

TWO MEMOIRS  
OF

RENAISSANCE FLORENCE

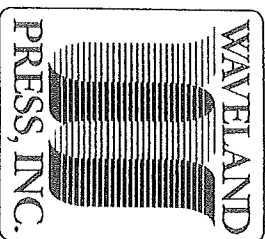
The Diaries of

*Buonaccorso Pitti and Gregorio Dati*

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"Kids, Kids & more Kids"



Prospect Heights, Illinois

ter of Pagolo d'Arrigo Guglielmi, and I shall also record the promises which were made to me. May God and his Saints grant by their grace that they be kept.

On 31 March 1393, I was betrothed to her and on Easter Monday, 7 April, I gave her the ring. On 22 June, a Sunday, I became her husband in the name of God and good fortune. Her first cousins, Giovanni and Lionardo di Domenico Arrighi, promised that she should have a dowry of 900 gold florins and that, apart from the dowry, she should have the income on a farm in S. Fiore a' Elsa, which had been left her as a legacy by her mother, Monna Veronica. It was not stated at the time how much this amounted to, but it was understood that she would receive the accounts. We arranged our match very simply indeed and with scarcely any discussion. God grant that nothing but good may come of it. On the 26th of that same June, I received a payment of 800 gold florins from the bank of Giacomino and Company. This was the dowry. I invested it in the shop of Buonaccorso Berardi and his partners, and it is recorded here, on page 2 among the profits. At the same time I received the trousseau which my wife's cousins valued at 106 florins, in the light of which they deducted six florins from another account, leaving me the equivalent of 100 gold florins. But from what I heard from her and what I saw myself, they had overestimated it by 30 florins or more. However, from politeness, I said nothing about this.

I have not declared this dowry nor insured it on account of their negligence and in order to put off paying the tax. They dare not urge me to do so since they are obligated towards me. Yet I must do so, and if by God's will something were to happen before I do, I want her to be as assured as can be of having her dowry, just as though it had been declared and insured. For the fault is not hers. It turns out that the income she is to receive comes from a farm in S. Fiore on the Elsa on the way to Pisa. It is a nice piece of property which apparently belonged to Pagolo Guglielmi. Giovanni and Lionardo bought it from Betta's mother, Monna Veronica, or rather bought a half-share in

it for 500 gold florins and paid a tax on this sale. Later they sold back their share to Monna Veronica, paying another tax, for 575 florins. These transactions are recorded in the register of taxes on contracts in registers 500, 40; 500, 41 and 500, 42. When Monna Veronica died in April 1391, she left the income from this farm to Betta and to her children after her.

On 26 September 1402, as Simone was in Florence for a while before leaving for Catalonia, and as the penalties for evading the tax on contracts were remitted by law for those who paid that day, I and Simone declared the dowry of 900 gold florins received from Lionardo and Domenico. The notary was S. Giunta Franceschi and on the 30th of the same September, I paid 30 gold florins, being 3 1/2 per cent, to the account of the taxes on contracts.

Our Lord God was pleased to call to himself the blessed soul of Isabella, known as Betta, on Monday, 2 October, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon. The next day, Tuesday, at three in the afternoon, she was buried in our grave at S. Spirito. May God receive her soul in His glory. Amen.

#### Children, 1393

In praise, glory, honor and benediction of Almighty God, I shall record the fruits that His grace will grant us, and may He in His mercy vouchsafe that they be such as to console our souls eternally, amen. On Sunday morning, 17 May 1394, Betta gave birth to a girl whom we called Bandeca in memory of my first wife. Goro d'Andrea, Niccolao di Bartolomeo Niccoli, and Berardo di Buonacorso were her sponsors.

On Friday evening, 17 March 1396, towards two o'clock in the morning, the Lord blessed our marriage with a male son whom we named Stagio and whom we had baptized in the love of God on Sunday morning by Fra Simone Bartoli of the Augustinian Hermits, my partner Nardo di Lippo, and Sandro di Jacopo, a pauper.

At two o'clock in the night of Monday, 12 March 1397, Betta gave birth to our third child, a girl. We called her after Betta's mother, giving her the names Veronica Gostanza, and Sandro di Jacopo baptized her in the love of God.

At midday on Saturday, 27 April 1398, Betta gave birth to our fourth child which was a boy. We called him Bernardo Agostino and he was baptized the same day in the love of God by Monna Agnola del Ciri and Monna Francesca Aldobrandino. God grant he turn out well.

At dawn on Tuesday, 1 July 1399, Betta had our fifth child and we baptized him in the love of God the same day, calling him Mari Piero. The sponsors were Master Lionardo<sup>5</sup> and Fra Zanobi.

On Tuesday evening, 22 June 1400, Betta gave birth for the sixth time. The child was a girl. We called her Filippa Giovanna and she was baptized on Friday morning in the love of God. Fra Simone Bartoli held her.

Our Lord God was pleased to take to Himself the fruits which He had lent us, and He took first our most beloved, Stagio, our darling and blessed first-born. He died of the plague on the morning of Friday, 30 July 1400, in Florence without my seeing him, for I was in the country. Master Lionardo and Monna Ghita were with him. May God bless him and grant that he pray for us.

On 22 August of the same year, the Divine bounty was pleased to desire a companion for that beloved soul. God called our son Mari to Himself and he died at eleven o'clock on Sunday, of the plague. God grant us the grace to find favor with Him and to bless and thank Him for all things.

On Wednesday, 13 July 1401, after midnight, the Lord lent us a seventh child. Betta had a son who we called Stagio Benedetto. The sponsors were Nardo di Lippo and Domenico Benini. Divine providence was pleased to take him back and for this too may He be thanked and praised. The child suffered from a cough for a fortnight, and at

<sup>5</sup>Gregorio's brother, Lionardo Dati, was a Dominican friar, who later was elected General of the Order.

midday on 29 September, St. Michael's Day and the Eve of St. Jerome's Day, passed away to Paradise. God grant that we, when we leave this mortal life, may follow him there.

On 5 July 1402, before the hour of terce, Betta gave birth to our eighth child. We had him baptized straight after terce in the love of God. His godparents were Nardo and blind Margherita, and we called him Piero Antonio because of Betta's special devotion to S. Antonio. God bless him and grant that he become a good man.

After that my wife Isabetta passed on to Paradise as is recorded on the opposite page, and I shall have no more children by her to list here. God be praised.

Our Creator was pleased to call to Himself the soul of our gentle and good son Antonio. He left this life, I think, on 2 August. For I was in great trouble and did not know it at the time. It was in Pisa where he is buried at S. Caterina's.

Betta and I had eight children, five boys and three girls. • • •

#### Memo, 1394

~~I record that on 1 February I withdrew from the partnership with Buonacorso Berardi and did business on my own this year. I bought goods and sent them to Simone in Valencia, lent money to friends in Pisa and elsewhere, received goods from Valencia for sale here and continued like this for eight months until the beginning of October. I did very well during this period. I have not kept accounts but earned and spent on my own. Yet I can see that the transactions I carried out have been successful, and I hope those which are not yet concluded will be equally so. I may go through with them by myself or may go into partnership with someone.~~

And since more in God's name I have formed a partnership with Michele di Ser Parente from 1 October 1395. In our account books, it will be reckoned as beginning on 1

restrain my own presumption and tendency towards ambition and shall live in freedom without demeaning myself by begging favors from any. And if I should depart from this resolve, I condemn myself each time to distribute two gold florins in alms within a month. I have taken this resolution in my fiftieth year.

Knowing my weakness in the face of sin, I make another resolve on the same day. In order to ensure the peace and good of my own conscience, I vowed that I would never accept any office, if my name should be drawn, wherein I would have power to wield the death penalty. If I should depart from this resolution, I condemn myself to give 25 gold florins in alms to the poor within three months for each such office that I have agreed to accept. And I shall in no way attempt to influence those who make up the purses for such offices, either asking them to put or not put in my name, but shall let them do as they think fit. If I should do otherwise, I condemn myself to distribute a gold florin.

#### Children—1404

♥ ♥ • Glory, honor and praise be to Almighty God. Continuing from folio 5, I shall list the children which He shall in His grace bestow on me and my wife, Ginevra.

On Sunday morning at terce, 27 April of the same year, Ginevra gave birth to our first-born son. He was baptized at the hour of vespers on Monday the 28th in the church of S. Giovanni. We named him Manetto Domenico. His sponsors in God's love were Bartolo di Giovanni di Niccola, Giovanni di Michelozzo, a belt-maker, and Domenico di Deo, a goldsmith. God make him good.

At the third hour of Thursday, 19 March 1405, Ginevra gave birth to a female child of less than seven months. She had not realized she was pregnant, since for four months she had been ailing as though she were not, and in the end was unable to hold it. We baptized it at once in the church of S. Giovanni. The sponsors were Bartolo, Monna Buona, another lady, and the blind woman. Having thought at first

that it was a boy, we named it Agnolo Giovanni. It died at dawn on Sunday morning, 22 March, and was buried before the sermon.

At terce on Tuesday morning, 8 June 1406, Ginevra had her third child, a fine full-term baby girl whom we had baptized on Friday morning, 9 June. We christened her Elisabetta Caterina and she will be called Lisabetta in memory of my dead wife, Betta. The sponsors were Fra Lorenzo, Bartolo, and the blind woman.

On 4 June 1407, a Saturday, Ginevra gave birth after a nine-month pregnancy to a little girl whom we had baptized on the evening of Tuesday the 7th. We named her Antonia Margherita and we shall call her Antonia. Her godfather was Nello di Ser Piero Nelli, a neighbor. God grant her good fortune.

At terce, Sunday, 31 July 1411, Ginevra gave birth to a very attractive baby boy whom we had baptized on 4 August. The sponsors were my colleagues among the Standard-bearers of the Militia Companies with the exception of two: Giorgio and Bartolomeo Fioravanti. We called the child Niccolò. God bless him. God was pleased to call the child very shortly to Himself. He died of dysentery on 22 October at terce. May he intercede with God for us.

At terce on Sunday, 1 October 1412, Ginevra had a son whom, from devotion to St. Jerome—since it was yesterday that her pains began—I called Girolamo Domenico. The sponsors were Master Bartolomeo del Carmine, Cristofano di Francesco di Ser Giovanni, and Lapuccio di Villa, and his son Bettino. God grant him and us health and make him a good man.

God willed that the blessed soul of our daughter Betta should return to Him after a long illness. She passed away during the night between Tuesday and the first Wednesday of Lent at four in the morning, 21 February 1414. She was seven years and seven months, and I was sorely grieved at her death. God grant she pray for us.

On 1 May 1415, at the hour of terce on a Wednesday, God granted us a fine little boy, and I had him baptized at

four on Saturday morning. Jacopo di Francesco di Tura and Aringhieri di Jacopo, the wool merchant, were his godfathers. May God grant that he be healthy, wise, and good. We named him after the two holy apostles, Jacopo and Filippo, on whose feast day he was born and we shall call him Filippo.

At eleven o'clock on Friday, 24 April 1416, Ginevra gave birth to a baby girl after a painful and almost fatal labor. The child was baptized immediately on S. Marco's Day, the 25th. We called her Ghita in memory of our mother. Monna Mea di Franchino was her godmother.

Manetto died in Pisa in January 1418. He had been very sick and was buried in S. Martino. Pippo died on 2 August 1419 in Val di Pesa in a place called Polonia. This is recorded in notebook B.

At two o'clock on the night following Monday 17 July, Lisa was born. She was baptized by Master Pagolo from Montepulciano, a preaching friar,<sup>15</sup> on Wednesday at seven o'clock. God console us, amen. She later died.

Altogether Ginevra and I had eleven children: four boys and seven girls.

#### Memorandum—1405

To take up my record of past years from folio 7, I served among the Ten on Liberty.<sup>16</sup> My term began on 1 April and ran four months. My colleagues were Arrigo Mazinghi, Niccoloso Cambi, Siraldo di Lorenzo, Piero Velluti, Nastagio Benincasa, Ugucione Giandonati, Michele di Bano, two artisans, and myself. I pleased everyone and acted as rightly as I was able.

I was Guild Consul for the third time from 1 May of the same year. With me were Zanobi di Ser Gino, Agnolo di Ghezze, Noze Manetti, and Agnolo di Filippo di Ser Giovanni [Pandolfini].

<sup>15</sup> A member of the Dominican Order.

<sup>16</sup> The Ten on Liberty (*Dieci di Libertà*) was a magistracy whose primary function was to settle quarrels between citizens.

I began proceedings against Messer Giovanni Serristori and Company on the . . . of September before the Merchants' Court. I was reluctant to do this but had no choice. I had suffered grievous harm in spirit and pocket and was likely to be ruined if I did not defend myself. God bring me safely out of this! The partnership with Piero and Jacopo Lana and Nardo di Lippo expired on 31 December 1406. We did not renew it because of the risks we had run in connection with what had happened in Spain. It is advisable for us to lie low for a while and wait and pay our creditors and put our trust in God. I have reached an agreement with Piero establishing the time and manner in which I must pay him. I am to do so through Bernardo who has a copy of the agreement.

I was a Guild Consul for the fourth time from 1 September 1408, in company with Lapo Corsi, Chimento di Stefano, Filippo di Ghezo, Francesco di Messer Jacopo Marchi, and Matteo di Lorenzo, the goldsmith.

On 11 November 1408, I set out for Valencia and Murcia, and reached Murcia on 30 December. I travelled overland in the company of Pagolo Mei and it was a difficult journey. I left Murcia in May 1410 and delayed in Valencia on account of the risks of both the sea and land route, due to the war between ourselves and the King<sup>17</sup> and the Genoese. In February I finally set out and took ship at Barcelona whence I sailed for Piombino which I reached on 12 March at terce on St. Gregory's Day and was in Florence on 15 March 1411.

In that year 1411, there was a plague, and Piero Lana died. That December I made an agreement with his brother and partner, Jacopo, who had been my partner too, and with Piero's sons through Dino di Messer Guccio and Bernardo and Pagolo di Vanni and Zanobi di Ser Benozzo, who acted as intermediaries.

Our Master Lionardo was elected Father General of the Dominican Order by the chapter, with great harmony and <sup>17</sup>Florence's antagonist was King Ladislaus of Naples. This war is described in Pitti's diary.