

**S. II. 5. – AS THE TIDE TURNED. THE SWINGING RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN NAPLES AND THE OCEANS**
CHAIR: Sylviane Llinares
(Université Bretagne Sud)

Panel Abstract

The growing importance of a global perspective among historians in recent decades has encouraged scholars to investigate seas and oceans, as they are considered fundamental gateways for global flows of goods, people and ideas. The present panel aims to examine the changing role played by the oceans in the economic expansion strategies of a Mediterranean port city, Naples, between XIX and XX century. For a long time, the role of the oceans in the history of Naples has been neglected by scholars. Until now, Historians have mainly focused on the importance of transatlantic routes for the growing emigration departing from Naples and headed to the American continent. Nevertheless, for Neapolitan economic and political élites ocean wasn't only an empty space to cross, but a new opportunity for economic initiatives. The concrete ways by which the city tried to exploit the oceans, anyway, changed throughout time. The panel is intended to underline the institutional, political, economic and technological factors that have determined opportunities and limits of the complex relationship between Naples and the Oceans over time.

Keywords

Global trade, Liner shipping, Mediterranean Sea, Southern Italy, Imperial policy

From the Mediterranean Sea to the Oceans. Naples, the Orient Line and the Australian Mail Service

DOMENICO MARRAZZO (University of Naples, Federico II, Italy)

Abstract

The present paper aims to investigate the role played by the Australian mail service in the economic development strategy of Naples between 1881 and 1914. After the Suez Canal was opened in 1869, Italian maritime cities like Genoa and Venice tried to regain their ancient role as marketplaces for trades between Europe and the Far East, encouraging steam navigation companies to call at their ports. Naples looked at the transoceanic trade through the Suez Canal as a way to redeem itself from a long period of economic stagnation. In 1880 the Orient Line, a British steam navigation company, started to call at the Neapolitan port, and when the company managed to sign a contract with the British government for the Australian mail service, Naples became an important hub on the route between Great Britain and Australia. Neapolitan merchants and politicians supported the Orient Line in every way, as they considered the Australian mail service an opportunity to foster the city trade and increase tourist traffic. Nevertheless, in spite of all the efforts the Orient Line played a marginal role in Neapolitan export, showing that a direct lane wasn't a sufficient condition for making trade arise.

Biography

Domenico Marrazzo is a third year Ph.D. in Late Modern History at the University of Naples Federico II, under the supervision of Professor Marco Meriggi. His doctoral research is focused on the role of foreign trade promotion, port infrastructure and liner shipping in Naples economy between the Italian Unification and the First World War. He is particularly interested in the role played by the global commercial connectivity network in the economic history of Southern Italy. His main fields of inquiry are maritime, institutional and economic history. Has presented a paper titled "Oltre il Mediterraneo. Napoli e la rotta del Sud America nelle convenzioni del 1877" at the AISPE-SISE conference "Institutions and socio-economic changes. Italy and Europe in the international context in a historical perspective", online, 4-6 November 2021.

From Oceans to Mediterranean Sea. Naples, the interwar period and the Italian Fascist Empire

DARIO SALVATORE (University of Salerno)

Abstract

The paper wants to investigate the process of involution of the oceanic relations of the city of Naples, which starts from the first post-war period and reaches up to the fascist imperial policy. The contribution aims to demonstrate how Italy undertook a Mediterranean policy, even before the affirmation of fascism. The Italian state began a project to turn Naples into a large commercial emporium to increase Italian influence in the Mediterranean basin. In the first post-war period, efforts were made to intensify the network between Naples and the ports of the Mediterranean through trade fairs, commercial museums, and commercial trips to the Middle East. During the Fascism, the discourse became more militarist and less mercantilist with the idea “mare nostrum”: the port of Naples must be the platform for Italian imperial policy. First of all, Naples must intensify relations with the Italian colonies in the Mediterranean (Libya and Rhodes) and in the Red Sea (Eritrea and Somalia). When Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935 and formed the fascist empire, the city of Naples obtained the title of “port of the empire”. The long and consolidated transoceanic relations of the city were defeated in this long process. The Italian state adopted a strategy of import substitution (called “autarchy” by fascists) which cut off some of these relations. Fascism saw especially imports as a factor of weakness and risk, therefore it made some economic choices to limit imports and facilitate integration with the colonies. For instance, the use of coral from the colonies was encouraged, while Japanese coral was discouraged. The struggle for food self-sufficiency (“wheat battle” for the fascists) cut the supply lines from the Black Sea and Australia. In fact, the wheat used to make pasta came from these markets.

Biography

Dario Salvatore is a third year Ph.D. student in Economic History at University of Salerno. Dario holds a bachelor's degree in History and a Master Degree in Historical Science, both from Federico II (University of Naples, Italy). His Ph.D. dissertation focuses on the role of Naples in colonial trade during Fascism. His main research interests are related to maritime history, Economics and colonialism.

Papers presented:

AISPE-SISE Conference 2021, Institutions and socio-economic changes. Italy and Europe in the international context in a historical perspective, online, 4-6 November 2021.

Paper: Sulle ali di Vittorio Veneto: Napoli «porto dell'Oriente» nel primo dopoguerra

Competence Centre for Regional History, Prefascismi regionali. Esercizio e ricezione del potere fascista nel contesto interregionale, Bozen, Italy, 12-13 November 2021.

Paper: Ripartire dal porto. La negoziazione difficile tra fascismo e forze economiche a Napoli dal 1921 al 1925

The Neapolitan “Armada de l’Oceano” (Ocean see fleet) (1623 – 1707)

MARIA SIRAGO (Nav Lab Laboratorio di Storia Navale)

Abstract

The kingdom of Naples, included as a state among the Spanish countries, since the time of its conquest (1503) had become a powerful military support base for Mediterranean war operations providing its own team of galleys; then galleons and vessels were built in the ports of Castellammare and Baia at the end of the 1500s. Between 1582 and 1583 a first navy unit took part in the expedition of the Azores and then in 1588 also in the one against England. A few years after the defeat, in 1594, the Spanish monarchy decided to create a permanent combat structure, called the Ocean Sea Armada, made up of vessels of Asientists, usually Genoese. From that moment on also for the kingdom began the oceanic “adventure”. In fact, after setting up numerous galleons and vessels, in 1623, the Neapolitan capital was ordered to set up its own Ocean Sea Armada made up of 8 vessels and a “petaccio” or support vessel which remained in service throughout the seventeenth century by participating in the Spanish war operations, both Mediterranean and Oceanic.

Keywords

Ocean see fleet, galleons and vessels, the Kingdom of Naples

Biography

She was permanent State teacher of literary subjects at “Liceo Classico Jacopo Sannazaro” in Naples (1897 -2017), then she retired on 1st September 2017. She has been studying maritime history in its different aspects, carrying out, in particular, studies on the Southern Italy port system, on Southern Italy Navy in Spanish, Austrian and Bourbon periods, on merchant ships, on maritime insurances, on trade, on naval schools and on fishing systems. As a result of these studies, she has published various essays and six monographic studies.

Latest book *La flotta napoletana nel contesto mediterraneo (1503-1707)*, Ed Licosa, Oliastro Cilento (Salerno), 2018.