

# Marquis Carlo Ginori and the founding of the Doccia factory 1737-1757

*A paper read by Patrick Hagglund to London Ceramic Circle in Morley College, London on 3 May 2024*

The intent in writing this paper is to compile a picture of Marquis Carlo Ginori, something of his life and interests, but primarily to explore from published literature his founding of the Doccia ceramics factory in Sesto Fiorentino to the north-west of Florence in Tuscany. Although his factory produced both maiolica and porcelain in his lifetime, this paper will concentrate on the hard-paste porcelain that is synonymous with his brand. The following questions will be addressed in what follows:

- Who was Marquis Carlo Ginori?
- What sort of a man was he and what drove him to explore the manufacture of porcelain?
- How did he set up a factory where porcelain could be manufactured in its very earliest years for Italy?
- How did he go about finding the recipe for porcelain?
- Where did he obtain the materials for the manufacture of porcelain?
- And ending with a selection of Doccia porcelain pieces produced in his lifetime.

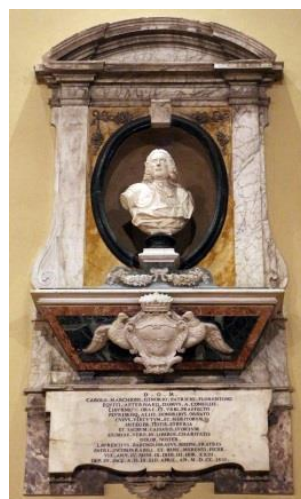
## Marquis Carlo Andrea Ignazio Ginori (1702-1757)



1. Carlo Ginori- attributed to Vincenzo Meucci [1694-1766]

Marquis Carlo Ginori (1) was an aristocrat from a noble family that dated back centuries, retaining a prominent position in the life and politics of Florence and its environs. He was a man with broad interests, not content to live off his inheritance, bent on enriching his life through his personal education, scientific exploration, and understanding of his environment. To pursue the development of his artistic interests in the decorative arts, especially in ceramics and more particularly porcelain, which had become so attractive to his class in the decades after the recipe for true porcelain was formulated by the Meissen factory by 1710, Carlo Ginori set about realizing his goal of founding a factory producing hard-paste porcelain around 1734/5, founded his manufactory to be known as Doccia in 1737. His factory produced its first products sometime after 1737, which were maiolica before his factory produced porcelain for the first time, documented as being on 6 July 1739. However, the factory did not produce an output for commercial sale until some years later in 1746. Little did he know that he would only live another eleven years, dying in 1757 at the age of fifty-five, but leaving the strong foundation of a porcelain manufactory that would grow and thrive under his son, Lorenzo, and ultimately well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century under different managements and ownerships. Ironically, the first phase of the great Italian porcelain factory failed to show a financial profit in Ginori's lifetime, whilst producing some of the finest wares and figures in the history of ceramics in Italy both before its foundation and since. Here are a few documented facts in his life:<sup>1</sup>

- 1702: born 7 January in Florence.
- 1714: he studied law in Siena under the Jesuits. He was just 12 years old at that time.
- 1718: he returned to Florence as page to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Cosimo III, and a Knight of Saint Stephen, i.e. at the age of 16.
- 1720: he wrote a treatise on logic in Latin.
- 1730: he married Elisabetta Corsini (1709-1775), the great niece of Pope Clement XII.
- 1734: he was appointed a Senator for Florence.
- 1737: he was appointed the Intimate Adviser to the Grand Duke and a member of the Regency Council of Tuscany.
- 1742: he became a Court Councillor to Empress Maria Teresa of Austria.
- 1746: he was appointed Governor of Livorno, a major port 78 km west of Florence. This appointment meant that he became somewhat distanced geographically from Florence and his Doccia factory. He was in fact also distanced from the thinking, dictates, policies, and taxes raised by the Lorraine ruler, Francis Stephen (*Francesco Stefano*) of Tuscany, who succeeded the Medici dynasty following the death of Grand Duke Gian Gastone in 1737. This affair was a major feature of Ginori's public life at the same time as he was establishing his ceramics factory and many other commercial ventures, but far too complex to discuss further here. He did however continue to be a major force in the modernization of the Tuscan economy and the development of the free port status of Livorno under his governorship in spite of the opposition to the thrust of his ideas from on high in the politics of the time.<sup>2</sup>
- 1757: died 11 April at the age of fifty-five in Livorno, and is buried in the Duomo there. (2)



2. Tomb of Marchese Carlo Ginori in Duomo di Livorno (Cathedral)



## The short history of porcelain manufacture in Italy up to 1737

In the period between c.1575 and 1583, perhaps as late as 1587, in kilns in the Boboli Gardens in Florence, a group of artificial or soft-paste porcelain wares were fired, the first of its type in Europe. Specimens of this porcelain are extremely rare, and only some fifty-nine or so pieces have been recorded. This porcelain is referred to as Medici porcelain due to the patronage of Francesco I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1541-1587). A couple of extant pieces produced by this venture, (3 & 4) now in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum and British Museum in London, show the sophistication and technical excellence of the work done in Florence at that time.



3. Dish of soft-paste 'Medici porcelain', made in Florence c.1575-1587, Diameter 24.8 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum (C.133-1937).



4. Medici soft-paste two-handled flask, c.1575-80, Height 22.50 cm with replaced Replaced gilt-metal foot. British Museum (1889,0710.1)

There are two small bowls in the Victoria and Albert Museum, (5) obtained at different times by the museum, in a type of soft-paste porcelain that are both dated – 1627 and 1638 respectively (6) that John Mallet and others have suggested may have been made in Padua or Genoa. Not much more is known or suggested for the origin of these pieces, but they are included here to recognise their importance in the history of porcelain manufacture in Italy.



5. Two soft-paste porcelain bowls, possibly made in Padua, dated 1627 (left) and 1638 (centre and right). Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.377-1919 and 341-1905)



6. Undersides of the two soft-paste porcelain bowls dated 1627 (left) and 1638 (right)  
©Victoria and Albert Museum, London (C.377-1919 and 341-1905)

The second well documented porcelain factory in Italy was the Vezzi factory, which operated between 1720 and 1727. Some 200 examples of Vezzi porcelain are known. The teapot (7) by Vezzi in the Victoria and Albert Museum is a good example of the outstanding work produced by this short-lived factory. Influences are strongly apparent in this piece from early Meissen regarding its form and German *Hausmaler* painted decoration of that time.



7. Vezzi teapot in hard-paste porcelain, c.1720-27.  
Victoria and Albert Museum (C.121&A-1930)

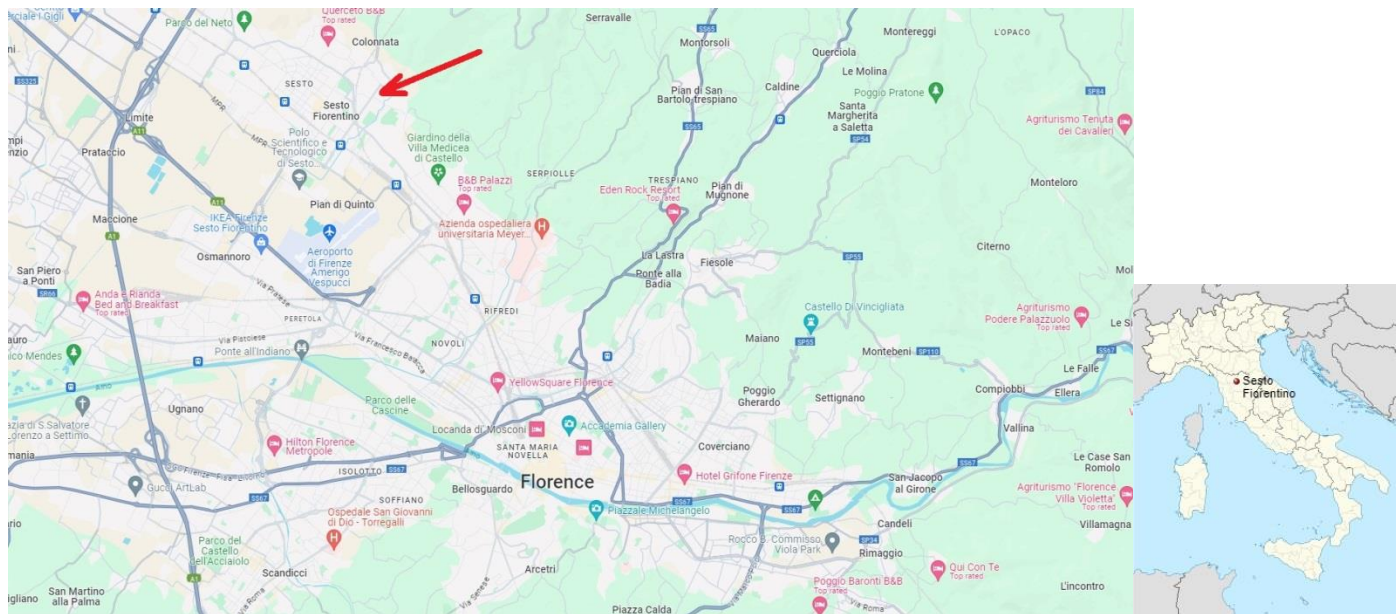
Ginori's Doccia venture was the third major entry into porcelain manufacture in Italy. And what followed soon demonstrated a remarkable progression into the production of both spectacular pieces on a large scale, stretching the possibilities of the technology of the time, as the examples selected later will show.

### The foundation of the Doccia factory under Marquis Carlo Ginori

Aside from serving as a Senator, in Carlo Ginori was a man of many talents as has already been alluded to, and his drive to make porcelain was most probably heightened by several factors, not least, the allure to be able to impress his peers, produce impressive gifts for the aristocracy of his time, whilst also



seeing a role for the training and betterment of the common people he served as their representative and in many cases their work provider. In fact, much of the workforce of the porcelain factory would be freshly trained local people, who responded enthusiastically to their opportunity to contribute to this new and stimulating venture by a nobleman of long family history in the area. Ginori of course tapped other sources for the expertise required to make a success of this new venture, especially by enticing top technicians from the Du Paquier factory on his visit to Vienna a little after he had already made major moves to establish his factory in the vicinity of his country villa named Villa Ginori di Doccia located in Sesto Fiorentino as it is known today. The map here (8) shows where this villa was and is, as it remains to this day in Sesto Fiorentino about 8 km from Central Florence or a 17 minute bus ride to the north west.



8. Map of Florence indicating Sesto Fiorentino in relation to central Florence.

To establish a porcelain production, Ginori needed:

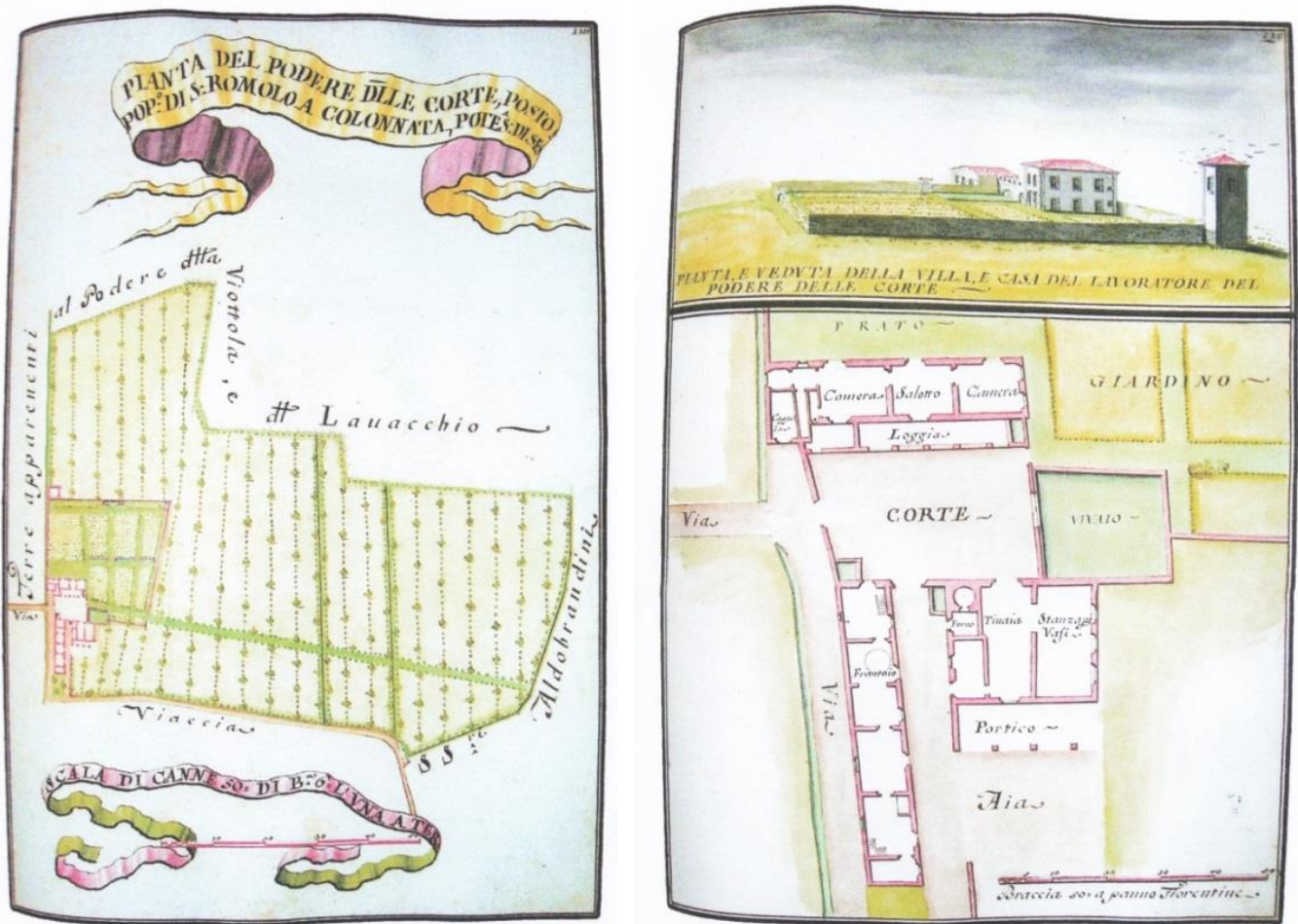
- a building or buildings to house the various stages of production, the kilns and other vital stages of the manufacturing process
- a formula and raw materials to produce porcelain
- easy access to fuel, workers to staff the undertaking, and transport to carry materials into and the end products out of the factory
- expertise to assist in setting up the undertaking.

### The factory buildings

Carlo Ginori chose, rather atypically, to purchase a villa, Villa delle Corte, near to his country villa, Villa Ginori di Doccia, converting his purchase for use as his porcelain factory.

On 15 March 1737, Carlo Ginori purchased the Villa delle Corte (or Villa Le Corti and other variants), which included ‘farm with master’s and workers’ house’, as is revealed thanks to the existence of a document extant today in a private collection. The document does not bear a date but can be traced to the 1730s. The property was acquired from Senator Francesco Maria Giovacchino Buondelmonti. This villa was just 100 metres south of the Ginori family Villa Ginori di Doccia. The aforesaid document was commissioned by Ginori the day after the purchase of Villa delle Corte and depicts the entire property in two scale drawings in pen and watercolour.<sup>3</sup> (9)

The left hand plate depicts the ‘farm with master’s and workers’ house’, and the right hand plate shows the plan of the residence and all the annexes, as well as a perspective view of the entire complex. (9)



9. Giovan Filippo Ciochi (attributed), Villa delle Corte, 1730s, pen and watercolour. Ginori Lisci Archive.<sup>4</sup>

These plates are probably by Giovan Filippo Ciochi (c.1695-1770), the architect who did other work for Carlo Ginori including the drafting of a plantarium in the grounds of the Villa Ginori di Doccia including a plate Ciochi prepared for that commission. (10)

The Bedfordshire-born historical and geographical writer Thomas Salmon (1679-1767) visited the Doccia factory in the early years of the factory and wrote his personal impressions of it in his substantial work entitled *The Present State of all nations, etc*, published in English originally in 1744-45, (11) and thereafter in more detail with regard to Ginori and his Doccia factory in Volume XXI of his Italian language publication, published in Venice in 1757. (12)

In the Italian publication of 1757, he included an illustration of the Villa Ginori di Doccia and the Villa delle Corte to the left of the image. (13) Comparison can be made of this image with that in the Ciochi plate, though the 100 metres distance between the two Villas is perhaps rather truncated by artistic licence. (14)

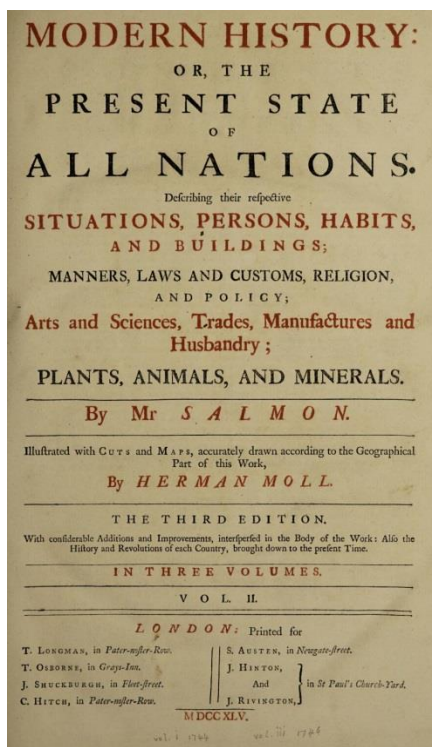




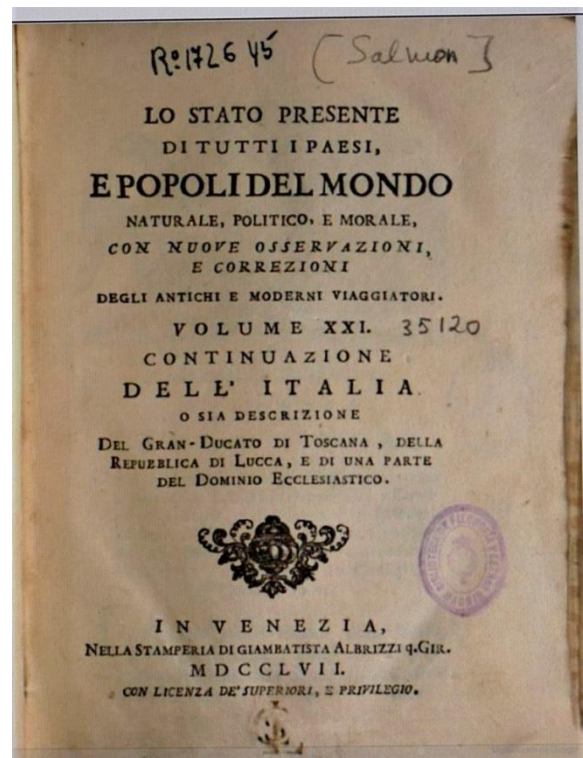
Giovan Filippo Ciocchi, *Villa Ginori a Doccia*, anni Trenta del Settecento; Firenze, Archivio Ginori Lisci.

Giovan Filippo Ciocchi, *Villa Ginori a Doccia*, 1730s; Florence, Ginori Lisci Archive.

10. Plate from Mazzanti (2022), p.19.

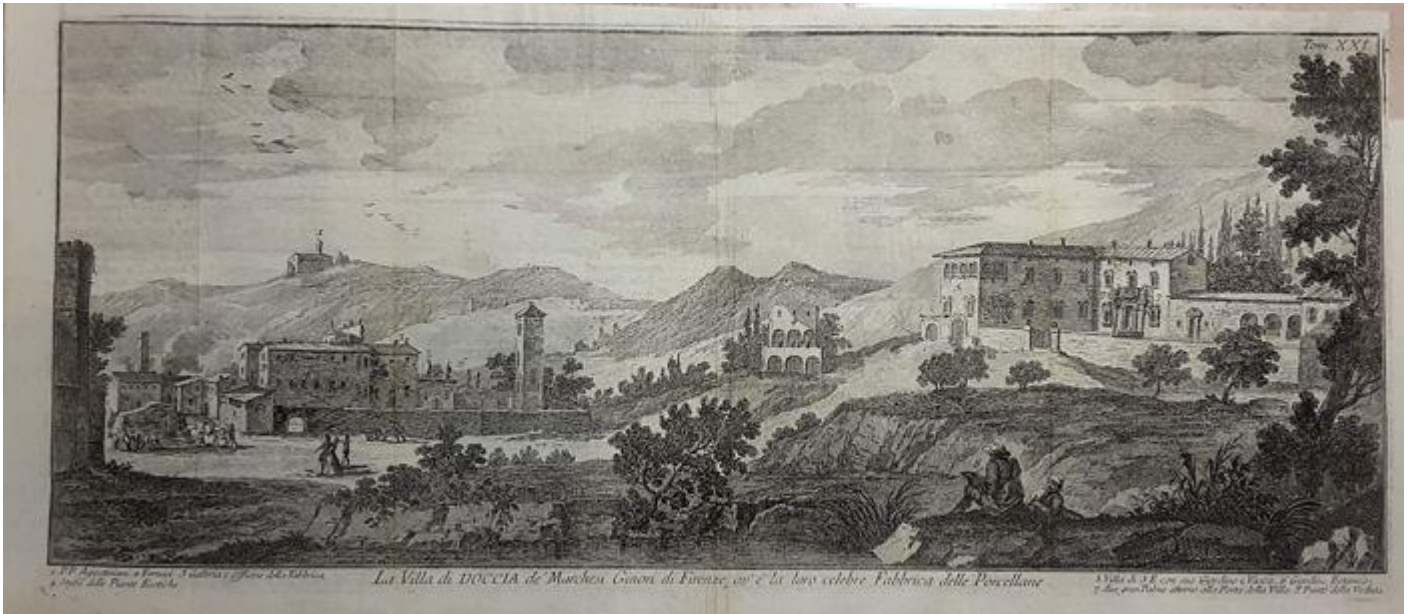


11. Thomas Salmon, London, 1744-45.

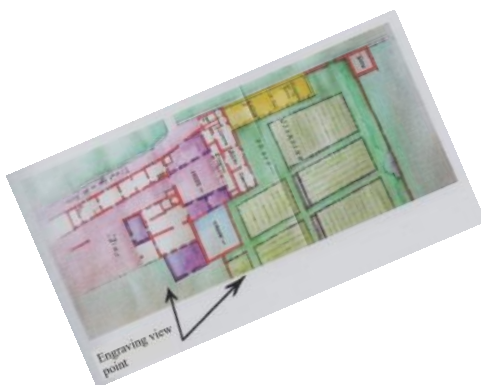
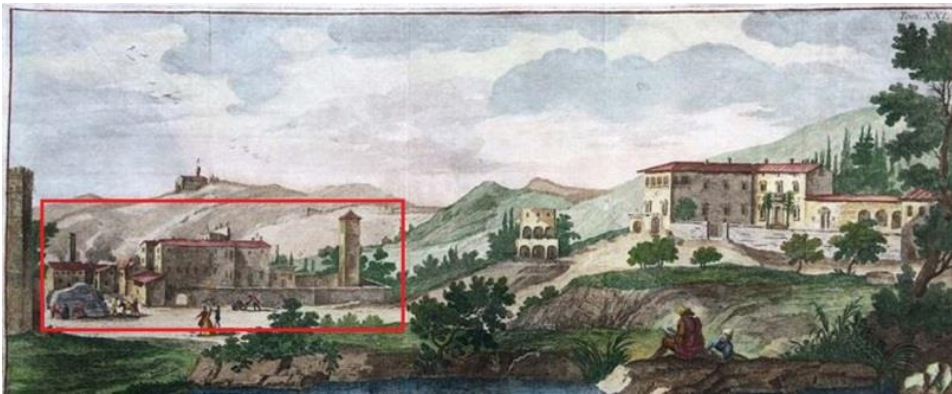


12. Thomas Salmon, Venice, 1757, Vol. XXI.





13. Illustration in Volume XXI of Salmon (Venice 1757) showing Villa Ginori di Doccia to the right and Villa della Corte to the left.<sup>5</sup>



14. The Ciocchi engraving of Villa delle Corte of the 1730s lined up with a coloured version of the illustration in Salmon Volume XXI (Venice 1757).

To quote Ginori's descendent, Leonardo Ginori Lisci in his *La porcellana di Doccia* of 1963 on the establishing of the factory using the Villa delle Corte, Ginori Lisci writes (in the author's translation):

*... that the land searches and the studies for the furnaces were begun earlier and probably in Florence, where Ginori, in his villa [i.e. Villa Ginori in central Florence], had long ago installed a complex scientific cabinet including apparatus for chemical analysis, and where contacts with people who could help him in his arduous research were easier.*

*The first expense, of which traces are found, is dated 20 April 1737, when a stonemason was paid for the construction of a furnace next to the recently purchased villa. This first expense was followed by*



*other interesting ones, such as the purchase, in the month of May, of wood of different shapes and qualities for the models, and the payment, made to a woodworker, for some wheels for a "water building", which was to provide the driving force for the "plate factory".*

*In the following month of July, three particularly significant events were recorded: the first "firing"["cotta"], which was cancelled on the 21st, the hiring of the sculptor Gaspero Bruschi, who for many decades would be one of the architects of Doccia, and finally the institution of a drawing and painting school for children entrusted to the young Angiolo Fiaschi.*

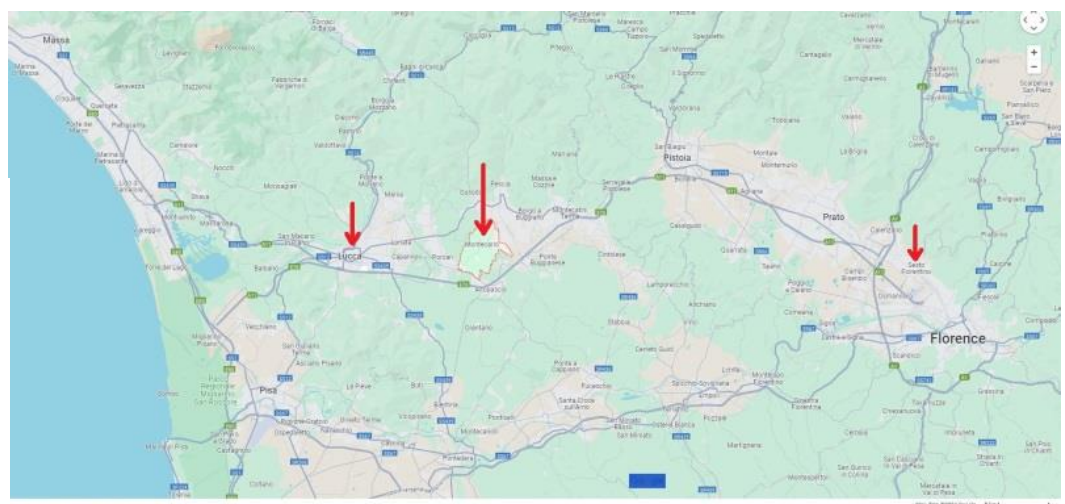
Ginori Lisci continues:

*Hard porcelain was produced in Meissen in Saxony in 1710, and in Vienna, thanks to du Paquier, in 1718: the first Italian factory, that of Vezzi, was established in Venice in 1720.*

*It is therefore logical that Ginori, understanding the artistic and economic importance that this new ceramic product would have in the future, also wanted participation in this new industry for his Tuscany. It should also be borne in mind that Tuscany had, in those years, frequent contacts with Austria due to the replacement by the new dynasty of the Habsburg Lorraine of the old one of the Medici which, in that same year, 1737, ended with the decadent Gian Gastone. It is therefore likely that various pieces and samples of the original Du Paquier porcelain arrived in Florence from Vienna, which, once appreciated and studied, would certainly have prompted and encouraged the implementation of the project. Unfortunately, there were many difficulties to overcome. The information received was too vague, both on the clay to be used and on the type of furnace suitable for reaching the necessary high temperatures; on the other hand, no one in Tuscany was familiar with this white, fine and transparent porcelain, so Ginori began to look for "white" clays in the vicinity, asked for advice from some owners of maiolica kilns, and started his first kiln thinking of being able to produce porcelain and maiolica at the same time, so much so that the latter was produced in quantity right from the first batches.*

A major source of clays and particularly for the production of hard-paste porcelain proved to be in the region of Montecarlo, about 12 km east of Lucca and 21 km west of Sesto Fiorentino, that of kaolin, an essential ingredient of hard-paste porcelain. The map (15) shows the accessibility of Montecarlo for this vital material to the new manufactory. There were other sources of clays for the porcelain production, but having a kaolin resource so nearby was a distinct benefit. The importation of French kaolin was only to be necessary well into the period of Lorenzo Ginori's time, after the death of his father.

15. Map showing the relative positions of Sesto Fiorentino (right arrow) to Montecarlo (central arrow) for the supply of kaolin clays for Doccia's hard-paste porcelain manufacture. Left arrow indicates Lucca.



Ginori Lisci further writes:

*Gian Gastone de' Medici had died in the first months of 1737, and the Powers had chosen Francesco di Lorraine, husband of Maria Teresa of Austria and the future Emperor, as the new Grand Duke of Tuscany. Ginori was sent on behalf of the Senate, that is, of the Florentine State, to pay homage to the new Sovereign, and went first to Vienna and then to Belgrade and Buda to pay his respects to the august Lorraine. The journey lasted several months and was full of vicissitudes, but allowed Ginori two long stays in Vienna, during which he had the opportunity to study Du Paquier's production and purchase interesting samples, but above all he was able to hire two expert workers at his service in porcelain.*

*The first was Carl Wendelin Anreiter von Zirnfeld, a skilled painter and gilder who had worked for years at Du Paquier, ...with whom a precise dated agreement was established ... 'on 1 November in Vienna in Austria'; the other was Giorgio Delle Torri, perhaps of Venetian origin, who was an expert kiln operator and paste handler of du Paquier himself. Ginori, during his stay in Vienna, asked for a privilege, that was a customs facilitation for materials to be imported, but he did not obtain it, despite the support of the Head of the Council of State for Tuscany that being Francis of Lorraine ...*

*The two Austrians arrived in Doccia in December 1737, and in 1738 the factory had its decisive start-up. The first loads of white clay from Veneto arrived, a special kiln was built for porcelain, a furnace for the lead needed for paints, and another for the colours. The rooms attached to the main furnace were enlarged, new workers were hired, among whom we mention the two Sieneese Giovanni Gori, kiln maker and glazier and Jacopo Mariotti, turner, and, for painting, in addition to the Florentine Angiolo Fiaschi who continued to teach drawing to the apprentices, a German painter, a certain Josef Mohr, arrived in Doccia. If we add to these new arrivals Jacopo Fanciullacci, a young settler who in a few months stood out among the others for his desire to learn and for his special interest in the kilns and the manipulation of paste, it can be stated that at the end of 1738 the three branches of manufacturing leaders were their management roles. The indefatigable founder [Carlo Ginori himself] supervised everything and everyone, and had Delle Torri as his main collaborator in the kilns and pastes, aided by the young Fanciullacci for the clays and paints; for painting, Anreiter helped in teaching young people through Fiaschi; for modelling and sculpture, Bruschi.<sup>6</sup>*

This testimony by a direct descendent of Marquis Carlo Ginori and written from direct reference to documents held in the family archives allows us a window into the early formation of the Doccia factory. In the final part of this extract, it shows that Ginori was very much hands-on to his venture, using his bought-in staff to their fullest extent whilst he maintained a close and direct engagement with the workings of the factory setup and production. At this point, it may be useful to pause and consider the wider interests of this remarkable man, Carlo Ginori.

Although he was born into a noble family of wealth and influence, he had a wide range of interests, and threw himself into each one of them with gusto and deep study and application. As just one example of this, we return to the writings of Thomas Salmon, where he listed the plants that Ginori cultured in the gardens of the Villa Ginori di Doccia:

*... botanical garden abundantly provided with simple, and abundant of waters, which are spread in a large tank, where you can see a certain species of fish that comes from China, which are so striking in their colour, red, white and yellow. ... in the nearby villa, in addition to the vast citrus garden and*



a pomarium filled with all the best and most particular fruits of France, there is a large stove [i.e. greenhouse?], built for the purpose of [controlling the temperature for] the rarest plants .... The direction of the same and the custody is handed over to the skilled botanist and gardener Ulderico Crucker of the German nation, whom the Marquis employed in Vienna into his service with copious monthly provision and treatment, after the death of Prince Eugene of Savoy, whose garden he had presided over in Vienna of Austria, ... This stove [greenhouse?] is therefore divided into six divisions; three of them are on the ground floor; the others in the upper part, all of which are always diligently held in six different degrees of heat according to the different requirements of the exotic plants that are preserved there, such as coffee, and many others that came not only from Africa, but from Asia and from America.

But since for what is constantly asserted to me, most of these plants are never seen in Tuscany, therefore before ending this chapter, I consider it convenient to give an exact relation to them in the same terms described by botanists, not only to satisfy the curiosity of readers, but to establish more and more in their souls and the whole world, what is the idea that one deserves to have of the magnificence and rare and excellent qualities of the Marquis Ginori.

The plants are the following:

1. *Ananas aculeatus fructu ovato, carne albida.* [pineapple]
2. *Ananas aculeatus, fructu pyramidato, carne aurea.* [pineapple]
3. *Ananas folio vix ferrato.* [a red pineapple]
4. *Annona fructu squamoso, parvo dulci.* [Anona or Custard pineapple]
5. *Guiava alba dulcis.* [white guava]
6. *Guiava rubra atida fractu rotundiore.* [red guava]
7. *Musa fructu cocumerimo cortiori.* [banana]
8. *Musa fructu cocumerino longiori.* [banana]
9. *Papara fructu melo peponis effigie.* [papaya]
10. *Papara fructu maximo peponis effigie.* [papaya]
11. *Vainilla flore viridi & albo fructu nigrescente.* [vanilla] <sup>7</sup>



**16.** Doccia porcelain ornament consisting of a base in the form of a plate on which are several stunted leafless trees and tree trunks [lifeless coral?]; seated on them is a nude putto holding a large cartouche bearing an inscription in raised blue lettering; only the cartouche is glazed, the rest is biscuit; much of the surface is still encrusted with marine growths including coral, 1754. ©British Museum number 1956,0704.1.

Carlo Ginori had a keen interest in studies of nature and the environment, particularly water life. The Victoria and Albert Museum has a porcelain ornament that Ginori left submerged in local water to study what life forms would inhabit it in time with a message for anyone who found it, reading in translation '*In order that by the law of nature, marine plants may grow here, the Marchese Carlo Ginori submerged (it) in the year of our Salvation. 1754. O Fishermen give (it) back for the growth of Science!*' (16)

Thomas Salmon had also remarked that he noticed Ginori's interest in *pietre dure* work in his Villa, and it may well be that he took to creating such pieces of his own. The author has no evidence that any such pieces purporting to be of Doccia manufacture are known or extant.

### **The question of the viability of the Ginori venture in Carlo's lifetime, that is between 1737 and 1757, finds a rather surprising outcome.**

An academic from Università Bocconi-Milano, Monica Poettinger, read a paper at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Congress of the European Business History Association (EBHA) at the Institute for Economic and Social History University of Vienna in August 2017, entitling her paper 'From aristocracy to business and back-the Ginori family and porcelain 1735-1896'.

In this important paper in the study of the Doccia factory, Poettinger considers many aspects of Ginori's endeavour in setting up his porcelain works including motivational, social and economic factors. She produces documentary evidence that the venture failed to show a profit in Carlo Ginori's lifetime. This dramatically changed after the manufacture was taken over by his son Lorenzo after his death, leading to a successful venture in terms of its profitability.

Whatever the reality of its profitability may have been, we are left with abundant evidence of the great achievement of Marquis Carlo Ginori, an aristocrat who was not content to sit back and enjoy the fruits of his inheritance, but strove incessantly to improve his personal education, apply himself to ventures and studies that attracted him; but most importantly, he was bent on contributing through his interests, his business applications and involvement in his community to the improvement of conditions for the local population, whilst fulfilling his dreams and no doubt gaining favour from his peers for his many accomplishments.

### **A selection of porcelain pieces produced under Carlo Ginori**

An exploration of some of the finest achievements of the Ginori production in Doccia in that first era under Carlo Ginori is appropriate here, and therefore there follows a personal choice by the author from pieces that have come down to us from over 250 years ago.

#### **1) The 'FARNESE HERCULES', c.1745-55**

The first example is a figure, or more realistically, a sculpture in porcelain being a tour de force of sculptural art, 82 cm high excluding the base (i.e. 32¼ inches). Its great size presented considerable problems in its creation in hard-paste porcelain, which meant that it needed special techniques to see the project to fruition – details of which are beyond the scope of this paper. This figure was sold by Bonhams in 2011 for the princely sum of £657,250 (including premium). (17)





**17.** Doccia porcelain, 'The Farnese Hercules', c.1745-55, 82 cm high, sold by Bonhams in 2011 for £657,250 (including premium). Bought in 2015 by Prince Hans-Adam II von und zu Liechtenstein from Galerie Neuse, Bremen and thence added to the Collection of the Liechtenstein Museum in Vienna.

## 2) *Pietà* after Massimiliano Soldani Benzi, c.1745

This figure group of the Lamentation over the Dead Christ or *Pietà*, essentially a copy of the sculpture by the celebrated sculptor Massimiliano Soldani Benzi, was realised in porcelain at Doccia around 1745. This is probably the largest figure group made at the factory, measuring over 3 feet wide, and moulded in eighteen sections. The group in the white was gifted to Cardinal Neri Corsini, and remains in the Villa Corsini in Florence. (18) Note also (19 – 22).



**18.** Doccia, *Pietà*, in the white, c.1744-45. H 71.5cm x W 92cm x D 73cm. ©Corsini Collection, Florence



19. Detail of the Corsini *Pietà*, see (18).



20. A polychrome version of the Doccia, *Pietà*, c. 1745.  
©Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



21. Wax cast of the *Pietà* by Massimiliano Soldani Benzi prepared under Gaspero Bruschi c.1744-45 in the Doccia workshops. ©Museo Ginori, Sesto Fiorentino.



22. The original bronze of the Soldani bronze is currently in the Art Museum of Seattle and dates to c.1714.





23. A maiolica version of a Doccia *Pietà* (upper image) compared with a recently discovered terracotta model of a *Pietà* believed to be a long lost version by Michelangelo (lower image).<sup>8</sup>

It is also most interesting that Doccia produced a maiolica version of a *Pietà* in the 1740s or perhaps the early 1750s, now in a private collection in Florence, different in several respects to the other Soldani Benzi inspired sculpture worked at Doccia under Bruschi. This maiolica *Pietà* however is somewhat similar to a recently discovered

terracotta model for a *Pietà* believed to be a long lost trial work by Michelangelo Buonarroti. Note in particular the positioning of Christ's head, arms and legs in these two works. (23) Here is surely a rich field for further research!

### 3) Large coffee pot with a *stampa* decoration , c.1747-50



This coffee pot is 26.5 cm (10½ in.) high and is beautifully designed, displaying the outstanding aesthetic sense of Ginori and his team in the early years of the factory. The technique called *a stampa* probably used actual plants, leaves and flowers as templates to create stencils through which the cobalt blue decoration material was applied to the biscuit paste before firing and glazing. This technique is a signature feature of early Doccia production. This coffee pot was sold by Bonhams in 2010 for £13,200 (including premium).

### 4) A dish or platter with polychrome decoration of Turkish figures, c.1745-47



25. Doccia dish c.1745-47. © Met Museum, New York (06.372c)

This dish, platter or tray (25) is one of a set of at least eleven painted with different Turkish figures in polychrome enamels, and this example measures 23.8 cm x 31.1 cm., and is in the Met Museum New York along with two others from the set.

Three quite damaged examples were sold for approximately £70,000 at auction by Cheffins in Cambridge in 2016, having had a pre-sale estimate of £4,000-6,000. (26)





**26.** Three damaged Doccia dishes in the Turkish figures series were sold by Cheffins in Cambridge for approximately £70,000 in 2016.

**5)** Fluted baluster teapot decorated with transfer printed scene of putti at various pursuits, including on a seesaw as well as some *a stampa* elements, c.1750-52, cover lacking.



**27.** Rare Doccia teapot decorated with both transfer-printed cupids on a seasaw, as well as *a stampa* elements, c.1750-52, sold from the Mavis Bimson-Watney collection by Woolley and Wallis, Salisbury in February 2024 for £15,120.

This rare and early teapot (27) appears to demonstrate the techniques of *a stampa* as well as transfer printing. There is further evidence that Ginori used transfer printing as early as 1749. This makes Doccia's use of the technique as predating that of John Brooks' first application for a patent for the technique from Birmingham in September 1751, and well before the John Sadler and Guy Green patent application for printing on tiles in 1756. This matter is examined in the ECC *Transactions* paper of January 2011 by John Mallet.<sup>9</sup>

#### 6) A double-walled teapot c.1745 in the Colli Collection<sup>10</sup>

This extraordinary teapot, (28) perhaps inspired by Chinese and Meissen double-walled porcelain pieces, shows the degree of advanced application adopted by the Ginori works even in the very earliest years of the undertaking. The Colli Collection contains other outstanding examples of the manufactory made at a time when experimentation must have been still much part of its activities. Such pieces demonstrate the bold initiatives taken by Doccia under its inspired founder and his carefully selected technical staff.



28. Doccia double-walled teapot c.1745.  
©Colli Collection.

#### 7) Another teapot from the Colli Collection, c.1742-45, painted landscapes in purple and with a green lizard-shaped handle



29. Baluster-shaped Doccia teapot,  
c.1742-45. ©Colli Collection.



The decoration of this teapot (29) is much in the style of the Du Paquier factory of Vienna. This influence is hardly surprising given that Carl Wendelin Anreiter von Zirnfeld had joined Ginori at Doccia from the Du Paquier factory in 1738 as mentioned earlier. The green lizard handle is also a feature similar to pieces produced by Du Paquier.

**8) Plate from the Colli Collection, c.1748-53, with transfer-printed decoration with an Arcadian scene, and hand-painted rim decoration**



**30.** Doccia plate with transfer-printed decoration from the Colli Collection, c.1748-53, diameter 22.6 cm. ©Colli Collection.

This rare plate<sup>11</sup> (30) is an example of the very early transfer-printing carried out at Doccia – earlier than the patenting of the technique in England as pointed out in the example of the teapot (27) above.

9) *Jupiter and the Eagle* c.1745-50, modelled after Giuseppe Piamontini. Palazzo Madama D'Azeglio, (Dono 1874. Inv. 3429/C), H. 64 cm.



**31.** Doccia figure group  
*Jupiter and the Eagle*,  
c.1745-50. Palazzo  
Madama D'Azeglio (Dono  
1874. Inv. 3429/C).

The author has written on this wonderful figure (31) in his LCC Lockdown Paper number 27 entitled 'Doccia porcelain in the Palazzo Madama, Turin' dated April 2021. Please note the truly remarkable achievement of Doccia in not only producing a porcelain figure of this complexity and size, the figure stands 64 cm high (25 inches in height), but Ginori had the temerity to have it polychromed, which of course meant subjecting so large a piece to many firings in the kiln – surely an outstanding achievement for a your enterprise at that time. (31)



10) *Fireplace in porcelain by Gaspero Bruschi and Domenico Stagi, 1754*



32. Doccia, *Fireplace*, 1754, Height 310 cm (10' 2"). Museo di Doccia, Sesto Fiorentino, Inv.4437

This huge masterpiece (32) was conceived to be part of the collection of works for the gallery in Villa delle Corte, and was installed there after its creation in 1754. The work was supervised by Gaspero Bruschi with the painter Domenico Stagi playing an important role. In the lower section of the *Fireplace*, eighty-eight tiles, each decorated with a country or village scene, were used to fill the back wall to which the *Fireplace* was installed. Most of these tiles were produced and bought in from Delft, but a small number were made in the Doccia factory. Two telamons (*a male figure used as a pillar to support an entablature or other structure*) support the upper part of the *Fireplace* on each side of the lower section. A large rectangular mirror occupies the middle section. The upper section consists of scaled-down replicas of *Dusk* and *Dawn* sculpted by Michelangelo for the tomb of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino, in the family shrine in the Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo in Florence. The top central feature is an oval bas-relief in a moulded frame of putti scattering flowers (distilling roses). This feature is by Massimiliano Soldani Benzi. Its wax cast is preserved in the Museo di Doccia, and a bronze version is to be seen in the oratory hall of the Compagnia di San Niccolò at San Quirico di Vernio, north of Florence. To describe this extraordinary work of art as a tour de force is an understatement. It remains in place in the Museo di Doccia in Sesto Fiorentino to the present.

The creation of the *Fireplace* must surely have had something to do with Ginori's attempt to break into the trade of pieces for the heating of buildings at the time. This idea was realised fully by his son Lorenzo after his death, when the factory successfully produced heating stoves in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### 11) *Tempietto Ginori* ('Small temple Ginori'), **Doccia porcelain by Gaspero Bruschi, c.1750-1**

This masterpiece in porcelain (33) is arguably the crowning achievement for the early period of the Doccia factory under its founder. Standing 167 cm (65 inches) high including its base, this is an almost overwhelming artistic creation. The porcelain has been left in the white excepting for the many medallions in the work, which have a blue background, as has the 'floor' of the piece.

Features of the porcelain sculpture, for that is essentially what it is, are as follows:

- at the four corners of the polylobed base sit the four cardinal virtues of *Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance*.
- at the top of the pillars, sit the three figures of the *Parcae* (the Roman Fates, female personifications of destiny – *Nona* who spun the thread of Life, *Decima* who measured the thread, and *Morta* who cut the thread of Life and chose how a person would die) and *Time*, all designed by Giovan Battista Foggini. The Doccia factory possessed wax models of all these figures made by Foggini's son, Vincenzo, who had cast them from his father's moulds.
- the crowning of the work is embellished with four lions.
- the central part is dominated by a group of *Time abducting Beauty*, also by Foggini.
- the work is has 73 white porcelain medallions on a blue ground, reproducing the bronze *Medici series* by Antonio Selvi and Bartolomeo Vaggelli (1740-4), representing the entire Medici dynasty with a few anomalies too complex to deal with here.
- The inscription in blue on the scroll at the base of the work translates as:  
*'To the immortality and genius of the place, Carlo Ginori, Marquis and Count of Florence, dedicated leader of the Etruscan Society (Accademia Etrusca) in 1756'*

Although the detailed sculptures are copies of designs by Foggini, the overall conception of the piece and its masterly manufacture are ample testament to the genius of Carlo Ginori, who conceived of the project and saw it realised through the work and expertise of his staff.

The *Tempietto Ginori* is in Palazzo Casali in Cortona, where it has been since 1757, the year of Ginori's death.





33. Doccia, *Tempietto Ginori*, c.1750-51, Height 167 cm (65.7 inches). Museo dell'Accademia Etrusca a della Città di Cortona.



### What remains of the early buildings of the Ginori venture in Sesto Fiorentino today?

An early settlement was recorded here from the 14th century, when it was documented as the property of the powerful Della Tosa family. In 1525 the villa, to be called Villa Ginori di Doccia, passed into the hands of the Ginori family. Work to enlarge the property began in the early 17th century and continued until it reached its present size.

What remains of the Marquis Carlo Ginori's time in modern day Sesto Fiorentino? Villa Ginori di Doccia remains relatively intact. It went onto the property market in 2019, though its present status is not clear. The photos that follow of the villa were placed online with the estate agent's sale package. (34)



34. Villa Ginori di Doccia in 2019 from the online package by the estate agents Knight Frank Tuscany<sup>12</sup>



As regards Villa delle Corte, the part that survives today is now a library, The Ernesto Ragionieri Library, (35) but the façade is relatively unchanged, including later Doccia portrait roundels in the façade wall between the ground and first floors as well as the original clock face set into the central gable. (36)



**35.** Façade of the Ernesto Fagionieri Library – a relic of Villa delle Corte and the original Doccia factory. The ceramic roundels between the ground and first floors are by Doccia, and the clock face in the central gable date back to the original factory.



**36.** Engraving of the Doccia factory in 1790 showing the façade of what is today the Ernesto Fagionieri Library. Notice, what appears to be, two kiln chimney domes to the right of the façade.



In The Ernesto Ragionieri Library there remain frescoes painted by Vincenzo Meucci and Giuseppe Del Moro in 1754, a lunette of a kiln being tended and a barrel-vaulted ceiling of further ceramic-related allegorical scenes. (37)



37. Frescoes by Vincenzo Meucci and Giuseppe Del Moro in 1754 in, what is today, the Ernesto Fagionieri Library. The upper lunette is over the entrance doorway, the lower fresco is on the barrel-vaulted ceiling in, what was originally, the *Galleria* commissioned by Carlo Ginori to display the Doccia ceramic production collection – see also (38).<sup>13</sup>



**38.** Carlo Ginori's *Galleria* of 1754 in Villa Delle Corte, now the Meucci Room in the Ernesto Fagionieri Library – photographed in the 1930s.

## Conclusion

Marquis Carlo Ginori (**39**) was certainly an extraordinary man of vision, talent, political acumen, as well as driven to explore and pioneer many avenues of the arts and science. His indefatigable drive to excel in all that interested him, left a remarkable legacy, not just of the fruits of the Doccia ceramics factory he founded, but of many other areas, such as marine life researches and horticultural studies well ahead of his time, whilst also fostering the lives of the common people in his region by employing many to be trained and to earn their living in his Doccia employ to the mutual benefit of Ginori himself and of those he employed and trained. His legacy continues through the global renowned of Doccia porcelain and maiolica in museum and private collections, and the recognition of his importance in the many fields to which he applied his curiosity and ingenuity.



**39.** Doccia porcelain bust of Marquis Carlo Ginori, modelled by Gaspero Bruschi c.1750-55. Private collection.



## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> Biancalana, Alessandro, *Porcellane Ginori a Doccia- La stanza delle meraviglie di casa Colli* (Milan: Chimera Editore, 2023), pp.112-119. This fine catalogue contains full texts in both Italian and English.
- <sup>2</sup> Alimento, Antonella, 'Carlo Ginori and the Moderization of the Tuscan Economy' in Corey Tazzara, et al. (editors), *Florence after the Medici- Tuscan Enlightenment, 1737-1790* (New York & Abingdon: Routledge, 2020-21), pp.157-175.
- <sup>3</sup> Mazzanti, Beatrice, *I Ginori, la Manifattura e Sesto Fiorentino – Una storia per immagini* (Sesto Fiorentino: Apice Libri, 2022), pp.20-22.
- <sup>4</sup> Mazzanti (2022), pp.20-21.
- <sup>5</sup> Salmon, Thomas, *Lo Stato presente di tutti I Paesi e Popoli del mondo ...* (Venice: 1757), Volume XXI.
- <sup>6</sup> Ginori Lisci, Leonardo, *La porcellana di Doccia* (Florence: Cassa di risparmio di Firenze, 1963), pp.24-26.
- <sup>7</sup> Salmon (1757), Volume XXI.
- <sup>8</sup> See: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-news/8170644/Original-model-for-Michelangelos-Pieta-discovered.html>, and <https://www.art-critique.com/en/2019/03/a-statue-once-housed-in-a-mouldy-box-now-believed-to-have-been-made-by-michelangelo/>. These are just two of the many reports on this terracotta model discovered by the New York-based art historian Roy Doliner in 2010.
- <sup>9</sup> Mallet, J.V.G., 'Transfer Printing in England and Italy', *Transactions of the English Ceramic Circle, Volume 22* (2011). This teapot provided the evidence to back up previously made claims that Doccia combined the art of transfer printing with that of stencilling *a stampa* and were the pioneers of the technique of transfer printing on porcelain in Europe.
- <sup>10</sup> Biancalana, (2023), N.64, pp.314-5.
- <sup>11</sup> Biancalana (2023), N.76, pp. 348-9.
- <sup>12</sup> <https://content.knightfrank.com/research/806/documents/en/italian-view-2020-6986.pdf>. Property Number FLO190021.
- <sup>13</sup> Mazzanti (2022), pp.24-25.

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**Biancalana**, Alessandro, *Porcellane e Maioliche a Doccia- La Fabbrica dei Marchesi Ginori I Primi Cento Anni* (2009)

**Biancalana**, Alessandro, *Porcellane Ginori a Doccia- La stanza delle meraviglie di casa Colli / Ginori Porcelain in Doccia- The Porcelain Cabinet of casa Colli* (2023). This is a bilingual catalogue in both Italian and English.

**d’Agliano**, Andreina, et al, *Lucca e le porcellane della Manifattura Ginori* (Lucca: Maria Pacini Fazzi Editore 2001) (Italian & English)

**Ginori Lisci**, Leonardo, *La porcellana di Doccia* (1963). The writer was a direct descendent of Carlo Ginori.

**Mazzanti**, Beatrice, ‘Carlo Ginori e Villa «Le Corti»: la fabbrica di porcellane di Doccia nella sua prima sede’ [*Carlo Ginori and Villa «Le Corti»: the Doccia porcelain factory in its first location*], in *Annali di Storia di Firenze*, VII, (2013) pp. 123-163.

This text examines the buildings used in the founding of the Doccia manufactory, in particular Villa Le Corti purchased by Carlo Ginori in 1737, and adapted to serve as the first Doccia porcelain factory.

**Mazzanti**, Beatrice, *I Ginori, la Manifattura e Sesto Fiorentino – Una storia per immagini* (2022).

This ‘story in images’ is an invaluable reference to the sites and buildings used in the founding of the Doccia manufactory.

**Poettinger**, Dr Monika, of the Università Bocconi-Milano, a documented lecture entitled ‘From aristocracy to business and back- the Ginori Family and porcelain 1735-1896’. This lecture was given at the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Congress of the Institute for Economic and Social History of the University of Vienna (24-26 August 2017).

This lecture deals in detail with the finances of the Doccia factory in the early years under Carlo Ginori as well as much other important detail of the affairs of both the factory and its founder.

**Salmon**, Thomas, *Lo stato presente di tutti i paesi e popoli del mondo naturale, politico e morale: con nuove osservazioni e correzioni degli antichi, e moderni viaggiatori. Continuazione dell'Italia, o sia descrizione del Gran-Ducato di Toscana, della Repubblica di Lucca, e di una parte del dominio ecclesiastico* (Venice, 1757). Which delightfully extensive title translates as ‘*The present state of all countries and peoples of the natural, political and moral world: with new observations and*

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*corrections of the ancient, and modern travellers. Continuation of Italy, or description of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, of the Republic of Lucca, and of a part of the ecclesiastical dominion'.*

Thomas Salmon (1679-1767) was an English geographer who travelled widely and wrote in great detail about his travels, including of his personal visit to the Doccia factory in the final years of Carlo Ginori.