

*Principles and Practice in the Civic Government of Fifteenth-Century Genoa **

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This paper is an examination of the civic government of Genoa from 1435 to 1464, and of the principles that underlay how it was conducted. Despite the political instability caused by contenders for the dogeship, and the division of offices between Guelphs and Ghibellines and between nobles and popolari, the civic government generally operated on a consensual basis. The principles and practices of the civic government restricted the power of the doges and prevented them from turning their position into an effective signoria.

Fifteenth-century Genoa was notorious for its political instability — a reputation it has maintained with historians. For their contemporaries, the conventional description of the Genoese was that they were individualists, traders and seamen whose devotion to commerce and lack of interest in public affairs was at the root of their political troubles.¹ This image, too, has persisted among historians of Genoa. “What is special about Genoa,” wrote Roberto Lopez, “is the extreme weakness of the state in the face of private citizens. . . . An almost unanimous historiographical tradition relates this to the extreme individualism of the Genoese, which in the Quattrocento would lose all restraint.”² From the early Trecento, “the typical individualism of the Genoese no longer wished to submit to the discipline of the Comune.”³ “Unlike Venice, Genoa was not a state in the modern sense of the word,” according to Geo Pistarino: “It was, rather, a great mercantile consortium, in which private initiative and interest, from the small entrepreneurs to the great economic and family clans, prevailed over a sense of the collective, except in the case of an emergency — and not always then.”⁴ Fifteenth-century Genoa “lacked any unifying vision of the

*All translations are the author's.

¹Petti Balbi, 1978, 12–14.

²Lopez, 1963, 718: “Ciò che Genova ha di speciale è l'estrema debolezza dello Stato di fronte ai privati. . . . Una tradizione storiografica quasi unanime mette questa debolezza in rapporto con l'individualismo esasperato dei Genovesi, che nel Quattrocento avrebbe perso ogni ritengo.”

³Ibid., 719: “dopo il principio del Trecento l'individualismo tipico dei Genovesi non vuole più piegarsi alla disciplina del Comune.”

⁴Pistarino, 1985, 40: “A differenza di Venezia, Genova non era uno stato nel senso moderno della parola. Era piuttosto un grande consorzio mercantile, dove l'iniziativa e l'interesse privato, dal piccolo imprenditore al grande clan economico-familiare, prevalevano sul senso della collettività, fatta eccezione — e neppure sempre — per i casi d'emergenza.”

state directly above everything and everyone," with "the interests of groups and factions being exalted above general interests."⁵

It is said that organizations that were wholly or in large part economic in nature — the *alberghi*, *maone*, and the Casa di San Giorgio — embodied and expressed the collective interests of the Genoese.⁶ It is these organizations which have attracted most interest from historians: the *alberghi*, bringing groups of families, often from different lineages and of differing social status, into one formally constituted "house" or clan; the *maone*, the groups of shareholders and traders who governed Genoese colonies, such as the island of Chios, and their trade; and the Casa di San Giorgio, which began in 1407 as a consolidation of public loans associated with tax farms and developed into the most important financial institution of Genoa, controlling most of the public revenues.⁷ The political history of fifteenth-century Genoa has received much less attention, the political institutions of the civic government least of all.

The dearth of studies of the political life and institutions of government of fifteenth-century Genoa may be due in part to the lack of literary sources, contemporary histories, and chronicles. Even the official chronicles written by Genoese chancellors have survived only in part.⁸ In consequence, there is no easy way to provide more than the most summary of narratives: the basic source for accounts of events in Genoa is still Agostino Giustiniani's *Castigatissimi Annali della Repubblica di Genova*, first published in 1537.⁹ The best general survey of fifteenth-century Genoa is *Genova nel Quattrocento*, the second volume of the *Storia illustrata di Genova*, and even that has little to say on events from the 1460s onwards.¹⁰ Jacques Heers's

⁵Forcheri, 1985, 112: "Per tutto il Quattrocento a Genova, continuava a perpetuarsi una concezione nella quale mancava del tutto la visione unitaria dello stato direttamente al di sopra di tutto e di tutti, mentre si esaltavano gli interessi dei gruppi e delle fazioni, al di là di quelli generali."

⁶For example, Lopez, 1963, 719; Petti Balbi, 1993, 120–27.

⁷For the *alberghi* and the Casa di San Giorgio, see below, pp. 55–64; for the *maone*, see, for example, Heers, 1961, 385–88; Petti Balbi, 1991a, 223–46; Lopez, 1938, 340–45, 370–72; Balard, 377–86, 469–72, 487–94. Argenti is an exhaustive study of the island of Chios under the administration of the *maona* that gave rise to the *popolare albergo* of the Giustiniani; see also Rovere.

⁸The annals written by Battista Stella, who died in 1461, and those written by Goffredo di Albano, who died around 1477, were apparently taken to Milan and perhaps lost there; Agostino Adorno requested their return to Genoa in 1489 (Pandiani, 1929, xix).

⁹An edition edited by G.P. Spotorno was published in Genoa in 1854 under the title *Annali della repubblica di Genova*; a facsimile edition of the 1537 edition was published in 1981.

¹⁰Borzani, Pistarino, and Ragazzi.

monumental *Gênes au XV^e siècle. Activité économique et problèmes sociaux*, which is principally concerned with economic history, sees Genoese political life as being in a "state of chronic anarchy and civil wars," and marked by the quest of the merchant and banking "aristocracy" for stable government.¹¹ His survey of the political institutions of Genoa concentrates on the doge, with only two pages (in a book of over 600) being dedicated to the remaining councils and commissions.¹² The only general survey of medieval Genoese history available in English, Steven A. Epstein's *Genoa and the Genoese 958–1528*, ranges over several centuries, and concentrates on economic and social history; Epstein does not discuss the nature or structure of the communal government in the fifteenth century. In recent years, valuable studies have been published illuminating Genoese political society in the fourteenth and particularly the sixteenth centuries.¹³ Less has appeared on the fifteenth century, although the work of Riccardo Musso on the period of the Sforza domination of Genoa from 1464 to 1478 has resulted in several important articles, and Giustina Olgiati's book on the naval expedition against Naples in 1453–54, provides a detailed picture of Genoese politics, internal and external, in the mid-fifteenth century.¹⁴

The lack of work on the political history and institutions of Genoa in the fifteenth century cannot be ascribed to lack of evidence. Despite the shortage of contemporary chronicles and histories, and the lack of family archives for the fifteenth century, there is plenty of archival material on these aspects of Genoese history for this period.¹⁵ The main series are in the Archivio di Stato of Genoa, in the Archivio Segreto: Diversorum, the registers of the decisions of the doge (or governor and his lieutenant) and the major executive committee, the Anziani, and of the deliberations of the councils; Diversorum filze, a chaotic and crumbling collection of loose papers (the despair of the archivists), associated with these registers, including petitions to the doge and Anziani, instructions to envoys, proclamations, and some material relating to the councils; and the Litterarum, the registers of the outgoing correspondence of the doges, and of the governors for the King of France and Duke of Milan during the periods

¹¹Heers, 1961, 610.

¹²Ibid., 601–07.

¹³For example, Savelli, 1981; Bitossi; Pacini, 1990; Petti Balbi, 1991b; Wardi; Pacini, 1999.

¹⁴Musso, 1993, 1998, 2001; Olgiati, 1990a.

¹⁵For the scarcity of Genoese family archives for later centuries as well, see Bitossi, 19.

when Genoa had submitted to their rule.¹⁶ The *Litterarum* registers contain many thousands of letters to other rulers and governments, to Genoese envoys, officials, subject communities, and nobles, and are an especially valuable source of information on the government of the Riviere and of the mountains.¹⁷ Particularly for the mid-fifteenth century, because there are so many letters dealing with the family affairs of the Campofregoso doges, the registers provide a partial substitute for the lack of a Campofregoso family archive. Many letters provide comments and insights into the internal affairs of Genoa as well, but for the government of the city, the *Diversorum* registers are the most important series. In particular, the records of the deliberations of the councils provide insights into the preoccupations, the opinions, and the policies of the Genoese, made still more valuable because of the substantial freedom of speech that prevailed in them.¹⁸

For the period from 1450 to 1500 there is the bonus of the wealth of material relating to Genoa in the Archivio Sforzesco of the Archivio di Stato of Milan. As well as over 130 boxes in the Genoa section, each containing hundreds of letters, there is much to be found in other series, including correspondence from Rome (especially under the Genoese Popes Sixtus IV [1471–84] and Innocent VIII [1484–92]), Florence, the Lunigiana, and elsewhere, and in the letter books and collections of documents in the *Registri Ducali*. This is the richest single source of material on Genoese history outside the city before the correspondence and papers from the period of the Emperor Charles V (b. 1500–d. 1558; r. Netherlands 1506–55; r. Spain and Spanish dominions 1516–56; Emperor 1519–58), preserved in Simancas. As might be expected, the years when Genoa was under the rule of the Sforza — from 1464 to 1478, and again when Agostino and Giovanni Adorno acted as governors of the city for Lodovico il Moro (Duke of Milan 1494–1500) from 1488 to 1499 — are those for which there is most surviving material, but there is also much for the period from 1450 to 1464. There are thousands of letters from Sforza ambassadors and agents for those years, together with confidential correspondence from

¹⁶The Archivio Comunale also holds some material on civic government, including lists of officeholders. Other series in the Archivio di Stato include the *Politicorum*, a collection of miscellaneous documents; the *Instructiones*, instructions to envoys; and the registers of the *Officio della Moneta*, the financial committee. The notarial archives for the fifteenth century suffered great damage during the bombardment of Genoa by the French fleet in 1684.

¹⁷Genoa, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Segreto (henceforth ASG, AS) 1794, alone has about 4,000 letters, mostly from Pietro Campofregoso.

¹⁸Shaw, 847–51.

the doges, and from their rivals and enemies, and much from the noble families of Liguria. All this provides both a multifaceted picture of Genoese political society and detailed accounts of major political episodes.

The picture that emerges from the archival sources in Genoa and Milan certainly confirms the traditional view of chronic political instability, but also reveals that this instability principally affected the office of the doge, leaving the other institutions of the communal government largely untouched. It is these institutions, and the ethos of the civic government of Genoa, that will be discussed in this article, for the period 1435–64: that is, from its rebellion against subjection to Filippo Maria Visconti (Duke of Milan 1412–47) to its submission to Francesco Sforza (Duke of Milan 1450–64). Neither the institutions nor the ethos of the civic government have been deemed worthy of much, if any, attention by historians; they have been lost in the shadow of the Casa di San Giorgio. But San Giorgio was not the only public institution the Genoese managed to produce and maintain; nor was their ability to conceive of a common interest, to be protected by collective administration, confined to commerce and finance. The institutions of civic government functioned remarkably smoothly, despite the political storms that raged around them. They also had some unexpected aspects, not least that in this faction-ridden city they operated on a consensual basis that persisted under different regimes.

For most of the period from 1435 to 1464, a Genoese doge was at the head of the government; from 1458 to 1461 Genoa was subject to the King of France. This article will not be concerned with the political events, the changes of regime, the conflict between factions, or the relations of Genoa with other states, except insofar as they affected the routine government of the city — and that was to a surprisingly small extent.¹⁹ Because so little work has been done on fifteenth-century Genoa, it is difficult to say whether the ethos of government during the period considered here was typical or exceptional. That ethos was, however, consistent throughout the thirty years considered here.

The glimpses of civic institutions at work that can be gleaned from, for example, the work of Carlo Bornate on the war of Pietrasanta, show the same institutions working together in ways familiar from the records of mid-century; it is quite likely, then, that the attitudes discussed here would persist as well, until at least the early sixteenth century.²⁰ Then the problems caused by another, longer, period of rule by the French — from 1499 to 1512 — and the problems caused by the Italian wars, aroused a desire

¹⁹ See Appendix for a list of the changes of regime during this period.

²⁰ Bornate, 147–97.

for change and discussions about reform that would eventually, two decades later, result in the new constitution of 1528.²¹

I. THE INSTITUTIONS OF CIVIC GOVERNMENT

In some aspects the government of Genoa resembled that of many other Italian cities, but there were also some exceptional features that made the ethos of government very different from that of the other major Italian republics. "Exceptional features" here does not refer to the *alberghi* and the Casa di San Giorgio: what part they played in the civic government will be considered later. The main offices, apart from that of doge, were the committee of the Anziani, and the Officio della Moneta, which oversaw the communal finances. There were other standing committees, such as the Officio della Romania — which dealt with business concerning the colonies and outposts in the Eastern Mediterranean — and the Padri del Comune, which supervised matters concerning the urban fabric. The Casa di San Giorgio was an autonomous institution, separate from the civic government, although the Officio di San Giorgio — the committee of eight Protettori — would often be summoned to participate in councils that had a bearing on their affairs. There was no permanent, fixed consultative or deliberative council: assemblies of citizens were summoned *ad hoc* to make proposals and reach decisions on important matters, decisions that would nevertheless be binding on the doge and Anziani. Special temporary commissions were often elected or appointed to deal with specific problems, from raising a sum of money to administering military or naval campaigns.

There were twelve Anziani, sitting for four months at a time. How the Anziani were elected is not clear. If their appointment was made in accordance with the *Regulae* — the "rules" as to how the government should function instituted in the early fifteenth century — they should have been selected by an electoral commission, who would themselves have been elected by a group of citizens who should have been summoned to the government palace without having been told why.²² How far the *Regulae* were observed in this respect is a moot point; they were certainly not observed in others, including the constitution of the legislative and deliberative councils.²³ From later references it appears that the Anziani were

²¹Pacini, 1990, 51–346.

²²ASG, Manoscritti di Parigi 19, fols. 48v–50r. For discussion of the *Regulae*, see Barni, 143–56; Forcheri, 1984, 7–24; Savelli, 1991, 463–502.

²³Shaw, 837–40.

appointed by an electoral commission that (at least in the early sixteenth century) had been elected by the Anziani, not by an intermediate body.²⁴ However the Anziani came to be chosen, it would seem to have been difficult for their composition to be fixed to suit the doge. Difficult, but not impossible: there could be concern that the doge might do it. It was predicted in September 1454 that there might be trouble when the time came to change the Anziani, because Doge Pietro Campofregoso (d. 1459) was trying to have appointed men who shared his views and would agree to what he wished.²⁵ This comment reveals that the doge might have some influence on the composition of the Anziani — if they were appointed according to the *Regulae*, he would at least have sat on the electoral commission — but that if he tried to secure a board of Anziani to suit himself, this would be resented.²⁶

Unlike the major executive magistracies of many other Italian cities, the Anziani did not have to live in the government palace during their term of office. If any were sick or absent, relatives could substitute for them, taking part in the deliberations and voting; the substitutes' names would be recorded in the registers of deliberations with a note of whose places they were taking. No need was felt to closet the Anziani away, to prevent them from being subject to the influence of family and friends. It was easy to gain

²⁴In 1468 the Milanese deputy governor, Sagramoro Visconti, assured the duke that he would see to it that “the chosen electors would be loyal, which is very important in the election of the Anziani”: “studiarò che li electori se faciano devoti, che molto importa per la electione de li Antiani” (Milan, Archivio di Stato, Archivio Sforzesco, Potenze Estere [henceforth ASMi, ASforzesco], b. 433: Sagramoro Visconti to Galeazzo Maria Sforza, 23 January 1468, Genoa). In 1501 (when Genoa was under the rule of Louis XII), the Anziani reported to Philippe de Clèves, the French Governor of Genoa, that they had appointed the electors of the Anziani — “havemo facto questa matina li electori de li Antiani” — with his lieutenant (ASG, AS 1814, fol. 41v, no. 90: Anziani to Philippe de Clèves, 30 April 1501).

²⁵ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 409: Giovanni della Guardia to Francesco Sforza, 24 September 1454, Genoa.

²⁶There is a genuine note of outrage in the long letter of protest, written by the Anziani to the Governor in 1505, about something they believed to be unprecedented — at least, they said, they had never heard of anything similar (“cosa de momento et forsia mai simile caso accadete, saltem de che habiamo noticia”): his lieutenant had come to join them in electing the electors, and had tried to impose on them candidates whose names were on a list he had brought with him. Despite the lieutenant's angry orders to desist, the Anziani had continued with the election according to their customary method, and insisted that the attempt by the lieutenant to “elect and create the electors of his choice” was “contrary to our laws, privileges and constitution” (“voleva elegere et crear li electori a sua posta, fora de le leze, privilegii et constitutione nostra”): ASG, AS 1820, fols. 15v–16v, no. 33: Anziani to Philippe de Clèves, 5 January 1505.

access to them, collectively and individually, and it was quite normal and legitimate for individuals to present their concerns to the Anziani.

Each board of Anziani was made up of half nobles, half *popolari*; half would be Blacks (Guelfs), half Whites (Ghibellines). Of the *popolari*, half would be merchants, half *artefici*. These "artisans" were not the official representatives of the *arti*, or trade guilds, and there was no merchants' guild at all in this preeminently mercantile city. Often they were notaries, but men involved in retailing and crafts were also chosen. This was the pattern for the division of all Genoese government commissions, regular, occasional, and extraordinary. It was not a cause for contention: no attempts were made by one group or faction to increase their own share of seats, or to try to impugn the legitimacy of the others. Could it be that, by recognizing the factions and social divisions among the citizens, by allowing them to have a part in shaping political institutions, the Genoese were able to keep them from disrupting the civic government? They certainly did not share the concern of the other major republics — Lucca, Florence, Siena, and Venice — to guard against unofficial groups of citizens trying to influence government decisions, nor did they feel the need to legislate to ban such "sette" and "conventicule."

As the appointment and composition of the Anziani were not a matter for controversy, neither were their powers. They met with the doge, but were not merely an advisory council for him.²⁷ He had two votes to the single votes of the individual members, but he did not have a veto. The doge and Anziani together constituted the supreme executive magistracy, dealing with a wide range of matters, from the appointment of arbiters to settle quarrels between prominent citizens to the raising of direct taxes and the appointment and dispatch of ambassadors and envoys. Together with the doge, the Anziani presided over the deliberative councils, and were often responsible, with him, for implementing the councils' decisions. Although the actual supervision and administration of most important

²⁷Musso, 1998, 261, considers that the Anziani "never exercised any control" on the doge — "non esercitarono mai alcun controllo nei suoi confronti" — and were "totally subject" to his will: "totalmente soggetti alla volontà del doge." He also states that the doge rarely attended their meetings; his authority for this statement is the Regulae of 1413, rather than the registers of the meetings of the Anziani (*ibid.*). In these registers, the chancellors always recorded the presence of the doge (or the lieutenant or governor of the King of France or the Duke of Milan) at the meetings of the Anziani. As the chancellors were careful to record that the Anziani were quorate and that decisions were reached by the requisite majority — sometimes listing the names of those present and specifying if someone was sitting as a substitute for another member — it would be anomalous if they recorded the doge or governor as being present if he was in fact represented by a vicar.

affairs were entrusted to special *ad hoc* commissions, the Anziani acted as a kind of clearinghouse for the civic government. Most matters of consequence would at some stage have found their way onto their agenda. The doge also often met with the various temporary commissions that were set up to deal with specific issues; these, however, did not lend themselves to any attempt to reduce the authority of the Anziani. None would metamorphose into a permanent commission that would displace them from their role at the heart of the civic government.

The other main permanent executive committee was the Officio della Moneta, which had eight members holding office for a year at a time. Their principal task was supervision of the finances of the commune, and their approval was needed for any expenditure over the limits — often quite modest — of the funds at the disposal of other committees and officials, including the doge. Members of the Officio della Moneta took their responsibility seriously, and were not content just to rubberstamp what others had done. Their reactions to proposed expenditures — whether approval, refusal, or concern — were sometimes recorded in the registers of the doge and Anziani.

Important or difficult questions were generally put before councils summoned *ad hoc* by the doge and Anziani, or the doge and the temporary commissions. Providing the usual proportions of nobles and *popolari*, Guelfs and Ghibellines, and merchants and *artefici*, were observed, there was no restriction on who, or how many, could be summoned. Numbers attending councils ranged from a few dozen to several hundred. The chancellors rarely provided an exact count of those who turned up; they would usually give an approximate number, such as “above 150” or “about 200,” of citizens who had been summoned. Generally, one or more of the other major boards of officials would be summoned to participate in the council as well. In April 1450, for example, the doge and Anziani summoned the Officio della Moneta, the Officio della Romania, the Officio di San Giorgio, the four members of a recently appointed commission to deal with affairs concerning Provence, and fifty citizens, to discuss the negotiations that the Commission of Four had been conducting to buy or hire a ship, as well as the conflicting reports that were being received from Provence.²⁸

These councils had no statutory authority, not even a set name. Sometimes an assembly was referred to as a Great Council; sometimes equally numerous assemblies, taking on exactly the same role, were referred

²⁸ASG, AS 546, ff. 14v–15r, 10 April 1450.

to only as "the council of those who were called together."²⁹ Debate in the councils was open; all who wanted to speak had the right to do so. They were not summoned to approve specific measures, but to discuss a problem and suggest solutions. A summary of the reason for the assembly would be read out; it was usually brief and to the point. The businesslike tone of the council was set from the start by the customary opening phrase: "Gentlemen, the reason for your assembly is . . ."³⁰ After the subject for discussion had been expounded, those present would be invited to speak; sometimes specific individuals would be asked to give their opinion. The proposals put to the vote came from the floor, not from the officials who had called the council. All proposals that had been made would be voted on at the same time, and those which attracted most votes, even if they constituted only a minority of the votes cast, would be adopted.³¹

Despite this apparent informality, the authority of the councils' decisions was accepted as binding. Official bodies would be careful to act within the limits set for them by the councils; if they felt unsure of the authority they had been given, or felt that it was inadequate for them to complete the task assigned to them, they would ask for another council to be summoned. For example, in November 1446, as dissatisfaction with Raffaele Adorno's (1375–1458) performance as doge was mounting, a commission of twelve had been given the task of trying to bring greater unity to the city.³² They decided that to be effective they needed greater powers, and joined with the doge and Anziani in summoning a council consisting of about 200 citizens, as well as the members of other major offices.³³ In September 1449, when another commission was charged with disposing of a ship that might be used to damage Genoese traffic if it fell

²⁹Shaw, 838–39: "consilium convocatorum."

³⁰Ibid., 836: "Segnoi, la caxum de la convocation vostra è . . ."

³¹Ibid., 846–50, 855–56. The extensive appendix of documents in Olgiati, 1990a, includes the records of several meetings of councils, which illustrate how they worked and the significance of the affairs they dealt with. See, for example, 409–11, the council of 4 July 1453, concerning the election of a commission to deal with the fleet (*Officio della Balia marittima*); 439–41, for that of 14 January 1454, discussing how to finance the war against the King of Aragon; 461–64, for that of 16 April 1454, discussing whether the offer of Francesco Sforza to Genoa to join in the Peace of Lodi should be accepted; 465–68, for that of 30 April 1454, concerning the ordinary expenditure of the Comune (an example of the detailed budgets that were sometimes presented to the councils). The council of 23 July 1454 (483–88), on whether the peace offers presented to the doge on behalf of King Alfonso should be accepted, includes a long exposition of the different arguments and opinions circulating in Genoa that provides a flavor of public debate in the city.

³²Adorno would resign his office in early January 1447.

³³ASG, AS 538, fols. 137v–139r, 21 November 1446.

into the wrong hands, they disagreed among themselves about whether they had been given authority to decide whether to let it go or to detain it, or only to decide how it should be detained. Doge Lodovico Campofregoso (d. 1498) summoned a council — including many of those who had been present at the council which had authorized the appointment of the commission — to ask the man whose proposal had been adopted that day what his intention had been, and to ask whether anyone could think of a better solution.³⁴

Such temporary commissions to deal with specific problems were a frequent outcome of council debates. Often it was decreed that these groups should meet with the doge. Members might be elected by the council, but more usually the choice was left to the doge and Anziani; the numbers to be appointed would generally be fixed at four, or multiples of four, to permit the usual balancing of factions and social groups. Again, the mode of election was not a cause for contention — a striking contrast to the situation in Florence, where the control of elections to special commissions was an important focus of political contests.³⁵ How to raise money was the ungrateful problem such commissions were often set to solve; depending on how successful they were on coming up with a solution, their appointment could last for only a matter of weeks. Those entrusted with administering a military or naval campaign might be in office for several months, and could be replaced by a fresh board if it was thought that they had served for long enough.

2. THE *ALBERGHI*

Famous as the Genoese *alberghi* are, there is still no consensus as to their origins, their precise nature, or their role in the lives of the Genoese. That the *alberghi* brought together members of different lineages into a formally constituted body, whose members usually lived close by one another in Genoa and often held common property — with a *loggia* or small *piazza* providing a meeting place — and whose affairs were governed by a group of the older men of the *albergo*, is not in dispute. Whether they came together because they were neighbors, or built up their enclaves of contiguous properties after the constitution of the *albergo*, how they might (or

³⁴Ibid., AS 544, fols. 94v–95r, 26 September 1449.

³⁵Rubinstein, 202–11, details the importance to the Medici of control of the Balie and commissions of Accoppiatori.

might not) be connected with powerful rural clans, and how they represented the influence of the country on the city, are among the matters that remain undecided.³⁶

The role of the *alberghi* in Genoese public life has yet to be clarified. They have been described as the "framework of civic life" in the fifteenth century, and as the basis for elections to government positions.³⁷ From the records of the communal government, however, there is no indication that offices were shared out among the *alberghi* — many citizens who held office would not be members of *alberghi* in any case — nor that those members of *alberghi* who held office were acting as representatives of their own *albergo*. Documents setting out the reciprocal obligations and benefits of members of *alberghi* make no mention of a share in political office as part of the joint assets to be managed.³⁸ Grendi's analysis of the proportion of seats held by the various *alberghi* in the Anziani revealed, as might be expected, some correlation between the prestige of *alberghi*, the numbers of their members, and the number of offices they held.³⁹ A more detailed study of the political background might reveal further nuances; that the powerful Spinola *albergo* held a smaller share of offices during the years 1450–75 than might have been expected from the number of its members may well reflect the opposition — which led them to absent themselves from the city — of many Spinola to the Campofregoso doges who held office for much of that period.⁴⁰ Reports and comments on Genoese politics can refer to "the Spinola" or "the Doria," for example, as though all the members of an *albergo* would share a common political outlook and aims. In such instances, however, the name of the *albergo* was simply employed as a convenient form of shorthand, to mean "a substantial number" or "some of the leading members," or, in the case of the Spinola and Doria, to the factions centered on these *alberghi*. These factions were a very significant feature of Genoese political life; they had great influence on

³⁶These were questions disputed by the two modern scholars who contributed most to our understanding of the fifteenth-century *alberghi*, Edoardo Grendi and Jacques Heers. Grendi argued that the links among neighbors in the city were the determining influences on the formation of the *alberghi*, and that they were essentially an urban phenomenon; Heers argued that they were "archaic," and reflected the enduring influence of rural noble clans and their clients. See Heers, 1961, 564–76; Heers, 1976, 67–69, 119–22, 180–85, 191–92, 208–12, 219–22, 230–33, 296–304, 309–14, 324–27; Heers, 1989; Grendi, 1975, 1981.

³⁷Petti Balbi, 1993, 121: "le strutture portanti della vita cittadina"; ibid, 122.

³⁸Grendi, 1975, 291–300.

³⁹Ibid., 253–54.

⁴⁰Ibid.

contests for the dogeship, but not on the running of the government of the Comune. There are no references in Genoese or Milanese sources to *alberghi* forming blocks or coalitions within the government, trying to manipulate the councils, or trying to influence the composition of the Anziani or other boards of officials, nor any references to individual members of *alberghi* expressing opinions in councils that were presented as representing the views of their *alberghi* as a whole.

The notion that the *alberghi* were an integral part of the civic government — as distinct from the political life of the city — may reflect the significance attached to the reforms of 1528, when nobles and *popolari* alike were merged into twenty-eight *alberghi*, among which offices and seats in the new councils were to be evenly distributed. To view the significance of the *alberghi* from this perspective can be misleading, however. It should be remembered that the arrangement — rather than being a natural expression of the role of the *alberghi* in Genoese public life — proved to be unsuccessful, and had to be abandoned within fifty years, in the “*Leges novae*” of 1576. Only then did the government of Genoa take on the form it would retain until 1797.⁴¹

3. THE CASA DI SAN GIORGIO

The dominant “myth” of Genoese history, whose persistence rivals that of the “myth” of Venice as a beacon of internal peace and benevolent government, is the myth of the Casa di San Giorgio as the one efficiently functioning public institution in Genoa, standing firm and unshaken while political turmoil raged around it. It has sometimes been argued, or assumed, that it was an important political institution, “the only true center of power,” “a state within a state.”⁴² “No republic in Italy or elsewhere drained away so much real power from the political structure to a self-perpetuating committee of shareholders.”⁴³

Frequently, discussions of the role of the Casa di San Giorgio in the government of Genoa hinge on comments by Machiavelli in book 8, chapter 29 of his *Istorie fiorentine*. The citizens had transferred their affection from the Comune to San Giorgio, he wrote, because it was well and equitably governed, so that when the Fregosi and Adorni fought for control of the Comune, most citizens stood aside, and let the government fall to

⁴¹Bitossi, 18; Savelli, 1981, 203–39.

⁴²Petti Balbi, 1985, 89: “l’unico vero centro di potere”; Epstein, 279; Lopez, 1938, 419.

⁴³Epstein, 280.

the victor. No philosopher, in all their accounts of real or imagined republics, had described anything like this, with liberty and tyranny coexisting in the same community. If it came to pass that all the city should be occupied by San Giorgio, this would be a republic more remarkable, even, than Venice.⁴⁴ The Genoese themselves, even in the sixteenth century, were fascinated by these comments, so that the notion of San Giorgio as "another republic within our republic" became something of a *topos*.⁴⁵ Some Genoese commentators stressed the separation of San Giorgio from the communal government, arguing that San Giorgio was essentially an economic institution; for some it was one that could be criticized as an association of the rich to protect their own interests, not the common interest.⁴⁶ In 1637 the description of San Giorgio approved by its governing officials, the Protettori, stressed its economic nature: "The Casa di San Giorgio is nothing more today than an aggregation of those with interests in the many gabelles of the Republic, which, troubled by wars, now civil and now external, needed first to pledge and then to alienate these gabelles."⁴⁷

Would the Protettori of the fifteenth century have said the same? Probably not, because for much of the fifteenth century the Casa governed Genoese colonies and parts of the territory in Liguria subject to the republic. When Machiavelli wrote of San Giorgio "occupying" Genoa, he was thinking of San Giorgio as a territorial, as well as an economic, power. But what relationship did the Casa di San Giorgio have to the communal government of Genoa in the mid-fifteenth century? This is a complex question; only an outline of the answer can be given here.

The Casa di San Giorgio had come into being in 1407 – a period

⁴⁴ Machiavelli, 419–20: "quelli cittadini hanno levato l'amore dal Comune come cosa tiranneggiata, e postolo a San Giorgio come parte bene ed ugualmente amministrata. . . . Talchè quando intra i Fregosi e gli Adorni si è combattuto del principato, perchè si combatte lo stato del Comune, la maggior parte de' cittadini si tira da parte, e lascia quello in preda al vincitore. . . . Esempio veramente raro e da' filosofi in tante loro immaginate e vedute repubbliche mai non trovato, vedere dentro ad un medesimo cerchio, intra i medesimi cittadini, la libertà e la tirannide, la vita civile e la corrotta, la giustizia e la licenza. . . . E s'egli avvenisse, che col tempo in ogni modo avverrà, che San Giorgio tutta quella città occupasse, sarebbe quella una Repubblica più che la Veneziana memorabile." For endorsement of Machiavelli's comments see Lopez, 1963, 720–21; Epstein, 281; Borlandi, 1985, 31–32.

⁴⁵ Savelli, 1984, 308: "un'altra Republica nella nostra Republica."

⁴⁶ Ibid, 303–21.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 303: "La casa di San Giorgio non è altro oggidi che un aggregato d'interessati in molte gabelle della Republica, la quale, travagliata da guerre ora civili et ora esterne, ebbe bisogno prima d'impegnare, e finalmente d'alienare esse gabelle."

when Genoa was under the rule of King Charles VI of France (r. 1380–1422) and was governed by Marshal Boucicaut — as a consolidation of various tax farms in an attempt to better control the public debt.⁴⁸ It was granted the right to operate as a bank, but in 1444 the Protettori decided to renounce this activity.⁴⁹ The majority of Genoese tax revenues were paid to and administered by the Casa di San Giorgio, not the Comune, which frequently turned to San Giorgio for money in time of need, either as a loan or as an anticipation on the levy (*paghe*) that the Comune placed on the income from the shares (*luoghi*) held in the Casa's funds.⁵⁰ The officials and council of the Casa di San Giorgio were not obliged to agree to requests for money from the communal government, however, and sometimes refused them. They could do this, not because they controlled the finances of the Comune — they did not — but because the finances of the Casa were separate from those of the Comune.

Although much work needs to be done to clarify the financial relationship between the Casa and the Comune, the financial significance of the Casa in Genoese life and society is well-known and beyond question. Through its control of tolls and gabelles, it had great influence on trade, and investments in the *luoghi* were a major element of the private fortunes of many Genoese families, individuals, and religious institutions. But was it, properly speaking, a political institution? Was it a locus of political power and influence?

The Casa di San Giorgio was an autonomous institution, and the communal government had no power to choose the Casa's officials or to direct how its affairs were run. Nevertheless, the policies of the communal government and of the doges could have a considerable impact on the affairs of the Casa: if Genoa went to war, for example, this was bound to have an effect on trade, and hence on the Casa's income. The eight members of the Officio di San Giorgio were often among the official bodies called to participate in the deliberative councils, particularly on financial questions. While their opinions would be listened to with respect, their votes would be cast as individuals, and they would not have a deciding voice, even on matters directly affecting the interests of the Casa. The officials and council of San Giorgio could be stubborn, resisting pressure

⁴⁸The basic work on the finances of San Giorgio is still Sieveking; see also Heers, 1961, 97–190.

⁴⁹See Heers, 1961, 121–23; Sieveking, 89–90, for the “Office of '44,” set up to liquidate the banking interests of San Giorgio, and which continued to have an important role in the administration of the Casa.

⁵⁰Heers, 1961, 162–72; Sieveking, 97–107.

from the doge and the Comune if they felt that they were being asked to do or accept something against the interests of the Casa; the officials and councils of the Comune, in their turn, were mindful of the importance of the Casa to the citizens. But the officials of San Giorgio could not dictate to the government of the Comune, and did not try to interfere in matters that were not their direct concern.

Perhaps even more than the Casa's financial weight in Genoa, it was San Giorgio's governance of much of the Genoese territory in the Mediterranean, and some Genoese places in Liguria, that has been taken as evidence of its being effectively a "state within a state." These territories were handed over to the Casa because the Comune was unable to maintain the effort needed either to defend or to hold on to them; the Casa's effective defense and efficient government of these territories are adduced as proof of its superior organization.⁵¹ Machiavelli's comments again provide a cue. He wrote that the Comune had placed under the administration of San Giorgio "the greater part of the lands and cities subject to Genoese dominion, which it governs and defends . . . without the Comune being involved in any way."⁵²

What receives less emphasis is that much of this territory was held by San Giorgio for a limited period, sometimes intermittently, sometimes precariously.⁵³ The last of the Genoese possessions on the Black Sea ceded to the Casa in November 1453 were lost to the Turks in 1474; Famagosta in Cyprus, ceded to the Casa in 1447 for a limited period of twenty-nine years, was lost in 1464; Corsica, ceded to the Casa in May 1453, was surrendered to Francesco Sforza when he became *signore* of Genoa in 1464, and was not recovered by the Casa until 1483; Pietrasanta in the Lunigiana, ceded to the Casa in 1446, was captured by the Florentines in 1484, and all efforts to recover it were in vain. The stronghold of Lerici on the Ligurian coast was given to the Casa in 1479; Sarzana, given to the Casa in 1484, was lost to the Florentines in 1487, and not recovered until 1498; Pieve di Teco, Ventimiglia, and Levanto were only ceded to the Casa in 1512, 1514, and 1515, respectively. Consequently the Genoese possessions

⁵¹Lopez, 1938, 417–19; Borlandi, 1985, 31; Petti Balbi, 1996, 35.

⁵²Machiavelli, 419. "in tanto è proceduta la cosa, nata dai bisogni del Comune e servigi di San Giorgio, che quello si ha posto sotto la sua amministrazione la maggior parte delle terre e città sottoposte all'imperio genovese, le quali e governa, e difende . . . senza che il Comune in alcuna parte se ne travagli." Lopez, 1967, 720–21, cites this passage approvingly, and criticizes Heers for not taking sufficient account of Machiavelli's observation.

⁵³Heers, 1961, 145, points out that San Giorgio's efforts in Cyprus, Caffa, and Corsica were unsuccessful: "se soldent par un échec."

held by San Giorgio in the Levant had been lost before the bulk of the territories it held in Liguria and the Lunigiana came under its control. At no time did it hold all or even the majority of Genoese territories, as is sometimes implied. All the places still held by San Giorgio in the mid-sixteenth century were handed back to the government of the republic in 1562.⁵⁴

It is usually said that these territories were ceded to the Casa di San Giorgio because the communal government could not raise the resources to defend them or keep them secure. This is true of the colonies in the Levant, and of Famagosta. The Casa accepted the burden, hoping — in vain, as it turned out — to protect its substantial financial interests there. The circumstances of the acquisition of those territories nearer to home, Corsica and the places in the Lunigiana and Liguria, were not so clear-cut. In them, the interests of the Comune needed to be defended not only against external enemies — the Aragonese in Corsica, the Florentines in Pietrasanta and Sarzana — but also against members of Genoese families that wanted to make these places into their personal possessions. The Campofregoso, in particular, had their sights on Corsica and on building up a *signoria* for themselves in the Lunigiana, including Lerici, Sarzana, and Pietrasanta. Ventimiglia had long been coveted by the Grimaldi of Monaco and the Doria of Oneglia.⁵⁵ Ceding these places to the Casa di San Giorgio was a way of taking them out of the sphere of political conflict while averting the danger of their sale to another power.

In late 1453, following the cession of Corsica and about the time when the cession of the Levantine colonies was being negotiated, the notion of selling the *signoria* of Genoa itself to the Casa di San Giorgio was mooted. It was a time of great tension in Genoa, with anxiety about the threat to Genoese interests in the Levant compounded by concern about threats to Genoa and Liguria from exiled opponents of Doge Pietro Campofregoso, the Dauphin, later Louis XI (1461–83), Duke Louis of Savoy (1446–65),

⁵⁴The clearest summary account of the history of the grants to San Giorgio is in Marengo, Manfroni, and Pessagno: for Famagosta, see 475–84; the Black Sea territories, 484–94; Corsica, 495–506; the territories on the mainland, 508–17. Documents concerning San Giorgio's government of the Black Sea colonies were published by Vigna; summary accounts of the Levantine colonies and Corsica are in Lopez, 1938, 417–46; Heers, 1961, 140–46. A useful recent article on Corsica is Musso, 1994–95; for the handover by San Giorgio to Francesco Sforza, see 1994, 544–55.

⁵⁵For Lerici, see Poggi, 1969, 2:349–417; Poggi, 1976; for Sarzana, see Ivaldi, 87–146; Coluccia, 36–158; Bornate, 143–97; for Ventimiglia, see Rossi, 154–83; for the persistence of Campofregoso designs on Corsica, see Musso, 1995, 60–76; Morengo, Manfroni, and Passagno, 496–99.

and Giovanni, Marchese of Monferrato (1445–64).⁵⁶ Various solutions were being propounded, including submission to King Charles VII of France (1422–61) or to Francesco Sforza, or putting the city “in libertà”—that is, without a doge—as well as putting it under the governance of San Giorgio. Whatever the solution, Pietro Campofregoso would have to be bought out; he claimed he had been offered 100,000 lire to agree to a “stato di libertà,” but had refused, apparently because he doubted he would be paid.⁵⁷ A payment from San Giorgio of 8,500 lire for territory and rights he possessed (or claimed) in Corsica had already helped to overcome his resistance to the cession of the island to the Casa.⁵⁸ Judging by a comment of another Campofregoso, Spinetta (d. 1467), the doge was also hoping to be paid for agreeing to the cession of the Black Sea colonies.⁵⁹ The offer put to him for agreeing to put Genoa under San Giorgio was a payment between 30,000 and 40,000 ducats, and other benefits. Pietro asked if he could have Pietrasanta as well as the money, was told he could not, and there the matter seems to have rested.⁶⁰

The idea of putting the city under the governance of San Giorgio seems to have been a speculative suggestion, a way of getting rid of an

⁵⁶ Olgiati, 1990a, 37–82; Prandini, 211–22; Sambotti, 168–72, 190–96.

⁵⁷ ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 408: transcription of coded dispatch from Pietro Cotta to F. Sforza, 29 September 1453, Genoa.

⁵⁸ Marengo, Manfroni, and Pessagno, 497; Giangaleazzo Campofregoso, who had been governor of Corsica, was reported to have accepted 3,000 lire from San Giorgio for the lands he held there (ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 408: copy of Niccolò Soderini to Cosimo de' Medici, 15 June 1453, Genoa).

⁵⁹ Ibid.: transcription of coded dispatch from Pietro Cotta to Francesco Sforza, 31 Oct. 1453, Genoa: “dice che esso dose se convene con l’officio de San Zorzo et per dinari gli da la dominio de Caffa che è grande diminiuzione . . . del dosato” (“He said that the doge has come to an agreement with the Officio di San Giorgio, and is giving them the dominion over Caffa for money, which is to the great detriment of the office of the doge”). Spinetta was proposing to Francesco Sforza that either he, Spinetta, should become doge, or Genoa should be put under San Giorgio (“mettere questo dominio in mano de San Zorzo”), or Spinetta would help Francesco Sforza take Genoa for himself.

⁶⁰ Ibid.: coded dispatch from Pietro Cotta to F. Sforza, 10 November 1453, Genoa: “Questa sira questo illustre duxe m’ha ditto che uno Burbone Centurione, riputato citadino zenovexe, suo amicissimo, lo conforto heri asai che’l volesse metere questo stato in mane del ofitio di San Zorzo et che gli faria dare circha trenta o quaranta milia ducati et altre honoranze. Dice esso duxe domandò se oltra diti denari gli volevano dare Petrasanta; gli respoxe che non” (“This evening the illustrious doge told me that one Burbone Centurione, a Genoese citizen of repute, and his great friend, urged him yesterday to agree to put this state in the hands of the Officii di San Giorgio, and that he would arrange for him to be given about 30,000–40,000 ducats and other benefits. The doge said he asked if, apart from the money, they would give him Pietrasanta; he was told no”). My deciphering.

increasingly unpopular doge — whose personal feuds were the cause of some of the most pressing problems facing the city, and who was ready, if he had to go, to sell the city to the highest bidder — while, it might be hoped, preventing an outburst of factionalism as his rivals and enemies contended for the dogeship at a time when the Genoese faced other serious problems. It was not a bid to take over the state by a group for whom the Casa di San Giorgio constituted a power base. There was no such group, and there is no evidence that the Casa was a center of political intrigue, a base for individuals or groups with their own political agenda. This is not just a case of clandestine maneuvers not being evident in the official records; it is a case in which it is significant that the doge did not bark. Had San Giorgio been a political center of this nature, some indication would surely have appeared among the thousands of letters from Genoa that are preserved in the Archivio Sforzesco. At the least, it might be expected that someone among those who repeatedly urged Francesco Sforza to take the *signoria* of Genoa for himself, or one of the Campofregoso or Adorno urging him to support them in a bid to become doge (or to help them to remain doge) would have referred to the need to come to terms with, circumvent, or combat, a political group based at the Casa di San Giorgio. But none of them did.⁶¹

This is not to say that a doge, or a prospective *signore* of Genoa, would not be well-advised to be on good terms with those running the Casa di San Giorgio. Nevertheless, that envoys from Milan and other states might come equipped with letters of credence for the Casa di San Giorgio (and for the *alberghi*) as well as for the civic government, and that the Casa sent its own envoys, does not imply that the Casa was seen as a significant center of political power within the Comune.⁶² It was common practice in fifteenth-century Italy for individuals, families, and institutions to send their own envoys to the governments of other states if they had business to transact or a favor to ask, and for the envoys of other states to be given letters of credence to important private individuals or families.

It has to be borne in mind that the men who ran the Casa di San Giorgio were not drawn from different social groups or families than the men who were elected to sit as Anziani — or on the Balie and other extraordinary commissions — and summoned to attend the councils: often, indeed, they were the same men. To give just one example: Salvago

⁶¹Nor does the Casa appear as a political power base in the correspondence from Genoa in the ASforzesco files for 1477–99 — bb. 967–78, 980–99, 1209–26, 1228–29, 1281–84, 1287, 1572 — that I have studied.

⁶²Borlandi, 1985, 28.

Spinola, who was a member of the Officio di San Giorgio in 1442, was a prominent figure in the communal government at that period. He had been one of eight men elected in a council in July 1440 to sound out and report opinion in the city on taxes on commerce; he served on an important commission, the Officio della Provvisione, in 1443.⁶³ The committees and councils of the Casa were made up like those of the Comune: half nobles, half *popolari*, with the *popolari* being half merchants, half *artefici*, and with half the members being Black, half White; they were chosen by their outgoing predecessors. There do not seem to have been any power struggles or conflict between nobles and *popolari*, merchants and *artefici*, or Blacks and Whites, within the Casa. There was a standing council of 100; larger councils met for particularly important questions.⁶⁴ The records of these councils in the Diversorum registers of the Casa di San Giorgio show that they were conducted along the same lines as the communal councils.⁶⁵ The Casa di San Giorgio itself could not be governed except by cooperation between factions and between different social groups, the same factions and social groups that composed the communal government. If the Genoese could manage to cooperate effectively to administer their common interests in the Casa di San Giorgio, why should they be considered incapable of cooperating effectively to administer the common interests of the Comune?

4. THE DOGE

While the system of communal government in Genoa — with its informality and its lack of institutional checks and balances — would seem to have been nicely set up for manipulation by those who wanted to establish their own dominance, in practice it was able to prevent this. Vague as they may have been, the political principles by which the affairs of the Genoese commune were regulated were very resilient. This may seem an odd comment to make about a notoriously faction-ridden and unstable polity. What must be remembered is a fundamental peculiarity of Genoese political life in the fifteenth century: it was composed of different spheres of

⁶³ASG, AS 521, fols. 255r–256r, 15 July 1440: the eight were to be elected from “among the worthiest men of the city distinguished for their prudence, intelligence and love of their homeland” (“ex prestantioribus civitatis qui prudentia ingenio et amore in patriam insignes habeantur”). For Spinola’s service on the Officio della Provvisione, see AS 529, fol. 95r, 23 July 1443.

⁶⁴Heers, 1961, 118–19.

⁶⁵The records are found in ASG, Archivio di San Giorgio, Cancelleria, Sala 34. In voting a ballot was taken, and a majority, apparently of two-thirds, was required for the adoption of a proposal. The council records provide fuller accounts of the debates than those of the communal councils, but they have yet to be systematically studied.

activity, which overlapped but remained to a considerable extent separate from one another. Consequently, although the causes of political instability affected the regular government of the Comune, they did not arise from it, nor did they shape it.⁶⁶

Political instability in Genoa was largely due to the competition between those who wanted to be doge and their personal feuds. These spilled out into the territory around Genoa, where factions that were centered on noble families such as the Doria, Spinola, and Fieschi were the major influence. With lands and fortresses, as well as vassals and partisans who would fight for them, members of such families could combine, sometimes in the same individual, the interests and behavior of an independent landed baron with the mercantile and shipping interests of a Genoese businessman. Often they had an important part in the competition for the office of doge, but the nobles alone could not impose a doge on the city, and no noble could himself hold the office: the doge had to be a *popolare*. By the mid-fifteenth century there were, in practice, only two families in contention for the *dogato*: the Adorno and the Campofregoso, who had built up their own factions, which overlapped with, and cut across, both the factions of the nobility and the Guelf and Ghibelline factions.⁶⁷ Two other families whose members had been doges in the past, the Montaldo and the Guarco, could no longer match the strength of the Adorno and Campofregoso.⁶⁸ The *popolare* families who contested the dogeship were known as the Cappellazzi, the “big hats.”

The doge was not the *signore* of Genoa. He was not supposed to be addressed as “Vostra Signoria,” even as a courtesy. Theoretically the office of doge was a lifetime appointment, although few incumbents managed to survive in the post more than a few years. Sometimes they aspired to behave like the lord of Genoa, but they could not impose their will on the Comune. The doge could do very little without the Anziani or the councils. If he tried to act without consultation and consent, or tried too obviously to manipulate the councils, he soon found himself in trouble, hamstrung by a lack of resources. With a salary somewhere between 12,000 and

⁶⁶ Olgiati, 1990a, illustrates the workings of the communal government and the influence of political factions.

⁶⁷ The Guelfs and Ghibellines were more significant in the mountains and on the Riviere than in the city. They were connected with, but by no means absorbed into, the factions centered on noble families.

⁶⁸ Isnardo Guarco had been elected doge in March 1436, but he lasted less than a week before being ousted by Tommaso Campofregoso.

15,000 Genoese lire, from which he had to pay the expenses of his household, he was being provided with the income of a noble rather than that of a prince, and the communal finances were not under his control.⁶⁹ Even though he was the military commander of the republic — whose defense was one of his chief responsibilities — few troops would normally be provided for him, and he would not necessarily even have a galley paid for by the Comune to guard or police the port. Doges were very dependent on the military and naval resources of their own family, faction, and allies, not only to win power but to maintain it. They often turned to other powers (even the King of Aragon) for financial and military support, but no doge ever got the decisive external support he hoped for.⁷⁰

Given the disruption caused by the contests for the dogeship and the efforts of incumbents to beat off rivals, why did the Genoese persist in having a doge at all? It would seem that they felt the need for some head of the state, a figure more prominent, and wielding more authority, than the short-term chairmen of the Signorie with which their contemporaries in Lucca, Florence, and Siena made do. Occasional experiments with a collective head of state were made, but did not last for very long. For example, after the deposition of Doge Tommaso Campofregoso (d. 1453) in December 1442, eight "Captains of the *libertà* of Genoa" were elected "servatis coloribus" ("observing the factions") by the Anziani and twelve citizens elected by a council, to hold office for two months. Not even a private household, let alone a republic, it was said in the official record of their election, would manage for long "without a governor."⁷¹ Six weeks later, Raffaele Adorno was elected doge. According to the official letters written on his behalf informing other Italian states of his election, the Genoese had found that this unaccustomed collective leadership did not suit them, and that their republic could not be governed by several citizens.⁷² Following the uprising of the *artefici* which brought to an end the French government of the city, on 9 March 1461, eight "artificum capitanei" ("captains of the *artefici*") were elected; they lasted only a few days before they were replaced by Prospero Adorno (d. 1485).⁷³

⁶⁹Pistarino, 1966, 243–49, prints the budget for 1461.

⁷⁰See Olgiati, 1990a, 19–23; Olgiati, 1990b, 320–46; ASMi, ASforzesco, bb. 407–17.

⁷¹ASG, AS 526, fols. 211r–212r, 19 December 1441: "Cognoscentes non modo ullam rempublicam sed ne unam quidem privati hominis domum sine rectore diu stare non posse"; ibid., AS 527, fols. 99r–100v, 18 December 1442.

⁷²Ibid., AS 1787, fol. 270v, no. 775: Raffaele Adorno to Niccolo de Mentano, 28 January 1443; ibid., fols. 270v–271r, no. 776: Raffaele Adorno to Lodovico, Duke of Savoy, 28 January 1443.

⁷³Ibid., AS 571, fol. 25r–v, 9, 10, and 12 March 1461.

One reason why the Genoese persisted in having doges could well be the pressure from the Adorno and Campofregoso factions, who would not rest until there was one. Who would be doge was settled by the result of rivalries within the Adorno and Campofregoso families, vying for support in their bids for power, and by the outcome of the contests between their respective factions. Nevertheless, if he was to be accepted by the citizens, the successful contender still had formally to be elected doge by a council. Whether the councils that elected the doges conformed to the usual pattern of equality between the numbers of nobles and *popolari*, and Blacks and Whites, is not clear; it would seem unlikely in the circumstances in which they tended to be assembled, often after street fighting or, at least, a show of force by those backing the aspirant. Doges were not supposed to be elected by councils; according to the *Regulae*, they were to be chosen by electoral commissions.⁷⁴ Election by a council, however, conducted in as regular a manner as the circumstances would permit (preferably with the Anziani present) gave some element of legitimacy to the process.

These assemblies to elect a doge were not conducted like a *parlamento* or *arengo*, in which citizens would be expected to signal their approval by acclamation. A formal vote would be taken, and there could be votes against. Over 200 citizens were present at the council that elected Doge Raffaele Adorno, although he received only 147 votes. While this constituted a much greater majority than those which supported many decrees obtained in ordinary councils, there still seems to have been a significant number of men prepared to express their opposition to Adorno in a council assembled specifically to elect him. When a group of nobles, enemies of Pietro Campofregoso, drove him from the city at the end of July 1455, and, without assembling a council, decided that Lodovico Campofregoso should be doge, many of their followers deserted them. They had elected a committee of eight nobles, who themselves chose eight *popolari* to meet with them and with Gianfilippo Fieschi (d. 1459); this group then elected Lodovico Campofregoso doge. The Spinola, who wanted an Adorno doge, objected that there should be a council of 300 citizens to make this election; if the council should choose Lodovico, the Spinola would ensure the acquiescence of the Adorno. Gianfilippo Fieschi and his allies refused to agree to this, only to cause an outcry among the *popolari* that the nobles had created the doge, and to see their allies and partisans leave them and rally to the Adorno. Their failure to observe the conventions of Genoese

⁷⁴Ibid., Manoscritti di Parigi 19, fols. 39r–41r.

politics in this important matter cleared the way for Pietro Campofregoso to return, and to recover his position within a day.⁷⁵

When doges were elected, no explicit statements as to why a doge was needed were made — or at least, none were recorded in the official accounts of the assemblies that met to make the elections — beyond the assertion that the republic needed a *rector*. Comments made about the performance and qualities of individual doges provide some clues as to what the Genoese looked for in a doge. Both Barnabe Adorno (d. 1459) and Lodovico Campofregoso — when they were deposed in January 1447 and September 1450, respectively — were said (admittedly, by their successors) not to have been up to the job. Barnabe Adorno was described in a letter written on behalf of Giano Campofregoso (d. 1448), who drove him out, as “little suited to bear such a burden.”⁷⁶ Adorno had only been doge for a few weeks, having been elected on 4 January to replace his cousin, Raffaele, who had abdicated. What the city needed, the assembly that elected him had been told, was a *rector* “capable of enlarging this republic and with the spirit to deal with difficult affairs.”⁷⁷ During his brief dogeship Barnabe gave little sign of possessing these qualities. Giano Campofregoso, who before his fatal illness had shown himself to be the most capable of all the fifteenth-century doges, was succeeded on his death in December 1448 by his brother, Lodovico. Lacking his brother’s political sense and strength of character, Lodovico was deposed by his own family, who feared he was endangering the dominant position of the Campofregoso. In his speech to the assembly that elected him doge on 8 September 1450, Pietro Campofregoso described Lodovico as not having made adequate provision to deal with matters pertaining to the public interest and the reputation of Genoa.⁷⁸

At one point during his dogeship, Raffaele Adorno claimed that he had been reproved for governing “more like a comrade than a doge,” and that he had been told that Genoa “could not be ruled without rigor and severity.”⁷⁹ But judging from the remarks made by or about the doges, what the

⁷⁵ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 410: Paolo de Goarco to Lodovico de’ Gradi, 2 August 1455, Genoa; *ibid.*, Pietro Spinola to Ottaviano Vivaldi, 4 August 1455, Acqui.

⁷⁶ASG, AS 1789, fol. 229v, no. 739: Giano Campofregoso to Pope Eugenius IV, 28 January 1447: “parum idoneus tanto oneri videretur.”

⁷⁷Ibid., AS 537, fol. 73v, 4 January 1447: “civitas hec optimo indiget rectore ad multiplicationem huius reipublice bene apto et in rebus arduis magnanimo.”

⁷⁸Ibid., AS 545, fol. 62v, 8 September 1450: “visum esse multa in dies accidere tum ad utilitatem publicam tum dignitatem nominis genuensis pertinentia quibus potiente rerum prefato Illustri domino Ludovico non satis oportune ac recte provisum videretur.”

⁷⁹Ibid., AS 533, fol. 23r, 7 March 1444: “ha governao questa citae in tanto che ello

Genoese really wanted in a doge was someone who would administer justice equitably, keep the peace, and not spend too much. In general, they had no great interest in expanding the subject territory of Genoa or cutting a figure among the states of Italy, they disliked paying taxes, and while they expected the doge to defend Genoese trading interests, they were not looking for a dynamic leader. When, a few days after the election of Barnabe Adorno, a council was told that he intended to treat everyone justly, according to their merits, and to be parsimonious, sparing the citizens' purses as much as he could, his intentions were commended, especially his promise to deal equitably with the citizens and "to use great parsimony in expenditure."⁸⁰ Peace in the city, keeping expenses low, and "equal justice for all" were what Lodovico Campofregoso was urged to provide when he was elected doge again on 24 July 1461.⁸¹

The problem was that these were not necessarily the qualities in government that would recommend themselves to the faction leaders and family members who had helped a doge to be elected, and who might turn against him if he did not provide the rewards of pensions, offices in Genoese territory, and privileged treatment for their faction that they expected to receive. Nor did these qualities necessarily represent the priorities of the doges themselves, on whose personal agenda maintaining themselves in power and defeating challenges to their own position tended to take precedence. Some were inclined to forget that the doge was the elected head of a republic, and thought of the position as a kind of lordship, of *signoria*. In the assembly at which Pietro Campofregoso was elected in September 1450, he spoke of the doge as a "prince" ("princeps"), and said that what was required was someone both capable of ruling and willing to rule ("qui et imperare posset et vellit"). Some of those who spoke in support of his election also spoke of a prince who would rule.⁸² But this was not the term that the Genoese usually used when speaking of the office of the doge. He was a "dux," a "duce," not a "princeps," or "principe," or even a "signore"; he was not to be addressed as "Vostra Signoria," but as "messer lo duxc."

When one of the frequent changes of doge occurred, all the other

pareiva pu tosto compagnum che duxe, de la qua cosa ello è stacto spesa volta repreizo da grande parte de voi e de altri simili a voi, digando che questa citae non se porria reze sensa rigor e severitae."

⁸⁰Ibid., AS 537, fol. 74r-v, 7 January 1447: "inter cives ius equum reddere et in pecuniis maxima uti parsimonia."

⁸¹Ibid., AS 573, fol. 29r-v, 24 July 1461: "ad ea omnia quae bonum et pacem civitatis respiciant, verum que ad paucos sumptus et equalem in omnes justiciam."

⁸²Ibid., AS 545, fols. 62v-63v, 8 September 1450.

elected officials in the civic government stayed at their posts. That the Anziani who were in office when a doge resigned or was expelled and was replaced by another would serve to the end of their term has been seen as a sign of the marginality of their office.⁸³ This, however, can be interpreted another way: as an indication that the doge was not the lynchpin of the civic government. The civic magistracies were not packed with his men, nor did he control them. The same board of Anziani could work with the new doge without difficulty because they were not the partisans of his predecessor; there was no need for a purge.⁸⁴ However, officials who had been appointed by the doge, who were often his factional allies, would be another matter.⁸⁵ Replacing men that he did not trust, where it was in his power to replace them, would be one of the first cares of an incoming doge.

5. THE SEARCH FOR CONSENSUS

Nor was the facility with which the Anziani and other officials elected under one doge could work with the successful rival who had supplanted him an indication of a cynical practice — among those who were not fervent partisans of one side or the other — of siding with the victors. Rather, it was the effect of the quite distinctive attitudes of the Genoese to government and to political office. Politics was not the focus of Genoese civic life, nor was the pursuit of political office an ambition of prominent citizens. There are no indications that participation in public life was viewed as the highest calling of a citizen, that holding political office contributed to the social prestige of a man's family, or was seen as a useful way of protecting personal interests. Reading the records of Genoese government in the mid-fifteenth century one gets a sense of groups of men dutifully coming together to deal with the routine business of their community and other problems as they arose, seeing this as something of a chore, a distraction from the real business of life, but something that had to be done. According to Teodisio Doria, the deliberative councils played an important role in encouraging citizens to take an interest in public affairs, because if they were not consulted, everyone would think of their own good, not the common good.⁸⁶

⁸³Musso, 1998, 262.

⁸⁴Ibid., 261, states that the doge controlled the election of the Anziani to ensure that they were men who would do as he wanted. If this were so, would not the incoming doge have needed to change them, even if the Anziani were as marginal as Musso suggests?

⁸⁵See below, pp. 80–81.

⁸⁶ASG, AS 539, fol. 77v, 28 June 1447: "laudando sempre che in li caxi de importancia se demande li citadini ali quali tocha la terra, perche essendo domandati se resvegierano a la utilita de la patria, e in altra forma ciascaduno pensa al bene proprio, e lassa andare lo commune."

Contributing to this sense is the strong emphasis placed by the Genoese on consultation of the citizens, on “sounding out the opinion of the citizens in the banks and in the *piazze*,” as the proposal adopted at a council in October 1444 specified.⁸⁷ About 200 men were present at the council that came to this decision, men who would all have had the opportunity to speak if they had wished to do so. Such “scrutinies” (as they were known) of public opinion were used most often to help in reaching decisions on how money could be raised, with the aim of identifying the way that would be “least displeasing to the citizens” as the speaker at the October 1444 council put it.⁸⁸ Such a formula was frequently used when proposals for taxation were being discussed. Scrutinies were, in part, a way of shuffling off responsibility for unpleasant decisions that no one wanted to take. If a commission was appointed to find a way to raise money, their burden was eased if they had instructions to consult widely and base their proposals on what they found to be the least unpopular solution. But there was also genuine concern that citizens who were not holding office at the time, or were not among those summoned to a particular council, should be able to have their say; there was also concern that consultations should be held in such a way that they would feel free to express their true opinions. On occasion it was thought preferable for those who wanted to proffer their views to come to speak privately to the office or commission concerned.

This practice of sounding out public opinion did not prevent the Genoese from recognizing that some matters, particularly those involving foreign affairs, were better dealt with by a few men rather than by a large assembly. For example, in June 1447, concerned by events in Lombardy and elsewhere in Italy, “many and various citizens of great authority” had advised the doge and Anziani that a large number of citizens should be summoned to discuss the situation. The council of over 200 that was convoked agreed that while it was good for large numbers of men to be consulted on such matters, it was better for decisions to be taken by a small number elected for the purpose. One speaker, Battista da Goano, suggested that if they wanted to explore the views of the citizens further, “they could hear two or three at a time separately.”⁸⁹

There is little sign of rivalry between factions over policy, apart from

⁸⁷Ibid., AS 532, fol. 124v, 19 October 1444: “scurtata civibus oppinione tam in bancis quam in plateis.”

⁸⁸Ibid.: “que civibus minus molesta esse.”

⁸⁹Ibid., AS 539, fols. 77v–79r, 28 June 1447: “molti e diversi citadini de grande auctorita, a chi tocha assai la terra . . . nam si civium animos explorare volent, poterunt duos aut tres seorsum seperatim audire, quando et prout eis videbitur, que erit haud dubie tutor consulendi via quam in magno numero.”

those connected with the endless contests over the dogeship. Excluding those contests, in the running of the affairs of the city the worst division to affect the communal government was that between the nobles and the *popolari* over taxation, particularly over the assessments for the primary direct tax in this period, the *avaria*. Many individuals, *popolari* as well as nobles, were exempted from payment of the *avaria* for a period of years or even for life; many of the communities on the Riviere also had exemptions.⁹⁰ This was not an instance of one group trying to shift the burden of taxation on to the other, although there were frequent expressions of resentment in the councils that some should be pressed to pay additional taxation when so many did not have to pay at all. The disagreements focused on the procedures of assessment: was it better for nobles and *popolari* to be assessed separately — the usual practice — or together? If an effort was to be made to collect bad debts, how should the problem that there were many more small debtors among the *popolari* be dealt with?

A rare instance of debate in council foundering in dissension occurred in July 1449 when a council was summoned to resolve a dispute as to whether the *conventiones* — the privileges of exemption — should be observed. This particular dispute had been dragging on for months, with the nobles arguing that the exemptions should be for one *avaria* each year; the *popolari*, who had more *conventionati*, wanted their privileges to be valid for every *avaria*, whether or not more than one was levied in a single year.⁹¹ In the summer a commission of twelve was elected to decide this question, but could not. The council, to which over 150 citizens were summoned on 19 July to discuss their failure, degenerated into a shouting match between the nobles and the *popolari*, with no one speaking to the proposition. At length, Salvago Spinola was called on to speak for the nobles, and Battista da Goano for the *popolari*, to say whether they would agree to elect four advocates each. The nobles had apparently already done so, and approved Salvago Spinola's confirmation; Battista da Goano refused, and the other *popolari* kept silent. Damiano Giustiniani rose to suggest that the doge should impose a decision. Unusually, there is no mention of any vote being taken on this suggestion, and it is unlikely that

⁹⁰Heers, 1961, 98–103; Sieveking, 1906, 136–41.

⁹¹ASG, AS 1793, fol. 9v, no. 50: Lodovico Campofregoso to Tommaso Campofregoso (?), 20 January 1449. According to a later summary of the long history of contention over this tax — ASMi, Registri ducali 55, 104–09; Corrado Stanga to Giangaleazzo Maria Sforza, 12 November 1489, Genoa — those who did not keep account books would not be assessed for the *avaria*.

the doge, Lodovico Campofregoso, welcomed the buck being passed on to him.⁹²

The difficulty was the anomalous nature of the *avaria*, which made it hard to find a solution that both parties would deem fair. The principle of consensus — of working out what most people thought was reasonable or was the least unpleasant solution to a problem — could not work in this case. As Marco da Cassina remarked in a council in February 1450, if God would only permit that a form of assessment could be found on which all citizens could agree, then he himself would approve it and recommend it, whatever it might be — but this was impossible.⁹³ That this issue was irresolvable, and could range the nobles and *popolari* against each other, did not mean that they were necessarily ranged against one another over other issues. Neither side was trying to oust the other from their share in the government. This is not to say that some doges, notably Pietro Campofregoso, did not try to incite trouble between the nobles and the *popolari* in order to create opportunities to enhance their own power, or that the nobles were not seen as being more favorably inclined than the *popolari* to rule by an outside lord — such as the King of France or the Duke of Milan — and that this did not create bad feeling at times.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, in running the affairs of the city cooperation, not confrontation, between nobles and *popolari* was the norm; it was exceptional for them to have distinct views on policy.

6. THE ROLE OF THE *ARTEFICI*

Just as there was no attempt to alter the balance between nobles and *popolari* in the government, so there was no attempt to reduce the share of the *artefici*. On occasion, they took a decisive role in Genoese political life. *Artefici* were prominent among those who rose in revolt against the domination of Filippo Maria Visconti in late December 1435, and, still more, among those who revolted against the domination of the French in March 1461. One of the government chancellors noted in his official register that on 9 March 1461 “the city was roused to arms by the efforts and at the

⁹²ASG, AS 542, fol. 59r–v, 19 July 1449.

⁹³Ibid., AS 545, fols. 50v–51r, 21 February 1450: “Si permetteret Deus repperiri posse formam circha particiones in quam cives omnes universo et comuni consensu convenient, quecumque ea forma esset illam posse et probare et laudari, verum cum id se impossibile fore arbitraretur.”

⁹⁴For Pietro Campofregoso, see Borlandi, 1984, 358–63, 377–99.

instigation of the *artefici*.⁹⁵ The French governor retreated to the fortress, the Castelletto, leaving the way clear for the Campofregoso and Adorno exiles to enter the city and contend for the dogeship. Rumors that Prospero Adorno was negotiating with the French in the fortress brought the *artefici* into the streets again. They held an assembly on 11 March and elected eight "Captains of the *artefici*," saying, it was reported, "that they wanted to be the ones who settled this city, and they did not want any one except the *popolo minuto* to be involved."⁹⁶ But the eight captains left the dogal palace the next day, "leaving the republic without any *rector*."⁹⁷ Later that day, after he had made an agreement with his main Campofregoso rivals, Prospero Adorno was elected doge.⁹⁸

This episode is presented by the main contemporary narrative source, *Rerum gestarum Francisci Sforiae* — a biography of Francesco Sforza written by Giovanni Simonetta, one of his secretaries — as a classic case of the *popolo* stirred to rebel by their grievances, but then unable to decide what to do for lack of leadership.⁹⁹ Among the *artefici*, however, were many men who would have served as Anziani, on other governing committees, and on special *ad hoc* commissions, and many who would have taken part in the councils. If the *artefici* were unable to think of an effective alternative to a doge as a head of government, and had no program for radical change, they were in the same position as the wealthier *popolari* and the nobles.

⁹⁵ASG, AS 571, fol. 25r, 9 March 1461: "concitata est civitas ad arma opera et consilio artificum."

⁹⁶Lazzarini, 147: Vincenzo della Scalona to Ludovico Gonzaga, 13 March 1461, Milan: "che essi vogliono essere quelli diano forma a quella città, ni in questa cosa gli intervene altro ch'el popolo minuto."

⁹⁷ASG, AS 571, fol. 25v, 12 March 1461: "Cum digressi ex palatio publico octo qui artificum capitanei nominabantur, rempublicam sine ullo rectore reliquissent."

⁹⁸Lazzarini, 149: Vincenzo della Scalona to Ludovico Gonzaga, 15 March 1461, Milan.

⁹⁹Simonetta, 441–43. There is very little direct evidence for the complex events of these days that survives in the official records in the Genoese archives; the letters that were sent to Milan from Genoa recounting these events and that were referred to in the dispatches from Milan of the Mantuan ambassador — Lazzarini, 146–50; Vincenzo della Scalona to Ludovico Gonzaga, 13, 14, 15 March 1461, Milan — are not extant in the Archivio Sforzesco in the Archivio di Stato of Milan. The account in Giustiniani, 2:420–23, is based on Simonetta's. There is no modern study of these years of Genoese history; the standard account is still Sorbelli, which was based primarily on the Sforzesco material in the Fonds Italien of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Sorbelli's account of the revolt against the French (43–46) is taken from Simonetta (whom he quotes verbatim) and from a letter from Bartolomeo and Marco Doria to Charles VII, 19 March 1461, Sassello (Basin, 361–62).

The Captains of Liberty elected after the deposition of Tommaso Campofregoso in December 1442 — among whom were two *artefici*, one of them, Domenico Ricio, a butcher — may have lasted a little longer than the Captains of the *artefici*, but still only stayed in office just over a month before the election of Raffaele Adorno.¹⁰⁰ The Genoese seem to have found it difficult to see their way to break out of the pattern of contests between the Adorno and Campofregoso for the dogeship, except for submission to a prince from outside Genoa. The suggestion that surfaced in 1453, that the city should be placed under the Casa di San Giorgio, did not get very far. In early 1461, although many nobles and some of the wealthier *popolari* would still have preferred to have a French governor rather than a Cappellazzo doge, the *artefici* had had enough of the French, and their opposition prevailed.

During the political upheavals of the next few years, before the city accepted the dominion of Francesco Sforza, the *artefici* maintained a distinct political voice. This was in itself unusual, but the way in which they were consulted, and the manner in which they intervened, demonstrated the established position they held within the political community. At one point — when the contest among the Campofregoso as to which of the family should become doge had reached stalemate — four *artefici* were elected to mediate between the main contenders, Lodovico Campofregoso and Paolo Campofregoso, Archbishop of Genoa (d. 1498). A commission of eight peacemakers had already tried and failed, as had a deputation of Spinetta Campofregoso, one of the Anziani and one of the chancellors, so on 28 May 1462 the Anziani summoned a council of over 500 citizens that met at the Church of Santa Maria delle Vigne. The winning proposal, which received 280 votes, was that the new Anziani — to be elected the following day — together with the commission of the eight peacemakers, should elect four “notabiles artifices,” who were to have all the power and authority that could be given to a doge or a governor to settle the matter and “do what was necessary for the good of the city.”¹⁰¹ On 31 May the outgoing Anziani and the eight peacemakers, with the consent of nine of the incoming Anziani, elected four *artefici* to be captains; the four were summoned to Santa Maria delle Vigne to take an oath on the gospels to do

¹⁰⁰See ASG, AS 526, fol. 212r, 19 December 1442, for the names of the Captains, who were elected on 19 December 1442; Adorno was elected doge on 28 January 1443.

¹⁰¹Ibid., AS 573, fols. 59v–61r, 28 May 1462: “eligant quatuor notabiles artifices qui soli sine alio socio habeant et habere intelligentur omnem potestatem et bailiam qui possit aut solitum sit dari duci aut alteri gubernatori qui querant cogere eum per quem concordia non probetur et providere his quae sint necessaria pro bonis civitatis.”

all they could for the peace and tranquillity of the city.¹⁰² But there was little they could do when many of the nobles took arms and clashed with the archbishop and his supporters. One of the four, the "apparently scandalized" Domenico Trabucco, left the palace that day; within a few days all four had given up.¹⁰³ Their place as arbitrators was taken by another commission of twelve *artefici*, who were elected by a large assembly of *artefici* who met at San Domenico on 3 June.¹⁰⁴ Both Lodovico and Paolo reluctantly agreed to accept the decision of the twelve, and on 7 June they exchanged a kiss of peace and took an oath to observe it before "a great multitude of the *popolo*".¹⁰⁵

Unfortunately, the terms of the arbitration had little chance of lasting success: neither Lodovico, as doge, nor the ambitious Paolo were ready to make work the proposed compromise, by which Lodovico would appoint three-fifths of the infantry guard and Paolo the remaining two-fifths, and each would appoint half the officials.¹⁰⁶ At heart, the Campofregoso did not want to accept arbitration from the *artefici*, although they would be happy to have them take up arms to join in the factional violence. Lodovico negotiated with the *artefici*, thinking that they were more inclined to support him than Paolo; they offered him money to give up the Castelletto, to which he agreed. The *artefici* who were carrying on these negotiations asked Francesco Sforza to help them by dissuading Paolo and Spinetta Campofregoso and Obietto Fieschi (1439–97, Paolo's main ally) from disrupting the arrangement.¹⁰⁷ The agreement should have been signed at the end of August, with Lodovico and Paolo feigning acceptance — although neither really wanted it to succeed — each hoping to get the better of the other. Lodovico also indicated that he would consent to the election of four more "captains".¹⁰⁸ On 2 September Lodovico summoned a council of *artefici* in the church of San Siro, where over a thousand gathered, approved the terms that had been negotiated, and urged

¹⁰²Ibid., fol. 62r, 31 May 1462.

¹⁰³ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 415: Cristoforo Panigarola and Biagio de' Gradi to Francesco Sforza, 31 May 1462, Genoa: "parendose scandalizzato s'è partito de palazzo"; ASG, AS 574, fol. 28r, undated entry: "post pauculos dies cedentibus palatio."

¹⁰⁴ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 415: C. Panigarola and B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 4 June 1462, Genoa.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.: C. Panigarola and B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 7 June 1462, Genoa: "baxatose per bocca tutti et iurato in mano de quelli xii in grande frequentia et multitudine del popolo de observare la sententia."

¹⁰⁶Ibid.: C. Panigarola and B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 9 June 1462, Genoa.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.: B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 25 August 1462, Genoa.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.: C. Panigarola and B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 28, 30 August 1462, Genoa.

Lodovico to accept them.¹⁰⁹ But Obietto Fieschi and Giangaleazzo Campofregoso persuaded Paolo to come to terms with Lodovico, and when another assembly of *artefici* met at San Siro on 6 September — having ordered the shops should be shut while they awaited a reply from Lodovico — the Campofregoso came in force to disperse them, told them they would have to be patient, and ordered the shops to be opened again.¹¹⁰ Paolo Campofregoso renounced the settlement pronounced by the twelve in June, declaring he would rather be at the discretion of his family than of the *artefici*.¹¹¹

7. THE ETHOS OF CIVIC GOVERNMENT AND ATTITUDES TO OFFICEHOLDING

There were no doubt some nobles, as well as some *popolari*, who were not too keen on the *artefici* having such a distinct, decisive role in political affairs. But whatever the private views of the citizens, the ethos of the civic government was not one of social conflict; the function of the government was not to mediate between different social groups, or to contain animosities. Indeed, without a general commitment to consensus, the peculiar way in which the deliberations and legislative councils were conducted in Genoa — with decisions being reached, and policies based, on proposals from the floor, and with only a minority of votes needed for a proposal to be adopted — was inconceivable.

Although the decisions of the councils were considered binding, there was no attempt to smother criticism of, or forbid dissent from, them. If citizens were unhappy with a particular decision, they could make their views known to the doge, the Anziani, or other officials; if feelings were judged to be strong another council could be called. In January 1452 some of those who enjoyed tax exemptions or tax privileges complained that a decision of a council — that the *conventiones* should be reviewed — had been taken without giving their views a proper hearing, and that the council had been unruly and not properly conducted. Another council was called to reopen the matter; some *conventionati* were introduced into the council to put their case, and then asked to leave. By a substantial majority, the council decided that the earlier decision should stand.¹¹² The right of the Genoese to object to decisions was also recognized under the French

¹⁰⁹Ibid., b. 416: C. Panigarola and B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 3 September 1462, Genoa.

¹¹⁰Ibid.: Agostino de Benegassio to Spinetta Campofregoso, 6 September 1462, Genoa; B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 6 September 1462, Genoa.

¹¹¹Ibid.: C. Panigarola and B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 3 September 1462, Genoa; B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 6 September 1462, Genoa.

¹¹²ASG, AS 552, fols. 4r–5r, 13 January 1452.

dominion. When "many citizens of good reputation" complained about the method of raising money for immediate needs that had been agreed upon by the Governor, the Anziani, the Balia, and the *Ufficio della Moneta* — who had been given the task of finding a way to do so by a council — the Governor and other officials revoked their decree, and summoned another council on 3 January 1460 to suggest an alternative.¹¹³

The citizens did not want councils to be called too frequently — especially if the question of how to raise money would be on the agenda — but if a matter was generating concern or there had been news from outside Genoa that was considered to be important, a council would be called, sometimes at the suggestion of concerned citizens, sometimes because officials thought it was appropriate to do so. Just as Genoese citizens did not want to be distracted from their private affairs by being summoned too frequently to take part in councils, so they do not seem to have been anxious to hold offices in the civic government. There is no evidence of competition for election to civic office, no reference to lobbying for appointments, and no complaints about exclusion, either in the Genoese records or in the copious correspondence from Genoa from 1450 onwards preserved in the Archivio Sforzesco.¹¹⁴ Some names — such as Luciano Grimaldi and Salvago and Eliano Spinola — recur in the special commissions, but this was because they were respected figures, not because they were faction leaders or members of the doge's family. (Members of the Adorno and Campofregoso families rarely, if ever, held such appointments.) Rather than being associated with a particular doge, such men tended to be prominent under several different regimes. For example, Battista da Goano was often elected to special commissions, and summoned to councils in which his proposals were frequently adopted; he served as well on several occasions as an ambassador for the republic. He was also one of the most sought after lawyers in Genoa.¹¹⁵ Antonio Bartolomeo Imperiale, another lawyer, was also held in high esteem by his fellow citizens; his name, too, appears frequently in the lists of those elected to commissions, or as the man whose opinion prevailed in a council.

In some degree, service on special commissions was seen as a duty and a chore, rather than a gratifying sign of a man's standing and influence

¹¹³Ibid., AS 568, fol. 75r-v, 3 January 1460: "heri vegnem monti citaim de bona reputatium, lamentandose."

¹¹⁴Competition among the noble families and the factions for offices in Genoese territory was another matter entirely.

¹¹⁵Olgati, 1994.

among his fellow citizens. No attempt was made to make any such commission permanent, either by a doge or a faction trying to secure a grip on the civic government, or by an elite group trying to arrogate to themselves a greater share in power. The Genoese were aware of the burden of service on such commissions, how time-consuming it could be; they knew also how they could be the best instruments to deal with certain tasks. A debate held in November 1446 to discuss the work of the commission of twelve “appointed to reconcile the minds of the citizens” made this clear.¹¹⁶ The council was told how diligent the twelve had been since their appointment: apart from consulting others and seeking their advice, they had been with the doge every day, morning and evening, to discuss what could be done for the benefit of the community and to ward off the perils looming over it. As the citizens knew, strong medicine was required, measures that would need great authority to be enforced. The twelve did not have such authority, and did not want to usurp it. “You all understand that such authority [*balia*] is a very great burden on those to whom it is given,” and that it was not fitting for anyone to ask for it.¹¹⁷ They would also understand that it could be harmful if the kind of business the twelve were dealing with was discussed in detail by many. Those present were asked to speak freely, and not wait to be called upon to speak: “in a free council, in which the well-being and preservation of the *patria* is being discussed, it is shameful to wait to be exhorted and admonished.”¹¹⁸ Many then put forward various opinions, which were broadly in agreement. The proposal adopted was that the twelve should be given ample powers to accomplish their work for the welfare of the city, but were to have no powers beyond their specific remit. Their powers were in no way to diminish the authority of other offices.

If they had served for several months, perhaps even a year, members of such commissions might ask to be relieved of their duties, and such requests were considered reasonable and justifiable. For example, the twenty *provvisionati* who had been elected to deal with a longstanding conflict with Galeotto del Carretto da Finale asked in June 1448 to be replaced: not because the matter had been settled, but because they had “endured much toil” and wanted others to take over, “so that everyone should have his

¹¹⁶ASG, AS 538, fols. 137v–139r, 21 November 1446; the quotation is at fol. 137v: “conciliandis civium animis constitutorum.”

¹¹⁷Ibid., fol. 138r: “Tuti voi intendi che tal *balia* è da grandissimo carrigo a chi ella è daeta; intendi etiamde che non dexe in bocca de alcum demandarla.”

¹¹⁸Ibid., fol. 138v: “admonitis quicunque aderant ne se nominatim vocari expectarent quam in concilio libero, in quo de salute et conservatione patrie consultaretur, turpe esset exhortationes aut monita prestolari.”

share of the toil, as is right."¹¹⁹ The council agreed to replace them with a new commission of eight. In January 1460 a council agreed that while it was necessary to have a Balia at present, those serving on the Balia had "been in office long enough," and that the promise made to them that they would be relieved of their duties at the end of January should be observed. A new Balia was elected immediately.¹²⁰ When in March 1445 the doge and Anziani agreed that the Officiali delle provvisione should, "as is just, have some leisure and quiet as a reward for their labors," they decreed that for a year they should not be called on to fill any office or magistracy or perform any public work, and that they should not be elected to such bodies nor be compelled to serve on them.¹²¹ Before they were released from office, however, they were to settle their accounts and finish any business they had in hand.

If it was thought that the members of a commission were trying to avoid a difficult task, the response to a request to be relieved of their duties could be less sympathetic. When a Balia for maritime affairs informed a council that they had not been able to put into effect any of the suggestions made as to how they could raise the 40,000–50,000 lire they needed, they said that "among them are some who have little knowledge of the sea, and nearly all of them hold other offices, which they should attend to," and asked that they should be replaced by "others more expert and better suited and less busy."¹²² The council decided that they should get on with the job, and that they were quite capable of doing it.

Most of the citizens were no more anxious to hold the kind of offices — as vicars, captains, or *podestà* in subject territories — that were so sought after in other states. There were few such offices available in Genoese territory, and those that were available were not filled by election but by patronage. It was the families who had interests in the Riviere and the mountains and were involved with the factions there — and the doges who had the right to fill such offices — who were interested in them. The doge's right to award these offices was an important element in his power,

¹¹⁹Ibid., AS 537, fols. 234v–237v, 27 June 1448: "durado affano asai"; "acio che ogniuono havesse la soa parte de li affani, come è debito."

¹²⁰Ibid., AS 569, fols. 14v–15r, 26 January 1460: "cum cives illi qui eiusdem officii sunt satis in magistratu permanserint et ob id equum esse, ut quicquid promissum ex publica deliberatione eis fuit inconcusse servetur."

¹²¹Ibid., AS 536, fol. 25v, 5 March 1445: "volentes ut equum est aliquam otium et quietem pro his laboribus sibi rependi."

¹²²Ibid., AS 558, fols. 72v–73r, 14 January 1454: "inter loro sum pochi docti de marina, e . . . quasi cascum de lor ha altri officii, aliue ghe convene attender"; "dar tal cura a altri più docti e più apti e mem occupae."

but one that he often had to share with other members of his family, or with members of other powerful families. Leading members of the Fieschi family, in particular, seem to have regarded an extensive share in this patronage almost as a right, and would, if given the chance, force the doge to allot them up to half of all the offices at his disposal to distribute among their partisans as they saw fit.¹²³ Naturally the doge would not be keen on such arrangements, and might well have tried to keep them confidential, but they must have been known to many Genoese, and do not seem to have aroused protest or controversy.

In June 1446 Raffaele Adorno unusually included the civic officials in distributing this patronage, agreeing to elect — with the Anziani and an Officio della Provvisione — four men to allot all the offices open to appointment in Genoa and the subject territories among Guelf and Ghibellines, and nobles and *popolari* (including *artefici*). These four men seem to have been expected to decide which offices should go to which category, not actually to make the appointments themselves: even Raffaele Adorno, six months before he resigned, would have been unlikely to surrender that power. Although such a distribution of these offices was described as being “according to good and ancient customs,” it is unlikely that the doge and those who were able to take a share in his powers of patronage normally observed the proportions prevailing in the offices of civic government.¹²⁴

Two proclamations issued in January and December 1460, when Genoa was under the dominion of Charles VII, are indirect testimony to how offices usually in the patronage of the doge were treated very differently. Issued on behalf of the lieutenant of the governor and the Anziani, the proclamations invited those wanting any of the offices or notarial positions to register their names with the chancellor. The proclamation of 7 January included a reminder that when the lieutenant and Anziani proceeded to make the appointments, those who had asked for one were more likely to be chosen than those who had not.¹²⁵ It can easily be imagined

¹²³Copies of several of these contracts, made during this period and later, survive. For example, that between Raffaele Adorno and Gianantonio Fieschi (undated) is in ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 1600; documents concerning the negotiations for the agreements between Gianfilippo Fieschi and Pietro Campofregoso from 1451–54 are at ASMi, Registri ducali 18, 495–559; for the text of the agreement between them of 1 January 1454, see Poggi, 1969, 2:339–45.

¹²⁴ASG, AS 537, fol. 37v, 27 June 1446: “concedi et distribui debeant secundum colores guelforum et ghibelinorum et secundum consuetudines antiquas inter nobiles et populares ac artifices.”

¹²⁵Ibid., AS 3044, no. 226, 7 January 1460; no. 260, 3 December 1460.

what effect such a proclamation would have had if made in Florence, say, or Venice, where such offices were keenly sought after.

The Genoese were different from their contemporaries in many other Italian cities in another important matter: they were not interested in making money by lending to the Comune. This in turn meant that they had no need to seek office in order to be in a good position to make loans on advantageous terms, or to safeguard money already invested. For the government to use loans from bankers to pay for urgent public expenditures was considered extravagant and wasteful. On one rare occasion — when it was agreed to ask bankers for a loan for four months to meet a pressing need for cash for ordinary expenditure for the next three months — the council approving the proposal agreed that this should be done without the Comune incurring any loss; no mention was made of interest to be paid, and it was noted that all present agreed except for the few bankers who were there.¹²⁶ Compulsory loans, accepted in other cities as at worst a necessary evil, and at best an opportunity to profit from good rates of interest, were very unpopular with the Genoese. A proposal by Antonio Lomellino that a number of citizens should be asked to stand surety for a loan to be raised by the Officio della Moneta in May 1456 was interpreted (perhaps wilfully misinterpreted by Doge Pietro Campofregoso) as a proposal that these citizens should be asked for a compulsory loan. The Officio della Moneta said that they could not do this, and another council had to be called, in which Antonio Lomellino emphasized that he had not had forced loans in mind. Such a proceeding was nothing but burdening some to leave others untouched, he said, which was "detestable"; it served no purpose to start doing such a thing.¹²⁷ Once again his proposal, which he modified in the light of comments by other speakers, won the day. If really desperate for cash, doges (including Pietro Campofregoso) might resort to detaining a number of bankers and other wealthy men until they promised to provide some money, but those subject to such coercion could be very stubborn, preferring to spend several days as prisoners rather than agree. Faced with the unending problem of raising money, it was always tempting to the citizens, as well as to the doges, to call on the Casa di San Giorgio, although it had ceased to operate as a bank in 1444. The officials who were running the affairs of the Casa, however, were often unwilling to cooperate.¹²⁸

¹²⁶Ibid., AS 552, fols. 132v–134r, 15 January 1453.

¹²⁷Ibid., AS 557, fols. 84v–85r, 13 May 1456: "nihil aliud esset quam unum gravari alium eximi, quod detestabile videtur ei, nec censem utile tale principium dare."

¹²⁸See above, pp. 58–60.

Inability to get hold of money was a perpetual source of problems for the doge. He had a fairly small personal salary, which was not immune from the periodic drives to cut ordinary expenditure that the Genoese fondly hoped would help them avoid having to levy additional taxes.¹²⁹ The budget for ordinary expenditure of the Comune was quite small for a city the size and wealth of Genoa — sometimes only around 50,000 lire a year — and it was never easy to raise funds for extraordinary expenditure. The doge could spend little of the ordinary budget without the authorization of the Officio della Moneta, and any extraordinary moneys raised were generally under the control of either this body or of a special commission, and would not be available for the doge to spend as he chose. Detailed budgets would often have to be presented to councils in an effort to convince the citizens that they needed to raise money, and the books of the Officio della Moneta could be opened to inspection.¹³⁰ The doge was not really able to harness the wealth of Genoa for his own purposes, or to enhance his own position. Much of what money he did have might have to go in pensions to members of his family clamoring for a share of the fruits of office, or to faction leaders who were in a position to cause trouble in Genoese territory.

8. DOGE OR *SIGNORE*?

There are indications that the Adorno accepted the limitations on the role of the doge more readily than the Campofregoso did, or it may just be that the Adorno doges of this period — Raffaele, Barnabe, and Prospero — were weaker personalities than their Campofregoso contemporaries, and less willing (or less able) to assert themselves and push for policies they wanted. There is no doubt that the Campofregoso were coming to think of the position of doge as belonging by right to one of their family, that “this government,” as Pietro Campofregoso was reported to have said, “by natural instinct seems promised to his house.”¹³¹ But if the Campofregoso were agreed that one of them should be doge, they could not agree which of them this should be.

This was most evident in the early 1460s, in the tussle between Lodovico and Archbishop Paolo Campofregoso. Another member of the family, Spinetta, also had aspirations to be doge, but when he was elected

¹²⁹See, for example, the scheme for the reduction of expenses in 1462 in Pistarino, 1966, 249–57.

¹³⁰See, for example, the report of the council of 30 April 1454, in Olgiati, 1990a, 465–68 (ASG, AS 558, fols. 85v–86r).

¹³¹ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 410: Giovanni della Guardia to Francesco Sforza, 11 August 1455, Genoa: “questo governo per naturale instincto par promesso nela caxa sua.”

on 18 July 1461, he lost heart within a week and resigned; Lodovico Campofregoso was elected to replace him on 24 July.¹³² Lodovico was stubborn and determined to keep his prize, which had already been taken from him once, when he had been replaced by Pietro Campofregoso in 1450; Paolo Campofregoso was equally stubborn, and was even more determined and tougher than Lodovico. His position as archbishop gave him no inhibitions about using force to attain his ends, and he insisted on sharing control of the Castelletto with Lodovico, with his men holding one of the main towers. In May 1462, after Lodovico had retreated from the palace to take refuge in the tower of the Castelletto under his own command, Paolo occupied the palace and was elected doge on 14 May.¹³³ Refusing to accept his deposition, Lodovico would not surrender, and Paolo's political base was insecure. Repeated efforts at mediation, including the election of the four captains of the *artefici*, finally resulted in Lodovico's reelection on 8 June.¹³⁴ One of the government chancellors, noting this in his register, described Lodovico as having been elected "dux perpetuus": not a usual epithet attached to the ducal title, and, in the circumstances, clearly meant ironically.¹³⁵ Seven months later, Paolo succeeded in definitively ousting Lodovico, who was detained on 15 January 1463, and then sent into exile. Paolo was elected doge on 16 January but only held office — on this occasion; he would be doge again from 1483 to 1488 — for fifteen months, after which, with great reluctance, he made way for Francesco Sforza.¹³⁶

It was these protracted disagreements among the Campofregoso, pursued as they were with scant concern for their effects on the government of the city or the lives of its people, that made the *signoria* of Francesco Sforza seem an attractive option to many Genoese by 1464. Among the suggested solutions during the various attempts to mediate between Paolo and Lodovico Campofregoso was a proposal that the *artefici* should buy the Castelletto from Lodovico, who at that time appeared readier to see the fortress in possession of the *artefici* than in the hands of a member of his own family. The *artefici* negotiating this deal asked that Francesco Sforza should "think of some good, severe *potestā*" to send to Genoa. One of his envoys reported that all the *popolari grassi* and *artefici*, and the majority of

¹³²ASG, AS 573, fols. 28r–29v, 18 and 24 July 1461.

¹³³Ibid., fol. 58r, 14 May 1462; ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 415, contains many reports from Genoa on these contests in 1462.

¹³⁴See above, pp. 75–76.

¹³⁵ASG, AS 574, fol. 28r, undated entry.

¹³⁶Ibid., fol. 60r, 15–16 January 1463.

the nobles who want to live in peace — “chi vogliono ben vivere” — were of the same mind, looking to Francesco Sforza for guidance.¹³⁷

Even if those Campofregoso who had come to think of themselves as a quasi-signorial dynasty had found it easier to agree which of them should be doge, the obstacles in the way of establishing an effective *signoria* in Genoa were immense. Not the least would be the attitude of their own supporters. It was not just that the faction who helped bring a doge to power would not be strong enough to help him achieve such a position: most of them, particularly the more powerful individuals, would not want him to be their lord. They wanted their man in place, in a position to dispense favors, not to command their obedience. Convincing the rest of the Genoese to accept that a doge should become a *signore* was even harder to envisage.

There were times when many Genoese would regard the loss of their *libertà*, and the submission of their republic to an outside power, as a preferable alternative to continuing with the unstable regime of the doges. Loss of their independence was a price they would be willing to pay if it brought peace and the opportunity to get on with the business of earning a living.¹³⁸ Genoa was ruined, and nobles and *popolari* could not see how they could hope for any improvement under the government of the Capellazzi because of their overweening ambition and the divisions among them; those who made this complaint to one of the Milanese agents said that the only remedy was for Francesco Sforza to take over.¹³⁹ Sforza was told in July 1462 that the people were weary of the troubles of their city, and saying they did not care who came, the French or anyone else, provided the city would be at peace and they could make their living.¹⁴⁰

How the Genoese understood the consequences implied by their acceptance of the dominion of a *signore* from outside the city could be very different from the hopes of the prince. The people expected their prince (or his representative) to take the place of the doge, to be bound by the same limitations and constraints, to be, in effect, subject to the same frustrations. Dominion over Genoa might appear to an outsider to bring access to the resources of Genoese commercial wealth, its ships and galleys, but the Genoese saw things differently. Rather than put the resources of their city

¹³⁷ ASMi, ASforzesco, b. 415: Biagio de' Gradi to Francesco Sforza, 25 August 1462, Genoa: “voglia pensare de alcuno bono podestà rigido.”

¹³⁸ For example, see ibid.: Cristoforo Panigarola and Biagio de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 21 July 1462, Genoa.

¹³⁹ Ibid.: C. Panigarola to F. Sforza, 1 June 1462, Genoa.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.: C. Panigarola and B. de' Gradi to F. Sforza, 21 July 1462, Genoa.

at the disposal of the prince — unless to do so was clearly to their own advantage — they took the attitude that he should provide protection for them, and that he should pay at least part of the cost of protecting them. The best way to keep hold of the city was to observe the ethos of Genoese civic government, but this could be difficult for a ducal or royal governor to do, or even to understand. When, for example, the French Lieutenant Governor suggested that the Genoese, rather than vote a specific sum to meet a specific budget, should give him authority to spend as much money as was required — which would be more “magnanimous” — he showed little grasp of the principles on which Genoese public finances were run.¹⁴¹

Although the doges should have been better acquainted with the peculiar ethos of the Genoese civic government, they could evidently find it just as difficult to maintain their position within its constraints. The principles on which the Genoese government was conducted — and which were so widely accepted by the Genoese — may have allowed the ordinary government to function without interruption despite frequent changes of regime; but these principles were themselves at least partially responsible for those frequent changes. Insufficiently interested in the business of politics to devise an effective structure of collective leadership, and unwilling to endow a single head with the power and resources to take decisions and carry them out without the consent of the citizens, the Genoese arguably made the position of doge an impossible one to maintain.

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¹⁴¹ASG, AS 564, fols. 18r–19r, 9 April 1459.

Appendix

- 28 December 1435 — rebellion of Genoa against the government of Filippo Maria Visconti
 29 December 1435 — election of Capitani di Libertà
 28 March 1436 — Isnardo Guarco elected doge
 3 April 1436 — Tommaso Campofregoso elected doge
 24 March 1437 — Battista Campofregoso ousts Tommaso and is elected doge
 26 March 1437 — Tommaso Campofregoso restored
 18 December 1442 — Tommaso Campofregoso deposed
 19 December 1442 — election of Capitani di Libertà
 28 January 1443 — Raffaele Adorno elected doge
 4 January 1447 — Raffaele Adorno resigns; Barnabe Adorno elected doge
 26 January 1447 — Barnabe Adorno forced to leave the dogal palace
 27 January 1447 — Giano Campofregoso elected doge
 16 December 1448 — Lodovico Campofregoso elected doge after the death of Giano Campofregoso
 8 September 1450 — Pietro Campofregoso elected doge following the deposition of Lodovico
 11 May 1458 ~ Charles VII of France becomes *signore* of Genoa
 9 March 1461 — rebellion against the French
 11 March 1461 — election of Capitani degli Artefici
 12 March 1461 — Prospero Adorno elected doge
 17 July 1461 — Prospero Adorno leaves dogal palace
 18 July 1461 — Spinetta Campofregoso elected doge
 24 July 1461 — resignation of Spinetta; Lodovico Campofregoso elected doge
 14 May 1462 — Lodovico deposed by Paolo Campofregoso; Paolo elected doge
 8 June 1462 — Paolo and Lodovico Campofregoso come to agreement; Lodovico elected doge
 15 January 1463 — Lodovico Campofregoso deposed
 16 January 1463 — Paolo Campofregoso elected doge
 22 December 1463 — investiture of Francesco Sforza with Genoa and Savona by Louis XI
 13 April 1464 — entry of representative of Duke of Milan into Genoa to take over the government

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