


EXPENDITURES, CONSPICUOUS CONSUMPTION AND LIVING STANDARD OF A NINETEENTH-CENTURY HABSBERG FAMILY

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living standard

Abstract: This paper analyses the expenditures and food consumption of a nineteenth-century Habsburg family, the Bossi Fedrigotti. Drawing upon the household budgets and the documents of their private archives, this study investigates the type, composition, and variation in expenditures during two benchmark decades, 1835-1844 and 1855-1864. The relatively small share of expenses for food as compared to leisure, cultural activities, charity and conspicuous consumption reflects the household's quest for social status and reputation befitting the noble title obtained in the previous century. The Fedrigotti also represented a pillar in the economic system of the town where they lived, which they actively supported through both economic and non-economic actions, helping the city to prosper in the 19th century.

Keywords: household budgets, living standard, conspicuous consumption, XIXth c., Tyrol, Italy

JEL codes: R2, D14, D64, E21, M41, N00

1. Introduction

In the past two decades a growing line of research has focused on estimating living standards and levels of poverty

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and wealth from a historical perspective.¹ Recent studies in Italy have experimented with a new approach to analysing these pivotal questions (Rossi *et al.*, 2001; Vecchi, 2017; Alfani and Barbot, 2009). The novelty of these studies consists in examining new data sets which allow an original method of investigation. In the past, research on living standards has been based on data that were incomplete or fragmentary, forcing a qualitative analysis. In recent years, however, thanks to new technologies that enable the creation of massive datasets, also drawing on archival records, significant progress has been made, yielding new and surprising results. Population censuses, which have been available since the mid-nineteenth century, along with household budgets, and more recently statistics produced by ISTAT and by the Bank of Italy, provide more complete and homogeneous records which make it possible to compile large databases and to apply a quantitative approach to studying phenomena such as trends in wealth, poverty and inequality. The outcomes of this new research, based on the first pioneering studies by Somogy about household budgets in Italy between 19th-20th centuries (Somogy, 1959), challenge traditional literature which maintains that the long process of growth was coupled with a fall in living standards among the poorest part of the population as compared to the affluent. In this view, inequality rises during periods of growth. However, the most recent studies argue that this is not always true: for instance in Italy in the period 1881-1961, the trend in income distribution showed this gap decreasing.

Family budgets in this case proved to be both an innovative and an indispensable source of analysis for estimating wealth gap and absolute poverty.² More specifically, household expenditures are reckoned as the most suitable monetary indicator of well-being, a summary index whose evolution over time reveals how benefits of economic development are distributed among the population. Moreover, the information extrapolated from the household budgets are fundamental in investigating secular trends (Chianese and Vecchi, 2001, p. 388), even if consumption versus income

¹ A historical view of wealth distribution and poverty levels is becoming pivotal in economic studies, Atkinson, Piketty and Saez (2011, pp. 3-71); Piketty (2014).

² Studies on inequalities have long preferred other indicators, like for instance real wages (Hoffman *et al.*, 2002).

as a means for assessing the evolution of inequality is still a matter of debate. If some economists maintain that income represents the best indicator, others are more inclined to favour the lens of consumption and expense:³ «Income is a good measure of the command that people have over resources and it is an important determinant of their standard of living, but it cannot capture all the diverse dimensions of human well-being» (Brandolini and Vecchi, 2011, p. 5). In addition, «high or low income may exaggerate the true position of the household when borrowing or saving is allowed to smooth the stream of consumption» (Blundel and Preston, 1998, p. 628). Conversely «consumption expenditure may better reflect expected lifetime resources» (Blundel and Preston, 1998, pp. 603-604). Nowadays, studies on developing countries show that «household characteristics play a crucial role in explaining consumption behaviour, identifying the poor and measuring welfare. Since nationwide food expenditure surveys consider households as the consuming units, welfare measures must be adjusted for differences in household composition to allow for an improved classification into poor and non-poor» (Perali, 2003). Between consumption and expenses, food expenditure proves a reliable proxy which makes it possible to predict the total expenditure when other household budget data are lacking (Chianese and Vecchi, 2001, p. 364).

Interest in the expenditures of aristocratic families has also been shown by economic historians, who have recognized the fundamental role played by consumption among the elites in changes in the economic system (Pinchera, 1999, p. ix). Conspicuous consumption in particular has had a symbolic function as the expression of a specific lifestyle and social distinction, and had an impact also on the productive system (Veblen, 1899). The increase of luxury or cultural products was brought about by growing demand from nobility, who thus stimulated the economy. However, the expenditures of aristocratic families have long been neglected in much of the literature, which deems them to be of no impact on the economic system. «Their role in stimulating the overall econ-

³ Methods for estimating inequality and assessing living standard generally take one of two approaches, either drawing upon expenditures or incomes. Atkinson for instance complains that «the subject of income inequality had become marginalised in economics. For much of the twentieth century the topic had been ignored, whereas I believed that it should be central to the study of economics» (Atkinson, 2015, pp. 14-15).

omy has been obscured by a sort of classical prejudice, which sees discretionary consumption as unproductive consumption, tending to signal crisis rather than wealth. This prejudice is not shared by those historians who underscore its effect on stimulating market dynamics and empowering social mobility» (Clemente, 2004, pp. 571-572).

Against this backdrop, the paper focuses on one case study: the household budgets of the Bossi Fedrigotti, a patrician family from nineteenth-century Trentino, and in particular on their expenditure and food consumption. This information is used in comparative analysis with other coeval families in order to estimate wellbeing levels and living standard.

The forefather of the Bossi Fedrigotti settled in Rovereto in the first decades of the fifteenth century after fleeing from Milan for political reasons. The first descendants were rafters who transported and traded wood, and later goods from Bolzano fairs, on the stretch of the Adige River from Bronzolo (near Bolzano) to Verona.⁴ Along with a small group of other local families they were granted a monopoly over this activity by the Habsburg emperors. They maintained this monopoly until the Napoleonic era, when the *Magistrato mercantile*, which had always opposed monopolies, finally won the battle to abolish them.⁵ Profits obtained from this privilege, coupled with booming trade in the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, enabled the family to accumulate considerable wealth, chiefly consisting of movable assets. The capital was invested in different operations, which helped to diversify the portfolio and thus risk. The family at that time, in the eighteenth century, was already engaged in numerous distinct entrepreneurial activities, from trade to silk⁶ and wine industry, to the management of the postal service in the stretch from Torbole to Calliano, to finance and finally to agriculture, where they specialized in viticulture.

The household's assets were constituted by land, houses and financial capital that at the turn of the eighteenth century reached its maximum expansion. The total value amounted to over 900,000 florins, which was equally divided between Pietro Modesto's heirs: Giuseppe Maria and Gianpietro.⁷

⁴ For transit trade along in Tyrol see Bonoldi (1999; 2016).

⁵ On the Napoleonic age in Trentino see Garbari (2000, pp. 13-165).

⁶ On the role of private credit market in financing silk industry in Trentino, see Lorenzini (2018, pp. 105-132).

⁷ The money used in Tyrol was the Florin. one florin was made of 60 carantani, and equalled 5 troni or Venetian Lire (Grandi *et al.*, 1978, p. 10). The family assets

Beside the economic condition the family was able to improve their social status and in the early eighteenth century they became earls of Oxenfeld, finally entering the book of the Habsburg aristocracy. Their new noble status yet did not deter the Bossi Fedrigotti from carrying on their entrepreneurial and commercial activities, which they further expanded.

As the economic system changed in the mid-nineteenth century, with traditional trade – along the Brenner axis – losing its attractiveness due to falling profits, the Bossi Fedrigotti began shifting their investments from commerce and finance to agriculture, gradually specializing in wine production (Figure A1).

Drawing on the household budgets that are present in the family's private archives, the paper analyses the expenditure records for two specific decades: 1835-1844 and 1855-1864. These time periods were chosen on the basis of the availability and homogeneity of the records for these years, and the possibility of comparing them with other coeval Italian families.⁸

The paper is organized as follows: Section II is centred on sources and methodologies. Section III is devoted to the analysis of the family's expenses and food consumption in 1835-1844 and 1855-1864. Expenditure indicators are fundamental factors for estimating wellbeing and standard of living. A comparative analysis of these data with other households' allows us to identify the Fedrigottis' position relative to other Italian families. In Section IV I draw conclusions.

2. Sources and methodology

The analysis of Bossi Fedrigotti expenditure records is based on the household budgets contained in the

were divided between two descendants: Giuseppe's, which amounted to over 460,000 florins and Gianpietro's, which to over 480,000 florins. Most was capital (70%), followed by real estate (30%) and the Post (10%). Archivio Storico Comunale di Rovereto (henceforth ASCR), Fondo Bossi Fedrigotti (henceforth FBF), Archival references here follow Giovanni Adami's Inventory, Atti ereditari (1785), folder 319.

⁸ Although Rovereto was part of the Habsburg Empire until 1915, when it was annexed to the Kingdom of Italy along with the entire Trentino (South Tyrol), it shared language and culture with the adjacent Italian State (Leonardi, 2001, p. 28).

⁹ The Bossi Fedrigotti archives, which were donated by the family to the Municipality of Rovereto in 2013, are composed of two parts: the family's private archives; and the Feudo Postale (the Post) archives. The former comprises 121

The archives contain ledger books providing rich and detailed information about the family's expenditures for food, salaries, medical care, donations, theatre rents, newspapers subscriptions, etc. They cover a span from 1792 to 1867¹⁰ and are basically of two types. One type – *Libro Giornale* – contains information exclusively regarding food. They provide a detailed description of the food bought by the family, but do not include data on quantity, prices or unit costs. There is also no information concerning the number of family members. The other type of ledgers are labelled *Conto cassa. Spese famiglia* [Cash accounts: family expenses] and *Libro spese di famiglia* [Family expenditure ledger] and are much more complete, recording all household expenses: wood, salaries, maintenance costs, medical care, charity, leisure, and, of course, food.

Our analysis draws upon this second kind of documents and focuses on two decades, 1835-1844 and 1855-1864. Recording and thereby controlling expenses, even minor ones, was a fundamental pillar of proper household administration among the wealthiest social classes since the sixteenth century, when treatises on good *oikonomia* were published and gradually spread among the aristocracy.¹¹ The practice was still common in the nineteenth century.

These registers recorded what the family spent; some products, such as wine, grains and wood, were privately produced and we may assume that they came from the family's own property and were recorded at their market price.¹²

The ledgers are organized as follows: on the right page, *Avere*, all the payments received by the family members are recorded, with prices and in some cases unit prices and quantity. On the left page, *Dare*, the sums of money out-

registers and 74 folders and covers a span of four centuries, from the 17th to the 20th century. The Post archives comprises 19 folders, 2 registers, and one box, and covers the same period.

¹⁰ ASCR, FBF, f. 9, «Giornale, (19.8.1792-15.8.1795)», f. 10, «Uscite (1.7.1797-1.12.1807)», f. 11, «Giornale (1799-1801)», f. 22, «Giornale di famiglia (1817-1829)», f. 37, «Conto cassa. Spese di famiglia, (1835-1845)», f. 46, «Libro spese di famiglia, (1854-1867)», «Haushaltung Bücher (1890)».

¹¹ See for instance the household budgets of the Riccardi, one of the most prominent and wealthiest families of 16th century Florence (Malanima, 1977), or the Salviati's (Pinchera, 1999). Not only the nobility used to keep ledgers to control the expenses, but there is evidence that also exponents of the urban bourgeoisie registered their daily activities and within them their everyday expenditures. An example is the detailed notebook drawn up by the notary Folognino from Verona in mid 17th century (Tagliaferri, 1968).

¹² Self-consumption products are not usually registered in household budgets and hence difficult to estimate (Pánek, 1997, p. 703).

laid by the family members are listed. Profits from the sale of agricultural products produced on the family's land were also sometimes recorded. The totals, in constant florins, on the two pages normally match exactly or closely (Figures 2A and 3A).

Expenses were recorded per day, per month and per year. Every quarter a partial summary was calculated, along with a general summary after Quarter IV, titled *Prospetto generale delle spese di famiglia dal 1 gennaio al 31 dicembre*. We have grouped items into macro categories that comprise: food, salaries, wood, medical care, leisure and culture, charity, maintenance work, hired labourers, and miscellaneous expenses.

3. Household expenditure and food consumption

3.1. The decade 1835-1844

In the decade 1835-1844 the family consisted of five members: Antonio (38-48 years old), Luigia (43-53), Giuseppe Fedele (36-38), Giuseppe's wife Augusta (they had a child who died when he was adolescent), and their mother Giovanna. In 1837-1841 the number dropped to 4 and then 3. In 1837 Giuseppe Fedele died and in 1842 also their mother Giovanna passed away. The data presented below, essential to estimating per capita consumption, are drawn from the *Dare* side of the ledger, where the outlay from each family member was recorded. The household budget was managed by Antonio, as explicitly stated in the last page of the document.¹³

Due to the variation of the value that affected the currency in the examined period, I decided to rely on real values to analyse the family's expenditures. In the first decade (1835-1844) the real price index shifted from 1 (1835) to 0.89 (1844), (Table B1) because of the economic stagnation involving the region in the early nineteenth century (Leonardi, 2001, p. 35; Cvrcek, 2013, pp. 20, 22). Conversely, in 1855 the index reached 1.36, and in 1864 it decreased to 1.28 (Table B2). Therefore, from 1835 to 1864 the real value of prices rose by 28%. The inflation was partly due to the monetary reform of 1857, that reduced the content of the

¹³ ASCR, FBF, f. 37, «Conto cassa. Spese di famiglia, (1835-1845)».

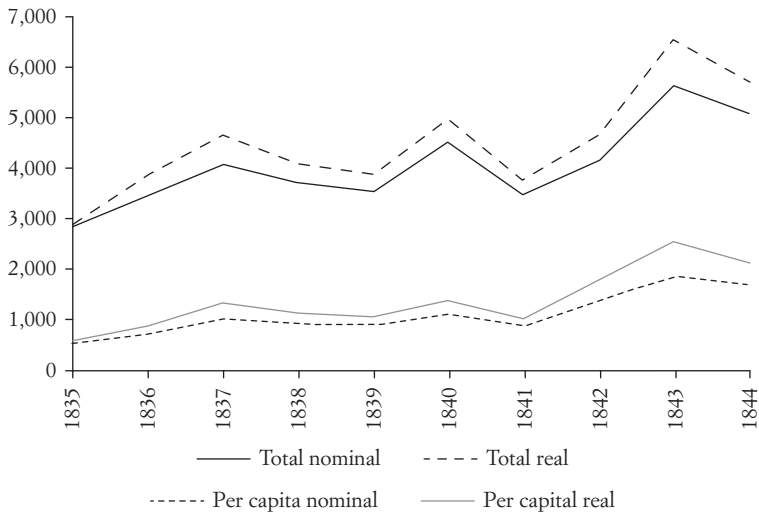


FIGURE 1. Total and per capita expenditure trend, 1835-1844 (nominal and real value florins)*.

* Henceforth nominal value: n.v. and real value: r.v.

silver coin by 5%. However since 1850s there was a general progress of living standards (Cvrcek, 2013, pp. 13, 22).

The family annual expenditure ranged from a minimum of 2,864 f. (1835) to a maximum of 6,549 f. (1843), for an average of 4,497 f. over the period. In per-capita terms it ranges from 572 (1835) to 2,548 (1843) f. for an average of 1,378 f. (Table 1) In terms of wages, a master bricklayer, shoemaker or carpenter earned 1 florin a day, while an unskilled labourer earned 30-36 car. (Grandi, 1978, p. 66). In 1828 1 *soma* of wheat (152 lt) cost 16 florins and 13 carantani (1 kg cost 5.2 car.)¹⁴; in 1836 with 3 carantani you could buy from 455 to 490 gr. of rye bread.¹⁵

Both per-capita and total expenditure showed an upward trend, while the number of family members decreased. Both types of expenditure showed an overall upward trend in 1841-1843, when the number of family members declined (Figure 1).

¹⁴ ASCR, «Registro dei mercati delle granaglie e dei prezzi correnti di altri generi venduti nel Comune di Roveredo», Ar.C. 3.3. From 100 kg of wheat, 80 kg of bread was made (Guenzi, 1982, p. 77).

¹⁵ Archivio storico del comune di Trento (henceforth ASCTN), Ordinamento austriaco, Esibiti politici del Magistrato politico economico e del Comune, Categoria I, («Annona»), unità 3.8-I.1836.

TABLE 1. *Total and per capita expenses, 1835-1844 (rv. florins)*

Year	Food	Medical care	Wood	Salaries	Leisure and culture	Charity	Maintenance	Hired labourers	Miscellaneous	Total	Family members	Per capita
1835	1,158	6	121	239	299	76	27	3	711	2,864	5	572
1836	1,907	56	171	290	41	3	62	13	1,034	3,862	5	860
1837	1,711	151	691	331	396	20	151	0	1,171	4,649	4	1,328
1838	1,606	30	662	255	379	66	70	0	924	4,087	4	1,127
1839	1,491	0	513	326	455	5	99	3	944	3,869	4	1,057
1840	1,479	0	224	572	466	20	46	26	995	4,970	4	1,374
1841	1,399	138	490	495	31	120	176	12	852	3,759	4	1,021
1842	1,221	20	520	631	277	149	93	22	1,588	4,650	3	1,754
1843	1,462	242	537	612	504	1,103	132	35	1,839	6,549	3	2,548
1844	1,115	47	447	698	110	364	139	5	2,710	5,713	3	2,142
<i>Average</i>	<i>1,455</i>	<i>69</i>	<i>438</i>	<i>445</i>	<i>296</i>	<i>192</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>1277</i>	<i>4,497</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>1,378</i>

Source: ASCR, FBF, f. 37, «Conto cassa. Spese di famiglia, (1835-1845)».

TABLE 2. Expenses (in %), 1835-1844

Year	Care	Wood	Salaries	Leisure	Charity	Maintenance	Hired labourers	Miscellaneous	Total
1835	37.8	4.2	8.3	10.4	2.7	1.0	0.1	32.6	100
1836	34.9	4.4	7.5	1.1	0.1	1.6	0.3	34.2	100
1837	34.9	12.3	7.1	8.5	0.4	3.2	0.0	28.4	100
1838	34.9	15.7	6.2	9.3	1.6	1.7	0.0	25.5	100
1839	34.9	12.8	8.4	11.8	0.1	2.6	0.1	25.6	100
1840	34.9	8.7	11.5	9.4	0.4	0.9	0.5	38.8	100
1841	34.9	13.0	13.2	0.8	3.2	4.7	0.3	23.9	100
1842	34.9	10.9	13.6	5.9	3.2	2.0	0.5	37.2	100
1843	34.9	8.1	9.3	7.7	16.8	2.0	0.5	29.4	100
1844	34.9	7.4	12.2	1.9	6.4	2.4	0.1	49.2	100
<i>Average</i>	33.9	1.5	9.7	6.7	3.5	2.2	0.2	32.5	

Source: ASCR, FBF, f. 37, «Conto cassa. Spese di famiglia, (1835-1845)».



FIGURE 2. *Total expenses (r.v. florins) and food share (1835-1844)*

This increase is explained by growth in expenditures for food, wood, salaries and charity. Miscellaneous expenditures, which we will describe below, also rose significantly.

Food expenditures represented the highest percentage of household expenses, ranging from 19.5% (1844) to 49.3% (1836) for an average of 33.9% (Table 2).

They showed an overall decreasing trend over this period (Figure 2).

Food

Food as a proportion of household expenditures is a good indicator of living standard. According to some estimates, in the 1880s it amounted to some 80% of total family expenditures for most of the Italian population.¹⁶ According to the Engel model, food expenses are negatively correlated to social status, the wealthier the family the lower the proportion of expenses for food. The Bossi Fedrigotti spent on food 34%, which sets them were among the wealthier classes.¹⁷ Though part of the elite they did not belong to the top richest families, where the quota of food was much lower (Figure 3). In the marquise Crivelli's family from

¹⁶ Maria Luisa Betri argues that analysis of the changes of popular nutrition in nineteenth century Italy still has to use the interpretative key of the *long nineteenth century* (Betri, 1998, pp. 7-8).

¹⁷ In 19th century Vienna an industrial worker's family composed of 4 people spent 54.9% (Cvrcek, 2013, p. 9).

Milan, for instance, it covered just 18%. These data match the calculations made by Carlo Maria Cipolla, according to which, a proportion of 35-50% was typical for well-off families, 20-35% for the most affluent (Cipolla, 1980, pp. 35-36).¹⁸

The family's landholdings in that period do not imply higher income or revenues. Neither their trade nor their transport business was improving during this timespan. In early nineteenth century the Bossi Fedrigotti withdrew from mercantile partnerships and, with the elimination of the monopoly of the *Società degli zattieri*, transit trade ceased to be a source of large profits. As with many patrician and affluent families, their main activity shifted to agriculture, which did not provide the level of revenues they once enjoyed. Yet this should not be interpreted as a retreat or a change towards a *more nobilem* lifestyle, rather as the ability to diversify their assets and in this way reduce risk. The Bossi Fedrigotti entered the primary sector as entrepreneurs, enlarging their landholdings and introducing new technologies in order to increase productivity and thus goods to be sold, particularly grains, wine, hay and mulberry leaves for silk-worm farming.

As aforementioned, food expenses recorded in the ledgers regarded food purchased on the market. Nevertheless, some of the food and other items – for instance grains, wine and wood – was self-produced and I assume that the amounts reported in the budgets were own-production valued according to a fair market price. Recurrent items were bread, butter, meat, grains (*grasce*), *semola*,¹⁹ wine, sugar, coffee, salt and sometimes freshwater fish from rivers or Lake Garda.

Bread, was usually paid once a month. The average expense was 190 f. a year (Table 3), 13% of total food expenditure.²⁰ This is quite low if we consider that for most households bread could be as much as 50% of food expenditures (Betri, 1998, p. 7). Bread, and especially white bread, was predominantly consumed by the upper social classes, while it

¹⁸ The analysis of the grape harvest ledgers shows that a part of the product was specifically for the family's consumption.

¹⁹ *Grasce* is a general term used in Trentino for grains. We can assume that this group includes maize, for making polenta. On the other hand, *semola* refers to durum wheat semolina, and was used for making pasta.

²⁰ In 1836, for instance, the family spent 232 f., which means 46.4 f. per-capita per year.

TABLE 3. *Average of food expenditures per items, 1835-1844 (r.v. florins)**

Food items	Butter	Bread	Wine	Grains	Semola	Meat, fish, etc.	Sugar	Salt	Coffee
Average (r.v. florins)	62	190	308	354	27	458	46	19	86

* For detailed figures for each item and each year, see App. 1 Table 1.

Source: ASCR, FBF, f. 37, «Conto cassa. Spese di famiglia, (1835-1845)».

was almost absent from the diet of peasants, who usually ate *polenta* made of ground maize soaked in milk.²¹ The per-capita expense was 47.5 florins a year (2,850 car.),²² which means about 8 car. a day per person. The price of white bread – we presume that they consumed white bread – varied from 13.2 to 14.4 car. per 1 kg; which means that they ate from 555 to 616 gr a day per person (Table A1). This value matches with the estimation made by Massimo Montanari, who calculated a consumption from 500 to a maximum of 700 gr. a day per person (Montanari, 1994). Rye bread was cheaper and its priced varied from 6 to 6.5 car. per 1 kg.²³

Meat, fish, etc. made up the largest portion of food expenditures,²⁴ equal to 31%. To gauge the value of this share, the quota consumed by urban workers in 1832 England was 21.2% (Hoffman *et al.*, 2002, p. 326). The family spent an average of 458 f. a year (Table 3) and per capita 114.5 f. A wide variety of meat was consumed: beef, veal, poultry, sometimes lamb, goat, guineafowl, roe deer, quail, woodcock, other game, along with fish.²⁵

Meat was considered for centuries a sort of status symbol food, which was «influenced not only by prices or by its scarcity on the market, rather by the conviction that it was the best nourishment, the food of warriors, nobles, and

²¹ The cultivation of maize spread in Italy during the eighteenth century, despite the original scepticism of peasants in introducing it as a crop. However once rooted in Italian agriculture it rapidly expanded to most of the population. In some cases, it came to constitute the principal or sole food consumed, causing a pellagra epidemic due to the lack of Vitamin PP (Messedaglia, 1927; Coppola, 1979; Fagiani, 1985, pp. 79-116).

²² ASCTN, Ordinarmento austriaco Esibiti politici del Magistrato politico economico e del Comune, Categoria I, («Annona»), 3.8-I (1836).

²³ *Ibidem.*

²⁴ Meat was almost completely absent in the peasants' diet. The most common food, beside polenta, was beans, turnip and potatoes (Grandi, 1978, p. 43).

²⁵ 1 hare cost 1 f. 40 carantani. 1 guinea-hen cost 1 florin.

in general virile individuals, *par excellence*» (Nada Patrone, 1981, p. 442).

After meat, the second most consumed product was grains, which include *grasce* and *semola*. The yearly average expense of both amounted to 381 f. (Table 3), accounting for 26.2% of total food expenditure. Grains and wine were also produced on the family's land and likewise recorded in the ledgers and calculated at market price. The total expense of wine was 308 f. a year, which was equal to 77 f. per-capita a year.²⁶ The lowest figure was in 1844, when the family spent 166.5 f. This may be due to low production that year as a result of the Adige flood, which may have damaged the crops.²⁷ On the other hand, data in the ledger refer to the payments and sometimes the family recorded or paid afterwards, the following years.

Modest sums were spent regularly on certain items such as sugar, salt and coffee (Table A1). Despite their limited share of total expenditures, these products indicate a varied, refined and costly menu, that identifies the high social status.²⁸

In general, throughout this decade the total costs for food decreased from 1,158 to 1,115 f. while per-capita expenditure rose from 232 to 372 f. real value. This is to be attributed not to an improvement of the living standard, but to the decrease of the mouths to feed from 5 to 3.

Salaries

The family was helped by an entourage of servants composed of a coachman, a valet (*famiglio*), two maids, one cook and one person whose role was not defined in the documents and that could be the butler. They were usually from Rovereto or nearby villages such as Ala and Noriglio,

²⁶ If we consider that 1 litre of simple wine could cost around 1 carantano, this means that the family drank about 2 litres of wine a day. As a matter of fact, the price of wine could vary very much according to the quality, so this is just an indicative estimation. ASCR, FBF, f. 37, «Conto cassa. Spese di famiglia (1835-1845)», 1 eimer was equal to 56.6 litres.

²⁷ The other year in which the family spent the lowest sum was 1841, when the river flooded in Sacco (Trener, 1904).

²⁸ Nobles and patricians were not the only ones whose high standard of living could be deduced from their diet. The same is true of religious institutions. In eighteenth-century Verona the Dominicans of St. Anastasia consumed 3 types of sugar, *verzin*, *mascabà* and *fino*; in addition they used cinnamon, 10 types of fish, 15 types of vegetables and 6 kinds of meat, (Lorenzini, 2017, pp. 93-107). These foods can be included in conspicuous consumptions, a marker of social class.

TABLE 4. *Yearly personnel salaries, 1835-1844 (r.v. florins)**

Personnel	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844
<i>Family members</i>	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3
Cook	40	45	46	50	49	50	43	45	58	56
Valet (<i>famiglio</i>)	60	67	69	66	66	66	65	91	93	90
Maid	30	33	34	39	44	44	43	45	47	
Coachman	–	80	82	79	79	106	163	170	175	169
Sister-in-law's maid	–	45	46	44	44	44	43	45	47	45

* For salaries in nominal values see Table 2.

Source: ASCR, FBF, f. 37, «Conto cassa, (1835-1845)».

but sometimes hailed from more distant towns such as Brunico or Bressanone. There was a frequent turnover in some positions, with replacements generally coming from the same family (daughters, sons, brothers or sisters).²⁹

Compensation included salary, possibly room and board, uniforms, and clothes. Salaries varied by position. The coachman could earn up to 175 f., including his uniform; the valet earned 60 f., but this did not include clothing; the cook earned 40 f. and the maid 40 f. (Table 4).

The total expenses for salaries, and other added tasks, ranged from a minimum of 239 f. to a maximum of 698 f. (Table 1) making up approximately 10% of total expenditures on the average with an overall increasing trend during the period in consideration (starting at 8% and ending at 12%). The coachman's salary increased sharply from 80 f. (1836), to 169 f. (1844), the cook's from 40 f. (1835) to 56 f.; the valet from 60 f. to 90 f.; the maid from 30 f. to 47 f.; while the sister-in-law's maid from 44 f. (1836) to 45 f. The latter in specific can be attributed to the fall in prices, not to a (nominal) wage increase (1844) (Table 4).

Wood

Wood was a significant cost item. It included firewood (*legna da passo*) for heating and cooking, and timber for construction. Woodcutter labour (*boschieri per taglio legna*) and transport costs were also included. The average expenditure was 438 f. a year, amounting to approximately 10% of total expenditures (Tables 1, 2). This cost peaked

²⁹ For instance 1th september 1836 the valet Nicolò Cavaliere replaced his brother Giuseppe.

in 1838 at 691 f. or 15.5% of total expenses. This is not to be explained by an increase in wood consumption but by payment of the balance of wood consumed in the previous 3 years (1834, 1835 and 1836). Costs in specific encompass the cutting of 1,450 logs,³⁰ 10 shipments,³¹ and the associated loading costs. Additional sums (over 100 f.) incorporated payment of more than 100 f. to the wood cutters Gasparo Dal Dosso and Antonio Mattasson for «firewood delivery»;³² 112 f. were put «in the household account for firewood from woodcutters Dal Dosso and Mattasson, including 22.25 f. of wood from family land»;³³ 12.5 f. for cutting 1,500 logs; 52.5 f. as an advance payment to woodcutters; 102.5 f. for 20.5 units of firewood; 2.5 f. per day of firewood wood transport by ox cart;³⁴ and 30 car. per day per labourer to load logs.

Wood costs increased significantly in the last four years, when they amounted on average to 408,5 f. with a concomitant increase in per-capita expenditure from 58 f. to 328 f.

Medical care

The family bore regular medical costs, that consisted of visits to the doctor, medicine, and home care. In 1835 they paid 6 f. and 15 car. for fifteen days of nurse home care for a family member. In 1836 they paid Giovanna Zambelli 7 f. and 30 car. for 18 days of home care during Lisetta's³⁵ illness (25 car. per day). The same year almost 43 f. were paid to Pietro Cristofori for medicines administered throughout the entire month of September.³⁶ They paid sums varying from 87 f. in 1841 to 148 f. in 1842 to doctor Baroni for his medical care. Recurrent amounts were paid again to Pietro Cristofori for medicines, an average of 27 f. per year. Medical expenditures amounted to 69 f. on average per year, covering a share of 1.5% (Tables 1, 2). The high sums of 1837, when the family spent 151 f. and 242 f. of 1843 matched

³⁰ The cutting of each log cost 50 carantani.

³¹ Each shipment cost 10 carantani. Transport was from the Leno river to the bridge of St. Colombano.

³² «a saldo della loro tangente di legna da passo consegnata», ASCR, FBF, f. 37, «Conto cassa, (1835-1845)».

³³ «in cassa comune per legna da passo ai boschieri Dal Doss e Mattasson 22.25 di porzione dominicale».

³⁴ «per una giornata da bovi a condur legna da passo».

³⁵ Their maid.

³⁶ «per medicinali somministrati sino a tutto settembre».

with the death of a family member and therefore the costs the medical assistance and medicines paid for their health care. In 1837 Giuseppe Fedele died, while in 1842 their mother Giovanna passed away.

Leisure and culture

The Bossi Fedrigotti spent regular amounts of money on vacations, playing cards, subscriptions to newspapers and rent for a theatre loge. I have classified these expenses into the category of leisure and culture. The highest costs within this group of expenses derive from holidays in their country house in Vigolo Vattaro, where the family vacationed once a year between August and September. Their stay amounted from 100 to 300 f., to which other costs had to be added such as luggage rental, servants' wages, and sometimes the cost of guests.³⁷

They frequently played cards (*tarocco*)³⁸ and went to the theatre, for which an annual rent of 22.5 f. for a loge was laid out. They also paid for annual newspaper subscriptions: Panorama dell'Universo (5 f.), Foglio (8 f. 36 car.), Panorama (16 f. 88 car.), Messaggero (8 f. 36 car.), Gazzetta (8 f.), Almanacco di Gotha (1 f. 15 car.), Ape (2 f.) and Corriere delle Dame (f. 16).

Overall, money spent on leisure and culture ranged from 1% to 12% of total expenditures, or a yearly average of 296 f. during the period in question, equal to 7% (Tables 1, 2).

Charity

Antonio distinguished himself for his particular attention to education, that may be derived from the fact that he had a high level education. He attended the lyceum (university-prep secondary school) and went on to earn a university degree. Charitable actions were also quite important to him. He made donations to local religious institutions, such as the *Istituto dei Sordomuti*, *Civiltà Cattolica*, *Casa di Ricovero*, *Congregazione di Carità*, and *Propagazione della Fede*. Other smaller sums of money were donated regularly to their staff

³⁷ The documents often refer to Don Bettini, whose relation with the family is not specified, but the family paid for his vacation in their country house.

³⁸ One deck of cards cost 50 carantani, which was almost like the one-day income of a master bricklayer, Grandi (1978, p. 65).

and hired labourers in the form of tips. Donations, bequests and other form of philanthropy as a form of wealth transfer were fundamental elements since medieval times, when critical institutions such hospitals, orphanages, houses for the poor, *monti di pietà* (pawnshops), etc. were founded.³⁹ These organization have operated in Europe thanks to the funding provided by private benefactors, representing different strata of the population, not only the aristocratic or wealthy middle-class families, but also the common folk (Cipolla, 1980, p. 3). Charity and the spirit of mutual benefit was a fundamental element in pre-industrial societies and persisted into modern times.⁴⁰

The Bossi Fedrigotti were much appreciated by their fellow citizens for their systematic donations to pious institutions, convents, monasteries and chaplains, and for those given on a more sporadic basis for specific purposes. For instance, after Pietro Modesto's son had joined the Order of the Capuchins in the mid-eighteenth century, Pietro Modesto paid the costs for rebuilding the convent in Condino and putting it at the disposal of the Order. He then left 3,400 f. to the *Congregazione di Carità* of Sacco, and another 1,000 f. to the Augustinian nuns of Sacco. At Giuseppe Fedele's death (1837), their mother Giovanna Bartolazzi donated 1,284 f. to the *Congregazione* (Andreazza, 1989, p. 200). Two kinds of offerings can be distinguished: the regular ones that are those we find in the everyday ledger, and the exceptional bequests that are not recorded in the budget but that are drawn up in the wills and that were donated at death's door. Hence the amount that we calculate from the budget is less to the real ones.

With Antonio as head of the family, sums of money were constantly devoted to charity albeit varying from one year to the next. However we may note an upward trend over the years. Charity and other forms of free gifts to social bodies, organizations, churches, and other kinds of pious institutions were also a strategic means for obtaining social acknowledgement and maintain a high reputation. Investments

³⁹ See for instance the creation of the first pawnshops, Carboni (2014); Fornasari and Carboni (2004, pp. 308-324); Fornasari (2008, pp. 119-162). For the role of charity linked to social reputation and honour, see Mandeville (1987, pp. 171-227).

⁴⁰ A marked philanthropic activity was already widespread during the ancient Roman Age. It was called *euergetism*, and had allowed major public works to be built: roads, bridges, aqueducts, fountains, etc.; see De Luca (2016, pp. 39-60).

here promoted recognition of the role of the aristocracy in the community and generated social support. The greatest amounts were given to the *Congregazione di Carità* (200 f.) and the *Casa di Ricovero* (200 f.), while smaller sums were given to celebrate Mass, 10 f. were donated to the *Abbrucciati di Pejo*, and 5 f. for the purchase of puppets for the oratory. The average amount spent for donations was 192 f., which means 3,5% of the total expenses, (Tables 1, 2).

Maintenance

The costs for household operations and maintenance made up a small portion of the overall family budget, generally in the neighbourhood of 2,2%. Sums ranged from 27 f. to 176 f. with the largest outlays in 1841, including sweeping the chimney, fixing the window shutters (147 f.) and repairing the roof (Tables 1, 2).

Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous expenses consist of both fixed and variable costs. Fixed costs include: wax, candles and torches for lighting, costing 80 f.; and also variable costs like letters and messenger service, around 20 f. a year; gardener works in the vegetable garden; occasional jobs, travel, and petty expenses for their mother Giovanna, their sister Luigia, and their butler Cavalieri and later Zomer. The family spent for this category on average 1,277 f. (32,5%) a year (Tables 1, 2). The highest amounts occurred in 1836, 1837 and 1844 due to the so called in the document «petty» expenses for their mother, their sister and their butler (50% of miscellaneous expenditures, 15% of total expenditures). In 1842, 1843 and 1844 the most expensive items were travel: to Vicenza (226 f.), Munich (538 f.) and Genoa (1,235.5 f.).

The miscellaneous group encompassed not primary goods, rather luxury items and conspicuous consumption in general and its considerable share is indicative of the social rank the family belonged to (Figure 3).

During the 1835-1844 decade the total expenditures increased from 2,864 f. to 5,713 f. although the number of the family members reduced from 5 to 3 and price index decreased by 10% (Table B1). The items that underwent a significant augmentation were salaries and hired labourers, maintenance of the house and the miscellaneous, which are

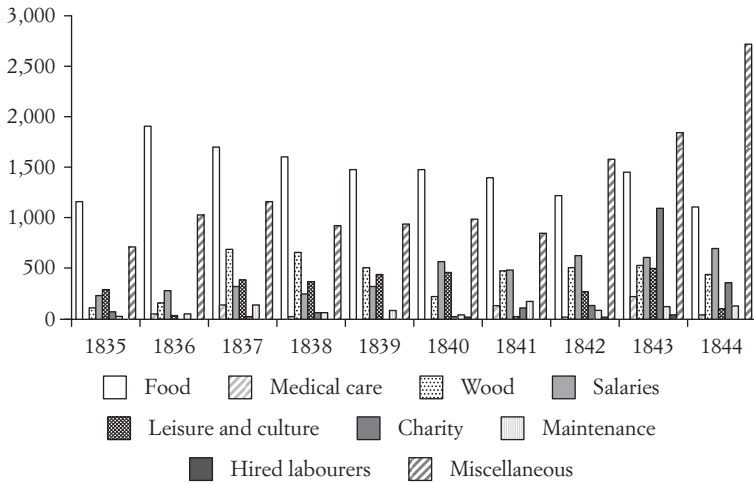


FIGURE 3. Expenditures per items, 1835-1844 (r.v. florins)

a set of expenses that, as above mentioned, were linked – rather than to necessary needs – to conspicuous consumptions, aimed at preserving their high social status, improving the living standard of the family.

3.2. *The decade 1855-1864*

In the second decade the surviving members of the household were just 2, the siblings Antonio (58-68 years old over the period) and Luigia (63-73 years old).⁴¹ The expenditure structure and the methodology in recording the data are the same as used in the previous decade.

The trend of the expenses shows that they remained almost unvaried within the decade (Figure 4). They ranged from a minimum of 2,979 f. (1862) to a maximum of 4,145 f. (1860). However if we compare the yearly average expenses declined at 3,350 f. (from 4,497 f. in the previous decade). In per-capita terms the 1,587 f. recorded in 1855-1864 is slightly higher than the figure recorded in 1835-1844, 1,378 f. (Table 5).

The highest portion of expenditures went for food, varying from 27.2% (1857) to 36.3% (1859) for an average of

⁴¹ Augusta died in 1852.

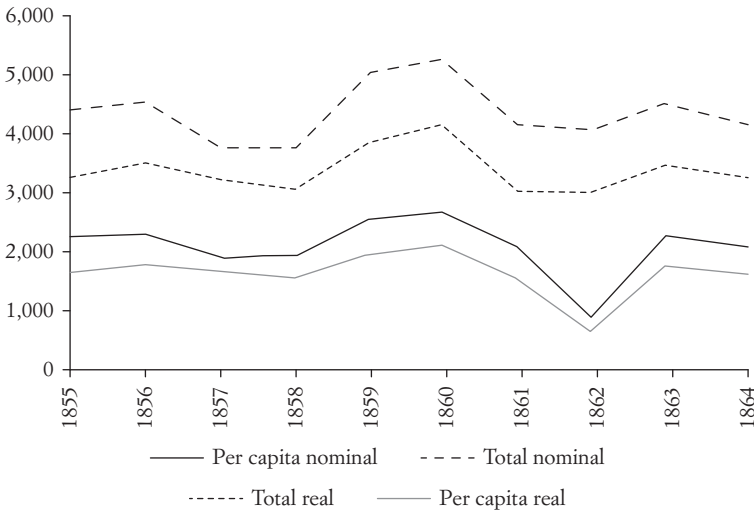


FIGURE 4. Total and per capita expenditure trend, 1855-1864 (r.v. florins).

32.3%, almost two points less than in the previously analysed period (33.9%) (Table 6).

Food

The Fedrigotti food expenditures do not follow a regular trend. There are peaks in 1855 (1,149 f.) and 1860 (1,446 f.), and troughs in 1857 (864 f.) and 1862 (845 f.) (Table 5). The peaks are attributable to a general increase in purchases of all foodstuffs: butter, bread, wine, meat, grains (including *semola*) and sugar. Champagne⁴² and a relatively large amount of coffee were significant items in 1859 (Table A3).

The troughs correspond to years in which wine expenses, a significant share of total food expenditures, were not listed in the accounting books. This may be due to omission or because the family consumed wine left over from previous years (Table A3).

Regularly purchased food items were: bread, meat, grains, *semola*, butter, wine, and occasionally sugar, salt, oil, and for

⁴² The Bossi Fedrigotti specialized in wine culture in the 18th century, and in the 19th century they likely began to produce champagne as well, hence the champagne recorded here very probably comes from their lands.

TABLE 5. *Total and per capita expenses, 1855-1864 (r.v. florins)*

Year	Food	Medical service	Wood	Salaries	Leisure and culture	Charity	Maintenance	Hired labourers	Miscellaneous	Total	Family members	Per capita
1855	1,149	127	355	160	17	285	50	230	856	3,228	2	1,614
1856	1,049	7	436	337	236	310	23	158	912	3,468	2	1,734
1857	864	19	330	333	388	347	6	231	655	3,174	2	1,587
1858	1,071	10	191	139	314	178	155	183	776	3,016	2	1,508
1859	1,387	0	319	220	194	311	15	123	1,255	3,825	2	1,912
1860	1,446	380	244	274	234	202	50	191	1,123	4,145	2	2,073
1861	1,035	17	90	227	22	114	17	131	1,330	2,984	2	1,492
1862	845	10	219	231	344	238	14	174	906	2,979	2	596
1863	1,109	6	99	180	328	142	40	196	1,349	3,449	2	1,724
1864	924	31	203	245	232	169	30	154	1,248	3,237	2	1,618
<i>Average</i>	<i>1,088</i>	<i>61</i>	<i>248</i>	<i>235</i>	<i>231</i>	<i>229</i>	<i>40</i>	<i>177</i>	<i>1,041</i>	<i>3,350</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1,586</i>

Source: ASCR, FBF, f. 46, «Libro spese di famiglia, (1854-1867)».

TABLE 6. *Expenditure shares, %, 1855-1864*

Year	Food	Medical care	Wood	Salaries	Leisure	Charity	Maintenance	Hired abouers	Miscellaneous	Total
1855	35.6	3.9	10.9	4.9	0.5	8.8	1.5	7.1	26.5	100
1856	30.3	0.2	12.5	9.7	6.8	8.9	0.6	4.5	26.3	100
1857	27.2	0.5	10.4	10.5	12.2	10.9	0.1	7.2	20.6	100
1858	35.5	0.3	6.3	4.6	10.4	5.9	5.1	6.0	25.7	100
1859	36.3	0.0	8.3	5.7	5.0	8.1	0.4	3.2	32.8	100
1860	34.9	9.1	7.5	6.6	5.6	4.8	1.2	4.6	25.4	100
1861	34.7	0.5	7.6	7.6	0.7	3.8	0.5	4.4	39.9	100
1862	28.3	0.3	12.6	7.7	11.5	7.9	0.4	5.8	25.0	100
1863	32.2	0.1	5.1	5.2	9.5	4.1	1.1	5.6	36.8	100
1864	28.6	0.9	9.8	7.5	7.1	5.2	0.9	4.7	35.0	100
<i>Average</i>	<i>32.3</i>	<i>1.6</i>	<i>9.1</i>	<i>7.0</i>	<i>6.9</i>	<i>6.8</i>	<i>1.2</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>29.4</i>	<i>100</i>

Source: ASCR, FBf, f. 46, «Libro spese di famiglia, (1854-1867)».

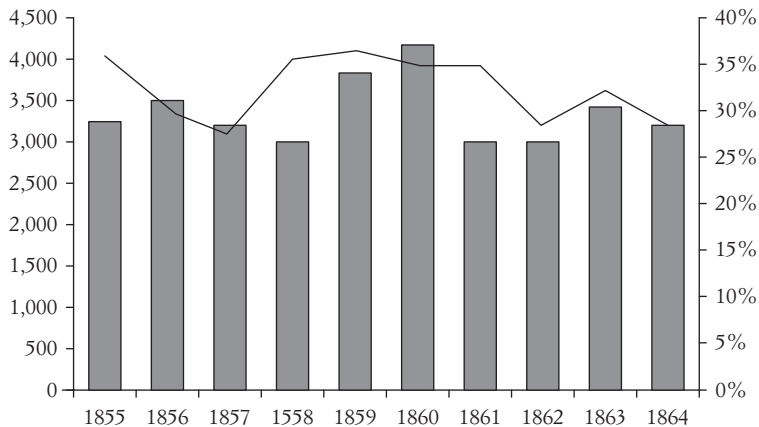


FIGURE 5. Total expenses (i.v. florins) and food shares, 1855-1864.

the first time chocolate and champagne.⁴³ The largest portion of food expenditures was for wine, 374 f. (34.4%), followed by meat, 358 f. (33%), and grains (grains and *semola*) 261 f. (21.7%). Bread was consumed regularly and represented an average cost of 165 f. a year (82.5 f. per person), amounting to 15.2% of food expenditures (Table 7).

Annual food expenditures ranged from a minimum of 845 f. (1862) to a maximum of 1,446 f. (1860), while the annual per-capita expenditures ranged from a minimum of 596 f. (1857) to a maximum of 2,073 f. (1860) (Tables 5, 6).

Comparing the two decades, in 1855-1864 the average total expenditures amounted to 3,350 f., thus considerably decreasing from the previous span when they were equal to 4,497 f. In per capita terms, the average was 1,586 f., slightly higher than in the past years that were 1,378 f. Hence, despite the fewer number of mouths to feed – from 5 down to 2 – the overall costs per person for food augmented.

In relation to the ratio of food expenditures to total ones, the Bossi Fedrigotti spent an average of 32%. As aforementioned, this places them among the wealthiest families.

If we compare the Fedrigotti food expenditures to those of other coeval aristocratic families, i.e., the Dionisi of Ve-

⁴³ 1 bottle of champagne cost 4 f. 10 car. (34 car.), that is almost 34 times more expensive than simple wine, whose cost could be 1 carantano per 1 litre. ASCR, FBF, f. 46, «Libro spese di famiglia, (1854-1867)».

TABLE 7. *Average of food expenditures per items, 1855-1864 (r.v. florins)**

Food items	Butter	Bread	Wine	Grains	Semola	Meat, fish, etc.	Sugar	Salt	Coffee	Oil	Champagne
Average (r.v. florins)	8	165	374	235	26	358	19	4	11	24	5

* For detailed figures distinguished per item and per single year, see Table A3.

Source: ASCR, FBF, f. 46, «Libro spese di famiglia, (1854-1867)».

rona, the the Biumi and the Crivelli of Milan, we find the Bossi Fedrigotti placing in the middle of the wealth hierarchy. In the 1850s the Dionisi household was composed of Lucrezia Giustiniani, widow of the marquis Ottavio Dionisi, and her five children. Food made up 46.4% of their total expenditures (Ferrari, 2012, pp. 388-390). The Biumi spent on food much less, 24%.⁴⁴ For the Crivelli of Milan, on the other hand, this proportion was even inferior 18%. They belonged to some of the richest families of Milan. Their nobility, of feudal origins, dated back to the Middle Ages. In the nineteenth century they still held a prestigious position in the city and a large estate. Their landholdings covered an area of 927,94 hectares in total, whose value amounted to about 2.800.000 lire in 1870. They also owned palaces, houses and farmhouses in the countryside.⁴⁵ The marquis Luigi Crivelli, who lived with his wife the marquise Carolina Medici spent on average 8,500 Italian lire per year, which means – as stated – 18% of their total expenditure.⁴⁶

Wood

The second largest share of the household budget was spent on wood, with amounts varying from 90 f. (1861) to 436 f. (1856), (the range may be attributable to variations in climate, i.e., cold or mild winters), for an yearly average of 248 f. (Table 5).

If we compare the average wood costs in the two decades, they significantly decreased from 438 f. to 248 f., very likely according to the reduction of the family size.

Wood constituted 9% on average of total expenditures, remaining unchanged compared to the period 1835-1844. Meanwhile, per-capita expenditure slightly increased to 124 f. from 109.5 f of the earlier decade.

⁴⁴ Archivio di Stato di Milano (henceforth Asmi), f. Biumi (sec. XII-sec. XX), Registro di cassa e spese diverse, Registro di spese diverse: cibarie, riparazioni, carichi, Libro mastro, reg. 10.

⁴⁵ Asmi, f. Crivelli-Giulini, reg. 7, Mastro centrale della sostanza ed amministrazione del signor Luigi Crivelli 1846-1855; reg. 81 (854-1856), reg. 9 (1857-1864).

⁴⁶ This figure is similar to that for the Riccardi family, one century earlier, whose food accounted for 17% of household expenditures (Malanima, 1977, p. 255). The same percentage was spent in the same period by the Salviati, also from Florence (Pinchera, 1999, p. 249).

TABLE 8. *Personnel salaries, 1855-1864 (r.v. florins)*

Personnel	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864
Cook	37	39	42	40	38	47	43	44	46	47
Valet (<i>famiglio</i>)	–	77	85	81	77	79	72	74	77	78
Coachman	74	77	85	81	77	87	79	81	77	78
Augusta's maid	33	35	38	36	35	32	32	33	35	35
Primo barale	74	77								
<i>Total</i>	217	305	250	238	226	246	227	233	236	239

Source: ASCR. FBF. f. 46, «Libro spese di famiglia. (1854-1867)».

Salaries

As for personnel salaries, the Bossi Fedrigotti had four servants in the latter period. This means that although there were only 2 family members (down from 5), the number of staff remained relatively constant: one coachman, one cook, one maid, a *barale* and one valet. As stated above, salaries varied depending on role and whether room and board were included. Some staff – the cooks, maids and the valet – very likely lived in a detached house or apartment on the family estate. The lowest salary, was for Augusta's maid,⁴⁷ which underwent a slight increase from 33 to 35 f. (in real terms). The cook initially earned 37 f. which raised to 47 f. The family had also a valet, whose salary slightly increased from 77 to 78 f. as well as a coachman, from 74 to 78 f. (Table 8).

The total expenditures for staff salaries increased from 217 to 239 f. The higher costs are attributable to a general increase in the staff 's salaries.

The ratio of salaries to total expenditures did not change significantly with respect to the earlier decade, remaining around 7% on average (Table 6). This figure matches those of the wealthier Milanese households, the Biumi and the Crivelli, that employed in salaries respectively 7% and 8%.

On the other hand, staff expenses accounted for 14.1% of the Dionisi household budget. In this case, the family nucleus, as stated above, consisted of 6 people: Lucrezia, a 32-year-old widow, and her 5 children (Ferrari, 2012, p. 349).

⁴⁷ As above mentioned, Augusta died in 1852. However, we may assume that her maid kept on working in the house and that the family kept on referring to her in the ledger as «Augusta's maid».

Medical care

The percentage of expenses devoted to medical care remained more or less unchanged at 1.6%. However the actual sums differed somewhat. During the decade 1835-1844 the family spent an average of 69 f. a year on medical care, while in 1855-1864 they spent 61 f. (Table 5). Exceptional amounts were paid in 1860, when the family laid out 380 f., which included the service provided by Domenico Sartori for medicine, by doctor Cofler for medical visits to Luigia, Antonio, and their nephew Giuseppe (130 f.),⁴⁸ by doctor Aberle for medical care provided to their nephew Giuseppe⁴⁹ (70 f.) and other medical visits made in the previous years, but paid only in 1860. Antonio and Luigia were at an advanced age at that time, respectively 63 and 68 years old, and this may explain the higher costs.

Maintenance

The family had to bear regular costs for household repairs and maintenance. The largest costs were borne in 1858 when the family spent 155 f. (Table 5). Costs included 30.9 f. for demolishing the boundary walls in the courtyard; 54 f. for replacing 1,800 roof tiles; 21.5 f. for planting carnations; 12.5 f. for pruning the citrus trees; and other minor sums for such things as caring for the vines in the vegetable garden. These expenses were a rather modest share of total expenditures at around 1%, somewhat less than the 2% in 1835-1844.

Leisure and culture

The Bossi Fedrigotti tended to maintain certain family traditions, especially as regards how they spent their leisure time. As in the earlier decade, their expenditures in this category regarded vacations, newspaper subscriptions, theatre rent and playing cards. Leisure expenses made up an average of 231 f. equal to 6.9% of the yearly household budget, which is comparable to the period 1835-1844. Again, the greatest expense in this category was vacations at the country house in Vigolo Vattaro, ranging from 250 to 400 f. a year. This included staff salaries, cleaning and repairs, lug-

⁴⁸ Giuseppe was 30 years old at that time. He was very likely one of the 11 children of their brother Ludovico. Giuseppe died in 1866 at the age of 36.

⁴⁹ There is no mention in the budget that Giuseppe lived with the family.

gage rental and hosting friends. The family also dedicated time to cultural activities, particularly the theatre, for which they paid an annual rent of 15 f. Other expenses included newspaper and magazine subscriptions (from 12.5 to 16.5 f.) and occasionally the cost of purchasing a deck of cards, another favourite recreational activity.

Charity

The Bossi Fedrigotti continued to provide charitable donations on a regular basis to pious institutions in Sacco and Rovereto: *Istituto dei Sordomuti*, *Civiltà Cattolica*, *Casa di Ricovero*, *Congregazione di Carità*, and *Propagazione della Fede*. They donated an average of 229 f. (6.8%) a year, much higher than in the period 1835-1844 (3%). The institutions receiving the largest amounts were the *Casa di Ricovero*, 100-200 f. a year, the *Congregazione della Carità*, 100 f. a year, the *Istituto dei Sordomuti*, 40 f. a year, and the *Incendiati del borgo*, 35.5 f. a year. They also paid tips to the personnel and hired labourers, provided bread to convents and monasteries, and bought lottery tickets. In addition, 100 florins were donated for the *Confraternita di San Giuseppe*, and the family sponsored the young painter Caracristi, who was studying in Venice at the time, providing a regular stipend of around 14 f. 40 car.⁵⁰

Antonio was notable for his commitment to local charitable institutions as we see in his *post-mortem* inventory, according to which he bequeathed a total amount of 61,250 f. to pious institutions.⁵¹ As stated above, offerings were delivered *una tantum* – like the sums recorded in the wills, or during exceptional negative episodes – or regularly like those that are registered in the budget. We may deduce that the amount delivered to charity was higher than that present in the daily ledger.

Miscellaneous

Miscellaneous expenditures still makes up the largest single portion of the household budget, ranging from 25 to

⁵⁰ «Al signor prelato per il mantenimento del giovane pittore Caracristi a Venezia, ultimo anno 1862, 14 fiorini e 40 carantani».

⁵¹ In the form of «legati». More precisely he had bequeathed 21,875 f to the priest from Rovereto; 13,125 f. to the Charity Organization; 8,750 f. to the Recovery House and the same amount to the Orphans' Home and to the Cappellania of Sacco. ASCR, FBF, XLVIII, f. 7, «Sostanza lasciata dal fu Antonio, conte Bossi Fedrigotti e sue passività (1871)».

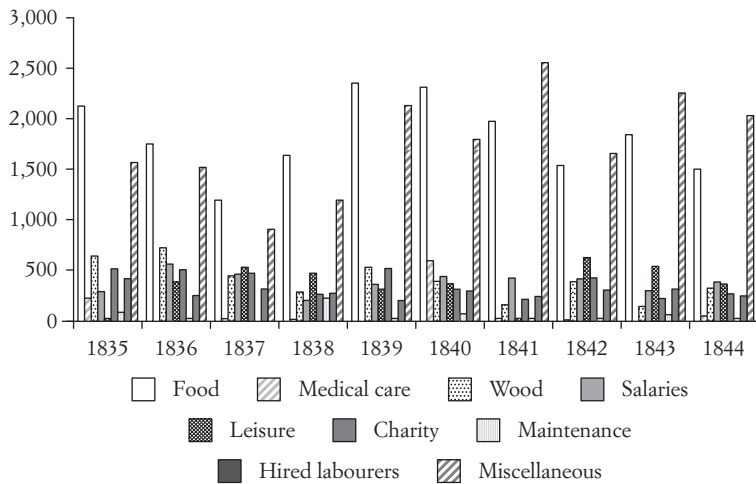


FIGURE 6. Expenditures by item, 1855-1864 (r.v. florins).

39% of total expenditures. The composition of this category reflects that of the first decade (Figure 6). It includes both variable and fixed costs: candles, wax and torches for lighting; stationery and messenger services; tips to personnel and hired labourers; travel; and above all (50%) for petty expenses accrued by Luigia and the butler/coachman.

4. Concluding remarks

Our analysis has focused on the Bossi Fedrigotti expenditures during two benchmark decades 1835-1844 and 1855-1864. At the beginning of the first decade (1835-1844), the family was composed of 5 members: two brothers, one sister, their mother, and a sister-in-law. The structure of the family changed over the years and in the second decade (1855-1864) they were only 2: Antonio and Luigia (brother and sister), who remained unmarried and died at an advanced age.

The composition of their household expenditures and the percentage share of individual items in the total budget reveal much about the family's economic and social status. Total average yearly expenses during the first decade amounted to 4,497 f. while in the second they lowered at 3,350 f. More specifically, as Figure 7 shows, while in the first decade both total and per capita expenditures augmented, in



FIGURE 7. Total and per capita expenditures (1835-1844; 1855-1864).

the second one they were significantly lower and remained almost stable. While the general decline may be attributed to the reduction of the family size, in per capita terms this is expression of a stagnation of the living standard.

Two categories in particular underwent a change: food and charity, the first decreasing while the second grew. If in the first case the lowering, as above stated, was due to the lower numbers of the family members, the second can be linked to the need to maintain social recognition and approval through charitable and philanthropic actions, especially as the siblings became elderly.

The family diet was particularly varied and refined, including – beside bread – different kinds of meat: beef, calf, lamb, game, roe deer, guinea-hen. They also consumed modest quantities of fish, mainly freshwater fish from rivers and Lake Garda. They used different types of grains: wheat, barley and rye, with an increase in the use of *semola* observed in the latter years. They also regularly drank wine. As with grains, it is quite likely that the wine was produced on their own estate and recorded in their accounting books at market price, although this money was not effectively spent. The family consumed foods that did not have a great impact on the total expenditure, as they were rare, refined and expensive, like coffee, sugar, chocolate and champagne, and identified their social status and aristocratic lifestyle.

Food expenditures changed over the years, decreasing from an average of 1,455 f. to an average of 1,088 f. (real values), which means -33% .

Expenses that significantly diminished were grains (-46%), meat (-28%) and bread (-15%). However new items indicating an appreciation for rare and refined foods were added to the diet in the second span, in specific oil (very likely coming from Lake Garda), champagne and chocolate.

Food diminished also as a share in total expenditures from 34% (average of 1835-1844) to 32% (average of 1855-1864), which expresses – according to Engel theory – an advance of their wellbeing level. This may be ascribed to an effective amelioration in their lifestyle or to the reduction in the number of family members rather than to an actual increase in income.⁵²

The food's 32% share in total expenditures places the Bossi Fedrigotti among the wealthier families. The Italian Tyrol was home to much more affluent and renown households, such as the earls of Thun, Wolkenstein, Giovannelli or Castelbarco. Also in Milan the marquis Crivelli and the earls Biumi placed higher in the hierarchy of wellbeing. However, unlike these dynasties, the Bossi Fedrigotti did not belong to a feudal nobility, but rather to a mercantile class. Starting as wood transporters, they were able to climb the social ladder and to achieve an aristocratic standard of living, along with a noble title.

The second category witnessing significant changes was charity, which rose from 3% to 6.8% . As Antonio and Luigia grew older – neither of them married or having children – they began donating greater amounts. The increase of expenditures attributable to charity was due both to donations to a larger number of organizations and also to more generous offerings (Figure 8). Donations, bequests and other forms of charitable contribution represented a form of redistribution

⁵² As stated above, at this moment of the research it is difficult to estimate with precision the total income of the family. The structure and organization of their assets and wealth underwent significant changes and documents recording the entire income are lacking. The only document summing up their ownership is the cadastre. However this only includes the area and value of landholdings and real estate. Other important economic activities and associated revenues and profits had been excluded, such as the revenues from the Post, of the Tithe of Sacco (though a modest sum at that time), the revenues from the houses and shops in the city, and the profits from their wine production and from their lending activity that was quite bountiful in the eighteenth century, finally declining in the nineteenth. However the private archives do not provide an overall view of assets.

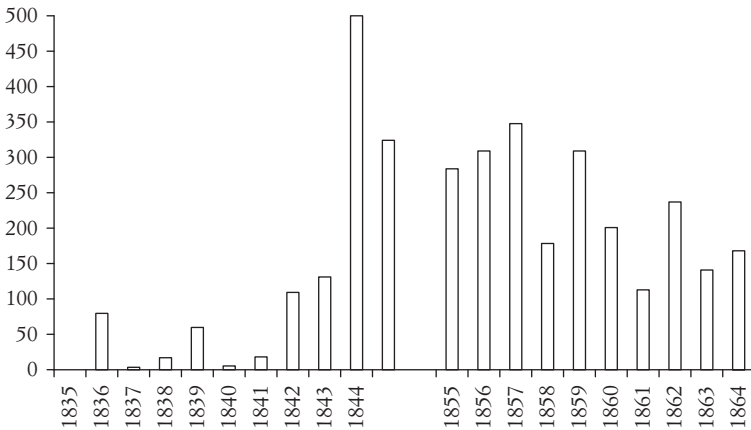


FIGURE 8. Charity expenditures, 1835-1844; 1855-1864 (r.v. florins).

of wealth which in the past has enabled the creation of important institutions such as hospitals, orphanages, institutes for the poor, and others. This philanthropic attitude has persisted into modern times and the Bossi Fedrigotti were always champions in this respect. As pointed out above, charity had a dual function: on the one hand it helped found and finance social welfare institutions; on the other it was a means for garnering social recognition and approval.

The Bossi Fedrigotti did not represent the richest household of southern Tyrol, but it was surely among the most well-off families in that area in the nineteenth century. It was predominantly distinguished by its dynamic entrepreneurial spirit and acumen in trade and business that allowed it to improve its economic status and social prestige. The analysis of its household budgets represents an important lens through which we can infer the family's living standard and lifestyle. The nature of their expenditures reveals a varied, refined and conspicuous consumption typical of aristocratic families, but also their particular attention to the lower social classes and to pious institutions which they financed through regular or occasional donations. The household budgets also tell us something of their preferences and choices, especially their concern for hospitality, education and culture. The Bossi Fedrigotti represented a pillar in the economic system of Sacco and Rovereto, which they actively supported through a variety of economic and non-economic actions, helping the city to prosper and advance.

Appendix A

TABLE A1. Total and per capita food expenditures per item, 1835-1844 (n.v. florins)

Components	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	Average
Years	1835	1836	1837	1838	1839	1840	1841	1842	1843	1844	1843	1844	
Butter	61.2	4.7	392	97.6	741	51.2	64.3	78	78.9	53.1	78	53.1	60.2
Pc	12.2	0.9	9.8	24.4	18.5	12.8	16	26	26.3	17.7	26	17.7	-
Bread	204.0	232.1	175.0	180.0	169.6	155.5	186.8	120.5	152.4	147.2	120.5	147.2	172.3
Pc	40.8	46.4	43.7	45.0	42.4	38.7	46.7	40.1	50.8	49	40.1	50.8	-
Wine	-	383.6	374.3	363.0	317	281.5	226	181.5	234.3	148.3	181.5	234.3	278.8
Pc	-	76.7	93.5	90.7	79.2	70.3	56.5	60.5	78.1	49.4	60.5	78.1	-
Grains	294.4	334	363.0	353.9	303.8	314.5	339.3	337	337.1	228	337	337.1	320.5
Pc	58.8	66.8	90.7	88.4	75.9	78.6	84.8	112.3	112.3	76	112.3	112.3	-
Semola	22.9	-	37.5	33.3	27	20.8	22.9	18.8	18.8	16.7	18.8	18.8	24.3
Pc	4.5	-	9.3	8.3	6.7	5.2	5.7	6.2	6.2	5.5	6.2	6.2	-
Meat, fish, etc.	520.0	641.2	420.6	421	348	351	412	343.5	379	310.5	343.5	379	414.7
Pc	104.0	128.2	105.0	105.2	87.0	87.7	103	114.5	126.3	103.5	114.5	126.3	106.4
Sugar	45.4	19.4	-	7.6	37.2	126.5	24.5	-	52.9	23	-	52.9	42.0
Pc	9.0	3.8	-	1.9	9.3	31.6	6.1	-	17.6	7.6	-	17.6	-
Salt	10.4	12.2	13.4	-	-	37.5	12	-	-	-	-	-	17.1
Pc	2.0	2.4	3.3	-	-	9.3	3.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coffee	-	85.1	73.3	-	88	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	77.6
Pc	-	17	18.3	-	22.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: ASCR, FBF, f. 37, «Conto cassa. Spese di famiglia, (1835-1845)».

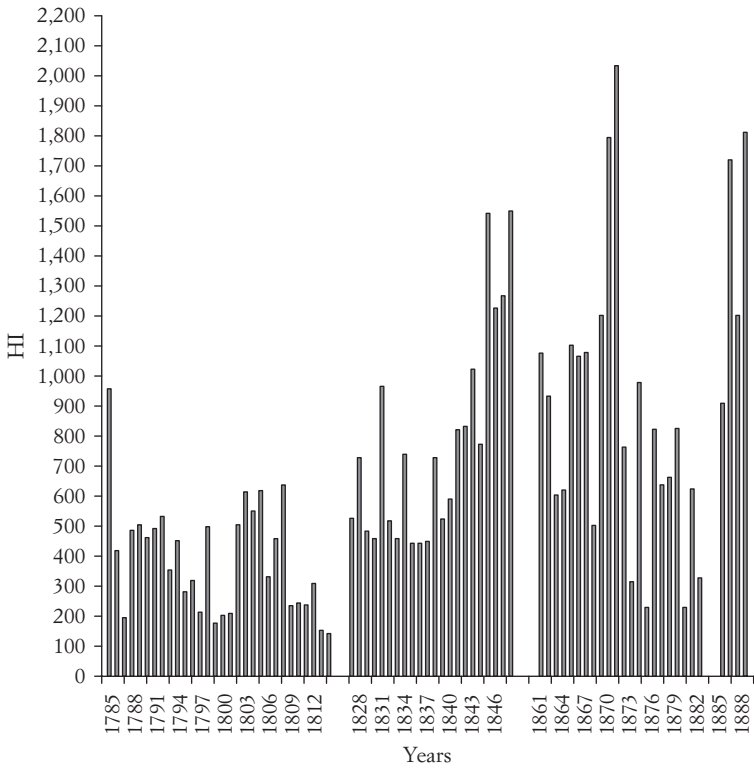


FIGURE A1. Wine production (1785-1888).

Note: Some data are lacking because archival sources are incomplete. The figures recorded in *eimers* have been uniformed in hectolitres.



FIGURE A2. Income and expenditure (1835-1844), n.v. florins.



FIGURE A3. Income and expenditure (1855-1864), n.v. florins

*Appendix B*TABLE B1. *Consumer price index and inflation index, 1835-1844 (1835 = 1)*

Years	Innsbruck	Rebased price index
1835	56,6	1,00
1836	50,8	0,90
1837	49,5	0,87
1838	51,3	0,91
1839	51,8	0,92
1840	51,2	0,90
1841	52,1	0,92
1842	50,0	0,88
1843	48,5	0,86
1844	50,3	0,89
Average	–	0,89

Source: Leonardi (2001, pp. 642-643, Table 18, «Indice dei prezzi al consumo in Cisleithania 1800-1914»). 1914 = 100. For my analysis I used the price index of Innsbruck, in South Tyrol which includes also Rovereto, rather than that of the entire Cisleithania.

TABLE B2. *Consumer price index and inflation index, 1855-1864 (1835 = 1)*

Years	Innsbruck	Rebased price index
1855	76,9	1,36
1856	73,3	1,30
1857	66,7	1,18
1858	70,2	1,24
1859	73,8	1,30
1860	71,7	1,27
1861	78,4	1,39
1862	76,6	1,35
1863	73,2	1,29
1864	72,2	1,28
Average	–	1,30

Source: Leonardi (2001, pp. 642-643, Table 18, «Indice dei prezzi al consumo in Cisleithania 1800-1914»). For the same chronological span, the Cisleithania index was 57% higher (Leonardi, 2001, pp. 642-643; Čvrček, 2013, p. 13).

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