

Pirro Gagliardi (b. Lucca, 11 March 1901): Where the Foundling Records Are, What Has Been Digitized, and How to Get Them

Bottom line: No foundling-home (brefotrofia) register from Lucca has been digitized or published online. Pirro's admission entry, the name of his wet nurse or foster family, and any recognition token survive only on paper at the Archivio di Stato di Lucca (ASLu), in the fonds "Regi Spedali e ospizi di Lucca." Because these documents are about 125 years old, Italian access limits should no longer apply, so a formal request from descendants should succeed. Meanwhile, Lucca's 1901 birth acts and the 1920 marriage file, including its *allegati* (supporting documents), are free to browse on FamilySearch. You can start reading them today.

TL;DR

- **Nothing from the Lucca brefotrofia is online.** Unit 4326 ("Registro dei ricoverati nel Brefotrofia, 1894-1918") and the related wet-nurse (*balie*) and token (*segni*) material exist only as paper at ASLu. They are listed in the SAN inventory n. 1623, which was presented in 2021. Antenati holds only Lucca's Napoleonic civil records (1807-1814). FamilySearch's Lucca collection 2043811 covers civil registration for 1866-1929, but none of the hospital records.
- **Your fastest free leads are on FamilySearch.** Look for Pirro's 1901 birth act, with any margin notes, in the Lucca (city) "Nati 1901" images. Then look for the 1920 marriage act and its *allegati* in the same collection. The *allegati* may contain the hospital's consent and an extract of his birth act, possibly naming whoever registered him.
- **Legal access is very likely, not certain.** The strictest limit, the 100-year rule protecting a mother who chose anonymity (art. 93 of the Privacy Code), has run out for 1901 records. Even so, ask ASLu in writing for a "consultabilità" ruling and full photographs. Hire a Lucca-based researcher if the reply is slow.

Key Findings

1. Digitization status of the brefotrofia records (verified)

- **SAN inventory:** The fonds is described in the online inventory "*Regi Spedali e ospizi di Lucca. Inventario sommario*" ([inventari-san.cultura.gov.it/inventari/1623/...](http://inventari-san.cultura.gov.it/inventari/1623/)). Your unit (ca/1414951, segnatura 4326) is part of it. The inventory site blocks automated access, so I could not list the sibling units around 1414951. I could open one other series of the same inventory: "Referti, operazioni, autopsie, obitorio" (ca/1414937, 1892-1975). Its units carry *segnature provvisorie* (provisional shelfmarks) 3886-3893. cultura This shows that the inventory's shelfmarks, probably including 4326, are provisional. Quote both the unit ID (1414951) and the provisional number (4326) when you write.

- **What the fonds contains:** ASLu presented the inventory in 2021 at the event “Sanità e infanzia abbandonata a Lucca tra XIX e XX secolo.” The work was funded by the Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Lucca and presented by Veronica Bagnai Losacco (ASLu) and Michela Moliterno. ASLu describes the fonds as containing “il cospicuo nucleo di documenti relativi al brefotrofo” (a large body of foundling-home documents). It is linked to the archive of the Spedale di San Luca della Misericordia, which was merged into the Regi Spedali in 1808. The exhibition showed “i cosiddetti ‘segnali’”: recognition tokens such as medals, crosses, coins, scraps of cloth and small handmade objects, tucked into babies’ swaddling or hung round their necks. [cultura](#) So a tokens collection exists, but its unit numbers are not visible online.
- **Not digitized anywhere I could find:**
 - **Antenati:** for ASLu, it holds only the *Stato civile napoleonico* (1807-1814). [beniculturali +2](#)
 - **ASLu’s own website:** it hosts PDFs only of the old printed inventories (Bongi, vols. I-IV, and the family-archive volumes V-VIII). [cultura](#) The Regi Spedali inventory is online only through SAN. [cultura](#)
 - **FamilySearch:** it has filmed Lucca civil registration but not the hospital fonds. [familysearch](#)
 - **Other sources:** no Internet Archive, Europeana or university copies turned up.
 - **ASLu’s own policy:** unpublished inventories may not be reproduced, and all fonds are consulted “in originale o su relativo supporto sostitutivo” (in original or on a substitute copy). [cultura](#) [cultura](#) That fits a paper-only fonds.
- **Related but different records:** the Provincia di Lucca’s archive portal ([archivista.provincia.lucca.it](#)) holds files on the Province’s payments for foundlings, e.g. “Esposti appartenenti alla Provincia di Lucca ricoverati nei diversi Brefotrofi del Regno” (1936-38). [provincia](#) It also holds 1867 files on disputes with Pistoia over the upkeep of foundlings. [provincia +3](#) These are administrative records, not admission registers. They are worth checking only if Pirro’s upkeep was ever charged to another authority.

2. Online civil records you can search now (verified)

- **FamilySearch collection 2043811**, “Italy, Lucca, Lucca, Civil Registration (Tribunale), 1866-1929”:
 - It holds the Tribunale di Lucca’s copies of births, marriages and deaths, plus *allegati*, *pubblicazioni* (banns), *processetti* (marriage paperwork) and ten-year indexes. It is partly indexed and browsable by waypoint. [familysearch](#) [familysearch](#)
 - The catalog title for Lucca city is “Registri dello stato civile (Lucca), 1866-1935.” [familysearch](#)

- I could not read the individual film or DGS numbers without logging in. When signed in, open that title from catalog 2043811 and note the DGS numbers for: Nati 1901, the 1901-1910 ten-year index, Pubblicazioni 1920, Matrimoni 1920 and Allegati 1920.
- **What to look for in Nati 1901:** read every act from about 11 to 20 March 1901 (foundlings were often registered a day or more after admission).
 - Foundling acts are usually declared by a hospital officer, not a parent. Look for wording like “esposto,” “figlio di genitori ignoti” (child of unknown parents) or “presentato dal... dei Regi Spedali” (presented by ... of the Regi Spedali).
 - These acts often describe the clothing and tokens found with the baby. They give the name and surname assigned to the child.
 - Margin notes (*annotazioni*) may record his 1920 marriage, a later recognition, a legitimization or his death.
- **What the 1920 marriage file can add:**
 - The *allegati* usually include an extract of the groom’s birth act and the guardian’s written consent.
 - Pirro was 19 in 1920, below the age of majority (21 at the time), so the Regi Spedali were acting as his legal guardian.
 - The consent may name the officer, give Pirro’s register (*matricola*) number, or state where and with whom he was living. Any of these would point straight to the brefotrofio entry and the foster family.
- **Check whether the banns name a mother.** You describe the banns as “father unknown.” A true foundling is normally described as “di genitori ignoti” (of unknown parents). If the banns name a mother, she recognized him or was known to the institution, and that changes the whole search.
- **Lucca’s own civil registry (Comune di Lucca):** it can issue certificates for acts from 1866 onward. comune For acts more than 100 years old that concern someone other than the applicant, the Comune di Lucca’s “Ricerche d’archivio di stato civile” page charges a “contributo amministrativo di € 300,00 per ciascun atto, ai sensi dell’art. 1, comma 637, della legge 207/2024 e della Delibera di Giunta n.7 del 23.01.2025.” The fee must be paid before the request is sent. You don’t need the Comune if the FamilySearch images are legible. Save that fee for a certified copy needed for legal purposes.
- **Military conscription:** according to the Portale Antenati page for ASLu, the “Ufficio leva” fonds holds lists of men called before the draft board who were born **1833-1923** in the province, so the class of 1901 is covered. These lists usually give parentage (“di ignoti”), the comune where the man was registered, his trade and his residence at about age 18-19. That residence is often the foster family’s village.

- ASLu holds service records (*ruoli matricolari*) only for the classes of 1913–1940. The classes of 1844–1888 are at the Archivio di Stato di Pisa. cultura Ask ASLu where the 1901 *ruoli* are now.
- The Viareggio harbour office’s naval draft lists begin with the class of 1901. cultura
- **Pirro Gagliardi online:** web searches found no indexed record, family tree or Brazilian record under this name. Search engines cannot see inside FamilySearch, MyHeritage or Geni, so search them directly. For Brazil, check FamilySearch’s Brazil immigration-card and São Paulo civil-registration collections and the Museu da Imigração do Estado de São Paulo lists. Use the 1966 death date and the spouse’s name from the 1920 marriage act.

3. Records with incomplete or unknown names (March 1901)

I found no online record of an unnamed or “di ignoti” child admitted in Lucca around 11 March 1901. The one place such records can be seen without visiting is the FamilySearch Nati 1901 images described above. Compare every foundling act there with Pirro’s details: the date, the given name “Pirro,” and the surname assigned. Ignore any lead that rests on a surname alone.

Details

Law and access (verified law, with my interpretation)

- **Codice dei beni culturali (Cultural Heritage Code, D.Lgs. 42/2004, art. 122):**
 - Documents in State Archives are freely consultable, with exceptions.
 - Documents containing sensitive personal data become consultable after 40 years.
 - Documents on health, sex life or confidential family relationships become consultable after **70 years**.
 - A 1901 foundling admission is caught by the 70-year rule, which expired in 1971.
- **Codice privacy (Privacy Code, D.Lgs. 196/2003, art. 93):**
 - Where the mother asked not to be named, the birth-assistance certificate and medical file can be released in full only after **100 years**. altalex
 - Before that, they can be released only in a form that does not identify her. altalex
 - For 1901 the 100 years ran out in 2001.
 - The Corte di Cassazione (sez. I civ., sentenza n. 15024 of 21 July 2016, overturning the Corte d’Appello di Torino) held that the 100-year limit is “non potendosi considerare operativo, oltre il limite della vita della madre che ha partorito in anonimo.” In other words, it stops applying once the mother has died. The Sezioni Unite confirmed this in ruling n. 1946 of 25 January 2017.
- **What this means for you:** neither limit can lawfully block a descendant from seeing a 1901 register today. The “confidentiality” refusal in 2015 most likely came from an office still holding modern health or registry files, possibly the municipal registry in the old

hospital's women's wing. It may also have been a general refusal not tied to a specific document. It does not reflect the rules for the ASLu fonds.

- **The request itself:**
 - ASLu has a page called “Consultabilità e diffusione di documenti riservati” (consultability and release of confidential documents). cultura If staff hesitate, ask in writing for a decision under art. 122 and art. 93. Point out that the record is more than 100 years old and that the mother, if born before about 1885, has certainly died.

Working with ASLu

- **Contacts:**
 - General: as-lu@cultura.gov.it cultura
 - Reading room and research by correspondence: as-lu.salastudio@cultura.gov.it cultura
 - Certified email (PEC): as-lu@pec.cultura.gov.it cultura
 - Phone: +39 0583 491465 cultura
 - Main site: Piazza Guidiccioni 8. Second site: ex Macelli, Via dei Pubblici Macelli 155. The hospital-archive fonds are probably kept at the second site; I infer this because the psychiatric-hospital fonds is listed there. cultura +3
- **Response time:** ASLu says it answers correspondence requests within **30 days**. cultura Your 17 October 2026 email should get a reply by about mid-November 2026.
- **Follow-up email:** if nothing arrives, write again in Italian. Ask for: (a) the admission entry for “Pirro,” 11–20 March 1901, in unit 4326; (b) the *matricola*-linked entries in the wet-nurse and foster-placement registers; (c) any tokens or notes filed under his number; (d) the 1920 file for the guardian's consent to his marriage; (e) a quote for digital photographs.
- **Hiring help:** correspondence services seldom transcribe several linked registers. A Lucca-based professional genealogist, or a researcher hired through the reading room, can follow one entry across admissions, *balie*, payments and discharge in one or two visits.

Historical context (mixed verified and inferred)

- **The institution:** the Ospedale di San Luca della Misericordia was founded with the approval of Bishop Enrico in 1262 at the initiative of the Merchants' Guild (*Arte dei Mercanti*). It ran Lucca's care of foundlings for centuries. Wikipedia imss From 1458 the Ospedale di Santa Maria/Santa Caterina, later the “Orfanelli,” was joined to it and took on foundlings. iltirreno In 1808 the Baciocchi government merged all of Lucca's charitable institutions into the Regi Spedali e Ospizi di Lucca. cultura

- **Was the wheel still in use in 1901? Probably not, though I could not confirm Lucca's closing date.**
 - Treccani's Enciclopedia Italiana (1932), entry "Esposti" by Bruno Castellini and Ugo Enrico Paoli, reports that the wheel "in Italia era in vigore ancora nel 1866, anno in cui ne erano aperte ben 1179." It says admission offices began replacing wheels from 1867, and the number fell "nel 1879 a 675 per scendere ancora a 306 nel 1896."
 - Historians Gorni and Pellegrini note that by the late 1800s wheels survived mostly in the South and had been abolished almost everywhere else. [istrianet](#)
 - The Biblioteca dell'Istituto degli Innocenti records that Florence's barred window (*finestra ferrata*) "fu chiusa quel 30 giugno (insieme alle ruote di Venezia, Verona e Siena)" in 1875. The last child left there was named "Laudata Chiusuri."
 - So in 1901 Pirro was more likely brought to an admissions office, or born in the maternity ward and registered "di ignoti" (child of unknown parents), than left in a wheel. This is my inference, not a confirmed fact. Ask ASLu what the admission method was in 1901.
 - In registers from this period, mothers who gave birth in the hospital were often known to the institution even though the child was recorded as of unknown parents. [unimi](#) [istrianet](#) That makes the admission register much more promising than the civil birth act.
- **Surnames:** one secondary source (the inCultura blog) says Lucca began giving foundlings surnames only after 1848 and used place names (Lucchesi, Carraia, Farneta, Camaione, Nocchi). [istrianet](#) "Gagliardi" (meaning "sturdy" or "vigorous") is not a place name, but it does resemble the descriptive surnames Tuscan institutions invented. Treat the surname as possibly assigned and do not use it to look for blood relatives until the records confirm where it came from.
- **Wet nurses and fostering:** according to Gorni and Pellegrini's study *Un problema di storia sociale. L'infanzia abbandonata in Italia nel secolo XIX*, on 31 December 1892, 102,690 of 105,867 children assisted by Italy's brefotrofi (about 97%) were placed with outside nurses or foster families rather than kept in institutions. Nurses typically kept infants for a year and often stayed on as paid "tenutari" (foster keepers), usually in the countryside. [istrianet](#) The most likely story is a rural wet nurse in the Lucca plain or hills, then the same family or another as foster carers until he was a teenager.
- **"Raised by a nun":** this fits Italian practice. Religious sisters commonly staffed foundling homes and their nurseries. But I found no source naming the order that served the Lucca brefotrofio in 1901, so this remains unverified. Ask ASLu whether the staff or *personale* series names one.

Physical location (verified)

- **Today:** the complex is the Palazzo Galli Tassi (coordinates about 43.8444 N, 10.4989 E). The main entrance is on Via Galli Tassi; the side wings face Piazzale San Donato.
[Wikipedia](#) It is close to Via San Paolino, not Via San Giorgio.
- **History of the buildings:**
 - The present buildings date from an **1870** rebuilding. [Wikipedia](#)
 - The name comes from Antonio Galli Tassi, who died in 1876 and left neighbouring property to the hospital. [Wikipedia](#)
 - The hospital moved to Campo di Marte in **1935**. Only an orthopaedic ward remained until about 1980, after which the complex became the **courthouse**.
[Wikipedia](#)
- **Which wing housed the foundlings:** the Museo Galileo's historical-hospitals guide says the **men's section**, "**con le infermerie, i ricoveri per i trovatelli e gli oratori**" (with the wards, the founding quarters and the chapels), lay between Piazzale Giuseppe Verdi, Via San Paolino and Via Vittorio Emanuele. The **women's section**, completely rebuilt, now houses the **municipal registry office** (*anagrafe*). [imss](#)
 - In 2015 you were likely sent from the courthouse to the municipal registry, whose address is Via Santa Giustina 6. [comune](#)
 - I found no published plan showing where the wheel stood.
 - Excavations in 1990–91 and 2001–04 under Giulio Ciampoltrini, published in Quirós Castillo, *Modi di costruire a Lucca nell'altomedioevo* (2001), and ASLu's cadastral maps (the "Ricerca catastale" service) are the best sources for floor plans. [cultura](#)
[Wikipedia](#)
- **Where the archives are now:** ASLu, not the building.

Recommendations (in order)

1. **This week, on FamilySearch:** browse Lucca Nati 1901 for 11–20 March, the 1920 Pubblicazioni, Matrimoni and Allegati, and the ten-year indexes. Save the image URLs and DGS numbers.
2. **Check the banns for a named mother** and for the guardian's details in the consent.
3. **Follow up with ASLu by mid-November 2026** with the list (a)–(e) above. Also ask about the Ufficio leva list for the class of 1901.
4. **If ASLu is slow or offers only partial transcripts**, hire a local researcher for 1–2 days at Via dei Pubblici Macelli.
5. **Brazil side:** find the immigration card, ship arrival and death record (1966). They may repeat parentage details or name the village he came from.

6. **DNA:** foundling registers often record only the mother's name, and sometimes none. Autosomal DNA testing of Pirro's descendants, compared with matches from the Lucca area, is the only route to a biological father.

Caveats

- I could not see the SAN tree around unit 1414951 (robots-blocked), the FamilySearch film/DGS numbers (login), or the 3Q9M-CSQT-7F7G record (login). The descriptions of those sources above come from search snippets and ASLu pages.
- Three points are unconfirmed and are my inferences: the date Lucca's wheel closed, which religious order served the brefotroflo, and whether "Gagliardi" was an assigned surname. The surname-practice claim comes from a secondary blog, not an archival study.
- I found no specific record of a 1901 Lucca foundling, so no candidate is named.