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Changing Craft in the Early Renaissance Florentine Citizens and the Profession of Arms (1427–1430)

Summary: Between the end of the 14th century and the beginning of the 15th century, the Republic of Florence was almost constantly engaged in war. As a result, public debt in a short time increased from 1 million to 3 million florins. The most difficult time for the Republic occurred between the years 1425 and 1433. In this phase, authorities experimented with new forms of taxation to cope with the growing expenses, including the cadaster (*Catasto*) created in 1427, pursuant to which Florentine citizens were forced to list all their assets in addition to other personal information.

Based on the information provided by this document, it has been possible to identify all Florentine citizens who were soldiers at the time. Furthermore, thanks to the data extracted from the accounting records of the Florentine government of 1430, it has been possible to evaluate an interesting change in society: several artisans, of various ages, abandoned their professions to become soldiers. According to the documents, such a choice was seen as a chance to one's economic condition thanks to the considerable wages and good working conditions offered by the Republic compared to those associated with work as artisans.

Keywords: Military labour, Renaissance Florence, Renaissance warfare, Renaissance army, Siege of Lucca

Introduction

Since the middle of the 14th century, the *Comune* of Florence initiated an expansionist policy that, in just over half a century, enabled Florence to subjugate more than two-thirds of present-day Tuscany and an important portion of Romagna. In the first phase, Florence conquered the territory of Mugello, and in the following decades won



dominance over many important towns such as Pescia, Prato, Pistoia, San Gimignano, Volterra, and San Miniato.¹ At the beginning of the 1380s, Florence's influence was extended to Arezzo, Montepulciano, Pisa, and Cortona, followed by the conquest of Porto Pisano and Livorno. The *Comune* of Florence thus became what historiography has referred to as a 'territorial state'.²

Florentine expansionism in those years was the cause of a growing concern not only for its neighbours such as Lucca and Siena but also for Milan. As a result, the Florentine Republic became involved in multiple conflicts against the Visconti of Milan, who on the one hand wanted to limit Florence's sphere of influence and on the other intended to expand Milan's own dominions to the south. The first phase of the armed conflict between Florentine and Milanese armies, occurred between 1390 and 1402. While the death of Gian Galeazzo Visconti brought the end to this phase of the conflict, peace did not last long – the wars between Florence and Milan had already resumed by 1423 under the impetus of Filippo Maria Visconti and continued until the middle of the 15th century, involving all the political actors of central and northern Italy.

In April 1428, peace agreements were signed between almost all the political entities that had taken part in the conflict. However, Florence decided to exclude from the treaty the lord of Lucca, Paolo Guinigi, as in the eyes of the Florentines, he was guilty of providing support to Milan despite being formally allied with Florence. Thus, the conflict took a new turn: seeing an opportunity to finally gain dominance over Lucca, Florentine troops laid siege to the city in December 1429.³ After months of siege, the Lucchese decided to ask the Duke of Milan for help. However, Filippo Maria Visconti could not intervene without breaking the peace with Venice and starting a new war. He therefore decided to lend his support indirectly: he relieved Niccolò Piccinino of his position as captain of the army so that he could be hired by Genoa, which in turn declared war on Florence and went to its aid.⁴ On the morning of 2 December 1430, the Florentine army moved onto the meadows between Lucca and the Serchio River while Piccinino's army was on the opposite bank.⁵ The Florentine army suffered a major defeat and retreated toward Pisa. Although the siege of Lucca was over, a new war had just begun. In the following months, both Milan and Venice entered the conflict

1 Florence already had formal control over some of these towns but during this period it consolidated its predominant position in the discussed areas.

2 On the formation of the Florentine territorial state, I refer to the major historiographical publications on this subject: Becker B. 1968; Brucker G.A. 1977; Cohn S.K. Jr. 1999; Fasano Guarini E. 1978; Chittolini G. 1979, 225–265; Zorzi A. 2000, 6–31.

3 Bracciolini P. 1476, 165; Montauri P. di T. 1931–1939, 814.

4 Biglia A. 1731, 135–136.

5 Graziani 1850, 346; Bracciolini P. 1476, 170; Stella G. 1730, 1304. The victory on the banks of the Serchio River was greatly celebrated in Lucca, and the occasion was celebrated until the second half of the 18th century. See: Tommasi G. 1847, 203–207. A poem was also composed about Piccinino's exploits, transcribed in: Pellegrini A. 1899, 382–409; Pellegrini A. 1900, 329–357; Pellegrini A. 1901, 230–243 and 686–696; Pellegrini A. 1902, 301–313.

directly, followed by all their allies. In April 1433, after three and a half years of conflict, peace was finally reached. Expenses related to waging war required increasingly more money and thus resulted in the imposition of unprecedented tax burdens, especially in the late 1420s and early 1430s. Interestingly, despite the fact that the war turned out to be the costliest armed conflict of the entire 15th century, leading to levels of fiscal pressure hitherto unheard of, the peace agreements stipulated that all of the stolen territories were to be returned, on pain of exclusion from the treaty.⁶

The Composition of the Ordinary Florentine Army in 1430

In this context of the ongoing war, the organisation of the army and territorial defence became the fundamental matter, as well as one of the main expenses, of the Republic of Florence. By analysing the expenses incurred in 1430 by the *Camera del Comune*, the main office aimed at the administration of state revenues and expenditures, it has been possible to identify the composition of the Florentine army in those years. Thus, the army can be divided into two main parts: the ordinary one – whose main task was defence – and the extraordinary one, composed of mercenaries. In the ordinary army, there were three subgroups: soldiers and constables for life; castellans with their hired men, and finally contingents of men deputed to the surveillance of specific localities of great strategic (both economic and military) importance.

The number of soldiers and constables for life was relatively low: there were 16 soldiers, of whom only 3 were Florentines,⁷ and 5 constables, of whom only one was a Florentine citizen.⁸ Dependent on the constables were additional troops of soldiers divided between infantrymen (*palvesari* and *balestrieri*) and cavalrymen – 72 men in total. Unfortunately, records do not provide further information on their origins, but in all probability they were inhabitants of the Florentine dominions or citizens of Florence.

The title of soldier and constable for life turns out to be peculiar for two reasons: the first is the great difference in pay compared to other hired men, which could range from a minimum of 4 florins gross per month to a maximum of 100 florins on

⁶ Pecini T. 1931–1939, 847; Bracciolini P. 1476, 180.

⁷ ASFi.CC.SC 214. From Montecchio: Jacopo di Macherone, Lorenzo Neri and Francesco di Zochio, 13v–14r. From San Rufino: Antonio di Cenni nicknamed Caviglia, Verdiano d'Andrea; Domenico di Francesco, 13v–14r. From Usigliano: Bergho di Pasquino, and the son Lorenzo di Bergho di Pasquino, Guido di Cecco, 14r. Da Lugnano, countryside of città di Castello: Nardo di Giovanni and his son Santo di Nardo, 14r. From Settignano: Piero di Francesco del Foresta, 2v. From Bodigliano: Baldino di Lorenzo, 7r. From Firenze: Benedetto di messer Piero Gaetani, his son Giovanni, and relative Galeazzo di Cecco Gaetani, 14v.

⁸ ASFi.CC.SC 214. Tomaso di Giovanni from Pellegrino, 41r; Jacomello di Martino from Fronzola, 42v. ASFi.CC.SC 219. Benvenuto and Giano di Giusto di Bonacci from Bruscoli, 51v; Cionetto di Salvatore Bastani from Firenze, 43v.

an annual basis.⁹ Secondly, the mode of enlistment: the profession was particularly attractive given the high pay, but the methods of entry were very strict. In fact, one could only become a soldier or a constable for life by receiving the title after the death of his father, which was followed by a resolution of the Signoria, or by obtaining such a position because of special merits. We find the latter case documented for Cionetto di Salvatore Bastari, thanks to the memoirs of Francesco di Cino Rinucci. In June 1412, Cionetto was in Bologna where he learned of a possible coup d'état hatched by some members of the Alberti, Ricci, and Strozzi families and other Florentine outsiders, conniving to secretly enter the city with a retinue of armed men for the celebrations of San Barnaba with the aim of killing the priori.¹⁰ Cionetto reported to the authorities what he had learned and – since the danger was thus avoided – he was rewarded with 5 ‘spears’ (or *lance*, was a tactical military unit composed by three horsemen) in his service and a life salary as constable equal to the considerable sum of 5 florins gross per month for him and 14⅓ florins for each *lancia*.¹¹ From the cadastral records (*Catasto* of 1427) we learn of another benefit granted to Cionetto as a reward for his services to the Republic, namely that he was to be exempt from all taxation.¹² This privilege was extremely rare given that out of more than 10,171 families, only 8 enjoyed the same benefit.¹³

A final question that needs to be answered concerns the actual tasks fulfilled by the hired men and constables for life. While in the case of constables, the large number of men in their employ indicates to us that in all likelihood they actually performed specific defensive tasks within the city of Florence, in the case of ‘soldiers for life’, their assignment seems to have been more honorary, i.e., a reward in recognition of their merits rather than an actual responsibility for defensive actions. Thanks to the *Catasto* declarations of the three Florentine citizens of the Gaetani family, we can see that they were well-off. The two brothers, Benedetto and Giovanni di Piero Gaetani, had a combined wealth of more than 7,000 florins each, while Galeazzo had 1,200 florins.¹⁴ The fact that all of them declared an age close to 80, well above the maximum age to be a member of the ordinary Florentine army, testifies to the fact that they were not actively serving in active office.

As regards the fortified localities and the men designated for their protection, Florence’s city statutes of 1415 offer considerable information on the 130 *castellanie*

⁹ The florin indicated is that of the account used in state accounts, equal to 4 *Lire* (£). 1 £ = 20 *solidi* (*s*); 1 *s* = 12 *denari* (*d*).

¹⁰ Rinuccini F. di C.1840, LI.

¹¹ ASFi.CC.SC 214, 43r.

¹² ASFi.C 73, 385r.

¹³ For the family’s number in the *Catasto* of 1427 see: Conti E. 1984, 147, 155, 173.

¹⁴ ASFi.C 5, 39r; ASFi.C 75, 424r e 430r.

(castles, fortresses, citadels, fortified structures) defending the dominions.¹⁵ These are divided according to their importance into four categories.¹⁶ The superiority of one *castellania* over the others was based on its strategic and economic importance, which was reflected in the records in the form of higher pay to the men delegated to its custody, their number, as well as different ways of electing castellans and tenure of the castellan's office.

To be elected as a castellan, one had to meet five requirements common to all public offices in the Republic of Florence: to be a Florentine citizen, be enrolled in an *Arte* (guild), be of the Guelph party, one's family had to be in good standing with the payment of taxes and, finally, a minimum age was prescribed, which varied depending on the office.¹⁷ According to the usual way of electing officials for Florentine public offices, these were drawn randomly from specific bags containing the names of citizens eligible for that office. In the case of the most important *castellanie*, a vote was followed by the *Signori* and Colleges who could approve or reject the nominations.¹⁸

The statutes also show us that not all *castellanies* depended economically on the *Camera del Comune*. Indeed, it is possible to see how some specific offices responsible for defence, such as the *Dieci di Pisa* and the *Sei di Arezzo*, had to use part of their income to maintain the *castellanie* in the territory entrusted to them. In addition to them, some communities were also directly responsible for paying the hired men and castellans, although the latter remained elected by Florence.¹⁹

This valuable information turns out to be crucial for understanding the small number of *castellanie* mentioned in the Florentine fiscal documentation of 1430, amounting to only 52. Therefore, to count the total expenditure for *castellanies* and soldiers, as well as their specific number, it is necessary to make a comparison between the outlays of the *Camera del Comune* of 1430 and the information contained within the city statutes of 1415. With regard to hired soldiers, in 1430 we find in the records 80 *palvesari* (infantry with a great shield called a *palvese*), 110 crossbowmen, and 120 infantrymen, for a total gross annual expenditure of £ 42,718.20.²⁰ To this number, we must add an additional 90 *castellanie* (these had in fact increased since 1415)

15 The total number of *castellanie* has been revised to Picchianti S. 2022, 7, then reported in Guidi G. 1981, 247–251.

16 SP 3. 1783, 192–211.

17 Zorzi A. 1997, 201.

18 The rules governing the castellans can be found in: SP 3. 1783, 164–192.

19 Picchianti S. 2022, 8–9.

20 When infantrymen without any specialisation were indicated in the records from the discussed period, it meant that the number of crossbowmen and *palvesari* to be hired was at the discretion of the castellan. However, crossbowmen should never have been less than 1/3 of the total. In the event that the castellan preferred to have a greater number of crossbowmen than the established minimum, the total pay to be distributed among the hired men would not have been increased in any case. See: ASFi.SUA.CP 6, 56v.

with 33 *palvesari*, 41 crossbowmen, and 456 infantrymen, for a total gross annual expenditure of £ 65,568.00.

The total expenditure for the maintenance of the *castellanie* thus amounted to 108,286.00 £ gross annually, of which only 40% depended directly on the central coffers of the state. It should be pointed out that although the *Camera del Comune* did not contribute directly to a large part of this expenditure, the fact that other local offices or communities were responsible for raising the necessary money and using it for these purposes directly resulted in a reduction in revenue to the state coffers as well. The decision to fractionalise the economic management of the castellanies thus simply had a functional purpose of faster payment for those in charge but, in fact, did not result in any reduction in spending.

Although we know from the norms on castellans how they were selected only from among Florentine citizens, as for the hired men we know only that these came from the dominions and never from the neighbouring area they would go to oversee. In fact, their names and geographical origin are not indicated within the accounting records of the *Camera del Comune*.²¹ Other sources that might have shed light on these professionals, such as lists drawn up at reviews, have not survived to the present day. For this reason, it has not been possible to identify the Florentine citizens who served as hired hands.

The item of expenditure that most directly affected the outlays of the *Camera del Comune* in terms of defence was that of additional hired men allocated to specific fortifications. We find some specific regulations in the already-mentioned Florentine city statutes of 1415. At that time, the *Dieci di Pisa* could in fact hire up to 200 men for the defence of the Pisan citadel alone, in order to make it an impregnable stronghold both from external enemies but especially to defend Florentine supremacy over the city itself.²² Similar regulations are also found in the rubrics for the *Sei Ufficiali di Arezzo*.²³

In 1430, there were additional soldiers in 5 specific localities: Cittadella di Pisa and Arezzo, Castello di Cortona, Fortezza di Castrocaro, and Torri di Porto Pisano.

These additional soldiers totalled 475, distributed between the different localities (Table 1). The majority were stationed in Pisa (333 men, a higher number than provided for in the 1415 regulations), which had evidently changed its function and required greater protection. Just as with the *castellanie*'s soldiers, pay varied according to the importance of the locality. Their pay was slightly higher than that of the *castellanie*'s hired men (Table 2). Payments to them were bestowed individually and not

21 As Pirillo has shown, this rule was already present in the mid-14th century in Florence but also in the Visconti domains at least from the beginning of the 15th century. Pirillo P. 2018, 164; Zambrieri T. 1988, 111.

22 SP 3. 1783, 117.

23 For example, the hiring of a constable with four infantrymen was envisaged for the castle of Pistoia, as was the case for the castle of San Miniato SP 3. 1783, 90, 102.

through intermediaries as was done through castellans or constables for their men. This form of contract provides more qualitative information, such as the individuals' names and the locations these troops were listed.

Table 1. Additional soldiers for specific locations (1430)

No.	Location	Crossbowmen	<i>Palvesari</i>	Total
1	Citadel of Pisa	250	83	333
2	Citadel of Arezzo	36	42	78
3	Cortona	23	2	25
4	Castrocaro	24	1	25
5	Porto Pisano	8	6	14
	Total	341	134	475

Table 2. Remuneration in the defensive field (1430)

No.	Profession	Currency	f	£	s
1	Soldiers and constables for life	gold	–	5→8	
2	Crossbowmen	gold	3 ½		
3	<i>Palvesari</i>	silver alloy	–	9	10
4	<i>Lance</i> (3 horsemen)	gold	14 ½	–	
5	Castellans	gold/silver	100→25	225→25	
6	Crossbowmen	silver alloy	–	16→10	
7	<i>Palvesari</i>	silver alloy	–	12→8	
8	Infantry	silver alloy	–	10→8	
9	Additional soldiers	–	–	–	
10	Crossbowmen	silver alloy	–	16→12	
11	<i>Palvesari</i>	silver alloy	–	14→10	

At Pisa, Castrocaro and Arezzo, a total of 87 Florentine citizens were present, accounting for about 18% of the total number of additional soldiers.²⁴ There were 57 crossbowmen stationed in the citadel of Pisa, 3 in Castrocaro, and 8 in Arezzo. There were 14 *pavesari* in Pisa and 6 in Arezzo. Most of these were crossbowmen, which was a profession of choice mainly due to the fact that they received on average 25% more salary than a *pavesaro*. As for the location of employment, it is confirmed that most soldiers preferred Pisa, probably again because of the higher pay compared to other locations.

The total expenditure for such hired men turns out to be the highest for the *Camera del Comune* among those for the defence of domains, amounting to 76,454.80 £ gross annually.

Prosopography of the Florentine soldiers in 1427 and comparison with the data of 1430

In order to compare the information gathered so far for 1430 with the situation known for 1427, it will be necessary to refer to the *Catasto* of citizens, which not only provides quantitative data but also allows a precise prosopographical analysis of the military professionals. In the records from 1427, 60 soldiers of the Republic were mentioned (Table 3).²⁵ Most of those individuals listed in the *Catasto* who stated their place of work were stationed in Pisa (45%), followed by Arezzo (20%), and then Livorno and Cortona (5% and 3%, respectively). An additional 9% guarded other specific locations, while 18% did not mention their postings. On the one hand, the prominence of Pisa and Arezzo is justifiable because of the larger number of hired men present there, but on the other hand, it could have been a specific choice of Florentine citizens attracted by higher earnings than the wages offered in other cities. Most of them lived in the neighbourhood of S. Giovanni (43%), followed by S. Spirito (27%), S. Maria Novella (17%), and finally S. Croce (13%).

In terms of the assets they owned, it is possible to see that almost all of them had private investments, while public investments did not exceed 10%, placing them in the average range of other Florentine craft or construction workers. Half of the residents of S. Spirito and S. Croce neighbourhoods owned private property, while only 1/3 of those in S. Giovanni and 1/4 of those in S. Maria Novella owned real estate.

²⁴ ASFi.CC.SC 214–219.

²⁵ There were also 5 mercenaries and 3 constables. Mercenary soldiers: Mariano di Ciocco, quarter of S. Spirito, Scala (ASFi.C 64, 327r); Agnolo di Leonardo, quarter of S. Maria Novella, Leon Rosso (ASFi.C 76, 243v); Antonio di Monte and Zanobi di Zanobi, quarter of S. Maria Novella, Leon Bianco (ASFi.C 77, 199r–199v and 375r); Piero di Bartolo, quarter of S. Giovanni, Leon d'Oro (ASFi.C 78, 622r). Constables: Iacopo di Mino Malavolti from Siena, quarter of S. Croce, Bue (ASFi.C 69, 588v); Giusto di Giovanni, quarter of S. Maria Novella, Unicornio (ASFi.C. 75, 298r); Mariano di Tommaso Deti, quarter of S. Spirito, Scala (ASFi.C 64, 331v).

Table 3. Soldiers of the republic in 1427 Catasto

F.	cc.	Name	Gonfalone	Work Place	Tot. Weath	Tot. Tax. Weath	Age	Bocche
Santo Spirito								
64	215v	Agnolo and Giovanni di Piero di Bernardo Paganelli	Scala	Castle of Montecalvoli	218	126	26, 22	6
64	398r	Bernado di Bindo d'Azzolino Viviani	Scala	Fortress (generic)	60	0	38	1
64	273r	Giovanni di Bartolo	Scala	Citadel of Arezzo	117	13	75	7
64	273v	Guasparre di Marco	Scala	Citadel of Pisa	167	119	40	5
65	320r-320v	Domenico di Giovanni Belfardelli	Nicchio	Fortress of St. George	306	229	55	2
65	396r-396v	Meo di Niccolò Falconi	Nicchio	Fortress of Vado	286	161	48	1
65	431r-432r	Rinieri di Ridolfo di Pagolo Lotti	Nicchio	Citadel of Pisa	967	933	35	6
65	435r	Senso d'Antonio	Nicchio	–	32	24	24	3
66	321v	Meo di Salvestro d'Alinari	Ferza	Citadel of Pisa	35	35	25	1
66	337r	Nanni di Stefano	Ferza	Citadel of Pisa	35	14	38	5
66	360r	Piero di Michele di Tano d'Alinari	Ferza	–	36	33	79	1
67	235v-236r	Cecco di Leonardo from Spicchio	Drago	Fortress of Livorno	159	119	37	3
67	290v-230v	Giovanni di Noso Fantoni	Drago	–	374	327	72	7
67	305r-305v	Giovanni di Piero Minucci	Drago	Castle of Bibbona	280	265	45	3
67	436r	Monna Papera widow of Carlo di Domenico	Drago	–	73	9	45	4
67	466r	Vanni di Luca	Drago	Castle of Arezzo	30	20	56	2
Santa Croce								
68	178r	Andrea Martino Totti	Carro	Citadel of Pisa	48	40	44	6
68	180r-180v	Antonio Francesco	Carro	Citadel of Pisa	225	21	55	2
68	296v-	Iacopo di ser Bartolomeo Oradini	Carro	–	1494	393	55	3

Table 3. cont.

<i>F.</i>	<i>cc.</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Gonfalone</i>	<i>Work Place</i>	<i>Tot. Weath</i>	<i>Tot. Tax. Weath</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Bocche</i>
68	291v–292r	Tommaso del maestro Piero de Pulci	Carro	Castle of Campiglia	862	825	54	3
69	486r	Bernardo di ser Giovanni Carcherelli	Bue	Citadel of Pisa	44	44	79	1
69	367v	Luca di Iacopo Nelli	Bue	Citadel of Pisa	114	74	45	3
73	319v	Matteo di Zanobi Bartoli	Ruote	–	250	50	25	1
73	263r	Giovanni di Lievo	Ruote	Citadel of Pisa	55	55	79	1
Santa Maria Novella								
75	330r	Lorenzo di Lapo Bernardi	Unicorno	Citadel of Pisa	95	0	40	6
76	328r	Giovanni di Iacopo	Leon Rosso	Citadel of Cortona	163	145	44	12
76	350v	Michele di Baldino	Leon Rosso	Citadel of Arezzo	78	78	55	4
76	350r	Michele di Bartolo	Leon Rosso	Citadel of Pisa	100	100	65	5
76	378r	Piero d'Agnolo	Leon Rosso	Citadel of Pisa	27	27	60	1
76	383v	Salvadore d'Omo	Leon Rosso	Castle of Livorno	50	19	79	1
77	31r	Agnol odi Stefano	Leon Bianco	Citadel of Pisa	35	35	79	1
77	30v	Antonio di Bernardo	Leon Bianco	Citadel of Arezzo	97	34	28	2
77	285r	Iacopo di Benedetto Amieri	Leon Bianco	–	80	24	26	1
77	271v	Iacopo di Iacopo Sozzi	Leon Bianco	Citadel of Arezzo	94	45	49	8
San Giovanni								
78	213r	Andre di Casella	Leon d'Oro	Citadel of Pisa	310	295	79	2
78	250v	Biagio di Vannino	Leon d'Oro	Citadel of Pisa	31	31	30	1
75*	592v	Giorgi odi Bartolomeo	Leon d'Oro	Citadel of Pisa	47	47	79	1
78	572v	Giovanni di Pagoletto	Leon d'Oro	Citadel of Arezzo	131	71	79	1
78	565r	Guardi di Giovanni	Leon d'Oro	Citadel of Pisa	35	29	26	1

Table 3. cont.

F.	CC	Name	Gonfalone	Work Place	Tot. Weath	Tot. Tax. Weath	Age	Bocche
78	343r-343v	Iacopo di Giovanni de Medici	Leon d'Oro	Castle of Cortona	25	16	64	4
78	361v-362r	Lando d'Antonio dal Pogale della Lugha	Leon d'Oro	–	100	0	65	2
78	386r	Nannino d'Andrea	Leon d'Oro	Citadel of Arezzo	40	15	34	1
78	386r	Niccolò di Giovanni	Leon d'Oro	Citadel of Pisa	30	15	31	1
78	480	Simone e Cristofano di Leonardo Rendinelli	Leon d'Oro	Citadel of Pisa	26	0	25	2
75*	657v	Ugolino d'Uco d'Uco	Leon d'Oro	Citadel of Pisa	500	428	60	7
79	430r	Domanico di Matteo	Drago	Castle of Livorno	39	0	40	5
80	303 v	Chimento d'Andrea	Chiavi	Citadel of Pisa	39	39	50	1
80	319v	Ciatino di Bartolomeo from Gambassi	Chiavi	Citadel of Pisa	376	255	40	4
80	431v	Michele di ser Lolo	Chiavi	Citadel of Pisa	0	0	28	4
80	472r	Nanne di Filippo	Chiavi	–	46	6	48	6
80	523v	Simone di Meo from Vinci	Chiavi	–	142	142	50	1
81	158r	Antonio di Iacopo degli Ubaldini	Vaio	Citadel of Arezzo	40	10	46	8
81	158r	Antonio di Michele	Vaio	–	38	30	79	1
96*	95v	Cecco di Leonardo	Vaio	Citadel of Pisa	104	74	40	3
81	224v	Domenico di Francesco	Vaio	Citadel of Arezzo	42	5	79	1
81	258v-259r	Geri del Sera	Vaio	Citadel of Arezzo	168	146	83	4
96*	132r	Gherardo di Giovanni	Vaio	Citadel of Arezzo	36	36	45	1
81	308v-309v	Mariotto di Lorenzo Brandi	Vaio	Castel of San Chimento	774	585	48	2
96*	105r	Maso di Leonardo from Spicchio	Vaio	Citadel of Pisa	209	118	50	2
81	307r	Matteo di Francesco	Vaio	Citadel of Pisa	140	140	47	2

Source: ASFi, *Catasto*; * ASFi.MCG.CC

Table 4. Artisans who became soldiers of the republic in 1430

F.	cc.	Name	Gonfalone	Profession	Tot. Wealth	Tot. Tax. Wealth	Age	Borche
Santo Spirito								
67	379v	Michele e Gherardo di Lazzero	Drago	–	174	145	65	8
Santa Croce								
72	277v	Bernardo d'Antonio	Leon Nero	–	328	164	29	2
73	250r	Filippo di Francesco	Ruote	Shoemaker	–	–	25	3
73	292v–293r	Francesco di Matteo di Palmerino	Ruote	–	325	296	25	7
Santa Maria Novella								
74	130r	Bernardo di ser Michele di Iacopo Tucci	Vipera	–	157	155	26	3
76	344r	Lorenzo di Simone Pacini	Leon Rosso	–	75	75	15	1
77	199r	Antonio di Carlo	Leon Bianco	Shoemaker	850	847	44	2
San Giovanni								
78	226r	Antonio di Nanni	Leon d'Oro	–	–	–	40	5
78	245v	Biagio di Francesco	Leon d'Oro	Broker	–	–	62	2
78	313r–313v	Falco di Bonacorso	Leon d'Oro	Leather seller, saddler	21	–	60	8
78	319v	Francesco di Cambio	Leon d'Oro	Shoemaker	–	–	21	4
79	562v–563r	Stefano di Piero	Drago	Combed raw wool	–	–	62	2
80	286v	Benedetto d'Agnolo	Chiavi	Shearer	237	237	40	8
80	444v	Matteo di Simone	Chiavi	Cloth bleacher	–	–	43	4
80	478r–475r	Niccolò di Boninsegna	Chiavi	Brick layer	883	873	24	4
80	519r	Simone di Giusto	Chiavi	Carpenter	32	32	22	1

Source: ASFi, *Catasto*

The highest wealth per capita was that of S. Croce residents, more than double that of the runner-up, the S. Spirito neighbourhood. These two, however, are similar in terms of taxable wealth per capita, while the situation remains the same for S. Maria Novella and S. Giovanni. The higher wealth of the inhabitants of S. Croce is perhaps attributable to their higher average age, which was around 54.5 years.

Among the identified soldiers, two declared what profession they held before they changed trades: Domenico di Francesco was formerly an apothecary, and Gherardo di Giovanni was formerly a shoemaker.²⁶

Comparing the data of *Camera del Comune* in 1430 with those of the *Catasto* of 1427, we can see, first of all, how the number of Florentine citizens being professional military men increased from 61 to 87, with a percentage increase of about 43%. However, an even more remarkable figure is the number of new soldiers: these constitute 85% of the total Florentine military force. This finding, though, must be contextualised by the limitations of this analysis. As already asserted, we do not have data that could clarify for us the origin of the men hired by the castellanies for defence duties. For this reason, it's possible that the men not present in the records of the *Camera del Comune* but whose declaration to the *Catasto* has been identified, could have been deployed at some. This hypothesis would logically imply that in fact there were many more active soldiers than the Florentine citizens mentioned in the records that year as soldiers of the Republic. Unfortunately, the later *Catasti* records are not helpful in terms of better defining this figure since due to the impoverishment of the population because of the high taxation, many families did not even report their assets to the *Catasto*, declaring themselves 'destitute'. In addition, where such information was provided, we see a significant reduction in financial statements made in individual documents.

For this reason, one of the key questions related to the above-mentioned state of affairs is that concerning the motivations that prompted a considerable number of Florentine citizens to take up the military trade or to change their profession. In order to obtain more information on this socioeconomic aspect, I searched for the names of the new soldiers of the Republic in the *Catasto* of 1427 to determine who these people were. However, this analysis has two main limitations: firstly, a considerable number of homonymous cases did not allow for a better identification of these citizens. Secondly, some of them could have been part of a family (a taxation unit) as minors or simply brothers or other relatives of the head of the family, making their identification almost impossible.

In the face of these difficulties, 16 'new' soldiers were identified with a considerable degree of certainty (Table 4). These are never master artisans who owned a workshop but rather workers employed in manufacturing or construction trades. Among them, we find a fair number of workers in the wool industry. Although wages for this kind

²⁶ Rispettivamente ASFi.C 81, 224v; ASFi.MCG.CC 96, 132r.

of work were not particularly low on average (Table 5), it should be emphasised that already by the beginning of the 15th century, but especially by the 1420s, the contractual conditions of these salaried workers had changed. In fact, in the early decades of the 15th century, there was a shift from pay on a monthly basis to one based on piecework or, more often, on a daily basis, which consequently created uncertainty about the actual monthly wage that could be received.²⁷ This could have been one of the reasons that prompted several Florentine citizens to change jobs by embarking on a career as soldiers of the Republic. Indeed, it is noted how most of those individuals identified in the 1427 *Catasto* who became soldiers in 1430 were crossbowmen in Pisa, consequently obtaining a salary that could range from 14–16 £ gross per month. There is also a point to be made that their assignment did not necessarily imply a danger to their own lives, as was the case of mercenary soldiers. During all the years of the War of Lucca, Pisa was never attacked. This implies that the actual need to use weapons was very rare even for internal security tasks within the city.

Table 5. Some monthly remuneration for employees (1421–1430)

Craft	£
Farmhand	9,68
Urban laborer not further identified as to occupation	12,10
Bricklayer	21,78
Carfts in the Art of Wool	
Subjected to the Ciompi	6,33
Apprentice	7,67
Tanner	8,30
Dependent on the Art of Wool	9,33
Worker at a craftsman	10,33
Thread maker	14,00

Source: Franceschi F. 1993, 244 and 251; Tognetti S. 1995, 302–304

27 Franceschi F. 1993, 241–259.

Table 6. Florentine citizens mercenary constables (1427)

F.	cc.	Name	Gonfalone	Profession	Tot. Weath	Tot. Tax. Weath	Age	Bocche
Santo Spirito								
64	331r	Mariano Ciccio	Scala	Mercenary	99	99	40	5
64	327r	Mariano di Tommaso Deti	Scala	Constable	636	389	79	1
Santa Croce								
69	588v	Iacopo di Mino Malavolti da Siena	Bue	Constable	287	0	63	3
Santa Maria Novella								
75	298r	Giusto di Giovanni	Unicorno	Constable	16	0	40	3
76	243v	Agnolo di Leonardo	Leon Rosso	Mercenary	342	320	24	1
77	199r-199v	Antonio di Monte	Leon Bianco	Mercenary	101	101	17	1
77	375	Zanobi di Zanobi	Leon Bianco	Mercenary	0	0	40	3
San Giovanni								
78	622	Piero di Bartolo	Leon d'Oro	Mercenary	636	389	79	1

Source: ASFi, *Catasto*

By comparing the documentation produced by the *Camera del Comune* together with the information contained in the *Catasto* of 1427, we can make another observation about the choice made by Florentine citizens to become soldiers of the Republic rather than mercenaries. Indeed, when we analyse information about Florentine citizens devoted to the mercenary trade, we see that their wealth was equal to or even lower than that of soldiers of the Republic (Table 6). An interesting case is offered by the mercenary captain Mariano di Tommaso Deti. In 1427, at the age of 79, he declared a total wealth of only 247 florins, although in 1430 he was leading 47 crossbowmen and 23 *palvesari*.²⁸ This example confirms to us that the profession of mercenary may

²⁸ ASFi.C 64, 331v.; ASFi.CC.SC 219, 50v.

not have been particularly advantageous from an economic point of view, and at the same time certainly posed a greater danger to one's life. This was probably the reason why men who decided to take up a military career may have been more attracted to the safer and more well-paid task of defending a particular locality.

Choosing to become a soldier of the Republic did not even turn out to be such a difficult or expensive operation. According to the regulations, to be enlisted as a crossbowman one had to take a skills test, while in the case of the aspiring *palvesaro* there was no practical test at all.²⁹ The other essential element was to be equipped with the stipulated armaments: from the defensive point of view a cuirass, plackart, bracers, chain-mail sleeves, and a bascinet were required. Offensive armament included both sword and dagger, and in addition a spear for the *palvesaro* and a crossbow with a *crocco* (recharging tool) for the crossbowman.³⁰ With the exception of the crossbow, which was checked carefully by the officers in charge and was marked whether it was found to be suitable, the other armaments could be purchased used. The total figure for a complete set of secondhand defensive armament could be as little about 11,5 £; the offensive armament used for a *palvesaro* could amount to about 5 £, while for a crossbowman it rose to about 1 £.³¹ This expense could therefore have been amortised in a few months of work.

In light of these considerations, it is possible to state how the socioeconomic context of the first decades of the 15th century – on one hand characterised by disadvantageous changes in the contractual types of subordinate workers, and on the other by an unprecedented tax burden – prompted some of the less well-off citizens to take up a military career as soldiers of the Florentine Republic. Thus, the state of near-constant warfare in which Florentine citizens lived during that period paradoxically provided some of them with an opportunity to improve their economic status.

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 ASFi.SUA.CP – Archivio di Stato di Firenze. Sei Ufficiali di Arezzo. Cortona e Pistoia.

29 ASFi.SUA.CP 6, 56v–59r.

30 ASFi.SUA.CP 6, 1v–2v.

31 As for the prices of defensive armaments, these were taken from the inventory of goods of the armorer Francesco di ser Andrea di ser Bene, dated 1424 and commented on in Picchianti S. 2017, 13–26. As for the offensive ones, the data were derived from the Republic's expenditures on ammunition ASFi.DB.M 1.

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