

Duels of Camorra

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Abstract

The author of the article presents the findings of an extensive criminological investigation into the Camorra, transcending the notion of the Camorra as a static and fleeting paradigm. In exploring the historical backdrop, origin, and evolution of this phenomenon within the context of historical events and societal shifts (Vahabi & Hassani-Mahmooei, 2016), the author not only categorizes the various types of Camorra conflicts but also elucidates the methods for resolving these conflicts, the weaponry employed, and the behavioral codes adhered to by Camorra duellists. This scholarly endeavor is fortified by references to archival materials from researchers, criminologists, and historians spanning the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries who scrutinized and documented the Neapolitan criminal organization known as the «Camorra.»

The primary aim of this article is to debunk the myths surrounding Camorra duels, which have gained prominence in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It seeks to illustrate how eminent criminologists of more than two centuries ago conceptualized the Camorra phenomenon and its socio-cultural significance. Through a comparative analysis, it becomes evident that the contemporary portrayal of the Camorra in the twenty-first century is significantly removed from historical accuracy.

Keywords

Camorra, duel, criminal organization, weapons, duellist

Introduction

Examining a wide range of contemporary human science issues, the study of criminal organizations is particularly relevant (Astarita et al., 2018; Barone & Narciso, 2015; Chang et al., 2013; Gamba et al., 2018). Scientific interest in this field fosters interdisciplinary research (Bueger & Edmunds, 2020; Campaniello et al., 2016; Daniele, 2019; Ferrara et al., 2014; Meier

et al., 2016). Of particular interest are criminal organizations of the South of Italy: Mafia, Camorra, and 'Ndrangheta (Lavoragna & Sergi, 2014 see also Calderoni et al., 2020; Catino, 2015; Craparo et al., 2018; Nese et al., 2018) To gain deeper insights into the phenomenon of criminal organizations, this article conducts a historical exploration of the Neapolitan criminal organization, the Camorra. I note that historical research enables us to comprehend the essence of phenomena, which is why this research method is employed by many scholars in various fields (Bradfield et al., 2016, see also Ballandonne, 2020; Hollstein, 2019; Kalenda & Schwartzhoff, 2015; Varner, 2018).

At the outset of this research, several fundamental questions were formulated to guide the inquiry into the Camorra: What is the Camorra? How did it originate and why? Where did the Camorra find its roots: on the streets of Naples or within the confines of prisons? How was this formidable institution constructed, and how has it endured for centuries? What mechanisms have bound this structure together and rendered it impervious to collapse?

The process of scrutinizing and analyzing sources commenced well before the author embarked on the task of writing the book «Perpetual Motion» (Maltsev, 2021). This preliminary research involved the examination of a wide array of historical materials and documents, authored by scholars, writers, and former law enforcement personnel, all of whom had connections to the Camorra. For the purpose of conducting a thorough comparative analysis, six prominent books were carefully selected, spanning the years between 1876 and 2006. This strategic selection allows for a comprehensive understanding of the Camorra by assessing the observations, conclusions, and factual accounts provided by authors hailing from both earlier and contemporary centuries. By leveraging this diverse sample of sources, it becomes possible to construct a holistic and multifaceted perspective of the Camorra, drawing from the insights of scholars and observers across different epochs.

Methods

In understanding the heuristic model employed in the study, an examination was conducted on a selection of works of historical and cultural significance:

The list of works analyzed:

- Giuseppe Alongi (1890), «La Camorra. Studio di sociologia criminale» («Camorra: A Study of Criminal Sociology»).
- Carlo di Addosio (1893), «The Duel of the Camorristi.»
- Eugenio de Cosa (1908), «The Camorra and the Malavita in Naples.»
- Cesare Lombroso (Lombroso, 1876/2006), «The Criminal Man.»
- M. Rignanese and V. Tricarico (1992), «Story of Three Old Ancestors. Rules and Rituals of the Camorra.»
- Roberto Saviano (2006), «Gomorra.»

These works have been translated and made available through the «Centre for Criminology,» founded by the author of this article. The scientific director of the center is Dr. Maxim Lepskiy, an Academician of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Philosophy, and a Professor in the Department of Sociology at the Faculty of Sociology and Management at the Zaporizhzhya National University. The translations were carried out by Anna Filippova, a researcher at the «[Centre for Criminology](#),» specializing in criminological and forensic research of subcultures in Southern Italy. Notably, due to legal restrictions, only two of these works are accessible in free access, namely Giuseppe Alongi's «Camorra: A Study of Criminal Sociology» and Carlo di Addosio's «The Duel of the Camorristi.» The remaining works are retained in the archives of the center for internal use.

In the context of this article, all these works hold relevance to varying degrees. However, the primary focus will be on the insights provided by Carlo di Addosio (1893) in «The Duel of the Camorristi» and Giuseppe Alongi (1890) in «Camorra: A Study of Criminal Sociology.» These two authors, in particular, offer qualitative descriptions of the origins and conditions of the Camorra, as well as the rules and methods governing duels, which are of particular interest for this research.

Giuseppe Alongi (1890) primarily attributes the emergence of the Camorra to several key factors. Foremost, he underscores the significance of the region's favorable and temperate climate, which not only attracted people but also predisposed them to lead a carefree and irresponsible lifestyle. Here, life was remarkably affordable, with no pressing concerns about shelter, even embracing open-air living, and minimal expenses for sustenance. The fertile land provided sustenance through the natural bounty of vegetation.

Additionally, Alongi (1890) emphasizes the socio-political conditions within the territory as crucial contributors. According to his perspective, the prevailing state system, marred by corruption, had thoroughly discredited itself. Deception and theft had become normalized as part of the legal framework, as even those responsible for curbing illicit activities were entangled in criminal ventures. This period witnessed a broader societal decay and moral erosion. From a socio-psychological vantage point, individuals in this region exhibited impulsiveness and a strong sense of individualism, cultivating a rebellious spirit that could only be quelled through significant force. This coercive and organized influence materialized in the form of criminal communities, which commanded fear and obedience.

Carlo di Addosio (1893) presents a contrasting viewpoint, suggesting that the Camorra was an artificially constructed organization directly «imported» from Spain. Whether this assertion holds true remains to be fully substantiated. It is worth noting that, upon initial

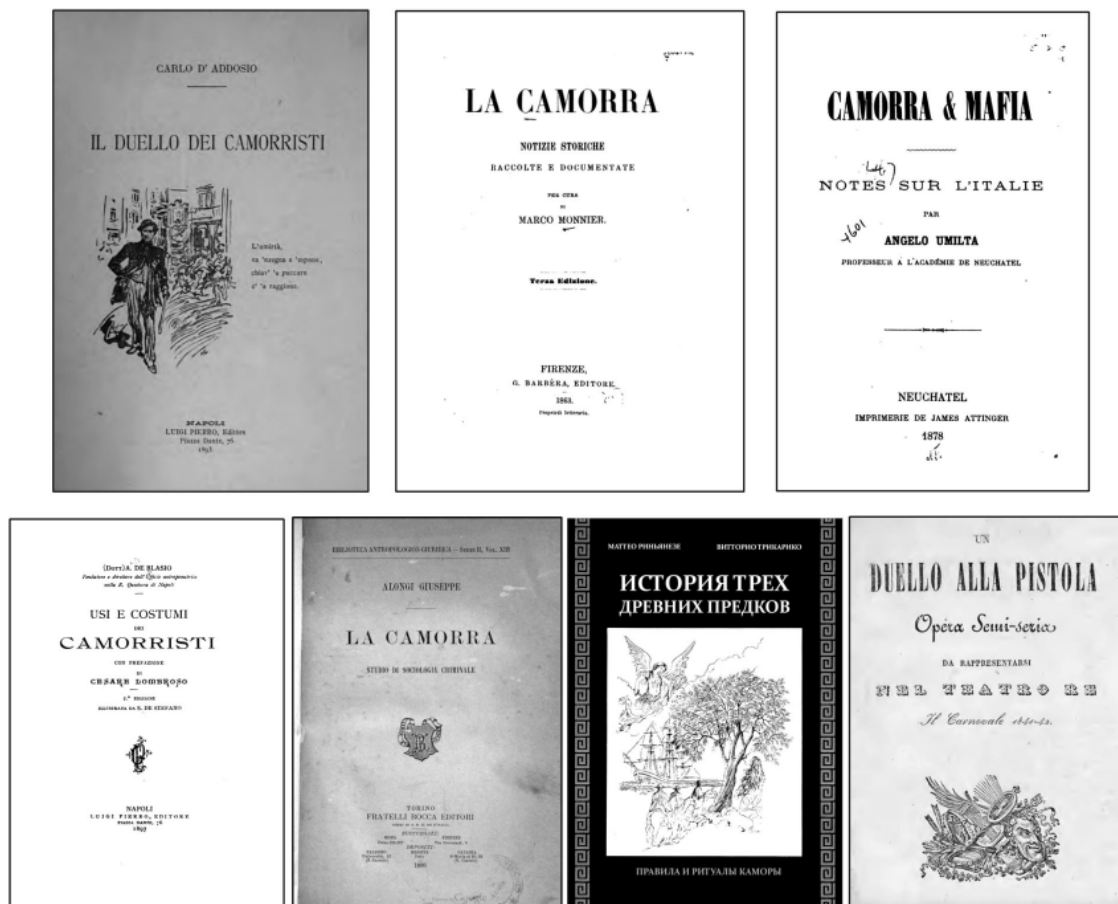


Figure 1. Covers of works analyzed

examination, there appears to be a certain apparent contradiction in the author's statements: on one hand, di Addosio speaks of the «export» of the Camorra, while on the other, he indicates that it was assembled from local criminals known as «smargiassi.»

In Carlo di Addosio's «The Duel of the Camorristi,» he notes that during the era of Masaniello, certain men were referred to as «guappi» in the Spanish style and «smargiassi» in the Neapolitan style (Addosio, 1893). These individuals instilled fear in the taverns of Mercato or Pendino, as well as under tents and shacks in Piazza Largo del Castello, and within numerous gambling establishments. Notably, one of the most renowned figures among them was Onofrio Catiero in 1647. Eventually, these figures would unite under a sect that would come to be known as the Camorra.

Furthermore, di Addosio (1893) posits that the Camorra is essentially a duplicate of the Spanish secret society called «LaGuarduna.» According to the author, «LaGuarduna» was established in 1417 in Toledo and consisted of marauders recruited from the galleys of Seville, Malaga, and Melilla. This connection is also mentioned by Arcangelo Badolati (2014) in his work «Mama 'ndrangheta.»

The objective of the article is to conduct a critical examination of the mythologeme surrounding Camorra duels that emerged in the XX-XXI centuries. Additionally, it aims to illustrate how renowned criminologists conceptualized the Camorra phenomenon and its socio-cultural significance over 200 years ago. Through a comparative analysis, we can formulate the hypothesis that the contemporary portrayal of the Camorra in the 21st century diverges significantly from the historical reality. This proposition will be substantiated in the subsequent sections of this scientific study.

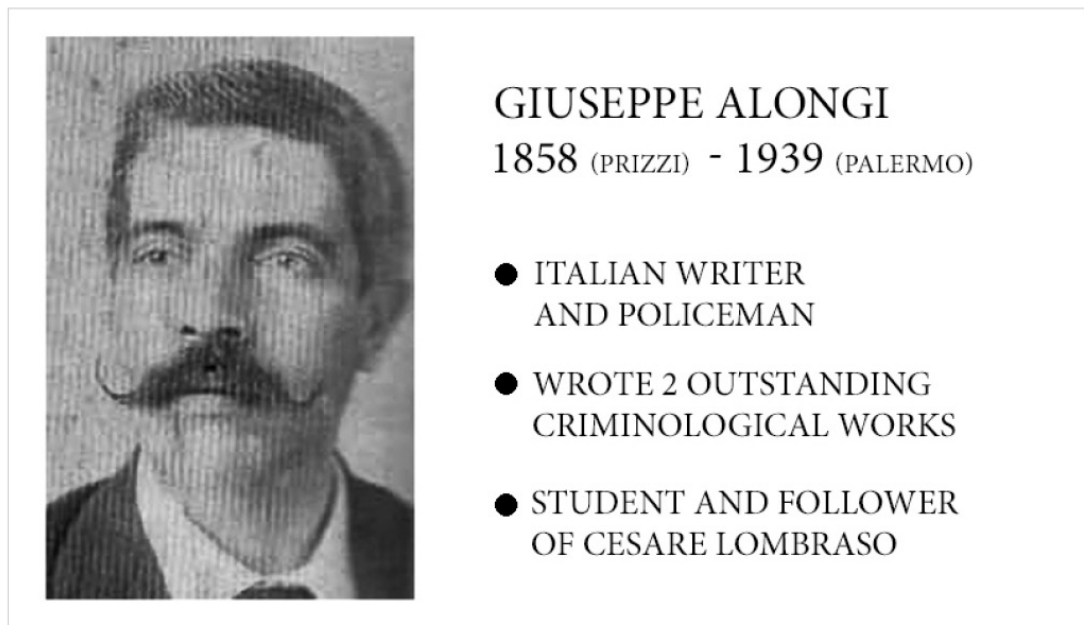


Figure 2. Giuseppe Alongi

Results

Transitioning to the next phase of the research, historical records reveal that in Palermo, there exists a Franciscan order composed of three branches, one of which is the Capuchin line. The Capuchin order was originally formed by repentant pirates, a rather intriguing historical fact. A criminal (a pirate), adopts a monastic life for a certain purpose. This intriguing «coincidence» warrants careful consideration.

Additionally, it is worthwhile to consider the enigmatic society known as the Beati Paoli. At times, it has been referred to as the order of knights and, alternatively, the order of avengers. Some viewed them as bandits, while Sicilians regarded them as «men of honor.» Legend has it that the Beati Paoli society was established in the 12th century in Palermo. It was founded by ten young aristocrats who took an oath to combat any form of arbitrary rule imposed by the church and the state. They would convene at night to determine who should be subjected to their brand of justice.

According to the historian Marquis Villabianca, who lived in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Palermo, the Beati Paoli indeed comprised a clandestine society of murderers (Gaetani, ca. 1802). They convened in utmost secrecy, strictly after midnight, within subterranean crypts located in the Capo neighborhood of Palermo. Their primary objective was to devise a strategy for seeking vengeance, essentially forming a sort of «court» or punitive body. Remarkably, even in the twenty-first century, it is reported that Sicilians, when faced with insults or losses they cannot address through legal channels, often express a longing for the Beati Paoli's existence, exclaiming, «Ah, if the Beati Paoli still existed!»

Indeed, the presence of the «Beati Paoli» phenomenon strongly suggests that we are dealing with individuals who functioned as hired assassins. This correlation becomes more evident when we consider Carlo di Addosio's depiction of the Camorra's structure in «The Duel of the Camorristi» (Addosio, 1893). He references a specific group known as «feritori di punta,» skilled in delivering lethal blows with precision. Additionally, within the Camorra's composition, there exists another category of members referred to as the «baruffieri.» These individuals are known for their participation in fights. In «The Dueling Camorristi,» Carlo di Addosio further clarifies that the society had an elected leader, termed «Il fratello maggiore» or «The elder brother,» who commanded captains, referred to as «capatazos.» The general membership of the society consisted of individuals known as «guapo» (alternatively «guappi» or «bravi»), who were further divided into «feritori di punta,» and «baruffier.»

Addosio (1893) also points out that prospective members aspired to join either of these two categories of «guappi.» To attain such status, they needed to demonstrate passive obedience and a capacity for cold-blooded cruelty for a period of two years. At the lowest level were the «chivatos,» who, after a year of apprenticeship within the organization, could progress to the rank of «novices.»

Interestingly, during the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies (in both capitals), centers were established for training individuals in different capacities. In Naples, a center was dedicated to the training of combatants, focusing on operational and tactical problem-solving, while in Palermo, a center specialized in training assassins. The process of entering these training centers followed a specific mechanism. To become a novice, individuals initially underwent a year of general training. During this period, they worked closely with Franciscan friars who evaluated their aptitude and determined the category (militant or assassin) to which they should be assigned. After the year of apprenticeship, the candidates were directed to the appropriate training centers. Those designated for the militant class went to Puglia, while those assigned to the assassin class were sent to Palermo.

One might wonder why monks were involved in training future Camorra members, given their apparent detachment from weapons and combat expertise. This question can be answered by considering historical facts, notably the birth of the Templar order within the Franciscan order. The historical practice of educating knights existed within these religious orders, which sheds light on their role in the training process. More detailed information on this subject can be found in the article titled «The «Third Order» and its impact on world history» (Maltsev, 2019):

What is the true essence of the Franciscan Order? According to the established narrative, this order was founded by St. Francis of Assisi around the year 1209, in the vicinity of the

Italian city of Spoleto, as a monastic mendicant order. Traditionally, Franciscan monks are recognized by their attire—a dark brown monastic cassock secured with a rope featuring three knots, symbolizing the three vows of St. Francis: poverty, chastity, and obedience. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that historians have grappled with the absence of reliable biographical information about Francis of Assisi. Many of the existing accounts are considered legends constructed by representatives of the Catholic Church and folk traditions. In essence, the narrative surrounding the creation of the Franciscan Order appears to be a blend of myth and uncertainty, lacking concrete evidence.

However, an alternate version of the Franciscan Order's origin presents a compelling narrative—one that can be readily substantiated by a visit to Venice. As we discovered during one of our expeditions, Venice serves as the cradle of all religious orders. In this alternative account, the initial Franciscan Order was actually established directly in Venice. It was within the confines of Venice that the Franciscans laid the foundation for a knightly order dedicated to Archangel Michael, an order that would eventually evolve into the renowned Order of the Templars. In essence, the Templar Order emerged within the framework of the Franciscan Order. This alternative perspective extends to the origins of other significant orders as well, including the Dominicans and the Hospitallers.

Origins of the Camorra

Giuseppe Alongi (1890), in his treatise «Camorra: A Study of Criminal Sociology,» delves into the origins of the Camorra. According to his perspective, the Camorra's beginnings trace back to prisons, but he posits a rather intricate and somewhat ambiguous view, asserting that the Camorra emerged spontaneously, without any specific guiding force behind its inception.

In Alongi's view, the Camorra found its roots within the confines of prisons, where merchants and individuals with violent tendencies were incarcerated. These individuals were eventually granted pardons for various reasons, transforming them into a legitimate and legalized force. They organized themselves within prison walls, gradually and inconspicuously imposing their Camorrist rules and laws upon both the populace and the government. The exact timing of its formation remains uncertain, but it is evident that the Camorra took shape and established its presence within the prison system.

While Giuseppe Alongi's perspective on the Camorra's origins is valid, it is important to note that during the analysis, an alternative theory emerged, suggesting a connection between the Camorra's organization and the Franciscan Order. However, the precise manner in which the Franciscan Order may have played a role in organizing the Camorra requires further investigation. Subsequently, I embarked on the next scientific endeavor, which involved the intricate task of piecing together and reconstructing the mechanism responsible for the birth of the Camorra.

It is proposed to examine the structure of the Franciscan Order. Publicly available sources reveal that the order was composed of three branches, a structure that continues to exist today:

- Order of Friars Minor, O.F.M.
- Order of Friars Minor Conventual, O.F.M.Conv.
- Order of Friars Minor Capuchins, O.F.M.Cap. (Established in 1525).

The historical record of the Franciscan Order reveals the existence of two additional branches. The second branch, known as the «Second (female) Order» (of Franciscan Order) or the Order of Saint Clare, was established in 1224, with St. Clara as a companion to St. Francis. The fifth branch of the Franciscans is the «Third Order of Saint Francis» (tertiaries), originally founded by St. Francis around 1221. In 1401, it received its independent charter,

becoming officially known as the «Third Order of St. Francis» (Alberzoni, 2004). Notably, the Third Order of St. Francis included both tertiaries residing within monasteries and a significant number of tertiaries living in the secular world. Among the latter category were many illustrious individuals, such as Dante Alighieri, King Louis IX (Saint Louis), Michelangelo, Raphael, and Christopher Columbus.

In the context of the study of the Camorra, particular attention is directed toward the tertiaries living in the secular world, as they played a pivotal role in the formation of this criminal organization. These individuals were sometimes referred to as the «civilian corps of the Franciscan Order.» The civilian corps endowed the Franciscan Order with a unique characteristic and presented numerous opportunities. Since not all members of the Franciscan Order resided in monasteries, these individuals lived in the wider world, concealing their affiliation with the Franciscan Order from public knowledge.

Giuseppe Alongi, in his treatise, mentions the existence of two Camorras: the superior Camorra and the inferior Camorra. Allegedly, the plebeian Camorra consisted of the lower classes, while the yellow-gloved Camorra comprised the upper classes. Alongi points out that similar to the distinction between the low and high Mafia in Sicily, Naples also recognized the existence of a low and high Camorra.

However, this division was not readily apparent to external observers, and the organization's structure and purpose remained unclear. The two Camorras functioned as parallel systems, with a «right Camorra» and a «left Camorra» coexisting simultaneously. In this context, the «left Camorra» corresponds to the civilian corps of the Franciscan Order, while the «right Camorra» represents the Camorra they established. This Camorra, which developed and evolved over time, has ultimately endured and remains in existence to this day.

The organization of the Camorra in Naples can be attributed to the civilian corps of Franciscans, with a pivotal role played by individuals referred to as «provocateurs,» or as I have labeled them. They were also known as peacemakers or masters of arms. Carlo di Addosio (1893) mentions their role in his work «The Duel of the Camorristi» saying that after the most cruel and ridiculous insults, before challenging each other, they begin to praise the skill of their fathers. But it happens that they immediately get into a fight until the peacemaker arrives. The peacemaker tries to reconcile, using his authority.

The Camorra was often referred to as the «many-headed hydra,» a symbol that encapsulates the significance of provocateurs who operated in various capacities, including peacemakers, masters of arms, and providers of resources. However, beneath these different guises often hid the same individuals who excelled in the art of masquerade. They were adept at constantly changing their appearances, donning various masks, and assuming different roles. What was their primary function? These individuals were instrumental in the formation of organized crime in Naples.

As Eugenio de Cosa (1908) elaborates in his work «Camorra e malavita a Napoli» («The Camorra and the Malavita in Naples»), the criminal underworld of Naples was stratified into distinct classes, encompassing thieves, robbers, swindlers, counterfeiters, and more. Among these various criminal professions, some were easier to master than others. De Cosa notes that becoming a thief, robber, or even a counterfeiter was not as challenging as becoming a con artist. To excel as a fraudster, one needed «outstanding organizational skills and a certain intellectual level.» These observations are pertinent to understanding the intricacies of the Camorra organization.

The article also emphasizes the distinction between borseggio thieves and truffatori, the swindlers, who constitute a distinct class within the criminal hierarchy. These swindlers are regarded with a unique perspective. While anyone could become a «lardodisciscasso,» «rap-pinante,» or even a brash pickpocket, becoming a swindler was a far more intricate endeavor. This is because fraud hinges on deception and misleading the victim, making it essential for

those engaged in this form of crime to possess the requisite skills and dexterity due to the complexity of their operations. A successful swindler had to project an appearance of masculinity, simplicity, a specific style of dress, and a witty demeanor—qualities that facilitate successful deception.

Swindlers were considered a privileged caste, and entering their ranks was exceedingly challenging, demanding a high level of intelligence and specialized skills. However, many young men aspiring to the underworld initially did not possess these traits. It was on the streets of Naples that individuals emerged who met all the requirements, individuals who were, in fact, representatives of the civilian corps of the Franciscan Order, concealed behind appropriate masks. With their level of training, they became authorities for street youth and others, effectively organizing crime in Naples. The question may arise: why did the Franciscans engage in such activities? The answer lies in the environment they created, from which they could select personnel for the Camorra. The Camorra exclusively recruited and accepted criminals into its ranks.

But why criminals? Allow me to share an story. In the Soviet Union, there existed certain unofficial educational institutions of a special nature. During the initial interview, candidates seeking admission to such institutions were posed questions such as: Could you rob a bank? Could you kill a person? Could you steal a specific item? Since the newcomers were Soviet citizens, they tended to answer that they could not engage in bank robbery or murder, citing moral and legal objections. Those who responded negatively were immediately categorized as «unsuitable» and were directed toward the category of «good» people because only «bad» individuals were educated in these institutions. One of my mentors once asserted that a intelligence officer should have a criminal disposition. While a he might receive ranks, accolades, and medals for serving their homeland, their actions on foreign soil might be considered criminal according to the laws of that country.

Back to the Camorra. The Camorra selected those who were not only ready to commit a crime, but also to commit it - that is, those who had already been tested in the field of criminal activity. A logical question arises: where was such a contingent? Correctly, in prison. The Franciscan Order invented and implemented the following mechanism: artificially created the criminal world of Naples. And those who committed crimes, sooner or later went to prison. And here they were already waiting for the very civilian corps of the Franciscan Order. In places of imprisonment there was a selection of «candidates» who met the requirements of the Camorra. There were, in particular, certain agreements with the prison authorities, which allowed the civilian corps to come to the places of detention, disguise themselves as prisoners, stay there for the necessary amount of time, and then change into civilian dress and leave. In this way, prisons were turned into «academies of crime», since this was where future camorristas began to be taught. There was plenty of time for this in prison.

However, before the recruits were trained, they were qualified, that is, they were determined who had what aptitudes. Above in the article considered a list of criminal activities, but in fact, the basis of their three: thieves, robbers and murderers (since the others were already occupied by the civilian corps of the Franciscan Order). Once the qualifications were determined, the training began; criminal activity required an enormous amount of knowledge and skill. For example, in order to commit a burglary, initially it is required to collect information about the object, to find out when the apartment is no one is in order to enter unnoticed. It is necessary to get into the apartment somehow - there are locks that will need to be opened - pick up the keys or act in another way. When the theft is successful, the stolen goods must be sold. As for this question, in the Camorra it was solved simply and definitely - all the loot was sent to the treasury of the Franciscan Order.

The wealth of the Franciscan Order was indeed substantial, making it one of the wealthiest monastic orders. As mentioned earlier, all stolen proceeds were directed to their treasury. To

illustrate the Order's affluence, consider the example of the Capuchin line, which inherited the entire wealth of the Habsburg dynasty upon their demise. It is worth noting that Charles V, who was the Emperor of the Holy Spanish Empire, hailed from the Habsburg lineage. Intriguingly, all the riches of the Spanish Empire ultimately flowed into the coffers of the Franciscan Order. The Habsburgs, a formidable monarchical dynasty during the Middle Ages and the Modern Age, wielded immense power in Europe.

To draw a comparison, let's examine how bandit training unfolded in the post-Soviet space during the 1990s. Following the dissolution of the USSR, many individuals from the security apparatus found themselves in precarious positions, viewed as representatives of the erstwhile communist regime. Exploiting this vulnerability, criminal groups recruited such individuals to impart training to the criminal element. In return, they offered a range of incentives, including apartments, cars, and money. Criminals recognized that in the altered landscape, survival and successful operation could only be assured by well-trained individuals, given the intense criminal competition of the 1990s, where nearly everyone dabbled in illicit activities. Since the skills of many aspiring criminals were deficient, schools were established to provide training in criminal activities. Former special forces personnel were often enlisted as instructors (Maltsev, 2021).

In the case of the Camorra, specialized training centers were established to groom boys between the ages of 13 and 15. Initial training spanned one year, after which candidates were assessed and qualified in one of three areas: thieves, robbers, or assassins. Subsequently, they were sent to designated training centers. Militants underwent a two-year training program in Puglia, while assassins were trained in Palermo. Those who completed their training and reached the age of 16 to 18 were designated as «piciotti,» or soldiers. If a candidate did not reach the age of 16 by the conclusion of their training, they remained in the monastery.

Discussion

In formulating the hypothesis, let us outline the following cultural scenario. Once a young man graduated from a Camorra training center and was designated as a soldier, he embarked on a journey of fulfilling the tasks assigned by the leadership. While he possessed a certain level of knowledge and skills, it was imperative to both maintain and acquire new ones. To this end, the Camorra implemented a system that placed great emphasis on honing weapon skills through dueling. However, the significance and function of dueling within the Camorra extended far beyond mere practice in wielding weapons. The different types of duels offer insight into their broader role.

Within the Camorra, there are three distinct types of duels:

1. Examination.
2. Judicial.
3. Professional.

The first type of duel, known as the examination duel, served as a means of promotion within the organization. Failure to succeed in this duel would impede one's progress. The judicial duel was employed to resolve disputes that arose between Camorra members. Whenever disagreements occurred among comrades, a duel was scheduled to settle these issues. If someone lacked proficiency in wielding a weapon, they could face dire consequences, even death, without advancing in rank. The third type of duel could arise spontaneously during the execution of professional duties.

Several Russian-speaking commentators have erroneously asserted that knife duels constitute the primary form of Camorra dueling. This misconception may stem from a lack of familiarity with foreign languages, as contemporary «Camorra enthusiasts» often rely on

questionable sources instead of direct primary materials from the era. Many tend to draw information from readily available open sources without delving into archival texts. It is important to note that this misinterpretation isn't exclusive to Russian-speaking authors; Italian authors have also been guilty of relying on open sources. Consequently, this has given rise to numerous myths and misconceptions surrounding the Camorra.

Carlo di Addosio's work, «Duel of the Camorristi,» provides a detailed account of Camorristi duels (Addosio, 1893). He clarifies that Camorristi utilized not only knives but also firearms in their duels. Moreover, the primary form of Camorra dueling predominantly involved revolvers rather than knives. Di Addosio explains that revolvers were the most commonly used weapons in these duels, with knives or daggers occasionally employed if the duelists were authentic Camorristi. In such cases, the duel acquired a distinct name, «zumpata,» denoting the combatants' propensity to leap (zompare) during the engagement. In rare instances, duels might involve a Genoese sword, particularly when the duel occurred between a man and a woman or between two women.

To understand the choice between using knives and revolvers in duels, we must distinguish between duels within prison and those outside prison walls. Inside prisons, revolvers were unavailable, so combatants engaged in knife duels. These knife duels had specific regulations: the knives' blades were required to match the size of a man's palm, and both duelists had to use knives of identical size. If one knife exceeded the other in length, the duel was postponed. Even within prison, peacemakers ensured that dueling rules were strictly followed.

Outside prison, duels fell into two categories:

- 1. Complex (Consecutive) Duels:** These were meticulously planned affairs, scheduled at predetermined locations and times. The choice of location aimed to prevent friends of the dueling parties from intervening. Camorristi during complex duels employed various techniques, including pendulum movements, hiding behind obstacles, jumps, rolls, somersaults to evade a bullet. Duelists could wield one or two revolvers simultaneously and even fire shots with both hands. Equality between opponents was emphasized, extending to the number of weapons and bullets each duelist possessed.
- 2. Instantaneous Duels:** These duels were impromptu and occurred when conflicts arose between individuals who were not Camorra members. In such cases, the winner was often the one who fired the first shot.

While it may be tempting to draw parallels with dueling scenes in movies, such as «The Quick and the Dead,» it is important to note that these films typically portray events in the Wild West, rather than Naples or Italy (Raimi, 1995). Nevertheless, it is worth considering that the Wild West was once part of the Spanish Empire, as was Naples. Some movies, like «Headless Horseman,» depict multi-stage duels (Vajnshtok, 1973). The analyzed source mentions that duels can occur not only between men but also between a man and a woman. In such cases, only cold weapons are used. Women can also engage in duels to resolve disputes within relationships, and in this scenario, only cold weapons are employed.

When it comes to a duel between two Camorrians outside the prison using edged weapons, daggers are typically used in a Norman grip. Alternatively, a dagga (Spanish dagger) or a stiletto pin may be employed, in which case a fencing grip is used. In duels involving two men, a boarding sword with a blade length of 70 cm can be used, while in a duel between a man and a woman, a double-edged small boarding blade is employed. It is worth noting that all these weapons have maritime origins.

From the presented list of weapons used in duels, it is clear that folding knives, often associated with the Camorra, are not mentioned. These knives appeared later, in the 19th century. The primary form of duel among Camorrians involved revolvers. However, this list

of duels in Naples is not exhaustive, and we will explore it in more detail later.

Carlo di Addosio (1893), in his work «Duel of the Camorristi,» describes the duel in three stages: *appicceco*, *raggiunamento*, and *acustione*. He explains that these three-act duels can take the form of a «challenge» or an invitation, often referred to as an «appointment» in Camorra jargon. This means that one can challenge or invite for reasoning and clarification, essentially asking a question. An invitation to reason doesn't necessarily depend on real issues; it is a way for opponents or their associates to consider themselves defenseless. They engage in reasoning and attempt to clarify the situation. If the dispute remains unresolved after this initial stage, it progresses to the second stage, which is a formal question. This often leads to a spontaneous clarification of relations but may be scheduled for another time, possibly on a different day and at a different location.

It is important to highlight that duels occurred between both members of the Camorra and non-Camorra individuals, and these two scenarios involved different approaches. When ordinary people dueled, they could do so without adhering to any specific rules. However, when Camorrians organized a duel, a peacekeeper might intervene and forbid it. In such cases, Camorristi typically complied with the peacekeeper's decision because these peacekeepers were respected figures within the community but had no direct affiliation with the Camorra itself.

A duel between two Camorristas was always subject to the control of Camorra leadership. The elders of the Camorra would convene to assess the situation. If they couldn't reach a resolution, they might seek advice from a more knowledgeable Camorra representative. When disputes between the two sides couldn't be resolved through negotiation, they would resort to a duel. Carlo di Addosio (1893), in his work «Duel of the Camorristi,» describes this process as follows:

The quarrel between the two *guappi*, which ends with a challenge, is beautifully depicted in two sonnets of Rousseau, which the author cites in the book. Wishing to find the reason for the origin of the dispute, from which the participants do not immediately proceed to the issue but postpone the firing to another time, it is safe to say that for the Camorra, it occurs as a sign of respect for discipline since it is forbidden to undertake anything without the prior authorization of the *capos* or those aware of what is going on.

Here is a sonnet by Rousseau in its original language, as cited by Carlo di Addosio (1893, p. 66):

Acciaccusielle! Picciuttielle 'e sgarra,
vuie ca purtate 'o cappelluccio 'a sgherra,
namazzaromano ca pare navarra
e sirascatevene 'o serra-serra,
e siguardate, staguardatasguarra
comm'ana lama int»apanza,
o pe terra fa scunucchià la gente pe caparra,
mo' scemiate pe nun ghi 'a guerra!
A vvuie, acciaccusiellepicciuttielle!
Chi Iene core se facessennanza!
Jammo !Quann»eccacciatesticurtielle?!
Na zumpatellasola !... .Peccrianza !...
E ch'è!... Facile 'e surde... 'e stunatielle?..
Vetramano 'e stentinerine 'a panza!

Conclusions

It is essential to emphasize that a reluctance to rely on primary sources in research and contentment with internet-based information can lead to the perpetuation of myths and

misconceptions about organizations like the Camorra in Southern Italy. These criminal structures continue to operate in the region today, but their historical origins and practices have often been obscured. Additionally, the documents and materials available have been shaped by policies and legislation aimed at revitalizing Italian culture, further complicating the understanding of these criminal organizations.

As a result, the duels currently taught by Italian «maestros» have no historical basis in the territory, especially not duels involving stick «bastone», which had no presence in Palermo, Naples, or Calabria. In his book «Fencing Science,» Blasco Florio (1844) mentions that sticks were used in fights among commoners, while knights were prohibited from wielding them.. Furthermore, in Palermo, knights were not allowed to duel with revolvers; doing so would be seen as opposing society. Firearms could be used in crimes like robberies and murders, but not in duels, which were considered dishonorable and subject to strict punishment.

The modern perception of the Camorra often deviates from historical reality. The mechanisms that established and sustained the organization were not fully understood by authors of 19th-century sources. However, through comparative analysis, it becomes possible to comprehend and reconstruct these mechanisms and find evidence supporting the conclusions drawn from six key books on the Camorra, written between 1876 and 2006.

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