

**Towards a Meta-Archive of Economic Expertise:
Knowledge and Positive Law in Late Modern Experiments of Power
(Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily) – Prof. Ida Fazio**

The project, launched in 2018, intends to continue the construction of a 'meta-archive' of the expertise applied in the economic government of the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily in the eighteenth century. This will be done through the systematic collection and publication of a type of document (the *Consulte*), generally aimed at providing the ruler with 'expert opinions' for the creation of norms at every level.

In this way, the project examines a discursive method that was associated with decision-making processes in economic matters, placing it amongst the procedures and relationships that produced it: that is, the relationship between a power that tests new forms of governmentality in the sphere of the economy, characterized by an insurmountable contradiction between private interests and public happiness, and the knowledge and languages capable of neutralizing the interplay of interests involved in sovereign decision-making.

We define this knowledge as expertise, that is, a competence based not on practice but on universalistic languages close to those of the Republic of Letters, but originating within the administrative apparatus, called to legitimize sovereign orders and linked to the production of late mercantilistic positive law.

We believe that these documents testify to a process, albeit imperfect and discontinuous, of institutionalizing decision-making procedures that link the 'experiments of power' of the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily to their contemporary commercial monarchies, as attempts to construct forms of governmentality compatible with the aspirations of power to sublimate trade for the common good and to discipline private interests.

The project has already produced the volume '*Consulte, rappresentanze, progetti per l'economia del Regno di Napoli - I. 1734-1739*', CNR, Rome 2021 (edited by D. Ciccolella, A. Clemente, B. Salvemini) as part of the 2015 PRIN "In Search of the Patriotic Merchant. Mercantilism, Economic Morality and Merchants in Mediterranean Europe (17th-19th centuries)", coordinated by Biagio Salvemini.

Extension to the Sicilian consultative institutions is now proposed, and its continuation regarding the Kingdom of Naples, where in 1739, with the establishment of the Supremo Magistrato di Commercio, a process of strong institutionalization and supposed centralization of the advisory function began, which the study seeks to verify by measuring its impact on the markedly pluralistic structures of the first phase of Bourbon reformism.

The proposal is part of a long-term project aimed at collecting and systematizing the consultative production for the entire Bourbon eighteenth century. Often scattered indiscriminately in diverse and disorganized archival collections, the documentation of consultants in the field of commerce represents an immense, unexplored documentary heritage, whose indexing is likely to have a significant scholarly impact on a wide range of areas of historical research.