

GENEALOGICAL THEATRE OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS, NOBLE, FEUDAL AND ANCIENT FAMILIES OF THE KINGDOMS OF THE TWO SICILIES

DON FILADELFO MUGNOS

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OF THE PATERNO' FAMILY

The Paternò Family, one of the most ancient noble Families of the Kingdom of Sicily, traces its origin to Constantine a Norman Knight and a member of the household of Count Roger; he is to be found as a signatory to a Deed of Concession of various possessions by King Roger in the year of Our Lord 1106 and also as a member of a confraternity of nobles set up by King Roger of Sicily.

Constantine's heir was Robert Paternò, who is also named in another Deed of Concession to the Monastery of Catania of certain gifts donated by Countess Adelasia in the year 1134, to which Deed both Constantine and Robert Paternò were witnesses; Abbot Pirri mentions him and as also another Deed of Donation made by Henry the son of Manfred Marquis and Count of Policastro to the Benedictine Fathers of Santa Maria di Licodia of the fief of Albata and of the farm of Tribezino in the year 1122.

The Bishop of Syracuse, Fra' Simon di Leontino, writes in his ancient manuscript Chronicle of the genealogy of the House of Leontini that the aforesaid Constantine was a close relative of Count Roger by virtue of his sister Archipreta, the wife of Gerald of Hauteville, the parents of Constantine who having for a long time fought with Duke Robert Guiscard and with Count Roger, acquired from them the territory of Paternò, at that time a small village, and also the fiefs of Artedoro Mongialini, a Knight from Catania, of the Sicilian Greek people, whose daughter Olibria he took as his wife and, having then increased the aforesaid territory with new inhabitants, was called Paternò, from Agomeno Paternò one of the Captains of George Maniace, who gave it to his daughter Altavilla as her dowry when she married Count Bartholomew di Luce, and from this Territory the said Constantine and his descendants took the family name of Paternò.

In the Book on the Prelacies of Sicily in fol. 387 may be read about Roger and Simon Paternò, who participated in the founding of the Abbey of Roccamadore in the city of Messina, effected by Count Bartholomew di Luce in the year 1197. And also of the Priest don John Paternò Chaplain to the same Count, in the ancient histories of those times (mentioned by the said Bishop of Syracuse, Fra' Simon) it is noticed that the aforesaid Roger, Simon and don John are brothers, the sons of Robert Paternò. In the illustrious events and noble achievements of the Speciali family, scrupulously written up by Peter Speciali the son of the famous Nicholas the Treasurer of the Kingdom, preserved by

Prince don Blaise Marchese e Speciali, is to be found that the said Roger Paternò Lord of Mongialini married Gaudiosa the daughter of Matthew Bonelli, one of the earliest Barons who flourished under King William I and who killed Maione, by whom he had as children John, Aldoriso, Matthew and William Paternò who in the wars between the Emperor Henry VI and King William III of Sicily fought on the side of the aforesaid King William Aldoriso and Matthew, who lost not only their goods, but their lives as well; John who was a follower of the Emperor Henry was chosen by him to be Governor of his native city Catania for three years. But William Paternò the son of Aldoriso and Giovannuzzo the son of Matthew, in fear before the anger of Emperor Henry, fled to Aragon in 1191 where they were employed in the service of the King don Alphonse II of Aragon and with military discipline they made happy progress in the struggle against the Moors; such that they received from that King two towns in the Kingdom of Aragon which took their surname of Paternoy, as is related by Mugno Alfonzo and Diego di Sangil in their ancient Chronicles of Catalonia, which say that beyond those two towns, as a sign of the King's affection, they were to take as their arms the four red pales of Aragon on a gold field, over which Simon or Scimenez de Paternoy, Captain of a squadron of three hundred armed horsemen under King James the Conqueror, placed the blue bend just as is displayed today by the Paternò Family of Catania, and the aforesaid Scimenez served so well the cause of the said King James that beyond being confirmed on him the aforementioned towns, but also the perpetual governorship of the Island of Minorca, where to this day in many buildings of the Conventual Friars or the Capuchins can be seen sculpted the said arms, thanks to the donations and benefices that they derived from this family.

It was the son the said Scimenez, according to Diego de Sangil mentioned above, Garzi Walter who emerged in the as one of the greatest knights of his time in the military career, always in service of the King don Peter the Great in times of war, as well as in other important matters, and with him he also travelled then into Sicily, to serve him in the conquest of the Kingdom after the Sicilian Vespers, where in Catania itself having found an hereditary link connected with the first John Paternò, just as wrote the said Bishop Fra' Simon di Leontino, by the death of John the son of the John first mentioned without legitimate heir, he obtained that great inheritance, with which as well as with other possessions that he received from King Peter as well as with the dowry of his wife Polisena Maletta, the daughter of Anthony the brother of Count Fredrick, he became rich and powerful in Catania. With the aforesaid Polisena Maletta his wife he had as children Rainier and Benedict, who with their father Walter are mentioned in an act of donation made by Count Frederick Maletta, Grand Chamberlain of the Kingdom, to the Monastery of the Benedictines in Catania in the year 1297 and in the confirmation of which in 1314 the said Rainier and Benedict are called with the title of Lords.

The second son of Scimenez de Paternoy, called Alvarez according to the author quoted above Diego de Sangil, was the founder of the family of Paternò of Aragon and Catalonia, amongst his descendents is seen Cypres de Paternoy who in the year 1453 was chosen by the Most Serene King John of Aragon and by the University of Saragoza to be Godfather by holding at the font the Infant don Ferdinand, subsequently called the Catholic King, maternal grandfather of the Emperor Charles the Fifth. Lord Gonzalo

Paternoy, Treasurer of Saragoza in Aragon, was one of those among the military Knights who swore the oath of loyalty in the matter of the future succession of the Princess Joanna.

Sancho Paternò was also Treasurer and chosen by the University with don John of the same family to hold office with the Holy Inquisition and, although on the mentioned occasions they appear with the title of Mossen, I say that this title means nothing other than Lord in the Aragonese idiom, as also indicates Duke don Ferrante la Marra among the families of Naples. Finally Zurita, Dr. Vincent Blasco del Lanuzza in the supplement to the Chronicles of Aragon, Fra' James Bossio in the History of the Knights of Malta, Mugno Alfonzo, Diego di Sangil, our Lucio Marineo the Bidinese and many others make fine references to this family.

Jerome Alonia tells in the book which he wrote on the origins and descendance of the Royal House of Aragon that don Michael, the son of the Infante don Peter of Aragon, finding himself deprived of the paternal inheritance of the Lordship of Ayerbe and of Zenia, which should have descended to him as a grandson in direct descent of King James III, bought many towns and castles and among the towns was that of Paternoy in 1287.

But returning to the family of Paternò of Sicily, which through the prudence of the said Walter, Rainier and Benedict became most famous, from Rainier was born John Walter who was Page to King Peter II and Chief Secretary to King Louis, Frederick, Olivella the wife of Henry Grimaldi a knight from Genoa and Agatuzza wife of James Speciali a knight from Messina, who all prospered amid much splendour.

John Walter was the father of Nicholas, John and Rainier. Nicholas was civil governor of the city of Catania in 1366 as may be read in the foundation document of the Abbey of Novaluce, by a donation of Artale d'Alagona, Count of Mistretta. He served King Frederick III with four armed horsemen as may be seen in a charter of the same King of the first of April of the year 1358 until the end of August for which he was rewarded by the King with the Prefectships of the cities of Noto and Caltagirone for the year 1359. Since in those times the Captains of the cities were also responsible for the military administration, with regard to civil wars in the Kingdom, so in addition the King had paid from his own resources 50 ounces of gold for the Captaincy of Noto and 48 ounces for that of Caltagirone. It was the case in those times that noblemen were obliged to assist in the government of the cities and moreover were paid by the King because they were honest and not self-serving.

Nicholas also held the office of Great Chamberlain of the Kingdom with 50 ounces of gold as a reward for his military services, the office of Secretary and that of Royal Prosecutor of Catania, and a further 36 ounces every year from Queen Blanche for the duration of his life. He took as his wife Falcona the daughter of Frederick Falcone, a nobleman from Messina and grandson of that Frederick who is celebrated in the histories of Fazello; he was father to John, who was brought up with Queen Mary, during the lifetime of King Frederick III, so that he became a member of her household and that of

her husband King Martin, from whom then received the office of Secretary of the City of Syracuse with the right to substitution as well as extensive lands, for having served them when in first attack that was made by the King with Queen Mary his wife against seditious rebels, as can be read in the Privilege of Concession in the Register for the said year 1392. By the same King he was chosen to be Treasurer, then Regent in the place of Louis of Aragon, relative of the said King, and in the Royal Decree it says : Therefore in view of the faith, wisdom, aptitude and well tested loyalty on the part of the knight John of Paternò, since he has been tested in many other reigns and offices, we reward for justice, faith and knowledge which surrounded you in the office of Treasurer of the said Privy Council as Treasurer with all privileges, etc. By the same King he was made Lieutenant and then Vicar General in Noto with the powers of civil and criminal justice, the power to declare war and the authority to receive the homage and the recognition of the holders of castles and also the task of nominating the officials for the city of Syracuse for the year 1395.

Moreover he was granted the Barony of Murgo, which he surrendered for the fiefs of Burgio, Saline, Trifoglietta and other possessions of Paul Capobianco when he was declared a rebel and often King Martin visited him in his house for amusement and to witness the feasts and jousts which were held on the Plain of the Fair. His son Nicholas held the Secretaryship of Catania, to which was added 36 ounces of gold by Queen Blanche for having served faithfully against the forces of Bernard Caprera, Count of Modica, who tried to capture the Queen. Benedict Paternò, John's second son, continued the same services and was Secretary of Catania as well as Baron of the Land of Castania and of the Forest of Pantano. He faithfully served the King alongside John his father against Artale d'Alagona who occupied the city of Catania, where he received from the same King and from Queen Blanche he received a large territory confiscated from Matthew Puglisi the rebel and he was also authorised to contract matrimony with the daughter of Thomas Massaro and was made Rector of the Diocese of Catania and Receiver of the Harbour and Offices of Catania with a gift of 70 tratti every year. He was sent by the same King as Ambassador to the Supreme Pontiff Boniface IX in Rome along with the Archbishop of Messina, the Bishop of Catania and other Knights of the Kingdom as can be read in a letter in Italian from the same King dated from Catania the 29th October 1393 in which letter it says that Benedict was Treasurer to the Pope and the Apostolic Chamber, an office which certainly demanded learning, wealth confidence and integrity. Finally this family was held in such affection by King Martin that he enriched it with fiefs, powers and sources of income.

Walter, the third son of the aforesaid John, was Baron of Imbaccari and of the supplements of Saline; equally was assigned to him all the annual expenses that he incurred during his period of study spent in Padua, being then still quite young he was made a Judge of the Supreme Council of the Holy Conscience in 1406, 1409 and 1412 and Judge of the Supreme Court. Moreover King Alphonse held this family in great esteem and gave Walter Paternò the office of Judge of Catania for life with the power to be substituted by such person as found his favour. He made him Protonotary of the Kingdom, he sent him as Ambassador to the Supreme Pontiff Eugene IV to explain his cause and to obtain the investiture of the Kingdom of Naples, notwithstanding that

prospered in those times the Abbot and Archbishop of Palermo Nicholas Tedesco, Anthony da Buerio, Ancorano Imola and others and he also served him personally in times of war, as can be read in a Privilege given in Gaeta on the 1st August 1442. King Alphonse conceded that Walter marry with donna Elisabeth Ventimiglia, the daughter of the Baron of Raugiovanni, first cousin of the Marquis of Gerace, don John Ventimiglia, a valiant knight, who brought about so many victories for King Alphonse in the Kingdom of Naples.

About Walter Fra' Matthew Selvagio published : There was also in Catania Lord Walter Paternò possessed of the most refined learning and conspicuous among the nobility. From the same King Alphonse he acquired as fiefs the supplements of Agrigento, Trapani and Sacca and other possessions.

Fra' Simon di Leontini writes on the genealogy of his own family that Nicholas the eldest son of John also had a son called John who was Chamberlain to King Alphonse and along with possession of the Castle of Noto he was given a further 113 ounces of income and in the act of donation the King said to him : For by the attentive services of the said John of Paternò knight and our Chamberlain and in our intention to give him greater graces and favours which we intend and wish as follows. He had another 70 ounces in perpetuity for the Secretaryship of Messina as well as other items, which were valued by the Royal Court as being worth 300 ounces of gold, which were to be given to John by Agresta the Treasurer of the Kingdom. Finally in view of his great wisdom he was chosen by the same King as Military Governor of the noble city of Messina to which position only the most noble and honest knights are raised.

Don Jaimes, or James of Paternò, was the son of John of Paternò. This gentleman was chosen by the same King Alphonse to be Abbot of the Monastery of St. Philip of Aggiro in 1445 and then to be Bishop of Malta and equally was elected by the Chapter to be Bishop of Catania; it can be read in the books of the Protonotary of the Kingdom for the year 1462 that Bishop don James beseeched the Viceroy lamenting that his predecessor James of Paternò had lent to Francesco Roza a book of the Epistles which had been written by St. Philip of Aggiro to the philosopher Seneca which had still not been returned to his monastery. Thus it is that there were two distinct Abbots of the said Monastery called James of Paternò, as also had been Anthony Paternò and also Bernardino in 1433 who in 1445 also became Bishop of Malta.

Another member of the family was don Camillo Abbot of Terrana who because of his many virtues and learning while still very young was elected Abbot in glorious memory of King Philip II in the year 1586. Today there is also don Thomas, brother of the Prince of Biscari, who together have founded a monastery on their own lands with the dedication to St. Joseph. And as for a member of this family who did not reach the rank of prelate or was illustrious in some other way, it would have sufficed to be noble and faithful to the King of Sicily in the person of the celebrated don John Paternò, son of Roderick; as a very young man still he was consecrated to the Venerable Religion of St. Benedict and for his many virtuous qualities he was generally loved by his monks and by the city of Catania. Thus he was chosen to be Vicar General of the Diocese, Prior and

Archdeacon of the Cathedral, Prior of St. Leo of Asaro, Abbot of St. Mary of Novaluce, Receiver of the Apostolic Chamber and finally Bishop of Malta. These various offices he exercised with such honesty and satisfaction that King Ferdinand the Catholic ordered him, with the consent of the Supreme Pontiff Sixtus IV, to exchange the Church of Malta for the Archbishopric of Palermo. From whom now held the See don Peter de Foix, Infante of Navarre and cousin of the same King, and he was chosen three times to be President of Sicily in the absence of the Viceroy in the years 1494, 1506 and jointly with the Count of Aderò in 1509, and originating from him may be read in the Pragmatics and Constitutions of the Kingdom many ordinances, which are also notable with other heroic actions by John Luke La Barbera, Master Notary in the Royal Chancery. In the Cathedral he had erected that beautiful tabernacle and sacrarium of marble wherein reposes the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist; he embellished the Sanctuary, having it decorated with 42 marble statues of wonderful naturalness by the famous Antonello Caggini, on whom great praises are poured by Fazzello and Marolì. He added the Garden to the Archiepiscopal Palace, he restored and enlarged the Monastery of St. Mary of the Angels at Baida and a chapel erected by him in honour of St. John the Baptist took the name of St. John of Baida under Monte Aguzzo. He was compassionate with the poor, and gave generous alms to other charitable entities. He increased the jurisdiction of his Church and while he was about to travel to Rome, called by Pope Julius II to receive the red hat in view of his merits, he died on the 24th January of 1511 in the 80th year of his life.

John Francis Paternò Baron of Radusa was also a knight of great valour and experience in arms, he was the commander of a Company of Horsemen, under don Hugh of Cardona, and one day, in action against James Sanseverino who was waging war for France in the time of the Catholic King don Ferdinand, John Francis conducted himself with extraordinary courage such that he defeated him and vanquished the enemy's army. In 1511 he was ordered by the Military Governor and by the Commander of the Garrison which was in the fortress to Tripoli in Barbary with many companies of infantry and cavalry. In 1516 he was made Captain of Arms of War in Catania, a position at that time only awarded to the first Lords of the Kingdom. In 1508 he was given wide powers to pursue all bandits, with the authority to take independent action. Finding the city of Catania in great unrest following the death of King Ferdinand the Catholic, the Baron of Radusa had violent encounters with Jerome Guerrieri a powerful knight. Thus the Viceroy sent to him don Peter of Cardona, Count of Collesano, to resolve the differences and by the Emperor Charles V he was then entrusted with the office of Governor of the Island of Malta with Gozo against the Turkish forces, and he was appointed to many other offices. Charles Paternò held the office of Captain of the Island of Malta, at the behest of the said John Francis Paternò Baron of Radusa and from the same Emperor in 1520 he received the accolade of knighthood with the military belt in Aix-la-Chapelle by the sword of the Emperor Charlemagne.

From this Baron John Francis descends successively the current don Giacinto Paternò, Baron of Radusa, of Imbaccari, of the Land of Marabella, Knight of the Order of St. Peter of Alcantara, who married the daughter of the Marquis of Santa Croce, Regent at the Court of Spain, who was Page and then Counsellor to King Philip III of blessed memory.

Several times he was Captain of Arms and Commissioner General in the Vale of Noto and Demona, Banner-bearer General of the Cavalry in military service, Civil Governor and Captain of the city of Catania.

Also from this family was Alphonse, a knight of singular prudence and courage in arms, who was the first to raise the Imperial Standard above the fortress of Coletta and it was he who brought about, as they say, the surrender of that military base, for which he received various benefits from the Emperor, as may be sign in the Acts of the notary Antonino Merlino of the 12th August 1536.

Don Hugh Paternò was esteemed for being one of the most valiant swordsmen of Sicily and he served His Majesty with a Company of 500 arquebusiers and also had command over 100 infantry, from the Count of Suriano as Commanding Officer; he was in the thick of the action on the day of Lepanto with His Most Serene Highness Don John of Austria, and then was the Commanding Officer's Lieutenant for his courage and was charged to seek the surrender of the city of Iace, against the people commanded by don Lopes de Siglierua, because otherwise the inhabitants of Iace would have caused even greater damage to the Spanish soldiers. He was head of the Estate of the landowners together with the Mayor of Palermo in the general parliament of 1580 and then deputy of the Kingdom in 1588. He was Royal Receiver for many years in the Vale of Noto, Civil Governor and Captain of Catania many times. Of no lesser merits was don Prosper his brother, who has served His Majesty in many capacities. From the line therefore of these brothers descend the Barons of Piraino, of Santa Margarita, and of other fiefs.

Don Alvaro Paternò was very famous for his many virtues and wisdom, in judgement, in generosity, in his faith and his piety. Thus he was esteemed to be Father of his native city and in all the differences and disputes in which he intervened he resolved all matters with authority and equally he set up all the Statutes and Customs of the Senate. Having been asked by King Ferdinand the Catholic to give up a great horse which he owned he did so gladly and the King thanked him for this with many courteous words, ordering by means of letters which he exchanged with the Viceroy don Raymond of Cardona to participate in important business on behalf of the Crown and equally Queen Isabel thanked him for having lodged her servants and members of the Royal Family in his house. Finally he was greatly esteemed for his many virtues and Matthew Selvaggio said of him that he was called to Rome by Pope Leo X to be made a Senator of Rome, but he was prevented by his advanced age.

Father Ferdinand Paternò of the Society of Jesus was held in great consideration by the world who, during the life of the Founder St. Ignatius, entered the Society together with a brother of his called Eustace and from the beginning showed such wisdom of virtue and intelligence that he was sent to Rome to be a pupil of that famous Dr. Don Francis Toledo, who was later made a Cardinal, by whom he was especially loved for the progress he made in all aspects of knowledge. He professed the four Vows, was Rector of various Colleges and Prefect of the House of the Professed in Palermo, he was chosen twice by the Provincial Congregation to go to Rome as Procurator to deal in most serious business with the General and his was also sent by the Society to the Court of King Philip

II where, as well as having obtained from the King the rich Abbey of St. Mark of the Grotto for the College in Palermo, he also took charge of Bl. John Aloysius Gonzaga the eldest son of the Marquis of Castiglione; Virgil Ceparì tells in his Life of Bl. Aloysius that on the day of Her Assumption the Blessed Virgin spoke clearly and distinctly to young Aloysius and told him that straight away he was to reveal his vocation to Fr. Ferdinand in order to be guided by him, and instructed as to how he should proceed. Fr. Ferdinand preached many times before the King and heard the confession of the Queen and made other wonderful advances.

Dr. John Thomas Paternò, great-nephew of Archbishop John, was a Judge of the Supreme Court in 1516 at the time of the revolutions in the Kingdom when the common people had chased out of Palermo the Viceroy don Hugh of Moncada, attacked the Royal Palace, and killed John Thomas among others, with such rage and cruelty that the spectacle was worthy of pity, since the rebels stripped him and threw him naked from the windows on the points of their swords and pikes along with Blasco Lanza, at the same time also a Judge of the Supreme Court, for their great zeal in the enactment of Justice and as a spokesman for the royal authority, and with their hands always resolutely opposed to conspiracy, as ordered John Luke Squarçialupo. Thus the Most Serene Emperor Charles compensated them for the harm that their sons suffered from the upset which deprived them of life, in a decree the same Emperor said : Charles, etc., His Most Catholic Majesty, since they have cruelly killed our judge and left us desolate in our spirit we wish to do as much as possible to relieve the damage to the family. And then he adds : In view of the egregious virtues of his character, neither by silence nor permitting empty retribution, we see fit in view of his many services and

John Philip Paternò also a Judge of the Supreme Court had better luck, benefiting from many offices, including that of Vicar General of the whole Kingdom on several occasions. He wrote a learned Commentary on the Apostolic Bull of Nicholas V, that was printed by Dr. Peter di Gregorio, with other commentaries by famous Doctors: some comments on the Rite and Capitals of the Kingdom, already indicated by Dr. Marcello Conversano Leontino.

In our own times Don Vincent has flourished given the fame of his talent, the Fiscal Advocate of Catania, and then Judge of the Supreme Court in the time of the Duke of Albuquerque, by whom he was greatly esteemed. Of recent memory there is also Canon don John Baptist Paternò, Prior of the Cathedral of Catania and almost permanently Vicar General, as well as Visitor of the Diocese in every vacancy of the See, for his zeal and his virtue he was greatly esteemed by Prince Emanuel Philibert, who nominated him for the selection of bishops and judges of the Kingdom.

I shall pass over the baronies and fiefs that have been owned by this family at various times, as well as their marriages and relationships which they have contracted with almost every noble family of the Kingdom; but since this would be in itself a very long document, I shall merely say that in all truth it can be stated that the family of Paternò is today one of the widest and most numerous of the Kingdom : thus in the city of Catania alone there can be counted fully 25 or 30 heads of house who represent branches

descended from the one source. They have contracted marriages with all the families of Sicily, at all times as has been said above and as is clear from the Notarial Archives and on the matter of matrimonial contracts it would be easier to take note of whatever family of the most important in Sicily with which they had not clearly been related, rather than list all the various house with which they have been allied and which have received one or more quarters of the family of Paternò.

Of territories, fiefs and baronies that it has possessed at various times or which it at present possesses, we find in the Royal Chancery, in the Office of the Protonotary and in public deeds, that until now this family has possessed five territories of vassaldom, and a good forty eight fiefs and baronies with civil and criminal justice. The first of these to have taken the title of Prince was don Agato on the ancient vassaldom of Biscari, at one stage a barony of the family Castelli of Catania, who lives nobly and with much wisdom and has been many times Captain and Civil Governor of his native city and from Cardinal Doria as President of the Kingdom he received the office of Vicar General for the Vale of Noto, with sweeping powers, and the same also from don Francis di Mello the Viceroy, who entrusted to him the establishment of peace between the Bishop of Catania and the first Canons of the Cathedral Chapter, acting therein with great wisdom alongside all his brothers in the events following the popular unrest in Catania in 1647, for which he was much caught up and involved in works he and his son that valiant Knight don Horace Paternò; who in many important matters of the Kingdom was always charged by the Lord Duke of Feria the Viceroy, by whom he was mandated to be nominated as Treasurer of the Kingdom and he enjoyed the reputation of being the foremost player of chess of his day; as his narrated by don Peter Carrera in his book on the game of chess, book I. c. 12, fol. 91, having beaten at the said game Paul Boi of Syracuse, the world champion, who had played before the crowned heads of Europe. Finally the descendants of this don Horace are now called Paternò Castelli through the mother of the Baron of Biscari, who came from the most noble family of Castelli, whose origin and great deeds I have recounted in the first part of my Theatre. Finally these two families have always been the most loyal supporters of the Most Serene Kings, their Patrons, and of their Ministers, and have on all occasions to risk life and limb. But it was among the Knights of Malta that was renowned Fra' Francis Paternò who was admitted in 1597 and Fra' Blasco Paternò of Caltagirone in 1632 and other noblemen of the same family who lived equally in all the splendour of the true Nobility.

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OF THE FAMILY CASTELLI

The family Castelli was so prodigious in Italy that the excellence of its nobility was found throughout its provinces and its major cities; its origin was most ancient as Lords of the County of Terni and of other castles in Lombardy, from the dominion of which they took their name of Castelli, thus Lords of Castelli. The Princes Narinesi were of the same house, one of whom was Rainier Castelli who along with others of his family was a

supporter of the party of the Church and opposed Beringar King of Italy the prime enemy of the Holy Church, and was obliged to flee from Terni to escape the wrath of the tyrant, as a result of which that city was destroyed in 650 and for these reasons he went to live in Lombardy together with his son Albert.

The latter married one of the principal baronesses of that region and fixed his residence there and a little later in 991 in Persicheta towards Modena he purchased 800 acres of land complete with the farms on it and the inhabitants to be found there from John the Cassinese Abbot, over which lordship he and his sons were made Counts by the Emperor Otto III, with the title of Count of Persicheta. The Cardinal of Ostia tells of this concession of the aforesaid country of Persicheta (as he says) in ch.57 of bk.1 :

He made this little book by Albert Castelli son of Rainier of certain farms of this monastery etc.

This knight swore to remain in those parts not only the rank of Roman knight, but also the Rites and Laws of Rome, and in the same country he raised many children among whom his inheritance was divided after his death which they had among them the city of Terni and the region of Nerina just as in in the Abruzzi adjacent to it and in particular they transferred from it 400 measures of land in Papiniano.

From these sons therefore issued many valiant and lucky knights, in the career of arms just as in that of justice. Also due to certain circumstances originated from them Counts Castelli in Lombardy just as in other provinces of Italy.

Valerian and Mars Castelli were very famous and notable for their birth and their courage and they participated in the peace after 1183 in the city of Constance between Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and various of the principal cities of Lombardy. Under the same Benedict Castelli also came to prominence as Lord of Persicheta and Count with great power, acquiring distinguished jurisdictions in Valleluna in Friuli.

Count Robba Castelli, led by the people of Milan for their Captain General against the same Emperor in order to prevent his passage over the bridge at Abdua, left eternal memory of his bravery.

Perricone Castelli was elected by the populace of Bolgna as its Captain General in 1188 for the purpose of the Crusade to the Holy Land; he left his family in Bologna, thus famous and noble in that city, just as the histories are full of his courage and to this day may be found many distinguished legal deeds of his in that city, whereby its principal families allied with his, but also with other of the most noble houses of Italy, always bearing as arms a silver castle on a field of blue amid three gold lilies, which are the arms common to the Lords Malvezzi and many other principal families of that city and as a crest above the shield a hairy giant with a staff in his right hand and a French motto thus "Sans Douter" that is to say "Never Doubting" and in his left hand a shield, the upper dexter quarter and lower sinister quarter of which are white waves on a blue field and in the other two quarters a white column on the same field joined in the middle.

It appears to me superfluous to relate the distinguished men of Bologna who came from this house, while Zazzara and other genealogists make ample mention of them; I shall rather say four lines or so on the family Castelli of Modena which derives from the same of Bologna.

Caruolino Castelli remained in Modena during the wars between the inhabitants of Bologna and Modena in 1249 during which he was held prisoner by the Modenesi and with whom he was subsequently reconciled. He remained in that city and nobly settled his family of Castelli which was the origin of many distinguished men.

The aforesaid Benedict Castelli also established his family in Treviggi and in the city of Belluno and he was Captain of Milan against the aforesaid Emperor Frederick and there this most illustrious family produced many famous men, but it would be outside my remit to sing their praises.

It also had most illustrious beginnings in Genoa the famous city of Liguria and following which, as Nicholas Gentile Sessarego says in his book which he wrote on the families of Castelli and Avvocati, generally using these words.

The city of Genoa knows no greater nobility nor antiquity among its citizens than the Castella and the Avvocati of whom there is over 500 years of memory, which at about the same time that the whole city was in two factions they carried it with them, the whole state, and because the chroniclers of Genoa are full of their praises we shall only say that they bore as a device the silver castle on a field of red, in consideration of that family in Umbria, when they were split into the two factions of Guelphs and Ghibellines, raising also as their crest a gold lily, and I shall finish by what words Alfonso Giaccone says when dealing with the arms of the Castelli.

The family of Castelli now extinct was ancient, if not very ancient, and passed into the Giustiniani and Grimaldi.

Fulk Castelli descendant of the Castelli of Genoa was elected Doge of the Republic of Milan in 1206, and then married in that city a lady from the family of Castelli of Milan which was extinguished in her, which had had its origins in the ancient source of Terni where it had acquired much rich incomes and goods, thus renewing in that country the house of Castelli.

We also wish to say that it descended from that Count Robba Castelli mentioned above who was chosen to be Captain General of Milan in 1158, no less famous was Gerald Castelli who in 1230 effected wondrous deeds of valour against the enemies of Otto and Matthew Visconti.

Gilbert Castelli is celebrated for the peace which ensued in Milan in 1258 between the nobles and the common people; and Anselm Castelli was a famous knight. Richard Lord of Belasio and other Castelli. Mariano was Keeper of the City Gates of Piacenza in 1275.

Gerald Castelli II was mayor of Vercelli in 1286. Robba II came to prominence also in 1270. Similarly Godfrey who for his virtues was no less loved by the Visconti. Daniel served Louis of Anjou in the office of Captain against Ladislas King of Naples. Thomas was one of the most illustrious Captains of his time and one of the fourteen Captains of the Cavalry of the Rose and many other knights of note were born to this family and who are mentioned by many authors.

In order not to become longwinded I leave to one side the Castelli of Tuscany and of Rome, who are amply narrated along with their glories by the aforesaid author Zazzara among the families of Italy, and continuing with my thread I shall pass to that of Sicily which is in no way inferior to any other of the aforesaid in Italy.

I say therefore that we find the family of Castelli to be very ancient and noble in the city of Catania, right from the times of the Norman Princes, by whom they received for their services diverse fiefs and jurisdictions and in the course of time the Barony of the Land of Biscari, which today is a Principality of the family of Paternò Castelli.

Under the Norman kings Conrad Castelli rose to fame as a valiant knight, who was entrusted by King Roger in many serious matters, including the government of the city of Catania,, as also was Andreasso and Berlinger his sons who governed under King William the Good the area anciently called Bruti, but today Calabria on the other side of the Straits.

Andreasso was father to John and Nicholas. John remained in Catania and Nicholas married in Messina where he nobly established his family and both lived in the reigns of King Peter I and Frederick II.

From Nicholas who was married in Messina were born Matthew and Peregrine Castelli, who were exiled from Messina by the Emperor Henry VI. Matthew was father to Santoro, whose son was also Matthew who was father to another Santoro who married Marina the daughter of John Loria, the relative of Roger Loria the High Admiral of the Kingdom; thus in his wife's dowry he acquired the fiefs of Machnesi and Cacini, that were later taken from him by King Frederick III because of his rebellion and granted by the said King to Frederick di Tavola, a gentleman from Messina, Treasurer of the Royal Patrimony in 1360, but then the aforesaid Marina with Ronald Castelli her son appearing before the King they obtained the restoration of the said fiefs in 1367; but Ronald was succeeded by Anthony and John his sons in 1416 who died both without male heirs, thus they were succeeded by the sons of their uncle Mark Castelli.

To the abovementioned John in Catania were born Nicholas, Andrew and Conrad, who all became Barons of great renown, thus Nicholas had from King Frederick III for services rendered 33 ounces of income as Bailiff of Syracuse in 1367, similarly Andrew his brother had by way of a Royal gift some fiefs in 1371 and from King Peter II in 1340 50 ounces of income in fief from the taxes of Piazza.

Conrad obtained from the same King another 34 ounces of income in fief in the aforesaid year of 1340 from the Port and income from Avola, the Tunny Fields of Orsa from King Louis in 1343 and from King Martin the fief of Monte de' Miti in 1397; he was Treasurer of the Kingdom and held many other of the highest offices in which he was succeeded by his son Ronald a knight of renown in 1366.

Equally to the same city in the reign of King Alphonse came from Pisa another family called Castelli, together with Galetti, and other Pisan families, from which descends the family still existing, brought to fame by Dr. John Dominic and John Baptist, who were both of them many times Judges of the Court Martial and of the Supreme Court but descended from John Baptists descend those living today nobly in Messina; his sons were Bartholomew, highly qualified in Medicine, his brother John Baptist, also a Judge of the Court Martial and also a Judge of the Supreme Court. They were nephews of Placid Castelli who in his lifetime held the same offices.

The aforesaid Anthony was Counsellor to King Alphonse from whom he received many buildings, a vineyard and the revenue from a tax on the wine from the city of Catania in the year 1425.

Peter, or rather Anthony Peter Castelli married Beatrice Barresi the daughter of Anthony Baron of Militello in the Vale of Noto and thus acquired in fief 80 ounces of income from Caltagirone.

The abovementioned Conrad also possessed the fief of Baroni, which had been granted by the Rector of the Hospital in Catani; and his brother Anthony also the fiefs of Marineo, Lalia, Passaneto and Belmonte with the fiefs of Poggi di Paternò. This family also acquired the hamlet of Biscari, which belonged in ancient times to Roger la Lamia Leontino, which because of his treason was granted by King Martin to Dr. James Serra, after whose death without legitimate heirs, the same King gave it to Nicholas Castagna, at that time Treasurer of the Kingdom, who in turn sold it to Matthew Mazzone of Caltagirone for one hundred and twenty five ounces, who resold it to Bernard Caprera Count of Modica, from whose possession Anthony Castelli recovered it through Constance la Lamia his mother, who was succeeded by Conrad his son, whose own son William Raymond was Treasurer and also Captain of Catania in 1476.

The latter was father to John who succeeded to the same Barony in 1495 and was chosen by the Catholic King to be Treasurer of the Tribunal of the Royal Patrimony and his brother Anthony Peter held the office of Secretary of the city of Catania.

As part of a dowry the said William Raymond had the fiefs of Favarotta and Catalfaro, which had belonged to Roger Passaneto that because of his rebellion were given by King Martin I to Peter Moresino a gentleman from Venice in 1393, who sold them to Philip Viperano for three hundred ounces in 1408 to whom succeeded Michael Viperano his son a knight under King Alphonse in 1453, who was followed by his own son Philip in 1455, who died without leaving male children, so he was succeeded by Isabel his daughter, wife at the time of the aforesaid William Raymond Castelli who was invested in them in 1516.

John Castelli was Captain of Catania in 1485 and in 1491; his son Raymond in 1520 and many other knights from this family followed in this and other offices in their native city. Finally this family was very famous in our own Sicily but today it is extinct and its fiefs and castles have passed by reason of marriage into the house of Paternò which has taken the Arms of a castle of gold on a blue field.

The head of the house of Castelli of the Lord Marquis of Capizzi was Gregory Castelli a gentleman from Genoa and Count of Gagliano, who established his house with many riches, titles, lands and baronial fiefs, who then granted to Lancelot his eldest son, a Knight of Santiago, Treasurer of the Kingdom and conspicuous for his valour the lands of Capizzi with the title of Marquis who after the death of his father succeeded as Count of Gagliano. And he gave to Charles the Marquisate of Motta di Firmo with other Baronies also to Gabriel who all live decorously as true noblemen. They display the Arms of Castelli of Genoa which are a castle of silver on a field of blue over a golden lily.