

## EMIGRATION FROM FRIULI VENEZIA GIULIA TO BRAZIL

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The first documents mentioning the possibility for the inhabitants of the present region Friuli Venezia Giulia to emigrate to the Brazilian countryside date back to 1872. On June 8 of that year, the Brazilian Consul General in Trieste, Barone Mario de Morpurgo, sent to the High Imperial Royal Maritime Government of Trieste some copies and the relevant translation of the contract signed on the previous January 31 in Porto Alegre, in the state Rio Grande do Sul, by Jeronymo Martiniano Figueira de Mello, President of the Province of São Pedro do Rio Grande do Sul, and by Caetano Pinto & Irmão and Holtzweissig & C.<sup>a</sup> to bring in forty thousand colonists within ten years<sup>1</sup>. In the letter attached to the copy of the contract, the Consul General asks for the contract to be “advertised to inform those who can be interested in this agreement signed by the [Brazilian] Government, so that they are not deceived by negotiators or their agents”. According to article 1 of the contract, Caetano Pinto & Irmão and Holtzweissig & C.<sup>a</sup> “undertake to introduce into this Province [São Pedro do Rio Grande do Sul], within ten years, up to forty thousand colonists, in families, sober, perfectly healthy, never younger than two nor older than forty-five, unless they are heads of a family.”. The colonists, the contract states, “shall be of three classes: *industrianti*<sup>2</sup>, day-labourers and farmers. Non-farmers shall not exceed ten percent of the total number of colonists”. Article 6 states that “half of the emigrants shall be from Southern Europe and the other half from Northern Europe, and exclusively: Scandinavian, Scottish, English, Dutch, Belgian, German, Swiss, Austrian, Hungarian, French, Basque and Portugese”. The same article also states that “Germans shall not exceed the half of the total number of emigrants”. According to the following

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<sup>1</sup> The copy and the Italian translation of the contract are kept at the State Archive of Trieste, Maritime Government, b. 875, file 1.

<sup>2</sup> TN: *industrianti* were tenants who lent plots of land for shorter periods of time and were thus not completely free, but directly dependant on the landlord.

article, “the number of colonists to be brought in every year shall be neither higher than six thousand nor lower than two thousand, except in case of uncontrollable events justified before the Government of the Province”. Article 7 states the benefits granted by the authorities to the agents Caetano Pinto & Irmão and Holtzweissig & C.<sup>a</sup> “who shall receive a subsidy amounting to sixty thousand reis for any person over fourteen years of age, fifty-five thousand reis for any person between ten and fourteen years and twenty-five thousand reis for any child between two and ten years”. On the basis of this agreement, the Government of the Province São Pedro do Rio Grande do Sul “shall welcome the colonists in the city of Rio Grande or in the capital [Porto Alegre], in case the ships transporting them arrive here” (art. 9) and “assures the colonists hospitality and nourishment in the city of Rio Grande, as well as transportation from there to the capital or to the Provincial Colonies” (art. 14). The Austrian Friulians and the inhabitants of the part of Venezia Giulia under Austro-Hungarian rule seemed not to be eligible for the special conditions offered by the agreement; a substantial number of emigrants to Brazil would be registered only in 1877. In this year, though, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior adopted various measures to discourage emigration to Brazil: this government office publicized a booklet called *The lot of emigrants to Brazil*, describing the negative experiences of some settlements of colonists in the states Minas Geraes, São Paulo and Bahia. The 19 emigrants who went back home in 1874 were very likely coming from this last state, more precisely from the colonies Muniz and Teodoro, settlements of 1333 colonists (in June 1873), mainly Germans and Austrians, among which 126 Bohemians. The difficulties and the tragic sanitary and alimentary conditions these emigrants had to face caused them to leave those colonies and to protest in front of the German and Austrian consulates in Rio de Janeiro, where they had been welcomed in the emigrants’ Hospedaria”<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. F. CECOTTI, *L'emigrazione dal Litorale austriaco verso Argentina e Brasile. 1878-1903*, in F. CECOTTI – D. MATTIUSI (edited by), *Un'altra terra, un'altra vita. L'emigrazione isontina in Sud America tra storia e memoria 1878-1970*, Gradisca d'Isonzo, Centro Isontino di Ricerca e Documentazione Storica e Sociale “Leopoldo Gasparini”, 2003, p. 17.

## **From the “Italian” Friuli to the state Rio Grande do Sul**

Emigration to Brazil involved mainly the farmers of the Italian Friuli, instead. In 1878, in the columns of the “Bulletin of the Friuli Agricultural Association”, Gabriele Luigi Pecile named Ampezzo, Forni di Sopra, Buja, Gemona, Cimolais, Frisanco, Cordenons, Fontanafredda, Rive d’Arcano, Roveredo in Piano, Caneva and Polcenigo among the relatively few towns of the then Province of Udine “with emigrants to Brazil”<sup>4</sup>.

Family Di Fant from Rive d’Arcano had, for instance, an interesting experience: Federico, born in 1848 in Madrisio di Fagagna, his wife Felicita Toniutti, born in 1854, and their children Costantino and Virgilio, born respectively in 1873 and 1876, left Rodeano Basso in the late July 1877. They reached the port of Genoa, where on July 31 they were granted an entry visa by the Brazilian Consulate General. Other families from Rodeano Basso, where Felicita Toniutti was originally from, are likely to have applied for a visa to Brazil with the Di Fants. Gabriele Luigi Pecile states that in 1878 “two families left [Rive d’Arcano] for Brazil, with four individuals, without ever giving any information about themselves”<sup>5</sup>. On July 13, 1877 the parish priest of the Church San Nicolò in Rodeano issued a certificate stating that Mr. and Mrs. Di Fant “are charitable and religious persons, their moral and religious behaviour has always been praiseworthy in every respect and they are held in esteem by everyone”. After approximately three weeks aboard the ship “Nord America”, the Di Fants landed in the port of Rio de Janeiro on August 23, 1877. They then reached the Colony Dona Isabel (now Bento Gonçalves, in the southern state Rio Grande do Sul), where they remained until approximately 1882. Before leaving the colony, Federico built the brick house (*casa de pedra*) of Dona Isabel, which later became the seat of the Mutual Aid Society Regina Margherita and then Hospital Tacchini.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gabriele L. Pecile, *L’emigrazione italiana al Brasile*, in “Buletino della Associazione Agraria Friulana”, v. I (1878), p. 185.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gabriele Luigi Pecile, *Sulla emigrazione nell’America Meridionale. Dalla provincia di Udine – Dati statistici. Distretto di S. Daniele*, in “Buletino della Associazione Agraria Friulana”, v. I (1878), p. 133.

Around 1899, the Di Fants were in the Colony Alfredo Chaves (now Veranópolis), where more children were born. In the period straddling the two centuries, the Di Fants reached the Colony Alto Jacuí (now Nao-Me-Toque): Federico died here, in Rio Grande do Sul, between 1901 and 1908. His wife Felicita and some of their fourteen children, among whom Costantino, moved to Nonoal, near the border with the neighbouring state Santa Catarina<sup>6</sup>. After almost half a century, in the second half of the 1970s, one of Costantino's children, Victorino, settled down in Santa Isabel do Oeste, in the state Paraná. Later on, Victorino and some of his thirteen children were among the founders and first residents of the city São Gabriel do Oeste, in the state Mato Grosso do Sul. In the following decade, Victorino's grandson, Acácio Defante, reached the town Balsas, in Maranhão, while one of his brothers settled down in a place close to the border between Mato Grosso and Pará, in the north of the country. Family Di Fant's never-ending pilgrimage – at first through the states of the south such as Rio Grande do Sul and Paraná, then of the mid-west such as Mato Grosso do Sul and Mato Grosso and finally of the north-east such as Maranhão or of the north such as Pará – mirrors the migratory route of many other Italian colonists who arrived in Brazil between the 1870s and 1880s. As families grew when children were born and new families were created when they got married, the pioneers and their descendants looked for new lands to till in unpopulated areas, thus moving further north. Looking for new lands is the motive behind the decision of most Friulian farmers to move to the Brazilian and Argentinian countryside from 1877 onwards.

In Casso, in the westernmost part of Friuli, departures to Brazil began in September 1877. Antonio Mazzucco *Tonin*, a descendant of the pioneers from Casso who settled in Rio Major near Urussanga in the state Santa Catarina, recalls mechanisms and features of the migration.

The propaganda of the intermediaries promoting emigration made some people go to Brazil to verify and then report about the truthfulness of what was being told:

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<sup>6</sup> I was given information about Federico Di Fant's family history by Paulo André Defante, great-grandson of Costantino Di Fant, the son of Federico and Felicita Toniutti, whom I am very grateful to.

among them Mazzucco's grandfather, who went to the state Paraná with his brother. The grandfather's brother came back reporting about America's wonders. The emigrants from Casso left with some people from Belluno, who were going to Urussanga. By mistake, the people from Casso also ended up in Urussanga, and not in Morretes, where their fellow townsman was waiting for them. After various adventures, the whole group got back together in Rio Major, where living conditions were harsh, at first: they had to adjust to the environment, to the food and to farm work, which they were not accustomed to. Many were killed by felled trees during deforestation works.<sup>7</sup>

When the people of the [Brazilian] government or the landlords, people who took a large plot of land, took it from the emperor to sell it or colonize it, like in [Nuova] Venezia, where it was Mr. Napoli [the director of the colony N. V.], here there were others, when they went to Italy they went to a town and they told about, they promoted this place saying there was gold on the ground, in reality they could only complain that they couldn't even work. And among our people, they had gone to Casso, those from Casso went to Morretes in the state Parana. Morretes is the only seaport, it is the port of Paranaguà and Morretes, it is just below the serra, the serra being the mountains. So my granddad and Ignazio, his brother, came together to see to then go back and tell those in Casso how things were here, whether what the others said was true. They remained here a while, the two brothers, and then Ignazio, who was not married, went back to Casso and said: "Look, in America there is everything, salad and palms".

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<sup>7</sup> From the words by Antonio Mazzucco *Tonin*, collected by the author in Rio Major on August 15, 2000. *Toni de Fora*, as he was called in his town, was born in Rio Major in 1911 and was highly respected and esteemed among the descendants of the people from Casso in Rio Major. Antonio Mazzucco *Tonin* passed away in September 2000. Various interesting interviews with the descendants of the pioneers from Belluno and Casso in Urussanga and Rio Major have been conducted by Marco Paolini and Italo Filippin. The video (length 21 min.), directed by Mirco Melanco and Federico Massa, contains the interviews with Antonio Mazzucco *Tonin*, Dante Martinengo, Maria Adelaide Frol Mazzucco, Elia De Lorenzi, Lisa Cancellier and Silvio De Lorenzi, cf. M. MELANCO, *Le comunità*

You know what palms are? Trees. [Ignazio] said: “You don’t even need to grow vegetables, you make salad from those things!” And he wanted to tell much more, it was really America, for real! So Vincenzo stayed there. Those of Casso left on a ship together with those of Belluno who came to Urussanga. And when they arrived at the port of Santos, which was where some of the people from Casso who left for Morretes were, they all remained in one ship and came to Urussanga and lost Vincenzo! These didn’t know where Morretes was and where Vincenzo was, the brother of the other one. Vincenzo wrote to him in Italy, asking if they had left already. From there they said: Yes! But, he said, they didn’t arrive in Morretes! Bloody hell, what now? So these said, look, we came here to Urussanga, but this is not Moretes and Cencio [Vincenzo] is not here! So those said: “Look, Morretes is in the state of Paranà”. So one of these from Rio Major, one of Cencio’s brothers, left and said: “Come to Rio Major, there is land for you, too”. And they settled just few steps from here. And here they began, but life was hard, sons, very hard. When my grandfather died I was 35, I always talked to old Cencio, the one in Morretes, we travelled together all around Brazil, almost all the states, he said he had been in the army in Italy, he knew something, but he couldn’t speak Portuguese, he spoke, got by, through yells or gestures, somehow he made himself understood. And he told me that during the first months it was very hard, in the first years, because they were not used to the food. My grandma came when she was 35. She said she ate meat once because a lightning had killed the ox. We laughed a lot at home, but there was nothing to laugh about, because those things happened, bloody hell! And so he told us they had to raise cattle, but none of them was a farmer! And here they were put into agriculture,

so how could they work? The earth was completely different back home. Here the Brazilians were teaching them to fell trees and many of our people died, so that they considered the woods here like war, because when they went to cut down a tree they cut it all around and then didn't know where it would fall and there was another tree which was cut and trapped them underneath. It was serious business and they didn't have anything, only what they had brought from back home!

The reconnaissance journey of some people from Casso before 1878 is confirmed by Lanfranco Morgante of the “Committee of the Friuli Agricultural Association for the society of the Friulian farmers emigrated to South America” who recorded the passage overseas of a “wandering huckster who left in September 1877 for Brazil, from where he wrote multiple times to say he was doing well; his example was followed by others not long after”<sup>8</sup>. The experience of the people from Casso shows a migratory strategy shared by a whole group: the community is close at home and stays close abroad, too. The same choice has been made since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in many other alpine communities of Veneto and Friuli who considered emigration, especially overseas, as the fulfilment of an “instinctive but objective project of economic and social rise, which is stubbornly pursued, and partly accomplished, in the space of various generations”<sup>9</sup>. The good news about new prospects of life on the other side of the Atlantic ocean was indeed immediately welcomed by the peasants of Casso, which, with 47 persons (10 families and 4 individuals), registered the highest rate (30,24) of emigrants per thousand inhabitants in the whole district of Maniago. “The hamlet Casso – writes Morgante, – the westernmost corner of the province, contributed to the emigration with 47 of its 377 inhabitants (none from the hamlet Erto); more would have

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. L. MORGANTE, *Sulla emigrazione nell’America Meridionale. Dalla provincia di Udine – Dati statistici. Distretto di Maniago*, in “Buletino della Associazione Agraria Friulana”, 1878, s. III, v. I, p. 202.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. E. FRANZINA, *La storia altrove. Casi nazionali e casi regionali nelle moderne migrazioni di massa*, Verona, Cierre Edizioni, 1998, p. 186.

followed that example – 130 passports had already been issued to that end, as recorded in the town archives – but the lack of money prevented many from going”. Father Luigi Marzano, apostolic missionary and vicar of Urussanga, meticulously described the getting together, on March 27, 1878 at the station of Conegliano, of people from Belluno, Longarone, Cadore, Friuli and Treviso, who were leaving for the state Santa Catarina through Milan, Turin, Modane, Lyons, Paris and Le Havre<sup>10</sup>. After having reached the Norman port, these people from Veneto and Friuli spent twenty-seven long days on the French steamer “Saint Martin” until Rio de Janeiro and almost as many days to reach their final destination passing through Santos, Desterro (Florianopolis), Laguna and Tubarão. The two groups settled down separately, once they arrived in Urussanga: the people from Veneto, who outnumbered the others and came from different towns (Longarone, Castellavazzo, Provagna, Pirago, Soffranco, Igne), settled down in the colonial capital city and in the towns Rancho dos Bugres, Linha Rio Major, São Pedro and São Valentim. The people from Casso chose, instead, Rio Major, in an area of high hills, four miles north of the capital city, on the banks of the river having the same name<sup>11</sup>. They were the families of Ignazio, Agostino and Giovanni Maria Mazzucco *Tonin*; Bernardo Mazzucco *Bianco*; Felice Manarin *Mangioni*; Bernardo De Lorenzi *Dinon*; Caetano and Francesco De Lorenzi *Cancellier*; Giovanni De Lorenzi *Canever*; Felice Barzan *Bacelo*; Beniamino Mazzucco *Menego*; Giovanni De Lorenzi *Cancellier*; Antonio and Francesco De Lorenzi *Canever*; Agostino De Lorenzi *Bocardo*; Antonio De Lorenzi *Frol*; Felice De Lorenzi *Cancellier* and Giacomo Manarin *Buchio*<sup>12</sup>. The division of the area between two communities is a common phenomenon which occurred not only in Urussanga, but also in many other colonies where people from Friuli and Veneto settled down. In the colony Dona Isabel, in Monte Belo do Sul in the state Rio

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. L. MARZANO, *Coloni e missionari italiani nelle foreste del Brasile*, Firenze, Tipografia Barbera, 1904, p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. A. ESCARAVACO, *Urussanga. As Imagens da Historia. Da colonização à última década do século XIX*, Criciúma, Gráfica e Editora Trabajara Ltda., 1984, pp. 12-13 and 16.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. O. DE LORENZI CANCELLIER – V. MAZURANA, *Rio Maior. Traços culturais e transformações de um grupo de imigrantes italianos do sul de Santa Catarina*, Orleans, ELO, 1989, p. 15.



Grande do Sul, for instance, people from Friuli (from Poffabro, Frisanco, Maniago, Polcenigo, Cavasso Nuovo) settled down in Argemiro and Santa Barbara, those from Veneto (from the provinces of Treviso, Belluno and Vicenza) in Zamith and Alcântara<sup>13</sup>. The presence of a group of families from Cavasso Nuovo in the Linha Argemiro (surface 151,250 m<sup>2</sup>), which after 1877 was inhabited almost exclusively by Friulian colonists, is for instance a sure fact: here lived the families of Antonio and Isabella Bernardon (their daughter Anna, born in Cavasso on July 31, 1875 married Thiago Fachinello from Asolo on April 23, 1894); of Giuseppe Toffoli (son of Michele and Maddalena Lovisa, born in Cavasso on August 25, 1854; he married Anna Lovisa on November 7, 1882); of Rosa Lovisa (daughter of Giacomo and Lucia Lovisa, born in Cavasso on May 27, 1856; she married Davide Longo from Poffabro) and of Anna and her brother Domenico Lovisa (children of Nicola and Caterina Colussi). Anna, born in Cavasso on April 26, 1861 married José Toffoli (who died on April 4, 1898) and remarried with José Cesca; Domenico, born in Cavasso on May 29, 1863 married Maria Romana Luisa Vissat from Frisanco<sup>14</sup>. There are limited relationships between people from Friuli and from Veneto, and the existence of a boundary between them is clearly proved by the fact that the first community is often mocked: “Dress well, otherwise you look like the ugly Friulian women” (in dialect “Vestiti ben, se no te pare una di chele furlanate!”) is what women were told by men in Monte Belo do Sul. The situation in Rio Major was not very different. Antonio Mazzucco *Tonin* notes that there were few contacts between the people from Casso and the ones from the neighbouring Longarone.

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<sup>13</sup> To analyse the features and methods of the emigration from Frisanco and Poffabro to Brazil and Monte Belo do Sul, see especially L. RAZADOR, *Povoadores e História de Monte Belo do Sul. De Zamith a Monte Belo do Sul*, Porto Alegre, EST Edições, 2005; see also F. MICELLI, *Friulani in Rio Grande do Sul. Il caso degli emigrati di Frisanco (Friuli occidentale)*, in M. REGINATO (edited by), *Dal Piemonte allo Stato di Espírito Santo. Aspetti della emigrazione italiana in Brasile tra Ottocento e Novecento*, Torino, Regione Piemonte – Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli – Sides, 1996, pp. 316-340.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. L. RAZADOR, *Povoadores e história de Monte Belo do Sul*, cit., pp. 38-40, 44, 89, 108; the information about Domenico Lovisa was provided by Edylio Domingos Luvisa, Bento Gonçalves, Brazil.

[People from Casso and from Longarone] didn't get along, as we say, and, as tradition demanded, they didn't become friends here either.

Sometimes people from Veneto and from Friuli are closer in their home country than abroad. In this case their closeness is due to the choice of Brazil as main migratory destination. This happens mainly in the areas close to the border: the farmers from Casso leave together with those from Longarone and Castellavazzo; those from Caneva, in the district of Sacile, go to Brazil with their countrymen from the neighbouring Cordignano<sup>15</sup>. This phenomenon shall not be underestimated, as at first most emigrants to Brazil came from these two towns in western Friuli<sup>16</sup>. Although emigration from Friuli was at first directed to Brazil, it quickly shifted to Argentina. "Emigration to Brazil would be, according to the information we received from the district of Sacile and from other parts of the province, calamitous to our people" writes Gabriele Luigi Pecile<sup>17</sup>. And he adds: "If emigration to Argentina has made few of our people happy and many unhappy, emigration to Brazil was positively disastrous. Letters are terrible and many emigrants directed there haven't sent any news"<sup>18</sup>.

The people from Casso had different experiences in Brazil, though. In 1880, two years after the arrival of the first colonists, other three families from Casso arrived in Rio Major (Eugenio, Vincenzo and Antonio Mazzucco *Tonin*), together with the families of Giuseppe, Lino and Giacomo Mazzucco *Baco* (from Castellavazzo), of Stefano Pilon (from Pirago), of Mariano Patel, of Antonio Bratti (from Cimolais) and of Giovanni Sachet. They were followed by the families of Stefano Giordani

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<sup>15</sup> About the experiences of the peasants from Caneva and the whole district of Sacile in Brazil, see J. GROSSUTTI, *Da Vallegger oltreoceano. Emigranti canevesi in Brasile fine Ottocento*, in G. GRI (edited by), *Caneva*, Udine, Società Filologica Friulana, 1997, pp. 367-384.

<sup>16</sup> Between 1876 and 1886, the districts of the Italian Friuli with the highest rate of expatriates (overseas) per thousand inhabitants are, together with Palmanova, Maniago and Sacile. In the district of Maniago the rate is 53.96 permil, in Sacile 58.37 and in Palmanova it reaches 62.95. In the same period (1876-1886), the highest average expatriation rates per thousand inhabitants in the whole Friuli are also registered in the districts of Palmanova (5.72), Sacile (5.31) and Maniago (4.91). Cf. A. LAZZARINI, *Campagne venete ed emigrazione...* cit., p. 337.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. G. L. PECILE, *Cronaca dell'emigrazione*, in "Buletino della Associazione Agraria Friulana", 1878, s. III, v. I, p. 147.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. G. L. PECILE, *La emigrazione italiana al Brasile*, in "Buletino della Associazione Agraria Friulana", 1878, s. III, v. I, p. 184.

from Claut in 1888 and of Battista Fabbro in 1893<sup>19</sup>. The success of the migratory adventure is furthermore confirmed by the few people going back home. Despite all the troubles the people from Casso had to face, Antonio Mazzucco *Tonin* wrote that

The older male emigrants positively thought that staying in Brazil was better than living in Italy, although they loved Italy, as it was their home country. Women, instead, would have preferred to remain in Italy, even in poverty. They missed the nature and the climate. But they did not give in and kept trying. Only one person had left Rio Major to go back to Casso, but it was due to family conflicts.

The old men never said that Italy was better, they loved it because it was their home country, but wasn't better, it was better here; women didn't agree! My grandma and all the other old ladies: in Italy it was better. However bad it was, however poor one was, there it was better. Every one of them, I never heard anyone say that it is better here. No chance to hear that! They said, there an apple has no maggots, grapes grow without giving them anything, not here. Everything was better there, because you knew in winter and also in summer, not like here where the heat is unbearable. Ah, you had to get by and very few of them went back. And of our people here, in Rio Major, from Casso, only one went back! One left, went back to Casso, it was De Lorenzi *Cancellier*. He didn't get along with his daughter-in law here, I don't know what, he went back to Casso. But when he arrived in Genoa again, he was covered with lice, so he was the only man who went back home.

Antonio Cordella from Zoldo Alto makes similar comments in the letter he sends to the mayor of his town in 1892 from Urussanga: "To tell the truth, I am more

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<sup>19</sup> About the migration experience of the Giordanis in Urussanga, see STEFANO GIORDANI, *Vecchio emigrante in Brasile*, in "Bollettino Parrocchiale di Claut", Easter 1980.

than happy and would never come back to my country”<sup>20</sup>. The uncertainty with which emigration, even overseas, was dealt with at first is nevertheless confirmed, for example, by the decision of the people from Casso not to give up their properties. In his report Lanfranco Morgante, the mayor of Erto and Casso, wrote that:

Emigration will result profitable for expatriates. They are really hard-working, accustomed to hardships and to the greatest sacrifices, so that it can be said that in no other region or town, however barren and sad it might be, there are people who work as much, eat poorly and sleep even on rocks and on the bare ground, wherever they are. These people are made of iron and emigration will always be very agreeable to them, as long as they have enough *polenta* to eat. In the locality Casso, very few well-to-do families aside, people are used to eating potatoes, few beans and maybe twice a week *polenta*, made for a quarter of cornmeal flour and for the rest of potatoes with the peel and all. It was the people from Casso who, in the past years, worked on railways abroad and stood out with their utmost diligence and economy in bringing money to their families; back then, too, it was said that emigration was a good thing, especially since there were no jobs available in town. None of the emigrants sells their lands to move to America, nor did they leave them without having found someone to farm them. They found the necessary money in different ways: some already had some saved up, others sold part of their cattle to make enough money. They left with the intention of coming back; and they have money, so that they can come back immediately

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<sup>20</sup> Cf. F. MODESTI, *Emigranti bellunesi dall'800 al Vajont. Sfruttamento, burocrazia, culture popolari*, Milan, Franco Angeli, 1987, p. 126.

if things in America should go wrong. We don't know exactly how things are going so far<sup>21</sup>.

The emigrants from Casso, as recalled by Antonio Mazzucco *Tonin*, settled down in Rio Major. Between the late 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, this area was completely inhabited and the available lands were not enough any more. Like the Di Fants did in a different context, the people from Casso, too, bought distant, still unoccupied lands, where their children, who had been born in Brazil, would settle down: this is how the following towns were founded: Palmeiras Alta (1898), Palmeiras do Meio (1901), Rio Palmeiras Baixo (1907/8), Rio Molia (1892/3) and Palermo (1902). What enables the people from Casso to make enough money to buy the new lands is working as stonemasons in the construction of the many bridges along the railway "Thereza Christina", linking Lauro Müller to the port of Imbituba. The railway had been financed by the English and was used to transport coal. At first, the pioneers from Casso ended up doing the same job that seasonal emigrants to the "Germanies" had done before them.

Antonio Mazzucco *Tonin* also recalls that men went far away to look for the kind of job they were specialized in: stonecutters and builders of bridges and railways. They found employment in the English company building the railway linking a coal mine in Lauro Müller to the sea, to the ports of Laguna and Imbituba. No one was really a farmer in Casso, they were all stonemasons and stonecutters; they were skilled in that job and earned a lot, but they had to use their earnings to buy land for the children who were getting married. The Brazilian government had indeed invited them over to be farmers and had entrusted them with land. So they spread from Rio Major to Palmeiras do Mejo.

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. L. MORGANTE, *Sulla emigrazione nell'America Meridionale...* cit., pp. 292-293.

Men had to go out to get a job, to earn twenty cents. And here there was a coal mine, a railway and they were all stonecutters and built those bridges and railways, because they had said it before that those who came from Casso were no farmers, they were all stonecutters and here they employed these stonecutters to build the railway bridges. They were all busy, only the women were at home, that's why crooks took advantage of it and went inside. It was a bad danger. In Casso they all left as stonecutters, they said "fora pal Essempon" [...] On the railways in the years '92-'93, when the English came and the railway was used to go get the coal, the coal belonged to a certain Enrique Lajes later on; at first it was the Viscount de Barbacena, a count, they call him viscount here [...] The mine was up here, but what about the coal transport? So they commissioned an English company to come and build a railway from Lauro to the port of Laguna or Imbituba, but first Laguna, then Imbituba, which is a stretch going beyond the bridge which enables a sea branch to go to the other side, the two ways go one to Imbituba and the other one to Laguna. The port was the place where the coal needed to be brought, so the railway was necessary. So they employed most of our farmers, all those who were able to go work outside, did so [...] So they made the railway and all our people earned some money, they fared well, but they bought land immediately because when they arrived as emigrants the government gave each family a colony, 30 hectares. But then children grew up, so it was necessary to buy them a colony, because I remember back then they used to ask: This Friulian is marrying that Friulian, did they buy the colony? They didn't ask for the car! So here, a place we call Palmeras de Meio, there are only these people. Up there there is Palmera Alta and down there Palmera Bassa, it's still the people from

Rio Maior, their children. Those lands have all been bought with the money earned with the railway.

When they migrate overseas, the inhabitants from the Val Colvera, in Western Friuli, prefer Brazil, too. From 1871 to 1889, 194 persons belonging to 29 families crossed the ocean; although the “Register of the population of the Town Frisanco” records “America” as destination for each journey overseas, it is almost certain that it was Brazil<sup>22</sup>. It was mainly families from Poffabro, who in Brazil settled down in the colonies Dona Isabel (now Bento Gonçalves) and Conde d'Eu (now the towns Garibaldi and Carlos Barbosa)<sup>23</sup>. A letter, sent from Dona Isabel by Agostino Brun Danelon from Poffabro on August 3, 1882 (and those of January 25, same year, and August 10, 1883) to father Daniele De Zorzi, vicar of Poffabro, describes in great detail the geographical conditions and the way of living in the colony; the relationships to the fellow countrymen (the Filippis and Culaus from Frisanco, the Danelons and Tramontina Florians from Poffabro), who settled down between Linea Jansen and Linea Algemira, both re-created the original community overseas and preserved (almost) intact the traditional ways of life<sup>24</sup>. The preservation of one's identity as farmers did not, however, hinder the choices of

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<sup>22</sup>Cf. F. MICELLI, *Emigrazione friulana in Brasile: il caso di Frisanco nelle Prealpi Carniche*, Trieste, Università degli Studi di Trieste, 1994, pp. 4; ID., *Frisanco, Poffabro, Casasola: orizzonti migratori a confronto*, in N. CANTARUTTI (edited by), *“Commun di Frisanco”. Frisanco - Poffabro - Casasola*, Maniago, Comune di Frisanco, 1995, pp. 247-271; J. GROSSUTTI, *La comunità di Frisanco all'estero, traccia per un'anagrafe*, in CANTARUTTI, op. cit., pp. 277-294.

<sup>23</sup>The reply of the mayor of Frisanco to the ministerial circular letter dated March 21, 1884 inquiring about the “causes and special features of the emigration in the strict sense of the word” for the years 1882-84 reports 221 real emigrants and 585 seasonal emigrants. The mayor does not hide the fairly good conditions of his townsmen in Brazil and lists as main causes of emigration “poverty for many, the wish for better luck and the shortage of agricultural products for others”. “The incitements of emigration agents” are added to the main causes for emigration from the town in the reply to a similar ministerial circular letter four years later (August 7, 1888). Most of the 80 real and 234 seasonal emigrants (farmers) still go to Brazil, see BIANCA M. PAGANI, *L'emigrazione friulana dalla metà del secolo XIX al 1940*, Udine, Arti Grafiche Friulane, 1968, pp. 122-153. About the emigration of Friulian (and Italian) farmers to Brazil, especially to the state Rio Grande do Sul, see A. I. BATTISTEL - R. COSTA, *Assim vivem os Italianos. Vida, historia cantos, comidas e estorias*, vol. I, Caxias do Sul, Escola Superior de Teologia Sao Lourenço de Brindes-Editora da Universidade de Caxias do Sul, 1982, pp. 14-44; L. A. DE BONI - R. COSTA, *Os Italianos do Rio Grande do Sul*, Caxias do Sul, Escola Superior de Teologia-Correio Riograndense-Universidade de Caxias do Sul, 1984, pp. 62-109; L. A. DE BONI, *Le colonie del Brasile meridionale nei documenti delle autorità italiane*, in R. COSTA - L. A. DE BONI (edited by), *La presenza italiana nella storia e nella cultura del Brasile*, Torino, Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1991, pp. 170-196; F. MICELLI, *La montagna friulana e l'emigrazione nelle Americhe: il caso di Cleulis*, in “In Alto”, CXII (1994), vol. LXXVI, pp. 75-85.

<sup>24</sup>See Parish Archive of Frisanco, Letter of the Brazilian Empire, January 25, 1882, August 3, 1882, August 6, 1882 and August 10, 1883.

the boldest: it was indeed Ernesto Tramontina from Poffabro who founded the famous Brazilian knife company carrying his family name.

Departures for Brazil have been recorded also in the district of Gemona and especially in the capital. In 1878 the provincial representative and secretary of the “Committee of the Friuli Agricultural Association for the society of the Friulian farmers emigrated to South America”, Pietro Biasutti, described the departures from the district of Gemona to the “New World to look for wider and friendlier lands”<sup>25</sup>. Biasutti wrote: “All left with the intention of not coming back and they mainly turned to Argentina, near Rosario di Santa Fe; seven, among whom a family of 5 people, stopped in Brazil in Santa Maria di Bocca di Monte”. Pietro Londero from Gemona also stopped here. “Contrary to what is generally believed and to what the emigrants reported about Brazil, [Londero] found his luck in S. Maria di Bocca di Monte, after having fruitlessly wandered through Argentina”, wrote Biasutti, who reported what Londero had written: “Don’t go to the Republic of Argentina, because it’s not our thing, because there are so many locusts that eat up the whole crop”. Another group of Friulians from Buia settled down in the area around Santa Maria, also known as the 4<sup>a</sup> Colônia da Imigração Italiana (fourth colony of Italian immigration): it is mainly the families Aita, Nicoloso, Guerra, Comaretto and Felice. Vincenzo Guerra was born in Buia on July 19, 1858 and arrived in Brazil in 1878. After working in a rudimentary kiln close to the large shed which had been destined to the Friulians after their arrival in the 4<sup>a</sup> Colônia, he worked with a group of Germans from the Volga area to build the first road linking Silveira Martins (colonial capital city) and Santa Maria. With the Russian-Germans, Vincenzo also worked to manufacture tiles and bricks in Estação Pinhal, which helped him save enough money to build his own kiln. In 1883 he bought the plot no. 134 of the Linha (line) 4 South (Pompei) in the area Silveira Martins, where he erected a brickyard to produce tiles and bricks. In 1899 Vincenzo was

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<sup>25</sup> About the emigration from the area around Gemona to Brazil see M. ERMACORA, *Coloni e pionieri gemonsi nelle Americhe. Note sulle partenze nei primi anni della “grande emigrazione” (1877-1888)*, in E. COSTANTINI (edited by), *Glemone*, 78m. Congresso della Società Filologica Friulana, Settembre 23, 2001, Udine, Società Filologica Friulana, 2001, pp. 191-206.



taken ill with a serious disease, but he managed to recover: as proof of his devoutness, in 1900 he had a chapel built and, later on, between 1908 and 1909, a church consecrated to Our Lady of Pompei. The church, octagonal-shaped and with a diameter of 13 metres, still stands and welcomes every year the procession of the descendants of family Guerra and of the Friulian and Italian families which have settled down here<sup>26</sup>.

According to Pietro Biasutti “this emigration is thus not yet driven by need [...], it is rather the result of a calculation, the effect of a reasoned decision: to sell one’s land at a high price here in order to buy much land at a low price in Argentina”. Biasutti explains the decision of the inhabitants of the district of Gemona with the disappearance of the earnings from temporary migration, the growing needs, the population growth, but he imputes the departures “mainly and specifically to a sort of mental hallucination, to an adventurous spirit, to the feverish craving to suddenly become landowners”. Pietro Biasutti does not hide his point of view: the decision of his townsmen was made “under the influence of exaltation and passion”<sup>27</sup>. His conclusions aside, Biasutti’s remarks are important because, although they specifically refer to the district of Gemona, they acknowledge that the emigrants actually assessed the situation, calculating pros and cons of their decision to leave.

The departures towards the 4<sup>a</sup> Colônia da Imigração Italiana kept taking place until the 1880s. On May 10, 1883 the commission responsible for measuring the plots to be assigned to the colonists and managed by Dr. Siqueira Couto started measuring the land where the Friulians who had arrived on February 10 would settle down. The new colony was at first called Nucleo Norte, as it lay north of Silveira Martins, but was later called Nova Udine (New Udine) as a tribute to the Italian colonizers coming from the province of Udine<sup>28</sup>. They were mainly farmers

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. O. e R. DAL LAGO, *A Pompeia de Vincenzo Guerra. “La casa di Buia del Friuli”*, Santa Maria-Rio Grande do Sul, Imprensa Universitaria, 1993.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. P. BIASUTTI, *Sulla emigrazione nell’America Meridionale. Dalla provincia di Udine – Dati statistici. Distretto di Gemona*, in “Buletino della Associazione Agraria Friulana”, v. I (1878), pp. 240-241.

<sup>28</sup> In 1939 this name was changed to Ivorá (as the place is still called), which means “river with the well-rounded beach”. This change was suggested by the Historical and Geographical Institute of Brazil because of the persecutions

from the district of Gemona, above all from the capital, among whom the families Cargnelutti, Londero, Venturini, Moro, Forgiarini, Copetti, Boezio, Brondani, Goi, Pascottini, Simonetti, Stroilli<sup>29</sup>.

According to the “Bulletin of the Friuli Agricultural Association”, in the three years 1877-1879 3,817 Italian “Friulians” left for South America (above all Argentina and Brazil): 571 in 1877, 1,544 in 1878 and 1,702 in 1879. In the same period, (European) temporary migration was much higher: 16,699 in 1877, 26,353 in 1878 and 15,286 in 1879<sup>30</sup>. Not all contemporary researchers of the migratory phenomenon agree on the numbers recorded in the “Bulletin”<sup>31</sup>. It is however interesting to note the remarkable increase of “real” and temporary emigrants between 1877 and 1878 as well as the decrease of the temporary ones between 1878 and 1879.

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foreigners (Italians, but above all Germans) had to endure during the Second World War; about the colony of Nova Udine see S. T. BELLINASO, *Ivorà. Cem anos de historia 1883-1993*, Santa Maria, Pallotti, 1991.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. B. A. SPONCHIADO, *Imigração & 4ª Colônia. Nova Palma & Pe. Luizinho*, Nova Palma – Santa Maria, Paróquia Santíssima Trindade – Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Pró-Reitoria de Extensão, 1996, pp. 63, 293-342.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. P.[ecile?], *Cronaca dell'emigrazione*, in “Buletino della Associazione Agraria Friulana”, v. III (1880), n. 10, pp. 77-78.

<sup>31</sup> On the basis of the various estimates, Gino and Alberto di Caporiacco suggest a quantity-based outline of the permanent emigration from the “Italian” and “Austrian” Friuli from 1876 to 1880, see Gino e Alberto di Caporiacco, *1877-1880 Coloni friulani in Argentina, in Brasile, Venezuela, Stati Uniti*, Reana del Rojale, Chiandetti Editore, 1978, p. 236.

## **An unusual migratory choice: from Caneva to Espirito Santo**

Between the late 1870s and the 1880s, increasingly larger groups of farmers going to Brazil added to the high numbers of temporary migrants in the district of Sacile. The District is made up of two very different areas: on the one side the lower plain, on the other the higher, alpine towns like Polcenigo, Budoia and Caneva. The two different geographical areas determine two different lifestyles: “Agriculture and sheep-farming in the towns closest to Polcenigo, Caneva and Budoia are the only activities of most of the inhabitants of the district; the civilian population is involved in the arts and crafts common to any town and there are no manufacturing plants which could be interesting from a health-related point of view”<sup>32</sup>. In the District of Sacile, Caneva is the town with the highest number of emigrants to Brazil. Between 1871 and 1881, the population of this town grows in the same way as the whole District: the District registers an increase of 280 persons, Caneva of 92. In the higher area of the town (and of the district) there is, however, a remarkable decrease in population in that decade: a decrease of 80 persons is registered in Sarone, of 169 in Budoia and of 477 in Polcenigo. The population decrease should not, however, be ascribed only to the higher number of seasonal emigrants leaving the mountains to go abroad: Polcenigo, Budoia and Caneva are indeed the three towns in the District with the highest number of emigrants to Southern America and Brazil.

The Friulian landowners’ open astonishment and mistrust in front of the first numerous departures for Argentina and Brazil in 1877 led to the foundation of a special committee the following year. The meagre crops had worsened the already uncertain conditions of farm labourers: “Only few towns in our Friuli, few families, can count on enough stores of maize to last till September, till the next harvest”. In his report dating December 31, Della Savia adds: “In the meantime, the statistics of the registry office at the end of the year show a clear predominance

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<sup>32</sup>Cf. *Sacile e il suo distretto*, Udine, Tipografia di Giuseppe Seitz, 1868, p. 63. On the occasion of the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Friuli Agricultural Association, the town of Sacile prepared a monographic research which was then presented to the members who got together in the town. This research is composed of three parts (geographical and topographical outline, historical outline, statistics) and offers a detailed overview of the District of Sacile and its towns.

of births over deaths: the population is growing and the migratory trend developing above all in the higher Friuli would not be injudicious. The phenomenon is not temporary and personal like in the past years, when people spent the working season in the near Austria and Germany to come back home in winter with more or less earnings. Now it's America, Brazil, the republic of Argentina calling for our farmers to colonize their huge territories"<sup>33</sup>. Population growth and production decline in agriculture were actually only some of the causes of the farmers' serious discomfort. Even before the outburst of the agricultural crisis of the Eighties, the ongoing effects of the cryptogam, the cocoon-related crisis, the remarkable decrease in supplementary crafts, the high taxes on land, the wheat tax, the salt tax and the pig tax all contributed to the worsening of the farmers' living conditions<sup>34</sup>. The increasing number of available labourers had led to a lower demand of hands in the countries of the Danube basin, which were struck by the crisis between 1874 and 1876. As Emilio Morpurgo notes when writing about Veneto in the *Agrarian Survey*: "The area lacks the necessary balance, nor can it be achieved, between the number of workers and the economy of production, between its limits and the earnings the workers need. Where the land is not generous, the number of people exceeds the needs of agriculture and the products of the land itself. Where the land is or could be rich, labour is not sufficiently rewarded, sometimes people have not enough to live on"<sup>35</sup>. The economic discomfort strikes everybody harshly: from daily farm labourers to casual workers, from sharecroppers to small landowners, so how – wonders Morpurgo – "can the landowners be condemned here and now, when they are among the many people who suffer and if, as is the case in most of Friuli, workers and landowners are equally doomed"<sup>36</sup>. At first, not everybody can

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<sup>33</sup>Cf. A. DELLA SAVIA, *Notizie campestri e commerciali*, in "Buletino della Associazione Agraria Friulana", Nuova Serie (1877), vol. 5, p. 790

<sup>34</sup>Cf. A. LAZZARINI, *Campagne venete ed emigrazione di massa (1866-1900)*, Vicenza, Istituto per le ricerche di storia sociale e di storia religiosa, 1981, pp. 157-181

<sup>35</sup>Cf. *Atti della Giunta per la Inchiesta Agraria e sulle condizioni della classe agricola. Volume IV. Relazione del Comm. Emilio Morpurgo sulla XI Circostrizione (provincie di Verona, Vicenza, Padova, Rovigo, Venezia, Treviso, Belluno e Udine)*, Roma, Tipografia del Senato, 1982, p. 34

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.* p. 54

however emigrate in order to escape the crisis. Only the small landowners had the means to scrape up enough money to leave<sup>37</sup>. “Looking at the close province of Udine, there are four fifth [rate of landowners based on the population] in Tolmezzo and even more in the whole Carnia, the same in the towns Budoja, Polcenigo and Caneva in the district of Sacile”<sup>38</sup>. These were the towns in the District with the highest rate of emigrants going overseas. In the lower area, in Sacile, “where sharecropping is common” and where “the severe economic situation jeopardizes morality”, it was much more difficult to free oneself from the land<sup>39</sup>. The few manufacture activities in the District, a paper mill and two old-style brickworks in Sacile, the manufacturing of hemp ropes in Brugnera, could only employ a limited number of people. Thanks to the introduction of steam machines, “quick progress” was expected in sericulture, the main industry in the District, which had, however, not yet reached the remarkable production it would achieve in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>40</sup>.

The “Committee of the Friuli Agricultural Association for the society of the Friulian farmers emigrated to South America” closely cooperates with the “Society of Italian emigrants” in Rome, founded in 1875 by senator Luigi Torelli, former prefect of Venice<sup>41</sup>. The Agricultural Association, made up of Friulian landowners, carefully observes the volume and features of the migration overseas. At first Valussi and then Pecile, Biasutti, de Girolami and Morgante show a fundamentally liberal attitude (with different nuances). From an ideological standpoint, Valussi’s attitude was consistent: according to him, the restriction of migration by means of police intervention would lead to an artificial reduction of the most active element of social change. The resistance against emigration overseas expressed in the letters of (assumably) disappointed emigrants, which were published as dissuasive measure in the “Bulletin”, should not cause

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<sup>37</sup>Cf. LAZZARINI, op. cit., pp. 182-184

<sup>38</sup>Cf. MORPURGO, op. cit., p. 471

<sup>39</sup>Ibid. pp. 15 and 16.

<sup>40</sup>See *Sacile e il suo ...*, cit., p. 100; BORIN, op. cit., pp. 62 and 82.

<sup>41</sup>Cf. E. FRANZINA, *La grande emigrazione. L’esodo dei rurali dal Veneto durante il secolo XIX*, Venice, Marsilio Editori, 1976, pp. 168-169

misunderstandings about the ideological standpoint of the Agricultural Association<sup>42</sup>. The Committee's aim does not lie in "the promotion or hindering of emigration, but in providing our threatened agriculture with adequate and legitimate means of defence by fighting ignorance and fraud"; it intends to collect and disclose more precise information, to examine and propose the best ways to safeguard our farmers' emigration as well as our landowners' general interests"<sup>43</sup>. In this regard, on July 18, 1878 the Committee decided to consult the mayors of the province to "collect the names and further information about those who have already emigrated there [to South America]" in order to "differentiate between good and bad emigration", i.e. the one "freeing countries from idlers and criminals, decreasing excessive population, likely to have a good outcome" and the one "dragging hard-working and relatively well-off families to venture to distant countries, leaving their country in a lack of farm labourers, or taking place with no guarantee as to the fate awaiting the emigrants"<sup>44</sup>. In the second half of 1878 the "Bulletin of the Friuli Agricultural Association", the Committee's main publication, reported every month about the reaction of the various towns to the circular letter dated July 18. The detailed description of the migratory situation in each Friulian district is followed by a collection of letters, surveys and newspaper articles published on this and that side of the ocean. On August 3, the Committee had already received the answers of 76 towns: "On the basis of the careful reply of the town Caneva and of a letter received from Mr. Pera", wrote Gabriele L. Pecile, "it is noted that emigration from the district of Sacile was directed to Brazil, and not Argentina, and is also in regrettable conditions"<sup>45</sup>. A few months later, Pecile reasserted the "disastrous" character of emigration to Brazil "which took place before the one towards Argentina, but stopped because of the miserable outcome"<sup>46</sup>. On the basis of the report signed by the mayor of Caneva on July 24,

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<sup>42</sup>In this regard, see F. MICELLI, *Emigrazione friulana (1815-1915). Liberali e geografi, socialisti e cattolici a confronto*, in "Qualestoria", N. S. X (1982), n. 3, pp. 5-38

<sup>43</sup>See the "Buletino della Associazione Agraria Friulana", third series (1878), vol. 1, pp. 5

<sup>44</sup>Ibid. p. 75

<sup>45</sup>Ibid. p. 77

<sup>46</sup>Ibid. pp. 147-148

Lanfranco Morgante described the migratory phenomenon in the District of Sacile, “from where a total of 187 persons, or 34 families, left for America”<sup>47</sup>. Caneva reported about 16 families (87 emigrants): 12 among them worked in agriculture, the remaining heads of families were two coal merchants, one carpenter and a mason. The “Registry of the Population in Vallegher” lists number (street, progressive), surname of the head of the family and of the other family members, name of every person, name of the parents, nickname if available, social background, birth (day, month, year), date of the wedding if married; for people born in another town (place of birth, place of origin, date of their arrival in town), date of death, place of death, remarks<sup>48</sup>. In the Registry, the families leaving for America are marked in blue or red on the left margin of the page; their emigration can be accompanied by other remarks. The comparison with the news contained in the “Bulletin” is *de rigueur*: according to the Registry, only three families emigrated to Brazil in the first half of 1878, the families of Giobatta Carlot (Carlottin), Domenico Chiaradia (Castellan) and Giuseppe Forest, all from Vallegher. Giobatta Carlot (peasant) and his wife Antonia Florian (peasant) left in January 1878, accompanied by Adriana Feltrin (Giobatta’s mother) and their five children, then left from the port of Genoa in the following March. Domenico Chiaradia (peasant), his wife Maria Teresa Tonial and their daughter left from the same port in the same month. The Registry does not contain the date of the departure for Brazil of Giuseppe Forest (mason), his wife Lucia Camilotti and their four children; they should probably have left together with the other two families, but the untimely deaths in Genoa of the two small children Luigi and Pietro on April 1 and 21 seem to have held them up in Italy. According to the Registry, only one family left for Brazil before 1878: Raimondo Poletto, his wife Giacoma Chiaradia and their three children, who left from Genoa on July 7, 1877. The Polettos and other 55 families arrived in Vitoria on the ship *Columbia* on August 11, 1877: “After a short stay in the inn of Pedra d’Agua, which they called

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid. p. 182

<sup>48</sup>This is the only registry of the last century which is still preserved at the municipal offices.

quarantine and sometimes lasted one week or few days, the colonists continued their journey to Santa Cruz, where they arrived on the 21 at 4 p.m.; here they were lodged in specially provided houses. On August 24, a first group made up of 126 persons was transported by canoe to a place called Morro das Palmas; on the 26 the others followed”<sup>49</sup>. The registry entries confirm the departure dates published by the “Bulletin”: it states that “the first emigrations from the capital began already in June 1877; others followed from Caneva in July and from Brugnera in November of the same year; others have taken place this year, in January, from Caneva”<sup>50</sup>. The registry and the “Bulletin” do not state the same number of emigrants. With the five members of the Ros family, the number of emigrants who are “in America in 1878” according to the Index of the Families in the Parish San Tomaso Apostolo in Caneva between 1877 and 1878 (25 persons – 5 families) is much lower than the number stated in the “Bulletin” (87 persons – 16 families). This discrepancy should however be ascribed to the lack of other registries more than to the lack of accuracy of the “Bulletin”. The long report sent to the Committee by the mayor of Caneva is very interesting; it describes in detail the conditions of the first emigrants to Brazil, which are considered “bad, i.e. harmful to the town... because the town thus lacks hard-working people, few exceptions aside, while the people lured there are destined to an unlucky fate”. The mayor of Caneva adds: “The first emigrants left Genoa on July 10, 1877, and arrived in Vittoria, province of Espirito Santo, after 36 days at sea. During the first thirty days, the emigrants were employed in road works, earning 4 lire a day at Santa Croce, where they were led from Vittoria. They were later sent to the scrubland, approximately 15 miles from S. Croce, to transform the woods into tillable land. There, some began to work for the Brazilian government, on a daily basis, earning 4 lire, some others worked independently: they were assigned a plot they had to

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<sup>49</sup>Cf. L. BUSATTO, *L’immigrazione italo-veneta nello Stato di Espirito Santo*, in G. MEO ZILIO (edited by), *Presenza, cultura, lingua e tradizioni dei veneti nel mondo. Parte I. America Latina. Prime inchieste e documenti*, Venezia, Regione Veneto – Centro Interuniversitario di studi veneti, 1987, p. 148

<sup>50</sup>See “Bullettino ..”, cit., pp. 182. It shall be noted that the departures which, according to the Bulletin, take place from Caneva in January, actually occur from Genoa in the following March.



clear of trees, in exchange they would work 15 days for the government and 15 days for themselves. During the first months they worked regularly and with quite satisfying profit; later on they were struck by fevers and subcutaneous diseases caused by small insects, which then led to gangrenous sores, their health failed, their strength gave out, they lost their appetite, got discouraged, many died: whence the disheartenment and the misery. They asked to be transferred to less disastrous areas but this was refused. Discouragement grew, and so did hopelessness. Most women and children died; according to the estimates, the sick emigrants who are destined to die are not even half. They eat white bread, rice, dried meat at a price between 2 and 3 lire per person. Very little wine and of bad quality, at approximately 2 lire per jug, which corresponds to half a litre or so; maize flour costs 1.50 lire per kilo; beans cost the same; water is not very healthy, air is stuffy. At the prices just stated, those who have children do not make enough to eat. Women are lucky if they find employment as servants in some household, the others have to assist their husbands or take part in the road works". This exceptional content was provided to the mayor of Caneva by Antonio Garbellot, who "after so many hardships, angry for his son's death and annoyed with those places... arrived in his home country on July 24 [1878], leaving his fellow emigrants behind in squalor and in the utmost misery"<sup>51</sup>. The locality S. Croce is clearly Santa Cruz (Ibiracu), later called Conde d'Eu. After the whole area of the Colony Santa Leopoldina was occupied by German and Swiss emigrants, a new area was founded: Timbuì. The colonization of new lands had thus gone north along the river S. Maria del Rio Doce. In 1877, two years after the foundation of Timbuì, the available territories had been filled again due to the arrivals of the Italian colonists (mainly from Trento). This is one of the reasons why the Colony Santa Cruz was founded further north, in the area of the town bearing the same name, where plots were being measured at full speed. Luiz Busatto described the colonists' situation in the first months: "The road they began to build was the one

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<sup>51</sup>Cf. "Buletino ...", cit., pp. 182-183

leading from this *fazenda* [Morro das Palmas] to an intermediate point called Cachoeiro do Barro. The founders of Ibiracu [Santa Cruz] received, in addition to maize, 108 axes, 109 sickles, 160 spades and a small sum of money. In this case the colonists were not treated by the government the same way the ones in Santa Teresa had been, who, for the first six months, had received the necessary food as well as the salary for the road works”<sup>52</sup>. In the colony Santa Leopoldina (of which Santa Cruz is a further development) the land was to be redeemed, i.e. the assigned lands had to be paid for by instalments; they were called “prazos”, because they had to be redeemed within two years<sup>53</sup>. In this colony the “prazos” lay on the right or left bank of the rivers, so that everybody could use the water. The *fazenda* Morro das Palmas lay on the bank of the river Piraqueacu, at the confluence with the river Taquarucu, where the first one was navigable, thus enabling the access via river: from this point the colonists left towards the virgin forests. To assign plots “... the forest was explored, then a commission of engineers and surveyors arrived and measured the “prazos”. After the deforestation was completed, the colonist had six months’ time to build his house and start the first crops”<sup>54</sup>. In order to pay for the land and one’s living expenses, the colonists could rely only on the money deriving from their crops, as business activities were forbidden.

It is impossible to precisely state the number of people from Caneva, and more generally from Friuli, in the Italian group which arrived in Santa Cruz first. According to Luiz Busatto “dos 275 fundadores do nucleo Santa Cruz (Ibiracu), 101 eram de Cordignano e os outros, dos arredores”<sup>55</sup>; it is thus not unlikely that a high number of those coming from the environs were from Caneva and the other towns of the District<sup>56</sup>. The 87 emigrants who, according to the mayor of Caneva,

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<sup>52</sup>Cf. BUSATTO, op. cit., p. 148

<sup>53</sup>The plots measured 302,500 m<sup>2</sup>, they were 275 m long on the front along the rivers and 1,100 m large; the “prazos” usually bordered uncultivated land.

<sup>54</sup>Cf. BUSATTO, op. cit., p. 148

<sup>55</sup> TN: original text in Portuguese: of the 275 founders of Santa Cruz (Ibiracu), 101 were from Cordignano and the others from the environs.

<sup>56</sup>See L. BUSATTO, *Por uma identidade italo-capixaba*, in M. REGINATO (edited by), *Dal Piemonte allo Stato di Espirito Santo. Aspetti della emigrazione italiana in Brasile tra Ottocento e Novecento. Atti del Seminario*

went to Brazil are not limited to those who left in July 1877, but also include those who left in the following January. During 1879 the “Bulletin of the Agricultural Association” listed the departures from Caneva to Latin America in July, August and November. The people who left in July “for Brazil were Lucchese Antonio from Caneva, farm labourer, with his wife and daughter, and Lucchese Francesco, mason”<sup>57</sup>. In the following August, two passports were issued in the district (although the “Bulletin” does not state the destination, we assume it is Brazil), “the first for Lucchese Giuseppe, tailor, from Caneva, who left with his wife, Favetto Bartolomea, and their son; the second for G. B. Zat, mason, also from Caneva, who emigrated with his wife Lucchese Emilia”<sup>58</sup>. The “Bulletin” does not list the names of the 57 people from Caneva who left in November<sup>59</sup>. These should include the family Sandrin (called Michellante), who according to the Index of the Families in the Parish San Tomaso Apostolo “left for Brazil of America on October 10, 1879”. The months of departure registered in the “Bulletin”, the Parish Index and the Registry do not always correspond: the date of expatriation mentioned refers sometimes to the departure from the port of Genoa, sometimes from Caneva. The Registry only confirms the emigration of Giuseppe Lucchese (called Conte), his wife Bartolomea, and their sons Antonio, Francesco and Giacomo; to be precise, Antonio, farm labourer, left with his wife and their little daughter. The expatriation of the family of Pietro Poletto (called Gusella), “who went to Brazil in December 1879”, is also listed in the Registry. Pietro, his wife Domenica Santin and their four children are precisely the seven persons who, according to the “Bulletin” of the Agricultural Association, left Caneva in January 1880<sup>60</sup>. The Polettos leave for Brazil together with Domenica’s sister, Anna Santin, her husband, Pietro Masut (called Role) from Sarone, and the little daughter Rosa, who “left from the port of Genoa on January 20 aboard the steamer

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*Internazionale Torino 22-23 settembre 1995*, Torino, Regione Piemonte-Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli-Società Italiana di Demografia Storica, 1996, p. 189

<sup>57</sup>Cf. “Buletino dell’Associazione Agraria Friulana”, series III (1879), vol. II, n. 23, p. 181

<sup>58</sup>Cf. “Buletino dell’Associazione Agraria Friulana”, series III (1879), vol. II, n. 28, p. 219

<sup>59</sup>Cf. “Buletino dell’Associazione Agraria Friulana”, series III (1879), vol. II, n. 38, p. 301

<sup>60</sup>Cf. “Buletino dell’Associazione Agraria Friulana”, series III (1880), vol. III, n. 10, p. 77

America”. The available data do not make it possible to count these two families among “the first colonists from the provinces of Udine, Belluno and Treviso who arrived on February 18 and 20, 1880 [in the newly founded Colony Castello]”<sup>61</sup>. According to the “Bulletin”, in May 1880 “26 persons left Caneva, all of them farmers with the exception of one who was a coal merchant, all going to Brazil”<sup>62</sup>. In the following July, 9 persons emigrated to South America<sup>63</sup>. According to the “Bulletin”, during 1881 only four persons from Caneva left for America (in January), none appears to have expatriated in 1882<sup>64</sup>. The Historical Archive of Rio Grande do Sul in Brazil lists instead the arrival of the family Zatti in 1881: Catarina Zatti and her sons Antonio, Angela, Giacomo and Madalena arrived in the Colony Caxias on April 11<sup>65</sup>. The end of the migration overseas coincided with the worsening of the situation in the colonies: as Grosselli recorded: “in Espirito Santo the migration influx was very low. In 1881 only 143 foreigners (42 Italians) arrived in Porto di Vitoria and 45 left (35 Italians)”<sup>66</sup>. The dramatic reduction of governmental funds in the various colonies and the subsequent delay in paying the colonists’ salaries caused a widespread dissatisfaction. As Renzo Grosselli wrote, “the colonies kept up the usual disorganization, now with less and less funds available. Conde d’Eu, which was considered a model colony, let its guests rot in the sheds”<sup>67</sup>. A series of protests had broken out in October and December 1877, until over 300 colonists from Timbuì and Santa Cruz poured into the capital in August 1878 to express their disagreement with the reduction of funds. “The government proved once again in early 1879 that it wanted to put an end to the colonies” by revoking the law 3784 of January 19, 1867, which meant that “those who were going to the Brazilian colonies would not receive any help. New saving-

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<sup>61</sup>Cf. R. M. GROSSELLI, *Colonie imperiali nella terra del caffè. Contadini trentini (veneti e lombardi) nelle foreste brasiliane. Parte II. Espirito Santo 1874-1900*, Trento, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 1987, p. 397

<sup>62</sup>Cf. “Buletino dell’Associazione Agraria Friulana”, series III (1880), vol. III, n. 27, p. 211

<sup>63</sup>Cf. “Buletino dell’Associazione Agraria Friulana”, series III (1880), vol. III, n. 34, p. 269

<sup>64</sup>Cf. “Buletino dell’Associazione Agraria Friulana”, series III (1881), vol. IV, n. 7, p. 54

<sup>65</sup>The certificate of the Arquivo Historico do Rio Grande do Sul attesting the arrival of the family Zatti from Caneva was forwarded to Father Egidio Camerin, parish priest of Caneva, by Genoveva Mussoi Sprinz from Porto Alegre, Catarina’s great-granddaughter.

<sup>66</sup>Cf. GROSSELLI, op. cit., p. 407

<sup>67</sup>Cf. Ibid. p. 357

oriented measures were being continuously introduced”<sup>68</sup>. The colonists were also often struck by diseases: as the mayor of Caneva reported, between 1877 and 1878 a yellow fever epidemic ravaged Santa Cruz. “The appearance of the disease happened at the same time as the deforestation, when the insects came down from the branches onto the ground. In March 1878 the climax was reached... and at the end of 1878 over 200 were dead. .... No family was spared and everybody in the colony was taken ill with the yellow fever”<sup>69</sup>. It is likely that one of the victims of this epidemic was Antonia Negrato, born in Borgoricco in 1854, who according to the Registry died in Brazil in 1878: a year later her husband Angelo Pisani would marry Catterina Zandonà from Stevenà “in Vitoria, city of Brazil”. The feeling of dissatisfaction of the fellow townsmen living in America had reached Caneva, and probably also the other Friulian towns.

### **Different migratory choices: “Italian” Friulians”, “Austrian” Friulians and inhabitants of the Coast in the states San Paolo and Minas Gerais**

The remarkable increase of emigration from the Friulian-Venetian countryside during the second half of the 1880s resulted from the worsening of the agricultural crisis as a consequence of the slump in cereal prices due to agricultural products coming from abroad. The farmers’ living conditions worsened altogether. In Caneva, for example, a sudden increase in departures for Brazil was registered in 1887. The Registry reports the expatriation of twelve families (58 persons); other four are mentioned in the Parish Index. Gregorio Lucchese (Conte) leaves in January; the peasant Giovanni Lessi, his wife Maria Polese and their children Maria Santa and Giovanni leave on March 15 aboard the steamer Bourgogne, directed overseas. The family of Tommaso Perin (Lorenzon) from Sarona, his wife Angela Fedrigo and their nine children, leaves fifteen days later, on March 31; the first-born, Antonio, is married and has two children. The families of the brothers

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<sup>68</sup>Cf. Ibid. p. 365

<sup>69</sup>Cf. BUSATTO, *op. cit.*, p. 149. Grosselli ascribes the deaths in Santa Cruz to “a virulent form of malaria”, instead, see GROSSELLI, *op. cit.*, p. 360

Andrea and Matteo De Marco (Pagot) with their mother Caterina Valdevit and two more children (9 persons) leave for Brazil (S. Paulo) on May 31. The Registry does not contain the date of departure of the families of Osvaldo Franco (Caldo Bin) and Marial Santin; of Domenico Manfè (Marcello), his wife Luigia Piovesana and their five children; of Sebastiano Poletto (Schiop), his wife Anna Bit, their six children and of the families of three of them (Antonio, Bartolomeo and Giobatta); and of Pietro Poletto (Schiop), his wife Anna Maria Ros and their four children. Nor does it contain the date of the return of the family of the coal merchant Matteo De Marco, who according to the Registry “came back from America and settled down in the town Alfonsine (Ferrara)”. Family Lessi’s destination is clear, it is not, however, for the other families. Maria Lessi, born Polese, gives birth to a son and a daughter in America: Matteo is born on March 6, 1889 in Casa Branca, Angelina on February 7, 1890 in Sertaozinho, in the area called Mogiana of the state of São Paulo. Their destination is not accidental: in the early Eighties the big landowners of the Western area of São Paulo, who had in the meantime come to political power, were already getting ready for the possible lack of labour due to the foreseeable liberation of slaves. The Society for Immigration Promotion was founded in 1886 on the initiative of the coffee capitalists of the west: its task was to recruit and transport European emigrants, thus ensuring a continuous and substantial flux of labourers for the *fazendas*. As noted by Renzo M. Grosselli, “when slavery was abolished in 1888, plantations were not empty of labourers (and this was one of the aims the founders of the society had in mind)”<sup>70</sup>. In 1886 the Paulista government signed a contract with the Society to transport 6000 European colonists to the *fazendas*; another agreement was signed on July 22, 1887 to transport 30,000 emigrants; with a third agreement signed in February 1888, the Society undertook to transport 60,000 European labourers. It has to be

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<sup>70</sup>Cf. R. M. GROSSELLI, *Da schiavi bianchi a coloni. Un progetto per le fazendas. Contadini trentini (veneti e lombardi) nelle foreste brasiliane. Parte IV Sao Pulo 1875-1914*, Trento, Provincia Autonoma di Trento, 1991, p. 93

noted that “an essential instrument of the policy to attract labour was the funding of the journey by the Brazilian government<sup>71</sup>”.

The agricultural crisis also strikes the “Austrian” Friuli: many families, especially those from near the border, leave for Brazil. In 1888 a group of entrepreneurs from Trieste organizes the transport of emigrants from this city. “The departure of emigrants from the port of Trieste was something new and this opportunity was immediately seized by the inhabitants of the coastal area and by many people from Veneto [...] The journeys were organized by two bankers from Trieste, the brothers Isacco and Giuseppe Morpurgo, who rented three ships of the Austrian Lloyd: the steamers «Helios», «Orion» and «Medusa», as Franco Cecotti specifies. The steamer «Helios» left for Rio de Janeiro on October 25, 1888 with 52 families, a total of 379 persons, almost entirely from the Isonzo area. The motor ship «Orion» left the port of Trieste for Rio de Janeiro on November 25, 1888 with 95 families, a total of 759 emigrants, 250 of whom Italian subjects who had been expressly transported from Venice. The last steamer, «Medusa», left for the port of Santos, in the state São Paulo, on December 27, 1888: 406 of the 736 emigrants were from Veneto and 330 were “Austrians” from the coastal area. According to the organizers, the emigrants should have reached the state Minas Gerais (which in those years launched a policy promoting peopling and agricultural colonial settlements by offering the emigrants to travel free of charge), but, after arriving at the port of Rio de Janeiro, some people from Trieste who were aboard the motor ship «Helios» were brought to the city Machaé in the state Rio de Janeiro: “changes of destinations and offers deemed to be inadequate caused such a strong protest that part of the group managed to be repatriated after having contacted the Austrian consul in Rio de Janeiro [...] Before they went back home, the Deputy had spread a placard containing the news about the request of 300 emigrants to be repatriated from Brazil. It was a clear way to dissociate from the initiative of the Morpurgo brothers, which up to that point had been tolerated by the Coastal

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<sup>71</sup>See A. TRENTO, *Introduzione a La presenza italiana nella storia e nella cultura del Brasile. Edizione italiana a cura di A. T.*, Torino, Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 1991, pp. XXII-XXIII

government”<sup>72</sup>. The ships of the Morpurgo brothers, which left Trieste between October and December 1888, brought however approximately 2000 emigrants overseas.

Between 1889 and 1894, the migratory flux to Brazil slowed down remarkably and quite a high number of emigrants went back home. After 1894 some went to the state São Paulo, because in that year “the immigration service was transferred from the federal government to the single states, which brought about the end of the agricultural colonization of Southern Brazil, as only the richest regions – i.e. essentially São Paulo – had the means to attract labourers from abroad”<sup>73</sup>. Many Friulians who had settled down in the state São Paulo, where the Italian immigrants were employed in the *fazendas* producing coffee, went back home. The crisis due to coffee overproduction in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the subsequent slump in coffee prices on the international market led to a remarkable decrease in labour demand. The Friulian and Venetian farmers at home certainly knew about it, partly due to “what we could call an inverse migratory chain, made up of negative information about the situation in Brazil sent back to their relatives and friends in Italy by the workers who had been living in São Paulo for a while”<sup>74</sup>.

### **Final remarks**

In the history of regional migratory fluxes to Brazil it is possible to identify three different experiences, which correspond to three different levels of integration in America. The experience in Rio Grande do Sul seems to represent the most successful migration; only in very few cases emigrants have gone back home. In the state Minas Gerais and in the colonies of Espírito Santo, the first destination for the farmers emigrating from the District of Sacile, the events in Santa Cruz and the many organizational problems in the colonies slowed down what was already an unstable migratory flux. The vicissitudes of the farmers who had arrived in the

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. F. CECOTTI, *L'emigrazione dal Litorale austriaco verso Argentina e Brasile. 1878-1903*, cit., pp. 22-25.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. TRENTO, op. cit., p. XXIII

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p. XXXII



sugar cane plantations in São Paulo show the often negative outcome of regional emigration to this state.

The group departures and the subsequent settlements of (relatively) homogeneous groups in Brazil corroborates the assumption that there was a will to rebuild the original community overseas, to preserve the traditional lifestyle. In Cleulis, Frisanco or Poffabro, the choice of a (basically) final emigration to Brazil coexists with the (multi)-seasonal emigration as miners to Bavaria, Pennsylvania (especially Philadelphia and Chestnut Hill) or Colorado (Silverton); these two kinds of emigration represent two different life projects, two different ways to understand social growth<sup>75</sup>. The lack of reliable data in the places of departure prevents wider-ranging generalizations. The only way to make up for this lack is to look for material in the places of arrival, to rely on the research carried out by the children and grandchildren of Friulian pioneers. Log books, books of the various “Hospedarias dos Imigrantes”, registers “matricula de colonos”, books of the “processos terras” as well as passports, letters and family documents collected on this and the other side of the ocean should enable a less superficial knowledge of this phenomenon. The rich archives in Rio Grande, Santa Catarina, São Paulo and Santo Espirito (like the one of Father Luiz Sponchiado in Nova Palma in Rio Grande do Sul) become extremely valuable, as they enable us to reconstruct whole migratory stories and larger genealogies. Another unique source of information is represented by the many requests for birth or marriage certificates sent from Brazil every month to the local parish priests. This information exchange does not only complete the work of people studying migration from the home country, it also helps reconstruct migratory routes for those who work independently in the various states of this large South American country. The reconstruction of (outbound and inbound) fluxes between this region and Brazil, the identification of other migratory chains (like in Casso and Frisanco, Cleulis and Buia) and the

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<sup>75</sup>About emigration as a choice, see F. P. CERASE, *L'emigrazione italiana nelle Americhe*, in “Bollettino di Demografia Storica”, (1987), no. 5, and “Boletín de la Asociación de Demografía Histórica”, V (1987), no. 5, pp. 31-35

discovery of other Friulian enclaves in Brazil should demonstrate the importance of pioneers' communities. The migratory experiences outlined here indicate a remarkable migratory flux and confute the Friulian and Julian researchers' belief that the preferred destination was Argentina.

On the whole, Italian migration to Brazil almost came to an end in 1915: over 4/5 (84%) of the expatriates headed there in the course of a hundred years have settled down. 90% of all the Italians who reached this South American country between 1876 and 1976 had expatriated by 1930<sup>76</sup>. The percentages should not differ for Friuli and Venezia Giulia. During the first post-war period, Argentina welcomed most of the Friulians and Julians who emigrated overseas, very few were moving to Brazil. During the second post-war period, a higher number of Julian Dalmatian exiles joined the low number of Friulians emigrating to large cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and not to the countryside anymore. For both groups, only the memory of some individuals enables us to identify their areas of departures, scattered all over the Friulian and Julian territory. An example is Luigi Papaiz, who landed in the port of Santos on May 9, 1952. Papaiz had been born in Sesto al Reghena in 1924, but before arriving in São Paulo he had worked as a metalworker and had launched the first steam iron in Italy. Thanks to his industrial activity as founder of the giant Papaiz Industria e Comercio Ltda, he contributed to the economic and industrial boom of Brazil. In the decades after the Second World War, many other Friulian and Julian emigrants, like Luigi Papaiz, gave their cultural and material contribution to the country which had so generously welcomed them: it is almost compulsory to gather the stories of their lives.

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<sup>76</sup> Cf. L. FAVERO – G. TASSELLO, *Cent'anni di emigrazione italiana (1876-1976)*, in G. ROSOLI (edited by), *Un secolo di emigrazione italiana 1876 – 1976*, Roma, Centro Studi Emigrazione, 1978, pp. 27, 31.