

AdI 2016
Speaking Truth to Power from Medieval to Modern Italy

Guest-Editors:

Jo Ann Cavallo (Columbia University) and Carlo Lottieri (Università di Siena)

We seek original, unpublished essays exploring instances in which literary characters and historical figures from the medieval to the modern period articulate personal, political, economic, or religious freedoms or otherwise challenge the established power of the state at the risk of their livelihood or their very lives.

In a court trial in which she faced a death sentence for adultery, Boccaccio's Madonna Filippa wittily defends herself by refuting the legitimacy of a law made without her consent, proclaiming self-ownership of her body and evoking free market principles (*Decameron* 6.7). She thereby not only successfully regains her freedom but also succeeds in overturning an unjust law. Yet those who defend their rights and liberties against the powers that be have not always been quite so fortunate, especially in real-life scenarios. Just a few generations later, the humanist Poggio Bracciolini penned an account of Jerome of Prague's pre-execution discourse which eloquently argued for intellectual freedom as it condemned the abuses of the Roman Curia. As many other critics of the Church also discovered, speaking out against unsavory papal practices could have fatal consequences even if one did not attempt to enunciate alternative metaphysical or scientific views as Giordano Bruno and Galileo later did.

While expressions of the right to personal, intellectual, or religious liberty presented an implicit threat to the political establishment, some authors aimed their comments and criticisms—whether in their own voice or through the invention of literary characters—directly against the machinations of the ruling elite. Well aware of the peril to one's person in confronting princely power, Castiglione advised courtiers to use salutary deception like a doctor who sweetens the rim of a medicine cup (*Book of the Courtier* 4.10). Machiavelli's disregard for such tactics in his passionate critique of the *ottimati* in "Ricordi ai Palleschi" (1512) may have contributed to his imprisonment and torture in 1513 as an alleged conspirator planning to overthrow the Medici government.

We encourage essays that address underlying ideological premises or make use of political and social theory in treating imagined or actual expressions of personal or community rights in the face of institutionalized power. Attention to intellectual traditions that valorize human action, such as libertarian philosophy and the Austrian School of economics, is especially welcome. In contextualizing occurrences in which writers dared to confront power structures across the centuries, we also aim to shed light on similarities and differences in the peninsula's shifting social, economic, and political configurations. Literary or historical examples to consider might include Alberti's *Momus*, Tarabotti's *Tirannia paterna*, Manzoni's *Storia della colonna infame*, Morante's *La storia*, and Pasolini's *Scritti corsari*.

The deadline for submission is September 30, 2015; the volume will be published in the fall of 2016. All contributions will be refereed. Essays, not to exceed 25 double-spaced pages, can be written in Italian or English, and should conform to the style-sheet criteria set forth by *Annali d'Italianistica* (<http://ibiblio.org/annali/norms.html>).

Prospective contributors should address inquiries to both guest editors:

Jo Ann Cavallo: jac3@columbia.edu

Carlo Lottieri: lottieri@unisi.it