This volume presents texts of a type that is familiar to scholars of Tuscany but is virtually unknown for the Veneto: only one of these works has been edited, and only three have been mentioned in secondary studies. Few in number, they are all of the *libri di famiglia* that have been uncovered from Verona and Vicenza for the Quattrocento (some extend into the early Cinquecento). They represent, in fact, nearly the entire corpus of early *memorie familiari* from the Veneto as a whole: as will be seen, scant examples from Padua and Venice have been located, and none from the other cities of the region. Even so, it has been possible to assemble this number of texts only by applying broad criteria for selection, requiring that texts exhibit the core attributes of *memorie*: detailed domestic and personal entries, especially anagographic data on the births, marriages and deaths of the writers’ families. Indeed, because these heterogeneous texts do not entirely fit within the more exacting typologies derived from Florentine examples, the nomenclature here is rather loose by the standards of literary criticism and deliberately avoids several debates over typology and nomenclature: *ricordanza*, *libro di famiglia* and *memoria familiare* are used interchangeably.

Both as a source for family and private history (demography, household structure, social relations and *mentalità*), and as a source for the history of language, literature, genre and literacy, *libri di famiglia* have attracted increasing attention in the past few decades. Several dozen texts were edited in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a few editions appeared after 1945, but systematic study and use of *ricordanze* began only in the 1970s. A salient feature of that recent interest has been research outside Florence, which was the focus of nearly all older work. Within Tuscany, scholars have examined texts from Arezzo, Lucca, Pisa, Pistoia and Siena. The canon - expanded to include municipal chronicles

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1. The editor expresses a deep debt to Gian Maria Varanini, whose generosity in locating texts and sharing his insights into the issues of editing them have everywhere shaped this volume; he also provided preliminary transcriptions of the Fracastoro, Muronovo and Veritá texts. In addition, Patricia Crawford, Edoardo Demo (who graciously allowed me to use his preliminary transcription of the Stoppa memoir), Thomas Izbicki, Gloria Maroso and Alessandra Tugnoli Aprile provided helpful assistance in procuring texts and locating sources, and the Folger Shakespeare Library is to be thanked for its support of the completion of the manuscript.


containing authors’ personal and family notices - now encompasses memoirs produced outside Tuscany: from Bologna, Mantua, Ferrara, Perugia, Orvieto, Viterbo, Rome and elsewhere. Non-Italian examples, particularly those of Limoges, must now be considered for comparison. The texts presented here draw the attention of scholars to the Veneto, where a historiography directed to public and institutional studies has overlooked personal and domestic documentation such as libri di famiglia.


1. The Production of memorie familiari in the Veneto

Despite assiduous archival research, undertaken with the express intent of broadening research into the family memoirs of Italy as a whole, the fact remains that known ricordanze are very unevenly distributed in geographic terms. In Cicchetti and Mordenti’s preliminary catalogue of published works, which adopted a « very wide and omnivorous definition of the libro di famiglia » precisely in order to be able to include works from throughout the peninsula, fully three-quarters are Florentine works.12 The first soundings of a team that is cataloguing unedited Florentine manuscripts indicate upwards of a thousand Florentine memoirs for the period before 1500.13 In contrast, the « appreciable number » of texts located in Arezzo and Lucca do not add up to more than a few dozen, and recent searches underscore the « extreme penury » of Sienese examples (no more than twenty). At a rough guess, the final count will probably not exceed a hundred for extra-Florentine Tuscany as a whole.14 Above fifty are known from Bologna, the other leading center of production, but no other city or region in Italy, it now appears, produced more than a handful. In Genoa, the Cibo family produced scattered entries, and a few account books briefly mention births, marriages, deaths and the expenses of caring for orphaned relatives: the personal information is minimal, but this is the best private documentation that the city can offer.15 For Milan only a single libricino of this type has been noted, and it is in actuality a diary of the ducal court with a very few family notices.16 For Naples, in the present state of research, there is nothing that even approaches the genre.17 Nor can the archives of northeast Italy challenge the Florentine preponderance. In Venice, apart from a few writers who provided bare lists of the births of children, only the libro di famiglia of the Freschi family is extant for the period before 1500.18 Two Friulan examples are known, and the Amaseo family incorporated another into its history of the region.19 The Bellunese cleric Clemente Miari, like the Amaseo, included copious personal and family notices in a general chronicle.20 A single Paduan text, from Ruggero Cortusi, resembles the Veronese and Vicentine works published here.21

18. The Freschi memoria was incorporated into a Cinquecento compilation: Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (= Marciana), Itali, 165 (8867). In addition, there is a mid-Cinquecento memoir of the Arborsani family (ivi, Itali, vii, 543 [7887]), and a Memorie lasciate da Francesco Amadi della sua famiglia, Museo Civico Correr, Cod. Gradengio 119 [56], also from the mid-Cinquecento but largely an account of the Amadi family ca. 1480; both may incorporate Quattrocento texts. For the writing of memoirs in Venice, see J.S. Grubb, Memory and identity: why Venetians didn’t keep ricordanze, « Renaissance Studies », viii, 4 (1994), pp. 375-87; Idem, Elite Citizens, in Venice Reconsidered, (N.Y.), Syracuse University, 2000. Mss. listing births of children are cited below, note 45.
Without question this list is not complete. Some fondi in the Veneto have not been explored, many family archives remain unavailable for consultation, and archives outside the region may yet produce memoires. But the repositories of Verona, Vicenza, Padua and Venice have all been searched in depth, and the yield cannot be judged anything more than meager compared with that of Florence. It does not seem likely that future research will much alter the present impression that the Veneto offers a limited quantity of libri di famiglie.

The reasons for the comparative scarcity of known memoirs in the Veneto are bound to be speculative: no one, after all, declared why he did not write the history of his lineage and household. Nonetheless, grounding texts in concrete local situations - political, social and literary - can raise the issue above the level of the merely heuristic and suggestive. The Veneto did, for example, favor alternative genres for inscribing personal and family memory, which suggests that people of the Veneto faced disincentives for writing (or preserving) ricordanze. When local patterns of memorialization are compared with what is known from Florence, where memorialists were highly forthcoming on their reasons for writing and where the socio-cultural milieu is better studied, we can derive plausible indications why Florentines regularly wrote ricordanze and people in the Veneto did not.

Most traditional explanations for unequal regional distribution of libri di famiglie are logical enough, but they can only partially stand up to close scrutiny. Cicchetti and Mordenti, for example, have posed a reasonable question: is the uneven distribution of memoirs the result of production or conservation? Were, in fact, family chronicles produced in considerable number outside Florence but then lost?22 Physical survival and archival dispersal might be one key. Florentines were early and systematic in amassing public repositories, and today the city’s archives and libraries are unrivalled in the quantity, variety and depth of their holdings. On the other hand, fire claimed the notarial archives of Verona (in 1723) and the municipal archives of Vicenza (in 1509).23 The conventi soppressi records and family archives of Florence are famous for having retained personal papers; those of Verona and Vicenza have been reduced to land documents and a few account books. Verona’s once-superb, later dispersed Saibante archive held at least the memoria of Bartolomeo Muronovo; some of its manuscripts have surfaced in Paris, Berlin, Milan and Florence, but the whereabouts of the major share is unknown. The wholesale destruction of the papers of Venice’s Donà dalle Rose family is famous but possibly not atypical.24 The vagaries of preservation are well known for other parts of Italy as well: the handful of extant account books from Genoa clearly represent a small fraction of those actually produced,25 and the ricordanze of the Bolognese builder Gaspare Nadi were apparently only kept because the author was mistaken for a more famous architect.26

There is evidence, in fact, of Veneto memoirs now destroyed or dispersed. Still extant in the Settecento was a « narativa dell’origine della famiglia Trissina », with « notte come passarono in Vicenza, e suoi accasamenti, et eretioni, e loro discendenza »; today it cannot be located.27 The «cronaca famigliare » or « cronachetta » or « memoriale » of the Vicentine Cardino Feramosca was excerpted in the last century, but the original has not been traced.28 In 1876 and 1915 Veronese

27. Bertoliana, Archivio Trissino, Catastico, Mazzo 1, doc. 9. Archivist Giovanni Dal Lago (communication to the author, 3/1991) thinks that this work is no longer among the uncatalogued buste of the archive.
scholars noted Andrea Banda’s « grosso libro autografo di memorie istoriche sulla propria famiglia », but its present whereabouts is unknown. Sometime before 1428, the Venetian Alvise Capello lost « certain books in which he wrote down the ages of his children ». When Venetian patrician youths proved their ages to qualify for early entry onto the Great Council, they often brought forth a *librum patris sui*: possibly a *libro di nascite*, though none survive to support a claim either way. In 1442 a gloomy Venetian testator referred to « mio libro a le choverte nigro » in which he had noted « hordenatamente tuta la mia povera condizion » since he was a « tristo regazo »; another noble, in 1472, made passing reference to the « molte cose stranie ò sentito eser seguide in vita mia, e però apar nel mio libro ». Both *libri*, apparently, refer to lost *ricordanze*. A further hint of widespread keeping of memoirs in Venice comes from the *Memoriale* of Zuan Paolo da Ponte, covering the years 1520-62. This work is so highly developed - totaling five volumes and two thousand pages (another volume has been lost) - that it seems inconceivable that da Ponte invented the genre; surely the *Memoriale* built upon a longstanding tradition. Still, the thesis of different regional patterns of conservation is suggestive rather than definitive. Widespread losses are hardly confined to non Tuscan Italy: Florentines too did not keep everything, and they must have lost a proportion of documentation comparable to that of the Veneto, but they still offer hundreds more *ricordanze*. The fact remains, too, that Veneto holdings have not been altogether decimated: Verona’s family archives are copious and well-inventoried, and Vicenza’s Archivio di Stato holds the registers of some 400 Quattrocento notaries, yet few examples of *libri di famiglie* have been located in either city. Surely if Venetians and Paduans actually produced a sizable body of memoirs, their cities’ rich archives would preserve more than a few examples. Destruction and dispersal do not seem able to account for the regional imbalance in known examples.

More promising is a corollary of the production and preservation question, resting upon a Florentine bureaucratic imperative. There, the public record is replete with denunciations of office-holders and subsequent investigations for insufficient age, illegitimacy or electoral fraud: these gave Florentines a strong impetus to create and preserve *libri di ricordi* to support their defences. After 1429, *ricordanze* were deemed admissible evidence for compilation of the *libri delle età* that demonstrated eligibility for office. The *catasto* of 1427 and beyond, requiring declaration of family members and their ages - a tax exemption for offspring offered inducement for full recording - further stimulated regular inscription of anagrophic data to fend off official challenges to *polizze*. In the period 1382-1434, generally seen as oligarchic, with access to high office increasingly restricted to ancient families of proven political reliability, a *ricordanza* could press claims to a family’s antiquity, constant participation in councils and unimpeachable Guelph credentials. In 1494, access to Florentine councils was restricted to those who could prove an ancestor among the « tre maggiori », giving further impetus to create and hold records of
careers.\footnote{Pezzarossa, Memorialistica fiorentina, pp. 135-36.} Florentine (and Lucchese) tribunals accepted memoirs as evidence in lawsuits; on the other side of the coin, Sienese \textit{libri di ricordi} may not have been kept because they had no standing in courts.\footnote{A. Valori, \textit{Famiglia e memoria. Luca da Panzano dal suo ‘Libro di Ricordi’: uno studio sulle relazioni familiari nello specchio della scrittura}, « Archivio storico italiano », clii, 2 (1994), pp. 265-66, 269, 279, 281-82; Ciappelli, \textit{Famiglia}, p. 191; Pezzarossa, \textit{‘Libri di famiglia’}, p. 69; Torelli, \textit{‘Libri di ricordanze’}, pp. 144-51; Cherubini, \textit{‘Libri di ricordanze’}, pp. 577-78.}

While Veneto heads of household also felt administrative pressure to compile anagraphic information, they may have felt less pressure to preserve those records. To be sure, the Veronese and Paduan fiscal systems equally demanded the submission of \textit{polizze} that noted the ages of family members. But since there were no fiscal rewards for full and accurate reporting of children, and the commune had no fiscal advantage in disputing family data in the \textit{polizze}, heads of household had little incentive to retain written evidence. Further, Veneto \textit{estimi} were frequent -compiled at nine-year intervals in Verona in the Quattrocento, at seven-year intervals in Padua\footnote{A. Ventura, \textit{Nobiltà e popolo nella società veneta del ‘400 e ’500}, Bari 1964, pp. 69-79; A. Tagliaferri, \textit{L’economia veronese secondo gli estimi dal 1409 al 1635}, Milano 1966, p. 20.} - which reduced the long-term incentive for anagraphic documentation. Once the \textit{estimo}’s cycle was complete and a new \textit{estimo} drawn up, there was no need to preserve old records. Nor was proof of age for political participation much of a stimulus for recording births. Vicentine statutes set a strict threshold of eighteen years for council membership, for example, but they also allowed hereditary transmission of council seats, which made a mockery of age limits: Silvestro Arnaldi was enrolled in the Great Council at the age of five. His family had kept a \textit{libro di ricordanza}, but hardly to prove that he had met the threshold for political eligibility. In Venice, the paternal \textit{libri} that proved the legitimacy and sufficient ages of aspiring candidates in the \textit{prove d’età} may have been akin to \textit{libri di famiglia} but, again, these records had only ephemeral value after the government began to keep systematic records of noble births in the early fifteenth century.\footnote{For \textit{prove d’età} registers, see above, note 31. The Avogadori di Comun after 1414 enrolled candidates for the Barbarella, after 1422 were ordered to register marriages between patrician men and women of « low status » and to investigate the mothers of men who aspired to the Great Council, and after 1430 kept registers of age -proofs of candidates for the Barbarella and positions in the fleet: S. Chojnacki, \textit{Social identity in Renaissance Venice: the second Serrata, « Renaissance Studies »}, 8, 4 (1994), esp. pp. 345-48, 351; Idem, \textit{Marriage Legislation and Patrician Society in Fifteenth-Century Venice}, in \textit{Law, Custom, and the Social Fabric in Medieval Europe}, ed. B.S. Bachrach and D. Nicholas, Kalamazoo 1990, p. 167; Idem, Subaltern Patriarchs: \textit{Patrician Bachelors in Renaissance Venice,} in C.A. Lees, ed., \textit{Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages}, Minneapolis 1994, pp. 75-76, 81; legislation printed in V. Crescenzi, \textit{Esse de Maiori Consilio: legittimità civile e legittimazione politica nella Repubblica di Venezia (secc. XIII-XVI)}, Roma 1996; 1422 legislation printed in Ch. Verlinden, \textit{L’esclavage dans l’Europe médievale}, ii, Ghent 1977, p. 683.} Once its sons were inscribed on the official rolls, a family had little incentive to preserve its own anagraphic record.

A further argument for Florentine predominance proceeds from an assumption of greater Florentine practical literacy. The city’s merchants, engaged in far-flung and complex business interests, kept close accounts of business affairs; as regular recorders of transactions, they naturally moved into the inscription of family affairs, particularly as these had implications for family economies (marriages, dowries, inheritances, deaths); once the family had to come to occupy a major share of their attention, they moved into inscription of ancillary material relating to the family (genealogies, moral precepts, political careers, etc.).\footnote{Pezzarossa, \textit{Introduzione}, esp. pp. 45-47; Valori, \textit{Famiglia e memoria}, pp. 264-65; Branca, \textit{Introduzione to Mercanti scrittori}, pp. xv-xvi; Cherubini, \textit{‘Libri di ricordanze’}, pp. 576-77; Cicchetti and Mordenti, \textit{Libridifamiglia}, i, pp. 115-16; and see works cited below, note 82.} Reinforcing this accounting habit was a litany of Florentine texts, from Paolo da Certaldo, Giovanni Morelli, Leon Battista Alberti and others, which urged the merchant to write down anything that might possibly need recall in the future.\footnote{Cicchetti and Mordenti, \textit{Scrittura dei libri di famiglia}, pp. 1124-26.} Moreover, the theory...
goes, the quotidian registration of events was customary further down the social scale in Florence than was the case elsewhere: even artisans kept account books, and many recorded personal material as well.42 This hypothesis may go far to explain why Florentines did generate ricordanze, but is less convincing in demonstrating why non-Florentines did not. It would be hard to demonstrate that citizens of other trading centers were less habitually literate than their Florentine counterparts. In fact, non-Florentines wrote copiously; they simply chose not to write about themselves and their families. Venetians regularly kept account books in the Quattrocento,43 as did merchants and landowners from the major cities of the Veneto,44 but few found reason to commit their families’ memories to paper. Several writers in the Veneto, from the Venetian patrician Piero Giustinian to the Feltrine humanist Antonio da Romagno to the minor Veronese merchant Jacopo Guastaverza, did compile bare lists of births and deaths of immediate family members, but they did not opt to flesh these out into true libri di famiglia.45 What matters for the production of family memoirs seems less the ability and frequency of writing, and more the will to transmit the memory of the lineage. Judging from the distribution of memoirs, Florentines alone possessed the impulse with some regularity, and people in the Veneto did not.

That will has been most commonly explained in terms of the development of lineage self-consciousness in Florence: libri di famiglia constructed the biological, moral and public identity of the patriline, supported its claims to eminence, and provided resources for the future instruction and preservation of the line.46 At face value, this hypothesis would seem to suffer the same defects as other explanations of Florence’s near-monopoly on production of ricordanze. Surely Venetian houses were just as proud, and the families of the Veneto equally stood in need of strategies for solidarity and perpetuation. Tangible celebrations of lineage - coats of arms, grand palaces, sumptuous tombs - are found throughout the peninsula; why should literary celebrations of lineage be concentrated in Florence?


44. For Padua see A.S.Pad., Archivi Privati, Selvatico-Manfredi 1558; Zacco 76-77; Negri 179-80; Obizzi 223; ivi, Ospedale di S. Francesco 1058-65, 1084. For Vicenza see A.S.Ver., Archivio Privato, Gianfilippini-Campostrini 791. For Verona see A.S.Ver., Archivi Privati, Allegri 22/352; Malaspina cclxxii/3026 and cclxxiii/3049; Malaspina Ormaneto 3087; Carlotti 841; Morando 1271; Pompei-Guadagnini 4-5; Dionisi-Piomarta 24, 260, 1718-19, 1725, 1863, 1875. The Guastaverza, Repeta and Fracastoro ricordanze presented in this volume all derive from catasti, as does that of Ruggero Cortusi in Padua. The Venetorean Ireco Aleardi possessed at least a dozen registers of income, expenses, debts, credits and land transactions: C. Cipolla, Libri e mobili di casa Aleardi al principio del sec. XV, « Archivio veneto », 24 (1882), pp. 40-42.


But the argument does have merit when seen in terms of the relationship of family memorialization to the political and social settings of the cities.\textsuperscript{47} In this regard Florence does seem a different sort of place. Its historians commonly speak of a \textit{ceto dirigente}, an oligarchy, a patriciate. However much scholars are convinced of the existence of a coherent ruling group at any one time, though, they are careful to note that the elite never received formal definition. Quattrocento lists testify to contemporaries’ perception of a firm inner circle, and modern prosopography can establish its contours with some precision,\textsuperscript{48} but the fact remains that it lacked explicit criteria for inclusion, at least in political terms.

This situation had profound implications for memorialization. With upper ranks unfixed, no Florentine, no matter how ancient and distinguished his family’s past, could find firm identity within a collective leadership. Family pride could not be anchored in a wider network: the patriline alone could serve as the object of memory. The \textit{libro di famiglia}, in consequence, inscribed the unilineal family’s resources for assertion and survival. Among them, to be sure, were links with affines, lateral kin, allies, clients and patrons, and these were well-documented. But primary attention was always focused upon the immediate family, because no greater allegiance could long be maintained. The patriline could only rely upon its own record of antiquity and status.\textsuperscript{49}

It may indeed have been the case that social mobility was eventually curbed, that Florence had indeed generated a «rigid oligarchy» by the fifteenth century. But that thesis hardly alters the argument. In an increasingly exclusivist society, both insiders and aspirants had to demonstrate the antiquity and traditional loyalty of their families, their good blood and sufficient patrimony, since there was no indelible criterion – such as hereditary nobility or fixed council membership – for inclusion. But each family, whether in power or seeking power, had to make its claims on an individual basis. As a consequence, Florentines wrote single-family, atomized ricordanze.

The situation was rather different in the Veneto, both as regards traditions of prominence and as regards traditions for transmitting family memory. In very general terms, northern Italian elites were more stable and formalized, and memorialization emphasized the collective elite rather than the individual family. The patriciate of Venice, most notably, was fixed by the first quarter of the fourteenth century, and scarcely changed its membership thereafter. On the mainland, to be sure, elites were never formalized to that degree. Still, the major cities of the region all moved towards more restricted access to municipal councils. The Trevisan nobility had corporate identity, with statutes and \textit{matricole}, and received a guaranteed share of high civic office.\textsuperscript{50} Vicentines were in theory closed after 1311, when statutes reserved seats for those currently holding office, their heirs and assigns; the city kept a sort of «golden book» officially enrolling council members.\textsuperscript{51}
In Verona, the councils of Fifty and Seventy-two elected each others’ members, and the majority of councilors simply moved from one to the other in alternate years.\textsuperscript{52} Paduan statutes of the Trecento had reserved half of upper council seats for nobles; that privilege disappeared under Venetian rule, but a 1430 reform that allowed the council to elect its successor gave municipal government a « netta impronta oligarchica », with a restricted number of case dominating office holding through informal cooperation.\textsuperscript{53} Throughout the region, too, traditionally prominent families might suffer normal attrition or extinction, but elites as a whole never suffered the brusque disruptions characteristic of Florence. Varanini has noted the « assenza . . . di quelle aspre lotte di fazioni » that embroiled Lombard cities. Changes of regime had relatively mild consequences: the Scaligeri and Carraresi seldom eliminated older elite families except in cases of outright rebellion. Indeed, they preferred to recruit eminent families into their administrations. The old magnate houses of Padua, excluded from power in the heyday of the guild-dominated commune, actually made something of a comeback in the signori period. The Visconti (after 1387) and the Venetian (after 1404) dominions proved relatively accommodating towards their new subjects and never engaged in mass proscription. Rebels were still treated harshly, but protest soon faded, and in the normal course of events the Venetian Republic ruled through local elites rather than replacing them with centrally-appointed functionaries.\textsuperscript{54} Thus while the political classes of the mainland were consistently permeable, they also displayed substantial continuity of membership.

More to the point, a significant body of memorialistic writing both presupposed and reinforced identifiable political classes. The collective, prosopographic family chronicle was particularly highly developed in Padua. Best known is the De generatione aliquorum civium Padue tam nobilium quam ignobilium of Giovanni da Nono (ca. 1318), which listed the origins, chief representatives, palaces and coats of arms of over a hundred of Padua’s notable houses. But the De generatione is only the most famous of a large body of works with approximately the same format and intention. Da Nono himself quoted from Zambono d’Andrea’s chronicle-poem De domibus insignibus Patavie (before 1315), which likewise assembled the city’s worthies into a group account. Giovanni Francesco Capodilista, drawing up the history of his family around 1434, cited group histories by Giacomo Ardenghi (1168), the chancellor Ziliolo (1196), Antonio d’Alessio (1258) and Lazaro Malrotondi (late fourteenth century), as well as a De moribus et familiae Patavinorum and three separate works that shared the title De domibus Paduanorum. A text of 1335, later titled (erroneously) the Favafuschi account. Giovanni Francesco Capodilista, drawing up the history of his family around 1434, cited group histories by Giacomo Ardenghi (1168), the chancellor Ziliolo (1196), Antonio d’Alessio (1258) and Lazaro Malrotondi (late fourteenth century), as well as a De moribus et familiae Patavinorum and three separate works that shared the title De domibus Paduanorum. A text of 1335, later titled (erroneously) the Favafuschi chronicle, celebrated the progenitors, arms and living members of around fifty families. Like the De generatione it is known from several versions, and was evidently nearly as popular.\textsuperscript{55}
In the Quattrocento several other such works, generally imitations or paraphrases or translations or reworkings of da Nono, circulated under the names of Giovanni Basile, Antonio Cartolari, Solimano de’ Solimani and Pietro Borromeo. The authenticity of these authors is doubtful, but that is not the point: the popularity of the type is beyond question. If we tally the number of their manuscripts along with those of the De generatione and the pseudo-Favafuschi chronicle, the collective family chronicle is represented by more exemplars than all other sorts of historical writing put together. Paduans, it will be recalled, scarcely wrote individualized libri di famiglia. Preferring the aggregate prosopographical chronicle, they chose collective exaltation of the ruling group rather than separate examination of their own families.

Nor were Paduans alone in a desire to memorialize families en masse. Verona and Vicenza produced several lists of notable houses, with cursory notes on origins and juridical-social status; examples date from the early thirteenth century and extend through a short list of Veronese gentilhomini et optimi zitadini in 1478 and a longer list of Veronese nobles from the early Cinquecento. The Vicentine Battista Pagliarini, at the end of the Quattrocento, compiled biographies of some 416 extinct and 271 extant families, and his work was highly popular in the next century.

Nearby, the Mantuan Andrea Schivenoglia gathered descriptions of several hundred fellow-citizens, with information on occupations, addresses, wealth and characters, and the Ferrarese Ugo Caleffini provided lists of Ferrarese gentiluomini. The « social chronicle » genre of Padua, in fact, was « paralleled in at least a score of cities » in northern and central Italy.

The other center of collective family memorialization was Venice. Extremely common are the chronicles sometimes given the title of caxade de Venexia, which offer brief sketches of all the city’s noble clans with information on families’ origins, current residence, illustrious representatives and heraldry. These testify to Venetians’ tendency to subsume any one family’s history into that of the overall ruling group. In turn, that aggregate memorialization reflects a fundamental self-perception of the Venetian patriciate: individual patricians held status and identity only insofar as they participated in a collected aristocracy. Indeed, the noble family scarcely existed apart from the charmed circle of the nobility, and certainly could claim no public standing outside it.

57. The most accessible manuscripts include: Padova, Biblioteca del Museo Civico, BP 149, BP 803, BP 860, BP 1151, BP 1591, BP 1860, BP 1239; Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, mss. 55, 65, 232, 1667, 2257; Marciana, Lat. x, 348 (3260); ivi, Lat. x, 69 (3131); ivi, Lat. xiv, 284 (4300); ivi, Ital. xi, 120 (6931); Padova, Biblioteca del Seminario, ms. 56 (« Cronica ... mccxxl »).
Venetian nobles found, then, a strong disincentive to transmit memory in an account of the single family, which would only emphasize the specific experience of the lineage and create a separate place for it: writing a ricordanza would distance the family from the all-important collegial matrix. A few Venetians might have been inclined to write accounts of their immediate families, but none were inclined to preserve them. In any case, as noted above, the government had increasingly taken over the task of keeping records on births and marriages and offices, which reduced any impetus for individual families to compile or preserve records of their own. Since throughout the Veneto the work of family memorialization was assumed by the group biography or the public record, there was less incentive to write the stories of individual families. It is surely no accident that Padua and Venice, centers of prosopographic family history, produced the fewest libri di famiglia. The preference for aggregate over individual accounts is evident in Vicenza as well, to judge by the popularity of Pagliarini’s Cronici and by the fact that none of the city’s great case produced memoirs or self-standing histories. Whether not this pattern is applicable for other cities in the region must remain an open question; it can at least be noted that Verona, where the collective chronicle genre was least developed, produced the lion’s share of the Veneto’s ricordanze.

In Italy at large, it might be similarly suggested that wherever (as in the Veneto) the collective, prosopographical approach to memorialization was dominant, reflecting contemporaries’ perception of coherent elites, the production of memoirs was stunted; conversely, wherever (as in Florence) collective memorialization was weaker, reflecting relatively diffuse elites, single-family ricordanze were the norm. Putting the thesis in slightly different terms, Alberto Tenenti has suggested that libri di famiglia enjoyed a richer tradition where the state was weak (Florence) than where the authority of the state (Venice) or the signore (Milan) was stronger. It is true that efforts to correlate patterns of memorialization with local political-social situations are scarcely underway outside the Veneto and Florence, and it is not certain if this pattern holds true for other regions as well. At best it can be said that where the ranks of elites were fixed in aggregate writing, ricordanze are scarce. Siena, where the leading families were grouped into five monti, produced only a handful of libri di famiglie. Genoa, where leading families were incorporated into collective alberghi, and laws of 1363 and 1413 ordered the vicedoge to compile lists of alberghi members, produced but one. Bolognese ordinances of 1454 ordered the compilation of registers of births, deaths and marriages, and Lucchese law required registration of marriages; neither city produced many memoirs.

Milan offers a final piece of corroboration. Public rolls of noble houses possessing the exclusive right to place sons on the metropolitan chapter date from 1377 (antecedent matricole existed a century before). By the logic of the 1377 matricola, that is, Milanese notables founded their claims to eminence upon membership in a corporate aristocracy that was identified in a publicly held document. The antiquity and legitimacy of noble houses was part of the public record and the public memory; by the fact that none of them found little impetus to keep their accounts of births, deaths and marriages and offices complete. Whether or not this pattern is applicable for other cities in the region must remain an open question; it can at least be noted that Verona, where the collective chronicle genre was least developed, produced the lion’s share of the Veneto’s ricordanze.

62. Hyde, Uses of Literacy, pp. 124-26; Grubb, Memory and identity.
63. G. Zanato, Ricerche per una edizione critica della cronaca vicentina di G.B. Pagliarini (1415-1506), Vicenza 1979, pp. 44-90, citing some twenty-eight manuscripts of 16th-17th centuries.
64. L’ideologia della famiglia fiorentina nel Quattro e Cinquecento, in La famiglia e la vita quotidiana in Europa dal ’400 al ’600, Roma 1986, p. 98.
their own accounts. The sole Quattrocento Milanese memoria derives from a newly-arrived family - the Simonetta were not inscribed in the matricola - and, conversely, no traditionally powerful family is known to have left a ricordanza.

But perhaps in this regard Florence was not idiosyncratic, merely out of synchronization. By the middle of the Cinquecento, Florentine notables were firmly established as noble, and were inscribed as such in documents such as the matricole of neochivalric orders, lists of casati fiorentini and proofs of nobility. They were also now equipped with alternative genres for memorialization, such as biography, autobiography, genealogy and history. Precisely at that point, their production of ricordanze fell off sharply.69

The preference for collective family history in the Veneto did not completely impede compilation of libri di famiglia: the texts printed here demonstrate that a few brave souls did oppose the prevailing trend and write memorie of themselves and their families. But they are the exceptions that prove the rule. Known libri di famiglie derive almost exclusively from writers whose case were not, at the time of writing, participants in local elites. Unable to claim identity and status from membership in an aggregated leadership, their families not mentioned in prosopographic chronicles, these men fell back upon their own lineages and their own memories. The lead example is that of Venice, where the only extant early memoir comes from the Freschi: these were cittadini orginari, non-noble and without hope for entry into the nobility. When they achieved semihereditary positions in high magistracies and formed close alliances with patricians, they understandably grew in pride and lineage self-consciousness, but they had to write their own story because neither caxade chronicles nor public rolls - reserved for the patriciate - would inscribe memory for them. Their book is as much an acknowledgment of exclusion as a statement of new-founded status.

So, too, on the mainland the writers of ricordanze were not wholly obscure, but most came from families that were new and/or undistinguished in the past. There are two strong exceptions, to be sure: Verona’s Verità family was very old, very rich, and continually occupied the highest civic offices,70 and Aventino Fracastoro, ancestor of the memorialist Bernardino, was both a celebrated doctor and a major investor in the silk trade.71 But the families of the other memorialists were of a rather different sort. Vicenza's Arnaldi had been minor notaries and makers of shoes - they bore the surname Soleri well into the Quattrocento - and are not known to have sat on municipal councils with any regularity. The Ferramsoca too were notaries and cloth merchants.72 At the time Manfredo Repeta composed his catasto, the family was resident in the countryside, declining in wealth and numbers, politically a nonentity and socially tainted by the violent crimes of cousins.73 Giacomo Trento, author of a list of nascite, was a distinguished jurist and ambassador,

70. Bartolomeo Verità, for example, was factor and procurator to Beatrice da Coreggio in the mid-Trecento: G. Barbieri, Economia, finanza e tenore di vita nella Verona scaligera, in Gli Scaligeri, p. 333; M. Lecce, Mutui commerciali a Verona nel Trecento, in Ricerche di storia economica medievoale e moderna, Verona 1975, pp. 270-71; E. Rossini and M. Mazzaoui, La lana come materia prima nel veneto sud-occidentale (sec. XIII-XV), in La lana come materia prima, ed. M. Spallanzani, Firenze 1974, pp. 191-92. He was also a wool-merchant trading with the great Covoni company of Florence, and a Scaligeri official: A. Sapori, Libro giallo della compagnia dei Covoni, Milano 1970, pp. 81, 281; Varanini, Vicenza nel Trecento, p. 189. In the Quattrocento various Verità were frequently elected to councils and high office: A.S.Ver., Antico Archivio del Comune, regs. 56-68, 139-41, 145-53, 166; Verona, Biblioteca Civica, ms. 894; A. Cartolari, Famiglie già ascritte al nobile consiglio di Verona, Verona 1854; reprint Bologna 1969, pp. 269-72.
72. Repeta, f. 42r; Bertoliana, Gonzati 309 (matricole of cloth merchants), 535 (matricole of notaries).
73. Pagliarini commented that previous Repeta « praestantiores olim in ea [Vicenza] cives fuere quam nunc et audatores ac magis locupletes »: Cronicace, p. 336. On the misdeeds of his kinsmen, see below, Repeta, ff. 97v, 131v.
but his family had only resided in Vicenza for two generations. Padua’s Ruggero Cortusi, to judge from his book, was a modest rentier and merchant. Verona’s Stoppa had just arrived in the city, from the area around Como. The de’ Bovi were not di rilievo in political or administrative circles. The Muronovo - notaries in the Trecento - did not sit on municipal councils in the Quattrocento. Judging from his account book, Jacopo Guastaverza was a minor cloth merchant. None of these Veronese families appear in the 1478 and Cinquecento lists of noble houses, nor in early lists of notables.

If these writers were distinctly on the lower levels of civic hierarchies, they were moving towards entry into the upper ranks. Andrea Arnaldi, Manfredo Repeta, Bonaventura de’ Bovi, Cardino Feramosca and the sons of Alvise Stoppa entered municipal councils, amassed considerable fortunes and married their children into the best old families. Increasingly conscious of their upward mobility and their potential claims to eminence, they were increasingly inclined to self-assertion. Like the Freschi in Venice, they wished (or needed) to fix the memory of the family present and past - but they had not yet entered into the common memory of the collective family chronicle. So they wrote their own accounts, perhaps to provide further credentials for eventual assimilation into the elite.

The subsequent histories of these families gives further weight to the thesis that only those aspiring to - but not yet part of - established Veneto patriciates were likely to leave memorie. By the end of the chronological span covered in the libri di famiglia, it is evident that the families had acquired prominence, at least in terms of consistent council participation and prominent marriages. They could then, by about the turn of the Cinquecento, share in the collective patrimony of civic memory: the Arnaldi, Repeta and Feramosca, for example, received prominent places in the sixth chapter (« de nobilibus nostrae civitatis familias ») of Pagliarini’s Cronicae. At that point, since they had found firm places in the top group and its aggregate history, they stopped writing the histories of their own families.

The memorie end precisely at the moment when writers’ families were admitted to the top ranks. They could afford to abandon their bygone concentration on the immediate lineage because they had secured a more prestigious identity within the collectively memorialized patriciate. Emblematic is the Arnaldi liber. The first major figure in the line, the modestly-born Andrea, steadily recorded marriages, births and deaths while he made a fortune and secured a hereditary council seat. Brother Tommaso and nephew Gaspare, moderately eminent, continued the memoir, though only sporadically. But son Silvestro only once took up the pen. Retired from trade and the notariate, universally styled nobilis and married to a daughter of the mighty da Poiana house - and, not coincidentally, living long enough to see his family given a good place in Pagliarini’s compendium of nobility - he could share in the lustre of aristocratic colleagues and chose not to continue the record of his own house.

74. Bertoliana, ms. 3336, f. 115r; Pagliarini, Cronicae, p. 339; Fasolo, Episodio, p. 129. He appears constantly in municipal records of the later Quattrocento: Bertoliana, Arch. Torre 59, 61-62.
75. Varanini, Classe dirigente veronese, p. 46. They were, however, elected to councils with some frequency: Cartolari, Famiglie, pp. 33-34.
76. Lecce, Mutui commerciali, pp. 275-77.
77. Verona, Biblioteca Comunale, ms. 906; cf. G.M. Varanini, Le campagne veronesi del ’400 fra tradizione e innovazione, in Uomini e civiltà agraria in territorio veronese, Verona 1982, pp. 245-46. One Guastaverza was once elected to councils: Cartolari, Famiglie, p. 113.
78. See A. Castagnetti, La società veronese nel Medioevo, ii, Ceti e famiglie dominanti nella prima età comunale, Verona 1987; and works cited in note 58 above.
79. Pagliarini listed Vicenza’s 271 « noble families » in order of descending importance, from the mighty Loschi to the Cogonegrì « imae conditionis ». Of the families that produced ricordanze, the Ferramosca and Repeta ranked 25th and 26th (91st percentile), the Arnaldi 36th (87th percentile).
2. Form and Content

Veronese and Vicentine memorie consistently resemble their Florentine counterparts in a single regard. Their anagraphic entries, especially the lists of nascite that offer detailed information on the date and time of birth, the choice of name, the date and place of baptism, and the godparents and attendants, are so similar to those of Tuscany - and Feltre, Padua, Venice, Genoa, Perugia, Bologna, Forli and west-central France - as to suggest that there circulated uniform models throughout Italy or even Europe as a whole.\(^{80}\) In other formal and substantive respects, however, the Veneto texts are at variance with the better-known Florentine examples. If the study of libri di famiglia is to be extended from Florence to the peninsula as a whole, the apparent eccentricity of Veneto memoirs demands one of two responses: either these works must be excluded from a narrowly-defined canon, or else the overall typology of the genre must be broadened to encompass the texts of the northeast.

Few of the Veneto texts are found as autonomous, free-standing works.\(^{81}\) The rest are hybrids, of two sorts. In the first case, family notices intermingle with, and are quantitatively inferior to, records of land and business management. The texts of Manfredo Repeta and Ruggero Cortusi began as inventories of lands divided with kinsmen; they then added personal and family notices as an incidental - albeit growing - afterthought. The Stoppa text is a short preface to a volume of patrimony-related documents; that of the Fracastoro is a postscript to a patrimonial administration book or catasto.

This stands at odds with the general perception of the Florentine libro di famiglia. Several scholars, for example, have adopted a developmental model starting with the commercial account book of the Dugento. Merchants increasingly noted the circumstances of debts and credits, then the domestic events (marriages and inheritances) that produced movements of money and property. Their successors began to sketch the personalities involved, then with growing frequency recorded political and civil events, moral admonitions and exempla, genealogies and anagraphic material. In time, the family material was so large in volume and distinct in content from the original commercial matrix as to warrant a separate register. By the later Trecento, the account book proper and the libro di famiglia had acquired distinct concentrations and constituted different genres. The « mature » or « advanced » memoir served primarily as a repository of information about the lineage in its biological, social and moral aspects, and would largely ignore land transactions in favor of a more « literary » treatment of the family.\(^{82}\)

That model would relegate the Veneto texts of the Quattrocento - which lump together debts and credits, family notices and land accounts in unspecialized and undifferentiated works - to the level of the « archaic » and « elementary »;\(^{83}\) or perhaps they are not true libri di famiglia at all. Perhaps the region was indeed provincial and backwards. But the Veneto texts, deliberately combining the personal and the patrimonial, at least raise the issue of how far the model of the bifurcation of the account book and the true cronaca domestica ought to be pushed. There are strong empirical objections to an overly schematic approach.

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81. The single exception is that of Bartolomeo de Bovi. The Arnaldi and Freschi texts survive as autonomous works, but the manuscripts are Cinquecento copies and seem to have been compiled from earlier texts.


First, literary historians have concentrated on upper-end works of unusual length, complexity and polish, especially the ricordi of Giovanni di Pagolo Morelli, Buonaccorso Pitti, Gregorio Dati, Donato Velluti and Francesco Guicciardini. This selection generates a self-fulfilling definition, since the texts considered are already those distinguished by their «autonomous physiognomy», «more elaborated» narrative and high degree of literary sophistication. But the typology then limits the field of inquiry to a few self-consciously literary works, and excludes the more mundane texts that constitute the great majority of production. If the focus is shifted to more humble texts, which frequently mingle family notices and moral commentary with accounts of land management, bifurcation might appear less absolute; and the Veneto texts might appear more conventional.

Most Tuscan works, in fact, retained strong residual traces of the account or management book into the Quattrocento and beyond. This was stressed by Philip Jones in an early study of Florentine examples: their content, he noted, was usually heterogeneous, but always «business and financial memoranda» are normally present if not predominant in ricordanze».85 Charles de la Roncière went a step farther, asserting that entries on loans, transactions and patrimony «constituent le partie principal» of memoirs; Anna Benvenuti Papi notes the «disomogenea morfologia dei libri di ricordanze domestiche».86 This is, in fact, the case even for many of the more famous Florentine texts: Niccolini’s Libro degli affarii proprii,87 Goro Dati’s Libro segreto,88 Biagio Buonaccorsi’s Ricordi,89 and Alessandra Macchinghi Strozzi’s unedited memoir.90 Filippo de’ Medici’s Libro di memorie consists largely of extracts of patrimonial documents.91 A recent editor notes the «prevalezza» of financial records in Francesco Castellani’s Ricordanze.92 This mixed quality is characteristic outside Florence as well, in the texts of the Siensese Cristofano Guidino and Simo d’Ubertino d’Arettezio, several Lucchesi, the Bolognese Cesare Nappi and the da Sala, and some French livres de raison.93

Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that editors in the Settecento and Ottocento (and several modern editors) severely truncated their manuscripts, giving the misleading impression of self-standing memoirs.94 Only rarely have these mutilated texts been re-edited according to more inclusive critical standards, and thus it is usually impossible to know what the older editions left out. In all probability, early editors were concerned less with the routine details of business and land transactions than with the search for data on domestic and political life, and so excised that which did not pertain to family and community. This is certainly the case, for example, when the Repeta text printed here is...

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84. Cicchetti and Mordenti, Scrittura, pp. 1144, 1150-55.
90. Cherubini, ‘Libri di ricordanze’, p. 582. See also Martelli’s Ricordanze (cited in note 34); F. Allegrezza, Un secolo di scrittura: libri di ricordanze dei Corsini, «Bollettino dell’Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio muratoriano», 92 (1985-86), pp. 223-94; and Leonorizzed of Giovanni Chellini di S. Miniato medico mercante e umanista (1425-1457), ed. M.T. Sillano, Milano 1984, where there are scarcely a dozen notices which expenses do not figure.
94. Cicchetti and Mordenti, Libri di famiglia, i, ch. 3; D. Solfaroli Camillocchi, Scrivere e proprietarie, Memoria familiare e servizio del principe nel ‘libro’ di Gasparo Venturini di Massa, «Archivio storico italiano», cliv, 1 (1995), pp. 126-30; Pezzarossa, Introduzione a Martelli’s Ricordi, notes 2, 94; Cherubini, Dal libro di ricordi, p. 393; Mordenti, La famiglia e le donne, pp. 637-38. This is true of some modern editions as well; Pezzarossa, ‘Libri di famiglia’, pp. 72-73, 79-81; and cf. the memoirs of Morelli, Pitti and Rucellai (below, notes 97-99).
compared with the abridgment published in 1887. That edition would have us think that the author was exclusively concerned with self and family, when in fact the catasto is (in quantitative terms) primarily patrimonial. At least, the degree to which a published text is complete should be consistently questioned. In particular, it is necessary to know how much mercantile and patrimonial data was omitted, thus presenting an artificial appearance of a free-standing, coherent libro di famiglia. Here too, the Veneto texts may yet be judged more typical of the entire production.

In the second type of Veneto memoir, the core of the manuscript is a zibaldone or literary miscellany. The Verità made entries to a miscellany of patristic and prophetic texts, Bartolomeo Muronovo to a miscellany of literary and moral texts. This type of material, it should be noted, rarely appears in the editions of Florentine libri di famiglia. As the format of the first set of Veneto memoirs blurs the boundary between the ricordanza and the account book, the content of this second set blurs the boundary between the ricordanza and the zibaldone. It is not hard to see how the zibaldone could easily intersect with the libro di famiglia, requiring only that a compiler or owner of personally pleasing texts should also claim the liberty of including those pursuant to his family. Giovanni Rucellai and Biagio Buonaccorsi in Florence and Cesare Nappi in Bologna kept both types of work, separately.95 Veneto writers chose not to establish separate genres, mixing externally-derived and family-specific material without discrimination between the two genres.

But the distinction between the pure libro di famiglia and the pure miscellany should not be too firmly drawn for Florence, either. A decade ago Cicchetti and Mordenti categorized the libro di famiglia as a hybrid, halfway between the libro d'archivio and the libro zibaldone, with points of contact on either side.96 Published versions of libri di famiglia, however, are usually shorn of what seemed to past editors as extraneous material. To take one example, the manuscript of Bonaccorso Pitti’s Ricordi also contains medical recipes, astronomical and calendrical texts and formularies of various sorts. These were omitted in editions of the Settecento and 1986.97 In the recent abridgment of Giovanni Rucellai’s Zibaldone quaesimale, Alessandro Perosa imposed tightly-defined criteria for inclusion that dictated the omission of some highly miscellaneous entries and that give the volume an artificially coherent appearance. Moreover, his topical arrangement of the volume, when compared to the nearly random ordering of texts in the manuscript, gives an equally misleading impression of an orderly compilation.98 The manuscript of Giovanni Morelli’s Ricordi contains proverbs and spiritual texts, in Morelli’s own hand, that were not included in the printed version.99 Attilio Bartoli Langeli’s checklist of elements that might be included in schede of libri di famiglie, including texts drawn from the individual and collective immaginario (myths, prophecies and dreams), suggests that we should expect to find such highly variegated material in future examinations of manuscripts.100

96. Cicchetti and Mordenti, Scrittura, p. 1138.
The proximity of this heterogeneous writing with entries more commonly associated with the « classic » memoir - anagraphic, genealogical and didactic notices, above all - does raise a crucial question, that of the overall purpose of the *libri di famiglia*. Students of the genre stress the imperative of patrilineal conservation: *memorie* provided the genealogical, political and moral resources for future solidarity and survival. They constructed family identity in a variety of ways: through invocation of ancestry, proof of age-old political office (on the right side of factional disputes, of course), examples of good and bad behavior by forebears, stern injunctions on right conduct, reminders of lands and palaces owned, and the like. *Memorie* were, by that account, designed to be kept within the family - several swear descendants to secrecy - and compiled with two related functions in mind: the instruction of successors, and the provision of hard data for eventual tests of social, legal, economic and political standing.\textsuperscript{101}

Against this consensus, Giovanni Cherubini has raised a voice of dissent. He stresses the *libro di famiglia* as « strumento strettamente personale dello scrivente », retaining the personal vision of the compiler, often lacking much awareness of the wider lineage, often passing outside the family (or disregarded within the family); and he asks how much « senso della famiglia e delle tradizioni familiari » these works actually have.\textsuperscript{102} His thesis has resonance for the Veneto texts, at least, in terms of accounting for what Vicentines and Veronese did include and what they did not include. They did, on the one hand, include extensive material that would have had little utility for the family in the future. Prayers, the apocryphal letters of Lentulus and Pontius Pilate, short-term prophecies and wondrous cures (how to expel bedbugs, for example) would not do much to hold the lineage together. Incantations against tempest and plague, or rules for finding Easter and electing the doge, were useful for anyone who chanced to read them, and hardly hold relevance for the writers’ family alone. Many of the *zibaldone*-type texts, particularly those with spiritual, calendrical and prophetic concerns, were in general circulation; many others, by the end of the Quattrocento, were copied from published works and belong to a general literary patrimony. They are not lineage-specific, and their inclusion in the *memorie* reflects more the tastes of the compilers than the political and social needs of sons and grandsons.

On the other hand, much in the Florentine texts that was critical for lineage affirmation was not generally included in those of the Veneto. Foremost among this sort of material is the genealogical element.\textsuperscript{103} Only Manfredo Repeta chose to trace his family back to a mythic progenitor, and he did so in a very brief manner. When Bartolomeo dal Bovo traced a previous generation’s service to the Scaligeri, he did so not to prove glorious antiquity but to set the context for the family’s discovery of an excellent cure for dog bites. The other *libri di famiglie* barely make reference to the writer’s father, let alone more remote ancestors. There is no deep past to the Veneto *ricordanze*, hence no historical foundation of biology and deeds upon which the lineage could base its identity, common purpose and future defenses; there is nothing remotely like Donato Velluti’s 150 pages of genealogy.\textsuperscript{104} On the other hand, to a degree seldom found in Florence they inclined towards matters spiritual and supernatural, medical and curious: writers demonstrate a preference for texts that speak to nonpatrilineal purposes. That is not to say that families in the region were disinterested preserving a family memory; rather, they used alternative genres for that


\textsuperscript{102} Cherubini, ‘*Libri di ricordanze*’, pp. 569-72; see also Cicchetti and Mordenti, *Scrrittura*, pp. 114-48.


\textsuperscript{104} Donato Velluti, *La cronica domestica*, ed. I. Del Lungo and G. Volpi, Firenze 1914, pp. 4-153.
purpose. Some kept genealogical trees and registers of notarial instruments. At least four great houses in the region sponsored histories of their lines. But they did not deem narrative ricordanze an appropriate place to convey that sort of information.

Florentines commonly began their books with a formulaic exordium that invoked God and favorite saints, identified the writer, declared the didactic function of writing - to instruct posterity, to assist the memory of future generations, and so forth - and gave a name to the book. This introduction explicitly located the act of inscription within the overall imperative of preserving the collective memory of the house. Descendants, that is, knew from the outset what they were to learn, and why. Giovanni Rucellai took the process a step further, making regular asides to his figlioli to tell them why a given passage was included and what its significance was.

This was not the case in the Veneto, where manuscripts generally begin with substantive entries and without explanatory exhortation. Gaspare Arnaldi simply declared his liber to be his property, and mentioned the name of his neighborhood. Bonaventura de’ Bovi alone gave a title - Memoriale - to his text. None of the other writers provided any guidance or context for their works. They wrote and copied, and left it at that. Future generations would have to draw their own lessons. In Florence, too, we note the persistence of overt moralizing. Proverbs and sage advice provided direct lessons for personal, social, economic and political comportment; accounts of virtuous and wayward forebears gave concrete examples for imitation and avoidance. Thus the family would acquire a moral patrimony to complement the biological and political patrimonies of memoirs, a crucial resource within the overall strategy for the survival of the lineage. The Veneto texts, in contrast, are relatively devoid of prescriptive content. Prayers, hagiography, moral epigrams and scriptural texts might be good for the souls of descendants, in very general terms, but practical and worldly advice is scarce. Exemplary anecdotes are equally rare; only Bonaventura de’ Bovi’s brief denunciation of his «incorrigible » and thieving son Girolamo would qualify in this regard. Andrea Arnaldi left out any mention of his brother Battista (a compulsive gambler and wastrel, and unable to provide for his wife and children, as we know from other sources), passing up a golden opportunity for monition.

105. A.S.Pad., Archivi Privati, Lion 189; A.S.Ver., Archivetti Privati, Bevilaqua doc. 10 (notebook marked « Privilegi », early Cinquecento), Auricalco doc. 6 (folders on Auricalchi and Verità); ivi, Archivi Privati, Malaspina ccvi/2217, Pompei-Maffei 672-76, Pompei-Vari 246/3, Dionisi-Piomarta 437 (later, but with references to earlier compilations, e.g. a « carta antica e tutta lacerata esistente in un rotolo di casa Dionisi dall’anno 1462 » and a « memorie storiche cronologiche de fatti della nobile famiglia Dionisi » covering 1180-1325), Dionisi-Piomarta 438 (the vetusta Dyonisiorum monumenta). The Stoppa and Fracastoro memoires are found amidst such collections. A genealogical tree of 1462 is found in A.S.Ver., Archivi Privati, Pompei-Bartolini 47; reference to an arbore of 1493 in A.S.Ver., Archivi Privati, Dionisi-Piomarta 437. Vicenza’s Fracanzani preserved correspondence with relatives in Città di Castello, seeking information on « le origine antique et nobile della nostra famiglia »: Bertoliana 2475.


107. From Velluti’s Cronica domestica, for example (p. 3): « Con ciò sia cosa che l’uomo desideri di sapere di sua nazione, e de’ suoi passati, e come i parentandi sono stati, e beni acquistati, e molte volte perciò si schifino di molti danni e fuggansi di molti errori » . On the proemium see Cicchetti and Mordenti, Scrittura, pp. 1119-21, 1137; Klapisch-Zuber, Invention, pp. 97-98; Branca, Introduzione, pp. lxi-lxii; and cf. Dati, Libro segreto, pp. 11-12; Libro di memorie di Filigno de’ Medici, pp. 5-7; Tugnoli Aprile, Patrimonio, pp. 109-10; Guibert, Livre de raison, p. 250.


109. Cicchetti and Mordenti, Scrittura, p. 1145; Branca, Introduzione, pp. xxxii, xlvii-xliv. See also Frati, Notaio poeta bolognese, pp. 34-40; Guibert, Livre de raison, pp. 229, 234, 244, 248-49, 251-53.
None of the Veronese and Vicentine writers, in fact, chose to comment upon the events that they recorded. Their accounts are quite spare, simple entries without elaboration. There is nothing comparable to Giovanni Morelli’s sweet musings on the Mugello, his bitter account of mistreatment by relatives, his loving reminiscence of sister Mea’s beauty and moral excellence, or his prolonged brooding on the death of two beloved sons. In contrast, writers in the north provided hard information, and revealed little of their opinions regarding place and kin. Buonaccorso Pitti filled page after page with the tales of his travels; in Vicenza, Manfredo Repeta quickly listed the stages of his pilgrimages.

The Veneto texts, finally, were disinclined to transmit a political memory to descendants. Florentines’ lists of the family’s past priors, gonfalonieri and ambassadors, and their demonstrations of participation in the public affairs of the community, find no equivalent in northeast Italy. Perhaps this is so because most of the northern families that produced libri di famiglia had been politically insignificant in generations past. The Verità were an exception but, even so, Bartolomeo Verità declined to provide any information on the family’s illustrious office-holders of the Trecento. Even the recent successes of the newly-emerged families did not pass into the record. Though the dal Bovo, Stoppa, Ferramosca, Repeta, Muronovo and Fracastoro were beginning to hold high positions as their ricordanze were being written, we derive that information from public archives rather than the ricordanze themselves. At most, Andrea Arnaldi briefly mentioned his own entry onto Vicenza’s Great Council, but he did not record his subsequent elections to high magistracies. Manfredo Repeta and Andrea Arnaldi made extensive notes of local and regional events, but indicated nothing of their political allegiances.

Compared to the better-known Florentine accounts, that is, the libri di famiglie of the Veneto are laconic, sparse, short, without judgment, undefined in purpose, disinterested in genealogy, seldom overtly didactic, inclined to broad topical horizons and not focused exclusively on the family. Commentary is rare, and introspection nearly absent. Perhaps this has as much to do with language and occupation as with a lesser degree of patrilineal self-consciousness or a reluctance to record innermost thoughts. Many were compiled by notaries or jurists (Arnaldi, Repeta, Trento, Cardino Ferramosca) or government functionaries (Freschi) accustomed to writing within the confines of strict formulaires. Often they wrote their memorie in a Latin that stood at one remove from daily experience. The merchants and artisans of Tuscany had a freer hand and perhaps, as writing in the volgare, had greater facility in recording the details of quotidian and past life.

In short, Veneto writers seem to have been guided by considerations that were not those of the major Florentines. In the present state of research, the two regions present what seem to be opposite sorts of libri di famiglia. But research is not far along, and one suspects that future work in Florence - looking beyond Morelli’s introspection, Dati’s volubility, Velluti’s genealogical bent and Pitti’s travel narratives to the mid-level texts - will soften schematic definitions and reduce apparent regional differences. Whether or not these Vicentines and Veronese did markedly differ from their counterparts elsewhere must rest with future studies. The present edition should be understood as an early contribution to a newly-broadened, peninsula-wide discussion, offering a new perspective and suggesting comparatives with known Tuscan production.


3. Criteria of the Editions

The principal guide to transcription has been that supplied by Giampaolo Tognetti. The overriding criterion has been to respect the integrity of the manuscript, to be faithful to the intentions of writers, and in general to minimize editorial intervention. At an extreme, this has led to the transcription of passages that are sheer gibberish: incomprehensible to modern readers, they were in some measure meaningful to those who wrote them down, hence hold significance and hence merit publication.

However, it has not always been possible to reproduce the complete text of manuscripts because, in most cases, personal and family entries are surrounded by a vast quantity of material that precludes integral publication. Patrimonial and business records, and the longer literary texts of the zibaldoni, have been noted but not reproduced in full. This was regrettable, but the alternative was a volume of unmanageable size: the slim Fracastoro memoire, for example, appears after a full 230 folios of business records. What distinguishes these texts from dozens of catasti and account books, and justifies their publication, is precisely their inclusion of personal material (anagraphic, chronic, spiritual, medical); this has been privileged in editing the present volume, sometimes to the exclusion of the literary and patrimonial. But because this latter material is of value in indicating the setting for family notices, demonstrating the methods of compiling records and suggesting the personal tastes of writers, omitted passages have been noted. Further, commonly available texts (psalms, the Athanasian creed) and printed texts are likewise cited but not transcribed. Readers interested in the surrounding texts will at least find guides for further study.

Some editorial intervention has been required to make the texts presentable in print, especially in the areas of capitalization, word and sentence division, and punctuation. Following Tognetti, the names of persons and places are capitalized, though places are not capitalized in Italian when they appear in adjectival form (Francesco veronese). Sanctus/a are capitalized when referring to an institution or place (in monastero Sanctae Clarae) but not when referring to persons (in festo sancti Marci). Dominus and deus are capitalized when referring to the deity and standing alone (credo in Domino) but not when followed by the proper name (in domino nostro Iesu Christo). Holy days are capitalized (in die Pasque) but not days of the week or months. Accents are used sparingly, to indicate terminal stress (andò, fu batezà); the distinction between acute and grave accents follows modern Italian usage. Prepositions are separated from articles (de la Schala) and nouns (a dì), except when omission or addition of letters clearly indicates that the author intended a compound (alla volta, dal Buovo). Punctuation and sentence division are in accordance with modern scansion. Abbreviations have been expanded in full. Authors’ lacunae are indicated by ***. Parentheses indicate illegibility or lacune meccaniche due to holes in or cropping of the manuscript. Uncertain readings are supplied in parentheses. Square brackets are used to supply obvious omissions of letters when the original would otherwise be incomprehensible.

The quantity of data in these texts defies full annotation. It would be impossible to provide full bibliographic references as background to texts, personalities and events. Several of these memorie for example, contain the so-called « Letter of Lentulus »; the secondary literature on apocryphal writings and their use as spiritual aides is vast, but it is beyond the mission of this edition to provide full explication of the sources and meanings of these texts. Explicative notes have been kept to a minimum. All scriptural citations are from the Vulgate.

Each text is preceded by an introduction that describes the format of the manuscript, gives a brief summary of its contents and discusses the specific issues involved in editing it. Here too it was not possible to provide a full account of each text and each family; nor did it seem necessary to provide the level of detail required by larger-scale, more literary or more problematic works. In particular the background on writers and their families is minimal; the reader is referred to recent studies of these families, and to the standard fondi - municipal council records, family archives, estimi, guild matriculations - of archives in Verona and Vicenza.113