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The Genealogical Gaze: Family Identities and Family Archives in the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Centuries

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In Renaissance Florence, early modern England, and the Netherlands during the Golden Age the “genealogical gaze” transfigured family archives into a cultural patrimony to be preserved, expanded, and transferred to future generations. Descendants, by appropriating the object of that genealogical gaze, embraced the values and modalities of the “paradigm of *patrimoine*.”

Record creators have always thought about the future and showed an awareness of the need to transfer recorded information through time. The continuity in premodern times between past, present, and future led creators and users of archives to practices that we recognize as a form of historical consciousness. Medieval records were, as M. T. Clanchy writes, pledges to posterity and an assurance of the continuity of institutions under God’s providence.¹ This entails an awareness of a *longue durée* stretching well into the future. But this is different from the notion that records created for current business may be transferred as a heritage to future generations who will value those records as cultural assets. Some records are transfigured into archival and cultural patrimony. Although the term “cultural patrimony” was not used before the nineteenth century, we can throw a sort of net out into the deep waters of history to catch and recognize “fragments of a patrimony consciousness” in societies of the past. This catchy metaphor is used by Jean-Michel Leniaud, professor at the École nationale des chartes and the École du Louvre, who uses four criteria to identify the “paradigm of *patrimoine*”: (1) Conservation: the intentionality of the creator of a monument; the scientific, artistic, etc., interest; the importance for social life; the economic value. (2) Motivations that lead one to accept the past or to reject it: a patrimony needs not only a testator and a will but also an heir who accepts the conditions. (3) The modalities by which *patrimoine* has been appreciated, preserved, and transferred: inventorying, restoring, reusing. (4) The media and means for diffusion within society: publications, tourism, etc.²

Applying Leniaud's four parameters, I propose to search European history for values, appropriations, processes, and media that construct records/archives as cultural patrimony. In an earlier article the nation and the state were the object of interest.³ I now focus on the family as a space in which identities and archives are constructed. Using Susan Crane's concept of the "historical gaze," which, through interacting with its object, creates a monument, I argue that from the fourteenth century on the genealogical gaze transfigured family archives into a cultural patrimony to be preserved, expanded, and transferred to future generations.⁴

Florentine Memories

Ricordanze

In 1367 the Florentine Donato Velluti started writing his *Ricordi* (I Remember):

Man desires to know about his birth, his past, what his ancestors were like, and the wealth they acquired; and many times this avoids damage and prevents many errors. I, Donato . . . finding myself to be the oldest member of our family, as a perpetual memorial for my descendants [*a perpetua memoria de' miei discendenti*], and others of the Velluti family and everyone else, have decided to make a record of what I heard from my father and others older than myself, and of what I have read in letters, books, or other writings.⁵

Velluti's *Ricordi* belongs to the genre of *ricordanze*. According to *Elsevier's Lexicon of Archive Terminology*, the Italian term *ricordanze* is the equivalent of the French *livre de raison*.⁶ The English equivalent would be "commonplace book," but this is too restrictive, because *ricordanze* contain elements of a commonplace book, an account book, a chronicle, and a diary.

On April 13, 1508 the Florentine Francesco Guicciardini began his writing (after hailing the Holy Virgin and Saints John the Baptist, Francis, and Thomas Aquinas) by stating that he had started the book to "farà conto di alchune cose appartenente a me" (render account of some things belonging to me).⁷ Later he corrected the word *conto* into *memoria*, indicating that what Guicciardini started as *fara conto* (rendering an account) developed into *fare memoria* (composing a memory). The book contains two sections, one for accounts and the other for memories. The

succeeding volume, begun in 1527, has the title, given by Guicciardini himself, *Debitori e creditori*, but Guicciardini notes that pages 3 to 150 are reserved for *debitori e creditori* and page 151 to the end for *ricordanze*. The twofold purpose of this and many other Italian commonplace books has escaped the notice of most modern editors, who have restricted their editions to the *ricordanze* part, omitting the *conti*.⁸

Ricordanze from before 1350 are rare, but they became increasingly numerous from the late decades of the fourteenth century onward. Almost every family in Florence had one. A 1985 survey lists *ricordanze*—only published ones—from over one hundred families and individuals.⁹ Some of these are more traditional *libri di conti*, as, for example, the painter Giorgio Vasari's accounts. However, for Vasari (as for most of his contemporary merchants) accounting was also a memory practice: he kept the accounts to “farà memoria di tucte le opere di picttura” (keep a memory of all paintings).¹⁰ Other *ricordanze* are primarily draft books, being in the Italian accounting system drafts for the *giornale* or *memoriale*, from which the entries into the *libro grande* (ledger) are made.¹¹ But most *ricordanze* were real *libri di famiglia*, part of what Giovanni Ciappelli calls a system, which included other document genres like *prioristi* (lists of the family members who had held the office of prior or of *gonfaloniere*), chronicles, genealogies, memoirs—the whole family archive.¹²

The Florentine *ricordanze* were “often formulated in terms of family interest: to pass on to later generations the experiences of the writer and his contemporaries, to demonstrate by illustration and example which paths to follow and which to avoid. Another motive was family pride.”¹³ As Filigno de' Medici appealed in 1373: “Still I pray you that you preserve not only the patrimony, but also the political status acquired by our ancestors, which is great and was formerly even greater.”¹⁴

Since political status depended to a large extent on ancestry, nearly all the *ricordanze* devote much attention to the history of the family, producing genealogies interlaced with the ancestors' civic functions, which demonstrated the family's participation in the political life of the city.¹⁵ That participation depended on consanguinity of members of a *casata* or *consorteria*, a group of common paternal descent.¹⁶

Bill Kent, the expert on Renaissance Florentine history, is one of the few scholars to have consulted all known *ricordanze*, both published and unpublished. He is professor at Monash University (Melbourne), which explains why that university holds the greatest collection of published *ricordanze* outside Italy. Kent explains that the Florentines have always been keen if not always honest genealogists, “and this mania was not merely antiquarian in a society where collective family rights still mattered, where

political eligibility and claims to patronage of chapels and churches often depended upon the keeping of accurate family records.”¹⁷

Thus, the Florentine genealogical gaze as expressed in the *ricordanze* was an agency for civic and political success. Descendants, by appropriating the object of that genealogical gaze, embraced the values and modalities of Leniaud’s paradigm of *patrimoine*.

Ricordanze were kept not only in Florence but also in other Tuscan cities such as Siena, Lucca, and Orvieto.¹⁸ Angelo Cicchetti and Raul Mordente point to two institutional factors favoring the making and preserving of *libri di famiglia* in Florence.¹⁹ First, there was a close connection between the city’s political institutions and the Florentine families, who could continue playing a civic role only if the private documentation of the family’s past accomplishments was transmitted from father to son. Second, the fiscal system (*catasto*) promoted private record keeping because tax authorities, to check tax returns, had access to the bookkeeping of heads of family.²⁰ Any person could post a denunciation in one of the boxes placed in squares and in churches. The clerks of the *catasto* could search a house and examine the family records. Many merchants provided with their tax return a copy of the family records from their account book.

Ricordanze served to preserve the political status of the family, the continuity of this entity being not only a moral imperative but in patrician Florence also an imperative of *publica utilitas*.²¹ The *libro di famiglia* became ritualized into “un personaggio attivo della vita della famiglia” (an active personage in the family’s life); it was cited in other documents and probably in family conversations, and it was kept in a special place.²² The place where the *libri di famiglia* and other books were stored as if they were sacred or religious objects was the *scrittoio* or *studiolo*, the true center of the house. The archives stored in the study constituted the memory not only of an individual but also of the family and clan network.²³ The study was accessible only to the head of the family.²⁴ He could, however, allow consultation of *ricordanze* even outside the narrow family. Sometimes they were copied for other branches of the family or loaned to *consorti*.²⁵ The family books “therefore not only helped a domestic group to identify with the wider family, but may also have contributed to the creation of a shared tradition among related households.”²⁶ To future generations “an appreciation of the achievements and a knowledge of the accumulated political and moral wisdom of the family’s ancestors” was passed on.²⁷ Descendants and heirs continued the *ricordanze*, sometimes for as long as two centuries. The lineage encompassed the past, the present, and the future.²⁸

Public Memorialization

In Venice very few *ricordanze* were produced.²⁹ Giovanni Ciappelli argues that Venetians had less interest than Florentines in collecting and keeping evidence of ancestral status because the ruling class in Venice was defined a priori.³⁰ James Grubb, on the other hand, contends that Venetians, too, felt the need to trace and transfer the political and moral patrimony of their lineage, but they did this not by writing single-family *ricordanze* but by relying on government archives.³¹ In Venice and many larger cities of northern Italy the written memory of patrician families was inscribed collectively and outside the individual family in collective public record keeping. According to Grubb, the relatively diffuse patriciate in Florence made public memorialization difficult and therefore encouraged private record keeping.

Public memorialization is one of the modalities of the paradigm of *patrimoine*. When the Florentine Leonardo Bruni (ca. 1370–1444) was writing his *History of the Florentine People*, he supplemented his narrative sources by looking up the relevant documents in the city archives. When the chronicles ended, he turned to state papers and to the private archives of the principal families in Florence, to whom he appealed for assistance through his banker, Palla di Nofri Strozzi.³² Three generations later, Francesco Guicciardini wrote his *Storie fiorentine* (1508–9), for which his own *Memorie di famiglia* served as the skeleton. As Nicolai Rubinstein observed, “In the *Memorie*, Florentine history of the 15th century is narrated from the angle of the historian’s family, so that the participation of the Guicciardini in Florentine history forms the focal point of the general account; in the *Storie*, the situation is reversed, and the history of Florence is told for its own sake, although still with an eye on the contribution of the Guicciardini.”³³

For Guicciardini and his equals the symbiotic relationship between the city’s history and family biography made the conjunction of private and public writings quite natural. Guicciardini made some use of the archives of the Commune, but his main source was the Guicciardini family archives, which, owing to the political influence of the Guicciardini, were, as Rubinstein writes, “in certain aspects, like miniature State archives.”³⁴

The two cases of the use Bruni and Guicciardini made of public and private archives lead me to argue that the *ricordanze* and other records kept by Florentine merchants were bridging objects connecting the private and the public, just as the bookkeeping connected the private sphere and the public sphere, shown, for example, in the taxation by the Uffiziali of the *catasto*. The Italian system of double-entry bookkeeping

developed from the *ricordanze cum libri di conti* and other financial and genealogical records within the family. “More emphatically than earlier and more varied kinds of record keeping, double-entry bookkeeping transported the system of management unevenly realized in private households to the space of public writing,” Mary Poovey writes, adding that “the double-entry ledger introduced an interface between the company’s ‘private’ concerns and the ‘public’ institutions of the government and the church.” The *ricordanze*, in fact, constituted a private-public archive.³⁵ Private archives and public archives were not antithetical, as demonstrated by the Guicciardini archives and, even more so, by the Medici archives (both before and after 1570).

Archives in Early Modern England

The Lineage Society

Florentine merchants, by appropriating the object of their ancestors’ genealogical gaze, embraced the values and modalities of the paradigm of *patrimoine*. In England, too, we can recognize this genealogical gaze and the ensuing “patrimony consciousness.”

In 1322 Henry de Bray of Harlestone, near Northampton, started writing a book that he intended “in evidentiū heredum suorum, videlicet de transcriptis cartarum et memorandum tempore dicti Henrici emergentium” (as evidence to his heirs, that is, transcriptions of charters and memoranda arising from the time of the said Henry). The book, known as the Harlestone register, was called by its editor an “estate book.” It is akin to a cartulary, containing copies and extracts from deeds and Exchequer records, lists of the lands in deBray’s mother’s dowry, and lists of tenants, interspersed with notes on the history of the village of Harlestone and genealogical data on deBray’s family.³⁶ Henry de Bray’s intention in creating this monument and designing it for his heirs points to, I propose, a consciousness of a paradigm of *patrimoine*.

De Bray experienced communal time and family time as they have been identified by Françoise Zonabend. Every person, she writes, “is fixed in a genealogical network in space and time, where past and present, kindred and community are intermingled. Each individual is set first and foremost in a time determined through the family.”³⁷ The Harlestone register is a rare example of an English family book comparable to the Florentine *ricordanze*. To catch more in our net of patrimony consciousness we have to look for other sources, first and foremost, cartularies.

The marvelous catalog of English cartularies by G. R. C. Davies lists some thirteen hundred cartularies still in existence. The oldest is the early-eleventh-century cartulary from Worcester. Some are from the twelfth century, but the majority date from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Some 158 lay cartularies have been preserved as well as 1,125 from religious institutions.³⁸ About a third of all cartularies have survived since the Middle Ages in the possession of landowners, although no longer as “working records.” They were “monumentalized,” especially through sixteenth-century antiquarian interest but also because these cartularies represented something more than administration of estates.³⁹

A cartulary is a “register, usually in volume form, of copies of charters, title deeds, grants or privileges and other documents of significance belonging to a person, family or institution.”⁴⁰ It is also a means to affirm the identity of the person, family, or institution, especially when the cartulary contains a chronicle, for instance, the late-twelfth-century cartulary of Ely. Cartularies served, in Robert Berkhofer’s words, different purposes at the same time: historical (recording deeds of the abbots), commemorative (about faithful donors), and preservative (copying charters) purposes.⁴¹

How a lay cartulary could confirm a family’s identity through a genealogical gaze is shown by the Pedwardine cartulary.⁴² In this late-fourteenth-century cartulary the transcriptions of charters (arranged in alphabetical order of places) are preceded by a genealogy of the Pedwardine family adorned with a series of carefully painted coats of arms, proof of the patrimonial consciousness of the family identity.⁴³

Jean-Philippe Genet treats other examples, including the Woodward cartulary from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, which starts with a family history, and the sixteenth-century Newton cartulary, containing deeds and genealogical trees.⁴⁴ Genet’s general conclusion is that the family’s records were organized into cartularies that could serve as a showcase of the family’s history.⁴⁵ The English gentry followed the example of the nobility. One of the central elements in the mentality of the nobility during the late Middle Ages and the early modern era was the importance of *memoria* and memorials connected to the family’s honor, for which there were many modalities and media: tombs, tablets and stained-glass windows in church, and pedigrees painted or sculpted and displayed in (or even outside) the stately home.⁴⁶ These social constructs and practices were “integral to the planning and the engineering of the nuclear family and the extended one.”⁴⁷ They emphasized the patrilineal descent but also served as signs of the continuity and solidarity of the lineage in the past, present, and future.⁴⁸ Mervyn

James used the label “lineage society” to characterize society in the Durham region between 1500 and 1640.⁴⁹ In the sixteenth century county visitations by the English kings of arms became increasingly important for delimiting nobility and gentry alike. In 1530 half a dozen families in the region submitted to the visiting herald evidence of their gentility. At the visitation of 1575, 56 families appeared; in 1615 their number had nearly doubled to 102. The “high priest of the cult” of genealogy was Durham’s sole surviving peer and leading lay magnate, John, the sixth Lord Lumley (1533–1609):

[The] gathering together of the family records was a principal preoccupation of his old age; and he set up in Chester-le-Street parish church a long line of mostly spurious funeral effigies, commemorating each generation of Lumleys from the founder the Saxon Liulph, to his own father, with a Latin genealogy composed by himself. He also made the hall of Lumley castle a family shrine, hung with fifteen specially painted portraits of ancestors, with “a pillar” of his pedigree in marble, and an equestrian statue of Liulph in full armour.⁵⁰

The Genealogical Imagination

The number of documents in English family archives supporting what Daniel Woolf aptly terms the “genealogical imagination” expanded from the seventeenth century onward.⁵¹ At the county visitations by the English kings of arms oral testimony was first considered sufficient evidence, but this changed as the seventeenth century wore on: “A defect in the keeping of records, or a failure to register a pedigree, was felt all the more strongly because personal memory and family ‘tradition’ were, like orally based ‘fame,’ rapidly losing pride of place to an emphasis on the written record.”⁵²

The document genre that first suggests itself as imbued with the genealogical imagination is the pedigree. One example out of many: the archives at Sherborne Castle contain the *Digbiorum*, the family pedigree drawn up for Sir Kenelm Digby in 1634. He was prompted by his wife’s sudden death the previous year to make this pedigree, and it soon became an important part of the family’s collections. It was as “big as the biggest Bible, bossed with silver,” as the seventeenth-century antiquary John Aubrey noted. Besides the family trees, it contains illustrations of family tombs and transcripts of the family archives as they then existed.⁵³

Family histories were important for transmitting values and family identity to descendants. John Smyth, steward of the Berkeleys (one of only a handful of noble families in England to have survived since the Middle Ages), wrote in 1626 the history of the family as an exemplar for his young lord, George, to enable him to learn from his ancestors' lives how best to manage his estates and household. As David Smith, the current Berkeley Castle archivist, wryly notes, there is no evidence that George profited from this.⁵⁴

Family Letters

Pedigrees and family histories serve and transmit the genealogical imagination and family values. But another document genre more clearly denotes a consciousness of a paradigm of *patrimoine*, provided, as Leniaud's model postulates, that that consciousness has been appropriated by the heirs to that patrimony. I am referring to letters, especially private letters in family archives. Only a few early modern collections have been preserved, among them the Paston letters.⁵⁵

Even the Buckingham family archives, "the largest and most comprehensive of any fifteenth and early sixteenth-century noble family," contain very little family correspondence.⁵⁶ The third duke, Edward Stafford (1477–1521), was an accurate record keeper, and Henry Stafford (1501–63) has been called "a Tudor nobleman as archivist." But their organization of the records was largely dictated by the exigencies of past or forthcoming litigation, Henry's primary concern being to recover as much of the third duke's confiscated property as possible.⁵⁷ The same goes for most of the other noble and gentry families: they kept their archives for purely practical reasons. In 1650–51 William Prynne (later to become keeper of the records in the Tower of London), while ordering the records of the Luttrell family at Dunster Castle, destroyed the early correspondence and other private papers.⁵⁸ He drew up instructions for George Luttrell, "touching your future writings and court rolls," that explain the arrangement of the records. One section consisted of the pedigree Prynne had made and several boxes with documents concerning the family "in point of antiquity, honor, jurisdiction, offices and the likes."⁵⁹

Edward, fourth Earl of Dorset (1590–1652), used to burn any papers that could be injurious to his friends or to himself; the fifth earl's interest in the records had to do with his efforts to repair the family's fortunes, which had dwindled because of his uncle's extravagance and

the troubles of the Civil War.⁶⁰ For other families, too, after the chaos of the Civil War period the construction of an ordered family memory bore an overarching significance.⁶¹ But letters with no bearing on the estate management generally were destroyed.

Letters received and sent in an official function have fared better than more private correspondence. Lord Spencer explained in 1953 how, when he went through the letters scattered all over Althorpe, the Spencers' ancestral home in Lincolnshire, he was delighted to find intact the correspondence of the second Earl Spencer (First Lord of the Admiralty and minister under Pitt), notwithstanding the legend that the second earl in his old age spent his time destroying all his correspondence. However, of his wife's letters there was no trace. Lady Lavinia "was a correspondent with many of the famous men of her day. After her death, her husband is known to have put all her correspondence unread in a clothes basket so that it should be consigned to the kitchen range."⁶²

Private letters were kept mostly outside the muniments room, where the charters, title deeds, and most of the manorial and estate management records were preserved. Sometimes family letters were preserved because they were monumentalized. Among the Montagu archives are nine volumes of letters, including the seventeenth-century correspondence between father and son. The first two volumes, however, contain letters that apparently were considered to be important autographs, often with portraits of the writers pasted in between the pages.⁶³ We encounter such appropriation of values elsewhere, too. At Arundel Castle, in the Duke of Norfolk's archives, is an early series of family correspondence of around 140 letters dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.⁶⁴ Clearly, at some point they must have been assigned a value and considered worthy of preservation, but by whom?

Private letters in English archives are not easy to find because, among other reasons, they are seldom identified in calendars and reports, having "only a very remote bearing on those historical, archaeological, or topographical questions with which the work of the Historical Manuscripts Commission is concerned," as was noted in 1902 in the calendar of the manuscripts at Kilkenny Castle.⁶⁵

Some families preserved caches of private papers. A famous cache was discovered in 1826 at Claydon House in Buckinghamshire, home of the Verneys. Sir Harry Verney (1801–94) found "a wainscoted gallery at the top of the house, forty feet long, full of boxes on tressels containing bundles of letters, acres of parchment"—the papers of fourteen generations between 1495 and 1810. The Verney archive contains probably the largest unbroken body of family letters from seventeenth- and

early-eighteenth-century England.⁶⁶ More than thirty thousand personal papers from 1643 to 1754 are available on microfilm; twelve thousand of them have been analyzed by Susan Whyman for her remarkable book *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys, 1660–1720*.

The discovery in 1826 was an accident, but not so the preservation of the archive: each generation taught the next to protect the papers that recorded their family history. Sir Ralph Verney (1613–96) had deep feelings about his family’s importance, and it was he who began saving every scrap of correspondence, including the 638 letters he wrote and the 1,194 he received. His son John’s (1640–1717) faith in his family’s importance led to an avid interest in his lineage. He compiled volumes of genealogical material, searching public records and documents from antiquaries and heralds and also his own family archives, spending “countless hours rereading letters and adding the titles, marriages, occupations, and social status of people who were mentioned in them.”⁶⁷ Whyman concludes:

Part of the strength of families like the Verneys lay in their silent, neatly beribboned stacks of documents placed in the quiet privacy of their muniments rooms. Letters, genealogies, deeds, and estate papers gave these families a history, permanence, and physical space. . . . It was no accident that the Verneys saved and organized their family history, piling up the largest collection of personal letters in England and perhaps Europe. . . . In our own day, the Verneys’ sense of self-importance may appear to be an obsession. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it helped to ensure their survival.⁶⁸

Using Archives

Leniaud’s model of the paradigm of *patrimoine* encompasses not only criteria for creation and preservation of monuments but also motivations and modalities for their (re)utilization. We must therefore search for cases where family archives were valued and effectively used not as “living records” in pursuance of legal obligations or in the transaction of business but as historical sources. The redoubtable Anne Clifford, Countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery (1590–1676), provides such a case.⁶⁹ Her life was dominated by litigation with her uncle and her mercenary husband, Richard Sackville, concerning her father’s estates, in which she successfully used archival evidence, later copied and expanded into the three-volume *Booke of the Recordes concerning the*

two noble families of the Cliffords. . . . She continued the archival work by inserting in them “her summary of the lives of her forebears and thereafter entered yearly a memorial of her life. Subsequently, she added to her collections two histories of her forebears compiled by the judge and antiquary Sir Matthew Hale, two copies of Earl George’s voyages, a book of heraldry, genealogies, and a volume of her mother’s letters, which, with the numerous legal documents, mark her as a family historian of special note.”⁷⁰ Anne’s genealogical gaze not only monumentalized the family archives but also pervaded her building and decorating passion. This is demonstrated, among many examples, by the Clifford triptych now in Abbot Hall in Kendal (Cumbria).⁷¹ The center panel of the triptych presents Anne’s father and mother and Anne’s two brothers and members of both their families, framed by two columns of coats of arms. The left-hand panel presents Anne at age fifteen. The right-hand panel shows her at about age fifty-six, standing in front of a well-filled bookcase and pointing to a book and a paper on the table that may represent her family archive.

Golden Age Regents in the Netherlands

Office Genealogies

According to Julia Adams, the city-state and patrimonial context of medieval Florence was in some respects comparable to early modern Amsterdam. In both cities (the former during the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Renaissance, the latter during the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Golden Age), she writes, “for a man or his family, the successfully achieved social fiction of an unbroken line of honorable, preferably patrilineal, descent was what counted in establishing enduring claims to politico-economic privilege.”⁷² However, Amsterdam regents became interested in patrilineal descent only with the aristocratization of the city patriciate in the seventeenth century.⁷³ In the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries kinship was more important as the basis for political and social status. There were strict rules to prevent a too-close kinship in bodies governing the city. The regents kept a careful genealogical record of their own families and collected pedigrees of other families with a view to lucrative marriage deals. The Backer family collected genealogies of 320 Amsterdam families; the Bicker archives contain lists of family members and the offices they held, stretching back to the 1400s and continuing to 1772.⁷⁴ Adams calls these records “office genealogies.” They resemble the Florentine *prioristi*.

Writing family chronicles and genealogies became popular among Dutch regents beginning in the first half of the seventeenth century. Some examples: the genealogical memoranda written by Pierre de Beaufort (1595–1611), a French merchant who immigrated to Zeeland, which were continued by his descendants until 1716. They have been preserved in the family archives, along with an office almanac for 1681 that his son Pieter used to note anniversaries and genealogical data on his ancestors.⁷⁵ Almanacs, like Bibles, were used to note down a family chronicle. Christoffel Doll used an almanac for the year 1623 to pen a chronicle “as a memorial for my children.”⁷⁶ Jan van der Merct began in 1579 a “Geboortenboeck van onse kinderen” (book of births of our children) with a reference to his father’s book, in which his birth date had been inscribed. In 1626, when Jan’s daughter Catharina married Daniel Hochepped, she took the book with her, and it was continued as a Hochepped family chronicle until 1708.⁷⁷ The *album amicorum* that Nicolaas Simonsz van Zwieten started in 1590 was used from 1621 to 1684 by his descendants to chronicle the family’s history.⁷⁸ The Stoop family at Dordrecht started a family chronicle in 1614 and continued it for almost a century.⁷⁹

Dutch regents also wrote patrician pedagogies for their descendants (not unlike the Florentine *ricordanze*) celebrating the lineage and transmitting cautionary moral tales underlining the fragility of the family line.⁸⁰ An example is the 150-page *Memorie* written by Paulus Teding van Berkhout (1609–72). For this regent the documents in the family archives not only were evidence of the administration of his estate but also served the aristocratic pretensions and the protection of the family’s honor. He was the first in his family to stipulate that the family archives and portraits should pass to the eldest son.⁸¹ In the seventeenth century it became customary to leave to the eldest son the family portraits, the family Bible, the pedigree, and the family chronicle.⁸²

In 1644 the antiquarian and genealogist Gerard Schaep cunningly managed to get hold of the Schaep family archives, which were in the hands of the eldest but Roman Catholic branch of the family. Schaep exhorted his descendants to preserve the family archives properly “in the service of our Race.”⁸³ Schaep’s genealogical passion and aristocratic ambitions were monumentalized in the family archives as well as in a gallery of family portraits, some of them fabricated.⁸⁴

The Amsterdam regent Joan Huydecoper (1595–1661) interspersed his account book with annotations about the history of his family and his city.⁸⁵ His son Joan (1625–1704) was more organized in his diary, which he started keeping when he was twenty-three and continued

until shortly before his death.⁸⁶ In this register he transcribed daily notes (including a record of having sex with his wife, with monthly and annual totals); he copied all outgoing letters and noted which gifts he received or presented, from whom and to whom. When Huydecoper had helped someone get a job, he marked this in his diary with a special sign, expecting a service in return. These registers were, so to speak, his ledger with a credit and debit side, not in financial but in social matters. Luuc Kooijmans concludes: “The daily registers and the copies of letters constituted the evidence for accounting to his descendants for his social administration, complementary to the financial administration. The daily registers also contained the elements for drawing up the moral balance sheet, weighing up virtues and sins.”⁸⁷

A Treasury of Monuments

Around 1800 souvenirs and memorials began to join the legal and administrative records in Dutch family archives, becoming monuments next to muniments: birthday poems, records of travels, private correspondence, etc. This reflected a change in values, appropriations, processes, and media apparent in society at large. The archive regained its position as a treasury not of monetary valuables but of historical monuments, valued by antiquarians, diplomatists, and historians. This occurred somewhat later in the Netherlands than in England, where the revaluation of archives as cultural and social assets was brought about a century earlier by men like Robert Bruce Cotton (1571–1631) and William Dugdale (1605–86).⁸⁸

Conclusion

As Leniaud recommended, we have thrown a net out into the waters of history to catch and recognize “fragments of a patrimony consciousness” in societies of the past: Renaissance Florence, early modern England, and the Netherlands during the Golden Age. We have seen how the genealogical gaze was expressed in *ricordanze*, pedigrees, cartularies, family letters, office genealogies, and other components of family archives. Descendants, by appropriating the object of that genealogical gaze, embraced the values and modalities of the paradigm of *patrimoine*. The boundaries between public and private memories and archives were permeable if not nonexistent. I suggest that we use our understanding of the past in discussing current and future concerns of the archival endeavor. In her recent book *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives*

and *Found Its History*, Jeannette Bastian has enriched archival discourse with the notion of a “community of records,” referring to a community both as a record-creating entity and as a memory frame that contextualizes the records it creates.⁸⁹ To what extent are records constructive in creating and maintaining memories, communities, and identities of individuals, families, corporate bodies, social groups, nations? These are political questions but also questions that determine the agenda for research in archivistics: historical, comparative, future-oriented research.

Notes

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1. M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 184.

2. Jean-Michel Leniaud, *Les archipels du passé: Le patrimoine et son histoire* (Paris: Fayard, 2002).

3. Eric Ketelaar, “Muniments and Monuments: The Dawn of Archives as Cultural Patrimony,” *Archival Science* 7, no. 4 (2007): 343–57.

4. Susan Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000), 28–29.

5. Vittore Branca, *Merchant Writers of the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1999), 111. The bracketed insertion is from Vittore Branca, *Mercanti scrittori: Ricordi nella Firenze tra Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Milan: Rusconi, 1986), 531.

6. “Dans lequel un particulier ou plusieurs individus d’une même famille ont inscrit des comptes personnels et des mentions, parfois fort diverses, se rapportant à leurs intérêts économiques ou à leur vie domestique” (*Elsevier’s Lexicon of Archive Terminology* [Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1964], no. 62).

7. Angelo Cicchetti and Raul Mordente, *I libri di famiglia in Italia* (Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura, 1985), 1:44–45.

8. *Ibid.*, 1:46. Peter Burke writes that Guicciardini’s “manuscript was bound up with his book of debtors and creditors,” which—while literally not wrong—does not do justice to the fact that Guicciardini destined one volume to contain both memoranda and debtors and creditors (*The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987], 119).

9. Cicchetti and Mordente, *I libri di famiglia in Italia*.

10. The painter Neri di Bicci noted in his *ricordanze* also “ogni chosa vendesi o chonperasi.” The manuscript once bore the title (given by an archivist) *Libro di richordi e debitori e creditor*. See Bruno Santi, ed., *Neri di Bicci: Le ricordanze (10 marzo 1453–24 aprile 1475)* (Pisa: Edizioni Marlin, 1976).

11. *Elsevier’s Lexicon of Archive Terminology*, no. 59. See Cicchetti and Mordente, *I libri di famiglia in Italia*, 1:118; Iris Origo, *The Merchant of Prato: Francesco di Marco*

Datini (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963), 115–16; Franz-Josef Arlinghaus, “Die Bedeutung des Mediums ‘Schrift’ für die unterschiedliche Entwicklung deutscher und italienischer Rechnungsbücher,” in *Vom Nutzen des Schreibens*, ed. Walter Pohl and Paul Herold (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002), 237–68; Franz-Josef Arlinghaus, “Account Books,” in *Transforming the Medieval World: Uses of Pragmatic Literacy in the Middle Ages*, ed. Franz-Josef Arlinghaus et al. (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 43–89; *Elsevier’s Lexicon of Archive Terminology*, nos. 56 and 59.

12. Nicolai Rubinstein, “Family, Memory, and History,” in *Art, Memory, and Family in Renaissance Florence*, ed. Giovanni Ciappelli and Patricia Lee Rubin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 39–47; Giovanni Ciappelli, *Una famiglia e le sue ricordanze: Castellani di Firenze nel tre-quattrocento* (Florence: Leo S. Okschki Editore, 1995), 198; Cicchetti and Mordente, *I libri di famiglia in Italia*, 1:109–11. Not all *ricordanze* are *libri di famiglia*, that is, transmitted to and continued by descendants. In Florence all *libri di famiglia* were started as *ricordanze* (Ciappelli, *Una famiglia e le sue ricordanze*, 191–92). Echoing Ciappelli’s system, Dale Kent writes, “Ricordi and cognate forms of the vast Florentine literature of private record—account books, prioriste, family genealogies and memoirs, chronicles, and literary compilations—shaded into one another” (“Michele del Giogante’s House of Memory,” in *Society and Individual in Renaissance Florence*, ed. William J. Connell [Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002], 112).

13. Gene Brucker, ed., *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence: The Diaries of Buonaccorso Pitti and Gregorio Dati*, trans. Julia Martines (New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 11.

14. Ciappelli, *Una famiglia e le sue ricordanze*, 196; Giovanni Ciappelli, “Family Memory: Functions, Evolution, Recurrences,” in Ciappelli and Rubin, *Art, Memory, and Family*, 29.

15. Ciappelli, “Family Memory,” 27.

16. R. Burr Litchfield, *Emergence of a Bureaucracy: The Florentine Patricians, 1530–1790* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), 17.

17. Francis William Kent, *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence: The Family Life of the Capponi, Ginori, and Rucellai* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977), 276.

18. Ciappelli, *Una famiglia e le sue ricordanze*, 190; Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 122.

19. Cicchetti and Mordente, *I libri di famiglia in Italia*, 1:116.

20. David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles: Une étude du catasto Florentin de 1427* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1978), 68–69. This work is available in English in an abridged edition: *Tuscans and Their Families: A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985).

21. Thomas Kuehn, “Inheritance and Identity in Early Renaissance Florence: The Estate of Paliano di Falco,” in *Society and Individual in Renaissance Florence*, ed. William J. Connell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 139.

22. Cicchetti and Mordente, *I libri di famiglia in Italia*, 1:108.

23. Dora Thornton, *The Scholar in His Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1997), 4.

24. According to Leon Battista Alberti in his early-fifteenth-century *Della famiglia*, quoted by Alan Stewart, "The Early Modern Closet Discovered," *Representations* 50 (1995): 78; Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Western Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 34–35. Women, of course, had an important role in transferring family memories and identities, too. They used other media, not *ricordanze* but letters, account books (for administering minors' estates), storytelling, commemorative masses, and so on. See Sharon T. Strocchia, "Remembering the Family: Women, Kin and Commemorative Masses in Renaissance Florence," *Renaissance Quarterly* 42 (1989): 635–54; Ciappelli, "Family Memory," 34. Ciappelli advocates for more research about the distinctive role women played in the transmission of family memory.

25. Cicchetti and Mordente, *I libri di famiglia in Italia*, 1:109.

26. Kent, *Household and Lineage*, 278.

27. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, 10.

28. Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles*, 536.

29. Peter Burke mentions memoranda of the kind of the Florentine *ricordanze* in Venice, Genoa, Bologna, and Milan in his *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 118.

30. Ciappelli, *Una famiglia e le sue ricordanze*, 191; Cicchetti and Mordente, *I libri di famiglia in Italia*, 115–18.

31. James S. Grubb, "Memory and Identity: Why Venetians Didn't Keep *Ricordanze*," *Renaissance Studies* 8 (1994): 375–87.

32. Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography*, 5.

33. Nicolai Rubinstein, "The 'Storie Fiorentine' and the 'Memorie di Famiglia' by Francesco Guicciardini," *Rinascimento* 4, no. 2 (1953): 171–225.

34. *Ibid.*, 220.

35. Poovey, *A History*, 37.

36. G. R. C. Davies, *Medieval Cartularies of Great Britain: A Short Catalogue* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1958), nos. 1203–4; Dorothy Willis, ed., *The Estate Book of Henry de Bray of Harleston, Co. Northants (c. 1289–1340)* (London: Camden Society, 1916).

37. Françoise Zonabend, *The Enduring Memory: Time and History in a French Village* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 142.

38. Jean-Philippe Genet, "Cartulaires anglais du moyen âge," in *Les cartulaires: Actes de la Table ronde organisée par l'École nationale des chartes* (Paris: École nationale des chartes, 1993), 343–59.

39. Ketelaar, "Muniments and Monuments," 345–51.

40. Peter Walne, ed., *Dictionary of Archival Terminology: English and French, with Equivalents in Dutch, German, Italian, Russian, and Spanish*, 2nd rev. ed. (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1988), no. 62.

41. Robert F. Berkhofer, *Day of Reckoning: Power and Accountability in Medieval France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 36; Georges Declercq, "Originals and Cartularies: The Organization of Archival Memory (Ninth–Eleventh Centuries)," in *Charters and the Use of the Written Word in Medieval Society*, ed. Karl Heidecker (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), 147–70.

42. Davies, *Medieval Cartularies*, no. 1305.

43. Jean-Philippe Genet, "Cartulaires, régistres et histoire," in *Le métier*

d'historien au moyen âge: Études sur l'historiographie médiévale, ed. Bernard Guenée (Paris: Sorbonne, 1977), 102–3.

44. Davies, *Medieval Cartularies*, nos. 1344, 1301.

45. Genet, “Cartulaires, régistres et histoire,” 127.

46. O. G. Oexle, “Aspekte der Geschichte des Adels im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit,” in *Europäischer Adel 1750–1950*, ed. Hans Ulrich Wehler (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1990), 21–35; Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

47. Joel T. Rosenthal, *Patriarchy and Families of Privilege in Fifteenth-Century England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 57.

48. Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles*, 536; Rosenthal, *Patriarchy and Families of Privilege*, 90.

49. Mervyn James, *Family, Lineage, and Civil Society: A Study of Society, Politics, and Mentality in the Durham Region, 1500–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

50. *Ibid.*, 109–10.

51. Daniel Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500–1730* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 99–137; Ketelaar, “Muniments and Monuments,” 248.

52. Woolf, *The Social Circulation*, 108.

53. Information graciously provided to the author (through Christopher Kitching, former secretary of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts) by Ann Smith, curator and archivist at Sherborne Castle, March 21, 2007.

54. Information graciously provided to the author by David Smith, archivist at Berkeley Castle, March 20, 2007.

55. Norman Davis, ed., *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). There are some collections of early modern business letters, for example, the Cely letters (commercial correspondence of fifteenth-century wool merchants) (A. Hanham, ed., *The Cely Letters, 1472–1488* [London: Oxford University Press, 1975]) and the Cranfield papers (sixteenth- to early-seventeenth-century cloth merchants) (A. P. Newton, ed., *Calendar of the Manuscripts of Major-General Lord Sackville, Preserved at Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent*, vol. 2, Cranfield Papers, 1534–1612, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Octavo Series 80 [London: HMSO, 1940]).

56. Carole Rawcliffe, “A Tudor Nobleman as Archivist: The Papers of Edward, Third Duke of Buckingham,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 5, no. 5 (1976): 294–300.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Manuscripts and Men: An Exhibition . . . to Mark the Centenary of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, 1869–1969* (London: HMSO, 1969), 45–46. The destruction of records as a component of the paradigm of patrimony deserves further research.

59. Information graciously provided to the author by Esther Ormerod, Somerset Archive & Record Service, 8 January 2007.

60. Newton, *Calendar*, xiv–xv.

61. Susan E. Whyman, *Sociability and Power in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural Worlds of the Verneys, 1660–1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 179.

62. Charles Leconfield, Albert Spencer, and I. Collins, “The Care of Records by the Private Owners,” *Archives* 2, no. 10 (1953): 74–85.

63. *Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, K.G., K.T., Preserved at Montagu House, Whitehall*, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Octavo Series 45, vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1899) and vol. 2 (London: HMSO, 1903), vi.

64. Information graciously provided to the author (through Christopher Kitching, former secretary of the Royal Commission of Historical Manuscripts) by Heather Warne, archivist at Arundel Castle, 27 March 2007.

65. J. T. Gilbert, ed., *The Manuscripts of the Marquis of Ormonde, K.P., Preserved at the Castle, Kilkenny*, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Octavo Series 36, n.s. vol. 1 (London: HMSO, 1902), v.

66. Whyman, *Sociability and Power*, 5.

67. *Ibid.*, 14, 40.

68. *Ibid.*, 179–80.

69. Vita Sackville-West, ed., *The Diary of the Lady Anne Clifford, 1616–1619* (London: William Heinemann, 1923), lxxv, 55, 56, 84, 91, 92, 106, 109, 110, 112; Elisabeth Bourcier, *Les journaux privés en Angleterre de 1600 à 1660* (Lille: Université de Lille III, 1977), 397–411; Richard T. Spence, “Clifford, Anne, Countess of Pembroke, Dorset, and Montgomery (1590–1676),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5641>, accessed May 4, 2007.

70. Spence, “Clifford, Anne.”

71. See http://www2.wwnorton.com/college/english/nael/17century/topic_1/knole.htm#picture, accessed June 28, 2008; Martin Holmes, *Proud Northern Lady: Lady Anne Clifford, 1590–1676* (London: Phillimore, 1975), 133–41.

72. Julia Adams, *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 84.

73. S. A. C. Dudok van Heel, “Op zoek naar Romulus & Remus: Zevetiende-eeuws onderzoek naar de oudste magistraten van Amsterdam,” *Jaarboek Amstelodamum* 87 (1995): 43–70.

74. Stadsarchief (City Archives) Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Backer, inventory nos. 36–45; Bicker, inventory no. 36.

75. Het Utrechts Archief, Utrecht, the Netherlands, De Beaufort, inventory no. 47, 100. The Des Tombe archives contain several family chronicles kept by heads of families related to Des Tombe: inventory no. 689 (Arnoud van Citters [1561–1634], kept from about 1589 to 1633); inventory nos. 1069–1070 (Johan van der Stringe [1577–1630], a commonplace book, including a “Memorie voor myne kinderen naer myn doot” [Memorandum for my children after my death] kept from 1614); and inventory no. 1080 (“Familjie boeckje” by Pieter Boudaen Courten [1594–1668]). The Courten chronicle has been published by Gerdien Wuestman, “Het familjie boeckje van Pieter Boudaen Courten (1594–1668): Memoires van een geportretteerde,” *Bulletin Rijksmuseum* 53, no. 1 (2005): 43–61.

76. Jeroen L. Salman, *Populair drukwerk in de Gouden Eeuw: De almanak als handelswaar en lectuur* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1999), 170–71. On the use of almanacs as personal and family diaries see Bourcier, *Les journaux privés*, 25–29; and Salman, *Populair drukwerk*, 167–70.

77. Het Utrechts Archief, Huydecoper, inventory no. 17 (no. 16 is a later partial copy). The two families were related in different generations: the son of

Daniel Hochepped, Jean Baptista (1634–68), married in 1666 Constantia Boudaen Courten, widow of Joan van der Merct (*Nederland's Adelsboek* 85 [1995]: 177).

78. Het Utrechts Archief, Huis Zuilen, inventory no. 1708.

79. Stadsarchief Dordrecht, the Netherlands, Repelaer, inventory nos. 2, 204.

80. Adams, *The Familial State*, 96.

81. C. Schmidt, *Om de eer van de familie: Het geslacht Teding van Berkhout 1500–1950, een sociologische benadering* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1986), 19; C. Schmidt, “Een lengteprofiel van het Hollandse patriciaat: Het geslacht Teding van Berkhout 1500–1950,” in *De bloem der natie: Adel en patriciaat in de Noordelijke Nederlanden*, ed. J. Aalbers and M. R. Prak (Meppel: Boom, 1987), 133.

82. Luuc Kooijmans, *Vriendschap en de kunst van het overleven in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 1997), 56.

83. Isabella H. Van Eeghen, “Het geloof en het archief van de Amsterdamse familie Schaep,” *De nederlandse Leeuw* 71 (1954): 217–23.

84. Through the 1681 marriage of Gerard Schaep's daughter Maria with Henrick Bicker her father's and grandfather's archives came to the Bicker family. When Margaretha Bicker married Cornelis Backer in 1720 a part of the Schaep archives were transferred to the Backer family archives. Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Backer, inventory no. 482; Bicker, inventory no. 719. For a discussion of the portraits see Dudok van Heel, “Op zoek naar Romulus & Remus.”

85. Het Utrechts Archief, Huydecoper, inventory no. 30.

86. Het Utrechts Archief, Huydecoper, inventory nos. 53–65. There are no diaries left for 1650–57, 1661–71, and 1688–93.

87. Kooijmans, *Vriendschap*, 147.

88. Graham Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquaries of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

89. Jeannette A. Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost Its Archives and Found Its History* (Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2003).