

FOREIGNS IN "TERRA DI LAVORO" DURING THE MIDDLE AGES

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Abstract

The presence of many foreigner merchants in "Terra di Lavoro"-Italy, during the Middle Ages drives civilisation historians to wonder about the role they had, what their culture and mentality were like, in which way they integrated with other foreign merchants (among which Greek, Rumanian and Hungarian ones), how they adjust themselves to native population and other Judaic ethny living in the wide territory way of living and customs.

Keywords: Economy, land use, planning, Amalfitans, Neapolitans, Pisans, Genoese, Venetians, Florentines.

1. INTRODUCTION

Capua's Principate – then called "Terra di Lavoro" (present Caserta province) – during the Middle Ages is a very important region to civilization historians. The presence of foreign merchants, coming from Italy various areas, get them to wonder about the role they have carried out and the interests they were animated by (Bova, 2007). Surely merchants made integration possible among areas with different productive specialization. From local documents of the period we know about the local products (such as wood, fruit, vegetables, corn, wine, flax and hemp), but we don't know much about Angevin products, apart from the little news taken from Angevin documents of the period, which deal with Capua territory (Bova, 2008).

But "Terra di Lavoro" history of the time, arouses historian interests not only in business, but above all because of the presence and the co-existence of many foreigners, who were able to integrate themselves with native population. Certainly the zone we deal with was full of contrasts, syntheses and survivals, considering the presence of Jewish people – above all Sadducees, Maccabees, Suricis, Medicis (Bova, 2009) – and of foreign economic operators, above all Greek, Romanian and Hungarian ones (Bova, 2007). Surely both local church and Angevin monarchs had to be able jointers among different cultures and economies because of various reasons. The former was also interested in evangelization, as well as in economy, considering all *pecie terre* of its own, which were hired to foreign economic operators, the latter wanted all kinds of advantages that could derive from that presence, above all because of money asked for a loan, for necessity. In fact in

documents of the time it is not rare to read about well-off exotic surnamed families: *mutuaverunt pecuniam regi* (Filangieri, 1968).

2. AMALFITANS, RAVELLO PEOPLE, SALERNO PEOPLE E NEAPOLITANS

The Amalfitan, Ravello, Salerno and Neapolitans merchants, as the Greek merchants and all the other ones coming from the coast had already done, used to collect their goods in the small area called *Castrum maris* (Castelvoturno) previously belonging to Capua, and from there, through via Campana, they went with their goods into hinterland for 28 km, practically all along Voltorno's water-way, from the Thyirrenian Sea to the present Capua, following the river (Bova, 2007).

In 1269 near Brezza Village (not far from Saint Maria la Fossa Village) a Iohannes cognomine Amalfitanus, *ligius vassallus et homo sancte Capuane ecclesie*, received as rent by Chapter six portions of land. We have already dealt with noble families such as Amalfitano, de Ebulo, de Surrento, whose surnames come from homonymous cities, from which at least at the beginning some representatives came from, then they settled in Capua.

In S. Maria la Fossa Village is also documented the presence of a certain Iohannes cognomine Mercatante, *filius quondam Petri eiusdem cognominis* (1299).

Perhaps the merchants from Salerno and Naples came from Castelvoturno too. In 1265 Capua Chapter sank into debts to buy lands in Capua and in the neighbourhood, held by dominus Guillelmus de Canalibus, de Salerno. In 1272 a piece of land near Capua Gulielmi de Rogerio, de Salerno is mentioned. In 1270 a Nicola Ravellensis land, near Grumo Village (not far from Marcianise), is registered. In 1327 the Chapter gave mercatoribus Napoli ten ounces of gold (Inguanez et al., 1942).

3. THE PISANS AND THE GENOESSES

An important commercial stage on the way from Castelvoturno to Capua, was S. Maria la Fossa center, with Women's Port and Palumbo Port, where during the Early Middle Ages a Pisan_merchants colony settled (Bova, 2007).

In a 1269 document, a certain Stabilis Pesanus, Roberto's son, from Arnone, owned thirtythree portions of land «in villa Arnoni et Rosselle» (Bova, 2010). A document dated 1276 shows a Nicola de Henrico and his wife nomine Pisana, daughter of dead Giacomo, Ambrogio Albi son, to have lived in loco sancte Marie ad Fossam. In another important document of 1303, about Arnone tenimentum, placed near S. Maria la Fossa are mentioned other Pisans who were interested in this area: "petia terre, quam laborat Petrus Pisanus, filius domini Nicolai Pisani", "heres Pisanorum", "terra Pisanorum", "terra Stabilis Pisani". Among nomina

vassallorum recorded in this document there are "Thomasius Pisanus, Petrus <filius> domini Nicolai cognomine Pisanus, de villa S. Blasii, Iohannes Pisanus, Angelus Pisanus".

A Iohannes Pisanus, de villa S. Marie de Cannellis, owned a land in Catorano, near S. Maria ad Quarantam (1327), while a Ciprianus Pisanus, de Capua, corbiserius (shoemaker) lived in the city along Volturno river (1467).

Other Pisans had business between Curti Village and ancient Capua (today S. Maria Capua Vetere), in the place Secata: "Iohannes, cognomine Pisanus et Michael, germani, filii quondam Iohannis Pisani et Iohannes Pisanus, filius quondam Nicolai Pisani, qui estis patrum et nepos (1273). In Carinola Diocese we meet in 1308-10 abbas Iacobus Pisanus (Inguanez et al., 1947).

As regards the Genoese, we register that S. Nicholas de Maraldiscis church in S. Maria la Fossa, under the Maraldos patronage, has been known since 1184 documents. Maraldo, or Maraldisci, were from Longobard stock and they came above all from Genoa neighbourhood, more exactly from Perinaldo (Di Crollanza, 1886).

4. THE VENETIANS

At the end of the XIII century, the Badoers, for the first time appeared in Capua. They belonged to a noble and rich Venice family, Hungarian by birth, in the person of Marco, then secretus Apulie, and his wife Marchisia. Since 1273 they had been taking the place of domina Alexandra de Raone who owned some work shops, placed in platea Capue: the one held by magister Robertus Bulfaroymo (should have given Balduario 30 taris a year), the one held by a Nicolaus de Tibaldo de Capua (should have given the same people 12 tari a year) and the one held by congregatio maioris ecclesie Capue (should have given the same people 30 tari a year).

King Charles of Anjou, in fact, had established that Marco Balduario, citizen of Venice, his wife and their heirs received goods and land once belonged to the dead Alessandra, daughter of Giovanni Filraone from Capua, Roberto de Accia's wife: «Roberto viro suo, que sunt iuxta domus Nicolai de Actia, in quibus idem Nicolaus habitabat, et iuxta viam publicam».

In a document of 1278 it is registered that Marco Badoer probably had already died. In this document are mentioned his sons: «heredes domini Marci Balduari de Venetiis, tenent molendinum in Triflisco».

As it seems clear the new Badoer generation wanted to leave the city, in order to undertake in the suburban area a more profitable economic activity, linked to the exploitation of water-mills and to their use as first engine for other machines.

5. THE FLORENTINS

They appeared in Capua's territory towards the middle of XIII century; and is right to think that some at least were exiled after (same) the famous disagreement between Guelphs and Ghibbellines in Firenze. It hasn't been possible to verify the kind of financial activity carried out by them in "Terra di lavoro". In the village of S. Lucia, today disappeared, in locality *ad Torum* (near S. Andrea de' Lagni) for example, is quoted in 1265 a «terra heredis Andrea Florentini» and a «terra quondam Andree Florentini» (1268). In locality *Palmentata* (near Marcianise) between frontiers is mentioned a «terra domine Florence, filie de domino Leonardo» (1266). In Cauciano (near Marcianise) in 1291 is quoted a Filippo's wood *de Florencia*, son of the late *magister Tommaso de Florencia* (maybe the king Carlo's personal doctor), reason for that it could deduce that this family was interested in wood commerce. In a document from the end of XIII century it is certified that «hamlet Airola near Capua and donna Palma Tommaso's vassalages and Nicola Spinelli's heirs, all Adenolfo d'Aquino, is gifts were given teacher Filippo from Firenze» (1292). But already next year is commanded to the late teacher Filippo is heirs to give back Airola hamlet: «executoria privilegii restitutionis casalis Ayrole de terra Lanei, quod teneut heredes condam magistri Philippi de Florentia» (1293). In Trentola (near Marcianise) in 1365 is quoted the *quondam domina Deda de Lambertis de Florentia*, whose weapon is «azure with six golden balls».

But is especially in the town on Volturno that Florentine seem more numerous. In 1301 is quoted for example a certain *abbas Nicolaus de Florencia*, son of late Bartolomeo. In 1340 *dompna Marotta de Falco, de Capua et Galeffus, hospes de Florentia*, have got in Capua some *domus palaciate* from S. Giovanni of nuns monastery. In 1374 is quoted a certain *Laurencius, dictus Gibillinus habitator Capue*. In December 1381 resides in town a certain *Matheus de Viturbino de Florentia, habitator Capue*, who has in concession by the archbishop *Acthenasius* a «presam terre sitam in dicta villa Luciani» (*Castel Loriani*), that confines in parts with a «terra franca dicti Mathei»; among the witnesses of the contract is present the «magister Carolus Synay phisicus».

In Capua is quoted in 1432 again the *nobilis et circumspectus vir Gaspar Boncianus de Florencia*, of a noble family (Mazzoleni, 1958). I remember by the way that in 1514 monsignor Giovanni Battista Bonciani, maybe a Gaspare's descendant, was named Caserta's bishop. Worthy is important to mention the presence in Capua of the famous Cavalcanti family from Firenze. We remember a *Nerius de Cavalcantibus de Florentia*, leader in Sessa and lieutenant of the nobles *Americus de Cavalcantibus* leader in Capua (1369). In August of 1394 were still present in Capua a *Iohannes de Cavalcantibus* and a *Francischella de Cavalcantibus de Capua*, in 1411 is quoted the *nobilis vir Iohannes de Cavalcantibus de Capua*; some *domus* of Giovanni de *Cavalcantibus* are quoted in Bagnara just out Capua (1400). In the 9(th) July 1422 the noble young *Americus de Cavalcantibus de Capua*, made a testament «in casa sua, in parrochia ecclesie S. Marie in Abbate, iuxta

iardenum domine Margarite de Accia», naming his heiress the «nobilem mulierem Biliam de Amato, aviam suam maternam» (1422). Finally, in 1452 was prior of monastery of Monte Vergine in Capua the monk Paradiso de Florencia (Bova, 2007).

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