CHAPTER FOUR

HOUSEHOLD AND FAMILY

The word familia might refer to persons, or to collective economic resources (substantia), or to lines of authority. In purely human terms, familia demonstrates “shifting criteria of membership”; to Alberti, the family might encompass only household residents, or it might extend to the entire body of blood kin. The Veronese Aventino Fracastoro defined familia Frachastorum as anyone possessing that surname, including both lateral and lineal relatives. The quasi-synonym domus was equally elastic, applied sometimes in a constricted sense to the co-residential household and sometimes in an expanded sense to all descendants of those who co-resided in an ancestral house. Veronese councils forbade more than one member of a casada to sit on key magistracies, defining the casada as those inclined to use political influence on behalf of kin but refusing to set boundaries. In other contexts, membership in the family was based on agnatic or cognatic ties, marriage, or co-parentage. “Family” might include servants or, in the case of Bonaventura Bovi, someone as remotely related as his wife’s uncle’s widow. What held that shifting and disparate body together has been variously defined as blood ties, material interest, co-residence, caritas, patrimonial succession, or honor.

Lawmakers, too, declined to fix the dimensions of the family. When Vicentine legislators forbade more than one member “de una domo, familia, sive agnatione” to sit in councils, for example, they regarded house, family, and agnate group as roughly synonymous but not quite the same, and refused to settle on a single standard. Elsewhere, they set standards on a case-
by-case basis. Each subdefinition applied to a precise setting—political influence, fiscal liability, mutual assistance—and constricted or widened the perimeter according to the needs of that context. In general terms, statutes defined priorities in concentric ranks outward from the protagonist, with preference for the male line. Intestate inheritance went first to children, in their absence to ascendants, in their absence to collateral agnate relations, and, failing all of these, to propinquii, defined as agnate relations beyond the third degree. A man having sex with an honest but unmarried woman had to amend the insult to her family “through the fourth degree,” the same compass allowed for alienation of property to noncitizen kin.

Other sorts of exchanges brought affines or cognates into the legally defined family. Alienation of property by minors, for example, required consent by close kin (proximi) from both the paternal and maternal sides. The boundary widened in public jurisdiction: no one could syndicate anyone of the familia, or agnate group, or personal descent group (stirps), or brother (from father or mother), or paternal cousin, or son of brother or sister, or brother-in-law, or father-in-law, or son-in-law. Wider still, no litigant could appear before a judge of the same house, agnate group, familia, or “anyone connected by a similar degree of consanguinity or affinity.” Widest of all, compromise rather than adjudication was ordered between ascendants, descendants, collaterals to the third degree, in-laws, and the distant "leviros sive leviras, glares vel ianitrices," and this miscellaneous category was to be construed as broadly as possible (largo vocabulo). Only illegitimates consistently fell outside the bounds of effective kinship.7

Households Paternal and Extended

Household Composition

Snapshots of the Arnaldi household at regular intervals demonstrate incessant recomposition, and indicate that no classification type was valid for more than a few years at a time. In 1430 seven of the Arnaldi lived in the house in the Carpagnon neighborhood: Gaspare, his wife Caterina Zugliano, their four children, and an unmarried brother. In 1435 son Andrea presided over a group consisting of his mother, uncle, wife, daughter, and two brothers. A decade later the blood ties of those who remained were if anything more tangled: Andrea had four children by two wives, and his brother Tommaso was now married with three children of his own. By 1455 the thirteen residents of the house counted Andrea's widow and children, Tommaso's second wife,
two sons by that remarriage, and the two daughters of brother Battista. In total the household counted ten children by five mothers (three deceased) and three fathers (two deceased). Although death and division later simplified matters, no grouping of the Arnaldi was ever reduced to a single nucleus. Indeed, in eighty-one of the 111 years covered in the memoir and family archive, Arnaldi brothers shared roofs and patrimonies. Only two men split off to set up house elsewhere.

The Arnaldi experience was not altogether typical. Other fathers in the region guaranteed a limited period of sibling communion by predividing their patrimonies and assigning portions to each heir. Gabriele Verità took a dozen folios to parcel not only lands but furniture, clothes, and jewelry, declaring that he wished to prevent future discords between his universal heirs. Grandson Verità Verità split his wealth into four parts well before drawing up his will. In Vicenza antemortem division was made not only by the noble Giovanni Thiene but also by the humble Zambono da Cremona. Those fathers, demanding the separation of wealth, virtually ensured that their sons would go their separate ways. Documents of division are common in family archives and notarial registers, suggesting that brothers normally divided wealth, though only after a variable period of co-residence.

On the other hand, the Arnaldi predilection for fraternal households would not have been unrecognizable to contemporaries. Manfredo Repeta was married for a decade and had produced seven children when he and his brother Bartolomeo went their separate ways. Antonio Trento was born when father Giacomo lived with brothers in communiae fratrum. Bonzanino and Bartolomeo Muronovo lived and held patrimonies together from at least 1429, when the latter began to write, until their division in 1466; kinsmen Giovanni Antonio and Bonadomane remained together for at least two decades after the former married. Adult brothers headed some 15 percent of fiscal units in Vicentine estimi, and 10 percent of Veronese households in ninety anagrafi returns from memorialist families.

Complexity, too, was frequent if not the norm (see appendix, table 4.1). True, by standard typologies some 83 percent of Veronese households in the sample were either truncated or consisted of a single nucleus. This figure, however, belies the fact that households were varied and often elaborate. A quarter of households extended over three generations. About 17 percent had multiple nuclei, either vertical (parents and married sons), horizontal (married brothers), or, in one case, both vertical and horizontal. More than one in ten had taken in stray relatives: sisters, wife’s parents, aunts, cousins, and one daughter of a deceased daughter. Adults lived with married uncles, grand-
parents, nieces, and nephews. Sons commonly remained under the paternal roof until their fathers’ deaths, even after their own marriages. Francesco Bovi still lived with his father at the age of fifty, although he had been married for two decades and had produced at least five children. Indeed, there scarcely existed a typical domestic unit.

How do Veneto patterns of domestic structure—often complex, filiocal, and fraternal—fit in the larger context? The prescriptive literature of Florence, to take one sort of evidence, frequently offered injunctions for sons to live with fathers and for brothers to live together. Most famous is the position of the senior Giannozzo in Alberti’s Books of the Family: “I desire all my family to live under one roof, to warm themselves at one fire, and to seat themselves at one table.” He pointed to the comfort, company, and prestige that accrued to a *paterfamilias* surrounded by kinfolk, and to the economies of labor and money that co-residents enjoyed. Furthermore, fathers should not permit filial division because “through division, the family not only is reduced in size and the number of its youth, but its authority shrinks and its importance and standing so decline that a good part of all the fame and honor accumulated over the years is lost.” He was proud of his own record: “I am not pleased with this division of families, this coming and going from separate entrances, nor has my spirit ever allowed my brother Antonio to live under a roof not my own.”

Matteo Palmieri and Gino Capponi equally urged an undivided patrimony and household. Marsilio Ficino thought that the “union of the father with his sons in one residence” was prerequisite for the “good and honest life.” To Matteo Palmieri, a united *parentela* offered mutual protection against enemy houses. Memoirs constantly invoked the ideology of the large family, and pointed to the disasters that could befall those who scattered.

Florentines appear to have paid little attention to that advice. The evidence from the *catasto* of 1427 is straightforward: a mean household size of about 3.8 persons, with 92 percent of households consisting of a single conjugal nucleus and unmarried offspring. In Tuscany as a whole multinuclear households were rare; fraternal households were infrequent (under 8 percent) and short-lived. At most the fraternal joint household was an ephemeral aspect of the domestic cycle, between the father’s death and the division of patrimony by his heirs. Community usually lasted only until the youngest reached maturity, but many heirs did not wait even that long: the eldest of the Niccolini took his share and departed within a year of the father’s death, and his two brothers split up shortly thereafter. The household might expand vertically as children and grandchildren were born, but usually contracted later-
ally as sisters married out and brothers moved out. In England, too, "the nuclear family household constituted the ordinary, expected, normal framework of domestic existence" from the Middle Ages to the Industrial Revolution.

Were the households of Veneto memorialists, with a preference for multigenerational arrangements during the life of the father and for fraternal co-residence thereafter (Andrea and Tommaso Arnaldi, for example, lived together for twenty-one years after their father died) simply idiosyncratic? A more careful scrutiny of the Tuscan situation reduces the apparent gap between northeast and central Italy: schematic presentation of Florentine data exaggerates the small size and simplicity of households there. The catasto of 1427 measured fiscal households, not residential units. The patrimony, not the domestic group, was liable, and distinct patrimonies might receive separate entries even though their holders lived under the same roof. Working out who actually lived together would require scrutiny of street addresses in sixty thousand tax returns and thousands of notarial registers, which no scholar has yet attempted. After decades in the archives Klapisch-Zuber concluded that catasto registers set a "documentary trap" and seriously underestimated the number and extent of complex households: "we should not be fooled by the statistical predominance of the conjugal family."

Too, the Veneto families that produced memoirs were wealthier than the norm. Their counterparts were not Florentines as a whole but only the well-off among them, and this group more closely resembles Veneto patricians in extended and expanded household configuration. Wealthy families in Florence were considerably larger than those of the poor: if two-thirds of Florentines lived in households of under three persons, the richest had households twice that size, with more nuclei and more lateral extensions. Their development cycle was more stable: fewer sons moved out, and greater life expectancy ensured a larger number of long-term patriarchs. They more commonly gave shelter to lateral relatives, orphans, and strays; greater reliance on a landed patrimony gave brothers impetus to keep collective wealth undivided.

Furthermore, the catasto year of 1427 marks the nadir of Florentine demography. Repeated disasters in previous generations virtually ensured that the city would be filled with "truncated or incomplete families." The timing of the survey strongly depresses the calculation of the domestic unit's size and shape. But times were getting better, in Florence and elsewhere. More children survived, more parents lived to old age, and outmigration did not increase. In little more than a century the average urban household rose in
size to 6.2 persons. The proportion of single-nucleus households remained steady, but those containing two or more married couples became more common. The large Veneto households of the mid- and late fifteenth century were not, then, out of line with their Florentine contemporaries.

Finally, Florence, once again, presents an extreme case. Even in 1427 "the city favored solitude," with higher rates of solitaries and biologically unproductive unions than were found in the countryside; the rate of isolates was 25 percent higher in Florence than in Prato, and the incidence of multi-nuclear households 50 percent lower. Smaller Tuscan cities had considerably larger and more complex families than did the capital. Towns and villages, for example, held up to twice the proportion of three-generation families. If the fraternal joint household was rare throughout Tuscany, brothers in Genoa and Montpellier had long shown a proclivity for co-residence and economic communion. A household average of 5.7 persons in Verona in 1473 corresponds roughly to the average of 5.2 persons in the menages of Carpentras in 1473. Some 79 percent of Veronese lived in households of five or more persons, as did 72 percent of the people of Carpentras. Figures for the Polesine show 6.4 persons per domestic unit in 1510, not far from the Veronese calculation of 5.8 in 1502. Looking not at Florence but at the second tier of urban centers, the large and composite units of families such as the Verità, Muronovo, and Arnaldi no longer appear an oddity.

Across the Generations

The younger generations of Bonaventura Bovi's family posted dismal records. Son Francesco was murdered in his twenty-sixth year. Grandson Francesco junior contracted a clandestine marriage that Bonaventura denounced fiercely. Nephew Pietro, too, was murdered. The memoriale ends with notes on "incorrigeble" son Girolamo, who left the paternal roof to live with his "crazy wife" amid goods stolen from Bonaventura's house. Misadventures are found in other memoirs as well: a Mantuan provoked nineteen-year-old Zuane Stoppi into a fight and then killed him with a stab wound to the throat, and Repeta youth committed murder in 1475 and 1493.

Contemporaries noted a youthful proclivity to violence and insubordination, deemed youth a period in the life span when passion ruled over reason and restraint, and thought that arrogance and overindulgence were defining characteristics of the wealthy young. To that perception David Herlihy added a demographic reading, based on the configuration of the upper-class Tuscan family. Delay of marriage extended a male's adolescence over nearly two
decades; youth not subject to domestic responsibilities might expend energies in antisocial directions. Since fathers were near forty when their sons were born, they were possibly emotionally remote and certainly distracted by commercial and political commitments, and could offer little guidance and discipline. Many died before sons reached maturity. The primary burden of raising children fell on mothers who, thought commentators, were inclined to spoil their children and were less able to control the errant.24

The model does not entirely work for the Veneto. Since patrician men in Verona and Vicenza married much earlier, they were, by Herlihy's reckoning, more likely to be engaged in the raising of their children, and were less likely to die when their children were young and thus deprive offspring of paternal control. Even when children were left fatherless, widows did not bear sole responsibility for their upbringing, since families without fathers usually lived with a mature male.

Another aspect of the Tuscan model does apply to northern cities: upper-class males passed through an extended period without significant responsibility or autonomy. Sons of artisans might split off to form separate households and establish independent careers; they had little economic incentive to remain.25 But older patricians in the Veneto, as was the case in Tuscany,26 did not retire, divide or liquidate business assets to launch sons on independent careers, or divide lands to give sons a separate income. Sons who married did not set up separate households; fathers commanded the dowries and dotal goods they received from wives.27 Growing life expectancy and reduced infant mortality increased the force of patriarchy, since more fathers reached a ripe age and more sons survived to maturity under paternal tutelage. Even the father's death might not change the situation much. When testators granted wives large usufructs of land or movable goods to induce them not to demand dowries and leave the household, sons had to await the deaths of their mothers as well before they secured financial independence.

Veneto custom particularly strengthened paternal controls. Young men in Florence and Venice often trained in foreign branches of commercial or banking houses, and young Venetian nobles regularly received minor offices on the mainland and positions in the fleet. In Verona and Vicenza, while patrician apprenticeships were not unknown—Zuane Stoppi met his death while an agent in the family business—the infrequency and small scale of extraregional partnerships sharply reduced opportunities for youthful employment. Most young men, as far as we know, grew up at home, and none appear in the records of paternal businesses.

Emancipation might have freed sons and eased father-son tensions, but
faced increasing disapproval throughout Italy. Fear that shifting assets could be used to protect the patrimony from creditors produced laws hedging the capacity of sons to achieve a capitalized independence; fathers, moreover, showed growing reluctance to share the wealth. In fifteenth-century Florence the incidence of emancipation declined sharply, which "increased the likelihood of competitive tensions."

28 In the Veneto emancipation was never popular in the first place, and was subjected to strong statutory disapproval.29 Restive sons such as Girolamo Bovi might simply pull up stakes and go elsewhere, but they seldom received either formal permission or a portion of family wealth to live on.

Nor did thresholds for coming of age, which merely established minimum standards for different types of legal capacity, sanction independence. Indeed, these norms tended to reinforce paternal or familial authority. For example, the good will of fathers, senior relatives, and allies entirely determined political access. In theory any Vicentine aged eighteen could secure election to the city's Great Council; in fact there were no elections. Since inheritance and alienation alone distributed seats—as Andrea Arnaldi inherited his seat from uncle Antonio Zugliano, and passed it to son Silvestro—a rebellious son would see the place pass to someone else. In any case, in 1498 the minimum age for election to the elite Council of One Hundred was raised to thirty.30 Any Veronese could stand for election to councils, but first had to pass rigorous eligibility scrutinies: councillor fathers could ensure that disloyal cadets did not enter.

In theory, too, any qualified person over the age of eighteen could enter Vicentine guilds. However, places in occupational corporations were patrimonialized, secured by family connections and transferred by alienation and inheritance: so the Arnaldi brothers entered the College of Notaries and the wool guild when their father and uncle were prominent in its leadership, and the family regularly bequeathed places in the elite lists that provided communal notaries. Here, too, family influence cut both ways: it allowed fathers to advance good sons but equally to cut off the disobedient. Anyway, in a region without banks, young merchants relied on fathers and allies for startup capital: here, too, the suffrance of seniors determined access.

Finally, the law set strict limits on the ability of the young to act in a public capacity, further reinforcing dependence on elders. No Vicentine under age twenty could alienate or obligate real property without the consent of two close relatives; none under age twenty-five could appear in court without a guardian or procurator.31 Even so, coming of age conferred theoretical rights only: a man could seldom dispose of much property while his father
still lived, since fathers held their lands closely until the end. Some children received bequests from mothers or grandparents, but testaments indicate that fathers actually held these during their lifetimes. At death, parents retained the capacity to reward or punish their offspring through unequal bequests: so Maddalena Fracastoro privileged one son over another “because he has always been most obedient towards her and has shown the greatest obedience and reverence towards the lady testatrix, his mother.”

The degree to which patriarchal strictures and retarded independence had disruptive consequences is difficult to assess. Elsewhere, intergenerational tension between son and father frequently erupted in ugly confrontation when matters of honor or property were at stake. More often, youth directed energies and frustrations outside the family, into factional violence, rape and assault, carnival, and political rowdiness. Still, criminal registers measure only deviations from expected behavior; dutiful offspring would not leave many traces in the record. Anecdotes of the Bovi, the Stoppi, and the Repeta must be placed against the careers of the several hundred boys in Veneto memoirs who waited for independence, perhaps with annoyance at delay but without such overt manifestations of frustration as to attract attention. After all, they were raised from childhood not to expect autonomy until a later age. They certainly did not find the system odious enough to loosen controls when they in turn assumed leadership of a household.

Many testators granted their widows a strong position with regard to property and children. Gaspare Arnaldi ordered that his sons honor and revere their mother as their domina, and that they acquiesce to her warnings and counsel, threatening to withhold his blessing from heaven if they did otherwise. Bonaventura Bovi granted his widow full power (potestas et libertas) to govern his family “because he holds great confidence in the lady Isabella”; his heirs were to demonstrate obedience, charity, reverence, and love to her if they wished a blessing. The practical Aventino Fracastoro desired heirs to show reverence and obedience to their mother “because she is frugal and gives good advice.” Pietro Verità’s “beloved wife” Benedetta was to serve as tutrix of her children and co-commissioner of his estate. Several others named their wives gubernatrix or domina of minor children; those who imposed maternal authority ranged from the humble Domenico da Quinto, whose widow Vincenza was to govern “without contradiction by his heirs,” to the noble Giovanni Thiene. Legislators felt strongly enough about guaranteeing widows’ tutelage that they set aside ancient doctrine. Roman law had assigned the burdens
of tutelage to those who held the right of succession to a minor's estate, which was not normally the mother, and preferred a male agnate as tutor. Even in the time of Baldus the idea of a woman as tutor was anomalous. But the principle was challenged by the perception that tutors with a personal stake in the inheritance might prove predatory. Choosing the mother or maternal kin as guardian best assured impartial management and decent care. Public magistries then sought to safeguard that choice. In the Veneto, cases involving widows and minors received summary judgment in order to forestall legal obstructionism by male relatives, and municipal officers such as syndics and advocates received special jurisdiction to protect miserabiles personas, a category that included widows and the fatherless. The Venetian appellate magistracy of the Auditori Nuovi was repeatedly ordered to give special favor to these miserabiles, hearing their cases in preference to more lucrative lawsuits. Statutes and testaments made the widow's job easier by releasing her from the obligation to draw up an estate inventory.

In practice, however, widows did not normally govern either estate or children. Even when named tutrix or executrix, they seldom appeared in the documents that recorded transactions of property, marriage, and movable wealth. Despite Gaspare Arnaldi's injunctions, for example, his widow Caterina Zugliano did not control his wealth and his offspring: eldest son Andrea managed wealth and household for his brothers for over two decades. In the next generations, too, widows less frequently served as tutors of minor children than did adult males. Brother Tommaso managed the patrimony for Andrea's widow Marcella Fracanzani and son Silvestro; he figured in some 150 transactions as the boy's tutor, while Marcella remained in the shadows. After his death, Silvestro's uncles served as guardians in five of six transactions. Tommaso left a widow and two sons of his own, with the order that older son Gaspare serve as "tutor, curator, rector, et gubernator" of his brother; his widow was merely given maintenance.

Other testators in the region gave guardianship to mature sons rather than widows, and documents show brothers rather than widows acting on behalf of minor children. Of the Veronese families that produced memoirs, eleven widows appeared in the anagrafi along with an adult son; in seven cases the son headed the fiscal household. Vicentine law actually encouraged male guardianship, at least in property transactions: no minor under the age of twenty could alienate or obligate land or land rights without the consent of two close relatives—and those proximi were to be men.

Moreover, minors did not necessarily respect tutelage. Silvestro Arnaldi,
for example, came of age early and threw off all guardianship. Despite the threshold of age twenty, he made a land investiture as sole proprietor in January 1466, when he had just reached the age of sixteen. While his uncles appeared occasionally as tutors for the next two years, Silvestro—described as *factus adultus*—engaged in large transactions after November 1466, and after late 1467 his documents made no mention of supervisors. In a similar vein, Gerardo dal Gorgo in 1451 acted as tutor for his younger brother Francesco, but the middle brother Gian Maria, aged sixteen, acted for himself.

**Strays and Servants**

For thirty-five years Bartolomeo Bovi resided with the widow of his wife's uncle. After living with a paternal uncle for nearly three decades, Tommaso Arnaldi headed a domestic community that included a widowed sister-in-law and two sets of nieces and nephews. Battista Guastaverza lived with his wife, children, a former wet nurse, a man identified as “cousin or partner,” and an aged woman “whom he keeps for the love of God.” The Veronese jurist Cristoforo Lanfranchino kept house with four brothers, a widowed sister-in-law and her sister, plus a nephew. Zaccaria Freschi's mother-in-law lived with him for twelve years (and was buried in the Freschi tomb); his mother's sister lived with him for twenty-eight years.

Decades of studies have underscored the small size and simple configuration of the premodern domestic group; in fact, the composite family was common in the fifteenth century, in the Veneto and beyond. It has, however, been overlooked for two reasons. The first is the nature of the documentation. A tax system such as Vicenza's, where the fiscal unit as a whole was liable, gave no incentive to mention co-resident relatives whose patrimonies were insignificant. In Florence's *catasto*, separate patrimonies required separate declarations, and co-resident kin often appear apart. *Ricordanze* were concerned to trace lines of agnates, and ignored the miscellaneous kin who took shelter with the family. Testators found little impetus to mention co-resident kin who would not inherit.

The second problem is that, despite disclaimers, aggregation oversimplifies data. Peter Laslett, for example, reminded his readers that despite the “relatively small average size and uncomplicated structure of the domestic group in England,” that fact did not preclude the constant, even considerable presence of complex households; even so, his refusal to include “inmates” and the “houseful” in his calculations inevitably obscured nonnuclear but co-resident relatives. In a similar vein, the reminders of Herlihy and Klapisch-
Zuber that Florentine households show huge variety in domestic configuration are overshadowed by their figures of mean household size (3.83) and percentage of noncomplex nuclear households (92.25 percent).

When the vantage point shifts from the aggregate to the individual family, however, exceptions to the norm multiply to the point that they dominate impressions of the household. At any given moment in the 1410–65 period, for example, the Arnaldi were living with one or more stray relatives. Uncle Pietro died but was replaced by nieces Isabeta and Bartolomea, who in turn married out but were succeeded by sister-in-law Marcella and cousin Silvestro. Standard schemes would classify the domestic group as a simple alternation of vertically extended mononuclear and fraternal joint families, whereas it was in fact a hodgepodge, more a concertina than a succession of tidy boxes.

Most of the strays came and went with little fanfare, and we scarcely know more than their names and relationships. Why they were taken in is not always self-evident. For the Veneto the best case is that of Semiramde Thiene, married to the wastrel Battista Arnaldi. After her death in 1446 Andrea and Tommaso accepted at least one and probably both of her daughters into their house; later Arnaldi arranged their marriages and guaranteed their dowries. It is true that the Arnaldi did not intend to lose materially because of their kindness. Andrea specified that the expenses of Isabeta's food and clothing were to come from her mother's estate and whatever was left of her father's money. The maternal inheritance was likewise designated to fund most of the girls' dowries. But the Arnaldi did not stand to gain either, since anything beyond expenses would flow to the girls' dowries and thus out of the male line. They did give shelter in an already crowded house for several decades and, since the girls' father was perpetually insolvent and Semiramde was not wealthy, probably never recouped the expense of maintenance and dowries.

Material interest was secondary to more vital considerations of caritas and public standing. An undowered daughter had no future; so Tommaso dowered Bartolomea because he was "avid for the honor and wellbeing" of the girl. He was equally avid for the honor of the Arnaldi house. Abandonment of Semiramde or her daughters would have seriously breached social imperatives and rebounded to the harm of the male line, since men's honor and thus family honor was at least in part associated with protection of their women. Semiramde Thiene was their brother's wife, thus by the doctrine of uno carne their sister; and the Christian who did not provide for relatives "has disowned the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (I Timothy 5:8).
Moreover, by hard-headed and worldly calculation, failure to care for them would impugn the family's good faith, respect, and publica fama in the community at large. As Paolo da Certaldo put it bluntly, "If you have poor relatives, don't treat them badly or kick them out, because if you treat them badly you open yourself to charges of cruelty. Therefore love them and maintain them as best you can, so that those who hear about it won't be as cruel to you as [they would if] you were [cruel] to your kin." Doing the right thing might also repair some of the social damage that Battista had caused. And if the Arnaldi did not care for the helpless in their midst, they could scarcely be trusted in future marriages, alliances, or business dealings.

When Giannozzo Alberti declared that servants were to be reckoned as members of the family, he simply drew on traditional definitions. To Romans, the family encompassed all those under the patria potestas, including servants and slaves; the domus was defined as a community of shared resources and mutual obligations that extended beyond blood relationships. Servants too, thought medieval writers, were owed the caritas that bound the household. But one did not need to be steeped in legal and patristic writings to know that domestics were integral to the family. Their service extended beyond mundane tasks of provisioning and maintaining the physical fabric of the house, to acts of intimacy and personal risk: to cite but two examples, Francesco Veronese carrying the body of little Renaldo Arnaldi to burial, and the famuli of Ludovico Thiene and Matteo Toso refusing to surrender arms and brawling with the night watch.

Three demographic conclusions can be assayed. First, the number of household dependents grew over the course of the Quattrocento. In Veronese anagrafi, which record both domestics and some of those hired to work on rural properties, the wealthier counted an average of 1.23 dependents in 1423. That figure rose sharply, as did the number of Florentine servants: rich Veronese in 1502 employed an average of 3.87 subordinates. In the anagrafi of Veronese families that left memoirs, the average household employed 1.7 persons before 1474, 2.2 in the following quarter century, and 3.1 in the first half of the sixteenth century (see appendix, table 4.2).

Second, the sex ratio of dependents, which initially favored women and girls, shifted steadily until males constituted some 62 percent of employees after 1500. Overall, 54 percent of dependents were male, the reverse of the Florentine and Venetian experiences in which female employees were always in the great majority.

Third, employment patterns were different for men and women (see ap-
Women servants were five years younger than male counterparts, taking the median. Nearly half of women domestics in the Veronese sample were under the age of twenty, compared with less than 30 percent of men. More than twice as many very young employees were female than male: girls were more highly regarded for the simple tasks of carrying and tidying. Men were more prized in maturity. Women served during childhood and adolescence, earning dowries and learning domestic tasks; their brief time in service marked a temporary stage in the life cycle. Men more commonly made a career of servitude, entering patrician households after adolescence and remaining in service for some time.

Writers regarded servants with distrust: Alberti advised wives to protect household goods with “fear and vigilance.” Vicentine statutes on servitude mirror that suspicion, directing rubrics against servants who departed before the stipulated time—they forfeited salary and were fined—and against those who carried off family goods. More seriously, they perceived servants as likely sources of the sexual pollution of the domus. A domestic who opened the house to someone attempting to rape or commit adultery with the mistress or her kin was not only executed but burned; this was the most severe of penalties, imposed on those guilty of heinous crimes such as heresy or treason. Anyone having consensual sex with a serving girl was ordinarily fined a mere ten lire, but the penalty was quintupled if the act took place in the master’s house.

Servants were placed firmly under the patria potestas of the employer: Andrea Arnaldi was obligated to “rule and govern” little Margarita Serenini “just as citizens are accustomed to do to their daughters.” Servants, however, by no means received the same protection as other members of the household; recent studies stress exploitation of servants’ labor as well as their sexual victimization. Predators had to be punished, but servants were deemed victims of little account and penalties were basically token. In Vicenza, sons, nephews, grandsons, and close kin of the master were fined a derisory ten lire for consensual sex with a servant girl, and other males were fined fifty lire for the offense; these penalties should be compared with the five hundred lire levied on those convicted of fornication with a respectable wife. The attempted rape of a married woman rated a fine of three hundred lire, but that of a servant only twenty-five lire. It comes as no surprise that the mothers of Manfredo Repeta’s three illegitimate children were one fantescha and two massarie.

Terms of employment also seem to support an image of servants’ vulnerability. Vicentine notaries, like counterparts elsewhere in Italy and France,
did not possess models for hiring contracts. They found substitutes in formulas of land transactions: the father of the young girl, declaring himself acting under the *jus locationis*, actually leased (*locavit*) her for a specified period and payment. In legal terms, these children were regarded as little more than real property, conveyed by their fathers just as a landowner transferred a field or a house.

But a different interpretation may be in order. The Vicentine law of domestic service offered no guarantee for the personal well-being of employees. Highly detailed land law, on the other hand, was designed to preserve economic assets. Several rubrics ordered tenants to preserve the integrity of property, prohibited treatment that might harm future income, and set stiff penalties for nonpayment. Procedures for redress clearly favored owners. Vicentine employment contracts, explicitly invoking that *jus locationis*, extended the guarantees of the land law to little girls in domestic service. Fathers of abused servants had little recourse under the law of servitude, but abundant redress under the *jus locationis*. In a curious way, servant girls received better protection when considered as leased property than they would have received as mere hirelings.

Servants may not, in fact, have been consistently mistreated. Good relations, after all, would not occasion notice in the documentary record. A few flagrant cases cannot establish a norm or even an appreciable frequency, and normative indifference to the sexual victimization of domestics does not mean that men habitually took advantage of the situation. The contrary notion, that employers commonly appreciated service, receives some confirmation in testamentary largesse. In Siena, orders to provide dowries to young girls rose throughout the period, with a large proportion of these directed at servants; in Lyons, legacies to servants were regular and stable. Venetians commonly left objects and art to servants, as well as dowries, and there are even cases of servants making bequests to their masters. In the Veneto, dowry bequests to servants were frequent and generous. The hundred *lire* left to servants by Giacomo Guasterverza, madonna Libera, Cornelia da Valmarana, and Francesca d'Arzignano, the 150 *lire* left by Bonaventura Bovi to a *pedisequa* and Alvise Stoppi to an *ancillae*, and the two hundred *lire* left by Giacomo Thiene to a *massaria* should be measured against an annual salary of around eight or nine *lire*. When the Arnaldi gave two hundred *lire* to a former servant in 1433, half was deferred salary but half was a free gift. Those who had served faithfully might be supported in old age: thus Pietro Verità ordered that *famulus* Pietro Viadana be clothed, fed, and kept in the household for the remainder of his life; heirs in
Several families of Veneto memorialists made domestics godparents to their children: self-interest was a factor, as those bound by spiritual kinship might be expected to exercise good care, but the fact remains that these servants were deemed worthy of deep trust.

Succession and Inheritance

Veneto sons inherited “equally and in equal portions,” and the sons of a deceased son assumed their father’s share. Roman and Germanic law discouraged the *melioratio*, the favoring of one son at the expense of others, and indeed it was little known; northern Italians scarcely knew primogeniture before the mid-Cinquecento. Sons received the core of the patrimony: fathers seldom dowered daughters with outright grants of land. When shortage of liquidity forced them to bestow a few fields in dowry, they ceded only miscellaneous lands and retained contiguous blocks for sons; they reserved the right to francate dotal lands and so recover them for the patrimony. When daughters confessed receipt of their dowries they renounced any further claim to family wealth. Lest there be any residual question of daughters' rights, many Vicentine fathers left them five *solidi*, and Veronese left them a few *lire*, with the order to be “silent and content” with this token.

In the normal course of events testators with sons seldom deviated from this formula. They made bequests to siblings, daughters, cousins, affines, cognates, and other blood kin—preference for patrilineal devolution did not eliminate alternate strategies—but these nearly always consisted of cash and anyway did not amount to a significant share of disposable wealth. The lion’s share of patrimonies, and the overwhelming proportion of land, passed to sons and grandsons. In the background, however, was ancient Germanic custom, which established a broad category of “natural heirs” from the larger kinship group, who might present a claim. To be on the safe side, to protect their sons from grasping relatives, many testators also granted *attinenti* the formulaic five *solidi* with the request to be “silent and content.”

Rules for intestate succession most clearly articulated priorities of devolution. In Vicenza, for example, males inherited according to their degree of distance of kinship to the deceased, as reckoned by canon law: sons were preferred to brothers, brothers to first cousins, and so forth. Women of the same degree, and male offspring of these women, “should on no account be admitted to succession.” If brothers were deemed the closest kin, sisters did not inherit; if nephews inherited, nieces did not. Indeed, women only succeeded to the patrimony in the absence of male kin within the third degree.
None of this was either new or peculiar to the Veneto. Dugento and Trecento statutes of Verona, Padua, and Treviso excluded dowered women from the paternal inheritance. Earlier medieval Italy, whether governed by Roman, Lombard, or Frankish law, showed preference for agnates (favor agnationis) and for males over females; equal inheritance by sons was likewise the norm in Florence and Genoa. The Veneto’s rules for intestate succession largely repeated those of Italy at large, as did the prejudice against giving land to women. At most it can be said that the Quattrocento tightened up the rules, particularly in pushing cognate, female, and collateral agnate inheritance to the margins. Both Verona and Padua, for example, sharply restricted the rights of female agnates and their sons to inherit. Lyonnais wills equally demonstrate declining bequests to lateral kin and a decreasing incidence of daughters as heirs, and exclusion of collateral relatives with a token bequest can be found as far afield as Siena and Avignon.

But normal succession requires a conventional family, which occurred in no more than a plurality of cases. Some 40 percent of all couples had no surviving children or only daughters; hence “female succession was a statistically frequent possibility.” Anyway rules of inheritance were more socially and legally approved guidelines than fixed requirements, and had to allow for personal preference. Deviations from the norm were so constant that they must condition any image of relentlessly patrilineal devolution.

Even those with eligible sons claimed the right to deviate from custom; social penalties for nonconformity were insufficient to deter the strong-willed. Caterina da Quinto, for example, cut off her sons and daughters with the five soli token, and left her estate to an apparently unrelated woman. Bonmartino Verità gave his two sons and two daughters equal shares in his wealth. The aged Bonaventura Bovi revised his will, adding a good chunk of land to the portion assigned to “most honest and most modest . . . , most sweet and most beloved” daughter Lucia. Ignoring hostility to the melioratio, Maddalena Fracastoro left a hundred ducats to her beloved (dilecto) son Battista but named obedient and reverent son Ludovico universal heir.

If fathers without legitimate sons had inclined to a strictly agnatic approach, they would have found heirs among their brothers, brothers’ sons, or sons of paternal uncles. In practice, however, men without direct issue often preferred miscellaneous relatives and friends, connected by marriage or affection, to lateral agnates. This was the case even when relations with male kin were not, apparently, strained. Zampietro Piva of the little village of Setteca had a brother, to whom he left some land, but named as universal heirs his sisters Elisa, Lucia, and Romana. The Veronese Ognibene Guastaverza had a
brother, to whom he bequeathed land, but made his daughter primary heir in his first will and the sons of that daughter heirs in his second. Venetians, too, preferred daughters and daughters’ sons to collateral males.75

Other wills established as heir a stepson, a daughter, the godfather of a child, and a son and stepson equally. Roman law allowed succession between spouses, but as a last resort only; men in Lyon rarely named their wives as heirs. Testators in the Veneto (and Milan), on the other hand, not infrequently left the bulk of their wealth to spouses. One ser Giovanni fu Francesco in 1431 left his estate to his wife, son-in-law, and stepson. Men’s choice of residual heirs, too, might disregard conventional priorities. Count Giovanni Thiene did have sons, who were named universal heirs in customary fashion; but if their lines died out the will substituted his daughter—not his brother or nephews.76

Women with children usually left their goods to those children. To some extent their choices were limited: Vicentine and Paduan statutes allowed them to make bequests outside the line of descent only if they left an equal portion to children.77 But if most respected that clause, they then chose secondary heirs from a wide pool of relatives: so Dorotea Verlati named her son heir, but left her dowry to her sister.78 Women without children showed even less inclination than men to seek heirs among agnates or cognates. “All good works expect a reward,” noted Caterina Verità, and she left almost everything to the unrelated couple who had provided “many and infinite services” during her illness. The Vicentine Elicha da Legnago left goods to Andrea Arnaldi and the aptly named donna Bonitá out of gratitude for multa beneficia. Dorotea Malasi vacillated among Christ’s poor, a “spiritual daughter,” and a niece, but did not consider male kin. Antonia da Quinto wanted the daughters of her daughters and the sons of her sister to succeed.79 Some did show preference to spouses and their kin: a second Caterina da Quinto chose her husband, as did Maria da Lisiera, and Romana da Lisiera gave the disposable half of her dowry and all residual goods to a father-in-law who had cared for her in sickness. Tadea Fracastoro, however, ignored her husband and named her mother universal heir.80

Pressures for male succession might be resisted when sons were less than beloved. It was difficult to exclude them altogether: Roman and Germanic law granted sons a portion of paternal goods by natural right and limited grounds for complete disinheritance to a few dreadful offenses. Girolamo Bovi, who looted the parental house and went to live with a wife that his father thought crazy (prava), was guilty of disobedience in contracting an unapproved marriage, perhaps sufficient cause for cutting him off. Still, his
mother acknowledged, the boy was owed a legitimate portion “by the law of nature,” and his father would not withhold a blessing. They would not, however, grant him equality with his “dear and beloved” brothers Agostino and Francesco. Their solution was to grant him a hundred ducats, for which he was to be content and silent.\(^8\) So, too, Bartolomeo dal Bovo provided a hundred ducats for chronically indebted son Giovanni but excluded him from the list of universal heirs.\(^8\) Effective disinheritance through bequest of a token came cheaper to the less well-off: five solidi only went to the sons of Domenico da Quinto, Marco da Bolzano, and Caterina da Quinto.\(^8\)

Testaments offer a final category of exceptional bequests: those to children in convents. Technically, taking religious vows constituted a sort of civil death; and only the living could inherit. Moreover, such legacies reduced the resources available to the lineage. Veronese legislators in 1450 echoed long precedent with a provision that those in monasteries could not be admitted to inheritance as long as agnates or cognates were available. Veronese parents disagreed. Benedetto Verità and his wife left a large sum to their daughter Caterina, which her brother Antonio converted into a maintenance payment. At her death, nephew Verità covered the cost of her funeral, medicines, and other debts, and he and the noble Maddalena Fracastoro made bequests to daughters who were nuns. These legacies were doubly dubious, since they paid for personal needs and so contravened the Justinianic requirement that gifts to the religious enter the patrimony of their convents,\(^8\) but testators showed no hesitation.

**If descendants** lacked the *substantia* to keep up an appropriate tenor of life, remain in the good graces of public reputation, and expend the all-important symbolic capital, the family would cease to exist in any social sense. Moreover, the income from commerce or professions alone could not maintain status, and required supplement by inheritance. Accordingly, testators increasingly sought to guard against dissipation of landed patrimonies by inserting nonalienation clauses into wills. In its mature form, often but not always labeled *fideicommissum* (vernacular *fedecommissos*),\(^8\) this mechanism forbade heirs to alienate the core of the estate to anyone outside the patriline; the share of any branch without legitimate male issue should pass to other branches in the patriline.

*Fedecommissos* is crucial to the development of a sense of lineage, and to the evolution of mechanisms for keeping the lineage intact over the decades. Yet it has suffered misconceptions and a paucity of studies linking doctrine to practice. First and foremost, it should not be connected to primogeniture,
as means to counteract the dissipating effect of equal inheritance. In fact, *fedecompresso* and primogeniture are very different mechanisms. They were distinct in timing: *fedecompresso* was common by the later Middle Ages, while primogeniture was rare or absent in Italy until the mid-sixteenth century. More to the point, testators did not use the former to establish the latter. Instead, in the Veneto as in Tuscany, they granted equal portions to each son and then imposed collective nonalienation clauses on all sons, aspiring not to reserve wealth for the firstborn but to preserve wealth among the entire male line of descent.

Veneto examples come, as we would expect, from families that had the most lineage self-consciousness and wealth to preserve. But *fedecompresso* was far from universal even in the wills of patricians: mechanisms for entail were still in a formative state, and varied widely in format. Often the testament forbade alienation only until minor sons came of age, or for a generation or two. Nonalienation clauses were not yet strictly enforced. Gaspare Arnaldi, for example, forbade his sons to touch their inheritances before the age of thirty; soon the twenty-three-year-old Battista withdrew his share and began to sell off pieces. His brothers could not legally block his squandering of the patrimony, and could only maintain its integrity by buying the lands themselves.

**Lineage**

At the end of a very long and stern testament, after binding his heirs with an eternal *fedecompresso*, Gabriele Verità broadened his efforts to ensure the solidarity of the lineage as a whole. Invoking symbolic patrimony, he commanded “that the arms and insignia which are placed above the house of the testator shall never be removed or deleted, but shall always be preserved: because these insignia shall be the *stimata* of those of the Verità.” *Stimata* had a dual meaning. In simplest terms it was the neo-Latin form of the vernacular *stemmata*, referring to the heraldic device painted or sculpted above the palace portal: Verità demanded that all sharing his name adopt common insignia. The word also referred to the verb *stimare*, denoting public esteem and estimation, and so pointed to the arms as emblem of the Verità’s high social standing. To efface them would in a metaphoric sense delete the lineage’s claims to eminence and thus efface the lineage itself. Moreover, surname and heraldry alone did not bind the family: *these* insignia, the ones on his palace, were to serve as focal point. Collective identity required tangible expression in stone and bricks and mortar. Bartolomeo dal Bovo, like-
wise, fixed the "memory of the house" by erecting a pillar upon which were carved the family arms and texts recalling great events in history that had touched the ancestral village of Bovo.\textsuperscript{91}

The law, too, invoked the house as principle of family aggregation. Prohibition of sitting in judgment on someone from the same \textit{domus}, and statutes against the presence of more than one individual from any \textit{domus} on a council, assumed that broader family connections had palpable force in everyday life, and in turn strongly fostered the individual's consciousness of membership in the extended family group. Statutes that imposed arbitration upon close relatives, reinforcing the principle that the broader family community should settle disputes internally, defined the \textit{domus} to include ascendants and descendants, collaterals up to the third degree, and a miscellaneous category to be reckoned "broadly" (\textit{largo vocabulo}): their intent was to extend the frontiers of effective kinship.

Still, apart from symbolic and normative statements, there remains the question of how effective that broader kinship was in everyday life. For example, the archives of Veneta families hold no records of collective association. Genoese \textit{alberghi} met to set rules for membership and conduct and appointed officials to keep peace between participating households, and Florentine houses such as the Peruzzi met to swear self-disciplining pacts,\textsuperscript{92} but Veneto patricians did not claim corporate identity for their houses. The wider family was not a \textit{consorteria}, a judicial entity with norms and structures, and the lineage remained unformalized.

Testaments were firmly patrilineal and seldom paid much heed to the larger agnate group. \textit{Fedecommissi} clauses named collaterals as residual heirs only when the testator's direct line failed; Gaspare II Arnaldi, to take one example from many, established cousin Silvestro as heir of last resort.\textsuperscript{93} Testators without sons preferred daughters and miscellaneous kin—including affines and spouses—to lateral males, and testators as a whole did not regularly order bequests to nephews, cousins, or lateral male relatives. Venetian and Genoese testators bound extended kin through gifts and expressions of gratitude, and some 80 percent to 90 percent of testators in Lyon made bequests to the wider family;\textsuperscript{94} Veneto counterparts offered few incentives to agnate solidarity, and more often remembered servants.

Executors of estates were relatives or nonrelatives, with no consistent pattern. Gaspare Arnaldi and his son Tommaso chose executors from among maternal relatives, Bonmartino Verità wanted Verità cousins to handle his estate, and Gabriele Verità opted for public officials and friends.\textsuperscript{95} Alberto Monza chose six friends; Marco Thiene, Gabriele Monza, and Gaboardo
Monza mixed paternal and maternal cousins and nonrelations; Clemente Thiene recruited a cousin and a brother-in-law. Gaspare II Arnaldi elected a friar, three friends, a distant affine, and his cousin Silvestro. This assortment demonstrates weaker reliance on the broad family than was the case in Genoa and Florence, where testators regularly chose commissioners from the agnate pool.

The community of the dead, in similar fashion, occasionally but not invariably extended laterally. The entire Verità gens gathered in a sepulchre in S. Eufemia, and the Bovi, Muronovo, and Stoppi owned collective tombs in S. Anastasia; generations of the Arnaldi rested under the right side of the altar of S. Giovanni Battista in Vicenza's cathedral. As many testators, on the other hand, mentioned sepoltura sua or noted construction of a personal tomb, indicating that lineage solidarity in death was no great priority. A few testaments, such as that of Gabriele Verità, ordered prayers and Masses for parenti; most, however, desired suffrages for the testator alone or, at most, for spouse and children. Nor did testators regularly intend funerals to proclaim the unity of the larger family. Marco Thiene ordered that a flock of relatives be dressed in mourning clothes to accompany his body to the tomb, but the case is exceptional; more representative was Gabriele Verità, who provided mourning only for wife, son, daughter, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. The many who stipulated an austere burial were more representative still.

The family at large seldom functioned as an enduring economic community. Testamentary provisions might bind the generations for some time: Bartolomeo dal Bovo ordered his descendants to supervise jointly the family juspatronus of a rural church, and Gaspare Arnaldi bound his heirs to give yearly alms to the hospital of S. Marcello in perpetuity. Land rights held in fief from the bishop were impartible; one such decima bound Arnaldi cousins together for at least thirteen years after they separated assets. These contacts, however, did not tie up any significant proportion of the patrimony. For seventeen years cousins Gaspare II, Girolamo, and Silvestro Arnaldi held some lands and investments as a jointly owned reserve, but this constituted a small part of total family wealth and anyway was divided once Girolamo reached maturity. Other cuginal transactions were low-grade (Gaspare once named Silvestro his procurator, and the cousins twice rented land to each other) or merely completed unfinished business, winding down investments made many years before and completing the dowering of uncle Battista's daughters. With the exception of the Stoppi, newcomers to the region, cousins or lateral agnates never formed commercial partnerships or held large blocks of land in common.
Brothers often held goods in common, but uncles and nephews, cousins, and stepsiblings usually divided patrimonies at the first opportunity. Convenience might dictate separation, and most divisions seem amicable enough, but some documents hint at indifference or even tension: as a Florentine noted dryly in 1519, "communions of goods frequently produce divisions of souls."\textsuperscript{105} When Andrea Arnaldi died in 1454, leaving four-year-old Silvestro and eighteen-year-old Angela Chiara in brother Tommaso's care, the family evidently suffered a shortage of liquidity. To provide Angela's dowry, Tommaso ceded a half share in the family palace in Carpagnon—Silvestro's share. Somewhat later Tommaso bought Silvestro a house in the outlying neighborhood of Santi Apostoli, exiling his nephew both from the family's traditional center and from the municipal center; the two branches thereafter remained residentially and fiscally divided.\textsuperscript{106}

Further, there is the test of residence: were lineages cohesive enough that their households sought to live in proximity? In Florence, judging from anecdotal rather than systematic study, those with a common surname often clustered in a few neighborhoods. Thirty-one Strozzi filed returns from a single quartiere in 1427, and the Salviati concentrated their properties and residences in six contiguous blocks; twenty-four sets of Buondelmonte lived near each other in the early Cinquecento. In Genoa, alberghi formed residential as well as economic and legal communities; in Rome, Perugia, and perhaps Venice, residence patterns demonstrate the "effective topographic cohesion of lineages."\textsuperscript{107}

Veneto tax rolls, however, indicate the opposite. Dividing the number of a family's households by the number of neighborhoods in which they resided produces an index of residential concentration; a ratio of one indicates dispersal (five households in five neighborhoods), while a higher ratio indicates solidarity (five households in a single neighborhood). For the later fifteenth century and the first decade of the sixteenth century, the index for the Veronese families that left memoirs is 1.6, which is virtually the figure for Vicentine families as a whole.\textsuperscript{108} On average, eight households of a given family lived in five different neighborhoods, which indicates weak clustering. Both samples indicate a slight trend toward concentration, as indexes rose to high points of 1.9 early in the Cinquecento; even then, on average, over half of a household's kin were not immediate neighbors.

Nor were Veronese and Vicentine families attached to ancestral centers. Even when one branch of the family remained in an original neighborhood, other lines scattered throughout the city (see appendix, table 4.4). Furthermore, outlying branches moved frequently and did not establish new clus-
ters: the Bovi kept continual residence in only one of thirteen neighborhoods in which they resided. By 1502 only one Verità household remained in the ancestral neighborhood of Falsorgo, and the family had households in eleven other sites. If they heeded the patriarch Gabriele’s words to gaze on the common insignia, they would have had to walk a considerable distance to do so. The Dionisi, Bovi, and Muronovo went a step further, and abandoned their original homes entirely (see appendix, table 4.5).

To return to the memoirs: with the exception of the Stoppi, writers were little concerned with anyone except their parents and progeny. Manfredo Repeta, for example, began his account of the agnatio with the common ancestor, but when he reached his own times he ignored the wider descent group and noted only the births, marriages, and deaths of his own children. He later mentioned the deaths of a brother and a cousin only because these had made him a residual heir. In the multigenerational memoirs of the Arnaldi and Verità, each writer noted salient events in the lives of his own offspring, with a glance upward to record the deaths of parents, but did not follow the life cycles of those uncles, aunts, nieces, nephews, cousins, or stepkin whose births were recorded by earlier memorialists. Glances sideways were faint and occasional, and most lateral agnates disappeared after a single notice. If the memoirs are any guide, Gabriele Verità’s thunderous injunction for family unity sounds more like a plea than a realistic expectation.