

## ***The Balkan Minorities (Slavs and Albanians) in South Italy***

### **1.**

The Slavs and Albanians who settled in South Italy between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Early Modern Period were not driven there by destitution or by the mirage of a better life, as has been the case in more recent times. They came to South Italy driven by the Ottoman armies, whose advance they had tried to stop, defending their own country and seeking help in alliances with Venice and the Kingdom of Naples. They took refuge in Italy in order to preserve their own Greek Orthodox religious beliefs, to avoid subjugation under foreign occupation and because they feared reprisals on the part of the Turks they had fought against.

Even before these dramatic migrations, for various reasons the presence of Slavs and Albanians in South Italy had not been infrequent, although their numbers were much smaller. From the eighth to the eleventh century several groups of Slavs and Albanians had come to South Italy because they had been bought as slaves or because they had been called by Byzantine Emperors and Arab Emirs to work on the lands they possessed there. In subsequent centuries, from the eleventh to the fifteenth, when the towns on the south coast – and not only those in Apulia – enjoyed a period of considerable economic revival and when political and trading relations between the two shores of the Adriatic were intensified, the presence of Croatian sailors and merchants in South Italian ports was frequent. Cereals, wines, livestock, cloth, wool, hides, timber<sup>1</sup> and the precious stones of Istria, Brazza and Curzola formed a trade that was carried on in both directions, and which, in favourable years, reached very high levels. It is certain that, in order to promote this trade, many Slavs settled in the coastal towns of the South. Slavonic sailors arrived in Naples on Venetian vessels and helped to reconstruct *Castelnuovo* which had been damaged during the wars at the end of the fifteenth century. Yet even more significant is the fact that, in August 1300, Croatian families were called by Charles of Anjou to repopulate Lucera after the Saracens, who had settled there under Frederick of Swabia, had been driven out.<sup>2</sup>

A steady immigration of Slavs took place in the fifteenth and sixteenth century on a more permanent basis, during the period of conquest and establish-

<sup>1</sup>R. Filangieri Di Candida, "Rassegna critica delle fonti per la storia di Castelnuovo", *Archivio Storico delle province napoletane*, (1938), pp. 466-472.

<sup>2</sup>P. Rivoire, *Lucera sotto la dominazione angioina*, (Trani, 1901), pp. 9-24.

ment of the Turkish Empire in the Balkans. The Slavs who fled from Turkish rule firstly sought refuge in the two Abruzzo provinces. According to Troilo they followed three routes in the Chietino: after landing on the shore of Vasto, they ventured into the interior, through Cupello, Montedorisio as far as Schiavi d'Abruzzo, where they settled. The second route started from the Lanciano coast and after a small settlement had been established at Schiavone di Lanciano they pushed further along the coast towards the north, passing through Fossacesia and San Vito and reaching Treglio. The third route began near Francavilla on the sea and continued inland, passing Abbateggio, Forcabobolina, Casacanditella, Vacri and San Silvestro.<sup>3</sup> The group of Croats who arrived in Teramano was smaller: just over a hundred persons settled in a few mountain dwellings.<sup>4</sup>

The Slavonic settlements in Abruzzo were, little by little, almost completely assimilated by the local population, unlike the Slavonic settlements in Molise. Even today Croatian is still spoken in the districts of S. Felice del Molise, originally S. Felice Slavo, and of S. Giacomo degli Schiavoni near Termoli, where the Slavs had settled in 1297. Croatian is still spoken in Acquaviva Collecroce, Palata and Montemitro, where the Slavs arrived at the beginning of the early modern era, after landing at Termoli.<sup>5</sup> Groups of Slavs also ventured into Sannio, Avellinese and Apulia. For example, they worked temporarily on the feudal estates of Ariano Irpino<sup>6</sup> and in the fiefs of the Count of Mola (near Bari).<sup>7</sup>

The Albanian communities which were established in South Italy were, on the other hand, larger and more numerous. Due to its geographical position and its nearness to South Italy, relations between Albania and the Kingdom of Naples had been more frequent. This probably explains why, when they were forced to leave their country, some groups sailed for the Veneto, the Papal States and Corsica, but the majority set out for South Italy. Morelli has counted seven waves of them.<sup>8</sup>

The first community was set up around 1448 after a contingent of Albanian soldiers, commanded by Demetrio Reres and deployed by King Alphonse of Aragon to quell an anti-feudal revolt in Calabria, was urged to remain in Calabria and Reres had been appointed governor of Calabria Ultra (roughly

<sup>3</sup> E. Troilo, "Gli slavi nell'Abruzzo Chietino", *Atti della Società romana di antropologia (1899-1900)*, vol. VI, p. 118.

<sup>4</sup> L. Giustiniani, *Dizionario geografico del Regno di Napoli*, (Napoli, 1804), vol. VIII, p. 364; R. Perrone Capano, "Sulla presenza di slavi in Italia e specialmente nell'Italia meridionale", *Atti dell'Accademia pontaniana*, (1962-1963), N. S. vol. XII, pp. 139, 140.

<sup>5</sup> A. Vietta, *Le colonie slave del Molise*. Degree Dissertation on Slavonic Studies, Istituto Universitario Orientale, (Naples, 1959).

<sup>6</sup> T. Vitale, *Storia della città e diocesi di Ariano (Irpino)*, (Rome, 1894), pp. 320, 335, 338, 408, 423, 427.

<sup>7</sup> L. D'Addario, "San Michele di Bari e una colonia serba" in *Japigia*, (Bari, 1936), fasc. III, pp. 389-410.

<sup>8</sup> T. Morelli, *Cenni storici sulla venuta degli Albanesi nel Regno delle Due Sicilie*, (Napoli: Guttenberg, 1812), p. 13.

speaking the provinces of Catanzaro and Reggio). However, some of the soldiers and their families chose to move to Sicily, where they set up an Albanian community at Piana degli Albanesi, S. Cristina Gela, Mezzoiuso, Contessa Entellina<sup>9</sup> and Palazzo Adriano.<sup>10</sup>

The invitation to remain in Calabria and the appointment of Reres as governor of Calabria Ultra was not only a form of acknowledgement of services rendered but also an admission of the existence of a need: that of stimulating the region's economic growth. Calabria at that time was undergoing a difficult period and showing visible signs of economic and social decline, which was aggravated by the succession of plagues and the extension of marshland as a result of deforestation. Uncultivated due to neglect, the latifundia, especially those in the interior, were largely depopulated; labour and commitment were needed to revive production and the feudal lords, both lay and ecclesiastical, felt the need keenly.<sup>11</sup>

The second wave of immigration was the result of the de facto alliance between King Alphonse of Naples and the Prince of Croia, Giorgio Castriota Scanderberg, acknowledged leader of the Albanians, who opposed the Turkish advance. While the Turkish armies advanced towards the Adriatic, posing a threat to the integrity of the southern kingdom, King Alphonse sought to give support to the Albanian armies who were resolved to oppose the Turkish advance. Thus in 1456 he had sent soldiers and provisions to Albania to aid Castriota. The aid had the desired effect: the Turks were stopped.

Castriota returned this support a few years later, in 1461, when he came to Apulia with 5000 soldiers on foot and on horseback,<sup>12</sup> to the help of King Alphonse's son and heir, King Ferrante, who was besieged in the town of Barletta. Castriota managed to break through the siege and to pursue John of Anjou who had invaded the country with his army, vindicating his right to succeed to the Kingdom.<sup>13</sup>

As a reward, Ferrante gave Castriota a vast territory which stretched from the town of Trani, passing through Manfredonia as far as the Gargano, including

<sup>9</sup> For an idea of the size of the population and territory of Contessa Entellina cf., *I riveli di Contessa Entellina del 1623*, (Palermo, 1987), pp. XL-240.

<sup>10</sup> F. Bonasera, "Le colonie albanesi in Sicilia" in *Atti del 19 Congresso geografico italiano*, (Como, 1966), vol III, pp. 197-217; F. Giunta, "Colonie albanesi in Sicilia" in *Atti del 8 Congresso internazionale di studi albanesi*, (Palermo, 1975), pp. 61-68; R. Petrotta, *Gli albanesi in Sicilia*, (Discorso, 25 ottobre 1939, Urbino), pp. 45; F. Bonasera, *Aspetti socioeconomici delle comunità albanesi della Sicilia*, (La Palermo: Nuova Edrisi, 1988), pp. 6 *et seq.*; G. Raffiotta, *I capitoli di Biancavilla e di 3 Università albanesi in Sicilia nei secoli XV e XVI*, (Palermo, s.i.d.), estratto, pp. 51-69.

<sup>11</sup> L. De Leo, "Condizioni economico-sociali degli albanesi in Calabria tra XV e XVII secolo. L'esempio di Santa Sofia d'Epuro", in *Miscellanea di studi storici*. Università della Calabria, Dipartimento di storia, (Cosenza: Edizioni Brenner, 1981), pp. 124-125.

<sup>12</sup> F. P. Volpe, *Saggio intorno agli schiavoni stabiliti in Matera nel secolo XV*, (Napoli, 1852), p. 16. For Volpe, as regards Calabria and South Italy, the Slavs were equivalent to Albanians. *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> A. Bozza, *Il Vulture*, ovvero brevi notizie di Barile e delle sue colonie albanesi e greche, con alcuni cenni di Rionero, Atella, Lagopesole, Ripacandida, Ginestra, Maschito, Venosa, Lavullo, Rapolla e Melfi. In ultimo, di San Menna, Rionero in Vulture, (1889), pp. 18 *et seq.*

the convent of S. Michele and the castle of S. Giovanni Rotondo; here the Albanians settled, giving rise to the Albanian communities of Campomarino, Portocannone, Greci, Ururi and Montecilfone, which today are municipalities.

The third wave of Albanian immigration to South Italy took place in 1467 after Castriota's death (1467) and the defeat the Turks had inflicted on his son John, who had landed on the Apulian coast with part of his army to seek asylum. In consideration of his nobility, King Ferrante assigned the Duchy of S. Pietro a Galatina to him, which was situated near to Taranto, the town that had conspired alongside the Angevins to drive him from the Kingdom. The many families of Albanian soldiers who came to settle there established the communities of S. Giorgio Jonico, Faggiano, Carosino, Roccaforzata, San Crispieri, Monteparano and San Marzano.<sup>14</sup>

It was not as the result of a new inflow of Albanians but as a consequence of the migration of some of those who had settled around Taranto, which led to the diaspora towards Calabria Ultra in the last few years of the fifteenth century. John Castriota's sister, Irene, married the Prince of Bisignano, Pietrantonio Sanseverino, bringing with her as a dowry the Duchy obtained by her brother. Invited and protected by Irene Castriota, many families went to join her entourage in the Cosentino, in the Prince's fiefs which occupied vast territories and were mostly depopulated, where they founded 25 villages in the hills and in the mountains on both sides of the Crati, from Sibari as far as Cosenza.<sup>15</sup> The villages were so close to one another as the crow flies that it was not only possible to hear "the countryside, the night-time singing and the sound of gun fire", but also to see inhabitants walking along the road with the naked eye.

While Acquaformosa, Firmo, Santa Caterina Albanese, Santa Sofia d'Epiro, Pedalati<sup>16</sup>, San Demetrio Corone, Cerzeto, Falconara Albanese, San Sosti, Civita, Plátaci, Santa Severina, Eiránina and other villages were founded *ex-novo*, those of S. Basile, Lungro, San Benedetto Ullano<sup>17</sup> and Vaccarizzo Albanese were built on the ruins of centres which already existed in the Middle Ages. Thus, deserted villages came back to life.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, in 1475, when the Prince of Bisignano entered into possession of the fief of Brindisi di Montagna,<sup>19</sup> an old Ghibelline village dominating the Basento Valley, which had been abandoned by its inhabitants and of which only the castle, the church and the bakery remained, the Prince himself urged many Albanians to settle there around 1478.

<sup>14</sup> T. Semmola, *Le colonie dei greci e degli albanesi in Italia*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>15</sup> G. Schirò, "Tradizioni e glorie degli italo-albanesi" in *Nuova Antologia*, (1 giugno 1939), p. 316.

<sup>16</sup> Pedalati was mentioned in a note drawn up at the time of King Robert d'Anjou, but it was destroyed in 1543 for protesting against taxation and was henceforth abandoned. Cf. P. De Leo, *Condizioni economico-sociali degli albanesi in Calabria tra XV e XVI secolo*. L'esempio di Santa Sofia d'Epiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 123-128.

<sup>17</sup> P. Zangari, *Le colonie italo-albanesi in Calabria. Storia e demografia*, (Napoli: Casella, 1941).

<sup>18</sup> E. Tavolaro, *S. Benedetto Ullano e gli Albanesi d'Italia*, (Grottaferrata, no date), pp. 61.

<sup>19</sup> F. Pirrone, *Memorie sugli antecedenti di Brindisi di Montagna*, (Potenza, 1890).

From the end of the fifteenth century – after Croia's major defeat (1478), and the almost contemporaneous fall of Scutari, after an eight-month siege – to the early decades of the sixteenth century there was a fourth migratory wave to two regions: Calabria and Basilicata. In Calabria in addition to widening the demographic base of Brindisi di Montagna, the Albanians founded or repopulated numerous localities north and west of Cosenza, such as Cartizzi, Casabona, Frascineto, Mongrassano, Pallagorio, Porcile, San Cosmo Albanese, San Lorenzo del Vallo, San Nicola dell'Alto, San Pietro Apostolo, Rota Greca and Spezzano Albanese. Another group settled on the outskirts of Matera, occupying a depopulated area on which it built its own district, Casalnuovo, and it set about farming the lands belonging to the local bishop. The community was still active in 1493.<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile a certain Giovanni de Gazulo, together with 60 other Albanians, had received as a gift from King Ferrante the fief of Castelluccio dei Sauri, scarcely inhabited,<sup>21</sup> situated in an area which had suffered greatly due to the 1456 earthquake and the plague of 1475-1458.<sup>22</sup> Previously, around 1460, the Prince of Melfi, T. Caracciolo, had received a large group in Barile, an old centre, largely abandoned, and a few years later, in 1467, others in Maschito, a centre which had grown up around a Roman *castrum*, deserted in the fourteenth century. In 1482 the same prince settled another group in an uninhabited territory near to Ripacandida, where a hamlet called Ginestra grew up.<sup>23</sup> All these localities were only a few miles away from one another and so it was possible to keep intact the language, religion and customs and to foster marriages among the inhabitants of the various centres.

Albanian communities expanded fifty years later when, in the treaty stipulated between Charles V and Solimen in 1533, the town of Corone on the eastern coast of Messenia was handed over to the Turks, while the Albanians who lived there and who had fought against the Turks were allowed to leave the town and move to the Kingdom of Naples, giving rise to the fifth migratory wave. The Albanians from Corone – but not the Albanians from others regions – received from Charles V the privilege to “build and make hamlets”, without any ordinary or extraordinary tax obligations. They were, therefore, exempt from paying household tax, gabelle or other duties and they were only obliged to contribute to public works from which they were to benefit, in proportion to the benefits received.<sup>24</sup>

The Albanians, who came from Corone, numbered little more than a thousand, counting men, women and children, and the Viceroy, Don Pedro of

<sup>20</sup> F. P. Volpe, *Saggio intorno agli schiavoni stabiliti in Matera nel secolo XV*, *op.cit.*, pp.15-17.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> B. Figliuolo, *Il terremoto del 1456*, Osservatorio vesuviano, (Altavilla Salentina: Istituto italiano per gli studi filosofici - Edizioni Studi Storici Meridionali, 1988), vol. I, p. 12n; vol II, pp. 79 *et seq.*

<sup>23</sup> A. Bozza, *Il Vulture*, *op.cit.*, pp. 103 *et seq.*

<sup>24</sup> Cf. G. Celani, *Per i nobili coronei di Barile contra l'Università della predetta terra*. Commissario l'ill. sign. Marchese Mazzara, presidente della R. Camera della Sommaria, (Napoli, 1750), pp. VI *et seq.*

Toledo, decided to settle them in Basilicata and Calabria, two mountainous regions, which were topographically similar to their own native country, but not in only one region. Thirty families were settled in a district on the outskirts of Melfi, another fifty on the outskirts of Barile, a hundred families went to the hamlet of Maschito, and thirty to Brindisi di Montagna.<sup>25</sup> The Prince of Tolve, a Pignatelli, for his part allowed the Albanians to set up the communities of S. Chirico Nuovo, San Costantino Albanese and Casalnuovo di Noja, the present-day S. Paolo Albanese.<sup>26</sup> Rionero in Vulture was also founded by the Albanians from Corone, but subsequently the indigenous population assimilated Italian characteristics, causing the abandonment of the Albanian language and customs.<sup>27</sup>

The sixth migratory wave took place in 1647 during the reign of Philip IV and brought about the expansion of Barile and Maina.<sup>28</sup> The seventh and final wave occurred in 1744 during the reign of Charles Bourbon, when the village of Badessa in Abruzzo was founded, now forming part of the municipality of Pescara.

## 2.

Relations between the Albanians and the local population were not always friendly. For example, the thirty families settled in a district of Melfi were obliged to leave the area and move to Barile towards the end of the sixteenth century, due to inter-ethnic conflict.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, relations between the local population and Albanians were not encouraged by the Catholic Church.<sup>30</sup>

The fact is that, in the early period of their stay in Italy, the Albanians did not have a good reputation. They were renowned for "robbery" and as "thieves."<sup>31</sup> They arrived in Italy in conditions of abject poverty, as is borne out by all the sources, and such conditions drove them to steal, so much so that the citizens of Cosenza, considering that the Albanians living in open spaces committed "many robberies", called upon King Ferrante of Aragon to order "all of them to go back inside to live within the walled areas and for no time at all could they live outside these areas".<sup>32</sup> King Ferrante granted their wishes, as it was generally known that the Albanians were inclined towards "the militia, hunting, and weapons, and using them too; the rifle was their

<sup>25</sup> A. Bozza, *op.cit.*, pp. 28 *et seq.*

<sup>26</sup> M. Scutari, *Gli Albanesi di San Costantino e San Paolo*, (Potenza, 1899), pp. 11 *et seq.*

<sup>27</sup> G. Fortunato, *Rionero medievale*, (Trani: Vecchi, 1899), pp. 64-69; Bozza, *op.cit.*, p. 92.

<sup>28</sup> T. Morelli, *op.cit.*, p.13

<sup>29</sup> A. Bozza, *op.cit.*, p. 28; Celani, *op. cit.*, pp. IX-XII.

<sup>30</sup> C. Karolewsky, *Le vicende ecclesiastiche dei paesi italo-albanesi della Basilicata e della Calabria*, (Roma, 1931), pp. 13 *et seq.*

<sup>31</sup> T. Morelli, *op. cit.*, pp. 14 *et seq.*

<sup>32</sup> See P. De Leo, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

childhood idol"<sup>33</sup> and their belligerence was known to both King Ferrante and the other kings who had succeeded one another in the Kingdom of Naples. Although they were granted asylum and a sufficient amount of land in lease, with the obligation to pay only dues to the feudatory or the state, and although they were granted freedom of worship and were therefore free to perform religious services and to build churches, the rulers were careful not to concentrate them in one town only. Both the Aragonese Kings and Charles V, aware that the Albanians were "warlike and audacious"<sup>34</sup>, made sure that "they were settled far away from the capital and spread out in the more remote provinces"<sup>35</sup>, "always keeping their eye on the internal security of the state". In fact, a number of Albanians were mustered into military formations and used, already in the sixteenth century, to put down brigandage and for military purposes.<sup>36</sup> Together with other immigrants from the Balkans, Albanians formed part of the Royal Macedonia Regiment in the seventeenth century. Yet despite their having served in the southern Kingdom's army, even in the first half of the nineteenth century, the majority of Albanians continued to have their own customs, habits, way of dressing, language and religious ceremonies; although they had lived for four centuries in Italy they continued to look upon themselves as foreigners and considered "the other countries barbaric", boasting about their ancestry and looking down on other nations. But such scornful behaviour might have been their reaction to the lack of respect and, at times, the outright derision shown towards the customs, language and habits of Albanian immigrants by the populations which had received them in South Italy<sup>37</sup>, as well as a reaction to the hardships that these immigrants had to face. In Calabria, De Leo believes that Albanian families, who came to Italy "naked, miserable, driven from their homes", were forced by absolute necessity to find assistance, to accept "economic obligations" and "to perform services" which were clearly feudal in nature, living in caves or straw huts which were authentic hovels.

He cites the case of Albanians settled in Santa Sofia d'Epiro and Pedalati, in the feudal district of the Bishop of Bisignano who, at the very same time that "the tacit decline of glebe-based society and the growth of private property" was taking place, imposed conditions which limited personal rights and exacted a number of heavy contributions.<sup>38</sup> Again, Michele Scutari, an Albanian, writing in the first few years of the nineteenth century, complained that Albanian families, who had settled in Italy, had suffered from the barons

<sup>33</sup> A. Bozza, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>34</sup> Semmola, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-3.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3,5-6.

<sup>36</sup> L. De Rosa, *Conflitti e squilibri nel Mezzogiorno tra Cinque e Ottocento*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1999), p. 18.

<sup>37</sup> Semmola, *op. cit.*, pp. 7-9

<sup>38</sup> P. De Leo, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-125.

many burdens, *angaries*, *perangaries*, "sterile and insignificant land" from which "they nonetheless managed to draw enough profit by farming the land in order to provide for their subsistence".<sup>39</sup>

Once they had settled in the towns, their actions were characterised by a strenuous commitment to working in the fields and animal husbandry. Morelli stressed that "from then on vast stretches of land, which had formerly been uncultivated, became fertile and abundant, yielding all the products necessary for subsistence".<sup>40</sup> But the hamlets founded or re-founded by the Albanians gradually expanded, due to their fertility and vitality. It was widely held that the Albanians had at least ten children per couple, with very rare cases of sterility and annual mortality rates much lower than birth rates.<sup>41</sup> Starting from the few thousands who had first arrived in South Italy, a long time before the South became part of the Kingdom of Italy, their number grew to over 100,000, of whom half were living in Calabria (in 39 *Comuni*), around a third in Sicily (in 7 *Comuni*) and the remainder in Basilicata, Capitanata, Contado di Molise, Terra d'Otranto and Abruzzo Ultra I (Pescara).

Not all Albanian communities had kept to the original Greek-Orthodox rite. Many had opted for the Latin rite. Indeed, with the exception of the provinces of Cosenza and Palermo, the Latin rite had been adopted by nearly all the communities.<sup>42</sup> While some of the old settlements had been assimilated by the local population, the great majority had grown into veritable Comuni, where, ever since the sixteenth century, the hovels had been replaced by walled houses. The best results were achieved in the area of Vulture where the Barile community, made up largely of refugees from Corone as we have seen, had asserted itself above all others. The area of Vulture had grown from a group of small and scattered hamlets into a highly populated territory. Consisting of a stretch of "hills and valleys, nearly all on slopes, with only a few narrow plains, mostly of volcanic origin, the land appeared "as nearly all cultivated with vineyards, olive groves, chestnut woods, with few areas fit to be sown". So while the Albanians produced "abundant quantities and various types of exquisite oil and wine, excellent fruit and tasty legumes", which they even sold outside their province, they were obliged to "receive all the cereals and fodder from the neighbouring towns where these abounded" and to which large numbers also went to work.<sup>43</sup>

Agriculture was the principal occupation, not only among Albanian communities in Basilicata but also among those to be found in Calabria, Apulia, Contado di Molise, Abruzzo and Sicily.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>39</sup> M. Scutari, *Notizie storiche sull'origine e stabilimenti degli albanesi nel Regno delle Due Sicilie, sulla loro indole, linguaggio e rito*, (Potenza, 1825), p. 15.

<sup>40</sup> Morelli, *op. cit.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>41</sup> Bozza, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

<sup>42</sup> See Table 1, pp. 266-267

<sup>43</sup> Bozza, *op. cit.*, p. 33

<sup>44</sup> Schirò, *op. cit.*, p. 318.

3.

Agriculture and animal husbandry fit harmoniously with the inaccessible and rocky sites on which the Albanians had to build their towns, both those built *ex-novo* and those erected on pre-existing sites. The plan they adopted to construct them differed greatly from the method used in the west and, in particular, in South Italy. Although the population was respectful towards the political and social hierarchy, it has been observed that Albanian towns were alien to the practice of giving concrete form to hierarchical differences in their architecture. The heart of the Albanian town was the district, which was highlighted, moreover, by the road system: usually state roads crossed over the urban centre separating the "High" district from the "Low" district and, as every district possessed its own general services (church, shop, etc.), each district was autonomous. At the basis of each district, however, there was an "urban microstructure" consisting of a small *piazzetta* opening onto lanes, surrounded by buildings, which looked onto the circular open space.

This "micro-structure" which the Albanians referred to as *gijtonia*, meaning "neighbourhood", transformed the town into a series of centres, that is, into many "neighbourhoods", giving rise to a polycentrism which was the "totally new element introduced by the Albanian populations into South Italy's urban development-structural system." The windows and doors of houses opening onto the circular open space encouraged people to participate in their neighbour's lives. In this way the houses' external spaces were the continuation of internal spaces and thus "from one dwelling to another came a continual sound of voices among the women discussing and questioning while they carried on their domestic chores."<sup>45</sup>

However, Albanian economic and social life was not just restricted to agriculture, animal husbandry and related activities, and housewives' chatter; it also involved study and participation in both the community's and nation's political and social life. Apart from contributing to the country's overall income and wealth, the Albanians have also contributed to the country's progress in science and culture and have even participated in its administration. In this connection we have only to mention the role played by the Sicilian Albanian Francesco Crispi in the *Risorgimento* and in Italian politics in the nineteenth century. During his long parliamentary career he was several times Minister, and Prime Minister; but he was also a hard man, apt to be heavy handed, and a man with ambitious schemes which were not always possible to pursue.

<sup>45</sup> C. Felcie, "La struttura urbana degli insediamenti albanesi" in E. Rossi-C. Felice, *Gijtonia. Origine e sviluppo degli insediamenti albanesi in Calabria*, (Chiaravalle centrale: Frama Sud, 1983), pp. 31-36.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Town</b>	<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Rite</b>	<b>Population</b>
<b>CALABRIA CITRA</b>			
S. Demetrio	Rossano	Greek	1500
Acquaformosa	Cassano	Greek	1200
Cavallerizzo	S. Marco	Latin	550
DCervicato	S. Marco	Latin	1050
Carzeto	S. Marco	Latin	512
Civita	Cassano	Greek	1456
Falconara	Tropea	Latin	1556
Firmo	Cassano	Greek	947
Frascineto	Cassano	Greek	1588
Lungro	Cassano	Greek	4000
Macchia	Rossano	Greek	463
Marri	Bisignano	Latin	300
Mongrassano	S. Marco	Latin	1200
Platici	Cassano	Greek	1400
Castroreggio	Tursi	Greek	350
Farneta	Tursi	Greek	54
Porcile	Cassano	Greek	540
Rota	Bisignano	Latin	804
S. Basilio	Cassano	Greek	1481
S. Benedetto Ulfano	Bisignano	Greek	1312
S. Cosmo	Rossano	Mixed	540
S. Giacomo	Bisignano	Latin	738
S. Giorgio	Rossano	Greek	1178
S. Caterina	S. Marco	Latin	838
S. Martino	S. Marco	Latin	1090
S. Sofia	Bisignano	Greek	1180
Serra di Leo	S. Marco	Latin	271
Spezzano Albanese	Rossano	Latin	3000
Vaccarizzo	Rossano	Mixed	971
			<b>32269</b>
<b>CALABRIA ULTRA II</b>			
Jazzeria	Nicastro	Latin	1399
Andali	S. Severina	Latin	702
Arietta	S. Severina	Latin	210
Zangarona	Nicastro	Latin	724
Vena	Nicastro	Latin	707
Caraffa	Catanzaro	Latin	1000
Marcedusa	S. Severina	Latin	1100
S. Nicola dell'Alto	Cariati	Latin	1600
Carfizzi	Cariati	Latin	900
Pallagorio	Cariati	Latin	1200
			<b>9542</b>

<b>CALABRIA ULTRA I</b>				
Casalnuovo	:	Gerace	:	Latin : 589
				<b>589</b>
<b>BASILICATA</b>				
Barile	:	Melfi	:	Latin : 3218
Casalnuovo di Noia	:	Tursi	:	Greek : 868
Maschito	:	Venosa	:	Latin : 2741
S. Costantino	:	Tursi	:	Greek : 1096
				<b>7923</b>
<b>CAPITANATA</b>				
Campomarino	:	Larino	:	Latin : 1912
Chienti	:	Larino	:	Latin : 1200
Casalnuovo	:	Volturara	:	Latin : 1800
Casalvecchio	:	Volturara	:	Latin : 1600
Portocannone	:	Larino	:	Latin : 500
S. Paolo	:	S. Severo	:	Latin : 2800
				<b>9812</b>
<b>CONTADO DI MOLISE</b>				
S. Croce di Magliano	:	Larino	:	Latin : 3180
Ururi	:	Larino	:	Latin : 1218
				<b>4398</b>
<b>TERRA D'OTRANTO</b>				
Faggiano	:	Taranto	:	Latin : 1000
Martignano	:	Otranto	:	Latin : 584
Monteparano	:	Taranto	:	Latin : 700
Rocca Forzata	:	Taranto	:	Latin : 300
S. Giorgio	:	Taranto	:	Latin : 1215
S. Martino	:	Taranto	:	Latin : 320
S. Marzano	:	Taranto	:	Latin : 730
Sternazia	:	Otranto	:	Latin : 1236
Zollino	:	Otranto	:	Latin : 574
				<b>6659</b>
<b>ABRUZZO ULTRA I</b>				
Badessa	:	Penne	:	Greek : 274
				<b>274</b>
<b>SICILIA</b>				
Mezzoiuso	:	Palermo	:	Greek : 5000
Bronte	:	Monreale	:	Latin : 6500
S. Giuseppe di Mortillaro	:	Monreale	:	
Contessa	:	Girgenti	:	Greek : 4500
Palazzo Adriano	:	Girgenti	:	Greek : 6000
Piana de' Greci	:	Monreale	:	Greek : 6700
S. Angelo	:	Girgenti	:	Greek : 2000
S. Michele	:	Monreale	:	Latin : 1300
				<b>32000</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	:		:	<b>103466</b>
Source: T. Morelli, <i>op. cit.</i> , pp. 4-35				

