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The oldest reference to jeu de mail (pall mall) in Italy

Posted by ancientgolf under [Mail \(pall mall\)](#)

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Tradition has it that some men were playing the game of palla e maglio (jeu de mail/pall mall) on April 6, 1450, the Monday after Easter, near the painting the Madonna dell'Arco at Sant'Anastasia (near Naples, Italy).

The ball of one of the players struck the lime tree that shaded the edicola, or shrine, instead of where he wanted it to go. Angry, he threw his ball against the painting.

In one version of the story, the ball hit the cheek of the image, which turned red and began to bleed copiously. He tried to flee but could only go around and around the edicola without being able to leave. The Count happened to be passing by and after a proceeding, the man was hanged.



In another version of the story, the Count freed the man thus saving him from the justice they were ready to impart.

In another version the lime tree from which he is hung withered and died that same day.

A little temple was built to protect the painting.

Source: <http://www.metaformia.org/articles/blood-relics/>

Anyway, the Sanctuary of the Madonna dell'Arco still is a destination every year on Easter Monday of the traditional pilgrimage of the "fujenti" or "battenti", an event that brings thousands of worshippers.

