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# *Ricerche/Articles*

ROSAMARIA ALIBRANDI

## THE BOURBON CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE. THE FOUNDATION OF A NEW PHILADELPHIA IN THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Philadelphia has attracted my gaze  
ever since I was a child. Thus I had become  
so used to considering this city as the only  
place where I could be happy to the point that  
I could not tear this idea from my imagination.  
Gaetano Filangieri<sup>1</sup>

### *1. Planning a post-earthquake city: a brief introduction*

From February 5 to March 28, 1783, five strong earthquakes rocked southern Italy. Calabria was the most heavily damaged area with the entire region being devastated. Groups of houses, farms, and even towns, were transferred to new sites. Among the hardest hit of the communities was Castelmonardo, a small mountain village founded in the VIII century. Located at the epicenter, it was completely destroyed, forcing the survivors to abandon its ruins and rebuild the community in a more favorable location (Pace 1958: 158-59).

Thus, the inhabitants migrated to the Piano della Gorna, a small plateau visible across the valley to the north and the new city was named Filadelfia. The choice was not accidental as many similarities, beyond the name itself, linked *Filadelfia* in Calabria to the American Philadelphia. Firstly, the design of the

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Gaetano Filangieri to Benjamin Franklin, manuscript preserved in the Library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (quoted by Pace 1958: 151).

Italian town was an imitation of Penn's plan for the metropolis of Pennsylvania. William Penn had divided up an area between the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers into four neighborhoods delineated by two main arterial roads forming a giant cross with the main square at their intersection. In every neighborhood there was to be a large park - today Franklin square, Washington square, Rittenhouse square, and Logan Circle. Penn planned his city in large blocks, leaving plenty of space between them (Clarke 1827: 132-33, 140-41, 151-53; Weems 1829: 203-04; Roberts 1919: 1-40; Newton Lauer 1940: 1-28).

The Calabrian Filadelfia was conceived even more rationally by the Bishop of Potenza, Giovanni Andrea Serrao. Where Penn allowed for ample space between the houses in order to lessen the danger from fire, mindful of the Great Fire of London in 1666 (Soderlund 1983: 82-86), the enlightened prelate, recalling the havoc wrought by masses of crumbling masonry, specified that the houses of *his* Filadelfia should be limited to two stories in height. The two main arteries were oriented to form a crossroads and the other roads were later named using numbers and directions by reference to this intersection, creating a grid system which was unique in Italy. Serrao's original project was subsequently amended, but the analogy with the four parks planned by William Penn for his city is still obvious today.

The Royal Decree of July 24, 1786, officially establishing the new name of Filadelfia, gave no explanation for the name change of the former Castelmonardo. According to Elia Serrao (Di Castiglione 2012: 223-24), the Bishop of Potenza's brother and author of the most relevant eyewitness accounts of the earthquakes, this name simply meant that the inhabitants of the new city wanted to live in a spirit of brotherhood (Forges Davanzati 1937: 39, 45). He wrote the only report on the foundation of the city, in which he told of the obstacles that his brother had had to overcome in order to achieve official recognition of the name Filadelfia by the Bourbon government. In Italian this name clearly evoked the idea of freedom. Indeed, the author assumed there to be some relationship between the "liberal sentiments", for which the inhabitants later distinguished

themselves in the fight against the Bourbons, and the name of their city, “created after the American city” (Serrao 1785).

In effect, events in America were followed with keen interest in Southern Italy, and in the selection of the name played a role the recent fame of the American Philadelphia, which convened the first Congress of the United States in 1774, and where independence of the American colonies was proclaimed in 1776. The decisive factors were the philosophical currents of the eighteenth century and the prototype which the American Philadelphia represented. In particular, American politics in the late eighteenth century influenced Italian political thinking. The latter was shaped by debates about the American Revolution and the U.S. Constitution as well as the influence of Benjamin Franklin, a particularly revered American freemason by Italian political thinkers (Demott 1986: 15-23).

## *2. Freemasonry and Masonic doctrine in America*

In Europe, Freemasonry was a major cultural and social phenomenon and a key element of the Enlightenment. It was to have an international influence across the globe. The first key period in the development of organized Freemasonry culminated in the formation of a single United Grand Lodge of England (Peter 2016: I). Masonic lodges were not only functioning as a space where the ideas of the Enlightenment could be exchanged in Europe, but were of global importance during the nation building processes in America. Such lodges played an important role and Freemasons would influence the political and social process the new nation states were going through. (Jacob, Reinalter 2018). Distinguished historians emphasized the role of Freemasonry in the dissemination of Enlightenment ideas, the building of a civil society, and the development of a modern sociability. Their opinion throw an interesting light on the development of civil society. Building on a tradition established by Alexis de Tocqueville (Wolin 2009: 172-213), modern theories of Western democracy stress the importance of voluntary associations for the vitality of the social and political structures in which it is rooted. Among such associations, Freemason-

ry played a significant role, both in eighteenth-century Europe and in the young United States, thanks largely to its formula of a publicly known yet secret organization, offering a free space in which fraternal tolerance allowed for meaningful company. (Koselleck [1959] 1973; Agulhon 1968).

With the triumphant end of the American Revolution «Masonic philosophy had, for the first time in history, an opportunity to play a constructive role in the erection of a political and social order» (Carter 1955: 119), an opportunity seized by the U.S. Founding Fathers. Many of them were Masons (Jacob 2016: 1-4). According to the Masonic Scholar James D. Carter, William Penn was not only a religious dissenter but also a Mason, and he was empowered to establish a government for his colony in accordance with his philosophy (Carter 1955: 119-154). Penn drafted a body of laws, the *Frame of Government*, which became the code of law for Pennsylvania based on the consent of the governed (Bittker, Idleman, Ravitch 2015: 25-27). The principles of this code, as well as those of representation and religious toleration, were fundamentally important to the Quaker William Penn, and also to Freemasons. The ‘City of Brotherly Love’ was founded to be a place where all men were free to practice their faith. Beyond Carter’s claim, there is no proof that Penn was a Mason, but the ideals he expressed in his life are remarkably similar to the aims of Freemasonry. Masonry was very much present in his city, and it was in Philadelphia where the official separation from the Grand Lodge of England would take place to assert the American brothers’ autonomy. With regard to the Masonic influences on the foundation of new cities, there are other examples of towns founded by Masons. The capital of the United States itself shows Masonic architectural symbolism. In 1789 George Washington became the first President of the United States and in 1790 he asked Pierre Charles L’Enfant, a Templar Mason, to design a city that «laid out freemasonic symbols: compass, square, pentagram, pentagon, octagon. [...] In 1793 Washington laid the foundation stone of the capital in a Masonic ceremony» (Hagger 2011:1931). The first Grand Lodge originated in London in 1717 (de Khegel 2017). Its constitution was drafted by Grand Master George Payne in 1720, then revised by the Reverend

James Anderson, and printed in book form as *Anderson's Constitutions* in 1723. Benjamin Franklin issued a reprint of the Constitutions in 1734 for American Masons. The widespread acceptance of Anderson's basic principles of government (popular sovereignty by majority rule; government limited by Constitution; local lodges self-governing; Grand Lodge supreme in federal system; a type of judicial review by the Grand Lodge) supports the conclusion that these basic democratic principles of government were already in place in what was to become the United States: probably no other institution was so widely distributed in the colonies as Freemasonry. There were many differences, large and small, between north and south and east and west, but the basic principles of Freemasonry were identical in the approximately one hundred colonial lodges established by 1775. When Franklin published Anderson's Constitutions in 1734, he was serving as Grand Master of the Provincial Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania. He was therefore familiar with the Masonic constitution. The fact that he called the council of representatives of the several colonies a Grand Council and that the council of the representatives of Masonic lodges is called a Grand Lodge suggests that Masonry was influential in his thinking. Moreover, given the similarities between the two systems of government makes it plausible to conclude that the Masonic constitution was used as a model for Franklin's Albany Plan (Hagger 2011:1926-29).

In fact, it is generally agreed among American historians that the Albany Plan contained the essence of the 1789 Constitution. Some of them believe that the Albany Plan contained Masonic ideas at the center of the transformation of American society and culture, linked with the changing ideals of early American society. Although the fraternity began among colonial elites, its spread during the Revolution and thereafter enabled it to play an important role in shaping the new nation's ideas of liberty and equality (Bullock 2011: 63-66).

The fundamental concepts of the Constitution of the United States include popular sovereignty, limited government, local self-government, supremacy of national government within the federal system, separation of powers, supremacy of the judiciary through judicial review, and individual rights protected by

constitutional provisions (Kelley, Harbison 1970: 1-6). Carter's analysis of the constitutional Charter also revealed other Masonic principles included in the first ten amendments: religious toleration; freedom of speech; the right to a speedy trial before an "impartial jury" when charged with a crime; no imposition of excessive punishment and the reservation of all powers not delegated in the Constitution. A comparison of these principles with those contained in Anderson's Constitutions, universally adopted by Masons, reveals that they are essentially the same: evidence that the majority of the men who worked for a federal union and drafted the Constitution were Masons. American democracy, in spreading the ideal of democracy to realize the idealistic goals for the full development of human potentialities, appeared to the European elite to be a way of life, social and individual, founded on political representation and human intelligence, in equality before the law and in the right to hold and express opinions. The essence of this democracy coincided with that of Freemasonry.

### 3. *Freemasonry in the Kingdom of Naples*

To understand how Freemasonry spread in Italy we have to journey back in time a little. Freemasonry was introduced into Italy in the year 1733 with the establishment of a Lodge in Florence by Charles Sackville, Duke of Dorset, most probably under the authority of the Grand Lodge of England (H. F. 1844:14-21). The initiation of the Grand Duke of Tuscany had a favorable influence on the prospects of the Order, and in 1735, Lodges were established in Milan, Verona, Padua, Vicenza, Venice, and Naples (Paton 1871: 36). In 1737, Giovan Gastone, the last Duke of the house of the Medici, prohibited Freemasonry in Florence, but his death shortly after allowed lodges to continue their meetings. His successor was Francis Stephen, the Duke of Lorraine and husband to the Empress of Austria Maria Theresa. On becoming Grand Duke of Tuscany, he declared himself the protector of the Order, and many new lodges were established under his auspices (Foschi 1999: 94-100; Cazzaniga 2006).

In the State of the Church, in 1738, Pope Clement XIV issued a bill forbidding all congregations of Freemasons. The first Papal bull against Freemasonry, *In Eminenti apostolatus specula*, was followed in 1739 by Cardinal Firrao's edict which inflicted the death penalty and confiscation of goods on anyone contravening the Papal order (Findel 1866: 224-27).

These events were recorded in a book, which was a milestone in the study of Freemasonry, attributed to Alexander Lawrie, an Edinburgh bookseller who was at the time the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Scotland (Mackay 1898: 166, 231). «When the flame of persecution is once kindled, its devastations are seldom confined to the country where it originated», but when this “flame” reached the ecclesiastical states of Italy, «it broke out with more ungovernable rage, its effects were more cruel, and its duration more lengthened. In the year 1738, a formidable bull was thundered from the conclave, not only against Free Masons themselves, but against all those who promoted or favoured their cause». In the Pontiff's opinion, Freemasons were enemies of the State and polluted the soul. However, «the fraternity had spread far and wide, and were daily increasing» (Lawrie 1804: 122-23). These circumstances were sufficient grounds to instigate the Church of Rome's opposition to a system so contrary to their views in matters of religion and government (Mackay 1898: 166-67; Cooper 2011: 157-58).

Several arrests were made by the Inquisition in Florence, but those arrested were released thanks to the Grand Duke's intercession. Freemasonry in Italy was therefore stifled by the persecution of the Church for many years and although Masons continued to meet, it was generally in secret. There was a Grand Lodge in Naples in 1756, which was in correspondence with the Lodges of Germany. Naples, indeed, seems to have been for a long time the only place where the Lodges were at all active (Mackay 1874: 371).

In 1759, King Charles VII of Naples, and V of Sicily, a proponent of enlightened despotism, succeeded to the Spanish throne, where he reigned as Charles III, King of Spain and the Spanish Indies. He then abdicated the Neapolitan and Sicilian thrones in favor of his son Ferdinando. In the 1760s, the Grand Lodge of London and Westminster was in dispute with the

Grand Lodge of Holland over control of the Masonic jurisdiction of Naples, as both were linked to the Provincial Grand Lodges (that is the administrative subdivisions of the Grand Lodge) of Naples (Laos 2016: 83-84).

The development of Masonic associations was by no means insignificant. Although Masonic culture and the first Masonic lodges in the Kingdom of Naples were not introduced by the Crown, this subsequently became the demonstration of the cosmopolitanism of the Neapolitan Court. Indeed, Freemasonry became highly influential at Court, especially by the second half of the century, as it brought together classes that traditionally were separated from each other, i.e. the high aristocracy, professionals, merchants and officials. Masonic lodges began to thrive at Court, particularly after the departure of Charles III for Spain. At that time, immediately after the American Revolution, the extraordinary expansion of Masonic organizations coincided with the arrival from Vienna of the new Queen Maria Carolina of Habsburg, daughter of Maria Theresa and sister of the future Emperor Joseph II (Francovich 1974: 194-211; Giarrizzo 1993: 396, 463; Montroni 2000: 22-43).

An authoritative source, a history of Freemasonry printed in the second half of the nineteenth century in Ohio, confirms that although several foreign Lodges were established in Naples from 1750 to 1765, under the authority of France, Holland and England, national prejudices had prevented them from working in harmony (Rebold 1868: 101, 145-147, 181). It was only in 1776, under the protection of Queen Carolina, that the order revived and the National Grand Lodge resumed its labors. New Lodges were founded, and continued with varied success until the occupation of the country by the French, when Masonry was once again revitalized.

This was possible because the Lodges were frequented by members of the aristocracy associated with the Queen, who opposed the elderly Minister of King Charles, Bernardo Tanucci (Astuto 2007:28-31). The latter continued to rule and to control the young sovereigns on behalf of the King of Spain. Thus, when on 12 September 1775, acting on orders from Charles III, Tanucci revived a law from 1751 banning Freemasonry and declaring Freemasons guilty of the crime of *laesae maiestatis*,

Queen Maria Carolina seized the opportunity to exert her interest on behalf of the Order and, at the same time, to achieve her ambition: to govern independently, removing herself from Spanish control, as she managed to do after Tanucci's fall on 25 October 1776. The Masonic issue had important repercussions: Tanucci's dismissal marked a turning point in the political fortunes of the Queen, and in the whole history of the Kingdom (Recca 2017: 5-6).

By 1775, Francesco d'Aquino, Prince of Caramanico, the ambassador to London and Paris for the Kingdom of Naples, and later Viceroy of Sicily, had already founded the Neapolitan Lodge "Zelo", detached from the Grand Lodge in London. He then transformed it into a national Grand Lodge with himself as Grand Master, claiming independence from any foreign "Obedience" (Montroni 2000: 40).

A year later, Diego Naselli was elected both Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of Naples and the English Provincial Grand Lodge of Naples; these parallel posts being proof of intense Masonic activity. Unusually, as reported in 1783 by George Smith, the Grand Master of Kent, most of the Italian nobles and dignified ecclesiastics were Freemasons. Despite generally holding their meetings in private houses, they established Lodges in Naples, Venice, Verona, Turin, Genoa, Modena, Messina and throughout the island of Sicily (Smith 1783: 211).

Masonry's aims began to be influenced by the principles of the Enlightenment and civil democracy. However, both the Naples Grand Lodge and the English Provincial Grand Lodge of Naples were dissolved due to the French Revolution, and the subsequent "Reaction". When the liberal policy of France was withdrawn from Italy consequent to Napoleon's defeat in 1814, Italian Masonry ceased to exist. Its revival would only begin many years later in 1860 when Italy was restored to freedom by the Unification of Italy and the political movements that led up to this (Mackay 1874: 372).

However, the correspondence between the American Freemasonry and the Supreme Council of Italy at the end of nineteenth century continued throughout the time: the Supreme Council of Washington encouraged Italian Masons «in their work of vindicating all the civil rights of the nations, and the

precious gift of the liberty of conscience, granted to all mankind by the Great Architect of the Universe» (Preuss [1893] 1908: 286-87).

#### *4. The Masonic value of the foundation of Filadelfia*

The Enlightenment was a period of experimentation, visionary thinking and fascinating theories and spread precociously throughout the Kingdom of Naples. The eighteenth century also became a golden age for public buildings. Governments constructed theaters, museums, hospices, asylums and market-places to forge a new type of city (Rao 2013: 477-490). As early as 1737, King Charles of Bourbon had already embarked upon the most extensive architectural and urban program of the entire century. The Sovereign commissioned monumental public buildings in the capital. Naples was profoundly reshaped, becoming a modern capital (Thomas 2013: 9-14).

Later in the century, after the 1783 earthquake, further south in Italy emerged the plan for the new Calabrian city. This was the brainchild of the “enlightened” bishop of Potenza, Giovanni Andrea Serrao, a native of Castelmonardo and a friend of the Neapolitan political theorist and legal reformer Gaetano Filangieri (Körner 2017: 34). Filangieri was linked to Benjamin Franklin by a special bond even though their relationship developed under the shadow of the Ancien Régime (Giarrizzo 1993: 402; Trampus 2005; Ferrone 2003; Ferrone 2014: VIII, 13-21).

The correspondence between these two political thinkers, from which emerges the strength of thought of the Italian Enlightenment and its European and international outlook, is eloquent proof of the exchange of new ideas in the intellectual world notwithstanding the obstacles imposed by the incumbent governments who fought the intellectual blossoming of the Enlightenment fostered by Freemasonry. It also reveals the personal and philosophical relationship between Filangieri and

Franklin at a crucial time, not only in the United States but also in the rest of the modern world.<sup>2</sup>

Franklin's compatriots recognized a kindred spirit in the author of *The Science of Legislation*. The exchanges between Filangieri and Franklin, the latter an influential member of the Lodge of the Nine Sisters and its Venerable Master in 1779 and 1780, were therefore heavily imbued with Masonic overtones. Hence, Freemasonry played a decisive role in disseminating Filangieri's work. Owing to their deistic and humanitarian inclinations, the Masons keenly felt the significance of the name Philadelphia, a compound of two Greek words meaning *love* and *brother*. The American Revolution and Franklin's presence in Europe made Philadelphia seem the ideal refuge to Europeans. For Gaetano Filangieri, Philadelphia was the epitome of the American dream where the rational ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity had been reached. His enthusiasm strengthened the favorable attitude of fellow Italian Masons towards Philadelphia on the strength of the enlightened jurist's prodigious reputation.

Since Filangieri was personally involved in the events in Calabria, his friends were undoubtedly aware of his close relationship with Franklin and his idealization of the New World metropolis (Salfi 1788). Notably, Giovanni Andrea Serrao, who was directly responsible for the name adopted for the rebuilt Castelmonardo, was an intimate of Filangieri (Gabrieli 1973: 178).

A pupil of Serrao called the "bard of masonry", Antonio Jeroades (Giarrizzo 1993: 391-394), wrote a poem about the foundation of Filadelfia which supports the American derivation of the name. Abbott Francesco Saverio Salfi, one of Filangieri's few close friends, provides evidence that America influenced thoughts on the disaster as he mentioned this topic in his essay *Elogio del Filangieri*, defining the foundation of the Calabrian Filadelfia a testimony of gratitude to modern republicans.

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<sup>2</sup> The correspondence exchanged between Gaetano Filangieri and Benjamin Franklin from 1781 and 1787, was published by Monica D'Agostini, *Gaetano Filangieri and Benjamin Franklin: the relationship between the Italian Enlightenment and the US Constitution* (Washington: Italian Embassy Publications, 2011), 1-149.

Hence, the humanitarian turmoil and Masonic age spontaneously produced the etymologically appropriate term “Filadelfia”, naming a city in honor of the celebrated friendship between the American patriot and the Neapolitan philosopher (Chiosi 1981: 299).

Filadelfia, like its eponymous American sister, was founded to fulfil a Masonic dream, a new order. Masonic principles also inspired the structure of the city: its geometric division on two orthogonal axes (Maretto 1975: 169-170), creating four neighborhoods with four churches, in perfect symmetry with the vast central square forming a “public seat” that was both a meeting place and a symbol of freedom and autonomy of the local community. (Fig. 1) Masonic traces are also to be found in the municipal coat of arms: three hills and three stars on an azure background surmounted by two clasped hands in a symbolic and fraternal social contract, the very same handshake that is found in many representations of Masonic society.

And it was a freemason, Giovanni Andrea Serrao, who proposed to the King the change of name from Castelmonardo to Filadelfia, a name derived from the Greek φιλαδέλφεια, “fraternal love”. A name in which the Masonic message is abundantly clear; a celebration of the Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, where the Declaration of Independence was proclaimed, and from whose lodges it is highly likely that concrete aid to the founders of the new Calabrian city was first provided.

Returning to the main design, both main roads were 17 meters wide (a phenomenal width for a village in southern Italy), and were oriented according to the compass points. This re-elaboration of the “castrum romano” (Maestri, Maestri De Luca, 1978: 42), arose from collaboration between an architect and a philosopher, Francesco Antonio Serrao (another brother of the Bishop Serrao) and the philosopher Biagio Stillitani, both members of the Great East Lodge. They devised an admirable rationalist urban plan in which a perfect cross aligned to the four cardinal points divided the four neighborhoods with four churches (Serrao 1974: 98). And it was after an Assembly of Citizens that the sacred ceremony of the foundation of the city took place: a plough, pulled by oxen, traced the boundaries of the city, just as, legend would have it, in Rome.

The foundation of the lodge “Giordano Bruno”, which probably occurred in Philadelphia immediately after the town’s creation, is attributed to Serrao. Tradition has it that he wanted the lodge to be based in the palace of Marquis Stillitani, a building majestically situated on the north-west square overlooking the entrance to the main urban center.

### 5. Italian “*Illuminismo*” and the American Revolution

Despite the importance of Enlightenment in the Italian peninsula, in the second half of the eighteenth century Italy remained divided into a number of separate political entities, each affected to varying degrees by Enlightenment reforms. While the Lombard Enlightenment remained largely indifferent to political developments in the New World, the intellectual élite in the Kingdom of Naples expressed their interest in America.

The aforementioned Gaetano Filangieri was preceded and followed by other thinkers who shared a common language and culture. Neapolitan culture was affected by the spirit of the Enlightenment early on, thanks to pioneers such as Ludovico Antonio Muratori, who sought to reform the curricula of Catholic schools and universities, Abbott Ferdinando Galiani, former secretary at the embassy of the Kingdom of Naples in Paris, Antonio Genovesi, professor at the University of Naples and the first Chair in Political Economy in Europe, with his studies on public happiness. The tension between utopia and reform was central to the Italian Enlightenment, which was *civil* and pragmatic. A great deal of its contribution had to do with economics, administration, justice and legislation (Venturi 1969). Other distinguished figures of the capital’s cultural élite included Francesco Maria Pagano with his Project for a Constitution for the Neapolitan Republic, a benchmark for modern constitutions, and Filippo Mazzei, another friend of Franklin and later of Thomas Jefferson (Martone 2016:136, 451).

Much has been written about the influence of Italian culture on America, but the real impact of Italian Enlightenment on the American Revolution has long been neglected. Historians, of course, acknowledge the influence of European thinkers such

as William Blackstone, John Locke and Montesquieu, while Cesare Beccaria's contributions to the origins and development of American law have largely been forgotten. However, Beccaria's seminal treatise, *Dei delitti e delle pene*, published in 1764, translated into English as *On Crimes and Punishments* in 1767, significantly shaped the views of American revolutionaries and lawmakers. It is still kept in President Jefferson's private library, carefully preserved by the Library of Congress.

The first four U.S. Presidents - George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison - were inspired by Beccaria's treatise; Jefferson read it in the original Italian and endeavored to introduce its theories into law. Beccaria's anti-death penalty views materially shaped American thought on capital punishment, torture and cruelty (Hostettler 2011: 26-27, 142). America's foundational legal documents (the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the U.S. Bill of Rights) were themselves shaped by Beccaria's treatise and its insistence that laws be in writing and be enforced in a less arbitrary manner. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison and Benjamin Franklin studied Italian, and read or spoke the language. Many educated Americans of that era were also fascinated by Italian history and the civil law. Thus, the Italian Enlightenment played a crucial role in the development of American legal doctrine. It is worth emphasizing that Filangieri's essays were avidly read by Benjamin Franklin and were later widely sold by American booksellers (Maestro 1976).

In an effort to determine the extent of knowledge of Italian culture in America during the eighteenth century, despite the fact that this culture was not widespread (Marraro 1945, 21-31), it is true that the gazettes and newspapers, as far back as 1747, published advertisements to the effect that the Italian language was "expeditiously and correctly" taught in New York "in a private school and that similar schools existed at about the same time in other cities; it is also true that a professorship of Italian was established as early as 1779 at the College of William and Mary, but the study of the language lagged, and from the point of view of numbers of students it ranked below the other major foreign languages" (Marraro 1940: 120-25). However, English translations of Italian works were published in

America, as was the case for Cesare Beccaria's seminal work in 1773.

Beyond political and constitutional aspects, Italy's key role in history, literature, art, and music cannot be overlooked (Findlen, Roworth, Sama 2009). Italy's great culture influenced American aesthetic consciousness, values and images (Jaffe 1989).

On the other side of the ocean, a fresh perspective on the Italian perception of American social and political identity can be obtained through an analysis of the interesting example of the Reign of Two Sicilies.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, the city of Naples was one of the most cosmopolitan of European cities. In the intricate political juggling that followed the War of the Polish Succession (1733-1735), the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies passed from Austrian domination to the Spanish Bourbons. Indeed, it was under Charles III that the first hints of the Enlightenment wafted in (Burns 2015: 62). Badly needed civil reforms were adopted, the Jesuits were ousted, the Inquisition was stripped of its authority, and many educational and ecclesiastical improvements were made. An Academy of Sciences was founded, and the ancient University was infused with new life (Davis 2005: 131-32).

The Court was one of the most sumptuous in all of Europe, and it became even more so under Ferdinand, after his marriage to Maria Carolina (the ambitious sister of Marie Antoinette) (Astuto 2007:27-51).

Furthermore, the position of Naples as a major port, and one of the principal stopping points for anyone making the fashionable Grand Tour of Europe, gave the city an added international luster. In this ferment of activity, the Neapolitans quickly demonstrated a marked bent for what today we would call the social sciences. Even before the advent of the Spanish Bourbons, the philosopher Giambattista Vico had laid the foundations for the Neapolitan school of social thinkers, and Pietro Giannone had been persecuted for his daring condemnation of the temporal power of the Pope. The appointment of Antonio Genovesi to the Chair of Political Economics at the University in 1754, the first such post ever instituted, was a clear indication

of the importance ascribed by the Neapolitans to social and political studies. An intensively active group of philosophers followed and the pioneering efforts of Vico, Giannone, and Genovesi thereby flourished in the last quarter of the century. They prepared the ground on which a combination of factors, but mainly the cultural impact of the French Revolution, motivated a group of idealists and humanitarians to lead a revolt against the Bourbon dynasty at the very end of the eighteenth century.

A striking characteristic of the seventeenth and eighteenth century Enlightenment, which transformed Europe by promoting reason over faith and advancing skepticism, scientific method and intellectual inquiry, was the international, “dynamic”, exchange of knowledge and ideas that transformed every aspect of intellectual life and culture: turning the entire high cultural world upside down (Dupré 2005: 3-12). This exchange was formalized by the founding of learned academies and societies, which invited multinational membership and served as clearing houses for ideas, while informal interchange took place through personal contacts and correspondence among scholars, scientists, and philosophers. There were few more active and articulate members of this world-wide intellectual fraternity than Benjamin Franklin, whose range of interests and achievements were undeniably impressive. This versatility impinged greatly on the foundation of new cities designed according to precise criteria (Tuckermen [1856] in Bloom ed. 2009: 38-52).

Focusing upon one strand of the Enlightenment’s complex web of international intellectual relationships, there are many documents to show that the “multifaceted Franklin” had a tremendous influence on Italian thought. During the years following the American Revolution, Franklin, as a political leader and statesman, became a dominant image among Italians, who regarded him as the embodiment of the numerous political and social concepts revered by men of the Enlightenment. It was not only in artistic and architectural spheres, but also in the political that the American Revolution was grafted onto the trunk of the French Enlightenment (Fagiolo 2006: 144).

Queen Maria Carolina was soon to become one of the new Republic’s European allies, and was among the first to open her

kingdom's port to American vessels. Even more remarkable is the fact that during her reign a city was founded in her realm bearing the name of Filadelfia, in honor of the American republic. Thus, the Crown played a decisive role in supporting the young American nation. In the centralized Kingdom of Naples, this opening of the port to American ships and the foundation of Filadelfia could certainly not have occurred without the approval and the support of the Sovereigns.

#### *6. The grid in Italian urban design: Baroque post-earthquake towns*

From an architectural perspective, Filadelfia has an urban structure that is very similar to the famous baroque Sicilian town of Noto.

This wonderful little city, described as “the perfect Baroque city” (Ide 1958: 15), was completely rebuilt following new design criteria at the very beginning of the eighteenth century after the devastating earthquake of 1693 that brought the 17<sup>th</sup> century to a close on a disastrous note. In actual fact, eight late Baroque towns of the Val di Noto, in south-eastern Sicily - Caltagirone, Militello, Catania, Modica, Noto, Palazzolo, Ragusa, and Scicli - shared the same destiny, and were all rebuilt after 1693 near to the towns existing at the time of the earthquake. This was a considerable collective undertaking representing great architectural and artistic achievements. These historic centers and urban environments are testimony to the post-seismic rebuilding efforts of the decades following the catastrophic earthquake which ravaged towns across south-eastern Sicily. The restoration or reconstruction of these communities resulted in the creation of an exceptional group of towns, all reflecting the late Baroque architecture of the seventeenth century, and which exhibit the art and architecture of the time, place, and social context in which they were created.

The innovative range of architectural and town-planning developments resulting from the reconstruction in the Val di Noto demonstrates how the 1693 earthquake created an opportunity for an enormous artistic, architectural, and anti-seismic re-

newal of the cities destroyed. These centers still retain their residential function and are home to a lively society of inhabitants.

Also not to be forgotten is Avola, a beautiful town at the foot of the Hybla hills on the east coast overlooking the Jonian Sea and situated along one of the oldest Greek routes in Sicily, the Elorina Road. This town, also totally destroyed by the same earthquake on 11 January 1693, was immediately rebuilt using a hexagonal design, on the fertile plain beneath the hills near the coast, according to the will of Carlo Pignatelli Aragona Cortés, Marquis of Avola, nephew of Pope Innocenzo XII. Angelo Italia, a great architect and Jesuit friar of Palermo, was given the task of choosing the site and devising the urban plan. Drawing inspiration from the Renaissance treatises, he designed a hexagonal layout, with an orthogonal network whose two central axes, now Corso Garibaldi and Corso Vittorio Emanuele, formed a cross, representing the Marquisate's symbol and solemn commitment to Christianity. These two main roads also demarcated four areas and their intersection formed the main square Piazza Maggiore (now Piazza Umberto), functioning as a public market. The square was also flanked by the Cathedral, the Liege's Palace, and the Clock Tower while four other churches were placed at the cross ends (Gringeri Pantano 1996: 87-89, 95-118, 132). (Fig. 2).

Analogously, Filadelfia was built using new design strategies based on a central square. Like several other cities in Calabria it was redesigned using precise planning concepts.

As already mentioned, the new center was installed on a hillside not far from the original site. From an architectural point of view, the main open space forms the hub of a network: the junction of two main roads, surrounded by four adjacent areas that are actually four public spaces. It should be stressed that this scheme was used by the international group of military engineers who worked on reconstruction in earthquake-affected areas. Therefore, around a main square, four smaller squares are grouped, each of which with its own church. Majestic buildings were constructed around each of these squares. But the difference with respect to the Sicilian cities of the Noto Valley is undoubtedly determined by the different historical epoch. Strict anti-seismic regulations imposed lower towers for

churches. The reforms carried out by the Bourbons during the Enlightenment drastically reduced the number of monasteries, convents and churches, thus eliminating the main landmarks, in other words, the ancient physiognomy. From an aesthetic point of view, the Philadelphia blueprint is a pure geometric pattern, thus lacking the liveliness of Noto (Tobriner 1980). It must be recognized that this town plan draws inspiration precisely from the enlightened rationalism of the time. The Bourbons, who were intent on bettering the backward province of Calabria, fully exploited the 1783 earthquake as a pretext to seize church property while creating a safer and more sanitary urban environment.

As regards the functions of the new city, the Bourbons initiated the establishment of the town by prioritizing housing for earthquake victims. These buildings had to meet certain standards to ensure they provided suitable dwellings for all citizens.

Therefore, when the population was moved to a new, symmetrically planned town located on a hill some miles away, this new urban nucleus became a good example of seismic reforms and rational urbanization (Tobriner 2013: 521-532). Its construction according to geometric laws unifying the power of a vision with the rationality of spatial order meant it served as a model of an ideal city that would influence urban planning subsequent to the Enlightenment (Vidler 1987: 41).

On another note, the Bourbons and local nobles, unsurprisingly, also exploited the rebuilding work after the earthquakes to strengthen their own positions in Southern Italy. Traditional historiography investigating the post-seismic events of the Val di Noto has recursively interpreted the extraordinary architectural heritage created after the 1693 earthquake to be the result of a collective effort, which saw all levels of Sicilian society involved synergistically. These comprised the three traditional spheres of power of the Ancien Régime: the Bourbon government, feudal nobility and the clergy and also, but in a subordinate role, urban communities. However, a more in-depth analysis reveals that despite the unquestionable synergy of the three organs of power in dealing with the immediate emergency, it was the urban communities whose efforts were more far-

reaching, going well beyond the purely reconstructive intentions, and these continued throughout the eighteenth century.

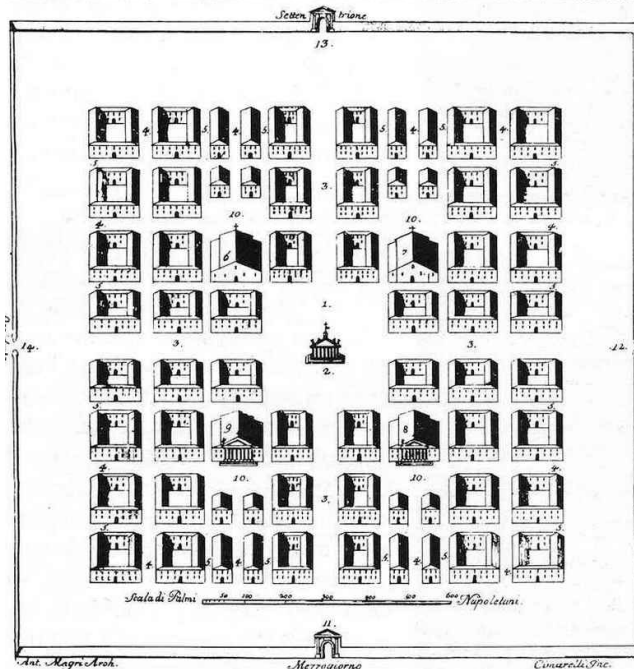
The study of the social dynamics of individual communities, as regards urban and even architectural decisions, actually reveals a deeply divided and conflictual urban society, one characterized by the often violent opposition between the groups and factions of the urban population.

This political and social analysis can also be applied to the whole of southern Italy and therefore to the case of Filadelfia. The physical destruction of inhabited centers that the earthquake caused was transformed into an opportunity not only to review the relationship between the settlements and the surrounding territory, with substantial economic upheavals, but also to redetermine the relative importance of the various social groups and their ability to control the city and its territory. In this sense, a distinction can be drawn between two different social structures operating within the urban nucleus: the first characterized by a strong vertical hierarchy, in which a solid and restricted oligarchy determines the fate of the city, and a second based instead on competing social, political and economic groups. Both Noto and Filadelfia, fall within the former category.

A substantially different relationship between urban choices and social dynamics prevailed in many other centers of southeastern Sicily, falling within the second type of social structure defined above. In these less hierarchized communities a constant state of conflict was fueled by economic prosperity and the absence of clearly assigned decision-makers (such as the bishop or the noble feudatory).

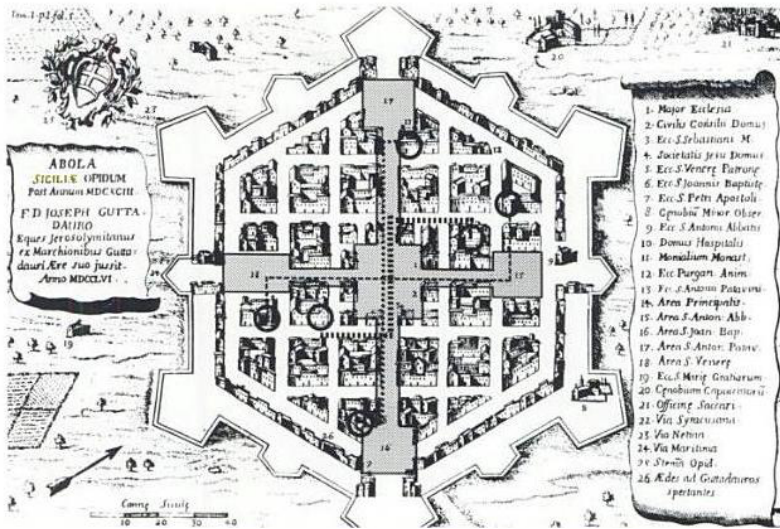
In the first case, it seems clear that the Bourbons and the dominant class of a restricted oligarchy provided the reconstructed area with cities that would also act as their private citadels serving their own interests.

SAGGIO DELLA PIANTA DELLA NUOVA CITTA DI FILADELFIA IN CALABRIA



1. Piazza di palmissa per ogni lato.
2. Pubblico sedile.
3. Strade di larghezza pal. 60.
4. Strade di larg. p. 30.
5. Strade di larg. p. 20.
6. Chiesa Panocchiale di S. Barbara.
7. Ch. Paroia S. Fedoro.
8. Ch. del Carmine.
9. Ch. di S. Francesco.
10. Stazzette dinanzi alle sud. Chiese.
11. Porta Vibonense.
12. Porta Montana.
13. Porta Catuconse.
14. Porta Maritima.

Filadelfia's Plan (Serrao 1785)



Avola's Plan (Guttadauro 1756)

## 7. The building of Filadelfia: form and society

The earthquake that struck the whole of Calabria has been widely studied regarding its geographical, geological, urban, and architectural impacts. Even within a Euro-Mediterranean society, mindful of the devastating earthquake of Lisbon of just thirty years earlier, it was a calamitous event. A military garrison led by Prince Francesco Pignatelli was sent from Naples, while the Marquis of Regalmici was sent to Messina - which had also been affected by the same event - by the Viceroy of Sicily, the Prince of Caramanico, also a brother-mason. On their heels followed a medical-scientific expedition, under the auspices of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Fine Arts of Naples led by doctor Michele Sarconi, intent on investigating the aftermath of the earthquake; studying the effects on the land and meticulously exploring the physical geography of the regions, to illustrate their natural history, understand their economy, and preserve the memory of the destroyed cities on their original sites, and the surrounding lands belonging to them. It was an ambitious project.

Many scientists who took part in the mission produced literary and iconographic works. Giovanni Vivencio, in 1783, wrote the well-known *Istoria e teoria de' tremuoti*, and Sarconi wrote an *Istoria de' fenomeni del tremoto avvenuto nelle Calabrie*, with an iconographic atlas full of tableaux by Pompeo Schiantarelli and Ignazio Stilo. These illustrations show the landscapes devastated by the earthquake and the morphological transformations, such as the opening of cracks in the ground, the creation of small lakes, as well as views of cities and villages destroyed by the earthquake. Another aspect, beyond purely mapping, involved the reconstruction of the destroyed settlements. This was handled mainly by engineers in Calabria under the command of Prince Pignatelli. The technicians acting under Royal authorization worked feverishly. They had to move unremittingly, on the back of a horse or mule, and then produce blueprints for new roads and bridges and draw up cost estimates for the necessary reconstruction work. The two military engineers, Antonio Winspeare and Francesco La Vega, were sent to identify the safest sites on which to reconstruct many of the destroyed cities, based on a new rational design. Pignatelli divided the Region into five districts, and appointed an engineer to head the work on each one (Dezzi Bardeschi 2010: 61). Technical features of the reconstruction work were entrusted to 39 engineers, coordinated by Winspeare and La Vega. These engineers were the designers and creators of earthquake-resistant buildings, called "case baraccate" (the Italian word "baracca" means "shack").

The main example in Filadelfia was the Serrao family's new residence, which became a sort of manor house. A series of blueprints were drawn up for various settlements, based on a similar model for all adopting the regularity of the urban orthogonal model, but adapted to accommodate any specific territorial requisites.

Although we can clearly recognize that Masonic concepts played an important role in planning the new Filadelfia, it is also true that it was the Crown who recruited the many international experts involved, controlled the work and, above all, paid for it. Royal functionaries such as the aforementioned Baron Antonio Winspeare senior, a military man and engineer in the

service of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, is remembered as one of the finest technicians of the Bourbon government.

### 8. *A new phase of enlightened development?*

When the ancient town and surrounding areas became uninhabitable, the people who were forced to abandon it were already living in wretched conditions. In the region of Calabria, the territory was partly owned by the so-called ecclesiastical “manomorta”<sup>3</sup> and partly by feudal families, among the latter the all-powerful Pignatelli family. Until then, Calabria had been considered by the Bourbons a marginal land, and it took this dramatic event (five horrific earthquakes and about a thousand minor tremors, causing a total of 30,000 deaths, besides incalculable damage to the artistic heritage) (Cecere 2017: 187-214), to awaken the interest of the Bourbon government in Calabria.

Only 60 deaths and 200 ducats worth of damage were recorded in Castelmonardo (G. Barone 1978: 126). The small number of victims was due to the fact that the inhabitants had previously experienced earthquakes in 1638 and 1659, and were accustomed to taking refuge in the outlying farmland; the quantification of the damage in monetary terms derived from the destruction of the buildings (Da Leone 1783).

On April 9, 1783, in the Chapel of Buon Consiglio, in Contrada Santa Croce, 27 “capi-fuochi” - the capo-fuoco was the head of a family, i.e. the oldest living male in a household - of the first class and 144 of the second class, unanimously approved the petition sent to the King to obtain the assignment of the *Piano della Gorna* for rebuilding Castelmonardo.

The peasant class, numerically the majority of the inhabitants, who would have been the workforce for the construction of the new center, was notable by its absence from this meet-

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<sup>3</sup> The term mortmain was applied to denote the alienation of lands or tenements to any corporation, sole or aggregate, ecclesiastical or temporal, so that the same becomes inalienable whence it is said to be in a “dead hand”. In essence, the term *manomorta* indicates the real estate property of civil or ecclesiastical bodies whose existence is perpetual. Such goods, usually land-based, were inalienable according to a long-term legal institution.

ing. Despite constituting 80% of the surviving population, this high percentage of peasants had only the right to declare to the royal officials, Winspeare and La Vega, their will to remain in that agricultural district. Antonio Winspeare and Francesco La Vega immediately wrote a report about the situation *Al marsciallo D. Francesco Pignatelli, Relazione 22.4.1783* (quoted in Chiosi 1981: 295).

With regard to the permanent feudal structure of power, it was certainly no accident that Prince Pignatelli himself was to take command of operations on the Calabrian territory. On February 15, 1783, he was appointed Royal Vicar General (Vicario Generale delle Calabrie) with authorities and faculty as *alter ego* of the King, royal and baronial courts, and other political and institutional offices: effectively, the Prince had authority *ut alter ego* «sopra tutti li présidi, tribunali, baroni, corti regie e baronali e qualsisiano altri uffiziali politici di qualunque ramo qualità e carattere, come altresì sopra tutta la truppa tanto regolare quanto di milizie» (*Il Monitore Napoletano* 1799: 155).

On February 20, Francesco Pignatelli, Prince of Strongoli, Marquis of Laino and Earl of Acerra<sup>4</sup>, accompanied by troops, with absolute power and one hundred thousand silver ducats arrived in Monteleone, where he installed his general headquarters in a central position with respect to the area affected by the earthquake (Tanucci [1760-1761] 1985: IX: 51). To recover the expedition costs, the government suppressed all the religious houses in the devastated areas, and confiscated their assets to create a new fund (Davis 2006: 61-62).

The Prince himself proposed to the King that the “Cassa Sacra” and a related committee, the “Giunta”, be established, and convinced Pope Pius VI to consent to the confiscation of ecclesiastical property to finance this. On June 4, 1784, the “Cassa Sacra” was founded in Catanzaro, by a dispatch sent by the Minister Acton to the Vicar Francesco Pignatelli Strongoli. Its task was to collect the annuities of places of worship in Ca-

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<sup>4</sup> Pignatelli was born in Sorrento on 27 March 1734, son of Ferdinando, Duke of Monteleone, and Lucrezia Pignatelli, Princess of Strongoli. *Archivio Pignatelli Strongoli*, Serie I, f. 77, inc. 13; *Ministero della guerra, Libretti di vita e costume*, Serie I, vol. 127 bis, c. 31, and *Generali Antichi*, f. 12, inc. 77, f. 14, incc. 35, 74, fs. 16, inc. 36, State Archive of Naples.

labria to be used for the restoration of the same, but the “Giunta”, composed of his brother, Don Vincenzo Pignatelli, as President, the Bishop of Catanzaro, the Caporuota of the Regia Udienza, and an Uditore (who held the position of “Fiscale”, i.e. judge), gradually seized the entire estates of the destroyed convents and monasteries. The Giunta was to administer the sale of the expropriated ecclesiastical property and to invest the proceeds in the reconstruction. In particular, monasteries and places of worship were abolished. A judicial function was also attributed to this committee since it pronounced judgments in the first instance on disputes that arose from the devolution of goods: «Che essa Giunta avesse l’ispezione dell’intera amministrazione delle rendite dei beni ecclesiastici della provincia» (Vivenzio 1783: 308). The Giunta had the duty to inspect the administration of the annuities of the ecclesiastical property of the province.

On November 27 a further “Giunta di Corrispondenza” (Mazoleni 1978: 234)<sup>5</sup> was created in Naples and presided by Francesco Pignatelli himself, to manage dealings between the “Cassa Sacra” and the Crown. The founding act listed the names of the members of the “Giunta di Corrispondenza”: Prince Pignatelli as President, three judges of the “Gran Corte della Vicaria”, Gregorio De Bisogno, Saverio D’Andrea and Gaspare Vanvitelli, and the Advocate of the Real Patrimonio Nicola Vivenzio as “Fiscale”. The text of the Dispatch dated November 15, 1784 which instituted the “Giunta”, contained six articles; of particular importance was article 5 which established that the “Giunta” had the task to construct, according to the “charitable intentions” of His Majesty the King, public buildings in the destroyed provinces of Calabria. The “Giunta di Corrispondenza di Cassa Sacra” was finally abolished along with the “Cassa Sacra” by a Dispatch dated January 30 1796 (Trinchera 1872: 473).

The fate of the “Cassa Sacra” was to end in bankruptcy due to the squandering of public money, much of which ended up

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<sup>5</sup> The documents about the “Suprema Giunta di Corrispondenza” and those of the “Cassa Sacra” are preserved in the State Archive of Naples. The collection “Uffici centrali di Antico regime” consists of 1507 documents - from 1783 to 1796 - divided into two series.

in the hands of profiteers and speculators. Despite the King's protection, Pignatelli was accused of having stolen public funds for personal use. In 1796, Enrico Capece Minutolo, the Bishop of Mileto, finally obtained the abolition of the "Giunta" from the King, but was unsuccessful in his efforts to secure the restitution of the ecclesiastical property confiscated, as this had in the meantime, largely been sold.

Despite these hurdles, in only a few years, entire villages and roads were reconstructed and numerous and extensive wetlands dried up thereby improving the overall condition of southern Calabria. However, it is also true that Calabria had become a real testing ground for political reforms: the failed attempt to redesign power relations with the local feudalism provoked not only a violent reaction from the nobility, but also met with resistance by the populace, who viewed it as interference in their customs and traditions.

Besides the opposition by the barons, who saw their powers and their estates reduced, there was the discontent of the people. The vast heritage confiscated from the Catholic Church was not distributed to farmers without land, who found themselves to be tenants with new landlords. They were the fiercest of clerics in defending their properties, even denying people the right to use the ancient "usi civici"<sup>6</sup> To the poorer classes was denied the opportunity to gain social advancement: in essence, the inhabitants of the disaster-stricken areas, for the most part peasants, were prevented from improving their socio-economic status. Of course, this also stifled the development of areas of new urban settlements because there was nothing to attract new settlers, and thus they remained closed communities.

### 9. *A failed experiment*

The destroyed town of Castelmonardo was located in a mountainous area, about fifty kilometers from Catanzaro, the nearest largest city. The move, the appropriation of a new territory and the foundation of Filadelfia arose solely from necessity.

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<sup>6</sup> The "usi civici" of tillage, sowing, pasturage, fishing, wood gathering, and so on, were ancient popular rights of astonishing antiquity.

In that context, the event became an incentive for the development of the nearby surrounding lands, but only because the landowner of this area was another member of the Pignatelli family, Don Diego Pignatelli<sup>7</sup>, closely linked to the Vicar, Prince Francesco. He granted the petition of the earthquake victims requesting new dwellings, since they did not want to abandon their land.

However, the majority of the population, namely the peasants, took no part in drafting the petition. The consent obtained was in no way a conquest, or a plan, of the people. The favorable predisposition of the Prince was made known to the nobles of the town by Giovanni Andrea Serrao. He played an active role in requesting and obtaining the Pignatellis' consent, and it is for these reasons that historiography attributes to him the authorship of the operation that brought the new city to life (Rubino 1988: 13).

Certainly the inhabitants obtained a remarkable improvement in their urban conditions, as the ancient Castelmonardo was essentially an agricultural village on a hilltop. With very few routes of communication, it was an isolated community. Instead, Filadelfia was conceived, at least on paper, as a blueprint for a city of the future by its architect, Francesco Antonio Serrao, another member of the Serrao family. Its urban design aimed at absolute symmetrical perfection, with the city divided into equal parts, the four neighborhoods each with their own church and a single central square.

In short, it was a prime example of urban planning. This small town was regarded as a "model city", but, despite its virtues, after two hundred years, the population of this prototype of the Enlightenment failed to exceed six thousand inhabitants.

The dream of the enlightened Bishop of Potenza, both the feudal owner of the town of Castelmonardo and the reformer who took charge of rebuilding the city, was not fulfilled. The enlightened reformers imagined that the sale of ecclesiastical

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<sup>7</sup> Primary documents on the Pignatelli family and the events described are kept in the Archivio di Stato di Napoli: *Archivio Pignatelli d'Aragona Cortes*, Museo, vol. 50; *Allegazioni*, bb. 9, 11; *Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Governo di Napoli (1806-1815)*, bb. 2187-2205, and in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli: *Branacciana*, 8.13 (15, 21); *Almanacco reale*, Napoli 1810, 104.

properties during the reconstruction would create a class of peasant farmers, whose energies would revitalize the economy of the damaged lands. But no new landowners emerged: instead, existing wealthy landowners bought extensive swaths of land. Since these buyers did not share progressive ideas, the peasants suffered a twofold loss as few of them had the means to buy any land, and, as most had been tenants of the monasteries, lost their leases when the new owners purchased the confiscated Church properties. Peasant families were thereby driven off the land. Even the Bourbon Government had to admit, exposing its defeat, that for the rural poor the financial management of the “Cassa Sacra” had become a greater disaster than the earthquake itself.

This situation revealed the difficulties in applying the reformers’ principles to the depressed southern region: the “Cassa Sacra” remained merely a failed attempt to benefit the rural poor.

Even Giovanni Andrea Serrao himself was unable to escape his sad destiny. As primary sources refer, when King Ferdinand appointed this learned and “most judicious Jansenist, bishop of Potenza” (Palmer 1838, I: 336), it took several threats from the Neapolitan Crown before the Pope Pius VI accepted the nomination of such a “liberal thinker”. In the tragic events of the Neapolitan Revolution of 1799, he supported the revolutionaries who waged resistance against the Bourbons (Cuoco [1801] 2014). Under the Parthenopean Republic, Bishop Serrao urged his people to obey the new government, and accepted the office of Civil Commissioner in Potenza. But the counterrevolutionary Sanfedist uprising, a peasant crusade led by Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo, destabilized French suzerainty. Cardinal Ruffo’s *Holy Crusade* restored the Bourbons in 1799.(Howard 2017: 23). When Ruffo’s bands drew near to Potenza, Bishop Serrao was regarded as “the enemy of the Pope, the King and God”. Warned to escape, he said that he trusted his fellow-citizens. On February 24, 1799, soldiers of the Potenza guard raided the Bishop’s palace: they killed Serrao, cutting off his head and parading it triumphantly around the city on a pike (Chadwick 1981: 474-75).

The reformer was too deeply involved in his own battle. He probably felt that his time had come; paying with his own blood for his devotion to his ideals. Even in the age of the Enlightenment, the shadow of the Counter-Reformation was still at large in Italy; but the tension between the old world and the new had already caused the downfall of the Ancien Régime.

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*Abstract*

THE BOURBON CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE. THE FOUNDATION OF A NEW PHILADELPHIA IN THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT

*Keywords:* XVIII century, Enlightenment, Freemasonry, Benjamin Franklin, Gaetano Filangieri, Serrao family, Pignatelli family, Philadelphia, Filadelfia.

In 1783 earthquakes devastated Calabria, destroying many towns including Castelmonardo, a mountain village. The survivors were forced to rebuild in a more favorable location and renamed the new city Filadelfia. This essay highlights the similarities between this city and the American Philadelphia. Since intellectual élites in the Kingdom of Naples had frequent contact with American thinkers, urban planners imitated William Penn's blueprint for the Pennsylvanian capital, evidence of the links between Masonry and the Neapolitan Enlightenment. Filadelfia became a model of rationalist urbanization and seismic reforms. The topic is intriguing from a variety of prospects, from Italian-American cultural history to the history of urban form and founded towns. Masonic thinking was important to the form of the town, and there were specifically Masonic formal and symbolic elements in the town plan. Enlightenment ideals - operative in the foundation of the American city of Philadelphia - were in play in the reconstruction of the Calabrian city of Castelmonardo as the new Filadelfia. After outlining the circumstances of the establishment of Filadelfia, the role of Freemasonry in Italy, and the influence of Italian thought in American Enlightenment thinking, the essay ends looking at the 17th century rebuilding efforts and comparing them with the 18th century ideals: where we might see Philadelphia flourishing as the home of independence from tyranny in the signing of the Constitution, and Filadelfia failing to fulfill the promise of a city of brotherly love due to the exclusion of the entire peasant class and the continuation of a suffocating feudalism.

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