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Chapter 1

The Acoustic Art of City-Building

What would it mean to build a city with sound? Several possible responses to that question are the subject of this chapter. Schmarsow's insights into the way architecture was the result of a transaction between the body and the building can be expanded historically to encompass the larger social body. This can be illustrated in the fundamentally dual nature of the city as physical phenomenon, a collection of buildings surrounded by a wall and located in space—the *urbs*—and the city as a cultural dynamic, a collection of people gathered together to live according to reason¹—the *civitas*. Although in contemporary use this distinction was elided by the preference for the term *civitas* to designate the Italian city, these two concepts of the city were, in a variety of ways, held in a state of mutual dependence, where the one was rarely represented without the other.²

Consider, for example, the remarkable portrait of Florence found in a mid-fourteenth-century fresco in the headquarters of the confraternity of the Misericordia in Florence (figures 11, 12). The city's walls enclose a dense topography of monumental stone buildings that form a united architectural mass even as they display details of recognizable structures. Surrounding the walls is the larger Florentine social body, whose members kneel in prayer. In turn, they are enveloped in the protective mantle of the Virgin of Mercy, who rises above the scene and to whom the Florentine prayers are directed. These successive layers of protection—walls, praying bodies, divine embrace—foreground how both stones and bodies protect the integrity of the city understood as a series of concentric layers of mutually reinforcing entities, while both were also under the celestial safekeeping of the patron saint. This image clearly reveals the Florentine desire to sanctify both concrete space and the communities that inhabited it. In a more schematic but formal way, the city's official self-expression, both linguistically and visually, maintained this distinction between the city as a physical and a social phenomenon, while consistently presenting both aspects side by side. For example, the coats of arms that represented the commune of Florence—the red lily—and the citizens (*popolo*) of Florence—the red cross—were amongst the most important and ubiquitous symbols of the city, marking its most important public monuments and spaces. They can be seen side by side on the city's gates, its public palaces, and the cathedral, and in numerous representations of the state (figures 13-15a).

Similarly, Florentine legal documents almost always modify the signifier “Florence” with such terms as “the people” (*popolo*) and “the city” (*cittade, comune*), a formulaic phrasing that explicitly combines and designates the jurisdiction of the law over both the social and the spatial domains of the city. Consequently, Florentines constantly encountered the dual identity of their city in the very places and contexts where such identities were staged, where civic rituals would have dramatized their bonds to others and to the concrete structures that defined their daily lives. This dialectic between the concrete and the social defines the range of ways in which Florentines sought to project themselves onto the spaces around them, to unite their social selves with the built environment, and sound was often the binding mechanism that made this real and concrete.

< figs. 11-15 >

What is crucial in this approach is that space and time were not preexisting categories but products of the social practices of the city itself. Through the continual repetition and transformation of the sounds the city made, space and time were continually reconfigured in a historical process that linked the meaning of buildings directly to the dynamics of social and political relations. The historical development of architectural style as well as urban design, as it has been understood as a product of ideas, politics, propaganda, taste, and institutional needs, is complicated by the fact that the symbolic meanings *we* have derived from them are necessarily inflected by the way historical meaning was always contingent upon the actual use and experience of the built environment. Buildings and spaces were constantly reinterpreted through the actions of those whose well-being depended precisely on both understanding the nuances in urban spatial politics and having the capacity to bend those meanings towards one’s desires. In other words, the relative stability of stones and the persistence of architectural motifs have made it difficult to integrate the ways in which the built environment was both a conceptual whole and a series of conflicted fragments, all of which were unstable in meaning and subject to the continual scrutiny, violence, ritual, and polyvalent perceptions of a very complicated networks of communities. It is this element of the experience and reception of architecture by the urban cultures that has inspired this investigation into sonic culture of streets and squares in early modern Florence.

The sounds that one heard in Florence were as crucial as the sights one saw in a society where information was a product of the full sensorial experience of the city. Reconstructing those aspects of the Florentine urban soundscape that are available to us, however indirectly, allows one to demonstrate the dynamic interplay of the city as *urbs* and the city as *civitas*, and how such a dynamic can deepen our understanding of the ways in which early modern culture understood the world it built up around it.

Harmony/Order—Amphion's Walls

Florentines were constantly making noise, and so was their city, and this required that they pay attention to both the harmonic and the discordant dimensions of the city, understood as the product of stones and communities, through specific strategies of representation. This dialectic between creation and experience, production and reception, is revealed by the representational strategies used by Florentines to forge symbolic links between their city and the wider cosmos. The stories that a city's inhabitants told themselves about the origins of their city speak volumes about how they understood their past, who they imagined themselves to be in the present, and where they hoped to go in the future. Such myths represented ways in which social groups defined themselves within both larger and more localized groups that were always making competing claims of legitimacy. Visions of distant and ideal cities could coincide with a desire, on the part of urban residents, to transpose a certain harmonics of design onto the necessarily fractured and unfinished built environment that surrounded them. In this way, the city in which they lived existed as both a mental ideal unity and a concrete physical aggregate of discordant parts. Such visions, however, captured in narrative as much as they were explicitly prescribed in legislation, imagined the social and the physical city as a fully integrated unity, where the cross and the lily, the popolo and the commune, were clearly recognizable in the harmony of their interaction. Many descriptions of medieval and Renaissance cities dramatize this dialectic between the ideal and the real. When Florentines described, imagined, and recounted their experience of the city, they demonstrated a will toward understanding the city as a social experiment whose imagined coherence was derived from its connection to cosmic harmony, ideal geometry, ancient myths, legendary foundations, and oft-repeated narratives.

The myth of Amphion illustrates this point explicitly. This ancient narrative links the organizational precision of music to the ordering of stones into walls. According to legend, Amphion built the city of Thebes solely with the power of music. By playing his instrument so sweetly, he induced the stones of Mount Cytheron to order themselves, one on top of the other, until they formed the walls of the ancient city (figure 16). This mythical tale is referred to in several ancient sources. Here is the passage from Horace's *Ars poetica*:

Amphion, builder of Thebes' citadel, moved stones by the sound of his lyre, and led them whither he would by his supplicating spell. In days of yore, this was wisdom, to draw a line between public and private rights, between things sacred and things common, to check vagrant union, to give rules for wedded life, to build towns, and grave laws on tables of wood; and so honor and fame fell to bards and their songs.³

< fig. 16 >

The resulting harmony was one in which the legal, sacred, social, and civic jurisdictions of urban life were clearly demarcated and embodied in the songs of the rhapsodes, the singer-poets of the ancient world. It was the verbal enunciation, the acoustic performance, through which the constitutive elements of the city came into being as a multiple system of thresholds. Amphion,⁴ erstwhile king of Thebes, son of Jove and Antiope, husband of Niobe, and twin brother of Zethus, built the walls and the seven legendary gates around the city of Thebes.⁵ He did this not, however, through any human sweat or physical toil but through the intellectual power of the liberal arts, the human sciences, and most particularly that of music. In this mythical literary context, the creation of the city, therefore, relied on the intellectual power of the mind to organize matter through the mathematical acoustics of music. The conception of the ideal city lay in the harmonic way it defined borders and separated elements in an orderly and rational way. On a more practical level, the Florentine government was extremely preoccupied with the precise delineation of borders, separating public from private and regulating access to a hierarchical system of spaces. Echoes of Amphion's harmonics permeated legislative texts as a set of abstract goals driving very concrete practices of urban regulation, which represented the correlative vision of a well-functioning city. The repetitions and reiterations of these kinds of laws that sought to manage the order of public space betray Florentine legislators' anxiety about the chaotic and far from ideal negotiation of territories and borders that occurred in actual practice, where the overlapping ties of neighborhood, family, economics, and memory tended to blur and challenge such borders.⁶

It is not my claim that Florentine legislators referred consciously and specifically to a myth like Amphion in order to give shape to actual policies. Instead, my claim is that a certain set of ideals that connected the city and its inhabitants to a larger cosmic harmony underlay the earthly geometries of the lived spaces of the city and its political propaganda. As David Friedman has remarked, when Florentines described their city, they transformed it into an ideal and harmonious geometry that "glossed over specific topographical details, giving a generalized account of regular and recognizable shapes."⁷ In other words, they were continually harmonizing their actual experience to conform to an imagined ideal. This formed a complement to the desire by planners, who were often part of the same governing class, to instill or imagine that such a harmonics guided planning as well.

Florentine sources reveal, moreover, that the auditory environment was a primary sensorial field through which identities, of both individuals and communities, were continually reconstructed and maintained in ways that seem, at first, to contradict desire for harmony. This environment

gave rhythm to forgotten modes of social relations, thus making possible collective forms of expression, both celebratory and conflicting, which are now almost completely lost to us.⁸ Such conviviality and discord lie in stark contrast to the ordered, rational harmony that constitutes the beauty of Amphion's mythical founding of Thebes and is vividly brought to life by the fourteenth-century Florentine poet Antonio Pucci (c. 1320–c. 1388).⁹ Pucci will be a recurring figure in this study because his life, unlike that of any other figure, was so profoundly integrated with the city as noise-making machine. He served as bell ringer of the commune from 1334 to about 1352.¹⁰ In this capacity he was responsible for maintaining a sonic regime that choreographed the daily activities of the city's inhabitants throughout the day. For the next seventeen years, until 1369, he served as town crier (*banditore*) of the commune, whose duties included observing council deliberations and proclaiming laws and notices to the people throughout the city.¹¹ Between 1371 and 1382 he held the position of *guardiano degli atti* of the city's merchant tribunal, the Mercanzia, which was involved with stabilizing lines of credit. As an archivist who will reappear throughout this study, he represents an important link between the sonic dimensions of the street and those of the Florentine government. He was also the author of one of the most widely circulated compendiums employed by professional storytellers to organize their repertoires.¹² Known as a *zibaldone*, this Florentine genre of journal or scrapbook was used to preserve all kinds of disparate material collected from a range of sources. Organized together, they reflected, on the one hand, the personal interests and character of their authors and, on the other, the more general circulation of learned and popular texts throughout Florentine society.

In one passage of his *zibaldone*, Pucci transcribes the details of Amphion's acoustically built city. This is his version of the story: "Amphion was son of Jove and husband of Niobe and builder of the city of Thebes. He was an expert and very well educated and with the help of the sciences he ordered and made that city, especially through the science of music because he and his wife played and sang so sweetly that according to the poets the stones picked themselves up, and moved and arranged themselves one on top of the other, and in this way he walled the city."¹³

The *zibaldone* format was well suited for juxtaposing diverse texts, the pairing of which could evoke unimagined associations. Florentines used it to record such things as their favorite tales, proverbs, sermons, memories, passages from Dante, contemporary events, classical fragments, rumors, and gossip, all of which amounted to a kind of haphazard intertextual experiment that was the corollary to the random encounters and fragmented vistas that characterized a society that relied heavily on face-to-face oral communication. As an educated functionary, Pucci was

interested in the classical past for how it spoke to his own present circumstances. Based on the number of copies and the contents of this manuscript, scholars have determined that this zibaldone, like so many others similar to it, provided a circulating repertoire for the public performance of such narratives sung by professional storytellers, known as *cantimpanche* or *cantastorie*. As such, Amphion's musical harmony would have had concrete presence in the voices of so many singers catering to the expectations and imagination of urban audiences.

Amphion's tale is set amidst stories from Ovid, discussions of Greek gods, passages from Dante, and references to contemporary events in Florence. It follows the foundation myths of various real and mythical cities (Rome, Venice, Saracen cities), all based on the travel writings of Marco Polo. There is a city built on water, and one where the inhabitants make wool from the bark of trees. He counts rooms and houses, measures the wall of the tower of Babel and the steps of Babylon. He describes how Alexander the Great founded twelve cities, and finally he arrives at the legendary origins of his own city of Florence,¹⁴ followed eventually by comments on Arezzo, Perugia, Todi, and Venice. It is a mix of the real and the fantastic, all destined for dissemination in the public piazza. Such emphasis on describing the origins of both fabled and real cities relates directly to the urban setting in which these stories were heard by Florentines. As such, these tales would have echoed within actual urban spaces, imbuing streets and squares with the most fantastic associations and a richer, more cosmopolitan cultural memory.

However, the compilers of zibaldoni were never passive copyists. They intervened continually in texts that they made conform to their real and symbolic worlds, with anecdotes, rewritings, and personal interpretations. In order to figure out what the myth of Amphion means, therefore, Pucci, like any self-respecting Florentine, turns immediately to Dante for an explanation. Reading the *Commedia* as a compendium of knowledge, Pucci finds in the *Inferno*, canto 32, that Dante had appealed to the same muses of the human sciences that had helped Amphion to build Thebes. He did so in order that they might also give *him* the linguistic power to construct, through words, the enveloping textual frame around the hell into which he was descending: "and Dante, however, said it like this: 'May those ladies help my verse.' They helped Dante to enclose Thebes so that his tale would not differ from the historical fact."¹⁵ Pucci, who was quite capable of spotting a musical metaphor when he saw one, concludes from his reading of Dante that the stones did not actually move and transform themselves into walls at all, but that the power of the music was manifested in the wisdom and good judgment displayed by Amphion, who was able to protect and maintain the city.¹⁶ In doing so, Pucci was following a general trend in contemporary Dante scholarship that argued that Amphion's metaphorical power of city-building lay in his absolute gracefulness as a speaker. Therefore, the author of *L'ottimo commento*,

Andrea Lancia, claimed that, although the story recounts how Amphion played and sang so sweetly with the help of the muses, this was a figurative image, and that it was not the songs or the music but the sound of Amphion's voice as a wise speaker that allowed the city to grow and be protected. It was the men of the city who were sweet and capable of being shaped, but also rugged like the stones that were guided by his words into place.¹⁷ In the commentary of an anonymous diarist, artisans built the city without suffering any physical fatigue while listening to the sonorous sounds of Amphion's lyre. But in truth, he explains, Amphion's auditory power was actually in his speaking voice, a voice capable of moving the souls of men to make what he desired.¹⁸ For Jacopo della Lana, the workers refused any payment for building the city other than the sweet sound of Amphion's voice,¹⁹ and Guido da Pisa identified the stones as symbolizing recalcitrant bodies, men who were enticed to obey laws and follow customs by the enchanting sound of reason itself.²⁰ In each case, Amphion's rhetorical power, the sheer eloquence of his voice, could motivate people, incite souls to action, literally civilize men, transforming them into urban communities as strong as the stones piled into defensive walls. It was the poetic corollary to the decidedly more prosaic sounds of Pucci's rather less melodious description of the Mercato Vecchio.

Dissonance/Disorder—Pucci's Marketplace

An urban poet, compiler of stories, earnest patriot, bell ringer, town crier, and urban storyteller, Antonio Pucci spent his life in public service to the Florentine commune.²¹ As a full-time civil servant, he would have been highly literate without being monstrously original. As an officer of one of the city's confraternities, he would also have interacted with men from a relatively diverse set of social backgrounds and been exposed to both erudite and popular musical repertoires.²² All of this meant that he was remarkably immersed in and representative of Florence's vibrant urban culture and a keen observer of the street life and street culture of the city. As such, he was perfectly capable of holding diametrically opposing theories about how the city was built. By recalling Amphion, Pucci imagined the city as a work of art, an ideal design that was the result of careful planning and execution, effortlessly ordered by human reason, a solitary authority whose sweet music ordered stones into an perfectly proportioned city. In the second case, the city was created not by a single founding act but through the continuous dynamics of human conflict, commerce, and clatter, which were encouraged, amplified, mediated, and contained by the concrete architecture of the city square.

Pucci's poem, known as "Proprietà del mercato vecchio," displays a poetic rhythm that lends itself easily to oral recitation. It describes a series of overlapping social encounters in a celebration of Florence's old market square (Mercato Vecchio) and extolls its beauty over every

other square in the entire world (figure 17). However, the picture that confronted the poem's audience is a series of frenetic, chaotic, highly competitive, lively, at times violent, always intense interactions of social groups and urban space. It stresses the riotous goings-on and noisy ebullience of the civic culture that flourished there, where all the messy elements that constitute urban society found a voice amid the chaotic architecture of commercial exchange.

< fig. 17 >

He begins the poem by declaring that he has seen many piazzas, ones beautiful like that of Perugia but also those, like the Campo in Siena, which are environmental disasters, where one wastes away in the winter and suffers the blazing sun in the summer.²³ But none can rival the beauty of the square that has inspired him to sing of it in verse.²⁴ Pucci goes on to describe the rich variety of characters that populate the market and the often raucous activities they engage in. There are artisans and vendors of all kinds, gentlemen, prostitutes, peasants, ruffians, and swindlers. Every morning the streets leading into it are jammed with carts and animals burdened with a ceaseless flow of provisions.²⁵ Across the arc of the poem's narrative, winter turns to spring, Carnival to Lent, and Lent to Easter, in which the transitions expressed through the changing culinary abundance that enlivens the feverish exchange. The poem ends by linking the culture of commerce to the ritual and rambunctious jousting and feasting of the city's young men in *potenze*, the city's festive youth brigades. The market was defined more by the practices that took place within it than the buildings and spaces that formed it. It was more important for Pucci to describe those things about the piazza that struck the multiple intersections of his senses; what he saw, certainly, but also what he felt, heard, tasted, even smelled (*seno*) in the market.²⁶ In this narrative the piazza was the end point of a vast circulatory regime of regional food production and consumption. In the piazza itself, well-stocked food vendors jostled against a vibrant commerce of fraud. Moneylenders' tables stood next to gaming tables.²⁷ The shrieks exchanged between garrulous female vendors who traded the vilest insults all day long as easily as they dispensed chestnuts clashed with the sounds of mocking banter of beautiful young girls selling all manner of flowers and fruit.²⁸ These lively and vulgar exchanges in the piazza are described as if they took place in the noblest garden, one that nourishes both the Florentine eye and taste.²⁹ Gentlemen and women look on as swindlers and sellers, prostitutes and pimps, cantankerous rustics and *bons vivants*, delivery boys and scabrous beggars, all become entangled in scuffles.³⁰ One hears the curses of those brawling ruffians, whose wheezing, puffing, and violent blows competed with singing idlers and songbirds in cages.³¹ And if, by chance, one of these unruly characters kills his rival, it will only temporarily shatter the beauty of the piazza, and in the meantime one can still sing and contentedly fritter away the time as arrogant youths

gamble and cavort next to a wretched humanity so poor that they go naked with only their heels in their ass in the coldest winter, begging for the most meager sustenance in the middle of so much alimentary abundance and acoustic mayhem.³² Meanwhile, festive brigades with lances and bells (*Coll'aste in man, forniti di sonagli*) greet their chosen lords as they ride out to the city's bridges to stage mock battles, where many end up in the river. Soaking in the frigid air, they return to the piazza, adorned in borrowed finery, where they dine at others' expense to the sound of trumpeters (*sonatori di stormenti*) playing and troubadours (*cantatori*) singing a genre of songs to which this poem most probably belonged.³³ The poem's end highlights the fleeting nature of the reign of these ironic kingdoms and their elected emperors, whose tenure is over as soon as their purses are emptied. He describes how they would soon be drinking water and eating dried bread, lamenting the memory of wine, capons, and partridges. The final image is a conventional moral warning about how the ritual rise and fall of such artisan brigades is governed by the rotating wheel of Fortune and its ceaseless cyclical caprice, a satirical reference to the inevitable triumph and tragedy Fortune bestowed in much grander epic narratives of a much wider cultural geography.

Pucci is able to enliven the square in a way that allows the reader to imagine the dynamic bodily experience of premodern civic spaces. The *mercato* represents a social and political space overabundant in goods, people, sounds, smells, and riotous activity (figures 18, 19). This jumbled acoustic phenomenon evokes the lively oral culture of a premodern city, destined as it was to be recited, sung, copied, or repeated in the city's public squares. All the messy elements that constitute urban society found a voice amid the chaotic architecture of commercial exchange. It was a poem representing one type of auditory environment through its performance in the context of another, making the soundscape both the subject and the medium of the narrative itself. Such a soundscape, however, was in direct contrast to the absolute social harmony invoked by the myth of Amphion. Instead of a single author commanding men in unison, Pucci represented the market as an expansive social space that enveloped the full range of urban heterogeneity. That heterogeneity is expressed as the sound of commercial exchange competing with the acoustic language of daily social relations, from the wealthy to the naked and entirely destitute.

< figs. 18 and 19 >

In describing the market, Pucci concentrates on the seasonal provisioning of foodstuffs, the abundance of production and consumption, and the pursuit of meals both grand and meager to evoke both olfactory and taste sensations. But it is primarily the noisy activities of competitive trade and commerce, fraud and physical scuffles, that inspire him to set the market to the

rhythms of verse. In light of these coarse and at times questionable activities, it is difficult to discern just what it was that Pucci found so beautiful and compelling about the Florentine Mercato Vecchio. The apparent chaos at first appears to completely undermine his claim for its paramount beauty. Pucci lived at a time before beauty could exist as an aesthetic quality based on the solely formal qualities of things, and this may help to explain the apparent contradiction between his hyperbolic claims and his dissonant description, where exaggeration, parody, and caricature are in play throughout. Such a reading of the poem in historical terms, taking seriously but not literally what it tells us about its times, is a productive way of gaining perspective on street life in the early modern city, where the absence of sustained popular media resources obscures the vitality of daily life. Although a literary construction, narratives like this one performed the critical task of staging how—in grotesque or comic terms—urban society came to terms with its relationship to and the part it played in constructing the urban environment. Their importance, therefore, for historical investigation cannot be overstated. They do not give rise to a history of facts so much as generate a representation of historical experience, where attitudes and assumptions become the subject of ridicule, mock praise, and biting critique. Urban stories, ones like this one that were likely told and retold, enable us to understand the city as a socio-spatial construction in ways that may not correspond to the traditional domains of architecture and urban history but were integral components of the construction and functioning of the built environment.

Historically, the Mercato Vecchio figured prominently in the daily lives of Florentines. Legally, it was amongst the oldest and most important public spaces of the city.³⁴ It was also the geographic center, the site of the Roman forum, the zone of prostitution, and the heart of daily social life. To Pucci, this piazza was more valuable, more dignified, more esteemed, and more precious than any other piazza.³⁵ The beauty of the square came not from its geometric or visual harmony but from its discordant *functional virtue*. In order to support this claim, let me return to Pucci's claim for beauty at the beginning of the poem, noted above: "But these piazzas and others, if I clearly discern, are nothing like the fruits and beauty of the one that gives government to the people."³⁶ Although it is rather awkward in English, I have translated "dà governo" here literally as "gives government" to emphasize the political allusions that Pucci is embedding in the functioning of the market. However translated, it is clear that the author is referring to some kind of regulatory power that exists as an attribute of the square's physical dimensions, an attribute that has real effects on the behavior of those acting within it. This idea leads directly to a fundamental debate about the coercive potential of architectural or urban design to elicit certain kinds of behavior and regulate urban relations. It begs the question of how much our physical environment determines our social identities and how much agency or power inhabitants have to

resist, transform, or manipulate their surroundings by impressing themselves, physically and psychologically, upon them.

This is why I believe “dà governo” is a remarkable statement. What exactly does Pucci mean when he declares that the most beautiful square in the world literally “gives government” to the people? Pucci’s claim for the square’s beauty and nourishing power appears at first to be a typical example of the formulaic hyperbole of a Florentine partisan, but it becomes something absolutely mystifying when we find out just what is actually going on there. Beauty in this configuration must be linked not so much to viewing pleasure as to moral action. It is not purely surface delight or compositional unity that makes for a beautiful urban space; it also has to be teeming with movement and voices. It is beautiful because it is a dynamic process rather than a finished product. Not only did the piazza nourish the world, it seems (“Mercato Vecchio al mondo è alimento”), but it also indicated how people ought to behave as a political community because proximity forced people to confront others, to recognize their roles as both actors and audience, to recognize differences through economic exchange, and to make space for both friends and foes. As a result, urban space took part directly in governing the city. Architecture played a didactic role. For Pucci, the piazza’s value as urban space lay in its direct involvement in civilizing urban society through a forced confrontation with social diversity that contained the potential to regulate itself.³⁷ Pucci thus points to a crucial historical link between the city as a series of buildings and spaces and the city as a social phenomenon, between *urbs* and *civitas*.

But Pucci’s claim that the square had the power to order and regulate Florentine society is immediately undermined by the apparent chaos that reigns there. From where does his faith in the civilizing power of social space emerge? What does he hear in the voices of quarreling vendors, the wheezing and puffing of those whose scuffles sometimes lead to blows and brawls, the frenetic trade, fraud, begging, borrowing, stealing, desiring, singing, and storytelling? It is my belief that, at the civic heart of a city whose politics was the result of a robust dialogue of conflict and consensus, universal claims and naked self-interest, Pucci was translating those continual negotiations from the council halls of the state to the forum of public life. In doing so, he displays no romantic sentimentality about civic life in the market, no patronizing moralism toward the petty crimes of a desperate underclass, and no fawning admiration of the elite. On the contrary, he celebrates this diversity. It was precisely the fact that the piazza was the site of open exchange, crowded as it was with the continual arrival of new bodies and products, that gave it its imperfect but effective regulatory power. Everyone belonged there, and everyone had a stake in the functioning of the market. Even the female peasants bringing milk and fowl from their wretched dwellings among clumps of mud became “neighbors” (*vicini*) to Florentine citizens

when they arrived in the square.³⁸ This was not a casual concept but one loaded with meaning. The term “neighbor” carried with it powerful associations within the nexus of Florentine social relations: relatives (*parenti*), friends (*amici*), neighbors (*vicini*).³⁹ Such terms were never neutral. Neighbors were part of an extremely ritualized mode of behavior, and access to such categories of social relations was constantly negotiated in space and time. Class differences were not erased in the square—they were set in stark relief—but no one was excluded and everyone had a role, however detestable or pitiful, to play.

Written by someone who would have been present at, if not directly participating in, official political debates, the poem could also function as an ironic critique of Florentine political practices. Although Florentine republican rhetoric was universalistic in its claims to represent the people of Florence, Pucci would have been fully aware of how the city’s political culture excluded certain groups (magnates, women, foreigners, the poor) legally, while contending forces sought endlessly to expand and contract access to real political power.⁴⁰ Pucci’s market, however, countered this with an idea of public space that forced the confrontation and recognition with, if not the love of, all manner of social groups. The “beauty” this offered might be a grotesquely ironic mirror to the ideals of republican universalism and its intimate interest in regulating economic activities. It was clearly an ambivalent beauty, but one that could exist in real space, a space that could tolerate human heterogeneity. The piazza was flexible enough to accommodate this and even minimize extreme violence. A murder would stain the square’s beauty, but it could be isolated by the stubborn force of the practices of daily life to persist in spite of it. Instead, idling bodies still sing as the persistent rhythms of daily life counter and literally drown out the eruptions of periodic violence, recalling the civilizing power of music. Such beauty was never morally pure but was, nevertheless, profoundly resilient. Pucci displays a deep sympathy for the weaknesses of his fellow compatriots, and he understands how even tricksters deserve a place at the table. In its stubborn refusal to separate the entire range of social classes living cheek by jowl or even distinguish between bankers and gamblers, the mercato provided the space not for some misplaced social cohesion but for the expansive inclusiveness of a more chaotic and heterogeneous civic belonging. Whatever the chaos of the piazza, the more people who inhabited it, the more effective its civilizing power became, the more “good government” it produced through the interaction of bodies and space. This is evident from the way the piazza acted as a site for the economic exchange of food, goods, and accumulation of profit, but also as the place of social and ritual exchange between diverse social groups—both the naked and the elegantly dressed. Both of these creative acts were in a constant state of aggressive tension that was representative of the desire of late medieval Italian communal governments to legislate a morally upright, beautiful, unencumbered, and productive city in

which they were, inevitably, forced to confront the unavoidable task of actually negotiating the opacity of urban spaces, filled as they were with the interests and belongings of endlessly contentious rival groups.

Although public spaces were meant to be physically accessible, they were filled with legislation. Pucci's market represents the concrete corollary to the forces and laws that sought to control the activities that occurred there.⁴¹ This desire to regulate space, however, which pervades the statutes of the city and its guilds, seems to lie dormant in the background of the poem. Nowhere in the poem does the voice of authority impose itself explicitly upon the vigorous competition between sellers, beggars, brawlers, strollers, and vagrants of both genders and all classes. In fact, it could also be read as an overturning of legislative order, beginning as it does during Carnival, when such ritual disruptions of hierarchical authority performed their social critique. Order, such as it exists, seems to come, literally, from the ground up and the collective experience of the cycles of social and religious seasons, distinguished and unified by the changing landscape of food. Such experience was embedded in the square itself and acknowledges that the laws of fortune were far more powerful and inevitable than any drafted by mortal hands.

Pucci's idea of the cacophonous beauty of the piazza dispels any nostalgia one might have for a lost sonorous past represented by the harmonic construction of Thebes in the myth of Amphion, but it maintains the centrality of sound in the production of space. Urban pandemonium embodied the antithesis of Amphion's carefully organized city. The dissonance between the claims for universal beauty and the boisterous and chaotic social exchanges that characterized the market would have generated a great deal of sympathy and derision on the part of listeners. All of the noisy ebullience and unruly mischief described would have resonated, literally, with the walls of the city to create a dialogue with the very audiences who would have recognized and participated in such activities. When performed in Florence, the poem would have offered a narrative self-portrait of the most dissonant acoustic practices of those it addressed, and would likely have received the very exuberant responses it describes. Various elements of the poem generate a complex series of relations with the acoustic dimensions of the city. Nowhere is the market visually described. Instead it is anchored in space by reference to the four churches that sit at each corner, at the intersections of the streets that connect the market to the rest of the city and the sources of its wares (figure 20).⁴² These, literally, are the properties of the square, disposed of in two lines, not seen, but heard or felt (*senito*). Ironically, this piazza has left the weakest visual imprint on the rhetoric and representation of Florentine urban space. Though it was destroyed in the grand urban renewal projects of the nineteenth century, its legacy remains in various fragments: from meticulous planimetric reconstruction of the dense urban properties

that surrounded it, to nostalgic absence in the photographic documentation of its demolition, to linguistic memorialization in the neoclassical inscription that celebrates modernity's brutal triumph over the squalor of a nineteenth-century urban slum (figures 21–23).⁴³

< figs. 20-23 >

The subplot of the competing youth brigades upon which the poem ends is an important element of how urban space was the product not only of policies but also of use. As the youth brigades move in and out of the square, desiring and consuming its products, the market space becomes a festive space, reconfigured in its symbolic import as the site where rituals of social bonds were enacted. The neighborhood confraternities that participated in these rituals were made up of artisans who were not part of the city's elite but who participated in the mock formation of territorial kingdoms throughout the city, over which they would rule at certain festive occasions. They would lay claim to their neighborhood by processing through it to ritually mark its borders, where they would often fight battles with rival gangs. And they would organize contests and meals that were paid for by the largesse of wealthy patrons.⁴⁴ Although these brigades would become more formalized and increasingly connected to charity and dependent on the power of dominant families such as the Medici oligarchs of the fifteenth century and the dukes of the sixteenth, losing some of their independent carnivalesque subversion of the political order, Pucci seems to be linking their ritual inversion of the city's power structure to his contention that the social life and spatial configuration of the piazza had a part to play in governing the city. In other words, their upending of social hierarchies was an important satirical disruption of the established order. The market, therefore, becomes an ironic microcosm of, reflection of, and corrective to the larger political organization of the city.

The piazza described by Pucci literally refuses to be silenced. It was both the landscape *and* the soundscape of the piazza that allowed him to analyze space, to load it with meaning and emotions, and to make it available for some kind of "aesthetic" appreciation. None of its sounds were meaningless; all formed part of a larger auditory landscape, an urban sensual dialogue, whose rhythms formed a certain type of poetics of space, a collective expression of the tension of the conflicting sounds that characterized the early modern piazza. Architectural historians are often trained to search for Amphion's elusive city of Thebes and actively attempt to clear away the historical debris that stubbornly clings to Pucci's market square. So we naturally look to authorities, planners, intellectuals, and architects to explain the visual rhetoric of beautiful walls and stones. But such tendencies cannot explain the tumultuous beauty that Pucci felt and heard more than he saw in the disorder of the market square.

I was forced to confront this tendency directly by a chance interdisciplinary encounter, where I was asked about the disastrous state of Florence's current central market square (figure 24). Naturally, I reacted with horror at the sight of this daily amassing of organic and industrial waste. I exhibited the proper disdain toward the clutter and refuse typical of marketplaces, the unwelcome intrusion of motorized vehicles, signs, bodies, and mechanized noises that obscured the beauty of *my* ideal of Florence and destroyed the "public" experience of dignified historical urban space. However, it was that very clutter that, to a social geographer, represented the last spasms of an active communal life in a city choking on its own artistic past.⁴⁵ The mess of the market was the last public defense against the encroaching private terraces of restaurants catering to the needs of tourism rather than those of a vanishing local community. I realized that the construction of the tourist's gaze, the architectural historian's gaze, and my gaze were all colluding to deny space for the necessary aspects of urban disorder that were fundamental to the production of those spaces in the first place. And so I realized that premodern Florentines, like Pucci, already understood this dialectic of *urbs* and *civitas* and how the antagonism between them, between bodies and buildings, was the engine of social life.

< fig. 24 >

Pucci, however, does not seem to have been fazed by the contradiction implied by these two images of the city and would never have felt compelled to resolve it. Cities were always defined precisely by the ability of citizens to exist simultaneously in an imperfectly functioning social and architectural configuration *and* by an imagined ideal society of perfect socio-spatial proportions. The interpretations of the Amphion myth in commentaries on Dante's *Divine Comedy* show how the building blocks of a city were stones *and* men, imbued with reason by the rhetorical force of Amphion's voice. Reason induced people to create an urban community whose values were reflected in its concrete surroundings. Walls became symbols; ideas became concrete building material. One's sensorial experience of the city was always both a physical and a mental exercise because Amphion's voice, the power of his words, was permanently linked to the walls with which the city was built.

Pucci understood this. It did not matter how the *mercato* was built. Its power lay in the way it reflected and imposed, however distortedly, a common, if messy, idea of urban justice. The civilizing power of architecture was the result of the interaction between an urban dialogue and an urban spatial structure. The rhetoric of words was transformed into the rhetoric of stone, and the materiality of stone was transformed into the materiality of words.⁴⁶ The one was the symbolic alter ego of the other, where walls became human bodies and civic dialogue became urban design. What bound these modes together was sound; the power of speech, both the

sweetness of a single voice and the confusion of many. Sonic harmony created a spatial one, motivating bodies, inspiring minds, all of which resonated off the very stones of the city. Words uttered had both meaning and a spatial echo. Sounds, in the urban environment, did not completely disappear at the moment of their pronouncement. They reflected off walls and left traces in texts, maintaining, imperfectly perhaps, the memory of the dialogue that arranged those stones in the first place and continued to resound within them.

In Florence, the dialectic between order and disorder, harmony and dissonance, played out within and around the official soundscape that successive regimes constructed, primarily through the ringing of bells. This daily acoustic exchange continually overlaid Amphion's rhetorical voice onto the city through the repetitive modulations of an official messaging system that marked time and defined the borders of the city's legal, moral, and political jurisdictions. This acoustic regime remained relatively stable over throughout the period of the republic, from the late thirteenth to the early sixteenth century, developing only in increasing complexity as time progressed and bells were added, lost, and recast. These were sounds that were intimately connected to the daily lives of Florentines, and they were, by and large, the objects of civic devotion. They gave structure to the urban environment through a dialectic of repetition and variation that was a fundamental element of the city's overall design. This particular aspect of the acoustic art of city-building lies between the two opposing but ultimately complementary practices that Pucci expresses: one ideal, transcendent, and harmonic, the other rather concrete and noisy. And although this investigation into the urban soundscape primarily concerns Florence, the development of a regular acoustic regime of mass communication, of marking time and prayer in the early modern city, was a near-universal phenomenon in the Christian West.

A Bell, a Belltower, a Rock, and a Hammer

As a way of introducing the main themes and interpretive methods used in this study, I would like to use the following four narratives—two historical and two literary—to illustrate the tension generated between competing ideas about harmony and discord, order and disorder, in the aural landscape. They foreground who had access to the constituent elements of the city's soundscape, when such access was granted or denied, and what constituted the proper character of the sounds that one heard in the city. They are also representative of the ways in which the soundscape can be excavated by attention to both the historical record and narrative invention, how the mechanisms of one can reflect and complement those of the other. Subjecting both to a representational analysis is not part of a search for historical facts, of piecing together fragments of the soundscape in a process of historical reconstruction. Such an investigation and reconstruction will be dealt with in the next chapter. Instead, the interpretive strategy introduced

below reveals attitudes, desires, and assumptions about the meaning, experience, and critical importance of the ability to make noise and the power to interpret sound. As such, one finds that political conflicts and narrative humor share a great deal of similar attitudes, desires, and assumptions.

First, the stories.

A Bell

On the 6th of April, 1498, the popular Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola, who would soon be burned as a heretic very near to where he now stood, was waiting in the rain for his Franciscan challenger, Giuliano Rondinelli, to join him in the city's main square, the Piazza della Signoria (figures 25, 26).⁴⁷ Growing tension in Florence between Savonarola's supporters and his enemies had led to open clashes, and so a trial by fire had been arranged. It was the result of competing claims of prophetic status in which there was much at stake for the millenarian prophet and radical political reformer's claims about his own divine mission and the city's eschatological destiny. In front of large crowds of their supporters, both friars were supposed to prove their own sanctity, and the other's falsity, by walking unscathed through fire. In the end, Rondinelli failed to appear, and so Savonarola tried to claim victory by forfeit. But in a city intensely divided between his partisans and his enemies, Savonarola was forced to return to his convent of San Marco with an armed government escort, surrounded by his brothers, who had to protect him from many who felt tricked out of a good miracle. The next day, Palm Sunday, an angry mob set siege to San Marco and threatened to kill this false prophet (figures 27, 28).

< figs. 25-28 >

As the mob charged into the square, the terrified Dominicans rang the convent's great bell, known as the Piagnona, or "wailer," in a desperate call for help (figure 29). Savonarola placed his faith in the bell's power to initiate the city's system of civic alarm and bring the force of authority to the square. But as Lauro Martines writes, "the minutes passed, then the hours, and no help came."⁴⁸ Having previously smuggled arms into the convent for just such an event, the friars put up stiff resistance, firing arquebuses propped on pulpits as Savonarola prayed hopelessly at the altar. Under threat of the wholesale destruction of their convent by an angry and hostile government, they finally surrendered.

< fig. 29 >

Trials ensued, and Savonarola, along with two of his closest aides, was condemned and burned as a heretic in the Piazza della Signoria. His writings were banned, San Marco's great library was confiscated, and the convent was shut down. However, what was also at stake was the right to make noise. Fearing even to speak, Savonarola's supporters were left with the sound of the bell as the only means left to defend their message. The government had already decreed that Savonarola had to leave the city, and the streets were increasingly under the control of violent forces. According to Martines, the government decided not to send in its own militias, since they could not be trusted to side against the friars of San Marco. Such political manipulation of the crowd undermined the very power of Pucci's piazza to counter extreme violence with the culture of daily life. Savonarola's supporters were too frightened to answer the Piagnona's call for help. That call for help would also be the last sound it made before it too was condemned by the authorities. Under pressure from anti-Savonarolan forces and in an atmosphere of backlash against the extreme piety of Savonarola's regime, the *signoria* (the city's executive council) ordered that the Piagnona was to be sent into exile. It was taken down from its tower, paraded through the streets of Florence to the taunts and jeers of the crowd, whipped along the way by the city's hangman, and finally banished to the Franciscan convent of San Salvatore al Monte, outside the walls of the city.⁴⁹

A Bell Tower

The Benedictine monastery known as the Badia stood just across from the city's courthouse, now known as the Bargello (figure 30). Founded in the tenth century, the Badia, which was originally built at the edge of the Roman city walls, was intimately enmeshed in civic politics. In 1307, levying a new tax on religious institutions to help pay for military operations probably sounded like a good idea to the cash-strapped Florentine government.⁵⁰ But when city officials arrived to collect the tribute, the insulted monks of the Badia closed their doors and rang their bell in alarm. Naturally, an angry crowd of poor workers, local ne'er-do-wells, and general ruffians (*malandrini*), supported by wealthy elites and angry merchants, rose up in anger and chased away and robbed the hapless officials. The government finally agreed to cut the tax in half, but not before it also decided to cut the monastery's bell tower in half, while a group of thugs sacked and burned parts of the abbey (figure 31). Politics as usual in late medieval Florence.

< figs. 30 and 31 >

A Rock

In the 1568 edition of the *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, Giorgio Vasari recounts an episode from the life of the fifteenth-century painter Sandro Botticelli. A cloth weaver moves in next door to the artist and proceeds to assemble no less than eight looms inside his home. When they are set in motion, they create a tremendous clamor that “not only deafened poor Sandro with the noise of the treadles and the movement of the frames, but shook his whole house, the walls of which were no stronger than they should be, so that what with the one thing and the other he could not work or even stay at home.”⁵¹ Botticelli’s repeated entreaties for him to stop fall on deaf ears because the weaver asserts that “he both would and could do what he pleased in his own house.”⁵² Having failed to persuade his neighbor with reason, Botticelli concocts a cunning plan. He hoists an enormous rock onto the roof of his house and balances it on the wall that separates him from his noisy neighbor (figure 32). This wall is higher and less stable than his neighbor’s, so much so that the rock threatens to crash through his neighbor’s roof and destroy his looms at the slightest tremor of the wall. To the terrified weaver’s subsequent protests, Botticelli responds by quoting his own words, claiming that he too, could and would do whatever he pleased in his own house. The story ends with Botticelli having successfully compelled the weaver to “come to a reasonable agreement and to be a good neighbor to Sandro.”⁵³

< fig. 32 >

A Hammer

In a novella written by Franco Sacchetti at the end of the fourteenth century, Dante Alighieri is asked by a young knight of the Adimari family, to make a public endorsement on his behalf with the city’s executor in order to get him out of paying a fine assessed against him. Dante agrees to put in a good word and sets off to the palace (figure 33). But something strange happens along the way: not far from the Badia, in the district of San Piero, he hears something that he does not like at all (figure 34). Inside a workshop, a blacksmith is merrily singing Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, using its rhythmic cadences to regulate the striking of his hammer. But he mixes up the verses and generally hacks its syntax to pieces, so much so that Dante feels it as a personal injury (figure 35).⁵⁴ Without saying a word, he enters the shop and starts throwing the blacksmith’s tools (*masserizie*), one by one, onto the street, first his hammer, then his tongs, then his scales.⁵⁵ When the blacksmith protests, Dante retorts, “If you don’t want me to break your things, don’t ruin mine!” How, the blacksmith wonders, could he have ever broken this mad stranger’s tools? Dante replies, “You are singing the poem, but you are not reciting it the way I wrote it. I have no other trade, and you are destroying it for me.”⁵⁶ Stupefied, the blacksmith gathers together his belongings in silence and returns to work.

< figs. 33-35 >

As he continues to the executor's palace, Dante, still rankled by the incident, begins to think about how the knight would ride through the city on a horse, his legs so widely extended that those passing him on the street would be forced to turn back, or, with their backs against the wall, suffer the indignity of polishing the tips of his shoes as he rode past (figure 36). As a result, instead of making a statement supporting his "friend," he denounces him for the crime of "riding widely" (*cavalcare largo*). The executor agrees that this is a grave crime indeed, and so, instead of having the fine against Adimari dismissed, Dante succeeds in having it doubled.

< fig. 36 >

Four Stories

In all of these stories—two of which are fragments of larger historical events, and two of which are fictionalized accounts of real-life Florentines—the central theme around which the narrative hinges is the relative power to communicate with the city, to silence the voices and sounds made by others, and to control crucial elements of the city's soundscape and the meaning such sounds conveyed. Therefore, a closer look at what was at stake for Florentines in confronting the noises, and the silences, they encountered can also provide ways of navigating the thorny relationship between historical events and literary narratives. This is not to collapse the distinction between the two, but to listen to what they say about the urban acoustic "eventscape" in which they were produced, the audiences to which they were addressed, and the different but related strategies of representation that were put into play, whether in antagonistic political circumstances or in contemplative narrative exploration.

The Bell Tower

The bell tower of the Badia was an important acoustic transmitter in Florence and was deeply embedded in the daily sonic rhythms of prayer and work. Each Florentine day began with a complex series of exchanges between the towers of the Badia, the Bargello, and the Palazzo Vecchio—monastery, judicial courts, and legislative councils (figure 37). The Badia marked the early morning prayers that led to a dawn mass with a series of rings, which was answered, according to statutes, by six muted rings of the bell of the Leone in the Palazzo Vecchio. The bell of the *podestà*, housed in the Bargello, would then begin with a triple ring sequence that was answered by the bell of the popolo in the Palazzo Vecchio. This extended series of acoustic exchanges between sacred and secular institutions legally marked the beginning of the day.

< fig. 37 >

When the government ordered the destruction of the Badia's tower in 1307, it literally silenced the monastery, prohibiting it not only from calling for help in times of crisis but from communicating with its community, and most importantly, marking time by ringing the canonical hours of prayer. Before mechanical clocks, the daily rhythms of monastic life were amplified by bells, so that their salutary sound encompassed the entire city. In exile, Dante placed this sound deep within the Florentine psyche and far back into the distant past. In *Paradiso*, canto XV, his great-great grandfather, Cacciaguida, laments the moral decline of the future city by remembering the past through the sound of the bell that marked the canonical hours of terce and nones from the campanile of the Badia (figure 38):

Florence, within her ancient ring of walls

That ring from which she still draws terce and nones,

sober and chaste, lived in tranquility.⁵⁷

< fig. 38 >

For Dante, the sound of a distant golden age still echoed in the sound of a bell ringing more than two centuries later. Such a sound excavated the traces of the long-demolished ninth- to eleventh-century walls, which had been built on even remoter Roman foundations. In Dante's time, the Porta Santa Maria was likely one of the only concrete reminders of these walls (figure 39). The city at peace—sober and chaste—that lay within those ancient walls of the city was long forgotten as it now spilled out from its original Roman grid into its medieval suburbs (figure 40). The Badia's bell not only dredged up the memory of a more peaceful urban community, it also defined the sober and chaste space that community inhabited by overlaying it onto the present. What is remarkable is the way in which Dante associated ancient Florentine virtue with a particular space and a certain sound. Not only did the bell of the Badia mark time throughout the day; the sonic rhythms that emanated from its campanile also excavated the memory of a privileged urban territory. Dante had belonged to this community, and the proximity of his family's properties to the Badia made the sound much more present in the silence of his exile (figure 33).

< figs. 39 and 40 >

Dante's city was a complex hierarchy in which bells defined limits and borders even when the actual structures, those city walls, were no longer there to guarantee them. They created space much more fluidly and convincingly than the complicated legal language needed to define the city's political jurisdictions. Its spatial signification was much more immediate and its temporal and spatial topography more easily apprehended. Bells enacted rituals of inclusion against borders of exclusion. It was precisely this space, the ancient urban core, that guaranteed, for Florentines such as Dante, a space which "was the proper setting for the enactment of honorable civic life" against the morally debased spaces of outlying neighborhoods.⁵⁸ It betrayed a certain anxiety about those who dwelt on the periphery by attempting to separate them off audibly from the ideal memory of the center. This was so even though Florentines of all classes, rich and poor, lived throughout the areas enclosed by the final circuit of walls. Dante was calling on the purging power of the Badia's bell to rid the center of any unwanted elements, even if it meant cleansing it through a type of sonic nostalgia.⁵⁹

One such unwanted element may have been the concentration of industrial wool production in the very area of the city in which Dante lived. Around the area of San Martino, which was right next to his beloved Badia, wool workers toiled to the sound of a very different bell (figure 41). Its distinct sound would have linked this centrally located but economically isolated zone to the other peripheral zones of wool production that surrounded Dante's chaste and sober center. It would have created an entirely different symbolic territory even within the jurisdiction of the bell of the Badia. These bells were part of an elaborate mechanism that attempted to circumscribe the urban experience of subjected workers. They represented an acoustic marginalization of one kind of labor located in spaces within the more general rhythm opening and closing workshops that sounded from the Badia. Therefore, the sound of a bell could dissociate a space from its own location and set it adrift in space as part of a network of socio-spatial marginalized zones of segregated labor. The persistence of *terce* and *nones* was the power of the bell to evoke the memory of a wished-for past, while at the same time it excluded other spaces created by the sound of other bells or superseded and redefined the spaces created by those very same bells ringing for other reasons.⁶⁰

< fig. 41 >

For Dante, the memory contained within the sound of the bell gave it the power to purge the present of the kind of fractious violence that led to his exile in 1301 and was still plaguing a besieged regime in 1307 that was struggling to construct a civic acoustic landscape as part of its efforts to maintain political control. When the government ordered the destruction of the Badia's tower, it not only silenced the monastery but also created a temporal void (figure 42). Dante's

early commentators consistently pointed out that the Badia, in addition to marking all the hours of the day, also regulated labor, marking the opening and closing of workshops throughout the city. Therefore, the city awoke, went to work, ate, prayed, and returned home, all to a familiar sound that bound them together in space, sanctified their labor, and brought the past vividly to life. Perhaps it was this bond that the government tried to break when it ordered the destruction of the tower. Silencing such an important aural landmark would have had dire consequences for the city's daily schedule and the government's ability to effectively organize its citizens and transcend the lure of rival factions. But the ruling regime, which was struggling to lay its own acoustic foundations, would have held different associations when they heard the bell ring out of sequence; for them it would have brought back bitter memories of bloody conflict against Dante's political allies less than a decade before.

< fig. 42 >

As historian Robert Davidsohn has written, bells functioned as the primary medium of mass communication in an age before printing. It is not surprising, therefore, that the regime had spent enormous sums on the casting of a giant bell that was completed that very year. Weighing in excess of sixteen thousand pounds, it waited in the piazza while the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio was being completed. The new civic soundscape was still under construction, and the Badia may have been a casualty of exuberant mismanagement, because the new bell was destined to bring the entire expanded urban polity together within a single jurisdiction, uniting ancient center with periphery and dismantling the ancient boundaries over which the Badia guarded. However, by 1310, the aural confusion of a silenced and much loved bell, the glaring absence of a suitable tower to showcase the new one, and the extensive rebuilding campaign of the monastery may have played a part in the government's change of heart as well as the assumption that this sound belonged to the larger communal soundscape of the whole city. The Council of One Hundred (*consiglio dei cento*) set aside funds to help the Badia rebuild its bell tower in 1310 (completed in 1330), and a new bell was cast in 1313 (figures 43, 44).⁶¹

< figs. 43 and 44 >

This architectural resolution hints at what would become, I believe, an acoustic strategy on the part of the Florentine government. It also speaks to the complicated relationship between successive popular governments and the Benedictines of the Badia. When councilors were being harassed by their political foes, the monks had rented them space to hold their councils in 1285. In the same year, the commune required the monks to rebuild their church so that its decrepit state did not embarrass the newly rebuilt city courts across the street. Conversely, in 1298 and

again in 1301, the commune threatened to drive a street right through the heart of the Badia to connect the civic grain market (which had been appropriated from the monks in 1240) to the Bargello, a move that would have required the total demolition of the bell tower (figure 45). After the government was forced to pay restitution for initial demolitions in 1301, its conciliatory mood in 1310 is understandable.⁶² However, the decision to help the monks rebuild their tower signals an alternative strategy that harnessed the inherent unifying power embedded in the sound of bells. Instead of silencing them, the government instead amplified their sound. When the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio was finally completed in 1330, the daily morning sonic exchange between regime and monastery, which punctuated the entire day, represented a hard-won political lesson. Instead of the usual antagonistic policies of urban planning through architectural demolition, the government used sound not to challenge the Badia but to harmonize itself with an institution to which Florentines felt a strong historical affinity. As a result, the response of the commune's bells to the Badia every morning acknowledged the monastery's integral role in the Florentine soundscape, signaled the transition from sacred to secular authority, and sonically dramatized the unity of church and state (figures 46, 47).

< figs. 45-47 >

The Hammer

By the time Dante the author was transformed by Franco Sacchetti into Dante the character, around the 1390s, the civic soundscape had fully integrated itself into the gaps in between the ecclesiastical ringing from both the cathedral and the Badia, carefully orchestrating ancient and new sounds. What the regime had learned was that bells were better at uniting people than dividing them, and that the future prosperity of the city could be bound to its past glory through the careful orchestration of ancient and new sounds. Sacchetti picks up on the sensitivity of Dante's ear. By filtering Dante's poem through the discordant voice of a tone-deaf blacksmith, he contrasted the sonorous sound of city's audible past with the horrifying linguistic mutilations that resulted from the unrestricted circulation of stories in the oral culture of the premodern city. Dante's horror on his encounter with the blacksmith was to hear the inevitable distortions caused by the endless copying, rewriting, and retelling to which popular texts were always subject (figure 48). The implication is that the smith was not reciting from the *Commedia* precisely, but was singing versions of it that he had heard in the piazza by *cantatori* who would continually reinterpret stories as they performed them. Heard more than it was read, the blacksmith's debased version of the *Commedia* was the result of the unregulated soundscape of Florence at the threshold of the Renaissance.

< fig. 48 >

At first glance, Dante's chance aural encounter with the blacksmith appears to bear no relation to the framing narrative of the story nor to provide the basis for Dante's sudden change of mind about the wayward knight. At the turn of the fifteenth century, Sacchetti was using Dante and his poetry as a means to explore the complex class relationships in which wealthy, nonelite guildsmen, that fluid class of merchants, bankers, and judges, tried to distinguish themselves from both violent upper-class clans and the less affluent and more numerous lower guildsmen, like blacksmiths, who were legally enfranchised but did not participate directly in the large textile and international financial sectors that drove the Florentine economy. This context put Dante in a rather awkward position. Comparing his own *métier* to that of a metalworker, Dante protests against the debasement of one type of work by its acoustic contamination by another. The text is explicit about how the blacksmith was singing the poem just like a street performer. He was reciting verses he heard in the piazza by professional singers who would create a shared community by continually reinterpreting stories as they performed them, "experiment with additions and variations, improvise and insert digressions," as they adapted to different audiences.⁶³ In Florence, as Dale Kent has documented for the early fifteenth century, the piazza San Martino, which was located in front of the now-reoriented church, was the principal site of such storytelling (figure 49). But those additions and variations were tearing Dante apart. The personal injury he felt was caused by the loss of control over the medium through which he established his identity as a writer and citizen. Sacchetti was posing the question about how much control an author ought to have—even from the grave—over the consumption and distribution of his work and whether the reading and listening public had a right to adapt such texts to its social needs.

< fig. 49 >

The smith's products, however, were for sale, and although there was a corporate mechanism to set prices, those products ended up in the world of economic exchange. Dante's poem, therefore, by Sacchetti's inference, is not the product of his labor but his tool, the medium through which he expressed his understanding and experience of the public world as a producing individual. It is the means by which he maintains himself, and he had as much right to hold on to it in the way any property holder might, as a particular configuration of words, by virtue of an early idea of what are now known as intellectual property rights.⁶⁴ Anyone could sing it, but there had to be some sort of standard of quality or fealty to the text and its author. Such restrictions would, theoretically at least, fall within the statutory purview of the regulation of labor and control of who could and could not perform their tasks in public spaces. We are left with the image of the

smith, his chest inflated, probably searching for the bellowing force of a true Florentine *motto* (witticism) but only able to silently pick up his things and return to work. He would no longer sing Dante, the narrator tells us, but make do instead with singing the story of Tristan and Lancelot and leave Dante alone.⁶⁵

If the poem was his tool, the problem for Dante was that his medium was a more refined version of the very vernacular language his compatriots were using to mangle it. The public realm in which such stories circulated favored the integrity of the community over the integrity of the text or the meaning the author may have intended. Stories told in the public square were tailored to the immediate surroundings and the social situation at hand, both the *urbs* and the *civitas*. So if Dante could not control the content of his narrative, then perhaps he could claim ownership of its style. It was the manner in which the blacksmith sang it, after all, that so hurt Sacchetti's Dante, and Dante in real life condemned the "hideous speech" of his fellow Tuscans, mired as it was in their own stupidity.⁶⁶ In contrast, he sought to create a more elegant courtly vernacular style that would unite all Italians within a single linguistic community. And the attentive reader would have also enjoyed the multiple layers of irony that resulted from the fact that Sacchetti himself was rewriting in his own idiom a story recounted by the ancient writer Diogenes Laertius in his life of Arcesilaus. Arcesilaus, chastising a dialectic philosopher for his inability to repeat an argument properly, reminds him of Philoxenus, who, hearing a bunch of brickmakers singing his melodies out of tune, trampled on their bricks, declaring, "If you spoil my work, I'll spoil yours."⁶⁷ Sacchetti makes a subtle change to show how intellectual work was relevant not only to philosophical arguments but also to everyday urban experience. He also takes up the ethical question of the proper way to repeat poetic stories. And Sacchetti's readers would have been highly aware of the fact that his own writing style was far closer to the very colloquial idiom of the Florentine street than Dante's ears, both those of the fictional character and historical writer, were so horrified by in the first place. Sacchetti's story, therefore, points to the way in which both class-based identities and aesthetic questions were embedded within public streets and squares through the circulation of competing voices, the particular acoustic imprint of stories people gave voice to.

If the Florentine political class officially included the likes of our blacksmith, then Sacchetti's story also puts into play how an increasingly erudite middle class, the *popolo*, represented by Dante, tried to distance and distinguish itself from both the artisanal class of semiliterate workers, represented by the blacksmith, and the spatial arrogance of upper-class men, represented by the Adimari knight. The young knight, in the fashion of his class, was usurping the space of the commune by the way he rode through it on his horse, wrapping it around himself

as if it were his own private mantle. Sacchetti was likely reflecting upon the Florentine popolo's history as an antimagnate class, precisely when the republic's political leaders, in the wake of the Ciompi revolt in 1378, were closing ranks and creating an increasingly oligarchic regime where fewer middling guildsmen had access to real power. The smith, on the other hand, was participating in the communicative experience of public space. This is the realm that always had the potential, for those who sought to control the message, to corrupt and degrade monologic communication. Notably, Dante does not denounce the blacksmith to the executor for the crime of singing badly (*cantare male*). Instead, this episode triggers in him an awareness of the *knight's* relationship to space. Immediately after confronting the singing blacksmith, he begins to think about the nature of the urban spaces he is walking through: to whom they belonged, how they should be addressed, and the proper means of moving through them. It was, after all, the setting and repository of those badly told stories, and therefore needed to be preserved, controlled, and maintained as much by laws as by social rituals and exchanges.

By placing Dante between two classes—one that appropriated space and one that appropriated texts—Sacchetti complicates Dante's class identity and its relationship upwards to the disenfranchised elite and downwards towards the nonelite ranks of the lesser guildsmen. Both ends of this vertical axis give Dante profound consternation and force him to reflect on the nature of two kinds of "publics." The space-cluttering knight encumbered and hindered public space as a network of movement that was supposed to facilitate trade and its control, while the ear-grating voice of the blacksmith corrupted a text that was part of a public culture of textuality to which, in Sacchetti's narrative world, the blacksmith did not belong. What emerges is a contradiction that illustrates clearly the rhetoric of Florentine republican statutes about public space and the constant desire to co-opt that space for private use by wealthy Florentine citizens. The condemnation of the knight presupposed the uninhibited circulation of bodies in public space, while the condemnation of the blacksmith demonstrated the necessity of obstructing the free flow of information through those very same spaces in order to protect a text that was, in practice, an aural public monument. In the perspective of the narrative, Dante's work inhabited the public square but was always in danger of being mangled and vandalized by the disorderly sonic forces at work there that threatened to turn it into something ugly, unsightly, or, more precisely, something acoustically repellent. In other words, Dante was condemning the privatizing use of space by one class while he sought to privatize the use of the public monument within the proper textual discourses. In both cases, what was at stake was the creation, control, interpretation, and enforcement of public space and the culture of textuality that it supported.⁶⁸

Public streets, squares, and palaces represented the universalizing ideology of the merchant republic, while it was the concrete infrastructure that facilitated economic exchange. They were not the private property of violent upper-class elites, because they were part of a long struggle to organize a merchant city. In fact, arrogant knights such as his widely riding friend disrupted the free movement along public streets that the government was supposed to guarantee (figure 36). “It was the property of the commune that he was usurping” by riding in such a way, Dante tells the executor. “I believe that that to usurp that which belongs to the commune is a very serious crime.” For Sacchetti’s Dante, usurping public space was akin to usurping political power. This was far more annoying than the sad sound of singing blacksmiths. He could hate the blacksmith, but he could not challenge his right to invade public space with the obnoxious sound of his voice. The solution to this problem had to be meted out with cunning and skill, not with legal punishments. He had to educate the smith, however crudely, and *convince* him, through reason or analogy, to change his misguided ways; which brings me to the rock.

The Rock

One could assume that the sonic world of Renaissance Florence was radically different from our own, but the issues that surround the global capacities of sound to transgress the physical barriers that we erect around ourselves persist and can be just as bothersome. They reveal to us how our acoustic horizons are still annoyingly but gratifyingly linked to the experience of the early modern city.

Giorgio Vasari’s anecdote recounts an alleged episode from the biography of the fifteenth-century Florentine painter Sandro Botticelli (figures 50, 51). Since reasoning with the wool weaver failed to resolve the problem, Botticelli resorted to a practical demonstration that taught the weaver a valuable lesson about the relationship between sound, architecture, and urban life. This story, which appears only in the second (1568) edition of the *Lives*, is likely an invention by Vasari. Richard Stapleford points out the striking contrast in Vasari’s historical method between the creation of a persona through invented stories and the more rigorous attribution and criticism of the works of art themselves. In the 1550 edition, he ignores two anecdotes about Botticelli’s sharp wit and his fear of marriage found in the *Anonimo Magliabechiano*, one of Vasari’s sources and much closer to the historical life of the artist.⁶⁹ Instead, he recreates a Botticelli who is wasteful of his time, his talent, and his money by starting the biography with a meditation on negligence of one’s present and future well-being, and ending it with Botticelli’s ignominious descent into poverty and decrepitude. He also seems to have invented a story describing the kind of jokes the artist liked to play, such as denouncing a friend for heresy, which leads to a stinging

rebuke in which his intellectual devotion to Dante is declared to be fraudulent. Vasari judged his work illustrating Dante's *Inferno* a waste of the artist's time and a detriment to his career.

< figs. 50 and 51 >

Botticelli's dissolute character is significantly ameliorated, however, in the 1568 edition. The opening discourse on governing one's life is replaced by a discussion of the artist's early intellectual restlessness, and his shameful death is mitigated by the addition of praise for yet more of his works than in the short epilogue given in 1550. Vasari also introduces two new stories that define his character—the one with the noisy wool weaver, the other about how Botticelli sends an assistant into terrible confusion about what the assistant had actually painted on one of the workshop's famous *tondi*. Both stories help to temper the complete dressing-down he receives for his complete ignorance of Dante. But if this is a fictional tale, what kind of historical knowledge can be drawn from it? Its historical value may lie more in what it says about the relations between space, sound, architecture, and community than in what it may say about Botticelli's life. If we leave aside the problem of disentangling the truth from fabrication about Botticelli's biography, which has long bedeviled art historians of the Italian Renaissance, Vasari's text can become an invaluable source for historical inquiry into the social construction of architecture. In other words, there is a way of reading historical inventions, fabrications, and revisions that forces them to lay bare their culture's preoccupations, anxieties, and modes of interpreting the world. If it sounds like a tall tale, then we may treat it like one. Rather than reading such stories against their grain, why not let them tell us what they want to say?

Botticelli's neighbor mistakenly assumed that the walls of his home represented the absolute boundary between him and the world, where the abstract legal demarcation of space was elided with the sensorial transgression of boundaries. Botticelli's solution is typical of the didactic procedures of the *burle* (cruel practical jokes) that pervade the late medieval and Renaissance novella form, and emphasizes the tight-knit spatial character of dwellings in such an urban agglomeration (figure 21). It also demonstrates by example how sound, though invisible and immaterial, had a profound physical effect on the integrity of architecture. It had the power to make walls vibrate, to penetrate boundaries that separated individuals and link them, however discordantly, through their sensual experience of the city. The expertise of Botticelli, as an artist working in the professional milieu of fifteenth-century Florence, not to mention the artistic ideals of his sixteenth-century biographer, rested in making visible in painting the complex interplay between social relations, literary narratives, biblical truths, and human desires. In this story he is also depicted as having a very subtle understanding of how those relations may have actually played out in the day-to-day urban context. The precariously perched rock made clear how the

noise from the looms penetrated the walls that separated neighbors, reintegrating them into a community whose integrity and well-being could be threatened by ignoring such links and whose spatial demarcations were no less complex and interpenetrating than the artistic compositions of Botticelli's paintings. Walls were never absolute borders, since they always belonged to at least two different spaces at the same time, two different constituencies, or two modes of living that could vibrate in resonance or clash in discord.

Botticelli was able to construct ideal spaces and relationships for the figures in the silent world of his paintings, but he was also keenly aware of the more chaotic sensorial dimensions that governed daily life—although, since this story is likely a fabrication, it reflects much more the narrative desire of Vasari to construct a world and a character that creates a dialogue with his artistic output. And although the cacophony of urban living conditions destroys the ability of the artist's creativity as a thinker, the story does not question the coexistence of manual and intellectual labor. Translated to the domestic sphere, the noise of industry must give way to spaces of contemplation and an understanding of one's acoustic effects on others. The story also dramatizes the way in which the "civilizing" power of architecture that Pucci dramatized was not only a general force but could be manipulated by its inhabitants to harness its didactic power. This forces us to rethink the way in which we analyze the spatial organization of the historical city. Its design was never fixed in time or space in the experience of its inhabitants. Through the necessity of sensorial perception it emerges as a series of more fluid topographies, brought into being, in this case, by sound.

However, by the sixteenth century, within the more erudite world of the emerging discourse of the fine arts, Vasari was also making a distinction between two types of material production that he seems at pains to maintain: between the artisan and the artist, between the manufacture of cloth and the creation of art. Such a distinction would not have been meaningful to the fourteenth-century artistic practices familiar to Pucci. In Vasari's narrative, the world of the artisan is characterized by the clanking and banging of the industrial machines that denied the artist the quiet solitude of creative reflection. Vasari's explicit desire in his *Lives* to situate the three major branches of art—painting, sculpture, and architecture—within the domain of intellectual production is implicitly reinforced by the humorous anecdotes he intersperses into his narrative with no editorial gloss. The weaving of cloth, once the engine that drove Florence's economy and whose product represented the most refined artistic quality, was now represented as an unwanted sonic obstacle to the artistic imagination.⁷⁰ Therefore, the power of sound to disrupt mental labor is marshaled to define the distance between what we now understand as the fine arts, produced by the mind of the artist, and the technical production of luxury goods,

produced by hand of the craftsman, which will enter into the subordinate category of decorative arts.⁷¹

With Vasari, writing a half-century after Botticelli's death, something of the meaningless, alienating modern concept of noise as a purely negative sign seems to be taking shape. However, its status as noise is contingent upon the particular place in which it was heard, and what the person who heard it was trying to do. Botticelli may have been a painter, but his work required a mental effort that was shattered by invasive sounds. According to the legal scholar Melius de Villiers, noise as a nuisance was not mentioned in Roman law but probably would have been covered by the prohibition on discharging unwanted smells in the airspace over a person's private property to the detrimental effect on someone's comfort and well-being. The only specific law pertaining to noise, however, was concerned with preventing professors and students from distracting each other from their studies. Therefore, Vasari's story implies that the sound of the weaver's looms became "noise" precisely when Botticelli became conscious of his *métier* as a thinker.⁷²

What this story implies about architecture in particular is its role as the pivot around which social relations were played out, where communities were separated and bound together, defined and reimagined, where bodies gave meaning to the buildings—literally making them vibrate—through which they defined themselves. Architecture was at the heart of the construction of such social relations, so that interpreting its changing meanings is simultaneously an interpretation of the society whose actions were constantly manipulating its surfaces and transgressing its boundaries. In the example in question, it was the incapacity of architecture to parallel an imagined social transformation that called for the discrete division of art from industry, whose excessive industrial noise was now on display. Botticelli's rock made the destructive potential of certain sounds visible and stands as a reminder to the architectural historian that our carefully constructed analyses of design and urban space are destabilized and could actually be demolished by ignoring their larger sensorial dimensions. In fact, it was the weakness of the wall that allowed Botticelli's rock to make *visible* the destructive potential of certain sounds and positive relationship between silence and mental labor.

This episode also demonstrates how the sources we make use of, such as Vasari's *Vite*, for the interpretation of some of the most sophisticated cultural production of the Italian Renaissance can also give us insight into the street life and street culture of the city, where artist and laborer constantly found themselves in close physical and metaphorical proximity.

The Bell

Which brings us to the silencing of the Piagnona and Savonarola in 1498. His supporters, known as *piagnoni*, variously translated as “wailers” or “weepers,” testify to the centrality of the auditory dimensions of his reform movement’s relationship to the city. Savonarola was an aural failure when he first arrived from Ferrara, with his “weak voice, ungainly gestures, and poor delivery,” not to mention his strange *romagnolo* dialect, which, Dante declared in his treatise on the vernacular, made men sound like women. He was not accustomed to the seasoned and skeptical listeners of a city like Florence, “where the populace looked for a performance and citizens were ready to compare preachers, to criticize, or go to another church” in search of a better spectacle (figure 52).⁷³ And except, perhaps, for a certain unnamed blacksmith, they were probably acute critics of the rhetorical power of storytelling in the piazza. But Savonarola obviously listened to and learned from the sounds of Florence, given that he was ultimately able to gain the loyalty of large crowds of people. His ever-present voice and the frequent peals of the Piagnona became a regular feature of the Florentine soundscape as he attempted to purge the collective soul of the city. It rang to celebrate the bonfires of the vanities, when Florentines offered their “obscene idols, lascivious images, and luxury goods” to the fire under the spell of Savonarola’s zeal.⁷⁴ However, by the time of his fall from grace in 1498, one supporter noted that Savonarola’s opponents did not even allow the piagnoni to speak in the chaos before his execution. The friars were forbidden by government proclamation even to utter Savonarola’s name, to participate in processions, to pray in common, or to sing their favorite hymns; all ways in which they had acoustically marked their presence in the city and through which they made a claim for its urban sanctity. In contrast, the silenced friars had to endure the noise of obscene and insulting songs that their enemies hurled at them throughout Florence.⁷⁵ Their bell, perhaps, was the only voice that remained capable of expressing their solidarity. Unlike the sound that Dante excavated from the past to criticize the factional discord of his present, the sound of the Piagnona failed to unite a city divided between wailers and their enemies, the *arrabbiati* (enraged mad dogs) and the *compagnacci* (rude, ugly companions).⁷⁶ Its parade of shame through the city, the ritual whipping, and the subsequent exile of the bell symbolically marked the silencing of a political and a spiritual movement whose legitimacy and power rested on the frequent sound of the Piagnona. However, the exorcising rituals of humiliation brought to bear on the bell only served to augment its aural power. After ringing a single strike of revenge on the death of the executive prior who orchestrated its exile to the observant Franciscan monastery of San Salvatore (figure 53), it was returned to the Dominicans in 1509 by Pope Julius II with the permission of a much more sympathetic government. By 1529, the Piagnona transcended its partisan past and redeemed itself when it rang to sound the call to liberty, rallying the whole city during the brutal siege of imperial troops fighting for the return of the exiled Medici family (figure 54).⁷⁷

< figs. 52-54 >

When the last Florentine republic fell in 1530 and gave way to the establishment of the principate, the sound of bells of the Palazzo Vecchio suddenly became incongruent with the sonic order of the new state. But after this disastrous defeat and the return of the Medici, the newly “elected” duke, Alessandro de’ Medici, wasted no time in dismantling the soundscape that Florentines had worked so hard to build. One of his first official acts was the removal the great bell of the commune, the Leone, from the tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, an act that both symbolically and collectively punished the city. On October 1, 1532, the Leone was taken down and ritually broken in the piazza before him.⁷⁸ This was the bell that had answered the Badia every morning with six soft strikes. It was also the bell that had called Florentines together, in crisis and celebration, for over two centuries. It was this sound that had called the people to arms—likely on more than one occasion—to chase the Medici from the city as enemies of liberty.⁷⁹ In the words of one contemporary observer, the bell of the councils was taken away so that Florentines could no longer hear the “sweet sound of liberty.”⁸⁰ Its sound was now rendered unnecessary and subversive. Taking away an enemy’s bell, therefore, was a way of rendering certain groups incapable of expressing their religious or political identity.⁸¹

Duke Alessandro most likely knew that as long as the bell was heard, it would remind Florentines of that liberty, and its destruction was an attempt to enforce a collective forgetting. He may have had some success, since the echo of this bell lived on within the vagaries of a silent, unreliable, and depoliticized memory. The sixteenth-century historian Benedetto Varchi wrote that Florentines debated whether the prime motivation to destroy the bell was symbolic or practical, whether Alessandro wanted to silence the memory of republican liberty embedded in its ring, or whether he needed to melt it down to mint coins to pay for the German troops that the emperor had supplied to protect him from that Florentine liberty (figure 55).

< fig. 55 >

Later, the bell would enter into the official collective memory of the city as a means to smooth over the violent transition from republic to duchy. In his history of Florence, Scipione Ammirato recalls a conversation he had with Duke Cosimo I de’ Medici, Alessandro’s successor. He recounts the story of how a Siennese master made it possible, in 1322, for only two men, instead of twelve, to ring the *grande campana del popolo*, inspiring Cosimo to recall that the bell weighed twenty-seven thousand pounds and could be heard for miles around (figure 56).⁸² There is no mention of how his predecessor broke the bell as he broke the republic, melting it down either for the silver it contained or to stop its call for the council of the popolo.⁸³

Relegated to an official, nonpartisan memory of the city's past greatness, the sound of the Leone was now a "living" memory divorced from its ritual destruction, which symbolically excised the analogous memory of the breaking of the Florentine republic from the hope its sound always carried for the creation of a unified and just community.

< fig. 56 >

The increasingly complex system of sonic markers that populated Renaissance Florence was part of a continual struggle of contentious communities and institutions to express and link themselves to the jurisdictions over which they laid claim. Florentines had to be adept at hearing the changing socio-political relations that such sounds represented. All of these stories represent ways in which producing, suppressing, and interpreting the sounds the city made were basic elements of how Florentines carved out spaces within which they imprinted their identities onto the urbs and the civitas. At the micro-level of day-to-day life, Sacchetti could dramatize how Dante learned about the interlaced social and political relations he shared with those above and below him, relations so tangled up with each other that historians have trouble constructing solid boundaries between them. As Botticelli's painfully thin wall reminds us, architectural barriers were as porous as the social boundaries they were erected to maintain and reinforce. Florentines knew this much better than we often do, and were constantly listening to the noises their city made, using them as signposts for navigating, willingly or not, through the multiple, fluid, overlapping, and conflicted topographies with which their city confronted them.

These stories were also immersed within the sonic landscape of a city that was producing some of the most important cultural, intellectual, and scientific monuments of the early modern world. Read against each other, they reveal important historical knowledge about the way in which the urban environment was a lively field of meaningful signs that provided those who listened carefully with the dense raw material for the aural construction and suppression of the identities and relationships that were such important drivers of its dynamic urban culture. But the question remains, how was this soundscape constructed? What were its basic parts, and who determined the nature of its rhythms? And finally, what can we learn by reconstructing the sonic armatures through which Florentines communicated to themselves and the world beyond? Answers to these questions will be pursued in the next two chapters.

Endnotes

1. The thirteenth-century Florentine political philosopher Brunetto Latini defined the city this way in his commentary on Cicero's *De inventione*. See Brunetto Latini, *La rettorica* (Florence:

Galletti e Cocci, 1915), 10. The passage is translated in *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300-1475*, ed. Rita Copeland and I. Sluiter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 762.

2. In the Middle Ages the term *urbs* was usually reserved for the city of Rome, while *civitas* designated cities in general. On this distinction, see Niall Atkinson, "The Republic of Sound: Listening to Florence at the Threshold of the Renaissance," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 16, nos. 1/2 (2013): 59n2.

3. Horace, *Ars Poetica*, in *Satires, Epistles, and Ars Poetica*, trans. H. Rushton Fairclough, rev. ed., Loeb Classical Library (London: W. Heinemann, 1929), 394-401. This is the most extensive reference to the myth and occurs within a discussion of how Amphion and Orpheus civilized men with their music.

4. Raped by Zeus, Antiope had twin sons, Amphion and Zethus, who were raised by shepherds. Amphion became adept at music and was presented with a lyre from Hermes, to which he added three strings to make seven in total. Conquering Thebes was revenge for the twins, whose mother had been imprisoned by its regent, Lycus. After having conquered the city, Amphion played his lyre with such magical beauty that the stones followed him and fitted themselves into place, showing his brother how it was a better aid to building than his own physical strength. See Michael Grant and John Hazel, *Who's Who in Classical Mythology* (London: Routledge, 2002), s.v. "Amphion and Zethus," <http://www.credoreference.com/entry/772866/> (accessed October 23, 2008).

5. Besides Euripides' lost *Antiope*, the Amphion myth appears in P. Papinius Statius, *Thebaid*, in *Statius*, ed. and trans. J. H. Mozley, 2 vols., vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (London: W. Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1928), 9-10; Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Hercules furens*, in *Seneca's Tragedies*, ed. and trans. Frank Justus Miller, 2 vols., vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library 62 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1917), 22.

6. For a discussion of the dynamics of constructing borders and organizing jurisdictions in Florence, see Niall Atkinson, "Architecture, Anxiety, and the Fluid Topographies of Renaissance Florence" (Ph.D. diss., Cornell University, 2009), 41-116.

7. David Friedman, *Florentine New Towns: Urban Design in the Late Middle Ages* (New York: Architectural History Foundation; Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), 201.

8. Alain Corbin, *Les cloches de la terre: Paysage sonore et culture sensible dans les campagnes au XIXe siècle* (Paris: A. Michel, 1994), translated by Martin Thom as *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside*, European Perspectives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), xix.

9. For biographical information on Antonio Pucci, see Domenico Maria Manni, "Notizie storiche intorno ad Antonio Pucci celebre versificatore fiorentino," in *Delle poesie di Antonio Pucci, celebre versificatore fiorentino del MCCC, e prima, della Cronica di Giovanni Villani ridotta in terza rima*, vol. 3, ed. Fra Ildefonso di San Luigi, *Delizie degli eruditi toscani* 5 (Florence: Gaetano Cambiagi, 1774). For his position within Florentine merchant and textual culture, see William Robins, "Antonio Pucci, Guardiano degli atti della Mercanzia," *Studi e problemi di critica testuale* 61 (2000): 29-70; Robins, "Vernacular Textualities in Fourteenth-Century Florence," in *The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity*, ed. Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 112-31. For more general biographical information, see the introduction to Antonio Pucci, *Le noie*, ed. Kenneth McKenzie (Paris: Les presses universitaires de France, 1931).

10. C. Ciociola, "Poesia gnomica, d'arte, di corte, allegorica e didattica: Antonio Pucci," in *Il Trecento*, ed. Marcello Ravesi, *Storia della letteratura italiana* (Rome: Salerno Editrice, 1995), 403.

11. Stephen J. Milner, "'Fanno Bandire, Notificare, et Expressamente Comandare': Town Criers and the Information Economy of Renaissance Florence," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 16, nos. 1/2 (2013): 115, 135. The document recording Pucci's petition to the government to be relieved of his duties as *banditore*, cited by Milner, is published in Salomone Morpurgo, *Antonio Pucci e Vito Biagi, banditori fiorentini del secolo XIV: Dodici strambotti di Luigi Pulci* (Rome: Coi tipi di Forzani, 1881), 13-14.

12. According to Dale Kent, Pucci's *zibaldone* was one of the most popular "manuals" used by street entertainers. See D. V. Kent, *Cosimo de' Medici and the Florentine Renaissance: The Patron's Oeuvre* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 80; Kent, "Michele del Giogante's House of Memory," in *Society and Individual in Renaissance Florence*, ed. William J. Connell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 116.

13. Antonio Pucci, *Libro di varie storie* (Palermo: Alberto Varvaro, 1957). "Anfione fu figliuolo di Giove et marito di Niobe et d'edifichatore della cipta di Tebeed era molto isperto et molto scienziato et coll'aiuto delle iscienze ordinò et fecie quella cipta ispezialmente per la scienza

della musicha però ch'egli et la moglie sonavano et cantavano si dolcemente che secondo i poeti le pietre prese medesimo si moveano et aconciavansi l'una sopra l'altra, et in questo modo murò la cipta." The passage can also be found in Antonio Pucci's autograph "Zibaldone," Biblioteca Laurenziana, Tempi 2, 103r.

14. Pucci, "Zibaldone," 70v and following.

15. Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, ed. Charles Southward Singleton (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 32, 10-12; Pucci, "Zibaldone," 103v.

16. Pucci, "Zibaldone," 103v. "Quelle donne cioè le scienze aiutin così lui nela sua *Commedia*. Ma deli credere non che le pietre si murassono elle medesime, ma che per lo senno suo quella città era guardata, conservata e murata" (Those women, that is to say, sciences, helped him like this in his *Commedia*. However, do not believe that the stones that walled the city by themselves, but by his good judgment that city was protected, preserved, and walled).

17. [Andrea Lanci], *L'ottimo commento della Divina Commedia [Andrea Lanci]: Testo inedito d'un contemporaneo di Dante . . .*, ed. Alessandro Torri, vol. 1 (Pisa: N. Capurro, 1827), 32.10-12.

18. *Commento alla Divina Commedia d'anonimo fiorentino del secolo XIV, ora per la prima volta stampato a cura di Pietro Fanfani*, vol. 1 (Bologna: G. Romagnoli, 1866), 32.10-12.

19. Luciano Scarabelli, ed., *Comedia di Dante degli Allaghieri col commento di Jacopo della Lana bolognese* (Bologna: Tipografia Regia, 1866-67), 32.10-12.

20. *Guido da Pisa's Expositiones et glose super Comediam Dantis, or Commentary on Dante's Inferno*, ed. Vincenzo Cioffari (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974), 32.10-12.

21. After his tenure as bell ringer and then herald, Pucci was responsible for maintaining the acts of the Mercanzia (merchant's tribunal) from 1371 to 1382. See Robins, "Antonio Pucci," 29-30.

22. *Ibid.*, 30-31.

23. Giuseppe Corsi, ed., *Rimatori del Trecento* (Turin: Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese, 1969), 870-71.

I'ho vedute già di molte piazza

per diverse città. . . .

Bella mi par quella de' Perugini
di molte cose adorna per ragione. . . .
Quella di Siena, che si chiama il Campo,
par un catino, e di freddo, di verno,
vi si consuma e, di state, di vampo.

Unless otherwise stated, all the translations of this poem are my own.

24. Ibid.

[N]iente son di frutte e di bellezza
e di cio' ch'a la gente da' governo
appetto a quell ache mi da' vaghezza
di dirne in rima.

Connecting the market's practical role in provisioning the city's material needs with its role in maintaining some kind of political regulation—"a la gente dà governo," literally, "gives government to the people"—makes a provocative statement about how urban order and social communities come into being, and it is with this statement in mind that the following reading of the poem proceeds.

25. Laws forbade carts with wood to be brought to the Mercato Vecchio, except on Saturdays. See ASF, Statuti, 13 (Statutes of the Capitano del Popolo, 1355, in Tuscan translation), fol. 4, 14. Live pigs were banned; see *ibid.*, 4, 17.

26. *Rimatori*, 871. "[D]i raccontarvi con parole preste / Le proprietà che nel Mercato sento." The sensual ambiguity of the term *sentire* (hear, feel, touch) is crucial in constructing the embodied experience of the market.

27. *Ibid.*, 872.

E sempre quivi ha gran baratteria:
contentanvisi molto e barattieri

perchè v'è pien di lor mercatantia,
cioè di prestatori e rigattieri,
tavole di contanti e dadaiuoli,
e d'ogni cosa ch'a lor fa mestieri.

28. Ibid., 872-73.

[V]i stanno trecche:diciam di quelle con parole brutte
che tutto il dì; per due castagne secche
garrono insieme chiamandosi putte . . . vengon le forsette con panieri
di fichi, d'uve, di pere e di pesche
se le moteggi, ascoltan volentieri.

29. Ibid., 873. "Non fu già mai così nobil giardino / come a quel tempo gli è *Mercato Vecchio*,
/che l'occhio e 'l gusto pasce al fiorentino."

30. Ibid., 874.

Gentili uomini e donne v'ha dal lato,
che spesso veggion venire a le mani
le trecche e' barattier c'hanno giucato.
E meretrici v'usano e ruffiani,
battifancelli, zanaiuoli e gaglioffi
e i tignosi, scabbiosi e cattani.

31. Ibid. "E vedesi chi perde con gran soffi / biastimar con la mano a la mascella / e ricever e dar
di molti ingoffi" (And one sees who loses with great wheezing, cursing with their hand grasping
at their jaw, suffering blows and throwing many of their own).

32. Ibid., 874-75.

E talor vi si fa con le coltella
ed uccide l'un l'altro, e tutta quanta
allor si turba quella piazza bella
E spesso ancor vi si trastulla e canta,
però che d'ogni parte arriva quivi
che e' vagabondo e di poco s'ammanta.
E per lo freddo v'ha di sì cattivi
che nudi stan con le calcagna al culo
perche' si son di vestimenti privi
e mostran spesso quel che mostra il mulo;
pescano spesso a riposata lenza
perch'e' ciascun di danar netto e pulo.

33. Ibid., 877-78.

34. The city laid claim to the square as far back as the 1290s, when it declared economic zones were under public or communal jurisdiction. See Paula Lois Spilner, "Ut Civitas Amplietur: Studies in Florentine Urban Development, 1282-1400" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1987), 61-64.

35. Corsi, *Rimatori*, 871. "[S]ì chè d'ogni altra piazza il pregio serra." The term *pregio* connoted economic, moral, and aesthetic value.

36. Ibid. "Ma queste e l'altre, se chiaro dicerno, / Niente son di frutte e di bellezza / e di ciò ch'a la gente dà governo."

37. Leon Battista Alberti makes a similar case when discussing the classical forum as a public space, where the gaze of elders helps to discipline the actions of youths. One of the functions of the piazza, therefore, was to embed sightlines for the disciplinary apparatus of vision. See Leon

Battista Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavernor (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1988), 8.6 (263).

38. Corsi, *Rimatori*, 876.

[Q]uando è 'l tempo, molte contadine

con pentole di latte fanno stuolo.

Per carnasciale capponi e galline,

partendosi di viver tra le zolle, vengono a farsi a' cittadin vicine.

39. On the triad of relatives, friends, and neighbors, see Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, "Parenti, amici, vicini: Il territorio urbano di una famiglia mercantile nel XV secolo," *Quaderni storici* 33 (1976): 953-82. Published in English as "Kin, Friends, and Neighbors: The Urban Territory of a Merchant Family in 1400," in *Women, Family, and Ritual in Renaissance Italy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 68-93. These concepts are elaborated in D. V. Kent and F. W. Kent, *Neighbours and Neighbourhood in Renaissance Florence: The District of the Red Lion in the Fifteenth Century* (Locust Valley, N.Y.: J. J. Augustin, 1982). On friendship in general in Renaissance Florence, see D. V. Kent, *Friendship, Love, and Trust in Renaissance Florence* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).

40. Universality often lay at the very core of idealized conceptions of the commune; see, for one example, Maria Consiglia De Matteis, *La "teologia politica comunale" di Remigio de' Girolami* (Bologna: Pàtron, 1977). The centrality of exclusionary practices in Florentine political life is sketched by Fabrizio Ricciardelli, *The Politics of Exclusion in Early Renaissance Florence*, *Late Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 12 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007). The profound but often permeable character of this exclusion is described nowhere better than in Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Retour à la cité: Les magnats de Florence, 1340-1440* (Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2006). For most of the fourteenth century the breadth or narrowness of the office-holding class remains a meaningful index of real political access; see John M. Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus in Florentine Electoral Politics, 1280-1400* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

41. Florentine statutes have various laws concerning activities in the Mercato Vecchio, as one of the city's principal public spaces. For example, see ASF, Statuti, 13 (Statutes of the Capitano del Popolo, 1355, in Tuscan translation), III, cxiiiij; IV, xliiiij, xlviij. Romolo Caggese, *Statuto del*

Capitano del Popolo degli anni 1322-25, vol. 1 of *Statuti della Repubblica fiorentina*, ed. Giuliano Pinto, Francesco Salvestrini, and Andrea Zorzi (Florence: Olschki, 1999), I, xxvii, xlv; Caggese, *Statuto del Podestà del anno 1325*, vol. 2 of *Statuti della Repubblica fiorentina*, I, xxviii; III, xl; III, lxxi.

42. Corsi, *Rimatori*, 871. "E brevemente dico che son queste: / che quattro chiese ne' suo quattro canti / e 'n ogni canto ha due vie manifeste."

43. The area around the market was part of the planned reconstruction of Florence as the new capital of the Italian nation, which was abandoned when the capital was moved to Rome in 1870. On the destruction and rebuilding of the Mercato Vecchio neighborhood, see Guido Carocci, *Firenze scomparsa: Ricordi storico-artistici* (Rome: Multigrafica, 1979); Carocci, *Il Mercato Vecchio di Firenze: Ricordi e curiosità di storia e d'arte* (Florence: Istituto Professionale Leonardo da Vinci, 1975); Elena Tempestini, Dante Mattani, and Guido Carocci, *Il Mercato Vecchio: Quaranta immagini del centro di Firenze com'era sino al secolo scorso* (Florence: F. Cesati, 1997); Carlo Cresti, *Firenze, capitale mancata: Architettura e città dal piano Poggi a oggi*, Documenti di architettura 86 (Milan: Electa, 1995); Luciano Artusi and Vincenzo Giannetti, *"A Vita Nuova": Ricordi e vicende della grande operazione urbanistica che distrusse il centro storico di Firenze*, 2nd ed. (Florence: Lito Terrazzi, 1997).

44. On the social significance of Florentine *potenze*, see David Rosenthal, *Kings of the Street: Power, Community, and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015); Rosenthal, "The Genealogy of Empires: Ritual Politics and State Building in Early Modern Florence," *I Tatti Studies: Essays in the Renaissance* 8 (1999): 197-234; Rosenthal, "The Spaces of Plebeian Ritual and the Boundaries of Transgression," in *Renaissance Florence: A Social History*, ed. Roger J. Crum and John T. Paoletti (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 161-81.

45. I would like to thank Professor Mirella Loda of the Dipartimento degli Studi Storici e Geografici of the University of Florence, whose survey of the experience of foreign researchers in Florence helped me to understand this dynamic in its contemporary context.

46. Such an exchange was particularly pertinent to the inhabitants of the late medieval Italian city-state, which Randolph Starn has referred to as a republic of words, an experiment in city-building that required the endless production of texts. See Randolph Starn, "The Republican Regime of the 'Room of Peace' in Siena, 1338-40," *Representations* 18 (1987): 4-11.

47. A historical account of Savonarola's time in Florence can be found in Lauro Martines, *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

48. *Ibid.*, 237.

49. *Ibid.*, 278.

50. This episode is recounted in Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Porta, vol. 2 (Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo / Ugo Guanda, 1990), IX, 176–77.

51. Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori: Nelle redazioni del 1550 e 1568*, ed. Rosanna Bettarini, vol. 3 (Florence: Sansoni, 1971), 518; Vasari, *Lives of the Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Gaston du C. De Vere, vol. 1 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, distributed by Random House, 1996), 540. I would like to thank Mark Rosen for bringing this anecdote in the *Lives* to my attention.

52. Vasari, *Le vite*, vol. 3, 518 (my translation).

53. *Ibid.*

54. Franco Sacchetti, *Il trecentonovelle*, ed. Valerio Marucci, *Novellieri Italiani* 6 (Rome: Salerno, 1996), 114, 11-13.

55. *Ibid.*, 14-18.

56. *Ibid.*, 30-31.

57. *Paradiso* 15.97-99. “Fiorenza dentro da la cerchia antica / ond'ella toglie ancora e terza e nona / si stava in pace, sobria e pudica.” Most trecento commentators on Dante locate these sounds as those made by the bells of the campanile of the Badia. Scarabelli, *Commento di Jacopo della Lana*; [Lanza], *L'ottimo commento*; Pietro Alighieri, *Petri Allegherii super Dantis ipsius genitoris Comoediam commentarium, nunc primum in lucem editum . . .* (Florence: G. Piatti, 1845); Benvenuto da Imola, *Benevenuti de Rambaldis de Imola comentum super Dantis Aldigherij Comoediam* (Florence: G. Barbèra, 1887); *Commento alla Divina Commedia d'anonimo fiorentino*. All of these commentators can be found at the Dartmouth Dante Project, <http://dante.dartmouth.edu/>.

58. Nicholas A. Eckstein, *The District of the Green Dragon: Neighbourhood Life and Social Change in Renaissance Florence* (Florence: Olschki, 1995), 6.

59. Bell ringing reflected the divisions and hierarchies by which groups were structured. See Corbin, *Village Bells*.

60. In his commentary on this passage, Jacopo della Lana notes that terce and nones were rung from the Badia, which also rang the hours of merchant labor. In this respect, Dante's Badia was dissociated from a particular kind of labor that included a large portion of unskilled Florentine laborers. As a result, it would not be surprising that this industry was regulated by a separate system of bells.

61. Robert Davidsohn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte von Florenz*, vol. 4 (Berlin: E. S. Mittler und Sohn, 1896), 494. Davidsohn cites a document from ASF, Libri fabarum, 9, fols. 41r-41v. Villani mentions that it was erected at the request of the cardinal legate messer Giovanni degli Orsini of Rome, the signore of the Badia. Villani, *Nuova cronica*, XI, 175. On the casting date of the bell, see Anne Leader, *The Badia of Florence: Art and Observance in a Renaissance Monastery* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 23.

62. These events are summarized in Leader, *Badia*, 21-23.

63. Enrico Malato, ed., *Il Trecento*, Storia della letteratura italiana 2 (Rome: Salerno, 1995), 856.

64. It is worth noting that the character of Dante believes that the tools he and the smith wield are comparable.

65. Sacchetti, *Il trecentonovelle*, 114, 32-34. "Il fabbro gonfiato, non sapendo rispondere, raccoglie le cose e tornò al suo lavoro; e se volle cantare, cantò di Tristano e di Lancelotto e lasciò stare il Dante."

66. Marianne Shapiro, *De Vulgari Eloquentia: Dante's Book of Exile* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 61.

67. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, ed. and trans. Robert Drew Hicks, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 4.36, 413.

68. In a real-life analogy, a specific law forbade the public scrutiny of merchants' account books as legal evidence even in cases of criminal convictions. See Caggese, *Statuto del Podestà del*

anno 1325, II, 29 (101); "Statuti del Podestà (1355)," II, fols. 81v–82r. Exceptions were made for the petitions of creditors. The exception "nisi ad petitionem creditoris" is inexplicably missing from the 1355 edition of the statutes translated by Andrea Lancia under the rubric "Che mercatante non sia costretto di mostrare lo libro delle sue ragioni." The law guarded the right of all merchants and artisans to keep their account books private when they were condemned or exiled, including the quantity of his *ragioni* or his company, or even of the shop or the *tavola*. Foreign officials were to be fined for breaking this law. I am grateful to John Najemy for pointing out the difference in the two laws; in his judgment, the law makes no sense without the exception.

69. On Vasari's use of the *Anonimo Magliabechiano* as a source for the life of Botticelli and an argument for Vincenzo Borghini as its author, see Richard Stapleford, "Vasari and Botticelli," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 39, nos. 2/3 (1995): 397-408. For a critique of that position and an attribution to Bernardo Vecchietti, see Bouk Wierda, "The True Identity of the Anonimo Magliabechiano," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 53, no. 1 (2009): 157-68.

70. In terms of labor, production, and value, wool was still a major component of the city's economy by the latter half of the sixteenth century, although, within an increasingly competitive and complex international textile trade economy in Europe, there were already signs of the industry's imminent precipitous decline at the beginning of the seventeenth century. See Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 267-82.

71. Consider, for example, the fact that Raphael's autograph cartoons for the Sistine tapestries are much more prized as art objects than the tapestries themselves, which were many times more expensive. On the cartoons and the tapestries, see John K. G. Shearman, *Raphael's Cartoons in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen, and the Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel* (London: Phaidon, 1972). The increasing perceived incompatibility between certain social and cultural practices in sixteenth-century Italy seems to have been part of a general trend toward the delineation and separation of certain refined activities of a more self-consciously serious and moralized elite. For example, David Rosenthal suggests that the riotous, expansive, and satirical carnival culture of the Florentine workers, as it was expressed in their festive brigades, known as *potenze*, was eventually suppressed and transformed in the early seventeenth century. This resulted from the impact of reform brought about by the collusion of both the clerical and social elite that figured prominently in the new ducal regime. See Rosenthal, "Spaces of Plebeian Ritual." Similarly, Philippe Canguilhem sees at the same time a parallel suppression of erotic and

irreverent carnival songs in Florence and a valorization of poetic verse more suited to an intellectual humanist culture. See Philippe Canguilhem, "Courtiers and Musicians Meet in the Streets: The Florentine Mascherata Under Cosimo I," *Urban History* 37, no. 3 (2010): 464-73. In Venice, traditional rituals associated with carnival began to be seen as an embarrassment in the sixteenth century. See Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 156-81. In the Florentine cases, the target was the very class that produced many of the workers in the textile industry, so Vasari's story becomes emblematic of that productive incompatibility between artist and worker in both spatial and sonic terms. The representation of workers in a wool factory in the *studiolo* of Francesco I de' Medici, with their classically muscular bodies, seems to be an aestheticization of the industry along the same narratological lines, paired as it may have been with an image of the mythical discovery of the pigment Tyrian purple. As a result, the industry is reified into the cosmos of erudite materials and knowledge and detached from its tumultuous history within the Florentine economy and its politics. On the *studiolo*, see Scott J. Schaefer, "The Studiolo of Francesco I De' Medici in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence" (Ph.D. diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1976); Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, *Lo stanzino del principe in palazzo vecchio: I concetti, le immagini, il desiderio*, ed. Massimo Becattini (Florence: Le lettere, 1980); Karen Edwards, "Rethinking the Reinstallation of the Studiolo of Francesco I De' Medici in the Palazzo Vecchio" (Ph.D. diss., Case Western Reserve University, 2007).

72. Melius de Villiers, "Nuisances in Roman Law," 13 *Law Quarterly Review* (1897): 387-94. De Villiers claims that noise nuisance is not mentioned in the corpus of Roman law, except for a passage in the Codex (11.19) about noise bothering students.

The prohibition which relates to the discharge into the air-space over a person's property of invisible matter affecting the health or the sense of smell, must no doubt be also extended to the immission therein of those vibrations of the air known as sound or other manifestations of the forces of nature, in so far as they detrimentally affect the comfort, and consequently the well-being, of such a person. It would probably not be allowable to focus the sun's rays upon a neighbour's property in such a manner as seriously to incommode him. With regard to offensive sound vibrations (in other words, noises), the Roman law lays down no specific rules generally; one can only seek to apply general principles. Commentators on that law do not leave the subject entirely untouched; but they mostly confine themselves to the case where noises are a source of disturbance and annoyance to students or professors; and they then base their comments on the legislation of Justinian as contained in the Title of the Code, "De studiis liberalibus urbis Romae et Constantinopolitanae." Provision is there merely made

“ne discipuli se invicem possint obstrepere vel magistri, neve linguarum confusion permixta vel vocum aures quorundem vel mentes a studio litterarum avertat.”

I would like to thank Robert Fredona for his help in situating noise within Roman law.

73. Martines, *Fire in the City*, 17; Shapiro, *De Vulgari*, 62.

74. Ubaldo Scotti, "La Piagnona di S. Marco in Firenze," in *L' illustratore fiorentino: Calendario Storico per l'Anno 1908*, ed. Guido Carocci (Florence: Tipografia domenicana, 1907), 52.

75. Martines, *Fire in the City*, 277.

76. These are Martines's translations.

77. Scotti, "La Piagnona," 56.

78. The sixteenth-century historians Benedetto Varchi and Scipione Ammirato, both of whom refer to the importance of this destructive act—the former as loss and the second as memory—use terms that have led subsequent commentators into complete confusion about which bell it was. Varchi was almost certainly referring to the “grossa” that Goro Dati mentions, which began as the Leone. The confusion comes from the fact that Bernardo Davanzati refers to the loss of the “campana del consiglio”; see Isidoro Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni e la sua Cronica*, vol. 2 (Florence: Le Monnier, 1879), 464. Varchi states that it rang for the council and called the *popolo* to *parlamenti*; Ammirato calls it the “grande campana del popolo”; see Benedetto Varchi, *Storia fiorentina*, ed. Lelio Arbib and Silvano Razzi, vol. 3 (Florence: Società ed. delle storie del Nardi e del Varchi, 1841), XIII, 9. It was the Campana del Popolo that called the council, but it was the Grossa, or Leone, that called *parlamenti*. Clearly, therefore, all were talking about the larger bell. By the late sixteenth century, Ammirato probably no longer understood the fine distinction between a bell that rang to call the representatives of the *popolo*, as ruling class, and a bell that called the whole city and spoke in a much more universal voice. Scipione Ammirato and Cristoforo del Bianco, *Istorie fiorentine di Scipione Ammirato*, vol. 6 (Florence: V. Batelli, 1846), bk. 31, 200.

79. Aurelio Gotti, *Storia del Palazzo Vecchio in Firenze* (Florence: Stabilimento G. Civelli, Editore, 1889), 31.

80. Gotti quotes Bernardo Davanzati, but it is Del Lungo who gives the precise reference as *Opere*, ed. Bindi, I, xix. See Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni*, 2:463. "A noi la campana del consiglio fu levata, acciò che non potessimo sentir più il dolce suono della liberta."

81. Del Lungo, *Dino Compagni*, 2:463; Gerhard Dohrn–van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 200.

82. Ammirato and Del Bianco, *Istorie fiorentine*, vol. 6, bk. 2, 87. The Leone, or Grossa, originally weighed over twelve thousand pounds, although some refer to it as weighing sixteen thousand pounds. It weighed twenty thousand pounds after its recasting in 1373. Dati claimed that it weighed twenty-two thousand pounds in the early fifteenth century, and Varchi repeats this claim in the early sixteenth century. Later in the sixteenth century, Ammirato records the claim by Cosimo I that it weighed twenty-seven thousand pounds.

83. Varchi, *Storia fiorentina*, XIII, 3:9. Varchi notes that the reason for destroying the bell—for money or to erase the memory of its power to rally the citizens—was a matter of debate amongst Florentines. Giuseppe Conti states that Alessandro put his own effigy on the coin and used this first minting to pay the German troops given to him by Charles V for the war against Florence. Notably, Conti sees this act, both practical and symbolic, as the beginning of Alessandro's tyranny. Cosimo II cast a new bell in 1615, which is the current *campanone*. Giuseppe Conti, *Firenze dopo i Medici: Francesco di Lorena, Pietro Leopoldo, inizio del regno di Ferdinando III* (Florence: Bemporad, 1921), 122.