

Condition of Women, Education, and the Role of the Church in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies

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The study "*Condition of Women, Education, and the Role of the Church in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies*" aims to analyze the condition of women and the educational system in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, with particular attention to the role of the Church in schooling and the structuring of educational pathways. The main objective of the research is to highlight gender disparities in access to education and to understand how ecclesiastical institutions influenced the school system, contributing to the definition of women's social roles in the 19th-century South of Italy. Furthermore, it seeks to explore how the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies had, in essence, a state organization that could be described today as "theocratic." Through a historical-analytical approach, the research examines archival documents, school regulations, statistical data, and historical testimonies to provide a detailed picture of the educational policies of the period. The methodology combines qualitative and quantitative analysis of primary sources, such as the 1819 school regulations and administrative correspondence, with a critical comparison of secondary literature on the subject. In particular, it delves into the teaching methods adopted, the distribution of female schools, and the training of female teachers—key elements for understanding the impact of education on women's social opportunities in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. The study is structured into several sections, first addressing the socio-economic context of the Kingdom and the living conditions of women, followed by an analysis of Bourbon educational policies and their effect on female schooling. Particular attention is given to the city of Brindisi, chosen as a case study to provide a concrete example of the difficulties and local dynamics in implementing educational policies. Finally, the role of the Church is examined in relation to its control over education and its function in maintaining social order, concluding with a reflection on the long-term consequences of these policies on women's conditions in pre-unification Southern Italy—effects that persisted even after national unification. This research contributes to the historiographical debate on education in pre-unification Italy and the construction of gender roles, providing insight into the historical roots of educational discrimination and gender inequalities that have characterized Southern Italy.

Social Structure of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies

It is now well known that before its unification on March 17, 1861, Italy was divided into many small states. The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was the largest of

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these, geographically extending from Abruzzo to Salento on the eastern coast of the peninsula and from Campania to the entire island of Sicily on the western coast. Existing between 1816 and 1861, it was primarily based on an agricultural economy, with some areas of industrial and metallurgical excellence. It follows that a predominantly agricultural country did not perceive the importance or the opportunity of access to education; working the fields consumed all the energy needed for the day, and poverty was so dire that every family member had to contribute to the household's maintenance from a very young age, making education a luxury that could easily be dispensed with.

In the feudal-style society of Bourbon rule, the poor were undoubtedly at the bottom of the social pyramid, but women, especially poor women, lived in even more difficult conditions. They were constrained by a patriarchal system that severely limited access to education, denying them any independence or capacity to engage with the world. The society of the time imposed a life model that relegated women to so-called traditional roles, emphasizing and confining their social function and purpose solely to the roles of wives and mothers.

In this context, the *Regulations for Primary Schools for Boys and Girls of Naples and the Kingdom*, dated December 21, 1819, and found in its original format at the Historical Archive of the Municipality of Brindisi, clearly highlights the immense difference in the education provided to boys and girls, as well as the active role of the Church in their education: 30 articles regulated male education, while only 22 regulated female education¹. Indeed, the Secretary of State and Minister of the Interior, D. Naselli, through an official circular, announces and introduces the newly issued regulation concerning the education of children, promulgated by his ministry. He takes care to clarify that "the schools shall fall under the supervision of the Commission and its Inspectors, the respective Mayors and Municipal Councils, without [excluding] the higher oversight of the Bishops"².

Fundamentally, boys, if their family and economic conditions allowed, could aspire to access the three forms of knowledge: "To Know," "To Be," and "To Do." For women, however, "To Do" was prioritized over "To Know," eventually becoming exclusive as girls grew older in their educational process. In short, women were denied access to pure knowledge. In fact, their possible choices for continuing education were limited to "professional" schools for girls from good families, such as sewing schools or singing schools, with the only exception being teacher training schools for the wealthiest girls. The gender distinction in schools also applied to teachers: male teachers for boys and female teachers for girls. In short, there was little attention given by the pre-unification rulers to the spread of literacy, where

1. Archivio Storico di Brindisi (ASB), *Archivio Storico del Comune di Brindisi*, (ASCB), sez. VI, cat. 9, cl. 24, b. 1, fasc. 1. "Archivio di Brindisi" corresponds to: "Archives of the Municipality of Brindisi", and "Archivio Storico del Comune di Brindisi" corresponds to: "Historical Archives of the Municipality of Brindisi".

2. *Ibidem*.

the percentage of literate women was most likely close to zero. Most probably, the only literate women, aside from those from noble families, were nuns within convents. The ability to read was considered a means of prayer; one need only think of the observance of the *Liturgy of the Hours*, which specifically requires the reading of the *Breviary*³.

Below are the percentages of Female Schools and Private Schools in the pre-unification states⁴.

PRE-UNIFICATION STATES	PERCENTAGES OF FEMALE SCHOOLS OUT OF THE TOTAL
Kingdom of Sardinia (1850)	28
Kingdom of Sardinia (1856)	35
State of Lombardy (1822)	19 (only public schools)
State of Lombardy (1841)	40 (only public schools)
State of Lombardy (1856)	44 (only public schools)
State of Veneto (1831)	2
State of Veneto (1841)	9
State of Veneto (1856)	26
Duchy of Parma and Piacenza (1883)	50
Duchy of Lucca (1835)	24
Grand Duchy of Tuscany (1841)	47
Papal States (1858)	45
Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (1818)	21 (only public schools)
Sicily, Province of Catania (1844)	11

The 1819 Regulation also outlined pedagogical and evaluative methods to be followed: the "mutual teaching" method was preferred by authorities over the so-called "normal method," probably because mutual teaching (or the "Lancasterian method," as it was also called) allowed one teacher to instruct large classes, which was advantageous given the lack of resources⁵. Primary education for girls, as per the regulation mentioned, consisted solely of teaching them domestic arts and state duties, while boys were taught the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as the Diocese's Catechism and State duties⁶.

Gender Disparities in Education in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies

The educational policy of the Bourbon government was contradictory because, despite numerous correspondences found in archival records⁷ declaring the intention

3. R. Basso, *Donne in provincia. Percorsi di emancipazione attraverso la scuola nel Salento tra Otto e Novecento*, Franco Angeli, Milano, 2000.

4. G. Vigo, *Istruzione e sviluppo economico in Italia nel secolo XIX*, ILTE, Torino, 1971, p. 10.

5. Cfr. G. Lancaster, *The British System of Education*, J. Murray, London, 1810.

6. ASB, ASCB, sez. VI, cat. 9, cl. 24, b.1, fasc. 1.

7. ASCB, sez. VI, cat.9, cl. 24, b.1, fasc. 1.

to promote public elementary education throughout the kingdom, there were no actual policies for establishing widespread public schools. The expansion of schools was left entirely to the responsibility of the municipalities and, consequently, to the financial capacity of individual local administrations.⁸

Regarding the availability of teaching staff, a clear distinction was recognized throughout the Peninsula at the time between *formal teachers* and *informal teachers*. The former were those who practiced teaching as their sole or primary profession, whereas the latter engaged in teaching voluntarily, as a secondary activity, or on an occasional basis. Until the second half of the 18th century, no *professional schools* existed for teacher training. The first country to establish a training school for future teachers—then called *normal schools*—was the Austrian Empire in 1774. A second phase began with the creation of *method schools*, which were established in significant numbers across the northern Italian states. In contrast, in the Papal States, the belief remained firmly rooted that priests were not only spiritual shepherds but also natural educators, as primary education was considered to have a predominantly moral character. These convictions were also present in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies⁹.

Below is a summary table of the number of Public Teachers in the Kingdom of Naples, that is, the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies excluding the island of Sicily in 1814¹⁰.

PROVINCES	Population (thousands)	Number of Public Teachers	Number of Teachers per 10 ⁴ Inhabitants
Abruzzo citeriore	258	245	9
Abruzzo ulteriore I	178	181	10
Abruzzo ulteriore II	250	189	8
Molise	306	232	8
Napoli	646	265	4
Principato citeriore	433	395	9
Principato ulteriore	329	309	9
Terra di Lavoro	572	419	7
Capitanata	257	174	7
Terra di Bari	339	186	5
Terra d'Otranto	299	282	9
Basilicata	398	274	7
Calabria citeriore	354	344	10
Calabria ulteriore	462	380	8
TOTAL FOR THE KINGDOM	5.081	3.875	8

8. *Ibidem*.

9. Cfr. G. Vigo, *Istruzione e sviluppo economico in Italia nel secolo XIX ... cit.*, pp. 25-62.

10. *Ivi*, p. 34.

Regarding gender disparities, these applied not only to students but also to teachers. They earned, on average, 30% less than their male colleagues, and their recruitment was less stringent compared to that of male teachers¹¹. In fact, it is not uncommon to read reports from that time often describing female teachers as illiterate. For recruitment, it was sufficient that they were competent in teaching cutting and sewing. In this regard, Vigo states: "In the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, where the availability of female teachers was particularly scarce, women who could neither read nor write could be appointed, provided they were assisted by capable individuals—yet even this requirement was rarely met"¹² Moreover, female teachers were not entitled to paid holidays, unlike their male colleagues, who could enjoy autumn vacations¹³.

In the absence of a state policy for free and compulsory education for all, and with municipalities lacking the means to create adequate infrastructure to accommodate students, as well as being unable to train and pay teachers, mass education remained for a long time almost exclusively in the hands of the clergy, particularly the Scolopi, or "Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools", in English. They had founded the first free people's schools, known simply as "Pious Schools," as early as 1597, with the goal of educating young people in both academic and Christian terms¹⁴.

In order to provide a concrete example of the educational reality of the ancient and vast Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, the municipality of Brindisi – a city of the ancient Terra d'Otranto in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies – was used as a case study. This territorial reality serves as an example of how educational policies were implemented in the southern provinces and the challenges faced by various municipalities in the South in carrying them out.

The Piarist Educational System in Brindisi and Francavilla: A Historical Overview

In Brindisi, Father Tommaso Simone, in a letter dated May 1, 1663, provided a report on the city's conditions with the intention of establishing a school run by the *Piarists* (*Scolopi*). In this way, Brindisi was provided, for the first time, with a free elementary school. The city's natural conditions seemed highly favorable for the *Piarists* due to its agricultural nature and its port, not to mention the secure

11. ASB, ASCB, sez. VI, cat. 9, cl. 24, b.1, fasc. 1.

12. G. Vigo, *Istruzione e sviluppo economico in Italia nel secolo XIX...* cit., 1971, p. 8.

13. ASB, ASCB, sez. VI, cat. 9, cl. 24, b.1, fasc. 1.

14. L. Picanyol, *Gli Scolopi*, in M. Escobar (a cura di), *Ordini e congregazioni religiose*, SEI, Torino, vol. I, 1951, pp. 855-870.

revenues that the Order would receive from Archbishop Francesco De Estrada, the seminary, and the city itself¹⁵.

Initially, the order sent two teachers to the city: "one for the younger children, to teach them reading and writing, and one for grammar."¹⁶ Thus, the Piarists settled in Brindisi in January 1664 and initiated such a successful educational and teaching activity, that there were four teachers only a year after their arrival. The first two teachers gave lessons in reading, writing, and arithmetic to the youngest students, "particularly the children of labourers and the poor," while the other two taught Latin to allow wealthier students to pursue further studies in philosophy, civil law, and canon law¹⁷.

Student progress was monitored by the clergy, and the students had to undergo monthly assessments of Christian doctrine to ensure the effectiveness of the teachings. Additionally, the Piarist Fathers were required to supervise the students and escort them back to their homes after each lesson¹⁸.

Over time, a multifunctional educational offering was established, with simple literacy instruction for "the children of labourers" and a complete grammar course for the wealthier students. We can presume that the clerics' charitable work was favourably received as, by the mid-18th century, the Order counted an average of 15 to 16 religious instructors¹⁹.

Regarding student numbers, in July 1707, there were at least 200 students in just four classes, with an average of 50 students per course, and the premises of the Pious Schools were used for children's education well into the early 19th century²⁰.

But how did lessons in the Pious Schools' colleges take place in modern times? In the town of Francavilla in 1841, a private school, or boarding school, was opened by the Fathers of the Pious Schools. To promote new enrollments, the school published its curriculum, divided into four parts: the first focused on the students' spiritual education, the second on subjects and exams, the third on hygiene and dietary rules, and the fourth on general rules of conduct. Regarding the first part, everything was organized to ensure respect for religious duties so that they would not be forgotten in adulthood. Students were formally required to attend spiritual exercises in November and during Holy Week, confess and receive communion twice a month, recite the Rosary upon waking, and pray before bed. They were also expected to visit the Blessed Sacrament before going for walks and attend

15. A. Tanturri, *Le Scuole Pie a Brindisi (1664-1808)*, in *Archivum Scholarum Piarum*, a. XXIV, n.48 (2000), pp. 19-37

16. Cfr. AGSP, Reg. Prov. 25-A, fasc. 7, lettera del De Estrada allo Scassellati del 1° maggio 1663, in A. Tanturri, *Le scuole Pie a Brindisi (1664-1808)*.

17. A. Tanturri, *Le Scuole Pie a Brindisi ... cit.*, pp. 19-37.

18. *Ibidem*.

19. *Ibidem*.

20. Cfr. A. De Leo, *Dell'antichissima città di Brindisi e suo celebre porto*, Dalla stamperia della Società Filomatica, Napoli, 1646, p. 125, in A. Tanturri, *Le Scuole Pie a Brindisi (1664-1808) cit.*

morning Mass, sing the Psalms to the Virgin Mary in the Oratory after study, and listen to a brief meditation. Furthermore, during holidays, students had to attend Novenas, Triduums, and catechism classes on Saturday afternoons after school and Sundays from 8 p.m. to 9 p.m.²¹.

The curriculum stated, "After the heart, the intellect requires its portion," so the Fathers guaranteed lessons on the "Classics" to "seal the dry precepts in the mind," allowing students to appreciate "the beauty and privilege of expression." This was accompanied by rudimentary lessons in civil history, customs of religion, and literature. Additionally, French language lessons were offered twice a week, as well as calligraphy, basic arithmetic, and modern and ancient geography. Optional lessons in drawing, music, and dance were available at additional costs. Student progress was evaluated through monthly exams, conducted in the presence of the religious instructors, students' families, and friends, and with public exams held in May and September to "keep the fire of emulation alive in young hearts."

The third part of the regulation concerned hygiene and conduct rules, including: eight to nine hours of sleep per night, four hours for study, five for lessons, two for spiritual exercises, with the remaining hours allocated to recreation and walking. Walks were permitted five times a week from 10:30 p.m. to midnight, but morning outings were forbidden. At lunch, students were entitled to three courses and fruit, and at dinner, one course (sometimes two) along with salad and fruit; however, twice a week (Thursday and Sunday), they could have dessert. During holidays such as Easter, Christmas, the last days of Carnival, the feast of St. Joseph Calasanz (founder of the Piarists), and during autumn vacations and secular holidays, a fourth course was added.

The final part concerned rules of conduct, which were very strict and severe. For instance, the regulation stated, "Permission to visit family is never granted, not even during autumn vacations or for prolonged illness."²²

Secular Education in the Bourbon Kingdom

Regarding "secular" teaching, or more precisely Bourbon teaching, the government opposed educating the masses, considering it unreasonable to disrupt the "balance" by promoting social progress, which they believed would only lead to unhappiness. The education programs in the Bourbon state were embryonic and rudimentary.

In early 19th-century Sicily, a document titled "Plan for Public Education Practiced in Naples and to Be Established in Sicily" was drafted. This document divided the municipalities into various categories, following the Neapolitan model, with Palermo, Messina, and Catania being allowed to adopt in addition to the

21. ASB, ASCB, sez. VI, cat. 9, cl. 24, b. 1, fasc. 1.

22. *Ibidem*.

normal model the Bell and Lancaster model, deemed more practical and economical. Elementary education was funded by individual municipalities based on population and consisted of two levels: basic reading, writing, arithmetic, religious catechism, and social duties; and a brief course in Italian grammar, catechism of arts and agriculture, and etiquette. For female education, teachers were required to provide a much lighter education limited to the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic, focusing more on so-called female arts: domestic arts, religious catechism, and basic knowledge of the Bible, as well as domestic economy²³. An example illustrating the state of female education in the Bourbon Kingdom can be found in the district of Pozzuoli, a municipality near Naples. In 1848, out of the mere 854 girls attending public elementary schools, half (413) received an education limited solely to catechism and "women's arts."²⁴

School inspectors were parish priests, who reported to the bishop and the municipal council. The former was considered the diocesan general inspector, while the latter was responsible for monitoring student progress and reporting directly to the Commission. The 1816 Regulation for Primary Schools for Boys in Naples and the Kingdom established male-only schools, confirming the Church's institutional role that went far beyond its spiritual duties. Only priest-teachers were permitted in each parish, with a limited number of female schools, as education was considered almost exclusively for the wealthy classes and a male prerogative²⁵. For a woman, the highest ambition was to be a good mother and "angel of the hearth," skilled enough to entertain husbands and guests with piano playing if her social standing required it.

In summary, the Catholic Church had a significant control over education in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, intervening not only in religious instruction but also in the general discipline of students.

The Church's Dominance in Education

The Church's control was evident in school regulations, which stipulated that teaching should conform to Catholic doctrine, giving bishops direct authority over schools, including teacher recruitment. The 1818 concordat between the Holy See and the kingdom affirmed the Church's influence in education and ensured a

23. S. Raffaele, *Restaurazione e istruzione nel meridione borbonico*, Annali della facoltà di Scienze della Formazione dell'Università di Catania, 2004, p. 237.

24. G. Vigo, *Istruzione e sviluppo economico in Italia nel secolo ...* cit. pp. 5-6.

25. Cfr. N. Scovazzo, *Discorso sopra il metodo di mutuo insegnamento... recitato nell' accademia delle scienze e belle arti il giorno 16 agosto 1835*, Graffeo, 1835, passim.; Cfr. A. Zazo, *L'istruzione pubblica e privata nel napoletano (1767-1860)*, Il Solco, Città di Castello, 1927.

climate of reconciliation between the clergy and the Bourbons²⁶. This was symbolized by Article 1 of the Concordat, which declared, "The Catholic, Apostolic, Roman religion is the only religion of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, and it shall always be maintained with all the rights and privileges that belong to it." Regarding the relationship between clergy and education, Article 2 of the concordat stated, "Teaching in royal universities, colleges, and schools, whether public or private, shall in all respects conform to the doctrine of the same Catholic religion." The secular spirit of the Enlightenment was now completely quashed.

Bishops had control over all educational aspects, including the dissemination of textbooks contrary to Catholic morals: "Whenever archbishops and bishops find anything contrary to Church doctrine and good morals in printed books introduced or printed in the kingdom, the government will not allow their distribution."²⁷ Therefore, priests were not only responsible for teaching children but also for ensuring that teachings conformed to Church doctrine. The clergy, therefore, were not solely entrusted with the task of instructing children, but also with ensuring that the teachings conformed to the tenets of Church doctrine. A notable example of this is the appointment, in 1830, of a certain Don Francesco Marzolla as District Inspector by His Majesty the King, in replacement of the late Romualdo Leone²⁸.

This system guaranteed the clergy not only control over educational content but also over the moral direction imparted to students. Religious education was central to the school curricula, and the textbooks used in schools included the Catechism and other materials that reinforced obedience to both religious and civil authorities. The clergy's role went beyond providing religious instruction; they also had the task of monitoring the conformity of teachings to Church standards. The education of the youth was thus aimed at creating obedient and respectful citizens, limiting any form of critical thinking or rebellion.

The Church's role grew throughout the 19th century. On January 10, 1843, Bourbon King Ferdinand II issued a Royal Decree establishing new rules for primary schools of both sexes in the "Royal Dominions."²⁹ The new school regulations were drafted and promulgated with the clear intention of "entrusting primary education to Ecclesiastical Authorities [with] greater care and zeal." Article 1³⁰ of the new regulation left no room for doubt: "Primary education in Our Royal Dominions is entirely entrusted to the Bishops in their respective Dioceses and placed under their exclusive direction. Bishops are therefore authorized to appoint, suspend, and remove primary school teachers according to the faults they commit in the fulfillment of their duties, notifying the Provincial Intendant of the

26. W. Maturi, *Il Concordato del 1818 tra la Santa Sede e le Due Sicilie*, Le Monnier, Firenze, 1929, pp. 183-186.

27. *Ibidem*.

28. ASB, ASCB, sez. VI, cat. 9, cl. 8, b. 1, fasc. 2.

29. ASB, ASCB, sez. VI, cat. 9, cl. 24, b.1, fasc. 1.

30. *Ibidem*.

matter.” Furthermore, Article 2³¹ stated, “Schools shall preferably be established, for boys, in Convents and Monasteries, and for girls, in Retreats and Conservatories for women.” This was likely not only to validate the clergy’s power of control but also to contain the expenses of municipalities, which were unable to build public schools.

Article 3³² stipulated, “Primary schools using the mutual teaching method shall also be established in Provincial Capitals and in all other municipalities that have the means to do so,” as the kingdom sought to achieve maximum results with minimal effort due to the limited resources available to local administrations. The article also specified, “These schools shall likewise be entrusted to the Bishops and exclusively directed by them concerning discipline, with methods and elementary school books approved by Public Education.”

The reason for this increased control by ecclesiastical authorities was likely the extremely poor state of public education under the Bourbons. The state needed help from the Church, both financially—using ecclesiastical buildings as classrooms drastically reduced municipal expenses—and administratively, with the assistance of prelates who were sufficiently educated to oversee the educational progress of students.

After the revolutionary movements of 1848, the Church’s control over education remained strong in the Bourbon kingdom, as education was seen as an opportunity to instill religious ideals and traditional values to protect the established power, rather than as a means of promoting social emancipation.

Women’s Social Role and Charitable Organizations in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies

For women, the situation was far more compromised; personal emancipation was not even considered, but rather their placement in society through marriage. This was why a practice dating back to the Middle Ages continued through the early 20th century: marriage dowries. Naturally, in a patriarchal society like that of ancient times and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, economic or social independence for women was an entirely foreign, if not unnatural, concept. Therefore, being born a woman and without a family meant being born under a bad star, condemning poor girls to a future of loneliness and misfortune. This is why various charitable organizations existed across the peninsula to assist these needy individuals. In the pre-unification era, these were religious institutions, which, after Italian unification, became “Congregations of Charity” with the law of August 3, 1862, No. 753; they were later abolished and transformed into municipal assistance organizations (ECA) with the law of June 3, 1937, No. 847.

31. *Ibidem*.

32. *Ibidem*.

The Congregations of Charity were organizations that, despite the limitations of the time, genuinely sought to improve the conditions of the needy in a well-organized manner, as their work was not at the discretion of any particular prior, but was organized and monitored by state law, with all the controls it entailed. A tangible example of improving women's conditions could be seen in orphanages, which were once solely under religious societies. Here, girls could finally benefit from charity aimed at their education. A report to the Municipal Council on the administration of charitable works by the Congregation of Charity of the city of Brindisi, dated December 4, 1877, stated: "When the orphanage was handed over to the Congregation of Charity, the orphans lacked any education; suffice it to say that their Superior could not sign the handover document because she was illiterate. Today, the establishment is managed by a capable Director, a distinguished lady, and a diligent mother of a family; it has its own elementary school teacher, and a mistress of female handicrafts, the proceeds of which benefit the students."³³

In Terra d'Otranto, a popular charitable institution was established between the 16th and 17th centuries in all the fiefs of the Pinelli family, known as the "Monte delle Orfane" (Mount of Orphans). It cared for the so-called "orphaned spinsters," young girls of marriageable age who, lacking a social condition that provided them with a dowry, were destined to remain single, with all the related problems. To make these girls more "appealing" to potential suitors, dowries, known as "orphanages" or "marriages," were drawn once or twice a year. These substantial sums helped the girls marry, as the funds were only granted upon marriage³⁴.

The sums given came from testamentary bequests, sometimes from noble families or wealthy unmarried women, and sometimes from God-fearing feudal lords. Donations were made through a will, drawn up by a public official, expressing the intent to donate part of their wealth to create dowries for poor and orphaned girls in their municipality.

The amounts varied depending on the bequest, ranging from 20 or 30 ducats in the pre-unification era during the 16th and 17th centuries in lower Salento, to 145 lire in the Brindisi area by the late 19th century.

The drawing of lots took place on different dates; for example, in Galatone, it was held at the church of the Capuchin Friars every year on September 27, the feast day of Saints Cosmas and Damian, as directed by the feudal lord. In Brindisi, the drawing took place either on the feast day of St. John (June 24) or November 9, the day of St. Theodore of Amasea, usually at the city's cathedral.³⁵

33. ASB, ASCB, sez. VI, cat. 2, cl. 1, b.1, fasc. 4.

34. Cfr. F. Potenza, *Orfanaggi e maritaggi in Diocesi di Nardò tra Cinque e Seicento*, in "L'indomeneo" (2016), n.22, pp. 133-150.

35. ASB, ASCB, sez. VI, cat. 2, cl.1, b.1, fasc. 6.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the condition of women in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was entirely shaped by a patriarchal culture that severely restricted access to education and prestigious professional opportunities. Education was almost exclusively controlled by the Church, which exercised near-total control over educational programs, emphasizing values of obedience and respect for religion and established authorities. The lack of equal education and opportunities for women had long-lasting consequences on their social position and ability to achieve personal fulfillment, even after the unification of Italy, with gender disparities persisting for many decades. Indeed, even during the unification era, female education aimed to instill submission to male authority in women. This is confirmed by a circular issued by the Ministry of Public Education, addressed "to the Teachers of Primary Schools on how to implement the Programs approved by the Royal Decree of September 15, 1860". Regarding girls' schools, it states: "Although the Law has made no distinction between the Programs of girls' and boys' schools, and therefore the subjects and their distribution remain the same, special attention should nonetheless be given to the particular direction required by girls so that their education is entirely suited to their condition. [...] Sacred and secular history offer abundant examples of religious and filial piety, resignation, and benevolence, providing ample material for both literary and moral instruction."³⁶ *For example: "Sacred and secular history offer abundant examples of religious and filial piety, resignation, and benevolence, providing ample material for both literary and moral instruction. [...] Similarly, in arithmetic, instead of examples entirely unrelated to female occupations, preference shall be given to those concerning domestic economy, expenses, customary tasks, and matters related to household affairs."*³⁷

Furthermore, it is evident that any government seeking to limit the power of its subjects must necessarily curtail access to knowledge, a strategy employed by the Bourbon government, with women being victims of this for many centuries, even today much remains to be done.

36. Cfr. F.V. Lombardi, *I programmi per la Scuola elementare dal 1860 al 1985*, La Scuola, Brescia, 1987, pp. 36-37.

37. Ivi, p. 37.

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