

***Project : 'A tale of two twinned cities: Corato and Grenoble'***

**Webinar organized by the association Atelier Généalogique on  
September 24, 2021:**

“Where do we go from here ?”

"How can descendants of emigrants contribute to the documentation of emigration history, by collaborating in migration studies ?"

*(Numbers below correspond to the timing of the webinar recording)*

Communication by **Matteo Sanfilippo**, full Professor of Modern History, University of Viterbo, coordinator of the journals "Studi Emigrazione" and "Archivio storico dell'emigrazione italiana"

00.19.01 ***"National and Apulian models of emigration"***.

Given my topic, I can only say a series of platitudes. All in all I have to talk about everything and nothing, i.e. the attempt to build migration models.

According to what I know in Italy, this is not easy because in reality migrations change direction, change quality, change quantity over time and sometimes appear absolutely contradictory. Much of what is being done now stems from seeing a series of immigrations to Italy, i.e., people arriving in Italy, and at the same time seeing an increasing number of Italians leaving.

This is not the brain drain that the newspapers talk about, but they are young people, often unskilled, they are people in their 40s who lose their jobs and have no chance of finding a job in Italy. They are elderly people who do not go to live abroad because they are rich, but because they cannot live on their pensions in Italy. So they hope that in countries with a lower cost of living they can still have some decent years, and obviously all this has been complicated in the last two years by the pandemic impact.

Now if we look at the current statistics, we see that in Italy the five regions of immigration, that is, the five regions where most immigrants arrive are four from the north (Piedmont, Lombardy, Veneto, and Emilia Romagna, and one from the center, Lazio). Which can be said to be normal. If we look at the five regions from which the most immigrants leave for foreign countries, three are northern (again, Piedmont, Lombardy, Veneto), one is central, Lazio, and only one is southern, Sicily. So the regions that send the most people out take in the most at the same time.

In this ranking we see what seems to me to be the great phenomenon of the South over the last 30 years, namely the exodus of young people. Where do these young people go? Because they do not go abroad, they go to Rome, Naples, Bologna, Milan, Turin, the Veneto region in general, thus partly replacing those who leave those regions and go even further away because of a whole series of wage scales that make them move. In any case, these movements show first of all that if we have to talk about an Italian model, it is not an emigration model nor is it an immigration model.

The Italian model is a circular model in which people come from outside, or start from inside and circulate inside the peninsula in directions that are not always equal, if you consider that people migrated from the north to the south until the 19th century. Then, after the Unification of Italy, this pattern reversed itself and inside Italy people began to migrate from the south to the north. The north of Italy has always migrated out of the peninsula, since time immemorial. I am not going to remind you of phenomena such as Lombard Street in London, which is a precious testimony of what this emigration was. We have an Italy in which, as I said, people have always left from the north, from the Middle Ages until the 19th century. In the 19th century, the great exodus continued, starting more from the north than from the south. This trend began to reverse itself in the 1890s, probably in part due to the agricultural crisis. Biagio Salvemini has just mentioned the wine crisis.

But there is also an olive crisis affecting Puglia as well as other southern regions. There is a fishing crisis; there are a number of additional elements. There is a political crisis in some regions: just think of the Sicilian *fasci*, the defeat of that movement which led to a diaspora, as well as further political crises will lead to subsequent diasporas. In the 1920s we have the flight from Italy in the face of fascism, a flight that often leads to France. In fact, the large Italian communities in France not only already existed in that period, but they increased in size, and it was also a political emigration. We know that these people who arrived in France did not always participate in political life. Those of us who are my age or Biagio Salvemini's age will remember François Cavanna's autobiographical novel *Les Ritals*, translated in Italy as *Calce e Martello* (I don't know why). In it the author recounts that he comes from a family in Emilia that had migrated to escape fascism, a family that did not engage in political activity in France because they were afraid of being sent back to Italy, but remained strongly anti-fascist.

Then after this wave, there will be a third wave, after 1945, think of the movement for the occupation of land and its failure, which leads to another very strong flight. So there is a whole series of departures that are interspersed, however, by equal migrations towards northern Italy. During the second half of the nineteenth century, the industrial triangle began to attract people from the rural regions, which were not only in the south, but also in the center, including Veneto, which remained a migratory region until the 1960s.

In this context the case history of Puglia is inserted, which is, all things considered, that of a region that, in terms of numbers, has not sent out so many migrants, also because Apulia has long been a region of attraction. Biagio Salvemini has written some wonderful things about all the migration and mobility linked to agro-pastoralism in which Apulia became the final destination of movements that began in Marche, Abruzzi, Molise and so on. By the way, I just said *Abruzzi*, which is a way of speaking for us elders; but if one thinks about it, we elders also say *Puglie*, not Puglia. In reality for us today's regions are administrative regions, but they are also made up of a series of sub-regions that should be viewed as different from each other in terms of economic development and so on. For example, in Apulia we had inland Apulia and maritime Apulia, agricultural Apulia and fishing Apulia. Now, if the agricultural and pastoral Apulia attracted, the fishing Apulia sought other avenues. If we take the case of Molfetta, which Biagio Salvemini studied - actually, all the things I have read about Puglia are either his or those of his friends -, its fishermen moved along the coasts of the entire peninsula and so they knew other flows, other fishing routes and,

at the moment when Italian fishing entered a crisis, they began to go to Africa, or to France. I remember an essay by Biagio Salvemini (*Comunità separate e trasformazioni strutturali. I pescatori pugliesi fra metà Settecento e gli anni Trenta del Novecento*, "Mélanges de l'école française de Rome", 978-1, 1985, pp. 441-48) in which he talks about how some fishermen from Molfetta even ended up in Alaska. Fishing is very rich in those waters and the fishermen from Molfetta sell their specialization there.

So, in reality, Puglia is somewhat less of a starting point and is often connected to the flows of others, especially in certain phases, including those I mentioned earlier. However, even in this context some Apulian centers export many people. In an article from the late 1980s (Yves Jaccoud, *Les Coratins de Grenoble*, "Le Monde alpin et rhodanien. Revue régionale d'ethnologie", 17, 3-4, 1989, pp. 131-145) it is said that there were many more Coratini in Grenoble than there were at that time in Corato itself.

To summarize what I have been saying so far in a very confused way, we can say that basically the patterns of emigration and mobility of Italians are extremely messy and change over time and space. So we can never assert much more than the fact that in a given time segment people move to certain regions from all other parts of the peninsula. But places of departure and places of arrival can be completely reversed 50 years later.

Thank you very much.

THE FOLLOWING IS NOT PART OF THE MAIN INTERVENTION, BUT IT IS THE ANSWER TO A QUESTION

01.08.38 Matteo Sanfilippo.

Okay, I can do that. So, in answer to everyone, on Calabrian emigration there are many studies, as well as on emigration from Basilicata. They are mostly in specialized journals, such as "*Studi Emigrazione*", "*Altreitalia*" and "*Archivio storico dell'emigrazione italiana*". On the other hand, the documentation is generally about emigration from a specific town and is therefore restricted to a small proportion of the departures. Moreover, it must be taken into account that the patterns of departures from southern regions are quite different from each other and very often respond to subdivisions. For example, in Calabria, people emigrate from Cosentino in a different way than from Reggio. According to some observers, there are even historical regions that do not respect administrative boundaries. An historical region would thus reunite Cosentino, Basilicata and the south of Campania and would share the same pattern of departures. According to others, Basilicata must be considered as divided into two parts and the flows departing from the Tyrrhenian shore of the region follow Sicilian and Calabrian patterns. They head, for example, towards Latin America. On the other hand, from internal Basilicata, in particular that facing the Murge, the flow corresponds more to the Apulian model. In short, we are faced with many different situations that only allow us to describe what is happening in a restricted area. I don't know if Stéphane Mourlane wants to add something.

01.13.35 Matteo Sanfilippo

In this regard there is an article by Jaccoud on *Les Coratins à Grenoble*, but it examined cohesion, not the relationship of the group with the city.