

Report in June 2026 on our “Corato Emigration Project” (*“A Tale of Two Twinned Cities: Corato and Grenoble”*)

Digitization in Trani: a challenge that may be of interest to FamilySearch

The attached report from a video conference held on June 4, 2026 with the regional director of the State Archives, Dr. Adriano Buzzanca, notes the director’s intention to submit a pilot project to the DGA for the digitization by the American company FamilySearch of the civil registry records from the 11 cities held at the Trani branch. This involves a total of more than 1,000 registers, a volume likely to be of interest to FamilySearch. **The director recommends that CRIAT submit a request to him regarding all of these registers, the contents of which have remained inaccessible for a century. Their indexing by FamilySearch using artificial intelligence can resolve this issue, creating a *de facto* right for the descendants of emigrants to know their origins.**



Project presentation at the Oakland Family History Center in California, March 26, 2026 :

<https://www.emigrazione-corato.org/medias/files/corato-emigration-project-presentation2.pdf>

Volunteer Digitization

Since October 2024, following authorization granted to CRIAT by the DGA in June 2024, the Atelier Généalogique (Genealogy Workshop) has been conducting volunteer digitization sessions in Trani. This volunteer effort allows the descendants of emigrants to participate in writing the history of emigration. Deanna Olivieri, a New Yorker whom we met 10 years ago online, has offered to continue this digitization work and coordinate the volunteers’ efforts. A descendant of emigrants to the United States, she has lived in Italy for seven years and currently teaches English in Naples. She conducted a digitization session in May 2026 and plans to return in September.



Deanna Olivieri digitizing at the State Archives in Trani (2026)

Recruiting university students

Elena di Lernia works at the Language Center of the University of Foggia, which organizes Italian language courses for foreigners, including those aimed at CELI certification. With the United Kingdom's re-entry into the Erasmus program in 2027, we could consider having Elena, subject to authorization from the University of Foggia, apply to spend a week at Pembroke College, Oxford, as part of the Erasmus+ program for TAB staff for "job-shadowing" training. On that occasion, she could meet with Professors Guido Bonsaver and Anna Proudfoot and discuss the possibility of establishing an agreement with the University of Foggia, in order to allow Oxford students to take an Italian course at the University of Foggia, while also participating in voluntary digitization and correction of indexing using artificial intelligence.

I propose to accompany Elena di Lernia to Oxford in the near future so she can meet with Guido Bonsaver, professor of Italian cultural history at Pembroke College, to develop a "Language and Digitalization" program that will allow students to earn credits toward their degree. I would like to remind you that it was Professor Bonsaver who suggested conveying to CRIAT the idea of creating an international database on emigration from Puglia. Guido and his colleague Anna Proudfoot have been informed of the volunteer digitization project and have expressed interest. **CRIAT's support would undoubtedly help bring this initiative to fruition, especially since Foggia is one of the member universities of its coalition.**

Resumption of the Seminar on Writing the History of Emigration.

A meeting is scheduled to take place soon at the Musée Dauphinois in Grenoble to relaunch the Study Day : to revisit the March 2024 program, but with a transnational approach to emigration and a particular focus on the role of women in migration ; to seek the participation of universities from the Americas, both North and South. **In addition, CRIAT could propose a meeting between the State Archives, CRIAT, the Atelier Généalogique, ISMed in Naples, and FamilySearch to discuss the implementation of the international database.**

Relevance of Roots Tourism.

Since a webinar organized by the Atelier Généalogique in October 2025, we have been advocating for a “*collective approach*” to genealogical and historical research. The pilot project mentioned above should not be limited to Corato, but should include all 11 towns whose records are kept in Trani. To enable the descendants of emigrants to learn about their origins, a key focus of the ITALEA program should be the dissemination of the genealogical data contained in these records.

The production in 2025 of three panels for the “*Ciao Italia*” exhibition at the French National Museum of the History of Immigration convinced us of the need for the descendants of emigrants to participate in writing their own history. Furthermore, this project was made possible thanks to significant support from the cities of Grenoble and Corato, commemorating their twinned city relationship and the participation of the people of Corato in the French Resistance during World War II: <https://www.emigrazione-corato.org/medias/files/800x2000-expo-ciao-italia-version-italienne-copie-compressed-copie.pdf>



Eliseo Tambone (city council member), Marina Labartino (ArcheoClub di Corato), Christelle Balducci, James Smith (Atelier Généalogique), Corrado de Benedittis (mayor), Beniamino Marcone (deputy mayor), Corinne Pinchon, Kelly Lombardi-Varesano (Grenoble Ville Ouverte) – Corato, May 2025

To build on this project, the Atelier Généalogique organized a meeting in Andria on June 5, where our colleagues Marina Labartino and Vincenzo Tota met with historian Giulio Cappabianca and genealogist Gabriele Marzano. We advised them to suggest to their mayor, Giovanna Bruno—known for her support of Roots Tourism—that she request the digitization of the civil registry records in Trani and of the *catasti onciari* (land registers) of Andria. We suggested that a public history event could be organized around the *Ciao Italia* exhibition to discuss participation in writing the history of emigration, and to volunteer to assist with digitization in Trani. This expansion of our project to another town in the Alta Murgia region would complement the pilot project recommended by the director of the State Archives.



Gabriele Marzano, Marina Labartino, James Smith, Giulio Cappabianca
at the Diocesan Archives in Andria (June 2026)

We plan to request a meeting at the Italian Cultural Institute in Marseille. Subject to the agreement and availability of its director, Dr. Angelo Izzo, **we hope this meeting can take place before the end of July 2026**; in which case, I will be accompanied by Catherine Virlovet, professor emerita of ancient history at Aix-Marseille University, the first female director of the French School in Rome, and a member of our scientific monitoring committee.

Articles written by the Atelier Généalogique

The Atelier Généalogique, thanks to its ‘family tree’ of 29,000 interconnected individuals and its database on Google Drive, continues to help people trace their origins. Following our July 2025 release online of the 1754 *Catasto Onciario* of Corato and of the indexes of the Corato parish archives, our collaborators Rafael Caterina of São Paulo and Giancarlo Minardi of New York have written articles that may be relevant to the launch of the international database on emigration from Puglia. These are “*Bringing Corato’s Historical Records Together*” and “*Genealogical Research in Corato Based on Available 18th-Century Archives and the Limitations Arising from the Inability to Access All Parish Registers: Case Studies and Future Prospects.*”

These articles are available in three languages on our new website: <https://radicialtamurgia.it/>

We would be interested in having these articles published in a journal and would appreciate any advice on this matter.

By the end of 2026, the Atelier Généalogique plans to present to the French and Italian Ministries of International Cooperation and to the European Commission a project focused on the digitization and indexing, using artificial intelligence, of all Civil State registers held in Trani, on the launch of a database documenting the history of emigration from Puglia, and on the participation of descendants of emigrants in these initiatives.

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