

Noble Families Symbolizing the Val di Chiana: Dei and Manni

Nobility in Flight Towards the Capitals

In Val di Chiana, some families were able to occupy prominent positions both in the political sphere and in the fields of science or religion. As their various members became part of the nobility of the Sienese State, they moved to the capital or Florence, initially for study and later to emphasize their new status, entrusting the management of their assets to local procurators. Let's consider two paradigmatic examples for the prestige and delicate functions they held: the Dei-Nardi family of Chiusi and the Manni family of San Casciano dei Bagni.

Deifebo Dei (1511-1582), son of Deo and Romana Sozzini, a doctor of law and theology, treasurer of the Church, and governor of Melfi, was knighted with the Golden Spur and granted the title of palatine count for his services to the Holy See. Flaminio, son of Flaminio and Porzia dei Nardi (1568-1630), fought alongside Silvio Piccolomini against the Turks in Negroponte and Bona, and faced Emanuele Filiberto di Savoia in Mantua. He later joined the Spanish imperial army, serving with the Count of Fuentes in the wars of Flanders. His final assignment was as the castellan of the fortress of Livorno. It was during this time that the marriage between Flaminio Dei and Porzia dei Nardi took place, uniting the two families. Subsequent generations included Stefano, son of Flaminio (1600-1678), a professor of law at universities; Flaminio, son of Silvio (1630-1706), five times in the supreme magistrate of Concistorio, gonfaloniere in 1655, captain of the people in 1674, and auditor of the Sacred Roman Rota; and Tommaso, son of Damaso and Lucrezia Piccolomini (1661-1725), dean of the Metropolitan, theologian, and professor at the University of Siena.

Among the prominent members of the Manni family is Aurelio di Girolamo, an orator in Rome in 1544 and ambassador for Cardinal Granvelle in 1546. A Doctor of Law in Siena, during a crucial moment in the war, he sided with his brother Gismondo in support of Florence. This choice led to the confiscation of all their assets, while the Sienese government, retreated to Montalcino, declared them rebels in October 1556. The defeat of the Republic of Siena would result in the restitution of their properties and new responsibilities. Aurelio became part of the Balìa di Siena, became Cosimo's procurator, then secretary of the State of Siena—a position established by Cosimo in 1561 to replace the chancellor of the Republic and the notary of reforms, reserved for jurists without criteria of brevity and rotation. In 1565, Aurelio left the secretariat to Antonmaria Petrucci and moved to Florence, where he was appointed fiscal auditor by the Grand Duke, a position (the third in importance in the Medici State) that he held until 1571. Among other members of the Manni family is Vittorio, "a distinguished physician, considered second to none in his homeland" (Ugurgieri, Pompe Senesi, 1649), who published *De Balneis Sancti Cassiani* in 1617. The Manni family has often held the position of podestà in San Casciano. Leonardo di Girolamo and Ottaviano di Girolamo were captains of the people in Siena in 1670 and 1700, respectively.