



BOUND BY BOOKS

Giovacchino Guasconi as book agent between the
Dutch Republic and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany
(1668-1692)

MA Thesis Book and Digital Media Studies

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INTRODUCTION

During the last years of the reign of Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany – from 1670 until his death in 1713 – the Florentine court faced the inevitable decline of the Medici dynasty.¹ Cosimo's zeal to stimulate industrial and technological innovations and to revitalize commerce resulted in an enormous expansion of correspondence and interchange between the Tuscan court and Europe in the 1660s. Once he came to power, Cosimo developed an interest in merchants who operated in the largest cities of Europe. Given the fact that the Grand Duke had a great fascination for the Dutch Republic, following his double stay there in 1667/1668 and 1669, the importance of Tuscan merchants in Amsterdam outweighed that of Medici traders in other European capitals. Among the scarce surviving correspondence of seventeenth-century Florentine merchants in the Low Countries, the most interesting may be that of Giovacchino Guasconi. During his tenure in Amsterdam as official agent for the Grand Duke, he wrote on average once a week to the Grand Ducal secretary, Apollonio Bassetti (1631-1699).

Guasconi's extraordinary correspondence is still largely intact and comprises 565 letters written between the years 1668 and 1692, which are to be found in the Medici Grand Ducal Archive *Mediceo del Principato* in the State Archive of Florence.¹ Moreover, newsletters, bills, reports on negotiations, price lists and freight lists of the Dutch East India company are also included. Together they form a source of major importance for the history of the Dutch Republic, in the sense that the letters describe precisely what was happening in the Republic in those years. This was a consequence of the order of the Grand Duke to Guasconi to report everything that seemed of interest to the Grand Ducal secretary. Nonetheless, so far no major study has been devoted to Guasconi and his activities in Amsterdam have gone practically unnoticed until now.²

¹ State Archive of Florence (ASF), Mediceo del Principato (MdP), inv. nos. 4260-4264, letters from Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti from 1667 to 1692. I have made transcriptions of all the letters written by Giovacchino Guasconi, as well as the responses of Apollonio Bassetti, comprising a total number of 565 Italian letters.

² The important role of Francesco Guasconi in Russia, brother of Giovacchino, has been stressed by M. Di Salvo in her book *Italia, Russia e mondo slavo: studi filologici e letterari* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2011), in which she discusses briefly the role of Giovacchino. The crucial figure of the agent within the early-modern (book) trade has not been unnoticed; cf. M. Keblusek, 'Book Agents, Intermediaries in the Early Modern World of Books', in H. Cools, M. Keblusek and B. Noldus (eds.), *Your Humble Servant* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2006), pp. 97-107 and M. Keblusek, *De weg van het boek* (Amsterdam: Vossiuspers UvA, 2004). Moreover, Guasconi's efforts to obtain paintings by Van Mieris and Dou have been described in the essays of F. Bacci: 'Misteria e grandezza del Miris', *Rivista Giornale del bordo*, 1 (1967-

The role of Giovacchino Guasconi as an intermediary between the cultural centres of Amsterdam and Florence, is the primarily focus of this study. However, when viewed in the broader historical context of Guasconi's services to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, it is important to note at this early stage in research that the role of an agent such as Guasconi was extremely varied. Therefore it was decided to select a particular theme from the correspondence, focusing only on the early-modern book trade between the Dutch Republic and Italy. The Dutch scholar and book scout Nicolaas Heinsius (1620-1681) plays a prominent role in this. As this study will show, Heinsius, as advisor and friend of the well-known Amsterdam printer Daniel Elsevier, was one of the most important contacts of Cosimo III.

A substantial part of this study is devoted to the transcriptions of Guasconi's letters. These documents enable to have a better understanding of the role of agents as Guasconi as active participants in the early modern process of cultural transfer. The present study can roughly be divided in two parts. The first part presents a short biography of the life of Giovacchino Guasconi, his network and activities. Next follows a description of the important role of Nicolaas Heinsius, focusing on his services for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and how his extensive network throughout Italy enabled him to provide these services. In the second part of this study – which consists of three chapters – a selection of Guasconi's correspondence is examined in more detail. The first chapters discusses the international interest for the famous Dutch Van der Hem library, showing Cosimo's interest for beautifully bound collector's items. The second chapter opens with information on Heinsius' famous and prestigious edition of the Virgil, the distribution of which sheds light on how books were dedicated and gifted in the seventeenth century. The last chapter focuses on Guasconi's efforts to obtain books from the auction of Heinsius' library, which was held in 1683 and drew much attention in the scholarly world.

1968), pp. 410-415 and 'Il Granduca antiquario e l'autoritratto di Gerrit Dou agli Uffizi', *Ibidem*, 2 (1968-1969), pp. 289-291.

PART ONE

GIOVACCHINO GUASONI AS CULTURAL AGENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC AND ITALY

“Devotissimo et Obbligatissimo servitore, Giovacchino Guasconi”

Your most devoted and obliging servant, Giovacchino Guasconi

Unfortunately, our understanding of the activities and life of Giovacchino Guasconi is greatly hampered by a lack of primary source material. This account of Giovacchino as the official agent of Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany, therefore, cannot be as complete as one would wish. The family archive was seriously damaged by the disastrous flooding of the Arno, the river that runs right through the city centre of Florence, in 1966 and is still in complete disorder and without an inventory. However, despite the chaos, one can clearly see the mass of documentation contained in the collection, which shows how complex and busy the trading company of the Guasconi family must have been.³ The Guasconi archive consists of three big shelves full of bound booklets, loose papers, letters and financial accounts. This collection will definitely be a valuable source to reconstruct the activities of one of the most successful international Florentine trading companies in the early modern period in more detail.

Fortunately, there are other sources that illustrate (fragments of) the life of Giovacchino Guasconi. This often fragmentary and sketchy information helps to understand the activities of Giovacchino Guasconi and how he fulfilled his role as the official agent of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany in Amsterdam.

1. *A short biography of Giovacchino Guasconi*

Giovacchino was born on May 9, 1636, to Carlo Guasconi and Lucrezia Franceschi (fig. 1). His father came from an old aristocratic Florentine family, carrying the title of marquis.⁴ The Guasconi family rose to prominence in Florence in the fourteenth century, when family members held important positions in the governance of Florence. Later, as was usual in many Florentine noble families, they gained great success and wealth through their trading activities.⁵ In Florence, members of the Guasconi family lived in old houses in the *Piazza Madonna degli*

³ Thanks to the kindness of Francesco Martelli of the State Archive of Florence, I was allowed to have a closer look in the Guasconi archive, which still has to be put in order and catalogued.

⁴ “Giovacchino di Carlo del cavaliere Alessandro Guasconi, e di Lucrezia di Carlo Franceschi”; Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, baptismal register, inv. no. 41, no. 73 (27 April 1636 – 11 May 1636) <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/battesimi/risultati_carte.asp> (22-04-2014) and ASF, Raccolta Sebregondi, inv. no. 2785.

⁵ V. Borghini, *Dell'arme delle famiglie Fiorentine* (Florence: Festina Lente, 1990), p. 73.

Aldobrandini, besides owning an enormous Renaissance villa in the *Via dei Tintori*, now in front of the National Library of Florence. The beautiful coat of arms of the family can still be seen today above the entrance (fig. 2).⁶

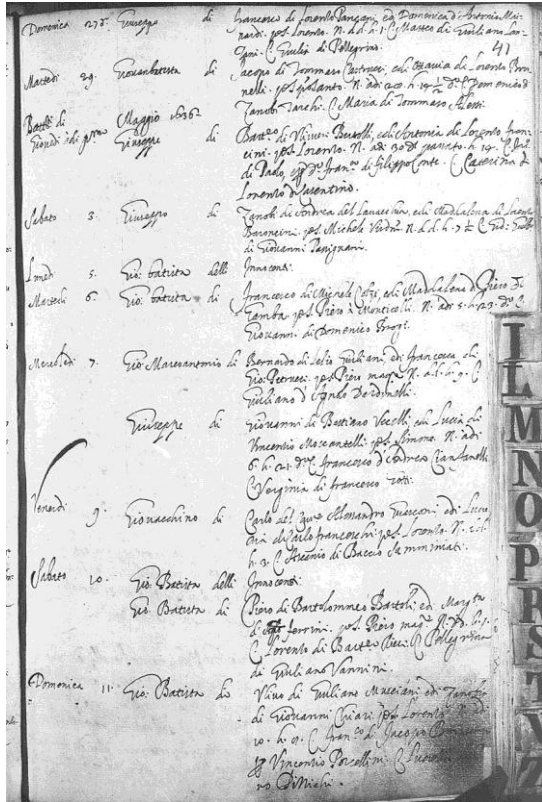


Fig. 1. Giovacchino’s record from the baptismal register of the Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, inv. no. 41, no. 73 (27 April 1636 – 11 May 1636).



Fig. 2. Coat of arms of the Guasconi family in the Via dei Tintori. Photo by the author, 2014.

Giovacchino must have died prior to 1699 because a letter was written to the court of Florence by Pieter Blaeu, at that time secretary to the Orphans’ Chamber in Amsterdam. In this letter, dated July 16, 1699, Pieter gives his permission for the departure of the widow and two children of Giovacchino to Florence:⁷

⁶ The coat of arms was attributed to Biagio Guasconi in 1378, who lived in the historic quarter *San Giovanni* in Florence. It consists of three black inverted V shaped stripes with in the middle a red cross, which is symbol of the Florentine people. ASF, Raccolta Ceramelli Papiani, inv. no. 40.

⁷ Giovacchino married a Flemish woman named Maria Hoshaver from Zurich, from which marriage he had two children: Carlo (?-1748) and Antonio (?-1747). Dates in the genealogical register of the Guasconi family in the State Archive of Florence indicate that he married in 1700 and died in 1748. However, more

Your Real Highness, the Most Illustrious Mr. burgomaster Witsen,⁸ our colleague, has left the other day to assist at the meeting of the States of Holland and West-Frisia in The Hague, where his illustrious secretary will in our name use the most effective means to obtain for the two children of the deceased Gioacchino Guasconi permission to leave from here to go to Florence with their mother by the safest means possible.⁹

When the permission was granted, Apollonio Bassetti thanked Blaeu and the Burgomasters of Amsterdam in November of that year, expressing his gratitude for

the permission that was given by Your Illustrious Lordship for the wife and family of the deceased Gioacchino Guasconi to return to these parts.¹⁰

The first trading company of the Guasconi family, named Samminiati-Guasconi, established itself in a position of considerable commercial power in the first half of the seventeenth century.¹¹ During the 1660s the activities were extended to several European cities by Carlo and Lucrezia's many children.¹² One brother, Alessandro, founded a company in Venice named Guasconi-Da Verrazzano, in association with his Florentine friend Niccolò Da Verrazzano.¹³ Other family members were present in the most important trading centres, including Madrid and Paris

reliable sources, such as the letter of Pieter Blaeu written in 1699, confirm that this is incorrect. Cf. ASF, *Raccolta Sebregondi*, inv. no. 2785.

⁸ Nicolaes Witsen (1641-1717), at that time burgomaster of Amsterdam.

⁹ "Altezza reale, Illustrissimo Signore Borgomastro Witsen, nostro collega partì l'altro giorno di qua per assistere all'Aija nell'adunanza de'Signori Stati d'Hollanda e Westvrisia, ove sua Segretaria illustrissima in nome nostro e da nostra parte si servirà de' mezzi li più efficaci per ottenere per li tutori testamentarij de' duce figliuoli del fù Gioacchino Gascuoni la licenza di lasciar con loro più sicurezza partir di qua a Firenze li detti figliuoli con la loro madre"; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 1036, *filza* 35/1036: S.A.S Repubbliche e Comunità 1694-1699, no. 161, letter from Pieter Blaeu to Apollonio Bassetti, 16 July, 1699.

¹⁰ "S.A. Signori Borgomastri e Reggenti della città d'Amsterdam li 3 novembre 1699 dall'Ambrogiana, Mi è stata di singolar compiacenza la favorita permissione concessa de V.S.ill.ma alla moglie e alla famiglia del fù Gioacchino Guasconi di ritornar in questi parti"; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 1036, *filza* 35/1036: S.A.S. Repubbliche e Comunità 1694-1699, no. 420, letter from Apollonio Bassetti to the burgomasters of Amsterdam, 3 November, 1699.

¹¹ Di Salvo, *Italia, Russia e mondo slavo: studi filologici e letterari*, p. 138.

¹² Guasconi's family tree shows that Carlo and Lucrezia had ten children: Anton Francesco, Alessandro, Gioacchino, Giovan Paolo, Andrea, Vincenzo, Lorenzo, Francesco, Ottavio and Filippo. ASF, *Raccolta Sebregondi*, inv. no. 2785.

¹³ Di Salvo, *Italia, Russia e mondo slavo: studi filologici e letterari*, p. 87.

(Vincenzo Guasconi), London (Bernardo Guasconi), Moscow (Francesco Guasconi) and of course, Amsterdam. Giovacchino, the third Guasconi brother, founded a company here with his other brother Lorenzo, who in 1678 transferred to Smyrna where he died in 1683.¹⁴ Giovacchino's precise motives for establishing a company in Amsterdam remain unclear, but it seems likely the success of the family firm meant that it was essential that the brothers established a base in Amsterdam. Thanks to the strategic and central position of Amsterdam, Dutch merchant men of the Dutch East India Company carried goods to a large number of cities in Europe and the East. Giovacchino and his brother lived in the commercial centre of Amsterdam, the 'Jordaan', in a house on the Rozengracht.¹⁵

Although it is impossible to pinpoint an exact date, or even the year in which Giovacchino and his brother Lorenzo established themselves in Amsterdam, they probably settled there in the 1660s, which coincides with the emergence of Florentine companies abroad *in accomandita*.¹⁶ In these kinds of partially limited liability partnerships, the trading company was divided into two categories: a 'sleeping' partner who shared the firm's liability according to the amounts that he had invested and who was entitled to a part of the profits proportional to his investment, while the partnership was run by an active merchant, who had unlimited liability despite controlling the minor part of the total investment.¹⁷ This mutual trust is the reason why the members of these partnerships were often relatives, as in the case of the company of Giovacchino Guasconi which was financially based in Venice. That the company of Giovacchino Guasconi was indeed *in accomandita* is attested in 1672 by a list drawn up by Cosimo III. Here the most important Tuscan trading companies in Europe are catalogued and the presence from 1670 onwards of Giuseppe Marucelli, Giovanni da Verrazzano and Giovacchino Guasconi ("Guasconi con interesse de' Guasconi e Verazzano di Venezia") as merchants *in accomandita* in Amsterdam is confirmed.¹⁸ The Grand Duke's efforts to revitalize commerce in order to prevent the decline of the Medici dynasty was probably the reason why Cosimo developed an interest in

¹⁴ ASF, Raccolta Sebregondi, inv. no. 2785.

¹⁵ The letters Guasconi received were addressed to "de Roozegraft tot Amsterdam."

¹⁶ P. Malanima, *La decadenza di un'economia cittadina, l'industria di Firenze nei secoli XVI/XVIII* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1982), pp. 130-131.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 133-138.

¹⁸ H.Th. Van Veen and A.P. McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries. An Introduction to the Sources and an Inventory of Four Florentine Libraries* (Firenze: Centro Di, 1985), p. 31. Moreover, letters from Guasconi to the Antwerp merchant Henri Francois Schilders show that Schilders could reimburse his costs to the company Samminiati-Guasconi in Venice: "le potete rimborsare in Venetia a Sam.ti e Guasconi"; Plantin-Moretus Archive, Bedrijfsarchief Henri François Schilders, inv. no. 69, no. 34, 10 May, 1666.

these *in accomandita* merchants, because they were stable and secure companies in a time characterized by economic crisis, epidemics and wars.¹⁹

The activities of Giovacchino in the Low Countries cannot be traced until the moment in 1664 when he started to correspond with the Flemish merchant Henri François Schilders (1638–1680).²⁰ This extensive correspondence, which is now in the archive of the Plantin-Moretus Museum in Antwerp, reveals the activities of Giovacchino before he became Cosimo's agent in 1673. His business mainly dealt with the acquisition and trade of oriental and occidental fabrics and carpets to Europe. Guasconi relied on the services of Schilders for the insurance of ships during the dispatch of goods to other European cities. For example, a letter to Schilders dated October 22, 1666 concludes as follows:

*Could you indicate to us how much we will have to pay for the insurance of merchandize which has been loaded in London and directed to Livorno, or to Lisbon, on the ship Salvator dell'Mondo. I have in mind merchandize belonging to free persons, for which you should make us a fair price, since the trip is short and the danger is negligible. Also, could you tell us how much we have to pay for the safety of a Hamburg ship which contains free merchandize which comes from Archangelsk and will go to Hamburg.*²¹

The letters contain exchange rates of that time, and complaints about the high rates and the low value of the imported fabrics, as a result of the ongoing wars with England and the many epidemics that plagued the Republic:

Because of the contagious diseases the prices won't increase, hoping that with the coming of the good season we will remain free of these illnesses and that the trade will recover

¹⁹ P. Malanima, *La fine del primato, crisi e riconversione nell'Italia del Seicento* (Milan: Mondadori, 1998), p. 55.

²⁰ Antwerp, Plantin Moretus Archive, Archief aanverwante families, familie- en bedrijfsarchief van Henri François Schilders en Sibilla Bosschaert (1657-1693), inv. no. 69, nos. 1-474, letters from Giovacchino and Lorenzo Guasconi to Henri François Schilders from 1664 to 1668.

²¹ "Piacciavi dirci cosa si pagherebbe di sicurtà costi sopra mercanzia che in Londra fussi caricata per Livorno, o' vero per Lisbona sopra la nave Salvator dell'mondo intendendo sempre mercantie attenente a persone libere, che per Lisbona massimo crederessimo si dovessi far un onesto prezzo, poi che il viaggio è corto, et il pericolo non è di gran consideratione. Così piacciavi dirci cosa costi si pagheria di sicurtà sopra nave Hamburgheese che con mercanzia libera venissero di Arcangelo in Hamburgho"; Plantin Moretus Archive, Bedrijfsarchief Henri François Schilders, inv. no. 69, no. 28, 22 October, 1666.

*again. If so, the prices of the Mexican silks will increase. Meanwhile, we will conserve our goods, awaiting orders that will be sent to us.*²²

Interestingly, Guasconi and Schilders rarely discussed services they provided to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Only one mention is made of providing the Tuscan prince with a timepiece and a monocle, which were sent by Giovacchino's relative Bernardo Guasconi in London.²³

It is not clear how Guasconi met Schilders, but he probably came into contact with the Flemish merchant through Francesco Feroni, Guasconi's predecessor as Cosimo's Amsterdam agent from 1653 till 1673.²⁴ Francesco Feroni (1614-1696), a merchant from Empoli, arrived in Amsterdam in the 1640s. He became very wealthy through his role as a shareholder of the Dutch West Indian Company and as an intermediary in the slave trade in the Spanish Indies. After his return to Italy Cosimo III made him Marquis of Bellavista and finance minister 'depositario generale' for the Tuscan court, using the merchant's experience in the Republic to work for Tuscany.

Schilders moved to Amsterdam in 1656, where he worked for three years as a pupil of Feroni. After his apprenticeship he went back to Antwerp from where he established, in 1660, a very prosperous commercial business and became one of the most important figures in the insurance world in the middle of the seventeenth century.²⁵

After 1668, Cosimo III called regularly on the services of Guasconi. The name of the Florentine merchant appears frequently in accounts from the early period of Cosimo's reign, in

²² "Ma per causa della malattia contagiosa non fanno agumentatione di prezzo vogliamo pero sperare che con l'approssimarsi della buona stagione resteremo liberi da detta influenza, et che il negotio ripigliera' il suo corso, in tal caso anco le sete messinese doveranno agomentare di prezzo, conservando in mentre la vostra balla in buona custodia per seguirne quanto in appresso ci ordinarete"; *Ibidem*, no. 25, 1 September, 1664.

²³ "Dalla gradissima vostra 16 del corrente intendiamo havevi riceuto l'occhiale et una scatoletta sigillata che sara l'orologia accennatovi per il Serenissimo Principe di Toscana"; *Ibidem*, no. 31, 19 January 1668 and ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4260, no. 562, letter from Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti, 11 January, 1668.

²⁴ P. Benigni, 'Francesco Feroni: da mercante di schiavi a burocrate nella Toscana di Cosimo III', in F. Angioloni, B. Becagli and M. Verga (eds.), *La Toscana nell'età di Cosimo III* (Florence: Edifir, 1993), pp. 165-183. See also H. Cools, 'Francesco Feroni (1613/16-1696). Brokers in Cereals, Slaves and Works of Art', in H. Cools, M. Keblusek and B. Noldus (eds.), *Your Humble Servant*, pp. 39-51.

²⁵ Henri François Schilders also corresponded with Apollonio Bassetti. The letters show that he also was responsible for the acquisition of paintings and books. ASF, MdP, inv. nos. 4260-4263, letters from Henri François Schilders to Apollonio Bassetti from 1667 to 1679. Cf. D. Van Camp, 'Onbekend maakt onbemind', *De Gulden Passer*, 87 (2009), pp. 25-31.

particular related to his *grand tour* in the Dutch Republic in the years 1667 and 1668.²⁶ The two men appear to have met for the first time on February 6, 1668 and afterwards met regularly when the Prince stayed in the United Provinces.²⁷ When Feroni suddenly left Amsterdam in 1673, Guasconi became the official agent of Tuscany and wrote on average once a week to Apollonio Bassetti, the Florentine Secretary of State from 1662 onwards.

Guasconi's chief responsibility with regard to the services for the Grand Duke was the acquisition of art, books and all sorts of other objects from the Republic and the East. These included diversities such as "monstrous plants which are half animal and half plant" and tulips²⁸, a slave from Muscovy, preferred for his "easy tempo and docile nature", and white feathered pheasants and horses.²⁹ The merchant's efforts to fulfill every wish of the Grand Duke are reported in detail in every letter he wrote to Bassetti. Guasconi also distributed Cosimo's gifts to dignitaries in the Dutch Republic. The most remarkable of these may well have been the very expensive Bolognese puppies Cosimo sent to Amsterdam by convoy, as a gift for the Amsterdam bookseller Pieter Blaeu. That four of the five dogs died during the trip, was, according to Guasconi, "a miserable situation".³⁰

So, the position of Guasconi became even more significant when Cosimo III made him official agent of the Medici court. Guasconi's responsibilities in the Dutch Republic increased; his correspondence reveal that he had personal contacts in the most prominent circles of the Dutch intellectual community, a network that he must have built up long before he became an official agent. Guasconi was acquainted with Dutch philologists such as Nicolaas Heinsius, Jacob Gronovius and Johannes Fredericus Graevius, politicians and diplomats such as Johan de Witt, Coenraad van Heemskerk, William Temple, Abraham de Wicquefort and Andreas Winius, booksellers such as Daniel Elsevier and Pieter Blaeu, and painters such as Frans van Mieris and Gerard ter Borch. Guasconi also called regularly on the help of other Florentine merchants living

²⁶ Mention of Guasconi is frequently made in the travel accounts of Filippo Corsini (partly transcribed in G.J. Hoogewerff, *De twee reizen van Cosimo de' Medici, Prins van Toscane, door de Nederlanden (1667-69)* (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1919) and Cosimo Prié (ASF, MdP, inv. no. 6384).

²⁷ "Poi fece introdurre li mercanti fiorentini, Marucelli, Verrazzani e Guasconi (...) alle 16 senti la messa e vi si trovarno i signori mercanti fiorentini." [And then he [Pieter Blaeu] introduced me to the Florentine merchants Marucelli, Verrazzano and Guasconi (...), at four o'clock he went to hear the mass where those Florentine merchants were also present]; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 6384, no. 230, diary of Cosimo Prié.

²⁸ "Sua Altezza piglierebbe volentieri i semi della pianta Boranets o sia Pecorina, che è un virgulto mostruoso, mezzo animale e mezzo pianta"; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 767, letter from Guasconi to Bassetti, 4 July, 1684.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, no. 667, 5 June, 1682.

³⁰ For the transcription of this letter see Chapter two, letter no. 1, pp. 29-30.

in Amsterdam, including Giovanni da Verrazzano³¹ and Giacinta del Vigna.³² Of course, establishing and nurturing a solid network of reliable contacts was of great use to Guasconi. He could draw on it to execute any request by his Tuscan patron, such as the acquisition of paintings and books, as will be shown in the following paragraph.

2. *Guasconi and the trade of art*

Perhaps the most revealing episode in the story of Giovacchino Guasconi's career is his role as intermediary for Medici art patronage. The Tuscan prince, during his *Grand Tour* in the Republic, guided by his agents Francesco Feroni, Pieter Blaeu and Nicolaas Heinsius, devoted his time mainly on visiting artists' workshops, cabinets of curiosities and map collections. When he returned in Florence, and became Grand Duke, he commissioned Guasconi to buy several art works from artists he had met during his stay in the Republic. Guasconi's letters reveal that he had difficulties with the Leiden portrait painter Frans van Mieris (1635-1681), spending considerable time and money on sobering up the artist, bailing him out of debts and begging him to finish his paintings on time. According to one letter the artist had been completely drunk when he came to deliver a painting named 'old lover':

*Last day the painter Mieris visited me, accompanied by a dozen men who supported him because of the sickness that dominates regularly in these parts.*³³

After he had put the painter to bed, Guasconi discovered that Van Mieris did not even have the painting with him, but that he had mislaid it in an inn.³⁴ Eventually, Guasconi did manage to obtain the painting and sent it to Tuscany by convoy courtesy of the Dutch East India Company.

³¹ ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4264, letters from Giovanni da Verrazzano from 1687 to 1689.

³² During Guasconi's later years as agent, Del Vigna became an important agent for Cosimo, performing almost the same tasks as Guasconi had done before him, as is shown by his 472 letters preserved in the State Archive of Florence; ASF, MdP, inv. nos. 4264-4265, letters from Giacinta del Vigna from 1689 to 1699.

³³ "Il giorno passato mi venne a trovare il signore pittor Miris, accompagnato da una dozzina di persone, che parte lo sostenevano per la malattia che ordinariamente si vede regnare in queste parti"; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 360, letter from Guasconi to Bassetti, 23 February, 1674.

³⁴ "Io, dopo haverlo lassato riposare qualche ora, venni in conoscenza come mi haveva portato il quadretto discorso dell'poeta Bridayode, quale haveva lassato qui in una osteria, che lo andai a ricevere"; *Ibidem*, no. 360, 23 February, 1674. The painting 'old lover' is referred to as a 'Bridayode'. Guasconi, however, had misunderstood the painter who hadn't depicted the literary author Gerbrand Adriaensz Bredero, but a

Van Mieris also had some financial problems, as is illustrated by a later letter from Guasconi that indicates that Van Mieris' wife, Cunera van der Cock, had come to Guasconi to ask for money to care for her household. She asked this without her husband's knowledge, because money "runs through his hands like water that cannot be stopped."³⁵ Although the painter had many difficulties to support himself and his family, this does not mean that he was always pleased to receive an order from the Grand Duke. On one occasion the painter disappointed the Grand Duke by refusing a commission to paint an episode from the life of the Jesuit Francis Xavier, whom Cosimo wished to be depicted with exotic plants and animals around him.³⁶ Van Mieris responded that he was only able to depict those things that he "can see in nature with his own eyes."³⁷ Still, Cosimo continued to admire his work, acquiring many paintings from him. In 1676 Cosimo ordered Guasconi to obtain the self-portraits of Van Mieris, Gerrit Dou and Gerard ter Borch for his collection of artist's self-portraits which was started by his uncle cardinal Leopold de' Medici.³⁸ The self-portrait of Van Mieris (1676) can be admired in the *Vasari Corridor* of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (fig. 3). A portrait of Dou (1658) can be found there as well, but it is uncertain if this is the same portrait as discussed in Guasconi's letters. Moreover, the painting 'Family Concert', which was ordered by Cosimo III in 1673 can be admired also in this museum (fig. 4).³⁹

scene described in one of his plays. O. Naumann, *Frans van Mieris (1635-1681), The Elder* (Doornspijk: Davaco publishers, 1981), p. 109.

³⁵ "Poi che tutto quello entra in mano dell'Miris va via come l'acqua forte quando non è fermata e niente vuol dare alla moglie"; *Ibidem*, no. 429, 5 April, 1675.

³⁶ *Ibidem*, no. 446, 28 June, 1675.

³⁷ "la sua vocazione è di dipingere cosa che con li suoi occhi ne possa vedere il natural"; *Ibidem*, no. 447, 19 July, 1675.

³⁸ "Mi comanda il Padrone Serenissimo di scrivere che vorrebbe i ritratti in piccolo delli tre famosi pittori di codeste parti: Miris, d'Haus ed altro di Deventer"; *Ibidem*, no. 463, 19 November, 1675.

³⁹ ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4261, no. 498ter, 4 August, 1673.



Fig. 3. Self-portrait of Frans Van Mieris, 1676
<www.culturaitalia.it/viewItem.jsp?id=oai:artpast.org:0900186879> (23-08-2014).



Fig. 4. Painting 'Family Concert', Frans van Mieris, 1675. <www.artchive.com/web_gallery/F/Frans-van-Mieris/the-painter-with-his-Family-1675.html> (23-08-2014).

3. *Business news and the establishment of trade relations*

To keep the Grand Duke informed about the situation in the Dutch Republic, Guasconi included many newsletters from Dutch informants such as Nicolaas Heinsius and Abraham de Wicquefort. The regular secret reports about the country provided by the diplomat Wicquefort (1606-1680), kept the Grand Duke informed on the course of wars and the negotiations that followed. Wicquefort had been commissioned by the States General to write a national history of the country and in the process, he used his position to start a secret news agency.⁴⁰ However, as time passed by it became very difficult for Wicquefort to obtain the news he wanted. When the Grand Duke asked Guasconi the reason for this, Guasconi replied:

I took the occasion to visit him and when I talked to him I indicated that his newsletter was not so full of news as previously. He answered that in the past it was easier to penetrate the state affairs since these were managed by the various governmental bodies of the Dutch Republic. But because now everything is operated by the Prince of Orange, pensionary Van

⁴⁰ Keblusek, 'Book Agents, Intermediaries in the Early Modern World of Books', p. 104.

*Beuningen and few others, it is impossible to obtain the news which I indeed confess to have received in greater amounts in the past.*⁴¹

In time, Wicquefort's agency was discovered by the authorities.⁴² In 1674 the Grand Duke received a letter from Guasconi, explaining indeed that Wicquefort was accused of selling state secrets and that the charges against him would be very severe:

*With the letter of Your Illustrious Lordship of the 12th I have received the letter from monsieur Heinsius which I have sent as usual. Up until now, I have not received the regular pamphlets from the friend in The Hague. I doubt that I will receive any this week since I have heard that, after the return of the Prince of Orange, he has been made a prisoner and all the manuscripts which were found in his house have been confiscated. Some are saying that he has written against the elector of Brandenburg, others say against France.*⁴³

⁴¹ "Io nelo compiacenza subitamente e nell'istesso tempo poi presi occasione di visitarlo et in discorso li motivai la riflessione costi veniva fatto che detto suo foglietto non fussi copioso delli buoni avvisi conforme seguiva per il passato sopra, che mi rispose che nell'tempo passato era molto più facile il penetrare le cose di stato poi che le medesime venivano maneggiate dall'corpo delli Signori Stati ma che al presente che tutto viene operato dall'signore Principe di Oranges, pensionario signore van Boningen e pochi altri, li è impossibile haver quelle notitie che in passato confessa haver riceute piu copiose"; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4261, no. 498ter, 4 August, 1673.

⁴² Keblusek, 'Book Agents, Intermediaries in the Early Modern World of Books', p. 104.

⁴³ "Con la di V.S.ill.ma 12 stante mi perviene la lettera per monsieur Hensio al quale al solito l'ho trasmessa e fin all'presente io non ho riceuto il foglietto solito dell'amico dell'Aija che mi presuppongo ne anco in questa settimana si riceverà poi che il medesimo sentesi (subito l'arrivo fatto nell'Aia il Principe d'Oranges) questo l'habbi fatto arrestar prigione e fattoli prender tutti li scritti e carte che in sua casa si trovavano. Alcuni dicono per haver esso scritto contro l'elettor di Brandenburgho, altri ragguagliato la Francia"; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 426, 29 March, 1675.

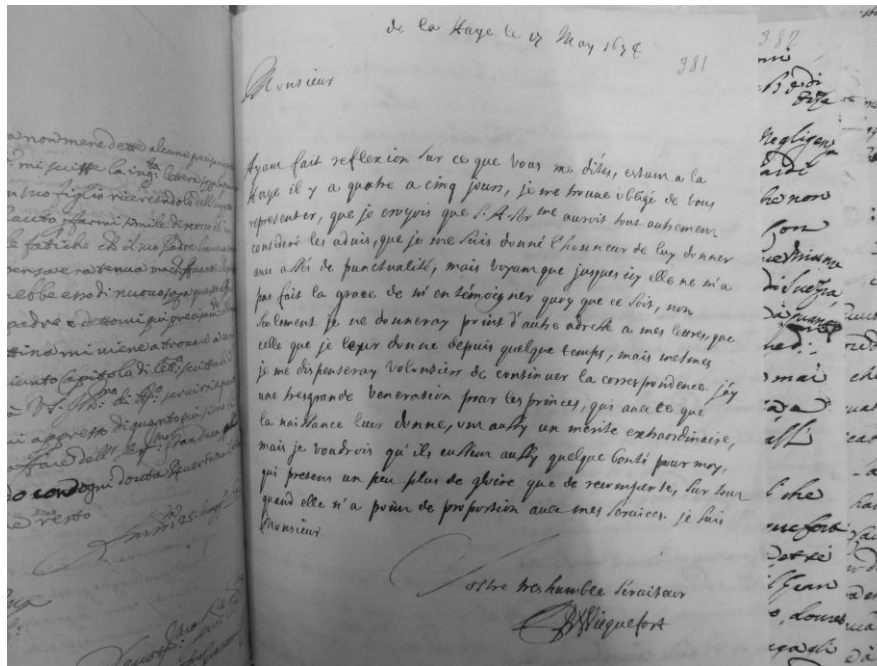


Fig. 5. A letter of Wicquefort to Cosimo III; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 311, 17 May, 1674.

Guasconi's political news from the Dutch Republic, which was scant at first, became very detailed after the imprisonment of Wicquefort. In his letters, Guasconi mainly discusses the political situation in Western Europe, in particular the ongoing wars between the Dutch and the English and French, characterized by the many sea battles in which Michiel de Ruyter (1607-1767), one of the most famous and most skilled Dutch admirals, played a prominent role.

Up to this point the discussion has been about the importance of the Dutch Republic to Cosimo III from a cultural perspective. But under Cosimo, in particular, the Republic was also vital to the Grand Duke to revitalize Florentine commerce with the East. During the 1680s Cosimo attempted to use his relations with the Dutch Republic to establish economic ties with China, by way of Russia. In the 1670s he had already asked Nicolaas Heinsius to procure a description of the route to China for him. Heinsius approached the residing Dutch diplomat in Moscow, Andreas Winius, who wished to make the trip.⁴⁴ However, Winius did not go and

⁴⁴ "Alcuni anni sono sendo qua stato il signore Niccolo Hensius B.M. [Buona Memoria] in qualità di deputato straordinario per la parte degli Stati Uniti delli Paesi Bassi (...) et havendomi diverse volte qui pregato si come di poi d'Olanda scrittomi d'inquerire et ancora descrivere qualche cosa toccante il viaggio fatto dalla nostra gente nel famoso regno di China" [Some years ago, Nicolaas Heinsius came here as extraordinary representative of the Dutch Republic and he has asked me to search for something which describes the trip made by our people to the famous reign of China]; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 726, letter from Andreas Winius to Apollonio Bassetti, 9 May, 1683.

Heinsius died shortly thereafter.⁴⁵ In the following year, Cosimo made a second attempt. He knew that Giovacchino had a brother in Moscow, Francesco, who had established a stable enough basis there to export caviar and other goods to Italy.⁴⁶ In 1682 Cosimo enquired if Giovacchino, together with his brother, could procure him some descriptions of the trade routes between Muscovy, the principality of Moscow, and China.

*His Highness would like Francesco to do everything to find a report which describes the voyage by land from Moscovy to China, supposing that at the court, at the embassy or among some merchants who have made the trip, there ought to be one. As the text will be written in the Muscovite language, with the report you should send us also a vocabulary of the same language.*⁴⁷

Guasconi's brother agreed to ask Andreas Winus again about the description, since by then he had already made the voyage. From that moment, a correspondence between Cosimo III, Giovacchino and Andreas Winus began. Not Francesco Guasconi, but Giovacchino took care of the delivery of the letters to Tuscany and he was also responsible for the translation of the letters from Dutch to Italian. Winus was indeed able to send the Grand Duke a map of the areas in question.⁴⁸

Moreover, from the 1680s onwards a fairly regular flow of information on the political situation of Russia reached Florence. The Moscow uprising of 1682 was the subject of a series of detailed letters Giovacchino sent to the Grand Ducal secretary. Moreover, he asked his brother Francesco to deliver a letter written by Cosimo to the Csar to promote commercial exchange between the ports of Archangel and Livorno. However, the request failed because the Grand

⁴⁵ Van Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, p. 38.

⁴⁶ Francesco Guasconi was born on October 20, 1640 in Florence. Opera di Santa Maria del Fiore, baptismal register, inv. no. 42, no. 53, 18 October 1640 – 21 October 1640; <http://archivio.operaduomo.fi.it/battesimi/risultati_carte.asp> (22-04-2014).

⁴⁷ "Vorrebbe inoltre Sua Altezza che il Francesco facesse ogni diligenza di trovar qualche relazione, in cui sia descritto il viaggio di terra dalla Moscovia alla China supponendosi che alla corte dovranno esservene o d'ambasciatori o di mercanti che l'abbin fatto e che saranno scritte in lingua moscovita, onde colla relazione dovrà mandare anche un dizionario della stessa lingua"; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 677, letter from Bassetti to Guasconi, 22 September, 1682.

⁴⁸ "Ingiunto viene un piego io riceuto di Mosco dal signore Francesco mio fratello quale mi dice contenere la descrizione dell'viaggio da detto luogho fino alla China, tala descrizione lui ha ottenuto con il mezzo dell'signore Andreas Winus"; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 713, letter from Guasconi to Bassetti, 9 July, 1683.

Duke had written the title of the Csar incorrectly, which would be very offensive to them.⁴⁹ After the necessary corrections and advice by Giovacchino, the letter was sent anew to Russia.⁵⁰ In the end, the Grand Duke managed to establish diplomatic relations with Russia, through Andreas Winius and the Guasconi brothers, naming Francesco his official envoy to the court in Moscow, while the Csar regularly sent a travelling ambassador to Florence. However, Cosimo was never able to make Livorno the centre for trade with Russia and China.⁵¹

China and Russia continued to interest the Grand Duke, not only for commercial reasons, but also for the exotic flora of these parts. Winius, for example, sent the Grand Duke a Chinese radish, which is described in the *China ... Illustrata* of Athanasius Kircher, a book which Cosimo had already received in 1667 by means of Pieter Blaeu.⁵²

Much more could be said about the varied activities of Guasconi, but attention now should go to Guasconi's task relating to the international book trade, in particular his role as intermediary between the Dutch philologist Nicolaas Heinsius and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

4. *Guasconi and the book trade; collaborations with Nicolaas Heinsius*

Guasconi took care of the dispatch of many books for the Grand Duke of Tuscany. He was mainly responsible for the coordination of letters and packages on behalf of Nicolaas Heinsius and Daniel Elsevier, but there also were occasions in which Guasconi arranged the shipment of books by the Utrecht professor Johannes Georgius Graevius. He usually sent the books by sea; transport by land only occurred during exceptional circumstances such as the Anglo-Dutch war or a long period of frost. Transport by sea was more economical than by land, and it was also safer.⁵³ The war between England and the Dutch Republic caused many problems for the trade; merchant men full of goods were often confiscated by English and Dutch warships. On one occasion the Grand Duke also suffered this fate: a cargo of his goods, including mathematical

⁴⁹ *Ibidem*, no. 753, 14 April, 1684.

⁵⁰ *Ibidem*, nos. 723-757.

⁵¹ F. Bacci, 'Francesco, Cosimo III e Pietro il Grande', *Giornale del bordo*, 3 (1969-1972), pp. 434-441 and Van Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, p. 38.

⁵² "Questa è la radice cinese detta ghinseng della quale ne fa mezione il P. Athan Kirchero nella sua *China illustrata*"; *Ibidem*, no. 730, letter from Winius to Cosimo III, 9 May, 1683; and A. Mirto and H. Th. Van Veen (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu, lettere ai Fiorentini. Antonio Magliabechi, Leopoldo e Cosimo III de' Medici, e altri, 1660-1705* (Amsterdam/Maarssen: APA-Holland University Press, 1993), p. 260. Kircher's *China monumentis ... illustrata* had appeared in Amsterdam with Johannes Janssonius van Waesberge and Eliseus Weyerstraten in 1667.

⁵³ "poi che per acqua come ella sa non ci sono grandi spese" [by sea, as you know, there will be less cost]; UBL, BPL 1923, no. 12, letter from Giovacchino Guasconi to Nicolaas Heinsius, 2 April, 1675.

instruments, five portraits and a number of English books loaded on a ship heading in the direction of Constantinople, was taken by a Dutch convoy from Zeeland.⁵⁴ Coenraad van Heemskerck (1646-1702), ambassador of the Dutch Republic, helped Guasconi to discover what had happened to the goods for the Grand Duke. He discovered the following:

*The box with books should not be lost, because they were registered on the list of goods of the sequestrated ship of Constantinople.*⁵⁵

The paintings and the instruments had been sent to The Hague, but the box with books could not be found, so Heemskerck concluded:

*Since there is nothing missing other than the books, the damage is reduced to nothing.*⁵⁶

Soon after, however, he discovered that the books had been returned to England by mistake and were now in the hands of an English friend in London, to whom he wrote a letter directly.⁵⁷ Luckily for the Grand Duke, the English friend of Heemskerck was willing to send the books to Tuscany.⁵⁸ To thank Heemskerck for his efforts, Guasconi suggested the Grand Duke to give him some Tuscan delicacy:

*I imagine that all Flemish people love sweet wine, such as for example, the white wines Moscadello and Trebbiano di pescia, which was available here and still was very nice. Selling the wine is a difficult business here and the Flemish gentlemen find red wine very strong to their taste. Also, it would not displease him to send him some sausages.*⁵⁹

⁵⁴ ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4261, no. 478, letter from Guasconi to Bassetti, 24 February, 1673.

⁵⁵ “La cassetta de libri non doverebbe esser perduta poiche si vede notata nel registro stampato in Zelandia di tutte le robe comprese nel carico della nave predata mercante d’Costantinopoli”; *Ibidem*, no. 482, 11 April, 1673.

⁵⁶ “Si che non mancando altro che i libri, il male si riduce a poco”; *Ibidem*, no. 485, 2 May, 1673.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, no. 489, 14 April, 1673.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, no. 487, 12 May, 1673.

⁵⁹ “(...) regalarli vini mi pare che questi tutti fiamminghi amino li vini amabili cioè li bianchi come sarebbe moscadello, trebbiano di pescia ne è qui venuto ancora dell’buono et altri moscadelli poi che la vendita molte volte si guasta et il vino rosso viene per lo più ruspio alla bocca delli sudetti signori fiamminchi e includervi qualche buon salsiccio non li dispiacerà”; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4261, no. 494, 16 June, 1673.

5. *Nicolaas Heinsius and the Italian world of learning*

Guasconi arranged the dispatch of books for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany together with Nicolaas Heinsius. For that reason, the life and career of Heinsius, and the way his Italian network of contacts functioned will be briefly discussed. Nicolaas Heinsius (1620-1681) is predominantly remembered for his magnificent library and his philological studies of editions of Ovid, Claudian and Virgil. He was the son of the famous poet and Leiden classicist Daniel Heinsius (1580-1655). Unlike his father, Nicolaas maintained an extensive network of contacts throughout Europe, in particular in Italy. Remarkably, however, apart from the 1949 study of Frans Blok of Heinsius' role as book scout for Queen Christina of Sweden, no other major study has so far been devoted to his varied scholarly and cultural activities.

Heinsius' philological work and book agency within Europe's learned community made him one of the most respected Dutch intellectuals in the seventeenth century. That he was indeed considered as such, is demonstrated by the many letters written to him by the most prominent Italian scholars of the time. The Italian historian and satirist Gregorio Leti (1630-1701), who spent a large part of his life in England and the Dutch Republic, and whose publications were all listed in the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*⁶⁰, considered him as "one of the most prominent men of letters of the Universe".⁶¹

The professional background and network of Heinsius was certainly a decisive factor in his success as a book agent for Cosimo III. The central position he held in the *Officina Elseviriana* in Amsterdam, as advisor and friend of Daniel Elsevier, was for many years an important reason for his prominence in the Dutch book world. Moreover, he had been employed by Queen Christina of Sweden to search in various European countries, and especially in Italy, for rare editions and manuscripts for her impressive library. During his stays in Florence and Rome in 1648 and 1651 Heinsius took part in the intellectual life of the city, expanding his elaborate network of learned and literary contacts all over Italy.⁶² He became acquainted with the scholars Giovan Battista Doni, Valerio Chimentelli, Andrea Cavalcanti, Paolo and Ottavio Falconieri, Paolo Boccone, Antonio Magliabechi, Cassiano dal Pozzo, Lorenzo Magalotti, Carlo Dati and Angelico Aprosio. Moreover, he was made a member of the famous *Accademia della Crusca* by Leopold de' Medici and was elected president of the *Accademia degli Apatisti*, both literary academies in Florence. During meetings of the latter, he was responsible for proposing related linguistic problems for discussion.

⁶⁰ M.L. Ambrosini and M. Willis, *The Secret Archives of the Vatican* (New York: Barnes & Noble Publishing, 1996), p. 138.

⁶¹ "Uno de' maggiori letterati dell'Universo"; Leiden University Library (UBL), inv. no. Bur F 7, letter by Gregorio Leti to Nicolaas Heinsius, n.d.

⁶² F.F. Blok, *Nicolaas Heinsius in dienst van Christina van Zweden* (Delft: Ursulapers, 1949), pp. 137-149.

During Cosimo's stay in the Dutch Republic Heinsius acted as his guide. The prince was impressed by his Latin eloquence and flattered by his laudatory poems.⁶³ It is no exaggeration to say that Cosimo's enthusiasm for the cultural and intellectual achievements of the Dutch Republic was largely aroused by Heinsius. Later, when the Prince became Grand Duke, Heinsius sent him detailed information about the political and intellectual developments in the United Provinces. The many letters which the Grand Duke exchanged with Nicolaas Heinsius, were enclosed weekly in Guasconi's letters.⁶⁴ Besides receiving news of the Republic, Cosimo also enlisted the help of the Dutch scholar when buying books. In this international exchange of ideas, books and news, Nicolaas made good use of his extensive network of contacts in the Republic and in Italy. Friendship and exchange of gifts were at the core of the relationships between Heinsius and his numerous Italian correspondents, who shared his eagerness for learning. Heinsius was like a spider in a web of communications and it is this aspect of his career that enabled him to exchange and disseminate ideas in the wider community of intellectuals and to remain up-to-date on the latest publications in Italy. Fortunately, an enormous amount of this correspondence has survived in Leiden University Library. Many of the letters to Heinsius contain long lists of publications which were being printed in Italy.⁶⁵ Cassiano dal Pozzo, fellow of the Roman *Accademia dei Lincei* and famous for his 'museum' of natural historical drawings, wrote to him on the achievements and the publications of the *Accademia* and also discussed publications regarding medals for Queen Christina.⁶⁶ Carlo Dati, secretary of the *Accademia della Crusca*, helped Heinsius to find manuscripts and rare editions for Christina's library.⁶⁷ Paolo Falconieri, architect and mathematician of the Medici court, informed him about the latest scientific experiments in Florence, the *Saggi di naturali esperienze*.⁶⁸

The Italian correspondence also demonstrates the remarkable relationship that existed between Nicolaas Heinsius and Antonio Magliabechi, Cosimo's librarian. Through him Heinsius came to know which books the Grand Duke desired. The manner in which Magliabechi addressed his Dutch colleague was flattering, praising him for his intelligence and admiring his

⁶³ Hoogewerff, *De twee reizen van Cosimo de' Medici*, pp. 73-74.

⁶⁴ The correspondence presently consists of 388 letters, which are preserved in the Medici Grand Ducal Archive of Florence; ASF, MdP, inv. nos. 4260-4263, letters written by Nicolaas Heinsius to Apollonio Bassetti from 1667 to 1681.

⁶⁵ Lists of books are present in the letters of Antonio Magliabechi, Angelico Aprosio, Cassiano dal Pozzo and Paolo Falconieri.

⁶⁶ UBL, Bur Q 16, nos. 1-106, letters from Cassiano dal Pozzo to Nicolaas Heinsius from 1649 to 1652.

⁶⁷ UBL, Bibliotheca Publica Latina (BPL) 1920, nos. 1-15, letters written by Carlo Dati to Nicolaas Heinsius from 1647 to 1660.

⁶⁸ UBL, Bur Q 16, nos. 1-5, letters written by Paolo Falconieri to Nicolaas Heinsius from 1676 to 1679.

work. Although Magliabechi did achieve much renown in the Dutch Republic, he appeared to understand very well the proprieties of his position.⁶⁹ The wish of Magliabechi to establish a relationship with Heinsius becomes evident from a letter he sent on October 9, 1671.

Magliabechi was very grateful for having received a letter from Heinsius:

Oh! I was so glad that I received your most kind, most humble and most elegant letter from your Illustrious Lordship of the 15th past, which I have read, read again, kissed, kissed again and held with affection to my chest. Many years I have nurtured the desire to dedicate myself to be a servant of the pen, which deep in my heart I have always been. From being a little child, I don't know how, I was fortunate to have your beautiful Latin poetry at hand. I was never tired of reading them, always discovering new beauties within them.⁷⁰

Magliabechi also sent him books, many of which are listed in the catalogue of the sale of Heinsius' library, which was held shortly after his death in 1683. In another letter Magliabechi writes:

Regarding [the edition of] Valerius Flaccus, with comments by Battista Pio, Your Illustrious Lordship does not need to look any further, since I have it among my books and will definitely send it to you, not only because you need it, but also because you will preserve it forever in your library, forever grateful to me for receiving this gift.⁷¹

⁶⁹ A. Goldgar, *Impolite learning. Conduct and community in the Republic of Letters, 1680-1750* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995), pp. 152-163.

⁷⁰ "Io per la mia parte con ogni maggiore ingenuita' le confesso, che sono molti anni che nuttivo un' ardentissimo desiderio di dedicarmele servidore con la penna, come le sono stato sempre col cuore, da quel tempo, che essendo piccol fanciullo, per mia buona sorte, mi capitarono non so come alle mani, le sue bellissime, e Latinissime Poesie, le qual non mi sazziauo di leggere, scoprendo sempre in esse nuove bellezze"; UBL, Bur F 8, no. 8, letter written by Antonio Magliabechi to Nicolaas Heinsius, 9 October, 1671.

⁷¹ "Circa al Valerio Flacco col commento di Battista Pio, V.S.ill.ma non ne cerchi piu, poiche io l' ho tra miei libri, onde lo mandero infallibilmente non perche ella se ne serva solamente, ma perche in eterno lo conservi nella sua libreria, supplicandola vivamente a farmia grazia di riceverlo in dono"; *Ibidem* no. 4, 15 January, 1671. *Argonautica* di Gaio Valerio Flacco (1523). This book can be traced in the auction catalogue of Heinsius' library from 1682; *Bibliotheca Heinsiana sive catalogus librorum quos magno studio & sumptu, dum viveret, collegit vir illustris Nicolaus Heinsius* (Leiden: J. Du Vivié, 1682), p. 97 (no. 139). The catalogue is digitized by Google and online available:

<http://books.google.nl/books/about/Bibliotheca_Heinsiana.html?id=P2Y7AAAAcAAJ&redir_esc=y> (12-08-2014).



Fig. 6. Portrait of Nicolaas Heinsius, engraved by Abraham de Blois (1679-1717)
<<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/RP-P-OB-26.668>> (20-08-2014).

The correspondence between Magliabechi and Heinsius also contains references to the value of the services Heinsius offered to Cosimo, who was willing to give Heinsius an allowance of one hundred *piastre* and a room in the Palazzo Vecchio, so that Heinsius could live in Florence without spending money.⁷²

As librarian of the Medici family Magliabechi knew more than anyone which books Cosimo desired. On February 20, 1673, Magliabechi responded to a letter of Nicolaas Heinsius in which he had asked which books Cosimo III wanted to have for his private library:

Answering to your enquiry, I inform you that Cosimo has few books, in particular modern books. Grand Duke Cosimo did order to make a beautiful salon with book-shelves, but when he thought of filling it with excellent books, his father [Ferdinand II de' Medici], died. He then was busy with the governance of the city. However, his intention has always been to accumulate many books. Included in this letter is a small note of a few books, which, together with an infinite number of many others books, he does not have. He possesses no modern books and lacks many antiquarian books. He has graciously said a hundred times that when he was in France, and other places, he did not want to buy books, because I wasn't there. Once he returned, as Your Illustrious Lordship is aware, Grand Duke Ferdinand II died and he needed to care for other things. Concerning the bindings, if Your

⁷² "In oltre gli ha adesso donate cento piastre, e gli fara' dare le stanze per abitare senza spendere in Palazzo Vecchio"; *Ibidem*, no. 12, 15 February, 1673.

*Illustrious Lordship finds them second hand, leave them in the manner in which they are already bound. You can either have bound, or leave unbound the other books that you buy. You can therefore send them as you wish, bound or unbound. To fill the paper, I will inform you about some literary news from Italy, however in a rushed and confused manner, since I have many other things to do.*⁷³

This letter illustrates and defines a number of themes and realities central to the provision of books for the library of Cosimo III. Interestingly, Cosimo's wish to build up a collection of books started quite late in his life, after the death of his father Ferdinand de' Medici. It is interesting that Heinsius could decide whether he sent the books in sheets (*in albis*) or had them bound before they were sent to Tuscany. When Heinsius had books to be sent to Tuscany, he called on the help of Guasconi who sent them with the first convoy leaving for Livorno. Thanks to his good and logical network of other merchants and shippers, the transport of these books and catalogues to Italy was facilitated. When the books arrived, normally after five months, the books were brought to the *lazaretto* in order to undergo disinfection against possible diseases. Once out of quarantine, the books were sent to the Grand Duke, where they became part of his private collection.

⁷³ Ferdinand II de' Medici died in 1670. "Rispondendo a quello che si è degnato di domandarmi, le avviserò, come il Serenissimo Gran Duca ha pochi Libri, e particolarmente de' moderni. Fece fare un bellissimo vaso, con iscaffali, ma quando appunto aveva pensiero di empierlo di ottimi libri, morì il Serenissimo Gran Duca Ferdinando, onde gli bisognò badare alle cose del governo. Il suo pensiero però è sempre stato, ed è, di accumulare un gran numero di Libri. Qui inclusa troverà una piccola nota di alcuni pochi libri, che con un numero innumerabile di altri gli mancano, ne moderni non ne ha quasi alcuno, e degli antichi gliene mancano moltissimi. Quando fu costà in Francia, ed in altri luoghi, non volle comprar libri, perche io non ero seco, come cento volte mi ha benignamente fatto l'onore di dirmi, e quando fu tornato, come Vosta Signoria Illustrissima sa morì quasi subito il Serenissimo Grand Duca Ferdinando, onde bisognò che Sua Altezza Serenissima badaste ad altre cose. Circa alle legature, Vostra Signoria Illustrissima quelli che trova usati gli mando nella maniera che son legati, e gl'alti che comprerà sciolti potrà mandare sciolti. In somma, gli mandi come vuole, o legati o sciolti. Per empire il foglio, le avviserò qualche nuova letteraria della nostra Italia, ma però in fretta, ed in confuso, come mi necessitano a fare le mie occupazioni"; *Ibidem*, no. 13, 20 February, 1673.

PART TWO
THE CORRESPONDENCE OF GIOVACCHINO GUASCONI
Editorial criteria

In the following chapters, a selected part of Guasconi's correspondence with Apollonio Bassetti is presented. As previously stated in the introduction, each chapter represents a specific event in the book world and is accompanied by an introductory note. The original 30 selected letters presented below are to be found in the State Archive in Florence, and have been transcribed directly from the original documents (fig. 7). A letter from the Leiden University Library is also included.

When compared to the letters Guasconi wrote to the merchant Henri François Schilders, which seem to have been written in a hurry, characterized by its many mistakes and cancellations, the letters to Bassetti are written in very sophisticated, legible handwriting. This is certainly related to the status of the letter: the recipient was no less than the representative of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Also, the letters which he wrote to Nicolaas Heinsius are written in the same elegant hand.

The use of capitals, as well as punctuation and (word) order of the phrases differs from modern use. In the transcription I have left this unchanged, to characterize the Florentine language which was still developing in the seventeenth century. The abbreviations have been omitted from the text and the full name used in order to facilitate the reading process. Each letter is preceded by a short summary of the content, accompanied by the line numbers of the Italian transcription, which are in brackets in front of the summary.



Fig. 7. The five *filze* in the State Archive of Florence;
ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4261-4265.

1. BOOKS AS COLLECTOR'S ITEMS: THE BIBLIOTHECA HEMMIANA

In 1671, Daniel van Papenbroeck, a well-known Flemish Jesuit hagiographer, made the acquaintance of Laurens and Hendrik van der Hem. According to Van Papenbroeck, the brother where “both book lovers, more so than anyone else”. In addition, they possessed “the special quality that they wished to have not only the best books but also the most beautifully decorated ones, for which they spared no expense”.⁷⁴ The *Bibliotheca Hemmiana* was one of the richest seventeenth-century collector's libraries in the Dutch Republic. But before taking a closer look at Hendrik's library, a few words about him are called for.

Surprisingly little is known about Hendrik van der Hem (1614-1673). The name of Van der Hem is, by the way, more often associated with Laurens van der Hem (1621-1678), Hendrik's brother. He was responsible for the assemblage of the so-called *Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem*, which is said to be the most beautiful and sophisticated atlas ever composed and is now kept at the National Library of Austria in Vienna.⁷⁵

Originally from the hamlet of Den Hem, near Broek in Waterland, Hendrik van der Hem's ancestors moved to Amsterdam in the late fifteenth century. In the course of the sixteenth and especially in the seventeenth century the family status readily rose through trading activities and marriage. Hendrik was born in 1614, as first son of Ysbrand van der Hem and Gertruy Spieghel, daughter of the well-known poet-merchant Hendrik Laurensz Spieghel.⁷⁶ Although the commercial activities of Hendrik were relatively modest, it should be clear that he was in a position to profit from the success of his father, who had enriched the family and to a large extent established the wealth on which his children lived. Hendrik practiced law as early as 1646 and matriculated in the University of Padua as late as 1651.⁷⁷ When he established himself in Amsterdam he initiated an impressive book collection in which almost every field of study was represented. Hendrik was no scholar, but rather a rich laymen with wide-ranging interests who happened to have a taste for beautiful editions and richly illustrated books. So, it was the quality of the books above all to which Hendrik van der Hem's library owed its renown. Subsequently, many foreign collectors were attracted to the auction of the library, which took place after his death in 1673.

⁷⁴ E. de Groot, *The World of a Seventeenth-Century Collector. The Atlas Blaeu-Van der Hem* ('t Goy-Houten: De Graaf Publishers BV, 2006), p. 63.

⁷⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 59.

⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 22.

⁷⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 40.

That foreign interest in the sale of Hendrik van der Hem's library indeed existed, is evident from the correspondence between Giovacchino Guasconi and the Florentine secretary between 9 March 1674 and 4 February 1675. Van der Hem's library was probably brought to Cosimo's attention by Pieter Blaeu, who functioned as Cosimo's guide and advisor in Amsterdam during his *Grand Tour* in the Dutch Republic in 1668. Although they only paid a visit to the house of Laurens van der Hem, where Cosimo admired his map collection, including "drawings of various cities, coasts and places in India, and excellent miniatures and other geographic, universal and particular maps all hand drawn, down to the minutest imaginable detail", it can be assumed that the enormous library of Hendrik also attracted the interest of Cosimo.⁷⁸ It is not surprising therefore, that Cosimo was particularly interested in this auction and that he ordered Guasconi to buy quite some books for his collection. According to the correspondence, it appears that Guasconi coordinated the transmission of the auction catalogue on behalf of the Amsterdam bookseller Daniel Elsevier and Nicolaas Heinsius.⁷⁹ As stated in the first part of this study, the social position of Heinsius, his professional background as a former book scout for Queen Christina of Sweden and his contacts in the political and intellectual establishment meant that he was the first person to know that the important collection of Van der Hem was to be auctioned off.⁸⁰ These factors were advantageous to the Grand Duke because competition, in particular from Pieter Blaeu, was keen. According to the correspondence between Pieter Blaeu and the

⁷⁸ Hoogewerff, *De twee reizen van Cosimo de' Medici, Prins van Toscane, door de Nederlanden* (Amsterdam: Johannes Müller, 1919), p. 76 and L. Wagenaar (ed.), *Een Toscaanse Prins bezoekt Nederland. De twee reizen van Cosimo de' Medici 1667-1669* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bas Lubberhuizen, 2014), p 81.

⁷⁹ An unique exemplar of the auction catalogue has survived in the National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague (KB), shelf number KW Verz Cat 15705, *Biblioteca Hemmiana sive catalogus, rarissimorum & vere insignium in omni materia, facultate & lingua, Librorum, Instructissimae Bibliothecae, Clarissimi & Consultissimi Viri, D. Henrici vander Hem, JC., Quorum Auctio habebitur Amstelodami, in aedibus defuncti, in platea vulgo de Heere-gracht, bij de Huddestraat, die 7. Maji 1674. Hora Nona ante, Secunda autem post meridiem praecise* (Amsterdam: Hendrik and Dirk Boom, 1674). This copy of the catalogue, which consists of more than 600 pages, lists all the names of the buyers, including many major booksellers such as Johannes van Someren and Pieter Blaeu, the auction master himself, Hendrik Boom and even Hendrik's brother Laurens. Nicolaas Heinsius had ordered the bookseller Joost Pluijmer to buy the volumes. However, an examination of the auction catalogue shows that Pluijmer did buy many more items than only these 33 books for Cosimo, which makes it impossible to identify the volumes.

⁸⁰ Cf. Blok, *Nicolaas Heinsius in diens van Christina van Zweden*, pp. 59-89.

Grand Duchy of Tuscany,⁸¹ he wrote to the bibliophile Antonio Magliabechi about the impending sale of Hendrik van der Hem's library, stating that he was:

*taking the liberty of sending the Grand Duke a catalogue of the books of the late Hendrik van der Hem, which contains numerous interesting items. They are going to be sold on the 7th of May. The size of the catalogue is such that, in order to avoid unnecessary expense, I have sent it only to the Grand Duke, not to you.*⁸²

But Blaeu had not yet finished his letter when he heard from the heirs that someone else had already provided the court with the catalogue.⁸³ Interestingly, an examination of a letter of Nicolaas Heinsius to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany informs us that it was Nicolaas Heinsius who was a step ahead of him.⁸⁴ Apollonio Bassetti responded to this letter in April 1672 (fig. 8), saying that:

*I have indeed heard from Guasconi that he has received the catalogue of books which are going to be sold in Amsterdam. But still he hasn't sent it to me. When it will arrive here I will see directly if there is something interesting for my collection and I will let you know my will.*⁸⁵

⁸¹ The correspondence between Pieter Blaeu and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany can be found in the State Archive of Florence. It belongs to the same collection as the letters of Giovacchino Guasconi. ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4260, nos. 167-184.

⁸² Mirto and Van Veen (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu: lettere ai fiorentini* p. 215.

⁸³ *Ibidem*, pp. 215-216.

⁸⁴ Already in March 1674, Nicolaas Heinsius wrote to Cosimo about the impending sale of Hendrik's library; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 20, letter of Heinsius to Bassetti, 8 March, 1674.

⁸⁵ "Il Guasconi mi da ben cenno d'haver riceuto l'indice de libri da vendersi in Amsterdam, ma per ancora non melo ha trasmesso: subito che mi arrivi non lascerò di far vedere ciò che possa esser approposito per il mio Gabinetto, et avviserò la mia volontà, che continuamente ha motivi di essere più tenuta all'amorevolezza di Vostra Signoria, la quale gode di mostrarsi così ufficiosa, ed attenta in ogni cosa che mi riguardi."; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 22, letter from Bassetti to Heinsius, 9 April, 1674.

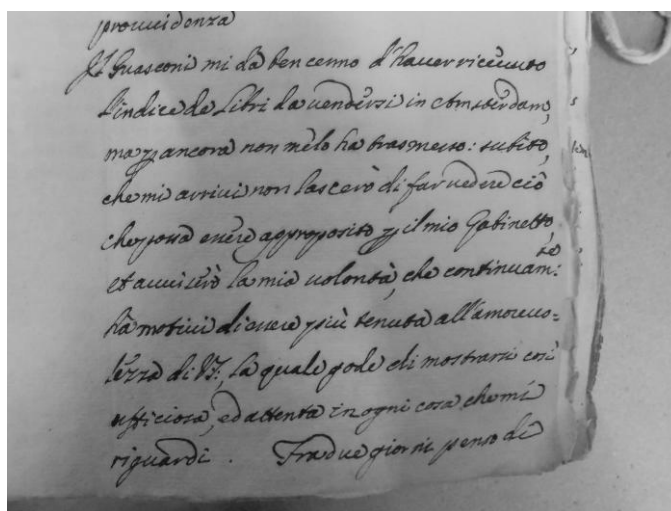


Fig. 8. ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 22, letter from Bassetti to Heinsius, 9 April, 1674.

Cosimo ordered Guasconi and Nicolaas Heinsius to buy the volumes he desired and the books were ordered immediately through the help of the bookseller Joost Pluijmer. Although his name is not mentioned in the following exchange of letters between Giovacchino and Apollonio Bassetti, a French letter from Giovacchino Guasconi to Nicolaas Heinsius, which, surprisingly, can be found in the collection of Leiden University Library, indicates the name of the person who bought the books (fig. 9):

*Sir, I have received from Pluijmer the books for which I have paid over 321 francs. From these books I will be awaiting the order of the Serene Grand Duke, to whom I will give also this notice.*⁸⁶

The story of Cosimo's interest in the *Bibliotheca Hemmiana* is vividly recounted in the letters Apollonio Bassetti received in March 1674 from his agent Guasconi. Although Nicolaas Heinsius advised the Grand Duke not to buy many books, because of the high prices, the Grand Duke ordered 33 volumes for which he paid over 321 florins.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ "Monsieur je receu par le mains de cet monsieur Pluijmer un cataloghe de livres par lequel je luij paije 321 franc, e 3 souls, et des mesmes livres je ne observe asteur les ordres du Serenissime GrandDucque de Toscane au quel je n'en donne aussi l'advis, et demeurant. Toujours prompte a vost comandemens je suis"; UBL, BPL 1923, no. 3, letter from Guasconi to Heinsius, 14 June, 1674.

⁸⁷ "Vostra Signoria [Heinsius] ha giudicato di non dover comprar per mio conto, che alcuni pochi de libri della biblioteca Hemmiana"; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 44, 28 May, 1674" and ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 45, letter from Heinsius to Bassetti, 2 May, 1674.

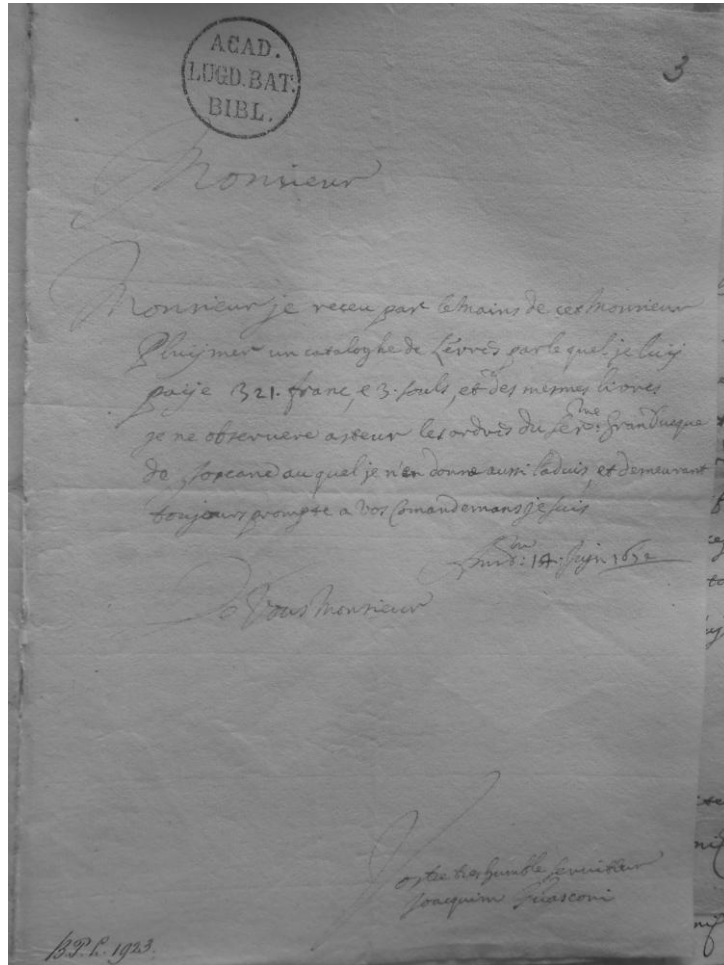


Fig. 9. UBL, BPL 1923, no. 3, letter from Guasconi to Heinsius, 14 June, 1674.

1.

**From Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), letter no. 364
9 March, 1674**

[1-3] Guasconi is pleased that his letters to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany are delivered on time and he hopes that he will also receive their letters, because there were many problems with the mail for which he does not know the reason.

[4-8] He writes that he has received a catalogue of books of a certain lawyer named Van der Hem which are going to be sold in May. It is not clear to him who brought the catalogue but he presumes that it was Daniel Elsevier, on behalf of Nicolaas Heinsius. He will find out who brought it to him, so that he knows what do to with it because the volume is too big to send by mail.

[9-15] Guasconi is awaiting the orders of Cosimo III regarding the dispatch of the painting of Van Mieris. He had many problems with the painter, but he has finally succeeded in obtaining the work, which is now ready to be sent to Italy. However, freezing weather hinders all forms of transport. Finally, he mentions that he has no more news to announce than is described in the enclosed pamphlet from The Hague.

9 marzo 1673 ab incarnatione⁸⁸

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Con piacer sento per la cortissima di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 12 febbraio passato come le mie lettere cominciassero a capitare in debito tempo ch spero pure di costa continueranno in avvenire mentre come dettoli non saprei ritrovarne la cagione della falta.

Ivi è stato portato a casa un alfabeto di libri⁸⁹ che verranno venduti in maggio prossimo di un tal signore Avvocato Vander Hem B.M.⁹⁰ ma non so chi melo habbi trasmesso quantunque mi figuri sia seguito dall' signore Elzevir⁹¹ per ordine dell' signore Hensio⁹² che procurerò intenderne il proprio per sapere come per esso contenermi sendo un volume assai grande per trasmetterlo con la posta pure osserverò quelli ordini che il sopradetto signore Hensio mi significherà.

⁸⁸ The letter is dated 9 March, 1673, but this should be read as 1674, owing to the Florentine use of beginning the New Year "ab incarnatione", on 25 March, the day consecrated by the Catholic Church to the Archangel Gabriel's annunciation to Mary. Cf. A. Cappelli, *Cronologia, cronografia e calendario perpetuo: dal principio dell'era cristiana ai nostri giorni* (Milano: Ulrico Hoepli Editore Libraio della Real Casa, 1998), p. 64.

⁸⁹ The auction catalogue of Hendrik's library is entitled: *Biblioteca Hemmiana sive catalogus, rarissimorum & vere insignium in omni materia, facultate & lingua, Librorum, Instructissimae Bibliothecae, Clarissimi & Consultissimi Viri, D. Henrici vander Hem, JC., Quorum Auctio habebitur Amstelodami, in aedibus defuncti, in platea vulgo de Heere-gracht, bij de Huddestraat, die 7. Maji 1674. Hora Nona ante, Secunda autem post meridiem praecise* (Amsterdam: Hendrik and Dirk Boom, 1674).

⁹⁰ B.M. stands for Buona Memoria or *good memories*, which was used to indicate the death of the person.

⁹¹ Daniel Elsevier.

⁹² Nicolaas Heinsius will certainly have had ties with the Van der Hem family. Laurens van der Hem went on a Grand Tour in France and Italy where he probably visited Heinsius in Florence in 1645. Cf. De Groot, *The World of a Seventeenth-Century Collector*, p. 41.

Gia haverà inteso quanto passò con il pittor Miris per il suo quadretto quale trattengo appresso di me attendendo suoi ordini per come spedirlo a Sua Altezza⁹³ giusto il denotatoli con la mia precedente confermandoli come il detto Miris intende che va di dappertutto a risisco dell'Serenissimo Granduca; Intanto detto quadretto non perde tempo perché qui continuano li geli che impediscono anco poterlo trasmetter in forma alcuna.

Di novità non ci è di merito più di quello vede per il foglietto dell'Aija⁹⁴ et io a Vostra Signoria recordando la mia devota prontezza in servirla. Li bacio le mani

Amsterdam 9 marzo 1674

Devotissimo et Obbligatissimo servitore
Giovacchino Guasconi

2.

From Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), letter no. 363
16 March, 1674

[1-6] *This week, Guasconi has not received any letters from Bassetti. This letter announces that the catalogue of books, which he has mentioned in a previous letter, was indeed sent by Nicolaas Heinsius. The book was badly bound and unrefined, which meant it was a big volume. Elsevier has now improved the volume so that it can be sent to Florence.*

[6-9] *Guasconi has no news to announce. He writes that the season continues to be severe and that all the cold of the present year was felt in this full month.*

⁹³ Guasconi had much difficulty obtaining the painting *The Old Lover* by the famous Leiden painter Frans van Mieris (cf. chapter one, pp. 11-12). Cosimo had ordered Guasconi to buy the painting on 23 January, 1674 (ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 354).

⁹⁴ Guasconi coordinated the transmission of secret newsletters on behalf of the diplomat Abraham de Wicquefort (1598-1682). De Wicquefort was commissioned by the Dutch government to write a national history. He established a secret news agency and provided – among others – the Tuscan court with secret political news from the Dutch Republic, for which he received a lot of money. The agency was discovered by the authorities and after a trial which lasted 37 days he was imprisoned for life (cf. *Business news and the establishment of trade relations*, pp. 13-14). Giovacchino and Lorenzo Guasconi are mentioned in the trial on the 26th of April 1675: “te weten aan den Groothertog van Toscane door middel van het adres van de H.H. Guasconi, kooplieden te Amsterdam.” See D. Everzwijn, *Wicquefort en zijn proces* (Leiden: Gebroeders van der Hoek, 1857), pp. 51-52.

[10-13] He complains that the mail from The Hague has not yet arrived because of the snow. He therefore went to the post office to bring the letters himself. If he receives the pamphlet from The Hague he will send it out separately.

16 marzo 1673 ab incarnatione

Illustrissimo Signore mio e Padrone Osservandissimo

Manco questa settimana di lettere di Vostra Signoria illustrissima e questa servirà per dirli come l'alfabeto delli libri⁹⁵ io mentionatoli la passata mi venne fatto consegnar dal'signore Hensio, ma allora era legato malamente e senza ripulire ch faceva un gran volume, adesso però il signore Elzevir lo ha messo al pulito, e giusto che esso per parte dell'signore Hensio suddetto mi ha risposto gielo trasmetto con la presente posta havendone fatto un pieghetto a Vostra Signoria illustrissima soprascritto ch grato mi sarà intendere gli sia pervenuto a dovere. Di novità non ci è cosa degna da partecipare la stagione continua rigidissima ch si puol dire che tutta la freddura dell'presente anno si è fatta sentire nell'corrente mese io rassegno a Vostra Signoria illustrissima il solito della mia osservanza, e resto.

Amsterdam 16 marzo 1674

D'Vostra Signoria illustrissima a chi soggiungo come siamo sull'spedire delle lettere per coste parti e la posta dell'Aija a causa delli geli, e neve fin ora non è comparsa si che risolvo portar le mie lettere alla posta, e se potrò avanti che la medesima posta haver il foglietto⁹⁶ verrà a parte, di nuovo la reverisco.

Devotissimo servitore obligatissimo
Giovacchino Guasconi

⁹⁵ The auction catalogue of Hendrik van der Hem's library.

⁹⁶ The newsletter of Abraham de Wicquefort.

3.

From Apollonio Bassetti to Giovacchino Guasconi
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), response no. 362
9 April, 1674

[1-4] Apollonio Bassetti confirms that he has received his letter in which a letter from Nicolaas Heinsius was enclosed. However, the letter was from an older date and should the courier arrive today with other letters, these will be confirmed as well.

[5-9] The catalogue was indeed sent by Nicolaas Heinsius, who had already written about it to Cosimo. However, it cannot be decided which books are interesting to the Grand Duke without seeing the catalogue. On receipt of the catalogue, the books will be decided and the precise orders indicated to Guasconi.

[10-19] The Grand Duke wishes to have eight or a maximum of ten female or male pheasants with white feathers, reared in Westphalia. Guasconi has to obtain them with the help of friends or correspondents that he has in that region. The same order will also be entrusted to Giovanni Gherardo in Bremen, who is a correspondent of the Grand Duke. Guasconi should correspond with him and if possible, send the pheasants with the first convoy to Italy.

[20-23] Concerning the painting of Frans van Mieris, Guasconi should understand from previous letters what to do with it. Bassetti mentions that the court of Florence will be replaced after two days, but that he will remain his servant.

[24-26] Bassetti explains that he has received the catalogue of Van der Hem and that Cosimo will see if there is anything interesting in it for him. He concludes that he has neither received other letters from Heinsius nor has he received the pamphlet from The Hague.

Al signore Giovacchino Guasconi Amsterdam li 9 aprile 1674 di Pisa

L'ordinario passato mi postò la di Vostra Signoria illustrissima de 9 scorso col pieghetto annesso di Monsù Heinsio per il Serenissimo Granduca nostro Signore, et erano di data vecchia una settimana secondo il solito. Se il corriere che oggi dovrebbe arrivare ne arrecherà altre saranno accusate in più di questa.

Toccante l'indice di libri venditi che era venuto in sua mano, ne scrive a Sua Altezza l'istesso Heinsio, ma non pare che si possa deliberar niente senza vedere, mentre non si sa quali volumi facessero a proposito per l'Altezza Sua, e se intanto Vostra Signoria illustrissima haverà trasmesso l'indice sudetto all'arrivo di esso si riconosceranno le materie, e se ne dirà a Lei il preciso.

Havrebbe desiderio il GranDuca de entrare in razza di certi fagiani di piuma tutta bianca, che fanno in Vesfalia, e mi comanda però di scrivere a Lei che vegga se potesse sortirle di buscarglene coll' mezzo di amici, e corrispondenti che ella tenesse in quella provincia et basterebbero otto o diece al più fra femmine, e maschi volendo Sua Altezza vedere se riuscisse di propagarli in questo paese. Sappia Vostra Signoria illustrissima che la medesima richiesta si fa questa sera al signore Giovanni Gherardo Wrantz a Tevenfelt residente Cesarro in Brema corrispondente dell'Altezza Sua et li si dice se s'intenda con lei a cui dovrà in ogni caso mandare i fagiani, et esser rifatto d'ogni spesa, potrebbe ella dunque parimente carteggiare seco, senza lasciar di farne anche dal suo conto le diligenze, onde se sia possibile col primo convio che parta di costa per Italia, ne resti Sua Altezza.

Toccante il quadro consegnato a Vostra Signoria illustrissima dal pittor Miris⁹⁷, ell'haverà già inteso dalla miei precedenti come dovrà contenersi, ond'hora non occorrendomi soggiungerle a tal conto di vantaggio. Le dico, che fra due giorni si restituirà la corte a Firenze, dove, et in ogni luogo mi haverà ella servitore di vera osservanza;

P.S. doppo scritto arriva l'ordinario e con l'altra sua lettera di 16 scorso mi porta in piego a parte il volume dell'indice consaputo che Sua Altezza farà considerare per vedere se vi sia cosa per lui. Non si ricevono già altre lettere dell'Heinsio, ne' meno il foglio dell'Aija.⁹⁸

4.

From Apollonio Bassetti to Giovacchino Guasconi
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), response no. 366
17 April, 1674

[1-4] Bassetti has enclosed a list of books, from the printed catalogue of Van der Hem's library. Cosimo wants to buy the indicated volumes, but Guasconi has to ensure he discusses this with Elsevier and Heinsius.

[5-9] However, if time is limited, so that it will be difficult to arrange a meeting with Heinsius, Guasconi should organize everything with Elsevier. If the book prices have risen a lot, the Grand Duke will no longer wish to purchase the volumes.

Al signore Giovacchino Guasconi. Amsterdam li 17 aprile 1674 di Firenze

P.S. nell'aggiunta nota havrà Vostra Signoria illustrissima un estratto di libri,⁹⁹ cavato dal'catalogo stampato che a nome di Monsù Heijnsio, e dell'Elzeviro che ella mi mandò con

⁹⁷ Frans van Mieris.

⁹⁸ The newsletter of Abraham de Wicquefort.

⁹⁹ Unfortunately, this list is not present in the Medici archive.

l'ordinario precedente, Sua Altezza comprerà volentieri tutti i volumi segnati in questo istesso foglio, però dice che ella ne sia coll'Elzeviro, e se ne intenda anche con l'Heinsio, al quale se ne scrive;¹⁰⁰ ma se il tempo della vendita si stingesse, si che Vostra Signoria illustrissima non potesse provvedere con la direzione di Monsù Heinsio, vole l'Altezza Sua che ella con l'Elzeviro faccino nel'miglior modo, mentre però i prezzi non fussero esorti tanti, nel qual'caso Sua Altezza saprebbe partirsene la voglia, e questo e quanto devo prescrivere a Vostra Signoria illustrissima in tal conto.

5.

From Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), letter no. 373
3 May, 1674

[1-5] Guasconi confirms that he has received the letter of the 9th of the previous month. Cosimo desires to transport the Van Mieris painting by land, so Guasconi has decided to address the painting to Carlo Zenone in Milan, to whom he has written also a letter. Guasconi is awaiting for the wish of the Grand Duke so that he can discuss together with Carlo Zenone the most convenient way for the delivery of the painting.

[6-14] Guasconi will see if he manages to obtain the white pheasants from Westphalia with the help of Giovanni Gherardo Wrintz in Meuenfelt, resident of Bremen. He will retribute all the expenses he will make. Guasconi believes that he manages to send the pheasants with the next convoy. He supposes that the convoy will not leave within two months, because it has not made any decision whatsoever. However, he hopes that this will be known as soon the fleet will set sail.

[15-21] Guasconi confirms that he has received a letter of Nicolaas Heinsius as well as the list with the books the Grand Duke desires to buy. He will discuss it together with Elsevier and Heinsius. If he is not able to have contact with Heinsius he will entrust the advice of Elsevier.

3 maggio 1674

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

¹⁰⁰ It is unknown which books Cosimo bought, however, given the fact that the Grand Duke had a well-known fascination for maps, discoveries and foreign cultures, it is likely that he was particularly interested in the cosmographical, topographical, archeological, genealogical and heraldic sections of the catalogue (concerning the division of these sections, see De Groot, *The World of a Seventeenth-Century Collector*, p. 64).

Ricevo la gentilissima di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 9 dell'passato Haverà già inteso l'indirizzo fatto per costi per terra dell'quadro consegnatomi il Miris et in Milano l'ho indirizzato al signore Carlo Zenone spedizioniere per la condotta per il quale amico ingiunto li mando una lettera¹⁰¹ accio segua per la disposizione dell'medesimo quadro il volere di Vostra Signoria illustrissima si che con esso potrà supplire di quelli ordini che più stimerà confacenti.

Sento il desiderio dell'Serenissimo GranDuca per haver 8 in 10 fagiani bianchi ch fanno in Vesfalia io procurerò con il mezzo di amici se mi sarà possibile farlo restar servito, et in mentre anco come mi dice per tale adempimento carteggerò con il signore Giovanni Gherardo Wrintz a Treuenfelt residente Cesarco in Brema all'quale (sequendo per suo mezzo) rimborserò ogni spesa che mi denoterà perciò haver fatta, e credo haveremo tempo per poterli trasmetter con il prossimo convoio già ch questo non credo che ne anco in 2 mesi deva partire non sendoci presso per anco determinazione ma si spera deva seguire subito ch la flotta sarà sortita al mare che è quanto mentre con rassegnar a Vostra Signoria illustrissima il solito della mia osservanza resto all'solito.

Amsterdam 3 maggio 1674

Devotissimo servitore Obbligatissimo
Giovacchino Guasconi

In punto della spedizione della presente mi giugne altra gentilissima di Vostra Signoria illustrissima con una per il signore Hensio, et una nota delli libri ch desidera avere il Serenissimo GranDuca dell'indice mandatoli io ne sarò con il signore Helzevier, e con il signore Hensio, e se non potrò procedere con direzione di questo ultimo, mi atterrò come dice all'altro li consigli, e deliberazioni dell'quale in questo hanno a prevalere poi che io non saprei in tal genere fondatamente agire se non con rappresentare all'medesimo li sentimenti di Sua Altezza illustrissima significatimi in tal affare e reverentemente li baccio le mani.

¹⁰¹ Interestingly, Guasconi usually sent his goods by sea; he used transport by land only under such exceptional circumstances as, in this case, the third Anglo-Dutch war (1672-1674).

6.

**From Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), letter no. 375**

10 May, 1674

[1-9] Guasconi has enclosed a letter from Nicolaas Heinsius for the Grand Duke. He writes that Heinsius came over last Sunday and that he has given him the list of books. Consequently, Heinsius has ordered these books from a bookseller. Guasconi has written a letter to Mr. Giovanni Gherardo Wrintz in order to enquire about the delivery of some white pheasants. Furthermore, Guasconi will try to obtain 40 or 50 pieces of sealing wax of the best possible quality and will send these on the first available occasion to Livorno.

[10-17] Corsini and Ticci have written to Guasconi to announce that the bale containing the box of books and the residue of soft linen for the Grand Duke has arrived in the quarantine station from where it will be discharged and sent on to the court.

[17-20] Guasconi will send the units of measurements (ell) that Cosimo has requested with other letters, because he had no time to enclose these with this letter.

10 maggio 1674

Illustrissimo Signore mio e Padrone Osservandissimo

Allegato mando a Vostra Signoria illustrissima una lettera dal signore Hensio per il Serenissimo GranDuca

Il medesimo signore Hensio si portò qui domenica passata, et io li consegnai la nota delli libri con ultima sua trasmessami per la provvista de quali esso ha più dato ad un libraro li ordini più necessari che quanto appresso ne succederà li particeperò.

Scrissi una lettera al signore Giovanni Gherardo Wrintz per da esso intendere quello sperava poter effettuar nella provvista delli fagiani bianchi ch fanno in Vesfalia per il quell'effetto ancor io ho per mezzo di amico fatto scrivere in detto luogo per vedere se ne potessi ritraere i fagiani che quello ne sortirà appresso lo doveremo intendere.¹⁰²

¹⁰² In the end, Guasconi managed to obtain the pheasants and they were sent to him by boat. However, this went not so well as he had expected: "mi sono trasmessi due fagiani con la piuma bianca, un maschio et una femmina. Ma questa ultima mi è stata consegnata morta dicendomi la persona che me ha portato che per il cammino il maschio l'aveva talmente beccata che era morta" [two white feathered phaesants, a female and male, were sent to me. But the female was delivered dead. The person who delivered the

Fin qui scritto mi perviene poi la gentilissima di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 24 dell'passato in cui risposta li dico haver preso in nota di provvederli 40 o in 50 di ceralacca della miglior qualità possibile per la medesima poi inviarli con il primo buon passaggio di navi per Livorno, e dell'suo importare a Vostra Signoria illustrissima ne farò tratta.

La settimana passata li signori Corsini, e Ticci di Livorno mi scrissero ch la balla dove era la cassetta libri¹⁰³ per Sua Altezza, et il poco lino soprafino di residuo era giunta in quell'lazeretto¹⁰⁴ di dove poi sarà stata licenziato e di così li detti amici poi doveranno a Vostra Signoria illustrissima. Il tutto haver trasmesso ch grato mi sarà intenderlo per quiete.

Le misure¹⁰⁵ che mi richiede vederò nella prossima trasmetterglelo in quella miglior forma che sarà possibile non permettendomelo con questa il tempo e con reverir Vostra Signoria illustrissima cordialmente resto.

Amsterdam 10 maggio 1674

Devotissimo servitore Obbligatissimo
Giovacchino Guasconi

pheasants said to me that the male pheasant had picked the female to death]; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 410, letter from Guasconi to Bassetti, 23 November, 1674.

¹⁰³ According to a letter of the 1st of September 1673, the box contained four books which were commissioned by Heinsius for the Grand Duke. (ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4261, no. 498¹⁰).

¹⁰⁴ After the ships had landed in Italy, the books were brought to the 'lazzaretto' in order to be disinfected against contagion of epidemics. See Mirto and Van Veen (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu: lettere ai fiorentini*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁵ In previous letters the Grand Duke has ordered Guasconi to send a note with the right units of measurements of the ell: "Mi comanda il Padrone Serenissimo di soggiugnere a V.S.ill.ma che si contenti di mandarli in una lettera la giusta misura dell'hala, con cui i costi ò per tutte le provincie si misurano le pannine, drapperie et ogni altro genere di cose che cadono sotto la misura andante, che appresso di noi si chiama il braccio" [The Grand Duke ordered me to ask you if you can send us the right units of measurement of the ell (...), which is used to measure fabrics and is also called *braccio*]; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4262, no. 371, letter from Bassetti to Guasconi, 24 April, 1674.

The ell represented approximating the length of a man's arm from the elbow to the top of the middle finger. It was a very easy way to measure lengths of fabrics. Before the nineteenth century several national forms existed, with different lengths. For example, the Dutch ell, which varied from town to town (55-75 cm), was somewhat shorter than the English ell (114.3 cm). the *braccio* unit of cloth measurement (58,5 cm), as mentioned by the Grand Duke, was used as a standard to import fabrics from Flanders and the Dutch Republic. J.H. Munro, 'The Rise, Expansion, and Decline of the Italian Wool-Based Cloth Industries, 1100-1730', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 9 (2012) pp. 55-58.

7.

From Apollonio Bassetti to Giovacchino Guasconi
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), response no. 376
29 May, 1674

[1-6] The Grand Duke is worried about Pieter Blaeu because he has received no letters from him for three months. He would like to know what is going on with him and asks Guasconi to inform him about the situation without letting anyone know that he has received these orders.

[6-12] Blaeu has bought many precious goods for Cosimo, which should have been loaded on the first available convoy that left for Italy. Since these goods could be at risk, Guasconi has to take care of the wares without letting anyone know about this.

Al signore Giovacchino Guasconi Amsterdam li 29 maggio 1674 di Firenze

P.S. sono già tre mesi, che Sua Altezza non tien lettere di codesto signore segretario Pietro Blaeu che pure haverebbe dovuto rispondere a diverse. Dell'Altezza Sua vorrebbe ella però sapere qual sia di lui, se sia stato fuori, se habbia partito alcun incomodo nella salute, o se per avventura soffrisca alcuna inquietudine per cause civili, Vuole però che Vostra Signoria illustrissima se ne informi, et avvisi senza darsi per intesa a nessuno d'haver questo ordine; e per ogni caso che le cose domestiche di esso Blau non camminasserò in felicità, sappi Vostra Signoria illustrissima in caso del medesimo si trovano diverse galanterie, e rarità di valore comprate per l'Altezza Sua, e pagate col suo danaro, che dovrebbe esser caricate su il primo convio, che parta per Italia, onde quando mai (che non si vuol credere) a causa di debiti et esecuzioni mi potessero correre alcun rischio Vostra Signoria illustrissima stia accanto, e vegga di garantirle con entrar mallevadore per il valore di dette robbe tanto, che se ne provi l'identità e la proprietà del GranDuca, ma tutto questo pure lo tenga in sé, e non se ne saprà cosa alcuna e solo c'avvisi in caso di bisogno.

8.

From Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), letter no. 379
17 June, 1674

[1-14] Guasconi has received a letter for Nicolaas Heinsius and has enclosed his answer. He has received 33 books from a bookseller, ordered by Heinsius from the sale of the library of Hendrik van der Hem. He has paid 321 florins and 3 stuivers. He will send the books at the first available opportunity, probably by sea. He believes that a convoy from the Netherlands will leave next week.

However, it is also likely that English ships are leaving for Livorno. Also, the ship San Michele with captain Lucatelli sailing under the flag of the Illustrious Grand Duke, has arrived from Livorno this week. Guasconi wants to know if the Grand Duke wishes to send these books with the first available opportunity, with the English ships, or whether he prefers the San Michele. He concludes that the ship Isabella with captain Giovanni Vincenzo Muti is docked here and that the captain will return to Livorno by land so his ship will remain in Dutch hands.

[15-18] Guasconi is surprised that the Grand Duke has not yet received the package that he has previously sent to him, because Corsini and Ticci of Livorno have notified that they have already received their wares. He supposes that the package is still in the quarantine station.

[19-28] Guasconi has enclosed the value of wheat, beans and salts. Cosimo will soon receive the units of measurements (ell) from Poland, but he did not manage to obtain the right units from Sweden and Denmark.

[29-33] Guasconi saw Pieter Blaeu last week in good health. His father died, but everything is already re-established and his wife will continue with the printing business. Pieter Blaeu is in his position as secretary of the Orphans' chamber and Guasconi has no other news other than reports of civic unrest that is characteristic of this time.

15 giugno 1674

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Aggiunto con la gentilissima di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 29 dell'passato ricevo altra per il signore Hensio al quale pure ho trasmessa, et ingiunta ne viene altra dall' medesimo signore trasmessami; Intanto di ordine dell' sudetto signore Hensio ho riceuto qui per mezzo di un libraro libri 33 stati comprati nella vendita seguita della biblioteca di Monsieur Van der Hem, e per essi ho pagato fiorini 321 e soldi 3¹⁰⁶ che ne ho dato debito a Sua Altezza Serenissima, e li detti libri adesso li spedirò con la prossima buona occasione si presenterà per mare che credo sarà in settimana prossima con un buon convoio di questa natione che allora si crede doverà partire; In mentre però credo pure partiranno di qui navi inglesi per Livorno sole e l'istesso si discorre farà la nave San Michele dell' capitano Lucatelli¹⁰⁷ di bandiera dell' Serenissimo GranDuca giunta questa settimana di Livorno.

Se intendessi il Serenissimo Padrone haver li detti libri con le prossima occasione cioe con navi inglesi, o la sudetta San Michele suoi ordini effettuerò. Parimente con la medesima nave San

¹⁰⁶ Apollonio Bassetti has written a confirmation in the left margin: "Sta bene".

¹⁰⁷ Bassetti has written a note in the left margin that the books have to be sent with the first convoy that will leave: "col primo di tali passaggi che parta".

Michele Arcangelo è qui giunta la nave Isabella capitano Giovanni Vincenzo Muti questo dice creder ritonarsene in Livorno per terra, e la sua nave ritornerà olandese.¹⁰⁸

Mi maravigliò come Vostra Signoria illustrissima non habbi riceuto il pacchetto gia trasmessoli con altre merce de signori Corsini e Ticci di Livorno qua sono piu ordinari che a me avvisono haver ricevuto in lor poter la mercantia a dovere si ch in loro potere, ò pur puol esser in lazeretto si deve trovar il detto pacchetto.¹⁰⁹

Ingiunto li mando un calcolo per la misura de grani, segale, fave e sali¹¹⁰ gradirò tutto sia a sodisfazione dell'desiderio di Sua Altezza Serenissima quale se maggiormente brama con l'avviso di Vostra Signoria illustrissima procurerò totalmente satisfar al mio debito, e per le misure gia le doverà haver riceute attendendo quella di Pollonia giusta per trasmettergli mentre per quella di Svetia e Danimarca fin ora non trovo la giustezza vorrei quantunque ch quelle mandarli mi sia stato detto che per quella di Danimarca principalmente sia giusta.

Vedo quanto mi va discorrendo di questo signore Blaeu¹¹¹ il medesimo ho visto nella settimana passata in buonissima sanità come Vostra Signoria illustrissima forse doverà sapere morì il suo signore padre, e tutto fin ora passato con intera aggiustatezza continuando la moglie il traffica per le stampe.

Il signore Pietro nell'suo Uffizio di segretaria, e nissuna novità è a mia notitia fuori di quelle seguirono in tempo di questi rumori civili prenderò debita informazione secondo mi denota e con altra saprò Vostra Signoria illustrissima soggiugner in ciò maggior particolarità mentre per la secretezza non si dubita, et io con dedicarmeli servitore al silito affettuosamente li bacio le mani.

¹⁰⁸ The reason for which the ship of Captain Lucatelli “became Dutch” is not explained in Guasconi’s letters.

¹⁰⁹ Guasconi relied regularly on the services of Lorenzo Corsini and Antonino Ticci from Livorno for the collecting of goods for the Medici’s. The Florentine Corsini family were originally bankers and merchants. Their influence grew in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, especially with regard to their services to the Papal state. Three members of the Corsini family rose to be cardinals, four were made bishops, and Lorenzo Corsini (7 April 1652 – 6 February 1740) was elected as Pope Clemente XII in 1730. Presumably this is also the Lorenzo Corsini mentioned in this letter, since he studied at the University of Pisa from 1672 to 1675. I was not able to find more information on Antonino, belonging to the influential and noble Florentine family Ticci.

¹¹⁰ The Grand Duke has ordered Guasconi to report the values of wheat, beans and salts. In a later letter Guasconi responds that “Li grani valgano fiorini 145 fino a 160 e le segale secche fiorini 90 a 95 tutto secondo la loro qualità” [the wheat is worth 145 to 160 florins and the beans 90 to 95 florins, according to their quality]; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263 no. 556, letter from Guasconi to Bassetti, 15 October, 1677.

¹¹¹ Pieter Blaeu.

Amsterdam 15 giugno 1674

Devotissimo et Obbligatissimo servitore
Giovacchino Guasconi

9.

Giovacchino Guasconi ad Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), letter no. 383bis
22 June, 1674

[1-9] Guasconi has delivered the letter to Nicolaas Heinsius, but he has received no letters from him for the Grand Duke. He has enclosed a pamphlet from The Hague and a list with the units of measurements (ell) of Gdańsk and Poland. Furthermore, he attaches a catalogue by the widow of Blaeu who wants to sell the atlases. Guasconi has heard that the death of Joan Blaeu has given rise to negative effects, more than had been expected. But when the children pay off all their father's debts, they can continue with the printing company. However, this remains uncertain. Nevertheless, Pieter will keep his good position as secretary of the Orphans' chamber and has a rich wife so he will be alright. Also, all the other children have had a very prosperous marriage.

22 giugno 1674

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Rispondendo alla cortesissima di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 5 stante Ho trasmesso al solito per il suo recapito la lettera mandatami per monsieur Hensio dal quale questa settimana non ricevo lettera ben viene ingiunto il foglietto dell'Aija cosi la misura di Danzica e Pollonia, et un catalogho datomi la vedova Blau che come vede disegna vendere li suoi atlanti¹¹² sentendo come

¹¹² The father of Pieter Blaeu, Joan Blaeu (Alkmaar, 23 September 1596 – Amsterdam, 28 May 1673), was a famous Dutch cartographer and became official cartographer of the Dutch East India Company in 1638. He published the *Atlas Major* between 1662 and 1672. In 1674 five auctions were held on the Bloemgracht, at the home of Blaeu's widow Geertruid Vermeulen, who was to die in 1676. The stock of books was disposed of in a series of sales: first sale 23 April, 1674, books only; second sale, 14 May, 1674, all the books, with the exception of the atlas and town atlases; third sale, 28 August, 1674, atlases, town atlases of the Netherlands and Italy with the plates; fourth sale, 20 April, 1677, books, maps, copperplates; fifth sale, 26 April, 1677, books only. See C. Koeman, *Joan Blaeu and His Grand Atlas* (Amsterdam:

li effetti dell' defunto sieno trovati sempre più in peggior stato di quello si credeva,¹¹³ si dice però che doppo liquidate le pendenze dell' padre li figlioli continueranno nella stamperia ma però è incerto.¹¹⁴ Il signore Pietro tiene il suo buon Uffizio nella segretaria et ha una ricca consorte si che per lui sela passerà bene, et anco tutti li altri figli poi che sono bene accasati, mentre con augurar a Vostra Signoria illustrissima il colmo di ogni bene devotamente la reverisco.

Amsterdam 22 giugno 1674

Devotissimo Obbligatissimo servitore
Giovacchino Guasconi

10.

**From Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), letter no. 387
20 July, 1674**

*[1-5] Guasconi will send the books to Livorno with an English ship that is now moored in Rotterdam. He will also send the box with the 50 sealing waxes of the best possible quality .
[6-13] It is said that the East-India Company has received good news. Their ships have battled against a fleet of English ships and the Dutch have seized three ships with merchandise. Eight*

Theatrum orbis terrarum, Amsterdam, 1970), pp. 7 and 99; Van Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, p. 35.

¹¹³ Joan Blaeu bequeathed the company to his sons Willem (1635-?), Pieter (1637-1706) and Joan II (1650-1712). The management of the firm was in the hands of the youngest son, Joan II. His first step was to completely reorganize the family concern, which Nicolaas Heinsius called already a 'broken business'. In spite of the great fame of their father, they were not particularly wealthy. This may have been caused by the misfortunes Joan had endured during his life. In February 1672 a devastating fire broke out in the main printing establishment at Gravenstraat., destroying not only thousands of sheets of paper and printed maps, but also copper plates and type, which melted in the heat. This loss must have been considerable for Joan Blaeu as is illustrated by this letter. The situation was worsened by Blaeu's fall from political office under the new regime of William III (of Orange) later in the year. See A.E.C. Simoni, 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and His Sons', *Quaerendo*, 11:1 (1981), pp. 20-23.

¹¹⁴ Joan II and Pieter remained active in publishing until late in life, but with the death of Joan II in 1712 their name finally disappeared from the world of print. This had nothing to do with the fire of 1672, for the printing house had continued to flourish long after the event. The end of the firm should probably be attributed to a lack of interest among the younger generation of Blaeus. See Koeman, *Joan Blaeu and His Grand Atlas*, pp. 105-106.

English ships fled and are now harboured at the fortification of San Giorgiorgio. From England they write that they have indeed lost three ships but that their adversaries have suffered the same loss. In this year, only four merchant ships from those parts have arrived and in England no ships at all have arrived. However, when their ships do arrive here, we will definitely find out more about this fact.

[14-15] The ships that recently left from Livorno have arrived here safely.

20 luglio 1674

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Conforme mi ordina Vostra Signoria illustrissima per la sua gentilissima 3 stante trasmetterò li libri statimi consegnati della biblioteca di monsieur Van der Hem con il passaggio di una nave inglese che presentemente sta in Rotterdam prendendo suo carico per Livorno, e con tall'occasione unitamente a Vostra Signoria illustrissima trasmetterò la cassetta con le 50 lacca della migliore qualità possibile mi commesse.

Qui si dice che questa compagnia dell'Indie Orientali habbi riceute assai buone nuove di dette parti cioè che le loro navi havessero combattuto con una partita di navi inglesi e presono tre con mercanzie, e le altre messe in fuga e salvatesi al numero di 7 sotto il forte San Giorgiorgio. Di Inghilterra scrivono pare che havevano perse le sudette 3 navi ma che da questa banda pare vi era pari perdita per navi colatessi fondo ch questo qui non si confessa, si dice bene che per quest'anno qui non veniranno di dette parti che 4 navi mercantili, e in Inghilterra nessuna che avvicinandosi il tempo solito della loro qui giunta presto cene doveremo chiarire. Io all'solito offerendo a Vostra Signoria illustrissima il solito di mia prontezza, affettuosamente la reverisco.

Amsterdam 20 luglio 1674

Le navi con il nostro convoio partite ultimamente di Livorno sono, Dio laudato, qui giunte in salvo.

Devotissimo e Obbligatissimo servitore
Giovacchino Guasconi

11.

**From Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), letter no. 392**

24 August, 1674

[1-7] Guasconi writes that this letter contains the regular pamphlet, a letter from Nicolaas Heinsius and the receipt of the box with books. Guasconi has loaded the box on the ship named Riga Merchant, which will leave next week, traveling via Cadiz, Alicante and Genoa. In the same box he has also placed the fifty sealing waxes.

[8-10] Guasconi has received answer from Lille that they are unable to find any white feathered pheasants.

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

24 agosto 1674

In questa settimana ricevo la gentilissima di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 7 dell'corrente aggiuntoli mando il solito foglietto con lettera dell'signore Hensio, et unitamente il conoscimento della cassa libri fattami consegnare il sopradetto signore Hensio et io caricata sopra la nave Riga Marchant quale disegna far sua partenza nella prossima settimana, e per il suo cammino toccherà Cadis, Alicante, e Genova che Nostro Signore dappertutto la conduca a salvamento nella medesima cassa libri vi e inclusa l'altra cassetta con le 50 lacca ch a suo tempo attenderò habbi riceuta, e trovata di satisfazione.

Mi scrivono adesso di Lilla che disperattono potermi far resta consolato delli fagiani con la piuma bianca si ch non possendoli ottenere farà haver pacienza, e per tanto io non tralasserò haverlo a memoria e con augurarli dal cielo il colmo di ogni bene, devotamente la reverisco.

Amsterdam 24 agosto 1674

Devotissimo servitore Obbligatissimo
Giovacchino Guasconi

12.

From Apollonio Bassetti to Giovacchino Guasconi
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4262 (XI), response no. 417
4 February, 1675

[1-6] Bassetti writes that last week he has received nothing from Guasconi apart from the pamphlet from The Hague and a letter from Nicolaas Heinsius, to whom he has enclosed the reply. He has received a letter of the 25th of the previous month which included a list of the costs made by the Grand Duke. The total amount is 2772.7 florins, which are to be paid in Livorno. The Grand Duke has given Bassetti the order to transfer the account to the depositary, who will take care of the payment.

[7-12] Moreover, he has evaluated the costs of the sealing wax, which he has received together with the books for the Grand Duke in Livorno. But he finds them of inferior quality and beauty to those from France and England: it is in the form of a straight stick of a vague and not very bright colour. However, this does not really matter.

Al signore Giovacchino Guasconi Amsterdam li 4 febbraio 1674 ab incarnatione Firenze.

La settimana decorsa fu senza lettere di Vostra Signoria illustrissima bensì col solito foglio dell'Haya et con una di monsieur Heinsio per Sua Altezza, che li replica l'aggiunta.

Questo ordinario ricevo la sua de 28 scorso et in essa la nota delle spese fatte per il Serenissimo Padrone alla somma di fiorini 2772.7 che si riducono alla quantità di pezze 709 e 2/3 pagabili in Livorno dove sarà cura di questo signore depositario¹¹⁵ grato il darne li ordini havendomi Sua Altezza comandato di metter nelle mani di lui l'istesso nota acciò ne sommetta il rimborso.

Io poi in proprio farò che nel signore Sini di Livorno similmente enta il prezzo della ceralacca già pervenutami insieme co' libri per Sua Altezza; la trovo di buona qualità ma non ha quella bellezza che mi aspettavo a similtudine di quella di Francia e d'Inghilterra, lavorata in candole diritte di vaghissimo colora, e lucidezza ma questo poco rileva. Ad'altro per ora non m'obbligo il contenuto della presente lettera di Vostra Signoria illustrissima a cui saprò dire in appresso l'esecuzione de pagamenti sudetti e resto per ora nel farle reverenza.

¹¹⁵ Francesco Ferroni or Feroni (Empoli, 1614 – Firenze, 1696), Guasconi's predecessor as Cosimo's official agent in Amsterdam, was appointed *Depositario Generale* (a kind of minister of finance) by Cosimo III in 1673.

2. BOOKS AS GIFT: HEINSIUS' VIRGIL

In July 1679, Daniel Elsevier wrote to Nicolaas Heinsius stating that he has sent Heinsius' new editions of Virgil to Apollonio Bassetti, to ensure that the books will be safe.¹¹⁶ Daniel Elsevier's explicit reference to the name Bassetti is an excellent starting point to search for further references to these books in the correspondence between Guasconi and Bassetti. As said in the first part of this study, Guasconi fulfilled an essential role as key intermediary between Nicolaas Heinsius and the Tuscan court and as such, there is little doubt that he arranged the dispatch of these copies as well, ensuring that the goods were properly delivered. This is indeed confirmed by the correspondence between Guasconi and Bassetti, where mention is made of a delivery of books for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Also, as is shown by the correspondence between Elsevier and Heinsius in those years, Guasconi came often to the publishing house in Amsterdam for the delivery of letters from Tuscany.¹¹⁷

But before examining the dispatch of the copies to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, it is interesting to take a closer look at the beginning of Heinsius' research, when he first went to Italy to collate ancient manuscripts of Roman texts in the most prominent libraries of Florence and Rome. Like his two predecessors, Johannes Fredericus Gronovius¹¹⁸ and Isaac Vossius,¹¹⁹ who were subsequently in Florence in 1641 and 1643, Heinsius visited the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana. Here he consulted an important manuscript of Virgil, which appears to have been implicitly used in his later revised edition.¹²⁰ Heinsius arrived in Livorno by boat in 1646, from where he travelled to Pisa with a letter of introduction to Paganino Gaudenzio from Gronovius.¹²¹ Gaudenzio assisted Heinsius throughout his stay in Tuscany and secured him

¹¹⁶ "De exemplare van Virgilius syn door Schipper Jan Willis op Livorno versonden ende geadresseert aen Abbate Bassetti soo dat niet twijffele ofte sullen wel te recht koomen." [The copies of the Virgil are sent to Livorno by Captain Jan Willis and addressed to Bassetti, so there is no doubt that the book will arrive well]. The letters are in the Special Collections of Utrecht University Library and transcribed in W.R. Veder (ed.), *Brieven van Daniel Elzevier aan Nicolaas Heinsius (9 mei 1675-1 juli 1679), volgens het handschrift bewaard ter Universiteits-bibliotheek te Utrecht, met enkele aantekeningen uitgegeven* (Amsterdam: P.N. Van Kampen & Zoon, 1890), p. 492.

¹¹⁷ Veder (ed.), *Brieven van Daniel Elzevier aan Nicolaas Heinsius*, pp. 411-415.

¹¹⁸ Johann Friedrich Gronovius (1611-1671) was a Dutch-German classical scholar and was the first Dutch philologist to visit Florence. Van Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, p. 28.

¹¹⁹ Isaac Vossius (1618-1689), Dutch philologist and collector of manuscripts and books.

¹²⁰ Van Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, p. 28.

¹²¹ The Swiss scholar Paganino Gaudenzio (1595-1649) was professor of eloquence at the University of Pisa. Gronovius met Paganino during his visit to Italy in 1641. *Ibidem*, pp. 28-29.

admission to the Medici library.¹²² In the autumn of 1646 Heinsius left Florence to continue his journey to Rome and the Vatican where he observed that there were many variants manuscripts of the works Pliny, Claudian, Ovid and Virgil.¹²³

During the summer of 1652 Heinsius returned to Italy, this time in the service of Queen Christina of Sweden. Despite his many obligations for the Swedish court, locating and buying rare manuscripts for Christina's private library, he was able to continue the research he had initiated during his first visit.¹²⁴ He noticed the presence of three ancient manuscripts of Virgil in the Vatican library, which, together with the manuscript from the Medici library, the *Codex Mediceus*, which he had consulted during his first visit in Florence, were the perfect base for a new edition.¹²⁵ After his stay in Italy he continued to correspond with most of the learned men he had met there, exchanging ideas and literary news. As is already discussed, numerous letters were written to Antonio Magliabechi and Carlo Dati, who informed Heinsius about literary and scholarly news from Italy. Heinsius asked those men whether they have found other editions of Virgil. On January 5, 1671 Magliabechi responded that he "does not possess a copy of Virgil among his books, but to serve you I will ask friends about it".¹²⁶

Heinsius devoted more than 30 years to amending Virgil's text. His efforts and the difficulties he had while writing the text and during the search for manuscripts are documented in the many letters he wrote to his friends Isaac Vossius and Johannes Georgius Graevius.¹²⁷ The business with the court of Stockholm went not so well as Heinsius has expected. The Queen didn't write a letter of introduction to the Grand Duke of Tuscany Ferdinand de' Medici, for which Heinsius was only allowed to consult the manuscripts two hours a day. Moreover, his official duties for the Queen of Sweden allowed him no leisure time, "not even to work on his Virgil".¹²⁸

Collating manuscripts was definitely exhausting work, in which the eyes were strained by constantly focussing first on the manuscript and then on the book. This unhealthy activity is

¹²² *Ibidem*, pp. 29-30.

¹²³ Blok, *Nicolaas Heinsius in dienst van Christina van Zweden*, p. 149.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 73.

¹²⁵ This is written in a letter from Nicolaas Heinsius to Gronovius, dated 18 July, 1652. "Vaticani ita me exercuerunt ut non potuerim tria Virgilii exemplaria literis maiusculis"; *Ibidem*, pp. 143 and 303.

¹²⁶ "Non ho edizione alcuna tra' miei libri da far conto de catalogo di Vergilio, e ben vero che per servirla ne farò diligenza appresso a gl'amici"; UBL, Bur F 8, no. 1, letter written by Magliabechi to Heinsius, 5 January, 1671.

¹²⁷ Johannes Georgius Graevius (1632-1703), German-Dutch classical philologist and critic.

¹²⁸ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS D'Orville 472, no. 38, letter from Nicolaas Heinsius to Johann Graevius, 4 April, 1663. <<http://emlo.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/>> (26-05-2014).

nicely documented by Antonio Magliabechi in a letter to Nicolaas Heinsius. Magliabechi writes that he has observed the activities of Jacob Gronovius in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana.¹²⁹ As his father had done before him, he consulted antiquarian editions of Aristotle for hours in the library. Magliabechi is amazed by his perseverance, writing that:

*The poor young man, to please himself and the Grand Duke, did not even undress at night, going to bed with his clothes on, for only two or three hours. When he was here in Florence, from dawn until late in the evening, he buried himself in studies in the Biblioteca Laurenziana, without eating, postponing his meal until the evening.*¹³⁰

Nicolaas Heinsius was probably subjected to the same treatment during his studies in the same library.

Besides the Virgil editions he found in collections in various libraries in Europe, his father's edition, published in 1629 by Louis Elsevier in Amsterdam, constituted the basis of the improved and revised version. When Heinsius finished his work, he asked Daniel Elsevier to print it, and not without success: editions subsequently appeared in 1664 (printed in 24°), 1671 (16°), 1676 (12°) and in 1679 (12°, printed on larger paper). The edition of 1676 is regarded as the most beautiful specimen of typography of the Elsevier's press and is also generally acknowledged to be the very best edition of Virgil.¹³¹ It was being printed when France and the United Provinces were at war. Nonetheless, Heinsius insisted on dedicating the work to the French King Louis XIV, but the impropriety of this dedication delayed publication for three years, until there was peace between France and the Dutch Republic. In September 1676 the first duodecimo's edition of Heinsius' Virgil appeared, measuring about 148 millimetres, without a dedication to the French King.¹³² After the end of hostilities between France and the Republic a reissue appeared in March 1679 of 48 copies on larger paper, measuring about 184 millimetres.¹³³ This time the copy contained two additional leaves with a dedication to Louis

¹²⁹ Jacobus Gronovius (Deventer, 10 October 1645 – Leiden, 21 October 1716), son of the famous philologist Johannes Fredericus Gronovius.

¹³⁰ "Il povero giovane per fare onore a se, ed a S.A.S., ne meno la notte si spogliava, ma si gettava sul letto cosi vestito, per sole due, o tre ore. Quando poi è stato qua a Firenze, dall'alba fino alla sera, stava sempre sepolto nella Biblioteca Laurenziana, senza ne anche andar mai a desisiare, indugiando a mangiare alla sera"; UBL, BPL, 1923, nos. 1-15, letters written by Antonio Magliabechi to Nicolaas Heinsius.

¹³¹ A. Willems, *Les Elzevier, histoire et annales typographiques* (Brussels: G.A. van Trigt, 1880), p. 399.

¹³² H.P. Du Bois, *Four private libraries of New York* (New York: Duprat, 1892), pp. 76-79.

¹³³ Willems, *Les Elzevier, histoire et annales typographiques*, pp. 398-399.

XIV.¹³⁴ Heinsius presented the large-paper copies to, among others, his friends Isaac Vossius and Johannes Georgius Graevius and to the King of France and the Grand Duke of Florence.¹³⁵ The special value of the reissue of 1679 is illustrated by a letter Heinsius sent to Graevius, in which he asked him not to divulge to his friends, who had received copies in a smaller format, that he been presented with a copy of Virgil on large paper, for fear of hurting their feelings or causing jealousy.¹³⁶



Fig. 10. P. Virgilii Maronis Opera (ed. N. Heinsius), 1676. UBL, shelf-mark 755 G 21.

Heinsius did not like a small format for the epic of Virgil, finding it inappropriate for such an important work as the *Aeneis*.¹³⁷ But besides the more literary reason, there was a practical need for a bigger format to facilitate reading the footnotes of the text. In previous years, the French poet Jean Chapelain¹³⁸ had been irritated by the fact that he was unable to read Heinsius' edition of Claudian and hoped that his later editions would be printed in a larger format.¹³⁹ Also,

¹³⁴ Du Bois, *Four private libraries of New York*, p. 77.

¹³⁵ The correspondence between Elsevier and Heinsius illustrates that copies of the larger Virgil edition were sent to Tuscany, addressed to Apollonio Bassetti. Veder (ed.), *Brieven van Daniel Elzevier aan Nicolaas Heinsius*, pp. 494-495.

¹³⁶ Bodeleian Library, MS D'Orville 476, no. 87, letter of Nicolaas Heinsius to Johannes Georgius Graevius, 13 May, 1679.

¹³⁷ Blok, *Nicolaas Heinsius in dienst van Christina van Zweden*, p. 97.

¹³⁸ Jean Chapelain (1595-1674), French poet and member of the *Académie Française*.

¹³⁹ "Pour ma satisfaction particuliere et ce me semble aussi pour vostre honneur je voudrois qu'il ne fut point imprimé de si petite lettre et que le volume en fut au moins in 8°"; Blok, *Nicolaas Heinsius in dienst van Christina van Zweden*, p. 97.

when Jacques Dupuy¹⁴⁰ received Heinsius' Ovid in 24°, he was outraged for the same reason.¹⁴¹ In order to avoid this criticism, Heinsius insisted on printing a limited number of copies on larger paper for a selected group of his most important contacts and admirers.

The appreciation of Heinsius' work by Cosimo III and his secretary is reflected in the many compliments he received from them. Four letters expressing this gratitude have survived in the collection of Leiden University Library (fig. 11). In one of these, Cosimo (but written by Apollonio Bassetti) communicates on October 10, 1679:

*I am impatient to receive the labours of Heinsius on the Virgil. Unfortunately, the intended gift has arrived in Livorno only last week and is now in the lazaretto to undergo disinfection for health reasons, so soon it will be delivered here.*¹⁴²

That the Grand Duke received a presentation copy is not the only reason for all these compliments. Attention should also be drawn to a particular feature of the edition; the preface. Mention of Cosimo III is made following the dedication to the French King, in which Heinsius writes that the *Codex Mediceus*, which was:

*Preserved for a long time in the Biblioteca Laurentiana of Florence, beautifully and piously dedicated to the family of the Medici by the Muses long ago, is to be found in the chapel of eternity where it continues to be guarded, recognizing its master Cosimo from his third name, Great Etruscan Leader, the name of morality and decency, encompassing the entire Nature of things.*¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Jacques Dupuy or Jacques du Puy (1591-1656), book collector and guardian of the Royal library in Paris.

¹⁴¹ "Au nom de Dieu si vous faites une nouvelles edition d'Ovide faite en sorte pres des Elzevirs qu'ils la fassent in 8° car ces petites impressions outres qu'elles sont inutiles a beaucoup de gent, c'est qu'elles ne conferrent point la reputation des auteurs qui y ont travaillé"; *Ibidem*, p. 97.

¹⁴² "Sono anch'io impaziente d'aver sotto gli occhi l'erudite fatiche, fatte da Vostra Signoria sopra Vergilio, ma il Dono ch'ella me ne trasmesse un pezzo fà è capitato solo ultimamente à Livorno, e sta ora purgandosi da'i rispetti di sanità in quei lazzeretti, onde non potrà tardar molto à pervenirmi"; UBL, Bur F 7, no. 1, letter written by Apollonio Bassetti to Nicolaas Heinsius, 10 October, 1670.

¹⁴³ "Sed commendandus hos inter prapicue venit codex longe praestantissimus, atque unus instar omnium, qui parem vetustate nullum per Europam universam nunc habet, servatus à multo tempore in Laurentiana Florintiae bibliotheca, pulcherrimi illo ac dedicato religiose Musis à Medicea gente jam olim aeternitatis sacrario, ubi etiamnum custoditur, ac dominum agnoscit Cosimum ejus nominis tertium, Magnum Etruriae Ducem, quod nomen virtutis capit decorisque tantundem, quantum Natura rerum universa in sese complectitur"; in N. Heinsius (ed.), *P. Vergilii Maronis opera* (Amsterdam: ex off.

Cosimo writes that he is confused and honoured by the fact that such a “great and praised man of letters made use of his name, amongst the noble ideas of your mind”.¹⁴⁴ When the books were finally delivered in Florence, Cosimo wrote that the edition “will be placed among the choicest books of his collection”.¹⁴⁵

The letters Apollonio Bassetti received in June from his agent Guasconi are presented below. This correspondence reveals that copies of Heinsius’ edition were not only sent to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but also to other prominent Italians. In addition, one of the letters sent by Apollonio Bassetti, in which he gratefully thanked the Dutch philologist for his gift, is included as well.

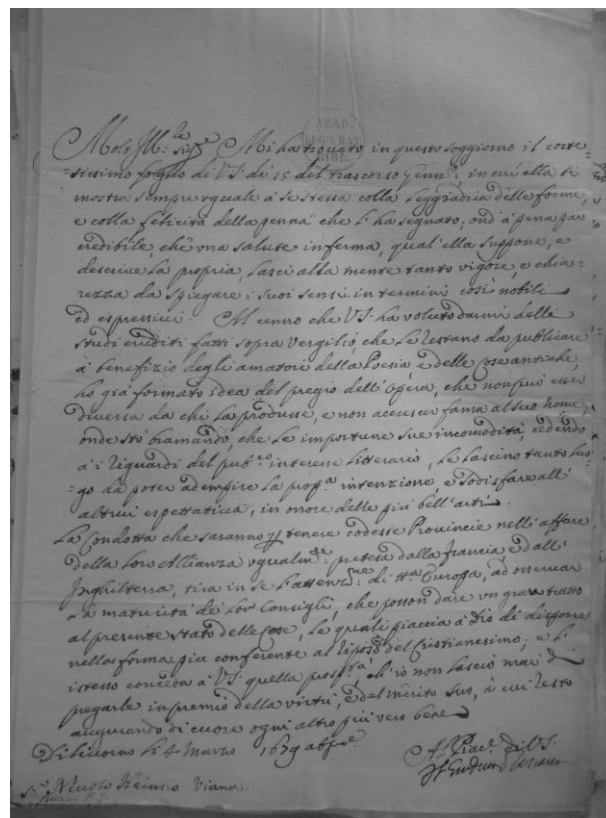


Fig. 11. UBL, Bur F 7, no. 8, Cosimo’s appreciation for Heinsius’ Virgil, 4 March, 1680. The letter is written by Apollonio Bassetti and signed by the Grand Duke.

Elzeviriana, 1676 [=1679]), preface, p. 2. This copy is kept in the *Elsevier Heritage Collection* in Amsterdam, shelf-mark 12.1676.Vir.01.

¹⁴⁴ “Letterato di sì gran fama, e benemerenza: onde rimango confuso, che la memoria di me abbia dovuto aver luogo tra le nobilissime idee della sua mente”; UBL, Bur F 7, nos. 1-14, letters written by the Grand Duke of Tuscany to Nicolaas Heinsius, 7 November, 1679.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. letter no. 4 in this chapter, pp. 58-59.

1.

Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 586

2 June, 1679

[1-11] *Guasconi writes that he has received the letter on behalf of the Grand Duke in which is communicated that the miserable situation with the Bolognese puppies which were loaded on the ship Salamandra is known. This week, Daniel Elsevier handed Guasconi the enclosed letter for Cosimo III, as well as a package with books on behalf of Nicolaas Heinsius and another man, whose name Guasconi does not remember. Guasconi has already loaded the package on a ship which will leave shortly from the Dutch Republic and will be accompanied by a convoy. The package is directed to Livorno and the bill of dispatch will be enclosed with the next letter so that it can be ascertained to whom the books belong. Guasconi supposes that there is one package for the Grand Duke and another for Magliabechi.*

[12-16] *There is barely any news to announce; it is uncertain what the reaction of Denmark and Brandenburg will be to the conditions proposed by France. Most people judge that they will come to an agreement because no one is interested enough to get involved in the case.*

2 giugno 1679

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Devo di risposta alla di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 18 aprile decorso della quale comprendo haveva inteso la miserabile riuscita ottenutasi nella canine di Bologna state caricate sopra la nave Salamandra che fa patientare.¹⁴⁶

Il signore Elzevier mi ha fatto tener in questa settimana la ingiunta per il nostro Serenissimo Padrone, et unitamente un pacchetto con libri quale mi ha pregato per parte dell' signore Hensio,¹⁴⁷ et altro signore... di voler far costi capitare.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁶ Cosimo sent four Bolognese puppies with a convoy to the Dutch Republic (ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 580, Apollonio Bassetti to Giovacchino Guasconi, 22 November, 1678). They were intended as a gift for Pieter Blaeu. Unfortunately, only one of the puppies (named *Tigrina* or little tiger) survived the sea voyage, the others were thrown overboard (*Ibidem*, no. 584, from Guasconi to Bassetti, 31 March, 1679).

¹⁴⁷ Nicolaas Heinsius.

¹⁴⁸ As is explained in the introduction of this chapter, the package contains Heinsius' Virgil reissue of the edition of 1676, printed on larger paper by Daniel Elsevier in 1679.

Io detto pacchetto libri ho già caricato sopra una nave che in breve disegna partire per costi con convoglio, e l'ho indirizzato a Vostra Signoria illustrissima in Livorno, e con altra glene trasmetterò la polizza di carico così pertinente notizia a che si conviene il contenuto de medesimi libri parendomi che vene sia uno per Vostra Signoria illustrissima e altra per il signore Magliabecchi et.

Di novità qui siamo scarsa, si sta in dubbiozza quello sieno per risolvere Danimarca e Brandenburgho per la pace alle condizioni proposteli la Francia, ma li più però giudicano che converrà, si accomodino poi che non pare ci sia disposizione in alcuno disinteressato di mescolarsene.¹⁴⁹ Io vivo al solito tutto disposto per li comandi di Vostra Signoria illustrissima e con tutto l'animo la reverisco.

Amsterdam 2 giugno 1679

Devotissimo Servitore Obbligatissimo
Giovacchino Guasconi

2.

Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti

ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 587

19 June, 1679

[1-6] Guasconi has received the letter of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany of the 23th of July with a letter enclosed for Nicolaas Heinsius which he has delivered as usual. He has attached the bill of dispatch of the package of books to this letter. This bill is necessary to arrange the delivery of the books when the ship arrives in Livorno. It consists of six packages, belonging to the following persons: [7-12] 1 for the Grand Duke of Tuscany, 1 for Francesco Barberini, 1 for Apollonio Bassetti, 1 for Cassiano dall'Pozzo, 1 for Stefano Gradi and 1 for Antonio Magliabechi.

[13-18] Bassetti is requested to deliver the books to each one of these men or to those responsible for them. Guasconi is very sorry for the inconveniences; however, it was impossible to manage the delivery in another way. Meanwhile, the ship Braccioforte, containing this package, probably left two days ago with a convoy from Texel. But this is not certain. Concerning the freight costs, each person should pay his part.

¹⁴⁹ The Scanian war (1675-1679), one of the Northern wars involving the double-monarchy Denmark-Norway, Brandenburg and Sweden. The war was prompted by the Swedish involvement in the Franco-Dutch War in which Sweden had allied with France. The United Provinces, under attack by France, sought support from Denmark-Norway.

[19-23] *There is hope that there will finally be peace between France, Sweden, Denmark and Brandenburg. Brandenburg determined to obtain the greatest advantage possible from France.*

19 giugno 1679

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Ricevo la di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 23 dell'passato con l'aggiuntavi per il signore Hensio alla quale ho dato il solito recapito.

Dell'pacchetto libri accennatoli con la mia della passata ingiunto con questa glene mando la polizza di carico che si compiacerà servirsene per farne all'arrivo della nave in Livorno per curar la riceuta servendoli che il suo contenuto consiste in sei pieghetti appartenenti alle persone che ciascheduto pieghetto sta soprascritto cioè

1 pieghetto per il Serenissimo GranDuca nostro Padrone¹⁵⁰

1 detto per l'Emenisimo signore cardinale Barberini¹⁵¹

1 detto per Vostra Signoria illustrissima¹⁵²

1 detto per il signore cavaliere dall'Pozzo¹⁵³

1 detto per il signore abbate Gradi¹⁵⁴

1 detto per il signore Antonio Magliabechi

Vostra Signoria illustrissima è pregata di contentarsi consegnare a ciascheduno delli suddetti proprietari ò pure a quelle persone che per loro gli richiederanno li suddetti pieghetti

¹⁵⁰ The Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III.

¹⁵¹ Francesco Barberini (1597-1679), a catholic cardinal and nephew of Pope Urban VII, who reigned from 1623 till 1644. Barberini was responsible for various tasks within the Vatican administration and his personal cultural interests, particularly in art and literature, made him a very significant patron.

¹⁵² Apollonio Bassetti.

¹⁵³ The well-known collector Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588-1657), secretary of Francesco Barberini and member of the famous *Accademia Reale*, a scientific society in Rome which was founded by Queen Christina of Sweden, the former patron of Heinsius, in 1674. Dal Pozzo was a very close friend of Heinsius and although he had died in 1657, this edition was probably dedicated to his memory. See D. Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx: Galileo, His Friends, and the Beginnings of Modern Natural History* (Chicago: the University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 34.

¹⁵⁴ Stefano Gradi (1613-1683), or Stjepan Gradić, a Croatian philosopher and patrician of the Republic of Ragusa. For seven year he studied philosophy and theology, while being the representative of the Republic of Ragusa to the Vatican. During this period he probably met Heinsius. He composed many poems in Latin and wrote numerous works on astronomy, geometry and law. Like Dal Pozzo, he was member of the *Accademia Reale* in Rome. Freedberg, *The Eye of the Lynx*, p. 55.

condonando la briga poi che era quasi impossibile poter in altra forma conseguir l'intento di tal repartita consegna. Intanto la nave Brasefort che conduce il sopradescritto pacchetto dicono sia due giorni sono partita dal Tessel con convio però no cene è chiarezza e quanto al nolo è spese che vi occorreranno ciascuno a portione doverà pagar quello si conviene.

Di novità continuano tutta via le speranze che finalmente deva concludersi la pace tra la Francia, Svetta, Danimarca, e Brandenburgho ad operandosi questi ultimi con ogni efficacia per ottenerla dall' Cristianesimo¹⁵⁵ con il maggior vantaggio possibile,¹⁵⁶ Dio ne facci sortire sempre il meglio per il beneficio universale et a Vostra Signoria illustrissima da ogni maggior felicità mentre io con tutto l'animo la reverisco.

Amsterdam 19 giugno 1679

Devotissimo Servitore Obbligatissimo
Giovacchino Guasconi

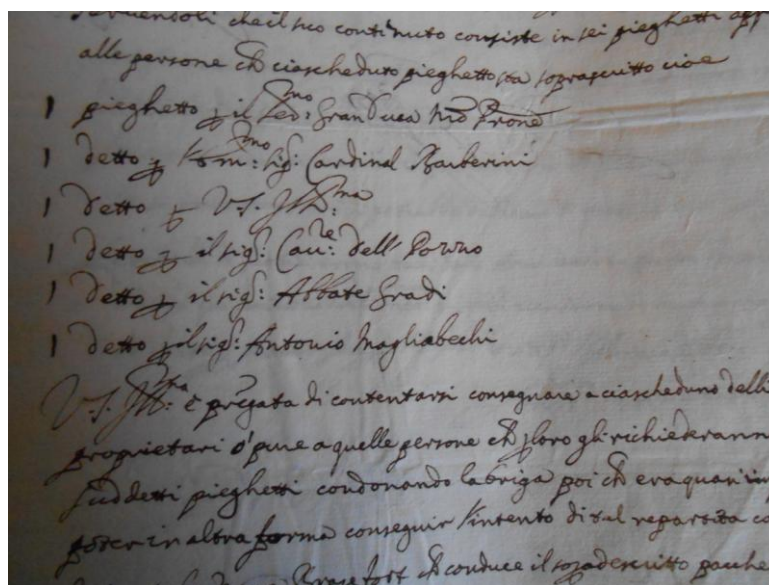


Fig. 12. ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 587, letter
from Guasconi to Bassetti, 19 June, 1674.

¹⁵⁵ France.

¹⁵⁶ Eventually, it was a war with no definite winner; the Swedish navy lost at sea, the Danish army was defeated by the Swedish, who in turn were defeated in Germany by the Brandenburgers. The war and the hostilities ended when the United Provinces settled with France and the Swedish king Charles XI married the Danish princess Ulrike Eleonora, sister of Christian V. Peace was made on behalf of France at the treaties of Fontainebleau and Lund (Sweden and Denmark) and Saint German (Sweden and Brandenburg).

3.

Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 588

14 July, 1679

[1-4] This letter is a reply to two letters from the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Guasconi has understood that the Grand Duchy has received the bill of dispatch of the bale of books which he had loaded on the ship Braccioforte. He had already provided them with the necessary orders about how to collect the goods, and consequently, how to deliver them to the right people.

[5-10] The peace between France, Sweden and Brandenburg is finalised and there is no doubt that Denmark will also be included. The Dutch merchants are worried about some French ships that have left from Portugal to the Caribbean. In case the ships from the East Indies, which are due in Spain, continue their journey, it is possible that there will be some misfortune for the trading market when the ships meet.

[11-13] The English royal army has defeated some rebels of Scotland. But here some have written that the rebels have reinforced their numbers.

14 luglio 1679

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Colendissimo

Devo di risposta alle due di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 20 e 27 decorso ch da questa ultima comprendo avessi riceuto il conoscimento dell'ballotto libri incamminatoli con la nave Brasefort al comparir della quale sta bene haverebbe supplito delli ordini necessari per la sua recuperazione per farne poi la repartizione secondo io pregatola.

Restò già conclusa come haverà inteso la Pace tra Francia, Svetia, e Brandenburgho non si dubita che succederà il medesimo con Danimarca e di così poi saremo ritornati alla generale quiete,¹⁵⁷ Le navi francese partite di Portogallo dicono per le isole di America fanno qui nelli negotianti concepire qualche timore per le navi si attendono in Spagna dalle Indie poi che si giudica in detti luoghi non saranno cessate avanti la partenza di detta flotta di Spagna si ch se si incontrassero si potrebbe dubitar di qualche mal colpo per il negozio.

¹⁵⁷ The Treaty of Fontainebleau was signed on 23 August, 1679; it ended the hostilities between Denmark-Norway and the Swedish monarchy.

Li ribelli di Scotia erano stati dalle armi reali in parte battuti ma alcuni qui scrivono che li medesimi ribelli venivano di nuovo rinforzati io resto per servir sempre Vostra Signoria illustrissima con tutto l'animo, e cordialmente la reverisco.¹⁵⁸

Amsterdam 14 luglio 1679

Devotissimo Servitore Obbligatissimo
Giovacchino Guasconi

4.

Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 593
3 November, 1679

[1-4] Guasconi has received a letter for Nicolaas Heinsius, which was enclosed in Bassetti's letter. He is glad that Apollonio Bassetti will look after the delivery of the books, directed to the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and loaded on the ship Braccioforte. He will also inform Elsevier about this because he had enquired about it a couple of days ago.

[5-10] From England it is said that the parliament will be prolonged until the end of February. In general, one can speculate that the English sovereign desires to redress the recent disorder, however, the nation is already furious about previous oppression.

[11-16] From the city of Hamburg is written that an agreement with the Danish King is not in doubt. However, the King continues to prevent passage of all ships and the King of Brandenburg is doing the same, possibly in agreement with the city of Hamburg. It remains to be seen if the Danish will be willing to negotiate and prolong their decisions. One assumes that they have not enough force available for the venture and it will only be successful if this happens very quickly.

[17-24] Raffaellino della Torre has, as he has said, obtained citizenship of Amsterdam and subsequently he has obtained a house. It seems that he is planning to stay here definitely, being here for his own safety and for the low costs of living. Guasconi will inform the Grand Duke about the political decisions and events in this area, for which he will make a wholehearted effort to get in touch with the best informed people to obtain this information. When he has managed to do this, he will communicate the news to the Grand Duke.

¹⁵⁸ The Battle of Bothwell Bridge, or Bothwell Brig, took place on June 22, 1679. It was fought between English troops and militant Scottish Presbyterian Covenanters, and signalled the end of the brief rebellion of the latter. The battle was fought at the bridge over the River Clyde in Hamilton, South Lanarkshire near Bothwell in Lanarkshire, Scotland.

3 novembre 1679

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Con la di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 10 dell'passato ricevo l'altra per monsieur Hensio all'quale all'solito farò pervenire, Sendomi stato grato l'intendere fussi appresso per farsi consegnar il pacchetto con li libri già indirizzatili con la nave Braccio forte, e lo parteciperò anco al signore Elzevier quale li giorni passati pure mene richiese ragguaglio.

Di Inghilterra si ode la prolungatione dell'parlamento fino in febraro prossimo con supposto che al quale tempo poi si udiranno simili risoluzione, e per quanti qui il generale specula pare che Sua Maestà Brittanica vadi secondo il suo desiderio addirizzando li sconcerti passati, non mancano però que popoli esser infuriati nella persecutione già intrapresa, poi che li autori con tutta applicatione agiscono di far sempre con li nuovi attestati, e scritti constare quanti giuste, e salutevoli al pubblico sieno state le loro azioni, et intraprese.

Di Hamburgho scrivono quelli della città non dubitar dell'aggiustamento con Sua Maestà Danese, questo però va facendo arrestare le navi che li si incontrano, et il simile sentesi che di nuovo facci Brandenburgho, quale si credeva aggiustato con la detta città di Hamburgho, il vedersi però che li danesi vanno trattando e prolungando il tempo alle loro deliberationi si cognettura non habbino di pronto forze equivalenti di riuscire al intrapresa la quale in ogni caso tutti giudicano che quanto più speditiva tanti più era da sperarsi riuscibile.

Il signore Raffaellino della Torre¹⁵⁹ come dettoli si assunse a questa borghesia, et dopoi ha preso casa, parendo che senza innovazioni disegni qui soggiornare che veramente è per la sicurtà e per la meno spesa il paese, e molto proprio, parendo che si contenterà trattarsi positivamente.

Vedo quanto Vostra Signoria illustrissima mi rappresenta dell'desiderio dell'nostro Serenissimo Padrone circa l'haver ragguaglio dell'positivo delle pubbliche deliberationi, et occorrenze di queste parti, io mi ingegnerò con tutto lo spirito per veder se potessi incontrar persona delli più informati per ricever tali ragguagli et in tall'caso a Vostra Signoria illustrissima li anderò partecipando e senza più con tutta osservanza la reverisco.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ In a later letter Guasconi explains that Raffaellino della Torre had provided money for the building of a theatre in Amsterdam, where an unnamed Venetian composer will stage a new opera with Italian music (ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 594, letter from Guasconi to Bassetti, 22 December, 1679).

Furthermore, in the same letter Guasconi supposes that Raffaellino will travel to Paris, Turin and Venice to find musicians for this opera and describes all the particulars concerning the opera, including how many times the musicians have to rehearse and what their salary will be.

¹⁶⁰ Until 1675 Cosimo received regular reports about the Dutch Republic from Abraham Wicquefort, who sent his letters to Guasconi. However, Wicquefort was accused of selling state secrets for which he was

Amsterdam 3 novembre 1679

Devotissimo Servitore Obbligatissimo
Giovacchino Guasconi

5.

Cosimo III to Nicolaas Heinsius¹⁶¹

UBL, Bur F 7, letter no. 11

7 November, 1679

[1-10] The Grand Duke writes that the name of King Louis XIV of France on the front page of Heinsius' Virgil edition fits admirably with the merit of the author. The Grand Duke appreciates the gift of the book, which will be placed among the choicest volumes of his collection. The Grand Duke writes that he is also honoured by the mention of his name in the preface.

Molto Illustre Signore,

L'invitto nome del Re Xpmo, che Vostra Signoria pose in fronte al suo vergilio, conviene mirabilmente al merito dell'Autore, e dell'opera, mentre riprodotta alla publica luce dalla fatiche illustri di sua nobil penna nel bel candore dell'antica purità, ben richiedeva la tutela d'un Eroe, non meno Augusto del primo. Io però tengo in sommo pregio l'accettissimo dono che Vostra Signoria ha voluto farmene, e sarà custodito tra i volumi più riguardati del mio Gabinetto, anche come argomento della singolare stima ch'io porto alla di Lei virtù; che in questo senso deve interpretarsi la memoria fatta di me troppo onorevolmente nella prefazione. E ringraziandola al più vivo segno di tanti, e tanti effetti dell'amor suo, ch'ogni giorno in abbondano, Le confermo l'ottima legge, che Le sarà mai sempre osservata dal mio, e pieno dispartialità cordialissima auguro à Vostra Signoria dal Cielo consolazioni, e salute perfetta.

imprisoned for life. Therefore, Guasconi's news, which was scant at first, became quite detailed in the years after Wicquefort's trial.

¹⁶¹ Thirteen letters from the Grand Duke of Tuscany to Nicolaas Heinsius are in Leiden University Library. In two of them, the Grand Duke expresses his gratitude for having received Heinsius' Virgil edition. Furthermore, a letter has survived from Apollonio Bassetti to Nicolaas Heinsius, in which he thanks Heinsius for his gift. UBL, Bur F 7, nos. 1-14, letters written by the Grand Duke of Tuscany to Nicolaas Heinsius from 1679 to 1680, and Bur F 7, no. 1, letter written by Bassetti to Heinsius, 7 November, 1679.

Firenze 7 Novembre 1679

Al piacere di Vostra Signoria,

Il Granduca d'Etruria

3. BOOKS AS MEMORY: THE BIBLIOTHECA HEINSIANA

Grand Duke Cosimo III corresponded with Nicolaas Heinsius until 1681, when news of his death reached him through Johannes Georgius Graevius.¹⁶² During the last part of his life, Heinsius' health was very weak, which is revealed in a letter the Grand Duke wrote to him in March 1681:

*I have recovered well from my illness (thanks to God). However, I have noted with much regret that this not happened to you. But I can deduce from the manner in which you express yourself, that your mind is still strong and vivid.*¹⁶³

Before the Grand Duke was aware of the death of Heinsius, he had sent him a book as appreciation for his services to the Grand Duchy. Besides Heinsius, Pieter Blaeu, Johannes Georgius Graevius and Jacobus Gronovius were also presented with this gift.¹⁶⁴ Giovacchino was responsible for the delivery of the books to each of these men and wrote a letter to Bassetti in November of that year, asking him what to do with the spare volume for Heinsius.

*I have received from the ship Iosua the four books which are destined for the four talented men. I have ordered the books to be bound so that I can give these to them. But when I tried to find out where Heinsius lived, I heard that he had gone to another life. You should let me know what I have to do with the book which was destined for him.*¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Graevius wrote to Cosimo on 9 October, 1681. This letter can be found in the same collection as Heinsius' and Guasconi's correspondence with Apollonio Bassetti; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 306. Cf. Van Veen and McCormick, *Tuscany and the Low Countries*, pp. 35 and 74.

¹⁶³ "(...) il disastro della passata malattia, dalla quale (grazie à Dio) veggo d'essermi assai bene rinfrancato. Intendo però con molta passione, che non così succeda a Vostra Signoria, ma dalle forme in che si esprime la di Lei nobile penna apparisce quello dell'animo sempre mai forte, e vivace"; UBL, Bur F 7, no. 14, letter from Cosimo III to Heinsius, 18 March, 1681.

¹⁶⁴ "Intanto havendomi promesso il libraio al quale diedi a legare li 4 libri rendermeli in questa settimana compiti, uno di esso presenterò al signore Blaeu, uno al signore Grevio et uno all' signore Gronovio" [The bookseller will finish the bindings of the four books this week so that I can present one book to Blaeu, one to Graevius and one to Gronovius]; ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 657, letter from Guasconi to Bassetti, 12 December, 1681.

¹⁶⁵ "Dalla nave Iosua ho riceuto anco il fagottino con 4 libri destinati per li 4 denotatimi virtuosi, li medesimi ho dato per legare pulitamente per darli poi suo debito recapito ma nel mentre ricercavo sapere dove fussi la dimora de monsieur Hensio, sento che sia passato da questa all'altra vita che Nostro Signore lo habbi riceuto in sua santa gratia, si che per il libro che adesso era destinato potrà Vostra Signoria dirmi come ne devi disporre"; *Ibidem*, no. 655, 24 November, 1681.

Although the response to this letter is absent in the collection, a later letter of Guasconi indicates that the Grand Duke had ordered him to keep the book until he received further instructions.¹⁶⁶

Initially, the complete collection of Nicolaas Heinsius was meant to be bought by Leiden University Library. However, because of budgetary constraints the library was unable to acquire the collection.¹⁶⁷ So, soon after the death of Nicolaas Heinsius, Johannes du Vivié (1655-1733), a Leiden bookseller and auctioneer, began working on a catalogue of all the books in Heinsius' library.¹⁶⁸ This was certainly not a simple task; he had to deal with one of the largest private libraries of the Dutch Republic, comprising over 13.000 titles.¹⁶⁹ There was only one library which was larger at the time: the *Bibliotheca Heemstediana* of Adriaen Pauw (1585-1653), Grand Pensionary of Holland, who possessed more than 16.000 volumes.¹⁷⁰ Alphonse Willems, the well-known author of the impressive biography and bibliography of the Elzeviers, wrote on the collection:

*The library of Nicolaas Heinsius contained the richest collection which was founded by a private person in Europe for the study of classical antiquity.*¹⁷¹

A year later, Du Vivié had finally finished the auction catalogue and asked Abraham Elzevier to print 350 to 400 copies, which were subsequently distributed throughout the Republic and Europe.¹⁷² The catalogue was divided into two sections; scientific and literary works. The first section was arranged by scientific discipline, whereas the second part was divided by language.

¹⁶⁶ "Il libro che fu destinato per il signore Hensio terrò come dice in buona custodia per disporne poi secondo si compiacerà ordinazione"; *Ibidem*, no. 660, 16 January, 1682.

¹⁶⁷ E.J. van der Linden, 'Bibliotheca Heinsiana', *Het Boek*, 2nd series, 11 (1922), pp. 286-287. However, the library did buy some volumes at the auction which took place in 1683; Cf. P.C. Molhuysen (ed.), *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis der Leidsche universiteit 1574-1811*, vol. IV (1682-1725) (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1920), p. 18.

¹⁶⁸ B. de Graaf, 'De Bibliotheca Heinsiana', *Folium librorum vitæ deditum*, 5 (1957), p. 48.

¹⁶⁹ The catalogue lists 13.034 titles; *Bibliotheca Heinsiana sive catalogus librorum*.

¹⁷⁰ H. de la Fontaine Verwey, 'Adriaan Pauw en zijn bibliotheek', in W.R.H. Koops et al., *Boek, bibliotheek en geesteswetenschappen* (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 1986), p. 108.

¹⁷¹ "La Bibliothèque de Heinsius contenait la plus riche collection de livres qu'un particulier eût formée jusqu'alors en Europe par l'étude de l'antiquité classique"; Willems, *Les Elzevier, histoire et annales typographiques*, p. 230 (no. 925).

¹⁷² B. van Selm, *Een menigthe treffelijcke boecken. Nederlandse boekhandelscatalogi in het begin van de Zeventiende eeuw* (Utrecht: HES, 1987), pp. 87-88.

Italian books make up the major part of the second section, comprising 1062 titles.¹⁷³ This was the consequence of the many connections Nicolaas had built up in Italy during his life.

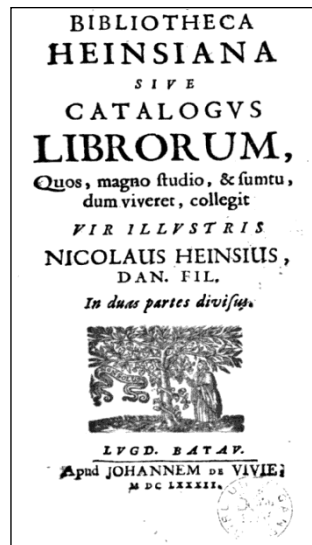


Fig. 13. The title of the auction catalogue of the Bibliotheca Heinsiana, digitized by Google; <http://books.google.nl/books/about/Catalogue_livres_bibliotheca_Heinsiana> (11-08-2014).

On 15 March 1683 and succeeding days the auction of the library took place. It was a successful event, as is shown by the enormous result of 23.833 Dutch guilders.¹⁷⁴ Unfortunately, little is known about the buyers of the books. However, from the correspondence presented below, we can deduce that two valuable books were intended for the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Guasconi was commissioned to purchase them, among them a copy of the Bible in Islandic, demonstrating Cosimo's interest in Nordic languages.¹⁷⁵ The selection of the correspondence presented below is concerned with the search for books from the Bibliotheca Heinsiana. The letters illustrate the bond of friendship that had existed between Heinsius and Cosimo. Their relationship was clearly a solid one, which meant that Guasconi knew how important it was to obtain these books. When it transpired that the books were already sold, Guasoni even tried to find out who had bought the books.

¹⁷³ Cf. *Bibliotheca Heinsiana sive catalogus librorum*, part II, pp. 170-222.

¹⁷⁴ "La vente produisit 23.833 florins, somme énorme pour le temps"; Willems, *Les Elzevier, histoire et annales typographiques*, p. 230.

¹⁷⁵ For Cosimo's interest in Nordic languages see L. De Anna, 'Una pagina poca coniuscuta di cultura medicea. Cosimo III e la lingua finnica', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 136 (1978), pp. 499-511.

1.

Apollonio Bassetti to Giovacchino Gusconi
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 693
22 February, 1683

[1-8] Apollonio Bassetti announces that the Grand Duke is aware of the auction of the library of Nicolaas Heinsus, which will take place under the direction of Johannes du Vivié, as is mentioned on the title page of the catalogue which circulates in Tuscany. Bassetti orders Guasconi to buy, with the help of some intelligent friends, the following books:

- An Islandic Bible, mentioned on the first page under number 9 of the catalogue's section 'Theology in folio'.
- S. Remigij explanationes epistolarum B. Pauli Apostoli, Mogunt 1514.

[9-13] Guasconi has to do his utmost to obtain these books. If needed, he can also contact the grandson of Nicolaas Heinsius.

Al signore Gioacchino Guasconi di Livorno 22 febbraio 1682 ab incarnatione

Sa il Serenissimo Granduca che il lunedì 15 del prossimo marzo deve cominciare a vendersi in Leiden dal libraio Johan de Vivie¹⁷⁶ la gran biblioteca Heinsiana, conforme si dichiara nel frontespizio dell'indice stampato che va attorno, ora Sua Altezza vorrebbe che Vostra Signoria illustrissima per mezzo di qualche amico intelligente facesse comprare per suo conto senza nominar il Sua Altezza al più grato prezzo che sia possibile i due libri seguenti:

Biblia in lingua islandica, notata nella pagina prima al numero 9 del catalogo de teologi in foglio¹⁷⁷

S. Remigij explanationes epistolarum B. Pauli Apostoli, Mogunt 1514¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁶ Johannes du Vivié (1678-1728), bookseller and auctioneer in Leiden. Cf. I.J. de Vries, *Johannes du Vivié, Leids boekverkoper en veilinghouder* (Leiden: Weidend temidden der leliën, 1993).

¹⁷⁷ This Bible was a very rare first edition of the complete Bible in Islandic also known as "Gudbrands Biblia" after the translator and editor Gudbrandur Thorlaksson, Bishop of Holar (1571-1627).

<http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/92002/BibliographicResource_1000093325421_source.html> (11-08-2014). This matches indeed to the book listed as no. 9 in the auction catalogue, "Biblia Islandica 1584 Liber rarissimus in folio"; *Bibliotheca Heinsiana sive catalogus librorum*, part I, p. 1.

¹⁷⁸ This is an early Mainz edition of the commentary on the letters of St. Paul by Saint Remigius. The book is listed as no. 152 under the section Theology in folio, "S. Remigii explanationes epistolarum B. Pauli Apostoli, Mogunt 1514"; *Ibidem*, p. 8.

E vegga Vostra Signoria illustrissima d'assicurarsi che li suddetti due libri tocchino a Lei onde potrebbe per tal'effetto avere anche ricorso al nipote del defunto signore senza però trattare in altra forma che in compra. Tale è la commissione che io debbo portarle con questa d'ordine di Sua Altezza e non avendo fin ora lettere da accusarle reverisco Vostra Signoria illustrissima con tutto l'animo.

2.

Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti

ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 696

19 March, 1683

[1-14] Guasconi indeed confirms that the auction of the Bibliotheca Heinsiana began on March 15 in Leiden and that up until now the third part has been sold. Unfortunately, the books which were ordered by Cosimo have already been sold. Guasconi is very sorry that he was unable to obtain the books because he knew that the books were to the taste of the Grand Duke. If Bassetti's letter had arrived on time, Guasconi could have certainly managed to obtain the books. Jansonius, the principal bookseller of Amsterdam, has said that there is also an Islandic Bible in Hamburg and he has promised Guasconi to write to request that the book will be brought to Amsterdam so that he can sell him the book at a modest price.

[15-23] Guasconi has received the box with chocolate for the Prince of Orange from Captain Toll. He cannot obtain the boxes with the moscadelli wines because these are loaded in the underdecks of the ship, so it is more convenient that the other goods are removed first. Guasconi will go there as soon as the boxes can be unloaded and will present the wine in person to the Prince of Orange in The Hague. On the way, he will also visit Johannes du Vivié in Leiden who supervised the sale of the Bibliotheca Heinsiana. Guasconi would like to ask him who bought the books so that he can buy the books for a higher price from these buyers.

[24-32] Guasconi awaits the answer from Antwerp regarding the book with the portraits of the two painters Hubert and Jan van Eyck from Maaseik. Pieter Blaeu hopes indeed that the book can be found there. In the final part of the letter, Guasconi writes about the delay of the letters from Livorno.

19 marzo 1682 ab incarnatione

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Con l'ordinario della corrente settimana ricevo la di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 22 febbraio passato alli 15 dell'corrente come benissimo dice principiorno [principiarono] in Leijden a vender all'incanto la Biblioteca Ensiana della quale fino al presente giorno è venduto circa la 3^a parte ma li due libri cioè:

- Biblia in lingua islandica
- San Remigij explanationes epistolarum, Mogunt 1514

che ambi erano descritti nell'principio dell'catalogo di detta libreria sono già venduti, che mi dispiace non haver adesso luogo di comprarli secondo vedo era il gusto dell'nostro Serenissimo Padrone che per altro se la lettera di Vostra Signoria illustrissima mi fusse giunta in tempo non mi sariano scampati poi che ogni poca cosa che havessi offerto più di un'altra gli haverei ottenuti. Questo signore Jansonio¹⁷⁹ presentemente principale libraio di questa città mi dice poterli tenere esso in Hamburgho in vendita una della suddette bibbie in lingua islandica e mi ha promesso domani voler scrivere in detto luogo per farla qui venire et in tal caso vendermela dice a prezzo grato.

Dall'signore capitano Toll¹⁸⁰ ho riceuto la cassetta cioccolata per il signore Principe d'Oranges¹⁸¹ ma dalla nave Salvator non posso per anco ritirare le sei casse moscadelli sendo che come dettoli le medesime il capitano ha poste in fondo della nave e conviene prima di poter haverla discarichi il restante delle mercantie sopra esse si trovano, subito però le possa recuperare penso personalmente con le medesime portarmi all'Aija per far di tutti presente a Sua Altezza e nell'istesso cammino passando per Leijden mi informerò dall'libraio Johan de Vivie presso dell'quale si vende la biblioteca Heinsiana chi sieno stati li compratori delli nominati due libri a fine che possendoli (con qualche onesta avanzo de detti compratori) avere prenderli per servitio dell'Serenissimo Granduca.

¹⁷⁹ Johannes Janssonius (Arnhem 1588 – Amsterdam 1664), was a Dutch cartographer, bookseller, printer and publisher who had an extensive international network, visiting the Frankfurt bookfairs each year. He had set up shop in Stockholm. Keblusek, 'Book agents, Intermediaries in the Early Modern World of Books', p. 99.

¹⁸⁰ Probably Captain Hendrik van Toll; Cf. A.J. Van der Aa, *Biografisch woordenboek der Nederlanden*, vol. 18 (Haarlem: J.J. van Brederode, 1874), pp. 165-166.

¹⁸¹ Prince William III of Orange (1650-1702).

Questo giorno si attendono di Anversa le risposte dell'libro in detto luogo addimandato nell'quale vi si trovano li ritratti delli due pittori, Huberto e Giovanni van Eijck¹⁸² di Maseijck¹⁸³, tall'libro spera questo signore segretario Blaeu¹⁸⁴ si habbi in detto luogo a ritrovare che quanto ne succederà sarà a Vostra Signoria illustrissima raggualiato. Osservo che le lettere alla giornata di Vostra Signoria illustrissima ricevo sempre sono una settimana più vecchia delle altri capitano di codeste parti, poi che in questo ordinario haviamo di Livorno le lettere dell'primo dell'corrente, questo li motivo per il ritardo fatto la lettera che adesso li accuso quale di ragione doveva mi esser pervenuto l'ordinario passato ne tenendo per adesso che essendomi di vantaggio, reverisco Vostra Signoria illustrissima con tutto l'animo.

Amsterdam 19 marzo 1683

Devotissimo et Obbligatissimo Servitore
Giovacchino Guasconi

¹⁸² Two brothers, named Hubert (ca. 1326-1436) and Jan (before ca. 1395-1441) van Eyck, Flemish painters who perfected the newly developed technique of oil painting.

<[www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/hubert-e-jan-van-eyck_\(Enciclopedia_Italiana\)/>](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/hubert-e-jan-van-eyck_(Enciclopedia_Italiana)/>) (11-08-2014).

¹⁸³ Maaseyck, near Maastricht in the present Dutch province of Limburg. Guasoni does not mention the title of the books in other letters, so it is very difficult to identify the book.

¹⁸⁴ After the death of Heinsius, Guasconi relied more on the services of Pieter Blaeu. The name of Blaeu appears from then on frequently in Guasconi's letters to the Medici court. This is probably also related to the death of Daniel Elzevier, who died the year before Heinsius. The news of the death of Elzevier reached Cosimo through Heinsius (UBL, Bur F 7, no. 8, letter from Cosimo to Heinsius, 10 December, 1680). Interestingly, Blaeu was ordered by Magliabechi to buy books for the Tuscan prince Francesco Maria de' Medici, whereas Guasconi was responsible for the acquisition of books for his brother, suggesting that the collaboration between these two men was not as intensive as has been suggested. See the letter from Magliabechi to Blaeu, dated June 11, 1683 in Mirto and Van Veen (eds.), *Pieter Blaeu, Lettere ai Fiorentini*, p. 235.

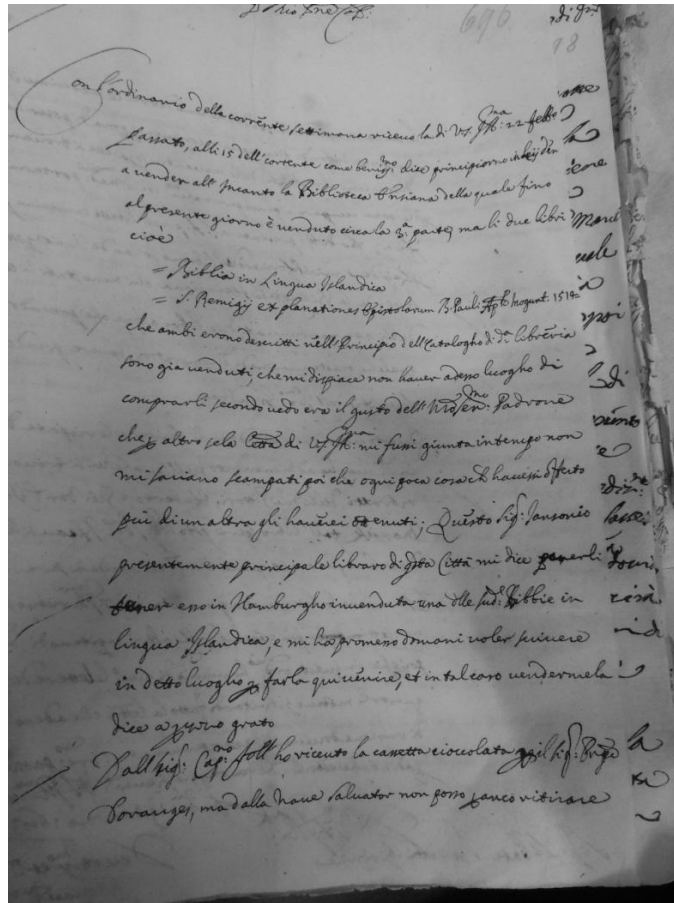


Fig. 14. ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 696, letter from Guasconi to Bassetti, 19 March, 1683.

3.

Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti

ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 699

2 April, 1683

[1-16] Guasconi has received the box with the Moscadelli wines from the ship Salvador, as well as the box with chocolate from Captain Toll, which all seem well-preserved. Guasconi has tasted the wine from the bottle and he thinks that it is perfectly maintained. He will send the boxes to the Prince of Orange in The Hague, who is currently hunting in Dieren. In Leiden, Guasconi was able to buy the book 'San Remigij explanationes epistolarum' for which he paid five florins, in agreement with the person who owned the book. The Islandic Bible was bought during the secret auction of the Bibliotheca Heinsiana by an English minister who lives in Leiden. He does not want to sell the book, for which he paid 10 florins. Already, a person in the service of the Vatican Library in Rome had offered him 46 florins. However, the minister still does not want to sell the Bible. The bookseller

Jansonius has not heard yet from Hamburg, where, according to him, an identical Bible is to be found.

[17-20] Guasconi writes that the book with the portraits of the two brothers Van Eyck, printed in the Flemish language, is present in Antwerp. Pieter Blaeu says that the book will arrive in the Republic next week. When it arrives, Guasconi will send it book directly to Francesco Terriesi in London so that he can compare the images of the brothers with the portrait he had found in London.

[21-28] Eighteen warships of the Dutch East India Company have arrived at the beach of Banten at the moment when the son of the ruling king turned against his father. The son managed to conquest his father's fortifications and drove him and his followers out of the country. This event is cause for concern because the new king is against England and France and had warded them out of the country. As a result, it is supposed that these nations will have no power over the trade in Banten in the future, which is problematic because most of the pepper comes from there.

[29-35] The aversion of the new king of Banten towards the English had caused England to lose many lives and much merchandise. However, the Dutch East India Company had rescued persons and goods with a ship travelling to Batavia. It is hoped that the English king will appreciate these services from the Dutch, so that this will be advantageous for the East India Company in the future.

2 aprile 1683

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Ricevetti poi le casse 6 moscadelli dalla nave Salvator e la cassetta con cioccolata dal signore capitano Toll, tutto in apparenza benissimo conditionato et il moscadello per la prova fatta a un fiasco mi pare si sia mantenuto in perfetione, il tutto condussi all'Aija e consegnai ivi al dispensiere di Sua Altezza quale si trovava a Dieren¹⁸⁵ alle caccie. Nell'passar feci per Leijden mi riesci ritrovare il libro Vostra Signoria illustrissima mi denotò comprare:

San Remigij explanationes epistolarum B. Pauli apostoli, Magunt 1514.

L'ho preso per servitio dell'nostro Serenissimo Padrone e lo ho pagato fiorini 5¹⁸⁶ havendomelo acconsentito la persona che lo possedeva, ma circa la bibbia in lingua islandica questa fu

¹⁸⁵ Dieren is a village in Gelderland, where William III, Prince of Orange had a country seat. Here he held hunting parties in the nearby woods.

¹⁸⁶ The price is similar to the one given in the the auction catalogue. *Bibliotheca Heinsiana sive catalogus librorum*, part I, p. 8.

comprata alla vendita segreta della libreria Heinsiana da un predicante inglese dimorante in Leijden che sento non la vuole vendere, a lui è costato circa fiorini 10 e dopo persona che gliela ha richiesta per commissione teneva di Roma dicono per servizio della Biblioteca Vaticana gli ha presentato fiorini 46, ma il detto predicante dicono non sene vuole disfare che è quanto in questo gli posso notificare, io ho stimato bene non parlare a detto predicante per non darli subito occasione di maggior retinenza e pretensione. Questo libraio Jansonio che mi haveva dato intenzione di una simile bibbia dice non tener ancora risposta di Hamburgho di dove l'attendeva che non so quello sia per seguirne.

In Anversa si trovò poi il libro dove è li ritratti delli due fratelli pittori Van Eijck stampato in fiammingho e tal libro il signore Blaeu mi dice sarò qui in la prossima settimana, subito sia in mio potere farò ricavare detto due ritratti e li trasmetterò al signore Terriesi¹⁸⁷ in Londra acciò sene possi servire a suoi disegni.

Haverà forse avanti di questa inteso come casualmente 18 navi di guerra di questa compagnia di Ostindien si trovorno alla spiaggia di Bantem nell' tempo che il figlio di quel Re si rivolto contro il padre e con la forza di alcuni seguaci di quale paese e quella forzatamente fattasi prestare da dette navi, li riuscì impadronirsi delli forti e scacciare il padre con li suoi seguaci.¹⁸⁸ Di questo accidente si vive qui con qualche apprensione poi che il nuovo Re di natura contrario alla nazione inglese e francese li ha di la scacciati e per conseguenza si congettura che in futuro verranno dette nazioni ad esser privi di poter più in Bantem negoziare e di tal piazza viene la maggior parte dell' pepe.

¹⁸⁷ Francesco Terriesi (1635-1715), Florentine ambassador in London. Pieter Blaeu helped Guasconi to find a book with the portraits of the Flemish painters Hubert and Jan van Eyck. The book had to be sent to Terriesi, who had to compare the images with a portrait he had found in London (ASF, MdP, inv. no. 4263, no. 689, letter from Bassetti to Guasconi, 8 February, 1683).

¹⁸⁸ Banten, sometimes called Bantam, was a city on West-Java that was strategically important because of its secure harbour at the mouth of Banten River. In the seventeenth century, the Portuguese, Dutch, French and English fought for control of Bantam in order to establish permanent trading posts. In 1614 the Dutch East India Company (VOC) discovered that Batavia (present Djakarta) was a more strategic trading site than Bantam and it consequently became the center of VOC operations and a serious rival to Bantam. At Bantam, meanwhile, disputes between the sovereigns of Bantam, Ageng Tirtayasa (also called old Sultan or old King) and his son Sultan Haji (young Sultan or new King), erupted. Sultan Ageng wished to maintain free-trade with the VOC, but his son wanted to end relations with the Dutch in Batavia. Because Sultan Haji allied with the VOC, a war broke between Batavia and Bantam in the 1680s. Cf. K. Hui Kian, 'How Strangers Became Kings: Javanese-Dutch Relations in Java 1600-1800', *Indonesia and the Malay World*, 36:105 (2008), pp. 296-299.

L'adverzione che il nuovo Re di Bantem¹⁸⁹ teneva contro li inglesi haverebbe causato la distruzione di tal natione nella vita e robba, ma questa natione si era interposta e ottenutali che si potessero salvare con le loro persone e mercantie come fecero con una nave di questa compagnia che li ha condotti in Batavia. Si spera che Sua Maestà Brittanica¹⁹⁰ sarà edificato de nostri buoni trattamenti quali senza innovatione si reputano possino in futuro esser di gran beneficio et aumento di negotio di questa compagnia. Io rassegno a Vostra Signoria illustrissima la mia osservanza e con tutto l'animo la reverisco.

Amsterdam 2 aprile 1683

Devotissimo et Obbligatissimo Servitore
Giovacchino Guasconi

4.

Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 703
30 April, 1683

[1-6] Guasconi has received the letter of Apollonio Bassetti of the 6th of April, with an enclosed letter for Pietro Guerrini which he will send to the Florentine secretary as usual. He has enclosed the response of Guerrini to this letter. Regarding the Islandic Bible, it was also impossible to find it in Hamburg, because the book which the bookseller Jansonius had in mind had already been sold. Guasconi went to Leiden where he obtained the other book San Remigij Explanationes and paid five florins for it.

[7-17] Francesco Terriesi wrote to Guasconi from London stating that he had received the copies made in the Republic of the portraits of Hubert and Jan van Eyck. The book which Guasconi had used for the copies, as well as the book from Antwerp that was ordered by Pieter Blaeu and the book 'San Remigij', will be sent to Livorno by sea. Since this ship will be delayed for a couple of months, there is enough time for the Grand Duke to let Guasconi know about the provision of cotton from France. The cotton is worth circa one Florin per ell, which is somewhat larger than the 'braccio fiorentino'. In case the friend of Guasconi cannot obtain the cotton, Guasconi will buy some nightgowns made from this cotton, which cost two pieces of eight.

¹⁸⁹ Abu Nasr Abdul Kahhar or Sultan Haji, reigned over Bantam from 1682 to 1687.

¹⁹⁰ Charles II (1630-1685), king of England from 1660 until his death.

30 aprile 1683

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Questa settimana mi perviene la di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 6 dell'corrente con l'annessavi per il signore Guerrini al quale resta in proprie mani consegnata e dell'medesimo incluso viene sua risposta.¹⁹¹ Circa la Biblia Islandica ne anco in Hamburgho si hebbe fortuna ritrovarla già che quella che in detto luogho credeva ancora ritrovarsi questo signore Jansonius libraro era stata venduta, ben si a me come dettoli sorti recuperare in Leijden l'altro libro San Remigij explanationes e lo pagai fiorini 5.

Il signore Terriesi di Londra mi scrive haveva riceute le due copie fatte qui fare delli ritratti di Huberto e Giovanni van Eijck, il libro che per questo qui comprai come l'altro fatto di Anversa venire il signore Blaeu et il sopranoimato io comprato in Leijden,¹⁹² tutti unitamente gle li trasmetterò con prima buona occasione di nave per Livorno che per quello sento tarderà ben ancora un paio di mesi si che ci sarà tempo a sufficienza acciò Vostra Signoria illustrissima possa suo sentimento dirmi circa la vatta che l'amico di qui mi dice attendere di Francia quale valerà circa un fiorino l'ala et è larga poco più di un braccio fiorentino, devo anco dirli che il bottegaro suddetto che attende la soprascritta vatta mi dice che in caso di essa non ne possa avere ha ordinato li sia mandato delle vesti da camera fatta della medesima vatta si che in caso di queste

¹⁹¹ The reference to the name of the Florentine engineer Pietro Guerrini (1651-1716) illustrates perfectly Cosimo's commitment to improve the manner in which water was managed in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. Cosimo ordered Guerrini to tour Western Europe in 1682-1686 to sketch and to report everything that seemed of technological interest. From the Dutch Republic, Guerrini frequently sent an impressive amount of sketches, with explanations, of Dutch windmills and machinery to the Tuscan court, in which he paid particularly attention to the way in which the Dutch used and controlled water (fig. 15). Giovacchino Guasconi, together with Pieter Blaeu, guided Guerrini all over the Republic and provided him with the necessary funds and letters from Tuscany. Apollonio Bassetti wrote on September 15, 1682 a letter of introduction to Guasconi, communicating that Guasconi was responsible for reimbursing all the costs Guerrini made in the Republic to Francesco Feroni. Guerrini's letters and all his beautiful sketches are published in F. Martelli, *Il viaggio in Europa di Pietro Guerrini (1682-1686)* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki Editore, 2005).

¹⁹² The book San Remigij explanationes epistolarum (cf. note 177).

ricevessi e non della vatta fatta in forma di pannina prenderò di dette veste per il servizio di Vostra Signoria illustrissima e per quello mi dice costerà circa due pezze da otto.¹⁹³

Amsterdam 30 aprile 1683

Devotissimo et Obbligatissimo Servitore
Giovacchino Guasconi

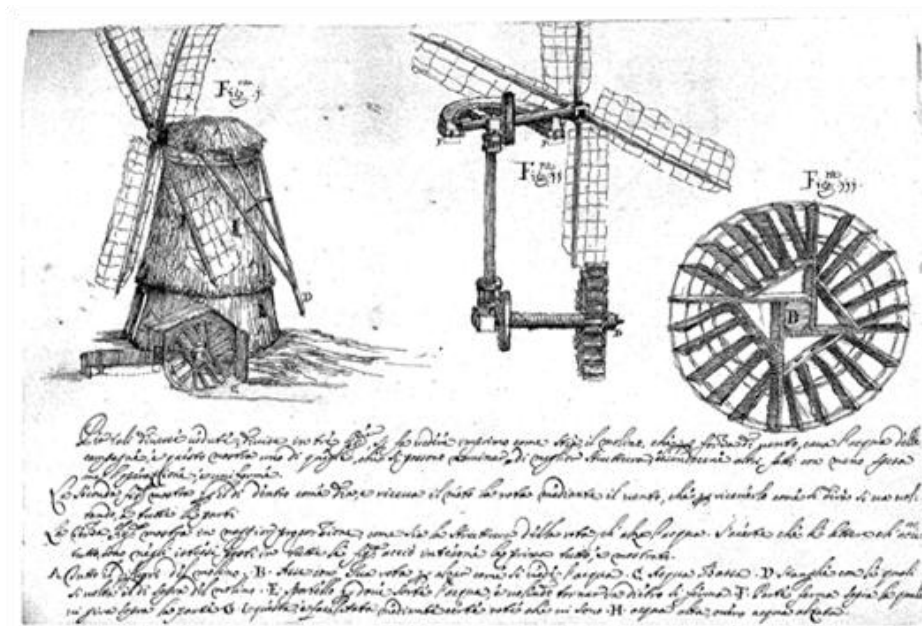


Fig. 15. A picture of a Dutch windmill used to drain the Dutch country side.
Martelli, *Il viaggio in Europa di Pietro Guerrini*, vol. II, p. 54.

5.

Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti

ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 705

14 May, 1683

[1-7] Guasconi has received the letter from Apollonio Bassetti from the 20th of the previous month. He has bought the book "S. Remigij", but unfortunately he was unable to find the Islandic Bible. However, Guasconi will remember the name of the book in case the Bible appears at another

¹⁹³ The eight *reales* coin, or 'pieces of eight', was the most common silver coin of late sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spain. They were the world's first global currency. Cf.

http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/cm/p/pieces_of_eight.aspx (11-08-2014).

auction. Guasconi is planning to go to Leiden where he has to deliver the twelve boxes of white wines. At the same time he will talk to the minister who had bought the Bible at the auction of the Bibliotheca Heinsiana.

[8-13] Guasconi writes that the events in Bantam are becoming even more unclear. In England, a ship has arrived with English merchandise which was saved from Bantam. The ship had been directed to Bantam in order to bring some weapons and munition to the old King, but by order of the new King the Dutch ships had prevented their arrival.

[14-15] Guasconi has received box no. 33 with chocolate and has sent it to The Hague. He will do the same for box no. 34. He has paid 86,6 florins for box no. 33.

[16-17] Guasconi has enclosed a letter from Pietro Guerrini.

14 maggio 1683

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Ricevo questo ordinario la di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 20 decorso. Haveva inteso la compra feci dell'libro S. Remigij e per la Bibbia Islandica ho fatto tutte le diligenze per trovarla ma non mi è stato possibile, la terrò però a memoria e se mai nelle vendite che alla giornata si vanno facendo di biblioteche sene troverà alcuna non mela lasserò scampare e con l'occasione che disegno portarmi lunedì prossimo all'Aija per far consegna delle 12 casse moscadelli passando per Leijden voglio tenerne discorso con il predicante che comprò quella si trovava nella biblioteca Heijnsiana che ne sentirà con altra il seguito.

Le cose di Bantam si vanno sempre più torbidando, in Inghilterra era giunta una nave che conduceva le merci inglesi salvate di detto luogo, la medesima nave dicono fussi andata per entrare in Bantam oppure quelle vicine spiagge e che conducessi armi e munitione per il vecchio Re, ma di ordini e comandamento dell'nuovo Re le navi holandesi li havevano impedito il disegno. Qui le ationi della detta compagnia di Ostindien di qui hanno scemato di concetto per il timore si dubita di qualche innovatione.¹⁹⁴

Ho riceuta la cassetta cioccolate numero 33 e trasmessa all'Aija et il simile seguirà in capitarmi l'altra numero 34, intanto per le spese della suddetta numero 33 ho pagato fiorini 86.5.

¹⁹⁴ A war between the Dutch East India Company and Bantam broke out in 1682. In 1683, Bantam surrendered with disastrous consequences: the Dutch gained Bogor and the Priangan Highlands (now West Java) and reduced Bantam's power substantially. Hui Kian, 'How Strangers became Kings: Javanese-Dutch Relations in Java 1600-1800', p. 296.

Ingiunta viene lettera dell' signore Guerrini et io ansioso dell'impiego nel comandi di Vostra Signoria illustrissima resto facendoli devotamente reverenza.

Amsterdam 14 maggio 1683

Devotissimo et Obbligatissimo Servitore
Giovacchino Guasconi

6.

Giovacchino Guasconi to Apollonio Bassetti
ASF, Mediceo del Principato, 4263 (XII), letter no. 716
30 July, 1683

[1-6] Guasconi has received the letter of Apollonio written on the 6th of July with an enclosed letter to Pietro Guerrini, which he will send to his friend in Antwerp so that he can give it to him. Guasconi will take care of the 29th box with chocolate; he already has given 38 boxes to the Prince of Orange.

[7-23] Guasconi has bought the book "San Remighij explanationes" in Leiden and he has received the book that Pieter Blaeu had ordered from Antwerp which contains the portraits of the two painters Van Eyck. He will send the books, together with the cotton from India, to Antonio Guadagni in Livorno. The package will be placed in a box which contains some geographic maps which were sent by Bernardo Guasconi. It will be loaded on the ship Signora Gertruijt with Captain Clemente Murtur and will depart next month. Guasconi will write to Antonio Guadagni in order to ascertain that the package will be sent to the Grand Duchy. The box contains also some books which belong to Pietro Guerrini who will communicate to Bassetti what he has to do with them. The cotton costs 3 pieces of eight and is made in such a way that it looks like sacks which have to be torn into two or three pieces. In this way the amount of cotton should be enough for the nightgown of the Grand Duke. If the Grand Duke is satisfied, the costs of the cotton can be reimbursed to the Buonaccorsi in Livorno.

[24-28] The officials of the Dutch maritime fleet are on board and will soon leave. It is believed that another twelve ships will be armed as well, but this is not yet certain. Guasconi has not heard of any progress in the conflict of the Turkish rebels against the Habsburg Empire.

30 luglio 1683

Illustrissimo Signore mio Padrone Osservandissimo

Ricevo questo ordinario la di Vostra Signoria illustrissima 6 dell'corrente con una annessavi per il nostro signore Guerrini al quale resta pure trasmessa a mano dell'mio amico di Anversa che haverà cura farglela recapitare ove sia. Vedo la nuova spedizione stata fatta di una cassetta cioccolate numero 39 quale in pervenirmi trasmetterò all'solito per il suo recapito confermandoli haver riceute tutte le precedenti fino al numero 38 e fatte tenere in potere di Sua Altezza il signore Principe di Oranges.

Il libro che già io comprai in Leijden, San Remigij esplanationes e l'altro libro fatto venire di Anversa il signore Blaeu e quello io qui comprato per ricavarne li ritratti delli due pittori Van Eijck, con tre vatte delle Indie fine io provviste per servizio di Vostra Signoria illustrissima ho tutto posto in un pacchetto coperto con canovaccio e soprascrittovi il suo nome et indirizzato per Livorno all'signore Antonio Guadagni¹⁹⁵ dentro una cassa di carte geografiche speditali per servizio di codesto signore cavaliere Guasconi¹⁹⁶ e tale cassa resta anco caricata sopra la nave Signora Gertruijt, capitano Clemente Multur che dicono partirà il mese prossimo con convoio per codeste parti. Si compiacci prenderne ricordo mentre io pure al suddetto signore Guadagni scriverò habbi la bontà all'arrivo in Livorno di sudetta nave fare a Vostra Signoria pervenire detto pacchetto oppure consegnarlo a chi comanderà, servendoli come oltre alli soprascritti libri e vatta nel pacchetto pure si trova altro libro soprascritto all'nostro signore Guerrini, questo si compiacci disporre secondo che dall'medesimo signore Guerrini li verrà suggerito. Intanto le tre vatte costano tre pezze da otto e le medesime sono fatte come se fossero sacchi che qui si costuma aprirle e poi sfogliarle o vero separarle in due o tre grossezze già che per usarle come sono sarebbero troppo grosse e così facendo troverà robba a sufficienza per una vesta da camera. Haverò gusto a suo tempo rieschino di satisfatione e per le suddette spese potrà a sua comodità farne fare lo sborzo alli signori Buonaccorsi di Livorno.

¹⁹⁵ Guasconi relied often on the services of Antonio Guadagni, merchant in the most important harbour of Tuscany, Livorno.

¹⁹⁶ Bernardo Guasconi, or Sir Bernard Gascoigne (1615-1687), was a relative of Giovacchino who lived almost all his life in London. In 1667 he was admitted to the Royal Society, where he was the main contact of Paolo Falconieri and Lorenzo Magalotti on their scientific visit to London.

<[77](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bernardo-guasconi_(Dizionario-Biografico)/> (12-08-2014).</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Di novità, li uffitiali della nostra flotta marittima sono andati a bordo e si crede ben presto sortirà al mare e per le altre 12 navi prese de nuovo in considerazione di armare non sene sente per anco precisa deliberatione.¹⁹⁷ Non si sente altro che avanzamenti dell'turco e ribelli contro l'imperio,¹⁹⁸ Nostro Signore ne vogli preservar Vienna e porre unione tra li Cristiani, mentre io nell'reverir Vostra Signoria illustrissima con tutto l'animo mi ratifico.

Amsterdam 30 luglio 1683

Devotissimo et Obbligatissimo Servitore
Giovacchino Guasconi

¹⁹⁷ Perhaps Guasconi is referring to the War of the Reunions (1683-1684), which was a brief conflict between France and Spain in the Spanish Netherlands.

¹⁹⁸ Guasconi writes about the Ottoman-Habsburg wars, which were fought from the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century between the Ottoman Empire and the Habsburg Empire. In September 1683, Vienna had been besieged by the Turks and a battle between the armies of the Holy Roman Empire in league with the Kingdom of Poland and the Ottoman Empire followed. When the siege of Vienna began in 1683, the Polish King and his coalition of Germans and Poles arrived just as the city's defence became untenable. Eventually, the Ottomans were defeated and the siege lifted.

CONCLUSION

The two visits of Cosimo III to the Republic, and the interest he maintained in the culture and political situation of the Dutch Republic after his return to Tuscany to become Grand Duke, are an illustration of the central position Giovacchino Guasconi held in Amsterdam. Guasconi did probably never returned home himself, but he never lost touch with his native country, acting as an important mediator between the cultural centres of Amsterdam and Tuscany. In his position as agent he functioned as key intermediary in the distribution of books and news in Europe. Yet Guasconi could only achieve this wide geographical reach because of his centrally based and secure trading house, making use of the trade routes of the Dutch East India Company. Moreover, his extensive network of contacts throughout Europe was a decisive factor why he could eventually embark on a career as official agent for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. This study definitely makes a contribution towards an appreciation of agents as active participants in the early modern process of cultural and political transfer. Our contemporary understanding of the role of the early modern agent is still elusive, but he can be profiled when we continue to study the surviving documents and correspondences. Therefore, in this study an attempt has been made to profile the activities of Guasconi and how he participated in the Dutch intellectual community, collaborating with the Dutch scholar Nicolaas Heinsius. Analysing Guasconi's web of relations which supported the exchange and circulation of ideas and books between Amsterdam and Florence can serve as an excellent example of the workings of the early modern international book trade.

Guasconi's correspondence will certainly help to dispell the notion that Tuscany by the end of the seventeenth century had become an intellectually and politically backward nation, isolated from the rest of Europe. The Grand Duke may well have been mainly interested to build his library book and art collections, however, he never lost sight of the benefits Guasconi's expertise and network could offer Tuscany. Cosimo hoped that Tuscany could derive some benefit from the merchant's international trade network with the Dutch East India Company. Furthermore, the orders for Guasconi to assist the engineer-spy Pietro Guerrini throughout his stay in the Republic and the desire to establish economic ties with China and Russia through Guasconi, are all examples of the Grand Duke's efforts to revitalize his nation. Cosimo's decision to place his hopes on the Dutch to curb the decline of the Medici dynasty through the agency of people like Guasconi, has resulted in an impressive body of documents and correspondence which deserve the attention of all those interested in the history of the relations between Tuscany and the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century.

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