

Carlo Ignazio Busca Arconati Visconti: from his Travels in Egypt to the Castellazzo Collection

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(PLATES X–XII)

Carlo Ignazio Busca Arconati Visconti was part of the nineteenth century fascination towards the culture of Ancient Egypt and came in contact with the main personalities of Egyptology. He travelled to Egypt in 1826. Even before this journey, he had started to collect Egyptian antiquities. Only the «Busca Papyrus» was known to modern Egyptological literature but the history of its arrival in Europe remained an unsolved question. In-depth research on this collector has resulted in the discovery of many details regarding his life and the formation of his collection, as well as the discovery of two stelae that belonged to him.

Antecedent facts

In November 1822, Amalia Nizzoli arrived in Milan. Her husband Giuseppe, originally from Modena but a naturalized Milanese citizen, had been appointed Austrian consular attaché in Egypt where he collected a great number of antiquities. After various vicissitudes, these pieces became the basis of the Egyptian collections in Vienna, Florence and Bologna.¹ Amalia was so fond of Milan that she considered it her city of adoption, as may be gathered from her memoirs.² On the first day of her stay, she visited the Duomo and was impressed by its beauty and grandeur; in the evening she attended a performance at La

1. On Giuseppe Nizzoli cf. S. DARIS, *Giuseppe Nizzoli. Un impiegato consolare austriaco nel Levante agli albori dell'Egittologia*, «La memoria e l'antico» 2, Napoli 2005; C. RINDI NUZZOLO - I. GUIDOTTI, *Origins and legacy of Giuseppe Nizzoli, chancellor of the Austrian consulate in Egypt*, in «Studi di Egittologia e Papirologia» 11 (2014), pp.149-63, with previous bibliography. On the vicissitudes of the Nizzoli collection cf. S. PERNIGOTTI, *Amalia Nizzoli e le sue «Memorie sull'Egitto»*, in ID. (a cura di), *Aegyptiaca Bononiensia* 1, «Monografie di SEAP, Series Minor», 2, Pisa 1991, pp. 3-84: 3-4, with previous bibliography.
2. The *Memorie sull'Egitto e specialmente sui costumi delle donne orientali e gli harem scritte durante il suo soggiorno in quel paese (1819-1828)* were published in Milan in 1841, thanks to Francesco Cusani's solicitude. This volume has been published, in two subsequent editions, by S. PERNIGOTTI (a cura di), *Amalia Nizzoli, Memorie sull'Egitto e specialmente sui costumi delle donne orientali e gli harem, scritte durante il suo soggiorno in quel paese (1819-1828)*, Imola 2015 (cf. also the Pernigotti's contribution *infra* in this volume). Two letters from Amalia to Cusani on the subject, dated 11 February and 27 August 1841, are in the Biblioteca Braidense, AF.XIII.14.N.102: cf. L. GABRIELLI, *Amalia Nizzoli: nuovi documenti per una biografia*, in «Ricerche di Egittologia e di Antichità Copte», 1 (1999), pp. 66-72.

Scala Opera House and was surprised to note its spaciousness and magnificence. During the following days Amalia visited Brera, the Basilica of Sant'Ambrogio and the Bibliotheca Ambrosiana, and walked along Corso Orientale, now called Corso Venezia (pl. X, 1). Her memoirs read:

Fra i vari palazzi che vidi, fermò particolarmente la mia attenzione per la sua estensione e bella architettura, quello situato subito passato il naviglio sull'angolo a destra del corso. Stava per domandare a chi appartenesse, quando l'iscrizione sovrapposta me ne rese istruita; apparteneva alla signora marchesa Busca figlia del duca Serbelloni, nominato appunto nella suddetta iscrizione. Mi compiacqui della combinazione, pensando che io possedevo già una lettera per quella distintissima dama, e che avevamo stabilito di presentarla l'indomani, come infatti fece mio marito, il quale mi raccontò il cortese accoglimento ricevuto dalla signora marchesa Busca che volle subito offrirgli un contrassegno di gentile ospitalità, invitandolo per il giorno susseguente a pranzo, ed in pari tempo onorarmi in persona di una sua cordialissima visita all'albergo. Io mi tenni onorata d'aver fatta conoscenza di quella nobile e dotta signora, e trovai che gli elogi fattimi in Egitto dai giovani arabi stati a Milano, intorno alle doti della medesima erano giusti.³

Among the various palaces I saw, one in particular caught my attention because of its size and architectural beauty; it stands immediately past the canal on the right hand corner of the avenue. I was on the point of enquiring as to whom it belonged when an inscription on the building provided the answer: it belonged to the Marchioness Lady Busca, daughter of Duke Serbelloni, whom the inscription mentioned. I was amused by the coincidence, in the knowledge that I was already in possession of a letter addressed to the distinguished lady which, we had previously decided, we would present the following day, as in fact my husband did. He later related to me about the courteous welcoming he received from Marchioness Lady Busca. Desirous of showing a sign of kind hospitality, she invited him for lunch the following day and also offered to honour me with a visit at my hotel. I felt privileged for meeting this noble and learned lady. I concurred in the appreciation regarding her accomplishments described to me in Egypt by the young Arabs who had visited Milan.

Amalia is referring to the young Arabs whom Mohammed Ali had sent to Milan to be «educated» by Professor Morosi di Lucca. In Cairo Amalia had met, among others, a certain Missabichi, who later became the director of the Boulaq Printing Company; Gerue, «who during his stay in Milan managed to become an accomplished dancer thanks to the education he had received»; Giubran, who thanks to his proclivity for languages became a dragoman, that

3. Cf. PERNIGOTTI (a cura di), *Amalia Nizzoli, Memorie sull'Egitto*, pp. 79-80.

is an interpreter; and Ghia «who remained really ignorant». The letter Amalia needed to deliver to Marchioness Serbelloni had been given to her by Garue, who together with Missabichi talked enthusiastically to Amalia about Milan and the exquisite hospitality they had encountered there:

si lodavano in ispecie ripetutamente della marchesa Serbelloni Busca, e del modo cortese con cui sempre furono accolti da lei in tutto il tempo del loro soggiorno. Pieni di gratitudine e di rispetto verso quella illustre dama, essi rammentavano sovente le distinte qualità di lei e le gentilezze, per cui sentiva destarsi in me un'insolita affezione per quella signora senza che avessi la sorte di conoscerla [...]. Non ebbe appena il Gerue intesa la risoluzione presa da mio marito di recarsi con tutta la famiglia in Italia, che venne all'istante da me per dirmi che avrebbe preparata la lettera [...]. E davvero fu per mia buona ventura, ch  nessuna lettera poteva nel corso di mia vita, e nei miei viaggi procurarmi maggiori consolazioni di quella che dal Gerue mi fu data per puro accidente.⁴

they especially and repeatedly praised Marchioness Serbelloni Busca and the courteous manner with which she had always met them during the course of their stay. Full of gratitude and respect for that illustrious lady, they would often remember her distinguished qualities and kindnesses, so that even though I had never met her, I felt an unusual and growing affection for the lady [...]. The moment Gerue knew of my husband's decision to visit Italy with the whole family, he immediately came to me to tell me that he was going to compose a letter [...]. And really it was my good fortune, since in the course of my life and travels no letter would bring me as much comfort as the one Gerue entrusted me with by pure chance.

This was the beginning of the life-long friendship between Amalia and Marchioness Maria Luigia Busca Serbelloni. When in 1824 Amalia returned to Egypt with her husband, her parting from the Marchioness and Milan was particularly sad:

Venne quindi il momento di lasciare Milano, e questo pensiero mi rattristava tanto che pareami d'andare incontro alla morte. Non sapeva distaccarmi da un paese sì ospitale, e in cui lasciava una persona che mi aveva colmato di bont , e nutriva per me una particolare benevolenza. Lasciava Milano per l'Egitto; qual paragone?⁵

When the time came to leave Milan I was so saddened by this thought that I thought I was going to my death. I did not know how to say farewell to such a hospitable city where I was going to leave behind a person who filled me with kindness and felt towards me a special kind of benevolence. I was leaving Milan for Egypt. How could they be compared?

4. *Ibidem*, pp. 94-97.

5. *Ibidem*, p. 108.

Contacts between Marchioness Busca and Amalia continued even during the latter's stay in Cairo and Alexandria. For example, in a letter from Giuseppe Acerbi⁶ to Giuseppe Nizzoli dated 18 June 1825 Marchioness Busca is mentioned thanking the Nizzolis for the dates they sent as a present from Egypt.⁷

Amalia was only able to return to Milan in 1830 and this made her extremely happy, as it did the members of the high society she renewed the acquaintance of. Moreover, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the cultural and upper middle-class circles that met in the social gathering of Milan and in the lakeside villas were keenly interested in Ancient and Modern Egypt, collected antiquities and discussed theories of Hieroglyphic deciphering and the minor or major antiquity of the events of Egyptian history in comparison with those narrated in the Bible. Prominent figures were Francesco Melzi d'Eril (1753-1816), Enrico Mylius (1769-1854), Robustiano Gironi (1769-1838), Gaetano Cattaneo (1771-1841), Giuseppe Acerbi (1773-1846), Pelagio Palagi (1775-1860), Giuseppe Bossi (1777-1815), Ermes Visconti (1784-1841), Eduard Rüppel (1794-1884), the more modest Carlo Zardetti (1784-1849) or, some years later, the eccentric Luigi Vassalli (1812-1887). Many were part of the intellectual and artistic circle that frequented the Academy and Library in Brera,⁸ and chanced to meet Alessandro Manzoni or Stendhal.⁹ Some evenings, they would go to La Scala (pl. X, 2), where opera and ballet with either an Oriental and Egyptian theme or set design transported the audience to these far away lands, as they were inspired by texts and illustrations in books by authors who had visited these exotic lands or by the fancy of imaginary travellers.¹⁰

6. There is an extensive bibliography on this famous person, who held the position of Austrian General Consul in Egypt between 19 August 1826 and 16 June 1834. Cf., for example, P. GUALTIEROTTI, *Il Console Giuseppe Acerbi e il suo viaggio nell'Alto Egitto*, Mantova 1984; recently, P. PIACENTINI, *Da Settala alla Statale. Storie d'Egitto a Milano*, Milano, forthcoming.

7. DARIS, *Giuseppe Nizzoli, un impiegato consolare*, p. 35: the aristocratic Milanese family is often mentioned in various of Acerbi's letters, which are in the Archivio di Stato, Trieste.

8. Cf. Ch. ORSENIGO (a cura di), *Da Brera alle piramidi*, Milano 2015.

9. PIACENTINI, *Da Settala alla Statale*, forthcoming.

10. V. CRESPI MORBIO (a cura di), *La Scala e l'Oriente 1778-2004*, in particular pp. 20-21, 35-37, 124-151. Marquis Busca, as many other noble and upper middle-class Milanese families, had a box at La Scala. This is confirmed by the almanacs and guides of the time, for example *Guida generale per l'anno bisestile* 1828, Milano 1828, p. 383.

*The travels in Egypt of Carlo Ignazio Busca Arconati Visconti
and the making of his collection*

This was the socio-cultural milieu in which Carlo Ignazio Busca Arconati Visconti (1791-1850; pl. X, 3),¹¹ son of Marchioness Maria Luigia, decided to undertake his adventurous journey to Egypt in 1826. His mother recommended him to the Nizzoli family, availing herself of the friendship they had forged in previous years. In his role as Chancellor of the Austrian Consulate and with the support of the various connections he had created in Egypt, Giuseppe could easily offer the young Milanese man guidance and suggestions pertaining to his travels throughout the Country. Between the months of March and April 1826, Amalia was overseeing archaeological excavations in Saqqara on behalf of her husband.¹² It is perhaps at this time that Carlo Ignazio visited the site and found or purchased one of the two New Kingdom stelae that will be discussed below in this paper. In the Theban region, Busca probably purchased a sarcophagus, which the locals claimed to be “complete” with mummy and funerary papyrus. In fact, the ensemble was a nineteenth century pastiche composed of the lid of the sarcophagus of Padikhonsu (XXII-XXIV Dynasty), a Ptolomaic-Roman mummy, and the Papyrus of Ptahmose (XIX Dynasty; pl. X, 4).

At the end of 1826, Carlo Ignazio returned to Rome, where he resided in via dei Condotti 29. He showed the papyrus to his friend August Kestner (1777-1853), who also lived there, in Palazzo Tomati, via Gregoriana 42, near the Spanish Steps. He was a prominent cultural figure and had in fact collected, besides important Italian paintings and Etruscan antiquities, also numerous Egyptian objects.¹³ Kestner's interest in hieroglyphic writing made him seek the company of Jean-François Champollion when the latter sojourned in

11. At the death of his father Lodovico in 1841, Carlo Ignazio inherited the title of sixth Marquis of Lomagna. He was also «Patrizio Milanese». Regarding the Buscas family history, cf. *Libro d'Oro della Nobiltà Mediterranea*, s.v. «BUSCA ARCONATI VISCONTI», <<http://www.genmarenostrom.com/pagine-lettere/letterab/busca%20arconati%20ovisconti.htm>> (last accessed on June 2017).

12. PERNIGOTTI (a cura di), *Amalia Nizzoli, Memorie sull'Egitto*, pp. 181-192.

13. Cf. CH. LOEBEN, *Kestner-Museum: 125 Jahre Museum August Kestner*, Hannover 2014, pp. 15-16; W. SCHEPERS (Hrsg.), *Bürgerschätze: Sammeln für Hannover: 125 Jahre Museum August Kestner*, «Museum Kestnerianum» 19, Hannover 2013, pp. 17-45, with previous bibliography.

Rome in 1825 and 1826 and the acquaintance of Ippolito Rosellini and Richard Lepsius.¹⁴

On 7 January 1827, Kestner wrote a letter to Rosellini which establishes the date of the arrival of the «Busca Papyrus» in Rome¹⁵ and which the studies on this papyrus have thus far either ignored or quoted incorrectly.¹⁶ If the papyrus was already known in Rome in early 1827, it must have arrived at the end of the preceding year at the latest. Lepsius' letter also explains how the papyrus was unrolled and subsequently glued on various cardboards, as it may be seen today in spite of some attempts at restoration:¹⁷

[...] È arrivato a Roma un papiro tutto geroglifico simile a quello del Vaticano sopra la porta d'entrata. Il Marchese Busca, di cui la stela loro conoscono, n'è possessore. Egli volle adoperarmi per svolgerlo, e volentieri me n'avessi prestato, ma dopo dodici palme, incirca, svoltate, cominciano rotture, al modo contrario del solito, modochè mi sono fermato d'andar avanti. Adoperando quest'accuratezza crederei però pure di riuscire a collarlo alla Champollion, sopra cartoni tagliati, ma si rincontra un'altra difficoltà. Dodici palme, cioè, sono scritte ad una parte, ma più avanti si trova scrittura all'una e all'altra parte del foglio, al par del primo foglio di questa lettera. Quando vuol aver la bontà di rispondermi alcune righe, mi favorisca d'un avviso, in che modo si sono regolati loro in simili casi.¹⁸

14. On Lepsius stay in Rome, cf. J. LECLANT, *Aux sources de l'égyptologie européenne: Champollion, Young, Rosellini, Lepsius*, dans «CRAIBL» 135, 1991, pp. 743-762: 759-760.
15. G. GABRIELI, *Carteggio inedito di I. Rosellini e L.M. Ungarelli*, in «Orientalia» 19 (1926), p. 68, nr. 140: the letter is now in the Biblioteca Universitaria, Pisa, MS. Rosellini.294.1.72.1. Identification number IT-PII12_MRC.294.1.72.1. GABRIELI, *Ibidem*, p. 63, also mentions a letter dated 17 October 1836 from Lepsius to Rosellini. However, this is a transcription mistake as the scholar in question is Bunsen.
16. I. MICHELI, *Descrizione e storia del papiro*, in F. CREVATIN (a cura di), *Il libro dei morti di Ptahmose (Papiro Busca, Milano) ed altri documenti egiziani antichi*, Pisa - Roma 2008, pp. 18, 21-52. In a series of serious subsequent mistakes, Micheli argues that the papyrus was purchased «around 1850», that «we do not know when or where it was restored» and that the papyrus «was studied for the first time by a young [sic] Richard Lepsius around 1850». F. TIRADRITTI, *L'Egitto a Milano: nuove acquisizioni e restauri: guida alla mostra*, Milano 1991, p. 10, on the contrary, rightly argued that the papyrus had arrived in the first decades of the nineteenth century, a little after 1825. It was not preserved in Palazzo Serbelloni, Milan as Tiraditti claimed, but in Marchese Busca's residence in Rome. Numerous mistakes regarding the history of the «Busca Papyrus» can also be found in M. PERRAUD, *Untersuchungen zu Totenbuch Spruch 166: Vorbemerkungen*, in B. BACKES - I. MUNRO - S. STÖHR (Hrsgg.), *Totenbuch-Forschungen: Gesammelte Beiträge des 2. Internationalen Totenbuch-Symposiums 2005*, «SAT» 11, Wiesbaden 2006, p. 289.
17. Specifically, in 1953, since some fragments were becoming unstuck from their cardboards, the restorer Adelmo Manicardi from Modena stabilized them, as attested by a receipt preserved in the archive of the Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico.
18. This is an original transcription which was deemed untranslatable, in consideration of the many linguistic peculiarities of Kestner's Italian. The content of the letter explains how Busca had asked Kestner to unroll the papyrus, which he accepted to do. Having unrolled twenty palms however, he

In 1836, while in Rome, Lepsius examined the papyrus, which is 671 cm long and 18,5 cm high. He read the text of the chapters of the «Book of the Dead» and wrote a report, now preserved in the archive of the Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico, Milan.¹⁹ Furthermore, both in a letter to Rosellini dated 28 July 1836, and in his *Lettre sur l'alphabet hiéroglyphique* of 1837, Lepsius mentions various passages and graphical peculiarities in the text.²⁰ This papyrus must have been well known among nineteenth century Egyptologists. In 1841, for instance, Luigi Maria Ungarelli referred to it in connection to the Four Sons of Horus depicted in the psychostasia.²¹

The fortune of the Busca Arconati Visconti Collection

In 1828, Maria Leche bore Carlo Ignazio a son out of wedlock, whom they called Lodovico.²² In 1844, Carlo Ignazio then married Susanna Fauras (1812-1854), but they had no children. After five years of marriage, Fauras became infatuated with painter Ignazio Villa who had been frequenting the Busca Serbelloni family for years. Marchioness Maria Luigia had already commissioned several works from him but Carlo Ignazio was his real patron and introduced him into the high society of Rome.²³ Ignazio Villa's bust of the Marquis is now lost, only

noticed that the papyrus was beginning to show cracks — in the opposite direction than their usual — and presented writing on both sides. He therefore resolved to write to Rosellini to ask his advice on how to proceed.

19. The text is reproduced in CHIAPPA, *Il papiro Busca*, pp. 13-14.

20. R. LEPSIUS, *Lettre à M. le professeur H. Rosellini sur l'alphabet hiéroglyphique*, Roma 1837, pp. 31, 66, 76, 81. On Lepsius' letter to Rosellini, where he mentions the graphical variations of the name of Ptahmose, cf. E. TEZA, *Dalle lettere inedite di R. Lepsius ad I. Rosellini*, in «Giornale della Società Asiatica Italiana» II, 1888, pp. 81-94: 88. Today, the document is preserved in the Biblioteca Universitaria, Pisa, MS.Rosellini.294.1.80.4. Identification Number IT-PI112_MRC.294.1.80.4.

21. L.M. UNGARELLI, *Illustrazione di quattro vasi funebri di alabastro provenienti dalla necropoli di Menfi ora posseduti dall'Eminentissimo Sig. Cardinale Luigi Lambruschini*, Roma 1841, p. 15.

22. Lodovico Paolo Carlo Maria Busca Arconati Visconti (1828-1865) was legitimized on 13 April 1851. He acquired the right to bear the title of seventh Marquis of Lomagna and «Patrizio Milanese». When he died in 1865, he was entombed in the family mausoleum in Gorgonzola. The complicated vicissitudes pertaining his inheritance are documented by the acts of the *Tribunale civile e correzionale*, Milan, 7 December 1872. Here one finds information regarding his “out of wedlock” birth: cf. *Monitore dei Tribunali. Giornale di legislazione e giurisprudenza civile e penale*, XIV, N. 1, Milano 4 gennaio 1873, pp. 15-18.

23. On this event: cf. E. MARCONI - B. MATUCCI, *Ignazio Villa: un eclettico dell'800 da riscoprire attraverso alcune inedite sculture tra Palazzo Pitti e la sua Palazzina-studio a Firenze*, in «MDCCC 1800» 5 (2016), pp. 25-43. The article contains various imprecisions regarding Carlo Ignazio Busca and his family.

a drawing and a photograph remain, while the one he made of Susanna in 1849 is in the Galleria degli Uffizi.²⁴ Ignazio Villa and Susanna began a relationship in Rome that same year, while Carlo Ignazio was in Milan attending to the inheritance left him by his mother, who had just died. The two lovers fled to Florence and then to Paris and Marseilles. Carlo Ignazio never ceased to beg his wife to return. And indeed, she did return when she heard her husband was seriously ill. Three months later, on 27 December 1850, Carlo Ignazio died of a phlegmon that not even the most illustrious doctors called to his sickbed could cure.²⁵ His obituary praised his origins, his love of art and antiquities and his extraordinary qualities, among which his humility and altruism stood out. Only in passing did it refer to the sad family vicissitudes which had afflicted him. There were some kind words spent for Susanna, whose behaviour at the time was sufficient «to cancel all past differences, painted black by the iniquity of others» (*a cancellare ogni passata differenza coi più neri colori dipinta dall'altrui iniquità*). About Carlo Ignazio, the obituary also says:²⁶

Grandioso come il Mecenate de' tempi di Augusto proteggeva ed aiutava le belle Arti facendo travagliare Scultori, Pittori, ed altri Artisti, ed acquistando oggetti di prezzo rilevante non tanto pel suo nobile genio quanto per la soddisfazione di incoraggiare gli elevati ingegni, che sono l'anima della società.

As great as the Maecenas of the times of Augustus, he protected and helped the Fine Arts by giving work to Sculptors, Painters and other Artists and purchasing expensive objects not so much for his own noble intellect, as for the satisfaction of encouraging people of superior intelligence, who are the core of society.

His body was embalmed by the Roman surgeon Angelo Comi who devised a method of «petrification of animal bodies»²⁷ and perfected the technique of human embalming following in the steps of Girolamo Segato, who was renown for his travels in Egypt between 1818 and 1823 and his first attempts in the

24. *Ibidem*, p. 30, figg. 5-7.

25. G. MAROCCO, *Cenni biografici dell'estinto Signor Marchese Carlo Busca*, Roma 1851.

26. *Ibidem*, p. 4-6. The transcription of these two extracts was kept in the original.

27. In spite of his prestige at the time, Comi's method aroused perplexities among contemporary scholars. Cf. A.F. SANDI, *Intorno ai metodi di riduzione a solidità lapidea dei corpi animali dei signori Angelo Comi chirurgo di Roma e Bartolommeo Zanon chimico farmacista di Belluno*, Belluno 1839.

«petrification» of bodies.²⁸ After the funeral in the church of St. Lorenzo in Lucina, Carlo Ignazio's body had to be transported, as the obituary reads, to Castiglione d'Adda, where his parents were buried. In fact, the mausoleum of the Serbelloni Busca family where the bodies of Carlo Ignazio, of his parents and family members were entombed is in Gorgonzola, which is at approximately sixty kilometres from Castiglione d'Adda. As is often the case with other Milanese noble or upper middle-class families, the mausoleum of the Serbelloni Busca presents two stone obelisks in the Egyptian style at the entrance (pl. XI, 1).²⁹ Since this building was finished in 1776,³⁰ the presence of these obelisks, common in funerary architecture, must be connected to those that can be found in Rome and in publications from the eighteenth century rather than to the family's later interest in the culture of Ancient Egypt. Following this fashion, two obelisks that will be mentioned separately were also erected at the entrance of Villa del Castellazzo (pl. XI, 2).

In 1854, Carlo Ignazio's wife Susanna died in Florence, to where she had moved and had married her lover Ignazio Villa.³¹ Even though the Marquis had left her a rich endowment, the whole inheritance was bequeathed to his adored son Lodovico. In the same year, Lodovico decided to donate the largest part of the Egyptian antiquities collected by his father and which were still preserved in the family estate in Rome, to the Ciceri-Fatebenesorelle Hospital in Milan. He acted on the advice of a certain doctor Pessani who was interested in the mummy. This arrived at Ciceri-Fatebenesorelle, with the lid and case from two

28. I. POCCHIESA - M. FORNARO, *Girolamo Segato esploratore dell'ignoto, scienziato viaggiatore cartografo. Inventò un metodo di pietrificazione dei cadaveri e portò il suo segreto nella tomba (1792-1836)*, Belluno 1992; P. DE SILVESTRI, *Girolamo Segato egittologo 'dilettante'*, in «Quaderni PAU: Rivista semestrale del Dipartimento Patrimonio Architettonico Urbanistico Cultural Heritage», 35/36 (2008), pp. 35-46, with previous bibliography.

29. M. CAVENAGO, *Il mausoleo Serbelloni a Gorgonzola, raffinata espressione del sentimento illuminista*, in «Storia in Martesana» 5 (2011), p. 2, fig. 1, 14.

30. Work of architect Simone Cantoni (1739-1818) who also designed Palazzo Serbelloni in Corso di Porta Venezia, Milan.

31. A vast amount of information regarding the relationship between the two and Ignazio Villa's attempt to claim Carlo Ignazio Busca's inheritance for himself, almost twenty years after the death of Susanna, can be found in the sentences of the Tribunale e Corte d'appello di Milano, 27 January 1872 and 18 April 1873: cf. *Monitore dei Tribunali. Giornale di legislazione e giurisprudenza civile e penale*, XIV, N. 1, Milano 1873, pp. 459-471.

different sarcophagi and the papyrus in June later that year.³² These pieces were transferred to the Museum of the Anatomy-pathological Institute of the Ospedale Maggiore in 1870. In 1867, Richard Lepsius who was, as previously indicated, aware of its existence since its arrival from Egypt, referred to it in his work dedicated to the «Book of the Dead».³³ When, in 1886, Édouard Naville wished to peruse the document in order to include it in the study he was preparing on the funerary texts, he could not locate it. In fact, the Swiss scholar searched for it in the archive of Palazzo Serbelloni in Milan with the help of the archivist Spinelli,³⁴ while the document was already at the Ospedale Maggiore. Naville used Lepsius' transcription then and quoted various sections of the papyrus in his work.³⁵ The papyrus is still preserved in the Archive of the Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico. However, following a recent agreement between *Fondazione IRCCS Ca' Granda Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico* and the City of Milan, the papyrus should be moved to the Egyptian section of the Archaeological Museum of Milan, which is presently undergoing renovation. In the course of time, Papyrus Busca has often been quoted by scholars who have treated the various textual and iconographic aspects of the «Book of the Dead».³⁶

32. P. PECCHIAI, *Guida dell'Ospedale Maggiore di Milano e degli Istituti annessi*, Milano 1926, pp. 231-32. Particularly indebted to the information contained in this volume, A. PIAZZA, *Mummia e papiro, una singolare donazione*, in CHIAPPA, *Il papiro Busca*, pp. 10-12, contains many imprecisions and false interpretations. The information contained in this volume has been used, second hand, by authors who have recently written on the Busca Papyrus.

33. R. LEPSIUS, *Aelteste Texte des Todtenbuchs nach Sarkophagen des altaegyptischen Reichs im Berliner Museum*, Berlin 1867, p. 12.

34. E. NAVILLE, *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch der XVIII. bis XX. Dynastie*, Berlin 1886, pp. 89-90. PIAZZA, *Mummia e papiro*, p. 12, who claims that the papyrus was lost and it is not known how it was recovered, reports this information in a totally fallacious manner.

35. NAVILLE, *Das Aegyptische Todtenbuch*, pp. 95, 125-26, 134, 183.

36. The following, at least, must be added to the already provided bibliography: M. HEERMA VAN VOSS, *Teksten over amuletten in de Papyrus Busca*, in K.R. VEENHOF (Hrsg.), *Schrijvend verleden, documenten uit het oude Nabije Oosten, Vertaald en toegelicht*, Leiden - Zutphen 1983, pp. 290-93; M. BELLION, *Égypte ancienne. Catalogue des manuscrits hiéroglyphiques et hiératiques et des dessins, sur papyrus, cuir ou tissu, publiés ou signalés*, Paris 1987, p. 99; I. MUNRO, *Untersuchungen zu den Totenbuch-Papyri der 18. Dynastie. Kriterien ihrer Datierung*, «Studies in Egyptology», London - New York 1988, p. 305; B. LÜSCHER, *Die Verwandlungssprüche (Tb 76-88)*, Bd. 2: *Totenbuchtexte*, Basel 2006; M. TARASENKO, *The BD 42 Vignettes during the New Kingdom and Third Intermediate Period*, in B. BACKES - M. MÜLLER-ROTH - S. STÖHR (Hrsgg), *Ausgestattet mit den Schriften des Thot. Festschrift für Irmtraut Munro zu ihrem 65. Geburtstag*, Wiesbaden 2009, pp. 239-65.

After various vicissitudes, the mummy and the two parts of the sarcophagus arrived at the Egyptian section of the Archaeological Museum of Milan.³⁷

The « Busca Stelae » of Castellazzo

Lodovico Busca moved the remaining Egyptian materials that he had inherited from his father to Villa Arconati, the family's country seat at Castellazzo di Bollate in Lombardy. As already mentioned, in line with eighteenth-nineteenth century fashion, the entrance of the villa is decorated with two obelisks and the terrace facing the garden by two winged sphynxes (pl. XI, 3). Inside, various small-scale, marble obelisks also serve as decoration (pl. XII, 1).³⁸

So far research allows us to affirm that there were at least two stelae, which will be referred to as « Busca Stela 1 » and « Busca Stela 2 ».

The circumstances in which Carlo Ignazio came to possess the « Busca Stela 1 » is still unclear. However, he probably purchased it before he travelled to Egypt in 1826. In fact, that year, Gustav Seyffarth, who famously opposed Champollion's theory of hieroglyphics deciphering, met Marquis Busca in the latter's residence in Rome in order to visit his collection. Carlo Ignazio asked him to translate the long inscription on his stela. Afterwards, « Busca took out of his pocket a piece of paper that bore Champollion's handwritten supposed translation of the whole text ».³⁹ Naturally, the two translations differed. Therefore, the stela had arrived before the papyrus, which arrived at the beginning of January 1827, as is confirmed by the already mentioned letter written by Kestner to Rosellini on 7 January 1827, and in which the German scholar wrote: « Il Marchese Busca, *di cui la stela loro conoscono* » (the italics is ours).⁴⁰ Lepsius

37. For a preliminary presentation, cf. G. LISE, *Museo Archeologico, Raccolta Egizia*, « Musei e Gallerie di Milano », Milano 1979, pp. 21 nr. 1, 22-23 nr. 5, 11, tavv. 1-7, 42-45. Today, the inventory numbers are E.O.9.40152; E.O.9.41114; E.O.9.40401.

38. On the history of the building and of the estate, cf. A. ERRICO, *Villa Arconati: Storie in Villa*, Castellazzo di Bollate (Mi), 2015, pp. 6-13.

39. G. SEYFFARTH, *Die Grundsätze der Mythologie und der alten Religionsgeschichte sowie der hieroglyphischen Systeme de Sacy's, Palin's, Young's, Spohn's, Champollion's, Janelli's und des Verfassers*, Leipzig 1843, p. 262. During his three month stay in Rome in 1826, Seyffarth also met Champollion himself: cf. M. Bierbrier, *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, London

40. *Supra*, note 15.

subsequently mentioned the stela in his *Lettre à M. le professeur H. Rosellini sur l'alphabet hiéroglyphique* with reference to the definition of Atum-Ra-Harakhty «the God, King of the Gods» which appears on the monument and which the German Egyptologist translated as «premier dieu des dieux regnans».⁴¹

The stela was still at Villa Arconati at the end of the 1980s, when it was photographed in the hall of the museum (pl. XII, 2a). Later, between 1989 and 1990, it was sold at auction, as were the majority of the art works and artistic furnishings that had been collected in the Villa throughout the centuries.⁴² In 1992, Horst Beinlich published it, courtesy of a non-specified European private collector (pl. XII, 2b).⁴³ It is a round-topped stela, dating back to the time of Amenhotep III. On the upper part, three persons are represented in adoration in front of an enthroned Atum-Ra-Harakhty. They are Sobekmose, «Overseer of the House of gold, Overseer of the House of silver»; Nebseny, «Scribe of the Treasury of the Lord of the Two Lands», and the wife of the latter, called Bata. Under this scene, there are fourteen lines of text which contain a sun hymn by Nebseny. Officials with the same names and titles are known from other objects, and listed by Wolfgang Helck in his study on Middle and New Kingdom administration.⁴⁴ Among the monuments of Sobekmose, the German scholar also lists a stela, possibly preserved in Rome, he claimed. This very surprising statement made us think of «Busca Stela 1» immediately. On the contrary, Beinlich did not know Busca's history and could not connect the stela to his proprietor, although he supposed that the stela he was studying must be the one mentioned by Helck in his list. Therefore, Beinlich asked Helck what had been the source for his statement and the latter answered he could not remember but supposed it was the preparatory files for the *Wörterbuch* in Berlin. However, Beinlich's research in those archives yielded a negative result. Today, it is certain that the stela mentioned by Helck «from memory» and the «Busca Stela 1» are the same monument. This matter deserves further investigation. It is probable that

41. R. LEPSIUS, *Lettre à M. le professeur H. Rosellini sur l'alphabet hiéroglyphique*, Roma 1837, p. 81.

42. ERRICO, Villa Arconati, p. II.

43. H. BEINLICH, *Eine Stele des Nebseni und des Sobekmose von er-Rizeikat*, in «SAK» 19 (1992), pp. 37-77.

44. W. HELCK, *Zur Verwaltung des Mittleren und Neuen Reichs*, «P d A», Leiden-Köln 1958, p. 511. After the list of the known monuments, he adds: «Grabstein in Rom (?)».

in some letter or memoir of Egyptologists of the first half of the nineteenth century, other than those we have been able to retrace, another mention of the «Busca Stela 1» may be found.

In his excellent work, Beinlich proved that the stela came from the tomb of Sobekmose at er-Rizeiqat, south of Luxor. The tomb had been extensively plundered since the beginning of the nineteenth century. It was rediscovered in 1908 and dismantled by Emile Baraize, working for the Egyptian Antiquity Service. This institution sold it to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, as was customary at the time.⁴⁵ Since then it is on view in Gallery 119.⁴⁶ In 1954, the north and west walls of the tomb were acquired by the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, through an exchange with the Metropolitan.⁴⁷

Aside from his tomb, Sobekmose and the members of his family are well known to us from several inscriptions and pieces, now kept in European and American collections.⁴⁸ Among them, the pyramidion D15 now in the Louvre and stela ÄS 38 now in Munich, also came from the tomb located at er-Rizeikat and formed an architectural composition with our «Busca Stela 1». Since the stela ÄS 38 arrived in Munich as part of the objects collected by Ferdinand Michel in Egypt in 1824,⁴⁹ we can guess — as an hypothesis that requires confirmation — that the «Busca Stela 1» arrived in Europe in the same period and was then acquired by Marquis Busca.

Recently, during the arrangement of the few works of art left at Villa Arconati, another stela was discovered. We will refer to it as «Busca Stela 2» (pl. XII, 2b).⁵⁰ At the end of the 1980s, it was still exhibited in the museum hall

45. Cf. P. PIACENTINI, *The antiquities path: from the Sale Room of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo, through dealers, to private and public collections. A work in progress*, in «EDAL» IV (2013/2014), pp. 105-130.

46. W.C. HAYES, *The Burial Chamber of the Treasurer Sobk-Mose from Er Rizeikat*, «MMAOP» 9, New York 1939.

47. ID., *The Scepter of Egypt. A Background for the Study of the Egyptian Antiquities in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, II, New York 1959, pp. 269-271: 269. MFA accession number 54.648.

48. BEINLICH, *Eine Stele des Nebseni und des Sobekmose*, 40-46, with previous bibliography.

49. D. WILDUNG, *Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst: 2. erweiterte Auflage*, München 1976, pp. XV, 79.

50. I would like to deeply thank Christian Orsenigo, who is currently studying this unpublished stela. We examined it together on 30 November 2016, and we had useful and pleasant discussions about it and on the subject of the present work. I would also like to kindly thank Arianna Errico, head of the Educational Department of Villa Arconati for informing me of the existence of the «Busca Stela 2». In particular, I would like to thank the Fondazione Augusto Rancilio for enabling us to give our small contribution to the re-evaluation of the Villa and its heritage. My sincere gratitude is also due to Alessio Delli Castelli, who translated the present text into English.

of the Villa but unlike the other artworks of the collection it was not sold (pl. XII, 2a). So far, no mention of this stela has been found during research in present and past bibliography. The stela is in a good state of conservation although its surface is rather worn. It is in the shape of a monumental entrance, surmounted by a torus, a cavetto cornice and a triangular tympanum. A text runs on the frame. The field of the stela is divided into two registers. In the top register, the deceased, named Nekhu, accompanied by some members of his family, is portrayed in the act of adoring Osiris. The god is enthroned and followed by Isis and Nephtys. In the second register, the deceased and his spouse receive offerings from a male figure who is followed by a long series of male and female figures grouped in two lines. The typological and palaeographical characteristics of the stela date it to the end of the XVIII or the beginning of the XIX Dynasties. The provenance is almost assuredly the necropolis of Saqqara. Therefore, it may be hypothesized that it was part of the antiquities that Carlo Ignazio Busca Arconati Visconti brought back from Egypt in 1826, when he spent some time in Saqqara with Amalia Nizzoli.

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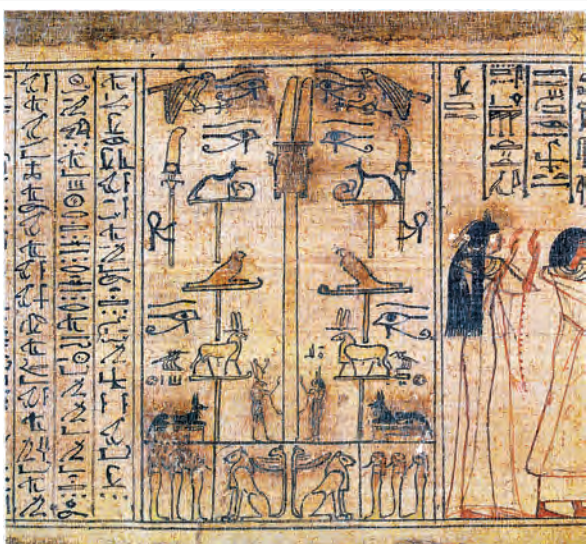
1. Palazzo Serbelloni on Corso di Porta Orientale, today Corso Venezia, Milan (engraving, early XIX century).



2. La Scala Opera House, Milan (engraving, early XIX century).



3. Franco Podesti, *Portrait of Marquis Carlo Ignazio and Antonio Marco Busca* (oil on canvas, 1825). Florence, Private Collection. Carlo Ignazio is seated, on the left; in the background, Podesti's self-portrait.



4. Details from the «Busca Papyrus», Milan, Archivio Storico dell'Ospedale Maggiore Policlinico.



1. Mausoleum Serbelloni and church of St. Protaso and Gervaso, Gorgonzola (Milan).
2. One of the eighteenth century obelisks at the entrance of the gardens of Villa Arconati, Castellazzo di Bollate (Milan).
3. Eighteenth century sphinx outside Villa Arconati, Castellazzo di Bollate (Milan).





1. Eighteenth century obelisks decorating the inside of Villa Arconati, Castellazzo di Bollate (Archivio Fotografico Digitale di Storia Locale - Città di Bollate).

2. «Busca Stela 1». *a.* The stela may be seen in the background of the museum-hall in Villa Arconati (before the end of the 1980s, Archivio Fotografico Digitale di Storia Locale - Città di Bollate). *b.* Detail of the stela.

3. «Busca Stela 2». *b.* The stela in the background of the museum-hall in Villa Arconati (before the end of the 1980s, Archivio Fotografico Digitale di Storia Locale - Città di Bollate). *a.* Detail of the stela.

