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*Dennis Romano*

### THE AFTERMATH OF THE QUERINI-TIEPOLO CONSPIRACY IN VENICE\*

On the feast of Saint Vitus, June 15, 1310, noblemen Marco Querini and Baiamonte Tiepolo led a conspiracy against the government of Venice. The conspirators gathered at the Querini and Tiepolo palaces near Rialto and prepared their assault on the ducal center at S. Marco. They divided into two groups, crossed the Grand Canal, and proceeded to the piazza where they planned to meet their fellow conspirator Badoero Badoer who was bringing reinforcements from the mainland. Nothing, however, went as the conspirators planned: Doge Pietro Gradenigo was alerted to the plot and gathered troops in the piazza; a thunderstorm delayed Badoer; and Tiepolo's men became bottled up in the narrow street known as the *Merceria* leading into the piazza. Marco Querini's troops reached the square alone and unaided where they were cut to pieces by men loyal to the doge. Querini himself was killed. Tiepolo's troops retreated back to the family stronghold across the Rialto bridge when their standard-bearer was struck down by a woman who dropped a brick from an overhanging window. The government survived.<sup>1</sup>

\* Some of the research for this essay was funded by a Summer Stipend from the National Endowment for the Humanities and by a Faculty Research Grant from the University of Mississippi. The author would like to thank Dale Kent and especially Edward Muir for many helpful comments and suggestions on an earlier version.

<sup>1</sup> Useful summaries of the conspiracy are found in S. Romanin, *Storia documentata di Venezia*, 3rd ed., 10 vols. (Venice: Libreria Filippi Editore, 1973) 3:21-39; Frederic C. Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973) 114-17; and Guido Ruggiero, *Violence in Early Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1980).

Doge Gradenigo and his councillors acted quickly to punish the conspirators. Badoer was captured and beheaded along with several foreigners. By contrast, Baiamonte Tiepolo was shown surprising leniency. He and several nobles as well as several parish priests involved in the plot were allowed to go into exile. But when the exiles began to break the terms of their confinement and conspire with Venice's enemies in Padua, Treviso, Dalmatia, and elsewhere, a commission of ten men was appointed to keep track of them and eliminate those who violated the terms of their banishment. Bounties were paid to assassins who killed the remaining conspirators, and within about twenty years most of the conspirators either had been assassinated or died. Nonetheless, the government decided to leave the commission in place. The advantages of a small, efficient body became apparent to a government which normally relied on the cumbersome deliberations of the thousand-strong Great Council. The enduring legacy of the Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy was the *Consiglio dei Dieci*, the Council of Ten.<sup>2</sup>

Contemporaries portrayed the conspiracy as a conflict between good and evil, God and Satan. In a letter written on June 17 reporting the plot to various Venetian governors and rectors, Gradenigo referred to Tiepolo as the "most vile traitor and seducer (*seductor*) of iniquities." According to the doge, the *popolani* or commoners who followed Tiepolo were unwittingly beguiled by him. Gradenigo implicitly equated Tiepolo with Satan. By contrast, Gradenigo reported that he and his men fought "manfully" (*viriliter*). They were victorious because they were aided by God himself and by Saint Mark—Venice's patron.<sup>3</sup> In the doge's eyes, a tournament between good and evil was

Many of the relevant documents are published in Ferruccio Zago, ed., *Consiglio dei dieci, deliberazioni miste*, vol. 1, *registri I-II (1310-1325)* (Venice: Il Comitato Editore, 1962), and vol. 2, *registri III-IV (1325-1335)* (Venice: Il Comitato Editore, 1968).

<sup>2</sup> For the legislation making the Council of Ten a permanent part of the government, see Zago 2:267-69.

<sup>3</sup> Andreae Danduli, *Cronica per extensum descripta*, ed. Ester Pastorello, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1938), 12: (part one) 375. In 1324 the Council of Ten wrote to the commune of Treviso encouraging them to expel Giacomo Vendelino, former parish priest of S. Tomà, who had participated in the plot. According to the Ten, Vendelino had been "*diabolico ductus spiritu*." See Zago, vol. 1, register 2, doc. 502. For an analysis of the terminology used by Venetian prosecutors and courts, see Guido Ruggiero, *The Boundaries of Eros: Sex Crime and Sexuality in Renaissance Venice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

fought in the piazza S. Marco as nobles fought against nobles, families against families, and patricians against *popolani*. The piazza, Venice's sacred precinct, was violated; and Saint Vitus's day was dishonored.

The Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy has long interested historians because it represents one of only a handful of conspiracies in the 500-year-rule of the Venetian aristocracy. Historians have explored carefully the motives and goals of the conspirators. The prevailing interpretation is that personal ambition and hatred of Gradenigo motivated the rebels. There is much evidence to support this point of view. The Querini family held a grudge against Doge Gradenigo who they felt had unjustly persecuted them. Marco Querini's son-in-law, Baiamonte Tiepolo, also held a grudge against the doge because Tiepolo's father Giacomo was Gradenigo's chief competitor for the dogeship at the time of Gradenigo's election. Disagreements over policy further divided the conspirators and the doge. During these years, Gradenigo pursued an aggressive policy against Ferrara, warring on the city and the pope its overlord. Many in the Querini-Tiepolo faction, notably the Badoers (who were related by marriage to the Querinis), had interests in the Ferrarese which were hurt by the war.<sup>4</sup> Weighing the evidence, most historians have interpreted the conspiracy as a conflict between rival noble factions in which the goal of the conspirators was to wrest control of the government from the other faction. Typical are the words of Frederic Lane who says that Tiepolo "seems to have been simply a disgruntled noble who would have put his clique of nobles in power and might have proceeded to become the Signore of Venice..." Seen in this light, the Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy fits nicely the mold of factional disputes characteristic of Florence, Genoa, and other Italian communes.<sup>5</sup>

Another interpretation is that the conspirators, especially Baiamonte Tiepolo, were champions of liberty. The Tiepolo family had a long

<sup>4</sup> Lane 114-15. For the Badoer family and their interests on the mainland, see Marco Pozza, *I Badoer: una famiglia veneziana dal x al xiii secolo* (Padua: Aldo Francisci Editore, 1982) 69-74.

<sup>5</sup> Lane 116. Romanin thinks Tiepolo aroused the people as a pretense for his own "eccessiva ambizione" (Romanin 3:38-39). Roberto Cessi argues that the conspiracy revealed that threats to the regime came "non tra il popolo e nel popolo, ma in mezzo a quella classe di governo, che della funzione pubblica aveva fatto titolo di nobiltà..." (Roberto Cessi, *Storia della Repubblica di Venezia*, rpt. in 1 vol. [Florence: Giunti Editore, 1981] 286). Giorgio Cracco states, "la congiura fu soprattutto una spaccatura interna al patriziato..." (Giorgio Cracco, *Società e stato nel medioevo veneziano* [Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1967]) 370, n. 3.

association with the popular party in Venetian society and against the oligarchic party led by Gradenigo. Thus, some works have portrayed Tiepolo as a democratic leader. Typical of these is the anonymous *Squitinio della libertà veneta*, published in Holland in 1612, which argued that Tiepolo was trying to reestablish the democratic age of Venice which was squelched when the aristocrats seized control in the *Serrata* or Closing of the Great Council in 1297.<sup>6</sup>

This essay takes another look at the Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy by examining its aftermath. It explores how the government reacted in the weeks, months, and years following the plot. Although historians have studied in detail the genesis and course of conspiracies in the Italian city-states, less attention has been paid to their aftermaths.<sup>7</sup> In this essay I will show that government policy had a threefold intent: to extirpate or exorcise the familial roots of the conspiracy, to reward *popolani* who remained faithful to the regime, and to restore the society's damaged sense of community. By examining the way the government reacted in the period following the conspiracy, we see how one late medieval society made peace with itself and in so doing gained new insight into the causes of the conspiracy.

The patrician regime established in the *Serrata* of the Great Council was one based on family principles. Venetian nobles enjoyed the right to sit in the council and the concomitant right to hold office because they belonged to a *casa* or kin group. The family stood at the center of Venetian politics with each lineage seeking to ally itself to other lineages through a variety of means including marriage. As we have already seen, the Querinis, Tiepolos, and Badoers were themselves linked by marriage ties.<sup>8</sup>

For the Italian situation in general, see Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979); J.K. Hyde, *Society and Politics in Medieval Italy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973).

<sup>6</sup> The "democratic" age began in the twelfth century when the monarchic powers of the doge were curtailed. Eco O.G. Haitsma Mulier, *The Myth of Venice and Dutch Republican Thought in the Seventeenth Century* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1980) 77-78, 113-17. See also Lane 115-16.

<sup>7</sup> One of the few works to consider the issue is Richard C. Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980) 336-47, *passim*. For some remarks on the aftermath of conspiracies in Venice, see Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) 217-19.

<sup>8</sup> On the familial aspects of Venetian politics, see Margaret Leah King, "Caldiera and the Barbaros on Marriage and the Family: Humanist Reflections on Venetian

Given the familial nature of Venetian politics, it is not surprising to find that the government chose to strike at the families of the conspirators as a way of exorcising the spirit of revolt. On July 25, little more than a month after the conspiracy, the Great Council voted to demolish Baiamonte Tiepolo's palace located in the parish of S. Agostin.<sup>9</sup> The demolition of the Tiepolo palace was heavy with symbolism. Although large Venetian patrician families built palaces throughout the city, many maintained strong emotional attachments to one particular palace known as the *domus magna* or *ca' mazor*.<sup>10</sup> This was the case with the Tiepolo palace at S. Agostin. Baiamonte Tiepolo's grandfather Doge Lorenzo Tiepolo had lived in that palace; there his wife the dogressa had received the artisan guilds at the time of her husband's election as recorded in Martino da Canal's chronicle *Les estoires de Venise*.<sup>11</sup>

In many societies, houses are seen as repositories of the family spirit. The *penates* and *lares* kept the spirit of the Roman house. In fourteenth-century Montaillou each house had its "luck" or "star" which the peasants maintained by saving the nail parings and hair of the deceased *paterfamilias*. The Inquisition burned or razed the houses of heretical families in Montaillou.<sup>12</sup> By razing the Tiepolo palace, the Venetian government struck at the spirit of the Tiepolo family and its association with the city's commoners. Like the Occitan Inquisition, the government hoped to contain the contagion by destroying the house.

On July 29, the government decided that Marco Querini's house at Rialto should be destroyed as well. Yet this posed special problems since, as was also customary among Venetian patrician families, the

Realities," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 6 (1976) 19-20; Stanley Chojnacki, "In Search of the Venetian Patriciate: Families and Factions in the Fourteenth Century," *Renaissance Venice*, ed. J. R. Hale (London: Faber and Faber, 1974) 47-90; Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1980) 81-96.

<sup>9</sup> Romanin 3:30.

<sup>10</sup> Juergen Schulz, "The Houses of Titian, Arentino, and Sansovino," *Titian: His World and His Legacy*, ed. David Rosand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982) 83.

<sup>11</sup> Martin da Canal, *Les estoires de Venise: Cronica veneziana in lingua francese dalle origini al 1275*, ed. Alberto Limentani (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1972) 284-305.

<sup>12</sup> Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: The Promised Land of Error*, tr. Barbara Bray (New York: Vintage Books, 1979) 31-37. See also Jacques Heers, *Family Clans in the Middle Ages*, tr. Barry Herbert (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1977) 104-05.

palace was owned jointly by Marco and Pietro Querini who had participated in the conspiracy, and by Giovanni Querini who was not implicated. To solve this dilemma, the government decided that two-thirds of the palace ought to be demolished, but when they were unable to determine the boundaries of the various parts, they decided to buy Giovanni's share and turn the palace into offices of the *Beccarie*, the officials charged with supervising the city's butchers.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the palace was converted into offices of the very government against which the conspirators had revolted.

The houses of other conspirators were also singled out. The noble Condulmer and Balduino families lost control over their property. The government forbade the families to rent their houses without the permission of the Ten. In addition, the Balduino family received another particularly humiliating punishment. They were ordered to leave the main door of their palace in S. Simeon Profete perpetually open, "on account of the Baiamonte affair." A great leaden chain secured the door, and the Balduino were subject to a 25 *lire* fine for violation of the order.<sup>14</sup> The open door symbolized both the family's inability to control its own property and the state's power to intercede in private affairs.

The government even marked the homes of non-noble conspirators. In 1321 the Council of Ten debated whether or not to prosecute Bertolino Spiati of Florence who defiled an insignia of Saint Mark painted on the home of Marco a Peroli of S. Salvador. According to the Ten, the house, "*que domus fuit proditorum.*"<sup>15</sup> The significance of placing an insignia of Saint Mark on the house of a conspirator is not entirely clear. Vittorio Lazzarini interpreted it as a symbol of infamy designed to stigmatize the inhabitants.<sup>16</sup> Yet there are other possibilities: it may have been a symbol of the inhabitants' reintegration into the

<sup>13</sup> Romanin 30-31. For the *Ufficiali alle beccherie*, see Andrea da Mosto, *L'archivio di stato di Venezia*, 2 vols. (Rome: Biblioteca d'Arte Editore, 1937-1940) 1:164-65. On the joint maintenance of palaces by brothers, see James C. Davis, *A Venetian Family and Its Fortune, 1500-1900* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1975) 2-8.

<sup>14</sup> Vittorio Lazzarini, "Aneddoti della congiura Querini-Tiepolo," *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, Series 2, 10 (1895) 85-89. I wish to thank Andrew Villalon for finding this reference for me.

<sup>15</sup> Zago, vol. 1, register 2, doc. 222. The entire act reads, "Si videtur vobis per ea que dicta et lecta sunt contra Bertolinum Spiati de Florentia occasione scuti picti ad insigniam Sancti Marci positi ad domum Marci a Perolis Sancti Salvatoris, que domus fuit proditorum, quod procedatur contra eum. Vel non. Capta de non."

<sup>16</sup> Lazzarini, "Aneddoti," 87.

community, or, like the open door of ca' Balduino, a symbol of the government's authority over private space. Given the cryptic nature of the Ten's deliberations, it is impossible to provide a definitive interpretation. Perhaps the government intended the insignia to have several meanings.

With the major conspirators either exiled or executed and their palaces suitably disposed of, the government undertook measures which symbolically allowed the remaining Tiepolos and Querinis to rejoin the community. In December 1310, the government ordered the destruction of all Tiepolo and Querini coats of arms displayed on public and private buildings and instructed the families to create new insignia. The new coats of arms signified the recreation of the remaining family members. These were new families untainted by the revolt.<sup>17</sup>

Yet in the succeeding decade, the government continued to act against the conspirators and their kinsmen. In 1320 the government placed bounties on the heads of Baiamonte Tiepolo and Pietro Querini. Querini was assassinated in June 1321, and the government made a public display of paying the bounty. In 1322 the government renewed its attack on Tiepolo, offering a bounty of 10,000 *lire* for his life.<sup>18</sup>

Other members of the Querini family continued to suffer as well. In 1320 Marco Querini's son Zanino reached the age of majority. Although he was too young at the time of the conspiracy to participate in the plot, the Ten voted to send him into exile, "on account of the vile treachery of his father Marco." The wives of the principal conspirators were exiled as well.<sup>19</sup> After the assassination of her husband, Pietro Querini's widow sought permission to return from exile. The patricians decided to grant her wish when she assured them that she had no children by him and that she was not pregnant.<sup>20</sup> Nicolò Querini's widow also was allowed to return to Venice, but she had to promise to remain cloistered in a convent.<sup>21</sup> With the Querini family

<sup>17</sup> Vittorio Lazzarini, "Le insegne antiche dei Querini e dei Tiepolo," *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, Series 2, 9 (1895) 221-31.

<sup>18</sup> Zago, vol. 1, register 2, docs. 140-44, 147, 165, 169, 304, 307, 315.

<sup>19</sup> Zago, vol. 1, register 2, doc. 124; register 1, docs. 5, 20. See also Cracco 372.

<sup>20</sup> Zago, vol. 1, register 2, doc. 137. See also Cracco 372.

<sup>21</sup> Zago, vol. 1, register 2, doc. 215; Romanin 3:36. The government did not want the conspirators or their kinsmen to parade about publicly. In 1321 the Ten voted to allow the body of conspirator Nicoletto Baseggio to be buried in the family tomb in Venice provided the body was returned to Venice at night (*conducendo ipsum de nocte*). Zago, vol. 1, register 2, doc. 211.

reconstituted, the government wanted to be sure that the seed of the conspirators would not reinfiltate the clan.<sup>22</sup>

A half century after the conspiracy, in 1364, the Council of Ten decided to erect an inscribed column at the site of the former Tiepolo palace so that the memory of Tiepolo would survive. The inscription on the column read:

Di Baiamonte fo questo terreno  
E fo per suo iniquo tradimento  
Posto in comun e per l'altrui spavento.  
E per mostrar a tutti sempre seno.<sup>23</sup>

In 1364 the island of Crete rose in rebellion against Venetian domination. Only nine years earlier the city survived another conspiracy—this one led by the doge, Marino Falier, himself.<sup>24</sup> The Ten decided it was a propitious time to remind both patricians and *popolani* of an earlier conspirator and his fate.

In the months and years succeeding the conspiracy then, the Venetian government struck at the familial roots which generated it. The government literally and figuratively eradicated the remnants of the conspirators and made sure they would not reproduce. Those branches of the families which were not implicated were restored to the community, and the *terreno* of “the most vile traitor” was turned into an object lesson for the entire community.

If the punishment and reconstitution of the conspiratorial families was one objective of the government, a second was to reward commoners who remained loyal to the regime. Just as conspirators deserved punishment, so loyalists deserved reward.

One of the critical battles of the conspiracy was fought in the *campo* S. Luca where members of the *scuola grande* or confraternity of S. Maria della Carità and members of the painters' guild repelled the conspirators. In commemoration of their service, both groups received the right to fly their standards atop a flagpole in the *campo*.<sup>25</sup> The

<sup>22</sup> This point is made in Cracco 372.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in W. Carew Hazlitt, *The Venetian Republic: Its Rise, Its Growth, and Its Fall: A.D. 409-1797*, 2 vols. (rpt. London: AMS Press, 1966) 1:550, n. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Vittorio Lazzarini, *Marino Faliero* (Florence: G.C. Sansoni, 1963).

<sup>25</sup> Romanin 3:27. For the significance of flags to *popolani*, see Richard C. Trexler, “Follow the Flag: The Ciompi Revolt Seen from the Streets,” *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 46 (1984) 357-92.

woman who dropped the mortar on Tiepolo's standard-bearer also received the privilege of flying the banner of Saint Mark on Saint Vitus's day and a promise from her landlords, the Procurators of S. Marco, that her rent would never be raised.<sup>26</sup> In these ways, the government publicly honored popular organizations and a private individual who had demonstrated their allegiance to the regime.

A number of other individuals received rewards as well. A few prominent *popolani* including Nicolò Papacizza and Simon de Verardo were inducted into the Great Council along with their heirs.<sup>27</sup> The closing of the Great Council in 1297 created discontent among certain excluded families. In 1300 one of the excluded, a certain Marino Boccono, led a conspiracy against the regime. Tiepolo appealed to the same discontented elements. According to the *Cronaca Zancarola*, the conspirators included, “Baiamonte Tiepolo and some members of cha' Querini and cha' Barozzi and cha' Baseggio and other houses recently added to the council, and they gathered to their side a large part of the *popolo* who had been excluded.”<sup>28</sup> By inducting several families into the Great Council in the wake of the conspiracy, the government defused a potential source of future discord.<sup>29</sup> The government also lowered tensions within the patriciate by distributing the offices which the conspirators had held.<sup>30</sup>

A number of Venetians of very humble status received government-sponsored favors or pardons (known as *grazie*) as recompense for their loyalty. In September 1310 a barber named Zanino received a *grazia* establishing a payment schedule for a fine assessed on him by one of Venice's police forces, the *cinque alla pace*. Twice Zanino had drawn his sword in the piazza S. Marco. In the months following the conspiracy the government carefully regulated the carrying of weapons. Apparently Zanino was a victim of the government's vigilance. Never-

<sup>26</sup> Romanin 3:30.

<sup>27</sup> Archivio di Stato, Venezia (ASV), Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Register 10 (Presbiter), fols. 43r, 89r. Romanin lists several others who were inducted as well. See Romanin 3:29, n. 26.

<sup>28</sup> “Baj. Tiep. co alcuni de cha Querini et de cha Baroci et de cha Baseggio con alcuni altri de le caxade fatte da nuovo del consegio, haviando renduto appresso di sì (sé) una gran parte del popolo che s'era romasi de fuora...” (quoted in Romanin 3:39, n. 72). For the Boccono conspiracy, see Lane 113.

<sup>29</sup> The government used this device on other occasions when the city was under stress. In the aftermath of the disastrous War of Chioggia, thirty families were inducted into the Great Council. See Chojnacki 54.

<sup>30</sup> Romanin 3:30. See also Ruggiero, *Violence* 195 n.11.

theless, the Great Council voted the favor to Zanino because "he did not hurt anyone and he is a poor man and because he conducted himself well on the day of the troubles" (*in die rumoris*).<sup>31</sup>

A *grazia* awarded a month later was more explicit about the "day of troubles." On October 6, 1310, the government voted to award a post in the office of the *giustizieri novi*, the officials who supervised the city's food supplies, to a certain Nigerno who, among other things, "on the feast of Saint Vitus fought manfully in the piazza S. Marco against the enemy."<sup>32</sup> In February 1311, a cutler named Benedetto also received a *grazia* establishing a payment schedule for a fine levied on him by the *cinque alla pace*. Again one of the reasons given for the favor was that he "carried himself well on the feast of Saint Vitus."<sup>33</sup>

In the *grazie* process, individuals seeking favors petitioned the government and nobles guided the petitions through the various government councils. Since few of the original petitions are extant, it is impossible to know whether the idea of rewarding *popolani* with favors on account of their service during the conspiracy originated with the petitioners themselves or with their noble advocates.<sup>34</sup> What is clear is that the Great Council accepted this argument and viewed the *grazie* as a good way to reward the lower classes for their loyalty. The argument remained persuasive for some time. In 1317 a cobbler named Tomaso received a *grazia* because he suffered a wound on Saint Vitus's day.<sup>35</sup> Both as individuals and as corporate entities then, the *popolani* of Venice received rewards for their service to the patrician regime in its hour of danger.

A third task before the government was to restore the sense of civic concord and community damaged in the revolt. On June 25, just ten days after the plot, the Great Council passed a law proclaiming the feast of Saint Vitus a public holiday to be celebrated with an annual procession by the doge to the church of Saint Vitus across the Grand Canal.<sup>36</sup> In this way the government honored the saint whose intercession helped defeat the conspirators. As Richard Trexler and Edward

<sup>31</sup> ASV, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Register 10 (Presbiter), fol. 25v.

<sup>32</sup> Register 10 (Presbiter) fol. 27v.

<sup>33</sup> Register 10 (Presbiter) fol. 36v.

<sup>34</sup> For the *grazie* procedure, see Dennis Romano, "Quod sibi fiat gratia: Adjustment of Penalties and the Exercise of Influence in Early Renaissance Venice," *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 13 (1983) 251-68.

<sup>35</sup> ASV, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Register 12 (Clericus/Civicus), fol. 138r.

<sup>36</sup> Romanin 3:29, n. 25.

Muir have shown, processions held in the aftermath of crises served to regenerate society and regain authority. The procession to Saint Vitus became a way for the patrician government to reassert its authority over Venetian society.<sup>37</sup>

Over time, the pilgrimage to the church of Saint Vitus became an important civic ritual occasion and took on an interesting history of its own. In 1354 the Great Council, noting the high cost of constructing the bridge across the Grand Canal used in the procession, authorized the purchase of a piece of property belonging to Pietro Taiapietra which, due to its location, would reduce the cost of the bridge by as much as one-third.<sup>38</sup> In 1375 and again in 1417 the Great Council took steps to make the procession more dignified. The procession had grown to large proportions, for among the participants were the five *scuole grandi*. According to the council, one stretch of the processional route (between the parishes of S. Maria Zobenigo and S. Maurizio) was particularly "arduous and dangerous." This led to an undignified procession. In 1375 the government and the parish of S. Maurizio together purchased part of a house which belonged to Ugolino Scrovegni in order to construct a street and two bridges at the site. And in 1417, the Procurators of S. Marco sold the remaining property to the government and parish in order to create a more commodious street. The Great Council noted that the improvement would bring "great honor" to the city. By altering the city's urban form, the government created a more efficient and therefore more dignified procession which better honored Saint Vitus. Seen in conjunction with the razing of the Tiepolo palace and the marking of other palaces, the reworking of the processional route represented a powerful assertion by the government of its authority over both private property and urban space. The government demonstrated that it, not individual families, controlled the city.<sup>39</sup>

The government also took steps to embellish the church of Saint Vitus itself. In February 1311 the Great Council voted to spend 5 *lire* on the purchase of religious vessels for the church.<sup>40</sup> And in July 1314 the council passed a law ordering that the pilasters from the razed

<sup>37</sup> Trexler, *Public Life* 336-47; Muir 217-18, 256, n. 16.

<sup>38</sup> ASV, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Register 19 (Novella), fol. 40v.

<sup>39</sup> ASV, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Register 22 (Ursa), fol. 21v. I want to thank Edward Muir for his help in interpreting the government's action in this decision.

<sup>40</sup> ASV, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Register 10 (Presbiter), fol. 36v.



Tiepolo palace at S. Agostin be used to adorn the portal of Saint Vitus.<sup>41</sup> The pilasters served, like the golden horses on the façade of S. Marco, as trophies of victory. Yet they did more. They provided symbolic closure on the Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy. With the transfer of the pilasters, the house of the conspirator was modeled into the house of Saint Vitus. The threshold of the devil became the threshold of the Lord.<sup>42</sup>

These actions reveal the government's desire following the conspiracy to reassert its authority and restore the city to a state of grace by honoring its holy patrons.<sup>43</sup> Blood was shed on the saint's feast day and piazza S. Marco, Venice's sacred center, was disturbed. Equating rebellion with sin, Venetians tried to atone ritually for the offenses and sought by a series of transpositions (the creation of new insignia, the transfer of the pilasters) to restore the city to wholeness.

Surveying the actions taken by the government in the aftermath of the conspiracy, we see how one late medieval society made peace with itself through a combination of punishment, reward, atonement, and celebration. I would suggest that an examination of the aftermath sheds new light on the causes of the conspiracy as well. The government's concern with extirpating the familial roots of the conspiracy indicates that it was, at heart, a clash between families and factions within the patriciate as modern historians have suggested. Yet the government's preoccupation with rewarding the lower classes both as corporations and as individuals indicates that there is an element of truth in the other interpretation of the conspiracy as well. Tiepolo was not a "democrat" in any modern sense of the term (to suggest as much would be absurd), yet there was a class element to the conspiracy which modern historians too frequently ignore. Many *popolani* pinned their hopes for change not on a radical transformation of society, but on the figure of a nobleman, in this case a nobleman whose family was associated with the populace.<sup>44</sup> This may explain

<sup>41</sup> Register 10 (Presbiter), fol. 128v. The threshold of a house was particularly significant. It could and did serve as a "magic frontier." See P. Bourdieu, "The Berber House," in *Rules and Meanings: The Anthropology of Everyday Knowledge*, ed. Mary Douglas (Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1973) 109.

<sup>42</sup> For S. Marco as a repository of trophies, see Lane 75.

<sup>43</sup> Trexler, *Public Life* 76-77.

<sup>44</sup> This was common in late medieval revolts. See Michel Mollat and Philippe Wolff, *The Popular Revolutions of the Late Middle Ages* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973) 299.

the government's leniency in its treatment of Tiepolo. From the government's point of view it was better to exile Tiepolo than to execute him and risk stirring up the populace even further. The patricians recognized the class tensions unleashed in the Querini-Tiepolo revolt and chose through a series of highly public measures to demonstrate that they, too, had the interests of the populace at heart. Through the procession to and embellishment of the church of Saint Vitus, the patricians tried to restore the sense of concord and community to which all Italian communes aspired.<sup>45</sup>

The Querini-Tiepolo conspiracy remained embedded in the Venetian consciousness with the procession to Saint Vitus serving as a yearly reminder of its import. It came to the forefront again in the years following the failed coup d'état of Doge Falier and in other moments of danger. Almost 100 years after the event, we witness the final act of reconciliation. In 1406 the Great Council voted to allow members of the Querini family to sit in the Council of Ten. Noting that all the conspirators and their successors were dead, the Great Council decided the time had come to remove the last stigma attached to the reconstituted Querini clan.<sup>46</sup> The community was fully restored when the family which had instigated the conspiracy was finally allowed to sit in the *Consiglio dei Dieci*.

<sup>45</sup> For the ideal of concord, see Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969) 218-20.

<sup>46</sup> ASV, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Register 21 (Leona), fol. 161r.