



## Logical paradox in medieval vendetta

Zoltán Szolnoki \*

\* Móra Ferenc Museum

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### Abstract

The vendetta descriptions show that the decisions of the opposing clans families can be analysed from game-theory view of point, for the stories are about decisions and their results. When we speak about these, we only examine the lines, and logic architectures of the different sources. These suggest a sort of modelling thinking in the describing sources, in which special structural schemes of vendettas are delineated. These can be similar, but their contents may be different. This is the reason why these decision states can not be modelled by a unique rule or motivation. In the case of the Buondelmonte-Amidei vendetta, the opposing effects of the short and long term strategies was stressed, that represented deserting and cooperative sides. In that case, the B player in the interaction re-acted to the deserting action with a deserting one. On the other hand, as it can be read in the Cancellieri-vendetta teaching tale description; “the tit for tat” basic rule is not enough to examine vendettas as a whole, for in some cases, just the opposing effect materializes.

„Vendetta” in the Italian medieval sources is a special term for the people taking revenges, reflecting social and deep cultural aspects. In the professional literature, it can be approached from law-, events-, and family-historian points of view; though an anthropological view also appeared recently (About vendetta: Dean, 2007; Blanshei, 1982; Martines, 2005; Zorzi, 2002; Halsall, 1999; Herlihy, 2005; Muir, 1993; Foote 2003). The game-theory, however, yields for quite a new approach, analysing the possible steps of the interacting participants of the historian area (About game-theory: Eigen-Winkler 1981: 26-39; Tóth 1997: 55-56). In his important work, Steven Pinker stated different models for the prisoners’-debate as well as for the equal revenge rule (tit for tat); underlying that not only the violence but the forgiveness was part of the system (Pinker 2018: 595-601). The historian, David Foote, picked up concepts from the game-theory, describing that the Vendettas could be featured with the idea of tit for tat (Foote 2003: 196). In the present work, I show the interpretation of the medieval Vendettas, different from the previous ones. From among the Florence Vendettas, the Buondelmonte-Amidei and Cancellieri-Vendettas are elevated, which can be read in the Florence historian traditions.<sup>1</sup> The analysis is made easier in as much as that these ones can be read nearly in all the city historian writings. Besides smaller differences, constant symbolic elements can be noticed, that make it possible to examine decision situations in the interactions.

The starting point of the 1216-os Buondelmonte killing is that the two greatest families of Florence (Buondelmonti and Amidei) would like to marry. Boundelmonte dei Boundelmonti, a boy, is to marry an Amidei girl, which cherishes the hope of peace. At that point, a widow from the Donati family, offers their girl. Because of the beauty of the girl, the boy decides to beak the stipulation made by the family, immediately. After the oath breaking, the answer of offended Amidei family is not missing. Although the peaceful solution arises at the family discourse, finally, The legend sentence of Mosca Lamberti decides, according to hat, the main thing is action (Machiavelli 62-64). The named men kill the boy on his white horse approaching, specially under of the Mars statue. The opposition party take up hatchets as a reply, the battle between the gulf and ghibellin starts, continuing for decades.

According to the Florence chroniclers, the oaths breaking and the hurt Vendettas ruined Florence (Compagni I/2, Villani VI/38, Bruni 127-128, Machiavelli 64). In accord to the traditions of the chronicler authors, such as in the case of Villani, Compagni, Stefani, Malespini, Leonardo Bruni and Machiavelli, the chroniclers give priority to the city, therefore they contemplate the action of the Buondelmonte family cheating, and deserting. Tóth János describes (1997), that, on the basis of the game-theory, via the deluding, the cheater knows how the others will behave (on the broken stipulation) and in this way, he can increase his own benefit by this knowledge (Tóth 1997: 61). What is a maximum benefit from Buondelmonte's view of point, means a cheating and deserting action for the public on the whole. A possible solution for that may be a peaceful one, but the negative sentence by de Mosca Lamberti rejects this too. As a conclusion, he suggests a decision on the basis of the tit for tat rule. The gist of this game-theory strategy is that the player answers the same way as the other one. It is what Pinker refers to, when he analyses the possibility of peace (Pinker 2018: 595-601). The aggressive answer such as the revenge is also a deserting strategy from the side of the public (Tóth 1997: 89, 101).

As we saw, the Buondelmonte benefit maximizing strategy can bring only short term results for him, since he is going to be killed. The chroniclers usually decrease the benefits of the deserting strategy: The fight is useless, and on the other hand it adversely influences the life the cities (Compagni I/2, Villani VI/38, Bruni 127-128, Machiavelli 64). It may arise, that if the revenge and fights are so useless, why we encounter them in so many sources. I wonder, why the deserting behaviour was beneficial for the opposing parties? For these questions, the descriptions of Cancellieri-vendetta can offer a game-theory point of view.<sup>2</sup>

According to the story by Machiavelli, the children from two different branches of Pistoiai Cancellieri family – Lore and Geri – play together. The former one, however, injures the latter one. At that point, Lore is sent by his father to the head of the other family, Bertracca, who is the father of Geri. He, however, says that wounds are not usually healed by words but swords, and in the stable, he gets Lore's arm cut. As a result, both Cancellieri families activate their followers; thereby it breaks out the hopeless fights for decades, than can not be won by either side. Accordingly, they move to Florence. The story is worth examining by the pigeon-kite phenomenon, where the pigeon behaviour suggests peaceful waiting strategy, and the kite one is to be an aggressive answer to everything. (Tóth 1997: 112-113). Giulielmo, when he sends his son, Lore to Bertraccához, achieves the pigeon type. Sir Bertracca, however, similarly to the earlier sentence by Mosca Lamberti indicates that he rejects the possibility of forgiveness. Accordingly, he behaves as a kite type. Here we can not speak about "tit for tat", since the endeavours for peace is not welcomed. The battle becomes deep, resulting in many damages on both sides. The fight from the point of the public, means deserting pattern, for there is no benefit for them. Moreover, the demolition and ruins can be imagined, especially for the whole city (Machiavelli 78). It results from the features of the teaching and moralizing vendetta-descriptions: the official chroniclers of the city are against the revenge and they show them as useless pattern of behaviour. It is noticeable; however, that Sir Giulielmo could have avoided the damages if he had not tried to act as pigeons. The examination of the story from the game-theory shows that the description has also got another message: if you behave as a pigeon in an interaction in an Italian city, you can suffer such deficits, that you might have avoided by the kite- pattern of behaviour. The pigeon can account for benefit if his opponents decide on the basis of "tit for tat". There is no guarantee for that, as we could see this did not happen. To my mind, we can name this term teaching tale paroxon. In conclusion, such a part got into the outmanoeuvred teaching tale written by several cotemporary authors that called the attention to a controversial possibility.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Works for historian traditions: Giovanni Villani: *Nuova Cronica*, Dino Compagni: *Cronica*, Ricordano Malespini: *Istoria fiorentina*, Marchionne di Coppo Stefani: *Cronaca Fiorentina* Leonardo Bruni: *Istoria fiorentina*, Niccolò Machiavelli: *Istorie fiorentine*. Used Editions of Important Papers: Bruni, Leonardo: *Istoria fiorentina*. Tran. Donato Acciajuoli, intr. C. Monzani, Firenze, 1861 (Progetto Manuzio, E-text edition, 2004.); Malespini, Ricordano: *Istoria fiorentina*. In: Tartini, D. G. – Franchi, S. Ed. *Istoria fiorentina*. Coll' aggiunta di Giachetto Malespini e la Cronica di Giovanni Morelli, Firenze, 1718.; Stefani, Di Marchionne di Coppo: *Cronaca Fiorentina*, Rodolico, N. Ed. In: Muratori, L. A. (ed.): *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. XXX., I. pars, Città di Castello, 1903.; Villani, Giovanni: *Nuova Cronica*. Giuseppe Porta Ed., Fondazione Pietro Bembo / Ugo Guanda, Biblioteca di scrittori italiani. Parma, 1991. (Progetto Manuzio, E-text, 1997.); Machiavelli, Niccolò: *Istorie fiorentine*. Machiavelli, Niccolò: *Tutte le opèdere*, 1971. (Progetto Manuzio e-text kiadás, 1998.); Dino Compagni *e la sua cronica*. Isidoro Del Lungo (a cura di), Firenze, 1870. As for Compagni és Machiavelli, Hungarian translation available too. Quotations from them are used. They are listed as follows: Compagni, Dino: *Krónikája korának eseményeiről*, Machiavelli, Niccolò: *Firenze története*, ford. Iványi Norbert. In: Niccolò Machiavelli művei. II. köt. Budapest, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> Florentine historian tradition works can be seen in the description of the Buondelmonte-Amidei vendetta at the fourth foot remarks. From among the Pistoia nameless sources, the *Annales pistoriensis* is to be stressed. (*Annales Pistoriensis*, Barbi ed., Città di Castello, 1907.) in addition to these, Ferreto de Ferreti and Tolomeo da Lucca deal with Vendettas. The latter one is special in that it estimates, as an only source, the date of the Cancellieri-vendetta for the year 1286. Ferreto de Ferreti's remarkable edition: Ferreto de Ferreti, vicentino: *Historia rerum in Italia gestarum ab anno MCCL ad annum usque MCCCXVIII*, vol 1., Cippola ed., Roma, 1908. Tolomeo da Lucca *kronikája: Ptolemaie Luccensis: Annales*, Documenti di Storia Italiana, tomo VI., Cronache dei Secoli XIII-XIV, Firenze, Cellini, 1876.