

Simone Guadagni by Raffaella Zaccaria

Simone Guadagni (common direct ancestor of all the Guadagni branches, French Gadagne, Torrigiani and Dufour Berte) was born in Florence, on July 25, 1411 from Vieri Guadagni and Francesca, daughter of Simone Tornabuoni; Vieri and Francesca got married in 1395.



Painting by famous Renaissance artist Ghirlandaio: from left to right: Giuliano Tornabuoni, Giovanni Tornaquinci, Gianfrancesco, Girolamo and Simone Tornabuoni. Detail from the painting below in the Tornabuoni Chapel in Florence.



Simone Tornabuoni, on the far right, is Francesca Tornabuoni Guadagni's father; as Vieri's wife, Francesca is the ancestress of all of us Guadagni, Torrigiani, Dufour Berte and French Gadagne and so her father Simone is too. Our common ancestor Simone Tornabuoni was born Tornaquinci, then changed his name to Tornabuoni. The second man from the left, Giovanni Tornaquinci, is probably a cousin of his who has not changed his name. The

other three, Giuliano, Gianfrancesco and Girolamo Tornabuoni are probably all our great uncles so this is a family portrait of our ancestors by great artist Ghirlandaio.

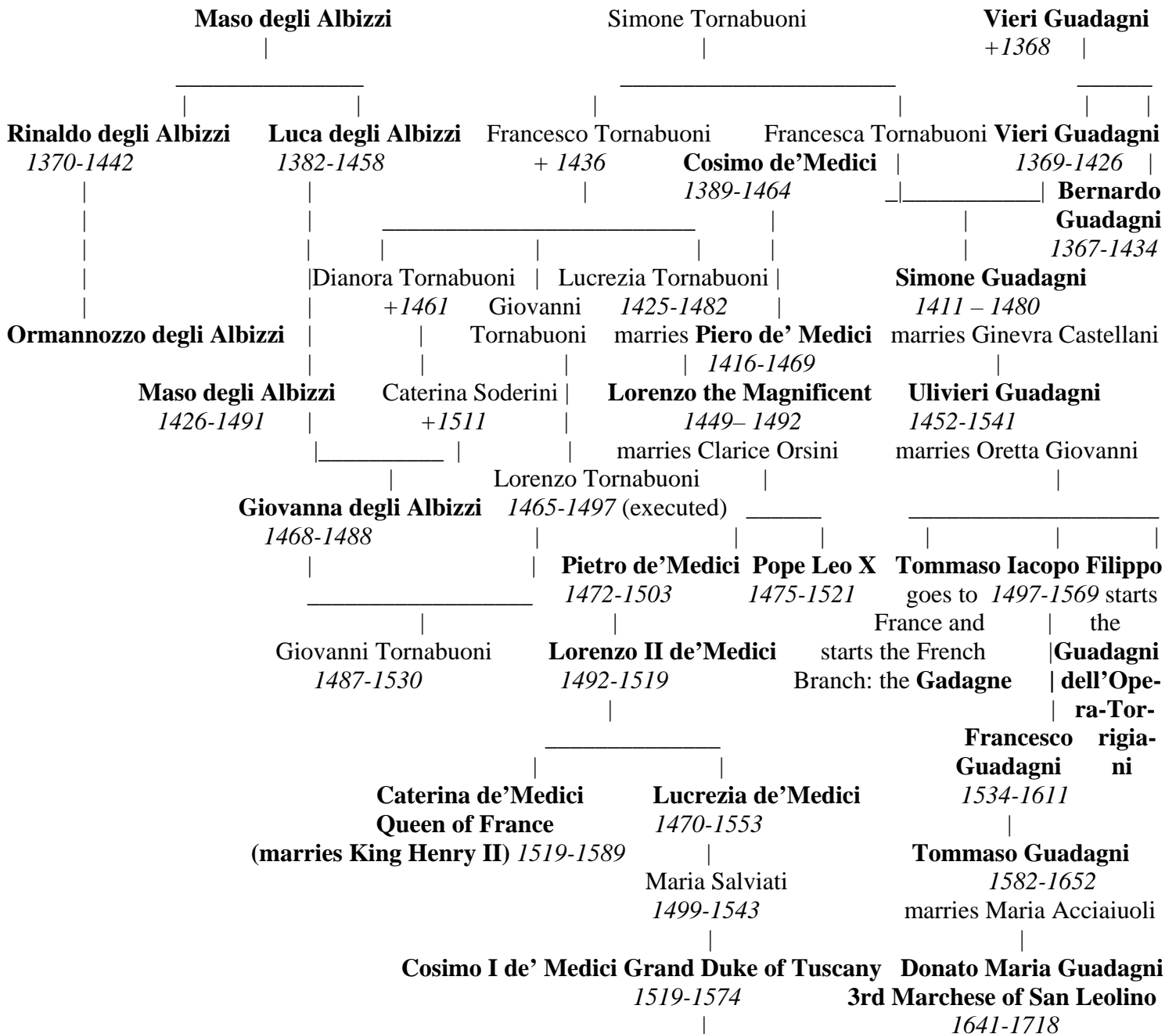
Tornabuoni Family Chapel by Ghirlandaio in the church of Santa Maria Novella in Florence.

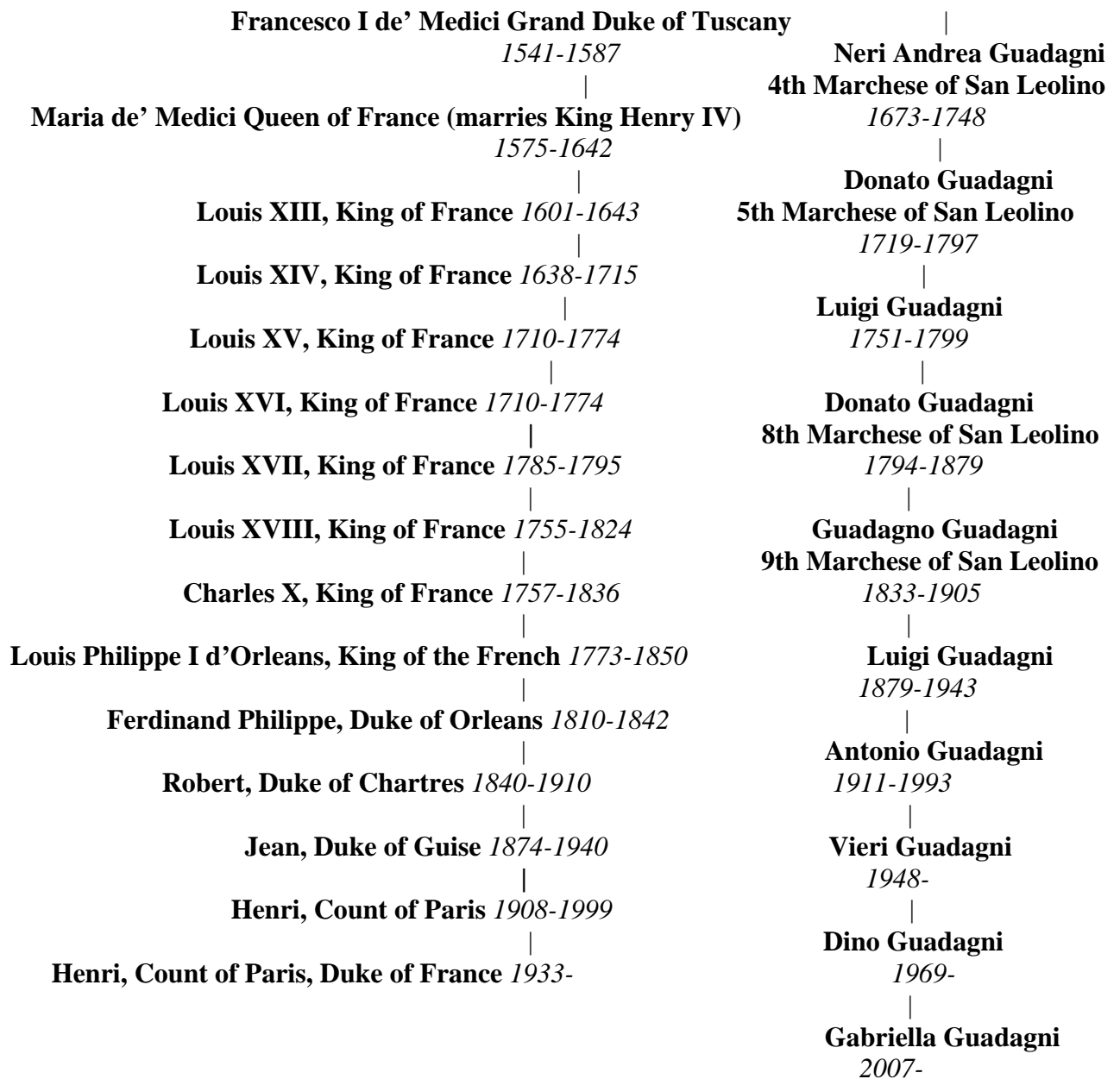
Simone Guadagni's father, Vieri Guadagni (1369-1426), had been an important representative of the oligarchic clique of the degli Albizzi, with which he had actively cooperated, together with his brother Bernardo, achieving a political position of prestige.

Also Simone Guadagni would have had a brilliant political career ahead of him, if the events which led to the fall of the degli Albizzi Party and the triumph of the Medici side, with the establishment of a 60 year lasting regime, had not hindered its realization.

We will show here a family tree of four great Florentine Families, Guadagni, Medici, Degli Albizzi and Tornabuoni, of how they eventually all became related to one another, during the Renaissance period.

Degli Albizzi, Tornabuoni, Medici and Guadagni Family trees





Vieri Guadagni (1948-)



Henri, Count of Paris (1933-)

Can we find common family traits between Vieri and Henri? (I personally think the expression of the Count of Paris' eyes, smiling independently of his mouth, is a typical Guadagni expression, which is part of their well-known charm – I don't want to be boastful, but I think that his smile with his eyes, his innate charm, and the shapes of his forehead, cheekbones and lower lip are typically Guadagni; they remind me a lot of Tony Gaines, who was even more charming, and whose eyes were always laughing, full of "joie de vivre", and would communicate it to everybody around him).

In 1848, another French Revolution sent King of the French Louis Philippe I in exile, and France became a Republic. The descendants of the Kings of France are now private French citizens, like everybody else. They go by the title of Count of Paris. They are still our cousins, but a little more remote at every generation.

At the beginning of the 15th Century, we see at the top of this Family Tree that three of the most powerful and important families of Florence were the Degli Albizzi, the Guadagni and the Medici. Florence was a Republic, but of the Oligarchic kind, i.e. a few rich families voted for each other at every election so the power (and the wealth) remained in the same hands. Both the Degli Albizzi and the Guadagni families, rich, noble and old families of Florence, belonged to the oligarchy and were in favor of the continuation of this type of Republican regime. As we remember the revolt of the *ciompi* tried to change it in a regime where poor people had the same opportunities to gain power as the rich, but eventually their regime failed and the oligarchic Republic returned.

The Medici instead were new rich, Cosimo's father, Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici, had made his large fortune himself, starting from scratch. The degli Albizzi and the Guadagni feared that the Medici wanted to change the Republican Regime into a Despotism (only one person, the despot or tyrant, reigns forever), or a Monarchy, where only one family rules forever, from Father to Son, etc. So Rinaldo degli Albizzi paid his friend Bernardo Guadagni's debts, so Bernardo could be elected Gonfalonier of Justice (i.e. President of the Republic of Florence). Gonfalonier Bernardo Guadagni called Cosimo de' Medici to Palazzo Vecchio (Palace of Government) and had him arrested and imprisoned in a cell in the Palace itself. Cosimo however had a friend of his take 1,000 Florins (Florin was the money of Florence), a very large amount, to Bernardo. Bernardo could have refused the "gift" and sentenced Cosimo de' Medici to death like Rinaldo degli Albizzi wanted, or accept the money and send Cosimo into exile for several years.

By his decision, Bernardo Guadagni had the power to change World History forever. If he had refused the Florins and sentenced Cosimo to death, the Medici Family would probably have never gained power in Florence again. If we think that Cosimo's grandson, Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent, lover of Art and Literature, started the Renaissance movement in Florence (from where it spread all over Europe), by inviting Greek and Roman art and literature experts from Constantinople, after the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire was captured by the Turks in 1453, that the Medici gave two Queens to France, Catherine (wife of a King of France, Henry II, and mother of three Kings of France, Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III) and Maria (wife of King Henry IV and mother of Louis XIII), and two Popes, Leo X and Clement VII, to the Catholic Church, Bernardo's decision to kill Cosimo de' Medici would have dramatically changed World History. And Bernardo Guadagni risked his own life by allowing Cosimo de' Medici to live. From historian Zaccaria we learn that Bernardo Guadagni was called to trial, where he would have probably been tortured, by Cosimo de' Medici who returned to Florence sooner than expected, and maybe was even poisoned by the latter on his way to trial.

Bernardo Guadagni had a second chance to change world history. After he accepted Cosimo de' Medici's "gift" and changed his sentence from "death" to "exile", while Cosimo was still in jail, awaiting to be freed, Bernardo heard "rumors" that Rinaldo degli Abizzi's son, Ormannozzo, angry that Cosimo was not sentenced to death any more, had decided to attack the jail with a group of friends and kill him anyway. At this point, Bernardo Guadagni had accepted the Florins, changed the death sentence to "exile", and could consider himself free from any further obligation. He could say he did not hear the rumors or that he did not believe them to be true, and stay at home warming himself up near the fireplace.

Instead, he sent a group of his friends immediately at full speed to Palazzo Vecchio, to free Cosimo de' Medici from jail and take him to his home. Then Bernardo and Cosimo had dinner together, while the former was organizing an adequate escort, and then Bernardo sent Cosimo into exile well protected from Ormannozzo or anybody else's attacks.

From the above tree we see that the three families, Degli Albizzi, Guadagni and Medici, eventually end up related through the Tornabuoni, who intermarry with all of them. Even Giovanna degli Albizzi, great-niece of Rinaldo, ends up by marrying Lorenzo Tornabuoni, first cousin of Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent.

Many of the people listed in the above Family Tree have their portraits made by great artists of the Renaissance. The Guadagni used to have a beautiful gallery of family portraits in Masseto, where I remember seeing them when I was a young man. When Masseto was sold, Lawyer Aiazzi took care of it and I do not know where he put the portraits. Even though these ancestors lived many centuries ago, it would be nice to see what they looked like while they were changing world history. However, we have portraits of Guadagni's wives or grandparents available, to whom they obviously resembled.

Simone Tornabuoni was Simone Guadagni (1411-1480)'s grandfather, the latter probably owed his name to the former, so all of Simone Guadagni's descendants (all of us) have Tornabuoni blood in their veins. A legend says that Simone Tornabuoni's grand-daughter, in the family tree above, Lucrezia Tornabuoni (1425-1482), wife of Piero de' Medici the Gouty, son of "Cosimo de' Medici", and our direct ancestor Simone Guadagni's first cousin, posed as Mary in the "Madonna of the Magnificat" by famous Renaissance artist Sandro Botticelli, and the baby in her lap is her grand-daughter, our cousin Lucrezia de' Medici, daughter of Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent. Part of the Guadagni famous good looks and legendary "charm" might come from our common grandfather Simone Tornabuoni, from whom Lucrezia probably inherited part of her looks.



“Madonna of the Magnificat” by artist Sandro Botticelli



Lucrezia’s grandson was Giulio de’Medici (1478-1534), who became Pope Clement VII; in the above 1519 portrait by Raphael, he, still a cardinal, is standing on the left, next to the right hand, of his uncle Pope Leo X de’Medici; you can already see the “wild Guadagni charm” in his eyes.



Lorenzo de' Medici the Magnificent (1449-1492), great-grandson of Simone Tornabuoni, ancestor of all of the Guadagni branches, Torrigiani, Dufour Berte, Gadagne. There is lot of Guadagni in him. Painting by Renaissance master Benozzo Gozzoli in 1459-1461 in the Magi Chapel in the Palazzo Medici in Florence.



Contessina de' Bardi (1390-1473) our direct ancestor, wife of our "enemy" Cosimo de' Medici, but direct ancestor of Neri Andrea Guadagni (1673-1748), 4th Marchese of San Leolino, and of all of us. I see something of my mother, Isabella Guadagni, in her.



Piero de' Medici the Gouty (1416-1469) by Bronzino, direct ancestor of all the Santo Spirito Guadagni (us)



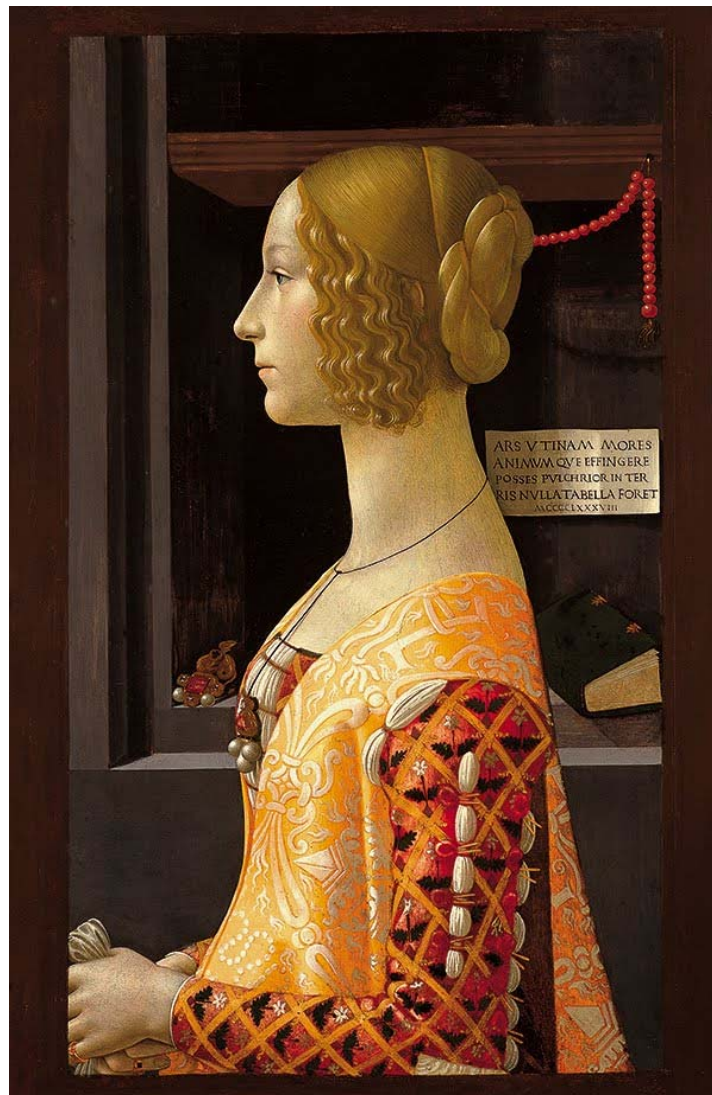
Giambattista Strozzi (1504-1571), our direct ancestor, an Italian Condottiere (“War Lord”) and banker, the most famous Strozzi of the Renaissance. In his house in Rome, future Queen of France, our cousin Catherine de’ Medici, was educated. Who of us looks like him?



Ludovica Tornabuoni by Ghirlandaio in the Tornabuoni chapel.



Giovanni Tornabuoni, grandson of our direct ancestor Simone Tornabuoni by artist Ghirlandaio in the Tornabuoni Chapel, Florence.



Giovanna degli Albizzi (1468-1488) by Ghirlandaio, married Lorenzo Tornabuoni, 2nd cousin of Simone Guadagni. She was the daughter of Rinaldo degli Albizzi's brother, Luca degli Albizzi.

Let us now return to Simone Guadagni's life, by Historian Raffaella Zaccaria.

When Vieri Guadagni died, in 1426, Simone and his brothers Francesco, Manno, Migliore and Malatesta, inherited their father's wealth and commercial trades deployed mostly in Rome, Florence and France: the amount of the substantial family patrimony can be extracted by the size of the cadastre report presented on July 12, 1427, by Simone himself and his brothers. On June 2, 1429, he obtained the registration to the Guild of the Bankers and money changers, and in 1430 he released a new tax statement.

In October 1433, Simone won the scrutiny for the three major offices, thus obtaining the possibility to perform the main government and public administration offices. In 1434 he presented again the cadastre certification together with his brothers.

However, with the return of Cosimo de' Medici to Florence, on October 6, 1434, he also suffered from the consequences of the measures issued against those who had endorsed the Degli Albizzi regime, as well as his brothers Francesco, Migliore and Manno did. Simone was absent from Florence from 1434 to 1463, when he had the possibility to return to his home town. During that period he went to Turin and then Geneva, Switzerland, at that time among the most important European trade and financial centers. Since 1446, he turns out to own and manage his own company.



Cosimo de' Medici surrounded by artists and scholars by artist Marco da Faenza from a drawing by Vasari

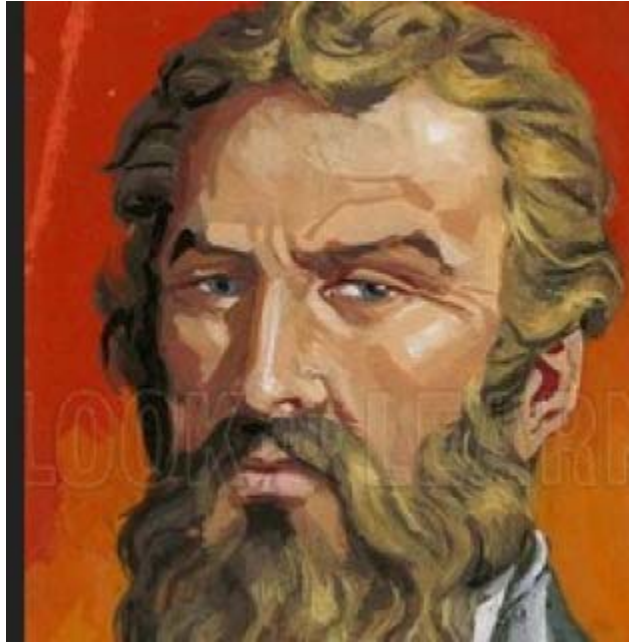


Geneva on Lake Geneva, Switzerland (two pictures above)

Most of the informations on Simone's life and activity, in the years he lived abroad, can be found in the registers 482, 484, 486 of the Alien Funds of the Hospital of the Innocenti Archives in Florence; in particular, it is about documents related to the company founded in Geneva by Antonio della Casa and Simone Guadagni, for the period 1453-1464; more information is available from the registers related to the Company of Della Casa in Rome (483, 485, 487-489).

Even though away from Florence, Simone continued to present cadastre certifications: in the ones of 1446, for example, the stated wealth is very inferior to the one declared in the preceding statements. On January 4, 1447, in Montpellier, Simone married Ginevra, daughter of Piero, son of Vanni Castellani – he was also a victim of the Medici purges - ; Ginevra outlived him until December 7, 1508. He had 10 children from her, Francesca, Imberta aka Lisabetta, Iacopo, Ulivieri (direct ancestor of all of us), first born male, born on April 7, 1452; after his return to Florence, Ulivieri dedicated himself to the political life, even though he also cared for his commercial interests in Italy and in France; he died on September 11, 1541; Tommaso, born in Savoy on August 27, 1454, died in Avignon on May 29, 1533; he returned to Florence with his father in 1463, but later he returned to Lyon where he

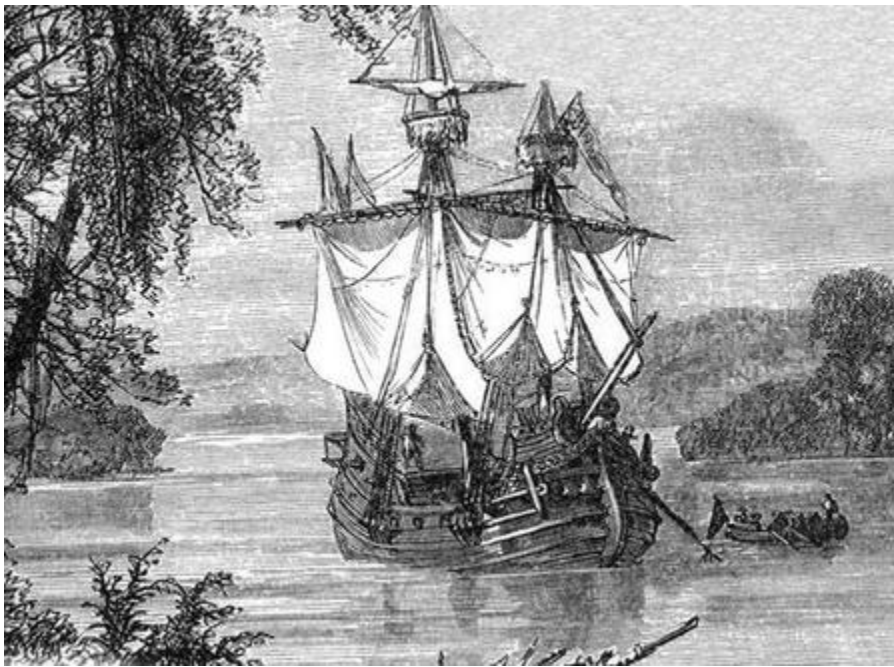
started his own commercial company, accumulating a huge fortune which made him become the banker of the French kings, who repaid him with titles and privileges. Simone's other children were Leonarda, Giovanna, Migliore, Maddalena and Francesco, born in Florence in 1464. Giovanna, married Alessandro da Verrazzano and was the mother of the famous explorer of North America, Giovanni da Verrazzano, whose exploration voyages were financed by the Guadagnis.



Explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano, in the above portrait, son of Giovanna Guadagni (and probably named after her), born in 1458, and nephew of our direct ancestor Ulivieri Guadagni, 1452-1541 (see family tree)



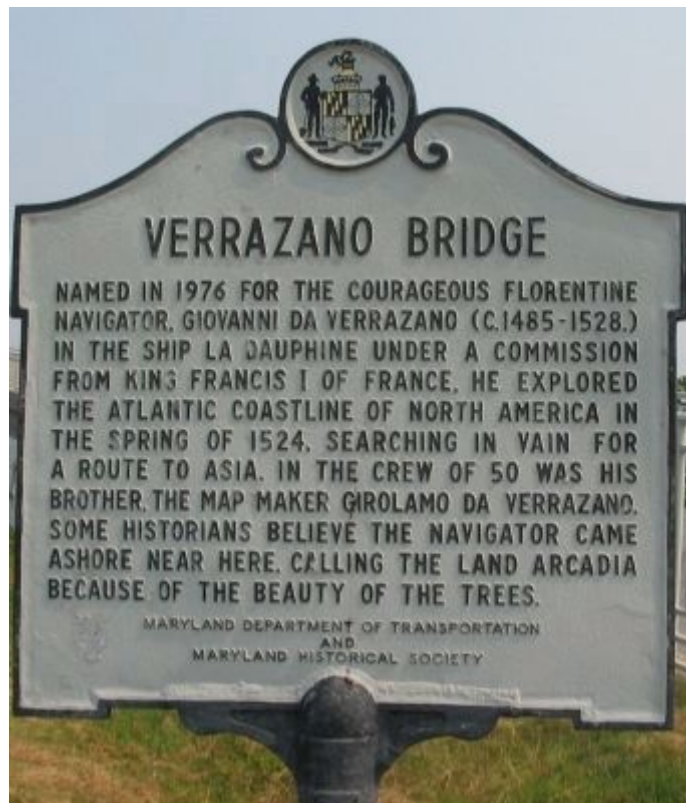
Exploration trips of Giovanni da Verrazzano, financed by the Guadagni.



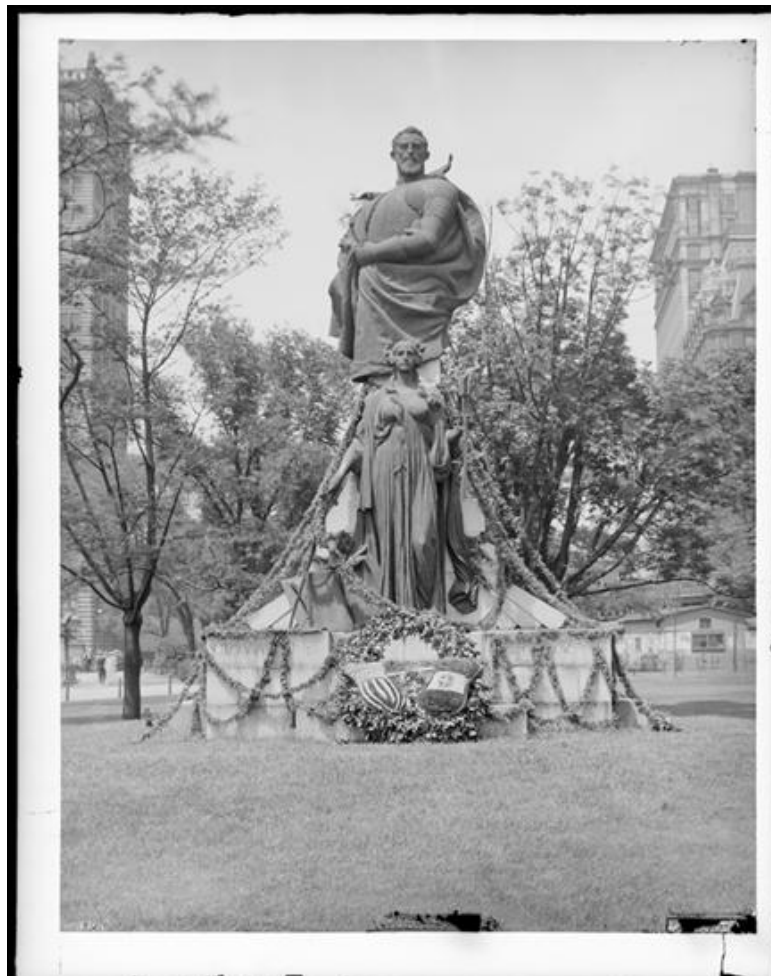
Giovanni da Verrazzano's ship "*La Dauphine*", financed by the Guadagni



Statue of our great-cousin Giovanni da Verrazzano, son of Giovanna Guadagni, in Greve in Chianti, Italy



Verrazano Bridge



Giovanni da Verrazzano's statue in Battery Park, New York, (built by the Italian War Commission in June 1917, when Italy and the United States were allied against Germany and Austria in WWI) You can see the American flag in front of the statue on the left and the Italian flag with the crest of the King of Italy on the right.

Even after his marriage, Simone had to remain in Geneva, where in 1449 he turns out to be one of the largest taxpayers with a tax of 6 Florins. In June 1450 he officially found a new partnership with Antonio Della Casa – with whom he had for a long time commercial interests, deriving from the banking activities that the Guadagni and the Della Casa families practiced in Rome and in Florence, with an investment of 2,500 ducats.

It was agreed that Simone's share of the gains would be 5/11. In spite of changes in assets and members (Antonio Della Casa died in 1454, leaving his share of the capital of the company to his sons Iacopo and Giovanni and to the sons of another deceased brother of his, Ruggeri) the Genevan corporation continued until 1464, managed by Simone, enlarging its business deals with a noteworthy increase of the assets and of the gains to share among the members.

During the years in which the association with the Della Casa was working, Simone resided in Geneva permanently, in spite of short trips for business reasons. However, he kept in touch with the rest of the Guadagni family: a nephew of Simone, Filippo Guadagni, son of his brother Francesco, worked with him as a regular employee with increasing responsibilities for all the period the company was operating. Another employee, since 1453, was Lionetto de' Rossi. The latter became manager of the Lyon Medici branch, maybe contributing to the failure of the Guadagni – Della Casa Company). Furthermore, in 1451, a brother of Simone, Migliore, who happened to be in Naples, forwarded 180 florins on behalf of Simone to the Della Casa Company in Rome.

On several occasions, Simone was able to return to Florence, where, by the way, he would provide himself with large orders of velvet, damask and silk to sell later on in the main European markets: he went there for the first time, in 1454, at the time of the Easter Trade Show, with the goal of carrying out commercial and trade operations. On February 25, 1458, he presented the cadastre report. He visited Florence again in May 1459, coming from Piedmont and stopping also in Milano, Parma and Mantova in his round trip. He came back also in 1461, while stopping over in Milan. In July 1463, he was in Lyon. The return to Geneva did not last long: in September 1463, with all his family Simone left for Aigues-Mortes, from where, on October 13, he boarded a



Aigues-Mortes

galley to reach Florence. On the following November 7, he wound up being there, as it appears from a letter he sent on that date to Giovanni della Casa in Geneva, to carry out a withdrawal of 1,000 ecus.

During Easter 1464 he went for the customary trade show of Lyon, where by then the interests of the main Florentine companies, like those of the Medici, of the Pazzi and of the Nasi had come together; then he briefly returned to Geneva, as we deduce from a registration of June 6 of that year, in regard to the withdrawal of an amount of money necessary to pay for the expenses of the trip back to Florence.

After 1464, the corporate name Guadagni – Della Casa is not mentioned any more in Geneva or in Lyon, where maybe the transfer of the company had been planned, but not carried out, probably because of the competition of the Medici Company. We know however that the Guadagni – Della Casa Company continued doing business in Florence: in effect on June 15, 1465, Simone signed, under the company's name, a declaration in which he committed himself to abide by the agreement made in Ferrara by Mariotto Lippi with Giovanfrancesco Strozzi by which the company had a credit of 12,000 Venetian ducats.

Later on, Simone found himself in serious financial hardships, caused by a series of miscalculated financial operations, but mostly by the overwhelming political and economical climb of the Medici: sure enough he was forced to incur huge debts with Angelo Tani, who had been for several years the manager of the Bruges (Belgium) branch of the Medici Companies, so much so that not even the income from his personal patrimony was enough to pay them off after his death. His brother Manno had to take over their payments until he died on August 7, 1481.

Simone died in 1468 (it is not known whether or not in Florence).

Filippo Guadagni, son of Simone's brother Francesco and who worked for Simone in Geneva, was born on 7/5/1425 from Francesco Guadagni and his wife Caterina Scolari, who died on February 1443. Filippo was freed from paternal authority in 1444, when he was 19 years old. He never seemed to have married but he had two illegitimate children, Caterina and Guadagno.

Caterina Guadagni was born in 1451. She never married and dedicated her life to works of charity. In 1493, when Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci decided to found a monastery of members of the third Order of the Order of the Servi in Piazza dell' Annunziata, she was one of the pious women who volunteered to seclude themselves in monastic life.



Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci (1458-1531) by famous artist Parmigianino

Guadagno Guadagni was born illegitimate in 1452, a year after his sister. Like his father Filippo, he never married but he had an illegitimate son, whom he named Filippo after his dad.

Filippo Guadagni Junior, Guadagno's illegitimate son, became a Camaldoli monk in the Monastery of Santa Maria degli Angioli ("Saint Mary of the Angels") on November 20, 1559, with the name of don Giulio. He was abbot of the monastery of Arezzo in 1591; of San Michele in Borgo in Pisa in 1592; of Santa Maria degli Angioli in Florence in 1595; he was also inspector of the Order. He died in Luco on September 10, 1608.



Church of San Michele in Borgo (Pisa).

Filippo Guadagni Senior's father, **Francesco** Guadagni, was born on February 18, 1400. He was Vieri's son and Simone's brother. When he was still very young he was engaged to Caterina, daughter of Messer Matteo degli Scolari. Caterina's paternal uncle was the famous Pippo Spano (born Filippo Buondelmonti degli Scolari), Commander in Chief of all the armies of the King Sigismund of Hungary.

Francesco and Caterina had seven children: Matteo, Arnaldo, Vieri (after Francesco's father), Matteo, Margherita, Filippo (probably after Caterina's famous uncle Pippo, nickname for Filippo, Spano) and Lisabetta. Francesco also had a daughter, Maddalena, with his second wife, Lucrezia Buondelmonti.



Pippo Spano (1369-1426) by Andrea del Castagno



King Sigismund of Hungary

Francesco was sent to Hungary to learn the military skills under Pippo's command. He took part in some of the famous campaigns against the Turks. When he returned to Florence, he was one of the Priors in 1427. However, Cosimo de' Medici's return in 1434 and the consequent fall of the Albizzi faction ended his political career like it did those of the other Guadagni. Nevertheless, no one dared to condemn him because no fault was found in him. So Francesco remained in Florence, unhappy but resigned.

One day, Friar Antonio Neri d'Arezzo, who was a fierce enemy of the Florentines and a friend of the Duke of Milan, wrote Francesco a letter, in which he invited Francesco to come to Fiumalbo and discuss how to return the Albizzi faction to Florence and overthrow the government. Francesco did not have the character of a conspirator, and he revealed everything to the Florentine government. He was told to pretend and accept Friar Antonio's idea and to go to Fiumalbo and then refer everything that was said there. Francesco did as he was told, heard all the proposals of the friar and returned to Florence without committing himself. In Florence he recounted everything to the government.

However, some imprudent words he uttered to Branca Brancacci were disclosed to the Podestà' (the Magistrate). The latter suspected Francesco of being two-faced and had him arrested and condemned to death. But the Gonfalonier of Justice, who happened to be Cosimo de' Medici himself, said that there was not enough proof to condemn Francesco to death and that if Guadagni was to be beheaded, Cosimo would give up the Gonfalone of Justice.



Cosimo de' Medici

Through Cosimo's intercession, Francesco Guadagni, his brothers and all their descendants were instead numbered among the magnates i.e. "nobles", which meant they were excluded forever from public life in the Republic of Florence. Furthermore, Francesco was jailed in the Stinche prison, in the "magnate sector", for ten years, under harsh conditions.



He had been imprisoned for four years when he was condemned by the Podestà' on October 30, 1438, to pay a fine of 3,000 lire. The reason was that Francesco, a noble, had slightly wounded Andrea Baldesi, his commoner cellmate, with a pair of scissors during an argument. [This had to do with the old anti-noble legislation of the late 13th century. For crimes committed by magnates or nobles against commoners, penalties were very severe].

When Francesco had served his jail term in the Stinche, he was sent into exile to Bologna, where he hoped to have a calmer life. When the catasto was compiled in 1451, he was still living in Bologna. He had the clerk write in the register that he was living in exile in great poverty, with his six children. He must have died a short while after, certainly before the new catasto was compiled in 1457.