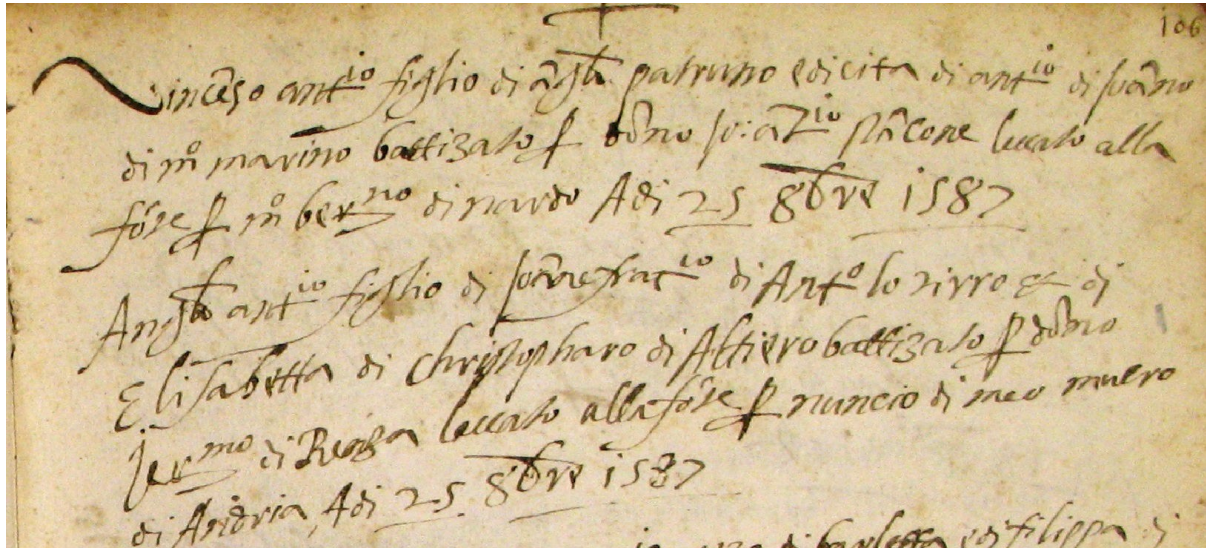


The genealogical role of the Church of Corato (Puglia)

In 2008, Pierre Marzocca, whose father had arrived in France in 1925, at the age of two, digitized a substantial part of the registers of the Church of Corato, from 1582 to 1934: to be precise, almost all the baptismal and marriage registers; the burial registers, but also several so-called 'genealogical' registers have yet to be digitized. Pierre did not have time to finish the work, as he only had 10 days free. However, the discovery of the 'genealogical' registers was essential, given the endogamous nature of the *Coratini* society.

In an endogamous society, where the norm was that marriages were almost always concluded between people from the same village or small town - i.e. generally between more or less distant cousins - genealogical research often comes up against the difficulty of distinguishing between homonyms bearing the same surname and first name. At the time of these marriages, there was also the risk of too high a level of consanguinity between the bride and groom : on this point, it is obvious that the Church took its role as genealogist very seriously.

In the case of the archives of Corato, we do not know how far back the genealogical records in question go, but it is a fact that the Church took care, at baptisms, to note not only the name of the child's father, but also that of the grandfather, on both the maternal and paternal sides, according to the need for clarification. This was from the beginning of her responsibility for recording family events in the 16th century. In the following example of a 1587 baptism, we read "Francesco Antonio figlio di Angelo Patrino e di Cita (or Rita) di Antonio di Pantaleo di Mauro Marino" :

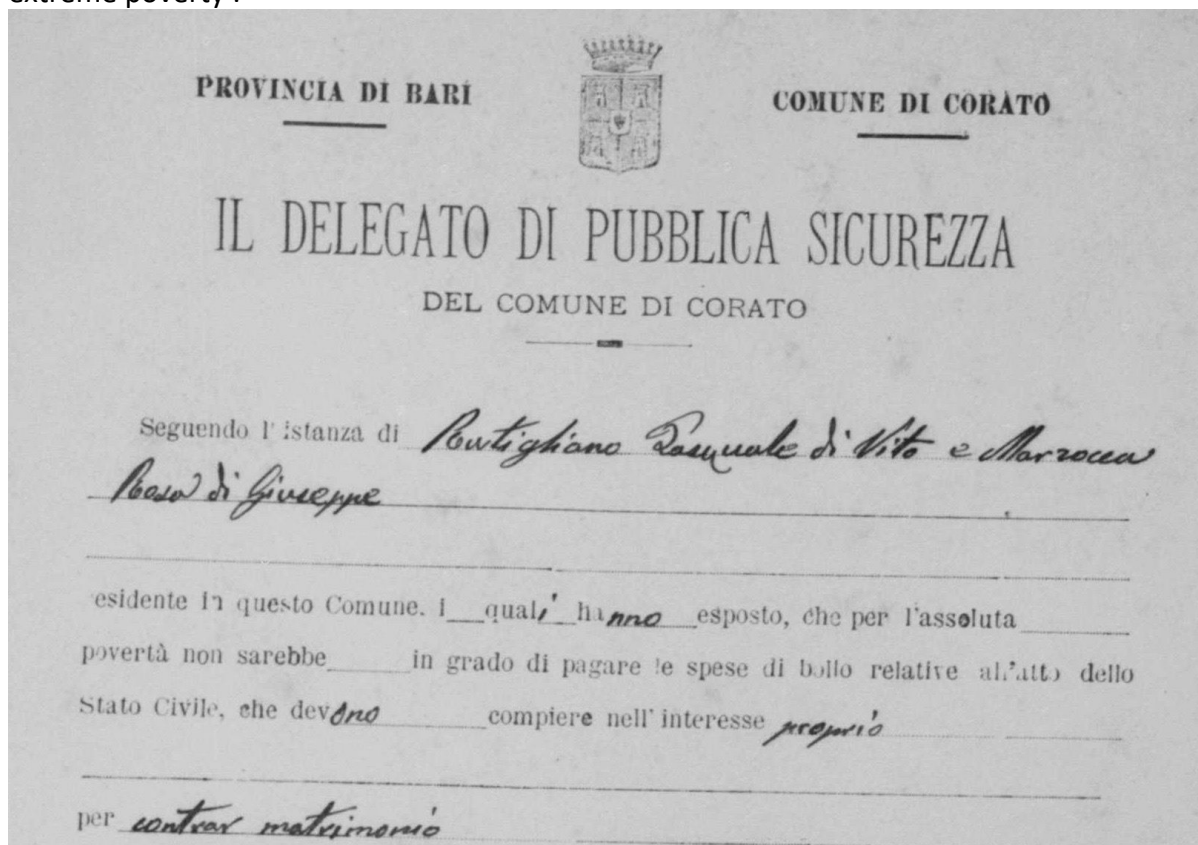


Genealogy as a social service

Pierre Marzocca photographed two pages of the genealogical register that concerned his family in a relatively recent period, i.e. in the 20th century, for marriages that took place in 1910 and 1919. However, before examining these photos, it is pertinent to go back to 1907 (without excluding the possible existence of factors prior to that date, of which we are not aware).

In 1907, several factors may have prompted the Marzocca family to 'tidy up' its official papers. For Giuseppe Marzocca, born in 1863, and his wife Maria Masciave, everything had to be in order for their first daughter Rosa, born in 1887, to be able to marry Pasquale Rutigliano on the scheduled day : May 26, 1907. Rosa's official birth certificate showed that her mother's name was Rosa Mangione ! The decision of the court of Trani fell on March 25, 1907: Maria Masciave was indeed the mother of Rosa Marzocca, and not Rosa Mangione. The *stato civile* could be rectified.

In fact, the examination of the Allegati of 1907 shows that Pasquale and Rosa were exempted from paying to the State the expenses incurred by the marriage, because of their extreme poverty :



The Church of Corato no doubt had to help the Marzocca family to solve the administrative problem in 1907, and they were certainly used to it. The faithful were often illiterate, human error was frequent in the annals of the *stato civile*, and the risk of confusion in the endogamous Coratine society was great, not to mention the fact that the spelling of names was changing. Because of illiteracy, it was difficult for the people concerned to verify the veracity of the documents themselves. Hence the 'verifying' function of the 'genealogical registers' of the Church.

By means of these registers, the Church took on the responsibility of avoiding any disappointment that could have had dramatic consequences : the postponement or even perhaps the annulment of a marriage. Until 1865, official marriage certificates (or marriage banns) even mentioned the dual role of the Church and the *stato civile* in the celebration of marriage. However, it is hard to imagine the staff of the *stato civile* providing the 'social

service' of verification for those concerned, even if *stato civile* laws were strict: if the father of bride or groom had died, the mother gave her consent, but the paternal grandfather was identified by his date of death. The same applied if the mother had died. If both grandparents were deceased, a family council could decide on the acceptability of the marriage and grant permission. The social role of the Church in verifying the genealogy of families must have continued long after 1865.

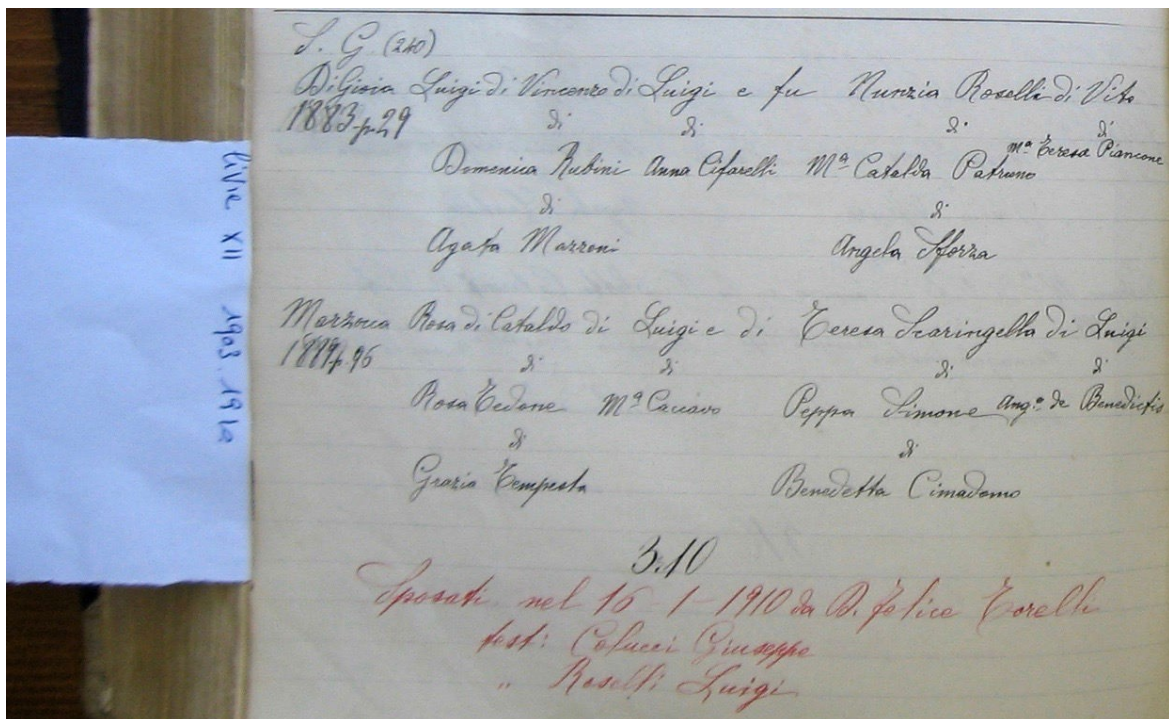
The pages of the genealogical register reproduced here do not mention the incident of 1907, but it may have prompted the Church to clarify the family tree of the Marzocca family in 1910 and again in 1919.

The history of the Marzocca family at the time of the two marriages in 1910 and 1919

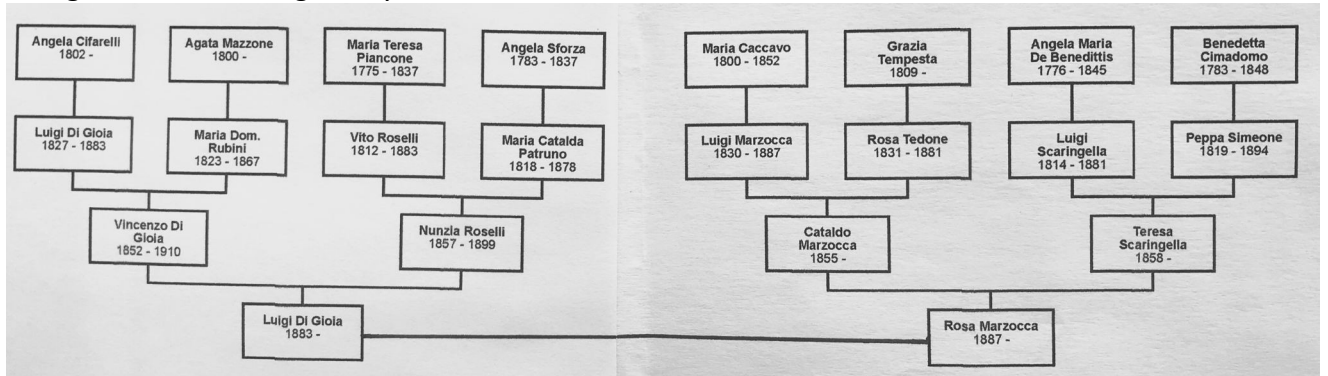
Luigi Marzocca, born in 1830, married in 1851 Rosa Tedone, who was born in 1831. Luigi and Rosa had at least two surviving sons: Cataldo, born in 1855, who married Teresa Scaringella in 1881; and Giuseppe, born in 1863, who married Maria Masciave in 1886. We have seen that among the children of Giuseppe and Maria there was Rosa, born in 1887 (the one who married Pasquale Rutigliano in 1907). As for Cataldo and Teresa, among their children there was another Rosa, born in 1889, who married in 1910 Luigi di Gioia, born in 1883; and also Pietro (Potito), born in 1895, who married Rosa di Candido in 1919.

It is these two marriages of 1910 and 1919 that the Church has studied in the pages of the genealogical registers that Pierre Marzocca digitized in 2008 (Pietro and Rosa being his grandparents).

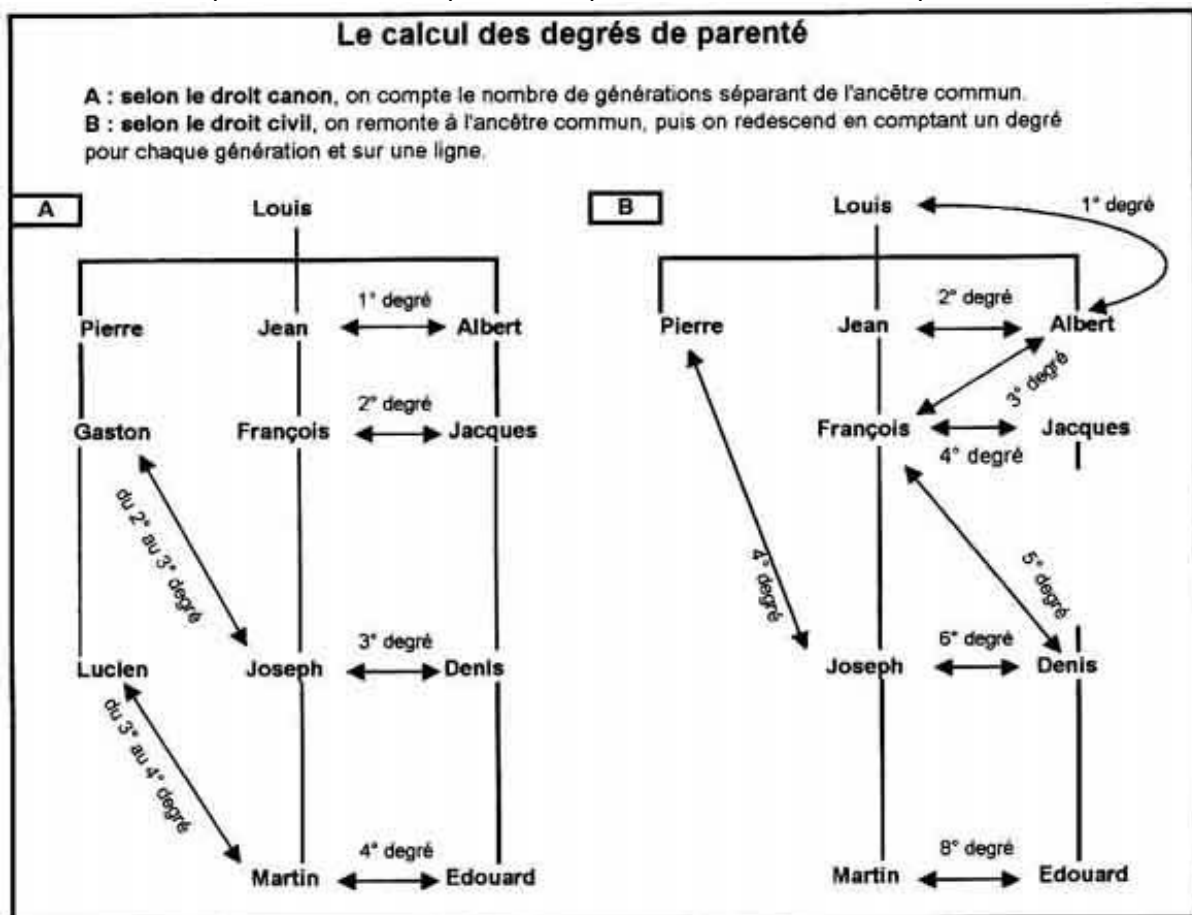
Here is the extract of the page concerning the 1910 marriage, taken from Book XII:



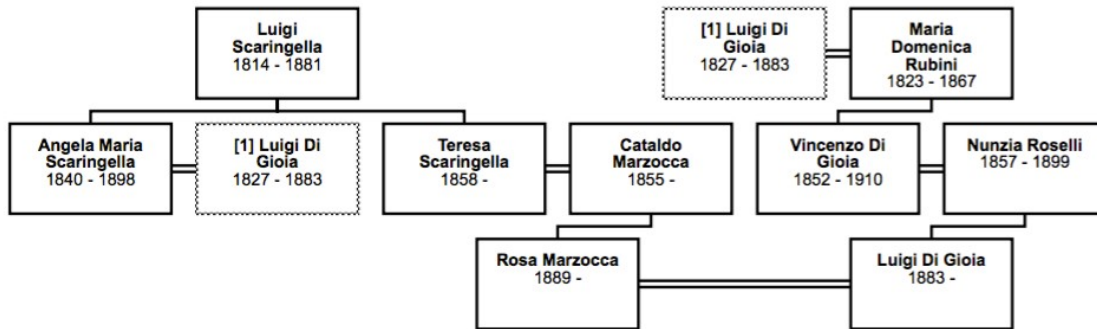
This gives the following family tree:



In the case of the marriage in 1910 between Luigi di Gioia and Rosa Marzocca, it is possible that the Church wanted to confirm that the marriage was indeed lawful. What was the rule laid down by canon law? Marriages between first cousins (cousins in the second degree, with grandparents in common) were not allowed, except with the Pope's authorization; between second cousins (with great-grandparents in common), a dispensation from the bishop was required. For example, in the table below, the marriage between a sister of Gaston and Joseph would have required a dispensation from the Bishop.



Here is the pedigree of the 1910 marriage between Rosa Marzocca and Luigi di Gioia:



Rosa's mother, Teresa Scaringella (born in 1858) was the sister of Angela Maria Scaringella (born in 1840), who was the wife of Luigi's grandfather, also called Luigi (born in 1827). In fact, there was no close blood relationship between bride and groom, as the grandmother of Luigi di Gioia (future husband of Rosa Marzocca) was the first wife of the grandfather, Maria Domenica Rubini (born 1823). No dispensation was necessary, in spite of the bond that linked grandfather Luigi di Gioia to the two families, and the fact that Rosa Marzocca was his niece by marriage. No document kept in the Allegati of 1910 contradicts this.

However, the factors described below must have prompted the Church to make a rather thorough analysis of the marriage planned in 1910 (the fact that the announcement of the marriage is written in red may, moreover, have some significance).

Marzocca/Tedone: the two Luigi Marzocca's

In both marriages (in 1910 and 1919), there was a risk of confusion due to the existence of at least two contemporary Luigi Marzocca's who, moreover, were linked by marriage to the Tedone family :

1. Luigi Marzocca, born on 12 January 1825, son of Domenico and Nunzia Piombino, married Grazia Tedone on 24 February 1854. Grazia, born on 27 September 1834, was the daughter of Pasquale Tedone and Rosa Craco.
2. Luigi Marzocca, born 25 Feb 1830, son of Vincenzo Marzocca and Maria Caccavo, married Rosa Tedone on 19 Jul 1851. Rosa, born on 7 October 1831, was the daughter of Cataldo Tedone and Grazia Tempesta.

Grazia and de Rosa Tedone were first cousins: their paternal grandparents were Francesco Tedone (ca. 1770-1845) and Rosa Tarricone (1776-1816).

Pierre Marzocca (who took the photos when he digitized the archives) is a descendant of Luigi Marzocca and Rosa Tedone.

It can be seen that, in the two genealogical diagrams reproduced in the documents of 1910 and 1919, the Church focuses above all on the identity of the mother. This is indeed what helps to dispel the doubt created by the existence of the two Luigi Marzocca's.

With regard to the marriage of 1910, because of the confusion existing in the Simeone family, it was again the identification of the mother that had to be verified.

Benedetta Cimadomo and the Simeone family

Born around 1783, Benedetta Cimadomo married Michele Simeone before 1810. She gives birth to Giuseppa (Peppa) Simeone on 18 September 1819. This filiation is attested in the marriage certificate of Peppa in 1839 with Luigi Scaringella. However, Peppa's birth certificate gives Francesco Simeone and Grazia Rosario as her parents, which is overturned in Peppa Simeone's death certificate in 1894. Francesco Simeone was, in fact, Michele's brother, therefore Peppa's uncle.

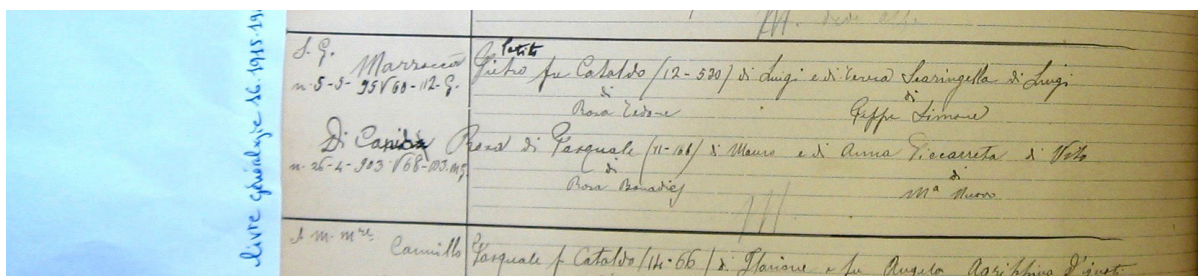
We are not aware of any official rectification of Peppa Simeone's filiation, as the *allegati* were not available at the time of her marriage in 1839. The marriage certificate only mentions the date of birth, without mentioning a rectification of her filiation.

Peppa Simeone's filiation was not the only occurrence of confusion in the civil status of the Simeone family. There was also the confusion between Nicola and Maria Rosa Simeone: they were probably the same person, sister of Michele, Peppa's father, and daughter of Gaetano Simeone (c. 1757-1817) and Peppa Gennaro (c. 1762-after 1816). Maria Rosa Simeone married Giuseppe Nicolo Lastella in 1812. However, on their daughter Peppa Lastella's birth certificate of 1819, Nicola (not Maria Rosa) is mentioned as her mother, and Giuseppe Nicolo as her father. Maria Rosa is not among the children of Gaetano Simeone and Peppa Gennaro, listed in Gaetano's death certificate of 1817. Nor is there any marriage of Nicola with Giuseppe Nicolo Lastella between 1809 and 1819, but all the successive children of Giuseppe Nicolo Lastella have Nicola as their mother.

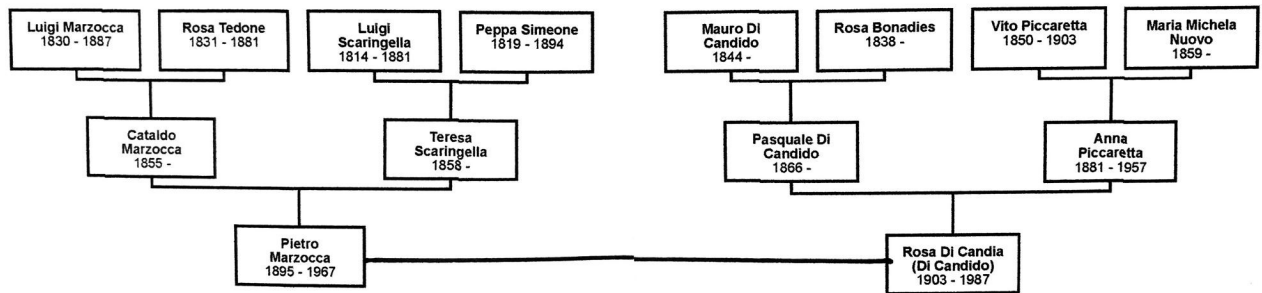
Finally, for the genealogist, the civil status of Benedetta Cimadomo, the mother of Peppa Simeone, probably needed one last clarification: her date of death is erroneous in the marriage record of her son Gaetano Simeone (Peppa's brother) with Agata Benigno in 1848. The date mentioned - 26 November 1847 - is in fact the date of death of Gaetano's first wife, Maria Giovanna La Franceschina. The real date of death of Benedetta Cimadomo is 27 September 1848.

The 1919 marriage between Pietro (Potito) Marzocca and Rosa di Candia

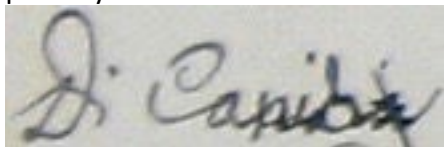
Here's the detail of the photo from book 16:



This gives the following family tree:



This genealogical analysis must have been much less thorough than the one in 1910 (which may also have been used for the 1919 marriage). The essential challenge for the ecclesial genealogist seems to have been to identify the family of the bride, Rosa di Candia (or di Candido?). There was at least a spelling confusion to be clarified, as the photo of the patronymic shows:



Here's Rosa di Candia's ancestry:

Mauro di Candia died in 1836.

His son, Giuseppe di Candido, was born in 1814 under this name, and under the same name married Angela Bonadies on 16 January 1842.

His brother, Pasquale di Candia (born di Candido in 1821), married Maria Lastella (or La Tella) in 1844.

Mauro di Candido, son of Pasquale, married Rosa Bonadies in 1865.

Pasquale di Candido, son of this Mauro, was born in 1866.

Rosa di Candido, daughter of Pasquale, was born in 1903 in Corato and married Pietro Marzocca in 1919 under the name of Rosa di Candia.

Rosa's brother, Mauro di Candia, was born in 1910 in Corato.

Today, the two names di Candia (or de Candia) and Di Candido coexist, but perhaps not in the same family. In the family we are concerned with, the form 'Di Candia' seems to have taken the upper hand, but this may not be definitive.

Conclusion: the need to put the Church's archives online

In 2020, it is not parental authority that is at stake, nor consanguinity, nor disabilities due to illiteracy: needs have changed. The genealogical monitoring required today does not seek to rectify the *stato civile* in real time, which quite rightly requires a court decision, but to check and verify parentage. For the purposes of tracing their origins and, even more so, for historical research on the emigration of the *Coratini*, the correct identification of families (some of whose members emigrated, others not), appears most necessary.

Indeed, a century after the beginning of the emigration of the *Coratini* in the 20th century to the United States, to France and to other countries, voices are being raised calling for an assessment of the value of this migration in terms of its contribution to the economic and social life of the host countries. In this context, academic research focuses on the family experience of emigration. In order to document this experience, the genealogical follow-up of families has become all the more complex as the transnationality of some families has added to the difficulties due to the endogamous nature of *Coratini* and *Pugliese* society in general.

In the course of the centuries, and until recent times, the genealogical thoroughness of the Church, attested in its archives, has made it possible to correct many errors and inaccuracies in the *stato civile*. The cases studied in this article are a brief demonstration of this.

Moreover, the search for origins is increasingly becoming a right under European law. The development of genealogical research - particularly through the Internet - allows the descendants of emigrants to access family history and, potentially, to contribute through their testimony to the deepening of the history of migration. In some cases, research could even enable the descendants of emigrants to rediscover long-forgotten family ties. It is these issues that would fully justify the Church's registers being made available online so that they can be accessed by researchers worldwide.

James Smith, Marseille, May 2020

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