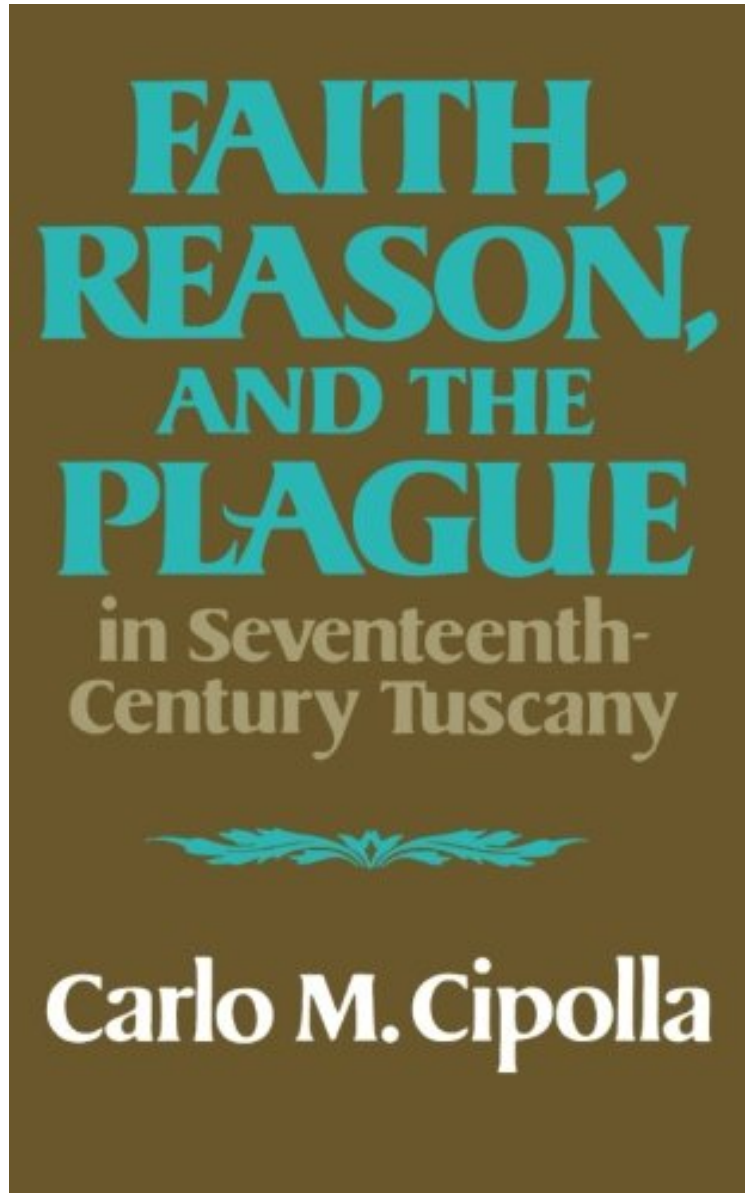


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Faith, Reason, and the Plague in Seventeenth Century Tuscany

Carlo M. Cipolla

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In this short book, Cipolla uses documentation about outbreak of bubonic plague in early 17th century Italy to explore some aspects of changing world-views in early modern Europe. To deal with endemic plague, several northern Italian states has relatively powerful and comprehensive public health authorities. Their major tool was different forms fo quarantine and this brought the state into conflict with religious authorities and popular movements who wished to use religious ceremonies to beseech God to halt the plague. The public health authorities, while lacking modern understanding of infection, were properly concerned that large public gatherings would increase deaths from plague. Cipolla follows one such conflict in a small Tuscan town to illustrate conflicts between religious and secular authorities, and between traditional and more empirical forms of knowledge. While not developed explicitly, this is also a case study of the extension of state authority.

Recreates the struggles within plague-stricken Italy, relating events that led to a confrontation between the advocates of science and the followers of faith. By the late fall of 1630, the Black Plague had descended upon northern Italy. The prentice Magistracy of Public Health, centered in Florence, took steps to contain and combat the scourge. In this essay, Carlo Cipolla recreates the daily struggle of plague-stricken Monte Lupo, a rustic Tuscan village, revealing in the vivid terms of actual events and personalities a central drama of Western civilization - the conflict between faith and reason, Church and state.

Language NotesText: English, Italian (translation)
About the AuthorCarlo M. Cipolla was the author of *Before the Industrial Revolution* and a professor at the University of California, Berkeley. He died in 2000.