

# Changing Campanilismo

## Localism and the Use of Nicknames in a Tuscan Mountain Village

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*Campanilismo* is a well-known phenomenon in Italy. An important aspect of this parochialism in a Tuscan mountain village is the idea of being more “civilized” compared with the other surrounding villages, as can be seen in the offensive role of collective nicknames. *Campanilismo* is a boundary mechanism that is connected with the closeness and commitment between villages. It is not a simple mechanism that makes a distinction between insiders and outsiders but it differentiates them both. Because this closeness and commitment have largely disappeared today, it is logically that a part of its vocabulary, like the collective and personal nicknames, will fade away too.

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In Italy the strong tie people often have with their place of residence is called *campanilismo*. A word that refers to the *campanile*, the civic bell tower, which stands in many Central Italian places and is a symbol of independence (Bell 1979: 151; Douglass 1984: 1; Pitt-Rivers 1971: 30; Silverman 1975: 16). This bond with their own community is, as Goethe wrote in his *Italienische Reise*, a form of local patriotism (1776/1979: 73). *Campanilismo* can be seen as a non-institutionalised and quasi-mystic notion that involves the expression of positive sentiments towards one's own community (Cohen 1977: 107). Their own village is seen as the centre of the world and is believed to be superior to the surrounding villages. This parochialism is characteristic of many Mediterranean communities. As is the case with so many words which are now intrinsic to anthropological language, as for example nickname, *soprannome* in Italian, the word *campanilismo* originated as a folk concept within the context

of a particular cultural tradition (De Pina-Cabral 1984: 149).

In this article, I will examine the significance of this *campanilismo* for a Tuscan mountain village. Because this society has undergone a transformation like so many pastoral and agrarian societies, I will also show the changes that have taken place in this notion during the last decades. *Campanilismo* is not a static concept, it develops like the whole local community. My working hypothesis here is that *campanilismo* is a boundary mechanism that is strongly connected with the closeness and commitment between villages but also the relationships within the village play an important role. After describing the overall changes, I shall attempt to analyse the different aspects of the *campanilismo* in this mountain village, such as: being more ‘civilized’; collective nicknames; cultural topography; personal nicknames and the egalitarianism of this mountain community.

## The village

Stazzema is a nucleated mountain village of 200 inhabitants which lies at 443 meters at the end of a steep road. The peaks of the Apuan Alps rise above the village like dark perpetual clouds. The area is called Versilia, an old enclave of the grand ducy of Tuscany, which consists of a ten kilometre long coastal strip and a part of the Apuan Alps. The coastal strip is urbanized near the Riviera della Versilia. Between that and the mountains there are many olivegroves and vineyards. At the foot of these Alps there are countless marble working-places, with Pietrasanta as their centre. The stones that are tooled here come from the marble-quarries that lie near some mountain tops.

The municipality of Stazzema lies in this mountain area which is called High Versilia. In contrast to the other three municipalities of Versilia, the marble industry has played a subordinate part in Stazzema (Paolicchi 1982: 572). Until the fifties there was an agrarian pastoral society close to an industrial urbanized area. Most of the working population were peasants. There were no big landowners and practically no tenants. The plots were small, fragmented and dispersed. Besides peasants there were some artisans and small businessmen.

After the fifties the village society underwent a considerable transformation. Today there are hardly any people working in the village. Except for some shopkeepers most of the Stazzemesi are workers in the coastal area, and like before there is no sharp social stratification. Stazzema has changed from an agrarian pastoral community into a commuter village.

An important aspect of this transformation is the migration of many inhabitants. In the early sixties about 450 people lived in Stazzema, today there are less than 200 inhabitants. Not only in Stazzema but in all the other villages of High Versilia, people left. The population of this mountain municipality has been halved since the Second World War. Many people migrated to the coastal area of Versilia, others went to the industrial areas of Milan, Genoa or, as foreign workers, to Switzer-

land, France and Germany and stayed there.

Migration is for these societies no new phenomenon, it has always been an outlet for the surplus labour, that existed for example after demographic growth. The migration after the Second World War was of a different order. In this period the strong economic development, particularly in North and Central Italy, provided for employment in the cities and industrial centres, like the one in the coastal area of Versilia. This migration of a part of the mountain population should not be explained by 'push-pull' factors only. MacDonald writes that migration is one of the reactions of a rural population to poverty, in which the prospect of some development plays an important role (1963: 74). The prospects for agriculture were poor in the mountains of Versilia after the war. Mechanization was nearly impossible, thanks to the terrace cultivation and the small fragmented and dispersed plots. This resulted in local agriculture being placed in an extremely unfavourable position in relation to the expanding market. High Versilia bears a strong resemblance to the Alpine area, about which MacDonald has written, where the equality of poverty and the absence of big landowners lead to migration (1963: 70-71). Or, as an ex-shepherd from Stazzema said: *"there was enough food but what was lacking was money"*. This was the reason for leaving the agrarian pastoral sector in large numbers.

In addition to the decline of agriculture and migration, the accessibility of the mountain villages played a part in the development of this area. Many of the modern roads were built in the fifties and sixties. There was already a road to Stazzema, the principal town but access to other mountain villages such as Pomezano and Farnocchia was by unpaved, so-called, muleteer paths. Through the construction of these roads such villages have become more accessible and it has made commuting easier.

All these developments have also led to visual changes. Many of the former meadows are now covered with undergrowth. The chestnut woods, once an important food supply, are no longer kept in order and the chestnuts are not gathered anymore. Terraces have fallen into disrepair, farming land has disappeared, and

the cottages where the peasant stayed during the harvest are in ruins. Today the village territory is largely reduced to the nucleated village. Together with this shift, a large part of the vocabulary to denote the different parts and areas of the immediate vicinity has disappeared. In this agrarian pastoral mountain society each plot, each stretch of woods and pasture had a name<sup>1</sup>. You cannot find these names on any map, and today they are meaningless to the village youth. Also inside the village the marks of decline are visible. Some of the houses of migrants that for all sorts of reasons did not find new occupants, are ruins now.

After the Second World War Stazzema did not only lose a number of her inhabitants but also her service function within the municipality. The town hall and the post office were transferred to the lower but more centrally situated settlement of Pontestazzemesi. The medical practice went first, the baker and butcher followed. Obviously, all these developments had considerable consequences for the village community.

### More 'civilized'

The elderly Stazzemesi look back with some nostalgia at the past. In their youth there were many opportunities for social contacts, such as during the harvest and the maintenance of the chestnut woods; during the *veglie*, the evening gatherings of families; and during the village festival of Maria Assunta, Assumption, when a flood of people came to Stazzema. Of course it is probably a remembered past, which is idealized but it is clear that this village community was entirely different from that of today. Many of the social possibilities have disappeared together with the agrarian sector. In the eyes of the Stazzemesi their village was important in those days. The inhabitants of the other mountain villages were forced to come to Stazzema because the town hall and the post office were there. Stazzema, the Stazzemesi said, was more ahead, more important than the other villages.

This idea of being more ahead is an important feature of *campanilismo*, the ties people

have with their village. Sydel Silverman writes that in Central Italy *campanilismo* takes on to a large extent, the form of pride, with a little cynicism, in their own civilization, compared with other places of compatible size. This aspect should be lacking in the *campanilismo* of Southern Italy, which has, generally, a defensive disdain of other communities. According to Silverman it was the landowners who established the community civilization, with their way of living and material contributions (1968: 17).

In Stazzema there were no large landowners, there was a family that owned some marble quarries, but being more ahead was especially connected with the relationship between the village and the Italian state. The presence of the public institutions and the probable existence of a small group of civil servants and a doctor, gave the village prestige as a centre of information about the outside world. Stazzema was, like her inhabitants said: "*a village that everyone knew*". This was true, because the other inhabitants of the municipality were forced to come to the village for some of their business. That the Stazzemesi felt superior was recognized in one of their collective nicknames, which is *Gentilomini*, gentlemen or noblemen. Like many other nicknames there is some irony in this name because there were no gentry in Stazzema, and her population did not deviate much from that of the other mountain villages.

The attitude of being more civilized is also expressed in the views Stazzemesi have about the neighbouring village, Pomezzana. Formerly the Pomezzanini were poor, and today they are still reserved, afraid of outsiders and furthermore they speak a different dialect. These are all characteristics the Stazzemesi do not attribute to themselves. A common opinion was that the people of Pomezzana were stupid. The collective nickname for the Pomezzanini is *Gobbi*, which means hunchbacks. They have this name, according to the Stazzemesi, because inbreeding has resulted in a high incidence of hunchbacks in this village. There are also denigratory stories about their supposed stupidity. The owner of the only bar in Stazzema, told me the following almost Deca-

meone like anecdote: "Once there was in Pomezana a Gobbo who was married and had five tall but very honest sons. One day the father, who was a small person, said to one of his boys who had been troublesome: 'Sit down on this chair so I can hit you!' The boy sat down and got a hefty blow in his face!"

To give the designation 'silly' to the inhabitants of neighbouring villages is often mentioned in the anthropological literature (Chapmann 1971: 150; Cohen 1977: 108; Pitt-Rivers 1971: 9-10; Sensi-Isolani 1977: 116). In Stazzema not only the Pomezanini were labelled stupid, but also the inhabitants of Farnocchia, another village that is visible from Stazzema. They were called *Fagioloni*, beans or idiots. The aspect of pride in their own civilization changes here into the second characteristic of *campanilismo*, that is, the defensive disdain of other communities.

## Collective nicknames

In Stazzema the prejudices focus especially on Pomezana. Pitt-Rivers has pointed out for Andalusia, that villages are commonly linked in pairs, each one, supposedly, hating its rival above all others (1972: 110). If such a system was active in High Versilia is unknown, because this aspect of *campanilismo* is too much in decline. But noticeable is the relationship between Stazzema and Pomezana, a relationship that to a large extent does not exist between Stazzema and the other mountain villages. For example, the Stazzemesi did not say more about Farnocchia than that they were idiots and insane.

The defensive and derogatory nature of *campanilismo* is especially expressed in the nicknames some of the villages have. *Vocabolario Versiliense*, a Versilian dictionary that names most of the villages and hamlets of the area, gives the nicknames of thirteen villages:

Basati: *Lumaconi*, lazy people  
 Capanzano: *Chiorpi*, niggards  
 Cardoso: *Monnai*, drunks  
 Farnocchia: *Fagioloni*, beans, idiots  
 Levigliani: *Teste Grosse*, big heads, insane but smart

Mulina: *Carbonai*, charcoal producers  
 Palagnana: *Fiorentini*, Florentines  
 Pomezana: *Gobbi*, hunchbacks; *Raspai*, producers of files and rasps  
 Pruno: *Burrai*, buttermakers; *Patatai*, ?  
 Retignano: *Gatti*, cats  
 Santanna: *Saltapizzi*, men who go from one woman to the other  
 Stazzema: *Gentilomini*, gentlemen, noblemen  
 Volegno: *Burrai*, buttermakers.  
 (Cocci 1956: 148-149)

Notable about this list is that only two villages, Basati and Capanzano, which are not located in the municipality of Stazzema have a nickname. But both are situated near the municipal boundary. Therefore, the collective nicknames are limited to the mountain section of Versilia, where the agrarian pastoral society held out the longest. The places that have a nickname are the important villages, the others are hamlets, peripheral villages or places that have something to do with the industrially exploited marble quarries.

Informants from Stazzema mentioned the following collective nicknames, but no one knew them all:

Alpe della Grotta: *Grottaioi*, cave-dwellers  
 Basati: *Lumaconi*, lazy people  
 Farnocchia: *Fagioloni*, beans, idiots; *Pozzetto*, pool, wallow  
 Mulina: *Ranocchi*, frogs, handicapped persons  
 Pomezana: *Gobbi*, hunchbacks  
 Pruno en Volegno: *Burrai*, buttermakers  
 Retignano: *Gatti*, cats  
 Stazzema: *Gettoloni*, lizards; *Gentilomini*, gentlemen, noblemen; *Schiaccioni*, bruised; *Schiaccioni di Faggiuoli*, bruised beechnuts.

Besides being ironic, like *Gentilomini*, the nicknames are often insulting, and from that the defensive nature of *campanilismo* is evident. The names refer among other things to physical characteristics, like the hunchbacks of Pomezana and the handicapped people from Mulina. The last mentioned nickname has a double meaning because it also refers to the circumstances in which this village is situated. Mulina lies low in a narrow valley where it is

humid, a nice place for frogs. Also behind the nickname *Gatti*, cats, lies the same sort of explanation. According to the Stazzemesi, Retignano looks like a cat in the sun. Another part of the nicknames refer to prejudices about the behaviour of people of other villages. Besides the supposed inbreeding of the Pomezzanini, the inhabitants of Cardoso were called drunks and those of Santanna, *Saltapizzi*, men who go from one woman to another. To degrade other communities is the most striking aspect of *campanilismo*.

There are collective nicknames that attribute particular 'qualities' to villages. Like *Teste Grosse*, insane but smart, for Levigliani, the lazy people of Basati, the misers of Capanzano and the drunkards of Cardoso. More over there are nicknames that denote the commercial sidelines of some villages (Cole & Wolf 1974: 111) Like *Burrai*, buttermakers, for both Pruno as well as Volegno that is situated next to Pruno, and *Carbonai*, charcoal producers for Mulina. Pomezzana has, like Mulina, two nicknames. The Pomezzanini were besides *Gobbi*, also *Raspai*, this name refers to the iron files and rasps that are produced there. Not all the nicknames can be interpreted, some are unclear, like *Pozzetto*, pool, in addition to which an informant noted that the Farnocchini were mad (= pazzo), and *Patatai* for which there is no translation. David Gilmore noted about nicknames, that there is no need for any consensus about them, they can be comic to people in sound, and still have their desired effect (1982: 690). The same is more or less true of *Schiaccioni de Faggiuoli*, the bruised beechnuts for the Stazzemesi. The meaning is obscure, but this nickname provoked great hilarity among the Stazzemesi, who only knew the literal meaning and said that it was funny.

A striking difference between the nicknames listed by the Stazzemesi and that of *Vocabolario Versiliese* is that the dictionary only gives one nickname for Stazzema while the Stazzemesi knew several. The two lists do not correspond precisely. The list of the Stazzemesi is village centred, and it is likely that there were many more collective nicknames in High Versilia. In Stazzema the nicknames of the visible villages, like Pomezzana, Farnochia, Mulina

and Retignano, were on the tips of the tongues, while only a few people knew nicknames of an other village. This incomplete knowledge of the nicknames lexicon points to the decline of its use, but also indicates the small scope people had in the pastoral agrarian village community. It was the visible villages of which they knew the nicknames; villages they had relations with. Collective nicknames define the boundaries between one's own village and the surrounding area (Brandes 1975: 146). They distinguish between 'we' Stazzemesi and 'they', the 'Beans', 'Frogs', 'Cats' and 'Hunchbacks'.

### Cultural topography

The boundary-maintaining mechanism of collective nicknames can be explained for the collective nickname of the occupants of Alpe della Grotta, the *Grottaioli*. In this case the genesis is known, in contrast to the other nicknames which are very old. In 1911, the late father-in-law of an informant built a big house at 865 metres in the forest between Stazzema and Pomezzana, and took up residence with his wife and an unmarried brother. In the fifties they had created a large extended family, but in the sixties this family broke up and the house was sold to the C. A. I., the Italian Alpine Club. The area is called Alpe della Grotta, a name that refers to a small cave that is situated there. There is nothing there except chestnuts, brushwood and mountain meadows. The nickname *Grottaioli* means cave-dwellers, which points out that the name-givers saw this area as uncivilized. According to the informant who lived a year in this family house after her marriage, there was nothing in this place, they had to carry everything up hill, and as a villager from Stazzema she hated the place. Alpe della Grotta did not belong to Stazzema and this was made clear by a denigratory nickname.

In the Mediterranean region there exists between mountains and plains not only geographical contrasts but also, from time immemorial, social and cultural differences. Mountain dwellers, Braudel writes, were looked upon as inferior by the citizens (1972: 44-47). In Italy we find this attitude already developed

in the fifteenth century expressing itself in coarse stories, like those of Bandello and Pogio the Florentine, in which peasants and mountain dwellers are satirized for their foolishness. Here we can speak of a cultural topography, the farther from the cities, the source of civilization in Italy and the Mediterranean, the more uncivilized. 'Baixar sempre, mountar no', 'always go down, never go up', says a Catalan proverb (1972: 44). This cultural topography also applies to the mountains of Versilia because here the notion of the higher the more uncivilized counts too. Thus the afore mentioned informant did not want to live in the house of her in-laws in Alpe della Grotta. This family house was, according to her, situated too far from Stazzema and there was nothing there. In High Versilia there are hardly any family houses outside the nucleated villages. The question is if this is due to the need for protection, perhaps it was for safety from bandits or wild animals, or perhaps it is connected with the attribution of more civilization to the villages then to the surrounding countryside (Christian 1972: 18).

This cultural dichotomy between high and low also had its repercussion in the *campanilismo* of Stazzema, namely in the attitude the Stazzemesi had in relation to the other villages. Stazzema (443 m) was the centre of the municipality and a link with the outside world, thanks to the presence of some public institutions. For the Stazzemesi the visible villages of comparable size, like Pomezzana (597 m) and Farnocchia (652 m), were probably less civilized because they were situated higher and were, because of the absence of passable roads, difficult to reach. The attitude of the Stazzemesi in this was comparable to that of city dwellers to mountain dwellers, they considered them as silly. This is expressed in the anecdotes about the Pomezzanini and also in the use of collective nicknames. The Farnocchini were called idiots and the Pomezzanini hunchbacks. Their hunchbackness must have been the result of inbreeding, they said, and that is certainly not a sign of civilization.

The Stazzemesi do not compare themselves with the people of Seravezza and Pietrasanta, two much bigger places at the foot of the

Apuan Alps. Because, according to *campanilismo*, one compares one's own village with other places of comparable size. The Stazzemesi know very well that there is a difference between High Versilia and the coastal area and that this militates against the uplands. Like somebody in Stazzema said: "Someone from below doesn't want to live here".

## Closeness and commitment

Another way in which the defensive mechanism of *campanilismo* was expressed, was the throwing of stones by the male village youth at potential boyfriends from other villages. In Stazzema this took place till the end of the fifties. According to an informant who was 'stoned' himself, this existed in Pomezzana till the sixties.

All these manifestations of *campanilismo* did not mean that there were no personal relations between the villages. On the contrary, there were many contacts between Stazzema and Pomezzana. Shepherds from both villages met each other when going up and down with their flocks. Stazzemesi married Pomezzanini, and the people from all the mountain villages and hamlets came to Stazzema for the post office and town hall. It was no isolation but closeness and commitment that made boundaries necessary if these villages wanted to distinguish themselves. These relations provided the conditions for attributing nicknames, which specified the differences between villages and even aggravated them because of their often insulting nature.

For the Stazzemesi *campanilismo* means to defend their own village and to stand up for their way of living. They said that they protect the village against outsiders, especially when these outsiders should bring unrest. The Stazzemesi called themselves *campanilistic*, but they did not attribute this feature to the people of the other mountain villages. From this speaks a still powerful village orientation, through which people can not place themselves in someone else's position. But it is especially the old Stazzemesi who stand up for their village. For the young Stazzemesi, and by young they mean even fifty years old, it is less import-



ant. It is likely that the original antagonism between villages was already on the wane in their youth (Pitt-Rivers 1971: 12, 30). The present youth of the mountain villages is hardly ever thrown into each other's company. They have cars, and work and have their amusement in the coastal region.

Today the strong contrast between the communities has disappeared. The collective nicknames are part of a somewhat archaic vocabulary, about which the Stazzemesi felt a little embarrassed. In Stazzema there is told now and then a corny joke about the Pomezzanini and *Gobbo* still is a term of abuse. Alpe della Grotta has no permanent occupants anymore, the *Grottaoli* are dead, or live again in Stazzema or in Pietrasanta or Genoa, both places where this nickname has no meaning. The main reason for the disappearance of the discrepancies between the villages, is, to a large extent that the closeness and commitment have disappeared. The focus of the social relations has changed. Thanks to the ruin of the agrarian society, the disappearance of the shepherds with their flocks and the relocation of the public institutions, there are hardly any contacts between villages. The mountain dwellers are directed towards the urbanized coastal area, the real 'civilized' world. The inhabitants of High Versilia hardly visit each other's villages. If the communication between villages disappears then it is understandable that the concepts by which it was guided fade away too.

The relations between Stazzema and her rival Pomezzana have changed. Both villages lie today at the end of a road, on different mountainsides. In the process of change there has been a temporary shift in the appreciation for the Pomezzanini. Next to the stereotypical biases there were also some positive sounds audible. Some Stazzemesi had a bit of admiration of the inhabitants of Pomezzana. Because of this firmness, fewer people have emigrated from this village and it is therefore bigger than Stazzema today.

It is remarkable that precisely Pomezzana, in spite of their supposed difference, attracted such admiration. This proves not only the weakness of the contemporary *campanilismo*,

but also its 'anti-civilization'. Being more civilized was an aspect of *campanilismo*. Thanks to the progress and absorption of the mountain villages into the national society, there has been a levelling out of the villages. Stazzema is not anymore the centre of the municipality and not more ahead than the others, except perhaps for Pomezzana which has experienced a somewhat slower development.

Instead of satirizing this logging behind of Pomezzana, according to the spirit of *campanilismo*, or putting it forward as a proof of their stupidity, or even attributing it to their hunchbackness, they approached it positively. This appreciation is different from the revaluation of traditional values about which Sydel Silverman has written in *Three Bells of Civilization*. There it was the youth that was trying to bring about revival of their own hill town (1975: 223–224). This phenomenon in Stazzema needs another interpretation. Here the Pomezzanini were attributed with the original qualities of Stazzema. It was an appreciation of their own community that had largely disappeared. Therefore, it can be seen as a reaction to the developments that took place, through which these villages are now interchangeable. Stazzemesi regret that Pomezzana has changed too: "*Today it is like here, they changed generation and now they are also ready to leave*". The generation of peasants and shepherds doesn't exist anymore and the way back looks closed forever. Pomezzana as it was in the past, has disappeared. "*The Pomezzanini were a race! Now they are all bastards,*" somebody said, the appreciation was only temporary.

## Personal nicknames

Not only the relations between villages have changed but also the relations within the village community of Stazzema, which is expressed in the disappearance of personal nicknames. These nicknames were related to individuals. Inherited nicknames, like there are in Spain and Portugal do not exist in High Versilia<sup>2</sup> (Barrett 1978: 94; Brandes 1975: 140; Gilmore 1982: 689; de Pina-Cabral 1984: 149). In Stazzema examples of personal nicknames were: *Giambacorta*, someone with short legs,

*Baffu*, moustache, *Trucco*, a man who distorts things, *Lardino*, someone who is fat, *Tafano*, hornet or an intrusive person, and *Morte-briaca*, stronger than death. Most of the bearer were dead, one man in the village was sometimes called *Patatino*, a little bit stupid, but that was, according to an informant, not very sympathetic. There were no new names, except that I was called the student.

*Vocabolario Versiliese* cites personal nicknames for all the municipalities of Versilia (1956: 146–147). These nicknames are of the same order as those from Stazzema. Some of the nicknames from the dictionary refer to old trades, like *Concino*, tinker, others refer to physical characteristics like *Bibino*, little one, and *Nasino*, small nose. But most of the personal nicknames poke fun at a person's character, like *Dragone*, dragon, someone who is lucky, *Macacche*, a little bit crazy, or *Sculato*, bare bum, someone who has been out of luck.

In the anthropological literature about nicknames it is pointed out that personal nicknames are an effective community mechanism for maintaining social control. Through nicknames certain behaviour can be satirized. Like the Stazzemesi said, nicknames were of laughing at. Besides that, they are a useful way of identifying people (Barrett 1978: 105; Brandes 1975: 146; Pitt-Rivers 1971: 161–169). In mountain villages, like Stazzema, the same surnames are prevalent.

Eugene Cohen stressed the boundary-maintaining functions of personal nicknames and their contribution to the community socio-centrism or *campanilismo*. Nicknames cross family boundaries, he writes, and define persons as members of the community, within which the nicknames only have a meaning. Therefore, their use provides a means of identifying outsiders and insiders. Nicknames operate as boundary-defining and boundary-maintaining mechanisms (1977: 110–111). Cohen means personal nicknames and does not mention collective nicknames. But in High Versilia it is collective nicknaming that defines the boundary mechanism of *campanilismo*, and probably in a more aggressive way than personal nicknaming.

A different approach to this phenomenon of

personal nicknames is that of David Gilmore, who argues that: 'too much emphasis has been placed on the literal meaning of nicknames and not enough on how the expressions are used' (1982: 687). Nicknames are a form of verbal aggression, their use is, in a Freudian explanation, a successful release of repressed feelings of hostility. They are rarely used face-to-face unless the intention is aggressive. Gilmore calls them secret weapons, like gossip (1982: 695–696). The bearers oppose the use of the nickname, they want to be accepted on their own terms, called by their given name (Christian 1972: 26). 'The family-derived name is an inseparable, integral component of self-identity and self-perception', Gilmore writes, and 'the imposition of the unwanted nickname by the community represents an interference with the autonomy of the individual' (1982: 697).

Gilmore's analysis clarifies the collective nicknames too. The nicknames for villages are used in the same way as the personal nicknames, but there are some differences. They can be used for a whole village, like *Gobbi* for Pomezzana, but also for one person, a *Gobbo*, hunchback, from Pomezzana. Moreover, the collective nicknames are less perishable than the personal ones (de Pina-Cabral 1984: 150), because they are by definition attributed to those who are born in a certain village. It looks as though collective nicknames are even more aggressive than personal nicknames because they are a component of *campanilismo* and are an outstanding example of the discrepancy between villages. If the imposition of a personal nickname is an interference in one's own autonomy, then the use of a collective nickname, for someone of another village, is a form of depersonalizing, because only the prejudices of a whole village are ascribed to him.

## The disappearance of personal nicknames

Personal nicknames were part of the communication and social networks inside the village community, the disappearance of them is a consequence of the changes in this community. The possibilities for social contacts have de-



creased in Stazzema since the fifties. Today the Stazzemesi watch television and do not gather for the *veglie*, the evening meetings of families. Personal nicknames serve within the village community, outside they have no meaning. The Stazzemesi work in the coastal area and their village has changed from an agrarian-pastoral into a commuter village, that is nearly empty during the day. Thanks to the absorption of this mountain community into the national society the personal nicknames have disappeared. In contact with the government institutions and in their work they will be referred to by their family names and surnames.

It is possible that beside these changes in social relations, another aspect plays a part in the disappearance of the nicknames. Brandes points out in an article about nicknaming in a Spanish village, that a small sized and egalitarian community precludes people openly calling one another by nicknames. According to him a community of 500 inhabitants or so would be the lowest limit for this custom (1975: 144–145). Stazzema saw in a few decades its population halved. Today there are only 200 inhabitants, not enough according to Brandes for the custom of personal nicknames, especially when these nicknames have a degrading nature and when the community solidarity depends on all treating their fellow-villagers as equals (1975: 145).

The egalitarian character of Stazzema is expressed in the custom of using Christian names. Villagers old and young usually address one another by first names. Often these names are transformed or shortened, like Pietro into Pie and Luigi to Lubigi. Through this the bearers are easier to identify, especially when there are people with the same surname, for example there is a Mario and a Mariolino in Stazzema. Eugene Cohen calls these names transformations also nicknames, but he has the picture wrong in this case (1977: 104). Shortenings of first names is very usual in Italy, Giovanni is transformed into Gianni or Nanni, and Guiseppe into Beppe. Of course there are local differences but that does not mean that they are nicknames, *soprannomi*. They are used in front of a person without any

hostility, they are used by one's own family, they are not really funny and surely not insulting. In short they lack the nature of nicknames.

## An egalitarian community?

Like many mountain communities Stazzema has an egalitarian character but it is not therefore an egalitarian community, and it remains to be seen whether it ever was like that. According to Stazzemesi everyone in the village was equal, somebody called the village one big family. Davis says in his study *People of the Mediterranean*, that: 'we are all equal here' seem to be the universal greeting of mountain villagers to anthropologists. What they mean is, *vis-à-vis* the rest we are equally excluded. Mountain villages are absorbed in the national hierarchy of power, at the lowest level, they do not have any power or influence. But that does not mean that there are no differences within the village, such as in the amount of land held, the size and fittings of the houses, the earning capacity of the household heads. There is in these mountain villages, as everywhere, economic and social differentiation (1977: 71; 80). I think that Davis' ideas are correct, but what he forgets is the difference between ideology and reality. The point here is not the actual equality but as Pitt-Rivers says, an 'ideal' feeling, this feeling has to do with the essential or basic values of the village, namely equality in the sense that everyone who is borne in the same place is, by nature, equal (1971: 49). From this point of view the notion of equality between the villagers, is an ideology that ties them to their village, for as far as that is possible. The equality reinforces the 'we' feelings of the Stazzemesi.

Of course there were and are differences in Stazzema. Till the fifties there probably lived some civil servants in the village, and there lived a family in the village that had some quarries. Together they must have formed the top of the village hierarchy. Between peasants there were differences too. One family was less poor, had a little bit more soil than the other. But to the majority applied, as one informant said: "*I am nothing, you are*

nothing and he is a little bit better", namely small differences.

Through the integration of the village into the national society, a process which began much earlier but was accelerated after the war, the village community changed. The poverty disappeared together with the agriculture and many left their villages, like the family who owned the marble quarries. Most of those who stayed behind found work in the coastal area. Today the population of Stazzema belongs to the working class and this is at the low level to which Davis points. But class is not a local notion. The contemporary equality is the result of these developments. Of course there are differences in Stazzema, the possession of soil is nearly worthless today, the possession of houses is not and there are differences in the village. Furthermore the local barkeeper has many possibilities, which he does not use, because he has most of the villages licences. But such differences do not lead to sharp stratification and are not translated in different lifestyles. The uniformity of the people is probably characteristic of such mountain communities (Christian 1972: 19), contrary to the agrotowns of Southern Italy which are distinguished by a strong social stratification (Douglass 1984: 12) and where the differences are more pregnant and expressed in ostentation. This is absent in a mountain community like Stazzema where possible differences are not expressed.

This egalitarian feeling, the equality of all villagers, is even today a unifying factor. Because many aspects of *campanilismo* have disappeared, this feeling is an important mechanism that binds the villagers to their village, and reinforce the 'we' feeling. Everyone who lives in Stazzema is in principle equal. This 'egalitarianism' is an ideology of equality and that is something different as the 'Hello, we are all equal here' at which Davis pokes fun.

## Conclusions

*Campanilismo* is a complex phenomenon. In Stazzema it had different aspects, such as being more 'civilized' which was also connected with the cultural topography of high and low; the use of collective nicknames, denigrating

anecdotes, personal nicknames and the egalitarian character of the village community. *Campanilismo*, is a boundary mechanism that protects the village community against a supposed hostile external world. This world includes especially the surrounding area. The most obvious conclusion is that *campanilismo* is a mechanism that makes a distinction between insiders and outsiders. This conclusion is certainly not inaccurate but somewhat superficial. The insiders as well as the outsiders are differentiated. Here we are faced with the problem of names. This can be made clear when we depart from the individual. A person had in this mountain community several names, by which he can be referred to and they form a part of his identity (Gilmore 1984: 696-698). First of all there are the family name and the given name, both given at birth. The given name can be transformed for the purpose of distinguishing between the same name bearers, or out of habit like Giuseppe is usually called Beppe in Italy. In the pastoral agrarian mountain community it was possible that an individual got a nickname which served other purposes than mere identification. Nicknames could satirize a persons behaviour, physical qualities, and so on. This nickname was an affront, known to the bearer, but mostly used behind his back and only understandable to insiders. Besides these different names the individual got at birth the collective nickname of the village too. Within the village community this nickname was not used, everyone knew this name but did not take it seriously. An informant who was an ex-*Grottaio*, cave-dweller, added *merlo*, sly fox, to it. But outside the village in the surrounding area the collective nickname is insulting, like the personal nickname. It has a denigratory function that in extreme tends towards depersonalization, although one must not forget the intended drollery of nicknames. The collective nickname has a meaning that varies, from extreme offense to none, because outside High Versilia they don't mean anything. Even in these mountains their power varies. It looks as though villagers nicknamed a person from a rival village in an offending way while towards the others they were more friendly and vice

versa because others, in their turn, were more preoccupied with their own rivals. The relation with the 'real' outside world is that of high and low, for a townsman the mountain dweller is a bumpkin. Therefore, a second form of *campanilismo*, can be observed namely that of High Versilia by which mountain dwellers defend their way of living against outsiders.

In High Versilia an individual could have eight sorts of names, depending on the context in which he is addressed. For example, someone had as family name, Gherardi and as given name Pietro, that was shortened into Pie. His villagers gave him also the personal nickname *Sculato*. In addition to being a Pomezzanino, inhabitant of the village Pomezana, he was also a *Gobbo*, bearer of the collective nickname. He probably saw himself as a mountain dweller, a Versilieso, but for a townsman he was a bumpkin.

*Campanilismo* contained a differentiated sequence of personal names. Just as the variety of names to denote the different parts and areas of the immediate vicinity has largely disappeared, this sequence of names is partially fading away. The personal nicknames disappeared first and the collective nicknames are following. Logically, because the pastoral agrarian society does not exist anymore and so the vocabulary and its meaning will disappear too. The internal village community has changed and the closeness and commitment between the mountain villages has vanished. There are no family gatherings anymore, the mountain dwellers work in the coastal area and the yearly festival of the village saint, once a vehicle of local sentiments (Driessen 1985: 16; Silverman 1975: 151), has lost its meaning. People do not visit each others villages anymore. To the Stazzemesi, especially the older ones, *campanilismo* still means defending their village and standing up for their way of living but the original basis, the envy between villages, is gone. Today the mountain villages are interchangeable. Stazzema is not anymore the centre of the municipality but lies, like Pomezana high in the Apuan Alps at the end of the road.

## Notes

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1. Christian writes about the Nansa Valley in northern Spain: "Each field, each barn, each path, each resting place, each prominent stone, each knoll, each spring, and of course each peak and saddle in the village territory has a name. A survey of such names in one locality in Asturias turned up 600 names" (1972: 22-23).
2. Cohen does not mention inherited nicknames for a Southern Tuscan village either (1977: 104-105).

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