



women maintained the household wardrobes and had a certain amount of financial autonomy. While the subject of women's consumption is not the primary focus of McCall's work, he does prove that self-fashioning was not only a woman's prerogative. The fourth chapter, "Fair Princes: Blanched Beauty, Nobility, and Power," once again makes use of iconographic sources to create a dialogue with key terms for symbols of power drawn from secondary sources, with which the author is profoundly familiar. One of the book's strengths is the rich use of iconography shared in an abundant collection of images. The fifth and final chapter concludes with "Epilogue: Black is the New Gold," where McCall traces the trajectory in which vivid, fifteenth-century colors such as crimson (*cremisi*) give way to the use of black, a color that was just as shiny and even more costly. Contrary to what one might think, black did not transmit sobriety, but rather provided an even deeper and more luxurious background with which the male body could be adorned as usual.

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Florence à l'écritoire: Écriture et mémoire dans l'Italie de la Renaissance.
Christiane Klapisch-Zuber.

Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2023. 254 pp. €12.

Not surprisingly, Didier Lett opens his beautiful preface (a veritable portrait, one may say, covering some thirty pages) with a reference to the monumental study of the Florentine tax system in the early fifteenth century that Christiane Klapisch-Zuber and David Herlihy published in 1978. That first edition was translated into English in 1985 and published by Yale University Press as *The Tuscans and Their Families: A Study of the Florentine Catasto of 1427*. In many respects, *Florence à l'écritoire* is a fitting continuation of that research and Klapisch-Zuber's many other studies on the Florentine Renaissance that came out in the following years. As Lett reminds us in his preface, the last part of *Les Toscans et leurs familles* (titled "Les images de la famille") focused on relationships among individuals, families, generations, genders, and social groups. In those pages, both Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber emphasized the importance of personal diaries, commonplace books, and family records as major sources of information to study all these types of relationships and much more.

The present collection of seven essays (five of which were unpublished until now) heavily relies on merchants' *ricordanze* to shed light on such topics and notions as ego-writing, personal reputation, women, wealth, and memory. All of these themes are addressed and assessed through the writings of—among others—the wealthy merchant Andrea di Messer Tommaso Minerbetti (1462/64–1551), his ancestor Andrea di Betto (who started writing his memoirs in 1309), their fellow Florentine

Neri di Bicci (ca. 1419–92, a painter of some repute whom Vasari mentions in his *Vite*), the octogenarian Monna Gemma da Lutiano, and the Bolognese mason Gaspare Nadi (1419–1504), thus covering about two hundred years (from the late fourteenth to the early sixteenth century). Despite their differences in age, status, and profession, each person discussed in this book provides—more or less overtly—a self-fashioning case study. This is one of the factors leading Klapisch-Zuber to tackle methodological issues, such as how to establish useful categories or separate the norm from the exception when dealing with *ricordanze*. Autobiographies are notoriously unreliable, and their authors' memory particularly manipulative; that is also true of documents like the diaries and family records that Klapisch-Zuber analyzes in the seven chapters of this book, dividing them into three main sections. Part 1 assesses memoirs as diverse (in terms of style, content, and the authors' social background) as those of an aristocrat, a bricklayer, and a middle-ranked artist (respectively, the aforementioned Minerbetti, Nadi, and Neri di Bicci). Klapisch-Zuber tackles a series of crucial issues pertaining to this literary genre, starting with the kind of readership that those writers wanted to reach, and, consequently, what rationale they followed in selecting and sharing information, be it private or public.

Part 2, “La mémoire et l'écriture des femmes,” is devoted to women's writings, as its title suggests; more precisely, the emphasis is on texts authored by late medieval and Renaissance Florentines and the role they played in their families' genealogies. Among them, Monna Dora Guidalotti (probably born around 1340 and married to Francesco Del Bene) stands out, thanks to the twenty surviving letters that she sent her husband (who had been exiled after the Ciompi revolt) and her sons between 1381 and 1394. Family documents written (not simply dictated) by women are rare in late medieval and Renaissance Florence, especially among merchants; this makes Monna Dora's letters—mostly dealing with marriage arrangements—even more precious.

Finally, the third and last part of the book, “L'honneur se joue dans l'écriture,” is the most concerned with methodological issues. In it, Klapisch-Zuber assesses once again the first, strongest, and most inevitable emotional community of all: the family. This time, however, she mainly does so in terms of honor, reputation, and benefit, which the Florentines of those centuries usually summed up in the well-known formula “l'onore et l'utile.” Understandably, rituals like births, christenings, weddings, and funerals play a crucial role within these social dynamics; as such, they receive particular attention both in the sources studied by Klapisch-Zuber and in her analysis of them.

The volume is provided with precise endnotes, a rich (although not entirely up-to-date) bibliography, and, finally, a useful index of names.

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