

San Vincenzo Martire *And the Crachesi in Two Worlds*

A publication of

The Craco Society



***San Vincenzo Martire:
And the Crachesi in Two Worlds***

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Revised 2021

The Craco Society (Inc.)

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Dedication

*To the people who came from Craco,
past and present,
whose devotion to San Vincenzo
was only exceeded by their love of family.*

Contents

Preface.....?

Part I The History of San Vincenzo Martire The Patron Saint of Craco

A Brief Sketch of the Life of San Vincenzo, Martire?
by Fr. Regis Gallo, O.F.M.

Breve Storia del Comune di Craco e del Suo Protettore S. Vincenzo Martire.....?
by Msgr. Andrea Mastronardi

Cenni Storici di San Vincenzo Martire e Sua Devozione a Craco.....?
by Don Leonardo Rocco Rosano and Marco Lategana

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco.....?
by Domenica Mormando and Palmina Vignola

Part II San Vincenzo and the Crachesi in New York

Into a New World..... ?

San Vincenzo Comes to New York.....?

A New Generation.....?

Lost and then Found.....?

Epilogue.....?

Appendix:

History of the Theban Legion.....179

Novena di San Vincenzo Martire (1904).....

Photographs and Ephemera.....

Preface

This work about San Vincenzo Martire, the patron saint of Craco, originally stemmed from a series of questions about the origin of the saint and what might be considered miraculous occurrences and events experienced by The Craco Society. Any phenomenon surrounding this event may have actually started shortly after The Craco Society was formed when in the summer of 2007 it was learned that a Mass was still celebrated for the patron of Craco in downtown New York. Prior to learning that, few if any of the members at that time was aware there was a statue of the town's patron saint in New York City. A contingent of Society members attended as a group that October and came away with many questions about the origin of the statue in St. Joseph's Church. Then at the Society's 2008 Reunion things picked up dramatically.

During that event the Society received a gift of an historic statue of San Vincenzo. In short order, several amazing incidents led to the uncovering of an almost forgotten society formed by Crachesi immigrants who brought their devotion of the saint with them to the US at the end of the 19th century. Following that, artifacts from this group began to emerge along with additional relics and information about San Vincenzo Martire that is presented in this work.

Originally conceived of to document The Craco Society's connection to the San Vincenzo statue that it received as a gift, this work turned into something more as the unique relationship that existed between the Crachesi and San Vincenzo began to unfold. The story of San Vincenzo, Martire di Craco spanning two continents and hundreds of years became the story of the Crachesi continuum and their cultural history in North America.

This publication fits well with the mission of The Craco Society clearly preserving the history, culture, and traditions of the town and its people. Although there are voids in the story due to lost information and some questions still remain unanswered, what is presented not only tells the story of San Vincenzo but also preserves prior publications and historic material about him and his followers in Craco and New York. As best is known, the feast day veneration of this saint is only carried out in these two places and this work serves to connect them.

The initial source for the history of the patron saint of Craco is the original material from there. The text of three Italian publications with the saint's history is incorporated into this book along with their English translations. These translations were underwritten by the Society to make them available for the first time to a new audience in

North America. Also included is a piece of original research about San Vincenzo that was done by Fr. Regis Gallo, an American cleric of Crachese descent providing us with his perspective about the history of San Vincenzo.

Developing the story of the Crachesi immigrants and San Vincenzo in America was challenging since there was scant documentation available. However, fragments of information when combined with oral histories enable us to gain an insight into how the Crachesi carried their devotion of the town's patron from their little hilltop town to their new home in the Metropolis at the turn of the 20th century.

In preparing a work of this type considerable effort, material, and information was provided by many people. Their contributions are noted in the text but we are compelled to express our appreciation to them here. Joseph D. Rinaldi and Frederick Spero translated the original Italian works; Marilyn Augustyne, Anthony Episcopio, Fr. Regis Gallo, Margaret Episcopia Gallo, Stephen LaRocca, Rita Gallo Lavery, Anna LoCicero, Carlo Muzio, Domenica Mormando, Anthony Mulé, Robert Rubertone, Joseph A. Rinaldi, and Paul Tocci provided oral history information, photographs, or other material; Dr. Mary Elizabeth Brown and Maria DelGiudice of the Center for Migration Studies, Staten Island, NY assisted in research.

The Craco Society would be remiss without acknowledging the individuals who played a special role in the preservation of the San Vincenzo tradition in New York. Vincent and Camille Niceforo lovingly cared for a small San Vincenzo statue in their house for many years before making their kind gift of it to the Society. Anna LoCicero graciously supported the restoration of the San Vincenzo statue in St. Joseph's Church in the 1990's while Stephen LaRocca maintained the tradition of holding a Mass for San Vincenzo there on the fourth Sunday in October for many years. Additionally, Fr. Regis Gallo and Mrs. Rita Gallo were not only kind enough to provide information and photographs of the American statues but also presented The Craco Society with the historic banner of the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco. In 2010, members of The Craco Society funded a two year restoration of the statue to be competed for the celebration of the 110th Anniversary of the statue on October 23, 2011 at the Church of St. Joseph.

Finally we want to acknowledge the community and parish of The Basilica of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral and Fr. Brian A. Graebe, S.J.D., their pastor who maintains a home for the San Vincenzo statue at The Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood. We wish the blessing of San Vincenzo on all of them and the many others who have lovingly cared for and protected the artifacts of our cultural heritage.

Part I

***The History of San Vincenzo Martire
The Patron and Protettore of Craco***

A Brief Sketch of the Life of San Vincenzo, Martire
(Translated and Adapted)
by Fr. Regis Gallo, O.F.M.

Among the many feasts of the saints, there is one which is not mentioned in the Universal Calendar, but which is, nonetheless, of local importance. This is the feast of San Vincenzo, Martire, which is celebrated in the town of Craco in the province of Matera, Italy on the fourth Sunday of October.

While little is known about the person of this great Confessor and defender of the Christian faith, one can, nevertheless, arrive at some idea of his origin, his deeds and accomplishments, by a superficial examination of the historical data, which is available. That he is a Martyr for the faith is testified well enough, not only in the church's liturgy, but also in the centuries old tradition and cult of many people for generation upon generations.

The fact that he was a Roman soldier is brought out well enough by examination of the casket in which he is interred. He is depicted wearing a sword of a legionnaire, a breastplate of armored mail and a plumed helmet.



The relic of San Vincenzo in Craco from an undated postcard

Let us now consider the following facts: since our Saint was a Roman soldier and since he underwent the pains of martyrdom, then he must have lived during the last persecutions against the Christians, when the idea or concept of a Divine Redeemer had

already penetrated the rank and file of the military. All this then, took place in the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, and definitely before 300A.D.

Since the slaughter of the famous Theban Legion took place in the year 286A.D., we can readily conclude that our own San Vincenzo was a companion to San Maurizio, in both war and martyrdom and just as the neighboring Montalbano Jonico chose San Maurizio for its patron (feast day – September 22nd), Craco chose San Vincenzo for its very own.

The Theban Legion

After the Emperor Aurelian had died, the infamous Diocletian succeeded in command. Moreover, he summoned a certain Maximinian (Hercules) to rule over part of the empire. Thus, while Diocletian ruled the east, Maximinian ruled the western part of the empire.

While Maximinian was on his way to Gaul (France) to quell a sizable revolt of the Bagauds, a peasantry of Belgium, and barbarian invaders, he stopped at the village of Otteduro (which today bears the name of Martinach) in Vallese, to rest his weary armies. Here he was joined by the Theban Legion, which was summoned by Diocletian from the east to re-enforce the already assembled militia. (The Theban Legion had been recruited in Egypt, then under Roman rule). It camped near Agauno, at the foot of a mountain, which today is called the Great St. Bernard.

This famous and glorious Theban Legion was made up of 6,600 legionnaires who were all Christians. San Maurizio was one of the officers in command of the Legion; its leader was Escuperius, while Candidus was the soldiers' elected voice.

As we have already mentioned, our glorious San Vincenzo was among them. On a certain day, while the entire legion was camped in that section, Maximinian issued an order to the effect that the entire army was to offer propitiatory sacrifices to the gods for the success of the expedition against the rebellious Bagauds.

Without a moment's hesitation, the Theban Legion refused to obey Maximinian's order, and this on the ground that it was a religious and not a military command. Because of this refusal on the Legion's part, the infuriated Emperor commanded the legion to be decimated, that is, every tenth man was put to death. The troops were ordered to file into separate ranks and every tenth man was then crudely put to the sword.

As a result of this slaughter, 660 brave men were killed and Maximinian grieved at the useless loss of so many legionnaires and sent a very complaisant message asking the remaining soldiers to sacrifice to the gods. But they replied, "We are soldiers, but we are also servants of the true God. We owe you military service and obedience; but we cannot renounce Him who is our creator and Master. We have taken an oath to God before we took one to you: you can place no confidence in our second oath if we violate the first. We have arms in our hands, but we do not resist, because we would rather die innocent than live in shame."

Maximinian, amazed at this bold reply, again issued absolute orders for every tenth man to be killed and yet, even after this second slaughter, the legionnaires remained constant.

Finally, realizing that any threat or punishment of his was useless, the emperor ordered the complete extermination of the famed legion.

The other army units fell upon the Theban Legion with drawn swords and butchery continued until not a man was left alive. The field was strewn with bodies and the blood flowed, but not a cry was heard from the lips of the brave soldiers, instead only songs and hymns of joy and glory to the Lord.

San Vincenzo, who fought so bravely in the battle against the enemies of his country, and who feared no man, was wise enough to fear God and put loyalty to him above all else.

Origin of the Devotion to San Vincenzo

The first sight to meet the eye of the traveler or tourist on entering Craco from the east is the former Friary of the Franciscans. The building of the Friary began on April 3, 1620 by a Friar named Robert, the then Bishop of Tricarico, and was finally completed ten years later in 1630. The construction of the Friary was realized through the generous offerings of the faithful in the community and especially Giovanni Donatus Penna, a lawyer. All this is attested to on the main entrance of the same friary.



Postcard view of St. Peter's Friary c. 1930

The Friary bore the name of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, and was entrusted to the care of the Franciscan Friars, who retained it until the Italian Government suppressed it in 1866.

Next to this Friary is a beautiful and spacious church to the left of which, many years later, in 1777 to be exact, a rather large chapel was built. This chapel was dedicated to the glorious martyr, San Vincenzo, in the year 1792. What follows is the story of this special dedication.

Finding himself in Rome, and wishing to return to Craco with a relic of some glorious martyr of our Faith, Fr. Prospero, a Franciscan of Craco, obtained from Pope Pius VI, through the Sacred Congregation of Rites, a great relic, which was said to be that of a Roman soldier as well as a glorious martyr, by the name of Vincenzo – a name signifying “winner” or “conqueror.”

Fr. Prospero enclosed the precious relic in an artistic crystal-sided casket. Inside the casket was set the waxen body of the martyr, dressed as a Roman soldier and lying in a reclining position.

Stopping at various places during the course of its journey, the remains were carried all the way to Craco where it was received with great pomp and honor by the local clergy. This was in the year 1792.

The great devotion of the faithful in that region and the neighboring towns rendered great honor to the soldier martyr San Vincenzo. In large measure, this was due to the many miracles which the Saint performed on the suffering multitudes that sought his help.

Because of all this, the clergy and the people of Craco decided to choose San Vincenzo, along with San Nicola of Bari as their patron and protector of the town. In 1798, the Very Rev. Fr. Francescoantonio, OFM of Craco, a lector of theology, composed a beautiful novena, full of devotion and fervor, honoring the famous saint.

The religious and civil festival of San Vincenzo was fixed for the fourth Sunday of October to coincide with the important annual fair which takes place after the harvest.



Postcard view of chapel interior c. 1960

Prayers in honor of San Vincenzo

Responsory in honor of San Vincenzo

O miles fortissimo.
Alto electus lumine;
Athlaeta verae Fidei;
Nune trimphator gloriae,

Meruisti merifice
Sanctus et mirabilis;
Vincenti vocari nomine,
Amore Christi saucuis.
Ad te proni confugiunt
Pro corpore, pro spiritu,
Ut sis pro invocantibus
Caelestia motor gratiae.

Fac ut te quaerentibus,
Prequs nunc praecantibus,
Tue valore sanguenis, Propiturs esto, et Dominus.

Gloria Patre, et Filio, et
Spiritu Sancto,
Sicut erat in prencipio et
Nunc et semper,
Et en saecula saeculorum
Amen

Pray for us, O Blessed Vincenzo.
That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us Pray
Grant we beseech you, almighty God, that through the intercession of
Blessed Vincenzo Your Martyr, we may be delivered from all adversities
In body, and be purified from all evil thoughts in mind.
Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who is God and lives
And reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, world without end
Amen.

Hymn in honor of San Vincenzo

O you, of all your warriors, lord
Yourself the crown and sure reward;
Let us from sinful fetters free
Who sing your Martyr's victory.
In selfish pleasures worldly round
The taste of bitter gall he found
But sweet to him was your blessed name
And thus to heavenly joys he came

Who manfully his Cross he bore
And ran his race of torments sore;

For you he poured his life away;
With you he lives in endless day.
Thus ever before you bending law,
We entreat You, Lord, Your love to show
On this the day Your Martyr died,
Who in Your saints is glorified!

Now to the Father and the Son,
Be glory while the ages run;
The same, O Holy Spirit to you!
Through ages of eternity.

Amen

Antiphon in Honor of San Vincenzo

This Saint contended for the law of God even unto death, fearing
not the words of the ungodly, for he was founded upon a strong rock.

Prayer in Honor of San Vincenzo

O glorioso Martire San Vincenzo, voi che foste in Anagnanimo campione della
relegione di Cristo: intercedite presso il Padre dei lumi, affinche a vostra imitazione
conocessimo el pregio ammirabile della fede e della verita della chiesa Cattolica; ed
impetrateci; per i vostra merite, che divemite diffensori di essa, invece di farci allucenare
dal secolo pervertito e dal senso ribelle potessimo conservrila pura ed intatta nel nostro
cuore; affenche cosi credendo ed operando, potessimo godere a faccia a faccia el Sommo
Bene. E cosi sia.

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Martyrologum Romano – Seraphicum

Encyclopedia

Historical Textual Materials

The Italian source materials that were translated for this publication are:

“BREVE STORIA DEL COMUNE DI CRACO e del suo Protettore S. VINCENZO MARTIRE coll’aggiunta della NOVENA E RESPONSORIO,” authored by Msgr. Andrea Mastronardi and published in 1933 when he served as parish priest in Craco. Although the original brochure is no longer available a copy of the text was preserved in a typewritten manuscript by Salvatore Gallo and is used in this publication.

“CENNI STORICI DI SAN VINCENZO MATIRE E SUA DEVOZIONE A CRACO,” a publication of the Parish of San Nicola Vescovo in Craco Peschiera. Although undated the authors, Don Leonardo Rocco Rosano, who was the parish priest there from 1976-1984 and Marco Lategana a city council member in 1980 suggests it was published during that period.

“SAN VINCENZO: un martire a Craco” a publication of the Associazione Colibri was written by Domenica Mormando and Palmina Vignola and published in 2005.

We gratefully acknowledge the kindness of the authors, Don Leonardo Rocco Rosano, Marco Lategana, Domenica Mormando and Palmina Vignola who granted us permission to reproduce their work in this publication. Their efforts to preserve the story of San Vincenzo are the cornerstone of our understanding of the saint and the Crachesi devotion to him.

Photographic & Printed Materials

The Craco Society would also like to acknowledge the kind assistance and contributions made by Lena Camperlengo, Fr. Regis Gallo, Mrs. Rita Gallo, Carlo Muzio, The New York Public Library, Joseph A. Rinaldi, Robert Rubertone, and Paul Tocci for material used in this publication.

***BREVE STORIA DEL COMUNE DI CRACO
e del suo Protettore S. VINCENZO MARTIRE
coll'aggiunta della NOVENA E
RESPONSORIO***



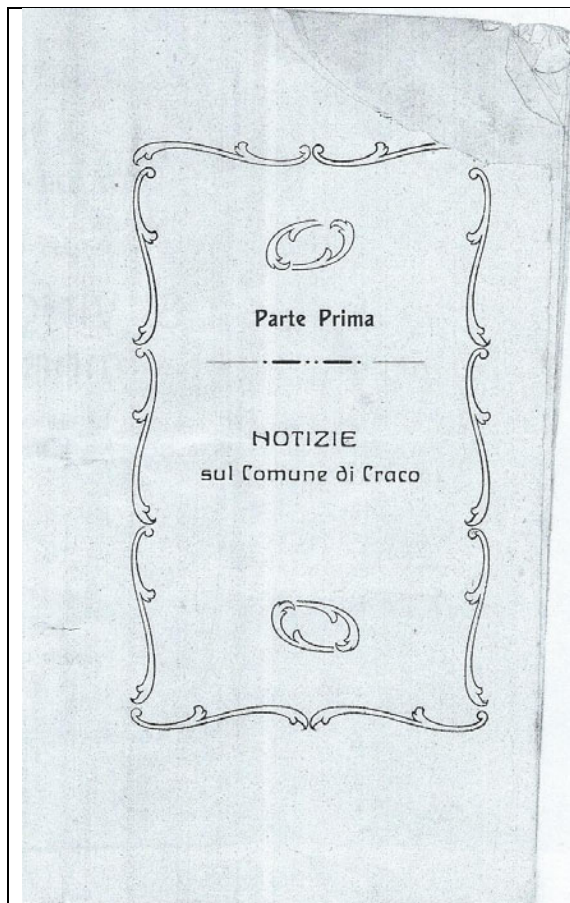
BRIEF HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF
CRACO

and its Protector
SAN VINCENZO MARTIRE
with an added
NOVENA AND RESPONSES

Pisticci

The Little Press

1933



PART ONE

NOTES ON THE TOWN OF CRACO



CAPITLO I

Notizie Storiche

Il paesello di Craco è molto antico: ebbe la sua origine all'epoca dei nuovi ordinamenti sociali, ed è tra i paesi che sorsero nei tempi di mezzo, tra il secolo VI ed il secolo XI.

Nel Catalogo dei Baroni, recensiti per le crociate di Terrasanta, ai tempi di Guglielmo II, si trova il nome di un certo Herbertus filius Kerberti de Craco, il quale possedeva Craco e Cagnano,

In prosiego passò ad un certo Carbonus de Belmonte, che, co-

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL NOTES

The very old village of Craco had its rise in the era of new social order among the villages that emerged in the time of the middle ages, from the sixth to the eleventh century.

In the *Catalogo dei Baroni* (*Catalogue of the Barons*), prepared for the Crusades to the Holy Land, at the time of William II, is the name of a certain Herbertus Fifius Kerberti of Craco, who possessed Craco and Cagnano.

Afterwards it passed to a certain Carbonus of Belmonte, who in the words of ancient documents, among others, also owned Cracculum.

- 6 -

... dicono le antiche carte, possedeva tra le altre terre anche quella di Cracculum.

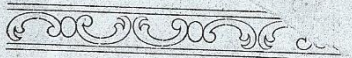
Nel registro dei Baroni, ai quali fu dato a custodire i prigionieri Lombardi per ordine di Federico II nel 1239, si trova il nome di un certo Goffredus de Craco, signore della terra, la quale nel 1308 faceva parte dello Stato di Montescaglioso, di cui era conte Beltrando del Balzo.

Al tempo del re Ladislao la terra di Craco passò ad Attendolo Sforza di Cotignola; di poi passò alla famiglia Sanseverino, unitamente al Contado di Chiaromonte, ed infine pervenne alla Casa Vergara, col titolo di Conte di Craco, la quale lo porta anche al presente.



In the directory of the Barons, to whom was given the guardianship of Lombard prisoners by order of Frederick II in 1239, there is the name of a certain Goffredus of Craco, Lord of the Land, which in 1308 was part of the State of Montescaglioso, of which Beltrando del Balzo was the Earl.

At the time of King Ladislao, the land of Craco passed to Attendolo Sforza of Cotignola; then to the Sanseverino family, along with the County of Chiaromonte, and finally came into the possession of the House of Vergara, with the formal title of the Earl of Craco, which continues to exist.



CAPITLO II

Nome e Stemma

*Il nome specifico del Comune di Craco, guardato nella sua etimologia, pare che abbia origine dalla parola del basso latino "Grachium", che nel medio evo ebbe significato di campo squassato e magesato di recente. Infatti anche al presente i Provenziali col vocabolo "Garach", indicano i campi arati di recente. Nel dizionario del Durange le parole "Grachium e Garachium", significano appunto terreni coltivati di fresco, e si trova la frase: *versus occasum cum grachio**

CHAPTER II

NAME AND COAT OF ARMS

The specific name of the town of Craco, from an etymological point of view, seems to have originated from the low Latin word "Grachium", meaning in the Middle Ages, 'recently plowed fields laying fallow'. In fact, to this day, the word "Gararch" in this provincial dialect means plowed fields.

In the dictionary of Durange the words, "Grachium" and "Garachium", in fact, mean "*land of recently plowed fields*", and we find the phrase, "*towards the west with plowed fields maintained by Peter.*" ("*versus occasum cum grachio [. . .] quod tenet Petrus*" . . . Therefore, with all certainty, we can conclude that the true etymology of Craco is "Grachium".

...d tenet Petrus. Perciò con ogni sicurezza possiamo concludere che la vera etimologia di Craco è "Grachium",.

Lo stemma del Comune di Craco è raffigurato da un braccio destro, manicato di porpora, stringente nel pugno tre spighe di grano d'oro: il tutto in campo azzurro. Questo stemma così compito, si trova registrato al Grande Archivio di Stato, perciò è lo stemma autentico del Comune. Circa il suo significato, dobbiamo convenire col Racioppi, che tutto il complesso vuol alludere alla fertilità delle terre arative, ed il ricordo delle spighe si riallaccerebbe alla vicinanza delle fertili pianure della scomparsa gloriosa Metaponto.



The coat of arms of the town of Craco is represented by a right arm, with purple sleeves, a tight fist around three sheaves of golden wheat, all in a blue field. This coat of arms is registered with the State Archives as the authentic coat of arms of the town. Regarding its meaning, we must agree with Racioppi, that the composition alludes to the fertility of the arable land, and the sheaves are linked to its proximity to the fertile plains of the once glorious Metaponto.



CAPITOLO III

Notizie a fascio

Il comune di Craco per lo passato apparteneva alla Provincia di Potenza, al circondario di Matera, al Mandamento di Ferrandina ed al Collegio Elettorale di Tricarico. Al presente, dopo la riforma fascista, appartiene alla provincia di Matera, giudiziariamente al Mandamento di Pisticci, amministrativamente al Mandamento di Ferrandina, e scolasticamente alla Direzione Didattica di Pisticci.

La sua popolazione ha subito una forte diminuizione, dovuta

CHAPTER III

POLITICAL NOTES

The town of Craco in the past belonged to the Province of Potenza, in the district of Matera, under the jurisdiction of Ferrandina and the Electoral Board of Tricarico. At present, after the Fascist reform, it belongs to the Province of Matera, the District of Pisticci judicially, administratively to the District of Ferrandina and academically to the Directorate of Education in Pisticci.

La grande emigrazione negli Stati Uniti; infatti, mentre nel primo censimento del 1881 contava 2015 abitanti, nell'ultimo del 1931 è scesa a 1486.

La sua altezza sul livello del mare è di 391 metri; il suo territorio è di 6781 ettari; il suo scalo ferroviario è alla stazione di Pisticci, sulla linea Napoli - Brindisi; benchè di recente con l'esercizio delle ferrovie Calabro-Lucane abbia avuta la stazione propria.

Il comune di Craco appartiene alla Diocesi di Tricarico, forma Parrocchia-a se stessa ed è indicata col titolo specifico di S. Nicola di Bari, con a capo un Arciprete - Curato.

Il suo santo Protettore è S. Vincenzo Martire, la cui festa si celebra la IV Domenica di ottobre. Aveva un magnifico

Its population has decreased greatly due to emigration to the United States. In fact, while the first census of 1881 had 2,015 inhabitants, the most recent census of 1931 declined to 1,486.

Its height above sea level is 391 meters and its territory is 6,781 hectares. Its railway station is in Pisticci on the Naples - Brindisi line; although recently with the expansion of the Calabro-Lucana railway line, it acquired its own station.

The town of Craco is in the Diocese of Tricarico; and it has its own Parish, known by the specific name of *San Nicola of Bari*, and is served by a parish priest-curate.

e rinomato Convento di Osservanti: il fabbricato al presente è occupato da alcuni uffici pubblici e dalla caserma dei R.R. Carabinieri, e la chiesa è ufficiata dal R. Clero.

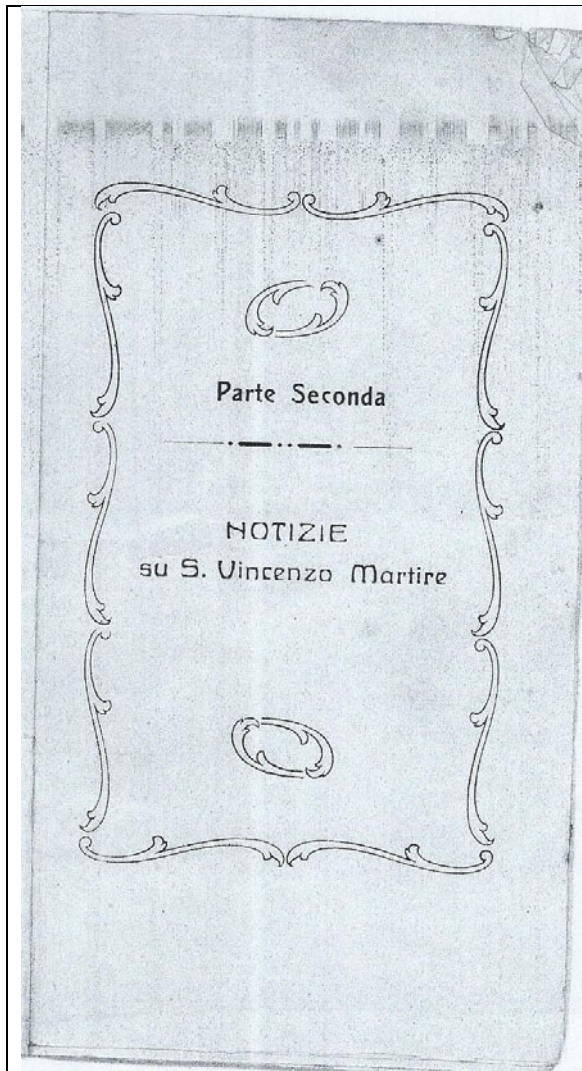
Craco è nota per la nobile e fraterna ospitalità data ai profughi dell'antica Siri, quando questa fu distrutta. La sua popolazione fu orrendamente provata dalla feroce persecuzione dei liberali, che precedette la proclamazione della repubblica del 1799: e dalla micidiale ed atroce invasione brigantesca del secolo scorso.

Craco è patria del celebre naturalista e teologo Nicola Columella-Onorati, del patriota e giurista Archimede Rigrone e dell'Arciprete Nicola Nardandrea colto e rinomato maestro di parecchie generazioni.

The holy protector is San Vincenzo Martyr, whose feast day is celebrated on the fourth Sunday of October. His statue had a magnificent setting in the Convent of the Observant Fathers. Presently, the building is occupied by several public offices as well as a police station. The parish is served by the clergy.

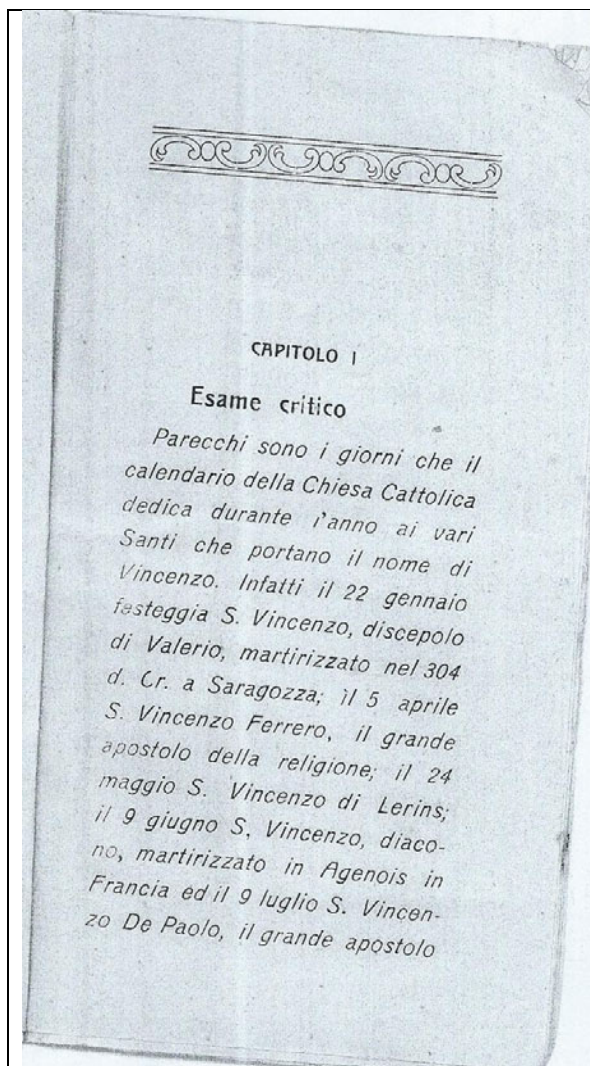
Craco is famous for the noble and fraternal hospitality given to refugees from ancient Siri that arrived when it was destroyed. Its population was horribly decimated by the fierce persecution of liberals, which preceded the proclamation of the Republic in 1799: and from the murderous, predatory and cruel brigand invasion in the last century.

Craco is the home of the famous natural scientist and theologian, Nicola Columella-Onorati; of the patriot and lawyer, Archimede Rigrone; and Monsignor Nicola Nardandrea, an educator and renowned teacher of several generations.



PART TWO

THE STORY OF SAN VINCENZO, MARTYR



CHAPTER I CRITICAL EXAMINATION

Many days in the calendar of the Catholic Church during the year are dedicated to various saints who bear the name of Vincent. In fact, on January 22nd we celebrate St. Vincent, a disciple of St. Valerio, who was martyred in 304 in Saragossa, Spain; on April 5th, St. Vincent Ferrer, the great apostle of the Faith is celebrated; on May 24th St. Vincent of Lerins; on June 9th St. Vincent, Deacon, martyred in Agenois in France; and on July 9th, St. Vincent De Paul, the great apostle of charity.

— 16 —

della carità.

Però tra tutte queste feste, ve ne è un'altra, la quale, benchè non sia menzionata nel calendario generale, è pure di grande importanza locale, e cioè la festa di S. Vincenzo Martire, che si celebra ogni anno nel Comune di Craco, la quarta domenica di Ottobre.

Benchè la storia taccia circa l'illustre personalità di questo grande confessore e difensore della religione cristiana, pur tuttavia con un pò di esame spassionato, con un pò di critica storica si può benissimo argomentare chi Egli sia stato, cosa abbia fatto e quale sia stato il campo della sua azione.

Che Egli sia stato un martire della religione cristiana, lo confessa la Chiesa nella sua litur-

But among all these feasts there is another which, although not mentioned in the general church calendar, is of great local importance, and that is the feast of San Vincenzo Martire, which is celebrated every year in the town of Craco on the fourth Sunday of October.

Although history is silent about this illustrious confessor and great defender of the Christian religion, with a bit of dispassionate examination and with a bit of historical criticism one can determine very well who he was, what he did, and what has been the result of his action.

The fact that he was a martyr for the Christian religion is confessed by the Church in her liturgy; it has been handed down by the traditions of many centuries; and it has been proclaimed by the people for many generations.

— 17 —

già, lo tramanda la tradizione di tanti secoli e lo confessa il popolo per molte generazioni.

Che Egli sia stato un soldato romano lo si argomenta benissimo, guardando l'urna ove Egli è racchiuso, giacchè è raffigurato con la daga legionaria, con la corazza squamosa e col cimiero piumato.

Ora, ragionando, diciamo: se il nostro caro Santo era un soldato romano, se Egli subì realmente il martirio, ciò dovette avvenire durante le ultime persecuzioni contro i cristiani, quando l'idea del divin Redentore era già penetrata tra le file dei soldati e cioè sotto il feroce Diocleziano, prima del 300 d. Cr.

Ora, essendo la carnelicina della famosa Legione Tebana avvenuta l'anno 286 d. Cr. facil-

That he was a Roman soldier is well known based on the crypt where he is enclosed, depicted with the legionary dagger, the scaled armor breastplate, and the plumed helmet.

Now, if our beloved Saint was a Roman soldier, and if He suffered martyrdom, this must have occurred during the last persecution of Christians, when the idea of the divine Redeemer had already penetrated into rank and file of soldiers under the fierce Emperor Diocletian, before 300AD.

-- 18 --

*mente si argomenta e si deduce
il nostro S. Vincenzo Martire sia
stato compagno di armi e di
martirio con S. Maurizio Marti-
re, e come la vicina Montalbano
Jonico scelse quest'ultimo come
Protettore, così Craco scelse il
primo!*

*Così avviati sul retto cammi-
no, eccoci a narrare la storia
del suo martirio.*



Now, since the carnage of the famous Theban Legion took place in the year 286AD, it can be easily argued and deduced that our San Vincenzo Martire was a comrade in arms and martyred with San Maurizio Martire, and just as the nearby town of Montalbano Jonico chose the latter as a Protector, Craco chose the first.

Now that we are on the right track, we can tell the story of his martyrdom.

CAPITOLO II

Legione Tebana

Dopo la morte dell'imperatore Aureliano, successe nel comando il terribile e famoso Diocleziano, il quale chiamò a far parte dell'impero un certo Massimiano, detto l'Erculeo. Così il primo prese per se il comando dell'oriente, lasciando al secondo il comando dell'occidente.

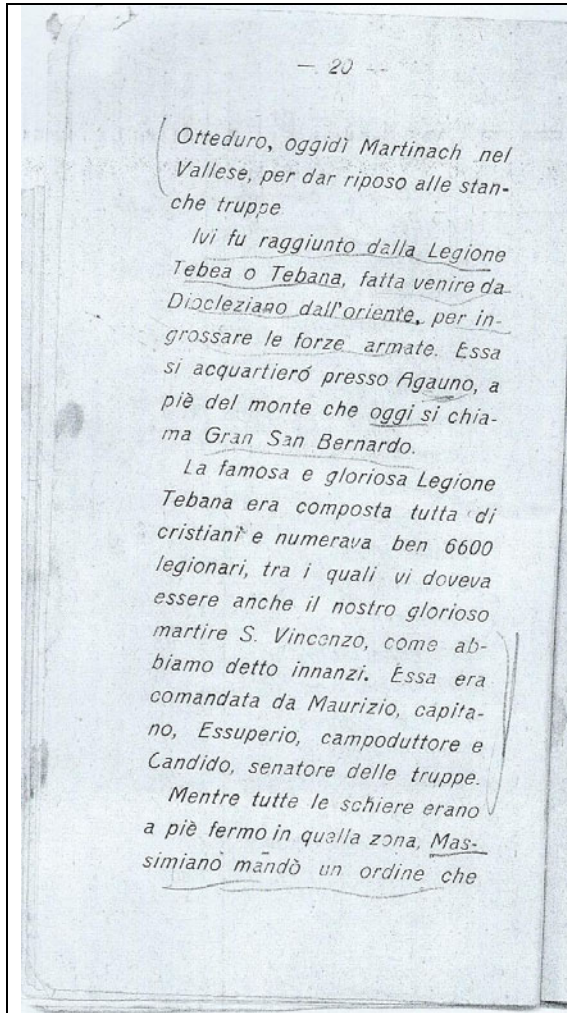
Ora avvenne che, essendo Massimiano andato nelle Gallie per sedare una formidabile insurrezione di Bagaudi, contadini del Belgio, attraversando le Alpi, si fermò in un villaggio di nome

CHAPTER II

THE THEBAN LEGION

After the death of the Emperor Aurelius, he was succeeded in command by the terrible and infamous Diocletian, who called upon a certain Massimiano, known as Hercules, to be part of the empire. And so the first commander (Diocletian) took the command of the empire in the East and the second took command of the empire in the West.

Now it happened that Massimiano was going to Gaul to quell a formidable uprising of the Bagaudae peasants in Belgium. Passing through the Alps he stopped in a village named



Otteduro, known today as Saint-Maurice in the canton Valais, to give rest to the weary troops.

He was joined there by the Theban Legion sent by Diocletian from the East to swell the armed forces. It was quartered at Agauno at the foot of Mont Blanc, at a mountain pass that is now called Grand Saint Bernard.

The famous and glorious Theban Legion was composed totally of Christians and numbered 6,600 legionaries, including our glorious martyr San Vincenzo, as previously mentioned. It was commanded by Maurizio, and led by Essuperio, with Candido serving as the elected leader of the troops.

When all the troops were settled in the area, Massimiano sent an order

— 22 —

tutta l'armata doveva offrire sacrifici propiziatori agli dèi per il felice successo della spedizione punitiva contro i ribelli Bagaudi.

La Legione Tebana, senza alcuna esitazione, si rifiutò di obbedire all'ordine di Massimiano, perchè era solo religioso e non un ordine militare. Per questo rifiuto il crudele condottiere comandò che la Legione venisse decimata. Furono allineate tutte le truppe in separate file, furono numerati tutti i legionari, e quello che capitava di essere il decimo veniva barbaramente ucciso.

Compiuta questa prima strage, per cui trovarono la morte ben 660 valorosi, il crudele imperatore Massimiano, addolorato per l'inutile perdita di tanti le-

that the whole army had to offer propitiatory sacrifices to the gods for the success of the punitive expedition against Bagaudae rebels.

The Theban Legion, without hesitation, refused to obey this order of Massimiano, because it was not a military order but a religious one. For this refusal, the cruel commander ordered that the Legion be decimated. The troops were lined up in separate files, all the legionaries were numbered, and whoever happened to be the tenth individual was brutally murdered.

Having accomplished this first massacre for which 660 valiant soldiers were killed, the cruel emperor Massimiano, sad for the useless waste of many legionaries,

— 22 —

gionari, mandò ai rimanenti un compiacente messaggio, per indurli a sacrificare agli dèi. Ma i superstiti gli risposero: -- Noi siamo soldati, e come tali ti dobbiamo obbedienza e servizio militare; ma come cristiani dobbiamo servire ed adorare il vero Dio. Confessiamo di essere seguaci di Dio Padre, autore di tutte le cose, e del suo Figliuolo, Gesù Cristo. Noi abbiamo assistito senza lamenti all'uccisione dei nostri compagni, e siamo fermamente decisi di seguir la loro sorte, pur di non rinnegare Cristo e la sua santa legge! --

Massimiano, sorpreso non poco per questa fiera risposta, mandò ordini severi e perentori per una seconda decimazione, la quale venne barbaramente effe-

sent a compliant message to the remaining troops, to induce them to sacrifice to the gods. But the survivors said to him: "*We are soldiers, and as such we give you obedience and military service, but as Christians we serve and worship the true God. We confess to be followers of God the Father, the author of all things and of His Son, Jesus Christ. We witnessed the killing of our fellow soldiers without complaining, and we are resolute to follow their fate, rather than to deny Christ and His Holy Law.*"

Massimiano, not the least bit surprised by this proud response, sent strict orders mandating a second decimation, which was brutally carried out, but without any practical result or change in conduct.

— 23 —

*tuata, senza però alcun risultato
pratico di conversione.*

*Infine, vedendo l'imperatore
che ogni sua minaccia e puni-
zione era inutile, ordinò lo ster-
minio di tutta la gloriosa e fiera
Legione. E con essa morirono
i suoi capi, cioè Maurizio, Es-
superio e Candido, e con essi
morì martire della fede cristia-
na anche il nostro glorioso S. Vin-
cenzo. Il campo fu coperto di
cadaveri, il sangue innocente
corse a rivoli, ma non un lamento
uscì dalle labbra di quei valo-
rosi, invece canti di gioia e di
gloria al Signore.*



In the end, the emperor seeing that all his threats and punishment were useless ordered the extermination of the glorious and proud Legion. With it died the leaders, Maurizio, Essuperio, and Candido, and with them died a martyr of the Christian faith, our glorious San Vincenzo. The field was covered with corpses; the innocent blood ran in streams, not one lament escaped from the lips of those brave men, but songs of joy and glory to the Lord.



CAPITOLO III

Devozione locale

Il viaggiatore o il turista che visita il comunello di Craco, entrando dalla parte di oriente, la prima cosa che vede è il fabbricato dell'ex Convento dei Francescani.

Esso fu istituito con licenza del 3 aprile 1620 da Fra Roberto, vescovo di Tricarico, e fu finito in tutte le sue costruzioni dieci anni dopo, cioè nel 1630. La costruzione fu fatta con le offerte dei privati cittadini e specialmente dal dottore in legge Don Giovanni Donato Penna, co-

CHAPTER III

LOCAL DEVOTION

Upon entering the town of Craco from the east, the first thing a traveler or tourist sees is the building of the former Convent of the Franciscans.

It was established April 3, 1620 with permission of Brother Robert, Bishop of Tricarico, and its construction was finished in ten years in 1630. The construction was made possible with the offerings of the people and especially by a lawyer, Don Giovanni Donato Penna,

me si legge sulla porta del medesimo convento.

Il Convento era sotto il titolo di S. Pietro, principe degli Apostoli, e fu affidato ai Minori Osservanti, che lo tennero fino all'ultima soppressione del 1866.

Annesso a questo Convento vi era e vi è tuttavia una bella e spaziosa chiesa, con alla sinistra un gran cappellone, costruito molto tempo dopo, e cioè nel 1777. Questo cappellone il 1792 venne dedicato al glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo. Perchè questa dedica specia'e? ecco la storia.

Trovandosi in Roma il Padre Prospero da Craco, minore Osservante, e volendo portare al suo paese ed al suo Convento la preziosa reliquia di qualche glorioso Martire della nostra Santa Religione, ottenne dalla

as stated on the door of the convent.

The convent was named after St. Peter, Prince of Apostles, and was assigned to Minor Observant friars, who kept it until the final abolition in 1866.

Attached to this monastery, and still there, is a beautiful and spacious church, with a large chapel on the left, built long after the original construction and finished in 1777. In 1792 this chapel was dedicated to the glorious martyr San Vincenzo.

Why this special dedication? Here is the story:

Father Prospero of Craco of the Minor Observant order was in Rome and wanted to bring to his town and his monastery a precious relic of some glorious martyr.

— 26 —

S. Congregazione dei Riti una grande reliquia, che fu detto appartenere ad un glorioso Martire e Guerriero per nome Vincenzo, nome che vuol significare: vincitore, vittorioso.

Il Padre Prospero fece racchiudere la preziosa reliquia in una artistica teca, la quale a sua volta fu incastonata nel corpo artificiale di un martire, vestito da guerriero romano ed adagiato verticalmente in un'urna di legno con belle vetrate.

Questo corpo e quest'urna, facendo diverse tappe nel suo cammino, fu trasportata su di un veicolo fino a Craco, ove arrivò nel 1792. Ivi fu ricevuta da quei Minori Osservanti e dal rev. Clero locale con grande pompa ed onori.

La grande divozione dei fedeli

He obtained from the Sacred Congregation of Rites a great relic, which was said to belong to a glorious martyr and warrior named Vincenzo, a name that means "victorious, winner".

Father Prospero enclosed the precious relic in an artistic reliquary, and placed it inside the artificial body of a martyr dressed as a Roman warrior. The body was laid vertically in a wooden case with beautiful glass panels.

The body and urn was carried on a vehicle, making several stops on its way to Craco, where they arrived in 1792. Arriving at the friary, they were received by the Minor Observant friars and local clergy with great pomp and honor.

*del luogo è quella dei paesi cir-
convicini onorò molto il glorioso
martire e guerriero S. Vincenzo,
specie per i numerosi miracoli
operati a prò dell'umanità sof-
ferente.*

*Per questo motivo, il Clero
ed il popolo di Craco decise di
eleggere S. Vincenzo, insieme
a S. Nicola di Bari, compatrone
e protettore del paese. Il molto
rev. P. Francescantonio da Craco,
minore osservante e lettore di
S. Teologia, nel 1798 compose
in onore del glorioso ed inc'ito
martire S. Vincenzo una bella
novena, tutta piena di fervore e
divozione.*

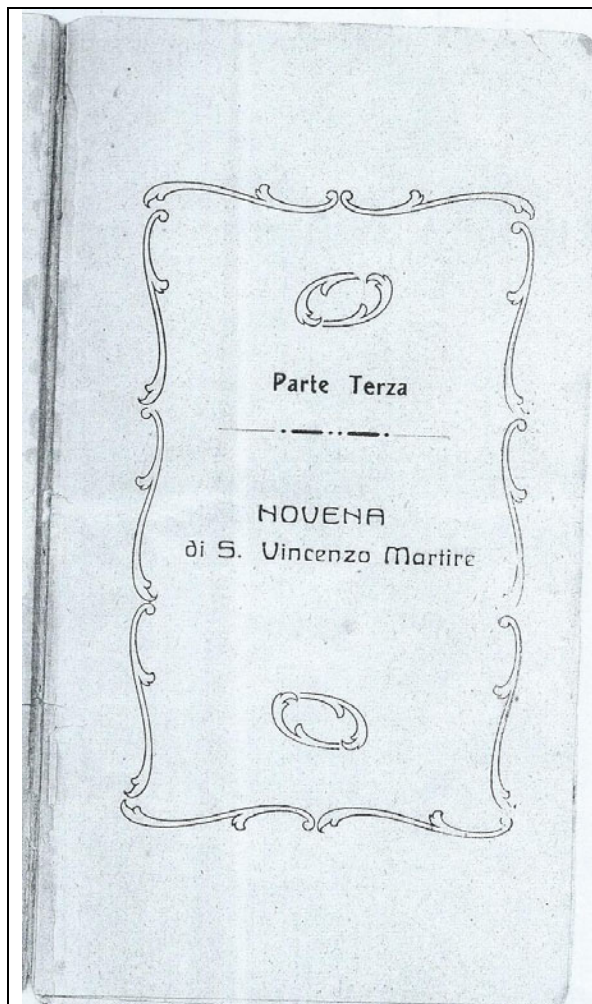
*La festa religiosa e civile ven-
ne fissata la quarta domenica di
ottobre, per farla coincidere con
l'importante fiera che ivi ha luo-
go in quell'epoca.*

The great devotion of the faithful in the town and the surrounding villages honored the glorious martyr and warrior San Vincenzo, especially for the many miracles performed in proof of human suffering.

For this reason, the people and clergy of Craco decided to elect San Vincenzo, along with San Nicola of Bari, co-patrons and protectors of the town.

In 1798, the Very Rev. Fr. Francescantonio of Craco, Minor Observant a theologian, composed a beautiful novena, full of fervor and devotion, in honor of the glorious and illustrious Martyr San Vincenzo.

The religious and civic feast was set for the fourth Sunday in October to coincide with a fair that took place there at that time.



PART THREE

NOVENA
TO SAN VINCENZO, MARTYR

— 31 —

*V. Deus in adiutorum, etc.
R. Domine adiuuandum, etc.*

I

O glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, voi che in grazie di quell'amore che vi portò il Sommo Bene, giungete felicemente a preservarvi dalla comune infezione dell'idolatria ed a conoscere tra la moltitudine delle deità nefande il vero Dio; impetrateci, per la vostra intercessione, la grazia speciale della perfetta conoscenza del buon Signore, onde renderci degni, al par di voi, di goderlo eternamente in Paradiso. E così sia.

*O S. Vincenzo Martire.
Ascolta i tuoi devoti;
Presenta i nostri voti
Al trono del Signor.
Nove Pater, Ave e Gloria, poi*

V. O God, come to my assistance.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

I

O glorious Martyr, San Vincenzo of Craco, by the grace of God, you came to know the one, true and loving God, distinct from a multitude of perverse and false gods. You resisted the temptation to commit the terrible sin of idolatry; and you chose to die rather than deny your faith in the one, true and living God. Through your intercession, obtain for us the grace to know and love the same true and living God and to enjoy His special gift of eternal life. We make our prayer through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with the Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. AMEN!

O St. Vincent, Martyr, listen to those devoted to you; and present our requests to the Lord.

(Say the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary* and the *Glory Be* nine times.)

— 32 —

RESPONSORIO

*Deus tuorum militum
Sors et corona præmium,
Laudes canentes Martyris
Absolve nexu criminis.
Hic nempe mundi gaudia,
Et blanda fraudum pabula,
Imbuta felle deputans,
Pervenit ad cælestia.
Pœnas cucurrit fortiter,
Et sustulit viriliter,
Fundensque pro te sanguinem,
Æterna dona possidet.
Ob hoc precatu supplici;
Te poscimus, piissime;
In hoc triumpho Martyris
Dimitte noxam servulis.
Laus et perennis gloria
Patri sit atque Filio,
Sancto simul Paraclito,
In semaiterna sæcula. Amen
V. Ora pro nobis S. Vincenti
R. Ut digni efficiamur, etc.*

RESPONSE

O God, the fate of your soldier
arose as a crown and reward
of a martyr singing your praises,
removing every attachment to sin.

The world's joys and its
allurements
are like spoiled food, filled with
gall
reaching to the sky.

Because of his love of you,
he conducted himself bravely,
shedding his blood
and gaining a great reward.

Now, O Most Holy One,
as suppliants, we beseech you,
in this martyr's triumph,
to take away our stain of sin.

Praise and everlasting glory be to
the Father, to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit, now and
forever. Amen

V. San Vincenzo, Martyr, pray
for us.

R. That we may be made worthy
of the promises of Christ.

— 33 —

OREMUS

Præsta, quæsumus, omnipotens Deus, ut intercedente beato Vincentio Martyre tuo, et a cunctis adversitatibus liberemur in corpore, et a pravis cogitationibus mundemur in mente. Per Christum, etc.

II

O glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, voi che sapeste così bene corrispondere all'amore divino, tanto da disprezzare le cose terrene e da offrire a lui il sacrificio degli affetti del vostro cuore: impetratici, col favore dei vostri meriti, la grazia speciale che proporzionando anche noi l'amore nostro a quello del buon Dio, ci rendessimo meritevoli di amarlo e goderlo eternamente in cielo. E così sia.

LET US PRAY

Grant, we beseech Thee Almighty God, that through the intercession of blessed Vincenzo, Thy Martyr, we may be delivered from all adversities, from all temptations, and from all evil thoughts which may hurt our minds. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

II

O glorious Martyr, San Vincenzo, you knew so well how to respond to divine love and how to despise earthly things and offer to God the sacrifice of your heartfelt affection. Through your merits, obtain for us the special grace to love God, so that we may desire to love Him and to be happy with Him forever in heaven. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Then as the first day.

— 34 —

III

O glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, voi che foste un magnanimo campione della religione di Cristo: intercedete presso il Padre dei lumi, affinchè a vostra imitazione conosciamo il pregio ammirabile della fede e della verità della Chiesa Cattolica; ed impetrateci, per i vostri meriti, che divenuti difensori di essa, invece di farci allucinare dal secolo perversito e dal senso ribelle, potessimo conservarla pura ed intatta nel nostro cuore; affinchè così credendo ed operando, potessimo godere a faccia a faccia il Sommo Bene. E così sia

Poi come il primo giorno

III

O glorious Martyr, San Vincenzo, who was a great champion of Christianity, intercede for us with the Father of light, that we may come to know the value of faith and the truth of the Catholic Church. Through your merits, obtain for us, that having become her defenders, instead of making us dream of perversion and rebellion, we will be able to keep her pure and intact in our heart, so that by our faith and actions, we will be able to see the Greatest Good face-to-face. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Then as the first day.

— 35 —

IV

O glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, voi che tanto vi segnalaste nell'eroica speranza, sì da rendervi invitto ed intrepido fino alla morte: impetrateci dal buon Signore la grazia speciale che divenuti anche noi forti e fermi in questa speranza, potessimo essere aiutati e protetti qui in terra, per poterlo unito con voi godere eternamente in Paradiso.

E così sia.

Poi come il primo giorno

V

O glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, voi che foste così fortemente investito dall'ardore della carità perfetta verso Dio, per cui non curando le delizie di questa terra, solo bramaste di farvi vit-

IV

O glorious Martyr, San Vincenzo, you distinguished yourself with heroic hope, and were invincible and fearless unto death. Obtain for us from the good Lord the special grace to be strong and firm in hope, so that we may be helped and protected here on earth, and united with you eternally in Paradise. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Then as the first day

V

O glorious Martyr, San Vincenzo, you were so heavily invested with the fervor of perfect charity towards God, that while not caring about the pleasures of this life, you desired to become an accepting victim of God's will. Obtain for us the special grace to be as you were, struck by so much love, making us humble and contrite before the divine throne of God.. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

— 36 —

*tima accettevole dei divini vo-
leri; impetrateci la grazia spe-
ciale di essere al par di voi
investati da tanto amore, per
cui riducendoci umiliati e con-
triti al trono divino, amassimo
solo Iddio ed il prossimo in Lui.
E così sia.*

Poi come il primo giorno

VI

*O glorioso Martire S. Vincen-
zo, voi che infiammato di zelo
ed ardente di carità cristiana vi
esponeste bersaglio ai colpi del-
le più fiere persecuzioni, per di-
fendere l'onore del vostro Dio,
e per palesare a tutti la sua
onnipotenza e grandezza: impe-
trateci la grazia speciale di poter
convincere gl'increduli della ve-
rità della divina legge e della
vanità delle umane invenzioni,*

Then as the first day

VI

O glorious Martyr, San Vincenzo, you were on fire with zeal and an ardent exponent of Christian charity and the target of the fiercest persecution in order to defend the honor, omnipotence and grandeur of your God. We beg you to obtain for us the special grace of being able to convince unbelievers of the truth of divine law and the vanity of human inventions in order to enjoy eternal life in heavenly. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Then as the first day

— 37 —

*onde poter godere eternamente
la patria celeste. E così sia.*

Poi come il primo giorno

VII

*O glorioso Martire S. Vincen-
zo, voi che vi distingueste con
tanto prodigio nell'eroica intre-
pidezza, per cui ad onta dei più
fieri supplizî, vi mostraste inal-
terabile nel divino timore: im-
petraci dal buon Signore uno
spirito d'intrepidezza uguale al
vostro, affinchè divenendo da
deboli forti, da timorosi intre-
pidi e da volubili costanti, ci
assicurassimo quella ineffabile
felicità che godono tutti coloro
che temono Iddio. E così sia.*

Poi come il primo giorno

VIII

O Glorioso Martire S. Vincen-

VII

O glorious Martyr, San Vincenzo, despite the most brutal tortures, you distinguished yourself with wonderful heroic valor and exhibited constant awe in the presence of God. Obtain for us from the good Lord a spirit of fearlessness the same as yours that makes us—strong not weak, fearless not fearful, firm not fickle—so that we may enjoy the same indescribable happiness known to all those who fear God. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Then as the first day

VIII

O glorious Martyr, San Vincenzo,

— 38 —

*zo, voi che foste invitto seguace
di Gesù Crocifisso e che tra i
più aspri tormenti, vi rendeste
ritratto vivente della fortezza e
della pazienza cristiana: impe-
trateci dal buon Dio la grazia
di essere forti e pazienti nei
travagli di questo mondo e nel
risorgere dallo stato di peccat-
tore, affinché illuminati dalla
divina grazia, potessi evitare
tanti scandali, edificare gli altri
col buon esempio, per essere un
giorno degni del Paradiso.*

E così sia.

Poi come il primo giorno

IX

*O glorioso Martire S. Vincen-
zo, voi che tanto vi segnalaste
con l'eroica costanza, tanto che
con una serie non interrotta di
prodigi e di patimenti, consac-
raste la vostra vita a Gesù Cri-*

unwavering follower of Jesus crucified, and bearer of torments, you who are a living portrait of Christian fortitude and patience, obtain for us the grace of God to be strong and patient in bearing the sufferings of this world, to rise above the state of a sinner, so that, illuminated by divine grace, we may avoid scandal, become good examples for others, and one day, to be worthy of Paradise. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Then as the first day

IX

O glorious Martyr, San Vincenzo, symbol of heroic loyalty, you consecrated your life to Jesus Christ

— 39 —

*sto: impetrateci dall'amoroso
Iddio lume e grazia bastante
per ravvederci e pentirci dei
nostri peccati, affinché termi-
nando con gloria il breve corso
di questa vita mortale, potessi-
mo eternamente vivere con voi
in cie'o, per godere l'eterna fe-
licità e l'eterno Bene. E così sia.*

Poi come il primo giorno

Laus Deo

with an uninterrupted series of miracles and sufferings. Obtain for us from our loving God sufficient light and grace to repent of our sins, so that when the short course of this mortal life ends, we will live in heaven with you and enjoy eternal happiness and goodness. We make our prayer through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Then as the first day.

PRAISE BE TO GOD

***CENNI STORICI DI SAN VINCENZO
MATIRE E SUA DEVOZIONE A CRACO***

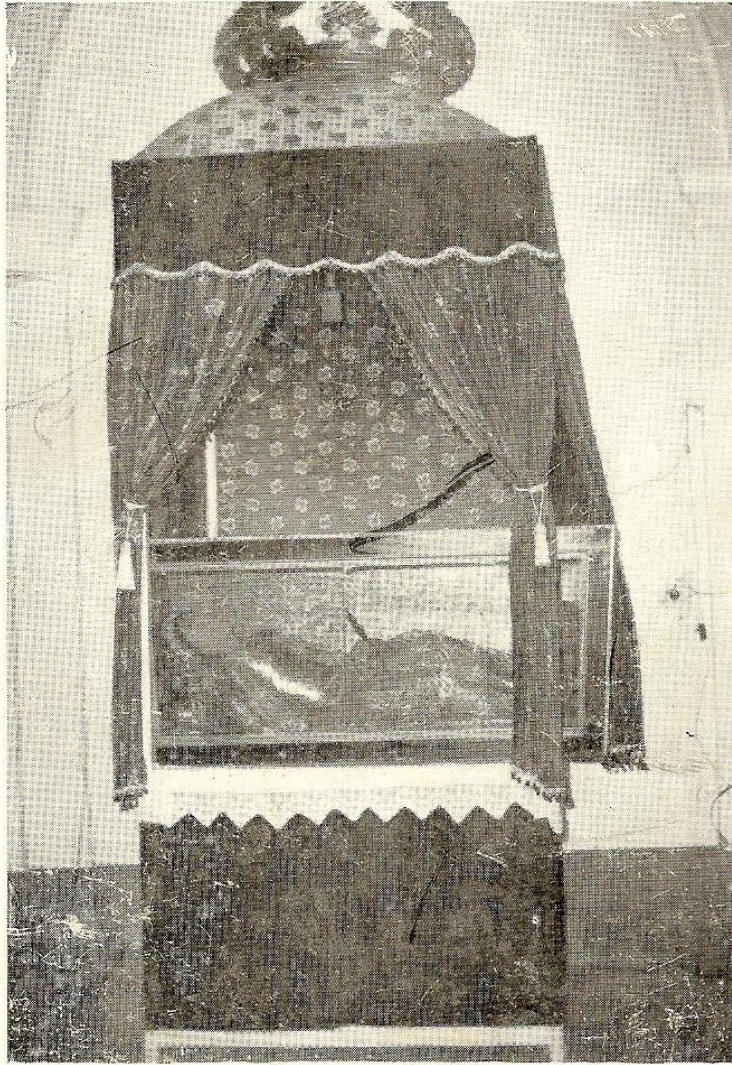


Immagine del corpo di S. VINCENZO
che si venera a Craco



Immagine del corpo di S. VINCENZO
che si venera a Craco

Photograph of the body of San Vincenzo that is venerated in Craco

L. Rocco Rosano - Marco Lategana



CENNI STORICI
DI
SAN VINCENZO MARTIRE
E
SUA DEVOZIONE A CRACO



L. Rocco Rosano – Marco Lategana

HISTORY
OF
SAN VINCENZO MARTYR
AND
HIS DEVOTION TO CRACO

I.m.d. lucana - pisticcici

Presentazione

Ci siamo domandati io e Marco Lategana sull'identità del nostro San Vincenzo e ci siamo accorti di non poterci rispondere. Abbiamo rivolto la stessa domanda alle persone di Craco e ci siamo accorti che nessuno ci sapeva rispondere. Per saperne qualcosa siamo andati a vedere tutti i santi di nome Vincenzo a nostra disposizione. Scartati gli altri, San Vincenzo Ferrero, San Vincenzo di Lerins, San Vincenzo diacono, San Vincenzo di Paoli, ci stavamo confondendo con San Vincenzo diacono e martire della Chiesa locale di Saragozza, morto nell'anno 304 sotto Diocleziano, un santo famoso per la sua testimonianza di fede da essere considerato il « San Lorenzo della Spagna ».

Ma ci sono subito sorte delle obiezioni: « Se è un grande santo spagnuolo come mai proprio a noi doveva spettare il corpo? come mai nessun devoto della Spagna è venuto in pellegrinaggio? come mai le armature addosso ad un diacono al servizio dei poveri e dei bisognosi? ».

Ci ha indirizzato sulla giusta via un libretto devozionale (1) su San Vincenzo trovato nella biblioteca parrocchiale.

Figura del Santo

Il nostro libretto ed un'enciclopedia cattolica romana dicono che san Vincenzo era un soldato, facente

(1) *Breve storia del comune di Craco e di San Vincenzo martire*, edito a Pisticci 1933.

*PAGE 5 English**Forward*

Marco Letegana and I have been asked about the identity of our San Vincenzo and we realized we were not able to respond. We addressed the same question to the people of Craco and noticed that no one knew how to respond. To learn something more we went to see all the saints named Vincenzo that were at our disposal. After discarding others, San Vincenzo Ferrero, San Vincenzo di Lerins, San Vincenzo Diacono, San Vincenzo di Paoli, we were left with some confusion over San Vincenzo deacon and martyr of the local Church of Zaragoza, who died in 304 under Emperor Diocletian, a saint famous for his testimony of faith and considered the, "San Lorenzo of Spain."

But we were faced with concerns: If he is a great Spanish saint why was his body given to us? Why have we not seen any devotees from Spain come here for a pilgrimage? Why is there amour on him if he was a deacon at the service of the poor and the needy?

These were addressed in a track of a devotional book¹ on San Vincenzo found in the parish library.

Figure of the Saint

Our book, a Roman Catholic encyclopedia says that Saint Vincent was a soldier, being

¹ *Brief History of the Commune of Craco and San Vincenzo Martire*, published in Pisticci, 1933.

parte di una legione romana fatta venire dall'imperatore Diocleziano dall'oriente: per questo motivo la legione si chiamava legione Tebea o Tebana. L'imperatore Diocleziano faceva venire dall'oriente dei soldati per ingrossare l'esercito romano ormai debole nella guerra contro i barbari per la difesa dei confini. La legione Tebana era formata da legionari comandati da Maurizio, il santo Martire che si venera a Montalbano Jonico. Il Martirologio Geronimiano dice che la legione era composta di 6666 soldati fra i quali spiccano Maurizio, Esuperio, Candido, Vittore, Innocenzo (Vincenzo), (2) Vitale.

Il Martirio è avvenuto nell'anno 286.

È una delle ultime persecuzioni romane perseguita quando già il cristianesimo si era diffuso in tutti gli strati sociali ed era arrivato anche nell'esercito che per sua costituzione era tipicamente pagano. Tutti i soldati della legione Tebana erano cristiani. Dalle testimonianze storiche il martirio è avvenuto in questo modo. Diocleziano aveva inviato nelle Gallie il Generale Massimiano per sedare un'insurrezione di contadini Bagaudi. Ora Massimiano, con il suo esercito, aspettava ad Agauno (3) nel Vallese ai piedi del monte Gran San Bernardo la Legione Tebana che doveva ingrossare il suo esercito.

Mentre l'esercito era fermo in quella zona, Massimiano comandò che tutto l'esercito, prima di combattere, doveva offrire sacrifici agli dei per ottenere da essi gli aiuti necessari per sostenere la battaglia. Maurizio e i suoi soldati rifiutarono dicendo

(2) Dal primo nome Innocenza si potrebbe forse spiegare la diffusione di tale nome a Craco, come devozione del santo protettore.

(3) Oggi Saint Maurice, da San Maurizio. Sul posto del martirio una bellissima basilica intitolata ai martiri.

Page 6 English

part of a Roman legion built by the Emperor Diocletian with soldiers from the East: for this reason the legion was called the Theban Legion. The emperor used these Egyptian soldiers to reinforce the Roman army that was weakened in the war against the barbarians defending the borders. The Theban Legion consisted of legionnaires controlled by Maurizio, the holy martyr who is venerated in Montalbano Jonico. Geronimiano, a writer about the lives of martyrs says that the legion was composed of 6,666 soldiers among which stand out Maurizio, Esuperio, Candido, Vittore, Innocenzo (Vincenzo)², and Vitale.

The Martyrdom Occurred in 286

This was one of the last Roman persecutions because Christianity was widespread in all social strata by this time and had even reached the armies which were typically pagan by constitution. All the soldiers in the Theban Legion were Christians. From historical information the martyrdom happened as follows. Emperor Diocletian sent General Massimiano to Gaul to quell an insurrection of peasants in Burgundy. Massimiano, waited with his army in Agauno³ [now the Swiss town of Saint Maurice-en-Valais] in Valais at the foot of Mount Grand San Bernardo for the Theban Legion to join them and increase his army. While the army was preparing for the first battle in that area, General Massimiano commanded that the whole army had to offer sacrifices to the gods to obtain their support in the battle. Maurizio and his soldiers refused, saying

² From the use of first name Innocent, it perhaps explains the spread of that name in Craco, as devotion of the patron saint.

³ Today we recognize him as Saint Maurice, from San Maurizio. On the location of his martyrdom is a beautiful basilica dedicated to the martyrs.

che Massimiano operava un abuso di potere: infatti come generale dell'esercito poteva dare solo ordini militari non religiosi.

Vistosi disobbedito, Massimiano ordinò che la Legione Tebana venisse decimata. Le truppe furono allineate, si contavano gli uomini, ogni dieci uomini ne uccidevano uno. Dopo la decimazione Massimiano rinnovò l'ordine di sacrificare. Al che sembra che i soldati rimanenti abbiano risposto: « Come soldati dobbiamo obbedire a te, come cristiani dobbiamo servire ed adorare il vero Dio. Confessiamo di essere seguaci di Dio Padre, autore di tutte le cose e del suo Figlio Gesù Cristo. Abbiamo assistito senza lamenti all'uccisione dei nostri compagni, siamo decisi a seguire la loro sorte pur di non tradire Cristo, la sua Chiesa e la sua Legge ». Questa coraggiosa risposta indispettì molto il generale romano che si accanì tanto a perseguire la gloriosa legione fino a sterminarla. Morì anche san Vincenzo, martire venerato a Craco. Il nome di Vincenzo sta ad indicare la forza della fede cristiana, vittoriosa delle persecuzioni e della morte. Ora le ossa di San Vincenzo aspettano a Craco l'ultimo giorno, quando verrà Gesù a risuscitarle. Infatti proprio perché aspettava la risurrezione, Vincenzo insieme con tanti compagni dette il suo corpo al Martirio.

PAGE 7 English

Massimiano was abusing his power because as an army general he could only give military orders not religious ones. Seeing disobedience, Massimiano ordered that the Theban Legion be decimated. The troops were lined up, in groups of ten, and then one in each ten was killed. After the decimation Massimiano renewed the order to sacrifice. At that, the remaining soldiers replied: "As soldiers we have to obey you, as Christians we should serve and worship the true God. We confess to be followers of God the Father, author of all things and his Son Jesus Christ. We have witnessed the killing of our comrades and have not complained, we are determined to follow their fate rather than betray Christ, his Church, and his Law."

Despite this courageous response the Roman general persecuted the glorious legion until exterminated. San Vincenzo the revered martyr of Craco also perished and the name of Vincenzo was connected with the victory of the Christian faith over persecution and death. Now the bones of San Vincenzo residing in Craco expect to be resurrected on the last day, when Jesus will be returning. Indeed precisely because they expected the resurrection, Vincenzo together with so many comrades gave his body to martyrdom.

Devozione di san Vincenzo a Craco

Se Montalbano Jonico ha come protettore san Maurizio, capitano della Legione Tebana è giusto che Craco abbia scelto San Vincenzo Martire come protettore, perché facente parte della stessa legione. Infatti era conveniente scegliere come celesti protettori di paesi confinanti quelli che una volta erano stati compagni sulla terra.

La devozione a Craco verso San Vincenzo risale almeno alla fine del XVIII secolo. Una prima testimonianza è del 1769. Il 6 febbraio di quell'anno era stata spedita a Craco insieme con la reliquia di un santo di nome Severo, una piccola reliquia di San Vincenzo. A spedirla da Roma fu il cardinale Marco Antonio Colonna, vicario generale del Papa Pio VI e giudice ordinario della curia romana e del suo distretto. La bolla che accompagnava la reliquia era indirizzata al « M. Rev. Francesco Antonio da Craco minore osservante ». In seguito il Padre Prospero da Craco, minore osservante di San Francesco, ottenne dalla S. Congregazione dei Riti di portare al suo paese ed al suo convento « una grande reliquia » di un glorioso Martire e Guerriero di nome Vincenzo.

La reliquia era accompagnata da una bolla di Francesco Saverio Passari, arcivescovo di Larissa, assistente al soglio pontificio, prelato domestico del Papa, scritta il 18 aprile 1792. In essa è attestata l'autenticità della reliquia. Si parla del « sacro corpo con vaso di sangue di San Vincenzo martire esumato dal cimitero di santa Ciriaca, nobilitato da vesti d'oro e d'argento . . . e deposto in un'urna lignea dipinta con color porpora ornata con oro e nella parte anteriore munita di cristallo ».

*PAGE 8 English**Devotion to San Vincenzo in Craco*

If Montalbano Jonico has as protector in San Maurizio the captain of the Theban Legion, it seems right that Craco chose San Vincenzo Martyr as a protector, because he was also part of that Legion. It was convenient how celestial protectors of those neighboring towns were once companions on earth.

The devotion of Craco to San Vincenzo began at the end of the eighteenth century, and is first witnessed in 1769. On February 6 of that year a relic of a saint named Severio together with a small relic of San Vincenzo was sent to Craco. These were sent by a Roman Cardinal Marco Antonio Colonna, Vicar General of Pope Pius VI and Ordinary Court of the Roman Curia. The Papal bull that accompanied the relic was addressed to "M. Rev. Francesco Antonio of Craco Minor Observant." Following that, Father Prospero of Craco, Minor Observant of St. Francis, obtained from the Congregation of Holy Rights, the authorization to bring "a great relic of a glorious martyr and warrior named Vincenzo to his town and convent."

The relic accompanied by a bull by Francesco Saverio Passari, Archbishop of Larissa, assistant Papal and domestic Prelate of the Pope, written on April 18, 1792; attested to the authenticity of the relic. It mentions, "sacred body with flask of blood of San Vincenzo martyr exhumed at the cemetery of St. Ciriaca, ennobled by vestments of gold and silver ... and placed in a purple wooden casket decorated with gold and a crystal pane at the front."

I crachesi si rendevano disponibili a venerare le reliquie del santo a cui già andavano le proprie devozioni. Il sindaco apostolico del Convento dei minori osservanti della terra di Craco, dott. Pasquale Arleo indirizzando una lettera al vescovo di Tricarico don Fortunato Pinto, originario di Salerno, scrive:

« In seguito a suppliche di un devoto si è ottenuto dal regnante Sommo Pontefice il Corpo glorioso di San Vincenzo Martire, ed ora a spese del medesimo si sta trasportando da quella capitale del mondo, con l'assistenza di un sacerdote regolare di detto Convento nell'ambito di Craco, per situarsi nella chiesa dello stesso Convento alla pubblica venerazione e tra giorni sortirà il trasporto suddetto . . . La popolazione di prefatta terra esclama di far riporre l'urna dove sta disposto detto santo nella cappella di Santa Maria della Stella poco distante dall'abitato ed ivi far osservare l'Autentica ed i Suggelli pontifici da chi stimerà la Signoria Vostra Illustrissima, per potersi poi detto corpo santo trasportare processionalmente da sacerdoti secolari e regolari e dai fratelli della congregazione sul monte dei morti nella chiesa del suddetto convento. Ricorre perciò il supplicante da Vostra Signoria Illustrissima e la supplica benignarsi di commettere l'osservazione suddetta a chi meglio stimerà del Clero di detta terra ed indi poi seguirà il trasporto processionalmente di detto santo corpo a vostro gradire ». (4)

Il vescovo risponde: « Si designano i reverendi sacerdoti Cantori ed Economo Curato della terra di Craco, luogo di nostra Diocesi ad osservare

(4) *Segue la firma del dott. Pasquale Arleo.*

PAGE 9 English

The Crachesi previously venerated the relics of the saint as part of their devotions. The apostolic head of the Convent of Minors Observant in Craco, Dr. Pasquale Arleo in a letter to the Bishop of Tricarico Don Fortunato Pinto, a native of Salerno, wrote:

"Following the supplications of a devotee we obtained from the reigning Supreme Pontiff the glorious body of San Vincenzo Martyr, and now at the expense of the former, he is being transported from the capital of the world, with the assistance of a regular priest from this Convent; "in the area of Craco, to lie in the church of the Convent for public veneration... The population of the town exclaims the preference to put the holy urn in the chapel of the Madonna della Stella that is near the town, to have the Pontifical Certification and Seals examined by whomever your Illustrious Lordship deems worthy in order to then carry that body in a holy procession, with secular, regular priests and brothers of the congregation to the mountain of the dead in the church of the above mentioned convent. The supplication of your Illustrious Lordship is therefore requested to assign to whomever the Clergy of this land deems worthy, and this person shall also officiate the processional transport of that holy body to a place of your liking."⁴ (4)

The bishop replied: "We designate the priests and the Cure of the land of Craco, place of our Diocese to observe

4 Following the signing of Dr. Pasquale Arleo.

l'Autentica e i Suggelli Pontifici del corpo del Glorioso S. Vincenzo Martire, che dalla Città di Roma si trasporta nella sudetta terra per esporsi alla venerazione di cotesta popolazione, così è dato in Tricarico dal nostro palazzo vescovile.

Abbiamo un'altra lettera del 9 Maggio 1792 (5) indirizzata dal sindaco Pasquale Arleo al Vescovo di Tricarico nella quale è attestato che « l'urna del glorioso corpo di San Vincenzo Martire » il 4 giugno è giunto nella cappella di Santa Maria della Stella. Il sindaco nella lettera dice: « Le carte pontificie furono riconosciute dalli Reverendi Economo Curato don Giovanni Ferrante e Cantore don Franco Lo Rubio e dopo l'esatta ricognizione si pose in venerazione il santo corpo suddetto e processionalmente fu trasportato nella chiesa di esso convento dove vi è un continuo concorso dei cittadini e forestieri (6) . . . li quali desiderano destinarsi la giornata della festività per maggiormente prestare la dovuta venerazione ed ossequio al prefato glorioso Santo. Per condiscendere adunque al comune desiderio ricorre il supplicante di Sua Eccellenza Illustrissima e la supplica benignarsi destinare la IV domenica del mese di ottobre di ciaschedun anno per solennizzarsi la festività di detto glorioso Santo e lo ricerca a grazia vostra ». Il vescovo accondiscende alla domanda del sindaco apostolico e permette che in Craco si celebri la festività di San Vincenzo nella giornata della IV domenica di Ottobre. Rispon-

(5) *Segue la firma del Vescovo di Tricarico Fortunato Pinto.*

(6) *Sembra esserci stata anche una certa gelosia dei forestieri: una leggenda dice che i Ferrandinesi abbiano tentato di trafugare nottetempo il corpo del Santo.*

PAGE 10 English

the Pontifical Certification and Seals of the body of Glorious San Vincenzo Martyr, that the City of Rome transports to the above mentioned land to exhibit to all of the population for veneration, and so given in Tricarico by our bishop's palace.

We have another letter dated May 9, 1792⁵ addressed by the Apostolic Mayor Pasquale Arleo to the Bishop of Tricarico where he certified that, "the urn of the glorious body of San Vincenzo Martyr" arrived in the chapel of Santa Maria della Stella . The apostolic mayor in the letter says: "The Papal papers were recognized by the Cure Reverend Don Giovanni Ferrante and Cantore Don Franco Lo Rubbio and after the exacting study venerated and posed the holy body which was then carried in procession to the church of the Convent where there is a continuous flow of citizens and foreigners⁶... who desire to know the designated feast day to give due reverence and allegiance to the glorious Saint. To comply with this common desire, a supplication is required from His Illustrious Excellency to designate the fourth Sunday of October every year for the celebration of solemn festivities in honor of San Vincenzo this glorious saint. The bishop accepted the request from the apostolic mayor and designated the fourth Sunday of October for the feast of San Vincenzo in Craco. Answering

⁵ Following the signing of the Bishop of Tricarico, Fortunato Pinto.

⁶ There also seems to be a certain jealousy of strangers: a legend says that Ferrandinesi tried to steal the body of the saint overnight.

de alla lettera del sindaco in data 29 luglio 1792 nella persona del vicario generale Carlo Parzilli.

Abbiamo anche una copia dell'atto notarile del notaio Pasquale Terso da Montalbano (7) che porta la data del giorno 21 giugno nella quale si attesta l'accettazione del corpo del santo Martire e la presa visione che le Bolle e i Sigilli romani sono autentici. L'atto notarile dice: «Noi qui sottoscritti notaio regio giudice insieme colli divoti fra Prospero e i Rev. don Giovanni Ferrante e cantore don Francesco ci siamo conferiti in detta cappella di Santa Maria della Stella fuori l'abitato; . . . li quali consentendo pienamente in noi ed agendo alle cose che dirigono fra loro stessi e loro hanno spontaneamente asserito . . . aver ricevuto qualmente una nota da osservarsi e destinarsi all'Ill.mo Vescovo di Tricarico, per la ricognizione ed osservazione dell'urna del sacro corpo di san Vincenzo Martire, concesso dalla Santa Sede Apostolica a devozione di fra Prospero e trasportato per esservi alla pubblica venerazione dei fedeli e situarsi nel venerabile Convento dei Padri Osservanti di questa terra . . . ci siamo portati in detta località non di forza . . . liberamente, avendosi pria fatta esibizione dal detto Padre Guardiano don Prospero dell'Autentica spedita da Francesco Saverio Passari che dopo letta davanti a noi hanno la medesima osservata e riconosciuta, come ancora hanno osservato il corpo venerabile di detto san Vincenzo una col

(7) *Il notaio era di Montalbano Jonico forse perché Montalbano era il paese devoto a San Maurizio, l'altro martire della legione romana.*

PAGE 11 English

the letter from the mayor on July 29, 1792 was the Vicar General Carlo Parzilli.

We also have a copy of the notarized document by notary Pasquale Terso of Montalbano⁷ which bears the date of June 21 which attests to the acceptance of the body of the Holy Martyr and the indication that the Roman Bulls and Seals are authentic. The notary's deed says: "We the undersigned lawyer and judge together Fra. Prospero and the Rev. Don Giovanni Ferrante and Cantor Don Francesco conferred in that chapel of Madonna della Stella outside the village, have come together to comply with the request received in the letter from the Illustrious Bishop of Tricarico to observe and acknowledge the casket of the sacred body of San Vincenzo Martyr, conceded by the Holy Apostolic See through the devotion of Fra. Prospero and transported to us for the public veneration by the faithful, and to be placed in the Convent of the Observant Fathers of this land ... we have come to this place not by force but by free will, having first had the Guardian Father Don Prospero examine the Authentication sent by Francesco Saverio Passari which after reading it to us, acknowledged, in the same manner that the Body of the venerable San Vincenzo was examined and acknowledged, along with a

⁷ The notary was from Montalbano Jonico, perhaps because the country was devoted to San Maurizio, another martyr of the Theban legion.

vaso col di lui sangue con la cassa entro cui tutto riposto sta e li suggelli al numero di cinque con funicella rossa dalla parte posteriore adattati ed affissi e con cristallo dalla parte anteriore con tutt'altro a tenore dell'autentica suddetta: hanno dichiarato e confessato in presenza nostra di aver trovato il corpo di detto santo con la sua cassa controllata sta situato una colli segnati suggelli, tali quali e nella maniera appunto sta descritto e notato nell'Autentica suddetta senza inganno o viziatura alcuna come ancora hanno trovato tale e quale e senza viziatura la detta Autentica, la quale dopo letta e fattane precisa ricognizione hanno letto viva grazia consegnando al detto padre Prospero che la conserva dopo vistosi dall'Economo Cantore e dichiarato e confessato, mi ne hanno giurato in nome santissimo et tacto meliori more clericale.

Qual cose in tal modo fatte essi Economo don Giovanni e cantore don Francesco hanno richiesto formarne pubblico atto e scriverne stesura ».

Passando da Napoli, il corpo S. Vincenzo è stato presentato a Francesco Vincenzo Layezza, vescovo dei Marsi, il quale riconosce autentico il corpo del Martire con una bolla datata al giorno 1 del mese di giugno tre giorni prima che giungesse a Craco. Intanto l'8 settembre arriva a Tricarico il permesso del Papa a celebrare la festività di S. Vincenzo Martire nella IV domenica di ottobre. Il permesso è firmato dal cardinale Giovanni Archinto, il quale dal timbro appostovi risulta essere segretario della Congregazione dei S. Riti apostolici.

PAGE 12 English

flask with his blood and with the vessel within which everything is placed, and five seals on it, with a small red rope along the back and a glass front, ... are consistent with the above authentication: they declared and confessed in our presence to have found the body in the coffer, with the said seals, as described and detailed in the above mentioned Authentication and noted all to be authentic without deception or any trickery. After having read and acknowledged the above Authentication, they asked Father Prospero to preserve it upon being witnessed by the Father Cantor. All was sworn to me in the name of all that is holy. Don Giovanni and the Cantor Don Francesco requested that the above be documented in a public act.

When they were moving the body of San Vincenzo from Naples, it was presented to Francesco Vincenzo Layezza, Bishop of Marsi, who recognized the genuine body of a martyr with a bull dated the 1st of June, three days before they came to Craco. Later, on September 8 a letter arrived in Tricarico with the permission of the Pope to celebrate the feast of San Vincenzo Martire on the fourth Sunday of October. The permit was signed by Cardinal Giovanni Archinto, Apostolic Secretary of the Congregation of Sacred Apostolic Rites, as indicated on the affixed stamp.

Collocazione della statua nella chiesa del Convento

Annesso al Convento vi era, alla sua sinistra un gran cappellone costruito nel 1777 dedicato alla Madonna della Annunziata. All'altare centrale di detto cappellone c'era un quadro della Madonna a cui la cappella era dedicata. Ora, il 4 aprile 1793 il sindaco apostolico del venerabile convento dei minori osservanti, dottor Pasquale Arleo, alla presenza dei testimoni Nicolantonio Viggiano, Valeriano Ferrante, Antonio Quaranta, stipula con il signor don Carlantonio Nigro compradone della cappella della Santa Annunziata il seguente contratto: « Il medesimo don Carlantonio permette al detto Arleo di far demolire l'altare di detta cappella e l'intero muro dell'istessa e farsi l'intrata nel cappellone edificando dietro l'istessa cappella che dovrà essere capace di poter fino costruire tre altari, uno per il glorioso martire san Vincenzo in mezzo, e l'altri due alli due lati per detta santissima Annunciata a mano dritta ed a mano sinistra per l'altro santo, e tutta la spesa occorrerà di fabbrica e stucco farsi dall'anzidetto sindaco apostolico e solamente esso don Carlantonio dovrà mantenere detto altare della beata vergine di necessari suppellettili e per lo spazio di due anni fare le spese della statua ».

Detto cappellone esisteva in piedi ancora nel 1933, in seguito è caduto per una frana insieme ad una parte del convento.

Sac. Leonardo Rocco Rosano

*PAGE 13 English**Positioning the statue in the Church of the Convent*

Attached to the Convent there was, on the left a large alcove built in 1777 dedicated to Our Lady of the Annunciation. At the center of the alcove there was a painting of the Madonna to whom the chapel was dedicated. On April 4, 1793 the Apostolic Mayor of the venerable Convent of Minors Observant, Dr. Pasquale Arleo, in the presence of witnesses Nicolantonio Viggiano, Valeriano Ferrante, Antonio Quaranta, concluded a contract with Don Carlantonio Nigro, the benefactor of the chapel of the Holy Annunciation the following: "Don Carlantonio allows the said Arleo to demolish the altar of that alcove and the inside wall and entrance in alcove behind the chapel so as to build up three altars, one for the glorious martyr San Vincenzo in the middle, and on the other two sides would be for Our Lady of the Annunciation on the right and the left hand side for the other holy saint, and all the expenditures should be borne by the Apostolic Mayor except that Don Carlantonio must maintain the altar of the Blessed Virgin and the necessary furnishings for two years."

That alcove stood until 1933, and later fell when a landslide destroyed a portion of the convent.

Fr. Leonardo Rocco Rosano

**Parrocchia S. Nicola Vescovo
CRACO (Matera)**

*Edizione a cura della Parrocchia di San Nicola Vescovo
per la conoscenza della figura di S. Vincenzo, patrono
di Craco.*

San Nicola Bishop Parish

CRACO, Matera

*by the Parish of San Nicola Bishop for information about the figure of
San Vincenzo, the patron of Craco.*



Vera immagine della statua di S. VINCENZO MARTIRE
che si venera a Craco e si festeggia la IV domenica di ottobre



Vera immagine della statua di S. VINCENZO MARTIRE
che si venera a Craco e si festeggia la IV domenica di ottobre

***Image of the statue of SAN VINCENZO MARTYR
that is venerated in Craco and is celebrated on the 4th Sunday in
October***

SAN VINCENZO: un martire a Craco

Associazione Colibrì

*SAN
VINCENZO:*



un martire a Craco

Hummingbird Association

SAN VINCENZO: *a martyr in Craco*



“Non è la sofferenza che fa il martirio,
ma la causa della loro sofferenza.
Se faccio dono del mio corpo
perché sia bruciato vivo,
e il mio sacrificio non si compie per la vera fede e per la
chiesa di Cristo,
non c'è martirio”

Sant' Agostino

COVER PAGE English

"It is neither torments nor death, but the cause and intention, that makes a martyr. If I should deliver my body to be burned and my sacrifice is not in the name of the faith and the Church of Christ, there is no martyrdom"

Saint Augustine

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

INTRODUZIONE

Il XX secolo, più di altre epoche della storia della Chiesa, può essere qualificato come il secolo dei martiri, tanto grande è stato il numero dei cristiani di ogni condizione che hanno sofferto per la fede cristiana, fino ad andare incontro alla morte. Come non pensare alla grande schiera di persone beatificate e canonizzate dall'indimenticato Papa Giovanni Paolo II.

Ogni chiesa locale ha i suoi martiri. Anche la nostra chiesa ha un martire, San Vincenzo. Nella devozione popolare crachese la figura di questo santo ha acquisito, con il passare degli anni, un posto significativo. La sua storia e la storia del nostro piccolo paese si sono ad un certo punto intrecciate, pare a caso. A noi piace pensare che il valoroso San Vincenzo abbia prediletto la terra di Craco come dimora per custodire le sue spoglie benedette e che Craco abbia accolto questo prezioso dono con fierezza e gratitudine. L'unione di queste due volontà ha fissato l'idea del "martirio" come un lievito che fermenta la fede di questa piccola comunità. Diremo di più... E' il sacrificio a caratterizzare le vicende storiche di Craco, legate indissolubilmente alla frana e alle sofferenze che ne seguirono: la presenza di San Vincenzo ha contribuito a reagire alla circostanza dolorosa con fermezza e coraggio.

Di martirio e di sacrificio parleremo in queste pagine, curate con una particolare devozione verso questo soldato speciale, venuto da lontano per indicarci la via maestra per arrivare a Cristo: quella del dono di sé fino alla morte. Ma prima di ripercorrere le fasi di questa storia, vale la pena di porci una domanda fondamentale: che cosa significa "martire", o meglio chi è il martire cristiano? Rispondere a queste domande è il primo passo per comprendere la grandezza di San Vincenzo e di quanti come lui hanno scelto di amare completamente Gesù. Il termine martire viene dal greco e indica un testimone. Infatti nel Nuovo Testamento, e in particolare nel libro degli Atti degli Apostoli indica coloro che sono stati testimoni di alcuni fatti, soprattutto della

PAGE 2 English

INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century, of all the other eras in the history of the Church, can be qualified as the century of martyrs, so great was the number of Christians of every condition who suffered for the Christian faith, and met death. How can we not think of the great multitude of people beatified and canonized during the pontificacy of Pope John Paul II.

Each local church has its martyrs. Even our church has a martyr, San Vincenzo. Crachesi placed significant devotion to this holy figure over the years. The history of our small town at some point intertwined, apparently at random, with the saint. We like to think that the valiant San Vincenzo chose the land of Craco to be the home of his blessed remains and that Craco accepted this precious gift with pride and gratitude. The union of these two wishes has made the ideal of martyrdom like yeast fermenting the faith of this small community. Moreover, Sacrifice has become the underlying theme of the history of Craco, tied directly to the Frana and the suffering that ensued. The presence of San Vincenzo has allowed us to react to the difficult conditions with courage and steadfastness.

These pages speak of martyrdom and sacrifice, paying devotion to this special soldier, who came from afar to show us the way to Christ: the gift of himself until death. But before we retrace the steps of this story, it is worth asking a fundamental question: What is a "martyr"? or rather who is the Christian martyr? Responding to these questions is the first step to understanding the greatness of San Vincenzo and those like him who have chosen to love Jesus completely. The term martyr comes from the Greek and indicates a witness. Indeed in the New Testament, and in particular in the book of Acts of the Apostles indicated those who were witnesses of certain facts, especially the

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

risurrezione di Gesù. Sono stati testimoni di Gesù perché hanno annunciato il Vangelo, ma lo sono stati ancora di più perché sono rimasti fedeli a Lui fino allo spargimento del sangue. Il martire, infatti, è colui che, in nome della propria fede o dei propri ideali, accetta il sacrificio di se stesso fino alla morte. È martire, ancora, chi subisce, con atteggiamento paziente, la continuità di una situazione penosa o di un tormento di eccezionale gravità. È martire, infine per la Chiesa, chi dà a Cristo la suprema testimonianza di fede e di amore: la testimonianza del sangue.

Mormando Domenica

Vignola Palmina

PAGE 3 English

Resurrection of Jesus. They were witnesses of Jesus that proclaimed the Gospel, but were still faithful to him even with the shedding of their blood. The martyr then in fact is anyone who, in the name of their faith or its ideals, accepts the sacrifice of himself until death. And martyrs can suffer, with patient attitude, the continuity of a situation or a painful punishment of exceptional severity. Finally, a martyr for the Church can be those who have given to Christ the supreme witness of faith and love: the testimony of blood.

Domenica Mormando

Palmina Vignola

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

BREVE NOTA STORICA SU SAN VINCENZO

Chi è San Vincenzo?

Le fonti biografiche a disposizione sono poche e frammentate. Secondo quanto scritto in un'enciclopedia cattolica romana, san Vincenzo era un soldato appartenente ad una particolare legione romana, chiamata Tebea (o Tebana), fatta venire dall'Oriente dall'imperatore Diocleziano per poter accrescere il proprio esercito contro i barbari. È l'anno 286. Pare che il generale Massimiliano prima della battaglia contro i barbari, avesse ordinato all'esercito di offrire sacrifici ai vari dèi pagani affinché potessero guidarli verso la vittoria.

A quel punto i nuovi soldati della legione Tebea si rifiutarono, accusando d'abuso di potere il generale Massimiliano : egli, infatti, poteva dare ordini militari ma non religiosi! La fede degli uomini della legione Tebea (comandata da Maurizio, il San Maurizio di Montalbano Jonico) era riposta e irremovibile solo in Cristo!

Per ripicca, usando la scusa di insubordinazione, Massimiliano decise di sacrificare quegli stessi soldati ai suoi dei. Ne fece uccidere uno ogni dieci. Tra i caduti c'era anche Vincenzo, il cui nome sta proprio ad indicare la forza della fede cristiana, vittoriosa oltre le persecuzioni e la morte.

L'ARRIVO DEL SANTO A CRACO

Una prima piccola reliquia di San Vincenzo venne spedita a Craco nel 1769. A mandarla fu il cardinale Colonna Marco Antonio, all'epoca vicario generale di Papa Pio VI, allegando ad essa una bolla d'attestazione indirizzata al Rev. Francesco Antonio da Craco "minore osservante".

Solo in seguito, ad opera di Padre Prospero da Craco (minore osservante di San Francesco) si ottenne il permesso di portare in Craco una "grande reliquia" di un soldato-santo di nome Vincenzo (1792). La reliquia (esumata dal cimitero di Santa Ciriaca) fu accompagnata da una bolla dell'Arcivescovo Francesco Saverio Passari , prelado domestico del Papa, in cui se ne attestava l'autenticità. La popolazione crachese si rese subito disponibile a venerare il Santo.

PAGE 4 English

SHORT NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF SAN VINCENZO

Who was San Vincenzo?

The biographical sources available are limited and fragmented. According to the Roman Catholic encyclopedia, San Vincenzo was a soldier belonging to a particular Roman legion, called Theban brought from the East by Emperor Diocletian to increase his army in the fight against the barbarians. The year was 286. The General Massimiliano, ordered his soldier to offer sacrifices to several of the pagan gods so that they could guide them to victory.

At that point the new legion of soldiers from Thebes refused and accused General Massimiliano of an abuse of power saying he, in fact, could give military orders but not religious ones! The faith of the people of the Theban Legion (led by Maurizio, who is San Maurizio of Montalbano Jonico) remained steadfast in Christ!

For their insubordination, General Massimiliano decided to sacrifice those same soldiers to his gods. He killed one in every ten. Among the dead was Vincenzo, whose name [Innocenzo] indicates the strength of Christian faith, victorious over persecution and death.

ARRIVAL OF THE SAINT IN CRACO

A first small relic of San Vincenzo was sent to Craco in 1769. In the column transporting it was Cardinal Marco Antonio, the Vicar General of Pope Pius VI, attaching to it a bull addressed to the Rev. Francis Antonio of Craco, Minor Observant".

Later, Father Prospero from Craco (Minor Observant of St. Francis) got permission to bring to Craco a "great relic of a saint soldier named Vincenzo (1792). The relic (exhumed from the cemetery of Santa Ciriaca) was accompanied by a bull from Archbishop Francesco Saviero Passari, domestic prelate of the Pope, in which it confirmed the authenticity of the saint. The Crachesi population immediately realized the need to venerate the saint.

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

Il sindaco apostolico del convento dei minori osservanti della terra di Craco, Dott. Pasquale Arleo, dispose che San Vincenzo, venisse deposto nella cappella della Madonna della Stella. Egli scrisse al vescovo di Tricarico di tali disposizioni, richiedendo anche una commissione di sacerdoti esterni che ne andasse ad attestare la definitiva autenticità apponendo dei "suggelli pontifici". Richiese, inoltre, il permesso di celebrare la festività del Santo la IV domenica del mese di Ottobre.

Nel 1793, ad opera dello stesso Pasquale Arleo e don Carlantonio Nigro, le reliquie del Santo (e di una sua statua in posizione eretta) furono sistemate nella Cappella dell'Annunziata, costruita sul lato sinistro del Convento Franciscano.

Nonostante la devozione dei Crachesi, a San Vincenzo, non è mai stata dedicata una chiesa. Lo stesso Convento, che tutt'ora la stragrande maggioranza della popolazione chiama "il Convento di San Vincenzo", è dedicato a San Pietro.

Attualmente, a causa delle opere di restauro del Convento, il corpo del Santo è sito nella piccola chiesetta (ricavata da un'ex scuola elementare) di Craco Sant' Angelo.

I FESTEGGIAMENTI NEL PASSATO.

Le Feste per celebrare San Vincenzo cominciavano nove giorni prima con la recita pomeridiana di solenni novene. In una di queste sere si svolgeva una piccola processione del Santissimo che partendo dal convento sfilava attorno alla "Croce", situata all'ingresso del paese. Il venerdì sera, dopo la novena, la statua del Santo veniva portata nella Chiesa Madre situata nel cuore del vecchio paese. Il sabato sera, prima della novena, la statua veniva portata in processione sino al convento. Tutti i festeggiamenti culminavano la domenica con la celebrazione eucaristica al convento e con la processione che attraversava tutto il paese. Di sera, davanti al Palazzo Riginone scoppiettavano i luminosi fuochi d'artificio.

LA CONFRATERNITA DI SAN VINCENZO

Sino ai primi decenni del '900 esisteva in Craco la confraternita di San Vincenzo cui aderivano i suoi più devoti adoratori. Gli appartenenti

PAGE 5 English

The Apostolic Mayor of the Convent of Observant Minors in Craco, Dr. Pasquale Arleo, who received San Vincenzo, declared that he be placed in a chapel at the shrine of the Madonna della Stella. He wrote to the bishop of Tricarico of these provisions, and requested a committee of external priests to witness the "papal seals" to give this the final authenticity. He also requested for the town to celebrate the feasts of the saint on the fourth Sunday of the month of October.

In 1793, under the direction of Pasquale Arleo and Don Carlantonio Nigro, the relics of the Saint (and an upright statue of the Saint) were placed in the chapel of Our Lady of the Annunciation, built on the left side of the Franciscan convent.

Despite the devotion of Crachesi for San Vincenzo, he was never given his own church. The Convent dedicated to St. Peter served as his home although the overwhelming majority of the population still calls it "the Convent of San Vincenzo."

Currently, due to restoration of the Convent, the body of the San Vincenzo is in the small church (created from a former elementary school) in the Sant'Angelo section of Craco.

THE FESTIVAL IN THE PAST

The feast celebrating San Vincenzo began nine days before the fourth Sunday in October with the recitation of solemn afternoon novenas. On one of those evenings a small procession took place with the statue starting from the Convent and moving around the "Cross", located at the entrance to the town. On Friday evening, after the novena, the statue of the saint was brought into the Chiesa Madre [San Nicola] located in the heart of the old town. On Saturday evening, before the novena, the statue was carried in procession to the Convent. All celebrations culminated on Sunday with the Mass at the monastery and the procession that crossed the entire town. In the evening, in front of the Palace Rigirome there were bright fireworks.

CONFRATERNITY OF SAN VINCENZO

Until the early decades of the 1900's a confraternity of San Vincenzo, which contained his most devout worshippers, existed in Craco. Those belonging

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

alla confraternita si contraddistinguevano per la tunica di colore bianco e per la mantella e la cintura di colore turchese. Questo gruppo prendeva parte alla Messa, alle processioni e, su richiesta, anche ai funerali.

LA FIERA

La festa in onore di San Vincenzo è sempre stata preceduta (il sabato) da una fiera, tradizione svolta sin dalla fine del '700 ai tempi nostri. La fiera mobilitava tutte le vicine contrade e i paesi limitrofi: molta gente proveniva da Salandra, Ferrandina, Montalbano e Pisticci. Si ramificava dall'entrata del paese sino all'abbeveratoio. Era il tempo in cui i lavoratori della terra erano impegnati nella preparazione dei terreni per la semina o nella raccolta delle olive. Ma quel giorno si lasciava tutto per fare acquisti importanti. Si vendevano animali di tutti i tipi oltre che derrate alimentari: i fagioli secchi, le mele "v'rnìl", i peperoni secchi (che sarebbero serviti per condire il salame). Insomma, si attendeva questa occasione per fare le provviste per il lungo inverno che attendeva la popolazione rurale.

Naturalmente oggi, tale evento non ha più (per tanti motivi) quel fascino dei tempi antichi, ormai ritrovabile solo nei racconti degli "anziani".

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Lucana, Pisticci*

*Cenni storici di San Vincenzo Martire e la sua devozione a Craco,
1980, Rosano R., Lategana M.*

PAGE 6 English

to the confraternity were characterized by wearing a white tunic with a turquoise color cape and belt. This group took part in the Mass, processions and, upon request also at funerals.

THE FAIR

The feast in honor of San Vincenzo was always preceded on the Saturday before by a fair, a proud tradition carried out since the end of the 1700's until today. The fair, traditionally known by all the nearby people and neighboring towns brought many people from Salandra, Fernandina, Montalbano and Pisticci. It branched from the entrance of Craco to the other end of the town (at the drinking trough). It was held at the time of the year when workers of the earth were engaged in preparing land for planting or harvesting olives. But on that day all work was left so the people could make major purchases. The fair sold animals of all types as well as foodstuffs: dried beans, "winter" apples, and dried peppers that would be used to season salami. In short, people waited for this occasion to purchase provisions for the long winter that awaited the rural population.

Of course, today, this event for many reasons no longer has the charm of ancient times, now it is experienced only in the stories of the "elderly".

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Cenni storici di San Vincenzo Martire e la sua devozione a Craco, 1980, Rosano, R., Lategana, M.

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

**CANTI E PREGHIERE
IN DEVOZIONE DI SAN VINCENZO MARTIRE**

Questo canto fu pensato dal sacerdote don Carlo Romano all'epoca in cui era un giovane seminarista.

INNO A SAN VINCENZO MARTIRE

Un bel canto di gioia e d'amore,
su concordi sciogliamo al Patrono,
egli è duce ineffabile e buono
che ci guida al cammino del ciel.
Rit. Salve salve Vincenzo beato,
salve o nostro speciale Patrono,
lassù intorno al tuo fulgido trono
vogliam tutti venire con te. (Bis)
Or che in cielo risiedi avvocato
Di tua Craco le fervide squadre
Giubilanti ti invocano Padre
Riverenti prostrati ai tuoi piè. — Rit

PREGHIERA A SAN VINCENZO MARTIRE

O forte e glorioso San Vincenzo, nostro insigne Patrono, che aveste l'onore di dare la vita per testimoniare la vostra fedeltà

Gesù Cristo, volgete amorevole lo sguardo su noi che, per sapiente disegno della Provvidenza, siamo, indegnamente, i fortunati custodi delle vostre reliquie.

Insegnateci, o Martire generoso, lo tenacia nel bene, di cui ci siete modello, avendo perseverato nei buoni propositi anche quando siete stato strappato violentemente dal quieto vivere della nostra famiglia.

Page 7 English

*CHANTS AND PRAYERS
IN DEVOTION OF SAN VINCENZO MARTYR*

This song was created by the priest Don Carlo Romano when he was a young seminarian.

HYMN TO SAN VINCENZO MARYTR

*A beautiful song of joy and love
In unison we sing to our Patron,
You are the ineffable and good duke
Who guides us to the path of heaven.*

*Chorus: Hail hail blessed Vincenzo,
Hail our special patron,
Up around your shining throne
Let us all come with you (Repeat)
And now in Heaven you live blessed advocate
Your fervent teams from Craco
Jubilantly invite you Father
Reverently we prostrate ourselves to you.*

PRAYER TO SAN VINCENZO MARTYR

O strong and glorious San Vincenzo, our distinguished Patron, who had the honor of giving his life for your loyal testimony.

Jesus Christ, turn your loving gaze on us for that wise design of Providence, we are, the unworthily, fortunate guardians of your relics.

Teach us our generous Martyr, tenacity of goodness of which you serve as a model, having persevered in good intentions even when you were violently torn from the quiet life of our family.

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco
Comunicare alle nostre anime un poco del grande amore al
nascondimento laborioso, di cui deste fulgida prova nel tempo della
vostra vita.

Pregate il Signore Gesù perché la generosità vostra nell' amare la
croce, abbia ad accendere sempre più i nostri cuori.

Presentate a Gesù, dolce amico delle nostre anime e corona dei martiri,
il nostro vivo desiderio di sostenere coraggiosamente, come voi, ogni
sofferenza della nostra vita. Amen.

INNO AL GLORIOSO S. VINCENZO MARTIRE

Innocenzo era il tuo nome
e vincente la tua mano
cavaliere valoroso
dagli amici davvero amato.

Dall'oriente sei venuto
con nel cuore la speranza
la speranza dell'incontro,
con chi il mondo aveva battuto.

E nel cuore tu portavi
le parole di chi un giorno
solo per amore nostro
le sue braccia stese in croce.

E sul campo di battaglia,
la preghiera sulle labbra,
il conforto degli amici,
rendevan vivo l'incontro fatto.

Massimiano poi ti chiese
Di adorare i suoi dei,
tu con forza rispondesti:
“la mia gioia è solo nel Signore”.

Page 8 English

*Communicate with our souls a little of the great love which
you showed evidence of in the time of your life.
Pray to the Lord Jesus because the generosity in your love
of the Cross, may ignite our hearts forever more.
Present to Jesus, sweet friend of our souls and crown of
martyrdom our earnest desire to support courageously, like
you, every suffering of our life. Amen.*

HYMN TO GLORIOUS SAN VINCENZO MARTYR

*Innocenzo was your name
Victorious is your hand
Valiant knight
Of your beloved friends.*

*You come from the East
With hope in your heart
The desire to meet,
Those whom the world had wrought.*

*And in the heart you brought
The words of the One who one day
For our love alone
Stretched his arms on the cross.*

*And on the battle field,
Prayer on the lips,
The comfort of friends,
Made the encounter so vivid.*

*Massimiano asked you then
To worship his gods,
You strongly protested:
"My only joy is in the Lord."*

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

Il tuo cuore ti imponeva,
di adorare solo il Cristo,
che quel giorno aveva incontrato,
e da allora sempre amato.

Mentre il boia ti uccideva,
il tuo volto risplendeva,
il tuo corpo è qui in terra,
la tua anima accanto al Padre.

Guarda noi popol di Dio,
tanto gretti ed infedeli,
nostro silenzioso amico,
tu modello di fede per noi.

Sia la nostra debolezza
confortata dal tuo aiuto,
sii vicino negli affanni,
sii compagno nella tristezza.
Sii tu nostro intercessore,
sii tu nostro protettore,
non voler disprezzare,
il canto di chi oggi ti invoca.

Amen, amen.

PAGE 9 English

*Your heart imposed you
To worship only Christ,
Whom you met that day,
And have since loved.*

*While the Executioner killed you,
Your face was resplendent,
Your body is here on earth,
Your soul is next to the Father.*

*Watch over us the people of God,
So narrow and unfaithful,
Our silent friend,
You are a model of faith for us.*

*May our weakness
Be comforted by your help,
Be close in difficulties,
Be thou our companion in sadness.
Be thou our intercessor,
Be thou our protector,
Do not despise,
The song of he who calls you today.*

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

SCHEDE TECNICHE

PROVINCIA E COMUNE:	MT — CRACO
LUOGO DI COLLOCAZIONE	Chiesa di S Rocco
OGGETTO:	Statua raff.: San Vincenzo
EPOCA:	XIX—XX
AUTORE:	ignoto artigiano meridionale
MATERIA:	Ossa del Santo; cera; raso; perle; pietre dure
MISURE:	70 X 155 X 60
STATO DI CONSERVAZIONE	Ottimo
CONDIZIONE GIURIDICA	pertinente alla Chiesa
DESCRIZIONE	Le presunte ossa del santo, ricoperte di un sottile strato di cera e di garza, sono composte nella figura giacente che stringe nella mano sinistra la palma del martirio e poggia la destra sulla spada distesa al suo fianco accanto ad un calice dorato e ad un cappello piumato; il volto è di cera, l'abito di raso decorato con perle e pietre dure. È racchiuso in una teca di legno con un lato di vetro.
NOTIZIE STORICO CRITICHE	La scelta iconografica e tipologica appare strettamente legata ad istanze di devozione popolare.

Fonte: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali - Matera

TECHNICAL DETAILS

PROVINCE AND COMMUNE: PLACE OF POSITION	Matera - Craco Church of San Rocco
SUBJECT: TIME:	Statue of San Vincenzo XIX-XX
AUTHOR:	unknown Southern craftsman
MATTERS:	Bones of the saint; wax; satin, pearls, precious stones
MEASURES	70X155X60
STATE OF CONDITION	Excellent
LEGAL REQUIREMENT	Pertinent to Church
DISCRIPTION	The alleged bones of the saint, covered with a thin layer of wax and gauze, are made in reposing figure with the left hand holding the martyr palm, and the right hand resting on the sword lying beside him, next to his head is a golden cup and at his feet is a plumed helmet; the face is made of wax, the silk clothing is decorated with pearls and semiprecious stones. All is enclosed in a wooden shrine with a side of glass.
HISTORICAL CONTEXT	This icon is typical and is closely linked to popular events of devotion.

Source: Ministry for culture and environmental affairs - Matera

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

PROVINCIA E COMUNE	MT — CRACO
LUOGO DI COLLOCAZIONE	Chiesa di S. Rocco
OGGETTO	Statua raff.: San Vincenzo
EPOCA	Seconda metà dei sec. XIX— primo quarto
AUTORE	GIOVANNI MARINO , attivo a Trebisacce
MATERIA	Cartapesta
MISURE	138 X 60 X 48
STATO DI CONSERVAZIONE	Ottimo
CONDIZIONE GIURIDICA	Proprietà della chiesa
DESCRIZIONE	Il Santo indossa una corta veste gialla con corpetto a maglie argentate e un mantello rosso; regge con la mano sinistra la palma del martirio e con la destra una spada. In terra, ai suoi piedi, è poggiato un cappello piumato.
ISCRIZIONI	Sul lato anteriore della base della statua si legge: restaurata nel 1959 a devozione di Matera Salvatore fu Vincenzo ; sul lato sinistro: Comm. Giovanni Marino SCULTORE (COSENZA) TREBISACCE
NOTIZIE STORICO CRITICHE	Sulla base della statua si legge il nome dello scultore Giovanni Marino, attivo a Trebisacce (Cosenza); non è chiaro tuttavia se si tratti dell'autore dell'opera

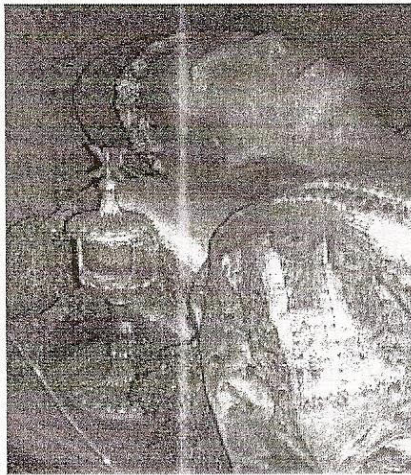
PAGE 11 English

PROVINCE AND COMMUNE	MT - CRACO
LOCATION	Church of St. Rocco
SUBJECT	Statue of San Vincenzo
TIME FRAME	First quarter of 20th century
AUTHOR	Giovanni Marino active in Tebisacce
MATERIAL	Papermache
MEASUREMENT	138X60X48
STATE OF CONSERVATION	Excellent
LEGAL STATUS	Owned by the church
DESCRIPTION	The saint wearing a yellow shirt has a silver mesh bodice with a red cloak, holding in his left hand the palm of martyrdom and in the right hand a sword. At his feet is a plumed helmet.
MARKINGS	On the front of the base of the statue reads: restored in 1959 by the devotion of Salvatore Matera son of the late Vincenzo; on the left side: Comm. Giovanni Marino SCULPTOR (COSENZA) TREBISACCE
HISTORICAL CONTEXT	On the base of the statue is the name of sculptor Giovanni Marino, active in Trebisacce (Cosenza); not clear however whether he is the original author of the work

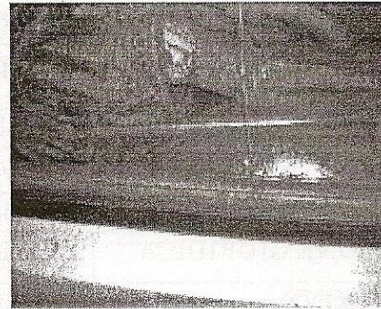
San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

	o dell'artefice del restauro commissionato nel 1959 da Salvatore Matera come specifica un'altra iscrizione
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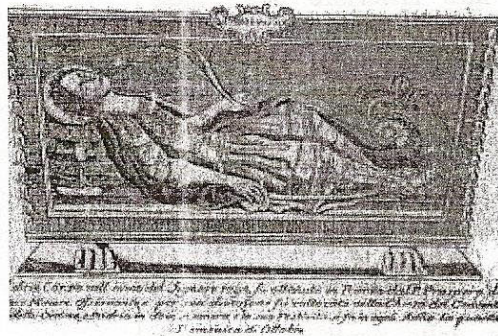
Fonte: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali - Matera



Particolare del calice dorato contenente il sangue di San Vincenzo



Particolare della spada



Antico dipinto raffigurante San Vincenzo



Statua di San Vincenzo

	or artist doing the restoration commissioned in 1959 by Salvatore Matera.
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Source: Ministry for cultural and environmental affairs - Matera

Detail of gold chalice containing the blood of San Vincenzo

Detail of the sword

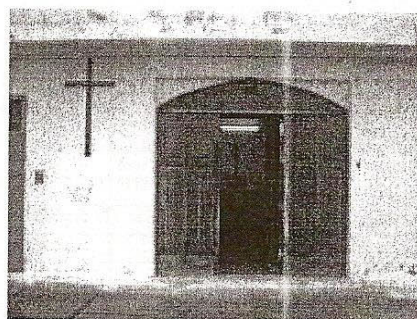
Old sketch of San Vincenzo

Statue of San Vincenzo

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco



Immagine del monastero che per molti anni ha custodito il corpo del Santo



La foto ritrae la chiesa dov'è attualmente custodito il corpo di San Vincenzo.

CURIOSITA'

Ci siamo chiesti: “Quante persone di Craco hanno ricevuto il nome Vincenzo o Innocenzo come segno di devozione verso il loro santo patrono?” I dati emersi da una ricerca effettuata presso l'Ufficio Anagrafe del comune di Craco ci mettono di fronte ad un risultato sorprendente: dal 1850 al 2005 si contano 527 persone che portano questo nome (di seguito riportiamo l'elenco dei nati dal 1900 al 2005).

Questo risultato è l'ennesima prova del profondo legame che unisce la nostra comunità al venerato San Vincenzo.

Va aggiunto che in passato a Craco vecchia, vi era un circolo ricreativo recante il nome “San Vincenzo”; anche la Pro Loco, recentemente costituitasi porta il nome “San Vincenzo”.

PAGE 13 English

Photograph of Convent that for many years housed the body of San Vincenzo

Photograph of the church where the body of San Vincenzo lays today

CURIOSITY

We wondered: "How many people of Craco received the name Vincenzo or Innocenzo as a sign of devotion to their patron saint? The data emerged from a research carried out at the Registry Office of the commune of Craco brought us a surprising result: from 1850 to 2005 there were 527 people who were given this name.

This was yet another proof of the deep bond that unites our community to the venerable San Vincenzo.

It should be noted that in the past in Craco Vecchio, there was a recreational circle bearing the name "San Vincenzo"; also the recently formed Pro Loco group bears the name "San Vincenzo."

Dolcemele Michele Vincenzo	1900
Ferrante Innocenzo	1900
Italiano Vincenzo	1900
Maseiulli Vincenza	1900
Azzone Vincenzo	1901
Francavilla Antonio Vincenzo	1901
Mastronardi Innocenzo	1901
Matera Nicola Vincenzo	1901
Pecoraro Vincenzo	1901
Rinaldi Vincenzo Nicola	1901
Arleo Annunziata Vincenza	1902
Dovasio Vincenzo Antonio	1902
Grieco Vincenzo	1902
Lacicerchia Innocenzo	1902
Laino Vincenzo	1902
Camperlengo Pasquale Vincenzo	1903
Defacendis Vincenzo	1903
Maglia Vincenzo	1903
Scuma Maria Vincenza	1903
Caricati Vincenzo	1904
Cataldo Maria Vincenza	1904
Colonna Vincenzo	1904
Laino Vincenzina	1904
Scriillo Antonio Vincenzo	1904
Tanico Vincenzo	1904
Tuzio Domenico Vincenzo	1904
Tuzio Vincenzo	1904
Viverito Vincenzo	1904
D'Onofrio Nicola Vincenzo	1905
Mastronardi Innocenzo	1905
Conte Vincenzo	1906
Cristaldi Vincenzo	1906
Spera Vincenzina Pietrina	1906
De Cesare Vincenzina	1907
Dovasto Antonio Vincenzo	1907
Francavilla Maria Vincenza	1907
Lacopeta Vincenzo	1907
Lauria Maria Vincenza	1907
Rinaldi Vincenzo	1907
Tuzio Domenico Vincenzo	1907
Angelone Vincenzo Pasquale	1908
Consoli Antonio Vincenzo	1908
Ferrante Vincenzina	1908
Forgione Vincenzo	1908
Guariglia Vincenzo	1908
Petrarulo Vincenza	1908
Pignataro Innocenzo	1908

Cantasano Vincenzo Nicola	1909
Lacicerchia Nicola Vincenzo	1909
Lauria Vincenzo	1909
Matera Vincenzo	1909
Tancredi Nicola Vincenzo	1909
Tuzio Vincenza	1909
Tuzio Vincenzo	1909
Lobosco Vincenza	1910
Magli Vincenzo	1910
Rubertone Vincenzina	1910
Santalucia Vincenzina	1910
Spera Nicola Vincenzo	1910
Zaffarese Vincenzo	1910
D'Elia Domenico Vincenzo	1911
Mastronardi Vincenzina	1911
Mormando Maria Vincenza	1911
Seccafico Innocenzo	1911
Aulerta Vincenzo	1912
Duca Vincenzo	1912
Pellegrino Vincenzo	1912
Vaccaro Vincenza	1912
Cipollino Vincenzo	1913
Lavieri Vincenzo	1913
Lorubio Vincenza	1913
Maronna Innocenzo	1913
Mastronardi Nicola Vincenzo	1913
Pignataro Vincenzo	1913
Pisciotta Vincenza	1913
Torraca Vincenzo	1913
Bito Vincenzo	1914
D'Ambrosio Vincenza	1914
Gentile Vincenzo	1914
Tuzio Vincenzo	1914
Altomonte Vincenzo	1915
Lorubio Nicola Vincenzo	1915
Maffeo Antonio Vincenzo	1915
Tancredi Vincenzo	1915
Consoli Vincenzina	1916
Ragone Vincenzo Domenicanti	1916
Autero Maria Vincenza	1917
Decostole Vincenzo	1917
Lospinoso Vincenzina	1917
Miggiano Leonardo Vincenzo	1917
Sillati Paolo Vincenzo	1917
Bernini Vincenzino	1918
Franchini Vincenzina	1918
Viggiano Vincenzina	1918

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

Grossi Vincenzina	1919
Montemurro Vincenzo	1919
Giuliani Maria Vincenza	1920
Bloisi Vincenza	1921
Spera Vincenzina	1921
Grossi Vincenzina	1922
Ribonati Vincenzo	1923
Sammartino Vincenzo	1923
Simonetti Vincenzo	1923
Matera Vincenzo	1924
Rinaldi Vincenzina	1924
Galeramo Vincenzo	1925
Miggiano Vincenzo	1925
Romano Vincenzo	1925
Simonetti Vito Vincenzo	1925
Vitarella Vincenzo	1925
Vignola Vincenzo	1926
Crapulli Vincenzo	1927
Montemurro Vincenzo	1927
Sarubbi Vincenzo	1927
Seccafico Vincenzina	1927
Colonna Vincenzo	1928
D'Onofrio Vincenzo	1928
Mormando Vincenza	1928
Pecoraro Vincenza	1928
Grossi Vincenzo	1929
Mormando Vincenzo	1929
Rinaldi Maria Vincenza	1929
De Cesare Vincenzo	1930
Lauria Vincenzo	1930
De Cesare Maria Vincenza	1931
Mezzapesa Maria Vincenza	1931
Benedetto Vincenzo	1932
Lofranco Vincenzo	1932
Mastronardi Vincenzo	1932
Mormando Vincenzo	1932
Tricarico Vincenzo	1932
Rinaldi Vincenzo	1933
Longobucco Vincenzo	1935
Musio Vincenzo	1935
Seccafico Vincenzo	1935
Spera Vincenzo	1935
Anzillotti Vincenza	1936
Pipino Vincenzina	1936

Sarubbi Vincenzo	1936
Gorgoglione Vincenza Anna	1937
Grossi Innocenzo	1937
Montemurro Vincenzo	1937
Trianni Vincenzo	1937
Bitonto Vincenzo	1939
Casella Angelina Vincenza	1939
Matera Vincenzo Pompeo Gaetano	1939
Motta Vincenzo	1939
Mulieri Vincenzina	1939
Palese Gino Vincenzo	1939
Vitelli Vincenzo	1939
Copeta Vincenza	1940
De Cesare Delia Aurora Enza	1940
Grossi Innocenzo	1940
Lapilla Nicola Vincenzo	1940
Montella Vincenzo	1940
Serra Vincenzo Rosario	1940
Cecere Vincenzo	1941
Tancredi Maria Vincenza	1941
Viggiano Vincenzina	1942
Genovese Vincenzo Gennaro	1943
Santalucia Vincenzo	1943
Lapilla Vincenzo	1944
Maffei Vincenzo	1944
Danubio Vincenza Cecilia	1945
De Mare Vincenzo	1946
D'Elia Maria Domenica Vincenza	1946
Pecoraro Vincenza	1946
Amodeo Vincenzina	1947
Boffilo Vincenzo	1947
Casto Vincenzo Nicola	1947
Costantino Vincenzo	1947
D'Elia Vincenzo Pompeo	1947
Motola Aldo Enzo	1947
Poidomani Vincenzo	1947
Viggiani Vincenzo	1947
Calciano Vincenzo	1948
Casella Innocenzo	1948
Maioranno Vincenzo	1948
Seccafico Innocenzo	1948
Vignola Vincenzo Giuseppe	1948
Bruno Vincenzo	1949
Clemente Vincenzo Lucio	1950

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco

Di Riso Vincenzo Adalberto	1950
Giannelli Vincenzo Giovanni	1950
Maioranno Vincenzo	1950
Montemurro Vincenzo Rocco	1950
Fersini Enzo Romeo	1951
Fittipaldi Vincenzo	1951
Gallotta Vincenzo	1951
Lacicerchia Innocenzo	1951
Magistro Vincenzo	1951
Oliveto Vincenzo	1951
Capogrosso Vincenzina	1952
Fersini Antonio Vincenzo	1952
Russo Vincenzo	1952
Gallotta Vincenzo Fiorenzo	1953
Montemurro Vincenzo	1953
Scandiffio Innocenzo	1953
Vignola Vincenzo	1953
Andrisani Vincenza	1954
Lofranco Pasquale Vincenzo	1954
Magistro Vincenzo	1954
Nuzzo Antonio Vincenzo	1954
Pacilio Lucia Vincenza	1954
Pirretti Innocenzo	1954
Bitonto Vincenzo	1955
Crapulli Vincenzo Antonio	1955
Bloisi Vincenzo	1956
Poidomani Vincenzina	1956
Eraño Vincenzo Mario	1957
Lacopeta Vincenzo	1957
Lacicerchia Innocenzo	1958
Mitidieri Vincenzo	1958
Pucciariello Vincenzo	1958
Lacicerchia Innocenzo	1959
Mele Vincenza	1959
Pecoraro Enzo	1959
Scazzariello Vincenzo	1959
Stigliano Vincenzo	1959
Giordano Vincenzo	1960
Montemurro Vincenza	1960
Turco Vincenza Nadia	1960

Aliano Vincenzo	1961
Colangelo Vincenzo	1961
Loporchio Vincenzo	1961
Longobucco Vincenza Rachele	1962
Mormando Vincenzo	1962
Vitelli Vincenzo	1962
Colonna Vincenzo	1963
Lauria Enza	1963
Lauria Vincenzo	1963
Scandiffio Innocenzo	1963
D'Elia Vincenzo	1964
Lacicerchia Innocenzo	1964
Montemurro Vincenzo	1964
Colonna Vincenza Maria	1965
Germini Vincenzo	1965
Pucciariello Nicola Vincenzo	1965
Lauria Vincenza	1967
Lavieri Vincenzo	1967
Pecoraro Vincenzo	1968
Rinaldi Vincenzo	1968
Copeta Vincenzo	1970
Di Santo Vincenzina	1971
Lacopeta Vincenzo	1971
Clemente Vincenzo	1977
Lavieri Vincenzo	1978
Montemurro Vincenzo	1981
Vignola Vincenzo	1981
Di Stefano Vincenzo	1982
Lavieri Vincenzo	1982
Bagnulo Vincenzo	1984
Magistro Vincenzo	1984
Lauria Vincenzo	1990
Lavaia Innocenzo	1991
Montemurro Vincenzo	1992
Lofranco Vincenzo	1999
Sanchirico Vincenzo	2001
Sanchirico Vincenzo	2002
Trianni Vincenzo	2003

NOTIZIE SULL'ASSOCIAZIONE COLIBRI



L'Associazione di Volontariato Colibri, con sede in Craco si è costituita in data 05/06/2002. L'istituzione di questa Associazione ha risposto innanzitutto all'esigenza di garantire la presenza sul territorio di un valido strumento di intervento sociale, essendo la nostra piccola realtà mancante da questo punto di vista.

Dal gennaio 2003 l'Associazione è impegnata nell'edizione di un giornalino locale, denominato **Colibri**. Durante l'estate 2004 l'Associazione ha promosso la realizzazione di un libretto sulla Madonna della Stella venerata in Craco: **OMAGGIO ALLA STELLA**

Nel periodo febbraio- maggio 2005 l'Associazione si è coinvolta nel progetto PROMOSTUDIO presentato alla Regione Basilicata nell'ambito dei PROGETTI INNOVATIVI. Attualmente l'Associazione gestisce in forma volontaria il **SERVIZIO DI LETTURA** aperto alla comunità di Craco sito nel locale sottostante la Scuola Media.

Ultimamente l'Associazione *Colibri* si è proposta come Associazione capofila di tutte le Associazioni in Craco, per la gestione del **Progetto ISP** (Internet Social Point).

La realizzazione dell'opuscolo **SAN VINCENZO: UN MARTIRE A CRACO** rientra in un progetto culturale presentato alla Regione Basilicata dal Comune di Craco nell'ambito delle attività culturali del 2005.

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RINGRAZIAMENTI

L'Associazione Colibri ringrazia vivamente le signorine Antonietta e Stella Romano, la signora Giovanna Lofiego e la signora Lilina Covella per averci guidato con i loro racconti nella realizzazione di questo opuscolo.

Associazione Colibri

San Vincenzo: un martire a Craco.

Tutti i diritti sono riservati

Impaginazione e grafica: Palmira Vignola

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Part II

San Vincenzo and the Crachesi in New York

Into A New World

A starting point in the story of San Vincenzo Martire and the story of the Crachesi in New York is with the statue that was given to The Craco Society on August 16, 2008.



Left to right: Vincent Niceforo, Camille Colabella Niceforo and Joseph D. Rinaldi, president of The Craco Society receiving the gift of the San Vincenzo statue.

Photo courtesy of Joseph A. Rinaldi

The statue was owned by Francesco Paolo Colabella who emigrated from Craco in 1911 when he was 17 years old. While developing his new life in New York he also sought to maintain connections with his roots and community as did so many others who came to America.

About 30 years before Francesco Colabella arrived in New York City immigrants from Southern and Eastern Europe began populating the Lower East Side of Manhattan. Although most of the early arrivals from Italy to America were from the north Crachesi immigrants started reaching the New York Harbor in the early 1880's.

In 1881 Craco had 2,015 inhabitants, almost all of whom lived in the center of town which had numerous stairways and steps, a great number of little houses made of reeds (canes) and sheets of corrugated iron or tin (sometimes with a stall or chicken coop attached). There were also a few villas all grouped together on the hill dominated by the Norman tower that is the town's landmark feature. Conditions were challenging with

especially high death rates among infants creating the circumstances that would cause a great emigration from Southern Italy over the next 40 years.⁸

From 1880 to 1900, over 300 Crachesi left the town for a better life elsewhere. The first to arrive in New York from Craco was Antonio Viggiano, who although he was a member of the town council, was unable to find secure work there.⁹ He was followed by a small but steady stream through the next decades.

A very small enclave of Crachesi immigrants settled in Jersey City, NJ with the vast majority from the town inhabiting the Manhattan, New York area then known as the Five Corners, a neighborhood with an infamous history. The first Crachesi coming to America brought with them skills such as barbers or tailors allowing them to gain a foothold in their new country, while those who were laborers found work in a city needing their efforts. Many probably had no intention of staying but over time as their situation improved their thinking changed.

The conditions in Lower Manhattan during this period were barely better than at home in Italy. The Mulberry Bend and Five Corners area was an infamous slum area that was heavily populated by Irish immigrants when they began arriving in the mid-1800s escaping their calamities. By 1885 the terrible conditions in the area were so much of a concern that slum clearance efforts razed the Five Points. However by eliminating the tenement buildings in this area the masses simply moved to nearby tenements in the adjacent area that became known as Little Italy.

In Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives* several of his observations help us understand the challenges immigrants faced. Riis pointed out that they arrived at the bottom of the social strata and were prey of "middle-men." Lacking both the English language and reading skills they relied on the "padrone" for access to work and lodgings. Riis identified a trait of Italian immigrants and by association a characteristic of the Crachesi, that besides the odds stacked against them, they were able to succeed in this environment by, "...applying the maxim that it is not what one makes but what one saves that makes him rich, manages to turn the very dirt of the streets into a hoard of gold, with which he either returns to his Southern home, or brings over his family to join in his works and fortunes..."¹⁰

⁸ D'Angella, Dino, *Note Storiche del Comune di Craco*, The Craco Society, 2009, pg. 85.

⁹ D'Angella, Dino, *Note Storiche del Comune di Craco*, The Craco Society, 2009, pg. 93-94.

¹⁰ Riis, Jacob, *How the Other Half Lives*, Dover Publications, New York, 1971, pg. 44.

It was this concept the Crachesi had lived by in Craco and applied to life in America. Riis points out that, "...there is money to be made in New York's ash-barrel, but it was left to the genius of the padrone to develop the full resources of the mine that was to become the exclusive preserve of the Italian immigrant."¹¹ Prior to the 1880 the City of New York hired gangs of men to trim ash scows before they were taken to sea for off-loading. Besides being paid a dollar and a half for the day they could keep whatever they found. This yielded bones, rags, tin cans, and other waste in the ashes that provided them an additional source of income. A generation later the Crachesi had applied this to the rag and waste paper recycling industry in New York and dominated it into the late 20th century.

As Irish immigrants in the Five Corners were displaced by new immigrants it became apparent there was a need for religious institutions to support Italian residents and their preferences. Although Roman Catholic, just as the earlier Irish inhabitants were, Italians noted major differences in the way the religion was practiced by the churches in the area.

With churches staffed by Irish clergy the new Italians immigrants found communication with them difficult and considered the Irish version of Catholicism rigid, hierarchical, cold, and remote. Conversely, the Irish clerics considered the new Italian immigrants a problem for "their" church. Adding to this divide was a considerable anticlericalism among Italian men stemming from roots in the old country.¹²

Other religious differences were visible in the Italian immigrants' accentuated role of the Madonna and also the appeal by individual worshipers to saints as intercessors for them to God. Every town in Italy had a patron saint that was not only unique to their village but was an integral part of their regular life. The patron saint held a deep personal relationship with each individual in the town as the saint was privy to their private prayers and received incantations of their heartfelt requests and secrets. Any time, in one way or another, when the saint responded to the villagers' wishes the relationship became more important to individuals' lives. In the chaotic new world metropolis that Italians encountered when they entered New York City the patron saint and activities associated with their veneration were a key to maintaining some sense of stability. With this

¹¹ Riis, Jacob, *How the Other Half Lives*, Dover Publications, New York, 1971, pg. 44.

¹² *Passage to Liberty, The Story of Italian Immigration and the Rebirth of America*, Ciongoli, A. Kenneth and Jay Parini, Regan Books, New York, 2002, page 19.

background it is understandable why the celebration of the feast days of various Italian saints became regularly events in the streets of Lower Manhattan during this era.

It is natural that immigrants seek to maintain old traditions and a cultural identity they are comfortable with while adapting to a new home. But it is also part of the assimilation process as old traditions get modified and changed to reflect values and experiences of their new home. This adaptation created the differences in Italian-American culture and that of Italy.

As the stream of Italians coming to Manhattan increased the Missionary Fathers of St. Charles Borromeo, an order popularly known as the Scalabrini Fathers, was dispatched to America by Pope Leo XIII to assist the struggling immigrants. The Scalabrini Fathers opened their first mission in New York in 1887 and within a year established their first church there.

The Church of San Gioacchino (St. Joachim) was opened in 1888 at 28 Roosevelt Street on the site of a former Protestant church.¹³ It was located in a neighborhood known as Knickerbocker Village, an area heavily populated by Crachesi. The church was named in honor of Pope Leo XIII who approved the founding of the Scalabrini order, based on his baptismal name Gioacchino Pecci.¹⁴ With a seating capacity for 800 and a congregation of 18,000 St. Joachim's held numerous Masses.¹⁵ It served as a center for social life including child care and educational assistance services for the families in the parish as part of their mission to assist Italian immigrants. It was the first assignment of the sainted Mother Frances X. Cabrini when she landed in America.¹⁶

Italian immigrants brought with them a family-centered peasant culture and held fiercely to local identifications, or *campanilismo*. They typically viewed themselves as residents of particular villages or regions, not as "Italians." The organizational and residential life of early US communities reflected these facts, as people limited their associations largely to kin and *paesani* fellow villagers. The proliferation of narrowly based mutual aid societies and *feste* (feast days) honoring local patron saints were manifestations of these tendencies. Gradually, as more Italian immigrants arrived they

¹³ Inventory St. Joachim's Church records, New York City, page 2, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

¹⁴ *Humilitas*, Golden Jubilee Church of St. Joachim, New York, NY, pg. 42.

¹⁵ *The Catholic Church in the United States of America*, The Catholic Editing Company, New York, 1914, pg. 337, digitized version of April 10, 2008.

¹⁶ Inventory St. Joachim's Church records, New York City, page 2, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

increasingly interacted with fellow immigrants; *campanilismo* gave way to a more national identity and affinity with others from the native land.¹⁷

One of the things St. Joachim's did to assist Italian immigrants was housing statues of patron saints from the many different home towns from those inhabiting the neighborhood. This gave the Italian émigrés comfort by providing access to the venerated images from home as they struggled to assimilate. By putting all of their different saints together in the churches, group solidarity emerged allowing the Italians to transcend their long held village loyalties and move through the process of integration into American society more easily than if left on their own.¹⁸

With its focus on Italian immigrants the Church of St. Joachim would become a center to support them. Besides providing services and programs to aid the immigrants the church formed and supported many religious societies. It was with St. Joachim's Church that the Crachesi would form a bond in the New World that would last for half a century.



St. Joachim's Church c. 1907

¹⁷ <http://www.everyculture.com/multi/Ha-La/Italian-Americans.html#ixzz1Kfy5UMUA>

¹⁸ *Piety and Power, The Role of the Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1880-1930*, Tomasi, Silvio M., Center For Migration Studies, New York, 1975 pg. 103.

The Crachesi Come to New York

From 1892 until the turn of the century, only 346 Crachesi were documented passing through Ellis Island and entering New York¹⁹ adding to the few others who arrived in the US from 1880 to 1891 before records required immigrants to report their town of origin.²⁰ By 1899, there were over 400 individuals living in the Greater New York City area with a connection to Craco. This represented about one-quarter of the Italian town's population, yet was miniscule in relation to all the other Italian immigrants.

When individuals or families left Craco and joined relatives or friends in New York they lived together in close proximity. Although they were in a large city it may have seemed a bit like they were in their old town with everyone crowded together. But New York was so different.

Unlike Craco, their agrarian skills were almost useless. They were able to find work as laborers or if they possessed a trade there was ample opportunity in the community to apply their skills. The earliest Crachesi came to America with established skills as tailors, barbers, and shoe makers and were able to serve the growing Italian community in Lower Manhattan. Those without skills found work as laborers in the construction trades or in the waste paper and rag trades.



Mulberry Street c. 1900

¹⁹ Craco Italy Passengers Entering Ellis Island, NY, The Craco Society, unpublished, 2007.

²⁰ Note Storiche sul Comune di Craco, D'Angella, Dino, I.M.D. Lucania, Pisticci, reprint 1986, pg. 112.

By 1900 New York City had changed dramatically with over 200,000 Italians who were beleaguered by illiteracy and a lack of technical and professional jobs. New immigrants continued to find work mostly as laborers, pushcart men, sanitation workers, and other unskilled jobs not requiring education or the English language. However, those who had come to America earlier had made gains establishing 10,000 *botteghe* (shops), 2,750 barber shops, 250 butcher shops, 1,300 delicatessens, 2,300 shoe repair shops and 200 banking and industrial companies under Italian ownership dotting the City. Added to this were 200 incipient labor unions, Italian fraternal organizations, and mutual aid societies.²¹ Among them was one formed by those who came from Craco.

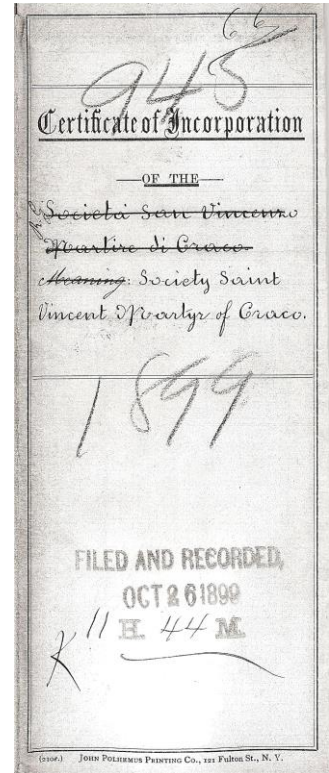
²¹ *Piety and Power, The Role of the Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 188-1930*, Tomasi, Silvio M., Center For Migration Studies, New York, 1975 pgs. 26-27.

Coming Together for San Vincenzo

The first documented activity on the part of the small band of Crachesi “paesani” that immigrated to New York City was to create a mutual aid society. On Wednesday October 26, 1899, the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco was incorporated in the State of New York.²² The next day on Thursday October 27, 1899 at 11:44am another copy of the certificate of incorporation was filed with the City of New York.²³

When the documents were filed with the Commissioner of Corporations, Raymond Guarini, the Notary handling the procedure ran into a complication. The Italian name and the word “meaning” following it were crossed off the document but the English words, “Society Saint Vincent Martyr” of Craco was left and the initials “R.G.” were added to signify this change was made by him. This small change, for whatever reasons, actually made the English name the correct corporate title of the organization but that name was never used.

A group of Crachesi men met with Raymond Guarini on Monday October 16th to fill out and sign the corporate documents. Raymond Guarini was operating as a broker but also had interests in two pharmacies with his brother Alphonso and another partner Gaetano Colonnello. Guarini, who was Italian born, would later become a banker and assist the Crachesi in that role too. At this time he lived at 21 New Bowery Street and was a Notary Public, able to speak both the English and Italian languages. He possessed the where-with-all to handle the necessary details for the men in filing the paperwork.²⁴



²² Book 47, page 117, Certificate of Incorporation.

²³ 1899 Corporate Charter Number 945, County Clerk, New York County.

²⁴ 1900 US Federal Census, New York State, New York County, Manhattan, Enumeration District 29, sheet 1. 1920 US Federal Census, New York State, Kings County, Brooklyn Assembly District 2, Enumeration District 116, sheet 12.

Using a preprinted corporate charter form Guarini filled in the details for the Crachesi men defining the organization as being formed for charitable purposes; giving the intention as:

Mutual aid, voluntary protection for the members and to practice benevolence and charity towards all who are in need and deserve assistance.

The charter named five of the seven men as Directors to serve until the annual meeting which would occur on the first Monday of December. The Directors and their addresses were listed as:

1. Vincenzo Camperlenco (sic), 338 Water St.
2. Gaetano Cantasano, 38 Baxter St.
3. Pasquale Marrese, 53 Spring St.
4. Nicola Torracca, 163 Leonan (sic) St.
5. Charles C. De Cesar (sic), 40 Baxter St.

The other two individuals who signed the document as charterers were:

- Joseph Rinaldi
- Antonio DeSisto

The day they met, Monday October 16, 1899 was the week before the 4th Sunday in October, the feast day of San Vincenzo. Perhaps they hoped to be able to have the organization completely incorporated by the feast day but it was not to be.

The background of the incorporators reflected the changes the Crachesi experienced since coming to America. “Vincenzo Camperlenco” was Nicola Vincenzo Camperlengo born in Craco in 1865 and had been in the US long enough to be naturalized by 1896. Gaetano Cantasano born in 1864 was a “rag merchant” and among the earliest to leave the town arriving in the US in 1880. Pasquale Maresse, who ran a tailor shop at 53 Spring Street, but had moved his residence from 221 Mulberry St. to Jersey City, NJ and was the oldest of the group; born in Craco in 1848 he immigrated in 1885. Nicola Torracca born in 1869 arrived from Craco in 1890 and was a shoemaker who lived on Leonard Street. Charles DeCesare born in Craco in 1872 and immigrated in 1881 he had spent most of his life in New York. Joseph Rinaldi was the youngest of the group, born in Craco in 1877. He immigrated to the US in 1890 and was trained as a barber; he obtained his US citizenship in August 1899 just two months before signing the document. He would go on to become the president of the Società after WWI. Antonio DiSisto is the only signer that is unknown.

Their efforts to organize the Crachesi were rewarded when they received their certificate of incorporation.



New York State Certificate of Incorporation²⁵

The organization's activity picked up the next year. One of the corporate charterers, Vincenzo Camperlengo filed a copyright request with the Library of Congress for a woodcut of San Vincenzo Martire. He submitted two copies of the woodcut on November 12, 1900 along with the necessary filing documents. The material that was submitted and protected under the copyright was not retained by the Library of Congress²⁶ although the record of the filing and copy right number are recorded in the public record.²⁷

Camperlengo (Vincenzo),
New York, N. Y.
Vincenzo (San) Martire, by Vincenzo
Camperlengo. 152
Copyright by Vincenzo Camperlengo,
New York, N. Y. 1900, class D, no.
19606, Oct. 10; 2 copies rec'd Nov. 12,
1900.

²⁵ Gift to The Craco Society by Mrs. Rita Gallo.

²⁶ Email correspondence from LOC Print and Photographs Division of Nov.15, 2011 in possession of Frederick Spero.

²⁷ Catalogue of Title Entries of Books and Other Articles, The Library of Congress, Copyright Office, Engravings, Cuts, And Prints, Vol. 26, First Quarter 1901, pg. 139.

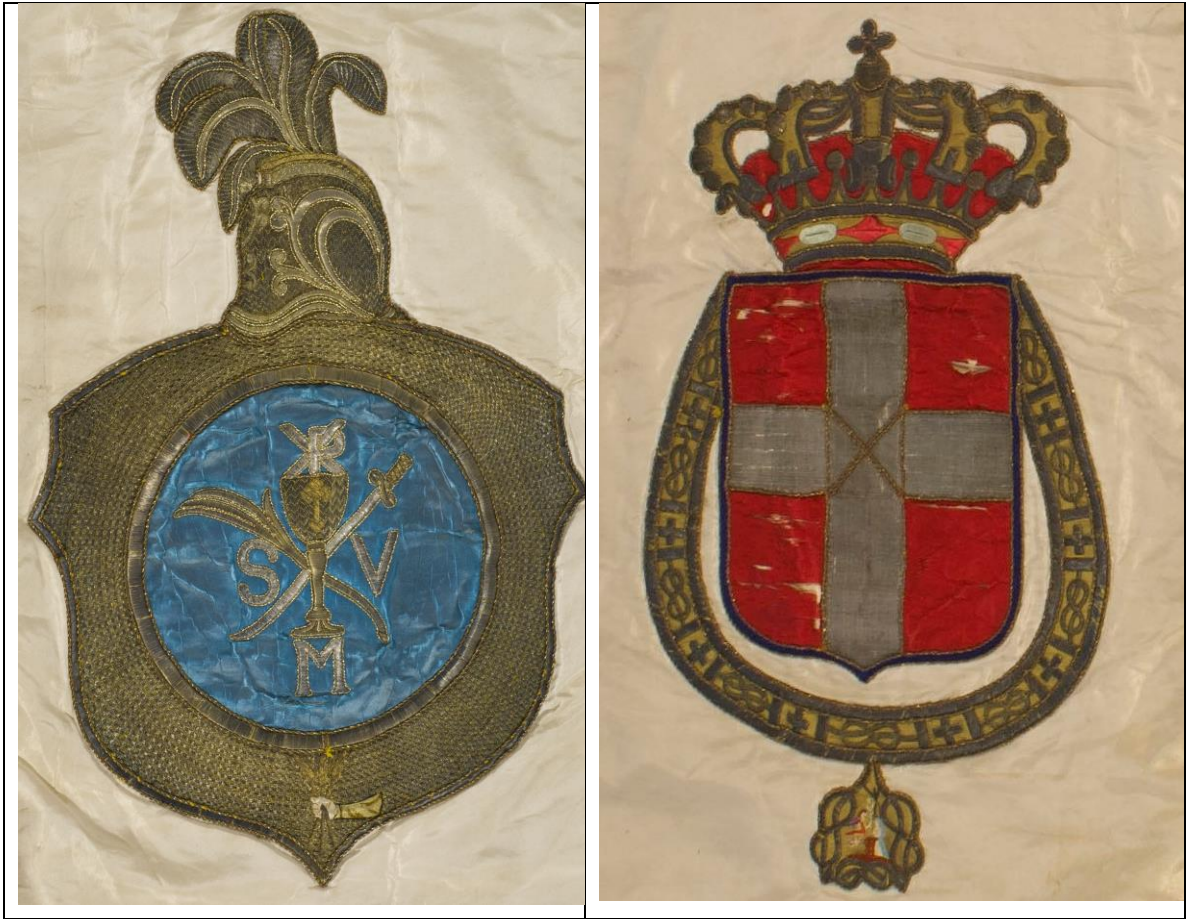
The woodcut he submitted must have been an image of San Vincenzo that came from Craco with the early immigrants as an image of their venerated saints. Camperlengo was probably filing the copyright on behalf of the Società to protect any rights they might want to claim for the image. The copyright would last for many years.

During that same year the banner of the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco appeared displaying the date 1900. The elaborate and beautifully embroidered crest suggests that it was created in the

tailoring shop of Pasquale Marrese one of the society's founders. Banners are used by societies and groups in processions or events and this must have been used during the first year after being founded. The next year the society would take a significant step in expanding activities.²⁸



²⁸ The banner is 52 inches high with a 2 inch fringe on both sides and is 70 inches wide with a 2 inch fringe on one side. The white and red fabric is silk and rayon, with a cotton interlining, the green is pure silk. In March 2105 the banner underwent professional conservation cleaning and flattening the banner, repairing a 5 inch tear, and stabilizing the red silk on the rear medallion. The banner was then packed in a 30 inch wide archival box with the front medallion showing. A Mylar sheet was placed over the banner so the box lid can be removed for viewing while still maintaining protection.



Ornately embroidered crests on the banner. The image on the left is the front of the banner displaying symbolic images associated with San Vincenzo; a blue field (the color of his tunic) on which is embroidered a goblet with the Greek symbols Chi and Rho, a monogram for Christ, sword and palm sheaf representative of San Vincenzo's martyrdom are crossed behind the goblet and the letters S, V, M are around it representing the initials for him; at the bottom of this crest is the stemma of Craco, a forearm and hand holding three sheaves of wheat. The image at the right is on the reverse side of the banner and is the Lesser Coat of Arms of the House of Savoy, the rulers of Italy in 1900; the crown above the shield is embroidered with metallic thread, the red shield, made of silk with a brown paper underlining, and below the crest is an Annunciation scene in a small image

San Vincenzo Finds a Home

The Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco formalized a relationship with St. Joachim's Church on June 10, 1901 when Fr. Alussi the pastor, signed a contract with them accepting the consignment of a statue and an "urna" of San Vincenzo to the church.²⁹ The contract, which was written in Italian, gives no information about the statue's origin but provides us with a reference to the holy relic of San Vincenzo and also an understanding of how the feast celebration was organized in New York. After the opening preamble between the parties there were 15 short clauses to the contract, which translate as follows:

1. *The statue with "urna" will remain property of the above mentioned Society.*
2. *The Society is not permitted to remove from the Church of St. Joachim's the statue and "urna," except in the case where the Società is legitimately authorized to build a Church or a Chapel in honor of the said Saint.*
3. *The Society, at its own expense, will place the statue of San Vincenzo on the right of the Church under the arch, where the statue of St. Anthony of Padua is currently located.*
4. *The Society will build, at its own expense, an altar for the statue of San Vincenzo according to a design approved by Father Oreste Alussi.*
5. *The Society, at its own expense and convenience will put the statue of St. Anthony in the Baptistery at a place designated by Father Oreste Alussi.*
6. *The Society undertakes to give the Church annually, on the feast day of San Vincenzo Martire, the sum of \$ 125.00³⁰*
7. *Fr. O. Alussi, or someone on his behalf, is obliged to celebrate an annual Novena with organ music in honor of Saint Vincent M. prior to the fourth Saturday of October.*
8. *On the day of the feast that is on the fourth Saturday in October, the Rev. of the Patron's Church will celebrate a solemn Mass with choir and organ, first and second Vespers, Panegirico³¹, and Benediction.*
9. *All the income from the candles that will be offered on the Holy occasion of the feast, and in other circumstances will belong to the church.*
10. *Similarly, the collections in the church will belong to the church.*

²⁹ Inventory St. Joachim's Church records, New York City, Collection #079, Series G: Box 5 Folder 130, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

³⁰ In 2020 dollars this would be equivalent to \$3,800 in buying power.

³¹ Translator's note: from the ancient Greeks, a speech delivered at a gathering, from the Romans a celebratory speech, in this case, a speech in honor of San Vincenzo.

11. *The offerings that will be given by the faithful at the Mass celebrated in honor of the saint will be collected directly by the Rector of the Church or other person designated by the Rector.*
12. *Gifts and precious objects of the faithful given to the saint will be held by the church.*
13. *The Rector of the Church has the sole and exclusive right to order and adjust the feast within the Church and outside the first door of the Church.*
14. *It prohibited for the Society or and any other vendors to sell any items in the Church or at the doors of the Church.*
15. *Both parties are bound to satisfy the covenants and conditions under penalty of compensation for damages.*

The contract was signed by Gustavo Colonnello, the legal representative of the Società. Gustavo Colonnello was the druggist partner of Raymond Guarini, the Notary Public who filed the corporate charter in 1899 and Guarini notarized this contract too. The Crachesi now had a home for a statue of their precious patron saint in America.

The contract reveals a good deal about the preparation and planning the Società did to establish San Vincenzo here. Certainly the terms of the contract were developed in conjunction with the clergy at St. Joachim's but to fulfill it they also relied on the cooperation of the clergy in Craco. This multination effort would have taken time for communication and to bring things and resources together before the contract was executed. This explains what was occurring during the prior year.

The first two clauses of the contract use the term "urna" which has an ancient Italian meaning referring to a container that holds the remains of a saint, an item referred to as a "reliquary" in modern usage. The inclusion of this in the agreement most certainly refers to the bone relic of San Vincenzo that was sent to Craco in 1769. So before the signing of the contract, arrangements must have been made to bring the "urna" from Craco to New York to be part of the display at St. Joachim's. There is no information about how the relic was transported from Italy but there was regular travel back and forth between Craco and New York. With this interaction the sacred relic could easily be hand carried from Craco by a trusted individual to the Crachesi "paesani" in America as they established another location to venerate San Vincenzo.

The novena referenced in clause seven of the contract was also brought from Craco in the form of a hand written copy of the original dated October 27, 1900.³² The inscription on it suggests it was specially copied for use in the New World:

*"A true copy from the original which is found in Craco in the care of Acolyte Andrea Mastronardi, that it may be used in those countries and among new people so it will honor such a portentous miracle worker."*³³

*Novena di S. Vincenzo Martire composta
dal Rev.^o P.^o Franciscantonio di Craco.*

*Esercizio di pietà per la Novena del glorioso,
ed inclito Martire. S. Vincenzo.*

— Avvertimento! —

*Si dà principio alla Novena del glorioso
Martire, S. Vincenzo nel mese di Ottobre,
celebrandosi la sua Festa ogni anno la 4.^a
Domenica dello stesso mese. La Novena in
detta, non si è potuta ricavarare, come gli altri
Santi, dalle gesta di sua vita, perchè nulla
se ne sa: onde è convenuto formarla
da quelle generali virtù, le quali siccome
si trovano in tutti gli altri Martiri, dei quali
si sa la vita e la passione; così essi vien crede-
re, che abbiano anche di questo Croe, non
solamente, non pure accompagnato,
ma coronato egualmente il glorioso Agone.
Il metodo poi per praticare questo divoto
esercizio sarà il seguente: si leggeranno
per soddisfare alla propria devozione i
prunti e le orazioni qui brevemente accen-
nati, ed assegnati per ciascun giorno;
dopo di questo, si reciteranno 9 *Pater*,
9 *Ave Maria*, 9 *Gloria Patri*, in onore
del Santo, e finalmente si diranno le
lettinie, il responsorio, con le loro rispettive
orazioni -*

Page from the handwritten Novena brought from Craco

³² Inventory St. Joachim's Church records, New York City, Collection #079, Series G: Box 4 Folder 111, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

³³ Andrea Mastronardi was serving the parish in Craco as a priest under Monsignor Nicola Nardandrea (1858-1905) and would become the head of the parish serving in that role from 1907-1959.

A Crachese, who was a naturalized US citizen, traveled back to Craco from New York in 1901 to obtain both the novena copy and the relic. His citizenship would allow him to reenter the US easily with the treasured items without going through the immigration screening process.³⁴

The statue the Società installed at St. Joachim's Church representing of the body of San Vincenzo was the remaining item needed to fulfill the contract. Pasquale Marrese with tailoring skills and using his large shop created the statue and clothing.³⁵ Relying on his memory of the statue's clothing in Craco and the woodcut of the saint that was brought to America by the immigrants he lovingly fabricated the statue's intricate and bejeweled clothing. With the extensive detail some of the work was also done by fellow Cracotans who were employed at his shop.



Pasquale Marrese & Maria Ferrante—Married in Craco in 1870 they arrived in NY City in 1890 and were mainstays of the community.



Jewels and intricate stitching on the stature

³⁴ Although the individual is unknown, a search of records during the time period revealed a possible candidate, Prospero Viggiano, who left NY on January 1, 1901 arriving in Naples on January 15th. He arrived in Craco two days later and stayed there until March 9th before filing for a passport in Naples to return to the US on March 11. Ancestry.com, National Archives and Records Administration, US Passport Applications, 1795-1925.

³⁵ Oral history, Rosa D'Elia Francavilla, October 26, 2013 at 112th Feast of San Vincenzo Martire in New York. Pasquale Marrese was her great-grandfather.

The cost and other expenses associated with the building the altar and moving other statues are not known but whatever they amount to it was raised from the Crachesi community so the new statue could be installed by the October 1901 feast day.

The only known photograph of the statue's placement in St. Joachim's Church, to the right of the main altar, as described in the contract, was ironically taken at the last Mass said at St. Joachim's before it was closed.



*Closing of St. Joachim Church, Christmas Eve, 1958
San Vincenzo alter is lower right.*

The First Feast in New York

The only newspaper article describing any feast of San Vincenzo Martire in New York appeared during the statue's inaugural year and it tells us how the Crachesi celebrated the first event of their beloved patron.³⁶

ITALIANS' GAY CELEBRATION.

Fireworks and Illuminations in Honor of St. Vincenzo Martry.

The church edifice of the Church of the Precious Blood, at Canal and Baxter Streets, which is being reconstructed, and is now about half built, was gay last night with many colored lanterns and fluttering Italian flags, surmounted by the Stars and Stripes. In front of the church fireworks of many hues were set off, and the neighborhood of Mulberry Bend was kept ablaze until a late hour. Two thousand Italians, young and old, who are members of Father Berardini's parish surrounded the church and quietly enjoyed the spectacle, their faces lighted up by the flare of the fireworks and swinging lanterns.

The occasion was the celebration by the Societe Militaire d' St. Vincenzo Martry of the natal day of its patron saint. The celebration began Saturday evening and was continued last night. The Italian Rifle Guard of New York assisted in commemorating the occasion. The members of both societies attended vespers last evening as a preliminary. They were in full uniform and carried their rifles. Later in the evening a salute of twenty-one guns was fired, and many wheels of red, blue, and yellow fire were touched off. The band of twenty-four pieces of the Societe d' St. Vincenzo was seated on a raised platform in front of the church, and played many airs, both grave and gay.

The newspaper reporter, although challenged with the Italian spelling and names of organizations involved in the event clearly identifies the "Societe (sic)." The language difficulty probably led to the confusion that seems to cross the Italian Rifle Guard of New York with the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco creating the reference to the "Societe Militaire d' St. Vincenzo Martry." The date of the article places the event on the fourth Sunday in October and it is also notable the celebration was a two day public event similar to the public display that was conducted in Italy on the Saturday and Sunday of the feast day.

The site of the event in 1901 news article is interesting as the Church of the Most Precious Blood was established in September 1891 by Fathers of St. Charles Borromeo and then entrusted to the Franciscans in

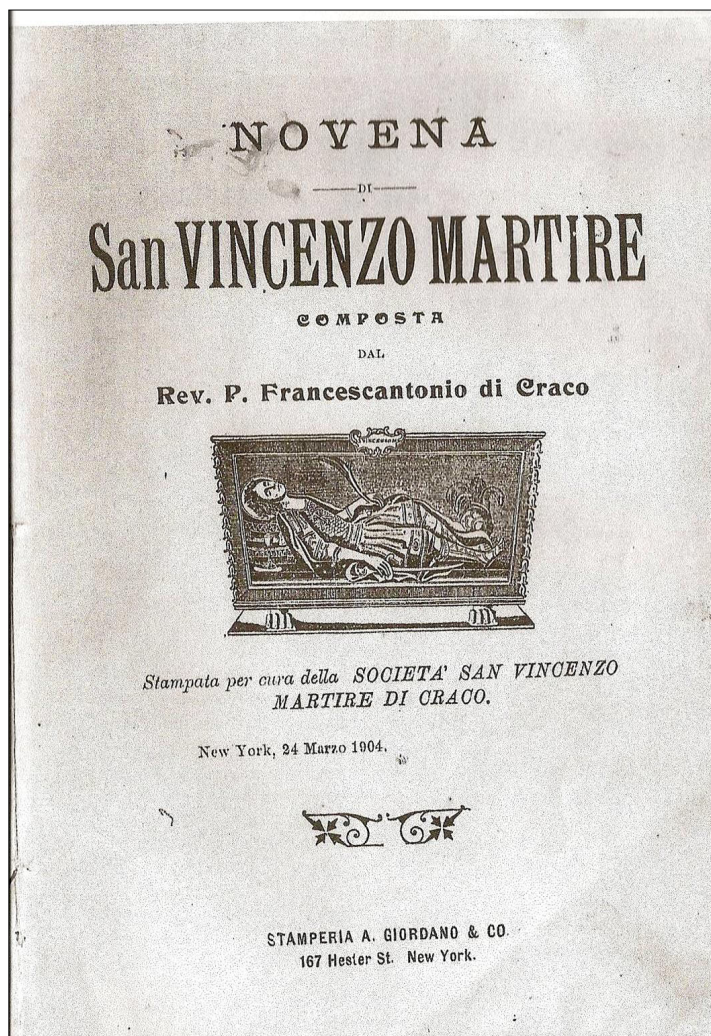
February 1894.³⁷ In 1901 the cornerstone for the upper church was laid and the final dedication took place in 1903.

³⁶ New York Times, October 28, 1901, Page 7.

Located a few blocks away from St. Joachim's Church, the bandstand at the Most Precious Blood Church for the 1901 celebration marked the ten year anniversary of that church and a new building effort. The bandstand's location also was an excellent spot to bring the people living in Little Italy together. There is no doubt from the newspaper article there was great zeal and gaiety surrounding this initial celebration marking the feast of San Vincenzo Martire in New York.

The article does not mention a procession as was customary with these festivals. Perhaps the reporter was not present during that part of the event or this group may not have possessed a processional statue, the upright form of the San Vincenzo figure constructed so it can be paraded through the streets. Although the contract with St. Joachim's does not mention another statue one source suggested that in subsequent dates small statues were used for processions and may explain the reason for the construction of the half-life-sized statues such as the one given to The Craco Society.³⁸

The Società was active and expanding in subsequent years. In 1904 they published the booklet, "*Novena di San Vincenzo Martire.*"



³⁷ The Catholic Church in the United States of America, The Catholic Editing Company, New York, 1914, pg. 352, digitized version of April 10, 2008.

³⁸ Oral history sources: Stephen LaRocca.

This fourteen page typeset booklet printed in Italian was produced from the handwritten copy of the novena brought from Craco previously.³⁹

Records from St. Joachim's Church show that considerable efforts were put into the celebration of the Mass celebrating the feast day for San Vincenzo as was stipulated in the contract. From 1903 through 1906 the church's organist submitted charges for playing at the feast day Mass of \$5.⁴⁰ This was by far the largest charge for any of the musical expenses at the church in October with most other charges for similar services being \$1.50-\$2.00. The importance of this to immigrants cannot be overlooked as, "during the novenas the people were electrified to hear the popular cantilene (slow rhythmic songs), even if off-tune, in which they used to take part in the church of their village."⁴¹

A piece written during this period by Giovanni Curcio gives us an example of the adjustment the Crachesi were making in adapting to their life in America. The undated verse to San Vincenzo was created by Giovanni in New York City, sometime between 1901 when the Societa was formed and before 1913 when Giovanni died. Giovanni Curcio was born in Craco in 1863 and married Rosa Maria Maffei there in 1881 before immigrating with their infant daughter Teodora in 1888 to the US. The Curcio family was well established with five children by 1901, when the Società di San Vincenzo Martire di Craco donated the statue of San Vincenzo, Martire to St. Joachim's Church. His family's oral tradition tells us that, "Giovanni operated a barber shop on Broome Street near the police headquarters in Manhattan where he was apparently more interested in singing and playing the mandolin than barbering."⁴²

Most likely his work was published in combination with the Società and used at the annual feasts and perhaps even sung during Masses. The references Giovanni makes in the piece to "United Crachesi" and "America" reflect the feeling of community that existed among the "paesani" and echo the theme of adjusting to life here and even

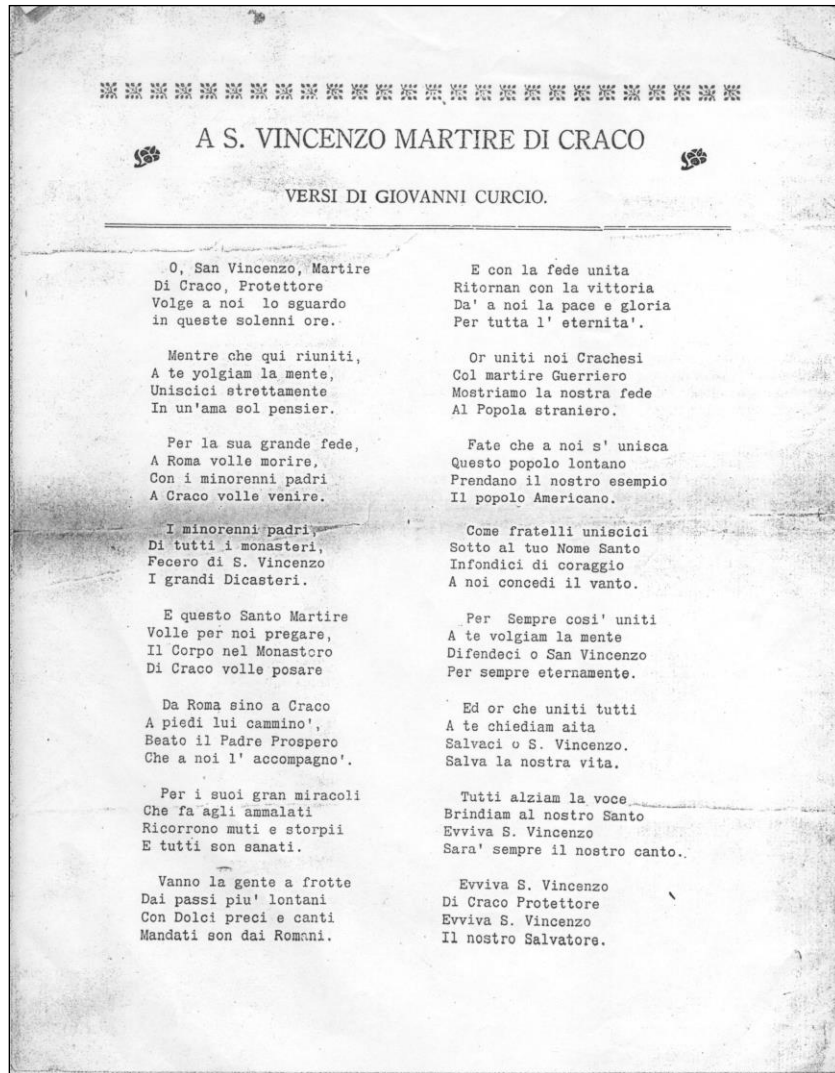
³⁹ The full copy of this pamphlet is reprinted in the Appendix.

⁴⁰ Inventory, St. Joachim's Church records, New York City, Collection #079, Series B: Box 2 Folders 5 & 588, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

⁴¹ *Piety and Power, The Role of the Italian Parishes in the New York Metropolitan Area, 1888-1930*, Tomasi, Silvio M., Center For Migration Studies, New York, 1975 pg. 123.

⁴² Email communication from Carlo Lombardi Muzio, great-grandson of Giovanni Curcio, Oct. 1, 2010, reading, "... I remember an uncle saying that Giovanni operated a barber shop on Broome Street near police headquarters in Manhattan where he was apparently more interested in singing and playing the mandolin than barbering."

aspiring to incorporate their patron, San Vincenzo Martire di Craco into American culture.



Undated verse to San Vincenzo Martire by Giovanni Curcio⁴³

⁴³ Gift of Carlo Lombardi Muzio, great grandson of Giovanni Curcio.

TO SAN VINCENZO MARTYR OF CRACO

Verse by Giovanni Curcio

O San Vincenzo, Martyr,
Patron of Craco,
Cast a glance upon us
In this solemn hour.

As we gather here,
And turn our minds to you,
Unite our thoughts together
In one soul.

For his great faith
He died in Rome,
With the Minor Observant Fathers
He came to Craco.

The Minor Fathers
Of all the monasteries,
Made of San Vincenzo
A great ministry.

This great Martyr and Saint
Prayed for us,
And chose the Monastery in Craco
To rest his body.

From Rome to Craco
He walked on foot,
Blessed be Father Prospero
Who brought him to us.

For the great miracles
He bestows upon the sick,
The mute and the crippled seek him
And everyone is healed.

People come in droves
From faraway places,
With sweet prayers and songs
Sent by the Romans.

United in their faith
They return victorious,
Give us Peace and Glory
For all eternity.

We Crachesi
United with our warrior Martyr,
Let us show our faith
To the people of this foreign land.

May the people of this faraway land
Unite with us,
Let us be an example
To the people of America.

Unite us as brothers
Under your Holy Name,
Fill us with courage
And with virtue.

Forever united
We turn our minds to you,
Defend us O San Vincenzo
For always in eternity.

Together united
We ask for your help,
Save us O San Vincenzo
Save our lives.

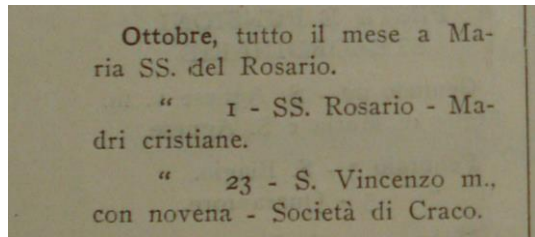
Let us raise our voice
Let us raise a toast to our Saint,
“Viva San Vincenzo”
Will always be our song.

Viva San Vincenzo
Patron of Craco,
Viva San Vincenzo
Our Saviour.

A 1907 publication about historic institutions in New York mentions the Società's connection to St. Joachim's Church.⁴⁴ The same year St. Joachim's church journal listed the celebration of the Mass and novena for the feast of San Vincenzo for that year.⁴⁵

During the period from 1901-1907 the exodus of immigrants from Craco grew dramatically with 498 individuals arriving in those six years and more than doubling the number of Crachesi in the New York area.⁴⁶ Undoubtedly, they added support and members to the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco that allowed for the continuity of the veneration for San Vincenzo in New York that would extend through another generation.

Communication from the Crachesi in New York with Craco and support for preserving the San Vincenzo chapel there was very active. Correspondence between the New York Crachesi and Don Andrea Rigirione from 1907 to 1919, includes copies of bank drafts sending funds to Italy. Interestingly, Raymond Guarini, who help the society get chartered in 1899, was now involved in these transaction as a principle in a banking firm, Guarini & Candela, 23-25 New Bowery St., New York.⁴⁷ This was not an uncommon practice as Italians in America sent money to relatives back home but things would change over the next decades as the children of the first generation of immigrants lost the direct contact with their family still in Craco.



44 Historic Homes, Institutions, Genealogical and Family History of New York, Pelletreau, Willaim Smith, The Lewis Publishing Company, 1907, digitized version from New York Public Library, pages 83-84.

45 Inventory St. Joachim's Church records, New York City, Collection #079, Series G: Box 5 Folder 152, Center for Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

46 Craco Italy Passengers Entering Ellis Island, NY, The Craco Society, unpublished, 2007.

47 Archivio Rigirone, Correspondence from 1907-1919, in The Craco Society archives.

A New Generation

Although the Crachesi in New York made up a small portion of Italian immigrants New York their activity and support of their patron saint there was an integral part of the community.

In 1913 St. Joachim's Church conducted an inventory and listed the value of the statue of San Vincenzo Martire at \$200. Of the 14 other statues listed only the Madonna de Carmine (Our Lady of Mt. Carmel) statue had a higher value.⁴⁸

In 1917 during World War I, a Royal Italian Commission, headed by the Prince of Udine visited New York City and parades were organized to honor the dignitaries. St. Joachim's Church participated in two parades held on June 24th with contingents from several societies marching in the parade. In the first group, marching behind young girls carrying the Italian flag was the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco headed by its president Mr. Rinaldi.⁴⁹ This was Joseph Rinaldi who was a signer of the charter and had by this time had given up barbering and now owned a café on Worth Street.⁵⁰

There is only oral history to guide us through the next two decades. The Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco continued to hold annual celebrations of the patron saint and the society continued to grow as the families making up its membership grew. Records document the arrival of a total of over 1,500 individuals from Craco by 1924⁵¹ when US laws changed severely limiting immigration. With this number of arrivals the Crachesi community in New York is estimated to have grown to 4,000 individuals when all family members are included.

By this time, most of the immigrants were well on the path to assimilation. The children of the initial arrivals had formed families of their own and the new generation, born in America had a foot in both worlds holding a unique position between the Italian and American communities. They were equally comfortable speaking the Cracotan dialect of their parents and English in school and at work. There is no doubt they were involved in religious events at St. Joachim's and also social activities of the Società.⁵²

48 Inventory St. Joachim's Church records, New York City, Collection #079, Series D: Box 3 Folder 87, Center for Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

49 Inventory St. Joachim's Church records, New York City, Collection #079, Series G: Box 5 Folder 143-145, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

50 Joseph A. Rinaldi, family oral history.

51 Craco Italy Passengers Entering Ellis Island, NY, The Craco Society, unpublished, 2007.

52 Oral history: Anthony Episcopio

This generation and their children would supply the energy and strength for the Società to maintain the Cracotan traditions in America until the mid-20th century.

After WWI the town of Craco obtained a new processional statue. Sources suggest that members of the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco brought the original processional statue of San Vincenzo from there to America.⁵³ Although no record of this transfer is available, published material in Craco dates the current processional statue there to the first quarter of the 20th century supporting this story.⁵⁴ In addition to the reposing statue of San Vincenzo an upright statue of the saint was kept at St. Joachim's

Church⁵⁵ and used for processions during the feast. The acquisition of the upright processional statue in this time frame after WWI fits the story since it is not listed on St. Joachim's 1913 inventory.

With this cherished statue from their home town the members of the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco maintained the tradition of holding a festival for San Vincenzo and were now able to expand it to include a procession just as was done in Craco. Now, on the fourth Sunday in October a Mass was held at St. Joachim's Church along with a procession carrying the statue through the streets of their neighborhood in Lower Manhattan.

This may have been challenging as the climate in New York at the end of October is markedly different and colder from that of southern Italy. There are reports that on some years the event was



*Processional figure of San Vincenzo used by the
Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco in New York
Photograph courtesy of Fr. Regis Gallo*

⁵³ Oral history sources: Stephen LaRocca, Domenica Mormando.

⁵⁴ San Vincenzo: un Martire a Craco; page 11.

⁵⁵ Oral history, Fr. Regis Gallo.

held on the last Sunday in September offering a welcome relief to the devotee who felt compelled to walk behind the statue in the procession barefooted through the streets of New York as a sign of their faith.⁵⁶

The San Vincenzo feast was part of a regular sequence of many street festivals that were held in the area as the robust Italian American population expanded their influence and demonstrated their devotion to a variety of saints. The San Vincenzo feast would have been the among smallest of these events as San Vincenzo Martire was only venerated by the Crachesi, although in this period the population of New York's Little Italy joyously celebrated all the processions and feasts.

With the density of the area, St. Joachim's was becoming overcrowded so in 1925 the Scalibrini Brothers created a new parish forming the Church of St. Joseph on Catherine and Monroe Streets to accommodate the larger population in the area. St. Joachim's lost the majority of its parishioners to the new church.⁵⁷

In 1935 Fr. Tarcisio Prevedello became the pastor of St. Joachim's Church and upon entering the office he decided to bring new life to the parish by reorganizing the activities including the societies.⁵⁸ The Crachesi responded to this overture and a 1935 broadside announcing the dates of the feast and soliciting support for the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco.

The broadside sheet, written in Italian, has the event running from Friday to Sunday, October 25-27, 1935 and was confined to Roosevelt Street. The 13 members of the festival committee were listed and the address for them was given as 71 Roosevelt Street. Beyond announcing the event the broadside also solicited financial support, something very understandable and probably challenging in Depression era Lower Manhattan. Information about committee members gives us insight into how the Crachesi of the era were faring. All but one were born in Italy and most immigrated between 1901 and 1920. Other than an electrician and a barber the rest were in the paper stock business an industry that was heavily occupied by Cracotans. All of them now lived in Brooklyn except for two still residing in Manhattan.

⁵⁶ Oral history: Anthony Episcopio, Stephen S. LaRocca.

⁵⁷ *Humilitas* Golden Jubilee Church of St. Joachim, New York, NY, pg. 43.

⁵⁸ Inventory St. Joachim's Church records, New York City, page 3, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

SOCIETA' S. VINCENZO MARTIRE DI CRACO
COMITATO FESTA
71 ROOSEVELT ST. NEW YORK

RICORDATEVI!

**CHE LA FESTA DEL NOSTRO
SANTO PROTETTORE
S. Vincenzo Martire
DI CRACO
CHE TANTO ONORIAMO
SARA' CELEBRATA IN
ROOSEVELT ST. N. Y. CITY
NEI GIORNI DI
VENERDI, SABATO, DOMENICA
25, 26 e 27 OTTOBRE 1935
SOTTO GLI AUSPICI DELLA
SOCIETA' S. VINCENZO
MARTIRE D CRACO**

COMPAESANO!

E' nostro dovere ricordarvi della Festa di quest'anno, perche' voi avete il dovere di contribuire e rendere piu' solenne questa Grande Festa.

Oggi voi con la contribuzione e cooperazione non fate altro che insegnare ai vostri figli a farlo domani

Con questa mutua assistenza e cooperazione paesana il Comitato Festa si propone di creare un fondo unico delle nostre comunita' non solamente in New York City, ma in tutto il Greater New York e Jersey City.

Gli echi del nostro appello invocando la fratellanza paesana per la riuscita della Festa 1935 e per le future valorizzazioni, divenuta in questo modo una nuova maglia nella catena della solidarieta' paesana.

UNO SCOPO. La festa non serve solo per incaminare i nostri figli ad imitarci e ricordarci nella tradizione che i nostri antenati usavano verso il nostro Santo Protettore S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco, che nei momenti di bisogno invochiamo, ma serve anche a chiamare a raccolta la nostra colonia paesana e renderla piu' unita e piu' solidale.

UN IMPEGNO. Ogni Crachese e circonvicini deve onestamente, lealmente ed entusiasticamente cooperare col Comitato Festa al successo della Festa facendo cosi che la Festa del 1935 sara' la piu' grandiosa data della nostra comunita'.

Schieriamoci tutti uniti facendo vedere il nostro sentimento della concordia e fratellanza. Cominciamo sul serio ad essere "Uno per tutti e tutti per uno" e la vittoria sara' nostra

Accluso troverete una scheda No..... per la sottoscrizione, apponendovi la vostra e riempirla fra i vostri amici, e quando la nostra rappresentanza verra' a trovarvi la consegnerete.

Sperando nella vostra cooperazione, salutandovi

IL COMITATO FESTA

Joseph Manghise, Pres.
Domenico Colabella, V. Pres.
Nicola Grieco, Segr.
Angelo Cantasano, Tres.
Lorenzo Mautone, Curatore
Joseph Torraca "
Frank Giove
Nicola Zaffarese
Vincenzo Ragone
Onofrio Caputo
Giovanni Mastrangelo
Michele Manghise
Nicola Tanico

1935 Broadside Announcing Feast of S. Vincenzo

Courtesy of Paul Tocci

The translation provides an insight into the thinking, motivation and operation of the Società.

Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco
Festival Committee
71 Roosevelt St. New York

<p><u>REMEMBER!</u></p> <p>that the celebration of our patron saint S. Vincenzo Martire Of Craco whom we honor will be celebrated on Roosevelt St. N Y City on the Friday, Saturday, Sunday 25, 26, & 27 October 1935 under the auspices of the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco</p>	<p>Fellow Countrymen!</p> <p>It is our duty to remind you of our Feast this year because you have a duty to contribute and make this a most solemn Grand Festival.</p> <p>Today by your contribution and cooperation you are teaching your children to do this tomorrow.</p> <p>With this mutual assistance and cooperation our Festival Committee aims to create a united community not only in New York City but in all of Greater New York and Jersey City.</p> <p>The echoes of our appeal, invokes our brotherhood for the success of the 1935 Festival, and for future developments in this way creating a new link in the chain of community solidarity.</p> <p>ONE GOAL: The Feast not only encourages our children to imitate us and to remember us during the tradition that our ancestors had for our Holy Protector San Vincenzo Martire of Craco, whom we invoke in our times of need, but also serves to unite our community and make it more cohesive and united.</p> <p>ONE DUTY: every Crachese, along with their loved ones, must honestly, loyally, and enthusiastically cooperate with the Festival Committee for the success of the Feast, making the 1935 Feast the most grand date of our community.</p> <p>UNITE: let us unite and show our sense of harmony and brotherhood. We begin seriously to be "One for all and all for one" and victory will be ours.</p> <p>Attached is a card No. ____ for subscription, complete the attached for you and your friends, and return to our representative when he visits you.</p> <p>Looking forward to your cooperation, we greet you,</p> <p>The Festival Committee Joseph Manghise, Pres. Domenico Colabella, V. Pres. Nicola Grieco, Sec. Angelo Cantasano, Treas. Lorenzo Mautone, Curator Joseph Torraca, " Frank Giove Nicola Zaffarese Vincenzo Ragone Onofrio Caputo Giovanni Mastrangelo Michele Manghise Nicola Tanico</p>
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With new zeal, in future years the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco was able to organize this event to honor their beloved saint on a large scale with street decorations, a bandstand and a procession. Participation was been supported by the other Italians in the neighborhood who joined in celebrating the event too as a relief from the hard times of daily life.

The Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco by this time was robust enough to not only sponsor the annual event honoring the patron of their home town but also organized other social events for their members. These included annual gatherings that were held

at catered facilities and drew extremely large turnouts.

A group assembled in the 1937 Annual Banquet & Dance photograph shows about 250 people in attendance. It was held at The Half Moon Hotel which was located at W. 29th Street and the Boardwalk at Coney Island, the famous beach section of Brooklyn, NY.



Bandstand for the Feast of San Vincenzo on Saturday October 24, 1936 at the intersection of New Chambers, Oak & Roosevelt Streets. With permission of New York Public Library



Società S.

*Vincenzo Martire di Craco, Annual Banquet & Dance
Half Moon Hotel Sunday May 2, 1937*

From the collection of Dominick Tocci, reproduction courtesy of Paul Tocci

Some banquets organized by the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco occurred during the first weekend in May, a date that serves as the celebration for the feast of the Madonna della Stella in Craco. They were held on the Sunday maintaining a connection to their roots and utilizing the event as a social gathering after a religious observance earlier in the day.



*Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco, Annual Banquet & Dance
Half Moon Hotel Sunday May 8, 1938*

From the collection of Dominick Tocci (second from right, table 19) reproduction courtesy of Paul Tocci

Other than these annual banquets and the celebration of the feast of San Vincenzo there are no business records or information known about the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco. Logically they would have held meetings of individuals involved in planning these events along with other social gatherings.

The reach of the small group of Crachesi to the rest of the larger Italian population was extended through the contemporary newspapers making people aware of their events and activities. The 1936 Banquet Committee was recognized in New York's most popular Italian language daily newspaper, *Il Progresso Italo-Americano* that was selling 90,000-100,000 copies daily.



Photo from Il Progresso Italo-Americano c. 1936

Top row from the left: Onofrio Caputo, second left, Salvatore Giove, remainder unknown.

Seated from the left: first, Salvatore Grieco, third, Joseph Manghise, fourth, Anthony Avena, fifth, Francesco P. Colabella, second and last individuals unknown.

The only photograph showing the processional statue of San Vincenzo in New York comes from this era and shows Crachesi participants celebrating feast day event in 1937. It was taken in front of St. Joachim's Church. In the background is an overhead banner advertising the church bazaar running for a four day period from October 21-24. The photograph does not show the group in procession or even prepared for it. More likely it was posed for during or after some event connected to the celebration. We know that this year there were two "queens" of the feast and they can be identified in the

photograph by the women holding the bouquets.⁵⁹ Although this was not done in Craco, it seems that naming of a queen was customary for the organization; perhaps an adaptation to things in the New World.



Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco and processional statue of San Vincenzo outside St. Joachim's Church October 1937.

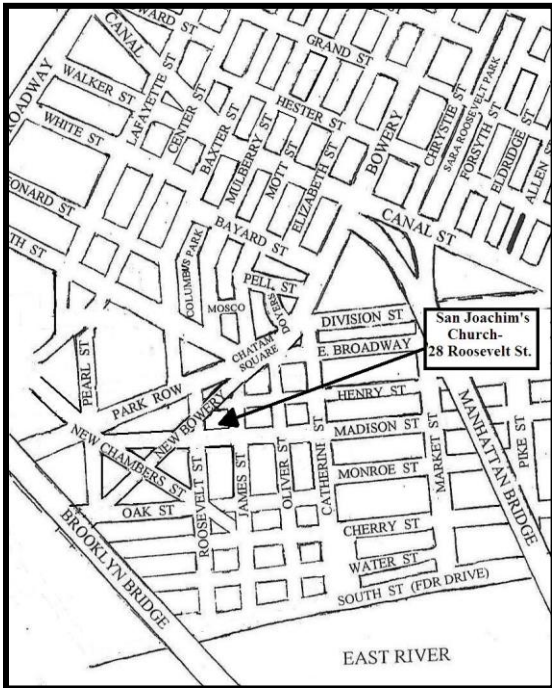
Photograph courtesy of Fr. Regis Gallo

⁵⁹ Source: Anthony Episcopio, an altar boy at St. Joachim's Church, who identified the women with the bouquet to the left of the statue as his mother Rosina Lauria Episcopio, the other woman with the bouquet is unknown.

The procession route through the Lower East Side is not known but a logical route would have been similar to those followed by other processions that were sponsored by St. Joachim's societies and are described in contemporary newspaper stories as:

...upon the ringing of the church bell the statue was carried into the street where after a firecracker salute and music by a band, the procession moved into Baxter Street. It proceeded through Bayard, Hester, Mott, and Mulberry Streets, returning through James Street.

Paper money was pinned on buntings of Italian and American colors wrapped around the base of the statue. Coins were gathered on trays from spectators along the route....⁶⁰



Most likely a bandstand was erected as mentioned in the 1901 article and shown in the 1936 photograph. Located at the nearest major intersection to St. Joachim's this bandstand was probably the staging area for the crowd after the Mass and on returning from the procession. Anyone who has seen one of these events can visualize the procession winding its way through the adjacent streets passing other churches and

major locations in the area and returning to the bandstand where another stream of traditional Italian music played for the gathering.

During 1938 St. Joachim's marked its Fiftieth Anniversary and conducted a yearlong series of events to November 13 when it marked the canonization of Mother Cabrini in Rome on that day.⁶¹ That year the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco continued their Spring dinner-dance at the Half Moon Hotel that coincided with the feast of the Madonna della Stella.

⁶⁰ "Parade In Drizzle Honors St. Rocco", New York Times, August 17, 1934, page 5.

⁶¹ New York Times, "St. Joachim's Church Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary," November 7, 1938.

The organizing committee members in 1938 announcement were the same dedicated group of individuals in the 1935 broadside.

In the years just before WWII the Società reached its zenith as the last of the documentation from this period shows a large and active group participating in events.

In the Fall of 1941 the wide support of the Crachesi for the organization can be seen in the news article announcing the dinner that was held in Brooklyn.⁶² However this marked some changes from past

years. This notice highlights the annual banquet that occurred on what was the eve of the San Vincenzo Feast that year. It also indicates a change in the organization's leadership. Listed as the organizing committee chairman was Onofrio Caputo; he had been active with the organization for years but was now the president.

With over 500 people turning out, it is obvious that this group was getting support from three generations who were living in America and had a connection to Craco. Besides the immigrant group, the second generation, many of whom now had families of their own, was adding to the number of individuals turning out for this event.

It also seems 1941 was a special year for the celebration. Although the feast of San Vincenzo was the smallest of the annual Italian feast events that occurred in the area for some reason this year there was an upwelling of effort, especially of the

500 to Attend Banquet At Half Moon Hotel

The Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco of Manhattan will hold its annual banquet on Saturday evening in the Half Moon Hotel, Coney Island.

More than 500 persons are expected to attend the event, according to Onofrio Caputo, chairman of the committee in charge and president of the group.

SPRING DINNER DANCE

The San Vincenzo Martire di Craco Society of St. Jachin's Church, Roosevelt St., Manhattan, will hold its annual Spring dinner-dance in the grand ballroom of the Half Moon Hotel today. Chairman of the committee is Frank Glove, assisted by vice chairman, Joseph Monghiese.

⁶² Brooklyn Eagle, Thursday October 23, 1941, page 21.

Crachesi youth living in the neighborhood to make the feast a special one. There seemed to be an attitude that “we could do better than them” and resulted in decorating of St. Joachim’s, and the streaming of banners and paper decorations along Roosevelt and Cherry Streets by them and local merchants.⁶³

⁶³ Oral history, Marge Episcopia Gallo, as provided on June 2, 2011.



*Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco, Annual Banquet & Dance Half Moon Hotel
Saturday October 25, 1941*

Photograph gift of Maria Colabella McKendry

Six weeks after the 1941 feast the United States entered World War II. In the following years, with the focus on war the ability and desire to organize festivals was impacted and the San Vincenzo feast was suspended.⁶⁴ After WWII the Società S. Vincenzo, Martire di Craco was unable to restart the feast event that had not been held during the war years. Due to inactivity to file reports with regulatory agencies the society was dissolved by the State of New York on October 15, 1952.

Meanwhile, some individual members of the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco, maintained half-life-sized statues of the patron saint in their homes or had images made of him that decorated other important places.

The small San Vincenzo figures display unique features suggesting it was constructed to specifically to represent this little known saint.

⁶⁴ Oral history reports, Fr. Regis Gallo, Margaret Episcopia Gallo.

A unique item to note about these statues is the turquoise blue cloak. This colored cloak was a part of the uniform worn by an early confraternity of San Vincenzo devotees⁶⁵ and is also visible on the original relic in Craco. A second item of note is the sword, which is not the shorter sword of the early Roman legions but appears to be the larger “spatha” design used during the middle and late Roman Empire and would have been contemporary with the era of San Vincenzo’s life.⁶⁶ A third consideration is the orb at the statue’s left foot which appears to be a replication of the vessel visible at the head of the reclining San Vincenzo relic in Craco. It appears the artist who created this statue worked from an image of the upright San Vincenzo that was at St. Joachim’s Church or researched the saint to incorporate these features in this depiction.⁶⁷



While the times and people in New York changed in the mid-20th century the statues of San Vincenzo remained at rest in peace and safety at St. Joachim’s Church. Then after WWII the City of New York notified residents of the area that a housing project would be erected and the buildings, including St. Joachim’s Church, would be demolished.⁶⁸ Many of the Crachesi living in the area were faced with relocation including San Vincenzo. There was a protracted fight to preserve St. Joachim’s over the next decade but it was unsuccessful and the last Mass was held at the church on Christmas Eve 1958.

⁶⁵ San Vincenzo: un Martire a Craco, page 5-6.

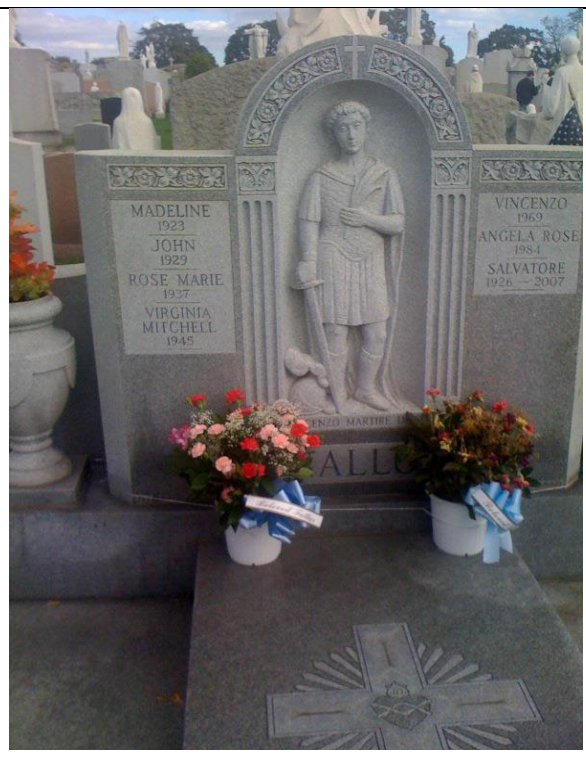
⁶⁶ Roman Legions website: www.romanlegions.info

⁶⁷ Besides the statue owned by Francesco Paolo Colabella, which is now part of the Craco Society collection, another copy resides in the Ragone Family Mausoleum, Calvary Cemetery, New York. Gerardo Ragone (1874 Craco-1954 Manhattan) was a contemporary of Francesco Paolo Colabella and was also active in the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco and served as a trustee at St. Joachim’s Church. Photograph courtesy of Matthew Ragone.

⁶⁸ Oral history, Margaret Episcopia Gallo, resident of 34 Cherry Street until 1946.



*Costantino Mausoleum, Calvary Cemetery⁶⁹
Ed Weidman, photograph, fineart america*



San Vincenzo relief on Gallo Family Headstone

⁶⁹ The mausoleum of Francesco Costantino and his family is the home to this beautiful and unique artwork. Francesco was born in Pisticci in 1880. In 1903, he was residing in Craco when he married Porzia Mastronardi (b. 1883, Craco) the daughter of Domenico Mastronardi and Angiolella Simonetti. In 1904 the young couple arrived in New York City, settling with an uncle, Gerardo Simonetti at 52 Roosevelt St. They remained there raising 10 children, Rose, Angelina, Theresa, Margaret, Helen, Dominick, Anna, Alfred, Henry, and Salvatore. The family relocated to 2159 E. 19th St., Brooklyn where Porzia died in 1949 and Francesco in 1966.

With the pending destruction of the building the statuary and church furnishings needed to be relocated. Church fixtures from St. Joachim's were moved to other churches including St. Joseph's Church down the street. It received the altar railing, the side altars that held the San Vincenzo and Corpus Christi statues and the organ.

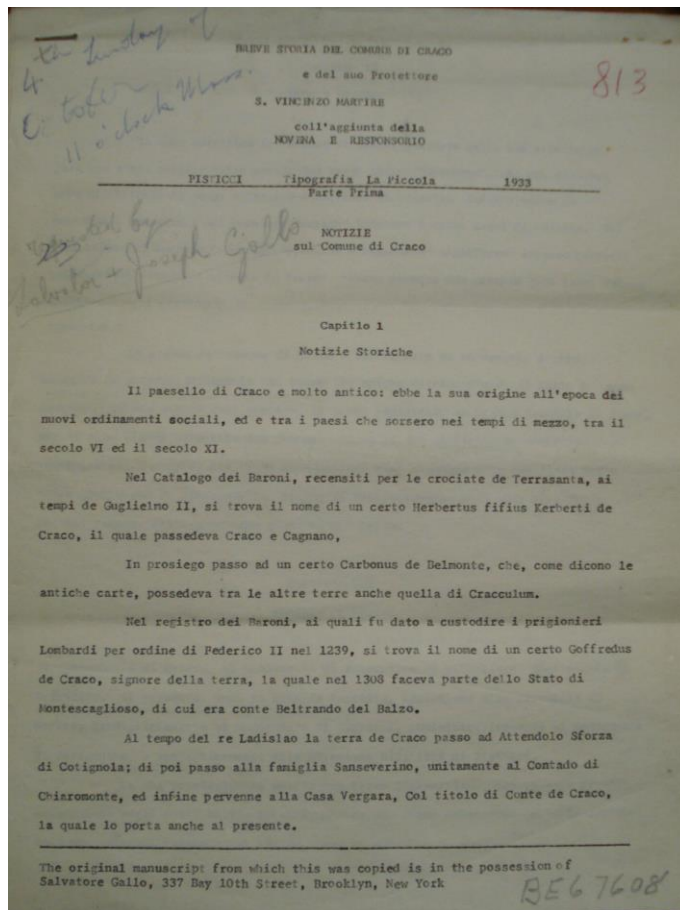
Unable to find a church that could take the two statues of San Vincenzo before St. Joachim's was demolished, they were both saved by the efforts of the Gallo family. The Gallo family, who were in the paper stock business, used one of their trucks to transport the statues and the other material to their home in the Tabor Court section of Brooklyn for safekeeping along with the banner of the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco. Vincenzo and Angela Rose (Tuzio) Gallo who were both born in Craco had a strong devotion to San Vincenzo and were active in the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco. Their home was in the area of Brooklyn that had a large Crachesi population.



San Vincenzo's Statue after arriving at the Gallo home c. 1959

Photo courtesy of Fr. Regis Gallo

Both statues remained there under their protection until arrangements were made by their son, Salvatore Gallo for the reclining version of San Vincenzo to be housed at St. Joseph's Church on 5 Monroe Street in the early 1960s. Along with installing the statue Salvatore arranged for a perpetual Mass to be said annually on the October feast day for San Vincenzo. He also provided the church with a copy of *Breve Storia del Comune di Craco e del Suo Protettore S. Vincenzo Martire* along with his contact information.⁷⁰



Weekly bulletins for St. Joseph's Church list the annual Mass as being offered by, "Devotees."⁷¹

The history of the Church of St. Joseph, the new home for the reclining statue of San Vincenzo, can be traced to 1908 when Fr. Vincent M. Jannuzzi, the pastor of the Church of St. Joachim's opened a small chapel dedicated to San Rocco. By 1914 it was outgrown and replaced by the Chapel of St. Joseph. By 1923 property was acquired and on June 28, 1925 the church and a school were officially dedicated.⁷² It is fitting that this church, which was so closely connected with St. Joachim's and also run by the Scalabrini brothers, should become the next home for the San Vincenzo relic in New York.

The Gallo family's dedication to San Vincenzo was tangibly visible in several ways.

⁷⁰ Uncatalogued material for St. Joseph's Church, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

⁷¹ Uncatalogued material for St. Joseph's Church, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY

⁷² Inventory Records of the Church of St. Joseph, New York City, page 3, Center For Migration Studies, 209 Flagg Place, Staten Island, NY.

Besides placing one of the statues in St. Joseph's Church and arranging for annual Masses they kept the processional statue in their home. It was carried, along with the banner from the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco to their local church, St. Rosalia, 6310 14th Ave., for several years to celebrate the annual feast.



*Processional statue undergoing repair at the Gallo home
John Gallo is shown repairing the statue brought from St. Joachim's Church
c. 1959*

Photo courtesy of Fr. Regis Gallo

Then in 1962 arrangements were made to keep the upright statue at the lower chapel of Regina Pacis Church, 12th Avenue and 65th Street in Brooklyn but with some conditions. The Gallo family undertook a restoration of the statue at the request of the church's rector, changing the original statue by removing the halo, which included a string lights, and the whole statue was professionally repainted.⁷³ Once the statue

⁷³ Oral history report: Fr. Regis Gallo, November 20, 2008.

changes were completed it was delivered to the church but without the case and halo.⁷⁴ It remained there until 1967 when the church decided to convert the chapel into a community center. The statue was brought back to the Gallo home where it remained until new arrangements could be made.⁷⁵

Then the family arranged for the statue to be kept at St. Rosila's Church in the Dyker Heights section of Brooklyn. This allowed the family to sponsor a feast day Mass on the fourth Sunday in October in Brooklyn to honor the patron of Craco along with the one that was being held in New York City at St. Joseph's Church. For the Brooklyn event the upright statue would be brought up from the church basement where it was stored throughout the year and displayed during the Mass. Then it would be relegated to storage in the basement until the next event.

About 1975 during the process of moving the statue to and from storage it was damaged. Assuming that the cost of the restoration would not be supported by anyone the church's officials reportedly ordered the historic statue to be destroyed.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ The ornate case, that held the upright statue, was reported by Anthony Mule, son-in-law of the Gallo family, to have been given to the Scalabrini brothers' facility in Staten Island where it was converted into a telephone booth.

⁷⁵ Oral history, Gallo Family members and Rita Gallo Lavery, March 29, 2011

⁷⁶ Oral history, Anthony Mulé on November 17, 2008.

San Vincenzo Martire And the Crachesi in Two Worlds



Processional statue of San Vincenzo at Regina Pacis c.1967

Photo courtesy of Fr. Regis Gallo

Lost and Then Found

Meanwhile, back in Craco the town would be dramatically impacted and changed forever. The effects served to change the resting place of not only San Vincenzo but also the Crachesi people there.

With the instability caused by the series of Frana (landslides and slippage of soil across the steep slopes) that occurred during the 1960's the Italian government determined that the 1,500 year old village on the hilltop was no longer safe for habitation. With the development of a new town, Craco Peschiera, located below the old village the people left their ancient town and ancestral homes taking with them the statuary that were in the churches and chapels in Craco Vecchio to their new village. Like the townspeople, who two generations before them were forced to become immigrants, the inhabitants of Craco were now forced to seek a new home. And just like those who left for the New World, the Cracotans in Italy now took their veneration of San Vincenzo with them too.

Although all the other churches and chapels in Craco Vecchio had to be abandoned, the chapel at St. Peter's Friary was still structurally stable and continued to function as a church, housing both the relic the processional statue of San Vincenzo that gave the residents a sense of continuity with their past. They continued calling the building, "the Convent of San Vincenzo."

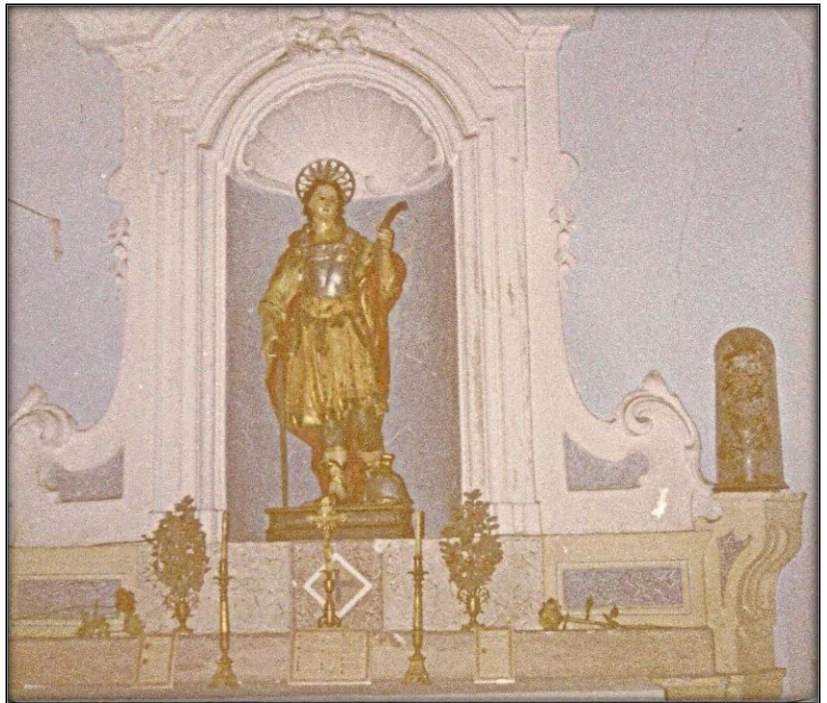


*San Vincenzo Procession scene in St. Peter's Chapel
c.1960*

The changes in Craco necessitated adjusting the historic procession route used during the celebration of the feast of San Vincenzo. The “Chiesa Madre”, the Church of San Nicola Vescovo in Craco Vecchio, was no longer available to bring the statue to nor was the winding streets of the old town safe to transit. So the procession route was modified to adapt to the new circumstances.

The devastation to Craco created a new wave of immigrants to America who joined their established “paesani” in the Greater New York area. The Crachesi arriving in the late 1960’s adapted quickly to life in the New World but also were able to maintain direct and regular contact with friends and relatives back home with improved communications technology. This group of new arrivals kept Crachesi connections intact and brought with them contemporary experiences from Italy.

By the mid-1980s, after residing for almost 200 years in the chapel at St. Peter’s Friary in Craco, the accumulated damage to the building dictated that the San Vincenzo relic and statue be removed. With the closing of the building the beloved San Vincenzo pieces were moved to a building in the Sant’ Angelo section of Craco Vecchio that had been an old school house.



Processional statue of San Vincenzo in Craco

St. Peter’s Friary April 2, 1978

Courtesy of Fr. Regis Gallo

The plight and iconic nature of the town of Craco seemed to serve as a magnet to people especially in the media industry who found the story about its abandonment and the fantastic vistas available from Craco Vecchio appealing as a

filming site for several movies. In 1990 the story of San Vincenzo and Craco's devotion to him was shown as a segment of the Public Broadcasting System show, "Travels: For the Colors" which featured the San Vincenzo procession.

Meanwhile, in the United States a few individuals of Crachesi descent still living in Manhattan maintained the annual Mass in honor of San Vincenzo at St. Joseph's Church. They were driven by their family connections to Craco and a need to honor the historic connection to the saint and their neighborhood church.

During 1999, under the direction of Rev. Fr. Ralph Bova, pastor of St. Joseph's Church, a restoration project cleaned the statue and replaced the cape along with other fabric that had deteriorated. The restoration was underwritten by Mrs. Anna (Zaffere) LoCicero, who was the daughter of Nicola Zaffarese, one of the individuals listed in the 1935 broadside.⁷⁷ She continued to sponsor the annual feast day Mass at St. Joseph's Church, and maintained contact with other Crachesi that had moved from the area. As part of their communication she would receive funds from some to light candles at the feast day Mass.⁷⁸

Several years later, in 2007 while several individuals in North America were researching their family history from Craco they serendipitously made contact with each other. This interaction led to organizing a reunion that served as the formation of The Craco Society, the successor to the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco.

By this time, there were two populations with Crachesi roots in North America, individuals from Craco that arrived in the mid-1960s and descendants from the turn of the century immigrants. Although these two groups were separated by time, generational differences, and geographic distances when they first met in Albany, NY in July 2007 they instantly bonded. There was an undeniable emotional connection stemming from the millennium-and-a-half associations developed by their ancestors living in the hilltop town over 4,000 miles away. They melded seamlessly and instantly rallied to the mission of saving the history, culture, and traditions of Craco that became the objective of this new Society.

Shortly after the inaugural Reunion and formation, the members of The Craco Society learned that the Church of St. Joseph held a San Vincenzo Mass and the Society organized a contingent to attend the October 28th event that year. Many were

⁷⁷ Oral history, Mrs. Anna LoCicero.

⁷⁸ Oral history, Mrs. Anna LoCicero to Robert Rubertone, email correspondence Nov. 20, 2008.

amazed to view the statue and it's similarity to the Craco relic. The innate connection to the patron saint generated much good feelings of the day and presaged events to come.



*San Vincenzo's Statue and Relic at St. Joseph's Church
Photo courtesy of Robert Rubertone, 2007*

The following year events moved quickly, seemingly guiding and steering people who were totally unconnected and unknown to each other in a way that revealed long forgotten information. On the last day of The Craco Society's August 2008 Reunion in Manhattan members attended the Mass for the Feast of San Rocco at the Church of St. Joseph. Afterwards, an individual sought out the Society president to share a picture of the 1937 Annual Dinner Dance of the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco. This revelation spurred interest in locating more information about the forgotten Società and would lead to further insights.

With the gift of the half-life sized statue of San Vincenzo given to The Craco Society at that same 2008 Reunion it only seemed natural to organize another

event to have the gift blessed at the Mass for San Vincenzo at St. Joseph's Church that October 26th. While planning for the San Vincenzo event, members of the Society gathered material and information about the San Vincenzo statues and the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco.

Just two weeks before the San Vincenzo Mass at St. Joseph's Church a Society member was directed to the Gallo family, which opened the door to missing pieces from the past. Mrs. Rita Gallo, who was considering how best to dispose of the original 1900 banner her late husband Salvatore had kept from the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco, immediately offered it to The Craco Society. Meanwhile, Fr. Regis Gallo, Salvatore's brother, upon learning about the Society immediately offered all his material about San Vincenzo and photographs of Craco and the Società San Vincenzo Martire di Craco.

Adding to the coincidences surrounding the unfolding events was that Fr. Gallo lived in the next town to one of the officers of The Craco Society. That these two people came to be living so closely at this critical time of rediscovery of Cracotan history in America was either totally random or an act of something higher - it is left to speculation but there is no doubt their meeting opened the door to a lost history.

On October 26, 2008 The Craco Society members attending the noontime Mass for San Vincenzo at St. Joseph's Church viewed the historic banner of the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco for the first time in over 65 years and experienced viewing what was thought to be the last two existing statues of San Vincenzo in New York shown for the first time ever in one place.



*San Vincenzo's small statue at St' Joseph's Church
October 26, 2008*

At the end of this historic Mass at the Church of St. Joseph the case holding the reclining figure was opened to give attendees a closer view of the statue. With the full exposure of the case a discovery was made that was totally unknown to everyone present. At the back of the case was a reliquary containing bone pieces labeled “*S. Vincenzo*” and on the rear of the relic were several ancient wax seals from a Bishop of the Catholic Church signifying authenticity.



San Vincenzo's Relic at St. Joseph's Church
*Left: front view Right: rear view showing seals*⁷⁹

This revelation added to the unknown elements of the story of San Vincenzo in America. It became apparent this was the 1769 reliquary mentioned in booklets about the history of San Vincenzo and referenced in the 1901 contract between the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco and St. Joachim's Church as the “urna.”

This new discovery about San Vincenzo in America added impetus to The Craco Society's research and cultural preservation efforts.

⁷⁹ Photograph taken at San Vincenzo feast day Mass on October 26, 2008.

As The Craco Society was preparing for the 2010 celebration of the feast day, another piece of lost history surfaced. The verse to San Vincenzo written by Giovanni Curcio in the last century was made available by his descendants to the Society for the Mass that year.

Based on recommendations for professional restoration of the statue minor cleaning, preservation, and covering the bare walls in the back of the case was done in early 2011. This restoration changed the look of the statue by copying the fabrics used in the case that holds the relic in Craco. A tapestry matching the background of San Vincenzo's case was selected for the New York location and a turquoise colored fabric matching his cape in Craco completed the fabric changes.

The final phase of restoration was done by members of the Craco Society to paint and clean the case and adding a plaque, which for the first time in 110 years identifies San Vincenzo and his connection to the people of Craco.



*Restored San Vincenzo's Statue and Relic at St. Joseph's Church
Photo courtesy of Joseph A. Rinaldi, 2011*

With the assistance of Fr. Walter Tanelotto, the Scalabrini pastor of St. Joseph's parish at that time, a plaque matching the design and style of the other plaques in the church was cast in bronze. Adding to the significance of this plaque was its mounting. A wooden board, donated by Nicola Mormando in Craco and shipped to the US, was used as the base for the plaque. The wood came from a farm property in the “Contrada tempa dei titoli”, a parcel of land near the Craco and Stigliano border. The wood was taken from a structure that was erected around the time of the unification of Italy 150 years ago. This gift from Craco continued the tangible connection with the town and this statue of the patron saint in America.



*Plaque and Wooden Board Mounting
Photo courtesy of Robert Rubertone,*

The reverse of the plaque mounting has a dedication plate that reads:

DEDICATION

This commemorative plaque is presented on the 110th anniversary of the donation of the statue of San Vincenzo to St. Joachim's Church.

San Vincenzo was a soldier in the Theban Legion who was martyred in 286 A.D. This statue is a replica of the holy relic of his body, which lies in Craco, Italy.

The wood the plaque is mounted on is a gift from the people of Craco. It provides a tangible link between San Vincenzo, the Crachesi in North America, and the land of our ancestors who brought their faith and customs with them. May it serve as a reminder of the sacrifices they made to provide their descendants an opportunity for a better life.

This plaque is donated as part of the 2010-2011 restoration of the statue of San Vincenzo, which was funded by members of The Craco Society in support of its mission to preserve the culture, traditions, and history of Craco.

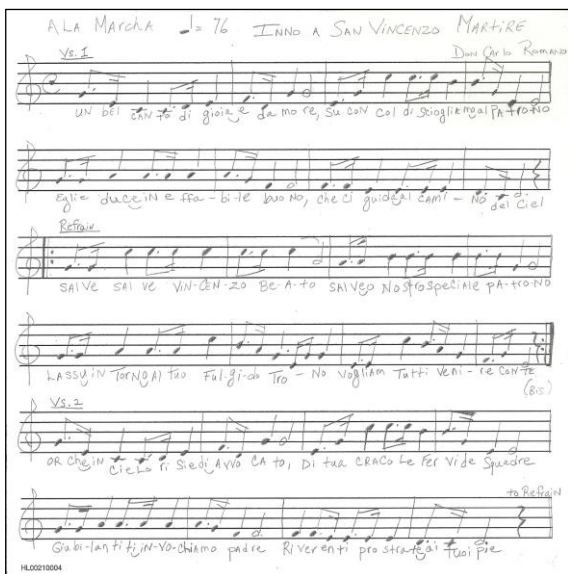
October 23, 2011



*110th San Vincenzo Feast Day Mass at St. Joseph's Church
Left to right: Msgr. Nicholas V. Grieco, Rev. Fr. Lino Gonsalves, and Rev. Fr. Nicholas Mormando, CAP*

On September 1, 2011 control of the Church of St. Joseph changed from The Scalabrini Order to the Archdiocese of New York. With the change a new pastor, Rev. Fr. Lino Gonsalves became pastor and concelebrated the 110th Anniversary Mass.

In 2012, the small plaster statue of San Vincenzo that was in the Society's keeping was restored. The Society had made a practice of rotating the statue between the households of members who were born in Craco. During this year, Maria and Angelo Grossi undertook a restoration of the statue and pedestal which holds it.



During the Mass celebration that year a newly written melody was prepared for the Society. Although the Inno A San Vincenzo Martire was sung in Craco for years as a chant, this was the first time music was prepared to accompany the singing of it.

A Move Back Home

The Craco Society continued to hold the annual San Vincenzo feast day Mass and luncheon celebration that followed at nearby restaurants or in the church function hall through 2014 at St. Joseph's Church.



Interior of St. Joseph's Church

But in 2013 the Archdiocese of New York began an assessment of their organization and parishes. This evaluation resulted in the announcement of plans to close St. Joseph's. Petition efforts and a television show⁸⁰ that told the history of the church, which highlighted the statue and story of San Vincenzo, failed to reverse the decision about the church. On July 31, 2015 St. Joseph's Church was closed.

With the impending closure, plans were made to move San Vincenzo's statue and relic. A fund raising campaign to underwrite the expenses of creating a new case was undertaken by The Craco Society using a small figurine of San Vincenzo. With the funds a new freestanding case was built. Meanwhile, Stephen LaRocca, Esq., a member of the Society's Board of Directors and also the president of the San Rocco Society of Potenza arranged to have several statues moved to a new home, amazingly it was The

⁸⁰ NET TV - City of Churches - "San Giuseppe" (08/19/15): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhChCyCwcsc>

Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood, the site of the original San Vincenzo feast in 1901.

The 114th celebration of the Feast of San Vincenzo, Martire di Craco in New York City at the Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood fell on the same date and location as the first feast that was held there in 1901 and it provided some extraordinary occurrences.

Beforehand, the San Vincenzo statue and relic were set up on Oct. 10th at Most Precious Blood occupying the “Guariglia Altar”⁸¹ and next to the other historic statue from Basilicata—San Rocco, which had also been relocated from St. Joseph’s Church.



*San Vincenzo statue on Guariglia Altar at the Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood Church
October 10, 2015*

⁸¹ Vincenzo “James” Guariglia (b. 1907, Manhattan, NY), the son of Pasquale Guariglia (b. 1883, Craco) and Maria Torraca (b. 1886, Craco), grew up on Mulberry St. and settled in an apartment that was right across the street from the Most Precious Blood Rectory in 1930 when he married Rose Cappola. With the passing of Rose in June 1993 James made a memorial of the altar with a plaque reading: *In memory of my wife Rose and my mother Maria by James Guariglia*

While the San Vincenzo statue was being placed in its new display, droplets of water appeared at the base of its wooden case. Perhaps, tears of joy as San Vincenzo saw his return to this beautiful new home.

Adding to this special Mass were the comments delivered by Rev. Msgr. Donald Sakano, the pastor of The Basilica of Old St. Patrick's Cathedral and Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood who welcomed the Society and veneration to San Vincenzo to the church. Msgr. Sakano also announced the Shrine Church of the Most Precious Blood was to serve as a pilgrimage church with Holy Doors during the 2016 Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Later that year, on November 9, 2015 The Craco Society and The Church of the Most Precious Blood entered into a license agreement granting the Society the right to install and exhibit the historic statue in the church. The agreement was self-renewing each year afterwards giving the San Vincenzo statue and relic a new permanent home.

Now securely established at Most Precious Blood, in 2016 the case was repositioned at the base of the altar on a wooden base that was simulated to match the marble of the surrounding area. It remains there today to greet all who enter the Church.



Epilogue

Understanding Crachesi powerful devotion to San Vincenzo may not be easily understood in today's world. In a small isolated Sothern Italian hill town the unwavering faith of this Egyptian mercenary from Thebes and the unanimity of the other soldiers in his Legion served as a powerful example to them. The inhabitants of Craco, like the Theban Legion, relied on the wholehearted efforts of each member of the community to survive. The model of such a faithful Christian who chose death rather than renounce his faith helped the Crachesi deal with daily difficulties and tragedies that struck them.

A great bond with San Vincenzo was formed by individual townspeople as they made prayers and supplications to their patron. Consider that over hundreds of years, generation after generation, called on San Vincenzo in Craco for aid and intercession. Then during the Crachesi immigrant experience as they struggled to meet the challenges of a new life in a new land, who else would be better for them to rely on for assistance?

The first wave of Crachesi immigrants in America maintained their strong connection to their patron by forming the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco. Their children continued the connection in New York by maintaining the Società S. Vincenzo Martire di Craco until WWII. The next wave of Crachesi immigrants arriving in North America during the mid-20th century found a home and along with their "paesani" in New York but the access to their patron was limited since the presence of the statue in St. Joseph's was not widely known. The American generation of Crachesi descendants from earlier immigrants had lost their connection to San Vincenzo even though they knew their roots were in Craco. Thus the statue of San Vincenzo was quietly left to rest in the hands of a dedicated few in Lower New York who maintained it.

With the onset of the 21st century a new generation of Crachesi discovered their past and connected to each other awakening interest in their roots and the story of their patron saint in America. Or perhaps it was the patron who awakened their interest?

Consider how appropriate it is for the relic of the patron saint in Craco to now reside with his people in the hilltop chapel at Sant' Angelo, the only area in Craco Vecchio that is still inhabitable. And in New York City, his original bone relic sits with the statuary likeness that was placed in the downtown area by the Crachesi at the beginning of the 20th century. There is no doubt that San Vincenzo and the Crachesi are alive and well in two worlds.

Appendix

- *History of the Theban Legion*
- *“NOVENA DI SAN VINCENZO MARTIRE” Composta dal Rev. P. Francescantonio di Craco, Stampa per cura della Società San Vincenzo Martire Di Craco, New York, 24 Marzo 1904, Stamperia A. Giordano & Co., 167 Hester St., New York.*

History of the Theban Legion

Much of the story of the Theban Legion as it relates to San Vincenzo Martire di Craco is covered in the original material from Craco. However, the story of the Legion, the other martyrs, how their bodies were discovered and how the saga was passed down is also an important part of understanding San Vincenzo.

The story of the martyrdom of the Theban Legion and San Vincenzo was first recounted in 434 by St. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyon. For centuries this martyrdom was accepted as an historical fact, but after the Reformation it became the subject of long and violent controversy. Recent research and the discovery of new material now leaves little doubt to the existence of the Legion and the role they played in the history of the Roman Empire. What remains contested is the degree of the decimation the Legion suffered.

The Theban Legion Structure

The Theban Legion (also known as the Martyrs of Agaunum) figures in Christian hagiography as an entire Roman legion — of "six thousand six hundred and sixty-six men" — who had converted en masse to Christianity and were martyred together, in 286, according to the hagiographies of Saint Maurice, the chief among the Legion's saints. Their feast day is held on September 22.

However, 6,666 was not the normal number of soldiers in a Roman Legion, and its appearance in this context is interesting for its similarity to 666, which has an association to the well-known "Number of the Beast" in the Book of Revelation.

Donald F. O'Reilly argues that evidence from coins, papyrus, and Roman army lists supports the story of the Theban Legion. A papyrus dated "in the sixth year of our Lord the Emperor Caesar Marcus Aurelius Probus Pius Augustus, Tubi sixteenth" (13 January 282 CE), shows rations which would sustain a legion for about three months to be delivered to Panopolis to the "mobilized soldiers and sailors". Coins from Alexandria from the same time period were minted in a style used only when troops for a new legion were leaving port. During the trial of the martyr Maximilian, it was noted that there were Christians serving in the Roman army, and the existence of Theban Christian legionnaires in the same units as mentioned in the Notitia Dignitatum was shown.⁸² Most likely, the Theban Legion that left Egypt was about 4,000 men.

⁸² Donald F. O'Reilly, "The Theban Legion of St. Maurice" *Vigiliae Christianae* 32.3 (September 1978).

The Roman Empire had no conscription so soldiers were volunteers who committed to 25 years of service. A recruit had to be at least 5 feet 10 inches tall and between 18 and 22 years old when entering along with having letters of reference stating he was from a good family. They had 4-6 months basic training designed to weed out all but the fittest. It was intended to be more severe than warfare with incessant drilling. Those who succeeded were accepted into the army, given a Latin name, and tattooed on their hands.

Thebans spoke the Coptic language of pre-Arab Egypt. The city of Thebes was populated by Medjay people during the period the Legion was formed. The Medjay had provided soldiers, police, and palace guards to the pharaohs for generations so joining the Roman Army as an auxiliary force would be natural to them. Christianity, central to the Legion's story, had grown much faster in North Africa than in Europe. The faith had a great influence on the Copts who were the peasantry and lacked opportunities since occupations in Egypt were hereditary. Military service was an opportunity for them.

As Africans they were dark, hence the name for St. Mauricius which means Moor, explains the images of the Legion's commander that often depict him as black. Moors were chiefly Berbers whose dress even today relies heavily on colors of blue including turquoise-like shades. Records list Mauricius as a "campidoctor" along with other leaders of the Legion, Candidus, Innocent and Exuperius. Campidoctors were retirees on recall who trained the new recruits. This made them at least 25 years older than the newly enlisted soldiers and respected as leaders.

The majority of the Thebans were archers. Records show two other Theban Legions were organized. The last one fought with Emperor Constantine and is depicted on the Milvian Bridge Arch (also known as the Arch of Constantine) on the Tiber River in Rome commemorating his victory there in 312AD. Ultimately this Legion became Pretorian Guards. Constantine, the emperor who recognized Christianity, knew his predecessors had consistently been assassinated by their guards so it is likely he chose the Legion for their fidelity.

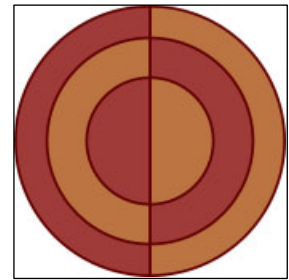
San Vincenzo and the Legion left in the Spring of 284AD following a route that took them from Thebes to Alexandria crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Crete then to Sicily and northward to Rome before marching to the Alps.

Dr. O'Reilly's assessment of the martyrdom is it was smaller than the legend. He feels the executions for military insubordination were limited to the campidoctors and other leaders. Valuing this large force of soldiers in a time when the

Roman Army was struggling to maintain its size he believes the vast number of remaining legionnaires were simply divided up and distributed to other Roman army units.

Unfortunately, our San Vincenzo was one of those among the number that were decimated. But from Dr. O'Reilly's writings we can deduce the following about San Vincenzo.

He probably had a swarthy complexion and was at least 5 feet 10 inches tall with tattoos on his hands identifying him as a legionnaire. The name Vincenzo or more likely the Latin version, Vincentius (meaning Conqueror) would have been given to him when he was accepted into the Roman Army about 283AD. In 286 when he died he would have been 21-24 years old and extremely fit. He ate a diet almost exclusively made up of grains. He wore studded soled shoes and his armor was iron with copper and bronze decorations weighing 40 pounds. He had a helmet and a leather shield decorated in the Legion's red and yellow identifying colors. His cloak was probably blue or green.



This would have made him a large and imposing figure, closer to the depiction in the statue that is in Craco rather than the more delicate portrayal of his relic in the case there.

San Vincenzo Martire statue in Craco

The Fate of the Theban Legion

Prior to the martyrdom of the Legion, in 249AD, a Roman widow, named Ciriaca, who had become a Christian sheltered many in her home including San Lorenzo (St. Lawrence) who is attributed to having cured her of severe head pains.

She donated a field in Rome on Via Tiburtina which became the graveyard named after her. (The catacombs of Santa Ciriaca are now within the municipal cemetery of Campo Verano in Rome's San Lorenzo District.) It was in these catacombs that San Vincenzo's remains were interred until 1792 when they were brought to Craco.

But the Theban Legion made another historic visit to the Roman stage that played out with a much different outcome than San Vincenzo's cohort.

A complicated series of events and turmoil followed the decimations that took place in 286AD with various factions contending for the position of Roman Emperor.

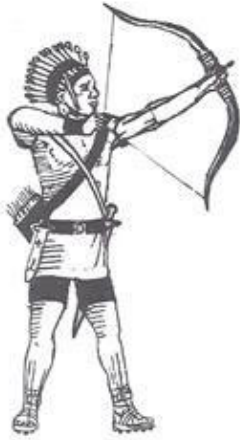
The Roman Senate, unhappy with Maximianus' rule forced him to renounce his imperial position in favor of his son. Hedging his bets, Maximianus then had his youngest daughter Fausta, marry Constantine one of the other contenders for Emperor. Afterwards, Maximianus returned to Gaul (where he originally ordered the destruction of the Theban Legion) and began hatching schemes against his son-in-law Constantine in an attempt to regain his imperial position. In a confrontation with Constantine, Maximianus' soldiers surrendered him to his rival but Constantine generously pardoned him. Soon after, Maximianus returned to scheming against his son-in-law, and finally was compelled to take his own life in 310AD by "falling on his sword," an ironic ending to someone who put the Theban troops to the sword two decades before.

As the factions contending for control of the Empire, Constantine and his brother-in-law Marcus Aurelius Maxentius, the son of Maximianus were battling for control. Maximianus was drowned in the Tiber River during the battle with Constantine at the Milvian Bridge. His body was taken from the river, decapitated, and his head was paraded through the streets of Rome, another ironic connection to the decimation of the Theban Legion by his father.

Constantine's victory at the Milvian Bridge in 312AD gave him total control of the Western Roman Empire. When he issued the Edict of Milan, making Christianity officially recognized in the Roman Empire he paved the way for Christianity to become the dominant religion throughout in Europe in the ensuing centuries.

Participating in the victory at the Milvian Bridge was a reconstituted Theban Legion. In the years after the decimation of the Legion by Maximianus the remnant remained in the service the Romans. It was probably no coincidence they chose to join Constantine in the struggle for control of the Empire over Maximianus' son, who they knew was responsible for the death of their predecessors.

Commemorating the victory, the Arch of Constantine was erected, outside the Colosseum in Rome. On the Arch is recognition of the role of the Theban Legion with images of the soldiers.



Theban archer as on
Constantine's Arch,
Rome.

The Thebans were an auxiliary unit in the Roman Legions. Although they are usually thought of as infantry they were actually specialists – archers. Constantine's Arch gives us an insight into their specialty and dress. Visible is the unique way they placed arrows in their head dress making them more quickly accessible during battle.

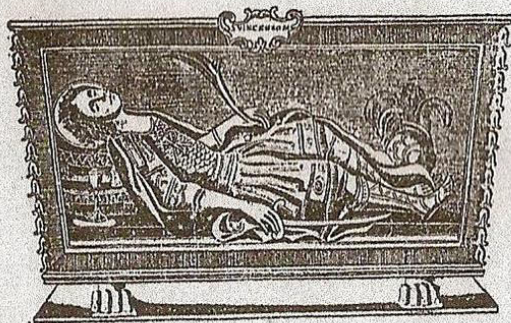
It is ironic that the descendants of the Theban Legion contributed to defeating the pagans who had massacred their ancestors and contributed to Constantine opening the world to Christianity.

NOVENA
— DI —
San VINCENZO MARTIRE

COMPOSTA

DAL

Rev. P. Francescantonio di Craco



*Stampata per cura della SOCIETA' SAN VINCENZO
MARTIRE DI CRACO.*

New York, 24 Marzo 1904.



STAMPERIA A. GIORDANO & CO.
167 Hester St. New York.

ESERCIZIO DI PIETA'

per la Novena del glorioso ed inclito Martire

S. VINCENZO

AVVERTIMENTO

Si da' principio alla Novena del glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo nel mese di Ottobre, nel brandosi la sua Festa ogni anno la quarta Domenica d llo stesso mese. La Novena suddetta, non si e' potuta ricavare, come degli altri santi, dalle gesta di sua vita, perche' nulla se ne sa: onde si e' convenuto formarla da quelle generali virtu', le quali, siccome si trovarono in tutti gli altri Martiri, dei quali si sa la vita e la passione, cosi' convien credere, che abbiano anche questo Eroe, non sol prevenuto, ma pure accompagnato, ma coronato eziandio il glorioso Agone. Il metodo poi per praticare questo divoto esercizio sara' il seguente: si leggeranno per soddisfare alla propria divozione i punti e orazioni qui brevemente accennati, ed assegnati per ciascun giorno; dopo di queste, si reciteranno 9 Pater, 9 Ave Maria, 9 Gloria Patri, in onore del Santo; e finalmente si diranno le litanie, il responsorio, con le loro rispettive orazioni.

Craco addì 29 Ottobre 1900.



PRIMO GIORNO

*In onore di quell'amore dimostrato da Dio al glorioso S. Vincenzo
nel chiamarlo alla cognizione di se' medesimo*

Considera, anima cristiana, come essendo Dio infinitamente buono, ed in ogni linea perfetto, infonder suole spesse fiate nella mente degli uomini, per puro amore, che nutre verso' di loro, certi lumi soprannaturali, che non ostante la corruttela di lor natura, e l'universale infezione, in cui vivono, pure giungono a conservarli puri ed immacolati, ed a farli risplendere, qual viva fiamma in mezzo alle più folte tenebre del vizio e dell'errore. Uno di questi parti avventurosi della Divina bontà e misericordia, fu certamente il glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, il quale benchè nato forse, come convien credere, cresciuto, ed allevato in un tempo, in cui gii errori nefandi dell'Idolatria occupavano le menti di tutti gli uomini, ciò non pertanto al primo raggio di luce Divina, che dall'alto balenò nella sua mente, seppe sì ben penetrare gli occulti profondissimi misteri del Cielo, che giunse speditamente alla cognizione del vero Dio. Quindi ad onta della comune infezione conservò sì vivamente nel suo cuore quest'idea, che mantenendola pura ed intatta, anche tra le nere caligini della superstizione, la riguardò mai sempre qual inusitato prodigio della grazia, che per questi sentieri volea condurlo alla sua Fede, per cui un giorno sarebbesi offerto sacrificio accettevole, ed ostia purissima di ringraziamento e di lode.

O grande Iddio, fonte di lume e di grazia, io vi adoro e vi benedico per sempre; ed offerendovi i meriti del glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, che in mezzo alle tenebre aprir seppe gli occhi della mente, per conoscere la vostra grandezza, e fissa ritenere nel cuore l'idea dello vostra sovrana ed ineffabile Onnipotenza, vi prego ad illuminare per sempre la mia mente, con un raggio luminoso della vostra Divina luce, affinché innalzato per mezzo di essa alla cognizione della vostra incomprendibile grandezza, sappia meglio ove indirizzare da questa terra gli affetti del cuore ed i pensieri della mente, per poterli sicuro riposare in voi nell'altra vita.

E voi, glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, che per grazia di quello amore, che Iddio vi portò, giungeste felicemente a preservarvi dalla comune infezione, ed a conoscere tra la moltitudine delle Divinità nefande il vero Dio; impetratemi vi prego da esso, mercé la vostra intercessione, la grazia speciale di arrivare ad una perfetta cognizione di quel sommo Bene, ch'Egli è in sè stesso, e per se stesso; onde farmi degno di goderlo al par di voi eternamente nel cielo. Amen. 9 Pater Noster, 9 Ave Maria, e 9 Gloria Patri. Kyrie Eleison, ecc.

RESPONSORIO

ad onore di S. Vincenzo

Organo:) O Miles fortissime,
Alto electus lumine;
Athlaeta verae Fidei,
Nunc triumphator gloriae:

Risp.) Meruisti mirifice,
Sanctus et mirabilis,
Vincenti vocari nomine,
Amore Christi saucius.

Organo:) Ad te proni confugiunt
Pro corpore, pro spiritu,

Ut sis pro invocantibus
Caelestis motor gratiae.

Risp.) Fac ut te quaerentibus,
Pieque nunc praecantibus,
Tui valore sanguinis,
Propitius esto, et Dominus.

Organo:) Gloria Patri, et Filio, etc.

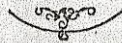
Risp.) Fac ut te quaerentibus etc.

Prete:) Orapronobis S. Vincenti.

Risp.) Ut digni, etc.

OREMUS

Praesta quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, ut intercedente B. Vincentio Martyre tuo, et a cunctis adversitatibus liberemur in corpore, et a pravis cogitationibus mundemur in mente. Per Dominum nostrum etc.



SECONDO GIORNO

In onore di quell'amore, con cui il glorioso S. Vincenzo corrispose prontamente alle chiamate amorose del suo Dio

Considera, Anima cristiana, come penetrato il glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo dalla cognizione del vero Dio, mercè i lumi soprannaturali, che l'illustrarono; corrispondere seppe con un amore sì intenso a questi inusitati favori della Divina grazia, che trasformato tutto nel suo Dio, divenne sì stabile nell'amore di Lui, che nè la corrente impetuosa degli esempi depravati, nè le furiose tempeste di quelle inviperite persecuzioni, che gli sovrastavano, poterono unquemaì distoglierlo dal consacrargli tutti gli affetti del suo cuore, ed i pensieri della sua mente. Conobbe ben' egli l'alto volere del suo Dio con riconoscere e stimare sopra ogni cosa, Ezzo soltanto, perché unico e supremo Signore di tutto il creato, e che per special tributo di singolare venerazione vuole

essere solo nell'amore, nè soffre che incenso si dia ad altro Nume; e perciò riguardando con occhio di dispregio la molteplicità dei falsi Dei, e con indignazione ributtando le inique persuasive della cieca ciurmaglia, e dell'affascinata gente di piegare ad essi il ginocchio, e prestar loro culto e adorazione; nel suo interno, e con l'animo risoluto dicea sovente: Te solo Dio, Re dei secoli, vivo e vero, immortale ed invisibile, conviene adorare, amare e Te solo servire.

Eterno e Sommo Iddio, fonte d'amore e sorgente di misericordia, nell'offrirvi i meriti del glorioso S. Vincenzo, vi prego ad ispirare nella mia mente pensieri tali, che tutti siano a voi rivolti, ed eccitare nel mio cuore affetti simili a quelli, che vi tributò in tutta la sua vita, l'invitto ed inclito Eroe della Cristiana milizia, Vincenzo, affinchè corrispondendo a sua imitazione all'amore, che mi avete mai sempre dimostrato, altro oggetto non ami fuori di voi, per essere un dì tutto assorto in voi ed in voi glorificato.

E voi, invitto atleta della Cattolica Chiesa, glorioso S. Vincenzo, che sapeste sì ben corrispondere all'amore dimostrato da Dio, che per lui solo dispregiaste tutte le cose, offerendogli per accettabile sacrificio tutti gli affetti del vostro cuore; vi prego ad impetrarmi col favore dei vostri meriti la grazia, che, proporzionando ancor io in alcun modo l'amor mio, a quello, che Dio mi ha portato, mi renda meritevole di amarlo, e di goderlo eternamente nel cielo. Amen. Pater, Ave, et Gloria, etc.

TERZO GIORNO

*In onore del dono della Fede, che ebbe da Dio
il glorioso S. Vincenzo*

Considera, Anima Cristiana, come il glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, crescendo di giorno in giorno nell'amore e nel desio d'avvicinarsi sempre più a quel Dio, che conosciuto aveva a primi lumi infusigli dalla grazia, meritò di essere da lui arricchito del dono soprannaturale della vera Fede, che pura e candida conservò in mezzo alle tenebre dell'idolatria non pure, ma la mantenne eziandio talmente accesa nel suo cuore, che non poté in alcun modo restare estinta dalla piena strabocchevole degli esempi profani, dalle maligne insinuazioni, e dagli artifizi degli uomini. Questa fu quella luminosa face, per cui più chiaramente riconoscendo un solo Dio per creatore dell'Universo, e per redentore Gesù Cristo; divenne talmente attaccato all'amore verso di Lui, che nè carezze, nè violenze, né promesse, nè minacce, né di quanto ha il mondo, o di più lusinghiero, o di più terribile, pote-

rono unguemai indurlo a rinunziare la vera Fede, ed a sottomettersi alla credenza dei falsi Dei: penetrato senza dubbio dai sentimenti dell'Apostolo, che non vi sarebbe stata potenza o celeste, o terrena, o infernale, che avesse potuto distaccarlo dalla Carità, dall'Amore di quel Dio, che conosceva ed amava.

Onnipotente e misericordioso Signore, io vi adoro, e vi ringrazio con tutti gli Spiriti Celesti, che senza riguardo ai miei demeriti, facendomi nascere nel seno della vostra Chiesa, mi arricchiste del dono soprannaturale della Fede; nell'offrirvi in questo punto i meriti del gran Martire S. Vincenzo, vi prego, che umiliando in me il reo spirito della superbia, che spesso m'induce ad operare contro la Fede, mi concediate quella grazia, che avviva i lumi ricevuti nel S. Battesimo, acciocchè credendo ed operando a tenore di essi, giunga felicemente ad ottenere il premio ai veri credenti promesso.

E voi magnanimo, glorioso campione della Cattolica Chiesa S. Vincenzo, intercedete presso il padre dei lumi, che a vostra imitazione conosca il pregio ammirabile della sua Fede, e la verità della Cattolica Religione, affinchè divenuto intrepido difensore di essa, non ch'è farmi allucinare dai falsi lumi del secolo pervertito, e dalle lusinghe vane del senso ribelle: procacci con ogni studio a conservarla nel mio cuore, pura ed intatta, e nel credere, e nell'operare per rendermi degno di vagheggiare un dì a faccia svelata quel sommo Bene, che ora ne forma il principale oggetto. Amen. Pater, Ave, e Gloria ecc.

QUARTO GIORNO.

*In onore della ferma speranza, ch'ebbe sempre nel Divino soccorso
S. Vincenzo*

Considera, anima devota, nell'invitto glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, come conoscendo egli, che il fondamento d'ogni forza, e l'appoggio incusso, e stabile dell'umana debolezza, è il solo Dio, a cagion di rendersi forte, ed invincibile nei perigliosi cimenti; cui prevedeva dovere necessariamente andare incontro, si fissò di tal maniera nella protezione, e nel valevole soccorso del suo Dio, che divenuto non men fedele, che forte, fermo, e costante nella sua speranza, dispregiò coraggiosamente ogni appoggio mondano ed ogni favore degli uomini. Per la qual cosa animato da questa virtù, vittorioso si rendette del mondo, del demonio, e di sé stesso, perchè fornito di quelle ali misteriose, che rinvigoriscono e sollevano a guise di Aquile invitte, le anime, ancorchè deboli, a fissare l'occhio di lor fiducia nell'eterno Sol di giustizia

Cristo Gesù. Questa fu la cagione per cui soccorso si vide in ogni incontro, protetto in ogni contrasto, aiutato in ogni cimento e fortificato di tal maniera nei più ardui perigli, che non vi fu forza, che potesse in alcun modo fare crollare la sua costanza.

O Dio, Padre di misericordia, che esser solete il principio di ogni valore e d'ogni buona risoluzione in tutti quelli che speravano nel vostro aiuto; nell'offerirvi ora i meriti del glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, vi supplico ad infondere nell'anima mia, una fiducia, ed una speranza nei vostri divini aiuti, simile a quella che ei dimostrò nel non curare gli appoggi terreni, per solo stimare la vostra protezione, acciocché divenuto ancor io al pari di esso, forte, e coraggioso nei mondani cimenti e negli attacchi delle mie passioni, sia fatto degno di quella eterna felicità, preparata e promessa da Gesù Cristo, a coloro, che in lui sperano, e a lui solo si affidano.

E voi invitto e fedele soldato di Cristo S. Vincenzo, che tanto vi segnalaste nell'eroica speranza del nostro Dio, che per essa foste soccorso, aiutato, protetto ed invigorito, sicchè intrepido, vi rendeste costante e invitto sino alla morte; impetratemi, vi prego, da esso la grazia, che divenutò ancor io forte e fermo in questa speranza, sia soccorso, aiutato e protetto qui in terra, come voi. per poi goderlo a voi unito nel Cielo. Amen. Pater, Ave, et Gloria,

QUINTO GIORNO

In onore della Carità, ch'ebbe S. Vincenzo

Considera, Anima divota, nel glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, come investito esso da un'ardentissima Carità e un amore fervoroso verso Dio, e le verità della Cattolica Religione, cui aveva già dedicato sé stesso, e per cui era pronto a sacrificare la sua vita; altro perciò non desiderava, se non di contestarla alla presenza degli infedeli, e di sostenere anche col sangue il dono soprannaturale, da Dio ricevuto, della vera fede esaltandone la virtù col dispregio di tutti quei tormenti che usar vedeva dalla Tirannia, contro coloro, che la professavano. Per lo che indirizzando egli la sua mente, il Cuore, l'Anima, il corpo e le opere; per effetto di carità ardente verso quel Dio, che solo cercava di amare e servire; senza far conto alcuno dei mondani riguardi, vittima si offerì alle tiranniche persecuzioni, per amor suo: nulla altro bramando entro sé stesso, se non di patire per amore di Gesù Cristo, dal quale con ferma fiducia aspettava la corona di gloria, in premio del suo amore, e della sua carità.

O eterno Signore, sorgente inesausta di carità; nel benedirvi

e ringraziarvi, perchè senza alcun risparmio spargeste nel cuore del glorioso S. Vincenzo gli ardori della vostra divina carità; vi supplico per i suoi meriti ad infondere nel mio petto quel santo ardore di carità, che abbruciando i cuori degli uomini, e trasformandoli in nuove creature, l'investe eziandio dello Spirito di pietà, e di devozione; affinchè corrispondendo perfettamente alla idea, che aveste in prescegliermi per uno dei figliuoli della vostra militante Chiesa, riuscir possa un giorno di decoro e di gloria per la vostra Santa Religione.

E voi, ingeguoso Guerriero della Cattolica Chiesa S. Vincenzo, che foste sì fortemente investito dall'ardore di carità perfetta, e di amore verso Dio, che nulla curando le delizie di questa terra, se lo bramaste di farvi vittima accettevole dei suoi divini voleri; impetratemi da esso la grazia speciale di essere al pari di voi investito da tal supremo fuoco, ed amore, che riducendomi umiliato, e compunto innanzi al Divin trono, mi faccia solo amare Dio, e il prossimo in Lui.

SESTO GIORNO

In onore di quel zelo, che S. Vincenzo dimostro' per la Cattolica Religione.

Considera, anima cristiana, come convinto, e persuaso il magnanimo, e generoso S. Vincenzo, mercé il lume soprannaturale, della fede e dell'aggregato delle altre virtù, della verità della cristiana religione e dell'unità del suo Dio, si accese di tal zelo per amore dell'uno, e dell'altra, che non potendo più soffrire di veder confuso il suo nome, con quello dei falsi dei; anzi sconosciuto affatto sulla terra; manifestò apertamente quel zelo, che ardeva nel suo cuore di fare a tutti conoscere la verità della Cattolica Religione, la grandezza del vero Dio, riprovando arditamente il detestabile culto dei Dei insensati.

Quindi da questo fuoco investito, esce, come gli Apostoli dal Cenacolo, dallo stato di privato confessore di Cristo, e divenuto in un subito forte Campione, per sostenere il decoro del suo Dio si accinse coraggiosamente a combattere per quella fede, che già aveva abbracciata. Dimostra arditamente la falsità della pagana religione: confessa a voce alta l'adorabile nome di Gesù Cristo, e dichiarandosi con eroica libertà di Esso seguace fedele, confonde gli errori della cieca gentilità ed esalta il nome del vero Dio.

Spirito di verità, Padre dei lumi, voi che tuonando là in Sion in forma di fuoco scendeste sugli apostoli, per infiammare, ed accendere i loro petti, affinchè zelando l'onore vostro, risuonar facessero il vostro adorabile nome per tutta la terra; vi supplico

per i meriti del vostro Martire S. Vincenzo, ad accendere nel mio petto un simile zelo, per sostenere con gloria, e manifestare con frutto ad ognuno il vostro Santissimo nome; onde divenuto così intrepido, e forte difensore della vostra Legge, dispregiando gli umani riguardi e reprimendo l'impeto di mie passioni, divenir possa fedele vostro seguace in questa vita, e fortunato comprensore della vostra gloria nell'altra.

E voi, glorioso magnanimo S. Vincenzo, che infiammato di zelo, di Carità, vi esponeste bersaglio ai colpi delle più inferite persecuzioni, per difendere l'onore del vostro Dio, e palesare a tutti la sua onnipotenza, e grandezza; impetratemi, vi prego, la grazia, che investito ancor'io di tal zelo, convinca gl'increduli della verità di sua Divina Legge, e dell'insussistenza delle mondane invenzioni, che escludon quelli per sempre dalla celeste gloria.

SETTIMO GIORNO

*In onore dell'intrepidezza dimostrata da S. Vincenzo
nel combattere per la Fede.*

Considera, anima cristiana, come unendo il glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo allo zelo per lo vero Dio e per la Religione quell'intrepidezza d'animo, che immobile rende ognuno a tutte le scosse ed agli urti, che possono muovergli contro le lusinghe, e le minaccie, divenne sì intrepido e talmente posseduto dal Santo e filiale timor di Dio, nel confessare la vera fede, che rimirando con sguardo, e con cuore magnanimo il feroce apparecchio di quante pene, e tormenti inventar seppe per spaventarla la Tirannia; e la crudeltà, dispregiò da costante, e generoso, tutti gli onori, i piaceri, e la vita stessa; per lo ché persistendo immutabile nei suoi pensieri, alle promesse fallaci, alle lusinghe, alle carezze, alle catene, ai ceppi che minacciati venivangli per ricondurlo all'empio culto delle false Deità, risponder seppe con tale intrepidezza di spirito, che nulla stimando i supplizii, solo amò di patire per amore di Gesù Cristo.

O Dio, speme, appoggio, e fortezza di tutti quelli, che di cuore vi servono, nell'atto che adoro, e benedico la vostra Onnipotenza, vi supplico eziandio per i meriti del glorioso S. Vincenzo, ad imprimere talmente nel mio cuore tal forza, e vigore, che divenuto intrepido, e costante agli assalti impetuosi del nemico infernale, del Mondo, e della Carne, mi renda assoluto signore del regno delle mie passioni, affinchè ubbidendo queste prontamente alla ragione, loro Reina, vincer possa e trionfare di tutti

gli allettamenti del piacere, ed assicurarmi in seguito d' un premio eterno per corona nel Cielo.

E voi, forte Atleta della Cattolica Chiesa, che sì prodigiosamente vi distingueste nella vostra eroica intrepidezza, che ad onta dei più fieri supplizii, inalterabile vi mostraste nel concepito Divino timore; impetratemi, vi prego, dal Cielo, uno spirito di intrepidezza eguale al vostro, affinchè divenendo da debole forte, da timoroso intrepido, e da volubile costante, mi assicuri di quella dolce ineffabile felicità, che godono tutti coloro, che temono Iddio e a lui si appoggiano.

OTTAVO GIORNO

In onore di quella Cristiana forza dimostrata da S. Vincenzo nei suoi tormenti.

Considera, anima divota, come volendo il glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo presentare al mondo, mercè l'offerta di sua persona, due degni spettacoli insieme, di sostenere cioè a costo del suo sangue la verità della Cattolica Religione, e di convincere per empia e nefanda la religione dei pagani, sì lieto, e festoso accettò ceppi, catene, ferri, aculei, ruote, ed ogni altro supplizio, cui la crudeltà condannava i martiri di Gesù Cristo; che spettacolo si rendette di valore e di cristiana forza in tutto il doloroso corso del suo Martirio. Questa fu quella virtù, che occupato il suo bel cuore, lo investì di tal inusitato coraggio, che divenuto quasi insensibile all'universal dolore, di giuoco gli riuscirono i tormenti; di delizie le pene, di un'indicibile compiacenza l'istesso Martirio.

Onde giustamente potremo dire, che se egli fra i tormenti del suo crudel martirio pose in stima la religione, glorificò Iddio trionfò dei suoi nemici, ed un campo verdeggianti di palme, e di allori comparve in mezzo al fuoco delle più crudeliter persecuzioni; da altro non nacque, se non da quella forza, che avendolo conservato puro, ed intatto fra le lusinghe, fra gli artifizii, e sforzi del Demonio, del mondo e della carne, lo condusse al compimento delle sue vittorie, con un trionfo memorando, e glorioso.

O eterno ed immortale Signore, che siete così ammirabile sulla condotta della vostra provvidenza, vi prego ardentemente, nell'atto che vi adoro ed offro l'intrepida cristiana forza del glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, a fregiare la mia anima di tal vigore, sicchè divenuta non men forte, che paziente, non men intrepida, che costante nel resistere alle scosse, agli urti, che con-

tro gli muove la carne ribelle, il mondo lusinghiero, e le tumultuanti passioni; apprenda dall'esempio del vostro Santo, di mantenersi ferma, e tranquilla; in mezzo alle tribolazioni, che solo gli possono fare meritare l'eterno riposo.

E voi forte, ed invitto seguace del Crocifisso S. Vincenzo, che tra i vostri più aspri tormenti, il ritratto vi rendeste della virtù prodigiosa della cristiana fermezza, di modo che molti animati dal vostro paziente, coraggioso, e forte esempio, alla verità che si ridussero della Cattolica Religione; vi supplico ad inpeetrarmi dal Cielo la grazia, che divenuto ancor'io umile, paziente, e forte, nonché nel soffrire i travagli di questo mondo, ma nel risorgere dallo stato di peccatore, passar possa sicuramente allo stato di grazia, e tenermi sempre stabile nell'unione di Dio, per edificar coloro, che travagliar feci collo scandalo e possedere la mia anima nella cristiana pazienza.

NONO ED ULTIMO GIORNO

In onore della costanza dimostrata da S. Vincenzo nel suo Martirio.

Considera, anima cristiana, l'invitta costanza, che sino all'ultimo respiro di sua vita, dimostrò il glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo quando sofferti con cuore intrepido, non men che forte, aspri tormenti, e varietà di supplizii, sentì dall'empio Giudice condannarsi alla morte. Non fu notizia più aggradevole, nè più lieta al cuore magnanimo del nostro Eroe, quando l'udirsi condannare all'estremo agone, per avere adunati a piè della vera fede trofei di gloria, e palme meravigliose di cristiano valore. Per la qual cosa non potendo reprimere nel suo petto il giubilo, e l'interno godimento, che tutta assorbivano la sua anima per lo desio di presto vagheggiare, l'amato oggetto nel cielo, con aria amena, con viso ridente, e con occhio ridontante di spirituale dolcezza, sempre benedicendo il suo Dio sempre cantando inni di lode, e di ringraziamento, con passo intrepido, con forte coraggio, e con animo costante s'invia al luogo del sacrificio, per testificare col suo sangue la verità della sua Santissima religione. Colà giunto, qual mitissimo agnello, senza punto risentirsi, consegna all'empio carnefice la sua innocente persona, perché sciolto da questi terreni legami, speditamente se ne voli al suo Dio, in dove colla virtù dei sofferti patimenti, gode ora la bella corona intrecciata di trionfali palme, e di gloriosi allori.

O supremo Signore, e Dio d'incomprensibile Maestà, che per fare maggiormente spiccare su la terra la vostra grandezza infunder solete nei petti dei vostri servi tal valore, e costanza

che per rendere più famosa la loro virtù, e più magnifico il loro trionfo, miracoli li fate addivenire d'intrepidezza, e di valore; vi prego caldamente per i meriti del glorioso Martire S. Vincenzo, ad infondere nel mio spirito tal costanza e fermezza, che inalterabile divenga nel combattere coi suoi nemici; affinché perseverando fermo, e costante in ben operare, incontri la sorte felice del vostro glorioso Martire, cioè di regnare coll'anima nella gloria beata e di trionfare in terra, come esso, colla frale spoglia, divenendo così lingua efficace, ed eloquente, per esaltare la vostra grandezza, ed Onnipotenza.

E voi glorioso Santo, che tanto vi segnalaste nell' eroica costanza, sicché con una serie non interrotta di prodigii e di patimenti, la vita, ed il sangue consacrate con la voce, e con le opere alla presenza di tutti, a Gesù Cristo; impetratemi vi prego da codesto Amorosio Dio, che ora godete, amate, ringraziate, e benedite, lume e grazia stante, onde ravvedermi dai miei errori, pentirmi ed emendarmi, acciocché terminando ancor'io come voi con gloria, il breve corso di questa vita mortale, concesso mi sia di venire a vivere eternamente con voi nel Cielo, ove vedendo si ama, amando si contempla, contemplando si possiede quel sommo bene, che la felicità forma di tutti i beati per una interminabile eternità. Amen.

FINIS

Fedele copia tratta dall'originale, che trovasi in Craco per cura dell'Accolto Andrea Mastronardi; acciocché anche in quei nuovi paesi, e fra quelle nuove genti si onori un taumaturgo così portentoso,

Craco li 27 Ottobre 1900.

H. MASTRONARDI.



RESPONSORIO

ad onore di S. Vincenzo

† O Miles fortissime
Alto electus lumine;
Athlaeta verae Fidei,
Nunc triumphator gloriae.

† Meruisti mirifice,
Sanctus, et mirabilis,
Vincenti vocari nomine
Amore Christi saucius.

† Ad te proni confugiunt
Pro corpore pro spiritu
Ut sis pro invocantibus
Caelestis motor gratiae

† Fac ut te quaarentibus
Pieque nunc praecantibus
Tui valore sanguinis
Propitius esto et Dominus

† Gloria Patri et Filio etc.

† Fac ut te quarentibus etc.

Ora pro nobis S. Vincenti
Ut digni etc.



OREMUS

*Praesta quaesimus, omnipotens Deus, ut intercedente B. Vincentio
Martyre tuo, et a cunctis adversitatibus liberemur in corpore, et a pra-
vis cogitationibus mundemur in mente.*

Per Dominum nostrum etc.



Photographs & Ephemera



Undated woodcut of San Vincenzo relic in Craco



Postcard of San Vincenzo relic



Postcard of San Vincenzo relic



Postcard scene of St. Peter's Monastery

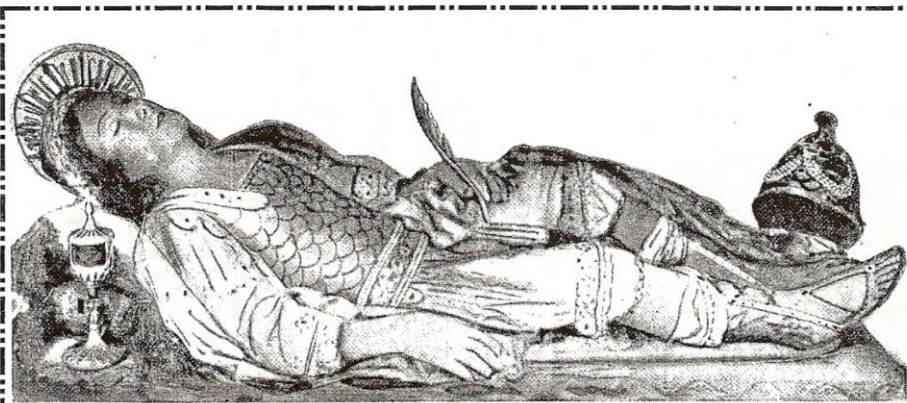


Postcard of San Vincenzo relic with Craco



Postcard of San Vincenzo statue inside St. Peter's Monastery

The Craco Society



San Vincenzo Martire

Protettore di Craco (Matera)

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to the 2010-2011 San Vincenzo Statue Restoration**

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The Craco Society (Inc.) was formed in May 2007 and is a 501(c)(4) non-profit corporation that seeks to preserve the culture, traditions, and history of Craco, the southern Italian hill town located in the Province of Matera and the region of Basilicata. Founded in 540AD by monks the town prospered until after the unification of Italy when societal changes, economic problems and a series of catastrophes made conditions there so difficult that from 1892-1922 over 1,250 individuals left to settle in North America. After sitting on its hilltop perch for over 1,400 years a succession of landslides in the late 1960's and the resulting structural instability forced the populace to relocate to a new site below the old town. Although virtually abandoned over the intervening years "Craco Vecchio" with its fantastic vistas and unchanged structures serves as a time capsule. It has become a haven for tourists and also the setting for several movies trying to capture the essence of the area or even more ancient times.

The Craco Society (Inc.) officers are:

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The Society website is: www.TheCracoSociety.org

The Society web group is "Craco Families of North America" which can be found at: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Craco/>

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