

# TRANSHUMANCE IN SOUTHERN ITALY (FIFTEENTH-SIXTEENTH CENTURIES): THE MOBILITY PERSPECTIVE

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This paper is an overview of sheep transhumance in southern Italy from the Aragonese reform of the 1440s to the eve of a second wave of reforms in the 1540s and 1550s. The analysis focuses on the concept of mobility, which proves to be a significant indicator of increasing interdependence between the factors involved in this complex economic activity (agriculturists, pastoralists, the state, the merchants, the market and local communities), leading to change in settlement patterns, production arrangements, merchant networks, social identities, economic and political thought. The role of the state institution of the sheep custom house in coordinating the seasonal movement of sheep, graziers, officials and merchants, and in negotiating the multiple, overlapping claims of landlords, towns, the state itself and pastoralists on the same lands was pivotal in the long-term survival of this economic sector.

**Keywords:** Transhumance, mobility, Southern Italy, pastoral products, markets.

## INTRODUCTION

A major theme in the *Past and Present* 2018 special issue on the Global Middle Ages is mobility, as opposed to sedentariness or endemism. Together with the concepts of interaction, integration, permeable borders, networks and connectivity, mobility belongs to the toolbox of global history. Although many of these elements are not new, they now converge in the global paradigm. Mobility refocuses historical research from the static, unchanging, ‘immobile history’ of the Annales school, as exemplified in Fernand Braudel’s *Mediterranean*, to the proposition that history is movement and movement is omnipresent, which Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell emphatically put forward in their own study of the Mediterranean. The question arises whether there is a difference between movement and mobility, or whether any movement matters in transforming historical societies. With regard to connectivity, Lynn Hunt stresses that simple contacts were not enough to intensify the interdependence between the local, the regional and the global. By analogy, simple movement is not sufficient to ascertain mobility and, by extension, increasing mutual dependence, which is the key concept in the case both of connectivity and of mobility.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Catherine Holmes and Naomi Standen, “Introduction: Towards a Global Middle Ages,” in *The Global Middle Ages*, ed. Holmes and Standen, *Past and Present*, 238, Supplement 13, November 2018,

A historiographical shift is underway in recent years with regard to the contrasting dipole of mobility and sedentariness, and a specific example of mobility in contrast to permanence is mobile pastoralism. In historical societies this type of husbandry involved organized, seasonal, recurring movements. It can be defined as ‘rural mobility’, and it aimed at the optimal use of the natural and human resources in a region. Due to the diversity of the landscape, perpetual population movements, we are told now, were unavoidable in the Mediterranean, for the redistribution of natural and human resources and for the complementary relationship between neighbouring or more distant regions (although obviously this type of mobility was not unknown in pre-modern northern Europe).<sup>2</sup>

Fernand Braudel described mobility in the Mediterranean as follows:

This stream [of mountain peasants] submerged lower Languedoc... The procession re-formed every year, almost every day, and was made up of landless peasants, unemployed artisans, casual agricultural labourers down for the harvest, the grape reaping, or threshing, outcasts of society, beggars and beggar women, travelling preachers, gyrovagues – vagabonds – street musicians, and shepherds with their flocks. Famine on the mountain was the principal motive of this constant descent.<sup>3</sup>

The mobile country people of late medieval Languedoc in Braudel’s description could not share in the security of family and property, of a social network, of constant employment; they moved close to or at the margin of settled society. According to Horden and Purcell (and twenty years earlier according to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari), the concept of permanence was acknowledged as a social virtue in late antiquity, a period of turmoil and insecurity, when a clear distinction was made between permanently established communities and reprehensible, dangerous, mobile wanderers. This contrast persisted as a narrative theme throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern period. Today it is pointed out that, although geographical mobility was never an easy option, it was the enduring

p. 1–44; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, “L’histoire immobile,” *Annales: Sociétés, Économies, Civilisations* 29, 1974, p. 673–92; Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l’époque de Philippe II*, Paris: A. Colin, 2, 1979, p. 516; Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, chapters V, IX; Lynn Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era*, New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2014, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Hunt, *Writing History in the Global Era*, p. 44–45, 62–72, 77; Giovanni Levi, “Frail Frontiers?” in *Global History and Microhistory*, ed. John-Paul A. Ghobrial, *Past and Present* 242, Supplement 14, November 2019, p. 37–49; James Belich, John Darwin, and Chris Wickham, “Introduction: The Prospect of Global History,” in *The Prospect of Global History*, ed. Belich, Darwin, and Wickham, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 3–20; Claudia Moatti and Wolfgang Kaiser, “Introduction,” in *Le monde de l’itinérance en Méditerranée à l’époque moderne*, ed. Claudia Moatti, Wolfgang Kaiser, and Christophe Pébarthe. Pessac: Ausonius, 2009, p. 12. Naomi Standen and Monica White, “Structural Mobilities in the Global Middle Ages,” in *The Global Middle Ages*, p. 158–89; Biagio Salvemini, “Migrants saisonniers et pouvoirs territoriaux: les Pouilles à l’époque moderne,” in *Le monde de l’itinérance*, p. 162–63.

<sup>3</sup> Braudel, *La Méditerranée*, 1:42; Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, p. 383.

reality in pre-modern societies (and still is today). But although the roamers and outcasts whom Braudel poetically described were part of the flow, they often followed the route of coherent socio-professional groups engaged in strictly organized and relatively well-controlled movements.<sup>4</sup>

In the past, therefore, scholars tended to consider seasonal movements as the result of marginalization, of the removal from the body of society of elements that occasionally penetrated rural communities but were expelled again when their usefulness came to an end. Others classified movements in the rural world alongside the numerous palindromic motions of individuals or groups that abounded on the fringes of an otherwise perfectly stable rural world, adopting Marc Bloch's classic account.<sup>5</sup> With the new emphasis on the importance of mobility, the pulsating recurrent movements between fixed points first highlighted by Bloch took on new meaning. It is now suggested that society could only survive through movement, particularly in the Mediterranean of fragmented micro-ecologies and landscapes. These movements, which we find not only in the rural world but also in coastal trade and in deviating forms of economic activity such as piracy, allowed for a multitude of connections, some of which eventually became springboards for an individual or group to move out of the narrow confines of their physical and social space.<sup>6</sup>

This essay focuses on pastoral mobility in southern Italy, in particular in the regions of Abruzzo and Puglia, in the fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries, where transhumant husbandry between spring (mountain) and winter (lowland) pastures flourished. Alongside transhumance, sedentary pastoralism was also highly developed and entailed mobility. Livestock farming was closely associated with extensive cereal cultivation and other forms of agricultural production (which also presupposed mobility, in the form of migrating agrarian wage labourers), as well as with the periodic movement of producers and merchants within a network of regional periodic markets. We are presented with a variety of mobility patterns, all seasonal in nature insofar as they were linked to the periodicity of the agricultural and pastoral calendar; but the persistence of this complex system of mutual dependence throughout the pre-modern period vindicates the lasting appeal of the *Annales*' vision of history, and the lure of immobility, if not in the spatial, certainly in the temporal dimension.

<sup>4</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux: capitalisme et schizophrénie* 2, Paris, Minuit, 1980, p. 34; Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, p. 383–85; Francesco Violante, "Agricoltura e allevamento transumante nella Puglia medievale: osservazioni sul governo della mobilità rurale," *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome, Antiquité* 128, no 2, September 2016, p. 330–34.

<sup>5</sup> Marc Bloch, *La société féodale*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Paris: Albin Michel, 1973, p. 70.

<sup>6</sup> Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, p. 377–80; Brent D. Shaw, *Bringing in the Sheaves: Economy and Metaphor in the Roman World*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013, p. 33 but also Salvemini, "Migrants saisonniers," p. 162–64, with reservations on this issue.

## HORIZONTAL TRANSHUMANCE

Although mountainous and lowland areas were complementary and interdependent, the relationship between stationary farmers and itinerant pastoralists was traditionally enveloped in strong stereotypes: farmers were more civilized, pastoralists were the backward alien.<sup>7</sup> The image of the lawless, uncouth shepherd pervades throughout time, the complaints of the farmers of Puglia against the encroachments and predations afflicted by the graziers' flocks in the 1470s and 1480s, only a few decades after the institutionalization of transhumance, being a pertinent example.<sup>8</sup> The rapid demographic recovery after the late medieval crisis helped consolidate these stereotypes. Italy almost tripled its population between the late fifteenth and the early nineteenth century. Increasing demand for food urged towards an expansion of the lands reserved for arable farming (grain fields had a higher caloric output per unit than lands devoted to pastoral farming) to the detriment of lands reserved for minor crops and livestock farming. This exacerbated the competition between farmers and shepherds, with the producers of the good in higher demand, grain, voicing their complaints loudly. In southern Italy, the first attempt to strike a compromise between baronial agricultural interests and pastoral concerns by redefining land usage in Capitanata dates in the 1480s, while graziers participating in transhumance organized themselves in a collective entity, the *Generalità*, which became a permanent interlocutor of the monarchy. The state took measures to avoid famine crises by securing a steady supply of bread at affordable prices for the urban poor, while at the same time protecting the transhumant industry.<sup>9</sup>

All this was perceived as a vicious circle caused to continue mainly by the persistence of traditional forms of husbandry. The criticism of political economists and agronomists of the Enlightenment targeted particularly transhumant forms of pastoralism and its co-existence with arable farming. As it became habitual to measure the economic success of a country by comparing it to the achievements of other countries, mainly in northern Europe but also, as far as Italy was concerned, in the Italian region of Lombardy (where transhumance was limited), it was believed that the vicious circle of grain farming could be broken only if livestock farming became sedentary and fodder crops were integrated in the rotation system.

<sup>7</sup> Moatti and Kaiser, "Introduction," p. 18–19 Standen and White, "Structural Mobilities," p. 158–59.

<sup>8</sup> Francesco Nicola De Dominicis, *Lo stato politico ed economico della dogana della mena delle pecore di Puglia*. Naples: V. Flauto, 1781, 1, p. 76–83 (graziers' petitions to the king, 1470, 1480); Pasquale di Cicco, *Documenti inediti sulla Dogana delle pecore di Puglia nel periodo aragonese*, Bari: Società di Storia Patria per la Puglia, 1989, p. 75–83 (instructions to the doganiere, 1549, but incorporating older documents); Potito D'Arcangelo, "Le scritture della Dogana della Mena delle Pecore di Foggia (metà del XV secolo – metà del XVI secolo)", *Nuova Rivista Storica* 101, no. 2, May 2017, p. 570–71, 576–77; the instructions of 1549 also in De Dominicis, *Lo stato*, 1, p. 120–36).

<sup>9</sup> Above, note 8; efforts to redefine land usage in the 1480s, Nicola Gaetano Ageta, *Annotationes pro regio aerario ad supremi Regiae Camerae Summariae senatus regni Neapolis decisiones per luculentos tractatus, et quaestiones ad rem fiscalem attinentes*, Naples: Ex officina typographica Jacobi Raillard, 4, 1692, p. 34; D'Arcangelo, "Le scritture," p. 578–79.

Eighteenth-century intellectuals viewed the typically Mediterranean model of transhumant sheep coexisting with arable farming on the same lands, that prevailed in the Maremma of Tuscany, in Lazio and, in its most institutionalized version, in mainland southern Italy, as an example of backwardness, and in doing so they founded a tradition of interpreting economic change in Italy, which still impresses contemporary scholars. In an attempt to escape the pathologies of the Old Regime, philosophers and political economists advocated the ideal of a social contract, of secure property rights, free trade, the abolition of state protectionism and monopolies; from their vantage point, the southern Italian arable-pastoral model and all that it entailed (intervention in the trade of foodstuffs by the state, aiming at securing the provisioning of the urban poor – known as *Annona* – and overlapping, common rights which entailed the use, by different claimants, of the same natural resource – land – both as arable and as seasonal pasture) seemed to lack rationality, to distort the market, and to limit individual rights, which now took precedence over more “medieval” concepts such as multi-layered land possession, individual privileges and immunities, but also social harmony and the notion of common lands or commons. Thanks to their criticism, Enlightenment intellectuals helped the western world break away from many obsolete social and economic institutions of the past, and enter the modern and contemporary era. With the distance of time, however, many specialists of the medieval and early modern period now question the interpretative scope of a historical narrative based on the retrospective reconstruction of a single path to development simply because it was the one that eventually prevailed. The past presents an extraordinary variety of social, economic, political and institutional forms that were sophisticated, rational and viable in a specific historical context; many lost their effectiveness and were abandoned as the context changed, but they are still worthy of being studied in their own merit.<sup>10</sup> In southern Italy, the areas specialized in the particular form of

<sup>10</sup> Saverio Russo and Biagio Salvemini, *Ragion pastorale, ragion di stato: spazi dell'allevamento e spazi del potere nell'Italia di età moderna*, Rome: Viella, 2007, p. 7–12, 55, 91–96; Eleni Sakellariou, “Regional Trade and Economic Agents in the Kingdom of Naples (fifteenth century),” in *Comparing the Two Italies: Civic Tradition, Trade Networks, Family Relationships between Italy of Communes and Kingdom of Sicily*, ed. Patrizia Mainoni and Nicola Lorenzo Barile, Turnhout: Brepols, 2020, p. 146–48. Of interest the criticism of Enlightenment author Giuseppe Maria Galanti, *Nuova descrizione storica e geografica delle Sicilie*, vol. 2, Naples: Gabinetto Letterario, 1788, p. 289–313, stressing the importance of secure property rights and freedom of economic initiative. Recent literature on the commons: Tine de Moor et al., “Ruling the Commons: Introducing a new methodology for the analysis of historical commons,” *International Journal of the Commons* 10, no 2, October 2016, p. 529–88, next to the classic Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action*, Cambridge: CUP, 1990; on commons in Italy, *La gestione delle risorse collettive. Italia settentrionale, secoli XII–XVIII*, ed. Riccardo Rao and Guido Alfani, Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2011; Riccardo Rao and Igor Santos Salazar, “Risorse di pubblico uso e beni comuni nell'Italia settentrionale: Lombardia, 569–1100,” *Studia Historica. Historia Medieval* 37, n° 1, June 2019, p. 29–51; R. Rao, “I beni comuni e la medievistica italiana: un itinerario storiografico,” *Archivio Veneto* 154, n° 26, 2023, p. 23–36; Vittorio Tigrino, “Risorse collettive e comunità locali: un approccio storico,” *Economia e società regionale* 33, n° 3, 2015, p. 23–44; Potito D’Arcangelo, *La Capitanata urbana tra Quattro e Cinquecento*, Naples: Società Napoletana di Storia Patria, 2017, p. 293–301.

horizontal, long-distance transhumance, in which roaming livestock (mainly sheep, but also goats and cattle in smaller numbers) travelled hundreds of kilometres to and from summer pastures, were the Abruzzo mountains, home to the livestock owners, and the winter pastures on the suitable for dry farming Tavoliere plain in Capitanata, one of the three provinces of Puglia.<sup>11</sup> Although the new principles of ownership were introduced in the agro-pastoral world of Capitanata in 1789, traditional forms of land possession and use died hard and arguably what tipped the balance against maintaining large sheep populations in Puglia (and in Europe) was not the success of the early nineteenth-century reforms but emergent competition from Oceania.<sup>12</sup>

### DEMOGRAPHY

In late medieval Capitanata, three factors played a role in the intensification of interdependence between cereal farming and transhumant sheep grazing. The first was the demographic factor; the other two were the institutional and the commercial context in which this economic activity unfolded. The demographic crisis escalated in southern Italy (as everywhere in Europe) with the Black Death in 1348, but was perhaps more lasting in this part of the Italian peninsula compared to the centre and north; the population did not start to recover before the last two decades of the fifteenth century. In Capitanata in particular, the population had been halved by 1447, compared to pre-plague estimates; it continued to shrink as late as 1508 and the increase between 1508 and 1532 was anaemic. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the province had the lowest population density in mainland southern Italy (6–7 inhabitants per square kilometre), while the number of settlements was drastically reduced in 1447 compared to the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century (the province had 69 settlements in 1447 while in a tax list of 1320 it appears to have had about 140).

The trajectory of population and settlements in Capitanata eludes an uncontroversial overview. A plausible explanation of the steep demographic decline in the province by 1447 is that arable-based economies were more severely affected in periods of demographic crisis: the shrinking population of Italy must

<sup>11</sup> John A. Marino, *Pastoral Economics in the Kingdom of Naples*, Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988, p. 15–16; Francesco Violante, *Il re, il contadino, il pastore: La grande masseria di Lucera e la Dogana delle pecore di Foggia tra XV<sup>e</sup>–XVI<sup>e</sup> secolo*, Bari: Edipuglia, 2009, Chapters IV–V; Eleni Sakellariou, *Southern Italy in the Late Middle Ages: Demographic, Institutional and Economic Change in the Kingdom of Naples, c. 1440 – c. 1530*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, p. 270–72.

<sup>12</sup> Russo and Salvemini, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 176–80; Alberto Guenzi and Roberto Rossi, “Institutions, Natural Resources and Economic Growth in the Modern Age: the Case of Dogana delle Pecore in the Kingdom of Naples (XV–XVIII Centuries),” *Review of Economics and Institutions* 5, n° 2, 2014, p. 19; Saverio Russo and Zeffiro Ciuffoletti, “La civiltà della transumanza: storie di animali e di popoli (XV–XX secolo),” *I Georgofili: Quaderni* 4, 2022, p. 53–71.

have immediately brought on a fall in demand for Capitanata's grain. The collapse in the number of settlements before and after the Black Death is more difficult to explain. The settlements that disappeared from the records were mainly small open villages. The steep rise in settlement desertions confirms the overall sharp population decline. The problem is that the fall in the numbers of small, open hamlets in Capitanata started in the second half of the thirteenth century, a period of population pressure and high demand in grain. It makes more sense to attribute this early wave of desertions to economic, social and political factors. In the latter half of the thirteenth century, as lordships in rural southern Italy (and, of course, Capitanata) took on their final form, some of the small, open hamlets through which the Norman lords had tried to expand the land under cultivation and to consolidate their lordships, became redundant. In Capitanata in particular, a possible explanation is the changing political and economic setting – a new equilibrium between royal authority and feudal lordships, the consolidation of great rural enterprises dedicated to grain crops or to mixed cereal and sheep farming, the absence or ineffectiveness of restrictions on peasant mobility, the first attempts at reorganizing transhumance, a change in the way hearth and settlement lists for fiscal purposes were drafted. The demographic collapse after 1348 caused a new wave of desertions. Equally challenging is explaining the persistently low population figures in Capitanata throughout the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century, when the province was established as the one with the lowest demographic density in southern Italy, although it was the fulcrum of production of two highly commercialised goods – grain and wool. A plausible interpretation lies in its economic organization: both arable and livestock farming (particularly the latter) need low labour resources which, in addition, can be seasonally mobile. Pastoral farming was seasonally imported in the province from Abruzzo (by means of an annual invasion of the Tavoliere plain in Capitanata by the millions of ovicaprids and cattle and the thousands of people involved in transhumance), while seasonal agricultural workers were mobilised in peak periods of cereal farming. In late medieval and early modern Capitanata, it is reasonable to envisage a disrupted link between population and resources, despite the sustained market demand for the area's main products.<sup>13</sup>

Although Abruzzo experienced an almost equally dramatic reduction in the number of settlements between the late thirteenth century and 1447 (from 720 to

<sup>13</sup> Biagio Salvemini, "Prima della Puglia: Terra di Bari e il Sistema regionale in età moderna," in *Storia d'Italia, Le Regioni dall'Unità a oggi*, ed. Luigi Masella and Biagio Salvemini, Turin: Einaudi, 1989, p. 59–60, 83–84; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 95–97, 108, 110; Sandro Carocci, *Signorie di Mezzogiorno: Società rurali, poteri aristocratici e monarchia (XII–XIII secolo)*, Rome: Viella, 2014, p. 92–93, 96–97; On peasant mobility in the twelfth and thirteenth century, Violante, "Agricoltura e allevamento," p. 334–35; see also Saverio Russo and Francesco Violante, "Élites fondiarie e ceti mercantili nella Puglia centro-settentrionale tra tardo medioevo e prima età moderna," in *I centri minori italiani nel tardo medioevo: cambiamento sociale, crescita economica, processi di ristrutturazione (secoli XIII–XVI)*, ed. Federico Lattanzio and Gian Maria Varanini, Florence: Firenze University Press, 2018, p. 374–75.

368), losses in population and density by the same date were more contained. Abruzzo's relative resilience could be ascribed to the general tendency of upland regions to be less vulnerable to the bubonic plague than the surrounding lowlands (and to the fact that their economy, less oriented towards cereal crops, was less affected in periods of demographic decrease). Demographic recovery in Abruzzo was sustained though somewhat slower than in other southern regions.<sup>14</sup>

The lasting demographic crisis defused the inelastic demand for cereals, allowing livestock farming to expand. Graziers from Abruzzo deepened the relations of interdependence with the agriculturalists of Capitanata by extending their reach to more lands in the lowlands. This intensification of transhumance was a strategy which was introduced in response to crisis – but the increased scale of transhumance did not lapse when better demographic times came from the late fifteenth century onwards; instead, it remained stable and it even expanded in the face of rapid growth elsewhere in southern Italy, contributing to the low demographic performance of Capitanata throughout the early modern period.<sup>15</sup> This was possible, because transhumance between Abruzzo and Capitanata now found extraordinary institutional support.

### INSTITUTIONS AND MOBILITY

Since Norman times, the royal administration had jurisdiction to collect pasture fees on lands belonging to the crown and to impose a loose set of norms regarding fees collected by private owners in Capitanata, but private landlords did retain the right to lease their own lands independently.<sup>16</sup> This, and the continuing demographic recession, resulted in a relatively modest revenue for the royal fisc in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, despite the regular appointment of commissioners of the sheep custom house or *dogana delle pecore* (the state agency, probably an Angevin creation, overseeing transhumance) and the guarantees of

<sup>14</sup> Pier Paolo Viazzo, *Upland Communities: Environment, population and social structure in the Alps since the sixteenth century*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, p. 13, 38–48, 178–79; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 96, note 124, 111.

<sup>15</sup> Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, p. 198–201; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 111; D'Arcangelo, *Capitanata*, p. 293–99.

<sup>16</sup> State consideration of transhumance in Norman and Hohenstaufen legislation: *Die Konstitutionen Friedrichs II. für das Königreich Sizilien*, ed. Wolfgang Stürmer, MGH, *Constitutiones et Acta Publica Imperatorum et Regum*, Tomus II Supplementum, Hannover: Hahn, 1996, book III, Titles p. 53–58, 422–429; a disputed report of 1254 about state revenue from pasture fees on royal lands in *I Diurnali di Matteo Spinelli di Giovinazzo (1247–1268)*, in *Cronisti e scrittori sincroni napoletani editi ed inediti*, ed. Giuseppe del Re, vol. 2, Svevi, Naples: Stamperia dell'Iride, 1868, p. 637; on the contested originality of Spinelli's chronicle, Francesco Panarelli, 'Spinelli, Matteo', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 93, 2018, last accessed on 18/2/2024 at: [https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/matteo-spinelli\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/matteo-spinelli_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/); De Dominicis, *Lo stato*, 1, p. 52; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 272–74.

safe passage and judicial services offered to graziers by Ladislas of Anjou and his sister Joanna II.<sup>17</sup>

Between 1443 and 1447, Alfonso V the Magnanimous (I of Naples) introduced a reform of the custom house; by doing so, he initiated a new and lasting phase of growth for transhumance and armed the central government with a means to extend its jurisdiction by challenging centrifugal tendencies in the provinces. One of Alfonso's first acts of government after he completed the conquest of the Neapolitan Kingdom was the transformation of the sheep custom house into an effective instrument of mediation and centralization. The principal innovation was that the king took migrating sheep husbandry under his aegis and transformed it into a quasi-monopoly. The state, by means of the custom house, negotiated with landlords and graziers, assuming control of pasture lands and pasture fee rates. In Capitanata, but also, to a lesser extent, in Abruzzo Citra and Terra di Bari, landowners, both feudal lords (lay and ecclesiastic) and urban communities, were now asked to lease pasture lands to the state at a fixed rate;<sup>18</sup> and the state, through the institution of the sheep custom house, distributed grazing lands (those claimed from private owners and those belonging to the crown) to sheep owners. On the side of pastoralists, holders of migrant flocks, especially of the noble *gentile* breed, known for its delicate disposition and high-quality wool, but also cattle and equine owners, were expected to register at the custom house, to participate in winter migration to Puglia (mainly the Tavoliere), and pay a fee which corresponded to the lease (*fida*) of the pasture land and was fixed by the state. In return, the transhumant graziers were assured free and safe passage, sufficient pasture at uniform, state-set prices, and expeditious justice. Free and safe passage became possible because Alfonso and his successors considered sheepwalks and drove roads to be regalian rights, under the jurisdiction of the custom house, even when they passed through private or baronial property. Last but not least, Alfonso removed the office of *doganiere* or commissioner at the head of the custom house from the hands of the influential sheep-owning communities of L'Aquila and Sulmona, which controlled it under Joanna II, by appointing a trusted Catalan, Francesc Montluber, who was confirmed in his office for life in 1447, and held the office through to 1459. In Montluber's privilege of confirmation, it becomes obvious that the commissioner had extensive jurisdictions, but his conduct in office was ultimately subject to scrutiny by the kingdom's central financial tribunal, the *Regia Camera della Sommaria* in Naples.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> De Dominicis, *Lo stato*, 1, p. 53–56; Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 20–21; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 274.

<sup>18</sup> Naples, Archivio di Stato (ASNa), Sommaria, Dipendenze, serie II, busta 61, fasc. 151, fols. 1–12v, list of lay and ecclesiastic landlords leasing their lands in Puglia and Terra di Bari to the Dogana, p. 1479–80.

<sup>19</sup> Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 274–76; Barcelona, Archivo de la Corona de Aragón (ACA), Cancillería, Registros, 2902, fols. 156v–158r (18/1/1443); 163r–v (no date); 2913, fols. 42r–44r (1447); Alan Ryder, *The Kingdom of Naples under Alfonso the Magnanimous: The Making of a Modern State*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976, p. 359–60; Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 20–22, 307–8.

The normative and operational framework of the custom house, with the intervention of the state as an intermediary between farmers and stockbreeders and within each of these two groups, played a decisive role in the annual movement of people and sheep over distances of more than 200 kilometres. By urging landlords to lease their pasture lands to the state rather than directly to the graziers, the monarchy both avoided the alienation of the landlords' property rights and controlled the particularist tendencies of local magnates who might have asked for exorbitant pasture fees or refused to rent their land out altogether. By declaring that sheepwalks were regalian rights, the state set a barrier to the fragmentation of the countryside into private territorial jurisdictions, which would hinder the descent from Abruzzo to Capitanata and back; it also confirmed the territoriality of its power. By enjoining sheep owners, particularly from Abruzzo and those whose animals belonged to the wool-producing *gentile* breed, to lease pasture lands from the custom house, it secured a stable and substantial fiscal revenue from the pasture fees while guaranteeing a normative environment that encouraged the expansion of an economic sector, the wool and meat market, which grew in response to demographic conditions and market demand. Overall, the Aragonese reform was long-lived and successful. Early signs of this success were the break on flows of lateral migration from Abruzzo to the pastures of the Roman Campagna across the political frontiers after 1443 (with the exception of a brief and quickly reversed flare-up in 1459–64, years of political insecurity in the Kingdom during the first baronial revolt); and the rapid increase in the number of sheep registered at the custom house, which rose from about 400,000 to more than 900,000 between 1445 and 1449 (a growth of 125%), and surpassed one million by 1450. This increase was not the exclusive outcome of a natural growth, because a flock was built up slowly with an increase of fifty per cent requiring six years; rather, it also demonstrates a rise in the number of animals registered at the custom house and placed on state-controlled rather than private or foreign pastures. Conversely, the maintenance of the sheep population at around one million throughout the latter half of the fifteenth century and for most of the difficult years of the Italian Wars and the passage of the Kingdom under Spanish rule (1494–1532) gives substance to the argument of resilience. Only at the end of this period, after yet another French invasion in 1527 and a sheep murrain in 1530–31, was the livestock capital at the custom house seriously depleted down to about 550,000 by 1532. It took the sheep population four years to bounce back to one million.<sup>20</sup>

Thanks to Alfonso's reform, the Puglian organization became the most institutionalized of the three major transhumant systems in Italy (the other two being the flatlands around Siena in Tuscany, and in Lazio). A note of caution is

<sup>20</sup> Figures of lateral migration to Lazio in Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, *Les pâturages de l'église et la douane du bétail dans la province du patrimoine (XIV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)*, Rome: École Française de Rome, 1981, p. 166. On resilience of the transhumant industry in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, D'Arcangelo, "Le scrittura," p. 557–58; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 277–84.

needed here, however: throughout the pre-modern period, political centralization remained tentative. The struggle against the lack of jurisdictional uniformity and the expansion of sovereignty in the territory were slow, and the state continued to be contested by holders of local power and privileges. The state was gradually becoming stronger and it established channels of communication and allegiance with a variety of interlocutors across the social and political spectrum, but it did not disown the rights of other entities on the territory – feudal lordships, ecclesiastical institutions, towns and local communities. Rather, it sought to place these competitors in an inferior position with respect to its own authority: the prince claimed that his office was institutionally responsible for the safeguard of the legitimate rights of others. The outcome was the emergence of complex configurations of overlapping rights and jurisdictions upon the territory and particularly agricultural land, a finite natural resource. Next to the tangential and intersecting rights and jurisdictions of the state and its feudal lords, equally important were communal lands (known in Puglia as *demani delle università*). They can be described as common goods that the people of local communities (*università*) exploited collectively by customary law; they contributed, together with other typical medieval forms of conditional possession, to the creation of multi-layered varieties of land owning. Such forms were slowly eroded by ideals of secure property rights in the modern period. Before that, the state was acknowledged as the principal vehicle of mediation and compromise between great land owners and towns, as well as between agriculturists and pastoralists in a rural space of conflictual practices and detailed negotiations.<sup>21</sup> By means of the custom house, it championed the peaceful co-existence of pastoralists and agriculturists on the limited natural resources of the Tavoliere, but only partially achieved this aim. Its perpetual dialogue and negotiation with the interested parties did not always resolve existing problems, and did not bring about a reversal of traditional rights and claims, out of fear that this might lead to a surge of social unrest.<sup>22</sup>

The institutional backdrop was fundamental precisely because in transhumance (indeed, in all forms of animal husbandry) ease of movement, adaptability and accessibility were of great importance for the periodical mobilization of hundreds of thousands of animals, and thousands of graziers, merchants and royal officials

<sup>21</sup> Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 85–86, 102–105; Alberto Guenzi and Roberto Rossi, “La riforma aragonese della transumanza nel Regno di Napoli come modello di sviluppo economico fondato sulla mobilitazione delle risorse territoriali,” in *Storia economica e ambiente italiano (ca. 1400–1850)*, ed. Guido Alfani, Matteo di Tullio, and Luca Mocarelli, Milan: FrancoAngeli, 2012, p. 90–95; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 52–55; Francesco Senatore, “The Kingdom of Naples,” in *The Italian Renaissance State*, ed. Andrea Gamberini and Isabella Lazzarini, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 30–49; D’Arcangelo, *Capitanata*, p. 280–99.

<sup>22</sup> D’Arcangelo, “Le scritture,” p. 565–66, 569; Saverio Russo, “Il conflitto tra agricoltura e pastorizia transumante nella Dogana di Foggia in età moderna,” *Mélanges de l’École Française de Rome, Antiquité* 128, n° 2, September 2016, p. 341–47 (*buon governo o l’arte del rinvio*); Russo and Violante “Élites fondiarie,” p. 396–98 (overlapping of territorial rights and commons).

across hundreds of kilometres.<sup>23</sup> The sheep of the custom house originated mostly from Abruzzo. Institutional control on the summer pastures of this region was relatively weak and focused on avoiding tensions by fostering an understanding that natural resources would be reasonably distributed between rich and less wealthy owners. When the descent to Puglia started, the normative setting became more detailed. The pastoral community took on a more official character and was articulated in groups known as *nazioni* according to their members' place of origin, since the allocation of pasture lands was based not on the single grazier but on the *nazione* to which he belonged. Only the wealthier graziers were excepted from this rule.<sup>24</sup> In late August, the king authorized the head of the custom house to set in motion the wheels of transhumance. The *doganiere* himself, with his *credenzieri* (officials with duties of financial and fiscal control) and other custom house employees, moved to the city of Lanciano between late August and early September. Preparations for the descent (putting together the simple infrastructure needed by the flocks and their guardians, making the first contacts with custom house officials and a preliminary declaration of the number of transhumant sheep) started in the first two weeks of September. The ritualized and certainly spectacular descent to the Tavoliere started in mid-September. From 1447, three major sheep droves (*regi tratturi*, royal sheepwalks) connected the summer pastures of Abruzzo with the winter pastures of Puglia, covering a distance of 200 kilometres. These roads started at three different points in Abruzzo (L'Aquila, Celano-Sulmona and Pescasseroli-Castel di Sangro, the three major areas of livestock husbandry) and converged on the Tavoliere plain, while, as the transhumant industry expanded, new tracts were added to supplementary pasture lands further south all the way to Terra d'Otranto and Basilicata. Accompanied by officials on horseback (*cavallari*) and by their shepherds, sheep moved along major and branch sheepwalks (*tratturi*, *tratturelli*, *bracci*), browsing on side pastures (*riposi laterali*). Lower-ranking officials prepared the ground ahead of the descending sheep all the way to Puglia. The mesh of interests affected by this descent was complex, including the people and the officials of the custom house, great landlords and rural and urban communities: all parties strove for control over the area's natural resources. In order to accommodate the great number of sheep and men on the move, the official pastoral calendar foresaw six to eight weeks for the journey; this timeframe provided for rest and overnight stays of up to twenty-four hours at the side pastures. The goal of both graziers and officials (who, headed by the *Doganiere* or his treasurer, had already moved from Lanciano to the plain) was for everyone to reach the three large general holding pastures (*riposi generali*), which formed an arc just outside the Tavoliere. Sheep pastured in this area, while a first enumeration was implemented, until 25 November, the official opening of the Tavoliere winter season. It was then that flocks proceeded, in the company of custom-house

<sup>23</sup> Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, p. 197–200.

<sup>24</sup> Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion Pastorale*, p. 117–18.

officials, to their assigned locations (*locazioni*), the divisions of winter pasture, which were distinguished in *ordinari* (*general*i for the small owners, *particulari* for the rich large ones) and *extraordinari*. Negotiations, at times intense, between graziers and officials preceded the allocation of pasture lands. With the exception of the wealthier and more powerful sheep holders, the ability of individual lessees to contend with these challenges was limited. For this reason, individual graziers sought to integrate themselves in bigger, institutionalized groups, fostering alliances and solidarity. The *nazioni* were one form of such collectivities. The general association of lessees (*generalità dei locati*, graziers' association) was a non-territorial community offering channels of negotiation between graziers, the state and the wealthier members of the *Dogana*. Next, in a solemn and tumultuous ceremony, the lists of lessees and allocated pastures were announced and handed over to the beneficiaries. At that point, custom house officials made a tour of the Tavoliere to make sure that everything was reasonably in order and that no major source of friction was left unresolved. They then produced an official register of all these activities which was signed by the *doganiere* and sent to Naples. Although the majority of locations and posts tended to concentrate in the geographical unit known as the Tavoliere plain of Capitanata, the fiscal competence of the custom house extended beyond the limits of the plain, as sheep spilled over into the provinces to the south. Even in the Tavoliere, pasture lands leased by the Dogana were not a continuous block, but rather a sequence of distinct units separated from one another by feudal or communal lands. Similarly, the locations themselves were not undifferentiated pasture lands; they were internally divided in three categories of land, for animal pasturage exclusively (*saldo vergine*), for cultivation (*portate*) or, finally, land restricted for grazing oxen used in agriculture (*mezzane*).<sup>25</sup>

On the first full moon of January, 192 employees of the *Dogana*, divided in 48 teams, left the headquarters at Foggia and roamed this vast area. Their mission was to enumerate the animals placed on custom-house pastures. Their records were the material with which the integrated annual enumeration was compiled. This annual record prepared the ground for the unfolding of the spring fair of Foggia, for the payment of the pasture fees by the graziers, for the payment of pasture rents by the state to landlords, for the settlement of debts and the quittance of fines, and, finally, for the compilation of documents to be exhibited at the sheepwalk toll stations on the way back to Abruzzo. On 25 March, the sheep could exit from their allocated posts and graze promiscuously in all locations. This lift of internal land divisions made the infiltration of animals from outside the Customhouse unavoidable, but this period of free grazing was essential, because the sheep needed to be well fed before they engaged on the long way back to the mountains. This was also the time when graziers prepared for the spring shearing. What followed was the sale of spring wool and other livestock products, and the payment

<sup>25</sup> Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 42–45, 50–51; Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 118–22; D'Arcangelo, "Le scritture," p. 584–85.

of the pasture fees. The custom house carefully monitored the wool, meat and cheese trade, in an effort to make sure that the graziers would have enough cash to pay the pasture fees on time. After the wool was sold and the fees paid, on May 8, the graziers could start the journey back to the mountains. The final act of the *Dogana* year was the dispatch of revenue, net of salaries and other expenses, to the Treasury in Naples, and the annual visit of the *doganiere*, his treasurer and his fiscal assistants to Naples, where they presented their books for inspection to the kingdom's supreme financial tribunal, the *Regia Camera della Sommaria*.<sup>26</sup>

The people and animals of the *Dogana* were on the move for three to four months every year; they spent four months on the locations of the Tavoliere, after having waited for about a month at the general holding pastures just outside the plain, and three to four months on summer pastures in the mountains of Abruzzo. The officials of the *Dogana* followed them for much of their itinerance. The normative and operational setting of the custom house, with the intervention of the state as an intermediary between farmers and herders and within each of these two groups, played a decisive role in this annual movement. From the custom house's re-establishment in 1447 to its abolition in the nineteenth century, the periodicity of the pastoral calendar was predominant. The beginning and end of each of the two pastoral periods, winter and summer, were defined with precision and time was allowed to avoid overcrowding and conflict. In a sense, encouraged by their organization in "nations", the upland communities temporarily settled the plain, creating a semblance of their villages on the pastures that were given to them. The shepherds attracted a following of craftsmen, bakers, tavern-keepers and other professionals from their place of origin, who offered their services to their co-townsmen in the plain, where both craftsmen and herdsman formed collectives, created places of worship, negotiated with the government.<sup>27</sup>

Historical sources provide information on the total livestock population, but much less on the number of people accompanying them. We know that in 1494, 1,2 million sheep were declared to the *Dogana*, owned by 740 graziers.<sup>28</sup> The lesser shepherds accompanied their animals themselves without other servants. The medium and large owners, however, hired servants and a hierarchy was created within the economic unit based on the division of labour: from foremen to dog handlers, cooks, gardeners, cheese-makers, craftsmen, etc. An idea of the order of magnitude of this mobile working population comes from the private archive of the noble family of the Doria of Melfi, spanning 90 years between 1672 and 1763. The family in question sent 10,000 sheep to the pastures of the custom house, employing 87 workers and servants, a third of them full-time, the rest for shorter periods.<sup>29</sup> Since the methods and techniques of this economic activity did not

<sup>26</sup> Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 122–24; D'Arcangelo, "Le scritture," p. 585–86.

<sup>27</sup> Salvemini, "Migrants saisonniers," p. 169; Violante, "Agricoltura e allevamento," p. 331–32.

<sup>28</sup> ASNa, Sommaria, Dipendenze, serie II, busta 61, fasc. 152, fols. 2–136.

<sup>29</sup> Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 41, 316.

change significantly until the abolition of the custom house in the 19th century, we can project these figures into the late Middle Ages. If we consider that the total number of sheep averaged around one million, we are looking at a mobilisation of a workforce of about 10,000 every year. This may be a modest estimate: writing in the early nineteenth century, Salvatore De Renzi suggested that the men variously associated with transhumance and mobilized every year could be around thirty thousand.<sup>30</sup>

### THE MARKET AND MOBILITY

Commercializing the products of transhumant husbandry caused additional mobility, not only of graziers and shepherds, but also of merchants. Much like the roaming of sheep and herdsmen, commercial itinerance was well-planned and in harmony with the pastoral calendar. It revolved around a number of periodic markets in Puglia and Abruzzo, among which Foggia, the custom house headquarters, had pride of place.

Since the 1450s, international demand for wool and meat was rising rapidly next to that for grain. Sheep registered at the custom house were herded mainly for their wool by sheep holders from Abruzzo. Smaller numbers of sheep belonging to local breeds, of more robust stock, coarser wool and better meat, known as *mosce* or *carfagne*, could also be enrolled at the *Dogana*, although they normally did not participate in transhumance; they usually belonged to Puglian breeders, who had the right to rent some custom house pastures, particularly close to towns of Capitanata and northern Terra di Bari.<sup>31</sup> Sheep were shorn twice a year, in late spring and late summer. John Marino has estimated that a population of about one million sheep, which was the annual average of sheep registered at the custom house in the late Middle Ages and the early modern period, produced annually about 115,000 *rubbi* (80,000 in spring and another 35,000 in autumn) or 1,025 tons of wool.

Demand for the wool produced by the *gentile* sheep was the third pillar (next to the demographic and the institutional factor) underpinning transhumance. As supply from more distant markets, such as England or Catalonia, started to dwindle in the early fifteenth century, and as the quality of southern Italian wool improved, the woollen textile industries of central and northern Italy sought wool closer to home. The principal clients of wool produced by the sheep of the custom house were Florence in the second half of the fifteenth, and Venice from the first decades

<sup>30</sup> Salvatore de Renzi, *Osservazioni sulla topografia medica del Regno di Napoli*, vol. 1, Naples: Società Tipografica, 1828, p. 181–82; vol. 3, Naples, 1830, p. 159; cited in Violante, “Agricoltura e allevamento,” p. 332 note 24.

<sup>31</sup> Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 31–33, 46; Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 42; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 289–90.

of the sixteenth century. John Marino has shown that between one third and one half of the custom house's wool was exported, while two-thirds to one-half was absorbed by domestic woollen textile industries. Judging from figures of total annual production of wool (which depended on the total number of sheep) and information about southern Italian wool at foreign markets, we can conclude with some certainty that the proportion between exports and domestic consumption was similar in the second half of the fifteenth and the early sixteenth century. The inclusion of wool in all land toll lists of the kingdom and the production of a variety of grades of woollen textiles in Abruzzo and Campania in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century are proof of the parallel existence of a lively domestic wool market.<sup>32</sup> Wool was not the only marketable product of transhumance. One million sheep gave birth to 420,000–450,000 lambs annually. One-third of these was reserved for stock rotation, while two-thirds were sold at livestock markets mainly for their meat. Finally, about 1,500–1,600 tons of cheese were produced with the milk from lactating ewes registered at the custom house every year.<sup>33</sup>

The commercialization of these pastoral products conformed to the periodicity of the pastoral calendar. Animal holders paid pasture fees to the *Dogana* in spring, before they moved back to summer pasture in Abruzzo. Since this was also the time when the best wool was produced, spring fairs became the venues where producers sold wool and gathered cash for the pasture fees. Animals born in autumn and the wool of the second shearing were sold at a second group of September fairs, before the descent to Puglia. In the first decades of the reformed custom house, the most important spring-wool fair was Lanciano in Abruzzo Citra; the periodic markets of the city had been established as important commercial venues with an international radius well before the expansion of transhumance in the fifteenth century. By 1473, however, complaints about the suitability of Lanciano as a market for graziers registered at the custom house were mounting, because Lanciano was at a distance from Capitanata, where sheep holders were expected to pay the pasture fees. Lanciano's fairs retained their international renown, but the wool trade moved south, to the new administrative capital of the custom house, Foggia, at the heart of the Tavoliere.<sup>34</sup> The shift of the spring wool

<sup>32</sup> Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 67–71, 200, 234–38; Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 65–68; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 292–95, 339–40; Roberto Rossi, *La lana del Regno di Napoli nel XVII secolo: Produzione e commercio*, Rome: Giappichelli, 2007, chapter II, confirms in the details Marino's conclusions.

<sup>33</sup> Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 23, 52–54, 185, 203, 207–8, 222, 347 n. 52; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 290. For higher estimates of total cheese production by animals enrolled at the *Dogana* in the eighteenth century, and how the advance sale of fresh cheese helped finance the economic activity of graziers and allowed the commune of Corato to specialize in cheese production, Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 70–73.

<sup>34</sup> When he reformed transhumance, Alfonso designated the provincial capital of Capitanata, Lucera, as the headquarters of the custom house. In 1468, his successor Ferrante moved the seat of the *Dogana* from Lucera to Foggia, thus strengthening the independence of the new institution's administration: Ageta,

trade from Lanciano to Foggia is documented as early as the 1480s, and by the mid-sixteenth century, after the consolidation of the town's three fairs into a single annual event, the April fair of Foggia had been acknowledged as the principal wool market of the kingdom: it lasted for one month, was sanctioned by the government and enjoyed the protection of the custom house.<sup>35</sup> Charles V's instructions of 1536 provided that the Foggian fair alone was authorised to sell pastoral products of the custom house.<sup>36</sup> In the early modern period, the state, the graziers' association and the merchants negotiated sale prices of pastoral products at the fair of Foggia which, as an incentive, was toll-free. But despite state protection, the fair faced competition from the periodic markets of Gravina and Altamura in Terra di Bari, which preceded it in the annual calendar of fairs. Merchants moved between Foggia and the fairs of Terra di Bari, trying to dampen prices.<sup>37</sup>

In the sixteenth century, the fair of Foggia opened on 1 April with a solemn procession. Sales began not with wool but with meat animals (lambs and castrated rams). Preparation for this had started several weeks earlier, in March, when the *Doganiere* dispatched his officials to the kingdom's frontiers to receive merchants from Umbria, Emilia Romagna and Tuscany who wished to buy livestock on the hoof in Foggia. With the news of the arrival of the foreign merchants, the graziers sent their livestock to town, where custom house officials organized the so-called "showing of the castrated lambs" (*mostra dei castrati*), and this was the symbolic opening of sales. There followed the sale of wool and other pastoral products (cheese, leather goods etc).<sup>38</sup> The fair culminated on 26 April, the religious feast of SS. Guglielmo and Pellegrino, with the celebration of two *palii*.<sup>39</sup>

A recent study of late medieval Foggia conveys an idea of the volume of people temporarily attracted to it by transhumance. When it became the administrative capital of the custom house, Foggia did not yet enjoy the status of a *civitas* – it was a *terra*; it became a bishopric and was recognized as the capital of Capitanata much later. Nevertheless, its new role as the headquarters of the *Dogana* placed the town

*Annotationes*, vol. 4, p. 31–32; Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 25; Violante, *Il re*, p. 141–42, note 61. For the importance of Puglian fairs with regard to the commercialization of the region's agricultural produce since the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries, Luciana Petracca, "The trade fair network in Apulia during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries," *Historical Research* 95, n° 267, 2022, p. 1–18.

<sup>35</sup> Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 291.

<sup>36</sup> De Dominicis, *Lo stato*, vol. 1, p. 97–103; Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 184.

<sup>37</sup> Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 187; Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 122–24.

<sup>38</sup> *Il Libro Rosso della città di Foggia*, ed. P. di Cicco, Foggia: Amministrazione Provinciale di Capitanata, 1965, doc. XI. New, revised edition, *Il Libro Rosso di Foggia*, ed. P. di Cicco, Foggia: Claudio Grenzi Editore, 2017; De Dominicis, *Lo stato*, 3, p. 111–13; Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 185; Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 55–56; Saverio Russo, "Il mercato napoletano e i prodotti dell'allevamento," *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane* 136, 2018, p. 166.

<sup>39</sup> Stefano Di Stefano, *La ragion pastorale over commento su la Pramatica LXXIX. de officio Procuratoris Caesaris*, Naples: Domenico Roselli, 1731, 2, p. 201; *Libro Rosso della città di Foggia*, doc. XI; Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 185–86.

at the centre of intense movement. Besides the mobility of royal administrators and officials from Naples and other parts of the kingdom, Foggia became an international market and the hub of frenetic activity, at least for part of the year, which coincided with the migration of graziers and livestock from Abruzzo to the Tavoliere plain. Its late medieval walls were rudimentary, and there were no monumental public buildings in town. Flooded each year by the people and livestock descending from Abruzzo, the town was literally overwhelmed during the fair, when scores of merchants were added to the people of the *Dogana*. The urban nucleus was not big enough for this intensive economic and social activity, which overflowed in the surrounding countryside. This was the case with the bakeries and taverns that served the people of transhumance, as well as with the fair, whose stalls expanded outside the city walls, leading to loss of revenue from indirect taxes that the municipal authorities could not impose outside their remit.<sup>40</sup> Housing was an additional problem, as powerful sheep owners spent the winter in Foggia, while the population swelled around the time of the fair.<sup>41</sup>

#### SEDENTARY HUSBANDRY

August wool (a little less than one-third of total production according to Marino's calculations) as well as lambs born in August and cheese cured in summer were marketed at autumn fairs in Abruzzo, when the transhumant population was back to upland pastures.<sup>42</sup> The livestock trade was, after wool, the second most important market sector of the pastoral industry. The fairs of Abruzzo were outside the remit of the custom house; they served the kingdom's overland livestock trade, and as checkpoints for the export of animals, thanks to their location close to the land frontier with the Papal State. They became, therefore, the venue where two different types of husbandry met: transhumant and sedentary.<sup>43</sup> In traditional societies sedentary husbandry implied a considerable degree of mobility, although not as long-distance as transhumance. The livestock trade, integral part of all types of pastoral activity, certainly entailed the movement of animals on the hoof and of their guardians over long distances. At the same time, roaming did not always mean participation in horizontal transhumance. In many provinces, the mountainous

<sup>40</sup> D'Arcangelo, *Capitanata*, p. 277–79.

<sup>41</sup> Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 186.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 185.

<sup>43</sup> Figures of pastoral products transacted in the periodic markets of Abruzzo (and Terra di Lavoro) close to the kingdom's frontiers, and the normative background in which they operated, in Alberto Grohmann, *Le fiere del Regno di Napoli in età aragonese*, Naples: Istituto Italiano per gli Studi Storici, 1969, p. 313–39; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 179–82, 297, 489–90; Ryder, *The Kingdom*, p. 347–52; Pietro Dalena, *Passi, porti e dogane marittime dagli Angioini agli Aragonesi: Le Lictere passus (1458–1469)*, Bari: Mario Adda Editore, 2007, p. 27–65.

landscape was better suited to shorter-distance, vertical migration. This was so in Calabria and Basilicata, and in the hilly zone of the Murge in Puglia. In Basilicata and Calabria, this economic sector is perhaps best known by means of local petitions and descriptions of the estates of great lords such as the dukes of Melfi and the princes of Bisignano,<sup>44</sup> while the livestock fair of the otherwise little-known town of Senise (in Basilicata) was a typical example of a periodic market serving as the meeting point of local producers and big merchants travelling from as far afield as Abruzzo, Umbria and the Marche.<sup>45</sup> In the Murge, the shift towards livestock farming is traceable as early as the fourteenth century and is consistently documented throughout the fifteenth. Sedentary sheep husbandry was organized in large rural enterprises known as *masserie di pecore*. One or more entrepreneurs, usually not titled and sometimes members of the urban élites, rented land and livestock from a lay landlord or ecclesiastical institution for a period of time (usually three to six years); after the expiry of the contract, landlord and *massari* shared the profit.<sup>46</sup> The inhabitants of Altamura, Gravina, Andria and Cave, all inland communities of Terra di Bari, appeared to be owners of large flocks of tens of thousands of sheep, mostly of the local breed of *pecore mosce* or *carfagne*, which did not participate in custom house-controlled transhumance, a practice reserved for the nobler *gentile* sheep, but was better adapted to the climate extremes and relative scarcity of grass of the area. A system of economic interdependence between extensive grain and sheep farming on the hilly Murge and the more intensive olive-tree cultivation on the neighbouring coastal zone led to rapid demographic recovery after the 1480s, and a stable settlement pattern with large, nucleated settlements which, for all the similarities to the agro-town model, were institutionally robust and with some distinctly urban functions.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> On Calabria, descriptions of feudal estates and local petitions in ACA, Cancillería, Registros, 2903, fols. iii-iiiv; 2904, fols. 177, 184v-185v, 187v-188, 226v-227v, 229v-232, 243v-246; *Il Registro "Privilegiorum Summarie XLIII" (1421-1450). Frammenti di Cedole della Tesoreria di Alfonso I (1437-1454)*, ed. Jole Mazzoleni, Testi e Documenti di Storia Napoletana, Serie II: Fonti Aragonesi, vol. 1, Naples: Accademia Pontaniana, 1957, p. 18, 39-44; Ernesto Pontieri, *La Calabria a metà del XV secolo e la rivolta di Antonio Centelles*, Naples: Fiorentino, 1963, p. 32-33; Giuseppe Galasso, *Economia e società nella Calabria del Cinquecento*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, Naples: Guida, 1992, p. 185-196. On the management of the estates of the dukes (later princes) of Melfi, Giuliana Vitale, "Aspetti della vita economica di Melfi ed Atella alla fine del XV secolo," *Atti dell'Accademia Pontaniana*, n.s. 17, 1967-1968, p. 57-81; Potito d'Arcangelo, *I conti del principe: Rendita e contabilità feudale negli stati di Melfi e Ascoli (secoli XV-XVI)*, Bari: Edipuglia, 2019; Marino, *Pastoral Economics*, p. 40-41, 54-57, 138-39, 196, 203-8, 222-27, 336, 354.

<sup>45</sup> Grohmann, *Fiere*, p. 193-205; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 213, 310.

<sup>46</sup> Raffaele Licinio, *Masserie medievali: masserie, massari e carestie da Federico II alla dogana delle pecore*, Bari: Mario Adda, 1998, p. 43-58; Salvemini, "Prima della Puglia," p. 27-28; Sakellariou, *Southern Italy*, p. 301-2.

<sup>47</sup> Salvemini, "Prima della Puglia," 29; Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 27, 133, 137-38; Saverio Russo, "La campagna in città: le agrotowns dell'Italia meridionale," in *Il paesaggio nel rapporto città-campagna. Lezioni e pratiche della Scuola di paesaggio Emilio Sereni*, ed. Gabriella Bonini and Rossano Pazzagli, Gattatico: Edizioni Istituto Alcide Cervi, 2021, p. 105-16.

### TO SUM UP

Pre-modern Mediterranean pastoralism was a complex economic activity, organically linked to agriculture. Far from existing in isolation, the adaptive nature of both agriculture and husbandry allowed the two sectors to develop high levels of interdependence. The pairing of agriculture and pastoralism favoured specialisation and commercial exchange, and their symbiotic relationship was not unresponsive to changing economic opportunities.<sup>48</sup> In recent decades, the rivalry between agriculturists and pastoralists over land, a common and finite natural resource, is no longer viewed as a simple problem of expansion and contraction of population and economic activity, but as a marker of significant transformations of settlement patterns, production arrangements, merchant networks, social identities, economic and political structures and thought.<sup>49</sup> Mobility is the point of reference in the transhumant variant of husbandry. Transhumant sheep farming between Abruzzo and Puglia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries relied on institutionally organized, periodically recurring movements. The seasonal, ritualized relocation of sheep, their guardians, merchants, state officials and other professionals enhanced a nexus of mutual dependence: of arable and livestock farming; of graziers, landlords, towns and the state; of large cities (by reason of their provisioning needs) and their hinterlands; of merchants and producers; of local and foreign markets. Contemporary scholars concord that long-distance transhumance was a resource-intensive activity, in that it extended the reach of graziers to more comfortable landscapes of winter pasture – a phenomenon that has been described as “displaced intensification”.<sup>50</sup> In the case of Capitanata, this goes a long way towards explaining both the persistently low population density and the mediating role assumed by the state in negotiating overlapping rights over common lands claimed by the state itself, the great landlords, the urban communities and the pastoralists. Mobility and multiple claims over commons extended to sedentary forms of husbandry, the only difference being shorter distances and a smaller degree of direct state intervention. This structure of mutual dependence and mediation remained much the same from the Aragonese reform of the 1440s to the late eighteenth century and the severe criticism of Enlightenment intellectuals, if not later.

<sup>48</sup> Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, p. 198–201, 385–86; Chris Wickham, “Pastoralism and underdevelopment in the early Middle Ages,” in *L'uomo di fronte al mondo animale nell'alto Medioevo*, Settimane di Studio 31, Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 1985, p. 449; Standen and White, “Structural Mobilities,” p. 159–61.

<sup>49</sup> Salvemini and Russo, *Ragion pastorale*, p. 77–78.

<sup>50</sup> Horden and Purcell, *Corrupting Sea*, p. 199.