

Lydia Fletcher
INF 385T

Austin, TX, Harry Ransom Center, Ranuzzi MS Ph 12994
Istoria ouuero Cronaca Di Casa Velluti

Florence, c. 1671-77
Folio

Exterior Description of the Manuscript.

Measurements of the binding:

- Total area: 301mm x 220mm
- Area within gilt border: 284mm x 200mm
- Spine length: 300mm including seven compartments
- Compartment size: 35mm x 25mm
- Size within compartment gilt border: 30mm x 20mm

The manuscript is bound in calf leather stretched over paste-paper boards. The calf was originally dyed either black or a very dark brown, but is now badly deteriorated: the leather is flaking away and much of the front and back have been rubbed bald, especially along the edges. There is a gilt double-lined border approximately 20mm inside the outer edge on both the front and the back covers.

The front cover displays a typical Ranuzzi paper plate pasted into the upper left corner of the area inside the gilt lines, although it partially obstructs the inner of the two top gilt lines. The plate measures 45mm x 61mm. The plate bears the number '52.' in a curvaceous italic hand, written probably in iron gall ink. The assumption about the ink is based on the slight browning of the outer edge of the numbers. Beneath the '52.' is written '12994 Ph' in a later hand and different ink.

The spine is comprised of seven compartments between eight raised bands indicating eight sewing cords. Each compartment has a double-lined gilt border approximately 5mm inside the compartment. The second compartment has the words 'CRO./DEL/VEL' stamped in gilt capitals. In compartment 7 there are two small paper tags pasted onto the leather. The uppermost has the number 12994 printed onto it. The second tag has been damaged and only the numbers '95' in pencil written on it. Based on the nature of the damage to this second tag, the majority of the wormhole damage likely came after the tag was affixed to the spine.

The spine has suffered more wear than the covers and shows extensive wormhole damage, especially in compartments 1 and 7. At least 50 holes can be counted distributed along the spine and 5-10 on the front and back cover along the spine.

Compartment 1 has suffered extensive wear and detachment of the leather, opening this corner of the book to examination of the binding materials. The paste-paper nature of the covering boards can be clearly seen, along with the nature of the first cord. Supporting silk threads running down the spine between the cords are yellow in color and very bright.

The cover extends approximately 5mm beyond the edge of the paper. The edges of the paper have been sprinkled with red and some black coloring and have been planed down to uniform edges.

Interior Description of the Manuscript.

Measurements of the paper:

- Page size: 290mm x 210mm

- Writing area (on average): 26 lines in a single column within 205mm x 157mm
- Chain lines: vertical
- Watermark: Arms of the Medici family
- Watermark size: 95mm x 60mm
- Quiring: 10 quires of 8 pages, 2 quires of 9 pages, 3 inserted pages; 101 total pages

The manuscript is written on paper. The size of the paper and the vertical nature of the chain lines indicate that this is a folio manuscript. The paper is heavy and has noticeable chain and wire lines. Except for the second leaf—containing the engraved Ranuzzi coat of arms—the paper stock is consistent throughout the book, including the sheets used for the pastedown and free endpapers at both ends of the book.

The watermark is the Medici coat of arms contained within an elaborate design of scrollwork and surmounted by a detailed ducal crown. The watermark is not represented in Zonghi, Briquet or Churchill. It is comparable to Heawood 786, which he states is from 1646-47 Florence¹. However the Heawood watermark is much rougher than the one in Ph 12994, which more closely resembles ID. 40 from the Biblioteca comunale dell'Archiginnasio website *Filigrane Bolognesi tra 1650 e 1750*². The Biblioteca ID. 40 watermark is from paper used in Bologna in 1678³ and the elaborate detail of the crown and scroll-work exhibited by both the Biblioteca ID. 40 watermark and the Ph 12994 watermark suggest that the Ph 12994 paper was made closer in time to the Biblioteca ID. 40 watermark than to Heawood 786. The paper of Ph 12994, therefore, is likely from the last quarter of the 17th century.

The initial pastedown of the manuscript is made of a single folio sheet folded in half. The left page has been glued to the inside cover while the right page has been left free, creating a free endpaper. The pasted down page exhibits discoloration due to the glue and provides a very clear example of the chain and wire lines and the watermark. On the top right corner of the pastedown page is written '12994 Ph' in the same hand in evidence on the front cover's paper plate. The verso of the free endpaper has two numbers in evidence: in the upper left corner 'Puttick 395' in pencil; in the upper right corner '12994 Ph' also in pencil but with the first '9' emphasized in ink. The Puttics number is likely the same as that on the incomplete paper tag in compartment 7 of the spine.

The second leaf of the manuscript is of a thinner, finer paper than the rest and has been inserted and secured by the leaf creating the pastedown and free endpaper. A small edge has been glued beneath the pastedown to secure the leaf. This leaf exhibits the engraved Ranuzzi coat of arms with the words 'DEL CAV. CON. VINCENZIO RANVZZI' appearing on a scroll beneath the shield.

The manuscript is made up of a total of 101 leaves. The text of the manuscript is written on 12 quires of 8 pages each, however the first and last of these quires has an extra single leaf added—properly 1⁸⁺¹2-11⁸9⁸⁺¹. The first quire of 8 pages has had an extra leaf glued to the first page of the proper quire to create the title page. The last quire of 8 pages has had an extra leaf glued to the last page of the proper quire to create an empty leaf.

The title page is in manuscript and reads:

¹ Heawood #786.

² Ansaloni, ed.

³ Ansaloni, ed. 'ID. 40. stemma Medici'

ISTORIA ouuero CRONACA
DI CASA VELLVTI

*cominciara a scriuere' nell Anno MCCCIXVII
da Donato Velluti, e sequitata da Paolo Velluti*

Beneath the title is an elaborate and detailed lascertine which incorporates what appears to be two birds' heads. The lascertine measures 40mm x 125mm and was drawn in the same ink that was used to write the title. Mostly likely both were created by the same scribe although it cannot be determined if this was the same scribe who copied the text of the *Istoria*. The title page has a watermark consistent with the rest of the paper stock, however, and so this page was likely created at the same time as the rest of the manuscript.

The manuscript text is numbered in the scribal hand on the recto of each leaf. The numbering begins on the first page of text, which immediately succeeds the title page, and continues to the last page of text, which is numbered 96.

The writing area is consistent across the manuscript and is comprised of one column of (on average, excluding titles) 26 lines within a writing area of 205mm x 157mm. There is no obvious pricking or ruling of any kind, but the lines are even and consistent across all pages. The scribe may have had unusually even writing, or he may have been using guidelines.

The hand is an elaborate Italian cursive with frequent flourishes to ascenders, descenders and capital letters. The hand is overall cramped and small with the height from baseline to x-height being approximately 2mm. Although the latest date mentioned in the text is 1567, it is unlikely that the hand dates from this time. There was no clearly dated contemporary hand with which to compare the hand of Ph 12994.

On folio 2 recto and folio 89 recto there are genealogical trees requiring the insertion of extra rectangles of paper to accommodate the size of the tree. On folio 2^r a piece of paper measuring 195mm x 90mm has been glued onto the right margin of the page. It appears to have been added at the time of copying as there is no break in the consistency or color of the ink. The same is true for folio 89^r where the fold out is 195mm x 80mm.

Author of the Text.

On folio 3, the header records that the text copied in PH 12994 was begun in 1367 by Donato di Lomberso di Filippo di Buonaecorso di Piero di Berso Velluti. According to *L'Enciclopedia Italia*⁴, Donato Velluti was born in Florence around 1313 and died in 1370. He served in many important civic roles during his life, including as a standard-bearer in 1351 and several times as an ambassador. In 1367 he began to write a *Cronica domestica* — the work covered the origins of the Velluti family (Volume I), Donato's autobiography (Volume II) and Donato's advice to his descendents (Volume III). The *Cronica* is considered important by medievalists studying Italy because of its illustration of intimate family life in fourteenth century Florence. The *Cronica* was added to by Paolo di Luigi Velluti between 1555 and 1560. Ph 12994 is comprised of the first volume of Donato's Velluti's *Cronica*.

Velluti's complete *Cronica* does not appear to have been published before the creation of Ph 12994. Ph 12994 was probably copied from another manuscript, which was probably incomplete since only the first third of the *Cronica* was copied in Ph 12994. The European

⁴ 'Velluti, Donato.' — Velluti does not appear in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, since the *Dizionario* has not been completed past 'M.'

Library records three listings of *Cronaca di sua casa scritta da Paolo Velluti in continuazione a quella di Messer Donato Velluti con notizie di detta famiglia dal 1560 sino a' di nostri* by Paolo Velluti published by Luigi Passerini in 1870. The most notable difference between these printed copies and Ph 12994 is undoubtedly the fact that the printed copy appears to be the complete *Cronica domestica*.

Provenance of the Manuscript.

The engraved bookplate inside Ph 12994 bears the name of Count Vincenzo Antonio Ranuzzi, who lived from 3 March 1658 to 10 August 1726. Count Ranuzzi spent the better part of his life at the Medici court after he was received there in 1671 at age 13 as a Page to Prince Ferdinand de Medici. At the Medici court, Count Ranuzzi received an untypical education in the sciences and humanities and lived in a court populated by learned and famous scholars.⁵ From 1671 to 1677, Ranuzzi lived with Doctor Forzoni, whose (unnamed) sister was mentioned by Count Ranuzzi in his memoirs as highly influential in directing Ranuzzi's collection of manuscripts during this time.⁶

After the French occupation of northern Italy in 1797, the Ranuzzi family's fortunes waned and in 1847 the collection of manuscripts accumulated by the Ranuzzi family was sold to John Payne and Henry Foss.⁷ At some point the collection was catalogued by the book auctioneers Puttick and Simpson, whose numbering of 395 is preserved in whole on the first free endpaper and in part on the spine of Ph 12994. It is not possible to determine whether the collection was bought by Payne and Foss at an auction organized by Puttick and Simpson, or whether Sir Thomas Phillipps bought the collection from Payne and Foss through a Puttick and Simpson auction.

Regardless, from the Ranuzzi family, the manuscripts passed to Sir Thomas Phillipps through the firm of Payne and Foss. Phillipps did not receive the entire collection, however, as some 117 manuscripts were purchased by the British Museum while Phillipps considered the purchase.⁸

Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872) was a notorious collector of manuscript books. Phillipps was educated at Rugby School and University College, Oxford, where he developed a mania for collecting books. He married Henriette Elizabeth Molyneux in 1819 and had three daughters. Phillipps had his wife and daughters rebind many of his books with what are now known as "Middle Hill Boards." Phillipps was a major collector both in England and on the Continent and eventually amassed some 60,000 manuscripts over the course of his life. On his death, the manuscripts were caught up in a legal battle due to the nature of Phillipps' will, which required that "not a book was to be moved" from the library Phillipps had created at Thirlestaine House to avoid leaving his collection to his Roman-Catholic son-in-law, who was to inherit Phillipps' family home of Middle Hill.⁹

The continual legal problems posed by the dispersal of the Phillipps estate meant that it was not until 1968 that the Ranuzzi manuscripts were auctioned at Sotheby's and bought by Lew

⁵ Wells 2.

⁶ Ibid 3.

⁷ Ibid 7.

⁸ Ibid 7.

⁹ Bell, 'Phillipps, Sir Thomas.'

David Feldman of New York. Feldman sold the collection to Dr. Henry H. Ransom in 1969 for the University of Texas Humanities Research Center.¹⁰

Dating of the Manuscript.

Based on the approximate date of the watermark, the low number of 52 which appears on the Ranuzzi plate on the cover and the name of Vincenzo Ranuzzi on the engraved book plate inserted into the manuscript, it is probable that Ph 12994 was created during the last quarter of the 17th century in Florence. The date may be further be narrowed to the years 1671-77 since Wells remarks in the exhibition catalogue that manuscripts collected by Count Ranuzzi during this time were typically ‘large folios with the watermark representing the coat of arms of the Medici.’¹¹ Certainly the manuscript was produced prior to 1686, when Vincenzo Ranuzzi changed his name and quartered the Cospi arms with those of the Ranuzzi.¹² The engraved plate of Ph 12994 bears only the Ranuzzi arms.

¹⁰ Wells 7.

¹¹ Wells 3.

¹² Ibid 3.

Works Cited

- Ansaloni, Irene, ed. *Filigrane Bolognesi tra 1650 e 1750*. Biblioteca comunale dell'Archiginnasio, 2008. Web. 22 September 2011.
<<http://badigit.comune.bologna.it/filigrane/>>
- Bell, Alan. 'Phillipps, Sir Thomas.' *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, n.d. Web. 22 September 2011.
- Heawood, Edward. *Watermarks, mainly of the 17th and 18th centuries*. Hilversum (Holland): Paper Publications Society, 1950. Print.
- Wells, Maria Xenia Zevelechi. *The Ranuzzi manuscripts: selected and described by Maria Xenia Zevelechi Wells*. Austin, TX: Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas, c1980. Print.
- 'Velluti, Donato.' *L'Enciclopedia Italia*. Treccani.it, n.d. Web. 22 September 2011.
<<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/donato-velluti/>>