

Gubbio nel Trecento: Il comune popolare e la mutazione signorile (1300–1404).
Alberto Luongo.

Italia comunale e signorile 9. Rome: Viella, 2016. 726 pp. + 32 color pls. €42.

Alberto Luongo's comprehensive history of the Umbrian city of Gubbio is the ninth volume in the distinguished series *Italia comunale et signorile*, edited by Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur and Andrea Zorzi. Its principal aim is to provide an interdisciplinary overview of the historical development of Gubbio during the fourteenth century, focusing on its social, economic, institutional, and political evolution during the decades when it was increasingly losing its autonomy. The book should appeal not only to historians of the fourteenth century, but also to scholars of thirteenth- and fifteenth-century urban Italy. Based on impeccable research, it evinces a thorough, impressive familiarity with the historiographical tradition (especially Italian). Since the 1970s, Italian scholars in particular have documented the evolution of Central and Northern Italian cities by tracking their institutional and juridical reach into the surrounding countryside (the *stato regionale*). *Gubbio nel Trecento* is no exception to this trend. Luongo argues that the lordship (*signoria*) of Count Antonio da Montefeltro at Gubbio gradually emerged in the last quarter of the Trecento primarily as the result of a cooperative partnership forged between the noble count and the leaders of the commune. By 1383 the divisive rule of the Gabrielli family, fiscal disorder, and war with exiles in the countryside had led to discontent. The new post-1383 change of regime (*la mutazione signorile*) incorporated long-lasting communal and popular traditions and established important continuity with the Guelf elite and commune. It was not the product of failed republican institutions, of crippling factionalism within the *popolo*, or of a take-over by the feudal aristocracy (as Philip Jones had argued).

As the author observes in his introduction, the historiography on fourteenth-century urban Italy has tended to focus on two principal concerns: the Black Death and its consequences, and the origins and rise of urban despotisms or dictatorships by noble lords (*signorie*). As such, historians have focused on the Trecento primarily within the context of the centuries before and after it: whereas the late thirteenth century marked the beginning of the crisis that culminated in the Black Death, the fifteenth century witnessed the consolidation of noble dictatorships and the return of economic growth. In contrast, like other case studies associated with the fourteenth century, this book moves us away from crisis and rupture to emphasize new beginnings and unbroken ties with the past. The approach here is both chronological and prosopographical. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the city itself: its architecture, geographical location, infrastructure, and population (17,000–20,000 before the plague, diminished by half after the epidemic). Unlike many other cities in Central and Northern Italy, the population and size of Gubbio surprisingly grew in the first half of the century because of its cloth industry. Chapter 2 examines the economy and social structure (the nobility and prosperous, urban nonnobles, or *popolo*).

Traditionally weak rural aristocratic lordships had essentially also broken up by ca. 1300, as had ecclesiastical estates. Partly as a result of these factors, the cloth industry and communal offices were attracting investments and the ambitions of both nobles and nonnobles alike. Within the city walls every phase of cloth production was present. Chapter 3 surveys the institutional, fiscal, and political history of Gubbio from 1300 to 1383. Topics covered include the governance of the Guelf commune to 1350, the period of brief personal rule by the Gabrielli (1350–54), the twenty years of papal control (1354–75), the return of the *popolo* (1375–78), and the failed *signoria* of Gabriele and Francesco Gabrielli (1379–83). Chapter 4 explores the gradual rise and leadership as *signore* of Count Antonio da Montefeltro (1384–1404), built upon the foundation of a symbiotic partnership between *signore* and commune. Whereas the former respected communal laws, received support from the *popolo*, and achieved his own personal ambitions from the arrangement, the latter benefited from effective governance following the period of disorder and political failure associated with the Gabrielli in the early 1380s.

This volume is certainly a worthy addition to the growing number of studies of fourteenth-century Italian city-states. However, there is one very unfortunate and serious flaw: pages 401 through 440 were missing in the review copy. After checking my review copy with another volume obtained through interlibrary loan, I noticed that the missing forty pages were indeed present in the loaned copy. In the future, Viella may wish to make sure that its advanced copies sent out for review are free of such flaws.

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Il tesoro di un povero: Il Memoriale di Francesco Bentaccordi, fiorentino in Provenza (1400 ca). Simona Brambilla and Jérôme Hayez, eds.

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When it comes to studying Tuscans in late medieval Southern France, one usually thinks of prosperous merchant-bankers or high-ranking ecclesiastics linked to the Avignon papacy, who often occupy a predominant place in archival sources. Francesco Bentaccordi, the author of the *Memoriale*, did not belong to either of these groups. Not much is known about him. His manuscript contains only very few autobiographical details, and hints in other sources are scarce. The son of a Florentine bowlmaker (*scodellaio*), he was of humble origins. In the 1390s he arrived in Avignon to serve as a janitor for Cardinal Piero Corsini, a member of an affluent merchant-banker family of Florence and at that time a supporter of antipope Benedict XIII. Beyond this bond of dependence, nothing suggests that Francesco was particularly well connected to other Tuscans in Provence. In 1411—some years after the escape of Benedict XIII and the death of Cardinal Corsini—he pops up again in the small town of Carpentras. For a