

International Memory of the World Register

Collection of Barbanera Almanacs

(Italy)

2014-03

1 Summary

The documentary asset whose inclusion is being requested in the Memory of the World Register is the, consisting of 356 original exemplars, from 1762 to 1962, making it the most complete collection in the world.

The uniqueness of the Collection lies in the fact that it is **the most outstanding proof of almanac literature** in the forecasting category.

This type of literature came into being in Italy in the Middle Ages in the universities and became extremely popular in the second half of the 15th century. The Almanac, in particular, was at its height in the 18th century, the so-called “century of almanacs”. **The most authoritative and representative heir of this early ancestor is the Barbanera**, in virtue of its extraordinary circulation, its non-localistic scope, its unfailing formula based on a “conversational” openness, and its deep-rootedness in the collective memory of the Italian nation, as borne out by countless literary quotations and influential Italian and international studies.

As a consequence, the universality of the Collection lies in its being a **symbol of a literary genre** which, able to boast one of the largest spatial-temporal circulations in the western world from the 18th century, helped to create the mass culture and identity-making heritage of entire nations, up until the advent of more modern forms of mass communication.

In the two hundred years it covers, the Collection of Barbanera Almanacs documents the period of time when this phenomenon was at its most intense.

At this point, mention should be made of the **uniqueness or the extreme rarity** of several pieces in the Collection.

2 Nominator

2.1 The nomination is made by Feliciano Campi, owner of the Collection of Barbanera Almanacs being presented here.

2.2 Since the mid-19th century the Campi family has worked, and still works, in the world of printing and popular publishing, of which the Barbanera Collection is part.

It is the family's involvement in this particular field that over time has led to materials of various kinds being sought and collected in relation to the entire sector of popular editions, including for the most part lunar calendars, almanacs and calendars, with particular reference to Barbanera editions.

In order to preserve, manage and enhance this important collection and tradition, Feliciano Campi set up the **Fondazione Barbanera 1762**: one of the most important European archives devoted to the almanac and to popular publishing.

It contains more than 7000 Italian and foreign almanacs and calendars; more than 2000 original documents from the main printing offices to have published the Barbanera almanac; a collection of editions from the 15th to the 19th century on forecasting; approximately 380 dedications and quotations relating to "Barbanera" from the early 19th century; more than 5000 articles that have appeared in major Italian national newspapers since the 1930s; notably a recent article written by Umberto Eco published on the "L'Espresso" magazine on 12 January 2012 (*enc. No. 2*); historical files of print advertisements, columns signed Barbanera, press releases, videos, radio recordings; and almost 40,000 music scores.

2.3 Mr. Feliciano Campi is the person who is administering the application process for this nomination and has the authority to nominate it to the International Memory of the World Register. He is the person to contact at the address below.

2.4 Any correspondence should be sent to the following address:

Mr. Feliciano Campi
c/o Fondazione Barbanera 1762
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3. Identity and description of the documentary heritage

3.1. Collection of Barbanera lunar almanacs from 1762 to 1962, consisting of 356 original exemplars, published by various publishers/printers.

The owner is Mr. Feliciano Campi, who is resident at Via S. Giuseppe, 1 – 06038 Spello (Perugia) Italy

4 Justification for inclusion/evaluation according to the criteria

4.2 World importance, uniqueness and irreplaceability

The Barbanera Collection is of unique and universal value because **no almanac exists in the world that is as representative as it is of the category of Almanacs**, a literary genre of great importance for the “popular” culture of the entire west.

Its representative quality is borne out by authoritative scientific studies¹, by the leading Italian dictionaries, in which Barbanera is actually defined as a synonym of Lunar Calendar and Almanac², by the Italian collective imagination and not only³, as well as by countless institutional acknowledgements, including the issue of a stamp and a souvenir philatelic card, and the medal awarded to it by the Presidency of the Italian Republic to mark its 250th anniversary (*enc. No. 2*).

Moreover, Barbanera is also the only example of an Almanac that can lay claim not only to an outstanding circulation as early as the 19th century, but also to a presence in various countries worldwide since the first half of the 20th century. A number of exemplars included in the Collection demonstrate in particular how it even circulated in the United States and Argentina⁴.

The Collection is irreplaceable because **its loss would represent the loss of a symbol and because, objectively speaking, it is impossible to reassemble a similar collection** owing to the rarity of the majority of the pieces of which it consists. Almanacs are in fact very rare precisely on account of their utility function, one also

¹ Beccaria Gian Luigi, *Tra le pieghe delle parole: Lingua storia cultura*, G. Einaudi Editore, Torino 2008, p. 183; *La Bibliofilia: rivista di storia del libro e delle arti grafiche di bibliografia ed erudizione*, Leo S. Olschki 1940, vol. 41, pp. 267, 435; Casali Elide, *Le spie del cielo: Oroscopi, lunari e almanacchi nell'Italia moderna*, Einaudi, Torino 2003, pp. 252-253; Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Linguísticos y Literarios, *Nueva Revista de filología Hispánica*, El Colegio de México 1984, vol. 33, p. 195; Mamiani Maurizio, *Il libro scientifico*, Ed. Sylvestre Bonnard, Milano c2001, pp. 54-55.

² *Il Dizionario della lingua italiana*, di G. Devoto e G.C. Oli, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1996, p. 202; *DISC: Dizionario Italiano Sabatini Coletti*, Giunti industrie Grafiche, Prato 1997, cit. p. 255; *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana G. Treccani, Roma, Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1950, vol. II, p. 571; *Grande Dizionario della Lingua Italiana*, Salvatore Battaglia, Torino, UTET, 1995, vol. II, p. 57; *Lessico Universale Italiano*, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma, Arti grafiche Ricordi, vol. II, p. 641; *Il Nuovo Zingarelli: vocabolario della lingua italiana*, Nicola Zingarelli, Nicola Zanichelli S.p.A., Bologna, 1989, p. 185; *Sinonimi e contrari*, Giuseppe Pittàno, Bologna, Zanichelli, 1994, p. 93; *Vocabolario della lingua italiana*, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana G. Treccani, Roma, Arti grafiche Ricordi, c1986, vol. I, p. 401.

³ Bacchelli Riccardo, *Teatro*, A. Mondadori, Milano 1964, tomo 1, p. 43; Bartolini Luigi, *Passeggiata con la ragazza*, Arnoldo Mondadori, Milano 1962, p. 237; Capuana Luigi, *Delitto ideale*, Remo Sandron 1902, pp. 145-146; D'Annunzio Gabriele, [*lettere e carteggi*]; De Rossi Giuseppe, *Farfalle sotto l'Arco di Tito: cose e persone della Roma di prima*, Cremonese editore, Roma 1941, p. 235; Goethe Johann Wolfgang von, *Faust: a tragedy*, Whittaker & Co. 1840, p. 345; Marpillero Gina, *Essere di paese*, A. Mondadori editore, Milano 1980, p. 62; Montale Eugenio, *New poems: a selection from Satura and Diario del '71 e del '72*, New Directions Pub Corp 1976, pp. 44, 104; Savarese Nino, *I fatti di Petra*, Salvatore Sciascia editore, Caltanissetta 1986, p. 94; Spaziani Maria Luisa, *L'occhio del ciclone*, A. Mondadori, Milano 1970, p. 90.

⁴ Almanacchi Barbanera 1917, 1932, 1935, 1937, 1938 e 1960. (*Enc. no. 1*)

intrinsic to mass-consumption literature, which does not identify them as material “for keeping” but, on the contrary, for replacing at the start of the new year, thereby causing their systematic disappearance despite the huge circulation achieved at their time of issue. The first Barbanera Almanac for the year 1762 (the first one found) is, in particular, unique in the world; the series of almanacs ante 1830 is unquestionably rare, if not unobtainable; the series from 1830 to 1930 is in any case hard to come by.

Due weight should be given to the fact that almanacs are evidence of the principal domestic reading matter of the less well-off social classes, and of the “folk” dissemination of knowledge with learned and academic roots. This gives the Collection a precise identification and a unique and tangible **emotional connection** with the past it represents.⁵

A further unique feature is the structure in which it is housed, which is not only able to guarantee its conservation and accessibility, but is also capable of enhancing and contextualising the collection, thanks to the Archive, to the Fondazione Barbanera Library, and to the activities that the latter organisation promotes.**4. 3 Criteria**

“Place”

The Barbanera Almanac started life in Italy, in Umbria, in the town of Foligno.

Italy is the place where forecasting literature had its origin and where it proliferated to the point of becoming an original literary form, the almanac genre, which spread throughout the western world. Central Italy in particular was the chosen place for this process in its various phases.

The first phase took place in Bologna, a university town since 1088, where the almanac came into being in the 13th century in the form of the *Tacuinum* and *Pronosticon* to be used exclusively by the highly educated and, in particular, by “philosophers of nature”, including physicians and astronomers-astrologists. This experience, which then spread to other Italian and foreign universities, constituted the original nucleus of the “popular” almanac⁶. Having emerged from the academic

⁵ Beccaria Gian Luigi, *Tra le pieghe delle parole: Lingua storia cultura*, G. Einaudi Editore, Torino 2008, p. 183; Capuana Luigi, *Delitto Ideale*, Remo Sandron 1902, pp. 145-146; Sciascia Leonardo, *Occhio di capra*, Adelphi, Milano 2004, p. 81.

⁶ Casali Elide, *Le spie del cielo. Oroscopi, lunari e almanacchi nell'Italia moderna*, Torino Einaudi 2003, pp. 42-43; Sorbelli Albano, *Il “Tacuinus” dell’Università di Bologna e le sue prime edizioni*, in “Gutenberg-Jahrbuch” 1938, pp. 109-114.

environment and been enriched with knowledge in the form of practical information for everyday use, this publication achieved its most complete definition and widest circulation between the 18th and the 20th century⁷.

The second, decisive phase of development of the Almanac took place in Umbria, and in particular in Foligno with the publication of the *Barbanera*, becoming, from the 18th century onward, the **symbol of an authentic means of diffusion of “popular” and mass culture**. In Umbria, three experiences and vocations converged, which to varying extents all had an impact on *Barbanera*, characterising it in a unique and original way. All three of these stimuli, which were inextricably linked to the area, would have an influence on the structure and the fortune of the *Barbanera*⁸, defining it as a unique editorial expression, and one that was able to cover the entire Italian peninsula from the early 19th century, with several printers involved in Foligno⁹ and modified versions being printed in other cities:

- **printing and commercial vocation** (in virtue of its strategically central position on the Italian mainland and the presence of old-established paper mills). This vocation came into being in the wake of one of the first movable-type printing works being founded in Foligno in the mid-15th century by Johannes Numeister (a pupil of Gutenberg), which specialised in “popular” publishing and in particular in the production of almanacs;

- **oracular vocation**, linked to ancient sibylline traditions. In the *Barbanera* this vocation is made explicit in the role of the astronomer-astrologer, who by surveying

⁷ The *Barbanera* almanac is the heir and representative of the transition from the ancient *Pronostico* and *Astrological Discourse* to the “Universal Book”. The “Italian” model of the *Pronosticum*, *Judicium*, *Tacuinum* brings together all the cosmological and astrological knowledge originating from the wise men of antiquity, re-elaborated by the Fathers of the Church and by the philosophers of medieval scholasticism, and revisited by the philosophers of Humanism and the Renaissance. In the Modern Age, in the pages of books for surveying time and forecasting events, knowledge of the Christian philosophy of nature is modelled in accordance with major historical, socio-economic, and political and cultural events: ecclesiastical laws and reforms, the Inquisition, the censor and the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*; the scientific and cosmological revolution; and the philosophical renewal of the Enlightenment and of the *Nouveaux philosophes*.

Barbanera is testimony to this constant process of elaboration through which the ancient philosophy of nature, albeit in simplified forms for a non-specialist readership, converged on the “popular” 18th-century almanac culture of astrological stamp, which was to model itself, during the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, on social, political, and cultural changes, taking on the role of “almanac of the Kingdom of Italy”.

It thus became the most popular “reading matter” among Italians, enjoying a very long print run (in 1921 the Campitelli *Barbanera* advertised a circulation of 1,300,000 copies), and was the almanac par excellence. To sum up, the Collection represents in concrete terms the legacy of an academic cultural tradition that became a “popular” literary genre. It is with this meaning in mind that *Barbanera* can be said to have become rooted in the collective memory of the Italian nation to such an extent that it has become an actual synonym for the “almanac” literary genre.

⁸ Consociazione Turistica Italiana, *Attraverso l'Italia illustrazione delle Regioni Italiane: volume duodecimo: Umbria*, coi Tipi del Bertieri, Milano 1944, p. 28.

⁹ Union Syndicale et Federation des Syndicats des Maître Imprimeurs de France, *Les Volumes de Noel*, [s.n.], [s.l.] 1938, pp. III, XXXVIII.

and interpreting the stars makes astrological and meteorological forecasts that are an aid for agricultural activities and provide answers to questions about the future. This role is also clearly shown by the iconography of the Barbanera figure depicted on the title page of almost all the copies in the Collection and in the traditional opening rhyme, which goes *"il Sol, la Luna ed ogni sfera or misura Barbanera per poter altrui predire tutto ciò che ha da venire"* (the sun, the moon and every sphere Barbanera now surveys, so he can predict for others all that the future conveys);

- **mystical vocation**, thanks to countless, eminent figures of Christian spirituality, some of them founders of religious orders of world importance. This vocation is present in Barbanera in its Catholic stamp, which, in conformity with the views expressed by Popes Sixtus V and Urban VIII, subjected to divine scrutiny everything written in each almanac, enriching the content with a series of formative texts of a moral character. Moreover, Foligno lay at the centre of the Church State, and was thus perhaps more directly connected to the universal character of papal directives.

This also explains the circulation, starting out in Umbria and branching out along the line of the Apennines, of printed books of extraordinary richness and singularity, hawked by peddlers, among which the Barbanera was the most influential ambassador of a technical and literary culture of non-localistic scope¹⁰.

The Collection is an **outstanding proof** of all of the above factors.

"Time"

The entire time span covered by the Collection, albeit that it consists of different historical and cultural moments, has its own intrinsic homogeneity, given that the Barbanera entered every home with the same type of information for the two hundred years represented by the Collection, acting as the mouthpiece of an identity-making spirit that remained constant over time.

These two centuries saw the rise and fall of a **phenomenon of mass acculturation**, for which the almanac was the principal interpreter up until the second half of the 20th century, when this role was taken over by the media. At this point it is worth clarifying that the starting date of the collection (1762) refers to the first exemplar

¹⁰ *The Hungarian Quarterly, Edizioni 189-190*, MTI 2008, vol. 49, pp. 53,56; Lo Gatto Ettore, *Russi in Italia: dal secolo XVII ad oggi*, Editori Riuniti, Roma 1971, cit. pp. 242-243

that has been found, but earlier editions are known to have existed¹¹.

As far as the less educated and informed social classes were concerned, the Barbanera Almanac was one of the few books, sometimes the only book, that was read, thus becoming for the entire Italian nation one of the texts with which people grew up and with whose values they identified¹².

Through the various years of the Collection it is also possible, using inductive reasoning, to reconstruct the knowledge of a particular age, since the Barbanera represents a **“documentary source”** for the reconstruction of cultural history: moral and religious, political and social, economic and agronomic, technical and scientific, medicinal and health-related¹³. The Barbanera also made an important contribution to the **linguistic and cultural unification process in Italy**, a century before its political unification, which took place in 1861.

“Subject and Theme”

The subject of the Almanac is based on one hand on surveying the cyclical nature of time recognizable in the lunar and solar calendar, somewhere between the sacred and the profane¹⁴, and on the other hand is founded on a type of wisdom that interweaves forecasts, practical suggestions and moral advice into an indissoluble mixture of information, constituting a yearly “ABC book” for every nation.

In the course of two centuries, the repetitive nature of this almanac topical structure became merged with the whole variety of additional annual elements that were introduced, finding its most dynamic and functional container in the form of the **dialogue between Barbanera and Silvano**, which provided a privileged window onto society and culture¹⁵. This dialogue takes place between the wise

¹¹ “[...] popular almanac, which has been published in Foligno since 1743 [...]” in *Lessico Universale Italiano*, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma, Arti grafiche Ricordi, vol. II, p. 641.

¹² Beccaria Gian Luigi, *Tra le pieghe delle parole: Lingua storia cultura*, G. Einaudi editore, Torino 2008, cit. p. 183; De Rossi Giuseppe, *Farfalle sotto l’Arco di Tito: cose e persone della Roma di prima*, Cremonese editore, Roma 1941, cit. pp. 235, 236, 237; Prezzolini Giuseppe, *La cultura italiana*, Corbaccio, Milano 1930, cit. p. 214; *Revue chrétienne*, vol. 15, cit. p. 238; *Revue des deux mondes*, au Bureau de la Revue des deux mondes, Paris 1872, cit. p. 382.

¹³ “[...] many almanacs, once the astrological predictions had been left out, further changed becoming more and more like notebooks with popular education aims.” in Casali Elide 2003, cit. p. 270; *see also* Tenca Carlo, *Giornalismo e letteratura nell’Ottocento*, a cura di G. Scalia, Cappelli, Bologna 1959; Stumpo Enrico, *I bambini innocenti: storia della malattia mentale nell’Italia moderna (secoli 16.-18)*, Casa ed. Le Lettere, Firenze c2000, cit. p.53..

¹⁴ Borriello Maria Rosari, Suzanne Kotz, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, a cura di Annamaria Ciarallo, *Pompeii: life in a Roman Town*, Electa 1999, p. 38.

¹⁵ Herein lies a whole procedure of codified theatricality: Silvano, the man of the wood, he who knows nothing, travels all the way up to the mountain to which Barbanera has retreated to survey the stars and meditate in solitude on human affairs. The ascent, which is physical and symbolic at the same time, represents the path to knowledge, and their greeting can be seen as a moment of communion

astronomer and the common man who turns to him in order to get information concerning the year to come¹⁶, on political and social situations, and on the problems of the world¹⁷.

The Dialogue between Barbanera and Silvano, which is found in all the exemplars in the Collection, **in metaphorical terms embodies the essential function of “mass communicator”** that is intrinsic to the Barbanera Almanac, and therefore represents the original symbol of its activity.

In this way, year after year, a tradition of education and formation targeted primarily at the middle and working classes became established.

“Form and style”

For all the years represented by the Collection, the Barbanera almanac is written in an homogenous, constant, coherent and strongly characterised style and form. The collection **documents in diachronic terms a mass communication format that was later rendered obsolete by the advent of new means of information**, first among which was television.

It therefore represents a genuine publishing model. It is an instrument of remarkable socio-cultural value, which in that span of time, through precise linguistic, graphic and artistic means, reached the apex of its circulation and popularity.

The format, the paper, the fonts, the white spaces, the illustrations and every other paratextual element¹⁸ helped to create a model that remained virtually unchanged

and of Silvano’s “affiliation” to the superior wisdom of Barbanera. At this point Silvano will give the sage news of what is happening in the world and share his simple thoughts on events, becoming a mouthpiece for the community. Barbanera will reply with metaphors, indications, suggestions, forecasts, and comments, provoking more questions and more answers. The Dialogue will conclude with a farewell, good wishes and an appointment for the following year, with the new almanac.

¹⁶ Société astronomique de France, *Astronomie*, [s.n.], [s.l.] 1912, vol. 26, p. 524.

¹⁷ Within the spatial-temporal journey covered by the Collection, the “Dialogue”, a dialectic space defined by Ennio Flaiano as a “masterpiece of wisdom and compromise” (Flaiano Ennio, *Un bel giorno di libertà*, Rizzoli 1979, cit. p. 131), can be recognised as having important educational characteristics, as well as an intention to provide reassurance and happiness in society, ensure the acceptance of events, and give value to work, the homeland and the family; Giovannetti Eugenio, *Satyricon, 1918-1921*, La Voce 1921, cit. pp. 47-48, 150.

¹⁸ The Barbanera Almanac presents the following unchanging and recognisable parameters.

- *format*:

editions are in pamphlet format, with the exception of the first issue, which is in folio (44x32 cm). The size ranges from 16x11 cm to 19x12 cm;

for the whole of the period presented, as a sign of its strength and representativeness¹⁹.

4.4 Rarity, integrity, management and access

The Barbanera Collection (1762-1962) is **rare** in that it consists of Almanacs whose utility function does not identify them as materials for keeping, but rather for replacing with the arrival of the New Year. In this light, several of the older exemplars are extremely rare. The first issue, in particular, which dates back to 1762, is unique in the world.

All the copies are **intact**, save for 4 exemplars, whose cover are missing, and their general conditions are for the most part excellent.

As far as the **management** of the documentary asset is concerned, it should be noted that the Collection is housed in shelving units in a closed Archive, under controlled humidity and temperature conditions. On account of its uniqueness and given that it is the founding piece of the Collection, the first Almanac *in folio*, dated 1762, is housed in a private, protected location. Moreover, a **librarian expert in computer and digital cataloging techniques** is employed full-time in order to ensure the effective management, conservation and cataloguing of the collection.

- *number of pages*

this varies over the years from 30 to 100;

- *monthly framework*

on average more than 70% of the publication revolves around the 12 months. The other contents are almost all calendar-based;

- *iconography of the months*

depiction of the labour of the month and the corresponding sign of the zodiac

- *framework of contents*

General Discourse; Dialogue between Barbanera and Silvano; months with saints, weather and proverbs; advice pertaining to agriculture, the home, health, and cooking; fairs and markets; papal bull, where present;

- *fonts, point size, colours*

garamond; helvetica; from 10 point to 14 point; starting in the 1950s, the inclusion of blue or red colouring in the titles and in some of the illustrations;

- *paper*

80 gr. uncoated paper

- *cover and title page*

beige or antique blue coloured cover, until the end of the 1940s, when it became green, and sometimes also carried advertisements; title page with various depictions of Barbanera (with the tools of his trade, half-length, seated in his study, inscribed in an oval with signs of the zodiac); introductory motto.

¹⁹ All the characteristics mentioned in the previous note 32 make it an easily identifiable product with a distinctive, marked and constant style, so much so that in the Italian collective imagination the colour of the cover, the title page, the size, and the depictions of the months still have a very strong and deep resonance: Acerbo Giacomo, *Fra due plotoni di esecuzione*, Cappelli editore, Bologna 1968, p. 88; Barberato Federico, *Libro e censura*, Ed. Sylvestre Bonnard, Milano 2002, p. 41; Buttici Giulio, *Dal risorgimento al partito d'azione*, Rocco Carabba ed., 1980, p. 28; Mamiani Maurizio, *Il libro scientifico*, Edizioni Sylvestre Bonnard, Milano 2001, cit. p. 55; Prato Dolores, *Le ore: II. Parole*, Libri Scheiwiller, Milano 1988, pp. 26-27; Savarese Nino, *I fatti di Petra*, Salvatore Sciascia editore, Caltanissetta 1986, p. 94; Sciascia Leonardo, *Occhio di capra*, Adelphi, Milano 2004, p. 81; Tempesti Pietro, *Il calendario e l'orologio*, Gremese, ed. Roma 2006, p. 71.

The **access** to the Collection is granted upon request for documentary intent, for research and studies purposes and for consultation subject. Furthermore, the **digital cataloging** which is being carried out will be followed by the digitization of the collection, in accordance with the Fondazione Barbanera project.

Legal information

5.1 The owner of the documentary asset is:

Feliciano Campi, residing at Via San Giuseppe, 1
06038 Spello (Perugia), Italy
Tel. + 39(0)742.391177

5.2 The custodian is Feliciano Campi

5.3 Legal status

a) The documentary asset is privately owned but licensed for use to the “Fondazione Barbanera 1762”. It is part of an open historical Archive including Italian and foreign almanacs, lunar calendars and calendars, and of a developing Documentation Centre on the history of almanacs in the world;

b) the copyright covers the name Barbanera and the 1762 Barbanera lunar almanac, which are registered in virtually every country in the world, whereas all the texts included in the Barbanera Collection presented here, comply with the times and modes provided for by copyright law;

c) Feliciano Campi is legally responsible for the safekeeping of the material, and this responsibility is exercised through the correct conservation and management of said material;

d) there being no legal, contractual or other circumstances in existence which might place at risk the safety or intactness of the documentary asset that is the object of this nomination.