

TWO ITALIAN NOVELTY CLOCKS

by
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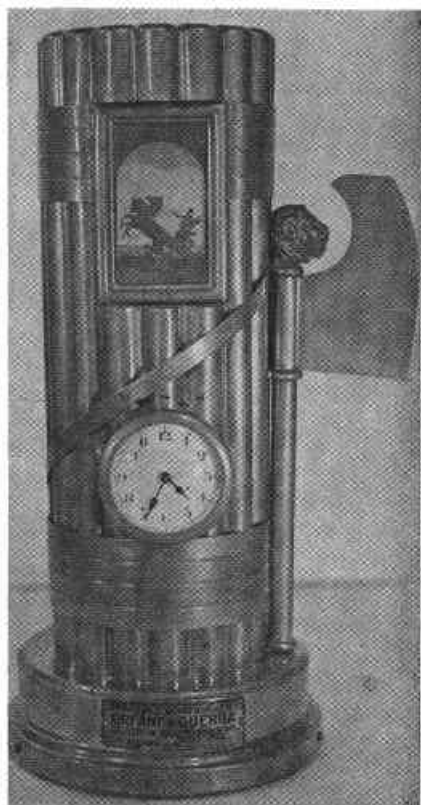


Fig. 1

Left — This clock was made some time between 1936 and 1939 and was used in connection with a fund-raising effort to benefit orphans of war (probably the 1935-36 Ethiopian war) and summer camps for young workers. The case is in the shape of a fasces, a bundle of rods bound together with a thong, containing an ax with the blade projecting. The fasces symbol has been in use since the days of the Roman Republic in the 6th Century B.C., and was used by the Fascist (a name derived from fasces) regime in power at the time the clock was made. The fasces also appeared on the back of American solid silver dimes, but its use was discontinued when the coins became a "sandwich."

Above the dial is a framed allegorical picture of Victory in a chariot pulled by rearing horses. The movement is 30-hour balance wheel, time only; it is self-contained and must be pulled out of the case for winding. The dial is marked "Veglia" (trade mark of the maker, Borletti) below the numeral 12 and "made in Italy" below the numeral 6. There is a brass explanatory plate on the base reading "A Parziale Beneficio Degli / Orfani di Guerra / Delle Colonie 'Giovani Lavoratori'." The bottom line has the word Brevettato (Patented) and the serial number 4821. A musical movement with 37-tooth comb is in the base, wound from underneath. It plays the Fascist song, "Giovinezza, Giovinezza," several times on each winding.

The case is nickel-plated brass, 14" high, 6 3/8" diameter at the base. Borletti, the maker, is still operating in Milan today manufacturing sewing machines, calipers, gauges, etc., as well as clocks. During World War II, the factory made timing devices for anti-aircraft shells and bombs. — Ignazio Frigerio Collection.

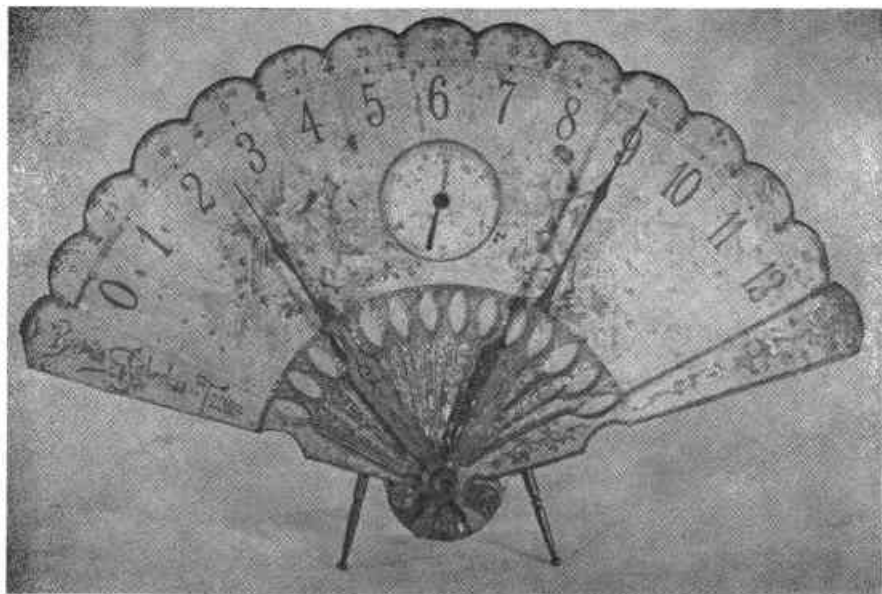


Fig. 2

Above — 30-hour Sector Clock with painted papier-maché dial in the shape of a fan. The dial, with seconds bit, is attached to a brass-cased movement, the bottom of the case serving as the rear leg of a tripod. It has a self-contained winding key and hand-set knob in back. A hanger is attached to the top for wall mounting.

The colorful painted scene on the dial is of a boy and girl on a balcony



Rear view of Italian Sector clock.



Trademark on case of Sector clock.

with mountains in the background. The shaped hands are pierced and decorated. The left section of the fan is marked "BREVETTO G. SCHERLINO." Printed on the right side is "PREM STAB G. RANCI & CO. MILANO." A trade mark is stamped in the case back reading "BREVETTO / GIOV. SHERLINO / TORINO." I would guess 1900 as the approximate date of manufacture. Width 15", Height 9 1/4", Depth 4". — Author's Collection