Katalin Prajda

Network and Migration in Early Renaissance Florence, 1378-1433

Friends of Friends in the Kingdom of Hungary

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Acknowledgments

My interest in expatriate Florentines in Hungary goes far back in time as I lived in the small settlement of Ozora, Pippo Scolari's former residence. The study of his network has been inspired by different sources, including numerous remarkable contributions to the scholarship of early Renaissance Florence, most of which will appear within the text. I would like to acknowledge here those scholars and organizations that supported the writing of this book in various ways. During my undergraduate studies, Attila Bárány and István Feld, then professors at the University of Miskolc, gave essential support at the very beginnings of my research on Pippo and his castle in Ozora. Professors of the Art History Department at the Eötvös Loránd University also contributed to my knowledge about the artistic connections between Hungary and Florence.

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Introduction

'Friendship is useful to the poor, gracious to the lucky,
comfortable to the rich, necessary to families,
to principalities and to republics.'[1]

In February 1426, Rinaldo di messer Maso degli Albizzi, one of the ambassadors to Sigismund of Luxembourg, King of Hungary, departed from the city of Florence for Buda with Nello di Giuliano Martini da San Gimignano, the jurist doctor. Upon their arrival, they stayed at the house of the Florentine Nofri di Bardo de'Bardi, officer of the royal mint. During their visit, the ambassadors contacted several other Florentine merchants who worked in different areas of the Kingdom of Hungary. Meanwhile, they arranged a meeting with the King; they also greeted Hungarian dignitaries of Florentine origins, among them the bishop, Giovanni di Piero Melanesi, and the baron, Pippo di Stefano Scolari. Rinaldo and Nello were welcomed at the residence of Pippo Scolari, key figure of the Florentine community in Buda. Pippo and Rinaldo, one of the leaders of the dominant Albizzi faction, were political allies and neighbours back in Florence, but an even stronger reason for the invitation might have been the fact that the two men were about to become in-laws due to the upcoming engagement between Rinaldo's eldest son and one of Pippo's nieces. In Ozora, the ambassadors admired the general splendour of Pippo's castle, and met the Florentine woodcarver, Manetto Amannatini, who was employed at that time as the baron's architect. On their way back to Florence, Rinaldo and Nello were accompanied by servants of other Florentines living in Hungary; the servants carried messages for them and guaranteed their safety within the borders of the Kingdom.[2]

During Sigismund of Luxembourg's reign, many Florentine citizens were drawn to work in the Kingdom of Hungary for various economic and political reasons. Analyzing the social network[3] of these politicians, merchants, artisans, royal officers, dignitaries of the Church, and noblemen is the primary objective of this book. The Florentines' network in Hungary,

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1 '[...] L'amicizia sta utilissima a' poveri, gratissima a' fortunati, comoda a' ricchi, necessaria alle famiglie, a' principati, alle republice [...]' Alberti, *Della famiglia*, p. 106.

2 *Commissioni di Rinaldo degli Albizzi,* II, pp. 552-594.

3 A social network, in my understanding, is a group of individuals linked together in pairs by a single type of relation. In its more complex multiple-network form, these individuals are interconnected by multiple, overlapping types of relations.

discussed in the book, was concentrated at its centre on one catalytic figure: the Florentine-born Pippo Scolari and his most intimate male relatives. I believe that these three men, Pippo, his youngest brother, Matteo, and their cousin, Andrea Scolari, had the most significant influence on Florentines' migration to the Kingdom of Hungary during the first three decades of the fifteenth century. This concentrated network structure was a result of the centralized political system in the Kingdom of Hungary, dominated by the royal court and its members. Pippo, as baron of the *aula regis*, obtained a social status, incomparable to those of his Florentine contemporaries, which allowed him to elevate others in his network.

The success of the network can be seen in the various ways in which its members were connected to each other and especially to the centre of the network. Some of these individuals developed weak ties among each other, characterized by a single type relation to one of the key figures of the Scolari family; meanwhile others established strong ties with them by multiple links of kinship, marriage, politics, neighbourhood, and business partnerships. I shall refer to members of this network as 'friends', defining in this way the existing personal connections set among them by their common political interests, neighbourhood proximities, marriage alliances, kinship ties, patronages, and company partnerships.

In the literature, there has been much research dedicated to simple historical networks and how they affect various public and private spheres. More rare are those historical case studies, which allow us to trace back the impact of a multiple set of relations. In this book, I shall look both descriptively at patterns of connectivity and causally at the impacts of this complex network on cultural exchanges of various types, among these migration, commerce, diplomacy, and artistic exchange. In the setting of a case study, this book should best be thought of as an attempt to cross the boundaries that divide political, economic, social, and art history so that they simultaneously figure into a single integrated story of Florentine history and development.[4]

Historical Networks

The complexity of relations built among individuals has been a subject for network scientists for decades. One of the pathbreaking studies in this field was by anthropologist Jeremy Boissevain, titled *Friends of Friends*, a

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4   Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, p. XIV.

network-centred analysis of Malta's society, published in 1974. By challenging the traditional view, which saw man as a member of a social group, society, or institution, Boissevain proposed to take a closer look at the network of relations that defines social space. He suggested that social groups must be understood as networks of choice-making individuals, rather than faceless abstractions.[5]

More than thirty years later, Paul Douglas McLean used the title of Boissevain's book as the chapter title in his monograph that dealt with strategic interaction and patronage in Renaissance Florence. McLean presented there an exhaustive analysis of the rhetoric used in letters of recommendation and how such letters were employed as a constitutive means to connect friends to friends of friends.[6] Throughout his study, he concentrated on networking as a social process, but actors in the networks played only a secondary role in his argument. As McLean has pointed out, 'Friendship (*amicizia*) was the loosest and the most ambiguous framework Florentines had at their disposal to apply to a multitude of different relationship constructions.'[7] These relations, in his understanding, were embedded in various sets of networks of politics, kinship, marriage, and business, a phenomenon previously little studied by specialists. Building upon Richard Trexler's claim, McLean argued that Florence, indeed, was a society of friends.[8]

McLean started his career with social scientist John F. Padgett, the first scholar to apply methods of network science to Florentine Renaissance history. In his article, addressing the robustness of Cosimo de'Medici's social circle, Padgett analysed quantitative data of considerable size, obtained from secondary literature, to show the organizing principles that governed the two competing political parties of the pre-Medici era.[9] Since then, Padgett's interest has shifted towards original archival sources and his most recent works are concerned with the complexity of Florentine networks, embracing politics, society, and economics during the time span which expands from the Ordinances of Justice (1282) to the end of the Republic (1530). Padgett's primary focus is to uncover historical processes connected to socially embedded inventions.[10] As part of this inquiry on the numerous inventions that emerged in Renaissance Florence, Padgett has opened

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5 Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, pp. 7-9.

6 McLean, *The Art of the Network*, p. 152.

7 Ibidem, p. 15.

8 Ibidem, p. 152. 'Networks of friendships were the building blocks of social discourse and of politics […]' Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, p. 139.

9 Padgett and Ansell, 'Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici'.

10 Padgett, 'Transposition and Refunctionality', p.168.

important discussions about the technical novelties in Florentine trade and banking, such as the evolution of the credit system.

In their co-authored paper, *Economic Credit in Renaissance Florence*, Padgett and McLean, following Ronald Weissman's definition of friendship, discuss the concept of 'instrumental friendship', meaning both that Florentines tended to form friendship ties with their business partners, and that doing business together usually provided solid ground for the formation of friendships.[11] Padgett and McLean also argued that the concept of friendship was different in Florence than it is today. 'Florentine friendship was more ritualized and stereotypical and less a unique meeting of unique souls than we believe modern friendship to be.'[12] Therefore, friendships between businessmen, by Padgett and McLean's definition, commonly implied economic transactions or even partnership ties.

Florentine friendships also extended beyond business. Anthony Molho, in his book on nuptial ties among Florentine elite families, has interpreted marriages as 'alliances' and strategic choices of adult male members of two families, which they made in order to strengthen their social relations. Marriage ties, therefore, in a more abstract sense, might be seen as indicators of friendship bonds between individuals and their nuclear families.[13] Molho has also established the social elite of early Renaissance Florence to be around 410 families, with a core of 110 families, which were mainly engaged in trade and were eager to build personal relations among each other.[14] Some of these lineages traced their history only to the beginnings of the Albizzi period.

On the subject of neighbourhood, studies conducted by Nicolas Eckstein, Francis W. Kent, and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber have demonstrated that several of these prosperous lineages tended to cluster into well-defined areas within the city, a feature particular to the medieval urban landscape, which remained an organizing principle in the early fifteenth century.[15] As

11   'The Renaissance need for friendship and kinship extended far beyond the need for companionship. The fragmented nature of the Renaissance city and the Renaissance economy made recommendations, introductions, and access to networks of reliable third-party contacts and networks of friends of friends necessities.'. Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence,* p. 28. Padgett and McLean, 'Economic Credit in Renaissance Florence'.

12   As McLean has conceptualized it: 'Friendship was a relation in which both affection and interest were implicated.'. McLean, *The Art of the Network*, p. 152.

13   Molho, *Marriage Alliance*. The contemporary Leon Battista Alberti talked about *coniugale amicizia*. See Alberti, *I libri della famiglia*, p. 93.

14   Molho, *Marriage Alliance*, Index.

15   Eckstein, 'Neighborhood as Microcosm'. Ibidem, *The District of the Green Dragon*. Kent, *Household and Lineage*. Ibidem, 's and Neighborhood'. Klapisch-Zuber, 'Parenti, amici e vicini'.

Eckstein has put it: 'In Florence, sociability and the physical environment were symbiotically linked.'[16] Therefore, neighbourhood proximity might also be considered as an indicator of friendship ties among nuclear families, likely interwoven with other social ties, as well, like economic cooperation, marriage, and political alliance.

Finally, studies have revealed that political alliances often came about from neighbourhood proximity, which served as solid grounds for the formation of friendships among individuals and their nuclear families.[17] In today's societies, close links between political actors, business, and kin are sometimes related to the activities of corrupt underground organizations that aim to control, by their social network, local and even international politics and the economy. In early Renaissance Florence, these intersections, as we shall see throughout the analysis, were part of everyday practice.[18] In Florentine social units, actors worked in continuous interaction with each other, through economic, kinship, political, and neighbourhood ties, to create a multi-stranded multiple-network of friends.

Despite their innovative approach to the complex ways Florentines were linked to each other, scholars have not exhausted the possibilities in the analysis of these networks. Renaissance Florence, even for McLean, has provided only a case study for unveiling networking processes, rather than a historical subject itself.[19] Besides Padgett's studies, research that combines sources of social, economic, and political history and that make use of quantitative as well as qualitative methods, have not reached convincing conclusions so far. The fourth most important sphere in which Florence proved to be a centre of innovation in the early Renaissance period was the visual culture. This book, therefore, proposes to add artistic networks to Padgett's multiple-network array of kinship, economics, politics, and neighbourhood.

Therefore, by merging the scientific results of the studies mentioned above, the present monograph addresses the questions of network and migration on four levels: politics, economy, society, and the arts. It takes as

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16   Eckstein, 'Neighborhood as Microcosm', p. 220.

17   Kent, *The Rise of the Medici*.

18   'Ties of friendship, residence, and kinship were absolutely necessary for social and psychic survival, but such ties were not without great hazard. The dense network of Renaissance social bonds placed great strain on such relations. One's brother, neighbour, or friend was also likely to be a business partner, competitor, client, fellow district taxpayer, and potential challenger for communal office or local prestige.' Weissman, *Ritual Brotherhood in Renaissance Florence*, p. 29.

19   McLean, *The Art of the Network*, Chapter 1.

a starting point the hypothesis that Florentine elite society was a network of friends of friends, constituted primarily by merchants who belonged to the 410 families established by Molho. They formed business partnerships, marriage ties, neighbourhoods, and political alliances among each other and also turned into the most important patrons of the visual culture.

Sources and Structure

In a way similar to Peter Burke's comparative study on the social elites in Venice and Amsterdam, this book adopts a prosopographical approach.[20] Its narrative is composed of short histories of single Florentine families and organized into chapters according to their social relations to catalytic figures of the network. The genealogies themselves are structured around brief biographies of those family members who established social links to the Scolari or to their most immediate relatives and who were related in some way to the Kingdom of Hungary. Family histories include factors like provenience, political status and political participation, trade, neighbourhood, as well as wealth of the lineage.[21] This information has helped me reconstruct the social status of the individuals studied, along with their political influence, and the spatial connectedness to the families they allied with. The genealogies also mention if the family had any previous connections to the Kingdom of Hungary. The biographies address the same issues on the level of individuals, emphasizing also possible career models they might represent.

The book opens with a chapter on Florentine networks in early Renaissance Europe, particularly in the Kingdom of Hungary, to provide the reader with a short comparative history of Florentine businessmen abroad and to place the Scolari's social network into a broader historical context. The next chapters deal with the four possible circles of the social network, centred on the catalytic family. The centre of the network, that is, the history of the Scolari family, provides the subject of the second chapter. Meanwhile, the third chapter links those families that shared either blood or marriage ties with them. The subsections discuss those families related to Scolari relatives

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20   Burke, *Venice and Amsterdam*, p. 14.
21   As Burke has pointed out, merchant-entrepreneurs tended to continuously invest their money into business, instead of keeping it safely in immovable properties, like feudal lords. Therefore, assessing their wealth based on their tax declaration may not entirely represent the reality. Ibidem, pp. 48-49.

by marriage or kinship ties. The fourth chapter examines the existing ties between the Scolari and those families whose members became the Scolari family's trusted men in the Kingdom of Hungary, but with whom they might not have shared any blood ties.[22] In the fifth chapter, we follow the development of personal ties between the Scolari and some of the leading artisans of the time who carried out commissions for them either in Florence or in Hungary. The book concludes with some remarks about the correlation between network and migration.

The terms *amico* ('friend') and *amicizia* ('friendship') are rarely present in sources concerning the history of Florentines in the Kingdom of Hungary. One obvious explanation might be that only a very limited number of documents of private interests survived from the persons being studied. Because of this and because of the availability of well-researched studies on the subject, more theoretical discussions about friendship will be omitted. However, the book discusses several conceptual problems with setting the case study of Florentines in Hungary within a broader framework that embraces key questions of the early Renaissance historiography.

By doing so, the present study intentionally exhibits signs of literal-mindedness, and builds its claims on a massive quantitative and qualitative data set, obtained from primary written documents. The archival sources cited in the analysis are predominantly housed in the National Archives in Florence (*Archivio di Stato di Firenze*). A smaller number of archival materials came also from the Hungarian National Archives in Budapest (*Magyar Országos Levéltár*), the National Archives in Venice (*Archivio di Stato di Venezia*), the National Archives in Treviso (*Archivio di Stato di Treviso*), the Vatican Secret Archives (*Archivio Segreto Vaticano*), the Archives of the Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence, and from the Archives of the Fraternità dei Laici in Arezzo.

I incorporate into the present study the results of more than a decade of research in the Florentine Archives, occurring between 2004 and 2017. During this period, I systematically went through all the major archival units, which included material regarding the so-called Albizzi period (1382-1434). Information on the political participation of Florentines and the diplomatic relations of the Republic with foreign powers come mainly from the fonds of *Consulte e Pratiche, Signori, Dieci di Balìa,* and the *Otto di Pratica* and *Signori, Dieci di Balìa, Otto di Pratica.* The secret councils of the *Consulte e Pratiche* were the most important forum for members of the political elite

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22 For the definition of first and secondary network zones, see: Boissevain, *Friends of Friends*, p. 24.

to discuss the foreign policy of the city. The 31 registers, which cover the period, have been retained as sources of primary importance in determining the political activity of the studied families and other noted individuals by providing an extensive database of all the speakers in the history of the secret councils, starting from 1348. The fonds of the Signori, like the volumes of the secret councils, called the *Consulte e pratiche*, was produced by the Florentine chancellery, and it is divided into various sub-fonds, including several sections dedicated to the letter exchanges between the chancellery and the outgoing ambassadors. Similarly, three separate fonds of the *Signori*, *Dieci di Balìa*, and the *Otto di Pratica* and *Signori, Dieci di Balìa, Otto di Pratica* deal with foreign policy and ambassadorships.

Besides the registers of the secret councils and the various materials on Florentine embassies, the matriculations of the five major guilds – Merchants' (*Arte di Calimala*), Por Santa Maria, later Silk (*Arte di Por Santa Maria*), Wool (*Arte della Lana*), Moneychangers' (*Arte del Cambio*), and Doctors' (*Arte dei Medici e Speziali*) – helped me analyse political activity and influence, as well as create a list of those who held guild offices. However, out of the five, only four guilds have surviving statutes, matriculations, and registers of the guild consuls. Most of the persons in this study belonged to the Merchants and Por Santa Maria Guilds, but only the Wool Guild has more diverse archival material, which includes court cases (*Atti e sentenze*) as well.

I have also used the corresponding volumes of the Merchant Court (*Mercanzia*) to see the elections for the consuls of the Court. These documents have proven to be essential in the reconstruction of business activity. The hundreds of volumes produced by the Merchant Court during the time period will not be studied thoroughly in a project of this size. Nonetheless, I have sporadically checked the most promising sections of its collection, including the correspondence of the Merchant Court, acts produced in ordinary (*Atti in cause ordinarie*) and extraordinary cases (*Atti in cause straordinarie*), and the money deposits made by individual merchants and companies (*Libri di depositi*).

The image of individual business activity will also be drawn based on original tax declarations of Florentine citizens, including the two earliest complete city censuses of 1427 and its corrections in 1429/31 and in 1433. Thanks to the groundbreaking quantitative work of David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch, the first *Catasto* has been the subject of numerous studies over the decades; the second *Catasto*, no less important and accurate, has remained marginal to the historiography.[23] By creating a database

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23   Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leur familles.*

comparable to the 1427 Catasto, I have managed to obtain statistical information on the entire population of the city as well as on the single families and individuals included in the present study.[24] The database comprises information on the total assets (*sustanze*) of the households, their tax (*catasto*) or stipulated tax (*composto*), household size (*bocche*), and their location (*gonfalone, popolo*). The data will be compared to a similar database on the 1378 Estimo, one of the earliest complete tax records. I have completed the three databases: the speakers of the secret councils, the 1433 Catasto, and the 1378 Estimo, in the framework of John F. Padgett's research projects between 2007 and 2013.

Similarly, it was part of his project to catalogue the companies listed in the 1433 Catasto. With this, I could reconstruct business ties as well as establish the total number of partnerships mentioned as operating in Buda, compared to the number of Florentine companies set up in other cities.[25] The various family archives also offered material of considerable quantity on business and inheritance. From this point of view, the fragmented Scolari archives, located among the documents of the Badia fiesolana (*Corporazioni Religiosi Soppresse dal Governo Francese*), the Del Bene, the Guadagni, the Pitti (*Ginori-Conti*), the Medici (*Mediceo avanti il Principato*), the numerous documents regarding the Buondelmonti family (*Diplomatico, Rinuccini*), and the Carte Strozziane are probably the most significant collections.

In several cases, I could identify the notaries who worked for various members of the network and the documentation (*Notarile Antecosimiano*), which mainly concerns inheritance, marriage, and dowry. For questions of inheritance and legal rights, the registers of the city officers supervising the inheritance of minors (*Magistrato dei Pupilli avanti il Principato*), as well as the repudiations (*Repudie di Eredità*) and emancipations (*Notificazione di Atti di Emancipazione*) proved to be crucial.

Because of the scarcity of documents regarding the Por Santa Maria Guild, into which silk manufacturers were most commonly enrolled, I have also consulted the surviving account books of those silk manufacturing companies that are housed by the collection of the *Ospedale degli Innocenti*. In this way, I have managed to piece together fragments that show the ways silk manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and goldsmiths worked together in producing high-quality silk fabrics for the domestic and the international market.

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24   *Online Catasto of 1427.*
25   Earlier, a similar database was created by Paul McLean which catalogues companies of the first Catasto.

Primary written sources of a lesser number came also from the Venetian National Archives regarding those Florentine merchants who had business interests both in the *Stato da Mar* and in the Kingdom of Hungary. Venetian documents of an economic nature are far less varied and voluminous than their Florentine counterparts. The only collection that might shed some new light on Florentines' trade is that of the court cases of the *Giudici di Petizion.*

The Vatican Secret Archives and especially the collections of the *Registri Vaticani* and *Registri Lateranensi* have preserved sources on Hungarian-Florentine dignities of the Church. This collection also includes documentation on Florentine businessmen who served popes as collectors of ecclesiastical revenues and worked as bankers in the papal court. Some of these references have already been published by Pál Lukcsics, covering the period between 1417 and 1431; meanwhile others remain only in manuscript, inaccessible to the wider public.[26]

Most of the sources located in the Hungarian National Archives have already been edited by the research team of the Magyar Medievisztikai Kutatócsoport, currently based in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Their indispensable series, titled *Zsigmondkori Oklevéltár*, includes all the documents produced during the period between 1387 and 1426 of Sigismund of Luxembourg's reign in Hungary. These documents were issued mainly by the royal chancellery and other *loca credibila* and are limited to topics concerning property ownership, royal privileges, and office holdings. For the remaining eleven years of Sigismund's reign, until 1437, I have used the database that incorporates the indexes and guides of the Hungarian National Archives about the archival material produced before the Ottoman Occupation (1526).[27]

Besides the already mentioned unpublished Italian documents, a considerable number of quantitative and narrative sources have appeared in printed form, which provided me with further details on the lives of some of the individuals in this study. Among the databases, the one of Florentine office holders, edited by David Herlihy, Robert Burr Litchfield, Anthony Molho, and Roberto Barducci, provided additional information on political participation and, in some cases, even on births.[28] Meanwhile, the documentation on Venetian privileges, obtained by strangers and collected

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26   *XV. századi pápák oklevelei.* In the nineteenth century, Vilmos Fraknói conducted research in the Vatican Secret Archives concerning our period. Tusor, *Magyar történeti kutatások a Vatikánban.*

27   *A középkori Magyarország levéltári forrásainak adatbázisa.*

28   *Online Tratte of Office Holders.*

by Reinhold C. Mueller, proved to be useful in the reconstruction of the circle of the Florentines who settled in Venetian territory.[29] Among the narrative sources are various Florentine and other north Italian chronicles as well as the already lost travel accounts of Rinaldo di messer Maso degli Albizzi, ambassador to Sigismund of Luxembourg in 1426.[30]

While the book draws mainly on a wide range of primary archival material, it also uses, to the extent possible, visual sources ranging from decorative arts to architecture, located either in Tuscany or Hungary. These objects might allow us to get a sense of the role the Scolari network played in cultural exchange between early Renaissance Florence and Sigismund's Hungary.

Centres and Peripheries

Because of the impressive social-structural, scientific, and artistic novelties that emerged precisely during the decades when the story of this book takes place, I will use as a key chronological term the 'Early Renaissance', emphasizing the importance of these innovations in the narrative.[31] In this period, Florence is undoubtedly considered to be a major innovative centre, which may allow it to claim some importance in world history.[32]

Peter Burke argues that the terms 'centres' and 'peripheries' should be applied within the context of the European Renaissance only by referring to a given historical context, for example, to the spread of a style. From this particular point of view, the Tuscan state was, without question, the centre and the Kingdom of Hungary constituted a remote periphery.

However, by using a more global understanding of the relations between the Florentine Republic and the Kingdom of Hungary during the Early Renaissance period, many aspects beyond artistic innovation could be considered, including diplomacy and international politics, so the question of centre and periphery might seem an anachronism. It might project back onto the unbalanced political-economic power relations between contemporary eastern and western Europe. The terms 'East' and 'West' often appear in scientific discourses on the Renaissance in the modern sense – the central West and the peripheral East.

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29   *Civesveneciarum*.
30   *Commissioni di Rinaldo degli Albizzi*. III. The manuscript has various fragmented copies, produced in a consecutive period. ASF, CS, 79; 81.
31   On the scholarly debate about the use of the terms 'Late Medieval' and 'Early Renaissance', see Burke, *Changing Patrons*, pp. 2-3.
32   Padgett, 'Transposition and Refunctionality', pp. 168-169.

Linguistic and archival limitations might also explain why the Kingdom of Hungary, despite its important role in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century European politics, is underrepresented in Renaissance European historiography. Martyn Rady, in his book on medieval Hungary, underlines: 'Hungary's medieval greatness is hardly matched by its documentary *Nachlass*.'[33] Furthermore, the Hungarian language of most of the secondary literature is inaccessible to many, making it complicated for outsiders to get a more accurate sense of the history of medieval Hungary.

Even though the present study is unquestionably Florence-centred, it discusses relations with the Kingdom of Hungary as politically non-egalitarian and culturally ambiguous, since they were built between a Tuscan republic, which was governed by merchants, and a major European kingdom, which was ruled by the soon-to-be Holy Roman Emperor. By framing the relations with Hungary in this way, this study reflects a compromise between Burke's centre-periphery concept and Rady's definition of Hungary's importance in European history.

Names of Individuals and Places

In most of the scientific works dealing with Renaissance history, it might purely be a technical question how names of individuals and places appear within the text. In studies discussing the history of the Carpathian basin before the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (1918), however, such a seemingly minor issue always carries with it another notion, the nationalization of the story to be told. The territory of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary today forms an integrated part of various neighbouring nation-states, so historians use the names of medieval places and persons according to their own linguistic traditions, which might lead to misinterpretations and inaccuracy.

Martyn Rady, one of the very few scholars of medieval Hungary, who could hardly be accused of being partial in his nationalistic sentiments, consequently uses Hungarian names for places that fall beyond the actual borders of the present-day Hungary, but he excludes those located in what is now Croatia, which then was a subject of the Hungarian crown through a personal union. In the case of places located in contemporary Hungary, the reader will find their names as they appear in specialist scholarship

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33   Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*, pp. 8-9.

dealing with the medieval Kingdom.[34] As for the others, which fall beyond the borders of today's Hungary, I retain their current names only if we have written information at our disposal that they already existed as early as Sigismund of Luxemburg's reign.[35] The rest of the names will appear in Latin, the administrative language used in the Kingdom, denationalizing in this way the issue as much as possible.[36] Their current names will be mentioned in brackets, facilitating their identification in the secondary literature.

As for personal names, Rady has translated kings' names into English, which I am going to follow. However, he also converted the names of Hungarian noblemen into English, adding the 'of' to their family names in place of the Latin *de* or the Hungarian *I* or *Y* suffixes.[37] This step may considerably facilitate reading for the English-speaking audience, but it may also make it challenging to find these persons in scholarly literature. To avoid this, I am going to write their names in Hungarian, except those who originated from either the Kingdom of Croatia or the Dalmatian Coastline.[38]

Finally, I shall call the state that existed in the Middle Ages the Kingdom of Hungary, distinguishing it from the current national state of Hungary. Although Florentine merchant society during the studied period was ethnically and linguistically far less varied than Hungarian society, tracing layers of identity in the case of Florentines living in Hungary is highly problematic. Therefore, discourse on identity will also be omitted. The terms 'Florentine' and 'Hungarian' appearing in the book will always refer to political belonging rather than to ethnicity. In the second case, the category shall include all subjects of the Hungarian crown, regardless of their ethnicity and linguistic traditions: Croats, Germans, Hungarians, Serbs, Slovaks, and Vlachs, in order to produce a story of inclusion.

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34   For example, *Fehérvár* and not Székesfehérvár.

35   See, for example, the town of Kremnica (Körmöcbánya in Hungarian) in Upper Hungary, today in Slovakia, inhabited mostly by Slovaks already in that period.

36   Medieval Oradea (today Romania), named *Várad* by the Hungarian-speaking population, will be mentioned by its Latin name; *Varadinum*.

37   For example, Lawrence of Ják and John Hunyadi. See Rady, *Nobility, Land and Service in Medieval Hungary*, pp. 99, 116.

38   For example, instead of Tallóci Matkó, who was of Ragusan origins, the reader will find Matko Talovac.