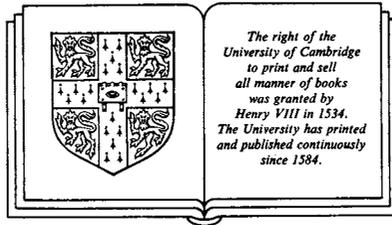


Benedetto Accolti and the Florentine Renaissance

ROBERT BLACK

*Lecturer in Modern History,
University of Leeds*



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Arezzo in the early Renaissance

(i) Political and economic life

The history of Benedetto Accolti's native city, Arezzo,¹ followed a characteristic pattern for a Tuscan city-state at the end of the middle ages: rapid expansion was succeeded by internal disruption, leading to loss of independence and prolonged civic decline. The climax of the Aretine commune's growth had been reached during the thirteenth century and was followed by almost a century of factional conflict and foreign war, culminating in the surrender of Arezzo to Florence in 1384. Florentine rule brought an end to overt political turmoil, but it also coincided with an economic depression from which Arezzo did not begin to recover until at least the sixteenth century.

¹ The fundamental source for Aretine history before 1384 is Pasqui's *Documenti*; the prefaces to the first three volumes provide the best available narrative of Aretine history before Florentine rule. The most recent general history is M. Falciai, *Storia di Arezzo* (Arezzo, 1928). A guide to the families who composed the Aretine patriciate is Lazzeri, *Guglielmino Ubertini*, 241–305. The most important sources for and works dealing with Aretine political history before 1384 are, after Pasqui, Giovanni L. De Bonis, *Liber inferni Aretii*, ed. A. Bini and Bartolomeo di Gorello, *Cronica dei fatti d'Arezzo*, ed. A. Bini and G. Grazzini, in *RIS*², xv, 1; *Annales Aretinorum maiores et minores*, ed. *idem*, *RIS*², xxiv, 1; A. Bini, 'Arezzo ai tempi di Dante', *AMAPet*, n.s. ii (1922), 1–57; G. Marri Camerani, *Statuto di Arezzo (1327)* (Florence, 1946); G. Fatini, 'L'ultimo secolo della repubblica aretina', *BSenSP*, xxxi (1924), 61–106; L. Romanelli, *La presa di Arezzo per Enguerrando VII sire di Coucy nel 1384* (Arezzo, 1887); P. Durrieu, 'La prise d'Arezzo par Enguerrand VII, Sire de Coucy', *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes*, xli (1880), 161–94; D. Bini, 'Il conflitto secolare tra i comuni di Arezzo e di Firenze fino all'assoggettamento del primo al secondo', *AMAPet*, xxx–xxxii (1941), 55–73; Lazzeri, *Aspetti*, 79–100. The principal article on Aretine political history in the fifteenth century is Pasqui, 'Una congiura'. There has been more interest in recent scholarship on Aretine economic, financial and social history in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, for which some works of importance are Benigni, 'Fonti'; Carbone, 'Note'; Varese, 'Condizioni'; Cherubini, 'Schede'; Dini, 'Lineamenti'; Lazzeri, *Aspetti*; A. Fanfani, 'Costi e profitti di un mercante del '300', *NRivSt*, xviii (1934), 412–22; F. Melis, 'Lazzaro Bracci', *AMAPet*, n.s. xxviii (1965–7), 1–18; *idem*, 'Uno sguardo al mercato dei panni di lana a Pisa nella seconda metà del Trecento', *Economia e storia*, vi (1959), 321–65; *idem*, 'L'economia delle città minori della Toscana', in *Le zecche minori toscane fino al xiv secolo. Atti del terzo convegno internazionale di studi* (Pistoia, 16–19 September 1967),

For most of the thirteenth century Arezzo had prospered and its commune had grown stronger, but Arezzo's rise brought the commune into conflict with neighbouring towns, especially Florence and Siena, and in 1289 Arezzo was decisively defeated by Florence at the battle of Campaldino. This humiliation was followed by more than twenty years of dissension among Arezzo's leading families. Two factions, called the Verdi and the Secchi, emerged and eventually the Secchi prevailed, installing their leader, Guido Tarlati, bishop of Arezzo, as despot in 1312. The *signoria* of Guido Tarlati temporarily restored Arezzo's prestige: he built a new circuit of walls which greatly enlarged the city, restored Arezzo's dominions in the countryside, introduced a new silver and copper currency and replenished the city's treasury. He reached the highpoint of his career when he crowned Louis of Bavaria as emperor in Milan in 1327, but he died a few months later, bequeathing the *signoria* to his brother, Pier Saccone. Arezzo's fortunes again waned under Pier Saccone, who was reduced to such desperation by the armies of Perugia and Florence and by plots among the Aretine patriciate that in 1337 he sold the city to Florence. This first period of Florentine dominion, however, was shortlived: in July 1343 internal dissension in Florence gave Aretines the opportunity to regain their freedom and restore an independent communal regime, which was now dominated by patrician Guelf families such as the Bostoli who had opposed the Ghibelline *signoria* of the Tarlati.

But the new Guelf commune did not bring stability to Arezzo. The city was now continuously under threat from the Tarlati and other exiled Ghibellines, and the regime was plagued by divisions among its leading members. The death-throes of the Aretine republic occupied the decade from 1375 to 1384, when, besides undergoing seven changes of regime and three rebellions, the city was sacked twice by the troops of mercenaries.² The end was finally reached in 1384 when the condottiere Enguerrand de Coucy put Arezzo up for sale. At first he approached the Sienese, but while they dithered he concluded a deal with the Florentines, who took possession in November 1384.

Florentine rule, now permanently established, brought greater tranquility to political life in Arezzo than the Aretines had been able to achieve themselves. The Aretine commune had failed to control the feudal magnates both in the city itself and in the nearby countryside. Before 1384 the

13–40, esp. 34–6; Cherubini, *Signori*, 313–92; *Idem*, 'Inventario dei beni del "piccolo borghese" aretino Agnolo di Bartolo detto Panciola', *Signori*, 495–500; A. Molho, 'A note on Jewish moneylenders in Tuscany in the late Trecento and early Quattrocento', in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. *idem* and J. A. Tedeschi (Florence, 1971), 99–117; Herlihy and Klapsich-Zuber, *Les toscans*; *idem*, 'Fiscalité et démographie en Toscane (1427–1430)', *Annales*, xxiv (1969), 1313–37.

² Arezzo underwent a grave economic crisis as a result of this political and military upheaval: cf. Cherubini, *Signori*, 321ff.

Tarlatti and the Ubertini had possessed strongholds in the countryside from which they could easily make sorties against the city; indeed, the Tarlati's fortified castle, Pietramala, which was only six miles from Arezzo, had provided Enguerrand de Coucy and his ally, Marco Tarlati, with a base for launching their assault on Arezzo in 1384. The feudal families had overshadowed and finally eclipsed the commune: first Guglielmo Ubertini had been effective ruler of Arezzo until his death at Campaldino in 1289; then came the *signorie* of Guido and Pier Saccone Tarlati; in the end it was the attempt of Pier Saccone's son Marco to establish himself as despot with the help of Enguerrand de Coucy which precipitated the surrender of Arezzo to Florence in 1384. Florentine military resources far outstripped anything that the Aretine commune could have mustered, and so the Florentine regime had greater success against the feudal magnates of Arezzo. Some were forced to submit their possessions in the countryside to Florence³ and dangerous fortresses near the city were razed.⁴ Indeed, one suspects that the very high rate of taxation at which the feudal nobility were assessed after 1390 not only reflected their position as the region's dominant class⁵ but was in part an attempt at discriminatory or even punitive action by Florence against a class which included many of its former enemies from the Tarlati, Ubertini and other Ghibelline families.⁶ Florence pacified the magnates of Arezzo and its countryside not only by overt force and through financial discrimination but also by diplomacy: in return for Florentine protection and recognition of their feudal rights, the Ubertini of Chitignano in the Casentino became the perpetual allies of Florence in 1384, thus preserving a semi-independent lordship for themselves until the eighteenth century.⁷

The main threat to Florentine rule and to domestic tranquillity in Arezzo came from the wars with Milan and Naples in which Florence was embroiled for more than half a century after the end of Aretine independence in 1384. Members of the Tarlati family led the armies of Giangaleazzo Visconti, duke of Milan, to the walls of Arezzo in 1390, no doubt in the hope of regaining some kind of control over the city; this attempt, however, came to nothing, as did further schemes of Giangaleazzo's to foment revolt in Arezzo in 1400.⁸ More serious was the civic unrest in Arezzo provoked by Florence's deteriorating relations with Ladislav of Naples in 1408 and 1409. A policy of exiling large numbers

³ *Annales Aretinorum Maiores*, RIS², xxiv, 1, p. 97, n. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 108; Bruni, *Historiae*, 239. For more references to Florentine subjugation of Aretine magnates in 1384, cf. Cherubini, *Signori*, 202, n. 2.

⁵ Cherubini, 'Schede', 6.

⁶ For a list of the Aretine nobles included in the *lira* of 1390, cf. *ibid.* 8–9. The nobles may not actually have paid these taxes: cf. Carbone, 'Note', 187–8.

⁷ Cherubini, *Signori*, 202ff.

⁸ Cf. Bruni, *Historiae*, 247–9; Brucker, *Civic World*, 172–3.

of potential rebels had been used to underpin Florentine rule in Pisa since 1407, and in 1408 a similar policy was suggested for Arezzo; it was rejected then as counterproductive, but the events of 1409 led the Florentines to change their minds.⁹ As Ladislas prepared an invasion force against Florence at the beginning of the year, Florentine intelligence uncovered allegedly treasonable activities by a number of friars and at least one layman in Arezzo.¹⁰ In May 1409 Ladislas appeared before the walls of Arezzo with his army but the major insurrection for which he had hoped failed to occur;¹¹ a plot to betray Arezzo to him was uncovered, resulting in the execution of one conspirator.¹² A more important result was that Florence now introduced the policy of mass exile used in Pisa, turning at least a hundred Aretines out of their homes.¹³ Exile on this scale led to incidents of injustice, mistaken identity, rapine and fornication,¹⁴ and growing hostility to Florentine rule provoked two large-scale conspiracies in Arezzo: the first in September 1409 was led by the Bostoli family, the second in December by the Albergotti.¹⁵ Both plots failed and were followed by numerous executions;¹⁶ Florence then continued the policy of exiling potential rebels until 1414 when, with Ladislas's death, the danger to Florentine rule in Arezzo once again receded. The bitterness which was the legacy of these years, however, lived on in the memories of Aretines and was at least in part responsible for another attempt to overthrow Florentine rule in Arezzo twenty years later in 1431. The power of the Bostoli and Albergotti had been curtailed as a result of the events of 1409, but a prominent Aretine from a feudal family, Conte Mariotto di Biagio Griffolini,

⁹ *Ibid.*, 214–16.

¹⁰ ASF, Otto di Guardia, 10, fol. 53r (16 April 1409): scribatur capitaneo custodie civitatis Aretii quod dictum officium extitit informatum quod quidam civis civitatis Aretii nomine Cerretta conditionis mediocris qui habet tres filios ex quibus duorum nomina ignoramus sed ambo videtur quod sint ad servitia Regis Ladislai et tertius vocatur Bernardus qui a pluribus mensibus citra de quindecim diebus in quindecim dies praticavit venire ad civitatem Florentie et quod dictus Cerretta pluries usus fuit dicere verba que dicto officio generant maximam suspicionem. Proinde stet attentus circa praticam dicti Cerette . . . fol. 69r (18 May 1409): scribatur capitaneo custodie civitatis Aretii quod ad aures dicti officii de novo devenit quod in regulis fratrum que sunt in civitate Aretii sunt certi fratres de partibus regni seu subditi Regis Ladislai qui verbis satis inhonestis utuntur. Proinde sollicitus inquirat de predictis et eos expellat de eius iurisdictione. fol. 72r (24 May 1409): scribatur capitaneo custodie civitatis Aretii comendando eum de gestis circa fratres religiosos forenses qui erant in civitate Aretii. I am grateful to Dr P. J. Jones for directing me to this volume. Cf. Brucker, *Civic World*, 215.

¹¹ Pasqui, 'Una congiura', 4, n. 1. ¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Brucker, *Civic World*, 216; ASF, Otto di Guardia, 10, fol. 78v (10 June 1409): [they elect] ser Bartolomeum Bambi Ciay notarium florentinum in notarium et officialem ad consignandum Aretinos et Castilionenses relegatos in civitate[m] Florentie.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, vol. 80r (14 June 1409).

¹⁵ Pasqui, 'Una congiura', 4, n. 1; *Cronica di Iacopo Salviati*, in *Delizie*, xviii, 331ff. For suspicions of other members of the Bostoli and Albergotti families in the early summer of 1409, cf. ASF, Otto di Guardia, 10, fol. 80r, 82v, 83r.

¹⁶ Pasqui, 'Una congiura', 4, n. 1.

who had been one of Arezzo's most eminent citizens and merchants in the 1420s, attempted in 1431 to betray the city to the forces of the duke of Milan led by the condottiere Niccolò Piccinino. Once again, however, the conspiracy failed and Griffolini and a number of his associates were apprehended and summarily executed.¹⁷

Despite these occasional incidents, political life in Arezzo in the early fifteenth century was usually tranquil, in marked contrast to the last years of self-government. The Florentines had been proud to number Arezzo among their possessions, and when the surrender was announced in November 1384, the entire city of Florence was reported to have taken to the streets, lighting bonfires and holding jousts for the whole day.¹⁸ Aretines did not prove to be intractable subjects, and so Goro Dati, writing in the early fifteenth century, was probably speaking for most Florentines when he proudly called Arezzo a 'great acquisition' which was 'useful for the city of Florence'.¹⁹ In his history of Florence, Dati provided an interesting description of Arezzo, particularly emphasizing its natural amenities:

The city of Arezzo is very old, and according to ancient chronicles it was a noble city even before the Romans came to Tuscany. It is situated near the river Arno, which rises in the Casentino over Pratovecchio in a mountain called Falterona; the river Tiber, which flows to Rome, also originates in this mountain. The city of Arezzo is forty miles from Florence, a distance which can be travelled in one day. Its site is strong and well-placed, descending from the hill on which the citadel is located and spreading below onto a plain furnished with many springs of running water. The nearby countryside is flat rather than hilly and possesses more fine land than anywhere else in that region. For there is an abundance of grain, oats and fine game. The town is well situated and has good air, and it begets men of keen intellect.²⁰

Aretines may have acquiesced in Florentine rule in the knowledge that Florentine power would help to prevent the turbulent events of 1375 to 1384 from recurring; however, it is doubtful whether many Aretines rejoiced at their subjugation to Florence, especially since Florentine rule coincided with a severe economic recession in Arezzo. Arezzo, like the rest of Tuscany, had reached the height of its medieval prosperity in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, when the area enclosed by its third set of walls suggests a population perhaps as high as 20,000.²¹ The Black Death and the political and military crises of the fourteenth century

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 3–19. Mariotto Griffolini's declared motives for conspiring against Florence were oppressive tax burdens and fear of renewed mass exile in Arezzo: cf. *ibid.*, 16. His taxes in fact more than doubled between 1423 and 1429: cf. ASA, Lira, 6, fol. 10v and 7, fol. 17r. For more details about Mariotto, his family and his conspiracy, cf. *infra*, pp. 186ff.

¹⁸ Cf. *Diario d'anonimo fiorentino*, in *Documenti di storia italiana*, vi (Florence, 1876), 456.

¹⁹ G. Dati, *Istoria di Firenze*, ed. L. Pratesi (Norcia, 1904), 36.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 30. ²¹ Herlihy and Klapisch, *Les toscans*, 180.

reduced the population by as much as two thirds, so that by 1390 the city's population was only about 7000.²² Apart from in Pistoia, Florentine rule coincided with declining population in its larger subject cities,²³ and Arezzo was no exception, by 1427 its population having fallen to 4123.²⁴ In the first forty years of Florentine rule, thus, the population of Arezzo fell by perhaps a third, which amounted to a decline of just over 1% a year.²⁵ Although not as great as the catastrophic decline suffered by Pisa between 1406 and 1427, which was 2.34% a year,²⁶ the continued population decline in Arezzo could have had only the most serious effect on the economic life of the city. Indeed, the communal government of Arezzo was aware of the consequences for the Aretine economy of the depopulation of the city and countryside, and strenuous efforts were made to attract foreigners to settle in Arezzo. It became normal practice to offer prospective citizens five years exemption from all communal taxes,²⁷ and as a result a considerable number of new citizens were created from the end of the fourteenth century.²⁸ Evidently, however, these efforts by the Aretine government to offset the falling population did not meet with much success, at least until the second quarter of the fifteenth century when the decline was finally arrested and the population levelled off at about 4500.²⁹

The clearest indication of economic depression in Arezzo is the decline in the average wealth of Aretine households during the fifteenth century. Whereas in 1423 the average wealth of a household was 455 florins, by 1443 it had fallen to 250 florins and by 1480 it reached a nadir of 200

²² In 1387 and 1390, there were respectively 1645 and 1776 households in Arezzo (Varese, 'Condizioni', 62–3), so that the approximate population was between 6500 and 7200.

²³ Herlihy and Klapisch, *Les toscans*, 177–81.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 664. On *ibid.*, p. 180, the authors give the figure of 1183 hearths from the *catasto* of 1427; my own count, based on ASF, Cat. 273 (1429), gives 1191 hearths.

²⁵ Herlihy and Klapisch, *Les toscans*, 180. ²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Cf. e.g. ASA, Provv. 1, fol. 12r (11 December 1385): . . . propter guerras et scandala hactenus orta et agitata in civitate et comitatu Aretii ipsa civitas et comitatus sunt civibus et incolis vacuati et volentes quantos possibile est forenses et aliengenos allicere et ipsam civitatem et comitatum habitatoribus instaurare . . . providerunt . . . quod quicumque forensis . . . veniet deinceps ad habitandum et standum cum sua familia in civitate vel comitatu Aretii intelligatur esse et sit exemptus liber . . . ab omnibus et singulis oneribus . . . comunis Aretii . . . infra quinque annos.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.* fol. 37v–38r, 39r–v, 42v, 57r–v, 60r, 73v.

²⁹ Varese ('Condizioni', 62–3) gives the following numbers of households on the basis of which Aretine population can be estimated:

Year	Households	Estimated population
1436	1336	5300
1443	1087	4300
1450	1110	4500
1458	1128	4500
1467	1217	4900
1480	1274	5100
1490	973	3900

florins.³⁰ As a result of this increasing poverty, the total wealth of the population declined from 529,000 florins in 1423 to 271,500 florins in 1443, reaching a nadir of 219,200 florins in 1490.³¹ Indeed, this decline in wealth during the fifteenth century is all the more striking when it is contrasted with the population, which has been seen to have been more or less stable after 1427.³² A further measure of the drastic decline of Arezzo as a city in the later middle ages is provided by the number of notaries at work there during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Legal contracts, deeds of procuration, testaments and innumerable other acts regarding almost all aspects of economic and civic life were recorded by notaries, whose records of matriculation into the Aretine guild of lawyers and notaries have survived for this period. Whereas in 1346, just before the Black Death, there were about 150 notaries matriculated in the guild,³³ by 1364 there were about 50³⁴ as there were still in 1390,³⁵ but by 1447 their numbers had fallen to about 30,³⁶ evidence of the degree to which the whole of civic life in Arezzo had wound down by the fifteenth century.

One symptom of Arezzo's worsening condition in the early Renaissance was the malaise of the city's commerce and industry. Arezzo did manage to beget one important international merchant, but Lazzaro Bracci's meteoric rise at the turn of the fifteenth century testifies more to his special entrepreneurial talents than to the buoyancy of Aretine commerce and industry,³⁷ which had never made the city into a major mercantile centre in the later middle ages. Evidence of this comes not only from the study of a merchant such as Simo d'Ubertino³⁸ but also from the relatively small contribution made by Arezzo's leading merchants and industrialists to Aretine direct taxation in 1390.³⁹ In the early 1420s, the largest foreign venture was mounted by Mariotto Griffolini, involving trade with Budapest in Hungary;⁴⁰ after this collapsed in the mid-1420s with losses in the region of 5000 florins,⁴¹ Aretines seem to have been less active abroad. In 1427 the only two Aretines with substantial business interests outside Florentine territory were Griffolini, who had ventures in Ancona and Rome,⁴² and Paolino di Messer Niccolò, who was involved in commerce at Avignon and Rome.⁴³ By 1427 business consisted mainly of local shops and trades; even Francesco di Baccio Bacci, the richest man resident in

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 50, 62–3. ³¹ *Ibid.*, 50. ³² Cf. p. 6, n. 29, *supra*.

³³ ASA, Dott. Not. fol. 32r–33v ³⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 34r–37r.

³⁵ Cherubini, 'Schede', 13. ³⁶ ASA, Dott. Not. fol. 34v, 35v, 36r–v.

³⁷ Cf. Lazzari, *Aspetti*, 101–25; Melis, 'Lazzaro Bracci', AMAPet, n.s. xxxviii (1965–7), 1–18; Fanfani, 'Costi', NRivSt, xviii (1934), 412ff.

³⁸ Cherubini, *Signori*, 325. ³⁹ *Idem*, 'Schede', 6–8.

⁴⁰ ASF, Cat. 201, fol. 334 bis r, 426r. ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 334 bis r, 426 r.

⁴² *Ibid.*, fol. 334r, 334 bis r, 426r. ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 202, fol. 153r–v.

Arezzo, was merely a successful shopkeeper,⁴⁴ and of the thirty-five Aretine households with wealth greater than 1000 florins in 1427–9,⁴⁵ twenty-four were retailers and manufacturers operating one or more local businesses, which included thirteen woollen cloth shops,⁴⁶ four apothecary shops,⁴⁷ three leather shops,⁴⁸ three silk shops,⁴⁹ four general mer-

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 203, fol. 359r, 372r. On the Bacci, cf. M. Salmi, 'I Bacci di Arezzo nel sec. xv e la loro cappella nella chiesa di San Francesco', *Rivista d'arte*, ix (1916), 224–37; Ginzburg, *Indagini*; G. Goretti Miniati, 'Alcuni ricordi della famiglia Bacci', *AMAPet*, n.s. viii–ix (1930), 92–103; Lazzeri, *Ubertini*, 273–4.

⁴⁵ These were, according to ASF, Cat. 273 (Sommaro della città di Arezzo): Gregorio Marsuppini, capital (*valente*) of 13,049 florins; Francesco di Baccio Bacci, 10,147 fl.; Michele di Conte Marsuppini, 5758 fl.; Tuccerello di Cecco, 5592 fl.; Mariotto di Biagio Griffolini, 4823 fl.; Lippo di ser Niccolò Lippi, 3561 fl.; Jacopo di Tome, 2723 fl.; heirs of Agnolo di Biagio da Pantaneto, 2532 fl.; heirs of Vanni di ser Niccolò, 2489 fl.; Antonio di Donato da Pantaneto, 2082 fl.; Paolino di Messer Niccolò, 2007 fl.; Francesco di Ghirigoro di Giovanni, 1920 fl.; Monna Mattea di Simone di Ghino, 1705 fl.; Michele di Santi Accolti, 1584 fl.; Agnolo di Bartolomeo, 1524 fl.; Urbano di Guido, 1389 fl.; Nanni and ser Paolo di ser Bartolomeo, 1388 fl.; Nanni and Bartolomeo di Matteo, 1353 fl.; Guaspere di Maestro Ciechino, 1338 fl.; Andreomò di Landuccio Albergotti, 1329 fl.; Giovanni di Nicola Sinigardi, 1316 fl.; Nanni di Jacopo, 1275 fl.; Giuliano di Agnolo di Maggio, 1263 fl.; Buono di Giovanni, 1236 fl.; Mattea di fu Carcastione di Duccio, 1236 fl.; Damiano di Giovanni Marzi, 1173 fl.; Cristofano del Tortello, 1154 fl.; Pippo di Piero di Dottino de' Gozzari, 1146 fl.; Antonio di ser Giovanni, 1136 fl.; Agnolo di Giovanni, 1125 fl.; Mariotto di Bettino, 1123 fl.; Francesco di Messer Giovanni di ser Baldo, 1091 fl.; Piero di Giovanni di ser Agnolo, 1090 fl.; heirs of Mariotto di Nanni, 1054 fl.; Jacopo di Niccoletto Albergotti, 1015 fl.; Giovanni di ser Antonio, 1016 fl.

⁴⁶ Owned by: Chiaromanno di Gregorio Marsuppini, in partnership with Mariotto di Biagio Griffolini (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 334r); Tuccerello di Cecco (*ibid.*, 202, fol. 630r, 631r); heirs of Agnolo di Biagio da Pantaneto (*ibid.*, fol. 406v); Francesco di Ghirigoro di Giovanni (*ibid.*, 203, fol. 199v); sons of Agnolo di Bartolomeo (*ibid.*, 200, fol. 195v); Urbano di Guido in partnership with heirs of Simo di Panco (*ibid.*, 202, fol. 567r, 569r, 578v); Nanni and Bartolomeo di Matteo (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 1138r); Guaspere di Maestro Ciechino (*ibid.*, 203, fol. 821r); sons of Nanni di Jacopo (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 1015r); Damiano di Giovanni Marzi (*ibid.*, 203, fol. 164r); Mariotto di Bettino (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 527v–529v); Piero di Giovanni di ser Agnolo (*ibid.*, 202, fol. 182v); heirs of Mariotto di Nanni in partnership with Giovanni di Antonio di Pace (*ibid.*, 203, fol. 209r).

⁴⁷ Owned by Francesco di Baccio Bacci (*ibid.*, fol. 359r, 372r); Mariotto di Biagio Griffolini (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 333r, 334r bis, 426r–v); Guaspere di Maestro Ciechino in partnership with Donato di Piero (*ibid.*, 203, fol. 823r); Giuliano di Agnolo di Maggio (*ibid.*, 688r bis).

⁴⁸ Owned by Agnolo di Bartolomeo (*ibid.*, 200, fol. 194r, 195v); Mariotto di Bettino (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 527v–529v); Giovanni di ser Antonio in partnership with Agnolo di Nanni (*ibid.*, 203, fol. 665r).

⁴⁹ Owned by Buono di Giovanni, in partnership with Cusume di Nanni di Jacopo (*ibid.*, 200, fol. 722r, 726r; 201, fol. 1015r); Agnolo di Giovanni (*ibid.*, 200, fol. 324r, 329r); Nanni and ser Paolo di ser Bartolomeo with Agnolo di Gionta (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 985v).

chandise shops,⁵⁰ two banks,⁵¹ one butcher's shop,⁵² one haberdasher's shop,⁵³ and one metal shop.⁵⁴

Many Aretines were slow to adjust to the more limited and different opportunities available in commerce and industry in the fifteenth century, and the continued prominence of the wool industry in this period points to a conservatism among Arezzo's business community which looked back to better days when the manufacture of woollen cloth had been the mainstay of their prosperity.⁵⁵ Indeed, the kind of mercantile ethos which developed at the height of Arezzo's medieval economic growth had not waned by the fifteenth century. Not to mention the large majority of rich Aretines who were by vocation businessmen, an interest in commerce was also shown by professional men, such as the notary ser Paolo di ser Bartolomeo, who, besides investing in two separate companies, arranged for his nephew to work in a shop in Pesaro;⁵⁶ another example is the lawyer Gregorio Marsuppini, who, besides his investments in the Medici bank in Florence, had business dealings with other leading Florentine families such as the Strozzi, Serristori, della Luna, Peruzzi, Baroncelli, Parenti and Capponi.⁵⁷ Even a nobleman such as Conte Mariotto Griffolini was involved in four separate business ventures.⁵⁸ A few richer Aretines were not involved in business, but there were often circumstances to discourage or prevent commercial activity: Antonio di Donato da Pantaneto, who had capital of 2082 florins in 1429, was an eight-year-old orphan,⁵⁹ whereas Mattea di Simo di Ghino⁶⁰ and Mattea fu di Carcastione di Duccio,⁶¹ with capital of 1706 and 1236 florins respectively in 1429, were widows of over seventy. One Aretine, evidently too old himself for business, certainly wished that his dependants would show more enterprise:

I have reached the decrepit age of eighty-six or thereabouts, wrote Giovanni di Nicola Sinigardi in 1427, and am almost always ill, and with good reason, and am afflicted and able to do nothing. I have five children by the grace of God and Our Lady. I have one daughter who is a young widow; and at home with me I have two more married daughters whose husbands have little inclination for earning; and

⁵⁰ Owned by Francesco di Baccio Bacci (*ibid.*, 203, fol. 359r, 372r, 398r); Michele di Conte Marsuppini (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 550r); Lippo di ser Niccolò (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 285r); Francesco di Ghirigoro di Giovanni (*ibid.*, 203, fol. 197r bis).

⁵¹ Owned by Mariotto di Biagio Griffolini in partnership with Pippo di Piero di Dottino de' Gozzari (*ibid.*, 202, fol. 122r, 123r); Jacopo di Tome (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 988r).

⁵² Owned by Nanni and Bartolomeo di Matteo (*ibid.*, fol. 1135r).

⁵³ Owned by Giovanni di ser Antonio (*ibid.*, 203, fol. 665r).

⁵⁴ Owned by Nanni di Jacopo (*ibid.*, 201, fol. 1008r).

⁵⁵ Cf. Lazzeri, *Aspetti*, 108–12; R. Davidsohn, *Geschichte von Florenz. Anmerkungen und Exkurse zum zweiten Teil* (Berlin, 1896–1927), 11; Herlihy and Klapisch, *Les toscans*, 295, 297, 299; Dini, 'Lineamenti', 3–22.

⁵⁶ ASF, Cat. 201, fol. 985v, 986r, 988r. ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 203, fol. 644v–647v.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 201, fol. 328r–334 bis r, 424r–427r; 202, fol. 122r, 123.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 200, fol. 17r. ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 201, fol. 776v. ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 496r.

the other two are sons who stand about doing nothing useful for themselves or for the family.⁶²

Deep-rooted traditions, however, were unable to save Arezzo's wool industry from near collapse by the end of the fifteenth century,⁶³ and mercantile conservatism did not prevent, and indeed probably exacerbated, the general depression in Aretine business which intensified in the course of the fifteenth century. In 1427 liquid capital in Arezzo amounted to 96,406 florins, comprising 33.5% of the total wealth of the city.⁶⁴ By 1490, on the other hand, the total liquid capital of Arezzo was only 38,488 florins, and comprised merely 17.6% of the total wealth.⁶⁵ Evidently there was a flight to the land taking place in Arezzo during the fifteenth century.

Arezzo had always been the centre of an important agricultural region in Tuscany. Indeed, the district surrounding Arezzo was the most predominantly agricultural region under Florentine rule in 1427. This is clear in the first place from the distribution of population in Aretine territory compared with elsewhere in Tuscany. In the Aretine district there were 4.7 rural dwellers for every city dweller, whereas the ratio for the Florentine countryside was 3.4 to 1, for the Pisan countryside 2.47 to 1, for the Pistoian countryside 2.65 to 1, for the Volterranean countryside 1.16 to 1 and for the Cortonan countryside 1.42 to 1.⁶⁶ The predominance of agriculture is also clear from the distribution of wealth in Arezzo and its countryside compared with the rest of Tuscany. The city of Arezzo accounted for only 48.5% of the total wealth of the Aretine district, whereas the city of Florence accounted for 84.7% of the total wealth of its region, the city of Cortona for 71.9% of its regional wealth, the city of Pistoia for 60%, the city of Pisa for 77.2% and the city of Volterra for 73.1%.⁶⁷ Indeed, it is hardly surprising therefore that Goro Dati singled out Arezzo's wealth as an agricultural centre in his description, making a particular point of the rich, well-irrigated land surrounding the city.⁶⁸

A striking feature revealed by the recent comprehensive study of the Florentine *catasto* of 1427 is the enormous contrast in wealth between

⁶² *Ibid.*, 203, fol. 664r: Esso Giovanni è divenuto in età decrepita, cioè d'anni 86 o circa, e quasi sempre infermo casgionevole e doglioso e in niente poderoso di sua persona con cinque figliuoli a piacer di dio e della Nostra Signoria. Fra' quali è una femina, vedova e giovane. Et 'a in casa con secho due nore fanciulle, e loro mariti sono con pocho aviamiento o industria d'alcun guadagno. E gli altri due suo' figliuoli attendono a darsi tempo senza fare alcuna utilità né per loro né per la casa.

⁶³ Dini, 'Lineamenti', 15–20. ⁶⁴ Herlihy and Klapisich, *Les toscans*, 664.

⁶⁵ Varese, 'Condizioni', 51–3. ⁶⁶ Herlihy and Klapisich, *Les toscans*, 231.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 664.

⁶⁸ Cf. p. 5, *supra*. On the economy of the Aretine countryside, cf. also G. Cherubini, 'Aspetti della proprietà fondiaria nell'aretino durante il xii secolo', ASI, cxxi (1963), 3–40; *idem*, *Una comunità dell'Appennino dal xii al xv secolo* (Florence, 1972); *idem*, *Signori*, esp. chs. ii, iv, vi, xiii; *idem*, 'Le campagne aretine alla fine del medioevo', BollRCA, 836 (17 February 1975), reprinted in *Contributi*.

Florence and the rest of its subject towns and territories. Florentines comprised only 14.1% of the population of Tuscany, yet they possessed 51.2% of the total landed wealth, 78% of the total liquid capital and 67.4% of the total wealth.⁶⁹ Like the rest of Florentine subject territories in the fifteenth century, Arezzo was a depressed area in comparison with Florence. Aretines were far poorer, only thirty-five Aretines in 1429 having capital of 1000 florins or more.⁷⁰ This was in contrast to more than eight hundred Florentines, who constituted 8.3% of taxpayers in Florence,⁷¹ whereas the thirty-five Aretines comprised 2.8% of taxpayers in Arezzo.⁷² Depression in contrast to Florence is also suggested by Aretine shop rents, which usually did not exceed nine florins a year,⁷³ whereas in Florence equivalent shops were often let for thirty-five florins.⁷⁴ Dowries too in Arezzo were much smaller than in Florence, where among rich citizens they usually exceeded 1000 florins in the fifteenth century.⁷⁵ In contrast, most rich Aretines expected to provide about 300 florins for their daughters, a figure which had apparently remained about the same since the mid-fourteenth century.⁷⁶ Piero di Giovanni di ser Agnolo, who had capital of 1090 florins, had to repay a dowry of 240 florins.⁷⁷ The silk merchant, Buono di Giovanni, who had capital of 1236 florins in 1429, wrote, 'I shall soon be obliged to marry my grown daughter; she will cost me, to provide a dowry and pay the wedding expenses, about 400 florins.'⁷⁸ Buono later declared that her dowry had in fact been 300 florins, leaving 100 florins, which was a usual figure, for wedding expenses.⁷⁹ Only the richest Aretine, Gregorio Marsuppini, is known to have received the substantially larger sum of 600 florins as dowry for his Genoese wife.⁸⁰

Certainly during the fifteenth century the Florentine government did

⁶⁹ Herlihy and Klapisch, *Les toscans*, 243. ⁷⁰ Cf. p. 8, *supra*.

⁷¹ Cf. Martines, *Social World*, 35, who says that this represented 8.3% of Florentines. The *valsenti* cited by Martines include all deductions including those for members of the family and cannot be compared precisely with the *valsenti* of Aretines (cf. p. 12, *infra*). If the *valsenti* of Aretines had included all deductions, there would have been a greater contrast between Arezzo and Florence.

⁷² In Florence, the richest 2.8% had *valsenti* of nearly 4000 florins or more: cf. Martines, *Social World*, 365–78.

⁷³ Cf. ASF, Cat. 200, fol. 18r; *ibid.*, 201, fol. 351r, 529v, 555r, 769r, 1010r, 1135r; *ibid.*, 202, fol. 408v; *ibid.*, 203, fol. 352r, 359r, 665r, 697v.

⁷⁴ Cf. G. Brucker, *Renaissance Florence* (New York, 1969), 24, 282.

⁷⁵ Cf. *idem*, 'The Medici in the fourteenth century', *Speculum*, xxxii (1957), 11; Martines, *Social World*, 37–8; Herlihy and Klapisch, *Les toscans*, 414–15.

⁷⁶ Cf. Cherubini, *Signori*, 317. ⁷⁷ ASF, Cat. 202, fol. 176r.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 200, fol. 732r: E più 'o d'incharicho la mia fanciulla grande da marito del tempo . . . la quale mi chostarà in darli la dota et mandarla a marito circha a fiorini 400 d'oro.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 738v. For Aretine wedding expenses, cf. *ibid.*, 203, fol. 383r: A Maestro Lionardo di Messer Giovanni Roselli 'o [i.e. Francesco Bacci] promessi per dota di la mia figliola di fiorini cinquecento . . . E per spese mi bisogna per lei per fornimenti et spese fiorini 100.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 647v.

little to mitigate this inequality in the distribution of wealth throughout their dominions. In fact, the system of taxation which Florence developed during the fifteenth century could only have worked to exacerbate the contrast between Florence and its subject town of Arezzo. In Florence direct taxation was based on the *catasto*, which was a means of establishing liability to forced loans (*prestanze*). The head of each household in Florence had to submit a *portata* (tax return) declaring all his capital assets and liabilities, which were then subtracted from assets and, after allowing for dependants and the value of the family house, the resulting sum, known as the *valsente*, was then subject to a forced loan of 0.35%.⁸¹ In Arezzo a different system was used. Aretines were required to submit a *portata* of all their capital assets and liabilities, which were then subtracted from assets and the remainder, or *valsente*, was the basis for determining tax. After 1427 Aretines like Florentines were allowed to subtract the value of their house from their assets, but unlike Florentines they were never allowed to deduct an allowance for dependants. In Arezzo, moreover, the procedure for determining tax on the basis of the *valsente* was more severe than the system used in Florence. Before 1490 only 80% of an Aretine's *valsente* was subject to tax; after 1490, it was 75%. Before 1427 the rate of taxation was one florin for every 540 florins of this portion of the *valsente*; after 1427, it was one florin for every 600 florins. This amounted to 1.54%, then 1.33% of an Aretine's *valsente* that he had to pay in taxes.⁸² Aretines therefore were more heavily taxed than Florentines in three ways: (1) theirs was an actual tax, not a forced loan as in Florence, eventually to be refunded at interest; (2) they were not permitted to make deductions for dependants; (3) their rate was higher: 1.54%, then 1.33% in contrast to 0.35%. Aretines had to pay a heavy price for the political stability that they gained under Florentine rule.

(ii) *Educational and intellectual traditions*

One feature of Arezzo particularly stressed by Goro Dati was its lively intellectual life. Surprising though it may seem that a city of between four and five thousand in the midst of a great economic depression should have produced citizens of outstanding scholarly attainments, nevertheless it is a fact that Arezzo was one of the great cradles of learning during the Renais-

⁸¹ On the Florentine *catasto*, cf. Herlihy and Klapisch, *Les toscans*, 48ff.

⁸² On Aretine taxation in the fifteenth century, cf. Benigni, 'Fonti'; Carbone, 'Note'; and Varese, 'Condizioni', 39–49. For a system of taxation similar to the one used in Arezzo, cf. E. Fiumi, *Storia economica e sociale di San Gimignano* (Florence, 1961), 1976. For further examples of heavier taxation in the Florentine dominions than in Florence itself, cf. A. Molho, *Florentine Public Finances in the Early Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass. 1971), 28ff.