University of Cambridge
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Masculinity, Arms and Armour, and the Culture of Warfare
in Sixteenth-Century Florence

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History
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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my thesis has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

Victoria Rae Bartels, April 2019
Abstract

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My thesis investigates the cultural role of arms and armour in Cinquecento Florence, roughly spanning the reigns of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici and two sons Francesco I and Ferdinando I, 1537-1609. My study primarily draws on records from the Otto di Guardia e Balia, the magistracy responsible for handling judicial and criminal affairs in Medicean Florence. I also rely on documents from the grand ducal Medici del Principato collection of letters. Contemporary legislation, account books, inventories, and material objects additionally feature in my analysis.

The introduction of my PhD illustrates the period’s affinity for warfare. I then review the literature that discusses Renaissance masculinity, violence, dress, and arms and armour, before introducing the four principle research areas discussed in my thesis. The first chapter “Everyday Armour: Civilians and Arms in Sixteenth-Century Florence” investigates the day-to-day prevalence of weapons and violence in the early modern city and its dominion. It focuses on the types of arms outlawed, the fiscal and corporal penalties commonly doled out to perpetrators, and the procedures for obtaining arms’ licences legally from the state. I also examine supplications requesting pardons and reductions in fines and sentences submitted to the court.

“The Making, Adornment, and Maintenance of Armour” is my dissertation’s second chapter, which explores the materiality of arms and armour. This study investigates the extreme dearth of armourers active in Florence in this period, as well as reviews the processes of armour manufacturing and the technological advances in methods of adornment. The systems in place for obtaining armour at the Medici court are also discussed. In the third chapter, “The Modern Man: Firearms in Sixteenth-Century Florence,” I explore the effects of firearms, most notably the wheellock pistol, in Grand Ducal Tuscany. I review the practices, customs, and risks of using these new-fangled weapons, as well as discuss a handful of extant weapons from
museum collections. Legislative procedures surrounding guns are also explored, as well as the workarounds that some inhabitants used to circumvent contemporary prohibitions.

Arms and armour and their relation to contemporary men’s fashion is discussed in my fourth chapter, “Dressed to Kill: Male Fashion in Renaissance Italy.” This research explores the connection between arms, armour, and dress, particularly for the elite man in sixteenth-century Florence. Focusing on the account books of Niccolò di Luigi Capponi, this study examines the basic components of contemporary men’s fashion, the city’s sumptuary laws, and the role offensive weapons and defensive garments played in relation to men’s fashion. I lastly examine how wearing certain arms and armour on the body affected male behaviour and concepts of identity.

My dissertation concludes by briefly revisiting the findings from the four chapters discussed above. Under this new lens, I review the tension that existed around arms, civility, and stately control. Finally, I close the thesis by examining how this period was reimagined by armour collectors in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. With these men in mind, I demonstrate how Renaissance arms and armour became emblems of another kind of masculinity exhibited centuries later.
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Introduction

Around 1540-45, Medici court artist Agnolo Bronzino executed a portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici (1519-74) (Fig. 1). In this half-length image, the Florentine Duke dons an elaborate armour, consisting of a gorget, pauldrons, vambraces, couters, a breast and back plate, and a memorable pair of protruding spiked besaugues. His right hand sits atop a matching burgonet—complete with visor and ear flaps—that casually rests on a tree trunk engraved with the Latin inscription, “COSMVS MEDICES – DVX FLOR.” The armour boasts intricate ornamental etchings and lustrous gold rivets and hinges, in addition to crimson velvet trimmings and silk linings of the same colour. A red velvet sword belt adorns the sitter’s waist, and he appears to be outfitted in red breeches on his body’s lower half to complete the ensemble. The shiny, polished steel and brilliant reds contrast sharply with the portrait’s shadowy background, thus, highlighting the brilliance of Florence’s stately ruler. Artist and author Giorgio Vasari explained that Cosimo chose artist Agnolo Bronzino for the work since

The Lord Duke, [having] seen in these and other works, the excellence of this painter, and particularly that he properly created portraits from life with more diligence than one could imagine, [the Duke] ordered a portrait of himself, who was then young, completely dressed in uncoloured steel armour and with a hand on top of his helmet.¹

The portrait of Cosimo I—who governed as Florence’s Duke from 1537-69 and then as the Grand Duke of Tuscany from 1569-74—became the ruler’s most prolific image. As was often the case in this period, copies were given as gifts for both political and personal reasons. More than twenty-five contemporary versions of the

¹ Giorgio Vasari, Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori, ed. by Gaetano Milanesi (Firenze: G.C. Sansoni, 1878-85), Vol. VII, 597-98. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. The beginning of the Florentine calendar year started on 25 March, thus, all dates given here have been adjusted to reflect the modern calendar. “Il signor duca, veduta in queste ed altre opera l’eccellenza di questo pittore, e particolarmente che era suo proprio ritrarre dal natural quanto con più diligenzia si può imaginare, fece ritrarre sè, che allora era giovane, armato tutto d’arme bianche e con una mano sopra l’elmo.”
painting are known today and can be found in collections across the world, including the Uffizi Gallery in Florence, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, in Kassel. In all depictions, Cosimo I wears the same armour, however, the background details and colour, as well as the length of the portrait (some versions show three-quarters of the body) vary. Although many of these works have been identified as the original, art historian Robert B. Simon posited that the earliest version remains part of the Uffizi’s collection.²

The harness that Cosimo dons in this portrait appears to have originated from his personal collection. The armour has been attributed to the celebrated Innsbruck armourer Jörg Seusenhofer (1516-80), and its elaborate etchings thought to have been the work of Leonhard Meurl (d. 1547).³ Scholars posit that the garniture was a gift from Ferdinand of Austria (1503-64), the younger sibling of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V (1500-58), in celebration of Cosimo I’s ducal appointment in 1537.⁴ The armour’s memorable design appears to have had an antecedent, as Charles V wore a similar looking armour in the portrait entitled Charles V with a Drawn Sword (ca. 1530) executed by the Venetian painter Tiziano Vecellio. Unfortunately, the portrait is now lost, but its contents were recorded shortly after its creation in a woodcut crafted by Giovanni Britto around 1533-34 (Fig. 2). Charles V’s armour has similarly been identified as a garniture of Seusenhofer’s; thus, Cosimo’s commission and decision to appear in this specific armour was likely an homage to the imperial ruler that endowed him with his ducal title.⁵

The Seusenhofer armour quickly became synonymous with the image of Cosimo I, a matter further cemented by the numerous copies in circulation. Consequently, we encounter the same armour in a posthumous portrait of the Florentine ruler’s father,

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⁵ Ibid., 535. Also cited in Carolyn Springer, Armour and Masculinity in the Italian Renaissance (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 134-35.
Giovanni dalle Bande Nere, executed by an unidentified Florentine artist around 1545 (Fig. 3). In this three-quarter length image now housed in the Galleria Sabauda in Turin, the celebrated *condottiere* dons a comparable-looking harness, although more of the armour can be seen, including its skirt located in the image’s lower portion. We also find two gauntlets stuffed inside the sitter’s inverted helmet hung in the upper right corner. Given the positioning of the sitter, the spiked besaugues also appear smaller, and therefore less menacing than in Cosimo’s likeness. Instead of resting his hand atop his helmet, Giovanni firmly grips the top of a steel mace.

Cosimo I’s cherished armour apparently remained in the Medici collection for centuries, and like the rest of the items that survived the purging of the family’s collection at auction in the eighteenth century, was inherited by the Bargello Museum in Florence roughly a century later. In 1927, however, Italy’s Fascist Prime Minister Benito Mussolini requested the armour for his personal collection. After much hesitation, the museum reluctantly acquiesced and sent the items to Rome. Although the majority of the garniture’s whereabouts are today unknown, a few objects—both knee defences and the bottom portion of the skirt of lames—can be found in the Castel Sant’Angelo’s permanent collection (Fig. 4).6 Lionello Boccia confirmed the provenance of these items, noting they were sent to Rome from the Bargello, along with a larger batch of armour, in 1927 and 1929.7

As exemplified by Mussolini’s appropriation, armour—especially pieces with historical significance—served as an integral component to the statesman’s image, symbolizing a ruler’s ambition to secure and defend his territory. The princely pastime of armour collecting was also popular in Renaissance Europe. For instance, one of the most famous collectors of the period was Archduke Ferdinand II (1529-1595). Located at Ambras Castle in Innsbruck, Ferdinand’s collection was so large that it occupied three distinct sites: the *Rüstkammer* held tournament pieces, the *Heldenrüstkammer* had armours displayed near their previous owners’ portraits, and

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the Leibrückenkammer housed the Archduke’s own commissions. The armour collection at Dresden court was equally impressive, as it filled thirty-two rooms, and 1,602 pages were needed to list the complete contents of the Electorate of Saxony’s 1606 inventory. In Florence, although the Medici had ducal armouries in their previous residences, it was not until 1588 that the first official armoury intended to showcase objects was built by Cosimo’s second son Ferdinando I (1549-1609). Located in the Uffizi—a complex of offices built in 1560 for state affairs—the armoury housed the family’s vast collection of armour, including pieces manufactured across Europe, Asia, and the New World. By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Medici’s armour holdings were recorded to contain over 10,000 pieces.

Although this study examines armour from the Medici collection, it does not focus solely on objects of men in positions of power. In contrast, I am interested in exploring the impact that these items had on all ranks of early modern society. This largely stems from the fact that arms and armour in sixteenth-century Italy, as we shall see, were no longer reserved for knights, statesmen, or princes. In 1584, for instance, the artist and writer Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo quipped that

On the other hand, the merchants and bankers, who have never seen an unsheathed sword, to whom one would properly expect a pen behind the ear with a full gown, and a book in front [of them], have themselves painted in armour with batons in hand like generals, [a] thing truly ridiculous, and [which] manifestly displays such little sense and judgment, both in the painted and the painter.

8 Angus Patterson, Fashion and Armour in Renaissance Europe: Proud Lookes and Brave Attire (London: V&A Pub., 2009), 79.
9 Ibid., 80-81.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, Trattato dell'arte de la pittura di Gio. Paolo Lomazzo ... diviso in sette libri (Roma: Presso S. Del-Monte, 1844), Vol II, 374. “Per incontro poi i mercanti e banchieri, che non mai videro spade ignuda, ai quali propriamente si aspetta la pena nell’orecchia con la gonnella intorno, ed il giornale davanti, si ritraggono armati con bastoni in mano da generali, cosa veramente ridicola, e manifestamente accusa il poco senno e giudizio, così del dipinto, come del dipintore.” Also cited by Carolyn Springer, Armour and Masculinity, 162.
In addition to the middling classes, weapons were also pervasive in the lower rungs of society. Weapon usage appeared to cut across social class, even though the terms of their adoption (i.e. whether they were worn clandestinely or conspicuously) were affected. As demonstrated by Lomazzo, one of the best ways of encapsulating a militaristic persona was to literally dress the part, however, it would be an oversimplification to suggest that men in this period merely emulated soldiers. The symbolic meaning of arms and armour varied and thinking of these objects solely as props for civilians fails to illustrate their complex role in Italian history.

Thus, this study aims to shed light on the rich cultural history of arms and armour in sixteenth-century Florence. Given their ubiquitous presence in early modern Italy, it is surprising how little we know about how these objects were used in everyday life. While museum curators have undoubtedly studied the function and adornment of arms and armour, historians have tended to subjugate the role of objects in their examinations of Renaissance violence and masculinity. My dissertation attempts to bridge this gap in the scholarship by examining both symbolic and practical functions, in addition to customs and cultural practices surrounding arms and armour usage. I additionally aim to demonstrate how arms and armour were a critical part of ordinary life in Renaissance Florence. Motivations for carrying weapons varied and could be influenced by a range of cultural and social factors, including class, profession, age, gender, and state policy.

Culture of Warfare

In order to understand the historical role of arms and armour, we must first establish the type of environment in which they were embedded. There existed a culture of warfare in sixteenth-century Europe. The Italian Wars—which spanned a little over five decades—as well as the more regionalized battles that followed,
affected a multitude of territories across Europe. As a result, large numbers of combatants lost their lives in battle, and thousands of innocent civilians were treated as “spoils of war” and savagely murdered during the many sacks that occurred.

The martial spirit of the period extended far beyond the battlefield, however. The images of soldiers—particularly the Swiss and German mercenaries respectively known as Reisläufer and Landsknechte—became commonplace. Popular interest in a wide variety of martial literature also flourished, including a surge of contemporary and historical war treatises. Although a few fighting manuscripts or Fechtbücher surfaced in the fourteenth century, it was not until the sixteenth century that the medium gained momentum. The topic of war appeared to remain consistently top of mind, and in Cento giuochi liberali et d’ingegno (1551), the Italian author Innocentio Ringhieri even provided readers with martial topics for polite post-dinner conservation.

Artists appeared to share in the enthusiasm, as many lent their architectural expertise to the craft of military engineering. For instance, Leonardo da Vinci played an integral part in designing fortification plans and weapons, which he personally touted when recommending his services to the Milanese Duke, Ludovico Sforza (1452-1508).

At the same time, medieval notions of chivalry enjoyed a Renaissance revival. Medieval texts such as Amadis of Gaul (ca. 1508) were republished and found fame

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14 For the effects of the Italian Wars on civilians, see Stephen Bowd, Renaissance Mass Murder: Civilians and Soldiers During the Italian Wars (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
16 Michael Edward Mallett, Mercenaries and Their Masters; Warfare in Renaissance Italy (London: Bodley Head, 1974), 215-16.
among enthusiastic contemporaries. Ludovico Ariosto’s (1474-1533) epic poem *Orlando Furioso* (1516) became a sixteenth-century best seller, even surpassing the Bible in the number of copies sold. The romance was a loose continuation of Matteo Maria Boiardo's unfinished *Orlando Innamorato* (1482) and described the tales of a knight named Orlando. In addition to simply reading the poem, contemporaries sung, recited, and performed its verses. In short, a taste for the romantic days of yore, complete with armour-clad knights, seemed to pervade sixteenth-century Europe.

Yet, the medieval notion of chivalry—which the Oxford English Dictionary defined as “knights or horsemen equipped for battle”—contradicted emerging practices of warfare. Military strategy was prioritized and studied in this period, causing the tactical methods of battle in this period to shift. One such modification had to do with the organization of Renaissance military forces, specifically supplanting much of the cavalry with foot soldiers. Equipped with guns and canons, in addition to long pikes and halberds, foot soldiers were much more agile than the lance-wielding cavalry. Moreover, infantrymen were much cheaper to hire than mounted troops, who primarily consisted of noblemen that earned higher wages. Thus, in a somewhat contradictory manner, contemporaries romanticized past militaristic practices, while simultaneously integrating modern advances in warfare. Michael Edward Mallett deduced that “the institution of knighthood remained both popular and prestigious although it tended to lose its specifically military connotations.”

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23 Ibid., *Mercenaries and Their Masters*, 4.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid., 211.
Another product of the trend for chivalry in this period was the rise in literature concerning fencing and duelling. The former being the style of combat, the latter, the practice of using said style to settle disputes. A sixteenth-century contemporary defined the process as

A voluntary fight between two men, by which one intends to prove to the other with weapons, by his own prowess, secure from interference, in the space of one day, that he is a man worthy of honour, not to be despised or offended, while the other intends to prove the contrary.26

An early form of the sport had existed since the eleventh century, but Renaissance authors revived the practice by treating the subject as a strategic and scientific discipline. It was then linked to the defence to honour, which consequently meant it was an activity best suited to the upper classes. One such case was Achille Marozzo’s *Opera nova* (1536), as it was one of the first fighting books to incorporate fencing into its list of martial strategies.27 Marozzo’s work notably linked the act of duelling to protecting gentlemanly honour, inspiring subsequent literature on the topic, especially from Italian and German fencing masters.28 Papal engineer Camillo Agrippa was the first to approach fencing using geometry in his *Trattato di scientia d’arme, con un dialogo di filosofia*, published in 1553 in Rome.29 Commenting on the recent surge in firearms, the Milanese native dedicated the book to Duke Cosimo I, declaring, “Because of the diabolical modern invention of artillery, all that remains to us of the good ancient ways of military honour is the duel...”30 Not everyone was in

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26 Qtd. and trans. in Donald Weinstein, “Fighting or Flyting? Verbal Duelling in Mid-Sixteenth-Century Italy,” in *Crime, Society and the Law in Renaissance Italy*, ed. by Trevor Dean and K.J.P. Lowe (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), 204.
27 Achille Marozzo, *Opera Nova [Illustrated with Woodcuts.]* (In aedibus ... Antonii Bergolæ. Mutinæ, 1536).
favour of the emerging custom, however. In his *Paradoxes of Defence* (1599), for instance, English nobleman George Silver (ca. 1560–1620) condemned the carrying of rapiers by civilians and disparaged the practice of duelling, along with the Italian masters who championed the sport. Silver retorted, “Fencing… in this newfangled age, is like our fashions, everie daye a change, resembling the Camelion, who altereth himselfe into all colours save white....”  

Popular opinion aside, the practice persisted, as several examples of scuffles filled contemporary letters, news reports, diaries, and manuscripts, adding credence to the bilingual Italian fencing master Vincentio Saviolo’s (d.1599) view that disagreements were best settled by rapier and dagger. Some of the most salacious tales stem from the French courtier Pierre de Bourdeille, seigneur de Brantôme (ca. 1540-1614). In his *Mémoires* (1665-66), Brantôme dramatically recounts (and undoubtedly hyperbolizes) a number of brawls. One such case referred to a man named Count Claudio, who happened upon a four-person fight in Milan one night. After subsequently trying to cease the impending quarrel, the four angry men turned on the Count and attacked him instead. As a result, Brantôme noted that the Count killed three of his new acquaintances and seriously injured the fourth.

The topic of fencing and duelling has similarly attracted much attention in modern-day scholarship. Despite its 1938 publication date, Frederick Robertson

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32 Patterson, *Fashion and Armour*, 68. For more, see Vincentio Saviolo, Samuel Sandars, and Girolamo Muzio, *Vincentio Sauiolo His Practise: In Two Bookes. The First Intreating of the Vse of the Rapier and Dagger. The Second, of Honor and Honorable Quarrels. Both Interlaced with Sundrie Pleasant Discourses, Not Vnfit for All Gentlemen and Captaines That Professe Armes*, Early English Books, 1475-1640 (At London: Printed by Thomas Scarlet and Joan Orwin for William Mattes, and are to be solde at his shop in Fleetestreete, at the signe of the hand and Plough, 1595).
34 As discussed in Frederick Robertson Bryson, *The Sixteenth-Century Italian Duel: A Study in Renaissance Social History* (Chicago: 1938), 183. For more, see original text by Brantôme, as cited in the previous footnote.
Byron’s *The Sixteenth-Century Italian Duel: A Study in Renaissance Social History* remains an authoritative source on this sixteenth-century phenomenon. In *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture*, Jennifer A. Low discussed the social customs of fencing and duelling both on and off the theatrical stage, while also examining the range of masculine behaviours that ensued across different social classes. Markku Peltonen examined the complex philosophy that duelling embodied across two centuries in early modern England, while Donald Weinstein explored the process of verbal duelling in Italy via a 1559 case study involving two Pistoise nobles.

The origin and evolution of the duel is another oft-discussed topic. Edward Muir suggested the practice replaced *vendetta* as the honourable method for seeking retribution and protecting honour. In her work on the southern German lands, B. Ann Tlusty confirmed Muir’s supposition by stating, “The shift in the sixteenth century, in Germany as in Italy, was primarily a change from responding to insults to honour by declaring a perpetual feud (‘Fehde’) or vendetta based on collective family vengeance to a more individual response based on personal honor.” Weinstein proposed that duelling for honour served as a Renaissance reinterpretation of the more judicial tradition that occurred in the middle ages, adding that disputes in the early modern period were now settled privately instead of publically. He also proposed that duels became less physical, and as a result more verbal and theatrical.

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40 Weinstein, “Fighting or Flyting,” 211-12.
in the last third of the sixteenth century, likely due to the decree disparaging the practice issued by the Council of Trent in 1564.  

When discussing fencing and duelling, one must also consider the evolution of the rapier. However, it remains difficult to pinpoint the exact moment when the weapon was created. Curators often struggle to define the sword’s construction before 1550 since the standardization of its design did not occur until the mid-sixteenth century. Even the terminology has been disputed among scholars, but most agree the word derives from “espada ropera” or “sword of the robe,” meaning it was an accoutrement for civilian dress, not soldierly battle. In Shakespeare’s 1597 tragedy Romeo and Juliet, for instance, Mercutio disparaged the “fashionmongers” that consumed themselves with swordplay. Similarly, the stereotype of the well-dressed man bedecked in weapons also appeared in a 1531 comedic play, Gl’ingannati (The Deceived Ones). As the character Gherardo, an old man trying to prove his youthfulness, explained

Old? Oh, I promise you that I feel so good in full force now as when I was twenty-five years old; and utmostly in the morning, before I pee. And, [even] if I have this white beard, in the tail I am as green as the Tuscan poet. And I would like that none of these unbearded guys that hang out playing the bravo in Modena with an upright plume à la Guelph, with the sword at the thigh, carrying a dagger with them, with the silk tassel, would beat me in anything, except in running.

41 Ibid., 214 and Bryson, The Sixteenth-Century Italian Duel, 118-19.
42 Capwell, The Noble Art of the Sword, 31-33.
43 Ibid., 31. Other potential derivations link the word to “raspar” in Spanish, which means to scratch. In Ibid.
Wallace Collection curator Tobias Capwell discussed this fundamental relationship, demonstrating how the sword in early modern Europe became an integral part of men’s costume in *The Noble Art of the Sword: Fashion and Fencing in Renaissance Europe 1520-1630*. Capwell pointed out that the link between fashion and fencing was also evident in some of the period’s fencing books, most notably in the works by Angelo Viggiani dal Montone of Bologna and Henri de Sainct-Didier of Paris, both published in the 1570s. In his posthumously printed *Lo schermo* (1575), Viggiani outfitted his swordsmen in complex renderings of contemporary male dress. Every figure in his treatise appears in different clothing, complete with slashings and ostentatious accessories. Capwell observed, “For Viggiani, the great swordsman clearly must have superb fashion sense.” Analogously, Sainct-Didier’s *Traicté contenant les secrets du premier ...* also portrayed his models in the latest male fashions (Fig. 5).

Going one step further than Viggiani, the first Frenchman to write about fencing featured his two main characters, the Lieutenant and Provost, in different outfits on every page.

Thus, offensive weapons, like swords and daggers, were pivotal components in the early modern man’s wardrobe. Chronicler and clergyman Claude Haton disapprovingly remarked in 1555, “there is no mother's son at this time who did not carry a sword or a dagger.” The conspicuous adoption of arms was especially prevalent among the elite classes. In 1623, for instance, French author François Dancie regarded the sword as “the finest plume of a great man, without which he cannot be distinguished from a financier, merchant or burgess, whom the abuse of our

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47 Ibid.
49 Capwell, *The Noble Art of the Sword*, 73.
times permits to be as well-dressed as he.“ The trend for wearing bladed weapons persisted, and men at European courts donned the accessory until the late eighteenth century.

**Relationship with Fashion**

Given the connection between weapons and dress, early modern men’s fashion is another crucial feature examined in this study. In their tomes on European dress history, costume historians give ample coverage to Renaissance fashion, as this period produced its fair share of memorable trends. Men’s fashion was relatively stable from the mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries, yet as the sixteenth century approached, a number of flamboyant accessories like the codpiece entered mainstream fashion, pushing bodily proportions to the limits. Although they present more generalized costume histories, François Boucher’s *A History of Costume in the West*, Anne Hollander’s *Seeing Through Clothes*, and Rosita Levi-Pisetsky’s four-volume series *Storia del Costume in Italia* are helpful insofar that they situate sixteenth-century dress in the broader context of historical fashion. Useful dress compendia that focus solely on the Renaissance periods are Jacqueline Herald’s *Renaissance Dress in Italy, 1400-1500* and Jane Ashelford’s work on Tudor England. The work of the late designer, conservator, and costume historian Janet Arnold has increased our understanding of sixteenth-century patterns and construction, and her ten-year

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52 Max von Boehn, *Modes and Manners* ([S.l.]: Harrap, 1932), 233.  
restoration of the Medici burial clothes on display in Florence’s Pitti Palace remain an invaluable resource to many.\textsuperscript{56}

Most pertinent for my study, however, are works that look at dress under a cultural and social lens. Carole Collier Frick demonstrated how contemporaries interacted with clothing and examined the functional and practical role of tailors in \textit{Quattrocento} Florence.\textsuperscript{57} Frick additionally explored the codpiece’s use in the costumes of male children a century later.\textsuperscript{58} In \textit{Dressing Up}, Ulinka Rublack explained how dress was used to shape one’s identity by analysing a series of textual and visual sources from early modern Germany, one of which includes the Augsburg accountant Matthäus Schwarz’s \textit{Klaidungsbüchlein}.\textsuperscript{59} Evelyn Welch demonstrated the various channels available for acquiring clothing in Italy by studying the Renaissance sleeve, and Giorgio Riello investigated the systematic and historical role of fashion to construct identities in \textit{La moda: una storia dal Medioevo a oggi}.\textsuperscript{60} Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass examined how the construction, value, and evolution of dress signified broader historical changes in the personal and collective memory of early modern Europe.\textsuperscript{61} Lastly, Roberta Orsi Landini has done extensive work on the


guardarobe of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici and his wife Duchess Eleonora da’ Toledo (1522-62), as her recent two-part work *Moda a Firenze* attests.  

The trends fashioned in contemporary menswear also heavily influenced armour designs, a practice particularly discernible in parade armour. The case can be exemplified by examining the vogue for “slashing.” Originating during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, slashing was a technique where the top layer of fabric was silt to allow an under layer of cloth to peek through, as seen Lucas Cranach’s 1514 portrait of *Henry the Pious, Duke of Saxony* (Fig. 6). The technique was thought to derive from militaristic origins, and in 1518, merchant and chronicler Philippe de Vigneulles (ca. 1471-1527) described the adornment of an outfit as “slit and slashed doublet and hose, just like a *Landsknecht.*”  

The style was similarly reconstructed in steel, as exhibited in a backplate and rump defence (ca. 1525) created by the Augsburg armourer Kolman Helmschmid (Fig. 7). The armour, which might have been owned by the Polish nobleman Jerzy Herkules Radziwill (1480-1541), has been embossed, chased, and gilded to resemble the puffed-and-slashed design seen so ubiquitously across early modern Europe.

The swapping of trends went both ways, as civilian accessories were also recreated in armour. Berets had their own steel equivalent, and the guards of Cosimo I de’ Medici wore armour burgonets modelled after velvet bonnets, two of which survive in New York’s Metropolitan Museum of Art. Conversely, some styles of sixteenth-century burgonets, cabassets, and morions were made into cloth hats. Even sabatons (armour foot plates) imitated the latest styles in footwear. The long pointy sabatons popular in the gothic era evolved into the broad bear-paw shape worn by contemporaries. The integration between civil and soldierly styles was not unique to

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63 Qtd. and trans. by Boehn, *Modes and Manners*, 119.


65 Ibid.
the Renaissance, however. In her investigation of masculinity and traditional dress in ancient Rome, Kelly Olson observed that civic fashions took inspiration from the dress of the city’s army. The notes that “military status was social status and the uniform of the high-ranking soldier (chlamys, tunic, belt and leggings) could be interchangeable with that of the civilian official.”

A small, yet focused, group of scholarship assesses the symbiotic relationship of fashion and armour, the most prolific authors on the subject being museum curators. In Fashion and Armour in Renaissance Europe, Angus Patterson, curator at the Victoria & Albert museum, discussed the stylistic trends present in both armour and dress, along with the accessorial use of weaponry and the princely art of armour collecting in the Renaissance. Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Stephen V. Grancsay—who worked in the museum’s armour department for nearly five decades—explored the progression of styles seen in both media from the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries in “The Interrelationships of Costume and Armor.” Moreover, Grancsay returned to the topic over the course of his career in other writings.

Armour and Masculinity

Although some women certainly used weapons in the early modern period, arms and armour were primarily considered masculine objects. Only a few female characters have been thought to wear armour, one of whom being England’s Elizabeth I (1533-1603) at the Battle of Tilbury, even though no evidence exists to substantiate this claim. Joan of Arc, canonized in 1920, is also commonly depicted in armour in Renaissance visual imagery. Santa Barbara, the patron saint of armourers and makers of firearms, is another female figure associated with the trade, since her father was

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66 Kelly Olson, Masculinity and Dress in Roman Antiquity (New York; Routledge, 2017), 59-60.
67 Ibid., 66-67.
68 Grancsay, Arms and Armor, 362-377.
said to have been struck by lightning and blown up when he sentenced her to death. Therefore, to fully understand the cultural role of arms and armour, one must also look at contemporary notions of gender. In the sixteenth-century, martial ability was closely intertwined with masculinity, or at least the semblance of it. A point recurrently supported in portraiture and other types of visual imagery from the period. A fitting example of this inextricable relationship can be seen in a drawing by the workshop of Federico Zuccaro (1540-1609) (Fig. 8). Fashioned in black and red chalk and housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the image depicts what appears to be a father and son with an armour. The sitter, who is outfitted in a doublet, peascod jerkin, breeches, ruff, sword, and sword belt, directs his gazes toward the viewer, while casually resting his left arm on the crest of the armour’s helmet. The young boy in the image’s foreground appears to don similar apparel, complete with ruff, and looks attentively at the garniture that stands taller than him. The message is clear; martial ability is a manly virtue, one that begins from boyhood. As Judith Butler famously argued in her writings on sex, gender, culture, and desire, “gender proves to be performative—that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always a doing, though not a doing by a subject who might be said to preexist the deed.” Thus, Renaissance men “do” masculinity by using arms and armour to illustrate martial identities.

The body of literature evaluating the construction of masculinity in the Renaissance period is vast. In *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*, Alexandra Shepard discussed how masculinity was dependent on being validated by the men in one’s social or professional sphere. Valeria Finucci determined the performative nature of masculinity in Renaissance Italy centred around sexual virility and fertility, not so much via the penis, but through the reproductive capabilities of

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the testicles.\textsuperscript{74} Mark Breitenberg posited that the patriarchy-imposed model of early modern England filled men with anxiety about biological, power, class, and sex struggles, making the term “anxious masculinity” redundant.\textsuperscript{75} Will Fisher examined the relationship between gender and prosthetic embellishments—such as codpieces, handkerchiefs, and beards—in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England, while Patricia Simons discussed the biological and sexual perceptions of the male body in her study on premodern Europe.\textsuperscript{76}

After reviewing contemporary sources, Renaissance philosophies concerning notions of masculinity can often seem contradictory. In her work on the Italian goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini’s writings, for instance, Margaret A. Gallucci observed that duelling books encouraged men to take up arms, while courtesy books urged them to show restraint.\textsuperscript{77} Similarly, in Lyndal Roper’s investigation of the urban masculine culture in early modern Germany, she proposed that society both celebrated and chastised men for their masculine behaviours (i.e. drinking and fighting).\textsuperscript{78} As Edward Muir noted, a gentleman was supposed to suppress emotions, such as fear, anger, and sexual desire. He explained, “Persons denied or delayed all impulses, never admitted fear, controlled and channeled anger into the duel, and sublimated sexual appetites through elaborate flirtations. The courteous man lied to others about his feelings and if truly courteous probably lied to himself.”\textsuperscript{79}

Masculinity and its relationship to arms and armour has received much less attention in scholarly literature. However, a few key authors have discussed the deep-

\textsuperscript{74} Finucci, \textit{The Manly Masquerade}, 35.
\textsuperscript{75} Breitenberg also demonstrated how masculinity at this time was in constant need of protection and defense. Mark Breitenberg, \textit{Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
\textsuperscript{77} Margaret A. Gallucci, \textit{Benvenuto Cellini: Sexuality, Masculinity, and Artistic Identity in Renaissance Italy} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 120.
\textsuperscript{78} Roper noted that fighting, whether that be in sports, guild processions, dances, weddings, or tournaments, made up a big portion of the male culture present in sixteenth-century Germany. Lyndal Roper, \textit{Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe} (London: Routledge, 1994), 113.
\textsuperscript{79} Muir, “The Double Binds,” 79.
seated connection in recent years. First, in *The Martial Ethic in Early Modern Germany*, Tlusty explored how male heads of households in southern Germany actually had a civic responsibility to store and bear arms. This right could be stripped away, however, if a man’s familial and/or financial orders were in disarray. Thus, Tlusty concluded that the bearing of arms was a marker identifying the men who could competently manage their domestic affairs. Olson similarly observed the connection between masculinity and citizenship for the men of ancient Rome, stating “Manliness was expressed particularly in military and political virtues. In such a value system the ideal and complete individual was a freeborn, male citizen who behaved in the prescribed manner and looked the part.”

Looking more at the material objects themselves, Carolyn Springer examined the iconographic programs found on elite parade armour in *Armour and Masculinity in the Italian Renaissance*, revealing how these styles both represented and consequently affected period ideas of masculinity. Springer’s analysis subsequently applied these findings to the armour commissions of three princely figures, including Emperor Charles V, Guidobaldo I della Rovere, Duke of Urbino (1514-74) and Cosimo I de’ Medici.

**Florentine Source Material**

Attempting to build on both Tlusty and Springer’s work, my thesis aims to explore historical records, visual imagery, and material culture, therefore, providing a comprehensive picture of how arms and armour functioned in the broader Renaissance society. The bulk of my analysis focuses on sixteenth-century Florence and its surrounding areas, roughly spanning the reigns of Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici and sons Francesco I (1541-87) and Ferdinando I (1549-1609), 1537-1609. The decision to concentrate on Tuscany derived from the records that I encountered from the Otto di Guardia e Balia, the magistracy responsible for handling judicial and criminal affairs in Medicean Florence. In *Criminal Justice and Crime in Late*

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81 Olson, *Masculinity and Dress*, 44.
Renaissance Florence, John Brackett created the first comprehensive study on the Otto di Guardia, revealing how the organization was run and structured, along with the stately role it played under three Medici grand dukes in the early modern period. Elena Fasano Guarini has also examined the magistracy’s handling of sexual violence via a case study, in addition to exploring the Otto’s function in relation to the wider Medicean ducal state. In order to determine how arms and armour were being used throughout the region, I relied on records from the “Partiti e Deliberazione” and “Suppliche” volumes, both of which have remained severely understudied. The former contains summaries of the crimes being processed by the criminal magistracy, while the latter houses letters submitted to the court requesting appeals and reductions in fines and sentences, or special exemptions from existing laws. Organised by year, the volumes contain hundreds of folios, sometimes upwards of five-hundred pages. Thus, my study samples letters from the years of Cosimo I and Francesco I’s reigns, using the most pertinent examples as case studies throughout my study.

“Suppliche” were written for a variety of reasons and many different organizations within the ducal state processed requests appropriate to their jurisdiction. As mentioned, the “suppliche” managed by the Otto di Guardia play a pivotal role in my analysis, and aside from the occasional citation, have never been explored. Although they vary in length and detail and can be formulaic in their language, these documents provide a rare glimpse into the reasons men provided for committing violent crimes or for wanting to carry weapons. Moreover, supplications were submitted by all social classes and came from varying locales around Florence and its dominion, allowing us to examine the regional and social contexts in which these crimes occurred.

In addition to the records of the Otto di Guardia, I also rely on numerous documents from the grand ducal Medici del Principato collection of letters, also stored in the archivio di stato di Firenze. These letters demonstrate the vast amount of day-to-day affairs being handled at the Medici court. Also included in this collection are avvisi, contemporary news reports that circulated throughout various cities and courts in the period. Another integral component examined is the legislation issued under the Medicean Dukes. Related bans, public notices, laws, and reforms serve as insightful sources, demonstrating the contemporary issues authorities faced when trying to enforce state policies on the region’s inhabitants. In order to demonstrate the financial investment and the laborious process of making clothing, arms, and armour, several key account books and inventories feature in my analysis as well. Lastly, extant material objects are additionally utilized when appropriate.

Chapter Summaries

My thesis considers four main subject areas. The first begins by examining the day-to-day prevalence of weapons and violence in Florence and its dominion. As previously mentioned, the management of violent crimes fell onto the magistracy of the Otto di Guardia e Balìa. Founded in 1378 the Otto began as a taskforce, monitoring residents in hopes of thwarting an impending uprising of the city’s unrepresented labouring class.\(^\text{84}\) The Otto’s judicial responsibilities increased steadily after its establishment, and by 1400, the organization also controlled the police force.\(^\text{85}\) After starting his reign in 1537, Cosimo I kept the magistracy active and expanded its jurisdiction. In 1562, writer and notary Giovanni Maria Cecchi explained that the Otto were handpicked by Cosimo I and totalled approximately thirty men, including one auditor/secretary, as well as a number of councillors and notaries.\(^\text{86}\) He

\(^{84}\) Referred to now as the Ciompi revolt. Brackett, _Criminal Justice and Crime_, 8.

\(^{85}\) Ibid., 9.

concluded that the incredibly powerful agency dealt with “homicides, robberies, violence, and other criminal things” and “govern[ed] according to Florentine statutes and laws, and in defect of those according to imperial laws.”\textsuperscript{87} Brackett noted that the organization served as the city’s most prominent criminal court and “acquired jurisdiction over all major categories of crime, from murder to theft, carrying weapons without a license, assault, fraudulent business practices… and crimes against religion.”\textsuperscript{88}

Assault appeared to have been the most frequently cited criminal offence in the Otto’s records.\textsuperscript{89} For example, in the first eighteen months after Francesco succeeded his father as Duke in 1574, 186 acts of homicides or other violent injuries with weapons were recorded.\textsuperscript{90} Often occurring in public places around the city, physical violence was frequently the result of verbal insults or contentious gestures. Correspondingly, the same mode of thinking pervaded other parts of early modern Europe. Natalie Zemon Davis has shown similar occurrences in her investigation of remission letters in sixteenth century France, and Tlustly demonstrated that “liar,” “traitor,” “thief,” and the ubiquitous German insult “Hundsflud” or “dog’s cunt” were common duel-starting invectives in southern Germany.\textsuperscript{91} In his expansive study spanning three centuries, Julius Ruff additionally examined the rampant interpersonal violence that plagued early modern society, as well as the reasons that made aggressivity a daily occurrence.\textsuperscript{92}

Naturally, weapons were often cited when describing physical altercations, even though they were strictly prohibited in Florentine legislation. Thus, the first

\textsuperscript{87} Ibid. “homicidii, ruberie, violenzie, et altre cose criminali”; “giudica secondo li Statuti e leggi Fiorentine, et in defetto di quelli secondo le leggi imperiali”
\textsuperscript{89} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{92} Julius Ruff, \textit{Violence in Early Modern Europe} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), especially the chapters on “Justice” and “The Discourse of Interpersonal Violence,” 73-159.
chapter explores the current legislative practices and examines the punitive measures enforced by the Otto di Guardia, including monetary fines, pulls on the *strappato*, temporary banishment, exile, and death, depending on the crime’s severity. Complicating matters was the state’s bestowing of arms privileges, as nobles were granted the right to carry arms, as well as those found within the Duke’s inner circle and payroll. Requests for arms licences were also awarded on a case-by-case basis and could be submitted to the Duke via supplication. Therefore, the supplication process is also reviewed in depth and a variety of cases from the period are discussed.

Chapter two examines the making, commissioning, and maintenance of armour, including its decline in the city, as well as at the Medici court. By 1561, the region’s census only recorded two active workshops still practicing in Florence, “Andrea di Lorenzo, corazzaio and Jacopo di Matteo da Modena, armaiolo” and “Batista di Simone…Scamorina, armaiolo.” Only three additional craftsmen were listed as armourers working in Florence (that is without their own workshop): “Giorgio, armaiolo,” “Gianicola, siciliano, armaiolo,” and “Stefano di Gasparri dalla Rocca San Casciano, armaiolo.” The scarcity of armourers in this period is even more startling considering Florence’s past stronghold in the metalworking industry just a few centuries prior.

Accordingly, this chapter investigates how the Medici managed to meet their needs for arms and armour in a city that no longer prioritized the production of these goods. Some of the family’s personal and civic commissions ordered from northern Italy and southern Germany are also examined. Since the Medici’s collection of armour was dispersed in the eighteenth century, the number of objects that survive today are extremely limited; however, we can learn more about the pieces commissioned by examining letters that discuss certain harnesses, shedding light on the aspects considered most important to patrons and armourers alike.

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94 Ibid.
One of the reasons the industry declined in Florence—as well as other comparable regions—was due to the emerging technology of firearms. This advancement required that steel now be made hard enough to withstand the force of bullets. Consequently, this chapter also discusses the newfangled recipes and techniques that surfaced in this period for making harder steel. These technological advances in craftsmanship managed to propel the industry forward—albeit in cities that still maintained their stronghold for production—even though the overall efficacy of armour in battle was starting to wane.

Other technological advances in the industry were utilized for the creation of parade armour, which as its name suggests, was meant for ceremonial, not protective use. In order to create the most luxurious, cutting-edge designs, armourers worked with a variety of craftsmen, including goldsmiths, etchers, engravers, and painters. This collaborative approach produced luxurious and elaborate effects, for which patrons paid top dollar. A beautiful example can be seen in this backplate fashioned by Milanese armourer Lucio Piccinino around 1575 (Figs. 9-10). This multi-piece garniture, complete with horse armour, was created for both parade and tournament use for Alessandro Farnese, Duke of Parma and Piacenza. Now housed in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, the armour has been blued, burnished, gilded, and silvered. Various textiles were also routinely used in armours. The Piccinino harness, for instance, was fashioned with leather strap work, silk linings, and velvet trimmings. These techniques, along with other common design elements, will additionally be discussed.

The next topic covered in my study aptly delves into the world of firearms in sixteenth-century Florence. Although the invention, evolution, and rise of guns has been diligently explored by military historians, most notably by Bert S. Hall and J.R. Hale, our knowledge of how men (or women for that matter) interacted with firearms in everyday life remains extremely limited. Some of the most pivotal studies on the topic have been conducted by Peter Blastenbrei and Robert C. Davis, as both have provided convincing analyses on firearms and violence in the Papal states of Cinquecento Rome and Perugia. Carlo Cipolla discussed this game-changing
technology in his seminal work on the history of canonry, *Guns and Sails in the Early Phase of European Expansion, 1400-1700*.\(^95\) J.R. Hale and Malcolm Vale have also written a great deal on firearms and their perceived public image in early modern Europe.\(^96\) Aside from Brackett’s study on the Otto di Guardia, however, little in Florence has been investigated pertaining to the city’s culture of arms, especially firearms, in the sixteenth century.

Although usage grew exponentially in this period, the firearm was not a sixteenth-century invention. Early hand-held models had been used in Europe since the fifteenth century, and gunpowder and large-scale artillery weapons were utilized even a century before. It was not until the second quarter of the sixteenth century, however, that handheld firearms began to significantly affect warfare tactics, which then generated a more widespread adoption in both the martial and civic arenas.\(^97\) The consequences of which can be witnessed in the period’s criminal citations, supplications, and *avvisi*. It would be logical to infer that the firearm replaced the many weapons that preceded its adoption; however, this chapter demonstrates that the rise in usage was very much a gradual one in Florence.

This chapter also explores the Florentine state’s reaction to the growing problem of firearms. In an attempt to curb usage among inhabitants, the city’s criminal magistracy issued several pieces of legislation, citing all models of firearms in popular use. Penalties were among the highest issued by the duchy, revealing the large threat that these weapons imposed on various levels of Florentine society. Given their small size and capability to be wound in advance, wheellock pistols were considered especially dangerous, and consequently, received the most attention in contemporary prohibitions. Similar to other offensive and defensive objects, licences for firearms could be obtained from stately authorities. Yet, even with the proper


permissions, these firearms had to possess a minimum size and were only authorized for use outside of the city’s centre.

Building on the first three sections, chapter four investigates the link between arms, armour, and contemporary men’s fashion, particularly for elite men in Cinquecento Florence. Even though arms and armour were pivotal components of male dress, the two subjects have traditionally been treated very separately in academic scholarship. Therefore, this chapter aims to bridge this gap by demonstrating how arms, armour, and fashion were all considered integral components to sixteenth-century male dress. A key piece of this section examines the giornali kept by Niccolò di Luigi Capponi from 1569-79, account books that detail, record, and categorize his financial expenditures for roughly a decade before his death. Clothing was a major category of spending in Capponi’s account books, and as Elizabeth Currie has shown, the Florentine nobleman made a total of 281 payments for apparel, which equalled the staggering amount of 5,800 lire when combined over the ten-year period.\(^98\) Along with various types of garments, Capponi’s records also reveal that the Florentine spent considerable amounts of money on weapons and hunting gear. I will explore these commissions, demonstrating just how pivotal these items were to the upper-class man’s lifestyle. Examples concerning the connection between dress and arms from the Medici court are also examined.

While Capponi’s account books contain copious amounts of luxury clothing and apparel, it is important to remember that the inhabitants of Medicean Florence—like many other cities in early modern Europe—were required to adhere to the city’s sumptuary laws. Florentine sumptuary laws affecting the cities in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries have received much scholarly attention by Ronald Rainey, Catherine Kovesi-Killerby, and Carole Collier Frick.\(^99\) Although clothing legislation certainly relaxed in the sixteenth century, however, it by no means disappeared. The


state still allocated time, money, and resources to the regulation of dress and ornamentation, which was determined by gender, age, and social class, and communicated by the publication of several laws issued throughout the period. This section additionally examines the laws and the reforms handled by the Magistrato de Conservatori delle Leggi della Città di Firenze, the organization that managed sartorial offences in both Cosimo I and Francesco’s I reigns.

The final part of this chapter explores the prevalence of defensive wear, including mail armour, reinforced padding, hardened leather, and clothing containing secret protective elements. In Giovan Battista Moroni’s Portrait of a Gentleman, for instance, the sitter—thought to be one of Gerolamo Avogadro’s sons—dons mail sleeves, in addition to a mixed-material jerkin, including a combination of mail and leather (Fig. 11). These garments were commonplace in the sixteenth century; yet, as in the case of arms, little is known about how these objects were employed. In addition to discussing the types of garments worn, the legislation surrounding the adoption of these items is investigated. The powerful role that clothing and apparel had on sixteenth-century male identity will also be considered, further questioning how arms and armour might have influenced this relationship and in turn, male behaviour.

The conclusion of my thesis summarizes the study’s main results, bringing together each of the four chapters previously discussed. I also examine how contemporary notions of masculinity were affected by these customs. By comprehensively looking at the study, a few central themes emerge and are therefore examined further. One such case is the state’s contribution to the city’s culture of violence, as Florence’s laws, remunerations, and penalties shaped and influenced the behaviour of the city’s inhabitants. Another key point examined is how Tuscany’s citizen militia might have affected the region’s customs on arms bearing.

Lastly, I conclude my study with an epilogue, exploring how Renaissance arms and armour were reimagined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries via the practice of armour collecting. In particular, my study focuses on William H. Riggs, an American expat who donated his extensive collection to New York’s
Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1913. In *Merchants and Masterpieces, the Story of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, Calvin Tomkins looks at the origins of the museum through the history of its collections, while examining how the early trustees and curators shaped the objects we see today.\(^\text{100}\) The Met’s armour collection is unprecedented for a museum of its scope, as most sizeable institutions are dedicated solely to armour, such as the Royal Armour Gallery in Dresden, the Waffensammlung in Vienna, the Musée de L’Armée in Paris, the Armeria Reale in Madrid, and the Tower of London.\(^\text{101}\) Yet, because the early trustees J.P. Morgan and Rutherfurd Stuyvesant enjoyed and collected their own armour, they actively sought to include the medium at the Met.\(^\text{102}\)

As a result, it was the taste of these collectors and the historical period that influenced which pieces were bought, kept, and collected, which in turn, guided public interest and future academic scholarship. By exploring the case study of Riggs, this coda attempts to reveal how late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century collectors contributed to the historicizing of the Renaissance and created “historical” narratives that championed their own period values. Albeit unknowingly, modern-day culture has absorbed many of these concepts and anxieties, especially when dealing with the scholarship of extant artefacts. Arms and armour became aesthetic objects of male valour, and collecting practices—including the finding, purchasing, maintaining, and displaying of objects—were likened to brave militaristic feats. By clarifying the cultural perceptions of the neo-Gothic movement, I aim to identify the unique relationship that this era had with Renaissance arms and armour. Reimagining past epochs through the eyes of distant cultures is an approach that has received more academic interest over the years. Simon Goldhill, for instance, has shown how beliefs


\(^\text{101}\) Tomkins, *Merchants and Masterpieces*, 152.

\(^\text{102}\) Ibid.
and attitudes from the Victorian era shaped the culture’s interest in antiquity, using classical literature, art, and opera as vehicles for self-expression.\textsuperscript{103}

If we return to Cosimo I’s iconic armour discussed at the start of this introduction, we are reminded of the unique allure that Renaissance arms and armour possessed. Unlike other types of garments worn on the body, armour survived the perils of time due to its durable materiality. Their shapes physically resembled the corporal figures they were created for, thus they seemed to have the uncanny ability of making absent bodies once again present. Moreover, arms and armour appeared to retain the qualities of their previous owners, making them attractive to future possessors, as exemplified in the case of Mussolini’s acquiring of Cosimo’s I garniture. Far from being static objects, early modern arms and armour seemed to adapt to various functions, owners, and environments. Identifying the context in which they function is pivotal to understanding their role in any given society. Thus, our study begins by examining the culture of violence and warfare that ensued in sixteenth-century Medicean Florence.

Figure 1. Agnolo Bronzino, *Portrait of Cosimo I de’ Medici*, ca. 1545, Tempera on panel, 74 cm x 58 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence
Figure 2. Giovanni Britto, Portrait of Charles V, After Titian (Tiziano Vecellio), ca. 1550, Woodcut, 50.7 cm x 35.6 cm, Museum of Fine Arts Boston
Figure 3. Unknown Florentine Artist, *Portrait of Giovanni dalle Bande Nere*, ca. 1545, 140 cm x 117 cm, Galleria Sabauda, Turin
Figure 5. Henri de Saint-Didier, Page from *Traicté contenant les secrets du premier livre del’espée seule*, Paris, 1573, Wallace Collection, London Howard de Walden Library
Figure 6. Lucas Cranach the Elder, Portrait of Henry the Pious, Duke of Saxony, 1514, Oil on canvas transferred from wood, 184 cm x 82.5 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden
Figure 7. Kolman Helmschmid, *Backplate and Rump Defence*, ca. 1525, steel and gold, 68.6 cm x 45.7 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Bashford Dean
Figure 8. Workshop of Federico Zuccaro, *Half-Length Study of a Man Standing in Frontal View, Leaning on Armor and Accompanied by a Boy*, 1540-1609, Black and red chalk on tan paper, 31.3 cm x 23.2 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Figure 9. Lucio Piccinino, *Backplate of the Garniture of Alessandro Farnese*, ca. 1575, Blued and burnished iron, silver, gold, leather, and silk, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
Figure 10. Lucio Piccinino, *Garniture of Alessandro Farnese*, ca. 1575, blued and burnished iron, silver, gold, leather, and silk, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.
Figure 11. Giovanni Battista Moroni, *A Knight with his Jousting Helmet ('Il Cavaliere dal Piede Ferito', Conte Faustino Avogadro (?)), ca. 1554-58, 202.3 cm x 106.5 cm*  
National Gallery, London
Chapter One -
Everyday Armour: Weapons and Society in Sixteenth Century Florence

On 30 March 1561, Piero di Domenico and Niccolò di Piero Parenti exchanged words in the graveyard of the Florentine church of Santa Maria a Olmi. Although the contents of their conversation remains unknown, the discussion concluded with Niccolò calling Piero an “ass.” After the insult was hurled, swords were drawn, and both men started striking each other repeatedly. Piero endured the worst of it, and Niccolò clenched his victory after seriously injuring his opponent’s big toe. The blade cut through his victim’s flesh and drew blood, potentially leaving Piero with a permanent limp. After seeing Piero incapacitated, Piero’s cousin—confusingly also named Niccolò—attempted to rescue his relative, but was hurled to the ground by a fourth person named Beco di Marco entering the scene. The fight concluded here, and the ramifications of the violent altercation were subsequently determined by the state. In the end, Niccolò was the only person charged with a crime. He was ordered to pay a fine for the “insulting word” and wound to his opponent’s foot. Piero and his cousin were found not guilty, and Beco was absolved for his momentary participation.

This story is just one of many that fill the sixteenth-century criminal records of the Otto di Guardia e Balia, the magistracy responsible for handling criminal affairs and law enforcement in Tuscany. According to the Venetian ambassador in Florence Vincenzo Fedeli, the Otto served as one of three supreme courts in the Florentine government, the other two being the Ruota and the Magistrato Supremo. The Ruota (also called the Consiglio di Giustizia) managed civil quarrels, while the Magistrato Supremo was the system’s highest court of appeals. The Otto acted as the city’s
primary criminal court, and one of their main tasks was to maintain public order.\footnote{For more on the Otto’s role in the new government of Duke Cosimo I, see Fasano Guarini, “Considerazioni su giustizia,” especially pages 146-155.} The magistracy was first established in September 1378 and although its function changed considerably throughout the years, the organization was kept active and alive under the Medici regime. It even survived the transferal of the duchy to the Lorraine family in 1737, finally being replaced in 1777 under Pietro Leopoldo’s sovereignty with the Supreme Court of Justice.

In the Cinquecento, the Otto’s highest-ranking official was its secretary and auditor, who served as one of the Duke’s closest advisors. Given the agency’s pivotal role in maintaining a well-ordered and secure state, Cosimo’s sons and successors, Francesco I (1541-87) and Ferdinando I (1549-1609), also fostered close relationships with the organization. In 1587, for instance, Otto secretary Messer Francesco Buoninsegni was the only person granted access to meet with Ferdinando (then still a cardinal) the morning after Francesco I’s death, and the day he succeeded him as Duke.\footnote{Ibid., 242.} In order to remain informed, Duke Cosimo I met with the organization’s secretary daily to discuss the previous day’s criminal activity, an unsurprising realization considering the organization’s role in securing civic peace in a city of nearly 60,000 inhabitants.\footnote{Brackett, \textit{Criminal Justice and Crime}, 11, 31.} As Fedeli explained in 1561, Cosimo

“…always rises at dawn and in winter two or three hours before daylight, and customarily the first to see him is the secretary of criminal matters, who is made aware of all of the criminality in the state; thus, with this routine of wanting to know the social status of those who fall into errors, he reminds these people of his standards, to watch out that they do not exhibit scandalous behavior more than one time.”\footnote{Qtd and trans. in Ibid., 35. Segarizzi, \textit{Relazioni degli ambasciatori Veneti al senato}, Vol. 2, 235. “E la mattina si leva sempre a questi tempi in l’alba e l’inverno due e tre ore inanzi giorno, ed il primo introdotto per l’ordinario e il secretario de’ criminali, al qual vien redrizzato tutte le criminalità del Stato; ché, con questo ordine di voler sapere la qualità di quelli che cascano negli errori, fa star le persone nei termini suoi, guardandosi di non incorrere più d'una volta nei scandoli.”}
A culture of violence

As evident from the region’s criminal records, acts of assault in sixteenth-century Florence were common occurrences. Violence erupted for a multitude of reasons, but the most common catalyst for physical assault was the spewing of verbal insults like “ass,” “scoundrel,” or “poltroon.” Anything considered potentially damaging to one’s honour could qualify as cause, and authorities were sympathetic to fighters who endured these types of provocations. After exchanging heated words with a surly merchant, the Florentine goldsmith Benvenuto Cellini summed up the sentiment perfectly, saying “for it had become clear that our words meant swords and daggers.”

One of the interlocutors in Giovanni della Casa’s 1558 book of manners cautioned that failing to display appropriate levels of respect could result in violence. Gestures could also be interpreted as signs of aggression. Gripping one’s hilt, pulling the sword ever so slightly out of its scabbard, or pushing back one’s clothing to reveal a weapon lingering underneath all served as non-verbal cues of antagonism. Even taking off one’s coat could be interpreted as hostile, as a young man in Germany explained that his friend removed his outer layer “because [he was] warm… not with the intention of starting anything.”

In Florence, fines from twenty-five to fifty lire were doled out to perpetrators who harassed the residences of their enemies by throwing rocks, shouting outside the premises, or unhinging doors. However, these laws did not deter inhabitants from expressing denigrations. In addition to more common methods, insults could be delivered in written form using letters, posters, or public manifestos. In 1573, a San Barnabà parish shop owner received a year of confinement in Pisa after writing a letter that sullied the character of his neighbour’s spouse. Singing was another

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11 Qtd. and trans. by Ibid., 105.
12 Brackett, Criminal Justice and Crime, 114.
13 Ibid., 113-14.
14 Ibid, 114.
vehicle for vilification, as an offender living in the countryside in 1603 was charged
with a six-month sentence in Livorno after publically warbling a denigrating song
about a merchant living in his town.\textsuperscript{15} Cat calls or insults to female honour were also
harshly punished. After yelling invectives and throwing rocks outside a woman’s
house, a cloth worker and his companion were investigated under torture; one was
absolved, while the other received a three-year banishment to Livorno.\textsuperscript{16}

Violence in the city frequently occurred in public places, like taverns, streets,
shops, piazzas, churches, and markets. Sharon Strocchia argued that these
environments served as theatrical stages where Florentines could act out their
frustrations publically, “advancing their own reputations with typical Tuscan wit by
cleverly deriding their enemies within earshot of neighbors.”\textsuperscript{17} She noted that the
city’s urban landscape functioned as an ideal setting to avenge old rivalries or start
new feuds. In his sixteenth-century chronicle, Giuliano de’ Ricci mentioned two
separate fights that occurred at the Mercato Nuovo after different sets of foes met
unexpectedly.\textsuperscript{18} Dances and festivals, which brought together men of different subsets,
as well as seedier neighbourhoods, such as the quarters where prostitutes dwelled,
were also considered particularly dangerous.\textsuperscript{19} Thus, the Otto assigned extra officers
to patrol these locales regularly.\textsuperscript{20} Even elite affairs were hotbeds for bouts of
aggression. A letter sent to Duke Cosimo sometime around 1564 stated that the
Marquess Iacopo Malatesta, who was wearing a mask at the time, was stabbed in the
arm with a dagger at a party in Padova.\textsuperscript{21} Apparently, the cause of the injury stemmed
from an argument that Malatesta had with another man concerning the seating

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Ibid. For more on the Otto’s handling of sexual violence, see Fasano Guarini,
\textsuperscript{17} Sharon Strocchia, “Theaters of Everyday Life,” in \textit{Renaissance Florence: A Social History},
ed. by Roger J. Crum and John T. Paoletti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006),
59, 61.
\textsuperscript{18} Brackett, \textit{Criminal Justice and Crime}, 135. For more, see Giuliano de’ Ricci, \textit{Cronaca
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{21} ASF, MdP (hereafter MdP), vol. 503, fol. 648. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 3607.
assignment of a noblewomen in attendance.

The abundance of crime was by no means unique to Tuscany. Many Italian city states struggled with controlling violence among inhabitants. Blastenbrei, for instance, estimated that Roman authorities in the second half of the sixteenth century recorded at least three incidents of serious assault each day. Contemporary avvisi, news reports that circulated around the courts of Europe, similarly recounted pugnacious incidents. The chronicles also appeared to be a source of curious entertainment. In a February 1579 avviso from Milan, for instance, we learn that the city was experiencing an influx of criminal activity, as the document explained:

For the last few days, there have occurred lots of excesses, consisting of an infinite list of troubles, endless homicides, and quarrels as many in day as in the night, that they give enough material to talk of nothing else, particularly of a case that occurred last Saturday in the middle of the day to a goldsmith, who was sought out to bring different necklaces of many sorts of craftsmanship to someone’s house, near the Ponte Vetro, saying there were at the house certain purchasers that wanted to buy necklaces for 500 or 600 scudi…. But the goldsmith seeing that these [men] did not appear, wanted in every way to leave, and this woman with the husband that had led [him] in the house, no longer being able to keep him as they had wanted to, waiting on people to help in this assassination, were resolved to do it themselves, one going to him with a knife, and the other with a dagger at the waist and they gave him many wounds, but defending himself he wounded them too. But the goldsmith finally was killed, and the traitors, so injured, escaped with the necklaces, who at this hour have not been found by the justice, still no one knows who they are...

23 For more crime as entertainment outside Italy, see Ruff, Violence in Early Modern Europe, 28-35.
24 “Zecharie,” likely originating from the verb “zaccarà,” meaning to argument or quarrel, as defined in Francesco Cherubini, Vocabolario Milanese-Italiano, Vol. 4 R-Z (Milano: Imp. Regia Stamperia, 1843). Many thanks to Profs. Mary Laven and Andrea Gamberini for their assistance with this translation.
25 ASF, MdP, vol. 3254, fol. 406. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 10057. “Sono da pochi giorni in qua occorsi tanti eccessi, che è cosa infinita de questioni, omicidii senza fine, et zecharie si di giorno quanto di note, che danno materia di non parlarsi d’altro, particolarmente di un caso serrano seguito sabbato passato nel mezzo giorno ad un orefice, qual fu ricecro volesse portare diverse collane di più sorti fatture in casa di uno, vicino al Ponte Vetro, dicendo esservi alloggiati certi forastieri che volevano comprarne per 5 o 600 scudi…. Ma vedendo l’orefice che questi non comparevano, voleva in ogni modo partire, et questa donna con il marito che l’havea condotto in casa, non potendolo più ritenere come
In another *avviso* sent a little less than a month later in March 1579, an update was given regarding the crime. The document explained:

The criminal who stole the necklaces from the goldsmith and [who] wanted to kill him, was led last Saturday through many parts of the city on top of a cart, torturing him with drowned pincers, and across from where he did this evil, his right hand was cut, and [he was] finally hanged at the usual place, having been obtained that the wife must be saved with the excuse of having been forced by her husband, having also many favours, particularly from some ministers because [she] is a stunning young woman.\(^{26}\)

*Weapons and the Florentine State*

Although weapons were frequently cited in acts of violence and crime, they were strictly prohibited in Florentine legislation. In fact, weapons were outlawed in most Italian cities in this period. It remains unclear when the first ban in Florence was issued; however, a 1436 law referenced the prohibition of arms, so the policy appears to have been in existence since at least the fifteenth century.\(^{27}\) How this law was enforced, if at all, remains unknown. One of Cosimo’s first initiatives after becoming Duke, however, was to disarm Florentine residents.\(^{28}\) The removal of weapons from inhabitants appears to have been standard practice for regime changes, as new governors in *Cinquecento* Rome were known to “revoke and annul all existing licences … in whatever way and for whatever purpose issued” for firearms after

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\(^{26}\) ASF, MdP, vol. 3254, fol. 413. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 10104. “Il scelerato che rubbò le collane a l’orefice et volse amazzarlo, fu sabbato passato condotto per molte parti de la città sopra un carro, tormentandolo con le tenaglie affogate, et al dirimpetto di dove fece il male, tagliatoli la mano destra, et finalmente impicato al luogo ordinario, tenendosi che la moglie debba salvarsi con iscusa d’haver fatto questo sforzata dal marito, havendo anco molti favori, particolarmente di alcuni ministri per esser giovane assai vistosa.”

\(^{27}\) Brackett, *Criminal Justice and Crime*, 123. See footnote 123 also.

\(^{28}\) Ibid., 102-03.
taking office.\textsuperscript{29} In Venice, weapons were also heavily controlled in an attempt to eliminate violence in the city.\textsuperscript{30}

The city’s laws were communicated through the issuing of written statutes. In order to hold inhabitants to a higher degree of accountability, Florentine public notices (or \textit{bandi}) were written in vulgar Italian, instead of Latin.\textsuperscript{31} After \textit{bandi} were created, they were circulated to the local courts for further enforcement.\textsuperscript{32} Letters were also sometimes sent to specific officers, including commissars, vicars, and captains in various regions; thus, ensuring that the most recent policies were being practiced in all parts of Florence and its dominion.\textsuperscript{33}

Cosimo’s first comprehensive \textit{bando} dedicated solely to the outlawing of arms appeared on 28 May 1539.\textsuperscript{34} The beginning of the proclamation explained

The respected and most dignified lords of the Otto Guardia and Balia of the City of Florence; hoping to provide by every appropriate remedy for the tranquillity and universal well-being of this City; and considering the many excesses, and scandals, injuries, and homicides caused by carrying weapons, which would undoubtedly fail to recur should men find themselves stripped of them [weapons]; and hearing that some [men] in the past days have been carrying the aforementioned arms across the city, and [in] other prohibited places; and also they do have and keep them inside their own houses despite the prohibitions, and bands, which were in other occasions decreed by said respectable Signori Otto di Guardia; and knowing such a thing can cause many disorders and inconveniences should no new remedy be made.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{29} Qtd. and trans. by Davis, “The Renaissance Goes Up in Smoke,” 405.
\textsuperscript{31} Brackett, \textit{Criminal Justice and Crime}, 4
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., 80-81.
\textsuperscript{34} Lorenzo Cantini, \textit{Legislazione Toscana Raccolta e Illustrata dall’avvocato Lorenzo Catini Socio di Varie Accademie}, Vol. I (Firenze: Albizziniana da Santa Maria in Campo, 1804), 183-86.
\textsuperscript{35} “Li Spettabili, & Dignissimi Signori Otto di Guardia, & Balia della Città di Fiorenza, desiderando con ogni remedio opportuno provedere alla quiete, & bene universale di questa Città, & considendo di quanti eccessi, & scandali, ferite, & homicidi sia causa il portare l’arme, le quali senza dubbio alcuno non risultano, quando li huomini si trovono di quelle spogliati, & intendendo come alcuni da pochi giorni in quà portano l’arme predette per la Città, & altri luoghi prohibitì, & etiam ne hanno, & ritengono in le loro case contro le prohibitioni, & Bandi altra volta per detti Spettabili Signori Otto mandati, & conoscendo tal cosa potere causare molti disordini, & inconvenienti se con nuovo rimedio non si provedessi.”
Thus, the Otto “expressly command[ed] each and every person from whichever state, grade, quality or condition being ecclesiastical or secular” to declare and surrender any weapon kept in the home or worn “to any place, in the house, or in the shop, in Florence; and within eight miles of the said city.”

The Otto further incentivized the populace to turn in offenders by offering to give informants twenty-five percent of the fines collected. The Duke’s relations, servants, and salaried soldiers were the only parties exempt from the injunction. According to the ban, even arms previously deemed legal were now strictly prohibited, and the penalty for not surrendering any of the aforementioned weapons within ten days of the ban’s issue date resulted in a 300 scudi (or more) fine per arm. 300 scudi was a considerable amount of money in this period, as the sculptor Giambologna made exactly this sum annually working on high profile commissions at the Medici court. This fine would have substantially affected a perpetrator’s financial situation, especially for the lower rungs of society, as a construction worker only earned around thirty-three scudi per year.

In order to avoid any possible confusion, all restricted weapons discussed in the first portion of the bando—twenty-four in total—were listed by name. Firearms, both old and new models, along with gunpowder and other crucial accessories, occupy some of the first positions on the list. Guns were considered especially dangerous for many reasons, but their smaller, more portable size particularly worried authorities, as they could now be worn concealed under clothing. In 1532, the Venetian state disparaged “schioppi piccolo” (one of the earliest models of firearms) since they could be positioned “under clothes, so that no-one is aware of them.”

Emerging technological advances made firearms easier to carry, operate, and fire in

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36 Cantini, *Legislazione toscana*, vol. 1, 184. “expressamente comandare a ogni, & qualunque persona di qualunche Stato, grado, qualità, o condizione si sia così ecclesiastica, come secolare”; “in qualsivoglia luogo, casa, o bottega in Fiorenza, & appresso a essa Città a miglia otto”
38 Ibid.
this period, causing several bandi on guns to surface in the following decades.\textsuperscript{40}

Other weapons included in the Otto’s ban appear more appropriate for the battlefield than the urban centre. For instance, the ban restricted seven different types of pole arms, explicitly listing each model by name. The pike, partisan, spear, roncone, halberd, zagalie (a sort of Turkish javelin used on horseback), and its Western equivalent, the giannetta (which derived its name from the Spanish cavalry that used them) were all forbidden. Although ostensibly cumbersome for urban use, it appears the need to ban polearms was warranted. In a 1568 letter from Francesco I to Matteo Bartoli, the Duke regent informed his majordomo to stop priests in Castrocaro from carrying and using polearms, an order seconded by Pope Pius IV.\textsuperscript{41} Other seemingly impractical weapons, such as two-handed swords, crossbows, and iron maces, also received mention in the proclamation.

Defensive armour, including full armour, helmets, cuirasses, protective clothing, and mail garments, such as jackets, sleeves, and gloves were also outlawed. Defensive apparel was considered equally—if not more—dangerous than its offensive counterpart, as authorities assumed wearers planned on fighting, making their actions premeditated, rather than spontaneous. Sentences were dispensed using Roman legal tradition, penalizing premeditated attacks and murders much severer than unplanned bouts of aggression.\textsuperscript{42} For instance, in September 1603, after murdering his opponent in a spur-of-the-moment brawl, the suspect explained that he had no intention of killing his challenger and only received a fine of fifty lire and six months of confinement in Livorno.\textsuperscript{43} The state was sympathetic to the emotional, hot-headed responses of men, but considered prearranged murders and assassinations to have been executed in “cold blood.” In fact, in supplication letters written for the reduction of sentences for assault, it was often vital to stress that the weapon used in the attack just happened to be lying around on a nearby table or dresser, demonstrating that the

\textsuperscript{40} For more, see the subsection “Gun Control and the Medicean State” in Chapter Three.
\textsuperscript{41} ASF, MdP, vol. 229, fol 255v. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 19206. Special thanks to Maurizio Arfaioli for bringing this document to my attention.
\textsuperscript{42} Brackett, Criminal Justice and Crime, 106.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid.
defendant fell victim to the heated situation. In accordance, the penalties for getting caught with defensive items were harsher than those for offensive weaponry. In a 1547 *bando*, the penalty for getting caught with a mail jacket was death by decapitation and the seizing of property; however, Brackett stated that not even one wrongdoer was actually executed, noting that they all received pardons at the last minute and were fined instead.

The most common offensive arms were treated separately in the 1539 ban. “Swords, daggers, knives, pointed instruments, stones, or clubs, or other similar sorts of offensive arms” were prohibited in the city and within the surrounding three miles, instead of eight-miles set out for the first group of offensive weapons. This would appear to signify that these weapons were more widespread, and therefore, slightly more tolerated. The penalty for getting caught with a sword, stick, or stone was a fine of ten *fiorini* and two pulls on the *strappato*. Probably due to their more concealable size, daggers, knives, and other pointed objects were deemed a bigger threat, as offenders were charged with a twenty-*fiorini* fine and three *strappato* pulls.

As stipulated in the 1539 ban, the most common sentences issued for carrying arms illegally appear to have been monetary fines and pulls on the *strappato*. The *strappato* (also called the *fune*) was the Otto’s most frequent method of torture, which involved tying a prisoner’s arms behind his back and then hoisting him up from his wrists with the help of hook or pulley (Fig. 12). The defendant was then dropped, causing his shoulders to partially dislocate, and then kept there for anywhere from twenty to sixty minutes. The number of “drops” or “pulls” given was always indicated in sentences.

The penalties given for the bearing of unlicensed arms could also be harsher

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44 Davis found similar results for sixteenth-century France in *Fiction in the Archives*, 17.
45 Brackett, *Criminal Justice and Crime*, 103. Footnote 19. Brackett does not specifically cite which source material he analysed to come to this conclusion.
46 Cantini, *Legislazione toscana*, vol. 1, 185. “spade, pugnali, coltelli, appuntati, sassi, o bastoni, o altre simili sorti d’arme offendibili”
47 In this period, the *fiorino* and the *scudo* almost shared the same value; the fiorino possessed only a slightly higher value of nine percent more. Carlo M. Cipolla, *Money in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (University of California Press, 1989), 16-18.
than the aforementioned sentences since having weapons often went hand-in-hand with assault. The type of weapon and assault, along with the severity of the injuries sustained, were all considered when doling out sentences. Consequently, criminal reports dutifully recorded the number and type of injuries inflicted, as well as the seriousness of the wounds (i.e. whether blood was drawn), a tradition stemming from ancient Germanic law.49

Capital punishment was reserved for more serious crimes or for when the state wanted to make examples out of inhabitants. In Francesco Settimanni’s diary, the Florentine contemporary recorded 140 executions for a variety of crimes, ranging from murder to sexual violence to theft under the reign of Duke Ferdinando I.50 In January 1591, for instance, two convicts were hung with signs around their necks that read “for homicide and forgery,” and in October 1602, a perpetrator was publically executed for cheating the department of customs near the administrative body’s office.51

When the death penalty was considered too harsh, lawbreakers were typically sent away from Florence, either perpetually or for a determined amount of time. Men of more elevated standing were condemned to different locales, while the less fortunate were relegated to the galleys, assuming they were physically capable of withstanding the role.52 By the mid-1560s, the cities of confinement were chosen for the benefit of state projects, and offenders were assigned to different initiatives based on their profession.53 In January 1573, for example, Otto secretary Ser Lorenzo Corboli instituted that “all woodwork craftsmen, masons, carpenters, or, other similar workers, whenever they are condemned to relegation they must be sent to Porto

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51 Ibid., 218.
53 Pisa, Maremma, and Livorno were common cities for temporary banishment, and some workers also received compensation for their labor. Noted in Brackett, *Criminal Justice and Crime*, 69-70.
Porto Ferraio was located on the island of Elba, which was a fortification town being developed at that time under Cosimo I and Francesco I. In 1564, an initiative began to use galley service to pay off debt. For the less able bodied, prison was the most viable option. Banishment could also occur if convicts failed to appear within a designated deadline to receive their charges at a specified prison. The courts subsequently held these lawbreakers “in contumacia” and deemed them officially banished from Florence and its dominion. This appeared to be a routine practice in other parts of Italy as well. As exemplified in 1581 by the Perugian Romolo Allegrini, who estimated that at least one out of every ten men from his region had been banished or had fled to escape criminal charges.

Since stately resources for the police to patrol the city were limited, authorities relied heavily on informants for convictions, often attempting to entice inhabitants with monetary compensation. The magistracy had two systems in place to make denunciations (accusatorial and inquisitorial). The former referred to the process of physically going into the Otto’s headquarters located in the Bargello to write up a querela (a complaint) with a secretary or judge, while the latter described the practice of anonymously dropping a written denunciation into one of the various repositories located around the city. Being caught by the police or another stately official was considered part of the inquisitorial process. The state also had an extensive network of spies on their payroll, as a February 1549 document recorded that official “denouncers” had been hired to report on local activities. The city was apparently divided into fifty sections, and each one was assigned one or two informants to gather

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54 Qtd. and trans in Ibid., 70.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 226.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
Ambassador Fedeli commented on the process in 1561 stating

This prince [Cosimo] has some prisons that are called 'secrete'; they are held in such terror that a common saying is 'God save me from the Duke's secrete'! From them no one ever emerges, nor can one get news about those inside. Many times it happens that men are jailed without knowing why. And this is so because every word uttered to the Duke's prejudice, every minor suspicion is pursued. The Duke thus has the most minute knowledge of everything in the state. He has in his service an 'infinite' number of men that are feared like the plague because they are spies. They report everything said about the Duke, in homes, in churches, in monasteries, in the streets and the piazze. And these reports bring their immediate results. This terror of spies has reached such a state that everyone fears that everyone else is a spy. There isn't a person who is not suspicious of his closest relatives and friends. Consequently, all conversation about the Duke and his state is always favorable.64

**Borders and the City Centre**

The state used every possible resource to enforce arms’ legislation. In addition to the issuing of *bandi*, the city gates were another pivotal resource utilized by the government to keep weapons outside. The city of Florence was enclosed by seven miles of walls, which encompassed a total of nine gates.65 In 1565, the notary Cecchi explained that the Otto sent delegates from the magistracy to regulate the city doors, thus, prohibiting bandits and foreigners from bringing illegal offensive and/or defensive arms into the city.66 The government official explained that visitors’ unauthorized arms (which included everything except for swords and daggers) could be checked and later retrieved at a pre-arranged door upon exiting the city. If the foreigner was just passing through Florence on his way to another destination, an officer could accompany him through town (with his unpermitted arms) until he departed through another gate. If he intended to stay in the city, his weapons would be sent to the *Dogana* (Florence’s customs office where import items were regulated and

63 Ibid., 240.
64 Qtd. and trans. in Ibid.
65 Ibid., 241.
taxed). The arms would then be sold or handed over to those who legally possessed the faculty to carry arms from the Duke, “that are today many.”

The Otto’s positioning of guardsmen at the doors was indeed warranted, as the probability that visitors were armed upon approaching the city borders was high. In May 1551, for instance, a certain Francesco di Zanobi was stopped at a Florentine gate for wearing a mail jacket. Francesco explained that he was a servant of the Florentine architect Nanni di Baccio Bigio, and that a fellow worker of Bigio’s named Dionigi Milanese had given him the jacket to wear while travelling to Rome that day. Francesco claimed he was unaware that mail jackets were banned and that he did not intentionally bring the item to the door in secret. In the end, Francesco was released without being punished.

Travelers were especially vulnerable to bandits and robbers while journeying through country territories and highways, and many needed methods of defence and protection. In his autobiography (1558-63), Cellini proclaimed that “a man on horseback about to take a journey ought not to bind his sword” after refusing his friend’s suggestion to do just that. His companion explained that binding one’s sword was practiced in Florence after “Ser Maurizio” had joined the Otto, as the chancellor “was capable of putting Saint John the Baptist to the rack for any trifling peccadillo.” Jonathan Walker and Davis both discussed how arms licences were often sought by inhabitants of Venice and Rome, respectively, for travelling. In his study on wheellock pistols in sixteenth and seventieth-century Rome, Davis explained that applicants often feared bandits, adding that “if legatine edicts are to be believed, the papal highways were choked with men armed both with archibugi corti and permits to carry them signed by every imaginable sort of petty nabob.”

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67 Ibid. “che sono hoggi assai”
68 ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 58, fol. 21v.
69 Cellini, *The Autobiography* (Star publishinLXXVI.
70 Ibid.,
71 Walker, “Honour and the Culture of Male Venetian Nobles,” 152.
72 Since numerous licences were issued in Rome at this time, Davis suggested that permits may have been dispensed for profit. See Davis, “The Renaissance Goes Up in Smoke,” 404-05.
Given the more unregulated nature of the countryside, the processes surrounding licences and the possession of weapons in the Florentine dominion were considerably more relaxed. Brackett pointed out that licences were more readily awarded to residents living outside the city centre and reported that in some instances, even entire neighbourhoods could legally carry arms. These sentiments are echoed in contemporary legislation, and due to practical constraints, the Otto poured most of its resources into keeping illegal weapons outside city walls. Even Cosimo’s militia resided outside the city centre, as several companies were housed in various parts of the region’s dominion.

In addition to keeping unwanted forces out, the city gates were utilized for locating offenders attempting to flee Florence. If a serious criminal was on the run, three shots of the canon signalled to close the gates, keeping the wrongdoer within city limits. If the convict managed to escape the city, periphery towns located just outside the centre were instructed to ring their church bells, thus, instructing farmers to look out for suspicious persons. The river was another way of accessing the city. Consequently, ships in the Arno were additionally stopped and checked.

**Crime and the Florentine Galleys**

One of Cosimo I’s main objectives after becoming Duke was to create a navy, which gave the duchy international exposure, protected coasts from attacks, and secured merchant trade routes in and out of the family’s main port of Leghorn. In addition to Florence, Venice, Rome, and Naples were also prioritizing the building of

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74 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
maritime fleets in this period. In 1547, after reviving a portion of the galley system from the fifteenth century, Cosimo constructed the “Pisana,” the first galley made within the Florentine territory. Gemignani, “The Navies of the Medici,” 171.

He subsequently built another three vessels not long after. Ibid. Galleys were considered ideal warships, as they were propelled by men roaring oars, instead of the wind, making them more efficient and reliable when sailing. Ibid. These vessels required several people to manoeuvre the oars at sea, and states found themselves scrambling to find the manpower to keep them afloat.

Therefore, as was the case in Florence, governments forced a portion of their convicts to carry out punitive sentences at sea. In addition to prisoners, the Tuscan galleys were operated by slave labour, as well as a limited number of paid employees. Ibid. The job was notoriously gruelling and many convicts who were assigned galley time fled, attempting to shirk their maritime sentences.

On 29 April 1555, General of the Tuscan galleys Marco Cienturioni inventoried the goods and passengers of five of the galleys currently under Duke Cosimo’s control. Ibid. The manuscript spans 120 pages and details the nautical furnishings, goods, armaments, prisoners, and slaves on board each of these vessels. The Pisana, now called the Padrona, was one of the five examined, in addition to the Capitana, Fiorenza, Toscana, and the San Giovanni Battista (also called the Capitana Vecchia). The list of artillery and weapons carried on each ship was vast. On the Fiorenza, for instance, a number of canons were recorded, along with emery and iron balls, in addition to various types of gun powder and forty hand-held arquebuses. Armour for the crew was also noted, including forty morion helmets “half badly treated,” twenty-four shields, twenty-eight partisan pole arms, ten iron arquebuses with their necessary accoutrements, and lead for bullets. Ibid. Also included in the register were uniforms, which included 173 undershirts made from a red cloth with a...
lining of canvas (*tela*), small berets of red wool, linen shirts and breeches, and “*gabbani d’albagio nostrale,*” doublets made from a locally-produced wool that was extremely coarse, and consequently, often used at sea. Wool tunics for the slaves were also listed.

The second half of the inventory detailed the members of each galley’s crew, splitting them into categories of “*forzati*” and “*stiavi,*” prisoners and slaves. According to a declaration made by Cienturioni on the book’s final page, there were 554 prisoners and 243 slaves spread across all five ships. Entries documenting the slaves on board most often included the man’s name, alias, place of origin, age, physical description, and any distinguishing marks used for identification purposes. Many of them appeared to originate from Turkey, Africa, and Constantinople. For example, on board the *Capitana*’s left band, a certain Adula di Tripoli was recorded and described as “a black moor [with the] alias big dick (*cazogrosso*),” who possessed a tall and thin build, had a small mark (likely a branding) near his hairline (*capellatura*), and was missing two teeth.

In order to efficiently record and keep track of prisoners, the inventory’s entries included each felon’s conviction number, full name, nickname if applicable, place of origin, a brief description of the crime committed, the organizational body of conviction, and the duration of sentence. A physical description, occupation, and/or age was sometimes also recorded if available. In the five warships discussed by Cienturioni, convicts appeared to originate from several places in Tuscany, including Siena, Pistoia, Cortona, Arezzo, and Prato, as well as other cities across Italy, comprising Rome, Ferrara, Ancona, and Bologna. About a third of the convicts committed were men who were captured at sea, the major part stemming from the Frenchmen caught in 1553 after their ships wrecked on the island of Pianosa. One such prisoner on board the *Capitana* was recorded as convict number 201, “Ramondo of Avignon, Frenchman [who] was taken in Pianosa from the ship wreck of the French

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86 The weight of the clothing in carats was also given, thus, demonstrating the textiles’ thickness. ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 12v.
87 ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 31v. “Adula di Tripoli moro negro alias cazogrosso di statura lunga e magro con poco di segnio vicino alla capellatura a dua denti manco di sopra.”
galleys, of good stature, black hair, thin face, a small cut above the right eyebrow.”

Greek slaves that fled from Turkish warships were another oft-cited category of felon, like convict number 1201,

Pagolo Greco of Ghiena of the Levant, of the age of 40 years, black hair, large stature, a cut in the head from a small blade, was taken at Elba where he had escaped the Turkish armada where he was a slave in the year 1553, [sent] by the Lords of Piombino.

The other two-thirds of the crew had been sentenced to the galleys for a wide variety of crimes they had committed. For instance, included on the Capitana’s right band was a certain Giovanni di Berhardino from the town of Bibbiena, who was sentenced by the Vicar of Poppi to five years of galley time “for having taken three wives.” As another illustration, Bastiano di Giovanni, also known as “the dodgy one (il bieco),” from Prato was allocated three years in the galleys from the town’s Podestà on 25 March 1551 for having broken a peace agreement. Men could also be convicted on multiple charges, as is the case of Piero di Domenico alla Casa. On the 25 August in 1551, the Otto di Guardia e Balia sentenced Piero to three years for engaging in acts of theft, cheating, blasphemy, and sodomy.

Crimes against the state were penalized with especially harsh sentences. In October 1547, the Otto sentenced Cortona resident Bastiano to a life at sea for blasphemy and speaking ill of his excellency Duke Cosimo I. In May 1548, Antonio di Filippo, also called the curly-haired man of Arezzo, received another eternal

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88 ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 25v. “206 Ramon do d’avignione franzese fu preso in pianosa del nave frago delle galone franzese di buona statura, pel nero viso asciutto un poco di taglio sopra il ciglio destro”
90 About a tenth of the crimes committed by convicts onboard were unknown to Centurioni.
92 ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 49.
93 ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 50v.
sentence for not observing the terms of his banishment set out for a pre-existing crime.\textsuperscript{95} Treason was also dealt with swiftly. One such case dealt with a handful of men imprisoned on the \textit{Capitana Vecchia}, who were convicted for their associations with the French in Florence’s war with Siena in the mid-sixteenth century. For instance, Domenico di Iacopo from Londa was charged \textit{à beneplacito} (indefinitely and for however long Duke Cosimo saw fit) by the Otto for having assisted French forces in Siena in April 1555.\textsuperscript{96} Crimes concerning fraudulent money were similarly severely condemned. For instance, Giovambatista d’Andrea Giusti from Siena, nicknamed “the superior,” was condemned to the galleys “forever” after falsifying money so that it resembled the coinage produced by the Florentine government’s mint on the 26 of February 1554.\textsuperscript{97} The Otto also condemned a certain Florentine by the name of Antonio di Francesco Ulivieri “who pretended to be Spanish [and convicted] for [being a] falsifier and cheater of letters of credit.”\textsuperscript{98} His sentence was not assigned a definite amount of time, rather it stipulated that he would be on board until he made peace with the merchants he scorned.

By far, the most oft-cited crime for prisoners was theft, as about a quarter of the men on board were charged with this condemnation. Bartolomeo di Lorenzo, known as “the sword maker” (\textit{lo spadaio}) was sentenced to time at sea by authorities in Orvieto on 8 May 1552 for stealing, while a weaver by the name of Mattio di Giovanni received six years for the act in February 1551 from the Otto.\textsuperscript{99} Another prominent category noted by Centurioni was the charge of “\textit{mariuolo},” literally meaning “scoundrel,” which likely indicated that the felon had tricked, scammed, or cheated someone. Naples native Giovaniacopo di Baldassari, for instance, was

\textsuperscript{95} ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 25. Also cited in The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 9775.
\textsuperscript{96} ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 56.
\textsuperscript{97} ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 42. Also cited in The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 9852. “Giovambatista d’Andrea Giusti da Siena detto superno, per falsatore di moneta da Maestri di Zecca di Firenze adì 26 di febbraio 1553 per sempre.” Year updated to reflect modern calendar (1554) in text.
\textsuperscript{98} ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 29. “Antonio di Francesco Ulivieri fiorentino che si fa spagmuolo per falsificatore et truffatore di letter di cambio da gl’ otto di balia à di 16 di luglio ne’ puo uscire senza havere accordato li mercanti.”
\textsuperscript{99} ASF, MdP, Vol. 627, fol. 36.
convicted on this charge on 13 September 1551 for three years from authorities in Rome for pretending that he had a proper licence (for what, it does not say).

Violent crimes also made up a noteworthy proportion of the offences committed. In May 1548 a man called Niccodemo, or Nemo Sabatino Pallai, from Pistoia, was sentenced to three years by the Otto on an assault charge, while the Frenchman Andrea Brai similarly received three years for injuries and the use of force or “sforzamenti” (likely referring to sexual assault) in July 1551. It seems one received more time if the recipient of the assault was of some importance to the state. As an illustration, a certain Giovanni di Salvadore from Poggio alla Lastra was sentenced to five years in May 1554 for having wounded the Captain of Val di Bagno. Serra di Batista from Campeggio in Bologna was also charged in June 1552 “for having taken money to kill someone.”

The presence of women in acts of assault was also noted. For instance, Giovannantonio di Iacopo del Padovano from Siena was sentenced to five years on 3 May 1553 “for having thrown filth (brutture) in the face of a woman.” This was also true for cases involving domestic violence, as Giovanni di Pasquale from Lucario in Bologna received three years from Pistoian authorities for injuring his wife. Life sentences at sea were typically reserved for more serious crimes of violence, as in the case of Senso di Giusto from Monterchi, who was “confined in the galley for life” “for having raped and de-virginized a girl of thirteen years.” Lorenzo di Cecchiano from Carda was similarly ordered to permanently remain in the galleys after being

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100 ASF, MdP, Vol. 627, fol. 51.  
101 For Niccodemo, see ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 44. Also cited in The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 10855. For Andrea Brai, see ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 38.  
102 ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 60.  
104 ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 38. “Giovannantonio di Iacopo del padovano da Siena per havere giettato brutture nel viso à una donna, venne da Siena per anni cinque à di 3 di Maggio 1553”  
105 ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 52v. “106—Senso di giusto da monterchi per havere sforzato et sverginato una fanciulla di tredici anni dal capitano dal Borgo San Selpolcro à di 13 d’aprile 1548 continato in galera in vita”
convicted for homicide by the vicar of San Giovanni on 29 May 1548.\footnote{ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 25v.}

Given the succinctness of these entries, it is difficult to judge the consistency of the sentences given. For instance, a homicide charge was not automatic grounds for a life sentence. The Otto charged a certain Mario di Piero from Perugino with only three years for killing his wife in May 1554, and a certain Giovanfrancesco di Giovanni from Piccardia received the same sentence from authorities in Rome for homicide in March 1552.\footnote{ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 49v.} Furthermore, it is extremely difficult to know if the presence of weapons, and which ones for that matter, featured in the crimes discussed above. However, there were a few cases noted that sent men to the galleys solely for getting caught with arms. On 26 December 1551, Lauretto di Baldassare from Cortona was condemned to three years for “having given an arquebus to someone.”\footnote{Ibid., fol. 50.}

Almost two years later in September 1553, Biago di Enardino from Sambuca (Zambuca?) was sentenced by the commissioner of the ducal bands for having taken a whole host of weapons, including a lance, a pair of mail sleeves, a sword and an arquebus.\footnote{ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 39.} Likely a member of the ducal militia, Biago received a sentence of “à beneplacito.” Ciecco di Goro from Casoli, nicknamed “iron,” was condemned “forever” for having aimed (imberciato), and presumably fired, an arquebus at an attempted target.\footnote{ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 58.}

\begin{quote}
\textit{Violence in the Eyes of the State}

Interestingly, in contrast to Florence, civilian weapons were commonplace in southern Germany. In her study on the culture of warfare and arms in early modern Germany, Tlusty demonstrated how male heads of households had a civic obligation to store and bear arms. Consequently, in Augsburg, a ban on carrying weapons could
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\item[106] ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 25v.
\item[107] ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 49v. Ibid., fol. 50.
\item[109] ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 58.
\item[110] ASF, MdP, vol. 627, fol. 58v. “1184—Ciecco di goro da casoli alias ferro per havere imberciato, da Signori Otto di Balia à di 8 di Febbraio 1554 per sempre”
\end{footnotes}
be ascribed as a penalty. One such case occurred in 1548 when the butcher Hans Geiger was slapped with a twelve-month ban after attacking his colleague with a sword and knife in their place of business.\textsuperscript{111} Similarly, the Augsburg cloth finisher Matheis Koch was prohibited from carrying weapons in 1585 after he was locked up for public drunkenness and urinated in his cellmate’s food bowl.\textsuperscript{112}

Even though weapons were permissible, violence was still a punishable offence in the eyes of southern German states. Men (and women) in these cities were required to report all verbal and physical fights, along with the salient details, within twenty-four hours of the altercation.\textsuperscript{113} In order to fend off future quarrels, town councils lowered or waved fines if the accuser retracted his disparaging remarks on public record.\textsuperscript{114} Authorities were sympathetic to the challenging of one’s honour, as a 1537 proclamation from the Augsburg Council explained that men were exempt from punishment for drawing their weapon first if “someone had touched the other with such insulting words, injurious to honour, that the injured party was incited and caused to draw his weapon first in order to save his honour.”\textsuperscript{115} Official apologies were also encouraged and valued by authorities. In Augsburg, Tlusty demonstrated that the insults hurled at one another were recorded in the public file and formal apologies were made by using the following template: “What I said or did against you occurred out of (Tlusty added here: ‘anger, drunkenness, lack of judgment, etc.’). I ask you to forgive me, for I know nothing of you that would suggest anything but that you are an honorable man.”\textsuperscript{116}

Although not as explicitly stated, the Otto in Florence were also sympathetic to men who fought to protect their honour. Authors of supplications reiterated the disparaging remarks or behaviour endured at length in an attempt to obtain sympathy from state officials. Although seemingly immaterial to modern readers, these details

\textsuperscript{111} Tlusty, \textit{The Martial Ethic}, 74.
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 75.
\textsuperscript{113} Ibid., 64.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} Qted. and trans in Roper, \textit{Oedipus and the Devil}, 116.
\textsuperscript{116} Tlusty, \textit{The Martial Ethic}, 64-65.
were considered pivotal in the period, as the Otto acted more lenient to wrongdoers who were challenged and/or provoked. In a case from 1603, a man by the name of Berna di Domenico Lippi hit a woman after she called him a rascal. The woman’s son and brother retaliated and went after Berna with clubs for revenge. Berna used his sword as a weapon of defence and unintentionally killed both men. Since Berna was the victim of an attack, he escaped the murder charges, but did receive two years in Livorno for defending himself with too much force.

As mentioned above, fines and sentences were reduced if foes publically took back their injurious words after a conflict. “Fare pace” (“to make peace”) was the Italian equivalent of this sentiment, and if enemies had reconciled, authorities were more apt to lessen or forgive sentences. In a supplication addressed to Francesco I in 1565, a lower-level Flemish painter by the name of Gaspar de Gurt pleaded for his one-thousand lire fine to be pardoned or reduced. He explained that in August of that same year, he stabbed his colleague, another Flemish painter named Jacopo di Jacopo Fiammingo, at Master Friedrich Sustris’ residence, where the pair lived. After going out and having some drinks, Gaspar explained that he and Jacopo had a verbal altercation after getting in bed, causing Gaspar to grab the bread knife lying nearby and stab Jacopo in the stomach. Because he was “poverissimo” and unable to support himself without earning a living from his painting, Gaspar asked for his sentence to be forgiven or to alternatively live in confinement, which would forgive the fine. He supported this request by explaining that he and Jacopo have since made peace and from this event, he has suffered “many hardships and ruins.”

The request was forwarded to Otto secretary Lorenzo Corboli, who explained that the painters, along with Master Friedrich, were working on a project for Giorgio Vasari. Corboli added that Gasper was immediately apprehended after the crime, put in prison, and fined, and that the artisan was appealing the sentence because he was a “poor foreigner” and supported himself with his “arms.” Corboli believed the two

117 Brackett, Criminal Justice and Crime, 106.
118 ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2247, fol. 18 recto. For the full transcription of the document, see Appendix, no. 1.
men were drunk, but reiterated that the men made peace. He thought it was futile to temporarily banish the perpetrator, since he was “young, unmarried, and Flemish,” meaning his whereabouts would have been virtually impossible to manage since his ties to Florence were tenuous. Given Corboli’s recommendation, Francesco I reduced Gurt’s fine by half; thus, he was pardoned for the crime after paying five-hundred lire.

Making peace was valued by the state, as it implied that no further violence would follow, an extremely important factor in a society that still practiced vendetta. Even though vendette were less common by the second half of the sixteenth century, the state still struggled to control warring familial factions in the countryside.\textsuperscript{119}

If an opponent had died during an altercation, the murderer could make amends with the victim’s family to obtain the benefits of “fare pace.”\textsuperscript{120} In a supplication from March 1565, after completing a year of his two-year confinement in Volterra, militia member “Stefano di San Giorgio Paccagli” from the parish of Palazzuolo petitioned the Duke for a pardon for the remainder of his sentence.\textsuperscript{121} In the Otto’s review of his request, it appears Paccagli received temporary banishment for using arms against a certain Batista Borghigriani with his relative Lisco Paccagli, who in the end was charged with Borghigriani’s murder. In order to increase his chances of success, Stefano noted that not only had he made peace with the deceased’s family, he became “their relative.” Although left ambiguous, Paccagli likely entered the Borghigriani family by marriage, either via himself or through one of his offspring. Marriage among nobles was often used as a vehicle for joining opposing families or for restoring peace after conflict. This case demonstrates that the practice appeared to trickle down to the lower classes as well. This appeared to be the deciding factor for Francesco I, as his final verdict given on 5 December 1565 declared, “if he has the


\textsuperscript{120} For more on the legal process of forgiving crimes, see Stephen Cummins, “Forgiving Crimes in Early Modern Naples,” in *Cultures of Conflict Resolution*, 255-279.

\textsuperscript{121} ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2247, un-paginated, after 135.
Although weapons were prohibited, the state did have a system in which residents could apply for licences to carry weapons legally. In 1565, Master Giovanni Stradano, for instance, asked for permission to legally own and carry weapons in Florence and its dominion. Addressed to Florence’s Duke, the supplicant’s letter stated (Fig. 13)\textsuperscript{122}

Master Giovanni di Giovanni della Strada, Flemish Painter, servant of your illustrious excellency humbly requests a pardon to own [and] to carry offensive and defensive arms, namely a sword, a dagger, and a jacket, since your illustrious excellency had granted them to him [for] many years…\textsuperscript{123}

Master Giovanni Stradano, also known as Johannes Stradanus (1523-1605), worked as a prominent artist at the Medici court. A native of Bruges, Stradano relocated to Florence around 1550.\textsuperscript{124} In 1565—the year he wrote the aforesaid supplication—the artist was busy preparing decorations for the December wedding of Cosimo’s first born son, Prince Francesco I.\textsuperscript{125}

Letters like the one Stradano submitted were called supplications (or le suppliche). Introduced by Cosimo I at the start of his reign, supplications replaced the somewhat lengthy appeals process practiced in previous years.\textsuperscript{126} These written

\textsuperscript{122} It remains unclear as to whether he was addressing Cosimo I de’ Medici or his son Francesco, as the latter started to serve as the former’s regent in 1564, especially for administrative tasks.
\textsuperscript{123} ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2247, fol. 74v. “Mastro Giovanni di Giovanni: della Strada Pittore Fiammingo servitore di vostra eccellentia illustrissima La supplica humilmente affarli gratia di possere portare l’arme offensive, e difensive cioè spada, pugnale e giacco, sicome li eccellentia vostra illustrissima gli concesse molt’anni sono…” For the full transcription of the document, see Appendix, no. 2.
\textsuperscript{125} All of the city’s most prominent artists were tasked with creating elaborate, ephemeral street art for Francesco’s bride’s Joanna of Austria’s official entry into the city. Baroni, “A Flemish Artist,” 87-88.
\textsuperscript{126} However, as Brackett pointed out, the supplication system appears to have been no faster than the appeals process. Brackett, Criminal Justice and Crime, 142.
requests could be submitted for a variety of reasons. For instance, bandits often submitted supplications to return to Florence safely so they could pay stately fines. However, the majority found in the Otto’s files pled for a reduction in fines and sentences or a special exemption from the contemporary ban on arms. In 1568, Cosimo called the supplication practice “good custom,” explaining that

“any kind of person, for comfort and facility in negotiating, could write to us and have the letter arrive in our hands. From this many good results ensued. Everyone could always reach us and they could be certain that no one would ever come to know that which was written… in this way… they could speak their mind without anyone else, except for us, knowing it…”

Reviewing these letters must have been a time-intensive task for the state, especially when the process demanded supplemental information from other administrations in the magistracy. The fact that Duke Cosimo devoted such a vast amount of stately resources to the reviewing of supplications demonstrates the level of importance he ascribed to contemporary matters of crime and justice. By personally involving himself in the process, Cosimo I used his own power as a strategy to remain in control of his inhabitants. This way, he could monitor any potential threats to the overall security of the Florentine state.

In most cases, applicants employed scribes to assist in the letter-writing process. The cost that Tuscan supplicants were charged for this service remains unclear, but Davis noted that the price of submitting a letter of remission (a similar type of request in early modern France) equalled the salary of an unskilled labourer for over two months. However, it is important to note that these documents were larger undertakings, and presumably required more resources than the supplication

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127 Ibid., 16.
128 Qtd. and trans. by James E. Shaw, “Writing to the Prince: Supplications, Equity and Absolutism in Sixteenth-Century Tuscany,” *Past and Present*, 215 (May 2012), 57. “…che ogni sorta di pesona per lor commodo et facilità del negoziare ci scriveva indirizzandoci le lettere in nostra man propria; da questo nasceva molti buoni effetti che ognuno sempre ci poteva parlare et quel che scriveva era certo che nessuno mai lo sapeva et così potevamo sapere quanto ci era fatto intender et loro dire li lor bisogni senza che altri che noi lo sapessi…” For the original quote, see Fasano Guarini, “Considerazioni su giustizia,” 143.
letters examined here. Requests followed a somewhat standardized template, although the detail and amount of information provided could vary. As James Shaw illustrated, supplications contained five basic components: an incriptio (a ducal address, such as “Illustrissimo et Eccellentissimo Signore Duca”), an intitulatio (the name(s) of the supplicant(s) submitting the petition), a narratio (the narrative explaining the reasoning behind the request), a petitio (the actual request being sought), and a closing apprecatio (the closing statement offering prayers and well wishes for the Duke).  

Although supplications began as one-off requests meant for special cases, the process was completely standardized by the 1570s, and consequently affected future legislation practices. 

Although formally addressed to the Duke, supplications were first reviewed by the Duke’s first secretary. Upon receiving a supplication, the segretario’s first task was to decide whether the request required information from another magistracy in the duke’s retinue. If so, the supplication was forwarded to the appropriate agency for review, and the secretary or chancellor from that organization provided a written analysis of the request at the bottom of the original supplication. The additional comments typically summarized the letter’s contents, added any pertinent information held by the agency, and concluded with the organization’s official recommendation. The supplication was subsequently returned to the ducal secretary, and the Duke’s final ruling was recorded (typically via the hand of his secretary) in just a few short words on the official supplication (Figs. 14-15).

Brackett deduced that more supplications were awarded or partly granted than rejected. He reported that most denials were due to a petitioner’s “base moral character” or to the “repulsiveness of the crime itself.” Given the concise and somewhat cryptic language, some of the Duke’s final rulings prove extremely hard to

130 Shaw, “Writing to the Prince,” 62.
131 Ibid., 82.
132 The Duke’s first secretary from 1546-76 was Lelio Torelli. Shaw explained this process in relation to the Mercanzia court in “Writing to the Prince,” 61-62.
133 Brackett, Criminal Justice and Crime, 74.
134 Ibid.
decipher. It appears this practice similarly confused contemporaries, as Shaw—who has worked on supplication letters for Florence’s merchant court—explained that some decisions were “so vaguely worded that the parties had to ask for clarification in a further supplication.” Nonetheless, there were standardized rulings that were oft used and easily understood, including “habbi gratia” (pardoned) and “concedesse” (request granted). A third ruling that frequently appeared in supplication letters was “non altro,” short for “non occore altro,” meaning “nothing else needed.” Although somewhat ambiguous, this phrasing likely indicated the request’s denial. It probably corresponded to something like “case closed,” meaning no further action would be taken, and the previous sentencing would stand. Conditional offers were also given and often done when encouraging feuding parties to make peace.

Connections to the state, especially ties to the government’s guard or military, were often cited in supplication letters to improve chances of approval. Davis similarly witnessed this practice in her review of French remission letters. In the first line of a supplication letter from December 1565, the petitioner Domenico Tedesco identified himself as an ex-lieutenant of the Medici’s German guard, and explained that he was returning to Florence in search of work. Since he believed there were people in Florence who still wished to harm him, Domenico requested an arms licence, although he did not mention the type of weapons he intended on carrying. In his assessment of the request, Corboli corroborated Domenico’s former role in the guard, reminding the Duke that he had served his excellency. Just seven days later on 12 December, Domenico’s request was approved.

Successful supplicants asking to bear arms, such as the ex-lieutenant, were awarded with physical paper licences confirming their immunity from current legislation. Yet, it was imperative that licensees carry this paperwork while armed. In May 1551, a certain Antonio di Francesco from Santo Pagolo was thrown in prison by the Otto after wearing a half armour at night without his permit. He was only later

\[135\] Shaw, “Writing to the Prince,” 61-62.
\[136\] Davis, Fiction in the Archives, 16.
\[137\] ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2247, fol. 144 verso.
released after proving he was armed because he was protecting the head of the ducal militia from the Tuscan town of Casentino.  

In August of that same year, a servant from Siena named Giovanni Antonio, who worked in the service of the prominent soldier Signore Gualterotto, was picked up for carrying a sword at night in Florence without the proper paperwork. He explained that he was unaware that he needed a licence, and because he was a foreigner (Siena was not conquered by the Medici regime until 1555), he was not familiar with Florentine laws and customs. Moreover, Giovanni explained that he routinely carried arms day and night like the other servants working for Signore Gualterotto. In Florence, servants could obtain permission to carry weapons for the defence of their masters. However, by October 1563, servants no longer had this privilege without their masters being present. 

Unsympathetic to his ignorance, the Otto incarcerated Giovanni and sentenced him to two pulls on the strappato ("dua tratti du fune") and a ten-scudi fine. In his supplication letter, the defendant further explained that Signore Gualterotto was in the nearby town of Vernia at the time and that the crime was ultimately his fault, as he had not submitted a supplication on his behalf. After receiving Giovanni’s explanation, the Duke’s secretary and chancellor Lelio Torelli consulted the active secretary of the Otto that year, Francesco Borghini, who corroborated the servant’s story and suggested his pardon from the assigned punishment.

Once awarded, it appears licences could then be voided without notice. In a bando from August 1581, Duke Francesco I did just that stating

That up to the present day, for those that have obtained the licence and faculty to carry arms of whatever sort and quality, [the licenses] have been revoked, annulled, and cancelled for everyone, and are no longer valid in the future, per the aforesaid His Most Serene Highness

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139 ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2228, fol. 373.
141 Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 10, 165-66. “Che insino al presente giorno havessi ottenuto licenza e facoltà di portare Arme di qual si voglia sorte & qualità, come dalla prefata Sua Altezza Serenissima sono state a ciascuno revocate, annullate, e casse, & più non durano per l’avvenire”
The notice served as a warning and stated that transgressors would be punished according to the current sentences. It is unclear as to why these privileges were no longer valid, but the notice indicated that this proclamation excluded courtiers, those on the Duke’s payroll, and knights of “the Order, and Religion of Saint Stephen, and the knights of the Religion Jerusalem, vulgarly called of Malta,” clarifying that they were still entitled to “the same immunity, privileges, licences, and faculty” that they possessed prior to the bando’s issuing. Another group exempt from the injunction were those listed in the Duke’s militia (li descritti). The licences that these men possessed for wheellock pistols in the appropriate size were to remain valid and intact.

The time of day that arms were worn was another factor considered important, as petitioners of licenses often included when their requested weapons were to be worn. Options were classified quite generally, however, such as day, night, or in some instances, twenty-four hours a day. Night time was considered extremely dangerous, as more crimes occurred after the sun went down, a fact recognised by the increase in the Otto’s policemen patrolling the city streets. Thus, state agencies made it harder to obtain permission to carry arms in the evening. Walker explained that some arms licences in Venice were awarded for daytime use only. Moreover, a 1603 bando issued for Prato ordered that everyone, aside from public officials, were prohibited from carrying weapons at night between February and October.

Although it remains unclear what the arms licences in Florence physically looked like, we do know what type of information they contained thanks to a supplemental document attached to Stradano’s aforementioned 1565 supplication to bear arms. Stradano’s request was essentially asking for a renewal of the arms privileges he had been granted in 1558. The supplemental document, likely written by Borghini, was entitled “Copy of the licence of the Arms of Master Giovanni [the] Flemish Painter” dated 14 March 1558 (Fig. 16). The information on the loose-leaf paper reads

142 “dell’Ordine, e Religione di Santo Stefano, & li Cavalieri della Religione Ierosolimitana, vulgarmente detta di Malta…”; “le medesime immunità, privilegii, licentie, & facultà”
143 Walker, “Honour and the Culture of Male Venetian Nobles,” 152.
144 Brackett, Criminal Justice and Crime, 81-82.
Master Giovanni di Giovanni della Strada, Flemish Painter of the age of 35 years, black hair, very bushy beard, white in the face, mediocre stature, has the faculty to own and carry in the state of his illustrious excellency by the grace of his excellency a jacket, sword, and dagger as the son-in-law of Master Giovanni Rosti, as noted in the file of supplications under number 320.

Giovanni Rosti, known also by his Flemish name Jan Rost (1545 active in Florence – 1564 death) was a prominent tapestry maker in Florence working for Duke Cosimo I. Originating from Brussels, Rost—together with Nicholas Karcher—started Florence’s first Flemish tapestry workshop in 1545. Stradano met Rost in Venice, and presumably followed him to Florence, where he worked in Rost and Karcher’s workshop designing tapestry cartoons. Roughly a decade later, Stradano began to receive his own commissions at court and would eventually come to run his own workshop working in a variety of media. Art historians have often noted the close relationship between Rost and Stradano in both their personal and professional lives. However, it is now clear from Stradano’s licence that the pair were related, as Borghini referred to Rost as Stradano’s father-in-law. Although this fact was heretofore unknown, intermarrying between artisans and craftsmen in similar trades occurred quite frequently in many early modern European cities.

The information presented on this licence, which included the painter’s age along with a description of his physical attributes, appears to resemble the data listed on contemporary passports issued for travelling. Without an image, however, the licensee’s identity must have been extremely hard to verify. The vague description (black hair, full beard, etc.) does not add much clarification either. This uncertainty might help explain the anxiety that contemporaries felt about maintaining consistent external appearances, especially while carrying weapons, as a 1564 ban issued for the

146 Baroni, “A Flemish Artist,” 60.
148 For more, see Ibid, 59-60.
The dominion of Montepulciano prohibited any one from wearing a mask or costume while bearing arms.  

In the last line of Stradano’s licence copy, the reader’s attention is drawn to Jan Rost’s initial supplication, identified as “number 320.” Submitted on 8 January 1558, Rost or “Mastro Giovanni di Rosta Araziere” asked for permission for four of his “domestici” to receive licences for carrying swords, daggers, and mail jackets. Rost listed each man by name: Pietro and Jacomo di Rosta (his two brothers), Stradano, and Baltasar Boxhovqette, “who lives above his workshop.” Rost somewhat curiously noted that all four men were Flemish, and if necessary, they will all, with the addition of the “said supplicant,” take up arms “in service of your illustrious excellency.”

Rost might have added this last phrase in hopes of drawing on the widely-held belief that Flemish men were good soldiers. In Florence, the Flemish were considered part of a larger group of “Germans,” meaning anyone originating from the low countries (mania bassa). In fact, the Medici’s official guard—who protected the family for over three hundred years—contained one hundred “German” soldiers, who originated from Flanders, the Netherlands, Germany, and Valonne. In a popular Florentine ditty from the mid-sixteenth century entitled “Canto di Lanzi Alabardieri,” the fearlessness of these “northern” halberdiers was commemorated. The first verse exclaims

\[Shricche, Shricche Halberdiers,\]  
\[The Flemish are good warriors.\]  
\[If you want to make powerful war,\]  
\[Pay the Lanze [German soldiers] generously;\]  
\[And you will see German people,\]  
\[How large is their power.\]

149 Brackett, Criminal Justice and Crime, 81-82.  
150 ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2233, fol. 320. For the full transcription of the document, see Appendix, no. 4.  
151 Grazzini, Anton Francesco, Tutti i Trionfi, Carri, Mascherate o Canti carnestolteschi andati per Firenze dal tempo del Magnifico Lorenzo de’ Medici fino all’anno 1559, (Lucca: Cosmopoli, 1750), 256-57. Thanks to Maurizio Arfaioli for drawing this reference to my attention. For more on the Medici German Guard, see the Medici Archive Project’s exhibition catalogue “Omaggio a Cosimo: Cento lanzi per il Principe. Exhibition catalogue: Florence 5 June – 29 September 2019, edited by Arfaioli, Pasquale Focarile, and Marco Merlo (Florence:
German soldiers undoubtedly owed their militaristic reputations (for better or worse) to the popularization of German and Swiss mercenary soldiers, the *Landsknechtes* and *Reisläufer*, respectively. Broadsheets depicting these characters circulated around late-fifteenth and sixteenth-century Europe, and the militaristic figures also adorned a slew of household objects, including decorative glass, oven titles, dishes, jugs, and tops of goblets.\textsuperscript{152}

It appears the touting of Flemish martial ability did not hurt matters, as Rost’s request was granted on 13 February 1558, a little over a month after its submission. Interestingly, Torelli did not send Rost’s supplication to the Otto for further information, signifying that Rost’s status at court was quite elevated. Before obtaining their licences, however, it appears it was necessary to have witnesses confirm the recipients’ identity. Medici guard chaplain Hadriano Elie de Candidis and ducal printer Lorenzo Torrentino, who printed some of the first versions of Vasari’s *Lives of the Artists*, both served as witnesses, confirming the identity and place of origin for each of the men in Rost’s supplication. Three letters were submitted in total, and they were all dated 13 March 1558, one day before the issue date shown on Stradano’s original licence. One letter was submitted for Giovanni Stradano, confirming that he originated from Flanders and was Rost’s son-in-law. A second letter reiterated the same information for Rost’s brothers, “Pietro and the other Jacomo,” who were tapestry makers from Brussels, and the last confirmed the identity of Baltasar, who also originated from Brussels and had worked with Rost for the last thirteen years in Florence.

\begin{footnotes}
\item[152] Both Hale and Rublack have discussed how this popularization affected contemporary perceptions of German mercenaries. For more see, Hale, *Artists and Warfare in the Renaissance* (1990) 59, 61-62 and Rublack, *Dressing Up*, 140-43.
\end{footnotes}
De Candidis and Torrentino were both high-ranking Flemish men working in prominent positions at the Medici court. They vouched for their fellow countrymen’s heritage, profession, and identity, thus, shedding light on what information was considered pertinent for the granting of arms licences. It appears accountability played a role, along with places of origin, profession, and social class. As is obvious from Stradano’s copy, Rost’s supplication to equip four members of his workshop with swords, daggers, and mail jackets was approved. Whether the workshop needed protection or only sought these permits to demonstrate their elevated status remains unknown. Interestingly, Stradano’s supplication for renewal was submitted in 1565, the year of Rost’s death. This appears to suggest Stradano needed to transfer his arms licence into his own name. Rather curiously, Stradano’s request for renewal appears to have been denied.

The status of the supplicant and his motivation behind the request appeared to heavily influence the application’s outcome. Although the reasons given by supplicants range in both detail and length, most solicitors stated that they had enemies and required arms for protection and self-defence. It was not uncommon to list an enemy by name, as Cellini did with Cardinale Capdonne in his 1562 supplication letter to Duke Cosimo.153 In 1544, Cosimo approved Niccolò Guicciardini’s request for two University of Pisa students to outfit themselves in defensive weaponry because they feared a “sospetto di grande importantia.”154 It also seemed necessary to explicitly state what these weapons would not be used for. For instance, Sebastiano Fraiamere from Augsburg, who worked for a German merchant in Florence, was granted a licence for a sword and dagger in August 1551.155 He explained that he needed these weapons because he had enemies and was a foreigner, but added that these objects were solely for defence, “not to make violence or harm to anyone.”156

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156 “non per far’ violenzia o’ ingiuria adalchuno”
As demonstrated in the case of Rost’s supplication, men in high status positions working in various trades at court appeared to have been obvious candidates for arms licences. In a 1599 letter, Eleonora de’ Medici-Gonzaga asked ducal advisor Belisario Vinta to assist with an arms supplication for the musician Francesco Rasi. In a 1562 supplication submitted by Cellini, it seems the goldsmith had already possessed an arms’ licence, as he reminded Cosimo, “just as you had done for all your good servants, you granted me the right to carry weapons.” Cellini’s supplication concerned the retrieval of his mail shirt, currently being held in the custody of Corboli and the Otto. After lending the item to his friend Messer Libradoro, the Otto had apparently intercepted the garment on its way back to Cellini. The artist explained that this very shirt was sent to him from Lyon once, and when it was stopped by the Otto, they happily passed it along to him. Cellini blamed Corboli for the inconvenience, writing that the Otto’s secretary “has informed me that he is not willing to give it to me to keep as in the past without the permission of Your Most Illustrious Excellency.” In the end, Cosimo granted Cellini’s supplication, and the mail shirt was returned to its rightful owner.

As evident from his many supplications, Cellini cherished his authorization to carry arms and took full advantage of the allowance by maintaining a fully-stocked arsenal. A 1538 inventory of his apartment in Rome reveals that he owned four firearms (schoppi), an Italian polearm (partigiana), and a slew of mail garments, including two jackets, a hood (una cappa da cavalchare), a mezze teste, a pair of sleeves, and gloves. In another inventory from 1570, the goldsmith also possessed...
two daggers in the “pistoleti” style, a knife ‘alla turchescha,’ a sword, a dagger with silver mounts, a one and half-handed sword, and a zagaglia,” all in the antechamber of his apartment in Florence.\(^{162}\) However, a note in the document indicated that the last two items listed (the one and a half-handed sword and the zagaglia) were to be confiscated by the Otto.\(^{163}\)

**Weapons & the Church**

Even if requests were more likely to be approved from the upper-classes, a wide variety of residents submitted petitions to bear arms. In an interesting supplication record submitted to Cosimo in 1551, a thirty-year old Portuguese priest by the name of Francesco Barradas asked for special permission to carry weapons on an upcoming trip to Florence.\(^{164}\) Francesco noted that he had already received permission to bear arms in his parish, but required the extension of this authorization because he had to visit the archbishop in Florence for work. Calling himself peaceful and religious, Francesco explained that he never caused disorder to anyone. He stated that a rowdy group of parish famers—who previously menaced him, almost taking his life—befriended a group of young citizens currently residing in Florence. Because he lived in fear of his enemy’s Florentine allies, Francesco asked to carry his concealed dagger and have his man servant armed with his sword while visiting Florence on business. He demonstrated the urgency of this request by explaining that his enemies were given permission from his excellency to carry arms. He reassured the letter’s recipient that he would only employ the weapons to “save his life” and concluded by proffering up a prayer for Cosimo’s happiness.\(^{165}\) It appears this reasoning was not


\(^{163}\) Ibid.

\(^{164}\) ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2228, fol. 537.

\(^{165}\) “a salvar’ la vita”
enough to convince the Otto or Cosimo, and the Portuguese priest’s application was denied.

Even though ducal adviser Francesco Vinta intriguingly described a sword and a pair of spurs as “more for priests than for knights” in 1551, as seen in Francesco’s supplication, religious occupations did not deter men from using weapons or participating in violent acts. In fact, in mid seventeenth-century Rome, some gun laws were specifically created to dissuade the carrying of weapons among ecclesiastical men during religious functions. The proclamations addressed “ecclesiastics, regular and cloistered [clergy] of whatever institution,” notwithstanding their “state, rank, order, condition, or pre-eminence, however sublime and most worthy of respect.” In Tuscany, as stated above, the priests of Castocaro carried polearms to Francesco I’s dismay, and a priest from the Malaspina family received a five-year sentence in Florence’s Stinche prison after attempting to murder Giulio de’ Medici, son of Duke Alessandro I.

In addition to committing crimes, men of the church were also susceptible to attacks. In another avviso from Milan dated 16 August 1581, the report began by saying “the disturbances of this city are badly growing, as they begin to transfer to the religious.” In the report, we learn of a particularly heinous crime about a friar who was murdered, cut into pieces, and dumped into a ditch near a castle. The chronicle stated that a woman was found secretly burning the habit of the deceased in her house, and the foul odour caught the attention of a neighbour, who “immediately imagined they were from the dead.” The nearby resident notified the authorities, who immediately took the suspicious woman into custody, where she later confessed to killing the clergyman with the help of an accomplice, another friar from

166 ASF, MdP, vol. 1176, ins. 11, fol. 34. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 3227. “più da prelati che da cavalieri”
170 “subito imaginò fossero del morto”
Sant'Angelo degli Zoccolanti. Apparently, the pair had targeted the victim for some money he had. We learn that the woman’s co-conspirator quickly escaped, changing out of his religious habit and into the clothes of a laymen. Adding to the downturn of the city’s circumstances, the avviso also noted that another friar from the order of Santo Ambrogio was at large because he had housed a woman who left her husband and had also stolen money from him. The document informed us that her spouse, along with ecclesiastical officials had actively searched for the friar, who was later found behind the main altar of a church and sentenced to prison of the archbishop, where he was currently being interrogated.

Perhaps the most famous example of a clergyman-turned-killer was recounted in an avviso from Antwerp, Cologne, Speyer, and Constantinople on 12 August 1589. The report noted the story of the infamous priest “Jacobino” (Jacques Clèment) and his assassination of the French King Henry III de Valois (1551-89). After having been sentenced to death for speaking ill of the French monarch, Jacobino had purportedly requested a private audience with his majesty, as “his conscience force[d] him before he die[d] to reveal grand secrets.” After gaining such close access to the King, the priest apparently stabbed the monarch in the belly with a bread knife, causing him to die the very same day. The famous episode was subsequently commemorated in contemporary visual imagery, one example being the woodcut by Frans Hogenberg now housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (Fig. 17). The report also curiously mentioned a rumour circulating that suggested the king was assassinated by someone dressed in a habit before Jacobino had met with him.

In Florence, the Otto considered itself “protector of the church,” and tried cases concerning “blasphemy, visiting a monastery without a licence, publication of books prohibited by papal index, sexual relations between Christians and Jews, witchcraft, incest, and sodomy.” They also enforced punishments conferred from the ecclesiastical court, and carried out sentences for heretics tried by the

172 “la sua conscientia lo sforza innanzi che mora a palesar gran secreti”
Inquisition. Since it served as a communal gathering place, the church was often another setting for violent crimes. Thus, it was not uncommon for men, especially stately leaders, to don protection underneath their clothing. On the day of the infamous Pazzi conspiracy of 1478, assassins hugged Giuliano de’ Medici in Florence’s Duomo to see if he was outfitted in armour before advancing with their attack. He was not, and subsequently received twenty stabs with a dagger as a result. Galeazzo Maria Sforza suffered a similar fate in 1476 in Milan’s church of Santo Stefano. His courtier Bernardino Corio explained that Sforza had decided against wearing his cuirass that morning because it made him look “too fat.” In a letter sent on 16 September 1600, Emilio de’ Cavalieri notified the Medici court that a seventy-year old man in the Roman curial named Marco Antonio Fiorenzo from Perugia had been killed with a stiletto on Sunday morning at the Church of San Silvestor at Monte Cavallo.

Lorenzino de’ Medici, notable assassin of Duke Alessandro I de’ Medici (1510-37), was similarly attacked on a Sunday morning while exiting the church of San Polo with his uncle Alessandro Soderini in Venice. In a letter from Medici court officer Pier Filippo Pandolfini to Duke Cosimo in February 1548, we learn that two assassins from Volterra were tasked with Lorenzino’s execution. Apparently, the killers, also known as “Riccio” and “Bebo,” worked together to simultaneously attack both men, as the document noted that Lorenzino received a strong blow to the head, in addition to stab wounds. Alessandro was also assaulted, but managed to escape by jumping into a small boat. Riccio and Bebo subsequently fled the scene.

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174 Ibid
175 Timothy McCall, “Brilliant Bodies: Material Culture and the Adornment of Men in North Italy’s Quattrocento Courts,” *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 16, no. 1/2 (Fall 2013), 471.
176 Ibid
178 For a more comprehensive examination of this particular episode, see Stefano Dall’Aglio, *The Duke’s Assassin: Exile and Death of Lorenzino de’ Medici*, trans. by Donald Weinstein (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 159-167.
179 Ibid.
while Lorenzino was taken to his house, where Pandolfini noted that he survived for only fifteen minutes more from the injuries, “not having other arms than his sword.” The report also noted that the wounds inflicted upon his companion Alessandro were not life threatening.

The church also appeared to serve as a place of refuge for men at large. One such illustration stems from a case discussed on 28 December 1613 in a report sent to the court of Ferdinando I from Otto secretary Taddeo Orselli. The first crime Orselli presented concerned the incident of a sixteen-year-old girl’s murder, who was stabbed and killed in her own house in front of her mother the night before. The killer was identified as Domenico da Ravenna, a servant of Signore Giovanni Visconti, who lived on via San Giovanni, the street where the heinous crime occurred. The suspect had apparently slept with the girl and attempted to forcibly take her as his wife, pleading to both her father and mother to let him do so. Apparently, the father finally acquiesced and agreed to give him his daughter if they married in an official church ceremony, which further intensified the man’s rage, causing him to go down the stairs, only to return with an unsheathed dagger. After this episode, Lucretia, the girl’s mother, attempted to take the weapon from Domenico, but was immediately wounded in the finger. “Out of fear,” the young girl tried to leave the house, causing the perpetrator “to chase after her down the street of San Giovanni with a naked dagger.” Once he caught up with her, he purportedly said something, causing her to return home. Once she arrived at the door, Domenico stabbed her. She tried to flee up the stairs but was stabbed again once she reached the landing. All of this occurred in front of her distraught mother, “who was yelling and crying miserably.” After the incident, Domenico was rumoured to have fled to the church of Santo Spirito for shelter. Since the priests purportedly sent him away, it was thought that he took refuge with a servant of a certain Signore Nuntio.

182 “per la paura”, “gli corse dietro per via San Giovanni col pugnale nudo”
183 “che gridava et piangeva miseramente”
In a separate document sent the same day as secretary Orselli’s, judge Cavallo provided the court with more information pertaining to the case. Cavallo noted that Domenico was angered because their wedding had been deferred since the girl’s family wanted to confirm that he was not already married. Despite many diligent attempts to locate him, Cavallo stated that Domenico was still on the run. The police presumed he was hiding in Santo Spirito, while Cavallo assumed he had either fled the city or was holing up somewhere in the neighbourhood.

In another document dated nine days later, Cavallo informed court officials that Domenico had been captured. Apparently, the defendant had been hiding behind an altar, thought to be owned by the Michelozzi family, in the church of Santa Maria del Carmine. The man was apprehended and taken into custody, and Cavallo sent for a notary from the Otto di Guardia to give secretary Orselli instructions for the trial. Cavallo added that a foreigner who committed murder should not be able to seek refuge in “the house of God,” as a church was not “a receptacle for wrongdoers.” Cavallo stated that criminals should be punished, “so that the secular princes may keep their cities clean of bad people.”

*The Symbolic Power of Arms*

Whether affiliated with the church, the workshop, the court, or the countryside, men in sixteenth-century Florence had a unique relationship with arms and armour. As Lyndal Roper has argued, “symbolically, masculinity was guaranteed when a man took up weapons.” Consequently, arms were pivotal accessories in early modern men’s portraiture. Sitters’ poses seemed to echo these sentiments, as sword hilts were frequently emphasized by placing a hand on one’s hip or by unabashedly gripping the sword’s hilt, as seen in the 1560 portrait by Giovanni Battista Moroni (Fig. 18). However, in some instances, arms were solely props used

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186 “la Casa di Dio”; “recettaculo de’ malfattori”; “che i Principi Seculari possino tenere le loro città mondate da tristi”
for dramatic effect. In his *De imagine sui armata*, poet Andrea Navagero explained
that he wore weapons in his portrait because everyone carried them, “not because [he
was] skilled in fighting.”

The symbolic power of arms is exemplified in a 1560 supplication from a
contadino named Tonino Frosini from the region of Meleto Valdarno. Tonino’s
letter requested permission to outfit himself in a mail jacket with sleeves, as well as a
sword and dagger, and noted that these objects would be worn ten miles outside of the
city. Since he was the “capo della casa,” he explained that he must make several trips
to the markets each day for work. This caused him to regularly return home late in the
evening, making him susceptible to attacks from his enemies. Rather curiously, the
supplicant additionally stated that he was unfit to use the weapons he was petitioning
to carry; he only wished to be seen wearing arms to discourage his adversaries.
Martial ability aside, owners who donned arms appeared ready to defend themselves
at a moment’s notice. Tonino explained that he did not intend to “offend anyone,” but
only wished to prevent further “insults and aches, and lest to be able to more securely
tend to his affairs and to his wife and children.”

In order to obtain further information on Tonino’s character, Torelli forwarded
the case to Amerigo Benci, the vicar overseeing the parish of San Giovanni di
Valderno. A little over two weeks later, Benci sent back a second document with a
summary of Tonino’s request, along with his commentary. Benci wrote

Hence, it has been proved to me from honest men that testify [that] he [is] a
peaceful person and [this is also stated] from the most important people from
his village; and he tends to his business and continually goes to the markets
and frequently returns home at night...

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Antonio Volpi, and Gaetano Cristoforo Volpi, Opera Omnia (Patavii: excudebat J. Cominus
Vulpiorum Aere, 1718), 192-93.
189 ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2235, filz un-numbered, immediately
following page 23. For the full transcription of the document, see Appendix, no. 5.
190 “offendere nessuno”; “insulto et aciacecho et accio possa piu sicuramente provedere a sua
affari et sua donna et figluoli”
191 ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2235, fol. 23. For the full transcription
of the document, see Appendix, no. 5. “Onde mi ha prodotto di huomini dabbene fedì che per
persona pacificha et da primi della sua villa et attende alla sua facende et continuamente va a
mercati et il piu della volta torna a casa di notte…”
After receiving Amerigo’s comments, the supplication was then forwarded to Corboli at the Otto’s headquarters five days later. Corboli noted that the supplicant was a farmer, who requests to bring outside 10 miles of the city a jacket, sleeves, and sword, and dagger and says he himself is unskilled to carry them, but that the request is for the suspected certain enemies of his and because in doing his affairs as head of the household, he is often required to return at home at night.  

Corboli added that he did not have to remind the Duke that there were many arms worn “by the bravi or by the belli in piazza,” and if the Otto granted licences for the reasons that Tonino stated, “in the state there w[ould] be infinite [men] that have more fear than him” wanting to receive permissions as well. Corboli’s reference to the “bravi” or “belli” is interesting. In Cesare Vecellio’s costume book entitled Habiti Antichi et Moderni (ca. 1590), the engraver and painter described “bravi” from Venice and other parts of Italy as hired henchmen, stating “and they serve now one man, now another, for money, swearing and threatening people without cause, causing all sorts of scandals and committing murders.” Although their field of work was often criticized, bravi were considered fashionable dressers. Vecellio explained that these men typically wore tall berets made of velvet and silks, donned collars in various styles, wore jerkins with an under layer of Flemish linen, and mail armour sleeves. The bravi figure shown in Vecellio’s woodcut is outfitted in all of these garments, in addition to his sword, dagger, and protective gauntlet or glove on the subject’s left hand, meant to protect oneself against an enemy’s blade during swordplay (Fig. 19).

In his La Piazza universal di tutte le professioni del mondo (first published in

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192 “domanda di potere fuor delle x miglia dalla citta portare Giaco maniche et spada, et pugnale et dice egli stesso non essere habile a portarle, ma che molto domanda per sospetto di certi suoi inimici et per che nel far le suo faccende come capo di casa gli conviene spesso tornare di notte a casa.”
193 “da bravi o da belli in piazza”; “nello stato ne saranno infiniti che stanno con piu sospetto di lui”
1585 with later editions), Tomaso Garzoni similarly described *bravi* as violent, beastly men-for-hire.\(^{195}\) However, as Jonathan Walker pointed out, the author makes a distinction between authentic *bravi* and their less ferocious counterparts, *bravi in piazza*.\(^{196}\) Garzoni explained that the latter were more concerned with appearing tough, suggesting that they lacked valour and relied solely on their words, weapons, and defensive dress to intimidate onlookers.

Although “*bravi*” also existed in Florence, it is unclear whether Corboli was specifically referring to a version of these dodgy bodyguards, or if he was simply employing the phrase, “bravo e bello,” an old maxim still used in modern Italian today. “Bravo and bello,” literally the “good and handsome,” could have referred to the fashionable, upper-class men seen around town. The saying “*bravo and bello*” brings to mind the ancient Greek phrase “*kalos kagathos*,” meaning “both good to look at and manifesting goodness in action.”\(^{197}\) Emphasizing both physical capability and beauty, ancient authors employed *kalos kagathos* to demonstrate militaristic, athletic, or noble characteristics.\(^{198}\) Although the derivation of Corboli’s reference is unknown, the phrase, in either context, signifies that weapons were objects that embodied both beauty and strength, and that these attributes were, indeed, transferrable to their owners.

Corboli’s final recommendation was to deny Tonino’s request, as the Duke’s first secretary thought weapons could make the situation worse, “not being capable as he says.”\(^{199}\) “Nonetheless,” he wrote, the final decision was the Duke’s.\(^{200}\) After


\(^{199}\) ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2235, filza un-numbered, immediately following page 23. “non essendo habile come dice”

\(^{200}\) “Non di meno”
obtaining recommendations to approve and deny the request from Benci and Corboli, respectively, the Duke decided to grant Tonino’s request for the supplicant’s safety and security.\textsuperscript{201} Even though Tonino was incapable of using arms to defend himself, Cosimo understood just how powerful these objects were, noting that even the mere sight of these instruments could be employed for the protection of men.

\textit{Arms and Masculinity}

...
If you think the contrary, wait until you hear of a contest in which the man who defends the cause of arms is allowed to use them, just as those who defend the cause of letters make use of letters in their defence; for if each one uses his own weapons, you will see that the men of letters will lose.  

Even though an education in the humanities was valued, arms was a skill that signified power, security, and protection, attributes traditionally associated with masculinity in this period. This association appeared to take hold starting at a very young age, especially for boys in noble or stately families (Fig. 20). One such illustration stems from a 1572 letter written by Antonio Serguidi, who noted that a proud Duke Cosimo I cried after seeing his youngest son, Giovanni, outfitted in armour holding a pike and mace.

However, as we have seen previously, Renaissance notions of masculinity appeared somewhat contradictory. The symbolism of arms and armour proved to be no exception to this incongruity. On one hand, they were beautifully adorned works of art that represented civility, courage, gallantry, and control. On the other, they were objects of destruction that needed to be tamed, as their presence indicated bouts of violence, cowardice, barbarity, and recklessness. This contradiction, like the ones inherent in contemporary notions of masculinity, kept the role of arms and armour in a perpetual state of flux. They were never deemed completely heinous, nor wholly principled, and as such, their roles were never permanently fixed. Masculinity in this period functioned in very much the same way. One’s maleness was always shifting, and finding the right balance of male characteristics was a continuous challenge, producing a feeling of uncertainly and everlasting unrest.

A point of comparison was one solution for establishing an equilibrium. An obvious opposition to masculinity in this period might be hypothesized as femininity; yet, this would be an oversimplification, egregiously excluding the contradictory ideas present in early modern notions of manliness. Instead of employing a binary

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205 ASF, Mediceo di Principato, vol. 613, ins. 21, fol. 5. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 21228.
model in which men were positioned against women, a more helpful methodology might be to plot varying degrees of masculinity along an axis. In his examination of nineteenth-century Britain, John Tosh demonstrated that masculinity was relational and required an opposing force to adequately define itself. Tosh theorized that masculinity was not inevitably set against the female sex, but rather the spectrum included a hierarchy of subordinate masculinities. \(^{206}\) Thus, men competed with other men. Their level of manliness was never fixed, and certain behaviours could manipulate one’s positioning along the continuum. \(^{207}\)

Violence—as long as the circumstances called for it—appears to have been one method of negotiation. Yet, in order to receive the benefits of this cultural capital, violent acts needed to be carried out in a socially acceptable way. Control and reason were necessary concepts to this idea, directly opposing emotional reactions propelled by passion and haste. However, it is important to note that most acts of violence were simply a means to avoid shame and protect honour. Arms seem to have been visible manifestations of this concept. Even if men did not fight, these objects made it look as though they would, as exhibited in the case of Tonino the apple farmer.

The challenge of the Medicean Tuscan state was to consider these delicate sensibilities, while striving to maintain a notion of security and public peace. The government also had their own military agendas which required the arming of domestic inhabitants. Thus, their role was pivotal in shaping men’s relationship with arms and armour, and as we will see, their ambivalence greatly affected attitudes toward violence within the territory. Another important point of enquiry when attempting to understand sixteenth-century aspects of masculinity is the role of the object, which additionally served to influence men’s behaviour, comportment, and brazenness. The next chapter explores the various aspects of their unique materiality, delving deeper into processes of “making.” The practical side of maintaining arms and armour in such a city will also be examined, both among residents and at the

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Medici court.
Figure 12. Jacques Callot, L’Estrapade, Detail of Les Misères et les malheurs de la guerre, 1633, Etching, 10.2 cm × 21.0 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Figure 13. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, “Le Suppliche,” vol. 2247, fol. 74v.
Figure 14. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, “Le Suppliche,” vol. 2247, fol. 18r.
Figure 15. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, “Le Suppliche,” vol. 2247, fol. 18v.
Figure 16. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Otto di Guardia e Balia, “Le Suppliche,” vol. 2247, fol. unnumbered, between pages 74-75

Figure 17. Frans Hogenberg, *Detail of Henry III of France Murdered by Jacques Clément*, 16th century, Engraving, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris
Figure 18. Giovanni Battista Moroni, *The Gentlemen in Pink*, 1560, Oil on canvas, Palazzo Moroni, Bergamo
Figure 20. Anonymous Florentine Painter, Portrait of a Boy, ca. 1545, Oil on wood, 129 cm x 61 cm, National Gallery, London
Chapter Two -
The Making, Manufacturing, and Maintenance of Armour at the Medicean Court

In his 1534 portrayal of Cosimo I’s predecessor, Duke Alessandro I, Giorgio Vasari recounted how difficult it was to depict the young ruler’s armour in the three-quarter length portrait he was creating (Fig. 21). Vasari explained:

Then, in a picture three braccia high, I painted Duke Alessandro in armour, with new invention, on a seat made of prisoners bound together, and other imaginative things. And I remember that besides the portrait, which was a good likeness, I almost went out of my mind trying to make the burnished surface of the armour look shining, bright, and natural; that is how hard I tried to portray every detail. But, despairing of making an accurate portrayal, I brought Jacopo da Pontormo, whom I revered because of his great skill, to look at the work and advise me; and when he had seen the painting and realized how deeply I cared about it, he said to me affectionately: My son, as long as this real, shining armour is next to this picture, the armour you have painted will always look like a painting; for even though lead-white is the finest pigment an artist can use, iron is still finer and more lustrous. Remove the real armour, and you’ll see that your imitation armour isn’t as bad as you think.¹

The image, which illustrated Florence’s first Duke looking out onto the city of Florence, portrayed Alessandro in contemporary armour. Given his painstaking rendition of the harness, it comes as no surprise that Vasari also ascribed a complex meaning behind its inclusion. Vasari added:

Now I will explain the meaning of the painting. His shining, polished armour is identical to the prince’s function as mirror of the people, so that they can see their own reflection in him as they go through life. I have armed the entire figure, apart from the head and hands, to show that he is prepared to defend every public and private interest for love of his country.²

While chapter one concentrated on the Florentine state’s attempt to control the usage of arms and armour in the city, this section introduces another important point of enquiry in understanding the role of arms and armour in sixteenth-century Florence. Vasari’s interpretation of the shiny, reflective surface of the armour’s steel recalls the unique materiality of these objects. Although worn on the body, armour was harder, more rigid, and much heavier than traditional garments. Consequently, much time, energy, and capital went into their creation, adornment, maintenance, and storage. Although this chapter briefly discusses general practices of making armour, which has been diligently explored by Alan R. Williams, its main aim is to shed light on the practicalities of armour commissioning, design, and manufacturing for the Medici court in the sixteenth century.

Scholars working on the armour of the Medici are undoubtedly indebted to the works of Suzanne Butters and Lionello Boccia. In her expansive work entitled *The Triumph of Vulcan: Sculptors Tools, Porphyry, and the Prince in Ducal Florence*, Butters examined the role of porphyry at the Medici court, using the famously hard stone as a point of entry into contemporary sculpting practices. Since porphyry was an extremely hard material to carve, Butters additionally explored the making and hardening of steel, primarily for the sculpting of tools, but also for the practice of making armour. Thus, her interdisciplinary work contains valuable scholarship on the manufacturing of arms and armour at the court of the Medici. Since the Medici’s armour was auctioned off in the eighteenth century, historians also owe much to Lionello Boccia’s invaluable scholarship. His examination of the ducal inventories contributed greatly to our understanding of the family’s collection, and his more general work on the categorization of arms and armour from the period serves as an indespensible resource to many.

Even with the contributions of Butters and Boccia, however, many questions remain about how the Medici dynasty procured and serviced arms and armour for

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3 Butters, *The Triumph of Vulcan* and Boccia, “Le armi medicee” and “Arms and Armor from the Medici Court.”
individual, courtly, and civic purposes. Thus, this chapter attempts to shed light on the practicalities of furnishing a court with armour, while additionally exploring the period’s “making” practices, which, as we will see, changed considerably throughout the century. Arms and armour were some of the most elaborate and expensive commodities commissioned in the period, and since they adorned the body, issues relating to dress, such as form and fit are similarly discussed. Equally important was the adornment of armour. Even though European production started to wane in the middle of the sixteenth century, artistic and technological skill among craftsmen reached its apogee in this period. This chapter concludes by delving into the material make-up of the most common weapons in circulation among Florence’s population. By identifying and investigating these objects further, a greater appreciation of their physical impact starts to emerge, adding to our overall understanding of how these objects adorned the body. Since they were designed to inflict harm or defend against it, the materiality of arms and armour is especially important, as their presence undoubtedly affected the way contemporaries felt, which in turn influenced masculine comportment and behaviour.

The Decline of the Armour Industry in Florence

Florence experienced a major decline in armour manufacturing, and a result, the city’s census only recorded two active workshops in residence by 1561. Both workshops were located on the Corso delli Adimari and had occupied those positions for the past twenty-five years. There were only three other armourers registered in the city, who were noted as independent workers without their own workshops. The shortage of armourers in Florence under the rule of Cosimo I appears somewhat contradictory, especially because the Duke sought to build up the region’s armed forces during his reign.

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4 Butters, The Triumph of Vulcan, 255, footnote 134.
5 Ibid.
6 For more, see Ibid. 255-56.
Florence had not always been lacking in armourers, however. In fact, due to the city’s natural resources, the trade started to flourish in the mid-thirteenth century, and as a result, furnaces were set up along the Apennines in Tuscany.\textsuperscript{7} Metalworking was a prominent craft, and workers occupied positions in four of the city’s guilds. The ironworkers and locksmiths were part of the Arte de ‘Chiavaioli, while the blacksmiths made up the Arte dei Fabbri. Along with the physicians and pharmacists, gold and silver smiths were members of the Arte dei Medici e Speziali, and the Arte Corazzai e Spadai was the guild of the city’s armourers and swordsmiths. Although classified as a minor guild, the city’s armourers and swordsmiths enjoyed domestic and international fame. The products manufactured under the guild’s watchful eye attracted some of Europe’s most high-profile patrons, including Emperor Frederick II (1194-1250), Charles of Anjou (1227-85), and Alfonso IV of Aragon (1299-1336).\textsuperscript{8} Even the Dominican preacher Remigio de’ Girolami (1235-1319) identified Florence’s armour industry as one of the three most beneficial trades (the other two being cloth and construction) that God had bestowed upon the city.\textsuperscript{9} The guild’s strong reputation continued into the fifteenth century, as made evident by their submission for the façade of the Florentine church of Orsanmichele. The organization commissioned Donatello to sculpt what Giorgio Vasari later described as “a very lifelike figure of Saint George in armor” (ca. 1416) (Fig. 22).\textsuperscript{10} St. George wears a Roman-inspired cuirass, executed in a contemporary style. The association was the only minor guild to earn a coveted, lower-level niche on the building’s exterior.\textsuperscript{11} By 1427, catasto records report that forty-seven men identified themselves as armourers.

\textsuperscript{7} Richard Goldthwaite, \textit{The Economy of Renaissance Florence} (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 400.
\textsuperscript{8} Goldthwaite, \textit{The Economy of Renaissance Florence}, 401.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid. For more, see Remigio de’ Girolami, \textit{Dal bene comune al bene del comune: i trattati politici di Remigio dei Girolami (1319) nella Firenze dei bianchi-neri} (Firenze: Nerbini, 2014).
\textsuperscript{11} Goldthwaite, \textit{The Economy of Renaissance Florence}, 401.
seven of whom possessed more than one thousand florins each.\textsuperscript{12} In 1512, Florentine armourers exported light armour to the English King Henry VIII (1491-1547).\textsuperscript{13}

The Armourers and Swordsmiths’ stronghold started to fall as the sixteenth century progressed, however, and the political turmoil that occurred within Florence’s government as the republic tried to ward off outside invaders further contributed to the guild’s deterioration. This is evident in the association’s historical records, which come to a halt in 1504.\textsuperscript{14} Documents do not re-emerge for the association until 1534, when Duke Alessandro I reduced the city’s fourteen minor guilds into four “universities.” Thus, the Armourers and Swordsmiths lost their autonomy and were reassigned to the “Università dei Fabbricanti,” along with the Fabbri (blacksmiths), Legnaioli (carpenters), Chiavaiuoli (locksmiths), and Maestri di Pietre e Legnami (masters working in stone and wood).\textsuperscript{15} The guild’s presence was reduced yet again when the “Università dei Fabbricanti” merged with the Università di Por San Piero in April 1583. The Fabbricanti were grouped with the Becci (butchers), the Fornai (bakers), and Oliandoli (oil makers and provisioners), all trades relating to the forge, metalworking, and the use of steel tools. Thus, by the 1561 census report, it seemed that Florence’s armour market slowly died out, aside for a few shops, which appeared to mainly handle smaller local orders, maintenance, and repair.

In addition to Florence, many other cities across Europe were affected by the industry’s decline. In fact, this shift in the market caused even the most celebrated centres of production to experience regressions. Sylvio Leydi’s work on the city of Milan—one of the most famous armour locales—demonstrated that the city possessed seventy-two registered craftsmen in 1474.\textsuperscript{16} By 1569, however, only twenty-six remained, totalling a 64% reduction in the industry in less than century. The quantity

\begin{enumerate}
\item[12]\textit{Ibid.}
\item[13]\textit{Butters, The Triumph of Vulcan, 257.}
\item[14]\textit{For more, see Archivi delle Arti, Accademia del Disegno e Camera di Commercio, Inventario Sommario at the Archivio di Stato di Firenze.}
\item[15]\textit{Ibid.}
\item[16]\textit{Sylvio Leydi, “Milan and the Arms Industry in the Sixteenth Century,” in Heroic Armor of the Italian Renaissance: Filippo Negroli and His Contemporaries, edited by Stuart W Pyhrr and and José-A. Godoy (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), 29. The figures cited in the rest of this paragraph were sourced from Ibid.}
\end{enumerate}
exported from the city similarly decreased. In 1580, 55,491 lire worth of armour was sent out, compared with 28,732 lire imported into the city.

Although Milan similarly experienced setbacks in the trade, the drop appeared to occur in a somewhat slower fashion. Leydi noted that armourers in Milan actually received a number of large commissions in the years immediately following 1580. However, the surge must have been short-lived, as the city’s armourers similarly formed a Università not long afterwards, and several stipulations overseeing the manufacturing of local armour were created in an attempt to protect trade members. In 1587, for instance, the Università regulated the import of arms, requiring its members to notify the establishment when foreign items were brought into the city. Additionally, large-scale commissions were monitored and could also be distributed among craftsmen to discourage the market’s collapse. To counteract this shift in the marketplace, Leydi posited that the average Milanese workshop had one of three choices available to them. They could specialize in the growing market of luxury commissions, become a supplier who worked for stately organizations, or expand the products offered at their workshops by making furniture, horse accessories, and other steel objects.

Another change affecting armour production was due to the technological advancement of firearms. Given the revisions in military strategies and battle tactics that occurred in the period, plate armour now had to be hard enough to resist bullets and light enough to allow for varied types of movement. Consequently, the industry responded by attempting to create harder, better quality steel that could withstand the force of bullets. Although armour had been “proofed” (shot at to ensure its protective capability) since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the steel was tested to withstand the impact of crossbows and longbows. In the sixteenth century, armour needed to defend against arquebuses and pistols. In the early 1560s, craftsmen started discussing recipes for hardening and improving the overall quality of steel.

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17 The information cited in this paragraph is from Ibid., 29-30.
19 Ibid., 234-39.
Bulletproof armour may have been considered even earlier, however, as some sources suggest craftsmen were making armour to withstand firearms before 1522.\(^{20}\)

Metallurgical studies appeared to attract more than just a professional audience, as recipes for manipulating steel, as well as information concerning equipment and practical techniques, appeared in several contemporary manuscripts, including writings on alchemy, mining, stones, plants, secrets, and magic.\(^{21}\) Cosimo I and his son Francesco I were particularly keen on the study of metallurgy. Cosimo I possessed several written works on the topic, in addition to texts relating to alchemy, botany, and medicine, and was praised by Benedetto Varchi for his “resplendent” understanding and interest in the genre in 1544. A year earlier in 1543, Cosimo recruited a Brescian master and his team to build a local foundry for smelting iron ore and remained actively involved in the organization’s practices. Given his strong affinity for alchemy, Francesco followed suit, taking a particular interest in the hardening of steel. He helped develop multiple quenching solutions, as well as his own concoction of “potable steel” for medicinal purposes.

Much time, care, and attention went into the forging, quenching, and tempering of arms and armour in this period. Recipes for hardening steel were treated as matters of national security, and formulae were closely guarded.\(^{22}\) One of the few still extant was authored by the Naples armourer and experimenter Giovanbattista della Porta (1535-1615), who worked for the Spanish viceroys. His recipe from the late sixteenth century suggested that the secret to making breastplates musket-proof was the cleansing of the charcoal used for forging in the hearth. Recipes could also be bought, as Francesco I apparently purchased a formula for making breastplates that could withstand arquebuses from an expert in Bologna.

Although Williams noted that most quenching baths used for armour in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries contained cold water, many early modern recipes for quenching steel existed and some included curious ingredients, such as urine from a

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 235.
\(^{21}\) The information cited in this paragraph is from Butters, *The Triumph of Vulcan*, 165-66, 215, 253-54, and 266.
\(^{22}\) The information cited in this paragraph is from Ibid., 237-38.
sterile ox or a red-headed boy. Quenches with magical properties were also proffered. One such example were the recipes given for “Orlando’s sword,” referring to the weapon featured in Geoffrey Chaucer’s Squire’s Tale (pub 1387). The concoction—made from worms, radish and leek—worked so well that a German tourist testified that his hardened stiletto pierced through a Foligno blacksmith’s anvil.

Pamela Smith hypothesized that “the work of prospecting, the beginning of all mining, smelting, and metalworking” must have resulted in “extraordinarily intense sensory engagement” for craftsmen. In her work on early modern methods of making, Smith discussed how the bodies of craftsmen were considered tools in the workshop, as they were used “for warming, blowing, handling, manipulating, sensing, tasting, and providing force and dexterity.” She stated that workers had a symbiotic relationship with the objects they crafted, meaning that bodies and materials affected one another. For instance, artisans with bad breath were discouraged from gilding objects, as foul-smelling breath was thought to prevent the gold from sticking to the surface. In order to protect against the inhalation of harmful fumes while mining, workers ate bread with butter to safeguard their health. Because of its spongy substance, bread was thought to fill the stomach, creating a physical barrier to prevent noxious fumes from entering. The creamy, wet texture of butter was believed to prohibit mineral and metal vapours from entering the air.

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25 Ibid.
27 Ibid., 43.
28 Ibid., 44.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
In addition to their bodies, early modern craftsmen also relied upon their experience for many routine tasks. Since no devices existed to identify the temperature of steel, colour served as an indicator for determining heat level, an important marker since the temperature at which steel was taken from the hearth and quenched determined its chemical makeup.\(^{32}\) Craftsmen had to be skilled in recognizing the subtle variations in tones, ranging from gold to ash to violet, a process further complicated by the fact that different concoctions of iron and carbon produced slightly different shades.\(^{33}\) Butters noted that in addition to colour, odour and sound could also inform craftsmen of metallurgical changes.\(^{34}\) She explained that the most desirable attributes forgers could possess were experience and judgment, not necessarily physical strength and muscle, as women also worked as blacksmiths.\(^{35}\) However, I have yet to come across any evidence of women working in the workshops of armourers.

*Armour and the Medici Court*

Rather curiously, the Medici did not possess an official court armourer until 1568, when the family finally succeeded in recruiting a member of the esteemed Milanese Piatti workshop to come to Florence. Consequently, the Duke was forced to rely on orders from northern Italian workshops. As Carolyn Springer observed, “the dependence on Milan was both an embarrassment and an inconvenience.”\(^{36}\) As head of the Florentine state, Cosimo required vast amounts of armour for himself, his court, and his militia. Adding to his necessity for armour was the fact that the family’s armour collection had been looted in the various expulsions of the Medici that

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32 Williams, *The Knight and the Blast Furnace*, 17.
34 Ibid., 514.
35 Ibid., 161.
occurred in 1494 under the de-facto ruler Piero de’ Medici and again in 1537 under Duke Alessandro I.  

Duke Cosimo I first attempted to recruit an armourer from Milan to permanently reside at the Medici court in January 1544. Cosimo’s choice to import a foreigner was very much due to the city’s celebrated reputation in armour manufacturing. Famed geographical hubs for armour development in this period were northern Italy (Milan and Brescia), southern Germany (Augsburg, Nuremberg, Passau, and Landshut), the Tyrol (Mühlau and Innsbruck), and the north of Spain (Vizcaya and Guipúzcoa). Milan was the first locale to be recognised as an international hub of production; in fact, the earliest document demonstrating the industry’s existence originates from 1066, when a “via Spadari” or “street of the swordsmiths” was recorded. Centres of armour making often boasted large numbers of specialized craftsmen and access to an ample supply of natural materials, like iron ore, wood, charcoal, and water for fuelling and powering purposes.

Cosimo I’s desire to acquire his own Milanese armourer quickly met resistance from Milan’s Imperial Governor at the time, the Marchese del Vasto, Alfonso d’Avalos (1502-46) (Fig. 23). In a summary recorded by one of Cosimo’s secretaries on 21 January, the Marchese stated that he was happy to allow Cosimo to import Milanese arms into Florence, but could not allow a master from the profitable trade to leave Milan. As a token of good faith, however, he offered to let local armourer Baptista d’Amerate and his team come to Florence “for some limited time, with certainty of returning.” Thus, for a brief stint in the 1540s, Baptista d’Amerate worked and consulted at the Medici court, and his presence was documented in various written sources within the family’s collection of letters.

38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
42 Ibid. “per qualche tempo limitato, con sicurtà di ritornar”
Before Baptista arrived, it appears his workshop provided Cosimo with arms and armour from his resident post in Milan. As exemplified in a document from July 1545, Baptista completed and sent an order of one hundred corsaletti (half-length armours), along with their corresponding helmets and arm defences to the city fortress’ superintendent. The other shipment of pikes from Milan were discussed in a letter from 5 January 1547. The entry described that several varying pikes, 895 in total, had been sent to the Fortezza da Basso, this time to superintendent Francesco Seriacopi. Florence’s customs office, the Dogana, had also confirmed the shipment’s arrival.

It seems that Baptista arrived in Florence not long afterwards, as a situation involving the armourer was discussed in a letter to Cosimo I on 1 June 1547 from the Duke’s majorduomo Pier Francesco Riccio. Riccio’s note informed the court of an event regarding the arming of the ducal militia. He explained that the local armourers in Florence used to make half-armours and armours in the “anime” style (breast and back plates constructed from overlapping plates) for members of the militia, who were always very pleased with the results “because such arms were made in the way they liked them.” Riccio explained that the commissioner, probably the General Commissioner of the Ducal Militia Girolamo degli Albizi, used to secure deals for his men with local armourers, but this practice had since ended. Shortly after Baptista’s arrival, we are told, that the commissioner made some sort of agreement with him to furnish the corsaletti and anime for the ducal band. These requests had apparently inundated Baptista with work, as Riccio informed the Duke that his orders with the armourer had still not been finished.

Appearing somewhat suspicious of the agreement made between Baptista and the commissioner, Riccio stated that the pair’s agreement was solely between them,

46 Ibid. “perché tali armi erano fatte a modo loro”
“and in little time,” “one could see the profit was good.”

If Baptista had a monopoly on the militia’s commissions, the armourer undoubtedly benefitted greatly. As Leydi noted, workshops profited the most from large orders of average and lower-priced objects, instead of the more elaborate pieces executed for stately rulers.

Unfortunately for Baptista, however, Riccio explained that the terms of his deal with the commissioner later changed. Apparently, the amount of work he received was drastically reduced, resulting in Baptista’s departure from Florence. The Milanese craftsman explained that his workshop was no longer profitable, and that the restriction limiting him from selling goods to the city’s armed forces seemingly conflicted with the initial terms he had arranged with the state.

Even after Baptista’s exodus, it appears the city’s local armourers were still blocked from furnishing the militia with armour. Riccio relayed their grievances to the Duke, since they, too, were “without licence of said commissioner.” The grumbling did not stop there, as Riccio reported that some soldiers were also unhappy with the current situation, which barred them from placing orders with Florentine craftsmen. We are told that the militia men preferred to work with local workshops since they offered better prices and allowed them to customize armours in the ways that they preferred.

Roughly a week later, Riccio sent another letter to Cosimo I after having discussed the matter with one of the sons of “Maestro Baptista Milanese,” as well as with the Florentine craftsman “Maestro Lorenzo corazzaio” and the other local armourers not receiving much work. He explained that he felt compelled to notify the Duke about the difficult situation that had besieged both the Milanese and Florentine armourers. He also reiterated the dissatisfaction of the militiamen, who were displeased with the armaments given to them by the commissioner. “Not only

47 Ibid. “Et in poco di tempo”; “si vedde il guadagno buono.”
for the price that seemed to them too high, but for the majority that have to wear the *corsaletto* or *anima*, it did not fit them well.  

The commissioner seemingly took over the arming of the militia, as Riccio stated that a workshop had been established on his personal premises. He added that he thought the Duke would not be pleased to hear that this armour was being sold at high prices, especially because one could purchase the same items for less. Moreover, since the armour did not fit well, it would not protect the state’s soldiers. He posited that the problem would only worsen if the current arrangement continued since militia members continually needed to have armour made and maintained. Riccio suggested the commissioner extend the licence so the local armourers and Mastro Baptista could work.

In both of his writings, Riccio seemingly and somewhat cautiously hinted that something might be amiss with the commissioner’s practices. For instance, in the closing of his second letter, Riccio stated that despite his affiliation with the militia, the commissioner’s storing of such a large amount of arms and armour on his property seemed dubious. He elaborated

> “But in the letter I wrote you, I wanted to say [this] since passing by his house I saw at times on his property a good number of iron pikes, and I knew that [there] was also a good number of half armours. And I tell you in case such a thing merited any consideration, even if such arms are to [be] distribute[d] to the militia.”

> “Ma nella lettera gli scripsi volevo dire perché passando da casa sua ho veduto in terreno qualche volta bon numero di picche ferrate, et sapevo che anche de’ corsaletti vi era honesto numero. Et lo dissi se per tal cosa meritava alcuna considerazione, se ben tali armi sieno per distribuire alle bande.”

In addition to serving the militia (at least before this privilege was taken away by the commissioner), local masters in Florence also assisted Cosimo I and his court. However, most court records demonstrate that these workshops were utilized more for maintenance and repair purposes, rather than commissions. One particular Florentine master that Cosimo I appeared to regularly utilize went by the name of “Lorenzo

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51 “non solo per il pregio che par loro troppo, quanto che la maggior parte ne hanno a portare il corsaletto o anima, chè non sta lor bene.”

52 “Ma nella lettera gli scripsi volevo dire perché passando da casa sua ho veduto in terreno qualche volta bon numero di picche ferrate, et sapevo che anche de’ corsaletti vi era honesto numero. Et lo dissi se per tal cosa meritava alcuna considerazione, se ben tali armi sieno per distribuire alle bande.”
Corazzaio,” literally “Lorenzo the cuirass maker.” One such case occurred on 6 March 1538, when Guardaroba employee Don Pietro noted that Lorenzo had been given the following items to service.53

And on the day 6 March written above given to Maestro Lorenzo Corasaio nine corsaletti for burnishing them and repairing them…

On the day 10 April in the year written above given to Maestro Lorenzo Corasaio 10 corsaletti with their small gorgets for burnishing them and repairing them…

On the day 11 July given to Maestro Lorenzo Corasaio 51 sallets of many sorts for repairing them and furnishing them…

On the day 14 August given to the Maestro Lorenzo Corasaio 150 old sallets to repair them and furnish them…

Other noblemen in Florence similarly turned to Lorenzo for armour repair and maintenance. Due to the city’s strict legislation, however, it appears that the state expected the armourer to act as another point of enforcement. One such case occurred in another account from secretary Riccio from November 1542. While en route to Ottaviano de’ Medici’s house, Riccio encountered a young boy on the street. The “fanciullo” was spotted with a hefty pole arm and was dressed in heaps of defensive armour. Riccio recounted the incident, stating that the boy “had in hand a partigianone and was dressed in [a] jacket, sleeves, gloves, and a small gorget.”54

Partigianoni were large versions of partigiane (or partesans in English), a type of early modern pole arm especially popular in Italy in this period. A contemporary

53 ASF, MdP, vol. 630, fol. 38. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 26168. “et adì vi marzo supraditto dato a maestro Lorenzo corasaio nove corsaleti per inbrunirlli et raconcarli [raconciarli]”; “adì x aprille anno soprascritto dato a maestro Lorenzo corasaio dieci corsaleti con le loro golette per per inbrunirlli et cociarlle [conciarlle]”; “adì xi luglio dato a maestro Lorenzo corasaio cinquanta et una cellata di più sorte per conciarle et fornirle”; “adì xiii agosto dato a maestro Lorenzo corasaio cento cinquanta cellate vecchie a raconciarle et fornirle”

54 Riccio does not become Cosimo’s majorduomo until April 1545. ASF, MdP, vol. 358, fol. 706-07. Thank you to Maurizio Arfaìoli for drawing my attention to these documents. “l’aveva in mano uno partigianone, et indosso in giaco: maniche, guanti, et goletta”
Illustration of a *partigiana* can be found in the *Portrait of a Gentleman* painted by Jacopo Bassano del Grappa (Fig. 24). Originating from the “spear in the Bolognese style,” the weapon emerged sometime during the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.\(^55\) *Partigiane* had spear-like blades flanked by two small “*alete*” (wings) that measured at least 30 centimetres on average and sat atop a wooden pole that spanned anywhere from 160-220 centimetres.\(^56\) *Partigianoni* blades were typically double that length, further illustrating why the young boy immediately caught Riccio’s attention. The jacket, sleeves, gloves, and small gorget that Riccio refers were probably made from mail or some combination of mail, plate armour, bone, and/or leather.

In his letter, Riccio stated that he questioned the youth, who explained that he worked with Lorenzo Corazzaio, who ordered him to retrieve the arms and armour from the San Gallo city gates. Since Florentine legislation prohibited offensive and defensive arms without the possession of a licence, Riccio asked for the name of the arms’ owner to which the boy glibly replied, “I think they are a Florentine gentleman’s.”\(^57\) Riccio explained to Cosimo I that he was unsure whether the arms were licenced or if the unnamed owner possessed a privilege under the “old custom.”\(^58\) On 1 December 1542—just two days after Riccio’s initial correspondence—fellow ducal secretary Pietro Camaiani responded, writing that Cosimo I wanted state officials to follow up with Lorenzo and identify the unclaimed arms’ owner.\(^59\) Moreover, Camaiani added that an agitated Cosimo was displeased to hear about the boy’s reply.

The state wasted no time getting to the heart of the matter, as minute documents from 3 December record the details of their meeting with Lorenzo. Officials reported that the armourer identified “*Lodovico de Libri*” called

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\(^{56}\) Ibid.

\(^{57}\) "io penso sieno d’un gentil’homo fiorentino"

\(^{58}\) “costume vecchio”

“Tasconcino” as the arms’ owner. Lorenzo further explained that the weapons were passed along solely for mending under the old authorization of the captain of the Medici German guard. The episode must have been a traumatic one for the armourer, as Lorenzo proceeded to stress that he only planned on repairing—not returning—the items, declaring he would rather die before giving weapons to someone without the necessary authorization. Although Lorenzo’s true intentions remain unknown, the case does demonstrate just how much time and energy authorities devoted to the policing and regulation of arms and armour in Florence.

Since these objects were fashioned from more than just steel, the Medici also called upon other types of craftsmen to carry out specific repairs. As a demonstration, Medici tailor Alessandro Barbetta was frequently tasked with mending the linings, coverings, and accessories of arms and armour. On November 1546 in a letter to Riccio (1501-64), state administrator Vincenzo Ferrini wrote that “Barbetta need[ed] another scabbard of red velvet for the rapier of His Excellency,” as “it [wa]s already broken.” In another letter from July 1544 from the Medici villa in Poggio a Caiano, secretary Vincenzo Riccobaldi relayed a message to Riccio explaining that the Duchess had asked Barbetta to fix a slew of objects in the armoires. Along with a red cape, Riccobaldi noted that Barbetta was to receive the sword belts, as well as a dagger with a belt located in the third armoire. He was also tasked with taking a sword to the swordsmith.

For swords and other bladed weapons, Cosimo I similarly relied on local swordsmiths. One such case was illustrated on 16 April 1550 when court member Sforza Almeni requested a new outfit for Cosimo I, which was to include a new sword sheath and belt from “Giuliano Spadaio” or Giuliano, the sword maker. Giuliano’s

60 Lodovico de Libri is mentioned in the letters of Benedetto Varchi. ASF, MdP, vol. 359, fol. 7r.
63 ASF, MdP, vol. 1176, insert 4, fol. 10. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 3100. Giuliano Spadaio is also mentioned in the 1560 inventory of the Medici armour. For more, see Boccia, “Le armi medicee,” 396.
expertise was not limited to swords, as the smith teamed up with Giuliano Sellaio “Giuliano, the lock smith” about seven years earlier to adorn a litter with metal fittings for Duchess Eleonora. Another swordsman in the service of the Medici was Cristofano Allori, father of Medici court painter Alessandro Allori. In a letter to Riccio dated July 1541, ducal secretary Lorenzo di Andrea Pagni wrote that Cosimo I was sad to hear about the death of “Tofano because of the virtue that he had.”

Cosimo then instructed Pagni to collect the two or three swords that were still in Tofano’s shop and return them to the Guardaroba, so he could see them on his next trip to Florence.

After Baptista’s brief stint in Florence, Cosimo I returned to sourcing larger quantities of armour from northern Italian hubs of production. He relied on ambassadors who resided in these cities to broker deals with local armourers, as well as with their civic governments. On 28 October 1547, for instance, the Duke procured five hundred corselets from an armourer in Venice, an order so large it required an export licence from the Venetian government.

In a letter from October 1547 to his Venetian ambassador Pierfilippo Pandolfini, Cosimo I expressed the need to order five hundred more and suggested that Pandolfini mention that the Duke was thinking of starting his own foundry in Florence if any objections arose, thus threatening to take business away from the region’s profitable industry if Venice did not comply.

Milan was the city to receive the most commissions from the Medici court. The deals were arranged by Medici ambassador Fabrizio Ferrari, who also procured other local goods on behalf of the duchy, including rock crystal, objects in silver, and

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64 The transportation structure referenced could be the litter depicted in a fresco commemorating Eleonora’s arrival at the Medici villa of Poggio a Caiano in the Palazzo Vecchio’s Sala di Cosimo (ca. 1556-58). In an entry dated 31 March 1543, Riccio noted in his account book that both Giulianos were owed payment for gold and the gilding of iron fittings for the litter. ASF, MdP, vol. 600, fol. 24. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 6961. In an entry dated six months later, Giuliano spadaio was paid for silvering iron fittings for a litter with a red cover, presumably the same one mentioned earlier. ASF, MdP, vol. 600, fol. 26. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 7026.


66 Ibid.

important recipes. In May 1570, for instance, Prince Francesco I sent a letter to Ferrari concerning an order for his “huomini d’arme.” The “huomini d’arme” or “men-at-arms” were Florence’s prestigious company of heavy cavalry. The organization contained a mixture of noblemen and professional soldiers, equivalent to the compagnie d’ordonnance found across Europe. The commission was for one hundred rapiers—half adorned with gold and the other half in silver. He stated

We send you the enclosed model of rapiers, request for us fifty of the same size notated (notati?), that are gilded; and another fifty in silver; that have to serve for our huomini d’Arme, assuring that the blades are good, and that you will be served well…

As indicated in the letter, it appears that Francesco also attached a model of how the rapiers should look. This likely referred to a drawing (unfortunately now lost from the archival folio) demonstrating the sword’s appearance and design.

For individual high-end pieces, the Medici similarly commissioned works from craftsmen residing outside Florence. In 1562, Prince Francesco wrote to Fugger agent Michael Mayer in hopes of ordering an armour for both war and tournament in the city of Augsburg. The Florentine prince requested that the armour not only be well made and elegant, but also fitted and slim. For sizing, he included a sheepskin for each of the pieces requested with measurements “written in Italian and German,” along with a jacket and a pair of hose. In addition to being well-tailored, Francesco instructed Mayer on how the armour should appear. Francesco indicated that a sketch illustrating the armour’s design had accompanied the letter, adding that the harness should be white (meaning uncoloured), engraved, and without any gold at all. The individual pieces being commissioned were indicated via the drawing, instead of

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68 ASF, MdP, vol. 3113, fol. 333. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 13262
69 “Vi mandiamo l’allegato modello di stocchi fatecene fare cinquanta della medesima grandezza notati, che siano dorati; et altri cinquanta argenta; che hanno da servire per li nostri huomini d’Arme, adovertendo che le lame siano buone, et che siate servito bene”
71 “scritta in Italiano e Todesco”
written out, additionally demonstrating each component’s preferred embellishment. A comparable sketch sent in 1557 illustrates the armour commission of Ferdinand II of Austria (1529-95) who worked with his local agent, Andreas Brenker, to create an armour made in Augsburg intended as a gift for Augustus of Saxony (1526–86) (Fig. 25).  

After not hearing back from Mayer, Francesco keenly followed up two months later, asking Mayer to confirm receipt of his initial letter. For extra precaution, he also sent along a second set of measurements and another illustration. Mayer responded in October 1563, informing Francesco that his armour was finished and would likely be ready for shipment in fifteen days from the letter’s postmark date. He also noted that the matching shield would be lined with green velvet, so it shared the same finishing as the rest of the ensemble.

Comparable to northern Italy, armourers located in the south of Germany were similiarly celebrated for their top-quality productions. Almost three years after he purchased his white, slim-fitting armour via Mayer, Francesco commissioned another “white” harness from the armourer Jorg Seuesnhofer on a visit to Innsbruck in November 1565. In a letter dated 26 June 1566, “Giorgio Seysenhofer” explained that “a white and worked armour, whole with all of its parts, that can protect from a shot of a bullet” had been finished for quite some time, and its delivery and payment

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75 “Et dicendomi vostra eccellenza illustrissima per la sua di xxvii luglio che lo scudo habbia essere foderato di veluto verde, ce pare che tutto l resto dell’armatura sia del medesimo veluto finito”
76 ASF, MdP, vol. 521a, f. 1112. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 20645
was being coordinated through the Craffters, a family who often worked as agents for the Medici in Germany.\textsuperscript{77} 

As exemplified in the commissions of Francesco, patrons often sent precise measurements, along with items from their wardrobe (most commonly arming doublets) when placing orders from abroad. Since these pieces adorned the body, fit was of the utmost importance, especially because armour had to fit properly to be effective. In a letter from 9 September 1548, after mentioning that he sent a box containing halberds, spears, and other arms, Brescia merchant Pietro Gandini asked Riccio for the “\textit{groseza et alteza}” or “width and height” of Cosimo’s head, leg, and knee.\textsuperscript{78} The measurements were needed for the Duke’s new harness, which also included a matching horse armament. Extreme measures were taken to ensure Holy Roman Emperor Charles V’s armour fit, as imperial Spanish account books record a wax model of “His Majesty’s legs” being given to armourer Desiderius Helmschmied for a commission.\textsuperscript{79}

It appears the Medici system for ordering armour from outside the city and having it repaired and maintained locally was practiced until the late 1560s. Unhappy with the current situation, Prince Francesco attempted to lure a Milanese armourer to Florence once again in letters to Ferrari sent in the summer of 1568.\textsuperscript{80} In his letter to Ferrari in May, Prince Francesco explained that he would happily welcome an armourer to open a workshop in Florence. He stated, “and we would like if [the armourer] would be such that he could make a large workshop, and we believe that he would do well with his business, so if you know of anyone, let us know.”\textsuperscript{81} Again in June, Francesco explained to Ferrari that

\textsuperscript{77} “un armatura biancha et lavorata, intera con tutte le sue appartenenze, che possa riparare un colpo d’una palla”\textsuperscript{78} ASF, MdP, vol. 1174, Insert 3, fol. 48. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 23261.
\textsuperscript{79} Qtd. in Grancsay, \textit{Arms and Armor}, 368-69.
\textsuperscript{80} Transcription of documents published in Butters, Appendix XVI, 475-76. ASF, MdP, vol. 3113, fol. 225r; vol. 229, fol. 182r; vol. 3113, fol. 240r. Butters additionally discussed the episode on 254-55.
\textsuperscript{81} Transcription of document published in Butters, Appendix XVI, 475-76. ASF, MdP, vol. 3113, fol. 225r. “et vorremmo fusse tale che potessi fare grossa bottega, et crediamo farebbe bene li fatti suoi, sichè intendete se ci è alcuno et avvisatecelo”
It would be pleasing to us if you manage to find an armourer, who will have a lot to do since there are many of our soldiers in need of armour, besides our new militia the huomini d’arme that we are making. And he could make a large workshop and sell armour at a higher price than they cost, also that he will have access to all the instruments of water for burnishing the arms, and we again would help him with reasonable pay, more than the average, because here there is no one who has knowledge [of the trade], nor the desire to consider it.\footnote{Transcription of document published in Butters, Appendix XVI, 475-76. ASF, MdP, vol. 229, fol. 182r; vol. 3113, fol. 240r. “Ci piacerà che procuriate di trovar l’armiero, il quale haverà che fare assai per esserci molti delli nostri soldati c’hanno bisogno d’armi, oltre alla nuova militia che facciamo d’huomini di arme. Et potrà fare una grossa bottega et venderle a maggior prezzo che costì, oltre che haverà la commodità di tutti l'instrumenti da acqua per brunirle, et noi ancora l'aiuteremo con provisione ragionevole più che dozinale, perché qua non ci è altri che sappia, ne voglia attenderci.”}

A week later, Francesco outlined the terms for the procurement of such an armour, noting

Do solicit to provide us an armourer, who we will give seven scudi of salary a month and pay them for all of the works that they will make in our service. And if he will come soon, he will earn grossly, since there is a need to make up to two hundred armours for the huomini d’arme, countless [armours] for our light cavalry and for our infantry, and an infinite [number] of helmets, of which if he will manage them, we will not seek those elsewhere; and finally, he will have much to do and will earn whatever he wants, so please solicit.\footnote{Transcription of document published in Butters, Appendix XVI, 476. ASF, MdP, vol. 3113, fol. 240r. “Sollecitate di provvederci l'armarolo, al quale daremo sette scudi di provisione il mese et li pagheremo tutti li lavori che farà per servitio nostro. Et venendo presto guadagnerà grossamente, chè si ha da fare fino a 200 armadure d'huomini d'arme, infinite per li cavalleggeri nostri et per la fanteria, et un'infinità di celate, le quali se le condurrà lui, non si manderà fuora per esse; et finalmente harà da fare assai, et guadanerà ciò che vorrà, sìchè solleciti.”}

On 16 June, Ferarri wrote to Francesco informing him that he had secured two armourers to potentially satisfy the prince’s request.\footnote{Transcription of document published in Butters, Appendix XVI, 477. ASF, MdP, vol. 3110, fols. 207v-209r.} He explained that the task had been particularly difficult because of master Baptista. Apparently, the armourer from Milan spoke pejoratively about his time in Florence, which discouraged other craftsman from pursuing the post. Ferrari attributed Baptista’s own negligence as the
cause of his dissatisfaction, but as Riccio indicated in his 1547 letter, Baptista’s grumblings were likely due to his inability to turn a profit after he was prohibited by the commissioner from working with the city’s militia. This was further exemplified by Ferrari, who stated in his letter that the current situation in Florence differed greatly from when Amerate was last there. He added that since that time, the Duke had built up more military organizations, all of which required vast amounts of armour.

The first craftsman that Ferrari enlisted was a certain maestro by the name of Pietro Paulo Malfetta, who had seemingly created an armour for Francesco for the wedding of an unspecified princess. Although deemed particularly competent by Ferrari, the Medici agent admitted that Malfetta’s asking price was high since he requested an annual retainer of 300 scudi, in addition to payment for the items he produced. The other candidate was a son of Giovanni Battista Piatti, “who has a really good workshop in this city.” If he was granted a specified list of conditions, Piatti agreed to a 150-scudi retainer, exactly half of Malfetta’s request. Ferrari also enquired about potential candidates from the city of Brescia, which he posited could aid in their attempt to secure Malfetta or Piatti, since this might arouse some jealousy. However, he admitted that this avenue was not worth pursing since the best armourers were to be found in Milan.

Matteo Piatti was apparently selected for the position, and in the June 1568 letter outlining his terms of employment, the craftsman requested a house and a workshop to accommodate his family and staff. He was to receive the 150-scudi annual salary for eight years, at which time he would be free to exit the contract. Matteo stated that his wife and sons would accompany him and additionally requested to bring an extensive staff to assist his production. He noted that he needed an engraver (which we would denote today as an etcher), one or two men for polishing, one gilder, one damascener, in addition to armourers who specialized in the forging of

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85 “che ha una bonissima bottega in questa città”
86 Transcription of document published in Butters, Appendix XVI, 476-77. ASF, Carte Strozziane, I, 22, fols. 149v-150r.
cuirasses, arms defences, gauntlets, and helmets. He also explained that he would need more men to assist in the workshop on a day-to-day basis, with the potential to hire more when the circumstances required. All of the workers would be paid at Matteo’s expense, and he would offer their accommodation since they were to reside at the house provided to Matteo by the Medici. If he had extra time and the Duke did not need him, Matteo also requested permission to export armours to other cities. He stipulated that he would only sent goods to cities that were not considered enemies of the state. This ability to outsource during slow times in production probably served to protect him against the problem Baptista encountered a little less than two decades earlier.

It appears that most of Matteo’s conditions were met, as his contract of employment was signed on 18 August 1568. His yearly retainer was slightly less than he had initially requested, since the contract specified his wage at 140, instead of 150 scudi. Piatti also received the same tax exemptions that maestro Baptisa received. Matteo departed for Florence almost two months later, as Ferrari sent a letter to Francesco on 3 November 1568 informing him that the craftsman was scheduled to arrive in Florence within eight days.

For the Medici, securing a member from the Piatti family was an impressive feat. As Ferrari attested, the Piatti had ran a successful workshop in Milan since the late fifteenth century, and several generations of the family had participated in the business. Like Matteo, a few members even set up workshops abroad. For instance, Biagio, Vincenzo, and Tommaso Piatti worked for French King Francis I (1494-1547) for a period, and Giuseppe and Ludovico Piatti were asked by Philip III of Spain (1578-1621) to establish a branch in the new town of Eugui, near Pamplona in 1595.

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87 For additional explanation of the vocabulary cited in the contract for the workshop, see Pyhrr and Godoy, *Heroic Armor*, 23 (footnote 43) and 330-331 (footnote 6).
90 Pyhrr and Godoy, *Heroic Armor*, 330
The fact that Piatti came from Milan was another advantage. As discussed, Milanese armour had been praised across Europe for centuries. In his 1288 chronicle, Bonvesin de Riva (1240-1315) recounted that the city possessed “a marvelous number of armorers, who daily produce[d] every type of arm . . . and all are of tempered and polished steel, brighter than a mirror.”\footnote{Qtd. and trans. by Pyhrr and Godoy, \textit{Heroic Armor}, 4.} By the end of the fourteenth century, merchants from the region were called “milaners,” known for selling fashionable clothing, armour, and other luxury objects.\footnote{Ibid.} The catchphrase “I only want a breastplate hardened in the Lambro” referred to the river that flowed through Lombardy and demonstrated how coveted Milanese armour was.\footnote{Butters, \textit{The Triumph of Vulcan}, 258.} Even in 1595, Paolo Morigi wrote in his \textit{Nobilita d’Milano}:

Now, if it were not for the need to be brief, I would tell of the many Milanese who were inventors of outstanding and useful types of armor and who took this art to the kingdom of France and other kingdoms and who with this profession earned great riches. And in Milan there are those of this profession who, having gained much wealth, now live honorably and are considered to be of the nobility having married into the noble families of the city. There are those also who raised themselves and their families to the nobility by their great wealth just as many other artists and merchants have done.”\footnote{Qtd. and trans. by Leydi, “Milan and the Arms Industry,” 31.}

Before Matteo signed his contract to work with the Medici, Prince Francesco had tasked Ferrari with finding an armourer to make 150 armours for his heavy cavalry, complete with barding for their horses. Price appears to have been an issue, as Ferrari and Francesco exchanged multiple letters discussing the purchase of the wares for the thriftiest rate. In a letter written on 28 July 1568, Ferrari informed Francesco that the lowest price he could secure for the harnesses of the \textit{huomini d’arme} was still fifteen \textit{scudi} per armour, a rate that they had already discussed previously.\footnote{ASF, MdP, vol. 3110, fol. 214. Transcription of document published in Butters, Apendix XVI, 478.} This amount included the neck and head protection for the cavalry’s horses, a small and large shield (\textit{targa}), extra heavy thigh protection, plating for the

shins with boots reinforced with mail, in addition to Burgundian sallets. If the prince wanted to commission the armours for less, Ferrari gently recommended that he wait two to three months before fulfilling his order. He noted that the armourers were busy with the current war in Flanders, and it seemed that another battle was about to break out in France. Ferrari added that he did not forget to initiate the tactic of pitting the armourers against one another in an attempt to arouse jealousy and secure the lowest price. It appears this was a tactic Ferrari used often, as demonstrated when he enquired about the craftsmen working in Brescia only to make the Milanese armourers he was negotiating with more desirous of the position in Florence.

Francesco was quite persistent in his attempt to commission the Florentine cavalry’s armour. On 4 August Francesco followed up with his ambassador to see if he had found a lower rate for the armours in question, in addition to letting him know that he was awaiting eighty *libbre* (approximately 27 kilograms) of rock crystal.96 He reiterated the items that he wished to order from his previous letter, but explained that he could make due with only receiving small shields that corresponded to the left pauldron. The rest of the armour was meant to contain the usual pieces worn by the heavy cavalry. Since they no longer desired large shields, Francesco restated his desire to receive the armours as quickly as possible. He concluded the letter by noting that he received Ferrari’s information concerning a certain armourer’s conditions (probably referring to Matteo Piatti), and that he would work to resolve them shortly.

Ferrari replied to Francesco a little over two weeks later on 18 August 1568.97 Due to the current situation occurring in Flanders, France, and Germany, he explained that he still had not found a better price for the heavy cavalry’s harnesses.98 However, he did present a potential solution which involved master Matteo Piatti and his brother. He explained that the pair agreed to make the armours for fourteen and three quarters *scudi* each. This commission would fall outside the scope of the contract he was contemporaneously negotiating with the Duke. If Francesco agreed to the deal,

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they additionally requested a two-or three-hundred *scudi* advance to get started. They would then provide Ferrari with three armours in five or six days’ time, which he would ship to Florence, so Francesco could evaluate whether he liked the style of their designs. Since the commission was for two-hundred harnesses, Ferrari explained this project—if Francesco were to hire them—would likely delay Piatti’s more long-term relocation to Florence by four or six months.

Francesco’s enthusiasm for outfitting the Duke’s *huomini d’armi* stemmed from his personal involvement in the company’s reorganization. His commitment to renew the state’s heavy cavalry unit was an extremely costly one, further demonstrating how important these more symbolic regiments were to the image of an authoritative state. Consequently, he earmarked and invested a hefty sum of money to get the organization up and running again. A long list of charges from an undated document in 1568 outline the final cost for twenty-five of the armours commissioned for the Duke’s *huomini d’armi*.

99 It is unclear whether Piatti had completed these goods before or after his acceptance of the role at the Medici court. The total for the armours, complete with neck and head protection for the horses, amounted to 368 *scudi*, 88 *lire*, and 6 *soldi*, roughly totalling the price that had been negotiated by Ferrari of 14 ¾ *scudi* each. Another 443 *scudi* and 59 *lire* was added to the bill to account for taxes, transport, and delivery costs, including an import tax from Milan and Lodi. Thus, if we use these prices as an estimate, Francesco would have paid roughly 6,500 *scudi* for the complete set of 200 armours. The 1568 document also noted that 130 scudi was paid to a certain Florentine named Antonio Berti, who transported the horses for war sent by the Medici General Gian Luigi, also known as “Chiappino” Vitelli (1520-75). In another letter from Francesco to Vitelli sent on 14 August 1568, it was noted that the Duke gave Vitelli a 3,000-*scudi* credit to buy as many Frisan horses as he could for the new heavy cavalry unit.

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Piatti in Florence

It appears that by 1569, Matteo had officially relocated to Florence and was fulfilling armour commissions for the Medici.\textsuperscript{101} In 1573, Matteo crafted a parade armour meant as a gift for Pope Gregory XIII’s son, Giacomo Boncompagni (1548-1612).\textsuperscript{102} Giacomo’s armour was hardened using a “Medici temper,” which combined the extracts of herbs picked at optimal times.\textsuperscript{103} Possibly due to his interest in alchemy, Francesco took great delight in developing quenching solutions for bullet-proof armours. In 1575, for instance, he sent a recipe he had prepared to the soon-to-be Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612).\textsuperscript{104} The enthusiasm for invention did not stop with Francesco, as Butters demonstrated that by 1604, there existed four Medici “tempers” for strengthening steel, in addition to one meant for bladed weapons.\textsuperscript{105}

Unfortunately, of the extant pieces surviving, the work produced by Matteo and his workshop remains hard to identify. This was made especially difficult because the master failed to sign the armours he made in Florence.\textsuperscript{106} However, most agree that an embossed parade armour housed in the Bargello Museum can be attributed to the Milanese armourer (Figs. 26-27). Scholars believe the harness was made around 1574 for Francesco, as the armour is congruent with Francesco’s height, who was roughly 170 centimetres (or five feet, seven inches) tall.\textsuperscript{107} 1574 was also the same year that Francesco succeeded his father as Grand Duke of Tuscany. The extant garniture consists of ten separate pieces, including a helm, a visor, a gorget, two pauldrons, two arm defences which include rerebraces, vambraces, couters, a cuirass, and two tassets.

\begin{enumerate}
\item Butters, \textit{The Triumph of Vulcan}, 260.
\item Ibid., 261.
\item Giacomo donned the gilded harness to Mutio Mattei’s carnival tilt in 1574. Ibid.
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 262.
\item Pyhrr, \textit{Heroic Armor}, 330.
\end{enumerate}
The striking armour fashioned in the Milanese style was embossed, etched, and blued, as well as fitted with gold-coloured rivets and grey-leather straps. The combed helmet resembles the head of a leonine creature, its eyes and nose occupying the helm, while its mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth adorns the visor. On the helmet, wavy ringlets of hair frame both the upper and lower part of the face, while another, albeit smaller, lion’s head flanked between two rams’ horns rests on the portion covering the wearer’s chin. Helmets adorned with leonine features were favoured in the period’s *all’antica* armour, a style of design that incorporated classical icons and motifs. Lions fared especially well in the genre because of their Herculean associations. An extreme example of the trend can be seen in a fifteenth-century Italian sallet now housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 28). The Met helmet’s embossed and gilt outer layer was made from steel, copper, gold, glass, paint, and cloth to resemble the head of a Nemean lion, whose pelt is often seen draped across Hercules in contemporary portrayals.

The other components of Piatti’s harness were similarly-inspired by classical motifs. In the centre of the cuirass, a winged female figure outfitted in classical garb holds a cornucopia with a *putto* at her left foot. Flanked by two approaching lions, the identity of the winged figure remains unclear. She could represent the Roman goddess *Abuntantia* or alternatively, an allegory of *Fortuna*. Putti with horns ride mythical beasts on the harness’ pauldrons, and Roman soldiers holding standards embellish the vambraces. Roman trophies, festoons, ribbons, flora, animal heads, and a sea of grotesque figures appear throughout, all competing for the attention of onlookers.

Northern Italy was internationally renowned for its armour made in the *all’antica* style, and local armourer Filippo Negroli was often praised for his ancient-inspired work. In fact, Lomazzo stated that “the chiseling of iron was rediscovered

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109 The helmet’s outer shell was fixed atop a plain steel helmet, thus, making the item protective as well. Pyhrr and Godoy, *Heroic Armor*, 92-94.
110 Ibid., 7.
by Filippo Negroli, who chisled arms.”

Although particularly prized in the *Cinquecento*, the style was first revived in the middle ages and continued to flourish until the Enlightenment period occurred in the beginning of the eighteenth century. Men of state often used the style to promote virtues of governing and leadership. One of the most extreme examples of extant *all’antica* armour is Bartolomeo Campi’s harness for Guidobaldo II della Rovere, Duke of Urbino (Fig. 29). Hailing from Pesaro, Campi worked as a goldsmith, damascener, embosser, military architect, and military and civil engineer. Campi’s armour mimics the classical dress of Roman soldiers with a torso-hugging muscled cuirass and a multi-strap leather skirt, complete with roman sandals.

Although Piatti’s armour was inspired by classical themes, its form and shape mimicked those of contemporary menswear. This was a common occurrence, as armour was worn both on and off the battlefield and was the outfit *de rigeur* for a variety of civic functions, including diplomatic entries, tournaments, parades, and carnivals. Slashing, pinking, billowing sleeves and breeches, and peascod bellies were all replicated in armour, despite the more rigid configuration of its materiality. For instance, the Augsburg armourer Kolman Helmschmied often incorporated imitative slashing into his favoured armour designs. In 1523, Helmschmied teamed up with local armour-etcher Daniel Hopfer (1471-1536) to create a *Kostumharnisch* for Wilhelm Freiherr zu Roggendorf, an officer of the Landsknecht mercenaries (Fig. 30). Not long after, Helmschmied and Hopfer created another slashed design, most likely for the Polish elite Jerzy Herkules Radziwill (1480-1541) (Fig. 31).

Piatti’s armour resembled the fashionable male dress of the 1570s, especially with its protruding peascod belly. The peascod, goose, or shotten-bellied doublet was characterized by its padded and stuffed front point that distended past the waistline in

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111 Qtd. and trans. by Ibid., 18.
112 Ibid.
a V-like shape. English moralist Philip Stubbes railed against the new mode in his 1583 Anatomie of Abuses saying

“for now the fashion is, to have the hang down to the midle of their thighes, or at least to their priuie members, being so hard quilted, stuffed, bombasted and sewed…”

In fact, many breastplates from the period tended to imitate contemporary doublet styles, which were mostly adopted for aesthetic purposes only, as their shapes offered no tactical advantage in battle. Another explanation could have stemmed from the practice of wearing breastplates over arming doublets, making them easier to layer if they shared the same shape. In his first edition of essays published in 1580, Montaigne writes,

“Let them get sick of that ugly codpiece that so openly shows our secret parts; of that heavy stuffing of doublets that makes us look completely different than we are, and that is so inconvenient for putting on armor…”

The Advancement of Decorative Techniques

Creating an armour like Matteo’s required multiple craftsmen trained in disparate materials to work collaboratively. As demonstrated in his 1568 contract, Piatti relied on a team of specialists, who had experience working in very specific trades. For instance, he brought along four armourers who respectively specialized in helmets, body armour, arms, and gauntlets. For the adorning of armours, he additionally brought polishers, an etcher, two gilders (most likely a goldsmith and a damascener), as he specified that one was proficient working in gold leaf, while the other understood the application of powdered gold.

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116 Although precursors to this style began to emerge in the 1540s, the peascod does not reach its full form until the mid-1570s.
118 Patterson. Fashion and Armour, 47.
120 For more on the Renaissance armour workshop, see Pyhrr and Godoy, Heroic Armor, 23 (footnote 43).
Matteo’s studio appears to have been typical for the period, as the more prominent workshops employed men to hammer the plates, men to adorn them using the techniques of embossing, etching, gilding, or damascening, and finally, men to assemble the armours. In fact, the decoration of armour was not a Renaissance invention, as the bronze and iron armour of ancient Rome had similarly been embossed, incised, silvered, gilt, and adorned using various types of inlay, including ivory or amber.

Embossing was the primary technique used to adorn Francesco’s parade armour, a work carried out most often by goldsmiths, who were familiar with the manipulation of various metals, including gold, silver, copper, and iron. This technique involved the hammering and punching of an armour’s under layer to create designs in relief on the surface, aptly named repoussé in French, meaning “to push out.” Fine details were then added to the exterior’s surface with chisels, punches, and burins, a method described as chasing. Embossing only adorned parade armour, as the process weakened the metal considerably, making it ineffective apparel for defence. Marina Belozerskaya equated sixteenth-century parade armour to “a kind of wearable sculpture,” linking it to “modern-day haute couture, which [wa]s similarly intended to communicate the wearer’s exclusivity and wealth and not be a practical everyday ware.”

Etching was another technique which used acid to cut designs into metal. Analogous to printmaking methods, the Augsburg armour-etcher Hopfer is thought to have introduced the technique of etching on paper to the printing industry. In fact, many printmakers’ designs were commonly utilized to also adorn arms and armour. Some printmakers’ circulated their designs for armour and other decorative objects in model books across Europe. For instance, Heinrich Vogtherr’s 1538 Ein frembds und

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121 Ibid., 17.  
122 Ibid., 15.  
123 Qtd. in Ibid.  
124 Patterson, Fashion and Armor, 93.  
125 Belozerskaya, Luxury Arts of the Renaissance, 182.  
126 Patterson, Fashion and Armour, 95.
“wunderbars Kunstbuechlin (published in Strasbourg) was composed in order “to
guide the artists who are burdened with wife and children and those who have not
traveled.””¹²⁷ Steel-chiselling was another method utilized for precise metalwork,
which was often employed on hilts, gun-locks, and cutlery.¹²⁸

Armours could be polished “mirror bright,” or colour could be added to embellish
an otherwise monochrome, steel exterior.¹²⁹ Surfaces could be left black from the
hearth, painted, or “blued,” a treatment used to create gradations of colour on polished
steel using heat.¹³⁰ In fact, many extant armours currently displayed in museums
initially possessed this bluish-black hue before eventually wearing off. Steel heated to
220˚C, 270˚C, and 310˚C respectively created yellow, purple, and the most frequently
utilized blueish-black tones.¹³¹ Not only was the colouring process fashionable, it also
prevented and/or slowed the rusting process.¹³²

One of the most expensive ways to ornament armour was to affix precious metals
to its exterior via gilding or damascening. When fire gilding, the metal was covered
with mercury and a powdered gold mixture, which was then heated, removing the
mercury and affixing the gold to the surface.¹³³ Gilding was especially costly, as this
technique could account for one third of a harness’ overall price.¹³⁴ Damascening was
another decorative method inherited from the East that adorned the metal with gold
and/or silver leaf, usually wrapped around a wire and inserted into silts scratched into
the surface and then burnished to create a smooth exterior.¹³⁵ Compared to gilding,
damascening took longer to complete, but gave craftsmen more freedom to produce

¹²⁷ Pyhrr and Godoy, Heroic Armor, 104-05.
¹²⁸ Patterson, Fashion and Armour, 95.
¹²⁹ Pyhrr and Godoy, Heroic Armour, 15.
¹³⁰ Ibid.
¹³¹ Belozerskaya, Luxury Arts of the Renaissance, 182.
¹³² Ibid. Pyhrr and Godoy, Heroic Armor of the Renaissance, 15.
¹³³ Pyhrr and Godoy, Heroic Armor of the Renaissance, 16.
¹³⁴ For more on gilding, see Patterson, Fashion and Armour, 22, Belozerskaya, Luxury Arts of
the Renaissance, 169, and Williams, The Knight and the Blast Furnace, 456.
¹³⁵ Patterson, Fashion and Armour, 96, 99.
unique designs using a variety of colours, including gold, silver, and copper (Fig. 32).^{136}

Another costly embellishment with dramatic effect was to adorn surfaces with precious stones, including rubies, diamonds, and pearls. Lorenzo de’ Medici attended his own 1469 joust outfitted in armour affixed with gems, some of which loosened, falling off mid-joust to the crowd’s shock and horror.^{137} Some jewels adorning wearable objects were far from authentic, however. Replicas could be made from coloured glass, paste, or crystal, and Timothy McCall noted that most of the jewels worn by Florence’s governing body in this period were, indeed, fake.^{138}

**Jacopo Piatti**

In 1574, Matteo returned to his native city, roughly five years after he first arrived in Florence. Matteo’s exit did not conclude the Piatti family’s tenure in Florence, however. Matteo was eventually succeeded by his nephew Jacopo Filippo Piatti, who relocated to Florence in 1592, almost two decades after his uncle’s departure.^{139} Jacopo was recruited per the order of Ferdinando I. The cardinal-turned-duke apparently tasked his armoury’s head master Antonio Maria Bianchi with finding another Milanese armourer to work at the Medici court. Bianchi had worked for Ferdinando I making armour and arquebuses with an assistant, and records document that he received a monthly stipend of twenty *scudi* and another thirty a year for lodging.^{140}

In a copy of Jacopo’s seven-year contract which was issued on 14 July 1592, Medici administrator Girolamo Seriacopi recorded that Jacopo requested “a convenient house and suitable workshop” in the centre of Florence to conduct his

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^{136} Pyhr and Godoy, *Heroic Armor*, 16.
^{137} Belozerskaya, *Luxury Arts of the Renaissance*, 143.
^{138} Timothy McCall, “Brilliant Bodies,” 459.
^{139} Transcription of document published in Butters, Appendix XVI, 482.
affairs, where six or eight workers would be allowed to comfortably live and work, this time at the Duke’s expense. The contract also stipulated that Jacopo would be exempt from state taxes that concerned the style and furnishing of both his home and workshop. Furthermore, Jacopo was to receive a cash advance in exchange for giving the state’s ministers a ten percent discount on any future works. Since Jacopo did not know anyone in Florence, the current Medici ambassador in Milan Giovan Vincenzo Modesti, also referred to as “Cavalieri Modesti,” was to act as the loan’s guarantor.

It appears that during the interim between Matteo and Jacopo, the Medici Dukes were primarily served by local armourers, as Jacopo’s contract referenced several customs that had previously been arranged. In the following passage regarding the sourcing of materials, the document clarified that

All of the material for making white (non-coloured) and black (coloured) armour for the infantry and cavalry, and bullet-proof armour will be delivered by the ministers of his Serene Highness, except for leather, studs/nails (chioderie), [and] canvas, in the same way that occurred with Mariano and Tommaso, armourers in Florence.

The seven-year contract included a long list of agreed upon prices for various types and pieces of armour, including harnesses for the infantry and light cavalry. For instance, the contract stated that Jacopo would construct the armours of the infantry, which boasted a scheme of white (meaning the steel’s natural colour) and darker portions for a total of 24 lire each, the same amount paid to armourers in Florence and Pistoia. Given the timing of the contract, the armour meant to withstand the impact of firearms was also priced out accordingly. The contract indicated that all bullet-proof objects would equal what the state previously paid to a certain Bernardino Breni. Thus, a backplate that had been proofed with a pistol cost 10 ½ lire, while a breast plate proofed by an arquebus fetched 14 lire. Since ducati were used most frequently

141 Transcription of document published in Butters, Appendix XVI, 482-83. “una casa conveniente & una bottega idonea”

142 “Da i ministri di Vostra Altezza Serenissima li sia consegnato tutta la materia per fabbrichare armadure bianche e nere, da fanti a piè & a cavallo, et a botta, eccetto corame, chioderie, tela, nel medesimo modo che si fa con Mariano e Tommaso, armaioli di Firenze.”
in Milan, the contract additionally included the corresponding price in Jacopo’s local currency for the items discussed.

In total, it appears that Jacopo would roughly provide the Medici court with around three hundred armours per year. For higher end, custom pieces constructed from costly materials, the contract stipulated that prices would be set “according to the judgment of intelligent persons.” At the end of his contract, Jacopo requested that he have the option to extend, assuming both parties were happy with the arrangement. The document additionally stated that the Duke would be expected to demonstrate his gratitude at the end of their partnership with affection and gifts for the Milanese craftsman’s good service.

After Jacopo had been officially hired by Ferdinando I, he started to make the necessary arrangements to gather his team to move to Florence. He sought to bring ten employees, which caught the attention of Milanese authorities, who in their duty to protect the local industry deemed this quantity of men excessive. In a letter from 1 August 1592 to Modesti, Duke Ferdinando I reiterated the situation to his diplomat writing

> You know that he was stopped, that armourer that was coming to work here, and to serve us with ten workers that he would bring with him, and because of the prohibition he is there under serious penalties, since it is not permitted to this lot of men to leave [Milan] to go work elsewhere, it is necessary that you ask for a licence for him and for the ten or twelve workers.

About a month later, on 2 September, the Duke of Terranova and governor of Milan granted a licence, but it only allowed four workers to accompany Jacopo to Florence. Knight Modesti went back to the Milanese governor and argued that the figure was simply too low given the various tasks in the workshop that required

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143 “secondo il giudizio di persone intelligenti”
144 ASF, MdP, vol. 3121, fol. 30. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 12398. “Voi sapete che si è fermo quello Armarolo per venire a lavorar qua, et servirsi con dieci lavoranti, che egli condurra seco, et per rispetto della proibizione che è costi sotto gravissime pene, del non potere questa sorte di huomini uscir di costi per andare a lavorare altre, è necessario che chiediate licentia per lui, et per dieci o dodici lavoranti.”
specialist knowledge. After some negotiation, Modesti finally secured permission for Jacopo to bring eight assistants with him to Florence on 9 September, a little over six weeks after the armourer’s contract was initially signed. Modesti informed the Duke that eight men was the minimum number of workmen that a court armour could possess. Apparently, this figure was indicated to him by a certain Pompeo, a fellow court armourer and close friend of Modesti’s. This Pompeo probably refers to the celebrated Milanese armourer Pompeo della Cesa (1537-1610), who served as court armourer to Philip II of Spain (1527-98) from 1572-93. On 17 August 1592, Duke Ferdinando replied to Modesti applauding his attempt to procure the licence from the governor, adding “we are sincerely hoping that he will manage to obtain it in the end.”

The Medici Armouries

Modesti’s assessment of needing at least eight professionals in the armourer’s workshop illustrates just how specialized arms and armour production had become. Artisans reached new heights in aesthetic achievement in this period, and men of state built collections as well as armouries to house their amassed treasures. The Medici family was no exception, but given the political turmoil that ensued after the expulsion of Piero (the Unfortunate) de’ Medici (1472-1503) in 1494, the dynasty’s armouries were broken apart and looted. The family’s fifteenth-century collection boasted an incredible quantity of arms and armour. Using a 1512 copy of an inventory executed in 1492 on the death of Lorenzo de’ Medici (1449-92), Mario Scalini has shown that arms and armour were a major component of the family’s possessions.

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147 Transcription of document published in Butters, Appendix XVI, 485. ASF, MdP, vol. 3120, fol. 771rv. Butters also suggested that the “Pompeo” referenced was likely Pompeo della Cesa.
149 Inventory for arms and armour is published at the end of Scalini’s article. Mario Scalini, “The Weapons of Lorenzo de’ Medici: An Examination of the Inventory of the Medici Palace in Florence Drawn Up upon the Death of Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1492,” in Art, Arms
Weapons filled the sixty-three folio document, and as Scalini expounded, “the reader finds himself amazed by the haphazard scattering of weapons everywhere: in chests, in cupboards, beside the beds and on the interior balconies on the bedroom walls.”\textsuperscript{150} Although the weapons’ descriptions were quite vague (as found in most early modern inventories), the vast quantity, along with the varying types of objects recorded, demonstrates just how prevalent these items were in Renaissance society. Granted, the Medici in this period served as the city’s de-facto’s rulers, which might help explain the sheer number of items they possessed.

The inventory noted that mass amounts of hunting gear, several styles of pole arms, crossbows, swords, daggers, maces, large arquebuses, armour, horse armour, standards, mail, and protective clothing were scattered between twenty rooms in the Medici palace. Boccia estimated that around 2,350 items were counted in total.\textsuperscript{151} Even a lance, which was seven and half braccia long and decorated with bone was documented in the camera delle balie or room of the wet nurses.\textsuperscript{152} Different makes and models of weapons were also common occurrences. One such case is exemplified by the document’s recording of eighty-one different crossbows, in addition to their various accoutrements.\textsuperscript{153} The document also recorded eighty-one swords, which included rapiers, scimitars, and falchions, but curiously only noted the presence of eleven daggers.\textsuperscript{154} Pieces in the collection contained varying levels of adornment. For instance, eight giannette were documented, one of which had been painted and gilded, and another four probably damascened in gold.\textsuperscript{155} Although numerous pieces of armour were catalogued, the inventory only recorded the presence of three complete armours, all of which had additional elements for jousting. Two of the armourers were gilded; Piero owned one, while the other was the property of Lorenzo’s youngest son,
Giuliano di Lorenzo. The third harness was unadorned (*a ferri puliti*) and did not list an owner.

After their expulsion and subsequent return to Florence, Boccia posited that the Medici probably reassembled their armory in via Larga over the years of 1512-27. These objects would have undoubtedly been added to Alessandro I’s (1510-37) personal collection at the time of his ducal appointment in 1534; however, after his assassination in 1537, the collection was ransacked by Alessandro Vitelli’s troops, who were sent to maintain public order and secure Medici and imperial control in the city. Three years after succeeding Alessandro I, Cosimo I formed the armoury of the *guardaroba* in the Palazzo Vecchio. Another armoury (called the “*Armeria Segreta*”) was fashioned in the Pitti Palace sometime after 1564 when Cosimo and Eleonora relocated across the Arno. It was not until 1588, however, that the first official Medici armoury—one intended for display—was created by Ferdinando I to commemorate his new role as Grand Duke. The princely treasures were exhibited in the “*armeria di corrido*” in the Uffizi, which additionally displayed precious artefacts from the family’s collection. The gallery was frescoed by Italian painter Ludovico Buti, who adorned the ceiling with battle scenes with soldiers from the far east, along with events from the war against Siena, and various armourer workshops (Fig. 33).

In 1631, the Medici’s collection grew with the addition of the ducal armoury from Urbino. The collection found its way to Florence as part of Vittoria della Rovere’s (1622-94) dowry, who married Ferdinando II de’ Medici (1610-70). In this period, there were four separate Medici armouries recorded. The *armeria segreta* now held Ferdinando II’s (1610-70) personal collection, as well as the armour being used

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156 Only one object (a shield in leather) survived from the collection. Boccia, “Le armi medicee,” 388.
159 Ibid.
at court, while the *armeria guardaroba* had turned into a sort of storage facility, looking after objects that were temporarily out of use.\textsuperscript{162} The *armeria di corrido* (gallery armoury) still housed the collection’s showy objects on display, and the *armeria di sotto* (armoury below) stowed additional works, as well as housed the workshop of the court armourers, who were now a permanent fixture at the Medici court.\textsuperscript{163} The collection continued to expand, totalling more than 10,000 pieces by the middle of the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{164}

Given the sheer scope of objects owned by the Medici, it may seem surprising that very few extant objects can be traced back to the family. In 1737, after the last Medici Gian Gastone passed away, the family was succeeded by the Hapsburg-Lorraine dynasty. In 1773, the second Hapsburg Duke Pietro Leopoldo (1747-1792) disassembled part of the collection, keeping only one room of the Uffizi armoury. Consequently, the court armourers estimated that 2,060 pieces were sold, and that the arms deemed less valuable were melted down.\textsuperscript{165} In a 1775 letter, Giuseppe Bencivenni Pelli, director of the Royal Gallery (now the Uffizi) advised the dispersion of the remaining armoury since it summoned “the memory of fierceness, inherited from the Goths and the Vandals.”\textsuperscript{166} However, Bencivenni-Pelli did suggest that a portion of the objects that possessed historical importance be kept.\textsuperscript{167}

In 1780, 1,217 arms were left, but Pietro Leopoldo personally decided to rid the court of the collection of arms and armour, “having them carried to the Fortezza da Basso to be sold like old iron at none other than six soldi a pound, ordering the definitive dispersion of the great collections built over the centuries by the Medici.”\textsuperscript{168} Leopoldo appeared to equate arms and armour—even artefacts with historical

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\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{163} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{164} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{166} Qtd. and trans. by Boccia in a 1775 letter written to Angelo Tavanti, Ibid.
\textsuperscript{167} Merlo, “Le armi combinate,” 63.
\textsuperscript{168} Ibid. “…facendole portare in Fortezza da Basso per essere vendute come ferri vecchi a non oltre i 6 soldi a libbra, decretando la definitiva dispersione della grande collezione raccolta nei secoli dai Medici.”
importance—with barbarity and violence, and their removal helped to further reinforce his public policy on crime and punishment. In 1786, Leopoldo banned all devices of torture and abolished the death penalty, making the Grand Duchy of Tuscany the first monarch-ruled government to end capital punishment.

Thus, the eighteenth century saw the dispersion of the Medici’s monumental collection, and the items that survived ended up in various private and stately holdings. According to Boccia, roughly one thousand items remain extant. In other words, ninety percent of the original collection has been lost, sold, or destroyed. Most of these extant pieces can be found in Florence’s Bargello museum, which now boasts more than two thousand pieces from the Medici, Rovere, and Lorena collections, the majority of which derived from the personal assemblages of Luis Carrand and Constantino Reissman at the end of the nineteenth century.

**Swords**

Arms make up a large part of the collection still extant. As demonstrated in chapter one, the most common items in circulation in this period were swords, daggers, and mail garments, including jackets, sleeves, and gloves. The following sections explore the materiality of these objects in the hopes of further clarifying their form and function in early modern Italian society. Although documents from the period often describe these weapons quite generally (e.g. *spada*), various models of each existed, thus, influencing how they were worn and used.

The sword was the most conspicuous weapon worn in the *Cinquecento*. In his autobiography, Cellini used the word “sword” seventy-eight times. Early swords from the medieval period possessed double-edged blades, making their primary function to cut and hack. To keep up with advances in armour production, swords

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169 Boccia, “Arms and Armor from the Medici Court,” 59.
170 Merlo, “Le armi combinate,” 64.
slowly adopted “diamond-shaped section blades” that could cut, as well as thrust.\textsuperscript{173} Swords that “cut” were favoured for battle since they were more economical and easier to use without proper training.\textsuperscript{174} By about 1530, however, most swords worn by civilians were prized for their pointed blades, and although they could still cut, thrusting was considered their primary objective.\textsuperscript{175} These “thrusting” swords were lighter to wield than previous bladed weapons and had hilts with bars and loops meant to protect the wearer’s hand.\textsuperscript{176} The catch-all term for this type of side sword was the “rapier,” although no standardized form existed until the mid-sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{177} Hilt designs were continuously being modified to better shield the hand in combat.\textsuperscript{178} Fencing masters promoted the style that worked best for their teachings.\textsuperscript{179} Patrons had many different styles to choose from, including hilts with ring-guards, bars, swept-hilts, plate hand-guards, simple cross-guards, and combinations using both bars and rings.\textsuperscript{180}

The rapier was a direct result of the new trend for fencing taking Europe by storm in this period. Although an early form had existed since the eleventh century, the sport was re-branded in the sixteenth century, becoming a strategic and scientific discipline. A number of fencing manuals were published to satisfy demand, and Cosimo I’s court master-at-arms Francesco di Sandro Altoni, who also trained the Duke as a young boy, similarly penned a fencing treatise by the name of\textit{ Monomachia}, dedicating its contents to Cosimo I.\textsuperscript{181} Although written around 1530, the treatise was not published until the nineteenth century. A supplication letter written by Altoni’s son Giovanni di Francesco in 1566 may proffer a plausible

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{173} “Diamond-shaped sectioned blades” were structured so they could thrust in the openings between armour and cut connecting links of mail. Wilkinson-Latham, \textit{Phaidon Guide to Antique Weapons and Armour}, 105, 110.
  \item \textsuperscript{174} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{176} Wilkinson-Latham, \textit{Phaidon Guide to Antique Weapons}, 110.
  \item \textsuperscript{177} Capwell, \textit{The Noble Art of the Sword}, 33.
  \item \textsuperscript{178} Wilkinson-Latham, \textit{Phaidon Guide to Antique Weapons}, 111.
  \item \textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{180} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{181} Gregory Murray, \textit{The Medicean Succession: Monarchy and Sacral Politics in Duke Cosimo dei Medici’s Florence} (Villa I Tatti: Villa I Tatti, 2014), 249.
\end{itemize}
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explanation for the delay. It appears the “book on fencing demonstrating the play of
the sword and other arms” was taken and held for ransom by its editor after the
Altoni’s death.\textsuperscript{182} Thus, Altoni’s son wrote to the Otto asking that the manuscript be
returned “in memory of [his] honourable father.”\textsuperscript{183} On the bottom of Altoni’s
supplication, the Otto noted in favour of Altoni, writing that they would help return
the book and administer justice. However, it seems they were unsuccessful in the
matter, as the manuscript was not published for another 300 or so years.

This “side-sword” (ca 1570) housed in the Museo Stibbert exemplifies the
classic characteristics of a rapier from the period, which was worn daily by licence
holders in the city (Fig. 34). The blade was made of Spanish steel and etched with
lion heads and ornate foliage.\textsuperscript{184} Typical of popular Italian designs from the period,
the sword’s hilt contains a guard with two large rings of incised steel for protecting
the fist.\textsuperscript{185} The wooden handle is covered in steel cording to securely position the
handler’s grip.\textsuperscript{186}

This German rapier owned by Ferdinando I (ca. 1600) at the Metropolitan
Museum of Art in New York serves as a more expensive example (Fig. 35). The
sword spans 1.2 meters and weighs approximately 1.2 kilograms.\textsuperscript{187} Originating from
the Medici Armoury, the double-edged blade crafted by the northern Italian
swordsmith Pietro da Formicano possesses a diamond-shaped section with six-
hundred decorative holes.\textsuperscript{188} The ricasso, portion of the hilt meant to be gripped by
one’s finger, is engraved with the initials “F.G.D.T.” and the crown of the Grand
Dukes of Tuscany. The impressive, chiselled hilt consists of a button, pommel,

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{182} “un libro sopra la scherma dimostrando il giucare di spada et altre armi” ASF, Otto di
Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2247, fol. 251v. For the full transcription of the
document, see Appendix, no. 6.
\textsuperscript{183} per memoria del mio honorando padre
\textsuperscript{184} Enrico Colle and Riccardo Franci, Il Sogno e La Gloria: L’armeria di Frederick Stibbert
attraverso i suoi capolavori (Firenze: Museo Stibbert, 2015), 85.
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{187} Helmut Nickel, Stuart W. Pyhrr, and Leonid Tarassuk, The Art of Chivalry: European
Arms and Armor from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York: The American Federation
of Arts, 1982), 98-100.
\textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
knuckle guard, two quillions, and two side rings and is chiselled with numerous soldierly figures, as well as fruit and foliage, in high relief. The background was originally gilded, which would have made the rapier particularly striking. An even more extravagant example from the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna is this mid sixteenth-century rapier made for the future Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II (1527-76) (Fig. 36) The renowned Milanese master Giovanni Antonio Piccinino fashioned its blade, while the impressive hilt made from pure gold was produced by an unidentified Spanish or Italian goldsmith, once thought to be Cellini. It is chased with decorative reliefs and possesses coloured enamel additions that produce jewel-like effects. Although Piccinino’s blade is fully functional, the weapon was not meant to be fought with. The rapier was made with a matching dagger, sword belt, hanger, and scabbards, all of which are now, unfortunately, lost.

Swords undoubtedly affected the comportment, movement, and behaviour of their wearers. Some rapiers could be as long as 1.5 meters, causing sumptuary laws and various authorities across Europe to prohibit the augmentation of blade lengths. Assuming one could legally carry a sword, it is unclear at what age this typically occurred. In the likely posthumous portrait of Filippo di Francesco I de Medici (1577-1582) painted by an unknown Florentine artist around the turn of the seventeenth century, Francesco’s youngest child awkwardly dons the weapon (Fig. 37). Since swords were quite long, however, it was much more common for young princes and nobles to don daggers instead. In a portrait by Francesco Salviati of Cosimo’s second son, a young Giovanni di Cosimo de Medici (1544-62) is shown with a dagger and carries a small Hungarian mace called a buzogany (Fig. 38).

Daggers

189 Ibid.
190 Capwell, Noble Art of the Sword, 86.
191 Ibid., 85.
192 Ibid.
Given their smaller size, daggers were easier to wield than swords and therefore, required less training to use. The dagger derived from the scaramasax, a versatile short knife used by the Saxons for a variety of jobs.\textsuperscript{193} Like swords, dagger styles evolved over time to accommodate changing needs in battle. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, knights carried daggers with double-edged blades and by the fifteenth century, the typical model was replaced by the rondel dagger, taking its name from the circular pommel adorning its grip.\textsuperscript{194} The rondel dagger had a pointed blade small enough to pierce between the crevices of plate armour, necessary since men-at-arms started to wear steel from head to toe in this period.\textsuperscript{195} Left-handed daggers for parrying became the go-to short-bladed weapon in the sixteenth century, as the interest in fencing peaked. The left-handed dagger was double edged and used to ward off attacks while duelling “like a shield.”\textsuperscript{196}

An example of a parrying dagger housed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art from the first decade of the seventeenth century measures approximately half a meter long and weighs a little over half a kilogram (Fig. 39). The blade was likely crafted by Andreas Munsten of Solingen, and the hilt matches another rapier in the Met’s collection.\textsuperscript{197} The pair were probably used by a bodyguard of the Prince Electors Christian II (1583-1611) and Johannes Georg I (1585-1656).\textsuperscript{198} The sleek “swept rapier hilt” contains a similarly-styled pommel and guard, and the wooden handle is covered in iron wire.\textsuperscript{199} The blade is engraved with ‘In Valin tia,’ an attempt to convey that the sword was made in Valencia.\textsuperscript{200} Even though the city of Solingen produced high quality blades of their own, “the swordsmiths obligingly stamped spurious Spanish or Italian inscriptions, as well as the Passau ‘wolf’ mark, on their products if a customer desired something seemingly exotic and prestigious.”\textsuperscript{201}

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 143.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{197} Nickel, Pyhrr, and Tarassuk, \textit{The Art of Chivalry}, 96-98.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{200} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{201} Ibid.
Although blade-making was related to methods of armour manufacture, the best swordsmiths were not necessarily the best armourers.\textsuperscript{202} The most sought after blade smiths were found in the cities of Toledo, Valencia, Passau, and Solingen.\textsuperscript{203} Ore was sourced for Toledo and Passau in the mines of the north Spanish hills and in the Alps bordering Austria.\textsuperscript{204} Smiths in Solingen relied on iron sourced from nearby bogs and swamps.\textsuperscript{205} Sword-making similarly adjusted to meet demands developing in industry practices, and like armourers, the hardening procedures used by smiths in the sixteenth century increased.\textsuperscript{206}

The parrying dagger, given its newfound role in duelling, almost always accompanied the rapier. The dagger was typically positioned at one's back, so the hilt was easily accessible with the left hand, while the rapier would have been held in right.\textsuperscript{207} For this reason, only a small portion of dagger hilts are visible in period portraiture. Moretto da Brescia’s 1526 \textit{Portrait of a Man} illustrates one of the earliest visual portrayals of both weapons accompanying each other (Fig. 40).\textsuperscript{208} The \textit{stiletto} was another dagger commonly used in the sixteenth century. Unlike the parrying dagger which defended against an opponent’s blows, \textit{stiletti} had sharp, pointed blades intended for thrusting, making them ideal weapons for surprise attacks at close range.

As swords and daggers became fixtures in men’s dress, they were commonly fashioned in sets.\textsuperscript{209} Hilts and scabbards were customized to complement the metal work found on a patron’s dress, including rings, pendants, earrings, buttons, and buckles.\textsuperscript{210} Moralists wasted no time in condemning this practice, as Stubbes complained in his 1583 \textit{Anatomie of Abuses},

\begin{footnotes}
\item[202] For more on the material composition of blade making, see Alan Williams, \textit{The Knight and the Blast Furnace}, 11-16.
\item[203] Helmut Nickel, Stuart W Pyhrr, and Leonid Tarassuk, \textit{The Art of Chivalry}, 85.
\item[204] Ibid.
\item[205] Ibid.
\item[206] Ibid.
\item[207] Capwell, \textit{The Noble Art of the Sword}, 30.
\item[208] Ibid.
\item[209] Capwell, \textit{The Noble Art of the Sword}, 47.
\item[210] Ibid., 46.
\end{footnotes}
“their Rapiers, Swordes and Daggers, gilte, twise or thrise over the hiltes with good Angell golde, or els argented over with silver…” are “a great shew of pride … an infallible token of vaine glorie, and a grievous offence to God.”

As Stubbes’ criticism demonstrates, the swords and daggers of elite men were often adorned with elaborate designs and/or precious materials. In addition to signifying supposed martial ability, these objects also served as vehicles for displaying one’s wealth. In 1601, Medici goldsmith Giacomo Biliverti created a matching set of sword and dagger hilts adorned with 680 diamonds. An *avviso* sent to the Medici court from Brussels in 1623 reported that the King of England James VI & I (1566-1625) sent an eighteen-year old Felipe IV of Spain (1605-65) a sword and dagger, whose value was so high, no one could estimate its worth. The priceless sword used diamonds and pearls to depict scenes of Christ’s birth, death, and passion, while other precious stones illustrated the Virgin’s lamentation shown with tears and sorrow at the foot of the cross.

However, the more ornate, the less useful a sword was as a weapon of defence. Only hilts constructed from iron or steel could be fought with, assuming any additional decoration had not compromised their effectiveness. Hilts forged from solid gold or silver remained too delicate to endure the wear-and-tear of combat. Really elaborate hilts were also enamelled and decorated with colours, pearls, turquoise, rock crystal, cameos, mother-of-pearl, coral, diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. A sword with this level of decoration was not to be drawn or even grasped; yet this did not concern the men who could afford these treasures, as their rapiers went regularly unused.

Innovation was another quality often sought by patrons with larger budgets. In 1612, Ferdinando I’s son, Prince Francesco de Ferdinando I (1594-1614), ordered an

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212 Patterson, *Fashion and Armour*, 60.
214 Capwell, *The Noble Art of the Sword*, 83.
215 Ibid.
216 Ibid.
elaborate sword and dagger set from the Medici ambassador in Milan, Alessandro Beccheria. In the letter to Beccheria, ducal secretary Francesco Giovanni Guidi recorded that Principe Don Francesco wanted something “extraordinary and a lot more beautiful in style,” so he could keep the pair in his armoury. He fancied that the sword and dagger be made “in some bizarre way to [the armourer’s] fantasy.” Sparing no expense, the patron instructed that the arms be fashioned with gold, silver, and/or iron or created “in whatever other way by some talented man of art.” Since these objects were meant to be displayed, the prince sought a novel, unique design that would captivate and impress others. Grotesque and eccentric armour most certainly had a following in this period, as the imaginative designs of artisans played a pivotal part in the innovation of the malleable art form. Jewels seemed to be the only item that Principe Don Francesco did not want. Apparently, these sparkly additions were too conspicuous, as Guidi noted that the prince wanted the arms to look like a pilgrim’s, “clean, and extraordinary without jewels.” Another reason for the avoidance of jewels was practicality, since Francesco planned on using and wearing the weapon “at his side.”

This was probably a wise decision, as assassinations, spontaneous fights, and duels were all major threats to men’s safety in this period. Short-bladed weapons were especially prevalent in these crimes, as they were easily used and concealed. In 1548, for instance, Medici agent Donato Bardi wrote to Cosimo from Venice explaining how the Duke of Ferrandina was killed with a dagger at a masked ball in Murano after getting in a row with two Venetians. Sfondagiachi were also considered extremely aggressive weapons, as they possessed square or straight blades with reinforced tips meant to break through mail armour.

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218 “non ordinarie et molto più belle di maniera”; “in qualche modo bizzarro a fantasia sua”; “in qualsivoglia altro modo da qualche valent'homme dell'arte”
219 “del pulito, et dello straordinario senza gioie”; “al fianco”
221 For more on the sfondagiaco, see Carlo De Vinta, Armi bianche dal Medioevo all’ Età Moderna, 18. Table, 33, 35.
Mail Armour

Having been utilized for centuries, mail was invented toward the end of Iron Age.\(^{222}\) The oldest piece of extant interlinked mail dates to the third century BCE and was found in a Celtic grave in Romania.\(^{223}\) Modern efforts to reconstruct mail determined that a typical iron shirt contained anywhere from 28,000-50,000 links, depending on its size and length.\(^{224}\) Compared to plate armour which required financial capital because of the equipment involved, manufacturing mail was a relatively straightforward task.\(^{225}\) Iron or low-carbon steel was used in the middle ages, but manufactures in the sixteenth century experimented with different blends of iron and carbon.\(^{226}\) Most scholars posit that a mandrel was used to mould the wire, which was then cut into rings.\(^{227}\) Another supposition posits that the rings were non-riveted and punched from a sheet of metal.\(^{228}\) Regardless of the method, the process was incredibly time consuming. One iron garment could take a 1,000 or more hours to complete, or 750 hours if the links were already made.\(^{229}\) Consequently, mail garments were often reused and recycled, causing pieces to contain sections of mail from disparate periods, complicating dating processes.\(^{230}\) Unlike plate armour, the refitting of mail was easily done, as alterations could be made by changing the amount of links in a row.\(^{231}\)

Cellini suggested that cavaliers wore chainmail to impress women, and as previously discussed, the artist possessed an entire wardrobe of mail, including two jackets, a hood, a pair of sleeves, and gloves.\(^{232}\) Mail was also easily hidden under

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\(^{222}\) Williams, *The Knight and the Blast Furnace*, 29.
\(^{223}\) Ibid.
\(^{224}\) Ibid., 30.
\(^{225}\) Ibid., 44.
\(^{226}\) Ibid., 31.
\(^{227}\) Ibid, 31.
\(^{228}\) Ibid.
\(^{229}\) Ibid.
\(^{230}\) Ibid., 44.
\(^{231}\) Ibid., 31.
clothing or added to the lining of clothing. For instance, in the 1492 inventory of the Medici guardaroba, Lorenzo de’ Medici (1449-1492) had several mail garments, as well as a doublet “full of mail.” In Giovanni Battista Moroni’s 1555 Portrait of a Gentleman with his Helmet on a Column, the sitter accessorizes his black ensemble with mail sleeves (Fig. 41). Mail armour was also a common gift exchanged between statesmen. In a 1543 letter to Cosimo I, Count Otto Heinrich von der Pfalz (1502-59) thanked the Duke for two mares and offered to send Cosimo a mail shirt as a gesture of appreciation.

In the collection of the L’armeria del museo civico medioeval di Bologna, a sixteenth-century Italian shirt has been fashioned using the “grano d’orzo” method, a style originating from Italy in which four rings were connected to one ring on either side, which was then repeated row by row (Fig. 42). The shirt also possessed an opening at the neck that was secured with hooks. Mail often also included decorative elements. In 1927, arms and armour curator Bashford Dean presented the Metropolitan Museum of Art with a sixteenth-century mail shirt that weighed a little under ten pounds (Fig. 43). The shirt was fashioned with several decorative elements, including two types of faux buttons, a latten-ring collar, a vertical panel decorated with lozenges, and a patterned lower portion. An elaborate example of decorated mail is evident in Giovan Paolo Negroli’s man and horse armour (ca. 1545-50) made for Ferdinand II of Austria and later Tirol (Fig. 44). The ancient Roman inspired design used grey iron and yellow brass butted rings that spanned three millimetres in diameter. The varying coloured rings create a decorative pattern, along with the

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233 McCall, “Brilliant Bodies,” 471.
236 Grancsay, Arms and Armor, 20.
237 Belozerskaya, Luxury Arts of the Renaissance, 164-65.
symbols of the archduchy of Austria, and leonine accents adorn the helmet and guards for the shoulder and knee.\textsuperscript{238}

A sixteenth-century Italian mail glove can also be found in the collection in Bologna (Fig. 45). Made from a series of interlocking iron rings, the glove enjoys a canvas lining trimmed with red silk.\textsuperscript{239} The tightly bound rings only fully surround the wearer’s thumb, while the top and bottom of the fingers would be covered in mail. The object is categorized as “\textit{da presa}” (“for grabbing”), as the glove was meant to adorn the left hand in combat, allowing fighters to safely stop an opponent’s blade by grabbing it. Therefore, gloves made for the right hands were typically fashioned using another design.\textsuperscript{240} While the left glove protected the palm with mail, the right glove’s palm was constructed from leather for gripping the sword’s handle.\textsuperscript{241} The glove in Bologna also has a small sleeve meant to secure the garment, as well as protect the wrist. However, this sleeve is shorter than usual. Boccia suggested that this was because its owner sought to hide the accessory under a leather or cloth glove. In the sixteenth-century inventories of the Medici, mail gloves were particularly prized items, as they kept the material from calze, as well as other pairs of gloves, on hand for repair purposes.\textsuperscript{242} Although shirts, sleeves, and gloves were the most common apparel constructed, it appears mail was also used to adorn the lower-half of men’s bodies. Grancsay stated that mail trunk hose existed, and in the 1492 inventory of the Palazzo Medici, Piero de’ Medici was noted as having a pair of mail leggings.\textsuperscript{243}

The close relationship that these garments shared with the male body must not be underestimated. As Jones and Stallybrass argued, armour was “transferrable from body to body,” a point reinforced by the practice of sons inheriting armours from their fathers.\textsuperscript{244} Arms and armour helped to shape and construct the ideal man, both his

\begin{footnotes}
\item[238] Ibid.
\item[239] Boccia, \textit{L’Armeria del museo civico}, 42-43.
\item[240] The right glove is now lost.
\item[241] Boccia, \textit{L’Armeria del museo civico}, 42-43.
\item[242] Ibid.
\item[244] Jones and Stallybrass discuss theatrical examples of this practice, including \textit{Hecuba} and \textit{Pricles}. For more, see \textit{Renaissance Clothing}, 256-60.
\end{footnotes}
physical body and psychological mindset. Undoubtedly tied to contemporary attitudes of masculinity, these garments acted as extensions of the early modern male form. Offensive weapons, especially swords, lances, and spears, seemed to adopt sexual overtones, both because of their phallic shape and penetrative nature. In Cardinal Bibbiena’s *La Calandria* (1513), for instance, a female character euphemistically described how a man’s knife had been inserted into her sheath. This double entendre was certainly not lost on contemporaries and seems to have been a regular theme utilized in the sexualizing of soldiers.

In conclusion, this chapter has attempted to shed light on the practicalities of creating, adorning, maintaining, and storing arms and armour at the court of the Medici. The industry declined sharply in the middle of the century, but as we have seen, a handful of Florentine armourers still received steady work from the court, militia (when allowed), and local patrons. The Medici appeared to rely on Florentine artisans primarily for maintenance and repair, and the family’s ambassadors in northern Italy were utilized to broker larger orders with more elevated craftsmen in Milan. For personal commissions, the duchy similarly relied on a network of local agents. Milan’s stronghold on the armour-manufacturing industry was again demonstrated when the Medici repeatedly attempted to recruit an armourer from the region for Florence.

The processes of “making” armour in this period are evident in the examining of the contracts, policies, commissions, and workshops of armourers. The practices of Matteo and Jacopo Piatti, for instance, showcased how craftsmen specialized and worked collaboratively to provide patrons with innovative designs. By reviewing the materiality of swords, daggers, and mail garments, we encounter the physical impact that these objects possessed. Their elaborate designs also illustrate how they served as symbols of wealth and status. The period also experienced better techniques for hardening steel, illustrating how a shift in battle tactics changed methods of armour manufacture across Europe. As a result of this greater specialization, however, the

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industry shrank or in certain locales, died out altogether. The next chapter explores one of the major reasons behind these shifts in production: firearms.
Figure 21. Giorgio Vasari, Portrait of Duke Alessandro de’ Medici, 1534, Oil on canvas, Galleria Palatina, Florence
Figure 22. Donatello, *St. George*, ca. 1416, Marble, Height 214 cm, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence
Figure 23. Titian, *Portrait of Alfonso d’Avalos and a Page*, ca. 1533, Oil on canvas, The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
Figure 24. Jacopo da Ponte, called Jacopo Bassano, *Portrait of a Gentleman, Half Length, in Full Armour, Holding a Partesan, A Broad Sword at His Hip*, ca. 1510-92, Oil on canvas, 109 cm x 82 cm, Sotheby’s Sale, January-February 2013, New York
Figure 25. Working sketch of the harness included in the letter from Andreas Brenker to Ferdinand II, Augsburg, 11 July 1557, Innsbruck, Tiroler Landesarchiv (vgl. Anhang, Dokument 2)
Figure 26. Matteo Piatti, *Parade Armour of Francesco de' Medici I*, ca. 1574, Steel, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence
Figure 27. Matteo Piatti, *Detail of Parade armour of Francesco de' Medici*, ca. 1574, Steel, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence
Figure 28. Unknown Milanese Armourer, *Sallet in the Shape of a Lion’s Head*, ca. 1475-80, Steel, copper, gold, glass, pigment, textile, 29.8 cm x 21 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Figure 29. Bartolomeo Campi, *Roman-Style Armour Given to Philip II*, 1546, Steel, gold, silver, and brass, Real Armeria, Madrid
Figure 30. Kolman Helmschmid and Daniel Hopfer, *Costume harness of Wilhelm of Rogendorf (1481 - 1541)*, 1523, Steel and leather, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
Figure 31. Kolman Helmschmid and Daniel Hopfer, *Gauntlets from Costume harness of Wilhelm of Rogendorf (1481 - 1541)*, 1523, Steel and leather, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
Figure 32. Kunz Lochner, *Harness for Großmarschall von Litauen Nikolaus IV Radziwill*, 1555, Iron, leather, and red velvet, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
Figure 33. Lodovico Buti, *Forge with Grotesques*, 1588, Fresco, Sala dell’Armeria, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence
Figure 34. Italian and Spanish, *Side Sword*, ca. 1570, Steel and wood, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence
Figure 35. Pietro de Formicano, *Rapier*, ca. 1610-20, Steel, iron, wood, partially gilt, Length 119.5 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Figure 36. Antonio Piccinino, Rapier for Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, 1550, Steel, gold, and wood, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
Figure 37. Florentine School, *Portrait of Filippo di Francesco I de’ Medici*, ca. 1600, Oil on canvas, 116.8 cm x 78.8 cm, Private Collection, Christie’s Old Master Paintings Sale 4 June 2014, New York
Figure 38. Francesco Salviati workshop, *Portrait of Giovanni di Cosimo de Medici*, Oil on panel, 70 cm x 59 cm, Private Collection, England
Figure 39. German, *Rapier and Parrying Dagger*, ca. 1610, Steel, iron, and wood, Length 121.9 cm (rapier), 45.7 cm (dagger), The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Figure 40. Moretto da Brescia, *Portrait of a Man*, 1526, Oil on canvas, 201 cm x 92.2 cm, National Gallery, London
Figure 41. Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Portrait of a Gentleman with His Helmet on a Column*, ca. 1555-56, Oil on canvas, 186.2 cm x 99.9 cm, National Gallery, London
Figure 42. Italian (?), *Farsetto in maglia ad anelli*, ca. 1540-60, Iron, Inventory Number 3307, L’Armeria del museo civico medievale, Bologna
Figure 43. Polish, *Shirt of Mail*, Late Sixteenth Century, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Figure 44. Giovan Paolo Negroli, *Mail Armour for Archduke Ferdinand II of Tirol and His Horse*, 1545-50, Iron, gilding, silvering, and leather, Kunsthistorisches museum, Vienna
Figure 45. Italian, Guanto da presa, Second third of the 16th century, Iron, Inventory Number 3305, L’Armeria del museo civico medievale, Bologna
Chapter Three -
The Modern Man: Firearms in Sixteenth-Century Florence

How, foul and pestilent discovery,
Didst thou find place within the human heart?
Through thee is martial glory lost, through thee
The trade of arms become a worthless art:
And at such ebb are worth and chivalry,
That the base often plays the better part.
Through thee no more shall gallantry, no more
Shall valour prove their prowess as of yore.

Through thee, alas! Are dead, or have to die,
So many noble lords and cavaliers
Before this war shall end, which, Italy
Afflicting most, has drowned the world in tears,
That, if I said the word, I err not, I
Saying he sure the cruellest appears
And worst, of nature’s impious and malign,
Who did this hateful engine first design:

And I shall think, in order to pursue
The sin for ever, God has doomed to hell
That cursed soul, amid the unhappy crew,
Beside the accursed Judas there to dwell...

-Lodovico Ariosto, Orlando Furioso (ca. 1532)

In Renaissance humanist literature, firearms and other gunpowder weapons were often associated with the devil. For instance, in his epic poem Orlando Furioso (ca. 1532), Lodovico Ariosto (1474-1533) condemned the weapon’s inventor to an eternity spent in the depths of hell. In his History of Italy, contemporary historian

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1 Lodovico Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, trans. by William Stewart Rose (John Murray, 1824), Canto XI. Verses XXVI-XXVIII.
Francesco Guicciardini (1483-1540) referred to cannon artillery as “diabolical rather than human,” and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) famously called the weapons “engines of hell.” In addition to possessing satanic origins, firearms also earned the reputation of being unchivalrous. Since they could kill opponents from a distance and without warning, these missile weapons—like crossbows—were labelled ungentlemanly. This was especially true when compared with the noble and chivalrous art of swordplay discussed in the litany of fencing treatises published in the period. For instance, in the dedication to Duke Cosimo I in his treatise on fencing (1553), engineer Camillo Agrippa (1520-95) highlighted the gallant nature of the sport by contrasting it with the “diabolical modern invention of artillery.”

Although poetically denigrated in the realm of literature, firearm usage surged in the sixteenth century. This was due to a variety of factors, one of which can be identified as the weapon’s effectiveness, which most contemporaries found hard to dispute. Although they were far from precise, the potential for wreaking havoc on the battlefield made them attractive options to princes, captains, militias, and mercenaries. Guns were also created using the latest technology, and knowing how to operate one demonstrated technological savviness, making collectors of these weapons exemplars of modernity. Most statesmen had abundant collections and were eager to show them off. Florence’s first Duke Alessandro I de’ Medici (1510-1537), for instance, was an avid collector with a particular fondness for German firearms. In his colourful autobiography written between 1558-1562, Benvenuto Cellini recounted a tale from his younger years in which Duke Alessandro let him choose a gun from his coveted collection.

While we were thus talking, his Excellency was in his wardrobe, looking at a remarkable little gun that had been sent him out of Germany. When he noticed

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4 For more on crossbows, see Hale, “Gunpowder and the Renaissance,” 396, 402.
6 For the few writers, including Montaigne, who deemed the weapon ineffective, see Hale, “Gunpowder and the Renaissance,” 394.
that I too paid particular attention to this pretty instrument, he put it in my hands, saying that he knew how much pleasure I took in such things, and adding that I might choose for earnest of his promises an arquebuse to my own liking from the armoury, excepting only this one piece; he was well aware that I should find things of greater beauty, and not less excellent, there. Upon this invitation, I accepted with thanks; and when he saw me looking round, he ordered his Master of the Wardrobe, a certain Pretino of Lucca, to let me take whatever I liked. Then he went away with the most pleasant words at parting, while I remained, and chose the finest and best arquebuse I ever saw, or ever had, and took it back with me to home.  

About a year after becoming Duke in 1538, Cosimo I seemingly tasked Fortezza da Basso superintendent Francesco Seriacopi to start gathering a collection of firearms for the state. In just a three-month period from July through October, several separate payments were made for acquiring arquebuses, accessories, and extra parts. For instance, in July 1538, master bombardier Iacopo da Jugano was paid nine scudi (a total of 7.5 lire each) for nine matchlock arquebuses and three schioppi (an early model of firearm). Just a little under a month later on 8 August, Guardaroba official Pietro Monferrati accepted an order of twenty-three arquebuses made from master Francesco di Pellegrino from Buggiano. Lastly, in a receipt from master Francesco di Pellegrino dated 22 October, another order of twenty-five arquebuses was placed for the ducal armoury in the Guardaroba.

Like the weapons that preceded them, firearms also served as objects of luxury among the elite, being elaborately designed and adorned with rare and costly materials, including precious metals, gems, bone, and ivory. This made firearms ideal gifts, and they were commonly acquired and exchanged among princes, statesmen, nobles, and high-ranking ecclesiastics. In May 1532, Duke Alessandro reportedly gave “a new German schioppo with its furnishings” to the Abbot of Monterotondo, and in April 1533, Cardinal Innocenzo Cibo was the lucky recipient of the same gift.

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12 ASF, MdP, vol. 630, fol. 3. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 24790 (entry noting the gift for the Abbot of Monterotondo), “uno istiopo todesco nuovo con suoi fornimenti”;
In an avviso from Venice on 19 September 1579, sources recounted that England’s Queen Elizabeth I (1533-1603) gifted the Duke of Alençon with a fancy coat and a gilded wheellock pistol with her portrait painted on it. In return, the Duke reportedly gave the monarch a massive diamond worth eighteen-thousand scudi. Even as late as February 1591, Cosimo’s second son, Duke Ferdinando I de’ Medici (1549-1609) sent a thank-you note to Marchese Carlo Gonzaga for gifting him with a wheellock mechanism.

Military historians, most notably Bert S. Hall and J.R. Hale, have adequately examined the evolution of firearms, however, there is much to be understood about how these objects functioned in everyday Italian society. Thus, this chapter focuses on the practicalities of using and carrying early modern firearms in Florence. Aside from a few investigations, we know very little about how men interacted with these objects. Some of the most pertinent analyses are the thoughtful examinations on gun usage and its effect on violence in sixteenth-century Rome and Perugia by Robert C. Davis and Peter Blastenbrei. Davis’ examination reported that violence peaked in the second half of the sixteenth century in these papally-governed cities. He showed that the introduction of wheellock firearms served to exacerbate matters, as the weapons caused incidents to escalate faster and produce deadlier outcomes. He demonstrated that the problem of banditry compounded the situation, and the papal state went to great lengths in its attempt to rid the territories of guns. Using the reports of doctors, surgeons, and barbers who treated inhabitants’ wounds, Blastenbrei similarly demonstrated that the Popes were unsuccessful in their attempts to curb the city’s escalating violence. His analysis included all weapons in circulation, including guns, and proposed that inhabitants tended to settle disagreements individually via brute force, as they distrusted the city’s police and court system. He also noted that

15 For more, see Hall, Weapons and Warfare and Hale, “Gunpowder and the Renaissance.”
assault tended to be seasonal, and in February 1580, for instance, the city withstood an average of 6.9 attacks per day. In his examination of the Florence’s Otto di Guardia e Balia, John Brackett also explored the city’s crime, briefly examining legislation against weaponry. Aside from Brackett’s more general enquiry, no studies have been conducted on the carrying of arms, let alone firearms, in Florence. Although arms were carried for a variety of reasons, protection against threat was one of the most oft cited. In fact, after analysing forty-six case studies of reports, Brackett determined assault was the most prevalent offence handled by the Otto. He classified assault into the larger category of violent crime, which also included assassination, infanticide, murder, premediated murder, attempted murder, rape, and sex crimes.

Using archival documents from the Medici ducal letters and the records of the Otto di Guardia e Balia, the main criminal and judicial magistracy in Florence, this chapter explores firearm usage in Medicean Florence and its dominion. My study begins by briefly discussing firearms, their background, and what made this new technology so successful. The practices, customs, and habits of using firearms in this period will follow, before moving to Florence, where we will examine the city’s legislation around this new-fangled weapon, as well as the workarounds that some inhabitants used to escape contemporary prohibitions. Similar to the arms’ licences discussed in the first chapter, residents of Florence and the dominion could request permission to carry firearms outside restricted areas. The reasons given for needing such weapons, in addition to the penalties for going about armed without authorization, will lastly be explored. Given that firearm usage increased as the sixteenth-century progressed, this study will primarily examine letters, cases, and laws created under the reigns of Duke Cosimo I (1519-1574) and his son Francesco I (1541-1587), roughly spanning the years of 1537-1587. Many cases will also feature Lelio Torelli, the Duke’s first secretary from 1546-1571/6, as well as the Otto di Guardia e Balia’s secretary Lorenzo Corboli, who held the position from 1560-1587.

The Innovation of the Wheellock Mechanism

Early models of firearms existed in Europe in the fifteenth century, however, it was not until the second quarter of the sixteenth century that the weapons were used more frequently in battle. The catalyst for this shift was the wheellock arquebus (archibugio o archibugetto a ruota). Most scholars attribute the invention of the wheellock to Nuremberg craftsmen Martin Löffelholz, as an illustration of the mechanism appeared in his 1505 manuscript of designs, which also included models for work benches, a chair with wheels, and several types of crossbows (Fig. 46). However, the attribution to Löffelholz is contested by some, as a sketch of the wheellock device also appeared in Leonardo da Vinci’s twelve-volume codex Atlanticus, a collection of notebook pages spanning the years of 1478-1519, now housed in Milan’s Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Fig. 47).

Technically, the wheellock succeeded an earlier firearm referred to as the matchlock (archibugio a corda o macchio). However, it is important to note that matchlocks continued to be used alongside wheellocks until they were both replaced by the flint lock in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Invented in the second-half of the fifteenth century, match locks possessed fuses, which had to be manually lit for the charge to ignite before the gun could fire. Although match locks were sturdy weapons frequently seen in battle, challenging weather conditions and the hurried rush of combat presented major obstacles when using these weapons. Moreover, match locks made it difficult to sneak up on enemies, as the act of lighting the fuse generated a slew of sense-inducing effects, including the smell of sulphur, the light of the illuminated match, and the sound of the fuse crackling.

What made wheellocks so revolutionary was their ability to self-ignite, freeing up the shooter’s attention so he could concentrate on the act of aiming and firing. Initially made by clockmakers, the wheellock’s design included a steel disk, ranging from 25-40 millimetres in diameter, which turned with the help of a spring after the

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18 For more, see the Löffelholtz-Kodex, Abbildungen und Beschreibungen von allerlei Handwerkszeugen, Folterinstrumenten, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, 27-28.
19 Special thanks to Maurizio Arfaioli for sharing his expertise in this area.
trigger was pulled (Fig. 48).\textsuperscript{20} While turning, the wheel contacted a piece of pyrite held in place by a small clamp above the wheel (often called the dog), causing it to spark and activate the gunpowder in the pan.\textsuperscript{21} Another advantage of the wheellock was that it could be loaded and wound in advance. This process of prepping wheellocks was nicknamed “lowering the dog” ("calar il cane"), meaning that the mechanism holding the flint was put in place against the wheel, so the gun was ready to fire.\textsuperscript{22}

Wheellocks infiltrated the battlefield around the 1540s, and their adoption forever changed sixteenth century tactics of warfare. Although it was still difficult to hit a specific target, the wheellock succeeded in eliminating groups of men, and without its “swinging lighted match,” the weapon could now successfully be employed by men on horseback.\textsuperscript{23} In fact, military historian Bert Hall attributes the decline of cavalry in the second half of the sixteenth century to the wheellock pistol, suggesting that the mounted troops retired their lances in exchange for multiple locked-and-loaded pistols.\textsuperscript{24} Mounted pistoleers, as they were now called, were known to carry two, three, or even six pistols at a time in battle.\textsuperscript{25}

To the state’s dismay, the threat of wheellocks was not confined to the battlefield. As production increased throughout the second half of the sixteenth century, the cost of wheellocks diminished, making the weapons much more affordable. In 1571, for example, in the small village of Riofreddo located just outside of Rome, a short wheellock pistol could be purchased for only four \textit{scudi}, and as a result, the weapon became extremely popular with the town’s young men.\textsuperscript{26} Given their capabilities, firearms were also the preferred weapons for assassins, fugitives, and bandits. As a result, many accounts of outlaws carrying wheellock pistols surfaced in this period. Despite the local 500-\textit{scudi} penalty (in addition to other punishments), the Medici

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{20} Hall, \textit{Weapons and Warfare}, 191.
\item \textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Davis, “The Renaissance Goes Up in Smoke,” 403.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Hall, \textit{Weapons and Warfare}, 193.
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 190.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 192.
\item \textsuperscript{26} Peter Blastenbrei, “Violence, Arms and Criminal Justice,” \textit{Renaissance Studies}, 85.
\end{itemize}
ambassador in Milan Fabrizio Ferrari reported to Cosimo I in 1563 that three men from Bologna and Ferrara had been going around for the last month at night with wheellock arquebuses and fake beards. Fabrizio added that eight additional men armed with wheellocks from Bologna, Ferrara, Modena, and Parma had also just arrived.

Avvisi from the period are filled with similar reports. For example, a 1579 news report stated that four men in Lombardy were dressed as Capuchin monks and were armed with pistols under their habits. Apparently, the foursome was attempting to kill the Duke of Parma Ottavio Farnese, but was apprehended and the plot subsequently foiled. In another avviso from two years later, the victims were not as fortunate. A band of twenty-five men dressed as pilgrims burst into the Peretti family household in Canda armed with wheellock pistols. The attack resulted in the killing of four and the additional injuring of eight. Lastly, an avviso from Venice in 1576 stated that eleven out of thirteen men armed with pistols had been arrested in Parma, as authorities suspected they were attempting to murder Count Alessandro da Correggio, the son of a former Cardinal.

Some argue that firearms democratized battle and levelled the playing field for would-be opponents since they reduced the close contact that other weapons required and did not necessitate users to possess rigorous amounts of training. Although all the Florentine records I examined contained male protagonists, it is also highly probable that some local women operated firearms, as avvisi accounts also include stories of women who were well-skilled in the operation of artillery. One such case occurred in a 1586 avviso from Rome, which recorded that a Pordenone girl armed with three wheellock pistols attacked five men, who were attempting to murder her father. After shooting and killing three of the said perpetrators and wounding a fourth, she was heralded for her bravery and compared to the renowned Amazon women of

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Crossbows were also used by women on occasion. England’s Queen Elizabeth I, for instance, was known to hunt with a crossbow, and in another avviso sent from Brussels to the Medici court in May 1615, testimonies recounted that the Infanta Isabel Clara Eugenia impressively handled a crossbow at the city’s annual “Shooting at the Papagay” tournament. Apparently, she hit the wooden-parrot target, which dangled off a structure atop the Notre Dame du Sablon.\(^3\)

Although adopted by many, the wheellock’s burgeoning technology was not without its challenges. Since the mechanism contained various moving parts, jamming and misfiring were common occurrences. In 1576, for example, a soldier by the name of Jacopo di Piermaria Rossi da Gaiuole was imprisoned for shooting a boy, around 8 or 9 years old, after his gun accidentally went off by itself, killing the young Giusto di Piero di Giusto Cioli.\(^3\) In his supplication, Jacopo stated that he had been granted permission to carry the weapon by Duke Francesco I. Evidently, he had wanted to discharge the gun while returning from outside the city, so he laid it on the bridge in Gaiuole, causing it to fire on its own. In the Otto’s summary of the case, the criminal magistracy stated that the defendant fled after the crime and was sentenced in absence. After being subsequently caught by police, Jacopo was finally charged with Giusto’s death. Consequently, Jacopo requested a pardon claiming the crime originated from unlucky circumstances and added that he had since made peace with the boy’s family. In December 1576, Duke Francesco I sympathized with the supplicant and ultimately granted his request. Cellini recounted a similar tale of his arquebus self-firing after arguing with a postmaster and his two sons at the Camollia gate in Siena. In his Vita, he wrote

> when I saw him determined to do some act of bestial violence, I pointed the muzzle of my arquebuse, with the object only of keeping him at a distance. Doubly enraged by this, he flung himself upon me. Though I had prepared the arquebuse for my defence, I had not yet levelled it exactly at him; indeed it was pointed too high. It went off of itself; and the ball, striking the arch of the

\(^3\) ASF, Medici del Principato, vol. 4027, fol. 155r. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 29200.

\(^3\) ASF, Medici del Principato, vol. 4257, fol 22r. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 23114.

\(^3\) ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2262, fol. 396.
door and glancing backwards, wounded him in the throat, so that he fell dead to earth.\textsuperscript{34}

Although Cellini admitted to prepping the firearm, the machine was ultimately blamed for the death of his opponent. Since the device acted on its own accord, the onus of the murder was transferred, thus, alleviating Cellini’s involvement in the violent act. This mode of thinking created a distance which undoubtedly helped to legitimize the use of its force.

The projectile accuracy of early firearms also possessed challenges. Wheellocks were loaded with lead balls aptly named \textit{lacrime} (or “tears”), and the pellets were known to occasionally miss intended targets and ricochet off nearby surfaces or even off parts of the body. In a 1569 letter to an unknown recipient, the Sienese governor Federico Barbolani di Montauto recounted a recent arrest that took place at a tavern in Figline di Chiusi.\textsuperscript{35} Two Sienese Bargello officers named Iacopo da Palazzuolo and Foschino reported that the defendant Ercole Albani had “a wheellock pistol attached to his belt and another in hand.”\textsuperscript{36} After encountering one of the officers, Ercole took the pistol from his belt and shot Foschino. The double-ball bullet apparently went through the officer’s stomach from front-to-back, rebounding into his right elbow, permanently wounding his arm.

As a backup or alternative use to the wheellock’s unpredictability, the stocks of firearms were also employed as weapons. Some models, as seen in the wheellock pistol (ca. 1580) created by the Nuremberg gunsmith Peter Danner (Fig. 49), were specifically outfitted with wooden roundels at the stocks’ base, turning the weapons into makeshift wooden maces if grasped by the barrel. In the case of Ercole and the two Sienese officers, the defendant reportedly fought the second officer Iacopo with the wooden part of his pistol, until Iacopo wounded Ercole in his neck with the object,

\textsuperscript{34} Cellini, \textit{The Autobiography} (2012), Chapter IV.
\textsuperscript{36} “uno arcobusetto a ruota attaccato alla centura et l’altro in mano”
forcing him to the ground. Injured, Foschino dismounted from his horse and withdrew
his sword and stabbed Ercole before he was handcuffed and taken to prison.\textsuperscript{37}

Assault using the stock of a firearm was a frequent occurrence. In 1576, the
priest Jacopo di Lorenzo Ottaviano submitted a supplication concerning an altercation
he experienced with the lieutenant of the local Mugello militia. After entering the
church of Santo Stefano in Grezzano, the lieutenant apparently lost his temper after
the priests “looked at [him] funny.”\textsuperscript{38} To stop the ensuing violence from occurring,
some other priests, in addition to Jacopo’s nephew, who was also a member of the
lieutenant’s militia, intervened, causing the lieutenant to strike the lad with the butt of
his arquebus. When the boy lifted his arms to protect his head from the impending
blow, the arquebus injured his arm. “Like a good religious man,” the priest tried to
make peace with the lieutenant after the assault, but was unsuccessful, causing him to
contact the militia’s captain.\textsuperscript{39} After talking with the captain, the men agreed to travel
to Rabatta to sort the situation; however, unsure the captain would turn up, Jacopo
headed into town by himself, excluding and angering the captain in the process. Once
in Rabatta, Jacopo appeared to arrange peace with a certain Bernardo Rabatti, who
served as the pact’s guarantor between the lieutenant and Jacopo’s nephew and his
brothers, who were also militia members and consequently, well trained in arms. At
the end of the supplication, Jacopo guaranteed Duke Francesco that peace had been
made, likely reassuring authorities that the matter had been settled and no further
violence would ensue.

\textit{The Steady, Yet Slow, Rise of Firearms}

While early modern firearms unequivocally, and one might also say
irreversibly, transformed tactics of warfare and practices of interpersonal violence in
the \textit{Cinquecento}, the change was not as immediate as some historical explanations
imply. Using a linear model of technological advances, it would be easy to conclude

\textsuperscript{38} ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2262, fol. 234. “voi mi guardate torto”
\textsuperscript{39} “come buono religioso”
that once firearms were invented, all other offensive and defensive weapons were slowly phased out. A more precise understanding of how firearms functioned in this period, however, would show their steady integration, meaning they were also used alongside other weapons, whether for civic or personal use. As Hall has described in his *Weapons and Warfare in Renaissance Europe: Gunpowder, Technology, and Tactics*, firearms did not start to replace more traditional weapons for another two centuries.40

Even after the firearm’s wider diffusion, the Otto di Guardia’s criminal reports reveal that contemporaries were still using a variety of traditional weapons, including scissors, daggers, and swords, in acts of assault.41 In March 1562, a tailor named Bernardo di Martino submitted a supplication on behalf of a certain arquebusier called Cencio di Pierantonio, who received a 25-fiorini fine for having shot a certain Giovanni di Rimedio in Carmignano the preceding November.42 Instead of using an arquebus to shoot Giovanni, Cencio wounded his opponent with a *pallottola balestra*, a type of crossbow invented and popularized in Tuscany that used stone balls for artillery. After being shot somewhere on his body, Giovanni died a few nights after the assault ensued. In his letter, Bernardo pleaded for the pardon of Cencio, stating that Giovanni’s death could not have been related to the crossbow injury. The Duke concurred and pardoned Cencio on 18 March 1562.

Correspondingly, in supplications to bear arms, firearms did not replace the need for donning other offensive and defensive arms, namely swords, daggers, and mail garments. Like tools in a toolbox, different weapons were employed for varying objectives and several combinations of arms were often worn together. For instance, the subject of Cornelis Ketel’s 1577 *Portrait of Sir Martin Frobisher*, proudly displayed his wheellock pistol, while also sporting his compulsory rapier and dagger

41 Given the frequency of firearms being discussed in the legislation, I had expected to find a greater quantity of indictments in the Otto’s records. Rather, firearms seem to have been one of many weapons in use. However, it is possible that authorities also struggled to catch and charge lawbreakers with guns, resulting in the incidents being underrepresented in the magistracy’s archives.
42 ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2239, fol. 11.
(Fig. 50). Various pairings of weapons were similarly cited in the Otto’s records. In 1576, for instance, militia member Giovanni di Lodovico Lavini from the parish of Santa Croce sul Arno registered a complaint against a certain Ludovico, who worked for master Francesco Stovigliaco from Castel Fiorentino. Giovanni claimed that the perpetrator entered his house at night in hopes of either robbing or terrorizing the place. The accused apparently escaped, disappeared for “many days,” and returned to the parish illegally armed with both an arquebus and a pole arm. Because he wanted “to live in peace and live safely,” Giovanni requested that the Otto handle the matter and swiftly inflict justice.

Another innovation born from this period was the combination firearm. Wheellock pistols were combined with a multitude of weapons, including swords, daggers, hunting knives, axes, hammers, maces, spears, crossbows, and pole arms. Prized for their ingenuity, combination firearms were coveted objects of curiosity, even if they chronically malfunctioned. Users also benefitted from having another weapon on hand in case the pistol jammed or misfired. A good example of a combination weapon is this wheellock pistol, halberd, and fork made by an unknown German artist in 1580 from the Wallace Collection (Fig. 51). The pole arm’s head contains a fork with two narrow spikes, while the axe-blade underneath resembles halberds of the period. The barrel of the pistol sits to the right of the halberd’s head, the lock is positioned near the socket, and the trigger can be found thirty inches from the staff’s bottom. A combination wheellock pistol and dagger (ca. 1575-1600) can also be found in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s armour collection (Fig. 52). Crafted from steel and wood, the intricate object was etched with detailed strap work and an arabesque pattern. In order to create the pistol’s barrel, the double-edged

44 “molti giorni”; “vivere in pace et sicuro”
46 Ibid.
dagger’s blade was hollowed out, thus, the blade’s tip must be removed to expose the barrel before firing.\textsuperscript{48}

\textit{Medici Firearm Commissions}

Another combination weapon can be found in the collection of the Bargello in Florence.\textsuperscript{49} This Medici owned, mid-sixteenth-century axe possesses a secret firearm component. Both the handle and extendable-axe blade boast floral and scroll-like damascened silver and gold designs, which have been ascribed to famed French armourer Jacques Androuet Ducereau.\textsuperscript{50} This item is thought to have arrived in Florence because of Caterina de’ Medici’s (1519-89) marriage to the French monarch Henry II (1519-59) in 1547.\textsuperscript{51} The weapon fashioned from both steel and bronze extends to a length of seventy centimeters and weighs 1.6 kilograms. The blade is affixed to the mouth of the barrel, and the hidden wheellock ignition and pan (or powder chamber) is located above the weapon’s handle. The grip and pommel was fashioned out of cast bronze (brono fuso) and gilded, as well as adorned with trophies of arms and the head of the Roman goddess of hunting and wild animals, Diana (Fig. 53).\textsuperscript{52}

The axe and firearm pairing was the most common type of combination weapon enjoyed in the period.\textsuperscript{53} Duke Ferdinando I similarly owned one (ca. 1580), and his German-made weapon (now part of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s collection) and was identified in a 1589 inventory of Ferdinand’s private armoury (or “armeria secreta”) located in the Palazzo Pitti (Fig. 54).\textsuperscript{54} The shaft of the axe is again hollow, allowing it to serve as the pistol’s barrel, and the lock is fashioned on the outside, while the grip, which contains two parts, was probably utilized as a

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} For more, see Merlo, “Le armi combinate,” 70-73.
\textsuperscript{50} Merlo, “Le armi combinate,” 71-72.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 73.
\end{footnotesize}
storage space for pyrites, wadding, bullets, and other necessary accessories. The barrel similarly contained a plug that needed to be removed before the wheellock would fire. The weapon was etched and gilded, resembling designs most often seen in Augsburg and Nuremberg. Adorning the outer side of the axe’s blade is the crowned Medici coat of arms, signifying that this weapon was made after 1569, when Cosimo I was awarded the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany. The axe’s other side depicts a soldier wearing elaborate and fanciful grotesque armour. According to the 1589 inventory, the weapon was covered in black velvet and had a fringe made of black silk and gold. It was also stored in a black leather case that had black velvet cords and tassels of black silk and gold.

Ferdinando appeared to possess quite a passion for firearms. In a February 1606 letter to his general of artillery and illegitimate half-brother Don Giovanni, the Grand Duke sent two drawings of guns. Unfortunately, both drawings referenced by Duke Ferdinando are now lost; however, Ferdinando presumably passed them to Don Giovanni in hopes of having the designs replicated. The first depicted a small moschettone (or carbine), equipped to create small explosions, destroy hammers, and fire iron bullets. The second illustrated a top-secret weapon that was commissioned by the Venetians and had been designed by a student of the Brescian arquebus maker Maestro Maffio di Niccodemo.

Maestro Maffio and his father Niccodemo, also known as Nicomedo di Marco Pizzinardi, had ties to the Medici, as Niccodemo signed a five-year contract with Duke Cosimo I on 9 October 1566. Just like their armour commissions, the Medici turned to northern Italian craftsmen for their procurement of firearms. Niccodemo’s contract stipulated that he would make the Duke’s arquebuses, along with their

55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 ASF, MdP, vol. 5153, fol. 188. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 11766.
60 ASF, MdP, vol. 1. fol. 143. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 19819. This document was likely created in the eighteenth century; however, it summarizes a notarial document from the sixteenth century.
necessary accoutrements, from raw material sourced from the Medici’s iron factory in Pistoia. In a letter from 3 February 1569 addressed to the factory’s general inspector Agnolo Popoleschi, Medici state official Tommaso di Iacopo de’ Medici explained that the factory was to provide Niccodemo with iron, specifically the quantity and type he requested.\(^{61}\) Niccodemo appeared to have crafted large orders for the duchy, as another letter exchanged roughly two months later stated that four thousand *libbre* (or 1,356 kilograms) of iron was to be sent to Niccodemo’s son Maffio.\(^{62}\)

The workshop of Niccodemo and son also fulfilled personal commissions for the Medici. In a February 1585 letter written to Medici administrator Pietro di Francesco Usimbardi, Duke Francesco I’s court personnel Perugio Giandonati explained that a new arquebus fashioned by Maffio for Cardinal Ferdinando was on its way to Rome.\(^{63}\) Perugio noted that the firearm appeared to be well made, both inside and out. He added that the weapon also received approval from Marcello Margutte, another arquebusier from Orvieto who advised at Francesco I’s court. Apparently, Margutte had managed the process of acquiring other arquebuses for Francesco and explained that Ferdinando’s gun appeared well made, and that he personally did not fire it because Master Maffio told him he tested it carefully twice with gunpowder and a bullet. Since he had visited the workshop of Margutte, Perugio also sent along one of Francesco’s old gun stocks, thinking it could be the proper size. He then noted that he packed the items, along with some accessories, protectively in a package addressed to the “Illustrissimo and Reverendissimo Signore Cardinale Medici Roma,” which should arrive the same day at eight.

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\(^{62}\) One *libbra* roughly translates to 0.339 kilograms. ASF, MdP, vol. 221, fol. 5. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 4868. Documents also record the payments made from Tommaso to the Pistoia factory for the value of the material used. On 26 March 1571, for instance, Tommaso informed Agnolo that they were paying them 171 *lire*, 4 *soldi*, and 8 *denari* for the iron used by Maffio. ASF, MdP, vol. 221. fol. 92. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 5145.

\(^{63}\) Maestro Maffio had presumably taken over the family business by this point, as he is noted as the Maestro instead of his father. ASF, MdP, vol. 1234a, fol. 2. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 15108.
Gun Control and the Medicean State

As firearms became more prevalent in Tuscan society, the Otto di Guardia attempted to restrict usage of these deadly weapons in Florence and the dominion. Cosimo I and the Otto prohibited firearms in their first public arms’ ban issued in 1539; however, as discussed in chapter one, this bando (public notice) outlawed a wide variety of weapons. It took eight additional years for authorities to dedicate an entire bando to the prohibition of firearms. On 2 June 1547, the comprehensive law banned wheellock arquebuses and schioppi, in addition to matchlock (“da corda”) and what appears to be early flintlock (“da fucile,” “da pietra,” and “da acciaiuolo”) styles that were smaller than one braccio and a half. There appeared to be no rank or class exempt, and the ban even went so far as to call out specific titles that likely received pardons for other weapons more willingly in the past. For instance, it barred “soldiers, and heads of the ducal militia, and to those on the Duke’s payroll and those of higher and richer rank, and also gentlemen.” Inhabitants “could not have, keep, or use” any of the aforementioned weapons “in [the] house, or outside, neither to leave, keep, bring, or use.” The ban laboriously named each province, along with the surrounding areas that were affected, and stated that gun owners had thirty days from the bill’s publication date to surrender weapons to state officials. The monetary penalty for getting caught with a firearm was the steep sum of three-hundred scudi per object, in addition to corporal punishment that could include death, depending on the guilty party’s character. Given the serious nature of the crime, the bill warned that the judicial process could progress through the stages of inquisition, cognizance, sentence, and condemnation “liberally.” Similar to other laws concerning arms issued by the Otto, the bill encouraged denunciations of perpetrators and offered to reward informants with a third of the pecuniary fines collected, while also offering

64 Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 1, 358-62.
65 “soldati, & capi delle sue Ducal Bande, & alli suoi stipendiati ancora, & di maggior e rico, & grado, etiam di Gentil’huomini”
66 “non possa havere, tenere, o usare”; “in casa, o fuori, ne lasciar tenere, portare, o usare”
67 “liberamente”
another third to parish officials who assisted in the process of getting firearms off their streets.

The ban also addressed those who had knowledge of persons possessing firearms. If the informed party did not denounce the perpetrator(s) within three days’ time of gaining such knowledge, he or she would be charged 150 *scudi*, half of the fee ascribed to men illegally caught with firearms. One such case occurred in March 1561 when a certain Giovanni di Ser Vespasiano Anterigoli from the neighbourhood of Vicchio in Mugello petitioned for a reduction in sentences after getting charged for keeping an arquebus under the minimum size in his home for five or six days.⁶⁸ In his letter, the supplicant stated that he had lent two donkeys to the French priest chaplain Don Antonio from Ponte a Frosinaia, who wanted to use the animals to move some items from Frosinaia to Giovanni’s residence. The supplicant explained that Don Antonio brought along two companions to assist with the job, Agnolo di Christophano and Maso di Gosto. Giovanni apparently learned of the weapon’s existence when the matchlock pistol or “*archibusino a corda*” fell to the ground while unloading the priest’s furnishings. The pistol only measured one *braccia* long, half a *braccio* short of the state’s minimum-size requirement. The items were reportedly left—along with the weapon—with Giovanni’s wife Mona Piera Donna, where the pistol was held for five or six days before the priest retrieved it and brought it back to Frosinaia. Consequently, Giovanni and his wife Mona Piera Donna were both incarcerated, and Giovanni was charged 300 *scudi* for keeping the undersized gun in his home, while his wife received a 150-*scudi* fine for having known about the firearm. The other two men who helped the Don Antonio, Agnolo di Christophano and Maso di Gosto, were similarly charged for having had knowledge of the weapon’s existence. In her confession, Mona Piera Donna described her husband of sixty-six years as being “*non armigero,*” meaning he was not a man of arms and did not typically use weapons. When requesting that he and his wife be freed from prison and forgiven for the fines, Giovanni reiterated his advanced age, stated that he had children, and added that he

was a “good-mannered person (*persona da bene*).” Ducal secretary Lorenzo Torelli forwarded the letter to the Otto, who reviewed the case and concluded that Giovanni and his wife did not have malicious intentions when this crime was committed. Thus, the Otto recommended to free them both, reduce Giovanni’s penalty to 150 scudi for having known about the weapon, and absolve Mona Piera Donna. The Duke agreed, and Torelli recorded his final verdict on 24 March which indicated that the couple should receive the lowest possible sentence since they lacked a malevolent motive.

In February of that same year, Maso di Gosto similarly pleaded for a pardon to reduce or eliminate his 150-*scudi* fine, stating he was poor, 50 years old, and had to care for seven children, “all small.” He was charged “for having seen an *archibusetto piccolo a fuoco*” and failing to notify authorities.\(^6^9\)

Having had knowledge of illegal firearms was a crime recurrently prosecuted by the state. On 16 March 1561, the commune of Castrocaro informed the court of the processing of a certain Alessandro di Francesco Paganelli.\(^7^0\) The report stated that foreigners from Lugo in the dominion of Ferrara, who were also friends of the Paganelli family, brought small wheellock pistols to the house of Alessandro’s brother Antonio Paganelli, whose home was just a quarter mile outside Castrocaro city limits. The letter explained that Alessandro confessed of having had knowledge of the firearms at his brother’s house, but stated that he sent the arms out of state to Forlì the same night after finishing his Hail Marys. Since Alessandro had knowledge of the weapons’ presence in his brother’s house and involved himself in the process of sending them away, he was to be condemned 300 *scudi* per firearm. Considering there were eight pistols, the sum totalled to 2,400 *scudi*, an exorbitant sum that Alessandro never would have been able to pay off in his lifetime.

Given the somewhat convoluted situation, Castrocaro authorities decided to consult the court on how to proceed. Their letter cited the 1547 firearms ban (along with its renewal in 1555), which forbade inhabitants from having, keeping, or using

\(^6^9\) ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2252, fol. 52. Although unclear as to why, this supplication was brought up again in 1568, and so resides with the other documents processed that year. “tutti picholi”; “per havere visto un archibusetto a fuoco”

\(^7^0\) ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2239, fol. 33.
firearms in one’s domestic dwellings, within the city, or its demarcated surrounding areas. Under this stipulation, however, Alessandro could not be charged since the weapons were kept at his brother’s house. The authorities then returned to the condition about having had knowledge of the pistols and his failed notification of their presence to authorities. According to the law, however, one was obliged to turn in perpetrators within three days of witnessing the illegal objects, and Alessandro had shipped the weapons to Forlì the very same day he supposedly found out about them. Wondering whether they even had just cause to convict Alessandro, they asked the Otto, who confirmed receipt of their letter on 23 March and indicated they would investigate the matter further. On the last day of March, Otto officer Francesco Tovelli stated that although there was precedent for this type of scenario, it did not necessarily apply to Alessandro’s situation, as “they [we]re different, the persons and merits.”

In the end, the Otto agreed that Alessandro should not be charged, and if anyone should receive punishment, it would be his brother Antonio.

As seen in the case of the priest’s small matchlock, firearm size was another factor that mattered greatly to Florentine legislation. Small pistols (*archibusetto, archibugio corto, e terzette*) were considered extremely dangerous, as they were easily concealed, could be worn in multiples, and were primarily used for harming others, unlike larger guns that could also be used for hunting. For those granted permission to carry firearms legally, the 1547 *bando* demanded they possess a minimum length of one *braccio* and a half. One *braccio* equaled approximately fifty-eight centimeters, meaning that the prohibition outlawed firearms shorter than eighty-seven centimeters total. Eighty-seven centimeters was a substantial length, especially considering the size of many handheld pistols often found in museums. As an illustration, one of the earliest wheellock pistols still extant was made by the

71 “ma sono di diverse le persone e meriti”
73 Another method for measuring guns was in palm lengths. Pistols were categorized as having barrels under two to three palms. In Rome, Davis reported that the papal legates and governors made carrying pistols under the minimum size requirements (two or three palms depending on the timeframe) capital crimes. In Davis, “The Renaissance Goes Up in Smoke,” 401, 404.
Munich gun-and clock-maker Peter Peck for Emperor Charles V around 1540-45 (Figs. 55-56). The double-barrel weapon contains two locks that are ignited using one mechanism and the pistol’s stock is adorned with an inlaid scene featuring the emperor hunting a stag, in addition to his personal emblems.\(^{74}\) The pistol spans 49.2 centimeters long, just a little over half of Florence’s proposed legal limit.

Firearm sizing was strictly policed in Florence and the dominion, and even city officials in the Duke’s service were monitored for adhering to size regulations. This is demonstrated in the case of the Pisa countryside’s Bargello captain Riccio da Lucha in 1569.\(^{75}\) In Riccio’s supplication, he explained that he never thought he would have to request permission to carry arms, as the Duke knew the “prejudice and danger” he faced having to “go daily to the borders of Lucca.” Moreover, he stated that the peril he faced was heightened given his banishment from Lucca, where a bounty had been placed on his head. Thus, the captain explained his need to travel with “all sorts of arms,” one of which was an arquebus that he loaned to his lieutenant called Ferro for a trip to Pisa.\(^{76}\) Ferro was going into the city on behalf of the force to sell fifty staia of orzo (1 stadio equaled 24.4 litres), property likely seized from a prisoner. On his return, the lieutenant was detained at the city gate and the arquebus was apprehended by a certain Jacopo di Desiderio since the lieutenant did not have a licence and the weapon fell short of the mandated size. Given Ferro’s prominent position in the Pisan countryside’s police force, it appears somewhat surprising that a local customs officer would detain him in the first place. In his letter to the court, Riccio explained that the arquebus measured “un braccio et uno terzo et anche qual che cosa piu,” or “a braccio and a third and also a bit more.” Considering the current misunderstanding, Ricco asked the Duke regent Francesco I to write to the commissioner of Pisa in hopes of explaining the situation, and used the opportunity to additionally request


\(^{75}\) ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2252, fol. 43.

\(^{76}\) “il pregiudictio et pericolo”, “andare giornalmente in sui confini de I Lucchesi”; “tutte sorte d’arme”
official authorization to carry arms for himself and his lieutenant. Riccio’s request was received on 30 January 1569, and on 11 February, Otto secretary Lorenzo Corboli sided with Riccio, stating that the gun was property of the Bargello and the mishap was likely due to “ignorance and carelessness” rather than malicious intention.77 One day later, Prince Francesco via the hand of Torelli approved Riccio’s request to drop the charges, release Ferro from prison, and issue the approved arms’ licences.

The Otto struggled to control firearm lengths in Medici territories, a matter exacerbated by inhabitants slyly trying to cheat the law’s sizing decree. A February 1570 ban on wheellock pistols and other small firearms, for instance, was issued after “having considered the abuse for some introducing fraud” to the initial 1547 law.78 The prohibition claimed that inhabitants were trying to circumvent minimum length requirements by adding extraneous parts “with craft” to a pistol’s stock (or cassa). Although these hastily added parts ultimately made pistols longer, and therefore harder to conceal, these weapons were still considered dangerous since their primary function was to harm others. In an attempt to discourage the practice of adding bogus parts to short guns, the state now specified that the barrel lengths of firearms must measure one braccio and a third, roughly seventy-seven centimeters.

Although the ban addressed all men, these requirements were specifically targeted toward citizens with ducal permission to carry firearms, especially the “privileged” positions such as Medici employees on stipends, courtiers, and ecclesiastics. In November 1576, Medici courtier Andrea Albertani submitted a supplication to Duke Francesco asking if he could carry a firearm on a return trip from France.79 He stipulated that his gun did not conform to the size mandate, as it contained two separate parts, each of which presumably fell short of the minimum length. He declared, however, that when the two portions were connected by a screw, the mechanism was long enough to carry legally. The Duke’s secretary concluded, “If

77 “ignoranza et poco accorgimento”
78 Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 7, 272-74.
it is not [one] of those really small [arquebuses] he [the Duke] alloww us since it lacks the size [by] two fingers or so."80 Considering the artfully constructed weapons discussed in the 1570 ban, one wonders whether Andrea’s firearm fell into this questionable grey area.

Firearm legislation continued to be a hot issue throughout the sixteenth century. In fact, during the fifty-year period combining Cosimo I and Francesco I’s rule, there were sixteen different bandi dispensed on firearms and ammunition, not including the other mentions of guns included in the forty additional bills on arms in general. Most of the subsequent proclamations reinforced the original stipulations of the 1547 ban, and additionally included common concerns experienced at the time of issue. One such case occurred in a prohibition on short pistols (archibusetti) from November 1555. The Otto reminded inhabitants that the firearms ban persisted even in times of war, as the city’s war with Siena had commenced with the Battle of Marciano in August of the previous year.81 The proclamation began, “having had news [of] how in his very happy state [there] are many who under the colour of war, or otherwise, have kept and are keeping small or large wheellock pistols against the bans made [at] another time.”82 After Siena was conquered, Cosimo I’s first law as the city’s ruler was the prohibition of swords and daggers published in 1557.83 Just three years later in 1560, Cosimo I issued a bando concerning the carrying of small pistols there too.84 Due to an apparent trend for carrying arquebuses and pole arms at festivals, markets, churches, and other events where people gathered, another ban on firearms was issued in 1564, and the same law also appeared in Siena one year later.85

80 “Se non e’ di quelli piccoli piccoli concedesse che a noi da detto che manca alla misura dua dita o cosi.”
82 “havendo havuto notitia come nel suo felicissimo Stato sono molti che sotto il colore della guerra, o d’altro, hanno ritenuto e ritengano archibusetti piccoli o grandi a Ruota contra li Bandi altra volta fatti”
83 Under the penalty of twenty-five scudi, or four pulls on the strappado if the defendant could not pay the fine. Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 3, 192-202. Cantini points out that this is Cosimo’s first law in his illustrazione concerning the band on page 194.
84 Ibid., Vol. 4, 30-32.
Men with access to wheellock pistols were also closely monitored. It seems the Duke’s militia were permitted to carry wheellocks in defence of the state, a privilege that was abused sometime around 1579. In an attempt to preclude state-issued wheellocks from being used in violent acts for personal vendette, the Otto issued the following bando.

Having considered and seen by experience with his great displeasure that arms—such as wheellock arquebuses of [mandated] size, which by his own accord [Cosimo I] had granted, and is still granting, to honour and empower and make more terrific his honoured Militia to defend his states—have been, and they are for some time now abused, and vituperatively used by many to kill, or seeking to kill others with them, for vendette, offences, or for whatever other evil intent, and diabolical nature, and cause: a thing that does not befit a person, and honoured soldiers, on the contrary [it befits] defamed [people], traitors, and assassins, hence it results in the loss of many subjects and vassals.\textsuperscript{86} The bill uses the common trope of shame and honour to clearly draw the line between the state’s militia and presumed enemies of the state. It is interesting to note how quickly the firearm shifts from an instrument used “to empower” to a weapon “vituperatively used by many to kill.” The “diabolical” associations recall the humanist prose first discussed at the start of this chapter. The proclamation also infers that some were using their weapons to settle the disputes of others, presumably in exchange for payment.

Since wheellocks were known to be unreliable weapons at times, the ban also painstakingly spells out that any shot taken—whether successful or not—was outlawed under pain of death. It asserts

To all those soldiers of his honoured militia, of whatever state, grade or condition, or from whatever place, comprising also the city, countryside, and mountains of Pistoia, that in any sort in the future they kill, or they seek to kill, or order murder, wound, or offend any person with wheellock arquebuses, same for a small or large

\textsuperscript{86} Cantini, \textit{Legislazione toscana}, vol. 9, 174. “Havendo considerato, e veduto per esperienza con suo gran dispiacere, che le armi cioè, gl’Archibusi a ruota di misura che motu proprio per onorare, e rendere più potente, e tremenda la sua honorata Milizia al difendere gli Stati suoi haveva concesso, e tuttavia concedeva, sono state, e sono da qualche tempo in quì abusate, & vituperosamente adorate da molti in ammazzare, o cercare con essi ammazzare li altri, per vendette, ingiurie, o per qualsivoglia altra male, e diabolica natura, e causa: cosa che non conviene a persone, e soldati honorati, anzi da infami, traditori, & assassini, onde ne risulta la perdita di molti sudditi, e vassali.”
matchlock, provided that one comes to the act of discharging them, and also when it does not fire, or it does not make a bang, or [when] firing, it misses the target, or in any other mode one follows such an act to kill, wound, or injure, either by chance, or by premeditation, or in ambush and betrayed and (as one says) in cold blood, the vituperative penalty shall be the gallows and confiscation of goods, with express declaration of [being] infamous, vituperative, and [a] traitor, and such a criminal cannot be pardoned ever in the future, or [be] un-banished by re-purchasing the banishment, or in any other way, except by the sole grace of his Serene Highness.  

In an earlier bando from 1550, it appears the act of simply aiming a wheellock pistol was considered threatening. The proclamation singled out “imberciatori,” a sixteenth-century word that proves difficult to translate, but likely referred to men who aimed wheellock pistols at targets. For instance, in his expanded English-Italian dictionary from 1611, royal tutor John Florio defined “imberciatore” as “a shooter or hitter of a marke.” The ban does not distinguish between living and non-living targets, causing one to infer that both were outlawed, as target practice with wheellocks could only signify that one was preparing for murder. It remains unclear if the shooters presumably also fired their weapons, but aiming the weapon—which indicated some form of premeditation—was punishable by death and the confiscation of goods. Men who loaned their weapons to imberciatori were subjected to a twenty-five scudi fine, the loss of the weapon, and two pulls on the strappado. Like other

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87 Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 9, 174-75. “Che a tutti quelli così soldati della sua honorata Milizia, come a qual si voglia Stato, grado o condizione, o di qualsivoglia luogo, comprendendo etiam la Città, Contado, & Montagna di Pistoia, che in alcun modo per l’avvenire ammazzerranno, o cercheranno d’ammazzare, o fare ammazzare, ferire, o offendere alcuna persona con Archibusi si a rota, come a corda piccoli, o grandi, pur che si venga all’atto dello scaricarli, etiam che non pigliasse fuoco, o non facesse botta, o facendola non colpissi l’offeso, o in qualunque altro modo seguisse tale atto per ammazzare, ferire, o ingiurfare, come a caso, o caso pensato o in aguato, e tradito, e (come si dice) a sangue freddo s’intenda essere, e sia la pena vituperosa delle Forche e confiscazione de Beni, con dichiarazione espresa d’infame, vituperoso, e traditore, e non possa tal delinquente mai in futuro esser rimesso, e ribandito con ricomperare il bando, o in altro modo, eccetto che per mera grazia di Sua Altezza Serenissma.”


89 John Florio, Queen Anna’s New World of Words or Dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues (London: Melch. Bradwood for Edward Blount and William Barret, 1611), 235.
bans, informants who denounced *imbeciatori* were ensured anonymity and promised a twenty-five *scudi* reward from the perpetrator’s confiscated property. In the event where the defendant’s possessions fell short of that sum, the state promised to cover the cost.

**Licences, Travelling, and Banditry**

Florence was by no means the only Italian city struggling to prohibit wheellock pistols. Davis demonstrated that the Papal states outlawed wheellock firearms of any sort in the 1570s, even for the authorities and police, in addition to banning the weapon from its own army in 1578.\(^{90}\) Moreover, the market that supplied these weapons was eradicated, as another *bando* from the 1570s instructed “artisans and master craftsmen of every sort not to make or adapt wheels or other sorts of similar arquebuses, not make the [firing] chambers, not even keep made ones in their shop or house.”\(^{91}\) Visitors also entering the city were ordered to dismantle the mechanism and carry the wheel away from the chamber and barrel.\(^{92}\) By 1590, however, the ban on wheellocks was overturned, and the carrying of wheellock pistols was made a capital offence.\(^{93}\)

For law-abiding citizens in Florence and the dominion, supplications were the most common method for requesting permission to carry firearms, and the most frequent reason cited was to protect oneself while travelling. As an illustration, a certain Pierone da Bruscoli successfully petitioned the government for two arquebus licences to use for travel in all of the Florentine state in May 1562.\(^{94}\) Because of his “many enemies,” as well as “for his security and defence,” Pierone requested to carry a wheellock pistol longer than one *braccio* for himself and a wheellock arquebus two *braccia* long for his servant.\(^{95}\) Pierone requested to use the aforementioned firearms

\(^{90}\) Davis, “The Renaissance Goes Up in Smoke,” 405-06.
\(^{91}\) Qtd. and trans. by Ibid. 405.
\(^{92}\) Ibid., 406.
\(^{93}\) Ibid., 407.
\(^{94}\) ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2239, fol. 106v.
\(^{95}\) “molte inimicitie”; “per sua sigureta et difesa”
on horseback and on foot while travelling and to store the weapons in his residence when residing in town. The threat of danger did not cease even when residents arrived in their native cities. In an avviso from 19 September 1579 from Rome, it appears that “a poor woman” coming from Loreto was killed by her husband just as she arrived at city’s gate of Porta del Popolo.96

It is unclear what the parameters of eligibility were for seekers of firearm licences. John Brackett reported that only citizens and their servants were authorized to apply for permits in Florence, but that licences in the surrounding parishes were awarded to inhabitants much more liberally.97 The countryside of these regions was considered even more remote, and due to limited police presence in these areas, most historians suspect that peasants donned arms quite regularly. In fact, Davis notes that many country folk outside of Rome wore long wheelock arquebuses, regardless of the laws, positing that the objects became part of their social culture, as the weapons were often held in hands, under arms, over shoulders, or used as walking sticks when standing and chatting.98 Correspondingly, an anonymous contemporary in Perugia in the 1580s observed

The abuse of the Archibugi a ruota has got so bad these days, both among great men, who carry them for defense, and among their inferiors, who see them in the country, that … at present no one undertakes vendette or attempts to unburden himself of even the lightest offense with any other weapon that this such that we see that the sword and other arms that were used in knightly fashion for these purposes have almost fallen into oblivion. Everywhere you go, you hear the reports of arquebus shots, either fired from a thicket, or from a window in a house, or … in the middle of the public streets … the police, finding everyone well furnished with this weapon, cannot carry out their duties … and no place or person is safe these days in the country, since there is not a cattle driver or shepherd who does not have his arquebus slung over his shoulder.99

97 Brackett, Criminal Justice and Crime, 103.
99 Qtd. and trans. by Ibid., 403-04. Davis’ translation stems from a document entitled “Ripartimento delle battaglie nel stato ecclesiatico,” found in Perugia’s Biblioteca Augusta, ms. 289, fol. 50r-v.
Since regulations relaxed the further one journeyed from the centre, it is not surprising that many contemporaries sought to carry guns on the road. Moreover, the threat of meeting a group of heavily-armed bandits, highway robbers, or other unsavory characters en route was a persistent one. In his autobiography, Cellini explained, “on the journey to Rome I carried with me that handsome arquebuse which the Duke gave me.”

In a letter from 17 June 1577, for instance, Governor of Siena Federico Barbolani informed Medici personnel officer Bartolomeo Concini that roughly fifteen to twenty bandits wearing fake beards were armed with double-barrel arquebuses (archibsi doppi) around the area of Pitigliano, just outside of Siena. The consequences of getting attacked by a gang of outlaws were often grim. In a letter from 12 January 1556 Bartolomeo Concini informed Duke Cosimo I that a commissioner’s mule driver was hanged and two chests “with a certain brigandine (giubbone di piastra), mail sleeves, and a certain few other things” had been stolen.

To make matters worse, bandits were particularly notorious for their use of wheellock pistols, often adorning themselves with multiple guns, ensuring they had several shots ready to fire when targets appeared. For instance, one contemporary described these outlaws as “really well armed with arquebuses.” Bandits turned the wearing of weapons into a flamboyant fashionable practice, “turning themselves into walking arsenals of sundry arquebuses, machetes, and daggers.” In 1581 the Perugian chronicler Romolo Allegrini explained that bandits sported “braids and little tassels of hair on the right side or the left,” were “adorned with bunches of feathers,” and often shaped “one of their mustaches longer than the other.”

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100 Cellini, *The Autobiography* (2012), Chapter LXXXII.
101 According to Barbolani, the faction appeared to be working for a certain Alessandro. ASF, MdP, vol. 1873, fol. 105. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 21481.
104 Ibid., 403.
105 Qtd. and trans. by Ibid., 403. For more, see Romolo Allegrini, “Memoriedi Perugia dall’anno 1580 al 1591,” in *Cronache della citta di Perugia*, ed. by Ariodante Fabretti (Torino, 1894), vol. 5, 50.
Leather holsters were not worn until the early nineteenth century, but contemporaries still found ways to carry pistols. As mentioned in the previous avvisi, they could be disguised under robes or cloaks, and depending on their shape and size, attached to belts and sashes worn on the body. Another common method used when travelling was to fix a gun to a horse’s saddle. In a letter to Cosimo I on 17 February 1553, Borgo San Sepolcro Captain Giannozzo Pandolfini informed the Duke about the confiscation of an illegal wheellock arquebus from the soldier Priamo da Valignano, who worked for Medici Guard captain Camillo Vitelli. 106 Priamo’s wheellock was found on his horse’s saddle while making a stop in the parish on his way to Florence.

Banditry appeared to be an unrelenting problem for both inhabitants and the state, as banishments and temporary periods of exile were common sentences for more elevated crimes in sixteenth-century Italy. In 1581, Allegrini repeated that he had heard “there [w]ere more than 4,000 people of Perugia either banned and condemned.” 107 While cities expelled criminals from their centres and suburbs, bandits set up networks in the fringe areas located on the outskirts of towns. In his work on banditry in Cinquecento Venice’s terraferma, Peter Laven explains that although some lived out their sentences lawfully, most resorted to illegal means to survive. 108 In such environments, crime and violence were regular means of negotiation. For instance, a particularly well-known bandit by the name of Count Paolo Averoldo aka “the clergyman” (il chierico) confessed under torture to assisting with 429 murders, twenty-nine he did himself. 109

“For the debt of their office,” the Otto also turned to violence to help alleviate the state’s banditry crisis. 110 In a bando from 16 March 1537, banditi were incentivized to kill other outlaws, including assassins, criminals banished for life, and

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109 Ibid.
110 Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 1, 162-63. “per il debito el loro offitio”
rebels of the state, in exchange for a pardon and the restoration of their own personal freedom. The bill explained that “in many places of this dominion and especially at the borders there have been discovered homicides, and assassinations in determent of the universal [law] and wishing, as in the city where everyone lives peacefully, that the Dominion [could] also be [this way], purged of the wicked, and that each one by day and by night, could go, and be completely safe.” Thus, if a bandit successfully killed or captured a fellow fugitive, his own banishment was forgiven and he could lawfully rejoin civic society.

The same law also addressed bounty hunters, who sought to kill bandits for monetary rewards. The Florentine state offered fifty scudi to men who captured fugitives alive and twenty-five if deceased. For example, on 10 October 1576, Nicholo di Tonio submitted a supplication to Duke Francesco’s court confirming that he killed the bandit Tonio di Salvadore from Valenzano di Casentino with an arquebus a month earlier. In his letter, Nicholo requested “the usual bounty give[n] to those who kill bandits” and on 17 October, his request was conferred. In addition to the fiscal reward, successful bounty hunters were also presented with the opportunity to absolve any bandit of their choosing. In his illustration of the ban from 1800, Lorenzo Cantini pointed out that this practice allowed elite members of society to purchase impunity from the law, as the wealthy likely hired bounty hunters to eliminate outlaws on their behalf. After killing the bandit Sandro di Antonio del Naccio from the countryside of Citerna in 1567, Horatio di Pietro di Battista from Fighile (also located in Citerna) requested his twenty-five scudi bounty and nominated to free another Citerna native named Agnolo di Gilio. Having lived in

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111 Venetian law also adopted this practice. See Laven’s discussion of the voci di liberarsi in Ibid., 226-229.
113 ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balìa del Principato, vol. 2262, fol. 316.
114 “la taglia solita dare a chi amaza banditi”
115 Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 1, 163.
exile for the past fourteen years, Agnolo was banished by the parish of Anghiari for committing homicide with his brother Giovanni da Prato.\textsuperscript{116} Sandro’s request was received by the Otto in March of 1568 and approved that same month.

It appears that bounty hunters could additionally hold onto these privileges for an extended period of time. In July 1562 brothers Dionigi and Cesare Cattani from the ecclesiastic dominion of Val di Lamona killed the bandit Rinaldo di Vincenzo Marroli from Moriccie.\textsuperscript{117} In a supplication letter submitted seven years later, they nominated the bandit Michele Giovannino di Giotto from Santo Mori, who with two others attacked and killed Michele Cechino del Negro from Moriccie by stabbing him roughly thirty times on the street of Baldrialto in October 1564. Michele Giovannino’s killing of Michele Cechino was apparently in response to the latter’s son’s killing of a certain Rinaldo di Evangelista (also from Santo Mori). By the authors’ account, it seems a vendetta was playing out between two rivalling parties in the towns of Morricie and Santo Mori, both located in the region of Brisighella. Dionigi and Cesare further supported their nomination for freeing Michele Giovannino by adding that the defendant’s cousin had made peace with his aforementioned enemies on Michele Giovannino’s behalf. It remains unclear why the Cattani brothers waited so long to cash in their reward, as the supplication was not received by the state until 3 April 1569. Nevertheless, the pardon was approved, as the document recorded “If he has peace, [the duke] allows him.”\textsuperscript{118}

The problem of banditry appeared to persist throughout the century, as Ferdinando I also found the issue particularly challenging when he reigned as Duke. In fact, one of the first laws he passed on 28 November 1587 was “Concerning the rewards to those who kill or bring to justice bandits, assassins and other criminals.”\textsuperscript{119} It appears the period also saw alternative, less violent methods for dealing with men in exile. In an avviso from July 1568 in Rome, we learn that Pope Pius V (1504-72) offered all bandits and fugitives—who had not been convicted of murder—an

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{116} ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2252, fol. 111.
\item\textsuperscript{117} ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2252, fol. 159.
\item\textsuperscript{118} “Se ha la pace, concedesi”
\item\textsuperscript{119} Berner, “Florentine Society,” 217. Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 12, 21-23.
\end{itemize}
opportunity to live freely in Rome if they agreed to settle there and take up the cloth weaving trade. Described in the report as “new arts,” the Pope was searching for men to work in the industry, most notably in the genres of wool and silk.\textsuperscript{120}

Business travel was another oft cited reason for procuring a pardon from the firearms ban. In April 1562, agent of the \textit{Fabbrica di Santo Pietro} in Rome Pier Matthia Orlandi asked to carry offensive and defensive arms for himself and two servants, in addition to a wheellock arquebus that he proposed to leave at the city gates and retrieve for use on trips outside of the ducal state.\textsuperscript{121} Initially founded by Pope Julius II (1443-1513) and continued under Pope Clement VII (1478-1534), the \textit{Fabbrica di Santo Pietro} was a task force employed to manage the construction, art, and administration of the new Vatican basilica. In his role for the organization, Pier stated that he was travelling to Maneggio and was “forced to make displeasure to many false and illegitimate applicants (\textit{questuari}).”\textsuperscript{122} He explained that one of the \textit{Fabbrica} officials in Bologna had recently been taken to prison, and since this wrongdoer “has many brothers and relatives that will try to offend” him, he could not travel through the ducal state “without great danger of his life.”\textsuperscript{123} Corboli reviewed the case on 5 May, and four days later, the ruling stated that “the wheellock arquebuses are not allowed, but the other arms yes!”\textsuperscript{124}

In another example from 1565, we encounter the Spanish merchant Francescho de Guinea, who asked for permission to carry a wheellock arquebus on an upcoming business trip to Naples.\textsuperscript{125} He explained that his arquebus measured five-palms long and that he purchased the firearm from a soldier at the city’s Fortezza da Basso.\textsuperscript{126} Since he had not received the licence yet, he left the weapon at the door of

\begin{footnotesize}
\item[121] ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2239, fol. 110. “forzato far dispiacere a molti questuari falsi et non legittimi”
\item[122] “ha molti fratelli et parenti che cercaranno offendere”; “senza grandissimo pericolo della vita”
\item[123] “L’archibusetti a ruota non si concedono, ma l’altre arme si”
\item[124] ASF, Otto di Guardia e Balia del Principato, vol. 2247, fol. 38.
\item[125] The Fortezza da Basso appeared to function as a place for servicing firearms as well. In a letter from 5 June 1547 to Duke Cosimo, Pier Francesco Ricci stated that a servant working for Bishop Roberto de’ Pucci, along with a Spanish soldier, brought a wheellock pistol of the
\end{footnotesize}
San Piero Gattolino (no longer extant in Florence, but was originally near Porta Romana) and planned to retrieve the gun on the morning he departed since the door was on the road leading south. Apparently, the merchant’s licence had been provisionally approved, but was subsequently suspended after Corboli requested to review the case with the Duke. On 4 October, Corboli reported that the Duke’s final ruling stated that he was opposed to Francescho obtaining such a licence, as he feared others would submit requests to carry similar weapons.127

Duke Cosimo’s reasoning to deny Francescho’s supplication made sense. The more the state dispensed licences to inhabitants, the more they received additional requests. In September 1593, for instance, Medici official Fabrizio Guidi wrote to court secretary Lorenzo Usimbardi regarding the Sienese gentleman Fedro Bandini. Guidi requested a licence allowing Bandini to get through Siena’s gates with a wheellock arquebus. Guidi asked Duke Ferdinando I to grant the licence, especially since the Duke had bestowed the very same privilege to “many others in that city.”128 Guidi added that it was for this reason, rather than legitimate need, that the nobleman submitted a request.

Since men often carried arms with or without permission when travelling, several arrests for carrying illegal firearms were made at city gates. One such case occurred in March 1560 when a Brescian printer by the name of Domenico di Grisenti was locked up after trying to bring an “archibusetto” through the gates to Florence.129 After finding the weapon, authorities incarcerated Domenico, sentencing him to pay 300 scudi. In his supplication, he explained that he had carried the weapon for defence and since much time had passed since his last trip to Florence, “he did not have knowledge of the ordinances of the city.”130 Being a “poor foreigner,” Domenico pleaded for the fine to be forgiven and to be freed from incarceration since “being

127 The Duke’s ruling explained, “Perche non li vuol avvezzare a tenere simil arme!”
130 “non haveva notitia delli ordini della città”
extremely poor he will be forced to die of hunger in prison.”¹³¹ A little over a week later, Domenico was pardoned by Duke Cosimo I.

Since weapons were prohibited in most regions of Italy, it was often necessary to contact the local officials before sending a citizen in armed. In April 1559, for instance, Duke Cosimo sent a letter to the Viceroy of Sicily Juan de la Cerda, forwarding the Florentine merchant Giovanni Caccini’s request to arm himself, along with his servants, with wheellock arquebuses while visiting Sicily on business. Caccini explained that he wished to be armed while travelling “from place to place,” to secure his safety, since criminals often inhabited these regions.¹³²

*Masculinity and Firearms*

While bladed weapons had their origins in chivalric medieval romances, firearms seemed to conjure up a very different kind of symbolism in the Renaissance period, especially when related to notions of masculinity. JR Hale briefly posited that the gun replaced the sword as a marker of virility in English literature of the Renaissance, suggesting that the relationship inspired links between speed, violence, and accuracy.¹³³ Likewise, one of the most cited quotes in popular culture today appears to be a parody of the original “Rifleman’s Creed” derived from the United States Marine Corps, which states “This is my rifle, this is my gun. One is for shooting, the other is for fun.” Thus, the gun became a sort of stand-in for the phallus, ready to engage in sexual conquest.

The pistol’s association with male genitalia intensifies especially if one considers that these weapons were projectile and sexualised. The shooting forth of bullets or pellets might have been likened to the propelling of the male seed. Art historian Patricia Simons linked this idea with a drawing executed by Pieter Isaacz of Danaë (ca. 1608) (Fig. 57).¹³⁴ As is typical for the Greek myth’s iconography, the

¹³¹ “povero forestiero”; “essendo poverissimo sara costretto morirsi di fame imprigione”
image depicted Zeus disguised as golden rain entering Danae’s bedchamber from the roof. Just outside the tower’s window, however, are two cannons caught in the process of firing. Both the artillery and rain, as Simon pointed out, trespassed areas meant to be safeguarded. The cannons infiltrated the city protected within its walls just as the seed of Zeus infiltrated the tower (and womb) of Danae. Also worth noting is how both subjects penetrated their targets, whether inimical or sexual, from a distance, without risk of retaliation.

Similar to the other weapons we have examined, firearms served as an extension of the male body they were meant to protect. These conspicuous commodities were objects of fascination, as well as beauty, as Cellini’s excitement over choosing an arquebus at the start of this chapter exemplifies. In addition to their novelty, we must also consider their protective function. Most sources derived from the Otto’s records would indicate that men sought firearms for independence and freedom. However, this likely seemed necessary since so many other inhabitants, state authorities, and outlaws were already armed. In theory, the state restricted arms, however, its model for bestowing licences on some created fissures in its reasoning. Thus, the legislation ultimately prioritized individual over collective security, causing men to take matters into their own hands. The addition of such a deadly weapon like the firearm into the fabric of society increased the danger men faced when acting out routine bouts of aggression, thus, threatening one of the main methods of negotiation used to substantiate masculinity. In the next chapter, we will examine another channel for exhibiting maleness, the militaristic nature of Renaissance men’s fashion.

135 Ibid., 122.
Images

Figure 46. Löffelholtz-Kodex, *Abbildungen und Beschreibungen von allerlei Handwerkszeugen*, Folterinstrumenten, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, page 27

Figure 47. Leonardo da Vinci, *Sketch of Wheellock Mechanism*, ca. 1478-1519, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan
Figure 48. Peter Peck and Ambrosius Gemlich, *Detail of Double-Barreled Wheellock Mechanism*, ca. 1540-45, Length 42.9 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Figure 49. Peter Danner, *Wheellock Pistol*, ca. 1580, Steel, bronze, gold, wood (walnut), staghorn, Length 50.2 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Figure 50. Cornelis Ketel, *Portrait of Sir Martin Frobisher*, 1577, Oil on canvas, 211 cm x 98 cm, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
Figure 51. German, *Combined Halberd, Fork and Wheelock Pistol*, ca. 1580, Steel, copper alloy, and wood, blued, Length 215 cm (Barrel 32.2 cm), Wallace Collection, London
Figure 52. German, *Combination Wheellock Pistol and Dagger*, 1575-1600, Steel and wood, Length 48.1 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Figure 53. *Axe with Firearm and Hidden Wheellock*, ca. 1550, Length 70 cm, Steel, bronze, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Images from Marco Merlo, “Le armi combinate del Museo Nazionale del Bargello,” *Armi Antiche* (Bollettino dell’Accademia di San Marciano: Torino, 2014), 70
Figure 54. German, *Combination Axe-Pistol of Grand Duke Ferdinando I de’ Medici*, ca. 1580, Steel, gold, Length 70cm, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence
Figure 55. Peter Peck and Ambrosius Gemlich, *Double-Barreled Wheellock Pistol Made for Emperor Charles V*, ca. 1540-45, Steel, gold, wood, staghorn, Length 49.2 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Figure 56. Peter Peck and Ambrosius Gemlich, *Reverse Side of Pistol Cited Above*, ca. 1540-45, Steel, gold, wood, staghorn, Length 49.2 cm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Figure 57. Pieter Isaacs, Danaë, ca. 1608, Drawing, pen and brown ink with blue wash, Album amicorum of Ernest Brinck van Harderwijk, Folio 246r, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek
Chapter Four -
Dressed to Kill: The Martial Side of Florentine Male Fashion

In a portrait attributed to the Medici court artist Giovanni Stradano (1523-1605), the Florentine nobleman Niccolò di Luigi Capponi (1546-79) is depicted in an elegant black wool giubbone (doublet) ornamented with a long row of buttons, slashed velvet calze (trunk hose), and matching black calzini (hose) (Fig. 58). A starched white linen colletto (ruff) and matching cuffie (cuffs) offset the sitter’s jet black ensemble, while a black cloak lined with silk nonchalantly hangs from his left shoulder. Likely commissioned by his father posthumously, the sitter’s age and year of death is inscribed on the clock’s base situated to the right of the picture.

From 1569-79, Capponi kept two giornali, account books that detailed, recorded, and categorized his financial expenditures for roughly a decade before his death (Fig. 59). Now housed in the Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Niccolò’s giornali provide a comprehensive look into the spending patterns of a nobleman tied to a long-established Florentine family. The family’s ties to the city date back to the early thirteenth century, where documents recorded Cappone Capponi’s membership in the Silk guild in 1210. By the sixteenth century, the family was well established, and the bachelor Niccolò worked in the international banking and textile businesses managed by his father and uncle, Luigi and Alessandro Capponi.

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1 Currie, Fashion and Masculinity, 96.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 The family’s elevated stature is also demonstrated by some of the artworks they commissioned throughout the Cinquecento. Niccolò’s great uncle, Lodovico Capponi Senior commissioned Jacopo Portormo to fresco the family’s chapel in the Florentine church of Santa Felicita. Lodovico’s son, and Niccolò’s second cousin, was also the sitter identified in Bronzino’s celebrated portrait now housed in the Frick Collection in New York.
6 Ibid., 95-96.
Capponi’s account books demonstrate that the aristocrat spent a large amount of funds on clothing, and Elizabeth Currie determined that Capponi made a total of 281 purchases, which totalled 5,800 lire over the ten-year period.\(^7\) Since \textit{lire}, \textit{soldi}, and \textit{denari} were units of account (and not actual coins) used for bookkeeping purposes, I have used Carlo M. Cipolla’s system of conversion to calculate that 5,800 \textit{lire} equaled approximately 773 \textit{scudi}.\(^8\) In order to contextualize this amount further, let us compare it with the wage of one of Capponi’s servants, Sandro di Niccolò da Firenzuola, which is recorded in another entry in the \textit{giornale}. For the period of 4 February 1571 - 11 April 1572, Capponi noted that he paid Sandro sixteen \textit{lire} (or two \textit{scudi}) for two months’ salary.\(^9\) Using this figure to estimate his yearly pay, Sandro would have earned approximately ninety-six \textit{lire} (or thirteen \textit{scudi}) per annum. Thus, the amount of funds Capponi spent on clothing in ten years was sixty times his servant’s annual salary.

In addition to Currie, studies by Ulinka Rublack, Evelyn Welch, and Carole Collier-Frick have all shown that substantial amounts of household income went toward clothing and apparel.\(^10\) This is especially true for the elite classes, as nobles were expected to appear in costly fashions and likely faced social and financial pressures to maintain these ensembles. Nowhere was this conspicuous spending more evident than in state-sanctioned events. Luxury fabrics, gold and silver thread, as well as precious stones were often added to clothing for triumphal entries, tournaments, weddings, and banquets.\(^11\) One such case is reported in a 1574 \textit{avviso} from Rome, which documented the visit of Jean Durfot de Duras, an ambassador of the King of

\(^7\) Ibid., 95.
\(^8\) In order to calculate the conversion to \textit{scudi}, I relied on Carlo M. Cipolla’s ‘System C’ method of conversion which provides the following rates:
\begin{itemize}
  \item 1 gold scudo = 7 lire 10 soldi
  \item 1 lira = 20 soldi
  \item 1 soldo = 12 denari
\end{itemize}
\(^9\) Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Capponi, vol. 146, Fol 8v.
\(^11\) For more on these elaborate, shimmery effects in the court culture of Renaissance Italy, see McCall, “Brilliant Bodies,” 445-490.
Navarre (Henri V de Bourbon). The report stated that the diplomat, along with six gentlemen and other staff were sumptuously dressed in clothes meant for parading. A few days after arriving, the envoy reportedly met with the consistory in the Sala Regia, the room intended for receiving high-status guests in the Vatican located just before the Sistine Chapel. The avviso recounted that the ambassador wore a short, semi-circular cloak (un cappotto) of yellow satin embroidered with pearls, gold, and silver lace. He also purportedly wore matching trunk hose and a jerkin (colletto) in the same colour and embroidery. The avviso estimated that the ensemble was worth the exorbitant sum of 12,000 scudi. The ambassador also accessorized the look with a beret adorned with jewels, totaling around 3,000 scudi. The weight of the cloak was estimated at 70 libbre (approximately 24 kilograms) and the calze, 40 libbre (approximately 14 kilograms), totaling 110 libbre (approximately 38 kilograms), which the report explained he could not have carried if not for his horse. The avviso recorded “being a thing of such great richness, all the principal lords of Rome wanted to see it.”

The purpose of the ambassador’s visit was to announce Henry IV de Bourbon’s (1553-1610) marriage to “Madame Margherita,” Marguerite de Valois (1553-1615), and the reported stated that the same day, the six gentlemen previously mentioned appeared in another outfit, “no less rich than the previous one.”

All types of dress and apparel added protective layers to the body. For the French envoy, the luxurious and over-the-top clothing protected the reputation of Henry IV de Bourbon by illustrating the court’s wealth through dress. In fact, using fashion to secure one’s place and/or climb society’s social ladder was a common practice. In his Civil Conversazione written in 1574, diplomat and Stefano Guazzo (1530-93) complained

13 Given the context, I have chosen to interpret the term “colletto” as jerkin, but it is important to note that the word also meant collar.
14 “per essere cosa di tanta ricchezza tutti questi signori principali di Roma l’hanno voluto vedere”
15 “Non men’ ricchio del primo.”
You see that peasants dare to compete in their clothing with artisans, and artisans with merchants, and merchants with noblemen, so much so that once a grocer has taken up the habit of carrying arms and wearing the clothing of a noble, you cannot tell who he is until you see him in his shop selling his wares. \[16\]

In addition to presenting a financially secure image, clothing could also be employed to defend the body from external weather conditions, disease, physical activity, or sport. Thus, dress was commissioned, tailored, and worn to suit specific types of environments. Since violence on the street or in the market, workshop, or tavern were common occurrences in early modern Italian life, it makes sense that dress would have included offensive and defensive elements, interlinking the relationship that men in this period had with arms, armour, and fashion. Arms and armour were also understood as symbols of one’s masculinity and status, making them indispensable to the male upper-class wardrobe.

Thus, this chapter aims to explore the connection between arms, armour, and dress, particularly for the elite man in sixteenth-century Florence. Even though arms and armour were pivotal components of male dress, the two subjects have traditionally been treated very separately in the scholarship. The topic has been explored, however, by a few curators of arms and armour, most notably by Patterson and Grancsay, who respectively analysed the collections of the Victoria & Albert Museum and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. \[17\] Lastly, Capwell also examined the sword’s connection to dress and fencing practices in *The Noble Art of the Sword: Fashion and Fencing in Renaissance Europe 1520-1630*. \[18\]

This chapter aims to add to this research, thus, attempting to further bridge the gap between histories of costume and armour. Using the aforementioned account books of Niccolò Capponi, the sixteenth-century grand ducal Medici collection of letters and avvisi, as well as contemporary legislative practices, this study strives to demonstrate


\[18\] Capwell, *The Noble Art of the Sword.*
how arms, armour, and costume were inherently linked in the minds of Florentine contemporaries. In his costume book entitled *Habiti Antichi et Moderni* (ca. 1590) under the title of “The Variety of Clothing,” engraver and painter Cesare Vecellio alluded to the significant cross over between dress and armour, writing

> Because I mentioned previously that the materials used in clothing include not only wool and silk, but also iron, steel copper and similar materials, it will not be out of place here (as with the Romans) to show those who are curious the armour formerly used by the Venetians.\(^\text{19}\)

Thus, my analysis begins by examining the basic components of sixteenth-century men’s fashion, as well as some of the sumptuary laws issued for Florence and the dominion under the Medici Dukes. The role of offensive weapons and defensive garments in relation to men’s dress are explored next. This study then reviews the connection that existed between fashion, appearance, and identity and concludes by investigating how the adoption of certain arms and armour affected men’s identities in a culture that closely connected martial valor to ideas of masculinity.

**Cinquecento Men’s Fashion**

Although fabrics, linings, and adornment varied, the garments worn by men in sixteenth-century Florence were fairly standardized. Male dress was a feat of layering and usually contained several individual pieces worn on top of one another. In her pivotal study on fashion at the sixteenth-century Medici court, Roberta Orsi Landini observed that Duke Cosimo I’s wardrobe typically consisted of a giubbone or busto (doublet), calze (trunk hose), a colletto (jerkin), saio (tunic), or cioppettela (overgown), a veste (gown), and a cappa (cape) or cappoto (cloak) if going outdoors.\(^\text{20}\)

If we take a closer look at this ensemble, we realise that the backbone was undoubtedly the giubbone and calze. The giubbone was a tight-fitting jacket (doublet)

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\(^{20}\) Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 34.
that may or may not have had sleeves, and the calze were trunk hose covering the upper part of the legs that were often laced into the doublet. Worn over white linen undergarments, the giubbone and calze matched or were fashioned in complementary colours and/or boasted similar adornment techniques. Calzette or calzini were stockings that covered the lower legs, which could be stitched into the calze, creating one garment.\textsuperscript{21} Cosimo I owned ninety pairs of calzini, complete with calze attached.\textsuperscript{22} Layered over top of the doublet was the colletto, often called the jerkin in English. Modelled after military wear, jerkins were popular sleeveless or short-sleeved garments that covered the bust and could be fashioned in a variety of materials.\textsuperscript{23} In the mid-sixteenth century, the colletto slowly started to replace the heavier sai (tunics) and cioppettelle (the lighter alternative worn for summer) used in previous decades; however, the saio was the most common form of male clothing in the first half of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{24} Depending on whether one was appearing in public or remaining at home, a short or long veste (gown) was respectively worn.\textsuperscript{25} Lastly, taking into account both the season and weather, a cappa, a cape with or without a hood, or a sleeved cloak (cappoto) was added.\textsuperscript{26} In 1550, Medici court tailor mastro Alexandro Barbetta noted that Cosimo I possessed 27 doublets, 18 imbusti, 33 pairs of trunk hose, 17 jerkins, 1 tunic (saio), 7 lighter tunics (cioppettelle), 37 gowns (vesti), 1 leather gown (veste), 2 summer cloaks (cappa da sole), 5 rain cloaks (cappa da acqua), and 2 hooded felt capes (feltri), not to mention several shoes and hats.\textsuperscript{27} The lavish spending on clothing did not stop with Cosimo I, as documents from the July 1600 ducal treasury record that Ferdinando I racked up a bill of 5,560 scudi to be paid to the vendors who provided his wardrobe. This equates to almost four percent of the total expenditures (149,214) spent for the duchy that year.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{footnotes}
\item[21] Ibid., 70.
\item[22] Ibid., 88.
\item[23] Ibid., 306.
\item[24] Ibid., 33-34, 41.
\item[25] Ibid., 34.
\item[26] Ibid., 34.
\item[27] Ibid., 36-37.
\item[28] Berner, “Florentine Society,” 209.
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The *giornali* of Niccolò Capponi are filled with entries that record payments for the fashioning of garments like these.\(^{29}\) Although the construction of these items generally followed a fundamental shape, the articles themselves were far from uniform. After the 1560s, a variety of colours were used to make clothing stand out. Orsi Landini noted that Francesco I owned twenty-four *guibboni* between the period of 1562-65 and only five were black.\(^{30}\) On 15 April 1577, Niccolò recorded that he reimbursed a family member for having settled his account with a certain Mastro Giuliano Sarto for the making of two doublets, one yellow and the other, crafted from iridescent light taffeta (*ermesino cangio,*\(^{31}\)

Since most garments were not sold ready-to-wear, elite contemporaries often worked with merchants, craftsmen, and/or agents to first secure the materials needed to make clothing, including wool, linen, leather, silk, satin, velvet, taffeta, and fur.\(^{32}\) Customers then hired tailors to help design and craft the garments they desired. This lengthy process of making can additionally be seen in the long list of transactions recorded in Niccolò’s account books. Currie noted, for example, that approximately seventy-five different artisans and merchants were mentioned in Niccolò’s entries related to clothing.\(^{33}\)

A wide variety of materials and textiles were also utilized by Niccolò. On 23 May 1574, the nobleman paid a Neapolitan tailor 9 lire (approx. 1.2 *scudi*) to make a pair of breeches and a doublet from *mucaiarro*, a Middle Eastern textile constructed from silk waste.\(^{34}\) Leather was also a popular choice as Niccolò paid 19 lire (approx. 2.5 *scudi*) for a leather doublet and breeches to give to his servant Tonino as a gift in

\(^{29}\) ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol 55.

\(^{30}\) Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 36.

\(^{31}\) ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol 79.

\(^{32}\) For more on networks of agents and craftsmen, see Rublack, “Matter in the Material Renaissance” 41–85.


\(^{34}\) ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol 24.
April 1574. Giving livery and/or clothing to domestic staff was common practice in the period. In his *Autobiography*, for instance, Cellini recounted

> No sooner had I reached home and dined with merry cheer, than I called for all my wardrobe, which included a great many suits of silk, choice furs, and also very fine cloth stuffs. From these I selected presents for my workpeople, giving each something according to his own desert, down to the servant-girls and stable-boys, in order to encourage them to aid me heartily.

Lux linings, like taffeta, fur, and velvet, could also give items a touch of sophistication. In 1572, Niccolò purchased half a *braccio* of black patterned velvet to adorn (*per il fornimento*) a pair of breeches of mixed fabric (*calzoni di panno mistio*). Accessories were also considered mainstays in the male wardrobe. Hats, shoes, gloves, jewelry, purses, swords belts, swords, and daggers were often ordered to match and/or complement existing outfits. In 1574, the nobleman paid 5 *lire* and 10 *soldi* (or .7 *scudi*) for two sets of gloves, one “lined with fox fur, and another unlined.”

**Regulating Dress**

Although Capponi owned several items of lavishly-adorned clothing and apparel, we must not forget that Florentine residents had to obey the duchy’s sumptuary laws. As noted previously, Rainey, Kovesi-Killerby, and Collier Frick all conducted pivotal studies on Italian sumptuary legislation for the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The sixteenth century has received much less scholarly attention, however. The first sumptuary law issued under Duke Cosimo I and the “*Magnifici Consiglieri*” appeared on 19 October 1546. Two additional reforms were

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35 ASF, Capponi, vol. 147, fol 30.
36 For more on livery, see Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
38 ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol 10v.
39 ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 32v. “foderati, di pelle di Golpe, et un'altro per non foderati”
subsequently published in 1562 and 1563 addressing inhabitants of Florence and Arezzo, respectively, as well as another law in 1568, likely written under the authority of both Cosimo I and Francesco I. Ferdinando I issued two more laws during his reign, one focusing on civic clothing in 1588 and another primarily policing pearls and other embellishments in 1593.

The first sumptuary law issued in 1546 split the populace into groups according to citizenship, age, and gender and made foreigners, nobility, courtiers, ambassadors, and doctors exempt from its prohibitions. However, as Kovesi-Killerby noted, Italian laws on dress and ornamentation were categorized quite generally, especially when compared with the rest of Europe, which created specific class regulations. The 1546 edict began by stating its aim to curb “the excesses and superfluous expenses of clothes, and ornaments, as much of men, as of women.” The law explained that the state had expected “that reason would teach moderation to the rich and necessity to the poor.” Yet, having seen that the problem only worsened over time, they “judged it to be necessary for public and private well-being and utility” to create legislation prohibiting these wrongdoings “with advice from the most wise and prudent citizens.”

Before discussing the more specific guidelines assigned to class and gender, the first portion of the law collectively addressed all women and children, regardless of their status, and concentrated on the regulation of jewels (including pearls, precious stones, amber, crystals, ivory, and mother-of-pearl), embellishments, and luxury fabrics. The men were then communally addressed regarding the amount of material, type of fabric, and level of adornment permitted for their clothing. Civil-wear for citizens, including lucchi (the long traditional Florentine overgown) and long mantels, were discussed, as well as baptism clothes for both boys and girls, as well as more

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44 Ibid. “che a’ Ricchi la ragione, e a’ Poveri la necessità l’haMESSI a insegnar moderare”
45 Ibid. “hanno giudicato esser necessario per bene e utile così pubblico come privato”; “col parer di più savi e prudenti Cittadini”
statutes on jewelry and ornamentation for citizens and non-citizens, including stipulations for their respective wives and children. The law also covered the dress of prostitutes, ensuring that these women were easily distinguished from “decent women,” who live honestly.

Interestingly, tailors, seamstresses, shoemakers, and shop assistants also received mention in the 1546 proclamation. Those working in the trade were liable for adhering to the stipulations presented under the penalty of five larghi d’oro for each violation and each incident. Offenders caught for a second time were subject to monetary fines, in addition to harsher, more physical sentences determined by one’s sex. Men, for instance, would receive two pulls on the fune, and women were publically shamed by wearing a miter on their heads (usually while riding a donkey through town) or sentenced to the pillory. If convicted on the third (or subsequent) occasion, offenders were charged with the aforesaid punishments, as well as given further pecuniary or corporal sentences determined by the Magistrates and Directors who oversaw the perpetrator’s jurisdiction. Another stipulation noted that if tailors, seamstresses, shoemakers, or their assistants turned in male or female clients (padroni o padrone) who commissioned illegal garments, those in the trade would be pardoned for their part in any wrongdoing. Analogously, if patrons denounced the workshops that agreed to fashion their forbidden vestments, they, too, were immune from being prosecuted. Grace was thus given to the party who denounced the other first, offering an incentive for guilty parties to betray accomplices.

In Cosimo I’s regime, the Magistrato de Conservatori delle Leggi della Città di Firenze handled sumptuary denunciations and the prosecution of transgressors. In 1562, Cecchi explained that the magistracy—who was administered by eight citizens of the Duke’s choosing—was to ensure “that the laws [we]re observed.” According

46 As Calvi has posited, the luccho was another masculine garment that specifically distinguished men from younger men and women. In Giulia Calvi, “Abito, Genere, Cittadinanza nella toscana moderna (secc. XVI-XVII),” in Quaderni Storici (2002), 481.
48 Ibid., 323-24.
50 Ibid. “che le leggi si osservino”
to the 1546 proclamation, the monetary fines collected from sumptuary lawbreakers would be distributed into three parts. One quarter went to the Magistracy or Director who managed the jurisdiction where the offender was condemned, while similar to the other bandi on arms, another quarter was awarded to informants, who denounced perpetrators either in secret or publically. The rest of the money went to the Magistracy for salaries and other office expenses.

The process for submitting a denunciation was also presented in the bill. All notifications were to include the name of the transgressor (contrafarà), who the perpetrator reported to (chi per lui sarà obligato), the date of the incident, as well as the illegal items or garments worn (in che cose o capi habbi contrafatto). The notifications’ contents were to be written in a book by the office’s chancellor, and the name of the informant kept confidential. The people recorded in the chancellor’s book were to be notified of their transgressions and the consequent penalties for their pending violations. The Conservatori delle Leggi intended to notify offenders from four days of receiving the denunciation if the perpetrator lived in Florence or in the suburbs, and sometime within fifteen days if he or she lived in the surrounding countryside. All residents in Florence and its surrounding dominion had four months from the date the law was published to modify clothing and accessories so they were compliant with the revised statutes.

During my archival work, I searched through the records of the Conservatori delle Leggi for the book of denunciations to which the 1546 law refers. Unfortunately, I was unable to find the aforementioned book or any other substantial group of sumptuary citations for this period. In the records of the Practica Segreta, however, Giulia Calvi found 255 sumptuary citations for the spring of 1638. This rare group of documents included denunciations, sentences, and supplications, citing 215 women and only 40 men. This was likely due to the shift in sumptuary legislation that occurred in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, since the 1637 law appeared to focus its efforts primarily on women, rather than men. As Calvi has

51 Calvi, “Abito, Genere, Cittadinanza,” 492.
52 Ibid., 491.
shown, most of the men charged worked in manual trades, which included wool and silk workers, peddlers, blacksmiths, milliners, shoe makers, butchers, vendors in the Mercato Vecchio, barbers, and farmers.\textsuperscript{53} Men were routinely caught with friends and coworkers in markets and taverns, compared with women, who were charged in the street and mainly in front of church.\textsuperscript{54} Almost all of the male perpetrators were guilty of the same offence: wearing collars with borders of lace that exceeded the regulated height. Documents record that two from the group donned even more elaborately fashioned collars in addition to slashed sleeves.\textsuperscript{55} As Calvi explains, most of the male violators did not dispute their charges, pleading ignorance to the laws in supplications so they would receive lesser sentences. Not all men took this route, however, as a certain notary by the name of Giovan Battista refused to give up his collar and was subsequently ordered to pay his entire twenty-scudi fine.\textsuperscript{56}

In 1562 and 1563, two reforms of the 1546 law were directed at the inhabitants of Florence and Arezzo. Although our investigation focuses on the Florentine reform, it is interesting to note that both pieces of legislation share the same phrasing in their introductions.

Hence this city having already crossed the line for many years, either because of the quality of the times, or because of the bad example of other nations, with sumptuous dress, and with other vain and superfluous expenditures, against its antique morals, and orders. And growing continually this licence, and abuse with great damage to families, corruption of political life, and offence to the Divine Majesty.\textsuperscript{57}

People deemed exempt from the sumptuary law reform in Florence included visiting foreigners, titled marquises, counts, and lords, as well as their wives and sons. If their

\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 493.
\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{57} In Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 4, 402-410 and vol. 5, 96-103. “La onde havendo questa Città già molt’anni, o per la qualità de tempi, o per il mal’esempio dell’altrre nationi, col vestire sontuosamente, & con altre spese vane & superflue contra le sue antiche leggi, & ordini, trapassato di gran lunga il segno: Et crescendo continuamente questa licentia, & abuso in grandissimo danno delle famiglie, corruptela del vivere politico, & offesa della divina maestà.”
daughters married Florentine noble citizens, the ladies were to follow the guidelines set out in the bill for this class of women. Courtiers and gentlemen on stipend at court were also pardoned, along with their Florentine children, as well as knights of any kind, including both the knights of Malta and Santo Stefano. The magistrates were also exempt, as well as certain state officials, including "captains, vicarii (authorities in charge of parishes), podestà (captains of the local police and jails) by regiment of the cities, and the lands of the Dominion."58

The reform began by discussing the general prohibitions on certain types of jewels, furs, and perfumes, and presented the regulations for married noblewomen, dowries, baptism attire, unmarried girls, as well as the wives of peasants. It then split male inhabitants into three categories: noblemen, the sons of noblemen, and peasants. Most of the bill focused on upper-class men and was concerned with the amount and type of material being used for garments, including breeches, doublets, jerkins, cloaks, and civic gowns. The law stipulated, for example, that a maximum of two braccia of approved fabric could be used for a pair of trunk hose or breeches, while doublets could utilize up to four and half braccia. The linings, patterns, and adornments of these garments were also regulated. The lining for breeches or trunk hose differed depending on the primary material they were constructed from, which included light taffeta (ermisino), taffeta, cloth (panno), wool cloth (saia), wool twill (rascia), and leather (cuoio).59 If made from light taffeta or taffeta, for instance, the lining was required to match the original material and to not exceed the two-braccia maximum. Doublets could be lined using plain light or moderate taffeta with a simple silk stitching either cut or uncut depending on one’s preference. Breeches or trunk-hose made of velvet were also strictly prohibited. This was likely because the cost of velvet was high and the process required to make the fabric was lengthy.60 However, as is known, inhabitants did not always abide by sumptuary legislation. In November 1572, for example, Capponi made a payment of 14 lire, 17 soldi, and 6 denari

58 “Capitani, Vicarii, Podestà per reggimento delle Città, & Terre del Dominio”
59 For the specific regulations, see Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 4, 406-08.
60 Paulicelli, Writing Fashion, 67.
(approx. 2 scudi) for 1 and ¼ braccia of “pink-red wool (saia incarnata) for the lining of a pair of black velvet breeches.”

The reform separated out the sons of noblemen under the age of twelve, restricting them to the general prohibitions, as well as allowing them to only use light taffeta, taffeta and wool cloth of silk (saia di seta) for clothing. Peasant men, which included those who did manual labour, were also ordered to adhere to the general stipulations and were barred from wearing cloth that had been dyed red (pavonazzo di grana or chermisi). This was likely to make the distinction between peasants and the upper classes, as red was commonly worn by young nobles in the city. One such case was during Cosimo I’s entry into Rome in 1560, when thirty-six young noblemen in the Duke’s entourage wore red velvet trunk hose and red satin doublets.

Calvi posited that while the 1546 law promoted an austere republican Florence, the reform seemed to favour “a masculine figure embellished with rings, thighs stitched of silk, doublets and tabarri (oversized cloaks) closed with silver buttons.” As a point of evidence, she cited the example of civil dress, as the 1562 law now allowed men to choose the fabric and colour, along with the lining and leather/skin (pelle), assuming they were all legal materials. This relaxation of rules is further evident in a letter written by Francesco Vinta, as the ducal secretary noted that Cosimo had sympathies for wealthier citizens, so he allowed them to wear outlawed items if they were obtained before the new reform made in 1562. Taking

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62 Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 76.
63 Ibid.
64 Calvi, “Abito, Genere, Cittadinanza,” 482. “una figura maschile abbellita di anelli, cosciali impunturati di seta, giubboni e tabarri chiusi da bottoni d’argento.”
65 Ibid.
this idea one step further, Currie argued that the Medicean state let nobles dress in the garments they preferred as a means of keeping them appeased and loyal.67

Men’s accessories were discussed next, and like the clothing prohibitions, most of the attention was focused on noblemen. Caps and berets were prohibited from being decorated with any sort of feather, “spenacchio” (likely a pennacchio, meaning a tuft of feathers worn on helmets or military hats), or medallion. Caps were likely worn while travelling or engaging in physical activity, while berets were thought to be more elegant items designated for city use.68 Musk, perfume, and ambra were also restricted from being put inside anything except for a pair of gloves, or any other perfumed (moscata) garment worth more than three scudi. If one could afford the expenditure, it was common for nobles to perfume leather garments using a variety of scents, including jasmine, amber, carnation, musk, cinnamon, civet, nutmeg, orange flowers, almond, and rose water.69 In April 1578, Niccolò paid the steep price of 36 lire (or 4.8 scudi) to the perfumer Giovanni Alberto for “two flower skins (pelli di fiore) for a colletto,” as well as 2 lire, 13 soldi, and 4 denari (or .4 scudi) to Mastro Girolamo Sarto for “the decoration and lining of a colletto of flowers.”70

Whereas the 1546 law did not mention anything regarding the carrying of weapons, the 1562 reform stated that noblemen were permitted to wear a sword, dagger, and sword belt, as well as silver or gold gilded knives and trappings and harnesses on horseback.71 This is the only reference that I have come across explicitly stating that noblemen were allowed to carry swords and daggers, and its inclusion in a sumptuary law—instead of the numerous bandi issued by Florence’s Otto di Guardia e Balia—is telling. It further demonstrates the strong link that existed between arms, armour, and dress among contemporaries, especially nobles.

69 Ibid., 155.
70 ASF, Capponi, vol. 147, fols. 76 and 76v. “dua pelli di fiore per un colletto”; “la guarnitura e foderatura d’ uno colletto di fiore”
71 Cantini, *Legislazione toscana*, vol. 4, 407-08.
The penalty for transgressors who chose not to abide by any of the statutes expressed in the 1562 reform was a ten-skudi fine for each violation. Peasants received reduced fines, as they were only charged four skudi per infringement. The distribution of the collected fines was also revised from the stipulations present in 1546. One quarter was now allocated to the Tax office and Ducal chamber, while another fourth was given to the informant who secretly or publically denounced the offenders. The rest was split between the monasteries and convents of San Iacopo on Via Ghibellina and San Joseph of Florence.

The punishments inflicted on craftsmen whose products ignored any of the reformed regulations were also strengthened. Tailors, shoe and leather makers (calzaiuoli), embroiderers, and goldsmiths were all subject to the ten-skudi fine, and if these artisans did not pay their fees within ten days of receiving notice, they were to be jailed for four months in Florence’s Stinche prison. If they repeated the violation, they would return to the Stinche for another four-month sentence, as well as receive another penalty to be determined from the Conservatori di Legge.

It appears that the state was having trouble regulating the dress and ornamentation of its inhabitants, as another sumptuary law was issued in 1568 that reiterated a lot of the same points presented in the 1562 reform. Moreover, the 1568 version increased the severity of its sentences, making a concerted effort to penalize repeat offenders. For instance, the bill specified that lawbreakers were billed ten skudi for the first offence, twenty-five skudi for the second, and fifty skudi and confiscation of the illegal garment or item for the third. The respective fines for peasants were four, ten, and twenty skudi, in addition to the item’s seizure for the third violation. Tailors, shoemakers, embroiders, and goldsmiths were also assigned harsher penalties. The first infraction resulted in ten skudi, while the second brought about a twenty-skudi fine, along with two pulls on the fune in public. The third was met with a twenty-skudi penalty and six months in Florence’s Stinche prison. Although harsher

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72 Cantini, Legislazione toscana, vol. 7, 35-42.
penalties were born out of the 1568 law, the same privileged group that was mentioned in the 1562 reform remained exempt from the regulations.

The 1568 law appeared to reflect some of the new trends emerging in men’s fashion. One such case occurred when the amount of material noblemen could use in their calze doubled from two to four braccia. This was likely influenced by the bigger, baggier styles of men’s breeches that were becoming popular in the period. They were also permitted to line breeches with three braccia of additional material, as well as adorn them with two more braccia of velvet or another legal fabric. Arising into fashion in the 1560s, ginocchielli (or canions in English) were worn around the lowest part of the calze that covered the point where men’s upper and lower leg garments met.73 Acting also as a concealment device, ginocchielli sat above the knee and were often made to match or coordinate with a client’s looser style breeches. In 1574, Capponi paid his Neapolitan tailor to make a pair of light taffeta ginocchielli, presumably to match the black light taffeta braconi (looser, baggier breeches) he ordered in the same commission.74

The 1568 law also stipulated that noblemen could accessorize their tabbari, cloaks, or short cloaks with ruffs, hinges (gangheri), or small chains (catenuzza) of gold or silver. In addition, they could carry swords, daggers, and sword belts, and possess riding gear, including spurs, stirrups, studs (botchie/borchie?), and harnesses for both horses and mules. Lastly, they could also own knives and iron tools for hunting (coltelli et ferri da carniere) gilded or adorned in silver. When it came to giving the upper classes special benefits, not everyone employed by the state agreed with his line of thinking. In a letter from November 1568, Antonio Maria Petrucci of the Balia in Siena noted that giving “men of letters, arms, or any other prerogative” special allowances would “for the common good” “cause confusion and damage.”75

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74 ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 31.
Weapons and Male Dress

For elite men, and those granted legal permission from the Florentine Duke, arms and defensive garments were no less pertinent to their everyday wardrobe than other accessories. In a November 1565 letter addressed to Francesco di Niccolò de’ Medici, the majordomo to Cardinal Ferdinando de’ Medici (later Duke Ferdinando I), state treasurer Tommaso di Iacopo de’ Medici detailed how the cardinal’s “gli appresso” (or entourage) should be dressed, according to Ferdinando’s father, Cosimo I.76 Aside from the chaplains, who were ordered to appear in a gown, cassock (sottana), breeches, and beret of wool twill (rascia), everyone in Ferdinando’s envoy was to be outfitted with a sword and sword belt.77

For instance, Ferdinando’s “three room assistants, two pages, mastro Giorgio Barbieri,” and “Bernardino the porter” were instructed to wear a male tunic (saio) and beret of black velvet, hoods of cloth striped with velvet (bandate), cloth breeches lined in taffeta, belt, leather sword scabbard, and leather shoes for each one of them.78

The next stipulation arranged for the “nine horse managers (parafremeri), Francesco the assistant in the guardaroba, and Piero the coachman (chochiere),” to dress in a “buricho and beret of velvet, hoods of cloth striped with velvet, breeches lined with taffeta, belts, shoes, [and a] leather scabbard for each one of them.”79

From Orsi Landini’s documentary appendix, which outlines Cosimo’s clothing commissions over the years of 1544-74, it appears the Duke ordered at least 56 sword

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77 This document also mentions another position called the “salsiccia scopatore,” whose ensemble was to include “a buricho, a cloak (chappotto) of cloth (panno) lined in velvet, breeches and beret of cloth (panno), belt and shoes of leather.”
78 Ibid. “Tre aiutanti di camera, dua paggi, m.o Giorgio Barbieri, Bernardino portier”; “saio et berretta di velluto nero; cappe di panno bandate di velluto; calze di panno foderate di taffetta; cintura, fodero di spada di cuoio; et scarpe di cuoio per ciascuno d’essi”
79 Ibid. “Nove parafremeri, Francesco aiutante in guardaroba, Piero chochiere”; “buricho et berretta di velluto; cappe di panno bandate di velluto; calze foderate di taffetta; cinture, scarpe, fodero di cuoio per ciascuno d’essi.”
belts, 20 dagger sheaths, and 91 sword sheaths during this thirty-year timeframe.\textsuperscript{80} Most of these objects were fashioned in black velvet; however, neutral colours like grey (\textit{bigio}) or brown (\textit{tanè}) were also used on occasion, and even more sparingly in red.\textsuperscript{81} If the accessories were not fashioned in velvet, wool twill or taffeta seemed to be another utilized option. Of the 91 sheaths commissioned, 12 were identified as being for a rapier (\textit{stucco}), and this labelling only started to occur after 1562. Most rapier sheaths were made from “velluto riccio,” a style where the pile is made from small raised loops made from round rods.\textsuperscript{82}

Even the unlikeliest of members at court wore swords. In September 1548, for example, records indicate that Gradasso, a dwarf at the Medici court, was given a long list of luxury items. Among the many items noted, Gradasso received a jerkin, a pair of trunk hose, a bonnet, a hat, a pair of shoes, a belt, and rapier scabbards, all fashioned out of crimson velvet.\textsuperscript{83}

The \textit{giornali} of Niccolò Capponi similarly reveal that the nobleman purchased several weapons and accessories during the books’ ten-year span. On 26 August 1575, for instance, Niccolò compensated a certain Giovanni Rimbaldesi with 14 \textit{lire} and 10 \textit{soldi} (or approx. 1.9 \textit{scudi}) for “a dagger with a silver handle for my use.”\textsuperscript{84} For the silver, Capponi paid 7 \textit{lire}, 13 \textit{soldi}, and 4 \textit{denari} (approx. 1 \textit{scudo}) to Francesco Mazzi on 13 October 1576.\textsuperscript{85} He then spent 3 \textit{lire}, 3 \textit{soldi}, and 4 \textit{denari} (approx. 4 \textit{scudo}) on “one small belt (or strap) of velvet for my use,” making the dagger and belt combination (excluding the cost of the silver) 17 \textit{lire}, 13 \textit{soldi}, and 4 \textit{denari} (2.4 \textit{scudi}).\textsuperscript{86} For Capponi, the expense of the silver-handed dagger was categorized under

\textsuperscript{80} Some entries do not confirm the exact number of objects commissioned. In these cases, I have only counted one or two objects (if pluralized), making this a conservative estimate of the entries recorded. Orsi Landini, \textit{Moda a Firenze}, Documentary Appendix, 227-295.
\textsuperscript{81} For mending and repairs of scabbards, it appears the Medici court tailor, Alessandro Barbetta, was often called upon. For more on Barbetta, see Chapter Two.
\textsuperscript{82} Orsi Landini, \textit{Moda a Firenze}, Documentary Appendix, 310.
\textsuperscript{83} Orsi Landini, \textit{Moda a Firenze}, 31.
\textsuperscript{84} ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol 4 and ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 37. “uno pugnale con la manica d’argento per mio uso”
\textsuperscript{85} ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 72. Also referenced in ASF, Capponi, vol. 147, fol. 66v.
\textsuperscript{86} ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 37. “uno cinturino di velluto per mio uso”
“vestire” or dress, the same category he used to label the grey velvet he purchased on 6 December 1571 to make a small hat.

Accessories for arms were also regular expenses for Niccolò. On 9 October 1575, for instance, the nobleman paid 2 lire, 6 soldi, and 8 denari (approx. .3 scudo) for a sword belt fashioned in black leather from Milan.\(^\text{87}\) Maintenance and repair were also occasionally needed. On 9 September 1576, Capponi recorded a payment for 5 lire (approx. .7 scudo), which included costs for a sheath, the polishing of some swords, a crossbow cord, and other miscellaneous items.\(^\text{88}\) On 15 April 1578, Capponi paid local swordsmith Cencio Spadaio to clean a sword and to create a new scabbard for 1 lira and 10 soldi (approx. .2 scudi).\(^\text{89}\) Lastly, in October of 1576, Capponi reimbursed some relatives for purchasing two pointed iron blade tips (due punteruoli da spada) for 3 lire (approx. .4 scudo) from Tommaso Coltellinaio.\(^\text{90}\)

Three years before he died, Capponi also commissioned and paid for a segreta, a catch-all term for any sort of weapon or defensive garment that was disguised as an ordinary object. On 3 October 1576, he made a 21-lire payment (approx. 2.8 scudi) to Cencio Spadaio for the cost of “a new sword with its furnishings (appartenente) and another sword in a walking stick.”\(^\text{91}\) Five days later, Capponi compensated Cencio yet again with 8 more lire (approx. 1.1 scudi) for the “sword inside [the] walking stick.”\(^\text{92}\) Capponi chose to adorn his “walking stick” with four pieces of ebony that he purchased for 4 additional lire (approx. .5 scudo). He also purchased two scabbards for two new storte, swords with curved blades, for 2 lire more (approx. .3 scudo).\(^\text{93}\)

Conventional weapons could also serve as vehicles for concealing more aggressive arms. One such case occurred in October 1543 when Duke Cosimo I

\(^{87}\) ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 42.  
\(^{88}\) ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 57.  
\(^{89}\) ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 82.  
\(^{90}\) ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 72. This purchase is mentioned again in ASF, Capponi, vol. 147, fol. 66v; however, the second mention also included “two knives.”  
\(^{91}\) ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 55. “d' una spada nuova con sue appartenente et un' altra spada in uno Bastone”  
\(^{92}\) Ibid. “uno bastone entrov una spada”  
\(^{93}\) ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol 55.
ordered his associate to secretly replace the blade of his dagger with the blade of a *sfondagiaco*.

Cosimo also ordered a special sheath to conceal his custom blade. He gave specific instructions to keep the commission a secret and to only inform the craftsman executing the work, so he would not appear “traitorous.” State diplomat Lorenzo Pagni described the alteration in a letter saying

I send again to your lordship in the same bag that large knife that is not good to cut but works well to pass through men from side to side, because the Duke wants your lordship to have made a scabbard with a pointed tip, lest it seems that inside is a knife and not that instrument of traitors…. But you must ensure that this instrument is not seen by anyone other than the master who will make the scabbard, sending it with the said scabbard when it will be ready.

*Buttafouri* (literally to “throw out”) were another category of concealed weapon that typically contained extensions or additional parts. A wonderful example of a rapier with a hidden extension can be found at the Royal Armouries in Leeds. When in its scabbard, the sword looks about half the size; however, when drawn, an extended part of the blade is released, lengthening the sword by roughly 22 centimetres. It is unclear whether the sword’s hidden length was intended to deceive government officials, opponents in duels, or both.

On the same day that Niccolò paid for a new sword and walking stick, he also gave Cencio a payment of 11 lire (approx. 1.5 *scudi*) “for the value of a rapier.” This was likely an additional sum for the “new sword” referenced in the previous entry. This further confirms his passion for duelling, as the nobleman’s account

95 ASF, MdP, vol. 117, ins. 6, fol. 332. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 6051. “Mando ancora alla signoria vostra nella medesima bolgetta quel coltello grande che non è buono a tagliar ma si bene a passar gli homini da banda a banda, perché il duca mio signore vuole che la signoria vostra li facci far una guaina che nel basso sia appuntata, acciò paia che vi si dentro un coltello et non quello instrumento da traditori.... Ma che facci che quello instrumento non sia veduto se non dal maestro che farà la guaina, mandandolo in dietro con detta guaina quando sarà fornito”
96 Capwell, *The Noble Art of the Sword*, 115. For contemporary examples trying to prohibit longer rapier blades, see Ibid., 114.
97 Ibid.
98 ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 55. “per valuta d'uno stocco”
99 ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 55.
books also demonstrate that Capponi purchased four books on the subject. They were written by authors Girolamo Muzio, Fausto, Pigna, and Possorino.\textsuperscript{100}

Since Capponi was often ill, the noblemen spent a lot of time outside Florence at his estate in Vico d’Elsa before dying at the young age of thirty-three.\textsuperscript{101} From his numerous purchases, it appears the noble had a great passion for hunting, however. A pastime that certainly fit the nobleman’s status as an elite male, as the Count explained in Castiglione’s Book of the Courtier when discussing sports that are related, but not directly, to skill in weapons and require “manly exertion.” He explained

“Among these it seems to me that hunting is the most important, since in many ways it resembles warfare; moreover, it is the true pastime of great lords, it is a suitable purist for a courtier, and we know that it was very popular in the ancient world.”\textsuperscript{102}

In March 1571, Capponi bought some sort of wrap or band for wood pigeons (un fasciatotio da colombacci) in addition to “a net for little birds,” reoccurring purchases that appear frequently throughout his transactions.\textsuperscript{103} In 1572, Capponi recorded paying 4 lire and 10 soldi (approx. .6 scudo) for “the cost of four dog leashes” and 16 lire and 8 soldi (approx. 2.2 scudi) for “two pairs of [silver harness] bells for falcons.”\textsuperscript{104} Capponi also reimbursed a relative that same year for paying Bartolomeo di Matteo Calzolaio for teaching one of his dogs to assist him when hunting.\textsuperscript{105}

Hunting also required artillery weapons, of which Capponi owned plenty. Different sizes and models of crossbows, along with their parts and pallottole (the balls or pellets used to shoot), were bought regularly, and on 26 November 1575, Niccolò paid the hefty sum of 70 lire (approx. 9.3 scudi) to Mariano di Antonio Seri Torniaio e Balestraio for a new crossbow. This was no regular bow, however, as the

\textsuperscript{100} Currie, Fashion and Masculinity, 96.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} Baldasar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, 63.
\textsuperscript{103} ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 6.
\textsuperscript{104} ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 14. “per il costo di quattro guinzagli” et “dua paia di sonagli da Falconi”
\textsuperscript{105} ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 18v.
model was made “with a key in the new style discovered by Mastro Antonio Lupicini.”

Antonio Francesco di Giovanni Lupicini (also called Lupattino) was in engineer of sorts, who held several prominent roles at the Medici court. In 1564, he served as Duke Cosimo’s Bombardiere working on military affairs, and in the 1570s, he worked on the family’s Boboli gardens.

Capponi also stocked his arsenal with arquebuses. In 1572, Niccolò bought a firearm from the Italian arms region of Brescia for 29 lire, 6 soldi, and 8 denari (3.9 scudi). Five years later, he reimbursed a certain Alessandro Finiugi Pistoese from Pistoia through a fellow named Biagio Duretti for two arquebuses that were “commissioned expressly for me and sent to me at Bagno à Acqua.” He paid the hefty sum of 95 lire, 5 soldi, and 4 denari (12.7 scudi) for the guns on top of a 6-lire (.8 scudi) delivery charge “given for the effort to the man that carried them.”

It seems that using agents to secure weapons from other cities was a common practice for the young noble. In November 1576, Capponi also paid a certain Bartolo Peccerini 52 lire (approx. 6.9 scudi) for two arquebuses from Mastro Ventura Stoppettieri in Lucca and “12 lire (approx. 1.6 scudi) for two cases (vesti) of tanned (goat?) skin (cordovani) for said [arquebuses].” As a surplus, Capponi was charged 8 lire (approx. 1.1 scudi) in taxes and other expenses as well as 3 lire, 6 soldi, and 8 denari (approx. .4 scudo) for Bartolo having organised the transport.

For arquebuses, it was also necessary to purchase gun powder. In 1572, for example, Capponi paid 2 lire, 13 soldi, and 4 denari for 2 libbre of gunpowder (totalling around .7 kilograms). In the same transaction he also bought “two

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106 ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 41. “con una chiave in uno nuovo modo trovato da Mastro Antonio Lupicini”
108 ASF, Capponi, vol. 147, fol. 6v.
109 ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, 80. “fatti fare per me à porta (posta) et mandatimi al Bagno à Acqua”
110 ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol. 80. “dati per sua fatica al'huomo che gli porto”
racchette (presumably some sort of instrument for the arquebus) and four bullets,” as well as a leather arquebus case. There were also repeated purchases for flasks of gunpowder from the clockmaker Andrea di Piero Oriolaio.

Goods arriving from outside Florence were often taxed by the Maestri di Dogana. In 1572, Capponi earmarked 30 soldi (0.2 scudo) for the tax on a horse he bought, and in 1576, he was charged 1 lira (0.1 scudo) for importing “six chairs from Pistoia for women.” A lot of fabrics, clothing, and accessories that Capponi purchased were also taxed as they were leaving Florence to be delivered to his country estate. On 10 March 1573, for instance, he allocated 1 lira, 6 soldi, and 8 denari (0.2 scudo) for the tax on “a beret of black velvet recently obtained from Florence and transported to Vico di Valdelsa.” Similarly, on 13 November 1579, he paid 13 soldi and 4 denari (0.1 scudi) for the transferring of “new shirts.”

**Alternative Clothing**

Like weapons, defensive garments also played a pivotal part in men’s dress. These garments could be worn under—or even stitched into—clothing. Inventories from the period reveal that these types of garments were quite common, and in the cassone of Lorenzo de Medici (1449-1992) records note the presence of a “damask fabric doublet lined in chain mail, for use in times of danger.” Mail armour, as discussed in chapter two, was one of the most common methods of adding protection, especially for layering underneath everyday apparel (Figs. 60-61). After having been woken up in the middle of the night by his servant regarding an unknown visitor at the door, Cellini explained,

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113 “dua racchette et quattro palle”; The racchette and bullets cost eight lire, thirteen soldi, and four denari (0.4 scudi), while the case was purchased for eleven lire (1.5 scudi).
116 ASF, Capponi, vol. 146, fol 61. “camicie nuove”
117 Trans. and qtd. by Stapleford, Lorenzo de Medici, 28.
While Cencio was on this errand, I lighted another lamp, for I always keep one by me at night; then I made haste to pass an excellent coat of mail over my shirt, and above that some clothes which I caught up at random. Cencio returned, exclaiming: “Heavens, master! it is the Bargello and all his guard; and he says that if you do not open at once, he will knock the door down. They have torches, and a thousand things besides with them!” I answered: “Tell them that I am huddling my clothes on, and will come out to them in my shirt.” Supposing it was a trap laid to murder me, as had before been done by Signor Pier Luigi, I seized an excellent dagger with my right hand, and with the left I took the safe-conduct.\textsuperscript{118}

Mail was essential article of dress for anyone preparing for a fight. In a copy of a letter from Paris in 1550, we learn of a brawl between Prince Charles de Bourbon (1515-65) and François de Coligny d'Andelot (1520-69).\textsuperscript{119} Apparently, while King Henri II of Valois was away hunting, the Prince confronted Andalot, and the two apparently engaged in a violent sword fight. The report noted that although most of the participants avoided serious injury, the combat resulted in many wounds in the head and right hand, some of which were thought to result in permanent crippling. The Prince suffered a blow to his right side, ironically from one of his own men. We are additionally told that “a big hat of Andalot saved his life, that he would have died otherwise. He was also supported by a jacket of mail.”\textsuperscript{120}

Countless supplications submitted to the magistracy of the Otto di Guardia e Balia sought permission to legally wear mail jackets, sleeves, and gloves. In 1542, the court informed Duke Cosimo that he received a request from a certain Antonio Beghini from Venice, who feared for his life and requested that the Duke provide him with “two jackets and two pairs of sleeves of mail and two segrete,” armour constructed under felt hats meant to be worn around town.\textsuperscript{121} Even without permission, mail was clandestinely being worn by inhabitants. In 1557, a slew of mail

\textsuperscript{118} Cellini, \textit{The Autobiography} (2012), Chapter LXXXII.
\textsuperscript{119} ASF, MdP, vol. 1858, fol. 106. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 21452.
\textsuperscript{120} “Un cappel grosso d’Andalot gli salvò la vita, ché altrimenti moriva”; “Era anche forte d’un giaco di maglia”
\textsuperscript{121} ASF, MdP, vol. 617, fol. 375. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 22888. “dua giacchi et dua paia di maniche di maglia et due segrete” For more on \textit{segreta} headwear, see Boccia, \textit{Armi offensive dal medioevo all’eta} (Firenze: Centro Di, 1980), 29 and Table 31.
had been confiscated from Siena, as well as Arezzo, Bucine, Colle di Val d'Elsa, Montevarchi, Montegonzi, Poggibonsi, Radda in Chianti, Staggia, Terranuova Braccioli, and Volterra.\footnote{ASF, MdP, vol. 1865, fol. 240. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 8495.} The total list of items comprised 187 mail jackets, 94 pairs of mail sleeves, 15 $\frac{1}{2}$ pairs of gloves, 3 mail gorgets, 30 pieces of mail, and 16 segrete (the armoured felt hats previously mentioned) and mezze teste, headwear that contained protective elements in the front part only, often worn by men while duelling. In 1562, Cellini admitted to owning a mezze teste, in addition to many other garments of mail that he owned for defence.\footnote{As cited in Gallucci, Benvenuto Cellini, 114.}

Cosimo I also had a great affinity for mail armour, and often received gifts of mail. In a letter dated 24 January 1541, for instance, an agent from Venice stated that Cosimo would be receiving a gift of mail sleeves from the Count of Sant’Agata Aurelio Fregoso.\footnote{ASF, MdP, vol. 653, fol. 245. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 26662.} Similarly, on 31 May 1542, Cosimo I was informed from court that Count Otto Henrich von der Pfalz (1502-59) sent him a jacket of mail as a thank you gift for the two lions that the Duke had gifted him.\footnote{ASF, MdP, vol. 617, fol. 307. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 22879.} The Florentine Duke also sought out choice pieces of mail independently. In a 4 December 1547 letter from Poggio a Caiano, Cosimo informed his ambassador in Rome, Averardo di Antonio Serristori, that he had spoken with a certain Giovanni Jacomo de Strata from Turin, who informed him about a mail shirt for sale.\footnote{ASF, MdP, vol. 9, fol. 225. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 4856.} Giovanni described the garment as “a shirt of mail very beautiful and [of] good [quality] and of great value,” and noted it was owned by Camillo del Saracino, who worked as the secret servant (scalco segreto) to Cardinal Philippe de la Chambre. “Being so rare, as he says,” Cosimo requested that his ambassador have the iron garment sent so he could inspect it personally, instructing his representative to give every assurance that the shirt would be safe whether he decided to purchase it or not.\footnote{“una camicia di maglia bella molto et buona et di gran valuta”; “Essendo così rara come dice”} On 17 December 1547,
Serristori’s secretary Benedetto Buonanni responded to Cosimo’s majordomo Pier Francesco Riccio about the mail jacket.\textsuperscript{128} Benedetto stated that he had sent the item, as well as provided a large 114-scudi security deposit on the Duke’s behalf. He added that although Giovanni was asking two or three hundred scudi for the jacket, the price previously agreed upon would be 150 scudi, even though Serristori had quoted a price of ten scudi less for another ambassador.

Steel plates were also used to enhance the protection of clothing. In a letter from 18 October 1553, court administrator Lorenzo di Andrea Pagni informed Medici secretary Cristiano Pagni on the status of Cosimo’s “giubbone di piastre,” or doublet reinforced with plates.\textsuperscript{129} Lorenzo stated that the armour-maker Mastro Lorenzo Corazzaio had been away until the day before and could not work on enlarging the doublet before today. Lorenzo explained that he persuaded Lorenzo Corazzaio to return to Florence from Romagna, as the armourer had fled there to hide from his impending debts. Lorenzo reassured Cristiano by stating that the Duke should not be surprised by the fact that the garment could not be sent until now. Apparently, Lorenzo Corazzaio also needed a half braccio of satin that he secured from Girolamo Migliorotti, as well as a little maglia\textsuperscript{130} from Evangelista Almeni, brother of Sforza Almeni. The jacket was to be sent to his Excellency via a messenger on horseback.

Strong, hard leather was another material that provided effective protection. It was also commonly worn when participating in outdoor activities, including hunting, riding, or fishing (Figs. 62-63).\textsuperscript{131} In a December 1572 avviso on the news from Antwerp, Lyon, Sparendam, and Nijmegen, it was reported that King Charles IX de Valois’ (1550-74) leather and thickly-padded clothing supposedly saved him from a massive injury while hunting deer.\textsuperscript{132} The account stated that his hunting companion, a German fellow called Ciasselenghe, accidentally struck the King’s arm with his “coltellaccio” or knife with a large, crude blade. He would have undoubtedly lost the

\textsuperscript{128} ASF, MdP, vol. 1173, fol. 941r. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 8340.
\textsuperscript{130} The proposed reading of this word is unclear; however, I suspect that it is “maglia.”
\textsuperscript{131} Orsi Landini, Moda a Firenze, 97.
\textsuperscript{132} ASF, MdP, vol. 4026, fol. 109 r and v. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 28364.
appendage if not for his clothing, which included “a good gown of wolf, and a jerkin of buffalo with sleeves, and a thick doublet (gippone) with sleeves with a lot of bambagio (cotton wool padding) inside.”

It was not uncommon to fill close-fitting garments with cotton padding, often called bombast. In 1536, the Medici guardaroba recorded the addition of twenty pounds of cotton for the doublets of court pages, and a half a pound of cotton for the jerkin of Cosimo’s predecessor, Duke Alessandro I. In his 1508 comedy Cassaria, contemporary poet Ludovico Ariosto poked fun at the phenomenon which distorted the body saying, “They support their hips with props, they enlarge their shoulders with felt and cardboard and the legs take on herculean size with the help of bombast and rags.” The addition of cotton alone was likely sought more for aesthetic purposes, however. The exclusive padding of clothing with cotton appears to have been a common practice utilized in the period to improve fit. Although any sort of added material undoubtedly added weight, defensive garments still needed to be light enough to move around in easily. In a letter to court from the Medici villa in Poggio a Caiano, Medici employee Arcangelo Barbeta informed majorduomo Riccio that Cosimo thought the “the jerkin of leather that he has is too heavy.” Thus, Barbeta instructed Riccio to procure another one that was lighter and to have this new version sent immediately.

Protective garments worn in civilian contexts were far from a new trend. In the 1512 copy of the inventory conducted on the death of Lorenzo de’ Medici in

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133 “una bona veste di lupo, et un colletto di bufalo con le maniche et un grosso gippone con le maniche con molto bambagio dentro”
134 Orsi Landini defines bambagino (or bombast) as cotton wool or light cotton cloth, see Moda a Firenze, 305.
135 Orsi Landini, Moda a Firenze, 63.
136 Trans. and cited in Paulicelli, Writing Fashion, 104.
137 Orsi Landini, Moda a Firenze, 65.
138 ASF, MdP, vol. 1172, fol. 174r. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 7811. “il colletto di corame che lui ha è troppo grave”
1492, it is evident that the Medici household was full of these enhanced vestments. For instance, in Lorenzo’s bedroom, we find the following entries

- 3 breastplates of various sizes covered with silk and damask
- 1 mail protection for the belly fitted with silver buckles
- 1 short mail shirt covered with black damask and one mail shirt with collar and sleeves
- 2 brigantines and one armoured doublet of fine Milanese steel lames

The inventory valued the three breastplates at forty-five florins, the three mail garments—the belly piece along with the two shirts—fetched twenty-four, and the brigandines and armoured doublet was appraised at fifty florins. As demonstrated in Capponi’s account books, the currency used to assess the value of the Medici belongings was given in fiorino contabile, the bookkeeping florin. “In the trunk in the bedroom with two beds,” 16 mail shirts for a total of 14 florins were recorded, while another in a cassone in Lorenzo’s bedroom contained “one doublet (farsetto) belonging to our lord armoured inside by mail” valued at 6 florins. In order to provide a reference point demonstrating the contemporary value of bookkeeping florins, Scalini noted that an established carpenter and his family of seven or eight could live on 12 florins per month. In the armoury of Piero “the Unfortunate,” Lorenzo’s first son, we find two brigandines (chorazzine) that were covered in velvet, one in purple (pagonazzo), the other in brown (tanè). There were also a pair of greaves and a pair of thigh defences adorned with red silk and gilded that were Lorenzo’s and valued at six florins.

In the palace’s antechamber and writing room, there were “four two-handed swords for fencing and parading,” in addition to the disguised protective headwear, the “mezza testa” and a “beretta di piastre,” a beret filled with iron plates or scales.

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139 The inventory, which only shows the property’s arms and armour, is published in Mario Scalini, “The Weapons of Lorenzo de’ Medici,” 22-29.
142 Ibid., 22.
144 Ibid., 25.
all valued at eighteen florins. These hats were likely worn while fencing, as the grouping of these items suggests, since men outfitted themselves in a combination of both civilian and militaristic garments while participating in the sport.

Even though many augmented clothing for purposes of defence, the practice was far from legal. Defensive armour, including full armour, helmets, cuirasses, protective clothing, and mail garments, such as jackets, sleeves, and gloves were mentioned in Cosimo’s first extensive ban on arms and armour issued by the Otto di Guardia e Balia in 1539. The penalty for not surrendering a defensive garment or weapon from ten days of the ban’s issue date was a three-hundred scudi fine. It seems the presence of protective clothing was a problem for many states across Europe, as in 1579, an English proclamation was issued to those who “presume audaciously to apparel themselves” in any “secret kind of Coat and Doublets of defence … thereby intending to quarrel and make affrays upon other[s] unarmed.”

Lionello G Boccia defines defensive armour as anything worn for protection and explained that these items could be fashioned from a wide variety of materials, including iron, steel, mail, leather, wood, bone, and fabric. Prohibitions on defensive wear can be found in numerous subsequent arms bans, and the issue seemed to have been a reoccurring one, as two separate laws solely dedicated to defensive garments surfaced throughout the period. On 11 July 1570, the Otto di Guardia e Balia published a ban on wearing any sort of armoured clothing, most notably protective legwear, doublets, or reinforced jerkins. The ban stated that members of the Duke’s militia, soldiers, and knights knew how to “carry and use weapons honourably,” but since some time, they had been “scorning the true glory of arms,” in wanting to offend others, at times undeservingly, and without cause… and sometimes on a whim, and on account of bad nature to cause harm, the said arms have been used vilely, wearing them even concealed, as are the defensive arms of the leg, or mail, or plates, or strips as they happen to be, and also doublets made with artifice of many double layers, and reinforced, and woven.

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145 Qtd. in Patterson, *Fashion and Armour*, 30.
together with small mail (magliette), or with agora\textsuperscript{148} or other similar things again violating the prohibitive notifications on defensive arms... which make the plated jackets and other defensive weapons look ordinary and normal, and with deception, fraud, and abuse of force (supercheria) against his enemy, that at times will be unarmed.\textsuperscript{149} The ban against protective clothing was directed at all residents, including “ecclesiastics, as well as [the] secular, and also the privileged, and of the Militia, including also the courtiers, gentlemen, and ducal cavalry (huomini d’Arme), and all the men on stipend of his Highness.”\textsuperscript{150} The only exception made was for the “huomini d’Arme” during military inspections. The proclamation also outlawed “doublets, or jerkins, as one says, reinforced, padded, or made with artifice of any strength of small mail (magliette), or agore, or thick rings made with the force of waxed cord (buchi spessi fatti con forza di spaghi incerati), or other mixture/size.”\textsuperscript{151} Making these kinds of garments was also banned, and men were forbidden from asking tailors or “whatever other person either male or female to work them in any way.”\textsuperscript{152} If any residents possessed clothing of this sort prior to the bill’s publication, they were barred from keeping these items in the city, as well as within the eight surrounding miles. If caught with reinforced clothing, perpetrators were subject to the penalties for carrying defensive armour presented in the \textit{bando} from 10 January 1548, “namely, penalty of life, and confiscation of goods.”\textsuperscript{153}

\textsuperscript{148}The precise translation for this word is unknown. I assume it meant something like “strips of metal.”
\textsuperscript{149}In Cantini, \textit{Legislazione toscana}, vol. 7, 227-230. “portare e adoperare l’armi honoratamente”; “sprezzando la vera gloria dell’Arme”; “nel volere offendere altrui, tal volta indebitamente, & senza cause… & alcuna volta per capriccio, & per mala natura di far male, sono state le dette Arme adoperate vilmente, con portarle anco coperte, come sono l’Arme di Ganba, o maglia, o piastre, o listre che si sieno, & anchora giubboni fatti con artificio di molti doppi, & rinforzati, & intessuti con magliette, o con agora, o altre simil cose in fraude anchora de’ Bandi prohibitivi dell’Arme defensive… che fanno e giacchi piastrini, & altre arme di dosso ordinarie & reali, & con inganno, fraude, & supercheria contro al suo nemico, che tal volta sarà stato disarmato.”
\textsuperscript{150}“ecclesiastico, come secolare, etiam privilegiato, et delle Bande, comprendendo anchora e Cortigiani, Gentilhuomini, huomini d’Arme et tutti gli stipendiati di loro Altezze”
\textsuperscript{151}“giubboni, o imbusti, come si dice, rinforzati, imbottiti, o fatti con artificio di alcuna forte di magliette, o agore, o buochi spessi farti con forza di spaghi incerati, o altra mistura”
\textsuperscript{152}o qualsi voglia altra persona così mastio come femina lavorarle in alcun modo
\textsuperscript{153}Modern year given in text to adjust for the Florentine calendar. “cioè pena della vita, & confiscatione de’ Beni.”
Persons who notified authorities of transgressors were rewarded with twenty-five *scudi*, but if an officer or state official discovered that a defendant possessed one of these garments after condemning him on another charge, the authority would only receive ten *scudi*. In the hopes of keeping these items outside Florence, the gates would additionally be notified of the ban. Residents who loaned or bought these garments were subject to a fifty-*scudi* fine, two pulls on the *fune*, as well as in most cases, confinement in the Stinche prison or galleys, “according to the quality of the cases and of the delinquents.”

It appears the 1570 *bando* did not stop men from donning these garments, as fifteen years later, “having considered the malice and perverse nature of men,” the Otto di Guardia e Balia issued another ban on 16 January 1585 forbidding the use of *colletti di Dante* or “Dante jerkins” among all men, regardless of “grade, or title.” These likely resembled or were influenced by brigandines, armoured jackets padded with metal, bone, or leather which were originally worn by “brigands,” or foot soldiers, most commonly archers, musketeers, and pikemen (Fig. 64). Dante referred to fallow deer skin, however, *colletti di dante*, as the bill explained, were “new inventions with doublets of leather...serious, outside of the ordinary.” Duke Cosimo I owned sixty jerkins, three of which were leather, two from “red deer,” which he commissioned in November 1552 and September 1557 and another identified made in 1560 from “dante.” On 27 October 1558, Cosimo also commissioned a *saltambarco “in pelle di dante.”* Traditionally an upper garment associated with peasants, the *saltambarco* became more widespread and was adopted by the middle and upper classes in the 1560s. These enhanced garments were “made really for the security of a person, and not for ordinary clothing,” as they were

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154 “secondo la qualità dei casi, & dei delinquenti”
156 Grancsay, *Arms and Armor*, 282.
157 “nuove invenzioni con Giubboni di cuoio...gravi, fuori dell’ordinario”
159 Orsi Landini, *Moda a Firenze*, 263 (Documentary Appendix).
160 Ibid., 99.
often reinforced with a variety of materials, including armour, mail, small plates, animal bone, and hardened board.\textsuperscript{161} Additionally barred items cited in the bill were “other sorts of corsets of extraordinary, thick leather,” in addition to protective garments made for the head, body, arms, and legs.\textsuperscript{162}

\textit{The Link between Clothing and Identity}

In Baldassare Castiglione’s 	extit{Il Cortegiano} (1528), the character Federico explains

\begin{quote}
I am not saying…that clothes provide the basis for making hard and fast judgments about a man’s character, or that we cannot discover far more from someone’s words and actions than from his attire. But I do maintain that a man’s attire is also no small evidence for what kind of personality he has, allowing that it can sometimes prove misleading. Moreover, habits and words, provide clues to the quality of the man.\textsuperscript{163}
\end{quote}

Bearing Federico’s words in mind, the last part of this chapter explores the relationship between men’s clothing and identity, in addition to the implications for wearing martial garments and accessories. Since contemporaries frequently wore the same garments, as articles of dress were expensive and wardrobes were much smaller than today’s, clothing become associated with inhabitants’ appearances, and I argue, men’s identifies. When discussing a story in his \textit{Autobiography} where his brother Cecchini fought to avenge a friend’s death by attacking his killer, Cellini explained that he failed to recognise him since he was dressed in an unfamiliar outfit.

\begin{quote}
“One on the instant I did not know Cecchino, since he was wearing a different suit of clothes from that in which I had lately seen him. Accordingly, he recognized me first, and said: ‘Dearest brother, do not be upset by my grave accident; it is only what might be expected in my profession: get me removed from here at once, for I have but few hours to live.’\textsuperscript{164}"
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{161} Cantini, \textit{Legislazione toscana}, vol. 11, 354-56. “fatto veramente per sicurtà della persona, è non per vestimento ordinario”

\textsuperscript{162} “altra sorte imbusti di corame grosso straordinario”

\textsuperscript{163} Castiglione, \textit{The Book of the Courtier}, 136.

\textsuperscript{164} Cellini, \textit{The Autobiography} (2012), Chapter XLVIII.
Consequently, clothing was often cited when giving physical descriptions for convicts attempting to side step the law. Although the trend died out in the sixteenth century, even the *pittura infamante*, illustrations of wanted criminals on the façade of Florence’s Bargello, were often times shown in their everyday dress (Fig. 65).\textsuperscript{165} Rebecca Unsworth has examined the role of clothing as a tool to identify and incriminate fugitives in early modern England, but as she pointed out, this process was often ineffective, as most perpetrators owned more than one outfit.\textsuperscript{166} Even with these challenges, however, the practice of including the dress of an outlaw in physical descriptions continued. One such case occurred in a letter from September 1557 to Cosimo I when Medici administrator Onofrio Camaiani described his interrogation of a certain Natale Borgognone.\textsuperscript{167} It seems Onofrio was interested in obtaining more information about some wanted German and Flemish men and therefore sought descriptions of two fugitives who went by the names of Giovanni and Piero Fiamminghi. According to Onofrio’s report, Natale described Giovanni Fiammingho as around twenty-four years old with medium stature, a small beard, meaning some sort of goatee or soul patch (*un poco di barbetta nel mezzo, che pende in viso*), with a “handsome face and without any distinguishing marks.” Natale continued stating that Giovanni was outfitted in a pair of yellow breeches “with red satin inside,” with a white cloth doublet, a pinksed or slashed (*trinciato?*) black leather jerkin, and a “sword in the Spanish style with the hilt even gilded.” He also wore a “band (*coreggina*) of dark velvet that he told me was still of the livery when he was with Marchese di Pescara,” or Ferdinando Francesco de Ávalos Aquino (1530-71), then Marquis of Pescara and Vasto.\textsuperscript{168} Piero, on the other hand, was around twenty-eight years old.

\textsuperscript{165} For more, see Samuel Y Edgerton, Jr., “Effigies of Shame: The Quattrocento and the Cinquecento,” in *Pictures and Punishment: Art and Criminal Prosecution During the Florentine Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 91-125.

\textsuperscript{166} For more see, Rebecca Unsworth, “‘Every man well appareled’: Men’s Fashion and Networks of News in Early Modern European Practice and Print,” unpublished PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, forthcoming.

\textsuperscript{167} ASF, MdP, vol. 1864, fol. 203. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 8745.

\textsuperscript{168} “Bella faccia et senza segno alcuno”; “con raso rosso dentro”; “spada alla spagnuola con’ilzi già Dorati”; “Coreggina di velluto morello che mi disse era ancora della livrea quando stava col Marchese di Pescara”
with a large stature. He had a “white face, greasy and blotchy (colorito?)” and “around two fingers of beard that hangs in black,” and wore “a cloak of black cloth edged in velvet of the same colour.”

We encounter the same practice on 3 April 1550, when the Captain of Justice in Siena Giovanni Andrea Cruciani sent a letter to Duke Cosimo I’s first secretary Lelio Torelli which contained the descriptions of a small group of wanted men thought to be potentially residing in Florence. Giovanni explained that Emperor Charles V (1500-58) and the diplomat Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503-75) were also in search of these men. The German count Federico Spela, thought to be around forty-five years of age, was the first man listed. The document stated that Spela possessed a regular build, reddish-blond hair (pelù roscio in biondo), a long beard if he had not cut it already, and if he had not changed his clothes, a black jerkin and velvet and taffeta black trunk hose. Two other men who both wore white breeches were accompanying Spela, “one beardless with grey hair, fat [and] tall,” “the other, not very tall, with freckles on [his] face with the first signs of fuzz and tends to be blond (con la prima lanugine et tira in biondo).” Lastly, a boy was also mentioned, who dressed in a black gabbanicchio (presumably a doublet) adorned with bands of velvet, along with a little hat.

If clothes become wrapped up in the way society sees men, and in turn, how they see themselves, what do we make of martial-inspired fashion and accessories? In her feminist treatise, The Nobility and Excellence of Women and the Defects and Vices of Men (1601), contemporary poet Lucrezia Martinella (1571-1653) observed

I have used this example because of the impossibility of finding a man who does not swagger and play the daredevil. If there is such a one people call him effeminate, which is why we always see men dressed up like soldiers with weapons at their belts, bearded and menacing, and walking in a way that they think will frighten everyone. Often they wear gloves of mail and contrive for their weapons to clink under their clothing so people realize they are armed

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169 “Viso bianco grasso et colorito”; “Circa dua dita di barba che pende in nero” “Cappa di panno nero listata di velluto del medesimo colore”
171 “uno senza barba, bianchio, grasso [non-troppo] grande”; “l’altro [grande] non tanto grando, con lentigene in viso, con la prima lanugine et tira in biondo”
and ready for combat and feel intimidated by them. What are these things but artifice and tinsel?  

Lucrezia’s thoughts were shared by many commentators of the period. But how do we read these observations as historians? If clothes make the man, surely the wearing of weapons and defensive armour make men soldiers, fighters, outlaws, and/or knights. Apparel worn on the body has a sort of transformative effect, and even if contemporaries like Lucrezia were not fooled, the wearers of these garments and accessories certainly altered their behaviour to fit the clothes (and identities) they wore. Since they enveloped the body, these garments must have activated a whole host of bodily senses, making their presence hard to ignore. Their existence was felt by the rigidity of steel positioned underneath clothing, the sounds created by sword hilts clanking against studs and sword belts, and by the bright, shiny steel that attracted the eye. Arms and armour were not merely accessories meant to adorn dress, they were clothing, and as such, they simultaneously helped shape and reinforce the notion that male identity was synonymous with physical combat.

Another gender-charged accessory worn frequently in the period was the Renaissance codpiece. The term codpiece evolved from old English’s “cod” (referring to the sack or scrotum) and “pese” (signifying the piece of material meant to cover part of the body), and its nomenclature varied by region, as the Italian, French, and Spanish terms derived from the Latin bracae, roughly translating to “breeches.”

Citing contemporary English dramatic literature, Will Fisher hypothesized that the enlarged and protruding codpiece signified and safeguarded the penis, which emphasized the sexual prowess of men. Fisher also noted that the codpiece "formed ideas about the male body," which in turn affected masculine ideologies. The

174 Fisher, Materializing Gender, 69.
175 Ibid., 62.
accessory, in turn, appeared to act as a stand-in for the biological part it concealed. In a 1553 letter to his commissioner, a military engineer working for Duke Cosimo I asked for a few things to be sent to his current lodging in Port’Ercole.\textsuperscript{176} In addition to tablecloths and napkins, he and his colleague requested that a beautiful prostitute come “to refresh the codpiece.”\textsuperscript{177} The need was apparently an urgent one, as the engineer threatened the commissioner that he would be responsible for the disorder that would ensue if the request was denied.

Given their likely derivation from martial wear, codpieces also exuded a sense of militaristic strength, generating notions of protection and stability. Historian Gundula Wolter suggested that the codpiece served as “an aggressive component of war costume,” which was “considered a sign of charged energy and excitation.”\textsuperscript{178} Collier Frick’s study looked at the phallic accessory and its donning by male children, some as young as two-years-old, in contemporary portraiture.\textsuperscript{179} Frick noted that other male signifiers such as beards, goatees, and short haircuts also became popular in male portraits of the period.\textsuperscript{180}

Like the codpiece, arms and armour were also instruments worn to establish masculinity. Only men were supposed to carry weapons, further distinguishing these accessories as male ones. As we have seen, menswear in the sixteenth century was an act of layering. Many different items worn together created the male ensemble. No outfit was considered complete, at least for elite men, without a sword, dagger, and sword belt. Defensive garments, most commonly worn underneath clothing, were also integral to the male wardrobe, as made obvious by the period’s supplication letters. Arms and armour were so embedded into masculine culture that they became symbols of status. Thus, the image of the well-dressed gentleman conjured up a peaceful, upright citizen of the community. However, as this study has attempted to

\textsuperscript{176} ASF, MdP, vol. 1860, fol. 32. The Medici Archive Project, Doc ID# 21511.
\textsuperscript{177} “per rin frescamento della braghetta”
\textsuperscript{179} Frick, “Boys to Men,” 164.
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid.
demonstrate, bouts of aggression were common occurrences in sixteenth-century Florence. Weapons added fodder to the fire, especially because a large proportion of the city’s inhabitants went around armed (either legally or illegally). The link between clothing, identity, and behaviour only served to reinforce violent behaviour. Thus, there existed a tension between the state’s legislation and the city’s masculine culture, an anxiety that has come to light and continually resurfaced throughout this study.
Figure 58. Attributed to Giovanni Stradano, *Portrait of Niccolò Capponi*, 1579, Oil on panel, Unframed 115.57 cm x 90.17 cm, The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College
Figure 59. Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Capponi, Volume 146, Folios 32 v & 33r
Figure 60. Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Portrait of a Gentleman with His Helmet on a Column*, ca. 1555, Oil on canvas, 186.2 cm x 99.9 cm, National Gallery, London
Figure 61. German, *Sleeve of Mail*, 16th century, Steel, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Figure 62. *Leather Jerkin*, 1550-1600, Leather and lead alloy, Height overall 186.2 cm, Museum of London
Figure 63. *Leather Jerkin*, 16th century, Museo Stibbert, Florence
Figure 64. Italian, *Brigandine*, ca. 1540-50, Steel and textile, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Figure 65. Andrea del Sarto, *Drawing of a Man Hanging Upside-Down*, 1530, Drawing, Galliera degli Uffizi, Gabinetto Fotografico della Soprintendenza ai Beni Artistici e Storici, Florence
Conclusion

So many are the different affections and passions of the souls of men in different times, according to the variety and force of the incidents: given that already in my adolescence I had seen fathers and mothers remove and take, the best they could and knew how, any type of weapons from the rooms of their young sons so that they were better disciplined, or were the least unruly as possible: and afterwards I myself had seen more than one father still young in age enrolled in the aforesaid militia go to the show, or parade, and also to the factions outside the gates, accompanied in the middle of two of his little sons with arquebuses, who would not pass the age of fifteen or sixteen years: and likewise I saw sisters arm their brothers personally, and mothers and fathers send their sons off gladly to the factions of war, entrusting them to the goodness of God with their blessing.¹ -Jacopo Nardi, *Istorie della Città di Firenze di Iacopo Nardi* (1563)

As Jacopo Nardi’s (1476-ca.1563) quote implies, a culture of warfare permeated several aspects of early modern Italian life. Arms were integral to masculine culture, a sentiment normalized and encouraged by various members of society. Boys used weapons as playthings, fathers with sons in tow attended martial sporting events, and even female family members encouraged the arming of their male next of kin. Thus, martial ideals informed masculine behaviours. Arms and armour became regular fixtures in imitate, daily life and served to generate a sense of individual as well as collective pride.

In addition to their chivalric associations, arms and armour were prominent fixtures in society because violence was a daily reality for many Florentines. This notion challenges the characterization of the period as one of progressive peaceful civility. The conclusion of this study first reviews the results of the previous chapters, before examining an underlying tension found in the city’s culture of warfare, including Florence’s complicated history with deploying a citizen militia and the Medicean state’s ambivalent position on arms. Lastly, I explore how the Renaissance’s culture of warfare was reimagined in the late nineteenth-and early-twentieth centuries by collectors of arms and armour. This examination is especially important if we consider how this generation’s constructed ideals heavily influenced the periodization of the Renaissance. It was their enthusiasm for aestheticized male valour that helped shape the historical narrative presented to audiences by museums, one that for the most part, still exists today. In his examination of the context in which Burckhardt and others romanticized the Renaissance in Italy, Martin A. Ruehl demonstrated how the cultural climate in nineteenth-century Germany helped guide the period’s historical perceptions. As a case study, I will examine the American armour collector William H. Riggs and his substantial 1913 bequest to The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Riggs, like so many of his contemporaries, used his collection to reimagine early modern European history. As we will see, Riggs’ collecting practices and the narrative surrounding them reveal more about the late nineteenth-and early-twentieth centuries, than the age in which the objects originated.

**Summary of main results**

The prevalence of weapons in sixteenth-century Florence was investigated in the first chapter, which demonstrated that Duke Cosimo I, along with the Otto di

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Guardia e Balia, dedicated a great deal of resources to the controlling of arms and armour in Florence, its countryside, and the dominion. For instance, the state issued numerous bandi outlawing arms, fiscally incentivized inhabitants to denounce perpetrators, and punished offenders with hefty fines, banishment, and corporal punishment. The records of the Otto di Guardia indicate that violence on the streets was commonplace, and physical aggression often followed verbal altercations. Sympathetic to these cultural norms, the state tended to lessen sentences when defendants could demonstrate they were provoked or attacked. Penalties doled out to men carrying more common weapons like swords, daggers, and knives were also less than the charges given for defensive arms and armour, which signalled to authorities that a perpetrator had purposely set out to fight.

Complicating matters further was the complex practice of dispensing arms’ licences via the state’s supplication process. Although one’s social class, reputation, and proximity to the city’s centre affected the likelihood of obtaining such permissions, the process for approving and/or denying applications was far from standardized. If obtained, the terms of the licences also varied, including which weapons were permitted during specific times of day. Licences could also be invalidated or expire, as exemplified in the case of the Medici court artist Giovanni Stradano, in addition to the ban outlawing all existing licences issued in 1581. Supplications were also the vehicle for requesting pardons and reductions in fines and sentences. As discussed, the state was more lenient if two opponents had “made peace,” as this act reassured authorities that the conflict had been resolved, meaning no further violence would ensue. By understanding the motives men sought to wear weapons, we start to better understand the pressures men faced to protect themselves, their families, and the reputations of both.

In the second chapter, the making, maintenance, and commissioning of armour was explored. Although weapons were ubiquitous in Florentine culture, it appears the city as a prominent centre of production lost its significance after the fall of the

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4 For more on the types of disputes and methods of reconciliation practiced in the early modern period, see Cummins and Kounine eds., Cultures of Conflict Resolution.
Florentine republic in 1532. Further lessening the industry’s prominence was Duke Alessandro I’s restructuring of the city’s fourteen minor guilds into four universities. Consequently in 1534, the Armourers and Swordsmiths Guild (Arte Corazzai e Spadai) joined three other trades to form the Università dei Fabbricanti, which merged again in 1583 with three additional guilds, becoming the Università di Por San Piero. Florence was by no means the only city to be affected by the armour industry’s decline, as technological advances in the development of firearms required that armourers across Europe augment their steel manufacturing practices to now withstand the impact of bullets. This shift occurred slowly throughout the century, however, and it is important to note that the major centres of production continued to flourish, albeit to a lesser degree than previously experienced. Accordingly, the processes of forging, quenching, and tempering steel became topics of interest among artisans and patrons alike. Given the role of metallurgy in matters of defence, statesmen took a particular interest in the topic, and as we have seen, Cosimo I and his son Francesco I were no exception. The decorative techniques of artisans in this period also reached new heights, and it was not uncommon to have goldsmiths, damasceners, etchers, and armourers working collaboratively on luxury commissions. Interestingly, some of the most innovative techniques were used to create parade armour that mimicked fashion trends occurring in contemporary menswear.

Without a court armourer of their own, the Medici relied on ambassadors and agents in prominent cities of production for large orders and personal commissions. Most of their bulk purchases derived from northern Italian cities like Brescia and Milan. Under the prodding of Francesco I in 1568, they finally secured Matteo Piatti from the Piatti workshop in Milan to serve as their court armaiolo. Medici armour still remains quite difficult to trace, however, as most of the collection was sold in the late eighteenth century by the second Hapsburg Duke Pietro Leopoldo (reigned 1773-1780).

The role and rise of firearms in sixteenth-century Italy was explored in chapter three. The improved wheellock mechanism made guns much more dangerous than earlier prototypes, as these new-fangled weapons had the capacity to be locked and
loaded in advance, rather than lit with matches on site. While the wheellock revolutionized firearm usage, records from the period indicate that the technology was often unpredictable. Misfirings, jams, and faulty aiming were just a few of the common issues users experienced. It is important to note, however, that although firearm usage rose, guns did not replace the more traditional weapons of the period. Criminal records illustrate that men still used a variety of arms, even after guns became more affordable and relatively wide-spread.

Similar to other weapons, the state attempted to ban firearms by issuing numerous bandi in both Florence and the dominion. Sentences for disobeying laws were harsh, and even knowing someone with a gun was a serious offence in the eyes of the Tuscan state. For those with legal permissions, Florentine legislation mandated that firearms must retain a minimum length of one and a half braccia (approx. eighty-seven centimeters). Weapons under this limit were considered extremely dangerous, as they were impractical for hunting and could be easily concealed. Under the right circumstances, citizens could also request state-sanctioned licences to carry firearms. When granted, these were almost always issued for use outside Florence. Travelling was the most oft-cited reason for obtaining licences, as bandits and highway robbers were infamously known to terrorize the space between territories.

The fourth chapter investigated the role of offensive and defensive arms in relation to the early modern male wardrobe. Especially for elite men, dress was a prominent category of expense that consumed much time and energy, as consumers worked with networks of craftsmen and agents to secure materials and execute designs. As demonstrated in the account books of Niccolò di Luigi Capponi, weapons appeared to command similar amounts of attention, often being categorized as items of apparel. Arms were considered integral components of contemporary menswear, as swords, daggers, and sword belts were often fashioned to match articles of dress, completing the elegant man’s sartorial ensemble. In addition to working with agents and tailors, men routinely hired swordsmiths and gun makers to make, service, and repair weaponry.
In an attempt to regulate the city’s luxury expenditures, the Medicean state published a series of laws on the dress and apparel of its inhabitants. In fact, sumptuary laws continued to be issued throughout the century, suggesting that the edicts did little to prevent residents from wearing restricted fashions. Punishments increased in severity over time, especially for repeat offenders, and tailors, seamstresses, shoemakers, and shop assistants were also subject to penalties. In the sixteenth century, the magistracy of the Conservatori delle Leggi supervised the violations, relying heavily on inhabitants’ condemnations, to whom they incentivized with monetary rewards.

A Florentine reform issued in 1562 granted nobles permission to wear swords, daggers, and sword belts. Stating this information in an edict on clothing—instead of a ban published by the city’s criminal magistracy—was particularly significant, as it reiterated the integral role of weapons in men’s fashion. This section also discussed the many protective elements, including mail, steel plates, leather, and padding that were routinely added to garments and concealed. Consequently, bans on defensive clothing were issued, and strict punishments awaited lawbreakers, since wearing these garments was considered a premeditated act.

*The Significance of a Citizen Militia*

Most Italian territories similarly outlawed arms, yet in other parts of Europe, some cities actually required men to own weapons. As Ann Tlusty has demonstrated, male heads of households in southern German cities had a civic responsibility to keep and bear arms in the public defence. These German towns employed citizen militias, meaning that residents would be called on to defend the territory in the face of external threats. Violators risked a host of penalties for failing to comply, including monetary fines, incarceration, and even exile. In fact, weapons were so inherently connected to notions of public male identity that the Augsburg council commonly prohibited men from carrying bladed weapons as a form of punishment. After

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breaking an oath in 1551, for instance, a peasant was banned from carrying all weapons except for a blunted bread knife.\textsuperscript{6} Thus, to don a sword was to perform a masculine act, signaling that its wearer was a “free and honorable citizen” who successfully and competently managed his personal, financial, and domestic affairs.\textsuperscript{7}

As this study has demonstrated, Florence prohibited the possession of arms amongst the majority of its inhabitants. A commonly cited reason for this ban often stems from the city’s lack of a citizen militia. In the fifteenth century, the Florentine republic had shied away from employing a citizen militia, relying on hired mercenaries and \textit{condottiere} to fight the city’s battles, a method famously criticized by Republican political advisor Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527).\textsuperscript{8} For Machiavelli, the primary motive for hiring external forces was the city’s fear of its own populace, as the state worried that arming citizens could incite an insurgency. The tide turned in 1506, however, when Machiavelli finally managed to persuade Florence’s \textit{gonfaloniere} Piero Soderini to recruit a militia from the local territory. The terms of how the militia would function were outlined in a treatise written by Machiavelli entitled the \textit{Discorso dell’Ordinare lo stato di Firenze alle armi}.\textsuperscript{9} One of the biggest questions addressed was where to source recruits first, whether that be from the city, countryside (\textit{contado}), or surrounding district (\textit{distretto}).\textsuperscript{10} In an attempt to reduce the risk of rebellion, Florence was immediately eliminated from the selection; moreover, citizen nobles would expect to serve as cavalry, and the first objective of the new militia set out to recruit infantrymen.\textsuperscript{11} Drawing candidates from the \textit{distretto} was correspondingly considered high risk, since these territories were typically walled-

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{7} Ibid., 6, 124.
\textsuperscript{10} Bayley, \textit{War and Society}, 255.
\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.
cities that once possessed their own independence, as in the case of Arezzo. Thus, the contado appeared to be the safest bet, and the first territories selected were the Mugello, Casentino, and Valdarno areas. Peasant militias were by no means a new concept. In his De institutione reipublicae, scholar Francesco Patrizi of Siena (1413-92) argued in favour of a citizen militia drawn primarily from the contado since farmers already possessed the physical demands required for battle and this opportunity allowed them to earn soldiers’ pay in wartime.

After the militia’s infantry was established, various other units were added, including a cavalry division made up of men from prominent rural families. After suffering a rough defeat in Prato against the Holy League in 1512, however, the Florentine militia was officially disbanded. From that point, various iterations were formed until the military force was absorbed by the Medici duchy after the appointment of Duke Alessandro I (1510-37) in 1532. One such case was Florence’s urban militia, which lasted from 1528-30. Totaling 300 members, most of which derived from the city’s youth, the milizia della gioventù was tasked with defending the Republic, while rural militias and foreign mercenaries protected the dominion. In fact, the sitter in Jacopo Pontormo’s famous Portrait of Halberdier (1528-30) is often identified as the young nobleman Francesco Guardi portrayed as a soldier in the city’s militia (Fig. 66).

During Cosimo’s tenure, the militia became a permanent fixture of the Tuscan state, and many resources were put toward the entity’s expansion and growth. When Cosimo became Duke in 1537, for instance, the armed force maintained nine districts. Ten years later, the number of districts had doubled to eighteen, and 15,000 men were recorded as members. By 1571, thirty-six districts had been established,

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12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 231-32.
15 Ibid., 267.
16 Trexler, Public Life in Renaissance Florence, 531.
18 Ibid.
and registrants had increased to 25,519.\textsuperscript{19} Even though Cosimo invested heavily in the expansion of the militia, he kept the majority of its armed members outside the city centre. Aside from the city’s prestigious cavalry unit, the \textit{uomini d’arme}, the Duke’s militia were organised into \textit{bande} (or districts) scattered among various towns in the dominion.\textsuperscript{20}

As my research has shown, even with the exiling of the militia to the \textit{contado}, violent crimes and acts of assault still occurred throughout the various Florentine territories. While it is true that rural militia members were known to abuse arms privileges, unlisted men still found ways to possess weapons, undoubtedly exacerbating and escalating the somewhat routine conflict experienced in everyday early modern life. Thus, men’s relationship with arms, armour, and violence interlinked with contemporary notions of masculinity and beauty, through the appeal of skilfully crafted arms.

\textit{Masculinity, Violence, and the State}

Although we know that some women certainly carried arms and engaged in violent acts, the major part of cases examined in my research involved men. In her work on history and emotions, Ute Frevert has shown that rage was historically understood as a male emotion, a feeling completely separate from the female experience.\textsuperscript{21} Frevert added that the physical expression of anger is still predominantly seen this way, while the appropriate, female equivalent would be to cry.\textsuperscript{22} Under this lens, arms and armour were tools meant to aid and legitimize the expression of anger. As the colourful Florentine Cellini explained after trading heated words with a surly merchant, “for it had become clear that our words meant swords and daggers.”\textsuperscript{23} The idea of anger and its physical expression being exclusively male

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Ute Frevert, \textit{Emotions in History? Lost and Found} (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2011), 91-92.
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 97-98.
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Cellini, \textit{The Autobiography} (2012), Chapter LXXV.
\end{itemize}
was further reinforced by men being the only ones eligible to bear arms. This separation was certainly evident in the Florentine Republic’s statement to their civilian militia from 2 November 1529.

Hoping that the arms of our militia, if accompanied with prayer and divine help, will always lead to victory and everything good, [the signoria] therefore causes to publicly announce to and notify whatever person not able and not suitable for arms, such as priests, friars, monks, nuns, boys, and women of any age, that everytime our soldiers come to battle with the enemies, this signal will come from the palace: one will sound the Ave Maria with the great bell of the Palace, the one with which the Great Council is usually called.”  

It is often stated that early modern men used violence as a means of preserving honour. Giovanni della Casa illustrated the point in his treatise on Renaissance etiquette when stating, “It has happened many times that swords have been drawn merely because one citizen, meeting another on the street, did not show him due honour.” 25 While this is most certainly true in the broader sense, my study posits that violent acts were used more specifically to avoid shame, whether personal, familial, social, or cultural. The connection between shame and violence has long been established by psychologists. Shame has been defined as “the painful emotion arising from the consciousness of something dishonouring, ridiculous, or indecorous in one’s own conduct or circumstances (or in those of others whose honour or disgrace one regards as one’s own)…” 26 Stemming from his research with prison inmates, psychiatrist James Gilligan explained that shame was a pivotal component of violence, noting

the degree of shame that a man needs to be experiencing in order to become homicidal is so intense and so painful that it threatens to overwhelm him and bring about the death of the self, causing him to lose his mind, his soul, or his

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scared honor (all of which are merely different ways of expressing the same thought).  

Although Gilligan’s conclusions referenced modern-day cases, an analogous narrative can also be detected in the early modern period. In Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier*, Count Lodovico explained the looming threat of masculine shame by stating

> Just as once a woman’s reputation for purity has been sullied it can never be restored, so once the reputation of a gentleman-at-arms has been stained through cowardice or some other reproachful behavior, even if only once, it always remains defiled in the eyes of the world and covered with ignominy.

Another reason for engaging in violence was self-defence. At first glance, Cosimo’s tough stance on arms would suggest that Florence was a weapon-free territory. As my research has shown, however, many of the city’s inhabitants were armed. Some illegally, and others state sanctioned, as there were a multitude of channels that legally dispensed weapon privileges to select inhabitants. Via the 1564 sumptuary law reform, we know that upper class men were permitted to wear swords, daggers, and sword belts. The supplication process was another mode allowing men of all classes to submit requests for arms licences to the Florentine government. State authorities working in law enforcement were additionally granted arms privileges, as well as those in the Ducal militia. Courtiers and other high-profile positions on the Duke’s payroll also received exemptions from bans. Thus, the state’s ambivalent stance on arms created a major imbalance, ultimately leaving the onus on the individual in an environment steeped in inequality. As Tlusty rightly points out in her study on southern German cities, the state’s contribution to the period’s culture of masculine violence has often been overlooked.

> Even though men were expected to fight when challenged, it was equally important to avoid seeming reckless, uncivilized, or overly militaristic. Thus, another sort of tension emerged in masculine culture. The presence of arms and armour could

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also be interpreted as barbaric or vulgar. In *Galateo*, for instance, contemporary author and diplomat Giovanni della Casa commented

> The feathers that Neapolitans and Spaniards wear on their hats, and their elaborate trimmings and embroideries, do not suit the apparel of serious men or the clothes of city dwellers. Armour and chainmail are even less suitable. So, what is perhaps suitable in Verona in Venice may not do, for these men, so feathered, decorated, and armed are out of place in that venerable city of peace and orderliness.\(^{30}\)

In Della Casa’s view, a peaceful, well-ordered society was one where its inhabitants eschewed all ostentatious adornment. Therefore, the absence of weapons was also deemed worthy of praise. One such case occurred in 1452, when the Florentine author Francesco Filarete (1419-1505/6?) observed that the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III (1415-1493) and his retinue were very pleased to encounter unarmed citizens when entering Florence.\(^{31}\) He explained that Frederick was shocked “to see such an ornate and free popolo all dressed in civil costume, without any anxiety at all, without any martial guard or arms of war.”\(^{32}\) Filarete added,

> I was given to understand that the whole imperial court was not without much wonder that among the many honors accorded them and the other pomps and nobilities of our city was this: that they did not see one man wearing a sword. To them this was something very beautiful.\(^{33}\)

One of Cosimo I’s biographers, Bernardo Davanzati (1529-1606), similarly praised the Duke for making his way around the city without armed guards after abdicating the throne to his son Francesco I, writing

> as he showed confidence, when the enemies were extinguished and the suspicions ceased, he left his personal guard, and went into the city by himself, like a real and legitimate King, guarded by the benevolence of his subjects.\(^{34}\)

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\(^{30}\) Della Casa, *Galateo*, 91.

\(^{31}\) Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, 329.

\(^{32}\) Qtd. and trans. by Ibid.

\(^{33}\) Qtd. and trans. by Ibid., 330.

In his *Vita di Cosimo de’ Medici primo Granduca di Toscana*, author and printer Aldo Manuzio il Giovane (1457-97) complained that Florence had abandoned some of its more honourable customs after the many wars, changes, and hardships the city had experienced. Traditional sober dress was among these lost honours after the locale “introduced silly, and vile, and soldierly clothing in the citizenry.”

As discussed, arms and armour had varied meanings throughout the early modern period, some of which went far beyond their offensive and defensive purposes. For example, they were often considered pivotal components of the male wardrobe and served as fashionable accessories, status symbols, and objects of art. Moreover, they served as visible manifestations of the many technological advances that occurred in form, function, and design throughout the period. Yet, their presence, especially in abundance and/or in the wrong context, could signify a certain sense of uncivilized barbarism that represented antiquated ideals, instead of modern ones. These conflicting messages seemed to indicate that the ideal position existed between the two extremes. The difficulty was finding the right balance, an impossible feat for a concept perpetually in flux. Thus, men were expected to continuously monitor and tailor their behaviour according to their context and audience. As Count Lodovico explained in Baldassare Castiglione’s *Book of the Courtier*:

> The man we are seeking should be fierce, rough and always to the fore, in the presence of the enemy; but anywhere else he should be kind, modest, reticent, and anxious above all to avoid ostentation or the kind of outrageous self-glorification by which a man always arouses loathing and disgust among those who have to listen to him.

*The Renaissance Reimagined*


The notion of the exemplary Renaissance gentleman put forth via Castiglione’s text persisted throughout the centuries, and as such, armour and its chivalric associations became hard to separate. On 1 February 1915, *The Christian Science Monitor* declared that the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s recent gift of ancient armour brings as close as yesterday to a fascinating period which for most of us has scarcely existed outside the tales of Walter Scott or the pageant plays of Shakespeare.  

The clipping refers to a donation made by William H. Riggs to the museum’s trustees on 19 May 1913 (Fig. 67). The collection, described as the world’s best “for Completeness and Historical value,” contained almost 2,500 objects and was valued at the insurmountable sum of five million dollars in 1913, and then as much as ten million dollars in 1924. On 10 November 1913, Met Director Edward Robinson even called it priceless, stating it would be hard, indeed, to overestimate the value and importance of this collection. It is one of the greatest ever made. … The museum never puts a money value on a gift to it, and Mr. Riggs never put a money value on the collection. Even if it were a question of money, the collection is one of the largest and most important the museum has ever received.  

A few months after the official endowment, the packing of the collection commenced, and the task of cataloguing and installing the collection was given to Bashford Dean, an avid armour collector himself who impressively held two full-time occupations (Fig. 68). The first was a zoologist professor at Columbia University, the second the Metropolitan’s Arms and Armour curator. According to a document

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entitled “Notes on Mr. Riggs’ Collection of Armor and Arms,” the collection roughly comprised:

- 70 Suits and half suits of armor,
- 300 Separate pieces of armor,
- 70 Bucklers, shields, targes
- 40 Hauberks, brigandines,
- 20 Ancient banners,
- 300 Swords,
- 600 Halberds and similar shafted weapons,
- 50 Maces and short pole arms,
- 70 Daggers,
- 200 Fire arms and accessories,
- 20 Arbalasts,
- 60 Various pieces of horse armor, in addition to spurs, bridles, etc. 41

The endowment also included Riggs’ library on arms and armour, which approximately contained 420 works and 525 sale catalogues. 42

Riggs was an American expat, who lived in France and dedicated his life to the collecting of arms and armour. He was the son of Elisha Riggs, a banker who made his fortune in the cities of New York, Baltimore, and Washington. After spending his childhood in New York, Riggs later relocated to Switzerland for boarding school after the death of his father in 1853, where he befriended fellow classmate, J. Pierpont Morgan. The pair remained life-long friends, and Morgan is credited with persuading his “school-boy chum” to donate his armour to the Met, where Morgan served as a Trustee. 43 In fact, Riggs had initially sought to bestow his collection to the national government’s institution in Washington; however, as the New York Herald reports, Riggs declined the proposition, even though President Taft had offered to send a warship to retrieve the objects from France. 44 After his stint in Switzerland, Riggs travelled to Germany to study engineering, however, it appears he

41 MMA, R4482, “Notes on Mr. Riggs’ Collection of Armor and Arms,” 5.
lost interest in the cause and started to collect arms and armour in the country instead. He spent the next fifty years scouring Europe for the best pieces of armour, acquiring roughly 8,000 objects in total. The press recounted how he combed through palazzos in Venice, Genoa, and Milan and visited Augsburg, Munich, Spain, the Middle East, Sinai, and Jerusalem. Ever the armour enthusiast, Riggs transformed the second floor of his residence on rue Murillo in Paris into an armoury and added a forge to the dwelling’s basement. Moreover, Riggs developed relationships with nobles and dealers and competed against a host of top-tier of men—Napoleon III, the King of Italy, the King of Belgium, and the Czar of Russia—for acquisitions.

Collecting and the Art Market

As Stuart Pyhrr has shown, the passion for collecting armour re-emerged in nineteenth-century Europe after the Napoleonic Wars “displaced quantities of arms from castles and city arsenals throughout Europe.” The neo-Gothic movement occurring in Britain and the United States followed, and like the chivalric revival of the sixteenth century, an enthusiasm for the medieval aesthetic resurfaced in nineteenth-century art, literature, and architecture. Authors like Horace Walpole and Sir Walter Scott situated their fictional tales in medieval times, and neo-classical

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47 Ibid., 155.
49 Ibid., 154-55
architecture was superseded by such Gothic masterworks as London’s Houses of Parliament and New York’s St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Private residences were also adorned with Gothic interiors and adornment. Armour collectors were especially keen to adopt this trend, as most built private armouries to showcase their wares. Some like Frederick Stibbert, Walter Scott, and Samuel Meyrick even transformed their estates (or built completely new ones) into medieval castles (Fig. 69).

With new pieces available on the art market, armour became a status symbol that demonstrated both cultural, historical, and financial capital. Calvin Tomkins observed, “In their gloomy mansions the gleaming battle harnesses, halberds, and broadswords served much the same function as the large and elegant English portraits that were becoming such a fad—they provided a sense of history, a link with a nobler epoch untainted by railroads, oil shares, or retail commerce.”\textsuperscript{51} In an 1881 letter to the armour scholar and adviser Baron de Cosson, French collector Constantino Wessman recounted a story about a mutual friend named Charles Maurice Camille de Talleyrand-Perigord, also known as the Duc de Dino. Wessman stated, “Dino is buying with a passion. He has just acquired an embossed and heavily gilt burgonet that belonged to M. Colbert.”\textsuperscript{52} Shortly after acquiring the object, Wessman explained that Dino hosted a dinner party at his home and hid the helmet underneath the table’s centrepiece of flowers, only to surprise his guests with the big reveal after supper.\textsuperscript{53}

Not long after, museums followed suit and started to acquire arms and armour for their holdings. In 1904, for instance, the Metropolitan Museum purchased its first major arms and armour collection from the aforementioned Duc de Dino. Following the advice of Met board member Rutherford Stuyvesant, the museum paid its highest sum to date ($257,027.08), sight unseen, for the collection of European armours,

\textsuperscript{51} Tomkins, Merchants and Masterpieces, 151.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid.
The museum received Riggs’ collection from arms and equestrian equipment from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. The next significant donation the museum received was Riggs’.

**The Met’s Courtship of Riggs’ Collection**

Although omitted from the official story fed to the press, the Met went to great lengths to secure Riggs’ collection, engaging in an almost ten-year long courtship. It all began with Dean and Stuyvesant visiting Riggs in Paris in July 1904, after Riggs’ collection was identified as one of the world’s best. After Dean had seen the collection, he wrote a letter on 16 July 1904 to Met director Luigi Palma di Cesnola (Fig. 70), stating

> And it may interest you to know that Mr Riggs (who is a New Yorker by birth) spoke quite seriously of the chance of the Metropolitan Museum being given his collection. This, indeed, I hope and pray may come about, for all that I had heard of the interest and value of his collection was nothing of the reality. And you may fancy what a man of almost unlimited means has been able to gather during fifty years’ hard work. There are historical pieces out of number, -- authentic -- such as part of an armor of Henry VIII, a half suit of Alva, of the Grand Constable, of Henri II, Francis I, several of the Duke of Hohenaschan, several of Max II, Karl V, Henry IV…… Then there are the important archaeological pieces, armor of XV + XIV centuries. Chain mail, brigandines, - He has something like 100 suits, several thousand swords, 300 casques…so you may have some idea of the importance of the collection. The pieces have all been selected with great care and the collection is possibly ten times, surely five times, the size of the Dino collection.

Over the next decade, Dean established a relationship with Riggs by regularly writing and visiting him. One of the main concerns delaying Riggs’ donation was the process of selling a hotel and casino he owned in Luchon, as the expat often claimed it was a constant source of stress and difficulty (Fig. 71). The desperate nature of the situation was revealed in a telegram sent to JP Morgan in London from Robinson and Dean. They wrote “Further progress impossible till Luchon disposed of. Says he will

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54 Ibid., 183, 207.
In order to relieve Riggs’ anxiety and subsequently secure the collection, Morgan ultimately ended up purchasing the hotel for 400,000 francs under Dean’s name. The details of the transaction were recorded in a document dated 10 September 1913. An excerpt reported that

Mr Morgan was anxious, as an officer of the Museum, to aid Mr Riggs in carrying out his intention. As an old friend of Mr Riggs he was also anxious to be of service to Mr Riggs and to relieve him of any anxiety. Mr Morgan learned when abroad in the spring of 1912 that Mr Riggs was embarrassed and delayed in arranging and cataloguing his collection preparatory to giving it to the Museum by anxiety with regard to his Luchon hotel, which he was seeking to sell and the operation of which had become increasingly annoying. Mr Morgan, in his characteristic manner instructed Mr Dean to relieve Mr Riggs of this anxiety by buying his hotel, but to do it in his, Mr Dean’s, name so as not to embarrass Mr Riggs by the idea that his old friend was seeking to help him and have Mr Riggs decline help on this account, and also in order not to embarrass the ultimate sale of the hotel to any prospective purchasers by having its title stand in Mr Morgan’s name. .. Mr Morgan doubted whether the property could be sold for the amount which he agreed to pay, but he deliberately preferred to eat whatever loss there might be in order to relieve the anxiety of his old friend, Mr Riggs, and to leave him free to complete his catalogue and the arrangements of the proposed gift.”

After Morgan’s death, the museum acquired the “damned hotel” from the Morgan estate, and in attempt to retrieve a higher selling price, held on to the property and managed it for several years afterwards. In an October 1919 letter to the Met’s President of the Board of Trustees Robert W. de Forest, Dean complained “that our institution cannot carry an affair of this kind of its books indefinitely (with numberless landlord-and-tenant troubles, with large bills for repairs, etc).” Finally,

57 MMA, R4482, “Riggs, William Henry Collection of Arms & Armor July-December 1913,” “The Facts with Regard to Mr. Dean’s Purchase from Mr. William H. Riggs of His ‘Hotel Casino’ at Luchon at the Instance of Mr. J.P. Morgan,” 10 September 1913.
58 MMA, R4882, “Riggs, William Henry Collection of Arms & Armor 1912,” Letter from Bashford Dean to Mr. de Forest, 1 July 1912.
in 1920, the museum sold the Luchon hotel for 150,000 francs, lower than half of the initial price it was purchased for.

After Morgan relieved Riggs’ from the stress of his hotel in 1913, Dean went to Paris to assist Riggs with the shipping of his vast collection. The items came over in batches on sixteen different sea liners over six months. The harrowing feat included cataloguing and packing of all 2,500 objects, and detailed inventories were created to keep track of the items in transit. Dean regularly sent letters to Met trustees on the shipments’ progress, often complaining that Riggs was going tremendously slow and that small trivial things interrupted and/or delayed the process, costing Dean “a million nerve cells.” He explained,

“The work goes on with fits and starts. Some days I can get almost no material; on another day I am able to get quite a number of pieces. In general the objects are in excellent condition, and would arrive so, but Mr Riggs insists on their being shipped dry (I am oiling them surreptitiously whenever possible, for the moisture of the packers’ hands, plus a couple of months in cases will put them in a condition which may give us much work hereafter!)”

Dean added that new discoveries were being made all over the house, in pantries, linen cupboards, and clothing closets. For instance, he wrote, “I found a pair of richly engraved gothic spurs among a huddle of socks a while ago.”

On more than one occasion, Dean reported that Riggs seemed distressed about parting with his collection. He noted, “I can understand that is a tremendous wrench for him to see his firearms vanish from their old home.” Similarly, in another letter written that same month, we learn that the main cause of delay is (and will increasingly be) the difficulty I have to get Mr. Riggs to give up the objects. For he has never had to or wished to do anything on a time schedule, and I have never been able to do anything except

64 Ibid.
on a time schedule, so the result of my nerve cells sitting about and waiting to do something which could be done in a jiffy. But on the whole we get along pretty well. And I realize, better perhaps than anyone, what it means to him to part with his treasures, each of which he loves more perhaps than anyone will ever love the whole collection.65

Embodying the Renaissance

For Riggs, and the period in which he lived, arms and armour seemed to possess somewhat magical properties. These objects conjured up notions of the past, making the absent present, and maybe even alive again. The fact that armour was worn on the body, and therefore resembled a corporeal shape, only added to its mystical, uncanny, appeal. Dean explained that “even a detached piece—a shoulder, backplate, gauntlet or greave—had in some degree the merit of a fragment of classic sculpture. Not merely are its lines expressed beautifully, but one feels that it has within it something living.” In a 1925 letter, Dean reiterated this idea when describing the purchase of one of his acquisitions for the museum. He viewed a matching armour made for horse and man in Germany, but explained that since the wooden horse was destroyed in a fire,

the armor on its manikin was propped up in a great basket and hidden away: in fact, I was told that it saw the light of day only when I happened to visit the castle. Under such a condition the armor became known as the ‘knight of the clothes-basket’—a splendid but dejected creature who was dragged from his dark closet, with crippled back, shaking its helmet in solemn reproach for captivity and neglect.67

Thus, Gothic and Renaissance armour seemed to literally embody the characteristics of the age in which they were created. Moreover, it was not uncommon for nineteenth-century collectors to dress-up in their treasures or commission contemporary reproductions of items from their collections. A fact that surely was enhanced if a previous owner was known to be historically significant. Angus

66 Ibid.
Patterson noted that because armour was made to measure, pieces in the Renaissance could physically represent their previous owners, and many early modern collectors often displayed armours next to portraits of their original proprietors. In fact, a commonly touted advantage of the Riggs’ collection, in addition to its lofty monetary value and aestheticism, was its historical importance, as some items were owned by “kings and famous generals.” One such case was a blurb often recited in contemporary newspapers which included a long list of famous men who had been previous owners of the Met’s newly acquired holdings. The celebrated roster included Marcus Antonius Colonna (1535-84), Louis XIII of France (1610-43), Charles III, Duke of Bourbon (1490-1527), Henry VIII of England (1491-1547), Henry IV of France (1553-1610), Henry II of France (1519-59), Louis XIII of France (1601-43), Lorenzo de Medici (1449-92), Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor (1500-58), Christian I, Elector of Saxony (1560-91), Louis XIV of France (1638-1715), and a certain Cardinal Borghese, most likely Scipione Caffarelli-Borghese (1577-1633).

Interestingly, the act of finding, obtaining, and collecting Renaissance armour was often likened to militaristic pursuits and described using martial vocabulary. For instance, in the *Morning Sun* article dated 3 February 1914, Robinson stated that Riggs “ransacked Italy in the early days when the garrets of old palaces still contained numerous art treasures.” Like a soldier bravely entering the line of duty, Dean praised Riggs’ courage when foraging for objects in an article published in the *Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Bulletin*. He noted that Riggs’s collecting practices “sometimes led him into perilous paths,” and when referencing a certain trip to Spain, he explained “In those days by-paths in Spain were not always safe, and more than once he ran imminent risk of robbery and captivity.” In the pursuit of his precious collection,

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68 Patterson, *Fashion and Armour*, 81.
Dean added that Riggs “nearly lost his life in a pit of mummied crocodiles… was sun-struck at Sinai… and nearly died of Syrian fever near Jerusalem.”

The auction house also became a metaphoric battlefield. In an 1888 letter to Riggs from fellow collector and friend Constantino Ressman (who bequeathed his collection the Bargello museum in Florence in 1899), the Frenchman referenced the upcoming Londesborough sale at Christie, Manson, and Woods in London, saying, “a considerable crowd of amateurs and dealers from all over Europe are expected. It will be a battle fought with thousand-franc notes. Will you be there?” Fairs and exhibitions contained elements of competitiveness as well. In another letter from Ressman, the Frenchman reassured his “brother in arms” that his entry at the Exposition Historique in May 1878 at the Palais du Trocadero was the best one there, adding “Everybody agreed that you had the lucky hand of the beginner, of the first inspiration, and today everybody awards you the palm for the arms. I do not flatter. It is a matter of fact.”

Expertise in historical arms and armour also seemingly corresponded to understanding modern matters of warfare. For example, Dean, being identified as the preeminent expert on historical armour, was tasked with designing helmets and body armour for American troops at war in World War I (Fig. 72). Since the Met had the most extensive reference collection of arms and armour in America, Dean paired up with the museum’s in-house armourer and restorer, Daniel Tachaux, to create a list of prototypes. Dean’s pupil and successor, Stephen Grancsay, was also tapped for the same job in World War II, and he similarly worked with Tachaux’s replacement, Leonard Heinrich.

Patriotism was another factor commonly cited in the custom of armour collecting. This theme appeared quietly frequently in the case of Riggs, especially since

72 Ibid.
74 Qtd. and trans. by Ibid., 172.
75 Pyhrr “Of Arms and Men,” 19-20.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
the American had resided in France for all of his adult life. Thus, his ties to New York, as well as America, were mentioned repeatedly when describing his endowment. One such case occurred in the New York Morning Sun article published in February 1914, where Robinson purported that Riggs’ collecting “was the fruit of a purely patriotic ideal to give the people of the United States a fine, noble collection.”78 In 1924, an article from the New York Times stated, “His American patriotism never left him, and it was always his wish that the fruit of his labors as a collector should be enjoyed by his own countrymen.”79 Moreover, several articles justified Riggs’ overseas residence by stating that the expat never renounced his American citizenship and always maintained that he was “an American sojourning in Paris.”80

Riggs’ death was announced via telegram to Dean on 1 September 1924 (Fig. 73).81 To commemorate Riggs’ life and gift, Dean wrote a piece on his “brother collector” for The Metropolitan Museum’s Journal. He praised Riggs for “showing to his countrymen (who often must see to believe) authentic and splendid specimens of the forgotten art” and also thanked him for devoting his life to the pursuit of these objects.82 Dean concluded his tribute by comparing Riggs to the sixteenth-century Holy Roman Emperor Charles V.83 He admits,

…far-fetched as it may seem, to compare a retiring, scholarly American with a world-governing emperor? But alike they were and in these details: both were gifted lovers of beautiful armor, both collecting jealously in their younger days, traveling far afield, visiting the same cities and castles; both were relentless to rival collectors when a splendid object was in question; both made up their minds slowly, but when once settled, no power on earth was strong enough to make them change them …. Both were steeped in lore of chivalry…”

81 MMA, R4482, “Riggs, William Henry Collection of Arms & Armor 1924,” Telegram from Luchon to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1 September1924.
82 Dean, “William Henry Riggs,” 307
83 Ibid., 301.
After presenting many more similarities between the pair, Dean interrupted his argument to present one very striking difference. He stated

“in their final and willing sacrifice: Charles took with him to Yste among his few belongings his best armor (no less than nineteen suits, it is said) while Mr Riggs brought to Luchon not a single piece from his beloved collection, though he could have had at his hand some of the very armor which the emperor had selected: he was the better pleased that his collection should be seen by his people than by himself alone.”84

Like a ruler residing over his loyal subjects, Riggs’ gift was portrayed as one that exemplified his self-sacrifice, kind benevolence, and loyalty to his country. This militaristic language undoubtedly stemmed from the types of objects Riggs’ collected. Unlike early modern clothing, which remained quite fragile if still extant, the materiality of arms and armour embodied the male form, allowing men to see the biological similarities they shared with their historical ancestors. Consequently, collectors often indulged their urge for dressing up in one’s armour or in tailor-made contemporary reproductions (Fig. 74).

This generation of collectors appropriated Renaissance material culture to fit within their own social and cultural norms. These men experienced the tragedy of war first hand, thus, a chivalric and refined Renaissance spoke to their own masculine ideologies. However, this study has attempted to show that the period’s relationship with arms and armour went far beyond these more reductive sensibilities. The role of arms and armour in the Renaissance was multifaceted, and at times, contradictory. Arms and armour simultaneously possessed contrasting characteristics, such as protection and freedom, civility and barbarism, honour and shame, and modernity and tradition. These nuances produced an underlying tension, representative of the complex, cultural norms present in early modern Italian society.

84 Ibid., 307.
Figure 66. Jacopo Carucci Pontormo, *Portrait of a Halberdier* (Francesco Guardi?), 1528-30, Oil on panel transferred to canvas, 95.3 cm x 73 cm, Getty Museum, Los Angeles
Figure 67. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, R4482, Portrait of William H. Riggs in his Armoury on Rue Murillo, 1913, Photograph, The Metropolitan Museum, New York
Figure 68. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Archives, R4482, *Bashford Dean*, Photograph, The Metropolitan Museum, New York
Figure 69. Exterior of Museo Stibbert, Florence
Figure 72. Bashford Dean’s Helmets, Image from Bashford Dean, *Helmets and Body Armor in Modern Warfare* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1920), Fig. 196B, 249

Figure 73. The Metropolitan Museum Archives, R4482, “Riggs, William Henry Collection of Arms & Armor 1924,” Telegram Announcing Riggs’ Death, The Metropolitan Museum, New York
Figure 74. Museo Stibbert Archives, *Frederick Stibbert*, Photograph, Museo Stibbert, Florence
Appendix

TRANSCRIPTIONS FROM ASF, OTTO DI GUARDIA E BALIA, “LE SUPPLICHE”

1. Volume 2247, Folio 18 recto & verso

Illustrissimo et Eccellentissimo Signore Principe

Gaspar de Gurt dipintore fiammingo humilissimo servente di vostra eccellentia illustissima humilissime a quella espone qualmente avendo ricevuto da Jacopo fiammingo anchor lui dipintore uno schiafo et una mentita in casa di federico fiammingo dove quel giorno che era il primo dagosto lui [loro] ave[van]o be[vuto] insieme et eran[o] usciti. un poco del camino fu forzato in quel impeto darli si come fece dun coltello e ferirlo nela pancia per la qual cosa e stato da magnifici signori otto condemnato in lire 1000 / e per che egli’è poverissimo e non puo vivere daltro che delle fatiche sue humilissime si racomanda a la benignità sua vostra eccellentia illustissima supplicandola si degni fargli grati a di tal condennatione o almeno permutargliela in confino avendo da la parte havuto la pace e patito per questo molti travagli e ruine. Egnene [e gliene] terra obligo perpetuo pregando sempre idio per la sua felicita—

Il Corboli informi
Lelio Torelli 6 di settembre 65

Questo supplicante del mese d’Agosto passato habitando insieme con Jacopo di Jacopo Fiammingo in casa di Federig fiammingo Pittore che ambi dua stanno seco per aiutarli a dipingere in queste imprese ordinate da mastro Giorgio. Et essendo una sera medessimo letto vennono in parole nella camera dove stavano in decta casa dove el supplicante prese un cotello panesco che era li sur [sopra] un disco et dette a decto Jacopo un colpo nello stomaco che passo dentro et fu preso avanti in scissi di casa per che sendomi vicino fui io subito sul fatto / (verso) lo fece firmare e condurre in prigione onde guarendo el ferito fu lui condennato in lire 1000 per la qual condematione si trova in dette carcere.

Ricorre et allegando essere povero forestaro et vivere sulla braccia, domanda libera gratia o che se li per muti in confino. Hanno fatto pace. Et la sera per quel che io viddi sul fatto credo che fussino imbrachi, ma egli in occorre ben mettere con reverentia in consideratione che costrui non è persona da osservare ne da potere osservare confino essendo che e giovane scapolo e fiammingo. Rimettere etecera
Di Firenze il 22 di settembre 1565
Duca vostra eccellentia illustrissima

Iste / Habbia gratia della meta
Lelio Torelli 25 di settembre 65
Pretarla a di 26 [?] dexto per il supplico [?]

Humilissimo et fidelissimo servo Lorenzo Corboli

2. Volume 2247, Folio 74

Illustrissimo et eccellentissimo Signore

Mastro Giovanni di Giovanni: della Strada Pittore Fiammingo servitore di
vostra eccellentia illustrissima
La supplica humilmente affarli gratia di possere portare l’arme offensive, e
defensive cioè spada, pugnale e giacco, sicome li eccellentia vostra
illustrissima gli concesse molt’anni sono: che lo terra a gratia singularissima
da vostra eccellentia ut deus etecetera
Al Corboli
Lelio Torelli 19 Ottobre 65

Non altro
Lorenzo Corboli del magistrato [?] 25 ottobre 65

3. Volume 2247, fol. 74, attachment (unnumbered, half sheet of paper)

Copia della licentia dell’Arme di Mastro Giovanni Fiammingo Pittore
A di xiiii di Marzo 1557

pel nero folto assai barba, bianco nel viso, statura mediocre, ha facoltà di
possere portare per lo stato di sua eccellentia illustrissima per gratia di quella
Giacco, spada e pugnale come genero di Mastro Giovanni Rosti, come in filza
di supplicationi sotto numero 320

Francesco Borghino Secretario

Backside of folio, bottom left:
Illustrissimo et eccellentissimo Signore

4. Vol. 2233, fol. 320

Illustrissimo et Eccellentissimo Signore Duca

Supplica a vostra illustrissima eccellentia Mastro Giovanni di Rosta Araziere che quella si debba concedergli gratia che possa con quattro suoi domestici portare arme per lo stato di vostra eccellentia cioè spada et pugnale et giacco, li quattro suoi [suoi] domestici sono gli in fra scritti cio e’

Pietro di Rosta suo fratello
Jacomo di Rosta suo fratello
Giovanni della strada suo genero
Baltasar Boxhovqette [?] sopra state della soa [sua] bottega

Tutti quattro sono fiammiggi, i quali bisognando insieme con detto supplicante sempre saranno parati adoperare l’arme in servizio di vostra illustissima eccellentia La quale dio sempre di male guardi da fiorenza ad di otto di genaio 1557

Si concede
Lelio Torelli 13 Febraio 57

Attachment (un paginated):
+
Io hadriano Elie de Candidis fo fede per la presente qualmente l’heshibitore di questa per nome Mastro Giovanni della strada nativo di fiandra, e, genero di Mastro Giovanni di Rosto Araziere et, e, quello per il quale detto Mastro Giovanni ha supplicato a soa [sua] Illustrissima Eccellentia per potere portare arme cio è spada pugnale et giacco per tutto lo stato di detta soa [sua] Illustrissima Eccellentia et per essere così la verita ho fatto la presente di mia propria mano questo di tredici di marzo 1557 in fiorenza

Io Lorenzo Torrentino Impressor ducale fo fede per la presente di mia propria mano essere vera cosa come di sopra si continene et per fede del vero ho fatto questa di mia mano propria il di sopra in firenze 57

Il Lorenzo Torrentino…

Second attachment (unpaginated):
+
Per la presente si fa fede per me Hadriano Elie de Candidis Capellano della guardia todescha di soa [sua] Illustrissima Eccellentia qualmente li exhibitori della presente sono fratelli carnali di Mastro Giovanni di Rosto Araziere di
detta soa [sua] Eccellentia il maggiore ha nome Pietro l’altro Jacomo tutti doi [due] arazieri nati di Bruselles in Brabantia et per essere così la verità ho fatto la presente di mia propria mano questo di tredici di marzo 1557 in fiorenza

Ita est ego Hadrianus Elie de Candidis manu properia in fidem

Io Lorenzo Torrentino Impressor ducale fo fede indubitata essere vera cosa come di sopra e detto di mia propria manu il di sopra in Firenze 57

Third attachment (unpaginated):

Per la presente fo fede io hadriano Elie de Candidis che l’eshibitore della presente per nome Baltasar Boxhoriinole [?] nativo di Bruselles di Brabantia sia araziere et e stato a lavorare con Mastro Giovanni di Rosto araziere gia tredici anni in circa qui in fiorenza et e stato governatore e sopra state della bottega di detto Mastro Giovanni sempre et di continuo sino al presente et, e, anchora, et e quello per il quale detto Mastro Giovanni ha supplicato et domandato grazia di potere per tutto lo stato di soa [sua] Illustrissima Eccellentia portare l’arme cio è spada pugnale et giacco et per essere così la verità ho fatto la presente di mia propria mano questo di tredici di marzo 1557 in fiorenza

Ita est Ego Hadriamus Elie de Candidis manu propria in fedem

Io Lorenzo Torrentino Impressor ducale fo fede indubitata essere vera cosa come di sopra si contiene et per fede del vero ho scritto la presente di mano propria il di et sopra in firenze 57.

Io Lorenzo Torrentino…

5. Vol. 2235, fol. Unnumbered (immediately following fol. 23) and fol. 23.

P. Unnumbered, page right after 23

Illustrissimo et Eccellentissimo Signore Duca

Tonino Frosinini da meleto di valdarno di sopra vasallo di vostra eccellentia illustrissima expone a quella come epso supplicante si trova in qualche quistione con certi sua inimici et per essere epso supplicante contadino et in habile a potere portare arme da difendersi cioe giacho con maniche et spada et pugnale et per esserli di necessita come capo della casa sua andare ogni giorno amercati come occorre et tornare il piu della volte di casa a mezza notte dubita tal volta che decti sua inimici non gli faccino villania

Pero epso supplicante genuflexo ricorrere a piedi di vostra eccellentia illustrissima supplicandola gli piaccia concederli faculta di portere portare
quantunque sia in habile decto giacho con maniche et spada et pugnale accio mediante le quali epso supplicante possa piu sicuramente andare a fare e sua negozii senza sospetto di decti sua inimici et quella non domanda a vostra eccellentia illustrissima per offendere nessuno ma solamente per havere cura non gli sia fatto qualche insulto et aciaceco et accio possa piu sicuramente provedere a sua affari et sua donna et figluoli et decte arme non domanda a vostra eccellentia illustrissima se no per poterle portare discosto alla citta da dieci miglia in la eta vostra eccellentia illustrissima quanto piu puo si racomanda pregando di continu Iddio la feliciti et conservi

Al vicario di San Giovanni che se ne informi sua eccellenza senza spese [?] Lelio Torelli 2 Mar 59

P. 23 recto

Illustrissimo et eccellentissimo Signore Il Signore Duca

Tonino Frosinini da meleto vicariato di Santo Giov anni, supplicando domanda gratia a vostra eccellentia illustrissima di potere portare fuor della x miglia dalla citta giacho con maniche spada et pugnale rispecto a qualche inimicitia che ha et per esser padre di famiglia gli bisogna alla vostra arivare di Notte a casa;
Onde mi ha prodotto di huomini dabbene fedi che per persona pacificha et da primi della sua villa et attende alla sua facende et continuamente va a mercati et il piu della volta torna a casa di notte et per fare bene per fatti sua per odiato da molti per quale potend pero farla netta gli farebbano dispiacere nella sua persona et questo per quanto sopra a tal supplicato posso informare vostra eccellentissima illustrissima alla quale humilmente mi racomando che Iddio in suo felice stato conservi di San Giovanni il di 15 di Marzo 1559

Al segretario dell otto che ne informi sua eccellenza Di Vostra Eccellentia Illustrissima humilmente servitore Lelio Torelli 18 Mar 59

Questo supplicante e contadino et domanda di potere fuor delle x miglia dalla citta portare Giaco maniche et spada, et pugnale et dice egli stesso non essere habile a portarle, ma che molto [?] domanda per sospetto di certi suoi inimici et per che nel far le suo faccende come capo di casa gli conviene spesso tornare di notte a casa. Intorno

Amerigo benci vicario

P. 23 verso

... al quale supplicato Io non ho che dire altro a vostra eccellentia illustrissimo se non che queste sono molte arme da bravi o da belli in piazza et
per la causa che e dice, nello stato ne saranno infiniti che stanno con piu sospetto di lui di poi egli ha el remedio a entrare nella banda et non essendo habile come dice gli farebbono forse peggio l’arme che e inimici. Non di meno a quella sta el concederli la gratia. Alla quale etc.

Di Fiorenza li 24 di Marzo 1559.

Di Vostra Eccellentissima Illustrissima
Facciasi sicureta per vita della decta
Lelio Torelli 1 Aprile 60

_Humilissimo et fidelissimo servo Lorenzo Corboli_

6. Vol. 2247, P. 251

Illustrissimo et Eccellentissimo Signore Principe

Giovanni di Francesco Altoni humil servo di vostra eccellentia illustriссissima espongo a quella come Francesco di Sandro mio padre haveva in sua vita dato opera per servizio dell eccellentia vostra a fare un libro sopra la scherma dimostrando il giucaре di spada et altre armi, et li detti sua scritti li dava giornalmente a Jacopo del Medico detto il Cima amico suo et perche li copiassi et ordinassi detto libro per dedicarlo et donarlo a vostra eccellentia illustriссissima et venendo a morte restò tutto in mano del detto Jacopo, al quale lo domandai piu volte, et lui mi mostrò tirava in anzi detto libro et che finito inel'harebbe dato; et essendo di poi mancato ancor lui et rimasto la sua redita in certe donne, sono andato piu volte da procuratori di dette donne domandando loro detto libro et loro detto mi d’haverlo visto, et che melo vendereбbero; ma di poi in hanno negato detto libro dicendo non vi essere.

Impero prego li eccellentia vostra illustriссissima si degni commettere alle Signore otto o dove piu li piace che il detto libro si ritrovi et sia restituito si per memoria del mio honorando padre, come per utile comune di ciascuno, perche senza dubbio e in mano di questi procuratori e non lo vogliono vendere, senza l’aiuto di vostra eccellentia illustriссissima la quale Dio prosperi felicissima

Iste: Li otto faccino ritrovare questo libro et administrino iustita
Lelio Torelli 20 di Gennaio 65
Pretarla decto di per il supplico
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