

ATELIER GENEALOGIQUE

Presentation of a 2024/2025 pilot project as part of the twinning arrangement between Corato and Grenoble

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1. Participation in the "Roots Tourism Week" program by the association Archeoclub d'Italia APS Padre Emilio D'Angelo, Corato branch

On January 19, as a prelude to the general assembly of the Atelier Généalogique, which will be held on the premises of the "Association des Coratins de Grenoble et environs," its president, Victor Tarantini, has agreed that our project: 'A Tale of Two Twinned Cities: Corato and Grenoble' will be presented to its members. **We will explain that this project is part of a broader program related to the 'Roots Tourism Week' ("Settimana di turismo delle radici", coordinated by the Archeoclub of Corato, as the lead association chaired by Michele Iacovelli, and of which the journalist Marina Labartino, our project partner, is a member.** This program has already been sent to the Municipality of Corato and is awaiting approval. Full of interesting activities, the period identified is from MAY 4 to 12, 2024, when the second feast of the Patron Saint Cataldo is celebrated at a time when there will be a greater supply of reasonably-priced accommodation than in the summer.

In our opinion, the ambitious "Roots Tourism" project planned at the national level by MAECI (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation) for 2024 aims to create the conditions for a "fair return" of the investment lost during the waves of emigration (as happened in 1946 when 2,000 Coratini chose exile).

It is also in the area of voluntary digitization of Apulian archives that the writing of emigration history and 'roots tourism' could find fertile common ground for action, according to the will of MAECI¹.

¹ "Roots Tourism...promotes the digitization of the archives of Italian registries, increasing the demand for genealogical and family history documents" *"Il Turismo delle radici... Favorisce la digitalizzazione degli archivi delle anagrafi italiane, aumentando la domanda di documenti genealogici e relativi alla storia familiare"* <https://www.italiannetwork.it/news.aspx?id=74014>

In short, our priority remains to promote the writing of the history of emigration from Corato, starting from the experience of the families who lived it, in collaboration with CRIAT². This is why welcoming the descendants of emigrants, as part of a program of "roots tourism," could be the seed planted in the nursery that will enable future developments.

2. Promoting the writing of the history of the emigration of from Corato

On January 31, we will hold a videoconference with the deputy mayor of Grenoble, Emmanuel Carroz. **In October 2023, the city of Grenoble decided to support our project "A Tale of Two Twinned Cities: Corato and Grenoble." Of course, we at the Atelier Généalogique would be delighted if the two cities would decide together to implement, at the institutional level, the project we have been trying to develop continuously since 2019, and let us know the names, surnames and roles of the people we should interface with from now on, so as to avoid wasting time and streamline bureaucratic procedures.**

Since 2022, our project has had a scientific monitoring committee composed of Italian and French historians, chaired by Professor Biagio Salvemini of the Aldo Moro University of Bari. It is thanks to our monitoring committee that a Study Day on Corato emigration will be held in Grenoble in October 2024, with the participation of the Musée Dauphinois. This project will be carried out in a collaboration between the University of Grenoble and CRIAT. Then, in May 2025, two new versions - in French and Italian - of the "Ciao Italia" exhibition of the Musée National de l'Histoire de l'Immigration in Paris will be inaugurated. Under the supervision of the Monitoring Committee, these new versions will include 3 new panels focusing on Coratine emigration.

Mr. Carroz informed us that in 2024/2025, the city of Grenoble will develop some important themes: **the commemoration of the city's liberation and the promotion of a culture of peace in Europe.**

Regarding the first of the two themes, we have just completed genealogical research on some 40 Coratini who joined the French Resistance during World War II. We did this in support of ongoing research carried out by historian Christelle Balducci on the same topic. Because the commitment of Coratini to the Resistance is a strong testimony to their commitment to the ideals that led to the Liberation, we propose that this genealogical and historical work be recognized under the title "Souvenons-nous de nos héros" ("**We remember our heroes**").

3. Our priority: making accessible the primary resources needed for genealogical and historical research

After the digitization in November 2023 of the 4 registers containing passport applications from 1920 to 1960, at the invitation of the mayor of Corato, it will be necessary to index their

² CRIAT : Centro di Ricerca per l'Analisi del Territorio, a coalition de 4 *pugliesi* universities: Aldo Moro et Politecnico (Bari), Foggia, Salento. CRIAT decided to create an internationale database on migration fom Apulia following a symposium in Bari in March 2023, to which I had been invited.

contents, as well as that of the land registry (*catasto onciario*) of 1754. We also took steps to obtain a complete print-out of people from Corato who landed at Ellis Island in New York.

In collaboration with CRIAT, we are continuing to promote the writing of the history of Corato's emigration, as we plan to digitize Corato's Civil Status records from 1911 to 1938, which are kept at the national archives in Trani.

On November 8, together with CRIAT and Ms Mariella Tarricone, our genealogical correspondent in Corato, we had a meeting with the director of the Pugliese National Archives, Dr. Michele Grimaldi, who recently retired. He encouraged us to request permission to digitize the aforementioned Trani records. We are currently awaiting a response to a request to that effect, which CRIAT has offered to make. Dr. Grimaldi also assured us that there will be no privacy problems in allowing the descendants of emigrants to find the graves of their ancestors in the cemetery in Corato.

4. Creating a university consensus in favor of digitizing Apulian archives

In order to get universities interested in researching the history of Apulian emigration, we would like to develop, as part of "roots tourism," intensive Italian language courses aimed mainly at foreign university students, combining these studies with participation in voluntary digitization at the national archives in Trani.

We intend to propose this formula to Oxford University's Migration Program, via one of its members recommended by Professor Bonsaver of Pembroke College, who suggested to us the idea that we submitted to CRIAT in March 2023: to create an international database on Apulian emigration. We will investigate whether this part of our project could fall within the scope of a university agreement that has existed between Grenoble and Oxford since 2018 (taking into account that these two cities are also twinned).

5. Development of genealogical research activities in the United States.

For the past two years, l'Atelier Généalogique collaborated with Wikitree, a free American genealogical self-help organization, where we created a "Corato One Place Study"³. The latter is based on our *albero genealogico coratino*, a family tree which contains more than 26,000 interconnected people and is the result of 7 years of painstaking research. Wikitree's app developer Greg Clarke used our tree to develop a new genetic genealogy application that should soon enable descendants of Corato emigrants - particularly from the United States - to identify people living in Corato today to whom they are potentially related.

This new application - called "X-friends" - is based on the transmission of the X chromosome: from father to daughters and from mother to all her children. Any descendant of a Coratino emigrant will be able to use it without difficulty – even without first taking a DNA test - thanks to the network of ancestors we have documented. We believe this application should also be of interest to historians, as it will allow them to identify transnational families.

³ https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Space:Corato%2C_Puglia_One_Place_Study

6. Developing volunteer work for the reception of tourists: at the cemetery and at the Corato Registrar's offices (*Stato Civile*)

Mr. Nicola Arresta offered to help descendants of emigrants find the graves of their ancestors on a voluntary basis. Recently retired, his experience of 26 years as a cemetery caretaker will be invaluable, because with him we discovered that the method of locating graves has changed several times over the years and that Mr. Arresta's accumulated experience is necessary to be able to locate them quickly and with certainty.

Ms. Rita Anelli - a very active member of the Centro Italo Venezuelano for many years and a highly respected former municipal employee - has offered to participate in our project by helping the descendants of emigrants find the *Stato Civile* records needed to build their family tree.

These two voluntary actions require the authorization of the Mayor of Corato.

7. Conclusion: collaboration with CRIAT (Bari) and with the Archeo Club of Corato

The year 2023 has seen our project reach some important milestones that should allow us both to collaborate with CRIAT in the development of the international database on Apulian emigration and to participate usefully in the Archeoclub of Corato's "*turismo delle radici*" week-long program. Through our website (www.emigrazione-corato.org) - created in November 2020 by Louis Lafranceschina of Grenoble - we will communicate with the many descendants of Corato emigrants around the world who use our Corato family tree and our Google Drive database. In this way, we will make available our cemetery and registry search services, as well as the use of the Wikitree "X-friends" application.

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