

THE FLORENTINE BISHOP'S RITUAL ENTRY
AND THE ORIGINS OF THE MEDIEVAL
EPISCOPAL *ADVENTUS**

Numerous historians have commented upon the elaborate ritual performed when a bishop of Florence first entered the city ⁽¹⁾. Documented from 1286 to 1584, the ceremony was a procession that went from the city gate to the episcopal palace, but it was punctuated by numerous stops at sacred sites and usually took two days to complete. It included four enthronements, at least two feasts, one mass, a ritual marriage, several exchanges of gifts, a special honor guard, and, usually, a great deal of dissension. Constant bickering over participation in the ritual was what produced many of the sources illuminating it ⁽²⁾. Although the Florentine episcopal *adventus* is perhaps extraordinary in the richness of its documentation, it was not unique. Elaborate rites of episcopal entry have been noted in other northern Italian cities — Bologna,

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(1) E. SANESI, *L'Antico ingresso dei vescovi fiorentini*, Florence, Artigianelli, 1932; R. TREXLER, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence*, Ithaca - London, Cornell University Press, 1980, p. 270-74; R. BIZZOCCHI, *Chiesa e potere nella Toscana del Quattrocento* (Annali dell'Istituto storico italo-germanico. Monografia, 6), Bologna, Il Mulino, 1987, p. 34-36; G. DAMERON, *Conflitto rituale e ceto dirigente fiorentino alla fine del Duecento*, in *Ricerche Storiche*, 20 (1990), p. 263-86; S. MANTINI, *Lo Spazio sacro della Firenze medicea*, Florence, Loggia de' Lanzi, 1995, p. 89-95; G. ZARRI, *Recinti: Donne, clausura e matrimonio nella prima età moderna*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 2000, p. 316-346.

(2) The route of the ritual and its sources are discussed in M. C. MILLER, *Urban Space, Sacred Topography, and Ritual Meanings in Florence: the Route of the Bishop's Entry, c. 1200 -1600*, in *The Italian City from Antiquity to the Present*, eds. A. M. McLEAN, B. DEIMLING, 3 vols., Cambridge, University Press, forthcoming; see also, DAMERON, *Conflitto rituale* [see note 1], p. 264-66; ZARRI, *Recinti* [see note 1], p. 320-24.