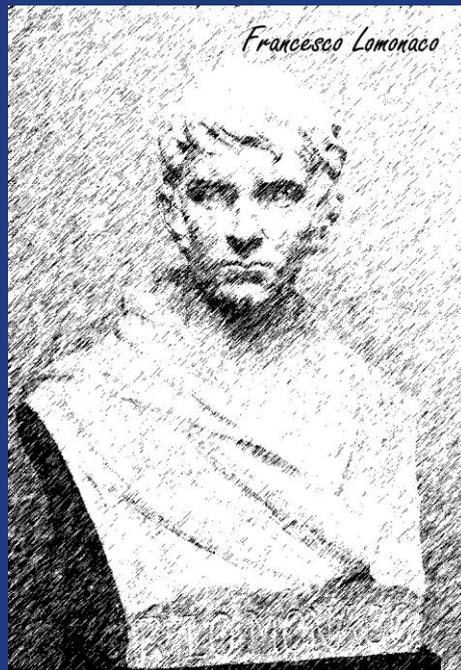


## Francesco LOMONACO

*Nacque in Montalbano Ionico, a  
specchio dell'azzurro golfo  
di Taranto, lungo le cui prode  
fiorì la civiltà regale della  
Magna Grecia, il 22 di  
novembre del 1772 dal dottor  
Nicola e da Margherita  
Fiorentino.*



After the failure of the Neapolitan Revolution of 1799, Francesco Lomonaco escaped from the borbonic reaction and was able to start a dialectic comparison with the “big” of national culture. His duty was to let the Northern intellectuals know the “historismus” of Giambattista Vico and all the fertile stimuli of Neapolitan culture. For that reason he would have become important in Foscolo and manzoni’s lives and works. Without him and his “vichismo” (from Giambattista Vico), Foscolo would hardly pass from *Ortis* to *Sepolcri* and Manzoni would hardly overcome the enlightened anti-historismus; he would have studied the history and discovered a hidden Providence in every human events. During an interview in 1866, but published ten years later by the “*Corriere della sera*”, the 12th, 13th October 1876, Manzoni gave wide credit to him for it.

Francesco Lomonaco was born in Montalbano Ionico the 22nd November 1772, in a moment in which in that little town lived some doctors graduated in Naples, under the influence of Enlightenment. One of them was Nicola Lomonaco, Francesco’s father. One of Francesco’s brother, Luigi, would have been involved in the events of 1799. So we believe the first Francesco’s teacher has been his father. The second teacher, in proper meaning, was the learned abbot Nicola Maria Tryli, who had a private school in the village.

After the high school, Francesco went to Naples to enter the Law faculty; but his interest on medicine was bigger. In the new school he found the same stimuli he had from his family. He read Rousseau and translated *De Mobly*. In 1799, when he was 27, he was one of the promoters of the revolution and among the besiegers of Castel sant’Elmo. For a banal mistake in his surname transcription, which was recorded as La Manica, he survived the reaction and the death sentence. He was free, he escaped to France; Then he returned to Italy and after a short stay in Milan, where he became Foscolo and Manzoni’s friend and their private doctor, he taught history and geography by the Military College of Pavia thanks to Monti’s recommendation.

His father, the friends he met in Naples and the French enlightened writers initiated him into the revolutionary ideals; but Giambattista Vico gave him a larger vision of life and history, which taught him to hope for time and the progress brought by time itself. It was not the catholic

Providence to back him up in this faith, but the Spirit of things and men, almost a “fire” or an “endogenous strength”, which always push us to go beyond the present. This means a big ethic and civil responsibility of men as had taught us renowned military captains, philosophers, artists and scientists, as to offer the readers some models to push them to great things. Lomonaco wrote *Vite degli eccellenti italiani* (1802) and *Vite dei famosi capitani d’Italia* (1804). Previously he had written a violent pamphlet on his personal events and on the fall of the Neapolitan Republic of 1799. The title was *Rapporto al cittadino Carnot*.

In the meanwhile, the Northern culture of Italy had widened his political horizons. He dedicated *Vite degli eccellenti italiani* to Italy and not to this or that person of consequence. It was his refusal of the enslaved to Prince literature (like Alfieri and Foscolo), and it was an invitation to give a unitary and national aim to politic battles.

Like Foscolo and Manzoni, “vergin of servile encomium and of coward outrage” Lomonaco too had tormented attitudes towards Napoleone Bonaparte, who seemed to be liberal and democratic in his speech, but actually he is an oppressor an ruler of other peoples. When he published his last work, *Discorsi politici e letterari*, in 1809, Lomonaco was living this tragedy. For this reason the Napoleonic power didn’t like his work, which was persecuted by censorship and withdrew from trade. So Lomonaco, like Iacopo Ortis, disappointed and saddened decided to end his life with an act of freedom and protest. In the morning of 1st September 1810 he drowned himself in the River Navigliaccio, in the suburbs of Pavia.

Scritto di curato da Giovanni Caserta

**A Francesco Lomonaco  
Alessandro Manzoni  
1802**

**Per la “Vita di Dante”**

Come il divo Alighier l’ingrata Flora  
Errar fea, per civil rabbia sanguigna,  
Pel suol, cui liberal natura infiora,  
Ove spesso il buon nasce e rado alligna,

Esule egregio, narri: e Tu pur ora  
Duro esempio ne dà, Tu, cui maligna  
Sorte sospinse, e tiene incerto ancora  
In questa di gentili alme madrigna.

Tal premj, Italia, i tuoi migliori, e poi  
Che pro se piangi, e il cener freddo adori,  
E al nome voto onor divini fai?

Sì da' barbari oppressa opprimi i tuoi,  
E ognor tuoi danni e tue colpe deplori,  
Pentita sempre, e non cangiata mai.