

Migliore Guadagni by Raffaella Zaccaria

I would like you to add (two blank lines after the actual end of it) to Migliore Guadagni's biography number 4 in Historical Notes Covering Plate Two in the Guadagni Website, a "**New biography of Migliore Guadagni, written by contemporary historian Raffaella Zaccaria for the Biographical Dictionary of the Italians of Treccani Encyclopedia**"

Migliore Guadagni was born in the neighborhood of San Giovanni, "gonfalone" (emblem) of the Keys, from Vieri Guadagni (1303-1323, who died when he was only twenty years old) and Monna, daughter of Messer Francesco de'Pazzi, in the first half of the year 1323; in August 1323, his father died leaving him an only child (he is the direct ancestor of all of us). His mother Monna remarried with famous chronicler Giovanni Villani.



"La Loggia", De' Pazzi villa near Florence and Masseto.



De' Pazzi Palace, Florence



Pazzi Chapel by Brunelleschi (who also designed the "Duomo", Cathedral of Florence) in the Church of Santa Croce, Florence

In 1343, Migliore married Niccolosa, daughter of Domenico Cavalcanti; she died on October 13, 1358; in 1359, Migliore married Lagia, daughter of Gherardo Frescobaldi, who lived until 1393. He had six children from her: Francesca, Agnoletta, Vieri (our direct ancestor, father of brothers Bernardo and Vieri Guadagni, whose lives were also written by historian Raffaella Zaccaria and we translated) Nanna, Niccolosa, Iacopa.



Frescobaldi Palace on the right, on the Arno River.



Another view of Frescobaldi Palace

Migliore Guadagni belonged to a rich and historical Florentine family. He followed the tracks of his ancestors and became an influential personality in the government of Florence. In those years in Florence the new “middle class” of merchants and craftsmen, was able to free itself from the Ghibelline influence (who was in favor of the Holy Roman Emperor vs, the Pope, and was composed of old feudal families, who had often received their power directly from the Emperor), and consolidated their presence in the public institutions, even though sometimes through violent disputes between the diverse social components, major, middle and minor arts (“guilds”). They would alternatively compete for and detain the political power.

Migliore’s first public action in Florence’s public life was the subscription of the peace, carried out on September 28, 1342, with the clique of the Aliotti Family, imposed by the Duke of Athens, Gualtieri di Brienne, at that time Lord of Florence, trying to keep order in the city. Later on, on January 1, 1343, Migliore also stipulated a truce with the Falconieri Family.



Gualtieri di Brienne, Duke of Athens

The public career of Migliore started in 1344, when he qualified in the ballot for intrinsic offices. In 1351, he qualified in the ballot for the election of the officers of the Tower; he held that charge from May 10; on July 31, he was appointed head of the Vice-Committee; on October 12, he became Governor of the Taxes on the wine. In 1354 he was elected Vicar of Mugello and Mayor of Prato.



Prato – Palace of the magistrates

From June 15, 1355, he was one of the 12 good men, and from May 8, 1356 he was also one of the *Gonfalonieri di compagnia* (“Commanders of the People’s militia”).

The **Signoria** was the government of medieval and renaissance Florence. Its nine members, the *Priori* were chosen from the ranks of the guilds of the city: six of them from the major guilds, and two from the minor guilds. The ninth would become the Gonfalonier of Justice.

As we know the Guadagni were in turn Priors, Gonfalonier of Justice, and Gonfalonier of Company, i.e. part of the Government of Florence.

The seven Major Guilds were:

- Judges, lawyers and notaries
- Merchants, finishers and dyers of foreign cloth
- Wool manufactures and merchants
- Bankers and money-changers (the Guadagni probably belonged to this one)
- Silk weavers and merchants
- Physicians and pharmacists
- Furriers and skimmers.

Then there were five Middle Guilds (Butchers, Blacksmiths, Shoemakers, Stonemasons and Tailors)

and nine Minor Guilds (Vintners, Innkeepers, Tanners, Oil-merchants, Saddlers and harness-makers, Locksmiths, Armorers and swordsmiths, Carpenters, Bakers and millers)

The names of all guild members over thirty years old were put in eight leather bags called “borse” (“borsa”, singular, “borse” plural mean “bag(s)” in Italian). Every two months these bags were taken from the Church of Santa Croce, where they were ordinarily kept, and in a short ceremony drawn out at random. Only men who were not in debt (Rinaldo degli Albizzi paid Bernardo Guadagni’s debts so the latter could be elected “Gonfalonier of Justice” and arrest Cosimo de’Medici), had not served a recent term, and had no relation to the names of men already drawn, would be considered eligible for office.



Basilica of Santa Croce (Florence).

Immediately after they were elected, the nine were expected to move into the “Palazzo (“Palace”) della (“of the”) Signoria (“Government’),” aka “Palazzo Vecchio”, where they would remain for the two months of their office. They were paid a modest sum to cover their expenses and were provided with green-liveried servants. The Priori (“Priors”) had a uniform of crimson coats, lined with ermine and with ermine collars and cuffs.



Palazzo Vecchio (“Old Palace”) in Piazza della Signoria (“Square of the Government”), Florence.

As we remember, Bernardo Guadagni was Gonfalonier of Justice and summoned Cosimo de’Medici to “Palazzo Vecchio” where he had him arrested and put to jail in a little cell in the palace itself.

In undertaking their governmental duties, the Signoria (“Government”) was required to consult two other elected councils collectively known as Collegi. The first was the Dodici Buonomini (“Twelve Good Men”), with twelve members (as we remember the Guadagni were often elected among the “12 Good Men”), while the second, the Sedici Gonfaloniere (“Sixteen Gonfaloniere”), consisted of sixteen people. Other councils, such as the “Ten of War”, the “Eight of Security” and the “Six of Commerce”, were elected as the need arose.

The “Gonfaloniere of Justice was one of the nine citizens selected by drawing lots every two months, who formed the government, or Signoria. As “*Gonfaloniere of Justice*” he was the temporary standard-bearer of the Republic of Florence and custodian of the city’s banner (“Gonfalone” in Italian means “banner” and “Gonfaloniere” “banner bearer” or “banner custodian”), which was displayed from the yardarm of a portable cross. Along with the voting rights of the other Priori, he was also in charge of the internal security forces and the maintenance of public order.

To distinguish him from his other eight colleagues, his crimson coat, lined with ermine, was further embroidered with golden stars.

Each of Florence’s neighborhoods, called *rioni*, had its own *gonfaloniere di compagnia* (“*Gonfalonier of Company*”), i.e. *commander of people’s militia*, selected from the first families of each quarter. As we remember, the Guadagni were often Gonfalonier of Company.

On October 20 1356, Migliore was appointed Vicar for Val d’Elsa; in May June 1357, he was selected Prior for the first time.

In this period, Migliore found himself facing the difficult political situation characterized by the fighting of different factions, among whom the most powerful were the Ricci and the degli Albizzi. To hinder the political power of the latter, in January 1358, the Ricci reinstated the so called law of “*ammonire*” (“chastise”), depending on which who had “*Ghibellines*” (in favor of the Holy Roman Emperor vs. the Pope) ancestors could be accused, and, without trial, be inflicted the perpetual disqualification from public offices (the first implementation of these provisions dates back to 1352: State Archives of Florence, *Provisions*, 39, chapters 84r-86v: January 17). The Albizzi Family tried using this disposition for their own advantage to fight their political adversaries, by having the law applied by the Captains of the Guelph (in favor of the Pope) Party, of whom Migliore Guadagni, friends of the degli Albizzi, was member.



Borgo degli Albizzi (“Degli Albizzi Street”), Florence

In January 1359, Migliore won the scrutiny to be the mayor of the town of San Gimignano; the following



San Gimignano

October 1, he became member of the Council of the Mayor and of the City; in December he was sent to Casentino with Piero degli Albizzi, to take possession of the Castle of Soci, which Count Marco Guidi had sold to the Republic of Florence in the previous October. On December 16, 1359, he was selected for the office of Vicar in Val di Nievole.



Val di Nievole (“Nievole Valley”)

In November 19, 1360, he was appointed Camerlengo of the Monte; a provision of October 8, 1361, allowed Migliore the reimbursement of the money spent in the practice of that office.

In 1361, Migliore is listed in the “electoral list of the Guelph Party and of the Gonfalone (“Banner”) of the Keys (the “Keys” are the Emblem of his neighborhood of San Giovanni in Florence)



Map of the four historical neighborhoods of Florence (the blue line is the Arno River): San Giovanni is the neighborhood where the Guadagni are originally from and the oldest in the city; its name comes from the Baptistery of San Giovanni, a very ancient church next to the Duomo; its color is green, its emblem the “Keys”. The Guadagni dell’Opera and the Guadagni Nunziata Palaces are in it.



Baptistry of San Giovanni, Florence



Historical Soccer Florentine game (“It’s more like Football than Soccer: tackling, pushing, hitting, grabbing the ball with your hands are allowed): San Giovanni team- its color is green



Guadagni "Nunziata" Palace



Guadagni dell'Opera Palace (Guadagni crest on top of central window)



Basilica of Santo Spirito, Florence

In 1683, our direct ancestor Donato Maria Guadagni (1641-1718), bought the Dei Palace in Piazza Santo Spirito and moved to the neighborhood of Santo Spirito.

The Guadagni Palace inherited from the Del Nero, in via de' Bardi, and now called Torrigiani Palace after our great-cousin Pietro Guadagni adopted the Torrigiani surname, is also in the Santo Spirito neighborhood. The Santo Spirito neighborhood color is white.



Historical Soccer Florentine game: Santo Spirito team- its color is white



Two pictures of the Guadagni Palace of Santo Spirito (it also includes the tall house on the left of the palace visible in the smaller picture).



Guadagni del Nero Torrigiani Palace in via("street") de' Bardi



Basilica of Santa Maria Novella, Florence.

Our great-great-grandmother, Luisa Lee Guadagni, bought and enlarged the Guadagni Palace of Porta al Prato, in the neighborhood of Santa Maria Novella. Its color is red.



Historical Soccer Florentine game: Santa Maria Novella team- its color is red



Guadagni Palace of Porta al Prato (“Door [of the old florentine walls] on the lawn”): the building on the right of the old Florentine door and in its opening, is the Guadagni Porta al Prato Palace It is a very large and beautiful building, which is not well visible in this picture. The palace is now the “Headquarters of the Florentine Police”.



Guadagni Palace of Porta al Prato, Florence: the whole yellow, red roofed, building on which “porta al prato guadagni” is written, including the red roof covered courtyard parking lot in the back left of it. It is in this palace that our grandfathers, Luigi, Bernardo, Guitto, Tommaso and Giacomo grew up. The last Guadagni owner of it was great-aunt Aurora Guadagni who sold it. The old Florentine Door roof is on the center right (the lawn around the door has disappeared with time).



Close up of the left side of the Guadagni Palace on the right of the picture.



Guadagni Porta al Prato palace façade. The Palace has 17 windows per floor, without counting the windows in the back of it.

In the same year Migliore was given the government of Volterra, freed from the tyranny of Paolo Belforti.



Volterra

In January 1362 he was still captain in Volterra; on the 25th of that month the Priors allowed him a brief absence; on June 21, he was elected War Captain in Todi.



Todi (above) and its walls (below)



Walls of Todi.

He was Prior again in May-June 1363 and, in the following July he was elected Captain of the People in Todi again. When his office expired after six months, he was reconfirmed for six more months. In January 1362 he presented himself in the scrutinies for the three major offices: from September 15, 1365, he was one of the twelve good men; from May 15, 1366, he was Mayor of Orvieto.



Historical Parade in Orvieto for the Procession of Corpus Domini



Orvieto: historical parade: three Knights, in the center is the Knight of the Counts of Marsciano.

In February 1367, he participated in the scrutiny for the three major offices. From March 24 he went as vicar in Val di Nievole; from January 1368, he was Gonfalonier of Company. In the two months of January-February 1369, he was Gonfalonier of Justice; on March 13, he was extracted for Magistrate of Prato; on November 24, he became mayor of the city with the charge to examine the situation concerning the creditors of the Florentine merchant Berto, son of Sir Francesco. On January 1270 he was sent to San Miniato with the charge to reform its institutions; he undertook a reconnaissance mission in Valdarno to arrange the restocking of wheat which was scarce in Florence. On February 23, 1371, he won the scrutiny for the intrinsic offices: on July 18, he was elected Captain of Custody of Pistoia.

The influence and the prestige attained by Migliore Guadagni in the Florentine political life are witnessed by the fact that he was among the first ten citizens elected for the defense of the institutions and safeguarding of freedom (the creation of the institution of the Ten of Freedom was on April 1, 1372; on July 30, while Migliore was still in charge, certain modifications in the composition of this magistrature were enacted)

On November 25, 1372, Migliore was elected Officer of the Castella. However he had to leave that office when he was appointed, on January 1, 1373, Gonfalonier of Justice.

On January 9, of the same year, with the intervention of Migliore Guadagni, appointed by the Government of Florence for it, legal provisions were taken banning the members of the rival families of Ricci and degli Albizzi from public offices for ten years. On November 23, Migliore returned to Pistoia as ambassador and commissary, together with Francesco Rinuccini, Iacopo son of Banco Pucci and Guccio son of Dino Gucci, to proceed to a general reform of the government of that city. He returned again to it in 1376.

In July of the same year, Migliore Guadagni, as Commissary of the Republic of Florence, was entrusted, together with Donato Acciaiuoli, son of Iacopo, to assist Rodolfo da Camerino, who was the commander of the Florentine troops sent to Bologna to defend the city from the assault of the Breton mercenaries under the leadership of Cardinal Legate Roberto of Geneva (future antipope Clement VII) (1342-1394), first of the French Popes of Avignon.



Cardinal Legate Roberto of Geneva



Castle of Camerino, of Rodolfo da Camerino

On November 29, 1376, Migliore won the scrutiny for the office of Captain of Pistoia. In January –February 1377 he became Gonfalonier of Justice. As soon as he finished his term, he went to Bologna, Romagna and Lombardy for problems related to the ongoing war.



Pistoia



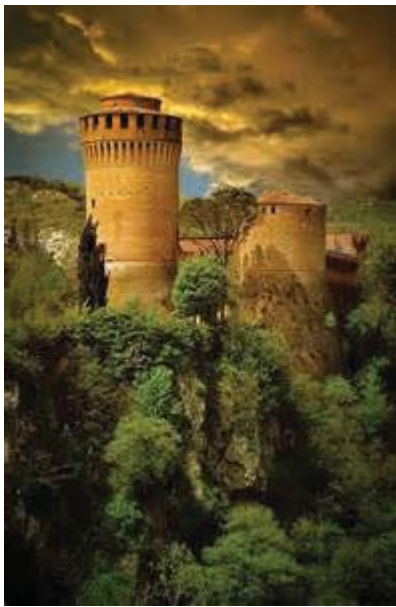
Middle Ages mercenary troops



Bologna



Bologna



Romagna



Lombardy

On November 13, 1377, Migliore's name was extracted for the office of vicar of Val di Nievole. Almost at the end of his office period, in June 1378, rumors spread, later revealed as false – that Migliore was returning to Florence from Val di Nievole, at the head of an army of 4,000 infantry soldiers, because of serious disorders caused by the uproar of the “ciompi”.

The **Revolt of the Ciompi** was a popular revolt in Florence 1378 by wool carders known as *ciompi*, who rose up to demand a voice in the City of Florence's ordering.

The *ciompi* were a class of laborers in the textile industry who were not represented by any guild. They were among the most radical of the lower-class groups. Vegetable sellers and crockery vendors and the like, they resented the controlling power that was centered in the Major Guild of Wool manufacturers and merchants, which guided the economic engine of Florence's prosperity and was supported by the other major Guilds of Florence.

In 1378, *ciompi* launched the *Revolt of the Ciompi*, a briefly successful insurrection of the disenfranchised lower classes, the *popolo minuto* (Italian for “little people”), which remained a traumatic memory for members of the major guilds and contributed to the support given to the Medici Family a generation afterwards, as stabilizers of Florentine order.

Unfortunately, when the rebellious *Ciompi* heard that the famous Florentine Migliore Guadagni, several times Prior and Gonfaloniere of the City, was marching on Florence with 4,000 troops to restore order (even though it was a false rumour), they burned down his house in Via del Corso, one of the oldest and most elegant streets of Florence.



Via del Corso, Florence, where Migliore Guadagni's house was burnt down by the *Ciompi*.

On July 21 and 22, 1378, the *ciompi* forcibly took over the government of Florence, placing the wool carder Michele di Lando in the executive office of Gonfalonier of Justice, and showing their banner at the Palazzo della Signoria.



Statue of Michele di Lando, waving the *ciompi* banner, Florence.

The *ciompi* Councils of the People and of the City abolished certain provisions regarding the rich and the poor, issued when Migliore Guadagni was Gonfalonier of Justice in January-February 1377 (cfr. Historian Capponi, I, pp. 594-599, in particular p. 596), they demanded the right to elect three of their own priors, the reduction of judicial corporal punishment, and reform of the tax system. On July 21, 1378, the *ciompi* excluded Migliore from public office forever, starting on the following August 19. On October 18, 1378, he was accused of conspiring against the new *ciompi* regime of the people and arrested. They took him in front of the Priors and the Mayor to be judged, but he was found innocent and freed on November 4th.

The major Guilds were able to regain power by the end of 1381. Migliore was reintegrated in the political life and won the scrutiny for the three major offices in the months of January and February 1382. On November 27, he was part of a council of citizens appointed by the Guelph Party to examine the case of those who had been exiled by the *ciompi* in June 1378, under the accusation of being Guelphs.

Migliore was appointed Gonfalonier of Justice for the last time in January-February 1383; in that same year, in the month of May, a violent epidemic of the plague developed in Florence. Migliore went to Friuli to avoid the infection, but he died of it on July 28, 1383.



Friuli (Alps), Northern Italy