

A Social Space in Constant Reshaping: Umbrian Migrants in the Atlantic Economies (1900–1914)

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Dirk Hoerder's comprehensive survey of labor migrations, highlighting the complexity of historical mobility in the Atlantic economies, and Samuel Baily's "village-outward approach," pointing to the need to study transatlantic migration flows from their place of origin, have revealed the multipolar character of the international migrations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They have also shown that European migrants did not travel exclusively to the Americas (Hoerder 1985; Baily 1992, 43–68); rather, migration chains often linked small European towns and villages to several international destinations on two, three, or even four continents (Audenino 1990; Gabaccia 2000). Complex issues concerning the direction—and redirection—of the migratory flows have been raised that can be addressed by focusing on the migrants' networks. Beginning with John and Leatrice MacDonald's definition of the migration chain as a "movement in which prospective migrants learn of opportunities, are provided with transportation, and have initial accommodation and employment arranged by means of primary social relationships with previous migrants," many studies have contributed to a better understanding of migratory networks (MacDonald and MacDonald 1964, 82). Such studies have defined the social space (family, town, region) in which migrants' networks operated (Baily 1982, 73–91; Sturino 1990); made distinctions between personal relationship chains and occupational chains (Gabaccia 1988) and between horizontal chains (linking migrants to family and friends at home) and vertical chains (in which emigration agents or labor bosses, for instance, played a crucial part) (Harney 1984); and have proposed migration chain typologies (Devoto 1991). These works inform my study of the migration patterns and social space of a group of very mobile Italian migrants during the Great Wave of emigration.

I am comparing the various destinations of migrants from seven small neighboring towns in the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines (Umbria)—a low-mountain area whose population underwent massive migrations to mining areas of Europe and the United States during the period from the turn of the twentieth century to World War I—in order to infer their social space. The migrants' precise U.S. destinations from four small hamlets (*frazioni*) that make up the municipality (*comune*) of Fossato di Vico (Colbassano,

Fossato, Palazzolo, and Purello)¹ were first identified by crossing data from several nominal sources, and then they were compared with the destinations of their fellow migrants from neighboring towns. This article will argue that throughout the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines very local migration chains – initiated in each town or small hamlet by a few pioneers and based on networks of family and friends – gradually included residents from other towns and hamlets. This phenomenon increased over time as more and more people emigrated and migrants' social space was reshaped through contacts established in the *paese* (hometown), in the neighboring towns, during the journey abroad, and at the places where they eventually settled.

In the Footsteps of the Pioneers, Everybody's Got Their Own America

Fossato di Vico's relatively small population (about 2,800 in 1900 and 3,500 in 1911) and the quality of research sources (individual *nulla osta* applications were systematically logged in two registers from 1901 to 1960)² allowed me to create a database on migrants and their families from several nominal sources in Italy (*nulla osta* registers, population registers, marriage and death registers), Luxembourg (immigration registers), and the United States (Ellis Island ship manifests, population census schedules).³ More than four out of five migrants were born to peasant families, and two out of three to families of sharecroppers or farm laborers. By the turn of the century, there were many individuals among the remaining 15 percent of families whose heads were classified in nonagricultural categories (mainly as craftsmen, railway employees, bricklayers, or shopkeepers) who had joined the ranks of the municipality's unskilled labor force (and those of farm laborers in particular). Unsurprisingly, men made up the bulk of the town's migrants (78 percent) and an even bigger percentage of migrants to Europe (84 percent, compared to 76.5 percent to the United States).⁴

Having little or no previous experience with mining, an overwhelming majority of the municipality's male migrants found work as laborers and – increasingly, as the years went by – as miners⁵ in the small iron-mining towns of the Lorraine, France, and Luxembourg; the anthracite region of Pennsylvania; the iron ranges of Michigan and Minnesota; and the coal basins of Illinois and Kansas. Women migrants either ran family boarding houses or helped with domestic chores. Not only did many individuals – mainly men – repeat *nulla osta* applications⁶ and migration moves⁷ in the course of just thirteen years, but they also often traveled back and forth between their homeland and several distinct migration places instead of returning to the same migration destination (Rinaldetti 2012). Sixty percent of those who applied twice for a *nulla osta* between 1901 and 1913 changed

countries of destination, as did 85 percent of those who applied three, four, five, and up to six times during those thirteen years. In this process, they sometimes simply changed mining towns or companies within a general area—for example, crossing a river sometimes meant changing countries in the mining basin situated at the borders of France, Luxembourg, and Germany—or else they tried new mining basins, which in the United States meant moving to a different state, or they went to different continents. Some of these men even traveled directly from Luxembourg to the United States without returning to their homeland first.

These migration patterns were not exceptional, surprising as they may seem in a small rural town whose population had long remained relatively isolated in the Umbrian Apennines. Fossato di Vico lies at the heart of the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines, where mass emigration did not start until 1900 but took on spectacular proportions through the first decade of the twentieth century until the onset of World War I in 1914. Migration rates in the area varied from 34.22 percent in Sigillo to 60.02 percent in Costacciaro in the years 1901–1910 and from 45 percent in Gualdo Tadino to 83 percent in Fossato di Vico in the years 1911–1913 (Tosi 1983, 230–231).⁸ From Fossato di Vico's walls, Sigillo, Costacciaro, Scheggia, parts of Gualdo Tadino (the San Pellegrino hamlet), and Gubbio (the Branca hamlet) could be seen; three of Fossato di Vico's four hamlets lay so close to the surrounding towns as to serve as bridgeheads to them. In the north, the hamlet of Purello bordered nearby Sigillo at the foot of the Apennines, while Fossato di Vico's administrative center was perched on the mountainside 1.3 miles away. In the west, Colbassano, still further away from the town center (over 2 miles), was adjacent to Gubbio's Branca hamlet. From Palazzolo in the south, Gualdo Tadino's northernmost hamlet, Palazzo Mancinelli, was nearer than the town's walls (Figure 1).

This location in an area of mass emigration was coupled with Fossato di Vico's central position in the region's road and rail networks, and the train traffic in a town this size made an impression on German writer Hermann Hesse when he passed through in 1913 (Galassi 2007, 7). With no train station in Sigillo, Costacciaro, or Scheggia and only one railway line passing through Gubbio, Gualdo Tadino, or Nocera Umbra, Fossato di Vico's situation was remarkable indeed: Not only did the trains between Rome and Ancona stop there, but a second railway line had been opened in 1886 to Arezzo in Tuscany. Fossato di Vico also stood at the crossroads of two major road axes. The road leading from Gubbio to the foot of the Apennines ended between Fossato di Vico and Gualdo Tadino. Another road, which followed the ancient Via Flaminia, ran southward to Foligno in the Tiber plain and eastward—precisely between Fossato di Vico and



Figure 1. The Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines

Sigillo—across the natural barrier of the Apennines through the Valico di Fossato pass and to Fabriano in the Marches. From Fossato di Vico, the regional road and rail networks thus provided easy access to Terni and Rome in the south, the Marches in the east, and northern Umbria and Tuscany in the west.

From Gubbio and Gualdo Tadino (the region's two largest towns, located, respectively, to the west and to the south of Fossato di Vico), from Nocera Umbra further to the south, and from Sigillo, Costacciaro, and Scheggia (three smaller towns on the western side of the mountain to the north of Fossato)⁹ migrants headed for the same mining areas of Europe and the United States. In Luxembourg, they concentrated themselves in just four small neighboring towns (Esch-sur-Alzette, Dudelange, Differdange, and Kayl) while their presence in France and Germany was virtually limited to the French and (then) German parts of the Lorraine (and more precisely to the *arrondissement* of Briey on the French side of the border) (Tosi 1983, 126–127; Antenucci 1999, 135). The fact that migrants from the four corners of the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines all shared some common migration patterns becomes evident when their destinations in the United States are compared to those of migrants from the area of Norcia, a nearby mountain town in the Umbrian Apennines. The former and the latter actually followed such specific routes that their paths rarely crossed in the mining regions of the United States.

In the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines, the destinations of 766 migrants listed in Bernardino Pezzopane's directory of the region's migrants aged

over fourteen and traveling to the United States between 1901 and 1913 were found in Ellis Island ship manifests (Pezzopane 2006, Appendix). Ninety-three percent of the Eugubino-Gualdese migrants headed for Pennsylvania (63 percent), Kansas (11 percent), Minnesota (8 percent), Michigan (8 percent), or Illinois (3 percent). The remaining 7 percent followed less trodden paths to a wide range of states including California, New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, Wisconsin, Missouri, Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts (Figure 2).

On the other hand, a search at www.ellisland.org listed 206 “adult” (defined as over age fourteen) migrants who indicated Norcia as their residence upon arriving at Ellis Island between 1901 and 1913 and who noted their final destinations. Because the sample included over 150 different family names and a large variety of destinations, it can be considered representative. As with their neighbors from the Eugubino-Gualdese, they, too, migrated to Pennsylvania—though in smaller proportions (33 percent)—but their other destinations were West Virginia (28 percent), Ohio (21 percent), New York (11 percent), and New Jersey (6 percent). In New York state, the migrants, who went to New York City itself, were



Figure 2. Mining Destinations of the Migrants from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines

- 1 Mesabi Range (Saint Louis County, Minnesota)
- 2 Upper Peninsula Iron Ranges (Michigan)
- 3 Anthracite Coal Fields (mainly Lackawanna and Luzerne Counties, Pennsylvania)
- 4 LaSalle County, Illinois
- 5 Cherokee-Crawford Coal Fields (Crawford County, Kansas)
- 6 Arrondissement of Briey (Département of the Meurthe, France)
- 7 Esch-sur-Alzette, Dudelange, Differdange, Kayl (Luxembourg)
- 8 Moselle (German part of the Lorraine)

street musicians, known as *girovaghi*. Unlike their fellow Umbrians from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines, the migrants from Norcia remained in the eastern United States, in the large coal basin on the borders of western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio, and never went to Kansas or the Great Lakes region. In Pennsylvania, they almost invariably preferred the bituminous coal districts in the west to the anthracite region in the east. Only about 1 percent chose another destination, again, always on the East Coast, that is, in Massachusetts or Delaware.

Throughout the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines, posters had been advertising ships to the United States since the late nineteenth century. Cinque Ditte Riunite, an emigration office whose headquarters were in Naples, was very active in Umbria, and the Società di Navigazione Generale Italiana had opened an office on Gualdo Tadino's market square in 1900. Throughout the region the mayors, local government employees, schoolteachers, and innkeepers acted as intermediaries between potential migrants and emigration agents (Polidoro 1973, 39–42). In Fossato di Vico too, an emigration office opened – though not until 1910 – on the initiative of Don Marinelli, the priest of the Purello parish, also known as “the priest of the emigrants.” The office, which was the headquarters of the benevolent society Opera Bonomelli, had been founded to address the needs of the parish's migrants and even published a short-lived newspaper (*Il Rocaccio*, from November 1911 to June 1912); it provided information on possible destinations and means of transportation and offered some help with the administrative procedures (Monacelli and Castellani 2002, 5). Yet by the time the international labor migrations gathered momentum in Umbria, many inhabitants had come to distrust the emigration agents and their practices, especially since the ill-fated episode of 1901, when thousands of Umbrians had been recruited and sent to recession-plagued Brazil (Tosi 1983, 83–84).

Nationwide, the emigration agents had been so harshly criticized by the landlords and the political establishment since the late nineteenth century that the Italian parliament even debated their legitimacy. Emigration agents were believed to have no true impact on the size of the migration flows, though they did have a significant one on the migrants' destinations (Sori 1979, 310). In Umbria, however, they seem to have assumed importance only belatedly in areas of mass emigration and to have merely helped migrants there to get their train and ship tickets and plan their journey to the seaports, among other things.

The Umbrian migrants probably depended more on the specific travel routes that had been pioneered in the different sectors of the Apennines than they did on the information spread by the emigration agents and offices. As a large number of complex factors contributed to shaping and

directing the flows of migrants, the prominent role of the pioneers is hard to demonstrate, but the oral testimonies collected by Eriberto Polidoro in Gualdo Tadino in the 1970s revealed that the town's first migrants to Pennsylvania had actually followed some fellow Umbrians from Fossato di Vico and Sigillo well before World War I (not incidentally, Sigillo had the highest migration rate in the whole Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines in the last decade of the nineteenth century) just before the advent of mass emigration from the Eugubino-Gualdese area.¹⁰ As for pioneers from nearby towns, they too had benefited from previous contacts with some migrants from the Marches and Romagna who had worked in Umbria in the lignite mines of Spoleto and passed along precious information about the work opportunities and conditions in Pennsylvania. As a matter of fact, the migrants who left Fossato di Vico from 1900 to 1914 were almost systematically headed for the same mining areas and the same mining towns as their fellow townsmen who had left long before them, sometimes as early as the 1880s. In the town's *nulla osta* registers, there were nine young men born in the United States between 1887 and 1897 to parents who had pioneered the routes to the very mining towns where the bulk of the town's migrants subsequently went between 1900 to 1914: Old Forge, Pennsylvania; Frontenac, Kansas; Iron Mountain, Michigan; and LaSalle, Illinois. Similarly, the town's migrants who declared at Ellis Island in the early twentieth century that they had been in the United States before had sojourned between 1885 and 1898 in those places that later became their fellow townsmen's favorite destinations: Iron Mountain and Bessemer, Michigan; Hibbing, Minnesota; Frontenac, Kansas; and Scranton, Pennsylvania.

From the Hamlet to the Nearby Towns: The Migrants' Social Space

Judging from their destinations in the United States and those of their neighbors from Norcia, the migrants from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines would appear to have followed the same routes everywhere, regardless of which town they came from. In each town, though, they typically favored one or two of the mining basins that received the bulk of the region's transatlantic migrants. Pennsylvania's anthracite region attracted an overwhelming majority of the migrants from Gubbio, Nocera Umbra, and Scheggia, but only half of the ones from Gualdo Tadino and Sigillo. Costacciaro and to an even larger extent Fossato di Vico stood out as exceptions with significant yet much lower proportions of migrants to that area. Unusually large numbers of migrants from Gualdo Tadino traveled to Kansas, while significant numbers of migrants from Sigillo and, to a greater extent, Costacciaro traveled to Minnesota. Minnesota received as many migrants from Costacciaro as

Pennsylvania did. In fact, the iron fields of Minnesota and Michigan drew 50 percent of Costacciaro's migrants. In Nocera Umbra travelers virtually always chose coal-mining areas in Pennsylvania, Kansas, or Illinois, while significant proportions of people from Gubbio, Fossato di Vico, and Sigillo went off the beaten tracks and away from the five major destinations of the region's migrants (Figure 3).¹¹

	KANSAS	ILLINOIS	MICHIGAN	MINNESOTA	PENNSYLVANIA	OTHER STATES
COSTACCIARO	2%	1%	8.5%	41.5%	41.5%	5.5%
FOSSATO DI VICO	15%	9.5%	23.5%	12.5%	26%	13.5%
GUALDO TADINO	25.5%	5%	8.5%	0.5%	54%	6.5%
GUBBIO	3%	1%	5%	—	82%	9%
NOCERA UMBRA	4%	4%	—	—	88%	4%
SCHEGGIA	3.5%	—	2.5%	2.5%	88%	3.5%
SIGILLO	2%	—	9.5%	21%	51%	16.5%

Figure 3. U.S. Destinations from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines

Because migrants to the United States almost invariably found work as miners or laborers in just a few small mining towns in this early period of international labor migration, one can assume that the occupational dimension of the migration chains and networks was of little significance and that local patterns in the direction of the migration flows should be attributed principally to the migrants' interpersonal relationships. In other words, if the migrants were found to have favored a specific destination, it was probably due to the contacts they had made in various social circles (relatives, neighbors, and acquaintances) and places (in their hometown, the surrounding towns, and the migrant communities abroad). The sheer number of migrants who apparently had very little trouble changing international destinations from one migration to the next, or who belonged to extended families with members already settled in various places of migration, seem to confirm the importance of primary relations in directing the flows of migrants.¹² With the exception of Pennsylvania's anthracite region, where immigrants settled in a more widespread manner, their destinations in the other mining basins were almost always just one or two neighboring towns between which the migrants often circulated (LaSalle, Illinois; Frontenac and Pittsburg, Kansas; Hibbing, Virginia; Eveleth, Minnesota; Bessemer and Iron Mountain, Michigan) so that a sustained migration flow, for example from Gualdo Tadino to Kansas, testifies to the existence of a specific migration chain.

In Fossato di Vico, a survey of the migrants' destinations from each of the four hamlets provides a microanalysis of the town's migratory flows. In each hamlet—Colbassano, Fossato, Palazzolo, and Purello—migrants followed the region's typical routes to the United States, Switzerland, and the mining basin on the borders of Luxembourg and the French and (then) German parts of the Lorraine. These regular patterns offer an exemplary case of multipolar international migration flows on a very small scale, one that is relevant to both Samuel Baily's village-outward approach and to Dirk Hoerder's focus on the multidirectional dimension of the international labor migrations in the Atlantic economies. In each hamlet, migrants to the United States often had a marked preference for one or two mining basins. For instance, Kansas attracted nearly 40 percent of the migrants from Palazzolo, only half as many in Fossato and Colbassano, and practically none in Purello. The Great Lakes region was the destination for half the migrants in Purello and two-thirds in Colbassano. More people went to Illinois from Purello than from any other hamlet, while in Colbassano one in two migrants went to Michigan. As for less frequented destinations, they had a particular appeal in Fossato, with almost 20 percent of migrants headed for such places as Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Missouri, New Mexico, or Utah. Those from Purello sometimes also chose less common locations, mostly California (Figure 4).

	KANSAS	ILLINOIS	MICHIGAN	MINNESOTA	PENNSYLVANIA	OTHER STATES
COLBASSANO	24%	6%	50%	10%	10%	—
FOSSATO	20%	7.1%	14.3%	4.3%	35.7%	18.6%
PALAZZOLO	38.2%	5.9%	5.9%	20.6%	26.5%	2.9%
PURELLO	1.3%	28.2%	12.8%	9%	39.7%	9%

Figure 4. U.S. Destinations from Fossato di Vico's Hamlets

Given Fossato di Vico's relatively small size and the tendency for several generations of extended family to live under the same roof, the migrants to all international destinations in the United States and Europe came from a limited number of households in each of the town's hamlets: 44 from Colbassano, 106 from Fossato, 47 from Palazzolo, and 79 from Purello.

The very existence of substantial migratory flows linking such small neighborhoods to quite specific mining basins in the United States seems to bear evidence that hamlet-based networks of relatives, neighbors, and friends played a crucial part in shaping the town's migration chains, from Palazzolo to Kansas, from Purello to Illinois, or from Colbassano to

Michigan. Indeed, on arriving at Ellis Island, the migrants from Fossato di Vico almost always indicated some relative's or friend's address as their final destination. A mere 4 percent gave a hotel name; one in two new arrivals stayed with some immediate family member; a little over one in three was accommodated by extended relatives, such as an uncle or an aunt, a cousin, or in-law; and one in ten relied upon some acquaintance or friend for accommodation.¹³

Kansas had a particular appeal in both Fossato di Vico's Palazzolo hamlet and in the nearby town of Gualdo Tadino. The state drew as much as 38 percent of the migrants from Palazzolo (compared to a mere 15 percent in the whole town and not even 1 percent from Purello) and 26 percent from Gualdo Tadino (compared to 11 percent in the whole Eugubino-Gualdese area, the smallest contingent being 2 percent from Costacciaro). Because of the hamlet's location—Palazzolo lay closer to Gualdo Tadino than to Fossato di Vico's center—its migrants and those from the nearby town probably benefited from common networks, with large numbers in both places taking part in a common migration chain to the Cherokee-Crawford coal fields of Kansas and to Frontenac in particular. Similarly, one may wonder whether the migrants from Colbassano, half of whom went to Michigan, were not taking part in a migration chain rooted in both their own hamlet and the neighboring sections of either Gualdo Tadino (in San Pellegrino, for instance) or Gubbio (in Branca). A microanalysis of the flows from Gualdo Tadino's and Gubbio's hamlets would be necessary to definitively make this case.

A shift in focus from the U.S. destinations of the region's migrants to their municipalities of origin reveals that, apart from Pennsylvania, where the migrants came from all over the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines, each state received migrants mainly from a smaller group of neighboring towns that seemed to be taking part in common migration chains (Figure 5). In Kansas, over 80 percent of the migrants came from Fossato di Vico and nearby Gualdo Tadino. In Illinois, a still larger proportion was from Fossato di Vico, Gualdo Tadino, and Nocera Umbra combined, three closely situated towns aligned in a north-south configuration on the western side of the mountain, with Gualdo Tadino positioned 5 miles to the south of Fossato di Vico and 7.5 miles to the north of Nocera Umbra. In the Great Lakes region, substantial migration chains linked the iron ranges of Michigan and Minnesota to Fossato di Vico, Sigillo, and Costacciaro, three towns separated by 2 or 3 miles between them and located on the mountain's western side when heading north from Fossato di Vico. In Minnesota, in particular, it was probably no coincidence that almost all migrants should have come from these three neighboring towns, while those from Nocera

Umbra and above all Gubbio (the region's largest *comune*) were conspicuously absent in that state, and the numbers from Gualdo Tadino (the region's second-largest town) barely worth mentioning.¹⁴ The migration chains of the Eugubino-Gualdesi depended heavily on the small distances between the different municipalities, if only because distances still for the most part determined the frequency and the intensity of the inhabitants' interactions and, consequently, the migration opportunities of would-be migrants. This phenomenon is in keeping with the migration chains of the Sirolesi and the Agnonesi to Buenos Aires (patterns that Baily found within a radius of 11 miles of the administrative center of Agnone), or those from Calabria's Rende area to Toronto (which Franc Sturino argued operated in "several communes within walking distance of each other") (Baily 1982, 89; Sturino 1990, 3).

	COSTACCIARO	FOSSATO DI VICO	GUALDO TADINO	GUBBIO	NOCERA UMBRA	SCHEGGIA	SIGILLO
KANSAS	2.5%	13.5%	68%	7.5%	3.5%	3.5%	1.5%
ILLINOIS	4%	29%	46%	8.5%	12.5%	—	—
MICHIGAN	14%	30.5%	32%	14%	—	4%	5.5%
MINNESOTA	65%	15%	1.5%	—	—	3.5%	15%
PENNSYLVANIA	8%	4%	24%	31.5%	13.5%	14.5%	4.5%

Figure 5. *Municipalities of Origin of the Migrants in the United States*

Owing to Fossato di Vico's central location both geographically and in the region's road and rail networks, its inhabitants probably had more occasions, especially during such events as the annual *fiesta* in honor of St. Peter on June 29, for instance, to meet or hear about other migrants (such as those pioneers from the Marches whose influence could be felt as far as Gualdo Tadino), to make friends with fellow Umbrians from the surrounding towns, and to forge family alliances with them through marriage. In other words, Fossato di Vico's citizens had many opportunities to establish such contacts as certainly proved invaluable in an age of international labor migrations, when the acquaintances and relatives by marriage, who were all following specific routes to the mining areas of Europe and America, could provide fresh opportunities that were not readily available to all potential migrants. As a result, people from Fossato di Vico developed substantial migration chains, available in no other town, to each of the region's five major U.S. destinations (Pennsylvania, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, and Illinois). Unlike their neighbors, they did not seem to have any favorite destination. Significant and almost comparable

numbers traveled to these five American states, which people from their neighboring towns migrated to in a more targeted fashion.

Dirk Hoerder argued that “although the immigrants were moving across the world, they did not leave their networks,” and indeed that was the case with migrants from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines as early as the 1880s (Hoerder 2005, 80). Since migrants everywhere relied upon contacts with people in their immediate areas, their networks were affected and changed by the migration process. In Fossato di Vico, the migrants’ town-based or hamlet-based networks soon evolved into broader ones, thus allowing the local population to try new routes—often those of their neighbors—and to eventually take part in several distinct migration chains, which could thus be represented as a “cobweb” linking the entire Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines to the migrants’ top five destinations in the United States (Figure 6).

The Eugubino-Gualdesi’s network allowed them to shift destinations in the course of decades or generations, like in Spain’s Baztán Valley—where the bulk of the migrants were successively redirected from Mexico or Venezuela to Cuba, Uruguay, Argentina, and California between the late eighteenth century and the 1950s (Moya 1998, 81). In Fossato di Vico, for instance, the flows to Luxembourg, the Lorraine, and the United States—which had come to an abrupt end with the outbreak of World War I—were revived just after the war, but in the aftermath of the immigration acts of 1921 and 1924, the town’s transatlantic streams were diverted to Europe.

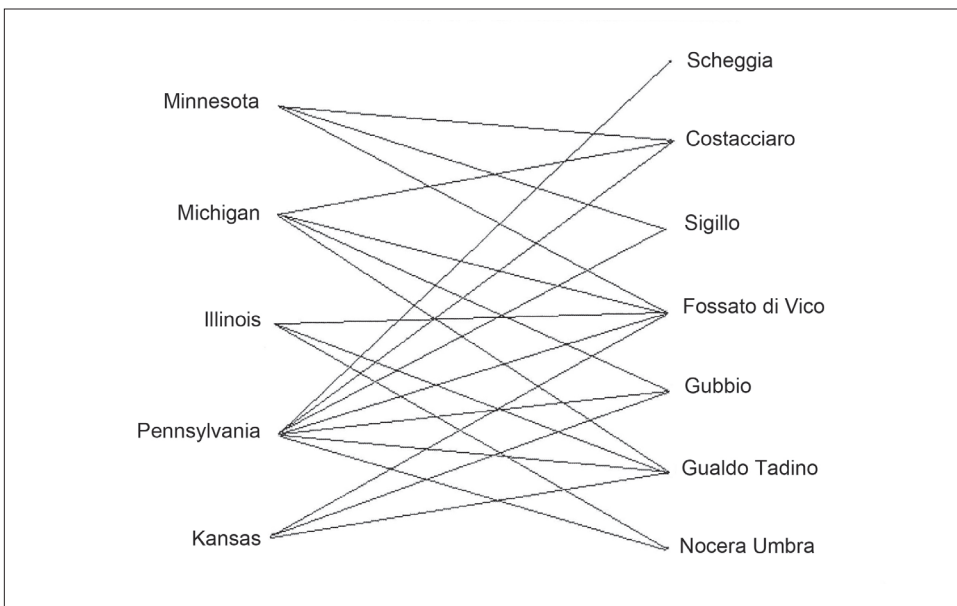


Figure 6. Migration Chains from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines

After a second interruption under fascism, emigration to Luxembourg and the Lorraine resumed after World War II, with Belgium emerging as a new destination in the late 1940s and Switzerland a decade later. The migrants sometimes responded almost immediately to changing conditions in the host countries, as happened when a mine employing 4,000 Italians closed down in 1903 in Iron Mountain, Michigan (Francesconi 1974, 217–219), one of Fossato di Vico's most popular destinations at the time. The following year, the town's migratory flow to the United States reached its lowest level (24 percent) for the period 1901–1914, and in the transatlantic flows the proportion of migrants headed for Michigan dropped from one third in 1901–1903 to 15 percent. As a rule, the volume of the flows to the United States—or to any other single national destination—varied considerably more from one year to the next than the cumulative volume of the town's distinct migratory flows,¹⁵ a sign that in the face of adverse circumstances would-be migrants relying on broad networks still had some possibility of leaving, provided they were prepared to change plans and destinations.

Changing Places of Migration, or the Migrants' Nonfinite Social Space

In his study of Portuguese migration from the Algarve to Argentina, Marcelo J. Borges observed that the social space of the migratory networks expanded beyond the parish limits for various reasons. Not only did roads favor interactions—and marriages—between residents from sometimes distant parishes, but these interactions were further reinforced as the Algarve's rural population shared some characteristic socioecological conditions and agricultural practices (Borges 2009, 159–161). The case of the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines shows that in addition to the new contacts they established in their *paese* and the neighboring towns, migrants were likely to further expand their networks at all stages of the migration process, first of all during the journey to Le Havre and across the Atlantic. As Donna Gabaccia argued in the case of the Sicilian migrants from Sambuca, whom she found to have settled in as many as eleven different U.S. states or cities, the sheer number of the migrants' international destinations can probably be explained only by regionalism and regional networks (Gabaccia 1988, 81). The information that migrants from Fossato di Vico gleaned here and there from fellow Eugubino-Gualdesi—during their journey, in the boarding houses of Europe and the United States, or in their cafés, clubs, associations, etc.—allowed them to devise new migration projects, change destinations between two successive international migration moves, or travel to another mining town or area.

The migrants from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines traveled all the way to the English Channel or the North Sea harbors, like northerners did, while their neighbors from Norcia almost inevitably embarked for the United States from Naples, like southern Italians. In Fossato di Vico, for instance, 89 percent of the migrants started their transatlantic journey from some northern European harbor: Le Havre (78.3 percent), Cherbourg (5.3 percent), or Boulogne (1.5 percent) in France; Southampton (2.4 percent) or Liverpool (0.6 percent) in England; Rotterdam (0.6 percent) in the Netherlands; or Glasgow (0.3 percent) in Scotland. Only 8 percent of the town's migrants embarked from Naples and 3 percent from Genoa between 1901 and 1913.¹⁶ Surprising though it may seem, the choice of such distant harbors made sense to migrants whose "mental maps" (Gabaccia and Iacovetta 2002, xi) were shaped more by their familiarity with the continental route to the iron mines of the Lorraine and Luxembourg than they were by actual distances. In addition, they benefited from lower ship fares and rebates on the trains, which made this alternative financially worthwhile. After Italy's 1901 Emigration Act put an end to the stark competition between Italian shipping lines, fares to New York rose to an average of 175–210 lire from Italy in 1910, compared to only 115 lire from Cherbourg. And while it cost another 150 lire to travel from Umbria to Cherbourg or Le Havre, the Emigration Act provided a 75 percent rebate on Italian railway fares to all migrants traveling with at least four companions, and a second discount of 40–60 percent on fares from the Italian border to the port of departure to groups of at least ten people (Polidoro 1973, 98–99, 106).

In these conditions, the migrants tended to get together and travel through Europe and across the Atlantic in the company of other inhabitants from the region whom they did not necessarily know and whose final destinations in the United States could be different. (For a study underlining women's roles in connecting unrelated male migrants, see Reeder [2002, 51–52].) Even fellow townspeople who had traveled together all the way from Umbria to the United States frequently split and went their separate ways, sometimes heading for as many as five different states and an even greater number of cities. Onboard the *Savoie*, for instance, four of Fossato di Vico's migrants landed together at Ellis Island on June 1, 1907, but Gregorio Spigarelli was going to Hibbing, Minnesota; Bartolomeo Biscontinini to Scranton, Pennsylvania; Palmira Mazzapicchio to LaSalle, Illinois; and Maria Pettinenza to Frontenac, Kansas. Similarly, the *Philadelphia* arrived on November 16, 1912, carrying six of the town's male migrants, who were headed for three different mining areas, in Kansas, Illinois, and Pennsylvania, and four different towns.

The migrants' mobility is evidenced through a mere survey of the different states they went to from one migration move to the next. In Fossato di Vico, for instance, one in four migrants who declared at Ellis Island that they had previously sojourned in the United States did not return to the same state. The variety of situations reflects the migrants' extreme mobility, as they sometimes shifted destinations from one state to another (from Minnesota to Michigan, Pennsylvania, or New Mexico; from Kansas to Pennsylvania or New York; from Pennsylvania to Minnesota, Illinois, or New Mexico; from Michigan to Minnesota, Kansas, or Pennsylvania; or, finally, from Illinois to Pennsylvania). Most of them probably decided to set out for another mining area as they left Fossato di Vico for the second – or third – time. After all, this was not very different from migrating to Pennsylvania after some previous experience in Luxemburg or Germany. But, like those Italians in San Francisco who developed secondary migration chains once in the United States (Devoto 1991, 423), the migrants from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines too sometimes circulated directly from one mining area to another. Some eventually acquired by this means a thorough knowledge of the U.S. territory, such as Efrem Bartoletti, from Costacciaro, whom fellow migrant and union activist Romolo Bobba contacted (in a letter from Kansas dated October 24, 1919) as he was planning a tour in the Great Lakes region to ask about the large number of mining towns with which his friend Bartoletti was acquainted.

Traveling across the United States from Pennsylvania to Kansas or Minnesota meant embarking upon a long and difficult journey, especially when one knew very little or no English. But then what should be said of those who journeyed all the way from Luxembourg to Le Havre and on to the United States without even returning home first, men such as Vincenzo Scaramucci, who arrived in Esch-sur-Alzette on February 28, 1902, and left a few months later, heading neither for some nearby mining town in Luxembourg, France, or Germany, nor for his hometown in Italy, but straight for the United States? Of course, such cases are difficult to document and too few to be really representative, but they are worth mentioning here, if only because they highlight the migrants' mobility in a most telling way.

In February 1906, Federico Pedana, age twenty-seven, returned from Kayl (Luxembourg) to marry his girlfriend, Luigia, in Fossato di Vico. The newlyweds soon migrated to Luxembourg. They stayed there for a couple of months before traveling on to Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania, where their son Novello was born in 1907 and their daughter Violetta the following year. By the time the couple decided to follow the direct transatlantic route from Luxembourg to Pennsylvania, Federico already had a long and varied experience as a miner, a migrant, and a migrants' son. After a first

mining experience in Romania at seventeen, he had spent several years in Luxembourg, where he first arrived in 1900 with his father, his mother (who kept the family's boarding house), and some of his brothers and sisters, and when he left Fossato di Vico with his wife in 1906 he already had some family members and close relatives in both Luxembourg and Pennsylvania.

Like Federico Pedana, migrants from Fossato di Vico sometimes indicated a small mining town in Luxembourg as their residence upon arriving at Ellis Island. Among them were Federico's brother Tito, who had preceded him on the direct route from Luxembourg to Pennsylvania in 1904; Tommaso Spigarelli, who embarked from Le Havre in 1909 and had Michigan as his final destination; as well as Saverio Galassi and Biagio Bartoletti, who traveled together from Esch-sur-Alzette, where they lived, to Le Havre and Pennsylvania in 1901. Curiously enough, the *nulla osta* applications the two friends made in 1901 were for Luxembourg, not the United States, but they nonetheless landed in the United States on December 1, 1901. Perhaps after traveling repeatedly to Luxembourg they decided to "*fare l'America*" (literally, to make America), thus trying a destination migrants from the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines were still unfamiliar with at the time but that grew increasingly popular among them as the years went by.¹⁷

Other migrants who arrived at Ellis Island shortly after filling out a *nulla osta* application for Luxembourg—or some other European destination—seem to have come from Umbria. For instance, Giuseppe Angeli, who applied for Luxembourg in 1905 but arrived at Ellis Island on January 15, 1906, or Cornelio Purgatorio, whose 1901 *nulla osta* application indicated France but who was found to already be on U.S. soil in 1901; both declared themselves residents of Fossato di Vico. Of course, it is possible that some may simply have changed their minds after making their applications and traveled to the United States instead, which would confirm the hypothesis that the migrants *chose* their destinations. But one cannot rule out either that other migrants whose final destination was the United States may have taken advantage of the presence of relatives and acquaintances in Europe and made plans to stop and work there for some time—perhaps just long enough to earn what little extra money they needed to pay for the crossing or adjust to their new environment more serenely.

Conclusion

From the four corners of the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines, migrants to the United States headed for the same mining areas and towns as others of the region had done before them. While migrants from each munici-

pality or hamlet did have (at times very local) preferences for one or two destinations, a pattern of common migration chains and networks emerges. A comparison of the destinations of migrants from the Eugubino-Gualdese area and those of their neighbors from the Norcia area reveals that in both sectors of the Umbrian Apennines the migrants followed very specific routes to and in the United States, so that their paths actually rarely crossed (with the former embarking from Le Havre and the latter from Naples). The pioneers who had opened new routes as early as the 1880s or 1890s probably played a more crucial role than the emigration agents operating all over the Umbrian Apennines in directing the enormous flows of migrants who left the region from 1900 to World War I. In Fossato di Vico, for instance, the bulk of the migrants followed in the footsteps of the town's first migrants, settling precisely in the same small mining towns.

A microanalysis of the migrants' destinations in each of Fossato di Vico's four hamlets confirms the importance of networks of relatives, neighbors, and friends in shaping the town's international migration flows, as very specific migration chains originated from just a few dozen—or at most a hundred—households. Yet, in Palazzolo, destinations were found to be remarkably similar to those in Gualdo Tadino, as though the migrants had benefited from contacts beyond their immediate surroundings. I checked this hypothesis by shifting the focus to comparing not only the migrants' destinations from the small towns of the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines but also the municipalities of origin of the migrants in the U.S. mining areas. Everywhere—with the exception of the anthracite coal fields of Pennsylvania—the bulk of the Eugubino-Gualdesi migrants came from just two or three neighboring towns.

Arguably broader social links, established not only in the home communities but also in the migrant communities abroad and during the long journey to the United States, contributed everywhere to directing the migrants to precisely the same mining areas as their neighbors from the nearest towns, increasingly so as mass emigration kept reshaping the outlines of the migrants' networks. In the case of Fossato di Vico in particular, the town's central position in the region and its road and rail networks provided the inhabitants with more opportunities to make contacts outside their *paese*, and they actually migrated, like nowhere else in the surrounding towns, to each of the region's five most traveled U.S. destinations in almost equal proportions.

Notes

1. A fifth *frazione* (Osteria del Gatto) was introduced in the 1911 census, but there were only four in the 1901 census and, most important, in the town's population registers (1871–1901), which provided the migrants' family backgrounds and *frazioni* of origin.
2. The *nulla osta*, for which migrants applied to the local authorities, testified that there was "no obstacle" (*nulla osta*) to their leaving the Italian territory. The *nulla osta* was necessary to obtain a passport, but many of the town's migrants actually traveled abroad without a passport, as the *nulla osta* allowed them to cross the Italian border. Thus the *nulla osta* was often the only document the migrants held, especially in Europe. The original *nulla osta* registers, on which I have based my research, are located in Fossato di Vico's town hall, in their Archivio storico (historical archives) section. Copies are also available in Gualdo Tadino's Museo Regionale dell'Emigrazione Pietro Conti.
3. The following sources, which are listed under Primary Sources, were consulted to create the migrant database (from this point referred to as Migrant Data Base): U.S. Population Census Schedules, 1910 (www.ancestry.com, accessed from September 2007 to August 2008); Ellis Island Ship Manifests, 1901–1914 (www.ellisland.org, accessed from September 2006 to August 2008); Registre d'arrivée des étrangers, 1900–1914 (Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg: Biergeramt); Registri delle domande di nulla osta, 1901–1946 (Comune di Fossato di Vico: Archivio storico); Registri matrimoni, 1886–1915 (Comune di Fossato di Vico: Archivio comunale); Registri morti, 1901–1995 (Comune di Fossato di Vico: Archivio comunale); Registri popolazione, 1871–1901 (Comune di Fossato di Vico: Archivio storico). For a detailed description of the Migrant Data Base, see Rinaldetti (2010, 24–27, 363–367, 428–432).
4. Owing to the men's repeated migration moves and to the relative scarcity of data on women in the *nulla osta* registers (many did not apply personally and were merely mentioned, sometimes anonymously, on their husbands' applications), initial aggregate-databased estimates indicated that women represented just 14 percent of all migrants. By ensuring that male migrants be counted only once—even if they had migrated *more* than once—and that *all* women be taken into account, a count of all distinct individuals in the registers revealed that women actually accounted for 22 percent of all migrants, which represents a 55 percent increase! See Rinaldetti (2010, 79–87).
5. In a sign that male migrants often acquired higher skills in the mines, 34 percent of those who sojourned abroad between 1901 and 1913 and then made a new *nulla osta* application just after the war (between 1920 and 1922) were defining themselves as qualified miners, compared to only 7 percent of those arriving at Ellis Island between 1901 and 1913—significantly, most of those in the latter group had already worked in the mines of Europe when they entered the United States.
6. Between 1901 and 1913 there were 1,582 *nulla osta* applications but only 1,001 different applicants, as 40 percent made at least two applications, with 14 percent applying three, four, five, or even six times over the period. Nearly one in two male migrants applied at least twice, compared to less than one in ten women.
7. *Nulla osta* applications indicated intentions—as opposed to actual migration moves. As such, they have never been used to describe the migrants' trajectories (unless evidence of actual migration moves could be found in other nominal sources), but rather to proceed to comparisons between categories of migrants and, more generally, to provide a global picture of the mobility of a large group of individuals and families. It is worth mentioning though that in a small town such as Fossato di Vico, where most people knew each other, one did not declare one's intention to leave thoughtlessly, for there might be consequences (landlords, for instance, had the right to modify, or even cancel, sharecroppers' annual contracts, a right that they often used to pressure or blackmail them). Further evidence of the true significance of *nulla osta* applications was found in the high proportions of applicants whose names could be found in nominal sources abroad (despite significant difficulties utilizing them due to inconsistencies within the records, among other

- challenges), as well as in the usually very short interval between a migrant's application and his arrival at Ellis Island (a month on average, and sometimes just a fortnight), a sign that migrants generally applied once their migration project was complete.
8. Only Gubbio, the area's largest town, had lower migration rates because it did not appear in Tosi's list of the twenty low- and high-mountain towns with the highest migration rates in Umbria (the last town on the list had a migration rate of 29 percent in the years 1901–1910).
 9. In 1901 Gubbio had a population of 26,100, Gualdo Tadino 10,800, Nocera Umbra 7,800, Scheggia 3,500, Costacciaro and Fossato di Vico 2,800 each, and Sigillo 2,100. *Censimento della popolazione, 1901* (Rome: ISTAT).
 10. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, Sigillo had a migration rate of 11.8 percent, while the agrarian zones of the Val Topina (municipalities of Fossato di Vico, Gualdo Tadino, Nocera Umbra, and Sigillo) and that of the Alte Chiascio (municipalities of Costacciaro, Gubbio, and Scheggia) had average rates of 5.3 percent and 2.95 percent, respectively (Polidoro 1973, 142–143).
 11. Statistics based on the American destinations of 216 migrants from Gualdo Tadino, 186 from Gubbio, 94 from Costacciaro, 81 from Scheggia, 73 from Nocera Umbra, 73 from Fossato di Vico, and 43 from Sigillo, whose names appeared in Bernardino Pezzopane's directory of the region's migrants (Pezzopane 2006) and who were over fourteen on arriving at Ellis Island between 1901 and 1913. Though some of the samples are rather small, their representativeness has been tested in Fossato di Vico and in Nocera Umbra: In Fossato di Vico, the directory's relatively small sample and the much larger sample available in the *nulla osta* registers produced comparable results; in Nocera Umbra, the directory's sample and a 196-strong draft register sample produced almost identical results (*Leva militare, classi 1875–1894*, Archivio di Stato di Gubbio: Archivio storico del comune di Nocera Umbra). For a detailed analysis of the representativeness of the samples, see Rinaldetti (2010, 181–184).
 12. In a family of sharecroppers from the Purello hamlet, for instance, six of Giovanni Fofi's children and one of their first cousins made fourteen trips abroad between 1902 and 1913, seven to the United States and seven to some European destinations. Those of the Fofis who left at a time when some of their family members were in Europe and others in America certainly had to make a choice between the potential places of migration available to them.
 13. These statistics are based on a sample of 338 migrants who indicated the United States as their final destination in their *nulla osta* applications, whose names could be found in the Ellis Island ship manifests, and for whom the relevant information was provided in the ship manifests.
 14. The relatively large proportions of migrants from Gubbio and Gualdo Tadino in Michigan need reappraising, as these were the two largest towns in the Eugubino-Gualdese Apennines.
 15. Over the period 1901–1914, the peak-to-low ratio was almost 4 to 1 in the flows to the United States but less than 2 to 1 globally (*Migrant Data Base*).
 16. Statistics based on 336 crossings (*Migrant Data Base*).
 17. In Fossato di Vico, a little under one third of all *nulla osta* applications concerned the United States between 1901 and 1906, compared to 45 percent between 1908 and 1913 (*Migrant Data Base*).

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