

**Europa e Italia.
Studi in onore di Giorgio Chittolini**

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Games of submission in late medieval Italy

by John Easton Law

The subject of game or play has long interested historians of medieval and renaissance Europe. That interest has “graduated” from one of curiosity and antiquarianism to one of serious historical enquiry in part due to the influence of other disciplines – for example, sociology, anthropology, art and architectural history. Its development was also due to the contribution of some influential historians working across disciplines; an early influence here was Jan Huizinga, whose *Homo Ludens. A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, was first published in Haarlem, 1938¹. In his forward, the author set out the case for the «supreme importance to civilisation of the play-factor», going on to argue that «all play means something», that play was a «function of culture», that the category “play” «is one of the most fundamental in life»².

As was often the case in the context of the Italian Renaissance, the importance of the subject was suggested earlier by Jacob Burckhardt in the chapter on «Society and Festivals» in his *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*. Burckhardt focused on the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; another early contribution to the study of games and festivals in Italy, but with a longer chronological range, was William Heywood’s still valuable *Palio and Ponte*³.

In more recent years, historians’ interest in play and games has been further encouraged by the establishment of dedicated journals – of which «Ludica» is a notable example⁴ – as well as by research in related fields: ritual, ceremony, dress, theatre, propaganda, the court, the control and use of “ritual space”. The contribution to the subject, coming from an interdisciplinary approach, is extensive and growing; the following are only some examples: Edward Muir and Elizabeth Crouzet-Pavan for Venice⁵; Richard Trexler

¹ The work first appeared in English in 1949. I have consulted the edition issued as volume III of The International Library of Sociology (Abingdon 2009).

² *Homo ludens*, p. 1, 4, 28.

³ Subtitled *An Account of the Sports of Central Italy from the Age of Dante to the Twentieth Century*, London 1904. Earlier, Heywood had published *Our Lady of August and the Palio of Siena*, Siena 1899.

⁴ «Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco» first appeared in 1995, published by Viella Libreria in collaboration with Fondazione Benetton.

⁵ E. Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, Princeton 1981; E. Crouzet-Pavan, *Quando la città*

for Florence⁶; Nadia Covini for Sforza Milan⁷. Today, probably the best known example of urban games with a medieval origin is the *Palio* of Siena⁸; however, in the period under consideration the festivities held in Rome, the capital of Christendom, probably attracted the most attention, from the Welshman Adam of Usk to the Florentine Giovanni Rucellai⁹. Medieval tradition was elaborated on in the Renaissance, creating a considerable bibliography¹⁰. The observation of Denys Hay that «the great public spectacles of Italy, and especially of Rome, await a historian who is alive to their significance in the political and religious spheres» has gone a long way to being answered¹¹.

Hay went on to acknowledge that “public spectacles” were of importance, not only in such major cities as Rome and Venice; game as part of ritual and ceremony has also attracted the attention of historians of smaller centres, as in the case of Fabrizio Ricciardelli’s study of propaganda and civic ritual in late medieval Arezzo¹². This contribution will be based on the participation expected of the commune of Amelia in southern Umbria in the carnival games held annually in Rome.

Amelia in southern Umbria is an ancient city, with pre-Roman origins, and from the fifth century it became the seat of a bishopric. However, it never became a major city state; though Amelia followed the pattern of other urban communes in extending its authority beyond its walls, its *contado* appears to have been largely limited to the frontiers of its bishop’s diocese¹³. Though

si diverte. Giochi e ideologia urbana: Venezia negli ultimi secoli del Medioevo, in G. Ortalli, ed., *Gioco e giustizia nell’Italia di comune*, Roma 1993, p. 35-48.

⁶ R.C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, New York 1980.

⁷ N. Covini, *Feste e cerimonie milanesi tra città e corte*, in «Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco», 7 (2001), p. 122-150.

⁸ For the historical background to the *Palio* and civic ritual in Siena: F. Schevill, *Siena. The History of a Medieval City*, New York and London 1964 (1904¹), p. 340-348; J. Hook, *Siena and its History*, London 1979, ch. 11; P. Jackson, F. Nevola, *Beyond the Palio: Urbanism and Ritual in Renaissance Siena*, in «Renaissance Studies», 20 (2006), 2, p. 137-275. For a recent contribution, A. Savelli, *Siena: il popolo e le contrade*, Florence 2008; I am grateful to Gian Maria Varanini for the reference.

⁹ *The Chronicle of Adam of Usk*, ed. and trans. C. Given-Wilson, Oxford 1997, p. 194-197; A. Perosa, ed., *Giovanni Rucellai e il suo Zibaldone*, London 1960, p. 76-77. An informed account of Roman carnival games, and where they held, was written by the Welshman William Thomas in *The Historie of Italy*, first published in London in 1549, A Deidda et al., *Lezioni ai potenti: William Thomas e l’Italia*, Cagliari 2002, p. 218-220.

¹⁰ A useful exploration of medieval tradition and Renaissance developments can be found in M. Boiteux, *Chasse aux taureaux et jeux romains de la Renaissance*, in P. Aries, F.-C. Margolin, eds, *Les jeux à la Renaissance*, Tours 1982, p. 33-53. For a more general treatment, M.A. Visceglia, *L’identità urbana. Rituali civici e spazio pubblico a Roma tra Rinascimento e Controriforma*, in «Dimensioni e problemi della ricerca storica», 2 (2005), p. 7-38.

¹¹ *Historians and the Renaissance during the last twenty-five years*, in *Renaissance Essays*, London 1988, p. 124-125. The essay was first published in *Il Rinascimento: interpretazioni e problemi*, Roma-Bari 1979, p. 1-32.

¹² *Propaganda politica e rituali urbani nella Arezzo del tardo Medioevo*, in «Archivio storico italiano», 162 (2004), p. 233-258. For the place of games and spectacle in a smaller centre of the Veneto, F. Pigozzo, *Palio, open-air gamings and fairs in a rural centre in the XIV century*, in «Ludica. Annali di storia e civiltà del gioco», 11 (2005), p. 109-112.

¹³ Some indication of the nature and extent of its territory can be found in S. Del Lungo, *Cultura*

within the Patrimonio di San Pietro in Tuscia and close to Rome, it never appears to have become an “alternative” or summer residence for the papacy. From the early thirteenth century, it was forced to acknowledge a dependency on Todi, and from at least the early fourteenth century, the city owed allegiance to the commune of Rome, if both could be contested, as indeed could its loyalty to the papacy, in “exile” in Avignon¹⁴.

However, despite the turbulence and changes of power that affected the Papal States in the fourteenth and earlier fifteenth centuries, Amelia never became the seat of a *signoria*; the ascendancy of Ladislas of Naples or such “warlords” as Tartaglia di Lavello, Francesco Sforza and Giovanni Vitelleschi was never centred on the city¹⁵. The Orsini, the Colonna and other families had land and influence in the area, but did not establish a lordship, or resided there. At the end of the Middle Ages, a leading local dynasty, the Geraldini, sought advancement in the Church, in the Kingdom of Naples, in Spain and even in the New World rather than within their native city’s walls¹⁶. Though legally a “city”, Amelia’s relative marginality almost places it in the category much discussed by Giorgio Chittolini, of a “quasi città” or a “centro minore”¹⁷. However, this very marginality may have contributed to the preservation of a remarkably rich communal archive which helps to throw some light on its participation in Rome’s carnival games, and on its relations with that city in the later Middle Ages¹⁸.

The carnival games in Rome had a long history, from at least the eleventh century¹⁹; but when a tributary element began which involved the communes subject to the *Alma Urbs* is less clear. Gregorovius suggested that the games «represented to the Romans a shadow of the ancient Latin dominion and the tributary allegiance of subjects and allies»²⁰; in the Middle Ages, the progres-

e evoluzione del paesaggio dalla tarda antichità al medioevo nella toponomastica amerina, in E. Menestò, ed., *Amelia e i suoi statuti medievali*, Spoleto 2004, p. 187-232.

¹⁴ G. Pardi, *Relazioni di Amelia con il comune di Roma ed i nobili romani*, in «Bollettino della società umbra di storia patria», 1 (1895), p. 579-590; A. Di Tommaso, *Guida di Amelia*, Terni 1931, p. 24-35; R. Nanni, *Amelia nel basso medioevo*, in Menestò, *Amelia*, p. 3-42.

¹⁵ B. Geraldini, *Amelia sotto la dominazione del Re Ladislao e del Tartaglia da Lavello*, in «Bollettino della Deputazione di storia patria per l’Umbria», 12 (1906), p. 491-495.

¹⁶ E. Menestò, ed., *Alessandro Geraldini e il suo tempo*, Spoleto 1994; *I Geraldini di Amelia nell’Europa del Rinascimento*, Viterbo 2004.

¹⁷ For example, G. Chittolini, *Città, comunità e feudi negli stati dell’Italia centro-settentrionale (secoli XIV-XVI)*, Milano 1996. To the north and west of the Via Flaminia, Amelia was not a recognised stop on the Grand Tour, though its ancient walls did attract the attention of the traveller and archaeologist Edward Dodwell (1767-1832; I am grateful to Mara Quadraccia for that reference). The later English travel writer and historian Edward Hutton, who was enthusiastic about Umbria and not afraid to leave the “beaten track”, does not mention the city in the early editions of his *The Cities of Umbria*, first published in 1905.

¹⁸ All the archival references that follow come from the Archivio Storico Comunale of Amelia (= ASCA), currently held in the city’s Biblioteca Civica. I am extremely grateful to the librarian Ugo Di Nicola for his assistance.

¹⁹ Boiteux, *Chasse*, p. 35.

²⁰ F. Gregorovius, *History of Rome in the Middle Ages*, London 1898, VI/2, p. 710; for Philip Jones, «in secular iconography capital or tribute-bearing cities continued, in the antique tradition, to symbolise dominion», *The Italian City State from Commune to Signoria*, Oxford 1997,

sive enforcement of a “tributary allegiance” probably dates from attempts by Rome in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries – in common with other major urban communes – to assert its authority over lords and communes in the city’s hinterland, especially those on major roads and near areas of supply by land and sea, for example Terracina and Priverno (Piperno), south of Rome on or near the via Appia²¹. The conquest of Tuscanella (via Aurelia) in 1300 forced that community to send its bells and gates to Rome, to pay a tribute in cash or grain and to contribute eight *luxores* to the carnival games; the significance of the last obligation is indicated by a memorial inscription on the Palazzo del Senato on the Campidoglio²². Other communes formally subjected to Rome in the same period were Velletri (via Appia), Tivoli (via Tiburtina), Corneto (via Aurelia) and Magliano (via Flaminia)²³. Amelia was on the via Amerina.

In the Middle Ages, the carnival games were normally held at two principal sites in Rome: on *Giovedì Grasso* in the Piazza Navona²⁴; on the Sunday before Lent on or near the Monte Testaccio near the Aventine. The part of the festivities the subject communes were principally involved with was at the latter, where a horse race was run for a *palio*; from at least 1256 the Testaccio could also be referred to as the «Monte de Palio»²⁵. The reason for the choice of site may not at first appear obvious, but the area was outside the medieval city, and while it was not built over, it was owned or leased by the commune of Rome²⁶. Moreover, in the Middle Ages the site was associated with Roman greatness, based on the belief that the amphorae and other terracotta vessels discarded there had once held tribute sent to Rome from its subject lands; Flavio Biondo dismissed this idea, but the mass of discarded vessels – *testae* – that made up the Monte did at least reflect the importance of Rome, drawing in commodities from a vast empire, explaining why the mound could also be referred to as the «Monte di Tutto il Mondo»²⁷.

p. 82, although it is unclear if the Romans held regular tributary games of this kind either under the Republic or the Empire.

²¹ G. Tomassetti, *Della campagna romana*, in «Archivio storico della società romana di storia patria», 17 (1894), p. 74-75.

²² P. Vitale, *Storia diplomatica de’ senatori di Roma*, Roma 1791, I, p. 266-267; F. Clementi, *Il carnevale romano*, Roma 1899, I, p. 31-32; Tomassetti, *Della campagna*, p. 75; G. Ricci, *La nobilis universitas bobacteriorum urbis*, in «Archivio storico della società romana di storia patria», 16 (1891), p. 160.

²³ Clementi, *Carnevale*, p. 30-32; Tomassetti, *Della campagna*, p. 74.

²⁴ On the site of the stadium built by Domitian where competitive games held: «in agone, nagone, navone, navona» (Touring Club Italiano, ed., *Roma e dintorni*, Milano 1977, p. 192).

²⁵ Clementi, *Carnevale*, p. 27; A. Busini-Vici, *Il carnevale romano*, Roma 1896, p. 27-33; V. Gleijeses, *Piccola storia del carnevale*, Napoli 1971, p. 26-27.

²⁶ Gregorovius, *History*, VI, p. 710, records that the city paid the church of Sta Maria on the Aventine a florin a year for the use of the Monte; Tomassetti, *Della campagna*, p. 75; D. Orano, *Il Testaccio: il monte e il quartiere dalle origini al 1910*, Pescara 1910, p. 22; R. Lanciani, *Il Testaccio e i prati del popolo romano*, in «Bollettino della Commissione archeologica», 42 (1914), p. 242; G. Masson, *The Companion Guide to Rome*, London 1972, p. 423; L. Chiumenti and F. Bilancia, *La Campagna Romana antica, medioevale e moderna redatta sulla base degli appunti lasciati da G. e F. Tomassetti*, Florence 1979, 5, p. 35-43.

²⁷ Gregorovius refers to the medieval legend while describing the Monte as «a fitting symbol of

At present, the role of subject communes like Amelia in the evolving carnival festivities in Rome is unclear; Roman and foreign commentators in the Middle Ages and Renaissance were interested in the games, but principally as a “Roman” event, and while they could note the distinguished visitors who attended in person or in proxy²⁸, the involvement of the “provinces” – ironically but tellingly – seems to have been largely ignored. At the Monte, pigs and bulls were slaughtered, a blood-letting that was followed by horse races, probably not on the Monte itself but on the surrounding level ground; according to Orano, most of the *luxores* who took part in the killing of animals were young men from lands subject to Rome²⁹, but as will be discussed below, the records of the commune of Amelia suggest that the riders formally dispatched to represent the subject city at the Roman carnival were intended to take part in games of horsemanship, rather than in a free-for-all slaughter of panic-stricken animals.

The exact date and circumstances of Amelia’s surrender to Rome are unclear. It was possibly in 1307, or slightly later, between 1308 and 1311³⁰. A majority of the clauses concerned the authority of the podesta – now a Roman appointment – but one committed Amelia to send «annuatim sex iocatores testacce» to Rome. On 3 February 1318 the commune was arranging with one «Iuculus Matrioni de Amelia» for its participation in the *ludum Testatii* over a three year period, suggesting that the obligation had become established³¹. Certainly by the early fifteenth century, the period for which the communal archives have been sampled – the need to take part in the Roman carnival games appears as a fairly regular item on the commune’s agenda.

As other sources confirm, the horse races in which Amelia and other subject communes were involved were generally held on the Sunday before Lent, though preliminary events were held on the Campidoglio on the Saturday. Very occasionally, however, and for reasons which are not at present clear, the games were brought forward, as in 1423³².

Whatever the date, a few weeks beforehand, the commune of Amelia, though its *anziani* – though sometimes its *podestà*, his vicar or even the General Council could be involved – issued a call, a *bannimentum*, for participants. This was carried out by the commune’s herald – the *precone* or *tubator* – who is recorded as having made the announcement «alta voce et sono tube», «per plateas et alia loca publica», «ad loca publica consueta»³³.

the splendours, shattered to fragments, of ancient Rome» (*History*, II, p. 409-410); Orano, *Il Testaccio*, p. 4.

²⁸ E.g., *Il diario romano di Antonio di Pietro dello Schiavo*, ed. by F. Isoldi, in *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, 2nd ed., t. XXXIV, p. 5, Città di Castello 1917, p. 56, for 1410.

²⁹ Orano, *Il Testaccio*, p. 30.

³⁰ Pardi, *Relazioni di Amelia*, p. 585-587; R. Boresta, *Il comune di Amelia durante il periodo del papato avignonese*, Tesi di laurea, Università di Roma, 1941-42, p. 27 (I consulted a copy of this tesi held in the Biblioteca Civica of Amelia); Nanni, *Amelia*, p. 7-9.

³¹ ASCA, perg. 41 (copy of 18 March 1421); Nanni, *Amelia*, p. 9-10.

³² ASCA, *Riformanze*, 13, f. 477rv.

³³ For example ASCA, *Riformanze*, 8, f. 73v; ASCA, *Riformanze*, 9, ff. 96v, 268r.

At times the commune found it difficult to find candidates willing to take part, and the summons had to be repeated; in 1411, for example, the proclamation was made on 29 January, 3 February and 8 February³⁴. However, the repetition of the proclamation could also be caused by the commune's anxiety to secure representation for as low a cost as possible³⁵. In 1411, the first price offered, by Lodovico *magistri Galasii* of Amelia, was 7 florins; the commune's decision to repeat its proclamation on 10 February persuaded Lodovico to drop his price to 6 florins, while a rival offer of 5.5 florins pushed Lodovico to offer 4.5 florins³⁶.

The successful bidder then formally declared in the commune's chancery his willingness to represent Amelia in Rome; on 12 February 1405, the *tubator* was told to announce that commune's representative «iret et compareret ad faciendum se scribi per cancellarium dicti comunis»³⁷.

At present, little is known about the participants themselves; however, the reappearance of a few names in the records already examined suggests that they were professional or experienced riders, earlier examples of the horsemen employed by the Medici, the Gonzaga and others to take part in prestigious *palli*³⁸. Lodovico *magistri Galasii* was successful in 1411. He entered again in 1421, offering to compete for 4 florins before withdrawing³⁹. His place was taken by Battista *Petri Pauli*, also offering to serve for 4 florins, and he appears the following year, offering to take part for 4.5 florins before accepting 3.75 florins⁴⁰. On 5 February 1436, Cristofano Buci offered to represent Amelia for 12 florins, though by 13 February competition had brought him down to 5.5 florins⁴¹. He was the commune's representative again in 1437 having lowered his fee from 9 to 6 florins⁴². In 1438 he secured the appointment after reducing his fee drastically, from 8 to 2 florins⁴³. On 2 February 1440, Cristofano was the only candidate, offering to go to Rome for 5.5 florins⁴⁴.

Though the riders referred to so far as responding to the proclamations were citizens of Amelia, on occasion recourse seems to have been made to substitutes with Amelia's contingent of four «equestres ludentes ante palacium Campidoglii cum bampneriis et copertis» being led by Roman citizens, as happened in 1411, 1412 and 1414⁴⁵. This is revealed from the *cedulae* or *apodissae*, the letters of acknowledgement dispatched to Amelia to record its

³⁴ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 9, ff. 268v, 269r, 274r.

³⁵ For example ASCA, *Riformanze*, 9, f. 268v.

³⁶ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 11, f. 277r.

³⁷ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 8, f. 73v.

³⁸ M.E. Mallett, *Horse racing and politics in Lorenzo's Florence*, in M.E. Mallett, N. Mann, *Lorenzo the Magnificent: Culture and Politics*, London 1996, p. 253-262.

³⁹ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 13, f. 90v.

⁴⁰ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 13, f. 299r.

⁴¹ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 18, ff. 9r, 13r.

⁴² ASCA, *Riformanze*, 18, f. 132v.

⁴³ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 19, f. 152r, 160v.

⁴⁴ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 21, f. 41rv.

⁴⁵ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 9, f. 297r; 10, ff. 76r, 252v.

participation. These were generally sent from the *Conservatores Camerae Urbis*, but they could reflect changes in the political circumstances in Rome. Thus the letter of 17 February 1414 was written on behalf of Ladislas King of Naples, then the effective ruler of Rome⁴⁶. The election of Martin V at the Council of Constance insured that the letter written on 27 January 1418 to remind subject lords and communes of their obligations to participate in the carnival came from the pope's senator as well as the *conservatores*⁴⁷.

Unfortunately the registers of the Riformanze examined to date are not very revealing about the actual games themselves: the documentation tends to stress the customary nature of the obligation suggesting that the details were clear to all concerned, as in 1405 – «ipsum ludum facere more solito in urbe romana» – or in 1421 – «ad faciendum ludum testacie more solito». However the number of riders sent appears to have been lower than the six stipulated on the city's surrender or in the letter of 27 January 1418⁴⁸, with three or four appearing to be the norm. In 1436, 1437, 1438 and 1440, Cristofano Buci was to attend with three riders, but the letter of acknowledgement sent by the *conservatores* on 17 February 1436 included him among the three participants⁴⁹.

The letters from Rome also reveal something of the preliminaries to the Testaccio games which took place on the Saturday before Lent. On 2 March 1411, the *camerarius* of the *Camera Urbis* informed Amelia that four riders – *luxores equestres* – had attended on the commune's behalf *ludentes* in front of the palace on the Campidoglio – «ante palactium Campidoglii» – complete with banners and trappings – «cum bampneriis et copertis» – as they were expected to do *annuatim*⁵⁰. The letter of 18 February 1412 is slightly fuller. The Roman notary «Paulus Laurentii Mutii» had acted for Amelia *more consueto* with four «luxoribus equestribus», carrying banner with the arms of the city and racing – *correndo* – in front of the palace – «ante palatium et scalas palatii Capitolii more solito et consueto»⁵¹. Further information appears in the letter of 17 February 1414. Again the contribution from Amelia was made up of four riders led by a Roman citizen. The festivities took place in the market area of the Campidoglio – «in foro Mercati ante palatium Capitolii more solito», or «ante palatium et scalas Capitolii» – in the presence of the senator, the *conservatores*, the heads of the districts, the *rioni*, of Rome and other officials. The participants carried banners with the arms of Amelia as they competed and raced – «ludendo et currendo»⁵².

⁴⁶ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 10, f. 252v.

⁴⁷ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 12, f. 144r.

⁴⁸ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 12, f. 145r. Six continued to be the number demanded from the surrender to 1353 when the Cardinal Albornoz lifted this and other burdens from ASCA, perg. 140 and 143.

⁴⁹ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 18, f. 13r, though the games may not have been held that year.

⁵⁰ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 9, f. 297r. For the Palazzo Senatorio and its surroundings, C. Pietrangeli, *Il palazzo senatorio nel medioevo*, in «Capitolium», 35 (1960), p. 3-19.

⁵¹ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 10, f. 76r.

⁵² ASCA, *Riformanze*, 10, f. 252v.

As mentioned earlier, forms of spectacle and ritual are attracting a great deal of attention from historians of medieval and renaissance Italy, but what can be ignored is the relevance of such phenomena to the political, social, legal and economic realities. Further exploration of the rich communal archives of Amelia would almost certainly reveal deeper dimensions to the relationship between the commune and the *Alma Urbs* beyond those suggested by the obligation to participate in the carnival games. A deeper understanding would also come from an exploration of the archives of other cities subject to Rome, and from a closer scrutiny of the political narrative for Rome and its hinterland. However some interesting issues relating to the relationship between Amelia and Rome can be raised from the evidence explored to date.

That some individuals bid to represent Amelia on several occasions, despite the commune's efforts to keep costs down, suggests that for the riders chosen their participation in the Testaccio games could be seen as prestigious and rewarding, as was the case with *palio* contests held in Siena, Florence, Mantua and elsewhere⁵³. But is there any evidence that the commune itself found the obligation burdensome or humiliating?

Little in the archival evidence in Amelia explored to date would suggest this, explicitly. The call for riders does not seem to have been accompanied by threats or statements of principle on the part of Rome, except in the possibly special circumstances of 1418. The entries in the *Riformanze* describe the fact and nature of Amelia's participation with little comment beyond the laconic *more solito*. Occasionally Rome is dutifully refereed to as *alma*, and the letters from that city to Amelia can address the commune's *anziani* in affectionate terms⁵⁴. The financial costs do not appear to have been high, generally running below the figure of 7 florins recorded for 1319⁵⁵.

However the *Riformanze* of Amelia – as in the case with those of other communes – represented the summaries of communal business rather than verbatim discussion, and as Amelia was not an independent commune, its records would have been composed under the authority of external officials, often sent by Rome. Indeed, a closer reading of the evidence suggests that the obligation to participate in the carnival games was perceived as imposition. Quite apart from the original terms of Amelia's surrender to Rome, there is the fact that the city felt the need to re-state, emphatically, the obligations expected of its subject communes on 18 January 1418⁵⁶. Amelia may also have used the unstable political and military situations as an excuse not to participate. In 1434 and 1435 the commune did not send riders to Rome; the intervention of one of its citizens, the «egregio doctore messer Johanni» – who had taught at the Roman *Studium* and who had been made «capitano delle appellazioni del

⁵³ Mallett, *Horse-racing*, *passim*.

⁵⁴ E.g., ASCA, *Riformanze*, 12, f. 15r; ASCA, *Riformanze*, 13, ff. 85v-86r, 94v.

⁵⁵ Above n. 31.

⁵⁶ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 12, ff. 144r-145r. The document stressed Rome's determination to defend the «iura camere» as recorded «in archivis urbis».

popolo di Roma» – secured its forgiveness on 17 February 1436⁵⁷. Moreover, Amelia consistently sent fewer riders than stipulated at its surrender or in 1418. Finally, it is significant that the obligation to take part in the carnival games was not included in the statutes drawn up by the commune, in contrast to the situation with another city subject to Rome, Anagni⁵⁸.

Finally, Amelia like other communes subject to Rome sought to end the commitment⁵⁹. When the commune submitted to the Cardinal Albornoz in 1354 he freed Amelia from the obligations to send candles to Todi and riders to Rome⁶⁰. The latter concession cannot have lasted; according to Di Tommaso, Amelia petitioned Martin V to remove the burden⁶¹.

The significance of the carnival can also be gauged from the interest the Romans took in the event⁶², if the role the subject communes took in the games as they evolved over the Renaissance is hard to assess. That interest, however, was not unique to Rome; as is well known, in late medieval and renaissance Italy, ruling states – republics and *signorie* – used ceremony to assert and celebrate authority, and the holding of races for *palii* was widely organised to express – or anticipate – victory over enemies and subjects. Some of these were of these events were ad hoc. In 1288, while laying siege to Arezzo, the Florentines staged a *palio* outside its walls in honour of their patron saint, John the Baptist⁶³. When Bernabò Visconti besieged the Della Scala in Verona in 1378, he demonstrated his confidence in victory and contempt for his opponents by knighting two of his sons outside the city's gates and organising a *palio*⁶⁴.

Other festivities involving a *palio* became annual events but they did not always mirror the Roman model and involve subject communities as participants. In the case of Florence subject lords and communes were certainly expected to contribute to the John the Baptist celebrations, but in terms of gifts rather than participation⁶⁵. In Siena, subject communities were present in the procession before the *palio*, but the reference appears to be late⁶⁶.

⁵⁷ ASCA, *Riformanze*, 18, f. 13rv.

⁵⁸ Menestò, ed., *Amelia e i suoi Statuti*; R. Ambrosi de Magistris, *Lo statuto di Anagni*, in «Archivio della Società romana di storia patria», 3 (1880), p. 351.

⁵⁹ The good offices of Giovanni Vitelleschi with Martin V probably freed his native city of Corneto (now Tarquinia) from the obligation, J.E. Law, *Giovanni Vitelleschi "prelato guerriero"*, in «Renaissance Studies», 12 (1998), 1, p. 47. Corneto submitted to Rome in 1376 (F. Guerri, *Fonti di storia cornetana*, Corneto 1908, p. 211).

⁶⁰ Nanni, *Amelia*, p. 19. It is at present unclear how long the exemption lasted.

⁶¹ Guida, p. 35. The fact that Martin was a Colonna and very much a 'Roman' pope may in part explain the failure of Amelia's petitions.

⁶² If Giovanni Vitelleschi managed to free Corneto from the obligation to take part, his later pacification of Rome, leading to the reintroduction of the games was praised, Paolo di Lello Petrone, *La mesticanza (XVIII agosto MCCCXXXIV-VI marzo MCCCXXXIV)*, in *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, 2nd ed., t. XXXIV, p. 2, ed. by F. Isoldi, Città di Castello 1910, p. 34.

⁶³ H.L. Chretien, *The Festival of San Giovanni. Imagery and Political Power in Renaissance Florence*, New York 1994, p. 40-41.

⁶⁴ G.B. Verci, *Storia della Marca trevigiana e veronese*, Venezia 1786-1791, XVII, p. 66-67.

⁶⁵ There is a vast literature on the festivities surrounding the fest of San Giovanni in Florence, for example C. Guasti, *Le feste di Giovanni Battista*, Florence 1908; L. Heidi, *The Festival of San Giovanni. Imagery and Political Power in Renaissance Florence*, New York 1994.

⁶⁶ Hook, *Siena*, p. 231.

Palii were also held in the *terraferma* cities subject to Venice. Here, however there is perhaps a difference from the Roman and the Tuscan “models”: these races appear to have been organised “from below”, as an expression of loyalty, rather than being imposed “from above” as an expression of authority. On 3 December 1391, Treviso decided to hold a *palio* to celebrate its return to Venetian rule on 13 December 1389⁶⁷. The Bellunese chronicler, Clemente Miari, records that a *palio* was held on 18 May 1405 to commemorate the inauguration of Venetian rule a year before⁶⁸. Clemente also records that on 4 January 1406 the representatives of Padua – a city also recently acquired by Venice – demonstrated their new-found loyalty by offering a *palio* to the winner of jousts and tournaments to be held in the Piazza San Marco⁶⁹. Much later, in 1483, the Venetian nobleman Marino Sanudo recorded with little comment the horse race held in Padua on 18 November to commemorate the city’s surrender to Venice⁷⁰. Such evidence suggests a rather more “consensual” view of the “territorial state” than the one expressed by Rome⁷¹.

Game, as part of ceremony and ritual, can provide revealing – if partial – insights into the nature of the territorial state in late medieval Italy; the case of Amelia confirms that there is much of relevance to be explored in archives outside the more familiar “centres” of research. Giorgio Chittolini would also recognise the fact that the nature of the “territorial state” revealed by such research does not easily conform to a single “model”, which adds to its value.

⁶⁷ Verci, *Storia*, XIX, doc. 17, p. 52.

⁶⁸ C. Miari, *Cronaca bellunese*, Belluno 1873, p. 151-152. The city also celebrated St Mark’s day (p. 145-147). On the chronicler, J.E. Law, *A clerical chronicler of c. 1400: Clemente Miari of Belluno*, in «Renaissance Studies», 2 (1988), 2, p. 173-184.

⁶⁹ *Cronaca*, p. 174.

⁷⁰ *Itinerario di Marin Sanuto per la Terraferma Veneziana*, ed. R. Brown, Padova 1847, p. 25.

⁷¹ This view of the Venetian state will be elaborated in a new edition of Sanudo’s *Itinerario* being prepared in collaboration with G.M. Varanini and M. Knapton.