

# APPENDICES

## THE MEUCCI FAMILY

### The Religious Censuses of Florence's parishes

The *Religious censuses* were actual annual censuses done by the parish priests of each parish during their pre-Easter visits to the houses placed under their jurisdiction. This work began in the pre-Lent period, that is to say six weeks prior to Easter, thus, generally, in February. The data collected were accurately recorded on a special register (generally triennial) on an individual basis, *soul by soul*, as well as in a summary compendium; it was then verified and countersigned by the curate who put down the date on which the verification was completed (generally in June). Naturally, the *souls* were classified according to the ecclesiastical criterion, as: *Married men*, *Married women*, *Unwed adult men* (or *Adult males*), *Unwed adult women* (or *Adult females*), *Impuberal boys* (under fourteen), *Impuberal girls* (under twelve), *Priests*, *Nuns*, *Heterodoxes* (namely people belonging to a different religion). At the time, a parish could count

many thousands of *souls*, up to a maximum of about ten thousand.

The Religious censuses were compiled according to the order in which the houses were blessed. If a family was not in during the first round, it was listed subsequently. At any rate, every year almost all parishes drew up an index of last names in alphabetical order, so that still today it is easy to find the page on which the individual souls were registered.

As one can see from the 1808 religious census of the S. Frediano parish (see p. 119), the religious censuses are ordered first of all by street; for each street, the houses are listed according to their number; then the families living in each house are numbered, followed by the name and number of the *souls* in each family, their relationship with the head of the family and their age (often roughly indicated, since it merely served to distinguish *adults* from *impuberals*).

Indeed, a column follows which indicates the progressive number of *impuberals*, whereas the last column indicates the progressive number of *adults*.

(On the left) Example of the 'recapitulation' of a religious census (S. Giuseppe, 1834) ●

### Domiciles of Amatis Meucci and his family

It was possible to identify most of the domiciles thanks to the *Religious censuses* of the parishes they belonged to, which - thankfully - were always mentioned also in the baptism, wedding and death registers and, often, also in police reports. In the baptism certificate of Antonio Meucci, the eldest son of Amatis, son of Giuseppe Meucci, and Maria Domenica daughter of Luigi Pepi, it is indicated that he was born in the S. Frediano quarter. However, according to the aforementioned religious census of the *S. Frediano in Cestello* parish of the year 1808 (shown here), only Amatis and his wife lived on *Via Chiara no. 475*, whereas their son Antonio was not registered. This can be explained by the fact that Antonio (their firstborn son) was born in April, when the round of pre-Easter visits - hence the census - had already been completed.

Religious Census of the S. Frediano in Cestello parish of 1808 ●

After Antonio's birth, Amatis moved with the family to house no. 765 in *Via dello Studio*<sup>1</sup>, under the parish of S. Maria de' Ricci. Indeed, in the 1809 religious census of that parish,

Antonio is registered at the age of one.

The other residences were traced in the various religious censuses of the subsequent parishes they belonged to, identified most of the time through the baptisms and weddings of Amatis' children (nine on the whole). The final compendium is on page 120.

As one can see, all the residences of Amatis and his family have been identified, up until the time Antonio Meucci and his wife left for Cuba (5 October 1835), except for the last three years. Of these, it was possible to trace only the domicile of Amatis's family in 1834, which was on *Via delle Mete*, house no. 7426, in the S. Giuseppe parish; Antonio, however, is not included, although in the wedding certificate (dated 7 August 1834) he was indicated as belonging to the S. Giuseppe parish. Research has been conducted for the three years previously mentioned in the S. Giuseppe as well as S. Michele Visdomini, SS. Annunziata, S. Ambrogio, S. Frediano and S. Felice in Piazza parishes, unfortunately with no results.

<sup>1</sup>In the Florence's State Archives, this domicile is given in *Via dello Studio*, house no. 759, instead of no. 765.

Year	Domicile	Parish
1808	Via Chiara, 475	S. Frediano in Cestello
1809 and 1810	Via dello Studio, 765	S. Margherita de' Ricci
1811 and 1812	Via dei Pucci, 6119	S. Michele Visdomini
1813 to 1816	Via dei Pilastri, 6766	S. Ambrogio
1817 to 1820	Via del Castellaccio, 6412	S. Michele Visdomini
1821 to 1832	Via de' Servi, 6412 <sup>2</sup>	S. Michele Visdomini
1833	unknown	unknown
1834	Via delle Mete, 7426	S. Giuseppe
1835 to 1838	unknown	unknown
1839	unknown	S. Giuseppe (Luisa's wedding)
1840	unknown	unknown
1841	Via della Salvia, 7508 <sup>3</sup>	S. Giuseppe (State census)
1842 to 1847	unknown	unknown
1848	unknown	S. Ambrogio (Luigi's wedding)
1849 to 1855	unknown	unknown
1856	Via de' Pentolini, 7155 <sup>4</sup>	S. Ambrogio
1857	unknown	unknown
1858	unknown	S. Giuseppe (Giuseppe's wedding)
1859	unknown	unknown
1860	unknown	S. Maria Novella (Fanny's birth)
1861 to 1863	unknown	unknown
1864	Via de' Pentolini, 28 <sup>5</sup>	S. Ambrogio (Amatis's death) <sup>6</sup>
1866	Via dei Pepi 45	S. Lorenzo (Ida's birth)
1869	Via Nazionale Aretina 3	S. Lorenzo (Ugo's birth)
1881	Via S. Antonino 24	S. Maria Novella? (Fanny's death)
1889	Via S. Antonino 24	(Lazzeri Daria's death)
1890	Via S. Antonino 24 <sup>7</sup>	S. Maria Novella (petition of inheritance)

<sup>2</sup>It is certain that the house remained the same (*Casa Pasqui*, thus named after its owner, who lived next door to the Meuccis), but was subsequently assigned to Via de' Servi instead of Via del Castellaccio, since it was positioned on the corner between the two streets. This is proven by the fact that the house number remained the same.

<sup>3</sup>Currently Borgo Allegri.

<sup>4</sup>Currently Via de' Macci, according to the papers left by Giuseppe Meucci Jr, discovered by Renzo Martinelli, of the Florence's newspaper *La Nazione*, in 1913 (see bibl.).

<sup>5</sup>It is probably the same residence of 1856, but with the new numbering system of the Kingdom of Italy.

<sup>6</sup>The data reported below refer to the residence of Giuseppe Meucci Jr, instead of those of Amatis Meucci.

<sup>7</sup>From the Petition of inheritance presented in February 1890 by Charles Bertolino, Antonio Meucci's testamentary executor.

A first hypothesis is that Antonio lived at the Teatro della Pergola and that for some reason he was not included in the ecclesiastical census. Another hypothesis is that Antonio was in hiding for political reasons. In a letter written by him to his friend Carlo Paladini from Lucca, he says: "... *the Italy for which in '33 and '34 I served many months in prison with Guerrazzi.*" Evidently, if Antonio was in prison during the pre-Lent periods of 1833 and 1834, he could not be registered by the parish he belonged to. But in 1835 he should have been living somewhere with his wife Esther. Perhaps they were still at the Theater.

#### **Personal information on the members of the Meucci family**

**Giuseppe Meucci (Sr.)**, son of Iacopo and Stella ... (illegible last name), born between 1739 and 1742, according to an information note of the S. Croce Police Superintendent dated 15 January 1829 (which mentions him as being 89 years of age) and to a plea forwarded by Amatis on 5 January 1828 (which states that he is 86 years old). Instead, according to the register of the deceased of S. Maria Nuova (certificate no. 832), he died on 3 November 1829, at the age of 80; this latter information, however, is quite unreliable. In the same register he is defined as *laborer* by profession and *unable to see*. He was married to Cateni Anna, but the date of their

wedding is unknown. According to the aforementioned report of the S. Croce Police Superintendent, Giuseppe was supported by his son Amatis. However, as he is not listed in any religious census with Amatis' family, he must have lived elsewhere (perhaps in the country), probably alone, as he had been left a widower for many years.

**Amatis Meucci**, son of Giuseppe and Cateni Anna, was probably born in Florence in 1776, according to the religious census of the S. Ambrogio parish and to the already mentioned information note of the S. Croce Police Superintendent dated 15 January 1829. According to Florence's census of 1841 he would appear as born in 1780. According to less reliable religious censuses, he was born in 1778. At any rate, since Amatis' baptism does not appear in the registers of S. Maria del Fiore between 1771 and 1775, he must be born on or after 1776. On the basis of many documents, he was *Royal Employee* by profession. In the register of deceased it is indicated that he died a widower and 'poor man' (though 'goldsmith' by profession) on 4 March 1864, at the age of 86 (instead of 88, which is actually more likely), in Via de' Pentolini no. 28, in the S. Ambrogio parish.

**Maria Domenica Pepi**, daughter of Luigi and Maria ... (illegible last name), was born almost surely in 1786, according to

the religious censuses of the S. Ambrogio parish. According to the register of the deceased of the S. Maria Nuova Hospital, she died there on 20 May 1862, at the age of 75, therefore she must have been born in the year 1787. In this register, it is mentioned that she was 'calzettaia' (a woman who makes socks). From Florence's census of 1841 she would appear as born in 1780. According to the religious censuses of the various parishes, she had nine children.

**Antonio Santi Giuseppe Meucci**, son of Amatis and Maria Domenica daughter of Luigi Pepi, was born in Via Chiara, house no. 475, in the S. Frediano quarter, on Wednesday 13 April 1808, at 5:00 AM. He married Esther Mochi, in S. Maria Novella, on 7 August 1834. He died at Clifton, Staten Island (USA) on Friday 18 October 1889, at 8:30 AM. His body was cremated and today his ashes are kept in the monument dedicated to him, which stands in the enclosure of the *Garibaldi-Meucci Museum* at Rosebank, Staten Island.

Maria Matilde **Esther Mochi**, daughter of Gaetano, son of Vincenzo Mochi, and of Assunta daughter of Giuseppe Papini, was born on 5 October 1810, at seven o'clock in the morning, in the S. Ambrogio quarter. She married Antonio Meucci in the church of S. Maria Novella, in the quarter where she lived. At the time, her father Gaetano had already passed away. Many authors, on account of the age (always a rough approx-

imation) indicated in the weddings register, have mixed up Esther with her sister *Flora Maria Teresa*, born on 14 July 1808 in the S. Giuseppe quarter. Esther died in Clifton, Staten Island (USA) on 21 December 1884. She was buried in the *Woodlawn Cemetery*, on *Grymes Hill*, (around 10 km West of Clifton). Subsequently, her mortal remains and the funerary stele were transported and placed next to the ashes of her husband, at the *Garibaldi-Meucci Museum* in Rosebank, where they are today. From her marriage with Antonio Meucci apparently only one child was born in Cuba in 1844. It seems that this little girl died at the age of six, just before the Meuccis moved to the United States.

Maria **Maddalena Elisa Meucci**, daughter of Amatis and Pepi Maria Domenica, was born on 27 September 1809 in Via dello Studio, 765, in the S. Margherita de' Ricci parish. She died on 7 November 1813, at the age of four years and two months.

Maria Assunta **Adelaide Meucci** daughter of Amatis and Pepi Maria Domenica, was born on 29 May 1811 in Via dei Pucci no. 6119, in the S. Michele Visdomini parish. On 31 January 1832 she married, in the church of S. Giovanni della Fortezza, Barbadoro Pasquale, a hairdresser, aged 33, of S. Giovanni della Fortezza. It is likely that she went to live with her husband. In the

wedding certificate she is said to be a *tailor* by profession. The possible birth of children and the date of her death are unknown.

Maria Giuseppa **Luisa Meucci** daughter of Amatis and Pepi Maria Domenica, was born on 13 August 1813, on via dei Pilastri, house no. 2257, in the S. Ambrogio quarter. She married on 28 September 1839 with Galleni Ranieri, a school teacher, in the San Giuseppe parish, to which both of the spouses belonged. In the wedding certificate she is indicated as a housewife by profession (a family worker). She died on 21 August 1880. This was confirmed by a letter written in 1891 by her brother Giuseppe to the editor of *'Il Progresso Italo-Americano'* (quoted in its entirety in Section Four): "...*Luisa Galleni died, also in Florence, in the same year 1880, leaving two sons, Napoleone and Oreste who have been living in Paris for over 30 years...*" One of their sons, Oreste Galleni, an industrial entrepreneur by profession, who resided in Paris, in 1889 claimed a part of Antonio Meucci's inheritance, according to what is referred by Moncada in his unpublished manuscript (see bibliography).

Maria **Giuseppa Meucci**, daughter of Amatis and Pepi Maria Domenica, is listed in the religious census of the S. Ambrogio parish of 1816 as the youngest of Amatis' children, aged two (although her age is only roughly estimated). She doesn't

appear either in the religious census of the previous year, or in that of the following year, therefore she must have been born not prior to February 1815 and died not later than February 1817; hence, she was not even two when she died. On the other hand, the years around 1816-1817 are remembered as years characterized by famines and typhus fever epidemics, which claimed the lives of many children. Her baptism certificate has not been found in S. Giovanni, the only baptismal font in Florence up until 1940. In addition to the *Spedale degli Innocenti*, newborns could be baptized outside of the city walls, in some parish, or at the maternity Hospital, which is where poor women went, or where women were taken when delivery was particularly difficult, according to what is referred by Mr. Enzo Settesoldi of the Santa Maria del Fiore Archives in Florence. It is more likely that she was born at the maternity Hospital.

Maria **Assunta Meucci**, daughter of Amatis and Pepi Maria Domenica, is registered in the 1819 religious census of the San Michele Visdomini parish, at the age of three (although her age is only roughly indicated). She does not appear in the religious census of the previous year. In that of the following year she is indicated as deceased at the age of four. Therefore, she must have been born not earlier than February 1818 and died around February 1820, when she was not

even two. Also as far as this little girl is concerned, it is likely that she was born at the maternity Hospital.

Giacinto **Luigi Meucci**, son of Amatis and Pepi Maria Domenica, was born on 11 September 1814 and was baptized at the *Spedale degli Innocenti*, where he was presumably entrusted to public charity. He was given the name *Giacinto degli Innocenti* (SCT - Stato Civile Toscano f. 1473, record No. 2848). On 5 April 1820 he was acknowledged as legitimate son of Amatis Meucci and his wife, with a sentence passed by the Court. According to the religious censuses, he lived with Amatis' family as of (February) 1818. Therefore, he was presumably taken out of the Institute a few months after his birth and was raised thanks to a modest subsidy provided by the *Spedale*, up until his acknowledgment, decreed by the Court. In the 1841 census, he was registered as Meucci Luigi, aged 23, decorator, living with his father Amatis. In the weddings register he appears as decorator by profession. On 9 April 1848 he married *Serandrei Teresa*, innkeeper, aged 48, widow of Iacopetti Giovanni. In the wedding certificate (Register 7, No. 94), it is stated that he belonged to the Sant'Ambrogio quarter. His wife, *Serandrei Teresa*, died on 29 November 1872. In the religious censuses traced, from 1818 to 1834, Luigi is always indicated as living with his father. From a letter, written in 1891 by his brother Giuseppe to

the editor of 'Il Progresso Italo-Americano' (fully quoted in Section Four), we learn that "... *Luigi died in Florence in 1880, a widower and childless ....*" We must therefore consider incorrect the news given by 'La Nazione' on 18 October 1939, saying that: "*Fifty years ago today, Antonio Meucci died ... Approximately twenty years later [therefore in 1909], two of his brothers, Florentines, who earned a living in Florence all of their life, passed away, a few months one from the other, in the Bonifazio Hospital ...*" On the contrary, according to Giuseppe, Luigi died *nine years before Antonio Meucci*.

This was confirmed by research conducted by Mrs. Paola Peruzzi, whom we have mentioned several times, at the Florence's State Archives. Mrs. Peruzzi found the registration of the death of Luigi Meucci in the books of the S. Maria Nuova Hospital, which reads as follows: "*Meucci Giacinto, widower of Teresa Serandrei, the son of the late Amatis and the late Maria Domenica Pepi, aged 63, decorator, Via Ghibellina no. 60, Florence, was hospitalized on 6 April 1880, for cataracts and died on 18 October 1880. He occupied bed no. 356.*" Furthermore, the date of Luigi's death is consistent with the content of two letters sent by Antonio Meucci to his brother Giuseppe. Indeed, in one of them, dated 25 February 1880, he wrote: "*Send my regards to Gigi and Gigia.*" Instead, in the second one, dated 2 August 1880, he wrote: "*I have received your letter of 13 last*

... *I am distressed to hear about our brother Luigi ...*," which evidently refers to Luigi's hospitalization on 6 April 1880.

Registration of the baptisms of Luisa, Giuseppe and Roberto Meucci ●

**Giuseppe Gustavo Meucci**, son of Amatis and Pepi Maria Domenica, was born on 23 October 1818 on Via del Castellaccio, house No. 6412 (*Casa Pasqui*), in the San Michele Visdomini parish. Like Luigi and Luisa, he lived with his father, until the day he got married. According to the weddings register, he was *employed at a law office*. In his first daughter's baptism certificate he is mentioned as *copyist* by profession. On 17 October 1858, at the age of forty, he married *Maria Daria Teresa Lazzeri*, daughter of Antonio and of the deceased Maria Lastrucci, born in Florence, *milliner* by profession, aged 22. Three children were born of the marriage: *Fanny* (born in 1860, died in 1881), *Ida* (born in 1866), and *Ugo* (born in 1869). In fact, according to a letter written by Mr. Miniati, Giuseppe Meucci's attorney, to the president of the Bell Co. on 16 June 1899 (quoted in Section Four), in that period Giuseppe had two children, a boy and a girl, that is *Ida* and *Ugo*. *Daria Lazzeri* died in the house at Via S. Antonino 24 (near S. Maria Novella) on 17 June 1889, at just 52 years of age. Giuseppe, instead, died in the Bonifazio Hospital, at Via S. Gallo 87, at 4:30 AM on 18 March 1909, at over 90 years of age (long-lived as well). In February 1890, Giuseppe was named by Carlo Bertolino as *the only living*

*heir* of Antonio Meucci, with his residence in Via S. Antonino 24.

**Roberto** Lodovico Maria **Meucci**, son of Amatis, son of Giuseppe, and Pepi Maria Domenica, was born on 15 September 1822 on Via dei Servi, house No. 6412 (*Casa Pasqui*), in the San Michele Visdomini parish. When he died, on 7 August 1824, he was not even two. In the archives of Florence's Archiepiscopal Curia, it is registered that he died at half past three in the morning from convulsions. He was the ninth and last child of Amatis Meucci and Domenica Pepi.

### Amatis Meucci's Descendants

On the basis of what was stated in the previous paragraphs, it is evident that of Amatis' nine children, four died in early childhood, the two girls who survived (*Adelaide* and *Luisa*) married but obviously did not hand down the family name and, of the three boys who survived (*Antonio*, *Luigi* and *Giuseppe*), only Giuseppe (aside from Antonio's little girl, who died at the age of six) had children, precisely two daughters (*Fanny* and *Ida*) and a son (*Ugo*). Their personal details, which were collected with the help of Mrs. Paola Peruzzi of the Florence's State Archives, are illustrated hereinafter.

**Fanny** Maria Vittoria **Meucci**, daughter of Giuseppe, son of Amatis, and of *Lazzeri Daria*, was



born in the Santa Maria Novella quarter on January 22, 1860. Fanny died very young (she was only 21) and unmarried, in her father's house at Via S. Antonino 24, on May 31, 1881.

**Ida Adele Maria Meucci**, daughter of Giuseppe son of Amatis and of Lazzeri Daria, was born in Via dei Pepi 45, on June 30, 1866. On November 17, 1894, in Florence, she married Umberto Marchionneschi, from *Rosignano Marittimo* (currently *Rosignano Solvay*). The couple had a daughter, **Dina Giustina Daria Marchionneschi**, who was born on August 23, 1896, in the house of her paternal grandfather, in Via S. Antonino 24. Dina died in Livorno on January 7, 1990, at the age of 94, probably unmarried. Her mother Ida, who had become a widow, remarried in September 1922 in Rosignano Marittimo, at the age of 56. The date of her death is unknown.

**Ugo Antonio Meucci**, son of Giuseppe son of Amatis and of Lazzeri Daria, was born in Florence on 1 April 1869, in Via Nazionale Aretina 3, outside Porta S. Niccolò. On 17 November 1894 (on the same day his sister Ida married) he married Emma Monesi, who was born in Florence, although her family came from Modena. According to the wedding certificate, Ugo was a *salesman* by profession. The couple had a daughter, **Bianca Daria Erminia Meucci**, who was born on 24 August 1895, in Via de' Servi 47. Ugo Meucci died in

Via Bonifacio Lupi 21, on 27 April 1902. Bianca never married and died in Florence on 20 January 1962, in Via Vaccareccia, 3. As regards Bianca Meucci, on 25 November 1939, Florence's *La Nazione* wrote: "*She is one, actually the only, living niece of the great inventor who was so cruelly betrayed. She isn't actually a direct niece, since she is a descendant of Giuseppe Meucci, Antonio's brother. Giuseppe was the grandfather of this little woman, so humble and yet so resigned and serene in her misery ... she owned letters, a photograph, and other extremely important documents ... but now she no longer has anything ... all she has is that last name ... Bianca Meucci ... and a small check from the [Italian] telephone company. Furthermore, every now and then she receives some subsidies from the [Italian] Ministry ...*" Always in regard to Bianca, Respighi (see bibl. p. 22) refers: "*Some letters signed by Meucci were on display at the National Science Exposition, in Florence (1929). These letters were presented by a grand niece Miss<sup>8</sup> Bianca Meucci and were donated to the Istituto Superiore Postale Telegrafico e Telefonico thanks to the intervention of Professor Banti and of the director of the Telegraphs in Florence, Mr. Baldacci ...*"

The author confirms that today these letters are on display at the *Museo Storico PT* in Rome, where

<sup>8</sup>This confirms once again that Bianca Meucci did not marry.

all of the pieces of the *Istituto Superiore PT* were transferred in June 1959, when the Museum was set up.

On the contrary, on the basis of investigations carried out by Mr. Gualandi in Livorno on behalf of the author, no evidence was found to confirm what was written in the issue of *La Nazione* dated 11 February 1926, that is to say that: "... Some of Meucci's grandchildren live in that city [Livorno], on Via del Corallo, close to the Jewish cemetery. Their names are Vittorio and Francesco Meucci, Iginia Giardini, Adriana Biagi and Elvira Meucci, and they all live modestly ..."

At any rate, they must have been namesakes, descending from other branches, but not from that of Amatis Meucci.

To conclude, the family tree of Amatis Meucci's descendants is illustrated, which, as one can see, is extinguished with Bianca Meucci, the niece of Giuseppe Meucci.

### The Would-be Children of Antonio Meucci

Due to the fact that Antonio Meucci had contracted an incipient form of syphilis at the age of 21, it seems likely that, although he could continue to have regular sexual relations, he was probably left with some degree of infertility<sup>9</sup>, on account

Carlo Meucci in 1962 ■

<sup>9</sup>Note that *infertility* is not the same as *sterility* (i.e. the inability to conceive a child under *any* circumstances). With infertility, the possibility to conceive a child has by no means ruled out [from

of the disease. This might be the reason why, in the fifty years that he was married to Esther (that is to say from 1834 until Esther's death in 1884), they never had any children.

Nevertheless, a well-informed newspaper of Baltimore, *The Sun*, in its obituary notice on Antonio Meucci, which was published on 19 October 1889, stated as follows: "In 1850, Meucci came to New York from Cuba, where his only child, a girl of 6, had just died ...". Therefore, according to *The Sun*, Antonio Meucci had only one daughter from Esther, who died in Cuba in 1850 at the age of six. The author did some difficult researching in Cuba with the aim to trace the birth and/or death of this young girl, but with no success, at least at the time the first edition of this book was published.

Another two (unlikely) children of Antonio Meucci, a boy who declared himself legitimate, and a girl, who proclaimed herself illegitimate, are: *Carlo Meucci* (registered as such at the Patti Registry Office, province of Messina, Italy) born in 1872, and *Esther Mathilda Nisini*, married to a *Mr. Grosch*, born in the Meucci home on 12 April 1885. Hereunder, we provide the information that is available on the two.

**Carlo Meucci** declared that he was the legitimate son of Antonio Meucci and of Esther Mochi, al-

*Mayo Clinic Family Health Book*, CD-ROM by IVI Publishing Inc.].

though he was born when the presumed mother was sixty-two and the presumed father sixty-three; furthermore, at the time, the latter (Esther) had been semi-paralyzed for over ten years. A journalist who interviewed him in 1962 refers that Carlo Meucci was born on 3 November 1872 (another journalist stated that he was born in 1873) in *Clifter, Long Island* (sic!), from Antonio Meucci and Esther *Machi* (or, according to another journalist, from Antonio Meucci and Esther *Magri*) and that at the age of eleven months he was entrusted to a *Giovanna Gullotta* from *Villa San Giovanni* who was to take him back to Italy with her, in order to save him from the 'Mano Nera' (the black hand)<sup>10</sup> which had threatened Antonio Meucci to kidnap his presumed son. Carlo Meucci returned to the United States in 1893, according to him, to look for his father, and discovered that he had died four years before. It is also referred that twelve years later, precisely on 12 September 1915, the ship which was taking Carlo Meucci back to Italy, the *Sant'Anna*, was wrecked off the coast of the Azores Islands, and Carlo Meucci miraculously saved himself by swimming back to the

shore. When he returned to Italy, it is likely that his documents had to be re-drafted, on the basis of his statements and of witnesses. The journalists who interviewed him in 1952 and in 1962 refer that he worked as junk dealer in *Tindari* and in other towns nearby, in the Messina province (Sicily), and that he bore a certain physical resemblance with Antonio Meucci although, quite frankly, it doesn't seem so to us.

The author did some research at the Registry Office of the Patti Municipality (Messina), of which Tindari is a division, and found that Carlo Meucci was registered there as being born in New York (not in *Clifton* or *Clifter*) on 3 November 1872 from Antonino and Esther Mochi, and having died in the Patti Municipality on 19 June 1966 at the age of almost 94. Moreover, according to the same Registry Office, it appears that up until 13 June 1957, he resided in the nearby Municipality of Sant'Agata di Militello. In turn - according to the Municipality of Sant'Agata di Militello, where he is registered as the son of Antonino and of *Magri* Esther, married to Preghiere (?) Anna in Venice in 1922, and traveling junk dealer by profession - he resided on Via Bottego 2, as of 15 June 1942, and he came from Barcellona Pozzo di Gotto (Messina). The data available at the latter Municipality are the same, except for the last name of his wife, which is *Preghieri* instead of *Preghiere*. Previously, Carlo Meucci was registered as residing in Marsala (Trapani),

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<sup>10</sup>The *Mano Nera* was an association of delinquents, which was widespread in Sicily as well as among the Sicilians in New York; their mark was precisely a black hand. It apparently originated between 1873 and 1883, as a Spanish anarchical sect. Subsequently, it spread and became ill-famed on account of the fact that its members had often eluded the law.

from 21 April 1936 to 7 July 1941, with similar registry data; more precisely, he was registered as born on 4 November 1872, instead of 3 November 1872; furthermore, it is said that he married Marianna *Pugliese* (not *Preghiere*) in 1921, and came from Mazara del Vallo (Trapani). Here, however, traces are lost, since the Municipality of Mazara del Vallo notified the author that it has no registry data prior to the year 1954.

According to research conducted at the Patriarchal Curia and at the Historical Archives of the Venice Municipality Registry Office, no marriage of Carlo Meucci and *Preghiere* or *Preghieri* or *Pugliese*, Anna or Marianna, was ever registered here at the time considered.

Finally, the *New York City Department of Records and Information Services - Municipal Archives*, upon request of the author, issued a certificate in which it is stated that no-one by the name of Carlo Meucci is registered, either in the Manhattan registers or in the Staten Island ones, as born on any day of 1872 or 1873.

One of the above-mentioned journalists stated that Carlo Meucci “*Reached Messina after many hardships, in 1922.*” Nothing is known as to where he lived from the time of the shipwreck of the *Sant’Anna* (1915) until 1922, although it would be interesting to verify the registry data of his first residence in Italy. In the appendix of Capelvenere’s book (see bibl.), some ten pages are dedicated to

him. Furthermore, at the Museo Storico PT of Rome, a peculiar ceramic tile is on display, which was donated to the museum by Carlo Meucci. The tile reads:

*“My father Antonio Meucci, born in Florence in 1808, invented the telephone, a precursory and eminent discovery which, by reducing distances, increases and favors human relationships. However, my father didn’t benefit from his invention, for, as he was in need, he sold the project and an American company set up telephones everywhere. Desperate, after a vain struggle to claim his right, he died in exile in 1889 in a hovel in Clifton.*

*Only in 1904, with a sentence passed by the United States Cassation, which I was able to obtain, my father was acknowledged as the inventor of the telephone, when - a trick of fate - the patent had expired. Having lost all my savings and the few dollars I had in the wreck of the ship that was taking me back home, I live here in destitution with my wife.*

*April 1960 Carlo Meucci  
(reproduction forbidden)”*

Needless to say, except for the first introductory sentence and the last one regarding the miserable conditions of Carlo Meucci and his wife, the rest seems to be entirely made up. In conclusion, it seems quite likely that the would-be Carlo Meucci invented a false identity; surely the date and place of birth, and the year and place of

marriage are false, and, consequently, so are the names of his father and mother. It also seems strange that Antonio Meucci never mentioned him in his will, which we illustrate in full hereinafter.

**Esther Mathilda Nisini Grosch**, the legitimate daughter of *Cesare Pasquale Nisini* and *Mathilda Julienne Marie Dotzler*, was born on 12 April 1885 in Antonio Meucci's cottage in Clifton, Staten Island (USA), according to a statement released by herself to Daniel Santoro on 18 April 1940. Her legitimate father was Italian and had married a French woman by the name of *Mathilda Julienne Marie Dotzler* in France on 17 October 1863. There, the Nisini spouses had a daughter, Anita (or Annita), who, however, died in a fire. On 26 July 1872, the Nisinis emigrated to Montreal (Canada), where Mr. Nisini ran a cigar shop. Shortly thereafter, they emigrated from Canada to the United States and were hired by an Italian family in Hoboken, New Jersey; Mr. Nisini worked as a gardener, while Mrs. Nisini worked as a cook. A few years later they moved to Ellicott City, MD, where they had a daughter, whom they also named Anita (or Annita) - the one to the left in the photograph - born, perhaps, around 1876, if one trusts a rough evaluation based on the comparison of the physical aspect of the three sisters, as they appear in the photograph, taking as reference the year of birth (1885) of Mathilda (the youngest; in the photograph, she is in the

middle). After a few years, the Nisinis left Ellicott City and went to Staten Island where they lived on *Bay Street*, in front of the gas tank. There, they had a second daughter, around 1880. She was named Cornelia (Lillie) Garibaldi, the one to the right in the photograph. Evidently, Cesare Nisini adored Garibaldi, for he named two of his daughters (actually three, if one includes the first Anita, who died) after him or his wife.

We don't know exactly when the Nisinis went to live in the Meucci home. Perhaps (in exchange for lodging) they moved there to assist the Meuccis also during the night; Esther required particular care, because she was almost paralyzed and was forced to spend most of her time in bed. Daniel Santoro (see bibl., p. 144) states that in 1888 Cesare Nisini officially lived with Antonio Meucci. We also have a photograph of 1887, taken on the porch of the Meucci cottage, which shows Meucci with the little Mathilda next to him and, some distance away, Mathilda's mother and a maid, named Elizabeth. It also seems sure that Mathilda was born after Esther's death (which occurred on 21 December 1884), precisely on 12 April 1885, in a room in Meucci's cottage, located on the eastern side of the house, opposite Garibaldi's room, the latter being occupied by Antonio Meucci at the time (see Santoro's sketch in which, however, Garibaldi's room is incorrectly positioned behind the one occupied by Meucci, whereas it

Anita, Mathilda and  
Cornelia Nisini

was actually the same room). The little girl was named *Esther Mathilda*, in honor of Antonio Meucci's wife who had recently passed away.

Therefore, one must deduce that the Nisinis went to live with the Meuccis prior to 1885 and perhaps before 6 March 1884 (date of Meucci's first will).

After Antonio Meucci's death, the Nisinis had to leave the cottage, for it was immediately taken over by three curators, as we shall see later on, in order to turn it into a historical landmark. Therefore, the Nisinis went to live on 61 Pennsylvania Avenue (currently Hylan Boulevard), Rosebank, Staten Island. Cesare Nisini died here on 14 February 1901. When his daughter Mathilda Esther married a Mr. Grosch, Mrs. Nisini went to live with her and stayed there until she died, on 31 December 1928. Since Cesare Nisini had died twenty years before his wife, one might deduce that he was much older than her (perhaps he was the same age as Antonio Meucci).

In 1936, architect Daniel Santoro, the founder of the *Staten Island Italian Historical Society*, tried to get in touch with Mrs. Esther Mathilda Grosch, in order to recover some of the belongings of Meucci and Garibaldi that had been passed on to Mrs. Grosch by her mother. On that occasion, Santoro made an exceptional finding. Indeed, here is the statement released to him by *Esther Mathilda Grosch* on 24 April 1940:

*"I hereby certify, that I was born in the Meucci cottage on the above date [12 April 1885, Editor's note]], and that I lived there until shortly after Meucci's death on 18 October 1889.*

*My father died in February 1901, at his home, No. 61 Pennsylvania Ave. Rosebank; according to a bill for mortuary services rendered by Martin Hughes the undertaker, which is dated February 28, 1901, his body was cremated at Fresh Ponds L.I. - the cost of funeral was 112.05 dollars.*

*My mother died at my house at 29-28, 70th Road, Forest Hills, Long Island, on December 31, 1928.*

*About two weeks before she died, my mother, who was sitting up in the living room of my house, called me and said 'Mathilda, I feel that I am not going to live very long - I have something to tell you - something which I have never before told anyone - it has always remained a secret, unshared by anyone. You look and act different than your sisters, as you have said on different occasions - that is true, because you are only a half sister to your sisters, you are Antonio Meucci's daughter - I was Meucci's sweetheart, that's why you are so good natured and intelligent, and quick to grasp any intricate proposition. I am telling you this as I feel that I have little time to live, and that you should know who your real father was.' I give this statement to Mr. Daniel Santoro, to use as and when seems fit.*

[Signed] *Mrs. Esther Mathilda Grosch, daughter of Cesare Nisini.*"

In another statement, released in the same period to Daniel Santoro himself, Esther Mathilda Grosch stated, among other things:

*"Everything belonging to Meucci and Garibaldi came to me from my mother after her death being that I was named after Meucci's wife, Esther. Mr. Meucci was my Godfather."*

Also this story, about a second (illegitimate) daughter of Antonio Meucci, seems unlikely to us.

Indeed, in his first will (drawn up on 6 March 1884 and reported in full at the end of this appendix), Antonio Meucci left a legacy of 100 dollars for *"Annita Nisini, daughter of Cesare Nisini, of whom I am the godfather."* Therefore, Meucci had expressed preference for the oldest (living) daughter of Cesare Nisini, a man who was surely a friend to Meucci. In his last will (drawn up a few days before his death, on 13 October 1889), Meucci left 100 dollars *"to the three minor daughters of Mr. Cesare Nisini, named Annita Nisini, Cornelia Nisini and Mathilda Nisini, until each of the daughters have respectively come of age ..."*; furthermore, *"... as a legacy and a token of friendship for the affectionate care devoted to me, to Cesare Nisini I leave my charcoal-pencil portrait signed 'L. Bistolfi, 1884.'"*

Plan of Meucci's cottage, drawn by D. Santoro (notice the room where Mathilda Esther Nisini was born)

Finally, according to Moncada (see bibl., p. 144), after the death of Antonio Meucci *"... the objects left temporarily in custody to Mr. Enrico [read Cesare] Nisini who*

*lived with the Meuccis ..."* were then put up for auction. Therefore, on the basis of Antonio Meucci's last will, one has the clear feeling that he had a true and sincere affection for Cesare Nisini (his wife isn't even mentioned in the will, whereas *"the gentle wife of Antonio Lazzari"* is mentioned) and for the three little girls, without particular preference for Mathilda, who later declared to be the goddaughter and illegitimate daughter of Antonio Meucci, whereas the latter declares that his goddaughter was Annita.

Moreover, it isn't plausible that Meucci returned Cesare Nisini's friendship by having an adulterous affair with his wife, furthermore allowing the name of his deceased wife, Esther Mathilda, to be given to the child born from such an affair. Instead, it is likely that Nisini himself named his daughter Esther Mathilda as a token of his affectionate solidarity to Antonio Meucci, who had been deprived of his wife, who had recently died. This without bearing into account that when Esther Mathilda was born, Antonio Meucci was already 77 years old and his wife had been deceased for a few months.

It is therefore likely that these statements were a form of self-exaltation which, however, also seems to have passed on to *Mrs. Grosch's* descendants, as can be deduced from a short article which appeared on *'The Philadelphia Enquirer'* some twenty years after the above-mentioned interview, which says, among other things: *"Alexander Graham Bell is a dirty name around my house. My*

*parents always taught me that my great uncle, Antonio Meucci, really invented the telephone. Are they right? - Mrs. D. P. Swedesboro, NJ.*" It would be interesting to verify whether this Mrs. D.P. Swedesboro from New Jersey was a descendant of Mrs. Grosch from Long Island, but just out of curiosity.

Meucci with friends and with little Mathilda at the Caprera Garden (1887) ■

The two stories we have illustrated above in detail prove, regardless of whether they are true or not, that Antonio Meucci was esteemed and appreciated by Italians in America - and not by them alone - after his death, as much as, and perhaps even more than when he was alive. To be the children of Antonio Meucci, whether legitimate or illegitimate, must have filled them and their mothers, evidently, with pride; thus, one can understand even the invention of such stories, with implications on the late virility of Antonio Meucci.

On the other hand, the reader will certainly be familiar with similar situations, referred by the press today - as always, and in all parts of the world - in which famous celebrities are attributed false paternities, since it is obvious that a scandal, however insignificant, involving them is a ... scoop.

### **The home where Antonio Meucci was born**

First of all, it is worth reminding that, at the time considered (1808), the houses in Florence weren't numbered according to the

street they were on, but with reference to the entire city, for the so-called *Napoleonic* numbering system was in force, which was progressive for the houses of the entire city of Florence. It began from current Piazza della Signoria (at the time Piazza del Granduca) and ended in Via de' Benci, not far from said Piazza. Therefore, in old Florence there were houses with numbers even greater than 20,000. Only after 1863 (following the Unity of Italy) was the Napoleonic system abolished and replaced by the modern numbering system. Furthermore, it appears that during the first decade of the past century the Napoleonic numbering system was reviewed; therefore, the same house had two Napoleonic numbers in subsequent periods (prior to the modern numbering system). The first series of Napoleonic numbers was assigned by the individual parishes (indeed, they were often called *parish numbers*).

Looking at the registration of the 1808 San Frediano religious census - transcribed and illustrated hereunder<sup>11</sup>, for the reader's convenience - one can easily understand how many authors mixed up the house number with the family number. Indeed, Umberto Bianchi (see bibl.) as well as others stated that the house where Meucci was born was *perhaps Via Chiara no. 128*, although this number, according to the archives, was situated in a completely different part of

<sup>11</sup>The photograph of this religious census, though barely legible, is shown on p. 119.



town. The mistake made by said authors is evident if one reads the religious census carefully. Moreover, if they were right, only one family lived in a house. If, instead, the religious census is read correctly, the following information can be found: that the house number is 475; that four families lived at such a number, three of which were comprised of only a husband and wife, while the fourth family was comprised of five people; that Amatis' family

was number 128 (and not *house* number 128), while the other three families were respectively numbered 129, 130 and 131. House number 476 follows, with other families, numbers 132, 133, and so on.

The first, in chronological order, who, as far as we know, conducted accurate research on the house where Antonio Meucci was born, was Renzo Martinelli (see *bibl.*).

**Religious Census of the Collegiate and Parish Church  
of San Frediano in Cestello of the year 1808.**

== Via Chiara ==

475	128	Amatis son of Gius. <sup>e</sup> Meucci	35	373
		M <sup>a</sup> Domca daughter of Luigi Donnini	25	374
	129	Ferdinando son of the late Domco Casini	61	375
		Teresa daughter of the late Mariano Faraoni	52	376
	130	Luigi son of Giov. Batt. Cistalesi	24	377
		Maddalena daughter of Ferdinando Casini	22	378
	131	Maria Anna daughter of the late Pietro Baldoni, widow of Paolo Cartieri	50	379
		Gius. <sup>e</sup> son of Francesco Ciancolini	40	380
		Luisa daughter of the late Giov. Batt. Bellagamba	40	381
		Maria daughter	19	382
		David son	11	121
476	132	Mr. Franco son of the late Giorgio Ferosa	53	383
		Mrs. Caterina daughter of the late Felice Ulivetti	46	384
		Ferdinanda daughter	16	385
		Nunziata daughter of Gaetano Materassi, maid	24	386

Mr. Martinelli, having realized that house number 128 was situated in a completely different part of town, checked in the municipal archives all of the house numbers of the very short Via Chiara (which coincided with the section of the current Via de' Serragli

comprised between Via del Campuccio and Via Sant'Agostino<sup>12</sup>) and was told that

<sup>12</sup>Notice that today, there exists a Via S. Chiara in a completely different area of Florence. Under the S. Frediano jurisdiction, in the surroundings of Via Chiara, there were: Via dei Camaldoli, Via del

the house number must have been 2722. Indeed, Martinelli writes: “*Mr. Alfonso Alfèrni... secretary of the Municipality Registry Office, assisted me. He, who is an expert in all that concerns the streets of Florence, has consulted books and catalogues and has been able to tell me - with scrupulous accuracy - that the house, which in 1808 was numbered 2722, is currently number 44, and is owned by Mrs. Minucci Beatrice nel Caselli ...*”

Martinelli also says (and in this he is wrong) that the registration *Via Chiara no. 2722* was found in the San Frediano in Cestello religious census of 1808 and confirms this in his other article of 1939, in which he recalls the research conducted by him in 1913. Furthermore, he calls *Via Chiara* ‘*Via Chiara del Goldoni*.’ But the *Teatro Goldoni*, situated on the corner of *Via Chiara* and *Via Santa Maria*, was opened in April 1817, therefore this *Via Chiara* couldn’t be called *Via Chiara del Goldoni* in 1808, although it may have taken this name subsequently.

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Campuccio, *Via della Nonziatina*, and a section of the current *Via dei Serragli* - from parish number 514 to 545 and from 594 to 616.

Photograph (above) and transcription (to the right) of the S. Frediano in Cestello religious census of 1809 ●

<b>Religious Census of the Collegiate and Parish Church of San Frediano in Cestello of the year 1809. == Via Chiara ==</b>					
2723	181	...	...		
2722	182	<i>Franco</i>	<i>son of the late Giuseppe Bracciolini</i>	69	367
		<i>Anna</i>	<i>daughter of the late Cristoforo Fondrizzi? wife</i>	55	368
		<i>Maria</i>	<i>daughter</i>	29	369
		<i>Margherita</i>	<i>daughter</i>	23	370
		<i>Vittoria</i>	<i>daughter</i>	19	371
		<i>Santi</i>	<i>son</i>	16	372
		<i>Giovanni</i>	<i>[impuberal] son</i>	13	126
183		<i>Ferdinando</i>	<i>son of the late Domco Casini</i>	62	373
		<i>Teresa</i>	<i>daughter of the late Mariano Faraoni, wife</i>	53	374
184		<i>Luigi</i>	<i>son of Giov. Battista Cistalesi</i>	25	375
		<i>Maddalena</i>	<i>daughter of Ferdinando Casini, wife</i>	23	376
2721	185	...	...		

From all this one can deduce that the number 2722 must have been given when Florence's houses were re-numbered according to the new *Napoleonic* system, which was introduced in 1809. This hypothesis is confirmed by research conducted by Mrs. Paola Peruzzi, of the Florence State Archives, for the author; by comparing the religious census of the year 1808 with that of 1809, Mrs. Peruzzi has proven that house number 475 (temporarily assigned by the S. Frediano parish in 1808) indeed became 2722 in 1809. Below is a transcription of San Frediano in Cestello's 1809 religious census. One can see that, after the Meuccis moved out, the *Casini* and *Cistalesi* families (whose members, needless to say, were one year older than in 1808) remained in the same building.

Note in the last column that the progressive number of impuberals differs from the progressive number of adult souls.

On behalf of the Author, Mrs. Paola Peruzzi also accurately checked that no. 2722 of Via Chiara in 1809 and today's no. 44 of Via de' Serragli are indeed the same house. In fact, Via Chiara changed name and house numbers in 1863, as was confirmed by following the same families in the religious censuses of the San Frediano parish, before and after said date (see the photographs below). Mrs. Peruzzi also observed that, on average, four families have always lived at that address. In fact, the photograph of the small door on Via de' Serragli no. 44 (which appears in the main text) shows that there are still four doorbells, hence four apartments. In the

Correspondence  
between Via Chiara  
2722 and Via de'  
Serragli 44 ●

wake of investigations conducted by Mrs. Marica Cassola of the Florence Municipality Historical Archives, it was confirmed that the house numbers and the structure of the buildings in Via de' Serragli have remained unchanged since 1863, the only exception being some restructuring work to the Teatro Goldoni on Via de' Serragli.

The pictures shown hereinafter refer to two religious censuses of the San Frediano in Cestello parish dated 1862 and 1866,

respectively. One can easily observe that the same families - *Farini, Grassi, Giovannini* and *Ammannati* - registered in 1862 at Via Chiara 2722 are registered in 1866 at Via de' Serragli 44, thereby proving beyond any doubt that the two addresses correspond to the same building.

As was stated previously, the change of name and numbers occurred in 1863, but the religious census of that year is not as readable as that of 1866, shown hereunder.

**Antonio Meucci's first will**  
(drawn in English, 6 March 1884)

*I Antonio Meucci, son of the late Amatis, a native of Florence, Italy, and now, since many years a citizen of the United States of America, residing in Clifton, Staten Island in the State of New York, being of sound mind and memory and considering the uncertainty of the human life, do hereby make, publish and declare this to be my last will and testament.*

*I nominate and appoint my friends Carlo Bertolino and Michele Lemmi, both of the city of New York, to be the executors and trustees of this my last will and testament, for them to receive and take into possession all of my properties, both real, personal and mixed, and in their good judgement to sell and convert the same in cash money, giving and bequeathing into my said executors all of my said properties in trust for the following purposes; to wit,*

*I direct my executors that, when I shall be dead, they shall dispose that any funeral shall be very modest, and that my body shall be cremated as they may deem best, and that my ashes shall be distributed by them to my heirs in equal proportions.*

*After all my lawful debts, funeral cremating expenses shall have been paid and discharged, I direct my said executors to dispose of the rest, residue and remainder of the proceeds of my said property, after it is converted*

*into cash, as I give and bequeath the same as follows.*

*To pay onto Matilde Brignoli, who is now employed as a servant girl in my house, the sum of One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)*

*To pay unto Annita Nisini of whom I am God father, daughter of Cesare Nisini, the sum of One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)*

*To pay one half of all the remainder of the proceeds of my said property to my beloved wife Ester Meucci to take place in lieu of dower and of all the claims she may have against my estate, for her own disposal & forever.*

*To pay the remaining one half of the proceeds of my said property unto my beloved brothers Giuseppe Meucci, Luigi Meucci and sister Luigia Meucci who are all in Italy, in equal part to each of them, and in the event that any of them should be dead, to their igene (if any) per stirpes [line of descendants, Editor's note].*

*In the event that my beloved wife Ester should die before my decease, then to pay the entire remainder of the proceeds of my said property unto my said brothers Giuseppe and Luigi, and sister Luigia at equal share to each of them, or, should any of them be dead at that time to their igene per stirpes.*

*And I authorize my said executors to select after my decease among my wearing apparel and furniture of my house any thing or object that they may choose and keep the same, as I hereby give and bequeath it to them as a souvenir in token of my friendship and in addition to the percentage or*

*interest allowed to them by law on my estate as executors of this my last Will and Testament.*

*In Witness whereof I have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed my seal in presence of the hereinafter subscribed by me requested witnesses this sixth day of March A. D. Eighteen hundred and eighty four (1884)*

*Antonio Meucci Testator*

*The aforegoing written instrument was subscribed by the said Antonio Meucci in our presence and acknowledged by him to each of us: and he at the same time declared the above instrument so subscribed to be his last Will and Testament; and We at his request in his presence, and in the presence of each other, have signed our names as witnesses hereto and written opposite our names our respective place of residence.*

*Thr Alexander Jr, West 154th St  
New York City*

*Angelo Bertolino, 234 East 85th  
Street N.Y. City*

*Otto Heidenheimer,  
62 West 37 Street*

### **The second and last will of Antonio Meucci**

*(drawn in Italian, 13 October 1889)*

*His Majesty Umberto I, reigning for the Grace of God and the will of the Nation King of Italy, in the year 1889, on the 13th of the month of October, in Clifton, Staten Island, in the County of*

*Richmond, State of New York, in the house known as "Garibaldi Homestead," at two o'clock p.m.*

*I, Giovanni Paolo Nobile Riva, General Consul of His Royal Majesty the King of Italy at the New York residence, having come to the above indicated place expressly on request of Mr. Antonio Meucci, and there in the presence of*

*Lemmi Michele, son of the late Fortunato, born in Livorno, domiciled in New York, serving as Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of Italy,*

*Oldrini Alessandro son of the late Luigi, born in Milan, resident in New York, Professor of literature,*

*Pacini Agostino son of Bonaventura, born in Livorno, domiciled in New York, a wood sculptor,*

*Rigali Pilade, son of the late Antonio, born in Barga in the province of Lucca, domiciled in New York, stucco worker.*

*All four witnesses well known, eligible, and in possession of the qualities prescribed by the law, and appointed for the purpose.*

*I have found Antonio Meucci son of the late Amatis, born in Florence, domiciled in Clifton, Stated Island, mechanic and electrician by profession, lying ill in his bed, but of sound mind. In the presence of the above-indicated witnesses, he declared as follows:*

*that at a time which he didn't recall exactly, but which must have been around the years 1880 or 1881, he had made his will by*

public deed in the presence of a public notary who exercised in New York, Mr. Angelo Bertolino, whose office is situated at 35 Broadway, in the archives of which the will is kept.

That to that last will, he intends to add, like with the present public deed does, the following codicil - which must have full effect and force.

I intend and provide that what I had left with the aforementioned will to Mrs. Matilde Brignole, the wife of Luigi Succi, and to Mrs. Maria de Gregorio, since both of them have died, the total sums that were respectively destined to both shall be given to the minor three daughters of Mr. Cesare Nisini, named Annita Nisini, Cornelia Nisini and Matilde Nisini, until each of the daughters has respectively come of age.

As a legacy and token of friendship for the affectionate care given me I leave to Cesare Nisini my charcoal-pencil portrait signed L. Bistolfi, 1884.

I wish for all of the objects that make up my heredity to be auctioned, with the exception of the ones for which specific indications are provided in the will which is kept by Notary A. Bertolino.

I wish for my body to be cremated, and the ashes must be given to the Società dei Reduci delle Patrie Battaglie, in New York, of which I was appointed honorary president with a diploma dated 28 May 1888.

I leave as a legacy to the gentle wife of Antonio Lazzari residing in Clifton, one of the two rustic arm-chairs lined with wool, and

specifically the one that carries the name of the beneficiary.

I intend for all the documents that concern me and that will be found in my house, correspondence, diplomas, manuscripts, accounts and any other paper, to be handed over to the Government of the Reign of Italy.

I declare that, outside of these provisions as indicated above, I confirm and validate in all its parts the will that exists at the office of the Notary A. Bertolino, as I intend this codicil's provisions to have full effect and force.

As requested, I, R. Consul have received and extended the present public deed which, after its reading, was confirmed by the testator in all its parts, and was signed by the latter together with the above-indicated witnesses and the proceeding office.

Signed by:

Antonio Meucci

Michele Lemmi, witness  
Alessandro Oldrini, witness  
Agostino Pacini, witness  
Pilade Rigali, witness  
The R. General Consul:  
signed G.P. Riva

Portrait of Meucci,  
charcoal drawing done  
by L. Bistolfi in 1884

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- Santoro, D., *A history of the Italians on Staten Island*, manuscript dated 23 March 1940, kept at the Staten Island Historical Society, Richmondtown Restoration, S.I.
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- Santoro, D., *Letter to D. Wallace*, 15 May 1935, kept at the Staten Island Historical Society, Richmondtown Restoration, S.I.



Settesoldi, E., *Private communication to the Author on baptisms administered in Florence, at S. Maria del Fiore*, Florence, 1991-1993

Spani, G., *Il figlio dell'inventore del Telefono fa il venditore ambulante di*

*cianfrusaglie lacero e povero nelle strade di Messina*, *Il Progresso Italo-Americano*, 29 May 1952

## LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND TRANSCRIPTIONS

In the following, a summary (in italics) is given for each document, as well as its rough location in the archives. More precise indications are given in the General Bibliography of Vol. One. Wherever a transcription is available, either it is indicated in which page it can be found or is given after the summary, within quotation marks.

### 3 October 1823<sup>13</sup>

From: President of the Buon Governo, to: Gio. Boldrini, Chief Gatekeeper; cc. General Adm. of the RR. Revenues

*Luigi Ficini and Antonio Meucci nominated to take over the vacant posts of Gatekeeper Supernumerary*

[see transcription on page 33]

Florence State Arch. N. 45

### 4 October 1823

From: General Adm. of the RR. Revenues Alessandro Pontenani, to: President of the Buon Governo

*The above order is received and confirms to have provided instructions for the related allowance*

Florence State Arch. N. 54

### ... October 1823

From: Antonio Meucci, to: Most Illustrious Sir Cavati, President of the Buon Governo

*Asks to be appointed Assistant Gatekeeper, as a place has become vacant.*

Florence State Arch. N. 196

### 12 May 1824

From: President of the Buon Governo, to: General Adm. of the RR. Revenues cc. Chief Gatekeeper

*A place as Assistant Gatekeeper has become vacant, following the death of Giuseppe Sani; the "supernumerary" Antonio Meucci is appointed*

Florence State Arch. N. 261

### 12 May 1824

From: General Adm. of the Royal Revenues Alessandro Pontenani, to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo, cc. Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*The above order is received and provides instructions for the related allowance*

Florence State Arch. N. 262

### 14 April 1825

From: Presidency of the Buon Governo (?), to: S. Spirito Police Superintendent

*Requests specific information on Antonio Meucci's responsibility in the accident involving his colleague Ficini at the Porta San Niccolò, which occurred on April 10, and on Antonio Meucci's general conduct also off duty*

[see transcription on page 45]

Florence State Arch. N. 578, 2 pp.

### 26 April 1825

<sup>13</sup>It may be interesting to note that, in the original Italian documents, the months are often indicated as 7bre (September), 8bre (October), 9bre (November), Xbre (December).

From: Presidency of the Buon Governo (?), to: S. Spirito Police Superintendent

*Attached to Ficini's plea for a subsidy; requests an opinion*

Florence State Arch. N. 593

**16 May 1825**

From: Auditor Director of Case Proceedings — Report, Deliberation<sup>14</sup>

*Reckless firing of rockets from the merlons of the Palazzo Vecchio occurred on 4 April 1825. Antonio Meucci is held responsible.*

Florence State Arch. N. 74 ÷ N. 99, 50 pp.

“Case against:

1 *Gaetano Baratti, aged 46, umbrella maker and fireworks amateur*

2 *Gaspero Carloni aged 40, cooper and fireworks amateur*

3 *Gaetano Marucelli aged 25 Assistant Gatekeeper and fireworks amateur*

4 *Luigi Pagani, aged 60, employee*

5 *Pasquale Nigi, aged 36, carpenter*

6 *Antonio Meucci, aged 18<sup>15</sup>, Assistant Gatekeeper*

7 *Giuseppe Franci, aged 35, plumber*

8 *Vincenzo Andreini, aged 31, umbrella maker*

<sup>14</sup>The case records consist of 50 handwritten pages. Hereunder, the excerpts taken from the records are printed in italics, whereas the other portions of the latter are summarized in plain text.

<sup>15</sup>Actually, Antonio Meucci was only 17 years old.

*All eight are charged with the wounding of and offenses against Vincenzo Lascialfare, Domenico Spuntoni, Isabella Gargiotti, Giovanni Cantini, Carlotta Cinganelli, Maria Antonia Sati, Carlo Lamberti and Giuseppe Colzi.*

*Incident*

*In the auspicious circumstance of the joyful birth of the child of the August Consort of His Royal and Imperial Highness the Grand Duke our Lord, Jubilant fireworks were fired in the usual venue, the Palazzo Vecchio, on the evenings of April 2, 3 and 4, of this year.*

*This welcomed display of public exultation corresponded well with its most gladsome purpose on the first two evenings, for it was not disrupted by any inconvenience.*

*The same does not hold true for the third evening, for, according to the Investigation on the Cause, as soon as the display was begun with the so-called Colombina [a dove-shaped rocket used to light fireworks], a great deal of rockets shot off from the merlons of the Palazzo Vecchio at various intervals, and many each time, rapidly and violently slithering down like thunderbolts in every direction, and landing on the various spots where the spectators were standing in the Piazza, in the adjacent streets, and in the Balconies and Windows of the Houses, causing commotion and bewilderment; and these unusual discharges continued, much to the surprise and disgust of the huge Audience, throughout almost half of the Display ...”*

Eight people were injured, according to the detailed description: *Vincenzo Lascialfare*, who was standing at the side of the Piazza, was wounded in the face, while the dress of a girl standing close to him caught fire; *Domenico Stampini*, who was also near the square, fainted on account of a rocket that hit him in the face; *Isabella Alessandri* married to *Gargiotti*, who was watching from the balcony of a house nearby, suffered three face injuries; *Giovanni Cantini*, who was standing next to the latter, reported slight burns, while a boy, *Carlo Lamberti*, was hit in the chest by a rocket, without consequences, as well as in the arm, which was bruised; *Carlotta Cinganelli* was wounded in the head, and lost a great deal of blood; *Maria Antonia Sati*, who was standing on the balcony of a house nearby, reported a semicircular wound on her front; finally, *Giuseppe Colzi*, who was in the Piazza not far from the Post Office, scraped his skin and reported slight excoriations on account of a rocket that fell on his feet.

Furthermore, six people suffered material damages: a woman by the name of *Teresa Berti* - who had been hit between the knees by a rocket that burned her silk dress, while she was out on the balcony of a house nearby - two days later had an abortion, perhaps because of the fright. The silk dress of *Enrichetta Berettari*, who was with *Teresa Berti*, was also burned by the same rocket, the damage amounting to 8 or 9 paoli. *Niccola*

*Fabbri* reported damages amounting to 2.6.8.<sup>16</sup> Lire for one of the panes of the balcony's window was shattered. *Anna Del Chiaro*, who was upstairs from *Nicola Fabbri*, burned the shawl she was wearing; the damage amounted to one hundred Lire. The same rocket burned the felt hat of her son, *Enrico Del Chiaro*, causing damages for 3.6.8 Lire. Lastly, *Felice Maggiorani*'s suit was slightly burned, although, according to him, no real damage was caused.

*Baratti* and *Carloni* were not held responsible; the contractor of the fireworks, *Girolamo Tentini* - an old man, who lay sick in bed - had put the two in charge of coordinating the firing of the rockets, since on other occasions and for many years they had conducted the same work with great responsibility, never causing accidents. Furthermore, they were elsewhere when the rockets were fired from the merlons where Meucci and the others were. Moreover, "*since they stood by the large windows, the dense smoke released by the Rockets, which remained in the Corridor where the large windows were, even after the rockets were fired, and the bright and blinding light given off by the Roman candles*

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<sup>16</sup>As was previously stated, prior to the Unity of Italy, many Italian states adopted an English-like monetary system. Therefore, like the pound, the Lira was subdivided into 20 soldi, and each soldo into 12 denari. One paolo was worth 13 soldi and 4 denari (0.13.4), the zecchino was worth 13 lire, 6 soldi and 8 denari (13.6.8).

*made of antimony, sulfur and niter that they held to light the machines, did not allow the two men to see and understand what occurred beyond a certain distance.”* In other words, they could not see the pandemonium that broke out in the square, which apparently lasted more than an hour.

The two men in charge stated that Meucci also took part in preparing the rockets, and that he, like his fellow workers, had been given specific instructions on how to light the rockets; indeed, nothing out of the ordinary had happened on the first two evenings. *Pagani* and *Nigi* were freed from blame by their companions, since they were only in charge of the rockets fired in the opposite direction, which went well.

That left four people: *Marucelli* and *Meucci*, who were in charge of the rockets fired at the other side of the tower, and *Franci* and *Andreini*, who were to fire the rockets on this side of the tower. Apparently, it was the multiple rockets (up to 15), which were lighted together by means of *funnels*, that caused the damages and wounding. A detailed description of these funnels and of the way they were used follows, bearing into account that the fire was doubled on that occasion and that a different procedure had to be adopted that time.

*“Meucci, after having denied his responsibility almost through to the end of the Interrogations, finally admitted that he had lighted all four Funnels that had*

*been assigned to him and Marucelli, from the Tower in the direction of the Uffizi. Meucci’s confession is confirmed by Marucelli, who repeatedly stated that he had no part in that operation, by the statements of the Witness Ferdinando Lucchi, who stated that he saw Meucci lighting one funnel, and by the results of the Proceedings, according to which other people were not involved.”*

*Marucelli*, also Assistant Gatekeeper like Meucci, was thus freed from blame by his companion and colleague. The other two, *Andreini* and *Franci*, accused one another till the end and both ended up being held responsible.

*“... Thus, as it is a sure and proven fact that each of the three defendants Meucci, Franci and Andreini directly took part in Lighting the Rockets of the Funnels which caused the inconveniences mentioned several times already, and that all ten of these Funnels were lighted by them alone ... a second inspection ensues on the basis of which to determine their conduct while executing the job, and if said behavior reveals criminal intent and guilt such as to authorize to proceed by Fiscal Action according to the Liber of Woundings and Offenses, as caused by the action of the foregoing rockets.”*

It was deemed impossible that the three defendants could not foresee the direction that the rockets would have taken, first of all because it was not the first time that they handled such rockets,

and furthermore because, according to the opinions of experts, the operation was very simple and could not go wrong. Therefore, they must have intended to shoot the rockets downwards instead of upwards, as had always been done. A famous fireworks expert, by the name of *Girondini*, refuted Meucci's thesis according to which he had sought refuge behind the merlon to avoid the blaze coming from the mouth of the funnel, for it was sufficient to keep the mouth of the Funnel outside of the merlons to prevent such a danger. Since a rocket burst on impact with Mrs. *Cinganelli*, it was even hypothesized that, when it was prepared, some substance was mixed into it to cause the delayed explosion.

*"... and, finally, the deposition of the Witness Doctor Antonio Banti, and of the victim Felice Maggiorani; the former recalled having heard during the day, without, however, remembering where or from whom, that on the last evening the rockets would be lighted towards the square; the latter said she had learned from her brother, who, instead, does not agree, that one of the people who lighted the rockets on the aforementioned evening / among whom Meucci seems to be indicated / had invited him to go and see them, saying that something special was in store, to which he replied negatively saying 'Today you seem somewhat tipsy to me, surely they cannot go well, I don't want to come.' ..."*

In conclusion, the Criminal Court, which deemed itself competent not only for the woundings, but also for the material damages suffered by people - also in the cases in which the latter did not file a complaint - decreed that *Antonio Meucci, Giuseppe Franci and Vincenzo Andreini* were to be sued, granting them the benefit of doubt as far as their intentionality was concerned, whereas the other defendants were freed from blame.

*"Signed on 16 May 1825  
by C.a Bologna"*

### 30 May 1825

From: S. Spirito Police Superintendent (?), to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo

*Replies to the request for details on the Ficini incident and judges Antonio Meucci a scatter-brained (heedless) young man. He suggests 5 days in prison*

[see transcription on page 45].

Florence State Arch. N. 579-581, 3 pp.

### 31 May 1825

From: Police Superintendent of the S. Spirito Precinct D. Callepi, to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo and cc. Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*On account of Ficini's monthly allowance of a mere L. 40 and of Meucci's insolvency, he expresses a positive opinion as regards the subsidy requested by Ficini*

Florence State Arch. N. 594-595,3 pp.

### 3 June 1825

From: Luigi Ficini, Assistant Gatekeeper at the gates of Flo-

rence, to: Secretary (of State) Franzesi, for His Royal and Imperial Highness

*Requests a single subsidy of 3 zecchini, owing to Meucci's insolvency*

Florence State Arch. N. 601-602, 3 pp.

### 3 June 1825

From: Aurelio Pernini, official of the Grand Duchy, to: His Royal and Imperial Highness

*Backs up the request of Assistant Gatekeeper L. Ficini for a subsidy of 3 zecchini*

Florence State Arch. N. 604-605, 3 pp.

### 4 June 1825

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: Police Superintendent of the S. Spirito Precinct

*Resolution against Antonio Meucci of 8 days in prison, 3 of which on bread and water, plus payment of proceedings and damages, disregarding additional inflections in connection to other trials*

[see transcription on page 46]

Florence State Arch. N. 589

### 9 June 1825

From: Amatis Meucci, custodian at the Buon Governo Department, to: Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*Asks to reduce the sentence inflicted on his son, who is in jail, and to take him back as Assistant Gatekeeper*

[see transcription on page 50]

Florence State Arch. N. 590, 2 pp.

### 9 June 1825

From: Police Superintendent of the S. Spirito Precinct D. Callepi, to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo and cc. Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

[note in the margin] *Supports the plea presented by Amatis, suggesting the sentence to prison be reduced by 3 days, which is granted*

[see partial transcription on page 50]

Florence State Arch. N. 591, 2 pp.

### 9 June 1825

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: S. Spirito Police Superintendent

*Authorizes to reduce by 3 days the sentence to prison inflicted on Assistant Gatekeeper Antonio Meucci*

[see transcription on page 51]

Florence State Arch. N. 592

### 10 June 1825

(sent on the 22nd to the S. Spirito Police Precinct)

From: Franzesi, Secretary of State, to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo and cc. Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*Notifies that His Royal and Imperial Highness has granted an extraordinary subsidy of 4 zecchini to Assistant Gatekeeper Luigi Ficini*

Florence State Arch. N. 603

### 9 February 1826

From: General Adm. of the RR. Revenues, Alessandro Pontenani, to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo cc. Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*Reports that Antonio Meucci has stolen a copper pail belonging to the office*

Florence State Arch. N. 247

**14 February 1826**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: Police Superintendent of the S. Spirito Precinct

*States that Antonio Meucci took the pail to use it for measurements, and did not put it back in its place. Requests an opinion*

Florence State Arch. N. 248

**... September 1827**

From: G. Cialdi, Employee of H. E. State Councilor ..., to: Most Illustrious Sir Knight Luigi Bonci, President of the Buon Governo

*Complains that he was insulted by a woman by the name of Renzi<sup>17</sup> who "associated" with Amatis Meucci.*

Florence State Arch. N. 42, 2 pp.

*"Most Illustrious Sir Knight ... Luigi Bonci, President of the Buon Governo of Tuscany.*

*Giuseppe Cialdi ... Employee of H. E. State Councilor Battaglini, Your very Humble Servant, wishes to expose that, after having tried to seek your authoritative mediation in order to stop Anna would-be de' Renzi - who associates with Meucci, a Custodian of the Buon Governo - from insulting the undersigned and his wife, not only has Renzi*

*not stopped, but indeed she has continued worse than before to insult my wife as well as ... those who come into the house, directly in their faces: how vile! All of this in front of my wife, who, this morning, like many other times before, was showered with insults and offenses by Renzi, while she lay sick in bed; the offender ... works in this house for Mr. Gio. Biagini, a tenant of the same house, which is owned by the undersigned.*

*Considering that this behavior on the part of the would-be Anna Renzi could ... (?)*

*I beg you, Most Illustrious Sir, to summon Meucci and to order him to immediately rid us of the presence of this insolent woman or see to it that she no longer be so bold as to insult the ... (?)*

*Most Illustrious Sir, you may request information from H. E. ... (?) as to the reserved ways of the undersigned and his wife*

*Gius. Cialdi"*

**9 September 1827**

From: President of the Buon Governo, to: (not indicated)

*Amatis Meucci, Custodian of the Presidency, is reprimanded and Renzi is expelled from Florence*

Florence State Arch. N. 43

*"Through the Police Inspector, without involving any Police Superintendent, and after having personally reprimanded the Custodian Amatis Meucci, insinuating he be more respectful of his duties as Husband and Father, it was possible to send Renzi away from Florence."*

<sup>17</sup>According to a note in the margin, Renzi lived on Via de' Pilastrini N. 6736, 2nd floor, and worked for Mr. Biagini.



[Illegible signature]

**5 January 1828**

From: Amatis Meucci, to: His Royal and Imperial Highness

*Begs for the authorization of deductions from his monthly allowance, to return a loan of 100 scudi*

[see transcription on page 53]  
Florence State Arch. N. 284

**30 January 1828**

From: Presidency of the Buon Governo, to: S. Croce Police Superintendent

*Requests information in regard to Amatis' plea*

Florence State Arch. N. 284

**24 March 1828**

From: S. Croce Police Superintendent, to: Presidency of the Buon Governo

*Delivers the information on Amatis Meucci requested by the Buon Governo*

[see transcription on page 53]  
Florence State Arch. N. 284

**21 December 1828**

From: Presidency of the Buon Governo, to: S. Croce Police Superintendent and Pron. Colmo

*Report by a Police Inspector on 13 December regarding Antonio Meucci's affairs and misconduct on duty*

Florence State Arch. N. c228<sup>2</sup>

**9 January 1829**

From: Presidency of the Buon Governo, to: S. Croce Police Superintendent

*Requests information, following Amatis' plea for a subsidy*

Florence State Arch. N. 23

**10 January 1829**

From: Presidency of the Buon Governo, to: Police Superintendent of the S. Croce Precinct

*Lanari, manager of the Teatro degli Intrepidi and of the Teatro della Pergola, asks His Royal and Imperial Highness for a subsidy of 200 zecchini*

Florence State Arch. N. 24

**15 January 1829**

From: S. Croce Police Superintendent, to: Presidency of the Buon Governo

*Delivers the information requested on 9 January*

[see transcription on page 54]  
Florence State Arch. N. 23

**end of January 1829**

From: President of the Buon Governo, to: His Royal and Imperial Highness

*Proposal of nominations for the vacant positions at the Presidency of the Buon Governo*

Florence State Arch. N. 32

This document contains interesting considerations on the salaries of top positions: 20÷25 scudi a month plus 2÷3 scudi as Perquisites. All of the candidates are praised, except Amatis Meucci. It is suggested that the latter be transferred, with the same salary, to the position of Custodian of the Presidency of the Criminal Court, covered by a Vittorio Cortigiani; instead, it is suggested the latter be promoted from Custodian of the Criminal Court to 4th Copyist. This is what the report had to say about Amatis Meucci:

*"It is with pleasure that I propose Mr. Cortigiani for this job,*

*and I would like for him to be appointed to this position, for a vacant place as Custodian of the Presidency of the Criminal Court, with a monthly salary of 12 Scudi, would give me the opportunity to beg Your Royal and Imperial Highness to transfer the Custodian of this Department, Amatis Meucci, who receives the same monthly salary of 12 Scudi, in replacement of Cortigiani. President Andreucci is in agreement with this proposal, as can be read in His Official letter dated January 20, herein enclosed.*

*While I cannot accuse Amatis Meucci of having been disloyal during Service, I have no confidence whatsoever in his personality, for he is a Gossip and is anxious to be informed on matters, which is not acceptable in an important Secretariat such as that of the Buon Governo, and finally, this office cannot be held by a man who has children whose conduct is condemnable, and are under Police surveillance, and still on trial, as is currently the case with his Firstborn son, tried at the Police Precinct of S. Croce in connection to a double scandalous affair<sup>18</sup>.*

#### **25 February 1829**

From: His Royal and Imperial Highness Leopold [Decree]:

*Promotion of 9 people to fill in the vacant positions at the Presi-*

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<sup>18</sup>Evidently, the Auditor did not appreciate Amatis as much as he did Cortigiani. Indeed, the previous opinion of Police Superintendent Cecchini on Amatis had been "his morality and conduct are absolutely flawless."

*dency; Amatis is transferred to the Criminal Court*

Florence State Arch. N. 32

The decree concerns 10 nominations to offices at the Presidency of the Buon Governo, all promotions, except Amatis Meucci's; indeed, the latter is removed from his post as Custodian at the Presidency of the Buon Governo and transferred, with the same salary, to that of First Class Custodian at the Criminal Court Department, in replacement of a Vittorio Cortigiani, who is promoted to Fourth Copyist at the same Presidency. The titles and salaries of the offices are interesting: for instance, a lawyer by the name of Carlo Renzi is nominated Fifth Clerk, evidently with important duties, since his salary was fixed at Lire 1680 a year (140 lire a month, almost twice the salary of Amatis Meucci). The decree contains the original signatures of Leopold II and Vittorio Fossombroni.

#### **1 May 1829**

From: Buon Governo Department (Pron. Colmo?), to: S. Croce Police Precinct

*Requests an opinion on the reports received from Gatekeeper Del Nibbio and Assistant Gatekeeper Antonio Meucci regarding their dispute*

Florence State Arch. N. 32

*"S. Croce Police Precinct  
Sent on 1 May 1829*

*I submit to your attention the reports presented by Gatekeeper Del Nibbio, who was on duty this morning, and by his assistant, Antonio Meucci, regarding a*

*quarrel they had, so that you may determine what happened and, on the basis of the results, express your opinion.*

*However, as regards Meucci, because he committed the serious infraction of leaving while on duty, which he admits in his report, and given that there are no satisfactory excuses for his behavior, no matter how things went, You, Most Illustrious Sir, shall order for him to be put in jail immediately, suspending his salary, in ... of the resolution that..."*

[text interrupted here]

**8 May 1829**

From: S. Croce Police Precinct (F. A. Cecchini), to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo and cc. Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*Antonio Meucci has taken leave from his duty at Porta S. Gallo several times to mix with women. Bad relationship with Gatekeeper Gaetano Del Nibbio. One month in jail without salary is suggested*

[see transcription on page 56].

Florence State Arch. N. 229 ÷ 232, 7 pp.

**14 May 1829**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: S. Croce Police Precinct

*Agrees with the sentence to one month in prison, with the order not to associate with Mrs. Socè and Mrs. Paoletti; should he breach said order, he shall be removed from his job*

[see transcription on page 58].

Florence State Arch. N. 235

**16 May 1829**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: General Adm. of the RR. Revenues

*Communicates the order to put Antonio Meucci in prison and to suspend his salary*

Florence State Arch. N. 236

**17 May 1829**

From: General Adm. of the RR. Revenues, Alessandro Pontenani, to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo and Sir Knight Auditor President of the Buon Governo

*Communicates that he has received the letter and that he has sent instructions to the Customs Office Cashier to suspend Antonio Meucci's salary*

Florence State Arch. N. 237

**29 May 1829**

From: His Royal and Imperial Highness Leopold [Decree]:

*Amatis Meucci is appointed Audience Bailiff in the Supreme Court*

Florence State Arch. N. 60

**25 June 1829**

From: S. Spirito Police Precinct (N. Tassinari), to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo and cc. Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*Report on Amatis Meucci for having complained in the Gatekeepers' office about the unjust imprisonment of his son. The Gatekeepers are divided into two factions: one in favor of the Sovereign (which reported the information) the other against him. Amatis says that he is happy he left his previous position and that now he is satisfied*

[see transcription on page 60].

Florence State Arch. N. 172 ÷ 175 bis, 8 pp.

**2 September 1829**

From: Sir Knight Superintendent of the Land Registry Records, to: Auditor President of the Buon Governo (Prones? Colmo)

*Request for information on 13 applicants for a post as Custodian of the Archives of the Grand-ducal Tithes - Antonio Meucci among them*

Florence State Arch. N. 1884

**3 September 1829**

From: Dr. A. Frassani, family doctor [Report]:

*Antonio Meucci is affected by syphilis, a hazard for his health, requires treatment*

Florence State Arch. N. 407

**10 September 1829**

From: Dr. Antonio Targioni Zoppetti, fiscal doctor, with note in the margin of the Presidency dated 16 September [Report and recommendation for the Presidency of the Buon Governo]:

*Confirms the diagnosis of the family doctor and recommends one month of treatment off duty. Exostoses on the left parietal bone with swelling and inflammation of the adjacent soft parts. A note dated September 16 gives consent*

[see transcription on page 67]

Florence State Arch. N. 406

**14 September 1829**

From: Auditor President of the Buon Governo, to: Police Inspector Giovanni Chiarini

*Presents the above-cited request for information dated 2 September*

Florence State Arch. N. 1884

**30 September 1829**

From: Police Inspector Giovanni Chiarini, to: Auditor President of the Buon Governo

*Supplies the information requested, including those on Antonio Meucci*

[see transcription on page 68]

Florence State Arch. N. 1884

**9 October 1829**

From: Auditor President of the Buon Governo, to: Sir Knight Superintendent of the Land Registry Records

*Forwards the information supplied by the Police Inspector on 30 September*

Florence State Arch. N. 1884

**20 October 1829**

From: Dr. Antonio Targioni Zoppetti, fiscal doctor [Report and recommendation for the Presidency of the Buon Governo]:

*Declares that Antonio Meucci has improved but that he is still affected by a throat infection and recommends another month off duty, in order for him to recover fully*

Florence State Arch. N. 408

**5 November 1829**

From: Antonio Meucci, to: Most Illustrious Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*Admits that Gatekeeper Doni had told him to appear before Chancellor Corsi at the S. Croce Police Precinct, and that he did not show up because he knew he would be put in jail. Asks to be forgiven and promises irreproachable conduct.*

[see transcription on page 70]

Florence State Arch. N. 490, 2 pp.

**12 November 1829**

From: S. Croce Police Precinct,  
to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo and cc. Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*On 30 October Antonio Meucci is found at 4 PM with Luisa Socè in her store outside the Porta a Pinti. Antonio Meucci says he was there to see her daughter Augusta, whom he wishes to marry. He is summoned on 31 October but does not show up until 7 November. One month in jail is suggested*

Florence State Arch. N. 480 ÷ 483, 8 pp.

*“Most Illustrious Sir Pron. Colmo*

*On 30 October around 4 o'clock in the afternoon, Police Officer Vincenzo Bertini, who works for this Police Precinct, caught Assistant Gatekeeper Antonio Meucci in the act of breaching the injunction communicated to him on 14 May of this year with the approval of this Superior Department. He was found with Mrs. Luisa Socè, the wife of Antonio Socè, in their Store outside the Porta a Pinti. The incident was communicated to this Court that very evening with a Report presented by the Police Officer, which solicited to proceed against Meucci for having breached orders.*

*The following morning, Flavio Guelfi and Pellegrino Bonini, the Witnesses, were immediately questioned, and, on the basis of their sworn testimonials, having*

*been ascertained that, indeed, Meucci was in the store of the aforementioned Luisa Socè, and in union with this Woman, on the evening of that very day, 31 October, it was requested that the Accused be summoned; as the latter did not show up, another notice was sent with the Bailiffs, inviting him to appear before the Police. The Bailiffs, however, reported that he was not in his House, and that he had left town.*

*On the morning of 7 November Meucci spontaneously turned himself in and confessed that he had been found in the company of the aforementioned Mrs. Socè and of her Daughter in their store; notwithstanding, he declared that he did not think he was breaching the Injunction according to which he was not to associate with Mrs. Luisa Socè, stating and protesting that he was not there to see her but her Daughter, Augusta, whom he said he was courting with the intention to Marry her.*

*Furthermore, on 31 October he said he received from the Chief Gatekeeper the order to appear before the Court but that at the time, because he was ill, and in the days that followed, on account of a previous engagement out of town, it had not been possible for him to go to the Police Precinct; this conduct and these excuses were deemed absolutely unacceptable, and are actually indicative of his marked insubordination and absolute disregard for the orders of the legal Authority, which had invited him to account for his behavior.*

*In the wake of these events, and following the investigations conducted, it appears that Meucci is an ill-tempered individual and insolent disdainer of Superior decisions; it seems to me that, beyond all doubts, he has breached the injunction, which very clearly stated that for no reason whatsoever was he to speak with Luisa Socè, whereas, as previously stated, he was found in her company by the Police. If, for honest and legitimate reason toward the daughter he was allowed back into the Home of her Mother, he was to notify the Court, prior to violating an order Rightly given him; furthermore, he should have been particularly careful not to breach orders, knowing that by so doing he would be dismissed from his job, which would have damaged him irreversibly.*

*However, I must observe that, according to the attached Report, presented by the “Campagna” [Country]<sup>19</sup> Head of Police, the justifications presented by Meucci are actually legitimate, and, consequently, although they cannot erase altogether the mistake committed by the Accused, they are nevertheless sufficient to mitigate the gravity of the matter, and it is for this reason that I am of the compliant opinion that, also on account of the marked contempt displayed toward the orders of the Court, he should be*

---

<sup>19</sup>Antonio Meucci went out of town, in the countryside, probably because grandfather Giuseppe was dying.

*sentenced to one month in jail as of the day he enters the latter; furthermore, he should also pay all expenses connected to the Proceedings, and when he is to resume service, moreover, I am of the opinion that, with a serious warning, he should once again be reminded of the breached Injunction and notified that, should he fail to comply once again, he will be arrested and sentenced to two months in jail and, without further notifications, he will be definitively dismissed from his service.*

*Enclosed herein are the Proceedings of the related case. I take this opportunity to send you my very best regards.*

*From the S. Croce Police Precinct  
12 November 1829  
Your most Faithful and Humble  
Servant  
N. Tassinari,  
Police Superintendent*

*To: Sir Knight Auditor of the Buon Governo”*

**14 November 1829**

*From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: S. Croce Police Precinct*

*Meucci sentenced to two months in prison, suspending salary and allowance, with warning as to further misconduct*

[see transcription on page 71]  
Florence State Arch. N. 488

**14 November 1829**

*From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: H.E. Pontenani? (General Adm. of the RR. Revenues)*

*Order to proceed with suspension of job and salary for two months.*

Florence State Arch. N. 489

**16 November 1829**

From: General Adm. RR Revenues, Alessandro Pontenani, to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo and Sir Knight Auditor President of the Buon Governo

*The order is received and instructions are given to proceed with the suspension of job and salary*

Florence State Arch. N. 491

**24 December 1829**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: S. Croce Police Precinct

*The last 15 days of Meucci's prison sentence are pardoned, and instructions are given to release him from prison at once*

[see transcription on page 72]

Florence State Arch. N. 492

**1(?) January 1830**

From: Antonio Meucci, to: Most Illustrious Sir Knight President of the Buon Governo

*Asks that, in addition to pardoning 15 days of prison, as he is living in destitution, he also be granted the related 15 days' salary*

Florence State Arch. N. 213

*"Antonio, son of Amatis Meucci, from Florence, one of the Assistant Gatekeepers of this city, Very Humble Servant of your Most Illustrious Excellency: with All Due Respect Explains that*

*Suffering great misery on account of the very Fair Punishment inflicted to him, and not having*

*anything on which to live, earnestly begs Your Excellency to grant the Grace to release him from prison 15 days early and to also grant him his salary.*

*Hoping to reside in Your Grace*

**12 January 1830**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: H.E. Pontenani (General Adm. of the RR. Revenues)

*Gives instructions to pardon the suspension of 15 days' salary, as requested by Antonio Meucci*

Florence State Arch. N. 223

**13 January 1830**

From: General Adm. of the RR. Revenues Alessandro Pontenani, to: Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo and Sir Knight Auditor President of the Buon Governo

*Ensures he has provided for the condonation, as requested by his superior*

Florence State Arch. N. 23

**9 June 1830**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: S. Spirito Police Precinct

*Antonio Meucci charged for having arrived 3/4 hour late at the Porta alla Croce, where he was on duty, for the second time in one month. He is sentenced to two days in prison and threatened to be fired*

Florence State Arch. N. 20 29

**7 July 1830**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to S. Spirito Police Precinct

*Antonio charged for having arrived 3/4 hour late for the third time. He is sentenced to 15 days'*

*suspension from duty and salary; he is once again warned that he risks losing his job*

Florence State Arch. N. 6

**7 July 1830**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: First Fiscal Accountant? (General Adm. of the RR. Revenues)

*Communicates suspension of Antonio Meucci's job and salary*

Florence State Arch. N. 21

**10 July 1830**

Urgent from: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: S. Spirito Police Precinct

*Amatis Meucci, Usher of the auditor of the Supreme Magistrate, on account of his misconduct in the Gatekeepers' office that morning, is immediately put in prison for 6 days*

Florence State Arch. N. 29 22

**13 July 1830**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: S. Croce Police Precinct

*Invites to summon Antonio Meucci to inform him that his resignation has been accepted*

Florence State Arch. N. 23

**13 July 1830**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: S. Spirito Police Precinct

*Once Amatis has served his 6 days in prison, he will be warned not to go near the Department or its offices, without having been invited to do so*

Florence State Arch. N. 24

**14 July 1830**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: Inspector of Gatekeepers

*Gatekeeper supernumerary Arcangelo Tosoni is appointed in replacement of Antonio Meucci who is said to have resigned*

Florence State Arch. N. 173

**14 July 1830**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: First Fiscal Accountant? (General Adm. of the RR. Revenues)

*Gatekeeper supernumerary Arcangelo Tosoni is appointed in replacement of Antonio Meucci who is said to have resigned. Provision for his allowance*

Florence State Arch. N. 174

**15 July 1830**

From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: S. Spirito Police Precinct

*In consideration of the special circumstances presented by Amatis Meucci, he is immediately let out of prison*

Florence State Arch. N. 25

(received) **20 July 1830**

*Section 2 - 20 July [note in the margin by the Presidency]*

From: Amatis Meucci, to: Most Illustrious Sir President of the Buon Governo

*Refers that, on 10 July at 9 AM, he had complained about the way his son had been treated simply because he was a few minutes late (less than 1/4 hour), and that at 4 PM he was unjustly sentenced to six days in prison; he thus believes that Antonio Meucci's resignation from his job was not spontaneous*

Florence State Arch. N. 26



*"Most Illustrious Sir President of the Buon Governo*

*It was because of my love as a Father that I went to the Inspector of Gatekeepers to justify the presumed misdeed that my son was charged with; indeed, he was accused of being negligent on the job for having arrived 3/4 hour late - according to them - at the Gate where he was on duty. With all due respect, I told this Inspector that he had not been informed well, but he insisted in saying that my son had been negligent on the job. At that point, I could not help saying (always with great humbleness) that Soldiers have their drum, and that they are quartered, and they are allowed to be one minute late, but this greatly upset the Inspector who said to me that there was no such custom with the Gatekeepers; I therefore replied that perhaps he should submit the matter to the attention of the Most Illustrious President, who, guided by his wisdom, would have surely done something about it.*

*This was my conversation with Mr. Zuchetti on 10 July at 9 AM, and around 4 o'clock in the afternoon I was told to immediately appear before the Most Illustrious S. Spirito Police Superintendent, and, should I fail to do so, I would had to pay a fine of Fifty lire; so at once I rushed to hear his orders.*

*While I was being questioned by Sir Chancellor Marabotti, I was very much astonished to learn that a trial against me was being prepared as a consequence of my misconduct at the Gatekeepers'*

*office, which was absolutely not true, for, aside from this circumstance, in which he couldn't help but lose his temper, ever since the time I was at the Presidency, where I worked for many years prior to being transferred to the Supreme Court, I have always loyally obeyed the orders of my superiors, and I have likewise behaved humbly towards those who worked under me, and I have been true to this principle all of my life.*

*I do not know how this Inspector presented the Incident, while I am serving the sentence of 6 days in prison set by the Police Superintendent of the aforementioned quarter, according to the orders of the Superior Department, and since such a mortification was not enough to give vent (I wouldn't know what other word to use) to Mr. Zucchetti's heart, My son has been suspended from his job, and his salary has been suspended as well, for 15 days, with the warning that he risks losing his job;*

*I do not intend to defend such ... .. (the rest is missing).*

#### **4 August 1830**

*From: Buon Governo Department (Prone Colmo?), to: First Fiscal Accountant? (General Adm. of the RR. Revenues)*

*The "former" Assistant Gatekeeper Antonio Meucci is pardoned the suspension of his salary for the 15 days referred to in the deliberation dated July 7*

*Florence State Arch. N. 35*

#### **... February 1832**

From: Antonio Meucci, to:  
Most Illustrious Sir President of  
the Buon Governo

*Asks to be re-employed*

Not found in the Florence State  
Archives, but referred to in the  
following N. 389

**15 June 1833**

(received on 20 June)

From: Antonio Meucci, to:  
Most Illustrious Sir President of  
the Buon Governo

*Begs to be re-employed (taking  
advantage of the Sovereign's  
amnesty and of two places left va-  
cant by Gatekeepers who retired),  
stating that he has not had a job  
for almost 4 years after having  
"rashly and heedlessly requested  
to be dismissed from his office"*

Florence State Arch. N. 389

*"Note for the Most Illustrious  
Sir President of the Buon Governo*

*«2/18 June/ Pontenani/ Re-em-  
ployed» [note in the margin by the  
Presidency]*

*Antonio, son of Amatis Meucci,  
very humble servant of Your Most  
Illustrious Excellency, full of def-  
erence once again turns to you to  
inform you that, after having  
worked for several years as Assis-  
tant Gatekeeper, for four years  
now<sup>20</sup> owing to some reprimands  
made by his superiors on account  
of slight misdeeds on duty, has  
been deprived of his job, having,  
as a consequence of said reprim-  
ands, rashly and heedlessly re-  
quested to be dismissed from said  
office, as he has had the honor to  
tell you once already in the past,  
in February 1832.*

<sup>20</sup>Actually, it was only three years, since  
his resignation was accepted on 13 July  
1830.

*The undersigned regrets such a  
dramatic Mistake and is  
anguished by the fact that he is  
aged 26<sup>21</sup>, unemployed, and fully  
supported by his poor Father, who  
surely cannot continue to provide  
for him; therefore, in the present  
favorable circumstance, in which  
our Kind Sovereign has granted to  
generously pardon many  
misdeeds, also the undersigned  
hopes to be able to benefit from  
such Sovereign Benevolence, and  
implores Your Most Illustrious  
Excellency to pardon his past  
wrongdoings; also, having heard  
that two places as Gatekeepers  
have become vacant following the  
retirement of the two Gatekeepers  
Bacci and Graziani, the  
undersigned also humbly begs the  
Goodness of Your Most Illustrious  
Excellency, should You grant your  
pardon as requested above, to be  
so kind as to re-employ him who  
resigned from his post as  
Gatekeeper in the city of Florence,  
now that the two aforementioned  
places have become vacant,  
namely the ones left by Bacci and  
Graziani who have retired, so as  
to allow him to relieve his poor  
Father of such a burden, and to be  
able to provide for himself.*

*Filled with confidence, this is  
what the undersigned hopes to ob-  
tain from Your Most Illustrious  
Excellency, and once again with  
great respect declares himself*

15 June 1833

*Most Humble, most Devout and  
Much Obligated Servant  
Antonio Meucci"*

**30 April 1834**

From: General Adm. of the RR.  
Revenues (illegible signature), to:  
Most Illustrious Sir Prone Colmo  
and Sir Knight Auditor President  
of the Buon Governo

*Mentions the inappropriate be-  
havior of the Boscolungo Customs*

<sup>21</sup>Actually, he had turned 25 two months  
before.

*Officers and, on the contrary, the appropriate conduct of one Antonio Meucci, who should be a name-sake, also due to the fact that it refers to S. Marcello and Pistoia as places of origin.*

Florence State Arch. N. 246-7, 3 pp.

**5 July 1834**

From: Antonio Meucci, to:  
Alessandro Lanari  
Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence  
"Mr. Alessandro

*Florence, 5 July 1834*

*As soon as I received your letter, I immediately rushed to the Post Office, but since I did not get the letter in time because Millo could not find me, at the Post Office there was not anything for anyone of the family; nevertheless,*

*I shall bear the names in mind and on Tuesday I will go back to have a look. Rest assured of my Loyalty and Secrecy.*

*Your Most Devout Servant  
Antonio Meucci"*

**5 July 1834**

From: Antonio Meucci, to:  
Alessandro Lanari  
Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence  
*Second letter, also dated 5 July 1834, with other elucidations.*

**10 July 1834**

From: Alessandro Lanari, to:  
Antonio Meucci  
Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence  
[see transcription on page 102 and a reproduction of the letter on this page]

Letter from Alessandro  
Lanari to Antonio  
Meucci

## HISTORY OF FLORENCE FROM THE LORRAINES TO THE UNIFICATION OF ITALY

### Francis II (1737-1765)

On 9 July 1737 the last Grand Duke of the *Medici* dynasty, *Gian Gastone*, died in Florence without leaving heirs. The Bourbons and the Hapsburgs reached an agreement, according to which the throne of the Grand Duchy was handed over immediately to the *Lorraine* family. This arrangement was later confirmed by the Treaty of Vienna, in 1738. *Francis Stephen of Lorraine*, husband of *Maria Theresa of Austria* became Emperor of Austria as *Francis I* and Grand Duke of Tuscany as *Francis II*, since there had already been a Grand Duke of the *Medici* family by the name of Francis. Francis II ruled the Grand Duchy for twenty-eight years, that is, until his death in 1765. However, he resided only three months in Florence: from 19 January to 28 April 1739. In his absence, power was exercised by the Regency Council.

The *Lorraine* family found the Grand Duchy in pitiful conditions. They had to deal with the financial catastrophe (the public debt totaled some 14 million 250 thousand scudi), the total anarchy in public offices, the venality of officials, the decadence of all social classes, the vast amounts of uncultivated land owned by the

church and the boldness and intolerable interference of the clergy and the feudal lords of the forty-seven feuds established by the *Medici*.

In 1743 *Francis II* opened the prisons of the *Sant'Uffizio* (*Holy Office*), which were far worse than the ones of the Grand Duchy, and for many years suspended the *Court of Inquisition*. His successor, *Peter Leopold*, completed the work of his father by definitely closing the *Court of Inquisition* on 5 July 1792. On 29 April 1749 *Francis II* passed a law on the discipline of feudalism, which deprived the forty-seven despotic feudal lords of most of their powers and privileges. A law was also passed on the press, to free it from the censure of the clergy.

*Francis II* died on 18 August 1765, aged only 57. He was struck by an apoplectic fit as he came out of a theater in Innsbruck. The eighteen-year old *Peter Leopold*, his third son, ascended to the throne of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. His second son had died earlier, while the first, *Joseph*, became Emperor of Austria, thereby separating the two thrones, as envisaged by the wedding agreements of the Archduke *Joseph* with *Maria Luisa of Bourbon*. As a result, since then, the Grand Duchy became independent from Austria.

### Peter Leopold (1765-1790)

The enlightened *Leopoldian reforms* were so bold and far-reaching as to irritate the nobles and the clergy. On the contrary, the

Bishop of Pistoia, a friend of *Peter Leopold*, was so enthusiastic, that he went as far as proposing a reform of the Church and proclaiming, together with the 1786 Synod of Pistoia, the supremacy of the Church over the Pope, thereby summoning even the *National Council*. *Peter Leopold* was one of the first European princes to abolish the death penalty and torture. In 1773 he confiscated the assets of the Jesuits and assigned them a pension. On 1st August 1778 he passed a law on the *absolute neutrality* of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, so as to secure a long period of peace during which he could introduce the reforms he had conceived.

Bencivenni Pelli, the director of the Uffizi gallery at the time, described him as follows:

*"... He was sober and dressed plainly. He demanded that he not be deceived. He was lively and hot-tempered, but knew and controlled himself. He was tireless. He jotted down notes and remarks... he knew everything about everyone.... he had a room, which he called the room of scandals, where he kept papers containing information on all those surrounding him. Before leaving, he burnt all those papers ..."*

Moreover, he had almost entirely abolished Court etiquette, thereby provoking the ambiguous smiles of the nobles and some of the high officials. He needed the truth - adds Vittoria Corti, in her excellent volume on the bicentenary of the Academy of Fine Arts (see bibl.) - to avoid being deceived, or rather to render deceit

impossible. In the room of scandals, Peter Leopold also kept a file on *false spies*, that is to say, those who double crossed him. Among his almost twenty thousand informers at all levels, there were also a number of high society ladies who referred a lot of drawing room gossip to him, as well as a sizable group of priests. He left his son the following warnings: *"... the Tuscans are gentle, not very courageous, but alert, not very sincere, yet highly refined, with a penchant to satisfy their interests and seek ways of swindling others to achieve their objectives. They are always disunited, diffident and envious of one another ..."*

It is thanks to Peter Leopold that the *Academy of Fine Arts* (see appendix) was founded and that the arts and sciences were promoted. He himself had a well-equipped chemistry laboratory.

*Peter Leopold* ruled Tuscany for some 25 years, until 27 February 1790, when he became Emperor of Austria as *Leopold II*, following the death of his brother *Joseph*. As a result, in April 1790 *Peter Leopold* left Florence for Vienna. While waiting for the arrival of twenty-year old *Ferdinand III*, his second son to whom he handed over the throne of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, *Peter Leopold* established a *Regency Council* in Florence. The weak and incompetent regents destroyed within a short period most of *Peter Leopold's* work and were unable to deal with the discontent of the people. As a result, rioting broke out in Pistoia

Grand Duke Ferdinand III of Tuscany with his wife

on 24 April, in Leghorn and Val di Nievole on 30 May and in Florence on 9 June, where thousands of women, with false military mustaches and armed with wooden sticks joined in. However, when in April of 1791 *Ferdinand III* arrived in Florence he was warmly welcomed with celebrations. Yet he was later forced to repeal most of the reforms introduced by his father.

### **Ferdinand III (1st period, 1791-1799)**

In the first years of his reign, *Ferdinand III* attempted a reconciliation with the old princes and powers which his father had endeavored to ruin. As a result, most of Leopold's edification was almost entirely destroyed. Furthermore, *Ferdinand III* had to deal with the difficult international situation following the French Revolution. He tried to maintain the Grand Duchy neutral, but this was not appreciated by either the French or their opponents, especially the English. In June 1796 *Napoleon Bonaparte* occupied Leghorn thereby driving away the English who had arrived there only a few months before. In 1797 the English and the French left Tuscany, but the following year the Directory demanded that *Ferdinand III* either become an ally or an enemy of France. Then, with the excuse of driving out the Neapolitan troops from Leghorn, the French occupied Tuscany and forced the Grand Duke to leave Florence on 27 March 1799, the same day when *Pope Pius VI* went

into exile. However, *Ferdinand III* would return to Florence sixteen years later.

### **The Napoleonic Interlude (1799-1814)**

Once *Ferdinand III* had left, the city was ruled by a member of the Directory, a certain *Reinhard*. In addition to the self-interested and ambiguous promises of peace and order made by the French, new, violent attacks were made against the Church, in the name of the new *goddess of reason*. The leaders of the Jacobin movement in Italy, who had ties with some eminent Frenchmen, declared that it was in the interest of France that Italy be freed of all foreigners and become a united and independent nation. The Florentine Jacobins, enraptured by an irresponsible form of fanaticism, planted *trees of freedom* in the squares of *Santa Croce* and *Santa Maria Novella*, amid considerable commotion.

After less than a month from *Ferdinand III's* departure, anti-French, but, above all, anti-Jacobin rioting began with slogans such as "*Death to the French and the Jacobins!*" and "*Long live Austria! Long live the Emperor!*" The first upheavals, which were immediately repressed, took place in Florence on 12 April 1799. A few days later riots broke out in Pistoia and were only repressed thanks to the peaceful mediation of the Bishop. On 5 and 6 May there was a revolt in the town of Volterra, which was followed by the occupation of a large part of the Maremma. On 6 May there

were uprisings in Arezzo and Cortona, which resisted the attack of four thousand Polish soldiers who had marched in from the south. On 26 June nineteen Jacobins and Jews were burnt alive at the stakes put up in Piazza del Campo in Siena. On 4 July the entire French garrison left Florence. A weak Florentine Senate was promptly set up, which immediately urged the Austrians to send an army, in order to reestablish order in the Grand Duchy. The army arrived on 7 July 1799, but, after the victory at Marengo, the French invaded Tuscany again and entered Arezzo on 19 October 1800, thereby crushing the resistance of the inhabitants. They pillaged the town and killed anyone that was found armed.

With the treaty of *Luneville*, stipulated between Napoleon and the Emperor of Austria on 9 February 1801, *Ferdinand III* formally lost the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, but in exchange received the Grand Duchy of Wuertzburg in Germany. Tuscany was renamed the *Kingdom of Etruria* and handed over to *Lodovico of Bourbon*, the son of the Duke of Parma. In this way the *Kingdom of Etruria* came to be united with the crown of Spain. On 12 August 1801 *Gioacchino Murat*, Napoleon's brother-in-law, who had temporarily established himself in Florence, officially handed over the *Kingdom of Etruria* to *Lodovico*. At the same time, the French garrison was replaced by the one of the Duchy of Parma. The kingdom of *Lodovico* was, however, short-

lived, since in May 1803 he died, less than two years after having ascended to the throne, while his son *Carlo Lodovico* was still a child. The Queen mother, *Maria Luisa of Bourbon*, ascended to the throne as regent and had a Spanish garrison arrive to join the one of the Duchy of Parma. *Maria Luisa* allegedly encouraged luxurious extravaganzas at court, which weighed heavily on the finances of the Grand Duchy. Nevertheless, even the regency of *Maria Luisa* was short-lived, lasting just over four years.

Following the treaty of *Fontainebleau* in October 1807, Tuscany was annexed by the French Empire and became the *Department of the Arno*. *Maria Luisa* and *Carlo Lodovico of Bourbon* received northern *Lusitania* in compensation. In compliance with the above-mentioned treaty, the French troops entered Florence again on 10 December 1807 and took the place of the troops of Spain and the Duchy of Parma. On 1st April 1808 *Elisa Baciocchi*, nominated Grand Duchess of Tuscany by his brother, Napoleon, arrived in Florence, followed by her husband, Prince *Felice* (a few days later Antonio Meucci was born in Florence). On 15 May of the same year the *Code Napoleon* was introduced in France, and laws and provisions that complied with the French ones were applied in Tuscany. Of the many changes that took place, the Tuscans bitterly complained about taxation (taxes were levied even on doors and windows) and compulsory

military service. The first recruitments deprived Tuscany, which was no longer accustomed to military practices, of some ten thousand young men. Furthermore, the clergy resented, among other things, the fact that they were compelled to recite the following prayer every day: “*Domine, salvum fac Imperatorem Napoleonem*” that is “*God save the Emperor Napoleon.*”

After the final defeat of Napoleon, *Elisa Baciocchi* left Florence on 17 February 1814 with ten carriages, taking away many of the treasures of Pitti palace. Shortly after, *Gioacchino Murat*, King of Naples at the time, arrived in Florence as an ally of Austria, and therefore as an enemy of his brother-in-law Napoleon. Two months later, in April 1814, the *Parma Convention* restored *Ferdinand III* on the throne of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. From Wuertzburg, the Grand Duke immediately appointed a “*commisario*” (a provisional administrator). He returned to Florence on 18 September 1814 and was greeted joyfully by the people. Piazza S. Marco was transformed into an amphitheater to celebrate his return.

### **Ferdinand III (2nd period, 1814-1824)**

On 9 June 1815 the Treaty of Vienna was signed which restored the great monarchies and enabled *Ferdinand III* to recover the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. *Ferdinand III* ruled Tuscany for ten more years, until his death on 24 June 1824,

thereby totaling nineteen years of rule. At the beginning of this period, the inhabitants of the Grand Duchy amounted to just over one million. During this same period, there was a strong economic recession compounded by repeated famines and typhus epidemics which took their toll on the population until the end of 1817.

In this second period, *Ferdinand III* tried to return, to a certain extent, to the legislation of his father, *Peter Leopold*, who had, in a way, anticipated the French Revolution with his reforms. However, he maintained many of the innovations introduced by the French Regime, such as the trade code, the mortgage system, the court procedures, the public nature of court rulings and the Registry Office. The unpopular compulsory military service was abolished and taxes were reduced. Yielding to the pressure of Pope *Pius VII*, he re-established the authority of the church by ordering the re-opening of 77 convents, the ecclesiastical courts, the confraternities and other similar associations.

Amiable and good-natured, *Ferdinand III* claimed to be more Tuscan than German. He would even have agreed, after the 1821 riots, to a form of representative government, had not Austria prevented him from doing so. Many believed him to be unable to leave his mark on the Grand Duchy and accused him of yielding to the Papacy and Austria. He was also accused of *false liberalism* and *false patronage* and of taking pride in his *non-rule*. He did indeed leave



much freedom to his ministers, who under his rule promoted many important public works, such as the building of schools, art galleries, roads and palaces and the reclaiming of vast areas. Following the example of his father, although only in theory, he used to walk the streets of the city and attend processions. However, he only received his ministers once a week. The Tuscans even accused him of lacking in artistic taste.

In 1821 *Ferdinand III* married *Maria Ferdinanda Amalia of Saxony*. His first wife, *Maria Luisa*, had died when giving birth to their child in 1802, during their exile in Germany.

On 18 June 1824 *Ferdinand III*, died at the age of 55.

#### **Leopold II (1st period, 1824-1848)**

On 19 June 1824 *Leopold II* succeeded his father, *Ferdinand III*. He would rule for 35 years. On 1st April 1825 great celebrations were organized in Florence in honor of the child which the Grand Duchess *Maria Carolina of Saxony* gave birth to. However, during the celebrations, firecrackers were thrown at the crowd from the top of Palazzo Vecchio and a number of people were wounded, as we have already reported.

The reign of *Leopold II* may be divided into two periods: a first bright period lasting 24 years and a more dismal second period lasting 10 years which ended with Leopold's dethronement.

Only the first period, which lasted until 1849, was fruitful. Liberal reforms were introduced and it was even tolerated that Tuscans take part in the first war for the independence of Italy. Eminent men, expelled from other States for political reasons, were invited to hold lectures in the universities of the Grand Duchy. Congresses of the Italian scientists, where the unification of Italy was openly discussed, were hosted in Pisa in 1839 and in Florence in 1841. However, this liberalism would soon turn against Leopold II.

#### **Leopold II (2nd period, 1849-1859)**

In January 1849 the *Democratic Ministry*, headed by *Guerrazzi* and *Montanelli*, installed itself and a constituent assembly was called for. Leopold fled in voluntary exile to Gaeta, where he joined the Pope. Later, backed by Austrian troops, he returned to Florence, but was subordinated to Vienna. The concessions made before were promptly repealed, Parliament suppressed and the freedom of press curbed. A young boy was even executed in Pistoia, an unprecedented event in the history of the Grand Duchy. It is the age of the satires of poet Giuseppe Giusti.

In 1859 all of Florence prepared to take part in the second war for the independence of Italy. The ministers of the Grand Duke met at the ambassador of Piedmont's and later set

unacceptable and humiliating conditions to *Leopold II*, who rejected them and decided to leave Florence.

On 27 April 1859 the court of the Grand Duke left Florence by carriage and headed towards Bologna.

### Towards the Unification of Italy

A temporary council was immediately elected in Florence. It turned to and obtained protection from the King of Piedmont, who appointed *Boncompagni* as “Commissario Reale” (Royal provisional administrator), who in turn appointed the Baron *Bettino Ricasoli* as Prime Minister. On 7 August 1859 a General Election was held to appoint members of parliament. On the 11 August parliament met and decided on the permanent dislodging of the *House of Lorraine* and Tuscany be annexed to the Kingdom of Italy. On 22 March 1860 the annexation was ratified by a popular plebiscite.

On 14 March 1861 the parliament in Turin proclaimed the Kingdom of Italy and on 17 March *Vittorio Emanuele* assumed the title of King of Italy.

On 3 October 1861 Italy acquired the region of Venetia from Austria, following the peace of Vienna and thanks to French media-

tion. *Mazzini* defined Italy's renunciation to Istria, Friuli and South Tyrol shameful.

In June 1865 the capital was transferred to Florence, as Rome was still occupied and protected by the French. It remained the capital until 20 September 1870, when the *Bersaglieri* entered Rome through the breach of Porta Pia.

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## F. D. GUERRAZZI AND POLITICAL CONSPIRACIES IN TUSCANY

### Premise

It was observed, in the principal text, that Tuscany was for the most part immune from uprisings for Italian independence, at least in comparison to other Italian regions. Nonetheless, even if they were not accompanied by bloody or violent events, conspiracies by secret societies of varied inspiration did exist in Tuscany, and they were followed by arrests and sentences from the Grand Duchy for *lese majesty*.

Antonio Meucci's name was associated with the uprisings for Italian unity, at times quite imaginatively, by several authors who even depicted him fighting on the barricades of some unidentified city, or else by Garibaldi's side, on some unspecified battlefield. For example, the *New York Times* on 19 October 1889 (Antonio Meucci's obituary, see bibl.) referred that Meucci returned to Italy in 1844-48 to fight during the revolutions of that period, that he was promoted on the field to the rank of lieutenant and that he then returned to Cuba to escape capture by the Austrians (*"Returning to Italy in time to take part in the revolution of 1844-8, he won a Lieutenant's commission. To avoid capture by the Austrians he went again to Havana"*). In Section Two (Havana) of this book we will demonstrate how such an assertion (later taken up by many

authors, both Italian and foreign) is entirely unfounded.

In another obituary for Meucci, published by *The Sun* of Baltimore on the same date (19 October 1889, see bibl.), it is more accurately reported that Meucci belonged to the "Carboneria" and that he was involved in the conspiracy of 1834 (*"He was a member of the Italian Carbonari, and was identified with the revolution of 1834"*). This affirmation is corroborated by a letter written by Meucci himself to his friend Prof. Carlo Paladini, of Lucca, on 2 May 1889 (see bibl.), in which he wrote *"the Italy for which in '33 and '34 I spent many months in prison with Guerrazzi ..."*

Unfortunately, in the Florence State Archives (Files of the Presidency of the Buon Governo) we did not find anything on Meucci's incarceration in the period he indicated, neither in the *Common Affairs* section nor in the *Secret Archive* section (in which there is an *"Inventory of the archives of the Secret Buongoverno and of the Secret Prefecture"*). Even though the archives of the years 1833 and 1834 were partly destroyed in the flood that hit Florence in 1966, inspired by our faith in Antonio Meucci's proven sincerity, we continued our research, centering it on *Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi*, expressly named by Meucci in the letter quoted. Thanks to the help given to the author by Dr. *Schiffini* of the *Museo del Risorgimento of Milan*, we were able to find, in a chapter of *E. Michel's* book on Guerrazzi

himself (see bibl.), an explanation for the absence of documents in the Florence State Archives. Michel says, in fact, in a note (see p. 174): “*Secret Archive of the Buon Governo - 1833 - no. 352. In the same archive, no. 532, which should refer to the trial against Guerrazzi and his comrades, is missing. Guastalla (op. cit., p. 277) defends Guerrazzi for having stolen it at the time of his greatest power in Tuscany*<sup>22</sup>.” Michel’s book, furthermore, contains very useful information on political conspiracies in Tuscany, exactly in the years 1833 and 1834 which interest us, for which reason we have thought it appropriate for the reader’s convenience to reproduce the entire eighth chapter of the book further on.

### Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi - Biography

*Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi* was born in Livorno (*Leghorn*) on 12 August 1804, son of Francesco Donato and Teresa Ramponi. Since childhood, he demonstrated a lively intelligence and a rebellious character. He received his first schooling from the Barnabite fathers of the *San Sebastiano* boarding school. The fathers, especially his teacher, *father Spotorno*, gave him both a classical and a modern

(Enlightenment) education, advising him to read plays and novels by the most famous late-eighteenth-century French writers. Following arguments with his father, Guerrazzi fled home and, for a short time, earned a living as a proofreader, taking advantage of such work to broaden his knowledge. After a reconciliation with his father, he went back to his family and continued his studies in the law school of the University of Pisa, where he found an environment that was politically lively and hostile to the Grand Duchy. He was also suspended for a while from the university for having sympathized with the *subversives*. He graduated with a degree in law in 1824, and thus returned to Livorno, where he opened a law office, at the same time attempting a career as a writer of literary works. However, his first dramas, such as *Il Bianco* and *I Bianchi e i Neri* were not successful. In 1826, he wrote his first historical novel, *La Battaglia di Benevento*, which instead won him great renown.

In the same period, Guerrazzi turned his combative character toward politics, violently attacking conservatives and supporters of the Grand Duchy. In January 1829, he founded a newspaper, which he named *L’Indicatore Livornese*, similarly to the newspaper in Genoa founded by *Mazzini*. His writings irritated the ducal government, which suppressed the newspaper in February 1830. Soon after, following a public speech (commemorating *Cosimo del*

<sup>22</sup>*Guastalla* is probably referring to January 1849, when the *Ministero Democratico* was instituted in Florence, headed by Guerrazzi, Mazzoni and Montanelli, which proclaimed a Constituent Assembly, while the Grand Duke Leopold II was in voluntary exile at Gaeta.

Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi in prison in 1833 ●

*Fante*, deceased in the Russia campaign), in which Guerrazzi launched ardent diatribes of revolutionary content, the ducal police confined him to a forced domicile in Montepulciano for six months. During his confinement, *Giuseppe Mazzini* went to visit him along with *Carlo Bini*<sup>23</sup>. They realized, however, that they could not control Guerrazzi's rebellious character for the purpose of channeling it towards the Mazzini movement's ideals and organization.

When he returned to Livorno from his confinement, Guerrazzi resumed, along with his legal profession, his political activism opposing the Grand Duchy. For this reason, on 2 September 1833, Guerrazzi was arrested by the ducal police during a round-up in which many conspirators were captured (including Bini). The prisoners were locked up for three months at the *Forte Stella* in the town of Portoferraio, where, however, they were treated very well and then released. But Guerrazzi was held under constant surveillance by the ducal police. In 1836, his most famous work was published in Paris, *L'Assedio di Firenze*, which became an important stimulus for the fight against oppressors and tyrants, not only in Italy.

His political activism reached its peak during the revolution of

<sup>23</sup> Carlo Bini, writer and patriot, born in Livorno in 1806, died in Carrara in 1842. He was imprisoned at Portoferraio with Guerrazzi, with whom he had been friends since childhood. In prison he wrote "A Prisoner's Manuscript," which was published posthumously in 1869.

1848-49, in which he played a determining role. Since 1847 Guerrazzi had already been collaborating on the *Corriere Livornese*, practically transforming it from a moderate to a revolutionary newspaper. Following riots that broke out in Livorno, Guerrazzi was again arrested and sent to Portoferraio, in January of 1848. Freed after a brief imprisonment, he took to his political activities again. On 8 February 1849, he established, together with *Giuseppe Montanelli* and *Giuseppe Mazzoni*, the *Governo Provvisorio* (provisional government) in Florence, forcing *Leopold II* to flee into exile at Gaeta. On 27 March of the same year, Guerrazzi was named dictator, but a popular insurrection which broke out in Florence on 13 April 1849 overthrew the *Governo Provvisorio*. Immediately afterward, the Grand Duke, supported by Austrian troops, returned to Florence, and Guerrazzi was imprisoned first in the Belvedere fort and then in the Volterra dungeon awaiting trial. There he wrote the famous *Apologia della sua vita politica* and *Beatrice Cenci*. After four years of (very mild) imprisonment, he was sentenced to seven years of penal servitude for lese majesty. In 1853 he accepted the commutation of his penalty into exile from the Grand Duchy. He chose Bastia, in Corsica, where he remained for about four years, devoting himself to writing other works, such as *Pasquale Paoli o la rotta di Pontenuovo*. In 1857, Guerrazzi fled from his place of exile because of dissensions with

the French government, and, with the consent of the Sardinian government, took refuge in Genoa, where he remained until the end of 1859. After April 1859, when Tuscany was united with the Kingdom of Italy, he refused to return there because he was not invited with the proper attention and regard by the new *Ricasoli* government. He was elected deputy for the *Rocca S. Casciano* constituency in 1860, and in successive legislatures (until 1870) in the *Casalmaggiore*, *Livorno I* and *Caltanissetta* constituencies. In Parliament he sided with the far left, opposing in particular the politics of the *Count of Cavour*, especially regarding the cession of Savoy and Nice to France.

In 1870 he settled in Livorno, where he held the office of Mayor for about a year. He then retired to his farm at *Fitto di Cecina*, where he expired on September 23, 1873. His final work was *Il secolo che muore*, considered his political last testament. In 1885 the city of Livorno dedicated a statue to him, which was erected in the square that bears his name.

### The Conspiracies of 1833

Here below we included the entire Chapter VIII of *Michel's* book, cited in our bibliography, since it is of extreme interest in order to cast light on the events of Antonio Meucci's last two years of residence in Florence before going to Havana.

Michel, E., *F. D. Guerrazzi and Political Conspiracies in Tuscany*

*from 1830 to 1835*, Società Editrice Dante Alighieri di Albrighi-Segati & Co., Milan, 1904.

#### «Chapter VIII

Summary: *Fears of the police; Arrests throughout the Grand Duchy; The second trial of the "Giovine Italia;" Other secret societies; Surveillance of the liberals*

The various demonstrations which had occurred in succession in the Grand Duchy led the police to believe that they were not isolated events limited to one place or person, but that they were connected and dependent on "social and sectarian affections."

The police had already known for some time that in Siena a brotherhood of the *Giovine Italia* had been reorganized thanks to the attorney Francesco Guerri and the mathematician Enrico Montucci, and they had managed to get their hands on the sect's documents and circular letters. These printed papers gave an account of the state of affairs, insisted on the propagation of the society, fixed impositions, the state of the treasury, the armed decuries and their hierarchy, and boasted of relations abroad and the cooperation of other societies all aimed at the founding of a free and independent Italian republic.

After discovering the existence of this brotherhood, on the night between 6 and 7 April [1833 - Editor's note] Lieutenant Pietro Casaglia and several other officers burst in on Guerri, Montucci, Matteo Nabissi, the new convert

Adeodato Piretti and other federates in the suppressed convent of Santa Chiara. The papers and records found in the meeting room were confiscated. Among them there were a paper entitled *Arbor cognationis*, a list of federates, and a book entitled *Lucubrationes Syrio-Kopticae*, the three of them written in enigmatic or conventional characters.

The discovery of these important documents, confirming the criminality of the scheme, persuaded the police to deliver the defendants without delay to the Criminal Court, so that they might be tried according to the ordinary rules of justice and that a proceeding begin under the title of "*Attack against the public order or lese majesty.*"

To decipher the important confiscated documents, the court summoned a youth, a certain Giuseppe Semach, an expert in ancient languages and in arbitrary and conventional characters. He accepted the job with much repugnance, and translated *Arbor cognationis* and the list of federates, but either did not want or was unable to explain the book *Lucubrationes*. Nonetheless it came to be known that the Siena brotherhood was composed of 195 individuals, of which the names of 147 were known with certainty.

As if the evidence already collected were small, a few days later Guerri informed the President of the Buon Governo that he was willing to make many disclosures if he were promised impunity.

President Bologna traveled promptly to Siena, and had an

"extended conference" with Guerri. The latter revealed:

"that the Siena brotherhood was comprised by Enrico Montucci, director of the Police Department, under the war name *Ettore di Ruvo*, Francesco Guerri, director of the Interior, *Giovanni Aguto*, Antonio Pistoï, director of the Finance Department, *Pietro Farnese*, Giuseppe Paselli, director of the *Bonifazio Visconti* Education Center, Celso Marzucchi, president of meetings, *Roberto Guiscardo*, now resigned;

"that the central Tuscan brotherhood was based in Florence; its heads and correspondents with Siena were the attorneys Venturi and Salvagnoli, who signed their names respectively as *F. Spinola*, director of foreign affairs, and *Foscolo*, director of Finances;

"that the Siena brotherhood received both orders and news from the central one, and presided over Poggibonsi and Chiusi, where there were so-called orderers, that is Federico Sozzi, Mayor, in Chiusi and the Marchi brothers in Poggibonsi ...;

"that the Siena brotherhood held correspondence with two other chapters, that is the central one and the one in Livorno, of which the heads known to him were Giovanni Palli, merchant, and Carlo Bini, from Livorno ...;

"that the central brotherhood corresponded abroad with the ones in Bologna and Lucca; that these had the same government as the one in Siena, without the latter however having legal knowledge of this ..."

These revelations alarmed, as one can easily imagine, the timid and fearful ducal police, and they alarmed it even more since it was being informed of liberal machinations from all over the place.

The Austrian minister in Florence led the President of the Buon Governo to believe that a landing by Mazzini on the Tuscan coast was possible; and Mr. Bologna hastened to give the severest orders for the terrible conspirator to be arrested immediately. This was the description he sent to the governor of Livorno:

*Mazzini Giuseppe, age 25 approximately.*

*Proper height, thin.*

*Face rather long, olive color.*

*Jet black hair.*

*Eyes the same, beautiful and bright.*

*Beautiful forehead which they have called Homeric.*

*He wears small black mustaches.*

*Nice voice, clear, quick in speech.*

*Noble deportment, energetic in everything.*

From Livorno a spy who enjoyed the trust of the liberals referred to the same Bologna that they had tried to corrupt the police chief Biliotti “to act unembarrassed and careless during Mazzini’s planned landing in Livorno”; and also that an emissary from the *revolutionary committee in France* had been sent to Tuscany with a million French Francs to serve the insurrection movement in Italy.

The police chief of Santa Croce, reporting to Bologna on liberal machinations, wrote: “At the moment it is universally believed among the liberals that also in Tuscany the moment is near for the crisis of convulsion in which the whole civilized world has the misfortune of finding itself.

“I believe that the liberal grand committee now seated in Geneva has finally decreed the Italian revolution, and is waiting at any moment to hear that it is realized and to experience its effects.

“It is incredible how much fanaticism therefore reigns today among the sectarians, and how much exultance dominates their hot heads.”<sup>24</sup>

In spite of the discoveries made and the alarming reports that arrived from every part of the Grand Duchy, the government did not make any decision, and limited its action to sending a circular letter to all magistrates regarding the rumor of a general uprising in all Italy.<sup>25</sup>

But soon the police succeeded in obtaining this letter from Mazzini dated from Geneva 16 August [1833, Editor’s note], to Giacomo Caraggi in Florence:

“Brothers I. U. L. [Italy United and Liberated, Editor’s note] Now and forever.

The signal for the Italian insurrection has been given. The field

<sup>24</sup>Secret Archive of the Buon Governo - 1833 - no. 429.

<sup>25</sup> Secret Archive of the Buon Governo - 1833 - no. 446.



is open. Whoever might not know how to seize the opportunity would merit infamy or worse from his brothers! The Neapolitan insurrection is not a partial uprising, nor a desperate attempt, it is the beginning of an Italian uprising, calculatedly adopted so that the uprising will have a point of support and also so that in case of an accident the insurrection can regain strength and not be rapidly suppressed. Because in the face of all Italy, the uprising in Piedmont towards which the eyes of twenty million people are turned is weak and must not take risks, after the latest disorders, until the moral effects of the Italian insurrection assure it of the unanimous concurrence of all elements whatever the color of their political orientation. For I know that by one of those coincidences that must nonetheless be foreseen, that if the uprising begun from Piedmont were suppressed, no one would any longer dare to rebel in Italy, whereas if such should happen after the initiative had spread elsewhere, they would rebel again after ten or fifteen days. Since Naples was the point around which the most Italian and European uncertainties are bound, it was necessary for Italy and Europe with the Neapolitan campaign to prove that the uprising is unanimous, that the system is one, that the fire of the G.I. [Giovine Italia, Editor's note] has penetrated the political-topographic-military positions in the whole peninsula. Every town must act as if the health of all Italy rested in its actions.

“Every town must act as if on its action depended the welfare of the whole Italy.

“Every town must act as if the neighboring town were about to rebel, and the means of its own insurrection would thereby emerge.

“The already hinted uprising of bands in the Papal States will begin well before the 20th in the Ancona territory commanded by the famous Sciabolone.

“Tuscany must rebel rapidly, energetically, republican-ly, youthfully. The quickness of the uprising must be our safety; several days after the Neapolitan offensive all the Italian territory comprised between the Faro and the Po must be emancipated. The Tuscan insurrection is necessary to prevent the Austrians from dividing the eastern and western Italians.

“The Tuscan insurrection is assigned for the insurrection of Siena and Montepulciano to reinforce the insurrection of the neighboring Perugia territory. The Livorno insurrection is to open a port to the rebellion and to the thousands who will rush to Italy. The Pistoia and Pisa ones are to materially cooperate with the insurrection in the Duchy of Modena and Lucca, and to conduct, once the Lucca uprising is carried out, a rapid demonstration on the Ligurian Riviera, then move with a select company of brave youths towards the Sarzana territory passing through Massa and Carrara and the Lunigiana territory, where the town of Val di Magra especially must be a gathering of good Italians who

may ensure the communication between the Eastern and Western links.

“Tuscany must be confident like the other Provinces, nor must it separate itself with culpable diffidence from its brothers. In Revolution, there is a point at which everything depends on unified thinking and quickness of decision and execution.

“Confidential. If Livorno should ever be recusant, the Florentine brotherhood will remain entrusted with the execution of orders with the Siena brotherhood and with the other Tuscan one. The Livorno brotherhood will in such a case be dissolved and all powers regarding Livorno’s matters will be conferred to a single power in Florence.

F. Strozzi.”

[F. Strozzi was Giuseppe Mazzini’s pseudonym, Editor’s note]<sup>26</sup>

This letter from Mazzini was the surest evidence of an intention to attempt an insurrection in Tuscany as well, and the government believed the moment had arrived to intervene. Two ways, as Baldasseroni<sup>27</sup> wrote, appeared before them: to prepare for the event, wait for the beginning of its execution, suppress it with force and then strike down the rebels with the rigor of the law, or to tear down the ranks of the conspiracy, prevent the crime, spare possibly

bloody repression and punishments that might lead to severe terms of justice.

The second option was preferred, and on September 1, several trusted employees were sent from Florence to Livorno, Pisa, Siena, and Montepulciano to bring instructions to the local governments.

The next day, the liberals were arrested with the utmost secrecy, and their papers searched by the police: arrested in Florence were Vincenzo Salvagnoli, Enrico Con-trucci, and Luciano Salle, a young shopkeeper who was in charge of picking up revolutionary mail at the post office; arrested in Pisa were Giuseppe Menici, the lawyer Angiolini, and the count Alamanno Agostini; in Siena Dr. Vaselli and Fausto Mazzuoli; in Montepulciano Zelindo Boddi, the surgeon Gherardi and Bernardo Basetti; in Livorno Alessandro Foggi, Carlo Guitiera, Ciriaco Domenickelli, of Greek origin, Luigi Minutelli, Carlo Bini, and Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi.<sup>28</sup>

All the arrested were locked up in the Old Fortress in Livorno to be subsequently sent off to different places. A few days later Guerrazzi, Pini [*Bini*, Editor’s note], Agostini, and Angiolini were sent to Portoferraio and locked up in the Forte della Stella.

<sup>26</sup>This letter, left out of the *Epistolario mazziniano* published by Sansoni, was authored by Guastalla in the work already cited.

<sup>27</sup>*Leopold II and his time*, page 99.

<sup>28</sup>[Editor’s note]: It is to be taken into account that E. Michel mentioned the name of the *important* persons arrested. People like Antonio Meucci (not prominent at the time) were not quoted.

The journey described with such refined humor by Bini in a letter to his father<sup>29</sup> was stormy; and the good governor of Livorno was sorry that the prisoners had so suffered sea-sickness<sup>30</sup>.

The prisoners in the Old Fortress were not treated too severely. They were administered—and the expense charged to the fiscal treasury—a daily meal consisting of soup, boiled meat, entree, fruit, bread and wine, besides table linens and oil for lamps, for the sum of 2: 6: 8 per person. An upholsterer named Silvestro Magnani had arranged each room with the necessary furniture, with change of bed linens every fifteen days for a total sum of 10 lire a month per person. And since these supplies were arranged towards mid October, the prisoners were later reimbursed for expenses they had had to cover earlier to support themselves<sup>31</sup>.

In addition, the prisoners were not prohibited from receiving or writing letters; but these had to regard family affairs and interests, not useless or leisurely things. They could also receive visits from relatives or friends. The lawyer Venturi was visited daily by his wife, and since he was afflicted by certain health

problems, the governor allowed “that husband and wife be left free to converse together even closed in a room without the assiduous presence of anyone supposed to watch and listen to their discussions.”

The lawyer Salvagnoli was also frequently visited by relatives and friends. On 7 October the lawyer Pietro Garinci from Empoli asked and was allowed to discuss several civil suits with prisoners Salvagnoli and Venturi. He went to the fortress in the morning and had a conference with Salvagnoli; in the evening he went back to talk with Venturi, and while he was going to the latter’s room, Salvagnoli passed him a paper from his window onto the corridor. The escorting corporal ordered the visitor to give it to him, but Garinci refused, and ripped the paper into tiny pieces.

When this fact was referred to the fortress’s commanding officer, Garinci was arrested and held in jail until the end of the hearings. “His actions,” wrote the Commissioner of the Interior, “seemed irregular and reprehensible, and raised grave suspicions of connivance and perhaps collusion to support the views of the prisoner Salvagnoli, all the more so because information collected has shown him to be a dangerous subject in terms of political opinions.”<sup>32</sup> The abbé Contrucci was visited by the bishop of Livorno, monsignor Gilardoni,

<sup>29</sup>*Scritti di Carlo Bini*, edited by G. Levantini Pieroni, p. 340 (Florence, Succ. Le Monnier, 1900).

<sup>30</sup>Livorno Historical City Archives - *Copialettere del Governatore* - 1833 - no. 683.

<sup>31</sup>Livorno Historical City Archives - *Ministerial Correspondence* - 1833 - 3rd block, file 153.

<sup>32</sup>Livorno Historical City Archives - *Ministerial Correspondence* - 1833 - 3rd block, file 153.

and the kindly prelate, to make the detainee's imprisonment less painful, sent him many books from his own private library. The learned abbé occupied much time in study, and translated St. Augustine's best Soliloquies<sup>33</sup>. Some time later he fell ill, and the governor had him transferred from the Old Fortress to the Capuchins' monastery, entrusting him to the superior father Mei, who was "so renowned for the irreproachability of his principles."

In spite of all these attentions, Contrucci left a pathetic diary of his imprisonment<sup>34</sup>. Guerrazzi also complained of suffering in his incarceration, and not out of a habit of declamation, as Martini notes, but because a pride equal to his great intellect, so wounded, suffered pains the body does not even know, and which for him changed those few months into as many of Spielberg's years<sup>35</sup>.

And yet even in Portoferraio Guerrazzi and his prison mates were treated with every possible regard. They wrote and received letters, conversed together, read books. Bini sent his burlesque tales to Angiolini: "*To Messer Agnolo the happy detainee*," and wrote a *Prisoner's Manuscript*. Guerrazzi, knowing that Napoleon had left a part of his library in

Portoferraio, took to studying all sorts of books—specially historical and political ones—with great ardor, and to composing *L'Assedio di Firenze*. The Forte della Stella can boast having witnessed between its walls the dawning of a poem that was sacred to the Italian generation.

After three months of useless investigations, the detainees were released. Salvagnoli was enjoined not to associate with suspicious persons and to retire for a time to his villa at Corniola near Empoli. Guerrazzi and Bini were made to understand through an *emphatic reprimand* that "if what happened had not been sufficient to admonish them to stay quiet, to not get mixed up in vicious relations of the kind for which they had been reproached, and to not approach persons known to be previous offenders of the same kind and notoriously suspicious, they would find themselves exposed to greater displeasures and more rigorous measures of longer duration depending on the case or circumstances."<sup>36</sup>

Only the federates of the Siena brotherhood underwent a regular trial. The criminal court, on the beginning of 1834, found the defendants guilty of the crime of *lese majesty to a remote degree*, and condemned Guerri to six years of

<sup>33</sup>*Opere edite e inedite di Pietro Contrucci* - Vol. IV (Pistoia, Cino Printing House).

<sup>34</sup>See A. Chiti, *Il risorgimento italiano nel carteggio di Pietro Contrucci*, Paravia, Turin, 1904, p. 25 ff.

<sup>35</sup>*Proemio alle memorie* del Giusti, Treves, Milan, 1890, p. XLI.

<sup>36</sup>*Secret Archive of the Buon Governo* - 1833 - no. 352. In the same archive no. 532 is missing, and should refer to the hearing against Guerrazzi and his comrades. Guastalla (op. cit., p. 277) defends Guerrazzi of having stolen it at the time of his greatest power in Tuscany.

forced domicile at Grosseto, Montucci to five years of the same penalty, Nabissi to three years of confinement to the [Tuscany's] Lower Provinces, and Peiretti to the detainment already served.

The search performed in Alessandro Foggi's house in Livorno led the police to the discovery of a second secret society named the *Veri Italiani* (true Italians).

Founded in Paris by Filippo Buonarroti, descendant of the great Michelangelo, the *Veri Italiani* society had spread quickly into Italy as well. It proposed to make a single state out of the various Italian states and to convert it into a republic based on complete equality, and thus had the same goal as the *Giovine Italia*.

Nonetheless, Mazzini opposed it with outraged hate, because it relied on the support of France. "The *Giovine Carbonaria dei Veri Italiani*," he wrote to Rosales<sup>37</sup>, "is French to the very end. The *Veri Italiani* are a noose held out to the Italians so that they may lose the fruit of all their labors and be nicely subject to foreign direction in the yoke of the French. The *Giovine Italia* is the Palladium, and the national banner par excellence. Must we always be slaves, even in the career of liberty?"

And again with increasing hate he wrote to Rosales: "In Italy the brotherhood of the *Veri Italiani* is spreading. May God strike them down! I have news of them from

Modena, from Tuscany and even from the remote Ancona. Their maxim is to do nothing serious, and yet they never dare, nor do they ever stumble ..."

Even though he opposed it so ferociously, in order to avoid a dangerous dualism, Mazzini had not refused an accord between this society and the *Giovine Italia*. Toward the end of 1832 the bases of an agreement had been drawn up and signed by Mazzini and by Gaetano Ceccherelli, commissary with special powers from the *Veri Italiani*.

Several copies of these basic agreements were thus found in Foggi's house, along with the society's *General Statute*, the Statutes of *Family no. 17* established in Livorno, and various papers which regarded the founding of the same family and the basic agreement between the *Veri Italiani* and the *Reformed Carboneria* in Livorno.<sup>38</sup>

From these papers the names of all the sect's affiliates were also learned. Since these were very numerous, a sovereign resolution on 17 November ordered regular judicial proceedings only against those who were listed as heads, regulators and recruiters, and that there be no arrest or incarceration for those simply registered as sect members.

Arrested were Carlo Guitiera, who by authorization from family no. 1 had established family no. 17 in Livorno, and Magliulo, Montefiore, Tubicci, Barigazzi, Balzano,

<sup>37</sup>*Epistolario*, Vol. I, p. 187.

<sup>38</sup>All these documents were published by Guastalla (op. cit., p. 406 ff.)

Ottolenghi, and Alessandro Foggi, who had all been the society's first affiliates and had striven for others to join.

In the following chapter we will see the trial and the sentence pronounced against these sectarians by the criminal court of Florence.

After the arrests throughout the Grand Duchy in September 1833, the police continued to exercise the most careful and scrupulous vigilance.

More than a few individuals, both Tuscan and foreign, from the moment of the first arrests had precipitously left their homes. The President of the Buon Governo wrote to the various government authorities: "Such behavior seems to explain a great deal, so that we may suspect them especially if they are already known for their adherence to the sayings of these days, and, in the case of foreigners, this event can suffice for the adoption of a provision prohibiting them from re-entering the Grand Duchy should they leave it, or to make them promptly leave in the case they should re-enter and reappear in the place they had abandoned without a known legitimate cause."

Refugees from other Italian states, particularly from the Lombardy-Venetia state, were not admitted into Tuscany; foreigners were not let out of sight. In Livorno a certain Santi Hermit, a baker from Provence, was constantly watched because he was suspected of storing cartridges. A

foreign captain, one Giacobello, was interrogated and searched because he was believed to have taken on the task of transporting two cases of rifles to Viareggio.<sup>39</sup>

The police did not even spare any special regard for the ladies. The countesses Giovanna Maffei and Teresa Guiccioli, "suspected of political afflictions," were carefully observed, especially the latter, who had just come from Marseilles, and was suspected of having some sectarian office.<sup>40</sup>

Bologna recalled the Governor of Livorno's attention to the nearby island of Corsica: "I must not overlook to warn you that Corsica is today one of the principal meeting points for faction members, who it is even believed to have succeeded in organizing an imposing mass of militia, even available for foreign expeditions, and that these militia have already been assigned to different points on the Italian coast. It is additionally believed that the most famous and hot-headed chiefs of the *Giovine Italia*, particularly the most renowned Mazzini, have already gone or are about to go to that island to direct the movement and the expeditions of the so-called federates ..."

Some time later the baron of Formont, French consul in Livorno, went to the governor Garzoni Venturi and, showing him

<sup>39</sup>Livorno Historical City Archives - *Ministerial Correspondence* - 1833 - 3rd block, file 153.

<sup>40</sup>Secret Archive of the Buon Governo - 1833 - no. 62.

a letter from the duke Di Broglio, assured him that the rumors which had spread in Florence of a large arms deposit on Corsica and of a possible hostile attack on the Tuscan coast were false.<sup>41</sup>

Nonetheless Bologna was not reassured, and since around the middle of November several individuals of good condition had gone to the island for the season's abundant hunting, he advised the Tuscan consul to practice cautious surveillance over all of them, especially Francesco Cipriani and Luciano Bartolommei from Livorno, "to investigate their movements and know with greater accuracy the real motive of their simultaneous journey."<sup>42</sup>

Even the liberals, who were staying quiet in the Grand Duchy, were subjected to constant surveillance.

The police chief for the outskirts of Florence kept an eye on several vacationers at Galluzzo, among them Colonel Poerio: "It seems in truth," wrote the police chief in a report, "that this man only attends to leading the life of a hedonist, and that having removed his dangerous blood ties (!), he no longer gives cause for apprehension."<sup>43</sup>

In Pisa and Livorno, police's fears were raised by Giuseppe

Montanelli and Giuseppe Mazzoni.

The former, "a very studious youth, very attached to the *cavaliere* Prof. Carmignani, and friend of the lawyer Angiolini," was suspected of acting as an intermediary for correspondence between the liberals. The latter, who had already compromised himself with the Tuscan police, had been expelled from the Sardinian states for having distributed various pamphlets of the *Giovine Italia*, and for having tried to subvert and corrupt the minds of young students in the Spedale [Hospital, Editor's note] quarter of Genoa.

To keep Mazzoni from stirring up the Tuscan schools, Bologna relegated him to the Lower Provinces. Not until June of 1835, when a third of the inflicted confinement had passed, did he permit Mazzoni to return to Livorno, renewing however all the constraining precepts that tied him down. Again in Livorno suspicions were raised by several foreign consulates, particularly those of Greece, the Sardinian states, and even Austria.

The Austrian consul's son, Peter Tausch, recently named vice-consul, was friend with Pachò, Pietro Bastogi, the lawyer Ricci, Guerrazzi and the Greek consul's eldest son, Panaiotti Palli, especially dangerous in political matters. It was said that Tausch had made friends with Mazzini during his stay in Livorno, and that the terrible agitator had several times been a guest of the Austrian consul.

<sup>41</sup>Livorno Historical City Archives - *Copialettere del Governatore* - 1833 - no. 910.

<sup>42</sup>Secret Archive of the Buon Governo - 1833 - no. 479.

<sup>43</sup>Secret Archive of the Buon Governo - 1833 - no. 62.

Even Luigi Spagnolini, eldest son of the Sardinian consul, harbored the same sentiments as Tausch, and like the latter was always surrounded by liberals. "These [liberals]," wrote the police magistrate, "are interested in having proselytes and influence in these two most important and feared consulates, whereas they are quite content with the French, American, Belgian and several other consulates where they already have easeful and well-established relations."

Friendships and relations with the liberals were dangerous especially for the Austrian consul. And in fact Tausch was more than once heard exclaiming, "These boys want to be the ruin of me!"<sup>44</sup>

And they would have certainly gotten him into some difficulty if the blind reaction to which the various governments of Italy abandoned themselves had not astonished the liberals and restrained them from other revolutionary endeavors.»

[Here ends Chapter VIII of Michel's book]

### Conclusions

From the above, we can deduce that the Tuscan conspiracies came to light with the discovery by the ducal police of the *Siena brotherhood of the Giovine Italia* at the beginning of 1833. From the documents confiscated by the police on 7 April 1833 in the

headquarters of the brotherhood, it was learned that the Siena brotherhood was composed of 195 initiates, that it depended on the *central brotherhood in Florence* (of which the heads were identified), that there were other brotherhoods in Poggibonsi, Chiusi and Livorno, and finally that the *central brotherhood* corresponded abroad with the Bologna and Lucca brotherhoods.

The letter sent by Mazzini from Geneva to Florence, on 16 August 1833, in which he stated in no vague terms that Tuscany must "*rebel rapidly, energetically, republican-ly, youthfully,*" came to the attention of the police, which decided to proceed, in great secrecy, with a series of *preventive arrests* in Florence, Livorno, Pisa, Siena and Montepulciano on 2 September 1833. *Guerrazzi* was among those arrested in Livorno. Probably *Meucci* was among those arrested in Florence. Since, according to what Michel wrote, all those arrested were locked up in the Old Fortress of Livorno, to be later sent to *various destinations*, it may be possible that Meucci was sent, together with *Guerrazzi*, from Livorno to Portoferraio. Their imprisonment lasted three months, at which point they were released, just before Christmas of 1833 (as was often the habit).

Also of interest is the existence in Tuscany of a second secret society, called *Veri Italiani*, founded in Paris by Filippo Buonarroti (a left-wing politician) and at first disliked by Mazzini. The docu-

<sup>44</sup>*Secret Archive of the Buon Governo* - 1832 - no. 385.



ments confiscated by the ducal police in Livorno indicated that this sect's affiliates were as numerous as those of the so-called *Carboneria Riformata*, with which, nonetheless, the *families* of the *Veri Italiani* had just agreed on an alliance pact.

Finally, *Michel* tells us (more elaborately in a later chapter not transcribed here) of the hearings against the affiliates of the *Carboneria* at the beginning of 1834, and of the respective sentences. It all seems, therefore, perfectly congruent with Antonio Meucci's affirmations about his incarcerations, both in 1833 and in 1834. Even the fact that Meucci's name is missing from the parish registers in 1833, 1834 and 1835 seems justified by *Michel's* affirmations: "*More than a few individuals, both Tuscan and foreign, from the moment of the first arrests had precipitously left their homes ...,*" as well as the declaration of the President of the Buon Governo that, "*Such behavior seems to explain a great deal, so that we may suspect them especially if they are already known for their adherence to the sayings of these days ...*" It is also of no surprise, that Antonio and Esther had managed to be dispensed from the publication of their marriage, in order to avoid disclosing Antonio's domicile, and that in the end they were induced to abandon Florence.

## Chronology

1804 - 12 August - Birth in Florence of Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi

1824 - Guerrazzi obtains his degree in law at the University of Pisa, then opens a lawyer's office in Livorno

1826 - Guerrazzi writes his first historical novel

1829 - January - Guerrazzi founds the newspaper *L'Indicatore Livornese* in Livorno

1830 - February - *L'Indicatore Livornese* is suppressed by the police. Soon afterward, because of a speech hostile to the Grand Duchy, Guerrazzi is sent into confinement at Montepulciano for six months. Here he meets Mazzini, with whom he cannot reach an agreement

1833 - beginning - The ducal police discovers the existence of the Siena brotherhood of the *Giovine Italia*

1833 - 7 April - Police break into the Siena brotherhood and confiscate documents which reveal the sect's organization in all of Tuscany

1833 - 16 August - Mazzini in Geneva sends a letter to Florence, inciting all Tuscany to rebel immediately. The letter comes to the attention of the police, who decide to carry out a series of preventive arrests in many Tuscan cities, with the utmost secrecy

1833 - 2 September - Guerrazzi is arrested by the police in a round-up and sent to the *Forte Stella* in Portoferraio, where he is held for three months. Then he is released along with other conspirators. Other arrests are carried out, the same day, in Florence (presumably Antonio Meucci among others), Livorno, Pisa, Siena, and Montepulciano. Many suspects leave their homes, furthering the police's suspicions

1834 - Other hearings are held against the *Carboneria* affiliates in Tuscany

1836 - In Paris, Guerrazzi's most famous work, *L'Assedio di Firenze*, is published

1847 - Guerrazzi collaborates with the *Corriere Livornese*, transforming it into a revolutionary paper

1849 - January - Following riots in Livorno, Guerrazzi is arrested and sent to Portoferraio

1849 - 8 February - Guerrazzi constitutes the *Governo Provvisorio* in Florence, together with *G. Montanelli* and *G. Mazzoni*. On 27 March, Guerrazzi is named dictator

1849 - 13 April - A popular insurrection in Florence overthrows the *Governo Provvisorio*. Grand Duke *Leopold II* regains power. Guerrazzi is locked up in the Belvedere fort, then in Volterra. In jail he writes the *Apologia della sua vita politica* and *Beatrice Cenci*. He is sentenced to seven years of prison

1853 - Guerrazzi accepts the conversion of his penalty into exile and goes to Bastia, in Corsica. Here he writes other works, including *Pasquale Paoli or the Defeat of Pontenuovo*

1857 - Guerrazzi flees Bastia because of dissidences with the French government, and repairs to Genoa, where he remains until the end of 1859

1859 - April - Tuscany is united with Italy, but Guerrazzi does not return there because he had not received an official invitation from the Ricasoli government

1860-1870 - Guerrazzi is elected deputy in Parliament, where he sides with the far left

1870 - Guerrazzi, no longer re-elected, settles in Livorno, where for one year he holds the office of mayor. He then retires to his farm at *Fitto di Cecina*

1873 - 20 September - Guerrazzi dies at *Fitto di Cecina*. His last work, *Il secolo*

*che muore*, represents his final political testament

1885 - Livorno dedicates a statue to Guerrazzi, erected in the square that bears his name

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## THE ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS OF FLORENCE

(from the origins to the unification of Italy)

### The Origins

Originally the Academy of Fine Arts was the *Compagnia di San Luca*, an institution of a strictly religious nature, founded during the first decades of 1300, that attracted painters, of which San Luca was the patron. The *Magistratura delle Arti e del Disegno*, where registers of all artists and draftsmen were kept, and the *Scuola d'Arte* (School of Art) were established later. A first step towards the founding of the Academy was made during the middle of the sixteenth century by the famous painter, architect and writer Giorgio Vasari, who, with the support of Cosimo I de' Medici, created the *Accademia del Disegno* (Academy of Design), a corporate body whose members were chosen among the best artists of the *Compagnia di San Luca*. According to the by-laws of the *Accademia* dating back to 1562, masters were required to inspect the works of younger artists one or more times, advise them and single out those who one day would become masters. Every year three new masters were appointed: one for painting, one for sculpture and one for architecture. The school activities also included anatomy lessons, held at the hospital of S. Maria Nuova, and mathematics lessons held on Sundays. As Vittoria Corti writes

in her excellent volume published in the year of the bicentennial of the Academy "... *the aim was to help the more ambitious boys of less humble families to bypass (and they did succeed) the long and servile apprenticeship in the botteghe (workshops), by shortening their training period ...*"

In 1571 the *Accademia* became an independent *Magistratura* and in 1585 new by-laws were adopted and applied until the reforms of Peter Leopold.

Towards the end of the rule of the Medici family, marked by general decadence, even Tuscan universities had deteriorated, with the exception of the one in Lucca, a town which was, however, independent from the Grand Duchy. Vittoria Corti writes in this regard: "... *There was great rivalry between the universities of Pisa and Siena and each would have gladly watched the other succumb, but they both agreed on keeping 250 year-old systems, void of content. ... Each year many young men received degrees, generally in law and medicine, the two professions in which a better living was earned ...*"

### The Leopoldian Reforms

The grand duke Peter Leopold, who came to power in 1765 at the age of eighteen, first implemented State reforms, before dealing with the reform of the *Accademia*. He began on 7 March 1783 by suppressing the *Magistratura delle Arti e del Disegno*, thereby removing its control on the artists

and craftsmen of Florence, who used to turn to it to settle their disputes. Then, with the by-laws of 3 October 1794 Leopold converted the old *Accademia del Disegno* from a simple corporation to an institutional body, thereby giving it its current name: *Accademia di Belle Arti* (Academy of Fine Arts). Peter Leopold transferred the Academy to the former hospital of S. Matteo in via del Cocomero (now via Ricasoli) which leads to Piazza S. Marco, where it still stands today. The hospital of S. Matteo was restored by Paoletti, an architect. Moreover, with his decree of 21 March 1785 Peter Leopold abolished all confraternities (of which there were 264 in Florence alone and 2059 in the entire Grand Duchy), including the *Compagnia di San Luca*, whose members automatically became members of the Academy of Fine Arts.

Peter Leopold introduced two fundamental innovations. The first laid greater emphasis on technical aspects within the framework of art, with the aim - as specified in the by-laws - of *financially boosting Tuscan handicrafts*. The second was that, schooling was to be *public and free*. The eight teachers and two caretakers were from that moment onwards paid by the State, which also covered expenses for teaching material. Students were to pay nothing. However, poor families preferred to send their sons to work, rather than to school. Although the Academy was free, most of the students, with a few rare

exceptions (among which, Antonio Meucci, many years later) came from well-off families. Peter Leopold attached great importance to competition and prizes, which part of the academics were expected to take care of. The aim of the prizes was to stimulate *doing*, rather than dwelling on lengthy and useless disquisitions. Finally, he prevented any form of favoritism in admissions, in that future students were no longer required to sit admittance examinations, for which they were coached, upon payment, by the same teachers who would then examine them.

Students were required to attend one *school* (the *school* was a subdivision of a *class*) per year, unless they chose otherwise or were encouraged to do so by their teacher, providing they had not decided to change subject. Mathematics and anatomy lessons were abolished, so as to allow students to concentrate on basic subjects. The schools of *nude* and *copper engraving* remained. All existing schools of *drawing*, including the ones in Borgo Pinti and Via della Crocetta, merged with the school of Via del Cocomero. The Academy, at its new, restored seat in the former *hospital of S. Matteo*, was inaugurated with a solemn ceremony on 2 January 1785.

The *library* of the Academy was gradually expanded thanks to bequests and purchases. However, many volumes were acquired, following the dissolution of numerous religious orders commanded

Piazza S. Marco toward the mid-eighteenth century  
On the left: the Church and the Convent of the Nuns of S. Caterina.  
On the right: S. Matteo Hospital ●

by Peter Leopold in 1786 and later by the Napoleonic regime between 1808 and 1810. In fact in 1810 the library received about seven thousand books following the above-mentioned dissolutions. However, after the restoration, the grand duke Ferdinand III instructed that most of these books be returned to the religious orders from which they had been seized. The *library* was open *to the convenience of the schools and the public*. From 1816 to 1853 it was moved to the former convent of S. Caterina together with the *Conservatorio d'Arti e Mestieri* (the conservatory of arts and trades), as described further on.

In addition to restoring (or rather, virtually *founding*) the Academy of Fine Arts, Peter Leopold had the Abbé Fontana reorganize the *Museo di Scienze Naturali* (Museum of Natural Sciences), which was re-baptized *Museo di Fisica e di Scienze Naturali* (Museum of Physics and Natural Sciences), where renowned professors, such as Giuseppe Pigri exhibited their work. The Museum also comprised an extremely sophisticated laboratory. The Museum - now the *Museo della Specola*, in Via Roma no. 17 - was opened to the public in 1775. At the time of Antonio Meucci, it was managed by Count Girolamo Bardi, who remained the director until 1829. Count Bardi introduced the free teaching of sciences in the museum, and published from 1808 to 1810 the *Annali del Museo Imperiale di Fisica e di Storia Naturale di*

*Firenze* (Annals of the Imperial Museum of Physics and Natural History of Florence), with articles by professors Babbini, Gazzeri, Targioni Tozzetti and Uccelli.

### **The Napoleonic Interlude**

After the French chased from Florence, in 1799, the grand duke Ferdinand III, the son of Peter Leopold, the Academy suffered the consequences of the wars and there were even times when the teachers of the Academy received no salaries.

The first consequence brought about by the new regime was new by-laws for the Academy imposed on 10 June 1807 by *Maria Luisa of Bourbon*, who became regent of the so-called *Kingdom of Etruria*, created by Napoleon, after the death of her husband Lodovico. Maria Luisa tried with these new by-laws to change the way Peter Leopold had organized the Academy, by re-establishing the *Compagnia di San Luca*, which obtained its ancient privileges and authority again. The teaching of mathematics, perspective and history-mythology was introduced again. Under the guidance of Pietro Benvenuti, the Academy was divided into two levels: students started at the first level at the age of twelve, when they attended a sort of '*liceo*' (secondary school) and basically learned figure and ornamental drawing. Then, they moved on to one of the four classes: Painting, Sculpture, Architecture and Engraving. The Academy was also linked to a *Corpo degli Artigiani* (Body of


Artisans), formed by the thirty best artisans of Florence, who met with the teachers of the Academy once a month with a view to discussing technical matters. The Body was made up by two silversmiths, two bronze workers, two wood carvers, two gilders, two cabinet makers, two upholsterers plus the Royal Master upholsterer, 2 coach-makers, 4 chief master masons, 3 marble-workers, 3 stone-cutters, 3 carpenters and 2 locksmiths. All had to be aged over 35 and be experts in their trade.

With the end of the *Kingdom of Etruria* ordered in October 1807 - a few months after the introduction of the new by-laws of the Academy - and the subsequent annexation of Tuscany into the *French Empire*, all Tuscan institutions were required to adapt to the standards of Paris. As a result, with the decree of 26 October 1809, Fauchet, the Prefect of the *Department of the Arno* (i.e. of Tuscany), established that, a *Conservatory of Arts and Trades* be set up in Florence. It was to pursue similar objectives to those of the Paris' *Conservatoire National des Arts et des Métiers* and be an integral part of the *Imperial Academy of Fine Arts* (the new name of Florence's *Academy of Fine Arts*) with which it shared its seat. However, the French Secretary of the Interior, to whom said decree was submitted for approval, decided "*de ne pas accorder à cet établissement les machines, modèles, dessins etc. qui pourraient occasionner le déplacement des inven-*

*tions et découvertes qui ont eu lieu récemment et des pratiques et procédés qui forment la ressource, dans l'ancienne France, de certaines villes manufacturières*" (see bibl., Gallo Martucci, p. 37). In other words, Paris feared the competition of Tuscan craftsmen and thus decided not to transfer to the Florence's Conservatory of Arts and Trades the most recent machines, prototypes, drawings etc. that were developed in France. The perplexities of Paris were furthermore compounded by the strong opposition of the Florentine academics, who were determined not to mingle arts with trades, *so as to safeguard the dignity of the former*, or at least to keep the Conservatory separate from the Academy.

A decisive step towards the establishment of the *Conservatory of Arts and Trades* was made by the new grand duchess *Elisa Baciocchi*, who assigned to the Academy the former convent of S. Caterina, also situated in piazza S. Marco on the corner between Via degli Arazzieri and Via Larga. In this way, the old Academy and the new Conservatory were (physically) separated. The Conservatory was officially set up on 7 July 1811, but in practice it did not become operative until the following year.

The convent of S. Caterina (today the seat of the Military Headquarters of the Region of Tuscany and Emilia Romagna) was situated almost opposite the Academy on the other side of Piazza S. Marco. After the dissolu-

Location of the Accademia and of the Conservatorio on Piazza S. Marco   
 A: Accademia di Belle Arti;  
 B: Conservatorio di Arti e Mestieri (former Convent of Sta. Caterina) founded and annexed to the Accademia in 1811; removed in 1850

tion of many religious orders, decreed by the French, the convent remained empty for many years, until it was assigned to the Academy in 1811. It was well-suited to host the *Conservatory of Arts and Trades*, because there was sufficient space for the arrangement of cumbersome machinery, to be used for didactic demonstrations and for the exhibits of the perspective museum.

New by-laws were drafted for the Academy, the first of which was introduced on 12 November 1811. According to these by-laws the members of the *Body of Artisans* became members of the Conservatory, though maintaining the same requisites and functions. We will give a detailed description of the 1813 by-laws, despite the fact that they were very short-lived, since the French left Florence in February 1814 and the grand duke Ferdinand III made his return. The 1813 by-laws established that the Academy was to be subdivided into three classes: the first class or '*Class of Drawing*,' which embodied the old Academy; the second class or '*Class of Music and Declamation*,' introduced by the French, who stimulated entertainment-related activities; and the third class or '*Class of Mechanical Arts*,' also known as the '*Class of Arts and Trades*.'

Contrary to modern customs, each class was made up by several schools. For example, the *Class of Drawing* embodied fourteen schools: *Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Perspective, Drawing of Figures* (or *Elements of*

*Drawing*), *Ornamental design, Copper engraving, Gem engraving, Anatomy, History and Mythology, Plaster work, Mathematics* (which included *Hydraulics and Philosophy*), *Drawing of Flowers* and *School of Nude*. The *Class of Music and Declamation* comprised five schools: *Counterpoint* (or *Composition*), *Piano, Singing, Violin* and *Declamation*. Lastly, the *Class of Arts and Trades* was made up by three schools: *Applied Mathematics, Mechanics and Chemistry*. The schools of *Painting, Sculpture* and *Architecture* could only be attended after having finished the school of *Elements of Drawing*, where beginners practiced copying classical drawings, bas-reliefs and plaster casts. The training of beginners also comprised the study of *Anatomy, Perspective* and *History and Mythology*.

As to their location, the various schools of the *Class of Drawing* remained in the old seat in Via del Cocomero, with the exception of the *School of Flowers* and the *School of Mathematics*, which, together with the schools of the so-called *scientific classes* (namely, the classes of *Music and Declamation* and *Mechanical Arts*) were moved to the former convent of S. Caterina. It should not be surprising that music was grouped with scientific subjects: from the Middle Ages, music was part of the *scientific quadrivium* (which included *Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy and Music*) which in England led to a *Master of Arts*, while the more modest *Bachelor*

of Arts required the study of only the *literary trivium*, consisting in *Grammar, Rhetoric* and *Logic* (see bibl., Boorstin, p. 420). The two classes of *Music and Declamation* and *Mechanical Arts* were held in the former convent of S. Caterina until 1850.

Plan of the ground floor of Conservatorio di Arti e Mestieri of Florence (1813) ■

Statics, Kinematics, the properties of water and air and their applications, the equilibrium of simple and composite machines and their use, the impact of hard and elastic bodies, pendulums and their use, resistance of solids, as well as various other applications to the arts and trades were taught at the *School of Mechanics*, which was open on Tuesdays and Saturdays from eleven to one. The *School of Chemistry*, instead, was open on Tuesdays and Fridays from eleven to one o'clock. In 1813 there were only sixteen pupils at the *School of Mechanics* and eleven at the *School of Chemistry*. In the course of the years, there was no remarkable increase in the number of pupils and the *School of Mechanics* became increasingly linked to the *School of Architecture*, in the attempt to achieve the desired synergy between science and art. The *School of Mechanics* was headed by professor Francesco Focacci until 1829, while the one of *Chemistry* was headed by professor Antonio Targioni Tozzetti and his assistant Carlo Calamandrei. The *mechanic* Felice Gori superintended the Physics Laboratory, where tests were made and machinery and tools built, as well as the *Museum of Machinery*. Mr. Gori was also

allowed to live on the premises. It is important to note that, at the time, a *mechanic* was no longer a technician in charge of a museum or the assistant of some great scientist, but rather an *inventor*, that is to say an independent professional, who presented his inventions during public gatherings (see bibl., Gallo Martucci, p. 76).

In 1815 the *Giornale di Scienze ed Arti* (the Journal of Sciences and Arts) was published monthly in Florence. It was sold at the *bottega* (workshop) of its creator and editor Giuseppe Landi, in Piazza del Duomo, near Via de' Servi. It was sold at the yearly subscription price of 30 paoli (equal to about 177,000 lire or \$147.50, in 1990).

The *Class of Mechanical Arts* of the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, nominally a child of the *Conservatoire National des Arts et des Métiers* of Paris, was among the most advanced technical schools of the time. Although in France the *Conservatoire National des Arts et des Métiers* was founded as early as 1794, together with the famous *École Polytechnique*, in the rest of Europe the precursors of engineering schools appeared many years later. For example, in Italy there were only two schools of the kind, that, however, were by no means "polytechnic:" the *School of Bridges and Roads* in Naples, founded in 1811, and the *School of Engineers* in Rome established in 1817. French-style polytechnic schools were set up, in continental Europe, in Berlin in 1821, in Karlsruhe in 1825, in Stuttgart in



1829, in Hannover in 1831, in Dresden in 1851, in Zurich in 1855 and in Milan in 1863. As Luigi Cremona, a famous mathematician, observed in 1861: “for long time [before the advent of polytechnic schools] *only the first rudiments of exact sciences have been taught at the Universities in Italy.*”

The above information was taken from the detailed historical survey of the origins and development of the Schools of Engineering (see bibl., Various Authors, *Il Politecnico di Milano 1863-1914*). This survey highlights the fact that, before the establishment of schools of engineering, most engineers were self-trained (and eclectic) and that the *Collegio degli Ingegneri* (College of Engineers) which existed in Milan from 1563, merely gave a ‘*patente*’ or license to its members, provided they met a number of requirements, including that of belonging to ‘*a socially distinguished family whose members had not been engaged in any vile or mechanic art for a long time.*’

### **From the Restoration to the Unification of Italy**

With the withdrawal of the French from Florence and the return to power of Ferdinand III, the Academy of Fine Arts was subjected to a number of slight changes. The author examined the *Students Registers* from 1820 to 1830 and found only slight differences in the organization of the Academy vis-à-vis the 1813 by-

laws. For example, in 1822 there were sixteen schools and a total of five hundred pupils, as follows (the number of pupils is shown in brackets): *Painting* (45), *Sculpture* (15), *Architecture* (72), *Drawing of Figures* (119), *Perspective* (6), *Ornamental Drawing* (66), *General Engraving* (3) and *Copper Etching* (14), all forming part of the *Class of Drawing*; *Counterpoint* (12), *Piano* (50), *Singing* (21), *Violin* (9), and *Declamation* (27), of the *Class of Music and Declamation*; *Mathematics* (20), *Mechanics* (10), *Chemistry* (14), of the *Class of Mechanical Arts*. It is interesting to note that girls began to be admitted to the Academy between 1825 and 1830.

On 18 June 1824 Ferdinand III died and was succeeded by his son Leopold II, who, with his decree of 14 January 1850, separated the technical schools of manufacturing arts from the Academy. These later formed the *Tuscan Technical Institute*, which, however, remained inactive until the day of its inauguration, 26 February 1857. Less than two years later, Leopold II left Florence definitively and the history of this city became part of the history of the united Italy.

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## THE CLOCK

### The Origins

The most ancient time-measuring instruments were based on the recurrence of stars and planets in the celestial vault; more precisely of the sun, observed in its daily journey, and of the moon and stars, observed in their nocturnal journeys. The 'return of the equal,' as time was defined by *Bergsson*, was perceived by primitive man particularly in regard to the influence of the sun and moon's cyclical movements on many aspects of his life, from agricultural climate to sea tides to women's menstrual cycles and pregnancy, etc. The solar year, the solar day and the lunar month were therefore the first and most obvious units of time measurement in all civilizations, but with various differences which brought about differing solar or lunar *calendars*.

Solar calendars developed in the entire occidental world. They were derived from the *Julian* calendar, promulgated by *Julius Caesar* in 46 BC, then reformed in 1582 by Pope Gregory VII, who established that the 4 October of that year would be immediately followed by 15 October, and that every fourth year would be a leap year, except for years initiating a new century if they were not divisible by 400. The Hebrews, on the other hand, had a mixed solar and lunar calendar, and the

Arab Moslems still follow a lunar calendar today. Furthermore, the measurement of *one month* originated in the recurrence of lunar phases ( $29\frac{1}{2}$  days), not in the sun's movements. Egyptian priests demonstrated their powers to their people by predicting the *Nile's* floods, concurrent to the star *Sirius's* rising together with the sun, an event which only took place once each year. The Egyptians nonetheless adopted a solar calendar, called the *calendar of the Nile*, which fixed the beginning of each year during our month of June, which, thanks to the fertility induced by the swelling of the Nile, also signaled the beginning of agricultural activities.

In China in the Middle Ages, a new calendar was proclaimed by each new emperor, who would pronounce it *better* than the preceding one and than those used by the rulers of other lands (defined as *barbarians*). It was considered a grave crime to challenge the imperial calendar or to propose a different one. For the calendar emanated from the emperor, who was of *celestial* descent and therefore infallible, and *his* calendar was therefore accurate.

Astrology was derived from the (*logical*) consequence that the influence of the stars and planets was supposed to extend to all aspects of life, besides those already known. We must not forget that astrology, like the already consolidated influ-

ences of the sun and moon, was initially an *experimental science*, that is, based on statistical observation of a large number of events. Only later did it degenerate and become the domain of charlatans.

### The Sundial

Before passing from the (solar) measurement units of “year” and “day” to the modern “hour”—defined as one twenty-fourth of the time that passes between one high noon and the next—many millenniums went by. In fact, in the most ancient sundials, the duration of an hour changed according to the season, since gradations of hours were obtained by dividing the interval between dawn and sunset by twelve. Thus, when one spoke of an *hour*, one had to specify the season as well. For example, in 370 BC the Romans prescribed that the marching speed of their army troops must be “*twenty miles every five summer hours.*” Sundials only began to be graduated with *uniform hours* in the sixteenth century, when practical and functional mechanical clocks were largely available.

Sundials appear to have been used as far back as 4000 BC. Several different types existed. The simplest kind consisted of a pole (called the *gnomon*), vertically stuck onto a horizontal, graduated surface on which it projected its shade. The angle formed by the two shades

of dawn and sunset was divided into twelve equal parts. Nonetheless, the most ancient sundial known (Egyptian, of green slate, dating to 1450 BC) was made with a horizontal gnomon instead of a vertical one. Even today, in upper Egypt, a very simple and ingenious sundial is used, made of a graduated linear ruler, with a  $\pi$ -shaped iron stuck into the center, which casts its shadow on the gradations. Later on, the Greek sundial’s gnomon was inclined at an angle parallel to the earth’s rotation axis, so that the direction of its shadow would be independent of the season. In this case, only the *length* of the shadow varied according to the season. And if, as in a Greek specimen from 300 BC, the surface of such a sundial was made inside the hollow of a semi-cone rather than on a horizontal plane, and circles were drawn on it, by adding the proper inscriptions one could easily obtain a yearly calendar.

The ancient Romans had a gigantic sundial in the *Campus Martius*. It was two hundred meters long and used the obelisk now on the Montecitorio square as a gnomon. They also held the supremacy for miniature sundials, with a pocket-size one that was just four centimeters in diameter. Certainly, however, they did not have the same knowledge of astronomy as the Greeks if it is true that they

Water clock built in  
1870 by the Dominican  
Father Embriaco  
(Rome, Palazzo Filippo  
Berardi) ■

actually brought a sundial from Catania to Rome, without considering the difference in latitude between the two cities, and then complained, wrongly, of its inaccuracy. In Palermo there is an Arab sundial dating back to the early Middle Ages, with windows and lights for nighttime, almost identical to the sundial in Damascus. In the Middle Ages sundials were widely used, including portable ones, many of them very sophisticated. They remained in use, along with clepsydras and *astrolabes* (instruments for determining the position of stars), through the end of the eighteenth century.

The thirty standing stones (*megaliths*) arranged along the perimeter of a circle, having a diameter of 91 meters, found at *Stonehenge* in Great Britain and dating back to 1850 BC, followed a different principle than that of the shadow on a sundial. They appear to have served, in addition to some kind of religious functions, as a level for nighttime astronomical observations of yearly and multi-yearly phenomena.

### The Clepsydra

Time-keeping clepsydras (equivalent to our modern-day *timers*), were originally simple graduated vessels made of glass or alabaster, with a small opening in the bottom from which water escaped (*outflow* clepsydras). There were also *inflow* clepsydras, which

measured the level of water filling a graduated vessel. An Egyptian alabaster clepsydra dating back to 1400 BC has been preserved to this day. The word *klepsydra*, which means *water-stealing*, was coined by the ancient Greeks. They used clepsydras in the courts as a time limit (six minutes) for lawyers' speeches. The Romans used twenty-minute water clepsydras for the same purposes. The judge could concede *further clepsydras* to more verbose lawyers. Courtesans used clepsydras for many centuries as a time limit (one half-hour) for encounters with their clients.

One advantage of the clepsydra as compared to the sundial is that it could measure time at night. However, until the sixteenth century, the nighttime *hour*, like the daytime one, was also obtained by dividing the night's duration into twelve equal parts, its length therefore varying over the course of the year. Nonetheless, it is said that the Babylonians made nocturnal astronomical observations using water clepsydras with a precision of 1‰, that is with an error of only a minute and a half per day.

In the second century BC, the Greek *Ctesibius of Alexandria* added an ingenious improvement to the water clepsydra. He used two vessels, one above the other, the first of which (above) was kept at a constant level, therefore insuring a constant rate of outflow of

water. The second vessel (below) received the water and was marked on the side with the gradations of the hours. Afterward, *Ctesibius* inserted a floating part into the receiving vessel on which he applied a rack rod which in turn engaged a cog wheel, from which one could easily obtain a visual representation of the time on a dial or activate an alarm or other mechanisms.

The sand clepsydra (*hourglass* or *sand-glass*), was introduced in the eighth century, apparently by a monk from *Chartres* (France), to avoid the freezing of water that occurred in water clepsydras during northern winters. Subsequently, the sand clepsydra took on the well known shape of two inverted and flame-sealed funnels, a form which did not require refilling and protected the sand from humidity. *Charlemagne* had an enormous sand clepsydra built which lasted twelve hours before needing to be turned over. In Latin America the clepsydra is used as a timer for chicken fights. *Christopher Columbus* used a sand clepsydra—which was turned over by a sailor every half hour—to regulate life on board his caravels. For example, every eight inversions (that is every four hours) the guard changed. Even the velocity of sailing ships was measured up until the end of the nineteenth century with the help

of a small, half-minute sand clepsydra.

A principle similar to *Ctesibius's* float was used in monastic water reminders in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In these, when the water in an inflow clepsydra reached a certain weight, by means of a sort of scale, a container of small metal balls was overturned, causing the contents to fall onto a bell and awaken the rector. Water-driven reminders were followed by mechanical ones. These were realized with a wheel which turned thanks to a weight (aptly controlled by a counterweight). The wheel had twenty-four or forty-eight holes, into one of which a peg was inserted. When the peg hit a lever, it unhooked the alarm-sounding device. The *canonical hours*—those in which some duty must be performed in the *rectory*—varied according to monastic rules. According to the *rules* set by *St. Benedict* in the sixth century, the canonical hours were seven, opportunely distributed in the time interval between the morning awakening and the night's retirement. It is from the monastic reminder alarms that the first mechanical watches originated in the fourteenth century, incorporating a primitive movement regulator, called a *verge escapement*, of which we will speak further on.

To stay with the theme of water clocks, we cannot forget

the *Celestial Mechanism* realized in China by *Su-Sung* in 1088 which, in fact, was a planetary calendar built inside a tower about ten meters high. It was based on a hydraulic wheel with forty eight baskets arranged along its circumference. One of the baskets was filled by a water clepsydra which measured a quarter of an hour, after which the weight of the basket disengaged the brake from the wheel, which could now turn until it hit the next brake, while a new basket took the place of the old one. In other words, *Su-Sung* had invented a water-powered movement regulator (*escapement*). It is truly unfortunate that, in 1094, when another emperor gained power, the preceding calendar was declared *wrong* (as was the custom) and, consequently, *Su-Sung's Celestial Mechanism* was smashed to pieces.

The Jesuit missionaries in China, who applied Galilean theories in open contrast with the Pope, humiliated Chinese astronomers by accurately predicting the sun's eclipse at 10:30 AM on 21 June 1629, with a duration of two minutes, compared to the 11:30 AM with a two-hour duration predicted by the Chinese. This was the first time that the Chinese *Minister of Rites* asked the emperor for a revision of the calendar, a task which was then entrusted to the Jesuits.

### Curious Clocks

The flame clock (made with candles or oil lamps) seemed like a convenient way to measure time during the night hours, as an alternative to the clepsydra. Towards the end of the ninth century, *Alfred the Great*, King of *Wessex*, used a clock with six identical candles, each thirty centimeters long. When the candles were lit in sequence, the clock lasted twelve hours. On each candle twelve notches were carved one inch apart from each other, corresponding to ten minutes each. In the case of oil lamps, the consumption of oil taken from a graduated, transparent vessel was measured from eight o'clock at night to seven o'clock in the morning. This method was perfected by the Milanese scientist *Girolamo Cardano*, who invented a device to ensure a constant flow (and therefore constant consumption rate) of the oil from the vessel to the lamp.

Also of interest are certain other types of clocks based on the sense of *smell*, or *touch and taste*, rather than on sight, and therefore appropriate for nighttime. For instance in China, Japan and Korea, devices to burn different incense powders sequentially were used for the olfactory measurement of time, even at night. The most famous is the *incense seal with one hundred gradations* realized in China in 1073, after a drought had

jeopardized the availability of water for clepsydras. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Frenchman *M. de Villayer* constructed a clock equipped with small containers of different spices corresponding to the numbers on the dial, so that the hand of its owner, awakened in the night, would be guided by the clock's hand in the dark to one of the containers, whose spice would be tasted, enabling him to determine the time.

### The Mechanical Clock

Tower clocks were the first type of mechanical clock, and spread throughout Europe after 1330. They were built with a weight motor device (*charge*) and a *verge* movement regulator (*escapement*). With the mechanical clock, the modern hour measurement—that is, *hours* of identical duration in every place, season, as well as during the day and night—also made its first appearance. The choice of a tower was due to the need for sufficient height for the fall of the weights, so that the clock could be *charged* for at least twenty-four hours. Another reason is that, for the entire century, tower clocks *beat* the hour out on a bell, in order to be heard from far away. It was also said that widespread illiteracy prevented people from *reading* the hour on the dial. It should also be said that the sound of the bells preserved the socializing effects of the church,

reminding individuals that they were part of a community. Furthermore, to emulate the first, magnificent example built in 1350 for the Cathedral in *Strasbourg*, tower clocks in the most important European cities were soon equipped with very sophisticated animation numbers.

The *verge and foliot*<sup>45</sup> escapement, introduced (apparently as far back as the thirteenth century) by an unknown inventor, constituted the first oscillator, though with a not quite regular beat. It involved, in fact, a vertical rod (*verge*), suspended at one extremity from a rope, oscillating around its own axis (thus with the rope twisting), and equipped with two levers fitted onto the rod at different heights and perpendicular to each other. These two levers interacted alternately, at the two ends of the diameter, with the cogs of a crown-shaped vertical cogwheel, dragged into rotation by a weight which, a moment after having pushed one of the levers, is stopped by the other one. Then, thanks to the pull of the weight, the brake would be overcome and the whole process would begin again. The

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<sup>45</sup>The word *foliot* comes from old French *folier* (*to fool around*, or *to behave foolishly*) to designate an object that moves in one direction or the opposite, as does, in our case, the oscillating horizontal bar of the device described in the following (see bibl., Landes, p. 72).



two levers, therefore, alternately arrested and released the cogwheel, transforming the weight's continual action into an intermittent one. A second bar, called the *foliot*, perpendicularly attached to the vertical rod (*verge*) near its upper extremity, and having two symmetrical weights at an adjustable distance from the point of connection with the verge, served as a *fly-wheel*, allowing for the variation of the whole mechanism's rate of oscillation, as in a *balance wheel*. In fact, the combination of *verge and foliot* constituted a rudimentary torsion pendulum, which could have had a more precise rate of oscillation if it weren't for the friction in the suspension cord.

The introduction of the escapement was an important conceptual revolution: the continual flow of time (like the shadow on the sundial, the water or sand in the clepsydra, the oil or wax of lamps) was substituted by distinct instants (that is, *quanta*) of time — marked by the *tick-tack* of the escapement — as well as the *counting* of time instead of its *estimation*. Note that the escapement also assumed the function of giving a periodic impulse to the oscillating system (just like periodically pushing a child's swing), in order to compensate the tendency for the oscillations to dampen because of friction.

Italy was, for more than three centuries, at the vanguard of

technology in mechanical clocks, culminating towards the middle of the fourteenth century with the work of *Giovanni de' Dondi*. He constructed, over sixteen years in Padua, a famed *astrarium* (astral clock) that is a mechanical clock with a perpetual calendar and an extremely complex planetarium, which was visited by curious observers from all over Europe. Giovanni's father, *Jacopo*, was credited with the invention of the clock-face, in 1344. Obviously it only had an hour hand, since at that time the daily error of clocks amounted to dozens of minutes. The same century also saw the construction of *Paolo Uccello's* clock, located in the inner façade of the duomo in Florence.

In the fifteenth century, the substitution of a weight charge with a spring charge allowed for the creation of smaller clocks, particularly table clocks. But, due to their poor accuracy, at first they were mostly appreciated as just ornamental objects. The spring charge appears to have been introduced by *Filippo Brunelleschi* as far back as 1410. From a technical point of view, the clock did not evolve much further until the middle of the seventeenth century, when the pendulum clock was introduced, or rather, when the pendulum was introduced inside the clock. The *motor* (that is, the *charge*) for fixed (tower or wall) clocks continued to be composed of

weights, while for portable clocks it was the spring, whose construction was gradually perfected, for instance, with the addition of a spindle, since its elastic force tended to diminish as the spring uncoiled. It should also be remembered that in 1540 the first machine for carving clock cogwheels was created by *Giannello Torriano di Cremona*, who also constructed a large astral clock for the king of Spain, *Charles V*.

It is known that *Galileo Galilei* discovered the law of the pendulum's isochronism in 1589, when he was just nineteen, using his heartbeat as a clock. Contrary to what one might think, the heartbeat duration of a healthy adult (which can vary from one individual to another by not more than 5% from its average of 0.8 seconds) is very constant, especially for lengths of time of around a minute. *Galileo* also used his discovery inversely with his *pulsilogio*, which consisted in holding a pendulum in one hand and a patient's wrist in the other. The frequency of the pulsations was determined by varying the length of the pendulum's string until perfect synchrony of the pendulum's oscillations with the pulse's beat was obtained. *Galileo* worked on the construction of a pendulum clock in the last ten years of his life, when he was held in segregation and had gone blind. His son *Vincenzo*

has left us with a sketch of a pendulum clock executed according to his father's instructions just before his death in 1642. A model of it, created in Florence in 1883, can be found at the Science Museum in London.

The effective introduction of *Galileo's* pendulum in clocks occurred in 1659, thanks to the Dutchman *Christian Huygens*, who demonstrated, also theoretically, that the pendulum was exactly isochronous if the terminal weight moved along a cycloid arc rather than along a circular arc. The pendulum revolutionized the concept of the oscillator, which was no longer *inert*, as in the *verge and foliot* escapement, but was equipped with its own — and very constant — period, independent from the rest of the mechanism. This allowed for the reduction of error in clocks from several minutes to a few seconds per day and, furthermore, for the introduction of the minute hand on a clock. In fact, after 1670, there began to appear clocks equipped with a second hand, controlled by the so-called *one-second pendulum*, which had an oscillation semi-period (one swing) of exactly one second (length of pendulum equaling 99 centimeters).

Now that they had an independent oscillator, clocks came to be composed of four fundamental parts, identifiable in modern-day clocks as well: 1.

the oscillator; 2. the escapement; 3. the wheelwork (with possible sound alarms); 4. the motor (either by weight or spring).

Two important inventions, just a few years apart, allowed the clock to make a big leap forward. The first one, in chronological order, was made by the Englishman *William Clement*, manufacturer of anchors for boats. In 1671 he invented the *anchor escapement*, inserting it into an *one-second pendulum* clock he built for the church of *St. Giles* in *Cambridge* (England). The anchor had the advantage of oscillating just  $3^{\circ}\div 4^{\circ}$  compared to the  $45^{\circ}$  of the *verge*, thus occupying less space. Furthermore, it was not restricted to a specific orientation. The second important invention was the *spiral balance wheel*, introduced by *Huygens* in 1675, allowing for a much less bulky, and also portable, oscillator than the pendulum. It was composed of a spiral spring, fixed at the inner extremity and oscillating at the outer extremity, to which is attached a small fly-wheel, the equivalent of the terminal weight on a pendulum. We may note that, after the two inventions of spring charge and spiral balance wheel, both functions, of motor and of oscillator, once executed by the force of gravity, are now executed by the elastic force of a spring. The law of elastic force (proportional to the *elongation* of a spring) is credited to

the English physicist *Robert Hooke*, who also claimed (belatedly) that he had preceded *Huygens* by sixteen years in inventing the balance wheel.

The inventions of the spring, the balance wheel, and the anchor escapement together allowed for the construction of sufficiently accurate pocket watches and marine watches, seeing as it was impossible to use a pendulum or a weight motor on a ship or person. Another important step was taken in 1704 with the introduction of perforated precious stones as low-friction cushions for the axes of the cog-wheels and of the balance wheel.

English watchmakers brought themselves to the technical vanguard from the beginning of the eighteenth century to the extent that, by the end of the century, they were exporting around eighty thousand watches per year. Among these were *Thomas Tompion* (who in 1695 obtained the first patent for the cylinder escapement), his pupil *George Graham* (who in 1725 perfected the *cylinder escapement* and introduced it in pocket watches), *Thomas Mudge* (inventor in 1755 of an anchor escapement, also called *lever escapement*, coupled with the balance wheel), and many others. It is believed that the accuracy reached by *Graham's* watches was unsurpassed for nearly two centuries.

As for marine watches, it should be remembered that since the time of the first Atlantic crossings the problem had existed of realizing a clock to carry on board a ship, guaranteeing high precision in order to determine longitude with sufficient accuracy. High prizes were offered to whoever would solve the problem by Philip III of Spain in 1604, and later by Louis XIV of France, by the General Dutch States and, in 1714, by the English Parliament, following a naval disaster off the *Scilly Islands* in 1707. Towards the middle of the century, John Harrison in England and Pierre Le Roy in France constructed marine chronometers which fairly satisfied the requirements. In particular, the fourth prototype constructed by Harrison, known as *Harrison no. 4*, was used between November of 1761 and April of 1762 on the English ship *Deptford* on the Madeira-Jamaica and return route, erring by just ten seconds in one hundred and sixty-one days of navigation. Harrison therefore won the twenty-thousand-pound prize instituted by the English Parliament for the clock that could make the return journey to the West Indies with a less than two-minute error. It is said that the captain of the *Deptford*, W. Digges, while measuring the ship's velocity with the usual log-chip and clepsydra, erred by nearly one hundred miles in the first nine days of navigation,

claiming that Harrison's chronometer was mistaken, not his. Naturally, he had to go back on his word as soon as the ship reached Madeira the next day, as Harrison had predicted.

Important improvements in construction techniques of clocks were introduced at the end of the eighteenth century in Paris by the Swissman Abraham Louis Breguet. His improvements allowed for the passage, in the nineteenth century, to industrial production. At the time, pocket watches generally used an anchor escapement. The winding crown of the spring, substituted for the key used until then, was introduced by Adrien Philippe in 1842.

In 1896, *invar* (an iron-nickel alloy with 36% nickel, featuring invariant length with temperature) was discovered by the Swissman Charles Edouard Guillaume. In 1897 he realized the first *invar* pendulum. In 1898 he applied a spiral to the balance wheels that was made of *elinvar* (nickel-iron-chrome alloy), whose elasticity coefficient remained constant in a wide range of temperatures. Finally, in 1899, Guillaume introduced his *integral balance wheel*, capable of reducing an error of two or three seconds per day in ordinary balance wheels to just a few thousandths of a second per day.

### Modern-day Clocks

Not until our century (1930) did the wristwatch appear. In the fifties automatic winding came into use, which had actually been experimented by *Abram Louis Perrelet* back in 1756. In 1957 electricity entered the scene, initially used as a *motor*, for the generation and transmission of the motive impulse to a normal balance wheel. Later, the balance wheel was replaced by the *accutron*, that is, an electric tuning-fork, vibrating with a period of one three-hundred-and-sixtieth of a second, so even the oscillator became electric. In the sixties the electric tuning-fork was substituted by the quartz-oscillator, with a period of a one-hundred-thousandth of a second, and gears were replaced, in fixed clocks, by electric frequency dividers, employing thermionic tubes. In the seventies, when the transistor had by that time replaced the thermionic tube, clocks became completely electric, gradually becoming smaller and smaller—therefore portable—and more accurate, thanks to progress made in miniaturization and integration techniques for electric circuits.

The best commercial wrist-watches today have an error margin of about a millisecond per day, that is, about one second every three years. Japan began to enter the electronic watch market in 1950, and gained the upper hand towards

the end of the seventies. In 1980, Japan exported nearly seventy million watches out of the ninety million produced in the world, overtaking Switzerland, which had dominated the market for over a century.

Air navigation—in the same way as marine navigation in the eighteenth century—today requires extremely accurate clocks, also to avoid collisions. The maximum precision was reached by atomic clocks, based on the radiation emitted every time an atom undergoes an energy state transition, that is it changes its spatial or electro-magnetic state. Such radiation has an extremely precise frequency (in cycles per second), and is not subject to any environmental disturbances. The first atomic clocks, based on ammonia, were developed in 1947, and could have an error margin as low as one second every thirty years. Modern cesium atomic clocks are ten times as accurate. National standard (cesium) clocks, kept in the greater nations of the world, can today boast an error margin of less than one second every three thousand years. This has made time measurement the most precise of measurements of all physical quantities. Nonetheless, it is theoretically estimated that, by building a hydrogen atomic clock, error could be further reduced to just one second every three hundred thousand years.

Time-measurement precision		
<i>Year</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Error</i>
c2000 BC	heartbeat	one hour/day
	sundials	half hour/day (between seasons)
c1000 BC 1300	water clepsydra	two minutes/day
	tower clock (weight driven)	variable from one hour to 10 minutes/day
< 1675	verge and foliot	4 minutes/day
1675	<i>Huygens</i> , pendulum	2.5 seconds/day
1761	<i>Harrison</i> no. 4	about 10 seconds/year
1899	<i>Guillaume</i>	1 second/year
1928	quartz, standard	1 second/20 years
1947	atomic, ammonia	1 second/30 years
1950	mechanical wristwatch	1 minute/day
1980	quartz wristwatch	1 second/3 years
today	atomic, cesium (NBS)	1 second/3000 years
future	atomic, hydrogen	1 second/300,000 years

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