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Introduction

Fabrizio Ricciardelli and Andrea Zorzi

In the last few years, the study of emotions and passions has entered the agenda of historians. After the first analysis of the topic by Peter and Carol Z. Stearns in 1985, early medieval studies are now oriented toward the analysis of the so-called “emotional communities,” as shown by the study of Barbara H. Rosenwein (2006). With few exceptions, the study of emotions and passions in Renaissance Italy has not yet been investigated. This book collects the essays presented in the International Conference on *Emotions, Passions, and Power in Renaissance Italy* held by Georgetown University at Villa Le Balze and Università di Firenze on 7-8 May 2012. The conference was the result of a series of meetings we organized between 2010 and 2011. The first meeting was held by the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Renaissance Society of America in Venice, where Daniel Smail, Marco Gentile, and Carol Lansing presented their researches on the theme. In winter 2010 Serena Ferente presented a paper on factions and passions at the Dipartimento di studi storici e geografici of the Università di Firenze. One year later, in Spring 2011, we planned the second meeting as a roundtable hosted by the Spring Lecture Series at Georgetown University at Villa Le Balze. Here Andrea Gamberini, Fabrizio Ricciardelli, and Andrea Zorzi presented another series of essays with the aim of studying the signs and forms of political communication at the light of the history of emotions and passions. The third meeting on the theme of the conference was held by the Università di Milano in September 2011 inside of the workshop, coordinated by Andrea Gamberini, Jean-Philippe Genet, and Andrea Zorzi, on *The Language of Political Society*, one in a series of meetings making up the French-Italian research project on *Le vecteurs de l'idéal. Le pouvoir symbolique entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance (v. 1200-v. 1640)*; the proceedings of this meeting were edited by the three coordinators and published, at the end of the same year, by Viella Editore in Rome as *The Languages of Political Society. Western Europe, 14th-17th Centuries*.

The main goal of this book is to initiate a discussion on the space of emotions in Italian urban societies between the thirteenth and the fifteenth centuries; to concentrate its attention on every possible passion bound to the use and exercise of power; to investigate the practices and languages of power, not only in the light of the “emotional” interrelationship between passion and hate, but also focusing on distress, fear, joy, and shame. Barbara

H. Rosenwein (*The Place of Renaissance Italy in the History of Emotions*) examines how the Italian Renaissance continues to hold an important place in historians' periodization of Western history, which, even in the twenty-first century, remains, broadly speaking, the three-fold scheme of antiquity, Middle Ages, and modern. Yet it is a curious fact that Renaissance Italy plays a relatively small role in most histories of emotion. This holds true in two ways: first, in discussions of the history of theories of emotion; and, second, in discussions that touch on the history of felt – or at rate, expressed – emotions. This paper talks about Renaissance theories of emotions and practices and suggests how to put the two together.

Fabrizio Ricciardelli (*The Emotional Language of Justice in Late Medieval Italy*) shows how the history of the Italian city-republics between the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was characterized by a constant division between political alignments, a division which was a continual source of political struggles that themselves led to the expulsion of the members of one side or the other from the city. From the time of the struggles between Guelfs and Ghibellines at the beginning of the *Duecento*, expulsion of the enemy party through lists of proscription was a consequence of political bipolarity. The dichotomy between the magnates and the *popolani* arising in the second half of the same century can be viewed in a similar fashion. The political struggles in Italian communes between magnates and *popolani* were so vicious and unrelenting that the losers were executed or physically excluded from the city, their goods and indeed their whole lives taken from them. In this tense atmosphere, the metaphorical language of justice can be a powerful political weapon.

Andrea Zorzi (*The Anxiety of the Republics. "Timor" in Italy of the Communes during the 1330s*) makes clear the emergence of a widespread emotion – “timor,” the anguished feeling of a profound and frightening change in the times – in some Tuscan cities in the second half of the 1330s. The essay offers an interpretation of three well-known “monuments” – the Florentine chronicle by Giovanni Villani, the frescoes by Buonamico Buffalmacco in the monumental cemetery in Pisa, and those by Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena – which, in the peculiarity of their respective cultural contexts, reveal the shared sense of turmoil that rocked the urban societies of those years. The natural catastrophes, economic crisis, constant state of war, fleeting nature of worldly power, and rise of “tyrannical regimes” were suddenly perceived by contemporaries as a sharp break compared with earlier generations. The “sweet life” depicted by Lorenzetti in the well-governed city, the well-being and power celebrated by Giovanni Villani, and the courtly amusements illustrated by Buffalmacco reflect a

common language of anxiety, a sensation of unease and gloom in the face of dangers felt as real or potential.

The essay by Carol Lansing (*Humiliation and the Exercise of Power in the Florentine Contado in the Mid-Fourteenth-Century*) analyzes that central question in the study of the history of emotion concerns causation: How and why did conventions for the expression of emotion change and how was emotional expression linked to the exercise of power? Scholars have shown that people, particularly rulers, staged emotions, using them as a form of ritual communication. One vivid instance is noble anger: the way nobles might use a show of anger to enforce claims about their prerogatives. Lansing's paper builds on the literature on noble anger and the exercise of power by showing its connection with forms of humiliation. It draws on a rich although complex body of sources, representations of anger and humiliation in mid-fourteenth-century denunciations to the Florentine executor of the ordinances of justice. The focus is cases in which nobles were denounced for the rape and abduction of women. It shows that denouncers to the executor depicted this in terms of the shame and humiliation of the women's kinsmen. These were, in Susan Brownmiller's phrase, messages between men. Ultimately, the cases suggest a need to reexamine assumptions about medieval rape.

Isabella Lazzarini (*The Words of Emotion: Political Language and Discursive Resources in Lorenzo de Medici's Lettere [1468-92]*) aims her attention at Lorenzo de Medici's letters, which were inaugurated in 1955 with the hope that a less romanticized portrait of him would result. Ironically, rather than painting a more realistic portrait of Lorenzo, recent research is discovering instead that it is not possible to separate the man from the aura of legend and that the latter constitutes an indissoluble aspect of his historical character. Lorenzo's image-making was a political as well as a psychological necessity of the day, and his correspondence offers insight into his character and into the subtlety of his public style, at the same time illuminating the political reality of late fifteenth-century Italy, its discursive resources and the psychological adjustments it required. In this historiographical context, Lazzarini's article reads Lorenzo's letters aiming to find out which words and expressions in his diplomatic and political writings reveal some emotionality. Lazzarini investigates when and why Lorenzo de' Medici chose to resort to these letters in relation to different kinds of linguistic, textual, and rhetoric discursive resources. More strikingly aware than most of his contemporaries, Lorenzo seems then to calibrate the use of emotional expressions, talks, and gestures within the argumentative framework of his political discourse – both written (controlled) and enacted (manifested)

– in order to master the anxiety derived from the increasing awareness of the weakness of a whole intellectual and pragmatic system of thought in interpreting contemporary men and events.

The essay by Serena Ferente (*Metaphor, Emotion and the Languages of Politics in Late Medieval Italy. A Genoese Lamento of 1473*) considers that the textual nature of a majority of the late medievalist's sources poses a challenge to all those who study the history of emotions, since the very relationship between language (particularly written language) and emotion is fraught with theoretical and methodological problems but remains unavoidable. This essay takes metaphor as the principal conduit to emotions within texts and seeks to offer a tentative empirical analysis of its role in generating an emotional understanding of the abstract concepts that populate the language of politics. The specific case study is the marriage metaphor and its uses in a variety of expert and ordinary languages of late medieval Italy.

The analysis investigated by Daniel Lord Smail (*Debt, Humiliation, and Stress in Fourteenth-Century Lucca and Marseille*) starts from the following consideration: as the volume of credit expanded in the later Middle Ages, so too did practices of debt recovery offered by the secular courts of law in all European jurisdictions. It is possible to interpret this emerging system of coercion from a purely economic point of view. Debt recovery, in this view, was the necessary adjunct to a system of consumer credit, since creditors would have been unwilling to extend credit without the guarantee that force would be made available to them if needed. But the existence of these economic functions does not preclude the possibility that debt recovery was simultaneously performing another kind of social or political function. Using archival records from the cities of Lucca and Marseille in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, this paper describes some of the humiliating practices intrinsic to the system of court-sponsored debt recovery. These practices are similar to the humiliations inflicted by the criminal justice system, with an important difference: instances of debt recovery were far more common. Debt recovery was clearly an economic activity, but we cannot fully understand the broader implications of the practice without seriously taking its ability to deliver stress and humiliation to a large segment of the population. Studies of primates and other mammals have suggested that the capacity to deliver stress is an order of power or dominance. The goal of this paper is to suggest that debt recovery was part and parcel of a broader transformation that saw the emergence of a different kind of humiliating society in Europe.

Samuel K. Cohn Jr. (*Renaissance Emotions: Hate and Disease in European Perspective*) examines the connection between epidemic disease and hate during the sixteenth century, particularly with regard to the new disease, syphilis. Cohn untangles the presumed notion that naming meant blaming of the “other,” the outsider, and especially the “absolute other” – the Jew and the Indian. Rather, he argues that throughout the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century, instead of blaming the other with syphilis, writers in Italy and elsewhere in Europe – physicians along with the laity – directed their blame, if anywhere, onto themselves. The last quarter of the sixteenth century marked a new beginning in the disease-hate relationship with new decrees to cleanse city streets morally and physically by booting from its walls undesirables and the underclass when an epidemic threatened. At the same time, blame of others entered medical texts and those by bureaucrats and notaries on defense against pandemics. The disease in question, however, was not syphilis but plague. This rise of a new hate-disease nexus came not because physicians and the laity were suddenly confronted with a new and incomprehensible disease. Instead, it was connected to medical progress, cracks in the holistic theological-Galenic models of epidemic causation – God, the stars, air, climate, and the humors – and the increasing importance that both doctors and the laity began to place on alien germs and alien carriers of disease.

Ori Z. Soltres (*The Emotive Power of an Evolving Symbol: The Idea of the Dome from Kurgan Graves to the Florentine Tempio Israelitico*) aims to show that Kurgan graves and underground domes served a dual symbolic purpose, connoting the dome of heaven but also the pregnant female belly. The freestanding Roman Pantheon echoes the dome of heaven, but the connection between the eye of heaven and the eye of the dome implied an umbilical tie between the two realms. Justinian’s dome in Constantinople also reflected these principles. So did Abdul Malik’s Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The domination of Jerusalem by the Dome of the Rock over the centuries gradually led Europeans to imagine the Israelite-Judaeen Temple as domed, or quasi-domed. As Rome was viewed as the New Jerusalem, the dome as a crown for the new St. Peter’s was fits this description. The implications of this would be variously felt in key Protestant structures like St. Paul’s in London, in the US Capitol dome, and in nineteenth-twentieth-century synagogues – such as Florence’s *Tempio Israelitico* – whose Jewish congregations felt themselves as spiritually complete as their ancestors in Jerusalem. Thus the symbolic idea of the dome has been continued and transformed over the millennia. Such a structure has addressed an

unconscious emotional need in offering a diverse if persistent statement of power and empowerment for every community that has employed its form.

Andrea Gamberini (*The Emotions of the State. A Survey of the Visconti Chancery Language [Mid-Fourteenth-Fifteenth Centuries]*) offers an insight into the display of feelings by the Lords of Milan between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The main attention goes to written records (letters, decrees, statues), but other sources (i.e., iconographic ones) are considered. The ultimate goal is to provide an analysis of the Visconti's communications in the light of the most recent studies on political languages and feelings. So, what was behind the emotions displayed by the Visconti? How did they change over time? And what is the relationship between the emotional register and the philosophical discourses in the Lords of Milan's letters? The paper answers these questions.

Gennaro Ferrante (*Control of Emotions and Comforting Practices before the Scaffold in Medieval and Early Modern Italy [with Some Remarks on Lorenzetti's Fresco]*) shows how the emotions of a crowd attending a death sentence were constantly shaken in a clash between desire of mercy and compliance with the stern office of secular justice, as well as those of Dante's watching in hell the harshness of divine justice. In late medieval Italy some lay companies started to express that need of mercy by comforting those going to death and by mediating emotions between them, the onlookers, and the public executors of justice. With the aim to prepare those suffering men for a "good death" (so that they could eventually deserve the divine forgiveness), comforters complied both with the will of God and with that of the established power, to the point of transforming the emotional ambiguity in political ambiguity. Ferrante's essay focuses on this intriguing moment in history by analyzing texts of Caterina da Siena and unpublished documents concerning those companies.

Stephen J. Milner ("*Bene Comune e Benessere*": *the Affective Economy of Communal Life*) examines what he calls "the affective economy" of the Italian communes, the way in which emotions circulated within communities both binding and dividing in the constitution of the fabric of self and society. The accumulation of affect through association and repetition was central to the generation of attachment (adherence and coherence) in the communal period, especially the passionate attachment to the social fictions of family and communal solidarity. Thinking around the relation of the psychic to the social and the individual to the collective, the aim is to examine the ambiguity of rhetoric as a technology of persuasion which sought to marshal emotions in advising various audiences regarding what they should pursue and what they should avoid. The ability to move was

central to most humanistic and philosophical discourses, however dispassionate and rationalist their claims, and central to the well-being and being well, or otherwise, of communities and individuals. Reference is made to a broad range of late medieval and Renaissance texts and engages with recent writing on the “affective turn” in critical theory.

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