

The regime of the landamani, 1815–1830

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The dominant figure of the Restoration in Ticino was Giovan Battista Quadri, born in Lugano in 1777, who had helped to lead the liberation movement of 1798 and the assembly of Pian Pòvrò in 1802. His regime lasted, in the words of the historian Martinola, "per tre lustri", for fifteen years, and met no serious opposition until its final years.¹ Quadri controlled the circle of the Magliasina, which was represented out of proportion to its population. He governed through a network of relatives, clients and officials whom contemporaries mocked for their elaborate titles. Minor officials of the canton had to be addressed as *illustrissimo*.²

The regime was nevertheless productive in the fields that the later financial centre would need. It gave the canton a penal code with a code of criminal procedure in 1816 and a code of civil procedure in 1821. It completed the Gotthard carriage road and negotiated the road over the San Bernardino. By what Martinola calls a laborious treaty it obtained from Lombardy, then under Austrian rule, the right to import grain and salt.³ The carriage road over the Gotthard, built between 1827 and 1830 under the engineer Francesco Meschini of Piazzogna, cost 1,650,000 lire, of which 150,000 lire were saved in disputes with the contractors. The road over the San Bernardino was designed by Giulio Pocobelli. During the Restoration the canton built about 118 kilometres of new cantonal roads.⁴ The public finances of the *landamani* rested on indirect taxes on salt, wine and grain, on tolls of several kinds (*pedaggi*, *pontaggi* and *portaggi*, collected on roads, bridges and ferries) and on customs duties at the border. By 1824 the state had to limit the approval of new projects for lack of funds. The posts illustrate how the canton financed itself. Under a convention of 1827 with the postal administration of Zurich the canton accepted a loan of 200,000 francs at 4 per cent and saw the net indemnity it received for the postal regalia fall to 3,000 francs a year.⁵ The canton thus pledged the future income of a sovereign right in exchange for present credit, a technique that

sovereign borrowers have used in every century and that the Gotthard railway companies of the 1870s would use on a much larger scale.

1 The reform of 4 July 1830

Opposition to the *landamani* grew in the late 1820s among younger lawyers, teachers and merchants, many of them educated in Pavia or Milan. Its manifesto was an anonymous pamphlet published in 1829, *Della riforma della costituzione ticinese*, which was soon known to be the work of Stefano Franscini. Franscini argued that the constitution of 1814 was flawed in its origin, since its adoption had not been free for the Canton of Ticino and had been willed by foreign interference. In his view a constitution required the consent of the people. Quadri replied in an extraordinary session of the Grand Council on 6 March 1830, but the reform movement could no longer be stopped. On 4 July 1830 the assemblies of the circles adopted a new constitution.

The date matters. The reform of Ticino preceded the July Revolution in Paris, which began at the end of that month and set off the wave of liberal constitutional revisions in Switzerland that historians call the Regeneration. The *Dizionario storico della Svizzera* lists Ticino first among the cantons that revised their constitutions in 1830 and 1831, followed by Thurgau, Aargau, Lucerne, Zurich, St. Gallen, Fribourg, Vaud, Solothurn, Bern and Schaffhausen.⁶ The core principles of the Regeneration were popular sovereignty, direct elections, the separation of powers, a wider male suffrage, freedom of the press and freedom of trade and industry. The Ticinese reform anticipated most of them.

The constitution of 1830 provided for the direct election of the Grand Council by the assemblies of the circles, with three deputies for each circle. It strengthened the separation of powers, guaranteed the freedom of the press, the right of petition and personal liberty, imposed the duty to provide public education and required the publication of the state accounts.⁷ Article 46 prohibited any amendment for twelve years.⁸ The cantonal school journal describes the reform as "un'autentica rifondazione della Repubblica e Cantone del Ticino", an authentic refoundation of the republic, because it rested for the first time on the consent of the people.

Feature 1803 1814 1830 Origin Annex to Act of Imposed by Diet and Adopted by Mediation powers assemblies Grand Council 110 members 76 members 3 per circle Election Direct choice and Census suffrage Direct by circles lot Seat Bellinzona Rotation every 6 Rotation kept years Amendment Not provided Not provided Barred for 12 years

Two provisions of 1830 matter to the financial historian. The publication of the state accounts established the citizens' right to know how public money is raised and spent, a principle that the canton's later rules on budget balance continue. The freedom of the press, combined with the presence of Italian exiles, made Lugano and Capolago centres of Italian publishing, as Chapter C.II shows. Both created the transparency on which confidence in public, and later private, financial institutions depends.

2 Notes

1. Martinola, study of the regime of the landamani, Scuola ticinese, no. 78,
https://m4.ti.ch/fileadmin/DECS/DS/Rivista_scuola_ticinese/ST_n.78/ST_78_Martinola_regime_Landamani.pdf. ↩
2. Marazzi, reform of 1830 (above); "La Costituzione del 1814" (above).
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3. Martinola, regime of the landamani (above). ↩
4. Mondada, study of roads and bridges, Scuola ticinese, no. 78, plates XVI–XVII,
https://www4.ti.ch/fileadmin/DECS/DS/Rivista_scuola_ticinese/ST_n.78/ST_78_Mondada_strade_e_ponti.pdf. ↩
5. Marazzi, cantonal postal service (above). ↩
6. Christian Koller, "Rigenerazione", DSS, version of 23 August 2010,
<https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/it/articles/009800/2010-08-23/>. ↩
7. Marazzi, reform of 1830 (above). ↩
8. Marazzi, study of the reform of 1855, Scuola ticinese, no. 94,
https://m4.ti.ch/fileadmin/DECS/DS/Rivista_scuola_ticinese/ST_n.94/ST_94_Marazzi_riforma_costituzionale_1855.pdf. ↩

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