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# Genealogy, Memory and Oblivion: the Case of the Valentinian and Tusculan Dynasties

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Very often, the study of history focuses on researching only what happened, its causes, the sequence of the events and their consequences. It is less common for this analysis, along with asking the essential customary questions, to seek to understand the forms of seeing the world that influenced the decisions made by the individuals who led the events and how these conditioned their behaviour and the development of history. After all, the analysis of history seeks to explain what happened, and this can involve both compiling objective data and a more subjective and abstract interpretation. It is, therefore, extremely revealing to investigate based on the genealogy of a memory that fed the image of what politics and society should be, preserved and passed on from generation to generation for centuries by the women of a dynasty of rulers, and subsequently realise how such memory determined these women's influence on enormously transcendental historical events.

“Genealogy is grey, is meticulous and patiently documentary,” stated Michel Foucault. “It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, he added: “genealogy requires patience and knowledge of details, and it depends on a vast accumulation of source materials. Its ‘cyclopean monuments’ are constructed from discreet and apparently insignificant truths and according to a rigorous method.”

A rigorous method, Tony Judt told Timothy Snyder, prior to his statement of principles: “Such mnemonic manifestations of the past are of necessity partial, brief, selective; those who arrange them are constrained sooner or later to tell partial truths or outright lies, sometimes with the best of intentions, sometimes not. In either event, they cannot substitute for history.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, memory has the power to sink us in an artificial, light and personal past.

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1. Michel Foucault, “La Généalogie, L'Histoire”, in *Hommage à Jean Hyppolite*, Paris, PUF, 1971, p. 145.

2. Tony Judt, *Thinking the Twentieth Century*, London, Penguin Books, 2012.

Judt, sensing the end of his life, settled his scores with the discipline. First, in terms of the relations between history and memory; their inevitable fight for a legacy that cannot refute or divide, as he used to say when he reflected on the apparently critical approaches of the past that only arouse confusion rather than perceptiveness, taking for granted that confusion is the enemy of knowledge: is it perhaps possible to interpret without having a precise knowledge of what happened? There is a sector that advocates this path, an unfruitful path because it spoils memory and confuses history. History is a discipline aimed at knowing what happened, in what order and with what results; while memory needs genealogy to ensure itself the scrutinising gaze of the wise man, and therefore avoid, to use Hayden White's expression, the metahistorical deployment of the ideal meanings and the vague providentialists.

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Nobody doubts, however, that an elision of this concern leads to an educational catastrophe and a crisis in the social order. As Shlomo Ben-Ami noted, "when everything is identical it is because the life of reason has been injured by visceral propaganda. The distinction, the capacity to distinguish between human and historical events, is a sign of civilisation."<sup>3</sup> Genealogy does not guarantee us the memory of a people but sheds light on the path to reach it reliably. Foucault's proposal, as the ultimate transformation of Nietzsche's studies on morality, defines

the main issues of the use of memory within the framework of a genealogy of simple features and always localisable in the sources we have at hand to study it. How interesting is the decisive instant when genealogy discovers the nature of memory. How revealing is the moment that unveils the succession of mental images enabling us to explore the social behaviour of the past in depth. I had that feeling some years ago when I analysed the documents that enabled me to extract the memory of the nobles of feudal society.<sup>4</sup>

The genealogies written by the men of the church who worked for those nobles made me explore in depth the cultural and political fantasies of individuals who were experiencing an extreme situation like those recently studied by Helmuth Plessner.<sup>5</sup> I managed to deduce in those texts the words and gestures with which some 12th century European nobles endeavoured to understand the events that marked the course of their time, be they crusades, pilgrimages or simply patrols in the districts under their responsibility. The satisfaction of perceiving the emotions of a past time compensated the interpretative challenge of texts that had emerged from a momentum in which individual existence took on a meaning with respect to the face of those who looked at it.

In short, by taking genealogy as it appeared in the texts written with the purpose of recalling some important ancestors, the vital work of some men for whom, Marc Bloch stated, war was life itself, emerged before my eyes;<sup>6</sup> and for this reason I had never had the idea of abandoning the lure they created themselves and resorting to the family memory to provide explanations for a way of living with festive yet cruel tones, as the troubadour Bertran de Born

3. In the prologue of the book by Idith Zertal, *La nación y la muerte*, Madrid, Gredos, 2002, p.16.

4. José Enrique Ruiz-Domènec, *La memoria dei feudali*, Naples, Guida, 1992.

5. Helmuth Plessner, "Lachen und Weinen. Eine Untersuchung der Grenzen menschlichen Verhaltens", in *Philosophische Anthropologie*, Frankfurt, 1970.

6. Marc Bloch, *La société féodale*, Paris, Colin, 1929.

pointed out. Neither did I wish to overlook that approach to a world in transformation, which genealogy suggests to us with its Apollonian and, once and for all, historical effect. At this crossroads I realised how inappropriate it is to abandon the only methodological weapons that man has to clear up the phantasmagorias of images and gestures, of words and dreams that appear endlessly entangled in the construction of genealogy. There I found the immense possibilities of grasping the meaning of memory in remote times, through the implementation of those two methodological principles in the reading of Arthurian novels, especially the *Elucidation*, which in its first verse puts forward the problem of the origin not as *Ursprung* but as *Entstehung*; that is, the beginning (the text reads in French “*Pour le noble commencement*”, v. 1) of an account consisting of explaining the enigma of a lineage. A triumph of the value of a metaphor of the wandering life: the metaphor of the Holy Grail sets out the nature of genealogy and, through it, of memory.<sup>7</sup>

The great German poet Wolfram von Eschenbach expressed this aspiration around 1200 in his magnificent work *Parzival*. His line of argumentation in this respect may surprise a learned person from our time, where the image is no longer a reality in itself but a symbolic reference. But if we look closer, without prejudices, the plot of the *Parzival* denotes a high capacity to locate the quest for the memory of the past in the genealogy of the family that guards the Holy Grail. Thus, as an unexpected heir of the great Chrétien de Troyes, Wolfram enters, at least in this work, the broad tradition of the initiation *queste* of the means of memory in the grey matter of genealogy. Indeed, as proven later in the

*Jüngerer Titurel* by Albrecht, a writer sometimes identified uncertainly with Albrecht von Scharfenberg, the tradition of the literature on the Holy Grail followed that direction. In any case, this tradition conceived as an account of death was, at the same time, and herein lies its mystery, an account of the triumph of the life of the mind over sensorial life. A line that we finally see in Freud in his distinction of the *Geistigkeit* over the *Sinnlichkeit* in his last book on Moses.<sup>8</sup>

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Let's go back to genealogy. The question at present is the same put forward by Foucault in his analysis of Nietzsche's work: what are the relations between genealogy of memory and what is usually called history? I intend to answer this important question by outlining the reading of two great moments in universal history seen from genealogy.

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First moment. I ask myself: cannot perhaps the very history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, in which the use of genealogy is subject to a deliberate oblivion, be compared to what Freud would call the refusal to go deeply into the taboo that has been constructed by the totem? This has been the core issue in the study of this history since, in the last third of the 17th century, Edward Gibbon discovered the disturbing silences of 5th century society. Since then there has been a pending issue: how can we ensure that the human profile of the key

7. *The Elucidation. A prologue to the conte del Graal*, ed. A.W. Thompson, New York, 1931. See on this the enlightening study by R. Howard Bloch, *Etymologies and Genealogies. A Literary Anthropology of the French Middle Ages*, Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press, 1983.

8. Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism*, Martino Fine Books, Eastford, 2010.

characters of this history is understood without the prejudice of making them responsible for the fall of the empire? I do not see a way other than by resorting to genealogy to determine the memory of what happened: the genealogy of the dynasty that ruled the Empire during the 5th century and, more precisely, between 364 and 476.

The aim is, therefore, to find the faces of the characters that formed part of this 132 years and discover if there is a strictly family feature in them that goes beyond individuality to become a phenomenon of family memory. The dynasty I am referring to is that of the Valentinians, a family group from the Danube area of the Balkans. The founder was born in Cibalis, the current Croatian town of Vincovci. The writer who was present when this dynasty ascended the imperial throne was called Amianus Marcellinus, a Greek who wrote in Latin. The political evolution took place in the year 364, once the effects of the government of Julian the Apostate had been overcome. The decision of Emperor Valentinian I in the political sphere was to give to his brother Valens, who was Arian, the government of the eastern part of the Empire and, therefore, control of the route of the lower Danube. There, on 9th August 378, he would meet his destiny (and death) in the pitched battle against the Visigoths on the outskirts of the city of Adrianople. The decision at a family level was to marry his daughter Gala, who he had with his second wife Justina, to General Theodosius, who would become emperor a few years later.

The amazing symbolic power of genealogy therefore echoed, in the progress of the Roman Empire, the emergence of a powerful link between the women of the dynasty of the Valentinians, a power sidelined in the great narratives about this period, but a power rich in images and objects, mainly coins. These objects were for decades the transparent expression of the meticulousness and fate of a

life: to pay particular attention to the hostility with which the attempt of the women of the Valentinian dynasty to face the true spirit of the time has been judged. This spirit consists of a change in the Roman Empire, brought about by a refugee crisis that began in 375, when the Huns destroyed the settlements of the Alans, Ostrogoths and Visigoths on the plains between the Caspian Sea and Black Sea. The aim is to see the 5th century without the masks of that beautiful story of the Decline and Fall from the perspective of women, something that the usual narratives are still reluctant to do; not to be ashamed of looking for the meaning of the history of that century where it is, looking through the bottom of the genealogy of that dynasty to enter the memory of women who held the idea of what the Roman Empire had to be in those troubled years.

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The memory of those women is acute proof of the capacity they had to awaken Roman society from its narcosis, removing it from the *fascinum* of a beautiful life into which it plunged every time something unexpected happened. Indeed, the women of the Valentinian dynasty, Gala, Gala Placidia, Justa Honoria, Eudoxia, Placidia or Anicia Juliana, tried to remove society from the abyss into which it had fallen because of its *tristitia*, its melancholy, because of the feeling of irreparable loss of its vital world. To remove it from the abyss meant the same as healing it. Did this mean that they tried to free 5th century Roman society from its narcissistic mirror anchored in the death of the civilisation, to attract it to new indications of the being endowed with reason? Is it not perhaps this combat against

the apathetic resignation of 5th century men (including Saint Augustine) that explains that Gala Placidia agreed to marry the Visigoth Ataulf, that Justa Honoria tried to do it with the Hun Atila, Eudoxia did it with the Vandal Huneric, or Anicia Juliana refused to marry the Ostrogoth Theodoric?<sup>9</sup> In these gestures that traditional history relates to us as an effect of the resignation of the women of “dark times”, acts of rape and cowardice committed by the “barbarian people”, genealogy sees something else and seeks deep within the memory of each of them the genealogy of a morality that shapes a way of life.

Disillusioned with the clumsiness replete with the negligence of men who dictated the politics in Ravenna in the 470s, Anicia Juliana, the last of the great women of the Valentinian dynasty and perhaps the most relevant of all, takes revenge on the imbecilias, weakness, which enabled Odoacer to stage a coup against Romulus Augustulus, leaving for Constantinople. There he designed a plan focusing on the drafting, by the year 512, of the *Discurides* manuscript, today at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna (Ms. Vindob. Med. Graec. 1). We must see this wonderful manuscript as a critical mirror of the events that occurred in Constantinople, the only imperial capital at that time, and which put an end to the heirs of Theodosius. By understanding the moral drift of the city, which the historian Procopius would depict in the *Anecdota* (also known as *Secret History*), Anicia Juliana gives free rein to the images. Theodora the actress-turned-empress, a cultured double of the heroin of those years, introduces the healing value of plants in the deadly mechanism imagined by Emperor Justinian to revert the situation of the Empire in the West and argues

her motives. Anicia Juliana, the critical image of the procedures that led to the Gothic War that ravaged Italy, is witness to the legitimacy that the Emperor lacks. If he accepts with so much docility her point of view, even though she expresses herself in complex medical metaphors, it is perhaps because, as Procopius reveals, he suffers from serious insomnia. The Emperor, who during the day plans to conquer the territory that the Goths have snatched away from the Empire, cannot sleep at night. And grouping the laws in a Codex is one of his preferred actions to combat the lack of sleep. Making a break with a critical reading of his kingdom would mean running the risk of it being crushed by a popular rebellion. The nocturnal fear makes him group the laws that he transgresses at dawn. Sleepless nights trying to find an answer in history which, however, is in the memory of Anicia Juliana, in reference to the order of the heliacal rising of the stars, events regulated by the time of politics rather than the time of symbols. This stance leads us to the course of the principles that marked the future of Byzantine thought, about which Silvia Ronchey has perceptively written: the Byzantine *ricossa* on the past always emphasises the wounds of history.<sup>9</sup>

I will not go in depth into the exegesis of the *Discurides*: I have referred to the famous manuscript simply to recall the power of memory, not as a suspicious and active memory, as it appears in the act of remembrance, but rather as the repository of the mind which, by using genealogy, manages to recover the past of the individuals who suffer the events. A genealogy in which, fragment after fragment, the brilliant illustrations are deposited, which in the form of legends, myths or personal experiences enable us to understand the past without the need

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9. Silvia Ronchey, “Quel simbolo conteso dalle fedi in guerra nell’antica Neapolis, le ferite della Storia”, in *La Repubblica*, Saturday 17th October 2015, p. 13. In any case, see her *Lo Stato bizantino*, Turin, Einaudi, 2002.

to resort to an account that, forcedly, must be manipulated.

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Second moment. The status of genealogy, in the perception of the world by the women of the Valentinian dynasty, is similar to that evoked by the women of the Tusculan dynasty in Rome in the late 10th century. With one difference. While in the first case the objective was to understand the reason for the Roman Empire in the 5th century and, in the end, the motives for its violent disappearance following Odoacer's death, in the second the objective is to perceive the Pope of Rome's need for power during the 10th century, which perhaps is why it has been called the "iron century". In both cases, however, the memory of the women means the sedimentation of the ideas hatched in the family; in other words, the expression of a genealogy. And it is also a sensorial vision of the world that is reluctant to be the vision of the visionary women that interested the nuns in the Middle Ages so much. The power of the word-image, as something hypnotic, uttered through the art of urbanity inherited from the court of the Othons.<sup>10</sup>

Let us consider the circumstances. In the year 905, the last of the Carolingians interested in Rome, Louis the Blind, promoted Theophylact, Count of Tusculum, as Commander-in-Chief of the city armies; the remaining nobility accepted the inevitable and proclaimed him "Consul". The position gave him power to appoint the Bishop of Rome; in other words, the Pope. This is what he did in the person of John X (914-928).<sup>11</sup> Where is genealogy located in the historical picture of 10th century Rome?

From where does the memory of the family of the Tusculans or Theophylacts emerge? The chronicles do not tell us; I imagine that it emerges within a genealogical plot. Its place in 10th century Rome: a city in ruins and with enigmatic monuments, empty temples, ambitions and bastardies, an amalgam of decors.

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The Tusculans remained in power for the two subsequent generations in the persons, first, of their two daughters Theodor and Marozia (of whom I will speak later) and later her son, Alberic II, who held the title of duke and senator of the Romans between 933 and 954. These three characters, allied with each other, or with other nobles, were responsible for appointing the popes for forty years, from 910 to 950. Alberic II was solely responsible for the choice of Pope Leo VII (931-939), who was a close friend of the monastic reformer Odon of Cluny, who intervened in the renewal of the three monasteries of the city: Saint Paul, Saint Lawrence and Saint Agnes. But his status as "Duke-Senator", prince without a title, was a fragile figure, the reverse of what was happening in the Empire with the rise of the Duke of Saxony Otto I after his victory over the Magyars in the battle of the river Lech (955).

Fear filled with boundless pride sometimes transforms politics into a comedy of manners. Such was the case in Rome in 955. Alberic II felt safe because of the ongoing flattery he re-

10. C. Stephen Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985.

11. P. Toubert, *Les structures du Latium Médiéval*, Rome, École française de Rome, 1973, and R. Davis, *The Lives of the Ninth-Century Popes*, Liverpool, 1995.

ceived. He did not mind making a decision that brought to light the scandal that had remained silenced for decades: the subordination of the Holy See to the ambitions of the Tusculan family. The aim was no longer to support one of them but to place on Peter's throne his own son, a 16-year old adolescent, promiscuous and swaggering. Not even the change of name (he wanted to be crowned pope under the name of John XII) prevented the complaints from reaching the powerful Saxon duke. But Otto I waited patiently for his opportunity, as he usually did. The news from the Lateran Palace did not need to suffocate any hint of hostility: it spoke for itself. John XII had turned one wing of the palace into a brothel, where he placed his private harem, and it was even said that he had had incestuous relations with his mother. Society began to turn its back on him; this made Tusculans adopt a defensive stance, but not their vain offspring. Before the increasingly greater isolation and the feeling of danger, he looked for support from the powerful Duke of Saxony. It was a political mistake. Otto I asked him for the imperial diadem in exchange for protection. He did not hesitate to give it to him and in 962 he crowned him Emperor of the Holy Roman Germanic Empire. He thought that he could control his ambitious guest, but it was not so. Faced with one of his many ineptitudes, Emperor Otto I brought together a synod of bishops in the very basilica of Saint Peter, in Rome. He subjected him to a trial for the many charges of immorality, deposed him and appointed as pope someone he trusted, Leo VIII. Thus the door was opened to the old adversaries of the Tusculans, the Crescentians, whose properties were on the Sabin hills, in the south and east of the city. Instead of the Roman demagogy, from the hedonist rancour of John XII a family emerged at that moment who believed that Rome was the eternal city. For this reason, the Crescentians became masters of history and made parodic use of it. The

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John XIII (965-972) was the first pope of the Crescentians, and he backed his brother Crescentius I to become prefect of the city with the consent of the pope's aunt, who was no other than Marozia. The genealogy of Tusculan women still had something to say. Even more so if we know that John XIII benefitted from the arrival of princess Teophanes, engaged to the emperor's son, who was called Otto like him, and would be the future Otto II. He seemed happy to resume for himself what his family had rejected. It was not about supporting the past at any cost but reconstructing the genealogy that would revive the memory of the city. For this reason, he wanted to take a risk with the new couple, married them and was the witness to the magnificent betrothal document in which Otto II acknowledged that his wife was also worthy of the throne. This was indeed commitment by this pope to the Crescentians: he re-enacted an agreement with the East by supporting the creation of the archbishopric of Magdeburg, on the border of the Elbe. But his projects died with him in 972. The family resorted to resentment and fell into a rapid succession of crimes. The Count of Spoleto, on behalf of Emperor Otto II, again used genealogy to recover the memory of the city and placed Benedict VII on Saint Peter's throne, which meant the return of the Tusculans, the only ones capable of making genealogical use of history; in other words, a rigorously anti-platonic use. The rest was easy. Once they had settled again, they repeated the model of the family with the support of emperors Otto III and Henry II. After the millennium, they ap-

pointed Pope Benedict VIII (1012-1024), who was not a family protégé but a member of it. He was the son of Count Gregory, head of the lineage in those years, and both led uprisings to remove the Crescentians from power. Although Benedict VIII sought to distance himself from his family, he found it difficult. His brother Alberic III appointed one of his sons pope, emulating his uncle, and chose the name of Benedict IX (1052-1056). A pope who was supposed to match the profile of the Tusculans: he devoted himself to sex in all possible forms, to amassing money and organising murders.

Under these circumstances, who can deny that in the times of the Tusculans in Rome political life became a to-ing and fro-ing of lies, threats, dangers, burdens, risks of death, tortures, bribes and blackmails as had happened with the political life of the Roman Empire in Ravenna in the 5th century? Hence the resort to a value judgement (“iron century”), the hedonistic dimension of the Tusculans, the clash with the Crescentians, in which we see that one of the two family groups represented the libido and the other the balance, one the primitive strength, the other respect for morality. But there must have been something else, something that the chroniclers of the time silenced and that modern historians have not wanted to analyse.

Let us recall the basic rule: genealogy seeks within memory the aspects of the past that history does not manage to explain. It is necessary to locate the events in their due place, their shakings and their surprises, to place them within the atavisms and legacies of a family whose behaviour, as it is repeated, conditions political life. If in this way we get closer to the

world of the Tusculans and the Crescentians in 10th century Rome, how can we not recall that in many of their actions they behave as characters, in the classical meaning of the term, as individuals that offer to the others’ eyes an image, a mask to conceal their true behaviour? As in classical drama, all the actions compiled in the *Liber Pontificalis* (Book of the Popes) brought together under the comfortable, partly innocent and imprecise name of “pornocracy”, a way of living that has no explanations from history but from genealogy. Simply because genealogy is capable of conjuring the horror or, rather, averting the concealed object of this horror

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Let us recall, with reference to this need to resort to genealogy to locate the morality in 10th century Rome, the episodes of the life of the famous senatrix Marozia, daughter of Theophylact and mother of Alberic II. In contrast to the canonical version forged in the *Liber Pontificalis* summarised by Paolo Brezzi, what interests me here is not highlighting her role in the political crisis of her time, but the feminine gaze over a world that we found strange and, therefore, sinister.<sup>12</sup>

Marozia cared little about the spirituality of monastic reformers, and perhaps for this reason Gibbon branded her a prostitute; she loved contact with cloth, velvets, silks, taffetas, satins and cretonnes. She used to pile them up and

12. The classical version in Horace K. Mann, *The Lives of the Popes in the Early Middle Ages*, London, Kegan Paul, 1910, updated by P. Brezzi, *Roma e l'imperio medioevale*. Bologna, 1946. For more contemporary approaches, see E. R. Chamberlin, *The Bad Popes*, New York, The Dial Press, 1969; Peter Stanford, *The She-Pope: A Quest for the Truth Behind the Mystery of Pope Joan*, London, Heineman, 1998, and Elizabeth Abbott, *Mistresses, A History of the Other Woman*, Overlook Press, 2010.

look for more. At the same time, she searched for an explanation for life other than that of daughter and mother, and therefore mediator, as women were recommended to emulate the figure of the Virgin Mary. She was probably ambitious, as were her father and her son, when she understood the nature of power as the origin of pleasure, but she coveted everything visual and a throne was her maximum aspiration. To this end, she conspired in the company first of Pope Sergius III, who was said to have been her lover and the father of her son who was later recognised by her husband— isn't this pornocracy? Her marriage to her brother-in-law Hugh of Arles was another event of great visual effect, and she did not made a mistake: she checkmated her own son Alberic II. When she decided to retire from the world, the rumours suggested that it was her son who had locked her in the castle of San Angelo.

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Thus, with Marozia in the 10th century, we place ourselves in the additional pole of Anicia Juliana in the 5th century; when the latter sees the primacy of the images as a metaphor of the world. Marozia places touch, perhaps even smell, as the element that offers greatest closeness to the other, those men who the chronicles turn into lovers, from Pope Sergius III to King Hugh of Arles (not to mention the others). It is the resource she uses, from the genealogy of her morality, to sense the closest, most profound, feeling: that which the skin experiences, from the early moments of existence; touch, smell, perhaps taste, faced with the power of the visual. And perhaps any account of understanding of the female universe that lies behind the impossible understanding of

the papal chroniclers (in the end, resentful priests because of their celibacy) is in short the expression of the world-other that she wanted for herself and her family.

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Five centuries before Lucrezia Borgia, a woman from Rome who according to her contemporaries had lost the *diritta via*, the straight path, Marozia needed to recognise the meaning of some acts that led her to the sombre and bitter forest of her passions. Here the resort to her dreams, which she must have had but whose contents we do not know, could intervene. But probably they had to do with the myth of the sphinx, that which points out the destiny of Oedipus in relation to his mother. The sphinx is the incarnation of the touch of carnal strength, but also that which impedes a woman from reaching her full maturity. In this behaviour that confused the chroniclers so much there is a digression as to how life is understood. And here emerges the subject of this analysis because, as Foucault wrote, “genealogy is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body.”

Do not hesitate to jump centuries and cultures: as long as genealogy has the value of warder of morality that explains history, we will come across cases like the women of the Valentinian dynasty or the dynasty of the Tuscians: some of them trying to understand why the Roman Empire had to disappear so that Europe could emerge, and others trying to explain to themselves why the terrors of the year 1000 were necessary so that the reform of the Church could germinate, which in the end was called the Gregorian reform. In the 5th century, they were aware that the future was linked to the peoples who had just entered the Empire: Goths, Huns and Vandals; in the 10th

century they considered it necessary to go beyond their mediating function that took them from being daughters to mothers.

What does seeing the transit from the past to the future from the perspective of genealogy mean? No other than what Nietzsche designated with one of his powerful concepts: *Entstehungsherd*, the quality of what emerges that watches over the borders of memory and oblivion, and the forms of creation of the spaces

in-between. History is something else. It means that by reconstructing a special scenario, the end of the Roman Empire, the end of the first millennium, we will discover along with the deliberate accounts of an official chronicle that strives to say as little as possible, the experiences of some characters, mostly women, who offer a different reading of the succession of events, and which in short is no other than a new visibility of the past at the service of the future.