

Mediterranean, Knowledge, Culture and Heritage 6

Erminio FONZO – Hilary A. HAAKENSEN
Editors

MEDITERRANEAN MOSAIC: HISTORY AND ART



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Book Series edited by
Giuseppe D'Angelo and Emiliana Mangone

This Book Series, published in an electronic open access format, serves as a permanent platform for discussion and comparison, experimentation and dissemination, promoting the achievement of research goals related to three key topics:

Mediterranean: The study of southern Europe and the Mediterranean world offers a historical perspective that can inform our understanding of the region today. The findings collected in this series speak to the myriad policy debates and challenges – from immigration to economic disparity – facing contemporary societies across the Great Sea.

Knowledge: At its core, this series is committed to the social production of knowledge through the cooperation and collaboration between international scholars across geographical, cultural, and disciplinary boundaries.

Culture and Heritage: This series respects and encourages sharing multiple perspectives on cultural heritage. It promotes investigating the full scope of the complexity, hybridity, and morphology of cultural heritage within the Mediterranean world.

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Preface by the Series Editors

Narration and Representation of the Mediterranean

This new book, edited by Erminio Fonzo and Hilary A. Haakenson, addresses several little known subjects in the history of the Mediterranean world as well as artistic representations of this dynamic world created over the centuries.

As Marcus Tullius Cicero stated in a famous passage of his *Orator ad M. Brutum*, “Nescire autem quid ante quam natus sis acciderit, id est semper esse puerum. Quid enim est aetas hominis, nisi ea memoria rerum veterum cum superiorum aetate contextitur” or “To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child. For what is the worth of human life, unless it is woven into the life of our ancestors by the records of history” (Cicero, *Orator ad M. Brutum*, 120). Taking this dictum to heart, the case studies in this volume, move beyond a one-dimensional vision of the “Great Sea” by contributing to the growth and development of a nuanced and complete understanding of the Mediterranean world across time.

This book is an achievement that explores the interconnections between two academic disciplines – history and art history - both essential to understanding the region. Building upon seminal scholarship produced during the 20th century, its essays address long-standing themes as well as little-known historical subjects from and artistic representations of the Mediterranean World.

We, the series editors of Mediterranean Knowledge, believe that creating new synergies and epistemological relationships between different but complementary disciplines is critical to advancing research on the cultures of the “Great Sea.” As we have elsewhere stated:

In the present world, the multidimensionality of the daily problems and the quick succession of social transformations urge us to re-compose the different points of view and the perspectives of various disciplines to create the fertile grounds for the cooperation between them. Opening a dialogue that can overcome “formal” disciplinary and terminological barriers is necessary. Only the permeability and the flexibility of the disciplinary borders - going “beyond the disciplines” and acknowledging them as “different disciplines” – will allow us to open ourselves to knowledge free from positivism (D'Angelo & Mangone, 2016, p. 5).

These theoretical and methodological premises drive the new scientific journey of Mediterranean Knowledge because:

The Mediterranean is not merely geography. Its boundaries are drawn in neither space nor time. There is in fact no way of drawing them: they are neither ethnic nor historical, state nor national; they are like a chalk circle that is constantly traced and erased, that the winds and waves, that obligations and inspirations, expand or reduce (Matvejević, 1999, p. 7).

It is precisely for this reason that narration and representation are important subjects not only in themselves, but also for understanding the present state of the Mediterranean World and the challenges that it faces today.

The three parts of the present volume speak to some of the most interesting historical and aesthetic themes emerging across the “Great Sea”: the relationships between the people of the Mediterranean Basin, their contact with other worlds, particularly the Americas, and the artistic representations and interpretations of both sets of interactions.

In bringing their respective contributions together, this volume’s authors, writing from a wide range of different countries and diverse academic backgrounds, provide a fresh and significant contribution to Mediterranean Studies.

The ICSR Mediterranean Knowledge is therefore particularly pleased to welcome this new book into its series “Mediterranean, Knowledge, Culture and Heritage” and hopes that new studies may deepen other subjects related to this sacred Sea.

Fisciano, Italy
February 2019

Giuseppe D'Angelo
Emiliana Mangone

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Erminio FONZO - Hilary A. HAAKENSEN

Editors

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HISTORY AND ART



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On the cover: Pietro Vesconte, *Nautical Chart*, 1311. Courtesy of Florence State Archive.

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Via Giovanni Paolo II n. 132, 84084 Fisciano, Italy



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Social, Economic and Cultural Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary States in the Kingdom of Naples under the Hapsburgs and Bourbons, 1707 – 1815

FRANCA PIROLO

Introduction

During the 16th and 17th centuries, Turkish pirates and Barbary corsairs continuously attacked the coasts of Southern Italy (Heers, 2003; Partner, 2003). Both foreign threats wielded expanding power; the increasing naval supremacy of the Ottoman Turks heralded the era of their empire's greatest power and glory (Murphey, 1999), while the Barbary corsairs - pirates and privateers who operated from North Africa under the protection of the Ottoman Empire - extended their maritime dominance by increasing the size of the fleets with which they besieged the coasts of Mediterranean countries, especially Italy and Spain (Heers, 2003). Southern European nations responded to this period of the so-called "corsair wars" by seeking new methods to secure peace. This, in turn, stimulated diplomacy, commercial exchange, and religious conversion (Ceci, 1906; Bono, 2000; Bono 2008) as well as slavery between Muslim and Christian powers across the Mediterranean Sea (Cardini, 2009; Eslami, 2014). This essay examines some of the causes and consequences of these cross-cultural encounters by tracing a history of relations between Naples, the Ottoman Empire and the Barbary powers from 1707 to 1815.

According to Piacentini (2005), Bono (2008) and Donini (2015), the most significant consequence of Barbary piracy was slavery. By the second half of the 17th century, advances in maritime technology meant that Ottoman and Barbary vessels no longer required a large number of rowing slaves; therefore, when Barbary corsairs captured Christians, they aimed to obtain a ransom for their "redemption," or return, instead of to employ them as galley slaves (Sirago, 2004a). By contrast, the Muslim slaves captured by Christians had no opportunity for redemption through ransom. Once taken, these Muslim converts to Christianity were primarily used for housework and domestic service (Monti, 1931- 1932; Vitale, 1988; Fiume, 2009).

In Italy, ransom for captured sailors was often collected by institutions established by private or government initiatives (Bono, 1993; Bono, 1999). The cities along the gulf of Naples and Salerno, in particular, regularly promoted the

redemption of slaves. In Naples proper, a *Confraternita per la Redenzione dei Cattivi* (Confraternity for the Redemption of Prisoners) (Boccadamo, 2010) was established in 1548, and, at the beginning of the 17th century, many communities formed *Monti di padroni di barche, marinai e pescatori*, mutual aid societies for boat owners, seamen and fishermen. Among other activities, these associations provided the payment of ransom to Turks or Barbary corsairs for the release of Italian prisoners (Di Taranto, 1999 and Sirago, 2004b). The price of the ransom, paid with gold and luxury merchandise, increased over the years: between 1570 and 1580, the average amount paid was around 100 ducats; in the years 1605-1610, it rose to 110 ducats; and, in 1720, the price reached 150 ducats (Ferrandino, 2008). In 1724, the threat to one group, the coral fishermen from Torre del Greco who fished along the Mediterranean coast of Africa, was considered so great that the group created a new “Fund of Slaves” to offset the expense.

1. Southern Italian relations with Barbary Corsairs under the Hapsburgs (1707-1734)

When the Kingdom of Naples came under the control of the Austrian Hapsburgs in 1707, the consequences of piracy were a matter of great concern for the government. From Naples, the Hapsburgs aimed at expanding trade with the Levant and the Atlantic world (Herrero Sánchez-Kaps, 2017) and pirates threatened this trade. According to Sirago (2016), to increase the protection of trade close to home, precise orders were given for the construction of vessels to defend merchant ships carrying foodstuffs from Abruzzi and Apulia to the capital at Naples. Seeking to trade more securely in the wider Mediterranean, Austrian Emperor Charles VI also engaged with the Sublime Porte and the Barbary States in negotiations intended to limit attacks and create more favorable conditions for commerce (Di Vittorio, 1979). On 22 July 1718, at the end of the Second War of Morea, Charles successfully signed a peace treaty with the Ottoman Empire in Passarowitz granting free trade and freedom of navigation for Hapsburg ships in the Black Sea (Sirago, 2016, pp. 89-98)¹. This agreement stipulated that the maximum rate of the duties on exports and imports should be fixed at 3 percent² (Di Vittorio, 2011). More importantly, it created the foundation for future political and economic relations.

¹ This provision was established through a clause in chapter 8 of the treaty reading, “Sicchè caricate le mercanzie si potessero trasportare in Costantinopoli, nella Crimea, in Trebisonda, in Sinope e in altri empori di quel mare senza impedimento di sorta alcuna” (“so that goods could be carried to Constantinople, Crimea, Trebizond, Sinop or to any other trading places of that sea without any hindrance”).

² Biblioteca Nazionale, Napoli, Rari, XXII/44, *Istrumento di pace stabilita e firmata in Passarowitz nel Regno di Servia à di 22 del Mese di Luglio 1718 tra Carlo VI e il Sultano Achmedhan, Napoli*, Sebastiano Porsile Stampatore della Reg. Generale, 1718.

In the hope of securing more lucrative trade routes across the Mediterranean Sea, the Hapsburg government in Naples followed an Ottoman model seeking to compel the Barbary rulers of North Africa to sign non-aggression pacts. However, the results were limited. According to Bianchini (1971), the only promising treaty between the Barbary rulers and the Hapsburgs was signed in 1725. By 1734, Hapsburg power was waning and, with the rise of Bourbon rule in Naples, long-standing patterns of political and cultural interaction between Southern Italy and the Barbary powers faced new challenges.

2. *The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1734-1806)*

Charles of Bourbon founded the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies as an independent monarchy in 1734. Upon his arrival, the new ruler hoped to improve the economy of his Southern state. His tripartite strategy was to strengthen the Kingdom's defenses, restore its aging ports and harbors (Sirago, 2004b)³, and expand the Royal Navy with the construction of 50 new gun vessels designed to combat Barbary corsairs (Sirago, 2012a, pp. 88-107). The actions of the Bourbon government also motivated private shipowners to arm their *polaccas*, *pinks* and *tartans* in exchange for official "letters of marque". The presence of a new affluent merchant class living along the Sorrento Peninsula by the end of the 18th century suggests the security measures of the Bourbon government and the merchants were a success (Mafrici_2007, pp. 241-245; Sirago 2012a, p. 85).

In addition to strengthening the Kingdom's defenses, King Charles aimed to lay the diplomatic foundations for a lasting relationship of friendship and commerce with the Ottoman Empire and the regencies of Tripoli, Tunis and Algiers (Barbagallo, 1971; Mafrici 2004, pp. 151-172). Pasquale Villani (1973; 2008) argues that "the aim of Neapolitan trade policy during the years 1730-40 was twofold: to open up new opportunities for Neapolitan foreign trade in the Eastern Mediterranean and Northern Europe... and consolidate/renew old trade relations with the countries of Western Europe and the other Italian States". Villani points out that, by the middle of the 18th century, Neapolitan trade had increased significantly in spite of the Kingdom's agricultural backwardness, low manufacturing productivity, lack of roads, and heavy system of taxation.

To support increased foreign trade, King Charles also attempted to reduce piracy through a treaty of peace and commerce with Sultan Mahmud I (1730-1754). The treaty was signed on 7 April 1740 by the Turkish Ambassador Haci Hüseyin Efendi and Ambassador Giuseppe Finocchietti, the Minister of Plenipotentiary sent by Charles of Bourbon to the Sublime Porte in Constantinople. The Ottoman Porte had previously concluded a trade agreement with Sweden in

³ These ports included: Brindisi, Gallipoli, and Trani in Puglia, and Messina and Palermo in Sicily (Sirago, 2004b, p. 33).

1737 (Demiryürek, 2014, pp. 53-74), and subsequently signed treaties with Denmark (1757), Prussia (1761), Russia (1774) and Spain (1782). However, the treaty with the Kingdom of Naples was different from the others because it was a bilateral agreement. Prior to 1740, Neapolitan and Sicilian merchants traded under the French, Dutch and Austrian flags in the Levant, but after 1740, the merchant ships of the two nations could dock at all ports, and the Turks were granted the so-called “Sicilyateyn” (Demiryürek 2014, p. 56).

At the conclusion of the 1740 peace treaty, the ambassadors exchanged gifts on behalf of their respective sovereigns. The gifts sent from Naples to the Sublime Porte consisted of porcelain cups and silver objects produced by artisan craftsmen as well as tortoiseshell items. In turn, the Neapolitan ambassador received a tartar curtain, carpets, jewelry and objects with precious stones and diamonds, luxurious fabrics, horses and an elephant. As impressive as these exotic gifts were, the Neapolitans hoped that the greatest reward would be the terms of the new trade agreement itself. In sum, the Neapolitan government expected great advantages from the treaty with the Ottoman Porte: new markets for its merchant fleet, the regulation of the diplomatic practices of both countries, the right of the Neapolitan Kingdom to appoint its own vice-consuls in the major port cities of the Levant (Smyrna, Thessaloniki, etc.), and the reduction of corsair campaigns (Mafriçi, 2004, pp. 152-153). Indeed, the 1740 treaty negotiations suggested that longstanding tensions between Naples, Istanbul and the Barbary powers were beginning to thaw.

Perhaps inspired by his success with the Ottoman Sultan, King Charles quickly signed another treaty of peace and commerce with the Regency of Tripoli in Tripoli on 3 June 1741 (Buonocore, 1976, pp. 257-276). The King recognized that the two diplomatic agreements with the Ottoman Sultan and the Bey of Tripoli promised a new era of trade for Naples. In turn, the King immortalized the two treaties and the correlated visits of envoys from both the Ottoman and Tripolitan sovereigns with two paintings commissioned between 1741 and 1743 from the artist Giuseppe Bonito (who would become court painter in 1751). The first image represents Hacı Hüseyin Efendi, the special envoy who had signed the treaty on behalf of the Ottoman Sultan Mahmud I. The second depicts Mustafa Bey of Derna, envoy of Ahmed Karamanli of Tripoli (1711-1745). Bonito painted the portraits from life, and they were eventually displayed in the throne room of the Royal Palace of Naples (D’Amora, 2003).

The hostility between the Kingdom and the Ottomans states had, for a long time, dictated how the Neapolitan and Ottoman subjects perceived one other. Frequent incursions, sacking, seizing of booty, and enslavement left indelible traces in the popular memory such that, when Hacı Hüseyin Efendi and Mustafa Bey arrived in Naples, perceptions of the “Turks” were essentially negative. Over time, however, closer contact, increasing diplomatic ties and shared cultural habits helped diffuse the longstanding tensions. Beginning in the 1740’s, the presence of Ottoman envoys in Naples contributed to Southern Italians’ interest in Ottoman life

and helped transform the image of the "Turks" as threatening aliens from a mysterious, wealthy and dangerous East into emissaries from a world full of every kind of rarity, luxury and marvel. Neapolitans even adopted new cultural practices such as drinking coffee, encouraged by their contact with Islamic worlds. The "Turkish" drink inspired a growing number of new coffee houses across Italy and Europe where the bourgeois culture of the Enlightenment had begun to take root. In this regard, Bourbon political diplomacy enhanced Neapolitans' cultural interest in the Islamic world.

According to Formica (2012), the close encounters between Southern Italians, subjects of the Ottoman Empire and their Barbary vassal states in the 17th and 18th centuries also resulted in the significant phenomenon of Christian conversions to Islam, and less frequently, in the conversions of Muslims to Christianity. Conversion and residence in each other's countries further hastened cultural exchange. Christian converts to Islam brought with them advanced knowledge of their home societies, and they often occupied public offices that helped them facilitate trade with relatives in their homelands.

3. Ferdinand of Bourbon, the first period (1759-1806)

In 1759, the reigning King of Naples, Charles of Bourbon was called to rule over the Kingdom of Spain. Until his son Ferdinand came of age, the Kingdom of Naples would be governed by Bernardo Tanucci, the Regent and Secretary of State. The regency period lasted from 1759 to 1767 and saw a decline in trade with the Ottoman and Barbary powers⁴. From the time of his appointment as Foreign Minister in 1755, Tanucci had actively maintained regular contact with consul Guglielmo Ludolf, who sent him monthly reports about the development of trade between Naples and the Ottoman Porte⁵. As Castellano (1956) and Mafriaci (2004, pp. 155-159) point out, however, the growth of this trade was blocked by the inefficiency of the Neapolitan merchant navy, the lack of an effective agreement with the Barbary states, and, above all, the absence of factories producing goods that appealed to Levantine merchants. Moreover, due to the continuous state of war with the Barbary states, the treaties were never respected.

According to Mafriaci (2004, p. 161), the general economic development of Bourbon Naples was further hindered by notably high import taxes, the ineffectiveness of the judicial system, and oppressive feudalism, all of which

⁴ During this time, Tanucci was also appointed President of the Regency Council (Mincuzzi, 1967; Ajello D'Addio, 1986; and Migliorini, 1991).

⁵ Guglielmo Ludolf was appointed Vice Ambassador in 1748, replacing Nicola de Maio who had, in turn, replaced Consul Finocchietti, who had played a critical role in successfully concluding the treaty negotiations. In 1750, Ludolf was appointed as Ambassador, a position he held until 1791 when he was replaced by his son, Guglielmo Costantino Ludolf (Demiryürek, 2014, p. 63). Biblioteca della Società di Storia Patria, Napoli, ms. XII A 3, *Correspondence between Ludolf and Tanucci*.

restricted the circulation of money and persuaded the wealthy to invest in domestic improvements instead of foreign trade. During a period of economic crisis that began in 1772, Guglielmo Ludolf attempted to advance trade by proposing that the Neapolitan government could supply the Ottomans with much needed grain (Mafri, 2004, p. 168). However, the proposal came to nothing because the merchant navy of Naples' remained inefficient and the ministers of the Supremo Magistrato di Commercio (the Bourbon Supreme Magistracy) did not support the initiative. By this time, the royal attitude towards the Ottomans had also shifted. Following his father's advice, King Ferdinand now approached the Ottoman vassal states along the Barbary Coast as marauding pirates who were not to be trusted to honor agreements.

Indeed, Neapolitan policies with the Ottoman Empire and Barbary states had begun to change soon after King Ferdinand's marriage to Maria Carolina in 1768. According to Mafri (2010), Queen Maria Carolina's mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, demanded a voice in the Council of State. Upon her arrival in Naples, she sent Tanucci on a mission to King Charles to limit his influence on Ferdinand. She then replaced Tanucci with the Sicilian Minister Giuseppe Beccadelli Bolognese, Marquis of Sambuca (Sirago, 2012a, p. 87; Sirago, 2012b, p. 206), and asked her brother, Pietro Leopoldo, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, to allow Admiral John Acton to come to Naples to reorganize the navy and increase security for trade.

In 1779, the Queen appointed Acton Minister of the Navy. His first initiative was to coordinate fleet actions against North African pirates. Intending to strike a critical blow, he revisited an old proposal, conceived by Tanucci in 1770. It had been designed to protect the coasts of the Kingdom and repel pirate attacks by creating a defensive fleet primarily composed of Neapolitan ships, and bolstered by French and Spanish ships (Mafri, 2007, p. 649). To facilitate the plan, in 1783, the Minister proposed to build a new royal shipyard in collaboration with a French engineer named Imbert. It was to be located in Castellammare di Stabia, a port 25 kilometers from Naples (Sirago, 2012a, p. 88), and would be used to build large vessels with 74 guns like those used in France and England. Acton intended to equip 15 new vessels with 10,598 guns, which were ordered from Sweden in 1780.

Despite the Queen's support, many Bourbon officials opposed Acton's policies. In the mid-1780s, Gaetano Filangieri's book, *Scienza della legislazione* (1798, III, 78 – 79), argued that, instead of acting defensively, the "marineria" (navy) should have supported trade activities whose profits could have provided money for ship repair and maintenance. In 1791, Giuseppe Maria Galanti (1969, II, pp. 59-60), "Visitatore generale del Regno" (General Visitor of the Kingdom) similarly opposed Acton's foreign and maritime policy: Galanti regarded Acton's naval developments as an unnecessary expense that would provide no greater protection for the shores of Southern Italy and Sicily. According to him, if pirates were the primary enemy, the Neapolitan navy should have protected the merchant vessels as it had under Austrian rule. Ten years later, Vincenzo Cuoco (1998, p. 269) again suggested that Acton's policy was hampering the development of trade in the Kingdom. Ultimately, rather

than advocating to build a defensive navy, Acton's critics supported a fresh round of diplomacy with the Ottomans and their Barbary vassals.

Like Acton, Ferdinando Galiani, a leading minister who pursued intense diplomatic activity with the Barbary states, was another influential figure who shaped Neapolitan relations with the Ottomans. As a young student, Galiani had devoted himself to the study of economic policy. He published the famous treaty, *Della moneta*, in 1750, and, in 1759, Tanucci appointed him Secretary to the Neapolitan ambassador in Paris. In 1769, he was forced to return to Naples to serve as Consigliere del Tribunale di Commercio (Counsellor at the Supreme Court of Commerce). At this time, he wrote his critical essay, *Sulla decadenza della marineria*, in which he discussed what he perceived as the decline of the Neapolitan merchant navy and promoted enlarging it (Diaz, 1968; Guerci, 1975). The essay argued that expansion of the Kingdom's trade depended on the improvement of the merchant navy. Galiani's observations were welcomed: according to Sirago (2004), between 1752 and 1762, 454 vessels were built in the shipyards of Piano di Sorrento and on the island of Procida.

During his ten years in Paris, Galiani met many other leading figures of the Enlightenment such as Diderot and d'Alembert. Knowing that Naples was eager to increase trade in the Black Sea, Galiani used his social contacts in Paris to access a wider network of potential allies around the Black Sea region, including Russia and the Ottomans (Cavalcanti, 1979, p. 76). In turn, Galiani attempted to sign two treaties: the first, a security agreement with France, which ultimately failed, and the second, a trade treaty with Russia (Guariglia, 1914).

The latter was one of his greatest achievements and the fruition of years of diplomatic strategizing. At the conclusion of the Russo-Turkish War in 1775, Galiani had begun negotiations with Tsarina Catherine II through Friedrich Melchior Grimm, an acquaintance whom he met in Paris. Grimm was the Tsarina's loyal *factotum*, and, after his time in Paris, circa 1776, he was sent to the Kingdom of Naples as her diplomatic envoy. There he and Galiani met again (Scherer, 1968). The Neapolitan Minister made every effort to use their friendship as an avenue towards realizing Naples' commercial goals. Consequently, in 1777, plenipotentiary ministers were appointed at both royal courts: Muzio Gaeta, Duke of San Nicola, was sent to the Russian embassy in St. Petersburg, and Count Razumovski came to the Neapolitan embassy (Mafri, 2012, p. 37). The purpose of this diplomatic exchange was to strengthen political and trade ties in the Baltic region, where Neapolitan vessels had been traveling since 1764 (Sirago 2012a, p. 84), as well as in the Black Sea region, where foreign trade had already taken hold, especially with the French (Giura, 1967; Cavalcanti 1979).

From 1783 to 1787, Galiani increased his efforts to ratify the treaty with Russia (De Madariaga, 1959). He worked with Guglielmo Ludolf and Antonino Maresca Donnorso, Duke of Serracapriola (Croce, 1922), two men who had long advocated for such a treaty. Through their assistance, Galiani's goal was finally achieved on 17 January 1787, just before he died (Cavalcanti, 1979; Sirago 2012b, p. 209).

According to Sirago (2012b, p. 208), Naples was optimistic that this treaty promised the opening of the “via dei Dardanelli” (the route of Dardanelles).

Meanwhile, the Tsarina had decided to build a new port, Odessa, on the Black Sea, and had assigned the task to Giuseppe (Osip) de Ribas, a general of Neapolitan - Hispanic origins. De Ribas had already distinguished himself through the construction of other military and maritime works (Sirago, 2012b, pp. 209-215). He quickly built the new city with an arsenal and warehouses, and declared it a “free port” to increase trade, above all, in wheat. Soon after, Neapolitan ships began to arrive. With the opening of the Tsarina’s new Black Sea port, it appeared that the dream of Galiani had finally come true. Constantine Ludolf, the son of Guglielmo Ludolf, continued to help facilitate trade between Istanbul, the Black Sea and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies.

A detailed map of the Black Sea, found among the papers of Ferdinando Scarpati, a professor of the Nautical School of Piano and Meta di Sorrento, also documents Naples’ desire for and attempts at commercial expansion in the Black Sea region. The Nautical School where he taught was founded in 1770 by King Ferdinand at the request of the rich mercantile and ship-owning class. The facilities of the school were used to build the new, technologically advanced, large boats that allowed Neapolitan merchants to sail dangerous waters including the Black Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Atlantic Ocean (Sirago, 2012c). Upon these ships, Professor Scarpati himself was one of the first Bourbon subjects to sail in the Black Sea, reporting his routes on his charts (Sirago, 2012b, pp. 217-221).

In 1798, to encourage the growth of trade, Constantino Ludolf, representing the Bourbon court, asked the Ottoman Porte to ease the passage of Neapolitan merchant vessels through the Dardanelle Straits. Unfortunately, this new avenue for increased trade was interrupted in 1799, when the French revolutionary forces invaded Naples, and created the short-lived Neapolitan Republic. At this time, the Bourbon King Ferdinand was forced to flee to Palermo. The instability of warfare halted foreign trade. An agreement honoring Constantine’s proposal would not be signed until after the rise and fall the Neapolitan Republic, when the Bourbon King returned from Palermo to Naples with the help of the English.

Once back in power in Naples, however, King Ferdinand resumed negotiations to renew a trade treaty with Russia. A proposal was signed by Tsar Paul I on 6 July 1800, but the Tsar was assassinated on 23 March 1801. Though his successor, Alexander I, initially overturned the agreement, after numerous requests, the new Tsar restored the exemption, allowing Neapolitan vessels to travel through the Black Sea for one quarter the customs duties to be paid in the ports of New Russia. He also confirmed the status of Odessa, now under Russian control, as a “free port” (Pezzi, 1992; Saul, 1970, p. 177). In 1803, Felice de Ribas, brother of the wealthy shipowner and merchant Giuseppe de Ribas, was appointed Neapolitan consul for the Black Sea. The appointment of Felice gave new impetus to Southern Italian trade with the Levant and the Black Sea (Sirago, 2012b, p. 221).

Despite these advances, however, Neapolitan commerce with the Black Sea and Ottoman domains was frozen when Napoleon's troops entered Naples in 1806. Yet again, King Ferdinand fled to Palermo. Only after the Restoration in 1815 was the sovereign able to resume commercial relations with the Russian and Islamic countries of the Mediterranean coasts.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, Naples aspired to play a critical role in both the economic and political life of the Mediterranean world, a process that necessitated improved relations with the Ottomans. Diplomacy between Naples and the Ottoman Empire witnessed the establishment of foreign consulates in the Ottoman ports and of agreements focused on increasing Mediterranean trade. Although this trade would ebb and flow responding to socio-political developments, Southern Italian merchants continued to frequent Ottoman and Russian ports. If and when they encountered problems, they called upon their resident consuls and vice-consuls to help solve disputes. Despite the complications caused by war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 18th century, Neapolitan merchant ships and calculated maritime strategy extended the scope and scale of their foreign trade across the Mediterranean world and into the Black Sea.

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