of the Meadow he used both egg and oil for the transparencies, in the Pala di San Giobbe he achieves the corposo areas by adding oil and white lead to pigments, while the velature are tempera. This reveals how difficult it is to assess the transition from a “double technique” to oil. Painters seem to adapt techniques according to the implementation of artworks, the pictorial effects sought, and material and economic constraints. In the next chapter, inventories and cross-sectional data shed light not only on the nature and use of pigments but also on the role of painters, such as Titian or Tintoretto, in the commerce and the international network of Venetian vendicolori.

Aiming at understanding pittura tonale and unione, the final chapters consider how colorito implemented intense or blended colors, shadows, glazes, and impastos. If unione depends on the relation between colors and volumes, Giorgione and Titian resolved the problem through shadows, but without resorting to cangiantismo. Indeed, La Serenissima’s painters created shadows suitable to local colors, mastering transparent glazes. From the 1530s onward, they also started using unusual blends, often darkening their colors. In unione, a key role is played by the brushwork: if in Giorgione, the young Titian, or Sebastiano del Piombo it defines forms, textures, and lights, Tintoretto gives an original turn to the technique, making the work quicker, as in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco’s Brazen Serpent. Also, since Titian adopted visible brushwork as soon as the 1540s, Hochmann revives discussions on the (alleged) unfinished state of some his paintings. In the closing chapter, unione is taken into consideration as a function of colors’ gradation, shadows’ quality, and colored preparations: for Titian, Tintoretto, or Bassano, chiaroscuro and a darkened palette never meant a renunciation of color intensity, and Veronese’s brilliant colorito did not lead to accepting chromatic dissonances. Finally, the specificity of the Venetian technique results more from the exaltation of materiality itself than from specific materials and mediums.

Among the book’s many virtues, three must be emphasized: First, thanks to the author’s perfect knowledge of Italian art history, the Venetian technique is placed in the wider perspective of artistic practices in Italy. Second, each chapter opens with a relevant overview of literature on the topic at hand. Last, but not least, the book is a wonderful, ceaseless mine of information!

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L’uomo con la borsa al collo: Genealogia e uso di un’immagine medievale.
Giuliano Milani.

Giuliano Milani’s study takes as its point of departure what might appear to be a highly specific subject in medieval iconography: the ubiquitous image of a condemned man
with a sack of money around his neck. The image, appearing first in a ninth-century Byzantine psalter, was eventually adopted into such common usage as to become an iconic figure, synonymous with the sins of avarice, corruption, and treachery. Yet, as Milani himself notes in this far-reaching book, it is the banality of the image that enabled its adaptability in defamatory portraiture, commissioned by the communal governments of the later Duecento, aimed at condemning citizens for a wide range of financial offenses.

L’uomo con la borsa al collo analyzes what Milani calls the “dialectical evolution” (246) of the image’s conventional associations, and he traces this evolution in two parts: the book first reconstructs how the image progressed from esoteric symbol to conventional representation, and then considers how that conventionality gives the image its capacity to reflect multiple political positions. The first part traces the ecclesiastical genealogy of the image, moving freely but accessibly between geographical areas and historical periods as it weaves its narrative. The second part narrows its geographical and historical focus to the legal uses of the image in the thirteenth-century Italian communes: in five short but dense chapters, the author examines cases of defamatory portraiture that use the iconography of the purse to different legal ends, primarily by governments associated with the popolo in the second half of the Duecento. Milani details appearances of the condemned man with the money purse around his neck in late thirteenth-century political iconography from Bologna, Parma, Mantua, Padua, Florence, and Brescia, cities in which the popolo movements had gained traction in the contest over social, political, and juridical power.

The most illustrative case of the image’s functional versatility in contemporary legal debates is recounted in the tenth and last chapter of the book. Here Milani analyzes the subtle variations between Giotto’s applications of the purse image in the Giudizio universale of the Scrovegni Chapel and Dante’s near-contemporaneous representation of the usurers in Inferno 17. These two instances—depicted within ten years of one another by two artists who were acquainted (if not deeply familiar) with one another’s work—employ the iconic moneybag around the neck of a sinner to “radically different ends, so symmetrical and opposite that one is highly tempted to think that the second one wanted in some way to respond to the first” (236). Giotto employs the image of the purse to differentiate corrupt uses of private wealth (for speculation, falsification, or fraud) from its correct uses, which channel money toward the public good, as in the case of Enrico Scrovegni’s commission of the chapel itself. Dante, on the other hand, restricts the image to the specific condemnation of usury, calling out five particular wealthy Italian families for their moneylending practices. Among these the poet includes the father of Giotto’s patron, Rinaldo Scrovegni. The different ends of these images constitute what Milani calls a “conflict of qualification,” a dispute over legal definitions, in this case about the correct use of personal wealth, particularly that of civic leaders (240). The precise mirroring of the two uses of the image of the money pouch,
in Milani’s convincing reading, reveals the multivalence of the image, which could be deployed to intervene in contemporary matters of political and juridical debate.

Given that Milani structures his study around the practice of *pittura infamante* in the Italian city-republics of the second half of the Duecento, the reader is left to speculate about the afterlife of the iconic image beyond its communal uses. With the tantalizing case of the patron’s intervention in such debates, offered by the Scrovegni example, one wonders how the image fared as the governments of the *popolo* gave way to the dominion of the *signori* over the course of the Trecento. These questions, however, fall outside of the historical scope of this suggestive study, which is as much an intervention in the study of medieval iconography as it is in the dynamic history of legal, civic, and political institutions in medieval Italy.

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Few scholars among the living may rightly be called patriarchs in the field of early modern Northern European art. Larry Silver, to whom this festschrift is dedicated, is doubtless one of them. Forty-two short essays honor Larry’s long, sportive, and ecumenical engagement with the northern visual tradition. His many books and essays (gathered in a bibliography at the back of the volume) range in scope from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries and from the Low Countries to Germany, though they also include forays beyond these borders. In mirroring this range, the volume’s contributions remind us how much has changed over Larry’s years of scholarship, from the 1970s to the present.

Most of the assembled essays focus on a single work or object, in emulation of their dedicatee’s insistence on “the primacy of the image” in his teaching and advising. I uncovered this explanation in a footnote (284) to the essay of the volume’s co-editor Ashley West. Two etchings by Albrecht Altdorfer depicting the Regensburg synagogue are West’s subject, both created in 1519 on the eve of the building’s demolition and anticipated replacement by the famous cult church of the Schöne Maria. West discerns in Altdorfer’s etchings a “strategy of claiming truthful presentation” (292) that functions to preserve both the memory of the synagogue’s destruction and the semblance of the lost monument itself.