Mario A. Iannaccone

The Lefèbvre D'Ovidio Family

A Dynasty between the Ages

Book 2

This is the story of a family, the Lefèbvre D'Ovidio, that was so important in Ancien Régime France, in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, in unified Italy and beyond in the 20th century. More than a novel, this is a thrilling story, brought to light for the first time in recent years through painstaking research on almost unpublished sources, which has revealed what time has inexplicably hidden.

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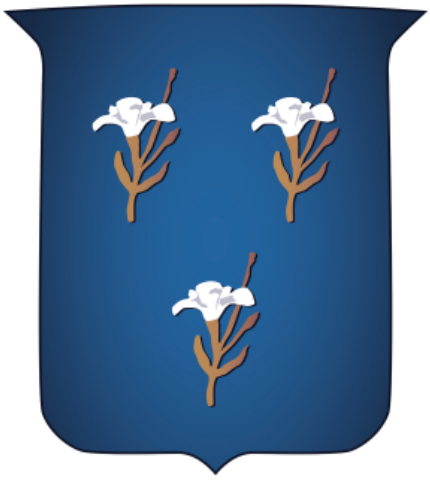
Chapters 1-11

July 2023

Cover: Gioacchino La Pira, *I giardini del Palazzo Reale di Chiaia*, Nineteenth Century, private collection.

LEFEBVRE



LEX DECUS LABOR

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Second volume

Chapter 1

The master's house

The so-called pure industrialists, i.e. those who devoted most of their time to the companies they managed and financed, were a new type of professionalism. They were characterised by being up to date, keeping abreast of international technological and process innovations that made the business more profitable and the product better, thus participating in the spirit and culture of the new ruling class that was technologically, financially and managerially prepared.

We can take the example of the Rossi dynasty, wool and paper industrialists who built villas overlooking their factories. The Villa Rossi in Arsiero, the mansion of the Rossi wool and paper industrialists, dominated the factory complex. The logic was similar. The Rossi family were local and therefore their family was large and articulate, which led to their entrenchment. Most of the Lefèbvre family, on the other hand, had remained in France, which made it easier for them to relocate when the Neapolitan industrial adventure came to an end.

This old postcard shows the main villa-palace of the Rossi family, to which was added another large country villa called Villa Rossi Santorso, not far from both the main palace and the Fabbrica Alta and Fabbrica Bassa settlements.

Villa Rossi (Schio).

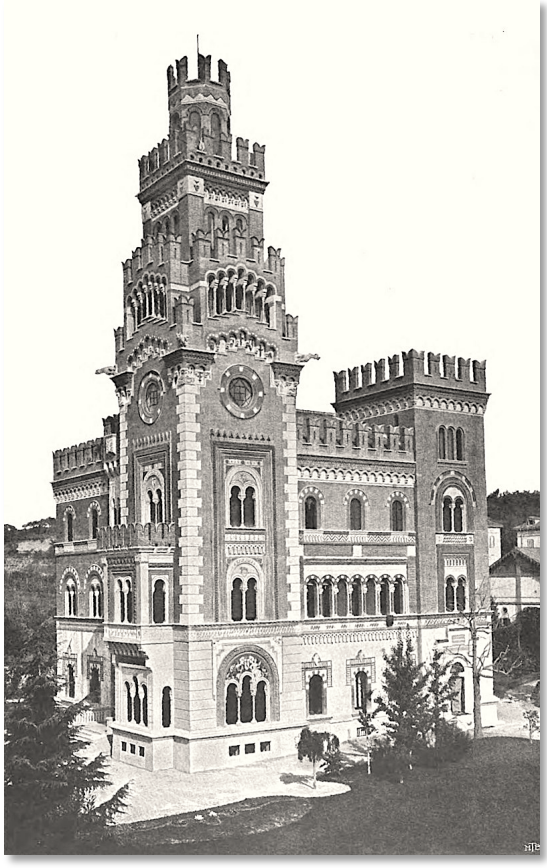
The duplication of residences had become necessary to accommodate the various branches of the family, which, as mentioned above, numbered many people and several generations. For the Lefèbvre family, it became necessary at some point to separate the country residence from the factory after they were ennobled as Counts in 1854.

Villa Rossi S. Orso.

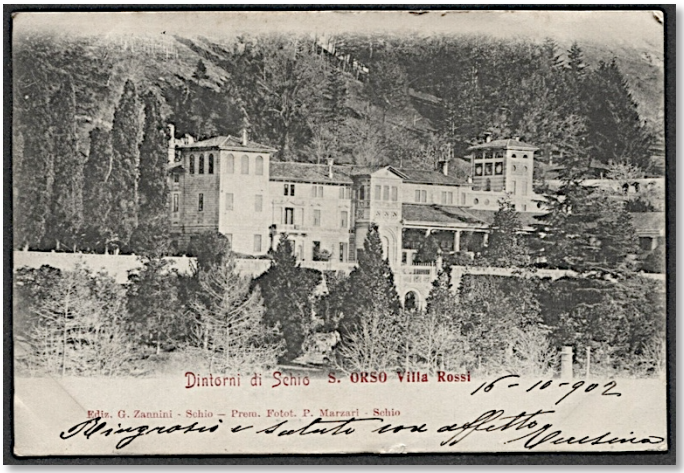
Villa Rossi Santorso was a palazzo villa in the neo-romantic style. In these manorial landscapes, inspired by the pre-industrial organic society, there is always a small church or chapel, in homage to the needs of religious care, and a park, as in the working-class towns they built.

Palazzo Crespi is also a famous and remarkable example. Later than the others, it stands out for its grandeur. Benigno Crespi used to travel from Milan to the workers' village to live there with his family from May to November. During the summer, as was typical of the businessmen of that generation, who had little interest in the sea or the mountains - except for cures, the spa - the workplaces of others became places of pleasure and leisure. At Crespi d'Adda, however, Benigno, and later his sons, received visitors, held parties, discussed business and made trips to nearby towns.

The imposing palace was built between 1893 and 1894 in the neo-Romanesque Gothic style by the architect Ernesto Pirovano (1866-1934). It is a striking palace, with a tall tower that recalls the function of the ancient towers that were meant to underline the power of a family. It may therefore be useful to look at the similarities and differences with the Lefèbvre case.



Palazzo Crespi (Crespi d'Adda).



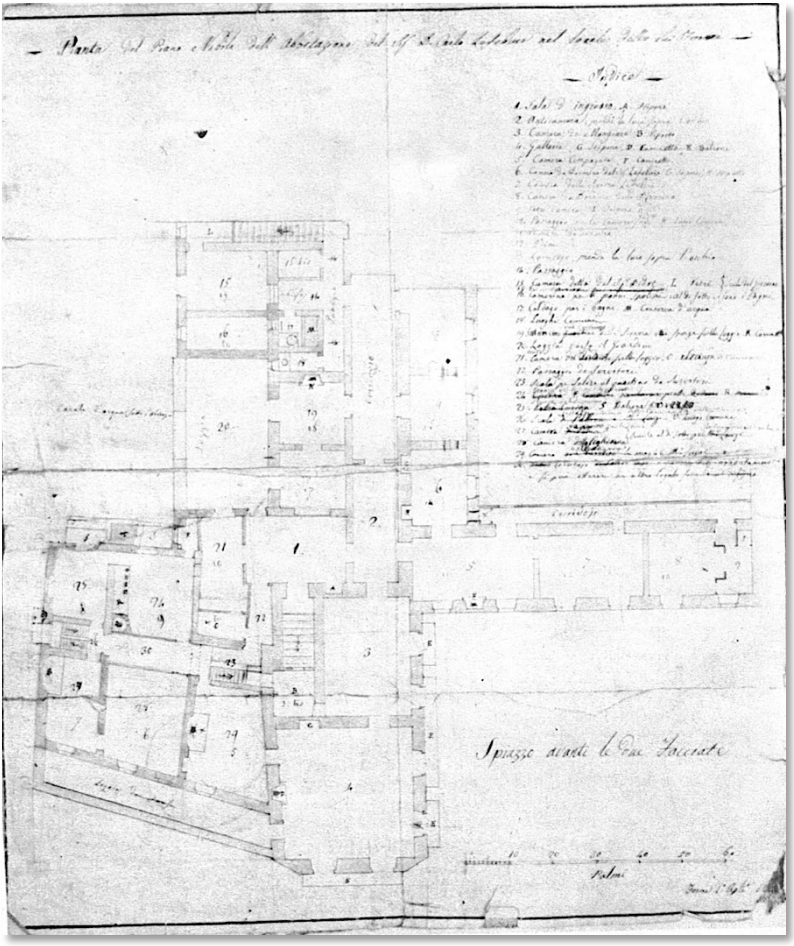
Surrounded by a park, the palace stood out from the surrounding architecture and was also used as a manor house and representative residence for visitors or people coming to the village on business. The ornate Lombard style with its crenellations is typical of the eclectic taste of the period.

The context in which Palazzo Lefèbvre was built on Isola is quite different. Work was completed in 1845, with the last additions, and a large villa was added just before 1860. It was not built on virgin soil, but as an annex to a pre-existing building, to which it also had to be architecturally adapted. It was also surrounded by a large park and dominated the Fibreno factory complex, but not from an isolated position. For the first few decades, it also had a dominant position on the heights of Isola Superiore, then it was hidden by other buildings and by the trees that grew there.

In the history of the Manifatture del Fibreno, as we know, public relations played an important role; therefore, the role of the Palazzo, a

centre of attraction and a place of passage, knowledge and publicity, should not be underestimated. Villa Rossi and Villa Crespi were physically isolated, albeit at a short distance, from real working class villages and were part of a more advanced phase of Italian industrialism and the culture of Italian industrialists. It should be remembered that the Crespi family, whose industrial adventures began with Benigno, were not of aristocratic origin, but were artisans and later bourgeois. The same can be said of the Rossi family.

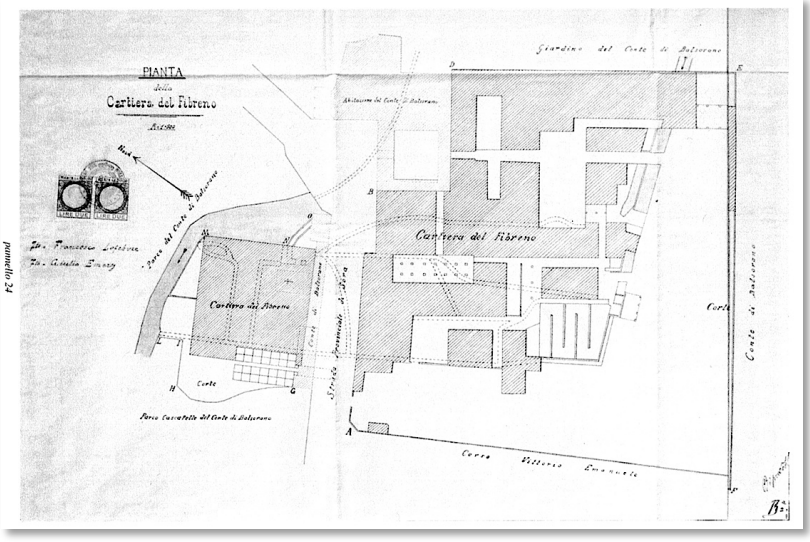
All these captains of industry, such as Donzelli, Binda, but also Zino, Sorvillo and many others, received the 'lay nobilisation' of a seat in the Senate. The Lefèbvre family, on the other hand, came from the functional aristocracy of the Dauphiné and Paris, and by the time of their Neapolitan adventure had been accustomed to an aristocratic lifestyle and to frequenting Parisian high society for over a century. This was also reflected in their behaviour, which was discreet even compared to the architectural style of the Rossi and Crespi families. Palazzo Lefèbvre in Isola was built, as mentioned above, in various stages as its usefulness became increasingly important and stable to the policies of the entrepreneur.



First phase of renovation of Palazzo Lefèbvre.

A French architect was commissioned to redesign the interior and exterior of the building, while retaining all the supporting structures. Half of the first floor of the front of the Palace is about 80 metres long and ten metres wide. As can be seen from the plan of the first phase of the Palace in 1830, Lefèbvre used only two wings of the former convent as family dwellings, the one on the right facing the street (horizontally)

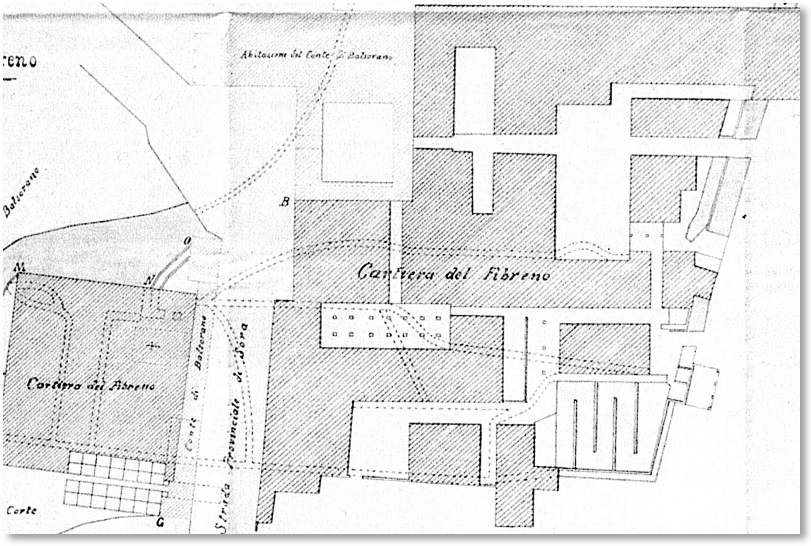
and the vertical one. The other two were left empty. No machines or processes were ever installed in the convent area. The main entrance was in front of the 'Spiazzo avanti la sua facciata', i.e. Via Tavernanuova, from where one entered a vestibule (3) flanked by a gallery (4) and then went up to the main floor. The 30 rooms marked here were all residential and part of them, on the upper left, bordered on the garden, where the large building of the Stracceria was built about 15 years later.



Second phase of renovation of the Palazzo Lefèbvre. After 1845.

The plan above shows the rooms of the Palace in the volume found by De Rogatis in 1915 and shows the second phase of the layout of the Palazzo Lefèbvre. It bears the names of Francesco Lefèbvre and Giulio Emery and was attached to the deed of sale of 1907. It shows the considerable extensions carried out in the next phase after 1845. The part of the former convent used as a residence is shown by the four palatial wings - the rest of the building is not shown here - arranged in

a square around the courtyard. In this form - new 'palace' and former convent united - it was inhabited for more than 50 years, while the factory, the whole of which is outlined in dark, developed around it.



Detail of second phase of renovation of Palazzo Lefèbvre. After 1845.

The map also shows, with dotted lines, the watercourses and pipelines that ran beneath the buildings. The clarity with which they appear here and the definition of their course are not found in other documents. From the 'garden of the Count of Balsorano', the canal that brought water from the Fibreno and collected it in a large cistern. This first flow of clean and pure water from the Fibreno was brought to the factory through three pipes, shown here in blue: one went under the south-eastern part of the building and reached the Soffondo; a second went through other parts of the factory and also reached the Soffondo after a few branches; and a third went under the old church and the building immediately behind it. This was a small masterpiece of hydraulic engineering, which made the most of the water coming from

the Fibreno canal and, once it had been fully utilised in the factory, recovered more energy by releasing it into the Soffondo.

The maximum force of the water was recovered in the fall and in the difference in level that separated the high factory of the Fibreno from the low one of the Soffondo. In this way, thanks to the peculiar construction of the dam, which raised the water level, and the fall of the Soffondo, the factory had an abundant supply of water, cheap and very pure, not to mention the contribution of the Magnene, which was used for the water games and canals in the park, then for the toilets and kitchens in the palace. The complex made excellent use of the water, and even more so when - as the flow of the canal increased and another factory, San Carlo for wallpaper, was built - the same water, which flowed down a minimal slope, was also used by this factory, with a diversion and for the irrigation of the grounds.

This was the real wealth of the factory and the reason why Cartiere Meridionali, which owned all the facilities of the former Liri paper mill and other structures, wanted to buy the Manifatture del Fibreno and its water intakes, which were cheaper to maintain, less prone to flooding and cleaner. The factory, unlike the Liri paper mill, was located on an elevation just before the sluices, which helped to drain excess water and avoid flooding problems. The high line marking a watercourse passing under Palazzo Lefèbvre indicates the Magnene stream, which flows under the building and carries away its effluent.

The building, in addition to the adjacent church, had ample space where, until 1800, the Carmelites had their refectories, choir, chapter rooms, storerooms and rooms for agricultural work. All the rooms of the church, but not those of the convent, were used as factories, with minor adaptations. The busy Baroque architecture was not entirely suited to a factory, but the space was found and the church was divided into several levels to create working and storage areas.

After many years of neglect, the church was restored in 2003. Today's exterior is very similar to the original, but the interior has changed. There is, however, a technical document, the Perizia De Rogatis (1913-1915), which gives us an idea of what the interior looked like before it was divided into apartments, allowing us to imagine the

refined elegance and comfort that characterised it, as well as the spaciousness of the rooms.

The Palace was, and still is, more than 50 metres long and at least 8 metres wide, with high decorated ceilings in which the surveyor who carried out his inspection between 1913 and 1915 suspected the presence of frescoes that had almost been erased. It was entered and exited through two large arched doorways on the two short sides and through several doors on the opposite side of the façade, leading to a service corridor one and a half metres wide. The entrance, through which the carriages parked in the large space in front of the façade, is still intact and can be seen in the photograph below, when it still belonged to the family.

Entrance to the Palazzo Lefèbvre when the ground floor facing the street was occupied by a post office and a recreational club; behind the carriage the entrance to the palace front under the cast-iron canopy.

The ceilings were very high, about 4 metres, as was customary in stately homes of the time. They had vaults for both structural and aesthetic reasons, and these created an ever-changing play of light and shadow with the sun coming in through the four large French windows.

The 'Grand Salon' was rectangular in shape, with a splintered and inlaid marble floor, and was heated by a very large fireplace.

All the walls were decorated with 'paste paintings' divided into large panels. Even in 1915, the engineer De Rogatis, who visited it with a detached eye, noted the 'decorations' on the walls of the salon, i.e. paintings of landscapes, seascapes with ships and galleys, all running around the vast hall. It was certainly a celebration of Naples and its history, with classical allusions. There were also fine marble frames at the top and bottom and large mirrors on the wall. An idea of what Palazzo Lefèbvre must have looked like can be gained by visiting the elegant villa next door, where one can still see examples of neoclassical Empire style furniture that must have been part of the palace's furnishings, such as a marble coffee table with 'Etruscan' legs, finely crafted chairs, early 19th century painted cabinets, Empire style, with colourful scenes and precious inlays, all in French taste and workmanship. The visitor was dazzled by the abundance of light from the large French windows, the many chandeliers, the mirrors and the taste for clear, serene decoration in bright colours.

It was surrounded by a single marble balcony that opened onto a large terrace in front of the entrance. At the time when the palace was inhabited, the rectangular terrace facing the entrance was complemented by a frame that provided shade during the hot season, hidden by pots and trees and equipped with various amenities such as chairs, sofas, potted trees and parasols. Lighting was provided by large Biedermeier-style chandeliers with crystal drops and long wax candles. The 20 by 8 metre ballroom would have required at least 16 chandeliers, based on the average for the time. Sadly, not a single one survives. Lighting in such a large palace must have required a lot of candles, and then gas when it became available after mid-century, which is why the larger rooms faced south, certainly to make better use of the light. The furniture was appropriate to the rank of the ministers, generals and famous writers: elegant, refined, without being pretentious.

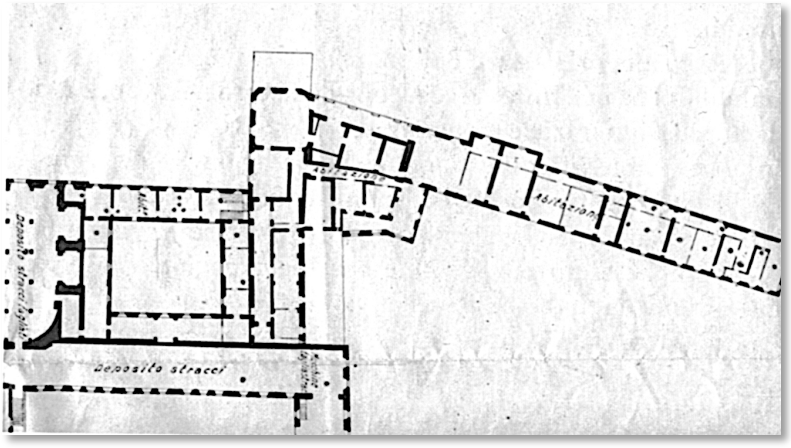
Unfortunately, everything was lost over time (except for the pieces in Villa Pisani and a decorated 'Chinese' style majolica stove still in the palace) due to the dramatic vicissitudes the palace went through,

including earthquakes and foreclosures. We do know that the many windows and French windows overlooking the long balcony on the park side had expensive, light-coloured curtains. The palace was also decorated with a large number of pictures, sculptures and paintings that covered the walls or were made directly on the doors, cupboards and sideboards. In some places it was possible to admire trompe l'oeil and classical or classical-inspired figures, similar to those in the nearby villa built by Ernesto in 1855, whose walls are entirely decorated with scenes reminiscent of Virgil's Aeneid. It is astonishing to think that the palace was next to what was for several decades the largest and most modern industry in the kingdom, with large and noisy machinery driven by water and then steam turbines. For this reason, the palace should be seen as an extension of the factory, a place of representation. It was also, and not only, what in later centuries would be considered a public relations structure. In this sense, the originality of its function cannot be underestimated.

If we look at the reproduced plans, we can see that the waterways that moved all those wheels and gears flowed mainly in the southern part of the building, protecting the inhabitants from the noise. Next to it was the stracceria, separated by a service building, but this was the least noisy part of the work, being mainly manual. On the opposite side of the street was the rag store, but it was relatively quiet and did not interfere with domestic activities.

Next to the main room were two other large but smaller rooms. One was called the 'billiard room', where the men retired after lunch or dinner to smoke, discuss and play. The very expensive Italian-made billiard table, presumably bought by Charles, still exists today. The other was the 'salle à manger', the banqueting room, used when there were not enough guests to require the use of the grand ballroom, and certainly used when the Bourbon kings visited the Lefèbvre. We know that the Lefèbvre family played the piano and that all their children and grandchildren were educated in music, so a corner of the large hall was reserved for the piano and a set of stringed instruments. Rosanne tells us this indirectly when she talks about the custom of playing and giving concerts in Isola and Naples. So, a banqueting hall, a billiard room for

playing, smoking and chatting, a ballroom: the 1,200 square metre apartment on the first floor alone allowed for such an expenditure of space. We do not know how much space was devoted to the ladies, to their chatting, to tea; probably a part of the hall had sofas and chaises longues for their amusements. We do know that the three directors of Carnello, Fibreno and later Soffondo were often invited to these parties.



Palazzo Lefèbvre.
Below, one side of the former convent bordered by the Rag Depot.

There were at least a dozen guest rooms in the palace, which could accommodate up to 25 people in addition to the family, using the Trianon annex (circa 1855) and the 'chalet', a building also added around 1855. From the outset, the rooms were equipped with sanitary facilities: at least one for every two rooms. The room next to the master's bedroom is remarkable in De Rogatis's description: a bright little room reserved for the toilet of the lady of the house, Rosanne, with very refined accessories. The observer, far from being an aesthete, admired the fine porcelain washbasins, the shelves, the cast-iron supports, the marble basins, the precious taps and fittings. The same that were used by the guests.

Back of the Palazzo Lefèbvre and exit to the factory,
Stracceria Department.

The next picture shows the building constructed between 1829 and 1830, with extensions added in the following decades. In this form, however, it could be considered architecturally self-sufficient: two wings, a loggia on the first floor, a balcony on the second, the entrance from the park on the left. It was separated from the neighbouring factory by corridors and insulation.

Detail second phase of renovation of Palazzo Lefèbvre.
After 1832.

The rooms in the palace were fitted with radiators and were therefore heated by a central heating system, which was very expensive and rare in the early 19th century. Some bedrooms had fireplaces for particularly cold days (the entire 19th century was a very cold period: these were the years of the 'Little Modern Ice Age').

The bedrooms were largely equipped with 'inclusions' with baths and separate 'loo rooms' (as defined by De Rogatis) with a drainage and sewage system. By means of a system of pipes and a small aqueduct or

tank on the roof, which ensured that the siphons were filled by pumps, it was possible to use the Magnene for the toilets, which was diverted during the 1829 works so that it flowed under the building.

Facade detail.

In the first decades of the house's use, bathrooms were undoubtedly fitted with S-shaped siphons. Bidets, on the other hand, were not used, as far as we know, but were installed around 1880. The water closets that Alberto de Rogatis sees look old and give him a sense of antiquity. But when they were installed, they were a very recent invention. The plumbing was probably redone after toilets became more widely used, that is, after the Great Exhibition of 1851 and therefore during Ernesto's renovation in 1855. The Villa and the Châlet were completed in that year.

Since the completion of its construction in 1830, the family has had at least two major renovations to the building: in the mid-1840s, when

it doubled in size, and in the 1850s. There was also a 'restorative' intervention around 1875-1876. In practice, an intervention every 20 years. From then until the arrival of De Rogatis, 40 years passed without any restoration or conservation work being carried out on the palace (or on the company, whose roofs were sagging). This is why the Palazzo was in such a bad state at that time, not to mention the earthquake that had opened gaps in the roofs and let in a lot of water.

In any case, the building was designed from the outset to be very comfortable: on the ground floor there was a wood-fired boiler that heated water, which was carried to every part of the building by a system of lead and cast-iron pipes. Similar services were provided for the workers, who, despite working very long shifts, are not known to have ever complained; the factory was equipped with toilets and washrooms with hot water, as the various boilers were installed throughout.

In the house on the ground floor there was a large kitchen with a large marble worktop, several cast-iron stoves and a boiler. It was equipped with exhaust pipes, a smoke extractor, several marble tables, a large collection of cooking utensils and pots and pans, some of which still existed in 1915, and a hearth. One wonders if there were canteens in the factory: they are not mentioned in the documents, but they had to exist. It is hard to imagine that 400 workers, including women and children, stopped to eat at the workplace; they had to have a room where they could eat. The certain presence, because it is attested, of an internal commissary suggests that there must also have been a refectory, as well as a kindergarten and an infirmary. These services were considered essential.

Under the kitchen, the water used in the magnene was drained through wide pipes closed by grids and easily opened by handles. Next to these rooms was an icehouse, dug below street level, where blocks of ice were brought in during the winter and kept throughout the summer, making it possible to store perishable food and even make sorbets. Next to the icebox were large cellars where one can imagine cheese, sausages, preserves, salt, sugar and all kinds of spices.

The kitchen had an antechamber where dishes were laid out, garnished and decorated. There was a hierarchy of service personnel: waiters, headwaiters, cooks, assistant cooks, apprentices, housekeepers. Charles, and later Ernesto, used different cooks, first French and then Italian, who became members of the family. Unfortunately, their names were never recorded. In addition to the main reception rooms - the billiard room, the ballroom and the dining room - which, in those days, had to offer a remarkable scenic effect with their synthesis of French and Neapolitan refinement, the house as a whole had more than 40 rooms after 1855, including bedrooms, small rooms and bathrooms. The passage between the different rooms was discreet, thanks to the antechambers and corridors. Many of the rooms were connected by a long corridor that ran along the side of the house facing the park. This corridor, which connected most of the rooms in the house, must have been very busy from morning to night. The maids had the task of tidying and arranging the rooms every morning.

Green Calabrian marble and white Carrara marble were used throughout the house on the main floor. The most common type of wood used was chestnut, which was abundant in the Isola area. The entire north-facing part of the house had a single long, massive balcony, which had a similar function to the corridor on the opposite side, although it was probably not used for passageways. De Rogatis was astonished to discover that this balcony was made by joining together huge slabs of thick marble, which, it should be added, must have been transported at great expense at the time of construction.

The Palazzo Lefèbvre was built around the concept of privacy for all its inhabitants. Born in the upper bourgeoisie, privacy had spread to the nobility, especially after the fall of the Ancien Régime. By the time of the golden age of the Lefèbvres, the first Italian generations, it had spread to all the wealthy classes. The layout of the rooms reflects a sensibility that was particularly prevalent in northern Italy and northern Europe at the time: to ensure that everyone could enjoy the presence of

others without being subjected to them. In the Palazzo Lefèbvre, a "romantic" sensibility prevailed.

The elegant neoclassical facade.

Chapter 2

Family life of the first Italian generation

The progress of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies

In the fifteen years following Ferdinand II's accession to the throne, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies made progress in the industrial indexes of the peninsula, remaining in third place behind Lombardy and Piedmont, the most developed regions and the first to benefit from the first processes of the industrial revolution. Unfortunately, it did not pay as much attention as it should have to the construction of infrastructure, especially the railways, and for this reason it would be left behind at the time of the unification of Italy.

Ports, however, were not neglected.

The government was characterised by reforms aimed at improving the economy and the administration of the State, while in the financial field a reduction in taxation was achieved thanks to prudent public spending and the reduction of court expenses, which the King had insisted on. From the 1830s onwards, sustained efforts in the industrial field allowed the first nuclei of modern manufacturing to emerge. In addition to the first Italian railway (the Naples-Portici, 1839), a short, experimental but highly symbolic section, the first lenticular lighthouse system in Italy was installed, the first Italian public gas lighting - limited to a few areas of the capital, but impressive. The first volcanic and seismic observatory in the world, the Vesuvius Observatory (1841), was also built.[1]

[1] In 1839, Ferdinand II of Bourbon, assisted by Minister Nicola Santangelo (1785-1851), entrusted the physicist Macedonio Melloni with the task of founding the Meteorological Observatory. The latter purchased the magnetic

Ferdinand, in order to preserve what he called the Kingdom's economic 'independence', favoured foreign initiative in the realm but always with the intention of acquiring and absorbing technological knowledge that would allow autonomy and independence from France and England. In these years, the capital contribution was still almost all French.

Ambitions and changes

For the Lefèbvre family, the management of business and financial investments was intertwined with family affairs. The first success of the Lefèbvre's ambitious marriage policy was the social elevation of Flavia, now Marquise de Raigecourt-Gournay. Without abandoning the entrepreneurial spirit from which the southern aristocracy was far removed, Charles had introduced the family to aristocratic social rituals. The paper mills, famous all over Europe, the Palazzo Lefèbvre in Isola, the castle of Doucy, which was part of Flavia's dowry but was used by the Lefèbvre family, the Neapolitan residences rented and bought, the expensive portraits commissioned from Raffaele d'Auria, painter at the court of Caserta and Naples, all made this family one of the most conspicuous in Naples, strangely unnoticed by many historians. Certainly, even the apartment in Palazzo Partanna, which hosted so many illustrious personalities, was sumptuous and lavishly furnished. Unfortunately (at least for the time being) no description of it has been found.

In 1836 time began to take its toll: Charles's cousin Joseph-Isidore

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and meteorological equipment for the chosen site, the Collina del Salvatore. On 16 March 1848, the Observatory was ready but the scientist was involved in the uprisings of 1848 and was dismissed. It was Luigi Palmieri who completed the Observatory in 1856 by building a meteorological tower. Here he built the first electromagnetic seismograph in history to verify the correspondence between volcanic and seismic processes. In 1862, Palmieri prepared a research programme with survey stations to try to anticipate volcanic activity.

died suddenly in August of that year. As we know, he had played an important role in his professional life and in his early years in Naples. We know from his son André-Isidore that he died at 9am on 14 August in Puy-de-Dôme. He had received the news of his father's illness and had immediately taken leave (he lived in Nantes where he worked in the land registry) to visit his father, but the next day he was informed that he had died. He was buried in the village of Ambert, near Puy-de-Dôme, where he lived. The news was passed on to Charles and Rosanne, who in turn informed their wide circle of friends.[2] Charles did not have time to attend his cousin's funeral, but Ernesto did, and it was probably for this reason that he anticipated his trip to England. The young man left in September 1836, paid his respects to his uncle, who was already buried at Puy-de-Dôme, and then set off for England, which he reached in early November and where he stayed for most of the following year, until October 1837. André points out that Ernesto had completed the classical studies he had begun with the help of his uncle Léon.

Joseph-Isidore was like a brother to Charles; although they had been separated for almost twenty years, they must have written to each other and met several times, as we can see from Rosanne's information. Charles will always have fond memories of him. For several years they had been inseparable, like sisters Rosanne and Annette. Joseph, unlike his wife Annette, probably did not return to Naples during these twenty years, perhaps in order not to reopen old wounds. It is not impossible that he also suffered from a certain envy of his enterprising and happy cousin, who had become immensely rich. But this is purely speculative.

As already mentioned, Ernesto, after completing his classical studies in Naples with a tutor named Riboulet, completed his education in England.[3] His father wanted him to learn English, to become acquainted with the customs and manners of English and French high society, and

[2] *Lettres de Ballanche à Madame Récamier, 1812-1845*, Agnés Kettler, ed., Lettres Honoré Champion, Paris 1996, p. 644; AB XIX vol. I, p. 174.

[3] Of this Monsieur Riboulet, nothing more could be known at present than his name and the fact that he followed Ernesto for about ten years, roughly from 1827 to 1836.

also to visit the nation's industries at the forefront of technology. He certainly visited London's great paper mills, printing houses and companies that built machines to process textile waste or the raw material needed to make paper. André-Isidore points out that Ernesto learned to speak fluent English during his stay in England, the first phase of which lasted almost a year. Ernesto visited the large industrial plants in Manchester, the railways and the infrastructure that was being built in England at the time with a new pace and abundant capital.[4] The young man - who was between 19 and 20 years old at the time - was interested in the English developments in the sectors in which the Lefèbvre family had pioneered in Naples, such as printing and writing paper, wallpaper, gas lighting and transport; Ernesto's and his father's curiosity was quite original for the time, especially in the Bourbon kingdom, which, after a brilliant start under Ferdinand II, tended to slow down over time.

After all, Ernesto was the only son of the energetic Charles; he was the one who had to take over a fortune that was turning into an empire. Once again, Charles proved far-sighted. Ernesto learnt a language that enabled him to take part in international exhibitions in the following years.

The Sale of the Château de Brulêrie (1837)

The family records also reveal another fact that remained unknown for a long time. Raoul de Raigecourt-Gournay, who owned several estates and châteaux, in particular that of Germancy, an ancient one where the family chapel was located, decided to sell Brulêrie, probably in agreement with his wife. It is likely that this decision was also taken with the agreement of Charles, who had invested a great deal in the castle, also from an

[4] AB XIX 4480-4483, II. *Ernesto Lefèbvre complete son éducation en Angleterre.*

emotional point of view. From that moment on, the castle left the family's history forever.

The Marriage of Marie-Louise (1840)

Around 1838, Marie-Louise's marriage was the focus of the Lefèbvre family's attention. In contrast to Flavia's marriage, this would strengthen the family's ties with its new homeland. Among the suitors, who were probably carefully considered by the family, was a young man who was already well known to the Lefèbvre family; he had appreciated the classical beauty of the girl and became her fiancé. He came from an old Piedmontese aristocratic family, a branch of which had long since moved to Naples and was related to a southern house. He was 28-year-old Gioacchino, Marquis of Saluzzo and Prince of Lequile, son of Carlo Maria (1776). The Saluzzos were an old family of Savoy warrior nobility, originally from Savona, who moved to Naples at the beginning of the 17th century. They had maintained links with France, as Gioacchino's mother was the Frenchwoman Lucie Rolland de la Vernette, who had died a few years earlier; and this again shows how close Charles had remained to France: some of the blood of those who married his daughters was French.

The Saluzzos owned large estates in Puglia and Terra d'Otranto and lived in Palazzo Saluzzo di Corigliano in Piazza San Domenico Maggiore in Naples.[5] Charles's acquaintance with his father, Carlo Maria Saluzzo, went back more than thirty years, since the former had worked in Terra d'Otranto and Lequile, where the palace that gave the

[5] The ancestral palace of the Lequile family is located in Lequile, a small town in Salento. The palace did not belong to the Saluzzo branch. When they arrived in the Neapolitan area, the Saluzzo had acquired the fief of Corigliano in Calabria Citra (Cosenza). The Saluzzo predicate was long disputed by the Montalto family, who regained the title in 1859 after a complex legal case. V. AB XIX 4480, vol. II, pp. 81-82.

noble title its name stood. A cousin of the betrothed, Filippo Saluzzo (1819-1855), was lieutenant-general and adviser to the king.

In 1840 the marriage was finally arranged and celebrated in Naples, probably in the Cathedral. The dowry of Marie-Louise, the younger daughter of the Lefèbvre family, must have been around 500,000 francs, as in the case of her sister Flavia. Gioacchino Saluzzo of the Princes of Lequile (1812-1874) was ten years older than his bride, a normal age difference in those days. Young people, even aristocrats, had to gain experience before marriage, military experience or experience of the world, travelling and getting to know it. Marie-Louise was only 19 and was considered beautiful, educated and of a very sweet disposition. [6]

They were married in Naples in December 1840. André-Isidore is very clear on one point: when he joined the Lefèbvre family, Gioacchino had good manners and, above all, seemed to have his head on straight. No one could have imagined that he would turn out to be a bad husband and father, addicted as he was to gambling, women and politics. In fact, the marriage was soon to prove unhappy, mainly because of his betrayals, and Luisa's long loneliness was to be compounded by political vicissitudes that led to trials, expulsions and exile. After the unification, he would become a senator of the kingdom, more for the power of his family than for his personal qualities. His contemporaries judged him to be intemperate, mediocre, lecherous and dissolute. For the time being, however, there were no clouds on the young man's horizon, although certain anxieties and liberal political ideas - not in line with those of Charles - were already known. It was hoped that marriage would allay his fears.

Journal by Rosanne Lefèbvre

Year 1841. We arrived on 18 April in cold and wet weather that became pleasant a month and a half later. Luisa and Ernesto were with me and for the

[6] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 81.

first time we had a good carriage attached to four mail horses at our disposal. Isola seemed even more beautiful to me and my house had been fixed up and repainted. I took care of fixing up the interior, an occupation I enjoy very much. We visited the famous portrait painter called Hersant whose wife had portrayed Flavia in Paris while her husband was travelling; then Prince Cariati and Mr and Mrs Catalano. Gioacchino was the only one of his family who came to spend a week with us. His father's illness prevented him from staying long. Towards the end of our stay, Carlo Filangieri and his housekeeper came. My husband had brought them to the island on his return. They spent 12 very pleasant days with us. We had parties, we went for walks [...] Luisa recovered and regretfully left this place where she was never to return. We left on 4 July, leaving Ernesto, who was temporarily in charge of the till.[7] While we were staying here, we learned of the sad event of Mr Rosier's death; we were deeply affected. The family was forced to leave the country with the exception of the children. It happened on 5 May, at 8 am!

From these notes we learn that Flavia was portrayed by Hersent's wife (sic), Louis Hersent (1777-1860), a well-known painter married to the famous portraitist Louise Marie-Jeanne Hersent-Mauduit (1784-1862), who painted Flavia in the late 1730s. Madame Hersent was the favourite portraitist of the exiled royal family, pretenders to the throne and many important statesmen. There are twenty or more paintings by Hersent-Mauduit with unidentified young women as subjects, one of which may be the portrait mentioned by Rosanne. Nothing is known of the tragedy that befell Monsieur Rosier (probably a Frenchman in her service, not better identified).

In the summer of 1841, Charles decided to make a new journey with Rosanne, Ernesto, Louise and Gioacchino. The group set off at the beginning of July, choosing the overland route. They visited Switzerland, then entered France via the Isère Valley and Franche-Comté, where they paid a long visit to the Grand Family of Besançon, Charles' sister Eugénie. In August, the five travellers arrived at

[7] He probably means liquid assets to pay suppliers and servants and for current expenses. Perhaps it was the first time he was given that task as he was only 23 years old.

Raigecourt Castle in Germancy, where they were welcomed by Flavia, Raoul and Marie.[8] The women spent a few weeks there while Charles accompanied Gioacchino on a tour of Paris. The trip (which was mainly a chance for the Saluzzos to meet important personalities to whom Charles introduced them) ended on 25 September when the two returned to Germany. In October, Raoul expressed to Charles his desire to travel to Italy, both to get to know the Bel Paese better and because Naples could be beneficial to Flavia's health, which was very fragile after five years of marriage. The proposal was readily accepted and the party set off towards the end of October, embarking in Marseilles.[9]

Enter André-Isidore

At one point, André-Isidore himself appears among the characters of his long narrative. Still a bachelor, working in Avignon, he had corresponded with his aunt and uncle in 1840 and 1841 and finally managed to arrange a meeting with them. On 6 November 1841, Rosanne left Marseille to meet her nephew at his apartment in rue Sauvage in Avignon, taking the whole company with her.[10] The nephew lived in a modest rented house where the landlady fed him. When the aunt and uncle arrived, Fanny, the landlady's daughter, began to laugh and jump around like a child at the sight of them, because, as the nephew explained, she was mentally ill. This episode inspired André-Isidore, an amateur scholar, to write a short story, La muette d'Avignon, which he sent to his aunt and uncle.

The next day, immediately after Sunday mass, an elegant four-horse carriage took the Lefèbvre and Raigecourt family to Marseille. Ernesto, André-Isidore, Marie and Miss McGoran, the housekeeper, took the evening stagecoach, which arrived in the Mediterranean city before midday. They checked into the luxurious Grand Hôtel de Beauvau in

[8] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 82.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 83.

Marseille, overlooking the docks of the old port, and ate a sumptuous lunch prepared by the personal chef who had begun to accompany the Lefèbvres on their travels. All nine of them thus spent a pleasant week visiting Provence and the beautiful surroundings of Marseille. All this in a sunny and windy week between 8 and 15 November 1841.[11]

André-Isidore had a deep and abiding affection for his uncles and cousins. At the time, however, he had few opportunities to meet them, and always only briefly. For him, his Tante Rosanne was a seconde mère, and his Uncle Charles a père. The latter, he wrote, turned out to be amiable and capable of enjoying bon vivre when he was away from his affairs, but had a 'very hard edge' when he was running them. He already had some health problems, particularly rheumatism, which plagued him in his later years. But he was lively, witty, intelligent and knew how to behave with a naturalness that his nephew described as 'noble'. His uncle was also generous, and one day, after they had talked about this and that, he nonchalantly left an envelope by the mirror, which André did not notice at first. When he opened it, he saw that it contained 500 francs to be collected from a Lefèbvre correspondent in Paris. A very useful gift for someone like him who had not yet established himself.

André-Isidore in Naples

On the 15th of November the company separated and on the 20th the Lefèbvre returned to Naples, where they spent the holidays. On 18 January 1842, in the church of San Ferdinando, Charles gave a speech on the virtue of almsgiving during a ceremony dedicated to the Società Napoletana degli Asili (Neapolitan Society of Kindergartens), of which he was a member.[12] In February, Ernesto travelled to Rome for Carnival, a very popular festival at the time that lasted several days, where he took part in a masked reception at the residence of Count

[11] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 84.
[12] *Giornale delle Due Sicilie,* I, Tuesday 18 January 1842, p. 63.

Nikolaï Dmitrievitch Gouriev (Guriev, 1792-1849), a Russian diplomat and frequent guest of the Lefèbvre family at the Forme.[13] A hero of the Russian resistance against Napoleon, he is also known for a portrait of him painted by Ingres in 1821, which is kept in the Hermitage Museum.

The day after the feast, 23 February 1842, Ernesto was reported to have returned from Rome.[14] His return had apparently been anticipated by the birth of Carlo, the son of his sister Luisa and Gioacchino di Saluzzo, who was born on the same day. Little Carlo Saluzzo di Lequile (1842-1853) was destined for a short life, but the days of sorrow were still far away. Luisa, a very happy new mother, took the initiative of inviting her cousin André-Isidore to Italy to continue the 'conversations' they had begun in Marseilles. He did not think twice and accepted on the same day he received the invitation by letter.[15] But André-Isidore confessed that he did not like Avignon and would like to leave: the "southern" Frenchmen had manners and a roughness that he could not stand.

For him, the trip to Naples was the fulfilment of an old dream. His sisters, Azélie and Ernestine, had spent years there as children with their mother, Annette, but he had never been able to see the places he had heard so much about and often imagined in his letters: the Palazzo Lefèbvre on the Isola del Liri, the Partanna Palace, the Riviera di Chiaia. He asked the head of the administration on which he depended for leave, which was granted, albeit sparingly, by the bureaucracy: 45 days to go to Naples, stay there and return. He had 1,500 francs at his disposal at the time, 500 of which had been given to him by his uncle Charles (perhaps he had already planned the trip?) and 1,000 of which had come from the settlement of a land grant. He had a passport issued by the prefecture, stamped 8 March 1842, and prepared to leave. By listing the personal details in his passport, he paints a true portrait of himself that may be of interest to the reader of his long story. The

[13] C. (sic) de Sterlich of marquises Cermignano, *Cronica delle Due Sicilie*, Tipografia Nobile, Naples 1841, p. 27.
[14] *Giornale delle Due Sicilie,* I, Wednesday 23 February 1842, p. 161.
[15] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 115.

upright French bureaucrat was then 43 years old (he was born in 1799), one metre and 69 centimetres tall, with blonde-brown hair, a high forehead, blue eyes, regular features (medium mouth, nose, chin and oval face) and a light brown beard. He added, without disparaging himself, that he was a little pingued.

The preparations are going well. Never before, he says, had he prepared for a journey with such happiness and good humour. This time he will have to *rapprocher de ma chère tante et avec mon Oncl*e (always in capital letters). Travelling to Italy, he adds, was then the prerogative of a privileged few, of high lineage, who could spend a lot. He was just a *modest personage*, but fortunate enough to belong to an exceptional family like the Lefèbvre of Naples. This enabled him to realise a dream that would otherwise have been prohibitively expensive.[16] In the almost 4,000 pages of André-Isidore's diaries, in which hundreds of people are mentioned and all sorts of historical and personal events are recounted, sometimes briefly, sometimes in great detail, the author reserves for no one the affectionate words he uses for his uncles and cousins.

On 11 March, he said goodbye to his director, said goodbye to the servant, Fanny, and to the mistress of the house, and set off by stagecoach for Marseilles. André-Isidore's reflections then turn historical. There was a time when leaving for another country meant making a will and leaving detailed instructions to relatives and family members. It was a sad time, but today, he writes, what do we have? Steam! Speed! These conveniences make it possible to travel very long distances in a short time, without having to wait for the right season. But there is a downside: modern speed takes away the sacredness of the journey, the slow approach to a place longed for and dreamed of in books. Progress gives and takes away, he says, compiling profound and interesting observations that make us realise how relative the concept

[16] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, pp. 115-116. In truth, there are no steamships of this name in France at that time. A sailing ship 'Charlemagne', a 74-gun warship, had been launched in 1807, some 35 years earlier. It may have been modified later to accommodate a steam engine.

of modernity is.[17]

The steamboat *Charlemagne* left the port of Marseille at six o'clock in the evening on 13 March 1842.[18] One landlubber, André-Isidore, soon realised that he was suffering greatly from the sea and resisted by staying locked in his cabin, suffering from nausea and fainting spells. The next day, the boat was within sight of Genoa, where it stopped for 24 hours. He disembarked with four companions to visit "La Superba" (the Superbe: as Genoa was called). On the 16th, the ship stopped at Livorno. Again, while the ship remained in the harbour, the Frenchman took a lifeboat, landed in a bay and took a car to Pisa, which he visited quickly, risking a late return: a hurried visit to the Leaning Tower, the cemetery, the streets of the largely medieval city. He left again and arrived the next day (the 17th) in Civitavecchia, which he did not visit, confining himself to a stroll along the seafront.

On the 18th, the *Charlemagne* reached the Gulf of Naples and the traveller's first sight, according to the cliché of the Grand Tour, was of Vesuvius. After almost four and a half days of pain and suffering, André-Isidore was finally able to leave his cabin.[19] He would only be in Naples for 20 days, from 18 March to 8 April, but it seemed like an eternity.

When he arrived at the port of Naples, which at that time was still full of sails and masts, he was very excited. He disembarked at the customs and then took the car that would take him to the Partanna Palace. Here he was greeted by Rosanne. She told him that she had reserved a small apartment for him to share with his cousin, François-Nöel Léon Lefèbvre, Charles's 52-year-old bachelor brother, a career civil servant, who was in Naples for his nephew Charles's baptism. Léon had been retired since 1838, was wealthy and loved to travel. The apartment was in a house he had bought in Vico dell'Assunzione, behind the French Embassy.[20]

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[17] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 117.
[18] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 123.
[19] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 124.
[20] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 125.

André-Isidore was tied to Naples by his aunt and uncle, but also by the memory of his father and that of his mother, Annette, who had loved these places and had suffered for having had to leave them a quarter of a century earlier. He had a special affection for Aunt Rosanne, "who protected my childhood so well". Weak and often ill, Annette often entrusted her son to Rosanne's care during her husband's long absences, which lasted about ten years. In his letter, André-Isidore explains that he did not want to describe in detail everything that happened to him in Naples, but rather to give a concise account of the most important moments of his stay. He reserves the right to devote a separate notebook to a more detailed description of his visit and the daily life of the Lefèbvre family. Unfortunately, this notebook, which would probably have contained descriptions of the house, is not among those that have come down to us from his writings. Although, as we have said, it contains almost 4,000 pages, there are occasional omissions and gaps of 20 or 30 pages: a small part of the manuscript has been lost. This gives an idea of André-Isidore's method in his long memoir. Throughout his life, he kept small notebooks in which he recorded impressions, dates and events. Between 1872 and 1885, he reassembled all this data into an "annalistic" account, organised by year, which, despite the jumps, is very interesting to follow. Unfortunately, his death in 1885, at the age of 86, prevented him from completing his long account. Pain and agony.

Memorable visits

On 18th March he was accompanied by Gioacchino di Lequile to the Grotto of Posillipo and then to Bagnoli, then an unspoilt beach and hinterland of perfumed landscapes, reclaimed from the marshes a few years earlier; on 19th March he visited the Reggia di Capodimonte and spent an evening at the Teatro del Fundo (Teatro del Fondo, now Mercadante) opposite Castel Nuovo. On the 21st he met his cousin Flavia, whom he found charming. The next day, the Lefèbvres took

their cousin to the Museo degli Studdi (sic, perhaps it means 'studi') - it is impossible to say where - an ancient form of theatre with ancient music and painted tableaux. With his cousin Léon, he then visited the Saint-Martin convent and took part in the solemn celebrations of Lent on 24 March. In the evening, André-Isidore and Ernesto sang the Miserere with the students of the Conservatoire. In the following days, with Léon and Gioacchino, he visited the monastery of Camaldoli and the tomb of Virgil at Posillipo. On 27 March, together with his aunt and uncle Flavia and Ernesto, he was invited to the Royal Chapel to attend a mass attended by the King, the Queen and the leading aristocracy of the Kingdom. In the evening he attended Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* at the Teatro San Carlo. On the 28th he posed for a portrait (undoubtedly by the painter D'Auria, who painted all of Lefèbvre's portraits). In the following days he visited Caserta, returned to the Studdi and posed for portraits.

On the 5th of April, André-Isidore watched the departure of the steamer "Francesco I" from the dock of the port of Naples, on which Flavia, Raoul, Adrien de Mun and his wife Eugénie La Ferronnays had embarked. Two young couples, carefree, smiling and joking. But Eugénie was seriously ill with tuberculosis. At the time, her illness seemed to be receding. The next day, after the classic excursion to Vesuvius - classic at least since Goethe made it almost obligatory for all travellers - she took a long boat trip in the company of her cousins Léon and Gioacchino to visit the most famous sites associated with classical memories, such as Pozzuoli, the cave of the Cumaean Sibyl, the so-called prisons of Nero, the Elysian Fields and Cape Misenum. Like Madame Récamier and Ballanche, André-Isidore associated Misenum more with Madame de Staël's *Corinna* than with Virgil, demonstrating the importance of the romantic culture of the time in reading reality and encoding memories of cultural places. André-Isidore also visited the various archaeological sites in Baia, such as the Temple of Vera, the Temple of Diana and the complex of Neronian buildings.[21]

[21] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, pp. 125-127.

Suddenly, on the 8th of April, as they were preparing to leave, the Lefèbvre family received a very short, angry and unexpected letter from Flavia, informing them of the sudden death of Eugénie La Ferronnays de Mun in Palermo.

The next day, the 9th of April, André-Isidore wanted to return to Rome, despite his aunt's insistence that he go to Isola. But his time was limited and he wanted to visit Rome and Florence.[22]

Charles accompanied André-Isidore to Rome for a few days and, before returning to Naples, revealed to him that they had a common cousin in Rome, Baroness Louise Salvage de Faverolles née Dumorey (1785-1854), who was described as very rich. She wrote him a letter of introduction and advised him to visit her. However, his nephew did not turn up at the Baroness's house, partly because of time constraints and partly because he was distracted by a mishap. When he finds out, Charles scolds him and tells him, in a somewhat Sibylline manner, that he has missed a great opportunity. What did he mean by that? André wonders.

Introduced by Juliette Récamier to Queen Hortense Cécile Bonaparte (daughter of Joséphine de Beauharnais and Queen Consort of Holland), Louise became his lady-in-waiting. Strongly attached to the Napoleonic regime, she later became Napoleon III's tutor. Perhaps the woman who was not married and did not want to marry was considered a good match for the bachelor André-Isidore? It is difficult to say, but the uncle's words of reproach to his nephew, who was accused of being an idler, make him suspect.[23]

Journal by Rosanne Lefèbvre

Meanwhile, Rosanne's notes from the year 1842 are full of sad things and omens:

[22] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, p. 128.
[23] AB XIX 4480, vol. II, pp. 136-136.

1842. Having remained in France and Switzerland until the end of July 1841, it was not possible to go to the island in the autumn of 1841, and I did not leave until the 4th of May having left Marie de Raigecourt, her housekeeper with her husband, and my beloved daughter, who had embarked with her husband for Constantinople. Luisa, Gioacchino and Ernesto joined us accompanied by the Misses Minatola who spent 10 days with us. The anxiety I had about Flavia's sad journey had taken all pleasure away from me and from that moment everything changed for me. An event as grim as that of the previous year had given me the final touch. Mr Martin, my husband's employee, ended his days on [...][24] of May following an access of madness.[25]

Those beautiful waterfalls became for me, instead of a memory of a last lunch taken on my Flavia's return, a subject of sadness, making them even more painful. Later, in 1841, the first waterfall was swept away by a flood, proving that we cannot rely on anything in this world, not even on the spurs of rock that have been there for so many centuries. On her return from the Orient, Flavia came to Isola to fall ill! It was the beginning of all our sorrows. She stayed there only ten days and then returned to Naples to accompany her husband who had left before her, to spend a good month in the city.

For the first time, the tone of Rosanne's diary changes. The narrative does not mention, as usual, a long theory of visitors and amusements. There is no sense, as before, of lightheartedness and joie de vivre, of the ecstasy of living an extraordinary adventure as a privileged person.

Rosanne revolves around a single event, the suicide of Monsieur Martin at the end of 1841, which turned the small waterfalls, a place so loved and visited by all the guests of the Palazzo Lefèbvre, into a place of death. A flood that changes the state of the falls becomes a symbol of the transience of things. We are probably talking about the high waterfalls that dominate the centre of Isola, commonly known as the "cascatelle", the same name given to the rapids of the Remorici bottom in front of the Soffondo, but from there it was difficult to kill oneself, except by being swept away by the current as far as the Cascata grande. Rosanne was restless, worried about Flavia's health. She does not even

[24] The date has been erased with white lead.
[25] *Journal of* Rosanne Lefèbvre, AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, pp. 22-23.

remember Eugénie's death, which is strange. Almost as if it were an all too obvious omen of what was to come for the family: she knows Flavia's true state of health.

Portrait of Maria Luisa Lefèbvre (1846), by Vincenzo Morani (1809-1870). Oil painting kept in the Museo della Certosa di San Martino. Naples.

Carnello fountain built by Charles III around 1770.
In the background, Isola di Sora.

Chapter 3

In the lighting industry

An unfortunate pioneer: Pierre Andriel

Charles Lefèbvre's activity was also marked by his participation in the then very modern gas and lighting industry, an adventure that should be told together to avoid confusion. The pioneer was Pierre Andriel, a naval captain and entrepreneur from Montpellier, who founded a company in Naples in 1817, in which Charles also participated, as we shall see. He was a member of three of the five innovative societies founded in the fifteen years between 1817 and 1833: the *Amministrazione delle Navigazione a Vapore*, la *Società Industriale Partenopea* e la Compagnia Lionese del Gas.[26] In addition to these three, the Società Sebezia and the Società Enologica were notable for their conception. In all these companies there was a small group of financiers, capitalists and industrialists such as Charles Lefèbvre, Lorenzo Zino, Luigi de' Medici, Carlo Filangieri, Luigi Giura and some others.

In Naples, French entrepreneurs and financiers were the main investors in some of the most technologically innovative sectors. John Davies had already noted how, in the first half of the 19th century, the actors of innovation in Naples were a small group of enterprising individuals who wanted to enter sectors considered modern and profitable. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the movement of

[26] With the privatisation for the construction of steamboats, he also obtained one for experimenting with gas lighting, with a duration of thirty years (1817-1847): *Collezione delle leggi e de' decreti reali del Regno delle Due Sicilie*, 1817, sem. I, Naples 1817, pp. 125; 129-131

capital from England and, secondarily, from France defined a true "first globalisation". The mobility of capital and people had already been remarkable before, around 1870, with the creation of an infrastructure that gave rise to numerous investment companies (business groups), networks of companies (joint ventures), holding companies and companies networked through relationships and cross-shareholdings.[27] The gas networks were not just a 'physical' infrastructure, but a vector of relationships that encouraged capital investment, such as shipping links and services on an international scale.[28] Proof of this is the close relationship between many Marseille and Naples businessmen, who, after the introduction of steam navigation, were able to enjoy an unprecedented closeness: they collaborated, formed partnerships, studied cross-investments. It is easy to see how the Mediterranean coastal cities between Italy and France form a common space that almost ignores the countries to which they belong. Moreover, the proximity and ease of communication between Lyon and Marseilles and Montpellier explain why the Lyonnais were so active in the Naples market. At the beginning of the 19th century, the French city was one of the main centres of transalpine industry, thanks to the availability of coal and the initiative of local capitalists. In Venice, the Lyonnais invested 4,500,000 francs in an overhead gas pipeline, while in Naples they invested 1,540,000 francs. Given the amount of money invested in Lyon, a local stock exchange was set up in 1845, second only to the one in Paris.[29]

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[27] See Rugman A. M. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of International Business, second edition*, Oxford University Press, New York 2009; Jones G. - Zeitlin J. (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of business history*, Oxford University Press, New York 2008.

[28] Tarr J., Dupuy G. (curr.), *Technology and the Rise of the Networked City in Europe and America*, Temple University, Philadelphia.

[29] Between 1840 and 1880, no fewer than 82 gas companies were founded by the Lyonnais Society, based in Lyon. They operated in 97 different locations, including, in addition to France, Spain, Algeria and Italy (in 8 major cities). Of these 82 companies, 49 were founded between 1836 and 1845.

During the period of the Restoration, the new financial entrepreneurs defined instruments suitable for securing capital and using it for the construction of service networks, such as the distribution of gas for lighting and, later, drinking water, which constituted the networked cities, investment areas open to international capital, projected onto the squares where there was a need for these interventions. This process was already underway in Italy before unification, and the new liberal system only accelerated it. Because of their importance, the so-called networked services have been studied in the fields of economic history, financial history, social history and studies of social change.[30]

Describing the complexity of these networks means discovering the links and relationships that were formed to constitute these investments, the people who were at the centre of financial and industrial nodes, the relationships between the peripheries and the major financial centres. Such studies have also contributed to an understanding of the difference between Anglo-Saxon (market-oriented) capitalism and the more widespread oligo-monopolistic (relationship-oriented) capitalism. For example, the widespread presence in France and Italy of business groups made up of actors linked by personal relationships has been demonstrated.[31] They function as examples of organised cooperation in business (like cartels, consortia, *joint ventures,* etc.), located between free markets and power.[32] In so-called *inter-organisational networks,*

[30] Cameron R. E., *France and the economic development of Europe*, 1800-1914, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1961; Jones G., *Merchant to multinationals: British trading companies in the nineteenth century*, Oxford University Press, New York 2000; Bonin H., *Histoire de la Société générale*, Droz, Genève 2006; Conti G., Feiertag O., Scatamacchia R., *Credito e nazione in Francia e in Italia (XIX-XX secolo)*, Pisa University Press, Pisa 2009; Stoskopf N., *150 ans du CIC, 1859- 2009*, 2 vols., Editions La Branche, Paris 2009; Tarr J., Dupuy G., *Technology and the Rise of the Networked City in Europe and America*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia 1988.

[31] Colpan Asli M., Hikino T., Lincoln James R. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Business Groups*, Oxford University Press, New York 2010.

[32] Nohria N., Eccles R. (eds.) *Networks and Organisations: Structure, Form, and Action*, Harvard Business School, Boston 1992; Granovetter M., *The*

companies, institutions and financial centres are integrated as power nodes capable of influencing even far-reaching economic decision-making processes and strategies.[33] Even relationships between boards of directors with one or more members in common (interlocking directorates), i.e. shareholder nexuses, prove to be instruments for the formation of a corporate élite with power and influence throughout the economic system. Through such interlockings, shareholders come to embrace many interests. Similar examples have been studied in Bourbon or pre-unification Italy. One thinks of the complex affair of the *Società Industriale Partenopea* with its *partnership* enterprises, of the *Compagnia Sebezia* up to the concentration of financial energies in the *Filanda di Sarno*. It is also striking that, from decade to decade, it is always the same names or the same families that are involved in business. Not those who lived on the large landed estates, but the dynamic families who came from other social groups and often from abroad.[34] It used to happen that business groups would send agents abroad to identify opportunities and new technologies and promote them in their own country. These agents would pass on news of innovations and opportunities. On this basis, it was decided to create companies that remained independent, often dedicated to exploiting these opportunities in partnership.[35] Networked gas service companies

Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes, in Journal of Economic Perspectives, 19, 2005, pp. 33-50.

[33] Moore G., *The structure of a national élite network*, 'American Sociological Review', 44 (5), 1979, pp. 673-692; Scott J., *Networks of corporate powers: a comparative assessment*, 'Annual Review of Sociology', 17, 1991, pp. 181-203.

[34] Business groups were common in England, France and continental Europe. They were companies set up to do specific business abroad, but generally did not operate in their country of origin, where they had an operational or financial headquarters. Such companies differed from the model of the modern multinational, which has emerged since the First World War. Chapman S., *British-based investment groups before 1914*, in Economic History Review, vol. 38, 1985, pp. 230-251; Chapman S., Merchant *Enterprise in Britain from the industrial revolution to World War*, Cambridge University Press 1992.

[35] Jones G., *Merchants to multinationals: British trading companies in the nineteenth century*, Oxford University Press, 2000.

adopted this model. Personal networks of social relationships facilitated the raising of funds. Investors placed their trust in a company established in a familiar environment and controlled by well-known individuals, and entrusted their investments to them. The operating company was thus at the centre of a group of individuals and companies. In the case of networked services, the key players were often (but not always) financial intermediaries, engineers or innovators able to mobilise capital. Markets often saw the merger of companies, which tended to become structured groups, holding companies, in which groups of actors continued to be involved.[36]

A specific set of networked services are those characterised by technical infrastructures installed on the territory, such as rail transport, energy distribution, drinking water and sewerage, which require an expensive infrastructure network that is difficult to implement without government commitment or large amounts of capital. Studies of the gas industry report that gas lighting was one of the first services to be installed in European cities.[37] By 1825, it had been adopted by major English cities, and from there it began to spread across the continent.

Those who exported technical and business knowledge were entrepreneurs, often already active in the transport industry, and those who received it and financed it at home were the most dynamic entrepreneurs, financiers and bankers. Some of them were already active in the wool, paper and steamship industries. In short, urban élites in all their diversity. Studies have highlighted two different concepts of networked services: the *service public industriel et commercial* of the French matrix, and the *public utilities* of the Anglo-Saxon matrix.[38] In the French area, the private entrepreneur acts as a 'delegate' of the public

[36] Haussmann W., Hertner P., Wilkins M., *Global electrification. Multinational enterprise and international finance in the history of light and power*, 1878-2007, Cambridge University Press, pp. 35-74.
[37] Paquier S., Williot J.-P. (curr.), *L'industrie du gaz en Europe aux XIXe et XXe siècles*, Peter Lang, Brussels 2005.
[38] Cossalter P., *Les délégations d'activités publiques dans l'union européenne*, L.G.D.J. 2007.

body to carry out services judged to be the latter's responsibility. The public body therefore organises, regulates and supervises the service.[39]

In this context, the main instrument of delegation for the construction or management of networked services in the French territory is the *concession à la française*, an alternative legal instrument to the contract whereby the public authority entrusts the performance of its service task and the related "obligations" to a third party, while retaining responsibility and the consequent powers of regulation, supervision and control. The specific characteristics of the concession instrument can be summarised in the following three: the indirect remuneration of the private company by the public administration through the collection of fees paid by the users of the service; the possibility for the public administration to guarantee the exclusivity of the service granted; the use of selection criteria not based solely on technical and economic motives, but on trust in the "quality" of the concessionaire. Similarities in the approach to public services in France, Belgium, Spain and Italy have also been highlighted. For example, the French-style concession has been widely used in Italy and Spain for the construction of infrastructure promoted by the unitary state.[40] But it was also used in the pre-unification, Bourbon period, with the instrument of the privative.

The concession, already known in Roman law, received its proper form in the law of the Ancien Régime, reaching its peak in the 19th century.[41] In carrying out public works, the relationship between the public and private sectors underwent major changes following the revolutionary period. A continuity can be seen in the centralised approach and the powers of the state property that controlled the territory, which became "public" from the royalty.[42] The recovery of the

[39] Guglielmi Gilles J., *Le modèle français de la concession: conquête ou concurrence*?, http://www.guglielmi.fr/IMG/pdf/TableRondeConcess.pdf.
[40] Fernandez A., *Villes, services publics, entreprises en France et en Espagne XIXe-XXe siècle*, MSHA, Pessac 2006.
[41] Lichère F., *L'évolution du droit des concessions,* cit., p. 117.
[42] Bezançon X., *Histoire du droit concessionnaire en France*, in 'Entreprises et histoire', No 38 2005/1, pp. 24-54.

capital advanced by the concessionaire took place through the collection of the tariffs paid by the users of the service, a kind of "fractional reimbursement".[43] This was the system used for the privatisation/concession of the steamboats that carried passengers, goods and mail in the Kingdom of Naples: the capital advanced by the shareholders could be recovered by requiring the payment of a ticket, which remained wholly or partly in the hands of the company under the privatisation or concession regime.

The concession, which in the old regime was a unilateral act that could be revoked by the political power, became everywhere by the middle of the 19th century a bilateral contract in which both parties made mutual commitments and undertook to respect the contractual clauses before the judicial authority and the commercial courts. The concessionaire had obligations, but also the right to charge a tariff set by the authorities; he also usually received subsidies and privatisation, which led to a monopolistic operation designed to protect the capital invested.[44] At this stage, many concessionaires took the form of joint-stock companies with the possibility of issuing bonds. At the same time, they retained the French-style travaux publics financing system, with the return of share capital over the duration of the concession. To this end, the companies introduced into their statutes a capital amortisation plan providing for the gradual redemption (by lot) of all the shares at their nominal value, to be carried out with staggered withdrawals from operating profits, also with an accumulation plan. In addition, at the end of each financial year, each share was guaranteed legal interest on its nominal value, to be taken from the profit before distribution of the dividend, which was the profit to be added to the interest already calculated.

The companies that sprang up in Naples in the third decade of the nineteenth century offered financial services and the "networking" of capital, tools and know-how, both in traditional services and in

[43] Christophle A., *Traité théorique et pratique,* cit., p. 594.
[44] M. Delalleau, *Rev. De législ.*, 1835, t.1, p.182.

innovative, mechanised and modern sectors. The concession contracts were financial in nature, which explains why finance intervened so massively in the service sector with such guarantees: these contracts guaranteed more money than the public debt, which was now in the hands, almost as a monopoly, of the largest bankers. For many, the interventions in infrastructure or transport services demanded by governments were more feasible. In order to guarantee the replenishment of equity and bond capital, the duration of the concessions was proportional to the size of the companies' capital and the tariff set by the authority.

The gas industry in Europe

The production of gas for use in lighting systems developed after a period of experimentation by Italian scientists such as Alessandro Volta, which led to the construction of the first gas production workshops in Great Britain and France. The first experiments in the use of illuminating gas date back to the Scotsman William Murdoch (1754-1839) and the Frenchman Philippe Lebon (1767-1804). Murdoch experimented with the gas released from charcoal, while Lebon focused on the combustion of wood.[45] In 1802, Murdoch organized the first public demonstration of the operation of his lighting system at the Boulton & Watt foundry and engineering works in London. Murdoch worked in the field of coal technology, in foundries, and the company he worked for, Boulton & Watt, installed the first steam engines with coal-fired boilers.

Lebon presented his first practical applications in 1811. From then on, he began a series of experiments and refinements, adding the work and insights of other technicians and engineers working in smaller companies. The first autonomous systems were installed in factories

[45] Berzelius J. J., *Treatise on Chemistry,* v. VII, transl. it. Naples 1841, pp. 327-328; 665-669; Products of Wood Distillation, pp. 739-742; 783-784.

and quickly spread to the textile districts of northern Europe, where large factories spent large sums to light large rooms with wax and oil candles.[46] Following the Birmingham experiment, between 1805 and 1807 Murdoch and Boulton & Watt lit the Philips & Lee spinning mill in Manchester with 3500 meters of piping. The installation reduced lighting costs by over 300%. From then on, there was a rush to use the new technology. Over the next four years, Boulton & Watt installed dozens of other systems, and soon other innovators improved the technology, spawning companies that produced systems for lighting smaller spaces such as shops, public buildings, businesses, and private homes.[47]

It was Frederick Albert Winsor (1763-1830) who identified London as a suitable place to launch his project to centralise the production and distribution of gas for lighting purposes.[48] London was ideal: it had factories, a large population, low cost of coal, high cost of candles. In 1806, he laid the foundations of a national company, the National Company, and obtained the privilege to operate in all territories of the Empire, Kingdom and Colonies, to supply gas through underground pipes, as was done with water. The company came to life in 1812 and received the Royal Charter.[49] At this point, emissaries from the Bourbon Kingdom began to take an interest in the technology and reported back to the king. The biggest problem for the English technology to be adopted in the Kingdom was the use of coal, which was very expensive. The gas production process consisted of several stages. In the first stage, coal was heated in closed vessels placed in masonry furnaces to produce gas. The purified gas was then conveyed to storage facilities (gasometers) and then distributed through a network

[46] Falkus M.E., *The Early Development of the British Gas Industry, 1790-1815*, in The Economic History Review, v. 35, no. 2 (1982), pp. 218-220.
[47] Falkus M.E., *The Early Development,* cit., pp. 220-225.
[48] Williot J.-P., *Naissance d'un service public: le gaz à Paris*, Rive Droit, Paris 1999, p. 24.
[49] Falkus M.E., *The Early Development,* cit., pp. 225-229.

of pipes buried under the streets, which, upon arrival at the places of use, flowed out of valves that fed the flame-burning appliances.

The English example was soon followed on the continent. Interest in the new discovery and the technology developed to make it widespread and profitable developed through public demonstrations with small distilleries located near the prestigious sites chosen for the experiments. Technicians and entrepreneurs thus stimulated demand and encouraged the construction of the first production and distribution plants for illuminating gas. Starting with Paris and Brussels, which were reached by the plants in 1818, 20 other important cities in France and northern Europe followed by 1838.[50] A Neapolitan traveling in France in the 1820s and 1830s might consider his own city more backward than those in France, which explains why a Frenchman transplanted to Naples like Charles Lefèbvre joined the first gas company installed in Naples after the second half of the third decade with such enthusiasm. While English technology, as we have seen, developed around the distillation of coal, in France coal, resin and various oils were distilled until the 1850s. Among the first cities reached by the gas industry were those on the sea routes, such as Barcelona (1842), Hamburg (1844), Trieste (1846), Turin (1837), Naples (1838-41), Florence (1839), Milan (1839), Venice (1839). From 1839 to 1844, olive oil was distilled and used in Naples as a result of the Bourbon government's desire for autarky, around which the interests of the powerful landowning and merchant élite moved.[51] From this point of view, the Neapolitan case remained isolated. Moreover, the experience of the time shows that various products were tried: gas from bituminous shale, gas from resin, gas from various vegetables, gas from oil, gas from whale oil. In the end, coal gas proved to be the most economical.

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[50] Williot J.-P., *De la naissance des compagnies à la constitution des groupes gaziers en France (années 1820-1930),* in Paquier S., Williot J.-P. (curr.), *L'industrie du gaz en Europe*, cit., pp. 149-156.

[51] For the case of Naples see: Berzelius J. J., *Trattato di chimica,* cit. pp. 396-398; *Il Politecnico*, 1°, s. I, Milan 1839, pp. 9-17 and 225-237; Bartoletto S., *Gli esordi*, cit., pp. 571- 572.

Thus in France, in the port cities of the North, in Belgium, in northern Germany and in Scandinavia.[52] Between the end of the 1830s and the 1840s, however, French technology also grew, developed in Paris, Mulhouse and Lyon.[53] This was mainly used in Italy, Spain, Western Switzerland and parts of Germany. The same companies and players were active in Italy and Spain. From the *Société de l'Union*, a limited partnership (1837) created by the sale to a group of Lyon capitalists of the patents obtained between 1834 and 1835 by the Parisian engineer Alexander-François Selligue (1784-1845) in the field of purification, came the Neapolitan company.[54] Workshop and equipment manufacturers, engineers and chemists took the knowledge of the new technology to other countries.[55]

The first major company was the *Imperial Continental Gas Association* (ICGA), founded in 1824 to export gas lighting to the continent. With a budget of £2 million, the ICGA had as its chief executive the engineer Aaron Manby (1776-1850), a leading figure in the export of British technology and the construction of steamships. The reasons given for the lighting were many and varied, but the main one was the need for safety and the savings expected once the construction of the installations had been amortized. The expiry of the first short-lived authorizations, the renovation of old, obsolete installations and the extension of the service to areas not yet reached favored the construction of new workshops and ensured a wider distribution of the

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[52] Paquier S., Williot J.-P., *Origins et diffusion*, cit., pp. 32-45. For Paris, see Williot J.-P., *Naissance d'un service public,* cit., in which the history of the first diffusion of gas lighting in Paris is detailed, where it is the founder of the London Gas Light and Coke Company who took out the first patent in 1815 and established the first lighting company in 1817.

[53] Williot J.-P., *De la naissance des compagnies*, cit. pp. 152-156 and for more information on the Lyon case Cayez P., *L'industrialisation lyonnaise au XIX siècle. Du grand commerce a la grande industrie* (These-Université de Lyon II), Service de reproduction des thèses de l'Université de Lille III, 1979, Tome I pp. 415-434 et II pp. 875-897.

[54] Cayez P., *L'industrialisation lyonnaise,* cit., pp.423-429. The Gosse engineers, father and son, were also in Naples in 1854.

[55] Paquier S., Williot J.-P., *Origins et diffusion*, cit., p. 32.

lighting service in Italian cities. The barriers to entry into the sector were lowered thanks to the reduction in installation and purchase costs resulting from improved transportation and the greater presence of subsidized credit. During the 1840s, continuous technological progress and improved transportation allowed operators to optimize the performance of installations and reduce production costs. Concentration phenomena occurred that rationalized the problems of access to sources of financing to meet the financial needs of the growing number of gas companies. Fragmentation into individual companies that were economically and financially autonomous, but united by network ties between shareholders, led to the concentration of different companies under a parent company that coordinated financial needs. The concentration of several companies with different levels of development allowed already productive companies to finance start-ups.

Concentration acted as an important diffusion factor, allowing investment risks to be reduced and competitive advantages in technology, organization and finance to be exploited. In France, on the other hand, municipalities did not intervene and the gas industry remained in the hands of private companies until well into the first quarter of the 20th century. In France, an effective legal framework was found to regulate the relationship between gas companies and public authorities. A balance was struck between the return on invested capital and the public interest. The case of Paris is particularly illustrative of the evolution of legal forms of relations between municipalities and companies. The 1846 contract for public and private lighting was an evolution of the first contract of 1821, when the first concessionary companies were authorized to lay pipes underground with an annually revocable permit. Confusion ensued, with several requests for the same streets to be channeled overlapping. The situation was resolved by authorizing a monopoly for each company within certain limits: in 1822, the Prefect of the Seine issued a series of decrees specifying the roads allocated to each of the three existing companies, and in 1839, when three more companies were created, he decided to divide the city's

territory into six sectors.[56] Rational regulation came in 1846, when the new industry was adapted to the legal instrument of the administrative concession, such as the railroad companies.[57]

By contractually "granting" the municipality the "exclusive right" to lay and maintain pipes in a certain area of the city's subsoil, the municipality recognized the monopoly of each company for a period of 18 years, at the end of which it guaranteed the return of the pipeline. The companies were relieved of the risk of sudden revocation, but accepted technical obligations and the extension of the service to less profitable areas of the city.

In 1855, the Emperor and Prefect Georges Eugène Haussmann (1809-1891) ordered the six Paris-based gas companies to merge.[58] The result was the *Grand Parisienne du Gaz*. The concession contract of 1855 was the result of a long process in which the brothers Jacob Pereire (1800-1875) and Isaac Pereire (1806-1880), founders of *Credit Mobilière*, played a decisive role.[59] The specialized press reserved a special section of the stock exchange listings for the gas industry, along with public pensions, shares in railway companies, metallurgical industries and mining companies. In the newly established companies, the financial partners played a greater role than the technicians. In 1861, the leading Geneva banking houses established the *Compagnie genevoise de l'industrie du gaz* (IDG) in Geneva with a capital of 10 million francs.[60] In 1862, on the initiative of the *Oppenheim* group, the *Compagnie générale pour l'éclairage et le chauffage par le gaz* was founded in Brussels, which opened subscriptions in Brussels, Paris, Geneva, Frankfurt and Hamburg and later in Italy.

In Italy, it was the Milanese Count Luigi Porro Lambertenghi (1780-1860) who had the first small installation installed in his palace in Via

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[56] Williot J.-P., *Naissance d'un service public,* cit., pp. 157-166.
[57] *Ibid*.
[58] Calabi D., *Storia dell'Urbanistica Europea*, Paravia, Turin 2000, p. 152.
[59] Williot J.-P., *Naissance d'un service public,* cit., pp. 232-261.
[60] Paquier S., Perroux O.*, De la compagnie privée à l'entreprise municipale. L'exemple genevois* (1844-1930), in Paquier S., Williot J.-P. (curr.), *L'industrie du gaz en Europe*, cit. pp. 302-306.

dei Tre Monasteri, where the writers of the romantic magazine *Il Conciliatore* lived. And it was Silvio Pellico, tutor of the Count's children, who translated into Italian the *Trattato pratico del gas illuminante* by the English inventor and technician Frederick Christian Accum (1769-1838), published in Milan in 1817. The Count purchased a plant in England from Frederick Winsor, with a number of lanterns, many tons of coal, and hired an English mechanic to operate the plant. The experiment was successful and the Count intended to continue it by starting a real public lighting business. Unfortunately, political repression soon followed: in 1819, *Il Conciliatore* was closed, Confalonieri was arrested, and Lambertenghi fled abroad.

By 1818, however, Giovanni Aldini (1762-1834), Galvani's grandson, had built a lighting system similar to Porro Lambertenghi's, but based on oil. In 1820, after having illuminated the small theatre in his home in Via Olmetto in Milan, he proposed to illuminate the entire Teatro della Scala. However, the Austrians did not grant it, judging the system too risky. In 1822, Turin took a little revenge of its own by lighting the Caffè Gianotti with gas and a small coal-fired system. In 1831 it was the turn of Gaetano Brey, who obtained permission to experiment with a lighting system based on whale oil. In 1832 he designed a privileged Intrapresa for lighting and reached an agreement with Luigi de Cristoforis, designer of the Galleria de Cristoforis, to experiment with lighting in the gallery. The lighting included De Cristoforis' home and the shops on the ground floor for a total of 50 beaks of light. The system was also judged excellent by the visiting Archduke Viceroy on 22 August 1832. This was the first illumination of a public place, outdoors even if it was covered. Finally, 36 lamps were installed, 28 movable and 8 fixed. The theatre hall adjoining the gallery was also illuminated, bringing the Milan installation to around 50-60 lanterns. The demonstration of the De Cristoforis gallery really opened up the public lighting debate in Italy. Brey was unfortunately opposed by the Austrian authorities and it was not possible for him to realise his idea of forming a public lighting company. However, De Cristoforis maintained the lighting system in the gallery and later

expanded it. Was it the Milanese initiative that opened up the possibility of Naples? Certainly it was proof that public lighting was possible, and the King himself advocated the venture. The actual introduction of a modern lighting system took place when a group of gas industrialists from Lyon intercepted the needs of the Kingdom.[61] Between the end of 1836 and the beginning of 1837, the Frenchman Pierre Andriel, who had already worked in the field of steamboats, obtained a concession in Naples to install a gas lighting system.[62]

Later, Jean De Frigière, from Bordeaux, acting with partners Montgolfier Bodin, from Paris, and Alexandre Cottin (and a certain A. Joumel), participated in the establishment of gas companies in various Italian cities: Florence and Venice (1839), Bologna (1846) and Rome (1847).[63] In Naples, De Frigière acted in anticipation of the expiration of the oil lighting contract on December 31, 1838. While the renewal of this contract was being discussed, he proposed to light the city with gas and organized a lighting experiment for the King, which took place on 10 September 1837 in the portico of the church of San Francesco di Paola, opposite the Royal Palace. This experiment therefore took place long before the installations in Venice and Turin were put into operation, although here, as in other cities, companies were already established. The demonstration took place in the presence of the King, notables, De Frigière's future partners in Italy (Lorenzo Zino and Charles Lefèbvre) and an enthusiastic public.

The technicians installed 29 lanterns that were lit one at a time. It was observed that they emitted a very white light. Although it was small, it was the first fully functioning gas lighting installation in Italy, because it included conversion, transport and final use. It consisted of a small "portable" factory placed behind the porticoes of the Basilica. It was an olive oil cracking plant whose hourly output was estimated at

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[61] It is a *'véritable "mania" gazière qui s'empara alors des capitalistes lyonnais',* Cayez P., *L'Industrialisation lyonnaise*, cit., p. 418.
[62] *Collection of Laws and Royal Decrees of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies,* a. 1817, sem. I, Naples 1817, pp. 125, 129-131.
[63] Giuntini A., *Dalla Lyonnaise alla Fiorentinagas,* cit., pp. 8-10 and 16.

6 cubic meters to feed the 29 lanterns (each equipped with 2 nozzles for a total capacity of 200 liters per hour). The system, of French design, has been described. We also have a drawing showing a stove that had on one side a tin vessel in which oil was distilled drop by drop into an iron tube two inches in diameter. The tube was then heated and made to glow by the heat of the coal.[64] The distilled gas was poured into a wooden vat lined with lead that held 15 barrels. From the bottom of the vat, a lead pipe drew the gas above the water level and conveyed it to the lantern, which was lit with a match. The match was extinguished by closing a valve called a barrage, which also served to regulate the flow of gas to the lanterns.

De Frigière's system was also equipped with a differential water pressure gauge that allowed the gas pressure to be controlled by opening an additional shut-off key. This rudimentary but functional gasometer bell had a capacity of 7 cubic meters, the cracking temperature was between 700 and 759 degrees Celsius, and the gas yield was 0.55 cubic meters per liter of oil treated. The calorific value was 10,000 kilocalories per cubic meter. The strong, stable light emanating from the glass spheres must have impressed the King and those present, including De Frigière's future "Neapolitan" partners: the Duchess of Berry and her husband, Lorenzo Zino, Carlo Filangieri and Charles Lefèbvre. The latter two met several times at the latter's house to discuss the deal, both on the Isola di Sora and in Naples. Before asking the French entrepreneur to resume the project on a larger scale, the king consulted chemists and experts to ensure that the gas was not toxic. The opinion of the experts was unanimous: the gas was not harmful to health. The process of research, finding the funds on the local market, analyzing the gases, the pros and cons, took about a year, but by the end of 1838 everything was ready and it was decided to build a system that would extend gas lighting to the Royal Palace, along Via Toledo and other routes. Unlike in France or England, the decision-

[64] Andrea Lizza, *Storia dell'illuminazione a gas nella città di Napoli*, pp.1183-1888.

making process and legislation were much easier to approve. The Bourbon kingdom was an absolute monarchy, and a royal decree with a concession and a privative was all the entrepreneur needed to get started. There was money to be found, of course. And from that point of view, Naples was a more difficult place than London or Paris. But De Frigière knew his way around, he was part of an existing entrepreneurial and financial network. He took part of the money from the Lyon partners and the rest was paid to him by the Neapolitan partners.

The contract with the Kingdom was signed on December 13, 1838. De Frigière acted in his own name and as representative of the "Compagnia di Illuminazione united in partnership with Messrs. Alexandre Cottin and Montgolfier Bodin", with a contract of 15 years. The company was called *Compagnia per l'illuminazione a gas della città di Napoli* (Lighting Company for the City of Naples). At that time it was authorized to light some streets in the most elegant districts of the city, starting from the current Piazza del Plebiscito (Largo Palazzo), then Villa Reale, Teatro San Carlo, Rivera di Chiaia, Chiatamonte, Monteoliveto, Via dei Tribunali, Via Foria, Porta Nolana and some other streets near the Royal Palace. From the Palazzo degli Studi, a branch would illuminate the Albergo dei Poveri, Castel Nuovo and some other points: 34 in all. The capital needed to create the first gas company came from Lyon, mainly from the Lyon-born but Turin-born banker Teodoro Brouzet (1796-1859), the notary Prospero Gallay (1795-post 1842), the shopkeepers Vittorio (Victor) Chartron (1782-1842), his son-in-law Adolphe Girodon (1798-1885) and Alfred Girodon (around 1810-1849), a very close group linked by kinship and common business, all living in Lyon.[65] Girodon was, among other

[65] Bartoletto S., *Gli esordi,* cit., p. 570 and Cayez P., *L'Industrialisation lyonnaise*, cit. pp. 422-424; Bouvier J., *Le Crédit Lyonnais de 1863 a 1882: les années de formation d'une banque de dépôts*, t. 1, Impr. Nationale, 1961, pp. 131-132.

things, a silk industrialist who also invested his money in Lyon's 'new industry'.[66]

The *Compagnia per l'illuminazione a gas della città di Napoli* was established in Lyon on the basis of a notarial deed dated 20 January 1839 by which Chartron and Girodon, together with Brouzet and Gallay, instructed Alphonse de Boissieu (1807-1886) to continue negotiations with the city, choose the site for the workshop and start work.[67] Local partners were carefully selected from among those active in the Naples marketplace, financially sound and of recognised open-mindedness. Faced with this increased financial strength, on March 11, 1839, De Frigière decided to cede the San Francesco di Paola factory along with the contract to De Boissieu. The cost of the plant to be built was to be borne entirely by the contractors and De Boissieu, and it was to be built on the opposite side of the city, in the Chiaia district, which was to become a residential area and was already densely populated. The land in Vico Cupa di Chiaia was located between two properties owned by Lefèbvre, a certain Veruhet and Carl Mayer Rothschild. Since Lefèbvre and Veruhet sold land in this area between 1840 and 1841, it is very likely that it was theirs. The first gasometer for lighting in Naples was built on land sold by Lefèbvre. De Boissieu completed the construction of the workshop and the canalization until the company was founded. The first was inaugurated on May 28, 1840. From June

[66] His entrepreneurial history is impressive: administrator of *Le Magasin des soies de Lyon* (1859), shareholder of *Crédit Lyonnais* (1863), even before that of the Compagnie *des fonderies et forges de la Loire et de l'Ardèche* (1836), administrator of the *Compagnie des Mines de la Loire*, auditor and administrative director of two oil production factories in *Rive-de-Gier* and *Saint Étienne* (1854-55). He also sat on the board of the steel company de l'Horme. Vittorio (Victor) Chartron came from a family of silk merchants in Saint-Vallier and was also involved in many of the same companies. Girodon therefore had experience in mining, oil refining, banking, heavy industry and had considerable contacts in the world that mattered at the time.

[67] Born in Lyon on 11 December 1807 into a noble family, De Boissieu studied law and was known as a legitimist politician and a man of great culture, with interests as an epigrapher and archaeologist.

29th, the Lyonnais undertook, in a private deed, to give a quarter of the shares to certain Neapolitan citizens, chosen for their financial soundness, and to members of the royal entourage, with symbolic shares allowing them to attend the company's meetings. The three gasometers installed were of French technology and construction, while the pipes, fittings, instruments and tools came from the Neapolitan foundry *Zino, Henry & Co*. The king wanted the spread of light to have a positive effect on local industry. The Vico Cupa factory originally covered an area of 550 square meters in a 12.5-meter-high building that housed 14 retorts for the production of gas, while the products of combustion were released through a 34-meter-high chimney. Adjacent to the plant were two large pavilions with offices and warehouses, each measuring 500 square meters. The gasometric capacity of the first plant was approximately 200 cubic meters per hour. The production process was based on cracking oil using a patented British process. This technique was less efficient than others, but it was chosen to favor the consumption of olive oil.

Problems began as early as the spring and summer of 1840. The yield of the plant was insufficient for the production of quality gas. This was partly due to the late delivery of shale gas, which was considered essential to increase the luminosity of the gas, but also to gas leaks in the pipelines. On June 15, 1840, there was a spectacular explosion that shook the city. De Boissieu had to report to the Minister of the Interior and assure him that the incident would not be repeated. It was mainly the technical problems of the canalization - smells, leaks, excavations with the risk of collapse - that fueled mistrust. By the end of the summer, the installation of the three-armed cast-iron poles and wall brackets for the gas lanterns, which were fed from the street pipes, had also been completed. Each pole was equipped with a gas shut-off system and two spouts, which were lit by a lighter with an igniter or lamplighter. Lighting and extinguishing operations were carried out by specially trained personnel who maneuvered a long pole on which a

lamp was placed; they used long, narrow ladders for maintenance work.[68]

When the work was completed, the capital was calculated at 350,000 ducats, divided into 3500 registered shares of 100 ducats each. On January 7, 1841, the company was opened for new members. Unlike other companies that were founded before the construction of factories, plants, materials or means of transport, here the first investors had created the infrastructure and then founded the company registered on the Naples market.

[...] at the end of 1840, the calm seemed to return to the Neapolitan nights. De Boissieu sent home some French workers who were unable to maintain good relations with the population [...]. On the other hand, municipal officials and above all the citizenry began to tame themselves and live with the gas, including [...] the stench. At the beginning of 1841, a year and a half after the first entry of the Neapolitan partners, and with the whole plant at full capacity, a new organisation was set up with a 30-year renewable duration and a new name: *Compagnia di Illuminazione a Gas della Città di Napoli*. The orgy of capital letters gave importance to the event:

1. the right of the founding members to gaslight the city of Naples;
2. the production factory and two plots of land to house the facilities (the second was purchased by Pio Monte della Misericordia);
3. 18,000 linear metres of pipes, as many as were sufficient for the complete illumination of Naples;
4. all lampposts that the municipal administration was obliged to reimburse in 15 years;
5. two gasometers each containing 35,000 cubic feet of gas and as many cookers as needed to fuel them.[69]

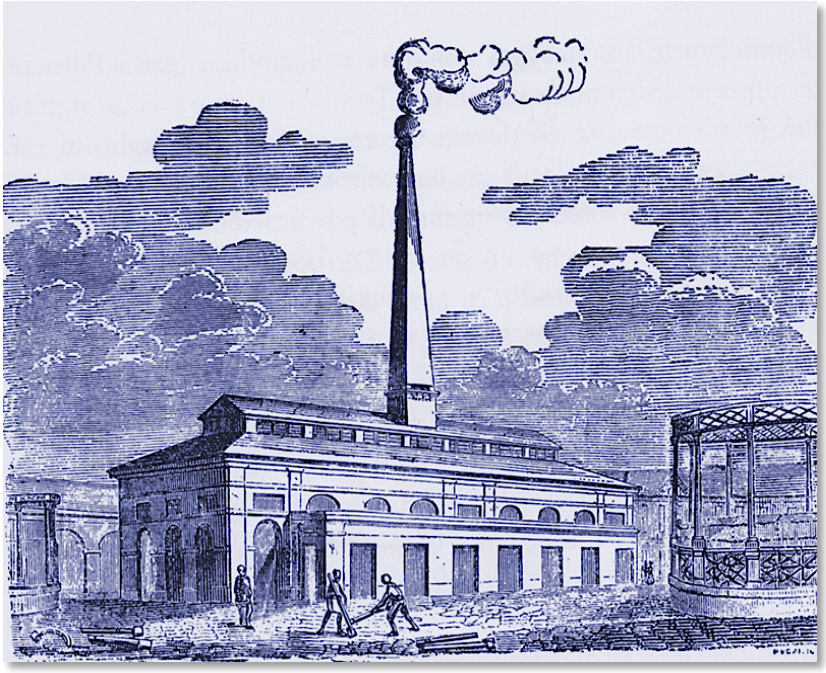
As agreed, on January 9, 1841, after the completion of the

[68] *Bollettino di statistiche ed economiche d'invenzioni e scoperte*, Società degli Editori degli annali universali, 1840, Milan pp, 220-221.
[69] Pier Antonio Toma, *Napoletanagas: 1862-2012. Da 150 anni il futuro della Campania*, Compagnia dei Trovatori, Naples 2012, p. 26.

installation works and the start of gas production, the *Compagnia per l'illuminazione per la città di Napoli* was founded before the notary Carlo Maria Ferrar. De Frigière and the individual partners from Lyon, who would hold the majority, were to participate. At that time, the *Union pour l'éclairage par le gaz* would not have entered the company as a legal entity.

A picture of the factory built in Turin in 1838 shows a building with the same characteristics as the factory in Vico Cupa di Chiaia. In fact, the builder was the same: Hippolyte Gautier. If it is not the Neapolitan factory, it is built according to the same model inside and out.

In a map of Naples drawn in 1859 and published in Milan in 1860 by Ferdinando Sacchi e Figli, Vico (later Via) Cupa di Chiaia (now part of Via Palasciano) is shown as the fourth street on the left, starting from the garden of Villa Pignatelli. In today's Via Palasciano there are no recognisable buildings that could recall the structure of the ancient factory. The first building in front of the street must have been the gasworks, built between 1840 and 1860 and then demolished. The factory, built on land belonging to the town, bordered on the land of Charles Lefèbvre, which in later years (1850-1860) underwent a major transformation. To the left of the Church of Santa Maria in Portico, one block away, in a street leading to Chiaia, the first gasometer for lighting was built by the *Società lionese* in a new building.



The Turin factory was built by Hyppolite Gautier, the same architect as the Neapolitan one. The two factories were, in all likelihood, very similar, if not identical.

As far as the composition of the company was concerned, the capital stock was calculated on the basis of the expenses already incurred and amounted to 350,000 ducats, represented by 3,500 shares, which were distributed among the participants in the venture as follows:

De Frigiére and Associates (Bodin, Cottin and Jumel), no. 412.
Adolfo Girodon, No. 386.
Alfred Girodon, No. 386.
Vittorio Chartron, owner in S. Vallier Drome, no. 386.
Teodoro Brouzet, banker in Lyon, No. 386.
Prospero Gallay, former notary in Lyon, No. 386.
Alfonso de Boissieu, owner of Lyon, No. 193.
Ippolito Gautier, civil engineer in Lyon, No. 193.
Balsamo Vienot and C., Bankers, No. 275.
Carlo Lefebure, shopkeeper in Naples, No. 200.
Alfonso Pouchain, owner in Naples, no. 120.
Zino, Henry & C., no. 100.
Lorenzo Zino, shopkeeper in Naples, No. 27.
Princ. of Syracuse Count Lucchesi Palli and Duchess of Berry, 15 cad. no. 30.
H.E. Lieutenant General Prince Filangieri, No. 20.
Total number of shares 3500.

An examination of the shares shows that the absolute majority, 66% of the capital, was guaranteed to the Lyonnais shareholders by the division of the 386 shares into 6 shares, one of which was divided between Alphonse de Boissieu, two members of the Girodon family and Hippolyte Gautier. Despite the preponderance of the Lyonnais in the division of shares, the governing body was rather equal, as the company was managed by a board of directors made up of 5 members, 2 Neapolitans, 2 Lyonnais and one representing the government. The elected members were Zino and Lefèbvre. Among the founding

members of the *Société d'éclairage par le gaz de la ville de Lyon*, besides Gautier, were the De Bossieu father and son.[70]

A few more words must be said about the Neapolitan personalities. Among the Neapolitan partners, as mentioned, we also find exponents of the Kingdom's high aristocracy, namely two members of the royal family - the King's brother, Leopold Bourbon, Prince of Syracuse (1813-1860), and his sister, Caroline of Bourbon, Duchess of Berry (1798-1870), who took the shares for Count Ettore Lucchesi Palli (1806-1864) with whom she had united in 1831 after the death of her first husband, the Duke of Berry. These personalities, of whom no particular interests are known, neither in technology nor in business or finance, and who invested symbolic shares (30 ducats each), seem to simply represent a tribute to the king who could not, for reasons of convenience and etiquette, participate directly in the deal. Even the powerful general Carlo Filangieri, prince of Satriano, who we find in many important companies of the time and who from 1832 directed the state factories (they were to become the Pietrarsa Workshops), had invested the symbolic sum of 20 ducats. Carlo (Charles) Lefèbvre was the only independent "Neapolitan" to take part in the deal. Both Lefèbvre and Zino were already partners in several important companies. When *Zino, Henry & C*. was re-founded in 1855, Lefèbvre became the largest shareholder after Zino. They were at that time the richest merchants, financiers and industrialists in the city (apart from the Rothschilds), "shopkeepers" active in financing state-protected industrial activities.[71] If Zino, through his personal share and that of his company, controlled 127 shares, Lefèbvre was committed to 200

[70] Cayez P., *L'Industrialisation lyonnaise,* cit. pp. 417; 424; 1022. Cadrat F., *Les journaux légitimistes de Lyon et leur personnel sous la Monarchie de Juillet*, in 'Revue d'histoire de Lyon', 1913, pp. 311-313.

[71] Davis J.A., *Societies and Entrepreneurs,* cit., pp.17-48. *Le Compagnie del gas in Napoli, cit.*, p. 96. De Rosa L., *Iniziativa e capitale straniero nell'industria metalmeccanica del Mezzogiorno 1840-1904*, Naples 1968, p. 3, 7 and 64. On Lorenzo Zino, see de Majo S., *L'Industria protetta: lanifici e cotonifici in Campania nell'Ottocento*, Athena, Naples 1989; Davis J. A., *Società e imprenditori*, cit., pp. 119-122.

shares. A very limited number of indigenous parties were admitted to the deal.

The bankers Balsamo, Vienot and C. guaranteed the deposit paid by the contractors. Alfonso Pouchain, described in the memorandum of association of the company as "owner in Naples", came, as we have seen, from Lyon and was chosen to replace De Boissieu. The latter complained of technical difficulties, as well as of the hostility of the city's environment, due to the inconveniences caused to the inhabitants by the excavations, the unpleasant smells caused by gas leaks in the installations that were still imperfect or during the tests. Some clauses of the contract, imposed by the administration in order to protect the economy of the kingdom, proved to be very burdensome: for example, the use of minerals from the state mines of Mongiana, which the people of Lyon considered unsuitable, was imposed, and the use of coal was expressly forbidden. Olive oil, to which the interests of important commercial houses were linked, was imposed as fuel.

Oil lighting, however, continued and was included in the contract signed by De Frigière. This contract, however, provided for the possibility of subcontracting its execution to the holders of the previous contract, pending any further request from the administration to extend the gas lighting. The holders of the oil lighting contract were "Messrs. Rocca and Scala", who had secured the subcontract even though they had not joined the company.

It is not known whether this exclusion was the result of a prior agreement or the result of mediation with the Neapolitan business community. What is certain is that Andrea Rocca, a "shopkeeper" of Genoese origin, was one of the Rocca brothers, owners of one of the most prominent trading houses in the kingdom, and one of the five "signatures of the square" whose undisputed solvency guaranteed the circulation of the bills of exchange with which transactions in the grain market were settled. The other, Nicola Maria Scala, was a judge of the commercial court.[72]

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[72] *Le Compagnie del gas in Napoli, Naples 1862*, pp. 63-68; Davis J.A., *Società*

It is possible, therefore, that the Lyon Company did not find favor with the city's economic élite. In general, other Neapolitan "owners" were hostile, as De Boissieu complained to the Minister of the Interior: "A pronounced malevolence in the class which, by virtue of its position, should actually encourage and favor true progress, threatens to completely ruin our company and make its development impossible. These were "several conspicuous owners" who were later followed by many others in imitation. Many important names of the élite of the time had not entered the gas business: perhaps they considered the French presence excessive. "Our industry, Excellency," De Boissieu's letter continued, "does not live on public illumination; the details alone can make it bear the heavy burden of a service at a low price. Perhaps some Neapolitans were jealous of the innovation brought by the Lyonnais? But the conflict was considerable.

A report by the Intendant of Naples, dated January 23, 1841, noted the poor "association of private individuals", the depletion of funds, the high daily expenses and the low income.

A report from the Board of Intendance to the Minister confirmed de Boissieu's views, noting the opposition to the extension of the service to private individuals from oil producers and merchants, as well as from building owners, who in some cases forbade tenants to install gas lamps. Not only that, but they took legal action against those who did.

At the same time, the same problems arose in Turin: the population was divided into what Silvio Pellico called "gasists" and "anti-gasists". While the former praised the beauty and vibrancy of the light that gas brought, the latter complained about the danger of explosions, the fumes and the high cost of gas compared to oil.

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e imprenditori, cit., pp. 66-92.

A difficult undertaking

Among the problems encountered during the construction phases, once the entire system had been installed, there was gas leakage from the joints (a real problem, of course), with the result that it was sometimes necessary to reopen the excavations and start from scratch. For these and other reasons, two years after the creation of the company, the 408 lanterns planned to illuminate the 34 locations in the city had still not been installed, and therefore more was needed from the capital already invested by the shareholders.

Faced with this critical situation, all the shareholders of the company, in a meeting that probably took place in Vico Cupa on April 6, 1841, demanded the replacement of De Boissieu by an absolute majority. Alfonso Pouchain was elected, who would manage the fortunes of the company for so long that it would be associated with his person. By the middle of the decade, in fact, the *Lyonnais Society* was commonly referred to as the *Pouchain Company*.

It was a difficult time for other reasons as well: the price of oil was rising sharply and it was difficult to find oil shale, an essential component for improving the luminosity of gas, on the market. So one of Pouchain's first acts was to request the use of coal instead of oil. Once the plant had been built according to the original specifications, permission was sought to extend it to other parts of the town.

The close relationship between the Lyonnais and Lefèbvre is demonstrated by the fact that Alfonso Pouchain later became director of the Fibreno printing works. Finally, in 1844, the Decurionate granted the extension of the mine, with the possibility of digging new sections, and also allowed the extraction of gas from the coal, to the displeasure of some powerful merchants. Thus began the importation of coal from France by steamships of the *Amministrazione della navigazione a vapore*. All this, however, kept revenues low and led to fears of the company's ruin. For all these reasons, the shareholders received no dividends until 1844.

Exactly in 1844, a silver medal with a diameter of 33 mm was struck at the Lyon Mint with the following description (it was decided to have it struck at the Lyon Mint because the majority of the shareholders were from this city): Opus: Marius Penin (1807-1880) 1844. The medal bears the inscription NEAPOLIS. Partenope is seated on a throne in the form of a rostral prow and facing right, holding in her left hand an olive branch to represent the importance of olives in the distillation of gas; a small shell can be seen near the rostrum and in the background Vesuvius in eruption, the exergue reads:

COMP.ie DU GAZ under: M. PENIN F.
Rampant lion with torch on globe with inscription: R/LUCEM DIFFUNDO PER ORBEM: I spread light throughout the world - referring to the Company of Lyon (lion). Underneath; MDCCCXLIV (engraved) on the sides; PENIN F. LUGDUNI (in Lyon);
In the cut; ARGENT in engraved.

It is significant that the figure of Parthenope, the ancient goddess who represented Naples, is depicted as a seated matron, with the Gulf

of Naples and smoking Vesuvius in the background, holding an olive branch in her hand. The olive tree represented the main source of fuel, but also the peaceful, civilized nature of this enterprise. However, the suitability of olive oil as a fuel was disputed by the French technicians.

The causes of the company's poor performance were attributed to various problems: the fact that the work had not been carried out in a professional manner, that the laying of the pipes had caused gas leaks due to the numerous joints required by the winding nature of certain streets, or because of the frequent interruptions during the laying, or because other underground services had been encountered during the course of the work: modern and ancient water pipes, ancient walls, sewers, underground water tanks, cellars. The city authorities, for their part, attributed the shortcomings of the canalization to the inexperience of the foreign workers, ignorant of the Neapolitan "trembling ground" and stubborn because of "the natural pride of the French". The quality of the lighting was also considered unsatisfactory, and De Boissieu attributed the cause to technological problems resulting from the use of equipment designed to burn coal and then converted to gas from olive oil.[73] In order to solve these problems, Pouchain, on behalf of the Board of Directors, had asked for authorization to use coal as a raw material for distillation, as an exception to the 1838 contract, which was granted in 1844.

Meanwhile, in 1845, De Frigière, who had started the Neapolitan company, moved to Bologna and presented a project with specifications for the gas lighting of the city, which had been sent to several companies. The municipal authorities, however, preferred Grafton and Goldsmith, considering the latter's technical expertise more important than the financial backing offered by De Frigière. Thus, while De Frigière's financial reputation was good, there were doubts about his technical competence, and the unfortunate developments in the Neapolitan venture had hurt him not a little, as the reputation of these problems had spread. To have left the company to others was

[73] *Ibid*, pp. 100-104.

considered a defeat for him. The only installation he had built completely up to that point was the contract for the public lighting of Venice. He had the strong support of the councilors who illustrated his offer, Count Carlo Marsili and Count Ludovico Isolani, but the council finally rejected his offer when De Frigière asked for a modification of the article concerning the prices foreseen for the purchase of materials in case of redemption at the end of the contract. For the presentation of the contract to the Bologna City Council, De Frigière had used the mediation of two local businessmen, Adriano Trouvé and Enrico St. Cyr, born in Bologna and "shopkeepers in Rome". Therefore, what had worked for him in Naples did not work for him in Bologna.gas from olive oil.

The first real gas lighting contract in the capital was awarded to the brothers Adriano and Marcellino Trouvé, and later the concession was taken over in 1852 by the Englishman Sir James Shepherd on behalf of the Imperial City of Rome and the Italian Gas Light and Coke Company. It was later transferred to the *Compagnia Anglo-Romana di Illuminazione a Gas della Città di Roma*, founded on March 10th of the same year. This, in turn, was given to Carlo Pouchain (son of Alfonso Pouchain) in 1869, demonstrating that this technology was still the preserve of a few.[74] Also in 1852, the Bologna business, interrupted in 1849, was taken over by the *Nuova impresa of Charles Laffitte, Blount and Compagni*, bankers in Paris, represented by the lawyer Zanolini and the engineer Augusto Vitali, director of the workshop.[75]

As for Naples, when a contract was nearing expiry other companies or mergers of European companies were evaluated in search of better contractual conditions and new entrepreneurs. Emilio Emery, progenitor of a family that some 40 years later, with Giulio Emery, would run the Lefèbvre paper mills, which were sold to the *Società delle Cartiere Meridionali*, and co-founder of the *Cartiere del Liri* in Isola, took part in the tender. As Pouchain retained ownership of the

[74] Cecchini L., *Contratti per l'illuminazione con la Società anglo-romana*, Rome 1906, p. 121.
[75] Alaimo A., *Prima delle municipalizzazioni,* cit., p. 290.

private lighting licence until 1871 along with the ownership of the installations and channelling, it was decided to renegotiate the offer with him. The new contract, signed on 16 October 1854, granted public lighting for a duration of 17 years.[76] However, the economic conditions of the *Pouchain Company did* not improve, although it continued to provide its service until Unity with the same partners. At the fall of the Kingdom, the City Council posed the problem of lighting with the idea of extending the service to the entire city territory by granting it to a large Company. However, as the 1853 contract was due to expire in 1871, a tender was called for the part of the city that went beyond the perimeter reserved for the *Pouchain Company*. It was then assured that in 1871 the contract would be extended to the entire territory. The three competing bids were those of the *Pouchain Company* itself, the Turin-based N.O. Accini, on behalf of a company to be formed, and *Parent, Schaken et C.ie* of Paris.[77]

In the search for the best contractor to provide the gas service, the bids differed mainly in the type of guarantee required for the return of capital. In order to circumvent the problem of the exclusivity of the Pouchain company, *Parent, Schaken et C.ie* offered to illuminate the territory not granted to Pouchain until 1871, by laying their own pipes where possible or by using "portable gas", i.e. carts with tanks. In return, they asked for a 50-year concession for the entire town (1871-1921). The idea of the promoters was "to bring about an agreement between the old concessionaire and the new one, not so much by the will of men as by the necessity of things". They applied in Naples what had been done in Paris, where the concession granted to the Pereire brothers had made it necessary for the existing companies to join the merger on pain of being driven out of business. *Parent, Schaken et C.*ie reached an agreement with the Pouchain company - which had appealed against the city council's decisions (February 8, 1862) - to cede the

[76] *Ibid* p. 143.

[77] *Project on the illumination of the city of Naples with flowing and portable gaz. Proposed by the N. B. Accini company. Reflections by Lawyer Alessandro Alfieri*, Naples, Tip. By G. Rusconi

plants and rights deriving from the 1854 contract. Thus, after reducing the tenders to two, the City Council chose *Parent, Schaken et C.ie*, and on May 12, 1862, the contract was notarized, granting this company exclusive rights to the public and private lighting of the entire city for a period of 60 years.

Thanks to the support of Mr. Roberto Savarese (1805-1875), the municipal council resolved to award the contract to *Schaken and Co.*, and Alfonso Pouchain ceded his rights from the 1854 contract to Parent for the sum of 1,750,000 francs. During this phase, the first partners, the Duchess of Berry (1798-1870), Ernesto Lefèbvre and Lorenzo Zino did not withdraw from the shareholding. The municipality was chosen because of the solid reputation of the *Parent & Schaken Company, which* ensured that the service quality problems that had been experienced with the *Lyonnais were* excluded. It should also be noted that Parent appeared with other shareholders in concessions for the construction of railways, granted to the company collectively known as *Contratti de Lahante e Comp.*, and that *Parent & Schaken was* granted the concession for the railway network from Naples to the shores of the Adriatic Sea (1860).

A new idea of urban spaces

We sometimes risk overlooking the powerful symbolic value of Innovations such as the one described here, beyond the obvious and due consideration of the progress, practical advantages and financial aspects that gas lighting brought to society. The *Société Lyonnais*, and then Pouchain, introduced to Naples a new concept of urban space that had been established in Paris in recent years. It was not by chance that in those years the French capital became known as the Ville Lumière, thanks to the tens of thousands of light points that illuminated its nights. London had also been illuminated in those years, despite the protests of misoneists and often poets who mourned the death of the night. Many other cities followed, such as Turin, Genoa, Rome and Milan, which

already had streets and squares lit by gas, such as the Galleria de Cristoforis.

The introduction of gas lighting had a great impact on the way people perceived their city, their urban spaces. Until then, cities had never had lighted streets at night. Oil lamps were placed at street crossings or in important places such as bridge abutments, taverns, and city gates. However, these were low-intensity lamps with a yellowish and reddish light that had to be constantly replenished. People moved about with lanterns or smoky torches in their hands. The change was profound. Oil lighting, which burned in wicks placed in lanterns, was also used outdoors, but had a very low light output. It had variable characteristics, as there was a lamp powered by different wicks and different oils, and therefore different colors. Overall, the appearance of pre-modern cities, indeed before the gas lighting revolution, remained dark and therefore dangerous. Even more so in winter or in fog. It was no accident that it was considered risky to go out after dark, when bandits could operate almost undisturbed in a dark alley or outside the circle of light of a wobbly oil lamp.

Gas lighting had a stable light because the pumps, if well maintained, had a steady flame; in addition, the fuel was delivered through pipelines, so the hours required for maintenance and replacement of tanks were much less, as were the running costs. What changed drastically and forever was the appearance of urban spaces. Streets lit by gas lamps became practical even at night. Whole streets changed their appearance: Via Toledo, Chiaia, Chiatamonte, making it possible to inhabit urban spaces even at night.

The light diffused by these two- or three-armed cast-iron street lamps was intense, amber-colored and produced very little smoke. In 1840, the great public squares of Naples were lit with gas for the first time, opening the squares to the kind of nightlife we still see today. After Paris, Naples was one of the first European cities to have public gas lighting, and the San Carlo Theater was immediately adapted for public lighting. These spaces were transformed by the revitalization of nightlife, a nightlife that became a leitmotif of the memoirs of the

period. Hence the importance and the impact that the Società Lionese had on the social life of the metropolis of the kingdom.

Parent and Schaken (1852-1862)

On 12 May 1862, Augustin Cochin - the son-in-law of Denys Benoist d'Azy, a great protagonist of the French metallurgical industry - wrote about a return trip from Naples on which he had met Basile Parent, whom he described as a great entrepreneur who had arrived in the Neapolitan city to sign a contract *pour l'éclairage au gaz de Naples.*[78] On that very 12th of May, in fact, Monsieur Basile Parent had signed the contract with the Naples City Hall to extend the gas lighting service to the entire city. But the old partners did not withdraw. Ernesto Lefèbvre did not leave the company. Parent undertook to build a new factory within 18 months of the municipality's handover of the land and to construct a pipeline for the daily supply of 4500 cubic metres of gas. Here too, the contract is full of indications, clauses and precise obligations as to how the service was to be provided; just as minutely set out are the procedures according to which the service was to be supervised by 12 inspectors, one for each district of Naples, who were to be accompanied on their patrols by an igniter.

Basile Parent (1807-1866), Belgian, ex-military, awarded many honors by the King, had signed the contract as managing partner of the company *Parent, Schaken et C.ie* in Paris, one of the "most conspicuous in France". This is how Roberto Savarese expressed himself in a memorandum to the Naples City Council on November 29, 1861, in support of the company's bid for the new lighting contract. The company "has great capital," Savarese wrote, "and has done immense work in France, Belgium, Holland and Spain. It has a large share in the Naples railways. In short, no words are needed to show that it is right

[78] Lambert-Dansette J., *Histoire de l'entreprise et des chefs d'entreprise en France*, I, Harmattan, Paris 2000, p. 388.

for us and that the lighting of Naples entrusted to it would be equal to that of Paris and London.

The first ten years of the company's life were devoted to the construction of the new production plant and the laying of gas pipes in a greatly expanded network. Once the initial, very costly investments were completed, the company went about its day-to-day business. Its big problem was that it could not gain a large private customer base and therefore devoted itself mainly to public lighting.

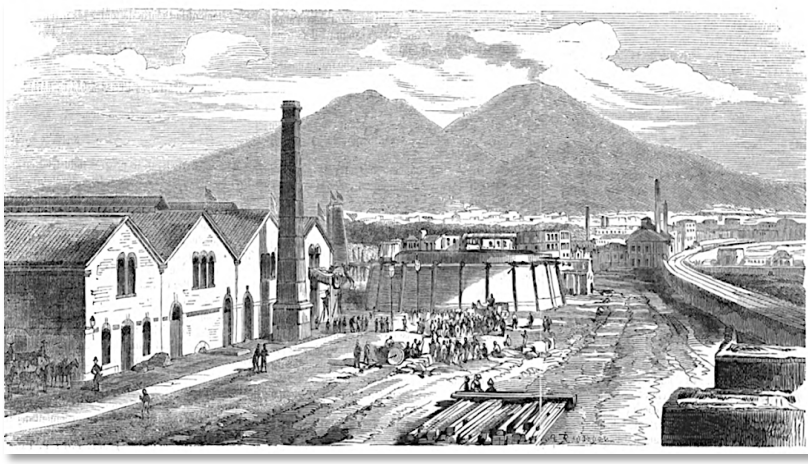
In February 1862, the concessions of the *Lyonnais,* which were to last until 7 January 1871, were granted the extension rights, with the privileges provided, until the end of the concession, and the ownership of the workshop with all its facilities. The old partners all remained shareholders in the new company. After ratification of the agreement by the shareholders of the Lionese and after successful negotiations with the City of Naples, *Parent, Schaken et C.ie* obtained the concession for lighting and heating with gas for 60 years from 1 June (1862- 1922).

A 'cahier des charges' attached to the deed of concession stipulated that *Parent, Schaken et C.ie* acted on behalf of a *Compagnie* to be set up with a capital of 2.5 million lire, so Basile Parent and Pierre Schaken founded the *Compagnie Napolitaine d'Èclairage et de Chauffage par le Gaz* on 18 October 1862, together with the Genevan Auguste Dassier (1790-1862) and Vincent Dubochet (1796-1877), and Mr Emilio Hemery (Emery?) appointed director of the company; the statutes were approved by royal decree on 14 December 1862.[79] . The new factory was designed by the Genevan Jean Daniel Colladon (1802-1893) and the work entrusted to the French company M. Lacarriere.

The area on the banks of the Sebeto, called Arenaccia, was chosen for the construction. It covered an area of 55,000 square metres, 1600 of which were intended for coal storage. At the inauguration, on 21 November 1863, Crown Prince Umberto of Savoy was present. The

[79] Savarese R., *Dell'illuminazione della città di Napoli. Memoria al Consiglio Comunale di Napoli, Naples* 1861, p. 11.

production capacity of illuminating gas was 25,000 cubic metres per day with a calorific value of 500 kilocalories per cubic metre.



Picture of the new gasometer inaugurated in an area called the Arenaccia, on the old course of the Sebeto. The inauguration took place in November 1863. The image of this installation, judged to be very modern, was published in the French magazine *L'Illustration Universelle,* no. 42 (p. 421) of December 1863.

The plant area grew to 100,000 square metres. The canalisation work proceeded slowly due to delays by the company F. Edward of Glasgow in supplying the pipes. The first section of the network of no less than 135 kilometres of pipes was ready within a few years. The old plant of the *Lyon Company* was valued at CHF 1,615,524.47.[80] The old shareholders exited the company gradually by selling their shares, but not immediately. However, some names on the board of directors are well known: the Neapolitan-Swiss banker Meuricoffre, Parent, Dassier, Dubochet and a certain commendatore De Martino from Naples. Messrs Mattino and Balsamo were also named. The company's Italian name was *Compagnia Napolitana di Illuminazione e Scaldamento col Gas*.

The new facilities cost 600,000 francs. Part of the money was used to repair the old gasometer. The old plant was now inadequate in both size and efficiency: leaks from the pipeline system and the gasometer itself amounted to up to a third of production. Between August and September 1863, the first tank of the new gasometer was completed, and in November the plant was put into operation. A further 2.5 million francs were spent in the second year and 780,000 francs in the third. At the beginning of the 1860s, when Parent, the Naples gas lighting company, won the contract, the *Schaken* society was at the height of the expansion phase that had begun around 1845, when the Belgians Basile Parent (1807-1866) and Pierre Schaken (1793-1870) entered the French railway construction market. At the beginning of the 1860s, the company had a complex structure, close to that of a holding company, with holdings in companies differentiated by sector of activity (metallurgy, mechanics, mining, public works) and geographical

[80] Of which 227,500 in exchange for the 455 shares of the new company and 1,343,840.06 for 2,590 shares redeemed in September and October 1862 and March 1863, between capital and interest Other (small) sums concerned the balance of the dividend on 910 shares not redeemed, the indemnity to the managers of the old company who were granted 455 shares out of 5,000 of the new one, and the 3,108 francs paid to Lyons as liquidation account. The old shareholders were thus granted just under 10 per cent of the company compared to 34 per cent for the old company in the 1840s.

location. [81] Its path is also intertwined with that of the railway networks, an industry to which almost every major industrial and financial group formed during the 19th century in Europe is linked. The joint-stock company was established in Turin at the notary Turvano's office, but was domiciled in Naples. The company proper was therefore established in Turin and the 'desistance' of the old *Società Lionese* was declared there.[82]

[81] They managed to finance the expansion of their business in a financial system that was not yet specialised or formalised: networks of interpersonal relationships were still the main channel through which access to credit travelled. Basile Parent (1807-1866) was born in Couillet (Belgium) to an old local family, while Pierre Schaken was from Ostend. They were part of the financial network of the Parisian marketplace: the two were in fact compared to the Pereire brothers and Paulin Talabot (1799-1855), who was linked to the Rothschilds. The founders of the *Napolitaine* also included Emmanuel-Vincent Dubochet (1796-1877), their partner in railway and gas companies including the *Società Italiana per il Gaz* (Turin 1863), financed by *Crédit Mobilier*. Beaujouan G., Lebée E., *La fondation du Crédit Industriel et Commercial,* in 'Histoire des Entreprises', No. 6, 1960, p. 23.

[82] Thus, it was born with a multinational profile: most of the financing came from France, Switzerland and Belgium, but the anchorage with investors resident in Naples was much less than in the past. Its relationship with the world of industrial-financial railway groups is also remarkable. The contract, signed in Naples in May 1862 at the notary Martinez, was approved in Turin on December 14, 1862, signed by Victor Emmanuel II, Minister Manna and the director of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Gaetano Serra. The deed was signed in the presence of Francesco Zanetti, Giuseppe Bertolotti, notary public, all resident in Turin, Jaen-Edouard Lannoy, a high-ranking bureaucrat of French genius, who acted as Parent and Schaken's lawyer, Auguste Dassier and Vincent Dubochet. Previous agreements made in Montreaux by the Notary Mayor were incorporated in this document.

Chapter 4

The Liri Arcadia

A singular wealth of water

Letters, visitors' documents and Rosanne's diary itself give us an idea of the small - but in reality not so small - paradise that the Frenchwoman found on Isola, which she shaped according to her own tastes, linking it to the nascent industry that was gradually growing in size and importance. These documents describe this complex world in a general way, but by reconstructing the various sources it is possible to give a definite picture of it; the documents we have do not go into detail about the appearance of the places, gardens, woods, roads or other "delights" that made up the human landscape, above all this place. Even Rosanne's diary, with its minute descriptions of actions, reactions, mottos, and names of people, is not descriptive. It has many qualities, above all liveliness and a taste for the quick image, but it is not descriptive, i.e. it gives back the visual aspect of places. So what was the Lefèbvre paradise that was so admired by the guests?

Because it has to be said that we are dealing with people who no longer design nature according to rationality and intellectual aesthetics, as was the case with the gardens of the Renaissance, the Baroque or the neoclassicism of the last Bourbons of France. We are fully in the age and aesthetic sensibility of Romanticism: nature must have an appearance of naturalness, of truth, even if it can, with discretion, be bent to man's needs. Lefèbvre's late garden, for all that we have preserved of it in memories, letters, and the reactions of visitors, is a jardin romantique, composed, like the best examples of the time, of a part that imitates nature and a part that subordinates nature to culture.

An example of such a garden was created in Monza by the viceroy Eugène de Beauharnais (1781-1824), who in 1806 had the largest enclosed park in Europe built around the royal villa in neoclassical forms. It had a section with meadows, woods and ponds that perfectly imitated the countryside, albeit adapted by the hand of the garden architects, and sections where horses, dairy cows and farm animals were bred, and farmhouses where able-bodied colonists grew wheat or fruit trees. Well, this model, smaller of course, as we know today, was realized in the park of the Palazzo Lefèbvre in Isola and in the farmlands that had been purchased around it and in its extension. Charles was careful to select the families who would live in the farmhouses, granting them a symbolic rent and ensuring that the families themselves remained united in their work.

Part of the garden was the Parco delle Cascatelle, located in the section of the Lefèbvre Park that stretched along the river bank where the water, falling down a slope, created a lot of foam at Remorici. Before the construction of the Soffondo (around 1830) and Remorici (1885) sections, it was a free and wild area, much appreciated by the guests of the Lefèbvre. There were the two main waterfalls of the Isola di Sora (later Isola del Liri, from 1869), the Cascata del Valcatoio and the Cascata Grande, both fed by the current of the Liri river. In the past, these two waterfalls were completely free: the Cascata del Valcatoio was spectacular, cascading into several waterfalls and attracting visitors who got to know it through the prints that had been circulating since the middle of the 18th century, enhancing the "picturesque" aspect, literally suitable for painting, for the representation of this place. It was only at the beginning of the 20th century that it was harnessed by pipes and turbines, which reduced the free flow of water and almost completely obliterated the spectacular inside an ugly steel and concrete structure. On the other side of a high rocky spur, to the right of the falls, beyond the ancient Boncompagni-Viscogliosi castle that dominates the Liri jump, is the so-called Cascata Grande, which has remained more or less the same since the time of Lefèbvre. Both waterfalls have a drop of about 28 meters: the first one is not steep, even if the movement of the water before the dam was considered spectacular; the second one is

almost vertical, still impressive, especially during the floods. It is also known for its danger.

Near the Lefèbvre mills there were other waterfalls, in particular the one near the Soffondo, at least ten meters high, which used to be higher and with a greater flow of water before it was harnessed for the needs of the paper mills. There are several prints from the late 18th and early 19th centuries that testify to the existence of an impressive waterfall that divided into three parts. A few dozen meters below the Stabilimento del Soffondo, at the bottom called Remorici, where later a textile factory of the Ciccodicola family was built, there was a rapid called "cascatelle". Maybe this was what Rosanne was talking about? Rosanne used to take her guests on a tour of the Valcatoio, the Cascata Grande, and the small waterfalls or rapids that foamed below the Forme, all within a half hour's walk. One can understand the enthusiasm of the various painters who stayed with Lefèbvre in Isola, where they found a concentration of the "picturesque", the heart of the pictorial sense of the time. This picturesqueness was also accentuated by the widespread use of traditional clothing for men and women, especially among the peasants. At that time, direct paths or "tratturi" (sheep tracks) connected the upper Isola del Liri with the lower part of the city. Today, walls, barriers and roads have changed the landscape through which Rosanne moved with her groups of elegant guests.

The water jumps of Isola del Liri were, before the work of man wrecked them, a true aesthetic spectacle that gave the impression of an abundance and variety of pure, running water. Perhaps not so pure, in that location, if we consider the great concentration of mills, wool mills, paper mills and weaving mills.

Funds

In addition to the large park, with its meadows, tall trees, groves of shrubs and streams running through the meadows, there were the farms that, like the Monza Park, allowed visitors to see nature in its original

form and also in its form of "culture", domesticated by man and dedicated to the production of the earth's riches, according to the model of the time. These farms had both a practical (they produced vegetables, fruit, wheat, milk and cheese) and a didactic (they could be shown to city guests as model farms) purpose. And Rosanne, as we know, did just that: she showed nature, culture and industry. A perfect lady of the romantic age

Today, where the three Lefèbvre estates closest to the palace (there were five more in the Carnello area), San Germano, San Carlo and Strada dei Gelsi, are located, there are clearings, parking lots, a sports field, old and new houses and large municipal buildings. It is almost impossible to imagine the peace and tranquility that once reigned here. However, a document helps us to get an idea: the *Perizia De Rogatis*. This handwritten document was buried for a century in the archives of the Fibreno paper mill until April 2018, when it was discovered by the lawyer Amleto Iafrate. We will have the opportunity to discuss this later in our discourse, since this document was used at the beginning of the 20th century to regulate the division of the inheritance among Charles's grandchildren. It is a dry but very precise document that gives us a faithful idea of what these places must have looked like in their heyday. It was written long after all the protagonists of Rosanne's Petit Paris had died, at a time when the structure was decaying and abandoned. It was compiled, as we have said, by the Neapolitan engineer De Rogatis between the end of 1914 and the first months of 1915, at the request of "Countess Gisella", widow of Francesco, nephew of Charles Lefèbvre.

The *Perizia* has the merit of describing the structure of the Lefèbvre estates as they were in the 1830s and 1840s. From then until the beginning of the next century, there were not many changes, except for the addition of two buildings, the Villa Lefèbvre-De Caria and the very large establishment of San Carlo, within the perimeter of the land purchased by Charles. Thus, with a little historical imagination, one can visualize what the places looked like before they were abandoned.[83]

[83] This is the document that regulated the division of the Lefèbvre property in

The "Casa Palazziata" (or Palazzo Lefèbvre was immersed in a large park designed in the "English style", with bushes, groves, gravel pits, streams and meadows that have now completely disappeared. It was part of a much larger estate that was divided into a series of plots cultivated with wheat, vegetables and then orchards, vineyards, chestnut groves and meadows for fodder. The entire complex was accessed through two entrances, or three if we consider the entrance to the palace: there was an entrance that connected the properties to the provincial road to Sora, and a second entrance that passed in front of Palazzo Lefèbvre, where it makes a sharp turn to the left. In 1855, another gate was added for direct access to Villa Lefèbvre (later De Caria, Pisani) and its park, built in the French style by Ernesto.

These two opposite passages were connected by a road that crossed the ground known as San Carlo. From the beginning, or at least from the time of the works carried out on the property in 1829, the park was surrounded by a wall of tuff and brick, about 2.10 meters high and 42 centimeters wide. The Lefèbvre Park was an enclosed park, like the Monza Park, following the model of the time. After the restoration in 1876, the inscription "Property of the Count of Balsorano, 1876" was added to the second opening of today's Via Tavernanova, opened in 1855 by Ernesto to allow independent access to the villa. In that year, Ernesto rebuilt a large part of the surrounding wall, which is still in good condition. This inscription was visible until 1892 or 1893, when the French style villa was rented to the industrialist De Caria.

The ground in front of the palace formed a wide open space of beaten earth and gravel that allowed carriages to enter and maneuver. There was also a comfortable shelter for carriages and horses, where the carriages were washed and repaired in a special workshop. There was also a large stable for the horses. From the first stages of construction, the square in front of the Palazzo Lefèbvre was adorned

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1915. It is a detailed description of the properties of the San Carlo and Palazziata mills, excluding the Fibreno mills, written by Engineer De Rogatis, which has been in the Fratelli Iafrate Archives in Isola del Liri since April 2018, after having been preserved for a century in the Archivi delle Cartiere Meridionali Archives.

with statues (which have since disappeared) and a fountain with a high spout and a circular marble vase, fed by water from the Canal delle Forme. A second fountain can still be seen on the side of the Palace where part of the park still exists.

The north-eastern side of the Palace, in front of the cultivated parts, was furrowed by a branch of the Canal delle Forme, built in the early stages of Lefèbvre's work, while another natural canal, the Magnene, with a good flow especially in autumn, but still with water all year round, flowed first within the perimeter of the gardens and the park, then was channelled under the Palace, where it served as a drain for the toilets and kitchen facilities, thus providing the Palace with an efficient drainage.

From the square in front of the Palace, an avenue of about 5 meters in width, crossed by a small bridge over the Magnene, runs more or less parallel to the Canale delle Forme and, after passing through a gate closed by an iron railing, enters the Lefèbvre farm. Today there is no trace of these artifacts or of the road itself.

The Fondo San Carlo

This first avenue proceeded for about 550 metres into the Fondo called San Carlo, purchased by Charles, in which a large factory was later to be built. The Fondo San Carlo occupied what the land registers once called Contrada Socca Isola, Contrada Montemontano and Contrada Paiola (p. 240). The road wound its way between regular rows of fruit trees, past a traditional local farmhouse: a one-storey house with an upper barn, built of wood.

Later the San Carlo estate was bordered by the Sora-Isola del Liri railroad. It was divided by another rather wide avenue, on one side of which were cultivated a particularly famous variety of pears, and on the other apples. In the memories of the islanders who were children in the thirties, this avenue, with its trees full of green fruit on one side and red on the other, is still very much present, so much so that one could think

that it was the work of an architect who arranged the main area and tamed nature according to the aesthetic taste of the time, a romantic taste that loved regulated nature.

Over the years, the Fondo San Carlo was the most affected by the hydraulic works ordered by Charles and later by Ernesto to build more canals to bring water to the Soffondo and the nearby Remorici Fund. In the middle of the century, Ernesto will have built there the great factory called San Carlo, which will occupy at least a third of the surface of the land.

The farmhouse in the Fondo San Carlo was rented to two families of colonists who passed the rent and the work from father to son. According to De Rogatis, it was smaller than those in the Fondo dei Gelsi. Almost certainly, all these houses predate the arrival of the Lefèbvre family, who had already bought old and stacked land, sometimes for centuries. However, they improved and extended all these buildings, no matter how modest. They did not want to lose the "picturesque" and traditional character of these farms, but they wanted them to work and for the people who worked on them to live well.

One can understand the enthusiasm of Rosanne's guests, who could enjoy a great variety of spectacles. Visits to the beautiful English gardens, meadows, groves, well-controlled streams with water effects, waterfalls, fountains and small lakes with fish (the area of San Carlo was called "lake" for centuries, so before the drainage works it must have had standing water and at least one small lake); but also the more varied landscape of rural roads, sheep tracks, paths, real farms, with peasants working the vineyards to produce table grapes, but also small quantities of wine and vinegar; then fruit trees - pears, apples, plums, peaches, figs - and small plots of maize and wheat. There were also more rare productions for the experience of a citizen: beehives for the production of honey and a considerable production of silkworms, probably planted to produce, in autarky, the precious fabric useful for the manufacture of embroidered wallpaper.

This production, as well as the orchards, lasted for a long time and, according to the testimony of many inhabitants of Isola, was still present in the 1950s. Nor should we forget the many irrigation channels,

real streams, that crossed the property, coming from the Canale delle Forme, but also from the Liri River, making the sound of water heard everywhere and making the clay soil very fertile, which agronomists considered suitable for many crops.

On the right, the Fondo San Carlo bordered the Verga d'Oro or Canale delle Forme. The Fondo San Carlo was connected to a second Fondo, the Fondo Strada dei Gelsi, by a small wooden bridge over the canal. Thus, from the windows of the Palace, looking north, one could admire a dense expanse of trees and land, divided by a straight avenue lined with mulberry trees. It was an expanse cultivated with care for variety and even harmony of colors, according to the same memory preserved in the village; a "creation" of culture rather than of nature. This vastness extended to the road to Sora and beyond, where there were other plots of land owned by the Lefèbvre family and rented out to farmers who were not directly dependent on the family.

The Fondo Strada dei Gelsi (Mulberry Road Fund)

The Fondo Strada dei Gelsi, like the previous one, was passed in ownership from Charles to Ernesto and from the latter to Francesco. To the south it was bordered by the Stabilimento del Fibreno, the canal, and to the north by the road to Sora, which led to the second gate, closed by a sturdy, wide, double-winged door. The Fund was crossed by a well-maintained avenue, at least 5 meters wide, since it had to be traveled by wagons: the aforementioned Strada dei Gelsi.

It owed its name to the fact that mulberry trees for silkworms were cultivated there. This plant, complete with drying vats and looms, located inside the Forme factory, served the Lefèbvre family for a small but lively silk-spinning activity related to the manufacture of clothing, but also the production of special wallpaper. Along this avenue, not far from two farmhouses that belonged to the estate and bordered the road to Sora, divided, as we have said, by a high wall of tuff and brick, stood the pretty little villa called Trianon. It stood in a quiet position, was

considered extremely elegant, surrounded by greenery, where the Lefèbvre family sometimes organized banquets with their guests when the weather was fine. There was a small wooden bridge with steps to cross the Canal des Forme, raised by 2 meters (it was known as "the footbridge"). The Viale dei Gelsi and another longitudinal road divided the Fondo Strada dei Gelsi into four plots of about 6 ½ hectares, each of which was devoted to a different type of cultivation, also in view of the slopes in this area.

The Strada dei Gelsi, like the Fondo San Carlo, were considered, according to the descriptions in the land register consulted by De Rogatis, to be first class clay and irrigated land, very suitable for the cultivation of vegetables and strawberry vines. They were cultivated by several families of colonists who lived in farmhouses, probably specialized in either vegetable or fruit growing. It was one of the places Rosanne took her guests to see: the mulberry trees, the vegetables, the American grapes (a novelty at the time), the model farm.

Nearby was a third property, Fondo San Germano, with similar characteristics, which was also tended by the inhabitants of a farmhouse and which benefited from abundant water from a tributary of the Fibreno River, and which was later, after the middle of the century, to be separated from the other two by the railroad. In the first of the four plots of land in the Fondo dei Gelsi, there was a "gracious chicken coop", as described in the appraisals, of a certain capacity, used to raise the not inconsiderable number of poultry needed to maintain the Lefèbvre's small farm and to produce eggs. In the same area, the Lefèbvre family had a "Vaccheria" (French for "vacherie") built, a real model stable, very modern for the time, which could accommodate 20 dairy and beef cows. Three of the four plots in the Fondo Strada dei Gelsi each had a farmhouse that provided work for at least one family, and in one case two. They were well built, with plastered walls, clay tiles and fences.

Trianon

As mentioned above, in addition to the Palazzo Lefèbvre, Charles Lefèbvre had a real piece of France built in international neoclassicism, a small villa defined as very elegant and graceful, which reproduced on a small scale the plan of the Petit Trianon, the villa at the end of the park of Versailles in rococo style. It had three bodies and, according to the model, large windows. Although it was called a chalet, it was not small: it also had a second floor. The de Rogatis report seems to describe the ruins of the small villa that collapsed in 1915 with these characteristics. At the moment we have no other description: the place was far from the passage and could not be seen by outsiders, so there is no known representation of it. When it was built, it was a place of pleasure, reserved for after-hunting pleasures, for conversations among the tame nature of the surrounding orchards, for banquets: it was used for daytime activities such as hunting or picnics, but it was also equipped for the night and often housed those who could not find a place in the Palazzo Lefèbvre. Sometimes the Lefèbvre housed more than 20 people at a time!

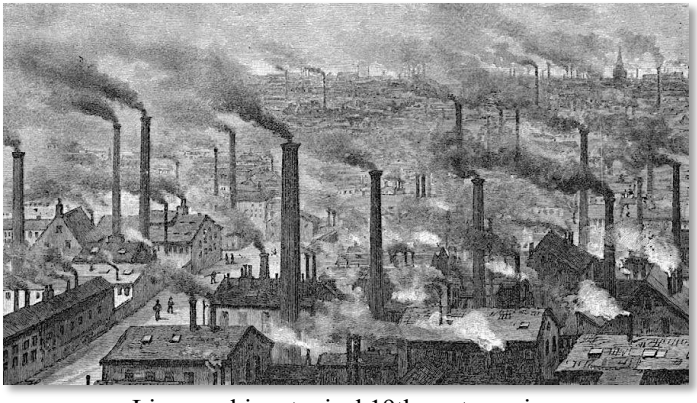
The Petit Trianon, as mentioned, was not so small if we consider its dimensions: 39 meters wide by 12.50 meters long. It was located in a quiet area, not far from the opening of the Fondo Strada dei Gelsi towards the Carnello and Sora streets, and was connected to the Fondo San Carlo by a small wooden bridge. It had two large rooms on the ground floor and five vaulted rooms on the first floor, surrounded by several sheds, probably for the horses. The small Villa Trianon was the residence of the directors of the Stabilimento del Fibreno, under the management of Lefèbvre, and also of the Cartiere Meridionali, until its destruction in 1915. Its construction dates back to the second intervention of the Lefèbvre family, at the end of the 1830s. The presence of these farms, which produced chickens, sheep, cows, eggs, vegetables and fruit in abundance, as well as chestnuts and flour, was necessary, considering that sometimes dozens of people lived in the Palazzo Lefèbvre for long periods, even a month. There were markets,

an important one for the area was held in Isola for centuries, but the Lefèbvre probably liked to run a perfectly functioning industrial and agricultural-pastoral machine.

Charles was curious, industrious; he read books on engineering, business management, but also agronomy. He was particularly interested in the cultivation of silkworms, which he had seen in France and also in Italy when, on his way to France, he passed through Lombardy instead of Piedmont, where this production was still widespread. Charles Lefèbvre, together with some other industrialists of the period, was a key player in the process of transforming the landscape of the Liri Valley. In the Liri-Fibreno basin, hydraulic energy was used to transform domestic production into a modern industrial system, and the change was rapid. But what were the consequences and what were the perceptions of the observers of the time? As we know, the process began after Ferdinand's Enlightenment reforms, Napoleonic law and anti-feudal reformism had brought the use of inland waters closer to ancient Roman law by classifying them as nobody's property (proprietas nullius). Freed from the constraints of feudalism, water became an open-access resource that could be appropriated by individual landowners and mill owners. As elsewhere, the private appropriation of the river soon revealed its contradictions: rather than increasing the overall efficiency of the economic system, it generated a high level of litigation and conflict between economic actors and high transaction costs. In the long run, it led to inefficiency in the use of energy, overcrowding of the river banks, obstruction, and ultimately an increase in the frequency and destructiveness of floods.

In the last decades of the 19th century, agrarian capitalism, i.e. crop extension, deforestation, intensive cultivation, had spread, causing great environmental instability in that area, but not only. Arriving in Sora, the Liri river brought with it deposits derived from soil erosion in the mountains of the Upper Valleys where deforestation activity was underway. Moreover, the flow of water was hindered by a system of closures and individual properties delimited by wells, stone banks, barriers, diversions, dams, canals, and constructions that caused flooding. In the 19th century, dozens of large floods were recorded in

addition to the ordinary annual floods that occurred mainly in the autumn. Sora and Isola began to live in a perpetual state of emergency, with some episodes of extensive destruction. Nevertheless, it is interesting to observe how a new consciousness, dominated by the capitalist industrial vision of water as a product of changing social causes, has emerged. In the case of the Liri Valley, the new perception of the environment was shaped by the revision of the narrative of the industrial landscape, which was no longer seen as contradictory, alien to historical and natural landscapes, nor as the bearer of contradictions in people's lives, pollution or ugliness. All these problems, although they existed, were concealed or simply not seen during the first phase of the industrial revolution in the area, also because the dozens of important visitors who saw the Zino and especially the Lefèbvre found themselves in front of very famous factories that were decidedly modern but managed to hide or absorb the contradictions of the industrial transformation. This is evident in the accounts of those who visited them or passed by them on their way to Isola from Naples or Rome; many of these travelers had already visited similar industrial settlements in Manchester, Liverpool or even Lowell (Boston) or Belgium in the 1830s and 1840s. Isola del Liri was compared to Manchester in a way that was both incongruous and significant, as we shall see. But Isola did not have the anti-human ugliness of Manchester: it was an exaggeration, but a meaningful exaggeration.



Liverpool in a typical 19th century view.

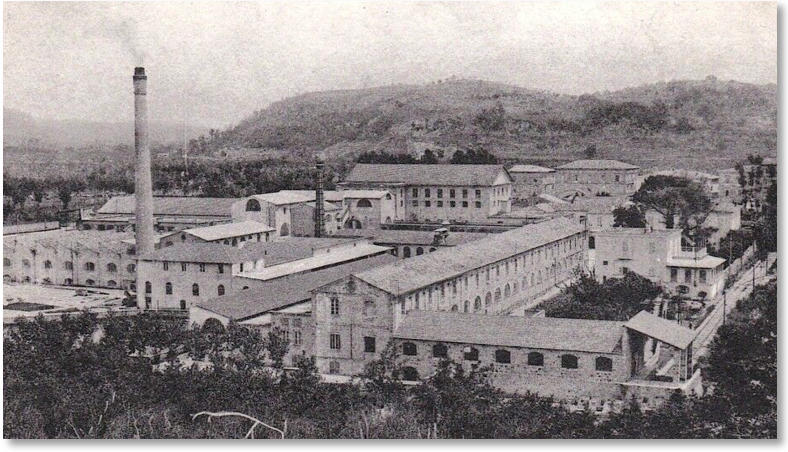
Situated on the road that connected Naples and Rome since ancient times, not far from the abbeys of Montecassino, Casamari and San Domenico, the area of Sora has always been a favorite destination for European travelers interested in antiquity and the Middle Ages, who left many descriptions and travelogues. We have seen, in the case of Carnello and Santa Maria delle Forme or Isola, how there are paintings and illustrations that testify the interest of artists in these places long before the industrial settlements. The same writers, painters and men of culture continued to visit these places and began to integrate the new structures into the historical and natural landscape, almost not seeing them or considering them as an organic part of the landscape. This singular phenomenon is particularly evident in the case of the Lefèbvre industries, which appear in so many travel accounts.

Isola del Liri, 1830. Ernst Fries.

The view painted by the German Ernst Fries (1801-1833) in 1830, which we find among the Lefèbvre's guests, shows that this painter still did not see, or was not interested in, the technological innovations in

the area. He painted a conventional view of Isola in its medieval structure, with the Boncompagni castle visible, the church of San Lorenzo, and the road coming from the east under the high cliffs leading to Isola Superiore. The population is always dressed in traditional clothes. No sign of modernity, although the Lefèbvre were already present and in other places, such as Belgium and France, the factories were already represented in the paintings.

In order to understand the stages of this process, which marked the arrival of liberal ideology in Italy, even in its visible form, it is worth considering as a breaking point the establishment of the Liri paper mill, the industrial complex built in 1843, which had all the characteristics of modernity and which forcefully inserted itself into a still rural landscape. By the middle of the century, the paper mill had already taken on the appearance we see in the photo below. This complex could not be integrated into Arcadian and Romantic visions; it was something radically different, a rupture. The argument here is that the Lefèbvre was an exception.



Società Cartiere Meridionali ex Cartiere del Liri, about 1890.

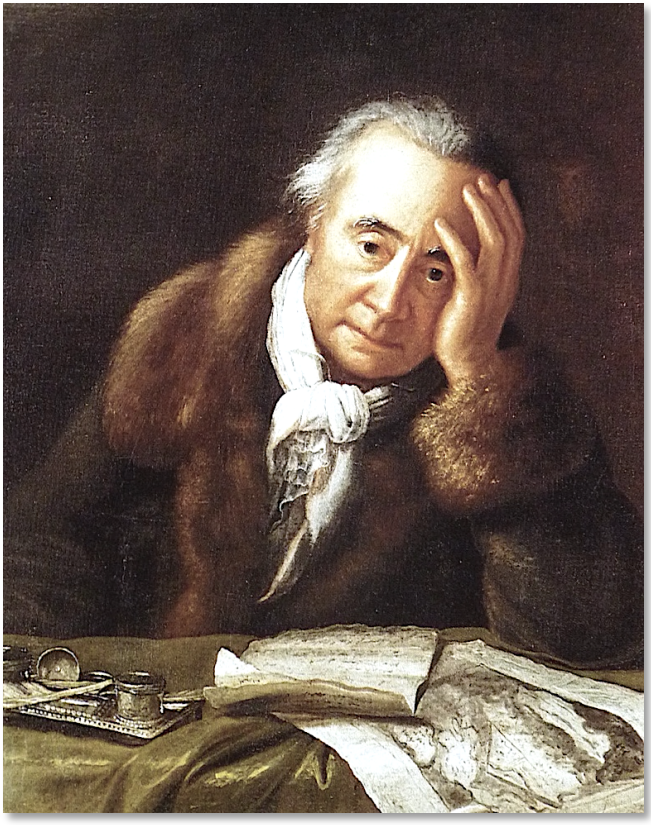
By chance and ideal conditions, but also by design, Lefèbvre's industries did not have the violent visual impact that offended the aesthetic sensibilities of travelers: they were hidden behind a large neoclassical building, the façade of a church, a Baroque convent, or vegetation. In the case of smaller industries located in historic buildings, such as Lambert or Manna, this was obvious. Charles Lefèbvre, on the other hand, is mentioned in dozens of these accounts as a new type of man who managed to balance nature and culture, antiquity and modernity in his work.

In this context, it is useful to look at accounts from just before the arrival of the Industrial Revolution in order to examine the change in perception and sensitivity to the first factories. Let us start with the case of the Swiss naturalist Carl Ulysses von Salis-Marschlins (1760-1818), who traveled through the valley in the early years of the French Revolution and described the local landscape as dominated by the feudal castle built on a cliff between two waterfalls: a vision perfectly in keeping with his ideas as a man of the Enlightenment. The village was surrounded by cultivated hills and dense deciduous forests. This is how Isola appears in many paintings of the late 18th and early 19th centuries: the cliff, the waterfalls, the olive groves, the woods.

The river Liri was described as a complement to this beautiful scenery, the surrounding countryside appeared as one of those enchanting places whose beauty was rare even in Italy. As for the local population, the traveler noted its quiet and idyllic life, lamenting only the missed opportunities for the development of the local wool industry.

We descended within an hour to Isola, a small town on the Garigliano. The Liri of the ancients. [...]. Nothing could be more truly romantic than the site of the old castle of Isola, for which security reasons caused its location at the highest point of an island formed by the Garigliano. After a tranquil course, that river there splits into two clear branches, one of which plunges over a perpendicular row of rocks, while the other flows over a sloping, rocky bed

and rushes, its waters churning to finally join the stream. The reunited waters then resume their placid course [...].[84]



The naturalist Carl Ulysses von Salis-Marschlins.

[84] Carl Ulysses von Salis-Marschlins, *Travels through various provinces of the Kingdom of Naples* in 1789, London 1795.

The naturalist calls the river Garigliano, which at this altitude is commonly called Liri, and immediately notices the high position of the castle, sheltered from the flow of the river. Such an observation would be repeated by travelers who, coming down from what is now Isola Superiore, along the "Cascatelle" and the "Remorici" - where the Lefèbvre factories were to be built - would come across the castle and the division of the river into two branches, forming the "Island", which would reunite further south. Then the traveler, obviously coming from Isola and moving towards Sora, meets San Domenico and the Ciceronian sites.

Since the Villa of San Domenico, with a convent occupying the site of one of Cicero's villas, is not far from Isola, we made a pilgrimage there on foot. The beauty and surroundings are flooded with water on one side by the Garigliano and bordered by gentle hills, while on the other side the eye penetrates at length into a wide and fertile valley, from which the Fibreno River emerges, which forms two branches before joining the Liri. Among them were the gardens of that celebrated orator. [...].[85]

This second passage in the author's description is also typical, borrowed from Cicero's text of the Laws: it would be repeated in many other descriptions and travelogues in the following century. Salis-Marschlins then went on to Carnello. Here it is even more evident, as mentioned at the beginning of this research, that those who wanted to establish industry in these areas, like Lefèbvre and Zino, occupied places where the memory of the past was so strong that it drove out the present and made it invisible. At one point in this passage, not quoted here, the Swiss naturalist complains that the superstitious and ignorant Dominican friars - a leitmotif of the Enlightenment and the Protestants - occupy the place where the great Cicero had lived. As for artisanal and agricultural activities, Salis-Marschlins found them decadent and, in the usual Enlightenment fashion, attributed them to "Catholic superstition". This was in 1789 or shortly before. We do not know how

[85] *Ibid*.

he judged decadence, perhaps on the basis of passages from Cicero, who considered his native country rich and industrious. But that is how it appeared - rich and industrious - in those years or shortly thereafter to other visitors who passed through the region with less prejudice.

An interesting case concerns the elderly Abbot Domenico Romanelli (1756-1819), who in 1819, while traveling from Naples to Montecassino, received as a gift a view of the town painted by a local artist.[86] When the abbot arrived in the Liri Valley, he found a place already undergoing fundamental political, social and environmental changes. A good road was being built to connect the town to Naples. The exploitation of the water had been temporarily conceded to the municipal corporation, which had rented the mills to the wool merchants of Arpino. After the arrival of the French army and the terrible massacre of 1799, we have several years of silence about which the sources known today are silent. What did the local population think about the massacre of 1799? What did they think of the French who continued to visit these areas and set up first artisanal and then industrial factories? The majority left behind a trail of unrest and hatred that was not recorded in the written works. In 1809, during the French Decade, the first paper mill was opened in Isola, inside the Boncompagni Castle, and soon the wool industry followed. Abbot Romanelli's voyage is one of the first testimonies of the emergence of the industrial landscape in the Liri Valley, or rather in the whole of southern Italy at the beginning of the 19th century. In Sora he described an active and industrious population that lived very well thanks to wool production and agriculture. He did not see the economic "degradation" that the enlightened eye of the Swiss Salis-Marschlins probably observed even where there was none.

Nevertheless, Romanelli's attention was captured by the sight of the largest and most impressive waterfall and, in general, by the beauty of the place, which appeared to him as an enchanted island with abundant

[86] Domenico Romanelli, *Viaggio da Napoli a Monte-Casino ed alla celebre cascata d'acqua nell'isola di Sora dell'abate Domenico Romanelli*, Angelo Trani, Napoli 1819.

citrus groves, surrounded by a varied landscape and rich vegetation. He then searched the banks of the Fibreno River for Cicero's birthplace, stopping to make scholarly reflections on these ruins. On the road between Isola and Sora, along the eastern bank of the Liri, he stopped to contemplate an unexpected landscape. Along the cultivated fields and orchards, he saw many new houses, canals and wells, and many industries and artisan activities.

Duke of Sora's Palace on Isola (1791), Richard Colt Hoare.

So wrote Abbot Romanelli:

The next day I traveled two hours from Arpino to the island of Sora. This small land is so called because it is surrounded by two large canals of the Liri, which then come together in a single volume. It is entered by two bridges called Porta di Napoli and Porta di Roma. I found there an active and industrious population, which draws its comfortable subsistence from artisanry and agriculture. As soon as I arrived there, a most magnificent and imposing spectacle presented itself to me. The river Liri, rich in water and flowing with

a rapid course, meets an enormous rock, from which it is divided into two branches. On this rock there is a splendid royal palace with a tower, isolated from the two branches of the river on either side. The two great channels of the Liri, which flow from it in great depths, form two marvelous waterfalls, of which there is no other like it in the whole world.[87]

Richard Colt Hoare (1758-1838) had depicted the place in 1791, when it was still the seat of the Duchy, and it was the same as the Abbot saw it 30 years later. He had painted it in a watercolor that was later engraved and circulated throughout Europe as part of a series of views of the area. In it you can see the water reservoir on the cliff of the Duke of Sora's palace, before it falls by one branch into the Cascata Grande and by the other into the Cascata Valcatoio.

The first channel plunges perpendicularly into a gorge 100 palms deep and 60 palms wide, and the other to the west runs swiftly along an inclined plane of about 600 palms and as many as wide. A perpetual iris, when the sun shines, shimmers in an arc among many sprays, flakes, fringes and minute particles of water, deceiving the observer and making him seem to be on an enchanted island or in the gardens of Armida. The surrounding green gardens with their citrus fruits, laurels and exquisite fruits add to the charm of this place. The chain of nearby mountains and pleasant hills offer you playful distances, contrasting shadows, perspectives and varied scenes. These natural beauties of the island of Sora attract a large number of landscape painters all day long to depict such beautiful, varied and noble views of nature. The most beautiful viewpoint is from the mountain known as San Giovenale. There is the most beautiful perspective of the two waterfalls, with the royal palace like a castle in the middle. Another charming landscape is formed by the southern branch of the Liri river, which, before rejoining the other, divides again and forms a new island. Here, then, is a blissful land, where everything exhales the comfort, the grateful pleasure and the original beauty that nature has scattered there. I was so surprised that, after walking here and there, I could not tear myself away from these famous places.[88]

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[87] *Ibid*.
[88] *Ibid.*

Duke of Sora's Palace on Isola (1791), Richard Colt Hoare.

Romanelli evokes the enchanted garden of Armida from Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata* and describes a blissful land of great natural beauty where prodigal nature has scattered all her graces.

Duke of Sora's Palace on Isola (1791), Richard Colt Hoare.

Then his attention turns to other places where he notices the first traces of industry: he does not see the Fibreno factory, which was already very active, because it was hidden in the structures of the monastery and the church. This is an indirect but significant testimony to the fact that Beranger's works, although he spent money on machinery and the first buildings, were not so obvious and did not change the physical structure of the places. In fact, the first major changes were to take place in 1824, with the construction of the sheds next to the church, which had not even been mentioned in written works before.

The abbot meets a young man who invites him to continue his visit.

As luck would have it, I found there a young draughtsman who was drawing various plans and views of it, and I had him draw the two famous waterfalls, with the palace in the middle, which I keep at home as one of the most grateful views of our kingdom. Finally, to complete my journey, I had to go a little further to see the Fibreno river, so praised by Cicero, when it joins the Liri and makes it colder. All the way I saw nothing but cultivated fields and gardens, many new houses built for woolen mills, canals and waterways

that could be directed wherever one wished, and many factories of useful and sought-after arts.[89]

Valcatoio Waterfall, 1840. Raffaele Carelli.

The waterfall of Valcatoio was also for a long time an obligatory location for painters and illustrators, from Hackaert until the end of the 19th century. Above, a view by Raffaele Carelli from 1840 shows how construction began and how the landscape changed from the beginning of the century. Houses began to surround the waterfall.

The Valcatoio, together with the Cascata Grande, originally formed an island of foam that surrounded the old town and the Boncompagni Castle. Today, the area is completely built up and unrecognizable, and in particular the Valcatoio waterfall has been used to produce electricity, effectively drying up its fall. At that time, however, it was described by travelers as spectacular, on a par with the Cascata Grande.

[89] Domenico Romanelli, *ibid,* pp. 117-121.

Arriving at the confluence of the Liri and the Fibreno, Romanelli makes a surprising discovery: before the confluence, the Fibreno divides into two branches. One of these arms divides into two small islands: on one of these islands was the ancient monastery of San Domenico, Romanelli's original destination, since the monastery is believed to be the birthplace of Cicero.

By the same new road, therefore, that is always beaten as far as Sora opened in 1795 under the direction of General Don Giuseppe Parisi, from the Island of Sora, running always along the eastern bank of the Liri river, I arrived immediately at the mouth of the Fibreno.[90] Here a new spectacle surprised my senses. The Fibreno river, before merging its waters with the Liri, divides into two branches, and one of *Phorcique Marsici lacus latices, Pitoniumque flumen sub terram se volvens...*

One also notices the same coldness of the lake, and of the river, so that Cicero said that the Fibreno made the Liri colder, and under the small land of Lecce in a cave one hears a terrible murmur of water, which flows underground. It splits into another branch, so that it forms two small islands. In one of them, the smaller, stands a ruined monastery with a church dedicated to St Dominic Abbot. Common opinion recognises here the paternal villa of the Tulli family, and this is confirmed by many ruins of antiquity, which the site still presents.[91]

The place described by Romanelli was well known, illustrated several times some twenty years earlier by Richard Colt Hoare's widely circulated engravings, which showed it as wild. And San Domenico appeared surrounded by water, because at that time it was actually an island.

[90] Of course it refers to the Consular Road.
[91] *Ibid*.

St. Dominic (1791). Richard Colt Hoare.

The abbot then turns to the new mills that had been built there since 1806 and were well developed by 1819, where wool and paper were produced in Carnello.

I paused for a while to contemplate it, and to see the new factories for woolen mills that have been erected there, and then turned my way to another nearby islet called Carnello. It is said that this other small island formed by two branches of the same Fibreno River acquired its name from the blood shed there by the Christian martyrs during the fierce times of persecution.[92]

[92] *Ibid*.

St Dominic's Monastery (1791). Richard Colt Hoare.

About Carnello, Romanelli reports what was known from local sources: it was a place of massacre and burial of ancient Christians. Next to this memory, marked by the Church of Santa Restituta and ancient artifacts and ruins, one could see the industrial innovations of the time.

San Domenico today.

At first I stayed not a little to examine the paper mills, the valchiere, and the mills that had been established there, and then the ruins of the antiquities, from which arose the other opinion that this, and not that, was the fortunate island where the Tulli had their villa and where Marcus Cicero was born. [93]

After observing the signs of work and the workshops, but unfortunately without going into details, he reports another opinion, according to which Carnello itself, and not San Domenico, hid the ruins of the most famous villa of antiquity, the one where the great orator spent his leisure time and wrote. In this regard, whether it is true or a rhetorical invention, the discussion is carried on by a native of Isola, a cultured man, who defends the opinion just mentioned with some arguments:

[93] *Ibid*.

After carefully observing the two islands, that of San Domenico and that of Carnello, I decided, with Cicero's books in my hand, to decide which of the two could boast and display its glory. As luck would have it, at Carnello I met a well-educated young man from the island of Sora, with whom we immediately discussed this very important matter. He was quite convinced that Cicero's native villa was on the islet of Carnello, and he thought it would be a classic mistake for anyone to recognize it as the islet of San Domenico [...] we have, he said, a very clear passage from Cicero in his book of laws, in which he mentions this islet, and not the other, as his native villa. But which one, I asked, and which passage? Listen to it, he replied, for if you consider it carefully, you cannot but agree with me as to the true location of his villa.[94]

The young scholar reads to the elderly abbot a passage from Cicero's *De Legibus*, which recounts a dialog between his friend Atticus and the orator's brother Quintus as they walk along the road out of Arpino. Cicero promises Atticus that he will show him his father's villa, which stands on a small island of the Fibreno: a pleasant place where the river divides into two equal parts and forms a small island before flowing into the Liri, making it colder. According to the young islander, this description applies to Carnello and not to San Domenico, where, after the island, the Fibreno, instead of merging, flows into the Liri in three branches. The young man quotes various authorities, more or less important: Febonius, historian of the Marsi, Pacichelli, Cavelli and others. After listening to him, Romanelli did not agree. He explains that in an earlier passage of the same *De Legibus*, Book I, the villa of Cicero is mentioned, where Cicero, walking on a bank among poplars, together with Quintus and Atticus, arrives at the villa avita and the Arpinate fund. At the beginning of the second book, Atticus wants to stop at an island that already appears in the Fibreno. Romanelli argues that coming from Arpino and always traveling along the banks of the Liri, one first encounters the island of San Domenico and not Carnello.[95]

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[94] *Ibid*.
[95] Domenico Romanelli, *ibid*, pp. 121-131.

The Liri river in the Carnello area.

In the latter place, however, there was probably another family villa called Amaltea, where the great orator used to retreat for his studies. It was therefore concluded that Carnello was the site of Cicero's villa Amaltea.

The engraving above shows a view of the Liri near Carnello. The area of the Tower of Fullonica, which is a recurring feature in reproductions of this area, does not appear in the image because, in the illustrator's view, it is to the right, out of the frame.

What we see, however, is a confluence or convergence of several branches, which in this area occurs at Carnello or after Isola, but this is not the case. The real confluence between the Fibreno, which comes from the east, and the Liri, which comes from the Roveto valley, occurs where San Domenico stands today. In the nineteenth century, two islands were clearly visible, one at Carnello and the other at San Domenico, and this could cause debates among historians and geographers. In this area, rich in waterways, there were several river

islands, all of which attracted visitors and were the destination of trips by industrialists and guests of the Lefèbvre family, as we know from the diary of the industrialist's wife

Chapter 5

The debate.
Industries, economy and landscape

In the second and third decade of the century, a new industrial landscape, slowly developing and not always perceived as such, took its place in and along the agricultural and literary landscape of the Liri. The mills that caught the eye of Abbot Romanelli were the first industrial complexes of the paper industry, transformed from the older, smaller, workshop-like ones. In 1819 he also saw Santa Maria delle Forme, which had enriched its water rights by drawing water from the Fibreno River with a canal that at that time served the monks' mills, a canal enlarged by Beranger, but which the abbot did not consider alien to the landscape.

A few years earlier, the original plan of the Carnello mills had been extended with some buildings built on the small island in the middle of the river, which had been filled in over time and had lost its island character. The mills that the abbot visited in San Domenico were also part of the monastery and therefore archaic in appearance, and the same can be said of another industry that was established in 1816 in the former convent of San Francesco, near Isola Liri, where in 1812 he had obtained a concession to house a small textile factory by Gioacchino Manna. It was a small and barely visible factory that employed perhaps fifteen workers. Ten years later, Manna built a factory with a second wool mill with 15 spinning machines and 45 workers. The new factory was valued at 5000 ducats.[96]

[96] Luigi De Matteo. *Un'economia alle strette nel Mediterraneo*, Edizioni Scientifiche italiane, Naples 2013, pp. 142-144. On the history of Manna see also De Matteo Luigi, *Governo, credito e industria laniera*, Naples in La sede

Church of St. Anthony in Isola del Liri. Headquarters Opificio Manna, 1812.

These were still small, workshop-sized factories. Even Santa Maria delle Forme, which was destined to become a large factory, was very similar in 1819 to what it had been ten or twenty years before. As you walked by, you could see the interventions, a wall, the animation of a factory, the noise of machines, but it was still not an invasive presence. The changes that had taken place inside, the work of the machines that had come from France, were not felt by the abbot. Perhaps he passed by at a time when the factory was closed; the fact remains that there was industry there, and that fact was known but not recorded.

Nevertheless, the peculiar location of these first industries in the valley makes it clear that something revolutionary had happened in the area. Romanelli does not specify it to his reader, perhaps because it was already known at the time, but industrialization, or as it was called at the time, machinism, came there. The suppression of many monastic orders, which over the centuries had used the water for grinding grain or tanning hides or for agriculture, had "liberated" the rights of use from their control and that of the city corporations, to transfer them to private

dell'istituto 1984, pp. 60-102; and *Il sotto intendente all'intendente*, Sora 23 July 1830. ASC, IB, AC 2359.

entrepreneurs, often foreigners, the bearers of interests emanating directly from the capital of the kingdom. Since the new liberal order considered entrepreneurs as part of a movement of utility for the nation, these goods were therefore considered free, even if they were not free. This change in the conception of the right to use water was at the origin of the industrial revolution in the basin.

The "liberated" water, according to the new laws, was made available to the public, which was not the public as we understand it today, and in fact, in this public conception, not everyone could use it. It was necessary to have the resources to make the necessary investments to turn this water into a source of industrial energy. This was not done through consortia or associations of small artisans as elsewhere, but through the use of concentrated capital.

Despite Romanelli's portrayal of the mills as a natural product, almost as natural as the landscape, industrial capitalism had brought violent and sudden changes to the Liri Valley, heralded by a bloody war of invasion. This was not without dramatic consequences: families thrown onto the pavement, religious people displaced by the hundreds, families forced to emigrate or wander. It must be remembered that farms and peasants, dependent on centuries-old relationships with monastic orders, found themselves overnight in a legal and judicial vacuum. Rights were renegotiated with the new powers, but not always successfully. The massacres perpetrated by foreign soldiers some twenty years earlier had also given rise to a new kind of banditry, initially formed for ideological reasons and religious resistance - these bandits had been "banished" from their lands - the insurgencies, but which had then been replaced by real, criminal banditry.

The peripheral area of the Liri Valley had been part of the broad stage of the Napoleonic wars that had shaken all of Europe. It is no coincidence that in Civita d'Antino, just beyond the mouth of the Roveto Valley, north of Sora and a few kilometers south of Isola, in Fontechiari, where the Lefèbvre family had bought some land, there were two Napoleonic cemeteries with burials of Frenchmen and soldiers of the Grande Armée. The main consequences of the imperial rule on the local way of life were the introduction of economic freedoms

related to the liberalization of land and water. These changes were ultimately accepted and celebrated by the highest authorities of the Kingdom of Naples, even after the end of French rule. In short, change was considered inevitable in the eyes of contemporary observers: it was the march of progress. The enthusiastic descriptions of Isola as a place of economic freedom, of progress, of life in harmony with nature, were eloquent testimony to this new credo. The case of the Manifatture del Fibreno and the paper and wool factories in Carnello, but also the factories of the Boncompagni Castle or the Manna family in Isola, reinforced this narrative.

In 1829, ten years after Abbot Romanelli's visit, other testimonies were recorded, that of Raffale Carelli, a painter, and of Domenico Cuciniello and Lorenzo Bianchi, historians, writers and journalists. The former, whom we have already met, was the author, among other things, of *La cascata del Liri,* reproduced in one of the volumes of the beautiful *Viaggio pittorico nel Regno delle Due Sicilie (Pictorial Journey in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies)*, accompanied by his pictures. He commented on the richness of the water of the waterfall that moved the wheels and cylinders for the production of wool 'which at the time honoured the ancient palace of the Dukes of Sora that the government donated to the industry of the nation'.[97] It was stated that the estates of the Dukes of Sora had been sold by the Boncompagni to the government and that the government had donated them "to the nation", that is, to the common good that could make the best use of them for the people. Water, for civilized nations that use it to their advantage, is a source of wealth and power for many kinds of machines, Carelli continued, and progress would be the ability to harness the great potential of a river to improve the common prosperity, the strength of industry and the wealth of the whole community.

The authors of the work portrayed the Liri and the Fibreno as rivers that, with their humor, spread so much power, energy and prosperity

[97] Raffaele Carelli, 'Cascata del Fibreno', in *Viaggio pittorico nel Regno delle Due Sicilie dedicato a sua maestà il re Francesco I*, First ed., Domenico Cuciniello e Lorenzo Bianchi, Naples 1829, p. 35.

that it became impossible to say whether their fame was linked more to history and the natural beauty they formed, or to the usefulness they had for the industriousness of men. Utility became their beauty, and history remained a mute witness to progress, no longer standing as the ultimate value. These were significant changes in mentality: utility blessed the people who lived on the banks of these rivers. This also explains the fame of the Lefèbvre factories: the owners knew how to enhance nature, culture and industry with a clever strategy of hospitality that involved hundreds of people from all nations. The authors of the voyage described the course of the Liri as far as the island of Carnello, where the river narrows between gentle cascades and becomes a small pond from which it divides into channels, forming many small islands connected by rural bridges. The beauties of the place deserve a careful description.

> The whole place looks like a very precious garden, created more by art than by nature, and its main ornament is a long, winding, charming boulevard that offers one of those walks that are now called romantic. Thousands of varied and enchanting vistas will delight you... before passing through the Canale delle Forme, as if to announce its great waterfall, here the Liri breaks joyfully between descending rocks, arranged with peculiar regularity in the form of five steps, among trees and shrubs full of foliage. The water, which rushes back and forth, rumbles, foams and widens into white waves, finally comes together in a wide, short and regular waterfall.[98]

The authors created here an icon representing the national path towards industrialization, where art, natural history and progress were inseparable (although there is some confusion between a stretch of the Liri and the Canale delle Forme). As if, in this lucky district, beauty could never be separated from the usefulness of those waters that moved the wheels and cylinders of the wool industry that adorned the ancient ducal palace.

But when Cuciniello and Bianchi wrote and Carelli illustrated, the area had already undergone considerable changes. With the

[98] Raffaele Carelli, *'Cascata del Fibreno', op. cit.*, p. 36.

construction of the locks, the water intakes of the Fibreno, the walled Canale delle Forme, the enlargement of the Lefèbvre factory with at least two large sheds, the construction of the factory next to the Zino wool mill, and many other smaller works already completed, the first effects on the environment could be seen.

The latter were a far cry from the views of Hoare and the descriptions of the Swiss naturalist some 40 years earlier. In between was the Industrial Revolution, the age of machines that was beginning to unleash its power. But this was a time when the Romantic sublime could still integrate industry and culture, economy and natural landscape, without undue problems of logic or ideology. Carelli's views, which grace the three beautiful volumes of the *Pictorial Journey,* prove this. In their account, Cuciniello and Bianchi, speaking of the castle of Isola transformed into a factory, point to the changes in power that gave rise to the process of industrialisation in the valley.

Isola del Liri, Cascata del Valcatoio (19th cent. about 1828).
Raffaele Carelli.

The authors describe one of the "national" industries by referring to the textile industry in Sant'Antonio owned by Gioacchino Manna, one of the most powerful industrialists in the valley. A detail that cannot be overlooked in Carelli's 1828 painting is the smoke coming from the chimney of the Boncompagni Castle, a trace of one of the factories that operated there: the castle smokes because of industry, not because of the presence of feudal lords.

This narrative of the industrial landscape was well aware of the interplay of social forces within this local environment and aimed to legitimize the current power arrangements. It did so by installing energy within a natural order that was also symbolically dominant and restored by politicians. Recovered from feudal ownership and wisely redirected by the government for possible use in private industry, the Liri and Fibreno, along with the many other smaller rivers such as the Magnene, could thus realize their full beauty and utility and contribute to the glory of the nation.

Detail of the previous painting.
The Boncompagni Castle.

This explains the extraordinary attention paid to these industries, especially the larger ones, which were also visited by kings. But while Zino did not play the cultural game of recycling the landscape, Lefèbvre took full advantage of this ideology, which was both industrial and romantic.

In this sense, the narrative of the industrial landscape had appropriated the language of history and literature and brought it into a broader social discourse that included economic and environmental change. Another text from a few years later is significant, when the industrial structure of the Zino paper mills was completed and the Lefèbvre mills were known to be state-of-the-art. A mention of the "endless machine" can be found in the account of the painter Étienne-Jean Delécluze (1781-1863), already quoted and included in his memoirs, *Souvenirs de Soixante Années*, published in 1862, or in the Extraits, which had many editions. In the Impressions romaines, he speaks of Isola, the Lefèbvre factory and the beauty of the places.

Étienne-Jean Delécluze, pupil of David,
portrayed here by Ingres in 1856.

In 1836, the *Poliorama pittoresco*, a popular cultural journal of Naples, which devoted many articles to the area, published a description of the Isola di Sora that seems to us a true manifesto of the new economic liberalism and the prosperity that it had brought. And yet this landscape, described as a sunny valley with pleasant hills, small waterfalls and gentle cultivated slopes, became the prelude to the deep thunder, the roar of the falling water, the incessant beating of the gullies working the ashes.

The author of the article was an 'Englishman' who travelled to the Liri Valley in 1836, when the industries had grown even bigger. This is his account:

At 9 a.m. I arrived at the famous waterfalls of the island (called Sora), perhaps even more beautiful than those of Tivoli. The Liri and Fibreno Rivers, after mixing their waters for a short distance, reach the Tower, which dominates the city, through a narrow riverbed, where they divide into two branches: the left one rushes down a rocky slope that reflects its limpid water with increasing speed; the right one rushes vertically from enormous heights, producing a roar so deafening that the voice of the person next to it can hardly be heard. My Byron would have called it an inferno of water. The dazzling sun vibrated its rays on the waves at the point where they began their leap, making them resemble rays of gold and silver. Indeed, the great masses of water fell with incredible rapidity, and from such a high fall they were reduced, as it were, to silvery dust, and as soon as they touched the rocks of the bottom, which rose again and melted into rain and clouds of light, the wind scattered them here and there. I began to draw the wonderful scene; but remembering that the famous Hackaert had painted it, I refrained from beginning the work.

I was already near Cicero's villa, half a mile from the island; so I went up the river by the consular road, feeling in my heart involuntary feelings of homage and sadness. I had the works of that great man with me; I wanted to see in the Book of Laws how he described his house, and to my surprise I found the Fibreno River still divided into two equal branches, passing through a small island covered with trees, where he used to retire when he had some special work to do; the clarity and speed of the water, murmuring as it flowed through

a stony bed, the shade and green of its banks, shaded by tall poplars, and above all the magnificent waterfall in the Liri, which presented a beautiful scene.[99]

The article brings up contradictory images of nostalgia, memory, change, but also of romantic ecstasy and industrial production. Waterfalls are described as 'famous', and indeed they were, becoming the subject of so many important English, French, Italian and German painters. For the first time in the century, the beauty of waterfalls was depicted in both its natural characteristics and its industrial, artificial, mechanical character. The picturesque of the time consisted of both. Quoting Lord Byron, who described the cataract as a sublime inferno of water, the author depicted it as a natural setting in which the industrious and active population of a small town moved. It is unclear whether the author of this piece was actually an Englishman.

Another author worth mentioning is Antonio Fazzini, who also saw the principles of political economy, considered the sublime science of the 18th century, finally reach their sacred goal in the paper production and the woolen cloth mills. Witness to these changes was the ancient tower of the Ducal Palace, which was no longer the stage of feudal oppression, but a workshop of ingenuity and justice, where industry and mechanical arts combined to work for production. The author, who was allowed to enter the Palazzo Boncompagni, wandered through the labyrinth of staircases of the ancient palace and its rooms, passed several times through the dark underground rooms where the thunder of water and the echo of monotonous fullonic machines resounded. Then he went to the foot of the second waterfall, where the water with its fury and foam lay on a lonely and silent bed of sand. There, at the end of his literary tour, Isola Liri became "one of the most romantic lands in the kingdom".[100] The machines in the mills have been dismantled, although a few millstones remain, like the one in the

[99] *Frammento del viaggio di un inglese nel Regno di Napoli,* Poliorama Pittoresco, Anno I, Semestre I, Tipografia Litografia del Poliorama Pittoresco, Napoli 1836, pp. 302-303.
[100] Antonio Fazzini, *Isola di Sora,* Poliorama Pittoresco, Anno I, Semestre II, Tipografia Litografia del Poliorama Pittoresco, Naples 1836, p. 91.

official images of the castle, now used for representation and ceremonies. The language of political economy and the language of the sublime mix again, but in a special way in this text, to forge a new vision of the landscape that tells a story of progress, from feudalism to industry, from the idyllic rural landscape of the past - still visible - to the industrious city.

No real contradictions were seen in this vision, no aesthetic contrasts that disturbed the Romantic sensibility. What is more, the beauty of the harmony achieved was enhanced by the fact that the new factories were inserted into ancient structures, as in the case of the Castle of Boncompagni, the Monastery of the Forme, St. Anthony, or the landscape viewed from venerable ruins such as Carnello, with the ancient church of Santa Restituta.

The most striking effect of this representation is its ability to naturalize social and environmental changes, hiding the oppressive character of industrialization in nature, but also in human relations. In fact, in the damp and noisy dungeons of the ducal palace ruled by the new industrial masters Lambert and Manna, which Fazzini visited, there were workers working in poor conditions. This place, which had once symbolized feudal power, was now the stage for a more modern form of time management, that of factory work, where hundreds of women, men and children followed the rhythm of the monotonous beating of water-driven machines, as happened in the castle. Fazzini found this fascinating, almost a music of the new age.

Moreover, water itself was subject to a process of domination, since this building was only one of dozens of mechanized sites concentrated along a short strip of the river basin to take advantage of the local availability of energy. Technology had managed to harness the hydraulic power of both flowing water and water heated by steam boilers in ever more ingenious and complex ways, opening up new, unprecedented possibilities that Fazzini looked forward to with wonder and anticipation. The progress of this vision can be studied by observing the quiet, reassuring language of landscape or pastoral fiction in other texts written during the same period. And it is surprising, as mentioned at the beginning, how many of these texts exist and how they exist in

visits to obligatory "places" such as Carnello, le Forme, San Domenico, the "little waterfalls" later incorporated into the Lefèbvre Park, or the second Manna wool mill in San Francesco.

In 1845, at an international scientific conference in Naples, the economist Matteo de Augustinis (1799-1845) took this process of transliteration to its peak, describing Isola Liri as the "Manchester of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies", a nickname that would last for centuries and that in fact did not do justice to the situation: Manchester was a hell of coke and fumes, furnaces and huge factories, the symbol of oppression that inspired Marx and Engels in their works. Fazzini wanted to signify its modernity.

Well, to tell the truth, the Liri Valley can be said to be a vast and almost unique factory; there are so many houses and workshops and so many industrial plants where all kinds of cloth and paper are prepared and produced. The roar and splash of those enchanting waterfalls and cascades; the murmur of the water, at every moment broken and contrite, and yet made querulous and frothy; the confused squeaking of the machines and wheels; the sight of the worshipped waters turned to a thousand colors by the variety of dyes; the meeting of endless wools and cloths, of rags and piles of paper; the jumble of wagons and carts in all the streets, in all the directions; everything you see around you tells you that you are in the valley of work and industry, as well as in the valley of leisure, rest and study. It is not surprising, then, that its textiles and its papers are a large part of both Sicily and the rest of the world. To be honest, if not ten, at least eight twelfths of the cloth and beaver consumed in this kingdom, which are not at all coarse and native, are produced in the said industrious valley, and are commonly called d'Arpino, from the name of the land that surpasses all others in manufacture. Nor must we say anything different about paper, with this difference that if Liri beats Fibreno, and Arpino beats Sora and Isola for cloth, the latter win for paper.[101]

[101] Matteo De Augustinis, *Della Valle del Liri e delle sue industrie, in Agli scienziati d'Italia del VII Congresso* (ibid. 1845); on his figure and work: Parente Luigi, *Ideologia politica e realtà sociale nell'attività pubblicistica di Matteo de Augustinis*, in "Archivio storico per le provincie napoletane", s. 3, XI (1973), pp. 29-137.

De Augustinis was a proponent of liberalism and fought for the abolition of tariffs and taxes that hindered early progress. Between 1844 and 1845 he got into trouble for his overly radical liberal ideas and was imprisoned for several months before being released. This lecture at the Accademia Pontaniana was his last contribution before his sudden death, probably of a heart attack, in October 1845. In the Liri Valley he saw the miracle of a "liberal" industry, with all the limitations of the time. There, the "confused squeaking of machines and wheels" recalls the "valley of work and industry," as it was already in "idleness, rest, and study. So there is no solution of continuity.

After mentioning the records of Arpino and Isola and the industrious life of the inhabitants of the Liri Valley, who were mainly farmers, De Augustinis mentions for the first time the industrialists Courrier, Polsinelli, Zino, Lefèbvre, Sorvillo, Meuricoffre - financiers and industrialists - and the pure industrialists such as Ciccodicola, Manna, Visocchi, who were to be the protagonists of the industrial economy of the area for over a century. And he points out the primacy of the Lefèbvre paper mill, "the first in Italy".

And he would be mistaken if he thought that the hospices of which we speak were small, modest, and without machinery, for as far as paper mills are concerned, it is now known that Mr. Lefebvre's Fibreno mill is the first in Italy, and not inferior to the largest and best in Europe; the range of qualities, colors, sizes, and prices is wide and varied, and the quantity of these papers is truly prodigious. Rivals, and in some respects equals, are the paper mills of Messrs. Sorvillo and Meuricroffe, on the one hand, and Courrier and Co. on the other. The wool mills of Pulsinelli and Zino have for many years maintained such a high level of production and quality in the manufacture of ordinary beaver and good cloths for the middle and working classes (they do not make very fine ones), that it can be clearly affirmed that there is no one who can now compete with them for supremacy in the whole kingdom and the whole Italian peninsula. [...] the permanent market of 30 million men will allow the reduction of tariffs, the lowering of prices, the improvement of quality, and will raise this unique valley in Italy to the peak of its prosperity, to the highest level of manufacturing industry. If we leave aside generalities, the number of

factories in the entire Liri Valley, including the adjoining Atina Valley, bathed by the Melfi River, is no less than 24 of the first and second order, of which 15 are wool mills and nine are paper mills. Among the wool mills, those of Polsinelli, Zino, Ciccodicola and Manna stand out, and among the paper mills, those of Lefebvre, Sorvillo, Courrier, Visocchi and others.[102]

De Augustinis was very well informed and, had he not died a few months later, would probably have written other interesting texts on the factories of the Liri-Fibreno valley and nearby Menfi. From the way he writes, it seems that he visited the Fibreno factory, whose characteristics and samples he knew. Later, in the same text, he mentions the 32 cloth factories of Arpino with their 7,000 employees, which, together with the allied industries, manage to employ ¾ of the population. The economist's description of these areas for his foreign colleagues is a celebration of the industrial landscape in its most artificial form and a powerful and rare exercise in environmental reinvention. For him, the valley had become like a giant factory, with so many buildings and workshops and so much mechanized industry. The noise and the splashing water, the confused squeaking of machines and wheels, the sight of the exploited water tinted in a thousand colors by the variety of dyes, the meeting of wools, cloths, rags and piles of paper are for him a new kind of beauty, and the dyed water is not perceived as pollution. And then the chase in the streets of carts and wagons going in all directions says that this is the valley of work and industry, as it was in the past of idleness, rest and study.

Here we recognize an evolution of the narrative of progress and environmental and social transformation. In just a few sentences, the author succeeds in transforming the poisonous effects of the factories into a sign of increased ability to dominate nature, sanctioning the definitive closure of the previous idleness - as if agriculture had led to idleness - replaced by work.[103]

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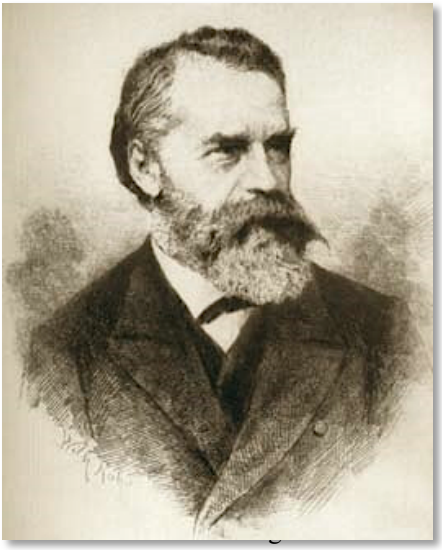
[102] *Ibid*.

[103] Stefania Barca, *A "Natural" Capitalism. Water and the Making of the Industrial Landscape*, in *Nature and History in Modern Italy*, ed. Donald Worster, Ohio University press, Athens, Ohio 2010. pp. 224-225.

With the introduction of the ideas of political economy into the narrative of the industrial landscape, water was subjected to an ever-increasing process of dematerialization, transforming it into an abstract mechanical and atomized commodity, causing it to temporarily lose its landscape-making properties. The Liri and Fibreno rivers were now compared to the gold mines of the New World because, in the scientific terms of economic science, they produced more value than the latter when they set machines in motion in profitable sectors such as paper.



Ferdinand Gregorovius

This can be seen in the words of the German historian Ferdinand Gregorovius (1821-1891), who traveled through the Naples area and the Liri Valley between 1854 and 1855, meeting Charles Lefèbvre and becoming his guest. In one of his books, he tells a rather romantic story of how he came to the city without any means and transformed the banks of the River Liri into an Eldorado by extracting pure gold from the power of the water, eventually obtaining the title of Count and leaving his son Ernesto an industry and many millions of ducats. This

story recalls that he called the Forme canal the "golden rod", a locution attested several times by his nephew André-Isidore Lefèbvre, recalling the gold metaphor. Obviously, Lefèbvre transferred this metaphor to Gregorovius in a meeting and dialog that is not better specified.

Gregorovius was at that time the leading German historian specialized in Italy. He traveled all over Italy for about twenty years and left many volumes of travel reports. What he wrote about Lefèbvre and the Fibreno factory is very significant, both for the weight of the character and the account he left us, and deserves to be quoted in full because it is the description that contains the most detail among those left by so many travelers.

Having lost so much precious time, I could hardly see Isola at sunset because it was already night. This small village is located on a beautiful island of the Liri, shaded by many plants. At the far end of the island, the emerald waters of the river rush down like a waterfall. Above the island rises a cliff, about 80 feet high, with the ruins of an ancient castle on top. The sound of the water can be heard from afar, and as you approach, the view is enlivened by the river itself and the many canals that flow into it, irrigating gardens populated by beautiful plane and pine trees and rich in the wonderful vegetation of southern countries when bathed by water.

Here the river is already swollen, because just above it it receives the tribute of the Fibreno; nor does it serve only to make the fields fertile, but it also gives movement to several cloth and paper factories that employ several thousand workers, thus spreading wealth and prosperity in the region.

Both Isola and Sora are industrial towns, and the good road that connects them is lined with factories, small villas and gardens. It is an oasis of wonderful cultivation that has been created since the beginning of this century, and it is a pleasure to finally find the spectacle of human activity in these regions so beautiful and so neglected.

By the light of the full moon I went to Sora, only an hour's journey away, on a char-à-banc, as the Neapolitan curricula are called here, with a French word, because the use of these one-horse carts already begins here, and as in Naples the poor nag is driven at a gallop by the whip. The moonlight makes this road, already beautiful, and all these modern buildings even more beautiful, because the prosperity of Sora and Isola dates back only to the beginning of this century; today it makes a deep impression on those who come

from the Roman provinces, where everything is ancient, where everything belongs to the papacy, to history, where the dark and obscure cities that rise from the mountains go back to the times of Janus and Evander. The present factories, mostly made of paper, built in a grand manner and according to the best modern systems, owe their origin to the French of Murat's time, and above all to a certain Le Febvre, who, having come here poor, found a true Eldorado on the banks of the Liri, and succeeded in extracting pure gold from the power of its waters. He bequeathed these factories and several millions to his son. The King of Naples, I think it was Ferdinand II, gave this family the title of Counts, a title which they well deserved; for a district which is not very well cultivated owes its rich life, which will not disappear, but will probably increase, to the inventive talent of this foreigner.[297] The sight of what human activity can accomplish is always a source of great satisfaction, even where there are frequent examples of it, as in England, in Germany, in France; everyone can therefore imagine the impression it makes on those who visit the Kingdom of Naples, where, unfortunately, such activity is rare.

The Le Febvre paper mill in Liri and the other in Fibreno are two large buildings. It is a pleasure to see this crowd of workers intent on making, I would almost say melting, paper; for all that liquid pulp flows like a dense river of milk and, passing over heated cylinders, it unwinds into an endless white streak, ready to receive the writer's thoughts. It is impossible to see this white river flowing without thinking of the many uses of this marvelous material that dominates life and is called paper, for photographs, for love letters, and in so many other forms that unite or divide life!

Near Isola, I was accommodated in a villa whose kind owner took me to the Count's park, a park that can easily compete with those of the Roman villas. Of course, the Princes Doria or Borghese might envy Count Le Febvre the abundance of water, which does not need to be provided by art, because a branch of the Fibreno runs through his wood, first rushing from rock to rock with small waterfalls, then widening into a calm and charming little lake. Its banks are full of beautiful plants, pleasant meadows; there are shady paths, secluded corners, flowers in abundance; this park is, in a word, a little Tivoli, a paradise of nymphs, where it would be a real enchantment to stroll, to rest, to read and to fantasize freely.[104]

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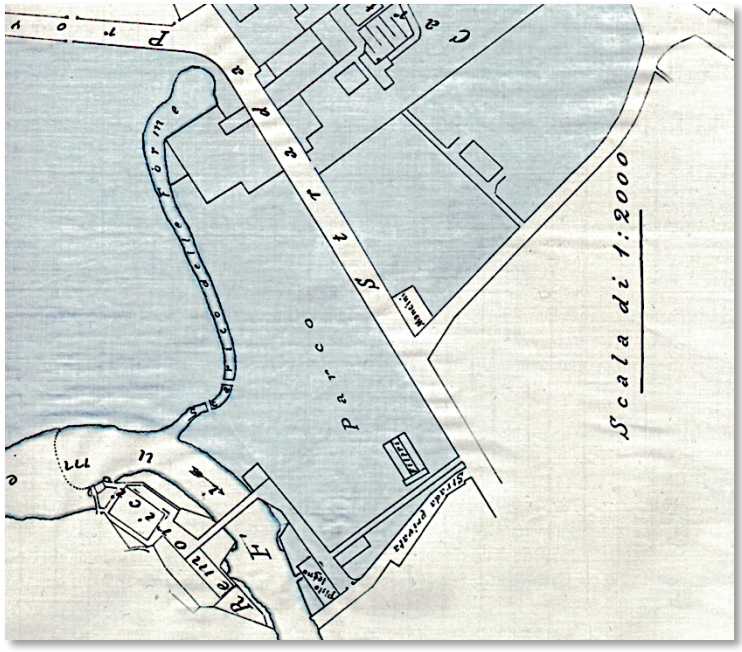
[104] Ferdinand Gregorovius, *Passeggiate per l'Italia,* trad. it., I, Carboni Editore, Rome 1906, pp. 218-221.

The language of the "sublime" of the industrial landscape is still used here to describe the magnificent buildings of Lefèbvre's two factories and the gardens of his villa on the banks of the Liri.

Villa d'Este in Tivoli.

When Gregorovius sees these gardens enriched with canals, paths, waterways, and secluded corners, so that they resemble a small Tivoli, a paradise of water lilies, he makes it a celebration of industrial domination over water. It may seem an exaggeration - the Villa d'Este at Tivoli was associated with one of the most famous Renaissance gardens in history, full of fountains, waterfalls and cascades - but it was a believable perception. In addition, Rosanne Lefèbvre's diary was a constant record of her guests' amazement at the water features, which she called cascades: waterfalls coming from many sides that were the beauty of the garden and the richness of the house. She and others called them "cascades.



Lefèbvre factory and park extension.

One of the maps drawn at the end of the nineteenth century, during the negotiations for the sale of the factory, shows that the Lefèbvre Park continued beyond the provincial road, then Tavernanuova, sloping down towards the Liri River, and that its romantic variety was therefore much greater than one might think, literally enveloping the factory, certainly the Soffondo and the Remorici Pistolegno. The comparison made by Gregorovius between the Cascatelle Park and the waters of Tivoli finds an echo in a 19th century Italian school painting depicting Tivoli.

View of Isola del Liri with waterfall (19th century),
long interpreted as a view of Tivoli.

Well, until recently, probably because of some similarity, this landscape painted by an unknown painter was called *Veduta di Isola del Liri con cascata (View of Isola del Liri with Waterfall)*. It almost seems that Gregorovius knew this work and that its erroneous attribution influenced him.

Magnene stream that flows through the still existing portion of the Lefèbvre Park.

Returning to Gregorovius' description, it can be considered the summa of the landscape narrative of the Liri Valley. In his eyes, the basin was an enchanted place, and the river, which flowed in a meandering course, with its deep green water and banks of tall poplars, already mentioned by Cicero, was compared to a river in Germany. Its banks were enchanting and gave a melodious, dreamlike sound on that sunny day when Gregorovius passed by on the unpaved but well-maintained provincial road. The trees were still numerous, the buildings scarce, and certainly the smell was of the countryside: medieval Italy, of the communes and castles that Gregorovius had studied and loved so much, and that of the emerging industry, did not seem at odds in

Monsieur Lefèbvre's factory. Now the town had a good paved road connecting it directly with Naples, with post stations and refreshment places, and a modern industrial life, and all coexisted in harmony.

Traveling along the Liri in the direction of Isola, the author discovered the presence of the industrial élite, indicated by the splendid villas - at that time he could only meet the Lefèbvre - and the industrial workshops that could be seen through the trees. Although the traveler was more attracted by the beauty of the landscape, the lush vegetation typical of the south, the sound of waterfalls and rapids, the sight of countless canals called "forms" that harnessed water, he observed how the abundant water flowing around Isola empowered various industries. Reading his account, one understands that he visited the factory where he met Charles or, more likely, Ernesto. And in the factory, the great historian marveled at how "the crowd of workers" almost melts the paper when "this liquid pulp flows like a dense stream of milk and, passing over heated cylinders, unfolds into an endless white strip, ready to receive the writer's thought".[105]

The image becomes poetic, lyrical, full of wonder.

[105] *Ibid*.

View of Palazzo Lefèbvre coming from Isola.

Arriving from Isola, the palace appeared as it does today: flanked by tall trees on the left, after a long street showing orchards, bordered on one side by a low wall and on the other by a row of buildings.

Coming from the opposite direction, towards Sora or Carnello, the palace appeared even more majestic: a gate bordered the garden and the façade began on the left, with the entrance to the former convent built in classical forms, and the rest in the same style concealed the industrial facilities.

View of Palazzo Lefèbvre from Sora-Carnello.

For a long time this part was left free, with a simple gate, bordered by plants. The beautiful garden is a leitmotif noted by travellers. Through the cast-iron gate, carriages parked at the front of the palace entered. Thus the harmony between nature, history and industry appeared particularly pronounced even to eyes as attentive as Gregorovius'.

His account, which speaks of a crowd of workers and describes the continuous machine in operation with its white paste in 1855, shows us the Manifattura del Fibreno in its heyday, when Charles was still alive and Ernesto was the administrator.

Palazzo Lefèbvre with the 'chalet' in the foreground.

The last section of the Palace, in the foreground of the photograph, known as the Châlet, was built in 1855-56 together with the Villa and the San Carlo factory. Built in a more modest style than the neoclassical style of the rest of the Palace, it was used to house the staff and escorts of important guests. Behind one side of the cloister, around which the rooms of Lefèbvre's servants were arranged, is the large and tall Stracceria building, built in 1845. From there you could hear the chatter of the rag-pickers. On the ground floor of this building there was a storeroom and later, probably not very noisy, ash sifters and washing machines. As for the cloister, it should be seen as a familiar passageway between the different wings of the building and the factory.

Cloister, part of the Lefèbvre residence behind which stands the tall Stracceria building built in 1830.

Chapter 6

A season of death

Romantic' deaths

The suicide by *acès de folie* of Martin, an old Lefèbvre employee, at the 'cascades' is a change of atmosphere. Nothing will ever be the same again. The man's tragic gesture, for unknown reasons, had turned this place of wonder and carefreeness into a 'subject of sadness'.[106] The death, on 7 April 1842, of Eugénie de Mun, wife of Adrien and mother of Albert (1841-1914) marked a change of mood in Rosanne's mind too.[107] The first Flavia had died in her swaddling clothes, and Léon had left them when he was a child: his mother thought of them as angels, and this comforted her, as André-Isidore observed. It was a strong, constant pain, but one that could be medicated and become a sweet memory, consoled by the spirit of religion. But Flavia's death seemed too cruel: it wiped out a whole world, a great project, the real and symbolic link between the Lefèbvre family and France; the emotional (and economic) investments linked to Doucy; the beautiful fairy tale of the maiden who found her prince.

In short, a dream turned into a project that could change the family's future faded away, leaving not even a grandchild to console them. This is what the diary says about the young woman's deteriorating health and the events that followed.

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[106] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, p. 23.

[107] Adrien was to become the most important Catholic politician of 19th century France. Legitimist and supporter of the Count of Chambord until his death in 1883, he accepted the *République* after the *ralliement* proposed by the Pope.

The fatal journey began on 5 April 1842 on the boat 'Francesco I' from Naples.[108] She and her husband, along with Marie and the entourage, left with the aforementioned couple, Adrien and Eugénie de Mun. On April 6, Eugénie became ill on the boat and died in Palermo on the morning of April 7, a few hours after disembarking. Nothing foreshadowed the tragic deterioration of her condition. His death, or rather the events of his post-mortem, are narrated by Flavia and Raoul in letters that have attracted the attention of a great French historian, Philippe Ariès, who has studied the "representation" of death narrated in these letters. Raoul, recounting the story of Eugénie's death (the La Ferronnays family had suffered a chain of grief in just a few years), writes

> On 5 April, leaving Naples for Palermo, a journey that probably hastened his end, he tried to write to Pauline but could go no further than the first words 'Dear sister of my life...'. Death is swift and sweet: the sick woman was too weak to get used to the habitual staging. One of those present - and there were always some, even when the show was short and poorly staged - wrote: 'this morning at 7.8, I witnessed the death or rather the glorification of an angel [...] She had ceased to live without shock, without effort, in a word as sweetly as she had lived' (*Letter from the Marquis de Raigecourt to the Abbé Gerbert*).[109]

Speaking of 'representation', Ariès refers to a way of 'staging' one's own and others' death in writing, entirely romantic and inspired by a strong religious sentiment. Taken by death suddenly, Eugénie had not been able to say her last, extreme words to those around her: Flavia, Raoul and Albert. However, Ariès did not know the letter written by Flavia Lefèbvre (and copied by André-Isidore) that could have confirmed his thesis of the staged death of Catholics in French Romanticism. The same "staging" that Flavia's stepdaughter, Marie de Raigecourt, would write about Flavia's death a year and a half later. Moreover, reading Pauline de la Ferronnays's account, it is clear that

[108] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, p. 60.
[109] Philippe Ariès in his book *L'uomo e la morte dal medioevo ad oggi,* Mondadori, Milan 1980, p. 489.

Flavia also suffered from tuberculosis - a disease never mentioned, not even by another name - as she was often bedridden. In fact, doctors prescribed trips to dry and warm places.[110] But these voyages also involved long waits in quarantine on damp ships that were certainly unsuitable for a tuberculosis patient, a risk factor that doctors of the time did not seem to consider.

On 9 April - the day set for departure to Constantinople - Flavia wrote a letter to her mother in which she expressed her anxieties, forebodings of death, and the impressions her visit to the Capuchin Crypt in that city had caused her.

Palermo, 9 April 1842,

[...] I am leaving tonight, my good mother, and I will write to you later about how I spend my days on the road, so that the steamer that leaves the day after tomorrow will bring you news. I want to recapitulate a little the events that have taken place in the last two days, because I think they may interest you; when I say events [...] alas! Only one event happened, and a very cruel one at that. But all the details that follow (and necessarily!) have filled these two very long days so much that it seems that many more things have been done, many more trials have been overcome. I will therefore write to you later, an hour after dinner, about this dear friend: it was 9 a.m.; the day had been very long. The pain of poor Adrian is so cruel, in spite of the sweetness of his resignation, that it hurts to see him: he was praying by his bed, Eugénie's little hat in his hand, and his prayer book on top of his books; so pious, so sweet. Poor boy! He offered God all his heart, all his strength, and this immense sacrifice. I stayed by Raoul's side, and he made me promise never to enter that room again; he thought it would make too vivid an impression on me. Then, at six o'clock in the evening, Raoul, Messrs. Gontaut and d'Ursel, Adrian's two cousins, had the body taken to a certain Capuchin convent, which, I remind you, my dear mother, I had seen another time with the unfortunate Mr. de Mallet. Nothing has ever made a more profoundly sad impression on me than the sight of that convent; I have sworn never to set foot there again [...] The very memory of it gives me shivers of horror. In short, there lie the remains of

[110] Mrs. Augustus Craven (Pauline Marie Armand de la Ferronnays) *A sister's story,* The Catholic Publication Society, New York 1968, p. 467. Flavia died a year after Eugénie; see also AB XIX 4482, vol. IX, p. 259.

my poor friend; God's ways are deep and impenetrable! Adrian wanted to go there, and Raoul had to prevent him with a certain rudeness and authority; the poor boy, so sweet, resigned himself to staying without complaining [...] I was appointed to watch over him at the moment of this eternal separation! Dear Mother, do you not see in this a positive and well manifested intention of Providence? In this trip that I did not want to make, and Raoul, who decided to make it at Eugénie's first word. I, who overcame all obstacles, all imaginable repugnances (and fought them well in the depths of my soul) to undertake it! [...] I felt as if an invisible hand was pressing me to do it [...] and now I see well that it was written up there; it was in my destiny to close my eyes to this friend for whom I myself now feel more adoration than friendship [...] I have often tried to imitate her virtues during the 12 years that I have known her. God allowed me to personally witness her sweet death, to give me a shattering example of gentleness, patience, angelic piety and perseverance [...] I have never seen such piety as that of poor Adrian, and he is truly admirable. Where would he be if he did not have this religion that sustains him, comforts him, makes him live in the moment of another world? Moreover, in the two hours we spent together, he said such touching things about his poor Eugénie, he told me such interesting details about this angel of goodness who will live all in God after his death. He knows me very little, but our grief unites us. She saw how I shared her grief, she knew that Eugénie loved me, and so she saw in me a friend, from that moment on, and no longer a stranger. Meanwhile, something sublime bound us together; we were, he, Raoul and I, the only witnesses of this immense suffering, of this moment of sacrifice, all three of us saw the same extreme gaze, we shed the same tears. Yesterday morning, at 9 o'clock, we went to the Capuchin church for the funeral; he was full of courage and strength; a priest who spoke French was found [...]. How touching it was, what extraordinary unity! Oh, how sad the Protestants are. What barrenness and dryness in their religion compared to our sacraments so full of love and strength! When he came out, he was strong against pain; he told me that he was so surprised by himself that he felt peace and serenity. I am sure she was praying for him at that moment. Yesterday he spent the whole day praying for Eugénie with the help of devotional books; and in the meantime he discovered such an ardent love for God, such confidence in His mercy, that this proof of serenity in his soul was a great source of comfort to him. We left him for a few moments to go and see the Mayos, the Duvergers of Albano; they all came to visit us several times and offered to help us in any way they could; but we did not receive anyone; they were in a common room and did not want to leave

poor Adrian alone, who has so much need of his pain and so much need of being understood. This morning he made some little paquettes of his poor wife's hair; he gave me the first one [...] here is all I have left of my two friends [Eugénie] and Ottavie. A lock of blond hair and a lock of black hair. And you care so much about such a short life, and you try so hard to find something that doesn't last! Ah, my God. How crazy we are! You'll understand how sad poor Adrian is to see us go; he's leaving on Monday, but he'll be so lonely, with his cousin d'Ursel, who is certainly a very dear friend of his, but how much less so under these circumstances. And besides, he tells so many coarse details, that Raoul has avoided his presence, and those who meet him are devastated by it; I part so from the pain, for this thought that he thinks is of some use and more interesting, so touching for its pain and pity, that it is impossible not to cling to him. I think he will need Father in Naples to ship his precious remains; it is very difficult to get them, we have said so; he is already afraid, but he is too determined not to part with them to do anything to get what he wants.[111]

Flavia's letter shows a deep faith as well as maturity and correctness of language. It is also expressed with the typical meaning ("angel of goodness") of romantic Catholicism. The drama is narrated with precision, tracing the stages of death and the thoughts that inhabited the minds of the protagonists of the tragedy. The moment of death is described as a transfiguration, preceded by the willingness of the sick woman to accept her fate. The letter also recalls another typical custom of the time: the keeping of paquettes of the deceased, usually in small glass containers that could become pendants and to which a portrait of the deceased was attached.

After arranging the funeral and the transfer of the body, Adrien returned to France while the Raigecourts continued their journey by boarding the ship "Ferdinand I" for Constantinople. The itinerary included a passage through Greece, with a visit to Athens, and finally a 15-day stay in Constantinople. After this visit, their ship sailed to Malta, where they remained in quarantine for 18 days, as required by the maritime regulations of the time. In truth, it is not clear why the voyage continued: probably other unnamed people were involved.

[111] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, pp. 60-64.

Unfortunately, Flavia suffered greatly during the quarantine, which never seemed to end, and her illness flared up again. Perhaps it was the heat, the humidity and the miasmas of the port and the ship. On his return, at the end of the summer, he settled first in Naples, then in Isola, where he was very ill for ten days. At the end of the summer, when she was feeling better, she left for Paris with her husband. However, the doctors who examined her thought that she was seriously ill. In fact, her condition worsened the following fall and became much worse in the early months of 1843. By April and May of that year, 1843, her health was considered serious and she was in clear danger of dying. Raoul asked her to return to Naples, convinced that the softer air would benefit her.[112] With a quick exchange of letters, mother and daughter agreed. Rosanne left for Paris, where she took Flavia, Marie, and the housekeeper Mac-Goran in the "excellent carriage drawn by mail horses.

In Marseilles, they met André-Isidore, who accompanied them to the Hôtel de Noialles, where they stayed until June 10. On the 6th they made an excursion to Avignon to distract the weak Flavia, then they stayed in Marseille where they spent days walking, shopping and resting. André-Isidore was there because he wanted to see his *tante* and *seconde mère*.[113] When Flavie regained some strength, the group decided to take the boat 'François I' in Marseilles, which reached Naples in five days.[114] André-Isidore remained in France in the company of the young Las Cases, Raoul's nephew, who was then embarked on the warship 'La Victoriouse' and had come specially from Toulouse to greet

[112] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, p. 65.
[113] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, pp. 66-67.
[114] Fifteen years later, returning to the same place with his wife Eugénie, André-Isidore nostalgically recalled the group of his 'Neapolitan family', which included, in addition to Flavia and Rosanne, the young Las Cases, nephew of the marquis, a naval officer in Toulouse. Raoul was in the habit of writing travel reports for all the journeys he made: South America, North America, Europe. It is strange that this one was not written down. Evidently it was never given to André-Isidore because he kept too many sad memories of his lost bride. It is not certain, however, that among the unpublished papers of Raoul de Raigecourt the text does not exist.

his aunt.[115] This grandson-in-law of Flavia would have died in 1862 during the French expedition to Mexico, during the years of Maximilian of Habsburg's adventure, when the French sent 3,000 soldiers to Veracruz to help the emperor. He belonged to the family of the Counts of Las Cases, to which also belonged Emmanuel Las Cases, who in 1823 published the famous *Memoir of St. Helena*, which collected his conversations with Napoleon on St. Helena.

Flavia had meanwhile arrived in Naples, where she was treated by the Lefèbvre doctor, Dr. Severino, who recommended the air of Castellamare di Stabia, where the family owned a villa. Meanwhile, that same summer, Raoul arrived from Paris and stayed until early fall, when he left for Paris - with the intention of returning soon - while she settled in Palazzo Partanna. He was replaced by Ernesto, who returned from a long stay in Germany, where he had also learned German.[116] André-Isidore notes that Ernesto had a unique ability to learn foreign languages.

Flavia's condition continued to deteriorate until the end. Her death was, as André-Isidore says, "like her life: calm and resigned" and occurred on November 14, despite the efforts of Dr. Severino. That day remained "a very painful adversary for the whole family". Her death was described in detail by her adopted daughter, Marie, who was present at her bedside in Naples, in a letter full of details about the young woman's last hours, which André-Isidore reproduced in full. It was written a few days after November 14, about a week later, to Raoul's sister in Paris.[117] It was in the castle of the Marquise de Raigecourt, the Château de Fleurigny, that Flavie would be buried, after two temporary burials first in Naples, then in Germancy.

God has taken her home, dear aunt. She has ended her short but beautiful journey and has fallen asleep in the sleep of the angels. The vigil is over for her: God has become her part forever. She is now happy for all eternity. But my poor father! Poor father, what a bitter destiny! Only she could make him

[115] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, pp. 67-68.
[116] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, pp. 69-70.
[117] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, pp. 141-144.

happy, and now she is gone. She left while he was away [...] He will never see her again, he who never left her in Castellamare, he who loved her so much! He thought she was better. She told him so in every letter. In the last one she read this sentence: 'Severino is happy with the way things have turned out'. And four days later, lo and behold, she was no longer suffering [...]. We mourn this consoling angel who returned to heaven. And he was not there to hear her last sigh! And her last look was not for him! In our shared grief, each of us thought of our own, made more bitter by the distance, by the surprise, above all by the deprivation of these last acts, given to the object of his outpourings, the only consolation in grief. Her end was sweet, serene, without pain or regret. She gave her beautiful soul to her Creator without having felt the last agony. Her hour had come and she never doubted it. She will still rejoice in life, in the thought of being reunited with my father! [She fell asleep with the hope of receiving a letter from him the next day. This letter, so desired, finally arrived, but she could not read it [...] The previous night had been good, and in the morning she told her doctor that she had no pain. And he said: 'She is better, she still hopes; but I no longer hope. For the last eight days I have been anxiously watching the steady progress of her weakness.

Severino despaired of saving her, but thought he was prolonging her life until my father's return. God did not will this; His decrees are impenetrable. Let his will be done! But my father, my poor father! Ah! how his grief pains me! From the first moment of this pain, he has turned all his thoughts to God, the true God, who has become my father's part and his good forever. There is nothing that can console him, that can sweeten the bitterness of such a separation [...] Eight days ago she was still there, interested in everyone, caring for everyone, rejoicing at the thought of a surprise she would give me, thinking with pleasure of her friends' plans and making her own. One could say that death surprised her at the moment when she was least thinking about dying. In Castellamare she had prepared herself, she had made her sacrifice, she had wanted it, almost, as the end of her suffering, of her exile [...] She had clung to life but left it without regret, not knowing that her end was near. Eight hours before her death, she had lost consciousness; she was like in hibernation, but one could see that she was not suffering. Not even a sigh warned us that she had fled to heaven. Her limbs were neither cold nor stiff, but her heart had stopped beating. [...] Resigned to live and suffer as long as Providence pleased [...] serene, seeking to help others, strong in her weakness, she had regained energy, this submission in faith. Six days before the end, she had the good spirit to begin to prepare herself and to renew this holy act, since God had

raised her to feed forever on the bread of the angels. As the end was approaching, she wanted to perform her last duties with her dear mother by her side [...] I went to her confessor and he gave her absolution. [Father Rhingelssein did not leave us until everything was over. It was Tuesday the 14th, at twenty to six, that my dear mother returned to rejoice in the bosom of God, the giver of life [...] Now we speak of her often, but without bitterness. She appears to us as an angel who watches over us from the heights of heaven and who, with her prayers, facilitates the path that leads us to her [...] In the meantime, my grandparents have shown me a touching kindness. I have been with them since that fateful evening; they do their best to give me clear signs of love. I like to reciprocate, but filial love also leads me to my father. I do not know what he will do with me, but when he travels, I hope he will not agree to leave me here. I must see my brother again, you. All those good and true friends whom grief makes dearer to me.

Marie of the Raigecourts.

Flavia, like her friend the year before and another friend, Ottavie, who died very young of the same disease, accepted her fate and spent her last days in prayer. From then on, just as June 18 was a happy date for the family to celebrate and remember (it was the date of Flavia's wedding), November 14 became a cursed date every year. Proof of how much the figure of Flavia and her destiny meant to the Lefèbvre family, French exiles who, with their daughter, had been reunited with their homeland. When Raoul learned of his wife's death in Paris, he immediately set out to see her at least once more (the body had been carefully embalmed by Semmola). He traveled through Avignon, where he was received at the Hôtel l'Europe by his cousins, Count Paul-François-Joseph de Causans and his wife, Countess Marie Anne.[118] When Raoul, twice widowed at the age of 39, went to Naples, his cousins asked André-Isidore to intervene with Charles so that he would allow Raoul to take Flavia's remains, "the last possession that cruel fate wanted to leave behind," which had been placed in a family tomb in the

[118] They were Paul-François-Joseph de Vincens, Viscount de Causans (1790-1873), an ultra-realist who had left government posts in 1830 - at the fall of Charles X - and his wife Marie Anne Geneviève Thérèse Sophie de Renoyer (1791-1869).

new cemetery of Poggioreale (new because it was founded in 1837). The matter was delicate and the cousin tried to use all his tact in writing the difficult letter. After being on the periphery of the family for so long, almost an extra, André-Isidore found himself involved in a very delicate matter.

Avignon, 1 December 1843

My good uncle, I am dealing here with a very delicate matter, which I promised to communicate to you; you will be the judge of the case that I must submit to you. You may think that nothing can be done for this angel whom heaven has willed with such pitiless severity; indeed, I would not know how to occupy your mind with other arguments.

Last night, at nine o'clock, Raoul, the unfortunate Raoul, left us after spending some time with Mr. and Mrs. De Causans at the Hôtel de l'Europe. The widower spoke to us that evening of his plan to bring back to France the precious remains of his beloved wife, and gave me some instructions on how to get a car to Marseilles, which had to arrive here first. You were kind enough to let us read some of your letters in which you gave us the details of the sad circumstances that overwhelmed you. And among others, one of yours in which you announce the treatment you have arranged for him, to leave him the last possession that the cruel fate wanted to leave him, in case he wanted to take it back to France. Your entire letter, my dear uncle, was imbued with such tenderness that it deeply affected me and Mr. and Mrs. De Causans.

In my heart I cannot hide a feeling of regret at the thought that Flavia will no longer rest close to her first family, and everything in me consoles me to be a part of it, I admire greatly this courage that allows you to deprive yourself of a treasure that I know is so dear to you.

Yesterday, Mr. and Mrs. De Causans, very worried about Mr. Raigecourt's condition, took me aside and told me: "Raoul worries us a lot. He has visibly changed, and his nosebleeds, combined with the pain he feels in his heart, make us fear the return of an aneurysm of which he had suppressed the symptoms a few years ago. He wants to undertake a task that requires energy that we fear is beyond him. We would wholeheartedly approve of this noble act of conjugal piety if we did not believe that we were seeing him nail himself to a cross that he will not carry without wounds. We cannot divert him from his goal, but we know that only Monsieur Lefèbvre has the qualities to make him understand that, in the name of the salvation he owes to his children, he must find in himself enough resignation to renounce an undertaking that would put his

health in extreme danger. We know of no one but you, sir, who can communicate with your uncle in such grave matters, and seeing that you think as we do, we beg you not to delay in making this known to your family.

Since Madame de Mun died in a foreign land, my dear uncle, it has become the duty of her husband to return her to a place where her memory can live on. On Neapolitan soil, however, Flavia was born and grew up, and what is more, her father and mother are now settled in Naples; her brother and sister are destined to live for a long time to come under this beautiful sky that did so much good to the sick woman. May she rest close to this family, which will have a different prayer for her every day. It is with regret, my dear uncle, that I return to your heart such heart-rending thoughts; but I feel that I could not refrain from giving voice to the anxieties of the family of Mr. de Raigecourt; I think that one day you yourself will reproach me for not having acted.

Farewell, dear uncle, I pray for your health, which has received a terrible blow, and I embrace you with all my heart. [119]

The letter was delivered to one of Charles' brothers, Léon Lefèbvre, as he left Naples, where he had attended the funeral of his dead niece. It was a sign that Raoul's decision had already been made, irrevocably, and Charles did not even discuss the matter. In December 1843, Flavia's body was taken to the Raigecourt-Gournay family's Château de Germancy and buried in the family chapel. From a reference elsewhere in the long diary (vol. XII), it appears that André-Isidore himself accompanied his friend Raoul on the journey with Flavia's remains from Marseilles to Germancy, but the memoirist did not see fit to leave a written trace of this event. In the notes of his *Journal*, dedicated to the year 1843, Rosanne is at a loss for words. Just a dry, painful note:

Year 1843. Having gone to France to see my daughter this year, I didn't really come to the Island. I spent the summer in Castellammare with her [...] But alas! 14 November was the end of all my joys in the world!

In contrast to similar cases, Flavia's death did not lead to a severing of ties with the important French line. Raoul (1804-1889) continued to

[119] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, pp. 145-147.

consider the Lefèbvres part of his family, socialized with Charles and Ernest, and never remarried.

In 1847, he accompanied Ernesto and his newlywed wife Teresa on a trip to North America. After the sale of Château de Germancy around 1870, Flavia's remains were exhumed and moved to the private chapel of the magnificent Château de Fleurigny (Thorigny-sur-Oreuse) in Burgundy, owned by Raoul's sister and later son Gustave, and considered one of the most beautiful Renaissance castles in France. As for the Château de la Brûlerie, it was sold by Gustave to the Counts of Néverlé around 1870. It then became a children's colony and a century later, in 1971, was sold to actor Alain Delon, who lived in the château with fellow actress Mireille Darc until 1979. When the couple split up, the château, which was in a state of disrepair because it had never been restored, was demolished and the land sold to the commune of Douchy. A pond now stands in its place. Only parts of the complex remain, such as the servants' quarters, the stables and an *orangerie*.[120] A reminder of that time is the large park where many of the trees that were planted by Rosanne and Charles still live.

André-Isidore wants to get married

The following year, meanwhile, he got engaged to André-Isidore Lefèbvre and on 15 May 1845 he married 22-year-old Eugénie Choquet (1823-1907), daughter of Alexandre Hyacinthe Choquet (1772-1857), Charles' contemporary. A solid bourgeois entourage welcomed the now 46-year-old cousin. In the marriage certificate, we learn that Charles' brother, François Noël "Léon" Lefèbvre, the groom's best man, had become a high-ranking member of the state bureaucracy: head of department at the Ministry of Finance in Paris and a Knight of the Legion of Honor. André-Isidore's second best man, whom we have

[120] At the time of Alain Delon's fame, the Château de la Brûlerie often appeared in photo shoots and also in the frames of some films such as *La piscine* or *The Medic* by Granet-Deferre.

already met in this story, was Baron Maurice Duval, Peer of France and also a Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor.[121]

Léon Lefèbvre, this brother of Charles, who had remained a bachelor, having devoted all his energies, according to his nephew, to the state administration, had made a great career in the *Administration de l'Enregistrement et des Domaine* and was already retired. He lived at 46 rue Lafitte, in the center of Paris, and every day he visited an exclusive but goliardic club on rue Montmartre called the Cercle des Ganaches: a place to eat, goliardia, drink and play cards.[122]

But the story of André-Isidore's marriage is better told, because it offers an interesting picture of bourgeois interiors and the marriage ceremonies of the time.

In reconstructing the circumstances of André-Isidore's marriage, we meet a person, Madame Dareste, who was considered part of the Neapolitan Lefèbvre family in that she was the governess of Flavia, Ernesto's daughter, and is buried in the Lefèbvre family tomb at Poggioreale. Accompanied by her and her husband, André-Isidore goes by carriage one evening in Paris to 10 rue Royale, where he meets a family with two girls for marriage. His sister Azélie knows that he wants to marry, and together with her friends and Madame Dareste, she spreads the word. This family seems interested.

The three of them enter the house, where a seemingly unimpeachable bourgeois image appears. At second glance, however, André-Isidore notices that one of the daughters seems ill, while the youngest seems healthy and even handsome. To show himself, he approaches the piano, where he sings a few popular songs, then offers tea and the company chats. No request is made: it is only a ceremonial first acquaintance.

Invited again the next day, André shows up, but the girl seems cold and gives him bizarre answers. No sparks fly between them, but you never know. The next day, André-Isidore is asked to introduce himself

[121] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, p. 223.
[122] AB XIX 4481, vol. V, p. 43.

again. The girl's mother asked him if he had any money, and he replied that his uncle owed him a dowry of 20,000 francs, but that he did not have it yet. The woman makes it clear that this could be a problem. He is asked to return that evening, but only the father and eldest daughter are present. They tell him that the mother is not feeling well. The message is clear. It is also clear to him that there is something peculiar, something eccentric about the young girl, based on certain answers she has given him. André did not return to the house and prepared to go back to Alençon, where he was working at the time.

But on the way back, Azélie meets an acquaintance:

"You know, mademoiselle, I came to see you because I had something to tell you."

"I am sorry, but I am accompanying my brother, who is about to return to Alençon and has little time."

"It is because of your brother that I have something to propose to you. Can't you come and talk to me? We are only a few steps away."

The sister replied that it was impossible: her brother had little time, he had to go back to the Danube Hôtel and leave.

"I understand everything, Miss Azélie, but couldn't your brother postpone his departure?"

Azélie begged her friend not to insist. But she tells him that it was she who told him that her brother wanted to marry, and that is what she wants to talk to him about. André-Isidore insists that he has little time and that it is impossible for him to discuss such important matters so quickly. But Mademoiselle Binet de Quéhélec is not deterred and adds:

"I have a friend, Madame Guenepin, who has recently told me of her affection for a young cousin whom she wishes to marry. She is the daughter of a retired major and I would like to propose her to you. Today, therefore, it will only be a matter of taking a car, without wasting a minute, to go to Madame Guenepin, at 92 rue de Richelieu, to introduce oneself, to exchange a few first words, and finally to establish contact. Depending on the chances of this preliminary operation, you will do the rest."

"In the face of such convinced insistence, you have to say NO three times! But at this point, we said yes," says André-Isidore. He then

apologized to those who would accompany him to the car for his return. Finally, he went to the address given, in the rue de Bououi.

Madame Guenepin, née Estelle Choquet, was the widow of her first husband, a banker named Lego, and had married the architect Guenepin in her second marriage. She spoke of Alexandre Choquet and his family. Choquet, a retired infantry major, veteran of the Russian campaign, recipient of the Legion of Honor and the Order of St. Louis, who lived at 24 rue de la Rochefoucauld, had a daughter named Eugénie.

André-Isidore listened with interest to what Madame Guenepin had to say, but then he had to leave, and he did so just in time. The French administration had a military rigor: absenteeism and lateness were not tolerated. At home, he calmly wrote a letter in which he described himself, saying that he was 45 years old and an "inspector of direct contributions, third class". He would soon be promoted to second class and receive a raise of 500 francs. He earned 4,000 francs a year and had 6,000 francs in liquid assets. But this was not enough for a bourgeois marriage, and he knew it.

"Mon Oncle d'Amerique', Charles Lefèbvre

Crucial to his nephew's marriage was the sum that his uncle Charles Lefèbvre, the "Uncle of America," promised to give him: 20,000 francs on the day of his wedding. He also specifies that he will have a pension that will be reversible to his widow.[123] For security, he has his family: his mother, his sister who lives in a convent, his sister Azélie, and above all his uncle "who has a brilliant position" in Naples. André-Isidore then describes his ideal bride:

A young woman, educated in the principles of orderly work and economy, animated by religious sentiments, attached to her family and her duties, will certainly be what I am looking for. Dignity of bearing and manners, a certain

[123] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, pp. 194-202.

talent for animating inwardness, a sweet and animated character are the qualities that exert a great attraction on us men; and I need not add how much I would appreciate them.[124]

Does Miss Choquet have all these charms? It seems so. Her person and her communications had a positive effect on the family, made up of her father, Alexander, her mother, aged 46, and their two children: a 24-year-old boy, a notary's apprentice, and Eugénie, 22. Through the good offices of Azélie and Mademoiselle Binet, a meeting is arranged. The two women accompanied André-Isidore on March 24th, when they were officially introduced to each other to judge their appearance and break the ice. The young woman, soberly dressed, approached the piano and sang Rosine's aria from The Barber of Seville in an alto voice that captivated André-Isidore. At 10 o'clock, everyone returns. The fiancé observes that the bride-to-be is "imbued with ideas of simplicity, order, economy, and accustomed to seeing little of the world". No time was lost, even though the two had just met: on the 27th, accompanied by Madame Guenepin, André-Isidore went to Choquet to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage. He does not dwell on the physical qualities of the girl, who is obviously not very attractive.

Conversations followed, a lunch, and finally, one of the following days, André-Isidore showed up with a huge bouquet of violets. He returned to Alençon to take concrete steps towards marriage. Negotiations were conducted by Azélie, and a contract was even signed in which Eugénie's father promised 30,000 francs in dowry. He then adds another 10,000 in lieu of an estate that the girl would inherit upon the death of her parents. When the negotiations were over, on April 1, 1845, André-Isidore wrote a long, sympathetic letter to his "uncle in America," recounting recent events as if they were a play divided into acts. The uncle does not answer by letter. He is not accustomed to written pleasantries. He sent a note of congratulations, but the most important message he entrusted to his brother Léon on April 26: a gift of 20,000 gold francs. At the end of April, he asked for leave for his

[124] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 203.

wedding, and on May 10, he left for Paris with all the necessary documents.[125]

On 13 May, the marriage contract is read out in the presence of a notary and many witnesses, including Léon Lefèbvre, Maurice Duval, Elisabeth Binet de Quéhélec and others, and various friends and relatives from the Choquets. On 14 May is the vigil, as André-Isidore calls it. Joking, but perhaps not too jokingly, he says that he is 'about to lose his innocence'. The civil marriage is celebrated in the Rue Drouot, in public offices, and in church at Notre Dame de Lorette. The groom's witnesses are Duval and Léon Lefèbvre. They then have lunch at the Hôtel du Parc.[126] Finally, they leave for Alençon, where the newly married man gives a detailed account of the end of his life as a célibataire and the organisation of the house.

For him, a new life begins with the new Madame Eugénie Lefèbvre. If he was able to marry, he owes it to his uncle and his beloved tante Rosanne.

Villa Acton

To conclude this chapter, it is worth saying a few words about an important real estate transaction made by Charles in 1843. That year, the entrepreneur bought a large portion, about half, of one of the most famous buildings in Naples even then and even today, the building known as Villa Pignatelli Acton. It stood on a site where, until 1825, there was a large garden that reached as far as the hill, owned by Lord William Drummond. The latter resold it the following year to Ferdinand Acton who, in 1827, commissioned the architect Pietro Valente to design a building. It was begun and completed in 1830; Acton lived there with his wife, Maria Luisa Pelline, for several years until his death in 1837.

When she remarried in 1840, the property was put up for sale and

[125] AB XIX 4480, vol. III, p. 217.
[126] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, pp. 222-223.

purchased the following year by Charles Lefèbvre and Francesco Veruhet and Carl Mayer von Rothschild. It is likely that Lefèbvre then held the property for a few years before selling it back to the Rothschilds in order to circumvent some ancient laws that kept the Jewish people from having a home of their own in Naples. The Rothschilds kept it as their home until it was sold in 1864-1865. We do not know whether the purchase was made by Charles with the intention of making it his home or by sale. The building, from its origin, has several symmetrical and opposite openings to the outside and is also suitable to be shared as a condominium among several families.[127]

[127] Aurelio del Rose, *I Palazzi di Napoli*, Newton Compton, Rome 2001, pp. 331-333. As for Francesco (probably François) Veruhet, there is no other information about him. The same historical information can also be found in AA.VV., *Museo di Villa Pignatelli*, Editrice Electa, Milan 2000.

Chapter 7

The Tale of Teresa and Ernesto

Wallpaper Makinf and Industry (1844)

Despite this diversification, which was initially purely financial, the paper industry remained at the heart of the Lefèbvre interests.

In 1844, Charles, who had seen in France the success of wallpaper in the homes of the aristocracy and the upper classes, confirmed by his son's travels to England and Germany, and who foresaw an expansion of its use in Italy, decided to start its industrial production. He had the first production unit set up on the premises of the Manifatture del Fibreno alle Forme, the first nucleus of what would become a truly independent factory years later. In this first venture, the machinery for the production of wallpaper was installed in the new warehouses built some ten years earlier behind the former convent.

It was a complex process, which had already been tried by a Neapolitan twenty years earlier and then by the Frenchman Francesco Charavel in 1834. Like his compatriot, Lefèbvre applied for exemption from customs duties and a patent, which were initially refused. However, he decided to go ahead and made considerable improvements to Charavel's process, which soon made Fibreno wallpaper a much sought-after product in the patrician houses of Naples, competing with French wallpaper. The most important improvement was the ability to produce paper in three colours. A new system of cylinders on the paper machine made three successive prints in three different colours. This was an absolute novelty in Italy, where until then very fine decorative paper had been produced by design, but only in monochrome or two-colour, and in very small quantities.

Although highly appreciated, the modest quantities that could be produced only satisfied the market of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. In the same year, 1844, Charles began some charitable works, such as the donation of an annual income to the Administrative Commission of the Municipality of Isola for the poor and the sick. Meanwhile, Mr Testa succeeded Mr Émile Grévenich as director of the Fibreno factory.[128]

In the period following the introduction of less protectionist laws and the trade agreement with France in July 1845, which reduced tariffs, the growth rate of the Fibreno factories slowed down and the workers in many factories, including those in Isola, had their wages cut by a fifth. In the following years, however, in order not to stop the investment needed to ensure the survival of production, Charles undertook to finance infrastructure works to improve the road network in the Isola and Sora areas. Until then, the only means of transport had been horse-drawn carts, and the poor condition of the roads, which were mostly made of rammed earth, meant high maintenance costs and slow deliveries of finished products. Improving the road system was therefore strategic, benefiting both the population and industry. Looking to the future, a railway had to be considered. In the meantime, Charles had two roads paved: the Isola d'Arpino road and the road through the Roveto valley. He also started work on a third road to improve communications in Upper Lazio, particularly from Arce. This route would avoid the wagons having to cross the Colfontana plateau, which was considered slow and risky. For this work, he made an agreement with the public administration, advancing the money to be repaid with 3% interest. At the time of his death, the work had not been completed; it was completed by his son. Other public works include the construction of two small hospitals, or rather clinics, in Sora and Liri, both known as Sala Flavia, in memory of his daughter. He pledged 450 ducats per year for these works. The Sala Flavia in Sora was still operating under this name in 1956, more than a century later.[129] It would

[128] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, p. 1.

[129] Annuario statistico dell'assistenza e della previdenza sociale. Central

later be changed with the start of reforms and new health centres in the area.

Life goes on: births and marriages

Flavia's death deeply affected the Lefèbvre family and Rosanne never recovered. The decision to name two small hospitals built by Charles in the Sora area in memory of his daughter Sala Flavia ('Flavia Hall' or Ambulatory) is an eloquent sign of this grief. It was an unexpected death that struck a young woman who, except for the last two years of her life, had never suffered from any particular illness. This death probably put an end to the dream of returning to France: the family would remain 'Neapolitan' forever, and among the Neapolitans, after Luisa's husband, Ernesto's bride would be sought. This was the first acquired relative who did not have at least one French parent, as had been the case with Raoul and Gioacchino.

In the spring of 1846, while Luisa was once again pregnant and being pampered, an old friend, André-Jean Vauchelle, visited the Lefèbvre family with his wife, who had also become the author of important texts on military administration. Having been a high official in the Commissariat des Guerres under the Napoleonic regime, he had managed to retain his position under the Restoration, relying on the same ministry, renamed the Intendence Militaire. He was always well received in Naples, especially by the Lefèbvre family, who had been among those who had favoured Charles' fortunes. The Vauchelle left at the end of June, never to return to Naples.[130]

A month and a half later, on 11 August 1846, Lucia Saluzzo di Lequile (1846-1923) was born, destined for a long life and rich offspring. On 5 October, the mother and the newborn moved to the bucolic tranquillity of the island, hoping for the presence of their father,

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Institute of Statistics, Rome 1955, p. 478. In 1955 the 'Sala Flavia' was used as an outpatient clinic.

[130] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, pp. 159-160.

but Gioacchino did not accompany them.[131] Even then, there was a chill between him and his wife that not even the birth of their daughter could melt. He had liberal ideas, but the radical and libertine liberalism of the nineteenth century; he therefore frequented what were considered subversive circles in Naples and Tuscany. At the time of Lucia's birth, he was already under surveillance by the political police of the kingdom because of his frequent trips abroad. Above all - and this was the cause of the marriage's unhappiness - Luisa knew that during his trips to Florence and long absences, Gioacchino frequented other women, "sciantose", dancers in particular.

At almost 30, Ernesto was the only male in the family and still a bachelor. He therefore attracted the attention of his parents and the good parties of the kingdom. The Lefèbvre family was no longer merely bourgeois, but had entered that liminal zone which, in the old regimes, preceded the aristocracy. This fact was known and accepted. At dances, in the salons, in the very exclusive whist club to which they had been admitted despite their non-nobility, Charles and Ernesto appeared alongside the nobility of the kingdom. A subtle, secret matrimonial diplomacy began to interweave names and meetings, discussions and opportunities. Finally, of the two or three names of possible brides for Ernesto, one stood out from the rest: the beautiful Teresa Doria D'Angri, who, incidentally, was one of the best parties in the kingdom, if not the best.

The power of the Doria d'Angri family was symbolised by the palace built between 1760 and 1778, considered one of the most splendid in Naples and certainly the largest, so much so that it rivalled the nearby Royal Palace. Its main floor, overlooking the beginning of Via Toledo, with its immense frescoed hall, was worthy of a palace. During the months of their visit, the Vauchelle were astonished and admired guests. A few years earlier, Marcantonio Doria, seventh prince of Angri, had also completed the construction of the monumental Villa

[131] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 166. Some repertories state that Luisa di Lequile was born on 3 March 1846 but this is an incorrect date.

Doria D'Angri in Posillipo, covering an area of 18,000 square metres. At the time, the Doria D'Angri family was one of the largest landowners in southern Italy, with vast tracts of cultivated land and farms in Puglia and beyond.[132] They were perhaps the most typical representatives of that great patriciate of the Meridional, who lived on land rents and leases and, at most, engaged in some financial speculation.

For Ernesto (unlike his sons), André-Isidore has nothing but praise. He describes him as calm, studious and with an excellent international education. He was fluent in Italian, French, English and German. Like his father, André-Isidore was a man of manners who had accepted and maintained the dignity of his acquired rank. Hardworking, attentive, unadventurous in business, in 1847 he was in every respect the 'golden bachelor of the kingdom'.

In 1846 Charles was asked to marry by his father, Francesco Doria, Prince of Angri (1797-1874). The Doria d'Angri were a branch of the Doria of Genoa, who had been associated with the families of the Bourbon kingdom for at least two centuries. They were also one of the wealthiest families in Italy. Teresa was also a Caracciolo on her mother's side, being the daughter of Giulia Caracciolo of the Princes of Avellino (1807-1890). The family was very numerous and included, in Teresa's generation, nine women and three men. Francesco Doria d'Angri and Giulia Caracciolo had four married children, including Teresa. The marriage between Ernesto Lefèbvre and Teresa Doria d'Angri was in every respect, including the dowry, comparable to that between Flavia and Raigecourt-Gournay.

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[132] An assessment of the overall value of the Doria d'Angri estate in the 19th century can be found in the pages written by Maria Luisa Storchi, *Un'azienda Agricola della piana del Sele. Tra il 1842 e il 1855*, Angelo Massafra, cur., *Problemi di storia delle campagne meridionali nell'età moderna e contemporanea*, pp. 117-141. Ibid, pp. 119-127. The Doria D'Angri family, moreover, is one of the families of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies that have been most studied, having organised and edited a consultable and ordered archive: Maria Luisa Storchi, *Formazione e organizzazione di un archivio gentilizio: l'archivio Doria d'Angri fra XV e XX secolo*, in *Per la storia del Mezzogiorno medievale e moderno. Studi in memoria di Jole Mazzoleni,* Rome 1998, pp. 561-564.

Donna Teresa Doria d'Angri (1825-1912), 21 years old and 8 years younger than Ernesto, was born in Naples on 9 December 1825.[133] Needless to say, her dowry must have been very substantial although we do not know the exact amount.[134] At the time, the young woman had just left the prestigious Florentine College in Via della Scala, where her daughter and other members of the Lefèbvre family would also study. Palazzo Doria d'Angri, which overlooks the beginning of Via Toledo, was built around 1770 by Ferdinando Fuga and Luigi and Carlo Vanvitelli, the architects of the Royal Palace of Caserta.

The wedding was celebrated there on 22 May 1847 and was remembered for its splendour in the newspapers of the time.[135] Immediately after the ceremony, the newlyweds went to the Palazzo Lefèbvre in Isola, where they were joined by relatives, with whom they went on excursions in the countryside until the end of June, when they travelled to Rome for the celebrations of St Peter's Day.[136] In July, the newlyweds arrived in Paris as guests of their brother-in-law, Raoul. Two years earlier, on 9 May 1845, Raoul had been made a peer of France, joining the royal retinue and the Constituent Assembly. Together with him, the newlyweds planned a series of excursions and trips. Then the unexpected happened.

Raoul, an experienced and courageous traveller, convinced them to take a trip to North America with him and his son Gustave.[137] It was certainly not a typical honeymoon, especially in those days. In fact, his and her parents tried to talk them out of it, pointing out the dangers of such an undertaking: Charles tried to persuade his son to follow his example. He had not travelled further than Switzerland and Germany on his honeymoon. He asked him if it would not have been better to

[133] Cf. *L'Araldo. Almanacco Nobiliare del Napoletano*, Naples 1908, p. 142.
[134] Marcantonio, Marquis of Doria, Prince of Angri born on 7 September 1824 and married to Laura Marulli; Eugenia Doria married to Giuseppe di Sangro, Prince of Fondi; Maria Doria of Angri married to Carlo Marulli, Duke of San Cesareo.
[135] Various periodicals including L'Omnibus reported on it.
[136] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 166.
[137] *Ibid*.

'stay quietly around Paris'.[138] The newlyweds were still undecided; it was an uncomfortable and, for the time, risky journey. Visiting the 'picturesque' places of America at the time - Niagara Falls, Boston, New York, French Canada, Philadelphia - and returning in time for the opening of the Paris theatre season seemed impossible.

When the project seemed to have been abandoned in the face of common sense, the two were walking around Paris when they came across a poster announcing the departure of a steamship to New York every 15 days. The same frequency was guaranteed on the return journey. The Atlantic crossing would take 15 days: 15 days of suffering and seasickness on the way there and 15 days on the way back, but they would see the New World. The idea was appealing, although it would be a gruelling voyage on a very tight schedule with little time for rest. They discussed it further, but the decision was made when they were assured that accommodation on the ship would be, if not comfortable, at least safe, as the season was one of calm navigation and storms were rare. So they left Le Havre on the evening of 14 August to reach the port of Cherbourg, the embarkation point for the ocean crossing.[139] They would return the following 12 November, over 80 days later (André-Isidore compares Ernesto to the protagonist of the novel *Around the World in Eighty Days*).[140]

The events of the approximately two-month voyage (not including the total of 30 days of the two crossings) are recounted in an actual book written by Raoul de Raigecourt, from which the willing André-Isidore has copied an extract entitled *Estrait du Journal tenu par le Marquis de Raigecourt*.[141] The account takes pages 176-267 of volume IV of André-Isidore's journal and is, like Raigecourt's earlier South American example, interesting, witty, rich in news and observations. Completely original observations sometimes attributable to Ernesto, other times to Raoul. In any case, it is a choral narrative summarising the impressions

[138] *Ibid*.
[139] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 167.
[140] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 175.
[141] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 176.

of the "four Frenchmen on the discovery of America" (there were actually five, including Raoul's son).[142]

The crossing went well: calm seas, steady winds, no inconveniences except perhaps boredom. After fifteen days of routine seafaring, they landed on time in Newport, Rhode Island, instead of New York, due to a hitch: the coal had run out early. The town was small - about 9,000 people that year, says Raoul - but you could stay there in peace, enjoying the beautiful bay and mild climate. The French were struck by the barren aspect of the terrain and the fact that all the houses and pavements were made of wood and were basically footpaths thrown over mud and earth. The four passengers stayed in a Hôtel, the Ocean House, which, like the rest of Newport, was built of wood and described as large, spacious and comfortable. Raoul and the Lefèbvre were immediately annoyed by the constant use of a Chinese instrument used to mark the various moments of the day: the gong. They found it in all the Hôtels, large and small, during their trip; because when it is decided that something has to be done at a certain time, "it has to be done", and America is a country where "you can do what others do, but you can never do it differently".[143]

In the evening, in the Hôtel saloon, the guests broke into lively dances such as the polka and the waltz. Word spread around Newport that a French peer was staying at the Hôtel, and when they saw him they were all convinced that it could only be Ernesto, from his distinguished manners. The four Frenchmen, amused, kept the game in high spirits.[144] A city official, honoured, offered to give the 'French peer Ernest', his wife, cousin Raoul and his son a tour of the city. At some point, however, the *imbroglio* (a term taken from the Italian Opera buffa) was revealed.

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[142] Raoul's texts containing the South American travel account and the North American travel account, both of which took place in the fourth decade of the 19th century, have never been published. They are, however, an excellent example of odeporic literature of the Romantic era.
[143] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 178.
[144] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 180.

After a few days they took a steamer to Wal-River and then a train to Boston, where they stayed at the Revere House, considered one of the best Hôtels in the Union.[145] Yet even in this prestigious Hôtel they found the abominable gong (sic), from which point of view, Raoul observes, 'America is but a vast, vast monastery'. The travellers also find a strange division between the sexes, between male and female places, which they had never imagined. In Europe, even in southern Italy, this *puritanin rigeur* did not exist. At that moment in history, the culture and customs of Protestant, Puritan radicalism still dominated the Union. They found that Protestant convent air in all the h Hôtels they visited. And they noticed that in all of them there was a place called the bar room, where alcohol was served (similar, they noted, to Parisian cabarets). The Boston Sunday, which the Europeans had longed to see because it had been glorified and praised by the Americans themselves, seemed to them sad, dull, silent and, above all, gloomy. Everyone walked with gravity, and the whole city seemed to become "one wake". They are all dressed in black and have 'an air of utter dismay' on their faces. It is a fossilized life, exclaims Raoul, and one might think that one had arrived in Pompei or Herculaneum 'in danger of dying of the spleen'. Perhaps the way Sunday is lived in Paris, between balls and parties, is not very edifying," the French reason, "but between the two extremes it is better to find a middle way.[146]

Boston was a large city in those days. In 1847 it had a population of about 130,000 (136,000 three years later, an increase of 4.5 per cent a year over the decade). The town had a uniform appearance: it was built entirely of brick, with only a few wooden buildings. The surrounding area is full of cottages and small buildings that try to imitate the Gothic or Greek styles. You visit Cambridge University, three miles from Boston, the Mont-Auburn cemetery, too picturesque and garden-like to evoke the idea of death. They make the acquaintance of a philanthropist, Mr Howe, visit the prisons and the Arsenal (probably

[145] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 182.
[146] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, pp. 185-186.

the site of shipbuilding and storage).[147] They also visit the spinning mills of Lowell, where as many as 10,000 workers are employed in the spinning of linen and cotton. Charles' and Ernesto's recent interest in the Sarno Company involved in the linen and cotton spinning mills is certainly the reason for this visit.[148]

After their visit to Boston, the French boarded a large carriage drawn by as many as twelve horses and travelled north along a dirt road through villages and vast forests. After a few days' journey they arrived at Montreal, which they found very French and yet so forgotten, they observed, "because of the selfishness of the French", who had relinquished all control of the region. Montreal was full of life and of considerable size, with a population of 80,000. The people spoke excellent French, but the city looked very American, even though the signs were bilingual.[149] The journey continued to Toronto and then on to Niagara Falls whose magnificence reminded Raoul, and his fellow travellers, of St Peter's in Rome.[150] After a short stay in Buffalo, they passed through Rochester and Auburn, where they visited the 'famous prisons', then Oneida, Utica and finally Albany, where they boarded a boat and arrived the next morning in New York, the largest city in North America.

The first thing that struck the travellers (André-Isidore recounts the text and relates the impressions in general terms to ils, them) was the size of the boats on the Hudson, veritable houseboats up to 500 feet long. What struck them most about New York City was its tremendous growth. At the time of the four's visit, it had about 400,000 inhabitants, slightly fewer than Paris and Naples, but its population was doubling every 15 years.[151] They admired the harbour, the stock exchange and other buildings and places. If the churches were nothing special, the city as a whole was remarkable and the Hôtel Astor, where they stayed, was magnificent.

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[147] *Ibid*, pp. 188-189.
[148] *Ibid*, p. 190.
[149] *Ibid*, pp. 194-197.
[150] *Ibid*, pp. 200-205.
[151] *Ibid*, p. 213. In 1830 there were 220,000, in 1845, 371,000.

Over the next few days they also visited Brooklyn, which was situated on what appeared to be a low hill, and marvelled at the borough's perfectly orthogonal streets. After their visit to New York, the four friends returned to Philadelphia, which they visited extensively. At that time, the memory of the Revolutionary War was still alive, and Philadelphia was considered the heart of the American spirit. But in the eyes of these travellers, what was great for the Americans, the idea of a republic, was not so great for the Europeans and the French, who were about to experience (in the words of André-Isidore) the fateful year of 1848, with its misunderstandings and the "masquerade of the provisional government". Near the city, they visited the cemetery, which had a bad effect on them and reminded them of the invocation of the character in Walter Scott's *Old Mortality*, described in the book translated as *Les Puritains d'Ecosse*.[152] Presumably, the visitors saw a statuary composition that still exists at the Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia Sculptural, entitled *Old Mortality and His Pony* (1836), which actually depicts a scene from Scott's novel.

They then visited Cherry Hill Prison, which opened in 1829 and was considered a model prison at the time. This interest in the prisons and prison systems of the various American states was probably due to Raoul's political and governmental appointment as a peer of France.[153] They then arrived in Washington, where they stayed for a short time. At the time, it was a small city of 45,000 inhabitants, "built with a plan of development that the present is far from justifying", despite the fact that it had been the capital of the United States since 1800.[154] The city had, in the opinion of Europeans, beautiful buildings, a worthy library,

[152] The opera had inspired Bellini's *I puritani*, performed in Naples in 1836.
[153] The Chamber of Peers in France was the equivalent of the House of Lords in the United Kingdom or the Italian Senate. Introduced in 1814 with the constitutional restoration of Louis XVIII of France, it was suppressed in 1848 and replaced by the National Constituent Assembly of the Second French Republic. The only right granted to the peers was the right of amendment, which allowed them to propose constructive changes to what had been passed by the Chamber of Deputies, which in any case had the final say.
[154] AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, p. 220.

an urban plan that was more of a promise, since the streets were large and wide but the people very few. It was a "map of a city" than an "authentic" city, they said. They also visited Baltimore, which at the time had 150,000 inhabitants. They only stayed there for a short time, just long enough to catch the train that took them across the Allegheny Mountains to Pittsburgh. The train's route took it dangerously close to the swollen Potomac River: it had rained heavily, and the train had to slow down all the time, which the Europeans observed was typical of the American habit of building without calculating. At this point, André-Isidore made a gallant remark:

> I am a little sorry not to see in the pages of the manuscript I have before my eyes a single consoling sentence about the rough ordeal that my young and elegant cousin, Madame Teresa, wife of Ernesto, had to endure on this harsh journey, who could see that not all was honey in the newlywed's moon.[155]

Pittsburgh was situated in a beautiful, green area at the confluence of two rivers and had a population of 100,000 by this time. Two bridges connected the opposite banks. The area was rich in coal mines, and the travellers met a Frenchman who had come to seek his fortune and who explained that he was not doing badly: he was a miner, but for two dollars a day he could find shelter and eat well. This made Raoul think of the situation of the poor French, who could not even eat on the same wage. They visited Louisville and then Cincinnati. They made their way back via Buffalo and New York, where they disembarked. On the following 12 November, after an uneventful crossing, they disembarked at Le Havre in a more reassuring France. Eighty-four days had passed since their departure.[156]

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[155] *Ibid*, p. 222.

[156] Then follow many pages of observations, summarised by André-Isidore, of travellers and Raoul on American customs. If they did not lead outside our main narrative, they would be very interesting (AB XIX 4481, vol. IV, pp. 232-258).

The return to Naples

After saying goodbye to their friends, the newlyweds hurried back to Naples, not least because the first signs of the 1848 revolution were already being felt in Paris. By the following February, riots, murders and violent political clashes had spread across France and then to European capitals such as Milan, Rome and Prague. In early 1849, a cholera epidemic swept through Paris, the effects of which would be felt for years to come. A direct consequence for the Lefèbvre family was the decree to expel the Prince of Lequile, Gioacchino, Marie-Louise's husband, who was considered a conspirator against the King.

Meanwhile, in 1847, Juliette Récamier, an old friend of the family, entered the last painful period of her life. Her extreme illness had begun with a kind of nervous breakdown, aphasia and various ailments. Doctors recommended rest and a warm climate. She still managed to hold a salon, but it was a pale memory of the one in Paris: a few old nostalgics of Louis XVIII and Charles X and a few ailing veterans of the Rue du Mont Blanc salon attended.

By 1842, she was nearly blind from a cataract that had affected both eyes. Threatened with total blindness, she underwent an operation in 1847. While she was convalescing, her close friend and former lover Ballanche died in the Abbaye-au-Bois and was buried in Récamier's own family tomb. The following year she underwent a second operation on her other eye, which left her paralysed. Cholera also reached the Abbaye-au-Bois from Paris, and on 11 May 1849 the woman, who was very weak, probably died of the disease.[157] The Lefèbvre family, and Rosanne in particular, were deeply saddened by the news of their old friend's death. An era dominated by the Restoration and the romantic climate following Napoleon's defeat was coming to an end. Revolutionary turmoil resumed everywhere.

[157] André-Isidore recounts in full the life of Récamier and her death as a friend of the Lefèbvre. AB XIX 4481, vol. V, pp. 230-269.

Journal by Rosanne Lefèbvre

From 1844, Rosanne began to frequent Palazzo Lefèbvre in Isola again, after having deserted it for years. The memory of her daughter who had died prematurely had prevented her from returning to that place of leisure, full of memories. The four years that followed, 1844, 1845, 1846 and 1847, showed a certain brightening in the Lefèbvre family sky.

The year 1844. What a return to Isola! Everything changed for me. My heart was darkened and filled with sad memories [...] my brother-in-law returned from Rome to spend a month with us. We welcomed the Gaspards of Clermont-Tonnèrre and their friend Guy de Dampierre. About the 21st of April we had the singular visit of a blind Englishman, who is known for his mania for travelling. His name is James Halman, an old naval lieutenant. He travels the world all alone and without being able to see. He gets help from town to town and assures us that he has always found support and protection. He is an interesting man; he has seen many things through the eyes of others he has met along the way. My son wrote his diary by dictation and his entries are those of an Englishman with all the faults of an Englishman.

Later we received the Duke of Montebello, Prince Cariati and Princess San Giacomo. I did not go on an excursion with them. When they left, Mrs Catalano and Mrs de Bernis surprised us with Mr Genry. The summer brought us back to Naples, as usual, and we returned in September, hoping perhaps to spend a month with Madame d'Arcambal and her sister Eugénie. The latter is trying to recover her health and has regained her beautiful voice. It was a great pleasure for us to receive this Caroline who loved Flavia so much and who had a tender affection for this daughter of mine. In those days we met here the Duke of Laorito, the young Satriano Albanese. [...] In San Carlo [...] let us have a larger meeting.

In the *Journal* of these years, along with the political changes and the effects of the painful losses, we can read the attempt to maintain the Arcadian salon of Isola del Liri and to offer the usual model of gallant sociality, even if the heart was now definitely 'darkened'. It begins with the first note of 1844 *(Quale ritorno ad isola!),* which recalls the recent

sorrows and then tries to forget them. Melancholy still lingered over the loss of a daughter in whom so many hopes had been placed. Every year on the 14th of November, the date of Flavia's death, the sad event is experienced as a terrible recurrence, as if time had not passed. A number of familiar names appear, such as the members of the Arcambal family, the Duke of Montebello, Gustave Olivier Lannes de Montebello (1804-1875), a French general and politician, the ever-present Enrico Catalano and Gaspard de Clermont-Tonnèrre (1779-1865), a high-ranking French officer from a noble family, with his wife Charlotte de Carvoisin (1791-1874). The Duke of Montebello was the son of General Jean Lannes, Duke of Montebello (1769-1809), who had seen the first revolutionary upheavals in Grenoble and the Dauphiné when Charles was a child. The two families must have known each other for decades.

The year 1845. When I went to Isola in the first months of this year, I did not know that seven months would pass. From there my husband left for France, my son left shortly afterwards and I stayed with Luisa until the auspicious time for bathing in the sea. I stayed with the lady from Lequile, accompanied my husband to Ceprano, and then was left alone with Charles. Repairs are being done all over the house and, despite the hassle, I like being on Isola. Luisa and her husband came to cheer me up around 10 September and we waited together for my husband and Ernesto to return. The San Carlo days were brilliant and for the first time in five years there was dancing in the Forme. All the people from the area came in droves, as if to pay homage to us after all these sad years. We had a visit from two friends of Mr di Lequile, Prince Trecasa and Mr Cicerelli. And then [...] Deriso and Muso and a very nice Russian recommended by Mr Catalano. What happened on the 14th of November happened in the same year that Madame Coletta died [...] the family remains inconsolable.

It is interesting to learn that Charles was absent from France for months at a time, at least from the beginning of the year (January, February) until July or August. We do not know what he was doing in his homeland, but it must have been important to force him to be away for such long periods. It was not the first time this had happened. With

the responsibilities he had in the paper industry, he would hardly have gone away just for fun. For the first time in five years, there is dancing in Forme. All the people from the surrounding area come in droves, as if to pay homage to us after all the sad years that have passed'.

The year was 1846. I arrived on the 5th of May with a good friend and her husband who had come from Paris to visit us. They had landed in Naples on 15 April. Luisa could not come because she was pregnant. I could only take little Charles with me. These two seemed to me to be excellent companions, for the intimacy that existed between Madame Vauchelle and myself was so great and long-standing that nothing could be more pleasant than our meeting. I felt myself reborn in new feelings and my deep sadness gradually disappeared. Could this be the desire to distract my soul? It was enchanted by our house, the surroundings and the people of the village and [finally] left for France [...] I returned to Naples at the end of July; I was expected by Luisa, who was due to give birth in August.

I returned with Luisa on 5 October; our caravan was joined by a baby girl and her nurse. The journey was good. We found the Count of Saint-Priest in the Forme, a kind and educated man, who spent 10 days with us. Shortly afterwards we received the Princess Dentice with her children and governesses; the day of their arrival was marked by a singular episode: a group of 12 people had arrived from Naples, convinced that they were going to stay with the Dentice family. Then they changed their minds, thinking they were intruding, and left. We had 12 people for dinner at La Forme that day! On Friday there were 17 (the Princess) replaced by the Acton family. It had been a long time since Mrs Escalon and her sister had come. They chose the time of the holiday dedicated to my husband, the 4th of November, to join us. The captain had been at the match with his little daughter [...] The 14th of November was a sad day. Monsieur Raigecourt preferred to be in Naples for that fateful anniversary and did not stop here at the Forme on his way from Rome [...] He did not want to see us until the 18th and his stay was very short, he had to embark for Naples on the 21st [...] Gustavo seemed to me a made man by then.

The year 1846 also passed quietly. Among the various visits, the one of the Count of Saint-Priest, who can only be Emmanuel Louis Marie Guignard, Viscount de Saint-Priest (1789-1881), is significant. The

latter was the son of François-Emmanuel Guignard de Saint-Priest (1735-1821), a member of a legitimist family from Grenoble, who had fought against Napoleon in the Armée Blanche and died young in 1821. In the entourage of the Duke of Angoulême and the Duchess of Berry, he was a diplomat in Naples and Madrid (where he became Duke of Almazan). The Lefèbvre family's links with the legitimists of Paris and the Dauphiné, Grenoble and Besançon, were not severed, suggesting that there may also have been a secret history of the Lefèbvre family in monarchical politics, a history that probably did not last beyond Charles's lifetime. A public figure, it was this Emmanuel Louis who provided the Duchess of Berry with her Austrian exile.

The family grew with the birth of Luisa's daughter. Old friends like the Vauchelle, Dentice and Acton families came and went. The sad date of 14 November always looms.

The year 1847. His Majesty the King of Naples came to Sora for the second time after a trip to the Abruzzi. My husband took him to the Forme to commemorate his first visit, and on the 2nd of May he wrote to me to join him. I left with a coach, a maid and a servant, having only half a day to prepare for the journey. The delays in the illustrious sovereign's itinerary gave me time to get the house ready. They arrived on the 4th [...] dinner was served at once [...] The poor queen was tired, and yet she had the constancy to remain amiable throughout the meal, seated between her husband and myself. I had the King on my right, and he had the courtesy to place my son by his side [...]. The Count of Trapani sat on Ernesto's right and the others, 14 people, made do as they could. The Intendant was placed in front of the queen.[158] I couldn't sleep until half past two in the morning. I asked Madame Germorel for asylum after giving up my room to Prince Comitino. The next day there was a big reception in the gallery, but it was freezing. The King asked for mass at noon, and our beautiful chapel gathered these pious sovereigns who wanted to visit the factory on their way out. Time flew, we went to Carnello and Sora. I accompanied Their Majesties in a carriage with the Marquis del Vasto. The enthusiasm was great and the King seemed very happy. On the way back we

[158] Here, it is probably not the intendant general of the Bourbon court but the intendant of the territory of Sora, a kind of governor or prefect who was in charge of public order and administration, with great decision-making powers.

visited the little waterfalls, which the Queen did not know. She made my husband kiss my hand and the King offered me his arm. During this walk I was allowed to talk about what I wanted and I took the opportunity to rehabilitate the Prince of Lequile in his spirit![159] When they returned for dinner, there was general merriment [...] my son accompanied them on horseback with the Duke of Cajanello and other guards of honour. Thus ended the great reception. I returned to Naples two days later to attend to Ernest's impending marriage, which took place on 23 May, Whit Sunday 1847. They left for the island the next day and we joined them four days later!!! [...] Luisa arrived on the 28th and Princess Centola on the 30th. The Cajanello family joined us around the 5th of June [...] On the 27th of June my son and Teresa left for Rome to attend the ceremonies in St Peter's Basilica. My husband accompanied them to see the Forme and then our children left for Paris and [...] on 15 August they left for America. We returned to Naples on 20 July to spend the summer and August! I could not leave Naples then.

The notes of 1847 record the last moments of political tranquillity in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, surrounded by clouds and conspiracies. The king arrived for the second time at the Palazzo Lefèbvre, which had been renovated two years earlier. He wanted to visit the new Carnello factory, but his face was worried and his cheerfulness was gone.

Something serious was happening in the kingdom. Traces of this can be seen in Rosanne's naive attempt to rehabilitate Gioacchino di Saluzzo, known as a dangerous subversive of liberal and 'constitutionalist' ideas. Other nobles moved closer to Mazzinian and even republican positions: they knew that in Britain, and perhaps in France too, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was considered to be doomed, and perhaps for this reason they sought ideological justifications for their estrangement from the Bourbons. Poor Rosanne's attempt at 'rehabilitation' was in vain, for she must have been unaware of much more alarming information about Gioacchino's acquaintances

[159] Apart from the dissipations for which he was evidently famous, Gioacchino di Saluzzo was considered (rightly) to be a nobleman with little loyalty to the King. It is no coincidence that he would leave Naples to spend a long time in Florence, returning only at the fall of the Bourbon Kingdom.

in the king's possession. Moreover, a few months after this meeting, the Lefèbvre's brother-in-law, who was already known for his various protests and real demonstrations in front of the royal palace, committed the last and most serious act that led to his expulsion.

On 23 November 1847 he took part in a demonstration that reached the Largo di Palazzo with the chant "Long live the King, long live the Constitution, long live Italian independence! This cry was much more serious because, if one understands correctly, the King who was being invoked was not the Bourbon but the Savoy. The royal cavalry tried to disperse the small crowd of demonstrators armed with sticks, who then continued their noisy protest along Via Toledo. A dozen nobles could be seen among the troublemakers, among whom, as always in such cases, the Caracciolos stood out, a family that for decades had had Enlightenment and liberal sympathies.[160] The demonstrators who arrived at the Nuncio's palace were attacked by a detachment of hussars who dispersed them and arrested many of them. This was the dress rehearsal for the 1848 uprisings, which broke out first in Palermo and then in Naples from the following January, as a more serious re-edition of the 1820 uprisings.

Note another detail, which is actually very important: Rosanne notes that the Queen kissed her husband's hand. Simple gallantry? According to the etiquette of the time, this was not a simple act of courtesy but a ritual sign that a person or a family had officially entered the King's favour and could aspire to nobility. There was a register of knights admitted to the Royal Kiss, called the Palace Note. The Lefèbvres were not on it at the time, but ennoblement was clearly under consideration.

Inclusion in the 'Royal Lefèbvre' was obtained by means of a Royal Rescript, issued after a rigorous examination of the titles of nobility, which the Bourbon King of the Two Sicilies sent to the Royal Chamber of Santa Chiara (later the Ministry of the Royal Household) and finally

[160] Distinguished were Duke Proto di Maddaloni, Marquis Caracciolo di Bella, son of the Prince of Torella, Gennaro Sambiase Sanseverino of the Dukes of S. Donato, Duchino Morbilli, Andrea Colonna di Stigliano, Maurizio Barracco with his brother Giovanni, Luigi Caracciolo di S. Teodora, Ferdinando de Petruccelli, Pasquale de Virgilii, Alfonso de Caro.

to the Royal Magistracy. In other cases, such as that of Lefèbvre, the ennoblement was decided by the King on the basis of merit, good name and noble lineage. The de facto inscription immediately preceded or followed a sovereign declaration of nobility. So why did ennoblement not follow immediately?

We must bear in mind that the years 1847-1850 were politically turbulent, that Lefèbvre's brother-in-law, Gioacchino di Saluzzo, was expelled from the kingdom as a conspirator, and that it was not until 1851 that the situation calmed down. All this delayed the declaration for a few years, but it did take place, and in this "royal kiss", which was completely unexpected but which Rosanne understood and marked, there was already a declaration of the King's desire to ennoble the Lefèbvre family.

In Nuptiis

ERNESTI LEFEBVRE DE CLUNIERE

Caroli In Regia Galliarum Honoraria Legione Equitis filii

ET

MARIAE THERESIAE AB AURIA

Francisci Centularum Principis filiae

SERVAENTISSIMIS

FERDINANDI II

REGNI UTRIUSQUE SICILIAE REGIS P.F.A.

AUSPICIIS

SOLLEMNI RITE X. KAL. JUNII MDCCCXLVII

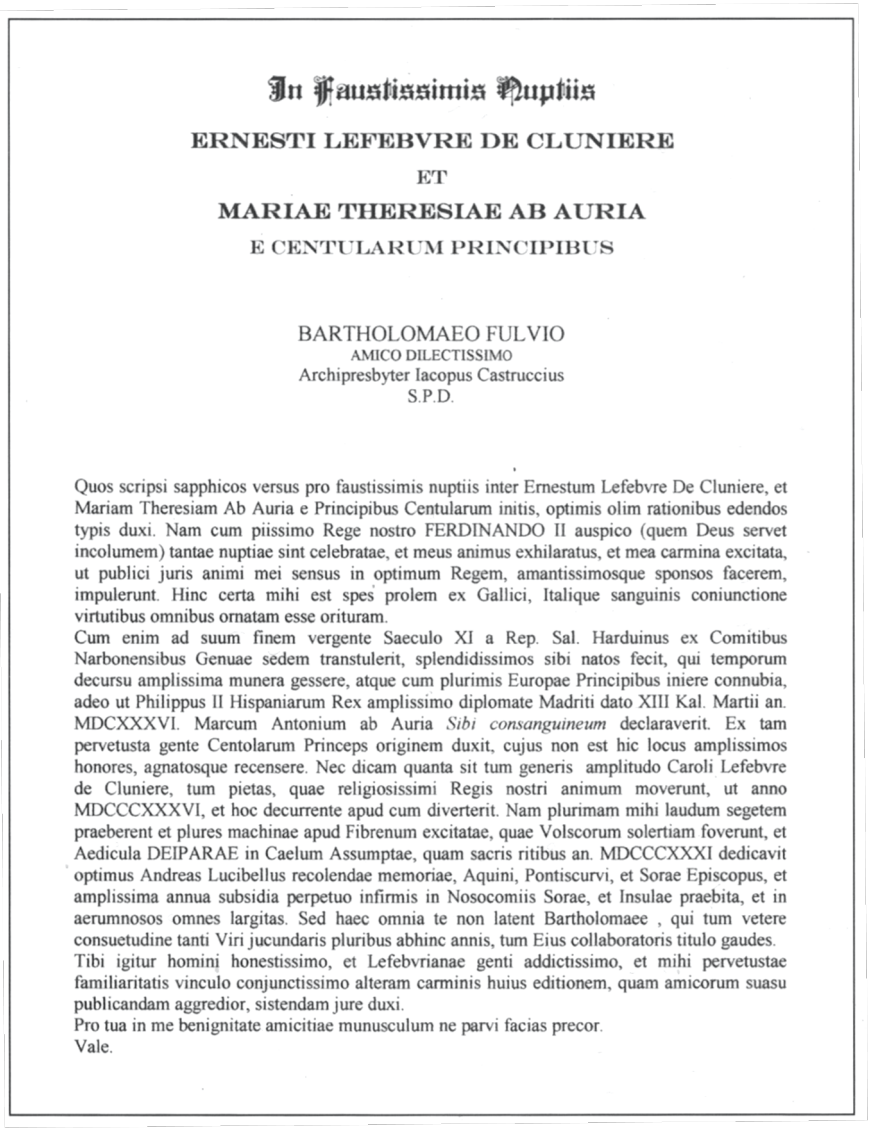
INITIS

Archipresbyter Jacobus Castruccius

Adsit e Coelis, teneros furores
Spiret ac vati, pia musa; sacro
Quando junguntur duce FERDINANDO
Foedere sponsi
Nubit ERNESTO generosa virgo
Doriae gentis soboles vetustae,
cui parem numquam tulerunt, ferentve
Saecula posthac.
Gratiae quid quid Veneri est ocellis,
Quid quid et vultu nitido decoris,
Sat refert THERESIA, sed pudico
Ore videnda.
Undique exciti veniunt frequentes,
Qui colunt Volscae Regionis arva,
Atque festantes hymenace hymen!
Io hymenace!
Adprecantur: dum resonant propinqui
Vocibs colles hymenace hymen,
Ipse Fibrenus caput e sonanti
Extulit unda;
Atque miratur juvenem potentem
Gallica virtute, patrisque factis,
Qui decus Volsco Genio, ac vetustas
Reddidit artes.

Et stupet candorem animi Puellae,
Et fidem, qualis Thetis alma nupsit
Peleo, aut Laertiadi diserto
Penelopea.
Edit et vocem senior, futura
Cui dedit Phoebus liquido videre:
Oh quod accedet decus usque nobis
Foedere tanto!
Nobilis quanta hinc veniet propago,
Quae patrum praestet veniens in aevum
Aureos mores, animumque vires
Luce recenti!
Mente versantur mihi Lambas acer
Gentis Andreas metus Africanae,
Carolo Quinto columen, decusque
Rebus in arctis;
Paulus ac doctae sophiae, bonarum
Artium cultor; neque vos tacebo,
Carole et Francisce, duces recentis
Gloria stirpis.
Filii crescant similes avorum,
Nestoris vivant hilares et annos,
Hunc diem sevi memorent nepotes,
Faustaque vota.

Compositions drafted by the Bishop of Naples on the occasion of the marriage of Ernesto Lefèbvre de Cluniere and Maria Teresa Doria.
Note the honorary de Cluniere in the name.



In Faustissimis Nuptiis

ERNESTI LEFEBVRE DE CLUNIERE

ET

MARIAE THERESIAE AB AURIA

E CENTULARUM PRINCIPIBUS

BARTHOLOMAEO FULVIO
AMICO DILECTISSIMO
Archipresbyter Iacopus Castruccius
S.P.D.

Quos scripsi sapphicos versus pro faustissimis nuptiis inter Ernestum Lefebvre De Cluniere, et Mariam Theresiam Ab Auria e Principibus Centularum initis, optimis olim rationibus edendos typis duxi. Nam cum piissimo Rege nostro FERDINANDO II auspico (quem Deus servet incolumem) tantae nuptiae sint celebratae, et meus animus exhilaratus, et mea carmina excitata, ut publici juris animi mei sensus in optimum Regem, amantissimosque sponsos facerem, impulerunt. Hinc certa mihi est spes prolem ex Gallici, Italique sanguinis coniunctione virtutibus omnibus ornatam esse orituram.

Cum enim ad suum finem vergente Saeculo XI a Rep. Sal. Harduinus ex Comitibus Narbonensibus Genuae sedem transtulerit, splendidissimos sibi natos fecit, qui temporum decursu amplissima munera gessere, atque cum plurimis Europae Principibus iniere connubia, adeo ut Philippus II Hispaniarum Rex amplissimo diplomate Madriti dato XIII Kal. Martii an. MDCXXXVI. Marcum Antonium ab Auria *Sibi consanguineum* declaraverit. Ex tam pervetusta gente Centolarum Princeps originem duxit, cujus non est hic locus amplissimos honores, agnatosque recensere. Nec dicam quanta sit tum generis amplitudo Caroli Lefebvre de Cluniere, tum pietas, quae religiosissimi Regis nostri animum moverunt, ut anno MDCCCXXXVI, et hoc decurrente apud cum diverterit. Nam plurimam mihi laudum segetem praeberent et plures machinae apud Fibrenum excitatae, quae Volscorum solertiam foverunt, et Aedicula DEIPARAE in Caelum Assumptae, quam sacris ritibus an. MDCCCXXXI dedicavit optimus Andreas Lucibellus recolendae memoriae, Aquini, Pontiscurvi, et Sorae Episcopus, et amplissima annua subsidia perpetuo infirmis in Nosocomiis Sorae, et Insulae praebita, et in aerumnosos omnes largitas. Sed haec omnia te non latent Bartholomaee , qui tum vetere consuetudine tanti Viri jucundaris pluribus abhinc annis, tum Eius collaboratoris titulo gaudes.

Tibi igitur homini honestissimo, et Lefebvrianae genti addictissimo, et mihi pervetustae familiaritatis vinculo conjunctissimo alteram carminis huius editionem, quam amicorum suasu publicandam aggredior, sistendam jure duxi.

Pro tua in me benignitate amicitiae munusculum ne parvi facias precor.

Vale.

Dedication drawn up by the Bishop of Naples on the occasion of the marriage of Ernesto Lefèbvre de Cluniere and Maria Teresa Doria. Note the honorary de Cluniere in the name.

Chapter 8

At the heart of the century

The Forty-Eight

On 12 January 1848 a group of armed men entered Palermo and started a violent insurrection that was both regional and strictly political in nature. The uprising broke out in Piazza della Fieravecchia and was instigated by Giuseppe La Masa (1819-1881) and Rosolino Pilo (1820-1860), who managed to rally a large number of commoners and elements of the liberal bourgeoisie to their side, demanding the restoration of the Constitution of 1812. After bloody clashes, La Masa drove much of the Bourbon army out of Sicily and set up a 'General Revolutionary Committee' and a provisional government based in Palermo. The committee was chaired by Ruggero Settimo (1778-1863), a nobleman who was considered a moderate. The insurrectionary movement spread to other cities of the island and then to the mainland kingdom, forcing the king to approve the French-inspired constitution by royal decree of 29 January (promulgated on the following 11 February).[161] Once the Constitution was granted, Ferdinand II promoted liberal reforms including that of Public Education, entrusted to Francesco De Sanctis (1817-1883).

Under the new institutional arrangements, the King retained executive power, but shared legislative power with Parliament. On 25 March the General Assembly of Sicily met with a revolutionary government chaired by Ruggero Settimo and composed of ministers

[161] Paradoxically, the Forty Eight revolts in France overwhelmed, at the end of February, precisely that best model of a constitution and King Louis-Philippe de Bourbon-Orleans.

chosen by the same president, who proclaimed the independence of the island and, on 13 April, the fall of the Bourbon dynasty. The rebels relied on the help of the British and the assurances of the British plenipotentiary, Gilbert E.M. Kynynmound Minto (1782-1859). The movement was also fundamentally independentist and drew strength from the fact that the Sicilians had never accepted the domination of Naples. An important role was played by the latifundistas and the English, who formed a rich colony of vine-growers, wine producers and mining industrialists with strong interests in the sulphur mines. In the interweaving of what the French 'annalists' call the 'micro-history' of the Lefèbvre family with the history of events, wars and institutions, we find another remarkable episode. When he was called upon by the king to put down the Sicilian rebellion, a moment recalled in countless history books, Carlo Filangieri was actually a guest of his friend Charles. Teresa Ravascheri Filangieri, the general's daughter, recalls this in her biography:

> The King was forced to face emergencies: the Constitution with the agitations in the streets of Naples; the revolt in Sicily; the expedition against the Austrians in aid of the Piedmontese army in the First War of Independence. A lot of meat on the fire. He chose priorities, such as the defence of Sicily. Filangieri was resting at Isola di Sora, in what is now Ciociaria. On the night between 15 and 16 May 1848, a clerk of the royal household handed him a message from Ferdinand II: 'I need you, leave instantly by sea and come to the royal palace via the Arsenal pier without passing through the streets of Naples, which is in flames'.[162]

Palmerston had promised to guarantee the independence of the new kingdom if the Sicilian people voted for a Savoy. However, after his defeat at Custoza on 27 July, Charles Albert of Savoy was unwilling to take responsibility for governing Sicily, even though he sent Prince Albert Amadeus I, and so the Sicilian insurgent government found itself

[162] Gigi di Fiore, *La nazione napoletana*, Utet, Turin 2017, p. 39. The author cites Teresa Ravascheri Fieschi Filangieri's biography, *Il generale Carlo Filangieri*, Treves, Milan 1902, p. 319.

isolated. Moreover, there was no harmony among the insurgents: different political forces, moderate liberals, democrats, Mazzinians, clashed with each other, while at the same time revolts against the revolution broke out in the countryside.

Elections were held in Naples on 18 April and around 100,000 people voted in all the provinces of the Kingdom, a significant number given the restrictions in force at the time, which strengthened the government of the Prime Minister appointed by the King, the historian Carlo Troya, after the failure of others. [163]

In September 1848, after recalling the army stationed in Lombardy and suspending parliamentary activity, Ferdinand II crushed Sicilian separatism - in which English interference was not wrongly suspected - by reconquering Sicily. The task of suppressing the Sicilian revolution was entrusted to Carlo Filangieri, Prince of Satriano, already a protagonist in the Napoleonic wars and then loyal to the Bourbons. It is known that he belonged to the circle of friends of Charles Lefèbvre. He was one of the 13 lieutenant generals of the Bourbon army (appointed on 11 January 1831), son of Gaetano Filangieri - the famous jurist of The Science of Legislation - and the Hungarian Charlotte Frendel, royal governess. He had a long military career and was the last of the Bourbons to be heard in military matters. Born in 1784, he was commissioned as a cavalry officer in Ferdinand IV's army at a very young age. Due to complicated circumstances, he enlisted in Napoleon's army, not because he was looking for it, although he was fascinated by it, but by chance. The Minister of Justice, André-Joseph Abrial, an admirer of his father and organiser of the Parthenopean Republic, sent him to the Prytanée Militaire for three years. The first of the school's 300 students, he became a second lieutenant and on 8 January 1803 joined Napoleon's army, fighting at Telnitz, Austerlitz and Gaeta under the command of André Massena. He fought on the side of the French, but always remained a Neapolitan in his heart. He then

[163] Giuseppe Galasso, *The Kingdom of Naples. Il Mezzogiorno borbonico e risorgimentale*, edited by G. Galasso, *Storia d'Italia*, v. XV, volume 6, pp. 661-662; pp. 666-676.

went to Spain and twice defended the honour of Naples against the French in duels, wounding a high officer in the process. For this, Napoleon transferred him to Murat's army. His collaboration with Murat united him with Charles: both were loyal to the king of the Ancien Régime. On the Panaro River, against the Austrians, he was seriously wounded in the leg and remained a cripple for life. When Ferdinand returned to the throne in 1816 and the Murattian officers were left with rank, nobility and honours, he joined the Bourbon army. He remained in the background between 1821 (because of his Murattian background, during the liberal uprisings) and 1831, during the reign of Francis I - when he married Agata Moncada of the Princes of Paternò - then he came back into the limelight and from then on remained a prestigious figure, even being appointed Prince of Satriano. Ferdinand II admired him and asked for his help until the end.

From the frequency of his visits to Charles it can be concluded that he was one of his closest friends: they also met for entertainment, he was often a guest at Isola, he was Charles' partner in various societies and he often had to discuss politics with him.[164] The violent bombardment of Messina was followed by looting on 7 September. Two days later Milazzo fell. Hostilities were soon suspended as British and French forces intervened. During this truce, the British ambassador in Turin, Ralph Abercromby, hoped that Ferdinand Maria Alberto of Savoy, Duke of Genoa, would become sovereign in Sicily.[165] Faced with the possibility of making Sicily independent and drawing it into their respective orbits, the neutrality with which the French and the British had approached the Sicilian rebellion was revised. At the time, this revision did not lead to any significant changes in policy, precisely because of the rivalries between the two nations that could have led to war.

Ferdinand, thanks to Filangieri's energetic action and the election of Louis Bonaparte as President of the French Republic on 10 December

[164] Gigi di Fiore, *La nazione napoletana,* Utet, Turin 2017, pp. 21-37.
[165] *Diplomatic relations between Great Britain and the Kingdom of Sardinia. Third Series: 1848-1860, I, 4 January 1848-31 December 1848*, cit., p. 348.

1848, who was opposed to an independent Sicily, was able to retake the island.[166] In March 1849, when France and England were retreating, Filangieri conquered Catania, Augusta, Syracuse and Noto. Palermo was taken on 15 May. The situation was accepted, but real threats were made to Ferdinand by Temple, who wrote that the United Kingdom would not stand by passively in a new crisis between the government of Naples and the Sicilian people.[167]

Charles, a member of the House of Lords and a peer of the realm, was one of the king's main advisers on sending the general to Sicily, although he advised moderation and suggested that severe reprisals should be avoided. This was the main topic of their meeting on Isola: politics, perhaps international affairs. When the constitution was suspended indefinitely, Ferdinand blocked other possible political reforms. Elections were held in April in the Continental Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The radicals wanted to change the newly granted constitution and the king opposed them. On 15 May 1848, the constitutional deputies (mainly republicans) demonstrated in Naples, even erecting barricades and firing on the army. The King then dissolved the Chamber and called new elections for 15 June. Those elected were largely the same, showing that a stalemate had been reached. After the first session, the reopening of the Chamber was postponed several times from month to month until 12 March 1849, when it was adjourned indefinitely.[168]

Meanwhile, trials and sentences were celebrated, including those of Luigi Settembrini (former author of the *Protesta del Popolo delle Due Sicilie*), Filippo Agresti and Silvio Spaventa. The re-establishment of absolutism was followed by a repression of liberal exponents.

[166] For a summary of the affair and the international background see Eugenio di Rienzo, *Il Regno delle Due Sicilie e le Potenze europee. 1830-1860*, Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2012, pp. 45-49.
[167] Ragona V.*, La politique anglaise et française en Sicilia pendant les années 1848-1848,* cit., pp. 123-124.
[168] For a concise but thoughtful account of those months see Giuseppe Galasso, *Il Regno di Napoli. Il Mezzogiorno borbonico e risorgimentale*, edited by G. Galasso, *Storia d'Italia*, v. XV, tomo 6, pp. 676-691.

Subsequently, petitions were signed throughout the kingdom to bring local administrations back into line. Citizens, represented by mayors, and bureaucrats demanded the abolition of the Statute. The liberals (not all of whom had been expelled) protested, but the petition was successful and Filangieri's work of persuading the Sicilians was fundamental. Only a minority of mayors refused to sign and were dismissed from office. A large part of the landowners and the population, tired of unrest and conspiracy, spontaneously supported what they saw as the restoration of order.

All these events are narrated nervously by Rosanne, who is restless and aware that the world she has lived in for the last few decades, the brief period of calm of the European Restoration, during which an attempt was made to return to the situation before the Revolution - in fact, everything had changed - is creaking and coming to an end.

Journal by Rosanne Lefèbvre

The year 1848. My husband and the Prince of Satriano preceded us to Forme on the 24th of April. The de Montgolfier family had settled there and we arrived with Teresa and Ernesto. At the same time, Gaspar and his wife wanted to spend a month with us. The Duchess Ravasquiere was with us at the same time during those famous days in May when the fate of Naples was decided. My husband was very ill with "dried sweat"; Vulpes made the journey twice, and on the 16th, the day the Prince had to leave by order of the King, [...] we were plunged into the greatest anxiety. Luisa, for her part, was alone in Naples, very exposed in the palace of Partanna and anxious about her father's health. My brother-in-law Léon had arrived a few days earlier to stay with us for two months.[169] My husband spent the summer in Naples and Teresa took refuge in Castellamare. I went to see Charles to give him a change of air and stayed only five days in Naples. Teresa returned in the autumn with her husband Ernesto. In the days of the feast of St Charles we received a visit from the Acton family, with a new son-in-law and a baby girl. We had a wonderful party; the delegate had come from Frosinone. A few days earlier we had visited

[169] François-Noël aka Léon.

the Arce forest, where Teresa had fallen from her horse and was still suffering two years later.

In the first notes that Rosanne wrote in 1848, we learn that General Filangieri went to Isola on the 24th of April to visit his friend Charles, from where he was to leave on the night of the following 15th of May, as we have seen, to follow the King's orders and travel to Ischia and then to Sicily. The Montgolfier family is also mentioned, who had settled in a villa that still stands next to the Forme complex, Villa Louise. There are unspoken questions. The first fears about the health of Charles, who was now suffering from a troublesome form of rheumatism, and the unprecedented "search" for Charles, who was now politically committed to the defence of the kingdom. These were dramatic days in which the English support that had traditionally protected the Neapolitan Bourbons had clearly failed. After thirty years of prosperity for the kingdom, the European balance of power was changing rapidly.

Entrance from the park to Villa Louise, next to the Cartiere di Isola del Liri. Two generations of a branch of the vast Montgolfier family that served the Lefèbvre lived here. The building pre-existed the complex.

In Rosanne's diary we find only a few references to all this. On the 15th there were serious disturbances in Naples and on the 16th the prince who 'had to leave' was Gioacchino of Saluzzo, who had been expelled from the kingdom during the days when Rosanne and Charles were stranded on the island and Luisa was 'exposed' alone in Naples. The 15th was the date of the oath of the peers of the kingdom (15 in all, including Charles) before the Parliament, which the king had hastily approved to avoid being overpowered by the conspirators, but riots and clashes delayed the oath and caused the formula to be changed.

In the pages of Rosanne, who maintained her role as a woman devoted to the home and children, leaving the commentary on political events to her husband, the tension never crossed the line. Rosanne always appears moderate in these writings. Nevertheless, there were attacks on houses. The palaces of nobles considered close to the king were destroyed, such as Palazzo Gravina. After hoisting a red flag over the palace, the army's artillery began firing on the dozens of barricades set up in the streets (17 in via Toledo alone, according to chroniclers).

The Lefèbvre family fled to Isola. Marie-Louise was in great danger: the 15th had been a day of shooting and barricades, with at least 500 dead in the city of Naples alone, and Charles and Rosanne's daughter had remained in the Partanna Palace, which was attacked but also defended by a large number of troops. The most serious setback for the Lefèbvre family was the expulsion of Gioacchino of Saluzzo.

Peers of the Kingdom

Charles had proposed his own appointment in the House of Peers to the King in good time. In a decree of 10 August, he was appointed as a peer along with five others and invited to appear at the sitting of the following 17th.[170] It should be noted that all the others named in this

[170] Circular of the peers appointed by decree of 10 August. Naples 1848, 14 August. In Archives of the Neapolitan Parliament (1848-1849). Chamber of Peers. *Circulars of the Chamber of Peers*: 04.07.1848-10.2.1848. Historical

decree were nobles, the only ones not being Giacomo Fourquet and Charles Lefèbvre (who acquired the title 'knight' on this occasion).[171] The summons of 17 August was the last, for immediately afterwards the Chamber was suspended indefinitely. Only a few commissions of which Charles was a member remained active, such as the commission on the 'free scale', which was to consider the introduction of new units of measurement in the kingdom to facilitate foreign trade. Charles also made an interpellation on the excesses committed by the Neapolitan troops in the bombardment of Messina, an episode that earned the king the nickname of King Bomba, rather unfairly, to tell the truth, since in the same days the Piedmontese army bombed Genoa even more heavily, but the king who ordered these acts would go down in history as the "King of Good Men".[172]

The year is 1849. I arrived with Luisa and Lucia in the first days of June. My husband has already been here for fear of being surprised by Garibaldi. Some of his troops have reached Sora, but he has only gone as far as Arce. All the towns are in turmoil and full of Neapolitan soldiers. I had a visit from a certain Captain Bonnelli, who came to make war [...] near Rome. I returned to Naples after my husband left for Switzerland, having learned of Gioacchino's serious illness. My son and his wife settled in Sorrento. We returned on 15 September after our presentation to the Pope. My husband, Raoul and Gustave spent their quarantine in Rome and did not arrive until October. We arrived in Frosinone, where we received a perfect welcome from the delegate. He gave us the long-awaited tour of the Colleparte caves and the cyclopean walls of Alletri (sic), which proved to me that I could still do extraordinary things! He made us ride 27 miles on difficult and mountainous roads and I felt no fatigue. I was delighted to see the same places that my dear Flavia had ridden. The

Archive of the Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Republic.

[171] The others nominated were Antonio Troisse (Troyse) Prince of Colle, the Prince of Stigliano, the Duke of Corigliano, Count Emmanuele Grasset, the Baron of Battifarano, and the Marquis of Filiasi. Fourquet, a banker, was also later ennobled.

[172] As already noted by John A. Davis, in *Naples and Napoleon,* trad. it. Rubbettino, Soveria Mannelli 2014, pp. 511-513 and then Gigi di Fiore, *La nazione napoletana. Controstorie borboniche e identità sudista*, Utet, Turin 2017, p. 40.

painter Morani had been with us on his way from Rome with some gentlemen.[173] On the day of Saint Charles, the amiable delegate arrived [...] the weather remained magnificent that autumn, and until November we could take beautiful walks. In December it began to get cold and the heaviest snow I have ever seen began to fall. Little Charles came to spend his holidays in the Forme, it is very good for him. His father has left for Florence. Our return to Naples this year was a bit late.

In Rosanne's notes from 1849, we find ourselves in the midst of the climate of the Risorgimento, with the imminent threat of Giuseppe Garibaldi. And he remembers the snow that fell in Naples that year, perhaps the coldest of the century. Garibaldi was in fact passing near the Palazzo Lefèbvre with a group of armed men, carrying out secret war manoeuvres. Charles knew this and avoided going to Isola for fear of being captured. In November 1848, an uprising organised by the Mazzinians forced the Pope to flee and he took refuge in Gaeta, and on 5 February 1849 the Roman Republic was proclaimed. The delegates of Austria, Spain, France and the two Sicilies left it to France to liberate Rome and return the Pope.

The intervention corps, under the command of General Nicolas Oudinot, landed in Civitavecchia on 24 April 1849, but was repulsed on 30 April. Meanwhile, Ferdinand II was advancing from the south and had decided to contribute to the recovery of the Papal States with an army of 90,000 men. The recapture of Rome was complicated by the arrival of Ferdinand de Lesseps. Appointed plenipotentiary by the French government, he opened negotiations with the triumvirs who ruled Rome: Mazzini, Aurelio Saffi and Carlo Armellini. De Lesseps stopped Oudinot by signing an armistice with the triumvirate. Ferdinand II then withdrew his army. At this point, taking advantage of the lull and the truce between France and the Roman Republic, he began a series of disruptive actions in lower Lazio. This is why we find Garibaldi near the Isola del Liri. Moreover, if Charles was afraid of

[173] The painter Vincenzo Morani (1809-1870) was one of the most important painters of his time, considered a forerunner of Romantic painting in Naples and later in Rome.

being "surprised by Garibaldi", it means that his role was known: he was an important figure in the kingdom. When Oudinot received the order to conquer Rome, he overpowered the Republic's defences. At this point, Louis Bonaparte placed his nation as protector of the papacy and responded to the Austrian occupation of Ancona (21 June 1849) by preventing Vienna from extending its influence further into the peninsula. In this way, Rome was removed from the more direct influence of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and the problem was solved by weakening the Bourbons.

When, in 1851, in order not to antagonise the temporarily friendly French, Ferdinand rejected the proposal of Imperial Chancellor Felix von Schwarzenberg to create a league under Habsburg protection with the participation of the principalities and kingdoms of Tuscany, Parma, Modena, Rome and Naples, he lost the useful support of Vienna. From then on he had to face the increasingly evident English aggression alone.[174] According to a popular historical interpretation, a further weakening of Ferdinand II occurred in 1852, when he rejoiced at Napoleon III's plebiscite nomination before Vienna and Moscow, breaking with the reasons of protocol. In fact, Vienna and Moscow had the right to speak first and demanded respect for the treaties of 1815. Meanwhile, Carlo Filangieri remained in Sicily as the King's plenipotentiary, guarantor of order, and was to remain there until 1855.

“Perfida Albione”

Meanwhile, having regained control of his kingdom, Ferdinand was portrayed as a 'monster' by Europe's liberal press. The British politician William Ewart Gladstone (1809-1898) wrote letters (faking a visit he apparently never made) describing the Bourbon prisons as a medieval legacy and a 'denial of God'. The British prime minister, Lord George Hamilton Gordon, 4th Earl of Aberdeen (1784-1860), urged the Neapolitan ambassador in London, Prince Ruffo di Castelcicala, to

[174] Eugenio di Rienzo, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

persuade Ferdinand to adopt a more liberal political line. Had he not done so, Gladstone's letters would have been published. But their contents were leaked in advance, in confidence, to the minister Giustino Fortunato. When he refused to be blackmailed, the letters were published in 1851. Ably amplified in the Anglo-Saxon press, they created a real scandal and gave rise to the black legend of the 'monstrosity' of the Bourbon regime, which in reality was no worse than the English, but which in the eyes of the English and the French had the serious defect of being an absolute monarchy. In this respect, the economic writings of Antonio Scialoja (1817-1877) made a great impression in Naples. He began to criticise the Bourbon policy of low taxation, which led to disinvestment and increased poverty and backwardness. Ferdinand II was persuaded to set up a commission to publicly refute the theses of the economist exiled in Turin.

The reaction of Ferdinand II to restore order after the revolutions of 1848 inaugurated in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies what has been defined, rightly or wrongly - the truth lies somewhere in the middle - as the 'decade of immobility', characterised by the increasing isolation of the Kingdom by foreign powers, especially those allied with the United Kingdom. A large number of intellectuals and military men, inspired by the battlefields of the First War of Independence and by the reforms of 1848, emigrated to Turin, the capital of the Kingdom of Sardinia, a state that had retained its Albertine statute after 1848. The Savoy regime was a breeding ground for the generation dedicated to unity, with the help of the British, who were interested in overthrowing the Bourbon kingdom. Now diplomatically isolated and with an ageing ruling class, it had to contend with the Savoy empire, which was very much in favour in international alliances.

Link with the dynasty

As for the Lefèbvre family, their relationship with the dynasty, and in particular with Ferdinand II, grew stronger. After his visit to Isola in 1832, he made another in 1847, showing great consideration for Charles. He had many other occasions to meet with them in Naples: parties, gala dinners, official ceremonies, collaborations at court. The Lefèbvres were always invited to royal weddings, baptisms and funerals, even though their official position was still subordinate to that of the nobility. In 1848, however, Charles became embittered when the Bourbon government, threatened by rebellions, became suspicious of all foreigners. Not only the British, but also the French, because between February and June, a revolution had taken place in France that put an end to the Bourbon-Orléans monarchy and established the Second Republic, of liberal-radical tendency. In fact, the French, who had continued to maintain links with the mother country, were from then on regarded with almost unjustified suspicion. The king asked the Neapolitans of foreign origin for a loan of three million ducats. One million of this loan was 'voluntary' and two million was compulsory. In practice, it forced the foreign entrepreneurs to tax themselves, but with the prospect of receiving the sum back with interest within a few years. Charles Lefèbvre paid 4000 ducats. The Lefèbvre family was also one of the richest in Naples, as can be seen from a list of the city's creditors, divided into districts, dated 28 July 1848.[175]

As far as the events at Isola are concerned, Rosanne does not mention an affair that had to sadden her. The former director of the factory, Giacomo Testa, who continued to work for the Lefèbvre family in one of the many positions of responsibility that the complex required, lost his wife, Gabrielle, and their third daughter, Theresa Aloise. This happened in mid-March 1849, and the wife and child were buried in the

[175] Bianchini, *Della storia delle finanze del Regno di Napoli, Naples,* Stamperia Reale, 1859, pp. 558-559. Quoted in Caglioti, *Vite parallele*, p. 206 and n80.

restored little church opposite the factory on 16 or 17 March 1849.[176]

The Crimean War

While these changes took place in the background, slowly and not all at once, the people of Naples continued to work, invent and produce.

The Crimean War brought further isolation to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. France intervened in the Crimea to stop, as Napoleon III claimed, Russian expansionism. Apart from the French manipulation (the Crimea was Russian), the war mainly led to the destruction of the order established by the Congress of Vienna. The exploitation and exaggeration of the Russian threat led France and Britain to sign a plan in Vienna (8 August 1854) to block Russia and create a kind of Western League. The French and Habsburg empires had agreed, but had based their respective spheres of influence on blackmail. France, for example, had warned Vienna that it could provoke uprisings in Italy if Austria agreed to a deal with Russia. The French could have provoked riots in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, Parma, Modena and Naples. Piedmont would have been the detonator. Hence the hesitation of the authorities in Vienna: Paris or Moscow? It was only under pressure from Paris that Franz Joseph issued his ultimatum to Moscow on 27 December 1855, when the Russian Empire had already been defeated. Vienna's failure to intervene earlier prevented it from sitting at the winners' table in a position of strength.[177] In the end, the Holy Alliance front disintegrated because of the ruthless and aggressive policies of France and Britain, which managed to pit old allies against each other. The Piedmontese government had managed to carve out an important role for itself by sending its mission and flanking the Franco-British contingent. This allowed it to further its expansionist aims.

Far from being a minor episode, the Crimean War, with its

[176] Archivi parrocchiali di San Lorenzo di Isola del Liri, Atti di morte, marzo 1849. At a later, unknown time, the bodies were removed.
[177] Di Rienzo, pp. 59-62.

reconfiguration of alliances and power relations, was a prerequisite for preparing the ground for the wars that would shake up Italy. If the Duchy of Parma sided with the Franco-British forces, the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and the Papal States, but above all the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, remained neutral and sided with Russia. Moreover, the Court of Caserta was linked to Russia by important treaties signed in 1845, 1846 and 1847. It was precisely because he hoped for support from the Russian Empire that Ferdinand had not intervened in the Crimea with an expeditionary force of 40,000 men, as he had been asked to do, and Vienna had warned the Court of Caserta of the possible serious consequences of this decision. French and British propaganda insisted that this intervention was aimed against Russian barbarism, but Ferdinand II knew full well how much of an excuse this was: the truth was that Napoleon III wanted to change alliances. His interpretation would prove correct, even if it did not save the kingdom. In the summer of 1853, therefore, Ferdinand had already banned the export of Sicilian wheat to feed the French army and forbidden Neapolitan ships to carry war material that could help the Franco-English and Austrian armies. Similar measures were reinforced in 1855. And yet Ferdinand did not take Russia's side militarily, as he had been invited to do on 9 January 1855.

In August 1855 Palmerston denounced the proximity of the Court of Caserta to Moscow and the fact that it had banned the export of goods:

This 'flagrant violation of international law' was all the more serious, Palmerston added, because it was 'perpetuated by a government which has been guilty of acts of cruelty and oppression towards its people, absolutely incompatible with the progress of European civilisation'. The British Prime Minister was explicitly referring to the declarations of William Ewart Gladstone, who, in his two letters to the Earl of Lord Aberdeen in 1851, had described the regime of Ferdinand II as 'the negation of God', with great rhetorical emphasis and not a few exaggerations, of the poor living conditions in the Bourbon prisons and the inhuman treatment reserved for prisoners, [demonstrating] how Ferdinand's firm determination to assert the autonomy of his kingdom in major foreign policy decisions was about to be exemplarily punished. A punishment that the allied governments would have justified with

entirely instrumental motives, all focused on criticism of the internal policy of the Two Sicilies, in the impossibility of using others motivated by real legal justifications relating to the violation of international law.[178]

Palmerston then began a series of interventions and provocations, some successful, some not, such as the attempt to free Settembrini, Spaventa and Agresti, and the first attempt to get the Bourbon police chief, Orazio Mazza, to resign for a non-existent offence he had allegedly committed against an English dignitary. More seriously, the pretext was to obtain a formal apology from the commander of Messina for failing to salute a French corvette on Napoleon's birthday. The apology was deemed insufficient and Paris threatened to withdraw its diplomatic delegation. Meanwhile, with the help of the British, Aurelio Saliceti published a pamphlet claiming that Murat's son was entitled to the Kingdom of Naples. This pamphlet, published in Paris, was a clear and serious provocation.[179] There were extremists in the British government who urged that an expedition of gunboats be sent to Naples to provoke an uprising. This intervention, strongly desired by Palmerston, was only stopped by the intervention of Queen Victoria. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was compared to Japan, 'invited' by the British gunboats to open up to international trade. But Ferdinand had been warned. He dismissed Mazza, but it was no use: England would not pay, she was determined to go her own way to the end, either directly or indirectly.

The consequences for the paper and textile industry

The consequences of the gradual weakening of tariffs, which began in the third decade of the 1830s and gradually took hold in the following decades of 1845-1848 and then after 1861, were felt almost immediately by the kingdom's two main industries. On 9 March 1846,

[178] Di Rienzo, cit., pp. 68.
[179] Aurelio Saliceti, *La Questione italienne, Murat et le Bourbons,* Dentu, Paris 1855.

in a partial acceptance of the new dictates of liberal economics, import duties on manufactured goods and yarn were reduced throughout the kingdom, thus mitigating protectionism. All the factories in the Liri Valley felt the blow, and in order to withstand the competition and not close down, they reduced workers' wages by 1/5 and increased working hours. This shifting of costs onto the workers, who were unprotected at the time, was typical of the period and there was still no way around it. On the other hand, it was thought that such a blow could have led to the drastic downsizing of certain departments, if not to their closure, with redundancies that would have plunged many families into hunger. At that time - we do not know the opinion of the workers - it was preferred to do this.

In the following years, Lefèbvre tried, in vain, to obtain a duty reduction on the import of chemicals to counter French competition.[180] Such a revision was not provided for in the treaties. For this reason, in 1853, his son Ernesto began to set up a chemical industry in Bagnoli, with the aim of producing key components for the paper-making process.

The spinning industry continued to develop and in 1853, at the Exhibition of the Arts and Manufactures of the Kingdom, the mechanical flax spinning mill of the *Società Italiana Partenopea* won prizes and praise. By then it was the largest in the kingdom, producing a wide range of high-quality fabrics. According to a report by Carlo de Cesare in 1857, the *Società Italiana Partenopea*'s textile mills in Sarno were among the largest in the peninsula, with around 800 workers and an annual output of 534,000 kilos of spun linen. A few years later, in 1861, at the exhibition in Florence, the Sarno factory appeared to be the largest in Italy, employing around 1,000 workers, almost all of them women. In 1879, after fifteen years of agony that began around 1865, the company was liquidated and the factory sold.[181]

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[180] Michela Cigola, *Le cartiere storiche del basso Lazio*, Ciolfi, Cassino 2002, p. 64.
[181] Luigi de Matteo, *Holdings and Industrial Development in the Mezzogiorno. Il caso della Società Industriale Partenopea 1833-1879*, Naples 1984.

Time and its duties: births and deaths

At the end of October 1849, Charles travelled to the Château de Germancy with his son-in-law and the latter's first-born son, Gustave, in time to return to Naples for the Christmas festivities. The surrounding area, in the commune of Decise in the Nièvre, was rich in agricultural activity, managed for centuries by the Raigecourts, with varieties of cross-fertilised fruit: apples and pears in particular. The journey went well and the small party returned by Christmas 1849.

This trip took place at a time when Garibaldi was touring lower Lazio and Charles thought it would be a good idea to 'change the air'.

The Germancy castle of Raoul de Raigecourt and his wife Flavia.

A few days after the celebrations, however, the Lefèbvre family received a letter informing them of a tragedy in Paris. Charles' brother François-Noël, known as Léon, was in poor health. Sixty-nine years old and suffering from a long history of rheumatism, he had undergone what was considered a miraculous cure at a clinic in Aise. It was a variant of

what would later be taken up and perfected by Sebastian Kneipp, the great proponent of hydrotherapy.

The treatment consisted of a series of very cold showers directed at the head. It was called hydrotherapy. It was followed, according to André-Isidore, by a "ramolissment de cervau", which in a short time had turned this intelligent and witty man into a semi-conscious amnesiac. Obviously, in the parascientific terminology of the time, he had caught a cold that had developed into something more serious. His brother tried to inquire by letter (someone in the servants' quarters kept in touch), but from a distance there was little he could do. However, he arranged for him to be admitted to a nursing home and then asked Ernesto to visit his uncle as soon as possible. When Ernesto arrived in Paris a few days later, he found his uncle in a coma and close to death. By chance, after witnessing this painful development, he visited Annette, also in Paris, and found her at the bedside of her daughter, Ernesto's cousin Azélie Lefèbvre Sylvestre, who had died on 5 February 1850.[182] After attending her funeral, she took her uncle Léon, who died two weeks later on 18 February 1850, to his final resting place. He had named Charles Grand, son of Hubert Grand and Denise Gabrielle Lefèbvre, as his universal heir. André-Isidore wrote words of praise for his uncle, who he said had reached out his hand to him on more than one occasion. Considering him a second father, he may have been disappointed not to have received part of his uncle's no doubt considerable inheritance, but he does not show it in his writings. In March, on his way back to Naples, Ernesto passed through Bourg-en-Bresse, the capital of the Rhône-Alpes region, to greet André-Isidore and his wife, who were living there at the time.[183]

Later that year, in the autumn of 1850, André-Isidore also received a

[182] AB XIX 4482, vol. VII, p. 38.

[183] AB XIX 4481, vol. V, pp. 82-84. On a page in volume VII of his work, André-Isidore scrupulously notes his service record: Quimperlé (4 years and 3 months); Hazerbrack (1 year and 8 months); Lille (2 years); Valenciénnes (10 years); Nantes (5 years and 1 month); Avignon (3 years); Alençon (4 years); Bourg (3 years); Draguignan (1 year); Grenoble (12 years). After 46 years of service, he retired in 1864 and bought a house in Paris. AB XIX 4482, vol. VII, p. 253.

welcome visit from Charles, Gustave and Raoul. The latter had brought some of the famous pears from his orchards in Germancy. His nephew was always full of praise for Charles and his cousin Ernest. His uncle was a "dear benefactor" to him, not least because of the sums he gave him over time.

André-Isidore, who was always on the move from one administration to another, had recently moved into his new home, which was not yet properly furnished, but his wife managed to create a climate "worthy of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies" during his brief stay in Bourg-en-Bresse.[184] The next day, before leaving, Charles played whist with a friend of André-Isidore's, which had apparently become a constant pastime for him. And he did not limit himself to playing "ten cents", as his nephew said, but much more.[185] The Lefèbvre family from Naples therefore returned to their city and spent their holidays there. Later, before the heat of summer arrived, Charles, his wife and granddaughter Lucia moved to Isola, where they stayed until the end of June. It was the second year that Rosanne did not write in her diary. She does not record anything that happened in Isola, except for a brief mention of 1852.

On 28 June 1850, Charles and Rosanne sailed for Genoa and then to Lucerne, where they invited André-Isidore. On 15 July they arrived at a 'charming chalet' with a magnificent view of the lake. They were joined by Annette Lefèbvre, who was mourning Azélie's death, and two old acquaintances of the whole family: Mr and Mrs Vauchelle. On 9 August, the brother-in-law of Charles' late sister, Eugénie, and their son, Charles Grand, arrived from Besançon.[186] More than 40 years after Charles and Rosanne had left France, the bond with brothers, sisters and sisters-in-law was clearly still strong. Between excursions and conversations, the reunion lasted until September.

On the way back, they paid another two-day visit to André-Isidore in Bourg. André had the opportunity to reaffirm his filial love for his aunt Rosanne. If so much has been preserved about this family and their daily

[184] AB XIX 4481, vol. V, p. 65.
[185] *Ibid*, vol. V, p. 66.
[186] *Ibid*, vol. V, p. 86.

life in the 19th century, it is largely thanks to the affection of this faithful nephew.[187] On this particularly melancholic occasion, before the usual game of whist, family members who had died in previous years are remembered with a prayer: little Léon, Flavia, Azélie and Léon Lefèbvre.

By the end of September, the Lefèbvre sedan was on its way back to Italy. Ernesto's wife was about to give birth to the first child of the family's Italian generation and had to be back in time. Dr Semmola was waiting for them in Naples. And so it was: a beautiful little girl, named Flavia in memory of the first and second Flavia, came into the world on 8 October 1850 in Naples, two days after her grandparents' return. The Lefèbvre always showed singular timing in these cases.[188]

Ennobling

About a year and a half later, in July 1852, after an absence that had lasted since 1839, Annette returned to Naples to visit her sister and to see places that were dear to her. The occasion was certainly the birth of little Carlo, Ernesto and Teresa's second son, born at the end of May. A son would guarantee the continuation of the dynasty. As for Annette, she was very old, in pain and too sensitive to the heat of Naples to go out during the day. The visit was marred by an accident suffered by Charles, who broke his collarbone when his car skidded off the road near Arpino and was confined to bed for over a month. Annette returned home in November, accompanied by Ernesto. It was the last time the two sisters saw each other.

A little over a year later, on 8 October 1853, Carlo, the son of Maria Luisa and Gioacchino di Saluzzo Lequile, died suddenly, probably of a cold complicated by bronchopneumonia. Born in April 1842, he was only 11 years old. It would be only the first in a new chain of mourning. André-Isidore added a note of regret about the father of this unhappy son. He, he writes, was attracted to love outside marriage, and 'the sweet

[187] AB XIX 4481, vol. V, p. 89.
[188] AB XIX 4481, vol. V, p. 90.

joys of the conjugal sphere were no longer enough for his fickle and undisciplined spirit. His heart was not high enough to understand his duties, nor his principles noble enough to know how to fulfil them', and so he sought 'new aspirations outside the legitimate path'. André-Isidore judged this to be a serious character flaw, which manifested itself in various ways, from the marital sphere to family policy and political ideas. He 'allied himself with political doctrines that condemned the government of King Ferdinand'. Exiled for years in Florence as a suspicious and dangerous person, he saw in this distressing situation only an easier opportunity to lead a pleasant life and was distracted by diversions", causing his wife such suffering that it hastened her death.[189] The child was buried in a tomb that today no longer exists in Poggioreale.

As always, joys and sorrows alternated, and finally, at the end of 1854, the noble title was conferred on old Charles by Ferdinand II. It was an honorary feudal title that could be inherited by the first-born male members of the family.[190] The coat of arms, specially designed, shows, on azure, three garden lilies gambuti, foliated in gold and placed in a band with the inscription Lex - Decus - Labor. The castle of Balsorano was linked to the title of Comital. The very nature of the title, according to the rules of aristocratic imposition, required a place to which honour could be attached, and this ancient castle was magnificent and well represented the importance of the family. The building was rather shabby and required a huge amount of money to repair. Had Charles lived longer, it might have become a new centre for the family, but in fact only a small part of it was ever repaired. A few rooms with all the comforts of home were created. The dilapidated and antique interiors were replaced with stucco, furniture and neo-Gothic decorations in keeping with the tastes of the time.

Situated on the top of a hill not far from the left bank of the Liri river, the imposing Balsorano Castle, surrounded by luxuriant woods,

[189] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, pp. 97-98.
[190] The feudal predicate of count *ad honorem* is more important than the *ad personam* predicate, which is not transmissible.

was built in the early Middle Ages and rebuilt in its present form in 1460 by Antonio Piccolomini, whose family owned the barony that belonged to the castle. At the beginning of the 18th century, the family died out and the Barony of Balsorano passed to the Roman Baron Testa, whose descendants were related to the descendants of another branch of the Piccolomini family and from whom Charles bought the castle in 1854, together with the surrounding land and woods. Balsorano was not far from Isola and Sora, half a day's ride from Rome. The barony remained with the Testa family, while King Ferdinand gave the name of Balsorano a comital rank.

After his ennoblement, he bought an old palace in the Amedeo district of Naples and began to renovate it to make it suitable for modern living. To furnish and decorate it properly, the old Frenchman began to invest in works of art.

Death of Marie Louise (20 November 1854)

The Lefèbvres were not able to enjoy their long-awaited ennoblement for long. On 20 November 1854, almost at the same time as the award, Marie-Louise died, followed shortly afterwards by Rosanne herself. In the autumn of that year, the cholera epidemic ravaged many cities, especially those on the coast, such as Marseilles, Livorno, Genoa and Naples. The epidemic hit hard. On the subject of Marie-Louise's death, we read a sibylline allusion by André-Isidore when he states that Marie-Louise's fall (tombeau) was due to her husband's "misconduct" (écarts de conduit): she was "the victim of the perfidy and evil passions of a man who never respected either the fidelity or the honour of the name she bore".[191] She had been ill throughout 1853 and 1854. André-Isidore in his account criticises the 'bad conduct' and debauchery of Gioacchino who was expelled from the kingdom and inclined to distract himself with mistresses in Florence while his wife remained lonely and 'unhappy' (*malehureuse*) to the

[191] *Ibid*.

point of physical harm.[192] By the end of 1853 - let us not forget - her son Charles had also died; by then Marie Louise had fallen into what we would now call depression. That she was depressed is clear from the descriptions we have - she was passive, she had no desire to do anything, she felt useless - but that was not all, she was probably also tubercular, we infer from another definition by André-Isidore: Marie Louise suffered from 'mortal languor', which at the time was almost synonymous with tuberculosis. The disease was worsening, becoming 'more and more desperate every day', so much so that medicines could no longer help.[193] The doctor advised her to move to a house in old Naples to breathe "under the influence of a more suitable temperature", but in vain.[194] When the first cold weather arrived, Marie Louise died on 20 November 1854, aged just 33. She was probably killed not by the cholera that was beginning to spread in the city, but by tuberculosis, which had struck her when she was particularly weak.[195]

André-Isidore remembers Marie-Louise Lefèbvre as a good-looking, pleasant, intellectual, educated and kind woman. He remembers meeting her for the first time when he was five or six years old, in 1826 and 1827, at the Château de la Brûlerie. Then in November 1841 and 1842, in Naples. The young woman left behind an eight-year-old girl.

The death of her daughter, after the deaths of Léon, Flavia and her grandson Carlo, plunged Rosanne into a state of grief from which she would never recover. She had already lost four children. It is no coincidence that the last record of her visits to the island ends in 1852 and her diary remains silent for the next three years, which André-Isidore regretted: "Today", he would write in 1885, recalling the splendour of half a century earlier, "the silence of the grave has become

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[192] AB XIX 4482, vol. VIII, p. 8.
[193] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, p. 235.
[194] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, p. 236.
[195] Eugenia Tognotti, *Il morbo lento. Storia della tubercolosi nell'Italia dell'Ottocento*, Franco Angeli, Milan 2012. Where we learn that the word languor was equivalent to other words or locutions used to indicate tuberculosis (consunction, mal sottile, morbo bianco, morbo lento, scrofola).

the author of these revered memories, but the devotion I retain for them naturally brings me back to the good old days and, at will, I ask under my pen the names of the people my aunt included in her precious cards [which] my dear brotherly cousin Ernesto wished to entrust to me temporarily".[196] Until 1885, and at least until Ernesto's death in 1891, Rosanne's diary, begun some 70 years earlier, still existed and was in Ernesto's possession in Naples. André-Isidore therefore declared that he wished to 'give the floor to my beloved aunt by presenting here, with the greatest literal fidelity, the reflections and names taken from her diary'.[197]

In those years, he returned to the beautiful palace surrounded by the Jardin Anglais, but his hand remembered nothing. The time of amusements, of parlour games, of trips along the banks of the Fibreno, of receptions and fireworks on summer evenings, was gone forever. Rosanne, always cheerful and happy, had become a shadow of her former self. It is a pity that the features of these people have not been restored to us, although the paintings depicting them certainly still exist, perhaps under misleading titles and in private collections. As for Maria Luisa, it may be possible to see her face: a gouache and chalk portrait of an unknown Neapolitan girl by the painter Raffaele d'Auria, dated 1854, could be her. Critics have tried in vain to establish the identity of the person portrayed by the painter who immortalised all the members of the Lefèbvre family.

[196] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, p. 4. This suggests that the *Journal* was returned to Ernesto and from Ernesto it must have been passed on to Franz or Charles, his two sons. Today, even this document has been lost. Fortunately, all or most of it was transcribed by André-Isidore.
[197] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, p. 4.

Probable portrait of Marie-Louise Lefèbvre. Jeune napoletaine (about 1854, R. D'Auria). Priv.Coll.

The portrait presents aspects that make the hypothesis put forward here plausible. First of all, the woman in the painting has no physical features or clothing that could identify her as a Neapolitan: she has light hair, a fair complexion and green or blue eyes, which are typically Nordic and described as common in the Lefèbvre. Charles, Ernesto, the second Flavia and the granddaughter Flavia all had very clear eyes. The background is a calm sky. The brown robe is fastened with a French-style brooch, which (enlarged) seems to suggest a scene of mourning. His hand is resting on a closed book. In essence, it looks like one of

those portraits that were commissioned to recall the features of a deceased person at a time when it was not easy to make daguerreotypes, especially in emergency situations. The 'Neapolitan' also seems to correspond to Marie Louise's young age.

Rosanne's death (12 July 1855)

On 13 July 1855, Rosanne also died, shortly after the age of seventy-two. André-Isidore seems to attribute this death to grief over the loss of his last daughter.[198] He makes no mention, however, of the violent cholera epidemic that raged in the Vesuvian city that summer and which, according to other sources, was the direct cause of her death. Rosanne was certainly weakened by age and the bereavements of her later years, but the cholera epidemic that raged from early 1854 to late 1855 also caused many deaths in the high society of the kingdom. In fact, many high bureaucrats and royal officials, singers, artists, the Prime Minister Pietro d'Urso and the 'Countess of Balsorano' died, as the chronicler and writer Raffaele de Cesare recalls.[199] The funeral was celebrated in the church of San Ferdinando, as it had been for his daughter Maria Luisa, and the body was buried in the Monumental Cemetery of Naples. In her memoirs, Lenormant notes that Rosanne died "having suffered the pain of leaving behind one of her sons and two daughters, the Marquise de Raigecourt and the Princess de Lequile".[200]

Shortly after his wife's death, Charles went to Paris with the gifts she had left him: 200 francs for André-Isidore, 200 for Ernestine, and so on. He told them that his brother-in-law, Marie-Louise's husband,

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[198] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, pp. 245-247. Maria Luisa's death is confirmed, for example, by *L'araldo nobiliare napoletano*, Naples 1899, p. 215.
[199] Raffaele de Cesare, *La fine di un regno*, Longanesi 1969, p. 175.
[200] "Ces deux époux, avec les nuances très-diverses de leurs caractères, rivalisèrent d'égards et de soins empressés pour Mm Récamier. A force d'instances, ils avaient obtenu qu'elle acceptât chez eux une élégante et affectueuse hospitalité". *Ibid*.

would also be in Paris from 10 to 15 December. By December Charles had returned home and on 11 December he wrote from Isola del Liri to his favourite nephew, informing him that Ernesto and his family would be staying there while he left for Naples. The letter also contained a copy of Charles's will, which included bequests to his grandchildren.

A little over a year after Rosanne's death, Charles's third grandchild, Franz, was born. Ernesto and Teresa's third son was born in Naples on 1 August 1856 and would always be called 'Franz'.[201]

[201] AB XIX 4481, vol. VI, p. 287.

Chapter 9

The steamboat era

The 1840s

Until 1848, the accounts of the Steam Navigation Administration remained good and the company had considerable assets, having paid all the expenses and loans taken out for the purchase or modernisation of steamships. It also had agents abroad who worked in the various ports visited by the ships (there were permanent agents in Marseilles, Genoa, Leghorn, Palermo and Malta), work that produced results, although some complained about the excessive cost of these agents, who presented representation expenses for actions not carried out, at least this is the suspicion that emerges from the reports of the meetings. From the 1840s onwards, new models were perfected in England, with iron hulls, which were lighter, and steam propulsion, which tended to replace the paddle wheel with the less cumbersome and less dangerous propeller; this made it possible to increase the speed of the ships and give new impetus to steam navigation. Meanwhile, technical improvements had made the breakdowns that still plagued steamships in the 1820s and 1830s less frequent and had protected the "fire" parts of the ships.

It is interesting to note the decisions taken at the General Meeting of 15 March 1841.[202] There was a transitional management between the limited partnership that had ended in December 1839 and the new one that had de facto started on 29 September 1840. From the former, 9

[202] *Administration of steam navigation. Estratto delle delibererazioni dell'adunanza generale del 15 marzo 1841*, Stamperia del Fibreno, Napoli 1841.

months of give and take were calculated, and from the new, 5 months. It was not until 1842 that the fruits of the new management began to be reaped.

The Sicard management had decided to modernise the *Francesco I* in terms of the boilers, which had to be replaced, the hull and the interiors (at a cost of around 20,000 ducats). The ship was laid up in the port of Livorno from March 1839 to April 1840 for restoration, then waited six months for a new boiler to arrive from England, which never did. This setback forced the *Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore* to work with only one steamer, the *Maria Cristina*.

Under the new management, the steamships had made good profits. The *Maria Cristina* had made 17 voyages to the west and 11 to Sicily, earning around 97,000 ducats (leaving a net profit of 42,000 ducats after expenses). The *Francesco I*, on the other hand, had made 20 voyages before its restoration, with a net income of 20,000 ducats. There was also a residual surplus from the Sicard management which, including the shares in the treasury, amounted to 40,000 ducats.

In addition, in August 1839 a law was repealed that had subjected the Neapolitan company's steamers to an "extraordinary imposition" of taxes that had reduced their income. In the meantime, two new ships had been purchased to join the *Francesco I* and the *Maria Cristina*: the *Ercolano* was due to be delivered on 15 March 1841, followed by the *Mongibello*. The purchase of the steamships was financed by the sale of shares and by drawing on the company's reserves. It was also stipulated that the total sum for the purchase should not exceed 80,000 ducats. If the net profits of the new management guaranteed 62,000 ducats for two ships, the profits were considerable. A few months later it was decided to refit the *Maria Cristina* as well.

The average life of these ships was rather short. Meanwhile, at the meeting of 15 March, we learned that in September 1840, Mr Meuricoffre, one of the first partners, a member of a Swiss family who had moved to Naples and had important business interests, had died.40,000 ducats.

The case of Polluce

The *Polluce* was a new boat built by the Sardinian shipyard *De Luchi, Rubattino & C*. Like her twin *Castore*, she had been built at the Augustin Normand shipyards in Le Havre, which she had left only three months earlier. She was about 50 metres long, had a 160-horsepower engine, a speed of 10 knots and a glossy black hull. It carried passengers in first and second class and was captained by the Genoese Carlo Lazzuolo, with the Englishman Wilkins at the engine. On board, the food was well prepared and the elegant porcelain services were taken from the boats of the *Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore*. The wheeled boats of the time all looked the same.

When the *Polluce* left Civitavecchia on 17 June 1841, it was carrying the usual cargo of well-to-do passengers, but also several chests of valuables, a real treasure. Within sight of the coast of Elba, about five miles off the coast, a steamer came out of the darkness, very fast, and rammed into the side of the *Polluce*. After a few minutes of confusion, before the Sardinian-Genoese ship sank, the passengers of the ramming ship, the *Mongibello*, helped the survivors of the Pollux. One death was recorded. The commander of the *Mongibello*, Ferdinando Cafiero, immediately after the collision, turned the ship around in the face of protests not only from his own passengers but also from the survivors of the *Polluce,* sailors and passengers, and then turned away. He arrived at the port of Langone and stayed there for a few hours. Then he presented himself to the Neapolitan consul and made four witnesses swear an oath, two of the crew and two passengers, but they would not testify against him. Instead, the commander of the Pollux went to the competent court and denounced Cafiero and his men on Friday the 18th. They called many witnesses, 31 in all, including three from the *Mongibello* and nine from the *Polluce*.

In the following days, the case of *De Luchi, Rubattino & C* against the *Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore in* the person of Livorno lawyer Domenico Guerrazzi was heard. The trial, which began in 1842, had obvious political overtones and lasted two years. It was a

trial between the Kingdom of Sardinia and the Kingdom of the Bourbons. Maritime law at that time lacked any useful codes: the behaviour of steamers was not yet regulated and this caused some difficulties. For this reason, Rubattino's lawyer insisted that the case be tried according to common law. In his defence, Guerrazzi went so far as to suggest that the Neapolitan administration, inspired by political intrigues, had ordered the sinking of the Polluce, jealous of the two ships and determined not to have rivals. When the accident happened, it was a clear night with no waves and no wind. How could the captain of the Mongibello have run into the other ship? Why were so many of the crew below deck? In the course of his arguments, Guerrazzi suggested that this collision between two ships that had started from opposite points and collided on a calm night, with no wind, a calm sea and excellent visibility, could not have been an accident. Perhaps the sinking had been deliberate?

Guerrazzi alluded to wilful misconduct, but then said that there was also negligence and cowardice on Cafiero's part. The code of maritime law of the time did not provide for the wilful or negligent sinking of a steamship on the high seas. The Pollux's cargo included gold coins and bars, most of which belonged to the Jewish community of Livorno. For this reason, the trial was held in Livorno and not in Naples, and Guerrazzi was inflexible on this point.[203] The defence of the Neapolitan society was entrusted to Giacinto Galanti, who wrote his *Difesa dell'Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore nel Regno delle Due Sicilie the Steam Administration in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies* (printed by Stamperia del Fibreno).[204] According to the historian

[203] Domenico Guerrazzi, *Replica ai dubbi comunicato dai tribunale di prima istanza di Livorno in causa di abbordaggio tra il Polluce e il Mongibello*, Livorno 1842. There is a series of harangues and cases on the trial that have been printed. In addition to the previous one: *Difesa della amministrazione sarda de Luchi, Rubattino contro l'amministrazione dei piroscafi napoletani nella causa di abbordaggio tra il* Polluce *e il Mongibello,* Livorno 1842*,* there is also the deposition of the witnesses: *Consolato relativo al naufragio del battello a vaporevo Polluce dell'impresa De Luchi, Rubattino e Comp*, di Genova.

[204] Giacinto Galanti, *Difesa dell'amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore*

Lamberto Radogna, the dispute ended with the Rubattino's boat being damaged and the shipowner being condemned. However, there is no longer a copy of this verdict, which seems to have been in the National Library in Florence, where it was destroyed in 1966. In any case, the authors of *L'oro dell'Elba* attest to its existence and have photographed the frontispiece. Instead, the text quoted by Galanti, dated August 1842, exists. As for Rubattino, he always remained convinced that the ramming was malicious.

On this there is no certainty, the affair is indeed shrouded in many doubts. The shareholders of the *Amministrazione*, at that time, were all men of the King, and it may be that they organised a drastic operation to slow down the financing of the Tuscan revolutionaries. The fact remains that this incident, over and above the conviction, probably weighed fifteen years later when it came to the decision by the Genoese and Piedmontese to give well-paid assignments to companies in the south. Did the *Polluce*'s precedent make the Florio's favour?

Managers of the *Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore*

Augusto Viollier, an enterprising Frenchman who had served in Napoleon's army before settling in Naples, joined the management team of the *Amministrazione*. His first business dealings were with his compatriots Antoine Beranger, Joseph-Isidore Lefèbvre, Charles Lefèbvre and Emmanuele Appelt. Charles Lefèbvre and Emmanuele Appelt were his partners in the introduction of steam navigation, and a complex history of intertwined business between France and Naples emerges in a pamphlet published in Naples, probably in 1818. All these men were accustomed to circulating money, unaccustomed to earned income and to networking, especially to introduce new technologies,

nel Regno delle Due Sicilie, Stamperia del Fibreno, Naples 1842.

while they seemed less interested in traditional trade (in grain, oil or coral).[205]

He entered into a limited partnership with them to manage the concession of a printing works and type foundry on the premises of the Carminello in Chiaia, and a larger concession on the Isola di Sora (in the province of Terra di Lavoro), where the great *Manifatture* del Fibreno was to be established - taken over and expanded from 1818 by Charles Lefèbvre alone. A few years later, Viollier sold his shares to Lefèbvre.[206] After going their separate ways, one in printing and the other in papermaking, Charles and Augustus found each other in *Amministrazione* and beyond, forming a partnership based on the culture of their respective countries. During the 1830s, Lefèbvre devoted himself mainly to the Isola paper mills, while Viollier became manager of a shipping group. Significantly, however, he named Lefèbvre as one of his financiers.

It was Viollier who took the initiative to take over the *Administration of Navigation by Steamship* from the Sicard family and associates on Leopold's death in 1839. Charles Lefèbvre joined in, along with other conspicuous individuals - nobles, *négociants*, bankers. A daughter of Augusto Viollier, Joséphine, born in Naples, married Francesco Torelli and in 1842 gave birth to Eugenio Torelli Viollier (1842-1900), who was to become the founder of the Corriere della Sera in Milan. Another important partner was Achille Meuricoffre (1793-1840), a member of an important Swiss banking family. Meuricoffre had married the daughter of a Frankfurt banker, Victoria Bansa. Like Charles Lefèbvre, Meuricoffre was a personal financial adviser to King Ferdinand and especially to his son Franz. His business was set up as a bank, the Meuricoffre Bank. When Achilles died in 1840, his son Oscar (1826-1880) took over. The original shareholders included the entire Lefèbvre family. Charles bought shares for himself and his wife

[205] A great deal of information on the first Viollier and Lefèbvre affair can be found in the pamphlet *Per sig. Ibert contro reclamanti la proprietà degl'effetti da lui subito a danno di C. A. Beranger*, Porcelli s.d. (1818) Naples.
[206] *Giornale di Sicilia*, 20 January 1824, Supplemento to No. 16.

Rosanne, as well as for their children Ernesto and Flavia. His brother-in-law Raoul de Raigecourt and his brother Léon also bought shares. The Lefèbvre family's commitment never fell below around 9,000 ducats, plus thousands more bought by Raoul and Léon. The commitment of the Rothschilds of Naples was also considerable. We find important shares bought by Baron Carl Rothschild and his wife Adelheid, and other shares and names of their three sons, Adolphe, Wilhelm and Alexander. Rothschild had arrived in Naples on two dates after granting the King a loan of 20 million ducats: 20 May and 5 December.[207] They had settled in a large new house but did not disdain other business ventures such as participation in joint-stock companies or the oil trade in which they became, for decades, the leading merchants.[208]

Needless to say, the Neapolitans continued to be well represented. In fact, we find shares purchased by Francesco Pignatelli Strongoli (1775-1853), a former military man, a leading exponent of the pro-Giacobean party, who had adapted to the kingdom by working in army procurement and other sensitive economic sectors. Various shares were acquired by members of the Staiti, De' Medici di Ottajano, Lucchesi Palli and other families. These were symbolic shares that allowed these families to participate in the innovation without taking too much risk. The important shipping company of Claude Clerc & C. in Marseilles, where ships were roadsteaded, refueled, cleaned and repaired, also bought a share of the bonds. A good and close relationship between the

[207] On the loan to the king, see Nicola Ostuni, *Finanza ed economia,* cit., pp. 155-156.

[208] Ignazio Balla, *I Rothschild,* Treves, Milan 1935, p. 205. These commitments, also found in other companies such as the *Lyon Gas Lighting Company*, contradict, as the scholar Marco Rovinello has already pointed out, the idea that: "Carlo Rothschild did not deal with the trade of Naples. He hardly ever did business with private individuals. He thought instead of employing the Rothschilds' powerful capital and connections to organise government loans, as the four other Rothschilds had done so successfully in four other large states'. See Marco Rovinello, *Un Grande Banchiere in una piccola piazza: Carl Mayer Rothschild e Il Credito Commerciale nel Regno delle Due Sicilie*, in "Società e Storia", no. 110 (2005), pp. 705-739. Ibid, p. 709.

two companies was essential. The enthusiastic participation of the family of Auguste and Ilario Degas was also important. The Degas had settled in Naples in the second half of the 18th century; we find them in many, even important, economic activities in the Neapolitan area.

In 1846 the company bought two ironclad but still wheeled steamers in England, the *Vesuvio* and the *Capri*. The former weighed 432 tons, was 55 metres long and 7.85 metres wide; the latter weighed 475 tons and was 55.95 metres long and 7.82 metres wide. The fact that these were remarkable ships, still regarded as technical marvels, and that the *Amministrazione* was considered to be at the forefront of the field, can be seen from various journalistic and printed sources. For example, the article written by Giacinto Galanti on 7 November 1846, celebrating the arrival of the new steamship Vesuvius, which replaced the *Francesco I*.[209] The *Vesuvio* was the first iron-hulled steamship to enter service in Naples, later followed by the *Capri*. Augusto Viollier had personally supervised the commissioning and construction phases of the *Vesuvio* and the *Capri* in London, wheeled boats with 300 horsepower built in the Ditchburn & Marc shipyards on the Thames. An editor of the *Giornale delle Due Sicilie* (*Newspaper of the Two Sicilies*) announced these prides of the new royal navy: 'The *Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore* always intent on activating communications has had two magnificent iron steamers built in London with low-pressure machines of the force of 300 horsepower'.[210] The editor was delighted that the ports of the kingdom and the Mediterranean would soon enjoy better and much faster connections. On the 7th of November 1846, a sunny day with a calm sea, the steamship, captained by Pietro Cusumano, approached the quay, which was crowded with spectators. The boat stayed for a few days, was refueled and on the 11th King Francis II, with the royal family, the Count of Aquila and the Count of Trapani, visited it and stayed on board for a day's cruise around the archipelago.

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[209] Giacinto Galanti, *Il Vesuvio, piroscafo di ferro della forza di 300 cavalli proveniente da Londra il 7 novembre 1846*, Porcelli, Napoli 1846.
[210] *Giornale delle Due Sicilie*, Napoli, 26 October 1846.

And he was pleased to see that his subjects shared his zeal for social improvement, praising all the improvements made to the machinery; the wheels, articulated to cut through the waves with greater ease; the construction in iron, and how well it harmonises with the wood that has been stopped; the solid, refined construction in all parts of the hull and above the deck; every point worked out with incredible precision, to the point of anticipating and repairing any variation that the immense metal could have produced in the compass.

The monarch was delighted with the beautiful arrangement of the interior, where an elegant gallery on the first floor towards the stern meets delicate paintings, carvings of the finest wood, the most sought-after furnishings of the vagaries of fashion, and luxurious tools and fittings to satisfy the senses to the full.[211]

A luxury ship, therefore, and suitable for Mediterranean cruises, like the *Capri*. The furnishings, decorations, carvings, paintings and luxurious furniture show that these were ships designed to carry passengers with money to spend. As for the internal layout, Galanti notes that below deck there was a sleeping area for the men, separated from the other spaces, with a few cabins for the wealthy on the outer sides, and the same accommodation for the women with their 'sleeping quarters'. The boat could travel at 15 miles an hour, a considerable speed for the time, "without that shaky, uncomfortable feeling, common to other boats; but with a steady motion, owing to the various engines and wheels, and the iron armour, it was most admirable, and fully satisfied the sovereign and the august Germans". Before leaving, the royal family drank a toast to the members of the board of directors and the director. But four days later, on the 15th, a short cruise was scheduled with members, subscribers and directors.

The boat covered the 17½ miles between Capri and Naples in one hour and eight minutes. A few days later its sister ship, the *Capri*, arrived in port. In the same year that *Vesuvio* and *Capri* began their sailing careers, the *Maria Cristina* was laid up for a complete overhaul that had been put off for years because of the cost. Her old, noisy boilers

[211] *Ibidem*, pp. 4-5.

were replaced with others built in Naples in the workshop of *Zino & Henry*. Within ten years, the Neapolitan workshops had acquired the know-how to build powerful boilers to power steam ships and, soon after, the first machines for industry. In 1847, on the death of Count Lucchesi Palli, Charles Lefèbvre was appointed to the Board of Directors. He held this position for five years according to the regulations together with Giovanni del Gaudio, the Count of Montesantangelo, the Prince of San Giacomo, Ilario Degas and the Duke of Bivona.[212] There was one departure a week from Marseilles, Civitavecchia, Livorno (and at certain times from Palermo, Messina and Malta) and two from Naples. The ships offered first-class luxury service with porcelain tableware. The *Administration*, led by modern-minded men, made an agreement with Raffaele Rubattino's *Sardinian Steamship Company* to jointly manage some maritime lines, such as the one between Marseilles, Genoa, Civitavecchia, Naples, Calabria, Sicily and Malta. The Rubattino's *San Giorgio* and *Virgilio* were reserved for the Marseilles-Naples line, alternating them with the *Administration*'s *Ercolano*, *Mongibello*, *Maria Cristina* and *Vesuvio*. In this way, by distributing the revenue according to agreed schedules, a frequent and regular service was guaranteed. Three times a month, the *Maria Cristina*, the *Ercolano* and the *Mongibello* sailed from Marseilles to Naples and then on to Reggio Calabria, Syracuse and Malta, while the *Capri* and the Vesuvio linked the Neapolitan capital with Messina and Palermo. It was the first example of integrated cooperation in Italy between two shipping companies belonging to two different states. The

[212] ASN, *Bourbon Archives*, f. 884, Minutes of the general meeting of 13 March 1847 on the management of the year 1846.

idea was proposed under the leadership of Charles Lefèbvre, and it worked brilliantly. If it was interrupted, it was because of the outbreak of the 1848 uprisings and the seizure of some ships, as we shall see.[213]

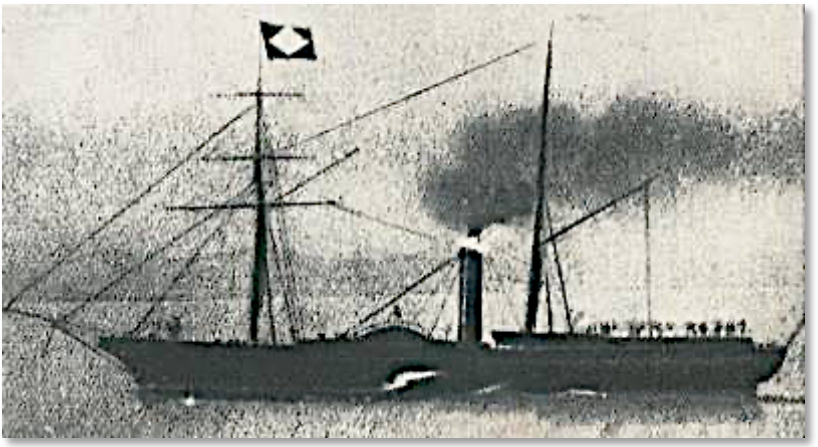
Incidents of war: 1848-1853

In the second half of the nineteenth century, partly as a result of the political turmoil, the Sicilian insurrections (1848-49) and the Crimean War (1853-1856), society began to experience difficulties and its money supply diminished: in the crisis of 1848-1849, which also affected many cities in France and on the Italian peninsula, people travelled much less. Visits to and from abroad came to a virtual standstill.

In Naples, maritime activity slowed down considerably for months, not so much for ships carrying basic necessities as for those transporting passengers. At the beginning of the 1850s, however, it was noted that both passenger and freight traffic was increasing. However, the company had too few ships to compete in an increasingly crowded Mediterranean.

In 1848, the *Mongibello*, which had been sent to the Adriatic together with the Kingdom's naval school commanded by Raffaele de Cosa, was sold to the Kingdom of Sardinia's war navy (May 1848).

[213] *Journal of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies*, 6 August 1847.



The Mongibello when it belonged to the Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore. Black and white reproduction of an anonymous oil painting.

After the sale, it was renamed *Monzambano* and 13 years later participated in the siege of Gaeta (1861).[214] On 20 January 1861, he entered the port of Gaeta to announce the naval blockade of the Bourbon fortress. On the 22nd of the same month, he took part in the action against the so-called Battery of the Ponente. The following month he transported the prisoners of the defeated and disbanded Bourbon army to Ponza and Genoa.

Two years after its first triumphant entry into Naples, the *Vesuvius* was involved in an unfortunate incident during the riots of January 1848. When the uprising broke out in Sicily, trade between 'the Two Sicilies' was not interrupted and so the *steamships of the Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore*, *Capri*, *Ercolano*, *Maria Cristina* and *Vesuvio* continued to shuttle between Naples and Palermo, sometimes carrying special government commissions.

On the 20th of May, the *Vesuvio*, under the command of Leopoldo Minutolo, was on its way to Palermo for a voyage duly announced in

[214] Lamberto Radogna, *op. cit.,* II, p. 70.

advance. On the morning of 22 May, as it was preparing to leave, despite the protests of the captain and the crew, the ship was seized by a Sicilian officer called Castiglia. After two and a half months of futile protests, on 12 August Augusto Viollier petitioned the relevant government offices in Naples to unblock the situation. During the war that followed, Vesuvius was used by the Sicilian rebels to transport up to 1400 soldiers from Palermo to Milazzo. When the rebels fled for other operations, the Vesuvius was stopped on its way back to Naples by the Russian vice-consul, who asked that the Russian flag be hoisted instead of the Neapolitan one to prevent the rebels from boarding the ship again.

The ship was eventually returned to Naples, the crew interrogated and then released, while Viollier asked the Royal Navy to pay for the damage and urgent repairs the steamer needed. In the meantime, however, the *Vesuvio* was being held as 'prey'. On 12 October and again on 21 November, it demanded its return. On 15 March 1848, after almost a year of inactivity, the ship was returned to her owners and after a while, in the summer of 1848, she was able to resume her voyages. The damage to the Amministrazione was not insignificant. The Royal Navy attempted to reclaim the ship on the grounds that it had been captured by rebels and had become a prize, but lost the case.[215]

These events, although they did not cause irreparable damage for the time being, made the company more fragile and began to convince many members that the business of ship-owning was more risky than they had thought, not least because these steamboats were generally more fragile than sailing boats, despite the advantages they had (being able to sail even when there was no wind).

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[215] The events summarised here are recounted on pages 5-13 of the text *Cenno de' veri fatti e confutazione delle contrarie fallacie ... nella causa tra il sig. Augusto Viollier Direttore dell'Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore contro l'intendenza della Real Marina*, Migliaccio, Napoli 1848. After the first summary of the facts, the paper summarises the arguments of the Administration's lawyers and includes as an appendix documents that may be of interest only to Military History.

The 1850s

At the meeting of 20 December 1850, it was noted that Charles Lefèbvre and sons held 18 shares worth 19,000 ducats. Other shareholders included the richest financiers and landowners in Naples, such as Carlo Maria (Carl Mayer) and Adolphe Rothschild (53 shares), the Marseille firm of Claude Clerc & Figli (40), Ilario Degas & Figli (30) and Giobatta Staiti (24). This group of shareholders, mostly of foreign origin, continued to represent the cutting edge of Neapolitan entrepreneurship. It was a group of wealthy men and financiers with common interests in other sectors: public lighting, the *Società Industriale Partenopea*, trade in oil, wheat, silk and agricultural products. At the time of its transformation into a joint stock company, the *Amministrazione* owned four steamships. Its profits came mainly from the privatisation of postal services.

But the real problem was that there was no money to buy new steamers. In 1851, with great difficulty, the company bought the 280-ton steamship *Mongibello*, famous for having rammed and sunk the *Polluce* in 1841.This affair caused much discussion at the time and afterwards. There were those who speculated that the *Polluce* carried English money directed to the Mazzinians in Genoa. [216]

The "Rope"

Meanwhile, Augusto Viollier's management continued. Around 1850, the company was saved from a crisis thanks to an important loan. After the 1850 financial year, the *Amministrazione della Navigazione a vapore*, following a general meeting, decided to have two large propeller steamers built. The two new ships were needed to meet increased competition. The decision had to be made quickly, as 1851

[216] Nicola Cappelletti-Gianluca Mirto. *The Gold of Elba. Operation Pollux,* Addiction-Magenees, Milan 2004.

was the last year of the company's life under the original plans, and a decision to extend it required good reasons. But there was not enough money, and for a long time none of the wealthy partners offered to help, so they turned to private credit, i.e. loans regulated by the laws of commerce.

A small group of businessmen, who on this occasion presented themselves as financiers but who were already partners in the company, offered to provide the money for the huge operation, which was probably necessary for the survival of the company: Ernesto Lefèbvre, Enrico Catalano and Marianna and Luisa de Berner. Ernesto Lefèbvre was already a partner in the company and carried out this operation independently of the other members of the family. For example, his father Charles, a founding partner and already managing director, did not contribute any of his personal assets to the financing of the ship. The same can be said of the other people involved in the operation, Catalano and Marianna and Luisa de Berner. The latter appears in other documents of the time as Catalano's daughter. Marianna was Catalano's foreign wife.[217] Details of these events are offered by the published resolutions of the meetings of the Navigation Company but also by the lawsuits filed by Ernesto Lefèbvre and associates with documents signed on 20 September 1866.[218]

The contracts for the disbursement of the money were signed on 1 October 1852 and 21 April 1853 at the company's notary's office. In the first, the director, authorised by the board of directors, obtained from Ernesto Lefèbvre a loan of 65,000 ducats (15 to 20,000 lire in the post-unification period) to be used for the purchase of the steamship *Sorrento*. It was decided to divide this sum into 130 'obbliganze'

[217] Girolamo Nisio, *Della istruzione pubblica e privata a Napoli. 1806-1871*, Testa, Naples 1874, p. 160. In this book, for instance, as in others dedicated to childhood, the 'gentlewoman' Luise de Berner *née* Catalano appears as a benefactress.

[218] *The maritime exchange creditors on the steamers Sorrento and Stromboli against Mr Giuseppe Cartoux*, 20 September 1866 (ASN, Tribunale di commercio, Atti Depositati); there is also a later deed that has the same title but is dated 23 January 1867 and contains some clarifications and additions.

(bonds) of 500 each, which were put into circulation and bought by the shareholders. In the second operation, a loan of 90,000 ducats was obtained from the Catalano-De Berner family group for the purchase of the *Amalfi*, and the sum was divided into 180 'bonds' of 500 ducats. In the case of Ernesto Lefèbvre, the money was taken from his personal assets, without involving the Fibreno paper mill complex.

It was written in the contracts that those who financed the company were granted "the privilege of the body, tools, machinery and fittings of the two ships; privileged mortgage over any other credit for having served the money for the construction of the ships". And it was added that the money was to be considered as given in maritime exchange. This meant that the contracts had to be registered in the maritime exchange register of the Court of Commerce, which was done on 17 November 1852 and 23 April 1853.

The money was used to build large steamships in English shipyards. These were the lifeblood of the company for about a decade. In 1853, Augusto Viollier presented the State with a project for the improvement of the wharves and the marina of the commercial port.[219] The ships were quickly built and in 1854, the *Sorrento* and the *Amalfi* entered service. The propeller-driven *Sorrento* and *Amalfi* both had iron hulls of about 300 tons each, and could carry over 300 passengers. These ships, capable of long voyages, opened up a new route that went around Calabria and up the Adriatic to Trieste. In the same year, however, a collision led to the sinking of the *Ercolano*. The 828-ton iron-hulled propeller steamer *Sicilia* had left the shipyards of James and G. Thompson on 31 March 1854. In the night between 24 and 25 April 1854, when a strong wind was blowing, the two steamers collided. The *Sicilia* (about 75 metres long and almost 10 metres wide) was much larger than the *Herculaneum* and sliced the side of the steamer with its bow, which was literally cut in two and sank off Nice. Forty-eight crew and passengers died. On board the *Herculaneum* was the son of the British Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel junior. The *Sicilia* was detained in Marseilles for a few days before being allowed to set sail again. A

[219] Giorgio Simoncini, *The Kingdom of Naples,* Florence, Olshky 1993, p. 34.

long and costly legal battle began between the two companies, which contributed to the collapse of the *Compagnia di Navigazione*.[220]

But the troubles were not over. Between 1854 and 1855, a terrible cholera epidemic began to ravage all the coastal cities of the western Mediterranean, especially in France and Italy, particularly Naples, where it caused many deaths, even among the upper classes. For a long time this prevented the opening of the new line between Marseilles and Trieste, for which ships had been purchased to compete with the Genoese and Sicilian Florio companies. This caused considerable damage. During the two years of inactivity that lasted until the autumn of 1856, the ships were chartered for the Crimean War (5 October 1853-30 March 1856), but were damaged and ruined. The elegant clientele who had sailed on these ships and paid for comfortable transport did not want to travel on ruined, dirty, troop-laden ships. The two ships had to be rebuilt, with some of the costs still to be paid.[221]

In the same years, two more of the six remaining steamships were laid up for repair, including the *Capri*. The company was on the verge of bankruptcy and had to negotiate the terms for repaying its debts. It was at this time that the director, Domenico Laviano, a former Inspector General of the Post Office, succeeded in obtaining a government contract for the company, which was entrusted with the postal service for the years 1856-1857. In 1857 the contract was withdrawn and the following year it was awarded to Florio on very favourable terms. Another disaster occurred on 17 September 1857, when the *Mongibello*, under the command of Domenico Ferrara, sank off the coast of Cap Cros, Hyeres, the *Santa Annunziata*, loaded with grain and cereals from the Sardinian company Rubattino. The *Amministrazione della Navigazione*, which quickly discovered the commander's manoeuvring error, was ordered to pay compensation.

Nevertheless, the balance sheets of 1857-1858 were better and the

[220] Carlo Perfetto, *La vicenda della Marina Mercantile a vapore del Reame delle Due Sicilie,* Editrice Barca, Naples, 1923, Appendix VIII.
[221] Lamberto Radogna, *La Marina Mercantile,* cit., p. 120. However, few records are preserved on the episode.

company seemed to be recovering as the ships began to sail again. However, it was unable to pay the bond premiums. That year, unable to repay the bonds when due, it proposed to its creditors that the balance be paid by annual draws over ten years. Despite some dissatisfaction on the part of the creditors, this solution was accepted in 1857, 1858, 1859, 1860 and 1861. At a meeting in 1857, it was decided that the company would change its name from *Amministrazione della Navigazione delle Due Sicilie* in *Compagnia di Navigazione a Vapore delle Due Sicilie* and Francesco Dentice, Carlo (Charles) Lefèbvre, the Duke of Bivona, Ilario Degas and Giovanni del Gaudio joined the first board of directors. However, Lefèbvre died suddenly at the beginning of that year, on 10 January 1858, and from then on, the interests were held by the other member of the family who had already played an active role in running the company, Ernesto Lefèbvre. In the same months, Augusto Viollier, who was very old and ill, resigned. Captain Luigi Consiglio was called in to manage the company for a few years, a decision that may have been politically inappropriate, as Lamberto Radogna points out, because this man, although experienced, clever and well connected in the world of shipping, was disliked by the sovereign for his liberal political ideas (as were Captains Cusumano and Ferrara). They were all suspected by the Bourbon police of favouring Neapolitan and Sicilian exiles who had taken refuge in Genoa or Palermo. Perhaps for this reason, the contract for the weekly postal service between Naples and Palermo, which was basically paid 14,650 ducats per year (280 per journey), was withdrawn and entrusted to Florio.[222]

Land holdings in Arpino and Sora expand

In the same months, Augusto Viollier, who was very old and ill, resigned. A shadowy aspect of the Lefèbvre family's growing wealth was their land holdings in the areas of Arpino, Sora and its various hamlets, Bagnoli and the flat areas north of Naples, such as Polvica. A

[222] Lamberto Radogna, *La marina mercantile,* cit., p. 121.

notable increase occurred in 1848, when an unpaid debt of the Arpinian Gioacchino Manna led to the transfer of ownership in favour of Charles Lefèbvre of numerous farms and vast lands cultivated with orchards, olive groves and wheat. The news is reported in the *Gazzetta Costituzionale del Regno delle due Sicilie* of 9 September 1848, and Lefèbvre was certainly present on the days when the properties of his creditor Manna were seized one by one.

Mr Cavalier D. Carlo Lefebure prop. Dom. in Naples, for his showy debt that he owes to Mr D. Gioacchino Manna, the owner domiciled on the Island of Sora, on 24 May 1848, issued a writ of summons for payment, and then, due to the lack of the requested payment, on 26 June said year and with the continuation of the following days he proceeded to the pledging of the following lands belonging to the debtor Manna. A flat shrubbed land, located in the appurtenance of the Island of Sora, district of Sora, place called Agnone of tomola 23, canne 256, of ancient measure, with a house of 4 members, and all the necessary facilities. Other land located as above, place called Posaturo, flat shrubland of 16 tomola, and 136 canes. 3. A habitation for the use of a trappeto, located in Isola, street called S. Lorenzo. 4. Another building, located as above, place called Vulcatojo. 5. A large estate, situated in the said appurtenances, place called S. Sebastiano, and under other denominations, and in several pieces, of the size of 145 tomola. An olive grove, oak wood, shrubbery, with a large building, with aja built, with soil reduced to a walled garden of about two tomola, with a stable and stables for animals, which building consists of two floors, many rooms, and a small temple for the use of a cemetery. 6. Other land situated in the tenimento of Isola, place called Orto Vulcatojo of tomola 3 and canne 25. 7. Other shrubbed land of 81 canes, located as above, place called Valleparadiso. 8. Shrubbed land, site as above d. Forme of tomola 6 and a half, with rustic house. All these other lands from n. 5 to 8 are part of the said S. Sebastiano estate, which together make up tomola 232. 9. An oven with a corresponding building, equipped with all conveniences, located on an island. 10. Two terranei reduced to one, located in Isola Strada San Bartolomeo. 11. Another rustic house located as above in the same place S. Bartolomeo. 12. Another house located there in the same district. 13. Other similar house. Other house situated as above. Other similar house situated in the same place as above. Other house on land, situated as above. Other similar house. One room located as above, place San Lorenzo.

19. A basement located as above. 20. Another house located as above. 21 Finally, eight pieces of houses located as above in the street known as San Bartolomeo, now reduced to a building, having suffered variations and increases. All the said lands are reported in land under articles 677 and 527 in the head of Mr Manna. The aforesaid pledge after having been endorsed by Mr d. Michelangelo Campoli mayor of Isola on 3 July 1848 was reported to the pledgee Mr Manna, and was then transcribed together with the report in the preservation of mortgages on 11 July said year under articles 86551 and 68552. The pledgee demanded the appreciation of all the aforementioned funds. No annuity attachment has been made. The pledged debtor is represented by D. Vincenzo Simoncelli patron. The aforesaid funds will be sold at the hearing of the Civil Court of Terra di Lavoro, at the request of Mr D. Giovanni de Rosa patrocinatore at the court domiciled in S. Maria. Gio. de Rosa patr. [223]

The bailiff Gioacchino Manna was the owner of the wool mills in Arpino and Isola, as well as large tracts of land around the town.

The total size of these properties was considerable, exceeding one million square metres (1 tomola was about 3000 square metres in the area), not counting the twenty or so buildings, some of them very large, such as the Palazzotto di San Bartolomeo and the vast estate of San Lorenzo, with stables, which corresponds to the hill, still cultivated with olive trees and mainly used for agriculture, that overlooks the northern part of the town of Isola del Liri Superiore. The Lefèbvre family, however, never considered themselves landowners; it was not their vocation, which was more industrial and, at best, financial. For this reason, with few exceptions, the land they took possession of, after being revalued, was generally sold.It is therefore probable that almost all of this land, which was not part of the Strada dei Gelsi and San Carlo property, was sold in the following months and years, in the various recorded hearings of the Civil Court of Terra di Lavoro in Santa Maria Capua a Vetere. What remained of the Lefèbvre property was a piece of land to the south (Valcatojo) and one to the north of the Forme, which allowed for a more solid territorial unity around the factory.

[223] *Constitutional Journal of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies* of 9 September 1848.

Chapter 10

The *Filanda di Sarno*

For sale

Charles and Ernesto's activities continued to overlap with the *Partenopea* companies to which they were linked, with varying degrees of commitment from time to time, throughout the life of this company. The meetings in Vico Piliero had to take up a considerable part of their time at certain times. In the second half of the 1830s, the liquidation of many of *Partenopea*'s activities coincided with a decisive change in strategy decided by the company's top management. Firstly, the premature cessation of porcelain production, then the increasingly dark clouds looming over *Partenopea*, which was about to embark on the entire sugar production chain, and finally the poor profitability of other activities launched in those early months, led to much discussion among the founding partners. As far as we know today, no minutes, correspondence or reports have survived, but the final decisions were clear.

Faced with a market that was not responding as they had hoped, the founding partners decided to change their plans. Many results had fallen short of expectations, including the collection of shares. But the sale of so many small holdings also signalled a change of pace that would lead to much more ambitious initiatives, decidedly industrial in nature. In the textile sector, the Guarnieri brothers and Ambrogio Tadiglieri had accumulated considerable debts with *Partenopea*, which had even led to the seizure and expropriation of the Aldifreda building. As far as Tadiglieri was concerned, after the Court of Santa Maria Capua Vetere had ruled in favour of the company in 1836, and after a writ of

attachment had been issued, *Partenopea* decided to grant Tadiglieri a deferment of payment in view of the business misfortunes that had befallen him, for which he was not to blame. It was not until 1851 that the outstanding debt was recovered.

In December 1837, Leonardo Matera and the *Partenopea* also agreed to end their collaboration by mutual consent. Matera would remain the owner of the tapestries and would pay his debt of 9243.13 ducats in monthly instalments of 200 ducats without interest. *Partenopea*'s involvement in the Barra silk factory continued for a few more years, and the further refinement of production made this factory the best of its kind in the kingdom. It specialised in precious fabrics and those used for upholstering carriages, chairs and the most elegant salons, and found a partner in Maurizio Berge. At the end of the years of forced participation, in December 1839, the *Partenopea* declared its intention to dissolve the company.[224]

Matera, however, did not leave the business and continued to sell carpets, working with Berge silk in collaboration with Luigi Guarnieri. They were artisans surrounded by esteem and admiration. The quality of Matera's goods, as well as those of the others mentioned, was recognised as valuable on several occasions, as in the 1844 exhibition. In 1851, in order to repay the *Partenopea*, he had to sell one of his estates in Barra to the Neapolitan company. As for the printer Sollazzo, the *Partenopea*'s participation in his activities ended in 1838. Sollazzo had proved himself to be a very good printer, and had even won admiration at the 1838 Exhibition, where he exhibited a model of a manual cylinder press of his own invention. However, the press still needed refinement, as it could not compete with foreign presses in terms of complexity and delicacy.[225] In a consensual dissolution, the *Partenopea* sold its shares that year to Carlo and Francesco di Lorenzo and to Francesco Paolo Siniscalchi. For the rest, it made an agreement

[224] The examination that was made showed that the *Partenopea* was owed 27,416.30 plus 4843.13 in carpets. Matera was obliged to repay it for 6,000 ducats within a month, 2,400 within a year and then 250 ducats a month for 95 months with interest at 5% compounded.
[225] *De saggi delle manifatture* 1838, pp. 70-71; 82-83.

with Sollazzo to sell him 716 punches and 890 mothers of type purchased in participation, charging him 200 ducats per year. When Sollazzo's new company with partners Di Lorenzo and Siniscalchi was also dissolved in 1842, the *Partenopea* had not been fully repaid and after a civil lawsuit came to an agreement with Sollazzo in 1846.[226]

The largest and most expensive enterprise, the sugar refinery at Sarno, was also liquidated, and the factory, land and energy-bearing water were leased to the highest bidder. The refinery and beet processing machinery, which had been idle for some time, were instead dismantled and sold. The land and water power were leased to the firm of *James Hartley & C.*, who established a silk factory there. Subsequently, the *Partenopea* bought shares in the same building, of which they owned 795/1000 in 1861.[227] In the course of time, then, both buildings - which still exist today - continued to be used first for industrial use and then for social use (as schools, for example).

(Veduta della città di Sarno e delle sue antiche fortificazioni.)

[226] A. N. N., Notaio Alessandro Tambone, deed 23 April 1846.
[227] Luigi de Matteo, *Holdings...*, cit., p. 66.

The biggest enterprise

Partenopea's greatest undertaking began with the liquidation of its various holdings, which had been more or less successful and courageous, but had not produced the desired results. It was then that the management turned with greater conviction to mechanised industry, and in particular to flax and hemp spinning. There seems to have been an initial interest in introducing mechanical flax and hemp spinning in the Kingdom as early as 1833, although it does not appear that a patent application was made in that year. Instead, a similar request was made by Carlo Filangieri, Prince of Satriano, who belonged to the *Partenopea* and was even its Vice-Governor.

At the time, the men of *Partenopea* estimated the cost of such a venture at 250,000 ducats, a very high figure that forced them to postpone the project in favour of smaller holdings. Between 1835 and 1836 he had bought land in Sarno, ¼ of which was used for the sugar factory. In the same years, he had tried to buy land belonging to the De' Medici family, but as there was a legal dispute between his uncle Giuseppe and his nephew of the same name, he had preferred to use contracts (signed in July 1834 and June 1835) to have them by emphyteusis and for sale. In 1837, Giuseppe de' Medici decided to sell a number of properties to the *Partenopea*: the so-called Orto della Cava, the San Francesco marsh, a hamlet of houses and the land known as Lanzetelle. In temporary emphyteusis, the gualchiera, the small paper mill, the branch mill, the mills and the baronial palace had been ceded instead.[228] At this point the *Partenopea* had an area in which to set up their factory, where there was an abundance of water, small factories that had been operating for many years and also the availability of an abundant local labour force. Meanwhile, in July 1836, *Cockerill, Gysill & Satriano* was founded with a capital of 180,000 ducats. Carlo Filangieri was involved in a personal capacity, not as a director of *Partenopea*. John Cockerill (1790-1840), was the owner of a large steel factory in Liège and other very large factories such as a spinning mill,

[228] A.N.N., Alessandro Tambone, 9 February 1837.

also in Liège. In March 1837, the *Partenopea* sold various funds it owned in Sarno to *Cockerill & Co*. It would then provide a water power of 40 horsepower for an annual fee of 156 ducats for 20 years (1839-1859). *Cockerill & Co*. undertook to build a cotton spinning mill on the land and later a second spinning mill for either cotton or hemp, linen, wool and flax. It was agreed that the mill would be in operation by 1 April 1839 at the latest. The management of the mills was to be decided in 14/15 for the *Compagnia Partecipata* (the joint venture) and in 1/15 for the *Partenopea*, with a capital of 280,000 ducats from the Compagnia and 20 from the *Partenopea*.[229]

This shows how much the men of the *Partenopea* were still interested in diversification. They did not want to tie up all their money in one business: they had seen how fickle market conditions were, how immature the market itself was, and how the profitability of a business could change. It was agreed that the agreement between the two companies would last for 50 years. *Partenopea*, in view of its lesser involvement and exposure in the spinning business (at least in the initial plans), would not intervene in the management, but would periodically send a trusted person to supervise. In any case, the mills were mortgaged in favour of *Partenopea.* Among the various obligations was that, in addition to the payment of capital to enable the factory to function, within six years from the date of the agreement a hydraulic power of up to 40 horses was to be provided. Half of this capital was to be contributed by the new company, i.e. its shareholders, and the other half was to be regarded as *Partenopea*'s share. The new company had the right to request a further 10 horses within three years. The construction of the waterworks was to be paid for by the *Partenopea*, who would receive an increase of 6 ducats per year for each additional horse. The agreement could not be implemented immediately. John

[229] The agreement stipulated that the Compagnia would use a sum of 130,000 ducats in 20 monthly instalments for the assembly and purchase of the machinery and material in the factories, while the Partenopea would grant it a loan of 150,000 ducats in 36 instalments, with a 6% interest rate scaled down; when the first spinning mill was operational, the Partenopea would receive a bonus of 22.5% of the factories' profits. Other details are of less interest here.

Cockerill sent his commissioner Wilhelm Schulz to Naples, who, in full agreement with Luigi Giura, drew up the layout of the canals and hydraulic systems and the design of the factory. A new cholera epidemic delayed the construction of the factory and Enrico Gysin died suddenly, leaving the company without one of the men who had made it possible. *Cockerill & Co.*, on the other hand, who had to build the machinery for which they had received a deposit of 12,600 ducats, also faced various problems due to the political situation in Belgium, where military tensions with Holland had increased.[230] In June 1837, Carlo Filangieri was granted a ten-year licence to operate a mechanical flax and hemp spinning mill (perhaps he had first applied for it in 1833), using the same type of machinery as John Cockerill in Seraing.

On 1 April 1839, the date set for the delivery of the factory and machinery, nothing was in operation as the building had not been completed and the machinery had not been assembled. In 1839, when the spinning mill still seemed to be far from completion, the Filangieri family began to use the patent by producing in a spinning mill near the Ponte della Maddalena ai Granili: thanks to this decision he did not lose the patent. As a result of these developments, Cockerill and *Partenopea* decided to postpone the construction of the spinning mill. During the 1830s, especially in the Salerno area, large cotton mills had been built, which could make such a venture less profitable due to increased competition.

Flax spinning, on the other hand, was less widespread and much linen was imported from northern Italy, France and even England and Belgium. In addition, they were able to take advantage of the Prince of Satriano's privatisation for linen spinning. A new agreement was signed on 25 October 1839. The Sarno mill, almost completed thanks to the *Partenopea*, the Prince and the late Enrico Gysin, was almost ready for use. Tow and canape could be added to the flax. John Cockerill was to supply flax and tow spinning machines with a total potential of 3280

[230] ASN, Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce, bundle 266. The Administrator of the Partenopean Industrial Company (D. Laviano, Prince of Ottajano, A. Sideri).

spindles. Production was to start in the summer of 1840. The whole thing was to cost 105,000 ducats, a third of which was unpaid because it represented his share in the company. As for the machines owned by the Prince of Satriano at Ponte della Maddalena (3 linen spinning machines for a total of 400 spindles; 3 tow spinning machines for 320 spindles and other machines), the joint venture, recognising the prince's rights of pecuniary interest, had acquired these machines by putting them into operation and establishing that the value of the machines and ancillary costs (workers' wages, rent and raw materials) could be calculated at 34,000 ducats, a sum to be considered as Satriano's payment for his share. If these machines had been as efficient as Cockerill's, the *Partecipata* would have considered an agreement to create a single factory by combining the potential of all the machines.

Cockerill also died suddenly in 1840. He had gone bankrupt during the military tensions between Belgium and Holland in 1838 and 1839, when the banks closed and called in their loans. In debt to the tune of 26 million francs, he travelled to St Petersburg in the hope of receiving funds from Tsar Nicholas I of Russia. On his return, he contracted typhoid fever and died in Warsaw in June 1840, aged 50 and without heirs. His organisation, however, continued to operate, supplying machinery and technicians, and the debts were settled.

Carlo Filangieri was the largest contributor to the *Filanda di Sarno* at the time. He had paid 23,259.81 ducats in cash, plus about 34,000 for the machinery of the Neapolitan spinning mill, making a total of 57,259.81, and he still had to pay 2740.10 to reach the agreed quota of 60,000 ducats. There was also a debt to be paid by Enrico Gysin's heir, Amalia Gysin, wife of Nicola Brancaccio, Duke of Rivello, who owed 17,466 ducats. As for the *Partenopea*, she had paid 7,000 ducats, plus 32,800: she therefore owed 13,000 ducats and 117,200 ducats as a participant in the settlement of the loan. It was also decided that each partner would contribute two-thirds of the cost of the machinery in proportion to the debt they owed to *Partenopea* (which owed them 150,406.19 ducats). So a plan of money transfers was decided (22,400 ducats, 5,000 in November and 10,000 each in December, January and February, making a total of 57,400). It was also decided that everyone

would contribute, in proportion to their debts, to the completion of the building and to the working capital. It was decided that the *Partenopea* would pay 30,000 ducats by June 1841 and 87,200 thereafter. During these months, the *Partenopea* was occupied with the liquidation of the company with Leonardo Matera, which took place two months after the contract for the *Filanda di Sarno*. In December 1839, in order to obtain more liquidity, the *Partenopea* sold to Antonio de Piccolellis half of the credit resulting from a loan granted in February 1836 to Matteo Sansone, Giuseppe Antonio and Domenico Antonio Rosati, landowners in Foggia. More time passed before the Sarno spinning mill was completed. The construction of the machinery also took a long time. In the meantime, Fourneyron, a Frenchman, built the turbine that would power the factory. Meanwhile, the machines that were working in the Prince of Satriano's factory at Ponte della Maddalena were dismantled, transported to Sarno and reassembled. English and Belgian workers and technicians were called to Naples, and the Belgian Eugenio Weemaels was appointed director of the factory. In the meantime, it was decided to assemble fewer machines than the factory could hold, as the cost of assembling and adapting them had proved considerable. It was also decided not to buy hemp processing machines, which were also very expensive.

Finally, in June 1841, the factory was able to start work, employing around 600 young people, mostly girls, at a low wage by today's standards, but considered average and decent by those of the time. Hundreds of Sarnesi people were able to avoid emigration.

In December 1841, the Prince of Butera bought the shares of John Cockerill, who died shortly afterwards. Once the factory was up and running, the *Partenopea* and the various partners in the Sarno business officially set up the *Società in Partecipazione* for the Sarno Spinning Mill. It was to be dedicated to the spinning of linen, hemp - if possible - and stubble, but would also be open to other types of spinning, such as cotton. The duration of the company was set at 50 years from 1 January 1842 (provided that the loan to the *Partenopea* had been repaid in full by that date). The share capital of the *Partenopea* consisted of 60,000 ducats from the Prince of Satriano (400 thousandths), 42 from

Ernesto Wilding, Prince of Radaly (heir to the Prince of Butera: 280 thousandths), 28 from the Marquise of Rivello, Amalia Gysin (133 thousandths) and 170,000 (20 as shares and 150 as loans) from the *Partenopea*, in which Charles Lefèbvre and the others who had signed the deed of foundation in 1833 were still partners.

It should be noted, however, that while the former had paid the entire loan for the construction of the *Filanda*, in addition to his share of 20,000 ducats, other members of the *Partecipata* had only paid part of what was due. Thus, the Prince of Butera's brother had paid just over half of his share of 60,000 ducats; Ernesto Wilding still owed half of his share of 42,000 ducats, while the Marquise of Rivello had paid almost all of her 28,000 ducats, leaving only 2,114.68. Subsequently, the Marquise of Rivello and Ernesto Wilding completed the payment of their shares, while the Prince of Satriano gave 20 thousand ducats, 1/3 of his share, to Charles Lefèbvre, who was already a partner in the *Partenopea*.

It is easy to see that the construction of the Sarno *Filanda* was a financially sophisticated and complex operation, which sought to balance risks and commitments on the basis of considerations that are partly lost to us. But there can be no doubt that it was a 'modern' operation in terms of its financial architecture. Then there was the purely industrial aspect.

The financial director of the whole company was Federico Schauber, who managed the industrial and commercial aspects of the company under the supervision of a board of directors made up of all the shareholders, including *Partenopea*, of course, represented by a strong shareholder, Antonio Spinelli, who was later replaced by Raffaele Caracciolo di Castelluccio. The factory also had a hand-weaving department which, in order to operate, had to obtain goods on credit from the company *Davide Vonwiller & Co*.[231]

The subsidiary was in a difficult situation. It was unable to pay dividends to its shareholders or to pay the *Partenopea* the interest on

[231] ASN, Ministero dell'Agricoltura, Industria e Commercio, faldone 266. L'amministrazione della *Società Industriale Partenopea*.

the loan and the rents for the waters it surveyed and used. In 1841 and 1842, the *Partenopea* itself did not demand payment of what was due to it, so as not to jeopardise an already delicate situation, but at the beginning of 1843 it asked for an advance payment and also for a more thorough clarification of the *Partecipata*'s accounts, recognising that the situation was serious.[232]

So he decided to assert himself and on 18 August 1843, he threatened to rescind the contract of December 1841 and refuse the water supply for the operation of the spinning mill, demanding the collection of 42,788.83 ducats.[233] The partners had to come to an agreement after drawing up a balance sheet and inventory as of 31 August 1843. This balance sheet showed that *Partenopea* was a creditor of 42,892.87. After deducting loans and outstanding debts, it appeared that the company had recorded a loss of 75,000 ducats, apart from the unearned interest on the capital of 150 ducats from the participants. In fact, the capital had been halved by the reduction of the shares of the main shareholders: the Prince of Satriano (20,000 ducats), the Marquise of Rivello (14,000 ducats), the Prince of Radaly (21,000 ducats), Charles Lefèbvre (10,000 ducats) and the *Partenopea* (10,000 ducats). Considering that some of these, such as Lefèbvre, were also partners in the Partenopea, it is clear how risky the deal could have been.

In order to avoid expropriation or forced payments, which would have made it impossible for Sarno's company to continue its activities and thus repay the money it had borrowed, after a series of meetings, not all of which were documented, it was jointly decided to sell the building, with all its machinery and equipment, to *Partenopea*, which would take over the direct management of the company. In other words, it was to be a sale to pay off the loan and any credit granted to *Partenopea*. The shareholders were content to receive a number of free shares in *Partenopea* at 17 ducats each (a value determined after

[232] A. N. N., Notaio Alessandro Tambone, atto 9 February 1844.

[233] The figure included 7500 ducats for the mortgage instalment due on 1 January 1843, 15,020 for the rent accrued from 1 January 1841 to 1 May 1843 for the exploitation of the 40-horsepower, and 20,268.83 for interest at 6% on the mortgage from 1 January 1841 to 1 April 1843.

lengthy negotiations). On 9 February 1844 the *Società in partecipazione per la filatura meccanica privilegata* was declared dissolved and the contract of December 1841 null and void. The four partners who participated in the acquisition of the factory by the *Partenopea* and who received shares from it were Carlo Filangieri (1776 shares), Charles Lefèbvre (588), the Prince of Radaly (1235) and the Marquise of Rivello (823).

At this point, the *Partenopea* owned almost the entire factory, the hydraulic systems and also the privatisation, while retaining the obligation to pay the Prince of Satriano 12% of the *Filanda*'s net profits.

The operation was complex. After the purchase, there was the problem of running the *Filanda*. It was essential to buy new machinery to modernise the factory. He therefore asked his shareholders for a new loan, to be repaid in 6 years (by December 1849), for which he would pay interest at 6% per annum on a sliding scale and would grant a mortgage on the factory and on buildings close to the main factory and, in any case, built on the land. He obtained a mortgage of 53,000 ducats:

Furquet & Giusso company, 20,000
Luigi Angrisani, 10,000
Carlo (Charles) Lefèbvre, 8,000
Raffaele Caracciolo of Castelluccio, 5,000
Gaetano Serra of Gerace, 4 thousand
Paolo Semengo, 2,000
Carlo Afan de Rivera 1000
Luigi de Ruggiero, 1000
Nicola de Siervo, 1000
Ferdinando Pertica, 1000

From 1844 to 1847 the *Filanda* recovered. The *Partenopea* set up its own warehouse for finished yarns in the *Forquet & Giusso* warehouses in Naples, opposite the San Giovanni Maggiore customs house, and bought more machinery in England. Eugenio Weemaels, the technical director, was sent on a mission to the factories in Fairbairn and Leeds to buy machines for spinning hemp and finishing flax and tow. These new machines were installed quickly, and in the meantime

the handloom was completed by training the staff and setting up a bleaching workshop. Gradually, 'gentle' linen began to be in greater demand and the quality of Sarno's yarns became more and more famous. Just as all this was happening and *Parthenopea*'s efforts were beginning to bear fruit, a decree was issued in 1846 that reduced import duties on manufactured goods and yarns of all kinds, weakening the protection that had allowed the kingdom's textile industry to flourish. Almost immediately, imports of generally inexpensive and well-made fabrics from northern Italy and Europe increased. The backlash for the Parthenopean industry was severe: sales fell and, of course, so did the value of the large stocks of finished goods. The drop was initially dramatic, ranging from 50% for yarns and 80 to 90% for fabrics.[234]

Unfortunately, despite the fact that all ten years of the privilege, even with its extension, had been spent in the effort to start up and maintain production, and despite the importance of Sarno's industry for the economy of the Salerno area, the request for renewal of the privilege was not granted. The Sarno spinning mill, however, resisted and continued to operate. In addition to the tenacity of the *Partenopea*'s efforts, much of the credit goes to the skill of the director or "manager", Augusto Sideri. He was praised by Domenico Laviano del Tito, vice-president of the company, who in August 1849 proposed an increase in the *Filanda* director's salary for his skill and the progress made between 1847 and 1849.

At the *Filanda*'s most difficult moment, when it was on the verge of collapse, Federico Schauber had resigned his post and four influential partners in the new loan - Charles Lefèbvre, the Prince of Radaly, the Marquise of Rivello and the Prince of Satriano - had asked the representative of the *Partenopea* to appoint Augusto Sideri as director.

Sideri had started working for the Partenopei around 1840 and had risen through the ranks to become director of the *Filanda* for a short time. In 1844, the administrative offices in Naples - that is to say, the accounts of *Partenopea*, by then the majority shareholder in the factory - passed to one of the shareholders and creditors, Luigi Angrisani, who

[234] Luigi de Matteo, *Holdings...*, cit., p. 266.

was unable to improve the company's situation, despite the capital provided and his good will. At this point it was decided to entrust the company to others and the choice fell on Augusto Sideri, both for his preparation and his human qualities. He had the competence, the technical knowledge, the economic preparation and the ability to make decisions, and he proved to be very suitable for the role.

Lefèbvre was a member of a scientific society in which an archivist from Santa Maria Capua Vetere worked. His name was Giovanni Sideri, a technical expert who wrote for the journal of the Società Economica Terra di Lavoro, for which Charles Lefèbvre was also a correspondent. For the journal of the Società Economica he wrote an agrarian-statistical description of the district of Caserta and an agrarian-statistical description of the district of Capua.[235] Giovanni Sideri and Augusto Sideri were probably brothers or relatives with similar interests. We are not certain of this at the moment, but circumstances and facts lead us to suspect it. The personal relationship they both had with Lefèbvre is another clue.

Domenico Laviano was also a remarkable figure, playing an important role in the *Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore del Regno delle Due Sicilie*, where Sideri himself would be appointed years later. Together, Sideri and Laviano proved to be very good at their job. According to Laviano, only two people were experts in the mechanical spinning of flax and linen: Eugenio Weemaels and Augusto Sideri. The original plan was to leave the management to Eugenio Weemaels' brother, who was about to leave Naples. Sideri worked in Naples as an accountant, but also travelled frequently to Sarno, where he had studied to become a factory manager and production manager. He also travelled a lot to open new shops and to establish relations with other cities and countries.

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[235] Published in *La Campania industriale: descrizione statistica agraria del circondario di Caserta (Caserta, Morrone e colonia di San Leucio)* vol. IV, quaderno 4, Caserta 1851, pp. 97-121; and *Descrizione statistica agraria del circondario di Capua (Capua, San Tammaro, Grazzanise, Castelvolturno, Cancello Arnone)*, vol. VIII, quaderni 1, pp. 4-40, 1851.

Sideri's dedication to running the Sarno factory was total and he was recognised as an expert agronomist. In 1836, he had published an important book, *Della maniera di fare il vino*, a translation from the French with his own additions and printed in Naples. He had given up having a private life and, as Luigi De Matteo recounts, had decided to spend half the year in Sarno (where he was born anyway), going to bed at night to replace the director and allow him to work during the day. When Weemaels went abroad to buy new machinery, Sideri was able to manage the company on his own for three months, even going so far as to study new production processes for the sugar factory, which was downsized but still active. Even his salary, which had been 780 ducats a year in 1843, was reduced to 600 ducats because he himself had given up 15 ducats a month to save the company money. He earned much less than other directors and even his subordinates. Federico Schauber, his predecessor, received a salary of 1600 ducats a year and 8% of the profits. The technical director, Weemaels, received 1320 ducats a year and 4% of the profits. The old accountant at the spinning mill also earned three times as much, and the purchasing manager even got 2400 ducats a year.[236]

But Sideri - an old-fashioned man, loyal as a soldier - did not want to look at these examples and agreed to work for 600 ducats a year, with 3% of the annual dividend, regardless of his salary, until it reached 6% of the share capital.

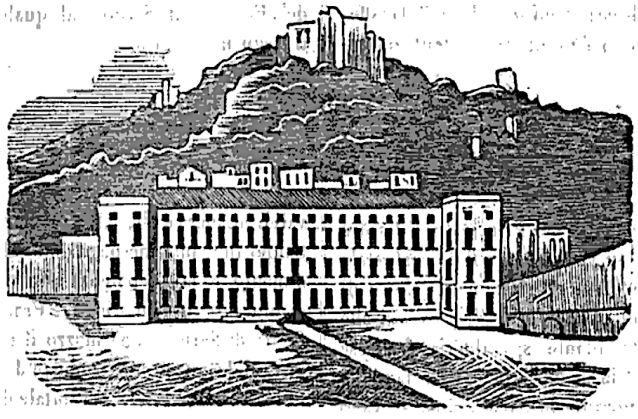
This character of self-sacrifice and total devotion may explain why he took over the management of the *Amministrazione della Navigazione a Vapore del Regno delle Due Sicilie* in the last period of the company's life, during the years when it was plagued by seizures and payment injunctions, putting himself in a difficult situation, even emotionally, for which he was in no way responsible.

[236] Luigi De Matteo, *Holdings...*, cit., p. 90.

The testimony of Augusto Sideri

In 1842, shortly before taking over as director of the Sarno factory, Augusto Sideri had written a nice article, or rather a short essay, for the periodical l'*Omnibus pittoresco*, in which he showed his knowledge of industrial machinery and the textile industry, and recounted some of the events that had preceded and accompanied the construction of the large spinning mill. Sideri was well acquainted with the Sarno area and stated that although it was fertile and rich in water, it could not prosper on agriculture alone, but that industry would bring prosperity and provide work for many people. Because of the abundance of water (the Fibreno, Liri, Irno and Sarno rivers), all the territories north of Naples were particularly suitable for the establishment of various types of factories. In the case of Sarno, the linificio was run by a new type of company, a joint stock company, which had chosen the area around the ruins of the buildings of Giuseppe de' Medici, Prince of Ottajano, as the site for its factory. Writing in 1842, Sideri mentioned only two notable spinning mills in Italy, one of which he generically placed in Milan (actually in the Milanese area, on the banks of the Adda) and the other in Sarno. This was then compared by Sideri with the English towns of Crawford (Derby County), Stockport (Chester County) and Mersey. This was the birthplace of English cotton mills. There, in 1741, the first mechanical spinning mill was built by Mr Richard Arkwright, the 'Watt of mechanical spinning'. But, writes Sideri, the original invention was probably made in Italy and brought to England by a certain Sir Thomas Lombe, who invented the first mechanisms in 1718 and then perfected them. He was followed by the Frenchman Vaucanson, who from 1749 to 1776 invented more and more perfect automatic devices. Great progress was made in Belgium in 1803 when Liewne Bauwens and F., B. Kruk and then Girard perfected modern machines. In Liège, John Cockerill had built machines that were later assembled in modern versions in Sarno. The flax industry, says Sideri, quoting Gera, then attracted the attention of economists because of the great benefits it could bring: It attracted the attention of great economists, statesmen,

farmers, the rich and the poor. Because it is considered a useful industry, because it allows the development of modern industry and also agriculture'. For Sideri, the development of this industry will avoid the importation of yarns from abroad and will benefit the economic balance. In the final part of his paper, Sideri praises the 'young' Eugenio Weemaels, whose collaborator he was, and then Carlo Filangieri, who had obtained the linen spinning patent from the government, and Antonio Spinelli dei principi di Scalea, president of the Board of Directors of the *Società Industriale Partenopea*.



Lunghezza dell'Edificio palmi 300 = Larghezza pal. 60 = Altezza pal. 70.

And then he gives some interesting news, praising the 'technological knowledge' of Cavalier Luigi Giura,

... under whose direction the canals for the hydraulic power of the Opificio were built by the brave young Mr Pasquale Francesconi, a work almost as Roman as that of laying the foundations in such a landslide terrain, and where the water gushes out abundantly with every simple palm of earth that is dug: the foundations of which were carried out under the direction of the same Prince of Satriano by the unfortunate young man who was Giovanni Verdinois, with the new Rondelet method [...] by whose mercy, by piling stones on top of

each other until they were completely rejected, as the art says, an artificial soil was obtained which was more solid and cheaper than the other, commonly used. ... by whose grace, by hammering stones into the ground until they were absolutely rejected, as the art says, an artificial soil was obtained which was more solid and less costly than the others commonly used by closed boxes filled with ferruginous and hydraulic mortar. Under the direction of his great general, our captain of genius Luigi Tramazza, he completed the very solid hydraulic box and the beautiful and grandiose building, the drawings of which had been provided by the skilful industrial engineer Mr Schulz, who had been expressly brought from Belgium for this purpose by our very worthy friend Guglielmo Rao, already a worthy agent of the Cockerill house in Italy.[237]

The hydraulic works were carried out by Luigi Tramazza. Sideri had been approached by the Rossi di Feratta family, who ran a flourishing cotton yarn business in Naples and were planning to set up a cotton mill in Sarno. The family offered Sideri, an employee of Partenopea, the management of the company to be founded, but he persuaded them to find a partnership with Partenopea, which could immediately provide experience, premises, hydraulic power and motive power.[238]

After much discussion, the initiative was given the green light by the *Partenopea*. However, as was made clear at the council meeting on 22 October 1852, the *Partenopea* were prepared to provide space and water power, but not cash. The Reds, on the other hand, did not have enough money to get the spinning mill up and running. So the *Partenopea* came to an agreement with Hartley & Co. The latter would provide the premises and engine power (for a total of about 20,000 ducats), while the *Partenopea* would share the premises of the former sugar mills with the Reds for 40-60,000 ducats. In the end, however,

[237] Augusto Sideri, *Gran filatura meccanica di lino in Sarno,* the '*Omnibus Pittoresco*', 28 April 1842, Naples, pp. 30-31. Moreover, it was precisely Sarno, so rich in waterways, that was hit by a mudslide in 1998 that killed 160 people. Giovanni Verdinois had died very young in 1841. In 1839, he had won a prize for his invention in the field of automatic machines. Annuari Civili del Regno delle Due Sicilie, XXXVII, January-February 1839, p. 153.
[238] A. N. N., Notaio Tambone, deed 11 March 1856.

the negotiations with the Reds were broken off and an agreement was reached with *Hartley & Co*. to set up a hemp spinning mill on the site of the former sugar mills. This allowed *Partenopea* to avoid competition by setting up production in a factory where, in theory, competing factories could have been built. It was also able to increase its production of linen and tow yarn and to transfer some of its hemp spinning to the new production unit, thereby reducing its price. He was also able to make a profit from the machinery and tools he had been using for almost 10 years.

At the beginning of the 1850s, a new mechanical spinning system, des lins coupès, was announced in international production, which caused *Partenopea*'s management some problems. The new production technology made it possible to obtain excellent yarns at a lower cost. It was feared that competing factories would be set up in the Kingdom, offering excellent yarns at relatively low prices. There was no time to lose. It was Sideri himself who took an interest in the matter. He asked for permission to patent the new production system, which, fortunately for the Sarno manufacturers, did not require much capital. Sideri applied in his own name and in 1852 submitted a report on the new spinning system. His ease of writing and his expertise make this report particularly important and interesting for the wealth of information it contains. It is written in the form of a questionnaire in which the directors ask questions and Sideri answers them. The first question was about English yarns. He explained that these had been imported for some time and were not a problem, while yarns under 35 were. The duty of 20 ducats per can on foreign yarns had favoured the import of fine numbers, i.e. those from number 40 upwards. Another reason for the import of fine over coarse was the inability of the Kingdom's hand spinning industry to meet the demand of the growing domestic textile industry.

From the beginning, the Sarno spinning mill only processed fines, the rest being imported from Belgium. But production had changed: fines were increasingly coming from abroad, from Belgium, England and Russia. The importation of fine yarns was also favoured by the reduction of this type of yarn by the *Filanda di Sarno* itself: for several

years there had been a shortage of fine linen in the kingdom, and the large quantities imported from Russia had made it unnecessary to organise the production of fine yarns in the kingdom. The *Filanda* had limited itself to the production of nos. 30, 25, 22 and above. Sideri explained the advantages by claiming that the results were assured, that the necessary capital could be found and that the availability of water for these improvements was entirely sufficient.[239]

It was decided to follow Sideri's and Laviano's instructions, to start producing a quarter of the output with the new system, and that the company would cover the cost of the new machines, estimated at 10 to 12 thousand ducats, with the two credits it had. It was also decided to raise Sideri's salary to 8%. Laviano, the vice-president, brought good news about the company's performance at the time these decisions were made. It was decided that 2/3 of the dividends from 1852 and 1853 should be used to repay the company's loans dating back to 1844, which was done (28 September 1852). The factory was working well, the problems had been overcome and sales were also good, despite the increased import of British products. Equally good were the results of the hemp spinning department, set up with the participation of Hartley and Co. The balance sheet for the first half of 1852 showed a profit of 2 ducats. The weaving mill was also doing well. Meanwhile, preparations were being made for the 1853 Industrial Exhibition, which was to showcase products that combined technology and economy. At this exhibition the Partenopea won one gold and two silver medals: this mechanical spinning mill was the only one in the kingdom and journalists and dignitaries knew it. Both Sideri and Laviano were praised.

Francesco Mastriani and the *Filanda di Sarno*

In a short space of time, once it was up and running and providing regular employment for at least 600-700 people (depending on the

[239] Luigi de Matteo, *Holings,* op. cit., pp. 96-98.

period), the Sarno spinning mill became a "place", a topos of the new south and of the modernity that was imposing itself, just like the steamboats or the great paper mills of the Liri Valley or the architectural achievements of Afan de Rivera.

This is evidenced by the attention paid to it by, among others, the journalist and writer Francesco Mastriani (1819-1891), a prolific realist novelist of the mid-19th century, author of many novels that described the world of his time with the intention of social denunciation. He made the *Filanda di Sarno* the setting for one of his novels, published in 1872: *Le ombre. Lavoro e miseria*, a historical-social novel written in the style of French and English realist novels (the novel is reminiscent of Mary Barton by the English writer Elisabeth Gaskell). The novel is divided into several parts, the central one dealing with the vicissitudes of an orphan girl who is taken to work at the *Filanda di Sarno*: it is not a denunciation of the *Filanda* or the working conditions of its workers, but of other distortions of the society of the time.

The text is an important, largely realistic and documented account of the living conditions of the hundreds of women and girls who made up the bulk of the *Filanda* workforce. Mastriani has nothing but praise for the factory: it was well organised and even healthy. The story revolves around the vicissitudes that young Marcellina has to endure in order to preserve her own safety and even her virtue. There is the figure of the "Lombard" master of another spinning mill in the area who violently seduces the young workers, the jealous father of two girls overshadowed by Marcellina's beauty, and much more. The living conditions in the noisy environment of the spinning mill are also briefly described, but Mastriani does not insist on this. On the contrary, a small chapter of his novel - which, it must be remembered, sold many thousands of copies - contains a recapitulation of the events that had led to the construction of the *Filanda* and a eulogy of some of the men who had led it, in particular Augusto Sideri and the president of Partenopea, Antonio Spinelli. Mastriani, who was very well informed about the events of the *Filanda* and probably knew some of the people he mentioned, tells us that when the Compagnia Industriale Partenopea was first set up, the idea was to build a sugar beet factory in Sarno. It

was an industry that had been successful in Belgium and France and, with the intention of implanting it in Sarno, the architect Luigi Giura had "raised" a large building to be used as a beet sugar factory. Technicians came from France, machines were made there and others were built in the Officina de' Granili in Naples by the Zino & Co. factory, beet seeds were imported from Silesia and other countries. The project was abandoned, however, when it was discovered that the beet would only grow best in cold climates. "Chemical analysis showed that our beetroots contained an excess of nitrate salts, possibly due to the presence of strands from our Vesuvius". These details reported by Mastriani, if true and there is no reason to consider them false, are not easily found elsewhere, a sign that he had taken the trouble to inform himself. Thus, after the failure of the sugar beet industry, capital had been invested in the creation of a large linen and hemp spinning mill, a type of production that had sprung up in Belgium, Scotland, England, France and Germany.

> Italy could not lag behind in this new industrial life, and in 1837, in a small village in the Naples area, in Sarno, a vast building was constructed for the use of a mechanical spinning mill, which, shortly after its foundation, produced excellent threads of different grades for smooth and operated cloths, for table linen, for so-called Russian cloths, etc. [...] our readers will not be disappointed if we give such details of the grand Opificio di Sarno as we believe will help them to appreciate its importance and the innumerable services rendered to industry and the country (p. 187).

Sentences such as these, written by an author who was sometimes accused of wanting to socialise, make it clear that the Sarno spinning mill, the largest in the kingdom, was a source of pride for its modernity and the quality of its products, and that it was a source of pride to work there. The fact that working conditions were not optimal was typical of all European industry at the time, with very few exceptions. Mastriani continued:

We have said that the Filanda di Sarno was founded in 1837. The founder of this splendid factory was the Industriale Partenopea company, headed by the eminent Antonio Spinelli, president of the board of directors and representative of social reason. Spinelli was one of the most tireless promoters of our industries and agricultural sciences: he was honoured all over Europe for his studies and for the impetus he gave to industry and agriculture, and he was rewarded at the recent Expositions in Florence and Paris with prizes and medals that are certainly more honourable than all the knighthoods, decorations and other titles created to feed ambition and vanity.

The Prince of Satriano, Carlo Filangieri, the architect Giovanni Verdinois and the engineer Colonel Lugi Tramazza contributed to the construction of the Filanda di Sarno. The hydraulic works were supervised by Luigi Giura, an experienced and well-known architect. The founder of the work was the stalwart Belgian Eugenio Weemaels. (Mastriani, *Ombre*, cit., pp. 187-188).

Colà, separata dalle sue compagne, ella (Marcellina) s'immergeva ne'suoi pensieri, e sembrava del tutto straniera a quanto la circondava. (Vedi a pag. 192)

At this point Mastriani praises Augusto Sideri, who must have been a highly respected man, considered a philanthropist, dedicated to the work and welfare of his fellow citizens of Sarno. He is even presented as the "father" of a large number of descendants, made up of workers and labourers.

We owe it to justice to pay tribute to our illustrious fellow-citizen, Mr Augusto Sideri, Secretary General of the Partenopean Industrial Society, who, with incomparable philanthropy, singular skill and long and arduous assistance, has overseen the growth, perfection and preservation of the factory. For some thirty-six years now, Sideri has been like the guardian of the magnificent factory and the father of the numerous family of workers of both sexes who earn their bread in the spinning mill. It is safe to say that if the current financial crisis, which is plaguing Europe and the Kingdom of Italy in particular, has not closed the doors of the Sarno factory, it is due to the intelligent diligence and economic prudence of the company's board of directors, Spinelli's philanthropic wisdom and Sideri's diligent collaboration. (*Ombre*, cit., p. 188).

As Mastriani rightly recalls in his novel, which is based on historical facts, during the crises of the years before the novel was published, 40 factories in Lille alone had to close and some 20,000 female workers were made redundant. In the north of France, spinning mills had also closed and thousands of people had been made redundant. Mastriani described the spinning mill with the pen and imagination of an observer who had been there more as a journalist than as a writer: he had visited it in its two production units and left us a description. It consisted of two buildings, a very large one, which was also faithfully described in the novel, and a smaller one. The first spinning mill had 8,000 mechanical spindles and was 300 palms long, 66 palms wide and 70 palms high on three floors. According to Mastriani, the "exposure", i.e. the environmental situation of this factory was one of the most "healthy and pleasant".

In keeping with the biblical English saying "Cleanliness is next to godliness", no effort is spared to maintain the utmost cleanliness in these halls,

where the nature of the crops to be grown would make it almost impossible to maintain without constant sweeping and washing. On every floor there are numerous large windows, through which the air, the light and the beneficial rays of the sun cheer and enliven the work of the young worker, whose fresh and rosy cheeks testify to her good health, despite the extreme poverty in which she lives. The main entrance to the spinning mill is enlivened by a large esplanade, with parterres, flowerbeds and soft shrubs. (*Ibidem*, p. 188).

The writer added that any visitor to the Spinning Mill would have been surprised to observe the prodigious 'machinism' that made inanimate matter seem animated through gear wheels, flying frogs, iron arms moving

... and with mathematical order; those combers that hover above themselves to comb the masses of linen and reed; those bells that ring in exact time to give important notices to the worker; those reels that wind with incredible celerity; those thousand spindles that obey simultaneous movements like a well-trained army; all that life, that motion, that intelligence in iron, makes you admire the power of the genius of the man who communicated a spark of his soul to the hardest of metals (p. 188-189). 188-189).

Mastriani explains some aspects of 'macchinismo', such as the need to purify the water used to run the machinery so that it does not become encrusted with lime. He then goes on to describe the *Filanda*'s machinery: the combing machine, the spinning machine, the winding machine, the bundling machine and others. In the dyeing department there are also whitewashing machines. Everything seems to be a marvellous technical miracle. After describing the wonders of the machinery, the writer moves on to the human element. He explains that in his time (the novel was published in 1872, so the references are from the early years of that decade) the spinning mill had about 600 workers, almost all women, about a hundred less than 10 or 20 years earlier. Those who worked there received a 'daily wage' of 1 to 6 or 7 lire, depending on the task. The work day lasted 12 hours: in summer it started at 5.30 in the morning and ended at 7.30 in the evening; in winter it started at 8 in the morning and ended at 9 in the evening. Workers have only one hour's rest during the day, from 12 noon to 1 pm. Almost

all are paid on a piecework basis. Mastriani marvelled at how 'uncultured young girls without education, mares reared in the middle of the field, acquire in a short time a perfect intelligence of the mechanism on which they work, and a marvellous dexterity in performing difficult and often dangerous operations' (p. 189). Mastriani tells an authentic story of a young girl called Carmina Baselice, whose arm was severed by a cog and who was then hospitalised in the Santa Maria Avvocata convent, where she worked all her life as a spinner with the stump that remained. Between 1834 and 1872, Mastriani records, there were only three fatal accidents, below the average for other factories. At that time, the safety systems that would become compulsory twenty years later were not yet in place.

> Machines make the labourer's work less tiring and more profitable; they refine his intelligence; they do not waste his strength and they respect his human dignity, since they play the role that horses, mares, donkeys and mules should play. The worker in front of the machine is always a ray of divine intelligence that regulates brutal and inorganic matter, made to serve the needs of life and civilisation (*Ibid*., p. 190).

And so Mastriani followed the mystique of progress, according to which the machine was good and carried well, despite the poor working conditions of those who used it. The writer also notes the feminine charm of many of Sarno's spinners, which inspired songs and stornelli at the time, suggesting how important this factory in southern Italy had become in the culture of post-reunification Italy.

> The Sarno worker has her own little coquetry and vanity. In the almost wild style of her clothing when she is at work, which consists only of a red skirt that reaches to her hocks, leaving her legs and feet completely naked, she does not forget her gold earrings, nor her handkerchief folded in four in the Sorrento style and covering only her hair. It is in this manner of wearing her headscarf on her head that the worker most explains her coquetry. [...]
>
> The Filanda's food consists of a large granola bread, 18 to 19 cents, which she eats during the day and while working. In the evening, back home, she eats the rest with onion and pepper (*Ibid*., p. 190).

Mastriani notes that Sarno's women workers and women in general are very clean. Not all of them work in the *Filanda*: there are also ribbon factories, other small spinning mills, silk factories. Small and very small, but numerous, so much so that they employ another 2300 or 2400 people. The factories, Mastriani goes on to note, prevented the stagnation of water, improving the 'bad air' and therefore the contagion of malaria.

Chapter 11

Generation change

Villa Lefèbvre in Isola

More than 25 years after its construction, Palazzo Lefèbvre was in need of renovation, but Ernesto no longer considered it suitable for the family to stay in when they were on Isola, except on special occasions. His children spent their holidays in Naples, Rome or Paris. Their relationship with the Fibreno factory became increasingly distant: he considered it a family asset, a source of income, not a place to show off to guests.

After the death of their mother, he and Teresa broke with the habits of the previous generation: picnics in the English garden, fishing trips to Lake Tremello. In the summer of 1854, Ernesto ordered the construction of a large, very elegant villa with sloping roofs. It was first occupied in 1855 and Theresa and Ernesto stayed there mainly between 1855 and 1857, while Charles was still alive. It still exists today and is perfectly preserved, designed in the "northern French" style, two storeys high plus a third sloping floor, as in the palaces of the Parisian boulevards, and stands a hundred metres from the western façade of the Palazzo Lefebvre.

This was the favourite residence of the second generation of the Lefèbvre family during their stays in Isola. The growth of the family with the birth of three children and the large number of servants - 15 people in all - certainly made it impossible to accommodate them all in the same palace. The villa is separate from the main property and, although it was once part of the park surrounding the Palazzo Lefèbvre, it is now surrounded by a large garden. It is still possible to appreciate

the elegance and quality of the trompe l'oeil decorations commissioned by Ernesto, which have survived the passage of time.

Villa Lefèbvre (later De Caria, then Pisani) in Isola del Liri.

The Fibreno printing press and the publishing industry

Around the middle of the century, the Lefèbvre family owned several residences in the city of Naples: Palazzo Manso, an old building that they had bought but which was uninhabitable and needed to be renovated and enlarged; the apartment next to Villa Acton at number 41; and the building at 255 Riva di Chiaia. Also: the building in Via dell'Annunziata, two premises of the Tipografia e Stamperia del Fibreno, in Via Pignatelli 18 in San Giovanni Maggiore and in Calata di Trinità Maggiore no. 26. In time, other buildings were added, such as the so-called Palazzo della contessa di Balsorano (Palazzo Capece Minuto Carafa, donated to Flavia Lefèbvre), located on the other side of the Riviera at no. 2/3, and a large paper warehouse in the city of Rome.

The largest printing works in the kingdom

The heart of Lefèbvre's financial power was always the Manifatture del Fibreno complex with its two units: Forme and Carnello (to which a third would soon be added). By the middle of the century, the Fibreno printing house, with offices in Sora and Naples and a warehouse in Rome, had also become an important business. Before the unification, like many other printing houses in Naples, it had collaborated with the Royal House of Bourbon, although "the exact amount of public commissions during the Bourbon period is not known, nor are those that the provisional governments and their administrations also entrusted to private printers".[240]

In this and the following three pictures, details of the original decorations and interiors of Villa Lefèbvre now known as Villa Pisani.

[240] Luigi de Matteo, *Holdings and Industrial Development in the Mezzogiorno. Il caso della Società Industriale Partenopea (1833-1879),* Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Filosofici, Naples 1984, p. 40.

Many of the archives were burned during the change of regime and when the new unified administration took over. However, for more than forty years the printing house published works of great value, such as the three volumes entitled Real Teatro di San Carlo demonstrated with copper engraved plates (1835), enriched with large colour plates printed on precious paper, a work that would demonstrate to the world the greatness of the Neapolitan theatre, especially after Bellini's direction. Among the many valuable works is also the prestigious collection of writers on the history of Italy from 1494 to 1830, not to mention an infinite number of commercial works, novels, essays, manuals for courts and lawyers, collections of laws and much more.

Interior of Villa Lefèbvre today known as Villa Pisani.

In 1851 the Stamperia del Fibreno was based in Naples and, with its 14 presses, was the largest in the kingdom, together with Raffaele Marotta's. Less than four years later, when Ernesto took over the family business, the number of presses had increased to 17. By then he had no rivals in the kingdom. Although Charles had not retired and his health appeared to be good, Ernesto gradually took over much of the family business.

In 1856, father and son decided to entrust the management of Fibreno's main factory, the Forme paper mill, to Vincenzo Montgolfier's son Gustavo, who had already been visiting Isola for ten years. He took over in 1856 and remained in charge for decades until the transfer of ownership at the beginning of the 20th century.

The birth of Officine Chimiche Lefèbvre

As well as working in the paper industry, Ernesto also set up his own business in a place where there were no buildings at the time. Like his father, Ernesto kept a close eye on the development of various modern industries, especially the newer ones. He regularly read Italian and foreign journals on scientific and technical progress. He was aware that he was operating in a market that was more restricted than the one in which his father had started out, a market in which credit for new activities was scarcer than at the beginning of the century. One of the bets he wanted to make was to invest in the chemical sector, which was growing in many European countries but was still stagnating in Italy.

When he took over the Lefèbvre empire, one of his objectives was to reduce the cost of importing essential chemicals, especially acids, which accounted for a large proportion of the total cost of paper production. Thus, on 22 April 1854, with the agreement of Charles, he bought from Tommaso de Franco and Giuseppe Jauch "the whole of the Bagnoli beach, which stretches from Monte dei Sassi to Monte Coroglio", i.e. about one kilometre of sandy coastline and a strip no less than 300 metres inland.

The area, then deserted and partly cultivated, was close to the small rural village of Bagnoli.

Interior of Villa Lefèbvre today known as Villa Pisani.

A modern chemical factory was to be built there, but another ten years passed before it could be completed: the State Property Office claimed ownership of the land, which had come to the Lefèbvre family after a complicated series of transfers, inheritances and sales.

A long legal battle ensued, which was only won in 1860. Immediately afterwards, construction began on the main building, a factory, "a large building used as a chemical laboratory", with various service buildings, the factory manager's house (which still exists today) and a sea passage with a jetty for a landing stage.

The complex, very close to the beach, was protected by an artificial reef and a series of dunes. A few years after the purchase of the Bagnoli coast, Ernesto had also acquired an important share (about 30%) in the glass factory located in the same place, the glassworks of the Swiss company Melchiorre Bournique (1829-1909).

The financial effort was considerable but, as we shall see, production did not begin until 1864, a full 10 years after the start of construction.

A difficult period, the 1850s

In the 1850s, the situation of the paper industry in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies deteriorated. The mills on the Amalfi Coast began to close down one by one for various reasons, mainly because their small size did not allow them to export. There was also a shortage of materials, as many cloth merchants found it more profitable to sell their goods to the better paid Genoese paper mills. The northern paper mills were running at full capacity, producing paper at such a low cost that it was possible to import the finished product into the kingdom. However, the paper mills of Fibreno and Liri resisted this difficult situation because they were still able to obtain the raw material that the Amalfians, with less bargaining power, could no longer obtain.

During the summer and autumn of 1857, Teresa and Ernesto spent several months in Paris, where they met André-Isidore. In September, the cousins made a trip to visit the Grand Charteuse. Eugénie, André-Isidore's wife, was an opera singer and had founded a philharmonic orchestra in Grenoble with a group of friends. These were brief moments of serenity in an increasingly alarming situation.

Alarming news from the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies indicated that the wars of the Risorgimento were entering a new, more violent and convulsive phase. There were reports of the first Garibaldian landings and of adventurers such as Carlo Pisacane (1818-1857), who landed at Sapri and ended his adventure in blood at Sanza, inland from Salerno. These were still controllable episodes, small incursions supported by a small but noisy group of intellectuals and even Neapolitan nobles.

Shortly after his return to Grenoble, André-Isidore received a letter from Paris: Ernesto told him that Annette had fallen seriously ill. The son immediately set off with his wife, but did not arrive in time. On her deathbed, Ernesto and Sister Sainte-Anne Marie, née Sister Ernestine, had been at her side, reading the Imitation of Christ to her until the end. It was they who told their son about the last hours of the woman who had lived for years in a house close to their daughter's convent. Eighty-one years old, Marie Anne Lefèbvre died in Paris on 8 November 1857

and was buried in the Montparnasse cemetery.

In the spring of 1857, at the instigation of the Duke of Montebello, Charles was awarded an important French decoration: the Legion of Honour. At the instigation of Marshal Soult, President of the Council, and Guizot, Minister of Foreign Affairs, a royal decree was issued on 30 April 1857 making him a Chevalier de l'Ordre Royal de la Légion d'Honneur.

Life had given much and taken much away in these last years. For a few months, the old lion continued to live and work, going about his business as usual. The death of his lifelong companion had worn him down, but he did his utmost not to stop, even though time had passed. Inexorably.

Villa Lefèbvre today known as Villa Pisani. Interior and decorations.

The death of Charles Lefèbvre

Ernest, Teresa and the children decided to spend Christmas 1857 in Paris, where they had friends and relatives. Charles was not with them that year. On 30 December 1857, he attended a social meeting of the shipping company in which he had eight major shareholdings. This meeting, as well as the children's trip to Paris, which had been taken in good spirits, showed that his health was considered to be good to the end. But on 2 January 1858, after a hearty dinner, old Charles felt ill. On the 3rd, a telegram was sent to his son warning him that the situation was considered very serious: even the doctors considered his death imminent. The very day they received the news, the Lefèbvre family left for Naples, but on the way the old man died, sadly far from his loved ones. Enrico Catalano, who wrote his obituary, gives a brief account of his last hours.

On Sunday evening, the 10th of January, Carlo Lefèbvre, born in the town of Besanzone in Franche-Comté on the 4th of April 1775, died at the untimely (sic) age of about 83. How he spent his youth in the army, how he arrived here in Naples at the time of the French invasion, and how, after acquiring his citizenship, he became receiver-general of the province of Terra d'Otranto, are things that it is not worth dwelling on.

With a few inaccuracies, Catalano's obituary goes on to give a brief account of Lefèbvre's exploits, which we already know. More detailed is the account given by André-Isidore, who wrote a letter describing what the doctor told Ernesto when he arrived in Naples. On the evening of 2 January, Charles had felt unwell, with pains in his chest and stomach, but he had initially attributed his discomfort to the large dinner he had eaten. That same night a massive haemorrhage had apparently begun, which the doctor had tried to treat with leeches, a treatment that was obviously useless, if not counterproductive. The situation had worsened over the next three days until Charles felt a contracture in his mouth and then lost the use of his speech. Internal bleeding, possibly from the stomach, had continued and after four days of agony he had

slipped into a coma. He survived another four days and died on 10 January at the age of 83.

Certainly Ernesto managed to see him before he died and asked Dr Mariano Semmola (1831-1896) to embalm his father's body. The body had to be placed in a temporary tomb, probably next to his wife and daughter, in the old Lefèbvre family tomb at Poggioreale, which was later abandoned. Semmola, the Lefèbvre family's trusted doctor, was, as we have seen, the main author of the health code of the new Kingdom of Italy after the Unification. The family had already suffered several bereavements since their time in Naples, but a monumental tomb had not yet been planned, and Ernesto was working on it.

André-Isidore himself, who knew his uncle very well, paints a truer and less hagiographic portrait of Lefèbvre. He held him in high esteem, but was also aware of the disagreements and conflicts that were not unknown in the family, for example with his son Ernesto and with Joseph-Isidore. While remaining as discreet as ever, he gives us a little more information:

> He possessed those precious qualities that are of great help to a founder: a very strong will, the spirit of initiative and the gift of perseverance. Of course, he had equal qualities and imperfections; meanwhile, he was very authoritarian. It is easy to understand how this lucid and penetrating spirit, who saw things from afar and from the other side, accustomed to his intellectual superiority [...] imbued himself with omnipotence in the circle of his collaborators, causing him to cut off certain issues without ever taking into account the opinions of others. It is something worthy of criticism, certainly [...] but who among us is perfect?[241]

At the time of his death, Carlo's assets were considerable, amounting to 50 million lire in Italy alone, and included, in addition to the two main paper mills at Isola del Liri, the Stamperia del Fibreno with 17 presses and two sites; a share in the Società Industriale Partenopea; shares in the Navigation Company of the Two Sicilies; 20,000 scudi pledged as a loan to the Kingdom; the ownership of at least five

[241] AB XIX 4482, VII, p. 43.

buildings used as residences, one of which was a very large one. A share in the Società Industriale Lionese; the ownership of at least five buildings used as residences, including a very large one, the Palazzo Manso Balsorano in Naples - still to be renovated - and a castle with extensive grounds, the Castello di Balsorano.

Between 1858 and 1859, the Lefèbvre industry showed clear signs of renewing its machinery. A 400-horsepower engine was used and no fewer than three endless drum machines had been installed in the previous years (or perhaps even in 1858) for the production of heavy grammage cardboard and paper.

At this point, we may wonder if a portrait of Charles-Flavien still exists. One was reproduced in black and white, in poor quality, in Achille Lauri's 1910 pamphlet *Carlo Lefevre e l'industria della carta*. It is a painting that must have been in the Balsorano Castle, where it was photographed, at the time when most of the Neapolitan palaces had been sold and the family had moved to Rome. It is considered to be a work of good quality, probably by Raffaele d'Auria. It is currently unknown whether it still exists or was destroyed in the earthquake that followed five years later.

The new head of the family, Ernesto, was an experienced man in his early 40s. From his father he had learnt caution, prudence and the rule of distinguishing between family business and enterprise. He had seen the world, he spoke at least four languages, he had lived in affluence, he had been in contact with the aristocracy and the powerful in France, Italy, England and Germany, and he had followed his father's work ethic to the letter. He lived as an aristocrat and was less inclined than his father to entrepreneurial adventure, his main task being to administer and use what Charles had earned, a task he performed admirably until his sons intervened in the management of his estate and other unfortunate circumstances

The monumental tomb at Poggioreale

In July 1858 Ernesto asked the Mayor of Naples to build a tomb in the monumental cemetery of Poggioreale. Poggioreale was the new cemetery in Naples that the urban development of the city had made necessary since the end of the previous century. It was first approved by Murat in 1812, but the project was interrupted and only resumed in 1821, when the king commissioned the architects Ciro Cuciniello and Luigi Malesci to design a large monumental cemetery in an area that had previously been used for vegetable cultivation. In the following years, Malesci built the mother church around which the new cemetery was to be built. After the painstaking construction of the church, the cemetery was organised and inaugurated by King Ferdinand in 1837.

Lefèbvre's tomb was dug and built between August and September 1856 on a 20x20 metre plot of land he had bought behind the chapel of the Congregation of the Rosary. When it was finished, at the end of August, the remains of C. Charvet, the widow of Dareste, a long-time friend of the family and former governess of Flavia, who probably died the same year, of Charles Lefèbvre, "embalmed", and of Carlo Saluzzo, who "ended his life in Lucca at the age of 11" and who had until then been buried in the Church of Santa Trinità in Florence, were transferred there. The child's remains ended up "next to those of his mother, who was buried in the aforementioned Poggioreale tomb". This was Maria Luisa, who died in 1854 and was apparently moved there with Rosanne (although this burial does not appear in the file). The so-called gentile chapel is a hypogeum, still preserved and in good condition.

At the end of that year, Ernestine Lefèbvre, Ernest's cousin and André-Isidore's sister, with the religious name of Soeur Sainte-Anne Marie, was appointed superior of the convent of the Dames Augustines du Sainte-Croix de Jesus. They were called the Filles de la Croix and were founded in 1633 by Mère Marguerite de Jésus (Marie de Senaux, ca. 1610-1692). The appointment was made on 27 December 1858. She was to remain in this position for only a short time, for on 10 July of the following year, André-Isidore received the news of her death.

Ernestine, who was 54 years old (1805-1859), was buried in Montparnasse with her mother Marie Anne and her sister Azélie Lefèbvre Sylvestre.[242]

Gioacchino and Maria Casaglia

Meanwhile, Lucia Saluzzo, orphaned by her mother at the age of 10, was entrusted to her aunt Teresa and became like an older sister to Flavia, who was only 6 at the time. Gioacchino was not suited to be her father, he wanted to be free. Moreover, after his exile, he had settled in Florence, where, according to acquaintances and relatives, he led a dissipated life, keeping more than one mistress and spending his wealth, although his position as senator of the kingdom allowed him to pay for more than one vice. His official mistress was a Florentine milliner called Maria Casaglia, who at one point fell ill, apparently seriously. This happened a few months after Maria Luisa's death, in 1856. From what appeared to be her deathbed, she asked Gioacchino, who still retained all his titles of prince and marquis, to prove his love by marrying her in articulo mortis. Since she had no children and there were no problems of succession, Gioacchino was convinced that the marriage of the soon-to-be-dead woman would be short-lived and agreed to the move. Maria Casaglia thus became the legitimate wife of the Prince of Lequile and acquired the title of Princess of Lequile and Marquise of Saluzzo. Shortly after the marriage, she "miraculously" recovered - as André-Isidore ironically commented, who did not believe in the woman's good faith - and became a rich, ostentatious and heavily bejewelled noblewoman. She also gained parental authority over Lucia, who did not tolerate her, protested against living with her stepmother and won. Those who tell this story seem to believe that it was all a plot. Certainly that was the view in Naples in the second half of the century.[243]

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[242] AB XIX 4482, VII, pp. 84-85 and p. 88.
[243] AB XIX 4482, VIII, pp. 34-35.

Shortly after the death of Maria Luisa, the other branch of the family, the Lequile Montalto family filed a lawsuit against Gioacchino to deprive him of the title of Lequile for reasons of succession and also for his behaviour. In 1859, the Commission of Noble Titles of the Kingdom ruled in favour of the Montalto family and prohibited the Saluzzo family from using the title. The dispute had already been tried before, after Maria Luisa di Saluzzo had ceded the feud of Lequile to her uncle Carlo Saluzzo in 1762 (who then sold it), retaining the title she had passed on to her husband Carlo Montalto. The latter's son, Giovanni Filippo Montalto, had therefore claimed the sole right to use the title of prince. Finally, in 1859 (and Gioacchino's marriage to Maria Casaglia was a decisive factor), the Court of Naples issued a decree forbidding Saluzzo to use the title of prince and princess of Lequile. The milliner from Florence, like Gioacchino, had to be content with the title of Marquise of Saluzzo, which was no small thing.[244]

Kingdom Isolation

At the Congress of Paris on 25 February 1856, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies found itself in a situation of great isolation and loneliness because of its desire to remain neutral and not subject to the diktats of powers such as, first and foremost, England and France. London and Paris were intent on definitively resolving *les affaires de Naples*.[245] At this congress, Cavour handed over notes to the English, who advised them on the steps to be taken for the political reconstruction of the peninsula. As for the Neapolitan delegation, it was rejected by the French, who considered its presence impossible. The English also plotted against Ferdinand. The Savoy ambassador in London, Vittorio Emanuele Taparelli d'Azeglio, believed that the English should negotiate against the kingdom non verbis sed verberibus. As for

[244] AB XIX 4482, VIII, p. 35.
[245] Eugenio Di Rienzo, pp. 75-76.

Cavour, he thought of using the Anglo-Italian corps, which had not yet been disbanded, for a coup d'état in Sicily. This plan did not come to fruition, but both Walewski and Clarendon were not sparing in their harsh criticism of the Bourbon kingdom, which they considered oppressive, shameful and in need of eradication. The excuse was that it made revolutionary discontent almost inevitable if it did not take the path of reform.[246]

The Franco-English and Savoyard manoeuvres were so blatant that they provoked the displeasure of the Austrian, Prussian and Russian delegates, who did not consider it right to discuss the internal affairs of another state in the absence of its delegates. At the end of the conference, having failed to obtain what he wanted - military intervention - Cavour declared that "diplomacy could now achieve little and other means would have to be used against the Court of Caserta". On the question of reforms, on the request for the release of people like Spaventa and Settembrini, the English and the French asked for assurances, but Ferdinand considered them as interference and at a certain point diplomacy no longer understood each other, leading to the breaking off of diplomatic relations in 1856. The situation worsened over the next few years and Russia, convinced that the Bourbon kingdom was heading for disaster, signed a secret non-aggression pact with France (3 March 1859).

Turmoil and intrigue

The kingdom was shaken by increasingly serious events. It was surrounded by enemies, squeezed by the hostility of the English, who supported Garibaldi and the political class in Turin. Economic closures, prolonged embargoes and trade wars had also plunged the country into a deepening economic crisis. The international campaign unleashed by the British also had an impact on public opinion in the pre-unification states, or at least on their ruling classes. The change of regime began

[246] *Ibid*, p. 78.

precisely in the years when the second generation of the Italian Lefèbvres took over responsibility for running what now appeared to be an empire; when, in short, Ernesto became pater familias.

At the end of November 1856, uprisings broke out in Palermo and Cefalù and on 8 December 1856, a Calabrian soldier called Agesilao Milano (1830-1856), a follower of Mazzini, wounded the King with a bayonet while he was reviewing the troops. He had just attended the Mass for the feast of the Immaculate Conception in Naples and was reviewing his troops at the Campo di Marte at Capodichino. Milan threw himself at the king and wounded him with a white weapon, as he did not have time to load his gun. The bomber was arrested and 4 days later shot.[247]

Milan's blade entered the King's abdomen; the wound did not kill him but ruined his health. The Neapolitan liberal exiles, refugees in Turin, Paris and Florence supported in 1857 the insurrectional plan devised by Giuseppe Mazzini who organised contingents of revolutionaries to be landed in various points of the peninsula, especially south of Naples ('south of the lighthouse' as it was called). The expedition to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was entrusted to Carlo Pisacane, a former Royal Army officer who had switched to socialist ideals. On 25 July 1857, Pisacane set sail from Genoa on the steamer 'Cagliari' for Cilento, hoping to find a population there ready to rise up against the Bourbons. Having landed in Sapri, Pisacane was blocked by Bourbon soldiers and when he escaped, the local population also fought against his men. The idea that the Bourbon subjects wanted to rebel at the first opportunity proved to be wrong.

When, in January 1857, the Court of Caserta sought to establish a penal colony in Argentina, on the Rio de la Plata, on the model of similar French and English penal colonies, it was seen as an opening for the reforms that had been incessantly demanded. On hearing of the Argentine project, Clarendon was delighted and declared that a period

[247] *Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania,* Rome, Vol. 25-26, Associazione nazionale per gli interessi del Meridione d'Italia, Rome 1956, p. 411.

of détente was about to begin. Waleswky and the French were also pleased, but Napoleon III said that the Argentine colony initiative had been inspired by Franco-English pressure. Ferdinand II rejected this further humiliation and had his diplomatic representative, Cafiero, reply harshly that France and England were still trying to undermine the kingdom. He was right.

In different ways and with different objectives, London and Paris had not ceased to work actively during the negotiations to destabilise the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. If the British executive adopted this tactic simply to hold in check a middle power, which had dared to manifest its unwillingness to become a mere pawn in the United Kingdom's Mediterranean strategy, the Cabinet of the Tulières, by blatantly encouraging the Savoy's programme of 'royal conquest', directed its action towards the broader objective of achieving undisputed hegemony over the Peninsula, as the outcome of the Plombières talks of 21 July 1858 would not delay in demonstrating.[248]

In the spring of 1859, the young king's health suddenly deteriorated. During a return journey between Naples and Bari, an inflammation broke out in his groin and he became septic. He died on his return from Bari to Naples on 22 May, aged just 49. His son, Francis II of the Two Sicilies (1834-1894), ascended the throne on the same 22 May at the age of 23 and immediately had to face the aggression of Garibaldi and Savoy. He first granted the restoration of the Constitution and replaced the old ruling class with men closer to the 'liberal' ideology in the hope of not giving ideological reasons for the aggression. He then allowed the exiles who had left the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies to return. And so, a year after this arrangement, Gioacchino di Saluzzo returned to Naples on 23 July 1860, together with 25 other exiles, most of whom had taken refuge in Florence. Among them were many of the protestors of November 1847, as reported in the daily newspaper *Il lume a gas*. [249]

Carlo Filangieri and Paolo Ruffo had succeeded in taming Sicily, but after Ferdinand's death the rebellions resumed. Part of the island's

[248] Eugenio Di Rienzo, op. cit., p. 95.
[249] *The Gaslight*, 23 July 1860, Naples, p. 68.

nobility, influenced by Freemasonry, English liberalism, the Carboneria, island nationalism and secret associations such as the Alta Vendita, had turned to the unifying cause.[250] In the early months of 1860, calls went out from Sicily for Garibaldi to lead a new Sicilian revolution. To incite him, some young nobles organised an uprising on 4 April 1860, secretly storing weapons in a warehouse in the Gancia monastery. The Bourbon police became aware of the uprising and arrested the conspirators.[251]

From that day on, the district of Palermo was placed under a state of siege and the Royal Army War Councils carried out 13 shootings. Garibaldi, preceded by Rosolino Pilo (1820-1860), then decided to land in Sicily to lead the island's insurrection under the diplomatic and military cover of the Savoy family. The Bourbon police also learned of Garibaldi's plans in advance and immediately organised a plan for the Armata di Mare and the army to patrol the Sicilian coast. However, the two Piedmontese ships carrying Garibaldi's Thousand managed to cross the coast ahead of the frigate 'Stromboli' and landed in Marsala on 11 May 1860. The decisive delay in opening fire on the Thousand was caused by the presence of British ships in the Sicilian port. They risked being hit by Bourbon shells, which would have had serious immediate consequences, since the British were openly at war with the Kingdom. Meanwhile, the Marsala telegraph office had already sent news of the landing to Palermo, and the following day the Neapolitan government issued an official note deploring the Turin government for allowing such an act of piracy.

Once again Francis II asked Carlo Filangieri to direct the operations in Sicily. He proposed General Ferdinando Lanza (1788-1865), who was old and in poor health, as commander-in-chief of the royal forces in Sicily. He trusted him, but the choice was wrong: Lanza made so many tactical mistakes (e.g. he bombed Palermo, as in 1849) that he brought most of the Sicilians over to Garibaldi's side. At the end of

[250] Massimo Viglione, ed., *La Rivoluzione italiana, storia critica del Risorgimento*, Il Minotauro, Rome 2004.
[251] Raffaele De Cesare, *La fine di un Regno*, Volume II, p. 350 ff.

May, faced with the desperate situation, Filangieri, who had always been pro-French, suggested to Francis II that he should approach Napoleon III; the general was convinced that by accepting the Constitution and occupying the Papal States instead of the French troops, Paris would be able to defend the rights of the two Sicilies and at the same time oppose British interests in the Mediterranean. However, the king refused to occupy the Papal States and merely promulgated a new constitution. Filangieri then resigned, and in response the liberals of the kingdom organised armed bands throughout the city. Between August and September, all the Kingdom's strongholds, such as Potenza, Altamura, Cosenza, Catanzaro and Benevento, fell, while in the Bourbon armies there were many cases of insubordination, especially on the part of senior officers. For the most part, these were old ex-Carbonarians and Murattians, recalled by Ferdinand II in 1831, who had always been opposed to the pro-Austrian and even pro-Russian party that dominated the Bourbon court. The king's old-fashioned and imprudent clemency thus proved to be a curse for the kingdom.

The Bourbon generals, such as Fileno Briganti (1800-1860), continued with inept actions that made them suspect treason to such an extent that the latter was shot by his own men while Lanza surrendered to Garibaldi.[252] The senior officers of the Armata di Mare refused to sink Garibaldi's ships on their passage from Sicily to Calabria and subsequently handed over most of their ships to the Savoy Navy. Perhaps the senior Bourbon officers were hoping for diplomatic action, or perhaps some of them had been bought with British money, as many historians suspect. In fact, the king was also abandoned to his fate by France and Austria. Only in the last part of the campaign, with the Battle of Volturno, where they fought bravely but were defeated by the arrival

[252] Although today there are those who dispute the motivation for the shooting, which was allegedly done by rebel soldiers who did not recognise the general. Giuseppe Catenacci - Francesco Maurizio Di Giovine, *La fine di un regno - I fatti di Calabria dell'estate 1860 - La leggenda nera sul generale Briganti*. Associazione Nazionale Ex Allievi Nunziatella - Sezione Calabria. Mileto, 2014, pp. 1-48.

of enemy reinforcements, did the Bourbons regain the dignity of a last stand. Francis II decided not to fight in the city of Naples (although it was well armed and fortified) to avoid massacre and destruction, and settled in the fortified strongholds of the Campanian plain to attempt a counter-offensive. The best fortified and defended was the fortress of Gaeta, where the royal family and the remnants of the Neapolitan army took refuge. It was surrounded in a last desperate stand that lasted for months.[253]

Meanwhile, Garibaldi arrived in Naples on 7 September 1860 and chose Teresa Lefèbvre's native palace, the immense Palazzo Doria D'Angri, as his headquarters, where he installed his staff. From the balcony of the piano nobile, he delivered his first speech to the people of Naples, ending with the cry "Rome or death". The scene is recalled in many paintings. The most famous is by Franz Wenzel. In the city, the Garibaldini, allied to the Camorra, burned many archives of the Bourbon kingdom.

Ernesto Lefèbvre at the head of the family

When the Second War of Independence broke out and the Kingdom of Naples began to be encircled, Ernesto had recently taken the reins of the Lefèbvre Empire into his own hands. Much depended on his decisions. When the time came to choose, he was one of those who stayed, without supporting the now desperate resistance of the Bourbons. Carlo Arrivabene, in his memoirs, mentions him as one of the 54 Neapolitan nobles "who adhered to the new regime". Officers, officials and landowners were given two months to make up their minds. There were very few diehards who did not accept the new kingdom and preferred to go into exile, generally people who were very compromised with the Bourbon kingdom: military, intellectuals and politicians. The industrialists all stayed. Not taking the oath meant the

[253] Although the last Bourbon stronghold, Civitella del Tronto, surrendered on 20 March 1861.

loss of all their possessions. So, after the capitulation of Gaeta on 13 February 1861, Ernesto swore allegiance to the new king, Victor Emmanuel, for the sake of his sons. The latter moved to Rome for a few years and in 1867 dissolved the Bourbon government in exile. Francis II moved to Paris in 1870 and then to Austria, where he lived in poverty for the rest of his life. He would recover the confiscated property in exchange for renouncing his claim to the throne, which he never accepted until his death in 1894.

Ernesto remained on good terms with him, who understood the reasons for swearing allegiance to the new ruler. After 1870, he made several private visits to the exiled Bourbon court. André-Isidore recalls that the Lefèbvres remained on good terms with the previous rulers, especially the Bourbons, while they did not have the opportunity, at least until the beginning of the following century, to establish special relations with the Savoy, who visited the great paper mills of Isola. Meanwhile, the international coalition against the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies made it clear not only that the change of regime was inevitable, but also that England and the Kingdom of Savoy would not stop: the Savoy wanted Rome.

Years of distance

Immediately after the unification, Ernesto, although formally part of the new kingdom, decided to leave Naples for a while to avoid, with three small children, the chaos of the change of regime that plagued the capital and its surroundings for months. Some of the Savoy generals, such as General Cialdini, did not hesitate to carry out summary executions and massacres to maintain control of the cities. Ernesto left for Paris with his family at the end of July 1862. He had rented a large flat on the first floor of the Maison Giroux, on the Boulevard des Capucines, in the centre of the new Paris, the modern boulevards that Haussmann had built, transforming the face of the city in a project that began in 1852 and would end in 1870: the modern, airy Paris of large

boulevards, suitable for rolling traffic and the movement of troops.

The opposite of the Naples of narrow streets, which in recent years has increasingly been seen as a city of easy riots and 'bad air'. The Paris of those years was also a city of huge building sites, looking to the future. Compared to Naples, it was growing enormously, benefiting from the development of the northern European routes.

The Boulevard des Capucines at the time when the Lefèbvre lived there for a long time, in the building on the right-hand corner.

At that time Teresa was pregnant with her fourth child. They all went to Paris: Carlo, Flavia and Francesco, the maids, the cook, the governesses and the servants. The usual caravan of about fifteen people that followed the Lefèbvre's long journeys. He also rented a large apartment with several rooms on the second floor to accommodate

possible guests.[254] Everything was in place for repeated stays in the Parisian capital, the first of which lasted just under a year. It was then that Carlo began to regard Paris as the city best suited to his life and aspirations, and to despise Naples.

When André-Isidore met him there at the beginning of September 1860, the apartment had already been furnished and the relatives had been there for over a month. The cousin devoted a few pages of his memoirs to the chaotic situation in Italy between 1859 and 1862, without going into too much detail. He comments more on French politics, explaining his anti-Republican sympathies and his dislike of the Second French Empire, which began in 1852 with the seizure of power by Louis Napoleon Bonaparte (1808-1873).

On 14 September 1862, Ernesto asked his cousin, who had just returned from London where he had visited the Great Universal Exhibition, to be godfather to his unborn child who came into the world exactly two months later, on 14 November: it was a girl and she was called Giulia.[255] By a strange twist of fate, this was the same day that his aunt Flavia had died 19 years earlier. A few days later, Ernesto witnessed the death of an old friend who had helped his father at the beginning of his career: the 86-year-old Maurice Duval, who died in Paris in September 1862. The grandson of an important official of Louis XVI, he had generously provided for the future of Pierre Lefèbvre's children and had been a faithful visitor to the Lefèbvre house in Paris, in the rue du Mont Blanc, until 1805, and then to the salon of Madame Récamier. He also visited the country houses of André-Isidore's father in Marolles and the Château de la Brûlerie.[256] André-Isidore also reproduces a series of letters written by his father at the beginning of the 19th century, which testify to the interest and importance of this official, who passed unscathed from the Monarchy to the Empire and

[254] AB XIX 4482, vol. VII, p. 185.
[255] AB XIX 4482, vol. VII, pp. 208-209.
[256] AB XIX 4482, vol. VII, pp. 211-212.

was made a Baron of the Empire by Napoleon I. Still disgraced by Napoleon's dethronement, he was reinstated in various positions in the successive governments of the Restoration and the Second Empire.[257]

On 4 February 1863, André-Isidore and his wife made an appointment with the Lefèbvre family in Lyon for a trip to Naples. However, only Ernesto and his eldest daughter Flavia, almost 13 at the time, showed up at the appointment in Lyon, because Francesco had fallen ill.[258] This circumstance reminded André-Isidore of the death of Charles's son Léon in Lyon when his little brother Ernesto was only 12 years old. At Teresa's request, Dr Cerise (probably Cérise) assured her that the little boy would be able to withstand a trip to Besançon, where the family was to visit the Grand relatives, but no further. There they would assess the situation. They arrived in the capital of Franche-Comté, where the child was diagnosed with croup, "often fatal in children". Croup (as it is still called in clinical practice) is in fact an acute laryngitis with a dry cough and fever, caused by a virus. The decision taken by the doctor and Lefèbvre was the wisest one at the time: cancel the trip, keep the child warm until he recovered. At that time, without antibiotics, it could take weeks before there was any hope of recovery. So they rented several rooms at the Grand Hôtel in Besançon and waited.

Ernesto, haunted by bad memories, went to visit his brother, who had been buried in the Loyasse cemetery since 1826. He took Flavia with him and showed her the tomb of his beloved elder brother, whose happy games he remembered. In the days that followed, they parted company: André-Isidore bade farewell to his relatives to return to Grenoble, where he lived at the time; while Franz was being cared for at the Grand Hôtel with his mother, Ernesto, Flavia and Carlo set off

[257] AB XIX 4482, vol. VII, pp. 213-222.

[258] AB XIX 4482, vol. VII, p. 226. Francesco was the youngest son but became 3rd Count of Balsorano on the death of his father due to the contumacy and absence of his brother who had meanwhile taken refuge in Paris. The genealogies of the type www.famiglienobilinapoletane.com that therefore show Francesco as the eldest because he was the 3rd Count of Balsorano are incorrect.

for Naples, as certain business could not be postponed.[259] During a stopover, he received a telegram informing him that his son had to have an operation on his trachea, which had been perforated; the laryngitis had become so severe that the child was unable to breathe.

Ernesto immediately turned back and reached Besançon with his son Carlo, while Flavia was sent to Grenoble by André-Isidore to spare her the trauma. On this occasion, André-Isidore tells us that the girl was born on 8 October 1850.[260] Flavia is often described by contemporaries as beautiful, sweet, intelligent and able to impress everyone she meets. Her stay in Grenoble with her aunt and uncle lasted over a month, from the end of February to the end of March. The Lefèbvres, on the other hand, remained in Besançon until mid-April 1863, much to their discomfort, at the Grand Hôtel, where, according to her cousin, they were ill. The latter noted something else of great interest for future developments, which we will have to take into account: François, known as 'Franz', had a very weak respiratory system and was easily taken ill. His parents, especially his mother, were always worried about him, and this continued throughout his youth. In André-Isidore's opinion, this meant that Franz was allowed vices that others did not have. Franz would take advantage of his state of health to ruin his character and indulge in a capriciousness that made him seem "like certain nobles".[261]

Before leaving Besançon, the Lefèbvre family attended the wedding of a cousin of André-Isidore, Marie Grand, daughter of Eugénie and Hubert Grand, who was to marry a magistrate of the Imperial Court of Besançon, Monsieur Saint-Ange. The ceremony took place on the 14th of April and attracted all the important people of Franche-Comté and even distant relatives of the Lefèbvre family. Perhaps the modest Flavia (Denise Monique Flavia Lefèbvre), her father's last sister, who lived 50

[259] AB XIX 4482, vol. VII, pp. 223-224.
[260] AB XIX 4482, vol. VII, p. 225. This is probably the only source that gives information on Flavia Lefèbvre's birth as Neapolitan birth extracts are nowhere to be found (my query to the Office of the Civil Status of Naples, Historical Archives, detached section; years 1840-1860, October 2012).
[261] XIX 4482, VII, p. 226.

kilometres from Besançon in Dole (French Jura), was also there. The next day, 15 April, Teresa and her son left for Naples.

It is no coincidence that Denise Flavie is mentioned here, because later that year, in 1863, Ernesto received the news of her death. Her story was different from that of most members of the large family: at the age of 18, after the death of her father Pierre in 1808, she had been entrusted to a Madame Dubetier in Dole, where she had lived for a few years. This was to be a temporary arrangement: sooner or later Denise would marry. But because of her isolation and her way of life, she never married.

Since 1805, Dubetier had run a boarding house in Arbois, some thirty kilometres south of Dole, which she eventually took over from Denise Flavie. The latter had lived on a modest salary as a waitress. After a few years, her brother-in-law Hubert Grand, Denise Gabrielle's husband, had obtained a better position for her and Charles paid her a pension of 800 francs a month. However, she preferred to continue living the life she had always led and refused to leave the small village where she had become a woman. Very religious, she had once devoted herself to prayer and decided not to marry. Her only distraction was a yearly visit to her sister Eugénie in Besançon as long as she lived.

Denise Flavie, who had lived a quiet and contemplative life in Arbois, "returned to God on 10 September 1863, leaving us to ponder how to approach Him", according to André-Isidore, who suggests that she was buried in the small cemetery of Arbois. A very small cemetery, but famous for containing the remains of Louis Pasteur's father, whose family came from this very village.

A famous ascent at the Boulevard des Capucines

There is evidence that the Lefèbvres were still in Paris in October 1863. On 4 October, at the mouth of the Boulevard des Capucines, their employee Fernand Montgolfier took part in an ascent by the photographer Nadar (Gaspard-Félix Tournachon, 1820-1910). A second ascent was made from the Champ de Mars on 16 October.[262]

It's hard to imagine a coincidence: Fernand's presence, the ascent in front of the Maison Giroux, rented by the Lefèbvre family for the whole year. We cannot be sure, but the Lefèbvre family was probably among

[262] XIX 4482 vol. VIII, pp. 13-17.

the crowd photographed in the large clearing. Also in 1892, one of the Montgolfier heirs, who lived in the Villa Louise next to the Forme, then abandoned by the Lefèbvre family, attempted a balloon ascent from the garden of the Palazzo Lefèbvre, which was still owned by the family. This time it went wrong: the balloon fell and several Montgolfiers were injured. The aftereffects lasted for months and Amédée's elderly wife was in critical condition for a long time.

A series of curious prints show Nadar alone, with his wife or with a camera, immortalised on the Boulevard des Capucines on the occasion of his ascent. However, these pictures were taken later, in the studio, and not *en plein aire*.

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