

Federal Councillor and statistician of the Confederation

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In 1848 Franscini was elected to the new National Council. On 16 November 1848 the Federal Assembly elected him to the first Federal Council, in the third ballot, with 68 of 132 votes. He headed the Department of the Interior until his death. His most lasting achievement in that office was the first federal population census of 1850, which the cantonal statistical office describes as the last great labour of Franscini, "uomo della statistica e uomo di governo", a man of statistics and a man of government. Between 1851 and his death he published the volumes of *Materiali per la statistica della Svizzera*.¹ He promoted the creation of a federal polytechnic school, which opened in Zurich in 1855 as today's ETH, while his proposal for a federal university met opposition and failed.² Franscini died in Bern on 19 July 1857. The Federal Statistical Office regards him as "the father of Swiss statistics" and records that he contributed to the establishment of the office in 1860, three years after his death.³ His last political text, *Semplici verità ai Ticinesi* of 1854, was addressed to his own canton at the height of its political conflicts.

1 Statistics, education and confidence

Franscini's work bears on the financial centre in a way that is easy to overlook. A financial centre depends on reliable public information: population and employment data, tax statistics, land values, price indices and the economic data on which banks, investors and regulators base their decisions. The Ufficio di statistica del Cantone Ticino (USTAT) and the Federal Statistical Office continue a tradition that Franscini began. The statistics of the Swiss National Bank on banks, balance sheets and crossborder positions belong to the same family of public goods. Education is the other half of his legacy. The bankers, fiduciaries and lawyers of twentieth-century Lugano came out of cantonal schools that he had organized. The Liceo cantonale of Lugano, where Carlo Cattaneo taught

from 1852, became the training ground of the canton's professional elite, as Chapter C.II describes.⁴ A university of its own came to Ticino only in 1996 with the Università della Svizzera italiana, whose Faculty of Economics and Institute of Finance are discussed in Chapter I.III.

2 Notes

1. Bottinelli and Zanetti (above). ↩
2. Marcacci (above); Marazzi, review of Lacaita (above). ↩
3. Federal Statistical Office, "History of the FSO", <https://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/en/home/bfs/geschichte.html>; Marcacci (above). ↩
4. Carlo Moos, "Cattaneo, Carlo", DSS, version of 1 February 2005, <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/it/articles/010128/> (Cattaneo taught philosophy at the Liceo cantonale of Lugano from 1852). ↩

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