

# 4 Oligarchy

Discussion of institutions on their own is somewhat barren and must be vitalized by consideration of those who exercised power through them. The question to be asked concerning a city-republic is not 'was it controlled by an oligarchy?' but 'what sort of oligarchy or oligarchies controlled it?'. Hence the need to investigate the social status of the principal office-holders and conciliar speakers and the degree of continuity: did political developments or the passage of time bring about significant changes in the personnel of the governing class, or did this class show strong powers of survival?

## THE GREAT FAMILIES

The starting-point must be those dynasties of landowner-financiers characteristic of medieval Siena, for names such as Tolomei, Piccolomini, Salimbeni, Gallerani and Malavolti appear constantly as holders of prominent positions and conciliar orators. A tendency towards a more formal classification in the upper levels of Sienese society is implied by the increasing use of family names – the advent of the surname – after the middle of the thirteenth century; up to that time the use of a patronymic had normally sufficed. This development was almost certainly intensified by the 'anti-magnate' laws of 1277, in which fifty-three families were named as *casati*, whose members had to deposit a payment as pledge for good behaviour and were ineligible for the main office, then the Thirty-six.<sup>1</sup> Though the families declared magnates in 1277 are not identical with those which acquired surnames, it was uncommon for a dynasty not in the 1277 list to gain the additional 'de' with the plural (surname) form.

In the surviving list of 1260 tax payments<sup>2</sup> (which relate to the terzo of Camollia only) no payer is styled as 'de' in the surname form, but residents in the Malavolti *castellare* are styled 'de fundaco Malevoltorum' ('fundacus' or warehouse being another word for block or castle), so a collective word in the plural was already being applied to this family. A papal letter of 1263, probably based on the phrasing of a Sienese petition, applies a surname to one 'de Tholomeis'. The text of the 1280 collective peaces rarely employs surnames, but 'de Salvanis' and

1 For a fuller discussion below, pp. 102–3.

2 Lira 5 (there are of course instances of a territorial origin being indicated).

'de Ponzis' are to be found.<sup>3</sup> The record of 1285 tax payments strongly suggests that the use of surnames was on the increase in the years after the issue of a list of magnate families. In these records several men are styled 'de Talomeis', two are 'de Forteguerris', others 'de Galleranis', 'de Russis' and 'de Selviolensibus'.<sup>4</sup>

By the early fourteenth century the usage had become common. The minutes of the Consiglio Generale are preceded – at the start of each volume – by lists of councillors and those given permission to hold office, usually as Podestà, in other communes. Naturally these constitute lists of members of prominent families. By 1305–08<sup>5</sup> members of nineteen families figure in the dative plural (i.e. surname) form, fifteen of these being among the *casati* of 1277. There must be an arbitrary element in the notarial use of surnames as opposed to patronymics; it must, for example, be fortuitous that a Gallerani is 'de Galleranis' in 1285 whilst another is denied this form in 1305, as are some (but not all) Tolomei, Salimbeni, Piccolomini and Malavolti. All the same the half-century after 1260 shows a marked move in the direction of a clear-cut social differentiation in nomenclature.<sup>6</sup>

At this point it may be useful to list the nineteen families given surnames in the 1305–08 lists:

Table 5. 1305–08 family names

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*Casati (in 1277 law)*

de Accarisiis  
de Bonsignoribus  
de Forteguerris  
de Maconibus  
de Malavoltis  
de Mingnanellis  
de Piccolominis  
de Ponzis  
de Renaldinis  
de Russis  
de Salimbenis  
de Saracenis  
de Scottis  
de Tolomeis  
de Urogeriis

*Non-magnate*

de Balzis  
de Mazzis  
de Squarcialupis  
de Ughettis

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The fifteen families in the first of these lists may be described (with the addition of the Gallerani) as 'super-magnates', those who belong most clearly in this category being the greatest landowning bankers, Salimbeni, Tolomei, Piccolomini, Bonsignori, Gallerani, Malavolti. The political predominance of this very small group of wealthy families is indeed the special feature of Sienese oligarchy, though the Bonsignori, who were less numerous, provided fewer prominent figures in the thirteenth century than the Tolomei and Malavolti.

Each of these dynasties requires separate consideration. Of the Tolomei, those particularly conspicuous in the political arena were Scozia and Federigo di Rinaldo, Deo di Lotterengo and Tavena di Deo. Scozia was the most frequent speaker in Council meetings in 1270, very prominent in all discussions of both internal and external matters in the following years, in fact almost certainly the most influential individual in the city throughout this decade of plutocratic Guelf regime. His role as councillor, orator, ambassador, financial expert and office-holder perhaps diminished briefly around 1280, after he had acted as Siena's Podestà at Massa. This apparent eclipse may have been due to involvement in the family disputes which were the subject of formal pacification in 1280; Scozia was one of the sixty-two Tolomei concerned in the great 'peace' of that year. By the mid 1280s he had regained all his former prominence and he held office and spoke in Council frequently in the following years. He was entrusted with a lengthy embassy to various Tuscan cities in 1286. In 1295 he was still a frequent orator, but he probably died soon after that year. He had owed cavalry service of five horses (1263) and his tax assessment in 1285 also suggests very comfortable financial standing, though not necessarily extreme wealth.<sup>7</sup>

Federigo di Rinaldo Tolomei was a young brother (or, just possibly, cousin) of Scozia. He held important financial offices, as Camerlengo in 1271 and Provveditore on seven occasions between 1272 and 1288. The most active part of his political life was to come after his brother's disappearance from the scene and he may have been, in a sense, his political heir. From 1295 he was a very frequent speaker in Council meetings, and this was particularly true of the years 1301–04;

3 CV, 2, pp. 1114–230.

4 B 88, ff. 77–165v; 90, ff. 61–235. See P. Waley, 'Personal Names in Siena, 1285' in P. Denley and C. Elam (eds.), *Florence and Italy. Renaissance Studies in Honour of N. Rubinstein* (London, 1988), pp. 187–91.

5 CG 67, ff. 4–13v, 23–7; 68, ff. 26–8v; 69, ff. 26–9; 70, ff. 26–9; 71, ff. 15–20; 72, ff. 15–17v; 73, ff. 16–18.

6 This is a very summary treatment of a topic which merits fuller investigation.

7 CG 13–19, 21–3, 25, 29–31, 34–5, 37, 47; CV, 2, nn. 913, 922 (but some of the editorial identifications of Tolomei may be incorrect): B 37, f. 16v; 49, ff. 10, 11v (embassy); 56, f. 5v; 57, f. 1 (*camerlengo*, 1274); 90, f. 318v (*lira* payment, 31 l. 11s.); 92, f. 81 (embassy). On Scozia see also Bowsky, *Commune*, pp. 36, 145.

in 1303, for instance, his speeches in Council easily outnumbered those of all others.<sup>8</sup>

Another Tolomei who was extremely active in the commune's affairs was Deo di Lotterengo. He too came into prominence as councillor and emissary in the early 1270s. After some years of activity at the centre of the Guelf-Tolomei regime he died, probably quite young, in 1275.<sup>9</sup> Deo's son Tavena must have been a near-contemporary of his kinsman Federigo di Rinaldo. He was a member of an important embassy to the papal Curia in 1294 and in 1298 served prominently – perhaps as commander – with the Sieneze contingent which participated in Boniface VIII's campaign against the Colonna. In the first years of the new century he was a frequent orator in Council and by 1304 a person of such weight that he was selected as Podestà by the city of Ferrara.<sup>10</sup>

Prosopographical information does not make exciting reading, at least for most readers. Yet it is not enough to convey general impressions; moving on from the Tolomei to the Malavolti, some more careers must be sketched. The Malavolti appear most prominently in the medieval history of Siena in connection with the bishopric and chapter,<sup>11</sup> but it was natural that such a family should also have deep roots in the city's secular affairs. A Malavolti had served as Podestà in the first years of the thirteenth century. At the beginning of the 1270s, when Siena turned her back on her pro-imperialist past, the two Malavolti most active in the commune were Filippo and Uguccone di Orlando. The latter was a very frequent speaker in Council throughout the first half of the 1270s and served three times (1246, 1255, 1273) in the principal financial office as chamberlain. He remained active in the following years and held office again, for the last time, in 1281.<sup>12</sup> Filippo di Braccio's period of distinction was brief (1270–74)<sup>13</sup> but his relative Mino 'Prete' di Guido enjoyed an exceptionally long career as councillor and office-holder, from 1274 or earlier until at least 1308. The sort of man who made an appropriate escort to royalty (to King Charles II, 1289) or a Podestà in a Tuscan town (Casole, 1308), his *dazio* payments in 1285 suggest the possession of very considerable wealth.<sup>14</sup> Filippo di Aldobrandino, another Malavolti, must have been about the same age. In 1278 he petitioned the commune of Siena on behalf

8 CG 47, 59, 63–4; B 67, f. 1; see Bowsky, *Commune*, pp. 113–14, 204 and English '5 Magnate Families', p. 511.

9 CG 13–16, 19; 20, f. 138v (death); B 49, f. 10v.

10 CG 59, 61, 63; 64, f. 17; 73, ff. 167–71v; B 110, f. 122; 114, f. 215; 121, ff. 293, 320v (embassy to Lucca, 1307).

11 See below, pp. 127–33.

12 CG 13–17, 19, 23, 25; B 56, f. 7; English, '5 Magnate Families', p. 468.

13 CG 13, 15–16, 18.

14 CG 18, 31, 34–5, 37, 47, 59, 63, 72–3 (v. 72, f. 17v); B 88, f. 163 and 90, f. 318v (two tax payments of 52 l.); 99, f. 109.

of the contado community of Torniella, which was being taxed by both Siena and the Aldobrandeschi counts, but this relationship turned sour and later (1308) the people of Torniella complained that Filippo was exploiting his lordship over them so vigorously that their only hope seemed to be to buy him out. Filippo may have been a turbulent character (in 1296 he was fined 25 l. 'on the petition of Pietro dei Forteguerra'), but he was an active participant in Council and was thought suitable for choice as an emissary to Florence (1288). His tax payments were about half those of Mino.<sup>15</sup> Another prominent Malavolti, roughly of the same generation as these and perhaps a brother of Mino, was Guccio di Guido, who figured as councillor and office-holder between 1285 and 1307. He was perhaps the 'Guicciolino' Malavolti chosen to command the Guelf cavalry force in Tuscany in 1278.<sup>16</sup>

The Piccolomini most conspicuous for his political role in these years was the classically named Enea (son of Rinaldo), born probably around 1230. His temperament may have been military and political rather than commercial, for he appears first as a borrower from the family bank rather than as banker, and in 1261, in the heyday of Siena's Ghibellinism, with six others he received spurs and a sword on their promotion to knighthood. He is recorded as a councillor and office-holder over the years 1270–95. He headed the commune's financial administration as Camerlengo in 1273 and in the following years very frequently undertook important embassies. He was one of the wealthiest of Sienese: in 1285 only three individuals made payments of direct tax larger than his.<sup>17</sup> Salamone di Guglielmo Piccolomini – as esoterically Hebrew by nomenclature as his kinsman was Latin – must have been of much the same age. He first appears in the Council in the same year and his energetic and eloquent activity as councillor and ambassador lasted rather longer; he was still orating as late as 1303. His tax assessments were much lower than those of Enea, nevertheless payments of over 30 l. towards the 1285 *dazio* place him among the richest men in the city.<sup>18</sup>

Approximately of the same generation of Piccolomini was Ranieri di Turchio, who was active as a banker from the 1250s. He was a considerable lender to the commune and helped at a difficult time by purchasing for 2,000 florins the communal lands at the Selva del Lago. Captured by German troops, he was forced to swear allegiance to Manfred (1263), yet by 1275 he was Captain of the Guelf party. Prominent in diplomatic negotiations, he was a tenacious holder of power

15 CG 22, Alleg. D; 29, 36; 73, ff. 151–62v; B 90, f. 346; 96, f. 69v; 113, f. 126v.

16 CG 22, f. 49v; 29, 34–5, 47, 59, 63, 70.

17 Prunai, p. 585n.; CG 14–19, 22–3, 29, 37; B 33, f. 64; 53; 90, f. 287 (86 l. 2s. paid, as also to *dazio* earlier in the same year; three joint payments were also for higher sums).

18 CG 13, 15, 18, 20, 22–3, 25, 28, 30–1, 34, 37, 47, 59, 63; B 90, f. 289v; see also Bowsky, *Commune*, pp. 103, 113–15.

throughout the storms of the 1250s, 1260s and 1270s – ‘popolano’ (yet at some stage knighted), Ghibelline (briefly) and Guelf in turn – and remained a leader in Sienese affairs as late as 1296.<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps the most active of Salimbeni in the commune at this time was Notto di Salimbene. He may have been more assiduous as a financier than those mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, for he figures in the list of exiled bankers to whom Urban IV granted exemption from his general condemnation of Sienese (1263) as Ghibellines. In the next decade he was pressing the commune to settle the large debt outstanding to his bank. He was closely linked with the Angevin cause and may have served (1265) as captain of the Guelf party. No doubt the pledges held by the Salimbeni strengthened their political position. Notto was very active in 1275 (only five men spoke more frequently in Council), but he probably died soon afterwards<sup>20</sup> and despite the family’s wealth and standing no Salimbene was as prominent in the last two decades of the century.

The outstanding Gallerani of this period was Bonifacio di Giovanni. A frequent speaker in council from 1270 (in 1275 he was one of the five men who made more speeches than Notto di Salimbene), he remained prominent at least to the end of 1286. In the documentation of the 1280 family pacifications he is recorded as *miles*, so it seems that, like Enea dei Piccolomini, he had been dubbed a knight.<sup>21</sup>

These sketches of the careers of some Sienese magnates have contained references to landed estates and to heavy tax-assessments. The Salimbeni made much the largest payment of direct tax in 1285, the Gallerani the next. The extensive landed basis of Siena’s great dynasties has already been emphasized, and the Malavolti lordship at Torniella is merely one instance of a general phenomenon.<sup>22</sup> The magnate families had territorial roots which were deep and enduring. They were linked with those landholding families which had not made the transfer into communal affairs, the lords of Prata, counts of Elci, Pannocchieschi, even Aldobrandeschi, and they intermarried with them and also quarrelled with them, interminably, particularly over stolen sheep. In 1285 a campaign was launched against Poggio S Cecilia which typifies the set-up in the Sienese contado. The proposer of the campaign was Biagio dei Tolomei and the army’s first objectives were to be the castle, which belonged to Enea dei Piccolomini, and certain properties of Biagio’s own cousin Ranuccio di Baldistraccha Tolomei.<sup>23</sup>

19 *Reg. Urb. IV*, 2, n. 274; CG. 16–20 (especially 20, f. 36v), 29; B 33, f. 64; 53, f. 12v; 55, ff. 1v, 10v; 90, f. 287 (dazio payment of 23 l. 16s.); 104, f. 17; 113, f. 88. English, ‘5 Magnate Families’, pp. 491–2.

20 *Reg. Urb. IV*, 2, n. 274; CG 13, 15 (especially f. 62), 16 (especially ff. 7v–8), 18–20.

21 CG 14, 16, 19, 29; 32, ff. 37v–8v; CV, 2, nn. 924, 927.

22 Above, pp. 80–1; *Repertorio*, p. 158.

23 CG 20, ff. 26–34 (where the Malavolti marriage link with the lords of Prata is also mentioned). For the probable relationship see Roon-Bassermann, genealogical table.

## KNIGHTHOOD, CHIVALRY AND CAVALRY

Dubbing as a knight was the ceremony which marked the initiation into manhood of the authentic Siennese magnate. Like his contemporary counterpart in 'feudal' Europe, he was a warrior on horseback. Mounted warfare in itself did not serve to set him apart entirely from the professional sergeant or the *nouveau riche* compelled by the commune to owe the service of a warhorse, but there could be no mistaking the superior social standing of one who had 'received the belt of knighthood'. Possession of a charger and a squire was part of the joy and squires had to be forbidden to show off by galloping their steeds through the city without giving preliminary warning. The commune could authorize the conferment of knighthood, but the ceremony of dubbing, with its quasi-magical passing-on of powers, could only be performed by one who was already a knight. The celebrations lasted for two weeks (this was the maximum period) during which the new knight could 'hold court' with his friends in a wooden enclosure in the Campo, the palisade closing off an area for jousting. Sumptuary legislation against the wearing of new fur garments was suspended for the occasion, but not more than 2 l. might be expended on the pay of the cook, whose services could be retained for one week. The celebration was not held to justify gifts of gold, silver, money or cloth. The laws restricting the social aspects of these occasions were resented by those involved, who sometimes petitioned for their suspension so that friends and relatives might be suitably entertained. The commune however marked the occasion – which involved, at least notionally, an addition to its cavalry strength – by the gift of 5 l., to be spent on spurs and a sword.<sup>24</sup>

The emphasis on dubbing was no mere enthusiasm for dressing up, but a central and important part of the way of living and thinking of the urbanized noble. Chivalry is a basic theme in the literature of the time, not least in the poetry of Cecco Angiolieri and Folgore da San Gimignano, the former Siennese by birth, the latter probably by residence, at least for part of his life (he served briefly in the Siennese army, though not as a cavalryman). Cecco was of military age by 1281 and died shortly before 1313. His poems give an idea of the cynicism which doubtless characterized some members of Siena's clever young set. His mother was a Salimbeni, his father probably descended from a prominent banking family with papal connections.<sup>25</sup> Cecco felt or affected a disenchantment which is seen at its most striking in the poems deploring his father's survival. His speciality, in fact, was the literary genre of *vituperium* (blame, irony, censure). Certainly not an

24 *Const.* 1262, pp. 31, 291; *Cont.*, BSSP, 2, p. 141; *Cost.* 1309–10, 2, pp. 311–13. For the petition referred to, which failed to secure the needed 2/3 majority, see CG 62 (1303), ff. 122v–4.

25 *DBI*, 3, pp. 280–3 (articles on Angiolieri and Cecco) has incompatible versions of Cecco's paternity, the latter claiming that Cecco's father was banker to Gregory IX (1227–41) and died in 1296.



ivory-tower poet, he served in several campaigns and suffered fines for absence from others, broke the curfew, appeared in the courts on a charge of brawling and celebrated the pleasures of dicing. The literature of chivalry was the standard reading of his milieu and his sonnets contain Arthurian allusions, to Tristram and Merlin. Cecco engaged in a literary quarrel with his great contemporary Dante. He left at least six children and an estate so heavily mortgaged that the younger of them opted against accepting their inheritance.<sup>26</sup>

Folgore flourished in the first two decades of the fourteenth century (first mentioned 1305, died before 1332). His links were both with Siena and his native San Gimignano. His friends figure in his poems as Lancelot and other knights of Camelot or even as Trojans ('paiono figliuoli del re Priano'). He could hardly write a poem without mentioning horses, a reminder of Siena's long and still enduring relationship with the noble animal. His themes are tourneying ('breaking lances'), hunting and falconry. The sonnet introducing his sequence on the virtues of the true knight advocates mortgaging castles and estates so that the chivalrous hero can feed his numerous guests, possess fine rooms and have plenty of servants – and horses.<sup>27</sup>

It is not clear whether these two talented poets spoke for their generation. Their works were meant to give pleasure (and, in the case of Cecco, to shock), so one must assume that they were not totally unrepresentative. Cecco knew that he was not cut out for an economical way of life and recommended 'If you want to be healthy, do what you enjoy' ('S' tu voi star san, fa' ciò che ti diletta'). These poets bear witness to a younger element within the oligarchical milieu, benefiting from the labours of their ancestors in the bank and critical of the standards of their financier forebears. Their views and way of life must have dismayed the more conventional among their relatives whilst some will have regarded them with benevolent amazement.<sup>28</sup>

The many fines paid by members of the grander families for absence from Council-meetings show that some who would not feel the effect of a low routine fine preferred this to an hour of tedium in the committee chamber. Payers of such fines were often Salimbeni, Malavolti, Forteguerri and so on.<sup>29</sup> However most took up the patrician's burden, administrative and military, and lists of office-holders give the impression of an enduring oligarchy. In all councils and in the podestarie and rectorates of the contado, Salimbeni, Tolomei, Piccolomini,

26 A. F. Massèra, *Sonetti burleschi e realistici dei primi due secoli* (edn 2, Bari, 1940), pp. 63–173 (numerous other editions).

27 Ibid., p. 168. E. Fiumi (*Storia economica e sociale di S. Gimignano*, Florence, 1961, p. 229n) believes that Folgore was a person 'of little social standing', but the judgement seems to be based solely on the low fiscal assessment of his estate at S Gimignano in 1332.

28 Massèra, p. 107. There may be an analogy with the attitude of the generals and senior civil servants to their children who constituted the 'Bloomsbury' set of Stracheys, Grants and Bells.

29 Some examples from the year 1282: B 82, ff. 39–41v; 83, f. 13v.



Malavolti, Gallerani, Bonsignori, Forteguerra names continued to abound.<sup>30</sup> The four Provveditori for the first half of 1289 were Pietro di Ramella dei Forteguerra, Arrigo di Ranieri dei Piccolomini, Mochata di Bartolomeo dei Maconi, Federigo di Rinaldo dei Tolomei, all from major Sienese dynasties.<sup>31</sup>

The names of those entrusted with important diplomatic missions are perhaps the best clues to those who were at the centre of power. In the autumn of 1278 an embassy was despatched to the papal court to negotiate with Nicholas III. The mission involved eight names, all from the very heart of the oligarchy, four of them judges (Bandino, Gregorio, Gratia, Griffolo), one a notary (Giacomo 'Sardus'), a banker (Ciampolo di Albizzo), another oligarch, Ugolino di Rustico, whose family name remains untraced, and Enea di Rinaldo dei Piccolomini.<sup>32</sup> In 1289, while the Provveditori named above were in office, Minione dei Tolomei was commanding a force of mercenaries on behalf of the commune, Biagio dei Tolomei was emissary to the Guelf parliament at Empoli, Salomone dei Piccolomini was ambassador to the Aldobrandeschi countess Margherita, Simone dei Tolomei, Sozzo dei Salimbeni, Ciampolo dei Gallerani and Mino dei Malavolti were ambassadors and escorts to King Charles II of Sicily.<sup>33</sup> The tendency to send lawyers to negotiate, nobles to accompany royalty, was a natural one.

These oligarchs certainly did not shirk military responsibilities – one speaks of responsibilities rather than dangers, for casualties on most campaigns were low – in favour of administrative ones. Giacomo di Rinaldo 'Gilli', probably a Tolomei, commanded the city's mercenary cavalry at Grosseto in 1295 – just as a Tolomei had led in 1289 – and clearly found this compatible with his role at the centre of the commune's business as a councillor and ambassador.<sup>34</sup> In 1302 the commanders of Siena's five cavalry corps, all Sienese aristocrats, were Vintotto dei Renaldini, Goffano and Ghino dei Forteguerra, Mino and Tavena dei Tolomei.<sup>35</sup> The summer campaigning season was perhaps an enjoyable change, a semi-holiday with a purpose or 'theme'; some young men have enjoyed the annual territorial camp in more recent times. In Folgore's sonnets of the months, August is spent in a mountain valley with thirty castles:

e palafreni da montare'n sella,  
e cavalcar la sera e la mattina<sup>36</sup>  
(And saddled palfreys to mount  
To ride evening and morning.)

30 An example: lists of councillors and office-holders in 1288 (CG 35, ff. 116–118v, 128 and v).

31 B 99, f. 40. For the last of these, see above pp. 79–80.

32 CG 22, ff. 42v–3v; for Enea, above, p. 81, for Bandino, Griffolo and Giacomo Sardus below, pp. 87–90.

33 B 99, ff. 60v, 77, 92v, 109. For Salamone and Mino, above, pp. 80–1.

34 B 112, f. 100 (probably identical with the subject of English, '5 Magnate Families', p. 512).

35 B 116, ff. 272, 288, 306, 356v, 357v.

36 Massera, p. 161.

To pass the summer in the open in Tuscany on horseback must have been a pleasurable experience. Often the purpose was hunting, but cavalry service was at times so frequent as to become almost an annual routine.

In the summer of 1307 the commune called those owing cavalry service, in all three terzi, for a period of just over three months (6 June to 8 September). Not all the 285 men summoned served for the entire duration of the levy, indeed some came for two weeks only, but the average time served was about two and a half months. The campaign, fought in alliance with the Florentines, was against Arezzo, and therefore conducted in most agreeable countryside, not at all distant from Siena. Seventeen villages were sacked, among them Ambra, later a favourite resort of Lorenzo de' Medici. Cignano, Oliveto and Gargonza were burnt and almost entirely destroyed. Sixty workmen were brought from Siena to demolish the walls of Cignano and Gargonza and thus employment was given as well as pleasure. No casualties are reported among the Sienese contingent and it may be supposed that a good time was had by all except the population of the places ravaged. Among the cavalymen serving for long periods in the campaign were at least seven Salimbeni, three Gallerani, three Malavolti, two Tolomei, Piccolomini, and indeed representatives of all Siena's magnate families.<sup>37</sup> To see these men in all their dimensions they must be envisaged on horseback, hunting or on military or diplomatic duty, in the fields and granaries of their estates, as well as in the council-chambers of the Sienese commune.

#### LAWYERS

Categorizing men according to their social origins and affiliations must be undertaken warily. In some instances the family connections and occupation of men prominent in the commune's affairs remain mysterious. Those who resist categorization must be taken into account, particularly in view of the danger of oversimplifying the structure of Siena's oligarchy by arguing from too few examples. However one stratum of politically active Sienese below the magnate class can be clearly identified in the form of lawyers, i.e. judges and notaries. The high standing of the judges shows in the lists of 1285 tax payments, in which they ranked above all other occupations disclosed by taxpayers, whilst their average contribution was more than twice that of a notary.<sup>38</sup>

The minutes of the General Council being extant from 1249 – though there are serious gaps – the identification of politically prominent Sienese becomes easier from that date. Some legal men were at the head of the commune's affairs at that time, whereas many of the magnates mentioned above only became intensely

37 B 121, ff. 312–18 (the cost of this cavalry levy amounted to 3,541 l.); *RIS, CS*, pp. 296–7.

38 See above, tables 1 and 2.

active from about 1270, after the city's abandonment of a Ghibelline foreign policy. Guiduccino, a notary, ranked second in the number of speeches delivered in council during 1251. He came first in this respect in 1255, was again the second most frequent speaker in the first half of 1260 and in 1266–67 much the most frequent of all. He served as a member of the governing Twenty-four (1258) and in 1261 had the agreeable task of drawing up the terms of the treaty with Florence which followed the victory of Montaperti.<sup>39</sup> Guiduccino had disappeared from the political stage by the 1270s, possibly through the revolution in foreign policy but more probably on account of age or death. Another very active councillor of the period, figuring in many discussions during the years 1251–62, was the judge Graziano; he leaves the scene sooner and may have been older.<sup>40</sup> In a slightly later generation a very prominent man was the notary Cacciaconte, who was a councillor by 1258 and a very frequent speaker and occasional office-holder in the period 1270–79.<sup>41</sup>

Guiduccino and Cacciaconte, as notaries, had received a much less considerable legal training than the judges, though their gild insisted on two years as the minimum for a notarial education. After Graziano several judges came to the fore in the affairs of the commune, the earliest being Griffolo and Recupero. Almost certainly Griffolo descended from a family of magnatial standing, though his descent cannot be traced within any of the families designated as magnates in the Sienese legislation of 1277. He owed cavalry service and his five sons were participants in the private treaties which sought to pacify feuding dynasties (1280). Griffolo was a councillor by 1260 and in the next year a member of a crucial mission to the papal court. He became a practised emissary and acted at least twice as Provveditore. There was a period in the mid 1270s when he was so much at the heart of Siena's regime that it was normally he who proposed those measures which were discussed and agreed to in council. 1278 found him again at the papal Curia, this time on a three-week mission connected with negotiations for a Guelf-Ghibelline pacification. By 1281 he was a rather infrequent speaker in council, but he was still active in politics in the following year, after which he disappears from the conciliar scene, perhaps at a fairly advanced age.<sup>42</sup>

A near-contemporary of Griffolo, probably less powerful but destined for an even longer period of distinction, was another judge, Recupero (or 'Ricovero'). He

39 CG 3, ff. 60–1, 62v, 65, 68, 90, 91v, 93r and v, 98v; 5–11; B 32, f. 25v. On Guiduccino's career see U. Morandi, 'Il notaio all'origine del comune medievale senese' in *Il notariato nella civiltà toscana* (Rome, 1985), pp. 311–36 (ad 325–6).

40 CG 3, 5–6, 8–10.

41 CG 8, f. 2; 13, 16–19, 22–3.

42 CV, 2, dd. 929, 933; CG 9 (f. 82), 10, 14–16, 18 (especially f. 146v)–23, 25, 26 (especially 10r and v); B 33, ff. 74–5; 49, f. 1; 65, f. 41; 71, f. 1; 73, f. 44v; 82, ff. 145–50: Bowsky, *Commune*, pp. 72–3. For notarial education, *Statuti . . . giudici e notai*, p. 67.

first figures as a leading councillor in 1271 and continues in that role with increasing prominence until 1288. He may possibly be identical with the Ricovero di Tebaldo di Rinaldo who was Provveditore in 1262 but, if he was, he did not yet rank as a judge. In 1287 he was one of Siena's representatives – another being Enea dei Piccolomini – at the parliament of Tuscan Guelf powers held at Castelfiorentino. His tax assessment suggests that he was by no means wealthy; in 1285 he and his brothers made a *dazio* payment of 2 l. 7s.<sup>43</sup>

Another legal man at the centre of affairs was the judge Giacomo di Guiduccino, who was probably a son of the Guiduccino (the name is uncommon) mentioned above as a notary very prominent in the period 1251–67. Giacomo's energetic career falls within the years 1273–86. He served as a Provveditore in 1274. In 1275 he was one of the most frequent of conciliar orators, in 1285 he was the most loquacious of them all. When Siena found itself temporarily without a Podestà (1281) it was Giacomo who put forward the proposal which solved this dilemma; Giacomo de Gandinis of Crema, who held a judicial appointment at the time, was promoted to fill the vacancy, without increase of pay.<sup>44</sup>

Bandino was a judge who enjoyed a much longer period of authority. He lived in the most prosperous part of the *terzo* of S Martino, his neighbours on either side being two of the most prominent Piccolomini, Enea and Ranieri di Turchio; this topographical proximity may well be evidence of a socio-political affinity. Bandino's years of eminence extend from 1272 to 1303. He was a big lender to the commune in 1272–73 and in 1285 made a considerable tax payment (with his brothers) of 17 l. 9 s. He was Provveditore in 1274 (in the half-year previous to Giacomo di Guiduccino) and again in 1277. His diplomatic missions included a three-week embassy to the pope in 1288.<sup>45</sup>

Lawyers were more prominent as speakers in council than as ambassadors or financial officials; it was not uncommon for several speeches to be made on a topic, each of them by a lawyer. On 13 January 1283 two routine clauses came up for discussion: 'What action should be taken concerning men from the Aldobrandeschine or Pannocchieschi lands and those of the bishop of Volterra who owe money to Sienese citizens?' and 'What action should be taken concerning Sienese held as prisoners in Tuscany?' Five speeches were made in that session, four of them by judges, one by a notary.<sup>46</sup> Was there a judicial attitude towards policy which characterized the viewpoint of Siena's lawyers? If there was one, it is not

43 CG 13–14, 16, 18, 20, 25, 28–32, 34–5; B 35, f. 1; 90, f. 254v; 95, f. 101v.

44 Above, p. 87; CG 18, 20, 22–3, 25 (especially ff. 34v–5v); B 57, f. 1.

45 CG 20, 22, 29, 32, 34, 47; B 51, f. 23v; 53, f. 12; 56, f. 1; 65, f. 41; 67, f. 1; 90, f. 287v; 97, f. 74.

For the location of Bandino's residence see the will of Ranieri di Turchio's widow Contessa, Dipl., Spedale, 11.10.1299 (text in English, '5 Magnate Families', pp. 310–17).

46 CG 27, ff. 17v–18.

easy to detect. Many of the questions discussed were fundamentally legal ones or had legal implications. Whether Griffolo was giving his opinion on Siena's arbitration between Grosseto and Count Aldobrandino, or Guiduccino his on such matters as a dispute with the community of Monticchiello, or on taxing the contado, or the bishop's peace-making mission to the papal court or how many cavalry Siena should provide for the Ghibelline army, almost all of these – the military contribution is only a partial exception – had legal aspects. Not only was a legal training appropriate for oratory and decision-making, but the lawyers were the educated element within the city; with the exception of the theologians, they were the only people who had received higher education. Evidence on the point is meagre, but some of the lawyers owned books; Bonagiunta di Pepone, a notary, had a library of fourteen volumes, including the corpus of civil (Roman) and canon law.<sup>47</sup>

#### OTHER OLIGARCHS

It would be misleading to imply that authority rested permanently with a narrow and unchanging oligarchy. Office-holders with 'new' names did make their appearance from time to time.<sup>48</sup> Also there were oligarchs who cannot be assigned to the categories of 'magnate' or 'lawyer' (or, like Griffolo, both), either because they belong to neither class or through lack of information about their social attachments.

Aldobrandino del Mancino is one who seems to belong with the magnate-oligarchs, but he is not identifiable as a member of any family named in the 1277 anti-magnate legislation. He was a financier on quite a large scale, as a lender to the commune and within Siena. His relatives were involved in the 1280 family pacifications – a sure indication of social grandeur – and he or his dynasty gave their name to one of the fiscal regions (*libre*) in the terzo of Città. The years of his political prominence were from 1275 to 1295.<sup>49</sup> Ciampolo di Albizzo appears to come into this category also. He may possibly have been a member of the 'Albizi de Platea' family listed in the 1277 legislation. He was prominent in the Ghibelline period, at least between 1255 and 1260, but he figures in the list of bankers pardoned by the pope in 1263. He was among the most frequent of orators in the

47 Morandi, 'Il notaio' (cited above n. 39), pp. 333–4.

48 Several new names occur, for example among the incoming Fifteen in November 1285 (CG 30, f. 34v).

49 See below, pp. 120–1. CV, 2, nn. 914, 930, 934; CG 20, 22–3, 29, 31–2, 35; B 87, f. 46; 93, f. 1v; 95, f. 9v; 103, ff. 54–7v; 106, f. 30; 109, f. 78v. He was probably an early member of the Nine (O. Malavolti, *Dell'Historia di Siena*, Venice, 1599, 2, p. 53v). Lack of information about the personnel of the Nine makes it difficult to use this as an indication of prominence (see Bowsky, 'The Buon Governo', *Speculum*, 37 (1962), p. 371n).

Council-meetings of the years 1270–88; in 1270–72 he made more speeches than any other councillor and in 1275 lost this supremacy to Griffolo by the margin of one speech only. He served frequently as a diplomatic emissary. His social standing seems confirmed by his participation in the peace-making of 1280.<sup>50</sup> Guglielmo 'Benachi' also figures in the 1263 list of bankers. Like Ciampolo, he was wealthy; he and his brothers possessed an important palazzo and he and other kinsmen owed cavalry service of two horses. He figures much in Council-meetings between 1270 and 1274, then disappears, presumably through his death. His daughter held land at Mensano (1290) and was accounted of magnatial descent ('de magnatibus et maioribus civitatis').<sup>51</sup>

Another wealthy oligarch whose social links are hard to locate is Giacomo 'Sardus'. His name indicates a Sardinian derivation, but he was as politically active as any other Sienese citizen over the quarter-century 1270–95, as councillor and ambassador. On some occasions he is described as a notary, so possibly he should appear among the lawyers, yet the appellation was not normally applied to him. Perhaps he sought to shed it and his tax assessment certainly suggests a social level a good deal higher than that of even the grander notaries; paying 11 l. 3s. in response to one 1285 dazio, he ranked below Bandino, the wealthy judge, but close to some members of aristocratic houses, Forteguerri and Tolomei.<sup>52</sup> He may have seen some of his work on behalf of the commune as a necessary financial prerequisite, to judge from the salary he drew as scribe to the Consuls of *milites* in 1292 (2 l. per month) at a time when he was absent on an embassy to Florence.

A good deal below 'the Sardinian' in the fiscal scale (at 3 l. 11 s.) was Giacomo di Bencivenne. He came to prominence by 1274 and was still a very frequent orator in 1301, ranking only after Federigo dei Tolomei in the number of speeches made in that year, and he served in the responsible and sensitive office of Rector of the Hospital of S Maria della Scala. His father had been a butcher: in general tradesmen are notably lacking among Sienese political leaders, but the exceptional case of Giacomo di Bencivenne shows that such a descent was not a barrier to the next generation.<sup>53</sup>

#### CONTINUITY

Oligarchs deserve consideration as individuals no less than as constituents of classes and families. It will have been noticed that several of those mentioned

50 CG 13, 15–16, 18–23, 29, 32, 34–5; B 69, f. 25; 73, f. 44v; 92, f. 81; 96, f. 81.

51 CG 13–14, 16–18 (especially 18, f. 145); B 79, ff. 29, 31; Capitano 3, f. 48v.

52 CG 13, 15, 20–2, 29–32, 34–5, 37, 47; B 49, ff. 10v, 16; 73, f. 44v; 95, ff. 102v, 105v; 96, f. 42; 104, f. 81v; 107, ff. 144v, 148v; 109, f. 120v; 111, f. 127v. See also Bowsky, *Commune*, p. 225.

53 CG 19–20, 29, 34, 37, 59; B 107, f. 172; 109, ff. 119v, 123; 110, ff. 137v, 144v, 147; Redon, 'Autour de l'Hôpital S. Maria della Scala à Sienne au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle' *Ricerche Storiche*, 15 (1985), p. 20; Bowsky, *Commune*, p. 211.

above were prominent over a long period. Nine of them – the selection being more or less arbitrary, there is no doubt that the length of their careers is typical – held positions of power for at least a quarter of a century. This was true of Scozia and Federigo dei Tolomei, Mino and Filippo dei Malavolti, Enea, Salamone and Ranieri di Turchio dei Piccolomini among the magnates, Bandino the judge, and Giacomo ‘Sardus’ among the uncategorized.<sup>54</sup> The duration of these careers suggests strongly that individuals tended to remain in positions of authority after policies with which they had been associated were abandoned and even reversed. The extent to which this was the case is now to be discussed.

First it is necessary to establish ‘turning-points’, after which it should not be difficult to establish whether there were indeed many individuals whose leading roles survived these chronological breaks and whether survival was the norm or was subject to many exceptions. At this juncture it may be noted that one agile survivor has already been identified in the person of Ranieri di Turchio Piccolomini.<sup>55</sup>

The Ghibelline allegiance which had characterized the commune’s foreign policy for nearly two decades was totally abandoned in August 1270, following the collapse of the pro-Hohenstaufen cause in Tuscany. The Guelf regime which ensued was diluted to an important extent by the participation of ‘popular’ elements and the issue of legislation to check the activities and authority of magnate families; the year 1276 was an important watershed in these developments. A third landmark, even less precisely locatable in time, can be placed around 1286–87, when the institution of the Nine, destined to last seventy years, was established with the declared aim of consolidating the role of prosperous mercantile elements.

Diagrammatic presentation should make consideration of this point less conducive to the tedium which always threatens prosopographical analysis. For this purpose the four chronological periods adumbrated in the previous paragraph (1250–70: 1270–76: 1276–86: 1286–c. 1308) will be styled (a), (b), (c) and (d), so that the careers of selected oligarchs may be set out and ascribed to their respective periods. The table which follows (table 6) depicts the duration in positions of power (and hence the ‘turning-points’ survived) of twenty oligarchs. The selection has been made to include lengthy careers – since the question at issue is that of ‘survival’ – but cases of possible homonymity have been strictly excluded; also some of the careers listed could have been extended had strong but not conclusive indications of political activity been admitted. The names selected include a number of those discussed in the earlier parts of this chapter.

54 Above, pp. 79–90.

55 Above, pp. 81–2.



Table 6. *Continuity in office-holding*

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
Alfonso di Pelacane (Tolomei?) <sup>56</sup>	x	x	—	—
Griffolo (judge)	x	x	x	—
Giacomo dei Pagliaresi	x	x	x	—
Ranieri dei Pagliaresi <sup>57</sup>	x	x	x	—
Uguccione di Orlando dei Malavolti <sup>58</sup>	x	x	x	—
Ciampolo di Albizzo	x	x	x	x
Ranieri di Turchio Piccolomini	x	x	x	x
Enea dei Piccolomini	x	x	x	x
Scozia dei Tolomei	—	x	x	x
Recupero (judge)	—	x	x	x
Giacomo 'Sardus' (notary)	—	x	x	x
Giacomo di Bencivenne	—	x	x	x
Bandino (judge)	—	x	x	x
Ramella dei Forteguerri	—	x	x	x
Mino Prete dei Malavolti	—	x	x	x
Salamone dei Piccolomini	—	x	x	x
Giacomo di Guiduccino	—	x	x	—
Bonifazio dei Gallerani	—	x	x	—
Guccio di Guido dei Malavolti	—	—	x	x
Filippo di Aldobrandino dei Malavolti	—	—	x	x

Key: a=1250–70, b=1270–76, c=1276–86, d=1286–1308

Continuity within an oligarchy needs to be considered in terms of successive generations as well as single careers, but examples of such succession in the major Sienese dynasties are so numerous and predictable that it is unnecessary to list and discuss them. The case of Guiduccino and his son (in high probability) the judge Giacomo di Guiduccino has been mentioned. Another is that of Rinaldo 'Gilli' (Tolomei), extremely prominent in 1255–60, and his son Giacomo, very active in council and on missions between 1273 and 1295.<sup>59</sup>

Does the degree of continuity suggested by table 6 imply the assumption that a change in measures need never mean a change in men? Did a total break or reversal in policy, internal or external, never involve the disappearance from the political scene of a figure committed to a superseded view? Clearly continuity in authority was normal and expected. Several men in table 6 (and others not listed

<sup>56</sup> CG 6–21 (references are given here only for 'oligarchs' not dealt with earlier in this chapter).

<sup>57</sup> CG 6–22. The Pagliaresi were among the *casato* families (1277).

<sup>58</sup> English, '5 Magnate Families', p. 468.

<sup>59</sup> Above, pp. 87–8. CG 4–9, 18–47.

there, such as Orlando Bonsignori) had come to the fore by the 1250s and remained at the centre of things in the Guelf 1270s. If men did sometimes relinquish power, by force or on principle, because they were associated with a policy which had been abandoned, cases of this cannot be adduced from the surviving evidence. Guiduccino, outstandingly prominent in the two decades of Ghibellinism, disappears from sight after 1270, but the reason for this may have been old age or death. Storms and the need for tacking were predictable and were not reasons for risking a new hand on the tiller of the ship of state, particularly in view of the tenacity of older hands.

There might have been a test case for the possibility of political survival after total commitment to a cause which suffered defeat and abandonment. Provenzano Salvani came from a family which was named among the *casati* and prominence in Siennese affairs was his birthright. From 1247 or earlier he assumed that position and in the critical years of the Ghibelline regime (1257–62) his authority was such ‘A recar Siena tutta alle sue mani’ (*Purgatorio*, XI, 123). Provenzano was put to death after his capture at the battle of Colle (11 June 1269) and the Siennese destroyed his palazzo. The importance of the Salvani family outlived the collapse of Ghibellinism, but it will never be known whether Provenzano himself, had he survived, might have assisted the Guelf regime in the 1270s, perhaps assuming office as Captain of the Guelf Party.<sup>60</sup> The Siennese themselves would have found it understandable had he abandoned Ghibellinism after the collapse of Hohenstaufen power in Italy. Even Dante, hardly a ‘realist’ in politics, turned seriously to Ghibellinism only when imperial authority was resurrected by Henry VII.

The diplomatic revolution of 1270 was the deviation most obviously forced upon the Siennese by external circumstances. In the ‘popular’ (or anti-magnate) developments of 1274–78 and the institutional changes of 1287–92 there was a much stronger element of volition and choice. The former were perhaps the outcome of local pressure on a narrow Guelf regime, whilst the latter involved a programme proclaiming the aim of a more formalized oligarchy and thus possibly the reinstallation of a narrower one. It is time to turn to this last development and to consider the city’s ruling class in the last decade of the thirteenth century and the first of the fourteenth.

#### THE NINE

The establishment of the regime of the Nine may be dated to February 1287, though in the next few years there was some not very significant experimentation in the numbers of office-holders. It has been usual to consider this institutional

60 On Salvani see F. Tempesti, ‘Provenzano Salvani’, *BSSP*, n.s. 7 (1936), pp. 3–56.

change as marking the advent of a 'new' oligarchy consisting of a merchant class which excluded the magnate families.<sup>61</sup> However it is by no means clear that the *casati* were driven from power or elbowed out of it – or even that their wings were clipped. Professor Bowsky sees this as a period of compromise. The Noveschi (i.e. the stratum whence the Nine were drawn) 'tried to maintain a monopoly over the most sensitive organ of government, while powerful magnates also enjoyed sufficient power to satisfy them with the regime's continued existence'. The *casati* only accepted exclusion from the Nine, he suggests, 'because they could share in the formulation of all important government decisions and policies'.<sup>62</sup> But can one speak of the regime of the Nine 'merchants of the middle people' as a governing oligarchy if it could only govern when it possessed the goodwill of the socially and financially powerful magnate families? These years from the 1270s onwards should surely be seen as a period during which authority was shared between the old magnate group and elements which ranked only just below them in the social scale.

If the Nine's first leaders saw themselves as superseding the 'old' families they were to encounter disillusionment. This appears clearly enough from Bowsky's own treatment of the Nine. 'Exclusion of magnates', even from the sole office for which they were notionally ineligible, that of the Nine, 'was not absolute' and some citizens who held office frequently as members of the Nine 'were no less noble than the excluded *casati*'. Prominent among the Nine were two sons of Griffolo, the judge who had been at the heart of Sienese affairs since the 1260s and whose family ranked among the feuding parties involved in the private peace settlements of 1280.<sup>63</sup> Dr Edward English has realistically described Siena's 'anti-magnate' measures as 'symbolic rather than really harmful'.<sup>64</sup> If the Nine were recruited from the very men whose violent and quarrelsome way of life the 'anti-magnate' legislation of 1277 was in part intended to check, the case for the Nine as representing a dominant and distinct stratum situated socially *below* the magnates becomes very difficult to sustain.

From the start the magnates were immensely prominent in the discussions, administration and diplomatic activity of the Nine. In the first six months of 1288, near the beginning of the Nine's regime (to accept temporarily the reality of this label), the most active councillors include Gallerani, Tolomei, Piccolomini, Salimbeni, Malavolti, Bonsignori, Forteguerri, Selvolesi. There was certainly no question of these dynasties weakening in their hold over the city's contado. In the same period Tolomei were chosen to be Podestà in such important subject

61 E. g. Marrara, p. 247.

62 Bowsky, *Commune*, pp. 80, 83, 64.

63 *Ibid.*, pp. 72–3: above, pp. 87–8.

64 '5 Magnate Families', p. 143.

communes as Massa (twice) and Chiusdino, whilst a Salimbeni held that office at Ischia and a Forteguerra at Montauto (near Monteriggioni).<sup>65</sup> In the next year the four Provveditori were (as already mentioned) magnates to a man. At this time the commune sent four 'ambassadors' to act as escorts to King Charles of Sicily; all of these also were magnates. Meanwhile other Piccolomini undertook major diplomatic missions and other Tolomei represented Siena at Tuscan parliaments and accepted military command.<sup>66</sup> A strange form of exclusion, this, from the city's governing oligarchy!

In 1290 there was a brief experiment, numerical rather than constitutional. The Nine were replaced by the Eighteen, then very briefly by the Six, till in the summer of 1292 it was decided that after all Nine was the most convenient number for the highest magistracy. The Eighteen consisted of six *gubernatores et difensores communis Senarum* (this was the usual formal title of the Nine), together with twelve *domini nobiles regentes civitatem*. The twelve *nobiles regentes* were, literally, nobles, not men styled 'noble' by courtesy. It would seem, in fact, that the regime of the Eighteen (1290–91) represented an *entente* between the 'good and lawful merchants' and the *casati*. This compromise was perhaps an *ad hoc* arrangement connected with the readmission of exiled Ghibellines (1290), but whatever its origins it confirms that the time of the Nine was one of authority shared between magnates and *mezza gente* rather than of control by a non-magnate oligarchy.<sup>67</sup>

The active role of the magnates continued to characterize the regime in the last years of the thirteenth century and the first decade of the fourteenth.<sup>68</sup> The most prominent Sienese of this time, most of whom have been mentioned above, were four Tolomei (Federigo, Tavena, Deo and Giacomo di Rinaldo), a Piccolomini (Salamone) and two Malavolti (Guccio and Mino).<sup>69</sup> The regime of the Nine was not one with which the magnate dynasties felt unhappy. They continued to have a say in fiscal matters, perhaps the most crucial aspect of internal policy. The *casati* were prepared to settle for a political structure within which they were quite heavily taxed but in return had a large share in the government of the city.

Assessment for the direct tax was just one of the matters on which the Nine could not act independently, but required the consent of other major officials, the *ordini*, comprising the Provveditori, the Consuls of the Mercanzia gild and the Consuls of the Knights or Captains of the Guelf Party. The Mercanzia was perhaps

65 CG 35, especially ff. 116–20v, 128r and v.

66 B 99, ff. 40, 109, 42, 60v, 77, 92v.

67 B 107, f. 12v. See also a reference (CG 39, f. 13) to *domini viiii qui pro tempore fuerint in officio pro parte rebellium et extitiorum communis Sen'*. See Bowsky, *Commune*, p. 59.

68 For some other examples, Marrara, pp. 257n–8n.

69 See above, pp. 79–82.

the institution (though little is known of its workings) best adapted to assist the continuation of magnatial control.<sup>70</sup> Elections to the General Council and the choice of officials in the contado communities were other matters requiring the agreement of the *ordini*. Altogether it is not surprising that the magnates did not press for constitutional change. At some period shortly before May 1310 all *casato* families had even been given the opportunity to shed this status and therefore become eligible for election to the Nine, though the offer was then withdrawn in respect of some of the greatest dynasties. A good deal later (1347) a constitutional change intended to promote their interests was put forward, but the motion was opposed by Pietro the son of Salamone Piccolomini and failed to gain the required two-thirds majority.<sup>71</sup>

Hypotheses of this type are not susceptible of proof, but the evidence available suggests that the years 1290–1310, the last third of the period covered in this book, saw an increase, rather than a diminution, in the domination of the great dynasties of banker–landowners. Leading elements of the Nine are described by Bowsky as having ‘intimate social and business ties with the magnates’ and he has noted no fewer than forty-seven ‘excluded nobles’ as intermarried with families represented on the Nine. The fiscal arrangements of the period bear the mark of a regime dominated by bankers and concerned to further their interests.<sup>72</sup> To sum up, the magnates’ alliance with certain families of the ‘middle people’ was not such as to attenuate their enduring social and political control.

70 This is the suggestion of English, ‘5 Magnate Families’, p. 146.

71 Malavolti, *Dell'Historia di Siena*, 2, pp. 64v–5; Bowsky, *Commune*, p. 61 (for Pietro's position see index entries, p. 323).

72 Bowsky, *Commune*, pp. 73–4; see also below, pp. 175–8.