Volumes published (2006)

I. *Thematic Work Groups*

I.   Public Power in Europe: Studies in Historical Transformations
II.   Power and Culture: Hegemony, Interaction and Dissent
III.   Religion, Ritual and Mythology. Aspects of Identity Formation in Europe
IV.   Professions and Social Identity. New European Historical Research on Work, Gender and Society
V.   Frontiers and Identities: Exploring the Research Area
VI.   Europe and the World in European Historiography

II. *Transversal Theme*

I.   Citizenship in Historical Perspective

III. *Doctoral Dissertations*

I.   F. Peyrou, La Comunidad de Ciudadanos. El Discurso Democrático-Republicano en España, 1840-1868

Cover: Ambrogio Lorenzetti (1285-1348 ca.), *The Effects of Good Government in the City and the Countryside*, fresco (central part), Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. © 1990. Photo Scala, Florence.

Manager
Claudia Napolitano

Editing
Francesca Petrucci

Informatic assistance
Michele Gasparello

Citizenship in Medieval and Early Modern Italian Cities[1]

Anna Maria Pult Quaglia

University of Pisa

Le condizioni di appartenenza ad una determinata comunità politica, con i connessi oneri, diritti e doveri del soggetto in forza di quella appartenenza sono mutati nello spazio e nel tempo e ripercorrere le fasi di questi cambiamenti può aiutare a capire se e con quali modalità nei diversi contesti spaziali e temporali tale comunità ha preso coscienza di sé, ha definito la sua identità, ha circoscritto i propri confini, ha elaborato le norme di appartenenza e di esclusione.

L'ambito di questo saggio è quello dell'Italia centro-settentrionale, dove più forte è stata la presenza delle città, nel periodo compreso tra il XIV e il XVIII secolo, periodo nel quale le città stato hanno modificato il loro assetto territoriale e istituzionale, per lo più dando luogo allo costituzione di uno stato territoriale, includendo al proprio interno altre città e allargando quindi le proprie frontiere. La categoria di 'cittadinanza' e il concetto di 'identità' non hanno conosciuto tuttavia una parallela evoluzione, non hanno allargato il proprio ambito, ma, di volta in volta, si sono ridefinite a seconda delle realtà sociali in gioco, delle loro esigenze, dei rapporti di forza esistenti, rimanendo comunque su di un piano eminentemente locale e mantenendo caratteristiche peculiari a seconda dei diversi contesti.

I casi brevemente ricordati sono quelli di Venezia, Firenze e Torino; pur all'interno delle differenti situazioni, si nota in tutti e tre i casi – ma la cosa è di ambito più generale – un analogo processo di trasformazione della categoria della cittadinanza, che sempre più si svuota degli elementi partecipativi per trasformarsi in un concetto eminentemente giuridico.

La cittadinanza conferiva diritti e privilegi, ma nello stesso tempo imponeva anche precisi doveri. L'esercizio dei diritti politici, i trattamenti di favore nei processi civili e penali, il diritto di possedere immobili, i particolari privilegi connessi alla navigazione e al commercio marittimo nel caso delle città mercantili, le esenzioni fiscali erano i più diffusi vantaggi offerti dal possesso della cittadinanza, mentre la residenza, talvolta l'obbligo di possedere una casa o un terreno, materializzando così la propria presenza, la partecipazione alla vita politica o alla gestione amministrativa della città, l'intervento personale e/o pecuniario alla sua difesa costituivano i doveri ai quali il cittadino si doveva assoggettare. Ben presto, tuttavia, la varietà di situazioni della società italiana medievale rese difficile delineare una condizione di cittadinanza comune e occorrerà quindi di volta in volta distinguere a seconda delle situazioni locali, ma anche a seconda del periodo considerato.

Cittadinanza, frontiera, identità sono stati termini ricorrenti nella cultura politica a partire dal tardo settecento e lo sono tuttora; come ogni altro concetto o categoria interpretativa ripercorrerne la storia, contestualizzarli, spogliarli anche dei veli mitici in cui sono stati spesso

avvolti sono operazioni necessarie per favorire una migliore e più consapevole partecipazione di 'tutti i cittadini'.

The conditions for belonging to a given political community together with associated individual rights, duties and responsibilities deriving from this belonging have changed in space and time. Going over each phase of these transformations can help us better understand if and how such a community constructed its self image in the different contexts of time and space, defined its own identity, set its limits and worked out the rules for belonging and exclusion.

This analysis will deal with Central and Northern Italy, where cities were more numerous and important, in the period between the 14th and the 18th centuries, when city-states modified their territorial and institutional framework. This gave rise, generally, to the constitution of territorial states, when some cities included other cities and territories in their dominions, extending their own frontiers. Nevertheless the category of "citizenship" and the idea of "identity" did not develop in the same way, and did not extend their field of reference; on the contrary they redefined themselves from time to time according to the social realities involved, their necessities, the existing power relations, always however at local level and still maintaining particular features according to the different contexts[2].

The central period in the redefinition of the category 'citizenship' is generally considered to have been between the 11th and the 13th centuries when cities and communes became more powerful. Within these entities the element of association was fundamental and participation played an essential role[3]. Initially, in fact, the commune was constituted by an oath and all those who participated in swearing the oath became citizens. In the initial phases it was in the interest of these new communities to facilitate immigration in order to promote internal growth, extend penetration into the surrounding area and weaken the rival neighbouring forces such as feudal lords, enemy communes and the like. At the same time, it was also possible to lose the status of citizen: for example, being convicted of a serious crime or being banished for belonging to a political faction in opposition to the ruling one, could lead to the loss of citizenship[4].

Citizenship brought with it rights and privileges, but at the same time it imposed precise duties. The most relevant advantages bestowed on citizens were: political rights, legal advantages in the case of civil or criminal proceedings, right to possess real estate, particular privileges for navigation and sea trade in merchant cities, and tax exemptions. On the other hand, the citizens' duties consisted of residence in the city, sometimes the ownership of a house or a plot of land (in order to 'materialise' the citizens' presence), participation in political life or in city administration, and the obligation to defend the city gate in person, or through a paid deputy[5]. But soon differences developed between the various medieval Italian cities so that it is very difficult to define common rules of citizenship. In the following analysis we must, therefore, distinguish according the locality and the period considered.

Venice, for example, is a very interesting case and in some aspects it is *sui generis* among the cities of Central and Northern Italy. According to regulations that were frequently re-

defined from the beginning of the 14th century and substantially revised at the beginning of the 15th century, various types of citizenship existed: first, that of original or native citizens, persons born into families that had lived in Venice for three generations; next, that of citizenship bestowed as a privilege on those who had lived in Venice for fifteen years and paid taxes – this kind of citizenship permitted the individual to engage in commercial activities, whereas twenty-five years of residence were necessary to trade outside the Venetian State (*cives de intus tantum* in the first case, *de intus et extra* in the second one)[6]. This form of citizenship by privilege could be transmitted and in some cases – and this is a quite exceptional situation – it was even bestowed on women[7]. Finally, citizenship was bestowed in some rare cases by grant to people or princes who had particular merits and had benefited the city[8]. Initially, privileged citizens could aspire to hold offices in the public administration, but later reforms in the second half of the 16th century reserved access to administrative offices in the Republic to native citizens, while political office and dignities were reserved to patricians[9]. Moreover, already at that time and even more rigidly during the first decades of the 17th century, citizens were required to prove that their family had been native for three generations, but they had also to prove that their families had not practised *arti meccaniche* [mechanical trades] for the last three generations[10]. Also citizens and patricians from Venice's subject cities, who at the beginning were allowed to hold offices in the Venetian territories, were later excluded from the most important offices. In order to practise some professions (such as notary, lawyer or doctor), there were requirements similar to those necessary for native citizenship. But doctors might be allowed to obtain citizenship status during outbreaks of the plague, in order to encourage their presence in the city. In this way, in Venetian society, the different types or grades of citizenship became almost similar to professional categories, such as merchants, bureaucrats, and the like. This was a peculiarity of Venice[11].

As we have already mentioned, the set of rules about citizenship tended to become more restrictive during the 16th century and above all its principles were defined more precisely and rigidly. Nevertheless, in practice, the procedure for bestowing citizenship became more flexible at the end of the 17th century and during the 18th century. According to census evidence, between 1509 and 1761 the number of citizens fluctuated between 5.19% (in 1586) and 9.57% (in 1633) of the entire population. If we consider that the proportion of nobles (patricians) fluctuated between 2.6% (in 1761) and 8 to10% (in 1509), it is easy to see how restricted the Venetian ruling class was[12].

In Florence, the background, the chronology and some institutions show similar characteristics, although the general situation was actually quite different. In Florence too, at the beginning of the 15th century, the set of rules about citizenship was redefined in relation to eligibility for public office. Only those whose fathers and grandfathers had lived in the city, had paid taxes and, in the case of the most important appointments, had been selected for these high offices, could aspire to become a magistrate[13]. Residence in the city (*ius soli*) or descent from citizens (*ius sanguinis*) was not sufficient to enjoy full rights to public office, because it was also necessary to have paid taxes regularly for more or less extended periods. At the beginning of the 16th century, only one male adult Florentine out of seven was a Florentine citizen. Unlike the Venetian case, in Florence there was no closed group of patricians who had the exclusive right to hold office; in Florence holding

public office was possible for any Florentine citizen whose father or grandfather had already been selected to hold the same office or offices of the same level. Those who had the necessary qualifications to hold the different public offices were entered on special lists, then their names were drawn by lot[14].

With the expansion of the Florentine territorial state and particularly with the establishment of the Principality, from the second half of the 16th century on, the Grand Duke began to bestow Florentine citizenship by 'grazia', as a gift, in exchange for the payment of a tax and the obligation to reside inside the city, although, in some cases, this was excused[15]. The status of Florentine citizen continued to be considered superior to that of the citizens of the subject cities or subordinate communities of the Florentine state, but at the same time the Grand Duke aimed to encourage the careers of persons coming from outside the Florentine oligarchy in order to weaken its monopoly of power. Unlike the situation in Venice, acquired citizenship in Florence did not differ from the original one and it did not correspond as in Venice to certain professional categories[16].

There were however some analogies between the Venetian and Florentine States insofar as in both cases each subject city and community had its own internal set of rules and requirements for the exercise of its public offices. Generally the elements that distinguished the citizen or the 'man of the town' and the 'foreigner' were owning land, enjoying the usufruct of common lands and holding public offices. In the 15th-century statutes of Tuscan towns, the "foreigner" was defined as whoever had not been born in the town and had not, he or his father, lived in the town for a certain number of years, paying all the taxes. Anyone who came from another community in the Florentine State, or from another country was also considered a "foreigner". From the end of the 16th century on, after the establishment of the Principality, in the modifications to the statutes, which were sent to the central government for approval, we find a different set of rules for defining foreigners in which distinctions are made according to whether the individuals concerned came from within the Tuscan State or from outside of its borders[17].

Since the local statutes had to be approved by a central authority, it is evident that those who proposed the modifications to the existing statutes recognised that it was opportune to take into account the new situation of the Florentine State.

A further case is that of the State of Savoy. In the first years of the 1560s, the capital of the Duchy was transferred to Turin, which was then a small town of a few thousand inhabitants (14.000 in 1571). In this case too the set of rules concerning Turinese citizenship referred to the communal statutes and citizenship offered a set of privileges, more or less the same as in the other Italian cities. These included admittance to communal offices, some tax exemption, freedom from the obligation of lodging troops without compensation, the possibility of receiving dowries for poor girls and access to charitable assistance. In return, citizens were obliged to reside in Turin, to make special donations in money to the Duke in case of necessity (between the 16th and 17th centuries this request was made frequently), and to guarantee guard duty at the town gates[18]. The context of the Duchy of Savoy however was different than that in Venice or Florence. In Turin the influence of the nobility of feudal origin was very great and furthermore the transfer of the capital produced strong immigration into the city. Between the end of the 16th century and the

first decades of the 17th century the population increased considerably (at the end of the 1620s there were nearly 30.000 inhabitants). The Duke's policies favoured this increase, not only by transforming the urban landscape thanks to great investments but also by encouraging economic development. Merchants who established themselves in Turin were granted exemptions and privileges and the University, which had been closed during the years of French domination was reopened and developed.[19] Not only did students and professors increase in number: the legal and medical professions were also encouraged. From the end of the 16th century, the citizens of Turin were squeezed between a strong nobility and a robust group of merchants and professionals who had recently settled in the city; their social and political prestige was inferior to that of the citizens of Venice or Florence. Until the reforms of the middle of the 18th century, Florentine citizenship continued to have a deep significance in the political and institutional framework of the Grand Duchy; in Venice it was an essential component of professional and social recognition; but, in Turin, it only guaranteed access to some communal offices and was not identified with an economically and socially prominent status.

During the early modern period, even allowing for these very different political and social contexts, we note that the three examples cited – but the phenomenon is more general in northern and central Italian cities – show similarities in the process of transformation of citizenship, which becomes less and less connected to participation in city or state government and transformed into an eminently juridical concept. In a context in which the sovereignty of the state was to be enhanced, there was obviously a tendency to limit the role of the community and participation in public office. It is noteworthy however that all the elements of participation which had marked the political life of the communes did not disappear completely, but still remained in other fields. They had less political importance, but still they were able to preserve at least a minimum of associative life, such as, for example, in the 'confraternities'. In Florence, in practically every parish there was a lay religious association with charitable aims, but also with aims of religious disciplining[20]; in Turin, the Society of St John the Baptist organised the most important town festival, that of St John[21]; in Venice, there were five so-called *Scuole Grandi* (Great Schools), religious brotherhoods with charitable and welfare aims[22].

As we have already seen, participation in political life was organised differently in the three examples examined: in Venice it was in reality limited to patricians who were the only ones to hold the most important offices on the *Terraferma*[23]. In the Savoy State political life was reserved to the nobility, although the Duke could make his own choices and there were many opportunities for social promotion. In Tuscany too social promotion depended on the Grand Duke's will and was not always connected with the possession of citizenship, even if this still maintained an important role. When participation in political life – which had distinguished citizenship in the early phases of development of Italian cities – disappeared or became a shadow of its former self, citizenship remained a marker of social status and its importance depended on the different contexts and periods of time. For example, in the first half of the 18th century in Tuscany the concept of citizenship and the debate about its role acquired a strong political valence[24]. The end of the Medici dynasty gave rise to a pressing clash between the courts of Florence and Vienna. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the famous German philosopher and historian in the

Habsburgs' service, had spurred the Emperor Charles VI to claim the Medici states for the Empire by right of devolution and at the same time a significant debate about the political and institutional configuration of Tuscany arose. The Florentine oligarchy defended the role of those city bodies which had conferred the title of 'duke' on a fellow citizen (Alessandro in 1532 and Cosimo I in 1537) giving rise to the Grand Duchy; and to the same city bodies, faced with another dynastic crisis, the Florentine oligarchy intended to entrust the decision on a new institutional arrangement, perhaps even returning to the republican form of government. In their view, the Principality had not eliminated the formal role of those Florentine citizens to whom the institutional bodies which had survived from the Florentine Republic were still restricted. Even if events, as we know, developed differently, it is interesting to see how this category of urban citizenship still had a strong resonance in the political debates of the early 18th century and still had the composition established during the Republic which ended in 1530.

During the 17th and the 18th centuries, in these three cases, as we have said, the structures of the State in certain respects were consolidated. International relations intensified and a protocol for ceremonies and ways of organising interstate relations were designed that implied the recognition of the different political weight of the various states. In its relationships with the other States, obviously each had to define itself more precisely. For example, states developed practices for certifying their own boundaries. In the 18th century, in the States of Venice, Florence and Piedmont we find records of initiatives taken to negotiate and define the borders with their neighbours. This process involved bilateral commissions, inspections and measurements of territories, retrieval of the ancient documentation to prove their respective rights, and cartographic reproductions and these were the result of this new stronger need to define their territorial extension[25]. In these practices obviously the main problem was the relationship with neighbouring States, but this question brought along with it a need for knowledge, definition and a new awareness of each State's own territorial identity[26]. Attempts to develop a system of thematic geographical maps (for example of diocesan boundaries, administrative boundaries, rivers and so forth) of the whole territory were a common phenomenon in European States at that time and they had greeat importance in developing a visual aspect of perception of the territory one belonged to. This is not to mention the importance of the technical progress made in surveying and map making as well as, often, the impressive aesthetic qualities[27].

As we have already mentioned at the beginning of this analysis, various phenomena such as the constitution of the territorial State, the determination of State borders, the closer correspondence between the figure of the Prince and the State (for example the new title of 'Grand Duke' of Tuscany given to Cosimo I in 1569 by the Pope, rather than the former one of 'Duke of Florence and Siena') were not accompanied by an extension to broader territories of the concept of 'citizenship'. Identification with a city was not transformed into a vaster 'territorial identity'. On the other hand, inside these States there was no correspondence between the enlargement of the political frontiers and a rationalisation of the administrative, fiscal or ecclesiastical boundaries. Even when these boundaries were simplified or redefined, the process was drawn out in time and not always linear. Administrative districts with particular tax systems and provisioning networks, ecclesiastical dioceses whose territories extended across State borders, and internal customs districts

not only maintained the structures inherited from the process of aggregation through which the territorial state was formed; the centrifugal forces were still strong as were the practices of mediation between different powers.

City identity remained in the restricted milieu where it had arisen and where, in some periods and some cases, it had been able to achieve broad and shared participation of citizens; it survived longer where it had preserved a certain political weight. It was along other paths that the boundaries of territorial identity were being extended, defining a belonging to a state larger than the city state. These paths did not develop completely and were not well consolidated, and they depended on the different contexts and aims. For example let us think of the myth of Venetian republicanism;[28] or the role of Savoy's military organisation in cementing the different strata of the population of Piedmont[29]; or the return to the Etruscan myth used by Cosimo I in the 16th century when the Principality arose and which appeared again, not by chance, because of the dynastic problem we mentioned above, in Tuscan culture in the 18th century[30].

Citizenship, frontier and identity were recurrent terms in political culture from the 18th century on and they still are. Like every other concept or interpretative category we must trace their history, place them in context, and free them of the myths which often veil them. These operations are necessary in order to create the conditions for a better and more aware participation of all citizens.

Notes

1 I would like to thank William Aird and Krystyna Romaniszyn for their suggestions and a special thank to William Aird who also corrected the English translation.

2 For similar considerations, see M. Prak, *Cittadini, abitanti e forestieri. Una classificazione della popolazione di Amsterdam nella prima età moderna*, "Quaderni storici", XXX, 89, 1995, pp. 331-357.

3 P. Costa, Civitas. *Storia della cittadinanza in Europa*, vol. 1, *Dalla civiltà comunale al Settecento*, Rome-Bari 1999, p. 5.

4 D. Quaglioni, *The Legal Definition of Citizenship in the late Middle Ages*, in A. Molho - K. Raaflaub - J. Emlen, *City–States in Classical Antiquity and Medieval Italy*, Ann Arbor 1991, p. 161.

5 In a European contest, see M. Berengo, *L'Europa delle città. Il volto della società urbana europea tra medioevo ed Età moderna*, Turin 1999, pp. 181-201.

6 A. Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati a Venezia in età moderna: i cittadini originari (sec. XVI-XVIII)*, Venezia 1993, pp. 37-47.

7 A. Bellavitis, «*Per cittadini metterete...*». *La stratificazione della società veneziana cinquecentesca tra norma giuridica e riconoscimento sociale*, "Quaderni storici", XXX, 89, 1995, pp. 359-383.

8 Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati* cit., pp. 27-28.

9 The ancient families, those members could be elected in the 'Maggior Consiglio'; on these problems, see. F.C. Lane, *Venice. A Marittime Republic*, Baltimore 1973.

10 *Arti meccaniche* were those activities which implied some form of manual work, such as artisanal work.

11 Bellavitis, «*Per cittadini metterete* cit., pp. 378.

12 Zannini, *Burocrazia e burocrati* cit., pp. 92-95.

13 J. Kirshner, *Paolo Di Castro on cives ex privilegio: a controversy over the legal qualifications for public office in early fifteenth-century Florence*, in A. Molho - J.A. Tedeschi (ed.) *Renaissance Studies in Honr of Hans Baron*, Florence 1971; Id., *Civitas sibi faciat civem: Bartolus of Sassoferrato's doctrine on the making of a citizen*, "Speculum", XLVIII, 4, 1973, pp. 694-713.

14 On the Florentine electoral system, see N. Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434-to1494)*, Oxford 1966, chap. I.

[15] See F. Martelli, *Cittadini, nobiltà e riforma comunitativa a Pescia*, in *Una politica per le terme: Montecatini e la Val di Nievole nelle riforme di Pietro Leopoldo*, Siena 1985, pp. 110-132 and L. Mannori, *Il sovrano tutore. Pluralismo istituzionale e accentramento amministrativo nel Principato dei Medici (Secc. XVI-XVIII)*, Milan 1994, pp. 124-134.

[16] See note 10.

[17] F. Martelli, *Pescia "capo" della Valdinievole: dinamiche e implicazioni di un ruolo controverso*, in A.M. Pult Quaglia (ed.), *Pescia e il suo territorio: la costruzione di una identità territoriale*, Florence 2006.

[18] E. Stumpo, *Spazi urbani e gruppi sociali (1536-1630)*, in *Storia di Torino*, vol. III, *Dalla dominazione francese alla ricomposizione dello Stato (1536-1630)*, ed. by G. Ricuperati, Turin 1998, pp. 185-220.

[19] From 1536 to 1559.

[20] See R.F.E. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence*, New York 1982, pp. 198-220.

[21] Stumpo, *Spazi urbani e gruppi sociali* cit., p. 217.

[22] See B. Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice*, Oxford 1971.

[23] The territorial state of Venice.

[24] See M. Verga, *Da "cittadini" a "nobili". Lotta politica e riforma delle istituzioni nella Toscana di Francesco Stefano*, Milan 1990, pp. 13-45.

[25] See Paolo Marchetti, *De iure finium. Diritto e confini tra tardo medioevo ed età moderna*, Milano 2001; C. Ossola - C. Raffestin - M. Ricciardi (eds.), *La frontiera da stato a nazione. Il caso Piemonte*, Rome 1987.

[26] See also E. Grendi, *La pratica dei confini: Mioglia contro Sassello, 1715-1745*, "Quaderni storici", XXI, 63, 1986, pp. 811-845.

[27] *Cartografia e istituzioni in età moderna. Atti del Convegno, Genova, Imperia, Albenga, Savona, La Spezia, 3-8 novembre 1986*, Genoa 1987.

[28] F. Gaeta, *Alcune considerazioni sul mito di Venezia*, "Bibliothèque d'humanisme et rénaissance", 23, 1961, pp. 58-75.

[29] See W. Barberis, *Le armi del Principe. La tradizione militare sabauda*, Turin 1988..

[30] M. Verga, *Dai Medici ai Lorena*, in F. Diaz (ed.), *Storia della civiltà toscana*, vol. IV, *L'età dei Lumi*, Florence 1999, pp. 125-151.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bellavitis A., *"Per cittadini metterete…". La stratificazione della società veneziana cinquecentesca tra norma giuridica e riconoscimento sociale*, "Quaderni storici", XXX, 89. 1995, pp. 359-383.

Brubaker R., *Nationhood and Citizenship in France and Germany*, Cambridge, Mass. - London, 1992.

Costa P., Civitas. *Storia della cittadinanza in Europa*, vol. 1, *Dalla civiltà comunale al Settecento*, Rome-Bari 1999.

Fabietti U., *L'identità etnica: storia e critica di un concetto equivoco*, Rome 1995.

Ossola C. - Raffestin C. - RicciardiM. (eds.), *La frontiera da stato a nazione. Il caso Piemonte*, Rome 1987.

Marchetti P., De iure finium. *Diritto e confini tra tardo medioevo ed età moderna*, Milan 2001.

Martelli F., *Cittadini, nobiltà e riforma comunitativa a Pescia*, in *Una politica per le terme: Montecatini e la Val di Nievole nelle riforme di Pietro Leopoldo*, Siena 1985, pp. 110-132.

Zannini A., *Burocrazia e burocrati a Venezia in età moderna: i cittadini originari (sec. XVI-XVIII)*, Venice 1993.

.

.