

Lucio Artini & Roberto Peticucci

***“The English Lodge of Florence 1732-1737,  
Pontiff Clemens XII and his Anti-Freemasonry Encyclical,  
the Trial against the last Secretary of the Lodge of England”***



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Lucio Artini & Roberto Peticucci

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Edited by: Dr.ssa Adriana ALESSANDRINI

Translation by: Dr.ssa Francesca SERENI

Text arrangement: Pier Luigi Rossi

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**The English Lodge of Florence 1732 – 1737,  
Pontiff Clemens XII and his Anti-Freemasonry Encyclical,  
the Trial against the Last Secretary of the Lodge of England**

The conflict between the Roman Church and Freemasonry begins in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and it involves especially English Freemasonry in Italy, despite the initial toleration, as shown by the presence in Rom of a lodge bound to the Stuarts (Giacomo III, Old Pretender 1688 - 1766 and Carlo Edoardo Stuart, Young Pretender, 1720 - 1788). Very soon the dispute expands to all those countries where Catholicism is the predominant religion.

Thanks to the notes – preserved in the Archives of the Grand Lodge of England – of the historian John Hamill, we can get to know about English Freemasonry's condition in Italy: in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century there are twelve lodges recorded in the registers in London, in which the names of four Provincial Grand Masters<sup>i</sup> also show – three of them related to kingdoms and domains, one for the whole Peninsula.

There were non-registered, self-proclaimed lodges as well, especially in the first half of the Century. Among them there was the Florentine Lodge mentioned by the English historian:

“There had been many absurd speculations about this lodge. It never showed in English registers, even though many of its members were English men living in Florence. It is quite sure that, like the four lodges constituting the first Grand Lodge, the one in Florence had been self-proclaimed. In 1957, at the Biblioteca Medica [the library of the university's medical school] of the University of Florence, one of this lodge members' handwritten diary and correspondence were found (Doc. Antonio Cocchi) and they helped immensely to shed light on the lodge itself.

Certainly, in 1732 the above-mentioned lodge existed already and had been probably founded in 1730. Its first members were mostly English, nonetheless from 1738 it seems to show an equal number of Italian and British members<sup>ii</sup>...The most renowned person among the Italians was most likely the poet and *litteratus* Tommaso Crudeli, who after the publication of the Papal Bull against Freemasonry (1738) had been arrested by Inquisition, imprisoned and tortured, in order to find out all names of Freemasons in Florence and to hold them up as political subversive dedicated to repulsive rituals”.

Doc. Antonio Cocchi (1695 - 1758 famous doctor, writer e scholar of natural sciences) was the doctor of the English who lived in Florence.

The lodge was founded approximately in 1731/1732, we are not sure of the date, the historian Carlo Francovich indicates this period in his book “Storia della Massoneria in Italia - Liberi muratori italiani dalle origini alla rivoluzione francese” [*History of Freemasonry in Italy*].

His activities continued quietly until 1737 when there was a first intervention by the Inquisitor Father on the Grand Duke Gian Gastone of Medici Family (1671-1737).

Crudeli states that the lodge was dissolved after the excommunication of Clement XII, published on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1738. We are sure that the lodge existed and worked from 1732 to 1737, probably also in 1731 and 1738.

The first and second Papal excommunications are addressed to this Freemasonic groups. These are complex processes showing both a cultural and a political value; on Freemasonry's side the

conflict begins as a cultural clash and remains on an ideological level, while on the ecclesiastical side, from the start, it shows very strong connections with the temporal power:

- The relation between religion and the legitimacy of Monarchy, alongside with godly dependence of Royal power and the demand to impose the monopoly of its own religion in a given area;
- The safeguard of social stability and the control on educational institutions, like schools and universities;
- The defense of the Papal States, i.e. the Pope-Monarch, who is king of a territory and often belonged with a noble dynasty with specific economic interests and the intention to dominate feuds and cities.

## EXCOMMUNICATIONS

The first result of the conflict between the Roman Church and Freemasonry is the excommunication by Pope Clement XII (Lorenzo Corsini, 1652-1740) in 1738, a Pope coming from the Florentine family Corsini and therefore very well informed and careful about what was going on in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. This is a conflict that we can observe throughout the centuries, both inside and outside the Catholic Church. A clash regarding the relationship between the Roman Church and political powers, as well as between the Roman Church and other churches. Nothing new in history, one need only think of the events occurring in 1200: the figure of Frederik II (Federico Ruggero Costantino di Hohenstaufen 1194 - 1250 - King of Sicily, Duke of Swabia, King of the Romans, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, King of Jerusalem) and his kingdoms in Southern Italy, where Muslims and orthodox Christians outnumbered the catholic Christians; moreover, the internal clash within the Roman Church between the "evangelical" wing, pontiffs included, and the French group, which at last prevailed.

Through the excommunication, Pope Clement condemned the so-called associations of "Free Masons or des Francs Maçons" by ordering bishops to take action against the members of these groups as they were suspected of heresy.

Such Papal instructions needed to be approved by kings to be applied in the several kingdoms or states. At first many Governments did not "register" the papal bull.

His measure "In Eminenti Apostolatus Specula" was published on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1738; it is assumed that it was written by the pontiff in person, on the advice of some Cardinals, for thereasons listed below and for "some other right and rational renown reasons", which were never disclosed.

Quoting Pope Corsini:

"Due to their public reputation, We know that they are growing in all directions, and day by day some Societies, Unions, Conferences, Assemblies, Secret Meetings or Groups arise, commonly referred to as Free Masons or des Francs Maçons or some other names, depending on the language. They gatherin fond and secret alliance, following their rules and statutes, men of all religions and sects are brought up together, and they are apparently contented with a certain contrived appearance of natural honesty. Members of those Societies take a rigorous oath on the Scriptures to keep inviolable silence about their secret actions – otherwise they

would incur overstated punishments...Their popularity grew so much that, the above-mentioned Societies got banned already by secular regulations in many countries and had been addressed as enemies of the Kingdoms –kingdoms which blessedly got rid of them”.

Given the “huge issues” that “those Societies or Secret Meetings caused to not only the temporal stability of the Republic, but also to the spiritual health of souls, since they are not in harmony with the Civil Law nor with the canonical ones”, Pope Clement sentenced, “*motu proprio*, clear minded, with wise resolution and in full possess of Our Apostolical Power”, and banished for good the “above mentioned Societies, Unions, Conferences, Assemblies, Secret Meetings or Groups of Free Masons, Francs Masons or whatsoever name they adopted. Therefore, We here strictly command, by virtue of the holy obedience, to everyone and every single believer of any status, grade, condition, order dignity or prominence, both Laic individuals and Clerics”.

“*Providas romanorum*” is an anti-masonic bull by Pope Benedict XIV (Prospero Lorenzo Lambertini, 1675-1758) published on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1751; this measure confirmed Pope Clement XII’s bull and condemned once more Freemasonry, furthermore it prohibited all catholic Christians to be part of it or to associate with its members.

Benedict XIV was pushed to publish one more excommunication due to a renewed masonic presence in Italy, this time in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. So, after denying that Pope Corsini’s bull was no longer valid, he confirmed and adopted it, by listing one by one all the reasons mentioned by Clement himself, commenting and reiterating them: the existence of members devoted to different religions<sup>iii</sup>, the secrets and oaths, the threat to the governmental laws, the fact that other Kings banished such organizations already.

Benedict concludes his analysis highlighting one more reason: “In the end, my last reason is that prudent and honest men blame the before mentioned Societies and Groups: in their opinion whoever registers with them, would incur the accusation of depravity and perversion”.

Benedict never mentions “other right and rational renown reasons”, to which referred Pope Corsini, but these reasons most likely lie in some process which the Holy See would not openly disclose; nevertheless, we can deduce them thanks to some documents at our disposal. It deals with political and cultural reasons, we can understand them from the concrete activities carried out:

- Helping the Stuarts to gain back the crown of England;
- Stopping the intellectual Reformers in the University of Pisa;
- Reducing British Anglicans’ power in Tuscany.

In Pisa, Galileo’s (Galileo Galilei 1564-1642) inheritance is still visible and new ideas are spreading which need to be stopped. That was the main goal of the Society of Jesus, that practiced Orthodoxy. At the same time, the Inquisitor from Florence wanted to strike Baron Philipp von Stock (1691-1757 Prussian antiquarian, scholar and English spy) in Florence and of the Jew Giuseppe Attias in Livorno (dates unknown - international trader, scholar and exponent of the Jewish community of Livorno).

The former, because of his social gatherings, lectures and open discussions; the latter because of his books and knowledge.

Pope Benedict remembers and renews Clement’s call to secular powers:

“At last, the Predecessor himself, in the above-mentioned Constitution, urged local Bishops, Major Superiors and Regular Prelates to not hesitate to ask for secular power help if needed to fulfill their task”.

Benedict reiterates the indissoluble bond between the temporal power and the Church, as well as the necessity of the former’s protection and, not least, that the temporal power kept applying Catholic Church “instructions”: “Since Sovereigns and Podestà are themselves elected by God as defenders of religion and are guardians of the Church”:

This same condemnation will be reiterated throughout the centuries, based on similar reasons.<sup>iv</sup>

The Freemasons were accused of Heresy.

In his book entitled, “L’Ultima Eresia - Chiesa Cattolica e Massoneria. Tre secoli di errori tra Satanismo, Gnosticismo e Relativismo” [The Last Heresy - Catholic Church and Freemasonry. Three centuries of errors amidst Satanism, Gnosticism and Relativism] (published by Settimo Sigillo - 2017), the historian Fabio Venzi identified the two specific heresies of which the Florence and the Rome Lodges were accused. These were identified in the course of a special Consistory of the Congregation of the Holy Office held on 25th June 1737, shortly before the closure of the Rome Lodge.

Venzi drew attention to the fact that reference had been made to "cleverly disguised" epicureanism in the case of the Rome Lodge and to Molinism and Quietism in that of the Florence Lodge. Miguel de Molinos (1628-1698) mystic and Spanish writer was the main exponent of this current, he was tried and condemned by the Inquisition.

Venzi is right. Heresy is central to the matter and we must not forget that experimental science, which called into question the Holy Scriptures along with Ptolemaic and Aristotelian geocentrism, was seen to be heretical. The Evangelicals and the Jews who met up with Catholics in the two Lodges, were also seen as heretics.

In Tuscany and the Italian peninsula, evangelicalism was not to be allowed to spread, since by undermining "the heavenly order", the political order "on earth" could also be compromised.

As Venzi notes, the accusations towards the Freemasonry would later reappear under the new names of "religious indifferentism" and "relativism".

The word “indifferentism” was used first time by pope Leo XIII (1810-1903) on April 20, 1884, in the papal Encyclical *Humanum Genus* - Against Freemasonry and the Spirit of the Age. The word was used again by (the) Cardinal Manning on the official organ of the Vatican State the “*Osservatore Romano*” March 18, 1950: Roman Catholic Church defines indifferentism as the belief that one religion is good as another, or it equalizes all religions and gives equal rights to truth and error. These position changed in part afterwards, with the Second Vatican Council.

The trial of Galileo had taken place just a few years earlier.

The trial of Galileo Galilei, supporter of the heliocentric Copernican theory on the motion of celestial bodies and of the scientific method, in opposition to the geocentric theory supported

by the Catholic Church, began in Rome on 12 April 1633 and ended on 22 June 1633. Galileo was condemned for heresy and forced to the abjuration of his conceptions.

He was charged for his conviction that the earth revolved around the sun and not vice versa, an idea which went against the Holy Scriptures and consequently could not be defended or upheld.

Similarly, the Church's fight against the Evangelicals continued in Italy: as recently as 1851, husband and wife Francesco and Rosa Madiari were imprisoned in Florence for having hosted the meetings of the first Florentine Evangelicals at their house. They were arrested and tried, sentenced to 10 months imprisonment, commuted into exile thanks to the intervention of the English government.

Along the same lines, despite declared freedom of worship following unification of Italy, one of the first moves made by Mussolini, the Church in Rome's new ally, was to close Rome's Monte Mario International College. This was a Methodist school which had been opened in the capital. Its property was confiscated by the fascist government (Christian Science Monitor, Boston - 08/08/1925).

And to think that on 1st October 1732 the group of Florentine freemasons was able to walk robed in procession through the streets of the city and up to Fiesole (a small old town near Florence) examining the works of architecture they encountered along the way.

## **THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK**

In order to better understand the impact of what was going on in Florence at that time, it is now necessary to mention the framework of political relations among European countries and within colonies.

First of all, we should analyze relations among European Powers and their effect on Italy, which, at that time, was divided into several small states subjected to Spanish and Austrian hegemonic ambitions.

Second, the relation between European Powers and the Catholic Church, which on one hand was trying to keep its privileges, and on the other hand was aiming to be the first defender of both Sovereigns legitimacy and social balance, by controlling schools, universities, libraries and books distribution.

Moreover, it is to mention, that the last Duke of Medici Family, Gian Gastone (Giovanni Battista Gastone dei Medici - 1671-1737), had no direct heirs. For the Duke's Crown, that would have meant a dangerous vacancy after his death and a most important aspect to take care of in the European framework.

From Luther's excommunication on, the European continent had been undergoing hard conflicts, especially related to religious beliefs. These conflicts could end only with the Treaty of Aachen, through which religion wars were supposed to stop, specifically thanks to the principle of "cuius regio, eius religio".

Wars and violence though did not stop.

There is a turning point with the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), which began in Bohemia, with the scope of establishing Catholic religion as one and only legitimate religion. At first, the conflict involved catholic and protestant factions, but France, also on the catholic side, joined the war soon after to hinder Hapsburg's and Spanish powers.

France itself withdrew the Edict of Nantes (1598), by expelling Huguenots from its territories (Edict of Fontainebleau - 1685). Internal religious unity and a foreign policy based on alliances aimed to maintain powers balance.

The Peace of Westphalia in 1648 started a new system, through which all States recognized one another only under a political point of view, beyond any specific religion the sovereigns may support.

States' sovereignty acquired therefore a most significant relevance. The historian Niccolò Rodolico pointed out that, through these treaties, "Pontiff's influence and his role as supreme mediator among European countries, started decreasing more and more; the Treaty of Utrecht – aimed to stop succession wars in Spain – even questioned papal political hegemony in Italy, which had been so far undisputed".<sup>v</sup>

Wars of Polish Succession (1633-1638) brought to a compromise and Francis Stephen of Lorraine (1708 - 1765, Emperor of the Sacred Roman Empire from 1745) could obtain the Crown of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany (1737-1765).

After Charles VI (1685 - 1740) died without any male heirs, the Austrian Crown passed in the hands of his daughter Maria Theresa (1717-1780), wife of Francis Stephen of Lorene. One more war of succession started in Austria(1749-1748) and involved Italian territories as well.

English and Austrians were allied, against them Spanish and French were allies and the Pontiff always supported Spanish and French, hoping to get British territories back to the Catholic influence, supporting the Stuart dynasty. For this reason, the Catholic Church sent aids for military expeditions organized by the Scottish pretender to the English throne.

At first, Gian Gastone was moved to welcome the decision to assign the Grand Duchy's crown (1732-1735) to Charles of Spain (1716 - 1759), son of the King of Spain Filippo V (1683-1746) and of his second wife, Elisabeth Farnese (1692 - 1766).

Afterwards, Charles became King of Naples (1734-1759) and King of Sicily (1735-1759), while Francis Stephen of Lorene, husband of Maria Theresa, was chosen as last successor of the De' Medici Family, even though the Spanish faction in Florence was still very strong.

Hence, here is the getaway to understand the events in Florence.<sup>vi</sup>

Wars had not stopped and in most of the conflicts, both Austria and England were allied against Spain and France.

Italian territories were since long a ground of conflict among European Powers, that tried to establish their hegemony, with changing fortune: after 150 years of Spanish domination, there came the time for the Austrian one, except for Southern Italy, which was at last taken away from Hapsburg influence by the House of Bourbon.

The Catholic Church, as usual, was in favor of a separation between the southern kingdoms and the northern ones. The Church had always feared the creation of a Kingdom of Italy in fear of losing its territorial possessions.

It is indeed thanks to the presence of Austrian troops in Naples (1713-1734), that Freemasonry could expand in Southern Italy, too.<sup>vii</sup>

In those years (1714-1750), in England, the Parliament and Crown could find a common ground. Especially due to the economic progress and the general welfare, religious fights stopped, and the main priority was utterly to reaffirm the royal authority on a population showing different religious beliefs. They could easily find a compromise: Freemasonry itself is proof of this, since one of its benchmarks is exactly the adoption of tolerance as a method, in order to welcome any kind of religious belief, to affirm the value of every single individual regardless of class or religion; besides, Freemasonry aims to protect scientific research freedom and ideas exchange. Many cultural influences come from the numerous travelers, from Africa, China and India, new but ancient religions, new naturalistic and scientific discoveries. This is how the political and social framework which encouraged speculative Freemasonry's<sup>viii</sup> enhancement and expansion developed.

### **GIAN GASTONE DE' MEDICI AND THE COUNCIL OF REGENCY**

Thanks to arts, science and culture, Tuscany had always served as reference for travelers and European scholars, especially the British ones, who wanted to explore this Region and deepen their artistic and cultural knowledge.

Many English visited Tuscany for studies reasons and due to other local amenities: the climate, art works, the countryside, wine and Leghorn Harbor for trade. And Tuscans welcomed them; some of them, for instance Doc. Antonio Cocchi (1695 - 1758 - doctor naturalist and writer), followed them to London and came back to Tuscany afterwards.

Thanks to its geographical location, Tuscany was a strategic spot to keep an eye open on what was going on in the Peninsula, and therefore not only traders moved out there, but also diplomats and spies. Since there was no British Embassy in Rom, the Resident of Florence had been assigned the task of supporting English interests in the area, including the relations with the Roman Church.

Under Gian Gastone there was a general tolerant atmosphere and religion was no longer a reason to fight or persecute. Under his father, Cosimo III De' Medici<sup>ix</sup> (1670-1723), clergymen considerably increased their power and could consistently interfere in matters usually managed by secular power.

Consequently, intellectuals and scholars could either accept Church and Cosimo's influence or leave Tuscany.

Gian Gastone government was "a great benefit", as assumed by the historian Ferdinando Sbigoli in his important work regarding Tommaso Crudeli "Tommaso Crudeli and the first Freemasons in Florence: historical chronical and unpublished dossier".

Even though he was no reformer<sup>x</sup>, he could lay the foundations for the *milieu* which hosted Pietro Leopoldo's work (1747-1792); persecutions went on in other areas of the Peninsula<sup>xi</sup>, for instance in Emilia Romagna and in Naples region.

Thanks to Gian Gastone, intellectuals could resume their studies without restrictions; in Pisa, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655), Isaac Newton (1643-1727) and John Locke's works<sup>xii</sup> (1632-1704) were again available; as mentioned by Sbigoli, though, Jesuits alongside with the Holy Office<sup>xiii</sup> took action against them.

Freemasonry had become once more a conflict ground since 1737: the Franciscan Inquisitor in Florence (1727 - 1741), Father Ambrogio Ambrogi (1690 - unknown) tried to intervene against the English Lodge, as soon as its power started increasing in Florence<sup>xiv</sup>.

Until his death on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July 1737, Gian Gastone safe guarded toleration and economic development.

We should moreover remark, that the huge economic power of the Catholic Church could consolidate throughout Cosimo III's government – a time, when the clerical interference on civil matters affected numerous fields: issuing gun licenses, the Press itself, as well as selling and publishing of books.

Half of Florence territory was occupied by buildings and goods belonging with the Church, ecclesiastical mortmain, too, was well-established in the rest of the Region; the annual balance in the Grand Duchy reached between 300.000 and 500.000 scudi, while ecclesiastical balance could go up to half million scudi<sup>xv</sup>.

Francis Stephen, after spending a short period in Tuscany and once come back to Vienna, left his position as Sovereign of the Grand Duchy to a Council of Regency, this one being strongly bound to the Council in Vienna.

Some of the most relevant members of the Council in Florence were the two Ministers Emmanuel de Nay Count of Richecourt (1697-1768), President of the Council of Ministers, and Giulio Rucellai (1702-1778), Ministero of Justice, Professor at the University of Pisa. Though catholic, they did not share Jesuits and Inquisition's conservative point of view in matter of religion<sup>xvi</sup>; although their studies and backgrounds were totally different, they could find very soon a consensus of views and could agree on the way the Duke's authority and its relationship to the Church had to be meant.

Both were Freemasons and therefore the fight between them and the conservatives focused on three main points:

- The persecution of Freemasonry and Tommaso Crudeli's trial;
- Press Laws and specifically the Edict published on the 28<sup>th</sup> of March 1743;
- The regulations published on 11<sup>th</sup> of March 1751 against "...ecclesiastical Mortmain goods – a law that people dreamed of for ten years, though always stopped by the Vatican".

After every single reform proposal or disposition, a clash with ecclesiastical bodies followed. The Vatican forces were aware of the new Grand Duke's weakness, first of all, because his headquarters were in Vienna, and, second, because he was involved in the war against the Turks (1737-1739) and afterwards in the wars of Austrian (1740-1748) succession and the fights for the imperial throne<sup>xvii</sup>.

### **TOMMASO CRUDELI'S TRIAL**

This is the historical background characterizing the time when Maria Theresa and Francis Stephan came to Florence on the 19<sup>th</sup> of January 1739, passing by Porta San Gallo. They went back in April, same year.

Jesuits, the papal Nuncio, bishops, the Inquisitor and supreme clergymen, trusting completely Maria Theresa, Anna Maria – daughter of Cosimo III and sister of Gian Gastone – and Francis I's influence, could coordinate and adopt strategic moves to take the secular power away from Rucellai's hands, who had very recently obtained this office.

The Inquisitor could imprison criminals in matters of faith but to arrest them he had to turn to the Duke's guards (secular arms), through the minister in charge and Rucellai could oppose the Inquisitor's wishes.

They were, therefore, able to reach their main goal: attacking the Florentine Lodge to undermine free thinkers, the university of Pisa and the political-cultural network existing among the big British community, the lodges, Baron Philip Von Stock (Von Stosch - 1691 - 1757) and the Jew Giuseppe Attias's (dates unknown) in Leghorn.

Besides, we would like to recall the excommunication and the absolute rejection of any interreligious dialogue, as well as the establishment of the bond between "Throne and Altar", considered as inseparable and necessary.

The Inquisitor met with Francis Stephan, who at first did not welcomed his instructions; consequently, all the Jesuit confessors of Princes and Princesses started an effective action to support the Inquisitor's requests.

In the end, the Duke received a letter from Cardinal Neri Maria Corsini (1685 - 1770, nephew of Clement XII) who had become vital in Rom at that time because of the Pope's bad conditions: Corsini stated that the catholic religion was threatened in Tuscany.

He was writing in the Pope's behalf, "citizen and defender of Florence, and he was exposing the increasing threats to Catholicism in the city"<sup>xviii</sup>.

The accusation fell on Stosch and on "immoral and corrupted"<sup>xix</sup> teachers and students.

Despite the excommunication strictly condemned Freemasonry, the Cardinal cleverly tried to identify a "good Freemasonry" and a bad one, i.e. Stock and Italian Scholars' one.

In his letter, Corsini maintains that the Inquisitor would have clearly explained what was happening and that the Florentine freemasons Society was to condemn.<sup>xx</sup>

Moreover, he suggested to "purge" the University of Pisa:

"It would have been more efficient if H. M. had purged the University of Pisa from old professors, and, in doing so, if he would have totally relied on the Archbishop of that city and on Monseigneur Cerati, superintendent at the University of Pisa."

If the Duke had not followed his instructions, the Holy See would have asked the Nuncio to come back to Rom, this affecting for sure the Grand Duke's prestige<sup>xxi</sup>.

A very important Italian Freemason, Adriano Lemmi (1822 - 1906), defined Freemasonry as an advocate of the third European civilization, "synthesizing it with "freedom of scientific and religious thinking", a revolution which in Italy got stopped by Fascism and the revived influence of the conservative Church<sup>xxii</sup>, whose cornerstone was the sense of belonging. The concept of "belonging" became incredibly relevant for Fascism<sup>xxiii</sup> too, since everything was subjected to adhere to the system.

The Cardinal's letter was immediately followed by the intervention of the Inquisitor in Florence (1727 - 1741), Father Paolo Ambrogio Ambrogi (1690 - unknown)<sup>xxiv</sup>, Order of Friars Minor Conventual; he reiterated that Freemasonry was a threat to both the Church and the State, and in consequence, he asked for the arrest of Tommaso Crudeli (1702-1745), Giuseppe Cerretesi (1702 - 1779) and Abbott Ottaviano Buonaccorsi (dates unknown - member of Apatisti Academy and of Etruschi Academy, director of the Literati's Newspaper), as well as for the expulsion of Lord Robert Raymond (second Lord Raymond 1717 - 1756 - Grand Master

1739) and Baron Philipp Von Stock (Von Stosch - 1691 - 1757)., a famous antiquarian and British spy.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of April Francis Stephan left Florence; soon after, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May, the Inquisitor could have Crudeli arrested and tried to catch Buonaccorsi, who was though very sick and got released.

Hence, Crudeli's trial had to be of example for all countries, as its huge resonance in Europe testifies.

A sort of tacit resistance to Inquisition's orders started, though Francis Stephan could not back out of obeying them, for fear of losing Church support in Florence and in other areas.

Lord Raymond, the last Worshipful Master of the Lodge, had left Florence; Von Stock had British citizenship, hence the Council of Regency asked the English Government to authorize his expulsion, but it never agreed on that.

Crudeli got arrested on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 1738 by grand-ducal officers, who brought him to the Inquisition court.

Immediately after, the English community, to whom he was very close, protested in a very strong way, alongside with many intellectuals in Tuscany.

Horace Mann (Sir. Horace - Horatio - Mann 1706-1786 diplomat was a long-standing British resident in Florence from 1737-1782, Baronet and Knight of the Bath), the English ambassador and Freemason, complained with great conviction at least thrice and one of these times in behalf of Gian Gastone himself, when the Congregation in Rom ordered the Florentine Inquisitor to go on with the investigation on Crudeli<sup>xxv</sup>.

As Great Britain had no diplomatic representation at Rome, Mann's duties included reporting on the activities of the exiled Stuart, the Old Pretender and the Young Pretender.

Those demonstrations served very soon as a pretext not to proceed with other arrests.

There is one more source – the booklet published by the Lodge Tommaso Crudeli<sup>xxvi</sup> N. 21 “Tommaso Crudeli, Poet and Freemason” – reporting that the Holy Inquisition was a judicial body founded by the Papal States which had power on individuals living outside the Vatican State as well. It had the right to judge a person's behavior, bypassing local powers, even in the case he or she was citizen of a sovereign country. This was indeed affecting Sovereigns' authority and reducing their power, especially because, in the case of Tommaso Crudeli, the Papal States aimed to different political goals than the Grand Duke, as several political alliances show.

We would like to point out, that the expected punishment in the mentioned cases was death penalty and the destruction of the rooms where reunions were held.

In an essay within the booklet, it is written that the trial was an “inquisitive” one, namely a trial where only one person acted as judge, inquisitor and investigator.

Furthermore, tortures could force a convict to confess anything, hoping to stop physical pains. Crudeli was threatened of torture several times, but it never came true, maybe because of his bad health conditions and the consequent risk of death.<sup>xxvii</sup>

The Inquisitor wanted Crudeli to make statements against the other Masons, in which case he would be released. But Crudeli refuses to betray the Brothers.

This event had big resonance in all Europe, to the point that the Grand Lodge of England promoted several fund-raising for Crudeli, as written in the reports of the Grand Lodge in London: the decision was made on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1739 and the first name in the list of

attendants was exactly the same Lord Raymond who used to live in Florence and whose expulsion from Tuscany was requested by both the Inquisitor and Corsini.

Crudeli was now in the Inquisitor's hands: he was imprisoned 36 days long in a cramped cell; after several complains he moved to a better one, though still not appropriate. Only when it became clear that his life was at risk, he was sent to the grand-ducal officers and put in a better cell within the Grand Duke's jail, in Fortezza da Basso. Nonetheless, imprisonment had damaged his weak health irrevocably.

In this prison he could write again and he could try to defend himself.

With the election of Pope Benedict XIV, 17 August 1740, the situation of Crudeli improves, the new Pontiff wants to close the process. The new nuncio in Florence (1739-1746), Alberico Archinto (1698 - 1758) helped to close the trial and below favored the grace with which the detention of the poet ended in April 1741.

Only on the 5<sup>th</sup> of August 1740 the Government in Florence got to know the Holy Office sentence, that is, house arrest in Crudeli's father property in Poppi, Casentino, the upper Arno valley in Tuscany – almost a proper imprisonment, then – “with the blessing of the Holy Congregation”.

On the evening of the 28<sup>th</sup> of August 1740, he was brought to a small church. Once he got in, they closed the doors, because the Government obtained that:

“Our Poet's abjuration had to be private and not public, because the Council of the Regency wanted to avoid that Minerbetti's sick fantasies, now available to everyone, of any age or sex, could give rise to a huge public scandal by ruining an honest citizen's reputation, and could consequently bring shame on the Society of Freemasons, this latter consisting only of most estimable gentlemen and men of letters, and moreover on the person of the Grand Duke himself”<sup>xxviii</sup>.

The two main witnesses against the Poet had withdrawn their accusations, and especially one of them added too many rumors to his deposition, to the point that it was very inappropriate to disclose it in public. In the mourning church, all the accusations had been read, without mentioning neither the Poet's defense, nor the withdrawals, therefore the clash between Crudeli and the Inquisitor was, once more, harsh<sup>xxix</sup>.

## **THE CORRESPONDENCE IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE STATE IN FLORENCE**

The Archives of State in Florence have plenty of detailed documentation dealing with Tommaso Crudeli's trial, as well as with the correspondence between Florence, Rom and Vienna. Some of the most important documents show the request to burn the letter after reading – this request was luckily not satisfied. Francis Stephan's men did not trust the bureaucratic bodies, and this is the reason why some of the ministers were in touch with the Spanish faction and Papal supporters.<sup>xxx</sup>

Crudeli does not know the reasons for his arrest for a long time; the proves brought by the Inquisitor were not enough to sentence him, in fact, Ambrogi had to listened to several further witnesses. Crudeli could hire a defense lawyer, while his first declarations had been recorded as the result of interrogations and described as they were spontaneous admissions.

Although the main accusers withdrew, claiming that they had been forced to do so and cheated, the Poet was anyway sentenced. The correspondence among the Ministers of the Council of Regency and with Vienna was continuous. The British Resident intervened several times and the correspondence between the Inquisitor and Rom, as well as between Rom and the Nuncio (Pope's Ambassador) in Vienna, was also huge.

Here, it is not possible to analyze every letter and paper of the Archives of State in Florence tracing back to the time of the Council of Regency and of Tommaso Crudeli's trial.

Nonetheless, we believe it would be very interesting to show some sample passages, which can show the extent of the fight mentioned before, above all because its motifs will be occurring till the Second Vatican Council.

Particularly interesting is a letter of Minister Abbot Giovanni Antonio Tornaquinci<sup>xxxix</sup> (marquis and abbot, 1680-1764), State Secretary, in which he informs the Grand Duke in May 1739, about Crudeli's arrest, as well as about the failed imprisonments: he confirms that Cerretesi's arrest failed after the British Resident protested against it, and he therefore suggests to overlook it, since the main goal of the Roman Court was to have Stock expelled, due to his position as English spy.

Apart from the arrests, the Inquisitor asked to search Giuseppe Attias the Jew's apartments in Leghorn, where "he suspected they might find bad books", aiming to attack once more the Jewish community in Tuscany by undermining a leading figure in Leghorn.<sup>xxxix</sup>

Due to his knowledge, Attias was a highly respected Jew, he was maybe the most estimable Jew in Tuscany, honored by Grand Dukes with many privileges, among which to be the only Israelite in the Grand Duchy to possess a sword and club. Leghorn Harbor richness was derived from the big flow of people of any origin arriving there and sharing a mutual toleration in religious matters; the Inquisitor's action would have alienated merchants and trade<sup>xxxix</sup>.

Nonetheless, the Pope, his Nuncio and the Inquisitor also sent letters from Rom and Florence to Vienna: in the folder 340 of the Archives we have found a copy of the letter sent by the "Court in Rom" to the Nuncio in Vienna – the letter had to be delivered to the Duke, who, at that time, besides succession issues and the war against the Turks, had to deal with Roman Court's goals<sup>xxxix</sup>.

This is a copy of a letter dated 8<sup>th</sup> of August 1739, in which no signature had been left, though probably it can be attributed to the Pontiff himself or to a person very close to him.<sup>xxxix</sup> The Grand Duke is accused of being responsible for many circumstances: first of all, the failure of some arrests as planned by the Secular Power. Moreover, the Duke was criticized because of his will of including some Commissioners into the Inquisition Court, as Venice already did, to better check the Office attitude<sup>xxxix</sup>, maintaining that the Pope was also concerned about the situation<sup>xxxix</sup>.

A trial only against Crudeli was not enough, since Freemasonry was considered as a "poisonous plant" to be eradicated<sup>xxxix</sup>.

Tuscany, based on its condition at that time, was in danger of "a general infection" more than any other country.

Here is the greatest risk for Tuscany: "a general infection", namely the spread of Freemasonry in the Peninsula, unless those "criminals in terms of religion"<sup>xxxix</sup> had not been punished.

Under the Roman Curia point of view, the situation is particularly serious, hence the need for a strong action at the hands of the Grand Duke.

It goes on mentioning the Poison of false dogmas and of “bad ideas”, the “criminals in terms of religion”; the work, opinions and advise of its Ministers – enemies of the name of Inquisition – are then criticized. The attack on Freemasons, on the Council of Regency and on scientists and reformers is a strongest one.

The letter concludes with the demand to have a full independence of the Inquisition from secular powers.

Some other relevant letters have been written by Rucellai to Richecourt in August 1739; Crudeli's first interrogation finally revealed that the hardest accusation was indeed of being a Freemason<sup>xl</sup>.

Rucellai goes on saying that it was necessary to inform the Grand Duke about that, since Freemasonry never tackled catholic religion, as testified by the fact that even some Cardinals<sup>xli</sup> joined the “society”.

The Grand Duke was the only one to know the real reasons why the intervention of the secular arm was requested, therefore Rucellai wanted him to be informed about the last events, in other words, about Crudeli's imprisonment because of his membership in Freemasonry and about the spread of the idea that Freemasonry was a heretic organization<sup>xlii</sup>; Ministers are concerned about a proper smear campaign organized by the Jesuits, the Inquisitor and their supporters.

If they could prove that the Grand Duke and the governmental authorities in Florence joined Freemasonry, the subjects of the Crown would have not been bound to obey any longer and this could affect irreversibly political authorities' power, as already happened in the past to Frederik II (1194-1250, Frederick II of Swabia, Federico Ruggero Costantino di Hohenstaufen was King of Sicily, Duke of Swabia, King of the Romans and then Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Jerusalem) other sovereign.

Crudeli and his family insisted that the trial should take place soon; when the poet was brought in front of the Inquisitor, the latter used Crudeli's words as a pretext to start from the questions he was interested in (45 questions), namely questions about Freemasonry to get a full admission<sup>xliii</sup>.

The Inquisitor wanted the Poet to provide further proves of his guilt himself and, at the same time, to find an excuse to proceed with other arrests and with the attack on the Ministers of the Regency. The Poet, even though very weak, could still cope with it with clear mind and could face up Ambrogi, without cheating his Lodge Brothers through false admissions and accusations, aiming to better his condition.

The Inquisitor wanted to find out which topics they were dealing with, in particular, what the English were taking care of, and Florentine people attitude.

Crudeli affirmed that Florentine people were few and seldom present, because all reunions were held in English, a language which most people did not speak.

In one of his letters to Richecourt from the 26<sup>th</sup> of August 1739, Rucellai stresses that “Freemason Society is no secular thing” and therefore, the Church, as well as the Inquisition, cannot be part of it, and this is the reason why they did not publicly disclose a subject's excommunication and imprisonment, since it could have been an attempt on the Sovereign powers<sup>xliv</sup>.

The Minister also points out that “it is very remarkable” that the Papal Curia chose Tuscany to hold this hard trial against Freemasonry, despite many members of “that society itself” were subjects of the Pope in Rome. Corsini made a conscious choice, whose reason was Leghorn Harbor: “Leghorn gets many advantages from England” and Rome does not like it.

Leghorn had a special laws in favor of trade and there lived a large Jewish Community, attacking the English and the Jews in Leghorn meant to undermine its port and to favor the port of Ancona that was in the State of Church.

The news about Crudeli’s arrest spread worldwide and was in fact released “on several ultramontane journals”.

However, if his trial and imprisonment had not come to an end, Crudeli could have died in the dungeons of the Holy Office<sup>xlv</sup>.

### **PERSECUTION GOES ON: THE STATE OF HEALTH**

After Crudeli got released, he spent 4 years as an invalid and finally died on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1745 in Poppi; Sbigoli comments: “This is how, at the young age of 43, one of the most clear and brilliant minds of the first half of Eighteenth Century in Tuscany, died”<sup>xlvi</sup>.

In Poppi, where he served his sentence, he had to cope with two serious issues: first, his state of health got worse because of a very cold winter and, second, the vicarious Foraneo, from the Holy Office, Padre Cocchini, who started to “torture” him with frequent visits, asking for a “mallevadoria” (guarantee) of one thousand scudi. Nevertheless, Richecourt, who was constantly fighting against the Holy Office, suggested him not to contribute the mentioned amount. Not even in Poppi, Crudeli could have some rest. His house and the local church were really close to each other, only a narrow street and a square divided the two buildings. It was definitely very easy for the vicarious to go by walk to the Poet and bother him.

These events are luckily documented in the papers found at the Archives of State in Florence, where we can see the letter written by Crudeli’s friend, Corti, to Richecourt, informing him about the vicarious; the letter was written on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 1740<sup>xlvii</sup>.

The torment goes on, even after the sentence, until his liberation, though impeding him to take care of his health issues, which were getting worse and worse because of imprisonment.

We would like to focus now on Crudeli’s health state, which had been well described in one of the essays published in the above-mentioned Booklet of the G.L.R.I.<sup>xlviii</sup>

According to our source, the Poet had tuberculosis and bronchial asthma. The disease arose in 1735, the booklet quotes a letter written by Crudeli himself to a friend in Bologna, Tommaso Perelli, where the description of the events and symptoms can serve to understand his disease development: a fever caused by hemorrhoids and a consequent septic fever show a serious clinical picture.

This fever weakened Crudeli’s health and immune system; from his general weakness derived “quite certainly” a bad tubercular infection. The tuberculosis bacillus is stronger in immunocompromised patients, otherwise it can remain stable for years within a primary nucleus (a sort of calcified lump), without giving any effect.

In 1700 there were no effective medicines to cure this kind of infection. Only a healthy lifestyle, an appropriate diet, fresh air and a good personal hygiene could help defeat the disease.

Thus, the imprisonment was contraindicated for a person in his condition, especially if detention was to be spent in such a disgusting cell, as mentioned before<sup>xlix</sup>.

In May 1740, after his state of health got worse and worse, he could get the permission to move to Fortezza da Basso jail and to spend his detention in custody of the Duchy.

Even after the sentence, he was given no opportunity to take care of his health, since he was relegated in too a cold location, Poppi, his hometown with its too rigid climate (Poppi is a small town in the mountains, very cold in winter). Due to his bad health state he asked for the permission to move to Pisa, without any success, until the intervention of two local doctors, the first one in Poppi<sup>l</sup> and the second one in Bibbiena, another small town in Casentino<sup>li</sup> Valley. However, after much insistence he was at least allowed to move to Pontedera near Pisa, a village close to the Tyrrhenian Coast, though devoid of hospitals.

In April 1741, thanks to the new Papal Nuncio in Florence and the new Pope Benedetto, the grace was granted to Crudeli, who returned to being free in Florence, recovering the ancient relations with the British Resident and Florentine intellectuals.

Crudeli was finally free to move and reach Florence, where he could meet his old friends and Brothers at the Lodge. At this point his health was unluckily too compromised and Crudeli died on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 1745 in Poppi: a last offence to his memory was then the burial of his body in a mass grave, as described in the booklet from the Tommaso Crudeli N. 21. Here is a quote of the historian Roberto Gervaso: "He could not even receive a proper burial, since he was thrown into a mass grave at San Fedele Abbey, a last outrage to the first Freemason who was victim of one of the most monstrous intolerances: the religious one"<sup>lii</sup>.

The Church controlled hospitals and cemeteries and a heretic could not be buried in "consecrated ground", just as those who belonged to the evangelical churches.

Further issues occurred even after his death; Doctor Nello Fontepiani wrote that: "The first selection of Crudeli's poems was published in 1746 in Florence (although the edition was published under a Neapolitan Publisher's name) and it contains 19 poems dedicated to Orazio Mann", an English Ambassador. The influence of the List and of the Inquisition<sup>liii</sup> affected the destiny of his literary work, too.

What did the Inquisitor want know about the Freemasonry?

We believe it is interesting to report the 45 questions Crudeli was asked. We find these questions in a letter dated 18 August 1739, with which Minister Richecourt recounts the events at the Grand Duke in Vienna - enclosure is a list of 45 questions With the authorization of the Florence State Archives - Concil of Regency - File 339 - papers 56/62 - front and back:

- 1 Who was the Minister
- 2 The name of the official
- 3 What is a freemason
- 4 How the new freemason is allowed entry
- 5 How to make an invitation to participate
- 6 What is the cost [of membership]
- 7 What is the colour of the gloves
- 8 If the bandage is compulsory
- 9 Which metals members are asked to leave behind
- 10 How the Council is organised

- 11 If the one who speaks inside [the Lodge] is the Master
  - 12 What is the figure marked with chalk on the ground
  - 13 How many light sources are there
  - 14 How the lights are arranged
  - 15 What the lights are placed on
  - 16 Where the Master sits
  - 17 What the oath is sworn on
  - 18 What is the book one swears on
  - 19 The meaning of the words of the oath
  - 20 What uniform or sign is given to the new freemason
  - 21 If there is a formula for the oath
  - 22 Summarise the oath
  - 23 If there is any obscene language
  - 24 If there is anything else
  - 25 What is discussed at the table
  - 26 Tell us the names of Florentines
  - 27 Tell us the names of the English
  - 28 What is the total number of freemasons
  - 29 Who was the Master when he joined them
  - 30 How long has it been since he joined
  - 31 How many Masters changed
  - 32 How long since he was introduced in this circle
  - 33 Who was the founder
  - 34 How many were there when he joined
  - 35 The number and the names of Florentines at that time
  - 36 Again, the number of English members at that time
  - 37 How long had Freemasonry been established by the time he joined it
  - 38 Where is the Freemasons' house
  - 39 Its exact name...
  - 40 The names of the Grand Masters
  - 41 What the day the meeting is on
  - 42 If after the meal, when the lights are lit, one speaks against Deus aut Divinam Scintiam
  - 43 Whether he knows if, or heard others say that in Florence or elsewhere there are other such conversations
  - 44 Why women are not allowed in
  - 45 if the English leave the table all together ... and Crudeli replied "not all," then the Inquisitor replied "I heard that in Germany .... "
- With Crudeli's trial, the Church managed to stop the activity of the Lodges in Tuscany, except in Livorno where a consistent presence remained.

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- August 8, 1739 a copy of a letter sent by the Court of Rome to the Nuncio in Vienna with which the Pope condemns what happened in Florence in the matter of inquisition and the innovations introduced, especially about the Secular Arm - Florence State Archives - Concil of Regency - File 340 from paper 313 to paper 321 - front and back
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<sup>i</sup>Especially regarding Southern Kingdoms, the list is not complete; some Lodges had been founded with a strong connection to these Provincial Grand Masters, but they never got recorded in London registers, due to communication issues (mail failed to reach the receiver). Here is the full list, for your information:

“The English Freemasonry in Italy

### **Provincial Grand Masters:**

1740 Marquis des Marches for Savoy and Piedmont; 1766 Niccolò de Manuzzi for Italy.

1770 Cesare Pignatelli, Duke of Rocca [and of San Demetrio] for Naples and Sicily; 1773 Count de Berney for Piedmont.

### **Italian Lodges recorded in the English books:**

First Grand Lodge: 1768 Lodge of Perfect Union N. 433 in the Infantry Regiment of His Majesty of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, Naples; 1769 Well Chosen Lodge N. 444, Naples; 1771 Lodge of Perfect Union N. 410, Leghorn; 1771 Lodge of Sincere Brotherly Love N. 412, Leghorn; 1772 Union Lodge N. 438, Venice; 1772 Lodge N. 439 (unnamed) Verona; 1775 Lodge Saint Jean de la Nouvelle Esperance N. 479, Turin; 1778 Lodge N. 510 (unnamed), Messina; 1780 Lodge n. 525 (unnamed), Naples; 1781 Lodge of Truth N. 440, Naples; 1782 Old British and Ligurian Lodge N. 444.

Ancient Grand Lodge: 1763 Lodge N. 117 (unnamed) in Leghorn; 1765 Lodge N. 138 (unnamed) at Salutation Tavern, via Grande, Leghorn.”

The presence in Rom of a self-proclaimed Jacobite Lodge is very remarkable: it existed approximately from 1730 and had been disbanded in 1738, after the publication of the Bull of excommunication.

<sup>ii</sup> Hamill indicates the names of the most important English members: “Of great relevance in the group, were Charles Sackville, Earl of Middlesex (later Duke of Dorset); Robert, the second Lord Raymond (Grand Master at the First Grand Lodge, 1739); Doc. Martin Foulkes (President of the Royal Society, Dep. Grand Master, 1724-25); Lord Montague; Sir Horace Mann; and probably Horace Walpole.”

<sup>iii</sup> “Actually, among all the serious reasons for the above-mentioned prohibitions and condemnations, as listed in the Constitution, **there is one that allows people, belonging to different religions and sects, to gather in those Societies and Groups; it is now clear how dangerous it would be for Catholic Religion**”.

<sup>iv</sup> In the 18th Century, economic progress, scientific and cultural discoveries brought many sovereigns to modify and improve living conditions of their subjects, as well as to try and make the administration more efficient and to invest on economic development. In Italy, but not only there, the Catholic Church had a huge amount of interests, goods and resources. The management of these resources was though static and no longer productive. Enlightened kings ended up fighting with the Catholic Church, because it was opposing the reforms which were supposed to implement agriculture and economy in a rational way. Freemasonry also contributed to this cultural clash, but its support necessarily stops because of French Revolution and “Restauration”, through which the strong bond between Kings and Catholic Church was re-established.

<sup>v</sup> Niccolò Rodolico, *Stato e Chiesa in Toscana durante la Reggenza Lorenese (1737-1765)*, Firenze, successori Le Monnier 1910.

<sup>vi</sup> As explained by Nicolò Rodolico, Clement XI and Clement XII “had supported, without any success, the enemies of the Empire” and kept on supporting them even after 1738, when Francis Stephan arrives in Florence: “There will be reasons even later for Francis I to direct his aversion to the Court in Rom and to the Bourbons in Spain and in Naples, who were trying to get him out of Tuscany “, op. cit. p. 148.

<sup>vii</sup> The foundation of the “**Perfect Union**” Lodge dates back to that time. We can learn about it thanks to the Archives in London; one of the first notes shows this reference: «Perfect Union Lodge. Authorized on the 2nd of December 1768 with number 433 at Infantry Regiment of His Majesty of the Two Sicilies. It was then assigned the numbers 368 (1770), 283 (1781) and 237 (1792). It was recorded until 1813, even though it united with the National Grand Lodge of Two Sicilies in 1776».

In the correspondence dated 1886 between the UGLE and the Anglia Lodge in Naples, the Perfect Union is mentioned as the first constituted lodge in Italy to ask for English recognition. In the same year, the Perfect Union Lodge is then named Capitular Lodge. The Anglia Lodge was recognized by the Supreme Council of Scottish Rite in Turin through the above-mentioned Union Lodge and afterwards allowed to work in English using the English Rite:

“NB The Capitular Lodge Perfetta Unione was first constituted in the year 1728 under warrant from the Gr. L. of England as result from the report of the Trial of its members guilty of Freemasonry, before the Neapolitan Tribunals - existing in the state archives in Naples - it is believed to be the first Lodge regularly constituted in Italy”.

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viii The clash between Tories and Whigs was decreasing and so was the one between new and old rich. Whigs lost their peculiar democratic foundation by distancing themselves from the middle class they stemmed from. At that time George I was King and since he came from Hannover, he could speak a bad English and knew very little about England. He was rather bound to the German area he left. These factors had facilitated a certain decrease in the power of the Crown and, consequently, supported the constitutional and parliamentary government success, as the Revolution in 1688 did. The increasing welfare had stopped religious fights; the English were fed up with conflicts and sects; even Voltaire, in his *Letters sur les Anglais*, remarks that all religions were welcomed in England and could finally coexist.

Although only the 20% of English population was not practicing Anglicanism, relationships were good, as testified by the co-existence of different beliefs within Freemasonry and its abstention from dealing with political or religious matters, this being a field of open discussion, tolerance, studies and research.

Religion was no longer a conflict ground, therefore when the Stuarts, supported by Pontiff and French troops, tried to gain back the Crown, the 20% of Catholic subjects did not join them; the action was joined by Scots, who wanted to promote their independence. The famous Battle of Culloden was the final confrontation of the last Jacobite rising of 1745: on 16 April 1746, the Jacobite forces of Charles Edward Stuart (the Young Pretender) and France troops were decisively defeated by loyalist troops. Charles Edward Stuart arrived in Scotland in 1745 incite a rebellion of Stuart sympathizers against the House of Hanover.

ix Sbigoli Ferdinando, *Tommaso Crudeli e i primi framassoni in Firenze: narrazione storica corredata di documenti inediti*, Forni, Bologna 1967, p. 12-13. In his book about Crudeli's trial, Sbigoli explains (page 53), that under Cosimo III, father of Gian Gastone, most of powers were transferred to clergymen:

"...within fifty-three, Tuscany became a huge monastery; Jesuits became lords of conscience and soul of all the subjects; families could no longer live in peace; sciences had been ignored or persecuted; State funds got thrown into frivolous wastefulness and given to deceivers. Punishment became a frequent entertainment; you could be sent to jail for any irrelevant reason, like haunting pheasants or making love, bypassing the priest's prohibition...Some flagellated themselves out of fanaticism with branches or disciplines; some, following the example of his brother the Cardinal or of the Grand Duke's children, gave themselves up to lecheries in secret; some others, clever and evil, took big advantage from the Prince idiocy and vanity by pretending to be a saint or a convert".

x Ibid., p. 14-15. From Sbigoli: «...times were not right for this Reform; nonetheless, it could be affirmed that he prepared it somehow». His biggest merit was however to have promoted toleration under a cultural point of view and to have offered the premise for the return of many intellectuals, who like him studied in Pisa».

xi Sbigoli reports that, in Bologna and in Naples, the situation was taking a similar turn to what was happening under Cosimo III's realm: in Emilia it had been established that nobody «could become a doctor, unless he make the oath of observing Aristotelian theories in the future», while in Naples «the Senior Clergy and Spanish Governors issued some more serious threats [...]». It was indeed «a triumph in the name of Aristotle and thanks to the Jesuits». A certain Father Neri, in his sermons, «used to say, that if people in Pisa wished for a godly blessing, they should keep away not only from vice, but also from heresies promoted at Pisa University».

xii After Huguenots had been slaughtered in France, in the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, and news reached in Rom, merry bells rang and people had been exhorted to celebrate in the streets. Europe was fed up with religious violence and was trying to get out of intolerance. Thinkers like Locke were indeed supporting tolerance. In my daughter's History textbook Locke's work *A Letter Concerning Toleration* has been quoted: «Since you are pleased to ask my thoughts about mutual toleration among Christians, I answer briefly that I regard toleration to be the chief distinguishing mark of a true church. For although some people boast of the antiquity of places and names or of the pomp of their outward worship, others of the reformation of their theology, and all of the orthodoxy of their faith (for everyone is orthodox to himself), these claims, and all others like them, are much more marks of men striving for power and empire over one another than of the church of Christ. Even if someone has the best claim in the world to all these things, if he is destitute of charity, meekness, and good will in general towards all mankind, even to those that are not Christians, he is certainly short of being a true Christian himself». The same toleration was promoted in Masonic Lodges, to which the Church opposed through excommunications, looking back to the past; it is indeed religious toleration that aimed to build a laic State, based on written constitutions and in which secular and religious powers were meant to be separated.

xiii From Sbigoli work: «All the opposers to this fervor of cultural renewal were supporters of the old system, first in line the Jesuits, who at that time had to face Jansenism on their same theological ground, but furthermore they also had to overcome the more open Scolopi in the pre- or para-academic educational field. If intolerance thoughts could find supporters in the Jesuits and in Paolo Ambrogio Ambrogio, or in the order of Friars Minor Conventual, in the Inquisitor and the Head of the Holy Office, the renewal party had its own stronghold in the Freemasonic Lodge». Thanks to Gian Gastone, Tuscany can get out from his father Cosimo III's obscurantism and find the way to toleration. The Prince could claim his powers on his subjects, also and above all on those conservative fields managed by the Church, such as Jesuits, Inquisition and Holy Office's influence, who were still trying to interfere in secular matters.

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<sup>xiv</sup> Op. cit. p. 156-57, Niccolò Rodolico: «exactly at that time he wanted to act quickly against those affiliates to the sect, to unveil their heretic doctrines, about which he could gathered exaggerated information. In vain, he asked for Gian Gastone's intervention, in vain he asked the Prince for audience, in vain he reminded the Prince how serious those heresies were, his duties as a catholic sovereign and his father Cosimo III's faith. Gian Gastone had dismissed the monk with a skeptical smile and told him, with a certain malicious naivety, that there was nothing so bad about Freemasonic gatherings».

<sup>xv</sup> Ecclesiastical immobilism involved Church resources, management and privileges and it was mostly considered as a brake on the economic development in the region. Being part of the ecclesiastical entourage could guarantee work, privileges and allowances; in return for these facilities, clergymen had to ensure loyalty and membership. Alongside with the Church, there was a pro-Spanish "party" operating on an administrative level, where many supporters of the Pope gathered.

<sup>xvi</sup> N. Rodolico, op. cit. p. X-XI. The introduction in this book is by Giovanni Spadolini, historian and ex-president in the Italian Senate: he describes the Secretary of the Royal Right Giulio Rucellai (successor of Filippo Buonarroti 1661-1733), and Emanuel de Nay-Richecourt, Head of Financial Council in Florence and President of the Cabinet, as the true protagonists of the conflict between State and Church in the Regency period, and as supporters of the renewal of the judicial system, of public bodies and of economic development: «They always showed toleration and benevolence and stand across the scenario of a region in decay, preparing the ground for the great reforms brought by the upcoming Enlightenment. Both of them were catholic, though devoid of Cosimo III's nightmares and obsessions. Cosimo, who was ready to get rid of all artistic works the Cathedral and the Uffizi pointed out as scandalous, for fear of breaking with tradition [...] and ready to impose restrictions to the University of Pisa».

<sup>xvii</sup> Clergy's pressure used to increase during crisis periods, for instance when Charles of Bourbons Kings of Naples wanted to invade Tuscany (passing through Pontiff's territories); religious claims were a means to acquire political influence, especially since the Curie and the Corsini Family were protecting Church privileges in Florence and the interests of Bourbons, Stuarts and other pretenders to the imperial throne. Finally, to facilitate Ancona Harbor (a Papal territory) at the expense of Leghorn.

<sup>xviii</sup> F. Sbigoli, op. cit. p. 167.

<sup>xix</sup> N. Rodolico, op. cit. p. 174-75: «Under the name of Freemason, they are used to heretic doctrines of Deism. By naming themselves Freemasons, they aim to avoid suspicion of whoever knows the real meaning of the word Masonry, which had arisen in England to allow only harmless entertainment...».

<sup>xx</sup> Ibid., p. 175: «...it rejects the mystery of Trinity and the principle of soul immortality, whereas it allows the sin of sodomy [...] if His Majesty aims to engage a war against the Turks to gain the Holy blessing, he should at first banish the heretics from the Grand Duchy, before acting against faraway enemies [...] ».

<sup>xxi</sup> F. Sbigoli, op. cit. p. 168: «It seems that the Holy See had been forced to make the Nuncio come back Florence, namely not an honorable and dignifying event for his Majesty».

On one hand the confrontation concerned the substance, the ideas, but on the other hand it involves method, form: there is some criticism for the scientific method and its books and, furthermore, it is here established a system in which relevant positions, both in public field and at universities, are granted not based on academic merits or knowledge, but rather on membership.

During the Ancien Régime, belonging in the Clergy or in Aristocracy is the only thing that matters and the most efficient way to have privileges and public positions. And this is only based on membership, as it is still nowadays in Italy: Can merit prevail devoid of any belonging in Masonic Lodges or is the belonging itself to prevail on the merit?

And what about the difference between a knowledge acquired through empirical research, open and shared discussions, and the one deriving from the exegesis of "holy" books, namely an interpretation allowed by Jesuits and Inquisition? An exegesis which is connected to the concepts of membership and of income.

Moreover, income itself is seen as livelihood and not as the result of that kind of work elevating ourselves and making us independent. Privilege versus general rule. All these factors keep on influencing significantly the selection within the political, administrative and academic ruling class and they walked hand in hand with a distorted notion of Freemasonry as a place protected by a deep confidentiality, where one can easily obtain favors, immunity, positions or make business – a meeting place for "powerful people" and not for cultivating knowledge – a place which facilitates membership and does not value merits and capabilities. This sort of Freemasonry is supposed to appeal Italian big criminal organizations, as testified by several reformed criminals.

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<sup>xxii</sup> On the 11th of October 1888 Adriano Lemmi, in his newsletter n. 17, addressed to “all Lodges of Italian Communion” and published on occasion of the excommunication of Freemasonry by Pope Leo XIII, reiterates Freemasonry mission of civilization. Here is a passage: «Rarely, and specifically now, I thought it necessary to listen to the words of the Supreme Head of the Order. Freemasonry – representing, **in the purest and highest sense, the third great European civilization, summarized in the free scientific and religious thoughts** – had been criticized never more than now and was never capable of inspiring such harsh and violent reactions. The more the secular fight between the enlightened and critical intellect and the blind faith nailed to dogma and words cross expands and walks towards its ending, the bigger is the helpless effort to stop human development. Those who had been defeated by time and truth insult the winners, and in their fatal and irreparable downfall, once lost their reason and powers, defame most noble achievements of science and human awareness, and furthermore, if there were any valuable contribution from them in the past, they destroy its memory through their current disgusting and greedy attitude. And this applying anywhere in the world: in our country they would like to deprive us of our right to have a homeland. The Pope, you see, dear brothers, ended up being a ridiculous pretender to our country. He affirms he would be the only one to guarantee peace and civilization – but, his Gospel alone will not do, he also needs gendarmes and Jesuits – and he curses and insults. Bishops support him, they organize conferences, meetings, pilgrimages, and underneath the religious veil are working at the grotesque machine of rebellion and parricide. When conspiracy was about Homeland freedom and union, the Pope – a knife in Italy’s heart – destined the bold ones to jail and scaffolds; while now, the Vatican, conspiring to separate our Homeland again, is protesting Italians self-defense and expects unbridled impunity».

<sup>xxiii</sup> In the fascist or catholic mechanism of membership, of the knowledge authorized by the Regime, of the income bound to a knowledge subordinate to powers’ interests.

<sup>xxiv</sup> Here is Sbigoli’s description of his work, p. 49: «Among them, a standing out figure, for his fanatic and impulsive nature, was Paolo Ambrogio Ambrogi, from the Order of Minor Conventual in Santa Croce, Inquisitor in Florence against heretic depravity».

<sup>xxv</sup> In his book (p. 217), Sbigoli reports that these events caused once more a British intervention and offered the Minister of Justice – Tommaso Pelham Holles (1693-1768), Duke of Newcastle (Robert Walpole Government 1721-1742) – an excuse for a renewed protest. He wrote to the English Resident in Florence to have an update about the trial, which not only brought Crudeli to jail, but it moreover threatens “the reputation of many respectable men of the Kingdom”. Mann was entitled to express to Tuscan government the discontent about this matter, since “according to British decency, it was not appropriate to keep the Poet in jail, only because he was a Freemason and had English relatives”. Mann gave his message to Richecourt, who replied to have already forwarded Mann’s previous “recommendations” about Crudeli, who was connected to his predecessor Faine.

Nevertheless, he expressed his surprise for the fact that the poet, without being a British subject, was so much protected by Walpole’s government: «you could not imagine, that British Government would have openly taken care of his situation». Mann answered, it was due to the accusation itself to Crudeli, and to the good relations between George I and the Grand Duke. «The Grand Duke would surely anything possible to protect England’s honor and decency».

See also: Archives State in Florence – Council of Regency, folder n. 339 – Letter of Minister Richecourt to the Grand Duke. The letter is written in French.

Richecourt informed the Grand Duke about the last events and about the Resident’s stance, in behalf of the English Government the Earl reports what happened in Florence and about the English Government stance.

This dossier cover has the following title: “Report of the Earl Richecourt to His Royal Majesty on Doc. Crudeli’s terrible imprisonment by the Inquisition and about Mann’s intervention, in behalf of the English Crown, since they consider such a sentence unfair, especially if due to Crudeli’s relations to English”.

<sup>xxvi</sup> Lodge Tommaso Crudeli, article published in the magazine ‘Square’ in September 1994 «A visit to Italy», p. 154-56.

<sup>xxvii</sup> Marco Panozzi, lawyer, in his essay published on the leaflet Tommaso Crudeli Lodge 21 “Brother Crudeli’s trial. Inquisition Court. Comparison with current trial systems”, mentions: «In case it is not possible to find evidence of the guilt, or there are some contradictions to be solved, the convict undergoes torture. Cases in which torture was permitted were not ruled. There were simple guidelines, precisely seven instructions to decide if proceeding with torture:

The accused does not answer promptly;

There is at least one witness against a defamed person;

There is at least one serious evidence against a defamed person;

There is at an accusation of heresy against him or her;

There many serious suspicions against him or her;

Especially, in the case that all the previous points are present and there is also a witness against him or her.

\*While, in case of simple defamation or there is only one witness against a non-defamed person or a single evidence, torture is not necessary».

<sup>xxviii</sup> F. Sbigoli, op. cit. p. 272.

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<sup>xxxix</sup>Sbigoli reports: « [...] Mister Crudeli, the Sacred Congregation found such a broad evidence of his guilt, that, if your health state did not refrain us, you would have been tested with torture. Nonetheless, Crudeli, who even without tortures was torn apart, could not bear such an ecclesiastical hypocrisy and did not let him finish his speech, on the contrary the Inquisitor lost his will of concluding. “My Judges are, indeed, much obliged to my illness” said Crudeli “since it was the only reason why an innocent did not undergo a severe exam [i.e. torture]; and the Sacred Congregation would have regretted so much to have tormented me, only based on a single accuser’s words, especially if the accuser is a notorious fool who already asked for my mercy and forgiveness for he caused my imprisonment, shame, expenses and an incurable disease.”

<sup>xxx</sup> The Regency brought order in the areas of responsibility of departments, which during De Medici government was not completely clear and overlapped, even under the archives point of view. Only thanks to Francis I’s Ministers we can go over what has happened.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Archives of State in Florence – Council of Regency, folder n. 339 – Letters of Abbot Giovanni Antonio Tornaquinci to the Grand Duke Francis Stephan of Lorene. We requested the access to the Vatican archives to review the correspondence belonging to the two Popes, it was unfortunately denied.

<sup>xxxii</sup> The dossier consists in a folded big page showing the text; on the cover, the archivists briefly explain what the message is about: «Report from Abbot Tornaquinci about the intention of the Inquisitor in Florence to proceed with the arrest of Abbot Buonacorsi, Doc. Crudeli and Cerretesi – the arrest was effective for the former [although Crudeli was mentioned as the second] and rejected for the two others, since Buonacorsi was sick, while Cerretesi’s arrest was suspended thanks to the English Minister until the English Court’s publication of a resolution ordering the removal of Baron Stosch from Tuscany».

<sup>xxxiii</sup> A quote from Tornaquinci:

«The Father Inquisitor would have liked me to search the house of Attias the Jew in Leghorn, where he suspected we could find bad books; though, Earl Richecourt mentioned that this would have caused the violation of freedom and privileges, as well as the ruin for the trades in the Harbor area (facilitating in this way the goals of the Priests in Rom, who aim to increase the trade in Ancona Harbor at the expense of Leghorn), so I answered the Father Inquisitor, that this was not matching the peculiar rules applying in Leghorn [...] ».

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Archives State in Florence – Council of Regency, folder n. 340 – Letter of the Holy See in Vienna.

<sup>xxxv</sup> Here is a quote from the notes in the dossier containing the letter:

«Copy of the letter to the Roman Court dated August 1739 and addressed to the Nuncio in Vienna, where it is shown an opposition to what happened in Florence in matter of Inquisition, namely about the latest news, especially regarding the Secular Arm, the Inquisitor asked for».

<sup>xxxvi</sup> Ibid., « [...] It was a great surprise to His Holiness that so far our requests in behalf of His Holiness to the Illustrious Grand Duke of Tuscany for the a Secular Arm support to the Court of the Holy Inquisition in Florence had not been satisfied; on the contrary, His Royal Majesty, pretending to ease the conflict, is considering to promote at first a severe new measure against the Inquisition Court itself, namely the introduction into the Holy Office of one or two Commissioners entitled by H. M. himself».

<sup>xxxvii</sup> Rather than finding a solution, or “lowering the bar, in the territories of H. M. they are adding to the ferment with serious prejudice towards Religion and, with great regret of His Holiness», who to avoid further fights «did everything possible to please H. M., showing an unprecedented compliance to the Grand Duke», but that might be necessary in this case.

<sup>xxxviii</sup> It is written: « [...] by punishing him only, all the others’ crimes would stay unpunished – cutting a single branch does not help **to eradicate the poisonous plant, which is growing its roots more and more in Florence and which is spreading the infection of most perverted ideas, moreover the cause, that is the cause of God**, should surrender, without stopping unbelievers, blasphemers committed to disgusting doctrines, degenerates who would destroy decency: basically, without putting any restriction to the evil that could spread all over the territory of H. M. and causing most serious consequences for both religion and stability, as well as for the Principality security».

<sup>xxxix</sup> We can read in the letter: «Since Bishops had not punished those criminals in terms of religion, and the Inquisition Court was not allowed to take action against such corrupted people – it happens nowadays in Florence, as it happened in the past after the Grand Duke Gio. Gastone’s death –, all the worst sins in the world will be permitted and those abominable people will commit any wrongdoing against religion».

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<sup>xi</sup> From the correspondence: «Finally, everything conjectured had proven to be correct, namely that Crudeli was accused by Inquisition only due to his membership in Freemasonry. He has been tested in any possible way and only about this topic. This information is thus certain, since we know exactly on what matters the interrogation focused, namely the oath on the Scriptures, the forms used to become a freemason, the most used words. Furthermore, they asked questions about the gatherings and about the Secret they have to keep. Latest news from this morning [...] ».

<sup>xii</sup> «Since it is very hard to believe, that a society hosting so many Catholics and respectable men would ever act against religion, most likely, H. M. was submitted some other reasons for the two arrests, one of them involving Crudeli, while I have no information about the other».

<sup>xiii</sup> Archives of State in Florence – Council of Regency, folder n. 339 – Letter from Minister Rucellai to Minister Richecourt, 11 August 1739: «...The word is spread about Crudeli staying in jail only due to this reason. Most of the people confirmed the suspicions out of fear, and the rest of them was shocked to learn from the Inquisition version, that this Society is heretic and so are its members. And this was a perfect occasion for whoever opposed Freemasonry, to support this belief – we can already observe the consequent bad results. I beg you to burn my letter after reading, so that nobody will get to know about it». The Minister did not trust the Florentine system, since it was partly connected to Papal supporters and partly to the pro-Spanish faction – and that is the reason why he asked to burn his letter after reading. Fortunately, his request was not satisfied.

<sup>xliii</sup> Archives of State in Florence – Council of Regency, folder n. 339 – Letter from Minister Rucellai to Minister Richecourt, 26<sup>th</sup> of August 1739: «what the Freemasonic gatherings deal with – = it is all about fables and trivial foolishness – replied the Inquisitor, and asked him to tell about the ceremony, the names of Freemasons in Florence and of people of English origin, if there was an oath and on what they have to take this oath; moreover, what they were doing in the rooms they gathered = Crudeli answered that he could not remember many of the things he was asked for, especially he could not recall the names = then, the Inquisitor frankly admitted to know that among the names figured the one of Buondelmonti Abbot and Galassi, who was in the service of H. M. in Leghorn. The Inquisitor mentioned many English, calling them by their name, like for instance Monsieur Fox, a very honorable person, a literate and mathematician, who spend a long time in Florence. Since some years, there was a book where Freemasons had to put their signature, and there were Corinthian and Doric columns, some candles and a torch in the middle of circle drawn with the chalk. Crudeli admitted it was all true, apart from the detail that all these elements were not mandatory, and **the book was not necessarily the same in every society– to the point that he had seen members taking the oath on Don Chichotte**. Furthermore, the torch was a symbol for the masonic work».

<sup>xliv</sup> From Rucellai: «The Frimasson Society **is a totally secular organization, the ecclesial part can't be interested, even less the Inquisition, the Inquisition should only be interested in the causes of Faith matters**, as showed by the fact that these ideas had been prohibited by secular apparatus and not from Ecclesiastical one; this is also the reason why the Bull does not apply in Florence. Indeed, the Holy Office is keeping a laic subject of H. M. in jail because of non-secular matters and without any doubt the arrest is not related to religion. This is namely, a serious affront to H. Majesty, the one and only entitled by God to have rights on his subjects of life and freedom».

<sup>xlv</sup> Ibid., From the Minister's letter: «This serious situation will not be over before months, of course, and I am afraid it will end up with this poor fellow's death, a consumptive who several times already coughed up blood and that is currently in jail as far as I can tell, suffering on a very bad lung-disease, mostly caused by the summer months spent in a disgusting cell [...] ».

<sup>xlvi</sup> F. Sbigoli, op. cit., p. 290.

<sup>xlvii</sup> Archives of State in Florence – Council of Regency, folder n 340 – Letter from Luca Corsi to Earl Richecourt: «Doc. Crudeli is constantly tormented in Poppi by Father Cocchini at the behest of the Inquisitor in Florence, as reported by the Mallevadore. He answered that Y. E. ordered him not to, so he replied = His protectors restrained the trial process and will keep taking care of it = at this point, Crudeli begged Y. E. either to obey the orders of the Holy Office or to protect him, though in a way which could meet the Holy Office needs, showing to be a good believer. I beg Y. E. pardon if I dare to [...]».

<sup>xlviii</sup> Booklet 'Loggia Tommaso Crudeli', Roberto Peticucci, *Crudeli: la malattia e la detenzione*, pagg. 63-73.

<sup>xlix</sup> Crudeli immediately let the Inquisitor know about his own health state; the latter, after reassuring him, sent him to the little dark room, we have already mentioned: a six-meters length triangular cell built out of a bigger room, into which air could only come from an external smelly "shared" area. Additionally, they add a wooden panel to the fence on the outer side, aimed rather to reduce air and light in the room than to prevent his escape. He was brought to a slightly better cell, only after 36 days and many claims.

<sup>l</sup> His hometown Poppi is a small village in Casentino, in the upper Arno River valley. It is up in the mountains and in winter the weather is particularly cold, making this location inappropriate for Crudeli's state of health. He will request, in vain, the allowance to move to Pisa, a city very close to the seaside and with several excellent hospitals.

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<sup>ii</sup> Especially the latter, after checking out Crudeli's state of health, wrote: «Due to my experience, in my opinion, Apennine mountain air in Casentino is equally detrimental for him, since the mountains there are covered up with snow most of the time. Therefore, Mister Crudeli, if staying in Poppi for some days longer, would definitely risk his life, especially because the weather is getting colder and colder, faithfully I wrote this by my hand». From the Booklet 'Loggia Tommaso Crudeli', R.P. *Crudeli: la malattia e la detenzione* (p. 63-73), p.72.

<sup>iii</sup> Booklet, 'Loggia Tommaso Crudeli', R.P. *Crudeli: la malattia e la detenzione* (p. 63-73), p.73.

<sup>iiii</sup> Booklet, 'Loggia Tommaso Crudeli', R.P. *La Poesia del Crudeli – Palestra di pensiero Massonico – Abile Esercitazione Letteraria*, Nello Fontepiani (p. 9–18), p. 10