Movements of Men and Goods in the Kingdom of Naples in the Early Modern Age: Restrictions and Controls for Health Issues

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1. Introduction

"Tra fratture e continuità, tra catastrofi e sopravvivenze (…) un Mediterraneo immobile non è mai esistito."[1] This is Giuseppe Galasso's definition of a sea that has always been a centre of economic, commercial and cultural exchanges.[2] Within this basin, the Italian Peninsula, and particularly the Kingdom of Naples had a central, almost "strategic", position. Since ancient times, men and

[1] G. Galasso, "Il Mediterraneo: un nesso totale tra natura e storia", in *Mediterranea. Ricerche storiche*, IV, n. 9, April 2007, p. 19 ("Between fractures and continuity, catastrophes and survival (...) an immobile Mediterranean has never existed").

[2] The bibliography on Mediterranean is truly immense, starting with the writings by Fernand Braudel, for example: *Civiltà e imperi del Mediterraneo nell'età di Filippo II*, vol. I, Turin, 1976. Here I will mention only a few books that are well known, but not exhaustive of the rich bibliography: P. Horden and N. Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Hoboken, New Jersey, 2000; E. Ivetic, *Studiare la storia del Mediterraneo*, Bologna, 2024; P. Matvejevic, *Mediterraneo. Un nuovo breviario*, translation by S. Ferrari, Milan, 1998. More recently: S. Capasso, G. Corona and W. Palmieri (eds.), *Il Mediterraneo come risorsa. Prospettive dall'Italia*, Bologna, 2020.
In addition, mention should be made of the first two issues of the *Rivista di Studi Storici del Mediterraneo*, in which there is an interesting essay by E. Ivetic ("Fare storia del Mediterraneo", *ivi*, year I, fasc. I, January 2024, pp. 11-28) (that also offers a rich bibliography) and the article by D. Salomoni ("Insegnare il Mediterraneo. L'emergere di un'idea geografica nella cultura educativa europea dell'età delle esplorazioni", *ivi*, year I, fasc. II, July 2024, pp. 223-248), which, recalling the volume by A. Vanoli (*Storia del mare*, Bari-Rome, 2022), proposes the suggestive idea of a Mediterranean "a lungo pensato per sottrazione" ("long thought of by subtraction") (p. 224, and in particular the paragraph entitled "Un mare per sottrazione", pp. 224-231).

goods had moved thorough this sea, favouring trades and agreements, but also conflicts and dangers.

Among the worst dangers affecting this basin there were certainly diseases, and especially epidemic diseases, which used to circulate together with men and goods. They spread easily and very quickly, by sea as well as by land. They caused immense carnage, which the men living in that time were almost always unable to contain.

One of the diseases widespread in the Mediterranean area in the early modern age was the plague.[3] With its bubonic, pulmonary and septicemic forms, it was little known to ancient people, even though it had been endemic in Europe since previous centuries.[4]

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[3] The plague often came from the sea, especially in port cities: G. Assereto, *"Per la comune salvezza dal morbo contagioso". I controlli di sanità nella Repubblica di Genova*, Novi Ligure, 2011, p. 15. Among other authors, these topics, with regard to Southern Italy, have been addressed by R. Salvemini, "A tutela della salute e del commercio nel Mediterraneo: la sanità marittima nel Mezzogiorno pre-unitario", in Ead. (ed.), *Istituzioni e traffici nel Mediterraneo tra età antica e crescita moderna*, Naples, 2009, pp. 259-296; Ead., "Epidemie e sanità marittima nel Mezzogiorno pre-unitario (XVIII-XIX secolo)", in *Glocale*, 16-17, 2021, pp. 73-88.

[4] The bibliography on the plague is endless, starting with the well-known work by Jean-Noël Biraben, *Les hommes et la peste en France et dans les pays européens et méditerranéens*, Mouton, Paris-La Haye, 1975-1976, 2 voll. Here I will mention only some authors: G. Alfani, *Calamities and the Economy in Renaissance Italy. The Grand Tour of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, Basingstoke, 2013; Id., "Plague in seventeenth-century Europe and the decline of Italy: an epidemiological hypothesis", in *European Review of Economic History*, 17(4), 2013, pp. 408-430; Id., "Epidemics and Pandemics: From the Justinianic Plague to the Spanish Flu", in C. Diebolt and M. Haupert (eds.), *Handbook of Cliometrics*, Germany, 2024, pp. 1931-1965; G. Alfani and R. Sansa, "Il ritorno della peste? Un'introduzione alla storiografia recente", in *Popolazione e storia*, 2, 2015, pp. 9-19; G. Alfani and T.E. Murphy, "Plague and Lethal Epidemics in the Pre-Industrial World, in *The Journal of Economic History*, 77, 1, 2017, pp. 314-343; S.K. Cohn, *Cultures of plague: medical thinking at the end of the Renaissance*, Oxford, 2010; W.H. McNeill, *La peste nella storia. Epidemie, morbi e contagio dall'antichità all'età contemporanea*, Turin, 1982; W. Naphy and A. Spicer, *La peste in Europa*, Bologna, 2021; A.Palazzo and M. Nicoletti (eds.), *Epidemics and Pandemics: Philosophical Perspectives*, Turnhout, 2024; A. Pastore, *Peste, epidemie e strutture sanitarie*, Turin, 1987; S. Scott and C. Duncan, *Biology of Plagues: Evidence from Historical Populations*, Cambridge, 2001; L. Shaw-Taylor, "An introduction to the history of infectious diseases, epidemics and the early phases of the long-run decline in mortality", in *Economic History Review*, 73, 3, 2020, pp. E1-E19; P. Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England*, London, 1985.

In the Middle Ages, the so-called "Black Death" had killed many populations, leaving men with a sad memory and a deep fear.[5] Although in the following centuries, the Italian peninsula had managed to keep the plague out of its territory "probably thanks to the efficient application of a sophisticated mix of anti-epidemic interventions and policies" developed in the centuries following the Black Death,[6] this does not mean that the disease had been eradicated, as shown by the following 16th-century epidemics[7] and the

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Regarding epidemics with a special reference to Italy, see, for example, R. Cancila, *Palermo giornate cruciali. Secc. XVI-XVIII*, Soveria Mannelli, 2023, in particular the chapter on *La peste 1575*, pp. 39-65; C.M. Cipolla, *Contro un nemico invisibile. Epidemie e strutture sanitarie nell'Italia del Rinascimento*, Bologna, 1985; A. Corradi, *Annali delle epidemie occorse in Italia dalle prime memorie fino al 1850*, Bologna, 1865-1877, 4 voll.; L. Del Panta, *Le epidemie nella storia demografica italiana (secoli XIV-XIX)*, Turin, 1980; J. Henderson, "Epidemie, miasmi e il corpo dei poveri a Firenze nella prima età moderna", in *Storia urbana*, fasc. 112, 2006, pp. 1-21; Id., *Florence under Siege. Surviving Plague in an Early Modern City*, New Haven, 2019; Id., "The invisible enemy: Fighting the plague in early modern Italy", in *Centaurus*, 62, 2020, pp. 263-274; M. Manfredini, S. De Iasio and E. Lucchetti, "The plague of 1630 in the territory of Parma: Outbreak and effects of a crisis", in *International Journal of Anthropology*, 17(1), 2002, pp. 41-57; P. Preto, *Epidemia, paura e politica nell'Italia moderna*, Rome, 1988; S. Speziale, *Le altre guerre del Mediterraneo. Uomini ed epidemie tra XVIII e XIX secolo*, Reggio Calabria, 2013.

[5] Much has also been written about the "Black Death". Here see only: O.J. Benedictow, *The Black Death 1346-1353. The complete history*, Woodbridge, 2004; O. Capitani (ed.), *Morire di peste: testimonianze antiche e interpretazioni modern della "peste nera" del 1348*, Bologna, 1995; R. Jedwab, N.D. Johnson and M. Koyama, "The economic impact of the Black Death", in *Journal of Economic Literature*, 60(1), 2022, pp. 132-178. Besides, see the numerous works (and the relative cited bibliography) by M.H. Green, "Taking "Pandemic" Seriously: Making the Black Death Global", in *The Medieval Globe*, 1, 2014, pp. 27-62; Ead. (ed.), P*andemic Disease in the Medieval World. Rethinking the Black Death*, Kalamazoo, 2015; Ead., "Putting Africa on the Black Death map: Narratives from genetics and history", in *Afriques*, 2018, https://doi.org/10.4000/afriques.2125; Ead.,"The four Black Deaths", in *The American Historical Review*, 125(5), 2020, pp. 1601-1631, https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/rhaa511; Ead., "The Pandemic Arc: Expanded Narratives in the History of Global Health", in *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 2024, jrae008, https://doi.org/10.1093/jhmas/jrae008.

[6] G. Alfani, "Epidemics and Pandemics: From the Justinianic Plague to the Spanish Flu", cit., p. 14. On the past strategies to deal with epidemics, comparing different historical epidemics, see M.E. Habicht, F.D. Pate, E.Varotto and F.M. Galassi, "Epidemics and pandemics in the history of human kind and how governments dealt with them. A review from the Bronze Age to the EarlyModern Age", in *Rivista trimestrale di scienza dell'amministrazione*, 2, 2020, pp. 1-32.

[7] Guido Alfani (*Il Grand Tour dei Cavalieri dell'Apocalisse. L'Italia del "lungo Cinquecento"*

next 1629-30 plague wave, which mainly affected the Northern area of the peninsula.[8] The Kingdom of Naples was safe, but only for a few years. In fact, in 1656 the plague also spread in Southern Italy,[9] and then hit Rome and Genoa too.[10]

The plague was often confused with other contagious diseases. It is not by chance that ancient records speak of "contagion" or "contagious illness," hardly of plague, also because the bacillus of the disease had not yet been identified, which would not happen until the end of the 19th century.[11] In the early modern age doctors wondered about the causes of the plague and possible remedies, but the answers they provided were hardly conclusive.[12]

Given these considerations, it was vital to impose restrictions and controls on men and goods to prevent the worst:[13] the arrival,

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(1494-1629), Venice, 2010, pp. 142-146) recalls the main epidemics that broke out in the Italian Peninsula in the 16th century. The author also mentions that Italy experienced "una sorta di parentesi felice" ("a sort of happy parenthesis") between 1530 and 1575, when it was free of the plague (*ivi*, p. 145).

[8] Among the others numerous works, see G. Alfani and S.K. Cohn Jr., "Nonantola 1630. Anatomia di una pestilenza e meccanismi del contagio. Con riflessioni a partire dalle epidemie milanesi della prima età moderna", in *Popolazione e Storia*, 2, 2007, pp. 99-138; G. Alfani, M. Bonetti and M. Fochesato,"Pandemics and socio-economic status. Evidence from the plague of 1630 in northern Italy", in *Population Studies*, vol. 78, n. 1, 2024, pp. 21-42.

[9] Probably the plague came from Sardinia. About the mid-century plague in this island, see F. Manconi, *Castigo de Dios. La grande peste barocca nella Sardegna di Filippo IV*, Rome, 1994.

[10] Among the other authors, see on Rome I. Fosi (ed.), "La città assediata. La Peste a Roma (1656-1657)", in *Roma Moderna e Contemporanea*, 1-3, 2006, pp. 3-11; M. Conforti, "Peste a stampa. Trattati, relazioni e cronache a Roma nel 1656", *ivi*, pp. 135-158. On Genova G. Rocca, "La peste di metà Seicento a Genova e in Liguria. Alcune considerazioni sulla diffusione spaziale di un'epidemia", in *Società Italiana di Demografia Storica, Popolazione, Società e Ambiente. Temi di Demografia Storica Italiana (secc. XVII-XIX)*, Bologna, 1990, pp. 707-720.

[11] In fact, the bacillus was only identified in 1894 by Alexandre Yersin, from whom it took its name: *Yersinia pestis*. See I. Fusco, "Il regno di Napoli e la peste nel Seicento: sintomi e rimedi", in *Medicina Historica*, vol. 4, suppl. 1, 2020, pp. 21-23. For more details, M.H. Green, "Plague (Yersinia pestis)", in *Encyclopedia of the History of Science*, May 2024.

[12] On this aspect, see I. Fusco, *La grande epidemia. Potere e corpi sociali di fronte all'emergenza nella Napoli spagnola*, Naples, 2017, in particular the chapter about *I medici e la peste*, pp. 45-73.

[13] On the importance of health institutions in controlling an epidemic, see among others

along with them, of an epidemic that would have brought perhaps even greater damage. However, these restrictions and controls also imposed serious costs on the population.

In this work I will deal with the restrictions on the movement of individuals and goods imposed in the 17th-century Kingdom of Naples for health reasons. These restrictions succeeded in stopping epidemics; nevertheless, they caused obstacles and serious damage to trade and commerce.[14] What was the Neapolitan rulers' attitude towards the epidemics that spread in the Mediterranean area during the 17th century? Was an adequate "preventive policy" adopted, were appropriate restrictive measures and controls put in place, even at the cost of causing problems to the economic and commercial life of the kingdom? And what restrictions and which controls?

To assess the evolution of the health "policies" in the Kingdom of Naples, I will examine, albeit briefly, four historical periods in the second half of the 17th century. This was a particularly difficult fifty-year period for the kingdom, hit by two epidemic waves. The first period covers the years from 1656 to 1658, when the plague epidemic that struck the kingdom was very severe. The second period concerns the years immediately following this epidemic until the outbreak of the new epidemic in 1690 in Conversano, in the Apulian area. The third period considers the years of this new epidemic in Apulia, from 1690 to 1692. The fourth and final period analyses the

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P. Calcagno and D. Palermo (eds.), *La quotidiana emergenza. I molteplici impieghi delle istituzioni sanitarie nel Mediterraneo moderno*, Palermo, 2017. See also: L. Antonielli, "Il Magistrato di sanità dello Stato di Milano: profilo istituzionale di una magistratura", in *Res Publica. Rivista di Studi Storico-politici internazionali, Pandemia e istituzioni*, F. Bonini, S. Mori and D. Novarese (eds.), I, 29, 2021, pp. 33-47; I. Fusco, "Il Regno di Napoli nelle emergenze sanitarie del XVII Secolo. Istituzioni, politiche e controllo dello spazio marittimo e terrestre", in *Storia Urbana*, 147, 2015, pp. 55-74; D. Palermo, "La Suprema deputazione generale di salute pubblica nel Regno di Sicilia dall'emergenza alla stabilità", *ivi*, pp. 115-138; D. Pedemonte, "Quando il nemico è visibile: il magistrato di sanità genovese come strumento di controllo del territorio e di politica economica", *ivi*, pp 33-54; R. Sansa, "Un territorio, la peste, un'istituzione. La congregazione sanitaria a Roma e nello stato pontificio. XVI-XVII secolo", *ivi*, pp 9-32.

[14] On the effects of epidemics on merchants in the Middle Ages, see for example M. Giagnacovo, "'A' tenpi di morìa e di guerra no si puote tropo aprire l'ochio!'. L'operatore economico medievale di fronte alle crisi sanitarie", in *Glocale*, 16-17, 2021, pp. 25-38.

years after the 1690 epidemic, when a new century will begin, adopting the changes that had developed during this difficult fifty-year period.

2. 1656-1658: Epidemic Years

A devastating epidemic spread through the Kingdom of Naples between March and May 1656, initially affecting Naples, the capital, and then spreading throughout the kingdom.[15] On December 8th, 1656, the day of the Virgin, the epidemic ended in Naples, whereas the rest of the kingdom had to wait until December 1658, when all the towns in the kingdom were allowed to trade freely and relations with foreign countries were authorized again.[16]

The long duration of the epidemic helps us to understand that in this case controls and restrictions were almost non-existent, at least in the beginning. Men and goods continued to circulate in the kingdom despite the existing rules (and of the new regulations drawn up for the occasion), and this favoured the wide spreading of the contagion, which caused, not surprisingly, the death of 43% of the total population.[17]

In the case of the capital, the confusion and the lack of control were in many ways more serious. Indeed, in the case of Naples, the first centre to be hit, the surprise effect played a significant role. It is true that news of the presence of the plague in the Mediterranean arrived in Naples long before the plague.[18] However, the Neapolitan

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[15] Only the two provinces furthest from the capital were better preserved: Terra d'Otranto and Calabria Ultra, where only three towns became infected. On the plague in Naples and in the kingdom, in addition to the overall book by Salvatore De Renzi (*Napoli nell'anno 1656*, Naples, 1968 [1867]), there are numerous works on specific Southern towns. For more details, refer to my two volumes *Peste, demografia e fiscalità nel Regno di Napoli del XVII secolo*, Milan, 2007, and *La grande epidemia. Potere e corpi sociali di fronte all'emergenza nella Napoli spagnola*, cit.

[16] I. Fusco, "La peste del 1656-58 nel Regno di Napoli: diffusione e mortalità", in *Popolazione e Storia*, 1, 2009, p. 119.

[17] *Ivi*, p. 125.

[18] In April 1656, for example, the rulers were considering whether to grant the "free

rulers seemed to have forgotten the word "contagion," 130 years having passed since the last epidemic that had struck the kingdom in 1526.[19] The memory of the past could have had a significant weight in stopping and better governing an epidemic. In fact, as little was known about the causes of the plague and the possible remedies to counter it, experience gained in similar cases could have played a significant role. And any experience was lacking in Naples. Certainly, also due to this lack of experience rulers did not prepare the necessary restrictions and controls in time.

However, for other reasons too, the necessary preventive measures were not taken, and controls were not as timely and rigorous as they should have been. Among these reasons, there was firstly the surprise effect, and the lack of knowledge of the aetiology of the disease, which led the rulers to think that the cause of the deaths in the city depended on bad food,[20] poisonous dust[21] or divine punish-

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practice", that is to say the access to the port of Naples, to vessels from Malta: Archivio di Stato di Napoli (ASN), *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 204, fasc. not numbered (15 April 1656). On the relationship between the communication of information and emergency situations, see D. Cecere and A. Tuccillo (eds.), *Communication and Politics in the Hispanic Monarchy: Managing Times of Emergency*, Berlin, 2023.

[19] G. Campanile, *Cose degne di memoria della città di Napoli*, in Società Napoletana di Storia Patria (SNSP), ms. XXVI.D.5, in particular the chapter *Della peste di Napoli dell'anno bisestile 1656*, ff. 679; N. Pasquale, *A' posteriori della peste di Napoli, e suo Regno nell'anno 1656. Dalla redentione del mondo*, Naples, 1668, p. 20; more recently, G. Calvi, "L'oro, il fuoco, le forche, la peste napoletana del 1656", in *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 1981, disp. III, p. 412.

[20] E. Palermo, *Ragguaglio storico della peste di Napoli del 1656, con documenti, ed altre notizie estratte da Registri di quell'anno sistenti nell'Archivio della Sopraintendenza della Salute, e con tutti i Bandi e le Prammatiche all'uopo emanate*, in SNSP, ms. XXV.D.9, 1834, f. 114v; A. Rubino, *Notitia di quanto è occorso in Napoli dall'anno 1648 per tutto l'anno 1657*, tomo I, in SNSP, ms. XXIII.D.14, f. 219.

[21] The story is told by Andrea Rubino (*ivi*, ff. 223 e seg.). See also S. D'Alessio, "L'aria innocente. Geronimo Gatta e le sue fonti", in *Mediterranea - Ricerche storiche*, anno XV, December 2018, pp. 588-592. Attributing the cause of epidemics to supposed plague spreaders was a widespread "practice". See, for example, J. Arrizabalaga, "Pestis Manufacta. Plague, poisons and fear in mid-fourtheen-century Europe", in O.P. Grell, A. Cunningham, J. Arrizabalaga (eds.), *"It All Depends on the Dose". Poisons and Medicines in European History*, London and New York, 2018, pp. 62-80. Cases of "plague spreaders" can be found all over Italy: for example, regarding Tuscany in the 17th century, see R. Pazzagli, "Storia, epidemie, ambiente. Le reazioni alla peste nella Toscana del '600", in *Glocale*, 2021, 16-17, pp. 53-72.

ment.[22] Secondly, the fear of admitting that there was a risk of a possible contagion also affected preventive policies. Fear was a common feeling not only among doctors, but also among the population and the rulers, who feared a wave of panic in the city. Above all, rulers were afraid of the consequences of complete isolation, which would have been necessary if they had admitted that a contagion had spread in the city. Isolating Naples meant causing problems with its supply and thus condemning the population to starvation.[23] Thirdly, in the early days of the epidemic, the movement of soldiers through the port of Naples to other territories of the Catholic Monarchy was not prevented.[24] In short, adequate restrictions and controls were not in place in the capital at first, nor were they often desired because of commercial, supply and military reasons. Fourthly and finally, restrictions and controls were not properly enforced also because in the city there was a lack of doctors and officials capable of enforcing them.[25]

All the above-mentioned factors contributed to the epidemic spreading widely in the capital and in a short time also throughout the kingdom. In fact, the plague spread in the provinces due to the flight from the infected Naples and then to the flight from one town to another.[26]

Throughout the Mediterranean area,[27] escape was a common re-

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[22] S. De Renzi, *Napoli nell'anno 1656*, cit., pp. 12 and ff.; I. Fusco, *Peste, demografia e fiscalità nel Regno di Napoli del XVII secolo*, cit., pp. 43-44. On the role of religion in disaster management, see the essays in M. Viceconte, G. Schiano and D. Cecere (eds.), *Heroes in Dark Times. Saints and Officials Tackling Disaster (16th-17th Centuries)*, Rome, 2023.

[23] G. Calvi, *L'oro, il fuoco, le forche, la peste napoletana del 1656*, cit., p. 421.

[24] I. Fusco, "Il viceré di Napoli, conte di Castrillo, e l'epidemia di peste del 1656", in M. Rizzo, J.J. Ruiz Ibañezand G. Sabatini (eds.), *Le forze del Principe. Risorse, strumenti e limiti nella pratica del potere sovrano nei territori della Monarchia asburgica*, Murcia, 2004, pp. 164-168. See also E. Nappi, *Aspetti della società durante la peste del 1656. Dai documenti dell'Archivio storico del Banco di Napoli*, Naples, 1980, p. 14.

[25] I. Fusco, *Peste, demografia e fiscalità nel Regno di Napoli del XVII secolo*, cit., pp. 36-39.

[26] *Ivi*, p. 116.

[27] In contrast to what has been generally thought, escape was also practised by the Muslim world, traditionally considered "fatalistic" for religious reasons. See, for example, Y. Aylon, *Natural Disasters in the Ottoman Empire: Plague, Famine and other Misfortunes*,

sponse in times of epidemic, suggested by the doctors[28] themselves. As Albert Camus recalls in his book *La peste* (the plague), in epidemic years people's feeling was to be "condannati, per una colpa ignota, a un inconcepibile imprigionamento."[29] And if someone manged to accept such a feeling, "per altri invece, d'allora in poi, l'unica idea [era] quella di evadere dalla prigione."[30]

Initially, nobles and privileged people[31] escaped, but later flight was also a response of common people. It was not until October 20th, 1656, when the plague had already spread widely, that the rulers issued a *bando* (order) attempting to prohibit these dangerous movements.[32] Thus, they officially reiterated the rules that were generally adopted in such an epidemic situation, but that had been set aside in the confusion caused by the plague in the city. Therefore, they ordered that no one could move from infected towns and, more generally, from the place where they lived to a different town in the same or another province.[33] Only those who moved from a healthy town to another for commercial reasons and to supply cities and villages, if provided with bulletins of health, were allowed to go around the kingdom.[34] This confirms that restrictions and controls could not be complete as they risked starving the population.

Cambridge, 2014, p. 9. The author underlines that in the seventeenth century in the Ottoman Empire rulers stopped trying to prevent people from fleeing and accepted the flight as a normal response to disasters. On this topic, see also the works by N. Varlik, as, for example, *Plague and Contagion in the Islamic Mediterranean: New Histories of Disease in Ottoman Society*, Amsterdam, 2017. Besides, S. Speziale, *Il contagio del contagio. Circolazione di saperi e sfide bioetiche tra Africa ed Europa dalla Peste nera all'AIDS*, Reggio Calabria, 2016.

[28] See, for istance, M. Ficino Fiorentino, *Contro alla peste, insieme con Tommaso del Garbo, Mengo da Faenza, & altri autori, e ricette sopra la medesima materia*, Florence, 1576, p. 73. For more details, see again the chapter on *I medici e la peste*, in I. Fusco, *La grande epidemia. Potere e corpi sociali di fronte all'emergenza nella Napoli spagnola*, cit., pp. 45-73.

[29] A. Camus, *La peste*, Milan, 1999, p. 77 (condemned, for an unknown fault, to an inconceivable imprisonment).

[30] *Ibid.* (for others, from then on, the only idea [was] to escape from prison).

[31] For example, rich and religious people.

[32] ASN, *Regio Collaterale Consiglio, Affari diversi II*, f. 36, fasc. 58.

[33] *Ibid*.

[34] *Ibid*.

However, some restrictions were not the same for everyone: the privileged people moved more easily, imposing their presence on the places where they arrived at the risk of infecting them (as it very often happened),[35] and disregarding the prohibitions imposed by the central and local rulers. Some nobles went so far as to be explicitly authorised by the rulers in their movements, as in the striking case of the Countess of Conversano, permitted by a vice regal *bando* to move from Naples to her Apulian lands.[36]

When the disease spread to the provinces, restrictions and controls were imposed here too but were often poorly enforced. Thus, we can find cases of abuses committed by local "powers" (nobles and prelates), acts of corruption, falsified bulletins of health, unjustified movements of royal officials and soldiers, who should rather have enforced the rules.[37] These were all frequent situations during these epidemic years. Moreover, sometimes locally imposed restrictions were not strictly observed because of economic and commercial reasons. Many people, in fact, went on going outside the walls of the infected towns for work and for the annual fairs and markets.[38] These movements, sometimes even permitted, facilitated the further spread of the disease in the provinces. In some cases, it was the same Neapolitan court that did not want to block some movements of individuals for economic and fiscal reasons, despite the "plague" risk. For example, we can think of the fair in Foggia, in the

[35] Numerous testimonies of this kind are preserved in ancient sources. It is known, for example, that the provinces of Molise and Abruzzi became infected precisely because of nobles and powerful people's movements from Naples to their provincial lands (ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 206, fasc. 203).

[36] I. Fusco, *Peste, demografia e fiscalità nel Regno di Napoli del XVII secolo*, cit., p. 48.

[37] These abuses can be found throughout the entire volume (*ivi*).

[38] In L'Aquila, for example, in Abruzzo Ultra, the plague would have come from the surrounding countryside due to its inhabitants going outside the town centre to do the grape harvest, an activity from which they derived all their income (ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 230, fasc. not numbered; 25 October 1657). And in Castiglione Cosentino, in Calabria Citra, the local officials allowed the local fair to be held regularly (*ivi*, f. 207, fasc. 281; 25 November 1656), although some suspicious deaths had already occurred in the town, thus contributing to the spread of the plague in the Cosenza area (ASN, *Regio Collaterale Consiglio, Affari diversi II*, f. 36, fasc. 22; 18 August 1656).

province of Capitanata, which attracted many people from other parts of the kingdom and from foreign territories and provided the royal court with considerable income. This fair was not suspended either in 1656 or in 1657 despite the presence of the plague in Foggia.[39] And we can think of all those people from Abruzzi who used to move across the northern borders of the kingdom, in the direction of the Papal States, for work reasons.[40]

These were dangerous movements, but they were often permitted by the royal court itself. Wherever it was possible to block these movements and enforce the rules, towns and villages were saved from the plague, as in the case of the province of Terra d'Otranto, which was completely preserved thanks to the restrictions imposed and the controls put in place at provincial level.[41] Where this did not happen (and this was the norm!), the plague could easily spread.

3. The Awareness of a Danger: The Years after the 1656 Epidemic

The wide spread of the 1656 epidemic and the difficulty of controlling it led almost immediately to reflection on the mistakes made and to the need to impose the necessary restrictions and controls from the very beginning. In short, the tragic experience weighed heavily on the future memory.

Already at the end of 1656, when the epidemic had ended in Naples but was still raging in the kingdom, the fear that the plague might reappear in the capital, brought in from the infected provinces, prompted the Viceroy to establish stricter controls. Giuseppe Aurilia's words, in a letter written from Naples on December 12th to Nicolò Doria Prince of Angri and Duke of Eboli, are emblematic of the change in favour of a greater rigour.[42] In December,

[39] I. Fusco, *Peste, demografia e fiscalità nel Regno di Napoli del XVII secolo*, cit., pp. 89-90.
[40] *Ivi*, pp. 91-92.
[41] *Ivi*, pp. 94-95.
[42] ASN, *Doria d'Angri*, part II, f. 318, fasc. not numbered. Giuseppe Aurilia was the local administrator of Nicolò Doria's goods.

many feudal lords and "assaissimi popolani" (many common people) were "continuously" returning to the now healthy capital from the still infected provinces, trying to escape the plague.[43] Therefore, many of them were next to the *rastelli* outside the city walls,[44] waiting to be allowed to enter after ending their quarantine period. These entrances to the city, however, were subject to strict controls. In fact, Aurilia wrote: "Hora si va con molto rigore" (now we are acting very rigorously).[45] It was mandatory to follow a strict procedure: people who wished to enter Naples had to undergo first a control by the Neapolitan deputies of health, then a period of quarantine and finally another control.[46] And in any case, it seems that the Viceroy had ordered the deputies not to admit anyone to quarantine "senza prima saputa sua" (without having told it to him).[47]

The 1656 experience had left its mark on the rulers and continued to influence the policies of the following years. It must be said, however, that the fear of the plague mainly conditioned the relationships with the Levant, from which the disease was thought to come.[48] In fact, these movements were more strictly controlled, while in many other cases (as it will be seen in the following examples) much uncertainty continued to exist, and the rulers' decisions were not always clear. Also, because restricting movements and imposing quarantine periods were the only effective measures able to stop an epidemic. However, these measures were difficult to be adopted in a strict manner, and above all they were a real obstacle to the eco-

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[43] ASN, *Doria d'Angri*, part II, f. 318, fasc. not numbered.

[44] The *rastelli* were barriers, controlled by guards, to avoid anyone entering the town uncontrolled, bringing the plague with him.

[45] ASN, *Doria d'Angri*, part II, f. 318, fasc. not numbered.

[46] *Ibid*.

[47] *Ibid*.

[48] A more general overview of relations with the Levant can be found, in addition to the works already mentioned in a previous note, in D. Panzac, *La Peste dans l'Empire Ottoman, 1700-1850*, Leuven, 1985; S. Speziale, *Oltre la peste. Sanità, popolazione e società in Tunisia e nel Maghreb (XVIII-XX secolo)*, Cosenza, 1997; N.Varlık, "'Oriental Plague' or EpidemiologicalOrientalism? Revisiting the Plague Episteme of the Early Modern Mediterranean", in N. Varlik, *Plague and Contagion in the Islamic Mediterranean: New Histories of Disease in Ottoman Society*, cit., pp. 57-88.

nomic and commercial life of the kingdom's population.

The rulers' uncertain choices did not fail to create confusion, especially at the local level, where the control of movements, especially of the maritime ones, was more difficult. Sometimes the officials operating locally had different views on health matters, which moreover conflicted with the opinions of the rulers in the capital. These contrasts complicated the management of local government in health matters.

An example is what happened in Calabria at the end of 1686. Papal galleys had arrived at San Giovanni, near Reggio, and the question arose as to whether to grant them the "free practice" (free passage).[49] The governor of Reggio and the local deputies of health had decided not to grant it to them: the galleys had to be refuelled at a distance under strict surveillance. Having left the kingdom, the ships had then been granted practice in Messina after a few days of quarantine.[50]

Considering what had happened, Marco Garofalo, marquis of Rocca, provincial *preside*, observed that the royal court had lost considerable income as a result.[51] In fact, the crew of the galleys, unable to go ashore, did not purchase the necessary food.[52] Therefore, Garofalo suggested to the Neapolitan authorities that, to obtain the "free practice", it was necessary only a sworn written attestation by the captain stating that the vessels did not come from infected places and that the crew was healthy.[53] This attestation was then to be verified through an on-board visit by doctors.[54] Above all, Garofalo demanded the local deputies of health to be provided with clear instructions on the rules to be observed, "acciò non resti a loro arbi-

[49] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 641, fasc. not numbered (Reggio, 24 September 1686).
[50] *Ibid.*
[51] *Ibid.* The preside was the main royal official in the province, heading the local court of the Regia Udienza Provinciale.
[52] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 641, fasc. not numbered.
[53] *Ibid*.
[54] *Ibid*.

trio per fine d'interesse o d'altra passione il disponere la prattica quando si deve o no per l'inconvenienti che ne possono seguire."[55]

This demand was well-founded, as it reflected the confusion in health matters that reigned in the province. In fact, the previous year, in a similar case the measures taken had been completely different. The local officials of Reggio had granted the practice to the same galleys, while Messina had denied it.[56]

However, Naples did not help to dispel doubts. In fact, the Neapolitan deputation of health ordered "[di]regolarsi secondo le congiunture (…), non potendosi dar regola certa in questa materia fuorché delli legni che procedono dal levante sottoposto al turco»", which were always obliged to make the quarantine.[57] This ended up legitimising a sort of "arbitrariness" by the local deputies. On the contrary, there was a greater certainty in the case of vessels from the Ottoman-Turkish world, which had always been considered the "enemy", and in the case of the ships that had traded with the Turks. Rulers were certain, in fact, that epidemics came from the Levant.

This meant blocking – for sanitary reasons – even vessels coming from other Italian territories that had trade relations with the Turks. Not least Venice, which was restricted in its active Adriatic trade, that also affected the Apulian area of the Kingdom of Naples. In fact, in August 1690, news of the plague spreading in Dalmatia prompted the kingdom to impose restrictive rules for all the vessels coming from the other side of the Adriatic, including the Venetian armada, as well as for all the vessels arriving from the Venetian domains in the East and from Ragusa.[58] This decision had provoked protests from Venetian rulers, who emphasised Venice's great attention to

[55] *Ibid*. (in order that deciding when to grant the practice is not left to their discretion, for the sake of interest or other passion, to avoid inconveniences that may follow).
[56] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 641, fasc. not numbered.
[57] *Ivi*, fasc. not numbered (Naples, 14 October 1686) (to decide according to the circumstances (...), as no certain rule can be given in this matter except for the ships coming from the Levant subjected to the Turkish government).
[58] Today, Dubrovnik. ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 776, fasc. not numbered (letter from Venice, without a date).

health problems.[59] Therefore, Venice asked for its ships to be allowed to sail freely and that the Manfredonia castellan[60] granted them, as always, the right to freely load salt stored in the Apulian salt pans without first having to wait for authorisation from Naples.[61] After all, the Venetian rulers continued, generally vessels laden with goods used to arrive in Manfredonia from Venice and Chiozza, a town in the lagoon a few miles from Venice, and local officials demanded to forbid them from disembarking without an express order from Naples.[62] And this claim caused many damages to trades.[63]

Naples, however, remained adamant about its decisions. The capital's deputation of health reiterated, in fact, that it was advisable to continue observing the precautions that had been taken up to then, considering that "vanno crescendo l'avisi con l'avanzamento del contaggio," "trattandosi di cautela che sempre è poca a sì importante materia."[64] In short, rigour was never too much when dealing with vessels from the East. And the subsequent events ended up proving the capital's rulers were right. In fact, only a few months later an epidemic broke out on the Adriatic coast of the kingdom, in Conversano, probably coming from the other side of the Adriatic.

4. A New Epidemic: The Conversano Plague in 1690-1692

The plague in Apulia in the 1690s, known as the Conversano plague from the name of the first place to be hit, affected only a few towns in a restricted Apulian area: Bari, Bitonto, Castellana, Fasano, Modugno, Mola, Monopoli, Palo, Polignano.[65] It probably broke out

[59] *Ibid*.
[60] He was the official which had in charge the castle in Manfredonia, in Apulia.
[61] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 776, fasc. not numbered.
[62] *Ibid*.
[63] *Ibid*.
[64] *Ivi*, fasc. not numbered (letter by the deputation of health; Naples, 20 August 1690) (news are increasing with the spreading of the contagion, since caution is always little in such important matters).
[65] I. Fusco, "Il governo "dispotico" dell'emergenza. Don Marco Garofalo e la peste pugliese di fine Seicento", in *Società e Storia*, 2019, n. 163, p. 26.

around the end of September and the beginning of October 1690 and lasted about a year and a half.[66] The damage, however, was contained, also thanks to the limited geographical spread of the epidemic.

The better control of the disease depended on several factors, among which the memory of the epidemic broken out only thirty years earlier certainly had an influence. It is no coincidence that, at the beginning of his volume, Filippo de Arrieta, a local official and eyewitness to the epidemic, did not fail to recall "le infauste memorie" (the inauspicious memories) e "le cicatrici" (the scars) inflicted on Apulia by the 1656 plague.[67] A warning to be on your guard!

Memory is, therefore, a central key to understand this new epidemic at the end of the century. In 1690, compared to 1656, not much had changed: the rules to be observed were still the same, but they were applied more strictly, also thanks to what had been done in 1656. Quarantines and isolations were imposed almost everywhere, and above all the infected area was completely isolated, enclosed in a double sanitary cordon.[68] This prevented the plague from spreading in other areas of the kingdom.

Thus, the real novelty lay above all in the different government of the epidemic. Thanks to the 1656 experience, in 1690 Naples was

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[66] *Ivi*, pp. 26-27. On this epidemic, see, in chronological order, F. De Arrieta, *Ragguaglio historico del contaggio occorso nella provincia di Bari negli anni 1690, 1691, e 1692*, Naples, 1694; C. Petraccone, "La difesa contro la peste: prevenzione e controllo dell'epidemia nelle pestilenze di Terra di Bari (1690-1692) e Noja (1815-1816)", in *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, 1977, year XVI, pp. 253-280; V. L'Abbate, *La peste in Terra di Bari. 1690-92. Cronaca e documenti*, Fasano di Brindisi, 1992; I. Ascione, "Una peste politica? L'epidemia di Conversano del 1691", in *Gli archivi per la storia della scienza e della tecnica*, Atti del convegno internazionale, Desenzano del Garda, 4-8 June 1991, Rome, 1995, vol. II, pp. 749-761; L. De Rosa, "La peste del 1690-91 in Puglia", in I. D'Ancona and M. Spedicato (eds.), *Nei giardini del passato. Studi in memoria di Michele Paone*, Lecce, 2011, pp. 299-375; I. Fusco, "The importance of prevention and institutions. Governing the emergency in the 1690-92 plague epidemic in the Kingdom of Naples", in *Annales de Démographie Historique*, 2017, 2, pp. 95-123.

[67] F. De Arrieta, *Ragguaglio historico del contaggio occorso nella provincia di Bari negli anni 1690, 1691, e 1692*, cit., p. not numbered.

[68] I. Fusco,"The importance of prevention and institutions. Governing the emergency in the 1690-92 plague epidemic in the Kingdom of Naples", cit., pp. 99-100.

aware that it could not manage the emergency from afar and therefore decided to delegate its control powers to those who were able to operate physically in the infected area. In short, in 1690 compared to 1656, the rules to be applied were the same (as just said!), but the strategies changed: it was necessary to delegate extensive powers at the local level to achieve a strict compliance of rules and measures. And this is what was done.

In the beginning, Naples took the situation into its own hands and sent some officials to the province to get information on what was happening. However, once they had ascertained the plague was in the province, the Neapolitan rulers began to delegate. They granted broad delegation to the barons, inviting them" [a] tornare nei loro feudi per prendersi cura dei loro vassalli."[69] They asked the local clergy to deal not only with the traditional religious duties, but also with the "secular" tasks of controlling the infected towns,[70] which had created many conflicts in the previous 1656 epidemic.[71] They involved the local officials and, among them, demanded a major commitment from the provincial *preside*, don Marco Garofalo. Naples granted an almost absolute delegation of power to the *preside*, who, as an emanation of the central power, was called upon to act locally in the name of the capital in an almost absolute autonomy and with truly exceptional powers. Garofalo had enormous powers

[69] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 786, fasc. not numbered (1 January1691) (to return to their feuds to take care of their vassals).
[70] For example, in the healthy Gallipoli (ASN, *Supremo Magistrato di Salute*, b. 296, f. 25r/v; Naples, 19 July 1691), and in the infected Monopoli (ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 790, f. not numbered; Monopoli, 7 February 1691). Another example. The Roman college of the Jesuits paid many men to guard the passes in order to prevent the plague from spreading more (*ivi*, f. 805, fasc. not numbered; 14 July 1691).
[71] For example, in Sulmona, in Abruzzo Citra, where in 1656 the clergy participated in the guarding of the gates alongside the ordinary guards. Their participation was well accepted by the local officials of the town (ASN, *Delegazione della Real Giurisdizione*, f. 221, fasc. not numbered; 11 November 1656), who were, however, reprimanded by the Neapolitan court of the Regio Collaterale Consiglio, who ordered that religious people had to deal only with spiritual matters (ASN, *Regio Collaterale Consiglio, Notamenti*, vol. 60, f. 219r; 20 November 1656). The Collaterale was one of the Neapolitan courts that supported the Viceroy in his governmental duties.

even over the barons and the "local powers,"[72] and sometimes he was even allowed to choose the royal officials who operated locally.[73] He took strict measures. Thanks to the extraordinary powers granted to him, he ensured strict observance of isolation and quarantines and managed to control the epidemic.

In conclusion, in 1690, compared to 1656, the government of the emergency was not managed by the capital's rulers, but was handled locally on behalf of the capital, which, from afar, fully supported the government action at the local level.[74] As the Neapolitan Deputation of Health wrote, every decision had to be taken only after listening to the opinion of Garofalo,[75] the only one who could decide as he was present in the contagious area.

5. After the 1690 Epidemic: Fears, Changes, Resistance

After the 1690 epidemic, fear remained and contributed to a stronger contrast between health and economic-commercial needs. Although the disease had been well controlled, the epidemic experience had left its mark on the population, which sometimes demanded greater rigour. We have numerous examples of this in ancient records. In the autumn of 1692, the people in Taranto rebelled against the local deputies of health, who had allowed the crew of the papal galleys to disembark "senza nessuna cautela" (without any caution), to stock up on water and to trade with some inhabitants.[76] On this occasion, people's cries had been so strong that the local rulers had been forced to isolate the crew members in a tower.[77]

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[72] I. Fusco, "Il governo "dispotico" dell'emergenza. Don Marco Garofalo e la peste pugliese di fine Seicento", cit., p. 38.
[73] *Ivi*, pp. 38-39.
[74] *Ivi*, p. 40.
[75] Ead., "The importance of prevention and institutions. Governing the emergency in the 1690-92 plague epidemic in the Kingdom of Naples", cit., pp. 107-108.
[76] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 849, fasc. not numbered (letter by don Feliz de Lanzina y Ulloa; Naples, 7 November 1692).
[77] On this event, which was communicated to Naples in an anonymous letter, the pre-

However, there were also commercial needs to be considered. In the same years, the deputies of health and the local officials in Gallipoli were accused of giving "free practice" to a Maltese vessel without informing the Neapolitan rulers and not even the *preside*.[78] The rules in force established that it was forbidden to grant practice to tall ships with square sails coming from Italian territories, with healthy passports and without goods, without first informing the *preside* and awaiting his instructions.[79] If the vessels came from other places, and from the Levant, their passports had to be sent to the Superintendent General of Health in Naples.[80] However, the deputies of Gallipoli protested, denying that the vessel had arrived in their port.[81] In addition, they complained about the orders issued by the *preside*, who insisted on forcing them to send to Naples the passports of all boats and not only of those boats coming from the East.[82] In the opinion of the deputies of Gallipoli, these decisions would affect trade: so, according to the regulations in force, these restrictions should be applied only to ships coming from the Levant and not to the ones arriving from other healthy, Italian and non-Italian, territories with clean passports.[83] It seems, however, that the local officials of Gallipoli, an active town in the Adriatic trades, had arrogated to themselves a certain freedom in granting "free practice", perhaps also to facilitate trades. To the point of provoking the protests of the general superintendent of health of the kingdom.[84]

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side was asked to inquire (ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 849, fasc. not numbered).

[78] *Ivi*, f. 852, fasc. not numbered (letter by don Feliz de Lanzina y Ulloa; Naples, 4 December 1692).

[79] *Ibid.*

[80] *Ivi*, fasc. not numbered (letter from Gallipoli; 11 November 1692).

[81] *Ibid*.

[82] *Ibid*.

[83] *Ibid*.

[84] In fact, he complained that the officials in Gallipoli were behaving as they were the superintendents, granting the "free practice" to boats without reporting it neither to him nor the local preside. And this was a serious matter considering that not even the deputation of health in Naples granted the practice without first reporting it to the superintendent. This was – the superintendent concluded – "un abuso" (an abuse) that had been introduced a long time ago (ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 852,

Trade was important for some trading towns, although the plague danger was always present on the ships sailing the Mediterranean. However, as we have already noted, in the contemporaries' opinion, the greatest danger came mainly from the Levant. It is no coincidence that even in the post-epidemic years, ships coming from the East continued to be subject to greater restrictions. Moreover, landings on the Adriatic coast were continuous, also due to the proximity of the two opposing coastlines. Apulia and the Abruzzi were territories far from the capital, with difficult communication routes and, instead, easy landings; therefore, they were territories more difficult to be controlled, as the Conversano epidemic had well demonstrated. It was precisely the experience of Conversano that had taught the need to delegate sanitary control to the local level to achieve better results. The Conversano plague had been handled locally by Garofalo, and it was Garofalo who suggested that Naples should delegate further even in non-emergency times.

In June 1696, news of plague arrived from the other side of the Adriatic.[85] Therefore, Naples ordered the *preside* Garofalo to prevent uncontrolled landings in Abruzzo and to order the local deputies of health to grant landing permits only to the boats coming from permitted places, checking their health certificates with caution and then sending them to Naples.[86] And the *preside* obeyed.[87] However, Garofalo did not believe in the efficacy of these measures: "le diligenze espressate non sono di sicurezza alcuna (…), restando dopoi la puntuale esecuzione in alcuni luoghi ad arbitrio di persone di

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fasc. not numbered; letter by don Feliz de Lanzina y Ulloa; Naples, 4 December 1692).

[85] It was rumoured that in Alexandria, Smyrna, Negroponte, Romelia and in other places on the other side of the Adriatic Sea "ha preso gran forza il mal contaggioso"(the contagious disease is spreading widely). This was confirmed by what had happened to a Dubrovnik vessel, which had arrived in Corfu from Alexandria. On the vessel, in fact, part of the crew had died and another part had become infected, so much so that it had been driven out of Corfu without being admitted to its port. See ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 967, fasc. not numbered (letter by Marco Garofalo; Chieti, 18 June 1696).

[86] *Ibid*.

[87] *Ibid*.

corta intelligenza e di nessuna obligazione."[88] It was "un miracolo evidente" (an obvious miracle) if the plague did not hit the kingdom, also considering the frequent uncontrolled trades between the two coasts.[89] The danger, Garofalo added, depended not only on the proximity between the two Adriatic coastlines and the frequency of traffic,[90] but also on another factor, which was uncontrollable. And specifically: on the opposite side of the Adriatic, the owners of goods were more inclined to export them in times of epidemics, to save them from the fire and the other necessary purification operations.[91] Furthermore, to get rid of them, they sold them cheaply or these goods were easily subject to theft; and in both cases, these infected goods could easily reach the coasts of the Neapolitan kingdom.[92] As in the recent case of Conversano, the *preside* recalled, the danger was real, especially if these landings occurred in lands with few inhabitants.[93] In fact, while awaiting an answer from Naples regarding the passports of the boats, according to the rules in force, "quale sicurezza si terrebbe, restando l'effetto della custodia alla discrezzione di pochi cittadini, che senza intelligenza e senza obligazione per dieci carlini farebbono sbarcare non che le robbe appestate, la peste istessa?"[94] And more so if the sailors were inhabitants of the landing places.[95] Therefore, with these words, Garofalo reiterated his expertise on the matter: "le marine di questo regno l'ho caminate quasi tutte e so quanto ne i luoghi d'esse si vive con trascuraggine."[96] And

[88] *Ibid*. (the measures indicated are of no safety (...), afterwards remaining, in some places, the punctual execution of them at the whim of people with no intelligence and no sense of duty).
[89] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 967, fasc. not numbered.
[90] *Ibid*.
[91] *Ibid*.
[92] *Ibid*.
[93] *Ibid*.
[94] *Ibid*. (what security could we have, leaving the custody task to the discretion of a few citizens, who without intelligence and without seriousness for ten carlins (few money) would land not only the plague-stricken goods, but also the plague itself?).
[95] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 967, fasc. not numbered.
[96] *Ibid*. (I have walked along almost all the places of this kingdom next to the sea and I know how carelessly people live in them).

he suggested "per maggior sicurezza" (for greater safety) that special places were set up in the provinces, where boats could spend their quarantine time while waiting for a reply from Naples.[97] After all, this was what was done also in other "dominij" (foreign countries), where not all the places were "luochi di quarantena" (quarantine places), but only the ones "dove maggiormente par che si possano pratticare le dovute diligenze."[98]

However, Naples did not support his proposal. In fact, the deputies of health, and according with them the superintendent don Feliz de Lanzina y Ulloa, reiterated that "sempre è stato stimato impossibile il potersi pratticare simili cautele, mentre le robbe soggette a spurga non possono ventilarsi e spurgarsi in altro luogo del regno che nelli spurgatori di questa città [di Napoli], e le persone sempre è stato stimato cautele e meno trapazzo il farli consumare la quarantena nelli luoghi dove approdano (…), mentre obbligando le persone a maggior spesa facilmente s'esponeriano far contrabbanno e pregiudicare alla pubblica salute."[99] It was only necessary, Neapolitan rulers added, that "li ministri faccino osservare gli ordini che se li danno."[100]

Orders that, however, were often not observed. Nevertheless, Naples did not intend to completely delegate its control tasks in non-emergency times in the kingdom. It had been already reiterated the year before, in 1695, regarding certain claims of the governor of the Apulian Brindisi, who continued to disobey orders, claiming to

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[97] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 967, fasc. not numbered.
[98] *Ibid*. (where it seems most likely that due diligence can be practised).
[99] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 967, fasc. not numbered (answer by the deputies of health, approved by don Feliz de Lanzina y Ulloa; Naples, 6 July 1696) (it has always been considered impossible to take these precautions, while the goods to be purified cannot be aired and purified in any other place in the kingdom except in the places designated for purification in this city [of Naples], and it has always been considered more precautionary and less scrambled to make people pass the quarantine period in the places where they land (...), while forcing people to spend more money could easily expose them to smuggling and compromise the public health).
[100] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 967, fasc. not numbered (the officials make people observe the orders given).

oversee sanitary matters.[101] Sanitary matters remained, sure, the responsibility of the deputies of health chosen in the towns, but the local deputations were directly subject not to the local governors, but only to the Viceroy or his delegate.[102] Don Feliz de Lanzina y Ulloa strongly affirmed it: "tutte le deputazioni di sanità del regno stanno direttamente a noi soggette."[103] It followed that all the rules issued by the Neapolitan deputation of health were addressed to the local deputies of health and not to the governors, while the governors were expressly forbidden from meddling in public health matters without a Neapolitan deputation's written order.[104]

In short, compared to 1656, the plague of 1690 had legitimised a decentralisation of tasks in health issues, allowing Garofalo to manage the epidemic emergency in the name of the capital. Nevertheless, once the epidemic was over, Naples reaffirmed its central role in health matters. Despite the objective difficulties and the proposals made by valuable and competent men, such as the *preside* Garofalo, to decentralise some activities to ensure a better local control, Naples did not give up its control of health in the provinces. However, this choice left much uncertainty and allowed many abuses at the local level. An uncertainty, perhaps, in some ways necessary, as it could implicitly legitimise, albeit with some risk,[105] Southern trade.

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[101] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 938, fasc. not numbered.
[102] *Ibid*.
[103] *Ibid*. (all the deputations of health in the kingdom are directly subject to us).
[104] ASN, *Segreteria dei viceré, Viglietti originali*, f. 938, fasc. not numbered.
[105] In fact, the plague would hit the Apulian coast again in 1815: see A. Tanturri, *"Il soffio avvelenato del contagio". La peste di Noja del 1815-16*, Milan, 2018. About this epidemic, see also C. Della Valle, *Ragguaglio istorico della peste sviluppata in Noja nell'anno 1815*, Naples, 1816; V. Morea, *Storia della peste di Noja*, Naples, 1817. Besides, see also A. Tanturri, "Measures to Combat the Plague in Southern Italy in the Early Nineteenth Century", in *Journal of the Southern Association for the History of Medicine and Science*, 2023, vol. 5 (n. 1), pp. 29-43.