finally, it celebrates Siena's most powerful financial magistracy, the Biccherna. It became a manifesto exalting both the office and its officials, with the didactic message that the pictured magistrates work diligently on behalf of the Sieneese citizenry. In the following century, the message will be stated with greater clarity.

Chapter Four

The Men in the Office Scene

Political Background

By the beginning of the Trecento, the Sienese Republic had experienced several changes in leadership. During much of the previous two centuries, the government had been dominated by wealthy aristocratic, and since Frederick II's reign (1220-1250), Ghibelline, oligarchies. At Colle Val d'Elsa in 1269, Sienese not only lost the battle to their great rival, Florence, but were also ousted from power by the Sienese Guelfs with support from their Florentine counterparts.¹ Thus, the rule of the Twenty-Four, which had lasted from 1240 to 1270, went down to defeat with the Hohenstaufen cause and their regime replaced by successive Guelf committees, including the Thirty-Six and the Nine, or *Noveschi*, who controlled Siena from 1287 to 1355.

The commune, especially before 1300, was but one association formed to protect the interests and property of its members. Until it could absorb or subdue them, it had to compete with other associations, such as the *societas populi senesis*, which probably was an armed company formed by the Popolo for political reasons and first documented in

¹Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Medieval Commune*, 200. As a member of the Guelf League, Siena's foreign policy was directed from Florence and her independence severely circumscribed. In return, the Florentines helped the Nine to remain in power against political foes who would overthrow them.

1213.² This organization, similar to *società d'armi* in other cities, existed independently, even in opposition to the commune, and operated under its own officials and regulations. The popular militia represented the lower-middle and working classes in the near absence of an effective guild system. By 1262, the power of the popolo had become sufficiently strong to make constitutional demands from the commune with the result that half of the elected officials came to be nominated from its ranks. But the tendency of its citizens towards jealousies and factionalism,³ as well as a lack of organization, led to a diminishing role for the popolo in civic affairs. Soon after, both the *Populus* and the Guilds lost power, and the office of the Captain of the People was abolished (1274).⁴

Leadership passed into the hands of the self-named *mezza gente*,⁵ which was, in fact, a select group dominated

²Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Medieval Commune*, 131-32.

³Armstrong, 4.

⁴Mario Ascheri, "Siena in the Fourteenth Century," *The "Other Tuscany": Essays in the History of Lucca, Pisa, and Siena during the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Centuries*, Eds. Thomas W. Blomquist and Maureen F. Mazzaoui, Kalamazoo, MI, 1994, 163. The rise of the popolo follows the pattern observed by Hyde in that three stages are discernable: first, the popolo acts as a pressure group for its members, then it emerges as a public body, and ends by becoming the dominant party. See J. K. Hyde, *Society and Politics in Medieval Italy: The Evolution of the Civil Life, 1000-1350*, New York, 1973, 114.

⁵Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Medieval Commune*, 195.

by wealthy aristocratic or bourgeois merchant-bankers and members of the great merchant and wool guilds, who succeeded in controlling both lower-ranking sectors of the popolo and certain magnatial families. According to the constitution of 1309-10, butchers, bakers, barbers, carpenters, and laborers were excluded from participating in the government.⁶ Previously, in 1277, members of certain noble *casati*--including the most famous names in banking and government such as Piccolomini, Tolomei, Buonsignori, Gallerani, Salimbeni, Malavolti, Ugurgieri, and Pagliaresi--had been excluded from holding office, supposedly as a means of preserving the independence of the commune and avoiding the political domination by the great families; ten years later, the prohibition was extended to judges and notaries because of the great influence and power their prominent occupations might give them.⁷ However, the regular appointment of members of the old, excluded nobility to high positions--to the Nine and every major post of the Biccherna and Gabella--demonstrates the

⁶Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Medieval Commune*, 195-96.

⁷Bowsky, *A Medieval Commune*, 63, 68. Lando Bortolotti, *Siena*, Rome, 1988, adds that in 1277 the list contained 53 *casati*; furthermore in 1310, the list was up to 90 and included members of the lesser nobility, 20. Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, cites Dr. Edward English's observation that the anti-magnate measures were more symbolic than harmful, 94.

ineffectiveness of opposition to their power.⁸ Even during the rule of the Thirty-Six, anti-magnate laws were not so severe as in other communes as to exclude aristocratic participation in government.⁹

This is not to say that government remained solely in the hands of a few powerful families because men lower in rank than magnates or whose class is unknown today also had a share of political authority.¹⁰ Many of the citizens serving on the Council of the Bell and on special commissions came from the class immediately below the wealthier and more socially prominent group from which the Nine were drawn.¹¹ Members of the Nine itself, or their close relatives, could have either noble or bourgeois origins. Professionally, they were predominantly bankers and international merchants, but also wool manufacturers or large-scale retail merchants. In addition, some of these

⁸Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, 103. Also see William M. Bowsky, "The *Buon Governo* of Siena (1287-1355): A Mediaeval Italian Oligarchy," *Speculum* XXXVII (1962): 368-381. Although Bowsky allows that the noble class did participate in the government, he believes their role to have been more limited than the considerably greater role Waley attributes to them. I am in agreement with Waley's opinion because of the number of excluded casati members participating as officials of the Biccherna throughout the republican period and because the violent overthrow of the Nine in 1355 would suggest less than amicable relationships with important and powerful parties.

⁹Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, 103.

¹⁰Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, 89.

¹¹Bowsky, *Medieval Commune*, 312.

men owned extensive estates in the surrounding *contado* and real estate holdings in the city, although many of the Nine invested in business enterprises rather than in real property.¹² By virtue of their wealth, the small group of greatest landowning-banking families, including the Malavolti, Salimbeni, Tolomei, Gallerani, and Piccolomini, who could be described as "super-magnates," dominated Siense politics. Even before the fourteenth century ended, their era had become legendary in Siense history.¹³

Three major attempts to overthrow the Nine in 1318, 1324, and 1346 by dissatisfied nobles, notaries, and lower guilds joining forces were unsuccessful,¹⁴ but in 1355 the government of the Nine was finally and violently deposed and that of the Twelve, or *Dodici*, consisting mostly of small businessmen, established in its stead. Under this regime, larger merchants were excluded along with the nobility. Revolts in 1368 and 1371 resulted in short-lived governments that had been forced to include members of the *popolo minuto* (small merchants, artisans and craftsmen) and laborers (especially wool workers), all clamoring for reforms. During the period of violence and unrest between 1368 and 1385, the government had been headed by the

¹²Bowsky, "The Buon Governo of Siena," 378.

¹³Ascheri, "Siena in the Fourteenth Century," 182.

¹⁴Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Medieval Commune*, 204-05.

Reformers, or *Monte dei Riformatori*, who were mostly recruited from the humbler classes and who again excluded the nobility. After new disturbances in 1385, which resulted in the exile of a sizable percentage of the artisan population, a coalition government of the Ten known as the *Monte del Popolo* was formed. Since membership became restricted to those families who had served in one of the previous ruling signories (*monti*), the result was the closing of ranks by the ruling aristocracy and the exclusion of the lower classes from public life.¹⁵ The century ended with a voluntary capitulation to the signorial leadership of Giangaleazzo Visconti that collapsed with the Milanese's death in 1402. This was followed by the government of the Ten Priors, or *Dieci Priori*, formed from components of several previous leading factions, the *Nove*, the *Riformatori*, and the *Popolo*.¹⁶ Except for the domination of the Petrucci family from 1455 to the fall of the Republic a century later, authority resided in a *Balia*, originally a committee to which power was delegated for a specific purpose and for a restricted period of time, but which became a permanent magistracy completely in the hands of the ruling elite.¹⁷

¹⁵Judith Hook, *Siena: A City and its History*, London, 1979, 161-63.

¹⁶Bortolotti, 22.

¹⁷Hook, *A City*, 161.

Throughout these turbulent times when the reigns of government might change hands as often as three times in a single year, as it did in 1368,¹⁸ it must be said that Siena's troubles were not entirely due to the internecine strife of its fractious inhabitants; economic decline, recurrences of famine and plague, and the depredations of mercenary bands also contributed to the unrest. The Biccherna managed to survive and function in spite of such adverse conditions, oftentimes by means of loans to the state from the personal wealth of its Provveditori or through a variety of forced and voluntary loans, both of which represented profitable investments--repayments were guaranteed at good interest rates--for the monied classes.¹⁹ The private wealth of the Provveditori might also be obligated to repay government loans.²⁰ This was in addition to the heavy direct taxes imposed upon the group of landed financiers, who, though small in number, contributed the bulk of the Commune's tax revenues. Their willingness to pay may have been due to their feelings of citizenship and

¹⁸Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy*, New York, 1979, 134.

¹⁹Bowsky, *Finance*, 224. Bowsky treats the financial situation under the Nine. Since information for periods after the end of their regime is lacking, it can only be supposed that similar means of securing revenue continued to be pursued. Voluntary and forced loans were commonly employed along with direct and indirect taxes as means of generating monies by other city-states.

²⁰Bowsky, *Finance*, 200.

sense of decorum as well to pressure from those who ranked immediately below them in power and wealth.²¹

The Biccherna's officials, then, were drawn from among Siena's wealthiest families and, not uncommonly, from one of the excluded *casati*. As guarantors of the city's solvency, their posts were crucial to the continued prosperity of the regime and commune; with total control over the commune's money, they wielded immense power.²²

Socio-economic Milieu

According to medieval religious beliefs, an individual's place in the world has been predetermined by God, causing any movement up or down the social ladder to be regarded as sacrilegiously sinful (rising in society showed pride, while falling signified a shameful sin). These beliefs conformed to the notion of a rigid hierarchy

²¹Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, 22-24. However, as the fourteenth century progressed, the poor were more heavily taxed compared to the rich. In the practice of forced loans (*prestanze*), the rich received interest on what they paid, while the poor did not, and in the matter of the public debt, were taxed to pay the interest that the rich received. Also, the poor were most affected by the gabelle, those indirect taxes which were placed on every type of goods. See John Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch 1216-1380*, London, 1980, 199. A list of taxable items is found in *Guida-Inventario*, 225.

²²The loan probably also gave them an opportunity for financial gain. Although Bowsky does not discuss how the Provveditori were reimbursed while in office for funds loaned to the State, it would seem reasonable to suppose that had it not been rewarding, the participation of certain families in that office might have otherwise been somewhat less.

modeled on a celestial society. Also according to tradition, Christian society was headed by a monarch, who reigned over clerics, knights, and peasants. Meanwhile, the merchant remained outside this three-tiered society, his trade being considered the ministry of the devil. Attributed to St. Leo the Great is the oft-quoted saying, "it is difficult not to sin when engaging in buying and selling."²³ This sentiment was repeated seven centuries later in Gratian's *Decretum: Homo mercator nunquam aut vix potest Deo placere.*²⁴ But neither these old social divisions, nor the discrimination against merchants, remained tenable within increasingly secular and commercial urban settings. Because they brought necessary or desired goods from the East and their activities promoted prosperity for their communities, their usefulness made them first tolerated, then protected, by the Church;²⁵ in fact, the Church routinely participated in profitable

²³Jacques Le Goff, 70.

²⁴Le Goff, *Marchands*, translates Gratian's words as, "the merchant cannot be pleasing to God--or only with difficulty," 70.

²⁵Some of the ways in which the Church protected merchants included the order given to kings and princes to make restitutions to Italian merchants for goods confiscated or risk excommunication, excusing merchants in special circumstances from confession, and placing merchants between clerics and peasants in their hierarchy of professions. See Le Goff, *Marchands*, 75-76.

enterprises through its banking intermediaries,²⁶ and since at least the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Sieneese excelled as papal bankers.²⁷ The Church did not fail to profit from commerce, but at the same time, it did not entirely let go of its prejudices against trade. The ambivalence was expressed by Thomas Aquinas, who while admitting that trade was necessary to society, nevertheless described it as sordid, shameful, and disgraceful.²⁸

Merchants had not been considered in the archaic economic system because of their small role in it. However, by the thirteenth century, their growing importance was being acknowledged by mendicant friars, who, preaching in urban centers, recognized the greater variety of crafts and social strata among their parishioners. The thirteenth-century Franciscan friar, Berthold von Regensburg, divided society according to occupations into groups that corresponded to the nine angelic choirs described in the sixth century by the eastern monk, Dionysius the Aeropagite.²⁹ In Berthold's system, the

²⁶Le Goff, *Marchands*, 75-76, 92-96. Le Goff believes the Church was lenient with merchants and bankers in order to free itself from the grip of old feudal ties and simultaneously make an alliance with the new power belonging to the merchants.

²⁷Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, 27.

²⁸Aron Ja. Gurevich, "The Merchant," *Medieval Callings*, Ed. Jacques Le Goff, Trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, Chicago, 1990, 247.

²⁹Gurevich, 253.

merchant ranked among the lower orders along with jewellers, coin minters, and blacksmiths, and those who sold provisions to the population. These orders or choirs were arranged in a horizontal rather than vertical hierarchy; since they were vocations that had been predetermined by God, they could not be deserted. Although Berthold made the common distinction between the great international merchant and small shopkeepers, the three superior orders consisted of the priests with the pope at their head, monks, and lay judges, which included kings, dukes, and other secular lords.

According to Mario Ascheri's tripartite system of Sienese society, the middle class represented the Aristotelian just mean between two extreme groups of the masses and magnates, both of whom could be dangerous to city life, the masses because of their ignorance, unruliness, and envy of wealth and the magnates because of their tendencies towards violence and tyranny.³⁰ In fact, it was partially to curb the behavior of the latter, also characterized by arrogance and a despise for the popolo, that communes enacted anti-magnate laws. Not all magnates had embraced the emergent commercial philosophy; some

³⁰Ascheri, "Siena in the Fourteenth Century," 185. Also see Larner, *Culture and Society*, chapter 2, for a system dividing Italian societies into four groups: 1) peasantry and urban poor; 2) artisans and shopkeepers (popolo minuto); 3) upper bourgeoisie made up of doctors, lawyers, and great merchants (popolo grasso); 4) aristocracy of old feudal families and ennobled merchants.

remained aloof from politics and commerce, and others were hostile. The disaffected were often at odds with the government, plotting and conniving its overthrow. They threatened the survival of the small republic because like the *società d'arme* of the popolo, they belonged to a similar organization within the commune, the exclusive and independent *societas militum*.³¹ The noble society was itself composed of the numerous familial and inter-familial *consorterie* or "tower-societies" transplanted in the city by the feudal aristocracy. While serving primarily as pacts for mutual aid among nobles,³² these agreements involved the vassalage system that put them into direct competition with the republic for the loyalties of the vassal. The most visible remaining urban manifestation of this life style is the tower house, which was designed as a defensible city fortress.³³ Fighting could occur between neighboring towers or parties of armed men might leave to carry out vendettas in the streets. Vendettas indicated the retention of feudal-magnate values and the unwillingness to settle private disputes in courts;³⁴

³¹Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics*, New York, 1978, 119.

³²Waley, *City-Republics*, 126; Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch*, 90.

³³Medieval images show that numerous towers rose above the skyline of many Italian towns. San Gimignano is often cited as offering the best surviving example.

³⁴Waley, *City-Republics*, 126.

throughout the first half of the Trecento, for example, the Malavolti fiercely fought against the Tolomei, Salimbeni and Montanini families.³⁵ Whereas the height of a tower might provide a tactical advantage, above all it was a source of pride for its owners; conversely, its destruction signalled the power of the commune over a consortium, underscored by the reuse of its stones in communal constructions.³⁶

If the nobility could sometimes be troublesome, they also made themselves invaluable to the commune. Not only did they pay the bulk of the direct taxes, but, as leading businessmen, their successes were essential to the well-being of the entire city, and they also provided it with ever necessary calvary service.³⁷ Biccherna records for the thirteenth century show that wars were frequent and the expense of waging them increased as campaigns grew longer and more highly paid troops came to be used.³⁸ Wars and their escalating costs continued into the fourteenth century. Having been trained in warfare, members of the nobility also acted as military commanders and advisers. Other sons of the nobility received lengthy legal training,

³⁵Bortolotti, 25.

³⁶Hook, *A City*, 11.

³⁷From the 1260s on, mercenary calvaries became more widely used. See Waley, *City-Republics*, 99.

³⁸Waley, *City-Republics*, 49.

instead, and became judges, serving as Podestà in other communes or as ambassadors in various cities and courts. Ubaldino Malavolti lectured in the Sienese Studio, which by the mid-thirteenth century, had won a small measure of renown in juridical studies, grammar, and medicine.³⁹ The sons of Ugo di Ruggeri, lord of Montaperti, moved into Siena as the Ugurgieri and provided the city with many elected officials, ambassadors, diplomatic arbitrators, and Camarlinghi.⁴⁰ Perhaps don Ugo, pictured on the 1258 Biccherna cover (fig. 1), was connected to that family. The Ugurgieri name later appears as one of the Provveditori on the Biccherna cover of 1350 (fig. 26) and as an executor of the Gabella on its 1357 cover (fig. 28). In the second half of the thirteenth century, a certain Griffolo, a judge and probably of magnatial standing, played an active role in communal affairs as councillor, diplomatic missionary, and at least two terms as Provveditore.⁴¹ One of the wealthiest citizens in the thirteenth century was an Aeneas Piccolomini. Knighted in 1261, he later served Siena in the capacities of councillor, elected official, ambassador and in 1273 as Camarlingo of the Biccherna.⁴²

³⁹Giulio Prunai, "Lo studio senese dalle origini alla "migratio" bolognese (sec. XII-1321)," *Bullettino senese di storia patria* LV (1948) 67-68.

⁴⁰Hyde, 86-87.

⁴¹Waley, *Siena and the Sienese*, 87.

⁴²Waley, *Siena and the Sienese*, 81.

The aristocratic lifestyle of the magnatial families fascinated the urban man, perhaps because as Hyde suggests, there was no alternative that could offer a similar appeal. He illustrates this hypothesis with the example of the vendetta, remarking that it was "commonly regarded as the hallmark of the archaic rural nobility, yet it seems that it was practiced by all classes of Italian society according to their means . . .".⁴³ Furthermore, townspeople had a passion for the outward forms of chivalry. French romantic epics and Arthurian legends were popularized in performances and in personal names such as Cavalleresco, Biancafiore, Orlando, and Artù; jousts were presented for everyone's entertainment. Ceremonial dubbings offered further displays of pageantry and glimpses of the chivalrous lifestyle. Images of tourneys and jousts formed part of the pictorial programs of the town halls in Todi (c. 1290) and San Gimignano (1295).⁴⁴ Merchants, especially those able to afford it, aspired to attain noble status by marrying into the aristocracy and adopting magnatial behavior. They pursued noble titles and coats of arms, partook in feudal activities such as hunting, indulged in outings in the country, held political office, and engaged

⁴³Hyde, 171.

⁴⁴For a discussion on the use of chivalric themes as appropriate decoration for civic buildings, see Jonathan B. Riess, *Political Ideals in Medieval Italian Art: The Frescoes in the Palazzo dei Priori, Perugia (1297)*, Ann Arbor, 1981.

in magnanimous and conspicuous spending, often for the glorification of their native cities. Living and working side by side or in partnership and sharing a common outlook and lifestyle, the distinction between the old feudal aristocracy and the great merchants-financiers blurred. In Siena, the landed lord and the leading merchant-financier, as we have seen, were often the same person. For their part, the aristocracy also had to make adjustments in habit and thinking: they deigned to work, to participate in the commercial world, and to spend at least part of the year within city walls, actions quite puzzling to nobles in other European centers. Such a phenomenon would not have been possible had Italian society during this period been less fluid.⁴⁵ It would harden again, but in the meantime, it was a vital component in the flourishing city-republics. Along side the belief that every man had his assigned vocation and place in society, the idea of the self-made man had begun to take hold.

Just as Berthold von Regensburg had distinguished the great merchant from the small shopkeeper, so, too, were

⁴⁵Social mobility was facilitated by immigration, the great need for notaries to perform administrative and bureaucratic functions, and the Black Death. See William M. Bowsky, ed., *The Black Death: A Turning Point in History?*, Malabar, Fl, 1978; on the Black Death and art, see Millard Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death: The Arts, Religion, and Society in the Mid-Fourteenth Century*, Princeton, 1978; Henk van Os, "The Black Death and Sieneese Painting: A Problem of Interpretation," *Art History* 4.3 (1981): 237-49.

different categories of usurers and usury recognized. Raymond de Roover in *Money, Banking and Credit in Mediaeval Bruges* discusses three types of professional money dealers: the international merchant-bankers, who developed legal business methods that included the bill of exchange, long-term or terminal partnerships, and maritime insurance; the lombards, who were licensed usurers and pawnbrokers lending money at interest to the public; and the money-changers, who not only made simple exchanges of currencies and dealt in bullion, but who also carried out such banking functions as the acceptance of deposits and reinvestments or relending of monies on a local level. Of the three categories of money handlers, the lombards were singled out for vilification and ostracism. In Bruges, as elsewhere, the revulsion for their occupation was so great that even other Italians living in that foreign city avoided associating with them.⁴⁶ In the hierarchy of occupations, lombards were placed at the bottom along with robbers, prostitutes, simoniacs and heretics.⁴⁷ The Church ordered them to make restitutions for their usury whereas merchant-bankers were exempted from similar demands. As Benjamin N.

⁴⁶de Roover, *Bruges*, 108. Not all scholars agree about the degree of differentiation made between the categories of usury that de Roover does. See Noonan, 191 and Le Goff, *Your Money*, 55; neither scholar believes the distinction to have been absolute.

⁴⁷Jacques Le Goff, "The Usurer and Purgatory," *The Dawn of Modern Banking*, New Haven, 1979, 34-36.

Nelson explains, the action was due to the high visibility created by the public nature of their business.⁴⁸ Licensed to practice openly and obliged to live in distinctive quarters, their very profession made them notorious, and, therefore, easily targeted by a Church hostile to their "evil" profession. In Siena in 1339, usurers had to be registered in a special ledger, the *usuraio di Biccherna*.⁴⁹ Usurers were liable for drastic sanctions and at any time could expect to be forced to make full restitution to their victims. In a letter written in Siena in 1221, the usurer Aringhiero d'Altavilla promises

that if I escape from this illness I shall be and remain [obedient] to the order of the lord bishop of Siena in regard to the usuries which I have collected up to this day, satisfying whoever proves to me his legal [claims] in regard to them and making restitution of these [usuries] as he [the bishop] shall charge me. And in regard to the excommunication laid upon me in the case of the money of Boncompagno, late of the monastery, I shall likewise be [obedient] to his order, so

⁴⁸Benjamin N. Nelson, "The Usurer and the Merchant Prince: Italian Businessmen and the Ecclesiastical Law of Restitution, 1100-1550," *The Tasks of Economic History, The Journal of Economic History*, Supp. VII (1947) 108.

⁴⁹Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Medieval Commune*, 105. In the Constitution of 1262, it was stipulated that the usurer be of good repute and without suspicious religious opinions.

far as it concerns my part.⁵⁰

In another example, written by an Italian moneylender in 1330 in Beaulieu and sent to Pistoia, the precarious position of lombards operating in foreign countries is clear:

These are the new developments . . . all the Lombards in the kingdom who are in the profession [moneylending] were arrested . . . I was arrested . . . and inventory was made of all our goods . . . commissioners were to go through every *bailliage* and *senechaussée* of the kingdom in order to listen to all who wanted to place complaints against us, and to cause the return of all profits anyone has received from [loans to] the said persons who would place the complaints. And whoever had extended credit at [a rate of] more than one denier should be subject to forfeit of body and goods at the will of the king. And it should be proclaimed that no one was to pay us, under penalty of body and goods; . . . the king wanted all the Lombards in the kingdom to go to live in Champagne . . . I believe the king was saying this to bend us more to his intention. I pray God that He give us counsel, for we have

⁵⁰Robert S. Lopez and Irving W. Raymond, *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World*, New York, 1955, 160.

been and still are in great trouble and conflict, and we have not yet gotten out of it. May God in His compassion free us from this. . . .⁵¹

On the other hand, usury not openly practiced did not usually require the same harsh penalties unless the *intent* to gain profit was confessed; instead, a much lesser restitution in the form of a penance would be demanded. Wealthy merchant-usurers often could make disguised restitution in the form of "philanthropic gifts"; sometimes they were absolved from making any restitution whatsoever.⁵² As Nelson writes, "it is apparent that both official policy and popular sentiment in the key economic centers of Italy made a clear distinction between the manifest usurer and mercantile elite. . . ."⁵³ Great wealth, together with the power it engendered, seems to have been a determining factor in the uneven and unequal distribution of penalty or penance. When the Arena Chapel was consecrated, Enrico Scrovegni borrowed hangings and carpets from San Marco in Venice to make the ceremony more solemn and sumptuous, for which Pope Benedict XI went so far as to dispense indulgences to visitors of the chapel.⁵⁴

⁵¹Lopez and Raymond, doc. 194, 394-400.

⁵²Nelson, "Merchant Prince," 111.

⁵³Nelson, "Merchant Prince," 117.

⁵⁴Settis, 224.

Usurers were sure to die a horrible death and suffer eternally in Hell, but at the end of the twelfth century, a new path to eternity was created.⁵⁵ Purgatory became the destination for those people who were neither totally good nor totally wicked; it became the means of saving the repentant dead and shortening their time of punishment through intercessions--masses, prayers, and alms--offered on their behalf by the living. It was especially useful for the professionally damned. Caesarius of Heisterbach includes an exemplum in the *Dialogus miraculorum* (c. 1220) that tells of a certain usurer who, because his widow tirelessly performed acts of atonement for him and because of his repentance, escaped Hell and gained eventual entry into Paradise. Repentance on the part of the usurer was demonstrable only through the full restitution of all dishonestly acquired money to their rightful owners. Furthermore, as Stephen of Bourbon stresses, the restitution must be made before death and it must be accompanied by confession if the usurer were to escape Hell and even Purgatory. Purgatory was officially recognized in 1254 in a letter of Pope Innocent IV and again in the Second Council of Lyon in 1274; private, auricular confession had become obligatory earlier in 1215 at the

⁵⁵For the discussion on purgatory and confessions, I have followed the information provided by Le Goff in *Your Money*, 75-80, and in his essay, "Usury and Purgatory," 43-52.

Fourth Lateran Council.⁵⁶ Whereas the penitent was expected to explain the motives or intentions of his sins, the goal of the confessor was to obtain the confession and contrition (repentance) of the sinner in order to impose the appropriate penance. The intention of the businessman--whether or not he secretly hoped for profit in a transaction--was the key separating licit commerce from illicit usury. Without contrition or penance, the businessman-usurer, having committed the cardinal sin of avarice, would die in a state of mortal sin and go to Hell. However, new business practices and values helped the businessman avoid sinning. Profits became allowable in circumstances involving risk to the investor, unforeseen penalties caused by a delayed repayment (*damnum emergens*), loss of profit due to money being lent at usury rather than being more advantageously invested (*lucrum cessans*), or when usury could be considered as a salary for labor.⁵⁷ These practices enabled many to believe that usury was only a venial sin which could be atoned.⁵⁸

Some of these notions were tied to the concept of

⁵⁶Le Goff, *Your Money*, 12-13. Prior to the decision, Le Goff explains that confession was a public event reserved for the most serious sins.

⁵⁷Le Goff, *Your Money*, 73-74.

⁵⁸Jacques Rossiaud, "The City-Dweller and Life in Cities and Towns," *Medieval Callings*, Ed. Jacques Le Goff, Trans. Lydia G. Cochrane, Chicago, 1990, cites Florentines around 1340 as an example, 170.

work, also being transformed. Manual labor, in traditional Christian theology, was regarded as a form of punishment for Adam's sin; later, it became the means for an atonement for the benefit of society.⁵⁹ This revised and more optimistic perspective of labor reflects the rise of cities and the growth of trades and professions: urban trades especially became justified on the grounds that they were socially useful and beneficial to the common good. In these regards, however, the manifest usurer's position remained suspect. Because his money increased without interruption in a manner contrary to the natural rhythm of work and rest, it was evil. In the words of Thomas of Chobham, "The usurer wants to make a profit without doing any work, even while he is sleeping, which goes against the precepts of the Lord, who said, 'By the sweat of your face shall you get bread to eat'[Gen.3:19)."⁶⁰ Despite his sloth, the usurer's wealth increased; by implication, profit through nonusurious means was permissible. From the eleventh century, the Church itself began promoting the nobility of labor on the grounds that Adam had been entrusted with work *before* the fall.⁶¹ This was followed in

⁵⁹Le Goff, "The Usurer and Purgatory," 31; Hook, *A City*, 134.

⁶⁰Le Goff, *Your Money*, 42. The quotation comes from Thomas of Chobham, *Summa confessorum*, 509.

⁶¹Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 180. Theologians used the Bible to support the new interpretation: "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress

the thirteenth century with the new belief in recompense for work, a significant development, for moderate rates of interest came to be accepted. Work became a means of achieving both wealth and salvation, since according to Thomas Aquinas, a man's character and his contribution to the state affect Christ's judgement upon him.⁶² Perhaps part of the reason why the poorest came to be suspected and despised at this time was because they did not work. Their inability or unwillingness to contribute to the welfare of the community not only meant that they were guilty of sloth and lacked civic virtue, but that their actions also jeopardized the entire community. It is no wonder that their dearth of money was viewed as totally dishonorable.⁶³ These new habits in thinking flourished despite the objections by the Church against avariciousness and the insistence by the mendicant orders on poverty as the chief virtue.

As the circulation of money increased, it created a thirst for accumulating more, as revealed in letters written by Sieneese merchant-bankers to their home offices. In 1265, for example, Andrea de' Tolomei informs his bank that the impending war between Charles of Anjou and King Manfred brings an opportunity for them to make a profit in

it and to keep it" [Gen. 2:15].

⁶²Riess, "Justice and Common Good," 75.

⁶³Martines, 86.

the exchange market:

". . . and they have with them a huge stock of money and [letters of] exchange. And I believe they will spend there a good proportion of it, so that [deniers] Tournois and [letters of] exchange ought to be at a great bargain there . . . And if you see a way to draw profit from this, do try to do it right away."⁶⁴

In 1305, a similar letter to the Sansedoni reads, "We tell you that the kingdom of France has never been so good for making profits as it will be as soon as this peace has been made."⁶⁵

The preoccupation with wealth also appears in what Lauro Martines calls "bourgeois realist" or "comic" poetry.⁶⁶ One of these poets, Cecco Angiolieri of Siena (c. 1260-c. 1312), who was born into a family of wealth and power (his mother was a Salimbeni and his grandfather, Angelerio Solafica, an official papal banker⁶⁷), wrote in a

⁶⁴Lopez and Raymond, doc. 193, 392-93, and n. 49.

⁶⁵Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, 27.

⁶⁶Martines, 78. For a comparison of Cecco's popular style with Dante's *stilnovisto*, in which all references to money as a gainful activity is meaningfully avoided, see 80.

⁶⁷Pinto and Morandi, 35.

cynical manner meant to shock the reader.⁶⁸ Here he conveys money's psychological impact on society by metaphorically replacing family with it:

Florins: The Best of Kin

Preach what you will,
 Florins are the best of kin:
 Blood brothers and cousins true,
 Father, mother, sons, and daughters too;
 Kinfolk of the sort no one regrets,
 Also horses, mules and beautiful dress.
 The French and the Italians bow to them,
 So do noblemen, knights, and learned men.
 Florins clear your eyes and give you fires,
 Turn to facts all your desires
 And into all the world's vast possibilities.
 So no man say, I'm nobly born, if
 He have not money. Let him say,
 I was born like a mushroom, in obscurity
 and wind.⁶⁹

The moral consequences of money is one of the subjects in the sonnet by Niccolo de' Rossi, who earned a doctorate in law at Bologna in 1317 and died after 1348:

⁶⁸Waley, *Siena and the Sienese*, 83. Waley writes that Cecco favored the literary genre of *vituperium* (blame, irony, censure).

⁶⁹Martines, 79.

were negative, responsible for causing an increase in crimes of robbery, which was followed by a similar increase in the usual punishment meted out to thieves, hanging. Within the Church, simony had become a major problem that had led to a wave of reform, while throughout Europe, Jews faced persecution for their business in usury and the wealth it generated for them as well as for their religion.⁷² The preoccupation with wealth in late-thirteenth century Siena is even suggested by the preference for female baptismal names such as "Gemma", "Divizia" (Wealth), "Diamante", and "Riccha". "Maria" was popular since the Virgin Mary was the city's patroness, but names of saints were not otherwise commonly used. Some of the popular male names, such as "Buonaventura", "Buonaccolto", and "Bencivenne", similarly implied wishes for good fortune.⁷³

Wealth became praiseworthy. When it was used for social ends as was the case with Scrovegni's construction of the Arena Chapel, wealth became a civic virtue. Jacopo da Voragine, bishop of Genoa and author of the *Golden Legend*, would go so far as to compare the morally rehabilitated merchant to Christ in that "Christ arrives on a ship of the cross to offer men the opportunity to exchange transient terrestrial things for eternal ones. . .

⁷²Murray, 61-69.

⁷³Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, 139-40.

. [and] asserts [that] the biblical patriarchs and even Christ himself were wealthy men."⁷⁴ Wealth thus shed its negative connotation and profit became a sign of God's grace, which no doubt helped immensely to assuage the conscience of the merchant when it was time to consider his immortal soul. Manifest, public, notorious usurers, on the other hand, continued to be denounced and forced by the Church to make restitutions into the sixteenth century.⁷⁵

Model of Civic Virtue

Whether as frank restitution, as restitution in the guise of "philanthropic gifts", or, in the dawning Renaissance, actual philanthropies, wealthy merchant-financiers often willed large sums to charities, to the construction and embellishment of churches and family chapels, and for stipends for requiem masses.⁷⁶ However, the contributions of the large majority of magnates were not made in the belief that their economic activities endangered their eternal salvation; on the contrary, they viewed their profits as the reward for their enterprise, risks, and as divine favor.⁷⁷ Italian merchants of the later Middle Ages and Renaissance felt confident of their

⁷⁴Gurevich, 263.

⁷⁵Nelson, "Merchant Prince," 120.

⁷⁶Nelson, "Merchant Prince," 115-18.

⁷⁷Nelson, "Merchant Prince," 114.

worth, dignity, and place in society. The fourteenth-century Florentine merchant and historian, Dino Compagni, advises other merchants to conduct their business in proper demeanor:

Song on Worthy Conduct

A merchant wishing that his worth be great
Must always act according as is right;
And let him be a man of long foresight,
And never fail his promises to keep.

Let him be pleasant, if he can, of looks,
As fits the honor'd calling that he chose;
Open when selling, but when buying close;
Genial in greeting and without complaints.

He will be worthier if he goes to church,
Gives for the love of God, clinches his deals
Without a haggle, and wholly repeals
Usury taking. Further, he must write
Accounts well-kept and free from oversight.⁷⁸

The sentiments expressed in the late-fifteenth century by Benedetto Cotrugli in the book, *On Commerce and the Perfect Merchant*, are equally valid for Sienese merchant-financiers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He writes that the great merchant is to be exalted for four reasons: the many contributions he makes to the common

⁷⁸Lopez and Raymond, 426.

good; his ability to increase his personal wealth through investments and good management; the virtue of his friends, associates, and clients; and his own good character. The idea that the merchant contributed to the common good was a crucial one for insuring the Church's acceptance of his place in society. Cotrugli writes:

First, with respect to the common weal. For the advancement of public welfare is a very honorable [purpose], as Cicero states, The advancement, the comfort, and the health of republics to a large extent proceed from merchants; we are always speaking, of course, not of plebeian and vulgar merchants but of the glorious merchant of whom we treat Through trade, . . . sterile countries are provided with food and supplies and also enjoy many strange things which are imported [Merchants] also bring about an abundance of money, jewels, gold, silver, and all kinds of metals. They bring about an abundance of guilds of various crafts. . . . And through their activity enable the poor to live; through their initiative in tax farming they promote the activity of administrators; through their exports and imports of merchandise they cause the customs and excises of the lords and republics to expand,

and consequently they enlarge the public and common treasury.⁷⁹

The late medieval concept of the common good is rooted in antiquity. According to Aristotle in the *Politics*, it is man's natural desire to live together in some sort of community or society. As man's natural habitat, the state furnishes the solitary environment in which civilized life flourishes, where men govern themselves justly by using their innate, therefore natural, knowledge of right and wrong. It is furthermore natural that the aim of the state is to attain the highest good for its members. This is achieved through laws--what Walter Ullmann describes as "the articulated will of nature."⁸⁰ Thomas Aquinas elaborated upon Aristotle's theses on naturalism and at the same time made them more acceptable to Christian intellectuals by bringing man's supernatural destiny into the discussion. Terrestrial man, he maintains, functions as a social and political creature and the good citizen reaches his potential by following his natural inclination within that perfect community which is the state.⁸¹ A close follower of Thomas Aquinas, Fra Remigio de' Girolami (d. 1319) added that only so long as man perfects himself

⁷⁹Lopez and Raymond, 416-18.

⁸⁰Walter Ullmann, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages*, London, 1961, 232-33.

⁸¹Ullmann, 243-58.

within the state and works on its behalf, could he expect to receive his heavenly reward.⁸² Service to the state, of course, was rendered by the great merchants in the ways enumerated above by Cotrugli.

While the individual's behavior is directed ideally toward the welfare of the community, the state's responsibility is to provide a peaceful environment supplied with the necessities for a good life. Aquinas writes in *De Regimine principum*:

Yet the unity of man is brought about by nature, while the unity of a society, which we call peace, must be procured through the efforts of a ruler. Therefore, to establish virtuous living in a multitude three things are necessary. First of all, that the multitude be established in the unity of peace. Second, that the multitude thus united in the bond of peace be guided to good deeds. For just as a man can do nothing well unless unity within his members be presupposed, so a multitude of men which lacks the unity of peace, is hindered from virtuous action by the fact that it fights against its very existence as a group. In the third place, it is necessary that there be at hand a sufficient supply of the

⁸²Jonathan B. Riess, "French Influences on the Early Development of Civic Art in Italy," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 314 (1978) 286.

things required for a proper living, procured by the ruler's efforts.⁸³

Peace and harmony are assured when all members of the community adhere to basic moral principles of natural law, knowledge of which are intrinsic to the rational person. When these principles are written down as regulations and practiced, they become human law.⁸⁴ The importance of legislation as the main function of the state is emphatically stressed by Marsilius of Padua (1275/80-1342) for "they are the means and the only means with which the end of the whole citizenhood (the *universitas civium*) can be achieved."⁸⁵ Because they are human laws, they are enforceable, unlike divine laws, which are commands of God made known to man through divine revelation.⁸⁶ Because they derive from moral principles, they are just.

Justice and Usury

Justice, along with Temperance, Fortitude, and Prudence, were called the cardinal, moral, or political virtues. Actions based on them are deemed valuable in themselves by Aquinas, whereas from a traditional Christian

⁸³Quoted from Robert M. Hutchins, *St. Thomas and the World State*, Aquinas Lecture 1949, Milwaukee, 1949, 7-8.

⁸⁴Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State 1050-1300*, Toronto, 1988, 166-67.

⁸⁵Ullmann, 271.

⁸⁶Tierney, 167.

standpoint, value was conferred only when the action was inspired by one of the three theological virtues (Faith, Hope, or Charity).⁸⁷ Also in the estimation of Aquinas (and Aristotle), Justice is the foremost of the political virtues because it promotes peace through the appropriate distribution of reward and punishment.⁸⁸ The righteous man, or good citizen, is rewarded for actions beneficial to the community; the great merchant-financier demonstrates his good citizenship through public service, through office.

Conversely, those who disrupted or threatened public peace and order were punished. This included the usurer whose self-serving activities put the entire community at risk. We have seen that the usurer had been condemned for reasons of avarice, sloth, and the very act of handling money. It was also, as we have seen, common to denounce usury as theft, and to pronounce the usurer guilty of committing a sin against justice.⁸⁹ As Thomas Aquinas points out, "Making a charge for lending money is *unjust* in itself, for one party sells the other something non-existent, and this obviously sets up an *inequality* which is contrary to *justice*."⁹⁰ The greed behind his

⁸⁷Ullmann, 247.

⁸⁸Riess, "French Influences," 296.

⁸⁹Usury as theft was derived from the Roman law that it is wrong to deprive a man of his property if he is unwilling, Noonan, 30.

⁹⁰Le Goff, *Your Money*, 27-28.

acquisitiveness makes him guilty of the sin of avarice, of course, but by receiving wealth when he ought not, he is additionally guilty of theft of someone else's property. Thomas of Chobham views the usurious transaction as the theft of time from God, in this case, the usurer was doubly damned, first as a thief of time and again as a thief of property.⁹¹ By putting his own interests above the good of the commune or by increasing his wealth inordinately, the usurer acts both unjustly and immorally.

To compensate for the general increase in wealth and private property, the Church felt it had to atone for these iniquities with gifts to the poor so that, at least in part, almsgiving became a matter of justice rather than piety.⁹² In Siena, where alms were given for the good of the city and for the preservation of its independence, charity was an important duty of the State.⁹³ Its most prominent civic institution was a charitable one. Santa Maria della Scala is first documented in 1195, and since

⁹¹Le Goff, *Your Money*, 39.

⁹²Karl Vossler, *Medieval Culture: An Introduction to Dante and His Times*, Vol. I, New York, 1929, 289. Not everyone was an eligible recipient of charity, which was reserved for the respectable, the innocent, or the holy. Also see Pullan, 181.

⁹³Hook, *A City*, 133, 144. Also, Frugoni writes that according to Pseudo-Hugh of St. Victor's *De fructibus carnis et spiritus*, charity was similar to the idea of the *Bene Comune* in that it, too, was considered as the key joining the members of the commune together for the good of all. See *A Distant City*, 128-29.

early in its history, the commune contributed to its construction and maintenance.⁹⁴ It was constructed at the end of the thirteenth century as a lodging-house for pilgrims, then expanded into a hospital and shelter for foundlings. Funds were donated for dowries and apprenticeships for orphans as well as for providing bread during famines.⁹⁵ The great wealth it accumulated was used by the commune as if it were a bank; from 1404, the election of its director was no longer in the hands of the brothers of the hospital but determined by the commune, which interfered increasingly in its administrative and financial activities.⁹⁶

Sieneze citizens had another motive for making charitable contributions; they believed it could placate the wrath of God for their factionalism, which they suspected to be the cause of their political strife.⁹⁷ Remigio was also well aware of the threat to the state that factionalism could pose. Because he attacked its destructive nature and the turbulence it stirs with such vehemence in *De bono communi*, it is not difficult to understand his complete insistence upon the supremacy of

⁹⁴*Archivio dell'Ospedale di S. Maria della Scala. Inventario*, Vol. I., Archivio di Stato di Siena XXXVII, Rome, 1960, viii-ix.

⁹⁵Hook, *A City*, 145.

⁹⁶*Archivio dell'Ospedale*, ix-x.

⁹⁷Hook, *A City*, 144.

the united and peaceful commune where the good of the community takes precedence over the good of the individual and where the individual can live virtuously.⁹⁸

In Thomistic Aristotelianism, the prominence of Justice is fundamental. It is the adhesive that binds the members of the community to one another, providing a sense of security which in turn fosters feelings of belonging, self-worth, and respect for others. If Justice were thought to be lacking or unequal in its application, fear, suspicion, and distrust would divide the population and the sense of oneness with the community destroyed. The downfall of the Nine offers a clear example. In 1287 at the beginning of their seventy-year regime, the rule of the Nine was characterized by a genuine attempt to govern fairly in the interest of the entire community, to distribute the tax burden equitably, to ensure an abundant and inexpensive food supply, and to provide all citizens free access to justice.⁹⁹ Impressively scaled building and artistic projects were undertaken during this relatively peaceful period. But towards the end of their regime, criticism regarding the special privileges began to increase. By 1349, Biccherna magistrates were being attacked for dishonest practices and favoritism in the matter of loan repayments as well as for allowing

⁹⁸Martines, 128.

⁹⁹Hook, *A City*, 34-37.

speculation in the public debt. Other charges were leveled directly against the Nine themselves. The attacks continued to escalate up to the downfall of the Nine in 1355. Just two months prior to the revolution, bankers had been specifically barred from serving as Camarlinghi for the Biccherna and Gabella.¹⁰⁰ In the *Cronaca senese*, Donato di Neri relates that during the upheaval books of penalties and foreitures were taken out and burned on the piazza del Campo, prisons emptied of their inmates and burned, and houses of the workers of the wool guild as well as those of the Nine either burned or damaged. The Nine themselves were forced into hiding and reviled in every possible way.¹⁰¹ Unfortunately for them, justice as the essence for maintaining peace, order, and leadership seemed to have been forgotten by the Nine, despite the fact that they were surrounded by that very message in their council chamber, the Sala dei Nove, also known as the Sala della Pace.

Good and Bad Government

Political iconography as a reflection of Aristotelian tenets has been thoroughly investigated by Jonathan B.

¹⁰⁰Bowsky, *Medieval Commune*, 304-05; also in *Black Death*, 121.

¹⁰¹Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 82, citing from the *Cronaca senese* of Donato di Neri (1352-1370) and his son Neri (1372-1381) in *RIS* XV, 6, 577-78.

Riess in works already cited in this paper.¹⁰² Concentrating on the fresco cycles in the Palazzo dei Priori in Perugia (1297) and the Arena Chapel in Padua, his studies clearly show that various artistic motifs were combined in order to create complex, multi-layered programs. Allegorical virtues and vices, depiction of labors beneficial to society, and astronomical-astrological references are amalgamated as they are in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's murals of *Good and Bad Government* (1338-1339, fig. 131) in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena. He notes with good reason the position of these frescoes as the last expression in the development of this particular type of civic iconography. As other art historians have examined the frescoes in great detail,¹⁰³ attention here will be focused only on select aspects as they pertain to this study.

In Aristotelian and Thomistic thinking, Justice is divided into commutative and distributive aspects and this concept is depicted in the *Allegory of Good Government* (fig. 132).¹⁰⁴ Above the head of Justice, Wisdom holds a

¹⁰²See his *Political Ideals in Medieval Italian Art*, "French Influences," and "Justice and Common Good."

¹⁰³In addition to Frugoni, *A Distant City*, and bibliography listed in the Introduction, see George Rowley, *Ambrogio Lorenzetti*, 2 vols., Princeton, N.J., 1958; Diana Norman, "'Love justice, you who judge the earth': the paintings of the Sala dei Nove in the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena," *Siena, Florence and Padua: Art, Society and Religion 1280-1400*, Vol. II, New Haven, 1995, 145-67.

¹⁰⁴Quentin Skinner sees a different source of inspiration for the program in the prehumanist rhetorical

scale, whose pans are steadied by the hands of Justice. In each pan an angel interacts with two figures kneeling before them. The angel balanced by Justice's right hand cuts off the head of one man while crowning the other; the swords on the ground denoting their magnatial status. In the other pan, an angel in white hands out a chest of money (?), a spear and a staff symbolizing public office,¹⁰⁵ to two men whose clothing denotes high rank. This imagery immediately brings to mind the similar and earlier representations by Giotto in the Arena Chapel, where Justice also holds a pan with an angel in each hand (fig. 133). On her right the angel appears to be crowning the good, though defaced, figure of a merchant seated at his *banco*, while on her left, another angel punishes the bad by decapitation.¹⁰⁶ Whereas in Giotto's image the dispensation

culture. See his "Ambrogio Lorenzetti: The Artist as Political Philosopher," *Malerei und Stadtkultur in der Dantezeit: Die Argumentation der Bilder*, Munich, 1989, 85-103.

¹⁰⁵Frojmovič regards these instruments, a *staio* and a longer *metro* (?), as official weights and measures, 45.

¹⁰⁶The identification of the merchant is made by Frojmovič, who furthermore cites the allegorical image of Criminal Justice (?) in the Palazzo della Ragione as a model for the Sienese figure for its Aristotelian content. On the other hand, in the Arena Chapel the inscription beneath Justice is not couched in Aristotelian terms: "Perfect justice balances everything with equal pans. Crowning good men, she brandishes her sword against vices. Everyone enjoys freedom if she reigns. As long as she wants to, she acts pleasantly; then the worthy knight hunts, people sing and trade, the merchant travels . . . (remainder lost)," 45.

of justice as reward or punishment is explicit, in Lorenzetti's frescoes the complex actions are more difficult to interpret. For example, it is not altogether clear whether the angel is crowning or removing the crown from figure kneeling next to the man being decapitated (fig. 132).¹⁰⁷ Commenting on the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle, Aquinas defines distributive justice as that which "consists in the allocation of a common stock of things that are to be divided among those who share in a bond of citizenship. Examples of these might be honorable offices, or financial wealth."¹⁰⁸ (Both are apparently being awarded.) Commutative justice is composed of two groups: in the first are those cases in which the restitution of goods or its equivalent is the only requirement and in the second, when some injury has occurred to the victim, carries the additional requirement that some form of punishment be inflicted upon the offender.¹⁰⁹ Randolph Starn

¹⁰⁷Edgerton interprets the angel who is beheading one man as also taking away the crown of the other, noting that decapitation was a form of punishment reserved for kings, queens, and nobles, 128-29. He further sees the action as a removal in accordance with the idea that Distributive Justice administers punishment, 39. The problem, however, is that the other function of Distributive Justice to reward is missing in the image. Norman believes the actions are not clear enough for deciphering, 156. Frojmovič associates Distributive Justice with commercial transactions and Commutative Justice with reward and punishment according to merit, 45. In this, she would concur with Frugoni's designations, discussed below.

¹⁰⁸Quoted from Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 122.

¹⁰⁹Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 122-23.

adds that commutative justice concerns transactions between two persons.¹¹⁰ But the angel labeled *comutativa* instead passes out rewards that are described by Aquinas as belonging to *distributiva*. That the cavalier being crowned is grasping a palm frond in signification of his worth and is kneeling toward the angel would suggest either reward or the redressing of a wrong done to him, while simultaneously, the wrongdoer is being penalized for the injury he had caused. Frugoni believes that during a restoration the *tituli* had been reversed, citing for evidence a miniature in a French translation of the *Ethics* that depicts a similar scene but with the proper inscriptions.¹¹¹ The inversion would not have been the only mistake made in the mural. The head of the enthroned figure the *Bene Comune* (Common Good, fig. 134) is encircled by the initials, "CSCV", (*Commune Senarum Civitas Virginis* or The commune of Siena, city of the Virgin), but a "C" has been inserted between the last two letters so that it reads "CSCCV". On the Gabella cover, attributed to Ambrogio, the initials correctly reads "CSCV" (fig. 22). If the superfluous letter can be accepted as a mistake in restoration, would it be impossible for other mistakes to have been made as well?

Punishment is absent in distributive justice, which is

¹¹⁰Starn, 29, n. 27.

¹¹¹Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 123.

concerned only with the proper disbursement of honors, office, and public funds. Since the sworn duty of the Biccherna's officials is the proper administration of state funds, they function within the sphere of justice. Even in their private businesses, the officials remained constantly aware of justice since economics was steeped in religious ideology and ethics and the *just* price and the *just* wage were fundamental economic issues for them.¹¹² As in law, the realm of economics recognized both distributive and commutative transactions, with the former being comprised of the distribution of wealth and income and the latter dealt with the equal exchange of goods and services by means of voluntary contracts.¹¹³ It might be said that thinking in terms of justice--legally, ethically, and economically--constituted a mental habit of the merchant-financier.

Another factor that must be taken into account in the formation of the merchant-banker's self-image is the concept of *amor patriae*. Beginning as the earthly aspect of Charity, in the communes it evolved into the virtue that places on the highest level the good of the community as it was depicted in the *Allegory of Good Government*. Charity is meant to be understood as *amor patriae*,¹¹⁴ following a

¹¹²Le Goff, *Your Money*, 28.

¹¹³de Roover, *San Bernardino*, 8.

¹¹⁴Rubinstein, 185-86; Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 129.

definition common around 1300 that had been made by Ptolemy of Lucca: *Amor patriae in radice Charitatis fundatur* ("Love of the Fatherland is founded in the root of Charity.")¹¹⁵ She hovers directly above *Bene Comune* or, as he is sometimes called, *Buon Governo*,¹¹⁶ serving as an inspiration to those in governing positions to legislate wisely and their agencies to be operated honestly. The relationship between *Amor Patriae* and *Buon Governo* parallels that between Wisdom and Justice; each virtue is the guiding principle steering Justice and Government to protect the common good. The consciousness of Justice has become emotional, almost religious in its fervency, in what Romans would have called *pietas*¹¹⁷ and which found new life in the communes. During every deliberation made in their meeting chamber, the Sala dei Nove, the governors and defenders of the commune should have been reminded by this imagery of their obligations.

It seems to me that at least some of the numerous ideas contained in the murals find echoes in the Biccherna covers. It is even possible that the covers, although modest in size, scope, and often, artistic quality as well,

¹¹⁵Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton, 1957, 113.

¹¹⁶The concepts and terms *bonum commune* and *bonum Communis* were nearly synonymous in fourteenth-century Italian communes and used interchangeably. See Rubinstein, 185.

¹¹⁷Vossler, 195.

were meant to be read as an adjunct to, or enrichment of, the great civic cycle painted in the Sala della Pace on the floor above the Biccherna offices. Following Frugoni's observation that no detail of a rich merchant or banker at work exists in the large scene, the *Effects of Good Government*,¹¹⁸ might not it be due to the fact that they were already being represented on the covers of the Biccherna's account books? The Biccherna cover design would have been a perfect medium for the officials' self-praise, for both fresco and covers were aimed chiefly at the same audience, the ruling oligarchy. Extant covers for 1339 (fig. 19) and 1340 (fig. 20), contemporary with the *Good Government* frescoes, are the first to give a glimpse of the interior of an office. The Camarlinghi busy behind their counters would not look out of place if were relocated into the city of the fresco as one of the many vignettes depicting occupations useful to the commune. The picture on the 1340 cover would be especially compatible since it includes a customer in what could be now considered as a historical genre scene. For the next sixty years, at the least, the office scene will be a favorite, increasingly elaborated choice for cover designs. In keeping with the theme of the frescoes, the image is couched in terms of communal life, showing the Camarlingo at work in the service of the bene commune.

¹¹⁸Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 161.

The pictorial program of the frescoes is augmented by inscriptions, captions, and longer texts in Latin or the vernacular,¹¹⁹ which act as the theoretical and authoritative underpinnings for the visual idealizations. The Biccherna covers may be viewed in a similar way, with its text naming the Camarlingo, Provveditori, and date of office, and its picture showing the Camarlingo at work. By virtue of its nature, written words convey authority but perhaps more importantly for the covers, they have the power to act as a visible oath.¹²⁰ In a collaborative manner, the picture makes explicit the obligation of that oath. As they do in the murals, words and images on the covers work together as prescriptive reminders of the duties that strengthen the regime.

Conclusion

Beginning with an overview of the Sieneese political scene during the period in which the office scene on the Biccherna covers developed, our examination focused on the social group that formed the pool for that magistracy's highest positions. Camarlinghi, unless they were clerics, and Provveditori usually belonged to the class of wealthy

¹¹⁹The inscription on most covers of the Duecento were in Latin, but by the beginning of the next century they were mostly being written in the vernacular. See Morandi, "Le istituzioni," 19.

¹²⁰Camille, 40.

rentiers, bankers, and merchants of the "glorious" kind described above by Cotrugli. Although a respectable position was made in the social hierarchy for the merchant-financiers, those members who were not already aristocratic aspired to be, adopting the magnatial lifestyle and values as soon as they accumulated enough wealth. The Church's acceptance of the merchant in the Christian community was facilitated by conceding the dignity of labor, a new esteem for money, the development of new and licit business practices, the allowance of a moderate amount of usury, and the opening of Purgatory as an avenue to salvation. Consequently, the great merchant-financier could be held up as a paragon of civic virtue. He, in turn, was guided by Aristotelian and Thomistic ideas of governing circulating through the communes. In Siena these thoughts, modified to exalt the independent and benign rule of the commune under the leadership of the Nine, are visualized in the *Good Government* frescoes.

The picture we have formed of the great merchant-banker-financial magistrate is that of a hard-working and wealthy businessman at or near the top of the social and political ladder, who sees himself as a good Christian, a good citizen, and civic leader. These were the facets of his identity that he would have wanted displayed on the covers. Whereas the goals of this chapter have been to present the merchant-banker within his historical and urban

contexts and to come to some understanding of how these factors compelled the officials of the Biccherna to fashion for themselves a new and confident self-image, in the next chapter we will investigate the imagery itself more thoroughly.

Chapter Five

The Office Scene in the Trecento and Quattrocento

Siena was a leader among the Italian city-states between 1250 and 1350 not only in the commercial and financial spheres but in the field of art as well. Native artists such as Guido da Siena (active 1260s-1280s), Duccio (active 1278-1318), Simone Martini (active 1315-1344), and the Lorenzetti brothers, Pietro (c. 1280-1348?) and Ambrogio (active 1319-1348?), belonged in the vanguard of artists whose works exhibited a closer imitation of nature as well as a greater degree of humanization that had responded to the teachings of St. Francis. In the narrative panels in Duccio's *Maestà* (1308-1311, fig. 139), for instance, human emotions are conveyed through realistic gestures and expressions, while figures are set within convincing spatial environments in order to make the biblical stories more tangible for the viewer. The imagery on the Biccherna covers show that their artists were aware of contemporary trends, as seen in the cover of 1296 by an anonymous artist (fig 10).¹ Although the placement of the picture at the bottom of the board departs from the usual format, it is significant that now the Camarlingo's body no longer appears to be cut off by the table, but continues

¹The cover belonged to the Ramboux collection. Despite its unusual, muted colors and anomalies in the inscription, it is regarded as authentic. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 68.

under it to his feet. Despite the absence of a chair, we see from his posture that he is seated behind the table. In addition to the assortment of coins, moneybag, and book spread on its surface, there are now other objects: pots of ink, quills and quill knife, a pair of scissors, and a small scale. The first surviving figured cover from the fourteenth century comes from the office of the Gabella in 1307 (fig. 11). Like the Biccherna cover of 1296, the scene appears at the bottom. Particularly notable is the disappearance of that staple feature of Duecento covers, the aedicule, which has been replaced by a screen or high-backed bench. The motif was reused only once more, on the Biccherna cover of 1310 where it separated the Camarlingo from the highly atypical multicolored brick wall behind him (fig. 12).² In each of these covers, the Camarlingo assumes the pose sanctioned through at least forty years of repetition.

By 1314 a decision had been made to combine the separate ledgers of the Camarlingo with the Provveditori

²Like the cover of 1296, its authenticity, because of its unusual features, has been questioned. Recently discovered documents related to the named Camarlingo and Podestà in office seem to confirm its genuineness. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 74. Since the Biccherna moved into its new offices on the ground floor of the Palazzo Pubblico by 1310, it can only be speculated whether the move was in any way related to the demise of the arched structure in the cover designs.

into a single volume.³ This was reflected in the amalgamation of the designs of their respective covers so that the portrait of the Camarlingo appeared in tandem with the heraldic devices of the serving Provveditori (fig. 13). These elements divided the upper half of the board into two approximately equal portions, which left the lower area devoted entirely to the lengthier inscription that now listed the names of both sets of magistrates. The small scene on the cover for 1314 displays a further modification with the almost total disappearance of the environment, which has been replaced by a golden field, as can be found in mosaic decorations and manuscript miniatures. Only a table or counter extends across the width of the picture. A similar ambience is called by Erwin Panofsky an "interior by implication"; in such a setting, no top or side boundaries are indicated, but an interior is implied by a tiled floor, as in Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Annunciation* (fig. 23), painted for the Gabella in 1344.⁴ In our cover by an unknown artist, the usage of the massive furniture seems to have eliminated the opportunity (or necessity) for constructing space-generating orthogonals. This format

³Instead of four separate volumes per year, therefore, there were now two submitted to the General Council from the Biccherna. Meanwhile, officials of the Gabella turned in a single yearly book. See Prunai, "The 'Tavolette della Biccherna,'" 21.

⁴Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art*, New York, 1972, 144-45.

seems to have been utilized for another decade or so. On the covers of 1321 (fig. 15), 1324 (fig. 16), and 1331 (fig. 18), the iconographical scheme is modified with the substitution of the counter by a smaller piece of furniture that has been turned at an angle to the picture plane, thereby providing a convenient means for creating a sense of depth. Beginning with the cover of 1314, the images have in common the golden atmosphere and a new pose for the Camarlingo, in which he turns slightly towards the right where the stemmi of the Provveditori are located in a separate rectangle. In addition, a large stemma belonging to the Podestà is suspended in the air next to the Camarlingo.

Of the surviving covers from this period, the one from 1329 (fig. 17) resembles most closely the 1314 image with the reinstatement of the wide counter. However, the paneling on the front of the desk is now shadowed and the intrusive coat of arms has been eliminated; these are small but significant details that point to the efforts made by the anonymous artist in suggesting the real world. A further developmental step is taken in the cover of 1339 (fig. 19), when the interior setting is given greater definition with the addition of a back wall. On the next surviving cover, that of 1340 (fig. 20), a customer making or receiving some kind of payment has been included in the scene for the first time, while another new feature is the

addition of the name of the notary or scribe in the inscription.⁵

The cover of 1340 represents the point at which the office scene assumes the aspect of a genre scene, peopled with figures engaged in activities seemingly taken from real life. Although never exactly alike, the scene recurs repeatedly at least until 1402. Because of the poor survival rate of the covers made in the fifteenth century, it is impossible to say whether it remained a favorite subject. Of those that did survive, many have historical or allegorical themes that had begun to appear, albeit sporadically, during the preceding century, and these seemed to have increased in popularity during the Quattrocento. The last Biccherna covers bearing the office scene date from the middle of the fifteenth century. Compared to their immediate predecessors, symbolic figures have been added. In the 1451 cover by Sano di Pietro (fig. 42), the field is split into two portions, with a flying Virgin protecting the city of Siena in the smaller section

⁵Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 92. The inscription reads: "Questo e libro de l'entrata e de l'escita de la Bicherna del comune di Siena da kalende Giennaio MCCCXXVIII a kalende Luglio MCCCXL. Do' Matteo Monaco di Sancto Galgano, Guiduccio Ru[f]faldi, Mochata di Memmo di Viva, Franciescho di Cinughi, Placito Ughi, Karmarlengho e Quattro Proveditori de la Bicherna el detto tempo, Bencivenni Ghucci loro schritore." (This is the book of receipts and expenditures of the Biccherna of the Commune of Siena from January 1340 to July 1340. Don Matteo monk of San Galgano, . . . Camarlingo and Four Provveditori of the Biccherna, of the said time, Bencivenni Ghucci, their scribe.)

and an interior scene of a Camarlingo washing his hands in the other. In the following year an unknown artist painted the interior of the Biccherna office with the Virgin and other saintly figures hovering above (fig. 43).⁶

While the theme seems to have disappeared from Biccherna covers, it lived on a short while longer on two Gabella covers from 1468 (fig. 48) and 1474 (fig. 50), in which allegorical figures of a civic, rather than religious, nature appear. Benvenuto di Giovanni, the author of the 1474 cover, revives the figure of *Good Government* or the *Common Good*, who sits between two officials of that magistracy. The venerable figure goes back to Ambrogio Lorenzetti's representation in the Sala del Nove in the Palazzo Pubblico. Ambrogio's figuration of Good Government was so impressive and meaningful to the Commune that it had been used several times for cover designs by the Biccherna and Gabella. The 1344 Gabella cover is so close to the original that perhaps it is by Ambrogio himself (fig. 22).⁷ In 1364 (fig. 30) and again in

⁶See H. W. van Os, J. R. J. van Asperende Boer, C. E. de Jong-Janssen, and C. Wiethoff, eds., *The Early Sieneese Paintings in Holland*, Florence, 1989, 138-40, for possible identifications of the saints as Catherine and Bernardino, the most important Sieneese saints of the fifteenth century. Following J. Offerhaus, it is suggested by the authors that the customers are personifications of different social classes, but this observation was not elaborated. The painting came from the Ramboux Collection and has been heavily overpainted.

⁷Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 96.

1385 (fig. 31), the theme was reused on Biccherna covers. The office scene can be related to Ambrogio's landmark fresco, but it also has associations with the medieval *exemplum*. The connection is not only due to the prominence of money-handling imagery shared by the office scene and exemplary tales, but also to the use of details drawn from contemporary life as well as the desirable comparison between officials and saints, whose stories constituted the bulk of *exempla*.

Exempla

Exempla, as previously noted, are short narrative stories that impart moral lessons.⁸ They flourished in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when they played an extremely important role in literature, religion, and culture. Classical *exempla* differed from their Christian

⁸For literature on *exempla*, see Claude Bremond, Jacques Le Goff, and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *L'"exemplum"*, Turnhout, Belgium, 1982; Thomas Frederick Crane, *The Exempla or Illustrative Stories from the Sermones Vulgares of Jacques de Vitry*, Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1967; Carlo Delcorno, *Exemplum e letteratura tra Medioevo e Rinascimento*, Bologna, 1989; Carlo Delcorno, "L' 'exemplum' nella predicazione di Bernardino da Siena," *Bernardino predicatore nella società del suo tempo, 9-12 ottobre 1975*, Todi, 1976, 71-107; Frederic C. Tubach, "Exempla in the Decline," *Traditio* 18 (1962): 407-17; Hans Belting, "The New Role of Narrative in Public Painting of the Trecento: *Historia* and Allegory," *Studies in the History of Art* 16 (1985): 151-68; Lilian M. C. Randall, "Exempla as a Source of Gothic Marginal Illumination," *Art Bulletin* 39 (1957): 97-107; J.-Th. Welter, *L'exemplum dans la littérature religieuse et didactique du Moyen Age*, Paris, 1927.

descendants in that they most often recounted the feats of a hero, whose actions were then meant to serve as a paradigm of behavior. In Greek examples, that figure came from heroic poetry, whereas Romans chose him from among their own national heroes. Medieval *exempla*, on the other hand, often feature neither type of hero; instead, they revolve around the action of a real, albeit unknown or anonymous, character who stands for an entire category or group. *Exempla* were most often employed by preachers, who aimed to change with their lessons the behavior of their listeners. A critical early step in the Christianization of pagan *exempla* was made at the end of the sixth century when Gregory the Great made them carriers of doctrinal content, especially where it concerned problems of the otherworld. *Exempla* continued their development in monastic settings, where they were enriched by anecdotes taken from the *Vitae patrum*, before becoming secularized at the end of the twelfth century. Collections of *exempla* were compiled so that preachers might choose appropriate ones to suit their audiences or the topic of the sermon. In their written form, they became widely-circulated literary and cultural objects. They also became extracted and isolated from their context.⁹ Early influential collections include the *Dialogus miraculorum* (1218-1223) by

⁹The summary presented was based on *L' "exemplum"* by Bremond, Le Goff, and Schmitt, 43-56.

Caesarius of Heisterbach, the *Sermones vulgares* (1228-1240) of Jacques de Vitry, the *Speculum historiale* (1244-1264) by Vincent de Beauvais, and the *Gesta romanorum* of Odo of Cheriton (d. 1247). Such was the popularity of Jacopo da Vorigine's *Golden Legend* (c. 1260) that some one thousand manuscripts survive and it has been said that in the late Middle Ages only the Bible was more widely read.¹⁰ It also provided material for medieval mystery and miracle plays as well as for visual representations in sculpture, stained glass, and painting.¹¹ The flurry of copying and collecting continued for about one hundred years, but after the middle of the Trecento, the number of new tales and collections declined significantly.¹²

The explosion of the popular use of medieval *exempla* in sermons was directly tied to the rise of the mendicant orders, by whom they were used for transmitting doctrinal messages to the urban populace, since heretical ideas spread quickly in the growing cities and had to be counteracted by the Church. Therefore, the sermon was always presented in the vernacular, with as many as five *exempla* being recited at its conclusion, all connected to the sermon by their moralization.¹³ In conjunction with the

¹⁰Ryan, xiii.

¹¹Ryan, xv.

¹²Bremond, Le Goff, and Schmitt, 59.

¹³Randall, 100.

friars' evangelical mission, other material was added to their content in order to attract converts, so that *exempla* came to include a quantity of references to the everyday world as well as folkloric elements. Altogether, they encompassed material drawn from a wide variety of sources, including: natural history or legend, the Bible, the Church fathers, the lives of the saints, fables (Aesop's fables were especially appreciated), bestiaries, contemporary events, and the personal experiences of their authors.¹⁴ In the Latin collections, the stories were presented in skeletal form, making it necessary to rely on the oratorical skills of the preacher to bring them to life for his audience. The tendency, according to Frederic C. Tubach, was for them to have become by the end of the fifteenth century little more than entertaining anecdotes lacking any moral instruction whatsoever.¹⁵

When using *exempla*, the preacher had to speak to the level and experiences of his audience in order for them to function as effective tools for instruction and conversion. While earlier ones were often presented as struggles

¹⁴Randall, 100.

¹⁵Tubach, "Exempla in the Decline," 415-16. Delcorno likewise sees it failing in the late fifteenth century and, in part, attributes it to the attempt to incorporate elements of the new humanistic culture. See *Exemplum e litteratura*, 54-55. However, Bremond, Le Goff, and Schmitt refute the opinion of Tubach, believing instead that the *exemplum* did not suffer a decline even from the fifteenth to eighteenth century.

between good and evil or as models of positive or, more commonly, negative behavior that concluded with a Christian moral, beginning in the thirteenth century, characters mirrored life and society to a greater degree, resulting in tales that involved psychologically differentiated individuals interacting with one another.¹⁶ The vividly told narratives often played on the fear of damnation, a fear greatly intensified by the presence of devils and ghosts that were crossing over from folklore into the *exempla*. They were imprinted in the memories of the listeners through frequent repetition. From his pulpit and for the benefit and pleasure of his audience, the preacher would have employed different manners of speaking, gestures, expressions, and the power of his own personality--dramatic embellishments that were naturally lost in their written form. But from the beginning of the fourteenth century, entire sermons with their *exempla* as given by certain friars, such as those by Giordano da Pisa

¹⁶Bremond, Le Goff, and Schmitt, 103. Some *exempla* extend beyond a simple struggle between good and evil. Jacques de Vitry includes a tale about an avaricious and an envious man who "were allowed to ask whatever they desired on condition that the one who asked last should receive twice as much. . . . At length the envious man said, "I wish one one of my eyes to be torn out," and it was done, and the avaricious man lost both of his eyes according to the agreement." Quoted in Crane, 212, Exemplum CXCVI. In this tale the characters have matched wits. See Tubach, 412-13.

(d. 1311)¹⁷ and San Bernardino of Siena, were being conserved by copyists attending the events. We have already met Benedetto di Bartolomeo, the humble cloth cutter who set down San Bernardino's cycle of sermons given in Siena's Piazza del Campo in 1427. It was his speed and accuracy that has preserved San Bernardino's sermons almost verbatim.

As a speaker, San Bernardino was one of the greatest popular preachers of his time. He wanted to recover the moral themes and popular style of the early Franciscans and skillfully interwove scriptural and patristic citations with rich narrative material. The day's sermon might well begin with a preface such as, "Dodici conclusioni tocaramo stamane . . . e ad ogni conclusione vedremo la ragione, l'autorità ed esempi."¹⁸ A large number of the *exempla* he used were drawn from his own experiences, and these were the most lively and the most appreciated.¹⁹ The inclusion of diabolical creatures, which were regarded as an integral part of the universe, if not everyday experience,²⁰ added extra drama and entertainment. In his sermons, San

¹⁷See Carlo Delcorno, *Giordano da Pisa e l'antica predicazione volgare*, Florence, 1975.

¹⁸Quoted from Delcorno, "L' 'exemplum' nella predicazione di Bernardino," 76.

¹⁹Delcorno, "L' 'exemplum' nella predicazione di Bernardino," 80.

²⁰Delcorno, *Exemplum e letteratura*, 105.

Bernardino managed to scold most segments of the population, including frivolous women and dishonest tradesmen, but above all, he railed against the usurer. To him the usurer was avaricious, uncharitable, cruel, a betrayer of God, and destined to eternal damnation, unless--and this was very unlikely--he made full and immediate restitution. He tells about the usurer

who dreamed one night that the Devil was carrying him away. And the next morning, waking up with this sight in his mind, he dressed himself in rags and crouched down in a dark corner of the church [thinking that there, at least, the Devil could not find him]. But his relations came to take him home, for he seemed out of his mind. On his way home he had to cross a bridge across a stream, and when the usurer was on this bridge, he saw a boatload of devils sailing down it, and when they got under the bridge, they cried to him, "Come down!" And he flung himself into the water, and the Devil bore him away.²¹

In most of the stories, madness or some sort of apoplexy that prevents the usurer from making an oral confession assured his consignment to Hell.

²¹Origo, 275 n.39, quoted from Padre Ciro Cannarozzi, ed., *Le prediche volgari, predicazione in Siena*, II, Florence, 1958, 124.

Tales about the evil usurer, constantly repeated since the beginning of the medieval commercial revolution, must have presented a very real problem for the merchant-banker, whose business practices at some point must have involved usury, for despite the loathing and stigma attached to it, huge numbers of men chose profitable usurious moneylending as an occupation.²² In 1328, when half of Siena's population lived at the subsistence level²³ and the least shortage of essential foods created a dire situation, the poor often had no recourse but to turn to the moneylender to borrow cash. However, people of all classes, not only the poor, utilized their services. In any event, the loan was usually of short duration, perhaps a matter of days or even hours.²⁴ It normally was made for a small amount and more than likely made against a pawn, for which the licensed lender charged an interest rate of up to 40 percent; unlicensed usurers commonly made even greater

²²Daniel Carpi, "The Account Book of a Jewish Moneylender in Montepulciano (1409-1410)," *Journal of European Economic History* IV (1985): 501-13. The general remarks would be true, I believe, for Christian moneylenders also, which he notes as well, 508. There is the additional observation that the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries represented the apex of Jewish moneylending, 501.

²³Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch*, 198.

²⁴Townspeople, residents from nearby villages, mercenary soldiers, and visitors borrowed from the moneylender, as did nobles, churchmen of all ranks, government officials, innkeepers, craftsmen and merchants. See Carpi, 509.

profits.²⁵ It is no wonder that city folk hated them. When the friars of the mendicant orders preached before the crowds in the market squares or other places, their tales about usurers were immensely popular. In fact, the ceaseless vehemence with which usurers were attacked in sermons may be viewed partly as a concession made by preaching friars to public demand,²⁶ for however profitable and necessary moneylenders might have been, they were scorned and reviled, their profession considered shameful. An *exemplum* in the *Sermones vulgares* by Jacques de Vitry illustrates the widespread attitude against the profession:

A certain preacher wished to show all how ignominious was the profession of usurer, which no one dare publicly confess. So he said in his sermon: "I wish to absolve you according to the trades and professions of each. Let the smiths arise." They arose and were absolved. "Let the tanners arise," and they arose, and so as they were named the various trades arose. At length he cried: "Let the usurers arise that they might be absolved"; and although there were more present of this profession than of the others, no

²⁵Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante and Petrarch*, 207. Rates above 20 per cent were considered usurious. See Iris Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, New York, 1962, 274, n. 33.

²⁶Gurevich, 249-50.

one arose, but all hid themselves for shame, and were derided and put to confusion by the others for not daring to confess their profession.²⁷

It is no wonder that the merchant-banker wished to distance himself from the manifest usurer; the wealthiest and most successful of them, in fact, belonged to the highest social and ruling classes. Especially after the end of the thirteenth century, when the sons of the merchant-usurer became merchant-princes and no longer clearly identifiable with that moral monster depicted so often in sermons, they could instead borrow from the corpus of *exempla* a very different figure to use as a model, that of the Christian *par excellence*, the saint. This was not unrealistic since the *exemplum* itself had become more attuned to the real world and its standards relative to human society.²⁸ In the fourteenth century, preachers were advised to limit their tales about the saints to the legend and to forego the more metaphysical aspects unless their audience were clerics. The emphasis in the saint's story, indeed the entire purpose of the *exemplum*, changed with the rise of the mendicant orders and a new awareness of humanity. Where before the goal was to have shown "perfect ethical behavior in harmony with an absolute metaphysical

²⁷Crane, 206: *Exemplum* CLXXIX.

²⁸Tubach, 412.

norm,"²⁹ now the saint's human side would be stressed in vignettes based on his legends and his behavior held up as an attainable model for emulation.

Exempla derived from the Scriptures or hagiographic material continued to form the core of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century collections. Not only were antique texts, such as the *Vitae patrum* and Saint Gregory's *Dialogues*, cited, but stories about recently canonized saints came to be added as well. A significant number of these saints and beati were Sieneese, some renowned like Saint Catherine (c. 1347-1380) and San Bernardino, others locally famous, such as San Galgano (d. 1181), the Blessed Agostino Novello (d. 1309), and Ambrogio Sansedoni (d. 1287). Sansedoni belonged to an aristocratic house, and was revered for having the interdict of Gregory X against Siena lifted.³⁰ The Blessed Giovanni Colombini likewise came from the ruling class, having been a merchant-banker and a leading member of the Arte della Lana who renounced his usurious life completely in 1335 and gave away his worldly goods to the Ospedale di Santa Maria della Scala

²⁹Tubach, 412.

³⁰Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 78. Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, explains the condemnation was due to Siena's support of Conradin. When the interdict was lifted, the event was celebrated with the institution of the palio (horse-race) that after his death came to commemorate Ambrogio's death instead, 145.

and the convent of Santa Bonda.³¹ Other noble and high-ranking houses could also boast having in their families saintly men, whose behavior might be expected to have been enormously influential by instilling "among family members sitting on important councils a strong sense of duty, of Christian charity, and civic pride and attachment."³²

Hagiographic stories combined elements of biography, panegyric, and moral lessons. The saint's life was typically presented at the end or an important division of the sermon, where it was used as an *exemplum*.³³ Moreover, the preacher was able to emphasize, minimize, or even omit certain episodes of the story in order to construct a precisely designed image of a saint, as in the case of St. Francis.³⁴ The *Golden Legend* follows this methodology; originally meant to be read and used in sermons, it was immensely popular and became an important resource for artists.

The purpose of the office scene to laud its officials can be considered analogous to the exemplary tales of saints. In a somewhat similar study, Lilian M. C. Randall associates the marginalia in northern manuscript illuminations with *exempla*.³⁵ She finds iconographic

³¹Hook, *A City*, 145.

³²Bowsky, *Medieval Commune*, 264.

³³Delcorno, *Exemplum e letteratura*, 32.

³⁴See Delcorno, *Exemplum e letteratura*, 41-54.

parallels as well as similarities in form and function: both *exemplum* and marginal illustration are secondary to sermon and text, yet reiterate the subject in an entertaining way. In several important respects the marginalia are significantly closer to the *exempla* than are the book covers. First, *exempla* and marginalia deal with identical material; specific tales are certainly identifiable in a number of illustrations and possibly in what is presently considered pure *drôlerie*. Many of the examples in Randall's essay feature animals, which, whether derived from fables or natural history, were highly suitable for entertaining pictorialization. One popular *exemplum* and illustration cited is the tale of the mother ape, who in fleeing from hunters clutches her most-loved young in her arm and throws the second over her back. As the hunters close in, the beloved young must be discarded. The mother is caught because of the second one clinging to her back and impeding her flight (fig. 140).³⁶ Secondly, the emergence and proliferation of illustrated marginalia

³⁵See note 13.

³⁶Crane, 143, Exemplum XXV. Randall cites the moral of this story as given by Jacques de Vitry: "In the same way the impious who now embrace pleasures and riches as they choose have their sins on their back, and not wishing to look back on them and confess them, they relinquish the pleasures they now embrace and . . . are caught by the hunters and led off to hell", 103. H. W. Janson notes that the mother ape was identified with the usurer, the beloved offspring as wealth rather than pleasures, and the hunter as death rather than devils. See his *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, London, 1952, 36.

around the middle of the thirteenth century follows closely the increase in the use of *exempla* by mendicant preachers during the first half of the thirteenth century. The subsequent curtailment of *exempla* in handbooks after the middle of the thirteenth century is matched by a similar abbreviation of marginal representations of some familiar tales.³⁷

The connection between the office scene on the Biccherna covers and *exempla* is more subtle. The subject matter would appear to differ completely in that the scene does not seem to be a literal illustration of any text in the manner of marginalia. Chronologically, it would also appear, at least initially, to be much further removed, since the scene was not fully realized until 1340, or more than one hundred years after the blossoming of the *exemplum*. However, since the scene could or perhaps should be considered as a development of the earlier Camarlingo images of the Duecento, its appearance in the second half of the thirteenth century would coincide with the "increase in anecdotes based on actual observation, mentioned as characteristic of *exempla* after the middle of the thirteenth century."³⁸ In fact, the developing office scene is not the only cover design which can be interpreted as having been influenced in this manner by *exempla*. The

³⁷Randall, 102.

³⁸Randall, 102.

cover of 1320 shows the Camarlingo don Stefano kneeling before San Galgano in the pose of a donor (fig. 14). Accompanied by his horse, San Galgano is shown thrusting his sword into a rock in renunciation of his life as a knight. This is the oldest existing cover whose picture does not follow the normal designs previously discussed but which does include narrative details.³⁹ Perhaps don Sefano is petitioning for the saint's guidance in the performance of his duties as Camarlingo or in the manner of an *ex voto*, has already successfully done so. Notwithstanding the fact that religiousness permeated all aspects of medieval life, it is suggested that the image of the saint could be connected with *exempla*.

As noted above, as a subject, the lives of the saints was extremely popular in *exempla*, marginalia, and on the account covers as well, and none more so than that of the Virgin.⁴⁰ Through the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, she appears on thirteen covers of the Biccherna or Gabella.⁴¹ In addition to images of the

³⁹At the top of the picture is the podestal stemma floating against the gold background. Next to the picture are the four stemmi of the Provveditori. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 78.

⁴⁰Randall, 102.

⁴¹The Virgin is pictured on Biccherna covers in 1451, 1452, 1460, 1467, and 1488; on Gabella covers in 1334, 1357, 1445, 1456, 1340, 1484, 1487, and 1489. Usually she is pictured in the sky with her outspread arms shielding the city of Siena, but in the 1456 image for the Gabella (fig. 44), she appears in a vision of the Annunciation

Virgin, whom the Sieneſe regarded as their ſpecial protectreſs and actual queen,⁴² illustrations from the legends of the ſaints are depicted as well. The Biccherna cover of 1436 bears a depiction of Saint Jerome healing a lion's paw (fig. 38); St. Michael Battling a Dragon is the ſubject of the Gabella's cover in 1444 (fig. 40), and the Stigmata of St. Catherine appears on a 1498 cover (fig. 54), alſo from the Gabella. Then there are the covers whoſe deſigns refer to contemporary events. The Biccherna covers of 1433 (fig. 37) and 1449 (fig. 41) ſhow reſpectively the Coronations of the Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg and Pope Nicholas V. In 1460, both financial offices celebrated the aſcendency of the Piccolomini family in eccleſiaſtic and Italian politics. Lorenzo di Pietro, known as il Vecchietta, is the artiſt reſponsible for both tavolette. On the Biccherna cover, the artiſt depicts the coronation of Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini to the papal throne as Pius II in 1457 (fig. 45). The ceremony is being conducted under the bleſſing of the Virgin, while in a ſeparate field below, is the walled city of Siena, the black and white balzana hung above the gate, the Duomo

ſcene above rows of kneeling youths. A group of more mature ſupplicants, thought to be the officials of the Gabella, kneel before her outside the city gates on a 1489 tavoletta (fig. 53), and the Gabella cover of 1487 ſhows her towing a black ſhip with a white ſail (Siena's colors) into a ſafe harbor (fig. 51).

⁴²Helene Wieruszowski, "Art and the Commune in the Time of Dante," *Speculum* 19 (1944) 19.

complex and the town hall's Torre del Mangia all clearly visible amid tower houses. Pope Pius II giving his nephew, Francesco Piccolomini Todeschini, the cardinal's hat is the theme of the 1460 Gabella cover (fig. 46). The Biccherna cover of 1467 commemorates the earthquakes of 1466-67 (fig. 47); other eventful occasions such as weddings, ceremonies, and military campaigns were also commemorated. As scenes from living history, they are part of the reflection of the range of subject matter exploited in *exempla*, which could account for the variety of designs found on the covers.

The very diversity of themes available for representation underscores the insistence with which the office scene is developed and repeated throughout the Trecento. As the scene is fully developed, we always see the Camarlingo at work behind the counter (fig. 36). In most cases he is joined by a scribe making an entry in his ledger. On the other hand, details vary with the individual cover; sometimes there is more paraphernalia on the counter, at other times customers, furnishings, and architectural details are also added. This observation is very similar to one made by Hans Belting in his discussion of allegory in monumental narrative painting.⁴³ Although he does not discuss the Biccherna covers, many of his arguments are applicable to them, and a summary of those which are pertinent follows.

⁴³Belting, 159-60.

Belting writes that from around 1300, narration in paintings assumed a new role designed for explicating political and social themes. Genre scenes commonly served as *exempla*, but he elaborated upon the notion by explaining how through the combination of historical fact and allegorical fiction, narration became "a method of exposition and also a mode of persuasion."⁴⁴ Using Lorenzetti's *Effects of Good Government* as an example, he assigns the role of an allegorical framework to the cityscape (fig. 135) and countryside (fig. 136) of an idealized Siena, while the historical facts are made up of genre scenes--the construction of buildings, selling of merchandise, transportation of products, and so on--taken from real life and superimposed onto the fictitious setting. By substituting the office itself for Lorenzetti's city, realistic details are added to its symbolic space (figs. 32-35), with "the one becoming more and more lifelike, the other remaining all the more rigid in terms of overall scheme."⁴⁵ More than a simple vignette from everyday life, the narrative scheme bore messages, which the viewer would have been prepared to find. This readiness would have been normal since genre pictures were

⁴⁴Belting, 155.

⁴⁵Belting, 155.

generally accepted as carriers of symbolic content,⁴⁶ which often resided in the tiny details of objects, clothing and ritual action.⁴⁷ In this way, the Camarlingo and his scribe become allegorical figures, too. Even the earlier image of the Camarlingo by himself could be interpreted in this way (figs. 5-8), his pose and the arched structure providing its allegorical scaffolding. In both types, the viewer reads messages attesting to the honesty and trustworthiness of the officials pictured and named, but the office scene, because of its narrative nature, carries additional information. The activity depicted in the office scene more than likely shows a payment or salary being made by the Camarlingo on behalf of the commune; disbursement of municipal funds was the sole prerogative of the Biccherna, the function that gave it great power and distinguished it from the Gabella. During much of the Trecento when the office scene prevailed, there is no comparable design used for any surviving Gabella cover. The office scene, therefore, not only celebrates the magistracy, but further implies that, properly run, its officials are essential to the well-being of the commune. There seems little doubt to me that the Biccherna covers did function as *exempla*. For

⁴⁶Rosemond Tuve, "Notes on the Virtues and Vices", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 26 (1963) 286.

⁴⁷Rosemond Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity*, Princeton, 1966, 158.

their form, they may have looked a particular form of *exemplum*, the judiciary *exemplum*, as found in the *Decretum Gratiani*.⁴⁸

The *Decretum Gratiani*

In investigating the depiction of money in art, one particular group, the illustrated manuscripts of the *Decretum Gratiani*, seems to me to deserve special attention. Its relevance is due in part to the artistic treatment of usury and simony found in some of the manuscripts. It would be reasonable to assume that this distinguished and popular law book would have been familiar to those in government, especially since justice was a major preoccupation of all communes. It also seems reasonable to believe that copies of the manuscript belonged to men who themselves might have worked in the Biccherna or, at the very least, had relatives and close associates who did. These two ideas will be examined shortly, but for now it should be noted that illustrated *Decretums* were available in Siena. Paolo D'Ancona mentions a Sienese copy of a Parisian manuscript in the Siena Biblioteca Comunale, where there is a second Gratian manuscript decorated with miniatures in a style close to

⁴⁸Bremond, Le Goff, and Schmitt, 46, and n. 5.

Giotto's Arena Chapel.⁴⁹

The *Concordia discordantium canonum* (A Concord of Discordant Canons) or *Decretum Gratiani* was written about 1140 by the Camaldolese monk Gratian, who was born at Chiusi in Tuscany but spent most of his life in Bologna, where he also taught law at the University.⁵⁰ The *Decretum Gratiani* is divided into two main sections, the *Distinctiones* and *Causae*, the latter containing judiciary anecdotes which were somewhat analogous to contemporary medieval *exempla*.⁵¹ For each of the thirty-six cases, Gratian stated the canonical problem, then offered in turn all textual support for one solution, then a second solution, and finally tried to reconcile the two sets of texts or explain why one solution was preferable.⁵² Using this dialectical method, the book gathered and systematically treated questions of theory and practice that formed the basis of canon law.⁵³ Subjects treated were

⁴⁹Paolo D'Ancona, *La miniature italienne du Xe au XVIe siècle*, Paris, 1925, 39. The Parisian manuscript is Cod. lat. 3898, Paris Bibliothéque Nationale, (see fig. 141). The copy is Ms. K.I. 6 (1272). On the giottesque style of Ms. K.I. 3 (see fig. 155), see Riess, "Justice and Common Good," 80, n. 42. Another *Decretum*, Ms. G.V. 23 (see fig. 153), is also in Siena and cited by Melnikas.

⁵⁰Diringer, *The Illuminated Book*, 314.

⁵¹Bremond, Le Goff, and Schmitt, 46.

⁵²Tierney, 116.

⁵³Robert Jacob, *Images de la Justice: essai sur l'iconographie judiciaire du Moyen Âge a l'Âge Classique*, Paris, 1994, 22.

not confined to strictly clerical matters, the last ten *causae* being devoted to sex and marriage. This was followed by sections on penance and consecration. Because ecclesiastical and civil legal spheres were closely allied in medieval thinking, the *Decretum Gratiani* was equally relevant for secular authorities as it was for the Church. Regarded as official doctrine, manuscripts, most of which were not illuminated, were copied and dispersed throughout Europe.

Embellished *Decretum* manuscripts that bear more than decorative patterns are studied by Anthony Melnikas. He has observed the Bible lacked models for many of the images, requiring, therefore, the invention of new iconography. Artists improvised, taking their inspiration from the world around them and interpreting the text to be illustrated in contemporary terms.⁵⁴ For example, *Causa I*, which deals with simony, is usually depicted by a scene of a father giving his son and a bag of money to the abbey (fig. 141). From the late thirteenth century, artists increasingly employed architectural forms, but in Italian examples, natural and genre elements, such as the tree and warrior in Ms. ç.I. 2 in the Escorial, are often added as well (fig. 142).⁵⁵ Genre elements were also utilized for difficult or intangible concepts, such as special rights of

⁵⁴Melnikas, Vol. I, 16.

⁵⁵Melnikas, Vol. I, 109-10.

abbots or ecclesiastical disobedience. *Causa XXIII* is concerned with heresies and the preservation of the Church's unity through the combined actions of Church and civil authorities. Many northern miniatures show a heretical bishop or the delegation of authority, as in Vat. Ms. lat. 1370 in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (fig. 143), while most contemporary Italian and Spanish miniatures depict the use of force and the role of the secular bishop in warfare, seen, for example, in Ms. lat. 1375, also in the Vatican (fig. 144).⁵⁶

Following the organizing principle used in the *Decretum*, Melnikas proceeds through the cases, presenting illustrations from different manuscripts in more or less chronological and geographical order. Typically, as in his examination of *Causa XIV*,⁵⁷ which deals with clerical usury and mundane possessions, the case is presented first: "The canons of a church initiated legal proceedings in regard to their estates. They produced witnesses from their own company; they entrusted some money to traders in order to gain a profit from the merchandise of these men." This is immediately followed by a discussion of the illustrations. He begins with historiated initials from various manuscripts of the second half of the twelfth century, most of which depict two arguing monks and continues with

⁵⁶Melnikas, Vol. II, 745, 751.

⁵⁷Melnikas, Vol. II, 463-86.

northern miniatures of the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Ms. 558 in the Bibliothèque Municipale in Tours shows the northern predilection to depict the inquisition of usury cases in ecclesiastical courts (fig. 145). The discussion ends with thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italian products and a comment upon the Italian predilections for genre episodes and for showing two stages of a narrative. In one Italo-Byzantine miniature, Ms. lat. 1371 in the Vatican (fig. 146), monks are shown in the act of investing their money; in another, Ms. Nouv. acq. lat. 2508 in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, by Pseudo-Nicolò (active c. 1340, fig. 147), the monk is again pictured doing business with a layman at a counter strewn with coins. In both, the second scene depicts a bishop disciplining the wayward monks. A similar two-part miniature was painted by Nicolò da Bologna, also known as Nicolò de Giacomo di Nascimbene (c. 1330-1404), in Ms. lat. 60 in Geneva's Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, although the counter has been omitted and the coins exchanged hand to hand (fig. 148). Is it possible that the vignette of the moneylender and client exchanging money at a counter was based on the actual practices of moneylenders?

Confronting us are questions concerning the relationship of iconographic motifs in the *Decretum Gratianiani* to other works of art and the significance of

those motifs when used in different circumstances. Concepts such as the divine origin of natural law, the Church's supremacy over secular law, and the duties of both religious and civil authorities are suggested in certain illustrations that borrowed from traditional iconography.⁵⁸ The *traditio legis* motif is a source for the image on the frontispiece of Gratian manuscripts, where in its mature form, the image presents the christological foundation of spiritual and temporal power (fig. 149). In illustrations of canon law, it originated in the late twelfth century as the historiated initial "H" with a bi-level arrangement that illustrated the hierarchy of authority;⁵⁹ Christ delegates authority to the figures placed meaningfully below him in a miniature from a Tuscan manuscript, Ms. 356 in Krakow, c. 1200 (fig. 150), while in Ms. 103 in Troyes (fig. 151), it is the pope or bishop who hands the scroll containing the laws of Christ to the king below. Elsewhere, cleric and lay figures form the initial "H" to illustrate the relationship between spiritual and temporal spheres of authority, as in the late twelfth-century Italian Ms. 14 in Bratislava (fig. 152). Concern for the

⁵⁸The motif appears, for example, on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (fig. 101): a youthful and beardless Christ is seated on a throne entrusting the Law to St. Peter in the presence of St. Paul.

⁵⁹For *Humanus genus*, the opening words of the treatise (Human kind is governed by two types of law, natural law and customs . . .), in Melnikas, Vol. I, 45.

interaction of both authorities to protect the *societas christiana* is seen in Ms. G.V. 23 in Siena (fig. 153), in which the two authorities are placed above their subordinates. This important theme also appears in contemporary sculptural programs for cathedral portals.⁶⁰ From the beginning of the thirteenth century when miniatures began to replace historiated initials, greater possibilities for the expanding narrative components were explored. One type of composition divided the field in half and showed clerical and civic courts in the left and right portions, but the most widely used image in the late thirteenth and first half of the fourteenth centuries was that of Christ as the grantor of ecclesiastical and civil authority. In Ms. ç.1. 2 in the Escorial, one miniature shows a pope standing at the favored right side of the enthroned Christ, while the king, wearing the ermine-collared robe of a lawyer, stands on the other side (fig. 154); borrowing the *traditio legis* iconography, Christ is rigidly frontal as he hands book and sword to pope and emperor.⁶¹ In Ms. K.I. 3, f.1 (fig. 155), Christ in Majesty is flanked by a kneeling pope and king, the former accepting a book and the latter a sword from angels; simultaneously the two are being crowned with mitre and

⁶⁰Melnikas, Vol. I, 39. The Portals of Saint Anne and the Virgin of Notre-Dame in Paris is one of several examples cited by the author.

⁶¹Melnikas, Vol. I, 41.

crown by another pair of angels. The double investiture long remained the obligatory decoration for frontispieces in the *Decretum Gratiani*, and it was still being used at the end of the fifteenth century.⁶²

Later, the scene was further elaborated by the use of a bi-level composition, in which the earthly actions are conditioned by the activity taking place in the heavenly sphere above. The two-tiered composition will become common in the second half of the fifteenth century and culminate in Raphael's monumental fresco, the *Disputa* (1510-11, fig. 156) in the Vatican's Stanza della Segnatura. In c. 1360, Nicolò da Bologna used it in a Gratian manuscript now in the Berlin-Dahlem Kupferstichkabinett, n. 4215 (fig. 157), for making a vivid comparison between divine and earthly dispensations of punishment.⁶³ The illustration is divided horizontally, the scenes and figures closely corresponding to one another in position as well as gesture and meaning. In the upper sphere the scene is unmistakably a *Last Judgement*, leading the viewer to conclude that as in the heavenly court, the terrestrial judgement has been arrived at justly, irrevocably, and under divine auspice. As Edgerton explains, "What these illustrations of the *Decretals*

⁶²Jacob, 28.

⁶³This illustration is discussed in Riess, "Justice and Common Good," 74, and in Edgerton, 30-32.

clearly show is that, by the early Trecento, the popular image of the dispensation of temporal *lex et iustitia* closely followed the basic hierarchy and symmetry of contemporary *Last Judgement* depictions."⁶⁴ He further states that they are related to Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Good and Bad Government* frescoes, which in themselves represent a translation of *Last Judgement* iconography into secular, civic imagery.⁶⁵

In discussing the use of artistic conventions, Melnikas cites reversed perspective and the presence of sometimes fantastic tower-like buildings in central Italian miniatures that are derived from later Byzantine miniatures and Italian panel paintings, frescoes, and mosaics of the thirteenth century.⁶⁶ But while he points out the various

⁶⁴Edgerton, 32.

⁶⁵Edgerton, 34-40. Frugoni in *A Distant City*, 127, also sees *Last Judgement* compositions as the source for the *Allegory of Good Government*, 136-37. Her suggestion that the twenty-four citizens are a reference to the twenty-four elders of the Apocalypse seems to make more sense than identifying them as the Twenty-Four of a previous and Ghibelline regime of Siena.

⁶⁶Melnikas, Vol. II, 327, 328, n. 3. Reversed Byzantine perspective is used in the narrative scene of St. Catherine being Comforted by the Angels in the thirteenth-century altarpiece of St. Catherine of Alexandria, now in the Museo Nazionale, Pisa; also in the mosaic (c. 1315-1320) showing the Departure of Joseph in the Church of Kariye in Istanbul, and in late thirteenth century Byzantine miniatures. Tower-like buildings appear in the scenes of the Pescia Altarpiece (1235) by Bonaventura Berlinghieri, the frescoes in the Parma Baptistery, and many other instances. Melnikas also notes that a source for the Italian works are the Byzantine miniatures produced from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries.

influences at work on the Gratian miniatures, he stresses neither the importance of the innovative use of genre elements in them, nor the wide circulation they would have enjoyed as illustrations in the foremost law book in use. It may very well be that the Biccherna office scene is particularly close to the judicial miniatures in the use of specific genre elements. It seems unusual, even in an age famed for the use of prolific civic decoration, that two objects not normally associated with art, i.e., law books and account records, are both embellished with scenes of money transactions.

However, the "popular" style used for the imagery was also used to decorate statutes and other, similar documents; in the early fourteenth century, Neri da Rimini illustrated a Regulations on Usury in Ms. Lat. 8941 in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (fig. 158).⁶⁷ It is similar to illustrations in Gratian manuscripts from Bologna in the neutral treatment of the subject. Moral and ethical overtones are absent from these images probably as a result of viewing the issues on legal, rather than religious, grounds. This, I believe, was important to the bicchernal scenes, representing, as it were, an intermediate step in remedying the negative image of the money handler. Also affecting the acceptance of a positive interpretation for

⁶⁷Alessandro Conti, "Problemi di miniatura bolognese," *Bollettino d'arte* 64 (1979) 2.

the scene was the Christian tradition of using the same symbol for designating both good and evil, such as the trees of good and evil.⁶⁸

The Sienese seemed to have a particular fondness for decorating communal constitutions, statutes, and rules of trade guilds, and since in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Tuscan miniaturists were partially dependent upon Bologna,⁶⁹ it is more than likely that the connection between two centers was very strong in this particular area. Interestingly, in Siena, the execution of some of these documents can be associated with notaries.⁷⁰ In Bologna, however, the production of illustrated juridical manuscripts was centered around the University, more precisely, in certain botteghe where artists had access to pattern books with specialized iconographic motifs; the motifs seem to have been developed in Bologna.⁷¹ Unlike most university texts which were dispersed throughout

⁶⁸For a discussion on the contrast between the Tree of the Cross and the tree Judas used for his suicide, see Cassell, Chapter 3, especially p. 38 and n. 26. R. A. Shoaf, *Dante, Chaucer, and the Currency of the Word: Money, Images and Reference in Late Medieval Poetry*, Norman, Ok, 1983, contrasts the falsified coin to the "moneta" as faith, pp. 24, 87-88.

⁶⁹Diringer, *Illuminated Book*, 307.

⁷⁰*Il gotico*, 61.

⁷¹Conti, "Problemi," 16-17; also see his *La Miniatura bolognese: scuole e botteghe, 1270-1340*, Bologna, 1981, 18. Whereas Italian manuscripts seem to follow the examples set by Bolognese iconography, in centers across the Alps, other norms were developed.

Europe by students, the circulation of illustrated Gratians was largely confined to scholarly circles.⁷²

Bologna and Padua were the premiere law schools, but Siena also had its own university.⁷³ Since the eleventh century, jurisprudence was being taught in Siena although it did not obtain imperial recognition until 1357. Its rise and early development can be linked to Siena's Ghibelline ties with Frederick II, who (temporarily) closed Bologna's school in the early thirteenth century because of its Guelf sentiments. Siena's Studio was state-supported and the city's aggressive recruitment of scholars and students succeeded in making it a worthy institution, particularly during the second half of the Duecento and early years of the Trecento. Biccherna records show ambassadors had been sent to Bologna to find teachers, that recruited scholars were paid directly by the Biccherna and were given many privileges, including important tax exemptions and immunity from serving in citizen militia. However, Siena's financial problems meant money was usually directed elsewhere than to the university, with the result that it never became very influential, although it did, at

⁷²Conti, *La miniatura bolognese*, 11.

⁷³Giulio Prunai, "Lo Studio senese dalle origini alla 'migratio' bolognese," *Bullettino senese di storia patria* LV (1948): 53-79.

least, supply the town with its many judges and notaries.⁷⁴

Judges and notaries are known to have been politically active in Siena since at least 1249, and probably earlier, serving often as financial officials as well as councillors.⁷⁵ A majority of judges belonged to noble houses; professionally, they were especially esteemed, but could gain even greater prestige by teaching civil and canon law in Siena or elsewhere.⁷⁶ Because notaries belonged to the same guild, they shared in some of the prestige, if not the wealth, enjoyed by judges.⁷⁷ They were members of the class sometimes called the *mediocres*, which included many wealthy merchant-bankers⁷⁸ and ranked just below magnates. Notaries were more numerous than judges, their training being cheaper and more widely available.⁷⁹ They performed numerous essential jobs for the commune--drawing up and legitimizing contracts, wills, and pacts, serving in courts and commissions, and diplomatic embassies. Some notaries wrote and decorated communal

⁷⁴Schevill, *Siena: The Story of a Medieval Commune*, 357.

⁷⁵Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, 86-88. From 1249 on, minutes of the General Council are extant, albeit incomplete, which allows the identification of prominent officials to be made.

⁷⁶Bowsky, *Medieval Commune*, 68.

⁷⁷Bowsky, *Medieval Commune*, 69.

⁷⁸Bowsky, *Finance*, 82.

⁷⁹Hyde, 168.

books and documents.⁸⁰ The Black Death created an acute need for judges and notaries, and the social and economic status of the latter rose dramatically as a result.⁸¹ These, then, are the men who might own illustrated Gratian manuscripts. Waley writes that one "Bonagiunta di Pepone, a notary, owned a library of fourteen volumes, including the corpus of civil (Roman) and canon law,"⁸² without mentioning whether it was illustrated.

Although in his study on juridical iconography,⁸³ Robert Jacob concentrates on its history and development in France, some of his observations concerning luxurious *Decretum* manuscripts are applicable to copies manufactured in Italy. He notes its status as a precious object rather than a working tool, its main function showing that its owner belonged to a corps of professionals. Ownership of the manuscript helped to define his elite place in society.

⁸⁰ *Il gotico*, 61, 63. Records show the names of ser Jacopo, ser Lando, ser Cecco di Ildibrandino, ser Giovanni di Guido da Ovíle were paid for their work on communal books throughout the second half of the thirteenth century. Ser Cecco di Ildibrandino wrote and probably illuminated the Statute of the Biccherna in 1298. In style it does not resemble the liturgical products of contemporary professional Sienese illuminators, but is related to the style and iconographic language found in coeval profane codices of north-central Italy.

⁸¹ Bowsky, *Black Death*, 115, 119.

⁸² Waley, *Siena and the Sienese*, 89, citing U. Morandi, "Il notaio all'origine del comune medievale senese," *Il notariato nella civiltà toscana*, Rome, 1985, 333-34.

⁸³ Jacob, 168-88.

In cases where only one illustration was included, its theme was legitimacy, usually expressed as a scene of *traditio legis*; when other images were included, they, too, often stressed legitimacy--though of the jurist's function or of the law itself. Otherwise, Italian miniatures usually supported the narrative portion of the text, and often provided additional information by including details based on contemporary customs.

In the Middle Ages, the problem facing the jurist was not unlike that of the Biccherna official; both were trying to empower images with the ability to persuade the viewer of the necessity of the office, its legitimacy, and the competence of its magistrates. If the jurist found the answer in images of God as the ideal form of justice, which they could imitate and with which they tried to be confounded,⁸⁴ perhaps a similar connection could be made for the Biccherna's officials and certain examples of civic art.

In the *Allegory of Good Government*, we have seen that two men are being rewarded with a coffer of money and symbols of office under the auspices of Justice (fig. 132). However, these two men might, in fact, represent the Biccherna itself, in which case the clothing would befit the social rank of its officials, the strongbox would refer to the Biccherna's financial functions, and the *staio* and

⁸⁴Jacob, 12.

metro to the office as the location where the official weights and measures were kept. The direct relationship between Justice and the Biccherna is powerfully visualized by the use of the *traditio legis* motif, just as frontispieces of *Decretums* have for their theme an image of a double investiture.

As well as exalting the Biccherna, the roles of its officers were also recognized, by means of the office scenes painted on the covers, where fiscal control and the power to exact or distribute funds are being demonstrated. Perhaps the scene, including its genre elements,⁸⁵ could be viewed as a sort of visual oath. Oath-taking appeared in the twelfth century throughout Europe and represented the birth of power for judges as well as a source of discipline and ethics.⁸⁶ Images of oath-taking are rare, but are sometimes found on seals of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.⁸⁷ In French examples shown by Jacob, the judge is seated frontally, his right hand placed over

⁸⁵Not only in the *Decretum*, but in statutes and registers as well, the Bolognese products often have a humorous quality which is perhaps not unrelated to the close association of these works with the University. See Conti, "Problemi," 11, 25, n. 36; Conti, *La miniature bolognese*, 39, 44; D'Ancona, 14.

⁸⁶Jacob, 81-82, and n. 17. In France, at least, it was believed that the oath protected the oath-taker from falling victim to the kinds of ills he would be expected to judge.

⁸⁷For ecclesiastical seals, see Chapter 2. For the discussion on French juridical seals, see Jacob, 81-91.

an open book and his left holding a heraldic shield (fig. 159). In other seals, he is shown taking the oath or, as more often found in miniatures, he holds gloves in his hands as an indication of submission to the supreme judge (fig. 160).⁸⁸ The group of Burgundian seals is clearly of interest because they reflect the addition of the judge's bearing before an audience to the representation of a solemn inauguration.⁸⁹ Jacob asks if the scene should not be regarded as a form of oath, and that, moreover, if its renewal were not implied at each court session. The likelihood for this interpretation is given in the Justinian Code, which was often read and cited by jurists of the Middle Ages: before hearing cases, the judge must swear before the Holy Scriptures to respect the truth and observe the law.⁹⁰ Might not the office images of the Biccherna covers be similarly construed, the message being that its officers are functioning in accordance with the oath they took? The suggestion is made by means of the

⁸⁸The same gesture as a sign of submission is used by the figure at the left in the fresco uncovered in 1980-81 below the larger mural of *Guido Riccio da Fogliano* in the Palazzo Pubblico. I agree with Gordon Moran and Michael Mallory that the new fresco may well represent the surrender of Arcidosso to Siena. See Michael Mallory and Gordon Moran, "Guido Riccio da Fogliano: A Challenge to the Famous Fresco Long Ascribed to Simone Martini and the Discovery of a New One in the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena," *Studies in Iconography*, 7-8 (1981-82): 1-13.

⁸⁹Jacob, 82-87.

⁹⁰Jacob, 88, from the Code of Justinian, C. III, 1, 14.

repetition of ritualized actions, including that of the clerk, who, in writing, seems to be validating the conduct of the Camarlingo.⁹¹

Its immediate and authoritative preeminence, together with its wealth of imagery, would make the *Decretum* a natural place to conduct a search for an iconographic model. Perhaps the main affinity between the Biccherna covers and the *Decretum* minatures, as well as other jurical imagery, resided in the desire on the part of jurists and magistrates for images that would acknowledge their place in the changing social order. By grafting the solemnity and dignity of the main image in *Decretum* frontispieces onto the narrative scene illustrating the cases, the artists of the bicchernal covers invented a new and positive iconography for the money handler.

Pitture infamanti

The book covers of the Biccherna belong to the category of public art whose other members have all but disappeared. Gone are the banners and costumes used in civic pageants, shields, decorated carroccio or war chariot, and the chests for holding deeds that were painted by Duccio. For the most part, they only remain as occasional and brief descriptions or notations in surviving

⁹¹Camille, 40, notes that by the thirteenth century, legal procedures were being validated by written rather than oral means.

diaries or accounts. Every trace of a peculiar type of image, the *pittura infamante*, has also disappeared from the wall on which it was painted. A *pittura infamante* was a defaming or slanderous portrait, whose use was sanctioned by the state as a means of punishing criminals. Life-size images with inscriptions spelling out the crime of the convicted were painted on the lower walls of public buildings where they would be easily seen by large numbers of people. In 1302, biccherna records state that a Giovanni Guido was paid for painting twelve forgers on the walls of the Palazzo Pubblico.⁹² The images themselves were derogatory in order to humiliate and insult the criminal publicly. When in 1308 a former Podestà of Florence, one Carlo Ternibili d'Amelia, was caught stealing that city's seal, his image was painted on the Bargello, the building of the Capitano del Popolo, and on city gates wearing a mitra (paper foolscap inscribed with the crime) and holding the seal he stole in a form of punishment that mirrored actual custom.⁹³ The most famous example of the Trecento is the lost image of Walter of Brienne, duke of Athens, who was expelled from Florence in 1343 after failing an attempted coup d'état. According to Vasari's description, the duke and his followers were painted disparagingly with

⁹²Ortalli, 56: Biccherna nr. 117, c. 322v. for October 1302.

⁹³Edgerton, 77.

mitre of justice on their heads as marks of shame. Around the head of the duke were many rapacious animals and other sorts signifying the nature and quality of the man. . . And all had the arms and insignia of their families depicted beneath, and some writings . . . In which the style of the artist pleased everyone.⁹⁴

Whereas treason might have been the most heinous crime to be punished by *pittura infamanti*, it was commonly utilized for offenders who were guilty of such commercial crimes as forgery, fraud, embezzlement, bankruptcy, and, above all, fraudulent bankruptcy. This form of punishment was devised in Bologna during the Duecento and then blossomed in the commercial centers of Tuscany.⁹⁵ In most cases the images depicted upper class men, who more than any other group would have been involved in banking and trade. The pictured men were regarded as enemies of the commune, who by their treachery or financial failures, endangered its very life. To have one's "portrait" painted as a *pittura infamante* was to invite public ridicule and scorn. It was a grave and real punishment that was to be avoided, since it punished not only the criminal, but his

⁹⁴Quoted in Edgerton, 81, from Vasari-Milanesi, 1:625-26.

⁹⁵Ortalli, 54.

family, friends, and associates as well.⁹⁶ It could spread deleteriously until it finally affected the entire community, which was why Giangaleazzo Visconti ended its practice in Milan.⁹⁷ These last remarks point to two key concepts at work during this period: the collective beliefs in the efficacy of these images and in the opposing concepts of *fama* and *infamia*.

Edgerton considers that the effectiveness of *pittura infamanti* as a punitive instrument hinged upon the medieval belief in sympathetic magic, that is, in the existence of a bond between an object or person and its image, and that this invisible bond might have consequences for the criminal in the afterlife in the form of eternal humiliation.⁹⁸ However, sentences could be rescinded, in which case the offending image was erased: in Siena, the Podestà decided annually with the council whether images of forgers painted on the Palazzo Pubblico and houses should be maintained or "depainted" (*dispingere*).⁹⁹ The acceptance

⁹⁶Ortalli, 91.

⁹⁷Ortalli, 86. In Edgerton's view, the prohibition had more to do with the images of middle class debtors and bankrupts plastered on the walls of his civic palace offending his aristocratic sensibilities, 93.

⁹⁸Edgerton, 76. Any overt role of sympathetic magic seems unlikely in Ortalli's views because magical forces were never invoked in conjunction with these images. See Ortalli, chapter 3, "I rapporti con le aree dell'arte e della magia," especially 110-25.

⁹⁹Ortalli, 60. See Edgerton, 96 for "depainting."

of *pitture infamanti* as punishment was not only dependent upon politics, but also urban sentiments and a sense of fellowship.¹⁰⁰ Since one's reputation and standing in the community was largely a matter of public opinion, to be publicly disgraced was calamitous. Commercial offenses were perceived and treated as political crimes while portrayed as moral ones--through public humiliation, which might mean the culprit would be stripped naked and pilloried, crowned with a mitra or other identifying hat, or bear something that would make the crime explicit.¹⁰¹ In one example, a Paduan who was guilty of extortion was pictured in this way with a purse attached to his neck.¹⁰² A note added in the margin of the minutes of a meeting of the Florentine signory in 1464 reads, "debtors should be painted in public places."¹⁰³

The offender became an example of *infamia*; among other things, he was a disgrace, shameful, despicable, and a coward not to be trusted. In addition, he was excluded from office, honors, employment or religious succor.¹⁰⁴ A man of *fama* or fame, on the other hand, was known for his honesty, trustworthiness, good reputation, honor, and the

¹⁰⁰Edgerton, 71.

¹⁰¹Edgerton, 65.

¹⁰²Ortalli, 39.

¹⁰³Edgerton, 227.

¹⁰⁴Ortalli, 32.

like. In ancient Rome, he was a man who enjoyed unblemished dignity, but his fame was confined to this world. Around the thirteenth century, the concept became entwined with religious notions of salvation and civic duty. Possessing all these stellar qualities, the medieval man with *fama* appears to have been rather like the merchant in Dino Compagni's poem cited above. It was exceedingly crucial for a man of any station to maintain his good name lest infamy destroy his opportunities in making favorable business and family alliances; naturally, a stain of infamy would be expected to have greater ramifications for a man of wealth and standing than for a rustic.¹⁰⁵ *Pitture infamanti* fulfilled didactic purposes by acting as both informant and deterrent.

Defaming pictures and Biccherna covers are components of officially sanctioned art but with opposite aims, the one to dishonor and the other to celebrate the persons depicted. As products of the minor arts, artists were normally paid a relatively small sum for them, while materials and time were also limited. For the earliest Biccherna cover of 1258 (fig. 1), the artist Gilio di

¹⁰⁵Edgerton, 64. Ortalli maintains that this type of punishment was applied to lower-ranking people as well in support of his theory that its usage was closely tied to Guelfism and the rise of the popolo, by which he means the communal society, 44. He emphasizes the dignity and honor felt now by every man, not only the high-ranking, and considers this as innovative and as a break with traditional, magnatial attitudes.

Pietro received five soldi, a sum that over time increased to two gold florins until a law passed in 1411 limited payment to one lira.¹⁰⁶ These factors would have affected the defaming pictures to a much greater extent than the book covers, owing to the size and sometimes number of the figures to be painted for each case. It would seem to follow that neither the artistic quality nor the degree of likeness would have been especially good. Recognition of the person depicted as well as the crime committed would have been made through the addition of symbolic attributes and inscriptions. A Florentine statute of 1283/84, which was to be repeated in every statute until the sixteenth century, stated that merchants, artisans, or other persons defaulting on certain debts were to be painted and have their first and last names inscribed.¹⁰⁷ According to

¹⁰⁶Waley, *Siena and the Sienese*, 166. Ortalli, 98-100. In 1301 in Bologna a Bartolomeo di maestro Gerardino was given directions to paint two criminals in a single day. In 1274 it took less than 20 days for the leaders of San Gimignano to decide and have executed a fresco on the parish church painted by Rainaldo da Siena: "iiiiij librae Rainaldo pittori de Senis pro suo salario et coloribus ex eo quod pro com. stetit ad pingendum picturam Nance Paltonis in muro prebis comunis," 99 and 99, n. 13. This is the same Rinaldo who was paid 10 soldi for the cover of 1278. For other payments made to him, see Giusti, 275-76. On the payments for the Biccherna covers, see Carli, *Les tablettes*, 7.

¹⁰⁷Ortalli, 61. Ecclesiastics later used a similar tactic: posters bearing the picture and information about excommunicated persons were pinned to church doors or other conspicuous spot. Devils were also sometimes drawn next to the picture of the excommunicated. See Ortalli, 126.

Ortalli,¹⁰⁸ didactic functions resided in the inscriptions, which the law required to be painted in very large and legible letters. Depending on the case, other information, such as the reason for the condemnation, the guild to which he belonged, his place of origin, and the name of those who had suffered damage because of the crime, were also added. Sometimes, he continues, the bare facts were inserted within lengthy expositions, especially if the crime were a political one, or they might be written in verse form; in any case, the intent was to insult the culprit. This verse accompanied the painting of the duke of Athens:

Avaro, traditore e poi crudele,
 lussurioso, ingiusto e spergiuro,
 giammai non tenne suo stato sicuro.¹⁰⁹

In another example, the verse is written from the point of view of the condemned:

Voi che guardate queste dipenture
 mirate me, che per mia avaritia
 tradii con grande niquizia . . .¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸The discussion on the textual content of the defaming verse follows that of Ortalli, 103-05.

¹⁰⁹Ortalli, 104. The lines can be translated as: Avaricious, treacherous, and then cruel; lustful, unjust, and false, never gaining a trustworthy status.

¹¹⁰Ortalli, 105. This verse may be translated as: You who are looking at these paintings, observe me, who by my avariciousness betrayed with great iniquity . . .

These compositions could become very lengthy: in 1391 the Sienese added 140 verses to the images of 27 rebellious citizens who were painted as traitors on the walls of the Palazzo Pubblico. Granted this may have been an exceptional case, but the presence of extensive written explanations begs to ask who was the intended audience of *pitture infamanti*? Ortalli believes it to have been mainly the illiterate.¹¹¹ But it seems to me that the greater impact would have been on those who were at least semi-literate with access to the inscriptions and text. However, the group most likely to have benefited from the examples made of the defamed embezzlers and bankrupted would have been those men who were themselves involved in commerce and banking. As Edgerton states, this form of public punishment was an expedient intra-class control.¹¹² On the other hand, perhaps preaching friars gathered their audiences before such images and used them in their sermons in the manner of San Bernardino, who said of the Madonna painted on the Camollia Gate that it was the most beautiful of the many then existing in Siena.¹¹³ Of the *Good Government* frescoes, he told his audience in the Campo: "You have it painted above in your palace, where to see

¹¹¹Ortalli, 25.

¹¹²Edgerton, 91.

¹¹³See Enzo Carli, "Luoghi ed opere d'arte senesi nelle prediche di Bernardino del 1427," *Bernardino predicatore nella società del suo tempo*, 153-82.

Peace painted is a joy. And conversely it is a sadness to see War painted on the other side."¹¹⁴

The Good Government frescoes contain an ample amount of labels, inscriptions, and verses. In general, and as noted by Starn,¹¹⁵ the presence of the written material--and this is especially true for the Latin labels--lends an air of abstract authority; the verses, in the vernacular as are *poesie infamanti*, provide concrete information or instruction. For example, in the *Effects of Good Government* Securitas (fig. 137) holds a sign that reads:

Without fear, let each man freely walk,
And working let everyone sow,
While such a commune
This lady will keep under her rule
Because she has removed all power from the
guilty.¹¹⁶

That Latin and the vernacular functioned differently is most apparent in the sudden switch from Latin to Italian for selected tituli: *Bellum* into *Guerra* and the use of *si* and *no* (fig. 138). The substitution draws attention to them and shifts their field of operation to the here and now; their message is meant to be applied to the

¹¹⁴Translation in Norman, Vol. II, 145.

¹¹⁵Starn, 16.

¹¹⁶Bowsky, *Medieval Commune*, 290.

contemporary situation in Siena.¹¹⁷ Use of the vernacular for the verses similarly signals their didactic function throughout the program as instruments of political instruction. They are given authoritative weight by their rhyming form, which was a literary genre characterized by "exhortations to virtue, the admonitions against vice, and the appeal to a moralizing vision."¹¹⁸ The defaming verses could be considered as members of this genre as well. Whereas the inscriptions of *pitture infamanti* may have excluded the illiterate, the audience of the Lorenzettian frescoes was the Nine and presumably highly literate. The verses in the fresco cycle advise, while the Latin labels recall basic precepts to remind the members of the Nine meeting in their council chamber to render justice with wisdom. Chiara Frugoni sees the legend *Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram* (Serve justice, you who govern the world) from the Book of Wisdom as the central point both conceptually and pictorially.¹¹⁹ The great importance of this message to the government is evident since the same verse appears in the fresco in the Great Council Hall next to the council chamber. In the impressive *Maestà* (1315,

¹¹⁷Frugoni, *A Distant City*, 131-32.

¹¹⁸Starn, 11.

¹¹⁹Chiara Frugoni, "The Book of Wisdom and Lorenzetti's Fresco in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 43 (1980): 239-41. These ideas are also incorporated into *A Distant City*, 118-93.

fig. 161) by Simone Martini that takes up the entire wall, the inscription is found on the scroll held in the hands of the Christ-Child.

Mieczysław Wallis calls these inscriptions "semantic enclaves," autonomous entities with a different semantic structure and speaking a different "language" than the imagery.¹²⁰ Because they combine images and writing, our book covers are also placed in this category, even though the writing is not embedded within the painted scene. As Wallis explains, any monument with an inscription--a coin or medal, an illuminated manuscript, or an inscription on a frame of a painting--are examples, as are musical scores, maps, and coats of arms. The last immediately brings to mind the stemmi of the Provveditori, as well as the podestal stemmi that intruded into some of the pictures between 1314 and 1331. The heraldic devices are redundant insofar as Provveditori and Podesta are also named in the inscriptions. Perhaps the double identification is related to the system used for the images of saints, who are identifiable by the attributes they carry but are named in accompanying inscription; the Virtues and Vices in Lorenzetti's frescoes are treated in similar fashion. Inscription and image work together in both fresco and book cover, each complementing and underscoring the importance

¹²⁰Mieczysław Wallis, "Inscriptions in Paintings," *Semiotica* IX.1 (1973): 1-28.

of the other. The wording on the covers, while not always identical, are repetitious almost to the point of ritualization, which reinforces the idea explored above that they function as an oath and that the *stemmi* are meant to be viewed as signatures as well as symbols of status.

Disappearance

That *pitture infamanti* began to disappear in the fifteenth century partly because of changing artistic tastes is asserted convincingly by Edgerton in his discussion concerning Andrea del Castagno (c. 1420-1457), whose *pitture infamanti* of the Albizzi in 1440 were praised by Vasari for their "naturalism and skillful poses." In short, they were important as much for their artistic quality as for their punitive function.¹²¹ Edgerton also interprets a Florentine document of 1465, in which the priors attempt to reassert the practice of *pitture infamanti* according to old statutes, as an indication of

¹²¹Edgerton, 103-04. Vasari had never seen the paintings, which were erased some fifty years before he wrote his *Vite* and had moreover attributed to him the painting of the culprits of the Pazzi conspiracy of April 26, 1478, in which Giuliano d'Medici was fatally stabbed. For his description of the defamatory picture of the duke of Athens, which was still partially visible in the sixteenth century, Vasari borrowed from Giovanni Villani's eye witness account in 1344, but altered it so that instead of retaining the original idea that the painting was pleasing because it "properly insulted the duke, Vasari clearly implied that it pleased for formal, aesthetic reasons quite apart from its scurrilous subject matter", 93.

changing artistic tastes. He reasons that defamatory pictures, if they were painted at all, were placed in hidden, not open and public, places because the quality of painting was poor.¹²²

The disappearance of the office scene from the Biccherna book covers in the course of the fifteenth century is also related to changing artistic tastes and demands. These mutations can themselves be attributed to a transformation of the socio-political situation in which upper and lower classes no longer shared the same civic values. As an arch-aristocrat, Giangaleazzo Visconti, for example, disdained the use of *pitture infamanti* because it was embarrassing while middle-class republicans respected its efficacy.¹²³ In Siena, much sooner it seems than elsewhere in Tuscany, the aristocratic upper classes were

¹²²Edgerton, 103-104. The document is reproduced and partially translated from the Latin in Appendix A from which I quote: "And considering that the said statute was made for the best of reasons, because it was found that many abstain from said bankruptcies for fear lest they be painted rather than for any other reason, and because it does not appear that the said statute would be more fully observed, either because they are not being painted or are painted in places secret and hidden, thus not able to be seen. . . . Each and every magistrate . . . must have painted any who have been or are at present declared defaulters . . . on the palaces or houses where they live and on the exterior walls, and on the part or parts more open of said palaces or houses, and by having them described in large and clear letters with their family and first names and with the title of the guild in which they belong. . . ."

¹²³Edgerton, 93.

setting themselves apart from ordinary people.¹²⁴ Major art commissions were being made by individuals rather than by the commune, which for the most part devoted its depleted treasury to more pressing needs, such as fortifying the city walls; in 1412 monies reserved for the completion of the Fonte Gaia were diverted for repairs of the walls.¹²⁵ Throughout the fifteenth century, leading families constructed large private palaces, construction for which they could be given tax exemptions, waivers of certain building codes, or even direct aid from the city and which were inaugurated with the kind of ceremonial pomp reserved at one time for the erection of the great public edifices.¹²⁶ Acknowledged for adding to the city's beauty and prestige, these palaces, nevertheless, served primarily as manifestations of the wealth and power of their owners.

Covers of the 1460 registers of both the Biccherna and Gabella likewise are the first of the series to exhibit the shift from public to private interests on the part of the ruling patrons. The covers for these years celebrated scions of the Piccolomini family: the Biccherna cover commemorates Aeneas Sylvianus Piccolomini's election to the papacy as Pius II in 1457 (fig. 45), while on the Gabella cover, he is pictured in the act of giving a cardinal's hat

¹²⁴Goldthwaite, 159.

¹²⁵Hook, *A City*, 155.

¹²⁶Hook, *A City*, 156.

to Francesco Piccolomini Todeschini (fig. 46). The younger man's ascent to the papal throne in 1503 as Pius III was due to the nepotism of his uncle, who also succeeded in making the archbishopric a family office. He played a particularly crucial role in promoting the Renaissance in Sienese territory in both matters of architecture and humanistic thought. Beginning in 1459, he modernized and renamed his hometown of Corsignano as Pienza, whose buildings and spaces of the Piazza Pio II were designed by the Renaissance architect, Bernardo Rossellino. These edifices and images of the Piccolomini clearly demonstrate that art now served to aggrandize the private patron, who replaced the commune as arbiter in cultural matters.

Behind the change in artistic taste lay profound reevaluations of views concerning religious, political and social orders; in religious attitude, the shift was away from "an age of communal faith to an age of individual cynicism,"¹²⁷ while in the socio-political world, as mentioned above, classes became increasingly alienated from one another, the upper classes discarding popular values in favor of aristocratic ones.¹²⁸ The calamitous and recurring bouts of plague from 1348 dramatically intensified these changes. In Siena, where three-fifths of the population perished in the first onslaught, its pre-plague level of

¹²⁷Edgerton, 76.

¹²⁸Edgerton, 93, 76, 77, n. 65.

25,000 was not regained until after 1550.¹²⁹ The Black Death's initial impact was to encourage economic and social fluidity; Siena's administrative and financial organizations were not seriously affected so that accounting and recording procedures remained intact. Even though in 1353 the budget came very close to being balanced, the regime of the Nine was overthrown with the help of new men who had gained entry into the upper levels of power.¹³⁰ Government became chaotic; regimes rose only to be toppled. Finally, after a series of serious revolts by the working and artisan classes, the dominant group of rich bankers, merchants, and landowners were able to consolidate their control towards the close of the fourteenth century, whereupon they closed ranks. Social classes hardened; participation in government became limited to those families who had previously served in a *monte*, one of the city's former ruling signories.¹³¹ Ultimately, they proved to be disastrous for Siena's political stability because their

¹²⁹Bortolotti, 19.

¹³⁰Bowsky, *Black Death*, 114-19. Larner, *Italy in the Age of Dante*, 122, notes that these new men could rise to high office through ambition and ability, but that they always were a minority. In Siena, political decisions rested in the hands of about sixty families.

¹³¹Bowsky, *Finance*, explains the term *monte* originally was connected to the taxation system, which was based on one's comparative wealth and socio-economic position. It did not have a political meaning until after the fall of the Nine, which may suggest that class lines had not yet hardened. See 85-87.

very existence promoted and perpetuated factionalism. In the course of the fifteenth century, politics became an aristocratic prerogative and a lucrative one.¹³² Altruistic service on behalf of the common good ceased to be one of the major criteria for judging one's nobility; birth and family antiquity counted more. The very fact that one was eligible for public office also confirmed his noble status, as did his palatial residence and new spending habits, which in the urban context, meant buying furniture, sumptuous clothing, and other durable goods that would demonstrate his private wealth.

Increasingly, wealth was invested in land rather than reinvested in industry, commerce, or banking; there was a decline of interest and commitment to business as entrepreneurs turned into rentiers.¹³³ In Siena, land acquisition on the part of the great families had been proceeding rapidly as early as the last decades of the thirteenth century, one reason being a dearth of other outlets for investment and another being the irresistible urge to emulate the aristocratic model.¹³⁴ Then, beginning as early as the second half of the Trecento, members of the

¹³²For example, in the practice of "farming" the government sold the right to collect certain taxes to the highest bidder, who paid the government a set sum and kept the profits as income. See Bowsky, *Black Death*, 115, n. 3.

¹³³Martines, 170-71.

¹³⁴Waley, *Siena and the Sieneese*, 38 for the former; Goldthwaite, 159 for the latter.

nobility began removing themselves ever farther from the life of the city and its ordinary citizens, either by remaining on their country estates for longer periods or by creating within the walls of their city residences miniature courts, complete with musicians, artists, and humanist scholars in their retinues. They also had formed an "academy" in the beginning of the Cinquecento with membership restricted to the aristocracy, which was formalized in 1525, becoming known as the *Accademia degli Intronati*, the oldest in modern Europe. Latin, Greek, and poetry were studied and members consciously retreated from the active, committed life for the pursuit of books and learning.¹³⁵

For the Biccherna, the changes in values and lifestyle of its officials should also be linked to the demise of the office scene which had reflected the civic-mindedness of the preceding era. Its republican message had become antiquated and irrelevant in the wake of new attitudes. Perhaps the single most important attitude to have changed concerned wealth. By the fifteenth century, it was becoming less and less necessary to hide one's wealth or to qualify it in terms of social responsibility as had been the practice in the past when money and profit were suspected by the Church. The suspicion of wealth lessened

¹³⁵Hook, *A City*, 163; Judith Hook, *Siena: una città e la sua storia*, N.p., 1989, 137.

as cynicism regarding the Church's interminable compromises on usury grew. With the control of government, the great families also felt more secure in their status, which led to a certain confidence in the face of social and religious criticism. At the same time, it became increasingly clear that money had great potential power, that it could be spent for private purposes, and that it could be used to display one's magnificence and nobility.¹³⁶ In the fifteenth century, "living nobly" designated a life style in which one had enough wealth to preclude the need for working.¹³⁷ Idleness became a sign of nobility that in medieval thinking had been harshly regarded as sloth and a sin.¹³⁸ And not unlike the urban magnates of the previous centuries, noble status could also be used to overawe the ordinary person. As members of this group, bicchernal officials no longer saw the need to atone for possessing wealth or to present themselves in the guise of public servants.

Scenes that may have had a special significance to the Camarlingo or one of the Provveditori were depicted from

¹³⁶Goldthwaite, 205.

¹³⁷Peter Burke, *Culture and Society in Renaissance Italy, 1420-1540*, New York, 1972, 235.

¹³⁸Le Goff, *Your Money*, 25, 42. According to Cardinal Robert of Courcon at the beginning of the thirteenth century, sloth was the mother of all vices and the usurer slothful because he made money even when not working. As we have seen, work at that time had been regarded as an instrument of redemption, dignity and salvation.

time to time, which suggests that the officials determined the subject matter of the covers. The picture of San Galgano on the 1320 cover of the Biccherna was probably not unrelated to the fact that the Camarlingo kneeling before the saint came from the monastery of San Galgano (fig. 14).¹³⁹ On the 1449 cover (fig. 41), the decision to depict the *Coronation of Pope Niccolo V* was very likely due to the close alliance of the Piccolomini family with the newly elected pope, since it was Niccolo V who had nominated Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomi as bishop of Trieste and, in 1450, as archbishop of Siena; one of the Provveditori serving that year was a member of the Piccolomini family.¹⁴⁰ The wedding of a member of the important Malavolti family was depicted on a Gabella cover of 1472/3 in accordance with the wishes of Agnolo Malavolti (fig. 49), who served as an Esecutore of that magistracy.¹⁴¹ Pandolfo Petrucci's victorious entry into Siena on 22 July 1487 was celebrated by both the Gabella (fig. 51) and Biccherna covers (fig. 52), no doubt because of the hope it brought of putting the internal affairs of the commune in order. As the diarist Alessandro Sozzini noted in 1526, "It is the custom that

¹³⁹Why the scene had not been used before when other monks from San Galgano preceded don Stefano as Camarlingo cannot be answered.

¹⁴⁰Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 154.

¹⁴¹Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 176. There is some question that the date had been altered in order to make the term in office coincide with the actual wedding (1473).

each Camarlingo of the Biccherna, at the end of his term of office, should leave the tablet of his accounts painted with some notable event which occurred in that year."¹⁴²

The decline of the office scene and the concomitant rise of other imagery used on the covers must also take into account more mundane factors. Between 1457 and 1459, paper pages replaced parchment for the final copying of accounts, making heavy wooden covers unnecessary. Instead, they were bound in covers of stamped leather or parchment. It was also at this time that the officials seemed to have decided to have the walls of the office decorated with pictures, presumably to compensate for the painted tavolette. An earlier example would be Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Annunciation* (1344, fig. 23), painted for the walls of the Gabella and carrying the names of the Camarlingo and Esecutori at the bottom. On an office wall of the Biccherna, Sano di Pietro painted over an earlier fresco of the *Coronation of the Virgin* by Lippo Vanni. Sano's fresco, also of the *Coronation of the Virgin* (1445) bears as part of an inscription, the names of the Camarlingo and two sets of Provveditori, since from about 1433 the Camarlingo began to serve for twelve months. In the following year, Sano painted another fresco next to it showing S. Pietro Alessandrino between two Siensese beati, Ambrogio Sansedoni and Andrea Gallerani, but this had been

¹⁴²Lightbown, 298.

whitewashed.¹⁴³ But perhaps owing to the high cost or the lack of wall space, the practice was soon abandoned, and, in 1460, the custom of painting tavolette was resumed, except they were framed and meant to be hung for display.¹⁴⁴ The first example, the 1460 cover with the Coronation of Pius II (fig. 45), at 59 x 40.5 cm., immediately exceeded the dimensions of previous tavolette. The detachment of the covers from the accounts, having severed the connection between the cover's form and function, broke as well the psychological bond between office and official insofar as the cover became less symbolic of a magistracy whose importance and prestige declined.

Conclusion

With slight variations the seated Camarlingo continued to be the only figured design used for biccherna book covers at the beginning of the Trecento, but greater modifications of this image soon began to appear. By the middle of the century it had evolved into a genre scene whose details inform us today of the furnishings and working procedures then in use. Whereas in the previous chapter we examined the reasons behind the longevity of this particular group of images, in this chapter we also

¹⁴³See Lightbown, 298 and Lisini, xi. Lisini reproduces the inscriptions and payment records from the Biccherna on xi, notes 2 and 3.

¹⁴⁴Lisini, xi.

turned our attention to considerations which were likely to have influenced the form of the images.

First, we looked at the medieval *exemplum*, whose full flowering in the middle of the thirteenth century coincides with the appearance of the portrait of the Camarlingo on the cover. While the downfall of the usurer was a favorite subject, hagiographic stories formed the core of collections of *exempla*. Biographies of the saints served as models for the officials wishing to project an image of selfless and Christian service to the public. Other subjects that were depicted were also found in *exempla*: contemporary events and folkloric or supernatural elements. An example of the latter is an allegorical scene of a pestilence on the Biccherna cover of 1437 (fig. 39), which shows a winged figure dressed in black shooting arrows into a group of unsuspecting gamblers, his horse trampling upon corpses. The image of the Camarlingo, especially after it evolved into a narrative scene, should be regarded as a visual *exemplum* to be read in the same way as Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Good Government*.

The *exemplum* as a literary form, of course, did not entail pictorial imagery, which meant that the officials had to look elsewhere for iconographical models. Illustrated copies of the *Decretum Gratiani* provided them; the *Decretum* was the most popular law book in medieval Europe and to own a luxuriously illuminated version was a

status symbol. It is highly probable that illustrated copies were circulating in Siena among the classes to which the magistrates of the Biccherna and Gabella belonged. If there were but a single illustration in any given copy, it would have been placed at the front of the book and stressed the legitimacy and authority of the judiciary system by utilizing that ancient imperial motif, the *traditio legis*. In Italian manuscripts, especially, other pictures that were tied to the narrative portion of the cases usually incorporated genre elements, even for depicting difficult concepts. The money imagery devised for Case XIV, which deals with usury, may have been borrowed for the covers and combined with the legitimizing function of the *Decretum's* primary illumination. For the Biccherna covers, such messages as the legitimacy of office, public service, and personal recognition were incorporated for propagandistic purposes.

Pitture infamanti are fascinating since they belong with the book covers in that group of minor, state-commissioned art projects. As an insulting and humiliating form of punishment that saw routine use for those judged guilty of commercial crimes, they represent the very antithesis of the office scene on the book covers. Whereas on the tavolette, image, inscriptions, and blazon were sources of pride, the meanings of these elements were inverted in the defamatory wall paintings. Sometimes, in

fact, heraldic shields were painted upside down beneath the offender's picture. That the person thus defamed felt the intended shame acutely is made clear by the fact that in negotiations between states, the depainting of *pitture infamanti* were sometimes part of those proceedings. Since the period of their greatest use is coeval with that of the office scene, the public could have been accustomed to viewing the two as an opposing pair in the manner of Virtues and Vices.

During the fifteenth century, the office scene disappeared as a subject of the Biccherna covers. A number of interrelated factors seem to have been at work and which involved the ruling elite. Not only did their artistic tastes change but so did their attitudes toward religion and money, as manifested in the construction and furnishing of grand private palaces. As their power and position solidified, so did the distinctions separating the social classes. The role of the aristocracy in government became a birthright and, conversely, the holding of office a sign of nobility. There no longer remained the need for the officials of the Biccherna and Gabella to promote themselves in terms of public service as greater self-confidence allowed them to commission covers that reflected the private interests of their own class. Images of the subservient Camarlingo and its descendent, the office scene, had become obsolete.

Chapter Six

Transformations in the Cinquecento

The "New State"

Age-old divisions into terzi (districts), compagnie (military organizations), and monti had made the Sieneze prone to inter-class and intra-class factionalism,¹ problems for which they were never to find a permanent solution. After the overthrow of the Nine, each monte fought to gain dominance but none succeeded.² There was a brief respite between 1487 and 1525 when the Petrucci family tried to form a dynastic, signoral regime in imitation of the Medici in Florence--Pandolfo even had himself called "magnifico" like Lorenzo--but after his death in 1512, his family saw its power evaporate.³ The contest among the monti for supreme power resumed. Between 1525 and 1552, various attempts to reform the government failed since as it was administered by the Spanish, justice was perceived by the other monti to be biased towards the Noveschi. Agricultural failure, famine, war, banditry, and rising

¹Siena's internal struggles was remarked upon by the Venetian Fedeli, who said that its citizens were "sempre contendendo insieme fino al sangue, ammazzandosi e tagliandosi a pezzi ed essendo divisi in partiti fra loro. . ." (always disputing among themselves to the point of bloodshed, slaughtering and cutting one another to pieces, and being divided into factions. . .). Quoted in Bortolotti, 84, n. 11.

²See Bortolotti, 59 and n. 12 for a brief summary of the changing parties in charge.

³Bortolotti, 61.

financial obligations contributed to Siena's problems.⁴

In the meantime, Siena's rivalry with Florence continued, although through much of the fifteenth century, the city on the Arno had been busy subduing the conquered citizens of Pisa, Volterra, and other territories rather than proceeding with its expansionist program. By the end of the century, however, neither Florence nor Siena could escape involvement in international politics as France and Spain used Italy as a battlefield for their own power struggles. But the Italian states used foreign intervention to further their own political ends as well. In 1494 for example, Lodovico Sforza had at first encouraged Charles VIII to protect French interests in Naples in order to check Neapolitan interference in Milan. This became a necessary ploy after having usurped power from his nephew, whose wife Isabella, was the granddaughter of King Ferrante of Naples. But once his objective was met, Lodovico turned against the king. When Louis, duke of Orleans, ascended the throne in 1498, he prepared to enforce his claim on Milan. Alexander VI and Venice acquiesced in the plan, since the pope hoped to gain support for Cesare Borgia's conquest of the Romagna and Venice wanted to gain territory at the expense of Milan.⁵

⁴Hook, *una città*, 143-48.

⁵H. Hearder and D. P. Waley, *A Short History of Italy from Classical Times to the Present Day*, Cambridge, 1963, 87-89.

Fearing the growing strength of the Spanish king, Charles V, Clement VII betrayed his former ally by forming the League of Cognac with other Italian states and France for the purpose of overthrowing the emperor. Charles sent an army to Rome, which his German and Spanish troops attacked in May 1527.⁶ Today the Sack of Rome is often viewed as the end of the Renaissance, but even to the people of its time, it was recognized as a cataclysmic event.⁷ In Siena, the Sack provoked both great unrest and attempted revolts by factions openly opposed to the Noveschi, who afterwards were excluded from any participation in the government. Charles V had to send imperial troops to quell the fighting and forceably reinstate the rule of the Noveschi. Having been suspected of working with the Spanish to gain exclusive control for themselves, their return made it necessary to double the imperial troops garrisoned there. For the next fifteen years the government was somewhat stable with the various monti gingerly respecting the balance of power and Spanish justice seemed fair enough. However, when the Noveschi again began rising at the expense of the other parties, another rebellion ensued and the Noveschi and imperial garrison thrown out of the city. Again, the Spanish troops, now 300 strong, returned in 1547, new modifications were made to the constitution and

⁶Harder and Waley, 95.

⁷Burke, 275.

the Noveschi recalled.⁸ In 1552 the Sienese populace attacked the nearly completed Spanish fortress with aid sent by the French, who were again contesting Spanish hegemony in Italy. Henry II had sent to Siena as his lieutenant Piero Strozzi, a bitter enemy of the Medici, a move which Cosimo I, duke of Florence and ally of the Spanish, interpreted as a hostile action and to which he responded by attacking Siena and its contado in January 1554. After the French forces were defeated, the remnants of Strozzi's army fled to Montalcino, where they held out until 1559. Siena, in the meantime, had been starved into submission after a siege that lasted more than eight months, and its population reduced from 22,500 to little more than 10,000 inhabitants.⁹ Instead of turning the conquered republic over to the Spanish, however, Cosimo manoeuvred successfully to incorporate it into the Medici state.¹⁰

Siena's defeat at the hands of Florence made the loss of independence doubly tragic, so that for centuries the Sienese have ended their historical accounts with the

⁸Hook, *una città*, 145.

⁹Bortolotti, 87. The dramatic decline in population was due in part to the casting out of the "useless mouths", massacres, and other effects of the war.

¹⁰Gene Adam Brucker, *Florence 1138-1737*, London, 1984, 186-89.

surrender of the city on 17 April 1555.¹¹ Yet the transformation from independent republic to dependent satellite within the Florentine hegemony was not as radical as it might have been. In the first place, Siena was able to conserve its medieval politico-juridical patrimony; under the terms of capitulation to Charles V, instead of surrendering unconditionally, they had formed a "personal association" with the emperor. Since it was an agreement which Cosimo had to respect, Siena did not suffer outright absorption into the Florentine state, but became the "New State" (Florence was designated as the "Old State"), thereby preserving a good deal of its autonomy. Secondly, its dominant class also managed to retain its privileged position while making sure that the doors to government offices remained closed to others. This closed group, the *Risieduti*, was composed of the four monti (Grandi, Nove, Popolo and Riformatori). Any future chance at governmental reform had been thwarted by Cosimo's solution to end the factional fighting, which was to freeze the parties as they were at the end of the republic. Power came to be so thoroughly concentrated in the hands of a few families that the system persisted even towards the end of the Settecento. In 1773, Peter Leopold wrote: "La città di Siena essendo stata una repubblica sempre governata dalla nobiltà non ha che due ranghi, nobiltà e popolo e tutte le

¹¹Bortolotti, 87.

magistrature e governi vi sono per la nobiltà."¹²

Of all the groups, then, the *Risieduti* benefited most from Cosimo's rule because he had guaranteed their position as the ruling elite. As a consequence, their economic activities did not deviate much from the path already begun in the preceding century. Although it became more usual for wealthy merchants and industrialists to invest in land, at the beginning of the Cinquecento, many families still remained in banking, in the wool or silk industries, in mining in the Maremma, or like the Piccolomini and Ugurgieri, in a combination of several businesses.¹³ However, by the next century the situation worsened, with the falling off of investments and the wool industry reduced to almost nothing.¹⁴

If some elements of Cosimo's control over Siena seemed benign, it was because they were profitable to the new Tuscan state, as Cosimo knew from experience that enlisting the support of the ruling class would be beneficial for him. Conquering Siena not only enlarged his dominion by one third, but it also won him the respect of all Italy and led to the bestowal of the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany

¹²Bortolotti, 89-90. It can be translated as, "The city of Siena, always having been a republic governed by the nobility, has but two classes, the nobility and people, and all magistracies and executive power in the hands of the nobility.

¹³Bortolotti, 57.

¹⁴Bortolotti, 87-89.

by Pope Pius V in 1569.¹⁵

Because Siena was such an important prize, Cosimo placed the city under the supervision of a personally chosen governor, usually a member of the Medici family, and three assistants, the *Auditore Generale*, the *Procuratore Fiscale*, and the *Tesoriere*, who were also selected by Cosimo. These four officials, collectively known as the *Consulta*, represented the supreme authority regarding all questions concerning the city and state of Siena; all major civic institutions, in fact, were controlled directly from Florence.¹⁶ The *Biccherna* and *Gabella* were placed under the control of the *Depositeria*, and their officials reduced to mere clerks carrying out instructions sent from Florence. The *Provveditori* came to be chosen by lot from a select pool of candidates, while the *Camaringhi* were appointed directly by the grand duke.¹⁷

To further his goal of domination over the Tuscan principality for himself and his heirs, Cosimo promoted a regional Tuscan culture over local interests, and therefore, any manifestation of Sienese cultural independence was discouraged.¹⁸ The university was depressed in favor of the institution in Pisa, academies

¹⁵Brucker, 186, 189.

¹⁶Hook, *una città*, 163-64.

¹⁷Morandi, "Le istituzioni," 10, and n. 1.

¹⁸Brucker, 184-85; Hook, *una città*, 165.

and printing presses were closed down, and, since any meeting or gathering was regarded suspiciously, even the *Compagnia della Vergine* of the Ospedale and other confraternities were closed. Culture was forced to revolve around the Medici "court" and citizens were turned into subjects of a prince.¹⁹

Unfortunately, at this critical time the aristocracy failed to provide any real economic or cultural leadership in Siena, being content to spend their money in ways that made their lives easier and more pleasant. In order to bind them to the Florentine court, every grand duke cultivated the spirit of class among the nobility and encouraged their enfeeblement.²⁰ Perhaps the decline of Sieneese vitality in economic, social, and cultural fields were exacerbated by the general torpor that was then being experienced throughout Italy and which was characterized by an "occupation with small things and amusement with mere pastimes."²¹ Benedetto Croce views Italy during this time as a period of crisis and decadence attributable to a loss of moral conscience and the failure to strive towards that

¹⁹Hook, *una città*, 165.

²⁰Hook, *una città*, 169.

²¹Benedetto Croce, "A Working Hypothesis: The Crisis of Italy in the Cinquecento and the Bond Between the Renaissance and the Risorgimento," *The Late Italian Renaissance 1525-1630*, Ed. Eric Cochrane, London, 1970, 30.

ideal higher goal, liberty.²² According to Judith Hook, Sieneese loss of freedom and will is reflected in the tavolette of the Biccherna executed after 1559 when subject matter was no longer found in Sieneese events, but in the lives of the Medici. Moreover, Hook views these paintings as artistically void of interest or quality, mirroring the fact that Sieneese "political and civil life had become one empty and perpetual charade."²³

However, an examination of the covers shows that at least some changes had begun to occur before Siena lost its independence. Beginning with the quattrocentesque images of Pius II (figs. 45, 46), individual families came to be glorified in public art, albeit that the election of Aeneas Piccolomini to pope was extremely fortunate for Siena as a whole, especially in terms of promoting both humanistic culture and Siena's standing among other Italian states. The 1473 Gabella cover commemorating the wedding of Lucrezia Malavolti to the condottiero, Roberto Sanseverino of Naples (fig. 49), on the other hand, seems to be purely a case of private aggrandizement. Pandolfo Petrucci's victorious entry into Siena in 1487 is remembered by the Biccherna as a narrative account (fig. 52), whereas in the Gabella cover, it is allegorized (fig. 51), the Virgin

²²Croce, 34.

²³Hook, *A City*, 202; Hook, *una città*: "specchio fedele di cio che era divenuta la vita civile di Siena: una grande sciarada senza fine, completamente vuota," 167.

leading the ship of Siena into a safe harbor.

1523 is the date of the earliest surviving cover from the Cinquecento (fig. 55); Christ with St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew are pictured above the stemmi and inscription, which retains the customary wording for bicchernal covers. Although it lacks an inscription or stemmi, a mutilated painting attributed to Domenico Beccafumi seems to be the next one commissioned by the Biccherna (fig. 56), its subject being a ceremony held in the Duomo prior to the battle of Camollia, 22 July 1526.²⁴ The Sienese repulsing the forces of Clement VII in that battle is depicted on the earliest sixteenth-century example from the Gabella (fig. 57).²⁵ This image is interesting for the distant viewpoint it presents of the battle and the city, and the detailed fortifications of the gate. The *Assumption of the Virgin*, originally painted by Simone Martini and described by San Bernardino, is visible on the antiporta. The artist, Giovanni di Lorenzo Cini, painted the same scene at the

²⁴According to a tradition that dates back to the battle of Montaperti, the key to the city is offered to the Virgin in return for her protection. The inscription and stemmi had been removed when the painting was cut down. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 226.

²⁵The picture is described by Alessandro Sozzini in his sixteenth century diary but attributed its commission to the Camarlingo of the Biccherna, Niccolo di Amerigo Amerighi. Subsequent investigation shows that Niccolo at that time was the Camarlingo of the Gabella. Also, the inscription had been repainted during the eighteenth century and there are no stemmi. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 228.

bottom of a larger work, the *Madonna della Battaglia di Porta Camollia* (Chiesa di San Martino, fig. 162), in which a colossal Virgin, posed as a Madonna of Mercy stands over Siena with outstretched arms and mantle, accompanied by a heavenly choir. An imaginary version of the naval battle between Andrea Doria and the Turks is the subject of the 1533 painting commissioned by the Biccherna (fig. 58). It has been interpreted as a demonstration of Spanish interference in Sienese politics: it would seem that the close ties forged with the Spanish was with the segment of the governing class that commissioned this work.²⁶ The atypical Latin inscription has little to do with the internal organization of the office:

CAMERARIO ALEXANDRO TAIO, EXPULSIS TURCARUM
CLASSIBUS OB GLORIOSISSIMAM ANDREAE ORIE
NAUMACHIAM, DUM CORONAS IN PELOPONESSO URBEM
MESSENIORUM ALACRITER LIBERARET.²⁷

Even more atypical is the inscription on the 1534 Biccherna painting that recreates the Coronation of Pope Paul III in Rome (fig. 59), for the partially abraded inscription makes

²⁶A portion of the governing class allied itself closely to the Spanish, whose presence in Siena was mandated by Charles V. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 232.

²⁷The inscription reads, "Having expelled the Turkish fleet through a most glorious naval battle, Andrea [D']oria quickly lifted the seige of the city of Messene in the Pelopponesus."

a reference to his predecessor, that implacable enemy of Siena, Clement VII. All that remains is:

. . . CLEMEN[S] VII PONTIFEX MAXIMUS PRIA
 FLOREN[TINA] PATRIA, ROMANUS PONTIFEX MAXIMUS
 CORONA[TUR].²⁸

The most dramatic event of 1552 is commemorated by both financial offices: the demolition of the Spanish fort. Despite Sienese hostility to its presence, a large fort was being constructed under the supervision of Don Diego Hurtado de Mendoza by order of Charles V. It therefore was not difficult to incite the populace to revolt, especially when the French army was at hand to force the Spanish troops from the city. In the Biccherna panel (fig. 60), the defeated troops are leaving under a white flag as citizens armed with shovels and pick-axes get set to demolish the unfinished structure. In the distance, the antiporta of Camollia can be picked out. It is also visible in the Gabella picture (fig. 61), which shows the scene from a slightly closer vantage point. In both, the Virgin and Child watch the dismantling from the sky. Giorgio de Giovanni is the author of the two paintings, which are almost identical in size and which also feature Latin inscriptions naming the serving officers. The use of

²⁸Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 234. The surviving portion of the now curious inscription reads, "Pope Clement VII, formerly of the State of Florence, was crowned Pope in Rome."

Latin was a practice that had been in disuse since the early Trecento. Its reintroduction in place of the vernacular can be explained as a display of scholarly conceit on the part of the officers on one hand, and as a measure of the growing distance of the ruling class from the popolo on the other. It also implies that the patron and audience were one and the same; in other words, at least certain aspects of the covers were more narrowly aimed at a select segment of the population.

In the following year of 1553, Giorgio di Giovanni again painted for the Biccherna an episode from the war embroiling Siena (fig. 62). His account of the siege at Montalcino recalls the heroic defense made by the citizens and Sienese forces within its walls against the combined forces of Cosimo and Charles V. Presented from a bird's-eye view, the architect-artist depicts the armies surrounding the hill-top fortress town, whose fortifications he designed.²⁹ Because such a large portion of the surface has been given to the representation, the names of the Provveditori are put beneath their shields, while that of the Camarlingo and date, 1552, is painted as though on a small plaque. The names of the scribe and notary and their stemmi are added to the bottom of the

²⁹Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 248.

frame.³⁰ The last painted tavoletta by Giorgio represents the surrender of Siena in 1555 (fig. 63), but any sign of conflict has been circumvented by the looming presence of St. Paul, who offers consolation to the Sienese with the words inscribed beneath his feet to which he points:

OMNES QUI VOLUNT IUSTE VIVERE PERSECUTIONEM
PATIUNTUR.³¹

The saint seems to be standing at the very edge of the picture plane, his foot, mantle hem, and book all projecting outward. Such close proximity to the front magnifies his size and obscures the distant, panoramic view of Siena behind. The central position of the saint, his towering form silhouetted against the sky, the low horizon, and distant landscape recalls such fifteenth-century compositions as Antonio del Pollaiuolo's *Tobias and the Angel* (fig. 163) and Ercole de' Roberti's *St. John the Baptist* (fig. 164) at the same time that it looks forward to such similar images of saints by EL Greco (c. 1547-1614) as *San Bernardino da Siena* (1603/4, fig. 165).

³⁰Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 248. The first extant example in which the names appear with the shields is the Biccherna tavoletta of 1548. Its image shows the Virgin and Child with St. Catherine of Alexandria and St. Catherine of Siena. The attribution to Beccafumi is disputed. See Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 242.

³¹According to Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 250, the motto is a loose paraphrase of II Timothy 3(?), 12: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution," (Those who wish to live justly must suffer persecution).

Inevitably, Siena's incorporation into the Medicean state was reflected in the tradition of the painted tavolette. For instance, in the first Biccherna painting commissioned since the surrender, that of 1558 (fig. 64), the cloud carrying the Virgin to heaven is supported by a large shield bearing the Medici balls. In 1560 (?) a Bicchern painting commemorated Cosimo's triumphant entry into Siena in that year (fig. 65), an event that had been postponed pending the surrender of Montalcino in 1559. Accompanied by trumpeters and banners, the duke passes through a Roman-styled triumphal arch. The partially deleted and restored inscription on the Biccherna panel reads:

[. . .]TIS [. . .]DI KAMARLENGO DI BICC[HERNA]
 [. . .] ANNO FINITO PER TUTTO DICEMBRE .MDLXI.
 NEL QUAL TEMPO FECE LA PRIMA ENTRATA IN QUESTA
 CITTÀ L'ILLUSTRISSIMO ET ECCELLENTISSIMO COSIMO
 MEDICI DUCA NOSTRO.³²

The painting for 1561 represents the solemn ceremony in which the papal ambassador officially recognizes the institution of the Order of Knights of Santo Stefano,

³²Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 258, report that although the inscription reads 1561, archival sources and the depicted stemmi indicate that the officials served during the previous year. The last part of the inscription relates that "in that time occurred the first entrance into the city of the most illustrious and most excellent Cosimo Medici, our duke."

founded by Cosimo I (fig. 66). In the bicchernal picture, Cosimo kneels before monsignor Cornaro to receive the insignia of Grand Master in a ceremony that took place in the Duomo of Pisa. It is from this moment that the panels will depict private, celebratory events in the lives of the Medici family for their subject matter.³³ For example, in 1588 the subject is the wedding in Florence of Ferdinando I to Christina of Lorraine (fig. 67) and in the following year, it is the baptism of their son, Cosimo II, born 12 May 1590 (fig. 68).

Changes in the tavolette that are to be associated with the Medici regime, then, consist of the appearance of the Medici blazon, either in the picture itself or in the frame, the depiction of events that take place outside of Siena or its contado, and the treatment of the Medici's private family celebrations as though they were affairs of community involvement or interest. On the other hand, the revival of Latin in the inscriptions and the wording, which no longer adheres to the antique formula used for the names and date of the serving officers, antedates the beginning of the Medicean rule in Siena. The pictorialization of the Coronation of Paul III in Rome (1534, fig. 59) and a Spanish naval battle in the preceding year (fig. 58) point out that the range of subject matter was already being broadened. Perhaps it is not coincidental that the

³³Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 260.

resumption of the tavolette as wall paintings in the middle of the fifteenth century coincided with the new emphasis on images that aggrandized certain individuals and families or that the practice began with the humanist pope, Pius II. It also seems more than coincidental that by this time the office scene has all but disappeared. These changes reflect the influence of the growing humanistic cult of the individual as well as the concomitant loosening of a sense of community. Interestingly, at about the same time that the office scene vanished from the Sienese book covers, it appeared elsewhere.

Northern Bureau Scenes

Office scenes showing two people handling money in an interior setting were painted by Netherlandish artists of the sixteenth century.³⁴ They are associated with Quentin Metsys (1466-1530), founder of the Antwerp school, and Marinus van Reymerswaele (1497-1567). The earliest extant member of this group is Metsys's *Money-Changer and His Wife* (1514, fig. 166) in the Louvre, which subsequently served

³⁴See Keith P. F. Moxey, "The Criticism of Avarice in Sixteenth-Century Netherlandish Painting," *Northern Mannerism*, Ed. Görel Cavalli-Björkman, Stockholm, 1985: 21-34; Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Cambridge, MA, 1953; Leo van Puyvelde, "Un Portrait de Marchand par Quentin Massys et les Precepteurs d'Impôts par Marin van Reymerswale," *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art* 26 (1957): 3-23; James Snyder, *Northern Renaissance Art: Painting, Sculpture, the Graphic Arts from 1350 to 1573*, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey and New York, 1985; Basil Yamey, *Art and Accounting*, New Haven, 1989.

as a model for van Reyerswaele's renditions.³⁵ Some of these images show a married (?) couple (fig. 167), while others feature two men behind a counter (fig. 168), of which at least sixty examples survive.³⁶

In general, the latter composition consists of two men working at a desk or counter in a small, cluttered room. Coins are heaped on the table or counter; one man writes in a book as the other simultaneously points a finger at this activity while looking directly at the spectator. A half-open door and a shelf with an extinguished candle and bundles of papers and documents make up the usual elements. There are some obvious similarities to the Sieneese office scene (fig. 35): the interior setting with the usual equipment associated with book keeping, the pile of coins, and especially the presence of two men at work, one of whom is usually shown writing. In both northern and southern bureau scenes, the figures stand behind the counter so that only their upper bodies are visible. But is there more to be discerned? And what purpose did these northern images serve?

Keith Moxey explains that these paintings were expensive, comparable in size and probably cost to small

³⁵For example, in the Koninklijk Museum in Antwerp, based on an earlier work of 1534, the Alte Pinakothek, Munich (1538) and the Bargello in Florence (1538).

³⁶Yamey, 51. Examples used in this study come from the collections in Munich, Hampton Court (Windsor), National Gallery, London, and Cailleux Collection in Paris.

altarpieces or devotional panels and aimed at the wealthier group of men engaged in commerce or finance.³⁷ It is generally believed that this entire group of images were criticisms of avarice leveled at such occupations as tax collectors, lawyers, and the like, as the variety of titles by which they have been known indicates: *Two Tax Collectors, Money-Changers, Portrait of a Merchant and His Associate, Two Jewish Usurers, The Misers, and the Banker and His Wife*. The range of the criticism from mild to harsh seems to depend upon such details as the substitution of the devotional Book of Hours in Metsys's *Money-Changer and His Wife* with an account book in the versions made by van Reymerwaele and others, the degree of the office's disarray, and the distortion--at times to the point of caricature--of the face and hand of the figures. A satirical reading is sometimes apprehended due to the fantastic hats appearing in some versions of both types; the claw-like gestures of the wife or associate, as well as the ugly expression on the associate's face revealing the inner corruption of his avariciousness are similarly interpreted, as, for example, in van Reymerwaele's *Two Tax-Collectors* (fig. 169). Leo van Puyvelde identifies this second figure as the guarantor, a person responsible for the security of the coins and the proper recording of

³⁷Moxey, 30.

entries in the ledger.³⁸ The attack on avariciousness or parsimoniousness is clearly evident in the Munich panel and the nearly identical version, known as *The Misers*, in the Royal Collection at Hampton Court by a follower of Marinus van Reymerswaele (fig. 170); not only do the scribes grip their fingers tightly around the quill and coins, but also their lips and, even, ears are pursed, while their prominent wrinkles signify avarice as a sin of old age.³⁹

As the variety of titles indicates, it is sometimes difficult to determine exactly what professions are being targeted when the images look much the same. Clues to the correct identity for a given picture can perhaps be found among the clutter of objects around the room or on the persons themselves. Grace Vlam notes that eyeglasses, as for example in the Munich and Windsor panels just mentioned, could have been used to symbolize shortsightedness or being blinded by money.⁴⁰ She adds that the weird hats, which had been fashionable in the preceding century, were used in sixteenth-century Rhetorician plays for satirizing the hypocrisy and deceit of tax collectors.

Basil Yamey has studied the inscriptions, some of which can be deciphered and thus provide the key for

³⁸van Puyvelde, 20.

³⁹Grace A. H. Vlam, "The Calling of Saint Matthew in Sixteenth-Century Flemish Painting," *Art Bulletin* 59 (1977) 566.

⁴⁰Vlam, 563.

establishing the occupation pictured.⁴¹ Van Reymerwaele's painting of a couple in Madrid includes a legible heading identifying the book as an account of annuities (fig. 171), the sale of which generated municipal funds; a variation of the theme in Dresden also contains a document pertaining to municipal revenues, while yet another version in Copenhagen shows account books whose entries pertain to commodities and therefore represent mercantile transactions. Other inscriptions, in the *Banker and His Wife* in Antwerp (fig. 172), for instance, have defied decipherment.⁴²

In the bureau scenes of two men, inscriptions can likewise be useful. According to the Dutch inscription in the London painting (fig. 168), the official is recording payments made by the city; similar inscriptions occur in a numerous versions of this subject, all suggesting that the scene is taking place in a municipal office.⁴³ Sometimes the activity cannot be precisely determined even with an inscription. For example, while the inscription in the Hampton Court panel (fig. 170) seems to be simply recording the receipt from a Nicola Dati of coins of various currencies which are to be converted into "schellingen," it has been variously interpreted as showing banking, money-

⁴¹Yamey, 50-53.

⁴²Yamey, 50 and Moxey, 31, n. 3.

⁴³Yamey, 53.

changing or a transaction between merchants.⁴⁴ Yamey concludes that while a few inscriptions employed in this genre are ambiguous as to the occupation depicted, the majority seems to refer to "the work of municipal treasurers, collecting or recording the proceeds of local taxes, presumably to be used for communal purposes. The treasurers would have been accountable to the citizens or their representatives."⁴⁵ These images, then, correspond to the office scenes so often repeated on the covers of the *Biccherna* except that they arose nearly two hundred years later than their Sieneese counterparts.

With a population that doubled from 50,000 to 100,000, Antwerp in the first half of the sixteenth century was experiencing an urban and commercial growth that was at least as vigorous as those of Florence and Siena in earlier centuries.⁴⁶ Antwerp had also developed into the financial and trade center of Europe, and could boast a vigorous industrial quarter as well, although Italian banking houses still dominated the financial world at the beginning of the

⁴⁴Yamey, 53. He notes that the Nicola Dati named in the painting is sometimes identified as Niccolo Deodati, a Tuscan living in Antwerp.

⁴⁵Yamey, 53.

⁴⁶For the population of Antwerp, see Lewis W. Spitz, *The Protestant Reformation, 1517-1559*, New York, 1987, 28. At its maximum in the first half of the fourteenth century and before the Black Death, Siena had a population of 25,000 within the city. See Bortolotti, 19.

century.⁴⁷ Despite the fact that over the centuries new business techniques and activities had evolved, which, when coupled with the new humanistic ideas developed and refined in the Renaissance, gave rise to new patterns of thinking that included the spirits of capitalism and individualism, sixteenth-century European society remained essentially the same in its medieval social divisions, not to mention in its attitudes towards usury. The great majority of the population was made up of small businessmen and merchants, guildsmen, traders, lower-ranking officials, and artisans, while a much smaller segment consisted of day laborers and servants at the bottom of the social pyramid. An even smaller group of patricians, who controlled the town's social, political, and economic power, stood at the top.⁴⁸ Accompanying the growth of the city were increased numbers of tax collectors, usurers, and money-changers. Those engaged in these occupations were almost automatically guilty of committing hypocrisy, deceit, and the deadly sin of avarice.

The usual conclusion is that these pictures, which were popular in sixteenth-century Antwerp, were moralizing attacks on avarice or on the business of finance⁴⁹ and were bought by members of the occupations satirized. Moxey

⁴⁷Spitz, 28-29.

⁴⁸Spitz, 34-35.

⁴⁹Yamey, 55.

includes lawyers in the group because like tax collectors, popular sentiment against them was strongest, as evinced in contemporary popular literary works such as Sebastian Brant's *Ship of Fools* and the playwright Cornelis Everaert's *Play About Plunder* (c. 1528), in which the character "Hypocritical Deceit" describes how lawyers "profit by confusing the people" and "encourage the people to go to court in order that they may profit from it."⁵⁰ Both tax collector and lawyer were condemned for their hypocrisy and deceit. Moxey asks

Is it not possible that tax collectors and lawyers may themselves have owned pictorial satires of their own profession as a means of asserting their recognition of the abuses for which their colleagues were responsible as well as their own virtue in refusing to succumb to temptation?⁵¹

Van Puyvelde and Snyder both agree that the buyers of these paintings shared the professions being satirized, although to Snyder the figures come from the financial world. As he explains, "the absurdly archaic costumes, the obvious sardonic expressions, and the fierce concentration on the act itself could well find a home in the offices of

⁵⁰Moxey, 26.

⁵¹Moxey, 30-31.

reputable lenders and bankers as warnings to their clients of the charlatans that abound in their business."⁵² Yamey believes that the moralistic criticism contained in these works would not have seemed offensive until it passed beyond a certain point, which, however, is not clarified for us. However, he is right to point out that in either case, moralists probably would not have distinguished between good and bad practitioners of these various professions and would have condemned them all.⁵³ Or were these images, because of the old-fashioned clothing and, at least in some instances, the out-dated business practices, meant to be seen as moralizing in a more general way?⁵⁴

The scribe in the Cailleux version, usually attributed to van Reymerswaele, writes in his ledger the following biblical paraphrase in French:

L'avaricieux n'est jamais rempli d'argent . . .

⁵²van Puyvelde, 18; Snyder, 443.

⁵³Yamey, 56.

⁵⁴Peter H. Schabacker, "Petrus Christus's *Saint Eloy*: Problems of Provenance, Sources and Meaning," *Art Quarterly* 35 (1972) 117 n. 45, considers the panels entitled *Tax Collectors* are actually pictures of bankers on the basis of the interpretation of van Reymerswaele's Windsor painting made by de Roover in *Bruges*, 262f. In this instance, the exact nature of the transaction cannot be conclusively determined, but others in the series do portray tax collectors. See the discussion above. As for the anachronistic practice represented of the money-changer, see de Roover, *Bruges*, 351ff. It is Schabacker's proposal that by using anachronistic clothing and customs, the pictures did not condemn particular occupations, but rather the notion of greed.

N'ayez point souci des richesses injustes, car elles ne vous profiteront en rien au jour de la visitation et de la vengeance. Soyez donc sans avarice.⁵⁵

An admonitory message in Latin, "Just balances, just weights shall ye have" (Leviticus 19:36), once inscribed the frame of Metsys' *Money-Changer and His Wife* (fig. 168). In the image, the money-changer carefully weights coins in a scale that symbolizes equality and justice. With other carefully rendered objects, the extinguished candle and the prayer book, opened to an image of the Apocalyptic Lamb, there is a reference is to death and the Last Judgement.⁵⁶ These and other allusions to death form an integral part of images of *vanitas*, which treat the evanescence of life; the presence of relevant details in bureau scenes strongly indicate that they should be regarded as such.⁵⁷ For example, in this context, the glass vase in Metsys's panel

⁵⁵van Puyvelde, 5. The passage is a paraphrase of Luke:12, 15 and 21-34 and of Matthew:7, 19-21 (the avaricious never has enough money . . . do not be concerned with unjustly gotten riches, because they will not be profitable on Judgement Day. Therefore do not be avaricious). Van Puyvelde assigns the work to Metsys, and believes the scribe to be a portrait of a French or Flemish merchant, while the guarantor is not a portrait. He considers this to be the prototype used by van Reymerswaele.

⁵⁶For the extinguished candle as a symbol of death, see Moxey, 32, n. 8; for the identification of the Lamb in the Book of Hours, see Vlam, 566, n. 28.

⁵⁷Yamey, 56, considers the *vanitas* interpretation to be possible.

stands for emptiness, the orange for eventual decay, and the coins for earthly possessions.⁵⁸ The bird in the Hampton Court painting (fig. 170), which normally serves as a symbol for the soul, is replaced by a pair of scissors in the Munich version (fig. 169). Scissors or shears signifies the cutting of the thread of life.⁵⁹ The open door probably signifies death and departure from the world, but may also separate the righteous from the damned. Might not the half-open door and its location on the right side of the composition refer to traditional Last Judgement iconography? Similarly, could the seals hanging from some of the documents also have ties to the Last Judgement?⁶⁰ As moralistic depictions of the transience of life and the futility of worldly things, bureau scenes would have transcended criticism of the few in favor of expounding a message with a greater universal meaning and appeal. Although any profession involving finance would have been suitable, the tax-collector was chosen as a particularly

⁵⁸James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, New York, 1974, 291.

⁵⁹Hall, 280.

⁶⁰For an iconographical reading for the door, see George Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*, London, 1961, 174, under "gate." A meaning for the half-open door in these paintings has not been hitherto discussed as far as I know; neither have the seals. The seal, according to Ferguson, is the mark or signature of God (Revelation 7:2,3). See Ferguson, 180. See Vlam, 563, for her belief that the bundles of papers refer to the buying and selling of indulgences, and 565-66, for the suggestion that the scribe is comparable to St. Matthew.

apt representative for delivering the image's moral messages.

Metsys is generally believed to have been inspired by Jan van Eyck for the composition.⁶¹ In the early sixteenth century, the Venetian Marcantonio Michiel described a half-length composition he saw in Milan: "El quadretto a messe figure, del patron che fa conto con el fattor, fu de man de Juan Heic, credo Memelino, Potentino fatto nel 1440."⁶² The now lost van Eyck portrait is also reflected in an intermediate work by Petrus Christus (active in Bruges, 1444-1472/73).⁶³ Traditionally, the *Saint Eloy* (1449, fig. 173) is considered to be a commission by the goldsmiths' guild in Antwerp, but Peter Schabacker believes it to have been made for its counterpart in Bruges.⁶⁴ He connects both this work and Metsys's *Money-Changer and His Wife* to van Eyck through the type of costume, the background still-life, and the round mirror,⁶⁵ all elements that recall van Eyck's *Arnolfini Wedding* (1434, fig. 174).

⁶¹Lawrence A. Silver, "The Ill-Matched Pair by Quinten Massys," *Studies in the History of Art* 6 (1974) 107, n. 12.

⁶²Schabacker, 108 and n. 35. The passage reads: The picture with half figures, of the patron who does the accounts with the factor, by the hand of Juan Heic, whom I believe to be Memling, in 1440.

⁶³Silver, 107, n. 12.

⁶⁴See his "Peter Christus" regarding his assignation of the commission to the goldsmiths' guild in Bruges.

⁶⁵Schabacker, 108.

Giovanni Arnolfini was a wealthy merchant-financier from Lucca who lived in Bruges and enjoyed an influential position in the court of Duke Philip the Good. It has been suggested that there he might have met the painter Jan van Eyck, who, acting as a diplomatic emissary, had been sent on "distant and secret journeys" between 1426 and 1430.⁶⁶ Arnolfini also commissioned a second, single portrait by van Ecyk. In addition to Lucca, other Italian "nations" were established in Bruges beginning near the end of the thirteenth century when permanent offices in key cities replaced the Champagne fairs as sites of business. The Sieneese, who had played a leading role as merchant-financiers at the fairs, were among the Italian "nations" active in commercial and financial operations in Bruges; Italian trade and credit, in fact, were vital to the economic health of Flanders.⁶⁷ Italian colonists commissioned tapestries and paintings by Flemish artists, including altarpieces and portraits. It would be tempting to suppose that a Sieneese patron wishing to have a portrait made could have provided a description or sketch of an office scene he had seen depicted on one of the tavolette of the Biccherna or Gabella at home. Circumstantial evidence makes such a scenario a possibility, but until new evidence comes to light, this hypothesis must remain as

⁶⁶Snyder, 97, 111.

⁶⁷de Roover, *Bruges*, 13, 25, n. 31.

such.

One more point can be made regarding the presence of two men in the scene. Van Puyvelde's identification of the second man as the guarantor is singular, since if he is described at all, it is usually as an associate. This second man may have been substituted for the wife pictured in related images, or he may have simply been retained from the borrowed image, such as a Camarlingo and his scribe (figs. 27 and 29). Michiel described the two men in van Eyck's now lost portrait as a patron and agent. The close physical contact between the two men, especially in the van Reymerwaele versions, suggests them to be in a working, rather than a client/agent, relationship, especially since they are on the same side of the counter.⁶⁸ Once transmitted, the Sieneese office scene was transformed by the artist, who turned the scribe, because he was shown writing, into the prominent figure, while he relegated the Camarlingo to an accessorial role.

What, then, can be said of the relationship between the tavolette of the Sieneese financial offices and Flemish bureau scenes? Although they may very well represent the development of an artistic motif in separate times and

⁶⁸Carpi, 509, notes that loan bankers, i.e., moneylenders, frequently "engaged in business with two officials, the 'cancelliere' and 'camerlengo', as well as with several notaries, sometimes acting in their official capacities, sometimes on their own account, and sometimes as guarantors for other clients."

separate locations, whose similarities in appearance had been conditioned by similar economic conditions and practices, a transmission of the Sienese office scene to the north cannot be ruled out. However, I believe that a direct connection between Siena and Antwerp in the sixteenth century would have been less likely than between Siena and Bruges during the previous century. Earlier, of course, other avenues had provided the means for transmitting Sienese artistic ideas to the north: the cycle of fairs and the papal court at Avignon. In the fifteenth century, the Biccherna maintained a degree of importance and prestige that in the next century dwindled to the point where its tavolette would not seem to have inspired emulation. Sixteenth-century tavolette, moreover, did not bear representations of the office scene.

Both the Sienese tavolette and the bureau scenes painted in Antwerp groups served as moral *exempla*, but with an important difference: the former represents a positive example, and the latter, a negative one that is also characterized by a strong religious overtone in keeping with contemporary attention of the Reformation on the idea of salvation. The Sienese products are striking because of the early date of their appearance and for having originated an image of money handling on the basis of a constructive, rather than critical, viewpoint.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

By the dawn of the thirteenth century, Siena had a growing population and a healthy economy based on agriculture, wool manufacturing, and, most importantly, money-changing and lending, which was carried out either at the papal court or in northern centers, the Champagne fairs, Marseilles, and London. Many families of the old nobility took part in these businesses; the Piccolomini, for instance, had formed a great commercial company by 1193.¹ At this time, the Biccherna was more than the primary financial office of the Sienese republic, functioning as its leading administrative office besides.² Its officers, the four Provveditori, became the driving force of all governmental activities under the Nove.³ For the position of Camarlingo, monks were preferred at various times, not only for their honesty, but also for their financial expertise. Beginning in 1257 with the Cistercian monk Don Ugo, clerics were chosen almost exclusively for the post until their ranks were decimated by the Black Death in 1348. Monks were again recruited until about

¹Bortolotti, 19.

²Mario Ascheri, *Antica legislazione della Repubblica di Siena*, Siena, 1993, 4.

³Ascheri, *Antica legislazione*, 14.

1375, and also for a time beginning in 1451.⁴ The Provveditori, on the other hand, had always been chosen from the highest classes of the laity, the aristocracy or the richest and most important merchant-banker families. Lay Camarlinghi also came from these high-ranking groups, as did the officials of the Gabella, a magistracy created near the end of the thirteenth century for the purpose of collecting most kinds of taxes, including indirect taxes, or gabelle.

At least from the early thirteenth century until the middle of the sixteenth century, these two magistracies were of central importance to the commune, but today they are chiefly remembered for the painted covers that once held the commune's accounting records. The series is a remarkable testament to the officials who continued the tradition for over four centuries. Bicchernal records show a Gilio di Pietro to have been the artist of the don Ugo cover, which is the oldest surviving cover with a painting. That these covers represented a popular custom is seen in their emulation by other Sienese organizations such as the Camera del Comune or Ospedale S. Maria della Scala; however, these covers were sporadic in production and lack dated inscriptions.

⁴In 1451 the Consiglio generale reinstated the practice of selecting a cleric as Camarlingo in order to maintain better control over the actions of public officials. See Morandi, *Le biccherne senesi*, 9.

Until this study, an examination devoted to the images of seated Camarlingo and their descendents, the office scene, has not been made. However, it seemed highly significant to me that the theme was retained and elaborated upon over a long period of time, a fact which would indicate its continuing relevance for patrons and audience alike.

It was perhaps not coincidental that the custom of painting the Camarlingo's portrait on the cover of his ledger began with the first appointment of a monk to that position. The richest and most important Cistercian abbey in Tuscany would certainly have had illuminated manuscripts, some of them bearing portraits not only within the pages, but possibly on their covers as well. Late Antique ivory diptychs were often dismantled and reused in cathedrals and monasteries as part of the sumptuous bindings of treasured liturgical books. Roman consular diptychs, on the other hand, were reused in their entirety, and thus have survived despite their secular images. The consular diptych as a likely antecedent to the Biccherna covers of the Duecento is supported by the presence of certain key features such as the inscriptions that are dated according to the term in office of the leading magistrate and portraits of the officials that are shared by the tavolette. The overall standardized format with variations limited to details is also common to both, as is

their commemorative function. Due in part to mercenary raids, such as those led by the famous Sir John Hawkwood,⁵ most of the treasures of San Galgano have been lost,⁶ making it nearly impossible to determine whether the monastery itself possessed any consular diptychs. However, the close contact maintained among mother and daughter churches, i.e., Clairvaux, Casamari, and San Galgano,⁷ would have increased the odds for coming in contact with such valuable objects.

Ecclesiastic seals, on the other hand, were much more numerous and widely utilized by all ranks of the clergy. Like consular diptychs and bicchernal covers, they bear

⁵In 1365 the condottiero used San Galgano as his base from which to pillage the Sienese contado. See Lekai, 96.

⁶Beginning in 1503, it became customary to entrust San Galgano to an abbot in a commendam with the result that the abbey was neglected and its treasures sold off. See Albergo and Vatti, 24; Canestrelli, 53-60. The few surviving precious objects include the pala of the high altar by Giovanni di Paolo (c. 1470) and an ornate reliquary in the form of a gothic temple, once containing the head of San Galgano (end of thirteenth century). One scene shows the young Galgano praying in front of the sword-cross fixed in the rock. Another reliquary of silver, bronze, and enamel (c. 1315), a gilded bronze crozier (c. 1320), and a gilt bronze and enamel "crown" complete this small collection. See Albergo and Vatti, 31; Canestrelli, 101-02.

⁷See Elizabeth A. R. Brown, "The Cistercians in the Latin Empire of Constantinople and Greece, 1204-1276," *Traditio* XIV (1958) 110-11. The organization of the monasteries is based on the Charter of Charity by Stephen Harding, 1119, which stipulated that abbots of Cistercian houses attend meetings of the Chapter General every year and the father abbot (of the mother house) visit the daughter houses annually. For the geneology of San Galgano back to Clairvaux via Casamari, see Amante and Martini, 89.

inscriptions; some seals carry the resemblance further in that their image depicts the office-holder in the pose borrowed from author portraits. Communes and the officials of its magistracies, including the Camarlingo, also employed seals for the purpose of validating the documents to which they were afixed. Acting as signatures, they also betokened the authority of the seal's owner. The Camarlingo's image on the cover could well be thought of as a painted seal that incorporated similar ideas.

Whereas the first painted cover used the author portrait as a model, the image was almost immediately adapted with the addition of an aedicule, a table and coins to reflect the Camarlingo's duties. In order to appreciate this transformation, it was necessary to examine contemporary attitudes towards money and the money-handler. Originating in the ancient world, where it was closely intertwined with religion, money fell out of use at the end of the Roman Empire to reappear along with a revitalized European economy in the Middle Ages. By then, however, it was thoroughly believed that money was evil and in opposition to God. Those who were associated with money, that is, merchants, financiers, money-changers, rich men and misers, were equally evil, although the greatest revilement was reserved for usury and the usurer. Eventually, usury came to be defined as illicit profit in cases of loans. As argued by Scholastics, usury was sinful

on many grounds: it was unnatural for money to beget more money; it was a sin of cupidity; it was a sin against charity; it was theft and a sin against justice.

Nevertheless, the hope of gaining great wealth attracted many men into lucrative financial occupations, including usurious moneylending.

Licensed moneylenders served as the scapegoat for society's insecurities regarding the transition to a different, monied economy with a new set of morals. The Church coped unevenly with the changes, sometimes condemning, other times relenting, in its waffling position against the rise of a new economic and social reality. One manifestation of this shift in attitude was the relaxation of the prohibition against usury itself, whereby a modest interest on an usurious loan came to be tolerated as a permissible recompense for the usurer's effort or time.⁸ Not surprisingly, public sentiment against the usurer remained strong, since many people using his services were charged up to 40 percent or more for interest. Equally understandable was the public zeal for hearing the preaching friars describe in dramatic terms the inevitable and horrible fate of the usurer to suffer the tortures of Hell until the end of time. However, the automatic assignment of those engaged in certain professions to Hell

⁸The concept of time itself was removed from the patrimony of God to man; Siena's Torre del Mangia was fitted with a large clock in 1359. See Gurevich, 278-79.

could be avoided since at the end of the twelfth century, the Church had added the intermediate realm of Purgatory into the universal scheme in order to take into account the growing complexity of a new urban society. Because the slightest hope for profit was deemed sinful by the Church, the creation of Purgatory was of great benefit and comfort to all those engaged in commerce and banking. Through confession, repentance, and atonement, primarily as the restitution of ill-gotten gains, these men might hope to find eventual salvation. Not only could restitution be disguised as philanthropic gifts because it sounded less odious, but rich men might also shorten their time in Purgatory by spending large sums of money as atonement; sometimes they were absolved from making any restitution whatsoever.⁹

Part of the inability of the Church to formulate a consistent policy on the problem of the restitution of usurious profit lay in the fact that it represented only a portion of a much larger problem, that being the role of the Church in an increasingly secularized world. Revisions

⁹Nelson, "Merchant Prince," 110-12, describes how usurers were supposed to give back all ill-gotten money to their victims as restitution; however, when it is uncertain who the victims were or they could not be found or were far away, it was permissible for the usurer to make restitution "to the poor," who often turned out to be a monastic foundation. Special ecclesiastical licenses allowed many religious establishments to receive a portion or quota of the restitution, providing thereby opportunity for the unscrupulous diversion of funds.

in concepts of work, the organization of the social hierarchy, and of man's place and function within society also reflect the new terms according to which men, especially in independent Italian communes, had begun to conduct their lives. Work no longer was perceived as shameful punishment but came to be seen as an honorable activity, and even the means to salvation. Voicing the belief of businessmen of the later Middle Ages and early Renaissance, the Dominican Giovanni Dominici, declared that wealth was a sign of God's grace.¹⁰ It also became a means of improving a family's social status, a formerly unknown ambition that was fueled by the circulation of money. Ambitious men could earn esteem, power, and wealth through public office.¹¹

The Camarlinghi and Provveditori of the Biccherna acquired great prestige on account of the importance of their positions in the most distinguished administrative and financial office of Siena. As one of their functions, they could be required to lend their personal fortunes to the republic; their wealth became a civic virtue. That these men were willing to contribute to the welfare of the state in this way was partially based on the commonly held Thomistic Aristotelian tenets that man's full potential was achieved only in the state, the fulfillment of which would

¹⁰Rossiaud, 170.

¹¹Murray, 81-85.

link him directly to God.¹² Therefore, not only would good citizenship garner public esteem, but it would also benefit the community and increase one's chance of ultimate salvation at the same time. Both wealth and political power were perceived as issuing from God.¹³ There was, in addition, financial profit in the way of interest earned on the amount lent to the state. Wealth and the wealthy were glorified for bringing stability, prosperity, and security to the community.¹⁴

Except in cases involving manifest usurers, negative attitudes toward money and the money handler softened and were being reversed through the course of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, at least among the monied classes, who clearly were setting themselves apart from smaller-scaled merchants. On the other hand, the belief in the evil nature of money was kept alive in the minds of the people through the frequent retelling of *exempla* about usurers, misers, and the avaricious. In early visual representations, money was almost always depicted as the main attribute of Avarice, a vice commonly juxtaposed against the virtue, Charity. Sometimes Avarice is shown hoarding money in a full coffer or clutches a bag of coins, sometimes being overcome in battle, or having already been

¹²Ullmann, 260.

¹³Martines, 125.

¹⁴Rossiaud, 170.

defeated, being punished by the victorious virtue. In other images, Charity, or Largitas, redistributes the hoarded wealth and treasures to the needy. The figure of Avarice was often grotesquely distorted to suggest inner corruption. Devils often tormented the vice or one of its manifestations--rich fool, miser, or usurer--with his own coins, coffer, and moneybags. In the Arena Chapel frescoes, Giotto retained the traditional, negative iconography of money since usury was one of its themes. In fact, except for the Biccherna covers, there are no positive images of money handling dating from the Duecento of which I am aware.

Positive oral *exempla* were presented by a preacher to his audience, however, in the form of hagiographic stories. They were utilized by the class of men who served as officials for the Biccherna by making their own motives and actions comparable to those of the saints and their handling of money interpretable as beneficial to the commune. It is in this context, I believe, that they are particularly close to Ambrogio Lorenzetti's depiction of idealized Sienese life in the city and contado that are painted in the Palazzo Pubblico. Although vivid and myriad narrative details are included, any sign of banking activity is oddly missing, which following Starn, may have been due to a lack of a conventional model for this

particular genre scene in pattern books.¹⁵ However, it might not be improper to relate the frescoes to the images on the covers of the Biccherna ledgers where those missing and all-important citizens are to be found, and where, moreover, they are working as diligently for the community as the artisans and craftsmen in the fresco.

For the first time in the 1340 cover, the genre scene includes a customer, whose small size recalls the hierarchical sizing of the figures in the *Allegory of Good Government*. The bicchernal image is to be associated with the school of Ambrogio Lorenzetti;¹⁶ Diringier attributes it to Ambrogio himself, whereas Carli and Miklos Boskovits concede the probability of such an attribution on the basis of its high quality of painting.¹⁷ From this date, the Biccherna cover will repeat the office scene almost exclusively at least until the early part of the next century. Undoubtedly, it had a special significance and served as a visual *exemplum* for the viewer, who not only was predisposed to read it metaphorically, but even to look

¹⁵Starn, 24, 31, n. 53. He overlooks the illustrations in various *Decretum* manuscripts.

¹⁶Ceppari, Sinibaldi, and Zarrilli, 92.

¹⁷Diringier, *Illuminated Book*, 337; Carli, *Les tablettes*, 20, sees a similarity between these figures and the 24 councilors in the *Allegory of Good Government*; also Boskovits, 337, n. 26.

for multiple meanings.¹⁸

The transformation of the image from a representation of the Camarlingo to a narrative scene followed in the wake of the development of the narrative in monumental art, a movement that made itself felt in manuscript illuminations as well with the result that adaptable patterns were to be found in the illustrations in the *Decretum Gratiani*, the preeminent law book of its time. Whereas French and Flemish artists emphasized technical finesse over narrative innovations,¹⁹ Italian artists looked to the everyday world for some of their models, seen, for example, in *Causa XIV*, which deals with the problem of money and clerics; their illustrations were based on what surely were actual monetary transactions between moneylender and client. In these depictions of money transactions, the overt negative emotionalism usually associated with imagery involving money is avoided.

For the duecentesque portraits of the Camarlinghi, the pattern was provided by that of the figure ensconced in a niche. His particular pose and gesture is similar to an illustration of *Causa XIV* in Ms. 678 of the Bibliotheque Municipale in Reims (fig. 175); it is also very close to a

¹⁸This was traditional for allegorical biblical exegesis in which the four levels of meaning, literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical, can be deciphered. Dante employed this system with modification in *The Divine Comedy*. See Cassell, 5-8.

¹⁹Melnikas, Vol I., 54.

number of figures used by Guido da Siena not only in the Reliquary Shutters, but in the wings of an important *Maestà* (fig. 176), which Piero Torriti believes were made not long after 1262 when the altar was transferred to San Domenico.²⁰ Despite the ubiquity of the motif, the contemporaneity, proximity, and religious context of models as they appeared specifically in Guido's altarpieces make them a likely source for the Biccherna examples.

The last group of images which bears upon the development of the Biccherna office scene is the *pittura infamante*, popularly used as a punishment for criminals and a deterrent for other citizens, especially in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Tuscany. The group presents a most interesting foil to the covers in that its purpose was to defame rather than praise by means of officially sanctioned images. Many of the criminals were embezzlers, the bankrupted, or others guilty of commercial crimes. A degree of likeness to the criminal depicted is presumed, but in any event, the image was accompanied by identifying inscriptions and sometimes by the criminal's stemma. If the vicarious punishment and insult inflicted upon the criminals pictured were felt to be real, would not the praise and glory of the officers pictured on the covers be perceived as equally efficacious? Instead of being

²⁰Piero Torriti, *La Pinacoteca Nazionale di Siena. I dipinti dal XII al XV secolo*, Genoa, 1977, 28.

condemned for criminal behavior--criminal because it endangered the stability of the state--the good service of the officers, as it is allegorized on the covers, is being lauded.

In addition to the depiction of money handling, inscriptions are a salient feature of the tavolette. As with the book covers, the ivory diptychs, seals, *pitture infamanti*, and the *Good Government* frescoes examined in this study utilized them, and in Italian versions of the *Decretum*, text and illustrations worked together in a particularly close relationship. In all cases, inscription and picture complement and add to the other's message. On the book covers, inscription, picture, and stemmi identify the Camarlingo by name and representation, and the Provveditori by name and coats of arms. Ritualized poses and wording promote the cover as an object of solemn nature and lend it greater importance and dignity. Indeed, there is also the real probability that the very repetition of the office scene was deliberate, that, like the events and miracles recounted in hagiographic *exempla* which verified the saint's sanctity,²¹ it represented the accumulated weight of authority in confirming the virtue and performance of the officials.

Moreover, the images of the seated Camarlingo and its descendent, the office scene, functioned as oaths of

²¹Ryan, xvii.

office, and as such, are closely allied to seals used for validating or authenticating documents. On some seals an oath-taking itself is reenacted, but on others it is implied in images of a more narrative nature. Oath-taking was an integral part of the commune's governmental system; it was a ceremony performed by all elected officials at the beginning of each term in office.²² Similar ceremonies were perpetuated into the sixteenth century after subjugation by the Medici, but by then they had become almost totally meaningless.²³

In the Renaissance, art increasingly became a medium for exalting personal achievement and fame,²⁴ and as a response to the resulting changes in artistic tastes and values, the office scene was dropped as a subject in the fifteenth century. Once their power seemed secured, aristocratic and wealthy office holders preferred images that frankly glorified their own families and caste. In addition, the waning importance of the Biccherna made its tavolette a less prestigious vehicle for advertising power and status. By the time Siena became part of the Medici state, the economic, social, and political alienation between ruling elite and the rest of the city's population

²²Hyde, 97.

²³Hook, *una città*, 167.

²⁴Mary E. Hazard, Renaissance Aesthetic Values: 'Example,' for Example," *Art Quarterly* 2:1 (1979): 1-36.

was well advanced. Until the fall of the Republic in 1555, the subjects chosen for the tavolette were related in some way to Sienese interests, but afterwards completely reflected the Medicean domination.

Interestingly, the office scene reappears in the sixteenth century in Flemish paintings and I have suggested that the two groups might be connected in some way, perhaps through the world of bankers and finance in Antwerp, or better, in Bruges in the fifteenth century.²⁵ Whatever the connection between the Sienese and the Flemish office scenes, they differed greatly in intention. Northern versions couched moralizing lessons in threatening terms, its imagery warning the viewer away from avariciousness. Sienese office scenes, although two centuries older, present a more modern viewpoint of the money handler, in that the negative, medieval attitude, especially notable in the paintings of van Reyerswaele and his followers, is absent. In its place, Sienese artists praised the particular money handler who was also a respected Treasury official.

Messages bespeaking competence, legitimacy, and necessity were conveyed by borrowing and adapting literary and visual models, both past and present, to fit their

²⁵It is suggested in "la Biccherna di Siena a Bruxelles" that Sienese art of the Trecento had not become known in the North only through Simone Martini's move to Avignon, and that Jan van Eyck and Petrus Christus paid attention to Italian art, 68.

requirements. The change to the office scene from simpler representations of the seated Camarlingo closely follows similar developments occurring in other branches of art and as seen in Lorenzetti's frescoes, the illustrations of the *Decretum Gratiani*, and judiciary seals. All began to exploit the greater narrative and didactic possibilities of their imagery just as the skillful preacher had embellished his sermon with richly detailed *exempla*. In this manner, the office scene on the Biccherna cover functioned as a visual *exemplum*, and through its symbolic narrative, celebrated and validated the official and his office, his activities, and his social group. The image was the epitome of the leading Sienese citizen in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when civic consciousness was at its height.

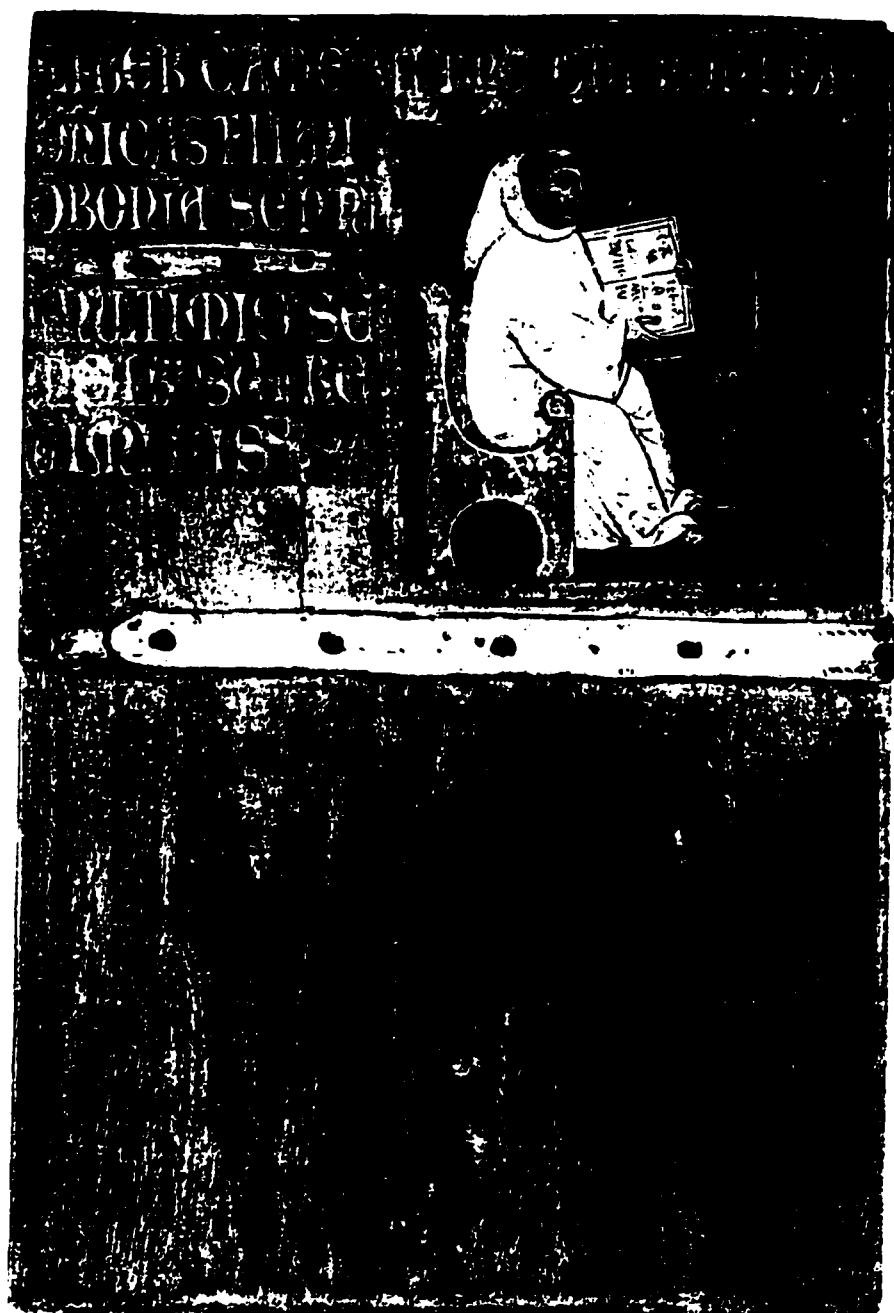


Figure 1. Gilio di Pietro. *Don Ugo*. Biccherna cover. 1258.

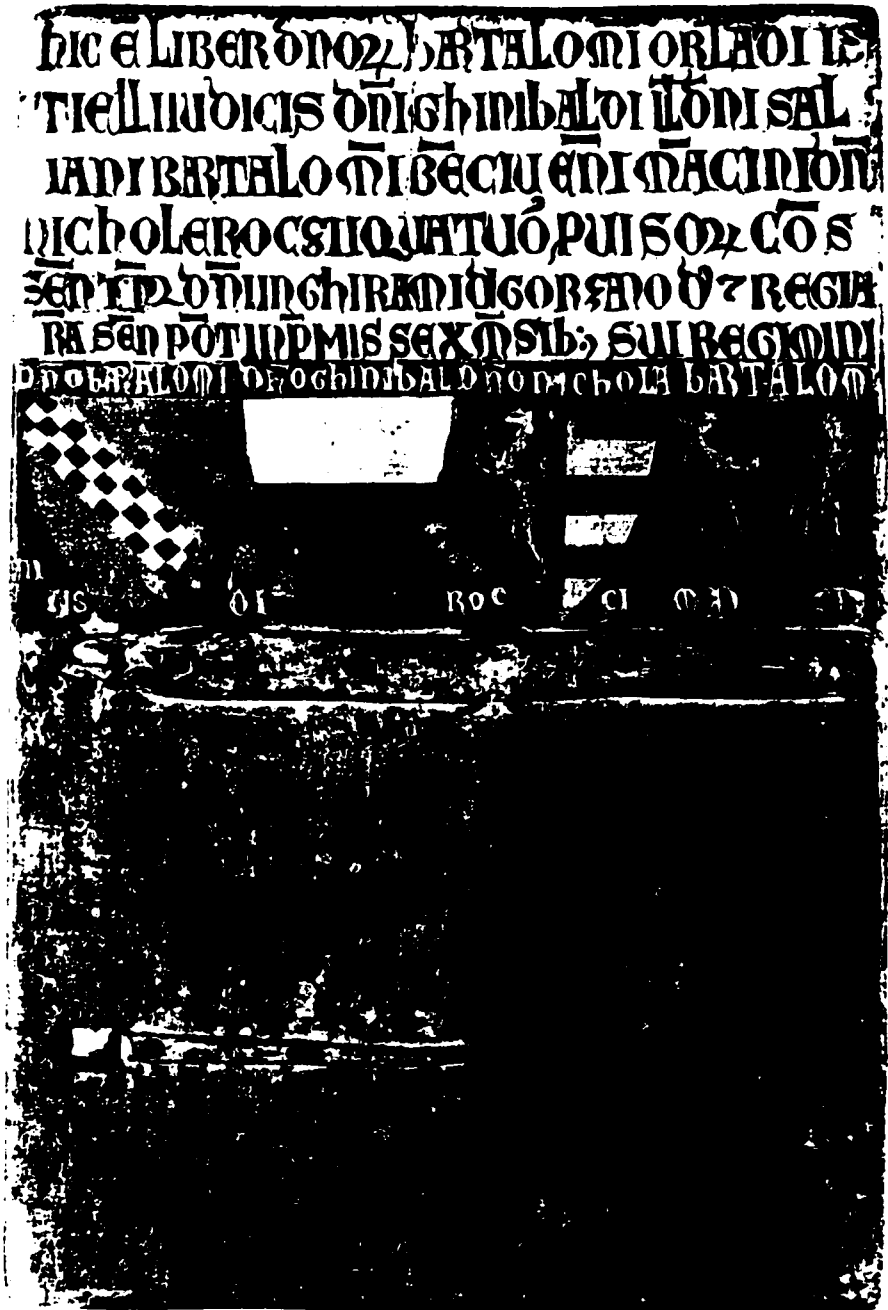


Figure 2. Stemmi of Provveditori. Biccherna cover. 1263.

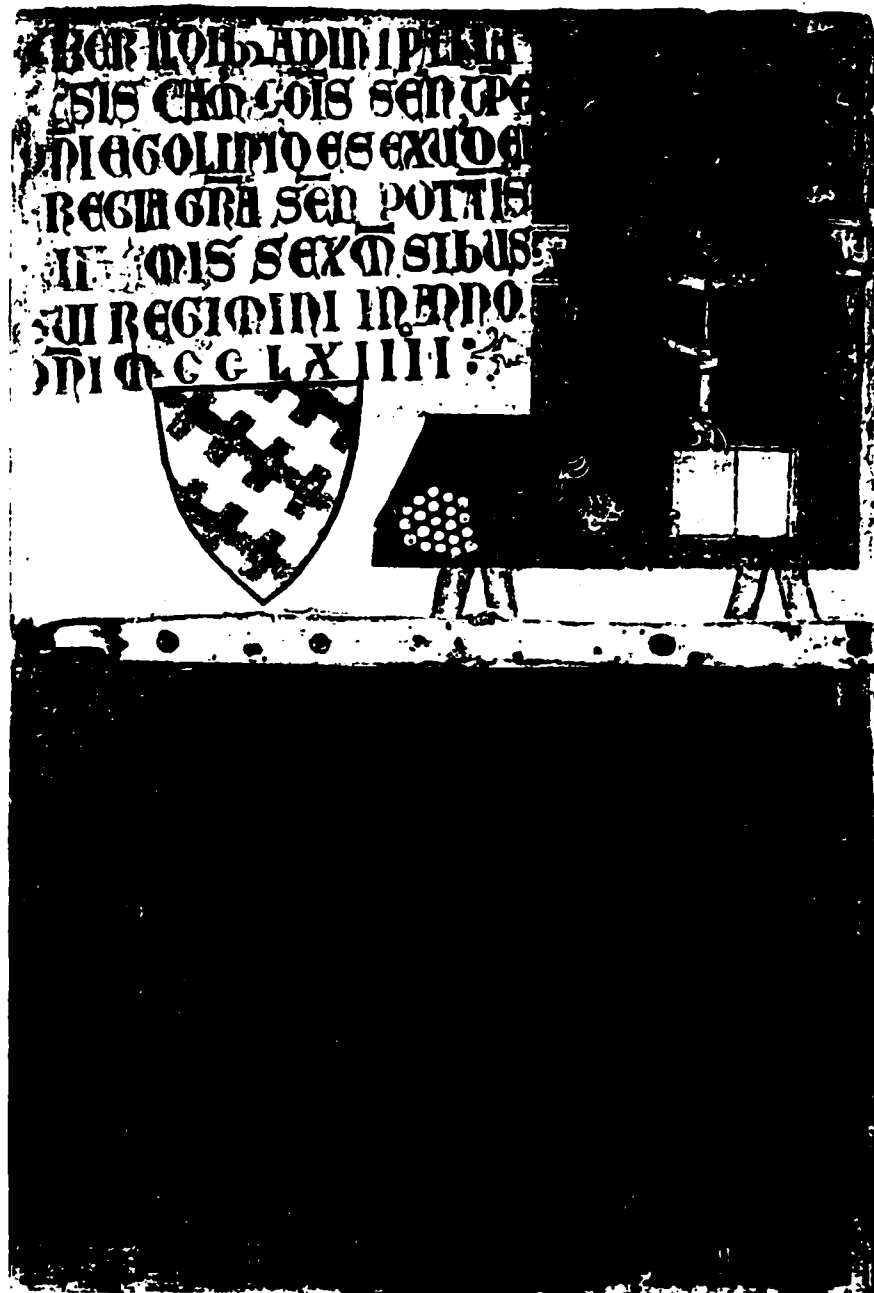


Figure 3. Dietisalvi di Speme. *Ildibrandino Pagliaresi*.
Biccherna cover. 1264.

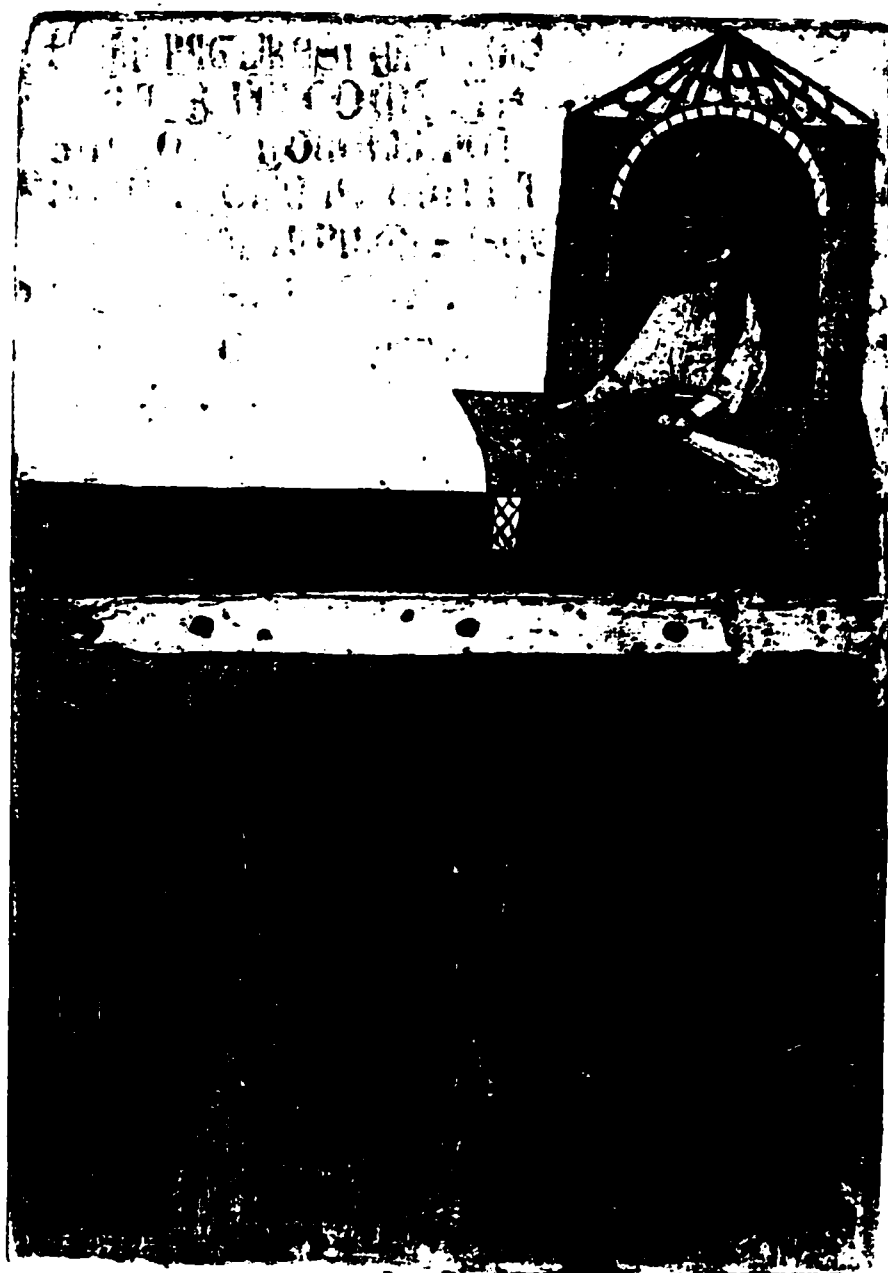


Figure 4. Dietisalvi di Speme. *Ranieri Pagliaresi*.
Biccherna cover. 1270.

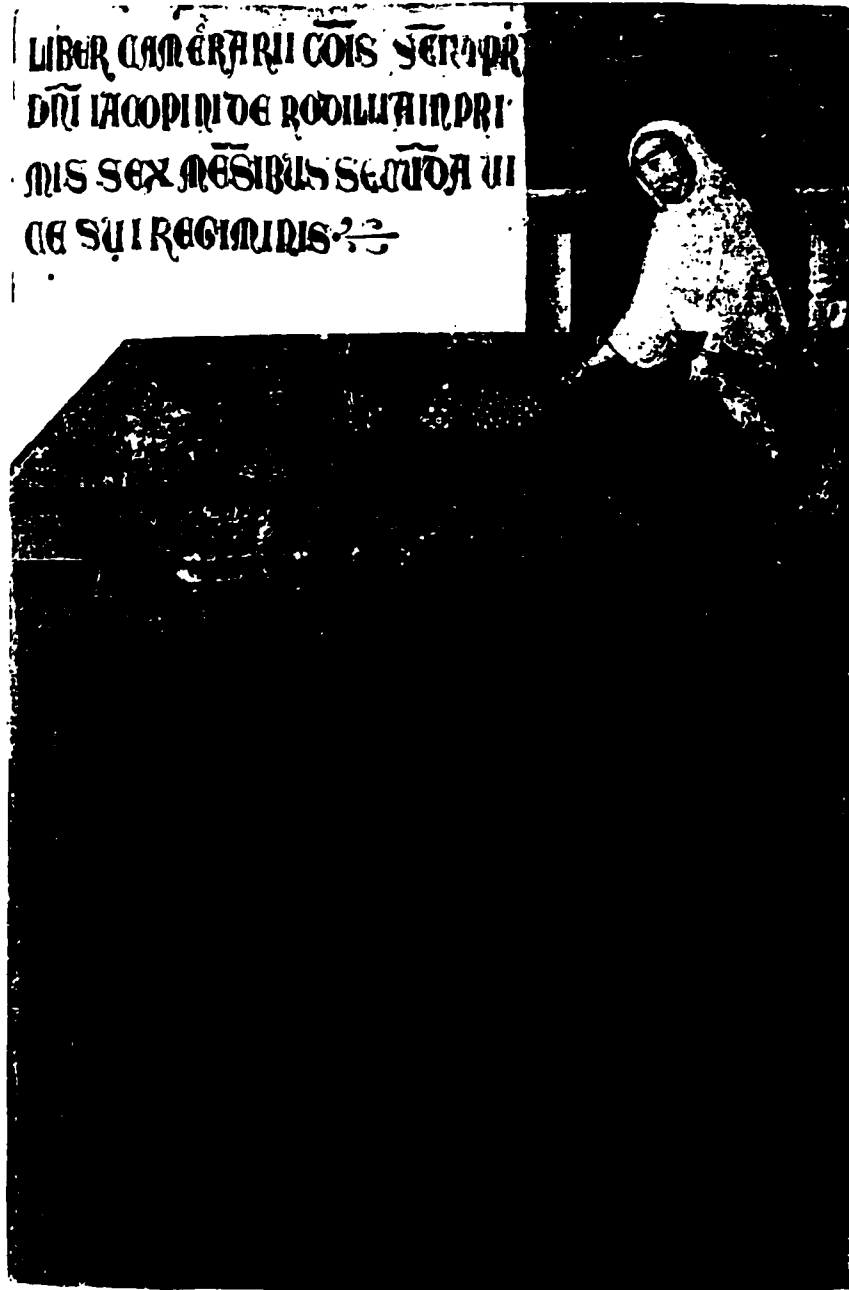


Figure 5. Guido di Graziano (?). *Don Bartolomeo*.
 Biccherna cover. 1276.



Figure 6. Rinaldo. *Don Bartolomeo Alessi*.
Biccherna cover. 1278.

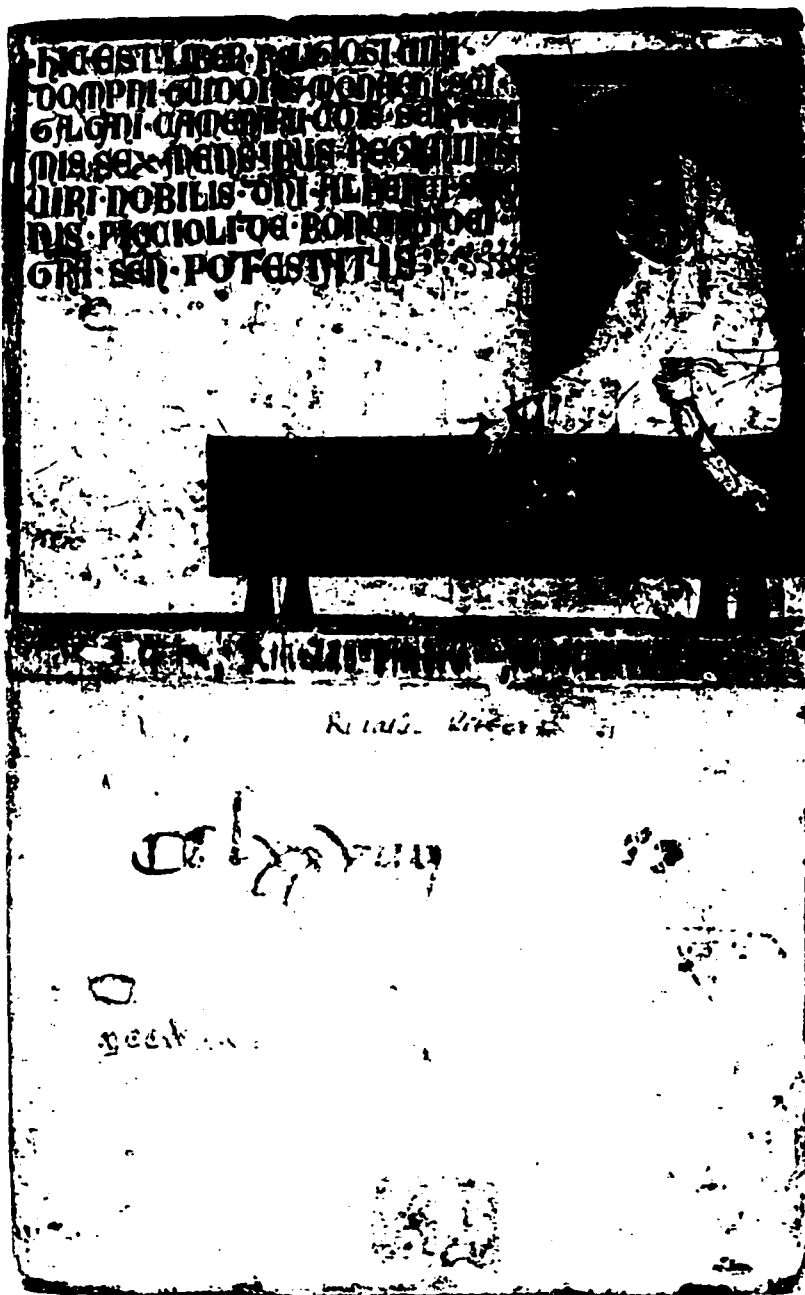


Figure 7. Guido di Graziano (?). *Don Guido*.
Biccherna cover. 1280.

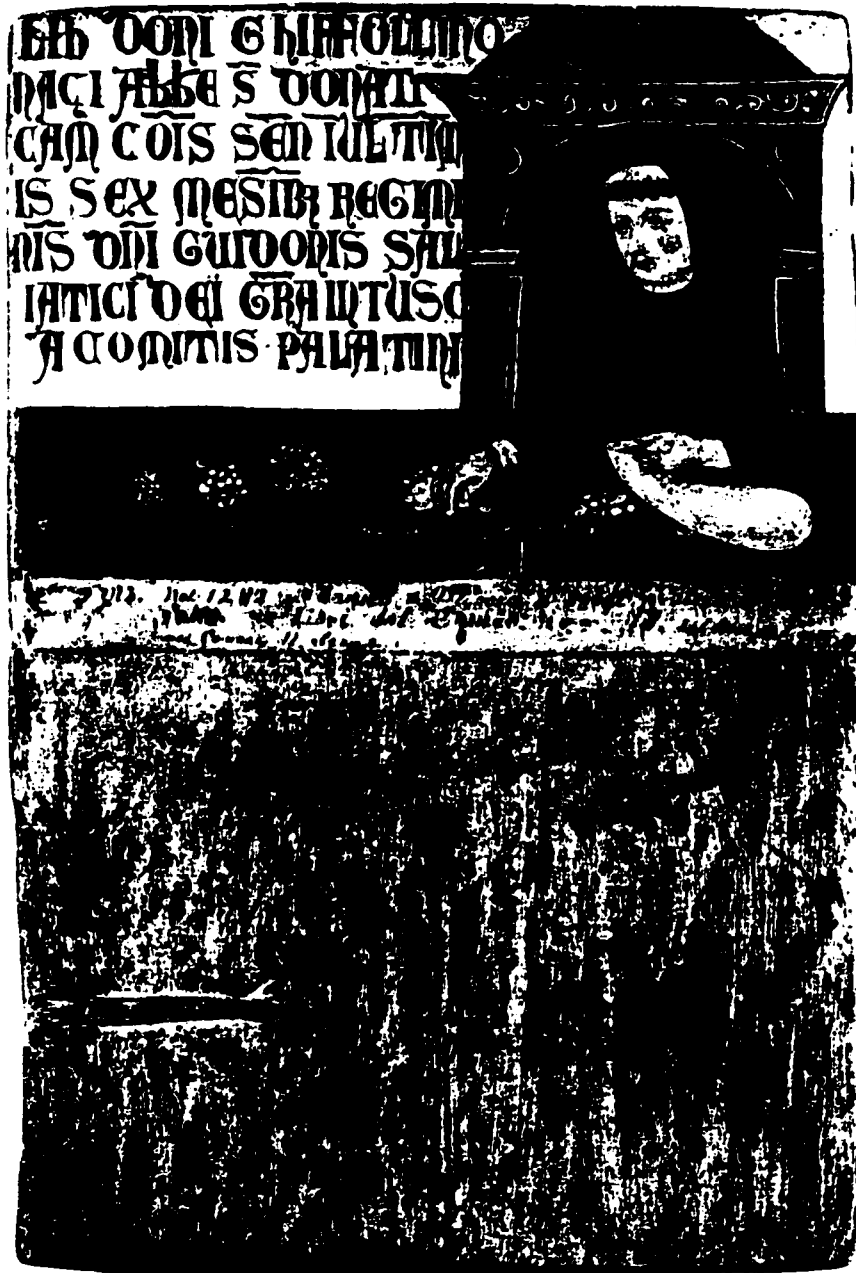


Figure 8. Dietisalvi di Speme. *Don Griffolo*.
Biccherna cover. 1282.

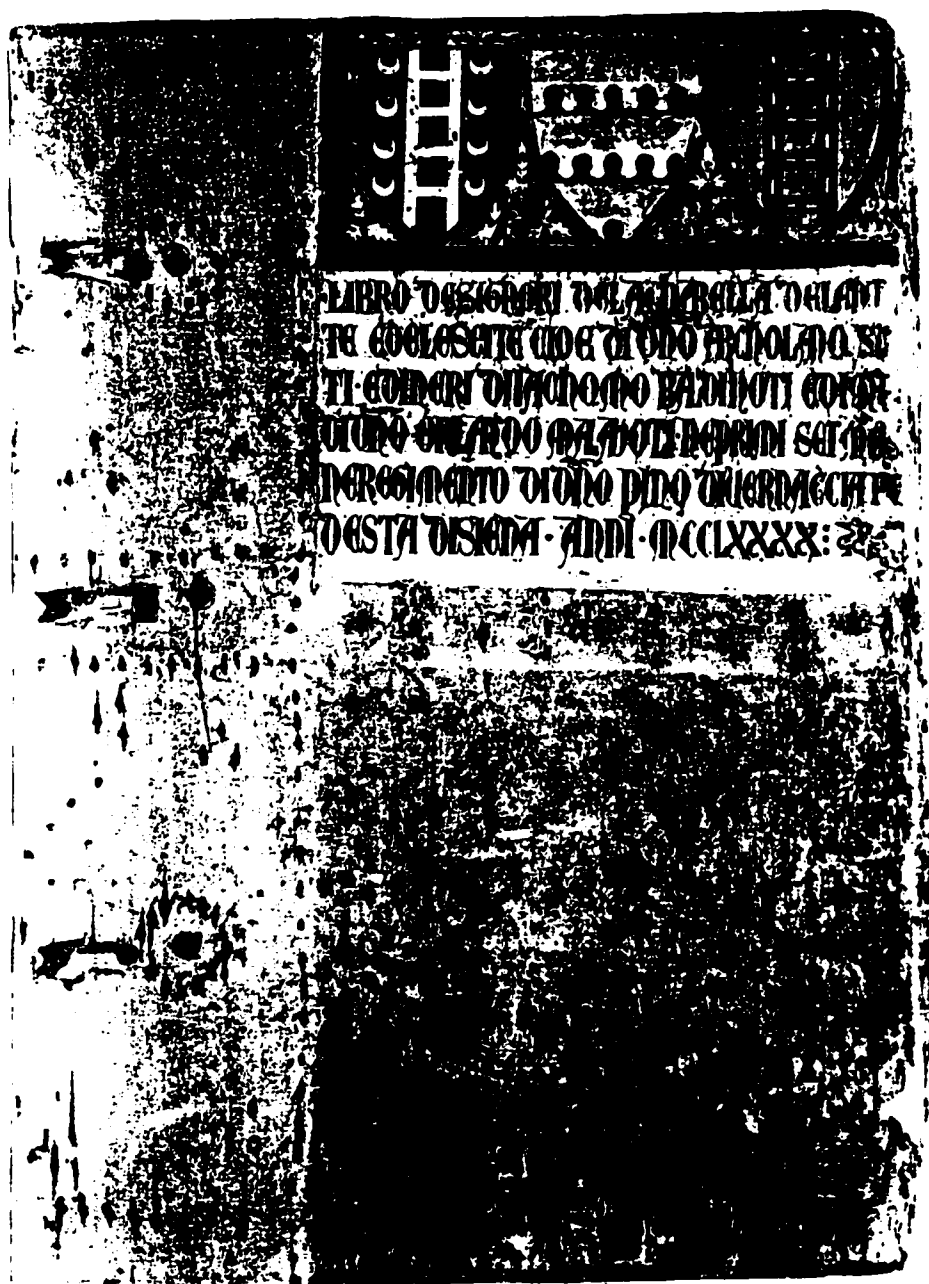


Figure 9. Massarello di Gilio. Stemmi of Tre Esecutori.
 Gabella cover. 1291.

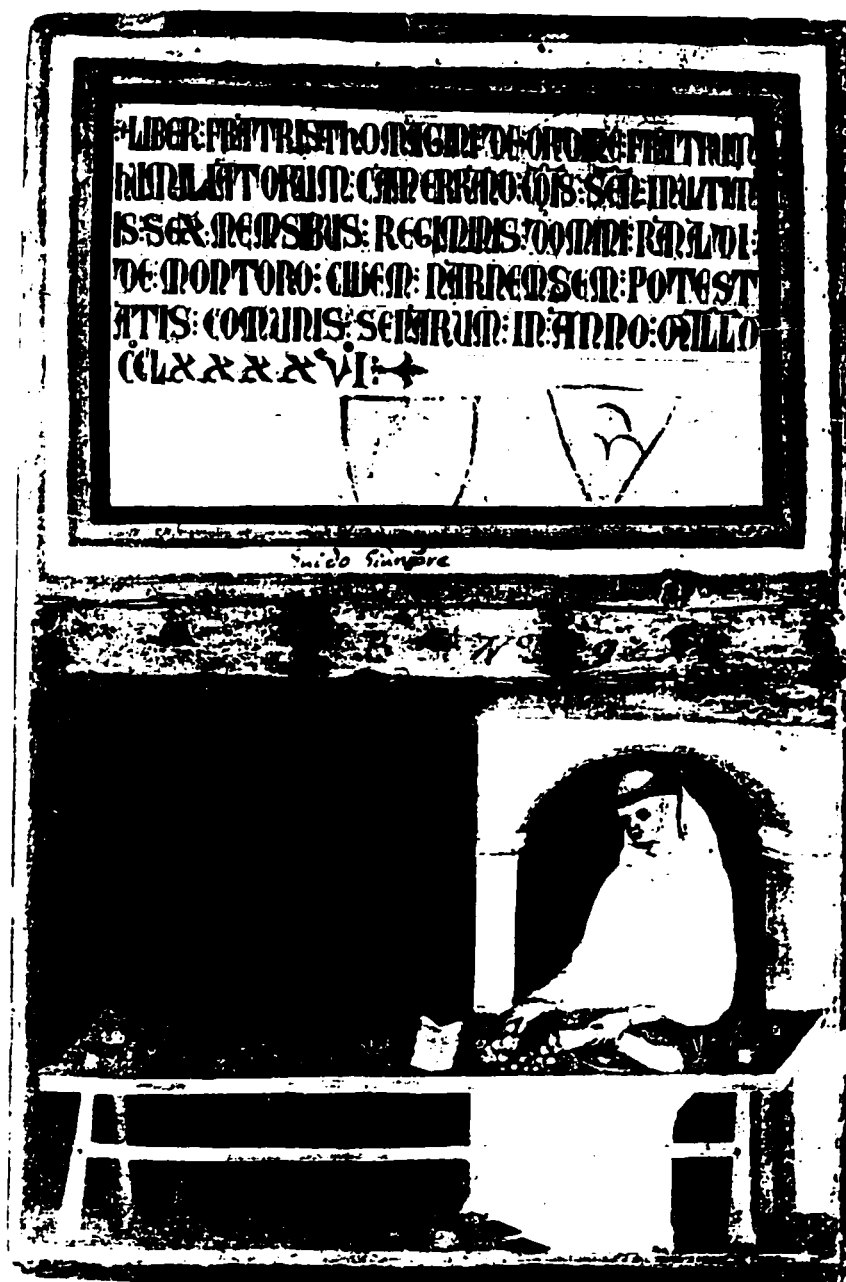


Figure 10. *Don Tommasino*. Biccherna cover. 1296.

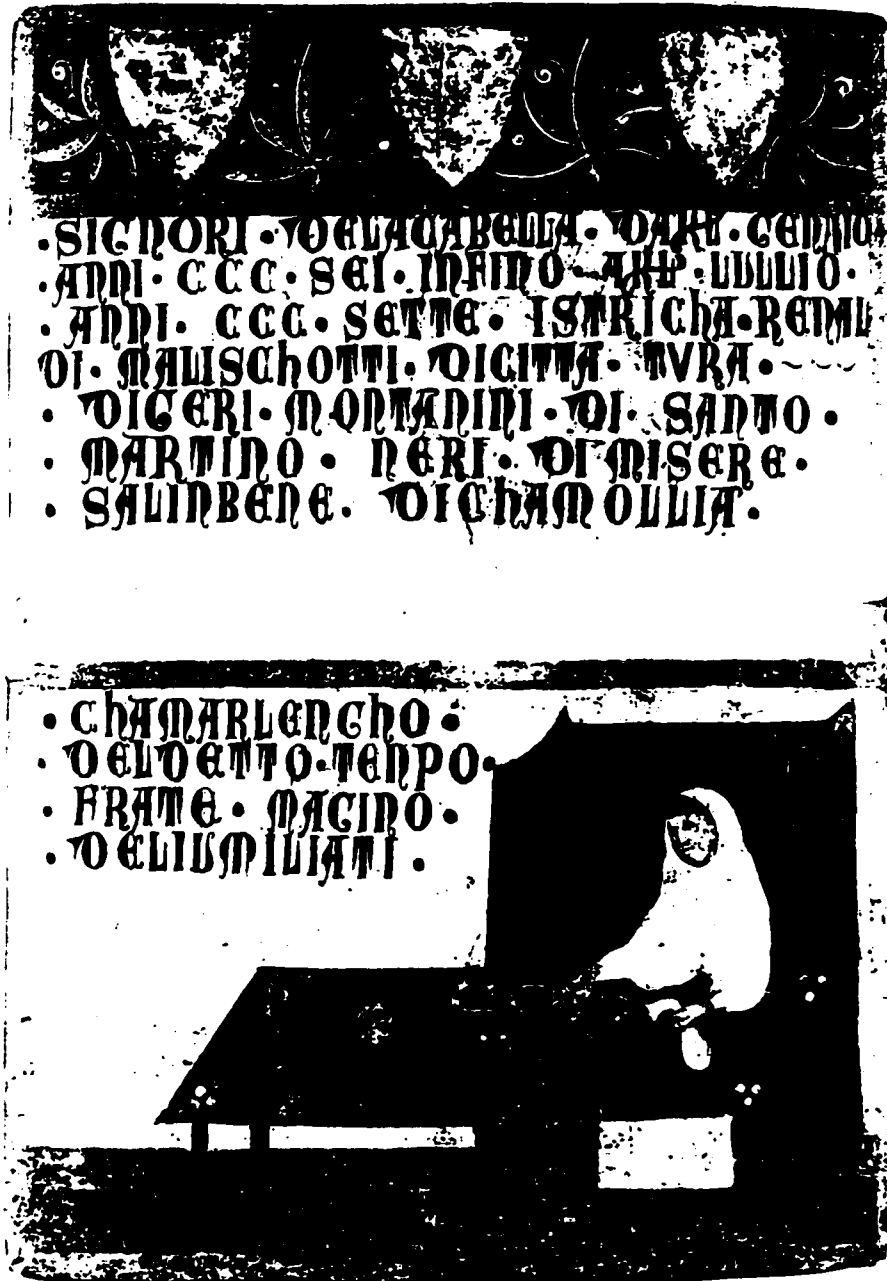


Figure 11. Don Magino. Gabella cover. 1307.



Figure 12. *Don Meo*. Biccherna cover. 1310.

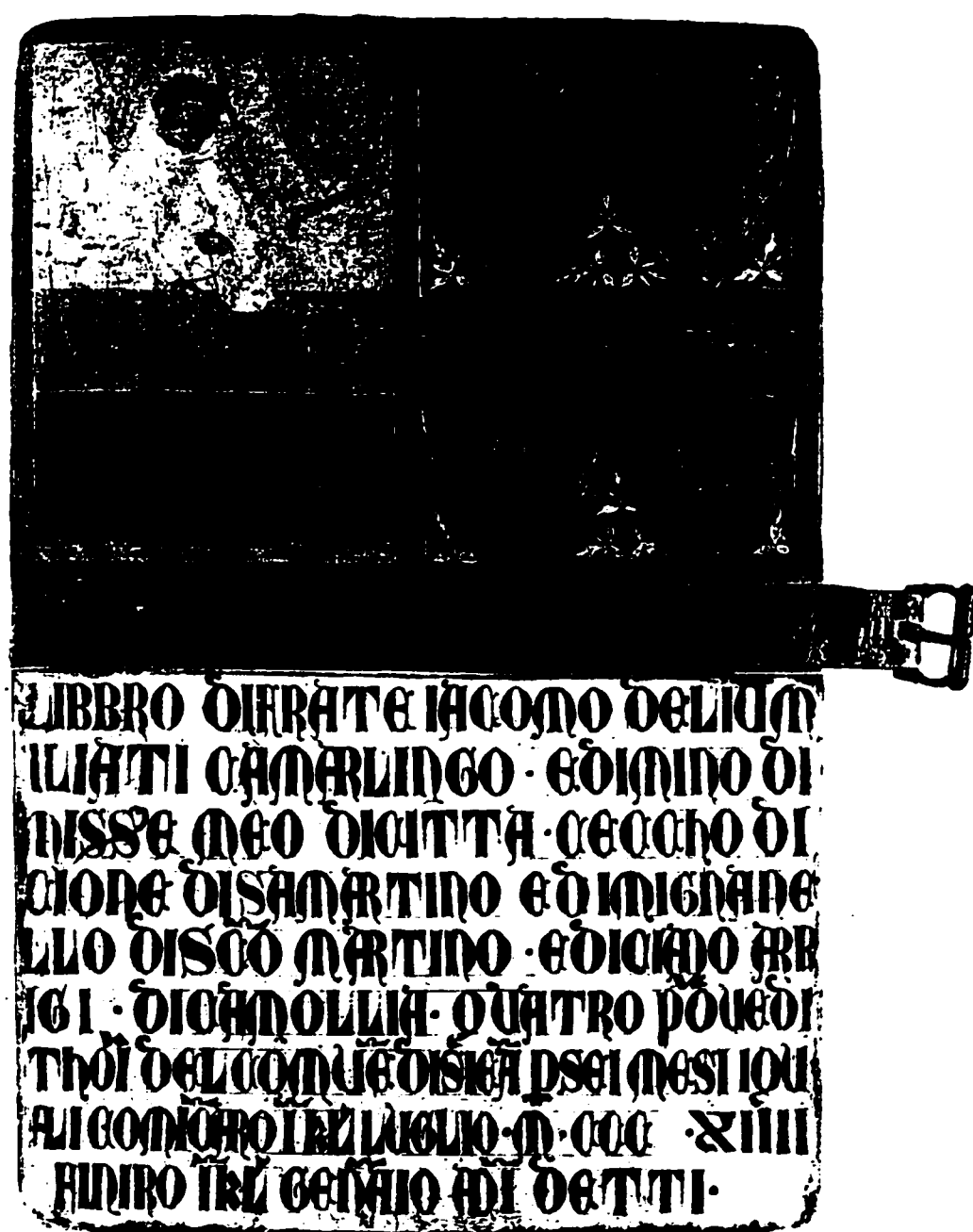


Figure 13. *Don Iacomo*. Biccherna cover. 1314.



Figure 14. *Don Stefano Kneeling before San Galgano.*
 Biccherna cover. 1320.



Figure 15. Guido Cinatti. *Don Ranieri*.
Biccherna 1321.



Figure 16. *Don Gregorio*. Biccherna cover. 1324.

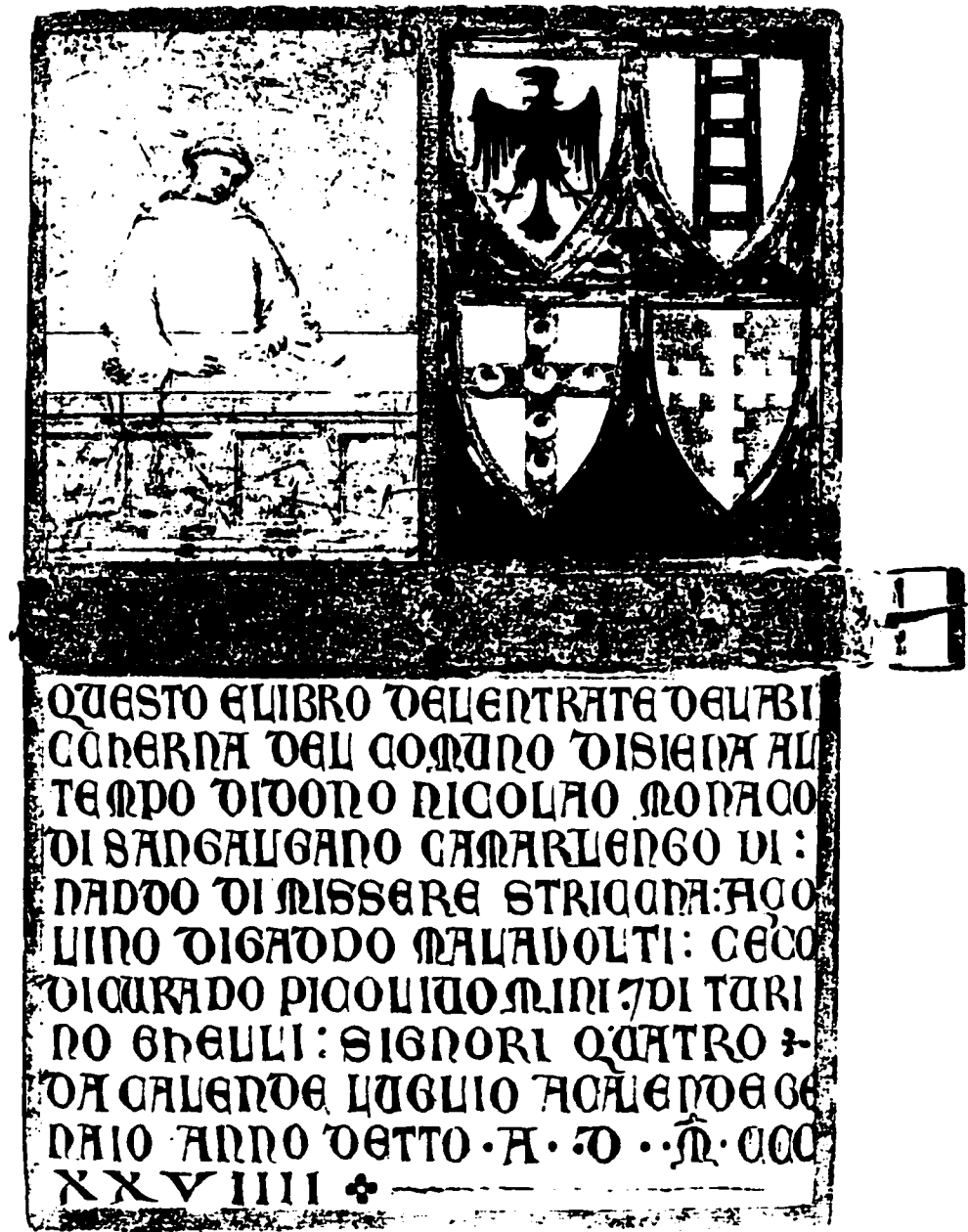


Figure 17. *Don Niccolò*. Biccherna cover. 1329.



Figure 19. *Fra Chimento*. Biccherna cover. 1339.

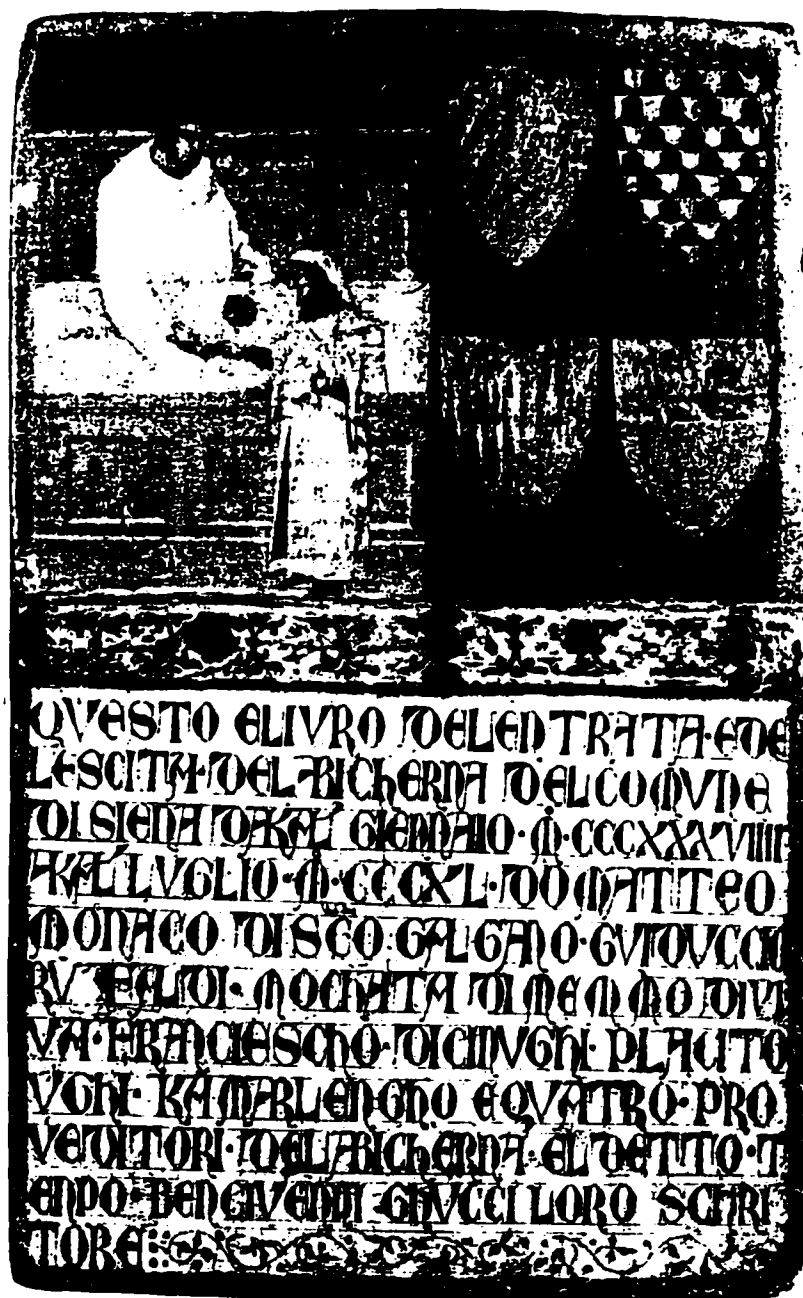


Figure 20. School of Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *Office Scene*.
Biccherna cover. 1340.



Figure 22. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *Good Government of Siena*.
 Gabella cover, 1344.



Figure 23. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *Annunciation*. 1344.



Figure 24. Don Francesco. Biccherna cover. 1346.

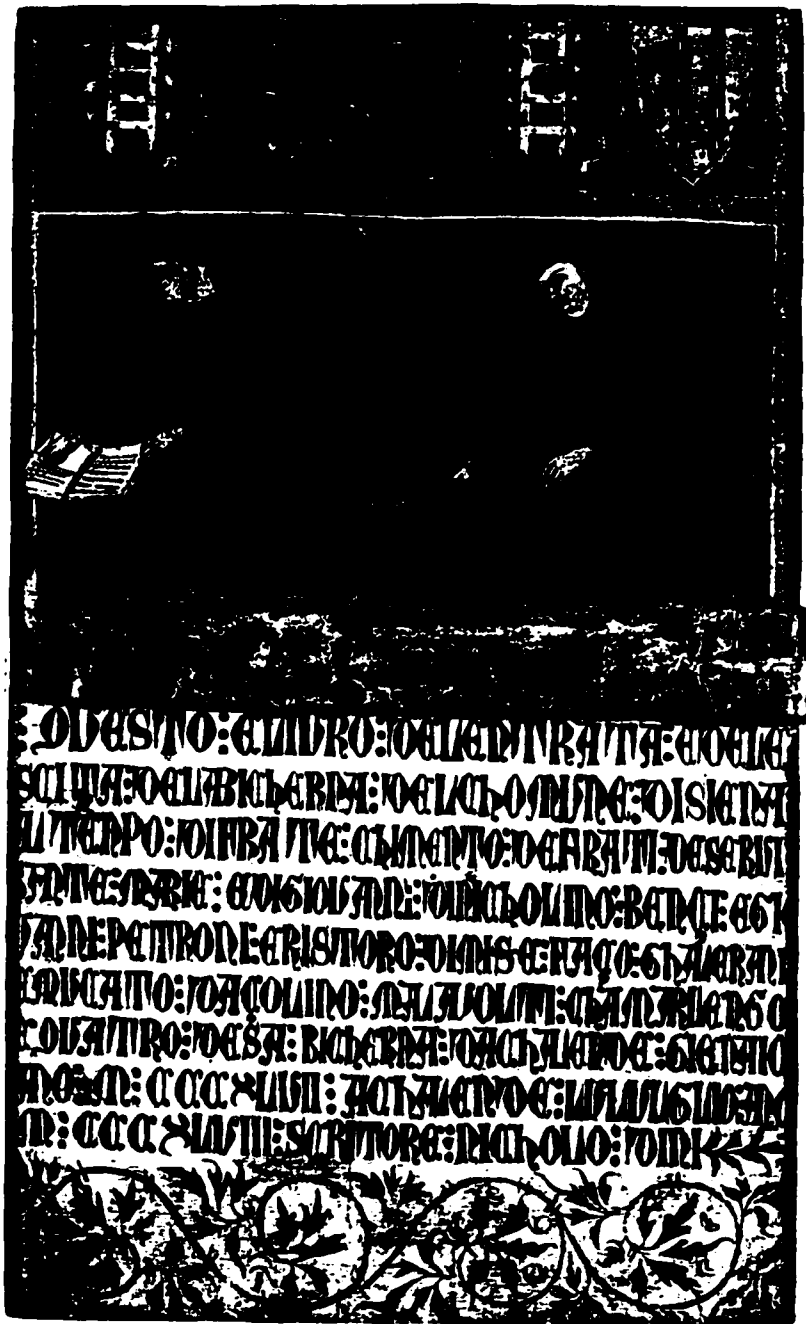


Figure 25. Office Scene. Biccherna cover. 1348.



Figure 26. *Don Leonardo*. Biccherna cover. 1350.

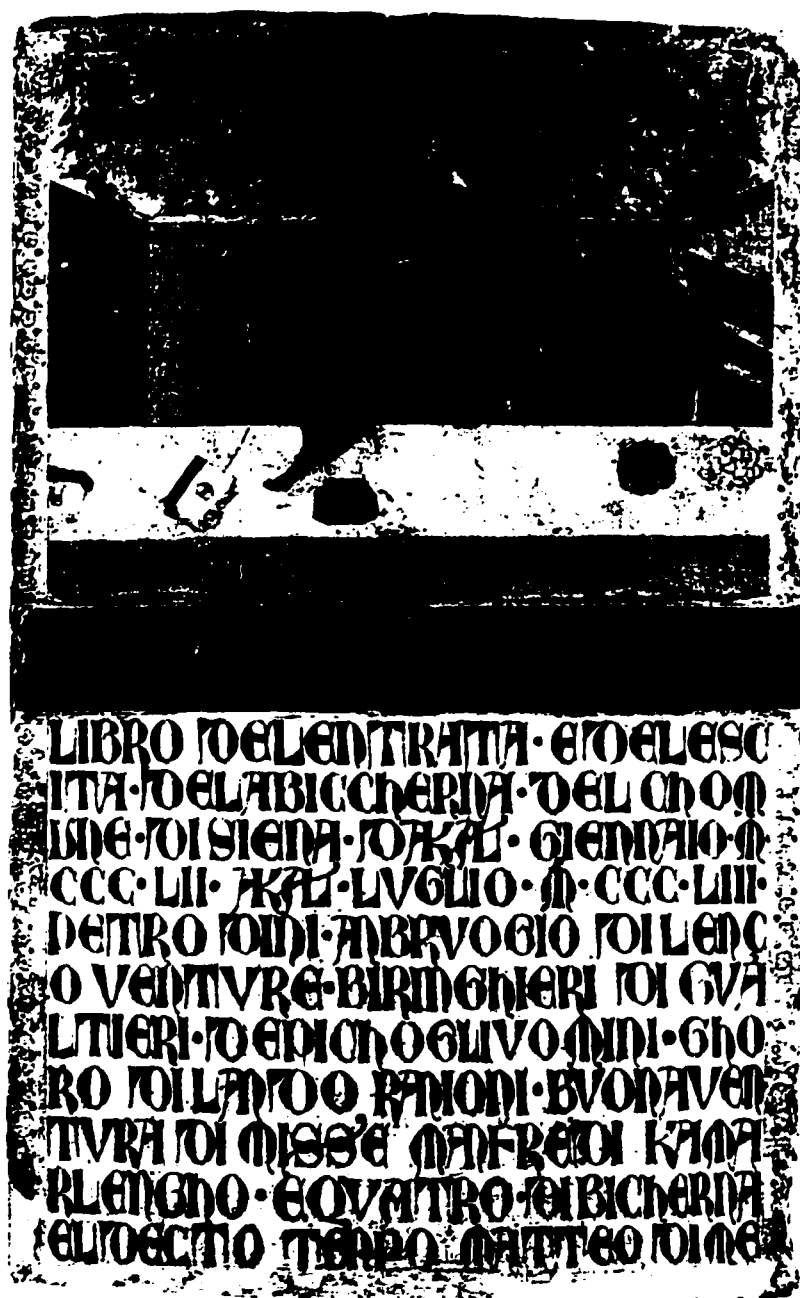


Figure 27. *Office Scene*. Biccherna cover. 1353.



Figure 28. Luca di Tommè. *Circumcision of Jesus*.
Gabella cover. 1357.

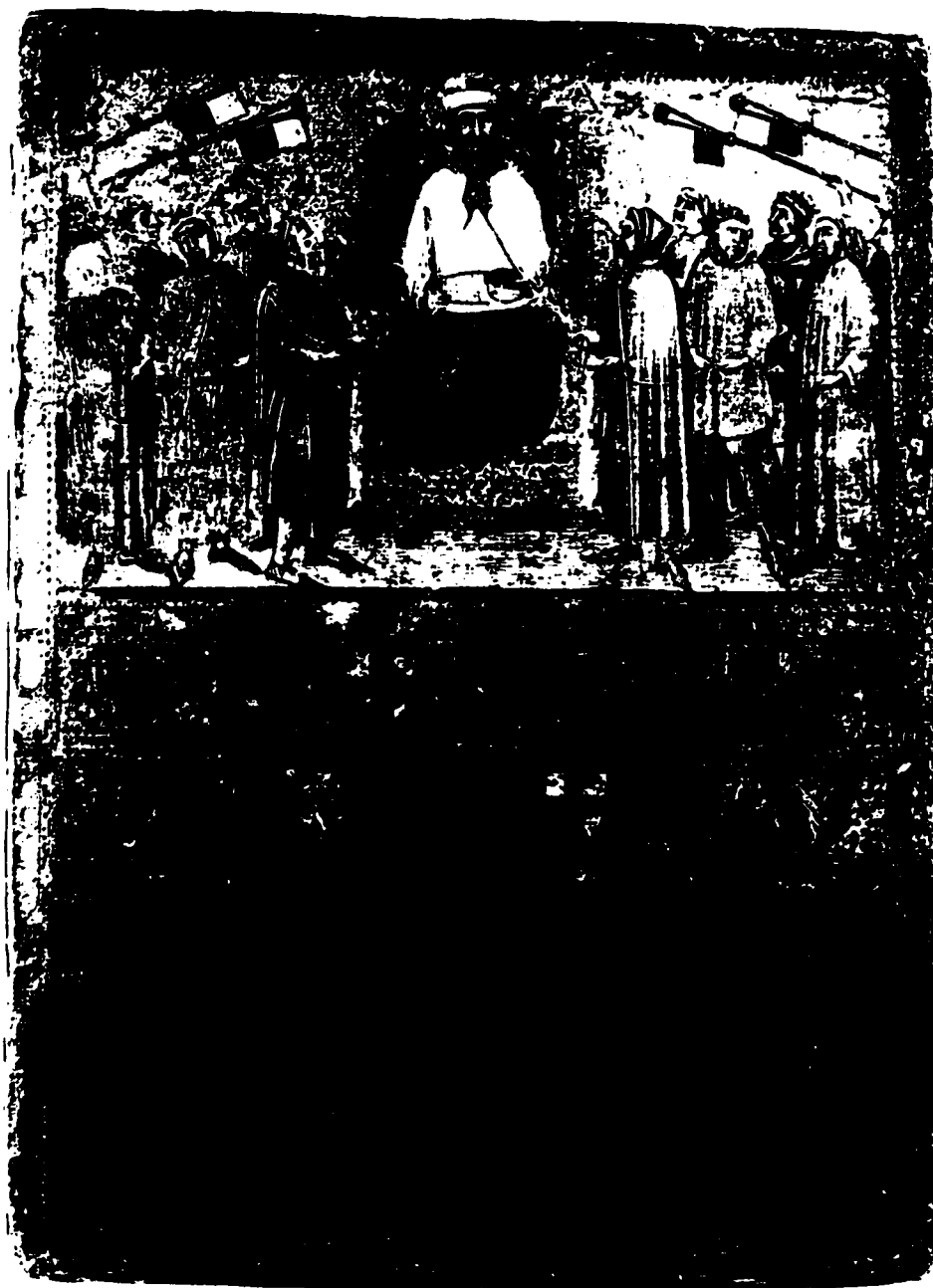


Figure 31. *Allegory with Figure of Good Government.*
Biccherna cover. 1385.

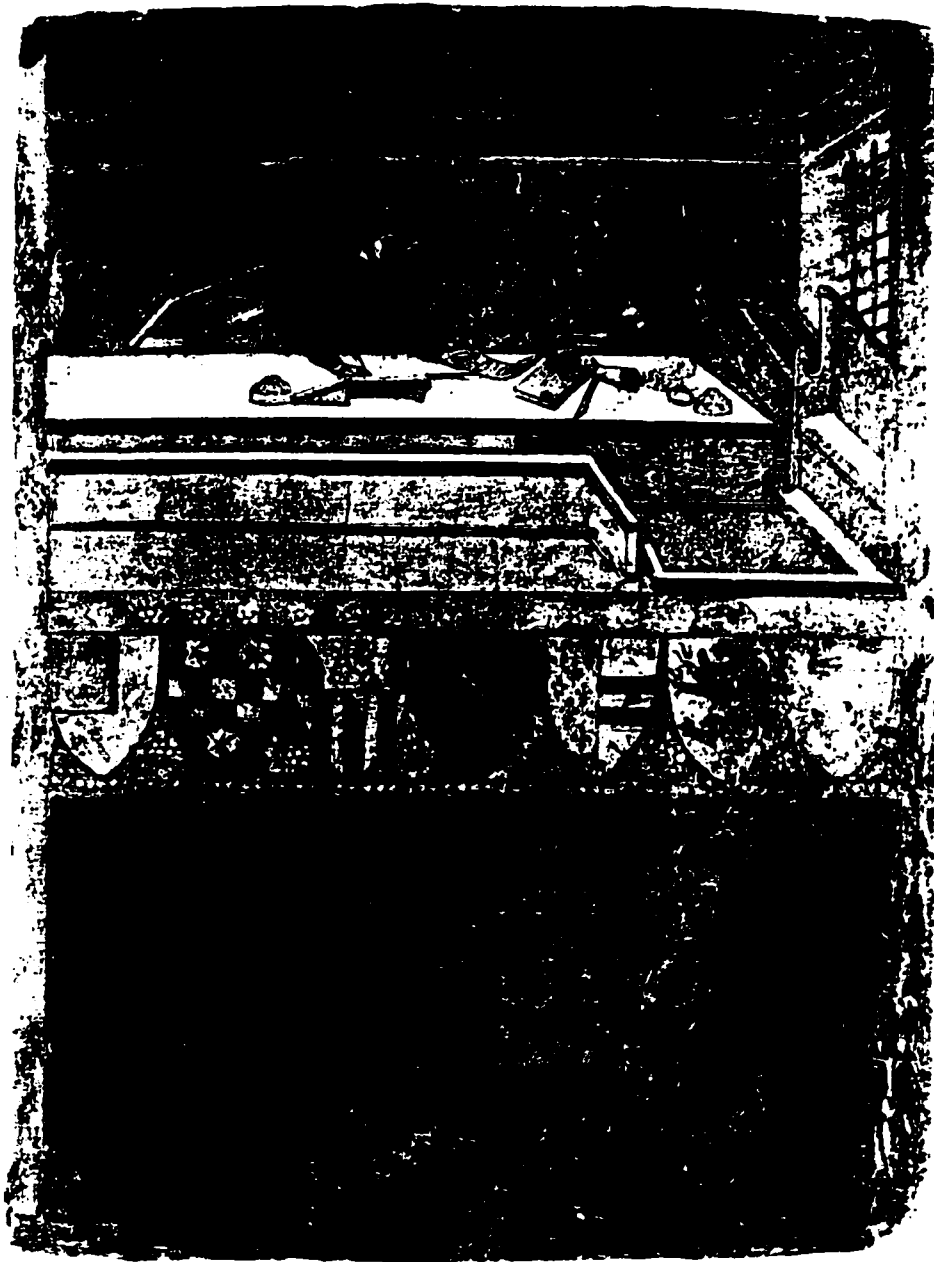


Figure 33. *Office Scene*. Biccherna cover. 1389.

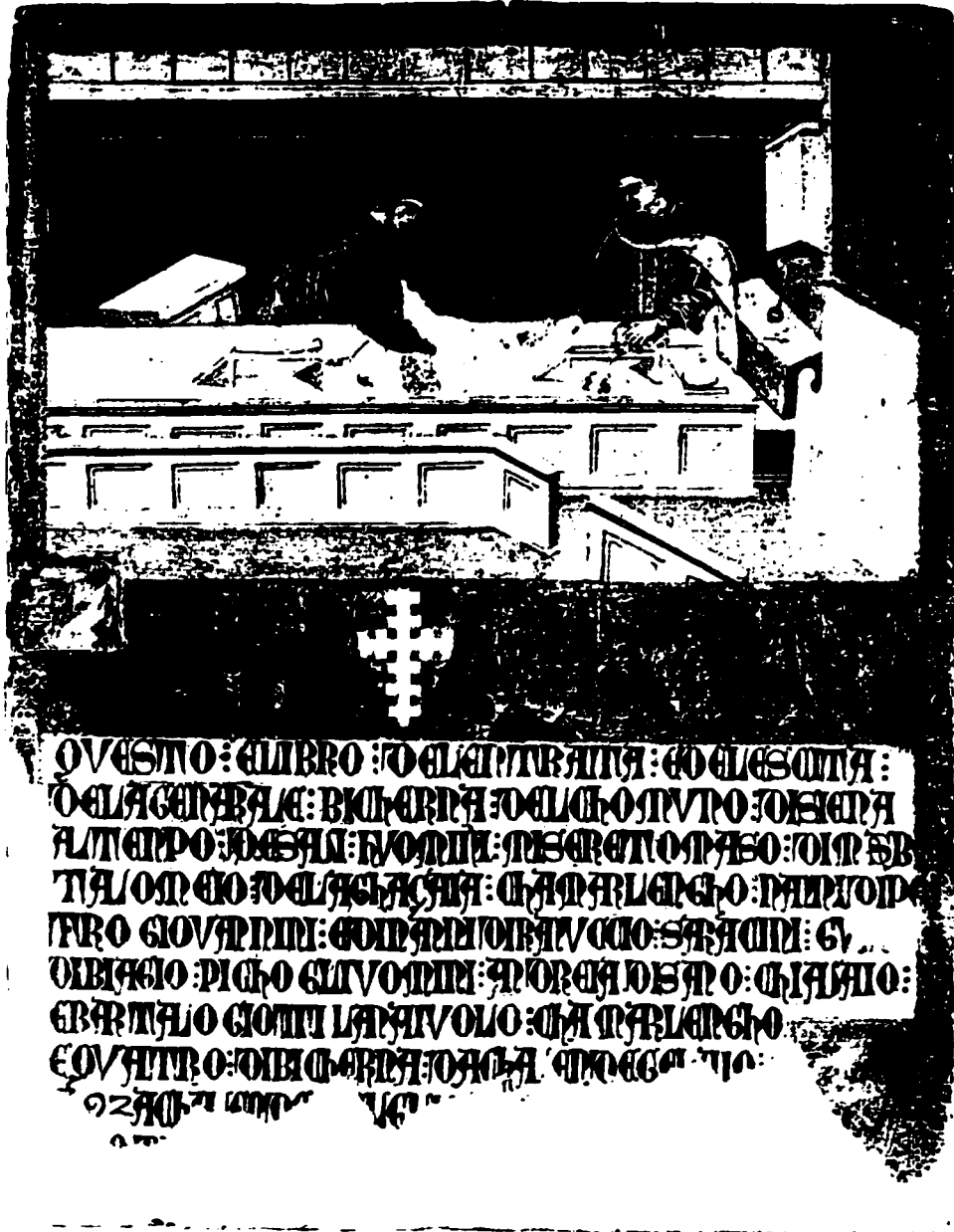


Figure 34. Office Scene. Biccherna cover. 1393.

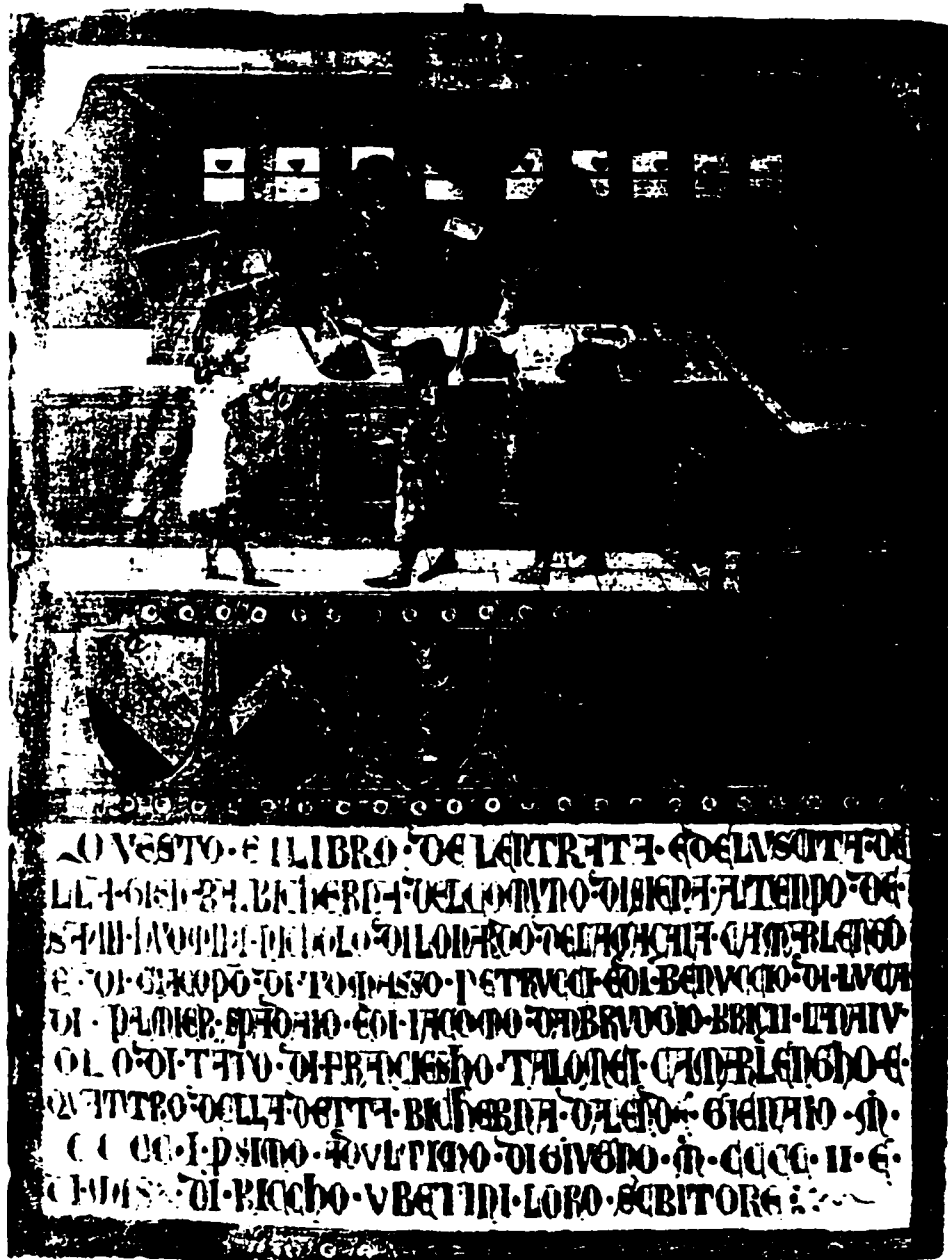


Figure 36. Office Scene. Biccherna cover. 1402.



Figure 37. Mariano di Jacopo, called il Taccola (?).
Coronation of Emperor Sigismund of Luxembourg.
 Biccherna cover. 1433.



Figure 38. Giovanni di Paolo. *St. Jerome Heals a Lion*.
Biccherna cover. 1436.

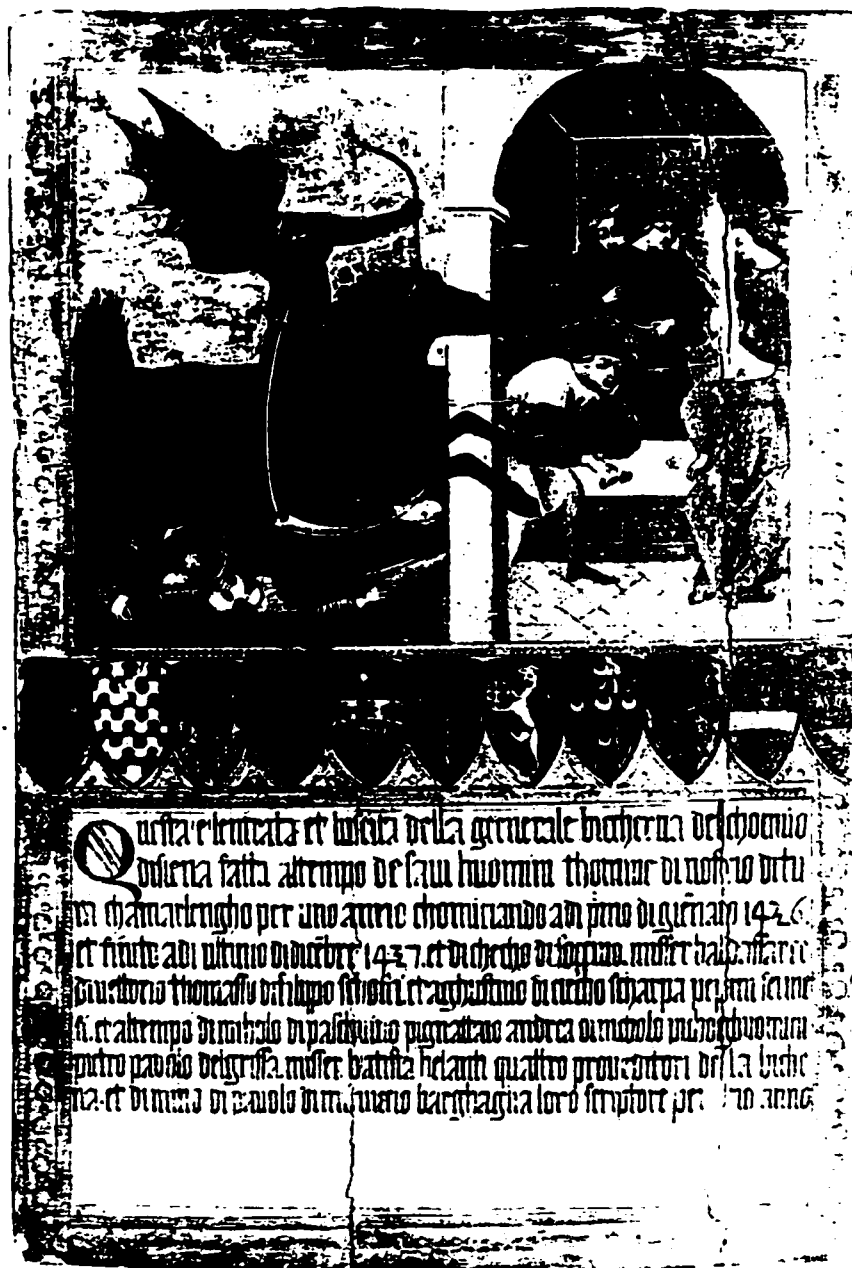


Figure 39. Giovanni di Paolo. *Allegory of the Plague*.
Biccherna cover. 1437.



Figure 40. Master of the Osservanza. *St. Michael Battles a Dragon*. Biccherna cover. 1444.



Figure 41. Coronation of Pope Nicholas V.
Biccherna cover. 1449.

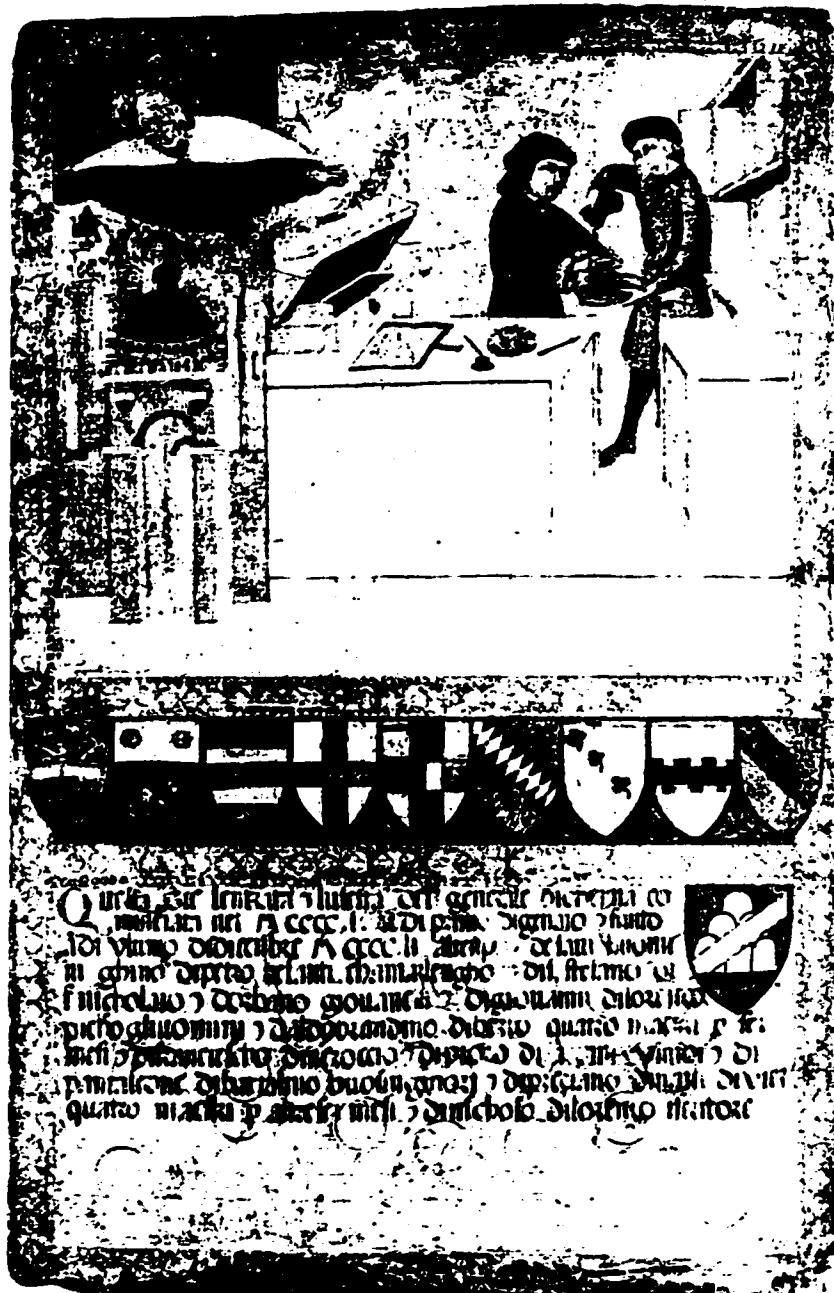


Figure 42. Sano di Pietro. *The Camarlingo Washing His Hands While the Virgin Protects Siena*. Biccherna cover. 1451.



Figure 44. *Annunciation with Saints and Kneeling Youths.*
Gabella cover. 1456.



Figure 45. Lorenzo di Pietro, called il Vecchietta (?).
Coronation of Pope Pius II. Biccherna panel. 1460.



Figure 46. Lorenzo di Pietro, called il Vecchietta (?).
Pius II Giving Cardinal's Hat to His Nephew, Francesco Piccolomini Todeschini. Gabella panel. 1460.



Figure 47. Francesco di Giorgio Martini. *Virgin Protecting Siena During Earthquakes*. Biccherna panel. 1467.



Figure 48. Benvenuto di Giovanni. *Allegorical Office Scene*. Gabella panel. 1468.



Figure 49. Sano di Pietro. *Malavolti Wedding*.
 Gabella panel. 1473.

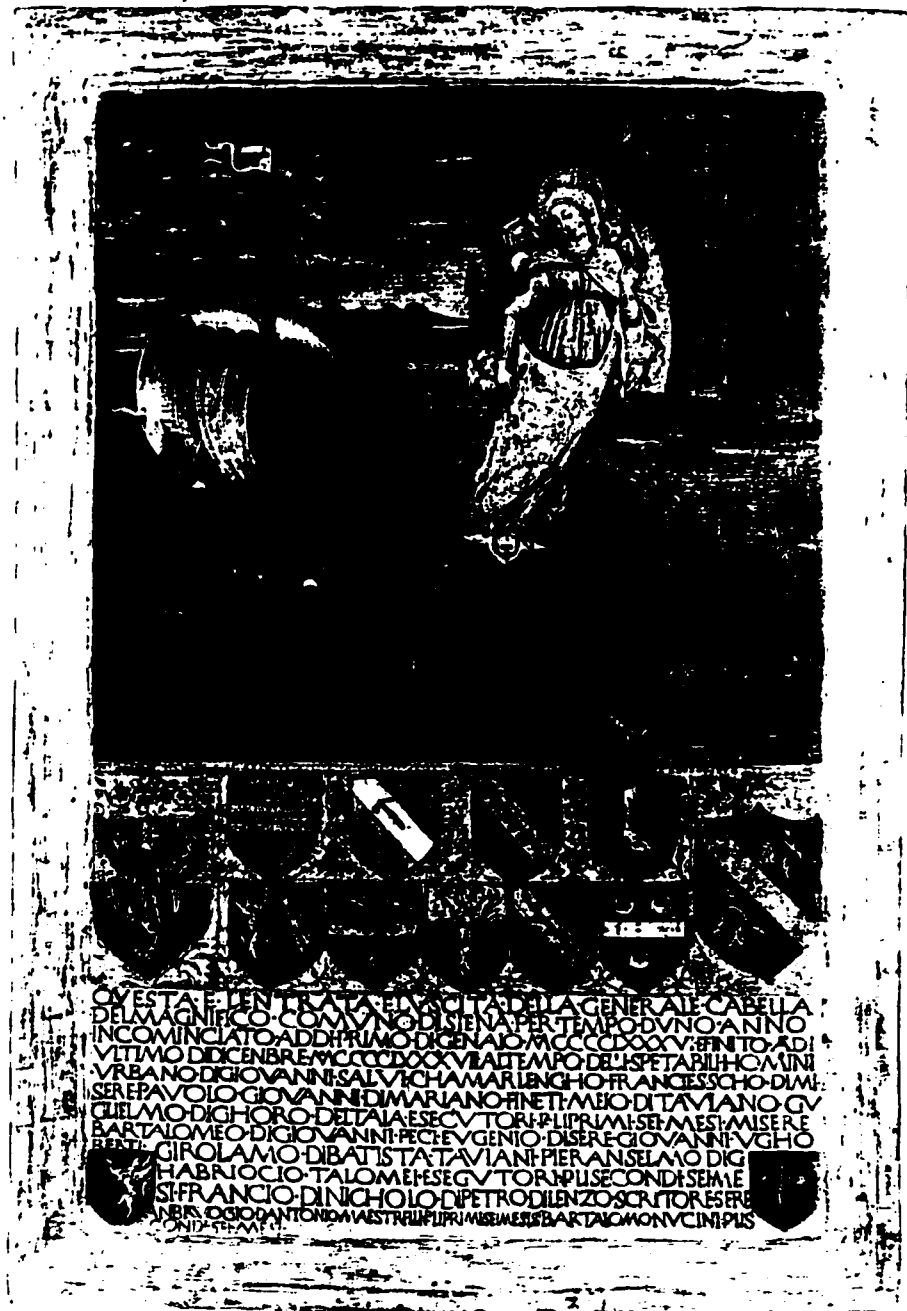


Figure 51. Guidoccio Cozzarelli. *Virgin Guiding the Ship of Siena into Safe Harbor*. Gabella panel. 1487.



Figure 52. Guidoccio Cozzarelli. *Victorious Entry of Pandolfo Petrucci into Siena*. Biccherna panel. 1488.

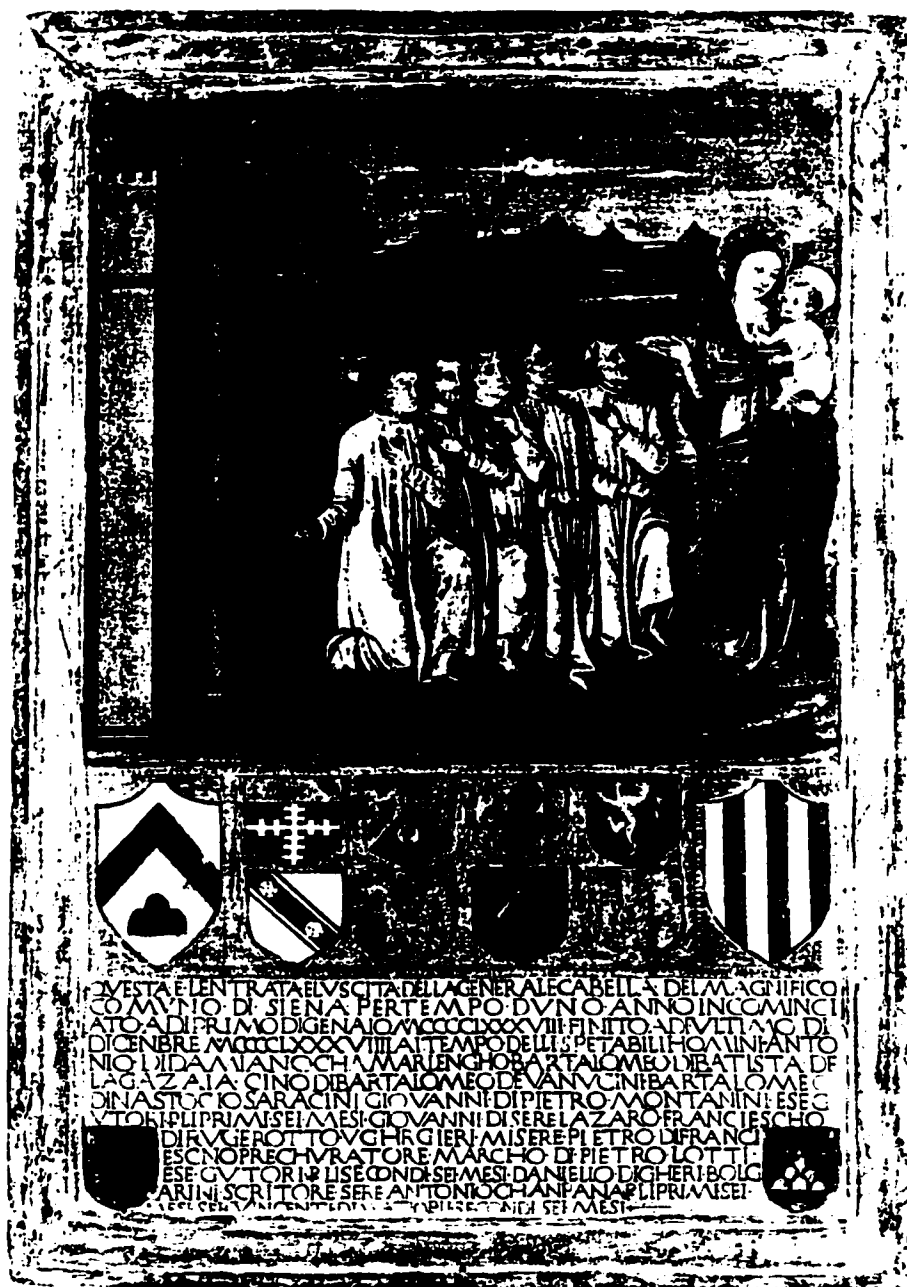


Figure 53. Guido Cozzarelli. *Officials Praying to the Virgin at the City Gate*. Gabella panel. 1489.

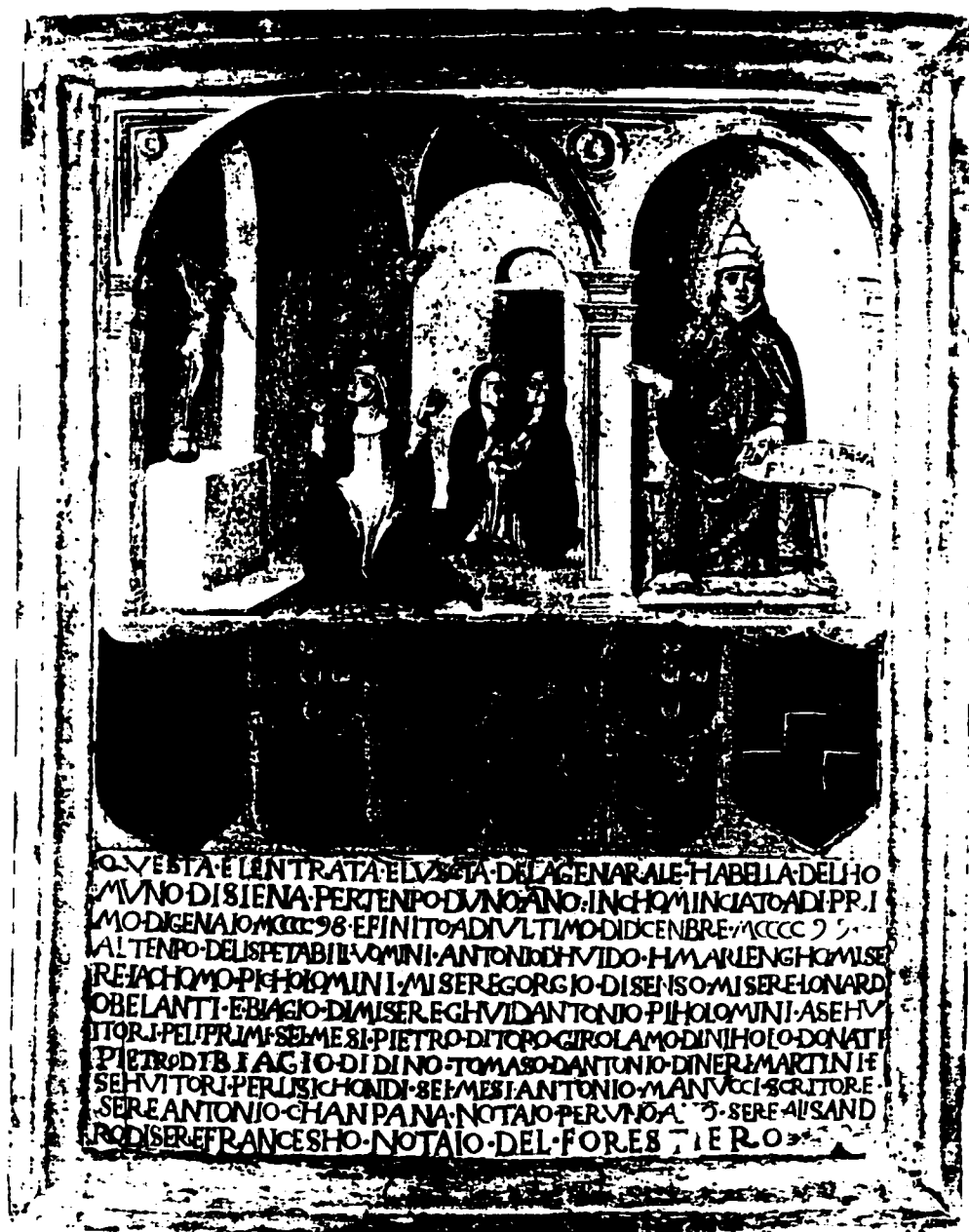


Figure 54. *Stigmata of St. Catherine.*
 Gabella panel. 1498 (?).

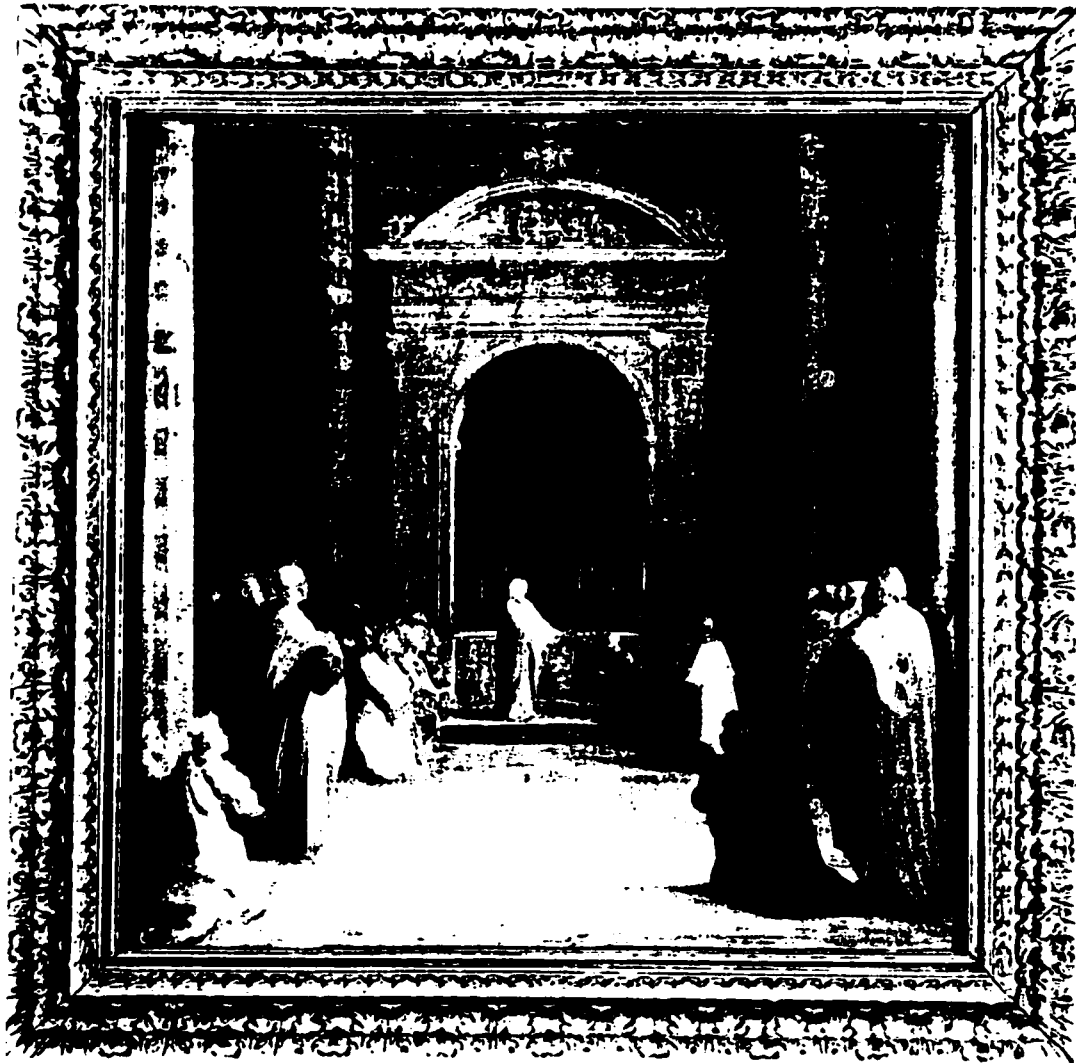


Figure 56. Domenico Beccafumi. *Ceremony before the Battle of Porta Camollia*. Biccherna panel. 1526 (?).

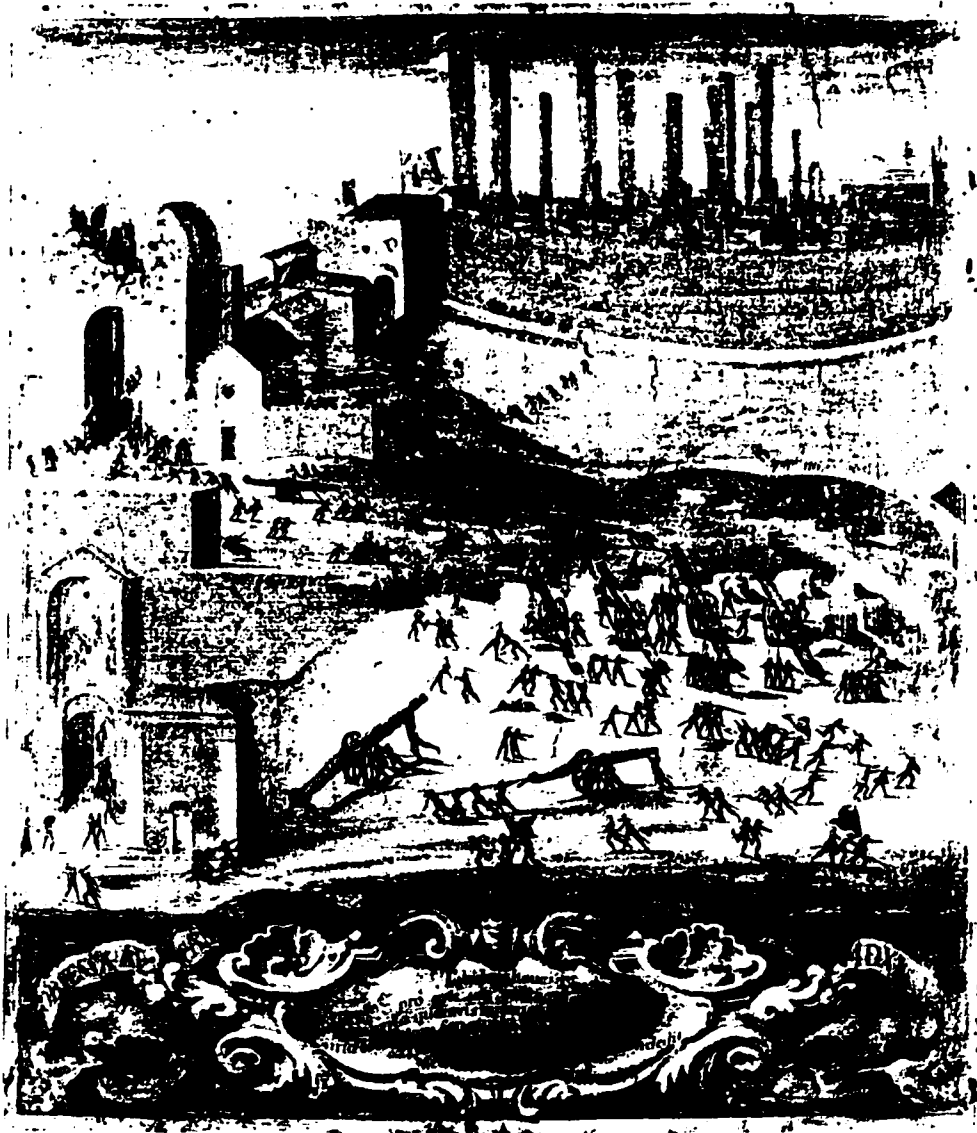


Figure 57. Giovanni di Lorenzo Cini. *Victory of Camollia*.
Biccherna panel (?). 1526 (?).

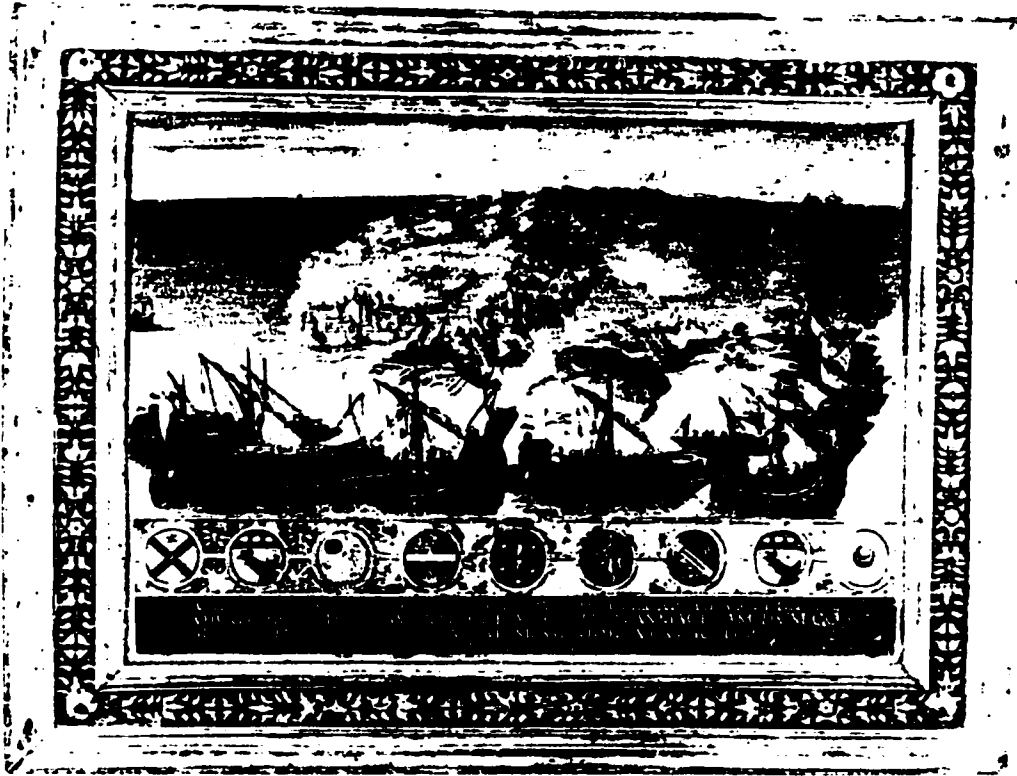


Figure 58. Giorgio di Giovanni (?). *Naval Victory*.
Biccherna panel. 1533.



Figure 59. Giovanni di Lorenzo Cini (?). *Coronation of Pope Paul III*. Biccherna panel. 1534.



Figure 60. Giorgio di Giovanni. *Demolition of the Spanish Fort*. Biccherna panel. 1552.

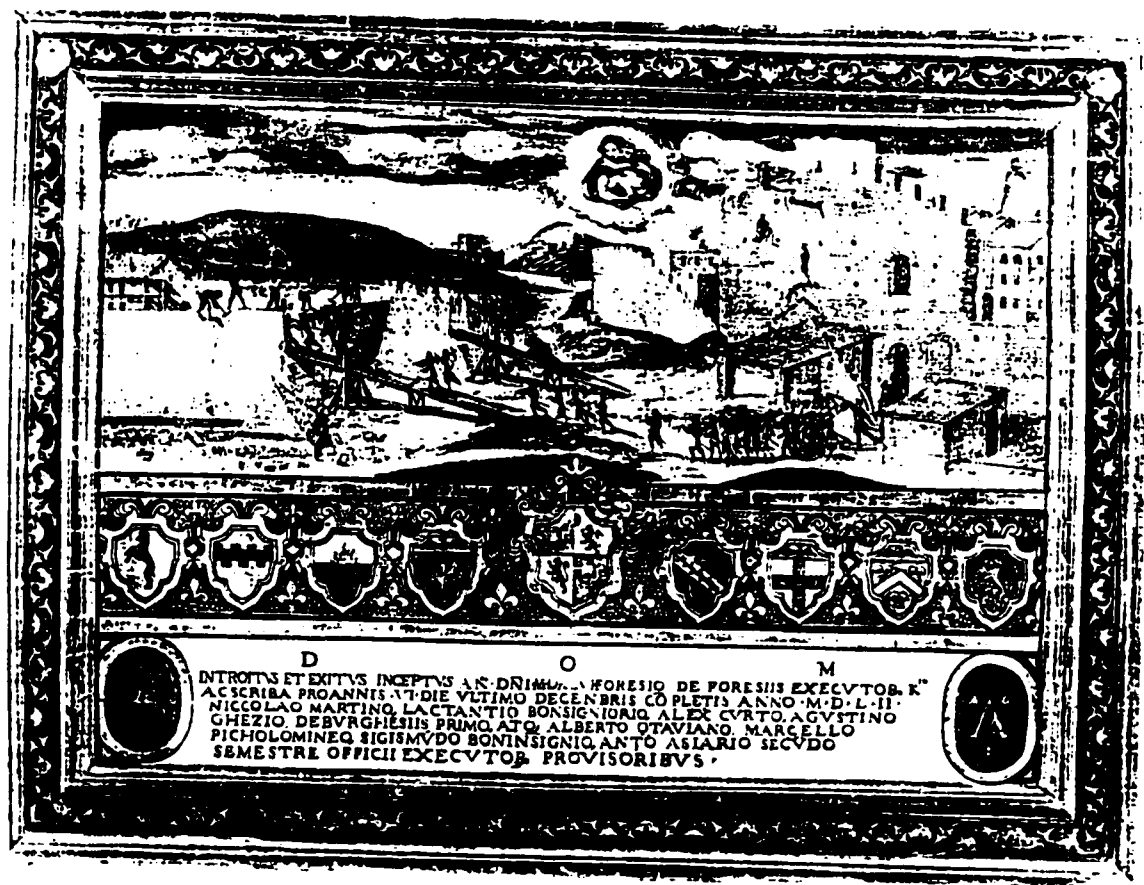


Figure 61. Giorgio di Giovanni. *Demolition of the Spanish Fort. Gabella panel. 1552.*



Figure 62. Giorgio di Giovanni. *Siege of Montalcino*.
Biccherna panel. 1553.



Figure 63. Giorgio di Giovanni. *Saint Paul Comforts the Sienese in the Siege*. Gabella panel. 1555.

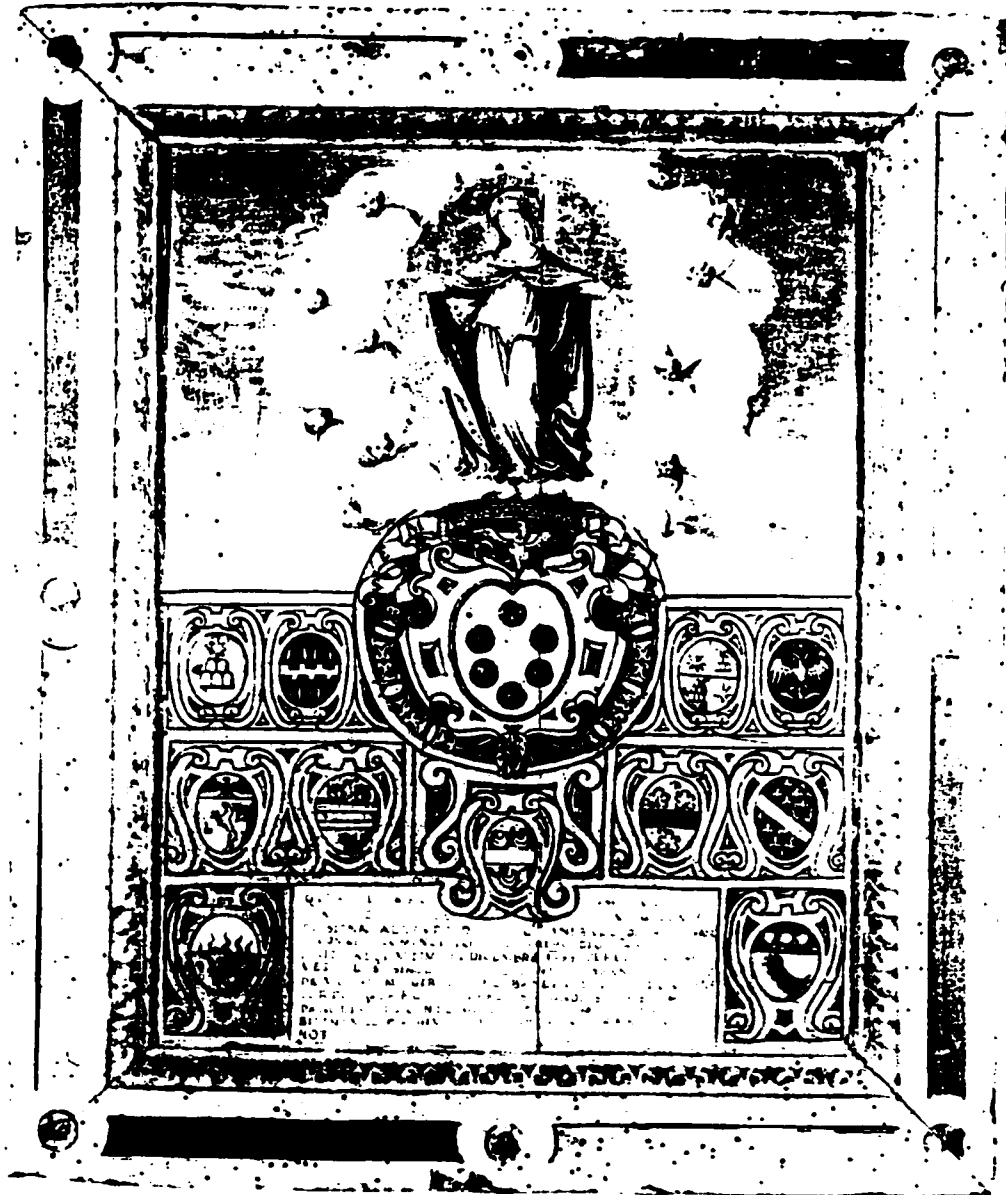


Figure 64. *The Assumption of the Virgin.*
Biccherna panel. 1558.

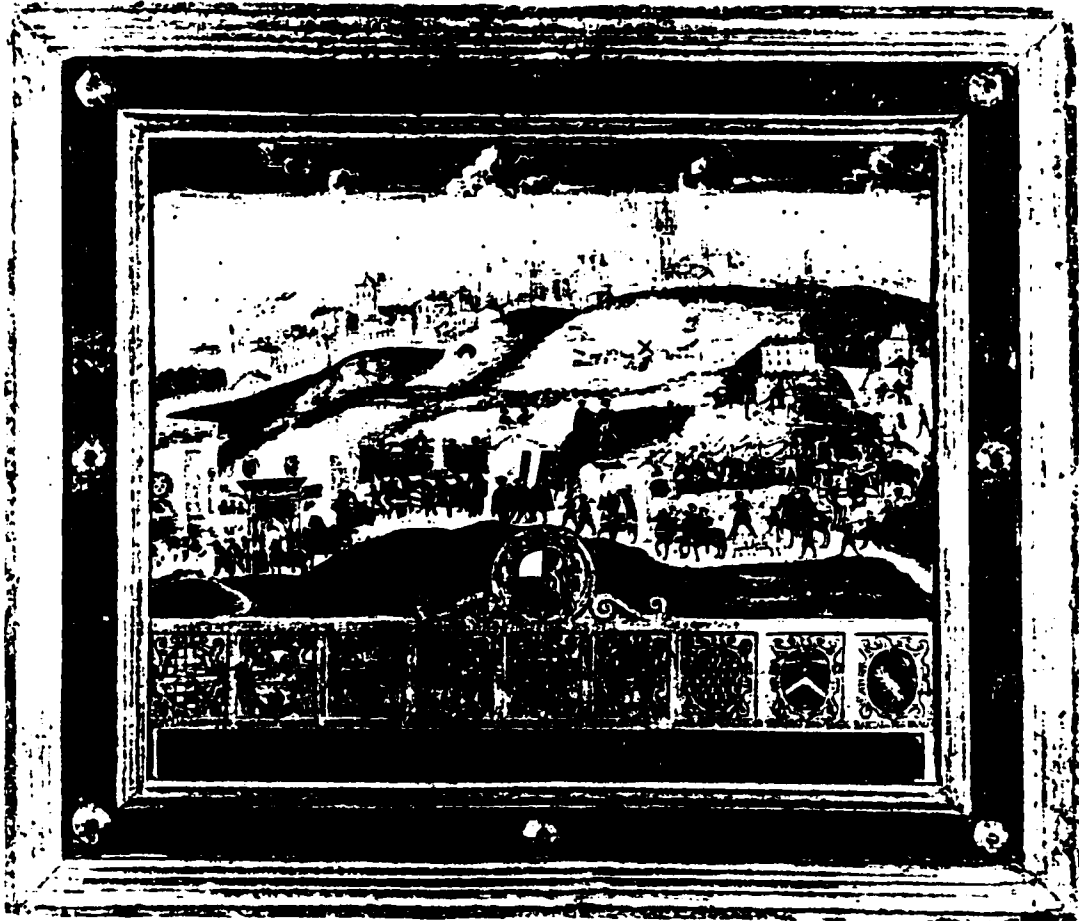


Figure 65. *Cosimo I de' Medici Enters Siena.*
Biccherna panel. 1560 (?).



Figure 66. Tiberio Billo. *Cosimo I de' Medici Receives the Insignia of Grand Master of the Order of Santo Stefano.* Biccherna panel. 1561-62.



Figure 67. Ventura Salimbeni (?). *Wedding of Ferdinando de' Medici and Cristina di Lorena*. Biccherna panel. 1588-89.

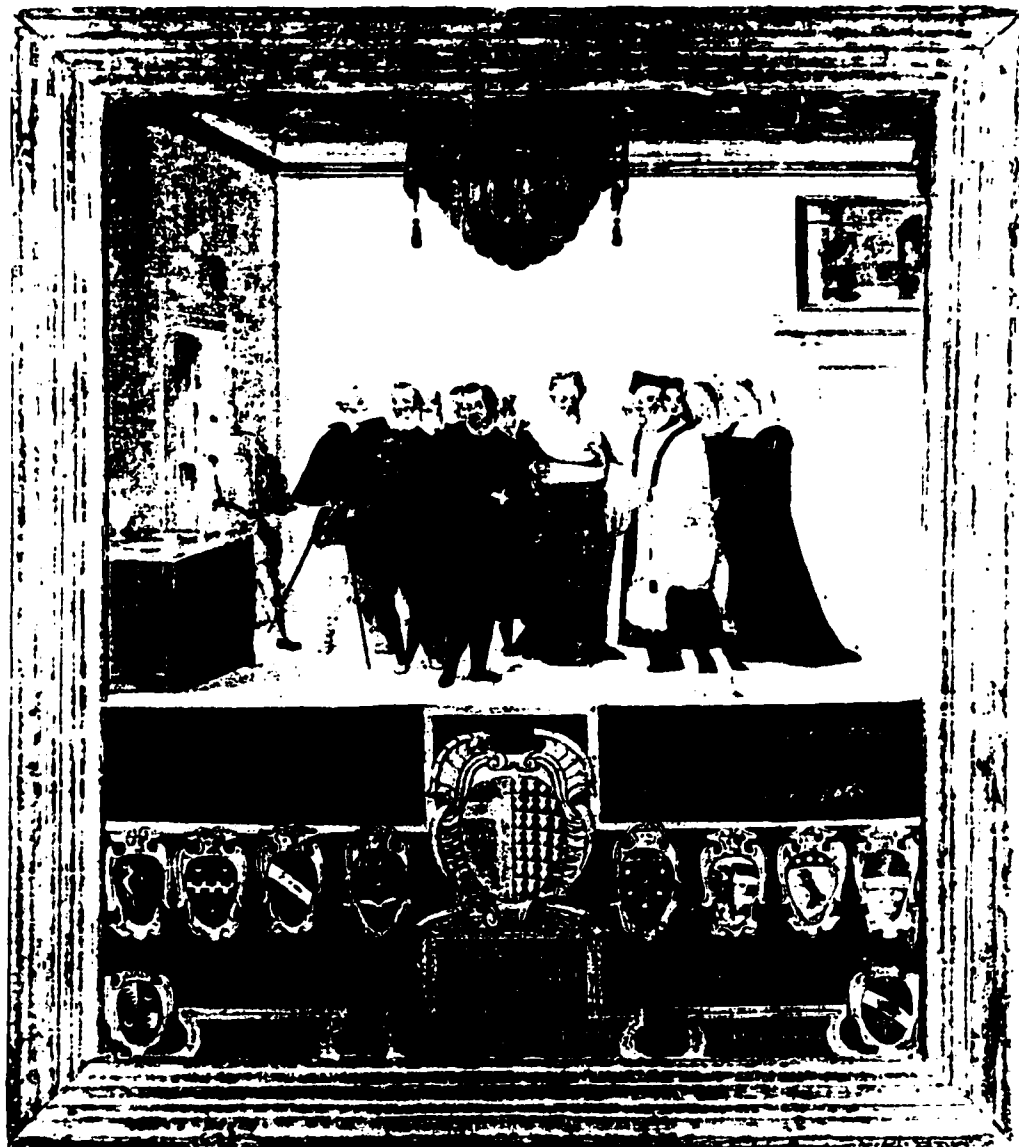


Figure 68. Ventura Salimbeni (?). *Baptism of Cosimo II de' Medici*. Biccherna panel. 1589-90.

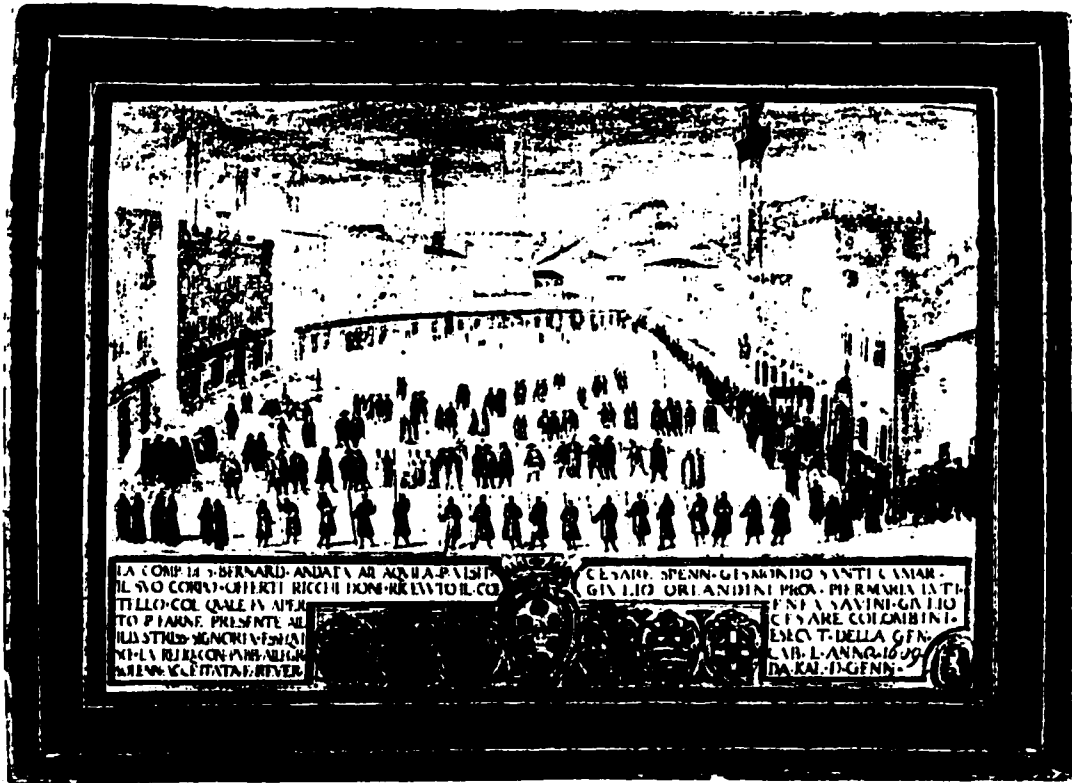


Figure 69. Antonio Gregori. *Scene in Piazza del Campo*.
 Gabella panel. 1610.



Figure 70. Francesco Rustici, called il Rustichino. *San Carlo Borromeo*. Biccherna painting on canvas. 1616-19.



Figure 71. *San Galgano on Montesiepi*. Biccherna painting on canvas. 1677-82.

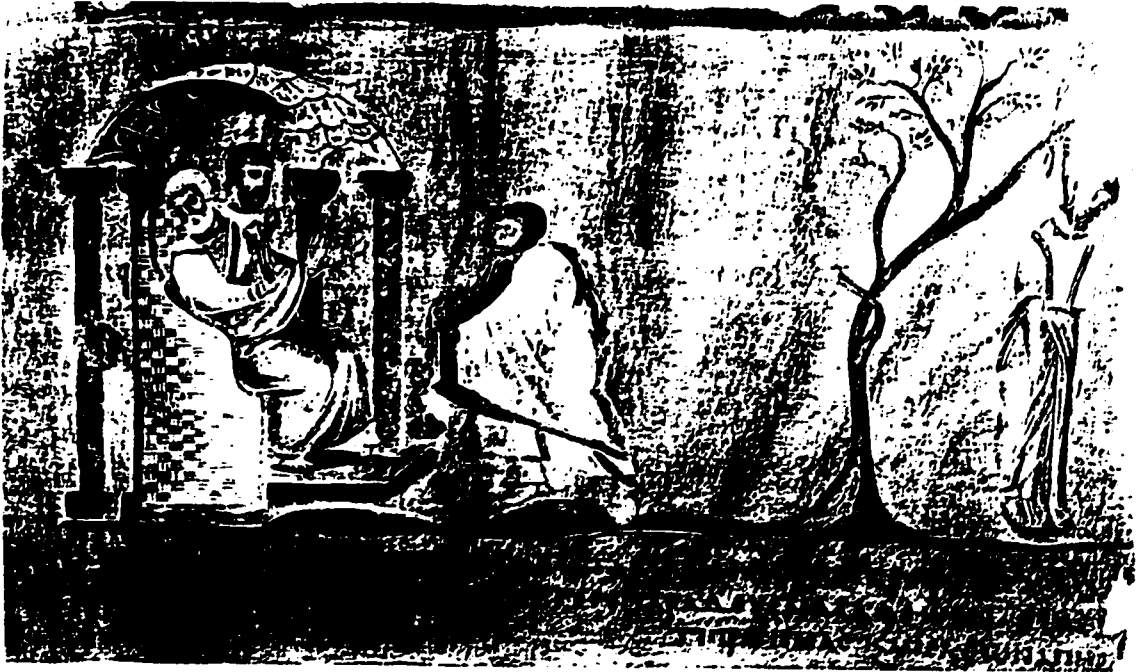


Figure 72. Scenes with Judas. Rossano Gospels. Il Duomo di Rossano, f. 8r. 6th century.



Figure 73. Scene with Hanging of Judas, from ivory casket.
British Museum. c. AD 420-30.



Figure 74. *St. Matthew*. Ebbo Gospels. Epernay, Bibliothèque Municipale. 816-35.



Figure 75. *St. Luke. Acts of the Apostles.* Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Ms. Theol. Gr. 302. 944-56.



Figure 76. *Ezra*. Codex Amiatinus. Florence, Biblioteca
Laurenziana. Cod. Amiat. 1, f. 5r. c. 700.



Figure 77. Frontispiece. Toledo Bible. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms. 240, f. 8. 1226-34.



Figure 78. *St. Gregory the Great*. Ivory book cover. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum. 10th century.



Figure 79. Ivory diptych of the Consul Boethius. Brescia, Museo Civico Cristiano. AD 487.



Figure 80. Ivory diptych of the Consul Anastasius. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale. AD 517.

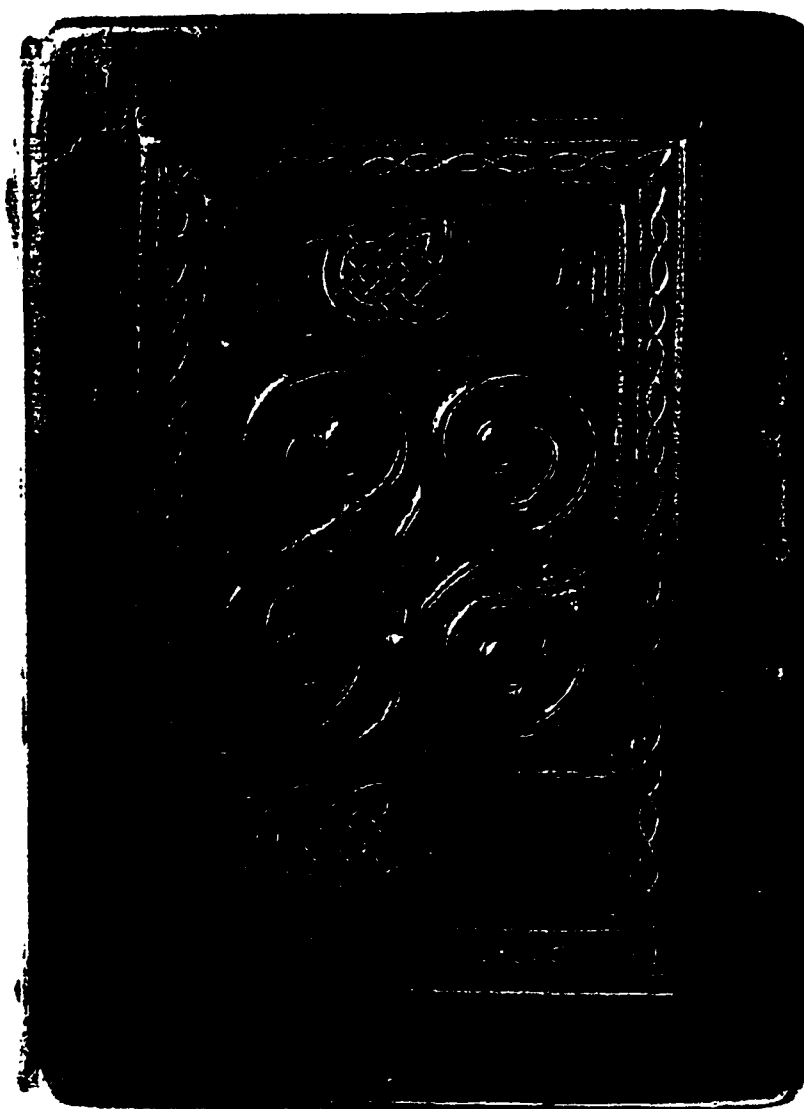


Figure 81. Gospel of St. John (Stonyhurst Gospel).
Late 7th century.

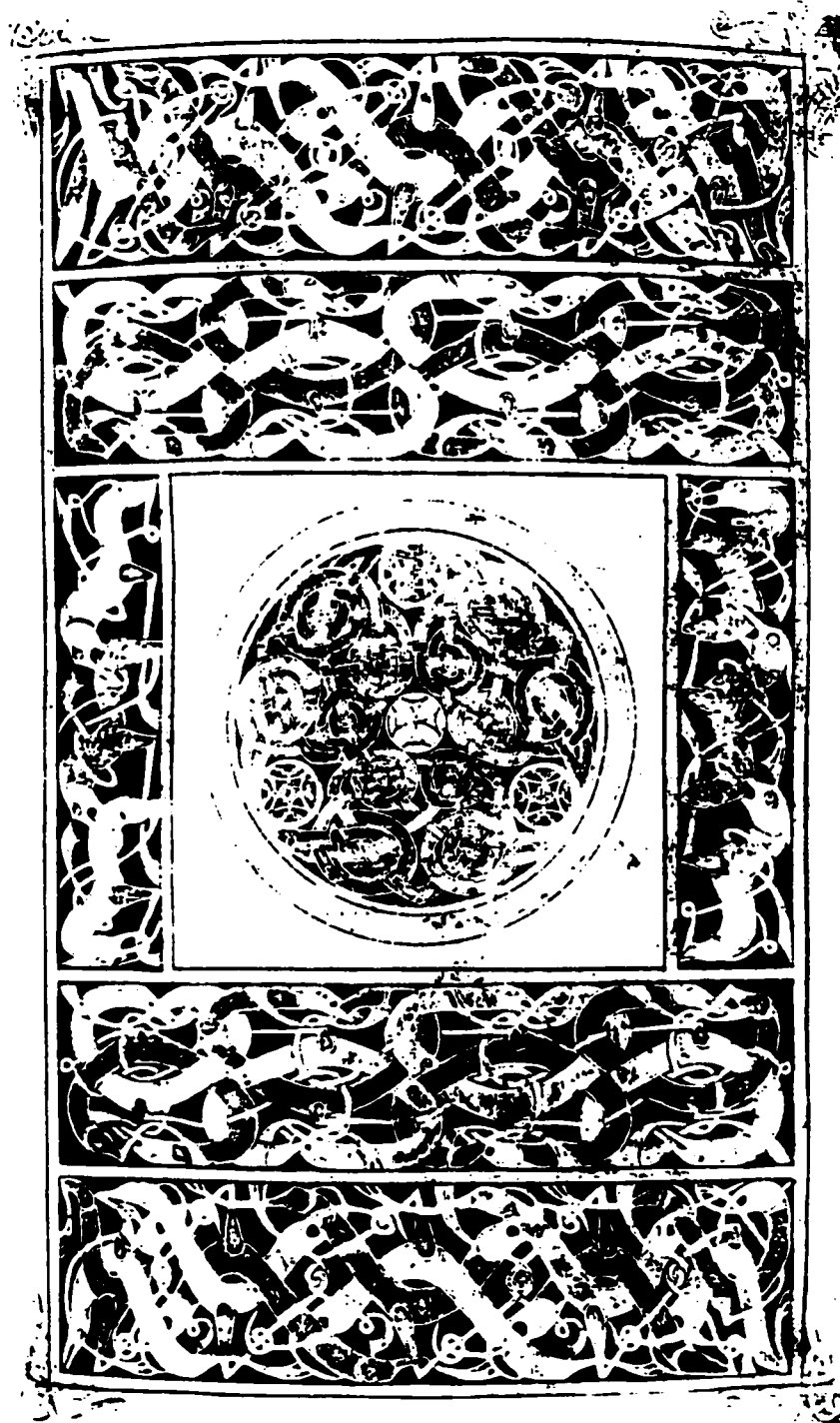


Figure 82. Carpet Page. *Book of Durrow*. Iona.
Late 7th century.



Figure 83. Cover. *Codex Aureus* of St. Emmeram (Cod. lat. mon. 14000). Munich, Staatsbibliothek. c. 870-80.



Figure 84. Leaf of imperial ivory diptych ("Barberini Diptych"). Paris, Louvre. c. AD 540.



Figure 85. Ivory book cover with scenes from the life of Christ. Milan, Cathedral Treasury. Late 5th century.

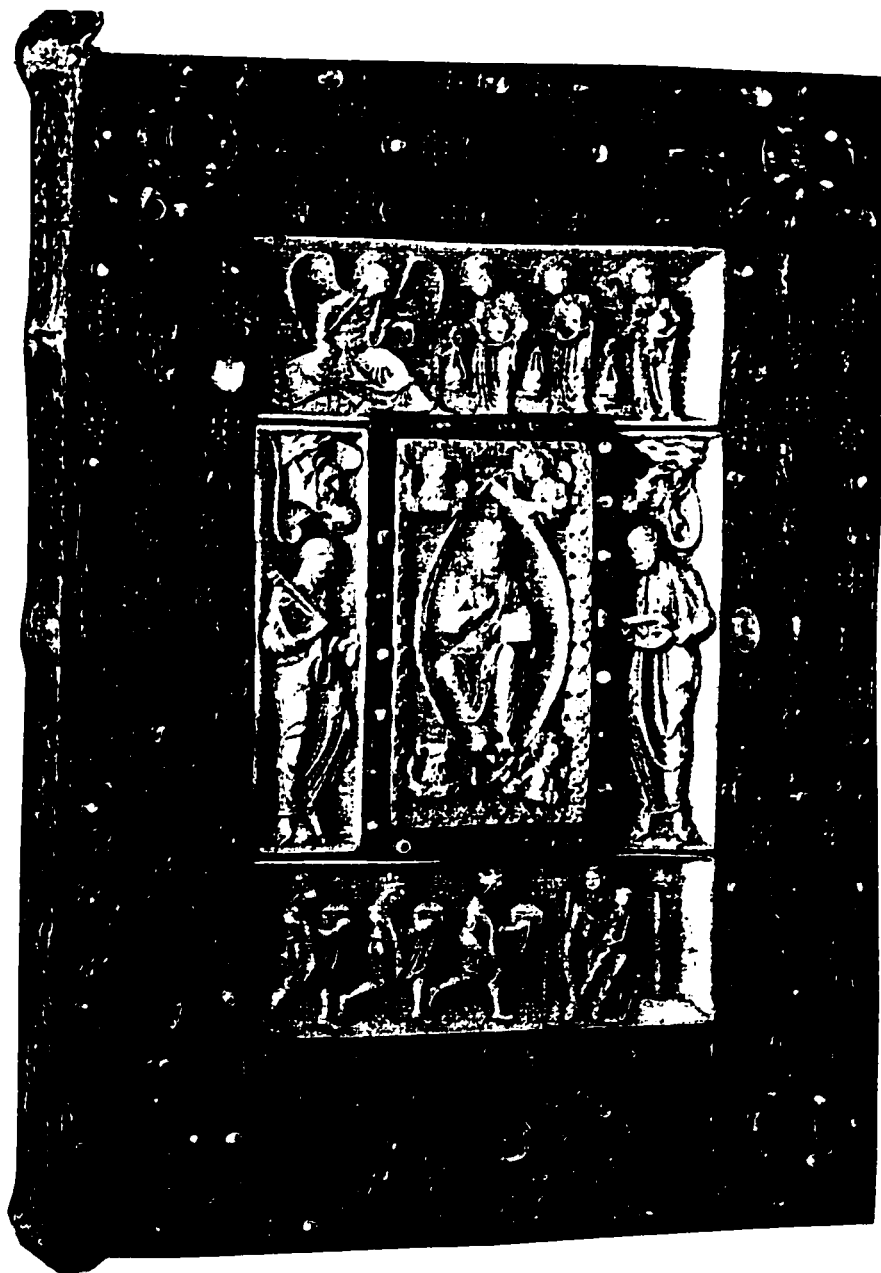


Figure 86. Book cover of an evangeliar from St. Aegidien.
Brunswick, Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum.
End of 12th century.

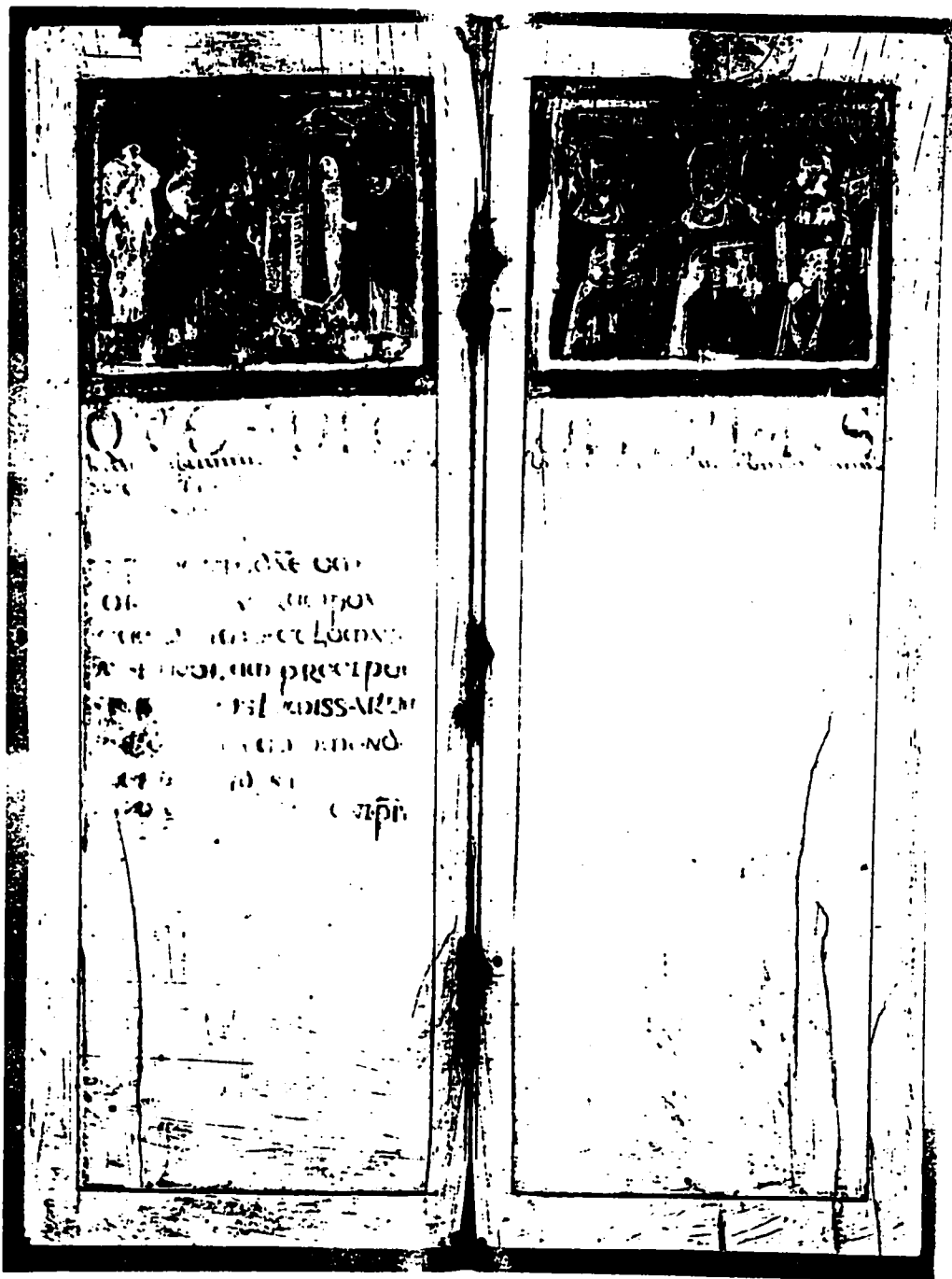


Figure 87. Interior of ivory diptych of Boethius. Brescia, Museo Civico Cristiano. Illuminations from the 7th century.

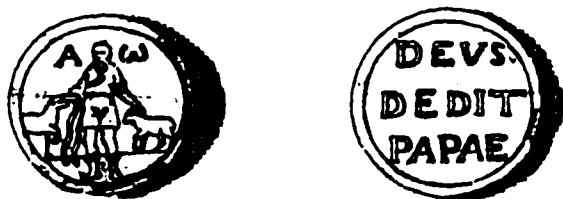


Figure 88. Drawing of the Seal of Pope Adeodato (615-18).



Figure 89. Seal of Master Guglielmo of Parma. 13th century.



Figure 90. Seal of Aretine bishopric with image of San Donato.



Figure 91. Seal of Judge Lando. Siena, Museo Civico,
n. 201. End of 13th century.



Figure 92. Seal of Frederico, bishop of Trento. Trento,
Museo di Trento. 1207-18.



Figure 93. Seal of Siena. Florence, Bargello, n. 1790.
Beginning of 13th century.

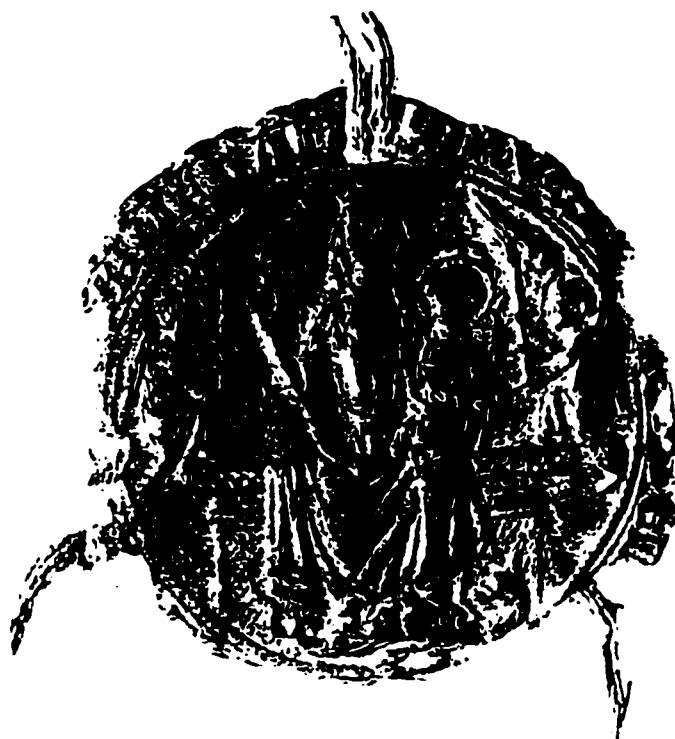


Figure 94. Imprint of seal of Siena. Siena,
Archivio di Stato. 1266.



Figure 95. Guido da Siena. *St. Clare and the Saracens*, from Reliquary Shutters. Siena, La Pinacoteca Nazionale. c. 1262.



Figure 96. Ivory diptych of the Consul Orestes. London, Victoria and Albert Museum. AD 530.



Figure 97. Ivory diptych of the Consul Clementinus.
 Liverpool, Merseyside County Museums. AD 513.



Figure 98. Ser Cecco di Ildibrandino (?). Constitution of the Camarlingo and Four Provveditori of the Commune of Siena. Siena, Archivio di Stato, Ms. Biccherna I. 1298.

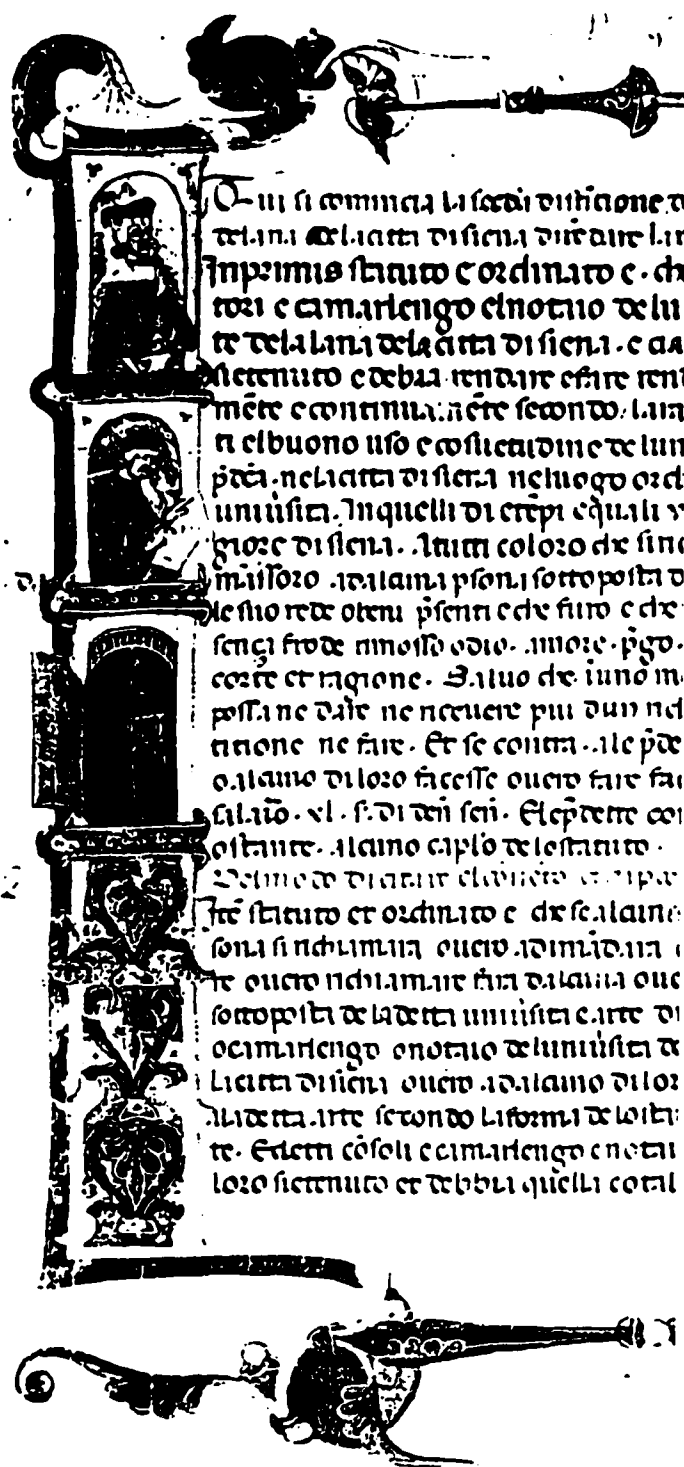


Figure 99. Constitution of the Lanaiuoli. Siena, Archivio di Stato, Ms. Arti 61. 1292.



Figure 100. Giotto (?). *Justice with a Steelyard*. Padua, Palazzo della Ragione. c. 1306-c. 1309.

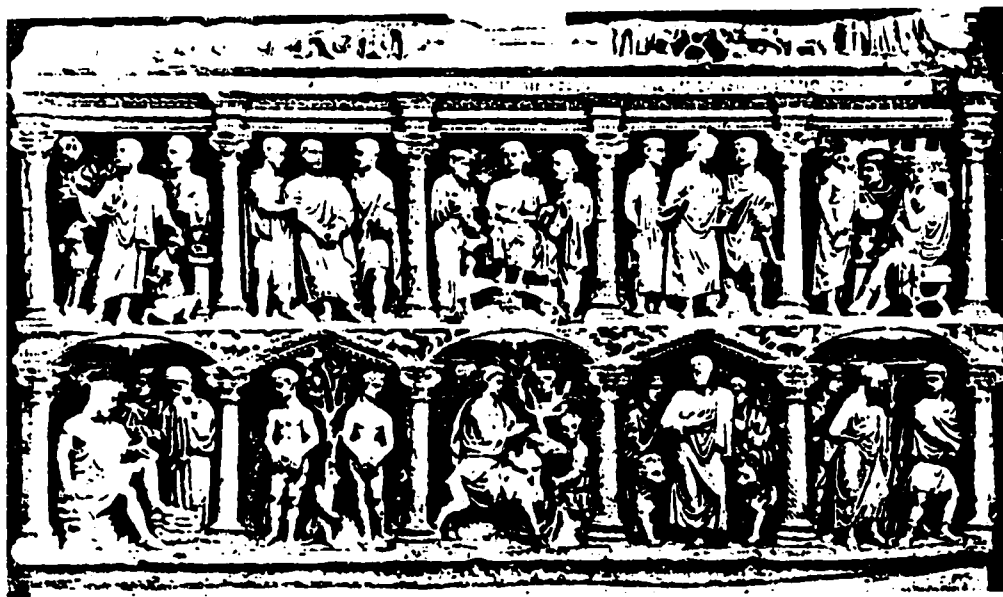


Figure 101. Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus. Vatican. AD 359.

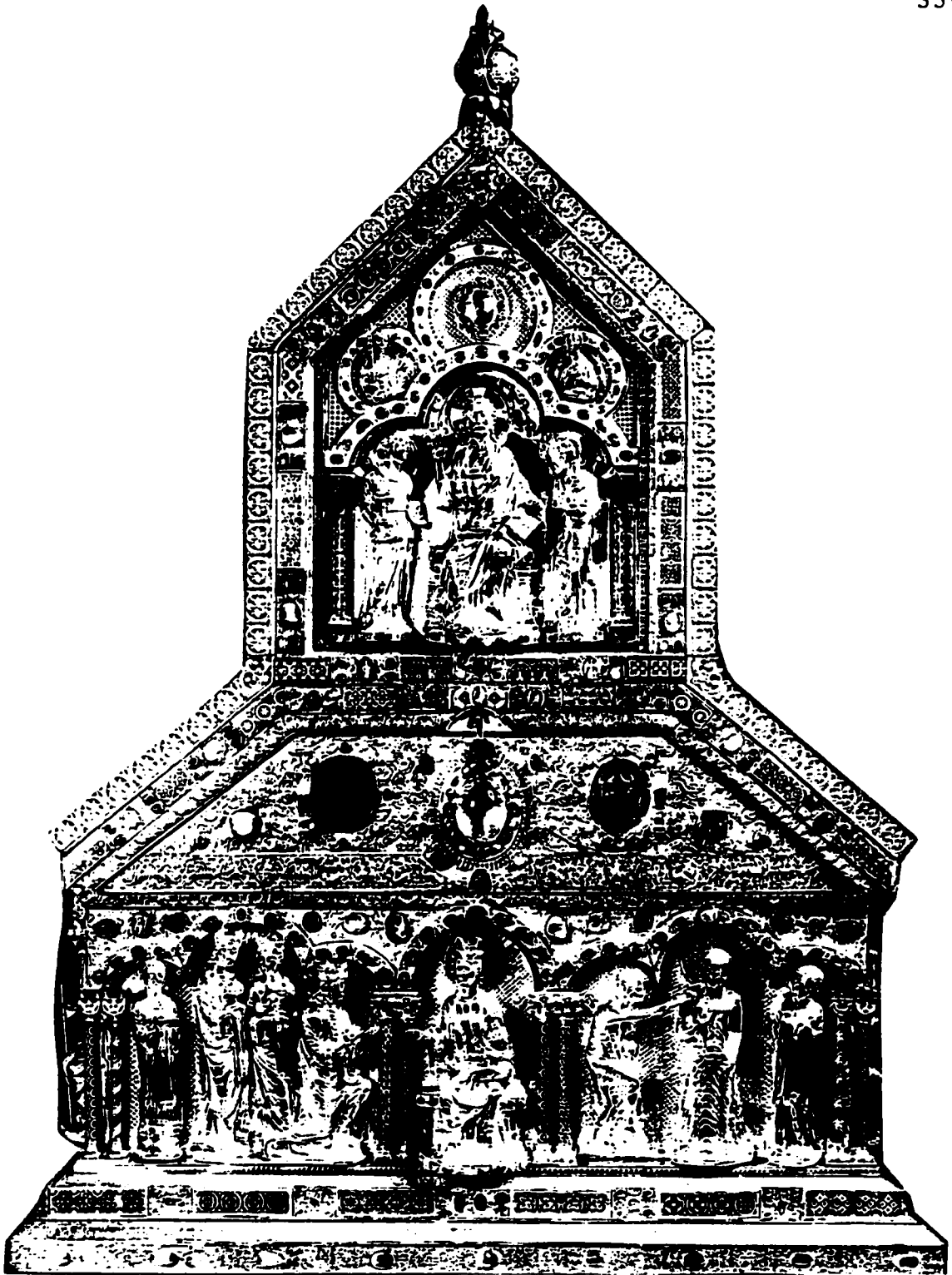


Figure 102. Shrine of the Three Kings. Cologne, Cathedral.
c. 1181-c. 1230.



Figure 103. Statue of Virgil. Mantua, Broletto. c. 1227.



Figure 104. Gold coin of Justinian II. New York, American Numismatic Society. AD 669-711.



Figure 105. Charity and Avarice. Bas-reliefs. Amiens Cathedral. 13th century.



Figure 106. Caritas-Misericordia and Avaritia. *Somme le Roi*. British Museum, Add. Ms. 28162, f. 9v.
Late 13th century.



Figure 107. Mercy and Avarice. *Somme le Roi*. London, British Library, Add. Ms. 54180, f. 136v. Late 13th century.

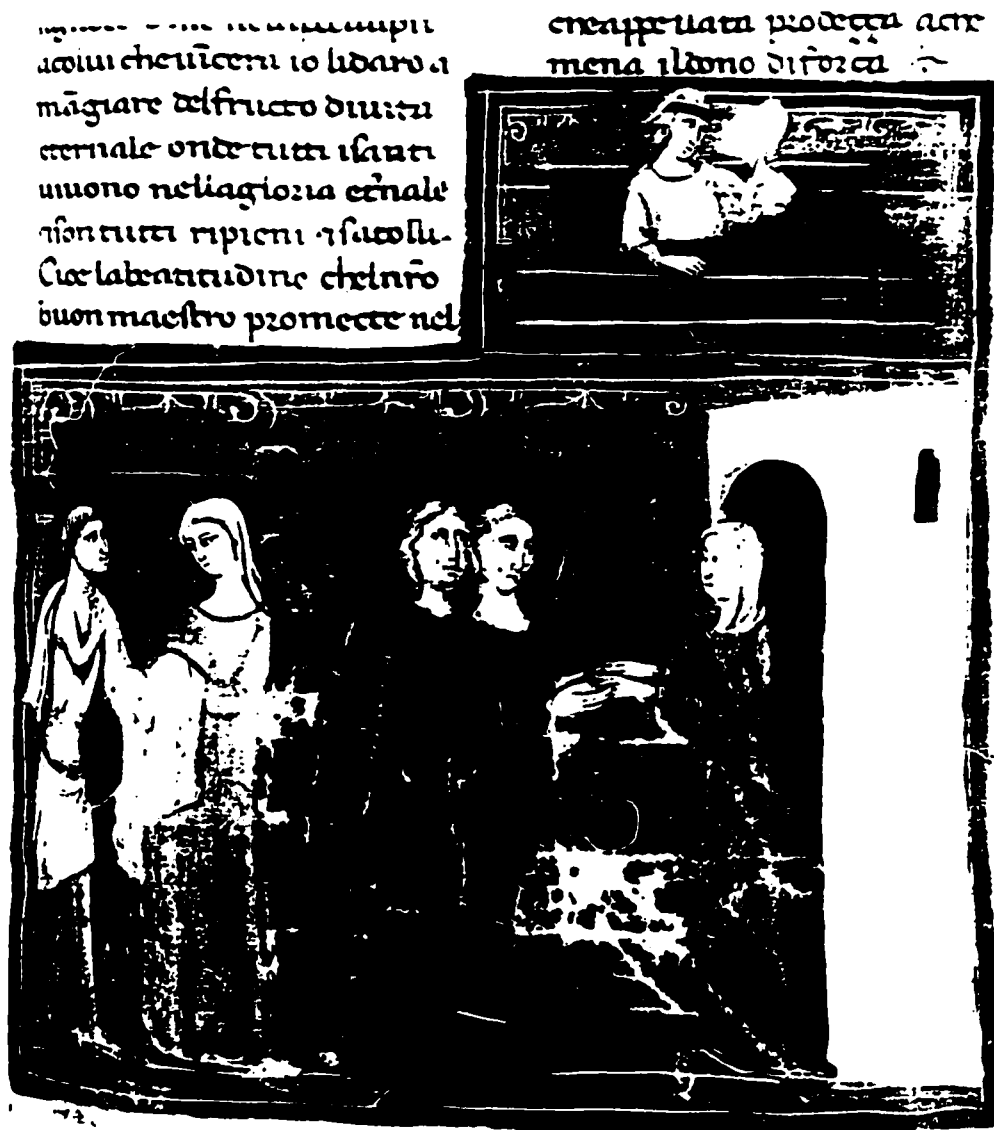


Figure 108. Avarice and Mercy. *Somme le Roi*. Florence,
 Biblioteca Laurenziana, Ms. Rediano 102.
 Early 14th century.

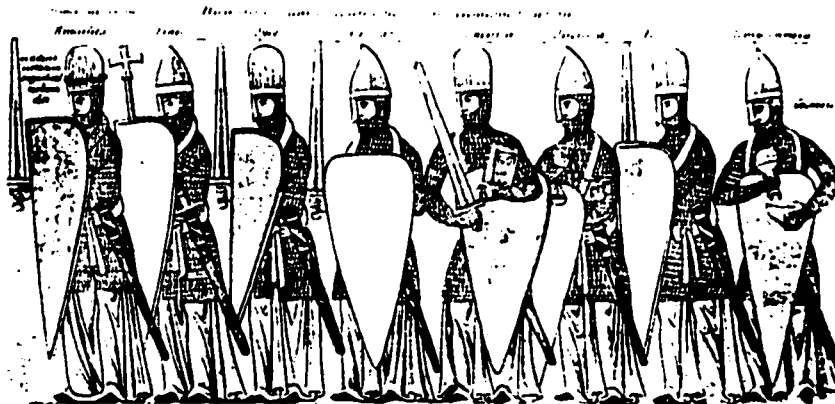


Figure 109. Psychomachy. *Hortus Deliciarum*.
Late 12th century.



Figure 110. Largitas and Avaritia. *Psychomachia*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 15158. 1298.



Figure 111. 19th century drawing of Largitas and Avaritia.
Salisbury Cathedral, Chapter House Portal. 13th Century.



Figure 112. Largitas and Avaritia. Laon Cathedral, west façade, north portal. 1190-1205.



Figure 113. Liberty. Bas-relief. Sens Cathedral, doorway. 12th century.



Figure 114. *Congiarium*. Arch of Constantine,
Rome. AD 312-15.



Figure 115. *Anicia Juliana*. Dioscurides. Vienna,
Nationalbibliothek, Cod. med. gr. 1, f. 6v.
Early 6th century.



Figure 116. Vices. *Psychomachia*. Leyden,
 University Library, Cod. Burmanni Q3.
 Second half of 9th century.



Figure 117. Avarice clutching moneybags. Capital, Autun.
Early 12th century.



Figure 118. Ape defecating coins. Marginal illumination.
London, British Museum, Add. 29253, f. 410v.
Early 14th century.



Figure 119. Taddeo di Bartolo. Detail from Scenes of Hell.
San Gimignano, Duomo. Late 14th century.



Figure 120. Punishment of avarice. Relief sculpture.
Fornovo di Taro, Church of Maria Assunta,
west exterior. c. 1200.

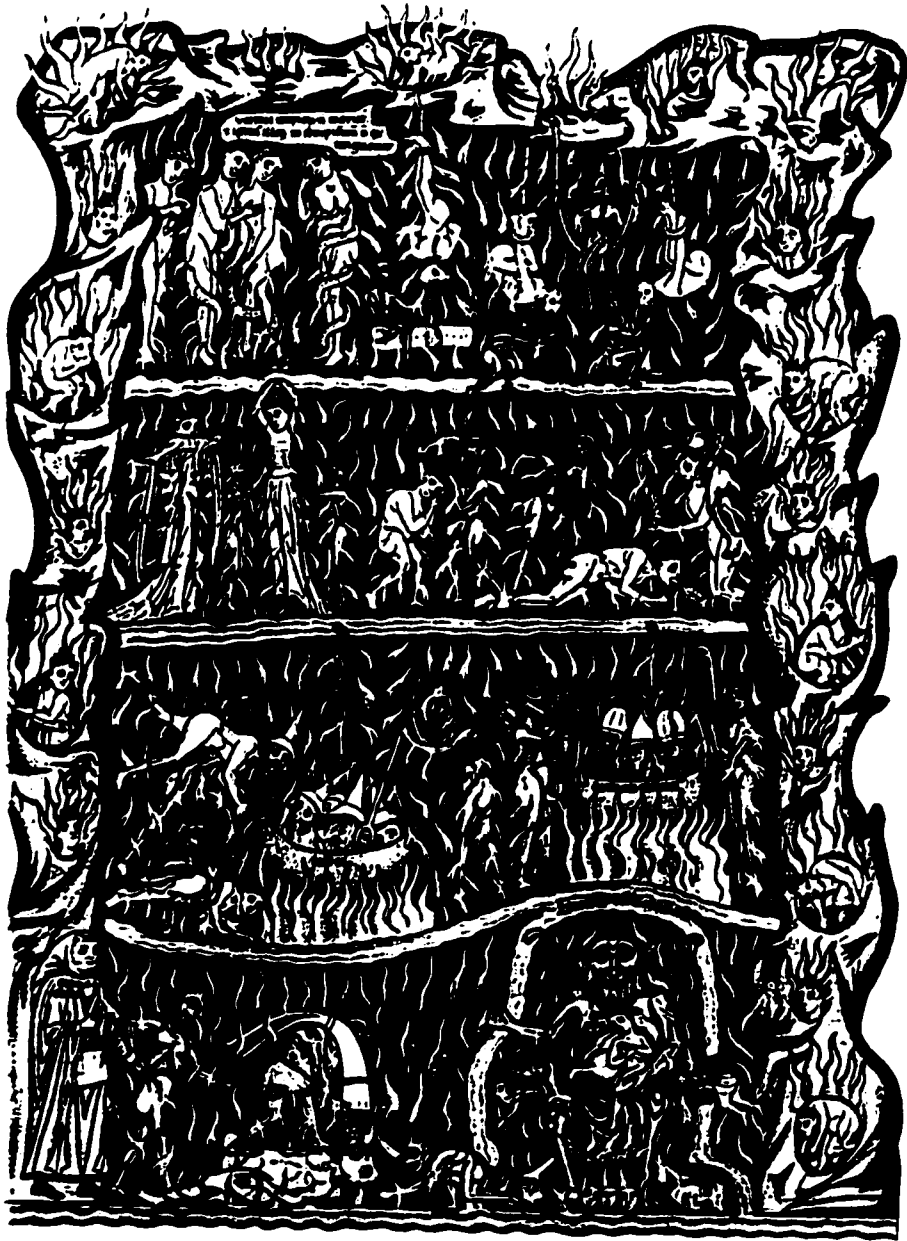


Figure 121. Last Judgement. *The Garden of Delights*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Fascimile. c. 1180.

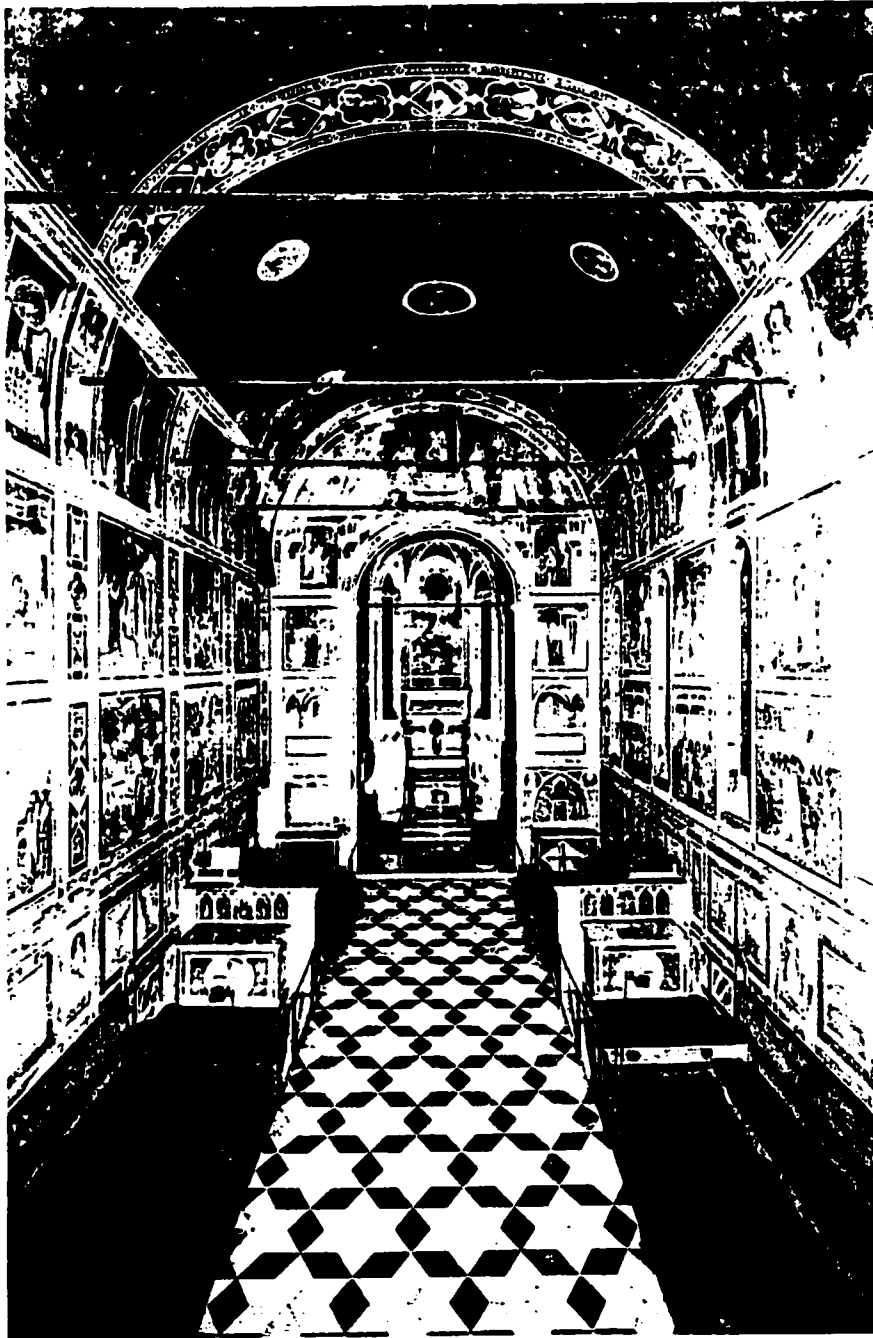


Figure 122. Giotto. General view of frescoes. Padua, Arena Chapel. c. 1304-c. 1308.



Figure 123. Giotto. *Envy*. Padua, Arena Chapel.
c. 1304-c. 1308.



Figure 124. Giotto. *Charity*. Padua, Arena Chapel.
c. 1304-c. 1308.



Figure 125. Giotto. *Betrayal of Judas*. Padua, Arena Chapel. c. 1304-c. 1308.



Figure 126. Giotto. Hanging of Judas, detail of *Last Judgement*. Padua, Arena Chapel. c. 1304-c. 1308.



Figure 127. Giotto. Enrico Scrovegni Kneeling before the Virgin and Saints, detail of *Last Judgement*. Padua, Arena Chapel. c.1304-c. 1308



Figure 128. Giotto. *The Visitation*. Padua, Arena Chapel.
c. 1304-c. 1308.



Figure 129. Giotto. *The Expulsion of the Merchants*. Padua, Arena Chapel. c. 1304-c. 1308.

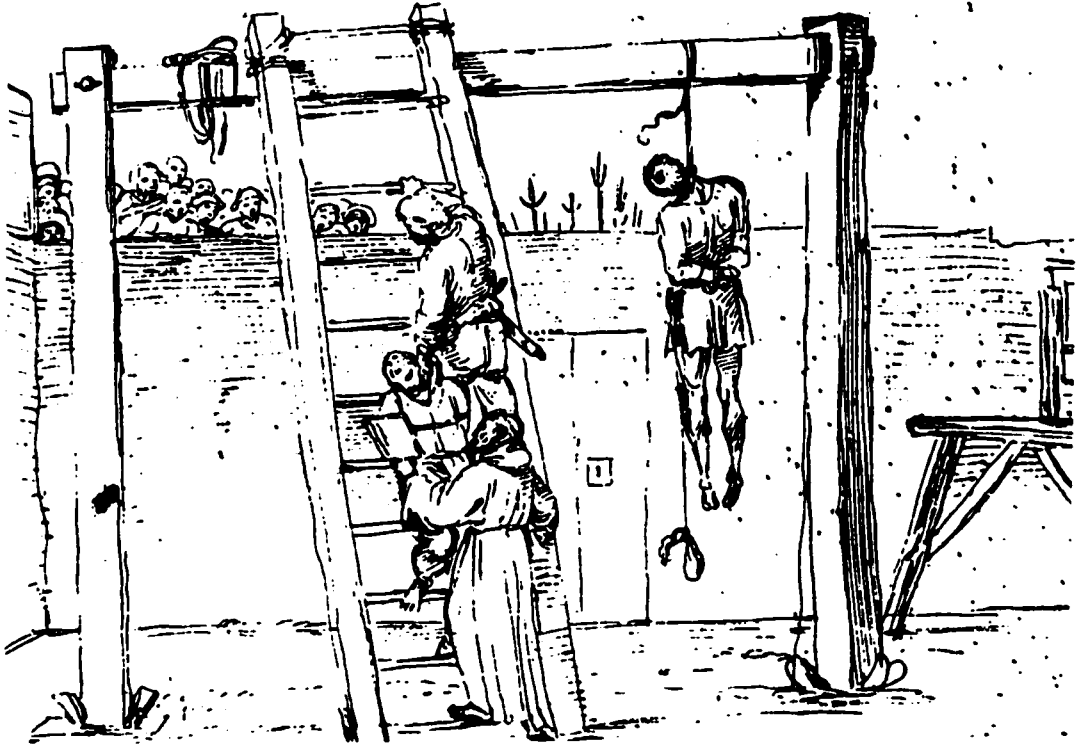


Figure 130. Annibale Carracci. *A Hanging*. Windsor Castle, Royal Library. c. 1599.

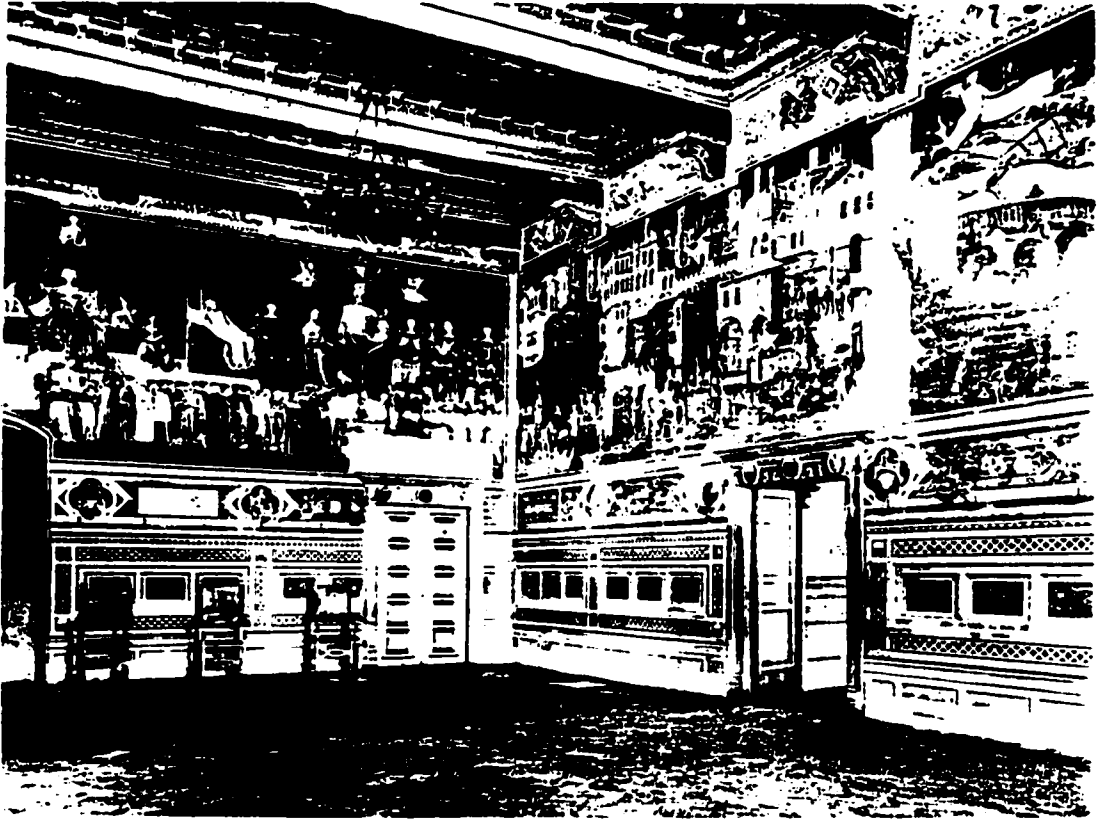


Figure 131. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. General view of frescoes, Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala dei Nove. 1338-39.



Figure 132. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *Wisdom and Justice*, detail from *Allegory of Good Government*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala dei Nove. 1338-39.



Figure 133. Giotto. *Justice*. Padua, Arena Chapel.
c. 1304-c. 1308.



Figure 134. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *Bene Comune*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala dei Nove. 1338-39.

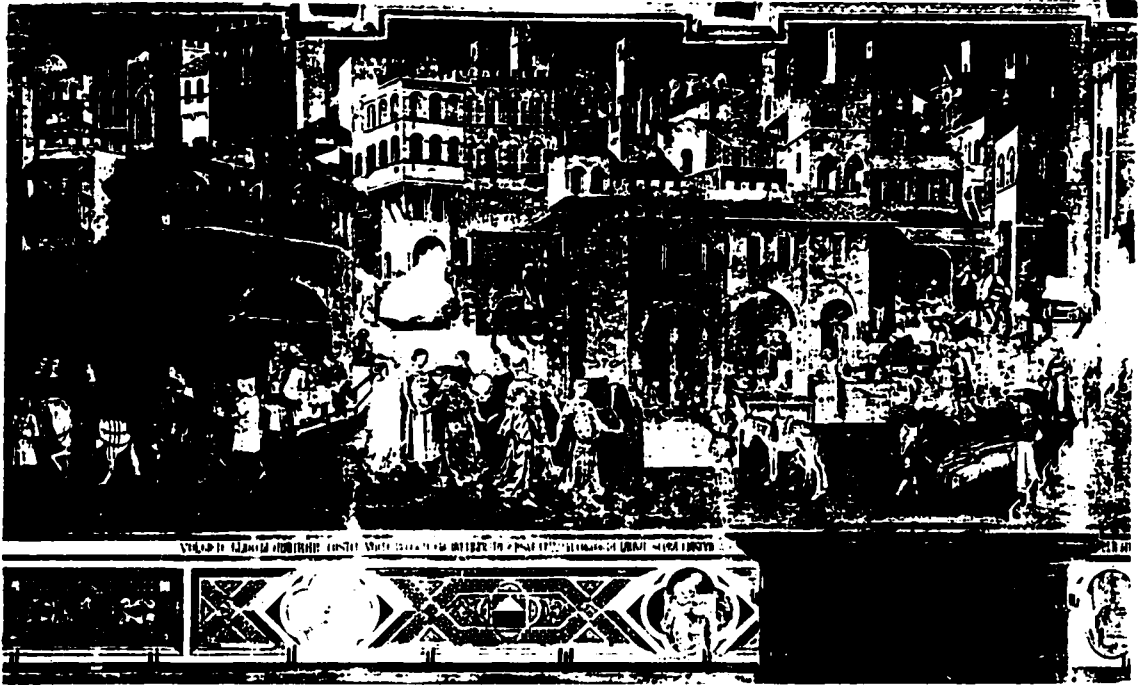


Figure 135. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *Effects of Good Government in the City*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala dei Nove. 1338-39.



Figure 136. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *Effects of Good Government in the Country*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala dei Nove. 1338-39.



Figure 137. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. *Securitas*, detail of *Effects of Good Government in the Country*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala dei Nove. 1338-39.



Figure 138. Ambrogio Lorenzetti. Detail of *Allegory of Bad Government*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala dei Nove. 1338-39.



Figure 139. Duccio. *Denial of Peter and Christ Before Annas* from the *Maestà*. Siena, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo. 1308-11.



Figure 140. Mother Ape and Hunter. From an English Beastyary. New York, Morgan Library, Ms. 81, f. 19v. c. 1170.



Figure 141. Miniature, *Causa I. Decretum Gratiani*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 3898, f. 92. Early 14th century.



Figure 142. Miniature, *Causa I. Decretum Gratiani*.
 Escorial, Real Biblioteca del Escorial, Ms. ç.I.2,
 f. 109v. 14th century (?)



Figure 143. Miniature, *Causa XXIII. Decretum Gratiani*.
 Vatican. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,
 Ms. lat. 1370, f. 192v. c. 1320.



Figure 145. Miniature, *Causa XIV. Decretum Gratiani*. Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. 558, f. 189. Late 13th or early 14th century.

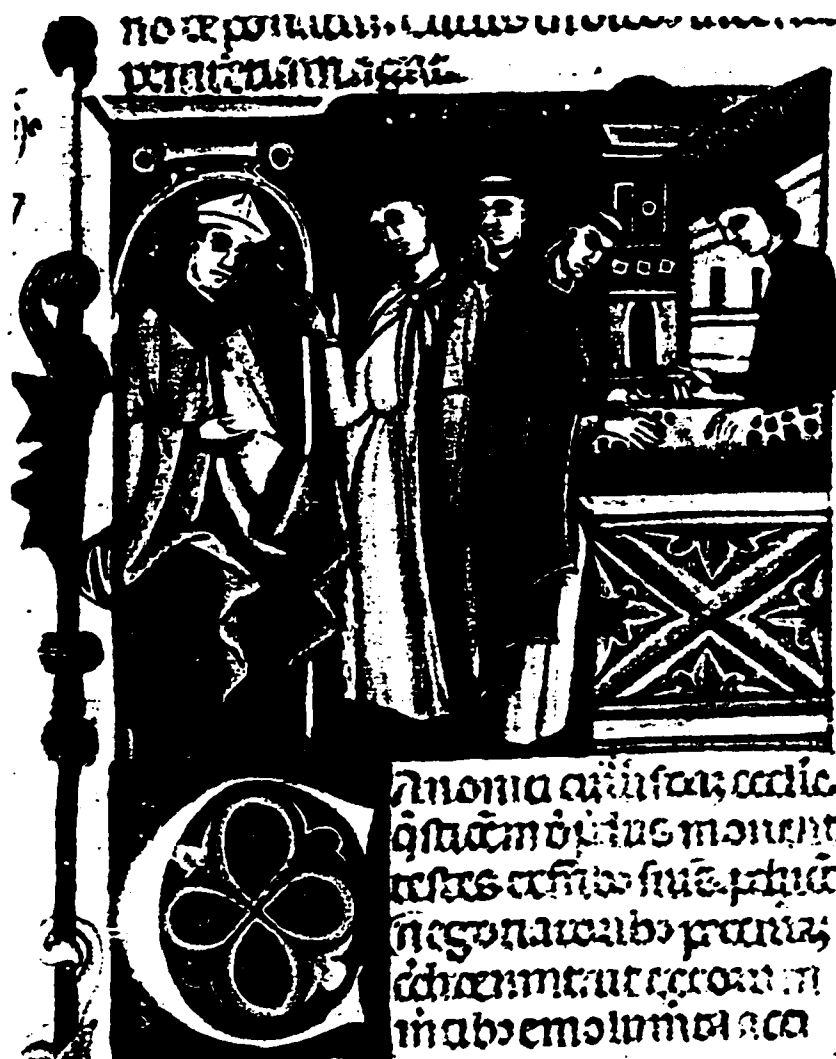


Figure 146. Miniature, *Causa XIV. Decretum Gratiani*.
Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana,
Ms. lat. 1371, f.156. 14th century.

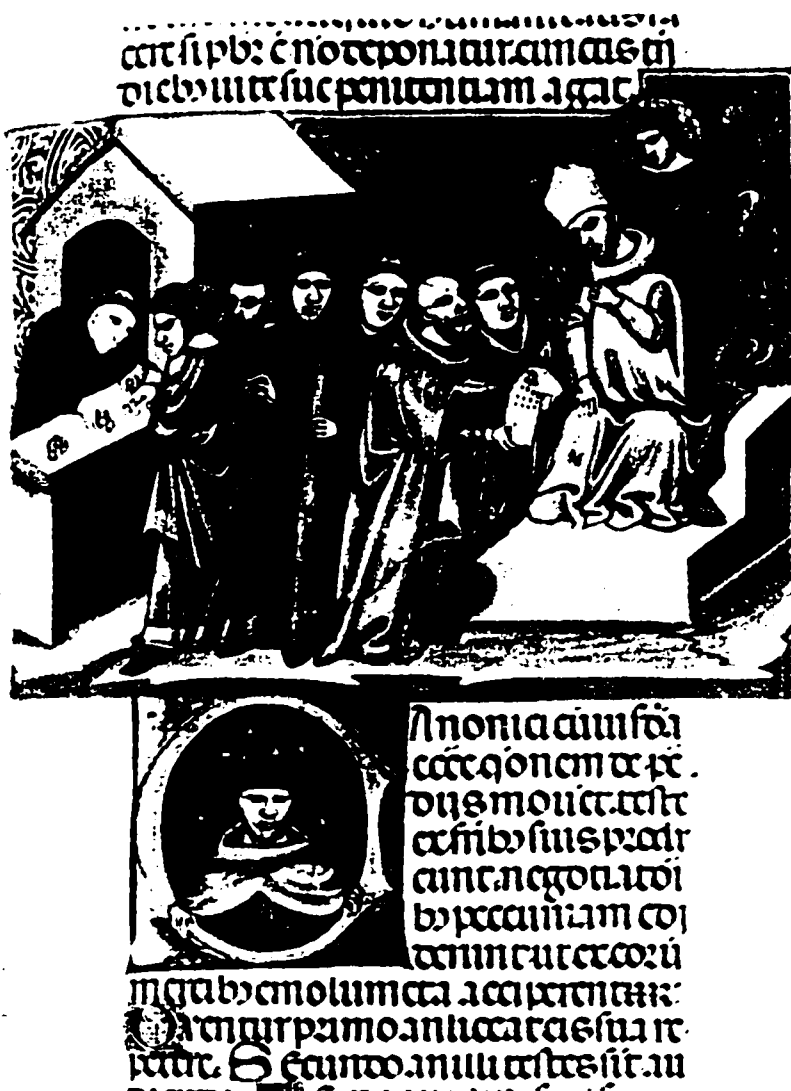


Figure 147. Pseudo-Nicolò. Miniature, *Causa XIV. Decretum Gratiani*. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. Nouv. acq. lat. 2508, f. 182. 14th century.



Figure 148. Nicolò da Bologna. Miniature, *Causa XIV. Decretum Gratiani*. Geneva, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Ms. lat. 60, f. 173. 14th century.



Figure 149. Jacopino da Reggio. Miniature, *Distinctiones* (Pars I). *Decretum Gratiani*. Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Ms. lat. 1375, f. 1. c. 1310.



Figure 152. Miniature, *Distinctiones (Pars I). Decretum Gratiani*. Bratislava, Slovakian Central State Archives, Ms. 14 (Jur. 46), f. 3. Late 12th century.



Figure 153. Historiated initial, *Distinctiones (Pars I). Decretum Gratiani*. Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Ms. G.V. 23, f. 8. Late 12th century.



Figure 155. Miniature, *Distinctiones (Pars I). Decretum Gratiani*. Siena, Biblioteca Comunale degli Intronati, Ms. K.I. 3, f. 1. c. 1320.

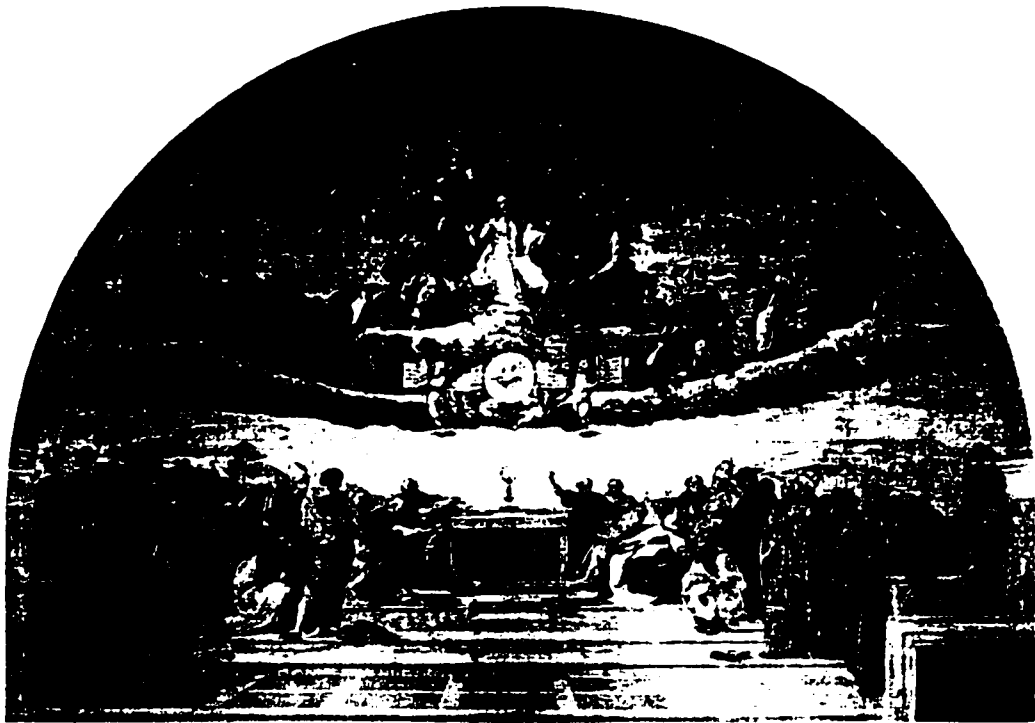


Figure 156. Raphael. *Disputa*. Stanza della Segnatura, Vatican, Rome. 1510-11.



Figure 157. Nicolò da Bologna. Miniature, *Distinctiones* (Pars I). *Decretum Gratiani*. Berlin, Museum Dahlem, Kupferstichkabinett. Late 14th century.

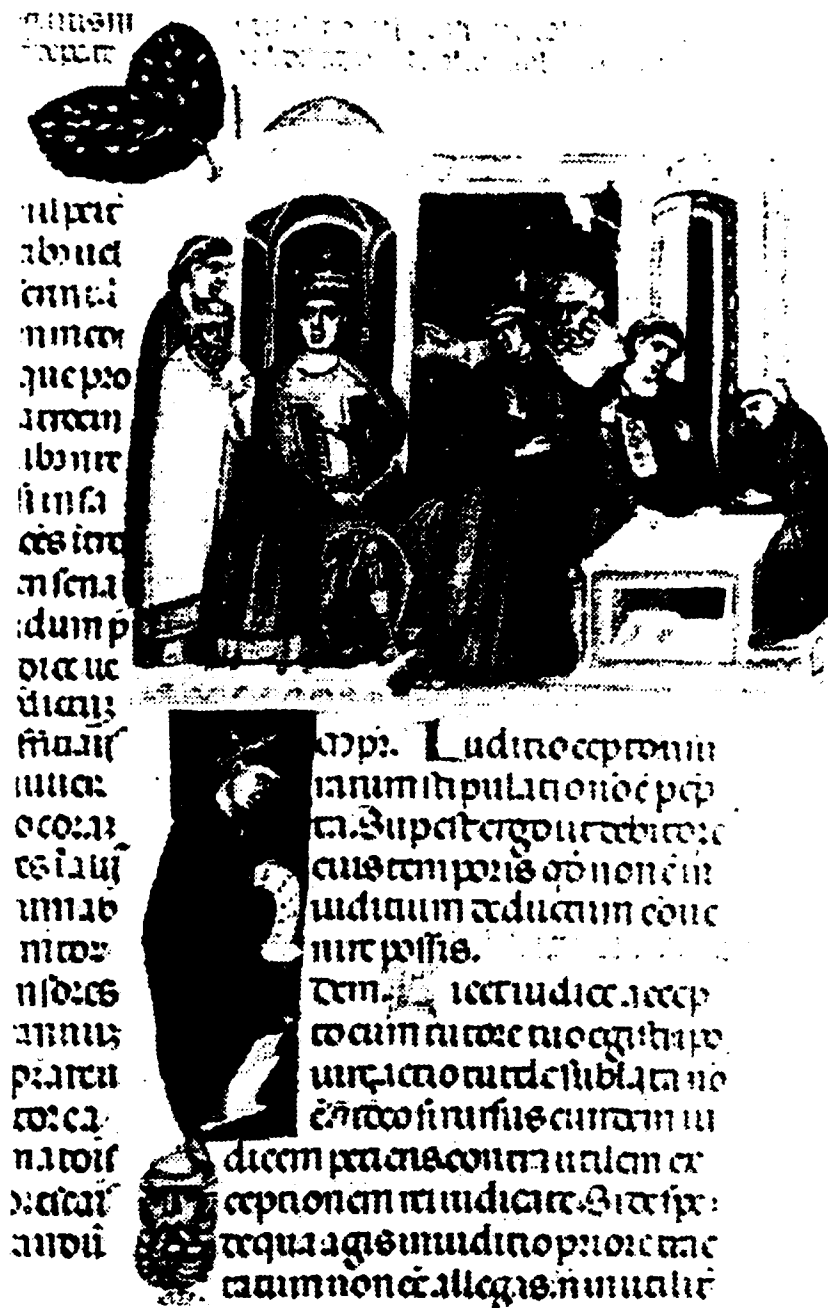


Figure 158. Neri da Rimini. Regulations on Usury. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. lat. 8941, c. 67. Early 14th century.



Figure 159. Seal of jurisdiction used in the court of the duke of Burgundy from 1274-1359. Archives Nationales, collection of seals, B. 572.



Figure 160. Seals of jurisdiction used in the court of Lord de Grancey. Archives nationales, collection of seals. 1328.



Figure 161. Simone Martini. *Maestà*. Siena, Palazzo Pubblico, Sala del Mappamondo. 1315.



Figure 162. Giovanni di Lorenzo "Cini". *Madonna della Battaglia di Porta Camollia*. Siena, Chiesa di San Martino. 1526.



Figure 163. Antonio dell Pollaiuolo. *Tobias and the Angel*.
Turin, Galleria Sabauda. Second half of 15th century.



Figure 164. Ercole de' Roberti. *St. John the Baptist*.
Berlin, Dahlem Museum, Picture Gallery.
Last quarter of 15th century.



Figure 165. El Greco. *San Bernardino da Siena*. Toledo.
El Greco Museum. 1603/4.



Figure 166. Quentin Metsys. *The Money-Changer and His Wife*.
Paris, Louvre. 1514.



Figure 167. Marinus van Reymerswaele. *The Banker and His Wife*. Munich, Alte Pinakotek. 1538.



Figure 168. Marinus van Reymerswaele. *Two Tax-Gatherers*.
London, National Gallery. Mid-16th century.



Figure 169. Marinus van Reymerswaele. *Two Tax-Collectors*.
Munich, Alte Pinakotek. Mid-16th century.



Figure 170. Marinus van Reymerswaele (?). *Two Misers*.
Hampton Court, Royal Collection. Mid-16th century.



Figure 171. Marinus van Reymerswaele. *The Banker and His Wife*. Madrid, Museo del Prado. 1538.



Figure 172. Marinus van Reymerswaele. *The Banker and His Wife*. Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunst. Mid-16th century.



Figure 173. Petrus Christus. *St. Eloy*. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art. 1449.



Figure 174. Jan van Eyck. *Giovanni Arnolfini and His Bride*.
London, National Gallery. 1434.



Figure 176. Guido da Siena. *Massacre of the Innocents*.
Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale. Second half of 13th century.

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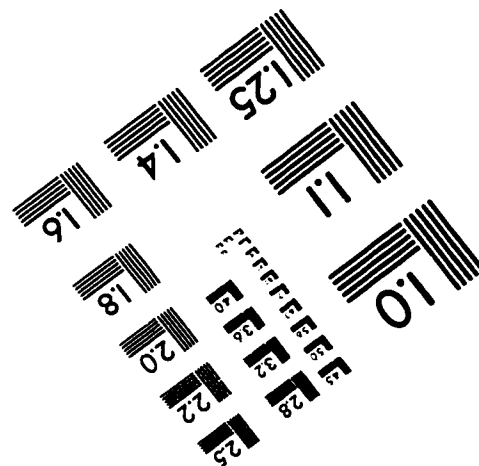
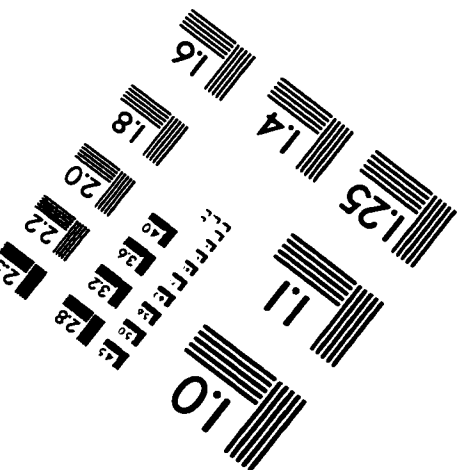
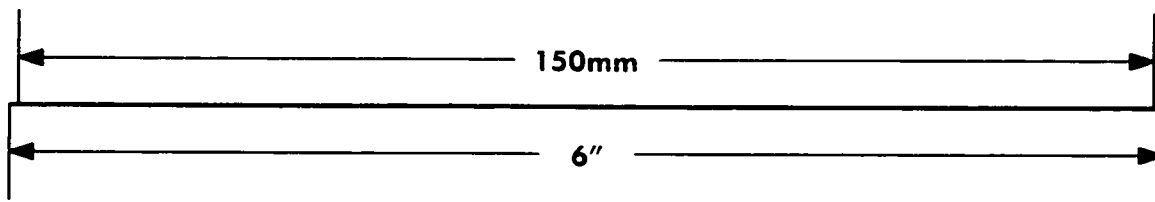
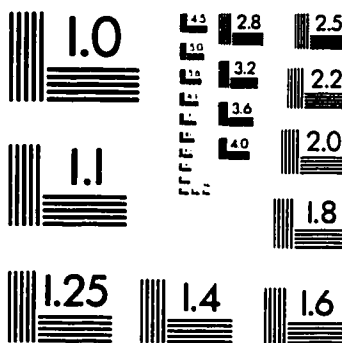
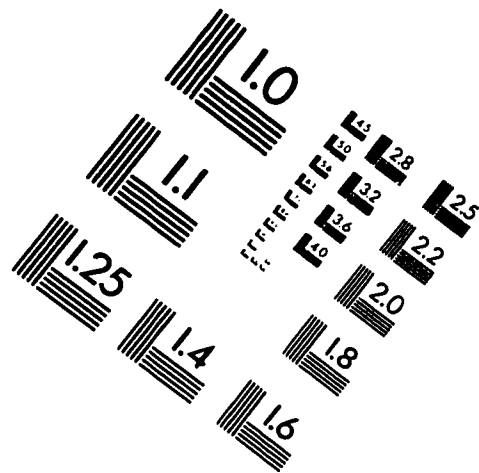
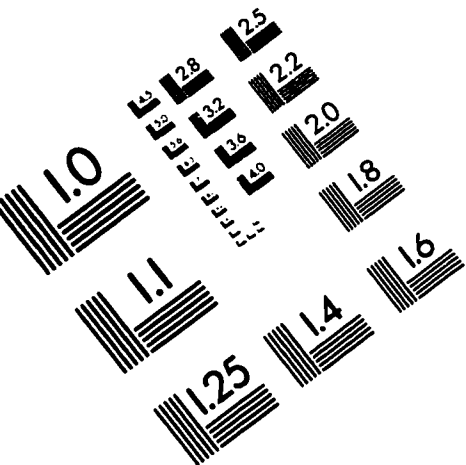
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