

ITALIAN SOCIAL CHRONICLES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

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IN a previous article an attempt was made to trace the development of the medieval *genre* of city descriptions from its emergence in the eighth century to its transformation under the influence of the new humanism at the beginning of the fifteenth.¹ During this period it was not unusual for the description of a city to be embedded in some larger work such as a civic chronicle or a saint's life, and for independent descriptions to be strongly influenced by extraneous material such as administrative documents or local church *ordines*. This helps to make the trail of the civic description *genre* difficult to follow, since it is criss-crossed by those of other writings of the most diverse kinds. Yet, even in this very diffuse tradition, the description of fourteenth-century Padua known as the *Visio Egidii Regis Patavie* occupies an exceptional position, not so much for itself as for the curious company in which it is found. It forms the second part of a unique trilogy called the *Liber Ludi Fortunae*, in the other parts of which the usual descriptive elements are overshadowed by material of a different origin. The first part, known as the *De Hedificatione Urbis Patavie* or *Patholonie*, need not detain us long. It is a very short work, beginning with a mythical description of the founding of the first city of Padua, which shows the unmistakable influence of the Roman descriptive literature stemming from the popular *Mirabilia Urbis Rome*; suddenly, in the sixth chapter, the author launches out into an account of the war of Dardanus, King of Padua, against the Tartars, which fills the rest of the book. The writer's lack of any real creative imagination makes the greater part of the *De Hedificatione* very tedious to read but easy enough to classify; it quite clearly belongs to the vast literature of popular chivalric

¹ "Medieval Descriptions of Cities", *BULLETIN*, xlviii (1965-66), 308-40.

romances. The third part of the *Liber Ludi*, the *De Generatione aliquorum civium urbis Padue, tam nobilium, quam ignobilium*, is not so easily placed. Here the link with the *descriptio* tradition is no more than vestigial, being restricted to two short chapters *de moribus civium urbis Padue* which give an interesting account of Paduan dress in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The greater part of the *De Generatione* is devoted to the supposed origins and recent fortunes of over a hundred Paduan families. Since it is concerned primarily with families rather than individuals, it does not belong to what may be called the *de viris illustribus* tradition of short biographies of outstanding men ; on the other hand, it has little in common with the histories of families, generally ruling families, which form an important appendage to the medieval chronicle tradition. Though in a very real sense a city description, this portrayal of Padua through its citizen families is only faintly paralleled in other examples of the descriptive *genre*. For want of a better term the *De Generatione* may be called a social chronicle ; in the present state of knowledge it could almost be called the only Italian social chronicle of the medieval period.

What were the antecedents of the *De Generatione* and had it any contemporary parallel outside Padua ? To try to answer these questions it will be necessary to plunge into a shadowy world of half-lost sources, many of doubtful authenticity ; before doing so it will be well to establish the exact position of the starting point, the nature and setting of the *De Generatione*. Manuscripts of the several parts of the *Liber Ludi*, and especially of the *De Generatione*, are legion ; indeed, there must be more fifteenth- and sixteenth-century copies, adaptations and translations of the *De Generatione* in Padua than there are of any other medieval work, and the embroidering of the stories and legends found in it continued at least until the middle of the nineteenth century. Despite the abundance of more or less adulterated versions, the establishment of the text of the *De Generatione* is, with the exception of a few points of detail, reasonably easy. This is partly because two manuscripts, one dated 1365 and the other undated but, to judge by the handwriting, belonging to the later fourteenth century, are markedly

older and superior to the rest¹; in addition, the authentic text of the *De Generatione* is distinguished by its unusual and restricted vocabulary. Above all, it was the caustic tone of the original which the interpolators, who worked mainly in order to praise certain families, were quite unable to imitate. For all its crudity of expression the entire *Liber Ludi*, and particularly the *De Generatione*, bears the stamp of the bitter and eccentric character of its author.²

The authorship of the Paduan trilogy is not open to serious doubt. The attribution to Giovanni da Nono is supported by overwhelming internal evidence. The treatment of the otherwise obscure Da Nono family and some of its neighbours in the northern Paduan contado shows an exceptional wealth of trivial detail which could only be derived from family traditions; the exaggerated claims for the antiquity and nobility of the Da Nono stand in sharp contrast to the indifference or disbelief expressed concerning the similar claims of others. The only other family which is given undue praise is the De Doto, and it is recorded that Giovanni da Nono was married to Dota de Doto. Apart from the information contained in the *Liber Ludi*, Giovanni da Nono is known almost exclusively from the records of the Paduan College of Judges which he entered on 11 August 1306.³ He appears thereafter in routine offices until 1346; his omission from the matricula dated February 1347 suggests that he died about that time. At the time of his reception into the College, Giovanni was living in the Via S. Polo in the northern quarter of the old city. This little street, which later fell upon evil times, had at this time some remarkable inhabitants. It was dominated by the heavily fortified palace of Vitaliano Lemici, one of the

¹ Biblioteca Civica, S. Daniele del Friuli MS. n. 264; Seminario Vescovile, Padua, cod. 11.

² J. K. Hyde, art. cit. pp. 330-2; idem. *Padua in the Age of Dante* (Manchester, 1966), pp. 29-32, 57 ff.; G. Fabris, "La cronaca di Giovanni da Nono", *Bollettino del Museo Civico di Padova*, viii (1932), 1-33 and ix (1933), 167-200. The *Visio Egidii* (ibid. x-xi, (1934-9), pp. 1-30) is the only substantial part of the *Liber Ludi* yet published; the present writer is engaged in preparing a complete edition.

³ *Statuta et Matricula Collegii Iudicum*, Archivio Antico, University of Padua, MS. n. 123, fol. 86^v.

two Paduans chosen by Dante to represent the usurers in the *Inferno*. Nearby was the house of Albertino Mussato, an ambitious lawyer and a *protégé* of the Lemici who was soon to become one of Padua's leading statesmen and the greatest Latin poet and historian of his age, the first crowned poet since the days of antiquity. The little monastery of St. Paul, from which the street took its name, had recently sheltered Albertino's brother Gualpertino, whose election as abbot of the leading Benedictine house of S. Giustina had been secured by political intrigue in 1300. Da Nono shows a particularly intimate knowledge of his neighbours, but his curiosity extended to the whole of the citizen body; where it can be checked by independent evidence, his knowledge of his contemporaries, their affairs and family connections, can scarcely ever be faulted. His anecdotes throw a pitiless light on the private lives of the Paduan citizenry and his revelations concerning certain great men like Albertino Mussato and Enrico Scrovegni, builder of the Arena chapel, are invaluable for the understanding of their character and motives.¹ As is to be expected, his information about earlier periods is much more patchy and shades off into legend and myth.

Various opinions have been held as to the date of the *De Generatione*, chiefly because nearly all manuscripts contain some interpolations bringing the history of particular families up to date; indeed, where they can be shown to antedate 1347 it is not unlikely that some such additions were made by the author himself. If it be accepted that chronologically speaking the *De Generatione* has a rather ragged edge, the most important question becomes the date of its general conception and the execution of the main text, and this it is possible to place fairly precisely. Da Nono's interest in the leading Paduan families of his day was heightened by the fact that when he wrote the widely based republican regime by which Padua had been governed for the previous fifty years was moving towards the *signoria* of a single family. In a remarkable chapter Da Nono discusses in most practical terms the assets of the various families in the struggle for power, particularly stressing the rivalry of the

¹ Hyde, *Padua*, pp. 165-8, 187-90, 271-5.

Carraresi and the Maccaruffi, which began to dominate the political scene in Padua from about 1314.¹ This is followed by a deliberately obscure chapter on the recognition of traitors which shows the author's distaste for tyranny. In an earlier chapter devoted to the Carraresi, the election of Giacomo da Carrara as Captain General of Padua on 25 July 1318 "a little before vespers" is duly recorded, but this has every appearance of being a very recent event the significance of which had not yet been appreciated by the writer.² The bulk of the *De Generatione* treats the identity of the future rulers of Padua as an open question—the prophecy that the Camposanpiero would produce a tyrant is taken very seriously—and it is doubtful if so shrewd an observer could have retained this attitude for long after July 1318 when, despite some setbacks in the Carrara cause, it was fairly evident in which direction the tide was flowing. The *De Generatione* is, therefore, no less than Mussato's tragedy and histories and certain passages in Marsiglio of Padua's *Defensor Pacis*, a product of the crisis through which Paduan society passed during the transition from the republican commune to the monarchical *signoria*.

To appreciate the real nature of the *De Generatione* it is necessary to penetrate beneath the sometimes bizarre details to the underlying plan. The book is made up of a large number of short family histories, each of which follows a similar scheme in which the origins of the family and its more recent members are treated, with appropriate anecdotes and sometimes with considerable genealogical detail; finally, the family's wealth, houses or castles in town and country and coat of arms are described. Da Nono's problem was from over a hundred small pieces to build a mosaic with a satisfying and significant pattern, and in this he was on the whole remarkably successful. One possible scheme would have been topographical, and there are

¹ *De Generatione*, Seminario, Padua, MS. cod. 11, fol. 38.

² Ibid. fol. 37^v. P. Rajna, "L'origini delle famiglie padovane e gli eroi dei romanzi cavallereschi", *Romania*, iv (1875), 161-83, dated the *De Generatione* after 1325 (pp. 164-5); his arguments are invalid because he confused Guglielmo I Dente, who died about 1294, with his grandson Guglielmo II, killed in 1325; moreover, the second peace between Padua and Cangrande della Scala was that concluded in the spring of 1318, not in 1320.

traces of such an arrangement when, for example, three families of the Codalunga suburb or the Pontemolino ward are grouped together.¹ Another possibility would have been by trades, had not the Paduan aristocracy been composed almost entirely of men who were primarily landowners who did not need to seek guild affiliation for political purposes. In fact, Da Nono used mainly social criteria in the ordering of his book, which depends on the whole on his concept of nobility.² Had he lived in a static society, it would no doubt have been possible for him to range his families in a single hierarchy from a few great ones at the top to an undifferentiated mass at the bottom. However, to his great regret, Da Nono could see that he lived in a time of considerable social change, so that nobility and power, and the wealth upon which both ultimately depended, no longer coincided in all cases. Thus the outline of the *De Generatione* resembles a kind of Fortune's Wheel, with the first book dedicated to the three great families which had dominated Paduan politics in the thirteenth century ; the second containing ancient noble families, many of which were in decline ; the third devoted to respected city families whose nobility was open to doubt ; while the fourth deals with a large number of non-nobles, mostly modest *popolani* but a few outstanding upstarts like the Scrovegni, of whom Da Nono disapproved. While it is in the deepest sense a social chronicle, a great deal of the interest of the *De Generatione* springs from the tension between the author's three preoccupations, with wealth, nobility and power.

While it is not impossible, it is in the highest degree unlikely that the social chronicle sprang to life fully developed in the brain of an eccentric Paduan judge, and the rest of this article will be devoted to a search for traces of other individuals of the species. A start may be made with the sources of the *De Generatione*. For a medieval writer Da Nono is reasonably informative about his authorities. He used the usual local chronicles and knew the importance of imperial *privilegia* for establishing nobility ; when he refers to *quibusdam scripturis* he seems to have

¹ *De Generatione*, fols. 44^v, 47^v-48^r ; see fols. 49^v-50^r for four rich taverners grouped by profession.

² Hyde, *Padua*, pp. 63-65.

documentary evidence in mind.¹ But no doubt the greater part of his material came from oral tradition, and the informants he names are all quite plausible.² By far the most important debt which he recognized, however, was to someone whom he calls Zambonus Andreadis de Favafuschis or Zambonus Andree, who may be indentified with the long-lived notary Zambono d'Andrea, who was already a member of the Paduan Consiglio Maggiore in 1254 and who made his will in Venice in 1315.³ Besides citing his opinion on a number of controversial points, Da Nono incorporated some half dozen of Zambono's verses into appropriate parts of his book. These rough Latin hexameters were hardly intended as poetry, being little more than mnemonics recording the ancient connections of various family stems and their association with certain castles. Da Nono draws on them particularly for the older families described in the second book, and some of his chapters are little more than prose explanations of the meaning of the cryptic verses. There are now no means of judging the total shape of Zambono's book, for, although a number of copies under the title *De Domibus Insignibus Patavie* were apparently extant in the fifteenth century, none has since come to light. But there is no need to doubt its importance as a precursor of the *De Generatione*.

The loss of Zambono d'Andrea's *De Domibus* was obscured for centuries through its confusion with another social chronicle existing in many copies in Padua, the earliest of which goes back to the late fourteenth century.⁴ This work must be related in some way to Da Nono's *Liber Ludi*, for it contains the same mixture of legendary and family history. The first chapters are devoted to the heroes of popular Paduan history, Antenor, King Vitaliano and his daughter Santa Giustina, and the Emperor Henry II and his wife Bertha; there follow some fifty chapters

¹ *De Generatione*, fol. 29^v, also *scripturis antiquis*, fol. 33^v.

² Particular informants are named on fols. 29^r, 30^v, 31^{r-v}, 34^r; unnamed *ioculatores* on fol. 34^r.

³ Hyde, *Padua*, p. 163. Zambono is mentioned or quoted, *De Generatione* fols. 18^r, 29^r, 30^r, 32^r, 35^r, 36, 40^r.

⁴ Seminario, Padua, cod. 56; the title, name of the author and the first pages up to the middle of chapter three were presumably lost, and have been replaced in a sixteenth-century hand.

dealing with Paduan families both noble and non-noble in no systematic order. Within each family history a fairly fixed procedure is followed. The opening anecdote usually relates to the first half of the thirteenth century and after it the supposed origins of the family are described ; in either of these sections a tendency to moralize about human affairs and occasionally about Paduan history may make its appearance. Then the present representatives of the family are introduced with the stereotyped phrase “ *ad presens dinoscuntur* ” and the account closes with a description of the coat of arms, where appropriate, and a short verse.

Like the *De Generatione* this second social chronicle is attributed in the manuscript tradition to more than one author, but the prevailing opinion until eighty years ago was that it was the work of Zambono d'Andrea and it is still generally known as the Favafuschis chronicle. This is impossible on several grounds. Firstly, in both the preface and the conclusion it is clearly stated that the “ chronicle ” was written in 1335 when Alberto della Scala was *signore* of Padua, and it is known that Zambono died at an advanced age nearly twenty years previously ; moreover, the persons described as flourishing at the time of the chronicle are generally consistent with the later date and even in the main text at least one incident belonging to the years 1326-8 is recorded.¹ Finally, the verses are not the same as those copied by Da Nono, being much more in the nature of *laudes* of the families concerned. At first sight the less popular attribution to a member of the Vitaliani family seems much more plausible because of the prominent place given to the mythical King Vitaliano “ *de Vitalianis* ” in the second chapter, but this hypothesis is shaken when the chapter on the Vitaliani family is examined, for here it is alleged, quite falsely, that the Vitaliano referred to in the *Inferno* was Vitaliano de Vitaliani and not Vitaliano Lemici. It is doubtful if the veneration for Dante in the fourteenth century had

¹ The execution of Corrado da Vigonza and the lifting of the ban on his descendants by Cangrande della Scala ; Favafuschis, MS. cit. fol. 12^r ; cf. G. Cortusi, *Chronica de Novitatibus Padue et Lombardie*, ed. B. Pagnin, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores [RIS]*, XII, v (Bologna, 1941), 45. Zambono probably died soon after making his will in October 1315 ; he is referred to as *quondam* in November 1317 (Archivio di Stato, Padua, Archivio Diplomatico 5563).

reached the point where a family would prefer to have an ancestor consigned by the *doctor vulgaris* to Hell rather than not to be mentioned by him at all.¹

On close inspection the authenticity of the so-called Favafuschis chronicle is found to be open to much more serious objections than the lack of a known author. It collapses at precisely the same point at which the *De Generatione* vindicates itself, for when checked against contemporary documents it proves so unreasonably inaccurate in such matters as names and professions that the genuineness of the whole work is called in question. The author obviously availed himself of earlier chronicles, yet a couple of examples suggest that he was at times incapable of understanding their plain sense. Thus, when speaking of the Forzatè family, the writer notes the death of "Johannes Batista episcopus Paduanus" where the Paduan annals record the death of bishop Johannes "in die S. Johannis Baptistae"; again, the curious statement that Alberico da Romano was known as the "prior civis Padue" looks like a misunderstanding of the chronicler Rolandino who describes Ezzelino I da Romano as "filius prioris Eceli de Honaria".² But the greatest blunder of all appears in the chapter devoted to Lovato Lovati, where certain events in the life of Albertino Mussato—namely, his quarrel with the Carraresi and death in exile at Chioggia—are transposed to the life of the older poet.³ It is hard to see how any sane Paduan could have confused these two outstanding men as early as 1335 when Mussato had been in his grave only seven years.

There is enough evidence to show that the author of the Favafuschis chronicle was a fool, but there is more which suggests that he was also a knave in so far as he was trying to pass off his work as something which it was not. In no fewer than six places the book contains statements such as "as the judge Antonio de

¹ Favafuschis, fols. 15^v-16^r; see A. Belloni, "L'usuriere Vitaliano", *Giornale Storico della Letteratura Italiana* xliv (1904), 392-406. A seventeenth-century manuscript (Biblioteca Civica, Padua, BP. 2050) is entitled *Petri de Vitalianis, Cronica Paduana sapientis Zamboni Andree de Favafuschis Carminibus Illustrata*.

² Favafuschis, fols. 1^v, 6^r; Rolandini Patavini, *Cronica in factis et circa facta Marchie Trivixane*, ed. A. Bonardi, *RIS*, VIII, i (Città di Castello, 1905), 15; *Annales Patavini*, *ibid.* p. 204.

³ Favafuschis, fol. 14^v.

Curte told me in the hall of the Paduan Commune ” or “ as Bonzanella Cortusi once told me in the chancellery ”. In three of these cases the supposed informant does not appear in any contemporary document and no Antonio de Curte appears in the very full records of the Paduan College of Judges, leaving only two persons who are at all plausible, and, of these, the presence of Bonzanella Cortusi in the chancellery is to some degree suspect, since he was neither a notary nor a judge.¹ In these circumstances even the twice repeated statement that the chronicle was written in 1335 becomes highly suspicious.

It is clear enough that the Favafuschis chronicle is not what it purports to be ; it is much more difficult to say exactly what it is. That it gives a much more flattering version than the *De Generatione* of the histories of the families described is hardly surprising, but the only consistent thread of bias in the book is that in favour of the lawyers and especially the notaries. One might guess therefore that the so-called Favafuschis chronicle was written by a notary in the last quarter of the fourteenth century, that is, contemporaneously with the oldest surviving manuscript or nearly so. His inspiration was Da Nono's *Liber Ludi*, which was just becoming known about that time, and his aim was to improve on his model by offering a more acceptable treatment of the same material. The fact that he sometimes follows Da Nono closely and sometimes flatly contradicts him without once referring to him in any way, suggests that the unknown writer wished to pass off his work as earlier than the *Liber Ludi* ; as such a person would almost certainly have believed that Da Nono's writings were considerably later than in fact they are, the year 1335 would have seemed a perfectly suitable one in which to “ plant ” his chronicle. He had at his disposal fairly reliable information about persons flourishing at about that date, and he also seems to have had access to a source independent of Da Nono which gave him details of some Paduan noble families and their castles in the first half of the thirteenth century. For the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries the writer seems to have drawn heavily on his imagination ; if this is so,

¹ Favafuschis, fols. 8^r, 10^r, 10^v, 12^v, 13^r, 13^v. The other accurate reference is to Partinopeo Polafrisana, a judge who flourished 1308-53.

the stories relating to this period are interesting evidence for the survival of certain attitudes, such as the condemnation of tyranny and the exaltation of the lawyers and bureaucrats, well on into the age of the *signoria*. In conclusion, it must be reiterated that the anonymous was extraordinarily incompetent as a historian so that no statement in the chronicle should be accepted on its testimony alone. He was, however, clever enough for his deception to pass undetected for some five hundred years.¹

The suspicion that there once existed some writings of the social chronicle type earlier than Da Nono but not mentioned by him, is strengthened by some evidence from the fifteenth century. This is provided by the *Codice Capodilista*, a book which Gianfrancesco Capodilista, a Paduan doctor of law, wrote about his illustrious ancestors.² In his text Capodilista, who was the Venetian ambassador to the Council of Basle, says that he began his book there in 1434 and internal evidence shows that he continued to add to it up to 1436. The work is prefaced by an impressive list of sources in which most of the known chronicles and major documentary records are mentioned, together with some which have since disappeared. The most important in the present context is an item which appears about half way through the list under the title *annalia antiquissima domini Antonij de Alexio*. Though the entry here is brief, the exceptional significance of this source to Capodilista is shown by the way in which he writes of it in two other parts of his book, giving a description and extracts which place it without doubt in the social chronicle *genre*. Firstly, at the very beginning of his family history, before the list of sources, Capodilista describes how he found at Basle a large volume of 264 folios containing a "chronicle" which he had never seen in Padua. It consisted of the *annalia* of Antonio d'Alessio, a Paduan judge but an inhabitant of Verona, which incorporated the "annals" of Giacomo de

¹ L. Padrin, *Lupati de Lupatis, Bovetini de Bovetinis, Albertini Mussati necnon et Jamboni Andreae de Favafuschis Carmina Quaedam*, (Padua, 1887), pp. 51-55, realized that the chronicle could not be by Zambono and suggested that it may have been compiled by his son Andrea.

² *De Viris Illustribus Familiae Capodilistae*, generally known as the *Codice Capodilista*, Biblioteca Civica, Padua, BP. 954.

Ardenghis written in 1168 and those of Ziliolo, chancellor of the Paduan commune, of 1196, together with other writings not specified, and additions made by *magister* Lazzaro in the time of Francesco senior da Carrara, who ruled Padua from 1350 to 1388. This complex volume seems to have consisted of two main parts, the first describing the main events and changes in the cities and powerful castle-owning families from Milan "downwards" from the time of Otto I to 1258, and the second devoted in greater detail to the four cities of Treviso, Padua, Verona and Vicenza. It was presumably from the second part that Capodilista abstracted the list of some forty Paduan families and their castles which follows, together with a few brief remarks, having, as he says, omitted further details until he could obtain a fuller copy. But this was not to be, although at the end of his history Capodilista returned to the chronicle and copied out in full the chapter on his ancestors the Transalgardi. In introducing this second extract Capodilista at last explains the presence of this Veronese and Paduan chronicle at Basle. The manuscript was compiled, he alleges, by *magister* Lazzaro and a certain Drudo by order of Francesco senior da Carrara, and was given by him to Guglielmo della Scala, whose son Bartolomeo showed it to Capodilista; the Paduan was unable to obtain a complete copy because Bartolomeo had left Basle.¹

It must be emphasized that the excerpts from the d'Alessio volume given by Capodilista are extremely convincing. The list of families contains a good deal of credible information about the castles of the Paduan nobility, much of it not recorded by Da Nono. Perhaps because it is a much abbreviated abstract, the list with its brief notes such as "castrum cum privilegio" or "sine privilegio" calls to mind an administrative document such as a register of nobles and their jurisdictions; a connection with the lost portions of Zambono d'Andrea's verse chronicle cannot be ruled out. The chapter on the Transalgardi, ancestors of the Capodilista, taken from the portion of the chronicle attributed to

¹ V. Lazzarini, "Un antico elenco di fonti storiche padovane", *Archivio Muratoriano*, i. 326-35, prints all Capodilista's references to and extracts from his sources. For the descriptions of the d'Alessio chronicle, see below, p. 121 note.

Giacomo de Ardenghis, is given *in toto* so that some idea of the character of the work can be formed. The subject matter includes such things as the derivation of the family name and those of related families, their castles, town houses and coats of arms, all very similar to Da Nono and "Favafuschis". The legends associating the family with Charlemagne and the spurious Carolingian diploma are exactly what one would expect of a twelfth-century source; only the section naming related families is slightly suspect, since it follows the verses of Zambono d'Andrea very closely both in content and order. But even if this section were proved to be an interpolation, it would be reasonable to assume that Capodilista copied it in good faith; similarly, a number of factual errors would be fully consistent with the authenticity of the chronicle, provided they could not be shown to be seriously anachronistic. For good measure, Capodilista cites a few lines from Ziliolo the chancellor's contribution, which was in verse.¹

The case for the existence of the d'Alessio volume seems very strong; however, before Antonio d'Alessio, Ziliolo the chancellor and Giacomo de Ardenghis are enrolled among the writers of lost social chronicles, it will be advisable to take a closer look at the context in which the only notices of them have been preserved, and in particular at the credentials of Gianfrancesco Capodilista. When he published extracts from the *Codice Capodilista* nearly sixty years ago, Lazzarini was able to show that, at points where it could be checked against other evidence, the list of sources was very accurate and reliable; had he subjected the main body of the chronicle to the same kind of scrutiny he would no doubt have modified his belief that he was dealing with a scholarly work which was absolutely trustworthy in all respects.² For example, the section which outlines the family alliances of the Transalgardi-Forzatè-Capodilista clan may, as is claimed, have been compiled from genuine documents, but, if so, they have been used with great carelessness and a complete disregard for chronology, so that members of the family with the same name in different

¹ Lazzarini, art. cit. pp. 327, 330-1, 334.

² "Il Capodilista, perchè nessuno potesse dubitare delle cose da lui narrate . . .", *ibid.* p. 327.

generations are frequently confused.¹ The pages devoted to individual members of the family are superbly illustrated, but the surrounding text is not up to the same high standard. The inclusion of legendary material in the lives of the early members of the family is no proof of bad faith, but the inaccuracies and exaggerated claims persist into the well-documented thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The case of Gabriele de Transalgaris, who is said to have been created archbishop and cardinal by Clement V, is a particularly blatant example²; throughout there is a tendency for citizens to be described as judges and judges as doctors of law, yet, despite the inclusion of the records of the College of Judges in the list of sources, some of the Capodilista who actually appear there are unaccountably omitted.³ The conclusion cannot be avoided that the main text of the *Codice Capodilista* was designed to create an immediate impression, to which historical accuracy was sacrificed if necessary, and its production was obviously related to the imperial privilege of nobility obtained by Gianfrancesco in 1434.

The contrast between the meticulous scholarship of the list of sources and the disregard for historical accuracy in the main text of the *Codice Capodilista* suggests that different authors were involved, and, indeed, it seems extremely likely that a celebrated lawyer like Capodilista would have had the background research carried out by an assistant. Since, however, the *Codice* is almost certainly in Gianfrancesco's own hand, the possibility that he tampered with the list of sources which he included with the object of silencing possible critics cannot be excluded. And if there is a cuckoo in the nest, it is most likely to be the d'Alessio volume to which such exceptional importance is attached.

¹ Capodilista, fols. 5^v-6^r. It would require much space and an elaborate documentation to unravel the errors in these pages.

² Ibid. fol. 26; Gabriele is said to have been "archiepiscopus aquonsis" and Cardinal, but according to Eubel there was no Cardinal Gabriele de Transalgaris under Clement IV, V or VI, nor a Gabriele, archbishop of Aix, during the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries. Gabriele is not mentioned in Clement V's registers.

³ Federico and Caroto Capodilista were not doctors of law as claimed on fols. 23 and 33; Rolando and Antonio Capodilista are omitted, although they entered the College of Judges in 1300 (*Statuta et Matricula*, Arch. Antic. Univ. 123, fol. 24^v).

Moreover, when the various statements about this source are looked at in detail certain errors, improbabilities and inconsistencies become apparent.¹

In the first place, the statement in the list of sources that there were many copies of the d'Alessio chronicle in Verona is almost certainly false, for had such an important source dealing in part with Veronese affairs been at all widely diffused in 1434 it is inconceivable that no one would have used or referred to it. A

¹ Since so much depends on them, it may be convenient to reproduce these statements here, as published by Lazzarini, pp. 330-4.

(I) *Yesus Maria—M IIIJ^c XXXIIIIJ—Basilee.* Reperta sunt hoc loco et tempore Annalia domini Antonij de Alexio, judicis et civis Patavi, habitatoris civitatis Verone, scripta per ipsum 1258 colligendo annalia cuiusdam Jacobi de Ardengis sive de Broxeminis civis Patavi, facta tempore Federici Barbarosa 1168, et eciam colligendo ea que scripsit Ziliolus canzelarius comunis Padue 1196, et aliorum plurimorum scribencium quos enumerat, cum additionibus factis per magistrum Lazarum tempore Francisci senioris. In quibus scribit de gestis Lombardie et Marchie Tarvisine et de nobilibus posidentibus civitates, loca vel castra in dictis provincijs. Est autem volumen seu cronice de folio regali, cartarum ducentarum et sexaginta quatuor. Incipit autem a Mediolano descendendo ad alias civitates et generaliter de gestis in Lombardia et mutationibus civitatum et familijs potentibus et fortilicia tenentibus a tempore Ottonis primi usque in 1258. Postea incipit a civitate Tarvisij, Padue, Verone et Vincencie, gesta in eis et potentes familias describendo, extense et prolixè multum. Et ut de Padua habeantur posesores fortiliciorum summatim et brevissime, omittendo ea que narrat de dictis familijs et gesta, hec pauca subiciuntur pro aliquali memoria, donec laciore copia haberi poterit, quod omni procuratur ingenio ne tam magnifica gesta transeant incognita, que in civitate Padue non habentur.

(II) Item annalia antiquissima domini Antonij de Alexio que Verone sunt apud plurimos et sunt hic. Et nunquam amplius vidi. Et sunt in magno volumine.

(III) Ex annalibus domini Jacobi Ardengi Patavi compillatis millesimo centesimo sesagesimo octavo, que sunt apud dominum Bartolameum de la Scala, sequuntur hec infrascripta de verbo ad verbum cum scribit de quadraginta domibus civitatis Padue (plura alia addiciuntur in cronica Zilioli et domini Antonij de Alexio) . . .

In eodem libro multa alia sequuntur moderniora in descriptione gestorum que supra posui in descriptione personarum. Et nota quod illam cronicam, quam ex multis compilavit magister Lazarus et Drudus de mandato domini Francisci de Cararia, donavit idem dominus Franciscus domino Guilielmo de la Scala patri dicti domini Bartolamei, et in ea leguntur aliqui versus antiquissimi quos eciam supra posui. Et hec manu propria traxi ex originali ad memoriam sucesorum, maxime quia eam cronicam non vidi Padue, vel si est tenetur secreta; nec potui habere copiam propter recessum eiusdem domini Bartolamei de Bascilea, sed saltem de nostra familia copiam volui.

later tradition that there was a copy in the Veronese chancellery may be disregarded for the same reason.¹ Then, the assertion that the Basle manuscript was copied by order of Francesco senior da Carrara is also highly suspect. This would mean that the d'Alessio chronicle was known in Padua at the Carrara court in the second half of the fourteenth century at the time when the history of the Carrara family was being written up by Bernardo de Caselle; as the chronicle evidently had so much to say about the Capodilista, it must have contained something on the Carraresi, yet there is no trace of its influence in the *Gesta Magnifica Domus Carrariensis* or any other Paduan chronicle of the period.² Finally, there is the curious story that Bartolomeo della Scala brought the book with him to the Council of Basle. Improbable as it seems at first sight, this tale stands up to scrutiny remarkably well. Bartolomeo was one of the della Scala who became adherents of the Emperor Sigismund after the Venetian occupation had finally driven them from their native Verona in 1404-5.³ His brothers Brunorio and Nicodemo, bishop of Freising, certainly attended the council and his own presence there is therefore likely. If he allowed Capodilista to copy extracts from the chronicle, this must have been during the first few months after the latter's arrival in Basle on 13 October 1433, for on 21 March 1434 Bartolomeo died in Vienna. His death was known to Capodilista's companion Andrea Gatari in Basle on 11 April, at a time when the *Codice Capodilista* with its elaborate illustrations can have been hardly begun, much less finished⁴; it is odd, therefore, that when Bartolomeo is mentioned at the very end of the book, his departure from Basle is referred to but not his death. Could this be because Capodilista did not wish

¹ A. Possevino, *Biblioteca Selecta qua agitur de ratione studiorum* (Rome, 1593), p. 245, followed by other bibliographers. Nothing resembling d'Alessio was known to Alessandro Canobbio, archivist of the Veronese commune in the later sixteenth century, as can be seen from the list of sources in his unedited chronicle, Biblioteca Civica, Verona, MS. n. 1698, p. 2.

² Ed. R. Cessi, *RIS*, XVII, i, vol. 2 (Bologna, 1942-8); for the sources, see pp. xxiii ff. For the identity of Lazaro and Drudo, the alleged editors of d'Alessio at this period, see Lazzarini, art. cit. p. 328.

³ G. B. Verci, *Storia della Marca Trivigiana* (Venice, 1786-91), vii. 118-136.

⁴ *Tagebuch des Andreas Gatari, 1433-1435*, ed. G. Coggiola, *Concilium Basiliense*, v (Basel, 1904), 378, 399-400.

to draw attention to the question of the present whereabouts of the manuscript? It cannot be ignored that the whole story, accounting for the existence of his source and yet placing it practically beyond reach of verification, was ideal for Capodilista if he really had something to conceal.

It is impossible to reach a definite conclusion on the question of the d'Alessio chronicle. On the one hand there is Capodilista's proved unreliability and the doubtful features of the story of the manuscript to which he draws so much attention; on the other there is the verisimilitude of the extracts which would have required considerable skill to forge. One may perhaps accept them while reserving judgement on the chronicle as a whole; could these genuine fragments have been the bait by which Capodilista planned to induce the reader to swallow his whole story of an unknown source, to which he could attribute any unsupported claim he pleased?¹

Despite the doubts which have been raised on particular points, the existence of some kind of social chronicle tradition in Padua is sufficiently established. Da Nono clearly owed something to Zambono d'Andrea's verses, and these in turn may have been based on an earlier generation of writings, traces of which have survived in Capodilista's extracts and parts of the "Favafuschis" chronicle. A favourable environment was provided by the flourishing Paduan commune, which constituted an almost self-sufficient social world in which ancient families competed with others whose wealth was of recent origin. But this situation, which must have sharpened the interest in social distinctions, was not peculiar to Padua but was paralleled in at least a score of cities in North and Central Italy alone. It would be extraordinary if the Paduan social chronicles were unique, but it must be admitted that the search for examples elsewhere has not so far yielded very substantial results.

The case of a supposed social chronicle at Cremona in the later thirteenth century seems to be based on a misinterpretation of the evidence. Domenico Bordigallo, in his description of

¹ This would explain the challenge with which Capodilista introduces his list of sources: "Concedimus autem omnibus licentiam apellandi omnia infrascripta falsa in uno solo falsitate comperta."

Cremona and its territory written in 1515, refers at one point to the *liber et cronica* of the notary Favazolo which he saw at the church of S. Lorenzo.¹ This began with a notarial copy of the *Liber Societatis Populi Cremone*, consisting of a list of the members of the Cremonese *popolo* arranged under the administrative quarters of the city, which was dated 1283. The writings of a later Cremonese antiquarian, Giuseppe Bresciani, contain what purport to be two copies of this matricula, one of which has been heavily adulterated for the usual purpose of proving the antiquity of families important in the forger's own day. The original manuscript of S. Lorenzo has been lost. In his studies of the Cremonese *popolo*, Professor Gualazzini suggested that the Favazolo manuscript consisted of the matricula followed by a social chronicle, explaining Bresciani's silence on the latter by the suggestion that he never saw the original but used earlier copies.² Recently Dr. Montorsi has argued at length in favour of the reliability of the best of Bresciani's copies and has used his silence to throw doubt on the existence of any chronicle element in the S. Lorenzo manuscript.³ It may be remarked that Gualazzini's case was a tenuous one at best. The use of the term *annalia* in the *Codice Capodilista* to describe the works of Da Nono and Zambono d'Andrea is a sufficient warning against putting too much weight on Bordigallo's *liber et cronica*; early historians cannot be relied upon to distinguish precisely between the various *genres* of historical writing. But even if there was some kind of Favazolo chronicle, there is no evidence whatever that it was a social one. Apart from the rarity of such writings, a social chronicle which survived until the sixteenth century would almost certainly have been copied by someone, for it could hardly have failed to interest antiquarians like Bordigallo and Bresciani. Gualazzini's idea of a social chronicle growing out of a list of names or families compiled for political or

¹ D. Bordigallo, *Designum Urbis Cremonae*, Biblioteca Governativa, Cremona, MS. A.A.8.16, fols. 29^v-30^v.

² U. Gualazzini, *Il 'Populus' di Cremona e l'autonomia del comune* (Bologna, 1940), pp. 303 ff.

³ W. Montorsi, "La matricola popolare di Cremona di 1283", *Annali della Biblioteca Governativa di Cremona*, xiii (1960), pp. xxv-xxix.

administrative purposes is an attractive one, and a list of up to a hundred or so might well have provided this kind of stimulus, but the matricula of the Cremonese *popolo* contains nearly eight thousand names.

If there was any city which would seem to have offered an especially favourable environment for the development of the social chronicle in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, it was Florence. The exceptionally rapid growth of the city brought families of widely differing origins into close proximity, and social distinctions were sharpened by intense political competition; the lively Florentine literary circle made it likely that social ideas would sooner or later be expressed in writing. And in Florence there are, in fact, traces of a social chronicle tradition which offers some interesting points of comparison with that found in contemporary Padua.

The closest approach to a social chronicle to be found outside Padua is contained in the XVIth canto of the *Paradiso*. Here Dante's ancestor Cacciaguida describes the Florence of his day, the first half of the twelfth century, stressing the small extent of the city and the simplicity of life at that time, and concentrating on the leading families which had already settled within the walls and suburbs. The information given concerning families, their origins and relationships, city and country houses and coats of arms, is the typical subject matter of the social chronicle. Moreover, in the main part of the description, where some thirty-nine families are named or alluded to, they are placed in three groups—those already in decline in Cacciaguida's day, those at the height of their power, and those whose rise was still recent.¹ This arrangement corresponds almost exactly with that of Da Nono's *De Generatione*. The Paduan, writing at much greater length, gives much more information but he is less clear and systematic; Dante's description has the conciseness and brilliance appropriate to verse, and the idea of the growth and decay of families and cities, the Wheel of Fortune, which underlies both accounts, is much more clearly brought out. There is no reason to believe that either had seen the other's work, but both independently perceived and recorded the material and social

¹ *Paradiso* XVI, lines 88-139.

change which was the most striking and disturbing feature of the life of the cities they knew.

It is well known that the XVIth canto of the *Paradiso* is one of those parts of the *Divina Comedia* which is closely related to the Florentine historical tradition chiefly preserved by Giovanni Villani and in the pages of the chronicle attributed to Ricordano Malispini. This is not the place to enter into the complicated controversy which has arisen over the relationship between Dante, Villani and Malispini, except in so far as is necessary to follow the social chronicle tradition.¹ This one-sided approach cannot be expected to yield general conclusions about such questions as Dante's dependence on the Florentine chroniclers or the nature of the Malispini chronicle, though it may eventually be shown that the key to the latter lies in the family and social history element which has already been recognized as especially characteristic of Malispini.

Three main theories have been put forward to explain where Dante found the factual basis of *Paradiso* XVI: that he used Villani, that he used Malispini, and that he used a lost source also known to Villani and Malispini. The first of these is almost certainly the correct one. Practically all the information conveyed by Cacciaguida is contained in four consecutive chapters in Villani's fourth book; so little is missing that it is probably unnecessary to look for any other written source, since the additional facts were probably part of an oral tradition or came directly from the poet's personal experience. It is true that the same facts as those given by Villani are also to be found in Malispini, but there they are interspersed with a great deal of other matter in two well-separated chapters, whereas in Villani they are concentrated in a comparatively short space.² Malispini's two

¹ For bibliographies and the present state of the controversy, see G. Aquilecchia, "Dante and the Florentine Chroniclers", *BULLETIN*, xlviii (1965-66), 30-55, and C. T. Davis, *Dante and the Idea of Rome* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 244-62.

² G. Villani, *Cronica*, ed. I. Moutier (Florence, 1823), i. 169-73; Ricordano Malispini, *Storia fiorentina*, (1816) ch. 52, pp. 46-50; ch. 103, pp. 83-6. Although the Malispini chapters cover much the same ground, Dante cannot have used either of them alone because ch. 52 does not name the Giuochi family or mention the Della Pera gate, while ch. 103 does not include the Della Bella; see also below p. 127, note 2, where Dante follows the order of ch. 52 or Villani, not Malispini.

chapters name about a hundred families and Villani about fifty-six ; if Dante had used Malispini or Malispini's source, the fact that he selected thirty-eight families every one of which was also mentioned by Villani, could only be explained as sheer coincidence. Equally striking is the way in which, in several instances, Dante gives his families in the same order as Villani. Thus Dante's first two families are the second and third in Villani's twelfth chapter, and his third, fourth and fifth appear in the same order in Villani's thirteenth chapter¹; these families do not occur in this sequence anywhere in Malispini. The group Gualterotti-Importuni-Buondelmonte is also found in Villani ; it appears in this order in one of the basic Malispini manuscripts, but the additional information that the Buondelmonte came from Valdigueve, which is used by Dante at an earlier point, is given only by Villani.² These examples are the more significant inasmuch as Dante would be likely to change Villani's order not only because of the necessities of the verse but also because his arrangement was chronological instead of topographical.

ch. 103. The Villani passage, on the other hand, names every family referred to by Dante in lines 88-139, except the Amidei, "La casa di che nacque il vostro feto", which the poet knew all too well from his own experience ; the connection of the Cerchi with Acone (line 65) does not seem to be found in Villani.

¹ "Io vidi gli Ughi, e vidi i Catellini,
Filippi, Greci, Ormanni ed Alberichi,
Già nel calare, illustri cittadini ;"

(*Paradiso* XVI, 88-90)

"... gli Ughi furono antichissimi... e oggi sono spenti, i Catellini furono antichissimi... e oggi non n'è ricordo."

"Filippi che oggi sono niente... e simile i Greci oggi sono finiti e spenti... Ormanni che abitavano ov'è oggi il detto palagio del popolo, e chiamansi oggi Foraboschi" (Villani, pp. 171-2).

² "Già eran Gualterotti ed Importuni ;
Ed ancor saria-Borgo più quieto,
Se di nuovi vicin fosser digiuni."

(ll. 133-5)

"... in Borgo S. Apostolo erano grandi Gualterotti e Importuni, che oggi sono popolani : i Buondelmonti erano nobili e antichi cittadini in contado, e Montebuoni fu loro castello, e più altri in Valdigueve ; prima si puosono in Oltrarno, e poi tornarono in Borgo" (Villani, p. 173).

Cf. "In Borgo S. Apostolo erano grandi Gualterotti, Importuni : poi vennono i Buondelmonti ch'erano gentili uomini cattani del contado, ed era loro per antico Montebuoni, e'l comune di Fiorenza il disfece" (Malispini, p. 47).

Dante mentions the Buondelmonti in Valdigueve, line 66.

The four chapters of Villani's chronicle which may therefore be regarded as Dante's immediate source, represent something more than a bare list of families but something less than a fully developed social chronicle. The overall arrangement is topographical, each chapter relating to one of the four administrative quarters into which Florence was divided in the twelfth century; within each chapter the situation of each family's town house is noted together with any important genealogical links. The description is placed by Villani in the twelfth century, soon after the destruction of Fiesole by the Florentines in 1125. Presumably Villani had a source which he believed to relate to that period; from time to time he brings its information up to date, usually with a remark to the effect that a family was in decline by his day. The division into quarters suggests that the ultimate source may have been an administrative document of some kind, though the early quarters were probably also important social units; however, any speculation concerning Villani's source must take into consideration Malispini also.

In passing to the Malispini chronicle it is necessary to enter into much more complicated and treacherous ground. In the first place Malispini contains not one social description of Florence but three, all of them belonging to the nucleus of the chronicle, which is not derived from a known early source and which cannot be dependant on Villani. Moreover, as there is no modern edition of Malispini and the manuscript tradition has not been fully studied, the state of the text is extremely uncertain, and this is especially true of the social chapters in which the lists of names acted as a kind of flypaper for interpolations in the interests of particular families. Leaving on one side the whole question of whether Malispini wrote before or after Villani, the possibility of borrowings from Villani incorporated into the Malispini text by copyists cannot be ruled out. This being so, detailed arguments based on, say, the inclusion or omission of one or two names or facts cannot be regarded as securely based, since only the general outlines of the text can be considered as firmly established.¹

¹ The earlier editions, up to and including that of Muratori, *RIS*, VIII (Milan, 1726), coll. 879-1046, were based on Magliabecchiana IV, 28; Follini

Although information concerning a few Florentine families is fairly widely scattered through the chronicle, the social descriptions in Malispini are mainly concentrated in three blocs. The first of these is inserted after the account of the destruction of Fiesole in 1125 ; the main chapter purporting to describe the leading families at that date is followed by one which claims to name the Florentine knights created by Charlemagne and two more which give some account of the rural holdings of the local nobility. The second bloc breaks into the narrative between the years 1218 and 1220 with a description similar in scope to the first, followed by a short chapter naming seven families which rose to prominence in the thirteenth century. The third list of families forms a coda to a chapter devoted to the formation of the *Primo Popolo* in 1250, and is supposed to record the noble families whose towers within the city were destroyed at that time.¹ It may be said at once that this last description does not add anything to the information contained in the other two and would seem to be based directly upon them ; since it is also missing from one of the earliest manuscripts it may probably be ignored as a late addition to the chronicle. A most serious complication is introduced by the existence of alternative versions of the first description which differ not simply in matters of detail, such as might come about through copyists' errors or interpolations, but show quite substantial re-arrangements of the material. The version published by Muratori contains some twenty extra families and is therefore in all probability inflated by interpolations, but there seems no reason to believe that its nucleus is any less authentic than that of the Follini edition.²

The variations in the Malispini manuscripts do not break down an essential difference between the first and second descriptions. This is not a matter of content, for nine-tenths of the families named are common to all three lists ; it cannot, therefore, depend on a difference in date, since greater changes could (1816) used Magliabecchiana IV, n. 27 ; the important Laurentiana Plut. LXI, 29 has not yet formed the basis of an edition.

¹ Malispini, ed. Follini, chs. 52-55, pp. 46-53 ; chs. 103-4, pp. 83-87 ; ch. 137, pp. 112-14.

² *RIS*, VIII, coll. 920-923 ; the variants are given in the notes to the Follini edition ; see p. 300 for a list of families excluded as interpolations.

be expected to have taken place in the century which is supposed to separate the two accounts. The placing of the second description seems to have been dictated by little more than literary convenience; having two similar sources at his disposal the author of the chronicle realized that to insert them one after the other might try the reader's patience too far. Both were basically lists of families filled out with connecting remarks, but while in the second description these are mainly genealogical or miscellaneous, the first is held together by a framework of topographical information designed to place the town house of each family as exactly as possible on the map of Florence.

If the street directions of either version of Malispini's first description are followed on a plan of medieval Florence, it becomes clear that the impression of topographical precision is no illusion.¹ The account begins on the southern side of the old city and, after weaving to and fro in the area between the first walls and the Arno, begins to move gradually in a clockwise direction until the north-eastern extremity of the city, around S. Piero Maggiore, is reached; it then returns by way of the centre to the south-western suburbs. Moreover, if the information contained in the first description is applied to the second, it can be seen that this too is laid out according to a topographical plan, although in this case the street directions have been omitted. The differences between the three versions do not entail the abandonment of a geographical sequence but seem to be produced by each account taking a slightly different route through the city. There are a few cases of groups of families appearing in reverse order, as if the writer had passed down a street in the opposite direction. It is true that there are families whose place seems to be dictated by a genealogical connection, but, as kinsmen generally lived close together (or is it that neighbours were assumed to be kinsmen?), this introduces fewer serious deviations than might be expected.

What does all this mean for our understanding of Malispini's sources? It should be possible to rule out one explanation, that Malispini's social descriptions are a straightforward forgery.

¹ I have used the plan at the beginning of O. Hartwig, *Quellen und Forschungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz*, vol. ii (Halle, 1880).

They are altogether too elaborate to make it very likely that they were concocted simply to exalt a family or group of families ; to invent one such description would have been difficult enough but to invent two would have been idiotic. Moreover, the choice of families does not seem to be slanted towards the situation in the late thirteenth or the late fourteenth centuries, the two possible dates for the composition of the Malispini chronicle. Whenever he wrote, the author, though he may have slipped a name in here and there, seems to have reproduced quite faithfully the two earlier sources which he says he found in the Badia of Florence and the Capocci house in Rome. But two sources so similar in content should converge somewhere ; the Villani description, too, covers so much of the same ground that it would be extraordinary if it were entirely independent. The difficulty is to imagine a source which would allow the same material to be arranged in three or four different but equally valid ways, by quarters in Villani and according to the various itineraries in Malispini. Details both of quarters and of streets might have been included in an administrative document of some kind, or the topographical arrangements might derive from the personal knowledge of the original author, who must be assumed to have passed his work on in a number of alternative versions. Whoever he was, Villani and Malispini's source must be regarded as an early and important exponent of a rudimentary social chronicle, the foundation of the only tradition so far recognized outside Padua.

It cannot be said that the search for a social chronicle tradition has so far yielded a great wealth of material. However, this article will have served its purpose if it has drawn attention to the problems posed by the *De Generatione* and its antecedents, problems which are hardly diminished if this development is held to be unique. Histories of the families of particular cities are not unknown at a later date, though the relatively static nature of Italian society from the Renaissance onwards led to a different kind of interest from the Paduan and Florentine writings considered here, which were inspired by social change. Passages in a Perugian vernacular poem of the mid-fourteenth century which lament the dominance of immigrant families and the decadence

of the old nobility seem to reflect the influence of *Paradiso* XVI¹; the verse *Cronichetta* of S. Gimignano of 1355² contains much typical social chronical material which may go back to an earlier tradition, though the immediate inspiration is almost certainly Dantesque, and the poem is marked by the tone of regret for the good times past typical of the *genre*. But this is very little when one considers the number of populous Italian cities each of which constituted a close-knit social world, and the vast amount of data which must have been available in the communal archives. Works of fiction, which have not been considered here, may have provided some of the links; a magnificent example of a social chronicle combined with the story of the building of a city existed in the Old Testament books of Ezra and Nehemiah and would have provided an excellent model for any writer with a similar theme. Compared to the broad stream of the true chronicle, the social chronicle tradition was doubtless no more than a meagre trickle, but its interest is out of all proportion to its bulk, for the social chronicler could hardly avoid revealing social values and attitudes which coloured the actions of contemporaries, whether they were economic, political or social.

¹ L. Salvatorelli, "La politica interna di Perugia in un poemetto volgare della metà del Trecento", *Bollettino della Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria* (1953), pp. 1-110; especially ll. 137-75, pp. 19-20.

² "La cronichetta di S. Gimignano di Fra Matteo Ciaccheri", ed. C. Talei, *Miscellanea di Storia Valdelsa*, xxxiii (1925), 125-46.