

Changes of Rule and Historical Writings

The Transition from the Commune to the Signoria in the Historiography of Northeastern Italy

Abstract

Recent research has emphasised that the transition from the commune to the “signoria” happened in many different ways, as the contexts, situations and constellations and therefore the formation and consolidation of the lordships varied. Based on these findings, the article examines how contemporary chroniclers perceived and described the political changes in Northeast Italy in the 13th and early 14th centuries. Three historiographical reports on Ezzelino III da Romano, who succeeded in establishing multi-city domination in the 1230s, show the various ways in which a change of rulership could be considered and evaluated. In the second half of the 13th century, the Della Scala and the Bonacolsi established themselves almost simultaneously in ‘soft’ processes in Verona and Mantua. By contrast, a political break can be observed in Vicenza and Padua: Vicenza went from one foreign rule to the next within fifty years, whereas in Padua the accession of the Da Carrara took place only later, and was a contested procedure. The article discusses the extent to which these processes of political change were perceived in historiography as caesuras, transformations or continuities.

The title of this paper echoes Markus Krumm, *Herrschaftsumbruch und Historiographie. Zeitgeschichtsschreibung als Krisenbewältigung bei Alexander von Teleso und Falco von Benevent*, Berlin-Boston 2021 (Bibliothek des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Rom 141), who examines two southern Italian chronicles of the 12th century, understanding them as “Reaktion auf lokale Auswirkungen des Herrschaftsumbruchs” of the 1120–1130s (p. 44). On changes of rule in other late medieval contexts, cf. now Sven Jaros / Eric Böhme / Marie Ulrike Jaros / Stefan Magnussen / Wolfgang Huschner (Eds.), *Changes of Monarchical Rule in the Late Middle Ages. Negotiations, Actors, Ambivalences*, Berlin-Boston 2024 (Europa im Mittelalter 44).

1 Introduction

In the first half of the Duecento, a political change emerged in northeastern Italy, namely the transition from popular sovereignty to a monocratic regime, commonly referred to as the change from *commune* to *signoria*. In the 1230s, the nobleman Ezzelino III da Romano succeeded in exploiting the factional strife, securing the support of Frederick II, and establishing his rule in Verona, Vicenza, and Padua. This trend continued in many places in the Veneto – as in the rest of northern and central Italy – after the death of this *signore*, who succumbed to wounds sustained in battle in 1259. However, this development was neither uniform nor irreversible, as recent research has shown. Rather, the initial situations and constellations differed in the numerous takeovers of power by these assertive and determined personalities, and accordingly the constitution and consolidation of their autocracies varied considerably.¹

This paper focuses on how contemporary and almost contemporary historiographers perceived and depicted such political transitions and upheavals in northeast Italy in the 13th and early 14th centuries. The emphasis lies on the accounts and views of the annalists and chroniclers who were involved in or at least affected by the transformation processes. The heterogeneous corpus of historiographical sources ranges from monotonously structured and information-scarce annals to rhetorically elaborate and content-rich chronicles, which provide a selective insight into how the transitions in power were received and to what extent the constitutional change was perceived as a rupture, transformation, or continuity.

The first section discusses the impact of the so-called “proto-signoria” of Ezzelino III on the attitudes and portrayals of Parisio da Cerea, Gerardo Maurisio, and Rolandino da Padova (Ch. 2). The attention then turns to Mantuan and Veronese annalists who record the almost simultaneous power takeovers by the Bonacolsi in Mantua and the Della Scala in Verona in the second half of the 13th century (Ch. 3). How Vicentine and Paduan historiographers assessed the double surrender of political autonomy in Vicenza in 1266 and in 1311 is examined in a comparative excursus (Ch. 4). Finally, the accession to power of the Da Carrara in Padua, between 1318 and 1337, will be illuminated through the lens of one of the many Paduan chronicles (Ch. 5). Hence, this paper covers almost a century of political and historiographical history.

1 Cf., for example, the contributions in: Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur (Ed.), *Signorie cittadine nell'Italia comunale*, Roma 2013 (*Italia comunale e signorie* 1).

2 The Multi-City Domination of Ezzelino III da Romano and the Differentiation of Historiography

Several historical works from the 1230s to the early 1260s have been preserved, focusing on the rule of Ezzelino III da Romano (and his brother Alberico).² Their formal structure and thematic orientation already provide first insights into how the authors understood the novel political circumstances. The historiographical writings of Parisio from Cerea (in the Veronese countryside), Gerardo Maurisio from Vicenza, and Rolandino from Padua illustrate the effects that the emergence of a lordship (signoria), alongside the political conviction and rhetorical skills of the historiographers, could have on the intentions, scope, form, and audience. Common to these texts of *cronisti ezzeliniani* – as Girolamo Arnaldi once labelled them³ – is, among other things, a broadened geographical horizon. Due to Ezzelino III's wide-ranging activities, they no longer focus solely on their city and its surroundings but also encompass the entire region, the March of Verona-Treviso. This former administrative district, which became obsolete with the establishment of the communes, may have remained in the memory of contemporaries in the Duecento, as recently illustrated by Enrico Faini,⁴ but its 'revival' under Ezzelino III and Frederick II was essential.

The rural notary Parisio da Cerea left behind annals reaching until 1260, which in their extant form, due to several continuations, extend from the pre-communal 12th to the post-signorial 15th century, namely from 1115 to 1446.⁵ The transmission of these

2 Cf., for instance, Dario Canzian, Romano, Alberico da, in: DBI 88 (2017), pp. 246–250 (URL: [3 Cf. Girolamo Arnaldi, Studi sui cronisti della Marca Trevigiana nell'età di Ezzelino da Romano, Roma 1963 \(Studi storici 48–50\); id., I cronisti della Marca Trevigiana, in: Studi Ezzeliniani \(see note 2\), pp. 123–143.](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/alberico-da-romano_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=ROMANO%2C%20Alberico%20da%2F; 10. 12. 2025); Remy Simonetti, Romano, Ezzelino III da, in: ibid., pp. 259–263; cf. also Studi Ezzeliniani, Roma 1963 (Studi storici 45–47); Giorgio Cracco (Ed.), Nuovi studi ezzeliniani, 2 vols., Roma 1992 (Nuovi studi storici 21,1–2); Carlo Bertelli / Giovanni Marcadella (Eds.), Ezzelini. Signori della Marca nel cuore dell'Impero di Federico II, 2 vols., Milano-Limena 2001; Carlo F. Polizzi, Alberico da Romano. Tiranni e popolo nella Marca Trevigiana, Romano d'Ezzelino 1987 (Studi e documenti ezzeliniani), and id., Ezzelino da Romano. Signoria territoriale e comune cittadino, Romano d'Ezzelino 1989 (Studi e documenti ezzeliniani).</p>
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4 Cf. Enrico Faini, *Italica gens*. Memoria e immaginario politico dei cavalieri-cittadini (secoli XII–XIII), Roma 2018 (Italia comunale e signorile 12), pp. 131–132. On the March, cf. Andrea Castagnetti, La Marca Veronese-Trevigiana, Torino 1986 (Storia degli stati italiani dal medioevo all'unità).

5 On him and his annals, cf. Gian Maria Varanini, Parisio da Cerea, in: DBI 81 (2014), [s. p.] (URL: [245](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/parisio-da-cerea_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/; 10. 12. 2025);</p>
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epoch-spanning annals is atypical for the Veronese region, as there exist over two dozen late copies from the 15th to the 17th centuries, in both Latin and vernacular versions.⁶ The entries are stylistically unpretentious, consistently structured in a paratactic manner, and – which is unusual – largely neutral.⁷ For all rulers – including emperor Frederick II, Ezzelino III, the margraves of Este, and the counts of Sambonifacio – the annalist from Cerea, for example, refrains from using the superlative negative or positive epithets typical of the historiography of the time. His geographically widened perspective reveals the regional network of the political actors: Parisio sheds light not only on the Veronese district but also on the various conflict zones and areas of action, first of the civic communities and their *partes*, then of Ezzelino III in the region. Linguistically, too, the political change can be grasped, namely in the officials and actors remembered by the annalist. Parisio consistently follows the highest communal official and almost exclusively begins the yearly entries with the *podestà* of Verona and the *podestà* of his hometown Cerea. In the 1250s, he attentively records not only a conceptual but also a factual change, as it was no longer communal *potestates* but *vicarii* or *rectores* who controlled the city's affairs.⁸ Ezzelino III apparently began to bind the leading magistrates of Verona more closely to himself during those years, as vicariates and probably also rectorates unlike *podestates*

Il 'Chronicon Veronense' di Paride da Cerea e dei suoi continuatori, ed. by Renzo Vaccari, Legnago 2014, vol. 1,1, pp. 81–96, 111–116; Arnaldi, *Studi* (see note 3), pp. 7–24; Andrea Sommerlechner, *Stadt, Partei, Fürst. Mentalitätsgeschichtliche Studien zur Chronistik der trevisanischen Mark*, ed. by Georg Scheibelreiter, Wien-Köln-Graz 1988 (*Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 28), esp. pp. 14–17, 29–30, 51–53; Giuseppe Cusa, *Die Geschichtsschreibung in der Mark Verona-Treviso im Zeitalter der Kommunen und Signorien (spätes 12. bis frühes 15. Jahrhundert)*, Regensburg 2019 (*Studi. Schriftenreihe des Deutschen Studienzentrums in Venedig, N. F. 18*), pp. 35–45.

6 In contrast to the "Chronicon Veronense" (i. e. Parisio's annals and its continuations), the bulk of the Veronese minor historical writings has mostly been handed down in a single manuscript, sometimes in the autograph. For the manuscript tradition of Parisio's "Cronica Verone", its continuations and vernacular translations cf. Il 'Chronicon Veronense' (see note 5), vol. 1,1, pp. 17–46; vol. 1,2, pp. 11–36.

7 The annals are edited as *Parisius de Cereta, Cronica Verone (1115–1260)*, ed. by Renzo Vaccari, in: Il 'Chronicon Veronense' (see note 5), vol. 1,1, pp. 121–177.

8 Parisio records a *rector Verone* for 1249 and 1251–1252 (*ibid.*, p. 166, l. 17; p. 167, l. 15; p. 168, l. 21), *vicarii Verone* for 1253–1258 (*ibid.*, p. 170, ll. 3–4, 7, 14–15; p. 171, ll. 9–10; p. 173, ll. 3–4; p. 174, ll. 2–3). According to Parisio, rectors presided over his hometown for the short period 1251–1253, before *podestà* were appointed again (*ibid.*, p. 167, ll. 15–16; p. 168, l. 21 – p. 169, l. 1; p. 170, ll. 4–5). These measures can probably be interpreted as a reaction to the death of Frederick II in 1250.

imply a personal relationship.⁹ A change can also be observed with regard to the actors involved. Until the 1240s, Parisio notes how members of the communal community acted – that is the respective *podestà*, the citizens, or the party leaders vying for influence within the commune. Consequently, the “Veronenses” or the “potestas cum Veronenses” went to war, for instance *podestà* Bartolomeo da Palazzo led the city’s regiment against the Vicentines in 1212, the Veronese provided support to the Mantuans eight years later against the Cremonese and Reggiani, or *podestà* Ugo da Corte commanded the communal troops on their unsuccessful campaign to aid the castle of Ghebbo against the margrave of Este in 1240.¹⁰ Although the annalist already records the political and military interventions of local and regional potentates up to the 1230s, in the entries for the 1240s–1250s, Ezzelino III clearly takes centre stage, with his actions and steps being traced, whether it be construction projects or acquisitions of goods, diplomatic endeavours, executions, or military campaigns. Now it is Ezzelino – although not understood as a *dominus* in the sense of a city lord – who leads the urban army contingents in similar formulations, for instance in 1243 with the troops from Verona, Padua, and Vicenza to Sambonifacio, or in 1256, “with the Popolo from Verona, Padua, Vicenza, Trento, and Feltre, and with all his friends gathered from everywhere” to Mantua.¹¹ Castles were also no longer handed over to the Veronese but to the Da Romano, such as Montebello in 1242 or Sambonifacio the following year.¹² Furthermore, in political matters, it appears that not only the *podestà* (or later the rector or vicar) represented the commune but also Ezzelino III, who negotiated an exchange of prisoners with Mantua “pro comuni Verone” in 1247.¹³ The communal order thus seems to have been formally preserved, although Ezzelino increasingly exercised power and made decisions. In their texture, however, Parisio’s annals remain firmly rooted in traditional communal historiography; although their

9 Ezzelino III, though, seems to have exerted a considerable influence on the choice of the *podestà* even before this, as Parisio notes for 1247 *ibid.*, p. 164, ll. 7–8: “Et eo anno Icerinus de Igna ex mandato domini Icerini de Romano fuit potestas Verone.” On the history of Verona under Ezzelino’s rule, cf. for instance Gian Maria Varanini, *Il comune di Verona, la società cittadina ed Ezzelino III da Romano*, in: Cracco (Ed.), *Nuovi studi ezzeliniani* (see note 2), vol. 1, pp. 115–160.

10 Cf. Parisius de Cereta, *Cronica Verone* (see note 7), p. 129, ll. 14–18; p. 131, ll. 6–9; p. 157, l. 17 – p. 158, l. 3.

11 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 161, ll. 14–16 and p. 171, ll. 10–18, here ll. 11–12: “cum populis Verone, Padue, Vicentie, Tridenti et Feltri, et cum omnibus eius amicis undique convocatis”.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 158, l. 21 – p. 159, l. 1; p. 161, l. 14 – p. 162, l. 1.

13 *Ibid.*, p. 164, ll. 3–7.

author perceives the changes in communal structures and customs, he apparently does not view them as a caesura.

Gerardo Maurisio represented a different standpoint. The Vicentine *causidicus*, who came from a long-established family of the consular aristocracy, served both the commune and the Da Romano.¹⁴ This ambivalence is reflected in his chronicle, written in prose and verse¹⁵ and preserved in a handful of copies,¹⁶ which extends until 1237, covering half a century of local and regional history.¹⁷ While he mentions the communal *podestà*, he breaks with the communal annalistic scheme, as the almost uninterrupted mentioned *podestates* – almost continuously introduced with the phrase “mutatur potestas” – pri-

14 On his life and work cf., for instance, Flavio Fiorese, Maurisio, Gerardo, in: DBI 72 (2008), pp. 370–372 (URL: [15 Gerardo Maurisio wrote a few verses himself, repeatedly quotes ancient poets, especially Ovid, and had his prose chronicle translated into verse by the notary Taddeo, cf. Arnaldi, Studi \(see note 3\), pp. 45–50, on the citation of Roman poetry: Ronald Witt, The Early Communal Historians, Forerunners of the Italian Humanists, in: Konrad Eisenbichler/Nicholas Terpstra \(Eds.\), The Renaissance in the Streets, Schools, and Studies. Essays in Honor of Paul F. Grendler, Toronto 2008 \(Publications of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies. Essays and Studies 16\), pp. 130–124, esp. p. 115.](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/gerardo-maurisio_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=MAURISIO%2C%20Gerardo%2F; 10. 12. 2025); Cusa, Die Geschichtsschreibung (see note 5), pp. 283–302; Arnaldi, Studi (see note 3), pp. 31–52; id., Realtà e coscienza cittadina nella testimonianza degli storici e cronisti vicentini dei secoli XIII e XIV, in: Giorgio Cracco (Ed.), Storia di Vicenza, vol. 2: L'età medievale, Vicenza 1988, pp. 295–358, here pp. 347–356; id./Lidia Capo, I cronisti di Venezia e della Marca Trevigiana dalle origini alla fine del secolo XIII, in: id./Giancarlo Folena (Eds.), Storia della cultura veneta, vol. 1: Dalle origini al Trecento, Vicenza 1976, pp. 387–423, here pp. 412–414; Sommerlechner, Stadt (see note 5), esp. pp. 17–19, 97–98.</p>
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16 The definitive critical edition remains, despite minor shortcomings with regard to the verses notated by Maurisio, Gerardi Maurisii Cronica Dominorum Ecelini et Alberici fratrum de Romano (AA. 1183–1237), ed. by Giovanni Soranzo, Città di Castello 1914 (RIS² 8,4). Flavio Fiorese announced a new edition in the mid-1980s but only published an Italian translation based on his preliminary editorial work: Gerardo Maurisio, Cronaca ezzeliniana (anni 1183–1237), transl. by Flavio Fiorese, Vicenza 1986 (Testi inediti o rari 4). The oldest of the six textual witnesses (two from the 17th and two from the 18th century) is Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 4941, probably from the late Trecento, a miscellany from Vicenza containing Vicentine und Paduan historiographies, i. e. Gerardo Maurisio's “Cronica” and Ferreto Ferreti's “Historia” as well as Rolandino's chronicle and a list of Paduanos, who “exiverunt obviam Sancto Prosdocimo honorantes eum”; for the manuscript tradition cf. Gerardi Maurisii Cronica (see supra), pp. XIII–XXIV.

17 Giorgio Cracco, Da Comune di famiglie a città satellitare (1183–1311), in: id. (Ed.), Storia (see note 14), pp. 73–138, here pp. 73–109, offers an overview of the Vicentine history from late 12th century to Ezzelino III's death.

marily serve for temporal orientation, as no year dates are given.¹⁸ Ultimately, Maurisio prioritized his loyalty to the local potentate over the communal association, hence emphasizing his services to the Da Romano while neglecting his communal offices.¹⁹ He immediately indicates that he is writing not a city history but a family history, namely a panegyric ode to the Da Romano, whose five-generation father-son succession he unfolds at the beginning,²⁰ before describing the achievements of Ezzelino I, Ezzelino II, as well as Ezzelino III and Alberico da Romano. He immortalizes the latter two brothers as militarily successful, law-abiding, righteous, selfless, loyal, and exemplary leaders.²¹ The extent to which the chronicler – who stylizes himself as a protagonist and writes in the hope of unspecified compensation from the Da Romano – became estranged from the communal idea and felt allegiance only to a leading family and its *pars* is revealed in several ways. Firstly, he judges the political actors and the officials of the communes based on their stance towards the Da Romano. Secondly, he omits mentioning the construction of communal buildings and the development of urban infrastructure, which communal annalists usually proudly recall. Thirdly, in his assessments of the controlled territory, he lists not the communities and areas under the jurisdiction of the commune of Vicenza but the communes directed by noble families.²² It is not without reason that the success story of the Da Romano, as recorded by him, culminates in their control of Padua, Verona, Vicenza, and Treviso, “thus they now hold the dominion (*dominium*) and power (*potestas*) of the entire March.”²³

Between 1260 and 1262, the Paduan Rolandino, who was well-versed in the *ars notariae* and *ars dictaminis* and repeatedly served his commune as a notary, wrote a chronicle covering events from the late 12th century to 1260.²⁴ To trace the rise and fall

18 Cf. also Arnaldi, *I Cronisti* (see note 3), p. 138; Sommerlechner, *Stadt* (see note 5), p. 36.

19 For this cf. Cusa, *Die Geschichtsschreibung* (see note 5), p. 285; Sommerlechner, *Stadt* (see note 5), p. 19.

20 Gerardi Maurisii *Cronica* (see note 16), p. 4, ll. 21–25.

21 Cf. Cusa, *Die Geschichtsschreibung* (see note 5), pp. 295–297.

22 Gerardi Maurisii *Cronica* (see note 16), p. 12, ll. 9–10, 26; p. 13, ll. 7–8; p. 16, ll. 23–24; p. 22, ll. 28–29; p. 41, ll. 21–31; on this, cf. also Cusa, *Die Geschichtsschreibung* (see note 5), pp. 297–302.

23 Gerardi Maurisii *Cronica* (see note 16), p. 41, ll. 29–31: “Modo habent illi de Romano, sua industria et prudentia, civitates Verone, Tervisii, Padue et Vincencie, quamvis immoderate destructe, ad honorem Imperatoris acquisitas et sibi subdictas et subpositas et sic totius Marchie nunc habent dominium et potestatem”.

24 For Rolandino and his chronicle cf., for example, Arnaldi, *Studi* (see note 3), pp. 79–208; Sommerlechner, *Stadt* (see note 5), pp. 22–25 and *ad indicem*; Marino Zabbia, *Rolandino da*

of Ezzelino III, he departed from the model of communal annals in favour of a sophisticated treatise in twelve books. Throughout, he characterizes his main figure almost consistently with negative epithets (primarily “perfidus”), denounces the unlawful and inhumane authority of this “enemy of humanity” (“hostis humani generis”²⁵), and vividly and emotionally lists the atrocities committed by the *tyrannus*. However, Rolandino’s critique extends not only to the ruler himself (criticizing Ezzelino III posthumously) but also to the concept of lordship (*signoria*).²⁶ Familiar with the political developments and transformations of the northern Italian communal landscape, he condemns the autocratic rule of local or regional magnates, from which his hometown had only recently liberated itself. He vehemently advocates for the preservation of the communal order and posits its incompatibility with the signoria. To illustrate the benefits of communal and the drawbacks of signorial rule, he paints an idyllic picture of the commune on one hand and a gloomy picture of the signoria on the other. As the chronicler addresses his fellow citizens with didactic and unifying intentions, urging them to draw lessons from the recent past, he appeals to their moral integrity through instructions, admonitions, and examples; he denounces character flaws or warns against false friends to prevent the rise of potentates.²⁷ Moreover, he glorifies the communal common good, asserting the importance of protecting it rather than pursuing particular interests, and vigorously de-

Padova, in: DBI 88 (2017), pp. 150–153 (URL: [25 Rolandino, Vita \(see note 24\), XII 6, p. 540, ll. 38–39. A Paduan anonymous, writing at about the same time, uses almost identical negative characterisations, cf. Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae et Lombardiae \(AA. 1270–1270\), ed. Luigi Alfredo Botteghi, Città di Castello \(RIS² 8,3\), here p. 22, l. 6 \(“humani generis inimicus”\).](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/rolandino-da-padova_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=ROLANDINO%20da%20Padova%2F; 10. 12. 2025), as well as Cusa, Die Geschichtsschreibung (see note 5), pp. 155–166. The following bilingual edition will be used and cited: Rolandino da Padova, Vita e morte di Ezzelino da Romano (Cronaca), ed. by Flavio Fiorese, Milano 2004 (Scrittori greci e latini).</p>
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26 On this, cf. Giuseppe Cusa, *Fuit ferus et crudelis et amator pecuniae*. Herrschaftskritik ostoberitalienischer Geschichtsschreiber des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts, in: Ines Soldwisch / Rüdiger Haude / Klaus Freitag (Eds.), *Schrift und Herrschaft. Facetten einer komplizierten Beziehung*, Bielefeld 2022 (Histoire 187), pp. 145–174, here pp. 157–162.

27 E. g. Rolandino, Vita (see note 24), VI 9, p. 424, ll. 61–64; VII 8, p. 336, ll. 1–3; IX 10, p. 424, ll. 38–41; XI 10, p. 498, ll. 39–41. Cf. also Giuseppe Cusa, Kommunikation in der Chronik des Paduaners Rolandino, in: Ralf Lützelshwab (Ed.), *Formen mittelalterlicher Kommunikation*. Sommeruniversität des DHIP, 7.–10. Juli 2013 / Formes de la communication au Moyen Âge. Université d’été de l’IHA, 7.–10 juillet 2013, s.l. 2015 (discussions 11), § 16–18 (URL: [250](http://www.perspectivia.net/publikationen/discussions/11-2015/cusa_kommunikation; 10. 12. 2025).</p>
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fends communal freedom.²⁸ He frequently emphasizes the unanimous approach of the Paduans, attributing discord (*discordia*) not to internal sources but always to external influences. To maintain this narrative, Rolandino sometimes exaggerates, omits criticism of fellow citizens, and presents details selectively. He often condemns Ezzelino's unjust rulership, likening it to cancer ("morbus Cancrī"), who deliberately eradicates population, prosperity, and buildings, "that adorn all cities and every place where people live."²⁹ However, he does not stop at invectives against the signorial rule but urges the fight against such *tyranni*, for "no flood, no pestilence, no fire nor hell which inflicts such wretchedness on the man who endures it as the privation of liberty under an evil lord."³⁰ In the contingency situation of the early 1260s, characterized by legitimacy competition, the Paduan chronicler therefore hoped that the autocracy – understood as a painful watershed – would not repeat itself. This had to be counteracted – Rolandino wrote his chronicle to foster this awareness.

28 On *libertas* in the age of communes and signorie, cf. Andrea Zorzi (Ed.), *La libertà nelle città comunali e signorili italiane*, Roma 2020 (*Italia comunale e signorile* 14); cf. also Robert Louis Benson, *Libertas in Italy (1152–1226)*, in: George Makdisi/Dominique Sourdel/Janine Sourdel-Thomine (Eds.), *La notion de liberté au Moyen Âge. Islam, Byzance, Occident*. Penn-Paris-Dumbarton Oaks Colloquia, IV. Session des 12–15 octobre 1982, Paris 1985, pp. 191–213. Christoph Dartmann, *Raccontare la libertà. Le cronache comunali*, in: Nicolangelo D'Acunto/Elisabetta Filippini (Eds.), *Libertas. Secoli X–XIII. Atti del Convegno internazionale*, Brescia, 14–16 settembre 2017, Milano 2019 (*Le settimane internazionali della Mendola*, n. s. 6), pp. 129–144, deals with corresponding narratives in communal historiography.

29 Rolandino, *Vita* (see note 24), VI 14, p. 302, ll. 11–15: "Ecce quomodo morbus cancri..."; VI 16, p. 306, l. 11 – p. 308, l. 16: "Videns enim Ecelinus quod precipue tria sunt, que cunctas civitates et loca singula, in quibus habitatur, exornant, scilicet personarum decor, diviciarum copia et pulcritudo domorum, ad hec tria removenda de Padua impius ille hostis familiaris intrinsecus fraudulentus, secundum quod patet hodie, posuit principaliter vires suas." English translation: *The Chronicles of the Trevisan March by Rolandino Patavino*, transl. by Joseph R. Berrigan, Lawrence (KS) 1980, p. 99. On unjust rule, cf. also the episode of Ranieri di Bonello's condemnation and execution, Rolandino, *Vita* (see note 24), V 9, p. 234; on this, Faini, *Italica gens* (see note 4), pp. 78–81.

30 Rolandino, *Vita* (see note 24), XI 10, p. 498, ll. 36–39: "Nullum est sane diluvium, nulla pestis, nullum incendium vel gehenna, quod tantam inferat miseriam toleranti, quam sub iniquo dompno privacio libertatis." Translation: *Chronicles of the Trevisan March* (see note 29), p. 169.

3 The Assumption of Power by the Bonacolsi in Mantua and the Della Scala in Verona in Contemporary Annals

Three contemporary annals document the successive seizure and subsequent consolidation of power by the Bonacolsi in Mantua and the Della Scala in Verona. All three annals have been handed down only in one manuscript from the Quattrocento: the “*Annales Mantuani*” in the middle of Bonamente Aliprandi’s vernacular verse chronicle “*Aliprandina*” (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, It. IX 284 [= 6319]),³¹ the “*Annales Veronenses*” of the judge Ubertino *de Romana* and the “*Syllabus potestatum Veronensium*”, on the other hand, in a miscellany possibly compiled by mendicants (Verona, Biblioteca Civica, Ms. 815).³² And all three annals – rather unadorned in structure and language – record the key moments in the assertion of power in their own as well as in the neighbouring city, which were just as often in conflict with each other as they were in close political and economic contacts.³³

The Mantuan annals, considered an “*affidalibilissima fonte*,” report from 1095/1183 to 1299/1309.³⁴ The voice of a contemporary witness is heard from 1265 onwards; he

31 The codex, probably from Mantua, contains the “*Aliprandina*” on fols. 11r–36v and 45v–126r; after the mention of Matilda of Canossa, annals are inserted on fols. 37r–45v (the “*Annales breves*” from Verona and the “*Annales Mantuani*”); on fols. 126r–128v follow addenda to the “*Aliprandina*” by another hand; cf. Cusa, *Die Geschichtsschreibung* (see note 5), pp. 52–53.

32 On this codex, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 72–86, and *id.*, *Gli Annales Veronenses di Ubertino de Romana. Tradizione manoscritta e genesi, composizione e struttura dell’opera*, in: *Archivio Veneto*, ser. 6 21 (2021), pp. 5–37, here pp. 9–27.

33 An impression provide *Documenti per la storia delle relazioni fra Verona e Mantova nel secolo XIII*, ed. by Carlo Cipolla, Milano 1901 (*Bibliotheca historica italica*, series altera 1); *Documenti per la storia delle relazioni diplomatiche fra Verona e Mantova nel secolo XIV*, ed. by *id.*, Venezia 1907 (*Miscellanea di storia veneta*, ser. 2° 12), and the peace treaties and legal transactions between Verona and Mantua, copied on two quires, in the *Liber privilegiorum comunis Mantue*, ed. by Roberto Navarrini, Mantova 1988 (*Fonti per la storia di Mantova e del suo territorio* 1), nos. 25–46, pp. 134–181; on the last item, cf. also Gian Maria Varanini, *I notai e la signoria cittadina. Appunti sulla documentazione dei Bonacolsi di Mantova fra Duecento e Trecento* (rileggendo Pietro Torelli), in: *RM Rivista* 9 (2008), pp. 1–55, esp. pp. 7–16 (URL: <http://www.rmoa.unina.it/1952/>; 10. 12. 2025).

34 Carlo d’Arco (1855) and Georg Heinrich Pertz (1866) have provided an edition of the annals. Hereinafter, the bilingual, annotated edition *Anonymi auctoris Breve Chronicon Mantuanum ab anno 1095 ad annum 1309 sive Annales Mantuani*, ed. by Ercolano Marani, Mantova 1968 (*Documenti storici Mantovani* 1) is used, which reproduces Pertz’s text with minor adaptations. The initial part for 1095–1178 probably comes from Verona and is known as “*Annales breves*”, see above note 31. The annals end with an entry on 1299, which concludes with a sentence on Passerino Bonacolsi’s accession to power (1309); this could be a later addendum. The quoted judgement on the annals is

not only observes events in Mantua but also the upheavals and developments in northern Italy, occasionally even in central Italy, which were also relevant to his hometown due to political alliances and networks. While in the early Duecento the Poltroni and Calorosi had vied for primacy in the city, the annals show how unstable and contested the political situation was once again in the 1260s, as the *partes* of the Gaffari and the Da Riva / Da Saviola faced each other with varying success.³⁵ In the late 1260s and early 1270s, the conflicts escalated and produced unprecedented consequences, as noted by the annalist. In 1268/1269, Pinamonte Bonacolsi, who had only emerged on the political scene a decade earlier, allied with the counts of Casaloldo, and their *pars* ousted that of the Gaffari. Shortly afterward, however, the margrave of Este and the count of Sambonifacio prevailed, “stormed the palace” (“ascenderunt palatium”, the phrase commonly used thereafter), and appointed temporary governors before returning to the usual communal path with a *podestà*.³⁶ The expelled Gaffari and Zanicali, as well as the Da Saviola, were allowed to return to Mantua – apparently driven by Obizzo II of Este.³⁷ In the political turmoil immediately before and directly afterward, as hinted, Pinamonte Bonacolsi appeared for the first time, participating in shifting alliances and managing to play the various factions against each other in his favour. The returning exiles subsequently failed in their coup attempt to secure city rule for Obizzo II by ousting Ludovico da Sambonifacio (“volentes facere dictum marchionem dominum sine comite Ludovico”); however, the count prevailed alongside Pinamonte.³⁸ The communal sovereignty seems to have remained intact for the time being, as the Da Riva and Da Saviola returned “ad precepta comunis Mantue”.³⁹ Yet, the situation remained volatile: after an alliance around Federico di Marcaria and Pinamonte Bonacolsi had expelled their opponents in 1272, the two made peace with Verona and allowed some exiles to return, who came “ad precepta et

from Giuseppe Gardoni, Mantova nell'età di Dante, in: Stefano L'Occaso (Ed.), Dante e la cultura del Trecento a Mantova. Catalogo della mostra, Mantova, Museo di Palazzo Ducale, 15 ottobre 2021 – 9 gennaio 2022, Mantova 2021, pp. 11–46, here p. 14.

35 On the factional strife in the early 13th century, cf. Giuseppe Gardoni, Fra torri e “magnae domus”. Famiglie e spazi urbani a Mantova (secoli XII–XIII), Verona 2008, and Mario Vaini, Dal Comune alla Signoria. Mantova dal 1200 al 1328, Milano 1986 (Collana di fonti e di studi dell'Istituto di storia economica dell'Università “L. Bocconi”), pp. 177–179; for the factional entanglements in the 1260s: Annales Mantuani (see note 34), pp. 66–86.

36 Annales Mantuani (see note 34), pp. 78–84.

37 Ibid., p. 84: The Gaffari und Zanicali have returned “amore et rogamine marchionis Mantue [sic]”.

38 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 84–86.

39 Cf. *ibid.*, p. 86.

comunis et dictis domnorum” – a small but crucial difference.⁴⁰ But even this alliance was short-lived, as Pinamonte got rid of both his former ally Federico and the margrave of Este, who had allegedly joined forces “to place the city of Mantua and its inhabitants under the rule of the margrave.”⁴¹

Despite the annalist’s clear formulation and positioning, Pinamonte is not the dominant figure in the subsequent entries, nor the directing actor. In the following years, the Mantuans secured the contado and drove the opposing fellow citizens out of their retreats there. With these measures, probably initiated by him, Pinamonte secured his position, but they also served urban peace and were carried out by communal troops, which is why in the annals the “Mantuani (intrinseci)” are seen taking, destroying, rebuilding.⁴² However, other actions, which certainly corresponded to Pinamonte’s wishes, are not explicitly attributed to him, including, for example, the appointment of Albertino Fontana as *podestà* of Mantua in 1274, who – as recorded by the annalist – had been banished from Ferrara by the margrave of Este along with his family.⁴³ Pinamonte, though, appears at crucial points in the annals, such as the thwarted conspiracy of 1277 or the peace treaty of 1291, which reconciled both the Bonacolsi with the Este and Mantua with Ferrara.⁴⁴ The annalist’s portrayal is consistent with the findings from documentary material: Pinamonte consolidated and expanded his position by controlling the occupa-

40 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 90–92. On Mantuan politics in the late 1260s and early 1270s, cf. also Gardoni, *Mantova* (see note 34), pp. 13–15; Vaini, *Dal Comune* (see note 35), pp. 213–216. The peace treaty between Mantua and Verona as well as other related documents can be read in *Liber privilegiorum comunis Mantue* (see note 33), nos. 33–37, pp. 157–169, and in *Documenti ... nel secolo XIII* (see note 33), nos. 43–44, pp. 121–145. The *pax* is recorded in the *Syllabus potestatum Veronensium*, in: *Antiche cronache Veronesi*, vol. 1, ed. by Carlo Cipolla, Venezia 1890, pp. 387–408, here p. 396, and the *Annales Veronenses de Romano*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 409–469, which recognise Pinamonte as the *spiritus rector*, having expelled “cum amicis suis” Ludovico da Sambonifacio and Guido da Correggio.

41 *Annales Mantuani* (see note 34), p. 94: “circa dandi civitatem Mantue cum hominibus sub servitute marchionis”.

42 Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 94–100, and also Roberto Navarrini, *Mantova tra comune e signoria*, in: *Liber privilegiorum* (see note 33), pp. 15–46, here pp. 22–23.

43 *Annales Mantuani* (see note 34), p. 96.

44 *Ibid.*, pp. 104–106: The conspiracies in Mantua and Verona, recorded in direct succession, the first foiled, the second unsuccessful despite the murder of Mastino della Scala, were probably a coordinated endeavour; Ubertino *de Romana* sees this connection, cf. *Annales Veronenses de Romano* (see note 40), pp. 419–420; *Annales Mantuani* (see note 34), p. 120: The peace negotiated by Alberto della Scala as “arbitrator et amicus comunis” and concluded in May 1291 takes up a lot of space in the *Liber privilegiorum* (see note 33), nos. 185–196, 204–217, pp. 511–532, 549–575.

tion of key positions and expanding the fiefs and properties of his family,⁴⁵ while leaving the communal institutions intact and contenting himself with the title of *capitaneus populi* or *capitaneus partis*; it was somewhat of a “soft” transition – a key moment is not highlighted in the annals. Only towards the end of his rule does Pinamonte title himself as *capitaneus generalis* (with extended powers),⁴⁶ but he failed due to the resistance of his son Bardellone, who was angered because his brother Tagino had been chosen as successor. Bardellone seized Mantua in 1291 in a coup, politically sidelined his father, captured his brother, and elected his nephew Guido (also known as Botticella) as *podestà*.⁴⁷ Bardellone was not as modest as his father, but promptly appointed himself as *capitaneus et dominus generalis* and established a council of twelve elders, to whom he delegated powers of the communal assembly, and created an armed corps, as the annals describe in detail.⁴⁸ He also apparently allowed exiles “bonitate et misericordia” to return “ad mandata sua et comunis Mantue” – the choice and order of words by the anonymous annalist appear deliberate.⁴⁹ When Bardellone deposed his nephew Guido and brought Tagino back to his side, with whom he formed an alliance with the Este in 1299, the abandoned Guido successfully invaded Mantua with the support of Veronese troops and

45 On the Bonacolsi’s investment in real estate in the *civitas vetus*, cf. Marina Romani, Una città in forma di palazzo. Potere signorile e forma urbana nella Mantova medievale e moderna, Mantova 1995 (Quaderni di Cheiron 1), pp. 61–72; Gianfranco Ferlisi, Entro mura d’acqua e di pietra. Dinamiche insediative e progetti dinastici dai Canossa ai Gonzaga, in: Marzio Achille Romani (Ed.), Storia di Mantova. Uomini, ambiente, economia, società, istituzioni, vol. 1: L’eredità gonzaghesca, secoli XII–XVIII, Mantova 2005, pp. 145–231, here pp. 158–160; on these and other purchases, cf. also Vaini, Dal Comune (see note 35), pp. 227–231.

46 On Pinamonte’s titles, cf. Gardoni, Mantova (see note 34), pp. 17–21; Vaini, Dal Comune (see note 35), pp. 221–222; still worth reading is Pietro Torelli, Capitanato del popolo e vicariato imperiale come elementi costitutivi della signoria bonacolsiana, in: id., Scritti di storia del diritto italiano, Milano 1959 (Seminario giuridico della Università di Bologna 21), pp. 375–480 [originally 1923], esp. pp. 384–409.

47 Annales Mantuani (see note 34), pp. 120–122. Transitions of power could be difficult for northern Italian personal governments; even later, despite advanced dynasticisation, many potentates sought legitimisation by the commune, cf. Gian Maria Varanini, Forme della legittimazione e aspirazioni dinastiche. Note sui regimi signorili dell’Italia nord-orientale (secoli XIII–XIV), in: Flocel Sabaté/Maite Pedrol (Eds.), Ruptura i legitimació dinàstica a l’Edat Mitjana. Reunió Científica XVII Curs d’Estiu Comtat d’Urgell, celebrat a Balaguer els dies 4, 5 i 6 de juliol de 2012, Lleida 2015, pp. 171–186; and Dario Canzian, Condivisione del potere, modalità di successione e processo di dinastizzazione, in: Maire Vigueur (Ed.), Signorie cittadine (see note 1), pp. 439–464.

48 Annales Mantuani (see note 34), pp. 124–126.

49 Ibid., p. 128.

Alberto I della Scala, who had looked critically at Bardellone's actions.⁵⁰ The annals end around 1300 with established personal governments, as Verona and Mantua were said to be governed by *domini*.⁵¹

The Veronese annals also record the significant political events in Mantua, not least those with Veronese involvement, as the two cities collaborated from the 1270s onwards under the Bonacolsi and the Della Scala.⁵² The two *annales*, however, have differing scopes: Ubertino *de Romana*, originating from Modena and relocating to Verona around 1264, where he practiced and taught law and quickly became part of the entourage of the Della Scala,⁵³ does not limit himself to the region or the Apennine peninsula. Instead, his annals (1259–1306) serve almost as a reference guide to the (party) political events and the reigning kings, popes, cardinals, bishops, abbots, as well as the local potentates of northern and central Italy, whose reigns and often also deaths Ubertino documents with diligence and accuracy. The anonymous annalist of the “Syllabus” (1194–1306), on the other hand, writing in the late Due and early Trecento, is almost exclusively interested in local events, annually listing the *podestà* of Verona and frequently evaluating their actions.

Both annalists, however, record the progressively strengthened leading position of the Della Scala, who were of urban origins, within the Veronese communal organisation following the end of Ezzelino III.⁵⁴ Similar to the Bonacolsi in Mantua, the Scaligeri did

50 Ibid., pp. 130–132. Bardellone had tried to break away from Verona and the Della Scala and to move closer to Ferrara and the Este instead, cf. Gardoni, Mantova (see note 34), pp. 22–23. This is clearly formulated by the anonymous of the Syllabus potestatum Veronensium (see note 40), p. 403, for the military intervention had taken place because Bardellone and Tagino “tractaverant unionem cum marchione Estensi in dampnum predictorum dominorum Alberti de la Scala et Boteselle fratrum predictorum et tocius partis Mantue et Veron(e)”. Guido/Botticella in turn introduced a much more personalised regime, extended his powers and, for instance, henceforth let the councils meet not in the designated palazzo but in his residence.

51 *Annales Mantuani* (see note 34), p. 132.

52 This also included appointing a person from the other city to the *podestà* office, which was not necessarily advantageous, as the anonymous author of the “Syllabus” criticises the unjust rule of Giovannino Bonacolsi, who held the Veronese *podestà* office several times in the 1270–1280s and is branded “ferus et crudelis et amator pecunie”, cf. Syllabus potestatum Veronensium (see note 40), p. 398; on the critique of *podestà* in chronicles of northeastern Italy, cf. Cusa, *Fuit ferus* (see note 26), pp. 151–156.

53 On his life, cf. Gian Maria Varanini, Ubertino de Romana, in: DBI 97 (2020), pp. 356–359 (URL: [54 On the Scaligeri's urban background, cf. Andrea Castagnetti, The Della Scalas. From Citizens to Rulers, in: *Scienza e cultura* 2 \(1988\), pp. 156–162, esp. pp. 157–158; id., *Formazione e vicende della*](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ubertino-de-romana_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=UBERTINO%20de%20Romana%2F; 10.12.2025), and Cusa, <i>Gli Annales</i> (see note 32), pp. 27–30.</p>
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not undermine or abolish the communal institutions.⁵⁵ Their position was based on the support of the *popolo*, and thus in the 1260s, Mastino I was *potestas populi* and *potestas* of the *Domus mercatorum*, the powerful umbrella organisation of Veronese merchants.⁵⁶ Like the Bonacolsi in Mantua, the Scaligeri consolidated their position through the expansion of fiefdoms and landholding, the elimination of political opponents, and the appointment of relatives and followers to secular and ecclesiastical offices in the city.⁵⁷ That they did not remain unchallenged in the early phase, is evidenced by the resurgence of factional conflicts in the 1260s⁵⁸ and notably the assassination of Mastino I in 1277, which consolidated the position of the Della Scala, though. As both annalists note, the communal association elected his brother Alberto as his successor in regular elections, and also pursued and condemned the assassins and conspirators.⁵⁹ On this occasion, Ubertino – who does not use generic names but accurately captures the factions and titles

signoria scaligera, in: Gian Maria Varanini (Ed.), *Gli Scaligeri 1277–1387*, Verona 1988, pp. 3–16, here pp. 3–5.

55 A comparative view of the personal governments in northeast Italy in the 13th and early 14th centuries is offered by Gian Maria Varanini, *Esperienze di governo personale nelle città dell'Italia nord-orientale (secoli XIII–XIV)*, in: Maire Vigueur (Ed.), *Signorie cittadine* (see note 1), pp. 45–76; id., *Istituzioni, società e politica nel Veneto dal comune alla signoria (secolo XIII–1329)*, in: id./Andrea Castagnetti (Eds.), *Il Veneto nel medioevo. Dai comuni cittadini al predominio scaligero nella Marca*, Verona 1991, pp. 263–422, esp. pp. 332–408. On the political developments and alliances cf. now Nicola Ryssov, *La Marca Veronese-Trevigiana. Un orizzonte per le sperimentazioni di raccordo sovracittadino*, in: Enrico Faini / Pierluigi Terenzi / Andrea Zorzi (Eds.), *Reti italiane. Spazi e relazioni politiche da Roma alle Alpi nei tempi di Dante (1260–1330)*, Roma 2023 (*Italia comunale e signorile* 17), pp. 145–168.

56 Cf., for instance, Varanini, *Istituzioni* (see note 55), pp. 337–338; id., *Della Scala, Mastino*, in: *DBI* 37 (1989), pp. 444–453 (URL: [57 On the Della Scala's influence on religious institutions, cf. Giuseppina de Sandre Gasparini, *Istituzioni ecclesiastiche, religiose e assistenziali nella Verona scaligera tra potere signorile e società*, in: Varanini \(Ed.\), *Gli Scaligeri* \(see note 54\), pp. 393–404; Maria Clara Rossi, *Le elezioni vescovili. Il caso di Verona scaligera*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 405–411. Even in the first half of the Duecento, historiographies do not address this element of the expansion of power, which was hardly ever played out in public, cf. Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, *Cavalieri e cittadini. Guerra, conflitti e società nell'Italia comunale*, Bologna 2004 \(*Collezione di testi e studi. Storiografia*\), pp. 51–53.](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/mastino-della-scala_res-3057e3f6-87ec-11dc-8e9d-0016357ee51_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=DELLA%20SCALA%2C%20Mastino%2F; 10. 12. 2025).</p>
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58 In accordance with the usual party logic of the Duecento, the *Syllabus potestatum Veronensium* (see note 40), ad a. 1268, p. 396, speaks of the “*pars domini Mastini et fratrum de la Scala*”.

59 *Ibid.*, ad a. 1277, p. 397; *Annales Veronenses de Romano* (see note 40), ad a. 1277, pp. 419–420; cf. also Varanini, *Della Scala, Mastino* (see note 56).

of political actors⁶⁰ – describes the actual power dynamics in an insertion, noting that the deceased “had asserted himself as lord (*dominus*) of Verona for a long time.”⁶¹ However, while the annalist lists punitive and retaliatory measures taken “per Commune Veron.,” surprisingly, there is no mention of succession arrangements made by the commune. The citizens’ assembly (*concio*) appointed Alberto, the brother of the slain Mastino, as *capitaneus populi* for life (which the anonymous annalist of the “Syllabus” notes⁶²) and granted him extensive governing rights, the so-called *arbitrium*. Ubertino takes a similar approach in his entry on the next change of rule in 1301, as he records the death and burial of the acquainted Alberto and his de facto ruling power in the city on the Adige river, noting that he had been “lord (*dominus*) of Verona for 23 years and 10 months and *podestà* of the *Domus mercatorum* for 32 years,”⁶³ yet once again there is no mention of his successor. Even though Alberto had paved the way for his son Bartolomeo during his lifetime, elevating him to *capitaneus*, or co-regent, around 1290. The transition in 1301 was correspondingly smooth, as documented in the “Syllabus.”⁶⁴ Here, as in 1277 and in 1304, the anonymous annalist uses the term *factus fuit* to express the official elevation of each successor by the citizenry,⁶⁵ as the Della Scala, despite having long held effective control, did not forego such formalities.⁶⁶

Both the anonymous author of the “Syllabus” and Ubertino note the alternate actions of the citizens or those of the Scaligeri following Mastino I’s violent death in 1277; thus, in the words of the annalists, it was still the “commune” or the “Veronenses” who went to war or made peace.⁶⁷ And yet, in the 1280–1290s, the focus of both shifts increas-

60 His linguistic sensitivity in this regard is similar to that of other chroniclers, cf. also – regarding Tolosan’s history of the distant past – Enrico Faini, *Un canonico alla prova del Comune. Tolosano da Faenza nel contesto della storiografia cittadina*, in: Fulvio Delle Donne / Paolo Garbini / Marino Zabbia (Eds.), *Scrivere storia nel medioevo. Regolamentazione delle forme e delle pratiche nei secoli XII–XV*, Roma 2021 (I libri di Viella 377), pp. 29–44.

61 *Annales Veronenses de Romano* (see note 40), ad a. 1277, p. 420: “steterat dominus Veron(e) longo tempore”.

62 *Syllabus potestatum Veronensium* (see note 40), ad a. 1277, p. 397: “Incontinenti factus fuit dominus Albertus frater domini Mastini capitaneus populi Veron.”

63 *Annales Veronenses de Romano* (see note 40), ad a. 1301, p. 461: “dominus Veron. per XXIII annos et X menses et potestas mercatorum per XXXII annos”.

64 *Syllabus potestatum Veronensium* (see note 40), ad a. 1301, p. 404.

65 *Ibid.*, ad a. 1277, 1301, 1304, pp. 397, 404–405.

66 On this, cf. also Varanini, *Forme* (see note 47), pp. 175–179.

67 Cf., for example, *Syllabus potestatum Veronensium* (see note 40), ad a. 1280, 1301, pp. 398, 404–405; *Annales Veronenses de Romano* (see note 40), ad a. 1279, 1280, p. 422. It should be noted that,

ingly to the representative and power-political actions of Alberto I della Scala – “vero artifice del consolidamento del regime signorile”⁶⁸ –, paying careful attention to his attempts to increase his rank and prestige. These include numerous marriage alliances with the Pelavicini, Bonacolsi, Este, Visconti, del Dente, and descendants of emperor Frederick II;⁶⁹ or the two lavish *curiae militum* in 1294 and 1298, at which the Scaliger displayed his *nobilitas* and *largitas* by knighting relatives and followers such as Bailardino Nogarola or Pietro da Marano and presenting them with precious garments, which the annalist of the “Syllabus” enthuses about.⁷⁰ Furthermore, apart from a few attempted coups, family cohesion was strong, and acceptance within the communal association was high – as shown by the two annals: in 1301 and 1304, the author of the “Syllabus” adds a panegyric to the deceased, who were solely concerned with the welfare of the Veronese.⁷¹ Ubertino, on the other hand, occupied a prominent position in Verona under the Della

unlike the feudal nobles, the Scaligeri probably did not excel in warfare due to their urban origins. Only Cangrande I della Scala distinguished himself through his military activities.

68 Cf. Gian Maria Varanini, La documentazione delle signorie cittadine italiane tra Duecento e Trecento e l'*Eloquium super arengis* del notaio veronese Ivano di Bonafine *de Berinzo*, in: Guido Castelnovo/Olivier Mattéoni (Eds.), “De part et d’autre des Alpes”, vol. 2: Chancelleries et chanceliers des princes à la fin du Moyen Âge. Actes de la table ronde de Chambéry, 5 et 6 octobre 2006, Chambéry 2011 (Collection Sociétés, Religions, Politiques 19), pp. 53–76, esp. p. 64.

69 Syllabus potestatum Veronensium (see note 40), ad a. 1289, 1298–1299, 1303, 1306, pp. 399, 402–403, 405, 407–408; Annales Veronenses de Romano (see note 40), ad a. 1285, 1289, 1291, 1294, 1298–1299, 1303, pp. 430, 436, 440, 442–443, 452–453, 456–457, 467. On the Della Scala’s marriages, who married into more illustrious circles from the late 1280s onwards, cf. Gian Maria Varanini, Donne e potere in Verona scaligera e nelle signorie trecentesche. Primi appunti, in: Paola Lanaro/Alison Smith (Eds.), Donne a Verona. Una storia della città dal medioevo a oggi, Sommacampagna 2011 (Nordest, n. s. 111), pp. 46–68, esp. pp. 51–58.

70 On the *curie*, cf. Syllabus potestatum Veronensium (see note 40), ad a. 1294, 1298, pp. 400–402; Annales Veronenses de Romano (see note 40), ad a. 1294, 1298, pp. 444, 453–454, or Paolo Rigoli, L’esibizione del potere. *Curie* e feste scaligere nelle fonti cronachistiche, in: Varanini (Ed.), Gli Scaligeri (see note 54), pp. 149–156. On the tournaments, dubbings and gifted clothes, cf. Piero Majocchi, La seta di Cangrande. Rituali funerari e distinzione sociale in Italia nel Medioevo (ca. 500–1450), Roma 2015 (Nuovi studi storici 97), pp. 107–109. For the two mentioned supporters, cf. Gian Maria Varanini, Nogarola, Bailardino, in: DBI 78 (2013), pp. 678–679 (URL: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bailardino-nogarola_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/?search=NOGAROLA%2C%20Bailardino%2F](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bailardino-nogarola_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=NOGAROLA%2C%20Bailardino%2F;); 10. 12. 2025), and Natascia L. Carlotta, Pietro „Nan“ da Marano. Ritratto di un cortigiano scaligero, in: Varanini (Ed.), Gli Scaligeri (see note 54), pp. 143–147.

71 Syllabus potestatum Veronensium (see note 40), ad a. 1301, p. 404: “qui quidquid boni concipiebat ad honorem et commodum civitatis Veron. et totius populi eiusdem, id effectui mandare ardentissime satagebat”; ad a. 1304, p. 405: “qui hanc urbem rexerat, et ad omne bonum et statum promoverat et honorem ..., cogitans semper populum suum in pace perpetua gubernare”.

Scala, being a communal judge and accompanying Mastino I during his tenure as *podestà* in Pavia in 1268 and seven years later Alberto I, who held the same position in Mantua. While this follower of the Scaligeri is interested not only in his own sphere of activity in and around Verona, his historical work on the early phase of Scaliger rule continues to encompass both the actions of the commune and the Veronese and the activities of the Della Scala – thus, he does not depict a turning point or a radical change. However, in the entries on the deaths of Mastino I and Alberto I, he almost casually captures the real power dynamics in Verona, where the civic body and ruling family entered an almost symbiotic relationship.

4 Excursus. The Loss of Vicenza's Autonomy in Contemporary Vicentine and Paduan Historiography

The political development in Vicenza in the second half of the Duecento and early Trecento differs from that of neighbouring cities. While initially, like elsewhere, the communal constitution was restored, social discord, institutional fragility, and likely also financial hardship led to Vicenza submitting to the Paduans in 1266.⁷² The Paduan foreign rule lasted almost half a century until 1311/1312, when Vicentines broke away from the Paduans and entered into the next relationship of dependence with Cangrande I della Scala. All contemporary Vicentine and Paduan historiographers address, either entirely or in part, these heteronomous years, and changes in power. They convey how differently these events were perceived and weighed in the two cities. However, none of the well-known Veronese historical works address the double upheaval in neighbouring Vicenza. Nonetheless, the sporadic mentions in Ubertino *de Romana's* annals indicate that the Veronese were well informed about the affairs transpiring in Vicenza.⁷³

72 The documents in Giambattista Verci, *Storia della Marca Trivigiana e Veronese*, vol. 2, Venice 1786, nos. 159–162, pp. 100–106, provide information about the change of rule in 1266; cf. further Natascia Carlotto, *La città custodita. Politica e finanza a Vicenza dalla caduta di Ezzelino al vicariato imperiale (1259–1312)*, Milano 1993 (Gli Studi 3), pp. 90–91; Cracco, *Da Comune* (see note 17), pp. 121–123, or Varanini, *Istituzioni* (see note 55), pp. 358–360. On the city history of the second half of the 13th century, is still useful: Vincenzo Bortolaso, *Vicenza dalla morte di Ezzelino alla Signoria Scaligera (1259–1311)*, in: *Nuovo Archivio Veneto* 24 (1912), pp. 5–53, 336–394.

73 The *Annales Veronenses de Romano* (see note 40) record a number of Vicentine affairs especially for the last quarter of the Duecento, for instance, a Paduan building programme carried out in 1296 to fortify the city (p. 449: “faciendo fossata, muros et munitiones”), a failed coup attempt five years earlier by Giordano da Serego, who “voluit accipere Vincentiam de forcia Paduanorum” (pp. 439–

The Vicentine notary Niccolò Smereglo covers the period from 1200 to 1312 in his communal annals, which focus almost exclusively on local events.⁷⁴ His historical writing, handed down just in three late miscellanies of the 16th and 17th centuries,⁷⁵ revolves around the communal *podestà*. He drew from an older catalogue of *podestà* for the initial part, which listed only the officeholders, and Smereglo adopted this simple structure for his own records from the mid-century onwards. Primarily, he registers conflicts within urban society and its relationship to the Paduans – whether in opposition or collaboration. He records how his hometown, due to political instability and social division, found itself “in malo statu” in the early 1260s, leading the city to seek the “custodia” of the Paduans in 1264 for the first time, having already turned to them in the immediate post-Ezzelinian turmoil of 1259.⁷⁶ As violent conflicts persisted and unrest and hardships increased, the Vicentines once again sought the protection of the Paduans in 1266, and “the Vicentine *intrinseci* once again handed over the city to the Paduans,” marking the beginning of their *dominatio*, as the annalist succinctly notes.⁷⁷ Although

440), also reported by Nicolai Smeregli *Vicentini Annales Civitatis Vincentiae*, ed. by Giovanni Soranzo, Bologna 1921 (RIS² 8,5), p. 15, ll. 21–27 (cf. on the family Gian Maria Varanini, Serego, da, in: DBI 92 [2018], pp. 85–90 [URL: [74 On Smereglo and his annals, cf. Nicolai Smeregli *Annales* \(see note 73\), pp. III–XIII; Arnaldi, *Realtà* \(see note 14\), pp. 341–346; Cusa, *Die Geschichtsschreibung* \(see note 5\), pp. 302–317.](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/da-serego_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=SEREGO%2C%20da%2F; 10.12.2025]); or the discovery of Laurentius’ relics near the chapel of San Lorenzo in 1278 (p. 421) – perhaps also for this reason, two years later the Franciscans acquired a chapel from the cathedral canons and subsequently built the Gothic church of San Lorenzo; cf. on the presence of the Minorites in the city Francesca Lomastro Tognato, <i>Appunti sulla fortuna dei Minori a Vicenza</i>, in: Giorgio Cracco (Ed.), <i>Minoritismo e centri veneti nel Duecento</i>, Trento 1983, pp. 41–62.</p>
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75 On the manuscript tradition, cf. Smeregli *Annales* (see note 73), pp. XIII–XXII.

76 *Ibid.*, p. 9, l. 8 – p. 11, l. 16, i.a. ad a. 1262, p. 10, ll. 29–30: “et sic civitas Vincentiae fuit in malo statu”, ad a. 1263, p. 10, l. 36: “Et tunc civitas Vincentiae data fuit in custodia tantum Paduanis per Vincentinos.” On the tumultuous 1260s in Vicenza, cf. Cracco, *Da Comune* (see note 16), pp. 111–123 and Carlotto, *La città* (see note 72), pp. 86–91.

77 Smeregli *Annales* (see note 73), p. 11, ll. 25–30: “Tandem Vincentini intrinseci dederunt iterum civitatem Vincentiae in custodia Paduanis ..., donec ipsi habuerunt dominationem civitatis Vincentiae.” The assumption of power is also worth a laconic entry in anonymous Paduan annals: *Redazione parmense degli Annales Patavini*, ed. by Antonio Bonardi, Città di Castello 1905 (RIS² 8,1), pp. 183–189, here p. 186, ll. 13–15: “Hoc anno castellani vicentini dederunt sua castra Veronensibus, unde commune Vicencie reddidit se paduanus communi et paduanus exercitus cepit castrum Leonici.” Similarly recorded in the compilation of the mid-14th century: *Liber regiminum Padue*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 291–376, here p. 327, ll. 19–20: “et postea Vincentini cives dederunt se et suam civitatem Paduanis, et eorum potestati ac dominio subsiderunt”.

Smereglo occasionally criticizes the Paduans, he does not condemn them or the *podestà* sent by them across the board.⁷⁸ He commends some, such as Ziliolo de' Maccaruffi, Lemizzo Cane, or Giovanni de' Tadi, for their "bonum regimen",⁷⁹ while others enriched themselves instead of pursuing the urban common good – Aldobrandino de' Mezzabati is accused of partiality, and Sinesio de' Bernardi, though proven guilty of embezzlement, managed to escape condemnation due to intervention from his Paduan fellow citizens.⁸⁰ The asymmetrical relationship between Padua and Vicenza harboured potential for conflict, such as Padua protecting Sinesio de' Bernardi, who was proven to have committed a crime, usurping Vicentine properties in the countryside, or attempting to occupy the bishop's seat with its own candidate – according to Smereglo, the Paduans regarded the Vicentines with great suspicion.⁸¹ The annalist therefore welcomes the change of power in 1311 and specifically emphasizes that the otherwise notoriously divided urban society took collective action against the Paduans to expel them. The future seemed promising to him, as the new imperial vicar Cangrande I was to achieve "multa mirabilia".⁸²

As expected, Paduan historiographers saw things differently. An anonymous annalist, for example, notes that the Vicentines were mistaken if they believed themselves to be under imperial protection. Detailed accounts of the events in 1311 are provided by the notary Albertino Mussato and the judge Guglielmo Cortusi, whose historical works were often copied and used in Padua, as well as by the Vicentine notary Ferreto Ferreti.⁸³ Their chronicles offer different perspectives on the same event. Albertino in his "De gestis Henrici VII Cesaris" (also known as "Historia Augusta"), which oscillates between regional and imperial history, Ferreto in his similarly themed "Historia rerum in Italia gestarum", and Guglielmo in his linguistically, stylistically, and structurally simpler "Chronica de novitatibus Padue et Lombardie", interpret the events. Hence, they pro-

78 On the *podestà* in and from Padua, cf. Sante Bortolami, *Politica e cultura nell'import-export del personale itinerante di governo dell'Italia medioevale. Il caso di Padova comunale*, in: Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur (Ed.), *I podestà dell'Italia comunale, vol. 1: Reclutamento e circolazione degli ufficiali forestieri (fine XII sec. – metà XIV sec.)*, Roma 2000 (Nuovi studi storici 51), pp. 203–258.

79 Smeregli *Annales* (see note 73), p. 13, ll. 26–30, and p. 15, ll. 19–20.

80 *Ibid.*, p. 13, ll. 11–25; p. 17, ll. 2–5.

81 Cf. Cusa, *Die Geschichtsschreibung* (see note 5), pp. 313–316.

82 Smeregli *Annales* (see note 73), p. 19, l. 12 – p. 20, l. 4. The annals end with the political upheaval in 1311 and with the proleptic words, that Cangrande "tempore suae vicariae fecit omnia infrascripta et multa alia mirabilia." Whether the author deliberately brought his annals to a close with this allusion, or whether they remained unfinished or were handed down incompletely, must remain open.

83 The following remarks take up Cusa, *Die Geschichtsschreibung* (see note 5), pp. 215–216, 243–244, 323–325. On the authors and their chronicles, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 208–217, 237–244, 318–325.

vide explanations for the political upheaval, which, of course do not represent a neutral analysis but rather correspond to their own position and the expectations of their audience. Additionally, Mussato wrote contemporary history, as little time elapsed between the reporting period and the writing, especially since he apparently allowed individual sections of this and his other major historical writing to be disseminated successively even before the completion of the entire work.⁸⁴

The Paduans Albertino Mussato and Guglielmo Cortusi, in their quest to understand the causes of the loss of Vicenza in 1311, conclude that the blame for this shameful event lies not least within their own ranks. Firstly, they attribute it to the rejection of Henry VII's offer of alliance, because the city leadership rejected the royal offer "unbelievably reckless" ("vesana temeritas") since they "perceived the emperor's power as almost non-existent".⁸⁵ Secondly, they point to the arbitrary rule that inflicted "many injustices" on the people of Vicenza.⁸⁶ Thirdly, they criticize the behaviour of the Paduan guards on the day of the storming of the city, accusing them of being careless and withdrawing cowardly in disarray, which is why – in Cortusi's harsh words – they "were all worthy of death for abandoning the city because of their worthlessness."⁸⁷ For Ferreto, who wrote about these events in the 1330s, the Paduan rejection of the Luxembourg's offer set things in motion, so that dissatisfied Vicentines were able to make a pact with him.⁸⁸

84 On this, cf. Giovanna Maria Gianola, *Tra Padova e Verona. Il Cangrande di Mussato (e quello di Dante)*, in: Varanini (Ed.), *Gli Scaligeri* (see note 54), pp. 51–60, esp. p. 51; Andrea di Salvo, *Storia del tempo presente. Il De traditione Padue ad Canem Grandem anno 1328 di Albertino Mussato* († 1329), in: Giulia Barone / Lidia Capo / Stefano Gasparri (Eds.), *Studi sul Medioevo per Girolamo Arnaldi*, Roma 2001 (I libri di Viella 24), pp. 161–204, esp. p. 161, and the introduction in Albertino Mussato, *De Gestis Italicorum post Henricum VII Cesarem* (libri I–VII), ed. by Rino Modonutti, Firenze 2018 (Edizione nazionale dei testi della Storiografia umanistica 12), p. 29. On the differentiation between *Zeit-* and *Gegenwartsgeschichte* cf. Martin Sabrow, *Die Zeit der Zeitgeschichte*, Göttingen 2012, p. 16.

85 Albertini Mussati *De Gestis Henrici VII. Caesaris*, ed. by Ludovico Antonio Muratori, Milano 1727 (RIS¹ 10), coll. 9–568, here III,1, col. 360B, and Guillelmi de Cortusii *Chronica de novitatibus Padue et Lombardie*, ed. by Beniamino Pagnin, Bologna 1941–1975 (RIS² 12,5), here I,13, p. 13, ll. 9–10: "reputans imperatoris potentiam quasi nullam".

86 Mussati *De Gestis* (see note 85), III,1, col. 360AB; Cortusii *Chronica* (see note 85), I,13, p. 13, ll. 18–19: "asserentes se non posse sustinere tantas iniurias Paduanorum".

87 Mussati *De Gestis* (see note 85), III,1, col. 361BC; Cortusii *Chronica* (see note 85), I,13, p. 13, ll. 13–15: "qui erant omnes digni morte, quia propter vilitatem amiserant civitatem".

88 Ferreti *Vicentini Historia rerum in Italia gestarum, ab anno MCCL ad annum usque MCCCXVIII*, ed. by Carlo Cipolla, *Le opere di Ferreto de' Ferreti vicentino*, vol. 1–2, Roma 1908–1914 (FSI 42–43,1), here IV, p. 313, l. 1 – p. 315, l. 9; p. 322, ll. 9–21, i. a. ll. 15–16: "sciebat nempe Cesar Patavos, pollicite fidei transgressores, moras expetere".

But since he was looking back on the events, he knew that the defection ultimately did not result in freedom. He criticizes the successful agitators (as well as the complacent Paduans) who abruptly ended the idyllic peace in which Paduans and Vicentines had lived.⁸⁹ The Paduan chroniclers saw the loss of Vicenza as a watershed moment, not least because they lost opportunities for proving themselves and because social tensions at home were fuelled, ultimately leading to the loss of communal autonomy. Ferreto, on the other hand, viewed the turn of events as an ominous liberation, considering the supposedly achieved independence as an “illusion” (“ymago”).⁹⁰

5 The Accession of the Da Carrara in Padua according to Guglielmo Cortusi

Padua was able to maintain its communal constitution much longer than neighbouring cities, which led to it being stylized as the last bastion of communal freedom. The transition from commune to signoria in Padua was not straightforward and took place over two decades (from 1311 to 1337/1338), before the Da Carrara could establish themselves.⁹¹ From the polyphony of the Paduan historiographers – whose viewpoints on the beginning of the Carraresi’s rule have already been subjected to a comparative analysis by Andrea di Salvo⁹² – only the voice of Guglielmo Cortusi will be listened to here, to hear how he presents and interprets the transition of power. Cortusi witnessed the political upheaval, served as a judge in the municipal courtrooms since 1315 but only occasionally stepped onto the diplomatic stage as Padua’s envoy. His chronicle, divided into smaller sections (*libri, capitula*), ends in 1358, presumably because death overtook him.

89 Ibid., p. 325, ll. 20–22: “tanta nempe fuerat tranquillitatis quies, tanta pacis amena iocunditas, ut Patavos Vicentinosque, tunc in sublimi felicitatis orbe positos, diiudicet vulgaris opinio”.

90 Ibid., p. 327, l. 10 – p. 328, l. 4. On Vicenza under Della Scala rule, cf. Gian Maria Varanini, *Sul dominio scaligero a Vicenza (1312–1387)*, in: id. (Ed.), *Gli Scaligeri* (see note 54), pp. 35–40; Franco Barbieri, *L’intervento degli Scaligeri nello sviluppo urbano di Vicenza*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 291–300.

91 On Padua in the late Due and early Trecento, cf. John Kenneth Hyde, *Padua in the Age of Dante*, Manchester 1966, pp. 220–282; an overview of the upheaval in the 1310–30s is offered by Silvana Collodo, *Padova e gli scaligeri*, in: Varanini (Ed.), *Gli Scaligeri* (see note 54), pp. 41–50, and Benjamin Kohl, *Padua under the Carrara, 1318–1405*, Baltimore-London 1998, pp. 39–67.

92 Cf. Andrea di Salvo, *L’affermazione della Signoria cittadina nella percezione dei contemporanei. L’esempio dei Carraresi a Padova nella prima metà del Trecento*, Tesi di dottorato, Università Ca’ Foscari di Venezia, Venezia 1997, esp. pp. 87–237.

Cortusi's "Chronicon", unlike Mussato's work, thus covers the entire phase of political change, with its escalations and disruptions. Based on his elaborations, it becomes clear that he views the events of the years 1310–1311, 1328, and 1337 in particular as turning points. He precedes the description of the envoys' announcement of Henry VII's Italian expedition by detailing the state of his hometown in the chapter "On the peaceful and magnificent state of the city of Padua" ("De statu pacifico et magnifico civitatis Padue"),⁹³ before describing the fatal consequences of the *Romzug* on the political landscape of northern and central Italy, especially in Padua. According to him, before the Luxembourger crossed the Alps, the city of Antenore had ruled as the only free commune in the region ("quod Padua sola libera in communibus in tota marchia imperabat"), had been a bastion of wisdom and science, a place of religiosity and piety, of the art of warfare and wealth, as well as a safe haven for foreigners of various origins ("forenses de diversis partibus"), in short: favoured by God.⁹⁴

But this half-century of peace ("etas pacis")⁹⁵ was followed by the aforementioned shameful loss of Vicenza, a bloody civil war, and the constant threat from the expansion-hungry Cangrande I della Scala. Therefore, in 1318, there seemed to be no other way out than to elect Giacomo da Carrara "in dominum civitatis" and grant him comprehensive powers to negotiate with the aggressor.⁹⁶ When the agreements with Cangrande proved ineffective and the Scaliger, together with Paduan rebels, put the city under increasing pressure, it submitted to the duke of Austria, so that from 1320 the city was under the control of foreign vicars. Meanwhile, another civil war erupted within the city walls, from which Marsilio da Carrara, nephew of the aforementioned Giacomo, emerged vic-

93 Cortusiis Chronica (see note 85), I,11, p. 12, ll. 5–23.

94 Ibid., ll. 6–16.

95 Cf. Mussati De Gestis (see note 85), III,1, coll. 359B–360A. On Mussato's cyclical view of history in which prosperity and crisis alternate, cf. Rino Modonutti, "Senescens rerum ordo". Albertino Mussato e la storia. Tra decadenza morale e determinismo cosmico, in: Pascale Bourgain/Jean-Yves Tilliette (Eds.), *Le sens du temps – The sense of time. Actes du VIIe Congrès du Comité International de Latin Médiéval – Proceedings of the 7th Congress of the International Medieval Latin Committee* (Lyon, 10.–13. 09. 2014), Geneva 2017 (Rayon Histoire de la Librairie Droz 6), pp. 667–680, and – going beyond Albertino – Nicolai Rubinstein, *Some Ideas on Municipal Progress and Decline in the Italy of the Communes*, in: Donald James Gordon (Ed.), *Fritz Saxl 1890–1948. A Volume of Memorial Essays from his Friends in England*, London et al. 1957, pp. 165–183, or John Kenneth Hyde, *Contemporary Views on Faction and Civil Strife in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Italy*, in: Lauro Martines (Ed.), *Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities, 1200–1500*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1972 (UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. Contributions 5), pp. 273–307, here pp. 274–276.

96 Cortusiis Chronica (see note 85), II,3, p. 26, l. 35 – p. 27, l. 3.

torious in 1328 and promptly handed over the city to Cangrande.⁹⁷ At this point, Cortusi integrates into his chronicle a recapitulation of the recent developments in the form of an inner monologue of Marsilio, to justify the surrender of the city – a narratological element and a sign of the relevance of this event or chain of events. Marsilio, who realized that Padua's situation “steadily deteriorated from bad to worse,” muses in the words of the chronicler about the hopeless situation of the oppressed community from both outside and inside, as well as the inevitable decision to negotiate with Cangrande, as he had in vain turned to the Dukes Henry VI of Carinthia and Frederick the Fair of Austria, Pope John XXII and his legate Bertrand du Pouget, Passerino Bonacolsi and the margraves of Este, nor could support from the Trevisans or the Venetians be expected.⁹⁸ But instead of taking refuge in the Venetian lagoon and wallowing in wealth, the Carrarese took responsibility, which emphasises his ‘patriotic love’.⁹⁹

Cortusi also seems to have come to terms with the once detested Cangrande as the new lord: while he repeatedly reprimands him before his assumption of power in September 1328, the chronicler then shifts to sometimes exuberant praise and upon Cangrande's premature death, judges that he became “a father to the Paduans, to whom he had been the cruellest enemy.”¹⁰⁰ The chronicler also welcomes the rule of the Carraresi, praising their character traits and reputation in topical formulations. However, Cortusi

97 Ibid., IV,1–3, pp. 53–54, and Kohl, Padua (see note 91), pp. 56–57. On Marsilio da Carrara, cf. the profile drawn by Pier Paolo Vergerio the Older in the early Quattrocento: Petri Pauli Vergerii de Justinopoli De Principibus Carrariensibus et gestis eorum, ed. by Attilio Gnesotto, in: Atti e memorie della R. Accademia di scienze, lettere ed arti in Padova, n. s. 41 (1924–1925), pp. 333–459, esp. pp. 383–409; cf. also Maria Chiara Ganguzza Billanovich, Carrara, Marsilio da, in: DBI 20 (1977), pp. 688–691 (URL: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marsilio-da-carrara_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/?search=CARRARA%2C%20Marsilio%20da%2F](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marsilio-da-carrara_(Dizionario-Biografico)/?search=CARRARA%2C%20Marsilio%20da%2F)”; 10. 12. 2025).

98 Cortusiis Chronica (see note 85), ch. IV,1, p. 53, ll. 2–17, here the citation in ll. 3–4: “videns manifeste facta Padue de malo in peius continuo declinare”; cf. also Di Salvo, L'affermazione (see note 92), pp. 155–156, Louis Green, The Image of Tyranny in Early Fourteenth-Century Italian Historical Writing, in: Renaissance Quarterly 7 (1993), pp. 336–351, here pp. 342–343.

99 Cortusiis Chronica (see note 85), IV,1, p. 53, ll. 17–19: “Dum hec et alia cum animo multotiens revolvisset ait: ‘Possem in Veneciis vivere in divitiis abundanter; sed, etiamsi me mori conveniat, volo mee Patrie subvenire’”.

100 Ibid., IV,9, p. 58, ll. 9–21, here ll. 15–16: “Nam Paduanis, quibus fuerat durissimus inimicus, fuit pater.” On Cangrande's portrayal in the historiography of northeastern Italy in the 14th century, cf. Di Salvo, L'affermazione (see note 92), pp. 39–86, and id., Il signore della Scala. Percezioni e rielaborazioni della figura di Cangrande I nelle testimonianze del secolo XIV, in: RSI 10,8,1 (1996), pp. 36–87.

once again presents a turning point with the replacement of the Della Scala by Marsilio in 1337, followed by his cousin Ubertino's succession the following year, marking the end of the crisis that had begun over two decades earlier.¹⁰¹ He portrays Marsilio's assumption of power, seen as a "liberatio" from the yoke of the Della Scala, with recourse to the common metaphor of light to elevate the Carraresi. When the beleaguered city, indeed the oppressed region had given up hope of freedom, "a light appeared in the darkness, illuminating Marsilio to rescue the city from the hands of these tyrants".¹⁰² The caesura is characterized by a double recapitulation of recent events. Cortusi puts the first into the mouth of the protagonist Marsilio, as he addressed his fellow citizens "in Consilio Padue" before the envoys of the allied Venetians and Florentines, recalling the "heavy servitude" ("gravi servitute") under Ezzelino III da Romano and remembering the turbulent events since the transfer of power to his uncle Giacomo I in 1318.¹⁰³ The second repetition of recent city history follows shortly thereafter on the occasion of Ubertino da Carrara's assumption of power, once again starting with Ezzelino III and the 55 years of peace that followed, before reminding of the turbulent and changing times, beginning with the loss of Vicenza in 1311 – and "all the aforementioned was collected in order from the beginning of this work".¹⁰⁴

6 Closing Remarks

As this brief outline has hopefully shown, the processes of change in the various locations of northeastern Italy had different repercussions in contemporary historiographical writings. Of course, one can a priori expect a different density of information and enthusiasm for judgment from sparse annals than from elaborate chronicles. Occasionally, it can be traced that the transition not only affected the positions and evaluations of the historiographers but also the shape of their historical works. The emergence of the

101 On the events of 1337/1338, cf. Kohl, Padua (see note 91), pp. 68–71.

102 Cortusi *Chronica* (see note 85), VII,1, p. 83, ll. 15–17: "Cum omnes de marchia Tarvisina gravi servitute coacti essent de libertate propria desperantes, lux apparuit in tenebris, que illuminavit dominum Marsilium, civitatem eripere de manibus tyrannorum".

103 *Ibid.*, VII,3, p. 84, l. 34 – p. 85, l. 16. Cf. also Di Salvo, *L'affermazione* (see note 92), pp. 164–165. Cortusi also uses "gravi servitute" as a deliberate analogy to characterise the situation under Alberto II and Mastino II della Scala, cf. the previous note.

104 Cortusi *Chronica* (see note 85), VII,9, p. 89, ll. 10–31, the citation in l. 31: "Omnia vero predicta seriatim a principio operis colliguntur." Cf. also Di Salvo, *L'affermazione* (see note 92), pp. 167–170.

first multi-city domination of Ezzelino III, for instance, led to a geographically widened perspective (from the city to the region). The transition of power was not necessarily immediately associated with a constitutional change but could, as with the Bonacolsi and the Della Scala, take a gradual, somewhat soft course. Therefore, the Mantuan and Veronese annalists do not note a break but reveal the factual power relations through specific statements or shifted emphases. However, a political caesura can be observed in Vicenza and Padua, and the writings of the historiographers reflect this. While their judgments are merely personal opinions which could sometimes extend to broader circles, methodological caution is obviously warranted – but their views often align with other written sources. And even laconic annals may not offer an interpretation (“Deutung”), but they can at least convey the significance (“Bedeutung”) of political change in the communes.

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