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GEOGRAPHICAL STUDIES IN EARLY 19TH CENTURY NAPLES THE DIDACTIC VISION AND CULTURAL ROLE OF FERDINANDO DE LUCA

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Abstract: *The paper focuses on the activity of Ferdinando De Luca, following an initial review of the attention devoted to geographical studies in Naples through Antonio Genovesi's influence between the late 18th and early 19th centuries. While previous research has explored various aspects of the Genovesi school, a significant gap remained concerning De Luca—a prominent figure in Naples' cultural life—who engaged in geographical studies during the early 19th century, a contribution largely overlooked. The study examines his eclectic personality, openness to political and cultural change, and scientific training, which enabled him to identify key geographical references and gradually master the discipline. This expertise led him to private teaching, particularly for the children of noble families, and inspired him to propose a methodological approach articulated in his 1833 essay* ***New Elements of Geography****. The paper analyzes De Luca's vision and method, demonstrating that he was not an outsider to the Genovesi school but a geographer who, with respect and autonomy, integrated into this intellectual network through original contributions.*

Key words: *Geography, 19th century, Naples, the Genovesi School, Ferdinando De Luca, geographical studies*

1. GEOGRAPHY SCHOLARS IN EARLY 19TH CENTURY NAPLES

In a research process lasting over ten years, an attempt has been made to highlight the particular attention that geographical studies received in Naples in the early 19th century, although, to be precise, the interest in geography began in the last decades of the

18th century, thanks to the Enlightenment philosopher Antonio Genovesi[1] (Sarno, 2012a; Sarno 2012b; Sarno, 2014; Sarno 2019b). The role of the Enlightenment, central to the development of modern geography on a different scale, was therefore reiterated, as a sort of starting point for a geography that is not only descriptive, (Sarno, 2022) also recalling studies to be considered now on a par with classics such as Gambi, 1973, Quaini, 1975, Livingstone, Withers 1999, Edney, 1999, Withers, 2007, and Dikshit, 2018. The Enlightenment paved the way to various debates in terms of both knowledge processes and analysis of reality, and on new ways of understanding society, politics and the economy (Thompson, 2008; Naddeo, 2013; Bond, 2017). Antonio Genovesi, pervaded by the desire to know where we stand, in his opening to the Enlightenment, thanks to which philosophy is considered the rational key to interpreting the world, discovers and enhances geography.

The writer's aim was first addressed to a little-known essay[2] by Genovesi, who places geography on a par with other disciplines and then to his school, since some scholars welcome his suggestions relating to this discipline. In reality, Genovesi's merit is not only to recognize the scientific value of the discipline, but to have placed it in relation to politics in the sense that he believes that geography is a necessary knowledge to understand the territories in their potential and criticality thereby promoting their socio-economic development (Augello, Guidi, 2012). The school founded by Genovesi demonstrated a particular sensitivity for a geographical reading of the Kingdom of Naples (Natali, 1926), both the first generation, active in the period of Bourbon reformism and in the French Decade, consisting of Ferdinando Galiani[3], Giuseppe M. Galanti[4], Francesco Longano[5] and Vincenzo Cuoco[6] , and the second, represented, during the Restoration period, by Luigi M. Galanti[7] and Giuseppe De Luca[8]. The role of each one was therefore examined, since only Ferdinando Galiani had been the subject of in-depth studies (Principe, 1993; Valerio, 2014; Abbattista, 2021), for his commitment to the

[1] Antonio Genovesi (Castiglione di Salerno, 1713 - Naples, 1769) initially dealt with metaphysics, then later on he approached Enlightenment theories, devoting himself to the study of economics thereby opening new fronts of knowledge (Patalano, Reinert, 2016). He gives space to geography in the Essay dedicated to economics, entitled *Lezioni di Commercio (Commerce Lessons)* (1788) and in the treatise written in Latin entitled *Elementa physicae experimentalis usui tironum aptata,* published posthumously in 1779 and in its Italian translation in 1783 and intitled *Elementi di fisica sperimentale ad uso de' giovani principianti* (Elements of Experimental Physics for the Use of Youngsters). See: Boran, Feingold, 2017. The first volume of the treatise illustrates topics of theoretical physics and physical phenomena whereas the second deals with astronomy, physical geography, geology, zoology, botany and the Earth's atmosphere. The part dedicated to geography was published in Sarno, 2012b.

[2] See note 1.

[3] F. Galiani (Chieti, 1728 - Naples, 1787) is committed to the Topographical Officer with the cartographer Rizzi Zannoni in Naples; see Principe, 1993, Valerio, 2014.

[4] G. M. Galanti (Santa Croce del Sannio, 1743 - Naples, 1806) wrote the *Geographical and Political Description of the Sicilies* and this very extensive work was published by Assante and Demarco in 1969. See: Naddeo, 2013.

[5] F. Longano (Ripalimosani, 1728 - Santopadre, 1796) wrote two reports, reprinted a few years ago, dedicated to two provinces of the Kingdom: The Capitanata and Molise; see. Longano, 1981 and 1988.

[6] V. Cuoco (Civitacampomarano, 1770 - Naples, 1823) left interesting writings on statistics and administration; their critical edition was edited by Biscardi and De Francesco in 2009.

[7] L. M. Galanti (Santa Croce del Sannio, 1757- Naples, 1837), Giuseppe's brother, devoted himself to political geography and also taught at the University of Naples.

[8] G. De Luca (Cardinal, 1823 - Naples, 1895) taught geography for a lengthy period at the University of Naples and wrote essays of theoretical reflection and didactics with the aim of enhancing geographical knowledge.

establishment of the Royal Topographical Office, under the direction of Rizzi Zannoni, for a modern cartographic restitution of the two Sicilies. As far as Giuseppe M. Galanti is concerned, although his main work, *Description of the Two Sicilies*, was published in 1969[9], there was much focus on his method of territorial investigation and his political role (Sarno, 2012a). In addition, the contribution to the territorial analysis of Southern Italy by Francesco Longano and Vincenzo Cuoco, was studied. Francesco Longano adopted the formula of the travel report, whereas Vincenzo Cuoco used geographical-territorial training during his employment in government offices (Sarno, 2009). While the first generation was more attentive to political aspects, following the magisterium of Genovesi, the second generation, in the Restoration period, focused on the dissemination of geographical knowledge. Luigi M. Galanti, an almost completely forgotten author, dedicated himself to the dissemination of geography, considering it a formative discipline for the ruling class, and it is no coincidence that he wrote essays on political geography; "he is recognized as having disseminated reflection on issues of political geography in the Neapolitan area, making it clear that reality cannot be read only through the lens of history" (Sarno, 2014, p. 632).

On the other hand, the figure and works of Giuseppe De Luca; he wrote an essay entitled – *L'Italia Meridionale o l'Antico Reame delle due Sicilie*[10] (1860) - where he analyzed environmental and cultural factors of Southern Italy. Giuseppe De Luca, with his academic experience as rector of the Neapolitan University, lived the transition from the Kingdom of Naples to the Italian realm. With him, geography was definitively institutionalized, in fact he held the chair of geography at the University of Naples for a considerable time, during which he also established a special scientific cabinet (Sarno, 2019b). Therefore, Genovesi's magisterium has indeed given interesting fruits that have spanned the early 19th century and have favoured the systematization of the discipline in the second 19th century. In addition, it created the conditions for the geo-cartographic analysis of Southern Italy, through the establishment of the Topographical Office, for geographical studies aimed at the socio-economic conditions of the Kingdom of Naples and for the dissemination of a modern vision of geography. His scholars focused on some conceptual knots, more specifically environmental fragility, socio-demographic problems and political responsibilities, which essentially represent the ideological framework of the southern question, which is a complex paradigm, developed at the end of the 19th century and still debated, relating to the socio-economic problems of Southern Italy (Sarno, 2019a; Gugliuzzo, Sarno, 2024).

Different aspects were studied and examined to reconstruct the diverse issues addressed, and even with the institutionalization of the discipline from an academic point of view, a link was still missing. Ferdinando De Luca, a figure who was present in the cultural life of Naples, dedicated himself to geographical studies in the early 19th century, that had not been focused on so far. He had not been taken into consideration, because he seemed extraneous to the school of Antonio Genovesi and he had not held any academic positions. Yet, we will learn that he devotes a lot of energy to geography and its teaching.

[9] See: Galanti, G. M., (1969), *Della Descrizione geografica e politica delle Sicilie*, Assante F., Demarco D. (eds), Napoli, ESI, 2 voll.

[10] *Southern Italy or the Ancient Realm of the Two Sicilies* (the translation of the titles is by the author in this and subsequent notes).

Therefore, with the aim of reconstructing the geographical network in Naples in the early 19th century, the personality and main essays of Ferdinando De Luca will be developed in the following pages.

2. FERDINANDO DE LUCA: THE BIOGRAPHY

Ferdinando De Luca was an eclectic personality open to political changes. He was born in Serracapriola, in the province of Foggia[11], on August 13th, 1783. His father was a jurist and initiated him into studies first at the seminaries of Troia and Larino, where he also undertook sacred studies, as reported by the biographer N. E. Trotta (1870). Ferdinando's training was, therefore, consistent with the times in religious education, representing the path to an ecclesiastical career. However, as the biographer points out, growing up, he left his sacred studies to devote himself to the exact and geographical sciences at the University of Naples. In 1806, he obtained a degree in physical and mathematical sciences and, in 1809, he began to teach. In 1811, he became a professor of analytical geometry at the Military Polytechnic School in Naples (a school known as "the Nunziatella"). The merit of Ferdinando De Luca is in having studied the new methods of Lagrangia[12] and Laplace[13] and applied them to geometry. These studies reflect Ferdinando De Luca's interest in a renewal of methodological approaches and, in a broader way, in the culture of the Enlightenment that takes the form of a political commitment. In fact, he hoped for the renewal of the Kingdom of Naples (also called the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies since 1816) and in 1820, after the concession of the Constitution, he was elected deputy of the Capitanata (province of the Kingdom) and chosen as one of the four secretaries of the Assembly. He remained in office until 1821, when the Constitution was revoked. However, due to his political position he had to give up the chair of geometry, so he dedicated himself to private teaching. This was a widespread custom in Naples and he managed to have the children of the most illustrious families as students. The need to provide a broad and articulated preparation pushes him to take an interest in geography, such as knowing that, for the physical aspects, it is concomitant with his basic training, but is able to dialogue with the humanistic dimension.

The skills acquired in the scientific field allow him to devote himself to geography, a discipline that he therefore cultivates with passion and determination together with mathematical sciences and politics. It is no coincidence that, thanks to his preparation, he drew up the manual, entitled *Lezioni di geodesia*[14], published in Naples in 1830. As Migliorini (1969, p. 345) specifies, "he was soon led to deal with geographical studies, to which he devoted himself for the rest of his life, acquiring in this field, not as a traveller, but as a desk geographer, a wide reputation among the scholars of the time, among whom he was able to stand out for his good preparation and for the vivacity of his intellect, for probity and honesty". In his teaching methods, he shows that he draws on the culture of the Enlightenment. In fact, in his essays he demonstrates familiarity with the main philosophers such as Condillac and of course Antonio Genovesi, whom he quotes punctually. From a geographical point of view, he recalls Luigi Galanti,

[11] Foggia was an important centre in the Kingdom of Naples.
[12] Giuseppe Luigi Lagrangia, later naturalised Joseph-Louis Lagrange (Turin, 1736-Paris, 1813), contributes with his studies to renew mathematical physics; see: de la Croix, Zanardello, 2021.
[13] Pierre-Simon Laplace, (Beaumont-en-Auge, 1749 – Paris, 1827), a physics and mathematics scholar, worked on astronomy and celestial mechanics; see: Gianfrancesco, Tarrant, 2024.
[14] The essay is dedicated to geodesy, which deals with the measurement and representation of the Earth.

understanding his essays. He recognizes, therefore, the first generation of scholars that had formed around Genovesi. On the other hand, he cites the Venetian geographer Adriano Balbi[15] and his geographical essays. As Trotta points out, Ferdinando de Luca hosts the Venetian geographer, visiting Naples. Moreover, he shares with Balbi the hope of the Unification of Italy. His scientific training and his ability to identify reliable references in the geographical field allow him to progressively acquire a mastery of the discipline and be able to teach it, choosing an intermediate role. He does not aspire or cannot aspire to university teaching because of his political past, but he values his commitment as a private teacher by dedicating himself to the education of Neapolitan scions.

He published several geographical essays allowing him to be employed, always in Naples, as a member of the Academy of Sciences, which was later renamed the Royal Society and he was thereby appointed secretary. He contemporarily continued to engage in politics and was appointed deputy in 1848, propagating a moderate vision and the hope of a confederation as a solution for Italian unity. However, due to the repression of the uprisings of 1848, he is arrested, tried and sentenced to 8 years in prison and only in 1852 he received a pardon. His political vicissitudes did not distract him from his scientific commitment and above all from his passion for geography and he elaborated a series of essays. He studies seismic and volcanic phenomena to the point of identifying a correlation between them revealed in the following pubblications[16]: *Nuove considerazioni su' vulcani e sulla loro cagione seguite dallo stato della geografia a' tempi nostri*, Napoli 1846, and *Su'tremuoti Memoria di geografia Fisica*, Napoli, 1859. He also studies some specific geographical areas taking soil characteristics into consideration: the area of the Campi Flegrei and the Vesuvius, the section between Baia and Castellammare and later the land crossed by the Sele. He then summarized his reflections in the following works[17]: *Sul fiume Sele e sui terreni paludosi delle pianure circostanti (Napoli, 1854*); I miei studi fisico-geografici sulle due regioni all'Ovest e all'Est di Napoli (Napoli, 1868); *I miei studi geografici sulla regione di Baja a Castellamare divisa per la collina di Posillipo in regione centrale e orientale* (Napoli, 1868).

He did not shy away from the task of drawing up the *Dizionario*[18] *corografico del Reame di Napoli,* (Naples 1852) with Raffaele Mastriani. Moreover, his intellectual *curiosity* led him to deal with the explorations of the North Pole and prepared, between 1863 and 1869, a series of communications on the subject for the Royal Academy of Physical and Mathematical Sciences in Naples; in these reports, he comments on the projects to cut the isthmuses of Suez and Panama. If his first interest is always the spatial dimension and the geo-physical characteristics of a place, he is not limited to the descriptive level alone because he tries to focus on a connection with human activities. It is no coincidence that he wrote an essay to point out the specificity of historical geography: *Memoria sulla giusta nozione che bisogna dare della geografia storica*

[15] Adriano Balbi (Venice, 1782 - Venice, 1848) was an important geographer of the early 19th century. He became famous for a school textbook entitled *Abrégé de Géographie* (Paris, 1832).

[16] *New considerations on volcanoes and their causes followed by the state of geography in our times,* Naples 1846, and *Memories of geography Physics*, Naples 1859.

[17] *On the Sele River and the surrounding rolling plains,* (Naples, 1854). *My physical-geographical studies on the two regions located to the west and east of Naples* (Naples, 1868); *My geographical studies on the region of Baja a Castellamare divided by the hill of Posillipo into the central and eastern regions* (Naples, 1868).

[18] *Geographical dictionary of the Kingdom of Naples*.

confuse finora con la storia geografica e con la storia[19]. His studies also paved the way for international contacts and he was appointed corresponding member of the Geographical Societies of Paris and Frankfurt as well as of the Geographical Institute of Rio de Janeiro. At the same time as his essay publication, he was concerned with the teaching of geography so he prepared the manual *Nuovi elementi di geografia o esposizione degli studi geografici secondo l'ordine dell'insegnamento* (1833) [20],which had 23 editions and he proposes his own methodological approach for the teaching of the discipline. The success of the first manual paved the way for its expansion with the publication of the *Istituzioni elementari di geografia naturale, topografica, politica, astronomica, fisica e morale, ordinate con nuovo metodo in otto periodi*[21].

His dedication to geography is evident in a well-known communication to the Congress of Scientists in Naples in 1845, where he invited the formation of an Italian geographical association. "I believe that Italy must have a Society formed by geographers who study the Earth and the distribution of its land, features and inhabitants from all the Italian states and economically maintained by the princes who govern its different provinces[22]". He launched the idea establishing a consortium that would bring together all the geographers to consolidate studies in this field. With his suggestions, he contributed to the establishment of the Italian Geographical Society after the Unification of Italy (Ferretti, 2014). but mainly influenced Giuseppe De Luca. It is necessary to specify that there is only a homonymy (a coincidence regarding the surname) between Giuseppe De Luca and Ferdinando De Luca, but no actual kinship; as mentioned in the first paragraph, Giuseppe De Luca represents the second generation of Genovesi's scholars and, in his youth, he meets Ferdinando and accepts three requests: the establishment of a national geographical consortium, the attention to the teaching of geography and the positive judgement of the essays of Adriano Balbi; in fact, Giuseppe edits a new edition of the Compendium of the Venetian geographer (Sarno, 2019b). From the above mentioned elements, it is clear that Ferdinando De Luca is indeed an important piece of the Neapolitan geographical network and, below, his first essay dedicated to the teaching of geography will be focused, to corroborate this thesis. Moreover, although he played a fundamental role in Neapolitan culture, after the Unification he was not called to further assignments; as his biographer reports, therefore, until his death in Naples in 1869, he continued to devote himself to scientific questions and to revise his publications; the main ones are reported in the bibliography dedicated to the author.

3.THE METHOD OF FERDINANDO DE LUCA AND THE ESSAY *NEW ELEMENTS OF GEOGRAPHY*

As anticipated, the following essay by Ferdinando De Luca is presently under examination: *Nuovi elementi di geografia o esposizione degli studi geografici secondo*

[19] *Memoir on the correct notion that must be given of historical geography confused so far with geographical history and with history, in Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of Naples*, 1840.
[20] *New elements of geography or the exposition of geographical studies according to the steps of teaching* (1833).
[21] *Elementary Institutions of Natural, Topographic, Political, Astronomical, Physical and Moral Geography Ordered with a New Method in Eight Periods*, Naples, 1838, accompanied by geographical maps.
[22] See *De' vantaggi che possono tornare alle scienze da' congressi scientifici* (Of the benefits that can accrue to science from scientific congresses*)* in *To the scientists of Italy at the 7th Congress***,** Napoli, 1845, p. 27**.**

l'ordine dell'insegnamento[23]. The *New elements* are introduced by two prefaces: the first by the Royal Auditor D. Biagio Ruberti, and the second by Ferdinando himself, who dedicates the essay to his most famous pupil: Gaetano Filangieri. Education was administered in the Kingdom by various bodies, including the Junta, of which the royal auditors were members (Palladino, 2023). In this specific case, the royal reviser D. Biagio Ruberti favourably evaluates the work of Ferdinando De Luca "for the benefit of youth" and "for the decorum of our country that scrupulously respects the sacred rights of Religion and Sovereignty" (Ruberti, 1833, p. 4). Therefore, he asks the President of Public Education to approve its publication and the brief preface also reports the permission granted. On the other hand, Ferdinando De Luca adds the dedication to the young Prince Gaetano Filangieri and his siblings. The education of a young person, who will certainly be called to political office, requires geographical knowledge. Yet, the author's purpose is not only this. He wants to strengthen the value of his work, which is guaranteed by Public Education and the target of his students. As he then points out in introduction, intitled *Work Plan*, he has at heart "the education of 'Captains and Statesmen' (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 14) and deems it necessary, for these people, to analyse trade and administration, connected "to the influence of the geographical situation" (ibidem).

Genovesi's magisterium is evident here, since he had emphasized the importance of economic and social aspects by holding the first chair of Economics, from 1754, at the University of Naples. In addition, his school gave space in the essays to investigations on the organization of communities. Ferdinando agrees with this vision also because these topics are formative for the ruling class. On these premises, the author, with the first paragraph, entitled *The Work Plan*, clarifies his method and the differences with other manuals. "We believe that the methods for dealing with geography can be reduced to only two. The first consists in successively exposing the complete description of each region, demonstrating one after the other the natural and moral relations, the topography and the products, (...): the other would be to distribute the geographical subjects not according to the order of the regions, but according to that of teaching methods" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 7). Moreover, he specifies that he sought confirmation of his method, exposing it in a memoir read at the Pontonian Academy[24]. Therefore, he moved scientifically, reflecting on his conception and seeking comparisons with other experts. He is thus able to provide several explanations, as to the choice of proceeding by periods. He clarifies that he wants to proceed by periods and also specifies the meaning of this term: "I have used the word *period* to demonstrate that in each of them it would be necessary to expose from the first to the last part of the Earth the complete description of those geographical facts, more suited to the intelligence of the students and to the state of their education" (ibidem).

Ferdinando's vision is to make the learning of geography proceed in accordance with the growth of the students and with the acquisition of concepts from other disciplines. Therefore, he builds a sort of curriculum that proceeds in the same way as that of the other subjects. If the student, for example, masters more complex scientific or mathematical concepts, he or she will be able to better understand and study astronomical geography or cartography. Furthermore, by building a vertical plane of geographical topics, geographical knowledge accompanies the entire course of study of young people and acquires the same value as literature or mathematics. What, then, are the contents of

[23] See note 20.

[24] He refers to the pamphlet *Pensieri sulla istruzione applicata all'educazione de'Seminario* (Thoughts on Instruction Applied to the Education of the Seminarie), published in Naples in 1827.

the different periods? "In the first period. After certain very elementary notions of the sphere deduced from observation, and therefore easy to be perceived by children, we present our pupils with the most elementary part of geographical language (...); we then call their attention to distinguish, in each of the eight parts of the Earth adopted by us, the divisions of states with their respective capitals" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 8). By this logic, each period is a small geography course. Each examines some variables, always analysing the eight territorial partitions identified, following a path from the known to the unknown. He believes that this progressive learning, which unites geography with other disciplines, is capable of forming the imagination, reason and heart of the students. Briefly, therefore, the contents of the other periods are as follows: borders of the states and subdivision of the latter; the mountain systems and mountain ranges of each state (second period); the most important cities and populations; descriptions of the main rivers present in the eight parts of the Earth (third period); study of borders and their peculiarities and subdivision of states (fourth period); concepts of ancient geography (fifth period); physical geography of the eight parts of the Earth and physical characteristics of peoples, climates and natural productions (sixth period); geographical astronomy and cartographic concepts (seventh period); statistics of the eight parts of the Earth and of each state, with references to economy, organization and culture (eighth period); elements of historical geography (ninth period); Progress in geography and history of geographical discoveries (tenth period). In the essay *The Elements*, the author does not effectively outline all the orders, but gives space to the first three and offers some hints of the fourth. The first order appears to be the most accurate: it provides information about the structure of the Earth and its subdivisions. It proceeds by means of brief information that offers targeted and consistent knowledge to the questions reported at the bottom of each page. Here is an example: "According to the most accurate geographical scientists, the surface of the Earth is about 150 million square miles"; the corresponding question obviously is: "Is the surface of the Earth very large?" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 29). After providing some basic elements, he proposes the division of the Earth into eight parts:

"The surface of the Earth can naturally be divided into three parts:

1. Ancient, which includes Europe, Asia and Africa.
2. New World, which encompasses America and Columbia.
3. Maritime world, in which Meganesia, Australia and Polynesia are found.

Thus the surface of the Earth is divided into eight parts" (F. De Luca, 1833, pp.33-34). Based on these partitions, it provides some geographical elements of each zone, like a list and following the statistical approach. The latter was particularly successful because it allowed for lists of information and data to be accessible and was therefore well accepted by various geographers in the 19th century (Lando, 2009). This approach was followed by Giuseppe M. Galanti, but not by Luigi Galanti who considered statistics only a premise of geographical work. Ferdinando De Luca, however, remains anchored to statistics because he considers it necessary for young people to understand data and information. In the second order, to which he devotes many pages, he continues to list the geographical characteristics of the Earth. It provides some initial clarifications on terms related to mountainous areas, then identifies the boundaries, extensions and internal subdivisions of each state, clarifying which mountain ranges are present in each. It proceeds from the particular to the general, from mountain ranges to large systems. In this section, the questions are not at the bottom of the pages, but within the text, followed by their answers. "What are the borders, what is the extension and population of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies? The Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, limited to the N. by the

Papal States, to the N. E. by the Adriatic Sea, to the east by the Ionian, to the W. and to the S. W. from the Tyrrhenian Sea, and from the Mediterranean to the S., it includes an area of 32,040 square miles with 7,491,770 inhabitants" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 83). He thus makes available a vast amount of information and cites some sources from which he has drawn data, such as Malte-Brun[25]. He shares this source with Luigi Galanti to document the most recent geographical discoveries. Similarly, he cites von Humboldt (1769-1859)**,** a German geographer, known for his travels.

In the third order, the questions disappear and the location of cities and rivers is proposed in short paragraphs. "In Portugal the most commercial cities are Faro and Tavira in the Algarve, each with a port; Serpa in the Alenteio and in Extremadura Lisbon with its magnificent port, Jbrantes and Santarem" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 326). It proposes lists of small or large centres, adding only a few adjectives that indicate their functions, history, size; in the same way, he presents the description *of the principal rivers and lakes of each of the eight parts of the Earth.* Only seven pages are dedicated to the question of borders, even though it is defined in the *Work Plan* as a complex theme. He mentions the fact that there are not only natural ones, but also those identified by man and therefore the subject of negotiation. Then he recalls the divisions of Europe and does not add anything else. Although it stops there, there is no shortage of exercises. In fact, the first two orders are accompanied by it. What do they consist of? Additional questions to be asked to the students to strengthen the acquisition of knowledge. However, in the first order, there are also suggestions for teachers to develop observation skills in students through the cards. He, therefore, composes the manual to outline "a system that is more conducive to teaching" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 16). In addition, the exercises are also useful, according to the author, to bring the students back to regional geography, since, by submitting a territory, it is possible to recall all the aspects studied in an analytical way. Again, he adds some appendices to briefly recall concepts to be treated in other orders, if necessary for the discussion.

In this way, F. De Luca confirms that, without going against the many studies of geography, he intends to present disciplinary knowledge in a gradual and analytical way to facilitate its acquisition. However, he did not accept the search for a modern geography, which, as L. Galanti had written, "was the science capable of describing the mutability of human frameworks and their political instability" (Sarno, 2014, p. 631). Ferdinando De Luca accepts a static vision of the discipline: "Geography is specifically the science that describes the permanent, natural and astronomical, physical, political, topographical and moral facts, which refer to the surface of the Earth" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 26). He considers the fundamental aspects of matter permanent and does not intuit its changing dimension directly due to human contribution. Always, with this logic, he tries to have his say on historical geography. "Historical geography is that which deals not with the events of nations, but with those to which cities, provinces and kingdoms were subjected. In short, it is the comparative geography of all times and of all nations, which sets forth the historical series of changes that have taken place in historical cities and states either by growth or by loss of territory, the names that succeeded the ancients with all the subsequent synonymys[26]". Succinctly, historical geography, according to the author, can

[25] C. Malte-Brun (1776-1826), Danish by birth, lives in Paris where he founds ≪The Annals of Travels≫. He became famous for the essay *A summary of Universal Geography*, publishing the first volumes between 1810 and 1817 and having J.J.N. Huot as his successor.

[26] See *Memoria sulla giusta nozione che bisogna dare alla geografia storica, confusa finora con la storia geografica e con la storia,* (Memoires on the right notions that must be given to historical geography,

indicate the changes in territories based on the succession of empires or governments, with particular attention to borders and toponymy. On the other hand, although he is involved in politics and has a moderately innovative vision, he does not follow the example of G. M. Galanti of carrying out territorial analyses to solicit government intervention. Instead, he chooses to deal with either specific topics of physical geography, which are close to his scientific training, or the didactic field. He, therefore, exerts his energies in identifying ways to encourage learning and, in the first years of school, he considers the assimilation of the specific language of geography to be formative, while he believes that, only thanks to a solid scientific preparation, is it possible to deal with topics that require mathematical and physical skills. Here is an example: "What is the isthmus? The opposite of the strait, it is a strip of land enclosed between two seas, which serves as communication to two large masses of land" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 33).

The theme of specific language is not only treated in the first order, but in all of them; Ferdinando De Luca provides terminological indications on each topic addressed and the teaching objective is extremely clear, very young students must learn geographical terms and know how to contextualise them. Instead, in the *Elements*, due to the age of the students and their limited geometric and mathematical preparation, he does not provide detailed information on cartography, but rather invites his readers to observation and therefore to intuitive use. It is no coincidence that cartography and its appropriate use are extensively dealt with in the following volume of the *Institutions*. In fact, he makes it clear that he has chosen an approach for the *Elements* supported by Enlightenment culture. His goal is to spread "the light of the sciences" and banish "pedantry and literary imposture" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 12). The procedure to follow is therefore as follows: propose knowledge in an analytical and progressive way. Synthesis can take place downstream of the analysis process. The reference to the *Enlightenment* strengthens his method and proves why Ferdinando De Luca does not intend to follow the synthetic method of regional geography. From a didactic point of view, an analytical method appears to him to be valid, describing one geographical theme at a time and keeping in mind the age of his students.

Following this approach, he proposes statistical information, one after the other, almost dissecting knowledge until it is reduced to short statements. In fact, while trying to make it easier to acquire them, he ends up providing sequences of data and information. If we compare the essay with other manuals, no particular differences emerge, however the method initially described justifies the analytical and statistical procedure. Probably, for these reasons, Ferdinando De Luca proposes only the first three orders or thematicisms and is waiting to see if his manual will obtain interest and diffusion. Although the work is incomplete, the author shows particular interest in Italy; in this it is in line with the tradition of the Genovesi school. In fact, even Luigi Maria Galanti dedicates, in his essay on political geography, a large number of pages to Italy rather than to other parts of Europe and the world. However, in Ferdinando De Luca, this interest leaves no room for politics. He undertakes to describe the geographical aspects of the Italian peninsula. Moreover, for its political vision, it focuses on every small Italian state. In fact, he was in favor of a confederation of states and not the formation of a single unitary state. Still, he does not care about the socio-economic problems of Southern Italy. Therefore, he only takes up the idea of providing his students with an adequate knowledge of Italy, refraining

confused so far with geographical history and history), in Acts of the Academy of Sciences of Naples, 1840, p. 30.

from any reference to politics. Moreover, in order to be in line with the will of the royal auditors of Public Instruction, he also describes the districts of the bishoprics, in the third order. The essay stops, as we have clarified before, at the beginning of the fourth order; the scholar, in the *Work Plan*, points out that he has dealt with the first themes that represent "the elementary part of geography" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 19); he adds that they need only "senses and memory, faculties with which the first age of man is so rich" (ibidem). Therefore, the essay should not be considered incomplete, but only exposes the elements for the youngest students[27], although all the orders or topics are mentioned in the *Work Plan*. However, the author's further objective is to move with caution: to propose his method and basic concepts to assess the interest that the essay may encounter. In short, he wants to go step by step, without competing with geographers, but giving his contribution to the teaching method. In this way, he consciously carries out an intermediate and connecting cultural role.

4. CONCLUSION: A PATH WORTH EXPLORING

Ferdinando De Luca, from the aspects mentioned above, proves to be a passionate lover of geography and a personality to be explored and studied. He also has interesting insights into aspects that will be reflected in geographical studies in the following decades, such as the Earth's populating capacity or acclimatization (Migliorini, 1969). He encounters the discipline for professional needs, having to devote himself to private teaching, but he realizes that he is entering an area that deserves a didactic systematization. He recognizes its importance, in fact, he writes that the study of geography is necessary because "not only do we have the need but we also have a duty to know the planet we inhabit" (F. De Luca, 1833, p. 14). This position is consistent with that of Genovesi, who was "pervaded by the desire to know where we stand" (Sarno, 2012c, p. 10). As mentioned in the second paragraph, private schools were widespread in Naples and favoured a wide production of manuals, including geography, during the 19th century. As has been highlighted in other papers (Sarno, 2013; 2014), Luigi Galanti had already stressed that it was necessary to develop updated manuals capable of facilitating students' learning. He himself had prepared his essay *Elementary Geography* (1844), proceeded by questions and answers and had put as his last topic the so-called armillary sphere, or the study of astronomy. However, while recalling knowledge of a general nature, he gives, in his essays, ample importance to political geography, as mentioned.

Ferdinando De Luca accepts some of the positions of the Genovesi school, but believes he must provide a description by theme of the discipline. His essay *New Elements* obtained particular consensus and therefore went through several editions until the expansion of 1838 with the essay *Elementary Institutions.* The two titles show the path taken by the author: he begins with the publication of elements of geography. Then, having obtained the favour of readers and even of Adriano Balbi[28], he decides to elaborate a text that collects the institutions of geographical knowledge and that, in a systematic and exhaustive way, provide basic knowledge. The *New Elements* are, therefore, to be considered a project in progress, which has, at its origin, a profound reflection on the teaching/learning of geography. In this way, F. De Luca brought to life, in the first decades of the 19th century, in Naples, the debate on the teaching of geography (Bandini, 2016). It is part of the cultural network promoted by Genovesi and the Galanti brothers,

[27] He believes that schooling should begin at the age of seven.
[28] Balbi's favour is widely cited in the preface to the *Elementary Institutions* (1838).

but enhances the aspect of teaching practice and transmits it to Giuseppe De Luca. The paper, therefore, wanted to enhance a little-known figure who, on the other hand, is important for reconstructing the spread of geography in Neapolitan culture. As mentioned at the beginning, he was a missing link in a broad research that pointed out how geography has acquired an increasing role in the city of Naples, both in the University and in the school environment. The archival research of the essays by Ferdinando De Luca as well as others is a determining factor because it allows us to explore the construction of geographical knowledge in the Italian 19th century.

The merit of Ferdinando De Luca is his constant attention to the students, so as to give an adequate preparation for subsequent experiences. Therefore, Ferdinando De Luca's production deserves further study starting with the second essay**,** *Elementary Institutions*, which is the continuation of the *Elements*. Some studies on specific territorial areas are still valid and interesting, so they must be brought to light. Furthermore, he should not be considered an outsider with respect to Genovesi's school, but a scholar who, respectfully in autonomy, inserts himself into this network and makes his own specific contribution. He stands as a link between the first and second generation, which were alluded to in the first paragraph. Moreover, he conveys to Giuseppe De Luca the importance of a society uniting all geographers. In conclusion, he was able to be a point of reference in the Neapolitan culture of his time and dedicated energy to geography, emphasizing its cultural and educational value.

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