

Summary of an exchange by video conference with Dott. Adriano Buzzanca, regional director of the State Archive in Bari, on Thursday June 4th 2026

Persons present on Zoom organized by Atelier Généalogique, with the help of Dott.ssa Laura Leo :

Dott. Adriano Buzzanca, Dott.ssa Laura Leo (Archivio di Stato di Bari), James Smith, Deanna Olivieri (Atelier Généalogique), Alessandro Lavopa (independent professional genealogist).

James thanks the Director for the support he provided in enabling CRIAT to obtain from Rome the original autorisation for digitization of the Corato Civil State registers. **James then asks whether it might be possible for FamilySearch to undertake the digitisation of the approximately one thousand civil registration volumes from the eleven municipalities held in Trani.**

The Director replies that such digitisation could potentially be carried out by FamilySearch within the framework of the existing agreement between FamilySearch and the Direzione Generale Archivi. However, he is not entirely certain that these volumes were explicitly covered by the original authorisation and suggests that, if necessary, an appendix could be added to the original authorisation letter.

The Director agrees with this general objective, while noting that he must operate within the rules and administrative procedures imposed by his institution. Nevertheless, he says that he is genuinely pleased to assist and would be willing to do more where possible.

Alessandro observes that the agreement between the Direzione Generale Archivi (DGA) and FamilySearch appears to have been renewed and that this may create an opportunity for further digitisation projects. He adds that, to the best of his knowledge, from discussions he had with Dr. Riccardo Rega, the Director has already taken steps in this direction for Trani.

The Director agrees in principle. He notes that he has not yet had the opportunity to discuss the matter directly with Riccardo Rega, but believes that the appropriate mechanisms must be found through agreements and formal conventions.

The Director asks Alessandro to provide a written description of the proposed procedure, including the method of reproduction and the nature of the activity to be undertaken. At the same time, he states that, since this remains essentially the same project that has already been authorised, he does not foresee any particular difficulties.

Alessandro further argues that digitisation undertaken professionally by FamilySearch would be more sustainable than the current volunteer-based approach, however commendable the latter may be. Familysearch's involvement would allow greater attention to be devoted to the scientific aspects of the project and to collaboration with the universities. He wonders whether the involvement of academic institutions in a scientific project might encourage the DGA to give greater priority to the proposed digitisation programme in Trani.

The Director responds that any formal request should come from CRIAT. He adds that he would welcome the participation of the State Archive of Trani, acting with the approval of its Directorate, and that he would prefer the necessary formal agreements and conventions to

be established from the outset so that the activities can proceed smoothly without the need to seek repeated authorisations.

James explains that CRIAT is due to review during the current month the project for establishing an international migration database relating to Puglia, making this a particularly important moment for the initiative.

He then explains that the project to create an international database on migration from Puglia could now become operational because FamilySearch possesses not only indexed civil registration records but also many other indexed resources relating to migrants and their lives in the countries of destination.

James then suggests organising a meeting involving the State Archive of Trani, CRIAT, Atelier Généalogique, ISMed and FamilySearch in order to advance the project for an international migration database on Puglia. He points out that, from a technical standpoint, the project is already feasible not only because FamilySearch possesses large quantities of indexed information, but because ISMed in Naples has the experience and database expertise necessary to support such an initiative. He emphasises that digitisation alone is insufficient and that indexing is essential.

The Director responds that the proposal could potentially be formulated by the State Archive of Trani as a pilot project and transmitted to Rome for consideration. He also stresses the importance of broadening the perspective of the initiative and looking outward rather than remaining confined within a narrow institutional framework, indicating his openness to wider collaboration.