Social Closure and the Arts in Late Medieval Siena

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This dissertation titled
Social Closure and the Arts in Late Medieval Siena

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ABSTRACT

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During the late Middle Ages, a remarkable phenomenon occurred in Italy: the growth of many small, self-governing city-states, which included Siena. At this time the Sienese commune was administered by a succession of elected ruling councils: the Ventiquattro, the Trentasei, and the Nove. Despite being mired in social and political turmoil, these regimes sponsored great works of art. This dissertation argues that the arts were a fundamental component of these administrations’ ability to rule because of the way that cultural production helped to create and spread new conceptions of social class.

This project examines two areas of the arts either commissioned, or created, by the Trentasei, Ventiquattro, and the Nove: a set of eighteen painted book covers from the government financial offices of the Biccherna and Gabella, and the Palazzo Pubblico complex (which includes the town’s main square). Through the methods of iconology and social closure it demonstrates how each of these arts, over time, acted as fulcrums through which members of Siena’s various social groupings attempted to monopolize certain cultural advantages by usurping privileges held by others and/or by excluding (or attempting to exclude) outside groups. Such cultural advantages included: displaying coats of arms and last names, possessing a palace and tower, and accessing the space of the city’s piazza. The structural relationships that were made as groups sought to usurp/exclude others from participation in these arts created the city’s social classes.
This dissertation provides an interdisciplinary bridge between socio-political and art historical analyses on late medieval Siena. It fills an important gap between the detailed social histories of the city, whose methodologies have not allowed the detailed examination of the evidence provided by the arts, and traditional art historical approaches, for which Sienese society tends to be a backdrop to other concerns, such as patronage, technique, and iconography.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

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INTRODUCTION:

Over the course of the late Middle Ages, the Tuscan city of Siena underwent a
series of political and social changes that had a profound impact its art and culture. In
1186 the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1122-1190) conceded the right of
self-governance to the city. Upon the death of Emperor Henry VI (1191-1197) the
commune declared its complete independence, and the nobili, a small circle of ancient,
well- to-do families, usurped the powers and responsibilities of the city’s bishop and
imperial count.¹ During the course of the thirteenth century, this aristocracy lost its ability
to fully control the city’s administration. The appropriation of positions in the city’s
seigniory, General Council, and financial offices was first effected by the political party
of the popolo who, in a lengthy struggle, won the right to elect its members into at least
half of these government bodies.² In contrast to the nobili, which was a relatively static
social and economic position, the popolo was a political party mostly comprised of
Sienese citizens of lower wealth and rank, but which also included some of the
commune’s wealthy elite.³ Thus, the city became divided into two economic and political
units with citizens from each eligible to hold civic office.

After Siena’s loss to Florence at the battle of Colle Val d’Elsa in 1269 the
coalition government of the city’s nobili and the popolo was dissolved. A new

² Ludovico Zdekauer, Il constituto del commune di Siena dell’anno 1262 (Siena: A. Forni, 1983), 58.1.2, 146.1.15, 144.1.13.
³ The popolo should not be identified clearly and completely with a determined economic/social group of
citizens. It was, however, drawn mostly from artisans such as shoemakers, bakers, and barbers. The party
left out those people directly below them on the economic scale, such as laborers and servants, who
undoubtedly made up a large part of the urban population. U.G Mondolfo, Il populus a Siena nella vita
della città e nel governo del commune fino alla riforma antimagnatizia del 1277 (Genoa: Formiggini ), 37-
38.
administration was put into place that drew its members from both the wealthier elite of the former *popolo* and some realigned members of the *nobili* who made up a coterie of urban merchants (*mercatores*) and bankers. This group took sole possession of the commune’s highest magistracy, the Trentasei, by suppressing the party of the *popolo*. By 1277, these *mercatores* were strong enough to be able to lawfully exclude non-affiliated *nobili* families (called the *casati*) from participation in Siena’s highest government offices.\(^4\) Soon after, in 1287, this ruling group of Sienese citizens created one of the longest lasting late medieval republican governments by forming a committee of nine “governors and defenders of the people and the city,” termed the Nove. Membership into this new magistracy was extended to some of Siena’s citizenry that fell just below the *mercatores* on the social/economic scale. During the course of the fourteenth century, eligibility for inclusion on the council became a center point in the social identity of a new social stratum that referred to itself as the *media gente*, essentially Siena’s new ‘middle’ class.

The intense political struggle and social upheaval that occurred during the thirteenth century, however, did nothing to dim the cultural achievements of the Sienese, and the period is now considered by many modern scholars to be the ‘golden age’ of Sienese arts.\(^5\) Yet, how closely were the phenomena of economic power, civic control, social grouping, and cultural production related within this society?

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This study analyzes the painted book covers from the Sienese financial offices of the Biccherna and Gabella, as well as the city’s Palazzo Pubblico complex and surrounding urban space, and argues that they were involved in a process of social closure, according to the theory of Raymond Murphy. Thus pictorial art, architecture, and urban space acted as forums through which members of Siena’s various social groupings attempted to monopolize certain social, economic, and political advantages by usurping privileges held by others and/or excluding (or attempting to exclude) outside groups. As both forms of derivative closure (in which the exclusion of other social strata from resources comes from the monopolizer’s access to the primary form of closure, civic/economic power) and contingent closure (in which exclusion is not directly derived from the primary form), these arts supported the monopolizing group’s access to power by further defining and naturalizing the social stratifications resulting from it.

This dissertation will discuss the painted book covers of the Gabella and Biccherna and the Palazzo Pubblico complex, since they were commissioned by members and/or committees comprised of the city’s then current ruling classes. The first chapter discusses the book covers of the Biccherna from 1258-87. The commissioning of elaborately decorated covers to hold the record books of the important financial bureau began in the latter part of this century, coinciding with the administration of the Ventiquattro and the civic struggle between the popolo and the nobili. The painted panels display a feudally based iconography which touts the privilege of Siena’s elite and which is comprised of self-portraits, Latin inscriptions, and the use of last names, titles of honor,

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and coats of arms. This chapter demonstrates that the institution of these new iconographic traditions in the space of the book covers was an attempt by the nobili to maintain control in the face of the loss of much of its political clout.

When the mercatores took over Siena’s government in 1271, they usurped the authority and prestige of both the artistic and iconographic spaces of the book covers. Maintaining the Biccherna iconography introduced by the city’s elite gave this upstart group a way to protect its power in the government by borrowing the visual culture of its social superiors for the glorification of its own regime.

Chapter two discusses the development of the panels of the Biccherna, as well as those of the new Sienese financial office, the Gabella, from 1287 to the end of the administration of the Nove in 1355. In this time period there was a switch from the use of Latin inscriptions to ones in the Italian vernacular, the abandonment of titles of honor for some of the bureau’s officers, and the introduction of various new iconographic formats such as religious and political allegories. This chapter argues that this was the result of the administration of the mercatores, who changed their strategy of civic control to include more of Siena’s citizens of mid-level wealth and standing and began to identify their social group as the media gente. Much of the artistic customs of the Biccherna and Gabella book covers, which reflected the values and culture of the city’s aristocratic elite, no longer suited this emerging middle class. In order to justify and naturalize their hold on Siena’s political process, the media gente changed the visual culture of the Biccherna and Gabella panels to reflect their own values.
Chapter three examines the Palazzo Pubblico and the Torre del Mangia in relation to how the *media gente* protected civic power through the creation of a political and social city center. This chapter discusses how Siena’s middle class, again usurping for its own use the trappings of the *casati’s* feudally based culture (the palace and the tower), was able to harness the social prestige and the practical economic and defensive natures of these structures. The *media gente’s* borrowing of these elite cultural forms resulted in limiting their power in the hands of the *casati* and blocking the latter group’s ability to use them to gain further social and economic advantage. Much like the iconography of the book covers of the Biccherna and Gabella, the *media gente* added new forms and functions to their civic palace and tower, which acted to separate their ‘middle class’ culture from that of the urban elite, as well as to help them further circumscribe the actions of those above and below them on the social ladder.

Finally, chapter four discusses the space of the city’s market and its subsequent transformation into the Piazza del Campo by its appropriation by the *media gente*. This chapter analyzes how this important retail area allowed the *media gente* to gain economic control over the commune’s inhabitants, as well as how its symbolic and central location made it a spot of social command. By determining who was allowed access to this city center for their economic and cultural activities, the *media gente* helped define the behaviors of the city’s various fluid social classes. By negotiating its position between the poles of Sienese society, Siena’s ‘middle class’ was able to defend its hold over the city’s republican government by maintaining the impression of social equilibrium.
These art forms are connected because their creation and use cover the span of time during which each of Siena’s main late medieval social classes formed and matured. Unlike other art forms of the period, these spaces also provided Siena’s social strata with popular, secularly controlled platforms in which to promote a vision of Sienese society that was different from any previously held. Through each social group’s successive conception of the lived experience, duties, habits, and art of the commune, the observers/participants negotiated their various spaces in the city by accepting, or rejecting, class identification and, ultimately, the ascendency of the ruling oligarchy.
METHODOLOGY

To conduct a study on the social and cultural production of Siena, a flexible methodology is needed, since not only visual images (including architecture) but also ritual and social habits will be addressed. This methodology must also allow the scholar to gain an understanding of the arts as both period specific constructions of form, as well as the expression of certain ideas and tendencies within their cultural context. Secondly, a methodology must be used which allows for the direct connection of artistic form and expression to the tendency for individuals to form themselves, and relegate others, into groups with restricted membership and particular societal roles. The combination of the methodologies of ‘iconology’ and ‘social closure theory’ provide effective procedures for analyzing the form and content of the artworks, as well as a way of connecting these elements within larger issues of power and social organization.

Iconology was developed by Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968).7 The goal of iconology is to contextualize works of art culturally, explore the possible meanings of their representations, and ultimately suggest interpretations that show them to be symptomatic expressions of a larger, overarching issue of a civilization. In his writings, Panofsky advances iconology as a tripartite method of interpretation that aims to understand the various levels of meaning within a work of art, with each step representing a deeper level of inquiry. The first step is what Panofsky referred to as pre-iconographical description. In this stage, the viewer moves beyond pure perception of the art object in order to describe the primary or natural subject matter. This process involves

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the identification of factual subjects (human beings, animals, objects) and expressional subjects (such as happy gestures or attitudes). In order to arrive at a correct identification, viewers must make themselves familiar with the objects and events of an art work’s milieu, as well as gain a knowledge of the ‘history of style’ (or the manner in which objects and events change the way they are represented in particular times and places).  

In this dissertation this step of Panofsky’s method consists of the visual inspection of various Sienese artworks such as the Biccherna and Gabella book covers and the Palazzo Pubblico complex, as well as other cultural productions such as chronicles. This analysis is tied to an understanding of late medieval Sienese art and social history. This inquiry allows for the identification of such subject matter as portraits, allegories, coats of arms, inscriptions, architectural motifs, and public events.

In the next stage, that of iconographical analysis, the viewer moves beyond the mere descriptive to examine the secondary or conventional subject matter of the artwork. This step involves connecting the artistic motifs of the art, identified in the pre-iconographical description, with themes or concepts. This step requires the viewer to have a familiarity with the customs and cultural traditions peculiar to the art work’s civilization as understood through a synthesis with other types of expression. Thus, the viewer must have an acquaintance with the ‘history of types,’ or insight into the way in that specific themes or concepts were consciously expressed by objects and events in a particular time and place.  

9. Ibid., 5-6 and 11-14.
In this dissertation this step will be accomplished at the same time as the previous step of visual analysis. These steps link the general subject matter of the art works with meanings specific to their Sienese context. This process results in the comprehension of the subjects as symbols. For example, the Biccherna and Gabella book covers depict coats of arms. When interpreted in accordance with the conventions of the adoption and display of arms by medieval Sienese families, the coats of arms are understood as signs that stand for specific families and their lineage.

Finally, Panofsky writes, the viewer is able to reach what he calls an *iconological interpretation*, which is concerned with understanding the *intrinsic meaning* or *content* of a work of art. In this step, the viewer reads the image in a manner beyond what is visible, or intelligible, from a familiarity with mere conventions, by coordinating in his/her mind all of the information which could be implicit within the work. On this last level of interpretation, the work of art is considered as a manifestation of fundamental principles of a culture, a period, or a philosophical attitude.\(^\text{10}\)

Although iconology is useful in that it provides a solid structure with which to analyze the form and content of an artwork, as well as its connection with its specific historical circumstances, in the last stage of his method Panofsky does not outline any precise manner of ‘reading’ the representation as a manifestation of class structure. Thus a complementary methodological approach is needed to complete this final step. To interpret how the Biccherna and Gabella book covers and the Palazzo Pubblico complex manifests medieval Siena’s class structure the theory of social closure can be used.

\(^{10}\) Ibid., 14-17.
Social closure theory is based on the work of the German sociologist Max Weber. In his book, *Economics and Society*, Weber discusses the process by which a group of jointly acting competitors seizes upon a characteristic of some outside grouping as grounds to exclude the latter from access to resources. Through such monopolizing, or ‘closing off’ of resources to others, the members of the group attempt to guarantee advantages for themselves.\(^\text{11}\)

The British sociologist, Frank Parkin, developed Weber’s observations as an alternative to the Marxist approach to social stratification, which focused on basing class division solely through the ownership of property.\(^\text{12}\) In his theory, Parkin tried to avoid many of the problems associated with Marxism in which classes are represented as inherently antagonistic dichotomies. According to Parkin, classes should not be defined in relation to their place in the productive process, as in Marxism, but in relation to the way in which they go about ‘closing off’ resources to others, or what he calls their prevalent mode of closure.\(^\text{13}\)

For Parkin, two modes of closure should be employed. The first and dominant mode in all stratification systems is exclusion. It works by subordination, which creates another group below it by closing off access to remaining rewards. The second mode is usurpation, in which a group that is unable to gain resources by using downward exclusion collectively responds by directing pressure upward. This claim upon resources threatens to diminish the share of the more privileged, excluding stratum. The

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13. Ibid., 1-4.
fundamental divide in the stratification order, then, is the point where power undergoes changes in its organizing principles and its directional flow according to these methods of closure. Thus, for Parkin, classes are defined not in relation to their place in the productive process but in relation to their prevalent mode of closure, either exclusion or usurpation.\textsuperscript{14}

The most comprehensive theory of social closure, however, has been laid out by Raymond Murphy in his book \textit{Social Closure: The Theory of Monopolization and Exclusion}. Drawing mainly on the insights offered by Parkin, with the addition of other scholars whose theories are similar (if not called ‘social closure’), Murphy clarifies both its method and aim. To him closure theory does not entirely replace a Marxist interpretation, but rather enlarges the examination of closure from the means of production to other bases of domination. Secondly, it broadens the scope concerning the rules of closure from the laws of private property to other forms of monopolization and exclusion such as credentials, race, ethnicity, religion, and gender. The accomplishment of this enlargement of focus from a restricted theory to a general theory requires a concentration not on the monopolization of, and exclusion from, one particular means of domination, such as means of production, nor one particular set of exclusionary rules, such as those of private property, to which all others are reducible, but rather a focus on monopolization, exclusion, and closure more generally.\textsuperscript{15}

Unlike Parkin, Murphy does not identify the boundaries of social class in terms of how each social stratification uses usurpation and/or exclusion. This concept, Murphy

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 5-6.  
points out, is problematic on two main fronts. The first is that exclusion and usurpation are not two mutually exclusive polar opposites; the latter is a subtype of the former. The second is that a definition of class in terms of up and down presupposes an independently defined hierarchal structure of positions. The author suggests that it would be more justifiable theoretically, and more feasible observationally, to base the conception of class on the overall pattern of power, rewards, and opportunities resulting from exclusion—that is on the overall objective situation of exclusion as experienced rather than on the collective action observed. Thus, social classes defined here are social stratifications resulting from structural relationships of domination and exclusion.¹⁶

What the main social determinant of class is for Murphy is what he identifies as the principal form of exclusion in a society. This refers to the set of exclusionary rules backed by the legal apparatus of the state which is the main determinant of access to, or exclusion from, power, resources, and opportunities. The remaining rules of exclusion can be classified into two forms according to their relationship with the principal forms: derivative and contingent. Derivative rules for monopolization of opportunities in society derive directly from the principal forms, yet are not identical to them. Contingent rules are not directly derived from principal forms, but ultimately depend upon them. The study of these second-order structural relationships of closure, along with the principal form, allows for an analysis of social closure based on different rules within one comprehensive framework. This enables a scholar to examine the myriad of control

¹⁶. Ibid., 52-4, 110, 124.
relations that govern a society and which have their basis on disparate foundations of power rather than only one, such as the means of production.  

Social closure allows for one manner of completion to the last step of Panofsky’s method. In this dissertation, after the iconological subject matter of the Gabella and Biccherna book covers and the Palazzo Pubblico complex has been established, these symbols will be interpreted in relationship to how they function within the processes of exclusion and control happening in medieval Sienese society. This will allow these art forms to be read as intrinsically about, and participating in, the formation of class during the period.

The primary sources of material for the analysis of social closure in medieval Siena are provided by the city’s various statutes, such as the constitution of 1262, and chronicles, such as the one written by Bindino da Travale from 1315 to 1346. Secondary sources include social-political histories of the city, such as William Bowsky’s *A Medieval Italian Commune: Siena under the Nine* and Daniel Waley’s *Siena and the Sienese in the Thirteenth Century*.  

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17. Ibid., 70-81.
PREVIOUS STUDIES

There have been several important socio-political histories of Siena written during the twentieth century. These accounts, however, deal little with the interplay between the cultural/artistic elements of Sienese society and its social strata. The first major treatment of Sienese historical/social development was made in 1906 by the French scholar Julien Luchaire. In the introduction to his later published doctoral dissertation for the University of Paris, the author advanced a story of medieval Siena that was heavily influenced by nineteenth-century notions that it was natural for civilization to strive towards a political democracy. 19 For Luchaire, Siena’s push for democracy happened as a result of a clear-cut class conflict between groups that he distinguished as "nobles" and "people" (popolo), and which culminated in the revolutions that happened in the city during the late fourteenth century. The arts of Siena during this period are only discussed, briefly, in the form of architecture, as a way to illustrate the cultural difference between the rich ‘Grandi’ and the poorer ‘Piccoli’. 20

Soon after Luchaire’s work, Ferdinand Schevill published his book, which was obviously influenced by Luchaire’s ideas, as he characterized Sienese history as a progression towards the self-ruling commune and, eventually, a free, capitalistic democracy. 21 Again, the motivation for this political development was rooted in the social organization of the city, as ‘oligarchs’ and ‘democrats’ engaged in a domestic

20. Ibid., VIII-IX.
struggle for power. Unlike Luchaire, however, Schevill included a discussion of the arts and culture of Siena, such as the building of the Palazzo Pubblico, which he explained as an outpouring of the patriotism and ‘civic spirit’ that united Siena’s inhabitants.

The scholar who has treated most thoroughly the history of Sienese society in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries is William Bowsky. Within his overall narrative on the administration of the city and its assets by the ruling faction of the Nove (Nine), the author closely scrutinizes the composition of the city’s social strata by examining the types of governmental participation afforded to various people within Late Medieval Siena which was based on family affiliation, occupation, and economic factors. Bowsky identifies differences between the poorer and wealthier Sienese citizens, like Luchaire and Schevill, but also considers divisions amongst the wealthier section of the commune’s society, such as between the excluded *casati* and those who participated in the government of the Nove. The author observes that although these two groups were often similar in wealth, habits, and occupation, those families who were elected into the ranks of the Nove participated in political maneuverings that admitted or rejected various social types into their ranks, limited the economic and social power of other groups, and reorganized the duties of government appointments and councils to ensure their ascendancy.

Like Schevill, Bowsky discusses the artistic and cultural productions of the city as part of the creation of a ‘civic ideal’, meant to beautify the city and serve the

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22. Ibid., 71.
23. Ibid., 293-4.
24. See in particular Bowsky, *A Medieval Italian Commune*.
25. Ibid., 54-69.
public good. Unfortunately, he fails to suggest that the arts could have played an active role in the rise and maintenance of the power structures of the Nove regime, nor does he investigate the subtle cultural differences that he elucidates amongst the members of the ruling oligarchy and other Sienese social strata.

The last major socio-political study of late medieval Siena was written by Daniel Waley. Whereas Bowsky characterizes the regime of the Nove as a break with the preceding economic and social history of Siena, Waley understands the period of the thirteenth century as a continuous development in which the oligarchy of the earlier century expanded in the latter half of the period to include wealthy merchants. The author thus conceives of Sienese society as a two-tiered social structure that lacked a numerically substantial ‘middle’ class. According to Waley, the wealthy section of Sienese society, whether *casati* or not, comprised one unified oligarchic class, while those at the opposite end constituted a little-varying, disenfranchised mass. Although he is interested in issues of class and power relationships Waley, in his assumption that classes are formed only in economic terms, does not consider the Sienese upper classes as divided culturally into two separate entities. Moreover, while the author also discusses Sienese arts and culture in greater length than the previously mentioned writers, the way he positions them seems largely detached from the more serious socio-political enquiries he makes in the book, and the picture he presents is an impossibly homogeneous set of practices shared amongst all of the city’s social strata.

26. Ibid., 283-298.
One of the few books written from an art historical standpoint to deal specifically with socio-political issues and Siena’s visual arts during the period of the Nove is Diana Norman’s, *Siena and the Virgin: Art and Politics in a Late Medieval City State*.29 Embracing an art historical method based on a blend of connoisseurship, iconography, and cultural/social history, Norman frames the discussion of art in her book through a focus on one of the most important and enduring aspects of late medieval Sienese culture: the city’s intense, state-sponsored devotion to the Virgin Mary. In demonstrating that such an important tradition existed in part due to the Nove administration’s interest in the promotion of a civic ideal, Norman discusses mariological imagery in four public locations within the city, as well as in four Sienese territories.30 Within this narrative of the interconnectedness of the commune’s use of the image of the Virgin, Norman’s study pays great attention to the programmatic ‘meaning’ of the Virgin in different contexts, issues of the development of artistic style, and concerns over attribution. While the author attempts to create a synthesis between Sienese art and society, rather than a chronological survey of artists and works, through a careful weaving of archival, textual, stylistic, and iconographic analysis, any substantial and sustained argumentation about the political function of art with the commune is limited.

This dissertation makes several contributions to the fields of art historical and Sienese studies. Much archival research has been conducted on the Biccherna and Gabella book covers and the Palazzo Pubblico complex. Luigi Borgia, Aldo Cairoli and

30. In her discussion of the Virgin in the city of Siena, Norman examines the city’s cathedral, town hall, patronal altars, and the hospital. The third part of the book considers images of the Virgin in the Sienese contado, specifically Massa Marittima, San Leonardo al Lago, Montalcino, and Montepulciano.
Enzo Carli provide a wealth of information about the historical development and content of these artworks. Nothing, however, has been written about the development of the iconography of these important Sienese state-sponsored works or the relationship between them. This dissertation discovers that the iconography of the Biccherna and Gabella book covers and the Palazzo Pubblico complex was rooted in the traditions of the nobili and was slowly transformed to fit the needs of the media gente. This analysis adds to the understanding of the origins and evolution of social, political, and artistic tropes as well as how such rhetorical devices could be employed across various cultural productions and practices.

Little commentary has been made in the existing literature on Siena about the role that the Biccherna and Gabella book covers and the Palazzo Pubblico complex played in the social and political lives of the city’s inhabitants. This dissertation’s examination of the rhetoric of the artworks/events demonstrates that they were involved in practices of exclusion and control, whereby various groups of Sienese citizens aimed to maintain their dominant political position. This process of social closure helped to form the social classes of late medieval Siena. This observation contributes to the understanding of Siena’s social composition and the dynamics of its classes and culture.

This dissertation also aims to find an interdisciplinary bridge between socio-political and art historical analyses on late medieval Siena. It fills an important gap between the detailed social histories of the city, whose methodologies do not allow for the detailed examination of the evidence provided by the arts, and art historical

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approaches for which Sienese society tends to be a backdrop to other concerns such as patronage, technique, or iconography. Connecting the socio-political climate of Siena directly with its cultural production is crucial to gaining a larger understanding of the intricacies of late medieval societies and the fine arts. Rather than considering the development of art and community on two separate trajectories that happen to sometimes connect, or one as subservient to the other, this dissertation argues that the two are intimately tied together, both assisting and opposing one another in their respective spheres.
CHAPTER 1: THE BOOK COVERS OF THE BICCHERNA AND CLOSURE IN
THIRTEENTH CENTURY SIENA

The Sienese office of the Biccherna was created during the mid-to-late twelfth century in order to manage the finances of the city and its territory. The Biccherna was one of the most vital and powerful bureaus of Siena’s government when the city was a subject of the Holy Roman Empire, and it survived the city’s transition into a free commune in 1197. The activities of the office were overseen by five elected officials known as the Camarlingo and the Quattro Provveditori. In order to make these executives accountable for their handling of the commune’s funds, a strict system of book-keeping was instituted in which both the Camarlingo and the Provveditori were required to detail each transaction of payment and/or expenditure made throughout their six-month tenure. At the end of their term, and after being reviewed by a council of other elected city officials, the two resulting books were preserved by enclosing them between two wooden boards bound together by a leather band. The covers were then adorned with simple marks, such as a letter of the alphabet, or an object, such as a crossbow or rooster, which scholars surmise acted as identifying markers for filing purposes.

However, by the mid-thirteenth century, during the Sienese administration of the Ventiquattro, more complex illustrative programs were commissioned by the Biccherna’s

33. The Camarlingo was the administrator in charge of overseeing the safety of the Biccherna’s funds.
34. The Quattro Provveditori were in charge of the collection and disbursement of the Biccherna’s funds.
35. What is known about the early covers comes from written descriptions, as none of these covers are known to be currently extant. The full significance of the objects that adorned the covers is unknown. See Donna Tsuruda Baker, The Artistic and Sociological Imagery of the Merchant-Banker on the Book Covers of the Biccherna in Siena in the Early Renaissance (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1998), 22.
officers to adorn their ledgers. Unlike the emblems that decorated the very first book covers, which seem to have had a mostly functional purpose, these new book covers had iconographic programs in which symbols of feudal culture, such as coats of arms, last names, and titles, were brought together to record and to memorialize the identities of the rich and powerful men, termed nobili, who were appointed to the prestigious positions of the Biccherna.

This chapter begins as an analysis of the iconography of the nobili and how they used it to promote their superior socio-political position. The book covers from this period can be divided into two distinct iconographic types depending on which officers’ writings they cover. The ledgers that were kept by the Camarlingo most often depict a seated portrait of this official at a desk, busy at his work (Fig. 1). Those tomes containing the sums of the Provveditori prominently feature each of the four officers’ coats of arms (Fig. 2). Both cover types also bear a more or less standard Latin inscription that details the first and last names of the officers, their titles, and a reference to the date. For example, the inscription of the book of the Camarlingo from January-June of 1270 reads:

Liber Ranerii Poglaresi Camararii Comunis Senarum, Tenpore Domini Comitis Guidonis Novelli, Potestatis e<t> Capitanei Generalis Civitatis Senarum, in primi sex menses (sic) Sui Regiminis. Anno Domini Millesimo. CCLXVIIII

(The book of Ranieri Pagliaresi, Camarlingo of the commune of Siena, in the time of Lord Count Guidoni Novelli, Podestà and captain general of the city of Siena, in the first six months of his rule. Year of our Lord 1269 )

36. The date here is given as 1269, instead of 1270, in accordance with the Sienese calendar in which the new year did not begin until 25 March. Morandi, Le biecherne senesi, 52.
The second half of this chapter examines how this feudally based iconography was either abandoned or underwent changes as another social stratum gained power in Siena. In the 1270’s the ruling oligarchy, which had initiated the tradition of the two-type panel iconography, was curtailed by a new political faction that referred to itself collectively as the mercatores. Although many of these merchants had little claim to the feudal iconography of the Biccherna book covers, upon coming into control of the office, they usurped the authoritative symbols established by their predecessors in order to record their own officers and demonstrate their socio-political ascendancy. As this new ruling faction changed its strategy of control over the commune during the 1280’s, re-defining itself as the media gente, the designs of the book covers, both in the Biccherna as well as in the newly created office of the Gabella, also changed. The Latin inscriptions were exchanged for writing in the Italian vernacular, the use of titles and honors were discontinued, and even more elaborate paintings, such as politically motivated religious scenes and allegories, were added.37

The close connection between the establishment of the Biccherna and Gabella’s elaborate book cover paintings, their subsequent metamorphosis, and the various power-groups in charge of their commission, allow one to examine how these artworks functioned as both a derivative form of social closure and an illustration of other contingent forms of closure in Sienese society. As the successive socio-economic aggregates of Siena controlled the city’s governing councils, these collectives also sought

37. More information on the history and iconography of the Biccherna and Gabella panels may be found in Baker, Sociological Imagery; Alessandro Tomei, ed., Le biccherne di Siena: Arte e finanza all'alba dell'economia moderna (Roma: Fondazione monte dei paschi di Siena, 2002) and Morandi, Le biccherne senesi.
to further their economic and political position through the control of other rights, privileges, and customs that derived from the advantage of holding office. The ruling group that was in charge of the Biccherna and Gabella, and thus the commissioning of its book covers, could deny the opportunity of other groups to represent themselves there, thus saving this space for the glorification of their own members.

The Sienese ruling group’s access to high socio-political power also allowed it to lay claim to various forms of cultural capital, such as the right to bear coats of arms, the use of last names, and the carrying of titles. The use of these assets had the effect of further controlling the other groups of Sienese society by excluding and/or limiting their access to them and their associated marks of status. Thus, the panels’ iconographies became instruments through which various Sienese ruling groups worked to naturalize and promote their own socio-political ascendancy by cutting into others’ privileges and/or excluding various social strata from cultural participation.

The structural relationships made between the competing Sienese social strata, as they employed sundry strategies of social closure throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (such as illustrated in the Biccherna and Gabella panels), had the effect of consolidating these groups along the lines of acquisition and/or denial of resources. In this way, these collectives came to share a common culture and sense of identity based on the equality of access to certain privileges; moreover, they felt it to be legitimate to exclude from their own set those who lacked the in-group subculture. Over time, this consolidation led to the formation of new Sienese social classes, culminating in the creation of the tripartite social system of the media gente, casati, and popoli minuti.
The Iconography of the Nobili of the Ventiquattro: 1258-1271

The Biccherna’s first painted panel that was more than just a simple, categorizing design was commissioned by the office’s Camarlingo in the year 1257. The evidence for the panel’s existence is recorded in a ledger of the Biccherna of 1257 that states that a certain Bartolomeo was paid two soldi for a painting. This work is now lost and little about it is known, although scholars surmise that its form and content were closely related to the second panel commissioned by the same Camarlingo during the next year.

The first extant painted book cover from the Biccherna is dated to the year 1258. This work was commissioned from Giglio di Pietro, who was recorded in a register of 1258 as having been paid 5 soldi for it. The painting, which occupies only the top half of the wooden panel, displays a portrait of a white robed Cistercian monk, seated in profile at a desk (Fig. 1). In front of the man is a large book on which is written in Latin the year, 1258, and the month of July. Another Latin inscription beside the seated figure informs the reader that the book belongs to the office’s Camarlingo and its contents encompass the period of the last six months of the appointment of the nominal head of the Sienese state, the Podestà, Bonifazio de’ Casatellani.

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42. The inscription reads: LIBER CAMERARI TEPOR DOMINI BONIFATI DOMINI CASTELLANI DE BONORIA SENESIS POTESTATI IN ULTIMIS SEX MENSIBUS SUI REGIMINIS. Tomei, *Le biccherne*, 108. The Podestà was ordinarily a foreign noble who served for a six-month term. In the early thirteenth century he had been the supreme communal magistrate, but his office had lost much power by mid-century. The duties of his position varied from time to time, but included presiding over the
Donna Tsuruda Baker queries whether this sudden appearance of a depiction of the Camarlingo on the Biccherna book cover was made in order to commemorate the partnership between the wealthy and powerful Cistercian Abbey of San Galgano and the commune of Siena. Although this explanation holds some truth, as the Cistercians from this order did go on to serve the government of Siena well into the next two centuries, the observation of the picture as merely a depiction of a monk might also conceal another, more overtly political statement. What one notices about the painting is that the Cistercian pictured is highly individualized. The artist seems to have taken care to faithfully render the facial features of a particular person, from the furrowed brow and crow’s feet to the rounded, subtly mottled chin. In contrast to the rather blocky execution of the other elements of the picture, such as the chair, desk, robe, and book, the attention given to the face indicates that the artist intended that the picture be recognized as a portrait. As portraiture suggests the act of remembrance of an individual, it is the identity of the sitter, combined with the portrait’s sudden appearance at a critical time in the history of the commune, which suggests that the painting was also a reaction to the shifting balance of power within Sienese society during the mid-thirteenth century.

Although neither of the inscriptions written on the panel reveals the name of the monk who is so carefully portrayed, scholars have been able to identify him as Don Ugo di Azzolino degli Ugurgieri. Don Ugo was apparently the first religious figure from this order to take the position of Camarlingo for the commune of Siena, and he held it for General Council, and judicial and military functions. Daniel Philip Waley, *Siena and the Sienese in the Thirteenth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 42–45. Bowsky, *Siena*, 23-24. 43. Baker, *Sociological Imagery*, 30. 44. The existing literature on this panel, as well as all of the other panels discussed in this work, does not indicate whether or not there has been any repainting of the book cover’s surface.
numerous consecutive terms between 1257 through 1262. As an Ugurgieri, Don Ugo was a member of the elite upper portion of Sienese society, many of whom were descendants of the area’s feudal lords, referred to collectively as the nobili.

From the time of their immigration out of the countryside in the twelfth century, these grand families dominated urban Sienese life. Their ascendancy was backed by their possession of capital in the form of property within and around the city walls. Through rents and the sale of the excess goods produced by their lands, the nobili were able to gain liquid assets that they used to invest in even more profitable business ventures, such as banking. As great landlords and leading businessmen, the nobili naturally gained considerable influence in the business of running the early city, alongside the imperially appointed Sienese count. As early as the year 1125, these elite families had established a consulship within Siena to act as its governing body.

In order to protect and increase their great economic advantage, this group of grand citizens succeeded in closing off social and political opportunities to the other inhabitants in and around Siena who did not share their interests. This meant that after 1179, when the city’s consulship was officially recognized as the head of the commune by the Emperor, the nobili controlled the city by monopolizing its most important civic

46. Ugo’s own family was a branch of the Berardenghi, former counts of the Holy Roman Empire, who held tracks of land to the northeast of Siena and who had moved to live within the city walls during the twelfth century. Paolo Cammarosano, *La familia dei Berardenghi: Contributo alla storia della società Senese nei secoli XI-XIII* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1974), 210.
47. For more information about land ownership and the economic power of the ruling classes of Siena, see: Giuliano Pinto, “‘Honour’ and ‘Profit’: Landed Property and Trade in Medieval Siena,” in *City and Countryside in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy. Essays Presented to Philip Jones*, ed. Chris Wickham and Trevor Dean (London: The Hambledon Press, 1990), 81-91.
positions. With the exception of the consulships, and the office of the Podestà, which was instituted in 1199, the appointments to the Biccherna were the most powerful that the nobili held. Not only were these officers supreme in all areas of the state’s finance (acting under their own orders), they also appointed a large number of commissioners and minor officials. Furthermore, in the case of the absence of the Podestà from the city, the Camarlingo (along with the commune’s judge) acted as his substitute, performing his duties such as calling the meetings of the General Council.

Unfortunately for them, the nobili’s exclusion of lower Sienese social groups from civic participation resulted in these latter groups acting to protect their own interests. Their goal was to erode the barriers that resulted in the concentration of power, resources, and rewards into the hands of the city’s few elite. In 1233, during a peaceful revolution, a new anti-oligarchic political party, first recorded in 1140 and called the Societas populi senesis (or simply the popolo), overthrew the city’s consular government. A new ruling council, referred to as the ‘ventiquattro antiani populi,’ was

49. In 1179 the Sienese received a charter recognizing not only the consuls but their rule over lands adjoining the city that they had already annexed by the defeat of the feudal barons. In 1186 there was a reinstatement of the right of the consuls and their rights over the bishop of Siena. By this time, the count of Siena, due to the Emperor’s weakness, the feudal usurpations, and ecclesiastical immunities, became a negligible factor in the power structure of the commune. Schevill, Siena, 55-7.
50. The number of consuls varied from three to six. Schevill, Siena, 67.
51. The first Podestà of Siena came from Lucca in 1199. Schevill, Siena, 67.
54. Il breve degli officiati di Siena, in Archivio storico italiano, serie III, t. III, p. II, p3-104; and y. IV, p.II. p. 3-57. Cited in L. Sbaraghi, “I mercanti di mezzana gente al potere di Siena,” Bullettino senese di storia patria 44 (1937): 37. Waley insists that “the popolo must be seen as an anti-oligarchic, not a democratic, body as is made clear by a contemporary (1257) definition of the electors to its captaincy as ‘noble and great (magni) citizens.’” Siena and the Sienese, 101. The dates and chronology given for the revolution in Mondolfo, Il Popolus a Siena, 7-48, are well documented and should be preferred.
set up to replace the consulship, and in this body Sienese citizens of non-noble origins were also represented.55

The biggest blow to the power of the nobili came during the same decade as the change in the iconography of the Biccherna’s book covers. By 1253 the party of the popolo had even more firmly organized itself by creating its own nominated leader, the Capitano del Popolo, who was the party’s equivalent of the official head of the commune, the Podestà. After this time, the popolo was demanding an even greater share of civic power from the official communal government. By the end of the decade, on account of their opposition’s overwhelming numbers and superior organization, the loosely affiliated, factional nobili were no longer able to exclude the popolo from participation in the rest of Siena’s administrative councils. The most important of the rights gained by the new faction were the following: at least half of the amenders (emendatori) of the constitution needed to be “abstrici et iurati universitati populi senesis.” Moreover, the popolo should number half of those who were to elect the Podestà; number by half of those who sit on the General Council; and comprise half of those men appointed as Provveditori of the Biccherna.56 That there was some conflict between the nobili head of the commune and the rising power of the popolo is attested by the constitution of 1262 in

55. The composition of the Ventiquattro and its election are obscure. Scholars such as L. Zdekauer, Il Constituto del comune di Siena dell’anno 1262, F. Schevill, Siena, the History of a Medieval Commune, believe that half of the seats were for nobili and the other half were for the popolo. G. Salvimini, “Il constituto di Siena del 1262”, maintains that it was entirely popular. Waley, Siena, 46.
56. Lodovico Zdekauer, Il costituto del comune di Siena dell'anno 1262 (Siena: A. Forni, 1983), 571. 31; 58.1.2; 146.1.15; 146.1.15; 144.1.13.
which is preserved traces of a peace made in 1256 between the Podestà on one hand and the Capitano del Popolo and the Ventiquattro on the other.  

Finding some of their political power usurped, the city’s finest families attempted to make up what authority they lost by tightening their hold on the powers they already possessed, such as the position of the Camarlingo. While the nobili’s wealth could no longer provide them with the privilege of total civic control, it still gave them great social and cultural advantage over other Sienese social strata, including access to superior education and predominance in key ecclesiastical appointments. It is exactly these areas of elite power that the portrait of Don Ugo Ugurgieri on the Biccherna book cover celebrates through the depiction of the learned monk of noble family engaged in the work of his communal office. Thus, the change in the iconography on the Biccherna’s book cover might also be interpreted as Don Ugo’s usurpation of the representational space offered by the financial bureau. By substituting the office’s visual cultural tradition with one that celebrates the pre-eminence of Siena’s elites, the work rhetorically tightens this superior social group’s hold on civic power by promoting its own iconography as synonymous with the workings of the Biccherna.

This intention of the image to serve the interests of the city’s nobili is underscored by what Baker observes as the two iconographic prototypes for Don Ugo’s portrait. The first model for the work appears to be the “author portrait.” This motif was used in manuscript illumination since Greco-Roman antiquity. It is comprised of a seated figure holding, perusing, or engaged in writing a book or scroll (Fig. 3). Such images most often...
appeared as a full-page, framed frontispiece to a book. A collection of visual symbols such as clothing, gesture, props and setting helped the reader to establish the identity and status of this figure who was the author of the subsequent collected writings. By means of the author portrait, the readers’ attention was brought to the original writer of the text and was prepared to read the passages as his ‘voice’, rather than as the scribe who copied the text. Thus the motif was a way to ensure that the authority of the text was not questioned through depicting, and thus verifying, its author.\(^{58}\) Author portraits were most commonly used for religious works, particularly as portraits of seated evangelists within copies of religious texts, although they could appear in secular and vernacular works as well.

While the adoption of this motif for the Biccherna book cover was most certainly a nod to Ugo’s religious vows, the fact that the portrait emphasizes him as a recognizable individual speaks to his other identity as a member of the noble Ugurgieri family. The iconography of the nobili in the guise of a religious leader underlines Siena’s aristocratic elite’s close control over the city’s ecclesiastical posts, including their families’ parish churches and the Sienese bishopric.\(^{59}\) In addition, the Latin script of the tome and inscription relays the superior education that the Sienese upper-class enjoyed through the benefit of their connection with the church, a topic that will be discussed at greater length below.


\(^{59}\) For example, from 1282 to 1370 the noble family of the Malavolti provided every Sienese bishop, a total of four, and this family was by far the most common name in the city’s canonry. See Bowsky, \textit{Siena Under the Nine}, 269-71, for more about the Sienese nobility and ecclesiastical posts.
As the “author portrait” pages were generally on the inside of the book rather than on its cover, Baker also points out what can now only be viewed as a distant predecessor of Don Ugo’s portrait: Late Antique consular diptychs. These pairs of linked panels’ most prominent features were an inscription and a carved portrait of its donor whose term as consul of the late Roman Empire they were used to commemorate (Fig. 4). The ideological program of the consular diptychs, in which the aristocratic wielder of state power is often enthroned (much like the person on the right of figure 4), anticipates the Sienese nobili’s tradition of holding the city’s consulship. Its also emphasizes the former government’s legitimacy, as recognized in imperial charters, as opposed to the usurping power of the party of the popolo and its regime of the Ventiquattro.

The socio-political statement that Don Ugo made by appropriating the space of his Biccherna ledger book cover and the unique forum it provided for the promotion of the nobili’s claim to civic power seems to not have been missed by the bureau’s subsequent officers. If the nobili were no longer able to insist on their total political control of the commune after the gains made by the party of the popolo, the elites, by continuing to usurp the space of the city’s financial ledgers as a place for their own glorification, could at least try to maintain an upper hand by controlling the culture of the city’s financial heart. While, for the most part, these latter Biccherna officers were not Cistercian monks, they relied on some of the same iconographic elements based on the benefits of belonging to the Sienese aristocracy, as commenced by Don Ugo, while at the

60. Baker, Sociological Imagery, 38-44.
same time introducing the use of other symbols of feudal culture such as titles, last names, and coats of arms.\textsuperscript{61}

One symbol of the might and superiority of Siena’s elites, which became a staple in the tradition of Biccherna book cover paintings, are the continued use of Latin inscriptions, such as the one found on the second oldest surviving Camarlingo panel (Fig. \textit{5}).\textsuperscript{62} This panel is dated July-December of 1264, and belonged to the ledger of the noble officer Ildebrandino Pagliaresi. Since Ildebrandino was not a Cistercian, he is not depicted in the same white robes as Don Ugo; instead, he is shown wearing secular clothing. Another change that this panel reveals is that the Camarlingo is shown not only with the Biccherna’s ledger, but also with a representation of the communal income that he was responsible for recording. This change was perhaps meant to emphasize the fiscal importance of the office for the commune. The panel’s inscription reads:

\begin{verbatim}
[LI]BER ILDIBRANDINI PALLIARE[RE]SIS CAMERARII COMUNIS
SENARUM, TENPORE [D]OMINI UGOLINI DE SEXU, DEI [ET] REGIA
GRATIA SENENSIS POTESTATIS [IN] [U]LTIMUS SEX MENSUBUS SUI
REGIMINI, IN ANNO DOMNINI MCCLXIII\textsuperscript{63}
\end{verbatim}

(The book of Ildibrandino Pagliaresi Camarlingo of the commune of Siena, in the time of Lord Ugolini of Sexus, by the royal grace of God Sienese Podestà in the last six months of his rule, in the year of our Lord 1263)

As mentioned above, the use of the Latin inscription in Don Ugo’s panel may have been a statement about the place of the Sienese\textit{ nobili} at the forefront of the city’s religious, but more importantly, lettered elite.

\textsuperscript{61} The details about how these book covers were stored and how they circulated are unknown. The assumption is that they were placed on shelves as other books of the time period were and that their circulation was limited to members of the Sienese governmental offices. In this case the intended audience of the rhetoric of the iconography would have been those who held communal office.


\textsuperscript{63} Tomei, \textit{Le biccherne}, 114.
Although it was undergoing a process of secularization over the course of the thirteenth century, the main font of foundational Latin education during this time was still the clerical school. While these schools were obviously set up in order to provide the necessary training for the churches’ clerics, whose most prestigious positions were often entrusted to the sons of wealthy families, the advantages of the education provided by the schools were also considered for the children of powerful Italian families not destined for church life. In a famous letter dating to 1041, Wipo, Swabian priest and chaplain to Emperor Henry II, noted the Italian laity’s penchant for education, commenting that rich Italians not only sent to school their children, who were to become potential members of the clergy, but also educated all of them. What these elites sought in education was to gain (Latin) literacy so that their families were better equipped to use literate culture to their benefit through such actions as the ability to read important notices like laws, to plead their own cases in court, and to make use of their own written documents. These advantages helped the nobili secure and maintain their vast properties and lucrative businesses.  

Even though in theory the teaching in clerical schools was supposed to be free for all children, it was predominantly patronized by Siena’s wealthiest families. One reason was that these families often made large donations to the schools’ religious houses to ensure their children’s placement there. Another was that Siena’s poorer families often could not forego the labor of the child in the home, fields, or family business for the length of time required to gain a sufficient mastery of the Latin language. Thus, it was

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mostly Siena’s wealthiest families that were able to receive the type of education needed to fully participate in Italian communal bureaucracy with its abundance of communications, treaties, court documents, and council notes.65

In this light, the use of Latin in the prominent inscriptions on the Biccherna panels signals more than just its appropriateness to the administrative purposes of the office. It also symbolizes the nobili’s exclusive participation in an extensive Latin ‘high culture.’ The language became a part of a linguistic hierarchy separating the literate elites linguistically from the vast majority of Siena’s population. It also rewarded those who could read/ write/ understand it with a special knowledge that was useful in gaining political and economic opportunities that were otherwise closed off from those citizens with little or no knowledge of the language. One of the benefits of Latin, the nobili pointed out through the inscription on the Biccherna ledgers, was the ability to read and understand the book cover and, by extension, the rest of this and the other civic offices’ most important documents. This reinforces the point that even though members of the party of the popolo gained entry into Siena’s government, those who shared in the high Latin culture were the administration’s most effective wielders of power and, as sharing these traits, stood together as a group to protect their similar interests. This was of particular importance as citizens who were otherwise considered nobili began to join the party of the popolo and held offices for them. If a shared culture was a greater bond than adherence to a political party, then the nobili, even within the popolo, still held greater civic power in the commune on account of the number of officers elected from amongst their rank.

65. Ibid., 174-186.
The usurpation of the space of the book covers following the wins of the popolo around 1257 was quickly turned into a tradition that exhibited the prestige of the nobili and their associates who were appointed into the Biccherna’s other fours posts as well. The second oldest surviving painted Biccherna panel belongs to the ledger of the Provveditori of January-June 1263 (Fig. 2). While this book cover uses the coats of arms of the four Provveditori, instead of portraits, to refer to the identities of its individual officers, which will be discussed later, it retains its iconographic connection to the panels of the Camarlinghi through the retention of a prominent Latin inscription. It also introduces an element of feudal culture in connection with Siena’s elites: the title of honor, dominus (lord), in front of the names of the officers. For instance, the inscription of the panel of 1263 reads:

HIC EST LIBER DOMINORUM BARTALOMEI ORLANDI ISTIELLI IUDICIS, DOMINI GHINIBALDO ILDIBRANDINI SALVANI, BARTOLOMEI BENCIVENNI MANCINI, DOMINI NICHOLE ROCÇII, QUATUOR PROVISORUM COMUNI SENAUM... (This is the book of the lord Bartolomeo of Orlando Istielli judge, Lord Ghinibaldo of Ildibrandino Salvani, Bartolomeo of Bencivenne Mancini, lord Nicola of Rozzo, the four Provveditori of the commune of Siena…)

67. It is difficult to determine how much class association that the use of the word ‘iudicus’ (judge) has in the Biccherna panel paintings. Such a designation is only found on four extant panels. These date 1261-1273 and encompass the reigns of the Ventiquattro through the Trentasei. These panels are: Biccherna (fragment) AS Siena Dono Horne tav.B, gennaio-giungo 1261; Biccherna, Budapest, Szépmvûzet Mûzeum inv. n.1 (38), gennaio-giungo 1263; Biccherna, AS Siena n.3, luglio-dicembre 1267; Biccherna, AS Siena n.5, gennaio-giugno 1273. While in Siena judges retained the right to the title of dominus (like a knight) and many judges came from the city’s most illustrious houses, judges were also to be found in wealthy non-nobili families as well. Zdekauer, Constituto of 1262, LXXVI, note 3, comments that it is an important fact in thirteenth-century Siena that many judges renounced their claim to use the title dominus after the rise of the party of the popolo. Thus, since the judges named in the panels are also designated as domini the inclusion of the designation as judge may simply be a reference to the individual’s important educational qualifications.
68. Tomei, Le biccherne, 112.
In the Early Middle Ages the word *dominus* indicated the bearer’s membership in the feudal nobility as a person who was in possession of a lordship. By the Later Middle Ages, however, both the nature of the nobility and the use of the words *dominus* had changed. According to Jacques Heers, “nobility was not easily defined at the end of the Middle Ages. Every detailed study shows that noble status...although linked to the family, was acquired in different ways; it depended on reputation and prestige rather than being an easily recognized legal status.”69 In Siena, as well as elsewhere in Italy in the Late Middle Ages, being considered a part of the *nobili* did not necessitate the possession of an imperial or papal title and, since much of the documentation of the origin and early history of many Sienese families is lost, it is unclear when and from what authority members of the *nobili* would have claim to such titles. Some families with large holdings and a history of governmental positions were simply assumed to be noble by tradition.70

Likewise in Italy the word *dominus* extended its scope. In the thirteenth century “the title *dominus* was always given to members of great families; but it did not only indicate seigniorial descent; it was used also to qualify any landed proprietor, patron, leader, or person in control of the destiny of others.”71 The Middle Ages inherited this construction of a civil aristocracy from ancient Rome, which held distinctions, based on birth and civic/imperial service, between those people known as ‘*nobiles*’, meaning well known or distinguished, and ‘*ignobles*’, those of baser origins.72

72. Etymologically, *nobili*, *nobilitas*, etc. are derived from *noscere*: to know—someone who was literally well known amongst his fellows. Janet Nelson “Nobility in the Ninth Century,” in *Nobles and Nobility in
Thus, while using the titles of honor on the Biccherna book covers did not necessarily refer to an individual’s feudal rights, it clearly signaled the attempt to connect the names of the office’s key administrators with special prerogatives. *Domini* were believed to have had a history of greater social value than other citizens. It was this personal and familial record of dominion that justified the *nobili*’s claims to social and civic power over the general populace, who, historically, had been the dependents of these great families. The decision to include titles on the book covers of the Biccherna may, again, be interpreted as an attempt by the *nobili* to use this space to reinforce for the bureau’s officers, men of a similar status group, a common culture that was separate from the experiences of Siena’s general citizenry. This strategy helped to advance the elite’s hold on the Biccherna by helping to unify this higher social sphere, while reminding them of their special right to power. At the same time, the monopolization of the space for this purpose had the effect of blocking its use for the expression of a *popolo* rhetoric, which limited this class’s ability to create its own specific identity, therefore increasing its solidarity in opposition to total *nobili* ascendency.

Along with the use of titles, the panels of this period also applied a re-developed system of last names. For example, in the panel of the Provveditori of January-June 1266 the officers of the post are clearly labeled (Fig. 6) “…PALMERII RANONI D (OMI) NI BONAGUIDA GREGORII BOCHACI ET RANERII RE(N)ÇII…”73 These Latin versions correspond to the Italian last names of the Ragnoni, Boccacci, and Renzi families.

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Although the ancient Romans had a system of nomenclature that included a family name, the Germanic tribes that took over the administration of western Europe eventually caused its collapse. Germans did not have a system of surnames but rather expressed relationship or descent through the frequent use of the principles of alliteration, variation, and repetition. Family identity was often expressed through the repetition of given names, such as naming the eldest son after his grandfather. This became the practice of many families of the upper classes of Italy as well. As some of these repeated first names became carried for several generations, they started to be crystallized into last names, as families identified, as a group, with a particular ancestor. In Italy, this had much to do with the immigration of families of wealth and consequence into the cities to take part in the economic advantages of urban life and the adoption of the notion of patrilineal descent. The latter enlarged the family by defining a group as kinsmen joined together by a common ancestor, and allowed for the creation of a tight network of alliance and cooperation among them.

The use of patrilineal last names in the paintings on the book covers of the Biccherna is significant in that they were often only sporadically in use for other important documents of the period, and then only by those families considered nobili. For example, in a list of Sienese tax payments for the neighborhood of Camollia dating to the year 1260 (Lira 5), almost every citizen, one third of the city’s population, was recorded with the normal form of nomenclature in thirteenth-century Italy, which was merely a

personal name followed by a patronymic. One family, however, the powerful nobile family of the Malavolti, was recorded by a surname. In Siena the strategy of last names led to a more formal classification of the upper level of society after the middle of the thirteenth century. On the panels of this period almost all of the last names given are those of the most illustrious and wealthy Sienese dynasties such as the Pagliaresi, Bonsignori, and Salvani.

Closely related to the use of names was another prominent feature of the Biccherna panels that was developed at this time for the use of the elite officials of the bureau, and which would become a regular part of the iconography: coats of arms. An example can be found on the next surviving Biccherna panel, that of the Provveditori of July-December 1267 (Fig. 7). The exact date and origins of the practice of armorial bearings is unknown, but it is surmised to have begun sometime during the late eleventh century in response to Europe’s involvement in the First Crusade. As a great many soldiers from various nations traveled and fought together in the holy land, the decoration of each heavily armored individual’s helmet, shield, and surcoat became a way to identify the combatants for both organizational purposes as well as for the recognition of their feats in battle. In time, the signs, which were at first personal and referred only to the individual, became inherited from father to son, much like other articles of war such as

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76. The Lira, also called Estimo, was the medieval Sienese system of direct taxation. Lists were made of the declared value of each individual’s property, on which he was taxed accordingly. Many of these lists survive in the Sienese archives. William Heywood, Guide to Siena, History and Art. (Siena: Torrini, 1904), 27.
77. The Malavolti are labeled ‘de fundaco Malevoltorum.’ Waley, Siena, 77-78.
79. Arthur Fox-Davies points out the evidence of the Crusades as being the impetus for arms by the fact that it was practically coeval throughout Europe at the time and that the terms, rules, and figures of heraldry are remarkably similar in all European countries. Complete Guide to Heraldry (London: Nelson, 1969), 13.
swords and banners.\textsuperscript{80} As the practice grew, the shield became the most important bearer of the insignia and was adopted as an expression of patrilineal descent by the families of the ruling classes whose ancestors first bore them in combat.

Although very few Biccherna panels survive from this period of 1258-1271, the coats of arms depicted on those that do remain illustrate some of the tendencies prevalent in the early iconography of Tuscan coats of arms that would have been in the possession of the \textit{nobili}. Although many scholars of heraldry caution against an overzealous search for the origins and meanings of the divisions of a shield, its colors, and its emblems, some uses of these elements may be traced to certain associations at a point in time and within a particular cultural context. In the case of the shields depicted on the remaining book covers of the Biccherna, their compositions demonstrate the relationship of many of the officer’s administrators with the feudalistic and knightly practices from which heraldry first sprang.

For example, the coats of arms of the Ghibelline Amidei, Renzi, and Pagliaresi families, as well as that of Lambertesco di Vigoroso, have a color scheme which is predominated by red (\textit{rosso}) and silver (\textit{argento}-- often represented by the color white) (Fig. 8). In the most antique heraldry of Tuscany this color contrast was a mark of a family’s obedience to the Holy Roman Empire as these were the colors of the early imperial war banner, which consisted of a white cross on a red field.\textsuperscript{81} Similarly, the arms

\textsuperscript{80} Fox-Davies, \textit{Heraldry}, 12-13.
of the Saracini\textsuperscript{82} and Ghibelline Bonsignori families, who boasted a key administrator for Holy Roman Emperor Henry VII amongst their ranks,\textsuperscript{83} had coats of arms which were composed of the colors black and gold. These hues were the colors of the coats of arms of the Holy Roman Empire as well (Fig. 9).

The display of last names and their corresponding coats of arms as part of the panel’s decorations, then, connotes the nobili’s use of keen rhetorical devices of identity and kinship. The names and coats of arms were formal, public declarations of each family’s affiliation, emphasizing the antique and honorable nature of its ancestry. As a sign of the officers’ relationship to this past, last names and coats of arms also placed them as a successive link in a chain of power, establishing each individual’s right to share in his family’s political and social patrimony.\textsuperscript{84} Emblazoned on the covers of the Biccherna’s ledgers, the names and arms indicated the possession of these offices, and by extension other civic posts, with nobili families. The high visibility, repetition, and commemorative function of the panel paintings permitted these devices to justify the possession of political control by the city’s elites by once again equating symbols taken from feudal culture with civic iconography.

The use of the prerogatives of Siena’s grandest families, such as a Latin education, and the symbols of feudal culture, such as titles, family names, and coats of arms as the iconographic basis of the Biccherna panels, of course, had wider application than on just the office’s book covers. Even with the gains made by the party of the popolo

\textsuperscript{82} Morandi, \textit{Le biccherna}, 38-39 suggests that the abraded coat of arms in the panel of Biccherna, AS Siena n.3, luglio-dicembre 1267 is that of the family of the Saracini, a theory which has been corroborated by a more recent cleaning of the panel. Tomei, \textit{Le biccherne}, 118.

\textsuperscript{83} This was Niccolo di Bonifazio Bonsignori. Bowsky, \textit{Siena Under the Nine}, 173.

\textsuperscript{84} Wilson, \textit{Naming}, 168.
within the civic government, Latin continued to be the administrative and diplomatic language in the commune and in the rest of Italy. The display of coats of arms was a popular practice and came to adorn many of the possessions of the city’s nobili, such as their towers and domestic palaces. Titles and last names became even more firmly established in written references to the commune’s elites and were used with increasing frequency in the city’s various registers and documents. This demonstrates that the Biccherna book cover decoration was only one small part of the general trend within Sienese society for the nobili to attempt to close off cultural spaces for use by themselves or their close associates. Courting a ‘high’ culture helped this social group to retain its hold on civic and economic power by forming the tools for the further social control and exclusion of Siena’s common citizens. The structural relationships of control and exclusion resulted in social stratifications expanding out from the forms of closure to create concrete social classes. Thus, the slow creation of a culture of the urban nobili, which is reflected in the Biccherna panels, created a firmer and more visible division between the main body of Sienese citizens and the elites, even those who belonged to the popolo, than had ever previously existed. While the nobili’s higher fiscal command gave them an advantage, the culture that was beginning to separate the two social strata clearly displayed that, even in the newly bifurcated government where the nobili were obliged to share power and/or pick sides, their combined social position was still resolutely dominant.
The Interlude of the ‘Mercatores’ of the Trentasei: 1271-1287

Unfortunately, there are only five complete book covers from the Biccherna that are preserved from the 1270’s and 1280’s. These consist of five Camarlinghi book covers and one painting from a ledger of the Provveditori. Three fragments of panels also exist (Appendix A), in addition to descriptions of six currently missing panels that were recorded as being seen by various sixteenth and seventeenth-century scholars (Appendix B).

From these sources it appears that the two iconographic types developed from 1258 through the 1260’s continued, with very little deviation, to be the standard. For example, the panels of the Camarlinghi, such as that of Don Bartolomeo of 1276 closely follows the example set by that of Ildebrandino Pagliaresi in 1264 (or another earlier, now missing, painting) (Fig. 10). The panel of the Cistercian monk’s portrait shows a depiction of the officer at his desk. While the entry book of the Biccherna is no longer visible on the Camarlingo’s table, he is still engaged in his primary duty of watching over the communal income. To the figure’s right is a Latin inscription restating the identity of the office and giving the year in terms of the tenure of the Podestà.

Similarly, the book cover of the four Provveditori of 1273 demonstrates that the decoration of the books of these officers continued to display their four coats of arms, above which was a Latin inscription (Fig. 11). This inscription shows that the

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85. The five panels extant from 1271-1287 are: Biccherna, AS Siena n. 5, gennaio-giugno 1273; Biccherna, AS Siena n. 6, gennaio-giugno 1276; Biccherna, Berlino Est, Staatliche Museen, Gemäldegalerie inv. n. M 580, luglio-dicembre 1278; Biccherna, AS Siena n.7, gennaio-giugno 1280; Biccherna, Budapest, Szépmüvészeti inv. n. 2 (36), luglio-dicembre 1282.
86. Biccherna, AS Siena n. 6, gennaio-giugno 1276. Morandi, Le biccherne, 56.
convention of providing the listed officers with last names and titles was also followed. It reads:

LIBER DOMINI HENRIGI RANUCCI, DOMINI TOMASII IUDICUS, DOMINI GUALTERII DOMINI RENALDINI ET SOCÇII LEGACCII QUATTOR PROVISORUM COMUNIS SENARUM, TENPORE DOMINI TADDEI COMITIS MONTISFERETRI ET URBINI, POTESTATIS SENENSIS IN PRIMUS SEX MENSIBUS SUI REGIMINIS

(The book of Lord Enrico of Ranuccio, Lord Tommaso Incontri judge, Lord Gualtieri Rinaldini, and Sozzo di Legaccio the four Provveditori of the commune of Siena, in the time of Lord Taddeo Count of Montis Feretro and Urbino, Podestà of Siena in the first six months of his rule)

Much like the panel of Don Ugo in 1257, whose simple composition belied the serious matter of the usurpation of the representational space of the Biccherna in order to promote his class through an iconography of power, the consistencies within the panels between the earlier period and this one conceal the strategies of ascendancy of a new status group. During this time a merchant oligarchy came to control both the government and the Biccherna. With many of their members already accustomed to the iconography of the *nobili*, the new oligarchy seized upon these representations in order to advance their own cultural claims and better control the political order of Siena.

The new government of the *mercatores* was ushered in by the events of 1269, where, during the battle between Siena and Florence at Colle Val d’Elsa, the Sienese forces were defeated. Thus subdued, the commune, which until this time had adhered to a Ghibelline foreign policy, was forced to join the Guelph league. At great peril to their own ascendancy, the party of the *popolo* and the council of the Ventiquattro had no

88. Morandi, *Le biccherne*, 54
choice but to call back Siena’s exiled Guelph families, while Ghibelline families were either themselves exiled or were quickly forced to change allegiance. With the party of the popolo and the Ghibelline nobili seriously weakened, some of the returning Guelph exiles, some new Guelph nobili, and some wealthy members of the popolo, all sharing mercantile interests, came into alliance to usurp the power of the city’s administrative council. The Ventiquattro ‘antiani populi’ was dissolved and a new governing assembly, the Trentasei ‘gubernatores et difensores civitatis et communis’ (1271-79), was hastily put into its place.89

Already close to the most affluent strata of Sienese society, which offered them some measure of economic command, the mercatores rewrote the statutes of the government in order to ensure their continued power. This was done by introducing three new pieces of policy.90 First, the statutes of the 1274 constitution of the Trentasei effectively suppressed the party of the popolo by not recognizing their elected leader, the Capitano del Popolo. By mid-1271 this post had disappeared and the rubrics of 1274 did not provide for it. The post was revived briefly from 1278-79, only to disappear again before it was reinstated in 1289, in a completely new form.91

Similarly, the new constitution did not make any provisions for participation of the party of the popolo in the government. Although chapter 2 of the popolo constitution of 1262 called for electors of the Podestà, amenders of the constitution, and officers of

89. The Trentasei was recorded for the first time on 26 of June 1271. Archivio di Stato Siena, Provisioni del consiglio generale, t.XIV c.57. Cited in Mondolfo, Il populus, 48.
the Biccherna to be selected by the party of the *popolo*, this was omitted in the constitution of 1274. Also in chapter 3 of this latter constitution (corresponding to chapters 128, 381, and 385 of the constitution of 1262), there is no statement that at least half of the seats of these three offices needed to be held by members of the *popolo*.92 These measures by the constitution of 1274 effectively excluded the lesser citizens of Siena from many positions of agency in the higher levels of the government that they had, theoretically anyway, gained access to with the wins of the party of the *popolo* in the middle of the century.

The loss of the power of the *popolo* within the new government is also easily seen in the name of the *mercatores*’ new ruling council. The Venti*quattro* expressed its alignment with the ‘popular’ Sienese faction by including the words *antiani populi* in its official title. The Trentasei, however, dropped this and instead stressed its connection to the citizens and commune (*civitatis et communis*).93

The second change that the *mercatores* made to the Sienese statutes during the rule of the Trentasei was the addition of a complementary principal form of closure in Sienese society alongside that of the ownership of capital: access to the ruling council. Unlike during the reign of the Venti*quattro*, when both the undefined *nobili* and *popolo* were eligible for office, the statutes of the new constitution clearly defined those who were eligible for election to the new office of the Trentasei as being *maiores et utiliores homines civitatis, qui sunt de numero mercatorum* (the major and useful men of the city,

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who are of the merchants). This solidarity amongst a social stratum defined as merchants resulted in the fracturing of the power of the party of the popolo and the nobili in two ways. One was that it reduced the number of adherents to each of the earlier factions by pulling out a section of their membership, thus weakening them numerically and organizationally. Secondly, the emergence of the merchant as a social group, rather than as a mere occupation, fractured the duel identities of nobili/common citizen within Sienese society, interrupting both groups’ movement to solidarity as they came to terms with their relationship to a new social entity.

Total control over the Trentasei also gave the mercatores a tighter grip on other bodies of the government than any previous social group had enjoyed up until this time. Almost all of the powers in the statutes of 1262 that were given to the Capitano del Popolo and the Ventiquattro were given to the Trentasei and the Capitano dei Guelfi. Powers that were once divided between the party of the popolo and the nobili became the total domain of the mercatores. The ruling council (along with the Mercanzia, and Capitano dei Guelfi, who all shared the same membership) was responsible for the election of the Podestà and the officers of the Biccherna, and was to be present at the meetings of the General Council.

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95. Mondolfo, Il populus, 54.
Lastly, the statutes of the Trentasei further excluded the remaining nobili from sharing the command of the mercatores by recasting what was left of this conglomerate as a united group. The statutes legislated that any member of the ‘casati’ (de casato seu de casatis), meaning those nobili which belonged to certain named houses, is specifically banned from participation in the highest council. Several years later, in 1277, this measure resulted in the drawing up of an official list of casati in which fifty-three of the most prominent noble families were named. This act, with its attending legislation, split the economic tier of what was the Sienese nobili into two, though not equal, sections. One group was the newly cast casati, whose feudal origins allowed them to generally possess greater economic power and cultural prestige but who were barred from the ruling council, while the second belonged to the ranks of the mercatores, who had civic control but lacked the economic and cultural power of the men above them whom they had managed to excluded from office.

The description of a now missing book cover from the ledger of the Provveditori, dated January to June 1277 (Appendix B-7), gives the best clue as to how the mercatores, who now controlled the appointment of officers to the Biccherna, remedied their lack of

97. Around the time of the 1271 legislation, a new word for the major Sienese citizens, magnati, also appears. It seems to be synonymous with the word grandi that continued to be employed in the vernacular legislations, while the former word was used in the laws that limited the power of the wealthy. Waley, Siena, 100.
98. Waley, Siena, 30, Mondolfo, Il populus, 4-60. Why a person was named as a casato is not explained, and is even more confused by the fact that not every person with a last name on the list of those excluded was kept from office, and new names were added or dropped. Although no medieval evidence has been found to support it, Danilo Marrara theorizes that being a casato was determined by the possession of legal powers and jurisdictional rights in the Sienese contado. Danilo Marrara, “I magnati e il governo del commune di Siena dallo statuto del 1274 alla fine del xiv secolo,” in Studi per Enrico Fiumi (Pisa: Pacini, 1979), 249.
99. See Appendix C for this list. There was also a list of the casati drawn up shortly after 20 September 1313, and a final list in the constitution of 1337-9 (the two are almost identical). Several names from the 1277 list are omitted on the later lists, such as the Bolgarini and Bandinelli, while new names such as: Mezzolombardi, Lotterenghi, and Caccianievole are added. Bowsky, Siena Under the Nine, 66.
cultural power by appropriating the system of nobili culture that had been laid out in the offices’ book covers. This panel was described as being the coats of arms of the four Provveditori. The officers listed are the judge Bandino di Uguccione, Federico di messer Rinaldo Tolomei, Bonaventura di Ranieri Patrizi, and Ranuccio Balzi. With the exception of Judge Bandino di Uguccione, who cannot be connected with a surname or family, these men are representatives of the various Sienese social strata created by the statutes of the Trentasei. Rinaldo Tolomei was a member of the newly formed casati. He held important financial offices, such as Camarlingo in 1271 and Provveditore of the Biccherna on several occasions between 1272-1288. He was also a frequent speaker in General Council meetings from 1301-4. Ranieri Patrizi was a member of a mercantile family that controlled a self-named merchant society called the Patrichiorum de Senis, and which held strong social and economic ties to the casati. Bonaventura’s family was active in communal service. His father, Ranieri, was a Provveditore of the Biccherna in 1249 and his son Niccolino (1337), an agent of the noble Tolomei family, would go on to sit on the future ruling council of the Nove at least four times. Ranuccio Balzi represents a family of merchants who were not considered magnates.

Although there is no indication what the coats of arms may have looked like, the limited information provided by the panel’s written description makes it clear that the

100. This panel is recorded as having been saw by Galgano Bichi in the text *Copia dell’armi gentilizie e delle iscrizioni che sono espresso nelle tavolette che gia servirono per coperte dei libri del magistrato della magnifica biccherna di Siena ed ora trovansi staccato dei medesimi* (1724), which is now conserved in Archivio di Stato di Siena. Tomei, “Appendice ‘elenco delle Biccherne perdute,” *Le biccherne*, 89.
Tolomei *casati*, the Patrizi partner of the *nobili*, and the *mercatore* Balzi all had one depicted.\(^{104}\) What is telling about this arrangement is the equal treatment with which Rannuccio displayed the Balzi family arms. As a family of non-magnate status, it is most likely that the family simply assumed its coats of arms, rather than inherited it from a knightly ancestor. Thus, it seems that in the face of the advantages that the culture of the urban elites gave their status group, Siena’s merchants followed the example set by the usurpation of the panel’s representational space by appropriating its established iconography. While some of the *mercatores* were no less noble than the excluded *casati* and hence were accustomed to these displays, other families like the Balzi were relatively new to these honors and had to insert themselves into the customs. The benefit to the *mercatores* in taking over the panels’ iconography was that they continued to reap the cultural power of having themselves commemorated like the *nobili*, as discussed above. This practice safeguarded the new groups’ political control not only by naturalizing their access to civic power but also by setting them culturally closer to the still influential *casati*.

Also recorded is Rannuccio’s surname, Balzi, which demonstrates that the *mercatores* were also developing the practice of using last names. This, again, was a usurpation of a *nobili* strategy of cultural control by the *mercatores*. Pamela Waley, in a study of the names taken from 5257 entries in volumes 88 and 90 of the Biccherna, argues that the use of surnames was on the increase in the years after the *mercatores*

\(^{104}\) Unfortunately, not enough evidence remains from the extant panels of this period to examine how the use of coats of arms were extended to the new families of the *mercatores* represented in the office of the Biccherna, since there are very few remaining panels, and the coats of arms on those that remain are connected with families belonging to the *casati*. 
issued the list of casati families. Surnames, usually indicated from the regular name/patronymic by the de with the ablative plural, was obviously given for some casati families such as the de Forteguerris and the de Tolomeis. However, the study also showed that some non-nobili families had suddenly gained last names, such as the de Balzis, de Serris, and de Fabris.105

These documents suggest that, as they came to power, the members of the mercatores began to use last names in the manner of the casati. In order to enter the cultural privilege that the casati carried by the use of surnames, they engaged in this contingent form of closure, which depended not only on economic clout but even more on the bureaucratic nature of the government that they controlled. The administration’s systematic documentation of individuals and families provided the space in which to publicly recognize and record new family surnames, bringing the prestige of sharing lineal honors to some men of more obscure origins. While, as discussed above, this chain of command was an important rhetorical device, the adoption of last names played an even greater role in the city’s power relationships by establishing an explicit list of families, recognizable by surname, who were eligible for election in the merchant government. This collection of surnames created a solid group of mercatores in opposition to those named on the list of banned casati.

Even though the description of the missing panel in discussion was written in Italian, the inscriptions on all extant panels until circa 1291 are in Latin, which allows for the reasonable assumption that the inscriptions on any missing panels of this period were

also written in the latter language. This demonstrates that the use of Latin was another way for those belonging to the circle of the mercatores to usurp the prestige of the nobili culture as a way of controlling both the casati, with whom they shared it, and the remainder of Siena’s citizens, who were unable to access it. Unlike the majority of the members of the defunct party of the popolo, who belonged to the artisan class, the mercatores were closer to financial equals with the casati. As such, it would not have been a strain for the wealthier merchant class to develop some sort of Latin literacy.

One reason for the mercatores’ greater access to a Latin education is that in the course of the thirteenth century the laity replaced the clergy as the principal providers of education in Tuscany. Judges, lawyers, and other professional users of Latin became teachers. The breaking up of the church’s monopoly on education created wider access for those less wealthy families who might not have been able to endow a church, but who could pool their money to provide a large enough stipend to pay for a lay teacher to educate their children. Since the Italian vernacular did not have any fixed orthography before the sixteenth century, this elementary curriculum would have been reading and writing in Latin.\textsuperscript{106}

The economic position of the mercatores allowed them both the access to, and leisure time for, the same educational opportunities as the casati. Since these opportunities, for the most part, were still closed off to the commune’s other citizens with less economic means and whose children often needed to be employed in the family business and/or at home, the mercatores shared with the casati the benefits of Latin education. For the new social group, literacy performed the same function as it had for

\textsuperscript{106} Black, Humanism, 41-2.
the nobili by ensuring the mercatores’ hold on power by making them informed participants in the commune’s highly bureaucratic government.

This chapter has demonstrated that the iconography that the nobili developed on the front of the Biccherna book covers during the reign of the Ventiquattro, such as coats of arms, last names, and Latin inscriptions, was grounded in feudal culture. The use of these elements had traditionally neither been available nor desirable to many members of the merchant class, the mercatores. However, the latter’s growing economic and political power allowed them to gain the cultural privileges formally held only by Siena’s social elites. Therefore, when the mercatores began to hold office in the Biccherna, they found it expedient to adopt the visual culture that the nobili had already established on the Biccherna book covers. The prestige of their adopted ‘high’ culture bolstered the mercatores claim to ascendency in the ruling council.

As successful as the mercatores were in usurping the political clout of the nobili and the party of the popolo, as well as commanding the iconography of feudal culture developed by the former, there are many contradictions amongst the regime’s various strategies of exclusion. While the laws and the elite culture espoused by the mercatores propagated a very clear distinction between the city’s lesser inhabitants and the upper tiers of society, it did less to close the gap between the two more wealthy status groups, the mercatores and casati. The principal means of exclusion, in the form of laws of the election to the Trentasei and the listing and exclusion of the casati, obviously attempted to make the casati and the mercatores two clearly defined entities. Yet, the fact that both the casati and the mercatores shared many of the same cultural elements tended to blur
the boundary lines between them as classes. The danger in this for the mercatores was the possibility of being subsumed into a new regime led by a usurping casati.

The formation of a political class, along with the usurpation of a rival group’s identity rather than the full development of a rhetoric of its own, was perhaps a method of control that the mercatores needed to take in this early part of their ascendancy in order to consolidate their power against the threats posed to them from both above and below on the Sienese social scale. As the group gained strength into the late thirteenth and throughout the fourteenth centuries, the mercatores would change their strategies of closure, both politically and culturally. These alterations would greatly impact the development of the iconography on the book covers of the Biccherna, as well as its newly created sister office, the Gabella.

In 1280 the Trentasei decided to make their council more manageable by cutting its thirty-six positions down to only fifteen. The name of the ruling council changed to reflect its number; it was referred to as the Quindici gubernatores et difensores communis et populi. Its policies were the same as the Trentasei. This period is poorly documented, possibly because much archival material was burned in accordance with a peace agreement in 1280 between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines.107 Unfortunately, only two panels survive from this period. These book covers are of Camarlinghi, and demonstrate no significant deviation from the prototype established under the Ventiquattro. The list of fragmented and missing panels seems to suggest that the panels of the Camarlinghi changed to display only their coat of arms with an inscription and did not include a portrait. This however, might be misleading since the portrait that surely was depicted

107. Waley, Siena, 46 and 121.
along with the arms either no longer exists (in the case of the fragments) or was not described (in the case of the list of missing panels). Both a portrait and coats of arms for a secular Camarlingo would have been in keeping with the example of the cover of Ildibrandino Pagliaresi in June-December of 1264.108

CHAPTER 2: THE BICCHERNA AND GABELLA BOOK COVERS AND THE

MEDIA GENTE OF THE NOVE

After 1277, and until the creation of the government of the Nove in 1287, only three painted-book covers from Siena’s Biccherna survive. These panels are from the ledgers of the Camarlinghi and date from the years 1278, 1280, and 1282. Following the tradition established in the early panels of the officers of this post, the paintings cover the top half of their wooden panel with a portrait of the Camarlingo counting money to the right, and a Latin inscription to the left. Although there is some variance between these depictions, the paintings seem to demonstrate no significant change in their iconography or inscription.\(^\text{109}\) The next surviving ledger-cover, dated January-June 1291, however, indicates that at some point in the decade of the 1280’s a great change happened within the iconography of Siena’s financial centers’ panel paintings.\(^\text{110}\) This alteration was only the beginning of a general trend of modification which was to take place into the mid-fourteenth century in the book covers of the Biccherna as well as the book covers of a new office, called the Gabella.

This chapter examines the developing iconography of the book covers of both Sienese financial offices in relationship to the changing political and social climate of the city during this period. As the mercatores of the Trentasei became subsumed within a

\(^{109}\) A prolonged discussion of these panels is here omitted for two reasons. First and foremost, the position of Camarlingo lost much of its power during the reign of the Trentasei since it was elected, and closely managed, by the ruling council. Secondly, the government statutes of 1274 also legislated that the Camarlingo was to be elected exclusively from amongst the monks of Cistercian order of San Galgano. These factors made the possession of this office less of a marker of social status than it had been in the previous regime when the Camarlingo was still often held by a noble layman. While monks belonging to merchant families must have certainly held this position and their book covers would certain speak about strategies of exclusion, the social origins of these monks are often difficult, if not impossible, to trace, making those panels of the Provveditori more applicable to the current study.

\(^{110}\) Gabella, AS Siena n.8, gennaio-giugno 1279. Morandi, Le biccherne, 64.
new social grouping who called themselves the *media gente*, the feudally based iconography developed by the *nobili* under the Ventiquattro underwent further alterations and omissions. Last names and coats of arms were adopted by those further down in the social hierarchy, Latin was replaced by the Italian vernacular, and titles of honor were used more selectively. Newly added to the iconography of the book covers were inscriptions identifying where within the city the officers lived, as well as religious and political allegories.

The decorated book cover of January-June 1291 is the first extant work to cover a ledger from the post called the Gabella (Fig. 12). This office was Siena’s second major financial agency whose main function was to administer the commune’s income derived from the city’s *gabelles* (indirect taxes) and forced loans. The exact date of when this office came into existence is not known, but it cannot be documented as an entity separate from the authority of the Biccherna before the 1270’s. Much like the Biccherna, the Gabella was presided over by a Camarlingo who was ordinarily selected from the *umiliati*, or the monks of the Cistercian abbey of San Galgano. The Camarlingo was aided in his duties by three other officers, the Esecutori. The oldest extant statues of the Gabella contain a rubric from late 1296, or early 1297, ordering that the Nove and other Orders were to select the Esecutori, one from each *terzo* (a one-third division of the city corresponding to three neighborhoods), for a six-month term, starting

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111. Bowsky states that *gabelles* defy a general definition, though they are often referred to as ‘indirect taxes.’ See Bowsky, *Finance*, 114 for elaboration.


on January or June 1 of each year.\textsuperscript{114} Also like the Biccherna, the officers of the Gabella were obliged to keep a register of each six-month division of the fiscal year. When finished, these books were provided with wooden covers that were then painted in imitation of the two iconographic programs developed on the book covers of the Biccherna’s camarlinghi and Provveditori.

Besides being the first extant cover from the office of the Gabella, what makes the panel of 1291 a turning point in the iconographic development of the genre is that it is also the first book cover from either Sienese financial bureau known to have an inscription written in the vernacular. In the previous decades, a common inscription, such as that found on the Biccherna panel of the Provveditori of 1263, might have started with the Latin phrase “HIC EST LIBER”. The Gabella panel of 1291, however, reads:

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(Book of the gentlemen of the Gabella of the entrance and exit namely of Lord Archolano Scotti and of Neri of Iachomo Baldinoti and of Meo of Lord Orlando Malavolti in the first six months of the command of Lord Pino of Vernaccia, Podestà of Siena. Year 1290.)

The first Biccherna book cover to feature the Italian vernacular did not appear until several years later, in 1304. This panel reads:

\[
\text{LIBER DI DUCcio SACHETI, NOCHOLÒ SPINELLI IACOMo TOMAGI, TA\textsc{V}ENA CRISTOFANI, QUATRO PROVED\textsc{I}TORI DEL COMUNE DI SIE NA PER LI SEC[ON]DI .VI. MESI, CIOÈ DA KALDENDE LUGLO ANNI}
\]

\textsuperscript{114} ASS Gabella, l. r. 12 ff 4v-5r. Cited in Bowsky, \textit{Finance}, 14.
\textsuperscript{115} Tomei, \textit{Le biccherne}, 128.
MILLE TRECENTO QUATRO INFINO KALENDE GENNAIO ANNI DICTI E A LA SIGNORIA DI MISSERE MANENTE DA IECI PODESTÀ DI SIENA\textsuperscript{16}.

(The book of Duccio Sachetti, Nicolo Spinelli, Iacomo Tomagi, Tavena Cristofani, the four Provveditori of the commune of Siena for the second six months, that is the first of July 1304 until the first of January of the said year during the lorraine of Sir Manente of Ieci Podestà of Siena)

Although knowledge of the Latin language did allow those members of the \textit{mercatores} who could read and write it to have some insight and entry into the ‘high’ culture of medieval society that was dominant in the early thirteenth century, by the fourteenth century the use of Latin lost much of its functional and political importance within the commune. While the switch to the vernacular was in some measure a part of a general trend in Tuscany at the time, it can also be seen as a component of the attempt by the \textit{mercatores} to moderate the elements of feudal culture, which they unreservedly embraced in the two decades following their usurpation of power in 1269, with that of a burgeoning business/trade culture. These changes reflect this group’s new strategy of control, one that aimed to position itself as a middle rung of communal society, halfway between the upper tier of the \textit{casati} and Siena’s lower-status conglomerate, referred to as the \textit{popoli minuti}.

The movement of the \textit{mercatores} to the center of Siena’s social structure began around 1285 when, due to serious famine and a series of other political incidents, pressure was put on the government to widen the base of the electorship of the city’s highest magistracy.\textsuperscript{117} This resulted in the inclusion of some members of Sienese society

who ranked socially and economically just below the mercatores into a reconfigured ruling council during the year 1287.\textsuperscript{118} Thus, the short-lived Quindici governatores et difensores communis et populi, itself a numerical reconfiguration of the Trentasei, was reformed into the new administration of the Nove governatores et difensores communis (1287-1355).\textsuperscript{119}

A statute of the Nove, enacted in 1287 and remaining in force throughout the regime, demonstrates how the mercatores drew new lines of access to the highest political office. This statute states that those elected to the council of the Nove “are and must be of the merchants and of the number of merchants of the city of Siena, or, indeed, of the media gente.”\textsuperscript{120} Thus, while international merchants and smaller bankers still predominated in this group, wealthy men with occupations that did not allow them enrollment in the merchant guild were now in the position to be selectively elected to the city’s highest council.\textsuperscript{121} This statute further protected the interests of the mercatores by increasing their numbers through alliances with other Sienese citizens who were of

\textsuperscript{118} That more ‘new’ members of this group were entering the consistory who had not sat on earlier councils is confirmed by Waley’s observation that several new names occurred among the incoming Quindici in November 1285. Consiglio Generale 30, f. 34 v. Cited in Waley, Siena, 89.

\textsuperscript{119} Bowsky, Siena Under the Nine, 14 and 115-119. In 1290 the Nove was temporarily changed to the Diciotto ‘domini ad gubernandum civitatem’ (6 of which were non-casati and 12 were to be casati). By 1290-1 the number and composition of the government had temporarily changed again into the Sei ‘governatores et difensores communis et populi’ with the casting out of the 12 previous casati members of the government. This was changed back to the government of the Nove in 1292. Waley, Siena, 95. Although there was a change in the number of people elected to office, the period documents do not indicate that there was any change in policy from that of the first Nove regime. Bowsky, “Buon Governo,” 368, n 1.

\textsuperscript{120} Statuti, Siena, 17, f. 389r (1300-1302), Dist. VI: “De his qui possint essere de novem. Item quod domini Novem qui sunt et esse debent defensores comunis et populi sen. et civitatis et districtus eiusdem sint et esse debeant de mercatoribus et de numero mercatorum civitas se. vel de media gente.” Cited in Bowsky, Siena Under the Nine, 63.

\textsuperscript{121} Bowsky was able to identify occupations for 110 men who sat on the council of the Nove between 1287 and 1355. Besides merchants and bankers, other known professions were wool manufacturers, goldsmiths, and even a hotel keeper. Bowsky, “Buon Governo,” 374.
similar wealth and standing, but who happened not to be merchants. Furthermore, by repositioning their group’s identity away from a small clique based on occupational interest to one that resided at a position nearer the middle of the economic and social continuum of Sienese society, the media gente allowed themselves greater power to command by supporting their claims to act as a mediator between the two poles of a dominant class and a general population.

As the mercatores widened themselves into the media gente, many of the practices and symbols of feudal culture that the group embraced became inappropriate for use by those who joined their ranks from the lower part of the Sienese social scale. One of these practices was the use of Latin within the commune’s administration. Many of the lesser members of the merchant class, as well as those who newly entered the ruling group of the media gente, likely did not finish a Latin education. The most popular form of education for this group was an alternative to the Latin curriculum, called abbaco.

Abbaco schools arose in Italy during the second half of the thirteenth century. Pupils, having learned elementary reading through the medium of Latin, immediately progressed to the entirely vernacular abbaco curriculum, where they learned elementary arithmetic and basic commercial knowledge and skills, such as monetary systems and, occasionally, double entry bookkeeping. As such, many children never learned Latin

122. For information about the electoral process of the oligarchy, see Bowsky, Siena under the Nine, 58-61. That there was great continuity among those who were in the Nove is attested to by Bowsky’s analysis of office holding from 1287-1355. Of the nearly 500 identifiable office-holders on the Nove, at least fifty served three times while some served six or more times. More than one-third of the office holders had close relatives on the Nove, and more than 100 had more than one kinsman who was elected. This consistency makes the author suspect electoral manipulation. Bowsky, Siena Under the Nine, 73.


124. Abbaco teachers are difficult to locate in the remaining documents of the period because most of them ran independent establishments rather than being hired by communal authorities. Paul F. Grendler, Renaissance Education Between Religion and Politics (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 6 and 11.
grammar per se, only simply acquiring the skills of reading the alphabet on the basis of Latin texts. They were then either passed to a vernacular abacus school or left formal education for workshop training. The move to the vernacular by the new *media gente*, allowed them to better harness the power of their numbers by creating, in their economic disparity, at least an equal linguistic community in opposition to the Latin high culture of the *casati*.  

The main force of the vernacular in the Gabella and Biccherna panels, however, lay in its use as an indicator of the new regime’s intermediary position in society. According to Jacque Le Goff’s work, *The Birth of Purgatory*, the later Middle Ages saw the rise of many new intermediate categories such as the notion of purgatory as a place between heaven and hell, the rise of religious tertiaries, and social divisions that distinguished between *maiores*, *mediocres*, and *minores*. Such schemes allowed the *mercatores* to conceive of themselves as occupying a position somewhere between Siena’s ordinary people and the *casati* and thus comprising a ‘middle class’.  

While one might ordinarily think that any group at the top of a hierarchy would have the greatest position of control, social intermediacy was actually a powerful strategy of control. According to Le Goff this was possible because “theoretically the position of the intermediate category of the triad is such that it can gain advantage by forging

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127. The author argues that in previous centuries, the medieval mind organized itself in binary oppositions, such as those of God/Satan, clergy/laiety, temporal/spiritual. Starting around the year 1000, however, the influence of Greek and Roman antiquity on medieval culture led to the introduction of pluralistic models. The most important of these new modes of thought was the introduction of ternary patterns that, rather than blunt oppositions, led to more complex interplays of three elements, such as the feudal model of those who pray, fight, and work (clergy, nobles, masses). Jacque Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984): 225-6.
alliances with, or moving close to, one pole of the other.” Already culturally close to the *casati* after having usurped many of the trappings of feudal culture in previous decades, the *mercatores* as the *media gente* now tried to establish an identity as also belonging to the city’s ‘people’ (*gente*). The inscriptions in the vernacular in the book covers of the city’s financial offices performed this function by signaling the administration’s move away from the total use of an antique tongue towards the language of daily use for the majority of the inhabitants of the city.

This shift in language was in keeping with the *media gente*’s other uses of the vernacular. One of the most important tools of the rhetorical use of this language was an Italian edition of Siena’s constitution of 1309-10. Purposefully placed in the office of the Biccherna was a book copy of the statutes of the constitution that was written in the vernacular, in large, clear letters with very few abbreviations, so that “acciò che le prove persone e l’alte persone che non sanno grammatica, et li altri e’quali vorranno, possano esso vedere e copia inde trarre et avere alloro voluntà” (So that the poor persons, and other persons who do not know {Latin} grammar, and the others who wish can see it and make and have copies made from it at their will). Thus, the use of the vernacular in the panels indicates that the business of government was no longer

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129. The entries in the ledgers of the Gabella office were often kept in the vernacular instead of being translated into a final Latin copy. The register to which the panel of the Gabella of 1291 was attached was written in the vernacular. William Heywood, *A Pictorial Chronicle Of Siena* (Siena: Torrini, 1902), 33. Tomei, *Le biccherne*, 128. The Statutes of the Gabella of 1301-03 were also written in the vernacular. See: Luigi Polidori, *Statuti senesi; scritti in volgare ne’ secoli XIII e XIV; e pubblicati secondi i testi del R. Archivio di Stato in Siena*, 3 vols (Bologna: G. Romagnoli, 1863-77).
131. Translation by Bowsky, *Siena Under the Nine*, 95. Another copy of the constitution was also fixed by a chain and placed in the office of the Podestà.
exclusively for the literate elites but, thanks to the *media gente*, for the broader Sienese citizenry.

Finally, the use of the vernacular in the Gabella and Biccherna book cover paintings might also attest to a strategy by Siena’s business class to control the city’s political process by advancing the idea of itself as the stratum of society most suitable for the task of administration. Vernacular literacy was required for conducting commerce; writing in the form of records, ledgers, letters, journals, contracts, and bills was produced by the men of the *media gente*. A common sentiment developed from observations of Late Medieval and Renaissance merchant culture was that they “had ink stained fingers.” In this vein, the vernacular, along with document keeping, became one of the signs of the newly emerging middle-class. As their command over the common language helped this group to successfully run large, profitable businesses, the use of the vernacular within the government helped form the idea that it was the merchant’s natural role in society to be the managers of civic affairs as well. From this position, the *media gente* became an increasingly legitimate choice to fill the positions on the ruling council of the nove *gubernatores et difensores civitatis et communis* (nine governors and defenders of the city and commune). The idea that the *media gente* were particularly suited to hold civic offices helped them retain their hold on power by suggesting that those citizens of Siena defined as *casati* and *popoli minuti* were somehow less fit for government election since, as belonging to other social strata, they had different natural interests and inclinations.

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While the use of Latin by the mercatores during the administration of the Trentasei was a type of closure in which power was usurped from the casati and used to help them retain ascendancy while allowing them to exclude many members of the popoli minuti from attempts to gain power, the use of the vernacular worked differently. By employing the common language of the people the media gente made a claim for their regime’s political inclusivity; however, the reality of education and literacy of the time meant that the vernacular mostly referred back to only one group: the media gente. As a relatively new office of its own, the Gabella was a reference point for the media gente, and since it might not have been as constrained to strictly observe the iconographic traditions established in the Biccherna, its painted book covers were able to better reflect the media gente’s first steps at new forms of exclusion.

In the early years of the government of the Nove there is another change to the inscriptions of the Biccherna and Gabella book covers that demonstrates the media gente’s further attempt to control by moving themselves to the center of Sienese social life. The first extant book cover of the Biccherna from this period, a panel dating to January-June of 1294 (Fig. 13), reads:

LIBER DUCCI SACCHETTI ET SOÇII RICHI, CORSINI BANDINI, MINI COMPAGNI, QUATUOR PROVISORUM COMUNIS SENARUM IN PRIMIS SEX MENSIBUS REGIMINIS CONTIS BERNARDINI DE CHONIO, POETESTATIS COMUNIS SENARUM

(The book of Duccio Sacchetti and Soçii Richi, Corsini Bandini, Mini Compagni, the four Provveditori of the commune of Siena in the first six months of the rule of the Count Bernardino of Chonio, Podestà of the commune of Siena)

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The panel of 1294 sees the offices of the Biccherna and Gabella modify another one of their connections with a practice of the feudal culture of Siena’s *casati*. In this, and all subsequent panel paintings from these bureaus, the title *dominus* is no longer used before the names of any of the agents, whether they be *media gente* or *casati*.

Like the use of Latin, the usurpation of the title of *dominus* and the cultural prestige it conferred to those who had the right to use it was a tactical move by the mercatores to compete with the power of their social superiors. However, also like Latin, the title was not necessarily appropriate to use in reference to all of the members of the new *media gente*. Furthermore, the movement of the *media gente* towards a rhetoric of their reign being for the benefit of the ‘people’ required that they distance themselves, and their administration, from the notion of feudal subjection and the abuses that the title *dominus* might have carried for members of the *popoli minuti*.

Another title, *missere*, appeared for the first time in the inscriptions of panel paintings of the Biccherna and Gabella, shortly after the apparent discontinuation of the word *dominus*. The first evidence of this title of address in a Sienese financial office book cover is in a Biccherna panel dated 1304 in which the Podestà is labeled “Missere Manente da Ieci”.

Unlike the general term *dominus*, which was still used to refer to the authority invested in the highest communal post of the Nove, *missere* was a specific term that was given to knights, judges, doctors, and law professors. Thus, the title given to the Podestà Manente da Ieci signaled that he was also a knight (a prerequisite to hold this office in the commune of Siena).

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On the panels of the Biccherna, the designation of an officer as ‘missere’ was important because it signaled that these men were not eligible for positions in the ruling council. According to the statutes of the constitution of 1287, knights, judges, and doctors, regardless of their social origins, were banned from election to the council of the Nove.\textsuperscript{136} While media gente families had representatives from the professions of judges and doctors in their number,\textsuperscript{137} knighthood was an honor specifically reserved for members of the casati. Considering that the appellation missere did not appear in any surviving panels before this date, but becomes common after the word dominus stopped being used, it is likely that the former became a solution as to how to distinguish iconographically the casati represented on the panels. Hence, missere would have indicated those excluded from entry to the main administrative positions of the commune without diminishing the prestige of the media gente also represented there, something that would have occurred had dominus continued to be used.

While the media gente jettisoned some of the iconography of the Biccherna and Gabella book covers that were not fit for some of the newer members of their social group, they continued to accommodate other forms. Two such examples of iconography that were accessible to the whole of the middle class were surnames and coats of arms. For example, the previously discussed panel of the Quattro Provveditori of the Biccherna

\textsuperscript{136} Notaries were also excluded. Statuti, Siena, N 16. (dsit. VI) fol. 253r. Cited in Bowsky, “Buon Governo,” 370. This prohibition was upheld in the constitution on 1309-10, which states “che del numero de li detti segnori Nove o vero d’esso officio, officiale essere non possa alcuno d’alcuno casato de la citta di Siena, ne alcuno cavaliere, ne alcuno giudice, ne alcuno notaio, ne alcuno medico.” Siena, Il costituto, vol. II, d. VI, r. VI, 492.

\textsuperscript{137} Although judges, notaries, doctors, and lawyers had many members of casati among them, or if not, were often allies or dependents of them, their exclusion from the Nove was more likely due to the need to circumscribe their power due to their earnings and intimacy with the government, as well as to keep them free to perform their vital services, rather than from mere group inclusion. Bowsky, Siena Under the Nine, 69- 71.
dating from January-June of 1294 clearly lists the first and last names of the non-casati officers Duccio Sacchetti and Socci Ricchi and displays their coats of arms. As the evidence from the discussion of the panel paintings from the previous regime confirms, by the fourteenth century the use of surnames was common for all of the casati and almost all of the families of the media gente. As markers of clan solidarity, these last names were intimately connected with their publicly visible form: the family coats of arms.

Although many of the mercatores had already adopted coats of arms during the thirteenth century, it is unclear how and when the members of the media gente of humbler means and social origins received theirs. According to the fourteenth-century jurist Bartolo da Sassoferrato’s work Tractatus de insigniis et armis (c.1355), one of the earliest tracts on the subject of insignia, coats of arms could be technically assumed by anyone, although those given by authorities or obtained as part of an official position were considered as higher in honor. Being further removed from the feudal tradition where coats of arms originated, and courting the good graces of the popoli minuti, the media gente might have rejected the practice of displaying coats of arms. However, the use of signs as marks of personal or cooperative identification was already quite familiar and ever popular amongst many levels of Sienese society below the casati in the form of trademarks.

138. The name Mini Compagni is given without his last name (Agazzari) although he is provided with the appropriate coat of arms. The last of the four officers is named as ‘Corsini Bandini’ but this name does not seem to match the remaining coats of arms, which is unidentifiable.
139. By 1305-08 among the councilors’ names listed in the minutes of the General Council nineteen families were given surnames (i.e. dative plurals), fifteen being among the casati and four not (de Balzis, de Mazzis, de Squaricialupis, de Ughettis). Waley, Siena, 78.
Trademarks (*marche*) had been in use in Italian cities since the Early Middle Ages. Often consisting of simple, linear figures, trademarks were used by artisans, notaries, and merchants to differentiate the source of their products and to assure consumers of their origin and quality. The members of guilds were often required to put a general sign (presumably the guild sign) on their products in order to control quality, and non-guild members were prohibited from their use. Guild masters were also required to use individual signs, and they increasingly saw their trademarks in the same light as coats of arms, placing their marks not only on their products, but also on such things as their houses and gravestones. As the *mercatores* had already established the practice of the use of coats of arms, the extension of this practice to other members of the *media gente*, who might not have possessed arms hereditarily and/or through their families’ acquisition of a knighthood, would have been a logical extension of the already developed culture of signs.  

This adoption of coats of arms by members of the general populace encountered little resistance from the *casati*, since the latter were too politically weak to close off their use by other sections of Sienese society.  

Although the *media gente* used the rhetorical device of coats of arms to advance their public visibility, and visualize their hegemony, it seems that there might have been a conscious effort to separate their arms from those of the *casati* by differentiating their  

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140. Bartolo did not discuss the authority of cities to grant coats of arms, although he did deem it lawful for them to grant honors and nobility. Since he recognized Italian city states as fully free and independent political entities, it is most likely that he would have recognized their right to make and grant coats of arms. Bartolo, *Grammar of Signs*, 154-60.  
141. Legal restrictions were used in other Tuscan cities to check the appropriation of arms by those townspeople of non-noble origins. For example, the statutes of Pisa in 1286 declared that no *popularis* was permitted to display the coats of arms of a noble citizen unless he had already used them for ten years. In 1313 the time period was moved to twenty years. Bartolo, *Grammar of Signs*, 58, n 195. In Florence in 1349 there was a probationary period that required any magnate who received a new coat of arms to place a black margin around its border. Bartolo, *Grammar of Signs*, 66.
colors, emblems, and divisions. While many of the coats of arms of the families that comprised the casati and media gente are missing from those represented in the extant Biccherna and Gabella panels, there does appear to be some difference in the coats of arms between the two groups. While evidence of the idea that the arms of the bourgeois should have more mundane emblems than those of the nobility can only be found in later literature on the subject, the colors and emblems of the Sienese casati appear to have more royal, feudal, and militaristic associations than those of the media gente (Fig. 14). While the color scheme of the red and white of the Holy Roman Empire appears in coats of arms of the casati such as the Scotti, Rinaldini, and Manetti, it is rarer in the representative group of shields of the media gente, occurring only in arms of the Agazzari family. Similarly, the black and yellow color combination, also signs of the Holy Roman Empire, occurs more frequently in the arms of the casati, such as in the Malavolti, Maconi, and Marescotti families, than in the media gente, where only the Rocchi utilize it in the extant panels.

The feudal emblems that appear on the remaining Biccherna and Gabella book covers are present on the arms of the casati Manetti and Marescotti families in the form of an eagle, another sign of the Holy Roman Empire. The fleur-de-lis appears on the

142. It was not until the fifteenth century, with works such as De nobilitate from the French Jurist Bonus de Curtili that the idea was writen that nobles and non-nobles should have different emblems on their shields, so that members of each class could be more readily identified. Curtili suggested that nobles be permitted the use of items such as lilies, animals, roses, and crosses, and that ordinary people should be limited to certain letters, number, lines, and ciphers. Bartolo, Grammar of Signs, 59.

143. Many noble families who had their origins in ministerial relationships with the Empire bear the eagle on their coat of arms. Bartolo of Sassoferato, Osvaldo Cavallar, Susanne Degenring and Julius Kirshner, A Grammar of Signs: Bartolo da Sassoferato's Tract on Insignia and Coats of Arms (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1994), 47. The earliest instance of an eagle as a definite heraldic charge appears on the ‘Great Seal’ of the Margrave Leopold of Austria in 1136. During the reign of Frederick Barbarossa, elected King of the Romans in 1152 and crowned emperor in 1155, the eagle with one or two heads (there
casati arms of the Manetti, Armalei, and Rossi families, which was a sign of imperial and monarchical power. Casati arms also tended to include signs of military and seigniorial activities, such as the castle that appears in the Cerretani arms, and the portcullis that figures prominently on the shield of the Malavolti.

In contrast, the arms of the media gente tended to be composed more of simple divisions of the shield than portrayers of particular emblems. For example, the Placidi family arms are only bisected horizontally and the coats of arms of the Bonichi are bisected vertically. When emblems are present in the representative arms of the media gente they are more likely to be routine things, for example, the simple flowers found on the Ricchi family arms, and the punning chess pieces (rooks) on the shield of the Rocchi.

Although no legal restrictions were placed on the adoption of arms in Siena and they could technically be borne by anyone, the media gente did cultivate a system of social restrictions. For a Sienese citizen to have and successfully employ coats of arms depended on both economic and social standing in society, since the conventions of display would keep them under check. Contemporary writers such as the Florentine Franco Sacchetti demonstrate that the communal mentality condemned persons too low on the social hierarchy who wanted to adopt arms in imitation of their social superiors. In his novella LXIII, a man of low birth desired to have his coat of arms painted on his

seems originally to have been little unanimity upon the point) seems to have become the recognized heraldic symbol of the Holy Roman Empire. Fox- Davies, Heraldry, 178.
144. As early as the Carolingian era the inclusion of a lily-crown and lily-scepter in images symbolized imperial authority. Charles S. Buchanan,” Late Eleventh-Century Illuminated Initials from Lucca: Partisan Political Imagery During the Investiture Struggle.” Arte Medievale 12/13 (1998-99): 65-73; P.E. Schramm, Die deutschen Kaiser und Könige in Bildern ihrer Zeit: 751-1190 (München: Prestel Verlag, 1983), 53. The lily was also a symbol of the French monarchy. Louis VI (1108-37) and Louis VII (1137-80) of France used the fleur-de-lis among the country’s repertoire of signs. By the time of Louis the VII, the first Capetian king, the symbol was used more by the king of France than any other Christian sovereign. Michel Pastoureau, Heraldry: An Introduction to a Noble Tradition (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1997), 100.
shield by the painter Giotto only to be duped and chastised by the artist for having ambitions beyond his station.\textsuperscript{145} Thus, arms and family names were an important tool of exclusion. Those who were able to, adopted them to demonstrate their families’ consolidation and social pretension vis-a-vis the \textit{casati}, while the subtle coercion of social norms blocked the access of the \textit{popoli minuti} from this cultural means of authority.\textsuperscript{146}

In Biccherna covers dated 1307 and 1314 the scheme of the Camarlingo at his desk and the coats of arms of the officers were combined into one panel.\textsuperscript{147} Around this time, another innovation was added to the panels’ inscriptions. After the name of each of the offices’ Esecutore/Provveditore, the section of the city where each man resided (Città, San Martino, or Camollia) was also added. For example, the Gabella panel of January-June of 1307 (Fig. 15) reads:

\begin{quote}
SIGNORI DEL LA CABIELLA DA KALENDE GENAIO ANNI .CCC. SEI INFINO A KALENDE LULLIO ANNI .CCC. SETTE, ISTRICHA RENALDI MALISCHOTTI DI CITTÀ, TURA DI GERI MONTANINI DI SANTO MARTINO, NERI DI MISERE SALINBENE DI CHAMOLLIA\textsuperscript{148}
\end{quote}

(Lords of the Gabella from the first of January year 1306 unto the first of July year 1307, Istricha Renaldi Mariscotti of Città, Tura of Geri Montanini of San Martino, Neri of Sir Salimbene of Camollia)

\textsuperscript{146} It is interesting to note that the constitution of 1309-10 forbids that coats of arms of individuals be painted in or on any other type of civic property. “\textit{Anco, che neune arme si possano o vero debiano dipegnere in alcuno palazzo del commune di Siena, nè in alcuna porta o vero fonte nè in alcuna lavorio del comune di Siena, excetto che ne li libri del comune.}” Siena, \textit{Il costituto}, vol .I, d. 1, r. DXXXVI, 334.
\textsuperscript{147} Biccherna, AS Siena, n.10, luglio-dicembre 1314. Morandi, \textit{Le biecherne}, 72; Gabella, AS Siena n.9, gennaio-giugno 1307. Morandi, \textit{Le biecherne}, 76.
\textsuperscript{148} Morandi, \textit{Le biecherne}, 72.
The practice of adding the neighborhood of each officer is first found in an extant book cover of the Biccherna in 1310.149

The division of the city into these three main neighborhoods, called terzi, stems from the area’s geography and its settlement pattern (Fig. 16). The first part of the city to become inhabited was the hill where the cathedral stands, the neighborhood now known as Città. As Siena grew, the adjoining hills also became settled, creating San Martino to the southeast and Camollia to the northwest. Throughout Sienese history these three divisions played an important organizing role for the city and its inhabitants, serving as the foundation for the division of military companies, the party of the popolo, and the number of seats of various city councils.150

The regime of the Nove also embraced the idea of social and bureaucratic duties being distributed equally among the three ‘natural’ divisions of the city. For example, besides having both the offices of the Biccherna and the Gabella drawing their officers equally amongst each section of the city, the Nove themselves were to be drawn, by threes, from each neighborhood.151 In addition, the city’s General Council was to be composed of 300 men, 100 per terzo.152 Rather than merely being representative of

149. Biccherna, London, Victoria and Albert Museum inv. n. 8989-‘63. Morandi, Le bicherne, 74. Besides the panels already mentioned, the feature of the officers’ terzo can also be found in these panels: Biccherna, AS Siena n.10 luglio-dicembre 1314, and Biccherna, AS Siena n.12, gennaio-giugno 1321. Morandi, Le bicherne, 76 and 80.
150. Both Siena’s foot soldiers and its cavalry were divided into groups dependant upon which terzo they lived in. Waley, Siena, 189, 191, and 193. Many of Siena’s regular and temporary councils and committees were drawn from men appointed in specific, equal numbers from each terzo. For some examples, see Waley, Siena, 55-7. This system of equal representation is first documented in the statutes of 1262. Morandi, Le biccherne, 72. The council of the popolo was composed of 150 men, 50 from each terzo. Bowsky, Siena Under the Nine, 35. Waley, Siena, 101.
151. Waley, Siena, 59.
152. Bowsky, Siena Under the Nine, 58-60 and 86. Another example is the revived Council of the People that, again, had 150 people, 50 from each terzo. The Nove also saw to the appointment of one judge per terzo to serve as a lawyer for those too poor to hire one. Bowsky, Siena Under the Nine, 37 and 110.
geography, however, the cultivation of the rhetoric of the tripartite city division served to underscore and naturalize the *media gente*’s contingent closure strategy of the tripartite social system.

That the city was sectioned into thirds happened naturally as the inhabitants of the area used the geography to their advantages. Representation in the government by the *terzi* of the city reinforced the notion of Siena as a whole made up of three, a number symbolically linked to such ideas as the Trinity. With this number already evident in the natural and political processes of the commune, the view that the populace of the city was also divided into three, uncontrived groups could find a foundation. Of course, as a continuum the social structure of the city placed the *media gente* as the middle. From this vantage point as an essential, mediating faction part-way between the *casati* and the *popoli minuti*, the *media gente* could more easily control the city’s political process by acting as the ministers of the needs and rights of all citizens.

For some reason, perhaps because of the constraints of space in the place allotted to the panels’ inscriptions, the practice seems to have gone out of favor by 1321. At this time, new iconography was being introduced. The fifteen book cover paintings from the Biccherna and Gabella that remain from the year 1320 until the end of the regime of the Nove in 1355, display many changes and a fluidity in the conventions of their iconography. The major innovation made during these years was in the panels of the Gabella, which began to replace the portrait of the monk/Camarlingo with various religious scenes or allegories.\(^{153}\) For example, the Gabella panel of the year of July-
December 1334 depicts the Camarlingo, Don Giglio, kneeling before a landscape of the Nativity of Christ in which the Virgin Mary looms large (Fig. 17). Another panel, that of the Gabella, July-December, 1344, also forgoes the traditional portrait of the Camarlingo and instead depicts an allegory of Sienese ‘good government’ (Fig. 18).

Both of these image types, and elements within them, became extremely important to the rule of the Nove in the early-to-mid-fourteenth century, as the commune faced many hardships that either threatened, or were potential threats, to the political might of the media gente. During these years there were several major disturbances, including two open revolts. On 21 July 1318 there was a tumult in the piazza in which the participants were butcher-animal dealers and smiths, with other popolari minuti. They shouted out against the regime of the Nove and threw stones. A few months later, on 6 October, several hundred armed rebels, led by some casati clans (foremost being the Tolomei), burst into the Campo and tried to storm the communal palace, shouting “death to the Nove.” There was a later plot to revolt in early February 1325, when various conspirators and some Tolomeis attempted to turn a game of pugna (a sort of group fist fight) into an open rebellion. A Biccherna volume notes that 200 gold florins had been paid at the end of that month “to a secret accuser who revealed to the Capitano della

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Guerra the treason, conspiracy, and plot that had been arranged against the office of the Lords Nine….” 158 Famines, disease, and financial hardships were also commonplace. 159

The changes in iconography in the Gabella panels from remembrance of an officer to charged allegory may speak of the increasing pressure the Nove felt to step up its strategy of exclusion in the form of the rhetoric of the media gente as inclusive protectors of a ‘good and pacific state.’ 160 Three of the most important rhetorical structures that the media gente came to utilize for this project were the commune as the city of the Virgin, allegories of a just government, and Siena’s connection to ancient Republican Rome.

A particularly strong devotion to the Virgin Mary had already been a part of the city’s identity since at least the thirteenth century. According to Sienese tradition, Mary was asked to accept the position of queen and protectress of the state, when in 1260, on the eve of the Battle of Montaperti, the city keys were delivered to her at the cathedral altar in the hopes for a victory. The media gente further encouraged the view of their city as being under her heavenly domain, and in 1315 they commissioned the painter Simone Martini to create a massive portrait of the Virgin with the Christ child and saints, to adorn

160. At this time there was a heavy emphasis on this idea. An undated rubric of the Sienese constitution of 1309-10, entitle “De la pena di chi turbasse el pacifico stato de la citta di siena,” provided a fine of 100 lira or more for anyone of Siena who said, counseled, wrote, or did anything that might even indirectly “disturb the pacific state of the city and of the district of Siena, or might suscitate or create any discord among individual persons…” Siena, Il costituto, vol. II, d. V, r. LIII, 255. Bowsky, “Anatomy,” 232.
the meeting hall of the commune’s General Council in the newly constructed civic
castle.\footnote{Simone Martini, \textit{Maestà}, 1315-21, fresco, Sala del Mappamondo, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena. This work
decorates one entire wall of the room. It is one of several late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth variations on
this theme, all which celebrate the city’s status as a protectariate of the Virgin.}

In the Gabella panel of the image of the Nativity, the Virgin Mary was once
again commissioned by an agent of the state. Although this image is not typical of those
that invoke her as the Queen of Heaven and of Siena, her central placement, commanding
size, and amplitude of fabric mark her as the work’s focal point. The small figure of a
youth in the left foreground who presents a chest to the Virgin is perhaps a reference to
city’s stored revenue and the wealth of the commune that flowed through Siena’s
financial offices. As such, the youth and the Camarlingo, kneeling to the right, seem to
be presenting to the Virgin the financial command of her city for whom the bureau’s
officers were the earthly executors. The presence of those agents of the \textit{media gente} who
were sworn to care for her state and see to the appropriate gathering of funds, are made
manifest by the continued inclusion of their coats of arms within the panel’s iconography,
between the picture and the inscription.

The counterpart to the idea of Siena as the property of the ‘Queen of Heaven’ is
the personification of the earthly power of the \textit{media gente} in the form of a just ruler of
the commune. In this allegory, found on the Gabella panel of 1344, a figure of a mature
male sits on a throne, with a scepter and crown that symbolize his dominion. That the
figure is closely connected to the commune of Siena is indicated by three key motifs. The
first is the initials \textit{C.S.C.V.} inscribed around his head. These letters stand for \textit{Commune
Senarum Civitatis Virgini}, a common designation of the city. Secondly, the figure is
dressed in a garment of black and white, colors that echoes the two hues of the commune’s coat of arms. Lastly, the shield that the figure carries, though difficult to make out due to abrasion, is that of the city itself on which is depicted the figure of the Virgin and Child.  

The meaning of the picture of the ruler seated in the regalia of Siena becomes more apparent when juxtaposed against the image’s prototype. This same iconography, with a few small differences, was first invoked in the media gente’s new civic palace as part of Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s immense fresco cycle of the Allegory of Good Government (Fig. 19). In this work, which covers the walls of the meeting chamber of the Nove, another image of the ‘ruler’ may be found and is described in an inscription at the bottom of the fresco as ‘Ben Comun’, the common good. Nicolai Rubenstein interprets this figure in an Aristotelian light. Common good, as a basis and criterion for government, could serve as a Republican alternative against the claims of the pacifying benefits of despotism, whereas the tyrannical government of self-interest and the neglect of the common good caused disaster and ruin. The salvation of the people lay in raising the common good to the position of the head of the state. 

Tied to this rhetoric of republicanism as an appropriate path for the commune is the legend of Siena’s close relationship to ancient Republican Rome. In the Gabella book cover featuring the idea of ‘Ben Comun’, the figure of the ‘common good’ rests his feet

162. Morandi, Le biccherne, 96.
on the side of a reclining she-wolf that suckles two human infants. The image of the wolf and twins immediately calls to mind the story of Romulus and Remus, the mythical founders of Rome. Thus, the picture seems to indicate that the rule of the common good is justified by the foundational example of the glories of the ancient world’s greatest republic. This notion had a special significance for Siena, for legend had it that the city was founded by the sons of Remus: Senio and Aschio. Together, both of the figures on the Gabella panel reveal that the rule of the people of Siena was part of its birthright, inherited from its mother city.

These rhetorical devices found in the Gabella book covers, but also in other spaces of representation controlled by the media gente, aided this social group in its attempt to monopolize the privilege of control over the civic government by parrying any opposition about the suitability of its administration. This is a critical point to address, since an important political ideal during the Middle was that monarchy is the best form of government. Promoting the Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven, as the rightful sovereign and protectress of the city gave the illusion of a feudal overlord, without the threat of abuse of power. The media gente then could install itself into the role of custodian of the Virgin’s worldly property. This social group’s rise to power and its political successes were, hence, taken as an expression of the favor of the Lady, and its devotion to her by commissioning artworks strengthened the bond. That the city was in the possession of the Virgin protected the media gente’s ascendancy by making any attempt at wresting the commune’s government away from the Nove a crime against heaven.

The particular suitability of the *media gente* for the task of civic power is symbolized by a personification of the rule of the common good, whose foundation lay in Republican Rome. As the ‘middling’ people of Sienese society, the *media gente* were the intermediate and balancing pivot between the social extremes of domination and submission, both of which had the potential to harm the tranquility of their Lady’s state. The legitimacy of this elected government of common people was provided by Siena’s direct descent from Rome, where during the Republic common citizens were intimately involved in the political process.

The changes in the Biccherna and Gabella panels during the reign of the Nove demonstrate that the simple usurpation of the iconography established by the *nobili* under the Ventiquattro and adopted by the *mercatores* under the Trentasei was not appropriate for the social composition of the new ruling social class. Thus, cultural practices not easily taken up by, or not useful to, the members of the *media gente*, such as Latin literacy and titles, were dropped from the book covers’ designs. Added to the repertoire of iconography of the panels was rhetoric found elsewhere in Sienese culture, such as political and religious allegories. All together, the elements chosen to represent the regime of the Nove, and by extension *the media gente*, promoted this group as a balancing middle force between socio-economic extremes and, as such, the natural caretaker of the city and its political processes.

The changes in iconography imply that as the *mercatores* grew less reliant on their close connection with the *casati* and began to promote themselves as the *media gente*, they corrected some of the blurring of social and cultural boundaries that existed in
their previous regime. While the main line drawn between the *media gente* and the *popoli minuti* and *casati* was still its ability to be elected to the city’s highest council, which at this point was the most powerful body Siena had ever seen, new cultural lines were being drawn. The need to include more of Siena’s populace in the ruling oligarchy led to the strategy of making the ruling class a ‘middle,’ elected social group which would defend the state for all Sienese citizens. Creating some sort of culture for this ambiguous group was important to the new *media gente*’s ability to maintain its control since being a ‘middling person’ of the Nove was a non-legally defined state. The creation of *media gente* surnames, coats of arms, and the promotion of a vernacular, republican, business-like state within the Biccherna and Gabella panels had the effect of supplying this group with a tangible set of behaviors and customs. This new *media gente* lifestyle more visibly defined the small social group which had access to power and placed all of Sienese society on a continuum, with the poles being called the *popoli minuti* and the *casati*. That these cultural closures were incomplete, with only social customs and pressures, not laws, maintaining them, speaks to the media gente’s reliance on being able to traverse fluidly the space between the extremes in order to protect its power.
CHAPTER 3: MEDIA GENTE CLOSURE AND URBAN CONSTRUCTION

As demonstrated in chapter two, in the 1280’s when the mercatores began to shift their methods of exclusion in response to pressures to reform the government, and in doing so created the media gente of the Nove, they also needed to employ cultural forms of control to support their political and economic power. In the Biccherna and Gabella book covers this was accomplished by the usurpation of the decorative space of the offices’ ledgers and their accompanying elements of the culture of the nobili. Once in possession of this space and iconography, the mercatores either abandoned what was not appropriate to their conception of the media gente or slowly grafted onto the tradition new layers of rhetorical meaning. These book covers, however, were not the only solution to the needs of the mercatores/media gente for cultural closure, nor were they the only example of the usurpation and mutation of the cultural capital of the nobili in service to the middle stratum of society.

This chapter examines the Palazzo Pubblico (Fig. 20) and Torre del Mangia (Fig. 21) and the strategies of exclusion and control employed in each. Much like the book covers of the Biccherna and Gabella, the elegant functionalism of this building and tower conceals much of its involvement in the complex social, economic, and political struggles of Siena during the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. An examination of the form and uses of these two structures reveals that much of their visual and functional aspects were an imitation of the private properties of the casati. This borrowing of casati culture allowed the media gente to harness the practical and symbolic importance that domestic palaces and towers had accrued. When glossed by the regime’s own rhetoric, these
borrowed elements aided the middle stratum of Sienese society in successfully tightening its grasp on the political, militaristic, legal, commercial, and social phenomena of the commune.

*The Palazzo Pubblico*

It seems that the creation of a public palace was an immediate concern for the *media gente* after the troubles that led to the creation of the Nove in 1287. Although the notion of constructing a palace had discussed in Siena’s government councils before this time, it was not until January, 1288 that the Nove, along with the four Provveditori of the Biccherna and the Podestà, made a decisive step. It was agreed that:

“…the palace, formerly called the “Bulgano,”¹⁶⁵ in which the aforementioned lord Podestà of Siena now resides, is and should be the perpetual palace of the Sienese commune which will house the Podestà and other leaders while they serve their terms in the city of Siena.”¹⁶⁶

Different claims have been made as to why the Sienese government finally felt that it was important to move its various councils and bureaus into a central, municipally owned location. One idea is that the Sienese were responding to the gap between themselves

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¹⁶⁵. At this time Siena’s Bulgano (or mint) was housed in the building of the “Dogana delle kabelle” (customs house), a large, two-storied building that was constructed in 1194. The Bulgano came to be located here sometime between 1262 and 1288. Max Elijah Grossman, “Pro Honore Comunis Senensis et Pulchritudine Civitatis: Civic Architecture and Political Ideology in the Republic of Siena, 1270—1420” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2006), 258-259. Aldo Cariola and Enzo Carli, *The Palazzo Pubblico of Siena*, trans. Diane C. Abramson (Roma: Editalia, 1964), 14. The use of the word Bulgano in 1288 to describe the building of the Dogana must not be confused with another building built by the commune as the Bulgano, first mentioned in a document of 1236. This building was located on the *Platea Comunis* near the church of S. Luca in Palchetto.

and other local Italian communes who had long ago erected impressive administrative buildings. For example, the Tuscan commune of Volterra boasted the first town hall, the Palazzo dei Priori, which was begun in 1208. Furthermore, the commune of Florence, Siena’s historic rival, had begun their Palace of the People (now known as the Bargello) in 1255.\footnote{167}

A completely different reason for the construction of the Palazzo Pubblico was given by a fourteenth-century Sienese source. An anonymous chronicler reported that the principle motivation for building the palazzo was to “prevent the church from gaining too much power” since previously, whenever the government wished to hold any council, it convened in the church of San Cristoforo.\footnote{168} During the city’s earlier administrations the influence of the church in the city’s affairs was a real concern. Although a communal building had been erected in 1194 to hold the Dogana (customs) and a few other offices, during much of Siena’s twelfth-century consular period, most of the city’s main civic bodies met in the church of San Pellegrino. During the 1240’s when the party of the popolo made political gains and installed the Ventiquattro, the ruling council met in the aforementioned San Cristoforo (Cristofano), while the General Council either met there or in San Vigilio.\footnote{169}

\footnote{167. In 1299, only two years after construction on Siena’s Palazzo Pubblico commenced, the Florentines embarked on surpassing their ‘Palace of the People’ with an even larger structure, the Palazzo della Signoria (now referred to as the Palazzo Vecchio). John White, \textit{Art and Architecture in Italy 1250-1400} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 65 and 241.}
\footnote{168. “... none esendoci ancora palazo in sul Chanpo, deove potesse stare e’ signori, e’ quai avevano a governare Siena, inperoché prima quando volevano fare alcuno conseggio el facevavo in sancto Cristofano, e per non dare più rincrescimento alla Chiesa... deliberoro di fare uno bello e nobile palazzo... ” Iacometti and Lisini eds., \textit{Cronache senesi}, 78. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 339.}
\footnote{169. Fortunato Donati, “Il Palazzo del Commune di Siena,” \textit{Arte antica senese} (1904): 317.}
However, when the mercatores took over the city in 1270 with the administration of the Trentasei, the government’s dependence on religious houses for meeting space was no longer the case. At this time the city’s main bureaus met in various houses belonging to members of the Guelph nobility to whom the commune paid rent. For example, under the Trentasei the General Council moved from San Cristoforo and installed itself in rented spaces in the domestic palaces of the Ugurgieri and Alessi families (Appendix D). Later, in 1275, the council began to convene in the newly constructed palace of the Tolomei where it resided until at least 1284. Similarly, in 1282 the government of the Quindici, a numerical reconfiguration of the Trentasei, rented space in the Guastelloni palace until 1286, when it moved to the Palazzo Saracini.

It is apt then that in his history of Siena written during the seventeenth century, Giugurta Tomassi claimed that the move to locate the city’s principal magistracies into a single building was taken out of “the desire for prestige” and “public security,” ostensibly against magnates who wanted to gain the power of coercion over the councils. More recently, Gabriella Piccini and Duccio Balestracci suggest that the Nove built its own palace because “it was imprudent to rent from magnates, many of whom had been

170. Grossman suggests that the removal of the General Council from San Cristoforo after 1270 was due to the heavy damage that the church sustained during the demolition of the nearby Salvani palace. “Pro Honore,” 215.
171. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 215. Donati’s timeline of palace rentals differs somewhat from that of Grossman. Donati writes that the General Council was in San Cristoforo until 1271, in 1272 it moved to the Palazzo del Ugurgieri, from 1276-1281 it was in the Alessi palace, and in 1282 it was in the Tolomei palace for a brief time. Donati, “Il palazzo,” 316. Mario Bezzini, Formazione e sviluppo di Siena medievale (Siena: Edizioni Periccioli, 1981), 25, states that in 1284 the council was moved to the Bulgano.
172. The Guastelloni Palace was near the Via Porrione, not too far from the Campo. The Palazzo Saracini was on the Campo, to the left of the Dogana near the Via Malborghetto. Donati, “Il palazzo,” 317.
excluded from the government’s highest office” and who probably demanded excessive rents.174

While all of the reasons given above were, undoubtedly, a part of the Sienese government’s decision to finally proceed with the building of a communal palace, they do not explain the lure of the ‘palace’ as an architectural form as a seat of government. Neither do any of these reasons elucidate how the ‘palace’ built by the Nove offered the government distinction and security beyond aesthetic and defensive concerns. When the form and decorative elements of the building that was ultimately constructed are examined, it becomes clear that while the media gente may indeed have wanted to distance themselves physically and financially from casati over-influence, they also were acutely conscious of the great leverage that domestic palace architecture held within Sienese culture of the late thirteenth century. By usurping this type of building to house and showcase its main form of control, the office of the Nove, the media gente utilized the authority and grandeur of the casati’s architectural tradition to further reap the rewards that their involvement with the government gave to them and to limit these rewards to other social groups.

The form of the Palazzo Pubblico demonstrates that the media gente intended its seat to be more than just a ‘palace’ in name. It is clear that the group also aimed to imitate the configuration of the domestic palaces of the casati, which were differentiated from other common types of Sienese architecture such as churches, castellari (casamenti), and

*case-torre.* For example, *castellari,* such as the one owned by the Ugurgieri family, were generally irregular in form and consisted of a group of tall stone buildings, several stories high, surrounding an open courtyard with one or more gated entrances (Fig. 22).

Domestic palaces were multi-storied symmetrical façades that spanned at least four bays in width *(Fig. 23).*

*Case-torre* were permanent residences somewhere between a *palazzo* and *torre.* While they were shorter than towers and usually wider, they lacked the expanse of domestic palaces and had little in the way of façade decoration. How the Nove’s civic building conforms to the domestic palace form is best observed by an examination of the progression of its three different building campaigns.

The first section of the Palazzo Pubblico was started in 1297 and is comprised of the building’s four-story high central body, often referred to as the Torrione (big tower). On its front façade the Torrione’s first three floors are divided into four equal bays. This section was substantially completed in 1310 when the façade was finished. The fourth story was added in 1326. This story is divided into three bays, and its construction changed the third story of the Torrione from an original five *triforia* to the four seen today.

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175. A bay is an architectural unit of space defined by the edges of vertical elements, such as columns, piers, or pilasters.
176. Another addition to the building, referred to as the *Palazzo Nuove,* was made behind the left (Podestà’s) wing in 1327, and was finished around 1343. The ground floor was a prison and the upper floor was a new meeting room for the General Council. A loggia was added to the back of the Torrione in 1350. The chapel in front of the Palazzo Pubblico was begun in 1352 and took over a century to complete due to design changes. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 306-7, 310, 315 and 323-4.
177. The commune’s lengthy conflict with Arezzo and Pisa (1288-1292), appears to have stalled the building process as the government was in no position to commence construction until around 1297, almost a decade after the location had been decided. The palace was substantially completed in 1350.
The second section of the Palazzo Pubblico to be built was started in June of 1307 and was placed to the right of the Torrione. In the fourteenth century, this wing consisted of only two stories, the façade of which was divided into three bays. This part of the building, too, was finished in 1310. The last section of the main edifice to be constructed was a wing to the left of the Torrione. This part of the building was begun in 1325 and consisted of two stories, the façade of which was divided into five horizontal bays. It was substantially completed in 1331.

The ground floor of the civic palace is revetted in regular limestone ashlar 15.5-20 cms in height. Perforating this facade are portals that are in the shape of pointed arches that frame recessed segmental arches. These doorways are accentuated with moldings of dark green serpentine stone and their tympana are decorated with the *balzana*, the Sienese coat of arms. The low stone walls that block most of these portals today were added during the early nineteenth century. The upper floors of the Palazzo Pubblico are made of brick of varying lengths and of about 6.1-6.3 centimeters in height. On the first floor, the surfaces of these bricks are incised with a fine herringbone pattern. Corresponding to the portals on the ground floor, the façade of the upper stories are perforated by several pointed-arched *triforia* windows. Each window is divided by two mullions with crocket capitals. The tympanum of each opening is slightly recessed and is decorated with a stone

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179. The facades of both the Torrione and the right wing were erected simultaneously in 1307-10. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 286 and 292.
180. The third stories of both the left and right wing of the palace were added during the seventeenth century. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 311.
182. Recent archeological analysis of the building fabric has confirmed that this part of the building and the Campanile should be considered as a unity. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 305-6.
183. Ibid., 294.
balzana. At the top edge of the palace’s first floor and on the second floor of the Torrione is a set of iron hooks and eighteen stone corbels that once supported a removable tettoia (roof). A drip molding delineates where the top edge of the tettoia would have abutted the building. Throughout the façade can be seen regular square openings in the masonry called buche pontaie. These holes were made during construction of the building and mark the place where the wooden poles used to hold the scaffolding were placed.  

All together the pieces of the Palazzo Pubblico formed one incredibly large palace with a massive and elegantly regular eleven bay expanse. That the media gente would be eager to adopt the domestic palace form for its own seat of power makes sense since late thirteenth-century Siena saw the increased building of these structures under the patronage of the city’s most illustrious families. While some great Sienese families, such as the Rinuccini, had begun to build domestic palaces starting in the early Dugento, more traditional Sienese dwellings called castellari (casamenti) and case-torre still predominated. This was due to the rocky political and economic climate of Siena during the mid-century that virtually halted any new domestic architecture from being erected. This situation changed after 1269 when the exiled Guelph nobility reentered the city after their victory at the battle of Colle Val d’Elsa and began to build grand domestic palaces in place of the ancestral homes that had been destroyed by the formerly ruling Ghibellines. Not long after, in 1270-2, one of these returning families, the influential and

184. Ibid., 295-6.
185. Their palace was built in 1208 on the Via de Re (now Via Cecco Angiolieri). It is five bays wide and, as can be told from the position of the windows, was originally five stories high. It may have been the first palace almost entirely constructed out of brick, but it had a lime stone revetment up to the bottom of the fourth floor. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 148.
wealthy Tolomei, constructed the largest and most elaborate private residence Siena had yet seen.

A quick summary of some of the most important and innovative features of the Palazzo Tolomei, and their heavy quotation in the façade of the commune’s own building, demonstrates that the Palazzo Pubblico was intentionally meant to suggest not only the homes of the *casati* but the finest example that Siena possessed (Fig. 24). The first decorative feature that the Palazzo Pubblico seems to have taken from the Palazzo Tolomei is what is now known as the Sienese arch. This arch may be defined as a pointed arch framing a segmental arch which, together, inscribes an equilateral triangle. The Palazzo Pubblico makes heavy use of this motif as the eleven exposed bays of the ground floor of the structure is perforated by them. While almost all of Siena’s earlier monumental buildings employ either pointed or segmental arches as portal and window openings, a primitive Sienese arch appears on the Palazzo Tolomei’s entrance on the Via Termini and is perhaps the first structure in Siena to have employed it (Fig. 25).

Another decorative element of the Palazzo Tolomei that also found its way onto the Palazzo Pubblico was what Fabio Gabrielli calls a ‘double cornice’. This motif consists of a stringcourse that runs along the face of a building at the level of the bottom of the windows along with a second decorative molding that runs along the facade at the

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187. This is an early example of a Sienese arch since the segmental arch springs from below, not at the level of, the impost. There is some debate as to the date of the ground floor of the palace. DeVecchi suggests it may date to the original 1208 palace. Vittoria De Vecchi, “L'architettura gotica civile senese,” *Bullettino senese di storia patria* (56) 1949: 3-52: 33- 93. Gabrielli doubts that it dates that early. “Stilemi,” 318. Grossman suggests that it was erected after a fire in 1240 destroyed the original building. With the exact dating of domestic palaces being uncertain, it is possible that the Sienese arches in the ground level of the *casa-torre* at Via di Città 113/115 predate those on the façade of the Palazzo Tolomei. “Pro Honore,” 220, n 722.
level of the impost blocks of the arches of each bay. Structures that pre-date the Palazzo Tolomei, such as the Palazzo Rinuccini, are either completely devoid of stringcourses, or have only one running at the level of the window sill. However, on the Palazzo Tolomei a double cornice appears along the windows of both the first and second story. The Palazzo Pubblico makes a similar use of the double cornice at the level of the windows of its first and second stories. This use of the motif is almost certainly a quotation of the architecture of the Tolomei since, while the double cornice can be found in a few structures in Lazio and Umbria, it is only common in Siena.  

A further element new to the Palazzo Tolomei that also found its way onto the Palazzo Pubblico was the decorative use of battlements, called a coronamento. On the Palazzo Pubblico this appears as a series of stepped archetti that spring from inverted, semi-pyramidal corbels that hold a parapet decorated with bands of saw-toothed decorative brick and square merlons (Fig. 26). This configuration of architectural elements is now often referred to as a ‘Sienese’ coronamento. While battlements were common in defensive architecture of the time, such as walls and gates, they only began to appear in Sienese domestic architecture after the middle half of the thirteenth century.  

Max Elijah Grossman states that although much restored, the current coronamento on the palace seems to conform to the original design. The belfry over the side of the Torrione close to the wing to the Nove was added at the time that the fourth floor was constructed, while the belfry on the opposite side of the façade was added only in the late seventeenth century.  

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188. One Tuscan example that might pre-date the Palazzo Tolomei is the Palazzo dei Priori in Volterra, which has a double a cornice along the five windows of the first floor. However, these windows might have been rebuilt in the Trecento. Gabrielli, “Stilemi,” 329-335.  
or early eighteenth century. Although the *coronomento* is no longer in place on the Palazzo Tolomei, the palace is known to have had one from the evidence provided by a manuscript dating to 1442. In this book is an illustration which depicts the house with *archetti* that support a row of merlons (Fig. 27). Contemporary Sienese scholarship considers the Palazzo Tolomei the first domestic palace in Siena to employ this urban battlement.

One important exception from the decorative scheme of the Palazzo Tolomei is the use of *triforia* windows in the Palazzo Pubblico instead of *biforia*. While the level of distribution of *triforia* windows in Siena before the Palazzo Pubblico is uncertain, it seemed to have enjoyed a moderate diffusion in secular architecture. For example, both the Palazzo Rinuccini and Palazzo Salimbene are thought to originally have had *triforia*.

Of course, the significance of referencing the architectural language of the *casati* and one of Siena’s leading families, the Tolomei, rests less in the mere form of the building than in the meaning that such a scheme held for those who viewed it. Besides being attractive homes for the wealthy elite, the Sienese domestic palace also had great physical and symbolic power. By using the language of the domestic palace on the Palazzo Pubblico, in particular the new elements created by the architects of the Tolomei,

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192. While this motif appears in French Gothic structures, it was not found in Sienese church architecture. Ambrogio Lorenzetti’s fresco of the *Allegory of Good Government*, inside the Palazzo Pubblico, provides an interesting comparison with the actual architecture of the city during the same period. Most notable is that the grandest domestic palaces have bisected windows, while trisected windows do not appear at all. Also, almost all of the buildings with *monofore* (no division) windows are devoid of decorative battlements (*coronamenti*). Fabio Gabrielelli, “Stilemi senesi,” in *L’architettura civile in Toscana: Il medioevo*, ed.Amerigo Restucci (Milano: Silvana, 1995), 341-6.
the *media gente* tried to ensure that its seat of rule would be seen as a kind of counterpart to the centers of the *casati*. That the government building would carry with it all of the connotations and functions of a domestic palace allowed the *media gente* to usurp even more of the authoritative position and benefits the *casati* possessed by virtue of their visual culture. The *media gente* could then use these advantages to further its own group’s political control.

The domestic palaces of the *casati* gave these families several advantages that not many of the *media gente*, even with their position in the government, could claim. First, since ownership of a palace was often divided into shares that were held by various members of an extended family, it often became a sort of headquarters for those people belonging to the lineage. For example, in 1310 some fifty-seven Tolomei met at the family’s new palace in order to vote on their legal representation on the eve of the failure of the family owned bank.\(^{193}\) This demonstrates that as both symbolic and actual centers, the domestic palaces of the *casati* allowed their large families a way in which to keep their members in contact with each other and to display solidarity. This organization, in turn, gave the *casati* families the advantage of being able to quickly pool their considerable financial resources and social clout.

As many of the *casati*’s domestic palaces were built adjoining the multiple residences and properties of their kin, another advantage enjoyed by the *casati* was that, within their extended family groups, they were often able to gain physical possession of large areas of the city. These holdings could sometimes even comprise whole

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neighborhoods. For example, the Malavolti family owned properties around its domestic palace in the neighborhood of Camollia that spread over several modern streets. So much land was owned by the family that this area basically became a separate village within the fabric of the city and, in 1262, the government had to negotiate a public passage through, or between, it and the properties of the neighboring family.\(^\text{194}\) Owning so many closely adjoined properties gave the *casati* tight control over many parts of the city which was a particular danger since these areas could have been fortified during times of trouble. If a noble family desired to menace a rival faction, such as the forces of the *media gente*, they would have had relatively autonomous and highly defendable territories from which to launch an attack or to retreat to if they themselves were attacked.

The domestic palaces and the complexes of the *casati* were also a great part of their social and economic might. Besides containing their homes, the properties also often included places that were used for shop spaces and apartments for non-family members. For example, in the Camollia neighborhood of San Egidio, where the Malavolti lived, the family not only owned three inns (*alberghi*) and a warehouse (*fondaco*), but also possessed of 90% of the shops there.\(^\text{195}\) The patronage of these types of properties within the purview of the *casati’s* domestic palace complexes gave the families the benefit of both great economic and social control. First, the rents from shops and housing that the lower classes of the Sienese paid to the *casati* guaranteed the latter an income that could be invested into other profitable ventures such as banking and the accrual of more property. Second, the economic ties between landlords and tenants created social bonds

\(^{194}\) English, “Castles,” 194.
\(^{195}\) English, “Castles,” 184.
of dependence between the two. The lords offered citizens in their sphere of influence some measure of security, and in return gained a pool of supporters from which they might draw aid in times of conflict.

While the *media gente* tried to curb the power that domestic palaces gave to the *casati* by instituting laws, such as one from 1309-10 that forbade armed citizens from gathering at their homes during riots and other troubling times, another method of dealing with the power of a domestic palace was to simply usurp it for use by the government. In doing so, the *media gente* underscored the notion that its regime superseded the authority of the local lords. By building a palace for the commune, the *media gente* ensured that it performed all of the functions of the *casati*’s own domestic palaces to an even greater degree. First, much like the *casati*, the *media gente* made the Palazzo Pubblico both a symbolic and physical locus of its group as a whole. This step was taken even before the building was begun in a decision made by the city’s General Council not long after 1290. In January of that year, it was proposed that each member of the Nove was required by law to reside in his wing of the palace for the entire duration of his two-month term. The Nove were supervised by the Podestà and could only leave the Palazzo Pubblico in cases such as illness (their own or a close relative’s) and festivals such as those in honor of Saint Ansano, blessed Ambrogio Sansedoni, and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Members of the Nove could be fined if they violated the

198. That the Nove should live communally at the expense of the city was first proposed by the General Council on January 14, 1290. At this time the measure did not pass, but it must have been reconsidered at some later date, since in August of 1296 it was recorded that the Nove were living together and each were receiving 5 soldi a day stipend, plus an extra 3 soldi per month. (Biccherna, 1296, c. 165) cited in Fortunato Donati, “Il palazzo,” 331, n.2.
Thus, much like the domestic palaces of the *casati*, which were the symbolic and physical rallying points for their extended clans, the communal palace became a visual marker for the existence of the *media gente* and its vigilant ascendency over the communal government. That the citizens of Siena were aware of the continual presence of the ‘lords nine’ of the *media gente* ensconced in their palace is demonstrated by the chronicle of Agnolo di Tura, who noted that “they [the Nove] moved into the new palace where they are [today] and which they never leave except for major holidays.”

By building the Palazzo Pubblico, the *media gente* also seemed to want to displace some of the divisive power that the *casati’s* domestic palaces held by virtue of being the center of these families’ urban strongholds. This goal was accomplished by making the communal palace a symbol of a strong, centralized government. Unlike other communes that usually had several municipal buildings scattered throughout the city, such as both a communal palace and a palace of the Podestà, the unique feature of the Palazzo Pubblico is that it is the only communal palace in Italy that housed all of a government’s main bodies in one building. Thus, the major securer of the *media gente’s* authority, the legislative magistracy of the Nove, was able to be supported by the judicial and financial powers of the Podestà and the Biccherna from within one, easily supervised center, rather than in separate (and perhaps more vulnerable) locations. This arrangement emphasized that the standing and functioning of civic command was above and beyond the influence of the city’s *casati*, and that control of the city was firmly in the hands of an elected body of citizens of ‘middling’ social extraction.

One of the ways that the Palazzo Pubblico usurped the social control of the casati’s domestic palaces was in the role that the Nove played there in the legal lives of the city’s inhabitants. For example, a statute of the city’s constitution during the reign of the Nove states that the ‘lords nine’ had to make themselves available to all of Siena’s citizens in a public place, so that anyone who wished the government’s services could talk with its representatives and that the people’s petitions might be heard. Given their restrictive residence in the palazzo, it is likely that this ‘public place’ was located somewhere within the building. This seemingly innocuous act took on the function of control, since only when these petitions were carefully screened by the sitting Nove were they sent over to the General Council for consideration. Even here the influence of the Nove was keenly felt, since frequently half, or more, of the members of the council also belonged to the city’s middle class. The result of this carefully controlled process was that, for a multitude of important personal and business matters such as citizenship, reprisal rights, exceptions from constitutional provisions, and the commutation of sentences, the populace was required to seek mediation at the governmental palace. Thus, power was taken away from the local lords and placed directly into the hands of the media gente.

201. The Nove were to answer all petitions in five days, either rejecting those that were unjust or forwarding those to be heard to the appropriate office. Statuti, Siena, 16, Dist. VI , r34, f. 255r. Cited in Bowsky, Siena, 57. In May of 1292 this day was set to Thursday. Siena, Il costituto, vol. II, d. VI, r. XXX, 504.

202. Bowsky says that an overwhelming amount of the business of the General Council was sent to it by the Nove. He also speculates, from the many fines for absence from the council charged to some of Siena’s casati, that if the council were truly independent of media gente control, these men would have been more faithful in their attendance. Bowsky, Siena, 87-89 and 97.
Similarly, the Palazzo Pubblico also took influence away from the casati since, as the home of the Podestà and his retinue, it was the city’s legal center. The Podestà was a foreign magistrate who, while having legislative duties as the head of the General Council, also exercised civil and criminal judicial powers. When this officer was chosen to come and carry out his duties in Siena, he was obliged to bring with him “seven good and legal judges wise in law.” Two ‘collateral judges’ were in place to hear civil cases, appealed cases, and limited criminal cases. Two other judges were a part of the ‘bench of crimes’. This body was in charge of trying all types of cases, of both the rural and urban inhabitants of the commune, which involved fines of 40 soldi or more. The other three judges of the Podestà’s personnel were two ‘judges and assessors’ in charge of hearing cases concerning property, and one plea judge in charge of hearing cases about minors, ward-ship, and orphans. Thus, issues that were unable to be dealt with by the media gente in the legislative function of the government could still be handled under the auspices of this group by virtue of their location in the civic complex. To cut even further into casati power, the media gente made sure that within the Sienese court system this rival social stratum lost much of its advantage of class cohesion. A law in the constitution

203. Already by 1288 Siena’s General Council had decided that the Podestà (potestates) was also required by law to reside in his own wing of the Palazzo Pubblico for the duration of his six-month term. Donati, “Il palazzo,” 323.
205. These included the bearing of arms, frequenting of taverns, drinking of wine, and playing games in a manner prohibited by the city’s statutes. Bowsky, Siena, 107. For an explanation of the media gente’s wrangling of judicial control from the bishop’s ecclesiastical courts, see Bowsky, Siena, 110-116.
of 1309-10 makes it clear that members of the *casati* were not allowed to advocate in court on behalf of anyone but themselves or their immediate family members.\(^{207}\)

The Palazzo Pubblico also vied with the *casati* domestic palace compounds for their economic importance to the city’s inhabitants. Although two of the building’s main sources of economic control were its tower and location on the city’s main market place, both of which are discussed in the following sections on the Torre del Mangia and Piazza del Campo, the Palazzo Pubblico was also the location of the office of the Biccherna. As the supervisor of the commune’s revenue, this office dealt with Siena’s citizen body through its responsibility of allotting public money and salaries. For example, the city set aside funds for charitable purposes, such as recompense to families for losses sustained in fires, and volunteer work, such as money paid to those who provided aid during city emergencies. The commune was also a large employer of other minor officials, such as notaries, scribes, judges, and messengers, and was the distributor of the salaries of other communal employees of varying degrees, such as university professors, soldiers, police officers, informants, and even street cleaners.\(^{208}\)

Lastly, the Palazzo Pubblico rivaled the defensive power of the *casati*’s domestic palaces by not only offering politically active members of the *media gente* a fortified place of refuge in times of trouble, but also holding armed patrols. Among the various officials residing in the Palazzo Pubblico a special corps of foot soldiers/city police was

\(^{207}\) “*Che neuno de’ grandi o vero de’ casati del la città do Siena possa advocare.*” Siena, *Il costituto*, vol. II, d. V, r. CCCLXV, 388.

\(^{208}\) See William Bowsky, “The Medieval Commune and Internal Violence: Police Power and Public Safety in Siena, 1287-1355,” *The American Historical Review* 73(1967): 8, for the various types of police forces in Siena, their sizes, jurisdictions, and Biccherna records of their salaries. Informants and secret accusers were also a popular method of law enforcement within the commune. The informant’s name was to remain a secret while he received, depending on the offence, one fifth to even a half of the accused’s fine. Payouts for disclosing treasonous plots were even larger in sum. Bowsky, “Internal Violence,” 7.
housed in the posterior section of the building. Although these forty or so men were dependents of the Podestà, they were sworn to uphold the existing regime and were subject to an official review at the request of the Nove. This meant that in addition to their own police force of around 100 men, who might also have lived in the Palazzo Pubblico, the *media gente* had a large group of well-armed infantry soldiers able to be put into place quickly, night and day, to back up their authority. Having such a display of might would have worked to legitimate the *media gente*’s claim to power, as well as to serve as a deterrent for any physical attack on the seat of government.

The usurpation of the cultural capital of the *casati*’s urban centers by the *media gente* controlled the nobility by interrupting their local power. Members of this group were no longer able to hold the position of lordship over their own small communities that jointly made up the fabric of the city. Instead, these men became citizens of a truly unified commune whose government slowly took jurisdiction over the happenings of the whole city. The oversight of the law, defenses, and economic function of the city from the Palazzo Pubblico weakened the lines of dependence that the majority of Sienese society had with the *casati*. Of course, the closure was incomplete, as members of the *casati* were still able to retain their homes and status as rich landlords. This does not seem to be due to the weakness of the *media gente*, who still relied on the *casati* to be

210. At various times the police of the Podestà ranged between 20 and 60 men before the number was set at 40 by the constitution of 1337-9. Bowsky, *Siena*, 120.
211. By 1334 there were five different police forces in Siena: the police forces of the Podestà, Capitano del Popolo, Capitano della Guerra, Nove, and the Quattrini (daytime police). Each had a different number of members and jurisdiction. Bowsky, *Siena*, 120-2.; “Internal Violence,” 8-11. I have been unable to locate where the police force of the Nove was lodged, but it seems probable that it too was housed in the posterior spaces of the Palazzo Pubblico.
partners in business and to fill some government positions, but rather from the lack of need. The centralization of the civic government into its own, oversized palace made it visually clear to the city’s inhabitants that their ultimate allegiance should lie with the commune itself and the administration of the *media gente*.

This type of control, of course, redrew class lines and made the dynamic between Siena’s three orders even more apparent. Before the Palazzo Pubblico was built, it might have been more difficult to distinguish where class and power boundaries lay between the *media gente* and the *casati*. While the latter group was banned from holding positions on the Nove, great power was still evoked by its culture and proximity to the seats of government. However, with the building of the Palazzo Pubblico, which distanced the *casati* from the spaces of government, the *media gente* possessed an arena where their habits, dress, and duties could be watched by all strata of society. By ensconcing a group of people who were clearly separate from the *casati* but who still commanded more wealth and prestige than the city’s lower social orders, the Palazzo Pubblico controverted any notion of Sienese society as consisting of a two tiered economic and social structure of wealthy citizens and the non-wealthy. Thus, the communal palace became the showcase in which the *media gente* set themselves up as the balancing middle force of the Sienese social hierarchy.

Of course, purely copying the domestic palace form was not enough to ensure the continuity of the *media gente*’s power when they themselves were often second socially and economically. To this extent, the group also employed two very important rhetorical devices discussed in the previous chapters: the tri-partite division of the city and the
Sienese Roman past. Although the uniform stone and brick façade of the Palazzo Pubblico makes it look like one, seamless construction, from the inside it is clear that the structure is actually three, semi-independent buildings.\textsuperscript{212} This tripartite form was entirely original and had absolutely no precedent in Italian architecture.\textsuperscript{213} It has been suggested by many scholars that the tripartition of the building and the presence of façade decorations in groups of three, or its multiples, was symbolic to the citizens of Siena in many ways.

As mentioned in chapter two, one scheme of control that the \textit{media gente} adopted was a rhetoric of division that promoted the number three and its multiplications as a number of harmony and balance between two extremes. Built upon the Sienese tradition of dividing neighborhoods, military regiments, and council seat numbers by the three natural segments of the city’s topography, the \textit{media gente} promoted itself as a ‘natural’ social stratum partway between the opposing poles of the \textit{popoli minuti} and the \textit{casati}. Expressed in the number of members who sat on the supreme council of the Nove (Nine), the number three and its multiplications became a marker of identity for the \textit{media gente}, its logic, and its importance to Sienese society.

The reference to the number three in the naturalization of the position of the \textit{media gente}, its ruling council, and the essence of the city and its political process echoes greatly in the number symbolism in the structure and façade of the Palazzo Pubblico. The

\textsuperscript{212} Although the building was erected over the course of 51 years, the government’s strategic buying of property around the area of the future civic palace, which greatly corresponds to its final measurements, suggests that a master design must have been conceived of and was generally followed throughout its creation. This way of working contrasted sharply with the commune of Florence, where the Palazzo della Signoria and its piazza evolved by accretion. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 277.

\textsuperscript{213} Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 328.
building itself is in a tripartite form with the Torrione housing the General Council and the Biccherna, the left wing holding the council halls and living quarters of the Nove, and the right wing accommodating the residence and hall of the Podestà. Thus, the office of the Nove, the nine elected ‘defenders of the people and the city’, sits opposite to the Podestà, a member of the nobility whose office dates to the days of the *casati’s* political control. In the middle of these two opposites sits the meeting chamber of the General Council, ostensibly the commune’s most widely representative institution, which forms a government of the ‘people’ made possible by the *media gente’s* overseeing the activities of the city’s noble *casati.*

The division of three is also an important decorative element in the building. Each wing consists of three arched openings per floor and all but two of the windows of the façade are separated into three vertical sections. Nine merlons decorate the battlement at the top of the Torrione and directly underneath these merlons are fifteen supporting corbels. While the nine merlons are seen to be a reference to the Nove, the fifteen corbels may allude to the ruling council of the Quindici (fifteen), the number of officers elected to the government of the *mercatores,* which preceded the creation of the Nove.

Another rhetoric employed in the Palazzo Pubblico is the promotion of the government of Siena as an extension of the city’s Roman past. Grossman argues that both the domestic palace form and the materials of the Palazzo Pubblico are references to Republican Rome. The first indication of this is the name of the building itself. The vernacular term ‘palazzo’ is derived from the Latin word *palatium.* The word is the name

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of one of the seven hills of ancient Rome, which, according to legend, was the location of
the cave, known as the Lupercal, where Romulus and Remus were found by the she-wolf
that nourished them in their infancy.\(^{215}\)

Although myth traces Siena’s foundation to the sons of Remus, unlike other
Italian cities, there are extremely few ancient Roman remains in the city to corroborate
the story. Grossman conjectures that the Palazzo Pubblico was meant to affirm the city’s
Roman past by imitating, in an abstract manner, the great decomposing ruins of Rome
such as the baths of Caracalla and Diocletian, the Basilica Nuova, and the imperial
residence on the Palatine Hill. Having been deprived of most of their marbles, stucco,
and frescoes long before the fourteenth century, the remaining bare brick of these Roman
edifices might have given the Sienese the impression that the city was built of this
material. The impression would have been reinforced by the presence of many Early
Christian brick basilicas throughout the capital such as San Paolo Fuori le Mura, San
Lorenzo, Santa Maria Maggiore, Santi Quattro Coronati, San Pietro, and Santa Sabina.
Thus, for the Sienese, who chose to build with brick rather than the stone that other
communes used, both the notion of having a palace and the use of brick as a building
material might have been equated with romanitas.\(^{216}\)

Supporting this account of the Palazzo Pubblico as inspiring an idea of the
connection between Rome and the commune of Siena are two features of its decoration.

\(^{216}\) Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 337. Another reference to Siena’s romanitas can be found in the city’s
cathedral. The black and white striped marble of the church’s interior calls to the mind of the viewer the
city’s coat of arms, the *balzana*. According to legend, this was the badge of Siena’s founders, Aschio and
Senio. The colors were chosen by the twins after Apollo sent them two horses, one black and one white, to
flee their uncle Romulus. In thanks for their escape they also made a sacrifice to Diana and Apollo and the
Murray, 1902), 6.
Although the façade is devoid of all other sculptural ornament, two marble rainspouts carved to represent she-wolfs suckling twin human babies project from the corners of the uppermost floor of the Torrione.\footnote{217 These sculptures, as well as the four on the Torre del Mangia, are modern copies. Two originals of the latter are displayed inside the building.} This clear motif of Romulus and Remus may also be found in two sculpted reliefs of she-wolfs and twins that were placed in the tympanum over the entrance to the Nove’s wing of the palace (Fig. 28). There seems to also have been scenes from Roman history frescoed on the outer façade of the Palazzo Pubblico. Although these works of art are now missing, in the Sienese Chronicles of Agnolo di Tura del Grasso the writer states that artist Ambrogio Lorenzetti was commissioned to create them.\footnote{218 Agnolo wrote in the year 1337 that “after the Sienese had made the palace with the new prison, they made above the council hall the offices of the Signori and other offices in the middle of the palace, and they had the offices painted on the outside with Roman scenes by the hand of Master Ambrogio Lorenzetti of Siena.” Iacometti and Lisini, eds., Cronache senesi, 518; translated by George Rowley, Ambrogio Lorenzetti (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University, 1958), I: 94. Grossman asserts that Ambrogio’s Roman scenes must have been confined to the upper portions of the building while the middle section of the building would have been left undecorated in order to show its fine brickwork. “Pro Honore,” 336. 219 Daniel Waley, The Italian City Republics (New York: Longman, 1988), 32-4, 55-9 and 90-3.}

The increased propagation of the connection of Siena with a Roman past was a vital part of the strategy of control of the \textit{media gente} that was a part of Sienese culture from at least the time of the rise of the \textit{mercatores}. In order for the middle people of the city to justify their right to govern the “\textit{civitates}” and its respective outlying area, in opposition to other claimants, the commune needed to insist on itself as the heir of Roman authority.\footnote{219 A Republican era provenance meant that the commune stood before, and above, the legal authority of the Holy Roman Emperor as well as the Church, whose claim to land ownership in the Sienese territory began with an eleventh-century charter.}
from the Emperor. The widespread acknowledgment of this provenance for Siena might have helped allay the very real danger that other local Italian states, such as Florence, might have seized upon the apparent illegitimacy of the media gente’s government to challenge it and the rule of its land.

Courting the legitimacy of a history of republican government was even more crucial for the media gente within the city’s walls. In the late Middle Ages, the nobility was regarded by many people as the class of society most fit for administrative duties. However, the media gente had already excluded them from the city’s highest council. The position of placing their stratum in control of the state was one that the media gente needed to defend. The perfect model for the middle class then was ancient Rome. In that society, the ordinary citizens, the plebeians, played a role in the official government alongside the aristocratic patricians. Thus, in invoking Rome, the usurping government of the media gente tried to maintain its hold over the commune by promoting its regime as a force that aimed to prevent any attempt at oppression or tyranny from the casati’s participation in civic life. This was important not only to the popoli minuti at the bottom of the social scale, but also to the casati themselves whose rivalries and feuds could have proven dangerous to the harmony of the city if any one family was to gain too much power.

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220. In the middle of the eleventh century Emperor Henry III of Franconia conferred on the Bishop of Siena the legitimate possession of Castelvecchio, the antique center of Siena. The Emperor also gave him the right of jurisdiction over all of the people living in the episcopal territory. Felicia Rotundo, “Il Campo: Formazione ed evoluzione,” in La Piazza del Campo: Evoluzione di una immagine, documenti, vicende, ricostruzioni, ed. Letizia Franchina (Siena: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, 1983), 17.
The Torre del Mangia

The Palazzo Pubblico was not the only structure built in the space of the Piazza del Campo by the media gente in order to command the city and its inhabitants by adopting the prerogatives of the city’s casati. As the wing of the Podestà was being erected in 1325, another instrumental part of the Palazzo Pubblico, the tower, later to be popularly named the Torre del Mangia, was also begun at the site. The structure received its peculiar name after the man who was first appointed as its caretaker in 1347. His name was Giovanni di Balduccio, and he received the nickname Mangiaguadagni (profit eater) from his reputation as a spendthrift.\(^{222}\) Nearly a perfect square in form, the shaft of the tower is composed almost solely of brick and rises 87.5 meters, before being topped with crowning ironwork that brings its total height to 92.6 meters (as measured from the Campo).\(^{223}\) It is one of the tallest of the towers constructed in the whole of Italy during the period, and some authors consider part of the drive for height was the fact that Florence had just built a 94-meter tower on their Palazzo Vecchio.\(^{224}\) At its summit (Fig. 29), the Torre del Mangia is surmounted by a ‘watch box’ formed by a ballatoio (balcony) and ciborium. The ballatoio is cantilevered on sixteen corbels that support sixteen corresponding pointed arches. It is revetted in travertine up to the level of the

\(^{222}\) Cairola and Carli, Palazzo Pubblico, 46-7.

\(^{223}\) Sonia Bonucci and Vincenzo Castelli, Antiche torri di Siena (Siena: Betti, 2005),157. Several authors give slightly different measurements for the height of the tower. For example, Michele Cordaro states the shaft is 86.6 meters high. “Le vicende costruttive,” in Palazzo Pubblico di Siena: Vicende costruttive e decorazione, ed.Cesare Brandi (Milano: Silvana, 1983), 57. Grossman contends that Biccherna records of payments from October –December 1334 indicate that three artists were paid to “paint the brick surface with a layer of rosette in order to enhance the color.” “Pro Honore,” 318-19. Although it is recorded that the architect who designed the tower was Minuccio di Rinaldo and his brother Francesco, little else is known about the actual construction of the tower. For information on the remaining documentation see Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 303-323.

\(^{224}\) Cordaro, “Le vicende.” 57.
dentil cornice and is decorated with strips of serpentine stone and the coats of arms of the commune. The ciborium consists of four square piers topped by rounded arches and is decorated with lead fixtures around the windows. There are twelve square merlons at its summit.

Almost all of the early Sienese sources agree that tower building in Siena began around 1080, around the advent of the Crusades.\textsuperscript{225} This happened as members of the families of the feudal nobility left their fortified holdings on their ancestral lands in the countryside to reside in the city and its environs during parts of the year.\textsuperscript{226} To accommodate and protect themselves on their stays in the urban areas, these families built compact, square towers of regular courses of ashlar limestone, the strongest material available.\textsuperscript{227} Having walls as thick as almost 8 feet (2.4 meters) with very few small openings the towers, while not luxurious dwellings, were for the nobili a perfect place of refuge from both foreign invaders and disputes among themselves.\textsuperscript{228} Before domestic palaces were beginning to be built, these structures were so important to the early Sienese urban fabric that even the city’s oldest known seal, dating from around 1170-1220, was simply a picture of their slender forms soaring up from behind the city’s sturdy walls.\textsuperscript{229}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{225} Bonucci and Castelli, \textit{Torri}, 29.
  \item \textsuperscript{226} Nello Bemporad, Guido Pampaloni, and Giulio Prunai, \textit{Il Palazzo Tolomei a Siena} (Firenze: Cassa di Risparmio, 1971), 62, suggest that the nobili built their towers in areas of the city that were the closest to their ancestral lands. Thus, there can be the assumption that neighboring families who had rivalries in the countryside found themselves in close quarters in the city- hence the need for fortified dwellings. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 196, n 628.
  \item \textsuperscript{227} There is debate on whether or not the towers were crenellated. Grossman contends that they were, citing a tower in the Via dei Montanini which appears to have traces of them. Both De Vecchi, “L‘architectura,” 7-8 and Gabrielli, “Stilemi,” 309, claim that they were not. Merlons are absent from the depictions of towers in Lorenzetti’s fresco of the \textit{Allegory of Good Government} (1339-40).
  \item \textsuperscript{228} Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 197.
  \item \textsuperscript{229} Even in the seventeenth-century the towers were still so prominent a visual feature of the city that the historian Isidoro Ugurgieri-Azzolini wrote that, from a distance, the city “seemed to be a canebrake”
\end{itemize}
There is evidence to suggest that few, if any, new towers were erected after 1172 (although some of these existing towers seem to have been replaced in the following century).\(^{230}\)

As urban imitations of the powerful keeps that were the symbolic center of their feudal rights in the countryside, the towers were ambitious status symbols for the few so-called families “of the tower” who could afford to erect one.\(^{231}\) It is no wonder then that the overwhelming majority of the families who owned towers were synonymous with those on the first list of Sienese *casati*. Of the 87 towers that Bonucci and Castelli have been able to document as having been erected in Siena, 76 of them are connected with family surnames.\(^{232}\) Of these 76 family-identified towers, 47 structures belonged to 33 families who were included on the 1277 list of *casati*, and thus were banned from participation in the Nove.\(^{233}\)

Included in this number of towers were several that ringed the perimeter of the Campo and overshadowed the newly built Palazzo Pubblico. For example, the seat of the noble banking family, the Sansedoni, was located right across from the site of the Palazzo Pubblico, where it took up much of the northern face of the Campo (Fig. 30). As if rivaling the *media gente’s* communal seat for supremacy on the town’s square was not


\(^{231}\) Families of the tower were only surpassed in importance by the families “of the loggia”, 5 in total, who were able to have on their domestic palaces porticati and cortili loggiati. These families were the Piccolomini, Mignannelli, Malavolti, Salimbene, and Buonsignori. Franchiana, *Piazza del Campo*, 13.

\(^{232}\) Bonucci and Castelli identify and list 87 towers, not including the Torre del Mangia. The first list of Sienese towers was made in 1649 by the Sienese historian Isodoro Ugurgieri-Azzolini, who counted 56. Bonucci and Castelli, *Torri*, 81-85. Antonio Pecci in 1765 counted 68. Antonio Pecci, “Delle torri tanto esistenti che demolite dentro la città,” *Miscellanea senese* 2 (1894): 19-25.

\(^{233}\) Some of the remaining towers may also have been owned by noble families descended from the feudal aristocracy, but undoubtedly incidents such as loss of fortune and line extinction made their inclusion on the list of *casati* unnecessary.
enough, the family’s tower measured around 66 meters and was the highest tower in the city before the Torre del Mangia was built.  

The biggest threat that the immense towers of the Sienese *casati* posed was that they acted as striking symbols of the class’ urban control. Long before their domestic palaces were built, it was in the shadow of these territorial markers, which often displayed the families’ other powerful feudal symbol, their coats of arms, that the *casati* were able to gather their kin and supporters. As the families’ historic seat, the towers became synonymous with the family name of their owners and proclaimed, from afar, the divisions of the city among its richest citizens. After more spacious and elaborate homes were built near the towers, the latter structure’s nature of being able to be seen from great distances became one of its most important functions.

As the tower became a symbolic extension of the *casati’s* domestic palace complex, so too did the Torre del Mangia become an extension of the Palazzo Pubblico. As such, the tower shared in the building’s duties of usurping the defensive, social, and economic power of the *casati* by appropriating and diluting the practical and symbolic function of this class’ structures. Much in the same way as the Palazzo Pubblico, the Torre operated as a sign of the preponderancy of the power of the *media gente* over the local authority of the *casati*. The advantage that the tower held over the domestic palace is the former’s vertical height. While the Palazzo Pubblico is mostly visible only from within the Campo, the Torre was, and still is, the highest point in the city. Easily seen from most points within the city walls, as well as many miles away, the tower

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234. This tower was bought by Buonatacca Sansedoni from the Meghini family in 1243 after its probable construction date in 1216. Bonucci and Castelli, *Torri*, 191-94.
unmistakably marked the location of communal power and provided a persistent visual reminder of the balance that the *media gente* kept in the city’s social and economic hierarchy.

As an emblem of the workings of the commune itself, the Nove’s tower sought to both break, and take for itself, the social power invested in the towers of the *casati*. The tower accomplished this by seeking to replace the bond between the *casati* and the *popoli minuti* of their neighborhoods with a new sense of Sienese identity. The fruit of this drive to attain a stable ascendancy by the promotion of a ‘Sienese-ness’ can be understood in the proverbial sentiment of the city’s inhabitants that equates being Sienese with being born in the shadow of the Torre del Mangia.235

This symbolism of a Sienese identity also played a role in usurping some of the power that the *casati* enjoyed outside of the city. Even with the tower being located at the center of Siena, its position on the sloping hill that led into the Val del Montone meant that from its great height the Torre del Mangia also overlooked the surrounding countryside. In this way, the tower of the civic government not only acted as a focal point for the control of the city proper, but also “as a point of mediation between the city and its territory.”236 The visibility of the communal government from its territorial holdings was important to the power of the merchant *media gente* in much the same way as with the city. As a symbol of the Sienese state, the tower further weakened the tenuous feudal ties between the city’s *casati* and the inhabitants of the countryside by the creation of an overarching Sienese identity for the latter.

The production of a Sienese national identity outside of the city served a variety of purposes. One of the most important outcomes was that it limited the risk of threat to the government by curbing the casati’s authority within the contado and thus breaking their power to recruit military forces to use against the existing regime. Furthermore, the sight of the tower from the peripheral roads of the city was the starting point of the acclimatization of the rural Sienese population to the classed rhetoric of the city. This was a necessity during the mid-fourteenth century, as the commune saw increased migration from rural areas into the city. In order for the media gente to keep its social footing, any new inhabitant of the commune needed to understand the social and political hierarchy. More crucially, however, the symbolic control of the countryside also helped the government to more easily command the vast labor, goods, and raw materials that the outlying area possessed. With the use of these resources no longer monopolized by the land-owning casati, the media gente was able to more efficiently and cheaply channel them towards their own interests. This included not only the middle class’s own private businesses, but also programs designed to further their control of the government, such as urban building projects and the appeasement of the city’s population by supplying abundant, affordable food.

Despite the symbolic component of the casati’s towers, their original defensive/offensive purposes were not overlooked by the media gente’s administration. The great height of the casati’s towers (some reached well over 131 feet [40 meters]) gave the families that owned them a militaristic advantage over Siena’s general
population. For example, from their position above the streets a person inside a tower could throw stones and other objects, such as boiling pitch, onto anyone on the ground below. Towers could also serve as command posts since fires lit at their summits could be used as signals for such things as defensive maneuvers or calls for aide.

Offensively, the towers could be manned as a way of supervising and controlling the surrounding city streets. This function was of particular concern to the inhabitants of Siena due to the areas within the city where the casati’s towers were constructed. When Siena’s noble families came to settle near the old city nucleus, they mostly built their towers along two important areas: the Via Francigena and the hill of San Quirico. (Appendix E) As these families bought up the land around their towers, they came to control large swaths of the city along its main arteries and its religious nucleus. Thus, with the might of the towers behind them, the casati were capable of controlling the activities of the city by attacking and/ or holding key economic routes and strategic civic sites.

The sheer size and central placement of the Torre del Mangia meant that it was able to anticipate such a threat by performing defensive functions of its own. A chronicle of the Sienese writers Donato di Neri and his son Neri written in 1368 gives us a clue to the type of visual control that the governments of the fourteenth century kept over the city with the aid of the Torre del Mangia. The document states that “up in the tower of the Campo there were several guards on duty night and day, and they would give fire and

237. The original heights of most Sienese towers are unknown. Of the 87 counted by Bonucci and Castelli, only eight are provided with their original heights. These range from 29 meters (Savolesi and Ugugieri-Castellare towers) to 66 meters, with the majority falling between 40 and 50 meters. Torri, 82-85.  
smoke signals when necessary and ring the tocsin and sound the alarm.” While this watch was an important part of the defense of the city from any outside force that might threaten its walls, it also functioned as a deterrent against illegal activities and civil unrest. The tower was a reminder to unruly *casati* who might be tempted to take the reins of the government for themselves to respect the workings of the commune who carefully circumscribed their actions by both legal action and vigilance. The ever watchful gaze of the *media gente* against the threat of an uprising also offered psychological assurance to those in the lower orders of society that the commune was there to preserve a balance of power and to protect them from the abuses of members of *casati* families.

The Torre del Mangia did not simply usurp the function of an emblem of feudal culture, but rather distinguished itself from its prototype by creating additional levels of meaning that represent the values of the *media gente*. Much like the Palazzo Pubblico, the Torre almost entirely forwent displaying the ubiquitous limestone, often referred to as *pietra di torre*, which comprised the towers of the *casati*. Built out of the same red brick as the Palazzo Pubblico’s edifice, the material of the Torre del Mangia shares in the same symbolic importance that this material plays for the structure below: the connection of Siena with the ancient Roman Republic.

The assertion of the *romanitas* of the Torre del Mangia is corroborated by its other structural elements. Of course, stone is not completely done away with on the surface of the Torre as it appears decoratively in parts of the structure’s crown. The

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240. “...e in su la Torre del Campo stave continuo il di e di note più guardie, e davano cenni di fuoco e di fume, quando bosognava, e sonavano le campane e stormo e a martello.” Iacometti and Lisini, eds., *Cronache senesi*, 627. Translation in Cairo, *Palazzo Pubblico*, 44.

largest visible area of stone on the tower is the travertine revetment of the watch box. The
gleaming white of this material provides a sharp contrast with the red color of the
surrounding brick and has the effect of drawing the eye upward to make it the dominant
focal point of the city’s skyline. However, the use of travertine was extremely rare in
Sienese architecture at the time, suggesting that its use also had some symbolic
implications. 242

An intriguing interpretation for the sudden appearance of this stone is suggested
by Max Elijah Grossman. In his analysis of the iconography and symbolism of various
Sienese communal structures he argues that the Sienese consciously quoted elements of
Roman Republican architecture in their buildings. He also notes that travertine was a
favorite construction material of the ancient Romans. Although the author does not
explicitly state this idea, it seems that the choice for using travertine to revet the lower,
most visible portion of the Torre’s watch box might have been made in order propagate
the city’s relationship with ancient Rome. The appearance of eight dripstones carved in
the shape of she-wolves, located in the corners of the upper and lower levels of the
tower’s crown, further attest to this theory of the edifice’s suggestion of romanitas (Fig.
31). 243 As mentioned above, the media gente cultivated a notion of the connection
between Siena and ancient Rome as another way to legitimize their claim to possession of
the city.

242. One of the earliest uses of this material was on the façade of the Palazzo Tolomei. The only other
Trecento Sienese building to display travertine is the Duomo. Grossman states that the booklet: V. Coli, ed.
Il travertino di Siena (Siena, n.d.), is inaccurate because the authors fail to distinguish properly between
The most significant part of the Torre’s effect of control, however, was its main purpose: its duty as the communal bell tower. Although work continued on the superstructure through May 1348, in 1345 the tower was finished enough for some of the communal bells to be hung there. In February of 1345 the first two of the communal bells, the ‘grosa’ and the ‘squilla’, were put into the tower.244 These were joined on April 28, 1345 by the newly recast ‘bell of the people’.245

The positioning of Siena’s bells inside the Torre del Mangia was a political maneuver that permitted the media gente to have an even tighter control over the function of the city and its citizenry than any other group had ever achieved. Given the lack of communal edifices in the city during the thirteenth century it is not completely surprising that when the mercatores came into power in 1270 they did not possess physical control over the commune’s bells. The honor of housing the campana grossa and the squilla, when they were cast in 1248, was given to the noble Mignanelli family whose tower was conveniently situated close to the place where the government council at the time convened, the church of San Cristoforo.246 When the bell of the popolo was made in 1255, it too hung in a tower owned by a family of the nobility and probably near the Mignanelli tower (although now the exact location is unknown).247

244. Agnolo di Tura notes the move of the bells in 1346. “Le canpane del comuno di Siena che erano su la tore de’ Mignanelli si levoro di febraio, e poi d’aprile si pose solamento la canpana del popolo su la torre nuova.” Iacometti and Lisini, eds., Cronache senesi, 546. For the passage in an English translation see Dean, Towns, 27.

245. This bell was recast in March of 1349. Bonucci and Castelli, Torri, 161.

246. “Al temp di Ghalghano Grasso da Pisa Podestà si fece la campana grossa del comuno e la squilla e posonsi sul Torrione dei Mignanegli imperroché il comuno non aveva fatto ancora torre nel palagio proprio” Iacometti and Lisini, eds., Cronache senesi, 53, and n 2.

247. “E per onorare la torre delle chanpane e fare una chanpana, al quale quando [sonava] tutto el popolo dovesse andare a consiglio. E questa chanpana no sonasse mai, se non quando bisognasse el consiglio del populo con quello de’ Vintiquattro. E questa chanpana si chiami per ‘lavenire la chanpana del populo; e
That the bells were hung in various towers of members of the *casati* until the construction of the Torre del Mangia was a serious threat to the existence of the Nove government as well as the *media gente* themselves. First of all, this arrangement was dangerous because the bells performed many of the commune’s most vital public functions. Of the two bells in the Mignanelli tower,\(^{248}\) the *gossa* rang to summon the city’s General Council to convene, to indicate war, to deliver sentences of justice (ringing for the death penalty at the moment of execution), and to signal the mid-day lunch stop. Similarly, the *squilla* rang in the evening to indicate the city’s curfew and at morning when curfew was lifted and the city’s gates were opened, to call citizens to arms, and to warn of fires raging within the city.\(^{249}\) The ‘Bell of the People’ rang to call the Council of the People into meetings with the city’s ruling powers.\(^{250}\) The inscription on *gossa* gives a good indication of the importance of the functions of the bells to the communal government. It reads:

Ave Maria piena di grazia il Signore è con Te. Annuncio un proposito santo, spontaneo, l’onore a Dio e la liberazione della patria. Il Verbo si fece carne e venne ad abitare in mezzo a noi. Negli anni della salutazione 1320 maestro Bencivenni pisano fece per Siena. Suono piacevolmente mattina e sera, per chiamare il popolo, per portare davvero giustizia, per indicare le guerre, per respingere i fulmini e distruggere il male. Quando suono Madre Pia dai pace o

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\(^{248}\) These bells had to be recast in 1321 when they fell out of the tower after a fire. “E nel tempo della signoria predetta essendo rotte le champagne del chomuno per l’alegreza d’aver riauto Menzano per lo fuoco el quale s’accese nell’armatura della torre, per lo falò el quale si faceva su la detta torre de Miganegli, e per questo il Chomuno di Siena none avea champane...” Iacometti and Lisini, eds., *Cronache senesi*, 120.

\(^{249}\) Siena’s curfew was instituted three hours after sunset. Hook, *Siena*, 96-98. Anyone found out of their house after this time, except for those with permission such as night watchmen, physicians, and garbage men, could be fined 20 *soldi*. Bowsky, “Internal Violence,” 7. The *squilla* is now replaced in the Torre del Mangia by the *campana dell’orologio*, made in 1468. Sauro Cantini, *Le campane di Siena nella storia della città* (Siena: Cantagalli, 2006), 112.

\(^{250}\) Cantini, *Le campane*, 103.
Vergine Maria. Per l’atto di questa compagnia Bernardo è il Camarlingo. Mico di
tura fu l’operaio. Ci fu portato a termine ad Avane. Amen. 251

(Hail Mary full of grace the Lord is with you. I announce a holy purpose, spontaneous, the honor of God and the liberation of the homeland. The Word made flesh and come to live among us. In the years of the greetings 1320 master Bencivenni of Pisa made (me) for Siena. I ring pleasantly morning and night, to call the people, to carry out real justice, to indicate war, to repel lightning and destroy evil. I ring Pius Mother of peace Virgin Mary. For the act of this company Bernardo is the Camarlingo. Mico of Tura was the laborer. This was completed in Avane. Amen.)

When the bells were in the towers of the casati, the events of the city that they rang could be at the mercy of the families who owned the towers or to anyone who could muster enough strength to capture them. An event such as the confiscation of the communal bells would, obviously, have led to chaos in a city of around 50,000 people. 252 Thus, the building of the Torre del Mangia for the bells of the commune allowed the media gente to easily control the governmental and functional running of the city. The great height of the shaft and the protected placement of the tower, nestled in the walls of the palace of the Podestà and with no exterior openings, provided extra assurance that the voice of the commune would be safe from usurpation by other groups.

The control of the daily events in the city, largely effected through the control over the ringing of the hours, was a crucial step in securing the ascendancy of the media gente, since it was through time that the members of this group accrued their economic clout (in contrast to the casati who mostly relied on hereditary accumulation). During the late Middle Ages time was taking on a whole new meaning. According to the historian Jacques Le Goff, during much of the European Middle Ages most of people’s activities

251. Ibid., 108-09.
252. This is Bowsky’s estimation of the population in the year 1328. Bowsky, Siena, 19.
were ruled by two measurements of time. The first of these was natural time, such as night/day and the four seasons. The second type of time was that of the church, which marked hours of the day for the observance of religious offices and days of the year for feasts. Slowly, more sophisticated assumptions of time beyond this earlier framework were being developed. This change was due mostly to the growth of mercantilism, whose activities needed to calculate things such as the duration of wage labor, exchange rates (inflation-deflation), lengths of trips, loans and other forms of credit, and the best time for the resale of goods. For business then, time really was profit, as its mastery could make or break fortunes. This notion of earning on time was equated with usury and was part of the medieval bias against merchants, since their profit came from the selling of time, which was supposed to belong to God alone. Nevertheless, the mercantile conception of the value of time meant that it became a direct object of measurement that required control outside of the ecclesiastic setting as well oversight of the functions performed within its span.

In Siena, while ecclesiastical hours were still rung from the city’s cathedral and parish churches, the hanging of the communal bells in the thirteenth century marked a new emphasis on commercial and civic time. Of course, with the placement of the bells in the Torre del Mangia, the control of time was put firmly into the hands of those who had the most to benefit from it: the mercantile based media gente. The ability to control time set the media gente apart from those who were most constrained by it, the workers of the popoli minuti.

Besides the wage laborers of the commune whose hours and earning were obviously controlled by the duration of the work day, many of Siena’s professions that were organized by the commune’s minor guilds were also regulated by the city’s bells. Rather than purely economic interests, the circumscriptions of time placed on the activities of these vocations were often seen as a part of maintaining the public good. For example, it was a law that no one could clean a well until after the third sound of the communal bell.\(^\text{254}\) Similarly, a statute from the guild of the key makers prohibited its members from working after the third chime of the communal bell (perhaps a precaution against theft).\(^\text{255}\) Even the city’s butchers were regulated by the bells since animals were not to be slaughtered or skinned after the third bell.\(^\text{256}\) By controlling time then, the *media gente* was able to control the activities of the city and its professions beyond their own sphere of activity. Thus the *media gente* secured the Nove government by presenting the mercantile ‘middle class’ as the industrious caretakers of the state for the benefit of the people.

While the *media gente* usurped the authority of the towers of the *casati* by building their own communal tower, they also took steps to block (though not completely) the use of these structures by Siena’s grander citizens by instituting new regulations and undermining their connection with *casati* culture. Publicly, the control of the city’s towers took the form of legislation, and stiff penalties for their violation were

\(^{254}\) “che neuno mondi o ver mondare faccia pozi et necessari, se non di notte diopo l terzo suono de la campana del comune.” *Siena, Il costituto*, vol. II, d. V, r. CLX., 301.

\(^{255}\) “Che non si debba lavorare di notte diopo el suono de le tre volte.” “Statuto dell’ arte de’ Chiavari di Siena” *Statuti senesi*, 2: 251, Capt XX.

\(^{256}\) “Che niuno uccida doppa terza nel tempo infrascritto” “Carnajuoli” *Statuti senesi*, I: 79, Capt. XV. “Com e’ consoli e Camarlingo possano dare licenza di scorticare e’ buovi e vacche doppo le tre” Ibid., 107, Capt. IX.
enacted. By the fourteenth century the commune had forbidden, by statute, the use of
towers for their original purpose: warfare. A law in the vernacular constitution of 1309-
10 stated that whoever ordered something to be thrown from a tower in order to induce an
uproar was to pay the large fine of four hundred lire. Any persons known to have
collaborated with the instigator were to pay a fine of 200 lire, and the tower from which
the offence was perpetrated was to be raised to the ground.\textsuperscript{257}

Since the demolition of a tower was the worst punishment one could inflict on the
honor of a family, it was often done by order of the government as punishment for
offences against the state.\textsuperscript{258} For example, at least one tower of the noble Forteguerri
family was destroyed in 1318 due to its part in the rebellion of that year.\textsuperscript{259} Of course the
fear of collapse of dilapidated, overly high, or poorly built towers also made a good
excuse for the further demolition and/or abasement of the ornaments of the \textit{casati}. On
November 26, 1300 a storm caused a tower owned by the Incontri family to collapse,
killing more than one hundred people. A campaign against dangerous towers ensued and,
while not as detrimental to the forms as could be expected, in the years following the
collapse several towers of \textit{casati} families were demolished or lowered. These included
one tower owned by the Marescotti family in 1300 and towers in the possession of the
Bisdomini-Antolini and Bandinelli families in 1307.\textsuperscript{260} These measures, of course, further
limited the militaristic threat of the towers in the hands of any possible enemy of the

\textsuperscript{257} “\textit{De la pena di chi gittasse alcuna cosa di torre o vero palazo o vero casa per incominciare battallia.”}
\textsuperscript{258} Letizia Franchina, “L’aspetto di Piazza del Campo: Evoluzione di una immagine,” in \textit{Piazza del
Campo: Evoluzione di una immagine, documenti, vicende, ricostruzioni} (Siena : Ministero per i beni
culturali e ambientali,1983), 13.
\textsuperscript{259} De Vecchi, “L’architettura,” 3-4.
\textsuperscript{260} Bonucci and Castelli, \textit{Torri}, 33. See this page for a list of other demolished/abased towers.
state, as well as ensured that no enterprising casati could seek to rival the height of the Torre del Mangia.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries other maneuvers were also being made by the media gente to undermine the authority of the city’s privately owned towers by taking them out of the hands of the casati. One way in which the media gente accomplished this goal was by gaining ownership rights to towers or portions of them. For example, the scholars Duccio Ballestracci and Gabriella Piccini found that during this time period towers were no longer possessed mainly by casati families, but also by people of more modest social extraction. For example, a man named Pietro di Bindo di Montalcino was recorded as the owner of a tower in the neighborhood of San Bartolomeo. The triumph of the merchant class over this old feudal symbol, however, became completed over the course of the Dugento and into the Trecento as the media gente gained access to the private towers of the casati to use as their private homes and places of business. An example of this was in 1331 when Francesco di Giovanni and Dino del fu Soldano paid 12 lire in rent to put an apothecary shop in a tower owned by the Antolini family.

It is clear that the forms of the Palazzo Pubblico and the Torre del Mangia, much like the iconography of the Biccherna and Gabella book covers, were rooted in the structural traditions of the nobili and were usurped by the media gente of the Nove. Similar to coats of arms, last names, and Latin literacy, the domestic palace and tower

262. “quondam apotecam [...] iuxta turrim [...] Antolinarum” (Notarile ante-cosimiano 30, c.37 v. 1331 febbraio 23). A space was also rented for a bottega in the tower of the Galgaria by Niccolò di Cerretano dei Cerretani to Niccolò di Meo (Notarile ante-cosimiano 11, cc. 13v.-4, 1336 settembre 16). Cited in Ballestracci and Piccini, Siena nel Trecento, 100, n 141.
acted as symbols of their socio-economic functions and gave the nobili a way to express that which made them social, political, and economic superiors. Since the media gente had no architectural traditions of their own, it became expedient for them to create palaces and towers as the physical locus of their power and thus accrue for themselves the prestige of the symbols that were once the prerogative of the city’s nobili/casati.

Also, like the book covers of the Biccherna and Gabella, the Palazzo Pubblico and the Torre del Mangia offered the media gente a platform, this one highly visible, from which to promote a campaign of rhetoric that served to persuade the populace of the media gente’s suitability to be caretakers of the Sienese state.

The media gente did not seek merely to appropriate the benefits of these structures for the purpose of protecting their regime, but also to change the culture of the domestic palace and tower. No longer were palace architectural forms, towers, and casati families completely synonymous, since the structures also now represented the Nove government which, invariably, referenced the media gente. That the closure was incomplete and the domestic palaces and towers of the casati remained a part of the urban fabric perhaps speaks to how well the Nove’s center of power was able to usurp the functions of its competitors and eclipse them entirely. This, undoubtedly, had quite an effect on Sienese class consciousness as the city’s casati and popoli minuti could no longer see their relationship to one another symbolized by their local domestic palaces and towers. Instead, the physical embodiment of the commune’s hierarchy was to be found on the horizon in the form of Torre del Mangia, the fulcrum of the media gente,
whose bells served as a constant reminder of this group’s upper hand in the city’s political processes that were played out in the palace below.
CHAPTER 4: THE CONTROL OF A CENTER: LA PIAZZA DEL CAMPO

Although the structures of the Palazzo Pubblico and the Torre del Mangia were important to the power of the media gente, the ability of these carefully plotted monuments to perform their functions depended upon the media gente’s choice of an equally strategic and meaningful placement for them within the city. The area that they chose was the Campus Fori, what is now known as the Piazza del Campo (Fig. 32).

This chapter examines how the media gente appropriated the site of the Piazza del Campo from the city’s casati. This place was culturally important to the casati as it was a space of their class’ early ascendancy, many families own properties there, and it was the traditional site of the most important ritual in the casati’s secular lives, the knighting ceremony. This field was also socially and economically important to the power struggle in Siena since whoever controlled it also held jurisdiction over the city’s markets, as well as one of the city’s most popular public gathering places.

Although now a bustling urban spot, the choice of the building site for the Palazzo Pubblico was hardly as obvious to the thirteenth-century inhabitants of the city as some modern scholars make it out to be. As the record of a meeting of the Sienese General Council on December 21, 1282 demonstrates, while the government of the mercatores seemed ready to consider building a ‘public palace’, there was still a debate about where such a structure would be best placed within the city.263 In this meeting, one speaker had suggested building at the site of the important street intersection known as the Croce del

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263. There are also records of debates/decisions about the building of the Palazzo Pubblico in June of 1280, and January, 1281. Ubaldo Moriandi, “Doumenti,” 415, docs 27 and 28.
Travaglio, while another speaker urged another *loco comunitis*. It was only six years later, as mentioned in chapter 3, that the firm commitment to build had been made and the choice of the site was fixed to the already existing building that housed the Bulgano (mint) and Dogana (customs).

It is easy to understand why the area of the Bulgano/Dogana was hardly a unanimous first selection. Even in the late thirteenth century, the plot of land that the building faced was barely more than a steeply sloping, marshy field that was held back from slipping sharply into the Val di Montone by a retaining wall. In addition, this low area also was the place into which rain water, and whatever else came with it, drained from the city’s hilltop neighborhoods. In contrast to the *media gente’s* rivals for power, the Sienese bishop and the *casati*, whose abodes were perched high and dry along the spine of the city’s three hills, the spot of the future Campo would have almost certainly been uninspiring.

Although the space was less than physically and psychologically ideal, the area of the Bulgano/Dogana did, however, hold a great economic/symbolic advantage over any spot that could have been carved out of the more prestigious neighborhoods in the city. As Maurizio Tuliani writes, the great significance of the area of the future Campo was that it was “… where the citizen’s market was sited, the control of which represented one of the key steps in the passage of power from the authority of the bishop to that of the commune.”

Already possessing the reigns of the government, the Nove saw in the field before the Bulgano/Dogana a place to augment their power in two main ways: by

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the direct control of the market and, as its economic function attracted many visitors, the cultivation of an urban cultural center.

The creation of the market of the future Piazza del Campo began in a period of time long before the creation of the council of the Nove, when the two areas that were to become united into the Campo stood outside of Siena’s walls at the Porta Salaria, the city’s main gate (Fig. 33). From this gate, towards the east, ran the Via di Galgaria (now the Via Città), which at a short distance from the city walls, intersected with the north/south running Via Francigena, one of the main pilgrimage and economic routes of mediaeval Europe. The land beside where these two busy roads crossed under the shadow of Siena’s walls, close to the church of San Paolo, developed into a thriving market place as goods flowed in and out of the city. 266 So convenient was the spot for the buying and selling of goods that the area eclipsed the importance of Siena’s earliest market located in the piazza of the Duomo.

Due to the area’s strategic position along two of the commune’s most vital routes into and around the city, as well as its lucrative market place, Siena’s twelfth-century consular government was interested in bringing it under the protection of the civic powers. The area began to be incorporated into the consul’s domain by its enclosure within the new circuit of city walls that were begun around 1150. Once the market was officially a part of the municipality, its control played a part in the series of challenges

266. The exact place of the market is debated. Donati argues that there were two in the area. One was the market of San Paolo and another was called the Campus Fori. The former was in the northern area of the current Campo while the latter was in the lowest part of the current Campo. He speculates that the two areas were separated by buildings. The piazza of San Paolo was a market for grains while the other was the city’s market. Donati, “Il palazzo,” 312-3. Grossman, Pro Honore, 257, n 891, states that the claims of the Campus Fori and the Campus San Paolo being different are unsubstantiated and were two interchangeable names for the same place. See also Tuliani, “Il Campo di Siena,” 61-62.
that the city’s increasingly powerful nobili made against Siena’s other temporal ruler: its bishop. By 1156, the church of S. Paolo was under the control of the city’s secular administration to such an extent that it held the first documented meeting of Siena’s governing council. This meeting was called so that the communal government could once again encroach on the Sienese bishop’s authority by accepting from Arnolfo, Abbot of the Abbey of Santa Mustiola, the abbey for the use of the Sienese people (“Ad utilitatem Senesesis Popouli”). 267 Thirteen years later, in 1169, the affront to the Sienese episcopate embodied in the control of the area of S. Paolo, was finalized as Bishop Raniere had been made to flee the city after a series of clashes with some of Siena’s aristocratic and military families, leaving his office vacant for three years. 268

With this triumph of the commune over church powers and with the physical locus of the market of S. Paolo soundly under communal administration, the consuls sought to improve the space and thus increase the tax revenues that the government agents collected there. In March of 1169 the consuls of the commune of Siena purchased property on the southern side of the piazza of S. Paolo, toward the Val di Montone, from Iacopo, Isacco, Iacopo d’Uguccio, Bigotto, and Orlando d’Antolini. 269 It is speculated that these properties formed a spine of buildings that separated the piazza of S. Paolo from another field behind them, and their destruction resulted in the large, single space

267. Grossman, “Pro Honore,” 256. Siena’s Parlamento seems to have often met in the piazza of San Cristoforo, a church and area under the sway of the nobile Tolomei family. Bemporad, Pampaloni and Prunai, Tolomei, 63.
that is now the Piazza del Campo. In 1193 more land was bought by the commune at the southern end of the newly widened space, and from then on this whole expanse was collectively known as the Campus Fori. In 1194 the area was made more hospitable for a market by the building of a retaining wall at its southern end and the laborious building up of the uneven valley with fill dirt (Fig. 34). At the same time a communal customs house, the Dogana, was built, appropriately, on the southern edge of the field, so that government officials might more easily collect the duties owed on the goods coming into the city. Thus, when the media gente chose the unlikely spot of the still uneven dirt drainage field in front of the Dogana as their administrative center, they were making the move for control by tightening their oversight of the market.

Yet when the media gente decided to make the Campus Fori their center of power, there was still much needed to be done to wrest this area away from the physical and symbolic influence of the casati. As the consuls of the commune had triumphed in usurping power from the Sienese bishop and had extended the city walls to include the Campus Fori, numerous families of the nobili came to settle in this new section of the city during the twelfth century. Here these families built towers, castellari, and case-torre on the suitable land around the edge of the field. One of the first domestic palaces to be built there, on the area’s northern edge, was begun around 1180 and belonged to the Alessi family (it is now the Palazzo Pannocchieschi d’Elci) (Appendix D).

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271. December 14, 1193 the consuls bought from Sisto di Ballione a house located in pede Campi Fori, bounded on one side by the Campo and on the other by a building that already belonged to the commune. Donati “Il palazzo,” 135. This is the first use of the term “Campus Fori” in Sienese documents.
273. Carlo Cresti and Claudio Rendina, Palazzi of Tuscany (Cologne: Könemann, 2000), 110.
southern edge of the field was also filled by the properties of Siena’s illustrious families such as the domestic palace of the Arzocchi family, which sat to the left of the Dogana. To the right of this communal building were several properties and a piazza owned by the Saracini.

In order to lessen the overwhelming presence of the casati in this space and to make way for their own group, the Nove government bought up many of the buildings adjacent to the site for the new communal palace. These structures were either to be absorbed into the new edifice or cleared to provide materials and/or space. The buildings that were bought included those mentioned above as being adjacent to the Dogana, as well as some properties belonging to the casati Ugurgieri and Ulivieri families. By purchasing the properties of the casati, the commune cleared the way to have the largest façade on the piazza, the Palazzo Pubblico, which was to occupy the entire area along the southern border of the Campo between the Via di Malcucinato and Via di Malborghetto.

Rather than simply being an instance of the commune’s need to clear building space for the communal palace, the destruction of the casati’s properties might have been seen during the fourteenth century as a mode of subduing ones’ rivals. Although there is no evidence of the casati’s reluctance to sell nor of coercion by civic officials, it was

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274. The commune bought this palace and two houses from the Azocchi in March, 1294. Capitoli, 1, cc. 614-15 (March 8, 1294) Cited in Morandi, “Documenti,” 416-17, doc. 55. These properties are no longer extant.
275. On December 21, 1294 Bartolomeo di Ildobrandino Saracini and Bartolomeo di Nasatagio received 2,700 lire from the commune for the sale of their properties. Capitoli, 1, cc. 642-643v. Cited in Morandi “Documenti,” 416, doc. 53. The next day Tuccio di Alessio Saracini also sold his property at the same site to the commune. Capitoli I, cc. 646-7. Cited in Morandi, “Documenti,” 416, doc. 54. These properties are no longer extant.
common in Late Medieval Siena for families to either destroy and/or cannibalize the residences of their rivals in order to symbolize their own ascendancy. Perhaps the most important example of this symbolic act of property consumption in late medieval Siena was the rebuilding of the Palazzo Tolomei. As mentioned above, when this Guelph family rebuilt its home after its return from exile, it demolished the home of its enemy, the Ghibelline leader Provenzano Salvani. To completely erase every trace of this complex, one of the largest in the city, its limestone was moved to construct the house of the Tolomei family that was being built 100 meters away. This example parallels what the media gente intended to do with the properties along the edge of the Campus Fori. As the Dogana was the only major visible monument to Siena’s former regime, taking over the field from this spot and clearing away from the area the homes of the casati proclaimed the media gente’s preponderant presence in the power structure of the city. The consumption of these private structures into a new ‘public’ palace also demonstrated the legitimacy of popular government over the tyranny of the casati, who had themselves, in the past, usurped power from the Sienese bishop.

Of course, effectively controlling the area of the Campus Fori, which was not only the city’s main market but also home to a fair and a weekly market of goods from the areas of the Tuscan countryside, had the effect of solidifying the hold that the media gente already had over the customs due to the commune from the trade that happened there. In addition, their administrative presence in the piazza also gave the media gente great physical control over the vending space itself, which was one of the main channels of financial activity within the city. Governing by the formal instrument of the law, as

well as by the surveillance and directive functions of the Palazzo Pubblico and the Torre del Mangia, the *media gente* were able to regulate closely the commerce within the Campo. For example, the allotment of vending space, the cost of renting an area, and the conventions of displaying and selling goods within the piazza were all carefully controlled.\(^{278}\) Also, to keep order and to protect the dignity of the piazza, guards were employed to circulate through the *Campo* to espy criminals.\(^{279}\)

Much of the hold that the *media gente* kept over the commerce of the Campo seems to have been channeled into promoting its own economic interests as well as into using the market as a political tool to strengthen its ties with the *popoli minuti* by granting them certain economic advantages. This goal was accomplished by promoting the diversification of the goods and crafts represented in the day-to-day business of the square. In his study on the market activity of the Piazza del Campo, Tuliani demonstrates that throughout the thirteenth to the fourteenth centuries there was a gradual change in the type of businesses positioned there. In the early communal years, up until 1249, much of the market’s business was controlled by sellers of food stuffs such as butchers (*carnaioli*) and food-stall keepers (*treccole*). By the time of the rise of the *media gente* however, communal records (dating to the year 1291) show that a wider variety of enterprises run by the *popoli minuti* and *media gente* were represented on the Campo.

For example, in 1291 there were 105 known occupations selling goods in the market. Of these 105 occupations, the most numerous, besides the 27 customary food-stall keepers, were 27 shoemakers (*calzolai*), a profession which would have been

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\(^{278}\) In July of 1300 a method of assigning booths to vendors in rectangular lots to improve the traffic flow of the Campo was implemented by the communal officials. Tuliani, “Campo,” 83.

considered firmly in the realm of the popoli minuti. The variety of other jobs, such as the six sellers of terracotta wares (coppaie) and the three locksmiths (acorai), also demonstrates the move to include more goods and services of the city’s minor guildsmen in the area. Similarly, in the botteghe lining the perimeter of the Campo, more popoli minuti occupations found a foothold. Of the fifty-five known occupations that rented botteghe spaces, besides the thirteen butchers (carnaioli) (these men were popoli minuti and were often as wealthy as many media gente, but not eligible for the Nove), the most numerous were other popoli minuti occupations such as the five doublet makers (farsettari) and the 5 barrel makers (barelettai).  

Of course, among the new businesses included in and around the Campo were also those with close ties to the media gente themselves. For example, of those shops lining the Campo in 1291, the second most common occupation, after the aforementioned butchers, were the ten shops belonging to large-scale retailers (pizzicaioli). In addition, four other perimeter shops were run by sellers of used goods (regrettieri). Both of these were the types of employment of men who held office in the Nove. These types of jobs were also found within the space of the Campo. The second most numerous of occupations located in the center of the market, after the tie between the shoemakers and the stall keeps, were the fourteen sellers of used goods (regrettieri), along with eight wool merchants (lanaiuoli) and two large-scale retailers (pizzicaioli).

281. Ibid., 71-78, and tables 1 and 2.
283. The wool guild, or the Arte della Lana, was big business in Siena within the circle of the media gente, and at least half a dozen of lanaioli held office in the Nove. The Arte della Lana received greater
Thus, as the *media gente* took over the market of the Campo, they forwarded both their own mercantile interests as well as those directly below them on the social latter, the *popoli minuti*. This meant that while the former were continuing to help some members of their social group reap the profits needed to make them formidable opponents to the *casati*, they were also forging bonds with members of the *popoli minuti*. The day to day exchanges between these two strata helped to create a feeling that the *media gente* belonged to the ‘people’ by their highly visible engagement with labor. Furthermore, the presence of these two groups together on the Campo, as well as the presence of the local *casati*, created within this area a microcosm of Sienese society that acted as a forum for the display of the cultural elements that defined the difference between each. Here in the Campo each class’s representative could be assessed based on elements such as education, dress, and guild affiliation. This plain view of the divergent habits of the various strata of Sienese society reinforced the *media gente*’s rhetoric of itself as a balancing force within a tripartite political and economic order.

The *media gente*’s ability to control the city due to its economic prowess and strong organizational ties was underscored by another part of the physical transformation of the Piazza del Campo: the reconstruction of the hall of the merchant’s guild (Mercanzia) at the northern end of the area. Although historically the piazza had been the site of the Mercanzia, whose headquarters was first documented in 1194 as being located next to the church of S. Paolo, sometime around 1308 it was decided to construct a larger,
more impressive building. In this year, in order to start construction, the commune and the Mercanzia together bought the domestic palace directly facing the new communal building; a structure belonging to casato m. Ciampolo di m. Jacomo Gallerani. The new Mercanzia hall was constructed between 1309-1311 and its style was an imitation of the Torrione of the Palazzo Pubblico (Fig. 35). The structure rose to a height of three stories with each story divided into four horizontal bays. The bays of the top floor were perforated by triforia windows and the whole building was crowned by a Sienese coronamento.

The resetting of the hall of the merchant’s guild as a supporting force across the expanse of the Campo from the civic palace allowed the media gente to further harness the economic and social power of this organization, since many within the ruling faction had their roots in the mercatores. Acting as partners in the running of the city, the consuls of the Mercanzia (which almost always included at least one person who held office among the Nove), along with the officers of the Biccherna, comprised what was known as the concistoro. This body of officials acted in tandem with the Nove in the election


286. The commune paid at least three-fifths of the selling price and granted control of the building to the consuls of the Mercanzia, who paid the remaining money. Bowsky, Siena, 224. The author notes that Agnolo di Tura reports that the commune paid three-fourths of the price, but that Lisini uncovered documents of cash payments in 1309 at the rate of three fifths. Iacometti and Lisini, eds., Cronache senesi, 303. Lisini, “Palazzo di Mercanzia,” Miscellanea storica senese 3 (1895): 27.


288. Of the 470 identifiable office holders of the Nove that Bowsky counted, at least 85 were Guild consuls, some for several terms. Bowsky, “Buon Governo,” 374.
of government officials and the oversight of many other state decisions. Having the merchant’s meeting quarters built as a conscious quotation of the architectural style of the Palazzo Pubblico’s Torrione, which it faced across the gulf of the piazza, emphasized the social and economic connection between Siena’s merchant class and the media gente of the Nove, making it again clear who was, and was not, able to hold the city’s highest office.

The replacement of the meeting place of the Mercanzia at the top of the Campo also played a physical role in the control of the city. Unlike the Palazzo Pubblico, which sat in between two open squares, the new guild hall sat on the Via Francigena, a vital commercial road for travel through Tuscany. Since the Mercanzia and the media gente often shared the same interests, the placement of the guild hall along this road helped the media gente to protect it and the passage of commerce into the Campo. This was important since the domestic palaces and towers of the casati lined the Via Francigena as it entered the northern section of the city, wound its way past the piazza, and exited through the southern neighborhood of San Martino. Although the guild halls’ three levels held shops, the guilds’ court, a meeting room, and a place for record storage, its placement on the road made it conceivable for use as a staging ground for communal troops as well as a place to store weapons and supplies.

The construction of the new building of the Mercanzia may also have been a part of a larger plan to regularize and unify the bare field of the Campus Fori in order to make

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289. The ‘Three Consuls of the Knights’ or the ‘Captains of the Guelph Party’ were also a part of the Concistoro. Bowsky, Siena, 23. Bowsky also notes that while the Nove would act without other members of the Concistoro, it was rare for them to act without the participation of at least three of the consuls of the Mercanzia. Bowsky, Siena, 223.
it a fitting stage and symbol for the media gente’s power. In order to make room for the merchant’s hall, not only did the commune purchase and destroy the aforementioned Gallerani Palace, the government also bought and tore down the church of S. Paolo. The destruction of these two properties allowed the new merchant hall’s facade to take on a more regular contour. The opening up of this area gave the northern section of the Campo the gentle curve that the modern viewer sees today. The aesthetic goal of reshaping the contours of the field was supported by legislation regarding the remaining structures surrounding the Campo. These properties were mainly the domestic palaces of the casati. For example, it was written into law that, in congruence with the Palazzo Pubblico, any new window opening onto the piazza was to have two mullions dividing it into three sections. Furthermore, a law of January 1302 made it illegal for the surrounding botteghe to have anything protruding into the Campo more than one braccio unless they had a special license. A measure of 1301 made it illegal for sewage runoff to be directed into the Campo.

Perhaps the most important step in the goal to unify the Piazza del Campo with its surrounding structures was surfacing the expanse of the field in fine brickwork. Begun in 1327, and near completion in December of 1346, the paving is carefully divided into nine, wedge-like sections that slope down the field from northern edge of the Campo and

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290. “Che in ciascuna casa, la quale si facesse di nuovo d’intorno al Campo del mercato, tutte le finestre si facciano a colonnelli.” Siena, Costituto, II, d. III, r. XXXVII, 29. Although there was some legislation concerning the appearance of the Campo in the previous governments, it was not until after 1297 that the majority of aesthetic legislation occurred.

291. braccio (arm): unit of linear measurement = about half a meter. Consiglio Generale, 61, c.123.

meet at the foot of the Palazzo Pubblico. Much like the rest of the decorative elements of the civic palace and the Torre del Mangia, as well as the hall of the Mercanzia itself, these divisions were meant to recall the Nove (Nine), and by extension, the *media gente*. All together, the improvements to the *Campus Fori* transformed the space from a mere open field within the urban fabric of the city into almost a type of extra ‘room’ connecting palace, tower, and guild hall into one government complex. Once embraced by the walls of this massive center, the eye of the fourteenth-century Sienese visitor was invited to recognize the motifs instituted by the Nove government and the carefully cultivated visual culture of the *media gente*, while recognizing them as the lords of Siena.

The control of the Piazza del Campo by the *media gente* then was a mastery over not only the economic center of the city but also over its new physical and psychological heart. As the city expanded around the Campo in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to incorporate the settlements running along the north-south axis of the Via Francigena, the geographic center of the city began to shift. Balancing the old nucleus of the city around the western hill of Castelvecchio (the neighborhood of Città) were now a northern neighborhood, Camollia, and a southern one, San Martino. Physically separated and defined by their position on three different hills, these areas developed into three distinct communities that came to be known as *terzi*. The point where these hill-top semi-cities converged to create the larger commune of Siena was in the sloping field of the Piazza del Campo.

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Thus, as not being a part of any one of these three communities, the media gente’s grand piazza lay in the section of the city that was considered neutral territory: belonging to every citizen, but not to any particular faction. Crowning this non-partisan center with the structures of the civic administration underscored several themes in the rhetoric of the media gente’s rule. The intervening Piazza del Campo, in its ability to create a unified Sienese state out of three diverse areas, acted as a metaphor to the republican government of the ‘middle people’ who created the commune of Siena out of its socially and economically factionalized inhabitants. This strategy of emphasizing a unified identity within the city helped to blur the class lines drawn by social closure and was, in a way, another method of media gente control. As closure’s access/denial of resources pushed the social conglomerates of the city into more sharply defined groups, there was a need to cement the bonds of connectivity between the separate classes to ensure that none would break its role in the balance and threaten the media gente’s rule. The solution to this problem was the promotion of an overarching Sienese identity to unite the three orders into one organic whole. The visual symbol of this essence was made manifest in the visual and numerical harmony of the Piazza del Campo.

Related to this idea of balance was the potential for closure that the Piazza del Campo offered the media gente by allowing, or denying, the city’s inhabitants access to the essential gathering area for recreation and display. Some events, like large-scale games amongst competing teams drawn from the various terzi, were either completely banned or strictly limited. Two of these amusements, such as elmora (a type of mock battle) and pugna (a group fist-fight), were often unruly and sometimes even deadly.
Although the game was officially banned from the Campo in 1262, a game of *elmora* that was played there in 1291 resulted in more than ten deaths and embroiled so much of the city that the Podestà and his agents were called to perform the difficult task of restoring the peace.\(^\text{294}\) After this, the ban on the game was strictly enforced; though *pugna* was allowed until 1325, when a fight in the Campo turned into such a fevered battle that neither the powers of the Podestà nor the Nove could quell it.\(^\text{295}\)

More than just a measure for the protection against loss of life and property, the prohibition on the use of the Campo for these games, or their severe limitation, allowed the *media gente* to keep its position through the maintenance of civil order, and thus social equilibrium. The confusion and fervor of the Campo competitions, in which the classes divided by social closure were thrown together in large numbers, could have been an ideal opportunity for an enterprising revolutionary group to seize upon and manipulate class rhetoric. Once an idea of *casati* and/or *popoli* agency had been established in opposition to *media gente* rule, it was a short step to lead the city’s inhabitants in open revolt against its government at their very doorstep. This is a lesson that the *media gente* learned firsthand in June of 1318 when 600 of the city’s infantry, among them 100 from the *Arte del Fuoco* (smiths and other metal workers) and 100 butchers/animal dealers (*carnaioli*), were sent to subdue the town of Massa Marittima. This large group of like-minded persons proved dangerous, as, shortly after their return to the city, the smiths and

\(^{294}\) Schevill, *Siena*, 342.

\(^{295}\) These games were so popular that it was difficult for the laws of the city to stop them and it seems that at least on one occasion, in 1291, the General Council of the city granted permission for there to be played a “game or battle of *elmora* in the Campo.” CG, N. 42, fol. 33v-34r, 35 r (oct.15, 1291). Cited in Bowsky, “Internal Violence,” 5. The bishop of Siena and the friars and priests of the city were able to stop the battle. Schevill, *Siena*, 344. Bowsky, “Internal Violence,” 6.
butchers, along with other popoli minuti, created an uproar in the piazza by gathering to protest the regime of the Nove and to throw stones.\(^{296}\)

Although some activities were banned from taking place on the Campo, others that gave expression to a group culture beneficial to the media gente’s control were eagerly supported by the city’s regime. One of the sanctioned uses of the Piazza del Campo was also one of the most important rituals in the lives of Siena’s casati: the celebration of knighthood. In Siena the milites (that is those with the dignity of knighthood) were not the same as those who were simply designated as equitores, those that possessed horses for combat or who maintained a horse for the use of the commune.\(^{297}\) Although in the early Middle Ages the correlation between knighthood and nobility was not always exact, starting from the twelfth century, the ranks of knighthood began to close to the point that, by the fourteenth century, only the men who had descended from knights were allowed to enter the order.\(^{298}\) This practice of attaining knighthood by virtue of one’s lineage was so common in Siena that the honor of knighthood became, along with the practice of vendetta, one of the main distinguishing markers of the families put on the list of casati.\(^{299}\)

Although it seems that allowing the existence of a large band of professional warriors would have posed a threat to the existing middle class regime, the knighthood’s power was mitigated by its dependence on the official participation and recognition of the

\(^{297}\) Franco Cardini, Banchieri e mercanti di Siena (Roma : De Luca, 1987), 306.
\(^{298}\) Franco Cardini, L’acciar de’ cavalieri: Studi sulla cavalleria nel mondo toscano e italic (secc. 13.-15) (Florence: Le lettere, 1997), 13-14.
\(^{299}\) Unlike in cities such as Florence where there were ‘knights of the people’, in Siena knights were not allowed to belong to the popoli. As such, there was no democratization of the order there. Cardini, L’acciar, 145.
commune’s government. As Siena was a self-governing entity during the reign of the *media gente*, the practice of authorizing the concession of a knighthood was assumed by the head of the state, the council of the Nove. 300 While the members of the Nove themselves could not preside over the ceremony, since only a knight could make another knight, the civic government’s presence was marked by the participation of the knights who numbered among the commune’s officials.

For example, in his Chronicle of Siena, Agnolo di Tura describes the ceremony surrounding the knighthood of the Sienese *casato* Francesco di Sozo di Bandinello di Bandinelli on November 25, 1326. Agnolo explains that Francesco’s dubbing was overseen by an official of the commune, the Podestà, who was at that time Simone, the Count of Battifolle. Francesco’s father, *messere* Sozzo, a knight himself, and the vicar of the duke of Calabria, Pietro Andolfi, were also a part of the ceremony, in charge of the sword and right spur, respectively. A second Sienese official, the Capitano del Popolo, presented the new knight with his left spur.301 Even the cost of the instruments of the ceremony were paid for by the commune who authorized the Biccherna to give new knights 5 *lira* each to be spent on spurs and a sword.302

The authorization and concession of knighthood then created interdependence between the *media gente* government and the *casati*. By supporting the practice of knighthood, the *media gente* reinforced its authority in several areas. First, the commune received well trained and equipped combatants for its military campaigns, as well as qualified diplomats, ambassadors, and other officials to lend greater weight to its

administration. Allowing the casati to retain the honor of knighthood also became another way for the media gente to conspicuously set apart the men that they wished to keep from power. While the families who were to be kept out of the city’s highest council were officially named in the casati list of 1277, the Nove’s first statues of 1287 express that knights were to be excluded. Of the 53 families on the 1277 list of casati only nine do not appear on lists of Sienese knights. However, the decree that knights and casati were banned from office is not redundant since, as is explained below, knighthood came with a visual culture that made its members far easier to recognize than the casati in general.

By obtaining knighthood through the official channel of the commune and its officers, the casati benefited by maintaining their families’ feudal traditions and professions as mounted warriors. This was key to the casati’s self-definition as domini and their subsequent high social standing in Late Medieval Italian culture. The casati’s membership in the knighthood was also important to their economic standing since being a knight was often a necessity for those men who sought to hold the lucrative and prestigious offices such as Podestà and Capitano del Popolo in other Italian communes. The hope by the media gente was that even excluded from political power the prestige of

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303. Judges, notaries, and physicians were also banned. “Anco, statuto et ordinate è, che del numero de li detti signori Nove o vero d’esso officio, officiale essere non possa alcuno d’alcuno casato de la città di Siena, né alcuno cavaliere, né alcuno guidice, né alcuno notaio, né alcuno medico...” Siena, Il costituto, vol. II, d. VI, r.VI, 492.

304. The nine families are: the Ubertini, Bulgarini, Savaioni, Uliverri, Bosti, Montecchiesi, Gherardini/Goccioli, Paganucci, and Cauli. The Bulgarini and Savaioni were taken off later lists of the casati, and the former had members who sat on the Nove. Andrea Giorgi, “Riflessioni sull’acquisizione della dignità cavalleresca a Siena nel Duecento,” in Fedeltà ghibellina, affari guelfi (Pisa: Pacini 2007):155-56.
becoming a knight and holding the civic offices reserved for men of their standing, would be enough to satisfy the ambition of members of the nobility.  

Perhaps in order to draw more fully the knighthood under the sway of the jurisdiction of the commune, the Nove continued the tradition of allowing the space of the Piazza del Campo to be used for the ceremony and even eased some of the laws that governed this, and other, public spaces. Although Agnolo di Tura reports that Francesco’s knighting took place at the Sienese Duomo on December 25, many other knights were created every year on the ferragosto, the 15th of August, in the piazza. Besides the ceremonial presentation of the sword, belt, and spurs here, the new knight also had a chance to demonstrate his military prowess within the space. In contravention of the laws forbidding violent games from taking place on the Campo, a statute of the commune of 1309-10 allowed a new knight to build a wooden palisade on the Campo in which a jousting tournament could be held. In the case of Francesco Bandinelli’s celebration, Agnolo del Turo tells us that the jousting started on St. Thomas’s day

306. Knights had been given the right by the city’s government to hold celebrations in the Campo since at least 1262: “quicumque homo voluerit novo militie cingulo decorari possa liberamente farlo in Campo Fori.” Zdekauer, Constituto of 1262, r. III LV.
307. In the chronicle of Siena attributed to Agnolo di Tura, the author gives an indication of how many knights Siena had and which casati families they were a part of. He describes an army of two hundred knights sent to help Florence in the year 1323. Among these knights were: 24 Tolomei, 46 Salimbeni, 12 Bandinelli, 36 Piccolomini, 35 Saracini, 20 Forteguerri, 20 Ceretani, and 22 Scotti. Iacometti and Lisini, eds., Cronache senesi, 406. Marrara, I magnati, 256, n 81.
308. “Et qualunque vorrà farsi cavalieri novella, avere possa nel Campo del mercato agevolezza di fare et di tenere la sua corte per XV. di senza alcuna pena; et in esso Campo el legname ficcare et tenere, et ine si possa chiudere con tutte quelle cose le saranno necessarie a la sua corte, nonostante alcuno capitolo di costoduto.” Siena, Il costituto, vol. II, d.III, r. LVI, 35.
(December 21), no fewer than 88 men participated, and the games continued over the course of three days.\textsuperscript{309}

In addition to the chivalric games, the new knight was also allowed to use the space of the Campo to receive guests. Francesco Bandinelli began to ‘hold court’ there on December 18\textsuperscript{th} until his Christmas day ceremony and then for a full eight days after. During this time, the Sienese \textit{casati} families would take it upon themselves to display their immense wealth and social privilege. For example, along with a list of the prodigious quantity of guests invited to celebrate Francesco Bandinelli’s knighthood, Agnolo del Tura also gives a long list of the sumptuous personal items that the new knight had acquired. These included silk underwear, an indigo samite (silk) doublet with gold braiding, and a surcoat of crimson velvet.\textsuperscript{310} Also displayed was the equipment that the young man would need to fulfill his military duties. These lavish, gold, silk, and velvet decorated items included: two pairs of spurs, two bridals, two saddles, a shield, several pieces of armor, and weapons such as an ivory handled knife and a halberd lined with gilded velvet.\textsuperscript{311} Since the chronicler wrote that these gifts were the ones he recorded because they were the things that he could see, there is little doubt that they, at least partially, were displayed during the knighthood’s festivities.

The permission to hold court on the Campo, with its display of gifts, was closely related to the \textit{media gente’s} exemption of knights, and sometimes their kin, from some of the city’s laws against the wearing of luxurious dress. For example, the sumptuary law

\textsuperscript{309} Dean, \textit{Towns}, 152-3.
\textsuperscript{310} Listed are 148 names from the neighborhood of Città, 98 from San Martino, and 153 from Camollia. \textit{Ibid.}, 153.
\textsuperscript{311} Dean, \textit{Towns}, 154-55.
prohibiting the wearing of new fur garments was suspended for knighting ceremonies and, in general, only knights (with the exception of judges and doctors of medicine) were permitted to wear outer garments made of fabrics such as velvet and silk, as well as precious metals like gold.\textsuperscript{312} Although forbidden to all other citizens, knights could wear silver buttons, and they and their wives were also allowed to wear ermine as a concession to ancient custom.\textsuperscript{313} Similarly, knights were exempt from the observance of the norms imposed on the populace concerning the wearing of a belt. They could wear any type, except those of silver wire (\textit{filo argento}).\textsuperscript{314}

Although this display of pomp and splendor in the Campo was beneficial to the social ascendancy of Siena’s \textit{casati} families, it also seems to have been part of a strategy by the \textit{media gente} to control the knightly class economically. As the descriptions of Agnolo del Tura confirm, in order for knights and their families to dress and comport themselves in a manner that would retain the social prestige of their position, they had to exert a considerable amount of time and money. The government’s relaxation of sumptuary statutes for the highest portion of Siena’s citizenry and the creation of a setting for their exhibition in the heart of the city further encouraged these families to engage in conspicuous consumption. In addition, the \textit{media gente}’s support of the \textit{casati}’s martial culture encouraged these men to persist in their traditions of continuously training in games such as jousting and hunting, as well as taking a leading role in the city’s military campaigns. Not only was training in arms expensive in terms of money for horses and

\textsuperscript{312} Citizens from other classes could only use these fabrics for linings. Ceppari-Ridolfi and Turrini, \textit{Mulino}, 95. Waley, \textit{Siena}, 83.
\textsuperscript{314} Ceppari-Ridolfi and Turrini, \textit{Mulino}, 85.
equipment such as armor and weapons, it also required a great amount of time which, had the \textit{casati} been so inclined, could have been channeled towards lucrative business pursuits within the domain of the \textit{media gente}.\textsuperscript{315}

Consumption and knightly displays could have been a boon to the \textit{media gente}, whose interests were mainly mercantile. Besides distracting potential market competitors, the spending of the \textit{casati} might have meant good business to those merchants who dealt in the selling of luxury goods. The purchases of the \textit{casati} then would have helped redistribute their surplus wealth down to the commune’s lower social strata.\textsuperscript{316} That the \textit{media gente} were aware of this economic dynamic may be seen in a law enacted to prevent the \textit{casati}’s money from returning to them in the form of gifts bestowed on the new knights. To limit the further gain of wealth by an already affluent class of citizens, a statute of the constitution of 1274, upheld in 1343 by the office in charge of enforcing sumptuary laws (the \textit{Donnaio}), legislated that rather than giving material gifts to a new knight, those wishing to honor him could only do so with donations of food and drink.\textsuperscript{317} Of course, many members of the \textit{casati} resented laws such as this one that restricted their affairs. However, attesting to the strength of the \textit{media gente} is the fact that petitions put to the General Council for the suspension of these laws often failed to gain the 2/3 majority needed to pass.\textsuperscript{318}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[315] Richard A. Goldthwaite, \textit{Wealth and the Demand for Art, Italy 1300-1600} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 153.
\item[318] Waley, \textit{Siena}, 83.
\end{footnotes}
Furthermore, the visual culture of dress that the suspension of sumptuary laws encouraged among Siena’s knights allowed the *media gente* to better manage the city’s upper class. First, the concessions on dress allowed the *casati* to become visually distinct from Siena’s general population. The advantage of this to the ruling faction was that, even next to the invariably well-dressed *media gente*, it would be easier to recognize a person who was on the list of the *casati*. This was an advantage to the *media gente*, whose members were wise to keep a close eye on individuals of the upper class who wielded great martial and economic strength. Second, a culture of visual prestige that marked one’s membership in the *casati* created a type of competition between rival families who, much like in their social disputes, vied to outdo one another. This competition, of course, might have encouraged the *casati* to invest their money and attention into commercial goods instead of into actions of violence and civil disorder, which would have threatened to disrupt the pacific state and the rule of the *media gente*.

This chapter has demonstrated that the space of the Piazza del Campo was, like the Biccherna and Gabella book covers, Palazzo Pubblico, and Torre del Mangia, another material and symbolic appropriation by the *media gente*. The *casati* had overshadowed the economic, social, and strategic functions of the space by owning properties there and using the field for their knighting ceremonies. When they came into power the *media gente* transformed the space by regulating and beautifying it. These acts transformed the piazza into an area symbolic of the *media gente* and its regime. In addition, the *media gente* determined how other Sienese social groups were allowed access to this improved city center for their economic and cultural activities. The Piazza del Campo thus became
a stage for the performance of class. The negotiation of social position that happened in
the Campo was a counterpart to the political rhetoric found in the book covers of the
Biccherna and Gabella and in the Palazzo Pubblico and Torre Mangia. Like the
iconography on the book covers, the events on the Campo helped locate the media gente
between the poles of the hierarchy of Sienese society. This position, again, allowed the
middle class to defend its hold over the city’s government by maintaining itself as the
defender of social equilibrium and caretaker of the pacific state.

Unfortunately for the media gente and the government of the Nove, the town’s
lively center was also the area chosen for the knightly class’s display of another sort of
power, when, in March of 1355, the casati and the popoli minuti gathered in the Piazza
del Campo to overthrow the government. According to the Sienese chronicler Donato di
Neri, the Nove’s troubles began on the 23rd of that month when the Holy Roman
Emperor-elect, Charles IV of Luxembourg was on his way to Rome to be crowned, and
made a stop in Siena. Although with the defeat of Ghibellinism the Emperor-elect had
little hope to reclaim control over his lost territories, he was still theoretically considered
the source of all political power and local governments received him accordingly. As
soon as Charles dismounted from his horse in front of the domestic palace of the casato
Salimbene family, a shout went up among the assembled crowd, “Long live the Emperor
and death to the Nove!” With this utterance, the casati and the popoli minuti raced to arm
themselves and a revolution began.319

The end of the Nove came a few days later, on March 25th, at the heart of their
government, the Piazza del Campo and the Palazzo Pubblico. As the Emperor-elect sat in

319. Iacometti and Lisini, eds., Cronache senesi, 577-578
conference with the Nove within the civic palace, the *popoli minuti* and *casati* stormed the Campo again crying, “Long live the Emperor and death to the Nove!” During this uproar, the revolutionaries moved to sack two of the *media gente’s* most important offices. First, they burst into the hall of the Mercanzia, robbing it of many items and destroying its records. They then turned their attention to the Palazzo Pubblico itself and attacked the offices of the Biccherna. There they seized the book of legal sentences and incarcerations and brought it out into the Campo, tore it to shreds, and burned it in the presence of the Charles IV.\(^{320}\)

After this attack on the peripheral instruments of the *media gente’s* power, the crowd of *casati* and *popoli minuti* turned its attention to the main site of control within Siena, the office of the Nove itself. Rushing to the church of San Domenico, the revolutionaries returned to the Campo with a lock-box in which were kept all of the names of the citizens eligible to be elected into the highest magistracy. At the urging of the revolutionaries, the Emperor-elect had already used his symbolic authority to divest the Nove of their staff of office when he threw the lock-box, which had been brought to him in the Palazzo Pubblico, out of the palace window to smash on the pavement of the Campo below. Under the auspices of the Emperor-elect a new, reformatory government was designated by an agreement between him and the crowd of citizens gathered in the Campo. Members of the *casati* ("*de’ grandi*") and the *popoli minuti* shared seats in the government with the division being 18 and 12 seats, respectively. The *media gente* of the Nove were excluded.\(^{321}\)

\(^{320}\) Ibid.  
\(^{321}\) Ibid.
CONCLUSION: THE NOVE ENDS, BUT THE NOVESCHI STAY

In reference to Sienese scholarship as a whole, the use of social closure as a methodology can serve to connect and elaborate some current observations about the motivations behind cultural objects and practices in the city during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. For example, much of the recent work on Siena’s artistic and cultural activities stresses their persuasive capabilities in the aim to legitimate social and political power. This can be seen in a wide range of Sienese scholarship, such as Grossman’s discussion of the Palazzo Pubblico, which he considers as “encoded with political and propagandistic messages” that provided a way for the Nove government to legitimate their political authority. 322 Similarly, Gerald Parsons points out that the promotion of the Sienese cult of the Virgin Mary, and related devotional practices, were a way for the Sienese state to bolster belief in the effectiveness of, and citizens’ adherence to, its authority. 323 Randolph Starn characterizes the frescos of Ambrogio Lorenzetti in the Palazzo Pubblico as a means for “the conservation, augmentation, and magnificence” of the Nove regime. 324

While studies of rhetoric and authoritative legitimacy are important to make in their own right, their expansion to include concepts of social closure allows for a greater understanding of these phenomena as just one part in an overall system of control that includes cultural forms of power in addition to the economic and political. In this way, the similarities and differences of how each cultural practice and/or object performs its persuasive functions can be related to other, non-artistic, methods of control. These, in

324. Starn, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, 15.
turn, unveil the overall pattern of the construction of power within a society in general, rather than merely demonstrate cause and effect.

Although tracing a society’s web of closure strategies in their many different manifestations throughout two centuries runs the risk of seeming reductionist by the necessary avoidance of explanations of art objects in their larger art historical context, the type of examination that social closure allows seeks to enhance, rather than replace, more traditional methods. The strength of analysis using social closure lies in its ability to make fine connections between different forms of the arts by examining their engagement with the subtle shifts in culture that result from various groups’ competition for economic and political dominance. Since the methods employed by these groups to gain ascendancy perform a naturalizing function and, as such, often appear self-evident and involuntary, social closure allows for a greater transparency between art, culture, and society. Closure theory also has the value of clarifying the sources, nature, and consequences of cultural exclusion within a conceptual framework that recognizes exclusion as the prime determination of class, rather than camouflaging social stratification within vague or general concepts.

What the revolution of 1355 demonstrates is that by the time Charles IV visited the city, the media gente’s series of closures had clearly changed the composition of Siena’s social strata. In the early thirteenth century the main social groupings appear to have been duel and consisted of the nobili and the rest of Siena’s various inhabitants. When the political party of the popolo gained some civic power, the cultural strength of the nobili, who rooted their social practices in the traditions of the feudal aristocracy, did
not allow for a full development of a rival *popolo* culture. Hence, Sienese cultural production remained largely in the hands of the wealthiest upper tier of the commune’s populace. Having become split between two political parties, these wealthy citizens each tried to maintain their social advantage through engagement with *nobili* practices, the only fully legitimated model for Late Medieval, secular behavior. Even with civic power now divided amongst the *popolo* and the *nobili*, the propagation of *nobili* culture reinforced the notion of a two-tiered Sienese social structure with one class being the wealthy men who participated in government and the second class consisting of the less affluent citizens who did not have the means to do so.

That the Biccherna, the Palazzo Pubblico complex, and the Piazza del Campo (including the hall of the Mercanzia) were recognized by Sienese society as linked spaces where the *media gente* had usurped and transformed the symbols of *nobili/casati* culture for their own use is evident in the choices that the revolutionaries of 1355 made in trying to destroy the regime of the Nove. The *media gente’s* last names, Coats of arms, Italian vernacular, Republican rhetoric, and its presence in the Palazzo Pubblico and Campo had made this group conspicuous from other social classes. Thus, the commune’s various social classes became capable of recognizing themselves and each other as belonging to one of the three social groups referred to as the *popoli minuti*, *media gente*, and *casati*.

Recognizing themselves as a group in opposition to the *media gente* and perceiving the source of the latter’s power as the regime of the Nove, the rebels of 1355 refuted the biggest symbol of that power, the Palazzo Pubblico. As a foil to the power of

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the civic palace that held the usurping government of the ‘middle’ people of Siena, the rebels chose the magnificent domestic palace of the immensely wealthy casato Salimbene family to become the site of the first cry of dissent. After this symbolic acknowledgement that the casati’s palaces held the real power within the city, the rebels were able to turn their attention towards physically attacking the media gente’s authority in their literal heart, the city’s center.

Once in the Piazza del Campo, the rioters again acknowledged the media gente’s closure through economic means by occupying the Mercanzia and the Biccherna. That many of the records of these offices were brought out to be destroyed in the open air of the Campo denied the authority of the corporate, record-keeping, media gente culture. This was an attack not only on the buildings of the Mercanzia and Biccherna, but also on the derivative and contingent exclusions that the media gente employed to obscure the origins of its power such as the Biccherna and Gabella book covers and their iconography. As was discussed in the chapters above, the media gente bit into the cultural assets of other groups and formed new rhetorical strategies to reflect their class’ values. The end effect of this practice was that it augmented the social divisions created by the main forms of closure with a complex web of behaviors and practices. These exclusions habituated the Sienese citizens to consider themselves as belonging to one of the newly developing Sienese social classes, as well as conditioned each group to recognize its ‘natural’ place in the city’s social/economic/political hierarchy.

A further blow to the media gente was the destruction of the Nove ballot system by throwing it from the window of the Palazzo Pubblico. This physical act disavowed the
symbolism of the *media gente* as a mediating force in a democratically elected republic (without the explicit disavowal of Siena’s Roman connection, a useful tool for the groups hoping to succeed the *media gente* in power.) Finally, the on-the-spot election of the city’s reformatory government re-affirmed Siena’s social classes in the absence of *media gente* rule. The new government was drawn from the *popoli* and the *casati* and specifically forbade the participation of members of families who had sat on the council of the Nove.

The most visible proof of the class-building function that the *media gente*’s social closure had, however, can be found in the shape of Sieneese politics and society after the Nove regime was overthrown. The eighteen ‘grandi’ citizens and twelve *popoli minuti* that were elected on that fateful revolutionary day in March gave way to a new government of the Dodici (twelve), whose members were elected from the *popoli minuti* and who were assisted by a council of nobles.\(^{326}\) From this post were excluded all of those Sieneese citizens who had been elected to serve on the former council of the Nove, as well as, in consciousness of their class affiliation, their sons, brothers, and relatives. Alongside the Dodici, a College of Magnates was created. The Dodici were not able to make a decision without the assent of at least two parts of the College. These two bodies together elected the officers of the Biccherna and Gabella (two *nobili*, two *popoli*). The General Council was to be 250 *popolari* and 150 *nobili*; no *noveschi* were allowed. The nobles lost their College shortly after its institution. In 1368 the Dodici fell and the city’s magnates and *noveschi* ruled, leaving out the *popoli*.

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The recognition of groups of Sienese citizens as political/social classes formed in the era of the *media gente* coalesced after this time into a concrete institution of social-political factions. Called *monti* or *ordini*, these groups were caste-like since membership was based on the role that an individual’s ancestors played in the Sienese politics of the previous decades. The *casati* became the Monti dei Gentiluomini and the *media gente* were re-christened the Monti dei Nove. The stratum of *popoli minuti* just below the *media gente*, who were elected into office after the Nove’s fall, became the Monti dei Dodici. After upheavals in 1365 and 1385 two additional groups, the Monti dei Riformatori and the Monti of the Popolari, were formed from men whose families had not held office in any of the previous regimes but who were at that time elected to the supreme magistracy. The majority of the members of both of these later factions were drawn from the lowest strata of the former *popoli minuti*.327

Although the strategies of closure used by these groups to vie for control over seats in the city’s public bureaus is a topic for further study, the pattern of office-holding of the Biccherna signals that this office was still of some importance. After 1385, when the ruling council, called the Quindici, was shared amongst the parties of the *riformitori* (eight seats), *dodicini* (four seats), and the *noveschi* (three seats), the Biccherna became such a popular place for each faction to have at least one representative member that there were six, sometimes seven, men elected to the positions of the Quattro Provveditori.328 These new political and social conditions in Siena were also met with

328. The *Monti* of the Gentiluomini was excluded.
iconographic changes to the Biccherna’s book covers. The tradition of the depiction of
the officers’ coats of arms persisted while the number of them painted on the book covers
grew to reflect the increased number of officers elected for each term. For example, while
no more than five coats of arms (those of the Camarlingo and the four officers) were
depicted during the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, a Biccherna panel of 1385
depicts no less than thirteen shields (Fig. 36). While this great number of coats of arms
was not common on Biccherna and Gabella book covers, more than five coats of arms
were regularly depicted after this date.

Furthermore, while the vernacular inscriptions on the Biccherna and Gabella book
covers remained relatively unchanged, new types of religious scenes and allegories
appeared. One such new iconographic treatment is found on the Biccherna panel of the
first half of 1364. In this painting a seated figure of ‘Siena’ receives presents from
individuals symbolizing the surrounding rural communities that were subjects of the
commune (Fig. 37). The youthful, modestly attired representation of the city presiding
over this offer of tribute, however, varies greatly from the elderly and richly adorned
‘Siena’ painted by Ambrogio Lorenzetti during the reign of the Nove. These differences
in depiction might convey the renewed vigor and austerity brought into the commune’s
new government by the participation of the monti of popular extraction.
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Figure 1. Biccherna, AS Siena n.1, luglio-dicembre 1258. (35.9 x 23.5 cm.)
Figure 2. Biccherna, Budapest, Szépmüvészeti Múzeum inv. n.1 (38), gennaio-giugno 1263. (36 x 23.5 cm.)
Figure 3. St Matthew, from the *Ebbo Gospels*, c. 816-835.
Figure 4. Diptych of Boethius (480-524), consul in 487 AD. (Ivory)
Figure 5. Biccherna, AS Siena n.2, luglio-dicembre 1264. (36.4 x 24.2 cm.)
Figure 6. Biccherna, Geneva, Private Collection, gennaio-giungo 1266. (36.5 x 24.5 cm.)
Figure 7. Biccherna, AS Siena n.3, luglio-dicembre 1267. (36.4 x 24 cm.)
Figure 8. Nobili Coats of Arms: Amidei, Renzi, Pagliaresi, and Lambertesco di Vigoroso.
Figure 9. Nobili Coats of Arms: Saracini and Bonsignori.
Figure 10. Biccherna, AS Siena n.6, gennaio-giugno 1276. (36.4 x 23.4 cm.)
Figure 11. Biccherna, AS Siena n.5, gennaio-giugno 1273. (36.6 x 24.6 cm.)

(The bottom half of this panel was painted at a later date.)
Figure 12. Gabella, AS Siena n.8, gennaio-giugno 1291. (40 x 28 cm.)
Figure 13. Biccherna, Berlin, Kunstgewerbemuseum inv. n. K 4817 b, gennaio-giugno 1294. (35 x 23 cm.)
Figure 14. Coats of Arms.
Figure 15. Gabella, AS Siena n.9, gennaio-giugno 1307. (35.8 x 24.5 cm.)
Figure 16: The Terzi of Siena
Figure 17. Gabella, AS Siena n.14, luglio-dicembre 1334. (41 x 26.3 cm.)
Figure 18. Gabella, AS Siena n.16, luglio-dicembre 1344. (41.8 x 24.7 cm.)
Figure 19. Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegory of Good Government* (detail), fresco, c.1338-40, Sala de Pace, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.
Figure 20. The Palazzo Pubblico of Siena, 1297-1350.
Figure 21. The Torre del Mangia, Siena, 1325-1344.
Figure 22. *Castellare* degli Ugurgieri, gateway entrance, twelfth century.
Figure 23. Palazzo Lombardi (was Accarigi or Cittadini), Via di Città, Siena. Late-thirteenth century.
Figure 24. The Palazzo Tolomei, Siena, 1270-2.
Figure 25. Sienese Arch, Palazzo Tolomei, Via Termini entrance.
Figure 26. Archetti, Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.
Figure 27. Drawing showing the Palazzo Tolomei in the background. Francesco di Giovanni Ventura, La Battaglia di Montaperti, 1442. Siena, Biblioteca degli Intronati.
Figure 28. She-wolf sculptures on the facade and main entrance of the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena.
Figure 29. *Ballatoio* and ciborium with she-wolf sculptures, the Torre del Mangia, Siena.
Figure 30. The Palazzo Sansedoni with debased tower (as seen from the left-front side of the Palazzo Pubblico), Siena.
Figure 31. She-wolf dripstones, Torre del Mangia, Siena.
Figure 32. The Piazza del Campo, Siena.
Figure 33. Map of Siena, eleventh Century.
Figure 34. Map of the Piazza del Campo, Siena, c. 1200.
Figure 35. The Piazza del Campo, showing the Palazzo Pubblico and the palazzo of the Mercanzia, Siena, 1309-1311. Attributed to Antonio Gregori, *Il ritorno della Compagnia di S. Bernardino dall’Aquila*, 1610. Arch. di Stato di Siena, *Le sale della mostra e il museo delle tavolette dipinte* [catal.], Roma 1956, p. 148 n. 84.
Figure 36. Biccherna, AS Siena n. 19, gennaio-giugno (?) 1385. (43.8 x 31.5 cm.)
Figure 37. Biccherna, Museum of Fine Arts Boston inv. n 50.5, gennaio-giugno 1364. (45 x 33 cm.)
APPENDIX A: BICCHERNA PANEL FRAGMENTS

1) *Due Stemmi*, 1275 (?) Archivio di Stato di Siena, Dono Horne, tav. A

2) *Stemmi dei Quattro provveditori di Biccherna*, 1261 gennaio-giugno, Archivio di Stato di Siena, Dono Horne, tav. B

   “HIC E LIBER PROVISORUM COMUNIS SERNARUM DOMINI BERINGERII IUDICUS DOMINI ILDIBRANDINI IUNCTE, DOMINI CHRISTOFORI TOLOMEI, HENRIGHI IACOBI, RANERII LONARDI PALIARENSIS, TEMPORE DOMINI COMITIS IORDANI DEI ET DOMINI REGIS GRATIA POTESTATIS SENARUM IN PRIMUS SEX MENSIBUS SUI REGIMINIS, ANNO DOMINI MCCLX, INDICTIONE IIII”


   “HIC EST LIBER DOMINI MEI DOMINI ORMANNI CAMERARII COMUNIS SENARUM, TEMPORE DOMINI IACOBINI DE RODILLA SENARUM POTESTATIS IN ULTIMUS SEX MENSIBUS SUI REGIMINIS”

4) *Stemma del Camarlingo di Biccherna*, 1274, luglio-dicembre, Archivio di Stato di Siena, Dono Horne, tav. D

   “HIC EST LIBER DOMINI SCOTIE DOMINI RENALDI DE TALOMEIS CAMERARII COMUNIS SENARUM TEMPORE POTESTATIS DOMINI CAMPANESIS DE PAPIA IN ULTIMIS SEX MENSIBUS SUI REGIMINIS”

5) *Stemma dei Quattro Provveditori*, 1275, gennaio-giungo, Archivio di Stato Dono Horne, tav. E

   “HIC EST LIBER QUATUOR PROVISORUM COMUNIS SENARUM TEMPORE DOMINI MEI DOMINI ORMANNI, DOMINI IACOPPINI GUASTELLONIS, DOMINI GRIFOI DOMINI IACOBI IUDICUS ET DOMINI SALEMBENI RANERII, DOMINI CAMPANESISI DE PAPIA POTESTATIS COMUNIS SENARUM [...]”

329. This original list and explanation is from Tomei, *Biccherna*, 73-77.
APPENDIX B: A LIST OF MISSING BICCHERNA AND GABELLA PANELS

The list that follows is based on the notes drawn from several sources. The “Memorie” of count Giulio Piccolomini [Consorteria Piccolomini], from “Copia dell’Arme gentilizie” di Galgano Bichi, from “Raccolta universale di tutti l’iscrizioni” of Giovanni Antonio Pecci and from the catalogue of the collection of Johann Anton Ramboux.

1) *Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori*, 1261 lugio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Ugo monaco di San Galgano; Provveditori Ugguccio di Orlandi Malavolti, Ranieri di Matteo guidice, Pagine di Giliotto Incontri e Bencivenne di Baroccio; Podestà Giordano conte de Anglano (Bichi n.1)

2) *Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori* 1262, luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Ugo manaco di San Galgano; Provveditori Orlandi di Buonsignore, Bartolomeo di Ruggerotto, Pietro di Scotto di Domenico, messer Ricovero di Tebaldino di Rinaldo guidice; Podestà Giglio da Padule (Bichi n.2)

3) *Stemma di Ugo di messer Ruggeri Camarlingo*, 1267 gennaio-giugno
Biccherna. Camarlingo Ugo di messer Ruggeri; provveditori Cherimbaldo Palmieri, Beringhieri guidice figlio di Ildibrandino, Rinaldo di Lamberto, Bartolomeo di Ildibrandino Vincenti; Podestà Gherardo Lambertacci da Bologna (Bichi n.3 where it is erroneously dated 1266 lugio-decembre)

4) *Stemma di messer Ranieri di Gregorio Bocacci camarlengo*, 1268 luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo messer Ranieri di Gregorio Bocacci; Provveditori messer Buonaventura di Bencivenne guidice, Guido di messer Ildibrandino Saracini, Errico di Ugucio di Guelfo, Bindo di messer Provenzano; Podestà Guglielmo Marescotti da Verona (Bichi n.4)

5) *Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori*, 1272 luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo messer Meo di messer Ormanno; Provveditori Sterpolino di messer Guido di Casa Conti, Salmone di messer Guglielmo Piccolomini, Federico di messer Rinaldo Tolomei, messer Bartolomeo di Orlando da Stielle guidice; Podestà lacobino da Rodiglia (Ramboux n.4/337, erroneously dated 1275)

6) *Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori*, 1277 gennaio-giugno

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330. This original list and explanation is from Tomei, *Biccherna*, Appendice ‘Elenco delle biccherne perdute,’ 89-91.
333. Pecci, Archivio di Stato di Siena, *ms.* D 4-6; 1730, cc. 22-46v.
334. Ramboux, 1862.
Biccherna. Camarlingo frate Bartolomeo monaco di San Galgano; Provveditori messer Bandino di Uguccione guidice, Ranuccio di Giovanni Balzi, Bonaventura di Ranieri Patrizi, Federico di messer Rinaldo Tolomei, Podestà Orlando Rossi da Parma (Bichi n.5)

7) Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori, 1279 luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo frate Giovanni manaco di San Galgano; Provveditori messer Tommaso guiduce, Pago di Giliotto, Salmone di messer Guglielmo Piccolomini, Federico di messer Rinaldo Tolomei; Podestà Corrado da Palazzo da Brescia (Bichi n.6)

8) Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori, 1281 luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Griffolo monaco dell’Abbadia di san Michele; Provveditori Ristoro di Vitale, Francesco di Ugo, messer Umberto guidice figlio di messer Bernardino, Geri di Bertoldo; Podestà Matteo di Rosso (Bichi n.7)

9) Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori, 1285 gennaio-giugno
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Griffolo monaco dell’Abbadia di san Michele; Provveditori messer Nese guidice figlio di messer Bartolomeo, Fazrion di messer Ranieri di Benacco, Vitaleone di Altimanno, messer Filippo Malavolti; Podestà Guido da Battifolle (Bichi n.8)

10) Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori, 1286 gennaio-giugno
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Bartolomeo da Percenna; Provveditori Manno di squarcialupo, messer Bandino guidice figlio de fu Uguccione, Bernardino del Priore, Sozzo di Bartolomeo di Balinotto; Podestà Bertolino Maggi da Brescia (Bichi n.9)

11) Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori, 1288 luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Pietro monaco di San Galgano; Provveditori messer Ugo Fabri guidice, Bartalomeo di messer Ildibrandino di Mainetto, Geri di Montanino, messer Uguccio di messer Orlando Buonsignori; Podestà Guido Selvatico (Bichi n.10)

12) Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori, 1291 luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo frate Tommasino degli Umilitati; Provveditori messer Goffa Forteguerri, Mino di messer Ranieri, Salmone Piccolomini, Manfredi di Buonaventura di Bernardino: Podestà Pino Vernacci da Cremona (archivio di Stato di Siena, Consorteria Piccolomini 10, n.1, c.2)

13) Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori, 1305 gennaio-giugno
Biccherna. Camarlingo [...]; Provveditori Grifo Manieri, Bargia di messer Uguccione Patrizi, Manno di Vitaleone Altimanno, Orecchia di Bartolomeo Balinotti; Podestà Angelo Donateschi da Rieti (Bichi n.11)

14) Stemmi dei tre Esecutori, 1305 luglio-dicembre
Gabella. Camarlingo frate Bernardo degli Umilitati; Esecutori Andrea del Foresti, Neri del Buonaventura d’Agostino, Cecco di messer Andrea Tolomei (Bichi. n. 30)
15) *Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori*, 1310 luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Matteo monaco di San Galgano; Provveditori Niccolò Benzi. Meo di messer Figo Scotti, Guglielmuccio Petroni, Pietro di Arrigo di messer Iacomo del Tondo; Podestà Guglielmo Guidofanni da Bologna (Ramboux n. 10/343; also Bichi. n.12)

16) *Frate Filippo degli Umilitati Camarlingo con san Tommaso*, 1322 gennaio-giugno
Biccherna. Camarlingo frate Filippo degli Umilitati; Provveditori Meo di messer Figo Scotti; Fazio di Iacomo peri, Landoccio di Naddo di Enea, Ciampolo di messer Spinello da Cerreto; Podestà Loffredo Caetani conte di Fondi (Ramboux n. 12/345; also Bichi. n.13)

17) *Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori*, 1330 gennaio-giugno
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Antonio monaco di san Galgano; Provveditori Meo Giovanni, Tone di Cino Ughi, Mino di Andreoccio Ranuccini, Simone di ser Iacomo (Bichi n. 14)

18) *Stemmi dei Quattro Provveditori*, 1335 luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Matteo monaco di San Galgano; Provveditori Rinaldo di Mino Guglielmi, Niccolò di Buonaventura Patrizi, Meo Cavari, Geri d messer conte de’Rossi (Bichi n.15)

19) *Don Matteo monaco di San Galgano Camarlingo*, 1336 luglio-dicembre
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Matteo monaco di San Galgano; Provveditori Filippo del fu messer Pietro Forteguerri, Giovanni di Petrone Petroni, Antonio di messer Sozzo di Legaccio, Pietro di Naddino di Puccio; Podestà Ugolino marchese dl Monte Sante Marie (Ramboux n.15/348, also Bichi n.16)

20) *Cinque Stemmi*, 1338 gennaio-giugno
Biccherna. Camarlingo don Bartolomeo monaco di San Galgano; Provveditori Iacomo gi Giovanni da Travale, Niccolino Patrizi, Meo di Neri Baldinotti, Meo Biringhieri de Rossi (Bichi n. 17)

21) *L’Annunciazione con don Giacomo Bernardelli Camarlingo*, 1339 gennaio-giugno
Gabella. Camarlingo don Giacomo Bernardelli; Esecutori Vanni di Meo del Balza, Cione Bindi, Antonio di messer Sozzo Legacci (Pecci, cc. 225v-226)
The Council of the Bell establishes the exclusion of the Nobili from the office of the Trentasei (Archivio di Stato in Siena; Provisioni del Consiglio, t. XXI c.91; 28 maggio 1277.\textsuperscript{335}

In nomine Domini Amen. Infrascripta sunt ordinamenta facta per sapientes viros electos secundum alterius Consilii supra reformatione et bono statu civitatis Senarum.


\textsuperscript{335} Mondolfo U.G., \textit{Il populus a Siena nella vita della città e nel governo del commune fino all' riforma antimagnatizia del 1277.} (Genoa: Formiggini, 1911), 82-83.
APPENDIX D: MAP OF SIENA’S CENTER
APPENDIX E: THE TOWERS OF SIENA

Legenda

1. ACCARIGH
2. ALDOBRANDESCHI
3. ANGOLIERI
4. ANTOLINI
5. ASSASSINI
6. BALDINOTTI SMIRALDI
7. BANDINELLI
8. BANDINELLI PAPARONI
9. BARATTUCCI
10. BARTALUCCHI
11. BENVOGLIENTI
12. BISDOMINI
13. BISDOMINI (della Vittoria)
14. BULGARINI
15. BULGARINI
16. BUONSIGNORE
17. BUONSIGNORE (Fondazioni)
18. CAMPANIS
19. CAULI
20. CODENACCI CAPONSACCHI
21. CRESCENZI
22. DELCI
23. FORTEGUERRI
24. FRANZESI
25. GAZZANI
26. GOLLI o GOLLUCHI
27. GRICIA
28. GIUSTELLOI
29. GUERRA
30. INCONTRI (Pietramala)
31. INCONTRI
32. LAMBERTINI
33. LAMBERTINI (Superiore)
34. MACONI (Logge del Papa)
35. MACONI (Volsa)
36. MALAVOLTI (Antico Arco)
37. MALAVOLTI
38. MANETTI o MARESCOTTI
39. MANETTI
40. TORRE DEL MANGIA
41. MARESCOTTI (Palazzo Chigi Saracini)
42. MIGNANELLI (La Squilletta)
43. MIGNANELLI
44. MONTANINI (VERO ET VALE)
45. MONTANINI
46. GALLI MONTANINI TEGOLEI
47. ORLANDINI
48. ORSA (GALLERANI)
49. PICCOLOMINI (Magalotti)
50. PICCOLOMINI (Montone)
51. PICCOLOMINI (Croce del Traglio)
52. PONZI
53. PULCINO
54. RAGNONI
55. RINUCCINI
56. RINALDINI
57. ROCCHETTA
58. ROSSI
59. SALIMBENI (Rocca)
60. SALIMBENI
61. SALVANI
62. SANCEDONI
63. SAN VIGILIO
64. SCOTTI
65. SELVOLESI
66. SERRAVALLE
67. SETTE SEGGINELLE
68. SEVIALI (Simolli)
69. SIRI GALLI
70. TOLOMEI
71. TORNANO
72. TROMBETTI (Arte della Lana)
73. UGURGIERI (San Pietro Bulo)
74. UGURGIERI (Castelare)
75. VILLANI
76. VINCENTI
77. VOLTAIA
78. VIA BANCHI DI SOPRA 50-52
79. VIA BANCHI DI SOPRA 73-75
80. VIA BANCHI DI SOTTO 35
81. VIA DI CALZOLERIA 6 VICOLO DEL VICOLO
82. VIA DI CALZOLERIA 38
83. VIA PANTANETTO 35-37
84. VICOLO DEI POLLAIOI 4
85. VIA DEL PORRONE 61-63 (dei Leoni)
86. VIA SAN MARTINO 47
87. VIA STALLOREGGI 14-16
88. VIA STALLOREGGI 91-93
## APPENDIX F: RULING COUNCILS, 1235-1355

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Formal Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1236-71</td>
<td>Ventiattro</td>
<td><em>anti populi</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1271-79</td>
<td>Trentasei</td>
<td><em>gubernatores et difensores civitates et communis</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1280-87</td>
<td>Quindici</td>
<td><em>gubernatores et difensores civitates et popoli</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1287-90</td>
<td>Nove</td>
<td><em>gubernatores et difensores communis</em></td>
</tr>
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<td>1290-1</td>
<td>Diciotto</td>
<td><em>domini ad gubernandam civitatem</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1291-92</td>
<td>Sei</td>
<td><em>gubernatores et difensores civitates et popoli</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1292-1355</td>
<td>Nove</td>
<td><em>gubernatores et difensores popoli et civitatis</em></td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX G: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

*Abbac*: Course of study consisting of mathematics, accounting, and geometry.

*Balzana*: The Sienese coat of arms. It consists of a horizontally bisected field that is white at the top and black at the bottom.

*Biccherna*: The central financial office of the Sienese commune.

*Bulgano*: The Sienese mint. It was located inside the “*Dogana delle kabelle*” (customs house).

*Camarlingo*: (Latin *camerarius* = chamberlain) The principal officer of the Sienese Biccherna. The Camarlingo was the administrator in charge of overseeing the safety of the Biccherna’s funds.

*Campus Fori*: The name of the field that later became Siena’s Piazza del Campo.

*Capitano del Popolo*: The Captain of the People. The leader of the *popolo* political party.

*Casato* (plural *casati*): Wealthy Sienese families which belonged to certain named houses (in Italian *case*) listed in an official roster of 1277.

*Case-torre*: A type of domestic architecture. Permanent residences somewhere between a palazzo and torre. While they were shorter than towers and usually wider, they lacked the expanse of domestic palaces and had little in the way of façade decoration.

*Castellari (Casamenti)*: A type of domestic building irregular in form and consisting of a group of tall stone buildings, several stories high, surrounding an open courtyard with one or more gated entrances.

*Coronamento*: Decorative battlements at the top of a building such as those at the top of the Palazzo Pubblico.

*Dogano*: The Sienese customs house. Also called the “*Dogana delle kabelle*”, it was a large, two-storied building that was constructed in 1194.

*Esecutori*: Officers of the Gabella. There were usually three.

*Gabella*: Siena’s second major financial agency, whose main function was to administer the commune’s income derived from the city’s *gabelles* (indirect taxes) and forced loans.
General Council: Siena’s largest council. It was often the most representative of the Sienese citizen body.

Ghibelline: A political faction allied during the Middle Ages with the German imperial party, in opposition to the party of the Guelphs and the papacy.

*Grossa (Campana Grossa):* “Large Bell”. Siena’s largest communal bell.

Guelph: A political faction in medieval Italy that supported the power of the pope and the city-states in a struggle against the German emperors and the Ghibellines.

*Media gente:* The “middle people.” Sienese citizens between the *popolo minuto* and the *casati* social groups.

Mercanzia: The merchant’s guild. Also the name of the building, located on the Piazza del Campo that housed the merchant’s guild.

*Mercatores:* Members of the merchant’s guild who were eligible for election to the council of the Nove.

Missere: A title given to Sienese knights, judges, doctors, and professors of law.

Monti/Ordini: Caste-like social groups of Late Medieval Siena. Membership was based on the role that an individual’s ancestors played in the Sienese politics of the early fourteenth century.

*Nobili:* Sienese ‘nobles.’ These families were noble by tradition and did not necessarily possess an imperial or papal title.

Nove: Nine. The Sienese ruling council in which the *media gente* were elected and the *casati* were banned.

Palazzo Pubblico: Siena’s centralized government building. It held the chambers of the Nove, the General Council, and the Podestà.

Podestà: Principal non-Sienese official of the commune. The Podestà was ordinarily a foreign noble who served for a six-month term. The duties of his position varied from time to time, but included presiding over the General Council and judicial and military functions.

*Popolo:* A thirteenth-century Sienese political organization claiming an anti-oligarchical program.
*Popolo minuto:* (plural *Popoli Minuti*) The “little people.” A social group of Sienese citizens below the *media gente.*

Quattro Provveditori: Four officers of the Biccherna who were in charge of the collection and disbursement of funds.

Quindici: Fifteen. A numerical reconfiguration of the Trentasei that happened in 1280 when the Trentasei decided to make their council more manageable by cutting its thirty-six positions down to only fifteen. Its policies were the same as the Trentasei.

Soldi: A former Italian copper coin and unit of money, equal to a lira.

*Squilla:* One of Siena’s communal bells. It rang in the evening to indicate the city’s curfew and at morning when curfew was lifted and the city’s gates were opened, to call citizens to arms, and to warn of fires raging within the city.

*Terzi:* The three ‘thirds’ into which Siena is divided. These are Città, San Martino, and Camollia.

Torre del Mangia: The Sienese communal bell tower. It is attached to the Palazzo Pubblico.

Torrione: “Big Tower.” The central section of the Palazzo Pubblico.

*Trentasei:* Thirty-six. The Sienese ruling council of the *mercatores.*

*Triforia:* Literally, something with three openings. Equivalent to Latin *tri* (three) and *foris* (doorway).

Ventiquattro: Twenty-four. The Sienese ruling council in which the *nobili* were elected (possibly also members of the *popoli*).