

History of Triganino Modenese

extracted from the book: "Manuale del Triganino Modenese"
by: Fabio Zambon and Antonio Vaccari

The Triganino Modenese have been bred in the city of Modena since time immemorial. In recent centuries, until the early decades of the twentieth century, these domestic pigeons were trained and educated for a very curious and peculiar sport commonly called "the game of flying doves" and those who carried out such training were called "triganieri". The sport was also practised in the neighboring city of Reggio Emilia and there was fierce competition between the two cities. The game consisted in training a group of pigeons to perform acrobatics directing them from the ground through the use of flags and whistles as signals. The flock was taught to move away gradually from their loft to merge with the flock of another triganiere. In this way, the so-called "shuffle" took place in which the two flocks of pigeons were flown together and then called go back when their own triganiere whistled. This phase was called "tearing" because upon the call the pigeons immediately had to return to their loft without leaving a pigeon behind in the opponent group. The goal of the game was just that: trying to steal pigeons from your opponent.

Right: From the collection of surgeon Fulvio Martinelli (1872). The translation of this colour is: Gazzi stone-shoulder with dark yellow.

Back in the loft, the birds were rewarded with corn as prize for their work, including the captured bird. The term "Triganieros" appears for the first time in the statute of the city of Modena in 1547 under the heading "*de columbis non capiendis, nec trappola tenenda*". (About the pigeons not to be caught, nor to be trapped or held in a cage). This name, in the past, was analyzed by several authors, who formulated several hypotheses on its origin word. Malmusi (1851) first discussed some of them and claimed that it could derive from the word "triga" or "tric", which meant "quarrel" or "dispute" in relation to the ongoing disputes and rows in the game of flying pigeons. A second



possible explanation was found in the French verb "trigauder" which means to act shrewdly, in homage to the wives of triganieri. Another possible derivation of the word was "traigner" that drive lead to the ability to control the Triganini in flight or even from the Spanish word "trigo" which means "wheat", used for the training of pigeons. The Latin word "trigonal" on the other hand describes a game that was to send and return a ball and thus could be related to send and call back the flocks of pigeons from pigeon to pigeon.



Left: This representative Triganino comes from the book: "The pigeons from Modena" (1876).

Right:
These Triganino Gazzi image is from
Giachetti (1914).

Another theory reported by E. Canevazzi, in a number of "Agricoltura Modenese" in 1902, argued that Sigonio recounted that in 217 BC a man named Triganio lived in Modena who became popular after his pigeons were used as messengers during the siege of Hannibal. Some believed that the terms Triganino and triganiere derived from the name of this breeder.

Professor Bonizzi, author of the monograph "I colombi di Modena", wrote that people like Vandelli, the historian of Modena Sac. Baraldi and Fregni were convinced that the word derived from the term "trigon" which means dove, for the similarity of Triganino to this bird. So the word trigon joined to the word pigeon could be the origin of the name triganino, ie turtle dove or little turtle dove. Many authors were convinced of the latter hypothesis and Prof. Alessandro Ghigi describing the checkered pigeons (in past also called scaglioli or shelled), introduced the term "trigano" because of the similarity of the design to that of the European Turtle Dove (*Streptopelia turtur*).

He also alleged that in Modena the word "trigano" became synonymous with pigeon breeders and then took the title of triganieri. Another source stated that the Triganino was also called the "barchetto" ("boat"), a term used by Giulio Cesare Giachetti in his monograph, for the fact that the shape of this pigeon resembled that of a boat. This name was later abandoned and it was decided to continue to be used to Triganino. Historical traces about triganieri we can find in a famous poem "*La secchia rapita*" by Alessandro Tassoni (1565-1635).

At that time, triganieri and bigots were two social classes or factions. The first were men of arms, a kind of mercenary. Some of these were dedicated to pigeons breeding and training of pigeons, used for capturing pigeons others but also for the transport of messages up to 50-60 km away. The bigots on the other hand were people dedicated to religion opposed to worldly behavior and guerrillas of triganieri.

Jotatan and Barbante were the names of two famous triganieri known by all tavern keepers of Modena. E. Reggiani tells us in his book that at the turn of 1800 and 1900 there were two types of triganieri: the first dealt exclusively with the selection of markings and colours, the second were defined as the 'authentic' triganieri that had devoted a long time to the 'art of playing to fly pigeons'. Unlike the first, the latter rarely raised their pigeons themselves, most of the time purchased them and only trained them. In some paintings dating from the mid-1600s and early 1700s by the painter Felice Boselli (Emilia-Romagna), we can see several pigeons that closely resemble the Triganino. In particular, in the painting entitled "Pigeons" there are three pigeons, a blue black barred gazzi and his two lovebirds: a black gazzi and probably a red gazzi. This painting proves that already at that time the gazzi marking was present and well established in some varieties of Italian pigeons.

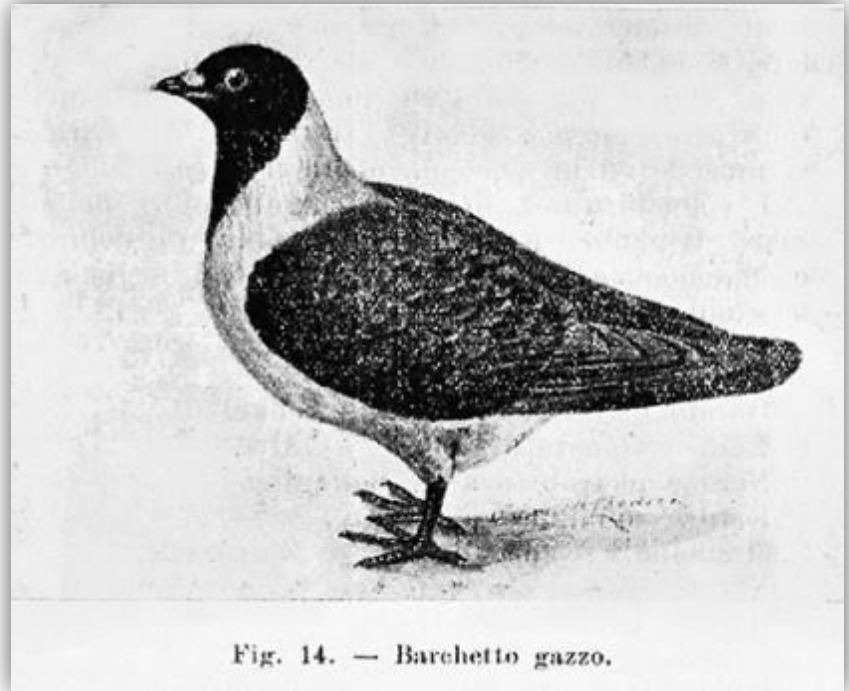


Fig. 14. — Barchetto gazzo.



Also in Boselli's painting "Dovecote" we can see a series of mixed gazzi pigeons, more or less legitimate and others schietti. In particular, the bottom and the center of the painting depicts doves wanting to drink, two of which seem to be gazzi almond on blue base, one almost completely white, perhaps a young male almond homozygous gazzi and a fourth schietti that looks very much like a mealy bar.

On the bottom right, crouching on the step or chest, we can clearly recognize a T-pattern ash red. It is unclear whether or not these pigeons are Triganini, but there is obviously some similarity both in form and in colour. In a painting from the same period, Giovanni Agostino Cassana paints the likeness to the Triganino even more clearly. On a basket to the left there is a gazzi that would seem to be a black, at the bottom in the foreground there is a spread brown gazzi, behind it's an ash red gazzi going to move forward in small steps.

Left: Oil painting 79 x 45 cm, by Felice Boselli (1650 – 1732).

On the water bowl a blue white bar gazzi pecks some crumbs. In the background on the right there is a pair of two gazzi in the basket, a black and a recessive yellow resting waiting for the next cue. In addition to the great similarity of these pigeons to the Triganino, one bird catches our attention: a blue with white bars. This colouration, as we shall see, seems to have been introduced by the Earl of Modena Gnoli at a time later than that of the painter. Analyzing in detail the subject it is not clear if the subject was actually a blue white bar. Using historical records we can say that the art of making flying pigeons in Modena has very ancient origins, but we can not say with the same certainty what the exact origin of the Triganino is. It is a fact that breed race over the centuries underwent numerous outcrosses to get to the shapes and colours today.

**Right:
Painting from
Felice Boselli
(1650-1732).
"Colombaia"**



It would seem that the breeds used were those belonging to the group of “flying” pigeons. The flying pigeons were those of the same or similar form to the rock pigeon which differed in the multitude of their colours, currently corresponding to the “Colour Pigeons”.

This would explain why we have the large variety of colours and marking in the breed today. Malmusi tells how in Modena triganieri used to train three distinct breeds, the “Turchetti” (pigeons intermediate between the Polish Barb and Turkish, now probably extinct), “Timpani” (today Gimpel) and “Zinganini”.



Above: Painting from Giovanni Agistino (1658–1720).

The latter were characterized by a white spot between the wings that stretched all over the back and in some cases even on the neck. The race was already considered extinct in the mid 1800s and was believed to have been introduced by Hungarian gypsies in the 15th century, from which it took its name “Zingarini” or “Zinganini”. Despite these historical data, it can not be said with certainty that all these breeds have contributed to the formation of Triganino, but of the use of some of them as an outcross, including the Gimpel, there are written records.

*Right:
Triganino Modena Schietti,
black, sulphur shield.
Photo: T. Trinci.*





Giachetti in his monograph indicates the pigeon Swallowtail, a native of Modena, as the intermediate breed between the Aldrovandi's pigeon Tronfo Pisano and the Barchetto or Triganino of Modena. Ghigi instead states that Swallowtail, also called Modano, was connected with the Florentine. In the early 1900s, in addition to purebred Triganini, there were often found mixed race pigeons.

Left: Triganino image from the book "The pigeons from Modena" (1876).

Some of these, for a period of time were considered as a sub-variety. This line of Triganini halfbreeds appears to have been originated by the experiments of Count Gnoli who crossed a female from Germany, most likely a Starling, with a Triganino gazzi creating the variety which was then called "gazzo Uccello" (gaz usel). With this cross Count Gnoli introduced in the breed the Toy Stencil (Ts) gene complex that gives white, pink (always considered a defect) and the red wing markings. The complex Ts is not the only factor that gives the red colour to the marking, we have to add the Modena-Bronze, too. Thanks to Count Gnoli the breed was enriched with new colours and it is said that the triganieri much appreciated his work. Even Triganini gazzi were considered a sub of schietti, in terms of size slightly larger, but this difference is no longer significant and the two varieties are classified within a single breed.

Right: Poster of the first National Pigeon Show of Medna, held om November 23^e, 1902.



Ghigi says in his writings that at the exhibition in Copenhagen in 1948, the Modena pigeons were divided into two categories: German model and English model. In 1949 in Bruxelles saw a collection of schietti Triganini all very large boat-shaped perfect but lacking in colour. It was probably some distant relatives of today's English or German Modena, yet similar enough to 'mother' breed, the Triganino.

German Modena and English Modena have preferred to give more importance to the shape and form than to colour, while the triganieri have always chosen to select the race for the flight originally and then the colours. This preference has meant that there is still some variability in shape between the different colour lines. Ghigi hoped for a more uniform shape of the breed and thought it could be done by studying and knowing the laws of genetics that underlie the transmission of characteristics of colour in order to transfer these colours to subjects of perfect form.

Right:
Triganino Gazzi from the book
"Il Colombo Triganini"
from Clemente Polacci (1978).
Image 26: Gazzo rospo.



The 19th century birds saw a great diversity of forms and figures, especially in the gazzi variety, which were derived from crosses made by Count Gnoli. Also, at that time, many triganieri began to make crosses in turn, to try to increase the number of colours of the breed. The golden age of the breed lasted until the first decade of the 20th century and the fame of this pigeon had already spread abroad so that J.C. Lyell describes them in his book "Fancy Pigeons". In the late 19th century the rich and noble families competed to have selected groups and individuals of rare colours.



Left: Triganino Gazzi. "Pietra scura
spalla gialla" (Gazzi, dark stone, yellow
shoulder). Photo: Collection Salsi.

But also the people from the middle class and humble workers devoted their skill and passion to developing this breed. Even students, who would not have a loft of their own would find a way of keeping a couple of Triganini pairs in gazzi or schietti.

To this day, the National Pigeon show of 1902 stands out in history with a huge amount and variety of Triganini presented (a few thousand). From there on alas, started a rapid decay for the Triganino. Most of the flying turrets disappeared at the turn at the end of World War II.

Right:
Triganino Gazzi from the book
"Il Colombo Triganini"
by Clemente Polacci (1978).
Image: 21
Gazzo zarzano di covro.



Poverty and hunger in the era of war forced most Triganieri to leave their hobby; in other cases this breeding was maintained for sustenance. The only pigeon that survived this period were those of some wealthy nobles and those of some small breeder who continued their passion by breeding in attics in order not to stop. After the end of WW II sporadic groups of Triganini could be seen in exhibitions organized during village fairs; the Triganini exposed were of a very poor quality and in particular gazzi were very elongated, as until then, they had been selected to perform better in the game of flying.

During this period, the most prestigious dovecotes were found in the territories of neighboring Reggio Emilia and Carpi. Among these we mention those of the Carretti family and Professor Cucconi in Carpi and the Bergomi of Reggio Emilia. A key role in the revival of Triganino was found in the Chamber of Commerce of Modena, in the person of Dr. Camillo Bruini. He spearheaded the establishment of the pigeon club "Triganino and Sottobanca Modenese". This pigeon club reawakened the passion of Modena and Reggio Emilia people for the breeding of this pigeon: since 1968 annual shows have been organized, that slowly went from strength to strength. With the help of the bank of San Geminiano e San Prospero, Dr. Bruini brought about the publication of the manuscript "Il Colombo Triganino" by Clemente Polacci generously made available by the heirs of the author; the book soon became a point of reference and inspiration for all breeders of this wonderful breed.

The last flying dovecote 'to fly pigeons' disappeared in the 1960s, it was the Marescotti loft on Via Ganaceto in Modena. Part of the blame for this decline has to be attributed to the advent of television with their antennae, which made the game impossible. After the war the breeding of Triganino has aimed exclusively at the selection of colours and morphology of the breed and not any longer for its flying characteristics. Another milestone in the Triganino

history was the inception of the Triganino Club in April 1988. This association aiming at safeguarding and popularizing this pigeon has reinvigorated the breeding of Triganini. The first president was Cucconi and we remember as promoters Goldoni and Balconi.

Every year since then, the Club has organized an exhibition, the Review of Triganino Modenese, which is generally held in February in Reggio Emilia. In addition to the Club there are two other independent associations that count among their members the expert breeders: the pigeons club of Modena and pigeons club of Reggio Emilia. Nowadays, breeding Triganino enjoys a flourishing period and the Club of Triganino, thanks to its initiatives and renewal, has more than sixty members. The most recent edition of the club show in 2014 saw more than 800 Triganini in the pens.

***Below: Triganino Gazzi from the book "Il Colombo Triganini" by Clemente Polacci (1978).
Image: 10 Gazzo magnano di nero.***



The Triganino Modenese today . . .

by: **Giuseppe Trompetto**

Since the time of Clemente Polacci many things have changed in human society and with them breeding Triganino Modenese has gone beyond the regional borders and is now practiced all over the world, expressing its enormous potential also in the form of English and German Modena. But it is only in the race of Triganino Modenese that has kept the original spirit of Modena's triganieri who wanted to bring in colours of other races and create new ones. This happened due to two factors: the creation of the FIAC (Italian Federation of Pigeons Breeders), member of the European Entente (EE) with the Triganino Club of Modena being a member of the FIAC and Giuseppe Rossin.



Left:

***Triganino Gazzo nero verghe rosse.
(Gazzi black red barred).***

Photo: Collection Bartoletti.

The Club Triganino, whose current board is composed of Gianfranco Montepoli (President), Giuseppe Rossin (Vice-President), Giampaolo

Novo (Secretary) and Filippo Bartoletti, Giuseppe Trompetto and Antonio Vaccari (Advisers), currently has about sixty members from every region of Italy: since its inception in 1988 Antonio Cucconi, Goldoni Mario and Giuseppe Rinaldi have served as president.

His merit was defining the standard, what are the characteristics of Triganino Modenese pointing out the differences from the other breeds what are namely the shape with legs slightly bent, the vibrancy of colour, the purity of design, strong beak and the clear and wide eye cere. Unfortunately the Clubs of Modena and Reggio are not part of FIAC which means that some breeders of these traditional areas cannot be part of it. The club is based primarily on the friendship between the members and the love for the Triganino: in the club we will exchange pigeons, give away or sell at an almost symbolic price. Every year meetings are organized at the headquarters at Campogalliano, made available by Mario Goldoni, where we discuss current issues, exchange pigeons, make updates and the prizes of the show are distributed.

The main activity of the club is the organization of the annual Review of Triganino, usually attended by about 500 pigeons; the show aims to be the party of Triganino in which each breeder can show the fine birds he has in his lofts and in that spirit this year in Reggio Emilia we came up with an idea of encouraging members to raise and select new colours or breed rare colours. In this respect, we should also designed special awards, namely the Cucconi Prize going to the pigeon with a new or strange colour and an innovation award for a strain that has been newly created or revived.

A prize is also awarded to a young breeder who has particularly stood out. Another feature is the prize, which is done by splitting the prize in proportion to the total score for each participant.

In the 2012 show 14 breeders presented 279 Triganini gazzi in 46 different colours and 224 schietti in 38 different colours.

In Gazzi variety:

Giuseppe Trompetto with 1320 pnt,
Giampaolo Novo with 775,
Alberto Sgarbi with 640,
Paolo Bisi 450,
Goletto Mauro with 415,,
Enrico Reggiani with 403,
Filippo Bartoletti with 275,
Roberto Nicoli 105,
Antonio Vaccari 100,
Alfredo Crivellaro with 30,
Massimo Mariani with 25.



Right:
Triganino Schietto magnano di
smagliato verghe gialle
(Schietti magnani, yellowbar).
Photo: Collection Grasseli.

In Schietti variety:

Giuseppe Trompetto with 1765 points,
Davide Conficoni with 730,
Aldo Belucchi with 365,
Claudio Grasselli with 380,
Massimo Mariani with 130,
Giampaolo Novo tied with Antonio Vaccari 110 and Roberto Nicoli 75.

The Innovation Award was won by Aldo Belucchi for a group of brodoceci (ember on blue base), one for best young to Mauro Goletto, and the Cucconi Prize was won by Giuseppe Trompetto for an almond schietti on ash red base.

This contrasts with the formula of the Italian National show in which it is privileged compared to the beauty and variety in each of the two different classifications for schietti and gazzi are rewarded champions of the seven varieties: spotted, almond, checkered, solid colour, multicolour, barred and grizzle.

In the XXXII edition of January 2013 of 168 Schietti and 159 gazzi, Alberto Sgarbi won the overall title with a silver sooty with 97 points. Here are the Schietti results:

The winners with their colours and points:

- 1) flecked: Belucchi, YC by 95 points.
- 2) almond: Assirelli, YH 97 pt, Belucchi YC 96,5 pt, Mariani OC 95,5 pt, Conficoni OH 96 pt.
- 3) checkered: Novo, YC and YH 2 x 96 points.
- 4) barred: Grasselli, YH 96 pt, Novo YC 95,5 points, Conficoni OC 96 points.
- 5) solid colours: Belucchi YC recessive yellow 96,5 points, Conficoni black OC 97 points.
- 6) Multicolour: Fantoni, YC 97 points.
- 7) Grizzle: Trinci, YC 94 points.

In young groups first class ranked Belucchi with 954 points, followed by Conficoni with 950,5 points while adult class Conficoni won with 960,5 points.

The Gazzi results:

- 1) flecked: Bartoletti, YC 95,5 points.
- 2) almond: Reggiani YC 96,5 points, Novo YH 96,5 pt, Sgarbi OC 94 points.
- 3) checkered: Novo YC 97 points. and YH 96,5 points. Sgarbi OC 94 points.
- 4) barred: Sgarbi YC 96,5 points. and YH 97 points. OC 9
- 5) solid colours: Mariani, YH black 95 points and YH recessive red 95 points, .
Reggiani black OC 95 points.
- 6) multicolour: Bisi and Torelli YC 96 points. Sgarbi YH 95 points. Bisi OH 96,5 points.
Sgarbi OCe 96,5 points.
- 7) grizzle: Fantoni YC 95 points.

In young groups first class Sgarbi with 960,5 pt and second Novo with 957,5 pt; adult groups Bisi first with 952 pt, followed by Sgarbi with 951 pt.

Giuseppe Rossin is the best breeder of Triganino Modenese who ever lived: he is the focus of today's Triganino having devoted his entire life to this passion, creating a huge pigeon loft that has brought about almost all the existing colours, recreating some of that disappeared such as the recessive yellow white bars which won the innovation award for 2011. His lines have spread to all the lofts that exist today, and he did this by distributing accompanied by expert advice on how to combine them in the best way.

The following breeders need to be remembered as valid lovers of Triganino Modenese: Arbizzi Renzo, Balconi Angelo, Bergomi Pietro, Caretti Mario, Giovannini Maurilio, Lumetti Pietro, Martinelli Dimes, Meschiaro Franco, Natali Ermanno, Piccinini Disma, Rigamonti Angelo, Rinaldi Giuseppe, Rinaldi Moreno, Salsi Corrado, Sanlazzaro Luciano, Sartoni Sergio, Tiberini Giorgio, Tondelli Severino, Zoboli Giovanni, Zoboli Arrigo, Ulosi Learco and Adriano Verardi author of a remarkable photographic atlas.

In the 2013 club show , 26 breeders showed 710 pigeons in 102 different colours. Over the years to the 317 colours cited by Polacci new ones have been added: gazzi recessive yellow, schietti recessive yellow white bars, schietti recessive yellow white shield, the khaki sulphur bar, the gazzi brown bronze shield, the gazzi silver sooty checkered.

The gazzi recessive yellow differs from the gold recessive yellow to be a more diluted form of yellow, it is also found in schietti with white bars or shield. The gazzi Pietrabianca bronze bar is identical to sulphur bar but has the red bars. The khaki sulphur bar is the dilution of brown bronze bar, available in gazzi and schietti. The brown bronze shield is similar to brown bronze bars but has the shield uniformly rich red.

The silver sooty checkered is similar to silver sooty sulphur bar by Polacci but has a checkered on the shield with yellow triangles edged. Today I kept a few of the colours described by Polacci: the flaked and pointed; few mealy, very few grizzle. The almonds are highly bred, but in a few colours. The increasing competitiveness led in turn to a higher quality, but to get good results you need to raise with pairs that match with different colours so dear in the past. I'm still practicing matings between rich colour with its diluted, as between black and dun,

the bronze with sulphur, the brown bronze with khaki sulphur, but only to improve in the second generation the intensity of the diluted colour. In gazzi almond the best results are obtained by coupling an almond with a non almond pigeon of the same base colour, but a son of almond.

See link, for more colours from the Triganini of Modena.

<https://sites.google.com/site/triganino/Home>

Below: Triganino Gazzi from the book "Il Colombo Triganini" by Clemente Polacci (1978).

Image: 10 Gazzo magnano di nero.



50 - Magnano di nero a fondo piatrabianca

The beautiful Triganini of Modena,

by: Danilo Mainardi

For a long time I suffered from withdrawal and immersed myself totally into the world of fancy pigeons. Luck had it that I learnt about the Association of Modena Pigeons Triganino and Sottobanca, two breeds of pigeons that enthralled for centuries the fanciers in the shadow of the Ghirlandina, Modena's landmark.

There was a pigeon show organized in Modena where of course the Triganini and the Sottobanca were the primus inter pares. The show also saw other breeds like the elegant Bagdad (that class!), the Jacobins with their large reversed neck feathers, the Fantail, the robust Piacentini, the Texans and so on. And then there were of course the people at the show, the pigeon breeders, the people with whom I am always a treat. Yes, because with patience and passion the pigeon breeders - but maybe now I'm a bit going too far – have sculptured living works of art with their pigeons.



**Left: Triganino Gazzo bigio verghe blanche.
(Gazzi blue whitebar).**

Photo: Collection Novo.

I think especially about the Triganini, tiny pigeons with a boat-like profile, which are subdivided into two categories: gazzi with white marking making them magpies, and Schietti, without any white in them at all. However, it is with the variety of colours, with punctuation and exactitude that these breeders produce refined combinations of every type and taste. There are about 200 different colours in Triganini which have colourful names like "penna furba" literally "smart feather" because now we don't know exactly their genetic origin, "sgurafosso" (qualmond on blue base), "pietrascura" (dun), "brodoccecci" (ember homozygous on blue base) ... But even so I have to say about these winged wonders that sooner or later I will come back on this issue. Last note on the pigeon breeders: they are the only ones now, to know the difference between a pigeon ("colombo") and a squab ("piccione") in Italian. The first is an adult, according to a novel, which is told as well as peeping, an onomatopoeic term coming from the Latin *pipio pipionis*.

Danilo Mainardi, *Noi e loro*. 100 piccole storie di animali, Cairo, Milano 2013, pag. 134-136.

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