

Dear Guadagni Family and Friends.

I have just found in Internet in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* of the Treccani Encyclopedia, the most important Encyclopedia in Italy, four new biographies, two of the Guadagni brothers, Bernardo (1367-1434), the one who arrested Cosimo de' Medici and sent him into exile, and Vieri (1369-1426), our direct ancestor, the third of Simone Guadagni (1411-1480), son of above mentioned Vieri, our direct ancestor and also of all the other branches of the Guadagni Family, including the French, and also of the Torrigiani and the Dufour Berte, and the fourth of Migliore Guadagni (died in 1383), Bernardo and Vieri's grandfather and our direct ancestor, all four by contemporary historian Raffaella Zaccaria



Raffaella Zaccaria

As we know, historian Passerini wrote about all of them in 1871, and all of our families have a copy of his book, which I translated in English a few years ago, at Vieri's request. Passerini's book is the backbone of all the lives of the Guadagnis in the Guadagni Family Website. He was a famous historian of the 19th century, and other Florentine noble families had their family history written by him also.

What fascinates me is that 132 years later, in 2003, a new historian, Raffaella Zaccaria, writes the lives of some of them, not copying Passerini, but using new contemporary research and findings, for the Biographical Dictionary of the Italians, paid by Treccani Encyclopedia. These Guadagni ancestors of ours are famous Italians, who shaped and created the history of Italy and through it the history of the world. I could integrate Passerini's biographies with Zaccaria's but I found some differences, and I feel it would spoil both, written as they were in different centuries, with different information available and by different historians with their own specific personality.

An example of an important difference between Passerini and Zaccaria, is on the end of the life of our great-uncle Bernardo Guadagni.

Passerini's version: The committee ordered the banishment of Cosimo de' Medici for five years, and with him they banished the most important of his adherents for longer or shorter periods. The chronicler Cambi recounts that, on the evening before leaving Florence, Cosimo went secretly to Bernardo's house where he had dinner with the Gonfalonier (Bernardo Guadagni).

Bernardo thought he was entitled to a reward from the Republic of Florence. He asked to be Captain of the city of Pisa and he obtained that office on March 11, 1434. He died in Pisa before September of the same year. He was lucky not to live long enough to see Cosimo's return and the consequent ruin of the Guadagni family, which he himself had prepared (*by having Cosimo arrested and sent into exile*)

Zaccaria's version: At the moment of the departure of Cosimo de' Medici for his exile, Ormannozzo degli Albizi, enemy of the Medicis, whose father, Rinaldo, had helped Bernardo Guadagni become Gonfalonier (President of the Republic) of Florence, assembled a group of armed friends to attack and kill Cosimo; so Bernardo sent a group of guards to protect and escort Cosimo secretly from the jail to his house, where Cosimo had dinner and then left for exile, protected by Bernardo's men.

The "Balìa", a Council of citizens, part of the Government of Florence, appointed Bernardo captain of the City of Pisa for a year, starting on March 11, 1434. When Cosimo de' Medici returned to Florence earlier than

expected, in October 1434, the new “Balìa” approved by Cosimo, ordered Bernardo’s exclusion from public office forever. G. Capponi refers that Bernardo was called to Florence from Pisa to be put on trial. (“We know from Macchiavelli’s life that when the Medicis came back from exile and suspected young Niccolò Macchiavelli to be against them, he was thoroughly tortured in jail for a long time. Young Macchiavelli was able not to confess anything under severe torture but remained physically handicapped for the rest of his life because of it.”)

Zaccaria states that according to historian Capponi, during the short trip from Pisa to Florence, Bernardo dies suddenly maybe poisoned.

So, Passerini tells us that Bernardo died peacefully in Pisa, unaware of the tragic consequences for his family of his move against the Medicis. Zaccaria tells us that Bernardo was removed from his office, called to Florence for trial and died suddenly, maybe poisoned, as he was in perfect health, during his short trip. Quite a different ending for our great-uncle.

My curiosity is this: **if** Bernardo Guadagni was poisoned, **who** did it and why? If Cosimo wanted him to come to Florence for judgment and was going to torture him, why silence him by poison just before? Or was it that he felt he *had to torture him in public to give an example*, but mindful and grateful for his protection against Ormannozzo degli Albizzi, he thought a quick and almost painless death through a strong poison would be better than long hours and days of repeated torture? On the other hand, perhaps, was it an old ally, degli Albizi or a friend of theirs, who was afraid Bernardo was going to talk under torture? I hope more will be found in the future.

Bernardo Guadagni by Raffaella Zaccaria – Bernardo Guadagni was born in Florence in 1367 or 1368 from Vieri Guadagni and Bernarda, nicknamed Lulla (+1417), daughter of Andrea Rucellai, married in 1363.

Bernardo’ father, Vieri, died prematurely in 1368, at the beginning of his political career. Also Bernardo’s younger brother, Vieri, was like Bernardo, an important representative of the oligarchic regime of the degli Albizzi.

In 1385, Bernardo married Bartolomea Cardinali, daughter of Gregorio. She passed away in 1394. In 1395 he married Francesca Bardi, daughter of Andrea, son of Bindo. She died in 1400. In 1401 he married for the third time, with Giovanna Ardinghelli, daughter of Filippo. They had seven children: Antonio, died young, Nicola, Francesca, Piero, Giovanni, Filippo and finally, another Antonio.



Restoration of Ardinghelli Palace. The crest looks like the Guadagni’s with the crown of marchese on top.

In 1391, when he was only 24, he passed the scrutiny for the three major offices of the Republic of Florence. After the fall of the Government run by the lower classes, the major corporations took over the power in the 1380s. Similar to his brother Vieri, his ties with the major representatives of the degli Albizzi party allowed

Bernardo to assume numberless charges in the Florentine Government and to carry out an intense diplomatic activity in an extremely difficult period for Florence, forced in a long and tiring war against the Visconti rulers of Milano. In 1393, Bernardo won the scrutiny again and was enrolled in the “Balìa” (a Council of citizens, part of the Government of Florence), who proclaimed the perpetual exile for the Alberti Family, rival of the degli Albizzi.

On January 1, 1394, he became “Gonfalonier of the Gompany” (“Commander of the people’s militia”), on the following December 15, he became one of the 12 “buonomini” (literally “good men”) (a consulting elected Council of twelve people, whom the Government of Florence had to consult to make important decisions). On March 1, 1396, he was a “priore”, one of the 9 members of the Government of Florence (he was only 29 years old), and in the same year he was elected captain of the Florentine Romagna (a region between Papal Romagna and Tuscany).

From 1397, we can also retrace Bernardo’s activity in the Administrative offices: on July 11 he became governor of the contract duties, and on Sept. 14, 1398, he was magistrate of Castiglion Fiorentino; from April 1, 1400, he was one of the Officers of Arezzo. On January 9, 1401, he participated in the debate concerning the fate of Antonio Alberti (15th century Italian painter, mostly in his native Ferrara, Bologna and Urbino; famous for his frescoes in the San Petronio Basilica in Bologna) (Consultations and Practices, 34, c. 145v); on April 1st of the same year he became Captain of Pistoia. From Jan. 2, 1402 he was a member of the Dieci di liberta’ (“Ten of Freedom”) and the following July 1, he was again “priore” (see meaning above); on March 5, 1403, he went as a “vicario” (“lieutenant”) in San Miniato, inferior Valdarno, to try and put an end to the long war against Pisa.



Gian Galeazzo Visconti



Castle of Mantua, where Agnese Visconti was beheaded in 1391



Bernabò and Beatrice Visconti, parents of Agnese



Forlì, Florentine Romagna



Cervia, Florentine Romagna



Castiglion Fiorentino



San Petronio Basilica in Bologna: 15th largest church in the world.



Arezzo: city wall



The Bell Tower of the Cathedral of Pistoia in Piazza Duomo.



Pisa: Square of the Duomo (Cathedral)

On October 1, 1403 he became superintendent of the Jail of the Stinche, in Florence. On September 15, 1404, he was again one of the 12 “buonomini” (“Good men”). On Dec. 17, 1404, he was officially in charge of the Duties



Jail of the Stinche, Florence by artist Fabio Borbottoni (1820-1902)

on wine; from Febr 1, 1406, he was officer at the doors of Florence.



Porta (door in the walls of Florence) Romana, from which you go to Rome.

On May 1404, he went as Ambassador to Piombino with Antonio Alessandri. On the following August 19, he was sent with Bartolomeo Popoleschi to the King of France Charles VI, 1368-1422, (called the “Beloved” and also the “Mad”) to explain the reasons why Florence had attacked Pisa: during the trip however, while they were crossing Burgundy, the two Florentine emissaries were imprisoned by Duke John the Fearless, allied of Pisa. On January 1407, Bonaccorso Pitti was able to obtain their liberation even though with much difficulty.

In April 1408, Bernardo returned to Florence. On August 8, he was appointed one of the Ten of Freedom; on February 12, 1409, he intervened in the political consultations in favor of keeping diplomatic relations with



King of France Charles VI, seized by madness in the forest of Le Mans



Duke of Burgundy John the Fearless (1371-1419)

King of Naples Ladislao d'Angio' Durazzo; then from February 26 he was a member of the Eight of Custody, 8 citizens of Florence who were supreme magistrates to judge criminal cases in the city and were in charge 4 years at a time; on August 29, he left his charge of officer of the Tower, because he was appointed Gonfalonier of



Ladislao, King of Naples

Company. On February 1410, he was sent to Bologna, with Giovanni Serristori, to talk with antipope Alexander V and convince him about the opportunity to return to Rome.



Antipope Alexander V

On January 1, 1411 he was elected Gonfaloniere of Justice (President of the Republic of Florence); during his mandate, he made peace with Durazzo and acquired the towns of Cortona, Pierle and Mercatale for the Republic of Florence.



Cortona



Pierle



Mercatale

During this acquisition Bernardo and the Government of Florence were granted special powers. On March 1, 1411, he became “operaio” of Santa Reparata (i.e. in charge of the supervision of the public works of the City of Florence). Shortly afterwards, with Iacopo Gianfigliuzzi, Michele son of Vanni Castellani and Gino Capponi, he was sent to escort antipope Giovanni XXIII in his trip from Bologna to Rome. In April of the same year he qualified for the election in the three major offices of the Republic of Florence: Prior, Gonfaloniere of Justice, and 12 “Good men”. From August 31, 1411 he was one of the Officers of Abundance; from December 2, 1412 he had the charge of “Vicar” of the Valle of the Serchio.



“Allegory of good government” (Abundance in Medieval Florence) painting by Ambrogio Lorenzetti



Valle del Serchio

On June 16, 1413, with Jacopo Gianfigliuzzi, Filippo Corsini and Michele Castellani, he was sent towards Siena to meet antipope John XXIII, coming from Rome, from which he had been expelled: the goal of Bernardo's mission was to prevent the antipope to enter Florence so as not to provoke the hostility of King Ladislao of Naples. On August 1413, Bernardo was in charge of ordering the imposition of an extraordinary tax; from October 1, he was captain of the Society of Orsanmichele.



Church of Orsanmichele;



Interior of the church

It was the chapel of Florence's powerful craft and trade guilds.

On July 1, 1414, he was again elected "operaio" of Santa Reparata (responsible for public buildings in Florence); in the meantime, the Government of Florence had made peace with King of Naples Ladislao, without dealing however with the problems of the Schism in the Catholic Church and of the antipopes; so on July 7, together with Niccolo', son of Giovanni da Verrazzano, Bernardo was sent to Bologna to reassure antipope John XXIII that Florence was ready to protect the Church from possible enemy attacks. King of Naples Ladislao died suddenly and his sister Giovanna became Giovanna II, Queen of Naples. Bernardo remained some time in Bologna to establish a truce between the antipope and the new Queen of Naples.



Queen Giovanna II of Naples

On June 12, 1415, Bernardo was selected among the 12 "Good men"; from October 1, he was one of the Ten of Pisa; on February 6, 1416, with Giovanni son of Nofri Arnolfi, he returned to Bologna, to offer help to the city who had rebelled against the Ecclesiastical authority; from June 10 of the same year, he was the Mayor of Pisa. On February 11, 1417, he became accountant of the City Hall and on the following June 1st, he enrolled in the foreign currency exchange Trade; on July 1, 1420, he was elected to supervise the construction of the Cathedral of Florence, Santa Maria del Fiore.



Santa Maria del Fiore

For a while, Bernardo lived in France. In 1424, while he happened to be in Provence, Southern France, the Florentine Government asked him and Michele dei Pazzi to protest to the Ruler of France, Yolanda of Aragon, widow of King Louis II of Anjou, because in a French port some ships, loaded with Florentine merchandise, had been looted.



Queen Yolanda of Aragon, with her son Charles

Back in Florence, on March 15, 1422, he was one of the 12 “good men”; the following July 10 he was sent to Perugia, with Niccolò de’ Nobili to ask Andrea Fortebracci (Braccio da Montone) to stop the incursions in the territory of Citta’ di Castello;



Andrea Fortebracci (1368-1424)



Citta’ di Castello



Pistoia

On October 1st of the same year he was Captain in Pistoia. In 1423 he was appointed General Commissary of the Florentine Army in Romagna to stop the advance of Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan. From April 1 of the



Filippo Maria Visconti, Duke of Milan

Alexandria of Egypt

same year, Bernardo was one of the Six of Merchandise; on the following July 21, he was appointed Captain of the galleys. He sailed from Porto Pisano with two ships sent to Alexandria of Egypt from the City of Florence for restocking of merchandise.



Galley

On April 19, 1425, he became one of the accountants of Pisa and from May 3 to August 1426, he was regulator of the Contracts. On September 12, he went to Pisa as a captain.

In 1427, Bernardo presented his land register (“cadastre”) certification. From it we deduce that he lived in a house situated in the Parish of San Pier Maggiore (see church below), Florence.





The Church was demolished by the Grand Dukes in 1783 because of its precarious conditions. The front arches however were saved and incorporated in a new building (see left of the picture above).



Church and neighborhood of San Pier Maggiore, Florence, when Bernardo Guadagni owned a house and lived in it, from an old print.



How it is now with the demolished church front arches incorporated in a new building. The house on the right does not seem to have changed from before.

From the abovementioned cadastre certification of Bernardo we deduce he owned “innumerevoli” (“countless”) properties located mostly in the Parish of San Giovanni a Remole and in the Casentino, in the parish of San Donato a Torri. On page 3 of his comic strip *Gadagne History*, Edouard Lejeune writes;”On Guadagni Hill the houses and lands of the Guadagni are “countless”.



Pieve of san Giovanni a Remole



Bell tower of the Pieve



Painting in the Pieve of San Giovanni a Remole

San Giovanni a Remole is in Monteloro, close to Masseto and Lubaco (where the Guadagni had their castle in the Early Middle-Ages). So even 6 centuries ago, a good part of the countless properties of Bernardo Guadagni were near Masseto and Guadagni Hill.

The village of San Donato a Torri belongs to the municipality of Fiesole, Province of Florence. Again, as we know, Fiesole is close to Masseto, so Bernardo's countless properties were all in the traditional very large Guadagni area. The old church of San Donato a Torri was bought with a lot of land around it by Russian Prince Demidoff in the 19th century. He built his large villa incorporating the old church in it, after having it deconsecrated, and the church, attached to the rest of the house, became his library. Prince Demidoff was one of our great-grandfather, Guadagno Guadagni's two best friends (the other was Prince Corsini). From Masseto, Guadagno would go and visit his neighbor Demidoff on foot, their villas being so close. I wonder if Guadagno knew that the library where he was drinking coffee with Demidoff used to be the Guadagni parish church 8 centuries earlier. He probably did.



Villa Demidoff, where Guadagno used to go and see his friend Demidoff

This cadastre declaration of Bernardo Guadagni and the following ones of 1430 and 1433 witness the economical fortune of the Guadagni, based on trade and mostly on banking activity, practiced by him and his son

Filippo (b. 1404), not only in Florence, but also in Rome and in Provence (Southern France): in the cadastre of 1430, we can see that a large load of salt, owned by the Guadagni, was in Avignon. Among the numerous credits owned by Bernardo, appear the ones related to large amounts of money lent to antipope John XXIII and to the Count of Provence, Louis III of Anjou.

On May 1428, Bernardo won the scrutiny (election) for the Gonfaloniere of Justice (“President of the Republic of Florence”); in that same year he was sent as General Field Commissary in Lombardia: he stopped in Mantua until July to gather the troops fighting for Florence and direct them towards Tuscany and to investigate on the theft of 4,120 Florins happened in Mantua, constituting the salary of the Florentine militias: also because of this loss endured by Bernardo, the Law Conservators decided , on April 20, 1429, for him to be relieved of the payment of 420 Florins which he owed the City of Florence for unpaid taxes.

On January 1, 1429, he became “operaio” of Santa Maria del Fiore; on January 29 he intervened in an important meeting concerning the introduction of the cadastral verification of the properties; on the following May 3, he was one of the Ten of Pisa; on January 12, 1430 he was sent as Ambassador to Pope Martin V, to explain the reasons determining the Florentine decision to make war to the City of Lucca. On May 6 he was elected officer of the Meats and on the following June 21 speaker, with Piero Guicciardini, son of Luigi, to Venice. In August 1431 he won a tight election for Priory, on November 28, he was elected again “operaio” of Santa Maria del Fiore, the Cathedral of Florence.

On January 13, 1433, Bernardo stated he was against the request of the Republic of Venice for Florence to join in the Peace Treaty with the Duke of Milano. On September 1st of the same year he was elected again Gonfalonier of Justice (“President of the Republic of Florence”).

It seems that Bernardo’s election to the charge of Gonfaloniere was maneuvered by Rinaldo degli Albizzi.

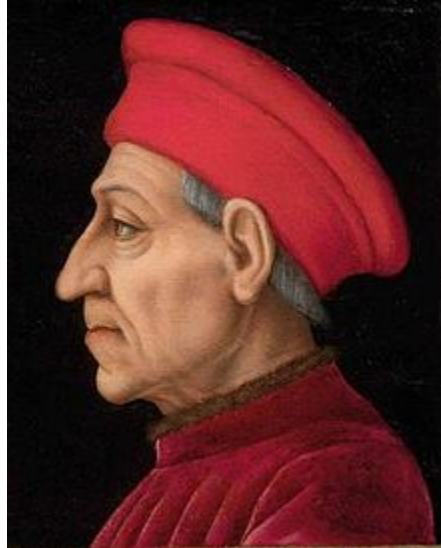


Rinaldo degli Albizzi

Rinaldo provided for the cancellation of the debts which Bernardo still owed the City of Florence; the goal of his political maneuver was to stop the rise of Cosimo de’Medici: contemporary chronicler Giovanni Cavalcanti (1381-1451) (pages 266-270), from a Florentine noble family, relates Rinaldo’ appeal to Bernardo, in quality of Gonfalonier of Justice, to block, in the name of the salvation of Florence, the Medici plan to transform Florence

from a democratic Republic into a Lordship of a single family (the Medicis). Bernardo answered that he would act only in the interest of the Republic.

A week later, on September 7, 1433, the arrest of Cosimo de' Medici was decided.



Cosimo de' Medici (1389-1464) by artist Bronzino



Cosimo was locked in a cell in Palazzo Vecchio, seat of the Government of Florence.

It seems that Cosimo was able to avoid the death penalty by bribing Bernardo himself with 1,000 florins. Bernardo joined those who wanted Cosimo just to be exiled. On September 9, 2 days after Cosimo's arrest and 9 days after Bernardo's election to Gonfalonier, Bernardo was elected "nominee" of the Seniors and assembled the Parliament; a "Balìa" i.e. a council endowed with special powers, was nominated, who approved for Cosimo a punishment of 5 years of banishment in the city of Padua; it seems that before the Balìa took this decision, Bernardo retired saying he did not feel very well.



Padua

At the moment of the departure of Cosimo de' Medici for his exile, Ormannozzo degli Albizi, son of Rinaldo, assembled a group of armed friends to attack and kill Cosimo; so Bernardo sent a group of armed men to protect and escort Cosimo secretly from the jail to his house, where Cosimo had dinner and then left for exile, protected by an adequate escort.

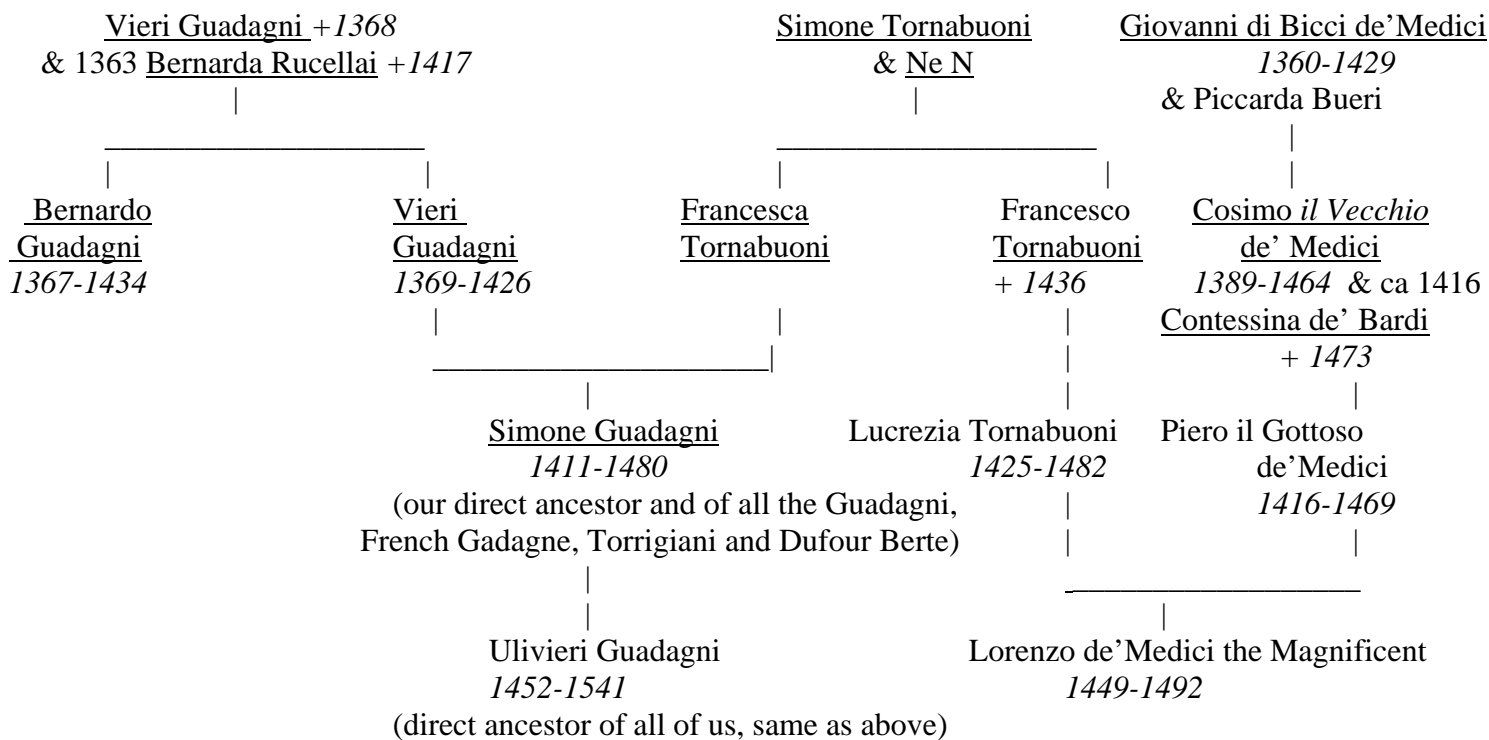
On September 18, 1433, the Balìa elected Bernardo among the "Accoppiatori" (nominees in charge) to preside to new elections; in the following October, he won the scrutiny for the three major offices; later, the Balìa appointed him Captain of Pisa for one year, starting on March 11, 1434. The return of Cosimo de' Medici to Florence in October 1434 marked the end of the degli Albizzi government: on the following November 3, the new Balìa ordered for Bernardo the perpetual exclusion from any public office.

In Giovanna Guadagni's (wife of Bernardo) cadastre it is certified that Bernardo died in 1434. G. Capponi reports that while he was returning to Florence from Pisa, where he had the office of captain, to be taken to trial, Bernardo died suddenly, maybe poisoned.

You might wonder: "When did the Guadagni and the Medici become cousins and stop fighting one another?" See the answer below in this family tree from "Roglo":

"In the following generation...!"

As you see on the second line of the family tree, Bernardo Guadagni and Cosimo de' Medici are not related; but, on the following generation, Piero il Gottoso ("the gouty") de' Medici marries Lucrezia Tornabuoni, whose aunt Francesca Tornabuoni, married Vieri Guadagni, our direct ancestor. So by marriage Vieri is Piero de' Medici's uncle and his son Lorenzo the Magnificent's great-uncle, and Vieri and Francesca's children, our direct ancestors, and their descendants (us included) are cousins of Piero and Lucrezia de' Medici and their descendants (the Medici Family and their descendants, the Kings of France, the Kings of Spain, etc.)



Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent

Portrait by Agnolo Bronzino

I will add here the bibliography Zaccaria put at the end of her work. This is what a historian finds nowadays on the history of the Guadagni. Many of these sources did not exist when Passerini wrote his book in 1871. In case other historians want to do research on the Guadagni Family, it is important to give them a list of sources existing in 2003. We are working to build the foundations for future works on the Guadagni Family History and any of its members in the next centuries.

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