

Lorenzo Lippi

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Notes about the first address of Luigi Embergher in Rome.

*News about Embergher's workshop in Rome
between 1893 and 1937 from the time's yearbooks.*

The first period of Luigi Embergher's activity in Rome, after coming from Arpino, as well as the year this activity began and the list of addresses he changed, are often treated in a contradictory way by different sources, even recently, and until today there is no serious and documented filing work to support a reliable reconstruction.

The source most commonly referred to (and surely the most reliable) are the labels inside many of the instruments preserved today. The difficulty is mainly in the lack of information exchange between researchers and collectors that attend this artist and, on the other hand, the relative lack of exhibits that can be attributed to the beginning of Embergher's activity (both in Arpino and in Rome), so that there are still many doubts about his relocations.

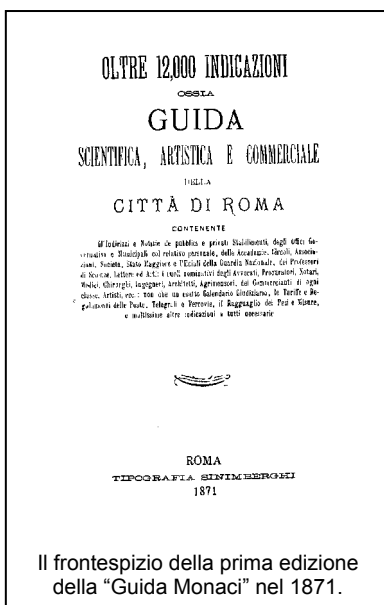
To face this need, we are preparing a page on the IROR website to give public opportunity to reveal this kind of data, as well as the serial numbers (often written by hand on the label) and also other details (like the eventual note of a signature on the neck block) in order to create the core of a database that offers the opportunity of exchanging knowledge between researchers and collectors, and so allow a better interpretation of these information.

Beside other research I am conducting on the roman mandolin, I found that a very important item is the reading of the time's yearbooks, a real hoard of information, and not only about the addresses of lutherie workshops.

Being Rome, the most known index (still existing and published, although completely different form the original setup) is with no doubt "Guida Monaci".

Edited by Tito Monaci since 1871, following similar indexes edited in Europe and in Italy, Guida Monaci had in a few years a huge success, becoming shortly the most important publication for commercial and professional activities existing in Rome. The importance of this index is due also to the exclusive links with the Capital, differently from other indexes that, referring to the entire Italian Kingdom, were necessarily less detailed.

Although some lack due to the difficulty in finding complete collections in the libraries and in the most accessible archives, the resulting analysis is quite interesting and contains also some important information probably never edited before.



The first record of the name of Luigi Embergher as builder of musical instruments is in the 1893 Guida Monaci which shows an unknown address of the Embergher workshop: Piazza Monte d'Oro, 29. The deadline for the publication on the index was the beginning of last December. Then the year in which Embergher had a shop in that address must be 1892, consequently all dates referred to later in this essay must be anticipated by one year.

It is interesting to notice that since the beginning Embergher paid for an advertising (called "annunci speciali": "special announcement") that he kept until 1901. This shows Embergher's commercial initiative: although just arrived in Rome's productive tissue (or maybe just for this reason) he understood the importance of a wider visibility, and he invested money in it. The years between 1890 and 1900 are those with the highest presence of mandolin constructors, even important ones, and the market had surely a great development, at least judging from the quantity of commercial activities and "special announcements" shown on the Guida, even related to other production sectors; on the other hand, competition was undoubtedly tougher and it is easy to understand how some way of "commercial aggression" was necessary for those who wanted to excel in this business.

Between 1902 and 1928, Embergher did not buy any advertising, limiting his presence only to his name and address in the "Musical Instruments" list.

There is a new ad in 1928 where he may call himself "Cavaliere" (he was nominated in the meanwhile) that goes on until 1933. Although in that time Embergher had a contraction of his business, so much that he had to reduce the workers and the working days, it is meaningful that he decided to invest again in advertising.

The presence of Embergher on the Guida Monaci ends in 1937, substantially when he gave his activity to Domenico Cerrone.

I think that even the advertisements, when existing, are quite interesting since they show significant moments of Embergher's activity. From his success in the international exhibitions to the claim of his inventions and his patents, typical of the time's luthiers, at least among the mandolin builders, like a kind of almost compulsory participation to the modernity of the Italian "second industrial revolution", so much that many craftsmen patented the strangest inventions just to have the right to write it on their labels (even if they were totally irrelevant with the matter) and often they boasted unfiled patents and inexistent inventions.

Only once, in 1897, advertising reports, apart from the address of the factory in via Tomacelli, also the address of a warehouse in via dei Condotti, 36.

Following, a list of the years I consulted and the reported addresses, then the pictures of the advertisements. For some years, I also consulted other indexes (especially the "Annuario d'Italia – Calendario Generale del Regno" and the "Annuario Italiano"), giving the indication, where relevant. Last but not least, I wish to point out that the "Annuario Italiano", 1932-1933 includes a note about the workshop of "Embergher A. & Bros." in Arpino, (at the time part of the province of Naples).

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Essential Bibliography:

M. Lizzani: "Guida Monaci: Roma di ieri, di oggi, di domani" from: "Strenna dei Romanisti", 1952

R. Vannes: "Dictionnaire Universel des Luthiers", 1975

R. Janssens: "Geschiedenis van de Mandoline", 1982

P. Sparks: "The Classical Mandolin", 1995

A. Timmerman: articles published on "www.Embergher.com", 2004

M. Chiappini: introductory booklet to Arpino's Museum of Lutherie

R. Leenen - B. Pratt: "The Embergher Mandolin", 2004

| Years | Address |
|--------------|--|
| 1893 | Piazza Monte d'Oro, 29 (also in the "Annuario d'Italia") |
| 1894 | Via dei Greci, 21 |
| 1895 - 1898 | Via Tomacelli, 147 |
| 1899 - 1902 | Via delle Carrozze, 19 |
| 1903 | Dato mancante |
| 1904 | Via Leccosa, 2 |
| 1905 - 1909 | Via delle Carrozze, 19 |
| 1910 | Via di Ripetta, 90 |
| 1911 | Via delle Carrozze, 19 |
| 1912 | Via delle Carrozze, 19 (in the "Annuario d'Italia") |
| 1913 - 1914 | Via di Ripetta, 90 |
| 1915 - 1937 | Via Belsiana, 7 |

ADVERTISINGS ("ANNUNCI SPECIALI")

1893

1894

1895

1896

1897

DEPOSITO:
Via dei Condotti, 36



FABBRICA:
Via Tomacelli, 147

LUIGI EMBERGHER
FABBRICANTE E NEGOZIANTE
d'Instrumenti Musicali a Corda
SPECIALITÀ IN MANDOLINI, CHITARRE E VIOLINI
VENDITA DI CORDE ARMONICHE ED ACCESSORI
ROMA

1898

MANDOLINI con
tastiera meccanica
brevettata



FABBRICA:
Via Tomacelli, 147

LUIGI EMBERGHER
Fabbriante e Negoziante
D'ISTRUMENTI MUSICALI A CORDA
PREMIATO CON MEDAGLIA D'ORO
ALL'ESPOSIZIONE DELLE NUOVE INVENZIONI VENEZIA-VIENNA
SPECIALITÀ IN MANDOLINI, CHITARRE E VIOLINI
Vendita di corde armoniche ed accessori
ROMA

1899

MANDOLINI con
tastiera meccanica
brevettata



FABBRICA:
Via delle Carrozze, 19

LUIGI EMBERGHER
Fabbriante e Negoziante
D'ISTRUMENTI MUSICALI A CORDA
PREMIATO CON MEDAGLIA D'ORO
ALL'ESPOSIZIONE DELLE NUOVE INVENZIONI VENEZIA-VIENNA
MEDAGLIA D'ORO - TORINO
SPECIALITÀ IN MANDOLINI, CHITARRE E VIOLINI
Vendita di corde armoniche ed accessori
ROMA

1900

MANDOLINI con
tastiera meccanica
brevettata



FABBRICA:
Via delle Carrozze, 19

LUIGI EMBERGHER
Fabbriante e Negoziante
D'ISTRUMENTI MUSICALI A CORDA
PREMIATO CON MEDAGLIA D'ORO
ALL'ESPOSIZIONE DELLE NUOVE INVENZIONI VENEZIA-VIENNA
MEDAGLIA D'ORO - TORINO
SPECIALITÀ IN MANDOLINI, CHITARRE E VIOLINI
Vendita di corde armoniche ed accessori
ROMA

1901

BREVETTO d'INVENZIONE
per meccanica con pacci e
tastiera mobile sollevata.



ROMA
Via delle Carrozze, 19

LUIGI EMBERGHER
FABBRICANTE
d'istrumenti musicali a corda
Specialista per MANDOLINI, LIUTI, CHITARRE
e d'altri strumenti a plectro.
RIPRODUZIONI DI STRUMENTI ANTICHI E MODERNI.
Premiato con Medaglia d'Or
alla Esposizione delle NUOVE INVENZIONI in Vienna 1897
e col Primo Premio a quella di Torino 1898.

1928 - 1933

ANTICA E PREMIATA FABBRICA
di strumenti Musicali a Plectro

Mandolini
ed altri
strumenti
per Orchestra



sistema
brevettato
del
Cav. Luigi
Embergher

Fabbricazione
speciale
per concertisti

ROMA (8)
Via Belsiana, N. 7