

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FAMILIES AND REAL ESTATE, ROME 1450 - 1480

BY

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE

DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

CALGARY, ALBERTA

OCTOBER, 1987

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ISBN 0-315-42505-9

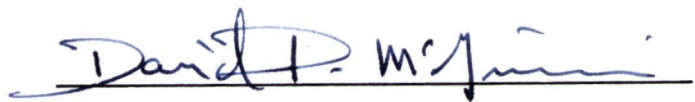
THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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ABSTRACT

This study endeavors to ascertain the degree to which people in fifteenth century Rome functioned as members of a cohesive family unit, or as individuals beyond the ties of kin relationship, particularly with respect to involvement in transactions concerning real estate. The method employed is an examination of notarial documents dealing with the buying, selling and rental of real property.

The discussion is introduced by a chapter on the background to the family in history, with emphasis on fifteenth century Italy, and one on the physical setting of the city of Rome. The third chapter describes rental agreements and the fourth, purchases and sales of property. The final chapter discusses the real estate transactions of individuals and family members within the context of family relationships evident in these transactions.

The people of Quattrocento Rome, regardless of family relationships, very often acted as individuals alone in dealing with real estate. Men and women interacted, not only with family members, but with neighbours, business associates, and others that circumstances led them into contact with. While contemporary writings indicate the desire for family stability and solidarity, the documentary evidence indicates that in reality Renaissance men and women found it necessary to establish ties and relationships with many outside of kin networks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During the preparation of this thesis I have become indebted to many. Above all, to Dr. Egmont Lee, not only for wise council and instructive criticism, but also for the inspiration to do it in the first place, and to keep on going when I was tempted to quit. Acknowledgement is also in order to the University of Calgary Endowment Fund for allowing me the opportunity to gain first hand experience in archival research, and to the archivists and their staffs at the Archivio Capitolino and the Archivio di Stato in Rome. Also, a special thank you to Antonella at the Canadian Academic Center in Italy. I wish to express my personal thanks to Liz, Olga, Marjory, Jodi and Joyce, for getting me registered, keeping my computer account active, and many favours and kindnesses that have made life more bearable. I wish also to thank the members of my family who have been so supportive and patient throughout my studies. Finally I wish to thank my colleagues who have born my complaints and my eccentricities, and still shared their knowledge, inspiration and humour.

for Ruby and Sigvald

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PREFACE

It is sometimes difficult to pin down the progression through which one comes to ask questions about certain institutions in the world around us. In this case, my first interest lay in the Italian Renaissance. But probably even before I began to study this period of history, there were questions in my mind - if perhaps not yet fully formulated - about what role the family has played in history. Or perhaps, like many people today, I was aware of current perceptions about the changing role of the family in our own society, and therefore became desirous of knowing more about its role in past times. In any case gradually over the past few years, these interests have congealed into a common one, so that the family in the Italian Renaissance has become a major interest.

One doesn't need to look very far to find justification for further research into the history of the Italian Renaissance family, especially in the Roman setting. In spite of the attention Renaissance Rome has continued to generate since the Quattrocento, we know remarkably little about the social setting in which ordinary Romans of that time functioned. That is beginning to change.

Aside from trying to understand more about Rome socially, we can also do with a greater understanding of what social role the family played there, to help fill in a picture of the family in Renaissance Italy which has recently been flushed out somewhat by studies which examine the family in other cities.¹

Before launching more directly into discussions of Roman families in the Renaissance, a few words are in order about sources used in this study. One of the reasons we know relatively little about the social milieu in which Romans of the Quattrocento functioned is the way in which the history of Rome has been approached. In Rome, as has often been the case, historians have tackled the most readily available and most obvious subjects first; the records of the great and the famous. Particularly in Rome, the records of the Papacy and its court, and of those families, wealthy and powerful enough

¹ If we are to achieve a greater understanding of the family historically in a broad human context, we must first understand it on a more localized scale. Robert Wheaton, in "Family and Kinship in Western Europe: The Problem of the Joint Family Household," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, V, 4, 1975, p. 627, raises questions about family structures which appear in Southern Europe during the Renaissance, but not in the north at the same time. Also, Michael Mitterauer and Reinhard Sieder, in *The European Family*, trans., K. Oosterveen and M. Hörzinger, (Chicago, 1982), point out that it was not until the eighteenth century that the German language adopted a word of Latin origin to describe what we now call the nuclear family, while the Italian equivalent *famiglia*, incorporated the concept much earlier. See also, Chapter 1, note 2.

to have made a lasting impression on the city and on the times in which they lived.

But these were not the majority of Romans, the story of whom only recently has begun to be told. Records of the lives and activities of these more humble Romans do exist, in specialized form, but in very large quantity. Notarial documents survive from the early fourteenth century. They are limited in quantity for those years, but by the middle of the fifteenth century they are numerous indeed.²

These documents present their special kinds of difficulties to the researcher. They contain, first of all, a special type of information, the record of transactions and events that individuals felt were important enough to be recorded legally. There are many daily activities which obviously would be passed over in such records. Nonetheless, they do record a considerable detail of what individual Romans did in their business and personal lives, and more important here, whom they did it with.

As a source, these documents also present difficulties in their physical nature. For the most part, a notary's short hand notes, they were written up at the scene where the

² Unfortunately, it was only in 1625 that Urban VIII saw to the systematic collection of notarial documents in establishing the *Archivio di Stato*. But earlier, notaries kept remarkably good files of their activities. Anna Maria Corbo, "Relazione descrittiva degli archivi notarili Romani dei secoli XIV - XV nell'Archivio di Stato e nell'Archivio Capitolino," in *Private Acts of the Late Middle Ages*, eds. Paolo Brezzi and Egmont Lee, (Toronto, 1984), afterwards, "Relazione," p. 49.

agreement, compromise, sale, or testament was concluded, and from which a good copy was made for the client. This original remained in the notary's office, preserved in case of future litigation. And so, many of them survived while the clients' copies, along with many of the names they recorded, have long since disappeared. They are also difficult of access, because of the sheer numbers of documents, and the uncertainty about what each contains. In 1866, Achille Francois compiled a list of notaries active in Rome, and the years in which they were active, and the volumes in which documents from their shops can be found.³ Some volumes also contain an index of names, but these are incomplete.

It would also be appropriate here to make a short note on currency. In Quattrocento Rome, as in other pre-modern settings, currencies did not conform to strict standards. Thus caution is necessary when comparing monetary values of items, including real estate. The most commonly used currency in Rome, and that which appears most often in the

³ Donato Tamble, *Vademecum delle ricerche nell'Archivio di Stato in Roma*, (Rome, 1984), p. 16. Anna Maria Corbo has recently compiled a similar modern listing, "Relazione," pp. 63 - 67.

notarial documents examined here, is the Roman Florin.⁴ Consequently, all monetary values, in so far as is possible, have been expressed in that currency. When values have been expressed in other denominations in the sources, an approximate conversion, to the nearest florin, has been made. The value as provided by the source is also given, enclosed in brackets.⁵ Values which appear in the text in florins only, are, either given that way in the sources, or are averaged values, which it would be pointless to try and express in other denominations.

At times, the sources provide the value of the currency in question. For example, ducats are often specified as being at the rate of 72 *bolognini*, or 75 *bolognini*. Occasionally, the denomination is given as ducats only, in which case it is assumed they are at the rate of 75 *bolognini*, which is the more common of the two. Also, less common are ducats (or florins) *de camera de auro in auri*. The rate of these gold coins could fluctuate, but again for

⁴ The approximate relationship of denominations is as follows:

12 <i>denari</i>	= 1 <i>soldo</i>
16 <i>denari</i>	= 1 <i>bolognino</i>
20 <i>soldi</i>	= 1 <i>lira</i>
47 <i>soldi</i>	= 1 Roman florin (<i>urbe currentes</i>)
72 <i>bolognini</i>	= 1 cameral florin
75 <i>bolognini</i>	= 1 papal florin (gold cameral ducat)

⁵ For example, if the source gave a value at 20 *ducatos papales ad rationem lxxv bolonorum*, it would appear in this text as, 43 florins (20 papal ducats at 75 bol.) For conversion factors, I have used 2.0426 for cameral florins at 72 bol., and 2.1277 for papal florins at 75 bol., calculated according to the denomination equivalents in note 2.

our purposes it suffices to assume a rate of 75 *bolognini*. Finally, after about 1470, there appeared *Carleni*, at the rate of ten to the papal florin. These I have encountered on only one occasion.

CHAPTER 1 Family: an Historical Perspective

Lionardo: What do you consider the family?
Giannozzo: It is the children, the wife, and the
 others in the household; relatives and
 servants.
 Alberti, "I Libri Della Famiglia."

While this was one definition of family provided by a Quattrocento writer, it was not the only one possible. Alberti also used the Italian word *famiglia* to describe those who shared the same surname.¹ Discussions of family often include both these concepts of domestic units and blood relatives, or household and lineage.² It has been pointed out, nonetheless, that studies perhaps too readily focus on household, rather than on functional kinship relations,

¹ The text quoted reads;

Lionardo: Che chiamate voi famiglia?

Giannozzo: E' figliuoli, la moglie, e gli altri domestici, famigli, servi. L. B. Alberti, "I Libri Della Famiglia," in *Opere Volgari*, ed. Cecil Grayson, I, (Bari, 1960), pp. 11, 186.

² The latter terminology is that used, for example, by Francis William Kent, in *Household and Lineage in Renaissance Florence*, (Princeton, N.J., 1977), hereafter cited as *Household*, p. 5.

mainly because there is more available data for the former.³ In the present study, we are especially concerned with kinship relations, relationships between family members, including both senses of the word, as those relationships come into play in the holding, the acquisition and disposal of real property. Particularly, we wish to examine what those relationships reveal about the extent to which family members act in concert as an extended family unit, and to what extent they act as individuals, or as nuclear families.⁴

Modern views of the role played by the family in the social relations of the fifteenth century have covered a wide spectrum. On the one hand it has been suggested that the Renaissance family served as a buffer between the individual and society.⁵ The other extreme has also been put forth,

³ T. Hareven, "Modernization and Family History: Perspectives on Social Change," in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, II, 1, 1976, hereafter cited as "Modernization," p. 195. Also on the problems of defining what is meant by household, see Wheaton, pp., 601, 604.

⁴ A concise definition of these terms is that provided by Betty Yorburg, in "The Nuclear and the Extended Family: An Area of Conceptual Confusion," *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, VI, 1, 1975, p. 6. Yorburg provides four categories, extended, modified extended, modified nuclear, and nuclear, in which the two middle ones are simply transitional phases between the extremes. The definitions of the latter will suffice for our purposes. The extended family includes "complete economic interdependence of kin networks," supported by a network of social interdependence. The nuclear family involves complete economic self-sufficiency, and the absence of any significant social interdependence in the kin network, p. 6.

⁵ Lauro Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists 1390 - 1460*, (Princeton, 1963), p. 50.

that the nuclear family, as we understand it in modern perceptions, had made its appearance in the Renaissance and left the individual "exposed and isolated."⁶ More to the point for our discussion, and even more recently, one historian has stated that the average Roman lived in a multi-generational extended family.⁷

There may be many ways to test the validity of such views, but a particularly appropriate one seems to be through an examination of the extent to which family members worked together in attempting to assemble stable patrimonies.⁸ As a setting for such a test, Rome in the late fifteenth century seems equally well suited. At that time, Rome had only recently known her lowest population since antiquity. Since the return from Avignon, the Papacy was attempting to re-establish itself there. Rome was experiencing a period of growth, in economics, and in population, including a large amount of immigration. This setting included elements of

⁶ Richard Goldthwaite, *Private Wealth in Renaissance Florence: A Study of Four Families*, (Princeton, N.J., 1969), hereafter cited as *Private Wealth*, pp. 261, 263, subscribes to a thesis of progressive individualization in some ways similar to that proposed by Marc Bloch, note 13 below.

⁷ Robert Brentano, "Violence, Disorder, And Order in Thirteenth Century Rome," in *Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities 1200 - 1500*, ed. L. Martines, (Berkeley, 1972), p. 313, does acknowledge, however, the frequency with which the family members owned property, removed from family centers, in other parts of the city and in the suburbs. On this, we shall see more later.

⁸ It is an alternative, for example, to looking at households as family units. See Hareven, note 3 above, and note 21 below.

instability not present in cities more economically and politically established at the time, such as Florence, where a number of other studies of the family in Renaissance Italy have been set.

* * *

In the nineteenth century, students of history began to speculate on how the family had developed in historic time and before. One approach, in some ways exceptional, was that of Fredrick Engels.⁹ Engels' theories were based on studies of the Iroquois and Seneca nations of the north east United States, and additional information from contemporary scholars working in various Pacific islands. He hypothesized that the modern family, based on monogamous marriage, was a phenomenon of civilization, one which took on greater economic importance with the appearance of private property, the growth of capitalism and wealth. In the distant past, according to Engels, when all property was communal, so was marriage, and

⁹ Engels drew heavily upon the work of the American anthropologist, Lewis Henry Morgan, *Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery, Through Barbarism to Civilization*, originally published in London by MacMillan and Co., 1877. Engels enthusiastically described his interest in Morgan's work in his introduction to his own book, for it seemed that Morgan had rediscovered "the materialistic concept of history." See Fredrick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, p. 71. Of course Morgan and Engels were not alone as nineteenth century commentators on the family, for a brief note on others, see Laslett and Wall, *Household and Family in Past Times*, (Cambridge, 1972), p. 4.

since every member of the communal family inherited whatever simple elements of property existed, no one was particularly concerned to know which child was specifically the result of their own procreation - all were part of the same family. This changed as man evolved through a series of family types, and concurrently through successive levels and stages of human society.¹⁰ It is in its materialist view of family development that Engels' work remains of some significance today. A derivative issue, the division of labour, remains important in anthropologists' discussions of family development.¹¹

What was common to other nineteenth century schemes was the basic concept of evolutionary stages of family development, following Herbert Spencer's application of the general

¹⁰ The four family types, consanguine, punaluan, pairing, monogamous, were provided by Morgan. The levels of development were, Savagery, and Barbarism, each containing a lower, middle, and upper stage, and finally, Civilization. Engels, pp. 87 - 92, on the stages of human development, and pp. 102 - 125, on the family types.

¹¹ Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Family," in *Man, Culture, and Society*, ed. Harry Shapiro, (New York, 1956), pp. 274, 276, notes the importance of the division of labour in allowing an adult to provide adequately for his or her own needs in tribal societies, yet he suggests that rather than contributing to monogamous marriage, it is a device to re-inforce the need for such marriage. Yorborg, p. 9, points out that in hunting and gathering societies, division of labour tends to be along sexual lines, while in agricultural societies with the rise in the importance of property - productive land - economic interdependence within family structures becomes more important.

theory of evolution to human society.¹² Such a view of an evolution of family types was also applied to family development in historic time. This involved a shrinking process from the great extended patriarchal families of the ancient world - exemplified for Christian Europeans by Old Testament accounts - towards the modern family, broken down to the nucleus of parents and children. Writing between the two world wars, Marc Bloch suggested that such a contraction of family size could be observed beginning in the thirteenth century.¹³ In another study that has generated great interest, this one coming in the 1960's, Philippe Aries has also traced a progressive transition from larger more integrated family units in medieval times to a gradually increasing concern with the conjugal family circle, and a more inward looking preoccupation, in more modern times. Aries' thesis centers around children, and a growing awareness of children

¹² Stuart Queen, and Robert Habenstein, *The Family In Various Cultures*, (Philadelphia, 1974), p. 3. Mitterauer and Sieder, pp. 24, 25, trace the notion of the shrinking family to Frederic Le Play and the stem family concept, a three generational cohabitation family, once thought to have been the standard prior to the industrial revolution.

¹³ Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society*, trans. L. Manyon, (Chicago, 1967), pp. 139 - 142, described a theory of progressive individualization which accompanied the decline of feudalism.

as special family members, a trend which he saw beginning in the late Renaissance.¹⁴

From the turn of the century until quite recent times, there seems to have been a dearth of investigation into the history of the family.¹⁵ By mid-century, sociologists and anthropologists had begun to rethink family development on the basis of studies done on many pre-industrial societies still existing in the modern world. In the mid-1950's anthropologists would argue that, the evolutionary models which equated all family types and customs differing from our own with earlier stages of family development, had been obsolete since the discovery that monogamous marriage family types existed among societies at the simplest cultural levels.¹⁶ Nonetheless, for a long time, the notion has

¹⁴ Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, trans. Robert Baldick, (New York, 1962). While Aries' work is very important, there are some flaws. The specific families he examines are restricted in class origins to nobility and wealthy bourgeoisie. Also, it strikes me that his interpretations from art and literature, especially the former, are too narrow. For example, the appearance of family portraiture, and an increase in the portrayal of children in painting generally, can be seen as manifestations of the widening scope of artistic subject matter which occurred from the early fifteenth century onwards.

¹⁵ Peter Laslett, Laslett and Wall, pp. 1, 2, notes some reasons why this may be so, problems of sources and terminology, and the perception that such studies fall somewhere between disciplines. Wheaton, p. 601, however, comments on the renewed interest in recent decades.

¹⁶ Levi-Strauss, pp. 261, 262.

persisted that as societies have become more industrialized, extended families have been replaced by smaller units.¹⁷

As more studies in family history have appeared since the 1960's the concept of progressive development of the family has received numerous challenges. The idea that in older and simpler times families incorporated all living progeny of their oldest members, where a typical scene might include aged grandparents, the sons of these with their wives and children, and perhaps even among the latter, some who had married and begun to raise their own children, presents problems. It would seem fairly obvious that, even without the intervention of death, a household of this sort would face practical limitations on its continued growth. Restricted living space, limits of productive support, and the maintenance of a unified political structure would all act to confine it. It has been well argued that in pre-industrial societies the norm of family growth was limited extension followed by fragmentation, rather than

¹⁷ The attraction of urban job markets has been suggested as a contributing factor. To what degree this might have been so, was affected by the distribution of economic opportunities in a given society, availability of contiguous housing for related nuclear families, as well as class origins and persistence of traditional values in specific families. Yorborg, p. 10.

continuous growth in unity.¹⁸ Even the notion of a direct relationship between increasing industrialization and urbanization, and a progressive trend in family development has been questioned in the face of growing evidence of fluctuations in family types in response to a variety of variables.¹⁹

Modern studies of families in Italy in earlier times have also called into question the widespread existence of large extended families living and working together, whether in the fifteenth century or earlier. An examination of records of land holdings in medieval Italy reveals that prolonged joint patrimonies were relatively rare prior to the eleventh century. During the eighth to tenth centuries, there had been a strong tendency for brothers to divide their patrimony. Joint patrimonies existed in the eleventh century about three times as often as in the eighth. This suggests that the development of strong family solidarity was a late medieval occurrence. Other indicators of this were moves towards consolidation of families, in property holdings and

¹⁸ Although Jack Goody, "The Evolution of the Family," in Laslett and Wall, pp. 103 - 124, relates his conclusions to medieval Europe, they are based on African agrarian societies. While this leap across continents may lead one to question the conclusiveness of his argument, the key point is that the traditional view of the developmental structure of land based societies has been opened to question.

¹⁹ Hareven, "Modernization" p. 194, and Kent, *Household*, pp. 21 - 24. Mitterauer and Sieder, p. 27, point out that statistics do not support a parallel between industrialization and declining family size.

in political and social conduct, in the growth of tower societies and of the *consorterie* holding property and doing business jointly. Thus it seems that families, at least in that Italian setting, were acting more as an extended unit in the eleventh century, and more as nuclear units in the eighth. It has been suggested that the economic and political instability of the later period may have been a major contributor in such a phenomenon.²⁰ In any case, there is some indication here of the potential diversity in family structural tendencies.

A study of the business relationships of the members of four prominent Quattrocento Florentine families reveals a tendency for the economic interests of these families to separate about every other generation. For example, Jacopo di Piero Guicciardini began a silk business with his father and was joined in the venture by two brothers. However, when the sons of the younger men came of age, the company was dissolved and restructured, rather than continuing to grow outwards.²¹

²⁰ D. Herlihy, "Family Solidarity in Medieval Italian History," in *Explorations in Economic History*, VII, 1969, pp. 175 - 177.

²¹ Richard Goldthwaite, *Private Wealth*, pp. 140 - 153. He also finds a new trend towards "nuclearization" in which he sees "individual efforts" replacing those of the family as the "dynamic" of business, pp. 253 - 258. That such a practice is either new or general has been disputed, in particular by Kent, *Household*.

This tendency to work together as a family for only as long as it remained practical to do so, then to divide the assets and start again with a "new" family unit as the core of a business also seems to be demonstrated by other families. Such transitional features are also revealed in housing arrangements. For example, Giovanni Paolo Rucellai spent part of his youth in a nuclear family headed by a widow, the years 1427 to 1442 in a fraternal family; 1446 found him the head of his own nuclear family, which by 1453 had become a generationally extended family and retained this character until 1481. The picture which seems to appear is one of families in specific phases of transition, rather than a general state of progressive change. That is, extended and nuclear families do not represent different levels of development in a particular society, but rather different stages of development in specific families.²²

In Genoa, somewhat earlier, distinctions have been drawn in family relationships, along the lines of social class.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 21, 22, 24, 39. Peter Laslett has also focused on households in his study of social structures in pre-industrial England. He contends that family structures in past times reveal a diversity of types, including independent nuclear families, in *The World We Have Lost: England Before The Industrial Age*, (New York, 1984), pp. 282, 283. Similarly, Hareven, in her 1974 article "The Family as Process: The Historical Study of the Family Cycle," in *Journal of Social History*, VII, 7, 1974, pp. 322, 323, called for a new approach to the study of family history, through an examination of individual families over time, rather at specific points in time. It should also be noted that she is again critical of the tendency to confuse families and households.

Among the aristocracy there, particularly in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, fluctuations in family relationships seem to have been very exceptional. Several of the wealthy families maintained very strong ties of patrimony as well as business relationships and marriage agreements.²³ Artisans, on the other hand, lacked very strong or well developed family ties, even in the earlier centuries. In addition to their poorly developed kinship ties, artisans also seemed to suffer from a greater degree of family discontinuity through early death of fathers, a fact which probably related to the economic need to wait until an older age before marrying.²⁴

Returning to look at families in Tuscany, examination of the records of the Florentine *Catasto* for 1427 provides some interesting statistics about household shape and size. Surprising, if we are looking for extended families, is the fact that eighty-five percent of the households included in this tax survey had only a single line of descent. However, seventy-three percent did include more than one generation.²⁵

²³ Diane Owen Hughes, "Urban Growth and Family Structure in Medieval Genoa," *Past and Present*, 66, 1975, p. 26. Most of her information comes from the earlier time period but she says the trends noted then seemed to continue in later centuries.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, for example, Hughes says that the majority of people, both men and women, of the artisan class, did not marry while their father remained alive, pp. 21 - 26. This problem reappears in later discussions.

²⁵ David Herlihy, "Mapping Households in Medieval Italy," *The Catholic Historical Review*, LVIII, 1972, hereafter cited as "Mapping Households," pp. 9, 10.

In some ways, the evidence shows a situation that is very common sense. For example, as the head of the household aged, the size of the household contracted collaterally, that is, siblings of the same generation disappeared, while, as a new generation was added, the household expanded longitudinally. However, the household only expanded until its head reached the age of 47 years, with 5.2 mouths at that point, and then began to decrease. However, such a decrease was not evident in country households.²⁶

A study of a small group of individual families also showed that half of the households among these families were nuclear in structure. Of the remainder, only one-third were extended, while one-sixth consisted of individuals living alone.²⁷ Equally surprising are the statistics which reveal that fifteen percent of the households in Florence in 1427 were headed by females, and of those headed by males, as many as twenty-two percent had no children.²⁸

* * *

²⁶ David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles*, (Paris, 1978), pp. 496 - 498.

²⁷ Kent, *Households*,

²⁸ Herlihy, "Mapping Households," pp. 12, 13. The existence of large numbers of widows will also be returned to.

Leon Battista Alberti wrote one of the most widely known fifteenth century treatises on the family, *I Libri della Famiglia*, published in Italian about 1460, and receiving quite wide circulation at the time. Alberti's book takes the form of a series of dialogues between various members of the Alberti family who were gathered to pay their respects to one of their number who was dying. The book sets out an exemplary Quattrocento Italian family, both through the characters represented by members of the Alberti family, and through the dialogues in which they engaged, taking advantage of this family gathering to discuss what exactly it was that a proper family should be.²⁹

These Albertian dialogues, while always focusing on the family, covered a wide variety of subjects. They ranged from matters concerning the larger family group, such as ways in which families obtain and maintain a place of honour, to more specific advice on such domestic concerns as how to choose a wife, how to organize a household and how to discipline the children. Some pieces of advice were practical and common sense, while others, today, seem quaint and naive. Since the first desire of any married man was the birth of sons,

²⁹ There is a significant irony in such a work coming from the pen of an Alberti, whose family had been prominent Florentines, but had been exiled before Battista's - the Leon was his own later addition - illegitimate birth. Renee Neu Watkins notes this in the introduction to her translation of his work as *The Family in Renaissance Florence*, (Columbia, 1969), p. 4.

attention to the sex of a prospective bride's siblings was recommended. If she was a lone girl among healthy brothers, fine. But if she was part of a large family of girls, she was to be avoided, for she would be liable to produce only female children herself!³⁰

Alberti's work is, in a sense, an idealized form of a literary genre quite common among the heads of Renaissance Italian families. Alberti's version is a fictionalized family history, aimed at presenting to a fairly wide audience the ways to family success. The *ricordi*, memoirs is about as close as we can come in English, were written by many fathers. These detailed the history of their own families, paying close attention to the noteworthy accomplishments of their predecessors, and providing advice for the anticipated sons and grandsons. Often the *ricordi* provided clear instructions and advice on how to deal with the problems of business, social and political relationships.

One of these *ricordi*, written by Giovanni Morelli in the early fifteenth century, serves as a good example. Both Giovanni and his father before him had lost their fathers as small children. He lamented the hardships caused by less than ideal guardianship, and the struggles of a young man to learn the ways of the world without the experienced advice of a father. He then did what he could to help out with such

³⁰ Alberti, p. 110.

difficulties for his own sons, by setting out the seven greatest disadvantages of an orphan and how each should be dealt with.³¹

The family that we find in the writings of contemporary Renaissance Italians is not without its contradictions. Of course, these occur to a considerable extent because the writings in some cases expressed a desired ideal, while in others they reflected a far less ideal reality. The expression of that ideal could be summed up to a considerable extent by describing a man's needs as a family and wealth at home, and social respect and friendship outside of the home. Wealth was needed to preserve and provide for the family, while one needed friends and influence to protect the family and its property.

Before a young man began to raise a family of his own he needed to devote some years to becoming established in a financial way. This practice had the added bonus of giving

³¹ Giovanni di Pagolo Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. Vittore Branca, (Florence, 1956), pp. 202 - 206. Other *ricordi* also survive. For example, that of Gregorio Dati, which is more of a simple family record, is reproduced in Julia Martines, trans., *Two Memoirs of Renaissance Florence*, hereafter cited as *Two Memoirs*, ed. G. Brucker, (New York, 1967). Another is the *Zibaldone*, the notebooks, of Giovanni Rucellai recorded over a period of thirty years up to his death in 1481. These include excerpts from books he read and observations from the world around him. He too gave advice to his sons, although from that advice it is apparent that his family's position was much more favourable than that of the Morelli. See *Giovanni Rucellai ed il suo Zibaldone*, I, (London, 1960).

him a few more years to mature before taking on the responsibilities of raising a family.³²

Once established financially, a man was advised to consider the primary goals of an honourable family, among which was to multiply in numbers, especially male numbers.³³ One of the first steps towards actually establishing a family, naturally, involved the selection of a wife. In this too, he should keep the stated goals in mind, reminding himself that the wife he chose must not only be his companion for life, but also must be capable of bearing an "abundance of the finest children." The prospective bride should be of good stable family, known to be astute in economic and political life, and although wealth was of importance, she should be from a similar station to his own to avoid instability. Particular attention had to be paid to her dowry, but it was deemed wiser to accept a smaller dowry paid on the spot, than a larger one with promissory attachments.³⁴

³² Alberti gave the four needs of the family on p. 185 and discussed financial establishment on p. 109. He suggested 25 years was the right age at which to marry, but in reality men often married even later. Delaying the age of marriage also had a negative side, leading to many young widows and orphaned children.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 104. Other important goals were given as increasing material possessions, avoiding disgrace and shame, avoiding involvement in disputes, and cultivating friendships.

³⁴ *Ibid.*; on how to select a wife, pp. 110 - 112; on child bearing as quoted, in *copia bellissimi figliuoli*, p. 110; and on the need for many sons, p. 80. Some of the same criteria for selecting a wife were spelled out in a Roman treatise on marriage, published about fifty years later, particularly the

Once the children had begun to arrive and had been named, steps must be taken to raise them properly, to the honour and benefit of the entire family. To ensure this occurred, although the father played an important role, the elders of the family were also to play a significant part in the education of the children, so the family continued to benefit from the experience of its grey haired members. In education, including sound religious training, lay the beginnings of discipline. Thus Alberti implicitly underlines the importance of extended family ties.³⁵

As the children grew, suitable careers had to be found for them, which would not only suit their abilities, but would also add to the prestige and security of the family. In the course of a career, or in running a business, it was advised to work with family members or kinsmen, both as partners and employees. Kinsmen would be less likely to cheat one, and family favours and obligations were never forgotten. At the same time, a warning was given about the

importance of sticking to one's own class. See Stephen Kolsky, "Culture and Politics in Renaissance Rome: Marco Antonio Altieri's Roman Weddings," in *Renaissance Quarterly*, XL, 1, 1987, 49 - 90.

³⁵ *Ibid.*; the selection of names itself was emphasized in importance with special consideration for ancestral names, p. 119. On educating the child, pp. 18 - 21, 42 - 44, 77, 79. That this role of the elders did not end with childhood is nicely illustrated by Alberti. Lionardo, the young man at the end of his twenties seeks advice from his uncle Giannozzo, who says that this is what elders are for, p. 213. On education and discipline, pp. 70, 71, and 59, 60.

difficulty in knowing the character of a stranger. If the family business included property, especially country-estates, it was a good idea to purchase land all in a single locale for the ease of watching over it.³⁶

When it came to a dwelling place, a smart family should own their house rather than rent. The whole family should live together under one roof, both for the social comfort this would bring as well as for reasons of thrift. While living together, the family should all dine together, preferably on produce from their own fields. The emphasis Alberti placed on family togetherness, on the family working as a unit towards the common good of the entire family is striking. It is difficult to judge just how wide a circle this togetherness was meant to include. But clearly, strong ties between kinsmen at some distance were seen as desirable.³⁷ There is little wonder that one who read only such contemporary views of the family would envision a world made up almost exclusively of large extended families.

Although the accounts of the *ricordi* often try to emulate such a family, we find little evidence of its

³⁶ *Ibid.*; on choosing a career, pp. 138 - 140, on working with family, pp. 207, 208, and on property, pp. 195, 196. The latter in particular we shall discuss further below.

³⁷ *Ibid.*; on the family living together, pp. 190 - 194, and other references to family togetherness, pp. 21, 108, 109, 124, 125. Finally, although cautious about lending money to friends, there was an obligation to help relatives for the honour of "home and kinsmen," or *casa e de' mei*, p. 256.

achievement. We have already noted, to some extent, that real situations seldom provided the necessary opportunities to follow such a plan. It was not possible to provide the voice of experience in the education of a son when two generations of fathers died while their children were still small. The occurrence of such a break in generational continuity was made more frequent by the practice of late marriage for men, taking their early years to become established financially. The intervention of death in family continuity did not only strike fathers. Child mortality was a cause for considerable concern for all prospective fathers, and with good reason. Wives and mothers too often fell victim to disease, and the experience of childbirth in the fifteenth century was a truly risky one. The experiences of Gregorio Dati illustrate both these points. Of twelve sons which he fathered, only three seem to have reached maturity, one dying at fourteen, the others not living beyond the age of six. He had a number of daughters as well, who fared only a little better. In the course of bringing this relatively small number of children to adulthood, Dati buried three wives and was married to a fourth. He did have one other son, illegitimately, by a slave girl, who survived to adulthood.³⁸

³⁸ Martines, *Two Memoirs*, pp. 112, 115 - 117, 126 - 128, 132, 134 - 136. The record is not clear on whether Dati's fourth wife out lived him.

From reading the memoirs, as well as from the statistics of modern studies, one obtains a profound impression of instability and discontinuity. Many Quattrocento households were missing the male parent, had no children, or consisted of individual persons. When we think of instability, again Giovanni Morelli comes to mind. He tried his best to prepare his sons for the destabilizing experiences of his own youth. Ironically, in the later part of his memoir, he revealed a tragedy he was perhaps less prepared for, the death of his eldest son at the age of twelve.³⁹

In the mid-fifteenth century, during the best years of the Medici period, Florence experienced a period of political and economic stability. Rome, by contrast, at the same time was struggling in an aura of much greater uncertainty. Political and economic infrastructures had lapsed considerably during the years of the Avignon papacy and the schism. If, then, instability was as strong as is suggested in the family structures of the Florentines, what would one expect to find in Rome? Other, more specific questions come to mind. What was the setting, both physical and social, within which the Quattrocento Roman family functioned? What kind of property transactions did Romans and their families engage in? And if they were engaged in renting, in buying or selling, to what extent did family members work together,

³⁹ Morelli, p. 456.

form partnerships, advise and give consent? Finally, how did family members collaborate in the management of property, and in so doing what considerations did they show for future generations of the family? These are some of the questions then, which we will attempt to answer in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 2 Rome in the Quattrocento

Messer Maco: So really Rome is the *coda mundi*.
Sanese: *Capus* you mean.
Messer Maco: So it is. And if I had not come...
 Pietro Aretino, *la Cortigiana*.

Thus the irreverent Aretino turned the old boast about Rome as the head of the world, *caput mundi*, upside down, to make it read as the tail of the world, or, even worse, the gelded cock.¹ Some twelve centuries earlier, Rome could have, with some legitimacy, claimed the more prestigious title. But even then cracks were showing in the Empire that struck into the very *urbs* itself. In the border lands, restless neighbours were noticing Rome's weaknesses, while within the Empire ambitious soldiers with no claim to rule other than the support of the armies at their backs competed for control. In 271 the Emperor Aurelian withdrew his forces from the troublesome Danube frontier. At the same time he

¹ Pietro Aretino, "La Cortigiana," in *Il teatro italiano*, ed. Guido Davico Bonino, (Turin, 1977), II, p. 197. In the Italian:
Messer Maco: In fine Roma e coda mundi.
Sanese: Capus voleste dir voi.
Messer Maco: Tant' e. E s'io non ci veniva...
The translation is the author's.

began the construction of a new city wall.² This wall extended eighteen kilometers, included as many as fourteen major gates and enclosed about a million inhabitants. The rubble concrete wall, faced with curtains of brick, although often repaired, stood well into the modern period, and sections, including nine gates, remain today.³

Although the wall could not have been effectively manned, it was not easily scalable, nor could it be battered down. It was really grandeur that mattered, to impress upon those without as well as those within, the eternal strength of Rome.⁴

The remains of this imperial grandeur must have also inspired a sense of awe in Rome's Quattrocento population, shrunk to perhaps one fortieth of what it had once been, and clustered along the banks of the Tiber in one corner of the area enclosed by the ancient wall.

* * *

² Aurelian (270 - 275), nicknamed *manu ad ferrum* (hand on hilt), was himself a soldier of humble birth, probably from Pannonia. Malcolm Todd, *The Walls of Rome*, (London, 1978), p. 21, 22.

³ Richard Krautheimer, *Rome, Profile of a City, 312 - 1308*, (Princeton, 1980), pp. 6, 7, and, Todd, pp. 24, 67. There is some disagreement on the exact dates, but the building took place roughly between 270 and 279 A.D., and renovations in the first decades of the fourth century, and again in the first decade of the fifth century.

⁴ Krautheimer, p. 7. The wall was pierced for the first, but not the only time, by Alaric in 410 A.D., Todd, p. 68.

Determining an accurate population for Rome in the late Quattrocento remains a problem. There is no census available for the fifteenth century, and the earliest comprehensive one, taken in late 1526 and first published by Domenico Gnoli in 1894, is not without flaws.⁵ There is considerable room for error, particularly through duplications and probable omissions which are often impossible to identify.⁶ Yet this collection of numerical information is the best we have and is therefore of fundamental importance. It gives us a population for the city of Rome of 53,689 in 1526.⁷

Karl Beloch has attempted to estimate what Rome's population might have been near the end of the fourteenth century.⁸ In 1393, a treaty was made between Pope Boniface IX and the Roman people, in which the inhabitants of each *rione* were to be proportionately represented. Although the proportion of representation was not known, the number of

⁵ In *Descriptio Urbis: The Roman Census of 1527*, (Rome, 1985), pp. 10, 17, Egmont Lee, ed., has recently shown that it was probably conducted in November, 1526. There was a census of sorts taken during the pontificate of Leo X a few years earlier, but this only considered heads of households instead of numbers of mouths, and at that was not complete for all of Rome's thirteen *rioni*.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 23. In Renaissance Rome, as elsewhere at the time, a person's name could include variations of a first name, nickname, family name, trade name, or place name, with no certainty any or all of the same elements would be included in other references.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 17 - 20.

⁸ K. J. Beloch, *Bevölkerungsgeschichte*, (Berlin, 1965), II, pp. 2, 3.

representatives for each *rione*, excepting Monti and the Borgo Leonino, were. Beloch believed that Ripa, the southernmost *rione* on the left bank of the Tiber, which contained the city's docks and warehouses, would have seen little change in population during the course of the Quattrocento.⁹ Thus, by using the 1526 population for Ripa, he calculated the number of persons represented by each counselor at 128. From this he calculated the population of the city would have been about 30,000, including Monti and the Borgo. Then, in order to allow for some growth in Ripa between 1393 and 1526, he arbitrarily reduced this figure to 25,000.¹⁰

We may assume then, with some degree of confidence that the population of Rome at the end of the fourteenth century was about 25,000, and that by the early decades of the sixteenth it had grown to nearly 54,000. It seems almost certain that the population growth was not constant through this period, but did not begin in earnest until near

⁹ Vera de Haas, *Urban Development In Quattrocento Rome: The Rioni, Ponte and Parione, From 1450-1484*, Unpublished Thesis, (Calgary, 1979), pp. 66, 69, has discussed this possibility. She suggests that Beloch's estimates are probably high, as they would mean that the population of some *rioni* would have declined between 1393 and 1526, which seems unlikely in the face of the overall growth.

¹⁰ Beloch, p. 3. Alternatively, Vera de Haas, pp. 69 - 72, has estimated that Ripa grew by twenty-five percent during the time in question. She calculates a population figure of 23,040, without counting Monti, not represented in the 1393 treaty because of the small population there, and Borgo, which was not yet part of the city proper. The population for the City of Rome in 1393 which she achieves does not differ significantly from that of Beloch, at 24,000 to 25,000.

mid-Quattrocento. Thus, an estimate of population at the beginning of our period in 1450, of 30,000 and of 40,000 by 1480, is not unreasonable.¹¹

The distribution of population within the thirteen *rioni* and the Borgo was not at all uniform. According to the 1526 census, nearly half of the people were concentrated in a crude rectangle formed on the north and west by a sharp meander in the Tiber, on the south by the more gentle curve of the river as it sweeps around Isola Tiberina, and on the east by the rise of land from the ancient river valley towards the seven hills.¹² The population density for the most crowded areas has been calculated at 33,345 individuals

¹¹ A simple extrapolation would give populations of about 37,000 and 44,000 for these two years. Most contemporary sources, as well as most modern scholars, seem to agree that growth did not really begin prior to the pontificate of Nicholas V, (1447 - 1455), with increasing papal authority, more stable government, and consequently, increased immigration. By way of comparison, the population of Florence in 1427 was approximately 37,144, and by 1552 had grown to 59,191 persons. Growth in Florence was slow, at first, then picked up a bit, reaching 37,369 in 1459, and 41,590 by 1480. (The latter figures are calculations rather than census data). Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans*, p. 183.

¹² The area includes, roughly, five *rioni*, Ponte, Parione, Sant'Eustachio, Regola and Sant'Angelo, with a total population of 25,914. The Borgo, nearly as large in area, had less than 5,000 inhabitants, while Campo Marzo, also large, had 5,282. Ponte was the most populous *rione* with 7,621 residents, and Parione the most crowded with over 6,000 in its much smaller area. See Lee, *Descriptio Urbis*, p. 20, and Italo Insolera, *Roma: Immagini e realta dal X al XX secolo*, (Rome, 1981), pp. 84 - 86, who includes maps of the distribution of various population groups.

per square kilometer.¹³ This populous area of the city became known as the *abitato*, and, appropriately, the remaining area within the wall, with its fields, ancient monuments and churches, the *disabitato*.¹⁴

Rome's people were unevenly distributed within the city wall, but within the populated area, distinct communities of social groups and classes are less easily identified. While it has been said that all *rioni* contained a mixture of social levels,¹⁵ the picture is complicated by the problem of defining social classes in Renaissance Rome. Although some contemporary Romans attempted to do so, one cannot necessarily accept their recorded views at face value.¹⁶ Marco Antonio Altieri, for example, maintained that class distinctions existed in Rome, and indeed set out the criteria that made for social distinction. Yet Altieri was himself a

¹³ This was in Parione, while small Sant'Angelo, where the Jewish ghetto was located, had a density of 30,118 per square kilometer. Jean Delumeau, *Vie économique et sociale de Rome dans la seconde moitié du XVI Siècle*, I, (Paris, 1957), p. 225, gives the density for the entire city as 16,990 for the same area, which emphasizes the uneven distribution. Also see Mario Romani, *Pellegrini e viaggiatori nell'economia di Roma dal XIV al XVII secolo*, (Milan, 1948), pp. 68, 69.

¹⁴ Krautheimer, p. 68.

¹⁵ While this may be generally accurate, it does not mean that specific districts were not populated predominantly by people with common professional or ethnic characteristics. The Jewish population was almost exclusively restricted to Sant'Angelo, although a small number lived in Regola as well. Men of the church were found mainly in the Borgo. See Insolera, pp. 84 - 86.

¹⁶ Kolsky, pp. 49, 50.

member of a family, which, although certainly respected in his own day, was not an old family.¹⁷ That the concept of old family had some ambiguities, and in fact often masked comparatively recent origins, is apparent with others of Altieri's time. Clara Gennaro refers to the Porcari family, once a *famiglia di bovattieri e mercanti*. When he became involved in the conspiracy which cost him his life in 1453, Stefano dei Porcari had held a senatorial position for some time.¹⁸ No doubt part of the reason for setting out such class distinctions was Altieri's anxiety over a perceived disintegration of class structure. This disintegration reflects both problems of economics and of natural family discontinuity. Altieri's lament for the demise of noble families in part reflected changing economic and political circumstances. But some of his concern must also have arisen because of the extinction of these families through natural

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 63. The requirements set out by Altieri in *Li nuptiali*, written about 1509, included *sustantie, sangue*, and *costumi*, (wealth, lineage, and decorum). There are similarities between these criteria and those provided by Alberti, p. 185, for good family. Kolsky, p. 50, says the Altieri family first came to prominence in the mid-fourteenth century.

¹⁸ Clara Gennaro, "Mercanti e bovattieri nella Roma della seconda metà del Trecento," in *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Muratoriano*, 78, (Rome, 1967), p. 187. Also Anna Modigliani, "La famiglia Porcari tra memorie repubblicane e curialismo," in *Un pontificato ed una città: Sisto IV (1471 - 1484). Atti del convegno*, eds. Miglio, Niutta, Quaglioni, Romieri, (Vatican City, 1986), pp. 317, 318, discusses the strong feelings of other members of the Porcari family on their social standing and sense of antiquity.

causes.¹⁹ Yet these problems did not begin with Altieri's "secolo" as he suggested. A similar breakdown of the social elite and incursions into their ranks by people of lesser standing have been identified in the late decades of the fourteenth century as well.²⁰

Increasingly in the Quattrocento Roman baronial families found opportunities for advancement at the papal court limited by the interests of foreign popes. These families were forced to seek other means to maintain their wealth. As a result, agricultural lands, traditionally held by these more noble families, or else by churches and monasteries, began to come into the hands of the merchant class, both through outright purchase and through lease arrangements whereby the productivity of the land was more readily exploitable by both groups.²¹ While such arrangements became

¹⁹ That the papacy bore the blame for the economic problems was related to the loss of opportunity at the curia as non-Roman popes employed countrymen. Kolsky, pp. 51, 56, and 70, 71. The discontinuity was also reflected by Alberti in his Prologue, p. 3, where he noted the disappearance of old families.

²⁰ Gennaro, pp. 167, 168, discusses the role of economics and of agricultural property, such as the *casali*, farms surrounding Rome, in this context. As we shall see, vineyards also played an important role.

²¹ Gennaro, p. 168, and Jean-Claude Maire-Vigueur "Classe dominante et classes dirigeantes a Rome a la fin du Moyen Age," in *Storia della città*, I, (1976), hereafter, "Classe," pp. 7, 8, have both put forth a theory of this economic mingling of baronial and merchant families. Yet, it is this very conforming to the economic necessity that Altieri seems to find disturbing, as he blames the political situation - papal policy - for creating it, Kolsky, p. 51.

necessary for the baronial families through economic pressures, they also provided a sort of stepping stone through which merchants, themselves often relative newcomers to Rome, could obtain a more solid hold on both wealth and influence in the Roman setting. The arrangement also worked nicely for providing successful merchants with an investment opportunity for their profits.²² The result, Gennaro suggests, was a leveling out of social status. Families of these merchants and agriculturalists even married into established families, including the Orsini.²³ It is difficult to say how widespread such intermarriage was, however, and over a century later Altieri was still deploring the practice of marriage, for reasons of economics, above or below one's station.²⁴

It seems probable that the question of class breakdown, in so far as it is here suggested, needs to be further examined for Renaissance Rome. It is not clear, to me at least, that such is in fact strongly indicated, or that instead, even in quite rigid class structures, there is some

²² Gennaro, pp. 161 - 163, and 179, 180, and especially, Maire-Vigueur, "Classe," pp. 10 - 13, on sources of investment in agricultural production.

²³ Gennaro, pp. 180, 181. Maire-Vigueur, "Classe," p. 13, also says marriage was common between new and old families engaged in agricultural activities to the point that there came to be strict endogamy within this new economic class of *bobacterii*, which he finds to be the dominant class, economically at Rome in the Renaissance, pp. 7, 14. As well, both these writers are dealing with a period, the late fourteenth, and early fifteenth centuries, slightly earlier than our own.

²⁴ Kolsky, p. 80. Alberti, p. 112, also saw such marriage arrangements as undesirable.

tendency for new blood to rise to replace the positions lost in the noble classes, due to the natural demise of the less fortunate families. After all, even those aristocratic families whose longevity has marked them down for historical recognition are a relative rarity on the grand human scale. For our purposes, it is most important to note the role of agricultural property, both owned and rented, for those families that were attempting to gain an economic place in the Roman scene.²⁵

In order to maintain a population growth of the magnitude we find in Rome during the late fifteenth century, one would expect a good deal of immigration.²⁶ It now seems likely that the numbers of immigrants claimed by contemporary Romans were embellished. For example, Marcello Alberini, in an often cited remark, suggested that only a minority of the

²⁵ Kolsky, p. 90, says that ultimately, Altieri's writings were both a protest against what he saw as the undesirable changes of the times, and an admission of defeat at the losses of the noble and patrician families.

²⁶ It is by now generally accepted that the demographics of urban populations in medieval and early modern times were such that any significant population growth depended on immigration to sustain it. It must also be noted that even in the late fourteenth century, immigrant merchants, cloth merchants and members of the wool trade, have been recognized in Rome, but in uncertain numbers. See for example, Gennaro, pp. 161 - 163, 175, 176.

Roman people were really Roman.²⁷ While some modern scholars have taken Alberini quite literally, it is extremely difficult to ascertain how many of Rome's inhabitants could be considered immigrants. It is true that in the 1526 census relatively few individuals are identified specifically as Romans. But the absence of the adjective *Romanus* is no clear indicator that an individual had not been a long-time, even a life-time, resident. Nor is it clear what exactly is meant by its inclusion.²⁸

Yet clearly, immigrants made up a large part of the fifteenth century Roman population during these years. Evidence of this is given in Clifford Maas's study of the German community in Rome. He points out the difficulty in obtaining work in Germany while Rome provided opportunities

²⁷ Marcello Alberini, "Il Diario di Marcello Alberini," ed. Dominico Orano in *ASRSP*, XVIII, 1895, p. 344. Orano notes that the Gnoli census, published in *ASRSP* the same year, confirmed Alberini's observations were confirmed. However, such a claim is no longer easily accepted.

²⁸ Peter Partner, for example, contends that the majority of inhabitants must have been immigrants, *Renaissance Rome 1500-1559*, (Berkeley, 1976), p. 75. Egmont Lee has pointed out the problems of drawing such conclusions, as well as that of what it meant to be Roman, "Foreigners in Quattrocento Rome," in *Renaissance and Reformation*, n.s., VII, 2, 1983, 134 - 138. Also cf. p. 140, where, on the basis of preliminary examination of notarial documents he has suggested it is more reasonable to set the number of immigrants at fifty percent or less.

in several trades.²⁹ The place of origin of labourers in Rome also indicates large immigration. For example, the paving of the Via Sacra, from Castel Sant'Angelo to St. Peter's, in preparation for the 1475 jubilee employed, over a five month period, 350 different workers at various times.³⁰ The majority of the workers were from northern Italy, while non-Italian workers numbered about the same as those from Rome and the surrounding area.³¹ Mobility among unskilled workers was also high in the agricultural industries in the country surrounding Rome. No doubt there was considerable movement of such workers from the countryside to the city and vice versa.³²

Just how transient unskilled labourers were, and how unstable were work opportunities has been indicated by examination of the building trades, not only in Rome but

²⁹ Among these were cobblers, bakers, some gold and silver smiths, and a few book printers - after 1450 - as well as cloth workers and hosteliars. The latter was an industry he claimed to be dominated by Germans, if not as owners, then as operators. Yet he does not list many among the German brotherhoods. Clifford Maas, *German Community in Renaissance Rome 1378-1523*, (Freiburg, 1981), pp. 3, 11, 14, 18, 23.

³⁰ Egmont Lee, "Workmen and Work in Quattrocento Rome," *Rome in the Renaissance: the City and the Myth*, ed. P. A. Ramsey, (New York, 1982), hereafter, "Workmen," p. 144, 145.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 146. About half of the *muratori* were from Lombardy and the north, while most of the *scarpellini*, or stone cutters, were Tuscans. But Lee also cautions on the element of uncertainty in using names to establish origin.

³² Maire-Vigueur, "Classe," pp. 6, 7, 22, discusses the seasonal nature of work on the *casali* but thinks that cowherds, for some reason, had longer term contracts than most labourers.

elsewhere in Italy as well.³³ Even on a major building project, very little of the work might be contracted for.³⁴ Most of the labourers seemed to come and go from a work project, and were employed on a day by day basis.³⁵ In paving the Via Sacra, of the ninety-four individual *muratori* who were employed, none worked every day and sixty percent worked only six days or less. At least some of these irregularly employed workers may have worked for some of the time on the numerous other projects being carried out in preparation for the jubilee.³⁶

Of course, a major attraction for immigrants in Rome was the Papal court and the economic opportunities it provided. The Papacy attracted men with a wide variety of skills, from

³³ The account books of the building of Filippo Strozzi's palace in Florence at the end of the Quattrocento, have been the subject of a detailed study by Richard Goldthwaite, "The Building of the Strozzi Palace: The Construction Industry in Renaissance Florence," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, X, ed. W. Bowsky, (Lincoln, 1973), hereafter, "Strozzi Palace," pp. 99, 116.

³⁴ In building his palace, Filippo Strozzi only contracted for the preparation of foundations. For the other two major portions of this project, the quarrying of building stone, and the construction of the actual house, Strozzi hired the head stone cutter and the chief master builder on a salary basis and he paid all those men who worked under them. *Ibid.*, pp. 142, 144 - 146.

³⁵ The Strozzi ledgers record 89 different workers who worked between one and six hundred days, although 55 worked less than one hundred days and only nine more than three hundred. *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 171, 173, 174, 175.

³⁶ Lee, "Workmen," p. 144. The one *murator* who worked the longest was present 92 out of 101 days. Also Goldthwaite, "Strozzi Palace," p. 177, says that it is possible that workers moved from one project to another.

notaries and secretaries to artists and craftsmen, who would decorate the palaces and libraries and furnish the artifacts and clothing the members of the court found a need for. Well into the sixteenth century, Jean Delumeau has demonstrated a similar diversity of backgrounds for 267 artists employed in Rome. The largest group of these, 162, were from Tuscany and other parts of northern Italy.³⁷

A major portion of the persons who contributed to Alberini's perception of Rome as a city of foreigners were those people who had no intention of staying there indefinitely. Among these, pre-eminent were the *romieri*, pilgrims who came for religious reasons. The numbers of pilgrims who were attracted by the indulgences offered during the Jubilee Years are impossible to determine. Contemporary writers say that in 1450 there were "millions" in Rome, and that in 1475, 200,000 attended the Ascension Day blessing of Sixtus IV.³⁸ One contemporary tells us that because of the huge crowds the poorer pilgrims were forced to sleep in doorways and on benches, and the mills and ovens could not

³⁷ Delumeau, pp. 190, 191, says that a significant number, fifty-three, were from France and northern Europe, while others came from the Marches and Umbria, from the south of Italy, and Sicily.

³⁸ Ludwig Pastor, *The History of the Popes From the Close of the Middle Ages*, IV, (London, 1949), p. 281. According to Vespasiano da Bisticci, "La Vita di Nicolao P.P.V.", *Le Vite*, I, (Florence, 1970), p. 62, no one could remember such a great crowd in Rome, "Erano le strade di rome a Firenze piene in modo parevano formiche"....

feed them.³⁹ These poorer pilgrims who attended jubilee celebrations purchased straw from vendors in St. Peter's Square, and made their own beds, in a tavern if room could be found, and if not, under a portico or an arch in the streets and *piazze*.⁴⁰ Others, from the opposite end of the social scale, like the court of Frederick III, were lodged in comfort in the central *rioni* of Ponte and Parione.⁴¹

The narrow streets could become dangerous at times. Pastor tells of an incident on the Ponte Sant'Angelo in December of 1450, when the crowd of pilgrims leaving St. Peter's was so great that the bridge, always crowded because of the shops along it, was jammed. Horses and mules in the crowd became frightened, and in the ensuing melee, compounded by those pushing from behind, many were crushed or pushed into the river. Pastor says that close to two hundred

³⁹ Paolo dello Mastro in "Il 'Memoriale' di Paolo di Benedetto di Cola dello Mastro del Rione di Ponte," reproduced in *RIS*, XXIV, 2, (Città di Castello, 1900), p. 93, "...e perche la folla era granne e durava assai e la notte lence facea, remanevano a dormire per li porticali e per le banche li poveri romieri... Et essenno capitata in Roma in un tratto tanta moltitudine, le mole e li forni non poteano supplire a tanta gente, et onne die ce ne moltiplicava piu...." Vera de Haas, pp. 76, 77, suggests that even an influx of ten or twenty thousand would have placed great strain on the facilities of a city of Rome's size.

⁴⁰ Umberto Gnoli, *Alberghi ed Osterie di Roma nella Rinascenza*, (Rome, 1942), pp. 11, 12, and Partner, p. 88.

⁴¹ Delumeau, p. 140. Also Stefano Infessura, in *Diario della Città di Roma*, ed. Oreste Tommasini, (Rome, 1890), p. 79, tells of King Ferdinand of Naples and his visit to Rome in 1475.

people, plus some horses and a mule, were drowned.⁴² This incident probably led to the building of the Ponte Sisto, and adjoining streets, to provide a second access from St. Peter's to the center of the city.

* * *

If Aretino could joke that Rome was the tail of the world in the 1530's, how much more this might have seemed true at the middle of the previous century.⁴³ The shrunken population huddled along the riverbank in the *abitato*. The remaining area within the walls was extensively given over to agricultural purposes. Vineyards and canefields flanked five

⁴² Pastor, II, pp. 97 - 101. Vespasiano, p. 62, says more than two hundred died and that Nicholas caused two small chapels to be built at the foot of the bridge in their memory.

⁴³ From the Romans of the Quattrocento, such an opinion might not have been forthcoming. Paolo Portoghesi, *Rome of the Renaissance*, (London, 1972), p. 9, has noted that the perception of Rome as the site of a rebirth of the classical world, existing in the late fifteenth and especially in the first decades of the sixteenth century, had changed to a much less confident view after the events of the 1520's, particularly the sack of 1527. It is not clear that such attitudes affected the dialogue of Aretino, published in 1534, who is well known for his irreverence: Bonino, *Il teatro italiano*, p. 186. A contemporary attitude was expressed by Biondo, in 1447, when he said that Rome was venerated not merely for her ancient glory, but also as the eternal capital of Christendom. But here too, one must remember the humanist bent of Biondo's mind. Flavio Biondo, "Roma instaurata," reprinted in *Codice topografico della città di Roma*, FSI, 91, (Rome, 1953), p. 323. Nevertheless, for the average Roman, aware of the glories of the past as witnessed by the ancient monuments, an awareness of the humble nature of late medieval Rome must have been very strong.

of the seven hills, and part of the sixth was taken up with gardens. Only the once sacred Mons Capitolinus escaped such utilitarian usage.⁴⁴ The flood plain along the river north of the Borgo Leonino - outside the Porta Castello - was also a favourite area for vineyards.⁴⁵ Ruins of the great baths of Diocletian and Caracalla stood silently in these open fields, as did those of the major aqueducts that had once slaked the thirst of Imperial Romans.⁴⁶ The churches were dilapidated. Some were roofless, so that the dust of the city settled on the unprotected altars. Many of the architectural triumphs and monuments of ancient Rome, those which had not been pulled down in invasions of the city or fallen to the ravages of time, were half buried in rubble and silt and overgrown with foliage. The low and unprotected banks of the Tiber - they had no control system and in fact wouldn't until the nineteenth century - often allowed the

⁴⁴ Agricultural areas on the hills and the valleys in between, including what had been the Circus Maximus, are evident in maps of Rome from even late in the sixteenth century, such as those by Paciotti and Tempesta, reproduced in Insolera, pp. 131, and 200.

⁴⁵ We shall see numerous references to these in the documentary evidence.

⁴⁶ Biondo, pp. 285, 290, 291, described the baths of Caracalla and the ruins of others of the twelve baths which he says had existed in Rome. Giovanni Rucellai, in his "Memorie di Cose Viste," p. 75, also commented on the baths of Diocletian, Antoninus, Cornelius and others, during his 1450 visit to Rome.

waters to spill over into the city.⁴⁷ A sketch, circa 1650, presumably not long after such a flood, shows the arch of Septimius Severus, looking not at all triumphant, sunk well up the sides of its vault in a slough of water.⁴⁸

Plundering of ancient structures was not limited to invaders and the natural elements. Many monuments, including the Colosseum, were pilfered for their marble.⁴⁹ Other buildings, or ruins, such as the Teatro di Marcello, served as substructures for medieval housing, while nearby, the Portico d'Ottavia was incorporated into medieval buildings which sheltered the fish market.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Carlo Pietrangeli, *Guide Rionali di Roma: Rione V, Ponte, I*, (Rome, 1978), p. 11, says that the "control" of the riverbanks was one of the great problems facing Italy's new capital after 1870, and also note the destruction of houses along Via di Monte Brianzo and Tor di Nona. (See discussion of houses below).

⁴⁸ Krautheimer, p. 65, and Delumeau, p. 241, also refers to the damaging floods of 1598.

⁴⁹ Pastor, I, p. 69, says that Rome became almost as good a source of marble as the quarries at Carrara. Also Torgil Magnuson, *Studies in Roman Quattrocento Architecture*, (Stockholm, 1958), p. 5, points out the surprising number of ancient monuments still in existence during the Quattrocento, as well as the rather ironic fact that more of them were destroyed during the classically conscious Renaissance than at almost any other period in history.

⁵⁰ The Teatro di Marcello was begun by Ceasar and completed by Augustus in the late first century B. C., and named for the latter's nephew. The lower arcades of the Teatro were liberated of the shops and much of the other medieval building surrounding them in the period of fascist restoration of antiquities, 1926 - 32. The Portico d'Ottavia was a part of a courtyard and temple complex restructured by Augustus and dedicated to his sister in 27 B. C. Paolo Fidenzoni, *Il Teatro di Marcello*, (Rome, 1978), pp. 25, 30, and pp. 145 - 149.

Through late medieval times there had been little control or planning in the building and expansion of structures. The streets formed haphazard passages between buildings rather than planned routes to facilitate the flow of traffic.⁵¹ They were further blocked by the addition of porticos and lean-tos on existing shops and houses. Balconies on upper stories often jutted into the streets, creating an obstruction. At times, the street was completely arched over, so in effect the traffic passed through a tunnel. Traces of such restricted fareways remain in numerous *vicoli* in modern Rome.

Adding to the physical chaos of the Roman world of the late Quattrocento was that associated with the inhabitants themselves, both human and animal. Bovine and other domesticated animals were common, not only in the open areas, but also along the banks of the Tiber, where enterprising men fattened their herds for the butcher shops.⁵² The latter too, added their odours and more serious problems to the Roman ambience. It was common practice for the butchers to do their slaughtering in the street in front of their shops,

⁵¹ Emilio Re, "I maestri di strada," *ASRSP*, XLIII, 1920, p. 7: "La piccola via urbana del Medio Evo senza nome o termini certi, che stenta ad aprirsi un varco angusto nell'intrico dell'abitato, è ben lungi del rassomigliare all'arteria stradale moderna dove pulsa veramente il pieno fiume della vita collettiva."

⁵² Delumeau, p. 241, says that only in 1599 were regulations introduced to prohibit the raising of pigs in the *abitato*.

where the entrails were left for the city's nighttime scavengers to clean up.

Poor sanitation was one problem, and the influx of pilgrims added further dangers to the public health. The crowds of penitents proved to be fertile ground for the outbreak of plague. In 1450 Nicholas V, having encouraged the people to come to Rome for the salvation of their souls, himself made a retreat, in the interests of his own mortal salvation, to Fabriano.⁵³ The plague struck "and many people died and many of these pilgrims, and the dying (were) such that all the hospitals, churches, every one were full between the sick and the dead, and the dead collapsed in the streets like dogs...."⁵⁴ With the absence of hygiene, garbage disposal, and sewage facilities, even between such visitations by the plague, disease must have presented a formidable drawback to population growth and stability.

* * *

Soon after their return from the Avignon Captivity, the popes had begun to work towards re-establishing order in the urban chaos of medieval Rome. The Colonna Pope, Martin V,

⁵³ Vespasiano, p. 72.

⁵⁴ Paolo dello Mastro, p. 94, writes, "e mori molta gente et molti di questi romieri, et moriero tali che tutti li spedali, chiesie, onne cosa era pieno tra malati e morti, e cascavano morti per le strade come cani...."

while still on his way to Rome from his election at Constance, had appointed a commission and provided funds to begin restoration work on the major churches.⁵⁵ On his arrival, to begin the work of cleaning the streets of rubbish, he revived the ancient office of the *magistri viarum*, or as they had come to be known in the vernacular, *maestri di strada*.⁵⁶ These officers held authority over all matters concerning building in the city, whether of houses, walls, streets or squares. This included cleaning and maintaining streets and squares, and the arbitration of any disputes arising out of the application of the statutes.⁵⁷

In 1452, Nicholas V issued a new ordinance for the *maestri di strada*, which explained more fully the obligations of the office, and strengthened the wording by which they

⁵⁵ Pastor, I, pp. 214, 216, says Rome hardly resembled a city at all. Magnuson, p. 35, adds that Martin was particularly concerned about the St. John Lateran Basilica and that he encouraged the cardinals to restore their titular churches.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* The ancient statutes had been revived earlier, in the thirteenth century, and again in 1410 by Alexander V, the first intervention by a Pope in what had formerly been the jurisdiction of the Roman municipality. L. Schiaparelli, "I maestri aedificiorum urbis," *ASRSP*, XXV, 1902, pp. 5 - 60, discusses their existence in the 13th and 14th centuries, including documents on their actions. Also, Re, pp. 5, 6, and C. Scaccia Scarafoni, "L'antico statuto dei *Magistri Stratarum* e altri documenti relativi a quella magistratura," *ASRSP*, L, 1927, p. 244.

⁵⁷ Schiaparelli, pp. 15, 16, quotes from the thirteenth and fourteenth century statutes, "...super omnibus questionibus Urbis edificiorum, domorum, murorum, viarum, platearum, divisionum tam intus Urbem quam extra et omnium aliarum rerum nostro officio pertinentium....," etc.

were to be under papal authority.⁵⁸ Additional duties under Nicholas' ordinance included supervision of the water supply, care and inspection of the fountains, paving of streets, and prevention of illegal building on the banks of the river.⁵⁹ The main streets were to be swept every Saturday, particularly during the summer months.⁶⁰

The statute reinforced an old prohibition against throwing refuse into the streets and specifically denied the use of the as yet unpaved Stadium of Domitian, the modern Piazza Navona, as a dump site.⁶¹ The regulations tried to prevent the blocking of streets with protruding balconies,

⁵⁸ Re, pp. 12 - 17, 26, 89, 94, 98, 99, and Scaccia Scarafoni, p. 246. Their pay was now to come from the Apostolic purse, 100 florins per annum, plus one quarter of the money taken in from fines imposed. The fourth quarter of the fine was to go to the informer. Also see Magnuson, p. 38.

⁵⁹ Care of the fountains had been, in 1363, assigned to the *marescalli* of the Curia di Campidoglio. In 1410, Trevi fountain, and in 1452 all other fountains in Rome, were put under the *maestri*, Re, p. 26. For the restrictions against building on the Tiber, infractions of which could result in a fine of 21 florins (10 gold ducats) and the destruction of the building, see pp. 26, 27, 100. It is interesting to note that those who could claim to have been established there from antiquity were exempted.

⁶⁰ With modern changes, the streets are difficult to identify. The statute reads "...queste tre strade principali: cioe dallo Canale de Ponte in sino ad Sancte Angilo Piscivendolo, dallo Canale de Ponte per via Papale in sino ad Campitoglio, dallo Canale de Ponte per la via ritta in sino alla Magdalena;" Re, pp. 20 - 22, 98. Magnuson, pp. 24, 25, 37, gives the approximate modern streets.

⁶¹ Instead all refuse was to be dumped into the Tiber; Re, pp. 17, 19, 23. Delumeau, p. 243, reports that it wasn't until 1505 that a specific garbage collection site was established further downstream.

vendors' stalls and benches, as well as the practice of propping up a structurally unsound house with beams, either against the house opposite or into the street itself. With the same intention, permission now had to be obtained before constructing a new portico. The *maestri di strada* were authorized to pull down existing structures which impeded traffic in streets and squares.⁶² Although the officers were charged with responsibility for the paving of streets, the neighbouring householders were obliged to pay the costs.⁶³

In 1480, Sixtus IV re-enacted the statutes of the *maestri di strada* for the third time in the Quattrocento. The need for such re-enactment suggests that previous efforts had not been completely successful.⁶⁴ There is also some-

⁶² Re, pp. 95, 96, 97, on unlicensed porticoes and impeding passage, the latter on pain of a fine of 25 *libre* or about 10 florins. Stefano Caffari's report of such an order against Lorenzo and Thoma in January 1449, who were to remove a wall that was blocking a *vicolo*, is reprinted in "Dai diari di Stefano Caffari," ASRSP, IX, 1886, ed. Giuseppe Coletti, p. 592.

⁶³ In fact, the *maestri* had no permanent labour force, rather the citizens were obliged to get the work done. Re, pp. 89, 98, 99, on citizens' obligations to carry out their instructions, for example, sweeping the street in front of their own house, under pain of a fine of 20 *soldi*.

⁶⁴ The statutes as reissued, the 1410 Latin version, rather than those of Nicholas V in the volgare, are reprinted in Scaccia Scarafoni, pp. 281 - 286. Magnuson, pp. 39, 41, also points out that once again, the papal authority over the statutes was strengthened as, through the course of the Quattrocento, papal power increased in areas that had previously been under municipale control. This new authority for the papacy would be even more important in the renewal projects which would come in later centuries.

thing to be said for the degree to which Roman civic organization lagged behind the Italian city-states.⁶⁵

Infessura tells us that King Ferdinand of Naples warned Sixtus of the difficulty in maintaining order in a city with so many hiding places created by porticoes and crooked streets.⁶⁶ In spite of this anecdote, there is no evidence that Sixtus specifically ordered porticoes to be closed, but his bull of June 30, 1480, *Et si de cunctarum civitatum*, did order the widening of streets, often at the expense of porticoes. The bull included a number of measures to facilitate renewal and rebuilding projects in the city, such as the first laws of expropriation of modern times.⁶⁷ An interesting provision, for what it tells us about the distribution of occupied housing and population even in 1480,

⁶⁵ Charles Stinger, *The Renaissance in Rome*, (Bloomington, 1985), p. 26, too, points out how the re-enactment is indicative of how ineffectual earlier efforts had been, and how far behind the city-states Rome lagged. Also, Magnuson, pp. 38, 40, notes that that Rome was far behind other Renaissance cities. Florence apparently had all streets paved by 1339.

⁶⁶ Infessura, pp. 79, 80, The editor notes however, the first bull associated with Sixtus' renewal projects as drafted a few days before Ferdinand's arrival at the end of 1479.

⁶⁷ Scaccia Scarafoni, pp. 250 - 266, notes that here is the basis for modern law concerning arbitrations and expropriations for the public utility, an essential step in the development of urban planning. Guidelines for appropriate compensation were also established. Re, pp. 46, 47. On the efforts of Nicholas V and Sixtus IV to straighten the streets, see Pierre Lavedan, *Histoire de L'Urbanisme: Renaissance et Temps Modernes*, (Paris, 1959). pp. 36 - 38. With Sixtus' efforts to create more direct routes through the city, such ordinances were indeed necessary, and they continued to be useful in later times. Magnuson, pp. 38, 39.

was that if someone's house faced demolition, he could occupy any adjacent house that was unoccupied or in ruins.⁶⁸

Nicholas V did more than reorganize the municipal ordinances and provide for more orderly and cleaner streets.⁶⁹ It has been suggested that the Renaissance rebuilding of Rome, and, in fact, the idea of modern urban planning had their beginnings with the efforts of Nicholas V in mid-Quattrocento.⁷⁰ Charles Stinger talks of the rebuilding of Rome in conjunction with the concept of a renewed *imperium*, beginning with Nicholas V, and continuing through the popes of the sixteenth century.⁷¹ But it must be admitted that an identifiable "urban plan" for Rome did not really begin to emerge until the massive rebuilding projects

⁶⁸ Scaccia Scarafoni, p. 251. In addition, if one were building a new house, he could force the sale of adjacent ruinous buildings on the site on which he wished to build.

⁶⁹ Magnuson, p. 57.

⁷⁰ Carroll Westfall, *In This Most Perfect Paradise* (University Park, 1974), pp. 35, 36, etc., argues, while some see the beginning of the Renaissance in Rome immediately after the schism, with Martin V, and others with more dramatic and visible changes, under Sixtus IV or Julius II, that because of Nicholas' plans for development, more emphasis should be placed on his role in the development of a Renaissance papacy, and for that matter, in the history of urban planning. Pastor, III, p. 3, too, said that the Renaissance in Rome began with Nicholas V. For other writers (for example, Delumeau, p. 223) it is clear that urban renewal in Rome only began in the sixteenth century.

⁷¹ Stinger, pp. 254 - 264.

of Julius II.⁷² In Manetti's account of his deathbed testament, Nicholas explained to his cardinals his reasons for wanting to rebuild Rome.⁷³ He wished both to protect the church, and increase devotion towards it.⁷⁴ The buildings were to be "as perpetual monuments and nearly eternal testimonies, almost as if made by God," as daily reminders to the Roman populace and to pilgrims that their devotion to the church was justified.⁷⁵ Manetti's biography also gives us Nicholas' building program. He repaired portions of the city

⁷² Nonetheless, Portoghesi, p. 11, calls Nicholas's dream "the first organic expression of the plan to make of Rome the political symbol of a religious capital, and it was this plan which inspired her popes with a coherent vision for three hundred years of architectural activity."

⁷³ Vespasiano, pp. 70, 71, writing after Manetti, added praises of his own, saying that Nicholas' buildings, like those of the Roman Emperors, dominated the world, and that his decorations enriched the divine cult.

⁷⁴ Westfall, pp. 1, 36, says Nicholas' two tasks were "to restore order to the church, and implement a conception of the papacy," within a changing world and a changing church, and, later, that "the invisible was to be shown in the visible." He notes the patristic precedents for such an ideology. See Giannozzo Manetti, "Vita Nicolai V, Summi Pontificis," ed. L. Muratori, *RIS*, III, 2, 1734, col. 947 - 957.

⁷⁵ "At vero quum illa vulgaris opinio doctorum hominum relationibus fundata, magnis aedificiis perpetuis quodammodo monumentis, ac testimoniis, paene sempiternis, quasi a Deo fabricatis, in dies usque adeo corroboratur et confirmatur, ut in vivos, posterosque illarum admirabilium constructionum conspectores continue traducatur; ac per hunc modum conservatur et augetur, atque sic conservata et aucta, admirabili quadam devotione conditur et capitur." Manetti, col. 949, line 71 - col. 950, line 6. The short portion quoted in the text is translated by Stinger, p. 157.

wall which had crumbled and broken.⁷⁶ The restoration of many of the station churches, traditional pilgrim sites since the time of Pope Gregory the Great, was also one of Nicholas' projects.⁷⁷ Nicholas also planned restorations of the papal palace and of St. Peter's basilica itself.⁷⁸ In the area from Porta Adriana, next to Castel Sant'Angelo, extending to St. Peter's Basilica, he planned a massive project to house the whole of the curia. This project, however, was never undertaken.⁷⁹ Nicholas died before many of his projects were completed, and they were not carried on after his death.⁸⁰

Paul II paid no particular attention to an urban development scheme. But he did make one contribution to the mid-century building projects which became increasingly

⁷⁶ Manetti, col. 930, lines 14 - 16; "...ut Urbis moenia pluribus simul locis iam collapsa et confragosa noviter repararet."

⁷⁷ Manetti, col. 930, line 17. Magnuson, p. 58, notes the error in the number of the churches as given by Manetti, but notes also that many were in fact restored.

⁷⁸ Manetti, col. 930, lines 17 - 19. Magnuson, pp. 57 - 60, says the plans for the papal palace and for St. Peter's were begun, probably before 1450.

⁷⁹ Manetti, col. 930, lines 20 - 26. Manetti goes on to describe various projects, up to col. 940. For particular discussion of Nicholas' projects for the Borgo Leonino, the Vatican Palace, and St. Peter's, see Magnuson, pp. 65 - 214, and Westfall, pp. 103 - 165.

⁸⁰ Magnuson, pp. 57 - 62.

prevalent in the late Quattrocento and beyond.⁸¹ These architectural expressions of Roman grandeur were mostly, but not exclusively, undertaken by popes and favoured members of the curia, often papal nephews, some themselves destined to one day wear the triple tiara.⁸² About 1455, Pietro Barbo, having been made cardinal at the Basilica San Marco by his uncle Eugenius IV some years earlier, began to renovate the house he had been living in near his titular church. He purchased, that year, some old houses and property onto which he wished to expand. The palace was built in two phases, the second begun after Barbo's ascension as Paul II in 1464.⁸³ The Palazzo San Marco, which became Paul's papal residence, provided an impressive standard of grandeur and fortitude

⁸¹ On the popularity of this architectural expression, even amongst the middle classes, see Gustavo Giovannoni, *Il Quartiere Romano del Rinascimento*, (Rome, 1945), p. 18, and, especially, Piero Tomei, *L'Architettura a Roma nel Quattrocento*, (Rome, 1942), hereafter, *L'Architettura*, p. 253.

⁸² Other examples were the Palazzo della Cancelleria, begun in 1485 by Cardinal Raffaele Riario, nephew of Sixtus IV, with money he had won at "games" from the nephew of Sixtus's successor, according to Infessura, pp. 251, 252. Also, the Palazzo Capranica, and the Palazzo Sforza - Cesarini, the latter built by Rodrigo Borgia, about 1458, after having been posted to the lucrative position of vice-chancellor of the Roman church by his uncle Calixtus III, Magnuson, pp. 227, 230. A Palazzo dell'Orologio, built on the ruins of an ancient theatre around 1450 by Francesco Condalmier, nephew of Eugenius IV, is no longer extant, Tomei, *L'Architettura*, pp. 36, 37. There were also the two palaces built at the SS. Apostoli by the two other nephews of Sixtus IV, Pietro Riario, and Giuliano della Rovere, Magnuson, pp. 312 - 318.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 248 - 250, 258. On Pietro Barbo's appointments, see Conrad Eubel, *Hierarchia Catholica Medii Aevi*, II, (Padua, 1914), pp. 8, 15.

and also provided Paul with a place from which to watch the horse races he instituted in the Via Lata, henceforth called,-- by consequence, Il Corso.⁸⁴ The palace remained unfinished at Paul's death, and was continued by his own nephew, Marco Barbo, named cardinal in 1467, although San Marco did not become the latter's titular church until November, 1478.⁸⁵

While these major building projects played an important role in changing the face of Rome in the Quattrocento, they tell us little about architecture and real estate as they related to the more immediate daily needs of the people. In fact, the re-building projects of the popes and their families, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, have helped to obscure the scene for us, as so much from the late medieval and the Renaissance period has been destroyed. More was destroyed with the development of modern streets and the building of the Tiber embankments in the nineteenth century. Of the few modest houses which probably survive from the Quattrocento, most have been much restored, sometimes without careful consideration to authenticity, "as though making a 'nice job' was easier than

⁸⁴ Paul was well known for his love of display, and Gregorovius, *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages*, VII, (London, 1900), p. 226, attributes Paul's popularity with the Roman people to his rediscovery of the formula of the Emperors, give them bread and circuses. Also, Pastor, IV, p. 31.

⁸⁵ Magnuson says, pp. 247 - 283, that in some details the palace still remains incomplete.

rediscovering the authentic medieval structure."⁸⁶ What evidence there is suggests a diversity of housing styles. Examples are a small group of houses, more or less incorporated into the Ministry of Justice buildings in the early part of this century, and in some of the surrounding towns of Lazio and Umbria.⁸⁷ There also exist, from the Quattrocento, *vedute*, views of parts of the city which give some idea of the exterior appearance at least, of domestic structures.⁸⁸ In particular, one sketch done in 1495 of Trastevere and the left bank of the *abitato* below the Capitoline Hill, shows

⁸⁶ Broise and Maire-Vigueur, "Strutture famigliari, spazio domestico e architettura civile a Rome alla fine del Medioevo," in *Storia dell'arte italiana*, III, 5, (Turin, 1978), p. 100. For example, the authors point to Palazzo Vallati, near Teatro Marcello, of which they say, "I due studi pubblicati dall'architetto incaricato del loro restauro non danno alcuna informazione precisa sulle condizioni nelle quali è stato realizzato e ci sono buone ragioni di credere che gli indispensabili rilievi non siano stati eseguiti..." and as quoted, "Si è cercato di 'farlo bello' piuttosto che ritrovare le autentiche strutture medievali." Also, Krautheimer, p. 289, and Magnuson, pp. 41-48.

⁸⁷ The houses behind the Ministry of Justice again present problems as a source of study. Only one study has been published on this 1930's restoration project, and that, a short anonymous article, was intended to give credence to the fascist administration's interest in the medieval period. Broise and Maire-Vigueur, p. 100. Also, Magnuson, pp. 42, 43.

⁸⁸ Krautheimer, p. 289. These must be used cautiously for there is no way to know how concerned the artist was with the accuracy of the structures, and to what extent they merely wished to represent housing symbolically. Krautheimer also reproduces a number of photographs, from the nineteenth century, before the major destructions of the modern era, as well as sketches and paintings from earlier times, of houses that probably date from the late Quattrocento or shortly after. He attempts to describe medieval housing, pp. 289 - 310. Also, see Magnuson, p. 5.

a real collage of housing types. Medieval towers rise above a hodge-podge of irregularly sized and shaped smaller structures, suggesting the impossibility of identifying any one Quattrocento Roman house type.⁸⁹ This irregularity is preserved, to some extent, in houses which still exist today in parts of the old city, both in the shape and size of houses as well as in the street front they present.⁹⁰

A few medieval towers still stand today in Rome, where they were never cropped by communal ordinance as occurred in Florence in 1250.⁹¹ The Torre del Grillo above the Forum of Trajan, and, further up the Quirinal Hill, the Torre delle Milizie - the latter probably built in the thirteenth or fourteenth century on older ruins, which even today some tour guides will claim as "Nero's tower," from which he was

⁸⁹ This drawing, from the *Codex Escorialensis*, is reproduced in both Krautheimer, p. 274, and Magnuson, p. 43. As Broise and Maire Vigueur, pp. 100, 101, have it, "...we are convinced that there does not exist a Roman medieval house presentable as a typical house, a model house." Tomei as well says there are no solid rules for defining a housing type, *L'Architettura*, p. 251.

⁹⁰ This is particularly true in areas such as the south slope of the Quirinal overlooking the fora, especially Via della Madonna dei Monti, and the area between Via dell'Orso, and Via di Monte Brianzo in Ponte.

⁹¹ Gene Brucker, *Renaissance Florence*, (New York, 1969), p. 8. The towers were cropped as a symbol of the commune's suspension of the power of the nobility. Henceforth the only tower to rise above the Florentine skyline would be that of the republican commune, represented by the Palazzo dei Priori, completed in 1310.

supposed to have watched Rome burn⁹² - and the Palazzo Scapucci, or Torre della Scimmia, located at the edge of the Rione Ponte, where Via de Portoghesi and Via dei Pianellari meet.⁹³

In spite of the limited evidence, attempts have been made to define distinctive types of domestic architecture in Renaissance Rome.⁹⁴ These types, however, are very similar, and depend for the most part on minor variations to distinguish them. For example, Piero Tomei sees new developments in domestic architecture appearing in the period 1450 to 1470, which because of the size of the structure and decorative exterior, especially the window designs, falls between a domestic house and a palace and is symbolic of the new awareness of architecture in middle class society.⁹⁵

⁹² Krautheimer, pp. 318, 319. *Guida d'Italia del Touring Club Italiano: Roma e Dintorni*, ed. Alessandro Cruciani et al, (Milan, 1977), pp. 134, 324.

⁹³ The popular name of the tower, della Scimmia, says Pietrangeli, p. 12, derives from a story of a pet monkey who carried a new born infant to the top of the tower, bringing her down unharmed when the Virgin was called on to intercede.

⁹⁴ Especially by Torgil Magnuson and Piero Tomei, who disagree somewhat on defining housing types. The one obvious new type is what Tomei calls the row or strip house, or *case in serie*, similar in layout to older styles. They are most easily described as two or more houses built as one by the sharing of a common unopened wall. Tomei's thesis is that this development occurred gradually from the Quattrocento to the Settecento. Piero Tomei, "Le case in serie nell'edilizia romana nel '400 al '700," in *Palladio*, II, 1938, hereafter, "Case," p. 84, and *L'Architettura*, p. 265.

⁹⁵ Piero Tomei, *L'Architettura*, p. 253. Magnuson disagrees, however, saying that this is just a variation on an existing medieval house type. Magnuson, p. 46.

Of these variations, with the exception of the noted medieval towers, all follow the basic layout, traceable from ancient times, in the Roman *insulae*, with large portals on the ground floor opening to shops, with residences on the one or two upper floors.⁹⁶ Because of the enormous area inside the Aurelian wall, and the small population of the city, in medieval times, many houses, even in the *abitato*, probably stood more or less as individual units, incorporating their own portico, an external staircase, and a garden, sometimes with a stable and a well, all behind.⁹⁷ As the population grew, gardens shrank, and the aspect of individual housing disappeared. Along with it went much of the irregularity. Houses came to present a more symmetrical facade, forming a

⁹⁶ Magnuson, pp. 47, 48. On page 44 he also notes that domestic architecture is very conservative, so that housing types which existed in late medieval times, and in the Quattrocento, probably continued to be quite common in later centuries. However, Tomei suggests that domestic architecture is, strangely, at times conservative, at other times rather novel and ingenious. Tomei, *L'Architettura*, p. 250.

⁹⁷ Tomei, *L'Architettura*, p. 251, 252, and "Case," p. 83. Also, Magnuson, p. 44. In documents of sales and rentals of houses, there are occasional references to a *porticali ante*, a portico in front, ASR NC 1174, fo. 36, ASR NC 1476, fo. 22, or to *orto retro*, a garden behind, ASR NC 1314, fo. 189.

more or less uniform street front.⁹⁸ Typically, still, these houses had a large portal on the ground floor, which might house a shop, from which a wooden staircase would lead to one or two upper floors. The top floor might include a loggia, and there might be, yet, a small garden at the back.⁹⁹

An example of a relatively modest house of this type which still stands, although it may date from the early sixteenth century, is one in the Rione Ponte, in Vicolo Cellini, number 31. This structure, once owned by a *cortesana honesta*, features one large portal to the left side of the ground floor, balanced on the right side of the facade with a round-headed window of similar size and shape to the doorway. On the second floor are two round-headed windows, and again on the third much shallower floor, two small square windows.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Tomei, *L'Architettura*, p. 260, 261, says that the Renaissance house was born with the streets of Sixtus IV, thanks to his efforts at straightening them. Other authors note the shrinking and disappearance of gardens (for example, Krautheimer, p. 289). Yet, Delumeau comments on ordinances passed by Pius IV in 1565 regarding the occupation, enclosure, improvement and rebuilding of vacant lots and gardens between occupied houses. These ordinances, in some ways a re-affirmation of regulations introduced by Sixtus IV some 90 years earlier, indicate the slowness of Rome's growth towards filling out the ancient shell. Delumeau, pp. 242, 243.

⁹⁹ Tomei, "Case," pp. 84, 87, 90, and, *L'Architettura*, pp. 253, 254, 262. The Casa Bonadies which still stands to day, near the Ponte Sant' Angelo, is given as an example. p. 263.

¹⁰⁰ As became popular in the sixteenth century, this house had a frescoed facade, which, although badly deteriorated is still visible. Urbano Barberini, *Le Case Romane con facciate graffite e dipinte*, (Rome, 1960), pp. 53, 54; Pietrangeli, p. 60; and Tomei, *L'Architettura*, p. 262.

In notarial documents, descriptions of houses are terse, or non-existent. The most common terms seen are *domus terrinea solarata et tegulata*, or a house, including ground floor, upper story and roof. Occasionally one sees *domus terrinea tantum*, or a house with a ground floor only.¹⁰¹

Through the medieval and early modern periods, Rome was quite literally a city built among the ruins. Not only were buildings set on the foundations of ancient Rome but they often incorporated ruins into their structure. Even in the late Cinquecento, the French writer, Montaigne, found Rome "a city no longer visible...and a small town perched like a parasite on top of the old buried structure."¹⁰² This sense of disorganization is reflected in private property holdings and exchanges as well. We find evidence of vacant plots of ground, even in some of the city's more crowded *rioni*. In 1478, Iacopo Cesarinis purchased such a plot near the Piazza Castello.¹⁰³ The existence of empty lots and vacant dilapi-

¹⁰¹ In the first case, ASR NC 1174, fo. 36, and in the second, ASR NC 1314, fo. 131, although many other examples would serve.

¹⁰² Quoted by Portoghesi, p. 15. Even today, as one walks Rome's streets and discovers the ancient ruins incorporated into the living architecture, such as the Teatro di Pompeo, or the small portion of the *caldarium* wall from the baths of Agrippa visible in the Via dell'Arco della Ciambella, one gets the same feeling.

¹⁰³ ASR NC 1313, fo. 60. It was not uncommon for a person to purchase or lease a portion of a building, such as the rental of a butcher shop, ASR NC 1314, fo. 150, or the sale of one-quarter of a house, ASR NC 1764, fo. 31.

dated housing is also evidenced by provisions included in the various revisions to the civic statutes to allow for the occupation of such properties by those willing to do the necessary restoration and rebuilding.¹⁰⁴

From the existing evidence, from contemporary accounts, from contemporary view sketches, from contemporary legislative efforts, it is evident that in Rome in the late Quattrocento the situation with property and real estate, as with life itself, was one of considerable discontinuity and confusion. Nonetheless, the beginnings of a more orderly and structured urban reality were emerging. As the population grew, both the established Roman families and less secure newcomers must have been concerned with establishing a greater permanence for themselves and whatever families they may have had. To continue with our examination of the ways in which real estate came into play in the bidding by Romans for a hold on some of the material elements of their world, and the role that family relationships played in the process, let us look next at rental property.

¹⁰⁴ Scaccia Scarafoni, p. 251, see also previous discussions.

CHAPTER 3 Rental Property

Lionardo: How would you acquire one? Would you buy
 the house, or would you rent?

Giannozzo: By renting, certainly not...
 "I libri della famiglia," Alberti.

Despite Alberti's precaution against renting,¹ Italian families, at least those in Rome in the late Quattrocento, did rent houses, as well as other forms of immobile property. Of forty-three documents concerned with lessors, lessees, and rental agreements, twenty involved houses. Eleven documents dealt with vineyards, and others with gardens, shops of various kinds, taverns and hotels.

The importance of rental property for the agricultural industry has already been suggested, particularly as it was exploited by a class of entrepreneurs who, while often not having sufficient capital to become large-scale landowners themselves, did have the means to invest in rental property in the forms of grainlands, pasturage, and vineyards. Through these investments, they could establish themselves as producers of foodstuffs, and thereby advance their economic,

¹ In the Italian:

"Lionardo: Come faresti voi? Comperresti voi la casa, o pur ivi ne torresti una a pigione?

Giannozzo: A pigione certo no...." Alberti, p. 190, author's translation.

and their social and political standing. These properties were often rented from institutions, churches and hospitals, who acquired them through bequests, or from baronial families interested in exploiting their rural assets more fully.²

On the other hand, I have found several documents where agricultural property, particularly vineyards, were leased out by owners who were simply not in a position to work them. These documents tell us something more significant in so far as the families and family fortunes are concerned. In one case, to which I shall return later, a widowed grandmother leased out vineyards on behalf of her deceased son's heir.³

Agreements of this type usually involved no cash rent, but only a share of production. Some of the produce, of course, may later have been turned into cash in the market place by the lessor. Often too, in rentals of vineyards, there existed an obligation on the property, usually involving a share of the production. Such obligations did not imply any particular connection between the parties.

² Maire-Vigueur, "Classe," pp. 10 - 13, notes the economic conditions which encouraged these land owning families to participate in such ventures, as well as the difficulties in raising investment capital, and the strong ties this entrepreneurial class developed across existing social boundaries. Also see Gennaro, and discussion in previous chapter.

³ ASR NC 709, fo. A65, and NC 1105, fo. 4.

Rather, it indicated the existence of a bond held on the property by a person or an institution. These obligations may have been made for a variety of reasons by the owner, or a previous owner, and were included in the new contract to ensure continuation. In 1473, Stefano, son of the late Nardo Symeonis Giovanni Facie of Ponte, rented a vineyard for one year to Georgio di Paolo da Segnia, a Slav, of the same *rione*. From the production of this vineyard, a widow, the wife of the late Gentile dei Astalli, whose connection with Stefano was not made clear, was to be given two *caballate* of "pure and good" must, and a quantity of grapes.⁴ In another situation, a rented vineyard was obligated to provide to the Chapel of Santa Maria in the church of Santa Cecilia in Turri Campi, about three quarters of a florin (35 *soldi*).⁵

Two years earlier, a married woman, Iacobella, whose husband does not appear in the document, rented out her vineyard. There was an obligation against this vineyard, located outside the Porta Maggiore, to the church of San Pietro in Vincoli for two barrels of must each year at

⁴ ASR NC 1764, fo. A10.

⁵ ASR NC 1764, fo. 108.

harvest time, and two more at each feast of the Annunciation.⁶

* * *

The rental of houses could have been motivated by more than one reason. For some renters, unable or unwilling to purchase property outright, it was a simple means of acquiring a place of residence. Since houses often included a shop on the ground floor, others wished to take advantage of a business opportunity, either by exploiting the economic potential of the shop, or by subletting the house itself. In some cases, only a portion of the building, the shop alone, or a portion of the house was rented. For the owner of the property, as with the owners of agricultural property, renting out part or all of their property was a means of generating cash flow from stable assets without disposing of the assets themselves.

The duration of each rental agreement and the rental rates varied considerably. The average rent paid for twenty houses (see Table 1) for which rental contracts are available was 52 florins, with the lowest at 13 florins (6 gold ducats)

⁶ "...ad respondendum perpetuo singulis annis dicte ecclesie duo barilia boni et puri musti ad vascam tempore vendemiarum et duo alia barilia eiusdem musti de tempore ad respondendum perpetuo singulis annis annuntiationis beate marie virginis..." ASR NC 1764, fo. 50.

per annum, and the highest 192 florins (90 gold cameral ducats). Of the exceptionally high rents, two, at 123 and 94 florins (60 gold cameral ducats, and 44 gold papal ducats), certainly included business opportunities.⁷ The highest rent of all, however, did not indicate a business, but the house was apparently very large, by the description including a garden and stable.⁸ The structure of payments preferred, *more romano*, was in semi-annual installments, or *de semestri in semestre*.⁹

⁷ In the first case, ASR NC 1313, fo. 74, from 1479, the reference was less clear, but a note that the house was called *lo pavone*, suggests a business establishment such as a hotel or a tavern. In the other case, ASR NC 1314, fo. 104, drawn in 1474, there was specific reference to a shop, which the renters were to maintain, as well as a note that there was a tenant living in the house. Also, in 1477, another house, including a tavern, called *la taverna dell'aquila*, in Ponte rented for only 61 florins (30 gold cameral ducats at 72 bols.), ASR NC 1314, fo. 191.

⁸ ASR NC 708, fo. 109, in 1464. One must be cautious due to the uncertainties of currency values as noted in the Preface. Maire-Vigueur gives rental prices for the period he examined at 10 to 12 florins per year, with variations for years of papal absence. Some, he says, exceeded 20, one, a palace, he notes rented at 50 florins. Maire-Vigueur, "Classe," pp. 10, 11. Thus, the change in rents between the late Trecento and mid-Quattrocento does not seem extraordinary. Anna Maria Corbo, "I Contratti di locazione e il restauro delle case a Roma nei primi anni del secolo XV," in *Commentari*, 18, 1967, hereafter, "I Contratti," p. 340, gives some examples of house rentals at rates similar to those cited by Maire-Vigueur.

⁹ See for example, ASR NC 1313, fo. 74, and NC 1764, fo. 134.

TABLE 1: Rates and Duration of House Rentals

<u>Time in Years (date)</u>	<u>Florins per Year</u> ¹⁰
5 (1451)	13 (6 gold ducats)
4 (1453)	21 (10 gold ducats)
2 (1464)	192 (90 gold cameral ducats)
3 (1468)	20 (10 gold cameral ducats at 72 bols.)
0.5 (1468)	26 (12 ducats)
0.5 (1469)	56 (26 current ducats)
1 (1470)	62 (29 gold cameral ducats)
2 (1470)	51 (24 ducats)
2 (1471)	33 (16 ducats at 72 bols.)
1 (1471)	23 (11 cameral ducats at 72 bols.)
1 (1471)	55 (26 papal ducats)
3 (1473)	26 (12 papal ducats)
1 (1474)	15 (7 papal ducats)
5 (1474)	94 (44 gold papal ducats)
5.5 (1474)	37 (18.18 cameral ducats at 72 bols.) ¹¹
1 (1476)	45 (22 ducats at 72 bols.)
1 (1477)	23 (15 ducats at 72 soldi per ducat)
1 (1477)	61 (30 gold cameral ducats at 72 bols.)
1 (1479)	123 (60 gold cameral ducats at 72 bols.)
15 (1480)	53 (25 ducats)

¹⁰ The documents in order listed in the table are; ASR NC 1684, fo. 52; fo. 28; NC 708, fo. 109; NC 1313, fo. 67; NC 709, fo. A12; fo. A208; fo. B53; NC 952, fo. 14; NC 1134, fo. 101; NC 1764, fo. 134; fo. 128; NC 1314, fo. 75; fo. 94; fo. 104; NC 1764, fo. A34; NC 1314, fo. 150; NC 228, fo. 44; NC 1314, fo. 191; NC 1313, fo. 74; NC 1174, fo. 65.

¹¹ This exceptional agreement included a lump sum payment of 204 florins (100 cameral ducats at 72 bols.) for the duration of the lease. ASR NC 1764, fo. A34.

The most common length of time for a rental agreement was one year, with some leases, particularly those involving business opportunities, being given on a year by year basis, but obviously intended to run for a longer time. One longer rental period of 15 years was an extension of a previous rental agreement. But there is no indication that anything besides living accommodation was at issue. Why this family should be renting their house for such a long time is not revealed in the documentary evidence.¹² Besides leases for a specific number of years, there also existed another type of long term rental agreement which amounted to a permanent lease for the lifetime of the tenant and occasionally also his heirs up to the third generation. These emphyteutic leases often involved property belonging to an institution. Such leases could be transferred from one tenant to another. As a result, individuals or institutions often held obligations, as we have previously noted, on a piece of land over an extended period of time. These obligations might have remained in effect even though the property itself changed hands.¹³

¹² ASR NC 1174, fo. 65.

¹³ For example, ASR NC 1764, fo. A10, fo. 108, and the discussion of obligations connected with vineyards above. Adolf Berger's "Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law," in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s., XLIII, 2, (Philadelphia, 1953), p. 603, says the term *obligatio*, although vague, indicates that one party is bound to give something to another party.

One emphyteutic lease was drawn up November 12, 1472, wherein the sisters of the monastery San Lorenzo in Panisperna leased out a house, to Cardiano di Fino Fiorentino *toto tempore vite sue*. There was, however, no indication as to what the arrangements for payment were.¹⁴ In another transaction, this one completed April 21, 1464, a widow, Giovanna Ser Roberti, whom we shall encounter again, contracted to rent out, in perpetuity, a vineyard to Egidio Andree, who held a benefice from St. Peter's Basilica. There was an obligation against the vineyard in the name of the same church in the amount of 20 florins per year, which Egidio promised to pay. In addition, Giovanna and her heirs were promised two *caballate* of good wine at each wine harvest. In this case in particular, the motivation for such a lease is clear. The widow Roberti had need of some of the produce of her field, but found it necessary, or wished, to absolve herself of the responsibility for working the property.¹⁵

The above transaction, which included a promise to one of the parties, the widow Giovanna and her heirs and successors, raises another interesting point. Very often in documents, an individual was said to be acting *pro se suisque*

¹⁴ ASR NC 952, fo. 84.

¹⁵ ASR NC 708, fo. 17. The Roberti family continued to be plagued with the early demise of male members, and consequent difficulties in the handling of their patrimonies.

heredibus et successoribus, on behalf of themselves and heirs. This may occur in relatively short term agreements as well as these long term ones. In the case of a perpetual lease, such an inclusion made practical sense. In the short term lease however, it would seem to reflect a deep awareness, on the part of a man or woman in Quattrocento Rome, of the transient nature of earthly life and a desire to protect the interests of their offspring.¹⁶

There seems to be no particular relationship between the rental price and the duration of the contract. Rather, it must be assumed that the size of the house and the inclusion of business opportunities were the factors which most directly affected rent. There were, however, from time to time, clauses of special provisions included in the contracts. In three documents, reference was made to a rental adjustment depending on the Pope's presence in or absence from the city, and in one of these, an adjustment would only be in order if he was absent for a significant

¹⁶ For example see ASR NC 1313, fo. 67 Girolamo Miccaelis rented a house from the hospital of Santa Lucia on behalf of himself and heirs. Also, Petro Paolo, son of Iacobello of Ponte also acted on behalf of himself and his heirs when he rented a house in Parione. The rent on this house, which was bordered on either side by property belonging to a certain Carlo Cardelli, was to be 21 florins (10 gold ducats) for each of the four years covered by the agreement. ASR NC 1684, fo. 28, and likewise, Paolo Maczatos, fo. 52.

period of time.¹⁷ While I have noted no rental adjustments during jubilee years, at least one document makes some provision for repossession of houses should they have been needed by the owner.¹⁸

One of the interesting features of rental agreements, particularly those dealing with houses, was the inclusion of repair and reconstruction commitments in addition to cash rent.¹⁹ This calls attention to two things. First, it illustrates the poor condition of housing that was available to renters, and hence the need for such repair.²⁰ Secondly, it reflects the lack of ready capital in the hands of property owners to undertake the work.²¹ One document, detailed below, notes such an agreement for repairs by the

¹⁷ The period of absence specified was a year and a half. ASR NC 1764, fo. A34, fo. 128, ASR NC 708, fo. 109. Corbo also notes two documents at the beginning of the Quattrocento which specified a reduction in rents of 3 to 5 ducats when the Pope was absent from the city: "I Contratti," p. 340.

¹⁸ ASR NC 1314, fo. 94

¹⁹ While Corbo, "I Contratti," pp. 340, 341, says that she finds agreements about restoration and repair work in *quasi tutti* the acts of leases between the end of the fourteenth century and mid-fifteenth centuries. In the documents that I have looked at, relatively few include such clauses, although there are others not noted here.

²⁰ See the discussion of housing in Chapter 2 above.

²¹ The lack of availability of capital as revealed in arrangements involving the rental of agricultural lands has also been discussed in Chapter 2. It seems likely that a similar situation existed with respect to repair and restoration of housing.

tenant in an earlier rental contract.²² In two other documents there are straightforward references to an obligation on the part of the tenant for repairs and refurbishing of rental property.²³ A fourth document describes an obligation on the part of the owners, the church of SS. Celso e Giuliano, for certain expenses, while the tenant agreed to spend from 64 to 149 florins (30 to 70 ducats) *pro rebus necessariis* and also took responsibility for certain other expenses.²⁴ These reflections of the troubled and discontinuous nature of the Quattrocento Roman setting also form the most predominant theme running through an examination of rental agreements with an eye for the family ties that might be revealed there.

* * *

In June of 1480, the sons and heirs of the late Ambrogio dei Spannocchi concluded a new rental agreement with the brothers Gaspar and Lello dei Petroni. The owners of this house, which Ambrogio had already been renting for some time, were no apparent relation to the Spannocchi family. This house, located in the Via Recta, on the Piazza San Salvatore

²² ASR NC 1174, fo. 65.

²³ ASR NC 1313, fo. 74, and ASR NC 1764, fo. A34

²⁴ ASR NC 1314, fo. 75. It also seems that he agreed to move to another house belonging to the church in a jubilee year.

in Ponte, had already been partly reconstructed and repaired by Ambrogio under the terms of a previous notarial-agreement.²⁵ The new agreement consigned the house to the heirs of Ambrogio for a further 15 years at a rent of 53 florins (25 ducats) per year. Ambrogio was also described as *mercator Senensis* and one Francisco, also *mercator Senensis*, acted on behalf of the Spannocchi family. The document tells us implicitly several things about this family at this juncture in its history. Ambrogio, the Sienese merchant, had evidently lived in Rome for a few years, as indicated by the work he had previously paid for in the house which his family was renting. The use of the phrase *mercator Senensis* in his name does not in itself tell us much beyond indicating a place of origin for the man or his family.²⁶ He had recently died, leaving "sons and heirs," apparently not yet at the age of majority. Their names do not appear in the document, and an executor acted on their behalf.

One might be tempted to suggest that the extension of their father's rental agreement indicates some kind of effort at family continuity. But more pragmatic factors may have taken precedent. The family was already, it seems, living in

²⁵ This earlier document is, typically, simply referred to as an instrument held by Lorenzo Petroni di Clodiis, public notary. Unfortunately, if the document is extant, it is not presently available. ASR NC 1174, fo. 65.

²⁶ See comments on significance of place names, Chapter 2, note 28.

the house in Via Recta, and the deceased father had already invested money in repairs to it. Thus, perhaps the extension of the lease was simply to ensure that the family got the best possible value out of their investment.

In November of 1475, five brothers with the family name of de Rubeis rented out a house they owned in Monte Giordano, in Ponte. The house was rented by two men, about whose additional relationships we know nothing, Lorenzo Vestri, and Stefano Palutii dei Archioni, for the sum of 94 florins (44 gold papal ducats) per annum, for a period of five years. The two partners also promised to maintain the shop in the lower part of the house. It is interesting to note that the document mentions that Puccino da Florentia was presently staying in the house, but no mention was made of what would happen to him in the future. Also, the document was drawn up in the house of the first two brothers, Luca and Francisco, located in Pigna.²⁷ Therefore, it seems that the house here being rented was part of the family patrimony jointly owned by the Rubeis brothers, although we do not know whether it was purchased by them or if they inherited it. In any case, the location was certainly a good one for investment, near to the Orsini stronghold and in one of the most densely populated *rioni* in the city. The transaction is significant here, for it shows us brothers cooperating in a simple

²⁷ ASR NC 1314, fo. 104, obviously, the brothers owned property in diverse locations in the city.

investment venture over a period of several years. On the other hand, the partnership renting the property seems to involve no family ties.

A number of rental documents deal with houses belonging to institutions. One such house belonged to the hospital of Santa Lucia in Rome, and was located in the Borgo Leonino, on the banks of the Tiber. It was rented to Girolamo Miccaelis of Campo Marzio, on behalf of himself and his heirs. Acting for the hospital were Thomaso di Lorenzo Bonis of Ponte, who also owned the house next door to the one in question, and the goldsmith, Angelino Santensis. Why the latter was involved is not clear, but the fact that Thomaso owned adjoining property is significant. We often find that neighbours were called on to act as caretakers or agents, in cases where the property owner was a private individual as well.²⁸ Thus we see again how business relationships extended beyond family networks, when it was expedient.

The rental contract was for three years, at 20 florins (10 gold cameral ducats) per year, apparently to be paid in six-monthly installments. This document raises some other questions. Why, for example, was someone from Campo Marzio renting a house in the Borgo? There is of course some problem with the exact meaning, again, of place names in recording the names of individuals. While it may mean - and

²⁸ See for example, Chapter 4, note 27, ASR NC 1313, fo. 61.

probably most often does - that the specified *rione* was a man's principal place of residence, it certainly does not preclude his being about to relocate. However, this document gives no motive for doing so. It could be that Girolamo was taking on the rented house for business purposes, or on behalf of someone else. While the document does not specifically mention his family, it does stipulate that he is acting on behalf of himself and his heirs and successors, so we must assume that he did have some family.²⁹

In other agreements examined, where houses belonging to churches were rented, the circumstances seemed to be quite similar. In most cases, several people, usually holding some office at the church, acted on the church's behalf, while the renters were individuals acting alone.³⁰ In each of these

²⁹ ASR NC 1313, fo. 67 The date on this document, probably 1468, is uncertain because of the legibility. See also note 16 above.

³⁰ "Venerabilis Vir Dominus Iacobus Pontanus, Beneficiatus et ad presens Camerarius Camere Basilice Principis Apostolorum de Urbe," acted on authority from three others on behalf of the noted church, in ASR NC 1313, fo. 74. Iacopo Pontano, canon of the church of the SS. Celso et Giuliano, and *prebendarius*, of the noted house, acted with the consent of *maioris partis capituli* of the said church, after which five others are listed, in ASR NC 1314, fo. 75. (One wonders if this Iacopo Pontano is the same in the latter document, acted in 1473, and in the former, acted six years later, in 1479). The exception here is frate Dominico, of Rome, rector of Santa Maria infra Monte Giordano, who acted alone on his church's behalf in ASR NC 1764, fo. 134.

cases, the renters would appear to have been from outside the city.³¹

For example, in December, 1471, Francisco Toner, priest and cleric from the diocese of Maiorca, rented a house from the church of Santa Maria infra Monte Giordano for a period of one year. It was noted that Francisco had already been living in the house, so this agreement was probably an extension of his lease for an additional year. There were provisions spelled out in the agreement for notifying and compensating him should the house be needed prior to the end of the lease period. It would appear that this Maiorcan cleric was in Rome on a temporary basis, but the duration of his stay was not clearly defined. Since the rent he paid was relatively low, 23 florins (11 cameral ducats at 72 bols.) per annum, it seems reasonable to suggest that the quarters he rented were not elaborate, and that his household, if it extended beyond his own person, was small.³²

The document on the house belonging to the Church of SS. Celso et Giuliano in Ponte and rented to Giovanni di Antonio of Milan, provides few certainties. We don't know, if in fact Giovanni had only recently come from Milan, what brought him to Rome. Nor do we have any indication of a

³¹ Some qualification is necessary. I have already made note of the problems with place names used as last names and in relying on them as anything but a vague indicator of a place of origin. See Chapter 2, notes 28 and 31.

³² ASR NC 1764, fo. 134.

family. Since there was no reference to business associations with the house, and since the rent was relatively low -- 26 florins (12 papal ducats) per year -- it was likely that Giovanni intended to live in the house, which he had rented for three years.³³

In a fourth document where a house belonged to a church, it was rented to one Cristoforo from Bergamo, *Magister Cursorum*, a messenger, but for whom we do not know. This document raises other questions. Again we don't know much about the tenant, and there is no reference to a family. Whether Cristoforo had any family in Rome or not, he certainly acted alone in this agreement. The document was drawn up in the house in which Cristoforo was living at the time, also located in Ponte. It would seem, moreover, that a business investment was at issue, rather than a place of residence. The house, described only as *domus* in the document, was also referred to as *lo pavone*. This suggests that the house served as an hostelry or perhaps a tavern. That it was to be a place of business is also suggested by the rental price, 123 florins (60 gold cameral ducats at 72 bols.) per annum, one of the highest rents I have seen for a house.³⁴

³³ ASR NC 1314, fo. 75.

³⁴ ASR NC 1313, fo. 74

In 1474, two apparently unrelated house owners rented out their property for five and a half years to a man who already owned property adjoining it. On behalf of himself and his heirs, Iacopo di Lorenzo Staxii, apparently formerly from the Abruzzi, now said to be from Colonna, rented this house in the same *rione*, on the Piazza of Santa Maria Rotonda. This is one of the more unusual agreements I have seen in that the rental price was paid in a lump sum, received in advance by the owners. The payment details are not given, but are indicated to have been covered by an earlier instrument, held by Paolo Zaccharie and Iacopo Palonis, public notaries. This suggests that the transaction was part of a more complex set of business arrangements between the men involved.³⁵ Whatever Iacopo's reason for renting this house was, by doing so, he extended his block of property holdings on the edge of one of Rome's more important squares. Since he had heirs, perhaps this was a conscious effort to expand the patrimony he would leave them.

Some house rentals clearly indicate business opportunities, yet what exactly it was those opportunities entailed is not always obvious. In August of 1471, Nuccio di Riso da Neranca of Ponte rented to a certain Martino dei Megerchenii, a German baker, acting alone, a house with an

³⁵ ASR NC 1764, fo. A34, the property was owned by Pietro di Sabbe Pietro da Marroccinis of Ponte, and Christoforo, son of the late Honofrio Battista da Rieti, whose residence is not otherwise identified.

oven. The house apparently belonged to Nucio and another man who seems to have shared his last name, although it is not clear if they were brothers. The rental agreement was, in this case also, for two years, at 33 florins (16 ducats at 72 bols.) per year.³⁶

Near the end of 1471, a grocer, who like Martino was probably a relative newcomer to Rome, acquired a business establishment. Nicolao Miccaelis, from Hungary, who was staying at the Torre Sanguignia, rented a house with a *pizzicaria* on the ground floor, from Cola Nardutii, formerly of Rieti, but now resident in the *rione* Ponte. The house in question, also in Ponte, was rented for 55 florins (26 papal ducats), for a period of one year. Since both landlord and tenant were of foreign birth, it is unlikely that they had much in the way of family in Rome.³⁷ But these rental agreements must be seen as the beginnings of some establishment there. The duration of that establishment would depend, not only on their success financially, but also on the founding of a family to pass on that success to.

At times, more complex financial arrangements become apparent. Another rental agreement which involved a business on the ground floor of a house, this time a *macello*, a butcher shop, was entered into by Bartholomeo della

³⁶ ASR NC 1134, fo. 101. The other owners name was Giovanni da Neranea. The house was also located in Ponte.

³⁷ ASR NC 1764, fo. 128.

Pilosella, renting from Antonio, called *Ciortarello*, in 1470. The rental price was 51 florins (24 ducats) per annum for a two year period.³⁸ What makes this arrangement unusual is the fact that Bartholomeo had in fact sold the same house to Antonio, on the same day.³⁹ The sale of the house was made with the consent of Bartholomeo's two sons. The house was located in family territory; his brother Pietro owned a house next door. The sale price was to be paid in installments over the next two years; the same time period of the rental agreement. Apparently, the Pilosella family, or at least Bartholomeo, was in some financial difficulty, and this double arrangement involving his house and place of business was the only way out.⁴⁰ If that was the case, he apparently never recovered his finances sufficiently to buy the house and business back, for Antonio was renting it out five years later.⁴¹

Women as well as men became involved in rental agreements in Quattrocento Rome. In January, 1468, Margarita Gallica la Vannarie of Parione, rented a house in the same *rione* from a certain Iacopo di Mattheo, a shoemaker, for a

³⁸ ASR NC 952, fo. 14.

³⁹ See ASR NC 952, fo. 13, for the sale agreement.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* For more details on the entire series of transactions see chapters below.

⁴¹ ASR NC 1314, fo. 150. In fact, by that time, other references, ASR NC 1314, fo. 112, tells us that Bartholomeo was dead.

six month period, for 13 florins (6 ducats). The document gives us few other details, beyond that Margarita promised to live in the house honestly and to be a good neighbour. One must ask why she would be renting for such a short period unless her financial situation prevented her from making a longer commitment. And why the proviso for living honestly unless there was some reason to cast doubt on her way of living? Something is perhaps also revealed in the absence of a title, for she is called neither lady, nor wife, nor widow.⁴² A second woman, also Margarita, called *da Callabria*, rented a house on September 1st, 1469, from Violante da Quellar, from the diocese of Segovia. This time the house must have been more substantial. Although like the previous house it had ground and upper floors, *domus terrinea et solarata*, this time there is also mention of a garden behind the house. At 28 florins (13 current ducats) for the six month rental period, it is also twice as expensive.⁴³ For both these women, untitled, with no mention of husbands or children, and functioning as they did on their own, one must conclude that they were lone, unattached individuals.

Much more well defined were the circumstances of Lionecta, who appeared in a document drawn up in the dining

⁴² ASR NC 709, fo. A12.

⁴³ ASR NC 709, fo. A208.

room of her own house, in August of 1470.⁴⁴ This woman, in full, *honestā domina* Lionecta, wife of the late Daniele da Napoli, of Ponte, that is, a widow, was also the administrator and guardian to the sons and heirs of her late husband, who had not yet achieved majority. In that capacity, she agreed to rent out the house belonging to those heirs, which included upper and lower floors, several rooms including a kitchen, two ground floor rooms, with a portico and a shop in front. The house, also located in Ponte, was next door to property owned by Nicolao, also a Neapolitan, familiar of Cardinal Orsini, a compatriot and perhaps a relative of her late husband. The rent for this apparently substantial structure was 62 florins (29 gold cameral ducats) for the one year lease, paid half at the beginning and half after six months, again in the *more romano*.⁴⁵

Another woman whose social status was well defined and who took an active role on behalf of her wards over a number

⁴⁴ "Actum rome in Regione pontis videlicet in tinello domus habitationis dicte domine et dictorum heredum...." This in itself is somewhat exceptional. When documents were drawn on behalf of women, especially widows, care was usually taken to ensure that they meet with the notaries in a public place, often the steps of a church, where all could see what transpired. In fact the favourite spot in Rome seemed to be the steps of Santa Maria Aracoeli on the Capitoline Hill. See for example, ASR NC 1644, fo. 7r. At least one document (ASR NC 1764, fo. 50) with a woman acting on her own behalf was drawn up on the steps of the local butcher shop.

⁴⁵ The description of the house reads; "domum dictorum heredum terrineam solaratam et tectatam cum sala cameris coquina in ea existente et cum duobus terrineis et cum porticali et apotheca ante eam." ASR NC 709, fo. B53.

of years was the *nobilis domina* Giovanna, widow of the late Giuliano Ser Roberti of Ponte. In two different documents, one drawn up on the December 13, 1463, and a second in August, 1468, she acted on behalf of her grandson. Much is revealed about the fortunes of this family in the first few lines of the document, where we find this widow, paternal grandmother and guardian to Giovanni Francisco, *pupillus filius et heres quondam Ieronimi Iuliani ser Roberti*.⁴⁶ Since she still acted on his behalf five years later, he was obviously quite young when his father died.⁴⁷ In the first of these documents Giovanna rented out a vineyard and cane field for three years to Antonio Corradi, of Ponte. This property, located outside Porta Castelli, in an area called *prata falconi*, the falcon's meadow - no doubt a favourite area for hawkers to play their birds - was bordered on one side by property belonging to Silvester, also a son of Giovanna and her late husband.⁴⁸

As was usually the case with vineyards, there was no exchange of cash in the agreement. Rather, the renter was entitled to usage and production from the property, promising to work it diligently, while the owner took a specific share

⁴⁶ ASR NC 1105, fo. 4; juvenile son and heir of the late Gyrolamo di Giuliano Ser Roberti.

⁴⁷ ASR NC 709, fo. A65.

⁴⁸ ASR NC 1105, fo. 4.

of the production. In this case that share was six barrels of must.⁴⁹

In 1468, Giovanna rented out a second vineyard, located in the same area, but it is not clear whether the two properties were the same. There is no mention of Silvester anymore, nor were the other neighbours the same. There does appear an *Ugolinus Lombardi* listed as holding adjoining property in 1463, and in 1468, *Golinus Lumbardus*, who along with Raffello da Viterbo - the latter now listed as a neighbouring property holder - held harvesting rights in the vineyard. It was also stated in 1468 that the vineyard was formerly rented to Antonio della Segnia, a Croatian, and to the said Raffello, and that Giovanna now leased it under similar conditions to Giovanni di Mattheo Barberii and his wife. There are several problems presented in assuming that this Antonio della Segnia and Antonio Corradi, of the earlier document, are the same person. Antonio was a common name, and in fact there is, in the 1463 document, an Antonio Palictii, owner of an adjoining property, who could just as easily prove to be Antonio della Segnia.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ ASR NC 1105, fo. 4.

⁵⁰ Antonio Corradi does appear as a witness in a document, ASR NC 1314, fo. 131, drawn in Ponte in 1475, concerning the rental of a shop, but there are no other parallels to the present document and no reasons to tie him to Segnia. Also, on the problems presented by possible name combinations, see Chapter 2, note 6.

In any case, the important points here are that Giovanna acted as *tutrix* and administrator to her under age grandson for a period of at least five years, taking care of the family estate on behalf of what remained of her broken family. She did so by striking business deals with diverse individuals, with whom, so far as we know, she had no specific connections beyond a common interest in the business arrangement itself.⁵¹

Other widows with no one to work their property also let out vineyards. In 1473, Domina Lucia, widow of the late Angelo Angelis, rented a vineyard to Thomas da Piemonte. The agreement was to last three years, and the lady was to be given three *caballate* of must each year, or a quarter of all that was made.⁵²

Not only widows but currently married women could participate in business arrangements. In April 1471, *discreta mulier* Iacobella di Ceccho Lanciario of Ponte rented a vineyard noted as belonging to her, with no mention of having obtained permission from her husband, to one Cola di Francisco da Monte Sancti Angeli in Apulia.⁵³ Not all wives

⁵¹ In the later agreement, the family's share of the vineyard's production was to be one quarter of the wine. ASR NC 709, fo. A65.

⁵² ASR NC 1314, fo. 76. In a separate document, drawn up July 27, 1467, Cola di Paolo Ferrarii of Colonna, was confirmed as procurator for the widow, suggesting that her husband had only recently died at that time. ASR NC 709, fo. 78.

⁵³ ASR NC 1764, fo. 50.

did act so freely, however. In October of the same year, Antonio Perdone, a barber also known as *Cifoletta*, of Ponte, was noted as having rented out a vineyard, with his wife's permission. Interestingly, the vineyard was referred to as the property of Antonio, but since the wife's permission was included, it may well be that he had acquired it as part of her dowry.⁵⁴ In both these last documents, there was an obligation against the vineyard to a church.

In these few examples of rental arrangements, we see, to some extent, the diversity of circumstances under which individuals and their families entered into contractual agreements. In a number of cases, we find family members jointly engaged in owning property, or making investments in property. We also find a great many individuals who acted completely alone, or with other individuals to whom they had no family ties. Finally, we see evidence of the natural barriers to family continuity, and to the extension of patrimonies. Several widows acted on their own behalf.

⁵⁴ As is normal in such cases, the phrase *cum consensu* is repeated throughout, ASR NC 1764, fo. 108. According to Berger, p. 408, the term *consensus* in Roman law could be used unilaterally, with one person giving consent, or bilaterally, two in agreement, but that the consent "must be complete and free from external influence." That the latter was the case here is not at all clear. Many questions of womens' ability to give consent, and to obtain consent to act in legal matters, remain unanswered. Thomas Kuehn, "*Cum Consensu Mundualdi*: Legal Guardianship of Women in Quattrocento Florence," in *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 13, 1982, pp. 310, 311, examines consent for womens public actions in Florence but notes the lack of understanding generally.

These may often have had no heirs, and their family's lineage ended with them. Others acted on behalf of their heirs, and perhaps the patrimony was preserved or enhanced through their efforts. Some heirs, as minors, were acted for by guardians of no apparent relationship. Again, perhaps the family's economic position may have been preserved through the offices of a trustworthy guardian. But aside from these fortunate orphans, there must have been many less fortunate, whose patrimonies fell victim to mismanagement.

Having noted the difficulties encountered by Quattrocento Romans in their attempts to enhance patrimonies and family situations through the rental trade in real estate, let us see how they fared in another area of property transaction, that of buying and selling.

CHAPTER 4 Property Sales

Giannozzo: "...I would buy one (a house) that was airy, spacious, and able to receive my family, and then, if a good friend should come, to keep him in the house comfortably as well. And in this I would look to spend the least money."
Alberti, "I libri della famiglia."

If the Quattrocento Roman was concerned with enhancing his family's material assets, he would certainly have considered purchasing real estate, and chances are he would not have had the option of being as fussy about his selection as Alberti suggested.¹ Of course, individuals and families could only increase their real estate portfolios as far as their economic circumstances would allow. We have already seen how Bartholomeo della Pilosella sold his house and butcher shop, then rented it back.² Whatever his motivation for this action, in doing so, he gave up some of the potential assets of the Pilosella patrimony. It seems

¹ Giannozzo: "...che me ne comperrei una ariosa, spaziosa, atta a ricevere la famiglia mia, e più, se ivi capitasse qualche amicissimo, poterlo ritenere in casa onestamente. E in questa cercherei spendere quanto manco potessi danari." Alberti, p. 190.

² ASR NC 952, fos. 9, 13, 14. The sale price of this house was the highest noted among the documents examined. See note 5 below.

unlikely that he would have done so had his financial situation not required it. When Bartholomeo sold his house, he did so with the consent of his two sons, Ludovico and Thomeo, who renounced their maternal inheritance.³

Five years later, in October, 1475, Bartholomeo's nephew, Antonio della Pilosella, and his wife Caterina, agreed to sell a house, also located in Ponte. While it is difficult to accurately position the various pieces of property - in the 1470 document the location was given as being on Via Recta, in the later one, simply as "*via publica*" - it seems that the Pilosella owned or had owned several pieces of property in the area. The house now being sold was described as being in the possession of Pietro della Pilosella, while both he and the heirs of the now deceased Bartholomeo held adjacent pieces of property.⁴

Antonio sold this house for a price of 102 florins (50 ducats at 72 bol.), and payment was made straight away, in silver coin. This was a relatively modest price among the twenty house sales examined in the thirty year period with

³ ASR NC 952, fo. 13. "Ludovici...et Thome eius filiorum presentorum et renuntiaverunt quo ad infrascripta omnia et singula cuiscumque successioni materne etc."

⁴ ASR NC 1314, fo. 123. In this document, the relationship between Antonio and Pietro was not made clear. But elsewhere, ASR NC 1314, fo. 196, Antonio was identified as the son of Pietro. Other particulars are vague. Pietro did not enter into the sales agreement, yet we know from other documents, ASR NC 1314, fo. 178, for example, that he was still alive two years later. Possibly Antonio and his wife lived in the house as well, but this is also uncertain.

which we are concerned, (Table 2 lists the sales of houses and of other property examined) with the most costly house going for 1,064 florins (500 current ducats).⁵ The lowest price paid, for what was noted to be one-quarter of a house, was 38 florins (18 ducats at 72 bol. per ducat + 54 bol.) The next lowest was 64 florins (30 gold ducats), with the average among the house sales examined being approximately 346 florins. Of the other property sales examined, mostly vineyards and cane fields, but including one olive grove and three vacant plots of ground, the prices were considerably lower, ranging from 12 to 140 florins, and averaging about 64 florins.⁶

⁵ This high priced establishment was unusual in two ways. It is the only example I have found of a house and business combined in one sale, and the sale itself seems to have been prompted by economic necessity. It does not, however, seem to have been a spurious sale to disguise a loan, for the new owner was seen renting out the shop to a new tenant after the death of the first owner. ASR NC 952, fo. 13, and NC 1314, fo. 150.

⁶ Table 2 lists the properties, sale dates and purchase prices. Prices shown appear in the documents as Roman florins at a rate of 47 *soldi* per florin, except where indicated in brackets. Gold ducats are assumed to be valued at 75 *bolonini* if rate is not given. Documents referred to in the table are as follows in order of appearance; ASR NC 482, fo. 249; NC 1684, fo. 17; NC 704, fo. A29; NC 1174, fo. 36; fo. 41; NC 484, fo. 189; NC 952, fo. 13; NC 1764, fo. 1; NC 1476, fo. 22; NC 1764, fo. 31; fo. 137; NC 1666, fo. 112; NC 1314, fo. 123; NC 1083, fo. 29; NC 1313, fo. 44; NC 1667, fo. 89; NC 1314, fo. 189; NC 228, fo. 34; fo. 40; NC 1174, fo. 68; NC 1684, fo. 111; NC 1479, fo. 2; NC 1174, fo. 30; fo. 38; NC 704, fo. B61; fo. B68; NC 952, fo. 11; fo. 21; NC 1476, fo. 18; NC 1294, fo. 34; NC 1292, fo. 14; NC 1314, fo. 121; fo. 144; fo. 173; NC 1313, fo. 60; fo. 61; NC 1293, fo. 70.

TABLE 2: Property Sales

Type of Property	Price in Roman Florins	Year
House	320	1451
House	64 (30 gold ducats)	1453
House	300	1457
House	340 (160 gold ducats)	1459
House	80	1459
House	148	1461
House and butcher shop	1,064 (500 current ducats)	1470
House	500	1471
House	700	1471
House (one quarter of)	38 (18 ducats at 72 + 54 bol.)	1471
House	200	1471
House	212 (100 gold ducats at 75)	1474
House	102 (50 ducats at 72 bol.)	1475
House	745 (gold Papal ducats)	1476
House	800	1477
House	468 (220 gold ducats at 75)	1477
House	313 (147 ducats)	1477
House	260	1477
House	50	1477
House	212 (100 gold ducats at 10 carleni per ducat)	1482
Vacant lot and vineyard	40	1454
Vineyard	20	1458
Vineyard	100	1459
Vineyard (one-half of)	70	1459
Vineyard	140	1462
Vineyard	140	1462
Canefield	21 (10 ducats)	1470
Vacant lot in Ponte	64 (30 ducats)	1470
Vineyard	50	1471
Vineyard	55	1475
Vineyard and canefield	55	1475
Vineyard	50	1475
Vineyard	38	1476
Canefield	12 (6 ducats at 72 bol.)	1477
Vacant lot	40	1478
Vineyard	64 (30 ducats at 75 bol.)	1478
Olive grove	130 (61 ducats and 11 bol.)	1479

The manner of payment was almost always a lump sum at the time the agreement was drawn up or a few days later. The normal procedure was that an initial document of intent was drawn up and a relatively small deposit, the *arra*, perhaps ten percent of the purchase price, was made with a promise to pay the remainder within a few days.⁷ At the time the sale was completed, a second document was made. Unfortunately, in many cases, only one of the documents still exists.⁸ Of the thirty-seven documents examined, there are only eight where a portion of the payment was deferred for a substantial time. In these cases, one-half the price was usually paid immediately, and the remainder in one or two payments within one, or sometimes two, years. In the case of vineyards, the deferred payments were sometimes to be made after the next grape harvest, and possibly two subsequent harvests.⁹

* * *

In January, 1459, a young man named Pietro, referred to as *discretus iuvenis*, a minor, together with his sister

⁷ See ASR NC 228, fo. 34, and Berger, p. 367, on the term itself.

⁸ An example is given by ASR NC 952, fos. 9 and 13. The first was drawn up on October 29, 1470, and included a deposit of 43 florins (20 ducats) on the stated price of 1,064 florins (500 ducats). The second document was drawn on November 10, at which time 638 florins (300 ducats) were paid, and it was agreed that the remainder was to be paid within two years.

⁹ ASR NC 1292, fo. 14, and ASR NC 1476, fo. 18.

Paulina, herself under 25 years of age, agreed to sell a vineyard to which they held title.¹⁰ The document does not tell us where the father, Antonio Scrimarii, was, but since the young people acted on their own, it must be assumed that he was dead. The vineyard at issue, located inside the city wall, was sold to two brothers, Antonio and Nicolao, sons of Lorenzo Cole Sabbe of Trevi, for 100 florins.¹¹ We cannot know from the existing evidence, why exactly these young people sold their vineyard. Yet it would seem that, since the father was probably deceased, they found themselves in a position where they could not work the vineyard, or more likely, they needed ready cash.¹² In any event, circumstances led them to dispose of at least a part of their patrimony. As was often the case, the members of another family, the Sabbe brothers, were likely to profit by the misfortune of the Scrimarii, and able to add to their own patrimony.

In February of the same year, two transactions took place which also involved a brother and sister. Ludovico Cecchi Sancti Tepposi of the *rione* Ponte, sold both a house and a vineyard to his sister Iacobella, widow of the late

¹⁰ As is usual, Pietro's exact age was not given, only that he was between 14 and 20. ASR NC 1174, fo. 30.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² The latter seems probable, for if it were simply a matter of being unable to work the vineyard, they could have struck a rental agreement, like some we have already discussed, and retained possession of this material asset.

Paolo Petroni. This time, it seems, one family member, as a widow, was left in an insecure position, and her brother took steps to see that his assets would serve her economic needs as well.¹³ It may be that obligations to this effect had been placed on Ludovico in their father's will, especially if the property involved was part of their inheritance.

The house, located on the Piazza San Salvatore in Lauro, was also next door to property owned by Iacobella's late husband. Also appearing in the transaction for the house was another sister, Flora, who it seems had (and continued to have) the right to stay in the house.¹⁴ The price paid for the house was, at 340 florins (160 gold ducats), about average among those examined.¹⁵ The vineyard, actually one-half of Ludovico's vineyard of three *petiae*, and located outside the Porta Castelli on the right bank of the Tiber, sold for 70 florins.

Another house sale in 1459 involved two widows. A modest house in Ponte, priced at 80 florins, was sold by Filippa, widow of the late Giovanni da Tostis. The house

¹³ We have noted that studies of other Quattrocento Italian cities have revealed the presence of surprisingly large numbers of widows. By the frequency with which they appear in notarial transactions, this must also have been the case in Rome. This is taken up further in Chapter 5.

¹⁴ The phrase used was "cum onere sedii domine flore eius germane sororis super dicta domo cum omnibus et singulis suis iuribus," etc., in *ASR NC* 1174, fo. 36.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

backed on other property Filippa owned.¹⁶ The buyer of this house was another widow, Palotia, who had been married to Andreozzo di Giovanni. Acting jointly with her on the purchase was a certain Iacopo di Giovanni Stefano of Ponte. Unfortunately, the document gives us no clue as to what the relationship between the two buyers was. Their connection may or may not have involved family ties. What is clear is that here we have two widows, one acting alone and on her own behalf, the other in conjunction with an acquaintance. However, although Filippa was looking after her own affairs, she did have children, as she also acted for the heirs of her dead husband.

Other widows also acted on their own behalf in sales of real estate. On May 3, 1457, Lucia, widow of Giovanni di Iacopo Piazzolante of the *rione* Ponte, sold a house, in the *rione* Arenula, to two unrelated men of the latter *rione*. Iacopo di Ludovico and Giuliano di Angelo di Magistro Antonio paid 300 florins for the house.¹⁷

In other situations, widows did not act completely on their own initiative. Angelotia, wife of the late Giovanni di Nardo Romano, and her married daughter Cherubina, with the consent of the latter's husband, sold a vineyard in 1471 to a

¹⁶ The document, ASR NC 1174, fo. 41, was acted March 13, 1459. The house was described as *domus terrinea et tegulata cum modico discoperto retro*.

¹⁷ A larger house than the previous one, both by the price and the description, *domus terrinea et solarata*, ASR NC 704, fo. A29.

certain Valentino, formerly of Sutri, now said to be of the *rione* Colonna. The vineyard, which included a canefield, was located outside the Porta del Popolo, next to property owned by Angelotia's late husband. There is mention of a renunciation on the part of Cherubina regarding the *donatio propter nuptias*.¹⁸ Payment was to be made such that, of the 50 florin price, 20 florins were paid immediately, to the said lady, Angelotia. The remaining 30 were to be paid to her son-in-law Paolo, in two instalments of 15 florins at each of the next two wine harvests.¹⁹ The fact that the son-in-law was to receive a portion of the sale price was probably related to the renunciation made by his wife. The property had apparently been part of her dowry (or security against it), so that her renunciation of the dower was required to allow the sale of the property. As part of that agreement, the husband received a share in the sale price, probably, to compensate him for a portion of the dowry he was giving up,

¹⁸ The *donatio propter nuptias*, or dower, was a gift promised by a prospective husband or his family and served as security against the dowry itself. In the event something went wrong with the marriage - if the husband died, or it ended otherwise without heirs - the bride's family would be more able to recover the investment in the dowry. The value of the dower varied at times, but by the Justinian code it was to equal the dowry in value. Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans*, p. 590. In fifteenth century Rome it often consisted of property owned by the groom or his family. Similarly, in ASR NC 1684, fo. 111, Iacoba, wife of Antonio Cerria da Salerno of Ponte renounced her rights to the nuptial gift when he sold one-third of a piece of land for 40 florins in 1454. Also see, ASR NC 1629, fo. A136, where Camillo Cesarini committed a house as the *donatio*.

¹⁹ ASR NC 1476, fo. 18.

or perhaps to return something of the *donatio propter nuptias* he had originally put up. There may, however, be other explanations for this arrangement. What is important here is that this illustrates how the exchange of property and wealth between families with marriage ties could become very complicated. The complications could become worse when part or all of a dowry had to be paid back.²⁰

Again, while it is difficult to say with finality what exactly was the motivation for a sale like this one, it is apparent that this family found it expedient to liquidate some of their real estate. It may have been that the widow Angelotia needed money for living expenses, or perhaps her son-in-law wanted cash for other investments. The latter seems the least likely of the two, since he did not receive any cash immediately.²¹ Nonetheless, we do see here an example of one family's dealings in property exchange and patrimony adjustment through marriage.

It may be that sometimes a man gained property through marriage, but he may not always have been inclined to keep the property itself. Francesco di Cola della Villa, of Campitelli, sold a house, located in Parione, to Iacopo Cesarini of Ponte, in November 1477. Francesco obtained the

²⁰ For example, see the discussion of the Pilosella family in Chapter 5.

²¹ Of course, this fact alone does not preclude such a possibility. We have seen investments in both houses and vineyards where money to be paid out at later times.

consent of both his wife and mother-in-law for the sale. It may be that the property came his way through his union with their family. It may also be that the wife's family interest in the property was tied to the dowry arrangements for their marriage, perhaps as the security he put up as his part of that agreement. His reason for deciding to liquidate the property remains a matter of speculation.²²

Another agreement for the sale of property involving husbands and wives, drawn up in Ponte in 1475, leaves one a bit more puzzled. Iacobella, wife of Pietro di Giovanni di Domino Iacopo Destes, with her husband's consent, sold her vineyard and canefield, complete with vines and trees, as the document notes, to a certain Pellegrina, wife of Matheo Pauli, also known as Ponzano. The fact that the purchase took place in Pellegrina's name raises interesting questions, especially since she was not even present at the transaction, but only represented by Ponzano.²³ Perhaps hidden behind the scenes in this agreement there was an attempt to avoid taxes. Unfortunately, this is an area where little information exists. But it is clear that women could become involved in business transactions for a variety of reasons, not only through the necessities of widowhood.

²² ASR NC 1313, fo. 44. Since the price obtained in the sale, 800 florins, was one of the higher noted, the house must have been substantial.

²³ ASR NC 1292, fo. 14. Of the total price of the sale, 50 florins, 20 were to be paid at the time, and 17 1/2 at each of the subsequent wine harvests.

A few years earlier, on the last day of March, 1462, Lucrezia, wife of Iacopo di Andreoto of Ponte, also purchased a vineyard. While there was no direct indication that Iacopo was dead, he did not enter into the transaction, aside from being noted as the holder of adjacent property. In this case, the only reference to consent was that of Antonio Paciutii of Trastevere, obtained by the seller. He, Leonardo Ciantelle, like the buyer, was from Ponte. Antonio, it seems, had contracts to work the vineyard in question, which carried on under the new owner.²⁴ A few days later, on the fourth of April, Lucrezia, once more acting on her own behalf, purchased an adjoining vineyard from the same vendor, and again with the consent of Antonio. While Iacopo did not appear in this transaction by his wife either, Leonardo's wife, Vannotia, gave her permission for the sale, as the vineyard had apparently figured in the couple's dowry and bridal gift arrangement.²⁵ Once again, the question of why a married woman was acting in these business transactions arises. One does not expect to find this in Quattrocento Rome.²⁶ While the document does not tell us so, it is possible that Iacopo was deceased. In one document, Lucrezia

²⁴ ASR NC 704, fo. B61.

²⁵ ASR NC 704, fo. B68. Besides giving consent, Vannotia renounced *eius dotis et donationis propter nuptias*. The purchase price of each of these vineyards was 140 florins.

²⁶ She was described as present in ASR NC 705, fo. B61, but there was no indication that her husband was present in either case.

was said to be acting on behalf of her *heredes et successores*. Thus, perhaps we must assume that she was in fact a widow, investing in the patrimony of her children.²⁷

In September, 1474, we find another transaction between women, this time a sale of a house by Rosa, wife of Philipppo (nicknamed Roscio) di Cheriboldi da Milano, from the *rione* Ponte. She sold the house, *solarata, tegulata, terrinea*, to Antonella, further identified only as the mother of Germano di Venectini, of Ripa. Rosa obtained the consent of both her husband Philipppo and her daughter Cassandra. In this case the daughter was under age, and the house figured in some way in the arrangements for her dowry.²⁸ If Antonella was a widow we are not told, only that she had a son who did not figure in the transaction otherwise.

Another interesting sale involving women was the one where Lucrezia di Mantis, a Franciscan tertiary, sold a house. She had the permission of Evangelista di Sebastiano Turrimbaccha of Colonna, but why is not exactly clear. The buyer was Cola di Thomeo da Turrita, who acted on behalf of his brother Paolo and nephew Luca, both of whom were absent.²⁹ Once again in the course of a single transaction

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ ASR NC 1666, fo. 112, acted on September 13, 1474, for a price of 212 florins (100 gold ducats at 75 bol.)

²⁹ ASR NC 1764, fo. 137, acted on December 19, 1471. While the price, 200 florins, was not large, the description of the house sounds impressive, "*domus terrinea solarata et tegulata cum sala cameris terrinea et aliis membris in ea existentibus*"

we see evidence of the diversity of Quattrocento Roman relationships. On one side there was a woman acting alone. On the other, purchasing the property were two brothers, and the son of one of these, adding to their real estate portfolio.

While some Roman fathers died leaving widows to look after their affairs, at other times there was no family member to do so. Sometimes family property had to be dealt with by executors. The late Rita, whose husband, Antonio Pazini of Trastevere had apparently predeceased her, left Egidio Andree, the holder of a benefice at San Pietro, and Thomaso di Angelo Cypriani, also of Trastevere, to sell her house on behalf of her heirs. The other party in this sale was a woman, but not a widow. Girolama, the wife of Giovanni Bonadies of Ponte, purchased this house with no apparent intervention on the part of her husband, for 700 florins.³⁰ He was alive at this time, for he appeared as a witness in another transaction some four months later on July 31, 1471.³¹

Many documents of sales of property give a small hint at cooperative ventures, dealings between family members,

et cum porticali ante eam."

³⁰ ASR NC 1476, fo. 22.

³¹ ASR NC 1764, fo. 82. As an interesting aside, this house is described as being located in Ponte, in the place known as *lo panico*, which also appears in the description of the house and butcher shop sold by Bartholomeo della Pilosella about four months earlier. ASR NC 952, fo. 13.

efforts at consolidation of family holdings, or, equally, of the results of family tragedies. Still, in examining many other documents, one could take the view that Quattrocento Rome saw individual men making business deals in expedient and independent ways with all and sundry.

In February, 1478, Nardo di Giuliano da Abrile, a resident of Ponte, with the consent of the proprietor Giovanni di Antonio Cianfeglione of the same *rione*, sold a small vineyard located outside Porta Castelli, for a price of 64 florins, (30 gold ducats at 75 bol.) The buyer of this property was a Slav from the city of Lovo, called Pietro Alegeteti. Giovanni, who worked this vineyard, also owned another adjacent piece of property. The document gives one additional small bit of evidence about a particular family. Another piece of property next to that being sold was owned by the widow of one Mencio di Oddo.³²

In the same way we learn that in 1453 Francesco della Zeccha of Ponte bought a modest house with a garden behind, in Ponte, beside property he already owned.³³ On the other hand, in 1476, Lorenzo Cecchi di Marcellanis of Parione sold a house located beside another house he owned in Ponte. For this he obtained 745 florins (350 gold papal ducats).³⁴

³² ASR NC 1313, fo. 61.

³³ ASR NC 1684, fo. 17. It must have been modest indeed, since the price was only 64 florins (30 gold ducats).

³⁴ ASR NC 1083, fo. 29.

While one man enlarged, if in a small way, his block of real estate in the center of the city, another gave up a portion of his.

One man we can be sure was acting on his own behalf rather than for a family in buying a house in Parione in 1477. Fra Matheo da Ferraria bought the house from Nicolo Gaytonus and his wife Vannotia, the latter of whom the house had belonged to, for 468 florins (220 ducats at 75 bol.).³⁵ A later transaction, actually in 1482, had Antonio Bartholomeo from Mantua, who served in arms for Pope Sixtus IV, purchase a house complete with a garden in the back, and behind which flowed the Tiber. He purchased this river-bank property for the sum of 212 florins (100 gold ducats at 10 carlenum per ducat) from another non-native Roman, Giovanni Marci, formerly of Orto, now living in Ponte.³⁶

In these last two documents we meet a small but significant sample of the Roman population, a sample that reveals something of the problems in discussing the Quattrocento Roman family in any generalized way. We find a man, who for religious reasons would live out his life with neither wife nor family, although, truly, he may have substituted in their place the family of his brother friars. We have a husband and wife who had a bit of property in the city. Since they were selling her house, presumably he owned

³⁵ ASR NC 1667, fo. 89.

³⁶ ASR NC 1174, fo. 68.

one himself and they would invest the money some way. If they had children, they were not mentioned here, but there is a chance they did or would later on. That is certainly not guaranteed, however, for if one looks at other households, particularly where they have been examined in detail in other Quattrocento cities, one finds many that were childless. Finally, we have two men, born outside of Rome, but, seemingly somewhat established here. If they were married or not we do not know. Perhaps if not now they will be later. Looking back to some of the other sales we have examined in the chapter, to one of the numerous widows selling off some property to help her through old age, or perhaps securing a place for herself to live out her last years in comfort, or to one of the heirs in minority who must rely on the good judgement of their late parents in having chosen sound executors to handle their affairs, the picture becomes even more diverse.

In the following pages we will endeavour to look more closely through the exchanges and holdings of property to the families that stand, or for that matter, do not stand, behind them.

CHAPTER 5 The Family Together?

Gianozzo: "Yes, my Lionardo, let the families be contained under one roof, and if the family grows so one room cannot serve for it, let it at least stay of one mind under one spirit."
Alberti, "I libri della famiglia."

- - -

Thus it is that a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife....
Ephesians 5, 31.

- - -

"What are these cries? They are the voices of the innocent babies thrown into your Arno and your privies or buried alive in your gardens and your stables....The cries of souls who might have been born, but were not, on account of the cursed vice of sodomy...and if you continue in this fashion, in another fifteen years, you will be half as many again."
San Bernardino of Siena.

These quotations provide very different commentaries on the notions of family and its social role.¹ Yet all three reflect a strong sense of the Quattrocento Italian experience. One suggests an expansive togetherness. The next indicates a division and renewal. The third, rather

¹ The Italian from Alberti, p. 192, reads: "Si, Lionardo mio, sotto uno tetto si reducano le famiglie, e se, cresciuta la famiglia, una stanza non può riceverle, assettinsi almeno sotto una ombra tutti d'uno volere." The quotation from San Bernardino is from Iris Origo, *The World of San Bernardino*, (New York, 1962), p. 198. The preaching friar is here attacking two sins, the sin of the pleasures of the flesh, and that of denying man's natural duty to procreate.

melodramatically, tells a story of disruption and discontinuity.

For the Quattrocento Roman there was a desire to build a large, strong family as a protective buffer in a world where *fortuna* was a major player, and often a ruthless one.² In contrast to this desire, there were the forces at work in the fifteenth century which undermined the growth of the family, dividing, separating and sometimes destroying it. Death, often premature, of parents and children, economic pressures, difference of opinion, and the desire for independence among individual family members, all tended to cut away at the extension and growth of families. In Rome especially, where perhaps as many as fifty percent of the adults were relative newcomers to the city, the establishment of large and cooperative family units must have been very difficult.

* * *

On the fifth day of the new year 1478, Iacopo de Cesarinis of Ponte, together with his son Camillo, purchased a piece of vacant property next to Iacopo's house on the Piazza Castello. This piece of ground, purchased for 40

² For the Renaissance man, *fortuna* encompassed the abundance of nature's cornucopia, and the violence of a river in flood, bringing by turn plentitude or destruction. While man could fortify himself against her whims, it was also dangerous to oppose her. Thomas Flanagan, "The Concept of Fortuna in Machiavelli," in *The Political Calculus*, ed. A. Parel, (Toronto, 1972), pp. 131, 136, 137.

florins from Lorenzo di Marcellinis of Parione, was to be used to expand Iacopo's house. The Cesarini, it would seem, would have agreed with Gianozzo Alberti's advice to his nephew Lionardo. If not keeping the family all under one roof, they at least were going about their purchases with one mind.³ Evidence that many other Roman families in the Quattrocento were functioning together, even in spirit, is not so easy to come by.

This was not the only property that Iacopo purchased. In fact the house which was now being expanded was, itself, purchased only six months earlier from two men of Pigna.⁴ At that time, although Iacopo alone was listed as the buyer, Camillo was present and agreed to act as *procurator* in the investiture of the house.

However, we must ask additional questions about how the housing needs of Iacopo and his son were met. For, in between these two transactions, Iacopo also purchased another house, this one located in Parione.⁵ Once again Camillo made an appearance, not in the purchase itself, but again in the investiture. So we have two houses, purchased within six months of each other by Iacopo. Was Iacopo just expanding

³ ASR NC 1313, fo. 60. The property is referred to in the document as *area sive solum*.

⁴ The house in the July 1477 document was located in Piazza Castello, next to property owned by Lorenzo di Marcellinis, so it must have been the same one. ASR NC 1314, fo. 189.

⁵ This was one of the more expensive houses we have noted, at 800 florins. ASR NC 1313, fo. 44.

his own investment assets, or was part of his intention here to set up his son in an appropriate residence? Since the adjoining property in Ponte was bought in the son's name and specific mention was made of the intention to extend that house, it seems reasonable to assume that it was the house where Camillo intended to live. This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that both men are recorded in different documents as men of Ponte.⁶ The house in Parione, then, must have been an investment property.

It seems timely that Camillo should be acquiring a permanent residence, for he was betrothed to be married in January, 1474. By now, three years later, with a bit of luck, there may have been small children to think of housing. At the time of the betrothal, yet another house, also located in Ponte was put up as security against Camillo's nuptial gift, as it is called here, the *pignus dotale*, to his prospective bride Lorenza, daughter of Giordano dei Carboni of Monti.⁷ There also exists a later document concerning Camillo but drawn up at the house of a Giuliano di Cesarini. The latter also appeared alone in other documents, but what his relationship to Camillo and Iacopo

⁶ See for example, ASR NC 1629, fo. 136a, and ASR NC 1313, fo. 60.

⁷ Unfortunately, the exchange of wedding vows has not yet been located. ASR NC 1629, fo. 136a, fo. 136b.

was, we never learn.⁸

Two brothers, members of the Porcari family, also remodeled a house, apparently to make it into separate living units, in 1470. It is tempting to argue that they were in a sense following Gianozzo's advice in that they stayed under one roof, while in a sense dividing their inheritance to allow them to follow separate lives, within practical limitations.⁹ However, one must also recognize the possibility that the project may simply have been intended to enhance an investment property, for example, by making two rentable properties.¹⁰ However, we do know that Antonio and Evangelista were sharing a house as recently as December 1467.¹¹ Unfortunately, there is no confirmation that both references are to the same house, as neither document gives a location beyond that of being in Pigna. Still, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the house being redone was the one in which they had lived, and that they would continue to live there.

⁸ From this document, ASR NC 1174, fo. 61, dated June 10, 1480, at which time Camillo was paying off a small debt, we also learn that Iacopo had died sometime after the 1478 document.

⁹ ASR NC 1108, fo. 48.

¹⁰ There are references to extending the roof and a new staircase, the latter apparently for a new entrance. *Ibid.*

¹¹ The document, ASR NC 709, fo. 123, concerning the appointment of a procurator for Paulina Porcari, whose husband had died, was drawn up in the two men's house. Her relationship to them is not clear from this document, but Modigliani, p. 351, shows that she is their sister.

Of the two brothers, only Antonio appears again, on two occasions, both times as a witness.¹² But never again do the brothers appear together, and there is no further indication of what became of their house.

Two other brothers shared a house in Pigna, and they were also engaged jointly in the ownership of at least one additional piece of real estate, together with three other brothers. On November 5, 1474, a rental agreement was drawn up in the house of Luca and Francesco Rubeis. These two, as well as Evangelista, Stefano and Gabriele, all brothers, rented out a house in Ponte to Lorenzo Vestri, and Stefano Palutii di Archionis. The house, located in Monte Giordano, and rented for a five year period, was occupied at the time by a certain Puccino of Florence.¹³

The only one of these brothers whom we have encountered again is Evangelista, who appeared twice as a witness, in 1475 and 1476, and on one occasion was designated to receive payment for an unspecified debt.¹⁴

We have previously met Giovanna, widow of the late Giuliano Ser Roberti, when she was *tutrix* to her grandson Giovanni Francesco, the child of her late son Gerolamo. She

¹² ASR NC 1105, fo. 56, acted November 8, 1464, and ASR NC 709, fo. 55, from September 9, 1467.

¹³ The rental price was 94 florins (44 gold papal ducats), ASR NC 1314, fo. 104.

¹⁴ ASR NC 1314, fo. 113, fo. 147, and fo. 146, the latter on February 13, 1476.

acted in renting out some of his property, in 1463 and again in 1468. We encounter her again elsewhere. First, in April, 1464, when she rented out a third vineyard, also located outside Porta Castello, but not beside the other two. This rental, in perpetuity to a certain Egidio Andrea, the holder of a benefice from San Pietro, on condition that he should see that the vineyard was properly worked, to take care that the 20 florins dedicated to the same church should be paid, and that two barrels of wine would be supplied to Giovanna and her heirs at each wine harvest. In this, Giovanna acted alone, and apparently on her own behalf, as no other family members appeared.¹⁵ In October of the same year, she acted, once again as *tutrix* to Giovanni Francesco, jointly with her son Silvester, and another executor of her late son's will - not a family member - in renting out a house that is here listed as being owned jointly by Silvester and Giovanni Francesco. The house probably was formerly the property of the latter's father, Silvester's brother. The house was rented for 192 florins (90 gold cameral ducats), if the pope was in town, and with compensation to be made if he should be absent, to Filippo, Archbishop of Arles.¹⁶

Through these documents, we cannot learn what tragedy befell the Roberti family prior to 1463 that deprived

¹⁵ ASR NC 708, fo. 17.

¹⁶ ASR NC 708, fo. 109. This would be Philippus de Levis, who became Archbishop in 1463, and was later promoted to Cardinal by Sixtus IV, Eubel, II, p. 93.

Giovanni Francesco of his father, and perhaps his mother as well.¹⁷ The family's misfortunes did not end there, however. A document, dated February 20, 1468, informs us of a second tragedy, the death of Giovanna's other son, Silvester. This time, there were four children, Giovan Battista, Dominico, Faustina and Giulia, left fatherless. Silvester, unlike his brother, appointed not his mother but his wife as guardian.¹⁸

One of the more prominent families encountered in searching through the notarial documents is that of the Sanguinei, whose medieval tower still stands north of Piazza Navona. On April 24, 1478, Riccardo Sanguinei made good use of a certain Pietro di Meriliis, public notary. Pietro drew up that day, in Riccardo's house, the agreement of the betrothal of the latter's daughter Caterina, a document of emancipation for the same daughter, and the testament of the paternal Sanguinei.¹⁹

The dowry for Caterina was a very large one, 2,979 florins (1400 gold ducats), of which 900 ducats was to be in cash, and the other 500 ducats in the form of a half share in a house, which Riccardo called *la Taverna del Cavalletto*,

¹⁷ The mother never appears in any of our documents. Also, see following note.

¹⁸ This change in practice may also suggest more strongly that the mother of Giovanni Francesco was dead, or it may merely reflect the increasing ages of the women involved; in the case of the grandmother, her increasing age may make her less suitable, in the case of the mothers, increasing maturity making them more suitable. ASR NC 709, fo. A23.

¹⁹ ASR NC 1110, fo. 127, fo. 128, fo. 131.

located next to the *Teatro Agone*, the other half share of which he would retain. The lucky man who was to receive all this was Niccolò, son of the late Antonio, also a Sanguinei.²⁰

From his will, we learn that Riccardo also had two sons, Bernardino, an adult, and Dominico, still a child.²¹ The will, which promised to Niccolò the inclusion among the heirs, basically spelled out the series of possible heirs, should either of the two sons die without male heirs, and the priority of who should succeed to the inheritance in each case. It was witnessed by seven men, including Francesco di Sanguinei of Colonna, and another prominent resident of Ponte, Giovanni Bonadies.²²

The latter gentleman appears often in our documents, but without yielding much information about families. His family name is likewise associated with a structure that still stands in Ponte, not far from the Torre de Sanguinei, the

²⁰ ASR NC 1110, fo. 127. Sheila Ross, *Women and Property in Renaissance Rome 1450 - 1480*, Unpublished Thesis, (Calgary, 1987), pp. 75 - 77, notes that this was one of the higher dowries at the time, the highest she noted being 4,000 florins, and most among the noble families being about 1,000 florins.

²¹ The words used to describe them are *adultus* and *infans*: ASR NC 1110, fo. 131.

²² *Ibid.*

Casa Bonadies.²³ We find the name of Giovanni Bonadies again and again, most often acting as a witness.²⁴ Other times he appears in some official capacity, as an arbitrator in a dispute between two men of Ponte, or as an executor for a testament, as he did for Catherina di Antonio Luca Blaxii of Campagnano, now living in Ponte.²⁵ Elsewhere he appears as a guarantor for someone in debt, and he is named as a beneficiary in another testament.²⁶

Yet, we have no reference to any other family members except Giovanni's wife, Girolama. She appears in one document only, and that we noted in Chapter 4, when she acted on her own to purchase an expensive house from the executors of the estate of Rita, the widow of Antonio Pazini of Trastevere.²⁷

Between the two of them, Giovanni and his wife invested considerable money in housing. Just two months earlier, in January, 1471, he had purchased a house at the foot of the

²³ See references in Chapter 2. This house, which dates from near the end of, or just after, the period of our study, is also very close to the location where Iacopo Cesarini purchased his house and lot in 1477 and '78: note 3 above.

²⁴ As in the case of the three Sanguinei documents listed above.

²⁵ The two men disputing were Antonio di Giovanni Damiani and Antonio di Paulo dello Innezato, in ASR NC 1764, A27. The testament is found in ASR NC 1764, fo. 83.

²⁶ The debtors were Nardo Symeonis and his son Stefano of Ponte on February 7, 1471, in ASR NC 1764, fo. 11. The testament, in 1478, was that of Giovanni di Lorenzo Pelliparius of Ponte, ASR NC 1313, fo. 64.

²⁷ ASR NC 1476, fo. 22.

Campo di Fiori from Christoforo dello Sarto di Novellis, of Campitelli, for 500 florins.²⁸ Two years later, on June 19, he made a trade with Cardinal Santa Croce of the church of San Lorenzo Fuori le Mura, a house he owned in Ponte for one in the same *rione* belonging to that church. In addition, Giovanni paid the Cardinal 426 florins (200 ducats). The money, it seems, would go to paying a certain Manfredi for repairs being made to the house Giovanni was getting.²⁹

One thing is particularly clear in nearly all of Giovanni's actions. While he may not have been acting on behalf of his own family, he was clearly a kind of functional father to many people in Ponte.³⁰

* * *

Since the documents being examined in this study are, in the first place, a very small number of those documents recorded in the thirty year period in question, and secondly, even that body of documents as a whole would represent only a

²⁸ ASR NC 1764, fo. 1.

²⁹ ASR NC 1314, fo. 66. This Cardinal Santa Croce, by the date, would have to be Angelus de Capranica, appointed by Pius II in 1460. Yet what his connection with San Lorenzo would have been is not clear from Eubel, II, p. 13.

³⁰ Even though he probably holds such a position by reason of his economic and political position, this still holds true. One is reminded of Giovanni Morelli's concern with the cultivation of the friendship of great men, especially for the orphaned young man, "sanza capo e sanza guida," Morelli, p. 104.

small sample of the people in Quattrocento Rome, statistical information from these documents must be treated with a great deal of caution. Nonetheless, I have generated a few statistics which, I think, reflect something of the general picture that is revealed throughout our discussion.

That picture points to very considerable discontinuity and instability within families. One of the first marks of discontinuity in a family is the absence of a parent and, in the Quattrocento, especially the absence of a father. Throughout I have called attention to widows as they appear in the documentary evidence. To add to that, I note that among twenty-five mothers appearing between 1456 and 1480, ten were described as widows. That is not to say that forty percent of Quattrocento Roman mothers were widows. But, the evidence found by studies of other Quattrocento Italian cities indicates the presence of surprisingly high numbers of widows.³¹

³¹ For example, Herlihy, "Mapping," p. 12, notes that in urban Florence in 1427, fifteen percent of the households were headed by women. While much lower than our figure, this confirms the relatively high number of widows found in the fifteenth century urban setting. Such disproportionate numbers of widows are also indicated by other studies of pre-industrial Europe, for example, Mitterauer and Sieder, pp. 148 - 150, in seventeenth century Austria. It must also be conceded that widows had greater need of a notary, both because of the legal implications of widowhood itself, and because of the absence of a husband to act for them. But here too, we have seen numerous instances of women who apparently had healthy husbands, yet undertook transactions on their own behalf.

I have also made some effort to look at the statistical distribution of cohesiveness in family dealings with real estate matters. Table 3 gives a short breakdown of transactions in three categories. One of the indicators of keeping property ties within or close to the family is the acquisition of property in the *rione* where an individual lived. Thus, column one lists the number of instances, for lessors, renters, vendors, and buyers, where the property in question lay in the individual's indicated *rione*.³² The meaning of significant numbers here for lessors and vendors would be quite different than for renters and buyers. Yet in no case is there a strongly indicated tendency to deal or not deal in one's own *rione*, with only the buyers acting in their own district slightly more than half of the time.

Similarly, and more directly indicating the attempt to establish family holdings, is the acquisition of property adjacent to other property already held by oneself or by family members. Column two gives a list of such instances for the same individual groups as column one.³³ The instances of property either rented or rented out, falling

³² Since vineyards almost always lay outside of the residential area of the city, hence outside the *rione*, they were not included. In addition, quite frequently, the location of the property or the residence of the individual are not specified. These are indicated by N/A.

³³ Here again, the problem of inadequate location descriptions, especially for the leased property, was significant.

TABLE 3: Relationships per Transaction³⁴

	Property in Home Rione	Adjacent Property Held	Family Connections
Lessor	8/22 yes 7/22 N/A	4/32 yes 9/32 N/A	8/32
Renter	8/22 yes 11/22 N/A	2/32 yes 9/32 N/A	
Vendor	6/19 yes 5/19 N/A	7/34 yes 2/34 N/A	19/34
Buyer	10/19 yes 6/19 N/A	9/34 yes 2/34 N/A	

next to other property held was so low it cannot be considered particularly significant. The number of times that either a buyer or a seller dealt with property that was adjacent to that which they or their family owned, while more significant, is also surprisingly low. The interpretation of this information for the latter two groups would of course be quite different. Yet, the fact that relatively small numbers

³⁴ The numbers in Table 3 are those fulfilling the noted requirements in the affirmative, out of the total number of documents examined for that category. For example, eight lessors of twenty-two lease agreements examined, had property in the same rione. For seven of these agreements, no information was available. For instances of family connections, (column 3) rental transactions and sales transactions are grouped together.

of people were selling property "next door," - undesirable if one wishes to accumulate a family stronghold - is not balanced by large numbers buying similar property. It would seem that while a few families, as we have noted previously, made efforts to emulate the great families with their large tracts of property, that most were probably fortunate to be able to buy any property, and took the opportunity where and when they could.

Finally, in looking for statistical confirmation of family cohesiveness, I have included instances where any other family connection was involved in the transaction, and these are given for rental agreements and sales only, in column three. Included among these are family members concluding a transaction between themselves, family members acting as partners in any way, family members acting on behalf of one another or giving their consent. These categories are given roughly in the ascending order of frequency. Among the last in fact, consent to a sale or rental between husbands and wives was easily the most common. There were only a small number of transactions between family members themselves.

Even so, the number of instances of family involvement is relatively low, only one-quarter of the time in lease agreements, and slightly more than one-half the time in sales agreements.

* * *

We have noted several times the Pilosella brothers, Pietro and Bartholomeo. We also know that Bartholomeo had two sons, Thomeo and Ludovico.³⁵ Pietro too, had a son, Antonio, who appears in several transactions, but only on one occasion along with other members of the family.³⁶

We know of other activities the various family members were involved in. Shortly after selling the house noted in Chapter 3, Antonio entered into an agreement with Cola Porcari to borrow money. In return for the 47 florins (22 current ducats), Antonio, with the permission of his wife, obligated his house. Presumably this was a different house, although no location was given. Nor was there any mention of his father Pietro in this transaction, although he was still acting on his own behalf in the following year.³⁷

Bartholomeo appeared as a witness on three occasions in addition to the transactions we have already noted for him.³⁸

³⁵ ASR NC 952, fo. 13.

³⁶ ASR NC 1314, fo. 123. This latter sale is discussed at the beginning of chapter 3. Also, this Antonio acted as a witness to a testament of December 15, 1477. It is on the strength of this document that we know he is the son of Pietro, for the patronymic is included here. He and Pietro seemed to be living in the same house. ASR NC 1314, fo. 196.

³⁷ See ASR NC 1314, fo. 142, for the obligation and ASR NC 228, fo. 40, where Pietro purchased a house in July 1477. and

³⁸ ASR NC 1764, fo. 81, fo. 82, in July 1471, and ASR NC 1764, fo. 119, acted November, 1471.

Through an oblique reference in a document of March 1475, we learn that he died sometime between 1471 and that date, and that his heirs, unnamed here, still held some property outside the city walls.³⁹ It also seems that the house and butcher shop Bartholomeo sold and rented back, in 1470, never returned into the family's possessions. In 1476, Antonio Cioctarello, the buyer, was renting out a butchershop, by the location, probably the same one.⁴⁰

Pietro della Pilosella appears in several documents, besides those mentioned, between 1465 (when he was mentioned as an owner of a house) and the late 1470s.⁴¹ He acted as an arbiter in a dispute involving another *macellarius* in October, 1471.⁴² He appeared as a witness in an unrelated document in 1477, and he was still active in July and August of that year when he first purchased a house (also in Ponte, but in a different neighbourhood) and then rented out two houses joined together, in Trevi, for a period of one year.⁴³

³⁹ ASR NC 1314, fo. 112.

⁴⁰ ASR NC 1314, fo. 150. We also know that eleven days after buying the establishment from Bartholomeo, Antonio also purchased a small piece of land next door to a house he already owned, for 64 florins (30 ducats). However, from the location described, this does not seem to be the former Pilosella house. ASR NC 952, fo. 21.

⁴¹ ASR NC 1175, fo. 105.

⁴² This document is the only indication we have that Pietro, like his brother, Bartholomeo, was a butcher. ASR NC 709, fo. B165.

⁴³ ASR NC 1314, fo. 178, for the witness, ASR NC 228, fo. 40, the purchase, and ASR NC 228, fo. 44, for the rental. These

A more interesting series of events in the saga of the Pilosella family is chronicled for us in three documents, beginning March 11, 1476. Andreota, the wife of our late Bartholomeo, having renounced the usual feminine exemptions from responsibility, called on four men to act on her behalf in a dispute. Among them are Cristoforo Filipputti, who purchased a house from her nephew in 1475, and Bartholomeo Coronis, who was designated as *procurator* in the investiture of that house.⁴⁴ Unfortunately, what exactly the issue of dispute was, is never spelled out in this document. However, the person she was taking issue with is named, her late husband's brother, Pietro della Pilosella.

One full year later, on April 11, 1477, there are two short documents, spelling out a compromise between Andreota and Pietro.⁴⁵ This time there is reference to a dowry,

houses must have been small, for the rental price was only 31 florins (15 ducats at 72 bols.)

⁴⁴ ASR NC 1314, fo. 123. As already noted, Pietro was said to be in possession of the house, but otherwise did not enter into the sale agreement. The current dispute is document ASR NC 1313, fo. 34.

⁴⁵ ASR NC 228, fo. 27a, fo. 27b. It is difficult to be absolutely certain that these two documents follow directly from the previous one, but it is certainly possible that a full year could have lapsed between the initiation of action and the achievement of some agreement, so it is a reasonable assumption that they are related. If they should prove to involve two different disputes, that would merely add strength to my reason for introducing the whole matter, the occurrence of family strife, and the need to draw on the legal sources to settle them.

Andreota's, and to a house. However, it does not seem to be the one sold by Antonio to Cristoforo Fillipputii.⁴⁶

Another interesting revelation of these documents is the parties who were and were not present. In the longer document, which spelled out a few details of the compromise which Pietro agreed to, it was noted that Andreota was absent. In the other document, for which Andreota must have been present, she was noted as swearing to a similar compromise with Pietro, with no details of the compromise itself. There is also a third document, which has nothing in common with these, except that it was drawn up in the same notary's house, at the same time. According to common practice, witnesses for legal transactions were whoever was handy. And who should appear as witnesses to this transaction, but Pietro della Pilosella, and his nephew Ludovico, the son of Andreota and Bartholomeo.⁴⁷ Yet Ludovico appears nowhere in the compromise agreements between his mother and Pietro.

What does all this tell us? Unfortunately, there are many gaps in our story. Yet there surely are some interest-

⁴⁶ The wording is *domus sive casale*, that is "a house, or really, a country estate," ASR NC 228, fo. 27a.

⁴⁷ ASR NC 228, fo. 27a, and fo. 27b. The principal actors of this document were witnesses to the Pilosella documents. This dispute is not unique. In 1467, Lucia, widow of Angelo Angelis, was involved in a dispute - about what we don't know - with members of her late husband's family, possibly a brother-in-law, and also, perhaps, over the return of a dowry. ASR NC 709, fo. 137.

ing points raised here about families, about interaction between family members and with others outside the family, in Quattrocento Rome. We have seen the two brothers, Pietro and Bartholomeo, both butchers, owning property side by side, and so far as we can tell, living side by side until the death of Bartholomeo. We have seen both men involved in numerous business transactions, especially Pietro, and in numerous legal transactions, yet not once do they act together. The only indication that we have that they must have done so to some extent is the dispute, which seems to arise out of earlier agreements, which we do not have access to. From the documentary evidence, if it were not for the fact they are identified as brothers, we might assume they were simply neighbours.

Pietro, had a son, but again, father and son acted as independently as if they were mere acquaintances. There is only one document where they act jointly, and even there the wording of the document leaves some doubt of their specific participation (Pietro appeared only as the person living in the house that Antonio was agreeing to sell).

Bartholomeo's two sons appear only briefly in our record, to give consent in the selling of a house which was part of their inheritance, and one of them returned to lend support to his mother's dispute with his uncle. There too, it was neighbours and business associates who played a major role in settling the dispute. Of course one should not play

down the possible importance of Ludovico's presence in bringing about the settlement just because his legal role is not noted.

One final note on the Pilosella affair arises out of the reference to the maternal inheritance of Bartholomeo's sons in the house he sold in 1470, and the dispute between Andreota and Pietro, which involved her dowry and another house. Bartholomeo must have acquired the property of the 1470 document through his marriage to Andreota. Also, the *casale*, or country house, mentioned in the dispute between Andreota and Pietro, must have belonged to the brothers jointly. Possibly, it was part of the *donatio propter nuptias* put up as security against Andreota's dowry at the time of her marriage, and which she was trying to recover from Pietro after the death of her husband. Here we have a glimpse of the complications which could be involved in family relationships. This was especially true with those relationships that involved marriage arrangements. Such complications must have presented particularly serious problems for widows. That a compromise was reached here perhaps suggests that Andreota was one of the more fortunate widows caught in such circumstances. Many widows must have been left with little in the way of financial support to fall back on.⁴⁸ Also, in the midst of all this, there were perhaps

⁴⁸ Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans*, p. 337, have noted the high occurrence of poverty among widows in fifteenth-century Tuscany.

more connections between the two brothers which are only hidden because of the loss of documentary evidence. Yet, the evidence is also clear that there was a great deal of independent activity within these two generations of Pilosella.

Likewise our evidence throughout seems to indicate diversity. Families in Quattrocento Rome may have often tried to function as a unit. But circumstances often prevented that, and when opportunities presented themselves, these family members did not hesitate to deal with and form partnerships with, neighbours, business contacts and others outside of family relationships.

Among the individuals and families we have discussed in the previous chapters, what have we seen of their functioning as extended families, or for that matter as families at all?

The Roberti family made some attempt to function in concert. The grandmother Giovanna acted on several occasions on behalf of her orphaned grandson. Her two sons, while they were alive, held property - vineyards - side by side as Alberti advised. On the other hand, one of the executors of the estate of her first son to die was not a family member. Nonetheless, the biggest obstacle to continuity in this family was the intervention of death, taking both sons while their children were yet minors.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ ASR NC 1105, fo. 4; ASR NC 708, fo. 109; ASR NC 709, fo. A23; fo. A65.

As a widow, Giovanna acted, on at least one occasion, independently, even though at the time one adult son was still alive.⁵⁰ We have seen several other examples of widows who looked after their own affairs, although whether out of necessity or by choice, we cannot always say. Without knowing more about what family members there were, or had been, one must be careful in reaching conclusions. Nonetheless, there is plenty of evidence here of the anomalous position of the widow in a patrilineal society, in which lineage and property passed, predominantly, through male lines. In that regard, these cases are further examples of the natural failures of the family as a system of security. Many widows were simply left without the family structures they might have hoped for.

Andreota Pilosella's situation also suggests that this is true. The efforts to recover her dowry after her husband's death were not unique. That such recoveries were an accepted practice, yet a practice in which, as seems to be the case here, success was not a foregone conclusion, illustrates quite forcefully one of the inadequacies of the ideal family of the Quattrocento. As a haven for the woman marrying into a family, it had very definite limitations. In this we see a reflection of the extent to which the society was preoccupied with male family members.

⁵⁰ ASR NC 708, fo. 17.

The one clear case we have seen of a widow being helped out with financial matters, is that of Iacobella, wife of the late Paulo Petroni of Ponte, who was sold two pieces of property by her brother. In this case, it was her natal family, and not her family of cohabitation which assisted her.⁵¹

Likewise, Paulina de Porcari, widow of Bartholomeo di Ciactulis, was assisted by her family of birth. The documents do not reveal to what extent she was assisted, we only know that her *procurator* was appointed in a house which belonged to two of her brothers.⁵² Perhaps other cases of such family cooperation are hidden behind the names under which individuals appear.

Of the two Porcari brothers as well, we must ask about their motivations in dividing the house in which they lived.⁵³ Was this a practical matter of space or investment as we suggested earlier, or does it reflect a conflict of strong personalities that made it only possible to continue sharing the house if there was a wall between them? We know

⁵¹ ASR NC 1174, fo. 36 and fo. 38. Likewise, Stanley Chojnacki, "Dowries and Kinsmen in Early Renaissance Venice," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, V, 4, 1975, p. 596, notes that in Venice at the beginning of the fifteenth century, among women's wills that he examined, almost fifty percent named parents and siblings as executor, whether the woman was married or widowed, while 21.3 percent named husbands and 29.2 percent children. As well, most women had drawn up their wills while still married.

⁵² ASR NC 709 fo. 123, and Modigliani, p. 351.

⁵³ ASR NC 1108, fo. 48.

well that brothers did sometimes differ sufficiently in attitudes and desires to put them, not only on opposite sides of a wall, but of political issues as well. A well known case was that of the Albizzi brothers in Florence, Rinaldo, the antagonist of the Medici in the 1430's, and his brother Luca, who supported the Medici faction.⁵⁴

As well, with the Pilosella family, while at times we have noted them working together, at other times we have seen them appear to function as very independent individuals.

The extended family, part reality, mostly myth, like the walls of Rome, provided some sense of security for people faced with a remarkable discontinuity and instability. Like their city itself, Quattrocento Roman families and relationships were built on the ruins of the past. Neighbours, business associates, brothers in a trade, and religious workers, supplanted the departed family members, or were substituted for families that had never been.

The antiquity of Rome, the popular awareness of that antiquity in the citizens' perception of Rome, both myth and reality, as that which had existed literally since time out of mind, was evidenced daily by the ruins which surrounded them. The ruins that were incorporated into their houses and churches reinforced the notion of a continuity in life - a

⁵⁴ Dale Kent, *The Rise of the Medici Faction in Florence 1426 - 1434*, (Oxford, 1978), p. 101. Also Modigliani, p. 327, notes how other members of the Porcari family avoided associating themselves with Stefano when he had been arrested for his part in the conspiracy against the papacy.

continuity that had to be reflected in human lives and human families - as well as in the life of the city, and in the desire for families of size, substance and duration, for the myth of the extended family.

As I have said earlier, as one examines the lives of these Quattrocento Romans, it becomes increasingly difficult to make generalized statements about the Roman Quattrocento family. It becomes more apparent that there is no real family type, but a great many different types. To a considerable extent it becomes meaningless to discuss the family in a general sense. Only the specifics of individual families can give us a true perception of the social setting in which they functioned.

It is clearly true that in Rome, 1450 to 1480, the Albertian ideal, the mythical extended family, was meeting with limited success at best. While there was every reason in the insecurity of the Roman setting to turn to the family - or its substitutes - for security, as always, in all times and places, such a security mechanism could only be successful in so far as the untimely appearance of death, of infertility, of economic failure, of incompatibility of personalities, in short, in so far as "fortuna" would allow.

EPILOGUE The Myth of the Extended Family

One might well ask now, why does the myth of the extended family loom so large in past times - both the modern popular impression of older families and the popular ideology of the time is evidence of how large - if the reality for many people was quite different? At least part of the answer lies in the lives of the people we have seen in the past pages, who populated the village among the ruins of an ancient civilization that was Rome in the Quattrocento. It lies in the spirit of a growing medieval city trying to resurrect itself out of those ruins. It lies even more in the individuals struggling to persevere and prosper in the face of tremendous instability and insecurity. Instability and insecurity were not only part of their political and physical surroundings, they were part of their personal lives as well. In the face of such instability the desire for a safe harbour in a tumultuous world, a secure and extensive family on the Albertian model was to be expected.

Throughout man's history, if not before as well, one constantly identifiable presence is the quest for security. The roots to this quest lie buried in the dim past. But at some point in his transformation from tree dwelling scavenger to manipulator of tools and builder of cities man became invariably aware of his own individual death, and in that

awareness he found a need to find himself a place as part of a larger entity that would carry him on beyond the grave. The search for longevity, for a secure place in an ever changing environment manifest itself in many ways, most obviously in the multitude of religious beliefs he has developed and then discarded.

Among the precepts of the religion which dominated our period of study was a call - reflected in one quotation at the outset of the final chapter - for the formation of a new reproductive unit by the separation of an older such unit. Yet, throughout the Christian tradition, efforts were made to continue strong ties across that separation. And in limited ways, man was able to find security in that process, the process that became ritualized and formalized as family.

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