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978-0-521-89520-0 - The Renaissance in Italy: A Social and Cultural History of the Rinascimento

Guido Ruggiero

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## THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

This book offers a rich and exciting new way of thinking about the Italian Renaissance as both a historical period and a historical movement. Guido Ruggiero's work is based on archival research and the new insights of social and cultural history and literary criticism, with a special emphasis on everyday culture, gender, violence, and sexuality. The book offers a vibrant and relevant critical study of a period too long burdened by anachronistic and outdated ways of thinking about the past. Familiar yet alien, premodern but suggestively postmodern, attractive and troubling, this book returns the Italian Renaissance to center stage in our past and in our historical analysis.

Guido Ruggiero is College of Arts and Sciences Cooper Fellow and Professor of History at the University of Miami. As an author, editor, and translator, he has published more than two dozen books on the Renaissance and related topics, including, most recently, *Machiavelli in Love: Sex, Self, and Society in Renaissance Italy* (2007) and *The Blackwell Companion to the Worlds of the Renaissance* (2002). His articles have appeared in many journals, including *The American Historical Review*, *The Journal of Social History*, *Viator*, *The Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Science*, *Xin shehui shi* (New Social History), *Studi storici*, and *Quaderni storici*. He has also published numerous essays and articles in edited volumes. Ruggiero has won a number of fellowships, including a Guggenheim Fellowship; two National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowships; several Delmas Foundation, Orowitz, and Taft Fellowships; as well as an ACLS Fellowship. He is an elected member of the Ateneo Veneto and has been a Fellow or visiting professor at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, Harvard's Villa I Tatti in Florence, and the American Academy in Rome.

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# THE RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

*A Social and Cultural History  
of the Rinascimento*



GUIDO RUGGIERO

University of Miami



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*For Laura*



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Ludovico Ariosto, in his classic sixteenth-century epic/romance/fantasy *Orlando furioso*, traced the origins of the Este family, who had patronized that masterpiece, back to a great female warrior of medieval romance, Bradamante, and a slightly less impressive warrior of even greater lineage descended from the heroes of ancient Troy, Ruggiero. The origins of this book, by a considerably less noble Ruggiero, cannot be traced so far back, but to do justice to the debts owed one would need acknowledgments and a tale of thanks that would approach the epic proportions of Ariosto's tale.

Undoubtedly the greatest thanks are in order to the two generations of scholars who have virtually revolutionized the field of Renaissance scholarship since the Second World War. Readers will find their work informing virtually every page that follows. Moreover, the great debates that flourished in academia over that same period, especially those over the cultural turn in the humanities and women's and gender studies more generally, along with historical controversies that swirled around the new social and cultural history and theoretical debates in anthropology and literary criticism, have left me deeply in the debt of those who carried forward those often heated discussions. Readers will find echoes of all my books and articles throughout this book. Thus I would like to thank all my publishers here, especially the most important: Rutgers, Johns Hopkins, Blackwell's, and Oxford. And I am particularly grateful to my Cambridge editors, Beatrice Rehl and Asya Graf, as well as to my copy editor, Russell Hahn, for all their help and support.

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Martines in graduate school and beyond. Once again, readers will note their influence throughout this book. Ladner's vision of reform is one of its main themes, and Martines's powerful vision of the social world of the time and his always creative approach to the subject have been a model not just for this book, but for my career.

Less formal teachers, both within academia and beyond, have also been many. But to single out perhaps the most important: Gene Brucker, Felix Gilbert, David Herlihy, Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, and John Najemy have taught me more about the history of Florence than they may be happy to admit and served as models of the committed scholarly life. The same is true of Gaetano Cozzi, Kenneth Setton, Martin Lowry, Joanne Ferraro, and Ed Muir for Venice. Moving beyond the cities most studied for the Renaissance in Italy, Nick Terpstra, John Marino, and Tom and Elizabeth Cohen have been particularly important as well. And although this is only a very limited list of all those who deserve thanks, when one moves beyond Italy the list grows exponentially. Particularly important have been Jim Farr, Donald Spivey, Mary Lindemann, Karen Kupperman, Richard Brown, Londa Schiebinger, Robert Proctor, Sophie De Schaepdrijver, Ronnie Po-chai Hsia, Matthew Restall, and Natalie Z. Davis, who in many ways unwittingly provided the most important model as well as some crucial support along the way.

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University. Along with those great students and fine colleagues, the staffs of each institution were unusually supportive and special friends as well.

Similar thanks are in order to the granting foundations and institutes for advanced study that have supported the research and writing that have gone into this book, starting with the Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies at UCLA and the Regents of the University of California, who awarded me a handsome University of California Regents Intern Fellowship that allowed me to complete my studies and carry out my first years of research in Venice. This was followed by a series of research grants from the Taft Foundation at the University of Cincinnati and several Delmas Foundation grants that supported more than a decade of ongoing research in Venice and Italy, until an invitation to the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton as a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow in the early 1980s pulled together the first part of my career and gave me the opportunity to consider the broader issues that stood behind my first two books and pointed to this work. These were followed by another NEH Fellowship for a year at Harvard's research villa in Florence, I Tatti, in the 1990s and a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, part of which I again spent at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. There and at I Tatti in 1990–1991 I began formally writing this book. The handsome research support that I received soon after as the Weiss Chair in the Humanities at the Pennsylvania State University was continued at the University of Miami and enhanced generously by my being made a College of Arts and Sciences Cooper Fellow there. Each freed up considerable time for writing this book. Invitations to the American Academy in Rome as a Rome Senior Visiting Professor and once again to Harvard's Villa I Tatti as the Robert Lehman Senior Visiting Professor allowed me to finish it.

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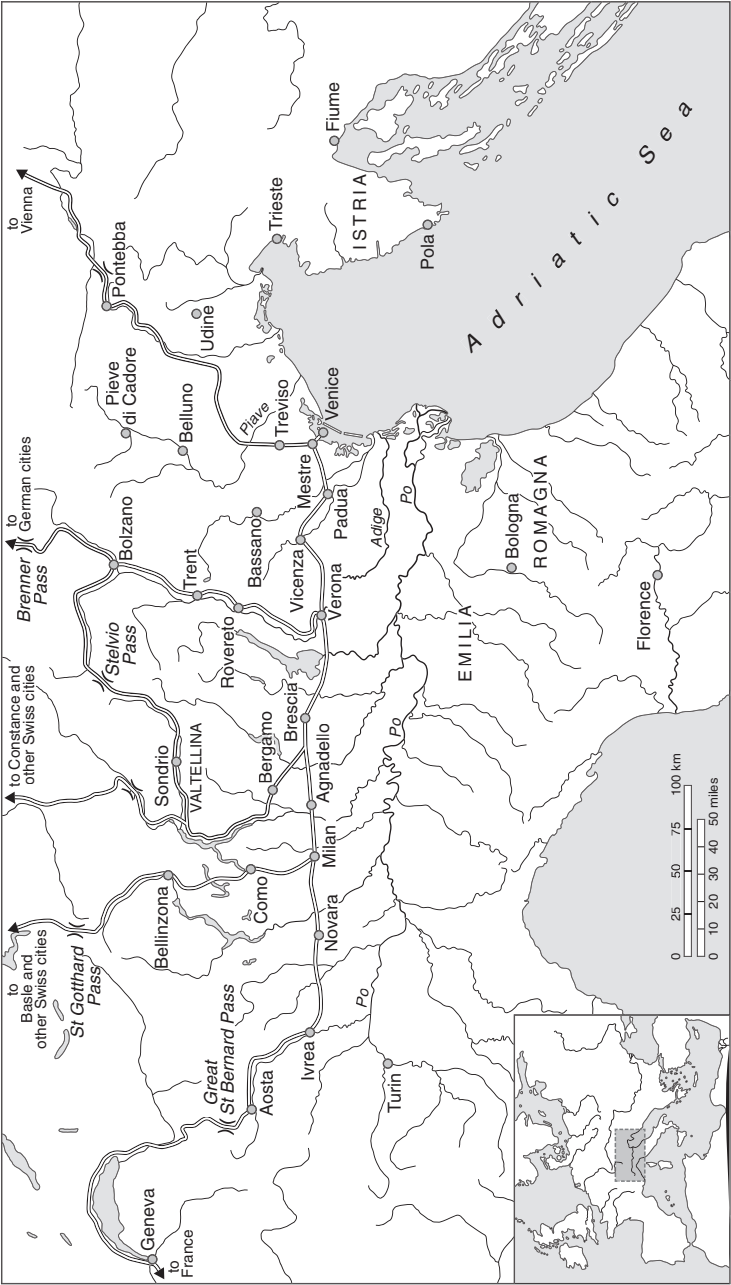
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Konrad Eisenbickler, Karen Barzman, Michele Laughran, Jim Farr, Mary Lindeman, and Laura Giannetti, were crucial for inspiring the many revisions that have gone into it and made it far stronger than it otherwise would have been. Laura Giannetti, who has long been much more than a colleague and mentor, not only read the whole book more than once, saved me from numerous foolish errors, and made crucial suggestions, she also lived the book with me for the last twenty years that have gone into it and made them truly special. Thus I dedicate the book to her along with all those who have contributed so much to it and made the path to its completion less epic and slightly less *furioso* than Ariosto's tale, but rich with shared pleasures and good friendship.



Map 1. Main cities of Italy c. 1300.



Map 2. The north of Italy c. 1426.



Map 3. The states of Italy in 1559.