

Vieri Guadagni by Raffaella Zaccaria

Vieri (common direct ancestor of all the Guadagni branches, French Gadagne, Torrigiani and Dufour Berte) was born in Florence, neighborhood of San Giovanni, “Gonfalone (“Emblem”; each neighborhood in Florence has an “emblem”) is Keys” in 1368 or 1369, from Vieri Guadagni son of Migliore and Bernarda, nicknamed “Lulla”, daughter of Andrea Rucellai. Vieri and Lulla married in 1363 and had also another son, Bernardo.



Rucellai Palace, Florence

Vieri senior’s death, barely in his twenties, in 1368, before Vieri junior’s birth, interrupted abruptly his political career, which he had just started. Also Vieri junior dedicated himself to public life, even though he did not neglect the family finances. He contributed to favor the consolidation of the degli Albizzi clique inside the oligarchic regime, of which he became a leading figure during difficult years for Florence, engaged in stopping the expansionist tendencies of the Visconti Family, rulers of Milan and of other cities of Northern Italy.



Visconti Castle in Pavia, 30 miles from Milano (look at the size of the passers-by on the left, compared to the castle)

It seems that Vieri, still very young, in 1384 (he was 16 or 17 years old) married Margherita, daughter of Manno Donati. In 1395 he married Francesca Tornabuoni (daughter of Simone and aunt of Lucrezia Tornabuoni, future wife of Piero the Gouty, son of Cosimo de’Medici (*the one that Vieri’s older brother, Bernardo Guadagni, arrested and sent into exile*))



Lucrezia Tornabuoni by artist Ghirlandaio, 1475, Vieri's niece by marriage and wife of Piero de' Medici the Gouty. Through Vieri Guadagni and her, Guadagni and Medici became cousins.

Vieri and Francesca had 10 children: Ginevra, Francesco, Niccolosa, Simone (from whom we all descend), Margherita, Migliore, Maddalena, Cassandra, Manno and Malatesta.

In 1391, Vieri qualified for the 3 major offices in Florence, and he did the same in the elections of 1393. His activity in the Government concentrated in an intense diplomatic activity, during which he was sent in several missions, starting in 1396, when he was 28 years old: from January 25 to February 18 he was sent to Conte da Carrara to convince him to fight for Florence in the extenuating war against Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan.



Gian Galeazzo Visconti, Duke of Milan (1351-1402)

From February 26 to March 18 of the same year, Vieri went to Bologna and Ferrara and to others small principalities in Romagna and Marca Anconetana to obtain alliances and hire troops.



Battle between troops of Italian small principalities in the late Middle-Ages

Starting from 1397, when he was 29 years old, we can reconstruct Vieri's honors course in the administrative charges: from April 1, 1397 he was captain of the Society of Orsanmichele (several of his charges, like this one, are similar to his brother Bernardo's). On May 1, 1398, he was Mayor of Prato.



Saint Stephen, Cathedral of Prato

In March-April 1399 he was a Prior; on March 15, 1400, he became one of the 12 "good men"; on August 1, he was officer of supervision for the transportation of cereals inside and out of Florence (it was a very important job during the late Middle-Ages and the Renaissance). In 1401 he intervened several times in political debates: on July 16, on August 16, on November 13, 15 and 30, on December 1. From January 27, 1402, he was "operaio" of Santa Reparata ("Supervisor of public works in Florence") and, in the same year, he was Mayor of San Miniato.



San Miniato

In 1402, he was also elected among the Ten of the Balia Commissary in Bologna and in Romagna to enlist troops for the war in progress; on January 1, 1403 he was elected member of the Ten of Freedom.

In the following March he went to Ferrara to convince marquis Niccolo' d'Este to organize, with the help of warlord ("condottiere" in Italian) Alberico da Barbiano a military campaign to free Bologna from the dominion of the Viscontis.



Marquis Niccolo' III d'Este



Alberico da Barbiano

After Gian Galeazzo's death, Vieri was sent to Lombardy to convince Alberico da Barbiano to ally with Francesco Novello da Carrara, Lord of Padua, and help the cities of Lombardy who wanted to rebel against the Visconti; during his mission he stopped in Ferrara and Venice.



Ferrara



Venice

On January 1, 1404, Vieri was Mayor of Montepulciano. On July 1 he was elected Officer of the Meats; on



Montepulciano.

October 24, he was in favor of the imposition of new taxes. On January 25, 1405, he was appointed to go to Rome and see Pope Innocent VII, together with Iacopo Salviati, Bishop of Fiesole, Tommaso Sacchetti and Lorenzo



Ridolfi, and contribute to the pacification of the Church. On April 25, 1405, he was appointed in charge as Captain of Arezzo, on November 20, as officer of the Castella; in December of the same year he went to Siena with Pierozzo Strozzi to talk that Republic out of assisting Pisa, besieged by the Florentines. On March 12, 1406, he was selected among the 12 “good men” and in the following month of May, with Jacopo Gianfigliuzzi and others, he was appointed general commissary on the field for the Florentine army besieging Pisa.

Soon after however, Vieri became ill and asked to return to Florence; on December 1, 1406, he assumed the charge of Officer of “Difetti”, on June 1, 1407, the charge of Mayor of the City of Prato, on the following December 16, the charge of Officer on the Duties on the Wines. He left that charge on February 27, 1408 because he was elected prior. In March-April he was elected prior again. On March 1, he also got the charge of “operaio” of Santa Reparata, and from October 1, the charge of Officer of the Duties at the doors of Florence.

On January 22, 1409, Vieri was sent as Ambassador to Bologna, to offer assistance to Cardinal Baldassarre Cossa, papal legate, in front of the new danger, represented by Ladislaus of Anjou-Durazzo, King of Naples, who was marching with his army towards the Regions of Umbria and Tuscany.



Cardinal Baldassarre Cossa, later antipope John XXIII



King of Naples Ladislaus of Anjou-Durazzo

From August 28, 1409, Vieri was Captain of the Mountain of Pistoia. In September however as General Commissary on the Field, together with Jacopo Salviati, he was sent to Montepulciano, to join Malatesta of the Malatesta of Pesaro, commander of the Florentine army facing the advance of Durazzo.



Neapolitan army in 1409

Vieri was a member of the Ten of Pisa from October 18, 1410, and of the Eight of Custody from March 16, 1411; in April of the same year he won the election for the Major Offices of Florence; the following June 4 he was sent with Jacopo Gianfigliuzzi to Carlo Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, to convince him to recognize the authority of antipope John XXIII [there were two or three popes at that time and nobody knew for certain who was the “real” pope] , and stop the raids in the territory of Bologna; from June 15, he was appointed Officer of the Condotte (“Pipes”) and, from November 1, “operaio” of Santa Reparata. From May 13, 1412, he was Captain of the fortress of Pisa.



Fortress (“Cittadella”) of Pisa

In the following September Vieri was appointed scribe of the Duties of the wine but he turned it down; on November 1, he was elected officer of the new Duties, but he left that charge on December 29, because he was elected Gonfalonier of the Companies.

On August 21, 1413, Vieri was sent, together with Iacopo Gianfigliuzzi and Giovanni Serristori, to meet Durazzo (the King of Naples) to try and convince him to allow antipope John XXIII to go back to Rome and give him back the occupied territories. On December 19, he returned to Florence: during his return, Vieri stopped in Cascia, from where he wrote to the Ten in “balia” on December 12.



Cascia (Diocese of Leghorn)

In February 1414, he was sent to Venice to see if there were any possibilities that Venice would join in the anti-Visconti league. On February 16, he was appointed commissioner of the Duties on wine. Following the beginning of the war with the King of Naples, Florence tried to negotiate peace by sending Vieri and Giovanni Serristori to antipope Giovanni XXIII on May 19 to try and convince him to give King Ladislaus the territories he requested concerning the Vicariate of Campagna and Marittima.



Florentine men in the time of Vieri and Bernardo Guadagni.

On July 30, 1414, Vieri was enrolled in the Art of Change; later, on October 1, he was appointed Captain of the Society of Orsanmichele; on April 1, 1415 he became Master of the Doors of Florence; on April 1, 1416, Officer of the Piping system; he left this charge on April 28, to become Gonfalonier of Justice (“President of the Republic of Florence”), like his brother Bernardo will be a few years later. From August 16, 1417, he was master of the contracts; he resigned to become one of the 12 good men; on September 1, he was appointed “operaio” (responsible for public works in the city) of Santa Maria del Fiore. From April 1, 1418, he became superintendent of the Stinche Jail; on May 7, 1418, he was sent to Ferrara, guest of Niccolò d’Este for the latter’s marriage with Parisina Malatesta.



Romana Door in the walls of Florence

From October 1, 1418, Vieri was officer of the Pupilli. On October 16, 1418 he was appointed, together with other six Florentine citizens, guardian of Spinetta Malaspina, whose properties were threatened by other members of the family. In 1419, on June 17, Vieri started another important mission, with Nerone son of Nigi son of Nerone. He dealt secretly with Matteo Lomellini, mayor of the Republic of Genoa, to purchase the city of Leghorn for Florence.



View of Genoa and its fleet by artist Christoforo de' Grassi 1481. Genoa was one of the four Independent Sea Republics of Italy, the other three being Venice, Pisa and Amalfi.

When Baldassarre Cossa (antipope John XXIII) died, in Florence at the end of 1419, Vieri was the executor of his last will, according to Cossa's choice. Cossa had also chosen 3 other citizens of Florence to assist Vieri in it,

considered with Vieri, among the most important of the city: Bartolomeo son of Taldo Valori, Niccolo' son of Giovanni da Uzzano and Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici. The last one was the father of Cosimo de' Medici, who was arrested and sent into exile by Vieri's brother, Bernardo, and who summoned Bernardo to trial, on his early return.



Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici (1360-1429), founder of the Medici Bank, by artist Cristofano dell'Altissimo. He was the father of Cosimo de' Medici and the ancestor of all our Medici cousins.

On December 1, 1419, Vieri was appointed officer of the water piping of Florence, again. On December 23, he was sent on mission to Genoa with Alessandro Bencivenni son of Tommaso to meet Tommaso Fregoso and ask for a better treatment of the Florentine merchants in transit through Porto Pisano and to resume the negotiations for the acquisition of the port.



On September 15, 1420, Vieri was one of the eight of Custody; in 1421, from April 1, one of the ten of Freedom, and on the 25 of the same month, he was captain in Arezzo.

He was elected "operaio" of Santa Maria del Fiore on January 1, 1423 but he renounced as he was still one of the Ten in Balìa; when the war against Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milano, started, on May 23, Vieri became one of the Ten of Balìa and he was given large authority in relation to the difficult political situation; he held that office almost without interruptions until his death.

In those years he acquired a leading role in the circle of the oligarchic group led by Rinaldo degli Albizzi, with whom he shared the political commitment and an intense diplomatic activity. In 1423, he was entrusted with receiving the partnership of Guidantonio da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, and going to Venice, with Giovanni Giugni to clarify the reasons of the decision of Florence to declare war to the Duke of Milano and oppose his expansionist policy.



Palace of the Dukes of Urbino

On January 31, 1424, he went on a mission, with Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Giuliano son of Niccolò Davanzati, to Ferrara, to meet with Niccolò d'Este, who had volunteered as a mediator between Florence and Milano, and then to Bologna. On the following April 18, he went to Rimini to urge Carlo and Pandolfo Malatesta to come to Florence and become commanders of its army.



Carlo Malatesta (1368-1429)



Malatesta fortress in Ascoli Piceno

In May of the same year, he was charged with Michele Castellani and Rinaldo degli Albizzi to meet the Pontiff's legate in Bologna to reassure him of the alliance with Florence; on the following June Vieri was elected general commissary on the field, but was recalled because he was selected with Rinaldo degli Albizzi to go and

meet Pope Martin V and convince him to declare war against Visconti because the latter had occupied several papal territories



Pope Martin V (1369-1431)

in Romagna. During his long mission, which lasted until October, Vieri entertained an intense correspondence with the Ten of Balìa, from which we deduce that he owned a company in Rome (but he also had a bank in Florence and had established a commercial company with Niccolò Sacchetti and Fruosino da Panzano) and that he had serious trouble with his eyes (*Commissioni* (“*Commissions*”), II, *passim*).

From November 12, 1424, he was again one of the Ten of Balìa and charged to receive the alliance of the marquis of Monte Santa Maria; in the following December he was sent with Matteo Castellani to the fleet near Genoa, engaged in the fight against Visconti.

On August 3, 1426, Vieri died hit by a bombard while he was commissary on the field near Arezzo to follow the war military operations.

On the following August 7, there was a funeral service for him, paid by the Republic of Florence, in the chapel of San Martino in the Basilica of Santissima Annunziata in Florence.



Basilica of Santissima Annunziata in Florence where the funeral Service for Vieri Guadagni was held, offered by the grateful City of Florence, for his long life of loyal and efficient service to the city. The Guadagni chapel is the left one behind the main altar. You can see the Guadagni Crest on top of it.

From the cadastre operation of July 12, 1427, presented by Vieri's children and heirs, Francesco, Migliore, Manno, Simone and Malatesta, we learn that they lived in a house located in the parish of San Broccolo, and that they had farms and other properties in Val di Sieve, in San Martino a Castello and San Miniato.



Val di Sieve



San Miniato

Before leaving Vieri Guadagni's life (1368-1426), I will add new information on him, written a few months ago by contemporary historian Isabella Lazzarini.

Historian Isabella Lazzarini, author of "Argument and Emotion in Italian Diplomacy in the early Fifteenth Century: the case of Rinaldo degli Albizzi (Florence, 1370-1442)" *shows us in detail the strong friendship between our direct ancestor Vieri Guadagni and Rinaldo degli Albizzi, head of the leading Florentine family of the time and of the so called degli Albizzi clique, which will eventually cause the arrest and exile of Cosimo de' Medici, through Vieri Guadagni's brother, great-uncle Bernardo, Gonfalonier of Justice in Florence. I am citing here excerpts of Lazzarini's book, relating to Vieri Guadagni.

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"1. Sent to the Roman curia in July 1424 in order to convince pope Martin V to join forces with Florence against the duke of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti, a worried Rinaldo degli Albizzi was pouring out his feelings in a letter addressed to his friend Vieri Guadagni: Florence was shamefully allowing Niccolo' Piccinino, the republic's (of Florence) condottiere (general of the Florentine army) to raid the same Florentine "contado" (countryside around or in the proximity of Florence) that he was paid to protect: " per Dio ("by God or for God's sake", Rinaldo is swearing, "appraise me of it, Vieri, because it breaks my heart too much if it is true. Dear me! Are we reduced to this? Alas! By God, make me return soon!" [*"Commissioni" ("Assignments"), Rinaldo to Vieri, Rome, November 1, 1424, Vol. II, comm.46, l. 697, p. 272.*]



Niccolo' Piccinino (1386-1444)- Portrait



Peter Paul Rubens' copy of the lost Battle of Anghiari(1440) by Leonardo da Vinci (allegedly Niccolo' Piccinino is the horseman 2nd from the left), Copy after a fresco in the Palazzo della Signoria in Florence, executed in 1504-1505 and destroyed around 1560).

*Author Lazzarini states in her work: "I wish to express my gratitude to Stephanie Pequignot and Sylvio de Franceschi and to Chris Wickham for inviting me respectively to the seminar on *Les émotions dans la négociation*, [French for "The emotions in the negotiations"], at EPHE, Paris (June 2010) and to the Medieval History Seminar in All Souls College, Oxford (May 2011); my text owes very much to the discussions and comments exchanged in these two occasions with friends and colleagues; I am very grateful as well to Stephen Milner for his generosity in sharing with me his opinions on these topics during some days of research in the Florentine Archives, and for helping me to polish my English."

In 1424, Vieri Guadagni (1369-1426) was 55 years old, Rinaldo degli Albizzi (1370-1442) was 54 (they were almost the same age), Piccinino was 38. Vieri was born 645 years ago. It is fascinating that an Italian historian writes about him with the help of French historians (in Paris) and English historians (in Oxford) after so many years. Her work must have been published one or two years ago, as it was in the making in 2011. As we remember, French historian Edouard Lejeune finished his *Gadagne History in Comic Strips*

only a few months ago. So we are in a full revival of interest in the Italian and French branches of Guadagni history, always new and always interesting, century after century.

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Vieri Guadagni plays a particular role in this picture (of Rinaldo degli Albizzi's epistolary exchanges): the epistolary exchange between the two men, of almost the same age, always centers on tried and tested friendship. [Note 46: *On Guadagni, see Brucker, "The Florentine world, ad indicem" ("we don't have it yet, I will look for it") and Raffaella Zaccaria, "Guadagni" ("we have this one")*]

I will add another interesting note about the two friends, Rinaldo and Vieri, together [Note 45: *Commissioni, II.46, 603, p. 156, Rinaldo and Vieri to the Dieci ("Ten"), Rome, August 12, 1424: "Twice, during lunch, the Holy Father told us: "For sure, if this defeat was not known, I would have given you the peace in one month", and we answered: "Because of this, will Your Holiness allow the duke of Milan to become the Lord of all of Italy and so forth?" Hearing these words His Holiness became excited and answered passionately twice: "No, never! No, never!"*

Vieri calls Rinaldo his "beloved friend", his "brother" sometimes joking with him or teasing him: Rinaldo in turn admits that with Vieri he talks as if with his very soul "parla come con l'anima sua"



Rinaldo degli Albizzi

(original words in Italian of Rinaldo). This shared confidence apparently helps Rinaldo degli Albizzi to think more clearly and the dialogue with Vieri flows so naturally that writing to him looks to Rinaldo like if he was talking to and reasoning with his friend ("et anche scrivendo con voi mi pare ragionare").

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Latin language and Roman heritage. The Degli Albizzi's "Commissioni" contain a rather abundant amount of lexical and linguistic intrusions from Latin, and Latin of all sorts: biblical quotations "nam virtus in adversitate perficitur" ("in fact virtue becomes perfect in adversity") Commissioni, II, 43, p.151, Rinaldo and Vieri to the "Ten", Rome August 8, 1424: Prov. XV.5.

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Roman history filters into the diplomatic letters and discourses and assumes an exemplarity that vigorously pushes men towards virtue and courage. In 1423 Rinaldo writes to Vieri "Vieri mio, io vorrei che noi fossimo uomeni, e leverenci per certo costui dinanzi, con maggiore fama non ebbono mai i Romani". ("Oh my Vieri, I would like us to be men, and then surely we would get this guy out of our feet

with more glory than the Romans ever had!”) *Commissioni*, I.40, 403, p. 528, Rinaldo to Vieri Guadagni, Bertinoro, October 12, 1423.



Walled town of Bertinoro in Romagna

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However, if we can agree with Michael Baxandall when, in his masterful research on the humanists' approach to fifteenth century painting, he says that “in 1300 a man could not think as tightly in words as he could by 1500; the difference is measurable in categories and constructions lost and found”, today it cannot be denied that this change started much earlier, and abruptly accelerated in the first decades of the Quattrocento (15th century).

Rinaldo degli Albizzi's *Commissioni* show the first signs of this development. On the one hand, a set of pragmatic political practices and innovative linguistic and conceptual resources refines the understanding and analysis of events, and offers the actors of political and diplomatic dynamics a wider array of argumentative strategies. Thus, the analysis of the events, both real and hypothetical, opens out to include larger range of possibilities, and considers them with a finer attention. On the other hand, however, the intensity of the confrontation and the variety of the available discursive resources give voice to emotions so instrumental and structural to the dynamics between the actors that alter the formal nature of the diplomatic and political dialogue. Thus, successfully combining these various tones with a literary touch that is not unusual in the *Commissioni*, Rinaldo can write in 1424 to his friend Vieri Guadagni a sentence like this: “fantasticato nel letto in queste lunghe notti che non si possono consumare col dormire, ho fatto pensiero ne' ragionamenti del Guasco” (“I fantasized in bed in those long nights in which one cannot sleep and I thought about the reasoning of Guasco”). *Commissioni*, II.46, 721, p.303, Rinaldo degli Albizzi to Vieri Guadagni, Rome, November 15, 1424, *di notte* (“By night”).