

ABSTRACT

This study deals with the *obligationes penes acta*, documents produced by the Local Courts of Abruzzo, a territory of the Naples Reign, from the XVI century to 1808 the year in which they were suppressed by the Napoleonic government.

The so-called Local Courts used to produce two different kinds of documents: the *obligationes* and some civil acts of first application of which we can find a few in the Abruzzo region. This study deals with the obligations because of the huge quantity of this documents available in the archives of Abruzzo more than in any other region of the Reign, their time continuity – especially for the Local Court of Chieti – and their economical and social considerable value.

Since studies on this topic are missing and since it does not exist a significant bibliography, our analysis starts investigating the law concerning the basic competences and the procedures followed by the Local Courts of the Reign through the XVIII century collections of laws which tried to give an order to what they considered a massive confused crowd of laws and regulations.

After this first enquiry it has been necessary to gather all the data about the *obligationes* kept in the Abruzzo's archives of Chieti, Pescara, Teramo, L'Aquila and Sulmona that had to be catalogued, counted and put together in a crossed statistic analysis.

Because the major part of the documentation is of the XVIII century and – as it is well known – during this period most changes had happened to the government of the Reign of Naples that passed from the Spanish to the Austrian, to the Borbone family and then to the French of Napoleon, the study is focused on this period.

At this point, the research entered in the very detail of the seldom before explored documents that, through an attentive review, pointed out some really interesting reflections on the economical and social field of the Abruzzo of XVIII century that both confirmed well known historical conceptions and pulled out some new fascinating ones.