

ALISON BROWN

Bartolomeo
Scala, 1430-1497,
Chancellor
of Florence

The Humanist As Bureaucrat



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Bartolomeo Scala, 1430-1497, Chancellor of Florence

THE HUMANIST AS BUREAUCRAT



Engraving taken from a fresco on the ceiling of the Uffizi, Florence.

Bartolomeo Scala

☞ 1430-1497 ☞

Chancellor of Florence

The Humanist as Bureaucrat

Alison Brown

Princeton University Press
Princeton, New Jersey

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In the United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, Guildford, Surrey
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Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data will be
found on the last printed page of this book

Publication of this book has been aided by a grant from
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

This book has been composed in Linotype Janson
Designed by Bruce Campbell

Clothbound editions of Princeton University Press books
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Printed in the United States of America by Princeton
University Press, Princeton, New Jersey

Contents

Preface	vii
List of Abbreviations	x
PART ONE <i>Career</i>	
1 Childhood and Education, 1430-1456	3
2 Secretary in the Medici Household, 1457-1464	22
3 Medicean Chancellor of Florence, 1465-1469	42
4 Scala and Lorenzo de' Medici, 1469-1492	61
5 Fall of the Medici and the New Republic, 1492-1497	115
PART TWO <i>Work</i>	
6 The Office of First Chancellor	135
7 From Medieval Chancery to Modern Secretariat	161
PART THREE <i>Place in Society</i>	
8 A Citizen Worth Knowing	195
9 Property and Family	220
PART FOUR <i>Writings</i>	
10 Apprenticeship: 1452-1464	257
11 Years of Maturity	
<i>Hundred Apologues</i> , 1481	278
<i>On Laws and Legal Judgments</i> , 1483	288
12 The Last Decade	
<i>History of the Florentine People</i>	297
<i>Defense against the Critics of Florence</i> , 1496	307
13 System and Eclecticism in Scala's Thought	310
PART FIVE <i>Conclusion</i>	
14 Scala and the State	329
Select Bibliography	345
Index	353

Preface

Bartolomeo Scala, chancellor of Florence from 1465 until his death in 1497, was the son of a provincial tenant miller. From secretary to Pierfrancesco de' Medici, he rose steadily to the Gonfalonierate of Justice and permanent membership of the Council of Seventy in Florence. He survived the fall of the Medici and died in office after serving for an almost unrivaled period of thirty-two years.

His is the classic new man's story and he has suffered for it. Francesco Guicciardini soon after his death described him as a man of mediocre talent who owed his success entirely to the favor of Lorenzo de' Medici and achieved the Gonfalonierate of Justice "to the great anger and indignation of all men of good birth."¹ Angelo Poliziano ridiculed his literary achievement during his lifetime. Despite a eulogistic biography by D. M. Manni in 1768 and a few articles in the *Miscellanea di Colle di Val d'Elsa*, his press has on the whole been consistently unfavorable.²

Although his career was frankly opportunistic, it does him less than justice to overlook his importance as a reformer and apologist of the modern centralized state. The Medici certainly promoted his rapid social advance and provide a major theme of his life. Like Savonarola's party later, however, the Mediceans attracted enthusiastic reformers and modernizers as well as opportunists, and Scala was one of them; a careerist who was also a severe and rigidly consistent moralist and reformer; an ardent Medicean who yet survived the fall of their regime; a lawyer as well as a politician, whose fastidious legalism and pragmatism

¹ *Storie fiorentine*, p. 79: "con grandissimo scoppio e sdegno di tutti gli uomini da bene."

² Manni's biography, the articles of del Lungo, Dini, Gentile and Marzini, and the sketch of G. B. Benvenuti are listed in the bibliography below. There are also brief bibliographies of Scala in Kristeller, *Supplementum*, 1:128, and Rochon, *La Jeunesse*, pp. 255-256. He is dismissed by Garin, "I cancellieri umanisti della repubblica fiorentina," pp. 26-27, and assessed more favorably by Kristeller, "An Unknown Correspondence," pp. 335-337, where he is described as "still a neglected figure." On Francesco Guicciardini and Poliziano, cf. ch. 8 below.

PREFACE

combined to provide the first justification of Medicean paternalism in the secular state.

I have attempted as far as possible to reconstruct Scala's life as it developed (treating separately, however, his work as chancellor, his social life and his writings). Eminences grises are difficult to document, but the amount of first-hand material that survives is considerable, consisting of Scala's tax returns, letters, an early account book, a literary notebook, published and unpublished writings, notarial copies of his transactions, chancery documents for his period of office illustrating his reforms, copies of his official letters and orations, and reports of ambassadors with whom he dealt, not to mention published primary and secondary material including the recent invaluable study of the institutions and development of the Medicean regime.³ More will inevitably be discovered, but it should not substantially alter this account of Scala's life as it emerges from existing material.

Of the many friends who have assisted in the birth of this book I feel gratitude overwhelmingly to two: Sir Ernst Gombrich, who could properly be called its father, and Professor Paul Oscar Kristeller, its midwife. It was Ernst Gombrich who originally fired and sustained my interest in the Renaissance by his teaching at the Warburg Institute and to whom, therefore, I feel that particular sense of gratitude owed to an inspiring and formative teacher; more than this, however, it was he who also introduced me long ago to Bartolomeo Scala as a subject for research. I owe its successful conclusion to the unstinting support of Paul Kristeller, whose scrupulous reading and constructive criticism of an earlier and longer draft have also contributed greatly to the present book and saved it from many more errors than it would otherwise contain.

Throughout this long period of gestation I have received help in many different forms from innumerable friends and colleagues whose generosity in giving and sharing information I have attempted always to acknowledge in footnotes. Other help is difficult to acknowledge adequately. I owe a particular debt, I think, to Professor Nicolai Rubinstein, not only because his work on Medicean government has provided an essential basis for this study, but also because I have been privileged to work closely with him over a number of years, which has enriched my work

³ Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434-1494)*.

PREFACE

in many ways. Professor Carlo Dionisotti and Professor J. B. Trapp have both given me generous help and advice in preparing the manuscript and transcriptions. William and Dale Kent have contributed perceptive comments and suggestions, as well as the stimulus of their inimitable friendship. Italian archivists and librarians have been as kind and helpful as it is possible to be, and I would like to express my particular thanks to the staff of the State Archives in Florence, who have been unfailingly generous and tolerant at times of crisis, to Dr. Gino Corti in Florence, to the staff of the National Library, the Laurentian and Riccardian Libraries in Florence, the State Archives in Milan, Lucca and Siena, The Biblioteca Estense in Modena, the Vatican Library and Archives, and the British Library in London. I am indebted to the British Academy and the Italian Government for grants toward the cost of travel in Italy.

My debt to my family is immense. Julian Brown has helped me on an embarrassingly wide range of fronts, both academic and domestic, and it is largely thanks to him and with his help that I have been able to attempt translations of Scala's more abstruse Latin writings, particularly his Apologues. Although I have been able to spend all too brief periods of time in Italy, I am grateful to him and to my mother for enabling me to work there at all, even more to Charlotte and Rachel for their tolerance and for their help in valiantly pursuing Scala's traces in southern Tuscany on broiling afternoons as children, and for their interest and companionship now. I owe to Mary and Felton Gibbons the hospitality of their house on several occasions and to Ruth Rubinstein the engraving of Scala reproduced as the frontispiece.

The biography was originally intended to have an appendix of illustrative documents to include all Scala's letters and unpublished writings, and for this reason I have quoted more extensively from his letters than I perhaps should otherwise have done. In order to avoid overburdening the footnotes with material that will now be published separately, I have not given the text of these long extracts unless essential.

December 1977

ALISON BROWN

Abbreviations

AS:	Archivio di Stato
ASF:	Archivio di Stato, Florence
	<i>Acq. Doni:</i> Acquisti e Doni
	<i>Capt. P. G.:</i> Capitani della Parte Guelfa
	<i>Cento Delib.:</i> Consiglio del Cento, Deliberazioni
	<i>Comp. relig. soppr.:</i> Compagnie religiose soppresse
	<i>Cons. Prat.:</i> Consulte e pratiche
	<i>Conv. Soppr.:</i> Conventi soppressi
	<i>Dieci Delib.:</i> Dieci di Balìa, Deliberazioni
	<i>Leg. Comm.:</i> Elezioni e lettere ad oratori dei Signori
	<i>MAP:</i> Mediceo avanti il Principato
	<i>Minut.:</i> Minutari delle lettere missive (Prima Cancelleria)
	<i>Misc. Repubb.:</i> Miscellanea repubblicana
	<i>Missive:</i> lettere missive originali (Prima Cancelleria)
	<i>Otto Delib.:</i> Otto di Pratica, Deliberazioni
	<i>Provv.:</i> Provvizioni
	<i>Risp. verb. orat.:</i> Risposte verbali degli oratori dei Signori
	<i>SS. Delib.:</i> Signori, Collegi, Deliberazioni ordinaria autorità
	<i>SS. Delib. sp. aut.:</i> Signori, Collegi, Deliberazioni speciale autorità
	<i>SS. Dieci, Otto:</i> Signori, Dieci, Otto, Legazioni e Commissarie, Missive, Responsive
	<i>Strozz.:</i> Carte Stroziane
ASI:	<i>Archivio storico italiano</i>
ASLomb:	<i>Archivio storico lombardo</i>
ASMi SPE:	Archivio di Stato, Milan, Sforzesco Potenze Estere
ASV:	Archivio secreto vaticano, Rome
	<i>Intr. Exit.:</i> Introitus et exitus
	<i>Reg. Vat.:</i> Registri Vaticani
ATL:	Anziani del Tempo della Libertà (Lucca, AS)
BNF:	Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence
GSLI:	<i>Giornale storico della letteratura italiana</i>

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Laur.:	Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence
Marucell.:	Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence
<i>Misc. Stor.</i>	
<i>Vald.:</i>	<i>Miscellanea storica della Valdelsa</i>
Modena MS:	Modena Bibl. Estense, MS Campori 235 8 P. 2.5.
<i>OLD:</i>	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i>
<i>P.G.:</i>	<i>Patrologie grecque</i>
<i>P.L.:</i>	<i>Patrologie latine</i>
Riccard.:	Biblioteca Riccardiana, Florence
<i>RIS:</i>	<i>Rerum italicarum scriptores</i>
Vat. Lat.:	Biblioteca Vaticana, Rome, Fondo latino

The names of the following frequently referred-to Florentine institutions have not been italicized:

- Accoppiatori: electoral officers, often with important discretionary powers
- Balia: special council with full powers for limited periods
- Catasto: tax, first introduced in 1427
- Cento: Council of One Hundred
- Decima: tax, first introduced in 1495-1498
- Dieci di Balìa: magistracy of Ten, elected with full powers in times of war
- Mercanzia: merchants' tribunal
- Monte: public-funded debt
- Notary of the Riformagioni: notary responsible for drawing up and presenting legislation
- Notary of the Tratte: notary in charge of the registers of names of those drawn for office
- Otto di Guardia: police magistracy of the Eight of Ward
- Otto di Pratica: magistracy of Eight on foreign policy
- Podestà: chief judicial officer, chosen from outside the Florentine state
- Signoria: principal government magistracy with important legislative as well as administrative functions, consisting of eight priors and their leader, the Gonfalonier of Justice, who represented the state for his period of office

PART ONE

Career



Childhood and Education

I came to the republic naked, disadvantaged, of the lowest parentage, full of confidence but absolutely penniless, without reputation, patrons or kinsmen. *Scala to Angelo Poliziano, 1494*¹

Like other self-made men Bartolomeo Scala could afford to boast of early hardship in his comfortable old age, but the evidence suggests he did not exaggerate.

He was born just outside the small town of Colle di Val d'Elsa in south-western Tuscany on 17 May 1430,² the son of a tenant miller. His father, called simply Giovanni di Francesco, held the mill at Onci according to the *mezzadria* system (receiving a half share of its profits in return for his labor), and we know from his tax return of 1429 that his declared possessions were minimal, his credits more than outweighed by his debts.³

Bartolomeo's place of birth contributed as little to his future success as his parentage. Colle was provincial.⁴ It had been an independent commune from the twelfth century un-

¹ Poliziano, *Opera*, pp. 393-394: "Veni nudus omnium rerum bonarum, egenus ad rempublicam, vilissimis ortus parentibus, multa cum fide, nullis omnino divitiis, aut titulis, nullis clientelis, nullis cognationibus."

² ASF *Tratte* 61 (p. 132, "Veduti et seduti Gonfalonieri di Giustizia," 1 April 1480, the reference to which I owe to Prof. Nicolai Rubinstein). This confirms the date given by Manni (*Vita*, p. 5), which appeared to have been refuted by the tax return of Bartolomeo's father dated 7 March 1429, where "Bartolomeo" is described as an 8-month-old baby (ed. Dini, "Bartolommeo Scala," pp. 60-62). However, this child evidently died before the birth of his brother, who in accordance with contemporary practice was given his name and subsequently the nickname "Vopiscus," not in this case as the younger twin, but as the younger brother, to survive, cf. Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*, 7.10.47, quoted by Zeno, *Dissertationi Vossiane*, 2:254; Manni, *Vita*, p. 4 (the use of this nickname is confined mainly to the 1450s, in letters and poems to Scala by Donato Acciaiuoli, Francesco Filelfo, Cristoforo Landino, and in the titles of Scala's own *Life of Vitaliano Borromeo*, *On Whether a Wise Man Should Marry*, "Elegia" in praise of Pius II, and the eclogue "Eritus").

³ Ed. Dini, "Bartolommeo Scala."

⁴ On Colle, Biadi, *Storia*; Repetti, *Dizionario*, 1:749-759; Targioni Tozzetti, *Relazioni*, 7:401-459.

til the middle of the fourteenth century, when it accepted Florentine overlordship in return for military protection.⁵ Like an early Roman *municipium*, which owed allegiance to Rome without Roman citizenship, Colle received in return for its loyalty no citizenship rights in Florence: anyone wishing to emigrate to the metropolis had to pay taxes there for twenty years before being allowed to invest in the Florentine dowry bank and thirty years before exercising elective offices in the city.⁶ Although the economic crisis of the mid-fourteenth century had in practice led to a less rigid interpretation of the statutes, theoretically they should have made Bartolomeo's achievement impossible.⁷

In one respect, though, he was fortunate. Like other Tuscan communes, Colle enjoyed an early tradition of learning which survived into the fifteenth century and must have helped to launch him on his successful career.⁸ Its statutes had granted

⁵ *Capitoli*, ed. A. Guasti, 1:253-257, cf. *Cronica di Giovanni Villani*, ed. F. Dragomanni, Florence, 1845, bk. 10, ch. 173, bk. 11, chs. 46, 81; *Cronica di Matteo Villani*, ed. Dragomanni, Florence, 1846, bk. 1, ch. 43. Colle belonged to the Florentine *distretto* and not the *contado* (*Statuta*, "Friburgi," 3:601; *Capitoli*, ed. Guasti, p. 257).

⁶ "Submissio et acceptatio et capitula terre Collis," 24 August 1481, ASF SS. *Delib. sp. aut.* 35, fol. 113v (the thirty-year restriction was for offices "tam per viam extractionis quam electionis"). In addition, citizens of subject towns had to pay the *estimo* to Florence, Molho, *Florentine Public Finances*, pp. 23-45. On Roman citizenship and the early *civitas sine suffragio*, A. N. Sherwin White, *The Roman Citizenship*, Oxford, 1939, esp. pp. 37-45. The question of Florentine citizenship has not been fully discussed, but see J. Kirshner, "Paolo di Castro on *Cives ex Privilegio*," *Renaissance Essays in Honor of H. Baron*, ed. A. Molho and J. A. Tedeschi, Florence, 1971, pp. 229-264 (esp. the bibliography on p. 230, n. 3) and "'Ars imitatur naturam': a Consilium of Baldus on Naturalization in Florence," *Viator* 5 (1974):289-331.

⁷ M. Becker, "An Essay on the 'Novi Cives' and Florentine Politics, 1343-1382," *Medieval Studies* 24 (1962):35-82, esp. 40, 82. According to the 1415 *Statuta* ("Friburgi," 2:754-755), taxes had to be paid for only twenty years "in offitiis notariatus" while for other offices they had to be paid for thirty years (by members of the major guilds) and twenty-five years (minor).

⁸ O. Bacci, "Maestri di grammatica in Valdelsa nel sec. XIV," *Misc. Stor. Vald.* 3 (1895):88-95; on Mino da Colle, one of the earliest teachers of grammar in Tuscany, G. Zaccagnini, *ibid.* 39 (1931):3-16; H. Wieruszowski, *Politics and Culture in Medieval Spain and Italy*, Rome, 1971, pp. 347-377.

special privileges to teachers and students and, although loss of sovereignty may have reduced its civic ambition "to be adorned with learned men,"⁹ there is evidence throughout the fifteenth century of well-known grammarians still visiting the town.¹⁰ Colle never possessed a school for higher studies, however, and for more than elementary education it was necessary to study "in Siena or . . . some other place removed from the said town of Colle where a studium is held."¹¹ Siena was some twelve miles from Colle, Florence twice as far away. For the ambitious, the attraction of Florence with its intellectual pre-eminence and expanding administration must have been overriding, and it was there that Bartolomeo and subsequently two of his five brothers went to make their fortunes.¹²

Bartolomeo never returned to live in Colle but his ties with it remained strong. He held the ambiguous status among his compatriots of one more honored than loved for success achieved outside his place of birth, profiting from his status in Florence to win privileges in Colle¹³ and at the same time

⁹ Biadi, *Storia*, p. 31 (quoting rubric 31 in bk. 2 of the Statutes: "Cupientibus nobis hanc Rempublicam nostram doctis viris decorari"); cf. Targioni Tozzetti, *Relazioni*, 7:450.

¹⁰ At the beginning, Maestro Onofrio di Angelo of San Gimignano (C. Mazzi, "Cartieri, tipografie e maestri di grammatica in Valdelsa," *Misc. Stor. Vald.* 4 (1896):186-187; Bandini, *Catalogus codicum latinorum*, 2, cols. 232-233, 565); in 1448, Battista of Volterra (M. Morici, "Maestri Valdelsani in Pistoia dal sec. XIV al XVI," *Misc. Stor. Vald.* 9 (1901):41); in 1457 and 1478 Luca of San Gimignano, Marsilio Ficino's teacher (della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 489-493); in the early 1470s Benedetto Colucci of Pistoia (*ibid.*, pp. 706-709; A. Chiti, "A proposito dell' insegnamento di B. C. a Colle," *Misc. Stor. Vald.* 9 (1901):198-200). On 1 July 1483 Lorenzo de' Medici commended ser Piero da Barga to the priors of Colle as "maestro di scuola," *Protocolli del carteggio*, ed. del Piazzo, p. 250. In the early 1470s a printing press was established in the town; Biadi, *Storia*, pp. 44-45; Repetti, *Dizionario*, 1:759; della Torre, *Storia*, p. 705.

¹¹ ASF *Notarile* G 109 (Gentile di Pela Pasci, 1466-1469), fol. 66r: the will of a citizen of Colle, bequeathing money for the further education of his son, "ad studendum ad civitatem Senarum vel ad alia loca remota a dicta terra Collis ubi studium teneatur."

¹² On Scala's brothers, see ch. 9 below.

¹³ On 10 November 1466 Scala and his male heirs were granted immunity from taxes on their persons and property in the district of Colle up to the value of 1,000 gold florins, and, "in signum maioris gratitudinis et amoris"

CAREER

exerting political influence there, to the chagrin of the natives.¹⁴ At other times he acted in Florence as spokesman for Colle in matters concerning their mutual interest, and he must have been influential in suggesting that the unusual privilege of full Florentine citizenship be offered to his compatriots to stiffen their resolve in the Pazzi war in 1479.¹⁵ He bought houses and land in the town after he was appointed chancellor of Florence, and he was qualified for political office there.¹⁶ Never an emotional man, he confessed to the Florentine war magistracy in October 1479 that his heart "shattered into a thousand pieces" when he witnessed the assault of Colle, and at the end of his life again paid tribute to its courage at that time.¹⁷ Whatever his feelings for the place of his birth, how-

they were awarded the arms and insignia of Colle: Siena, AS, MS *Comune di Colle, Delib.* 162, fol. 170r-v; cf. 163, fols. 118v-119r (26 August 1471), appointing the Podestà's judge to establish the extent of his tax exemption, which was in dispute.

¹⁴ See, for example, ser Gentile di Pela Pasci's letter [to Scala], ed. F. Dini, *Misc. Stor. Vald.* 9 (1901):211-212: "quando voi vorreste notare gli uomini che sono et parlano in favore degli adversari vostri, arete a notare i tre quarti e più degli uomini di questa terra." Ser Gentile's letter lacks an addressee or date, but although it is almost certainly addressed to Scala, it does not appear to refer to a high-handed attempt of Scala's to acquire the mill in which he was born, as Dini suggests (pp. 209-210), but to a boundary dispute between Colle and Siena, which Scala admitted to the chancellor of Siena, Agostino Dati, "me . . . ad nauseam fastidivit," Dati, *Opera*, fol. 137v.

¹⁵ See ch. 4, nn. 47 and 48 below; and on the offer of citizenship, Biadi, *Storia*, pp. 129-130; Targioni Tozzetti, *Relazioni*, 7:455-456; cf. ASF *Dieci Missive* 10, fol. 101r-v.

¹⁶ ASF *Conv. Soppr.* 95, 212 (Ricordi di Bernardo di Stoldo Rinieri), fol. 131 left (3 August 1462); *Notarile G* 109 (1466-1469), fols. 83v-84v (27 September 1467), 116v-118v (27 March 1468), 127r (30 May 1468); *Notarile G* 109 (Gentile di Pela Pasci, 1470-1474), fols. 83v-84v (19 October 1471), 104v-105v (13 July 1472), 131r-132r (10 May 1473). On Scala's Monte Vasone estate, see ch. 9 below. In 1474 Bartolomeo headed the list of citizens eligible for the Gonfalonierate of Justice in Colle, the only citizen in his *terzerio* entitled to be represented in the first three electoral bags with two tickets, ASF *Tratte* 15 (unfoliated): "Registrum reforme terre Collis 1474. Giugno." In the 1480s he was drawn several times as Gonfalonier of Justice and rejected as "absens," Siena, AS, *Comune di Colle*, 165, fols. 53v, 199v; 166, fol. 217v.

¹⁷ Scala to the Dieci di Balìa, 16 October 1479: ASF *Dieci Responsive* 25, fol. 332: "andò a me l'animo in mille parti"; *Apologia contra vituperatores civitatis Florentiae* (= *Defense*), Florence, 1496, fol. 25r.

ever, after he moved to Florence his first loyalties always lay with the city of his adoption, by which he was granted honors and full rights of citizenship.

His achievement in overcoming the disadvantages of his provincial birth and poverty was not unique. The appointment of Coluccio Salutati, a notary from Buggiano, as first chancellor in 1375 established the precedent for a series of such appointments in the following century: of Leonardo Bruni, Carlo Marsuppini and Benedetto Accolti from Arezzo, of Poggio Bracciolini from Terranuova nearby.¹⁸ But in some respects Scala's achievement was greater than theirs, for he started with more disadvantages and achieved higher honors. We shall follow the steps of his slow but sure-footed ascent.

By the time Scala reached Florence, the golden period was over.¹⁹ The papal court had left the city, and so had the Greek delegates to the Council of Florence.²⁰ Many of the first generation of scholars who had brought it fame by their teaching and by their discovery and translations of ancient manuscripts had died; others had left with the papal court.²¹ The economic and political climate had changed, too, and for almost the whole decade from 1444 to 1454 public teaching was reduced and the university itself was intermittently closed.²²

¹⁸ Becker, "An Essay on the 'Novi Cives,'" p. 82. On Salutati's early career, R. Witt, "C. S., Chancellor and Citizen of Lucca, 1370-1372," *Traditio* 25 (1969): 191-216. On the families of Bruni, Marsuppini, Accolti and Poggio Bracciolini, Martines, *Social World*, pp. 166-167, 127-129, 343-344, 123.

¹⁹ In general, Voigt, *Die Wiederbelebung*; V. Rossi, *Il Quattrocento*, rev. edn Milan, 1956; Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini*; della Torre, *Storia*; Sabbadini, *Le scoperte*.

²⁰ della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 239-285; Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini*, 2:50-51; Holmes, *Florentine Enlightenment*, pp. 244-245, 260-261.

²¹ Niccolò Niccoli died in 1437, Ambrogio Traversari in 1439, Leonardo Bruni in 1444; Poggio Bracciolini and George of Trebizond went to Rome with the papal court in 1443.

²² Gherardi, *Statuti*, pp. 259-262, 489. Appointments in the Studio in 1442-1445 and lists of back payments made in 1451 are listed in ASF *Monte* 2364, fols. 100r-101v; 2190, fol. 30r-v; 2275, fol. 35r-v; 1121, fol. 25r-v; and 1652, fols. 462v-463r (the references to which I owe to the kindness of Prof. Anthony Molho). In addition to the back payments made in May-December 1451, payments were made on 29 February 1452 to some sixteen teachers, presumably the first third of their annual salary, ASF *Monte* 1652, fol. 463r.

CAREER

It was during the latter part of this decade that Scala was a student in Florence. He recalls: "there was a great shortage of books and teachers . . . everyone tried to achieve what he could by his own exertions."²³ A fellow student of Scala's, Jacopo Ammannati, later a cardinal, also remembered the hardship of their student years together when they lived "close to each other" and "were both very badly off."²⁴ So again Scala's account of his early poverty is corroborated by other evidence. According to Ammannati, a self-made man like himself, they both achieved success and prosperity "by hard work and God's favor," studying the same subjects with "almost the same teachers."²⁵

What were these studies and who were Scala's teachers? Ammannati was taught poetry and oratory by Leonardo Bruni and Carlo Marsuppini before leaving Florence by the beginning of 1449 as secretary to Cardinal Capranica.²⁶ So Scala,

The appointment of St. Antoninus as archbishop of Florence in January 1446 was another blow to the new learning, della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 252 ff; Masai, *Pléthon*, p. 342, and n. 1.

²³ In a letter to Poliziano, *Opera*, p. 147: "et librorum et praeceptorum . . . penuria permagna fuit, suo quisque Marte quid possent vires experiebatur."

²⁴ In a letter to Scala, *Epistolae et commentarii*, fol. 227r, 5 March 1472: "Vicini habitavimus . . . Paupertatem etiam gravem pertulimus." Cf. his account of his early friendship with Scala reported by Alessandro Braccesi in a letter to Scala of 10 November 1470: "diu hominem . . . novimus et amicus est nobis," ed. Kristeller, "An Unknown Correspondence," p. 352 (cf. 337).

²⁵ *Epistolae et commentarii*, fol. 227r: "Iisdem litteris ac prope praeceptoribus operam dedimus . . . denique aspirante Deo nostrae industriae ambo ad honores et vitae commoda emersimus."

²⁶ Jacopo Gherardi, *Jacobi Amanati . . . brevis vita* in *RIS* 23, pt. 3 (1904):3; G. Calamari, *Il confidente di Pio II, Cardinale Iacopo Ammannati*, Rome-Milan, 1932, 1:26; *Dizionario biografico*, 2, s.v.; della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 329-331. The first letter Ammannati wrote to Donato Acciaiuoli after leaving Florence is dated 8 January 1449 (BNF MS Magl. VIII, 1390, fols. 103v-104v), and according to M. Catalano he worked for Capranica from 1448, ten years before his death, *Commentarius de vita et scriptis Dominici Capranicae Cardinalis Firmani*, Fermo, 1793, p. 133. This antedates Gherardi, according to whom Ammannati went to Rome, "ad finem iubilaei sedente Nicolao V. pont. max.," in 1450 (*Brevis vita*, p. 3), which is usually cited as the *terminus ad quem* for Scala's arrival in Florence (e.g. Manni, *Vita*, pp. 5-6; Dini, "Bartolommeo Scala," p. 62, n. 2).

too, must have studied these liberal arts subjects, and if his teachers were "almost the same" as Ammannati's, Marsuppini must have been one of them, for Bruni died in 1444 when Scala was only fourteen years old.²⁷

In addition to poetry and oratory, Scala also studied law in Florence. It was an obvious subject for a boy with a career to make, since it opened the way to offices in the papal and state chanceries, as well as in the law courts and universities. As he is described as a *iurisperitus* in 1454, he must have studied law as his principal subject in the university since at least 1449, perhaps combining it with other subjects as Francesco Filelfo had done as a student at Padua: law *diebus ordinariis* and *diebus extraordinariis* oratory in the morning and philosophy in the afternoon.²⁸ Despite the economic troubles of the university at this time, surviving accounts show that when it reopened briefly in 1451 there were more lawyers on the roll than other teachers.²⁹ Of these, Benedetto Accolti was prob-

²⁷ According to the oration "habitam initio lectionis mee in gymnasio florentino in adulescentia mea," Ammannati himself taught oratory and poetry in the Studio and may have taught Scala (*Epistolae et commentarii*, fols. 330v-331r). However, his name does not appear in the Monte records, where Antonio Pacini of Todi, tutor to Piero and Giovanni de' Medici, is recorded as teacher of "arte oratoria et poesia" and "rettoricha" in 1444 and 1445, receiving payments for teaching in 1446 and 1451, ASF *Monte* 2190, fol. 30r; 2275, fol. 35r; 1121, fol. 25v; and 1652, fol. 462v. On Marsuppini's Chair in 1451, see n. 35 below.

²⁸ C. de Rosmini, *Vita di F. Filelfo*, 1:6, n. 1. Scala is described as *iurisperitus* by Francesco Filelfo in letters to Donato Acciaiuoli and Andrea Alamanni, 4 [?] August 1454, *Epistolae*, fol. 86v, 87r. On the length of his studies cf. Martines, *Lawyers*, p. 31.

²⁹ ASF *Monte* 1652, fols. 462v-463r, lists some thirty-four teachers (without subjects) to whom money was owed in 1451, of whom at least fourteen are lawyers; the remainder include six to nine doctors of medicine, two theologians (who may also have lectured on philosophy and Dante), one teacher of Greek, one of rhetoric, two grammarians, one astrologer, one notary and two friars. In August 1451 the Studio had been awarded 740 florins for civil and canon law out of a total budget of 1,700 florins, 350 of which went to Carlo Marsuppini for poetry and oratory, Gherardi, *Statuti*, p. 261. On the scope and resources of the Florentine Studio, in addition to Gherardi, see G. Brucker, "Florence and its University, 1348-1434," in *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison*, ed. T. K. Rabb and J. E. Seigel, Princeton, N.J., 1969, pp.

ably the most preminent, but there were also Domenico Martelli, Otto Niccolini and Girolamo Machiavelli, who were all leading and active citizens in Florence.³⁰ Although he is not listed as a lawyer in the university accounts, Carlo Marsuppini was "the most learned of all the men I have ever known in civil law," according to one law student.³¹ He evidently combined theory with practice, on the one hand as a humanist restoring legal texts to their original condition unadulterated by the work of later glossators, "just as Petrarch first recalled the Latin language, which had long been in decline and unknown to us, to the light of day"³²; on the other, with unrivaled skill "solving the riddles of Roman law and loosing the bonds of criminals fettered on unproven charges."³³

220-236; H. Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. F. M. Powicke and A. B. Emden, Oxford, 1936, 2:47-51, 59-62.

³⁰ On Accolti, *Dizionario biografico*, 1, s.v.; Martines, *Lawyers*, pp. 502-503; the doctoral thesis of Robert Black (London University, 1974). In 1451 he received two back-payments of £169 15s od and £128 before receiving £186 13s 4d "per parte di lettura" on 29 February 1452, probably representing an annual salary of 140 florins, ASF *Monte* 1652, fol. 462v (cf. Gherardi, *Statuti*, p. 462) and 463r. Martelli received two back-payments of £58 6s 8d and £44 before receiving the same payment of £186 13s 4d as Accolti on 29 February 1452, as did Niccolini (preceded by two back-payments of £72 18s 4d and £55) and Machiavelli (back-payments of £53 8s 8d and £40), ASF *Monte*, 1652, fols. 462v-463r. On their political activities, Rubinstein, *Government*, pp. 94, 97, 98, 103 (Machiavelli), 25-27, 99, 132, 134, etc. (Niccolini), 93, 95, 172, 175, 183, etc. (Martelli). Machiavelli and Martelli were members of the commission appointed to review the laws in 1445, when Cosimo de' Medici was Gonfalonier of Justice, Cambi, in *Delizie*, 20:250.

³¹ Giovanni Fortiguerra, in his doctoral oration delivered in Arezzo, ed. L. Chiappelli, "Carlo Marsuppini e Giovanni Fortiguerra, precursori di scuola umanistica di diritto romano," *Archivio giuridico* 38 (1887):405: "iuris civilis omnium quos ego unquam noverim doctissimus fuit." The oration is dated "intorno al 1460" by Maffei, *Gli inizi*, p. 44.

³² Ed. Chiappelli, "Carlo Marsuppini," pp. 405-406, etc.: "Nam Franciscus Petrarcha. . . Latinam linguam, quae longo tempore lapsa et incognita nostris fuerat, primus in lucem revocavit."

³³ "Nemo quidem melius Romani aenigmata iuris / solvit et ambiguas vincula caeca reis," Landino, *Carmina omnia*, p. 110, "Eulogium in Carolum Arretinum" (Landino was also a pupil of Marsuppini's). *Caecus* probably here has the meaning "unsubstantiated" and "unproven," *OLD*, 3b.

We do not know if Marsuppini taught law to Scala, although it is possible to see traces of his influence in Scala's later dialogue *On Laws and Legal Judgments*.³⁴ His influence on Scala in the field of poetry and oratory is, however, indisputable, reflected immediately in a practice "Oration on justice," which Scala wrote less than three months after Marsuppini was appointed to the Chair of Poetry and Oratory in 1451, and subsequently in a series of other writings.³⁵ Scala later played an identical role to Marsuppini's as liaison between the Medici and the Florentine chancery, in which as a lawyer and humanist he was able to offer the same combination of intellectual and practical talents. For these reasons it is difficult not to see Marsuppini as the most formative influence on Scala during his university years in Florence.³⁶

In August 1454, with Marsuppini dead and the university closed, Scala went to complete his education at the feet of Francesco Filelfo in Milan. He lived in the household of Count Filippo Borromeo, possibly acting as tutor to his sons,³⁷ and al-

³⁴ For example, in Scala's horror of medieval postglossators and his admiration for the brevity and elegance of Justinian's *Institutes*, *De legibus et iudiciis dialogus*, esp. pp. 261-262, 279; cf. ch. 11 below. On contemporary interest in law reform stimulated in Florence by the acquisition of an ancient MS of the *Digest* in 1406 from Pisa, Maffei, *Gli inizi*, pp. 84-94.

³⁵ In August 1451 the Commune authorized a salary of fl. 350 for the teaching of rhetoric and poetry (Gherardi, *Statuti*, p. 261), and on 29 February 1452 Marsuppini was paid £466 13s 4d as the first third of this salary, ASF *Monte*, 1652, fol. 463r. The influence of Marsuppini and his successor Cristoforo Landino on Scala's writings is discussed in ch. 10 below. On Marsuppini, G. Zippel, *Carlo Marsuppini d'Arezzo, notizie biografiche*, Trento, 1897; Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Vite*, 2:234-237; Martines, *Social World*, pp. 127-131; and on his writings, Voigt, *Wiederbelebung*, 2:194-195.

³⁶ Cf. ch. 2 below.

³⁷ *Vita Vitaliani Borromaei*, p. 6: "apud Philippum Filium [Vitaliani] essem annum iam fere"; cf. the report of the Milanese ambassador in Florence in 1469 that Scala "allevossi a Millano in casa del C[onte] Filippo Bonromeo" (ch. 3, n. 20 below). Unfortunately the Borromeo account books for the period 1454-1455 were destroyed in the last war, as Count Vitaliano Borromeo kindly ascertained for me, but from the notice of them published by G. Biscaro in 1914 ("Note di storia dell' arte," pp. 88-89) it emerges that payments of 7 florins a month were made in 1445 and 1451 to "Maestro Fermo da Caravaggio maestro di scuola in casa" and in 1464 to

though he stayed only a year before returning to Florence, it was a formative year for him in several respects. It was the only occasion on which he lived outside the Florentine state and it opened him to ideas and a way of life very different from those offered by Florence: in place of the civic patriotism and respectful antiquarianism of its humanists, the stimulating but irresponsible Filelfo; in place of the bourgeois republicanism and old-fashioned communal institutions of Florence, a more socially diversified but administratively centralized state. They left their mark on Scala, as we shall see.

Scala arrived in Milan with letters of commendation to Francesco Filelfo, not from the Medici (who disliked Filelfo), but from members of two much older and more distinguished Florentine families, Donato Acciaiuoli and Andrea Alamanni.³⁸ They both formed part of the young intellectual pressure group in Florence at that time, the self-named "chorus of the Florentine academy" who were clamoring to have the univer-

"Maestro Giovanni da Monte," suggesting that this position could have been held by Scala in 1454-1455. On the Borromei, see n. 50 below.

³⁸ Filelfo to A. Alamanni and D. Acciaiuoli, *Epistolae*, fols. 86v, 87r; cf. della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 370, 372-373. The letters may be misdated 4 August ("pridie nonas augustas") as Donato's commendation (which alone survives) is dated "6 August" in his autograph notebook (see n. 40 below). On the Acciaiuoli, Curzio Ugurgieri della Berardenga, *Gli Acciaiuoli di Firenze*, Florence, 1962; P. Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*, 1, tav. 5 and 6; *Dizionario biografico*, 1, s.v.; on Donato, whose maternal grandfather Palla Strozzi and stepfather Felice Brancacci were exiled as anti-Mediceans in 1434, E. Garin, "D. A., cittadino fiorentino," in his *Medievo e rinascimento*, pp. 211-287; della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 322 ff; Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Vite*, 2:256-285; and the bibliography in Martines, *Social World*, pp. 348-349. Jacopo Ammannati refers to Donato as "nobilis et doctus" in a letter of 5 November 1468 (*Epistolae et commentarii*, fol. 168v, cf. Garin, "D.A.," pp. 216-217). A perceptive appraisal by Gentile Becchi is in ASF MAP 61, 28 (2 March 1471 to Lorenzo de' Medici): "Bene sapete che la pulcritudine di Donato . . . che piace in chotesta civiltà non regge poi in questi assassinamenti [in Rome]. Se voi mi dicessi che temi tu del nostro Donato, teme sforzamente in dimostrarsi, et uscendo per boschi incogniti non si smarisca. Più honore credo vi farà che quest' altri." On Andrea Alamanni, della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 294, 315-316, 368-371; the bibliography in Martines, *Social World*, pp. 345-346, and n. 39 below.

sity reopened.³⁹ They must have come to know Scala as students, and their friendship with this miller's son and their respect for his "not inconsiderable talents"⁴⁰ are an early tribute to Scala's ability, confirmed a decade later when these same "academicians" supported him as their personal candidate for the chancellorship.⁴¹

Scala was ambitious as well as able, as we can also see from Donato Acciaiuoli's commendation.⁴² His ambition to meet Filelfo was quickly achieved and only a month later he was congratulated by Donato on becoming an intimate friend of so learned a man.⁴³ Filelfo was a gifted but difficult person: one of the foremost scholars of Greek in Italy and an exciting teacher who had drawn large crowds to his lectures in Florence in the early 1430s, making the city "reverberate" with his vernacular orations on liberty and justice at a time when the Medici and Albizzi parties were fighting to establish control of the city.⁴⁴ He was a man of wide-ranging interests, but

³⁹ The phrase is Donato Acciaiuoli's in a letter to Filelfo, 27 June 1461 (BNF MS Magl. VIII, 1390, fol. 37v); cf. della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 285, 359-365; Cammelli, *I dotti bizantini*, 2:52-53. Donato calls Andrea Alamanni "defensorem et quasi patronum studiorum et nostre achademie principem" (Fossi, *Monumenta ad Alamanni Rinuccini vitam contexendam*, Florence 1791, p. 79, 15 April 1455); cf. Rinuccini, *Lettere e orazioni*, p. 11.

⁴⁰ "virtutes suas . . . non mediocres," Donato Acciaiuoli to F. Filelfo, 6 August 1454 (BNF MS Magl. VIII, 1390, fol. 86v; della Torre, *Storia*, p. 372, n. 2).

⁴¹ "achademici del grecho Argiropolo," see ch. 3, n. 5 below.

⁴² "doctissimorum virorum observantissimus sit amicitiamque tuam consequi velit, me rogavit ut ad te aliquid scriverem seque tibi plurimum commendarem," letter of 6 August above.

⁴³ Donato Acciaiuoli to "Bartolomeo Opisco Coll[ensi]," 5 September 1454, BNF MS Magl. VIII, 1390, fol. 88v; cf. della Torre, *Storia*, p. 371, n. 7, and p. 372, n. 3: "Tibi vero plurimum gratulor quod in eius familiaritatem veneris, quem ego tanti facio, ut non solum cum doctissimis viris aetatis nostre comparandum putem, sed etiam inter antiquos illos numerandum." Cf. his letter to Filelfo on the same day (*ibid.*, fol. 88r-v, partly quoted by della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 371-372, n. 8): "Commendatio autem mea pro Bartolomeo Collensi quantum apud te valuerit non solum tuis litteris, sed etiam suis certior factus sum."

⁴⁴ On Filelfo, C. de Rosmini, *Vita di F. Filelfo*; E. Garin in *Storia di Milano*, 7:541-561; G. Benadduci, "Contributo alla bibliografia di F. F.,"

litigious and perhaps superficial, his ambition outrunning his achievements.

Scala was too young to have known Filelfo in Florence, for Filelfo was made to leave when Cosimo de' Medici returned triumphantly in 1434.⁴⁵ But some of Filelfo's zestful disrespect for the shibboleths of the Medicean Florentines may have remained to influence Scala in Milan. While there, Scala practiced a genre of historical writing frowned on in Florence, eulogistic biography, and in it he supported Valla's radical opinion that new Latin terms should be adopted for new institutions, only modifying his intention both of writing a eulogistic biography of the Medici and of using new words for new institutions on his return to Florence.⁴⁶ Scala also probably acquired his limited knowledge of Greek from Filelfo in Milan, where he borrowed manuscripts from Filelfo's rich library (which he was later accused of not returning) as well

Atti e memorie d. R. deputazione di storia patria per le provincie d. Marche, 5 (1901):459-535, and now the doctoral thesis of Robert Adam, Oxford, 1975. On his orations, G. Zippel, *Il Filelfo a Firenze (1429-1434)*, Rome, 1899, p. 33 and *ibid.*, n. 1; Gherardi, *Statuti*, p. xx, n. 2; Vespasiano da Bisticci, *Vite*, 2:287; and Niccolò Strozzi to Matteo Strozzi, in Bec, *Les Marchands écrivains*, p. 370: "E quasi tutta la terra rimbomba di questa sua oratione volghare." There are copies of his orations on liberty and justice (emphasizing the importance of preserving liberty in a state where men are born free but are everywhere in chains, and in seeing that laws once promulgated are observed) in Laur. MS Redi, 130, fols. 78r-79v, 122v-125v. On the political situation in these years, see now Dale Kent, *The Rise of the Medici: Faction in Florence, 1426-1434*, Oxford, 1978.

⁴⁵Zippel, *Il Filelfo*. Filelfo subsequently wrote a series of attacks on Cosimo ("Commentationum Florentinarum de exilio liber ad Vitalianum Borromaeum," BNF MS II, II, 70, partly ed. Garin, *Prosatori latini del quattrocento*, pp. 494-517, etc.; *Satyrae*, Milan, 1476; "Exhortatio" to the Florentines and to Cosimo to recall the exiles in 1440, Laur. MS Stroz. 105, fols. 1r-20r; "Oratio in Cosmum ad Exules," Milan, Bibl. Ambr. MS V, 10 sup.) and he sustained a continuous relationship with the exiled Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Palla Strozzi (e.g. *Epistolae*, fols. 22r, 33v, 36v, 39r, 84v, etc.; *Commissioni di R. degli Albizzi per il Comune di Firenze*, ed. C. Guasti, bk. 3, Florence, 1873, pp. 672-673).

⁴⁶See ch. 10, n. 18 below. The letters patent appointing Scala a ducal counselor and secretary in 1469 affirm that "Mediolani a teneris annis studiis humanitatis operam navavit" (ed. D. Moreni, *Notizie storiche*, 3:75-76; cf. Benvenuti, *Quadri storici*, p. 81).

as from the son of his patron Filippo Borromeo.⁴⁷ Filelfo, too, was a client of the Borromeo family, and his greatest kindness to Scala may have been to introduce Scala to Filippo Borromeo as a tutor for his son Giovanni.⁴⁸ Scala in his turn repaid his debt of gratitude both to his patron and to Filelfo in writing a biography of Filippo's father Vitaliano, in which he described Filelfo as "the most learned of the scholars of his day."⁴⁹

Vitaliano Borromeo had been one of the leading feudatories of the Milanese state, a banker and patron as well as a rich landowner, whose fifteenth-century brick palace still survives in central Milan.⁵⁰ Decorated inside with Aesop's *Fables* and Petrarch's *Triumphs* by Michelino Besozzo and other artists, it contrasts strikingly with the massive stone edifices built by his Florentine counterparts, and could have provided Scala with the inspiration for the house he later built for himself in Florence, decorated with a frieze of fables of his own inven-

⁴⁷ On Filelfo's Greek MSS, H. Omont, "La bibliothèque grecque"; Calderini, "Ricerche." On Scala's limited knowledge of Greek, see ch. 10 below. On his loans from Filelfo, see below (n. 55), and from Giovanni Borromeo, MS Riccard. 834, fol. 173r (Francesco to Nicodemo Tranchedini, 2 February 1464): "Et si Bartholomeum Scalam usquam offensas, sibi dicere memineris, e verbis filii Comitis Philippi Bonromei, me ipsum orare ut sibi libros Ptholomei emendatos quamprimum remittat, cui me etiam commendes obscuro."

⁴⁸ G. Biscaro, "Documenti milanesi inediti su F. F.," *ASLomb.*, ser. 4, 19 (1913):215-220. Filelfo wrote orations for the Borromei (*Orationes*, Venice, 1491, fols. 48r-50v, 29v-31r) and dedicated his "Commentationum . . . de exilio liber" to Vitaliano, whom he praised as a "publicum et munificentissimum hospitium quoddam . . . omnium eruditorum, omnium bonorum, religiosorum, nobilium, principum, imperatorum, regum summorumque pontificum" (ed. Garin, *Prosatori latini*, p. 496).

⁴⁹ *Vita Vitaliani Borromaei*, p. 18: "Franciscus Philippus [Philelphus], doctorum qui per eam tempestatem viverent doctissimus."

⁵⁰ On the Borromei, "lords of all the fortresses of Lake Maggiore" (quoted from B. Corio's *History* by D. M. Bueno de Mesquita, "Lodovico Sforza and his Vassals," p. 210), see *Famiglie notabili milanesi*, ed. F. Calvi, bk. 2, Milan, 1881; and on their patronage and their palace, Biscaro, "Note di storia dell' arte," p. 81; M. L. Gengaro, "Aggiunte per la storia della pittura lombarda del sec. XV," *Bollettino d'arte* 39 (1954):296-305, esp. 300-302, fig. 2-8; G. C. Bascapé, *I palazzi della vecchia Milano*, Milan, 1945, pls. 87, 88; *Storia di Milano*, 6:804-807.

tion.⁵¹ Scala never knew Vitaliano personally, although he based his biography on the first-hand evidence of people he met in his house. His patron was Vitaliano's son Filippo who succeeded his father as count of Arona and was, like him, a banker who also played a responsible political and diplomatic role in the state.⁵² In everything but their feudal rank and standing the Borromei resembled the Medici family in Florence, and Scala's experience in their household was not wasted when he later worked as a member of the Medici household, not least the courtly servility he must have learnt in Milan. While he was there he also met Duke Francesco Sforza and doubtless also his powerful centralizing secretary Cicco Simonetta, whose influence, too, can be detected in the reforms Scala later introduced into the Florentine chancery.⁵³

After Scala returned to Florence in the autumn of 1455, he was apparently without employment but still in close contact with his friends in Milan. In one letter we find him searching for scarlet cloth to match a sample he had been given, possibly acting as an intermediary between the Borromei in Milan and their relations in Florence.⁵⁴ In another, to Filelfo's son Xen-

⁵¹ See ch. 9 below.

⁵² *Vita Vitaliani Borromaei*, pp. 6-7, 21. On Filippo, E. Lazzeroni, "Il consiglio secreto," *Atti e memorie del 3° Congresso Storico Lombardo*, Milan, 1939, pp. 119-120, n. 85; Santoro, *Gli uffizi*, p. 6.

⁵³ See Scala's letter to Bona and Gian Galeazzo Sforza (25 November 1477, ASMi SPE Fir. 293): "Sum iam ab ineunte fere aetate, cum Mediolani diversarer, Francesco Sfortiae . . . carus." He also wrote a poem on Francesco Sforza's mother, see ch. 10, n. 58 below. On Cicco, *I diari di Cicco Simonetta*, ed. A. R. Natale, 1 (Milan, 1962): xiii-xv. On the chancery, *Storia di Milano*, 7: 524-526; C. Santoro, *Gli uffizi*, pp. xx-xxi, xxiii-xxv; *Acta in Consilio Secreto . . . Mediolani*, ed. A. R. Natale, 1 (Milan, 1963): xxxi-xxxiii; "Ordines primi et veteres ducalis cancellariae secretae," Milan, Bibl. Trivulziana, MS 1325, fols. 86r-102. On Milan in the fifteenth century, *Storia di Milano*, 7: 520-538, and on feudalism there, Bueno de Mesquita, "Lodovico Sforza and his Vassals."

⁵⁴ Modena MS, fol. 6r. The letter lacks a beginning and name of addressee, and is undated. The Florentine branch of the Borromeo family descended from San Miniato: Giovanni Borromeo in Florence was one of eight rich citizens elected as "Officiali de Banco" to raise money in 1467 (ASMi SPE Fir. 273, May 1467); Count Giovanni Borromeo from Milan stayed in his

ophon, he vows "by all the gods and by the sacrosanct and inviolable law of friendship" that he has returned all the books borrowed from his father: the missing volumes of Diodorus Siculus he suspects are "hiding among your father's manuscripts" and he urges Xenophon to get his father to hunt for them and tell him as soon as they are found.⁵⁵ To Filelfo himself he writes a letter of great interest, which shows him for the first time in contact with the Medici family and acting as emissary between Filelfo and Giovanni di Cosimo, then, as Scala says, busily engaged in building his villa at Fiesole: "having dined," Scala wrote to Filelfo,

I set out in the afternoon for Fiesole where Giovanni was rustivating, absorbed in his building. My business with him was of some importance, and after we had discussed many matters together, I eventually gave him your greetings, in your own words, and showed him your letter and your poem. He read them very carefully and then spoke most warmly in your praise, saying he had written to you that very day, and urging you, if you thought him worthy of the kindness, to undertake the work of interpreting Petrarch's poems, which in themselves are somewhat obscure. If you did so, he would be completely indebted to you, and you would earn the eternal gratitude of all devoted readers of Petrarch, of whom there are many, particularly in this

house in 1470 on his way to Rome (Lorenzo de' Medici, *Lettere*, 1, no. 66), and the failure of the Pazzi family to inherit his patrimony through marriage was a contributing factor to the Pazzi conspiracy in 1478 (see Poliziano's *Commentarium*, ed. A. Perosa, p. 14, n. 1).

⁵⁵ Modena MS, fol. 6v. On Xenophon, who worked in Genoa and Padua before becoming chancellor of Ragusa in 1460, see his father's *Epistolae*, fol. 71r-v, etc.; Calderini, "Ricerche," pp. 232, 235, 290; de Rosmini, *Vita*, 3:107-126. On 11 March 1458 Filelfo wrote to Palla Strozzi to ask if he had any more volumes of Diodorus Siculus to add to the "quinque prima volumina" he already possessed (*Epistolae*, fol. 101r). There are in fact two MSS of Diodorus belonging to Filelfo in the Laurentian Library, MS 70, 18, bearing his arms, and MS 70, 34 (Omont, "La bibliothèque grecque," p. 139, no. 13: "libri IV," and Calderini, "Ricerche," pp. 290-291). On Filelfo's loans, *ibid.*, p. 289.

CAREER

city. I, too, not only advise and urge you, but beg and beseech you, to do so, for I think it would be no small addition to your glory.⁵⁶

Filelfo had begun his *Commentary* on Petrarch's poems at the behest of Filippo Maria Visconti some years earlier but, although he apparently never got beyond the first one hundred and five poems, these were in great demand and frequently printed.⁵⁷ Giovanni de' Medici had been asked to bring about a reconciliation between his father Cosimo and Filelfo in 1447, and Scala was evidently working for the same objective. Cosimo, however, steadfastly refused to have anything to do with Filelfo, although his sons and grandson were less unrelenting.⁵⁸

While Scala visited Giovanni de' Medici on Filelfo's behalf in Florence, Filelfo concerned himself with some business affair of Scala's in Milan.⁵⁹ On another occasion he wrote to

⁵⁶ Modena MS, fol. 6r. On Giovanni de' Medici's villa, Vasari, *Vite*, 2:442-443.

⁵⁷ See P. C. Decembrio's *Vita di Filippo Maria Visconti*, *RIS*, 20 (old ser.) 1731, cols. 1013-1014; de Rosmini, *Vita*, 2:14-15; N. Quarta, "I commentatori quattrocentisti del Petrarca," *Atti d. R. Accademia di Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti*, Naples, 23 (1905):269-324. On the same day that he commended Scala to Filelfo, Donato Acciaiuoli also wrote to ask Filelfo for the "commentarium quoddam in Triumphos Petrarche olim a te compositum," but a month later he wrote to tell Scala not to bother any more, since his friend wanted "Commentum in Triumphos Petrarche, non in cantilenas," 5 September 1454: BNF MS Magl. VIII, 1390, fols. 86r (cf. Garin, *Medievo e rinascimento*, p. 220, n. 13), 88v (della Torre, *Storia*, p. 372, n. 3). In fact the printed *Commentary on the Trionfi* attributed to Filelfo is not by him (Quarta, and de Rosmini, *Vita*, 2:15).

⁵⁸ Sforza Secondo Visconti to Giovanni de' Medici (16 December 1447, ed. Fabroni, *Magni Cosmi . . . vita*, 2:115). On Filelfo's other attempts at reconciliation with Piero and Giovanni, with gifts of writings and translations, see his *Epistolae*, fols. 41v, 96v-97r, ASF MAP 6, 114; 17, 120 (cf. della Torre, *Storia*, pp. 367, n. 3, and pp. 367-368, n. 4). On Cosimo and Filelfo, Gutkind, *Cosimo de' Medici*, pp. 116-118. Piero de' Medici agreed to be godfather to Filelfo's son Federigo and Lorenzo de' Medici to another short-lived son Celestino (see British Library, Add. MS 21, 520, fol. 7, Filelfo to Lorenzo de' Medici, 6 May 1474, and ASF *Notarile M* 530, fol. 37v).

⁵⁹ The so-called "Vermiam . . . rem" which "magnopere expecto" (Scala

Scala more lightheartedly to accuse him of having abandoned the Muses to serve Aphrodite: "But beware, my dear friend. We know that Love is blind, and I want you not only to appear to be a very clear-sighted man, but also to be one. Behave yourself."⁶⁰ Yet it proved to be Filelfo, not Scala, who found difficulty in being clear-sighted, and in the following May he wrote to ask Donato Acciaiuoli to remind Scala about the spectacles he wanted to be sent from Florence, repeating his request in a letter to Andrea Alamanni in June; for someone, he wrote, turning the phrase he had already used to Scala, who has a reputation among certain people for being wise must also appear to be very clear-sighted.⁶¹ In the years that followed, the positions of the two men were reversed, Filelfo the vagrant humanist seeking the favor of Scala, the prosperous chancellor of Florence. On at least one occasion Scala was instrumental in procuring letters of safe-conduct for Filelfo to pass through Florentine territory and to visit Florence.⁶² But the two men were prevented from reestablishing their old friendship by Filelfo's death in Florence in 1481, only fifteen

to Filelfo, Modena MS, fol. 6v), referred to by Filelfo in letters to Scala of 5 and 23 October 1455 (*Epistolae*, fol. 90v), is possibly connected with the city of Worms (called "Vermis" by Poggio Bracciolini, *Opera*, ed. Fubini, 3(1):81) or with Count Pietro dal Verme, an important vassal of the duke of Milan (cf. Bueno de Mesquita, "Ludovico Sforza and his Vassals," pp. 198-199).

⁶⁰ 19 September 1455, ed. E. Legrand, *Centdix lettres grecques de F. Filelfe*, Paris, 1892, p. 78.

⁶¹ *Epistolae*, fol. 94v (31 May 1456); Legrand, *Centdix lettres*, p. 88 (22 June 1456). On the manufacture of concave lenses in Florence and the demand for them in Milan, see now V. Ilardi, "Eyeglasses and Concave Lenses in 15th-Century Florence and Milan: New Documents," *Renaissance Quarterly* 29 (1976):341-360.

⁶² *Epistolae*, fol. 208v (29 March 1469); cf. de Rosmini, *Vita*, 2:185-186; and Filelfo to Piero de' Medici, 12 July 1469, ed. G. Benadduci, "Prose e poesie volgari di F. F.," *Atti e memorie d. deputazione di storia patria per le provincie d. Marche* 5 (1901):166. Filelfo spent four days in Florence at the end of October 1469 (de Rosmini, *Vita*, 2:191-193), and on 25 August 1475 he wrote again to ask a favor of Scala: "qua in re tua mihi diligentia opus est, ex incluso chyrographo cognosces" (Milan, Bibl. Trivulziana, MS 873, fol. 499v).

days after he returned to teach again in the university from which he had been banished nearly fifty years earlier.⁶³

Scala's future lay in Florence, not Milan, although in 1455 this was not obvious. It was in this year that Giovanni de' Medici became director general of the Medici bank on the death of Giovanni Benci and, although Scala gives no indication of what his important business was with him in Fiesole, it may have concerned some transaction between Milan and Florence, possibly involving the Borromei.⁶⁴ At this moment Scala's future was uncertain and his career could have taken one of several directions: he was qualified as a lawyer and could have practiced law, he could have been employed as a tutor or teacher, he could have entered the world of business and commerce. His options lay wide open.

His name first appears in official circles just over a year after his return from Milan. A commission had been appointed to examine the state of the chancery under the elderly Poggio Bracciolini who, after a lifetime spent in the papal court—"which nourished me for fifty years with honor and praise"—was too old for the work of chancellor and spent much of his time in his villa outside the city.⁶⁵ The problem was discussed in a series of special meetings of leading citizens, and on 27

⁶³ de Rosmini, *Vita*, 2:270; cf. Fil. Sacramoro to Gian Galeazzo Sforza, 2 August 1481, ASMi SPE Fir. 303: "El Philelpho passò de questa vita martis di sera al' un' hora di nocte, che fu l'ultimo del passato. Tri dì stete amalato cum uno pocho di febre e soprazonto di fluxo." On Filelfo's later career, de Rosmini, *Vita*, 2:176ff, 226ff, 268-270.

⁶⁴ de Roover, *Banco Medici*, p. 104. There is evidence of a friendly relationship between the Borromei and Medici in ASF MAP 137, 46 (20 or 22 January 1447), 163, fol. 30 (8 August 1464), and 34, 484 (4 October 1479, Giovanni Borromeo to Lorenzo de' Medici, promising to do for him what was in his power, "per l'antiqua amicitia et amore fraterno quale sempre vi ho portato"). The Medici employed a Giovanni di Lazzaro Borromeo in the Milan branch of their bank (de Roover, pp. 187, 388).

⁶⁵ Poggio, *Opera*, 3 (bk. 14, ep. 13): 271: "quae me quinquaginta annos cum honore et laude nutritiv. . . . Ego animi quietem appeto et perquiro, quae in hac mobili civitate nequaquam inveniri potest." On his appointment as chancellor, E. Walser, *Poggius Florentinus, Leben und Werke*, in *Beiträge zur Kulturgeschichte des Mittelalters und der Renaissance*, 14 (Leipzig, 1914): 382; Marzi, *Cancellaria*, pp. 219-224.

December 1456 a commission of four men (Otto Niccolini, Dietisalvi Neroni, Matteo Palmieri and Franco Sacchetti) recommended that Poggio should be reappointed annually, together with a second chancellor, ser Antonio di Mariano Muzi, and four assistants. Since there were no teachers in the university at that time, the commissioners also suggested that two of these assistants should teach there, one in the morning, the other in the afternoon, solving the problems of both chancery and university simultaneously. Four men were shortlisted as suitable to teach in the university: Cristoforo Landino, Antonio del Rosso, Bernardo di ser Francesco Nuti and "Bartolomeo da Colle."⁶⁶ We do not know if the report was accepted, although ser Antonio Muzi subsequently acted as second chancellor.⁶⁷ Bartolomeo of Colle, as he was still called, was not apparently chosen for this work and by the end of the following year he was employed in a private capacity by Pierfrancesco de' Medici. Finally he had entered the orbit of the Medici, who had had so little to do with his earlier years. It was his own ambition and his student friendships with influential Florentines that launched him on his path to success and not, as Guicciardini thought, the Medici. Once he entered their orbit, however, for reasons of mutual interest he did not leave it.

⁶⁶ ASF *Cons. Prat.* 54, fols. 61r-v, 67v-71r, 79v-80v (debates of 27 November and 8 December and "relatio super facto cancell[erie]," 27 December 1456, partly ed. Walser, pp. 404-406).

⁶⁷ Marzi, *Cancellaria*, pp. 221, 231, 244.

CHAPTER II

Secretary in the Medici Household

The more those who serve you are honored, the more praise will redound to you. *Scala to Pierfrancesco de' Medici, 1461*¹

We first find Bartolomeo Scala working for Pierfrancesco de' Medici in August 1457.² In September he was too busy even to greet his friend Antonio Guidotti before leaving to visit Pierfrancesco in the Mugello, but as a loyal Medicean himself Guidotti accepted his excuse unhesitatingly: "for you are a faithful hero, and by Hercules you do well to remain faithful to your master."³ Scala had apparently urged him to report to Pierfrancesco about the recent Ricci conspiracy against the Medici regime in Florence, and now Guidotti wanted Scala to find out if this had been well received and what Pierfrancesco had said.⁴ So already Scala is involved in Medicean politics and playing a confidential role among the supporters of the regime.

Pierfrancesco de' Medici was twenty-seven years old at the time, still politically immature. His father Lorenzo had died in 1440, leaving him in the care of his uncle Cosimo until he

¹ ASF *MAP* 2, 477, ed. Gentile, "B. S. e i Medici," p. 135, doc. 3: "et a voi quanto e servidori vostri saranno più honorati, tanto più loda ve ne risulterà."

² Scala to Sandro Pagagnotti, 6 August 1457, ASF *MAP* 98, 281.

³ Antonio Guidotti to Scala, 15 September 1457, ASF *MAP* 96, 461, ed. Gentile, "B. S. e i Medici," pp. 133-134, doc. 1: "Abiisti ut scribis in agrum Mugellanum multis insalutato amico occupationibus impeditus. Accipio plane excusationem, fidelis enim es hero et bene hercle facis fidelem te domino servare tuo." On Guidotti's position as a Medici partisan, see especially ASF *MAP* 17, 359 (to Piero de' Medici, 9 February 1464). On his offices, Cambi, *Delizie*, 20:235, 325, 383, 300; Rubinstein, *Government*, pp. 252, 263, 280, 290, 308; ASF *Cons. Prat.* 54, fols. 97v, 156v. According to the *Libro* of Antonio Billi (ed. C. Frey, Berlin, 1892, p. 46), Antonio di Migliorino Guidotti made the model of the Rucellai loggia, Rucellai, *Zibaldone*, p. 144.

⁴ Letter of 15 September above. On the Ricci conspiracy, Cambi, *Delizie*, 20:349-350; Rinuccini, *Ricordi storici*, p. lxxxvi; Rubinstein, *Government*, p. 89.

came of age in 1451.⁵ Then the Medici estate was divided between Pierfrancesco and his older cousins Piero and Giovanni and, although Pierfrancesco's sons later suspected Cosimo of profiting from their father's minority,⁶ outwardly their relationship was conducted with scrupulous fairness and friendliness. Yet there were reasons for concern, and even in 1457 it might have been possible to foresee the rivalry that finally split the two branches of the family. As Cosimo's sons, Piero and Giovanni stood to inherit their father's primacy in Florence and they were already initiated into the political life of the city. Pierfrancesco was not; but in compensation his patrimony as an only son was twice that of Piero's and Giovanni's and in Florence money had political value. Hitherto Pierfrancesco seemed uninterested in politics, preferring to spend his days in the wild and beautiful castle of Trebbio in the Mugello which had been allotted to him in 1451, dealing in horses and descending to Florence as infrequently as possible. Left to himself, he might have remained aloof. But in May 1456 this man of "unusual" and "somewhat rustic" charm married Laudomia, daughter of the prominent Medicean Angelo Acciaiuoli, and Angelo was concerned that Pierfrancesco should enjoy his share of the family's influence by cultivating Cosimo and playing a more active part in the state.⁷

Bartolomeo Scala became associated with Pierfrancesco shortly afterwards, doubtless as a result of this new situation. Perhaps Angelo Acciaiuoli, as a cousin of Scala's friend Donato Acciaiuoli, was responsible for introducing him to Pierfrancesco's household, or perhaps the Medici themselves chose

⁵ On Pierfrancesco, see Pieraccini, *La stirpe*, 1:149-155; on his father, *ibid.*, pp. 43-47; and on his death in 1440, de Roover, *Banco Medici*, p. 89. I discuss Pierfrancesco more fully in a forthcoming article to be published in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*: 42 (1979).

⁶ ASF MAP 88, n. 392, fol. 508; on the division of the Medici estate, MAP 161.

⁷ "L'animo gentile et pelegrino," N. Tranchedini to Francesco Sforza, 2 December 1454, ed. Magnani, *Relazioni private*, p. iv; "hai un po' del salvaticho," Angelo Acciaiuoli to Pierfrancesco, 4 March 1457, ASF MAP 2, 442, ed. Pieraccini, *La stirpe*, 1:150.

him. Scala already knew Giovanni de' Medici and he dedicated his *Life of Vitaliano Borromeo* to Piero during or after his visit to Milan.⁸ What is certain is that the years Scala spent in his employment coincided with Pierfrancesco's initiation into the Florentine *cursus honorum* as he attained his political majority. Pierfrancesco was appointed a member of the Balia of 1458 although not yet of statutory age; then one of six ambassadors (with his father-in-law Angelo Acciaiuoli) to congratulate and offer homage to Pius II in the autumn of 1458; a year later a member of the Signoria, although still younger than he should have been for this office; and in September 1460 a member of the all-powerful disciplinary magistracy of the Eight of Ward (Otto di Guardia), which had been given absolute authority (or *balìa*) to deal with political crimes after the discovery of Girolamo Machiavelli's conspiracy against the regime in 1458.⁹

Although Scala acted principally as Pierfrancesco's business secretary, he must also have been involved in his political career, acting as mentor and perhaps also as tutor to the young man. It was in the year when Scala began to work for him that Pierfrancesco asked Carlo de' Medici to procure him

⁸ On the date of the presentation copy of the *Life* to Piero de' Medici (Laur. MS 68, 27), Brown and de la Mare, "B. Scala's Dealings," p. 239, n. 10. Although its script (by Paganus Raudensis) and illumination suggest it was completed during Scala's stay in Milan in 1454-1455 (revealing Scala's early hope of patronage from Piero), a later date cannot be ruled out: if written in 1454-1455, one would have expected it to have been dedicated to Scala's patron in Milan, Filippo Borromeo, as Vitaliano's son the most appropriate dedicatee; moreover, its inclusion in Piero de' Medici's so-called 1456 Inventory does not provide an absolute *terminus ad quem* for its presentation to Piero, since the second hand of the inventory (in which it is listed) also lists works written after this date (*ibid.*), so it could possibly have been copied from a Milanese MS of the work after Scala's return to Florence.

⁹ Rubinstein, *Government*, pp. 107 (n. 5), 290; C. Guasti, "Due legazioni al sommo pontifice," in his *Scritti storici*, Prato, 1894, pp. 85-90; Cambi, *Delizie*, 20:362, 377; ASF *Otto di Guardia* 2723 bis, fol. 57r, and *Tratte* 81, fol. 5r. The minimum age for both the 1458 Balia and membership of the Signoria was 30 years. On the Otto di Guardia, Antonelli, "La magistratura," pp. 3-39; and on its special powers in 1458 and 1460, Rubinstein, *Government*, pp. 111-112.

books in Rome.¹⁰ In 1460 Scala delivered lectures on Virgil in Pierfrancesco's house in Florence, which the poet Luigi Pulci wanted to attend,¹¹ and he completed his treatise *On Whether a Wise Man Should Marry* at Trebbio one Christmas.¹² So Scala may have been intended to stimulate in Pierfrancesco an interest in learning and culture to match that of his urban cousins, although we do not know if these studies were primarily for Pierfrancesco's benefit, or for Scala's, serving as *passatempi* during Pierfrancesco's protracted absences and country pleasures.¹³ Significantly, perhaps, Scala dedicated his Trebbio treatise to Piero de' Medici, not Pierfrancesco. For his patron, he wrote a poem he may have considered more suited to his tastes in memory of his champion racer Swallow.¹⁴

Scala's principal duties were those of secretary and factotum to Pierfrancesco, and his surviving letters provide early evidence of the technique he used in all his subsequent dealings with the family: he was clear, efficient, quick to act and give advice when necessary, yet deferential and unwilling to act without instruction unless he knew what was required of him. Since Pierfrancesco was a partner in the Medici bank, sharing many contracts with his cousins Piero and Giovanni,¹⁵ much

¹⁰ Carlo de' Medici to Pierfrancesco, 9 December 1458, ASF MAP 137, 86, see Pieraccini, *La stirpe*, 1:151.

¹¹ Bastardello of Francesco Castellani, ASF *Conv. Soppr.* 90, 134, fol. 19v, quoted by C. Carnesecchi, "Per la biografia di Luigi Pulci," *ASI*, ser. 5, 17 (1896): 378, recording that Pulci borrowed a MS containing Virgil's *Bucolics*, *Georgics*, and the *Aeneid*, "el quale libro mi chiese per andare a udire da messer Bartolomeo da Colle torna in casa di Pierfrancesco de' Medici, e debbemelo restituire salvo," 2 January 1460.

¹² See ch. 10, n. 24.

¹³ Scala's letter to Pierfrancesco from Florence on 25 March 1459 (ASF MAP 4, 378) suggests perhaps the latter: "Qui di nuovo non ho che scrivervi. Attendesi alla anima più che ad altro."

¹⁴ "Carmina in laudem equi Petrificanci de Medicis," see ch. 10 below. Evidence suggests that Pierfrancesco may have dealt in horses, Pieraccini, *La stirpe*, 1:152.

¹⁵ Although de Roover does not discuss Pierfrancesco's role in the Medici bank as such, there are references to his partnerships in *Banco Medici*: 127, 338, 359, 551. Cf. also the *Inventario* to MAP, especially vol. 4 (Rome, 1963).

CAREER

of the work Scala did for him was concerned with the bank. In Pierfrancesco's one surviving letter to Scala, for instance, Scala was told to press on with other urgent business without further instruction, to do everything possible to get Pierfrancesco's debtors to pay up now they had been sentenced and the holidays were over, to tell Pierfrancesco's associate Bernardo Vespucci to find out what his mother wanted to do and then see to it that the business did not have to be discussed again, and finally to authorize a payment that was not for the moment to be put down to his account: "do what I write to you and advise me of' everything."¹⁶

When Scala knew what Pierfrancesco wanted to be done, he would act without specific instruction.¹⁷ However, in 1459 he forwarded Pierfrancesco a letter from "the Cardinal" (of Rouen, Guillaume d'Éstouteville), who the previous autumn in Rome had promised Pierfrancesco to be his guest on his way to the Congress of Mantua, asking Pierfrancesco to "let me know if you want me to reply and if you would like me to say one thing rather than another—although you have Sandro [Pagagnotti, Pierfrancesco's land agent] there, fit for more important matters than this. I mentioned it, though, be-

¹⁶ Pierfrancesco de' Medici in Trebbio to Scala in Florence, 19 December 1457 (not 1459 as inventoried), ASF *MAP* 98, 525: "Fate quello vi scrivo et di tutto avisate." Both Francesco Buondelmonti and Bartolomeo Gianfigliuzzi, mentioned in the letter, are listed as Pierfrancesco's debtors in the 1458 Catasto for sums of fl.56 27s and fl.24 25s respectively, ASF *MAP* 82, no. 182, fol. 594v: "I sopradetti debitori sono più anni passati." In a letter to Pierfrancesco of 13 April 1457 (*MAP* 2, 447), Bernardo Vespucci refers to "quello tristo di Lorenzo di Chresci," the same debtor whom Scala had to pursue as one of the first tasks we know he performed for Pierfrancesco (ASF *MAP* 98, 281, letter of 6 August 1457).

¹⁷ See, for example, his letter to Pierfrancesco of 20 January 1460 (ASF *MAP* 137, 94): "Io, perchè sapevo vostra intentione, di nuovo scripsi per vostra parte una lectera al Podestà e una a ser Michele. . ." On 16 January 1460 it had been agreed "quod dicta terra Prati de cetero reformari possit absque reformatoibus civibus florentinis," but because of disagreement among the citizens about the new election bags, three Florentines (including Piero de' Medici) were asked to assume authority for a limited period on 10 June 1460, ASF *Prato, Statuti e Riforme*, 657, fols. 478r-479v, cf. *SS. Delib. sp. aut.* 32, fol. 33r.