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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

edited by
Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin



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Ca' Foscari

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Venezia

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

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Prefazione

Per celebrare il 150° anniversario della fondazione della Scuola Superiore di Commercio in Venezia il Dipartimento di Management, il Dipartimento di Economia, il Dipartimento di Studi Linguistici e Culturali Comparati e il Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia e sull'Africa Mediterranea dell'Università Ca' Foscari hanno aderito al programma di iniziative coordinato dall'Ateneo promuovendo - tra l'altro - una serie di ricerche che ripercorrono in chiave storico-evolutiva lo sviluppo delle principali discipline presso il nostro Ateneo, nonché la storia dei suoi rapporti internazionali, al fine di coniugare l'importanza del valore scientifico dell'Università Ca' Foscari, e della sua storia, con le esigenze sorte nelle relazioni con l'ambiente esterno e con gli interlocutori che hanno consentito il suo successo e la sua affermazione.

Queste ricerche hanno portato alla pubblicazione di quattro volumi dedicati rispettivamente al contributo delle discipline economiche e aziendali, delle lingue e culture insegnate a Ca' Foscari e alla storia dei suoi rapporti internazionali fin dalla sua fondazione.

Il primo volume, intitolato *Le discipline economiche e aziendali nei 150 anni di storia di Ca' Foscari*, e curato da Monica Billo, Stefano Coronella, Chiara Mio e Ugo Sostero, è dedicato in particolare all'evoluzione degli studi economici e aziendali, al loro contributo allo sviluppo della Scuola Superiore di Commercio, al loro ruolo nell'alta formazione e nella ricerca alla luce anche delle interazioni con altre istituzioni, nonché dell'importanza degli illustri economisti e aziendalisti che hanno insegnato a Ca' Foscari ed hanno contribuito, non solo alla storia dell'Ateneo e di Venezia, ma a quella del nostro Paese.

Il secondo volume, dal titolo *Le lingue occidentali nei 150 anni di storia di Ca' Foscari*, e curato da Anna Cardinaletti, Laura Cerasi e Patrizio Rigobon, è dedicato all'evoluzione degli studi linguistici, in particolare delle lingue dell'Europa e delle Americhe. Queste discipline, inizialmente ancillari agli studi economici nella Scuola Superiore di Commercio, si sono poi sviluppate come materie autonome, allargando il proprio interesse agli aspetti letterari e culturali, e più tardi alla linguistica, dando vita alla Facoltà di Lingue e letterature straniere. Per la ricchezza e la varietà delle lingue studiate, alcune offerte solo a Ca' Foscari, gli studi sulle lingue occidentali continuano a essere un punto di riferimento a livello nazionale e internazionale.

Il terzo volume, dal titolo *150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari*, curato da Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin, vuole offrire una pa-

noramica, per quanto non esaustiva, sullo sviluppo degli studi sull'Asia e sull'Africa mediterranea a Ca' Foscari, offrendo anche alcuni scorci su personalità legate a questa università che hanno, a vario titolo, intessuto legami con quei paesi e quelle civiltà. L'interesse - tanto scientifico quanto umano - verso l'Oriente costituisce, infatti, una delle caratteristiche specifiche dell'identità accademica di Ca' Foscari fin dalla sua fondazione nel 1868, ed è di fatto un suo elemento distintivo nel panorama universitario nazionale.

Il quarto volume, intitolato *I rapporti internazionali nei 150 anni di storia di Ca' Foscari*, curato da Rosa Caroli e Antonio Trampus, è dedicato alla complessa e ricca storia dei rapporti che Ca' Foscari ha intrattenuto con istituzioni di formazione e accademie straniere, attraverso collaborazioni e scambi scientifici, didattici e culturali. Pur non pretendendo di essere uno studio esaustivo, esso fornisce un'idea della vocazione cosmopolita che ha caratterizzato Ca' Foscari nei suoi centocinquant'anni di storia e di come l'internazionalizzazione degli studi e della ricerca, alla base del moderno progetto che ispirò la nascita della Regia Scuola, abbia continuato a caratterizzare Ca' Foscari nelle varie fasi della sua evoluzione.

* * *

Questo volume raccoglie i saggi dedicati alla storia e allo sviluppo degli studi orientali a Ca' Foscari. Sin dalla sua fondazione nel 1868, l'interesse per lo studio delle lingue e delle culture orientali, reputato un elemento fondamentale per lo sviluppo delle relazioni commerciali con quei paesi, è stato identificato come una caratteristica distintiva di questa istituzione. Non a caso Ca' Foscari fu fondata solo due anni dopo la firma dei primi trattati diplomatici fra il Regno d'Italia e gli imperi cinese e giapponese e, solo un anno dopo la sua nascita, nel 1869, fu inaugurato il Canale di Suez. In questo contesto la Scuola superiore di commercio di Ca' Foscari aspirava ad appropriarsi e sviluppare l'eredità di Venezia come la 'porta d'Oriente', sfruttando la sua lunga storia di scambi e relazioni culturali con quella parte del mondo per rilanciare i collegamenti dell'Italia con il Mediterraneo orientale e l'Asia. Nei 150 anni successivi, i professori e gli studenti di Ca' Foscari si sono adoperati per fare di questa istituzione un centro importante per lo studio e la ricerca in questo ambito.

I saggi di questo volume non hanno l'ambizione di offrire una narrativa esaustiva della storia degli studi orientali cafoscarini, ma nel loro insieme riflettono la ricchezza e la varietà degli approcci accademici e delle peculiari relazioni che, nel corso della sua storia, questa Università ha sviluppato e ha ora con l'Oriente.

Il volume è suddiviso in tre sezioni.

I saggi della prima sezione sono dedicati in particolare alla storia degli studi sul Nord Africa, l'Asia occidentale e il Medio Oriente. L'articolo di

Maria Pia Pedani ricostruisce i primi anni dell'insegnamento delle lingue orientali a Ca' Foscari, in quel periodo limitato all'arabo, al turco e al giapponese. Nel suo saggio dedicato agli studi armeni, Sona Horoutyunian colloca lo sviluppo di questo campo di studi nel contesto della presenza religiosa e accademica armena a Venezia, che precede l'istituzione ufficiale dell'insegnamento a Ca' Foscari. Eleonora Cussini analizza la storia della filologia semitica, ricordando come gli studi cafoscarini sulle lingue orientali siano stati qualche modo collegati anche alla presenza di famosi orientalisti nella città, quali Austen Henry Layard, il cui palazzo è diventato la prima sede degli studi orientali di questa università. Dario Miccoli ha ricostruito la nascita e lo sviluppo degli studi ebraici dal 1950. Gli ultimi tre saggi di questa sezione sono dedicati all'arabistica e al legame di Ca' Foscari con il mondo arabo. Antonella Ghersetti ripercorre la storia di un laureato di Ca' Foscari che alla fine dell'Ottocento si afferma come uomo d'affari a Beirut, autore di un trattato sull'allevamento del baco da seta in lingua araba. Nel suo interessante saggio, Ida Zilio Grandi ricostruisce le vivaci attività accademiche della professoressa Maria Nallino, che ha svolto un ruolo fondamentale nella creazione e nello sviluppo di studi islamici e arabi qui dall'inizio degli anni '60, mentre Patrizia Zanelli riflette sull'insegnamento dell'arabo colloquiale a Ca' Foscari ai nostri giorni.

La seconda sezione del volume raccoglie alcuni contributi dedicati allo studio delle lingue e delle civiltà dell'Asia meridionale e centrale. Il saggio di Giuliano Boccali è una panoramica della ricca storia dell'indologia a Ca' Foscari dagli inizi a oggi. Concentrandosi sull'archeologia, Paolo Biagi illustra il ruolo importante di questa istituzione nello studio dell'antichità in Pakistan. Infine, Elisabetta Ragagnin e Samuela Simion descrivono lo sviluppo dello studio della lingua e della cultura mongola negli ultimi anni.

I saggi della terza sezione sono dedicati alla storia degli studi sulla Cina e sul Giappone. Il contributo di Laura De Giorgi offre un breve ritratto dei due padri fondatori della sinologia cafoscarina, il professor Lionello Lanciotti e il professor Mario Sabattini, che dalla metà degli anni '60 hanno avviato gli studi sulla Cina in questa sede. Daniele Brombal propone una riflessione sulle attuali sfide poste dall'emergere di un approccio interdisciplinare allo studio della Cina. Ricordando, infine, come i rapporti di Ca' Foscari con la Cina non siano solo legati allo sviluppo della sinologia, il saggio di Guido Samarani e Laura De Giorgi rievoca l'esperienza di uno dei più famosi laureati di Ca' Foscari, Alberto De' Stefani, divenuto consigliere economico nella Repubblica di Cina nel 1937. Gli ultimi due contributi riguardano la lunga storia gli studi giapponesi a Ca' Foscari, istituiti nel 1873. Il saggio di Adriana Boscaro fornisce un resoconto dettagliato del ruolo svolto da insegnanti e artisti giapponesi nel contesto delle relazioni tra l'Italia e il Giappone fino agli inizi degli anni '20. Luisa Bienati, Adriana Boscaro e Bonaventura Ruperti, invece, descrivono lo

sviluppo degli studi giapponesi cafoscarini dall'istituzione della Laurea in Lingue e letterature orientali nel 1965, ricordando il contributo degli studiosi di Ca' Foscari non solo nello studio della lingua e letteratura giapponese, ma anche in quello della filologia, storia, filosofia e religione, arte e scienze sociali.

Venezia, settembre 2018
Laura De Giorgi e Federico Greselin

150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

edited by Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin

Foreword

This volume collects the essays dedicated to the history and development of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari. Since its foundation in 1868 the interest for the study of the languages and cultures of the East, believed to be a fundamental asset to develop trade relations with those countries and people, was identified as a distinct feature of this institution. Ca' Foscari was established two years after the Kingdom of Italy had signed its first diplomatic treaties with the Chinese and the Japanese empires, and, just one year later, in 1869, the Suez Canal was inaugurated. In this context, Ca' Foscari Royal High School of Commerce aspired to appropriate and develop the legacy of Venice as Europe's 'gateway to Orient', taking advantage of the city's long history of trade and cultural relationships with the East in order to play a pivotal role in reviving Italy's connections with this part of the world.

In the following 150 years, Ca' Foscari's professors and students worked hard in order to intensify these relations, and to make this institution an important centre for the study and research in the field of Oriental Studies. As this book shows, it was not an easy task. Actually, during the first decades after the establishment of the University, the study of the Oriental languages and civilisations played a secondary role with respect to the other disciplines, as their development was affected by the historical circumstances and several organisational difficulties. Nevertheless, the overall goal was never given up and, especially after the Second World War, Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari began to expand unceasingly, widening the scope of teaching and research to an ever-increasing number of languages, subjects and disciplines up to constitute one of the most important centres of area studies in Italy with regard to the Middle, Central and Far East.

The essays in this volume do not aim to offer an exhaustive narrative of the history of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari. Rather, their authors have tried to give some insights into the richness and the variety of the scholarly approaches and of the peculiar relations that, in the course of time, this University developed with the East.

The essays of the first part are mainly dedicated to the history of North African, West Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. Maria Pia Pedani's article reconstructs the early years of the teaching of Oriental languages at Ca' Foscari, at that time limited to Arabic, Turkish and Japanese. In her essay, focused on Armenian Studies, Sona Horoutyunian places the devel-

opment of this field of study in the context of the Armenian religious and scholarly presence in Venice, which precedes the official establishment of the teaching at Ca' Foscari. Eleonora Cussini discusses the history of Semitic philology, but also reminds us how the studies of Oriental languages at Ca' Foscari were somehow connected to the presence of famous orientalists in the city, such as Austen Henry Layard, whose residence in Venice has become the first location for Oriental Studies in this University. The birth and development of Jewish Studies since '50s in the context of Italian Orientalism are, on the other side, accurately reconstructed by Dario Miccoli. The last three articles of this section are all dedicated to Arabic Studies and Ca' Foscari's connection with the Arab world. Antonella Ghersetti tells the story of a Ca' Foscari *alumnus* who had a successful career as a businessman in Beirut in the late nineteenth century, and who wrote a treatise on silkworm breeding in Arabic language. In her accurate essay, Ida Zilio Grandi offers a full portrait of the rich scholarly activities of Professor Maria Nallino, who played a pivotal role in establishing and developing Islamic and Arabic Studies since the early '60s, while Patrizia Zanelli discusses the teaching of colloquial Arabic at Ca' Foscari.

The second section of the volume collects the articles dedicated to the study of the languages and civilisation of South and Central Asia. Giuliano Boccali's essay is an overview of the rich history of Indology at Ca' Foscari from its early beginnings to now. Focusing on archeology, Paolo Biagi highlights of the important role of this institution in the study of the ancient past in Pakistan. At last, Elisabetta Ragagnin and Samuela Simion describe the development of the study of Mongolian language and culture in the last few years.

Finally, the third section is dedicated to the history of Chinese and Japanese Studies. Laura De Giorgi's contribution briefly illustrates the pioneering activities of the two founding fathers of Venetian sinology at Ca' Foscari, Professor Lionello Lanciotti and Professor Mario Sabattini, who since the mid-'60s were able to drive Chinese Studies towards a path characterised by strong innovativeness and academic rigour. From a different perspective, Daniele Brombal offers a reflection of the current challenges of interdisciplinary approaches to China in Venetian sinology. Recalling how the relations of Ca' Foscari with China have not only been confined to sinology, Guido Samarani' and Laura De Giorgi's essay analyses the experience of one of the most famous Ca' Foscari's *alumni*, Alberto De' Stefani, who was an economic adviser of the Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek in the Republic of China in 1937. The two last articles concern Japanese Studies at Ca' Foscari, whose history is quite long as they were established as early as 1873. Adriana Boscaro's rich essay gives a detailed account of the role played by Japanese teachers and artists in the context of the relations between Italy and Japan until the early '20s. Luisa Bienati, Adriana Boscaro, Bonaventura Ruperti and Luisa Bienati

describe the development of Japanese Studies since the establishment of the Degree in Oriental Languages and Literatures in 1965, accurately reconstructing the contribution of Ca' Foscari's scholars not only to the study of Japanese language and literature, but also to Japanese philology and history, philosophy and religion, art and social sciences.

As these essays show, Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari are grounded on a rich legacy of relations and scholarly activities, and they have been and still are opened to new developments and fields of enquiry. In this sense they fully belong to the history of this University - and of Venice - as a gateway to the world.

Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin

1 Middle Eastern and North African Studies

Teaching Asian and African Languages in Ca' Foscari (1868-1929)

Maria Pia Pedani
(Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, Italia)

Abstract The Royal High School of Commerce in Venice was created just when the Suez Canal was opened. Its aim was to prepare young people for international trade or a consular career. Thus, also some languages spoken in the East began to be taught (Arabic, Turkish and Japanese) but the idea was to enlarge this offer with Chinese, Persian and also Amharic. The first years were difficult: courses were opened and closed according to the presence of students or professors who could teach them.

Summary 1 The Beginning. – 2 Teaching Arabic, Turkish and Japanese. – 3 Students. – 4 Conclusion.

Keywords Eastern languages. Venice. Venetian Royal High School of Commerce. Ca' Foscari University. History.

1 The Beginning

In November 1866 in Venice the twentyfive-year-old Luigi Luzzatti (1841-1927), who would have become an important Italian academician, economist and politician, had the idea of creating a new school with a strong focus on trade and foreign languages: the Scuola superiore di Commercio (Berengo 1989, 8-11). He aimed to begin a renewal of the Italian education system and, at the same time, to show the strategic and economic importance of the city of Venice, after its annexation to the kingdom of Italy that had place on the previous 19 October. The following year he went to Antwerp and Mulhouse to get in touch with other two European institutes of the same kind. A commission formed by Agostino Colletti, Eduardo Deodati, Antonio Fornoni, Daniele Francesconi and Luigi Luzzatti himself was created to study the project and, in November 1867, they presented their report: it made also reference to modern languages, such as Arabic, that were not taught in other commercial schools in Italy (*Notizie* 1881, 69).

In the same period the Suez Canal was built. It was begun in 1859 and officially opened on 17 November 1869 (Bono 2006). Six months earlier also the American transcontinental railroad was completed and on the 23 October 1868 Japan opened the doors to the external influence and the emperor of the Meiji dynasty went to his new capital, Tokyo. The world was

becoming smaller and smaller, it could be circled in record time and the Suez Canal reduced the journey between the North Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. Egypt was again in a commercial strategic position as it was in the middle ages, when Indian spices crossed the Red Sea, arrived in Cairo and Alexandria and were sold to Venetian merchants who brought them to the heart of Europe. In the same period also the Italian plenipotentiary in Japan, Alessandro Fè d'Ostiani, so appreciated by the Meiji emperor, gave his support to the new role attributed to Venice. He thought that in this way it was easier to send the boxes of silk moth eggs from Japan to Italy in order to help the Italian silk production ruined by a disease, called *pébrine* (Boscaro 1991). In particular, Luigi Luzzatti's idea was to take advantage of the new commercial routes to stress the role of Venice as a new strategic trade terminal. To do this a new generation of entrepreneurs and diplomats, expert of international trade and foreign languages, was required.

In March 1868 a new commission was created to plan the new school in detail. Its project was sent to the Italian government (*Notizie* 1881, 73-84). It contained also a reference to oriental languages: it said that the monks of the Mekhitarist monastery of Venice had already offered their collaboration to teach them and the Comune of Venice had agreed to. They could teach Modern Greek, Arabic and Persian; these languages would have been very important to prepare also new diplomats and in this way the Venetian institute would surpass Antwerp school. The Mekhitarist religious order had been created by Mekhitar of Sebaste (1676-1749), an Armenian Catholic monk who had arrived in Venice from Constantinople in 1715, escaping persecution from Ottoman authorities. In 1717 the Most Serene Republic gave him the island of San Lazzaro to create a monastery and, from this time on, his community was renowned for its library, museum, school, press (in Oriental alphabets) and cultural activity. It was considered to be an Armenian oasis transplanted in the Venetian lagoon. No wonder that these monks were involved if the Venetian authorities were looking for teachers of Arabic, Persian and Modern Greek.

It is also important to note that, after 1866, Venetian patriots were deeply involved in stressing the past glories of their city in order to show that also their ancestors wrote an important page of the history of Italy. In this period, the myth of the Lepanto battle (1571), fought and won against the Ottoman Turks, was discovered again, after having been forgotten for centuries (Stouraiti 2004). Also the widespread destruction of ancient buildings to re-use their bricks to create new houses had a stop and ruined palaces, churches and monasteries began to be restored and brought to a new life as it happened to the Fondaco dei turchi that became the first seat of the Correr Museum (Pedani 2010, 221-2). Venice enjoyed a very lively cultural life whose core were the Venetian State Archives, the Marciana Library, the Istituto Veneto di Lettere Scienze ed Arti and the Querini Library. Some of the professors of the new School were involved in this intellec-

tual activity, such as Antonio Fradeletto (1858-1930), who was among the founders of the Biennale d'Arte. Other Venetian personalities supported the new institute such as Guglielmo Berchet (1833-1913), historian and honorary consul of Japan from 1880 to 1913; Filippo Grimani (1850-1921), major of Venice in the years 1895-1919; Piero Foscari (1865-1923) who supported the idea of creating a new industrial port in Venice;¹ and Pacifico Ceresa (1833-1905) a senator of the kingdom of Italy who strongly supported the new school as it is shown in a note (17 August 1872) he sent to the Consiglio Provinciale of Venice (*Relazione straordinaria* 1873, 12).

On this background the Regia Scuola Superiore di Commercio was created. Then, the Minister of Agriculture, Industry and Trade presented to the king a report about the new institute where he too stressed the importance to learn modern Oriental languages such as Arabic, Persian and Turkish for a commercial school and the long lasting Italian tradition in trading with the East (*Notizie* 1881, 88-90).

On 6 August 1868 the king's decree approved the statute of the new school (1881, 91-4). Among the aims described in the first paragraph there were: a) to improve young people's knowledge to apply to commercial professions, and b) to teach, besides the principal modern European languages, also the Oriental ones, such as Arabic, Turkish and Persian, in order to facilitate relations and exchanges with the Eastern countries.

2 Teaching Arabic, Turkish and Japanese

The first academic year of the new school was 1868-1869 and on 13 April 1871 also the course for consuls was approved. Since 1868 to 1889 don Raffaele Giarue from Aleppo taught Arabic, while since 1869 to 1877 Zuchdi Effendi from Constantinople (*recte* Zühdi *efendi*) taught Turkish. Modern Greek was taught by Costantino Triantafillis from Athens, director of the Greek College Flangini in Venice. In this period Arabic (or another Oriental language) was present only in the consular course (from the 2nd to the 5th year) and not in the other courses, included that of foreign languages. Moreover, a note in the programme specified that the Board of the school could give permission to study, instead of Arabic, another Oriental language such as Turkish, Persian, Japanese and Chinese (if these two last ones would have been activated). Arabic, however, was recommended (*Notizie e dati* 1871, 94, 96-7).

The programme of Arabic was divided into two parts: the first contained elements of pronunciation and reading according to Giuseppe Sapeto's

¹ Bonfiglio Dosio 1984, 78, 115, 135: b. 48, fasc. 2/IV: *Promemoria. Per l'istituzione di una cattedra di lingua giapponese alla R. Scuola Superiore di Commercio in Venezia. Sulla utilità di studiare l'Oriente e le sue lingue.*

grammar book (Sapeto 1866); the presentation of the regular verbs and exercises of translating the tale of *Mahmud the Persian and the Kurd Sharper* from Arabic into Italian and the other way round according to Robertson's system. The second part presented the regular and irregular verbs, according to Sapeto's examples and exercises of reading, analysis and translation of the tale of *Budûr and Qamar al-Zamân* from *One Thousand and One Nights* (*Notizie e dati* 1871, 136). Giuseppe Sapeto (1811-1895), of the order of San Francesco de Paoli, was a missionary, explorer and agent of the Italian government in Danakil. After a period spent in Lebanon and Ethiopia he left the priesthood and became Professor of Arabic in Florence and Genoa.

The program of Turkish was divided into three parts and was taught in French. It comprehended grammar, syntax, words of Persian and Arabic origin, while the translations were made from French into Turkish and the other way round (*Notizie e dati* 1871, 136-8).

The courses of Japanese were activated on 30 November 1873 and between 1873 and 1888 five teachers followed each other: Yoshida Yosaku, Ogata Korenao, Kawamura Kijo, Naganuma Moriyoshi and Ito Heizo (Boscaro 2007). Japanese and modern Greek were elective courses from the second to the fifth year, also for the language programme together with French, German and English. Soon afterwards the lessons were interrupted because of lack of money. They started again in 1908-09 with Professor Terasaki Takeo, an artist who lived in Venice but they were immediately suppressed again and then resumed only in 1957 (Boscaro 1991). In this period Chinese language was not taught, notwithstanding the school founders' hope. Persian had to be taught by the Professor of Turkish but in 1905 it was not yet activated since no student had expressed the desire of studying it (*Statuto* 1905, 56).

At the same time even Arabic and Turkish had serious problems: for instance Zühdi *efendi* left Ca' Foscari in 1877 and in 1881 nobody had yet taken his place (*Notizie* 1881, 17) while in 1891 also Arabic was interrupted because of lack of students. At the same time the board of the school was thinking to replace this language with Amharic, bearing in mind the beginning of Italian colonial goals in East Africa (*Notizie e documenti* 1891, 15). In 1909-10 Arabic had not yet been resumed, but since March 1909 Turkish was a choice course held by Agop Kerdbadjian from Constantinople who taught also in the Armenian college Moorat Raphaël in Venice (Bellingeri 1991). Soon after Italians and Ottomans fought for Libya (1911-12) and to know French began to be considered enough to trade in an Empire where the whole élite spoke fluently in that language. Moreover, just at the end of the war, Professor Kerdbadjian became ill: he had to leave Ca' Foscari and Arabic took the place of Turkish that was resumed only in 1970 with Asım Tanış (*Annuario* 1912-13, 10; *Tracce. İzler* 2017, 75-7).

Since 1913-14 to 1928-29 Arabic was taught by another Armenian professor of the Moorat-Raphaël college, Garabed Tsoorbadjian (*recte* Çorbacan), *hoca efendi, décoré de palme academique*, who lived near

Carmini (in *Fondamenta Rossa* in 1924-25 and in *Fondamenta dei Cereri*, no. 2448 first floor, in 1928-29) (*Annuario* 1924-25, 169; *Annuario* 1928-29, 211). The course was divided into three parts: 1) alphabet, writing, speech and numbers; 2) grammar, nouns, plural, pronouns, adjectives, numbers, regular verbs, reading and writing, translations from Arabic into Italian and vice versa, dictation, study by heart of verses of the Koran; 3) advanced grammar, irregular verbs, adverbs, prepositions and conjunctions, translations from Arabic into Italian and vice versa (*Annuario* 1921-22, 219). Tsorbadjian died in December 1929 and left 130 volumes in Arabic to the library of Ca' Foscari. After him no Arabic course was taught until 1962 when Maria Nallino arrived in Venice (Gabrieli 1991; Baldissera 1991; cf. Zilio Grandi in this volume).

3 Students

The new school was imagined also to attract students coming from other countries but the beginning was difficult. A comparison for the period 1875-76/1889-90 shows that the 27% (i.e. 415) of the students came from Veneto region and the 25% (381) from the city of Venice. Then, there was Lombardia (9%, 139), Emilia (8%, 125) and the rest of Italy. In the same period only 22 students came from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, 5 from Romania, 6 from Egypt and 18 from other countries (*Notizie e documenti* 1891, 23). We may also note that in the academic year 1879-80 also one student from the Ottoman empire attended to the courses of the school (*Notizie* 1881, 22-3). More or less the same trend had place in the following years: in the period from academic year 1913-14 to 1922-23 the students from Veneto were 1,337, from the city of Venice 416 while the bulk of the rest came from other regions of Italy; there were also 10 students from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, 44 from Fiume, 6 from Dalmatia, 7 from Greece, 6 from Romania, 9 from Turkey and 76 from other foreign countries. In 1923-24 there was also an Arab, Abdi Sobuachakis from Bengasi, who attended the courses of economic and commercial sciences (*Annuario* 1923-24, 146, 152, 158). Students from Libya began to arrive above all after 1923-24. In the following years other students coming from Egypt or Turkey had Italian names such as Lorenzo Bianchi from Alexandria of Egypt and Riccardo Tubino from Constantinople (1924-25) or Mario Bertolissi and Gino Dell'Amore from Cairo (1923-28) (*Annuario* 1924-25, 140, 148; *Annuario* 1928-29, 150). It was a period in which foreigners were not usually present in Italian schools. Different scales of values could create difficulties that were, however, soon overcome as when Vera Michelson from Vilnius in Poland (1923-24) was afraid to say to her Catholic classmates that she was the daughter of a protestant minister.

The courses of the Venetian school opened the way for new jobs in foreign

lands. The prize of the Mariotti award was given for Anatolia and Syria in 1908-09 and it was won by Gino Buti from Florence who immediately left for Izmir. In the same year Timo Pastorelli from Melara (Rovigo) went to teach Italian in Tokyo and, when the director Enrico Castelnuovo was opening the new academic year, he was travelling along the Trans-Syberian railroad to reach Vladivostock and then to sail to Japan (*Annuario* 1909-10, 10-12). In the following years the Mariotti award for India was given to Giuseppe Gmeiner (*Annuario* 1910-11, 10-11; *Annuario* 1911-12, 10-11) who went to Calcutta. At the same time Giuseppe Maniago from Vicenza had the Mariotti award for the Middle East but the outbreak of the war for Libya obliged him first to postpone his journey (*Annuario* 1911-12, 10-11) and then to go to Russia, where he had the possibility to learn Russian (*Annuario* 1912-13, 14-15). Another award for foreign business given by the Italian government allowed Erminio Mariani from Civita Castellana to go to Japan that he reached by sea, and during his journey he sent also a card to his professors from Ceylon (*Annuario* 1911-19, 12). Also in the following years the Mariotti and Italian government awards helped Ca' Foscari students to go to far away countries. In his speech held on 23 November 1913, the director Enrico Castelnuovo recalled Gentilli from Friuli who went to Morocco, Arcudi to Tunis, Mariani to Yokohama, Pastorelli and Cavazzani to Tokyo, Beltrame to Buenos Ayres, Weigelsperg to Hong Kong, Gorio to Bombai, Perera, Buti and Petrocelli to New York, Ceccato to Washington, de Parente and Gentilli to Tangeri and Maniago to Baku and Tiflis (*Annuario* 1913-14, 23-4).

In 1911 the association of former students of Ca' Foscari rewarded two foreign students with two golden medals: Yakir Bekir (Behar) from Constantinople and Pietro Fredda from Corfu even if, in this case too, the award to the Turkish student could not be immediately given because of the war (*Annuario* 1911-12, 19-20; Bellingeri 1991). Behar discussed his dissertation about the Ottoman system of taxation in July 1913 and it was so good that it deserved to be published by Ca' Foscari (Behar 1914). He was a Jew and freemason of the Beni Berith lodge of Constantinople; he collaborated with Luigi Luzzatti (1841-1927) and in 1919 was the secretary of the Board of directors and CEO of the Italian consumer cooperative "Luigi Luzzatti" (Behar 1919, 1922, 1923, 1928).

4 Conclusion

After the beginning of the Venetian commercial school, other institutes alike began to appear in Italy: in 1884 in Genoa, in 1886 in Bari, in 1906 in Turin while, in 1902, also Bocconi University was created in Milan.

In 1905 the R. Scuola Superiore di Commercio in Venice began to issue *laurea* degrees and in 1914 it became the R. Istituto Superiore di Commercio (Meregalli 1958, 1991). In the same years also a Scuola Media

di Commercio existed in Venice in Palazzo Morosini near Santo Stefano. In 1909 its director was Gilberto Secrétant, Professor of Italian literature in Ca' Foscari from 1908 to 1922.²

The Venetian courses of Oriental languages were appreciated also abroad. For instance, in 1910 the honorary consul of Japan, Guglielmo Berchet, was present at the final exams, together with the Ottoman consul Celaleddin pasha and Berovich pasha. In this occasion, the Ottoman government sent three volumes for the three best students of Turkish, while the Venetian Camera di Commercio gave money to sponsor the Japanese course (*Annuario* 1910-11, 9-10).

Ca' Foscari interest for the East took advantage of both the geographic location of Venice and the ancient links that united the city to Eastern countries. The first statal school of Arabic, Turkish and Persian for official interpreters was created by the government of the Most Serene Republic in the middle of the sixteenth century and we may conclude this paper recalling the unknown scholar who used to teach Arabic in the main Venetian street at the beginning of that century, as Marin Sanudo wrote in his diary on 6 October 1517: "È da saper: vidi, cossa notanda, in Marzaria, di una scola che insegna lezer e scriver in moresco" (Sanuto 1889, 20).

2 Bonfiglio Dosio 1984, 78: b. 18 fasc. 13: *Scuola Media di Commercio, 1904-1909*.

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

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From Academia Armena Sancti Lazari to the Establishment of Armenian Studies at Ca' Foscari

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Abstract The Armenian Studies have a very long tradition in Italy. However, the establishment of the official teaching of Armenian at Ca' Foscari is particularly significant. It is a direct continuation of many Armenian traces present in the lagoon city for centuries, such as the birth of the first Casa Armena in Europe in 1245, the prosperous diplomatic relations between the Republic of Serenissima and the Kingdom of Armenia, the printing of the first Armenian book in 1512, the arrival of Armenian merchants from Julfa, who highly contributed to the economy of Venice, and finally the institution of the Mekhitarist Congregation of the Armenian monks on the island of San Lazzaro, recognised by Napoleon as Academia Armena Sancti Lazari. After an historical excursus, the paper will go on to detail some significant periods of Armenian Studies at Ca' Foscari.

Summary 1 Historical Overview. – 2 Armenian Studies at Ca' Foscari.

Keywords Venice. Armenians in Venice. Armenian Studies. Ca' Foscari University. Mekhitarist Congregation.

1 Historical Overview


Venice has always had an irresistible appeal for the Armenians, who can find there evident or forgotten traces of their ancestors under the cloths of pilgrims or merchants, monks, artists and literary figures, ambassadors, and even sovereigns. Venice is proud to have the oldest 'Casa armena' in Europe, in Calle delle Lanterne, later renamed as Calle degli Armeni. "Domum in qua stant Armenij volumus ut in perpetuum ipsi in ea stare debeant", can be

In 1994 when I made a step in Venice as the first exchange student of the first ever signed agreement between Yerevan State and Ca' Foscari Universities, I could not imagine that a few decades later I would have the honour to write the history of Armenian Studies in Venice. It is really a difficult task to restore the long and rich chronology of Armenian Studies in Venice and summarise it within the limits of a single article. Hence, I hope in the reader's forgiveness if some names or events have been left out of this paper. My special thanks go to the Department of Asian and North African Studies as well as to the International relations offices of Ca' Foscari and Yerevan State Universities for providing me with some archival documents.

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read in the testament of the doge Sebastiano Ziani's nephew Marco.¹ This was not by chance. The Republic of Venice enjoyed a privileged relation with the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia. Hence, the doge paid the honour back with this generosity.² In 1434 there is also mention of the small church of Santa Croce, which is the only one among the forty Armenian churches present in Italy during the Middle Ages that still hosts masses celebrated after the Armenian rite by the Mekhitarist fathers of San Lazzaro.³

From the beginning of the sixteenth century on, when the role of Venice in the world trade started to decline, the Armenians supported strongly its economy.⁴ As a matter of fact, in many official papers issued by the highest bodies of the Venetian government the following can be read:

Questa nazione armena è stata sempre per pubblica deliberatione raccomandata; [...] Armeni et Persiani in particolare che tra' forestieri sono li più frequenti, e quasi solo che sostengano il negotio in quelle parti; [...] la benemerita e prediletta nazione armena [...] che traffica summe rilevanti di denaro [...] con le mercancie apporta considerabilj benefici a questa città. (Peratoner 2007, 109)⁵

Venice is also the birthplace of the first Armenian printed book, entitled *Urbat'agirk'* (Book of Friday), issued between 1509 and 1513, in the Venice-based printing house established by Hakob Melapart.⁶ Since then, nineteen Armenian printers worked in the city.

1 Venezia, Archivio di Stato (ASVe). "Testamento di Marco Ziani": Procuratori di San Marco, Misti, b. 180.

2 Some sources indicate that the building became a guest house for Armenians around 25 May 1235. For further details on Venetian-Armenian community consider among many others Alishan 1893; Hermet, Cogni Ratti di Desio 1993; Peratoner 2007, 107-12; Karapetian 2011, 223-229; Manoukian 2014, 25-7.

3 In 1348 there is also mention of another church and a convent, that of San Giovanni Battista dei Frati Armeni, at Castello.

4 For further details consider Aslanian 2011; McCabe 1999.

5 "This Armenian nation has always been dear to the Republic by official decree; [...] especially Armenians and Persians, who come here most frequently among the foreigners, and are almost the pillars of the trade; [...] the good-doing and beloved Armenian nation [...] who moves huge amounts of money [...] and through goods it trades brings a significant contribution to the city" (Peratoner 2007, 109).

6 For the transliteration of the Armenian examples this author adopts the system based on the works of the linguists Heinrich Hübschmann and Antoine Meillet as referenced in Meillet 1913, 8-9.

And finally, Venice is the home of the Mekhitarist Congregation of Armenian Monks at San Lazzaro island,⁷ beacon of cultural and spiritual awakening of the Armenian people and defined by Napoleon as “Academia Armena Sancti Lazari”.

Since their foundation, the fathers have set themselves the principal aim of creating a new intellectual exchange between East and West, and have ceaselessly published important contributions as well as translated the works of classical antiquity into Armenian, together with modern European masterpieces.⁸ A great deal of this translation work was done in the nineteenth century.⁹ In parallel to their religious and cultural missions, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Congregation underwent considerable expansion of its educational activities with the foundation of numerous schools and colleges in the Crimea, Venice, Padua and various centres in Asia Minor and the Caucasus.¹⁰

In 1843 the Academia Sancti Lazari inaugurated the publication of the periodical *Pazmaveb*. It is regarded as the patriarch of the Armenian and Armenological press and published without interruption from 1843 up to the present.¹¹ Italian Ministry of Education (MIUR) has classified it among scientific journals.

In the Venetian panorama, one of the figures of particular prominence in Armenian Studies was the Mekhitarist father Giovanni Battista Aucher (Mkrtič' Awgorean). In 1818, he published a critical edition with a new Latin translation of the *Chronicon* by Eusebius of Caesarea. Until its publication, this book was believed to be lost, however the Armenian transla-

7 On Mekhitar and the Mekhitarists there is a large bibliography. I shall note here only a few key works: on Mekhitar's life and work see, Nurikhan 1914; Zekiyan 1977. On the order, its history and spirituality, see Sargisian 1905; 1936; Leo 1946, 979 ff.; Bardakjian 1976; Adalian 1992; Zekiyan, Ferrari 2004. Some significant tokens of the general esteem among Armenians for Mekhitar and his work are quoted by Zekiyan (1993, 221-48).

8 There are a few publications inherent to Armenian Studies antecedent to the establishment of the Mekhitarist Order, such as *Introductio in Chaldaicam linguam*, the oldest book in Europe that uses the Armenian characters and has some important observations concerning the phonetics (Albonesi 1539). Also, it's worth mentioning *Dictionarium armeno-latinum* by Rivola (1624), and *Grammaticae et logicae institutiones linguae literalis armenicae* (Galano 1645). For more details consider Morani 2014, 363-73.

9 For further details on the translation activity of the Mekhitarists, consider Mildonian 2004; Uluhogian 2004; Haroutyunian 2011, 2012.

10 For more details on Mekhitarists' educational activities, consider Peratoner (2007, 141-3) and also “Murat-Rap'ayēlean varžaranneru barerarnern ew irenc' ktaknerë” (*Bazmavep*, 1936, 9-12, 167-200), and especially chap. 2 “Samuēl Muratean: azgayin mec barerar” (Samuel Muratean: Great Benefactor of the Nation) (175-186).

11 The transcription of the name appeared as *Pazmaveb* until 1970. In the beginning *Bazmavep* served for popular education. Later it changed into an Armenological review, and now it is the organ of the Mekhitarist Academy of San Lazzaro, Venice. For the birth of *Bazmavep*, cf. Zekiyan 1995; Ćemčemean 1994; Xaç'atryan 2011, 2012.

tion was able to reproduce it in its entirety (Aucher 1818). This publishing event caused a great sensation and immediately highlighted the importance of the Armenian manuscript tradition.¹² Interestingly, for his philological work on the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea and *De Providentia* of Philo of Alexandria, Giacomo Leopardi drew the mentioned two texts. In his introduction Leopardi writes:

Some of those many works written by Philo of Alexandria, that lack to the Westerners are preserved nowadays among Armenians who translated them in their own language at the time of Theodosius the Younger, i.e. fourteen centuries ago. (Leopardi 1845, 201; Author's translation)¹³

The cultural prestige that the Mekhitarist Congregation had earned by the early nineteenth century attracted the English poet, Lord Byron.¹⁴ From the end of November 1816, during his stay in Venice, he visited the San Lazzaro island a number of times. With the help of father Aucher he applied himself to the study of the classical Armenian language. To his friend Thomas Moore, Byron wrote:

By way of divertissement, I am studying daily, at an Armenian monastery, the Armenian language. I found that my mind wanted something craggy to break upon. (Byron 1844, 329; cf. Prothero 1901, 4: 9)

He reached the stage where he was able to translate some short literary texts from Armenian and collaborated on a basic grammar in English. He also collaborated on an Armenian-English and English-Armenian dictionary by father Aucher.¹⁵

12 For more details consider Uluhogian 2004, 232.

13 The original Italian text reads: "Di quelle molte opere scritte da Filone alessandrino giudeo che mancano agli occidentali, alcune si conservano anche oggi fra gli Armeni, recate nella loro lingua a tempo di Teodosio minore, cioè quattordici secoli addietro". Consider also Bolognesi 1998; Haroutyunian 2014.

14 For Byron and Mekhitarists, consider among others Mesrobian 1973, 27-37; Dowsett 1989, 7-52; Byron 1983.

15 In a letter dated 2 January 1817, Byron wrote: "Despite their sad lot and the uncertainty of the future, their land will always and for all time remain the most interesting in the world, and their language, in order to be the more charming, needs only to be studied further. If we read the Scripture correctly, the earthly paradise was in Armenia, [...] it was in Armenia that the floodwater subsided and the dove found a place to land. But when the earthly paradise disappeared, misfortune befell the country, and although it was a powerful kingdom for centuries, it maintained its independence with difficulty; the satraps of Persia and the Pashahs of Turkey have devastated this country where God created man in His own image" (Byron 1983, 16).

The Mekhitarist Congregation in its role of cultural promoter also attracted the greatest interest of intellectuals and writers, such as Foscolo, Berchet, Monti, Bellotti, Hobhouse, etc.¹⁶ By the mid-nineteenth century, the Mekhitarist Order arouse also the interest of the Italian linguist, journalist and essayist Nicolò Tommaseo. Thanks to his collaboration with the Armenian monks, two pillars of Armenian historiographical literature were presented to the Italian public: the invaluable literary translations of the *Storia di Mosé Corenese* and the *Storia di Agatangelo* (Tommaseo, 1841, 1843). Another important figure in the panorama of nineteenth century Armenian Studies was the Venetian priest Giuseppe Cappelletti (1802- 1876). Cappelletti widely collaborated with the Mekhitarists, was a member of their Academy of Sciences and contributed to the translation and publication of many important works.¹⁷ Also, Cappelletti was the one who realised the importance of opening space for Armenian Studies within the Italian Academia:

Oggidì in tutta Europa non c'ha che una sola cattedra di lingua armena, ed è questa nel collegio reale di Parigi, onde uscirono alcuni giovani grandemente solleciti di conoscere le cose armene, e di pubblicarne tradotti i migliori scrittori. Fa veramente vergogna che in nessuna provincia colta di Italia vi sia una cattedra di armeno idioma, aperta dalla munificenza di un qualche Principe, per cui prevenire, in parte almeno, i Francesi nella gloria di tradurre e pubblicare le classiche produzioni degli scrittori di quella illustre nazione.^{18,19}

It will be not long after that several Italian universities would establish the official teaching of Armenian, firstly in Padova (1928), followed by Milan (1954), Bologna (1973) and Venice (1976).²⁰

16 For more details consider Camporesi 1966, 376.

17 Cf. among others Cappelletti 1829, 1833, 1840, 1841, 1877.

18 With respect to Cappelletti's contribution, his name passed unobserved because of his controversial personality. In 2010, Tamara De Valerio, a PhD student at the University of Rouen, delivered an important talk on Giuseppe Cappelletti's contribution in Armenian Studies, unveiling many aspects that by that time remained unobserved. The paper was delivered at the Padux-Araxes cultural association's annual workshop in Milan. To our knowledge it has not been published yet.

19 "As of today, there is only one chair of the Armenian language, and this is in the Royal College of Paris, wherefrom graduated some young people very eager to know the Armenian literature, and to publish the translations of the best writers. It is truly a shame that in no educated province of Italy there is a chair of Armenian language, established by the munificence of some prince, in order to prevent, in some part at least, attributing the French from the glory of translating and publishing the classic works of the writers of the illustrious nation" (Author's translation).

20 For further details on Armenian Studies in Italy consider Zekiyani 1996,13-16; Zekiyani, Bonardi 1998: XI-XII; Morani 2014, 363-373; Manoukian 2014, 207-213, as well as different

2 Armenian Studies at Ca' Foscari



Figure 1. Vincenzina Flora,
“Armenian Alphabet”.
Gold-plated mosaic 53 × 53
(courtesy of the artist)

The history of Armenian Studies at Ca' Foscari began in 1976, according to the common will of the rector Feliciano Benvenuti and the abbot of the Mekhitarist Order of Venice, Boghos Ananian. It was established “as an opening window of the Armenian Academia of San Lazzaro on the Italian world” (Manoukian 2014, 211).

The teaching was entrusted to the Mekhitarist monk Father Levon Zekiyian. “The new university environment [...] had never been familiar to me before. In fact, I came from a curriculum of studies for which I had never set foot in an Italian university before, neither as a student nor as a lecturer”, testified prof. Zekiyian years later (Zekiyian 2004, 39; Author’s translation).

Initially, the instruction was free, and the lessons of Armenian were part of the course denominated “Iranian Dialects”. Five years later, due to the abolition of free teachings at Ca' Foscari, “Armenian Language and Literature” became a distinct course.

Further, in 1997, Armenian was consolidated into a four-year regular teaching at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literature within the Degree in Eastern languages and Civilizations. With the words of Manoukian, “[it] was an important result, because it recognized to the Armenian culture an adequate space and relevance in the representation and understanding of the complex Middle Eastern and Caucasian reality” (Manoukian 2014, 211).

Currently, with the abolition of the Faculties, Armenian Studies are at the Department of Asian and North African Studies.

issues of the *Rassegna Armenisti Italiani* of PADUS-ARAXES Cultural Association, especially the column “Centri armenistici e associazioni collegate all’Armenia operanti in Italia”.

The presence of Armenian Studies at Ca' Foscari allowed to promote important activities. First of all, it's worth mentioning the establishment of the "Intensive Course of Armenian Language and Culture" by prof. Zekiyan in 1984. "Under many aspects this course can be seen as an ideal continuator [...] of the mission once undertaken by the Moorat-Rapael College", affirms Manoukian (2014, 212). The course was the fruit of collaboration between Ca' Foscari and the Padus-Araxes Cultural Association.²¹ Another result of this collaboration was the birth of the audio-visual course of the Western Armenian-language teacher Hayeren Khosink.

Since its establishment in 1987 by Levon Zekiyan and Gabriella Uluhogian (University of Bologna), the Padus-Araxes Cultural Association had a leading role of liaison between different Italian Universities, as well as scholars interested in the Armenian Studies. It has its journal, *Rassegna armenisti italiani*. The Association supported various activities of Armenological interest and funded courses at Ca' Foscari. In particular, until 2010, the Association sponsored the Armenian Language Practice course (*lettorato*) entrusted to this author, and between 2010-2015 Armenian Language and Literature courses, taught by Benedetta Contin and Paolo Lucca.

Other important activities carried by the chair of Armenian Studies, include conferences - *L'Armenia tra Oriente ed Occidente* (1978), *Culture Transcaucasiche* (1979), the workshop *Gli armeni nella cultura italiana* (1982-87) -, the Armenian film festival in Venice (1983), and a research project on Armenian documents preserved in the Vatican Secret Archives (part 1, 1994).

Within Armenian Studies, art has always arisen a big interest. In fact, in 1988 Levon Zekiyan organised the 5th International Symposium of Armenian Art in collaboration with Adriano Alpago Novello, Ermanno Arslan, Hrant Pambakian, Gabriella Uluhogian and Giovanni Curatola (Zekiyan 1991). In his inaugural message of the symposium, prof. Zekiyan thanked the rector Giovanni Castellani and the head of the Department of Eurasian Studies Giuliano Tamani, and affirmed:

The meetings between scholars of the same discipline or related disciplines have become more and more affirmed in recent decades, as one of the essential means of developing scientific investigation. It is certainly motivated by this conviction that the Department of Eurasian Studies and the Magnificent Rector of the University of Venice have accepted

²¹ In 1984-86 the Summer Intensive Course of the Armenian Language was initially organised at Moorat-Raphael College. Between 1986-2015 the course was held in collaboration with Ca' Foscari. Since 2016 it takes place at the General Studium Marcianum of Venice. For more details on the activity of the Intensive course consider Kasbarian 2005; for further details on this and other activities of the association, see the website of the PADUS-ARAXES Cultural Association at URL <http://www.padus-araxes.com> (2018-03-05).

with great availability the proposal to organize this Symposium, and that numerous prestigious institutions at national and international level have joined to it... (Zekiyan 1991, 35-7; Author's translation)

A year later, after the success of the Symposium, Armenian Studies at Ca' Foscari were enriched with a new course dedicated to the Armenian art and architecture. It was held by Adriano Alpago Novello,²² whom the colleagues and Armenians jokingly called 'Alpaghian', thus 'armenizing' his last name through the particle *-ian*, typical to Armenian surnames (cf. Macchiarella 2005, "Presentazione"). Once professor at Polytechnic University of Milan, he was one of the main promoters of the Centre of Study and Documentation of Armenian Culture, founded in Milan in the '70s. In 1991 it transferred to Venice, to Loggia del Temanza. The Centre, under the direction of Minas Lurian, continues to support different conferences and seminars of Armenological interest in collaboration with Ca' Foscari. Among the supporters of the Armenian Studies it is worth mentioning Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, which has contributed the fellows of the Chair with scholarships and grants.

Prof. Levon Zekiyan retired in 2011. In 2014, he was appointed by Pope Francis as Apostolic administrator of Armenian Archieparchy of Istanbul, with the dignity of Archbishop.

In 2005 Aldo Ferrari - historian and expert in Russian and Caucasian Studies - joined the chair of Armenian Studies and after the retirement of prof. Zekiyan, became the head. He teaches Armenian Literature, Introduction to Armenian Culture, History of Caucasus, History of Russian Culture. The courses of Armenian Language (both theory and practice) are entrusted to this author according to the agreement between the Embassy of Armenia in Rome and Ca' Foscari since 2011 and with the support of the Ministry of Education of Armenia.

In 2015, in the occasion of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide the Department of Asian and North African Studies sponsored several events, such as the international conference *Metz Yeghern - Armenian Genocide: Past and Present Challenges* (in collaboration with the Ca' Foscari School of International Relations, CeStuDir, CEM, ASIAC and Padus-Araxes), as well as the international workshops "Translating Memory: the Representation of the Armenian Genocide in Literature and Film", in collaboration

22 For a complete bibliography of prof. Alpago Novello cf. Macchiarella 2005. After the retirement of Alpago Novello, prof. Gianclaudio Macchiarella continued the course with the initial collaboration of Gaiane Casnati (Manoukian 2014, 211). Upon Macchiarella's suggestion, *Onnik Manoukian Lecture Series* were established, which allowed to integrate the teaching of Armenian language and art with seminars of Armenological interest. Aldo Ferrari, Marco Bais, Giuseppe Munarini were among those who contributed with integrative courses on Armenian culture and history.

with the “Laboratorio sulla Traduzione delle Lingue Orientali” and “The Armenians in the Islamic World: Paradigms of Interaction” in collaboration with Padus-Araxes Cultural Association.

Recent activities promoted by the Chair include the workshop “Giornata di Studi Armeni e Caucasicci”, which marks its twelfth edition (since 2007, in collaboration with Padus-Araxes and ASIAC) and the series of lectures “Armenia: una civiltà di frontiera” (six editions since 2013). The interest for Armenian art at Ca' Foscari is testified by the success of the seminars on Armenian art, “Seminari di Arte Armena,” which already marks its fourth edition under the coordination of Aldo Ferrari and Marco Ruffilli.²³ Thanks to the collaboration between Ca' Foscari, Sorbonne, AIEA and ASIAC, an important international conference was organised in 2018: *Journey to Armenia: From Ancient to Modern times*.

Since 1990, the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research (MIUR) permitted the discussion of PhD theses in Armenian Studies. This decision was the fruit of the request presented to the Ministry by the Professors Levon Zekiyian, Gabriella Uluhogian and Giancarlo Bolognesi (Kasbarian 2005, 71).²⁴ Since then, a number of PhD theses as well as post-doctoral research projects were carried out by the fellows of the Chair, including the areas of history, philosophy, philology, linguistics and translation.²⁵

23 Within this vein it is also worth mentioning the case of the painter Vincenzina Flora, who ‘fell in love’ with the Armenian alphabet. In parallel to her lessons at the Accademia di Belle Arti of Venice, she enrolled in the Single Courses of Armenian Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari to intertwine her linguistic and artistic interests. Her final work, exhibited the day of her thesis discussion, was a mosaic showing all the letters of the Armenian alphabet. It was gold-plated, as most of the Byzantine and Venetian mosaics, thus recalling the ancient relations between Venice, Bysantium and Armenia (see fig. 1).

24 After this permission, the first PhD discussion was in 1995 by Valentina Calzolari from the University of Bologna, who further became the head of Armenian Studies at the University of Geneva and promoted an exchange programme with Ca' Foscari. She is also the president of AIEA, an Armenological association which among many other events has supported the recent conference *Journey to Armenia: From Ancient to Modern times*.

25 In 2007 Paolo Lucca discussed the PhD thesis *La prima versione armena di 1-2 Cronache: edizione critica*. Three years later Milena Bernardelli discussed on *Alessandro Magno nel Medioevo armeno: quando l'effimero diventa eterno*. In 2011, Benedetta Contin finished her PhD thesis on *La version arménienne des oeuvres grecque de David l'Invincible: Recherches sur la formation du vocabulaire épistémologique arménien*. In the same year, at Ca' Foscari, I discussed my PhD thesis entitled *An Analysis of Dante's Tenses in the Armenian Translations of the “Divina Commedia”*. Post-doctoral research projects include among others: *Reflections on the Verbal System: From Comparative Linguistics to Translation Theory* (Haroutyunian 2011-2013); *Philosophical and theological production of David the Invincible* (Contin 2014-2016, with the contribution of Gulbenkian Foundation); *From Manuscript to Printed Book: The Publishing History of the Armenian Version of the ‘Breviarium Sacri Ordinis Praedicatorum’ (Venice 1715)* (Lucca 2014-2016); *Migratory Flows: From Language Contact to Cultural Translation* (Haroutyunian 2017-2018).

The recent decade is characterised by the development of new relations between Ca' Foscari and the Republic of Armenia. "The current agreement has been active and fruitful for a long while [since 1993], and we warmly support the continuing of this mutually beneficial cooperation", can be read in Rector Pier Francesco Ghetti's letter addressed to the Rector of Yerevan State University Aram Simonian.²⁶ In September 2007, the rectors met at Ca' Foscari to sign the new agreement for cooperation in the areas of education, science and culture.²⁷

In the following years, the rector Carlo Carraro received the ambassadors of Armenia in Rome, Ruben Karapetian and Sargis Ghazarian. In 2011 an agreement was signed between the Embassy of Armenia in Rome and Ca' Foscari in support of Armenian Studies in Venice, funding the courses of Armenian language (both theory and practice). The agreement was renewed in 2014.

Within its internationalization strategy, Ca' Foscari cooperates with Yerevan State University, Armenian National Agrarian University, Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University, Gavar State University, "Yerjanik" Children's Charity Organization, in the context of European Erasmus Mundus, WEBB, EMBER, HERMES projects. Moreover, since 2014, the Travelers Club of Ca' Foscari University Foundation organises cultural trip to Armenia guided by Aldo Ferrari. In 2015 the Ca' Foscari delegation was the only one among other Italian universities to represent Armenia during the Model United Nations at Harvard.

Since 2016, the success of European Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility two projects marked an important milestone in the cooperation between Ca' Foscari and Yerevan State University.²⁸ The subject areas covered by the projects include History, International Relations, Archeology, Literature, Linguistics, Translation Studies, Economics. The cooperation foresees students' (BA, MA, PhD), professors' and staff' mobility. In 2017, for the first time the Chair of Armenian Studies hosted an Erasmus+ Visiting Professor from Yerevan State University, Prof. Alvard Jivanian. He is expert in children's literature and the Armenian translator of *Peter Pan* and *Harry Potter*; among others, he enriched the activities of the Chair by teaching courses and delivering public lectures. She finished her final lecture on "*Harry Potter's* Armenian Translation" with the following testimonial:

I am completing my Erasmus+ professorship at Ca' Foscari University in Venice and going back home. I will take into my ears the sounds of this

26 Ref. n. 20067, August 2, 2007, Venice.

27 Pr. 9599-III/13 14/04/08. The first student exchange agreement between Ca' Foscari and the Yerevan State University was signed in 1993.

28 The coordinator of the project is Alessandra Giorgi in collaboration with Elena Rova (for Archaeology) and Sona Haroutyunian (for Translation Studies and Literature).

never silent town because the seagulls are early risers, the howling of the badly behaved but proud winds. In my eyes, I will keep the images of big ships making their slow pace at Zattere and leaving foaming white dragons behind. They bring peace to my heart and a hope to return. Karen Cushman writes in her fictional diary of a young girl: "He told us wondrous stories of the places that he has been. The cities have names that whisper like the wind: Venice, Damascus, Byzantium, Samarkand. I say them over and over to myself so I will not forget them". (Cushman 2012, 26)

It is really a difficult task to restore the long and rich chronology of Armenian Studies in Venice and summarise it within the limits of a single article. However, after this excursus, it can be affirmed that the Mekhitarist monks laid the bases for Armenian Studies in Venice. They already had their successful educational experience in Venice through the Moorat-Raphael College, the boarding school for Armenian children, at the gorgeous Venetian *palazzo Ca' Zenobio*. Hence it was a natural desire to expand the instruction of Armenian at a university level. On the other hand, it can also be concluded that the establishment of Armenian Studies at Ca' Foscari University is undoubtedly a continuation of a consolidated tradition that dates back to the very origins of the lagoon city, a tradition that can be denominated 'Armeno-Veneto' to recall Alishan (1893) or 'La Venezia degli Armeni', to recall Hermet and Cogni Ratti di Desio (1993).

"If not in Venice, where else Armenian should be taught?" (Zekiyan 2004, 48): these were the words of Gianroberto Scarcia, the Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures and one of the main promoters of the establishment of Armenian at Ca' Foscari in 1976.

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

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Forty-Nine Years of Aramaic and Semitic Philology at Layard's Home, Ca' Cappello

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Abstract Semitic Philology has been taught at Ca' Foscari for almost fifty years in the unique setting of Ca' Cappello, former Venetian residence of the archaeologist Austen Henry Layard. There, in a most inspiring environment for Semitists, from 1969 to present, seven specialists have taught Semitic languages and culture to generations of students. The broad scope of the subject represents the appeal of Semitic Philology to Ca' Foscari students: to those interested in the history and languages of the Ancient Near East and to students who concentrate on modern Semitic languages and contemporary issues.

Keywords Semitic Philology. Aramaic. Austen Henry Layard. Near Eastern Studies. Ancient and modern Semitic Languages.

Teaching and studying Semitic languages at Ca' Cappello-Layard, the place that was the Venetian residence of the celebrated discoverer of Nineve, Austen Henry Layard (1817-1894) is a unique experience. In 1884 Layard retired to a place that was particularly suitable to him, in the final part of his adventurous life.¹ As Julian Reade wrote, in the concluding remarks of a paper he delivered at the 1983 Colloquium *Austen Henry Layard*

I wish to thank Maria Pia Pedani, Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin for the opportunity to contribute to the volume. I am extremely grateful to Giuliano Tamani, former Professor of Hebrew Language and Literature at Ca' Cappello from 1969 to 2012 and Chairman of the Department of Eurasian Studies from 1984 to 1990 and from 2005 to 2011, one of the founding members of the present-day Department of Asian and North-African Studies (DSAAM), who shared his memories and contributed with comments. Moreover, I wholeheartedly thank him for his generosity and unfailing support over the last twenty years. I gratefully acknowledge the help of Antonella Sattin, Fondo Storico di Ateneo, Biblioteca e Archivio Ca' Foscari who kindly provided documents and offered insights, and Stefano Patron, librarian at Ca' Cappello.


For Giuliano Tamani, Mentor and Friend, with profound gratitude.

1 Layard first came to Venice in 1839. He later returned in 1866 and 1867 when he created the Venice and Murano Glass and Mosaic Company in collaboration with Antonio Salviati (1816-1890). In 1871, on holiday in Venice from the Legation in Madrid with his wife Enid, he asked Rawdon Brown (1803-1883) to find him a Venetian home. That place was Ca' Cappello, where he moved permanently in July 1884 (cf. Arnott 1987, 150-1).

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tra l'Oriente e Venezia, organised by Frederick Mario Fales and Bernard Hickey: "Here, as near the Orient as anywhere in western Europe, he could without incongruity display his collection of Assyrian sculptures and Italian paintings on the walls of one palazzo. Poised still between the exotic and the familiar, between rebellion and respectability, he could watch equably as Venice, with ice-floes on the Grand Canal, displayed her own unpredictable felicities" (Reade 1987, 53). Unfortunately, there are no tangible traces of such an illustrious predecessor in the building, where also the internal layout has changed in the course of time, in order to accommodate classrooms and offices. There are no pieces of the original furniture, nor archaeological artifacts. Ten Assyrian relief fragments and two Neo-Babylonian bricks were donated by Layard to the city of Venice and they are housed today in the Museo Civico e Raccolta Correr (Favaretto 1987, 233). At Ca' Cappello, only rare examples of the original decorative elements survive.² Nonetheless, it is an inspiring experience to offer classes and lectures in the very place where the celebrated discoverer of Nimrud and Ninive spent part of his life.

The teaching of Semitic languages at Ca' Foscari dates back to 1962, when Arabic language was first offered by Maria Nallino. That course was later followed by the creation, in 1965, of a university degree in Oriental Languages and Literatures (Corso di laurea in lingue e letterature orientali), that included the Chair of Hebrew, while the first course in Hebrew language and literature was offered in the academic year 1965-66. The teaching of Semitic Philology was added to the curriculum on 3 February 1969 (ASCF, Organi Collegiali, Consiglio di Facoltà di Lingue). The first to offer a course on the subject was Franco Michelini Tocci, Professor of History of Religions at Ca' Foscari, who was officially put in charge of the teaching of Semitic Philology (*Professore Incaricato*). The next academic year (1969-70), Fabrizio Angelo Pennacchietti joined the former Department of Hebrew, today Department of Asian and North African Studies (DSAAM) at Ca' Cappello and was appointed Professor (*Professore Ordinario*) of Semitic Philology. Pennacchietti, a Semitist and an Aramaic scholar, whose broad interests spanned from Aramaic epigraphy to lin-

2 For example, the frescoed ceiling in a small ground floor office, or the stucco decorations and mirror-framed fireplace in the corner classroom next door. This last room was vividly described by Lady Gregory, a close friend of the Layards and a frequent guest at Ca' Cappello (Hickey 1987, 162). The original stained-glass windows on the first floor hall (now part of the library) one sees in the portrait of Enid Layard have been replaced (for an image of the portrait, Hickey 1987, tav. XXIV, British Museum Society). For another Ca' Cappello scene, see the 1891 portrait by Passini depicting Layard at his desk at Ca' Cappello, with a library background (Favaretto 1987, tav. LII, National Portrait Gallery). After the death of Lady Layard, in 1912 the palace was bought by the illustrious jurist and lawyer Francesco Carnelutti, Professor of Commercial and Civil Law at the University of Milan Bocconi, later in Padua and Rome. The palace was bought by Ca' Foscari in 1967.

guistics, including Neo-Aramaic dialects and Esperanto, spent ten years in Venice, from 1969 to 1979, and later joined the University of Turin. In 1973-74 the course was offered by Carlo Zaccagnini. The next year (1974-75), Frederick Mario Fales joined the Department and continued to offer the course in the following years. In 1982 he was appointed Associate Professor (*Professore Associato*) and taught Semitic Philology at Ca' Foscari until 1987. In 1988 he joined the University of Padua and from 1989 to 1990 he offered courses in Semitic Philology at Ca' Foscari as an external temporary professor (*supplente esterno*). In 1990 Riccardo Contini joined the Department at Ca' Cappello first as temporary professor (*supplente*) and, from 1992 onward, as Associate Professor (*Professore Associato*) of Semitic Philology. He remained at Ca' Foscari until the academic year 1998-99 and then joined the Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples. From 1999-00 to 2005-06 the course was taught by Eleonora Cussini, as an Adjunct Professor (*Professore a contratto*) and for one year, in 2006-07 by Fiorella Scagliarini. From 2007-08 to the present academic year (2017-18), the course has been held by this writer.

The first available Ca' Foscari course guide (*Notiziario guida per lo studente*), that of the academic year 1973-74, records that Carlo Zaccagnini offered a course on Comparative Semitic Linguistics and another on the history of Semites in the Ancient Near East.

In 1974-75, Frederick Mario Fales taught a general introductory course on the grammar of Semitic languages, another on the Aramaeans and an Assyriological seminar on Akkadian language. While the general introductory course and the Assyriological seminar were offered every year, the second or monographic course focused on different topics within the realm of Semitics, i.e. mainly on Old Aramaic and Imperial Aramaic dialects and inscriptions. Akkadian was the object of the monographic course in 1977-78, while the seminar dealt with the history of the Ancient Near East in the pre-Islamic period. In 1979-80 there were two courses: the general one on Ancient Near Eastern languages and relevant writing systems, with a focus on Ugaritic and Phoenician, while Egyptian-Aramaic texts from Elephantine, in comparison to Biblical Aramaic, were analysed in the monographic course.

In 1980-81, a course divided in three parts was reintroduced. In the general course one finds a discussion of Semitic phonology, and a focus on the different writing systems of the Semitic languages in the monographic course. Moreover, a text-reading Assyriological seminar on Neo-Babylonian letters was offered. In the following academic year the general course addressed third millennium BC cuneiform documents from Fara, Abu Salabikh and Ebla, while the monographic course focused on Arabic. A choice of Neo-Assyrian letters were read in the Assyriological seminar. In 1982-83 the monographic course dealt with the theme of the wise courtier in the framework of Biblical wisdom literature and the Aramaic story of

Ahiqar, while the general course was on Old Aramaic dialect and its documents. In the Assyriological seminar bilingual dictionaries from Ebla were discussed. In 1983-84 Mesopotamian literature, and specifically the Epic of Gilgamesh, was the object of the general course, while the monographic course offered an introduction to Ugaritic language and documents. The seminar dealt with Neo-Assyrian letters and court epistolography as a literary genre. In 1984-85 the general course addressed literature and politics in the Ancient Near East. The monographic course focused on archaic Semitic languages: Old Akkadian, Eblaite and Amorrean and their relation to Aramaic, Hebrew and Arabic. In the seminar, Ugaritic poetic and historical texts and late cuneiform royal inscriptions were examined.

In 1984-85, besides an inter-departmental joint-seminary, two courses were offered: one on the myth of Neo-Assyrian empire in Eastern antiquity, in the classical world and in the nineteenth century, and an advanced class on Old Aramaic inscriptions. The following year, in addition to the inter-departmental joint-seminary, there was one introductory course on Comparative Semitic Grammar, with further study of Akkadian Royal inscriptions on one hand, and of Imperial Aramaic documents on the other. The courses offered in 1987-88 were the inter-departmental joint-seminary and a class on the morphology of Semitic languages. The monographic course addressed the sources of Ancient Near Eastern history.

Semitic Philology was not offered in the academic year 1988-89 and students of Hebrew, Persian and Arabic had the possibility to take courses in Medieval Hebrew Philology and Islamic or Iranian Philology. Given the great relevance of the subject in the curriculum, after a one-year pause, the teaching of Semitic Philology was resumed in 1989-90, and taught by Fales, as an external temporary professor (*supplente esterno*).

In 1990-91, Riccardo Contini joined the Department. In 1991-92 his course was divided in three parts: a general introduction to Comparative Semitic linguistics, elements of Syriac and examination of a choice of texts and, finally, an introduction to the Neo-Aramaic dialect from Ma'alula (Syria). With the same pattern, the 1992-93 course focused on the languages of pre-Islamic Arabia and on Aramaic epistolography. In 1993-94 Contini offered an introduction to Qumran Aramaic and Turoyo (Neo-Aramaic) and Arabic dialects from Anatolia. The study of Qumran Aramaic texts continued in 1994-95, while the third part of the course consisted in an introduction to Syriac language. Besides the usual first part of the course devoted to an introduction to Comparative Semitic linguistics, in 1995-96 the monographic course treated Targumic Aramaic. Elements of Epigraphic South Arabian, with examination of a choice of texts, were offered in the third section of the course. In 1996-97 the course was divided in two parts: a monographic section featuring an introduction to Western Neo-Aramaic and a seminar on Jewish Aramaic, with selected readings from the Targumim.

Semitic Philology was not offered in 1997-98. In 1998-99 in addition

to an introduction to Comparative Semitic linguistics, Contini offered a course on the *Peshitta*, the Syriac translation of the Old Testament, and a seminar on Syriac sources on the Crusades.

Finally, the academic year 1999-2000 was the last year Contini taught at Ca' Foscari. He offered a course on the Aramaic literary work *The Story of Ahiqar* between Elephantine and the Old Testament, and a seminar on Nabataean dialect.

From the academic year 2000-01 Semitic Philology was offered by this writer. In 2000-01 the course included a general introduction to Comparative Semitic linguistics and a monographic course on Palmyrene Aramaic.

As a result of the curriculum reform, from the academic year 2001-02 the course was divided in two parts or units (*primo* and *secondo modulo*). The first part consisted of a general introduction, illustrating Semitic languages, their phonology and morphology, with a focus on the distinctive features of Middle Aramaic. The second unit was devoted to a study of role and representation of women according to Middle Aramaic epigraphic and iconographic records. The topic of the 2002-03 course (first part) offered an introduction to Aramaic epigraphs on cuneiform tablets of the Neo-Assyrian, Neo and Late Babylonian and Achaemenid periods; in the second part a choice of inscriptions from the cuneiform archives of Murashu (Nippur), the Kasr archive (Babylon) and Neirab (Syria) was discussed. In 2003-04, besides the first introductory course, the second part focused on Middle Aramaic, with a discussion of chosen Nabataean, Palmyrene and Hatran inscriptions. In 2004-05 the second part of the course dealt with Imperial Aramaic and specifically with features of the Egyptian-Aramaic contracts from Elephantine, and an analysis of the legal language. The 2005-06 second part of the course centred on Aramaic documents from the second century BC to the third century AD. In 2006-07 the course was taught by Fiorella Scagliarini, with the usual introduction to Semitic Languages and a seminar on pre-Islamic inscriptions from North-Arabia.

From the academic year 2007-08, the course was taught by this writer and divided, as customary, into two parts: an introduction to Semitic languages and a monographic course on the Aramaic language of sale: from fifth century BC and later contracts, including legal formulae embedded in Nabataean and Palmyrene monumental inscriptions. In 2008-09 the second part of the course centred on Old Hebrew epigraphs, while in 2009-10 the second part was devoted to an introduction to Old Aramaic dialect and a presentation of its most significant epigraphic records.

In 2010-11 two Semitic Philology courses were offered: for the first degree course (*Corso di laurea triennale*), an introduction to ancient and modern Semitic languages (thirty hours) and, for the second degree course (*Corso di laurea magistrale* = MA degree course), a study of food and drink consumption according to Aramaic epigraphic sources (thirty hours).

From the academic year 2011-12, the course of Semitic Philology was

reorganised as one single unit for a total of thirty hours. In addition to the introduction to ancient and modern Semitic languages, their different writing systems and a discussion of relevant documents, attention was given to this writer's area of research, that is Aramaic epigraphy and aspects of social history and legal language from Imperial Aramaic to middle and late Aramaic documents. Whenever possible, given the amount of time now allocated to the course, additional in-depth analyses were offered: in 2012-13 on the study of samples of Aramaic and Hebrew inscriptions from the Syrian site of Dura Europos, in domestic buildings and from the local synagogue; in 2013-14 on an introduction to Aramaic and North-Arabic pre-Islamic funerary inscriptions; in 2014-15 on a close-up examination of the different writing systems of the Semitic languages; in 2015-16 on a lexical study of names of professions and official roles according to Aramaic inscriptions and, in 2016-17, special attention was given to the mobility of Jews and to the networks the Jewish communities in Syria, in ancient Aramaic-speaking contexts.

Following the tragic events that led to the murder of the foremost Syrian archaeologist Khaled al-As'ad, and to destruction of monuments of Palmyra, to name just some of them, the temples of Bel and Baalshamin, the tower tombs, and artefacts in the former local museum, two conferences were held in Warsaw (April 2016) and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (May 2016). Issues from the two papers delivered by this writer at those conferences were discussed in the 2016-17 and 2017-18 Semitic Philology course, alongside other themes developed in other papers delivered at recent congresses on Aramaic and Palmyrene Studies.

The choice to draw attention to Middle Aramaic material, was especially done to meet the interests of Ca' Foscari students majoring in Arabic. Together with those majoring in Hebrew, they form the core audience in Semitic Philology classes, while other students major in Persian, Turkish or Archaeology, Ancient Near Eastern History and Assyriology.

Over the last fifteen years, Erasmus students from Spain, Germany and Belgium have been a welcome addition to the Semitic Philology classes. Ca' Foscari students participating to the Overseas and Erasmus Programmes have conducted small epigraphic research and activities abroad, in Museum collections, or on funerary epigraphs, as part of their Semitic Philology individual exam programme.

Moreover, examples of both first and second level degree originated from materials discussed in the Semitic Philology classes. Two recent thesis can be cited: the work of Francesca P. De Stales (2017) on the making of the collection of the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul started from the analysis, in Semitic Philology classes, of the Palmyrene collection housed in that Museum and on the origin of that and other collections of Ancient Near Eastern artifacts from territories that formerly belonged to the Ottoman Empire; and the thesis of Alice Salvadego (2017), whose research

topic was suggested during the presentation of stories of Aramaic fugitives during the Bar Kokhba anti-Roman revolt. She later used that ancient example as a model to investigate the theme of estrangement and exile in modern Palestinian narrative.

The broad scope of the subject of the course of Semitic Philology represents its appeal to Ca' Foscari students, not only to those interested in the Ancient Near East, but also to students interested in modern Semitic languages and contemporary historical and social issues. The course in Semitic Philology (especially as it was conceived by Pennacchietti and Contini, with attention to Neo-Aramaic and modern Aramaic dialects, or Scagliarini's and this writer's focus on pre-Islamic, Middle Aramaic and Nabataean or Palmyrene epigraphy) and an introduction on the general features of Semitic languages are fundamental methodological tools for Ca' Foscari students. Moreover, thanks to Semitic Philology, students acquire a better understanding of the phonological and morphological features of the language they major in and an awareness of the complex picture of Semitic languages in their chronological framework and wide geographical setting.

In his 1991 discussion on the teaching of Arabic at Ca' Foscari, Eros Baldissera concluded that he felt a pressing need for a course in Philology and History of Arabic language. He deemed important that this teaching could "free itself from Semitic Philology, so far oriented towards the ancient" (Baldissera 1991, 86). He also considered Semitic Philology "not so useful for students of Arabic", because "so far it has mainly treated theoretical and practical aspects of Semitic languages too early than Arabic".³

This view certainly does not reflect the objectives, the methodological approach and the topics of the courses in Semitic Philology that have been offered at Ca' Foscari, from its very beginning, almost fifty years ago, and especially over the last thirty years.

³ Baldissera 1991, 86 in the original text: "E in tema di esigenze sentite val la pena di ribadire quella di un insegnamento di una filologia dell'arabo, una storia della lingua araba, per emanciparsi dalla filologia semitica, finora orientata verso l'antico in quanto nel suo ambito finora sono stati trattati per lo più aspetti teorico-pratici di lingue semitiche troppo anteriori all'arabo risultando quindi di non grande utilità per lo studente arabista senza interessi specificamente semitisti".

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

edited by Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin

'Ad me'ah ve-hamishim

Notes on the Teaching of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at Ca' Foscari, from 1950 to Today

Dario Miccoli

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Abstract The teaching of Hebrew at Ca' Foscari officially began in 1965, under the guidance of Franco Michelini Tocci and continued until today thanks to researchers and professors specialised in Bible Studies, as well as modern Hebrew, Israeli culture and Jewish Studies more generally. Earlier than that, the early '50s had seen the birth of a short-lived Hebrew *letturato* taught by two rabbis, Elio Toaff and Leone Leoni, thanks to an agreement between Ca' Foscari and the Union of the Italian Jewish Communities. Basing upon archival documents and interviews with some of the people involved, this essay aims to reconstruct the development of the teaching of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University of Venice, contextualising it within the history of Italian Orientalism and that of the Jews of Italy in the period that goes from 1950 to today.

Summary 1 Venice, December 1950. – 2 Hebrew and Orientalism in Modern Italy. – 3 The Teaching and Studying of Hebrew at Ca' Foscari from 1965 Onwards. – 4 'To One Hundred and Fifty'.

Keywords Hebrew. Jewish Studies. Orientalism. Venice. Jewish history.

1 Venice, December 1950


On Monday 4 December 1950, Elio Toaff – without a doubt the most significant personality of postwar Italian Judaism and Chief Rabbi of Rome from 1951 to 2001 – inaugurated the first Hebrew class at the Istituto Universitario di Economia e Commercio of Venice, giving the speech *Storia e vitalità della lingua ebraica* in the *aula L* of Ca' Foscari, to the presence of

The writing of this chapter – which has been for me, a graduate and now a lecturer at Ca' Foscari, both a scholarly and almost sentimental endeavour – would not have been possible without the support and advice of many of my colleagues and friends. I wish to thank Tsipora Baran, Piero Capelli, Maria Grazia Masetti-Rouault, Tommaso Munari and, most of all, Giuliano Tamani and Emanuela Trevisan Semi. My gratitude goes also to Antonella Sattin of the Archivio Storico of Ca' Foscari and Gisèle Lévy of the Archivio Storico dell'Unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane of Rome and lastly Manuela Saladini of the Segreteria Didattica and Stefano Patron of the Library of the Department of Asian and North African Studies.

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the Israeli Consul-General in Rome and other authorities. In the previous months, the Dean of the Institute – the economic historian Gino Luzzatto, himself of Jewish origin (Lanaro 2006, 735-40) – had discussed the idea of opening this course with the President of the Union of the Italian Jewish Communities (UCII), the Venetian-born Raffaele Cantoni. Cantoni had proposed “creat[ing] a *lettorato* of Hebrew in the Faculty of Languages”, specifying that the salary of the lecturer – Elio Toaff, then Chief Rabbi of Venice – would be paid by the UCII.¹ Although Luzzatto – who was also Vice-President of the Jewish Community of Venice from 1945 until his death in 1964 (Levis Sullam 2002) – supported the initiative, he feared that the class would have no students, since “among the many students of Commerce, no one is interested in culture per se [...], as for those of Foreign Languages, almost all are *poveri maestri elementari* (poor primary school teachers) and nothing can be hoped from their part”. Mocking the racist lexicon of the Italian Fascist bureaucracy, Luzzatto suggested solving the problem by “ensuring the attendance of three or four Jewish young men, who would then convince a few... Aryans”.²

Even though these first Hebrew classes do not seem to be mentioned either in the minutes of the Board of Executives of Ca' Foscari or in those of the Council of the Faculty of Economics, they must have lasted for about three academic years, from 1950-51 to 1952-53. Their launch grew out of a cooperation programme promoted by the UCII, together with the State of Israel and the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which foresaw the introduction of Hebrew classes to Italian universities and of Italian classes to Israeli higher learning institutions. Thus, between 1950 and 1959, Hebrew classes were opened in Venice as well as in the universities of Padua, Trieste, Rome, Genoa, Florence and the Università Bocconi of Milan. All were taught by the local rabbis, except for the short-lived *lettorato* of Rome, taught for one year by the journalist and intellectual Carlo Alberto Viterbo.³

In Venice, Hebrew was listed among the subjects offered by the Foreign Languages and Literatures section of the Faculty of Economics – whose council approved its introduction in a meeting of the end of October 1950.⁴

1 This is a mistake on the part of Cantoni, since the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures was not established until 1954 (Meregalli 1991, 23).

2 Archivio Storico dell'unione delle Comunità Ebraiche Italiane (AUCEI), Attività UCII dal 1948, b. 231, f. 91-4, Cattedre di ebraico (Ebr.)/Venezia, Luzzatto to Cantoni, 26 July 1950. If not otherwise said, all the quotations have been translated into English by the Author.

3 AUCEI, Attività UCII dal 1948, b. 231, f. 91-4, Ebr./Roma, Viterbo to the UCII President, 6 July 1952.

4 Archivio Storico Università Ca' Foscari (ASCF), serie rettorato, scatole lignee, b. 30/B, f. 11, Ebr., Luzzatto to Cantoni, 23 October 1950.

Toaff wrote in his autobiography *Perfidi giudei, fratelli maggiori* that in the first year the course had about twenty students, only two of whom were Jews (Toaff 2017, 153), and consisted of an introduction to Hebrew, both in its ancient and modern version. The bibliography included a selection of texts from the Bible, but also from post-biblical and modern literature, “with particular attention [...] to the economic-commercial and geographic content”.⁵ Toaff’s programme partly followed the suggestions made by the UCII in an undated and unsigned preparatory document on the *lettorati*: “for the commercial institutes, the readings and exercises will focus on practical rather than literary issues, such as: the Israeli industry, the various types of colonisation of Ere[t]z Israel”.⁶ As for the lessons of Biblical Hebrew, attention was to be paid to passages like “Exodus 21 and 23: the administration of justice”.

Following a second agreement with the UCII,⁷ in the academic year 1952-53 the *lettorato* was taught by Leone Leoni, who had served as Chief Rabbi of Ferrara before replacing Toaff in Venice when the former was nominated Chief Rabbi of Rome (Graziani Secchieri 2016). Also under Leoni, the course focused on ancient and modern Hebrew: the material ranged from excerpts of the Book of Isaiah up to medieval poems of Ibn Gabirol and early twentieth-century texts by some of the leading Hebrew writers like Haim Nahman Bialik, Shmuel Yosef Agnon and the poetess Rahel.⁸ Leoni’s class was attended by seven students who, by the end of the year, “could understand sentences and texts that I read to them and were able to answer simple questions in Hebrew”.⁹ Moreover, belying Luzzatto’s fears and to the surprise of the President of the Jewish Community of Venice Vittorio Fano, none of the attendees was a Jew.¹⁰

Clearly, the *lettorati* were motivated more by the desire to spread knowledge about the State of Israel – established only a few years earlier, in May 1948 – and about Jewish culture in general among Italian youth than by the idea of setting up an organised Hebrew course structure at Ca’ Foscari. The people involved belonged to a network of rabbis, Jewish communal leaders and intellectuals who had survived the traumas of the Second

5 ASCF, Istituto Universitario di Ca’ Foscari Venezia, *Programma della Sezione di Lingue e Letterature Straniere*, a.a. 1950/51, 53.

6 AUCEI, Attività UCII dal 1948, b. 231, f. 91-4, Ebr./Lettorato di lingua ebraica: proposta di programma per un corso biennale.

7 ASCF, serie rettorato, scatole lignee, b. 30/B, f. 11, Ebr., Lattes to Luzzatto, 23 December 1951.

8 ASCF, Istituto Universitario di Ca’ Foscari Venezia, *Programma della Sezione di Lingue e Letterature Straniere*, a.a. 1952/53, 56.

9 AUCEI, Attività UCII dal 1948, b. 231, f. 91-4, Ebr./Venezia, Leoni to UCII, 1 July 1952.

10 AUCEI, Attività UCII dal 1948, b. 231, f. 91-4, Ebr./Venezia, Fano to UCII, 11 July 1952.

World War and the Holocaust – Gino Luzzatto, together with others, had been removed from his position after the promulgation of the 1938 racial laws (Bettanin 2016, 73-80, 118-76) – and were now taking part in the ‘return to life’ of Italian Judaism (Sarfatti 1998; Schwarz 2004). Furthermore, both Toaff and Leoni had a deep interest in the educational realm (on the teaching of Hebrew in the Italian Jewish schools see Trevisan Semi, Sohn 1998, 98-111): Leoni fought against the closure of the school of the Jewish Community of Venice in the late ‘50s (Trevisan Semi 1997, 181) and participated in educational programmes broadcast by RAI, the Italian national television company (Graziani Secchiari 2016, 70-1). Toaff instead was to become head of the Italian Rabbinical College and always talked of teaching as “my greatest satisfaction, for which I never cease to thank the heavens” (Toaff 2017, 227).

The Hebrew *lettorato* disappears from the faculty guidebooks in 1953. Even though the exact reasons for its closure remain unclear, it is likely that this was due to the limited number of students, cuts in the financial support given by the UCII and, last but not least, the administrative restructuring of Ca' Foscari that would lead to the establishment of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures in 1954. In any case, in 1961, when the Israeli Consul in Milan asked Giulio Anau, the Secretary of the UCII, “whether a Chair or *lettorato* of Hebrew still exist in the universities of Bologna and Venice and who the lecturers are”,¹¹ Anau answered negatively, adding “I do not believe those universities even possess any Jewish or Israel-related publications”.¹²

2 Hebrew and Orientalism in Modern Italy

If, as I have suggested, the *lettorati* reflected the postwar history of the Jews of Italy and their relations with the newly-born State of Israel, in order to understand how a Chair of Hebrew makes its appearance at Ca' Foscari, one should rather go back to the history of Italian Orientalism and to the place that Hebrew and Semitic Studies occupied in it. It is fair to argue that in Italy – until the second half of the nineteenth century at least – Hebrew was considered to be a subject primarily of interest to Jewish or Catholic scholars, especially when it came to the religious and biblical dimension of the language. Unlike other European countries, in Italy the study of ancient Hebrew and Judaism for purely academic purposes long remained a marginal enterprise (Facchini 2005, 46), unless conceived in philological or archaeological perspective as part of the field

11 AUCEI, Attività UCII dal 1948, b. 231, f. 91-4, Ebr./Varie, Smilan to Anau, 6 November 1961.

12 AUCEI, Attività UCII dal 1948, b. 231, f. 91-4, Ebr./Varie, Anau to Smilan, 9 November 1961.

of Semitic Studies (Rinaldi 1971). And with the partial exception of studies devoted to the history and literary production of the Jews of Italy, post-biblical Hebrew was even less relevant (Sierra 1971, 70-1).

One of the first scholars seeking to apply a scientific approach to the field was David Castelli, born in Livorno in 1836. A “‘rationalist’ and non-conformist Jew” (Levi della Vida 2004, 66), in his works – from *Leggende talmudiche* (1869) to *Il Messia secondo gli ebrei* (Castelli 1874) – and in his activities as a lecturer of Hebrew at the Istituto di Studi Pratici e Superiori of Florence, where he began teaching in 1875, Castelli utilised new approaches to the study of Judaism based on a rigorous analytic methodology and a critical reading of the biblical text, as per the post-Enlightenment *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (science of Judaism) and in opposition to the rabbinical tradition (Facchini 2005, 202-5).

Giorgio Levi della Vida is another scholar embodying the Italian Orientalist school at its best. Born in Venice in 1886 into a family of Jewish origin that was “non observant, but of patriotic traditions” (Nallino 1968, 306), Levi della Vida studied Hebrew and Arabic at the University of Rome in the early 1900s under the guidance of eminent Orientalists like Ignazio Guidi. He contributed to Leone Caetani’s *Annali dell’Islam* (Caetani [1905-26] 1972) then took up positions first as Professor of Arabic Language and Islamic Studies at the Istituto Orientale of Naples in 1913 and then as Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Studies at the University of Rome in 1919. Levi della Vida was one of the twelve Italian professors expelled from academia for refusing to take the oath to Fascism in October 1931 (Boatti 2001). After the 1938 racial laws, he became Professor of Semitic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania and then in San Diego, holding this position until his return to Rome in 1945, where he died in 1967. Even though he was a Semitist and scholar of the Islamic world more than of Hebrew (Fales 2010; Facchini 2014), Levi della Vida left an indirect mark on the history of Hebrew teaching at Ca’ Foscari, especially as regards the cultural meanings of Judaism, the ‘Oriente’ and their multiple ties to Europe.

Umberto Cassuto, who was probably one of the most important scholars of the Hebrew Bible of the first half of the twentieth century, first in Italy and then in Israel, came from a very different background. Born in Florence in 1883, Cassuto was Chief Rabbi of Florence between 1922 and 1924, and from 1932 he replaced Levi della Vida as Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Studies at the University of Rome (Rigano 2016). In 1938 Cassuto resettled in Jerusalem where he taught Bible Studies at the Hebrew University until his death in 1951 (Rofé, Piattelli 2016; Zatelli 2016). He is known as an acute exegete of the Bible and author of commentaries to the Torah as well as of important monographs like *Gli ebrei a Firenze nell’età del Rinascimento* (Cassuto 1918) and *Storia della letteratura ebraica postbiblica* (1938).

3 The Teaching and Studying of Hebrew at Ca' Foscari from 1965 Onwards

As if establishing an ideal connection with the existing Orientalist tradition, the first Professor of Hebrew Language and Literature in Venice was Franco Michelini Tocci, a disciple of Giorgio Levi della Vida. His appointment in 1965 was intended to help meet Ca' Foscari increased staff' needs following the creation of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures in 1954 (Meregalli 1991, 23) and then of the degree in Oriental Languages and Literatures in 1965. Moreover, Maria Nallino – daughter of the great Islamist Carlo Nallino, who was Professor of Arabic Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari from 1962 onwards (Baldissera 1991, 83; see also Zilio-Grandi in this volume) – also played an active role in recruiting colleagues from other universities so as to create a Venetian school of Oriental Studies.¹³ Thus Ca' Foscari could at last become “a true *politecnico* of the commercial languages of Europe and the East”, as Luigi Luzzatti had hoped when founding the Regia Scuola Superiore di Commercio in 1868.¹⁴

Prior to his appointment, Michelini Tocci was *assistente* to the Chair of Semitic Philology at the University of Rome and before that he had served as cultural attaché to the Italian Embassy in Israel for two years.¹⁵ A scholar of ancient Judaism and of the history of religions – see, for example, his *I manoscritti del Mar Morto* (Michelini Tocci 1967) – Michelini Tocci was also interested in the study of modern Jewish literature and in fields such as psychoanalysis and mysticism. The committee that promoted him to Full Professorship of Hebrew in 1969 – which numbered some of the most distinguished Orientalists of the time, from Sabatino Moscati to Alessandro Bausani – underlined his versatility, noting “the original contribution given [...] in a field that was essential to open to the interest of the Italian culture”.¹⁶ One of his first students recalls the depth and eclecticism of his teaching, that “open[ed] whole new worlds” to the young men and women attending his classes (Trevisan Semi 1991, 97).

In the academic year 1965-66, Michelini Tocci's first class consisted of an introduction to the Hebrew language, based on the one hand on the book that is still the most widely used grammar of Biblical Hebrew in Italy today, the *Grammatica della lingua ebraica* by Antonio Carrozzini

13 Telephone interview of the Author with Giuliano Tamani, 20 November 2017.

14 *Notizie e dati* 1871, 34; see Boscaro 2007.

15 ASCF, serie personale docente, f. Michelini Tocci Franco (1965-1970), Curriculum accademico-scientifico dei professori universitari, 1966.

16 ASCF, serie personale docente, f. Michelini Tocci Franco (1965-1970), Relazione della commissione giudicatrice per la promozione del prof. Franco Michelini Tocci ad ordinario di Lingua e Letteratura Ebraica, 1969.

(1961), and, on the other, upon the modern Hebrew textbook *'Elef milim* (Rozen 1958).¹⁷ From 1968-69 onwards, that is, after the creation of the degree in Oriental Languages and Literatures, the programmes required an extremely rich reading list for the exams, including classics like Soggin's *Introduzione all'Antico Testamento* (1968) and Klausner's *Storia della letteratura neo-ebraica* (1926). Although only a few Italian translations of Hebrew authors were available at the time, several were listed in the bibliography: from two novels by Agnon, who won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1966, to *Un re di carne e sangue* by Moshe Shamir (1959).¹⁸

In 1969, Giuliano Tamani – a young scholar of medieval Hebrew literature and palaeography from the Catholic University of Milan – joined Michelini Tocci at Ca' Foscari. Tamani, who worked in the university until his retirement in 2012, became the guiding figure of Hebrew and Jewish Studies when Michelini Tocci left his post in 1972 to become Professor of History of Religions in the Ca' Foscari's Faculty of Humanities – a choice dictated by the wish to better pursue his own research interests.¹⁹ Tamani began by teaching Biblical Hebrew and, as time went by, included other subjects closer to his area of expertise such as medieval Hebrew literature, philology and Jewish philosophy. He also played a key role in promoting the acquisition of books and manuals of Hebrew and Jewish Studies – which were, until then, virtually absent from the university libraries.²⁰

In 1970, Emanuela Trevisan Semi – one of the first graduates of Hebrew at Ca' Foscari – became part of the teaching staff, remaining until her retirement in 2017 and specialising in contemporary Hebrew literature and modern Jewish Studies. Other lecturers teaching in the period from the mid-'70s to the mid-'90s were Frederick Mario Fales, Fabrizio Pennacchietti, Bruno Chiesa and Giulio Busi. For several years, Ca' Foscari also had an adjunct lecturer in Yiddish, Sigrid Sohn. From the early 2000s, a new generation of professors and researchers in Hebrew and Jewish Studies has been active at Ca' Foscari, working on subjects as different as Biblical and Medieval Hebrew, the history of the Jewish thought, the Talmud, Israeli literature, Jewish and Israeli history, and Sephardic and Mizrahi Studies.

Although *esercitazioni di ebraico moderno* are only mentioned in the faculty guidebooks from 1974-75, it seems that these conversation classes did exist before and that the first *lettore* was an Israeli medical student

17 ASCF, Istituto Universitario di Ca' Foscari Venezia, *Programma della Sezione di Lingue e Letterature Straniere*, anno accademico 1965-66, 61.

18 ASCF, Università degli Studi di Venezia Ca' Foscari, Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere, *Notiziario/Guida per lo studente*, anno accademico 1968-69, 79-83.

19 Interview of the Author with Emanuela Trevisan Semi, Bologna, 4 November 2017.

20 Telephone interview of the Author with Giuliano Tamani, 20 November 2017.

at the University of Padua.²¹ For several years, starting from 1974-75 the *esercitazioni* were given by Menachem Emanuel Artom, a rabbi and author of an important Hebrew-Italian dictionary.²² His classes were based upon the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's *Sifron la-student* (Blum-Kulka, Ashuri 1968) and – in the case of more advanced students – included the translation of texts by Israeli authors.²³ As the number of students increased, the so-called *lettorato* became both an opportunity for students to converse as if in an Israeli *ulpan* ('language school'), and an occasion to get to know Jewish and Israeli everyday life and culture by reading newspapers and children's books, and visiting art exhibitions or the Israeli pavilion of the Venice Biennale, as well as the Ghetto and the old Jewish cemetery at the Lido.²⁴

The first graduates of Hebrew were two young women who, in 1969, defended dissertations on the poetry of Yehudah Amihai and Haim Nahman Bialik, respectively. Other dissertation topics chosen in those years concerned the Bible, Venetian Jewish history, Israeli society and the medieval poet Yehudah Halevi.²⁵ The topics chosen point out "a new type of student" who does not follow the traditional Semitic Studies curriculum and is "interested in Judaism and Hebrew not only as something related to the past, but to our times".²⁶ The intellectual stimuli given by the lecturers surely had a role in this, as confirmed by a graduate from the late '70s who subsequently embarked upon a successful academic career abroad but still remembers the "special atmosphere" of her university years and the mark they left upon her: "Entering Ca' Cappello", where the Seminario di Lingua e Letteratura Ebraica was transferred in the early 1970s, "meant being inside a never-ending lecture. Professors had discussions with students outside the classroom [...]. Perhaps because we were so few, we had very direct relations".²⁷ More generally, we should also consider the repercussions of the increased space occupied in Italy by Jewish and then, from the '80s onwards, Israeli culture: just consider the historic visit to the Roman

21 Telephone interview of the Author with Giuliano Tamani, 20 November 2017.

22 Menachem Emanuel Artom (1916-1992) was the son of Elia Samuele (1887-1965) – a central figure in the history of the Italian Jews, who was Chief Rabbi of Turin, Tripoli, Ferrara and Florence, a scholar and teacher at the Italian Rabbinical College. After emigrating with his family to Palestine in 1939, Menachem followed in the path of his father and of his maternal uncle Umberto Cassuto as a Jewish Studies scholar, serving also as Chief Rabbi of Turin between 1985 and 1987 (Sierra 1993).

23 ASCF, Università degli Studi di Venezia Ca' Foscari, Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere, *Notiziario/Guida per lo studente*, anno accademico 1973-74, 127.

24 Interview of the Author with Tsipora Baran, Venice, 5 December 2017.

25 ASCF, Lista Tesi di Laurea 1914-91.

26 Interview of the Author with Emanuela Trevisan Semi, Bologna, 4 November 2017.

27 Telephone interview of the Author with Maria Grazia Masetti-Rouault, 7 November 2017.

synagogue by Pope John Paul II in 1986 and the echoes it had, the public debates on the Holocaust and the role of Fascism, and the great success of Israeli novelists like Abraham B. Yehoshua and David Grossman (Trevisan Semi 2010; Steindler Moscati 2009).

4 'To One Hundred and Fifty'

Since 1950, many generations of Hebrew scholars and students have passed over the threshold of Ca' Foscari. From 2013 to 2017, an average of twenty-eight students have been enrolled in the first year of the BA programme, much fewer in the MA and doctoral programmes. The library of Ca' Cappello holds almost 8,700 volumes and more than eighty journals, thirty of which have active subscriptions, in the field of Hebrew and Jewish Studies. Notwithstanding these successes, when it comes to the place of Hebrew in the Italian academic system overall, as Mauro Perani, President of the Italian Association for the Study of Judaism, noted, there is still "a great discrepancy between an increasingly popular and productive subject, mainly in extra-academic domains, and a scarcity of means and space granted to it by university regulations" (Perani 2005, 115). Trevisan Semi talked about the "desolating picture" that emerges when we consider the space allocated to Hebrew and Jewish Studies by Italian universities (Trevisan Semi 1991, 103). While, against the background of the increased precariousness affecting Italian universities, Tamani calls upon us to consider how "the rules of the game have changed" since the creation of the Chair of Hebrew at Ca' Foscari in the '60s, explaining that "the future of Hebrew is precarious if universities only take into account the number of students", leaving aside concerns about the broader cultural significance of the subject.²⁸

Surely, what remains is the wish to transmit the knowledge of a language and culture that are undoubtedly a key part of the heritage of both East and West, which Michelini Tocci, echoing Levi della Vida, defines as "two cultural areas [...], but not [...] two worlds or two different humankind" (Michelini Tocci 1970, 8). While trying to follow their teaching, and keeping in mind Toaff's and Leoni's pioneering classes, let us then hope that the 'Hebrew history' written by the city of Venice (Tamani 2007) and then by Ca' Foscari will continue for many years to come. Or – to paraphrase a well-known Jewish greeting – *'ad me'ah ve-hamishim* (to one hundred and fifty).²⁹

28 Telephone interview of the Author with Giuliano Tamani, 20 November 2017.

29 *'Ad me'ah ve-esrim* 'to one hundred and twenty' is the traditional Jewish birthday wish. Its origin is Genesis 6:3: "And the Lord said, my spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years".

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

edited by Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin

A *Cafoscarino* in the World: Arturo De Luciano

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Abstract Arturo De Luciano was first a student at the Royal High School of Commerce (Regia Scuola Superiore di Commercio) of Venice, then active in several commercial enterprises in Lebanon and in Europe. The Historical Archive of Ca' Foscari keeps a copy with dedication of a singular treatise he wrote on the breeding of silkworms, published in Arabic in Beirut in 1897. This brief contribution intends to present the figure of this *cafoscarino*, with particular attention to the international dimension of his training and professional activity.

Keywords Arturo De Luciano. Regia Scuola Superiore di Commercio. Silkworms breeding. International students. Lebanon.

Since its foundation, Ca' Foscari has demonstrated an international vocation concreted in the teaching of foreign languages, European and extra-European, in the *curriculum studiorum* of the Regia Scuola Superiore di Commercio. The figure of Arturo De Luciano is an interesting testimony of the opening to the world typical of Ca' Foscari, even in this first phase of its history when language education was ancillary to commercial studies. Citizen of the world, he always maintained a privileged link with his *alma mater* and the city of Venice. A multifaceted and polyglot person, De Luciano is an example of the international dimension that still characterises Ca' Foscari University and its students.

Arturo De Luciano, son of 'cav. De Luciano-*bey*',¹ was born on 12 July 1859 in the island of Rhodes, at the time part of the Ottoman Empire.² He studied at the 'De Propaganda Fide' college in Smyrna (nowadays Turkey) and at

1 From the Turkish *beg* (lord): honorary title of the Ottoman empire used to designate a particular type of nobility, i.e. the fiscal or military manager of an administrative district and then as a sign of respect.

2 This and the following information on his career as a student are taken from the matriculation register of Arturo De Luciano (Regia Scuola Superiore di Commercio di Venezia, *Registro Matricolare*, anno 1879-1880, 147 r. 148).

I thank Dr. Antonella Sattin (Archivio Storico di Ca' Foscari) without whose precious help in finding documents and information on Arturo De Luciano this piece would not have been written.

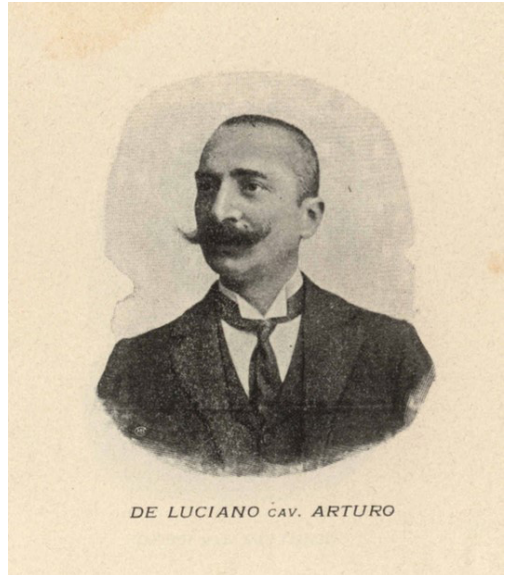


Figure 1. Photo of Arturo De Luciano
(from *Bollettino* 24, 1906, 36)

the Saint Joseph University in Beirut.³ He was enrolled at the Regia Scuola Superiore di Commercio of Venice in 1879, with the admission examination obtained by presenting “a certificate from the Superior of the College of Propaganda”. Registered for the second time, with provisional registration, in the 3rd course of the ‘Sezione Consolare’, in the academic year 1882-83 he finally abandons the school. We know that he moved abroad for professional reasons. He features among the fifty-two members residing in the most diverse locations out of Italy (*Bollettino* 12, 1902, 68). Since 1897 he carries out various professional occupations and actively participates in the life of the Italian community in Beirut (then in the Ottoman Empire): he was “head of a commercial house in Beirut in Syria, agent of the Italian General Navigation (Navigazione Generale Italiana),⁴ judge at the consular court and the mixed court, and president of the Italian gymnastic club and the Italian charity association [in Beirut]” (*Bollettino* 24, 1906, 37).

In 1919, again in Beirut, he is involved in a trial that opposes him to Elia Sabbagh (Raccuia 2015, 62). We find him later in Barcelona⁵ as a shipowner

3 The Université Saint-Joseph is a prestigious Francophone university founded by the Jesuits in 1875 and still active in Beirut.

4 Founded in 1881 by the merger between the shipping companies Florio (Palermo) and Rubattino (Genoa) that operated in the Mediterranean and in the routes to the two Americas.

5 In 1924 his name features in the chapter “Riparazioni” (Raccuia 2015, 100-108, 102); he was probably already in Spain.

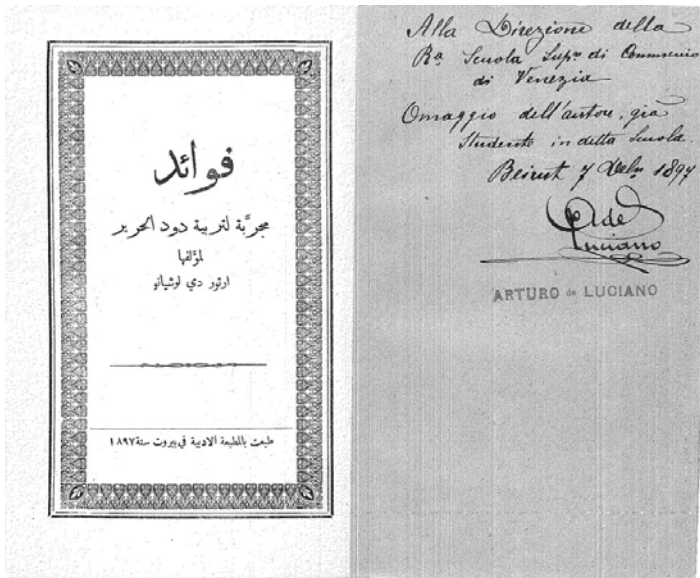


Figure 2. Title page of *Fawā'id muğarraba li-tarbiyat dūd al-ḥarīr* with the dedication to the alma mater)

of the Lega Navale Italiana (Italian Navy League) (Agustina 2014, 26) where he features in 1925 as auditor of the Italian Chamber of Commerce (Gonzalez i Vilalta 2009, 37); in 1936-37 he is listed among the members of the Fascist party (Raccuia 2015, 200). After this date there are no traces of him.

De Luciano also worked as a publicist: he was among the collaborators of the ephemeral Venetian artistic-literary periodical (it only lasted from May to August 1881) *La Gioventù Italiana*, which published poetry, essays of novels and pieces of literature and which included among its collaborators the famous Venetian playwright Giacinto Gallina (see Iveser 2018b). Another cooperation, more in line with his professional activity, is that with the *Bollettino del R. Museo Commerciale di Venezia* (originally *Rivista Commerciale d'Oriente*) published in Venice from 1907 to 1911, which contained relevant information on economic relations with the countries of the Levant, the Balkan area, Russia and the Far East: reports of fairs and exhibitions, reviews and reports of specialised texts, etc. (Iveser 2018a).

De Luciano seems to be strongly attached to Ca' Foscari and to Venice as well. Perpetual member of the Association of Old Students of the High School of Commerce (Associazione degli Antichi Studenti della Scuola Superiore di Commercio), he sends to his *alma mater* a copy with dedication of a work he penned, a manual of twenty pages for the breeding of silkworms, in Arabic: *Fawā'id muğarraba li-tarbiyat dūd al-ḥarīr* (Tested

Information for the Breeding of Silkworms) (De Luciano 1897).⁶ The dedication, dated Beirut, 7 October [?] 1897, states "To the Direction of the Royal High School of Commerce of Venice. Gift of the author, former Student at the School", it is undersigned with De Luciano's both signature and stamp (fig. 2).

In his preface the author states that he learned the topic during his studies at the Royal High School of Commerce of Venice. Noting that "in the land of Syria" (De Luciano 1897, 3) silkworm breeding is practiced with little profit and antiquated methods, with this brochure it intends to offer professionals in the sector an instrument to improve their activity and to keep the silkworms in good health. The detailed treatment, divided into nine sections, closes with the guarantee of success for those who follow the instructions contained in the manual and with the (non-disinterested!) recommendation to purchase "eggs of Italian silkworms available from the author" (De Luciano 1897, 20). The elaborate dedication to Na'ûm Bāšā (Naum Coussa), the Greek Catholic of Melkite rite who was governor of the Province of Mount Lebanon between 1892 and 1902,⁷ is an interesting testimony of De Luciano's relations with the local authorities.

De Luciano, a businessman, was also a man of letters: on the occasion of the collapse of the bell tower of San Marco (1902) he published a poem in French in the *Bollettino* of Associazione degli Antichi Studenti (1902, 48-9). The nostalgia for his city of adoption (and probably also for youth) clearly transpires from the lines of the poem composed on 31 July 1902 in Beirut. The fate of the bell tower, referred to in anthropomorphic terms, is thus assimilated to De Luciano's fate, for his words seem to allude to some difficulties of his life in Lebanon.

Non ! C'est incroyable !
Même, épouvantable !
Quoi, Lui s'écrouler,
Se laisser tomber ?
Finir en un instant sa vie,
Sans se plaindre, sans agonie ?
Impossible ! C'est trop fort !
Je ne puis croire à sa mort !
Cependant l'annonce est officielle,
Je ne puis, donc, douter de la nouvelle !
Hélas ! Je n'entendrai plus ton doux carrillon,

6 The copy, which bears the signature Misc. B 1842, is kept in the Ca' Foscari Historical Archive.

7 Mutašarrifiyya Ġabal Lubnān: an administrative division established in 1860 by the Ottoman Empire in accordance with foreign powers and subject to the jurisdiction of a foreign Christian governor (who should have not been a Turkish or a Lebanese).

Bercer à minuit, rêves et imagination,
Ni verrai de ton Ange d'or la robe,
Scintiller aux premiers éclats de l'Aube ?
Je ne viendrai plus, dans l'ombre, le soir,
Parler à tes pieds d'amour et d'espoir ?
Ni te contempler du fond noir de la lagune,
Quand au ciel brillent les Astres et la lune ?
Tout n'est plus, qu'un éloigné souvenir !
Dans ce monde tout doit un jour finir ?
Adieu ! Ami de ma jeunesse,
Je sens, comme toi, ma vieillesse.
Bientôt à mon tour. Je suivrai ton sort.
Je tomberai sans larmes, et ma mort,
Tranchera la lutte de cette pauvre vie
Passée à Beyrouth, au fond de la Syrie !

De Luciano, a polyglot and a citizen of the world, can be considered an interesting example of that openness to the world and of the combination of technical-commercial knowledge, humanistic training and linguistic skills that have characterised and continues to characterise the history of Ca' Foscari.

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The Importance of Being Diglottic

Colloquial Arabic Teaching at Ca' Foscari

Patrizia Zanelli
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Abstract Since the '70s Ca' Foscari teachers have been facing the challenge of diglossia that typifies the Arab world where the oral use of Standard Arabic is reserved to specific situations, while colloquial varieties of the same language are used for ordinary conversations. Thus, learning Colloquial Arabic is a paramount need to communicate with native Arabic speakers. Moreover, diglottic proficiency is necessary to access several contemporary cultural outputs of the Arab world. This article describes the features of Arabic diglossia and instructional approaches meant to cope with the phenomenon. It then offers a brief account of Colloquial Arabic teaching at Ca' Foscari, which has been a European vanguard in the field.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Arabic diglossia. – 3 Coping with Arabic Diglossia: Learning Needs and Teaching Approaches. – 3.1 Learning Needs. – 3.2 Teaching Approaches. – 4 Colloquial Arabic at Ca' Foscari: One of the Signs of a Long-Standing Avant-garde Bent.

Keywords Colloquial Arabic. Diglossia. Learning needs. Teaching approaches. Ca' Foscari.

1 Introduction

The Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University launched the official Colloquial Arabic Course in 2015, when this subject of study was not, however, a novelty at the Venetian academic institution, which has actually played a pioneering role in the field at both Italian (Kalati 2007, 289) and European level. In fact, the relatively recent establishing of the course is the result of a long list of instruction experiences carried out from the '70s onwards to face the challenge of diglossia that strongly characterises the Arab world. Being aware of the importance of knowing at least one Arabic dialect to communicate with native Arabic speakers, generations of Ca' Foscari teachers have tried to give their students the chance to fulfil this need. Moreover, since the '90s diglottic proficiency has become a paramount requirement for accessing online communications and various cultural outputs of the Arab world. This article describes the features of Arabic diglossia in order to explain learning needs stemming from such a sociolinguistic phenomenon and

instructional approaches tailored to cope with it. These clarifications introduce a brief account of Colloquial Arabic teaching at Ca' Foscari.

This contribute to an anthology celebrating the 150th anniversary of the founding of Ca' Foscari is partly based on my personal experience. As a matter of fact, I have been teaching Colloquial Arabic at the Venetian University since September 2013. In addition, I attended my first lesson at Ca' Foscari in November 1978, which makes 2018 the fortieth anniversary of the day I started to understand the multi-faceted meaning of learning Arabic as a living language.

2 Arabic Diglossia

Arabic is the official language of the twenty-two countries now forming the Arab League. Yet, the Arabophone world is linguistically very heterogeneous, being strongly characterised by diglossia that Ferguson ([1959] 1972) describes as a sociolinguistic situation in which educated speakers of a given speech community use two varieties of the same language, switching from one to the other according to the circumstances. They speak a high (H) standardised superposed learned variety to communicate with speakers from different dialect areas or on formal occasions; and a low (L) inherited colloquial variety for everyday conversations. Moreover, there are different models of diglossia that may arise and develop in various ways but it is never the mere stage of an evolutionary process (232-4). This kind of sociolinguistic situation is actually rather stable, for it “typically persists at least several centuries” and can even “last well over a thousand years” (240). Which is exactly the case of Arabic diglossia. In pre-Islamic (fifth-sixth century AD) Arabia, poets resorted to a super-dialectal constructed acrolect for their oral poems, but used tribal dialects for ordinary communication (Durand 2014, 112). After the Quranic revelation - traditionally believed to have started in 610 AD - the Quran and a corpus of pre-Islamic poetry became the foundations for the codification of what Arabs call *al-fuṣḥà* (the most eloquent language), a term translated as either ‘Classical’ or ‘Literary’ or ‘Standard’ Arabic. Alongside the propagation of the latter, the early Islamic conquests (seventh-eighth century) greatly contributed to the emergence of Neoarabic dialects (Blau 1977, 7) that partly developed through contacts with *fuṣḥà*, which still influences Arabic dialects today (Durand 2014, 159-62). The current geopolitical structure of the Arab world is largely the result of nineteenth and twentieth century European imperialism that also affected the sociolinguistic situation, which changed mostly in the territories under French domination: the Maghreb, Syria and Lebanon. As colonizers tried to exploit the dialect diversity of the area in order to divide it, ideologists of Arab nationalism rediscovered that the primary unifying identifying factor of the Arabs was language (Rodin-

son 1981, 6), i.e. *fushà*, which therefore gained a new secular-ideological significance next to its traditional religious one. On the other hand, the encounter with Western culture gave an accelerating boost to the Arab Renaissance (*Nahḍa*) movement that pioneered the development of MSA (Modern Standard Arabic), which differs from Classical Arabic only in vocabulary and a few stylistic features. In fact, most Arabs do not distinguish the two forms, perceiving them both as H and dialects as L, i.e. vulgar.

The unique prestige of *fushà* has prevented colloquial varieties, or rather groups thereof, from reaching the rank of autonomous official neo-languages, once the Arab world regained its independence in the second half of the twentieth century. But, due to many other factors, various urban dialects, chiefly those of capital cities, have de facto achieved the status of prestigious national vernaculars, giving rise to triglossia (Durand 2014, 81-2). This means that, in contemporary Arab societies, code switching involves a third variety, i.e. a mixture of MSA and colloquial, mostly termed 'Educated Spoken Arabic'.¹

In this article, the term CA (Colloquial Arabic) is used to indicate national or regional vernaculars.

3 Coping with Arabic Diglossia: Learning Needs and Teaching Approaches

Ferguson argues that the specification of function for H and L is one of the most important features of diglossia and that therefore each variety is appropriate only for one specific set of situations. Using H in an informal activity sounds as ridiculous as using L on a formal occasion (Ferguson [1959] 1972, 235-6).

All the above means that to be able to communicate efficiently and appropriately with the native speakers of a diglottic community an outsider has to know both H and L. Yet, most students of AFL (Arabic as a Foreign Language) still have few chances of learning CA, although academic institutions started to handle Arabic diglossia already in post-World War 2 in the United States and in the second half of the twentieth century in Europe (Younes 2015). Triggered by the Arab world's political-economic importance, the renewal of teaching Arabic as a foreign language initially occurred by replacing Classical Arabic with MSA, whereas the introduction of CA began later. In Europe the latter change was partly linked to the large presence of Arab immigrant youth in European universities. Being

1 Ryding (1991) has listed eleven other different terms used to indicate this mixed variety, e.g. 'Formal Spoken Arabic', 'inter-Arabic' and 'urban cultivated Arabic'. Moreover, Egyptian writer and playwright Tawfiq al-Ḥākīm (1898-1987) suggested the use of a 'Third Language' for theatre. Cf. Montaina 1973.

familiar with Arabic dialects, these students proved that MSA “was only part of the story” (Versteegh 2006, 10).

Interestingly, immigration from various origins was the main factor behind the drafting of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) that provides the proficiency guidelines followed since 2001. The history of Arabic instruction in the West has varied from one country to another due to different state policies, linked to fluctuating social, political and economic interests. The historical notes provided in the previous chapter explain why teaching dialects is usually viewed negatively in the Arab world, where therefore only a few universities have included CA in the AFL program (Versteegh 2006, 10).

3.1 Learning Needs

The results of various surveys conducted in the United States show that over the last three decades university students have been studying Arabic chiefly for communicating with native Arabic speakers, traveling/living in the Arab world and understanding the literature, culture and mass media thereof (Younes 2015, 24-5). A similar trend has been witnessed in Europe and, of course, also at Ca' Foscari. The findings of a 1989 survey carried out at the Venetian University demonstrated that most respondents were “studying Arabic language and literature to discover various Arab cultures by communicating with Arabic mother-tongues and, secondarily, for job-searching concerns” (Kallas 1990, 15; 1991, 74). Some recent interviews prove that Ca' Foscari students still have the same goals. They mostly want to learn Arabic and acquire knowledge of Arab culture and history to understand the events occurring in the Arab world (Abd Alaziz 2017).

Today's students can focus more on mass media, thanks to the widespread changes brought by the digital revolution that has been reshaping global societies since the early '90s. From then on the Internet and mobile phones have caused an unprecedented porousness of the boundaries between CA and MSA reflecting the oral-written dichotomy. Several Arabs use CA to write emails, short-texts and social network communications. Concurrently, Arabic dialects are invading literature more than ever while preserving their usual omnipresence in cinema and predominance in radio and television entertainment. The same goes for pop music and video clips, especially after of the 2011 'Arab spring' (Al-Batal 2018a, 8). All of these recent developments have made the need to acquire diglottic proficiency more urgent than ever for AFL students.

3.2 Teaching Approaches

Western universities have experimented three different ways to cope with the diglottic situation of the Arab world: 1) starting with MSA before introducing a dialect; 2) starting with a dialect; 3) starting with both varieties at the same time. For almost three decades scholars of TAFL (Teaching Arabic as a Foreign Language) have been debating over which of these approaches should be adopted as well as on the choice of the vernacular to be taught. In all cases the main difficulty faced by institutions planning to include CA in their curricula is the lack of teaching materials for many varieties (Versteegh 2006, 11).

3.2.1 Starting with MSA Before Introducing a Dialect

Most universities apply this method to introduce CA in the Arabic program. The usual choice is Egyptian, i.e. Cairene dialect, because of its wide circulation in the Arab world, its outstanding use in literature and online, and the profusion of teaching materials² for this variety that gives access to Arabic films and media much more than any other vernacular does (Versteegh 2006, 10-11; Woidich 2007, 83; Rosenbaum 2011). The second most frequent option is Levantine (*šāmī*), which includes features of Syrian, Lebanese, Jordanian and Palestinian. There are several teaching materials also for this regional CA,³ besides those created for each of the four varieties it englobes.

Promoters of this approach suggest that learning MSA first facilitates the subsequent acquisition of CA and avoids confusion caused by simultaneous exposure to the two varieties (Parkinson 1985, cited in Younes 2015, 25); moreover, it takes less time to learn a dialect than to gain proficiency in Standard Arabic, which requires studying a considerable amount of complex texts.

3.2.2 Starting with a Dialect

Some AFL programmes are based on this approach, which Woidich endorses arguing that learning a dialect first also facilitates the acquisition of any other variant of the same language and that switching from simple

2 The American University in Cairo Press has published numerous Egyptian Arabic textbooks, including a five-volume series, *Kallimni 'Arabi* (Speak Arabic to me) (2008-09), and a two-volume intensive course (Al-Tonsi, Al-Sawi, Massoud 2010-13).

3 Two recent textbooks for this regional CA are Al-Masri 2016 and Durand, Ventura 2017.

(colloquial) to more complex subjects and (standard) language structures is pedagogically more suitable (Woidich 2007, 79). He has been applying this model at the University of Amsterdam since the early 1990s, when he moreover published an Egyptian Arabic textbook (Woidich 1990)⁴ for part of the activities included in the curriculum. In the first year, CA is introduced in the first term, and MSA in the second term. The two modules are intertwined: MSA is taught in a contrastive manner with respect to the previously learned colloquial structures and lexicon, and through relexification, translexification and translation exercises. Both varieties are taught side by side, with each used for a specific set of tasks, throughout the second year that comprises a ten-week Arabic training (200 hours) at the Dutch-Flemish Institute in Cairo in the second term. The third year programme is carried out by listening to recordings of media broadcasts in CA and studying transcripts and classical texts (Woidich 2007, 81-2). The CEFR target level of the Bachelor's course is B1 (Threshold/Intermediate): students at University of Amsterdam are usually better in oral communication than those from other Dutch universities but they are less skilled in replicating activities, e.g. reading MSA aloud (91).

This order of teaching the two varieties aims at reflecting the real situation of the Arab world, where native speakers first learn a dialect and then *fushà* at school. Nicola, who promoted this naturalist approach for TALE, suggests that CA should always continue to be used for speaking in the classroom, once MSA is introduced as a written language (Nicola 1990, 42).

3.2.3 Starting with Both Varieties at the Same Time

This fully integrated approach aims at replicating in the classroom and in all teaching materials the diglottic situation as it is in the contemporary Arab world. Thus, a course should introduce MSA as a variety that is mainly written but also spoken in numerous situations, and a dialect mainly used for everyday conversations but also in artistic literary forms (Al-Batal 1992, 298). Moreover, the two varieties are treated as complementary and equally important, being the components of one linguistic system of communication (Younes 2015, 32). Cornell University provides an integrated program that introduces both Levantine and MSA in the first few hours of instruction, with each variety used in its functional domains. Oral communication in CA focuses on the familiar, concrete and informal; reading and writing activities in MSA cover areas of overlap between the

4 Woidich wrote the textbook *Ahlan Wa Sahlan* (Welcome) in German (Woidich 1990); later, a Dutch version *Kullu Tamâm* (Everything is O.K.) by Woidich and Heinen-Nasr appeared (1995) and was also published in English (2004).

two varieties, e.g. geography of the Arab world. The Bachelor's degree course aims at developing the four language skills simultaneously and code switching ability along the speech continuum (33).

Brustad, Al-Batal and Al-Tonsi co-authored the most widely used textbook series designed for applying the fully integrated approach in a four-year period. The programme begins introducing basic reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in MSA and CA. Egyptian featured in the first two editions ([1995] 2004) of the series, but Levantine has been added in the third edition (2011) which therefore presents the three varieties.

Promoting the vision of Standard and Colloquial Arabic as 'one language' against the predominating vision of a 'firewall of separation' between the two, Al-Batal (2018a) describes the different models of integration of CA in the AFL programmes of five US universities. The description shows a significant common feature: the number of instruction hours devoted to MSA grows considerably with the rise of the level of the courses. The increase begins either in the first or second term of the first year or in the first term of the second year. Moreover, most curricula focus on one dialect only throughout the three years (14-18). A truly different model is applied at the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center – one of the first in the United States to adopt a fully integrated approach in the late '50s –, which provides instruction for sixty-four weeks with six to seven class hours per day. Students simultaneously learn to read and write in MSA, and to speak in MSA mixed with four dialects taught right from the beginning: Iraqi started in 2009; Levantine in 2011; Egyptian in 2013; Sudanese in 2015 (18).

Palmer published two surveys of AFL students in the United States. In his first article (2007), he denounces the general educational deficiency in coping with Arabic diglossia and strongly recommends the fully integrated approach. Yet, in his second essay (2008), he refers diverging views expressed by the students. They all deemed learning CA important and that it should be undertaken before traveling in the Arab world, but only 57% of them agreed on the approach. Two perceptions, i.e. confusion deriving from simultaneous exposure to the two varieties during the first year and the need of a basic understanding of MSA before studying CA, showed that learning a dialect may not be the absolute priority for beginners. MSA and CA could be taught separately in terms of timing or concurrently but in separate courses (87-9).

As to Arabic instruction in Europe, Giolfo and Salvaggio conducted a study (2018) focused on the CEFRL, which conceives language proficiency as the ability to perform a set of socio-communicative tasks relating to real-life situations in various domains. This concept underlies the definition

of the six levels⁵ established for the assessment of language proficiency, involving listening/speaking and reading/writing skills. Giolfo and Salvaggio mapped out the association of each CEFR level with MSA and CA, respectively, according to native Arabic speakers' linguistic behaviour. The study shows that: A1 (Breakthrough) is almost only associated with CA; A2 (Waystage) mainly with CA; B1 (Threshold) equally with CA and MSA; B2 (Vantage) mainly with MSA; C1 (Effective Operational Proficiency) mainly with MSA but less than B2; and C2 (Mastery) equally with the two varieties (2018, 98-9). However, Giolfo and Salvaggio also note that Arabic mother-tongues progressively mix MSA and CA in using the four skills to perform the tasks related to the most advanced levels; thus, C1 is equally associated with CA and MSA, and C2 mainly with CA. The analysis shows that "both varieties are required to reach the goals envisaged by CEF [CEFR] for each level" (100).

In conclusion, although the on-going debate on how to integrate dialects in Arabic programmes leaves some issues open to discussion, there is wide agreement on the need for this integration.

4 Colloquial Arabic at Ca' Foscari: One of the Signs of a Long-Standing Avant-garde Bent

After Rome, Naples and Palermo, Venice chronologically became the fourth Italian centre for Arabic Studies, just one year after the founding (1868) of the Royal High School of Commerce (Regia Scuola Superiore di Commercio di Venezia) housed at Ca' Foscari, where Abbot Raffaele Giarue (from Aleppo) taught Arabic from 1869 to 1889 (Nallino 1963, 120). Arabic was included in the curriculum of the consular career class and was recommended by the School's Board of Directors more than any other Oriental language (*Notizie e dati* 1871, 96). No one substituted Giarue at Ca' Foscari for almost two decades. On 4 November 1912, the Dean of the School Enrico Castelnuovo informed the Academic Body that Arabic instruction was to be resumed and provided by Garabed Tsorbadjian, proposed by the director of the Armenian College (*Verbali* 1912-15, 8-9). Interestingly, in 1913, the Mariotti Scholarship for commerce practice abroad was destined to North Africa and small European allowances were established to finance part of the grant received by Simone Gentilli (26-27), who then sent the School a report on the commercial situation in Morocco (112). Tsorbadjian taught Arabic at Ca' Foscari until the course was suspended again in 1930 (*Annuario* 1913-30). Once the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Litera-

5 For a summary description of the six common reference levels, see Council of Europe 2001, 24.

ture was established in 1954, the official course of Arabic Language and Literature was launched in 1962, on the initiative of Maria Nallino (1908-1974) who became Full Professor in 1965, when Vincenzo Strika began to work with her as an Arabic language assistant. At the opening ceremony of academic year 1965-66, Rector Italo Siciliano announced "with particular satisfaction" the start of the degree course in Oriental Languages and Literature (*Annuario* 1964-66, 26). Thus, Ca' Foscari turned into one of the major centres of Oriental Studies in Italy shortly before becoming the 'University of Venice', in 1968 (Kalati 2007, 288).

The most significant facts to recall for the purposes of this discussion occurred in 1974, when Arabic dialects were introduced in the curriculum (*Guida* 1974-75, 9) and Giovanni Montaina taught Egyptian besides Standard Arabic. He was probably the first to teach an Arabic dialect at an Italian university, at a time when the shock of the 1973 oil crisis had just brought European academic institutions to realise that very few Arabists had diglottic proficiency, since most of them still treated Arabic as a dead language, as it had been studied since the sixteenth century (Woidich 2007, 75). This was definitely not the case of three of Nallino's former students who began to teach in 1974: Eros Baldissera, Giovanni Canova and Rosella Dorigo. Interest in contemporary Arab culture induced this new generation of Arabists, joined by Lidia Bettini in 1975, to focus on MSA, dialects, modern Arabic literature and mass media without totally abandoning Classical Studies. They also adopted the most recent AFL teaching methods and materials of those years, e.g. audiovisuals. Another important novelty was the presence of Arabic mother-tongue language assistants. All of these innovations turned Ca' Foscari into a vanguard of Arabic Studies in Italy (Kalati 2007, 289) as well as in the rest of Europe: many students from the University of Venice reported that they had a higher level of proficiency compared to students from other Italian and European universities taking Arabic courses in Tunis and Cairo.

Arabic native speakers' reluctance to teach a dialect was - and still is - one of the main difficulties faced by academic institutions planning to include CA in their programs. Thus, Baldissera, Bettini and Canova resorted to their diglottic proficiency to solve the problem. Starting from 1977, they tried in various ways to introduce CA (*Piani di studio* 1977-78, 115-16; 1979-80, 109-10; 1980-81, 109-11). Baldissera analysed modern Arabic literary texts partly written in Syrian. Besides teaching Cairene, Canova introduced Southern Egyptian dialect, showing a film he shot in Upper Egypt between 1978 and 1982 (Canova 1998, 2015). Bettini taught history of the Arabic language and dialects. The situation changed in Venice in 1980, when Lucy Ladikoff (from Gaza) started to teach Palestinian at the Interfaculty Language Centre (*Piani di studio* 1981-82, 107). A key change was brought by the application of a new approach in 1983: Samia Loueslati and Adnan al-Mussa respectively taught Tunisian and Syrian in

two separate courses that were compulsory in the first year; then students chose which variety to continue to learn in the second year and which until the fourth (*Piani di studio* 1983-84, 104). After this truly revolutionary experiment, which lasted until 1987-88, instruction in only one CA variety was offered (*Guida* 1989-90, 141). Once he defined the B1 threshold level as the final goal of the four-year course, Elie Kallas gradually created materials to teach Lebanese and eventually included them in a textbook (1990). Moreover, from the early '90s onwards, Dorigo taught modern and contemporary Arabic literature, often focusing on theatre, which entailed analysing texts in CA.

At the dawn of the 21st century, as Kallas left Venice and Italian Universities shifted to the new EU system, Colloquial Arabic teaching was suspended at Ca' Foscari. But Arabic dialectology continued to be provided by various teachers, including Canova and Baldissera. Antonella Ghersetti, who has been teaching at Ca' Foscari since 1996, taught this subject in 2004-05. Once she became the coordinator of Arabic Studies in 2010, each of the three years of the Bachelor's degree course was associated to a CEFR level (A1, A2 and B1, respectively) and a module of CA was included in the AFL program. Thus, in 2010-11, Dario Ornaghi provided an Egyptian Arabic course for third year students. But then the CA module was included in the second year programme. Massimo Khairallah taught Jordanian in 2012-13; and I began to teach Egyptian in 2013-14. Hoping to give students at A1 level in MSA the chance to attain A2 in CA after only thirty instructional hours, I gradually created materials to reach this goal and finally assembled them in a textbook (Zanelli 2016), also designed to possibly be used for a sixty-hour course aimed at achieving B1.

As already noted, the official Colloquial Arabic course, launched by the Department of Asian and North African Studies in 2015, is the latest result of the pioneering experiences carried out in Venice in the '70s. Hopefully, the study of Standard and Colloquial Arabic as one language will be enhanced at Ca' Foscari, in line with the best practices recommended by TAFL scholars.

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

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Maria Nallino (1908-1974) and the Birth of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Ca' Foscari

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Abstract This essay, based on bibliographic and archival material, focuses on the academic figure Maria Nallino, a scholar whose voluminous body of work ranges from classicism to modernity with equal fluency and expertise. Daughter of the famous Orientalist Carlo Alfonso Nallino (1872-1938), whose work she gathered and actively promoted, her arrival at Ca' Foscari (1962) inaugurated Arabic and Islamic Studies in Venice.

Keywords Arabian Studies. Ca' Foscari. Nallino. Arabic language. Islamic Studies.

The story of Maria Nallino at Ca' Foscari begins on 27 October 1962, with the report¹ that the selection board of the competition for the first chair of Arabic Language and Literature at the Higher Institute of Economics in Venice sent to the Minister of Education. Until then, Ca' Foscari had only seen 'free' Arabic classes, held first by Raffaele Giarue, a priest from Aleppo, between 1869 and 1899, and then, between 1912 and 1929, by Garabed Tchorbadjan.²

The document is signed by prestigious names for Italian and also European Oriental Studies. The board chairman was Giorgio Levi Della Vida (Venice 1886-Rome 1967) of the University of Rome. Della Vida was among the leading experts of Semitic Studies at the time; in addition to Arabic and Islamic Studies, he was also a recognised scholar in Syriac, Jewish, and Neo-Punic Studies. Being one of the eleven academics dismissed from teaching in 1931 for refusing to swear allegiance to the fascist regime, Della Vida emigrated to the United States in 1938. He was reinstated in 1945, and during that interval was the author, among many other works, of a fundamental catalogue of the Arabic and Islamic manuscripts preserved in the

1 Preserved in Archivio Storico Ca' Foscari (ASCF), Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti.

2 "On the latter I could not find information". This is what Maria Nallino herself recalls at the end of "Venezia in antichi scrittori" (M. Nallino 1963). See below for more on this interesting article.

Vatican Library (Levi Della Vida 1935).³ Laura Veccia Vaglieri (Rome 1893-1989) of the Istituto Universitario Orientale of Naples was also a member of the competition selection board and, in 1937, produced a theoretical-practical grammar of the Arabic language that is still widespread in Italy today in the edition partially revised by Maria Avino (Veccia Vaglieri, Avino 2011). As an example of her vast output, she also co-authored a precious Ghazalian anthology with Roberto Rubinacci (Veccia Vaglieri, Rubinacci 1970). The great Francesco Gabrieli (Rome 1904-1996) of the University of Rome, one of the most distinguished European scholars in the field of Arab and Islamic civilisation from a historical-political but, above all, literary point of view in the light of the Crocian aesthetics, was an exponent of that collective judgment; he published many masterly works on the history of Arabic literature (Gabrieli 1951), the Arab historians of the Crusades (1957), the Arab culture of the twentieth century (1983), and much more. In recognition of his high intellectual stature, he was elected president of the Accademia dei Lincei between 1985 and 1988. The secretary of the competition, Umberto Rizzitano (Alexandria of Egypt 1913-Palermo 1980), considered the heir of Michele Amari (Palermo 1806-Florence 1889), was in his turn historian and excellent translator, a scholar and a disseminator of the Arab roots of European civilisation and a pioneer of a cultural and religious dialogue between the West and Islam. The fifth member of the commission was Father Giovanni Rinaldi (Trinità 1906-Nervi 1994), theologian, semitist, and biblicist of the Collegio Emiliani in Genoa.

That distinguished commission declared Maria Nallino winner of the competition; Roberto Rubinacci (1915-1992) – another great scholar, jurist, and Islamologist – was classified second, with the same number of votes. But the commission praised Nallino in her “secure knowledge of the Arabic language, classic and contemporary” and, thanks to her numerous trips to Egypt, “the vast and precise erudition”, the “philological attitudes”, as well as the variety of her works that ranged from classicism to the contemporary world with equal fluency and expertise.⁴ In confirmation of this last point, the commissioners quoted, on the one hand, the biography of an ancient Arab poet who converted to Islam during the Prophet’s life, al-Nābiġa al-Ġa’dī (d. 698 or 699 AD) (M. Nallino 1934), with a critical edition and a translation of his songbook; and, on the other hand, regarding the contemporary world, they highlighted her intense activity as editor (since 1939), and then director and scientific director (since 1955) of *Oriente Moderno*, the review published by the Istituto per l’Oriente,

3 Maria Nallino would later dedicate a delicate memory to Levi Della Vida (Nallino 1968, 305-21). In 1971 she will also edit his *Note di storia letteraria arabo-ispánica* (Levi Della Vida 1971).

4 Archivio Storico Università Ca' Foscari, Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti. All the quotations retrieved from this archive (ASCF) were translated into English by the Author.

founded in Rome in 1921; in addition, her press reviews from the main newspapers, her translation of documents and other political, geographical and cultural contributions from the Arab world were also taken into consideration. Finally, they observed that “a non negligible part of Maria Nallino’s scientific activity remains insufficiently put in evidence because it is dedicated to non-personal and non-autonomous works”.⁵

The commission made explicit reference to the six large volumes of the *Raccolta di scritti editi e inediti di Carlo Alfonso Nallino* (1939-48),⁶ which Maria Nallino, the author’s only daughter, edited and sometimes actually completed, as in the case of the first volume and particularly the essay on Saudi Arabia (C.A. Nallino 1939; see also, on the same topic, M. Nallino 1941).⁷ They also highlighted the almost invisible character of this demanding and patient work, a work, as the commissioners recalled, which included the Italian translation of the lessons on the history of Arab astronomy (C.A. Nallino 1944) and on the ancient Arabic literature that Carlo Alfonso Nallino had held in Arabic at the Cairo State University (1948).⁸

After receiving the report on the competition, the Minister of Education communicated the outcome to the Rector of Ca’ Foscari, Italo Siciliano (Campo Calabro 1895-Venice 1980), and for knowledge to the Rector of “La Sapienza” University of Rome, where Maria Nallino, after graduating in literature (1929) and obtaining the ‘libera docenza’ in Arabic literature (1948, confirmed in 1954) and in History and institutions on the Muslim world (1954, confirmed in 1957), served as an ordinary assistant to the Chair of Islamic Studies (from 16 June 1955).⁹ So, on the morning of 3 November, the Council of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures met under the presidency of Ladislao Mittner (Fiume 1902-Venice 1975) and unanimously called Maria Nallino to hold the chair of Arabic Language and Literature in Ca’ Foscari, starting from 16 November 1962.

Once entered as a Tenured Professor at the University of Venice, taking up residence in the San Polo *sestiere*, near San Stae (not far from the current headquarters of the University, which at the time housed all the

5 ASCF, Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti.

6 On Nallino’s monumental production see Capezzone 2012. On the cultural exchanges between Carlo Alfonso and Maria Nallino, I would also mention the inventory of their private papers due to the attentive care of Anna Baldinetti (Baldinetti 1995).

7 Later, she will autonomously treat similar questions (M. Nallino 1958 and again, on the peninsular States, 1961).

8 Maria Nallino would later return on the intellectual figure of her father, but in different terms, in what will be her last publication (M. Nallino 1973).

9 Before, in the same University, she had been a lecturer in charge of the Chair of Arabic Language (from 1 December 1948 to 15 June 1955).

Venetian oriental studies),¹⁰ Maria Nallino worked hard to give form to a school of Arabic and Islamic Studies; and she had to create that school

from the very beginning [...] because this teaching was new to Venice, apart from the remote attempts of the last century; and this she did with exemplary zeal and competence. [...] The effectiveness of her teaching is demonstrated by the growing number of students. [...] [Among the attending] also two graduates of the University of Padua (and one of whom from the Aristotelian center) who intend to continue the study of medieval philosophy. (ASCF, Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti)

This is what we read in the report drawn up by Alfredo Cavaliere (Crotona 1903-1999) and Franco Meregalli (Monza 1913-Venice 2004) on her *straordinariato* period, whose report was put on record of the Faculty Council on 16 November 1965.¹¹ During those three years, Maria Nallino was able to organise a library from nothing, a library which – as this report recites – “already consists of 1500 volumes, whose cataloging prof. Nallino, in the absence of experts, had to personally provide”.¹² The report continues:

It is also worth mentioning her effective collaborative work regarding the organization of the section of Oriental Languages and Literatures, which begins its activity in the present academic year 1965/66, and which in the chair so effectively covered by Maria Nallino has had its corner stone.¹³

In the meantime, she moved with alacrity, and not without some embarrassment,¹⁴ among the meanderings of the University management; the first step was obtaining an assistant to her chair, in the person of

10 I owe this information to the courtesy of Eros Baldissera.

11 See again ASCF, Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti.

12 ASCF, Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti. It should be noted that, since then, that library has been considerably enriched, thanks to the diligent and generous commitment of the Arabic language and literature teachers, and also thanks to legacies of scholars, among them, Seeger Adrianus Bonebakker (Wish, the Netherlands, 1923-Zeist, The Netherlands, 2005), Professor Emeritus of Languages and Cultures of the Near East, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). On his legacy, see Ghersetti 2007 and also https://www.unive.it/pag/file-admin/user_upload/SBA/documenti/BALI/Donazione_SA_Bonebakker_1.pdf (2018-07-05).

13 ASCF, Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti.

14 In the letter dated 1 August 1964 (ASCF, Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti), Maria Nallino wrote to the administrative director dr. Guido Monaco: “A letter from the Rector gives me the good news that I was assigned an assistant position to my chair. I immediately replied, telling him that I would like to ask for the competition immediately. But I do not know what kind of practice should be followed. I therefore turn to your courtesy by asking you to give me some instructions – if what I wrote to the Rector was not enough – on what I must do”.

Vincenzo Strika, who, between 1964 and 1967, helped her in teaching language and literature.

Her arrival at Ca' Foscari significantly influenced her research. She did not give up caring for her older colleagues' works: in fact, she edited the history of Tripoli and Tripolitania by the Turkologist, Islamologist, and codicologist Ettore Rossi (Secugnago 1894-Rome 1955) (Rossi 1968), and the notes of Arabic-Hispanic Literary History by Levi Della Vida (1971). But above all, she mostly turned her attention to the study of Arab historians and geographers and to their interest in Italy¹⁵ and in Venice. In the spring of 1963, at the Giorgio Cini Foundation, on the island of San Giorgio, she gave a very popular lecture entitled "Venice and the Arabs until the year one thousand" (*La Venezia dei Mille* 1965, 163-72, and subsequently Branca 1979, 199-208). In the same year she published in *Annali di Ca' Foscari*, her still unsurpassed¹⁶ essay on the presence of Venice in the works of ancient Arab writers (M. Nallino 1963), where, starting from the Arabic name of the lagoon city, *Bunduqiyya*, and its Greek-Byzantine etymology, she retraced the quotations referring to Venice in the geographic literature up to the fifteenth century: from the probably most ancient, in *Kitāb al-A'lāq al-nafisa* (Book of the Precious Stones) by Ibn Rusta of Isfahan (text written at the beginning of the tenth century), to *Kitāb šūrat al-arḍ* (Book of the Configuration of the Earth) of the Mesopotamian Ibn Ḥawqal (second half of the tenth century), to the so-called *Kitāb Rūḡār* (Roger's Book) of the Moroccan-Egyptian-Sicilian al-Idrīsī (d. 1251), to *Taqwīm al-buldān* (Determination of the Countries in Latitude and Longitude) of the Syrian Abū l-Fidā' (d. 1331), up to another Syrian, Ibn al-Wardī (d. after 1419) in his *Ḥarīdat al-'aḡā'ib* (Pearl of Wonders); to end in the curious lesson of good manners for the Arab interlocutors of the Doge offered in *Ṣubḥ al-a'shā* (The Morning of the Nictalope) by the Egyptian al-Qalqašandī (d. 1418). Maria Nallino offered a further tribute to her adoptive city when, elected as a corresponding member in the Veneto Institute of Sciences, Arts and Letters, she illustrated for this academy, during a meeting on 6 November 1965, the result of a meticulous documentary research (M. Nallino 1965a): *in absentia*, she confirmed the existence of a printed edition of the Koran in Arabic movable type, produced in the sixteenth century in the Paganini Venetian typography, absolutely the first printed edition of an Arabic Koran, preceding all other European printed editions as well

15 See, for example, M. Nallino 1964 and the subsequent M. Nallino 1966 (this essay is often taken up by contemporary scholars: see, as an example, König 2015). Even before arriving in Venice, Maria Nallino had come to that subject (M. Nallino 1945).

16 As confirmed by its repeated quotations in the most recent studies on the history of Venice; see for example Pedani 2017, 84, 108.

as, and by several centuries, those of the Arab and Islamic world.¹⁷ This edition was discovered many years later, confirming Maria Nallino's work.

The results achieved in her first three years at Ca' Foscari, with her commitment to the creation of a prominent Venetian centre of Arabic and Islamic Studies, including Islamic philosophy, are also widely praised by the report dated 22 March 1966, by the commission of Orientalists who promoted her to the role of *Professore Ordinario*; a commission, again, of all excellence: still Levi Della Vida; then the semitist, Africanist, politician and diplomat Enrico Cerulli (Naples 1898-Rome 1988), renowned among other things for his studies on the Arab-Spanish sources of the *Divine Comedy* (Cerulli 1949, 1972),¹⁸ president of the Accademia dei Lincei between 1973 and 1976; and the youngest but equally celebrated Alessandro Bausani (Rome 1921-1988), scholar of Iranic Studies and of the Arab-Islamic sciences, at that time Professor of Persian Language and Literature at the Oriental Institute of Naples. As for the research, the commissioners quoted the "usual qualities of perfect linguistic knowledge and of very precise bibliographic information, and the familiarity with the scientific method also in the field of contemporary Arabic literature";¹⁹ but they particularly underlined Maria Nallino's interest in the historical and cultural relations between the Arab world and, in fact, her new city of Venice; lastly, the study that she conducted on the *Diarii* by Marin Sanudo the Younger (Venice 1466-1536), on the last times of the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt, "an arduous task for the delicate problems of identification that it presents, duly and successfully resolved [...], which constitutes the first part of a much wider work", a work that Maria Nallino would not have the time to complete.²⁰

The period of her *ordinariato*, which runs from 5 April 1966 to her premature death, is more than ever intended to shape and expand the Arabic section in Ca' Foscari. To provide a wider cultural context to language and literature, additional teaching was needed; and, in order to face this necessity, Maria Nallino gradually took in hand the fundamental teaching of History of the religions of the East (from the academic year 1965-66 to 1968-69), the fundamental teaching of political history and institutions of the East (1966-67), the teaching of Geography of the Near, Middle, and Far East (1967-68), and finally, for a longer time, the teaching of Islamic Studies (from the academic year 1969-70 to 1973-74).

17 The first appeared in Bombay (1852), followed by Cairo (1864) and Istanbul (1872) (cf. Albin 2004).

18 I remember here that Maria Nallino, too, studied the relationship between the *Commedia* and the Arabic literature, but modern (M. Nallino 1932).

19 ASCF, Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti.

20 ASCF, Fascicolo Nallino Maria, Serie Docenti. For the complete bibliography of Maria Nallino, cf. Castro 1974 and Minganti 1974, especially 566.

Her work for Ca' Foscari culminated when she assumed the direction of the Seminar of Arabic literature, with a rectoral decree of 21 October 1971, a post that she kept until her death and that, after the brief interlude of the dialectologist Giovanni Montaina (? - Palermo 2012), was taken over between 1976 and 1979 by Giovanni Oman (Cairo 1922-Rome 2007).²¹ Then, as evidence of a fruitful tradition, her legacy was worthily collected in Venice²² and elsewhere; but this is a more recent history.²³

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²¹ Giovanni Oman would then sign the dedication in *Studi in memoria di Maria Nallino nel decimo anniversario della morte* (Oman 1984).

²² In particular by Francesca Lucchetta (who followed her in the study of the relationship between Venice and the East, dedicating herself to the schools of Oriental languages; cf. Lucchetta 1984, an essay specifically dedicated to Maria Nallino), Eros Baldissera, Giovanni Canova and Rosella Dorigo, and later by Lidia Bettini and Antonella Ghersetti.

²³ For this, and especially for the teaching of Arabic, see Kalati 2007, 288-90, Baldissera 1991. In general and in short, see also Gabrieli 1982, 26.

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**2 South Asian Studies
and Central Asian Studies**

150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

edited by Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin

Venetian Indology

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Abstract The essay traces the studies and academic responsibilities covered by all those scholars who have taught and teach Indological disciplines at Ca' Foscari, at every level, as well as of those who have studied at Ca' Foscari and have earned a position abroad or in other Italian universities. The author outlines the expansion of Indological Studies in Venice and the rich network of international relations established by Venetian Indologists.

Summary 1 Origins and Development of Venetian Indology. – 2 National and International Ramifications of Venetian Indology. – 3 Venetian Indology Today. – 4 Conclusions.

Keywords Indology. South Asian Studies. Scholars' education and fields of research. Ca' Foscari. Venice.

1 Origins and Development of Venetian Indology

1.1 Laxman Prasad Mishra


Venetian Indology¹ was born in 1965, when Laxman Prasad Mishra (Jabalpur 1931-Venice 1985) was appointed to a Professorship in Hindi Language and

1 Within the limits of this article it was not possible to include a presentation of all the people who in various ways contributed to the development of South Asian Studies at Ca' Foscari. Nonetheless, I wish to mention at least their names, with heartfelt gratitude, indicating their field of research. The absence of anyone's name – for which I excuse myself in advance – is due to nothing other than my own lack of recollection given the unavailability of official transcripts and the difficulty of reconstructing several decades of academic history. Adjunct Professors: † Franco Coslovi (Religions and Philosophies of India), Ilaria Graziani (Urdu Language and Literature), Monia Marchetto (Hindi Language and Literature), Claudia Ramasso (Indian Art History), Fabian Sanders (Tibetan Language and Literature), Giovanni Torcinovich (Indology), Marco Zolli (Hindi Language and Literature). Current Adjunct Professors: Sara Mondini (South Asian Visual Culture), Carmen Simioli (Classical Tibetan). Cultori della materia, i.e. 'Subject experts': † Corrado Puchetti (Religions and Philosophies of India), Daniela Rossella (Religions and Philosophies of India, nowadays Adjunct Professor at the University of Potenza), Guido Zanderigo (Indian Art History). Current Professors at Ca' Foscari whose field of research includes India: Paolo Biagi (Full Professor of Palaeoethnology and Prehistory of Near and Middle East), Stefano Pellò (Associate Professor of Indo-Persian Culture and Iranian Philology).

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Literature in the then degree programme of Oriental Languages and Literatures, at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures. The scholar became an Italian citizen that same year. He had previously worked as a voluntary Teaching Assistant at Nagpur University, where he graduated, and as a Professor of Hindi at Marathvada University. Invited to Italy by Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984), he introduced the teaching of Hindi Language and Literature at the Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Is.M.E.O.) in Rome in 1959 and at "La Sapienza" University of Rome in 1960. Mishra taught the same subject at Ca' Foscari where, since 1975, he was Full Professor. He also held the Seminar of Hindi Literature at the same University since its establishment in 1967, until his untimely and abrupt demise in 1985.

As a young scholar, Mishra played a pivotal role in making the modern Indo-Aryan literatures, and in particular Hindi literature, known in our country - through important works such as *Mistici indiani medievali* (1971), a monograph on Ramanuja (1978), and *Nuovi materiali per un'antologia critica del medioevo religioso indiano: le 'kāvya-rūḥi' nella 'nirguṇ-bhakti'* (1984). Numerous other publications reflect Mishra's prevalent interest in medieval Indian mysticism (the *nirguni* poet-saints, Gorakhnath, Namdev, Tulsidas, etc.). This privileged area of research, however, did not preclude him from venturing into other domains, such as literary and political Indian movements of the twentieth century.

Founder and first President of the Italy-India Association based in Venice (though for just few months before his death), member of the Société Asiatique in Paris, Mishra was awarded the prestigious prize of Vishva Hindi Sammelan by Indian Premier Ms. Indira Gandhi in 1982.

His personal biography, his scientific work, and especially his commitment in promoting cultural exchanges between India and Italy have given to Venetian Indology its peculiar orientation. One of its relevant features is its strong international vocation, favoured by the cultural transmission and mediation between the two countries. Indeed, this trait should characterise every institution or centre of study devoted to research in the fields of languages, literatures, and world civilisations (I try as far as possible to avoid using the adjective *foreign*, especially nowadays...). From this point of view, Mishra's birth and studies in India, his marriage with an Italian woman, and his acquisition of Italian citizenship certainly promoted and facilitated his role. A second meaning of the expression 'international vocation' used above is not likewise predictable. As it will be clear from what follows, I refer to the many international exchanges, not only with India, both personal and institutional, promoted by the first successors and disciples of Mishra and, subsequently, to the brilliant careers outside Italy, in academic positions of world-renowned prestige, of some scholars who flourished (also) in the domain of Venetian Indology.

L.P. Mishra's work was continued, in very different ways and fields, by two of his earliest and most gifted disciples, D. Dolcini and G.G. Filippi, and by one of his earliest collaborators, M. Offredi.

1.2 Donatella Dolcini

Donatella Dolcini enrolled in the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures (Oriental Section - Hindi Language and Literature) in 1966 and graduated under the supervision of L.P. Mishra in 1970 with a thesis titled *The Linguistic Evolution of Khari Boli Hindi*. She was the first one to earn a degree in Hindi Language and Literature from Ca' Foscari. In the same year she started to hold practical courses in Hindi as a Teaching Tutor. Afterwards, she obtained two scholarships (from CNR and MPI) for the academic years 1971-75, and two four-year contracts for teaching and researching in subsequent years. In 1984 she was appointed University Researcher. In 1985 she moved to the State University of Milan, where, at the then Faculty of Political Sciences, she continued to teach Hindi language under the label of History and Institutions of Afro-Asiatic Countries. In 1991, she had the opportunity to start an official, independent teaching of Hindi Language. During her work at Ca' Foscari University, having obtained special funding from the University, she went to the Municipal Library of Udine in order to examine the materials that the great scholar Luigi Pio Tessitori (1887-1919) had left as his legacy; she thus led the way in the study of this rich Indological collection. In the same years, she actively participated in national and international conferences and wrote essays and translations (some of which were the first to appear in a European language), concerning her particular fields of studies: Hindi grammar, Hindi history, and ancient and modern Hindi literature (Gorakhnath, Sadal mishra, Premchand, and the poets of Chayavad).

1.3 Mariola (Maria) Offredi

Mariola Offredi was not a direct disciple of L.P. Mishra, since her university education took place in Milan with the Hindi Language and Indian Culture diploma earned from Is.M.E.O in 1958 and with the degree in Political and Social Sciences obtained in 1961 from the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, with her thesis *Le comunità agrarie nello sviluppo economico indiano*. In addition, in 1961 she received from Is.M.E.O the diploma in Chinese Language and Culture. After teaching History of Indian Art (academic year 1958-59) and Hindi Language and Indian Culture for seven years (1959-60 to 1965-66) at Is.M.E.O in Milan, in 1969 M. Offredi became Teaching Assistant in Hindi Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari. Adjunct Professor in the same discipline from 1974, she was appointed Associate Professor in 1982; from 1982 until 1987 she also held the course of Religions and Philosophies of India. While Mishra focused upon medieval texts, Offredi studied almost exclusively twentieth century narrative and poetry, publishing important translations: *Godan* by Premchand with

the title *Godān. Il dono della vacca* (1970); *Bahti Ganga* by Rudr (*Le onde della Gaṅgā*, 1980), *Kali-katha: vaya baipas (Bypass al cuore di Calcutta*, 2002) and *Shesh Kadambari (La storia di Ruby Di*, 2004) by Alka Saraogi. The latter three translations were the first ones to appear in any foreign language. In parallel to her activity as translator, she wrote essays in the fields of narrative, in particular novel, and twentieth century poetry. In addition, works concerning other subjects show the scholar's attention to the contemporary world: the book *I primi cento anni del giornalismo hindi (1826-1926)* (1971); the volumes resulting from several periods of fieldwork, namely *L'acculturazione dei tribali del Bastar* (1983), which examines the effects of industrialization on tribal populations of the area, and *I tessitori musulmani di Banaras e Mau* (1984). Offredi's interest in diverse fields and time periods is also proven by her research on unedited manuscripts attributed to Gorakhnath, studies that gave rise to the monograph *Lo yoga di Gorakh* (1991) and to various other essays. Offredi's assiduous work in the domain of Hindi Language and Literature earned her the Vishva Hindi Samman (World Hindi Award) received by the Government of India in 1999. She has also been honoured with the Dr. George Grierson Puraskar in 2006.

Offredi was able to build a network of international relationships, preferably of a personal kind, through numerous annual stays in India. Here, she met and interviewed Hindi and Panjabi authors, collected manuscripts and conducted various fieldwork, as the above-mentioned studies testify. In Europe, she had privileged contacts with Czechoslovakia (then Czech Republic), where, among other responsibilities, from 2007 onwards she was member of the Editorial Board of *Archiv orientální*. Offredi's teaching activity was untiring and among her graduate students mention should be made of the musician Vincenzo Mingiardi.

1.4 Cecilia Cossio

Cecilia Cossio, who graduated in 1974 with a thesis on the Hindi novel *Maila "anchal"* (1954) by Phanishvar Nath 'Renu', studied with M. Offredi, but also with L.P. Mishra and Paolo Beonio Brocchieri. Subsequently, from 1978 to 1982, C. Cossio was Teaching Assistant in Hindi Language and Literature and then University Researcher in the same discipline until 2006. From 1992 to 1995 she also held official courses of Hindi, while from 1998 to 2006 she taught History of India. In 2007 she retired but continued to collaborate with the University as editor of the India section of the Ca' Foscari Internet portal AsiaMedia, now dismissed. She is a member of the Scientific Committee of Ca' Foscari Short Film Festival, which is directed by Maria Roberta Novielli and is aimed at students of cinema schools from all over the world; indeed, it is the first festival of its

kind organised and managed by a university. From 2008 to 2010 she was a consultant for India in the Venice International Film Festival. Her research interests and her works were initially devoted to the *anchalik* or “regional” Hindi literature (with particular attention to the '50s) and to the literary production of the '60s and '70s known as *nayi kahani* or “new novel”. Starting from 1985, the themes of her works have mainly concerned Hindi and Indian cinema and its relation to Hindi literature and Indian history.

For another scholar who graduated with M. Offredi, Francesca Orsini, see below.

1.5 Gian Giuseppe Filippi

Gian Giuseppe Filippi graduated with L.P. Mishra in 1971 with the thesis *Il concetto di 'bhakti' nel Vedānta di Rāmānuja*. He was Teaching Assistant of Hindi Language and Literature from 1973 to 1975 and then obtained a three-year fellowship grant (renewed) in the same discipline (1976-81). From the academic year 1976-77, he taught History of Indian and Central Asian Art as an Adjunct Professor. He was then appointed University Researcher (1980-85), Associate Professor of Indology (1985-2004), and lastly Full Professor of Hindi Language and Literature (2008) until his early retirement in 2011. Among the subjects that G.G. Filippi taught during the long course of his didactic career there are also Political History and Institutions of the Indian Subcontinent and Religions and Philosophies of India. In addition to the numerous courses he held, Filippi has covered various academic roles both in the Department and in the degree and diploma courses, and has been President of the Self-Evaluation Committee (LICEM) in 2004. Of particular scientific relevance were his positions as coordinator of the PhD programme in Oriental Studies (the then Near East and South Asian Studies section of the Doctoral school LICUSO, 2005-10) and as vice-chairman of the Doctoral school from 2007 to 2010.

A versatile scholar, Filippi has written a large number of scholarly works in a variety of domains, which span from iconography, both Hindu and Buddhist, to mythology and *Puranas*, from Himalayan Shamanism to Hindi literature, and from the *Upanisads* to mysticism. His studies have culminated in a series of essays on all aspects of death in Hinduism, unified in the monograph *Mṛtyu. Concept of Death in Indian Traditions* (2010). Filippi has marked Venetian Indology with the establishment of many international exchanges and relationships, in dealing with which he was tireless. He was Visiting Professor at the universities of Hull (UK), Oxford (Magdalen College, UK), Stockholm (Sweden), Post-Graduate Institute of Deccan College (Pune, India), National Museum Institute (deemed to be University, New Delhi, India), Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (deemed to be University, New Delhi, India), Heidelberg (Germany),

and Venice International University (Venice). Besides his membership in prestigious international Indological societies and associations, Filippi has assiduously worked in the coordination and direction of important archaeological projects in India: 1996-2001, Kampilya, Farrukhabad Distr., U.P., funded by MAE; 1999-2002, Pedam village, Phulbani Distr., Orissa, funded by MAE and Regione Veneto; from 2000 the Arunachal Project, Tawang Distr., Arunachal Pradesh, funded by MAE. Such research activities have been effectively integrated with distinguished editorial positions and knowledge-sharing perspectives: the presidency of the Venetian Academy of Indian Studies (V.A.I.S.), with an intense activity of lectures and conferences, also of international level; the direction of the Indological works of the V.A.I.S. Series (New Delhi, DK(P) Printworld); and the direction of the Indoasiatic Series (Bassano-Vicenza, Itinera Progetti).

In this and the immediately following period, the contribution offered by some colleagues of Ca' Foscari and other universities, specialists in related disciplines, should not be forgotten. With gratitude, I must mention the names of scholars such as P. Beonio Brocchieri of Ca' Foscari and Mario Piantelli of Turin University in the field of religions and philosophies of India, of Ferruccio Ducray Giordano from Turin, refined connoisseur of Indian art history, and of Chatia Orlandi of Pisa University in the field of Vedic and Indo-Aryan linguistics. Moreover, it must be emphasised that, since its inception, Venetian Indology has benefitted from the irreplaceable contribution provided by mother tongue lecturers. I wish to remember at least some of these precious *lettori* starting from the '80s, when I began teaching Indology in Venice: Mahesh Jaiswal (from 1982 to 1987), Asvani Kumar Srivastava (from 1987 to 1994), Ghanshyam Sharma (from 1987 to 2012) and Shyama Medhekar (from 2013 up to the present).

1.6 Giuliano Boccali

In the academic year 1987-88 the present author, Giuliano Boccali, was appointed to a Professorship (from 1991-92 Full Professorship) of Indology at Ca' Foscari, where he had already taught Iranian Philology and other Iranian disciplines in the decade 1973-83. Disciple of Vittore Pisani (1899-1990) in Milan and of Helmut Humbach (b. 1921) in Mainz, G. Boccali is an Indo-European linguist by education as well as an Iranist. He was Associate Professor at Milan University in the years 1983-87. From 1986, he has focused exclusively upon Indological Studies, which he had always cultivated in parallel. In Venice he taught for a decade Religions and Philosophies of India and, above all, he introduced for the first time the teaching of Sanskrit and of ancient Indian literatures under the name of Indology. Among his various academic responsibilities at Ca' Foscari

especially significant were the presidency of the degree programme in Oriental Languages and Literatures and his participation in the Board of Directors of the University.

Boccali's studies have concentrated mainly on Indian classical literature (*kavya*), and, particularly, on the problem of its genesis and relationship to both the Epic Poems, the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. He has also deeply investigated several specific aspects of *kavya*, with special attention being paid to the representation of love and natural descriptions – the latter also studied in relation to aesthetic feelings (*rasas*). Both literary and figurative aesthetics have indeed represented an important field of his research, and one that favoured the accord and collaboration with G.G. Filippi. Moreover, his activity as translator of Sanskrit poems has always been thoroughgoing, addressing works that are counted among the masterpieces of Indian classical literature: Hala's *Sattasai* (with Cinzia Pieruccini and Daniela Rossella), Kalidasa's *Meghaduta*, the *Chaurapanchashika* which is attributed to Bilhana and Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda*.

Among the positions he covered, of particular relevance are the scientific direction of the above-mentioned Venetian Academy of Indian Studies (V.A.I.S., 1987-2004), which intensified his collaboration with G.G. Filippi; the cultural agreements with the universities of Marburg and Leipzig and the seminars held there; and the General Secretaryship of the International Committee for the Promotion of Studies in Indian Classical Literature (ICICL, 1996-99). The latter Committee was founded in Venice during a seminar of very high international level, which was the first manifestation of the international Indological seminars that would subsequently involve the universities of Prague, Milan, Cracow, Warsaw and Calicut and various other scholars of prestigious institutions all over the world (Leipzig, Lancaster, Lausanne, Marburg, Moscow, Paris, Stockholm and Washington among the others). Boccali is also a member of the Ateneo Veneto and of the Istituto di Studi Superiori dell'Insubria Gerolamo Cardano since its foundation. He is the editor, together with Carlo Della Casa, of the Bibliotheca Indiana Series (Paideia, Brescia, since 1986) and of the Ganges Series of Indian Classics (Marsilio, Venice, since 1989). In the academic year 1997-98, Boccali was appointed to a professorship in Milan in one of the chairs held by his teacher V. Pisani, i.e. Sanskrit. The decade of Venetian teaching activity, thanks to the consonance and cooperation with G.G. Filippi at both a cultural and 'diplomatic' level, represented a period of strong impulse for Venetian Indology, which contributed to its national and international expansion and renown also in terms of scholarly publications. According to the present author (a degree of subjectivity is unavoidable...), at Ca' Foscari, in the decade 1987-97, Indian Studies stood out especially in the fields of aesthetics in the broader sense, literary criticism, art history, and archaeology.

2 National and International Ramifications of Venetian Indology

With reference to the national and international ramifications of Venetian Indology, a significant interlude is to be introduced at this point to briefly present some of the Ca' Foscari graduates whose subsequent studies and careers brought them to other universities. This brief excursus well highlights the national and international appreciation of Venetian indologists, given their varied cultural background and ample range of scientific interests. The exposition is chronologically ordered on the basis of the dates of their graduations.

2.1 Francesca Orsini

Francesca Orsini graduated in Hindi under the supervision of Mario Nordio and Mariola Offredi in 1989, with a thesis titled *Il fuoco che non brucia. Ideologia e immaginario nei racconti di Rājendr Yādav*. After a long spell in Delhi, she pursued a PhD at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. Her research on the Hindi public sphere of the '20s and '30s was published as a monograph in 2002. She has taught at the University of Cambridge for several years and joined SOAS in 2006, where she is at present Professor of Hindi and South Asian Literature.

Her research interests span between modern and contemporary Hindi literature; book history and nineteenth-century commercial publishing in Hindi and Urdu; popular literature in Hindi and Urdu such as detective novels, romantic fiction, and *barahmasas*; women writers and women's journals; and the multilingual history of literature in early modern North India. She organised numerous workshops and conferences, including one on *Love in South Asia* (2006). Another recent project (with Ravikant, SARAI/CSDS, funded by the British Academy, 2012-15) has been on the cultural and social dimensions of 'Hinglish', i.e. Hindi-English language mixing in everyday life, media, education, and the workplace. She is currently working on the multilingual literary history of Awadh and leading a project funded by the European Research Council (2015-20) on *Multilingual locals and significant geographies: for a new approach to world literature*. Francesca Orsini is presently Chair of the Centre for Cultural, Literary, and Postcolonial Studies at SOAS. She is also one of the regional editors for the Murty Classical Library of India and a member of the Executive Committee of the British Comparative Literature Association. In 2013-14, she was a Fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Studies, Harvard. In 2017, she has been elected Fellow of the British Academy.

2.2 Nicoletta Celli

Nicoletta Celli's university education at Ca' Foscari followed a double path, Chinese and Indian, involving exams on Indological topics and a degree thesis on Skanda/Weituo (1993). She obtained her PhD in History of Indian and East Asian Art in 1997 (University of Genoa) and thereafter focused her research upon Chinese medieval Buddhist art and thought. She continued her university career in Venice on Chinese archaeology through a research grant (1999-2002), and was subsequently invited to China (Research Fellow at the Department of Archaeology of Beijing University, 2001) and Japan (Research Fellow at the International College for Advanced Buddhist Studies in Tokyo, 2002). She has travelled widely and frequently throughout Asia for research purposes. Nicoletta Celli taught as an Adjunct Professor at Venice University from 1998 to 2007, when she moved to the University of Bologna where at present she is Associate Professor. She is co-founder and member of the editorial board of the European Association for Asian Art and Archaeology. Her main interests lie in Chinese Buddhist art - especially its origins and relationship with the art of India and Central Asia - and Buddhist iconography.

2.3 Stefano Zacchetti

Stefano Zacchetti majored in Sinology, studying Modern Chinese with Mario Sabattini and Magda Abbiati, and Classical Chinese with Maurizio Scarpari. A strong interest in Buddhism and, in particular, in the Chinese translations of Buddhist texts led him to include Indology in his undergraduate curriculum, studying Sanskrit and Indian philosophy with Giuliano Boccali. He graduated in 1994 under the latter's supervision, with Alfredo Cadonna as co-supervisor, writing a thesis on the Chinese translations of the *Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita (Diamond Sutra)*. In 1994-95, he spent a semester in Leiden as a visiting graduate student with a grant from Ca' Foscari. He had the opportunity to study under the guidance of Erik Zürcher and Tilmann Vetter, who reoriented his research towards early Chinese Buddhist translators, especially An Shigao and Dharmarakṣa (second and third centuries AD). The latter's version of the *Larger Prajnaparamita* became the topic of his doctoral dissertation that he discussed in 1999. After teaching Sinology and Chinese philosophy at the University of Padua from 2000 to 2001, he was invited by Seishi Karashima to join the International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology at Sōka University, Tokyo, where he worked until July 2005 as Associate Professor of Sino-Indian Buddhist Philology. In Japan he published, among other things, the monograph *In Praise of the Light* (Zacchetti 2005), based on his PhD thesis. He moved back to Ca' Foscari in 2005, teaching modern Chinese as a Tenured Lecturer

until 2012, when he took up the position of Numata Professor of Buddhist Studies at Oxford. He is a Professorial Fellow of Balliol College, and a co-editor of the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*.

2.4 Fabrizio Ferrari

Fabrizio Ferrari graduated at Ca' Foscari in 1999 with M. Offredi. His thesis, titled *Analisi semantica del romanzo "Sūkhā bargad" di Manzūr Ehteśām*, includes the first translation of the novel *Sukha bargad* that was published in 1986. In Venice, he studied also with G.G. Filippi, C. Orlandi (Indo-Aryan Linguistics), Riccardo Zipoli (Persian) and G. Boccali. The latter introduced him to the study of the *Gitagovinda*, Jayadeva's masterpiece. Thus Ferrari became interested in Bengali language, whose literature was taking form precisely during Jayadeva's time. He continued his research in West Bengal, where he perfected his language skills and developed a project whose outcome was the book *Oltre i campi, dove la terra è rossa. Canti d'amore e d'estasi dei bāul del Bengala* (2001). He then obtained a Student Research Fellowship at SOAS, where he earned his PhD degree in 2005 with a thesis on Bengali religious folklore. This work was published in 2011 and won the ICAS Book Pride (Colleagues' Choice Award) in 2013. Subsequently, his interests turned to healing and medical-ritual folklore, which, together with magic, were the topic of three consecutive monographs. More recently he has edited, together with Thomas Dähnhardt, three volumes on flora, fauna, and mineral world in Indian traditions (2013-16). After a short period as Teaching Assistant and Post-Doctoral Fellow at SOAS (2005-07), he moved to Chester University where he was appointed Full Professor of Religious Studies. In 2018, he has transferred back to Italy having been appointed Full Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Padua.

2.5 Davide Torri

Davide Torri studied with M. Offredi, G. Boccali and G.G. Filippi, and graduated in 1999 under the latter's supervision with a thesis on Lepcha *adivasi* religion (a population located in Darjeeling and Sikkim). He continued his studies orienting his interests towards anthropology under the supervision of Romano Mastromattei at 'Tor Vergata' University of Rome. He earned his PhD at the University of Naples 'L'Orientale' in 2009, and in the same year he taught at 'La Sapienza' and at Chester University. After a period of teaching and research at the University of Heidelberg (2013-17), he is currently working at Ruhr-Universität Bochum at the Religious Studies Centre (CERES) where he continues his studies on Himalayan

Shamanism. This theme constitutes the focus of his scientific production and scholarly endeavour, which also includes the investigation of the interactions between Shamanism and Buddhism. Among other affiliations, he is member of the Heidelberg Centre for Transcultural Studies and of the Centre d'Études Himalayenne of CNRS in Villejuif.

2.6 Gianni Pellegrini

Gianni Pellegrini took numerous exams with M. Offredi, G. Boccali, A. Rigopoulos and G.G. Filippi and graduated in the year 2000 under the latter's supervision discussing a thesis on the figure of Bhairava. Between 2000 and 2007 he specialised in Advaita Vedanta at the Sanskrit University of Varanasi, completing a highly difficult study programme, especially for a non-Indian student. In 2011, he earned his PhD from Ca' Foscari (supervisor G.G. Filippi) with a thesis on the dream state (*svapna*) in non-dual Vedanta. His scientific interests focus upon the epistemology of this philosophical system, on Navya Nyaya logic, and on the commentarial tradition of Yoga. To these themes he has devoted important works published by prestigious international journals and editors. At present, Gianni Pellegrini is University Researcher of Religions and Philosophies of India and of Sanskrit Language and Literature at the Department of Humanities of the University of Turin. Here he is also the Scientific Director of the Summer School in Sanskrit (elementary level), which is taught in Hindi. In 2010, he was honoured with the Sarasvati Award (Heidelberg-Delhi). In 2015, he was the coordinator of the section "Philosophy" at the sixteenth World Sanskrit Conference in Bangkok.

3 Venetian Indology Today

I now come to an examination of the academic staff that took up the legacy of M. Offredi, G. Boccali and G.G. Filippi and that currently constitutes Venetian Indology.

3.1 Antonio Rigopoulos

Antonio Rigopoulos earned his B.A. in History – focusing on Religious Studies – in 1987 under the supervision of Prof. Franco Michelini Tocci and Prof. Mario Piantelli. His thesis concerned the life and teachings of Sai Baba of Shirdi (d. 1918), a revised version of which was published in 1993. During his undergraduate years he also studied Hindi and Indology with M. Offredi and G.G. Filippi. Having won a scholarship, in 1987 he transferred

to the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), where in 1989 he completed his M.A. with a thesis on Buddhist logic centred upon the undecided questions (*avyakatani*). He subsequently earned his PhD at UCSB in 1994, discussing a thesis on the transformative and inclusive character of the multi-faceted Hindu deity Dattatreya (under the supervision of Prof. Gerald J. Larson, Prof. Ninian Smart and Prof. Barbara Holdrege). A revised version of his dissertation was published in 1998. Back in Italy, he was Teaching Assistant in Religions and Philosophies of India at the Department of Indological and Far-Eastern Studies of Ca' Foscari University and in the academic years 1995-96 and 1996-97 Adjunct Professor of History and Institutions of Asian Countries at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Trieste (Polo universitario di Gorizia). Meanwhile the Department of Indological and Far-Eastern Studies of Ca' Foscari University granted him a post-doctoral fellowship, the outcome of which was the annotated translation of a Sanskrit poem, the *Dattalahari* of Daladanamuni (supervisor Prof. G. Boccali), which was published in 1999. In the academic years 1997-98 and 1998-99, he was Adjunct Professor of Religions and Philosophies of India at the Department of Indological and Far-Eastern Studies (in 1998-99 renamed Department of East Asian Studies). In 1999, he was appointed University Researcher in the field of Religions and Philosophies of India and subsequently, from 2002 to 2014, he was Associate Professor of Indology. From 2015, he is Full Professor of Indology at the Department of Asian and North African Studies of Ca' Foscari University. Besides Religions and Philosophies of India, Indology, Sanskrit and Literary Cultures of South Asia, over the years he also taught courses in Hindi and Indian History. Throughout his career, Rigopoulos has covered a variety of academic roles within the Department and its Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes. Mention must be made of his actual position (from 2016) as President of the Master's Degree Programme in Religious Studies (inter-University with the University of Padua). From 2013, he is the Scientific Director of the Journal *Annali di Ca' Foscari. Serie orientale*. From 2015, he is in the Board of the Italian Association of Sanskrit Studies (AISS). He has been Visiting Professor at the Philipps-Universität of Marburg and at the Institut für Südasienskunde of Wien University.

Rigopoulos' research activity has focused upon the following subject-matters: 1) the study and critically annotated translation of philosophical and religious texts of Sanskrit and Pali literature; 2) the study of the devotional and ascetic movements of medieval and modern India, particularly of the Marathi cultural area (the Mahanubhavs and the *Dattasampradaya*); 3) the *guru* institute: its origin and development up to the modern and contemporary period. In recent years, he has focused attention on the mythologies centred upon sacred trees and termite mounds (*puttas*, in the first place by analysing the case-study of Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh and Sathya Sai Baba's figure and cult). He has investigated the concepts

of *vibhuti* and *trimurti* (this latter one from its origins in the *Mahabharata* and its unfolding in the *Puranas* up to its transformations in contemporary neo-Hinduism) as well as of silence and negation in the literature of the *Upanisads* and of the *Nikayas* of the Pali Canon. He is presently working on Shirdi Sai Baba's short stories and parables (*gosthis*) and on hagiographic themes, with special attention being paid to the figure of the Hindu hagiographer and the *caritra* genre.

3.2 Thomas Dähnhardt

Thomas Dähnhardt studied with M. Offredi, G. Boccali and G.G. Filippi and graduated under the latter's supervision in 1994. His thesis concerned the teachings of a Sufi order in India. He then moved to London and earned his PhD degree in Religious Studies from SOAS (1999), with a thesis on the interaction between a Sufi order and initiatory Hindu contexts within the Kabirpanth. In the same year he was appointed Research Fellow at the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies (OXCIS), a research institute associated with the University of Oxford. Here he worked on a project centred on the intellectual and social history of South Asian Muslims. From 2001 to 2007, he was Adjunct Professor of Urdu Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari. From the academic year 2009-10, he is University Researcher in Modern Indian Languages and Literatures at the Department of Asian and North African Studies of Ca' Foscari University. Author of a series of papers devoted to different aspects of Indo-Islamic civilisation, in 2002 Dähnhardt published a monograph focused upon the critical translation of a Sufi doctrinal treatise. He is also the co-author (with Ilaria Graziani) of an Urdu grammar (2014). He has been Visiting Scholar at the Department of Religious Studies of Chester University and at the Institut für Südasienskunde of Wien University.

3.3 Stefano Beggiora

Like D. Torri and T. Dähnhardt, S. Beggiora was a student of M. Offredi, G. Boccali and G.G. Filippi. He graduated with the latter in 1999, discussing a thesis on shamanic cults among the Lanjia Saoras of Orissa. He then perfected his studies on shamanism, also conducted under the supervision of R. Mastromattei at 'Tor Vergata' University of Rome, and earned his PhD at Ca' Foscari in 2005. Thanks to a funding by Regione Veneto (2006-07) his interests broadened to sociological and economic themes, though his main field of research is the anthropology of India and *adivasi* studies. His teaching activity has been intense: he was coordinator of seminars on Indian shamanism at University of Rome Tor Vergata, supervisor

of the Indian section of the Master "Cindia for Investors and Promoters: per esperti d'internazionalizzazione in Cina e India" (Autonomen Provinz Bozen/Fondo Sociale Europeo, Bolzano), and Adjunct Professor of History of Contemporary India at Ca' Foscari (2010-11). Since 2012, S. Beggiora is University Researcher in History of India at Ca' Foscari. In 2014-15, he has been Visiting Professor at the University College of Cork (Ireland). Very active in international research, Beggiora took part in missions to Kampilya (2000, with an Italian archaeological mission) and to Mongolia (2001, via the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Starting in 2001 and up to the present, he has been conducting extensive field-research in Orissa and Arunachal Pradesh. Mention must also be made of his missions to Bombay and Delhi (in 2007 and 2008), which have led to the establishment of important international agreements with various Indian institutions and universities. In 2013, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs honoured Beggiora with the Tagore Award for his archival research on Rabindranath Tagore's travels to Italy and the poet's legacy. The award ceremony took place at the Indian Parliament at the presence of the President of India, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee. The Tagore Award earned him a position at the prestigious Institute of Advanced Studies in Shimla.

3.4 Federico Squarcini

Federico Squarcini graduated at the University of Florence under the supervision of Prof. Giorgio Renato Franci, discussing a thesis on *carvaka* and *lokayata* traditions in classical India. He earned his PhD in Social and Historical Studies of Religions from the University of Bologna and since 2011 he is Associate Professor of South Asian Religions and Philosophies at the Department of Asian and North African Studies of Ca' Foscari University, where he is also the Director of the Master in Yoga Studies. From 2013 to 2017 he was the coordinator of the Asian Studies PhD programme. He has taught History of Religions at the University of Florence and Indology at the University of Bologna and at 'La Sapienza' University of Rome. He is author and editor of various volumes, among which mention must be made of two of his works on Yoga, namely *Yoga. Fra storia, salute e mercato* (2008) and *Patañjali's Yogasūtra* (2015), and of his studies on Sanskrit normative textual traditions (*dharmashastra*) which include *Il trattato di Manu sulla norma* (2010) and *Forme della norma* (2012). His main research interests encompass also the intellectual history of asceticism and anthropotechnics, Western receptions of South Asian cultural and intellectuals traditions, and methods and theories in the studies of religions. He has published in journals like *Critica Sociologica*, *Orientamenti Pedagogici*, *Parole Chiave*, *Rivista di Studi Orientali*, *Social Compass*, and serves on the Board of Directors of *Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Reli-*

gioni, Religioni e Società, and *Rivista di Studi Sudasiatici*.

3.5 Andrea Drocco

Andrea Drocco graduated at the University of Turin under the supervision of Prof. Pinuccia Caracchi and Prof. Mariangela D'Onza Chiodo, discussing a thesis titled *I nomi degli animali "jarāyuja" nella "Deśīnāmamālā" di Hemacandra. "Deśī" o "tadbhava"? Un'analisi etimologica*. After earning his PhD in Indological Studies at Turin University in 2005 – with a thesis titled *L'ergatività in hindī. Studio diacronico del processo di diffusione della posposizione 'ne'* (supervisors Prof. Stefano Piano and Prof. Giuliano Bernini) – he taught Hindi language at the same university for several years. Presently, he is University Researcher in the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University, where he teaches Indo-Aryan linguistics and Hindi language. His main area of research is the development of morphosyntactic alignment system of New Indo-Aryan languages, in particular of the period preceding the nineteenth century. He has published research papers not only on this topic as regards Brajbhasha, Hindi and Bangani but also on the interpretation of the technical terms *tatsama*, *tadbhava* and *deshi* in the context of the Prakrit grammatical tradition. He has recently started to collaborate with the International Center of Humanities and Social Change (Ca' Foscari University) on a research project focusing on the language rhetoric and linguistic strategies of religious intolerant discourses in various regions of South Asia.

4 Conclusions

Pondering over this fascinating human and scientific adventure, still in full course, I propose one last comment that is both joyful and painful. To be sure, the role of Venetian Indology has been remarkable, both at a national and international level, and this is a source of joy and pride: this is proved by its lasting relations and exchanges with other academic institutions and research centres in Italy and abroad; by the ongoing attraction that the Venetian school of Indian Studies has exercised over colleagues who were trained in other universities; by the high number of students who were educated at Ca' Foscari and who now cover prestigious positions throughout the world; and, last but not least, by the good fame that the latter have earned in both Italian and international contexts. All this stands in sharp contrast with the few, scanty resources that our country has always destined to South Asian Studies. A scarceness of resources that has forced and forces many young, talented scholars to leave Italy in the hope of building their career and finding a position somewhere else; alas, this is a sorrowful

fate which characterises many other disciplines as well. Furthermore, this pitiful state of affairs determines a terrible waste: even without considering the pain and suffering of whomever is forced to migrate, everyone sees what a waste it is to train students and scholars – wholly financed by Italy – whose often first-rate skills will be capitalised elsewhere. Such a situation reveals the obtuse short-sightedness of those who govern our country and our university system, given the growing importance of India in our globalised world, at an ever-increasing pace, especially in the economical, political and cultural realms. Unfortunately, it often appears as if India itself does not care to adequately support the studies on its own civilisation, nor the scholars who dedicate their lives to it. Nonetheless, these adverse circumstances do not prevent researchers, teachers and students alike from pursuing their investigations with passion, competence and generosity. Indeed, in such fascinating endeavour they discover the *raison d'être* of their human and cultural growth.

Ca' Foscari and Pakistan

Thirty Years of Archaeological Surveys and Excavations in Sindh and Las Bela (Balochistan)

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Abstract This paper regards the research carried out by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Sindh and Las Bela province of Balochistan (Pakistan). Until the mid '80s the prehistory of the two regions was known mainly from the impressive urban remains of the Bronze Age Indus Civilisation and the Palaeolithic assemblages discovered at the top of the limestone terraces that extend south of Rohri in Upper Sindh. Very little was known of other periods, their radiocarbon chronology, and the Arabian Sea coastal zone. Our knowledge radically changed thanks to the discoveries made during the last three decades by the Italian Archaeological Mission. Thanks to the results achieved in these years, the key role played by the north-western regions of the Indian Subcontinent in prehistory greatly improved.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Archaeological Results. – 3 Discussion. – 3.1 The Chert Outcrops. – 3.2 The Late (Upper) Palaeolithic and Mesolithic sites. – 3.3 The Shell Middens of Las Bela Coast. – 3.4 The Indus Delta Country. – 4 Conclusion.

Keywords Sindh. Las Bela. Indus delta. Prehistoric sites. Radiocarbon chronology.

1 Introduction

Due to its location midway between the Iranian uplands, in the west, and the Thar or Great Indian Desert, in the east, the Indus Valley and Sindh have always played a unique role in the prehistory of south Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent in particular. Crossed from north to south by the River Indus, Sindh is the natural route to follow to reach central Asia and the chains of the Himalaya and the Hindu Kush from the Arabian Sea (Burton 1976; Curzon 2012). Of major strategic importance during the British Empire (Eastwick 1989; Napier 2001), Sindh was brutally conquered during the Afghan wars. Its scope was to control the Indus waterway, and the increasing Tsarist interests in the Indian Ocean (Pathan 2017).

More than two thousand years before the British occupation, Sindh was invaded by another European army. To its conquest followed disastrous consequences that led Alexander the Great to the loss of ca. 60,000 Macedonian soldiers after crossing Las Bela plain (Minchin 1983), moving

along the barren, dry landscapes of Gedrosia, present-day Makran, which were inhabited by tribes of fish-eaters (*Ichthyophagoi*) (Hughes-Buller 1996; Holdich 2002), during their retreat toward Babylon (Romm 2010; Biagi 2017a).

The excavations carried out at Mohenjo-daro near Larkana, in Upper Sindh, by J. Marshall (1931), E.J.H. Mackay (1937-38), M. Wheeler (1976), and other British and Indian archaeologists during the last century (Lahiri 2005), uncovered the impressive remains of a huge metropolis all made from bricks with public and private structures and craftsmen quarters, from which just a few metal tools were recovered (Dikshit 1939).

Between 1927 and 1931 N.C. Majumdar carried out intensive surveys in Lower Sindh and part of the Indus delta (Majumdar 1981). During those years he revisited the Tharro Hills, a unique Chalcolithic Amri Culture site (Piggott 1950, 79) discovered by G.E.L. Carter just a few years before (Cousens 1998, 38).

The results achieved by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Sindh and Las Bela (Balochistan), led to significant changes in the prehistory of the two regions (Biagi 2011a). Until the end of the '80s archaeology was almost exclusively related to the Copper and Bronze Age antiquities, and the study of the main characteristics, development, periodization and collapse of the Indus Civilisation (cf., e.g., Kenoyer 1991, 2015; Possehl 1997, 2002).

2 Archaeological Results

Since those years many things have changed, mainly thanks to the discoveries made by the Italian expedition. Following a chronological order they can be summarised as follows, starting from the oldest periods of prehistory to Buddhist times.

1. The preliminary periodization of the Palaeolithic of Sindh, from the Early Acheulian onward. It was made possible thanks to the discoveries made on the Rohri Hills, and the excavations carried out at two lithic sites named ZPS-1 and ZPS-2 (Ziārāt Pir Shābān) (Biagi, Kazi, Negrino 1996; Biagi et al. 1998-2000). The first is a workshop for the manufacture of early Palaeolithic Acheulian hand-axes is located in a unique part of the northern terraces of the Shadee Shaheed hills. The site is not paralleled with any other of the same age so far discovered in Sindh (Biagi, Negrino, Kazi 1996; Biagi 2008c).
2. The study of the Levallois Mousterian Middle Palaeolithic chipped stone assemblages. During the late '70s industries and isolated tools of this period were found for the first time in the north-westernmost region of the Indian Subcontinent. Though their chronology is still inaccurately defined, they are suggested to mark the presence of

- Neanderthal groups that spread from the Iranian uplands down to the Indus river course, most probably during the OIS-5 (Biagi, Starnini 2018a). The first Levallois Mousterian tools were collected by Professor A.R. Khan at Ongar and other Karachi region sites, during the intensive geoarchaeological surveys carried out in the late '70s (Khan 1979a; Biagi 2007a; Biagi, Starnini 2011, 2018a).
3. The discovery of early and middle Holocene Mesolithic hunter-gatherers sites in the Thar Desert lake district of Upper Sindh. The first chipped stone assemblages with characteristic trapezoidal geometric microliths and lunates, sometimes obtained with the microburin technique, were recovered in the '90s from the top of stabilised sand dunes that elevate east of the caravan town of Thari, close to the border that separates Sindh from Rajasthan in India (Biagi, Kazi 1995; Shar, Negrino, Starnini 1997; Biagi, Veasar 1998-99; Biagi 2003-04, 2008b, 2018).
 4. The typological analysis of the Late (Upper) Palaeolithic and Mesolithic industries of Lower Sindh. Chipped stone assemblages of the two periods were discovered by Professor A.R. Khan in the Mulri Hills in front of Karachi University campus (Zaidi et al. 1999), and many other sites located within a radius of ca. 40 miles east and west of Karachi in the late '70s (Khan 1979b; Biagi 2003-04, 2004, 2017b, 2018). Following the results achieved by Professor A.R. Khan, it was possible to establish a preliminary sequence of the Early Holocene assemblages of Sindh and compare it with those from other territories of north-western India, mainly Rajasthan and Gujarat (Misra 2013).
 5. The discovery of Final Palaeolithic chipped stone assemblages at the top of the limestone terraces that extend south-west of Jhimpir in the Thatta district of Lower Sindh (Biagi 2011b). Lithic scatters of this period were found *in situ* close to a freshwater spring and outcrops of good-quality chert. The typological analysis of the artefacts and the presence of impact traces on two microlithic lunates show that some of the sites acted as hunting camps.
 6. The radiocarbon dating of at present disappeared Mangrove Environments that had been exploited seasonally by Neolithic communities since the middle Holocene, Atlantic period. The radiocarbon dates were systematically AMS processed at Groningen laboratory on single specimens of *Terebralia palustris* and *Telescopium telescopium* mangrove gastropods recovered from the top of the limestone outcrops raising from the alluvial plain of the Indus delta (Blanford 1880; Lambrick 1986; Biagi 2010, 2017a). Thanks to the new radiocarbon results we can suggest that seafaring along the northern coasts of the Arabian Sea started around the beginning of the seventh millennium BP, if not before (Biagi 2011a). Moreover,



Figure 1. The Bay of Daun with a shell midden in the centre of the image marked by a white spot (photograph by Paolo Biagi, January 2008)

the results could be compared with those obtained from other sites discovered along the coast of the Arabian Sea and the Persian (Arabian) Gulf (Cleuziou 2004; Biagi, Nisbet 2006; Biagi 2008a; Boivin, Fuller 2009; Biagi, Nisbet, Fantuzzi 2017, 2018).

7. The discovery and radiocarbon dating of many seventh and fifth millennium BP shell middens distributed along the coast of the small bay of Daun and the marine terraces that surround it (fig. 1) (Biagi 2004, 2008a, 2013; Biagi, Franco 2008; Biagi, Fantuzzi, Franco 2012). The bay opens south of Gadani headland in Las Bela province of Balochistan. Cape Gadani itself played an important role in prehistory because of the presence of dark red chert outcrops on its top that were exploited at least since the Mesolithic (Khan 1979b; Naseem, Sheikh, Qadeeruddin 1996-97). Other prehistoric and historic shell middens were discovered and radiocarbon-dated at both Gadani and neighbouring Phuari headlands (Biagi, Nisbet, Girod 2013).
8. The surveys carried out along the ancient shores of the almost dry basin called lake Siranda (fig. 2), described by Snead (1966, 58) as “a desert depression with no normal outlet to the sea”. The depres-



Figure 2. The dry depression of Lake Siranda from the south eastern shore from site SRN-63 (photograph by Paolo Biagi, January 2013)

sion stretches from north to south. It is bordered by the Holocene dunes of the Sonmiani Hills in the west, and the Pleistocene sand plain that extends to the east (Snead, Frishman 1968). It is delimited, in the south, by the Khurkera plain, which is formed by the silting of the Winder River flowing from the Pab Range (Pithawalla 1952, 33). Lake Siranda, ca. 14 km long and 3 km wide, only 0.30-0.45 m above the present sea level, is located in the southernmost part of Las Bela province (Snead 1969). It is seasonally fed by monsoon rains draining into the basin mainly by the Watto River, an easternmost branch of the Porali (Stein 1943, 198). Research in the area was resumed by the Italian Archaeological Mission between 2011 and 2014. Its scope was to verify the presence of prehistoric shell middens along its ancient shores, to establish a radiocarbon chronology of the sites, and interpret the reasons why the lagoon started to dry around the end of the of the third millennium BC, when the Indus Civilisation finally collapsed. The surveys led to the discovery of 76 archaeological sites, mainly Neolithic and Bronze Age shell middens, 33 of which were AMS radiocarbon-dated by one single,



Figure 3. Rohri Hills: excavations underway at the Indus Civilisation chert workshop and mine RH-59 (photograph by P. Biagi, January 1994)

- adult specimen of mangrove gastropod either *Terebralia palustris* or *Telescopium telescopium* (Biagi, Nisbet, Fantuzzi 2017, 2018).
9. The definition of the main typological characteristics of the Chalcolithic Amri Culture (Casal 1964) chipped stone assemblages (Lechevallier 1979). This was made possible thanks to the typological and technological study of the Tharro Hills lithic industries collected by Professor A.R. Khan in the '70s, and the precise mapping of different spots of chipped stones on the surface of the aforementioned, fortified Chalcolithic site, defined during an intensive survey carried out in 2008 (Biagi 2005, 2010). Moreover, the data obtained from the surveys and the radiocarbon dating of samples of marine and mangrove shells showed that the Tharro Hills were an island surrounded by Arabian Sea waters and mangrove swamps during the Copper age, and that the landscape around them was still roughly the same in Hellenistic times (Biagi 2017a).
 10. The surveys and excavations promoted by the Italo-Pakistani Joint Rohri Hills Project, a programme of archaeological research launched by Ca' Foscari University and the Department of Archae-



Figure 4. Daphro Hill: parallel Indus Civilisation chert mining trenches at the north-westernmost edge of the hill (photograph by P. Biagi, January 2008)

ology of Shah Abdul Latif University in Khairpur. The research was conducted between 1993 and 2002. It led to the discovery of hundreds of archaeological sites located on the hilltops (Biagi, Shaikh 1994). Its main scope was to record the impressive number of Indus chert mines discovered in the central-western part of the Hills since 1986, and to excavate a few lithic sites by trial trenches and, whenever possible, date them (fig. 3). Following this experience, the research was resumed at Ongar in cooperation with the University of Sindh, Jamshoro. The new project led to the discovery, recording and mapping of dozens of unknown Bronze Age Indus Civilisation chert mines on the hills of Ongar, Daphro (fig. 4) and Bekhain, south of Kotri in Hyderabad province (Biagi 2007b). The exploitation of the chert resources in the area is marked by the recurrence of mining trenches that border the edges of the limestone mesas, as well as heaps of debitage flakes, on the top of which typical Indus Civilisation subconical blade cores were collected (Biagi, Cremaschi 1991; Biagi, Franco 2008; Biagi, Starnini 2008, 2018b; Starnini, Biagi 2006). Other new chert mining complexes were later found close to

- Jhimpir in Thatta province (Biagi, Nisbet 2010), a territory that was exploited mainly around the end of the Palaeolithic period.
11. The study of a Bronze Age fishermen village at Sonari. The site is located a few km north-east of Cape Monze (Ras Mauri), west of Karachi, in Sindh. It faces the Hab River mouth. Professor A.R. Khan discovered Sonari in the late '70s, though he never published or even mentioned it in his papers. The site is well-sheltered inside a saddle that opens at ca. 30 m of altitude in the limestone Miocene Gaj formation that characterises the area (Biagi, Nisbet 2014). The settlement structures cover a roughly semi-circular area, ca. 30 m long and 35 m wide. They consist of at least 5, rectangular, stone-walled features 2 by 3 m wide, arranged in north-south and east-west direction, filled with marine bivalves. They are surrounded by 4 small heaps of marine and mangrove shells that were all AMS-dated. The presence of beached stone net-weights shows that fishing, and the collection of marine and mangrove shells, played a fundamental role in the subsistence economy of the small site that was settled during the first half of the third millennium BC. Sonari is the only prehistoric fishermen village so far discovered all along the northern coast of the Arabian Sea.
 12. The first traceological study ever made to interpret the function of the chipped stone tools of the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age industries of Sindh. Though our knowledge of this aspect of Lithic Studies is still very poorly developed in Sindh and Las Bela prehistory, new results have been achieved thanks to the aforementioned analyses. They regard the definition of a) a unique type of denticulated blade sickles, utilised in the Indus Valley during the early Bronze Age Kot Diji period, and b) the elongated, scalene triangles that characterise the Chalcolithic Amri Culture assemblages that were employed as straight perforators (Voytek 1994; Biagi 2005).
 13. The thin-section and SEM analyses of two Early Bronze Age Kot Diji pottery assemblages of the Thar Desert (Spataro 1998-99, 2003), the scientific study of the ceramics from the Buddhist city of Seerajji-Takri in the Rohri Hills (Biagi, Spataro, Nisbet 2002), and the analysis of the characteristics and variability of the protohistoric and historic bangles of Sindh (Spataro 2013). Moreover, Ethnographic Studies have been conducted on the present-day pottery manufacture in three villages of Lower Sindh: Hindwari, Pir Chebo and Hingorja (Spataro 2005).
 14. The first archaeobotanical analysis of prehistoric (Castelletti, Madella, Mahar 1994) and historic (Biagi, Nisbet 2009) macrobotanical and phytoliths remains (Madella 1997), and present-day ethnographic structures of Sindh (Nisbet 2010).

15. The first soil micromorphological thin-section analyses of prehistoric and historic sites of Upper Sindh, among which are those from the city of Aror, the capital of Musicanus in Hellenistic times (Biagi, Cremaschi 1988; Biagi, Kazi 1995; Biagi et al. 1998-00; Ottomano 1995; Ottomano, Biagi 1997).
16. The radiocarbon dating of a few famous historical sites of Sindh. They have been obtained from identified charcoals collected from the Buddhist city of Seeraj-ji-Takri (or Shiraz) in the Rohri Hills (Jafri 1980; Verardi 1987; Biagi, Spataro, Nisbet 2002; Biagi 2004) that was totally destroyed by the opening of a new illegal limestone quarry in the early 2000s; three other Buddhist sites in Lower Sindh (unpublished results 2017), Aror (Ottomano, Biagi 1997) and Ranikot Fort (Hasan 2006; Biagi, Nisbet 2009). This aspect is particularly important because almost nothing is known of the chronology of the Buddhist sites of Sindh and the events that followed the Arab conquest of the country (Pathan 1978).
17. The reconstruction of the route followed by Alexander and Nearchos during their retreat toward Babylon in Sindh and Las Bela (Stein 1943; Eggermont 1975; Holdich 2002; Biagi 2017a).

3 Discussion

3.1 The Chert Outcrops

Until the end of the '80s very little was known of the distribution of the knappable raw material sources in Sindh. The surveys and excavations carried out by the Joint Rohri Hills Project in the Rohri Hills between 1993 and 2003 led to the discovery of an impressive number of chert mining complexes attributed to the Bronze Age Mature Indus Civilisation that were opened at the top of the limestone terraces located just to the east of the shrine of Shadee Shaheed (Biagi, Negrino, Starnini 1997). Following their discovery a few test-trenches were opened and a few workshops excavated (Biagi, Pessina 1994; Negrino, Starnini 1995, 1996; Biagi 1995; Starnini, Biagi 2006, 2011; Biagi, Starnini, Michniak 2018c).

Nevertheless, most Indus archaeologists always underestimated the role played by chert during the Indus Bronze Age (Kenoyer 1991, 2015; Lahiri 1992; Wright 2010). Their importance is remarked by the evidence retrieved from the Rohri Hills and other chert mining sites discovered at Ongar and Jhimpir in Lower Sindh (Biagi, Starnini, Michniak 2018c), the craftsmen quarters of Mohenjo-daro (Tosi, Bondioli, Vidale 1984; Vidale 1992, 2000), and the dark red chert outcrops of Cape Gadani (Biagi, Nisbet, Girot 2013).

3.2 The Late (Upper) Palaeolithic and Mesolithic Sites

The surveys carried out by Professor A.R. Khan in the '70s have shown the presence of sites of these ages near Karachi and the Arabian Sea coast. Chipped stone assemblages with microlithic geometrics were collected also from the Thar Desert lake district of Upper Sindh since the '90s. These discoveries show that Late (Upper) Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hunter-gatherers inhabited both Upper and Lower Sindh. In most cases their chronology cannot be ascertained because of the absence of stratigraphic sequences and organic material to be dated, with the exception of site KDJ-1, along the southern banks of the Kadeji river (Biagi 2018). Their cultural attribution and chronology can be suggested mainly because of the presence of specific geometric microliths.

3.3 The Shell Middens of Las Bela Coast

The first shell middens were discovered in January 2000 along the shores of the bay of Daun, south of Gadani promontory, in Las Bela province of Balochistan (Biagi 2004). The area was revisited and accurately surveyed in 2004 and 2008 (Biagi, Franco 2008). The Daun shell middens consist mainly of heaps of *Terebralia palustris* and *Telescopium telescopium* mangrove shells inside which few material culture remains were recorded. From a chronological point of view the sites are grouped in two main clusters, the first of which falls into the seventh, while the second is of roughly the first half of the fifth millennium BP (Biagi, Fantuzzi, Franco 2012).

The discoveries reported above are complemented by those made a few years later along the shore of Lake Siranda basin (Biagi 2013; Biagi, Nisbet, Fantuzzi 2017, 2018) and also Cape Gadani and Phuari. The amount of data obtained from the aforementioned sites and the radiocarbon dates obtained from these sites have contributed to a new interpretation of the prehistory of Balochistan (Shaffer 1978) and the coastal changes that took place between the middle Atlantic and the Subboreal. According to the new data, they can be compared to those of the coast of Oman during the same periods (Berger et al. 2013).

3.4 The Indus Delta Country

This region is of basic importance for the study of the advance of the Indus fan, the formation of the river plain, and the changes that took place along the northern coast of the Arabian Sea during the Holocene (Wilhelmy 1968; Harvey, Schumm 1999; Giosan et al. 2006; Inam et al. 2007).

At present we know that at the time of Alexander's invasion (327 BC) "the sea extended upto Gujo area" (Panhwar 1964, 100). This idea is generally accepted by both geologists (Bender 1995, fig. 10.18) and historians (Eggermont 1975, 30, map 2), within the picture of the movements of the Indus river throughout the ages (Flam 1984, 1987).

Most authors suggest that the *rocky rises* of the Indus delta were in fact islands in Hellenistic times. This is the case for the Tharro Hills. The surveys carried out in the delta between 2009 and 2013 confirmed this view because of the discovery of archaeological finds, marine and mangrove shells from all the above outcrops from which we have now a good set of radiocarbon dates (Biagi 2010; Biagi, Nisbet, Fantuzzi 2017, 2018).

4 Conclusion

Thirty years of research and excavations carried out by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Sindh and Las Bela led to dramatic changes in the archaeology of the two regions of present-day Pakistan.

The Rohri Hills have shown an unknown aspect of the Indus Civilisation, i.e. the presence of huge chert mining centres that undoubtedly played a very important role in its economic system. Impressive examples are known from the Shadee Shaheed Hills, on which more than 2,000 flint mines and workshops have been discovered (Maifreni 1995).

The study of the material culture assemblages collected by Professor Khan in the '70s drastically changed our view of the Pleistocene and Early Holocene prehistory of Sindh. Before his discoveries nothing was known of the Mesolithic settlement pattern and the characteristics of the chipped stone assemblages of this period. At present we know that groups of Mesolithic hunter-gatherers systematically settled close to freshwater springs and high-quality sources of knappable raw material, and inhabited coastal zones, river banks and desert sand dunes close to freshwater basins. Dozens of sites of this period are currently known in Sindh, making the Mesolithic prehistory of the country one of the richest of the Indian Subcontinent.

The surveys conducted along the coast of Las Bela in Balochistan and the Indus delta in Sindh showed the archaeological importance of both these territories. From the radiocarbon results obtained from Las Bela shell middens and the Indus delta rocky outcrops we know that the northern coast of the Arabian Sea started to be inhabited around the last centuries of the eighth millennium BP, and that seafaring along the coastline also began around this period (Biagi 2011a). The radiocarbon results obtained from the above-mentioned sites helped interpret the changes that took place along the Arabian Sea coast throughout the Holocene. From many

points of view they can be compared with those that took place along the coast of the Oman peninsula.

To conclude, thanks to the results achieved by the Italian Archaeological Mission, now we can state that the prehistory of this part of the Indian Subcontinent has drastically changed during the last thirty years. Most of the data available only a few years ago are no longer acceptable and their complete updating is absolutely necessary.

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

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Mongolian Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice

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Abstract This essay offers an overview on Mongolian Studies carried out at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice focusing on teaching activities, research outcomes as well as outreach events and cooperation with Mongolian institutions.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Teaching and Didactic Materials. – 3 A New Tool for Mongolic Studies: the Critical Digital Edition of Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Dei viaggi di messer Marco Polo* (1559). – 4 Outreach Activities. – 5 Cooperation with Mongolian Institutions.

Keywords Mongolian Studies. Silk Road Studies. Marco Polo Studies. Italian philology. Travel literature. Textual criticism.

1 Introduction

Venice, the hometown of Marco Polo (1254-1324), one of the most famous Europeans who travelled on the Silk Road and visited the Mongols in the Middle Ages, has a special legacy with the Mongol world. Just by evoking the name of Marco Polo the historical relations between Venice and the Mongol world come to everyone's mind. In keeping with Venice's legacy with the Orient, Ca' Foscari has a tradition in Mongolian Studies.

2 Teaching and Didactic Materials

Since 1982, Ca' Foscari has been offering a wide range of academic courses and seminars focusing on Mongolian Studies.

From 1982 till 1998, Giovanni Stary was Professor of Mongolian language and literature at the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures. Starting from the following academic year, however, he started to hold the teaching of Manchu language and literature. In the following years,

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Figure 1. Marco Polo statue
in the centre of Ulaanbaatar
(© Elisabetta Ragagnin)

namely from 1998 till 2005, Mongolian language was taught by Mrs Jargal Molomjamts. This course was as an ancillary teaching activity flanking the seminar Uralic and Altaic Philology held by Professor Andrea Csillaghy. An important outcome of this teaching activity was the publication of *Introduzione alla lingua mongola: mongol xelnij oršil*, authored by Jargal Molomjamts and Professor Andrea Csillaghy (1998), the first introductory course book in the modern Khalkha Mongolian language published in Italian. After the retirement of Professor Csillaghy, the course Uralic and Altaic Philology was assigned to Elisabetta Ragagnin, presently Adjunct Professor at Ca' Foscari. In her classes she regularly dealt with Mongolic philology with special regard to Middle Mongol sources (XIII-XV c.). Furthermore, in 2014 she was in charge of the course in Mongolian Language, which was attended by a large number of students majoring in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Turkish and Persian as well as students of Religious Studies. Finally, since 2015, Elisabetta Ragagnin has been teaching the Master course Linguistic Research Topics, which provides learners with

overviews and insights on several linguistics topics such as comparative and typological linguistics, sociolinguistics, writing systems and endangered languages, with regard to the language families of Eurasia, including Mongolic languages.

Presently, Elisabetta Ragagnin, in cooperation with Bat-Ireedui Jantsan, Professor of Mongolian Studies at the National University of Mongolia (MUIS), is preparing a new Mongolian language textbook.

3 A New Tool for Mongolic Studies: the Critical Digital Edition of Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Dei viaggi di messer Marco Polo* (1559)

Since February 2015, Giovanni Battista Ramusio's (1485-1557) work *Dei viaggi di messer Marco Polo* (On Travels of Sir Marco Polo) is available online and publicly accessible on Edizioni Ca' Foscari's website (Ramusio [1559] 2015). It is the first digital critical edition of Marco Polo's *Devisement du monde* (The Description of the World), prepared by the Venetian humanist Ramusio for the second volume of his work *Navigazioni et viaggi* (Navigations and travels), published posthumously in 1559. This edition is the result of a research project funded by Ca' Foscari University of Venice jointly developed by a group of romance philologists and orientalists coordinated by Eugenio Burgio, Marina Buzzoni and Antonella Ghersetti. The following scholars, in alphabetic order, participated in the project: Alvisè Andreose, Alvaro Barbieri, Giampiero Bellingeri, Eugenio Burgio, Marina Buzzoni, Angelo Cattaneo, Marco Ceresa, Giacomo Corazzol, Simone Cristoforetti, Daniele Cuneo, Paolo De Troia, Mario Eusebi, Antonella Ghersetti, Giuseppe Mascherpa, Laura Minervini, Martina Modena, Maria Piccoli, Elisabetta Ragagnin, Irene Reginato, Fabio Romanini, Vito Santoliquido, Samuela Simion, and Federico Squarcini. Besides, Francesca Anzalone (Netlife s.r.l) and Damiano Bulzoni were in charge of the IT infrastructure. Characteristics and goals of the project are described in the presentation page:

The digital object which is now available at this website displays the characteristics of a hypertext edition, since it focuses on Ramusio's text and the sources he had at his disposal, without aiming at going back to the manuscripts. The main goal of this edition is to represent Ramusio's alleged 'desk' in a virtual hypertext environment. In the electronic Ramusio's *Marco Polo*, the modal windows allow the user to visualize a chapter of Ramusio's text (R) in parallel with its major sources (Z, V, VB,

L, P, VA, and F),¹ three of which are given in new born-digital editions. Furthermore, each section of the text is accompanied by a philological commentary made accessible through pop-up windows which present the relevant interface to the user. Finally, it is possible to display (and superimpose) the entire text of the other *Milione* redactions, and access the records containing the information on the Eastern *realia* both through the “Lemmario” button in the main Menu and through the internal page links. The simultaneous opening of different windows in an online environment permits to visualize: (1) the main text (Ramusio’s *Dei Viaggi*); (2) the comment apparatus (containing the identified sources; an analysis of their manipulation; some informative notes); (3) the complete version of the text from which the source extracts are taken, also in parallel with the Ramusian text. An edition as such allows the readers to create their own path within the text(s) provided. (Ramusio [1559] 2015)

As just briefly mentioned, the digital edition of Ramusio’s *Marco Polo* also offers a rich lexicological section dealing with the oriental *realia* occurring in Polo’s travelogue. Such terms – among which several are of Mongolian origin – mostly are toponyms and personal names, but also lexemes describing institutions, religious and administrative offices, ethnonyms, everyday objects etc. This section aims at updating and integrating existing materials, such as Pelliot (1959-73) and Cardona (1975). This lexicological section resulted from the close cooperation between romance philologists and orientalists. Each pop-up includes the list of the word’s occurrences in Ramusian text as well as the list of the corresponding forms documented in other versions, essential references, philological, linguistic and historical comments to the entry. Identified toponyms are provided with a link to Google maps. Thus, this digital edition can be used by a wide variety of users. Moreover, this is the first step towards a broader project that will consist of the whole edition of *Devisement dou monde* as well as a translation into English of the critical text and all the related comments. This project will thus represent an authoritative tool for historians, archaeologists, geographers, anthropologists, orientalists, etc. (Burgio, Eusebi, Simion forthcoming).

1 Z = Latin version handed down by the Zelada ms. 49.20 (second half of XV c.) preserved in the Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares of Toledo (Barbieri 1998); V = late XIV c. Venetian version handed down only by the manuscript Hamilton 424 held in the Staatsbibliothek Berlin (Simion 2008-09); VB = XV c. Venetian humanistic rehash handed down by two codices and one fragment (Gennari 2009-10); L = XIII c. Latin summary handed down by 6 manuscripts (Burgio forthcoming); P = Francesco Pipino OP’ early XIV c. Latin translation of VA; it is handed down by around 60 versions (Prášek 1902; Simion 2015); VA = Medieval northern vernacular Italian version, handed down by five manuscripts (Barbieri/Andreose 1999) and F = XIV c. Franco-Italian version, handed down by the manuscript fr. 1116 of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Eusebi, Burgio 2018) and by a fragment, signed f, in a private collection (Concina 2007; Ménard 2012).

On the base of these digitally available materials, Elisabetta Ragagnin, Samuela Simion and Anna Rinaldin, in cooperation with Bat-Uchral Ganzorig, lecturer of Italian language at the National University of Mongolia (MUIS), the Institute of Mongolian Studies at MUIS, and the Department of History of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, are preparing a critical translation in Mongolian of the Ramusian *Devisement dou monde*. This monograph will be jointly published by Ca' Foscari University and the National University of Mongolia at Soyombo Printing (Ulaanbaatar).

Last but not least, Elisabetta Ragagnin and Samuela Simion have been working together on Marco Polo's manuscripts and other medieval sources, and, combining their respective Mongolian and Romance philological skills, are yielding new important insights on medieval Mongolian material and spiritual culture. Forthcoming are, in this respect: "Marco Polo's *Boodog* Recipe"² to appear the journal *Mongolica Pragensia* (Ragagnin, Simion forthcoming a) and "A New Tool for Mongolic Studies. The critical digital edition of Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Dei Viaggi di messer Marco Polo* (1559)" (forthcoming b). Various aspects of their joint research were presented at several universities in Europe and in Asia, among others in Shanghai, Dunhuang, Ulaan Baatar, Berlin and Saarbrücken. A workshop on Marco Polo studies will be held at the National University of Ulaanbaatar in the next academic year. Finally, forthcoming are also the proceedings of the conference *Giovan Battista Ramusio. Nuove indagini filologiche e linguistiche* held at the Department of Romance Philology, Saarland University, Saarbrücken, on 23 June 2017 (Crifò, Rinaldin forthcoming).

4 Outreach Activities

In 2014, on the occasion of Veneto Night, the Department of Asian and North African Studies organised a multidisciplinary programme focused on Mongolia. For this special event, a yurt – the traditional round tent with cap cover, typical of the Mongols and other nomadic peoples of Central Asia³ – was mounted in the small yard of Ca' Foscari's main building. The

2 *Boodog* is a traditional Mongolian cooking method, consisting of meat cooked within the abdominal cavity of a deboned animal (e.g. marmot, goat or sheep) using preheated stones to cook the animal in its own skin.

3 'Yurt' is the term used in English and in other European languages (cf. Russian *юрта*, Italian *yurta/iurta*, German *Jurte*, French *yourte/iourte*, Dutch *joert*, etc.) to refer to this kind of tent. Its etymology is Turkic: in Old Turkic, the word *yurt* referred to 'an abandoned camping site', and in later periods it came to mean 'dwelling place, abode' with several successive semantic developments ranging from 'residence', to 'a specific kind of felt tent', 'community' and 'country' (Clouston 1972, 958). The word *yurt* entered European languages through Russian. In Mongolian, this traditional circular tent is called *mongol ger* 'Mongolian dwelling place/home' or simply *ger*, whereas present-day denominations among Turkic



Figure 2. Veneto Night 2014: the yurt is almost ready (© Elisabetta Ragagnin)

yurt was kindly provided by Gianluca Beggio, owner of a yurt-producing company in Italy. Transporting the yurt's components by boat from Piazzale Roma to the venue of Veneto Night was a great and unique experience both for the students, who actively participated in mounting the yurt, and for the Mongolian colleagues and friends who expressively came from Mongolia to attend the event. In Mongolia and in the rest of Central Asia, yurt's components may be transported by camel, yak and other animals, as well as by tractor and other wheeled vehicles. Therefore, the Venetian transportation by boat was very special.⁴ The event took place inside the

peoples include Kazakh *kijiz üy* 'felt house/home', Kyrgyz *boz üy* 'grey house/home' (because of the grey colour of the felt), and Tuvan *ög* 'house/home'. The words *üy* and *ög* are cognates of Old Turkic *eb* 'dwelling place' and correspond to Turkish *ev* 'house'. For a comprehensive view on yurts, see Andrews (1999).

4 Our colleagues in Mongolia enjoyed very much the video of the Venetian-style yurt-transportation we shot that day.

yurt and witnessed a large flow of visitors. The programme consisted of four lectures: 1) "The Turkic-mongolian Yurt: an Environmentally Sustainable Dwelling", 2) "The Mongols: Past and Present", 3) "The Turkic-Mongolian Steppe World" and 4) "Venice and the Mongols". The first three lectures were held by Elisabetta Ragagnin, whereas "Venice and the Mongols" was held by Prof. Eugenio Burgio (Department of Humanistics), who presented to the public the goals and results of the critical digital edition of Giovanni Battista Ramusio's *Dei viaggi di messer Marco Polo*. The event ended with an audio-visual talk of Elisabetta Ragagnin on the Turkic Dukhan of northern Mongolia,⁵ the last reindeer herders of Mongolia, focusing on her linguistic and ethnographic researches in the field.⁶

This autumn, on 28 September, on the occasion of *Veneto Night 2018*, there will be an event centred on Mongolian oral literature that will take the public on a multimedia journey into the oral literary traditions of the Mongols. The event will consist of readings of selected passages of the *Secret History of the Mongols* – the national epic of the Mongols (cf. among others, de Rachewiltz 2013; in Italian, Kozin [1973] 2009; Grousset 2011) –, Buddhist and shamanic tales as well as legends on the origin of the enigmatic *xöömiy* 'throat-singing', and other Mongolian tales enclosing motives common to the European folkloric tradition resulting from the historical Silk Road connections. The event will be accompanied by a

5 The Dukhan people, approximately 500 people, are a Turkic-speaking group inhabiting the northernmost areas of Mongolia's Khövsgöl region. This area borders with Buryatia on the northeast and with the Tuvan Republic on the west. Presently, around 32 Dukhan families are reindeer herders in the surrounding taiga areas, on the southern slopes of the Sayan Mountains. They follow the so-called Sayan-type of reindeer breeding, characterised by small-size herds of reindeer used as pack and riding animals and as a source of milk products. The remaining Dukhan families have settled down in the village of Tsagaan Nuur and in neighbouring river areas, abandoning reindeer breeding. Some families, however, regularly rejoin the taiga in the summer months and tend to reindeer. Although the Dukhan people identify themselves as *dukha*, a variant of *tuba/tubo*, an ancient name of South Siberia that is common across Sayan Turkic speakers and various groups in the neighbouring areas, in Mongolia they are generally called *Tsaatan* 'those who have reindeer'. Concerning their spiritual world, Dukhan beliefs are animistic, i.e. they worship nature, and shamans play an important role as intermediaries between the material and the spiritual world. On Dukhan language and culture, see, among others, Ragagnin (2011). Furthermore, forthcoming is a new monograph in Mongolian on Dukhan language and culture authored by Oyunbadam Chuluu, director of the boarding school of Tsagaan Nuur and native Dukhan speaker, together with Elisabetta Ragagnin, *Mongol nutag dax' Tuxačuudyn xél ba soyol* (Language and Culture of Mongolia's Dukhan People). This monograph is specifically addressed to the younger generation of the local community and aims at helping them to preserve their native language and culture. The book will be published in cooperation with the Mongolian Academy of Sciences. In February 2017, Oyunbadam came to Venice and was a guest in Ragagnin's seminar Linguistic Research Topics as native speaker of Dukhan and Darkhat-Mongolian, the local Mongolian variety that differs in many aspects from standard Khalkha Mongolian, the official language of Mongolia.

6 The program of the event can be viewed at the URL <http://www.venetonight.it/2014/yurta-mongola-il-mondo-dei-nomadi-delle-steppe/> (2018-07-09).

Mongolian throat-singer playing the traditional horse-fiddle (Mong. *morin xuur*).⁷

Finally, the Italian ambassador in Ulaanbaatar, His Excellency Andrea De Felip, has already agreed to give a lecture at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice, focusing on the Italian mission in Mongolia.

5 Cooperation with Mongolian Institutions

In 2014, on the occasion of Veneto Night, Ca' Foscari University signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National University of Mongolia, starting thereby a bilateral Overseas Mobility programme for students, researchers and professors that was active till December 2017. A new co-operation project with Mongolia was recently submitted within the framework of the new Erasmus+ International Credit Mobility Program (ICM), promoting international mobility of students, teachers and technical staff.

Last but not least, the Mongolian Ministry of Education has recently granted a financing to the Department of Asian and North African Studies for a further development of Mongolian Studies at Ca' Foscari University.

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3 East Asian Studies

150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

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Chinese Studies at Ca' Foscari

Lionello Lanciotti, Mario Sabattini and Their Legacy

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Abstract The successful development of Chinese Studies at Ca' Foscari was mainly due to the contribution of two eminent sinologists, Professor Lionello Lanciotti (1925-2015) and Professor Mario Sabattini (1944-2017). This paper offers a brief overview of their intellectual and academic experience in Venice and of their legacy.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 Lionello Lanciotti at Ca' Foscari. – 3 Mario Sabattini and His Contribution to Venetian Sinology. – 4 Lionello Lanciotti and Mario Sabattini's Legacy in the '80s and '90s.

Keywords Chinese Studies. Lionello Lanciotti. Mario Sabattini. Italian sinology. Ca' Foscari University.

1 Introduction

The teaching of the Chinese language and culture at Ca' Foscari University started in 1966, almost one century after the foundation of the University in 1868 and later with respect to other educational institutions in Italy, such as the universities of Naples and Rome. Nevertheless, just in few years, Ca' Foscari became one of the main teaching and research institutions in this field, widely re-known in Italy and abroad. This rapid and successful development was mainly due to the contribution of two eminent sinologists, Professor Lionello Lanciotti (1925-2015) and Professor Mario Sabattini (1944-2017), who from the mid-'60s to the end of the last century played a pivotal role in establishing and driving the academic study of China in Venice and in educating a group of young specialists eager to develop their intellectual legacy. Both can be considered as the founding fathers of Venice sinology.

2 Lionello Lanciotti at Ca' Foscari

Lionello Lanciotti arrived at Ca' Foscari University as Professor of Chinese Language and Literature in 1965, starting his teaching of Chinese language and literature in the academic year 1966-67. At that time, Ca' Foscari was the only university in Italy where there was a Chair in Chinese Studies, as in the other institutions where Chinese language was taught - namely the universities of Naples and Rome - no similar position existed. Before coming to Ca' Foscari, Lanciotti worked at the Institute for the Middle and Extreme Orient (IsMEO) in Rome and from 1960 he was in charge of teaching Chinese language at La Sapienza University. It was there, in 1942, that Lanciotti, attending the classes of the eminent sinologist Pasquale D'Elia, developed the deep intellectual interest for Chinese culture that nurtured his scientific and academic work all along his life. There, Lanciotti also met Giuseppe Tucci, the famous Italian orientalist, who was in charge of the IsMEO and strongly supported Lanciotti in the early state of his academic career (D'Arelli 2005). In 1946, Lanciotti enrolled in Chinese language classes at IsMEO and two years later began to work there as a librarian. In 1949 he moved to Stockholm, to spend a period of study abroad in order to specialise under the supervision of Professor Bernhard Karlgren. After coming back to Italy, he left again to Leiden, where in 1951 he studied with Jan Julius Lodewijk Duyvendak. It does go without saying that Karlgren and Duyvendak were among the most eminent European scholars in Chinese Studies. This academic international training was pivotal in making him known as the most representative personality of a new generation of sinologists in post-war Italy. In 1957 he had the chance to visit China for the first time, as a member of a small cultural delegation of the IsMEO; his reports were later published as a book (Lanciotti 2007a). Later in 1960 he began to teach Chinese language at La Sapienza University and in 1965 he was called by Ca' Foscari as Professor. He held the Chair of Chinese language in Venice until 1979, when he moved to the Istituto Orientale of Naples (Sabattini 1984b; Rossi 1996).

A well-known scholar all over Europe, Professor Lanciotti was a member of the Board of the European Association of Chinese Studies for many years. It has to be also said that his wide popularity was due not only to his remarkable academic skills, but also to his warm attitude toward colleagues and students. As it is well known, his academic and scientific profile was mainly marked by his deep interest not only in Chinese philosophy and philology, but also in Chinese traditional literature and archaeology. He has been the author of the first original history of Chinese literature in Italian language (Lanciotti [1969], 2007b), and of several studies on Confucius and on Chinese philosophy (Lanciotti 1968). Moreover he translated and commented Chinese classical texts into Italian, ranging from traditional fiction to Chinese classics (Lanciotti 1955, 1981). Lanciotti's impact on Chinese Studies



Figure 1. Lionello Lanciotti and Mario Sabattini in the library of the Seminary of Chinese Literature, 1972

in Italy has been seminal and widely recognised, covering a great variety of scientific interests.¹ But it is worth spending some words about his contribution in establishing Venetian sinology. This is important because, besides having a foundational role in the study of Classical Chinese from an innovative academic perspective, Lanciotti's intellectual and academic enterprise was also marked by his belief about the importance to overcome the traditional approach to sinology focused almost exclusively on classical texts. Not by chance was he also active in exploring topics quite ignored before, such as the history of Chinese law, the history of Chinese women and the relations between Venice and China (Lanciotti 1978, 1980, 1987). But he was also supportive of the need to develop a more specialised expertise in the different fields of Chinese humanities. Ca' Foscari was the academic environment where this development became soon quite evident. Here, between the late '60s and the '70s, the success of Chinese Studies could be measured not only by the increasing numbers of students – around fifty in the early 1972 – but also by the training of a young generation of scholars who, sharing an approach to China based on the most rigorous knowledge of the language and on an acute awareness of the relevance of culture for understanding contemporary Chinese issues, were also interested in opening new fields of enquiry, from modern and contemporary history to modern Chinese language, literature and art. Lanciotti also envisioned the necessity to promote the study of Chinese language at high school, following the experimentation

1 For a bibliography of Lionello Lanciotti's works see Carletti, Sacchetti, Santangelo 1996.

adopted in other European countries such as France. The leading figure in this transition towards a specialised approach to China founded on solid linguistic and cultural knowledge was Mario Sabattini, who, in 1971, began his career at Ca' Foscari under the aegis of Professor Lanciotti.

3 Mario Sabattini and His Contribution to Venetian Sinology

Mario Sabattini was the favourite student of Prof. Lionello Lanciotti's at La Sapienza University in Rome, where he graduated in 1969 and started his career, just to move in 1971 to Venice, as lecturer of Chinese history, and soon in charge of the teaching of Chinese language and literature. At Ca' Foscari, Sabattini, who eventually took the Chair of Chinese Studies in early '80s, soon became the pivotal figure in guiding the shaping of a distinctive school destined to gain a central position in the national and international context.

Mario Sabattini held the position of Head of the Chinese Literature Seminary from 1979 to 1991 and from 1991 to 1994, of the Department of Indological and Far Eastern Studies (later renamed Department of East Asian Studies). Moreover, he was Supervisor of Courses of Asian Languages and Literatures (1987-90), Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures (1996-99) and Pro-Rector (1988-92 and 2003-04). From 1979 to 1989 prof. Sabattini also served as Director of Courses of Eastern Languages and Cultures at the IsMEO in Rome. Like Lanciotti, as an internationally renowned scholar, he too was a member of the Board of the European Association of Chinese Studies for many years and moreover he gave a fundamental impulse to the birth of the Italian Association of Chinese Studies, of which he was Secretary General from 1988 to 1999. From 1999 to 2003 he moved to Beijing as Director of the Italian Cultural Institute at the Embassy of Italy and, in 2003, he was awarded for his merits as foreign expert of China by the Chinese Ministry of Education. After his retirement, he became Professor Emeritus at Ca' Foscari University. His intellectual role was also fundamental as a member of the Veneto Institute of Sciences, Letters and Arts.²

Actually, Mario Sabattini's role in developing Chinese Studies at Ca' Foscari University deserves a full appreciation from several perspectives. First, he gave an invaluable contribution as an intellectual with a wide range of interests. He was the first one among the scholars of his generation to recognise the importance that Chinese society, culture and economy were going to take on the world stage and, in light of this awareness, to open the path towards a new research and study approach to China in

2 For a more complete assessment of Mario Sabattini's academic experience and scientific contribution see Abbiati, Greselin 2014, 11-22.

Italy. One of his fields of expertise was history, and not by chance was his first book dedicated to the history of political movements in modern and contemporary China, a topic that he studied with a full understanding of the legacy of China's past and the challenges of modernity (Sabattini 1972). Nevertheless, his greatest scientific contribution concerned the development of aesthetic thought in China. In the latter field, in particular, Sabattini's work has achieved great resonance even in China. He has been unanimously recognised as one of the world's leading experts on the work of Zhu Guangqian, the important Chinese philosopher inspired by the ideas of Benedetto Croce (Sabattini 1984a, 1992, 1993, 1996, 1998, 2005, 2008, 2010). The relevance of the historical dimension remained at the core of Sabattini's intellectual project even when he turned his main academic attention towards literary criticism, the translation of classical and modern poetry and prose, the evolution of Chinese fiction. Among his several works it is worth remembering his two books - written with another eminent Italian sinologist, Paolo Santangelo - on Chinese history (Sabattini, Santangelo [1986], 2005) and on Chinese fiction (Sabattini, Santangelo 1997), his contribution as translator of Yu Dafu (Sabattini 1999) and of Chinese contemporary poetry, as in the specialised journal *Caratteri*. In the last years he co-edited one volume of the most important work dedicated to Chinese civilisation in Italy (Sabattini, Scarpari 2010). Finally, one cannot fail to mention his pioneering work in the study of Thai language and literature, and in the comparative analysis between Thai and the Chinese language (Sabattini 1996; Bungjarat, Sabattini 2017).

Secondly, Mario Sabattini's academic work was also addressed to the promotion of the knowledge of Chinese culture and civilisation in Italy. He organised the first major exhibitions on ancient Chinese civilization in Italy, namely *7000 Years of China. Neolithic and Han Art and Archaeology* (Venice, 1983-84) and *China in Venice, from the Han Dynasty to Marco Polo* (Venice, 1986-87) (Sabattini, Abbiati 1986). These two initiatives greatly contributed to project Venice as a main centre for the diffusion of the knowledge of China in Italy.

4 Lionello Lanciotti and Mario Sabbattini's Legacy in the '80s and '90s

Thanks to their personal charisma, their human and intellectual depth and their vast and multidisciplinary knowledge, Lionello Lanciotti and Mario Sabbattini managed to gather around them a group of young scholars who found high inspiration in their example for developing their own specialisation in Chinese Studies. In a period in which in Italy the teaching of the Chinese language and culture was still in a pioneering phase in terms of methodology, they were able to educate a generation of sinologists who, since the late '80s, made Ca' Foscari the greatest centre for Chinese Studies in Italy.

Among them, we must at least mention Maurizio Scarpari, who not only developed research and study of classical Chinese but also played a pivotal role in enhancing Venetian sinology and making the Department of East Asian Studies an important institution in the field; Magda Abbiati, whose academic research was fundamental in the development of a new approach to the teaching and learning of Chinese modern language, thus making Ca' Foscari a leading centre; Guido Samarani, a nationally and internationally re-known historian of contemporary China; Federico Greselin, who was the first to specialise in modern Chinese culture and media; Alfredo Cadonna, whose research interests were focused on Chinese religion and Taoism. Scarpari, Abbiati and Samarani acted also as Heads of Department in the '90s and in 2000s; Scarpari has also been Pro-Rector in the early 2000s. This is an evidence of the capacity of Venetian sinologists to personally engage themselves in order to place Chinese Studies at the core of the development of Ca' Foscari as a nationally and internationally important institution in high-education and research.

This small group all belongs to the first generation of Lanciotti and Sabbattini's students at Ca' Foscari in the '70s. In the following two decades all of them were able to build on these masters' inspiration not only to support the growth of Chinese Studies at Ca' Foscari but also to promote an approach to ancient and contemporary China, based on a solid knowledge of the language. This remains the main trait of sinological studies at Ca' Foscari, and has nourished and still nourishes the current generation of China scholars in Venice.

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

edited by Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin

Chinese Studies in Venice: a Timeline of Change

Daniele Brombal

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Abstract Chinese Studies have historically been shaped by change in political, social, and scientific institutions. Since the '80s, China's emergence into the world stage and change in scientific paradigms have spurred debate about the epistemological foundations of the field. Sinologists have been confronted with the need of identifying pathways to ensure that the knowledge they produce is relevant for science and society. The engagement with theoretical and empirical approaches employed by different disciplines, most notably the social sciences, has been a key element to their endeavours. This paper contributes to this on-going reflection, by benchmarking recent changes in Chinese Studies at Ca' Foscari University against global trends of evolution in area studies. Results show that the field has now multi-disciplinary features and has initiated a transition towards inter-disciplinarity. By endorsing the holistic approach to knowledge informing this transition, scholars in the field may strengthen the centrality of Chinese Studies in scientific production processes concerned with the sinosphere.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 2 The Evolution of Chinese Studies. Change Within Continuity. – 3 Recent Trends in the Evolution of Chinese Studies at Ca' Foscari. – 4 A Possible Pathway Toward Transformation.

Keywords Chinese Studies. Venice. Social sciences. Disciplinarity. Change.

1 Introduction


Defining the nature of Chinese Studies is by no means an easy task. Throughout history the epistemic milieu of the field has been enriched by heterogeneous contributions. This makes it challenging to draw clear-cut boundaries based on disciplinary features, a common practice in other fields. Things get easier if we seek to define Chinese Studies through their aim: i.e. to generate knowledge about peoples and places of the sinosphere, both present and past. Boundaries of the sinosphere cannot be superimposed on physical or political ones. They are drawn by the diffusion of

I express my gratitude to Mr. Sebastiano Morando (Ca' Foscari University Venice) for collecting data on scientific publications authored by sinologists at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. Likewise I wish to thank Ms. Arianna Magnani (PhD candidate, Ca' Foscari University of Venice) for her insights on Chinese Studies in the XVII and XVIII centuries.

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cultural and social institutions originating from the epicentre(s) of the Chinese civilisation. These boundaries are porous and constantly reshaped by relations with other cultural and social systems (Wang 2002; Barmé 2005; Previato 2017; Fumian 2018). This dynamic process represents both a source and a receptor of adaptive behaviours by scholars in the field. By coping with change induced by factors out of their control – historical events, the evolution of science, etc. – they incessantly redefine their field of inquiry and their methods. This paper contributes to this dynamic process, by discussing change in Chinese Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice against wider trends of evolution in the field. The first section sketches the trajectory of evolution of Chinese Studies since their inception in the XVI century, by identifying motifs of continuity and change. The second introduces a systematic review of recent scientific works authored by researchers¹ with formal sinological training, employed by the Department of Asian and North African Studies.² A total of 955 works have been extracted from the university database,³ filtering them based on (a) date of publication (2000-2018); (b) authors' department of affiliation; and (c) authors' names. Publications have been then categorised based on their disciplinary approach, by triangulating information about their (a) title; (b) disciplinary field(s)⁴ of publication; and (c) authors' disciplinary field. Results of the review are presented and discussed against wider trends at play in the field. The conclusive section of the paper introduces potential areas for reflection relevant to the future evolution of Chinese Studies, drawing from the international debate on area studies and transdisciplinarity.

2 The Evolution of Chinese Studies. Change Within Continuity

The origin of Chinese Studies can be traced back to the late XVI century, when the expansion of maritime trade toward Asia created the preconditions for intensifying relations between Europe and the Ming empire. At the time, the production of scientific knowledge had not yet been normalised into the narrow branches that we call today disciplines. Science was the pursuit of a holistic comprehension of the human and physical nature (Capra 1982). The first pioneers of Chinese Studies – mostly Jesuits – who set foot on the shores of South-East China were imbued with such an epistemological imprinting. Clearly, establishing accurate and reliable means

1 Including faculties, post-docs and PhD candidates.

2 Formerly Department of East Asian Studies.

3 Data are partially available here: URL <http://www.unive.it/data/19126/>.

4 *Settore scientifico-disciplinare*, SSD.

of communication was their first preoccupation. The study of language therefore played a vital role in their efforts, as did the inquiry into texts that constituted precious sources of information about China's cultural, social, political and religious institutions. Besides these core skills, first sinologists were also trained in natural philosophy. The inquiries into astronomy, geometry and mathematics, etc. were part of their scientific work. As a matter of fact, they acted as proxies between the European and Chinese scientific traditions, collecting, crafting and transferring knowledge about humans and the natural environment they inhabited (Iannaccone 1996; Hsia 2008; Jami 2011). Change came with the compartmentalisation of knowledge and the institutionalisation of higher education in the XIX century. This period witnessed the emergence of canonical Chinese Studies, shaped by the humanities. Besides language and philology, the field came to include the study of philosophy, religion, arts and history, as well as archaeology and anthropology. Scholars in the field continued to be regarded both as a source of knowledge on China and brokers of the intellectual and scientific dialogue between China and the West. This exchange was all but fair, as it often served political, economic, military and religious interests of colonial powers. In fact, the prestige achieved by area studies in this period can be largely explained with their being instrumental to the interests of European élites. This paradigm entered into crisis in the XX century once again, when the social sciences emerged as an important locus of scientific production on China's social and political institutions (Dutton 2002; Walder 2004). Political science, sociology, and economics complemented the humanities in the production of societally relevant knowledge on China. This trend was also fuelled by the increasing importance attributed in academia and policy circles to the adoption of 'objective' methods of inquiry, based on standardised metrics, quantitative analytics and a detached approach to the subject of inquiry (Carlson et al. 2010). Against such a background, traditional Chinese Studies were understood in many quarters as ancillary to other disciplines. The marginalization of the field and the increasing disciplinary specialisation over the second half of the century resulted in different outcomes in Anglo-Saxon countries and continental Europe. In the US – and partially UK – Chinese Studies soon embraced multi- and inter-disciplinarity,⁵ blending their traditional areas of interests and methodological approaches with those prevalent in the social sciences. In continental Europe change was slower in taking roots and the focus on humanities long remained dominant (Leiden University 2012). A generalised opening-up of the field to the contribution by other disciplines came with the China's reforms in the '80s-'90s. The

5 Multidisciplinarity implies the collation of inputs from different disciplines, without a unified analysis or synthesis. Interdisciplinarity is the collaboration among different disciplines oriented towards a comprehensive and integrated knowledge of the subject (Bernstein 2015).

political and economic dynamics triggered by the emerging role of China generated a greater heterogeneity in interests and pathways of scientific inquiry in/about China. Moreover, her opening-up to the West made it possible once again to conduct field research, while unprecedented access was given – at least until the first decade of the 2000s – to a variety of sources useful for the study of the country's contemporary institutions (Carlson et al. 2010).⁶ In a long-term perspective, the trajectory of evolution of Chinese Studies can be therefore understood as characterised by both continuity and change. Continuity lays in that, since its inception, the field was been shaped by political, economic and social contingencies. Also, despite developing a robust and coherent core centred on the humanities over the centuries, Chinese Studies have often been a locus of encounter for different scholarly traditions. The field has been constantly changing to adjust to the wider socio-political and scientific environments, by selectively expanding to encompass other scholarly traditions, or otherwise retrenching into its core. This capacity to adapt has constituted an important source of resilience for the field. As we shall see in the next paragraphs, this dynamic continuity persists to the present day.

3 Recent Trends in the Evolution of Chinese Studies at Ca' Foscari

Chinese Studies have a relatively recent history in Venice, dating back to the mid-'60s. Its roots however run deep in the tradition of continental sinology. Professor Lionello Lanciotti—the initiator of Chinese Studies in Venice—had been student of Giuseppe Tucci, one of the main figures in Classical Oriental Studies. In his young age he had known first hand the work of scholars representing the late apogee of the XIX century sinology, such as Bernhard Karlgren and Jan Julius Lodewijk Duyvendak (on prof. Lanciotti, cf. Scarpari, Lippiello 2005). This important legacy has long nurtured the development of Chinese Studies in Venice, centred on philology, linguistics, literature, and philosophy. This has remained the norm until recently. In the last decade the contribution of other disciplines has become more robust. The figure below shows the composition of research carried out by Chinese Studies scholars at the Department of Asian and North African Studies. Publications are subdivided into four areas: the humanities, contemporary history,⁷ social sciences and law. Data show a clear trend towards an increase in the diversity of scientific work conducted at the department, thanks to a marked increase in research informed by Social Sciences and Legal Studies.

6 These processes were sustained also by technological development.

7 Contemporary history is considered separately due to the role it has played in Ca' Foscari in bridging the humanities with the study of contemporary political and social institutions.

Graph 1. Publications by disciplinary field. Department of Asian and North African Studies (2000-01/2018-06)

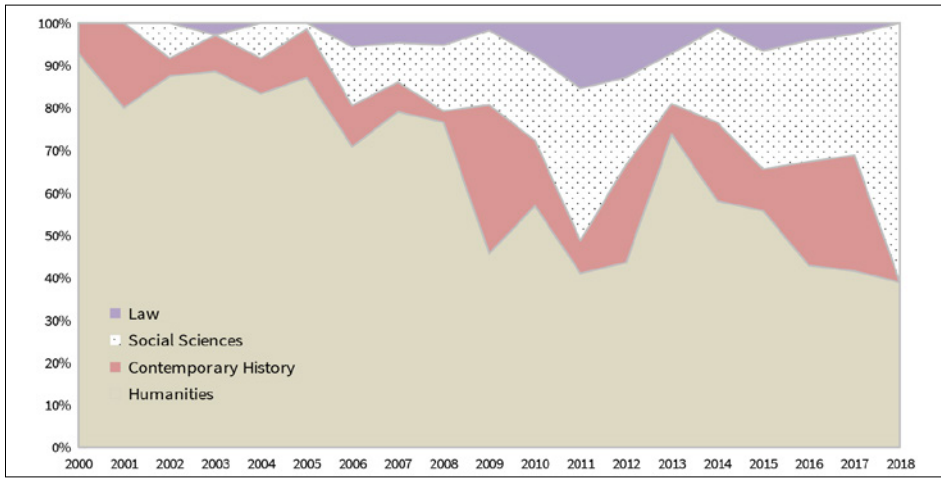
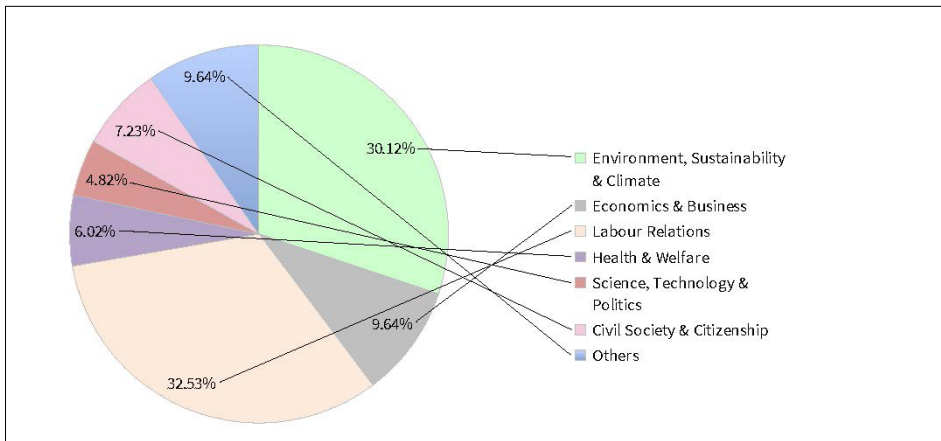


Chart 1. Publications that have employed social sciences approaches, subdivided by subject. Department of Asian and North African Studies (2013-01/2018-06)



Research informed by social science has revolved around major governance challenges and institutional transformations that have characterised China in the post-reform era. Albeit to a lesser extent, it has also focused on topics relevant to Sino-Italian relations. Subjects include the environment and climate politics, sustainability policies, labour relations, welfare and health care policies, business and economics, civil society and citizenship, and the science-politics nexus (chart 1).

For a considerable part, researchers have employed theoretical frames and empirical tools utilised in the field of political sciences, as well as sociology and organisational studies. It is worth noting that the inquiry into the legal dimension and regulatory structures has constituted an important transversal component of research conducted on the above-mentioned subjects. The strive toward a meaningful engagement with these issues has resulted in a deeper integration of disciplines, based on systemic theoretical and analytical framings. Almost one third of works published in the last five years have been co-authored by researchers with diverse disciplinary backgrounds. One out of ten publications – particularly in the field of environmental and social sustainability – has been co-authored by scholars of natural and health sciences. These dynamics are a tangible sign of the establishment of a interdisciplinary research agenda within Chinese Studies in Venice, whereby research subjects are chosen, framed and inquired into by integrating concerns, concepts and methods of different disciplines.

4 A Possible Pathway Toward Transformation

Since the year 2000 Chinese Studies in Venice have been characterized by the gradual establishment of multi- and inter-disciplinary research. At the same time, the core of the research agenda has remained rooted into the humanities. This has generated considerable scientific results and allowed the wider scientific community in Ca' Foscari to tune in to China's evolving social, political and economic reality. This trend is consistent with the one observable in continental Europe, where the field has opened to the contribution of different disciplines, albeit preserving the humanities at its core. In recent years, further evolution of the field has been subject to lively debate. Despite a certain degree of heterogeneity, many scholars tend to agree in endorsing the idea of a holistic epistemology of the sinosphere, open to integration between the humanities and other disciplines (Barmé 2005; LIAS 2012; Brombal 2017; Previato 2017; Fumian 2018). This approach appears to echo transdisciplinary propositions,⁸ according to which Chinese Studies may work as a locus where not only boundaries among disciplines can be crossed at ease – this is happening already – but these very boundaries can be radically challenged and new approaches established from scratch. Based on the current debate on transdisciplinarity (Capra 1982; Bernstein 2015) and the future of area studies (Dutton 2002;

⁸ Transdisciplinarity differs from interdisciplinarity in that it “challenges the entire framework of disciplinary thinking and seeks to assemble new approaches [...] using materials from existing scholarly disciplines for new purposes” (Bernstein 2015). On the pursue of holism in the sciences, see the seminal work by Capra (1982).

LIAS 2012), further reflection on this proposition may focus on four aspects, namely scientific awareness, ethical drive, societal engagement and positional consciousness. The first aspect – scientific awareness – refers to the capacity of scholars of being conscious of and responsive to transformations in knowledge production. Today, these transformations mostly regard the establishment of a systemic perspective, whereby interconnections among human, social and natural phenomena replaces boundaries arbitrarily established by scientific disciplines. This sense of interconnectedness closely relates to ethical responsibility stemming from relations among human beings and between human beings and nature. It is worth noting that Chinese Studies possess tremendous potential at this regard, as they have been traditionally concerned with interconnections between people(s), their cultural and social institutions and spaces they inhabit (LIAS 2012). Such an ethical approach would empower the humanities lying at the core of our field, unearthing their potential in reflecting on life, the human condition, values and beliefs. To some extent, societal engagement can be understood as a by-product of such an ethical drive, as scholars become concerned with challenges faced by contemporary societies and pursue the co-creation of knowledge on subjects of pressing public concern. Finally, a critical reflection on positionality has been as well a practice that has long informed the daily practice of Chinese Studies. Rather than focusing on the divisive trait of dichotomies (self/other; we/them; researcher/subject; knowledge/matter), positional consciousness may both facilitate the production and exchange of knowledge, and the identification of novel solutions for long-standing problems of human origin, within and beyond the sinosphere.

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

edited by Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin

Alberto De' Stefani: from Ca' Foscari to China

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Abstract Alberto De' Stefani (1879-1969), one of the most important Italian economists, studied and taught in Ca' Foscari until he moved to Rome in 1922. Among his personal achievements, it is worth remembering his mission to Republican China in 1937. This essay first looks at De' Stefani's connection with Ca' Foscari and then it gives an account of his trip to Republican China in the context of the history of Sino-Italian relations in that period, aiming at offering some new insights on this important figure in the history of Ca' Foscari University.

Summary 1 Introduction. –2 De' Stefani at Ca' Foscari. – 3 De' Stefani's Career in Ca' Foscari's Sources. – 4 De' Stefani's Mission to Republican China. –5 Conclusions.

Keywords Alberto De' Stefani. China. Ca' Foscari Alumni. Relations between Italy and Republican China. Chiang Kai-shek.

1 Introduction

Alberto De' Stefani (1879-1969) has been one of the most well known *alumni* of Ca' Foscari University. His career as an economist and as a politician took him to the highest level of both the Italian government and academia in the '20s and '30s. Among his life's achievements it is often forgotten that in 1937 he has also been an economical and financial adviser of Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of the Republic of China. His mission to China, though shortened because of the outbreak of the war between China and Japan, was a relevant event in the history of Sino-Italian relations (Samarani 1993). Nevertheless, it is still quite unnoticed in the history of Ca' Foscari University, in spite of the fact that, as far as it is known, De' Stefani has been the first and, for a long time, the only *alumnus* – and ex-professor – of Ca' Foscari to have gone to China in an official vest, and this occurred in a period that was crucial for the relations between the two countries (Samarani, De Giorgi 2011).

2 De' Stefani at Ca' Foscari

Alberto De' Stefani was educated in economics in the regions of Padua, Venice, Verona and Vicenza under the supervision of some of the most prestigious figures in the field of Italian economics of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, such as Angelo Messedaglia, Luigi Luzzatti and Giuseppe Toniolo.

He enrolled at Ca' Foscari when this was the already well-known Scueola Superiore di Commercio (High School of Commerce), in early 1900s. We do not know much about De' Stefani's life as a student here. He is remembered by an old schoolmate in 1941 in a short notice written in the *Bollettino dell'Associazione degli Antichi Studenti* (the newsletter of the Association that gathered Ca' Foscari alumni) as someone "in constant meditation, measuring the University courtyard by large steps" (*Bollettino* 143-4, 1941, 38-9).

In March 1902 he passed the final examinations for the Degree in Commerce (Diploma Commerciale) at Ca' Foscari, with a score of 99/120 (*Bollettino* 10, 1902, 31). At that time he was also enrolled at Padua University, where he graduated in Law in 1903. His thesis was published as a book, *Teoria del Commercio Internazionale* (De' Stefani 1903), in Verona in the same year (Marcoaldi 1991).

In the following years De' Stefani worked in Vicenza and later moved to Padua, but still he often attended the general meetings of the *Associazione*. But it was only after the Great War, in Autumn 1918, that the relationship between De Stefani and Ca' Foscari became tighter, as he was invited to teach Political Economy and held also the chair in Finance (*Bollettino* 67, 1918, 24).

During the following three years De' Stefani taught these fundamental courses, supervising also some theses. At last, in April 1921 he became a Full Professor of Political Economy.¹ Actually, according to the list of selected scholars for the position of Full Professor, the first one was Luigi Amoroso (1886-1965), who chose to be the chair of Political Economy at the new High School of Commerce in Naples. De' Stefani, who was second in the list, was appointed Professor here (*Bollettino* 74, 1921, 12-13). In the same period he had begun his political career, becoming also an early member of the Italian Fascist Movement (Marcoaldi 1991) and in June 1921 he was elected to the Italian Parliament (*Bollettino* 75, 1921, 13; Camera dei deputati, "Alberto Dè Stefani").

Few months later his election, in 1922 he was chosen as Minister of Finance by Mussolini; after few months he headed the unified Finance and Treasury Ministry, because the Minister of Treasury Vincenzo Tangorra

1 Venezia, Archivio Storico Ca' Foscari (ASCF) Serie docenti, v. 4, 25-26, 67-68.

had suddenly died. His appointment as a Minister was actually greeted by his colleagues and all the members of the Association *Antichi Studenti* with much pride.

The political newspapers, in offering some biographical information about Alberto De Stefani, the new Minister of Finance, recalled that he is a Full Professor of Political economy at our school. But he also belongs to the numerous group of Ca' Foscari's *alumni*, since, in addition to studying in the Faculty of Law at the University of Padua, he also studied here in our Section of Commerce. To the illustrious economist and dearest consociate, the President sent his best congratulations and fervent wishes. (*Bollettino* 78, 1922, 15) [Translated from Italian]

Actually De' Stefani's leave caused some initial difficulties. He had been invited to give the *lectio magistralis* for the beginning of the Academic Year 1922-23, but due to his institutional duties in Rome, he had to renounce, and was substituted by Professor Gino Luzzato (*Bollettino* 79, 1922-23, 8). As for what concerned his teaching, he was replaced by his colleagues Alfonso De Pietro Tonelli and by Marco Fanno (*Bollettino* 79, 1922-23, 9), though he still officially maintained the position (*Annuario* 1923, 19-20). Quite interestingly, De' Stefani appointed one consociate of the Association, the economist Raffaele Gangemi, in charge of the Press Office of the Ministry of Finance (*Bollettino* 80, 1923, 45).

3 De' Stefani's Career in Ca' Foscari's Sources

De' Stefani's position as a Minister was certainly considered by the Association of Alumni with pride, but most of the attention on him was given to his intellectual efforts and to the acknowledgments he received in the academic world. In 1923, for example, the news of the honorary degree he was awarded at the University of Ferrara was reported as well as a strong appreciation about his initiative to promote the publication of a catalogue of all books and reports edited by the Italian State (*Bollettino* 81, 1923, 26, 34-5).

In Spring 1925, De' Stefani was forced to resign from his appointment due to conflicts with Italian entrepreneurial circles and with Mussolini himself, which sharpened after the murder of socialist leader Giacomo Matteotti in June 1924 by a fascist hand. He was soon invited to teach at the newly inaugurated Faculty of Political Science of the University of Rome. The events were not commented in the *Bollettino* until 1926, when the *alumni* expressed their support to their old schoolmate by the way of Pietro Rigobon, the President.

The *alumni* of the High School of Venice expressed their satisfaction over the rise of Alberto De' Stefani in the academic field and over his appointment to the illustrious chair of this Institute where he had been a very worthy student. After he was appointed as Minister, they followed with admiration his pure and wise work, which designed the financial organization of the State. They greeted with sympathy the simplicity with which he left the Government and returned to teaching. With regret, they received the news that family reasons and public offices had taken him away from the our school and led to accept the chair and the presidency of the School of Political and Social Sciences in the University of Rome. Proud to have Alberto De' Stefani in their ranks, the *alumni* will follow, wherever it takes place, his work, guided by his clever mind and noble intentions. Offering their affectionate and devoted greetings, they express their best wishes to him and his dearest ones. (*Bollettino* 88, 1925-26, 43) [Translated from Italian]

During the following years, De' Stefani's primary commitments were teaching and research. Even though he was invited to join the Grand Council of Fascism in 1932,² this did not mitigate his contrasts with numerous sectors of the regime, which were critical of his sympathy toward England and his reservations about racial policy (Viviani 2006, 1: 300-3; Marcoaldi 1986; Toniolo 1980).

4 De' Stefani's Mission to Republican China

It is within this context that the possibility of De' Stefani's appointment as adviser to the Government of China, whose main purpose was to contribute towards the reform and restructure of the administrative, economic and financial apparatus, became a reality in the latter part of 1936.

De' Stefani's name was likely proposed to Nanjing by Hjalmar Schacht.³ As William C. Kirby points out:

The new German position in China was forged by a confluence of interests between the Reichswehr, leading German industrial firms [...] and, after 1933, the economic policy of Hjalmar Schacht. Together, these elements formed a German 'China lobby' that set a course for Sino-German rela-

2 The Grand Council of Fascism (Gran Consiglio del Fascismo) became the main body of Mussolini's fascist government. It was created in late 1922 and became a state body in 1928.

3 Hjalmar Schacht (1877-1970) had been President of the Reichs Bank under Dawes Plan (1924-30); at that time (1934-37) he was Reichsminister of Economy.

tions quite different from that envisaged first by the German Foreign Ministry and later by the Nationalist Socialist leadership. (Kirby 1984, 256)

Moreover, De' Stefani contributed to the popularization of Schacht's thought in Italy, writing, among other things, the preface to the Italian translation of some of his works (among these cf. Schacht 1949).

De' Stefani's mission should have lasted one year, from early 1937 to the end of that year: however, given the critical situation in China marked by the civil war and the Japanese aggression, his mission began in March 1937 and ended prematurely in the summer of that same year, soon after the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War.

During the first part of his mission in China, De' Stefani visited various Chinese provinces and met several governors, mayors and representatives of the industrial and commercial circles. On these occasions, he delivered a series of speeches that focused in particular on the importance of national reconstruction and unification. While in Nanjing, he spent most of his time studying the situation and discussing his ideas on the commencement of a series of projects regarding the reform of the economic and financial systems with members of the government, army and economic circles.

In July 1937, he was invited to attend a series of summit meetings in Lushan at the request of Chiang Kai-shek himself, following the serious political situation that arose after the Chinese leader's kidnapping by some Nationalist generals in Xi'an at the end of 1936. De' Stefani was accorded the opportunity to present to Chiang and several top country leaders a set of suggestions and plans involving, among other things, the reform of China's fiscal system and the approval of a National Mobilization Act. After the beginning of the Japanese attack, he was sent to Shanghai to work, together with Song Ziwen (*aka* T.V. Soong, 1894-1971),⁴ on defining a plan for stabilising the national currency and public finance. He remained there until the middle of August: he left Shanghai and via Hong Kong went back to Italy accompanied by Jiang Baili, as a personal representative of Chiang Kai-shek, and Dr. Xue Guangqian, as his counsellor. De' Stefani had first met Jiang Baili (*aka* Jiang Fangzhen, 1882-1938), a brilliant Chinese general and strategist, in September 1935, when Jiang was sent to Rome during a mission study; as for Xue (*aka* Paul K.T. Sih, 1910-?), this was a young attaché at the Chinese embassy in Rome and soon became a pupil of De' Stefani's at the Faculty of Political Science.⁵

4 Song Ziwen was one of the most prominent personality of the Chinese government and the Chinese Nationalist Party. At that time, he mainly worked to raise fundings in order to sustain the war with Japan and also began to cultivate support for China in the United States.

5 Roma, Archivio storico della Banca d'Italia, Fondo Alberto De' Stefani (ADS), Dossier, 16/10, 708 10.

Actually, besides the mission's specific objectives, prior to his departure, De' Stefani had the chance to receive general indications about the broadest political meaning of the mission by Galeazzo Ciano⁶ and Mussolini himself. In particular, though Ciano had not concealed Italy's increasingly strengthening relations with Japan, he had denied any Italian intention to recognise Manzhouguo. In his turn, the Duce pointed out the need for Italy to actively support some kind of agreement between China and Japan.⁷

As a matter of fact, Alberto De' Stefani found himself cooperating with Nanjing in a very difficult phase of Sino-Italian relations. This notwithstanding, until his departure from China, as well as during the years following his return to Italy, he remained convinced that a positive and friendly collaboration between Italy and China was both necessary and possible.

When Chiang Kai-shek, during the leave-taking meeting which took place in Lushan on 17 July 1937, asked him about Mussolini's attitude towards the Sino-Japanese conflict,⁸ De' Stefani pointed out that before his (De' Stefani's) leaving for China, the Duce had explicitly proclaimed to him Italy's interest in the triumph of a strong and independent China.

Furthermore, De' Stefani added:

As for my opinion, I love China as I do my own country and I will say this from the bottom of my heart. China is now at the period of her reconstruction, any things that hinders her reconstruction shall be forborne, if not infringing her sovereignty, so that the reconstruction can be completed.⁹

After returning to Italy, De' Stefani strove to keep alive the feeble hopes of the ability of Italy and China to maintain a friendly relationship, carrying on a mediation attempt in close accordance with Jiang Baili during the autumn of 1937.

On that occasion, De' Stefani and Jiang Baili agreed upon a draft proposal to be submitted to the attention of Ciano that envisaged the Chinese recognition of Italian sovereignty over Ethiopia and the Italian commitment to sustaining the principle of the self-determination of the Chinese people. Thus, it was intended in particular to reassure Chiang Kai-shek

6 Galeazzo Ciano became Minister of Foreign Affairs in June 1936. He had already been in China in the early '30s, carrying out an activity deemed very precious in order to cement the friendship and the collaboration between China and Italy.

7 Roma, Archivio storico della Banca d'Italia, ADS, Dossier, 16, 11 18; 16/2, 116.

8 The political significance of the conversation appears evident considering the fact that, just a few days earlier (7 July), the so-called Marco Polo Bridge (Lugouqiao) Incident had occurred, which would mark the beginning of the Japanese aggression that led to war with China.

9 Roma, Archivio storico della Banca d'Italia, ASD, Dossier 18/1, 12 14: quot. 13 (in English in the original text).

that the recognition of the Italian invasion of Ethiopia had nothing to do with the recognition of the Japanese invasion of China.

Nevertheless, it is known that this project soon failed due to the Japanese intransigence as well as the uncertainty and ambiguity of the European positions, especially that of Great Britain, which should have played the important role of mediator.¹⁰

But, in spite of this failure, De' Stefani kept, though not so explicitly, a sympathetic attitude towards China, and especially towards Chiang Kai-shek, something that was at odds with Italian philo-Japanese policy (Samarani 1993, 309).

5 Conclusions

Considering the national political climate and its influence in Ca' Foscari, it is not surprising that small echo of De Stefani's experience in China was recorded by his old schoolmates and colleagues. Except for a later short annotation of his appointment as High Advisor of the Chinese Government (*Bollettino* 117, 1973, 35), no specific mention was made to his mission to China in Ca' Foscari's sources. As a matter of fact, at that time Ca' Foscari University's connections with China were mostly occasional. The only relevant event occurred in January 1933 - in the golden era of Sino-Italian relations - when the Chinese Educational Mission to Europe was received with all honours by the Rector, as required by the Italian Ministry of Education (*Bollettino* 107-108, 1933-34, 12).¹¹ Nevertheless, its subsequent impact on the development of Ca' Foscari relations to China was insignificant.

So it is even more important to recall De' Stefani's unique experience in Republican China, as he remained greatly appreciated by the highest Chinese authorities even when Sino-Italian relations became difficult. De' Stefani was proud of this. As *alumnus* of Ca' Foscari, he insisted on mentioning his official entitlement as economic adviser by Chinese government as a personal merit worthy, more than other, to be signalled to his old schoolmates (see for example *Bollettino* Nuova Serie 2, 1957, 55).

10 Roma, Archivio storico della Banca d'Italia, ADS, Dossier 16/4 5, 887 89; 16/4 216 19.

11 Si veda anche Venezia, ASCF. Verballi Consiglio di Amministrazione, Gennaio 22, 1933.

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

edited by Laura De Giorgi and Federico Greselin

Japanese Teachers at the Royal School of Commerce (1873-1923)

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Abstract Only five years after the Royal High School of Commerce (the present Ca' Foscari University) was founded in 1868, the School introduced, for the first time in Italy, Japanese language courses taught by native speakers. The classes started in 1873 and continued until 1888, and were again part of the curriculum from 1909 to 1923. In those years a little number of very active Japanese teachers (interpreters, linguists, sculptors and painters) contributed to shaping the education in Japanese of Italian students, who in turn went on to direct Japanese instruction in Italy. Their guiding spirit was Guglielmo Berchet, a tireless promoter of Italo-Japanese relations.

Keywords Japanese language instruction. Ca' Foscari University. Italian-Japanese relations. Japanese cartography. History of Venice.

Four Years to Remember

1867 In Venice, the vice president of the Province, Edoardo Deodati, writes to Luigi Luzzati (a young politician, future Prime Minister in 1910-11) regarding the upcoming opening of the Suez Canal, asking that a Vocational School for economic operators be established in the city, in order to “re-establish those commercial relations with the East, which so deeply influenced the past greatness of our city, and through which it will rise again, on the economic side, too” (cited in Berengo 1989).


A plea that was not ignored, considering that the soon-to-be mayor Antonio Fornoni suggests that “the city council ignores which use should be attributed to the majestic Foscari Palace, and notes that it could be very much suited for the School. It is a venue that could be used for the greatest University”. The Palace “in the channel’s vault” is, to this day, the prestigious location of the University.

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1868 *La Gazzetta di Venezia* of 1 February reports that on the night of 31 January, at the Venetian Athenaeum, Luzzatti presented his ideas regarding an ambitious project that aims to make Venice a focal point for economic studies, similar to the one created in Pisa for Letters and Natural Sciences Studies. The project involves the Provincial Council, the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce and the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry and Commerce. The Royal Decree regarding the foundation of the School is emitted on the 6th of August of the same year, with 1868-69 being its first academic year. On 23 October, after two and a half centuries of closure, Japan open its doors to the World. The sixteen-year old Emperor, Mutsuhito, moves from Kyōtō to the new capital, Tōkyō. Thus begins the Meiji period, which will see its end in 1912.

1869 Opening of the Suez Canal. Venice was the ideal harbour in the Mediterranean for Austria, Germany and Italy to establish commercial relations with the East, which role was strongly suggested by Alessandro Fè d'Ostiani, plenipotentiary minister of the Italian Government in Tōkyō, who was highly regarded by the Emperor.¹ Not least, an important part of these commercial interest was the need to facilitate the arrival of boxes of silkworm eggs to face the pebrine epidemic that was devastating those years' silk production.²

1873 Opening of the Consulate General on 9 May. Thus, Venice became the first city in Europe to host a Japanese consulate.³ Even though it did not last for a long time - in march of the next year it was first moved to Milan and then to Marseille, while the one in Venice remained as an honorary consulate - this event gave great visibility to the city and put it in a privileged position in the eyes of the politicians in Tōkyō.⁴

1 Alessandro Fè d'Ostiani (Brescia 1852-Roma 1905) is an important figure in the history of the Japanese-Italian relations. After being awarded a Law Degree from the University of Vienna, he was appointed to several diplomatic roles in Rio de Janeiro, Paris and China, before being transferred to Tōkyō in October 1870. He was extremely popular in the Japanese capital, so much that this anecdote on him circulated: "Our minister is so well known in that city, despite its great size, that it is sufficient to say 'Italian Minister' to make the *ginrikisha* [*jinrikisha* rickshaw guy] leave as fast as possible for his destination. And that's not true for the other Foreign Ministers, as, for example, the Russian one has to say 'Italian Minister' in order to be brought to his house, which is close to our Minister's" (Graffagni 1877, 174; Author's translation).

2 Claudio Zanier is a true expert in the subject, being the author of many essays (see, among others, Zanier 2006).

3 The previous consulates were established in S. Francisco (1870), New York, Shanghai and Fushu (1872).

4 On 18 May 1873, *La Gazzetta di Venezia* indicates the Guccioli Palace in San Samuele as the building chosen to host the consulate.

On 27 May of the same year Iwakura Tomomi – plenipotentiary minister and head of the ‘Iwakura Mission’, the delegation sent by the first Meiji government who visited the United States and Europe for 18 months between 1871 and 1873 – arrived in the city. The official escort of the Iwakura Mission in Italy was Fè d’Ostiani. The mission, constituted of fifty members, had the principal purposes of obtaining a review of the treaties, connecting with the governments of the fifteen visited countries, and in particular of familiarising with the western reality (for general information see also Istituto Giapponese di Cultura 1994). Not everyone from the delegation came to Venice, but so did Iwakura, who remained in the city for a few days, during which he not only visited Venice as a tourist, but also gave his patronage to the Japanese language teaching project.

On 30 November 1873, the Japanese language courses (which had started its academic activity just five years before) started at the High School of Commerce with a solemn celebration.⁵ In addition to the regular course based on theoretical and practical teachings for commercial operators, teachers of economic subjects, and the specialists of a so-called “Consular Section”, there was the new possibility of studying foreign languages – western and eastern – because, as Luzzatti said, “in order to know ourselves, to better ourselves, it is better to study those modern languages which are used in modern negotiations rather than studying ancient languages, which deal with the negotiation of ancient matters” (*La Gazzetta di Venezia*, 1 December 1873).⁶

La Gazzetta di Venezia gave a detailed account of the ceremony, and it is easy to understand the role held by Fè d’Ostiani, highlighted by the words of the comm. Ferrara, who, in addition to suggesting and promoting the project, offered the services of his secretary Yoshida Yōsaku, who became the first Japanese language teacher in Venice.⁷ Yoshida himself participated in the ceremony with a well-received speech in French. Yoshida Yōsaku, who remained in Venice from 1873 to 1875, had enrolled in 1865 at the Collège Japonais-Français of Yokohama, and spent some time abroad in France. He became the official interpreter for the Royal Italian Legation in

5 On the one hand, Venice was the first city to hold Japanese language classes in a High School; moreover, these classes were taught by native speakers and aimed to educate future commercial operators. On the other hand, in Florence, which can be considered the birthplace of Far Eastern Studies in Italy since the second half of 1800, the purely philological approach, or anthropological, was prevalent and it pertained mainly the scholar elite. However, Japanese was not the first Oriental language to be taught in Venice: there were colloquial Arabic classes (Professor abbot Raffaele Giarue from Aleppo) from 1868 to 1889, and Turkish classes (Professor Zuchdi Effendi) from 1869 to 1877.

6 All the quotations retrieved from *La Gazzetta di Venezia* and other Italian sources have been translated by the Author into English.

7 The news spread beyond Venice and abroad. *La Gazzetta* reports the reactions from *Il Sole* of Milan and from the English *The London and China Express*.

Tōkyō, together with Fè d'Ostiani, and, after leaving Venice,⁸ he operated as a ministerial clerk in Holland, Korea, the Philippines and in Germany. Once he returned to Japan, in 1890, he was nominated counsellor to the Imperial Household.⁹

The *Gazzetta* informs its readers:

10 December, 1873. City news. Japanese language classes. We delightfully observe that these classes at the High School of Commerce are attended by more than 40 people, and that they proceed with order and appreciation, so much that the students demanded and obtained evening classes during non-working days. If this kind of enthusiasm was to manifest in other areas with the same fervour, it would be of good auspice for the commercial future of our country.

The following month:

14 January, 1874. Yesterday evening the Italian Minister to Japan [Fè d'Ostiani], unexpectedly joined a Japanese language class, sitting among the students. He stayed for the whole lesson, and in the end expressed not only his satisfaction regarding the work of the egregious Professor [Yoshida], but also his praise towards the students for their very fast improvement.

Before starting to talk about the succession of professors who held the teaching post at Ca' Foscari, it seems right and proper to mention a fundamental actor in those years' context: Guglielmo Berchet, honorary consul and indispensable helper to the Japanese people both residing in or just visiting Venice. He came from a family of French descent who had moved to Venice, and was born on 3 July 1833. He graduated with a law degree from the University of Padua, but was interested in particular in the history of Venice, about which he studied historical documents and past testaments, then shifting his interest towards the East.¹⁰ Active member of the Vene-

8 It could be interesting to know whether Fè d'Ostiani had a say in deciding the conspicuous salary received by Yoshida. The Japanese teacher made 7.000 liras, against the 3.000 and 2.000 liras made by his German and French colleagues. Even the Italian teachers rarely received such high salaries (cf. Berengo 1989, 61 fn. 35).

9 He also served as a guide to H.R.H. Tomaso, Duke of Genoa, during his well-received visit to Japan. Tomaso, who had arrived on 8 August 1879 as the captain of the *Vettor Pisani*, remained in Japan until 13 January 1881, visiting the Japanese coasts for a year (cf. di Russo 2003, 157-75).

10 His bibliography consists of about fifty essays, among which "About Venetian Merchants in Asia" (Berchet 1864) and "Report on Venetian Consuls in Syria" (1866). A monumental work of his, to which he committed for twenty-four years, was the curatorship of

tian Institute of Sciences, Literature and Arts from 1880, he was elected its secretary for life in 1897. He was amongst the founding members of the Venetian Institute of National History, of which he became secretary at first, and then president. From 1866 to 1875 he edited *La Gazzetta di Venezia*, the major newspaper in the city. It is not known when his passion regarding Japan began, and passion it was, indeed. Maybe it was thanks to his research, urged by Iwakura's visit to the State Archives, about the documents regarding the Japanese diplomatic missions in Italy in 1585 and 1616 (Berchet 1877). He was nominated Honorary Consul in 30 September 1880 and served until his death on 15 June 1913. Even in those years in which he did not have an official role, he was upfront in every event that involved the Land of the Rising Sun; careful in assisting the Japanese residents, with whom he had a consolidated friendship; an excellent guide to tourists; present to every commercial exchange; active in organising meetings and managing networking; a sponsor for the presence of Japan at the International Art Exhibitions; and a delegate for the Geographical Society of Tōkyō at the International Geographical Exhibition that was held in Venice in 1881.

All these events happened in the context of an energetic political and cultural life that animated Venice in those years, and revolved around its historical poles: the Frari State Archive, the Biblioteca Marciana, the Venetian Institute of Sciences, Literature and Arts, The Querini Stampalia Foundation; it also revolved around local personalities such as Antonio Fradeletto and Riccardo Selvatico, amongst the creators of the Biennale d'Arte;¹¹ Filippo Grimani, enlightened mayor who served from 1895 to 1919; artists like the sculptors Antonio Dal Zotto (1852-1918)¹² and Luigi Ferrari, who served for years as director of the Royal Institute of Fine Arts; Pompeo Molmenti, politician and historian,¹³ Rinaldo Fulin, philologist and erudite, just to name a few; in addition to the above mentioned Edoardo Deodati, Luigi Luzzatti, and the economist Francesco Ferrara.

Marino Sanudo's *Diaries*, an impressive 58 volumes work, in collaboration with others (Sanuto [1496-1533] 1879-1902).

11 Initially called "Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte della Città di Venezia", it was established in 1895 on the occasion of the 25th wedding anniversary of King Umberto I to Queen Margherita.

12 Antonio Dal Zotto (1852-1918), professor at the School of Arts Applied to Industry in 1870, in 1879 joined the Fine Arts Academy where he taught for forty-five years. He sculpted the statue of Carlo Goldoni in Campo San Bartolomeo and was teacher to Nagayama Moriyoshi.

13 Pompeo Gherardo Molmenti (1852-1928), successful journalist and politician, dedicated many of his historical and artistic pieces to Venice, amongst which an essay on the personal life of Venetians (Molmenti 1879). For further information about him, see a recent work by Monica Donaglio (2004).

Following Yoshida, five more teachers were part of the School, before the interruption caused by a lack of funds: Ogata Korenao, 1876-77; Kawamura Kiyoo, 1878-79 to 1880-81; Naganuma Moriyoshi, 1881-82 to 1886-87; Itō Heizō, 1887-79 to 1880-88.¹⁴ Classes resumed for about fifteen years from 1908-09, with the painter Terasaki Takeo as the teacher and funds from the Chamber of Commerce. Ogata, Kawamura, Naganuma and Terasaki were all people of high calibre who deserve a special mention, especially Ogata and his peculiar story.¹⁵

Born in 1853, Korenao was the tenth son of a famous physician from Osaka, Okata Kōan. He attended, like Yoshida, the Collège Japonais-Français in Yokohama, founded in 1865, and was then a recipient of scholarship in France. Once he came back to Japan, he was chosen to be the interpreter at the World Exhibition of 1873 in Vienna; he was then in Turin at the International Institute. When he was only twenty-two, he had already been to Europe three times. Finally, he arrived in Venice in 1875, when he enrolled in the Royal High School of Commerce in order to attend a 'consular course', and at the same time accepted the position of teacher of Japanese language, succeeding Yoshida. However, he held this position for a short period of time, as he died of scurvy on 4 April 1878, just a few days after converting to Christianity (with Guglielmo as his Christian name) and marrying the Venetian Maria Giovanna Gerotti, with whom he had had a daughter, Eugenia Gioconda, born in their house near Ponte dei Pugni in Dorsoduro.¹⁶

The child's godfather was Guglielmo Berchet, as the documents show, and it was Berchet himself who arranged for Korenao's body to be retrieved from the mass grave where it was initially put, in order to give him a proper burial at his expenses in the cemetery of San Michele in Isola. Moreover, he appointed the sculptor Naganuma Moriyoshi to decorate his grave.¹⁷ The citizens' moved response and participation to the young man's funeral service can be seen through the words reported in *La Gazzetta* of

14 Itō Heizō was the only one to have nothing but a feeble influence on Venice, but, as an Italian literature scholar, once he returned to Japan he taught an Italian literature course at the Tōkyō School of Foreign Languages (Tōkyō Gaigo), and in 1910 published an Introduction to the Reading of Italian Language for Japanese Students.

15 The bibliography regarding these topics is vast; for one of the most complete texts focused on the relations between Venice and Japan see Ishii 2004.

16 The most detailed account in Italian of Korenao's life is Daitō 1976-77, which reports: "The *Liber Baptizatorum* of S. Maria del Carmine in Venice, on 24 September, 1877, records the baptism of Eugenia Gioconda born on the 10th of the same month, daughter of the pagan Corenao Ogata and Maria Gerotti, godfather Guglielmo Berchet" (Author's translation).

17 The tomb (fence II, vertical recess 74, row 4) is a burial recess, in the centre of which Naganuma placed Korenao's profile in a medallion. Korenao's name figures both in Latin alphabet (Corenao [sic]) and in Chinese characters. Notably, the first character of the two that form his name, *kore*, is wrongly written. It is thanks to the painter Beppu Kan'ichirō's

6 April 1978, and through Carraro's speech, which once again exalts the importance of the commercial relationship between the two countries:

This young man, whose death we are mourning, was a son of that Far East which, closed for centuries in his most ancient civilization, has just come in frequent and fructuous contact with the western civilization. The relationship with Japan started to grow strong in 1845, because of the illness that impacted our silkworms; the Italians, bearing the purpose of getting the hold of healthy silkworm eggs, which were fairly abundant there, were amongst those who took advantage of the opening of some of the Japanese harbours to international commerce, which was before restricted to just one harbour open to Holland. Moreover, this relationship flourished thanks to the revolution happened in Japan, in which the element who so strongly vetoed any contact with foreigners succumbed, and the power fell into the hands of those who do not fear to join their efforts with ours in order to promote a ever growing progress for all the members of the human family. We cherish and encourage those efforts, and we believe that thanks to them, numerous and more important results will come.

For the current purpose, it is enough to mention that the connections between Japan and Italy grew, consolidated and became more current, and with them came the urgent necessity to understand each other. This being the situation, it would have seemed like a shortcoming for our School, had it not created a Japanese language tenure.

Thus it was created, and the post initially went to the egregious Professor Yoshida. However, three years later, having had to return to Japan to deal with some personal matters, he managed to have his compatriot Korenao Ogata nominated as his substitute; Ogata, who had come to Venice in order to learn more about the Italian language and our political and economic institutions, had been teaching with a positive outcome to a good number of students when he suddenly died.

His good heart, his alacrity and acumen, his most tranquil attitude, his loyalty and generosity, his poised manner, which maybe revealed the ancient and innate civility of his race, had gifted him with a large number of friends and estimators between us colleagues and acquaintances. We hope that all these qualities, which he most certainly shared with his compatriots, as its is universally known, will bring, more than the reconciliation of mere individuals, the growth of our commercial relation, the reciprocal exchange of every kind of idea, the knowledge and diffusion proper of the civilized world. [...]

research, who lived for a long time in Venice in the last century, that his tomb was traced and cleaned, and is now a frequently visited place.

Farewell, for the last time, unfortunate stranger, symbol of the fraternity of peoples, example of honest and useful industry, assurance for the hoped fusion between different and distant civilizations, earnest of useless fatigues and beginnings of a bond between yet unknown interests; farewell, excellent youngster, we will send your last farewell to your desperate mother, to your brothers, to your beloved land; we will send that farewell that you, in your anguished agony, could not send, but which we are sure wandered through your tired mind and lied on your trembling lips.

Ogata was succeeded from 1878 to 1881 by Kawamura Kiyoo, a painter, who had studied in Paris before arriving in Venice in 1876, when he enrolled in the Academy of Fine Arts, which he attended for many years, even receiving a few awards, and where he had the occasion to become acquainted with both Italian and foreign artists like Oreste da Molin, Ettore Tito and the Spanish Martin Rico Ortega. He was fairly active in the teaching of Japanese, so much that his teaching programme was added to the report of the Directive Council that was presented in May 1881 at the Milan National Exhibition.

In September 1881, the International Geographical Exhibition was held. Berchet undertook the task of drafting the catalogue. Once the Exhibition ended, the artefacts remained in Italy, as they were previously been donated to various institutions. *La Gazzetta* reports:

Remarkable gift from the Japanese government. All the artefacts and all the collections, sent by the Japanese government to the Geographical Exhibition, will remain in Italy. The Japanese Consul in Venice, *comm.* [commendatore] Berchet, by order of that government, consigned the great Map of the Japanese Empire to the Venetian City Hall, Map that had earned the selection of the international Panel, and it was asked that it will be collocated in the Civic Museum, as a reminder of Japan's participation to the Geographical Exhibition; he consigned to the Royal High School of Commerce the entire collection of minerals, soil specimens, stones, carbons, etc. which can be found in Japan, a collection assembled to satisfy many Industries' interest; he consigned to the Meteorological Observatory a 21 volumes collection of meteorological and astronomical observations recorded in different stations throughout Japan.

He also sent:

To the Geological Museum in Florence, the Japanese birds and amphibious collection, together with photographs of Saghalin's Ainos;

To the Prehistoric Museum in Rome, the most interesting collection of remains of the human industry and fossil shells dug in Omori and Hidatchi;

To the Italian Geographic Society, the collection of 98 maps drawn by the Japanese Hydrographic Bureau;



Figure 1. The maps *Nihon zenkoku* (Representation of Japan as a whole) donated by the Consul of Japan. University of Venice, Department of Asian and North-African Studies, Director's Office (photograph by the Editor, May 2018)

To the Ministry of Public Works, the great map of the Lighthouses on the Japanese coast, equipped with manuals;

To the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, all that it was left, meaning geographical and topographical maps, books, collections, a complete herbal of 720 Japanese plants, the works and papers of the University and Normal School of Tōkyō, etc., with the request of implementing their distribution to the various Italian Institutes.¹⁸

¹⁸ The collection of stuffed birds was registered in the Geological Museum of Florence by Enrico Hilyer Giglioli, director of the Natural History Museum La Specola. Giglioli, naturalist and ethnographer, had circumnavigated the Earth together in 1866-68 with Vittorio Arminion and Filippo de Filippi aboard the pirocorvette *Magenta*, which stationed in Japan in July and August 1866.

The map here defined as the “great Map of the Japanese Empire” comprises of two coloured maps (fig. 1), with the caption (right to left, horizontal) *Nihon zenkoku* ‘Representation of Japan as a whole’. Edited by the Monbushō, the Ministry of Education, they are dated Meiji 10, ninth month (September 1878). One of them (173 × 269 cm) depicts Kyūshū with the surrounding islands, Shikoku, western Honshū up to the Kii peninsula, Tsushima and, in a square below, the Ryūkyū Islands. Korea is just outlined. The other one (176 × 270 cm) depicts Honshū until the Tsugaru Strait, and the Sado Island. In a square above, under the scroll, Hokkaidō and the Kuril Islands.

The maps were then moved from the City Hall to the Royal School of Commerce, where they were put into storage as rolls for decades, before being transferred to the Library of the present-day Ca' Foscari University. During the '80s, one of them was preserved in the Geography Institute, and the other in the Japanese Language and Literature Institute in Ca' Cappello, where they were reunited as a pair a few years later. Nowadays, the maps have been restored and are exhibited in the Director's office at the Department of East Asian Studies in Palazzo Vendramin dei Carmini,¹⁹ where they are admired by visitors, among them also representatives of Japanese television companies.

Again in 1881, the Project of the High School of Commerce in Venice reports:

To these subjects [statistics, economics, maritime law, history of commerce] we would add the teaching of foreign languages, especially English, German, French and Spanish; however, what would make the Venetian School unique, and attract not only a large number of Italian students, but also English, French and Germans, and give it the characteristics of a European school, as it is the commerce that it wants to represent, is the teaching of Oriental Languages. The well-known Mekhitarists fathers, who have been living on a little Island in the Venetian Lagoon for years, offered to teach, for a modest price, those Oriental Languages of which they are illustrious scholars. The City Hall has already accepted the offer, and it would like to implement these classes at the Superior Institute of Commerce in Venice, where, as a consequence, modern Greek, Arab, and Persian would take their place alongside western languages. Modern Greek and Arab would very much be the key to a new continent, and the Venetian school would be, thanks to them, a real Polytechnic specialized in European and Oriental languages for

¹⁹ At the time (2007) an independent institution, the Dipartimento di Studi sull'Asia Orientale (DSAO) was in 2011 one of the founding components of the present-day Department of Asian and North-African Studies, whose Director's Office was in the same premises as DSAO's [Editor's note].

commerce. This would also offer the mean for the Government to educate its consuls, so that, before leaving for those distant countries, they would have already mastered the languages there spoken. And, when the gigantic endeavour of the making of the Suez Isthmus is completed, Venice, with its High School of Commerce, will not only match Antwerp, but also surpass it, and, with its excellent teaching tradition, with these Oriental Languages, will become the real nurturer as well the very archive of all the commercial relations with the East, as demanded by the memory of our past and the hopes of the future. (*La R. Scuola di Commercio in Venezia* 1881, 78-9; Author's translation)

Let us go back to the teachers. From 1881, it was the sculptor Naganuma Moriyoshi who held the post until 1887.²⁰ He was one of Vincenzo Ragusa's students in Tōkyō, at the Kōbu Bijutsu Gakkō (School of Industrial Arts), and, once in Venice, he attended classes at the Royal Institute of Fine Arts, starting from January 1882.²¹

He took part in the National Exhibition of Fine Arts in 1887 in Venice, presenting a successful (but nowadays lost) gypsum sculpture called *Al Lido*,²² which portrayed a young boy bent over, left knee on the ground, with his right arm raised and turned backwards, holding a sea shell just picked up from the beach. Berchet himself ensured that the news spread in

20 In his memories, published in 1936, Naganuma complains that the School only paid him two thousand liras, compared to Kawamura's seven thousand, due to the fact that Kawamura was also the recipient of a generous scholarship from the Japanese Government, which consisted of six thousand liras. Only after three months did Naganuma obtain a raise in his salary, which was brought to three thousand liras per month. However, the most interesting part is the one regarding the fact that, even though he did not regard himself as suited to be a Japanese language teacher, he was the first to teach the "Chinese characters, which I think are fundamental in order to read our language", since Kawamura only taught the alphabetic katakana (cited in Ishii 2004, 39).

21 The speech - on the occasion of the closing lecture for the a.y. 1883-84 - by the Academy Secretary Domenico Fadiga regarding the situation of western art in Japan, proves how strong the artistic bond between Venice and Japan already was. "I will just briefly discuss how, a few years ago, under the patronage of our ambassador count Fè d'Ostiani, a sort of Academy was established in Tōkyō, and how, in order to manage it, three professors were sent from Italy, one for architecture [Cappelletti], one for painting [Fontanesi], and the third one for sculpture [Ragusa]: the new-born institute, however young, seemed able to take root (except for architecture, as it was in competition with the already existing Polytechnic), and the schools were well attended; the reason why this experience, as many others before, failed, I do not know. As of today, therefore, the only exponents of the future monumental artistic development of that country are our Naganuma, in Venice, and another student, who at the same time attends the Academy in Rome [Matsuoka Isashi, with Cesare Maccari]" (*Atti* 1884, 39; Author's translation). An account of Naganuma activities in Venice can be found in Ishii 2001.

22 *La Gazzetta* reports it on 28 September 1887. The original title was meant to be *Al Lido* (with a clear reference to the Venetian beach), but Berchet translated it into French as *Au Lido*, which became *Orido* in the Japanese transliteration, losing then the initial meaning.

Japan, as he sent a praise letter written in French to the *Jiji shinpo* newspaper.²³ The only creation of Naganuma now left in Venice is the bas-relief of Ogata Korenao's profile on his grave in San Michele, as said before. However, his presence and works were fundamental in order to organise the Japanese participation in the second edition of the International Art Exhibition in 1897.

In the meantime, once Itō Heizō had ended his teaching period (1887-88) at the School, the Japanese language classes were interrupted because of a lack of funds, with great regret from the academic authorities and disappointment for the numerous students who were attending these classes. Indeed, the seed had been sown, and the first results were starting to show. On 18 March 1886, Agostino Cottin held an academic lecture at the Venetian Athenaeum, titled "Notions on Japanese Language", which was later published in the journal *Ateneo Veneto* of the same year (Cottin 1886). It was comprised of 19 pages and three tables: the first displayed the phonetic alphabet *katakana*, the second one a *hiragana* chart, the third one simple dialogues with transliteration and literal translation: "Today nice the weather is. Your sister where she is? I her brother saw. Your father and mother good people are". In addition to a praise of his superiors and of Professor Naganuma, Cottin also mentioned a few students who attended those lessons and who particularly stood out: Giulio Gattinoni, who will teach Japanese at the Philology Club in Venice before moving to the Oriental Institute in Naples, where he worked from 1907 to 1910, who published a few language texts: *Oral Japanese Grammar* (Venice, 1890) and *Complete Course of Japanese Language I, Writing* (Venice, 1908); Emilio Roquemartine, who could not - holding a French passport - work for the Italian delegation in Tōkyō, but nonetheless served as interpreter

23 "The Japanese Honorary Consul in Italy, Cav. Guillaume Berchet, an Italian who was honoured with the Fourth Class of the Order of Imperial Merit, sent the following letter to the *Jiji shinpo* to praise our fellow countryman Mr. Moriyoshi Naganuma: 'One of the most admired pieces of the National Exhibition of Fine Arts, opened in Venice last year, is a gypsum statue sculpted by Mr. Mariyoshi Naganuma, born in Iwate prefecture in Japan, Professor of Japanese language at the High School of Commerce in Venice, and student at the Royal Institute of Fine Arts in the same city. The sculpture, titled *Au Lido*, portrays a beautiful young boy who holds a sea shell picked up from the beach. The elegant statue was largely admired by the public. Had it been sculpted in marble, it could have had surely sold for a high price. It was also requested for the Emilian Exhibition now open in Bologna. It is a shame that it wasn't shown; it would have surely earned much praise. However, the sculpture had already been damaged in various spots during transport, so it was decided not to send it to the Exhibition. A rich connoisseur wanted to buy the statue in order to reproduce it in bronze. The sculptor, Mr. Naganuma, is no longer in Venice and cannot control the process. Now he lives in Japan. I hope that his fame reaches his country, and the he - inspired by this good result - will continue his activity to honour both his country and Italy, where Mr. Naganuma studied, the country where his sculpture technique was forged. Japanese Consul in Venice, Italy, Guillaume Berchet'". *Iwate nichinichi shinbun*, 26 August, 1888 (cited in Ishii 1998).

for the French delegation.²⁴ Others were Timo Pastorelli, from Melara (Rovigo), who taught Italian at the Tōkyō School of Foreign Languages (Tōkyō Gaigo),²⁵ and A. Scolastici, who too lectured in the same school for two years, as well as Luigi C. Casati, “who is now responsible for the government of Korea”, as reported by Cottin. The latter stresses that the method of approaching the language used by Naganuma recalls Franz Ahn’s progressive method, so that a fast learning of the basic spoken language is made easier,²⁶ while the approach to the written language is more difficult, for “the Chinese symbols are the main obstacle”.

He also notes: “I cannot say why, even though they already had their own alphabet, they still chose to use these Chinese symbols; it could be to favour commercial exchanges with that nation”, but he believes that “the study of those Chinese symbols should be considered as a study subject for a dedicated course”. Then, after explaining the basic rules, he concludes that “in the written language the greater challenges are due to the use of Chinese characters; in the spoken language, students are particularly troubled by pronunciation and sentence structure”. Unfortunately, this peculiar statement on pronunciation was not better explained. On the other hand, Cottin exposes some acute practical observations: “Instead of an animal feather or a mineral of some sort, they use a little brush called *fudè*; the ink they use is the one we call ‘of China’, which dries instantly, a characteristic which is very useful considering that, when writing right to left, it would be easy to get the paper stained”.

In 1897 the second International Art Exhibition was held. Even though Venice had already asked for the participation of Japan to the first Exhibition, it was then too late to organise it properly. In the occasion of the

24 *La Gazzetta* reports on 9 September 1874: “From Tokio, 15 July: In the Nishin-Shimbun and other Japanese newspapers, I happily read many pieces regarding the school of Japanese Language in Venice. These newspapers show their satisfaction with the project, but I believe that it would be better if the Government, in return, added the teaching of Italian Language to the *Kasei Gakko*, which is the first language school in Tokio, as it is unreasonable that many European languages are taught there, with the exception of ours, which is used by many who come here or by those who maintain commercial relations concerning the silk market. It is speculated that the best student of the Venetian School, Mr. Emilio Roquemartine, is supposed to come here. He will be very much welcome, and he will be the first example of the level of your school as well as its first great outcome”.

25 Pastorelli already served as representative for the Royal Museum of Commerce of Venice in the capital, establishing there a special agency. He remained in Japan for a long time, and in 1911 it is recorded that he sent to the Royal Museum an important report on the Yokohama harbour and its commerce, with special attention to Italy, report which was later published in the *Rivista commerciale d'Oriente*.

26 A method already adopted by Kawamura, and then maintained by all the other Japanese professors. Franz Ahn (1796-1865) is best known for his simple and practical approach to the teaching of languages, which for him consisted in the study of grammar structures through short and frequently used sentences.

second Exhibition, it was once again Berchet who managed the contacts, while for other events everything was managed by ambassadors and ministers. As a result, once the approval of Secretary Fradeletto was obtained, Berchet sent, on 15 January 1896, a letter of invitation that ended with these words: “La prochaine Exposition aura lieu du 1er avril jusqu’à 30 octobre 1897; et nous espérons d’y pouvoir admirer aussi des œuvres d’artistes japonais de l’ancienne et mieux encore de la nouvelle école”. Berchet included a piece of Pompeo Molmenti’s speech that was reported on *La Gazzetta* of 13 January:

Neither it is my intention to forget the efforts to bring Japanese Art to the next Exhibition. Whoever even barely knows, ladies and gentlemen, the ruddy and bizarre fantasies of that Art, its decorative flair, the rich inspiration which can add to a candid primitive spirit the finest expedients of a refinedly mature civilization, will soon convince themselves of the fascination that this Art can hold not only for those chosen minds who research all the original forms of beauty, but also for those many persons of good taste who cheer and take care of every notable novelty.

We think that we should not be waiting anymore to start working on the next Exhibition, both because we are the recipients of the most welcome and undoubted promises, and the echo of the previous success is still vibrant in the artists’ souls, and finally because, if we hesitate any longer, another city could take this great event from us.

It was the Japanese Art Society (Nihon Bijutsu Kyōkai)²⁷ who took care of the organisation. They sent only their members’ works and gave Naganuma the responsibility of finding an answer in Europe to the most urgent question arisen in those years: was Japanese art to be considered pure art or regarded instead as decorative art? This debate saw the participation of Corrado Ricci, Ugo Ojetti, Antonio Munaro, Vittorio Pica and Enrico Thovez, among others. Others, with more competence than this Author, published essays on this subject, including topics as: the debate’s conclusion, the various opinions and the frantic exchange of letters; the stances of the Venetian authorities (Molmenti, the Major Grimani, Dal Zotto, Fradaletto, Selvatico) and of the Japanese authorities (minister Sanno, the omnipresent Naganuma, the Japanese Art Society); the refusal of the

27 It was thanks to officials and art dealers interested in the participation of Japan to the world expositions, amongst whom there was minister Sano Tsunetami, that the Ryōchikai ‘Society of the Dragon’s Pond’ was founded in 1879. In 1887 its name was changed to Nihon Bijutsu Kyōkai ‘Japanese Art Society’. The purpose of the Association was to give value to the Japanese art in Europe, where the fever for *japonisme* was spreading, and to enhance the export of Japanese art pieces. The term *bijutsu* ‘beauty and technique’ was born in 1873 as a translation from the German *Schöne Künste*.

Japanese part to send the original ancient pieces instead of the copies they sent; the need to take some pieces from two already existing collections in Europe, owned respectively by Ernst Seeger (Berlin) and Alessandro Fé d'Ostiani, and the invitation to Edmond De Goncourt to supervise the Japanese section, which was nullified by his death.

In this first participation, Japan presented 35 paintings and 69 'art objects' (sculptures, lacquers, porcelains): numerous were the difficulties (custom clearance, water infiltration into the trunks, insufficient space in the Giardini location at the beginning, and so on), but in the end, accepting some logistical adjustments, the organisation of the exhibit was successful, to both everybody's satisfaction and the surprise of those who did not know anything about Japanese art.²⁸ According to Naganuma, one of the reasons why the public showed so much interest in the Japanese exhibition resided also in the admiration for the Japanese military victory in 1894-95 against the Chinese colossus. It is not possible here to report all the accounts, documents and facts regarding this first Japanese outing, artistically speaking, in Venice. However, a peculiar event happened with regard to the selling of these works: we refer to the fact that seventeen Venetian hoteliers bought seven paintings, which they thereafter offered to the City Hall as a contribution to the "soon to be established Gallery of Modern Art", the present-day Museum of Modern Art in Ca' Pesaro. These paintings are unfortunately not exhibited now. The comment of *La Gazzetta* was: "A beautiful gesture from the hoteliers, which, we are sure, will urge the other owners of the numerous Hôtels, who still didn't, to do the same..."²⁹

However, the reaction in Japan was somewhat lukewarm: the comments supporting some of the doubts expressed by a few Italian critics about the real value of Japanese art were very few and isolated, but it cannot be forgotten that these were the years when Ernst F. Fenollosa and Okakura Tenshin staunchly upheld the superiority of Japanese art on the western one.³⁰ Japan did not participate in the third Biennale in 1899, as it was preparing for the World Exposition in Paris (1900), nor in the following

28 For the list of the works exhibited and comments on Japanese art, see Munaro 1897, 209-17.

29 The 'meritorious' hotels were: Britannia, Europa, Italia, Luna, Roma, Milan, Inghilterra, Beau-Rivage, Métropole, Aurora, Sandwirth, San Marco, Cavalletto, Belle Vue, Vapore, Cappello Nero, Bella Venezia.

30 Ernest F. Fenollosa (1853-1908), an American educator and art scholar, taught in Japan from 1878 to 1886. Patron of the tradition Japanese art, he contributed to the protection of many masterpieces and to the re-evaluation of the local art. His student Okakura Kakuzō Tenshin (1862-1913) fought for the recognition of the Japanese traditional arts. In 1889 he was amongst the founders of the first Academy of Arts, Tōkyō Bijutsu Gakkō (nowadays Tōkyō University of Fine Arts and Music). He introduced Japanese culture in Europe through various conferences, debates and books, like *The Ideals of the East* (Okakura 1903), and *The Book of Tea* (1906).

ones,³¹ but the impact that Japan's participation had on the resolves that were taken, both in Europe and Japan, on the participation of 'decorative arts' in these events was fundamental.

In January [1900] Mr. Takeo Terasaki, student at the Institute of Fine Arts in Venice, inaugurated at the School a course on Japanese language, which is attended by 30 students divided into three groups of ten students each, in order to ensure a more efficient way of teaching. The young professor was presented to the students with an important speech by the director, Professor Castelnuovo, who reminisced of the past, when this course was issued at Ca' Foscari, and hoped for the just renewed teaching assignment to be as successful as possible. (*Bollettino* 35, 1909, 15)

An excerpt of Professor Castelnuovo's well received speech:

Indeed, because these oriental languages are the object of not mandatory courses, their knowledge being not necessary to a man of average culture like it is the study of French and English, their study is left to the interest of those who have a strong will of learning them, or who are particularly versed in the philological disciplines. It is enough for the teacher of Turkish language, as it is for the one of Japanese, that each year two or three students graduate from the School with the ability to put their teachings to good use. Sirs, in this movement which urges Italy to re enter the route to the East, Venice must be nowhere else than in front line. (*Bollettino* 36, 1909, 33-4)

These courses lasted until 1923, to the satisfaction of the local authorities and of the students. Terasaki,³² who also taught the language to Ferdinando

31 A sporadic appearance was in 1924, on the occasion of the Fourteenth Biennale. The regular participation of Japan in Venice with a proper Pavilion begun in 1952.

32 The name Terasaki Takeo appears in the *Annuario della R. Scuola Superiore di Commercio in Venezia per l'anno scolastico 1913-14* (116). The list of his publications includes both studies on the commercial relations between Italy and Japan, regarding the development of the silk worm related industry in Italy and the transportation of hard coal from Manchuria published on the *Official Bulletin of the Commerce and Industry Ministry of Japan* (years 1909-11), and articles published on Japanese periodicals, like the *Bulletin of the Tōkyō Academy*, regarding various artistic themes. There is a photo that depicts a group of about fifty people, between teachers and students, reunited around the well in the Ca' Foscari courtyard, dated July 1912. The *Bollettino della Associazione degli antichi studenti* follows Terasaki's career across the years, taking note of the trips to Japan in 1916-17 in order to care for his ill mother, or his impossibility to return in 1918 caused by the "intensified war of the German submarines", as well as the anxiety due to the lack of news about his situation after the terrific earthquake of 1923.

of House Savoia, Prince of Udine,³³ stayed in Venice for a long time, studied painting at the Academy, became friends with a few local painters (for example, Gino Cadorin), and wrote a grammar text (Rivetta, Terasaki 1911) in collaboration with Pietro Silvio Rivetta, professor in Naples from 1907. The always present Berchet wrote the preface. Terasaki was a productive painter, and a great number of his paintings and sketches depict Venice. One of these, simply titled *Venice* (Takeo, Tateyama 2003, 17, fig. 77), was one of Taishō Emperor's favourites, who kept it in his room. It is now located in the National Museum (Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan), as a gift from the Imperial Family. Terasaki was the first Japanese artist to be honoured at the Biennale, and he received this praise for his painting *Kannon* (Takeo, Tateyama 2003, 26, fig. 1), bought by the Italian government and now kept at the Museum of Modern Art in Ca' Pesaro. In 1930 he organised the Exhibition of Japanese Art, supported by the baron Okura Kinshichirō, which was held in Rome at the Exhibition Palace, and had a wide appeal. For this continuous activity in the field of arts, he was nominated Knight of San Maurizio and of Italy (second class), as reported in the illustrated catalogue of the retrospective exhibition *The World of Terasaki Takeo* in April 1967 (2003). At the inauguration, the writer Mishima Yukio praised his "blue skies of Italy", pointing out how his inclination towards sensations of calmness, serenity, cheerfulness, and a lack of ambiguity was understood more in Japan than in Italy.³⁴ With Terasaki, we arrived at the end of these intense years, rich of innovation, encounters, initiatives of which we just gave a glimpse; with the forced suspension of the courses, our overview of the Japanese teachers active between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries ends.

Yoshida, Ogata, Kawamura, Naganuma, Itō and Terasaki were not the only Japanese in the Venetian lagoon during those years. All began with the first real Japanese tourist in Venice (and in Italy), the man of letters and journalist Narushima Ryōhoku, who wrote his memories in *Kōsei nichijō* (Diary of a Journey to the West). From the diary we know that he arrived in Venice at 5 p.m. on 21 March 1873 and checked into the Hotel La Luna (reported from Keene 2001).

In his memories, he observes that Venice, though less prosperous than Milan, is much more beautiful. He describes its canals and bridges, and tells us of his walking under the colonnades in Saint Mark square, which he compares to the Palais Royal in Paris, and of which he admires the white

33 The *Bollettino* for the 1911-12 years reports: "Terasaki had the honour this year to give private Japanese language lessons to H.R.H. the Prince of Udine, who expressed his satisfaction" (114). Ferdinand of House Savoy, on board of the Calabria, later went to Japan in order to do some research at the Imperial University of Tōkyō.

34 It must be noted that we know how much the young Mishima was attracted by the serenity and the clear colours of the Mediterranean skies and seas, as it is evident in one of his first best sellers, *The Sound of Waves* (Mishima 1954).

marbles. He sits in a café with stone tables and seats. During the night, he is tormented by mosquitos: since arriving in Europe, this is the first time he hears those insects' noise, and he notes that it must be caused by the great number of canals.

The day after, he visits the Palazzo Ducale, and he admires its architecture and the portraits of the *Doges* and, when he asks his guide the reason why some of the faces are empty, the guide jokingly tells him that they had been 'borrowed' by Napoleon. He also visits the Piombi, the Serenissima's prison, and is deeply moved by the torture devices that are stored there. On a day of celebrations, in Saint Mark's square, he admires the 544 marble columns of the Basilica: young girls are selling flowers, there is music everywhere, and under the shadow of the bell tower people are promenading wearing their best dresses. Among the churches that he had the chance to visit - Frari, Jesuits, Carmini - the last was the one that impressed him the most for its beauty, and he is also particularly intrigued by the hole in the ceiling caused by an Austrian cannon shot. He also went to visit Murano, as it was usual and unmissable, while more unusual was the visit to the San Michele cemetery. His brief stay comes to an end on the dawn of 24 March: he takes a gondola to the station to catch a train to Bologna, highly praising the gondolier, who in his honour lifts the Japanese flag.

We will not go beyond this example as concerns Japanese tourists, but it must be said that many of them stopped in Venice during their trips to Italy either for business (the commerce of silkworm eggs) or for pleasure during the time taken into account: Tajima Keitarō who there met Nagamura in 1892; Atani Kahei, who is visited the city in 1899 under Berchet's guidance; Anesaki Masaharu and Ueda Bin in 1908, as well as many others. Between the numerous statements of admiration and amazement for the beauties of the city, there were also a few of disagreement, like Sakurai Ason, who in 1908 complained because he was requested to pay for the transportation of his heavy luggage, or Tanabe Eijirō, who the following year noted that the storekeepers were too demanding, but all things considered similar to the Japanese ones located in tourist locations; Ninagawa Arata, who visited Venice in 1913-14, reported that the porting service was too expensive, the canals stinked, the mosquitos were too many, the gondolas too dirty, the alleys too narrow, and in general noted that the city was full of pigeons' guano (see Beretta 1997, 2001, 2004, 2006 for a collection of four articles that is a precious tool for both details on these travellers' activity in Italy and selected commentaries from their diaries).

But the most significant reported visit may date back to 1585, when four young men who had freshly embraced the Catholic faith were invited in Europe by the Jesuit Father Alessandro Valignano, in order to pay homage to the Pope. They visited various locations across Portugal, Spain and Italy, and in their journey's memories, edited and completed by Valignano, and

then translated in Latin,³⁵ this is the way they describe their entrance into the city on a boat from Chioggia:

we happily entered the city of Venice, which is so famous in Europe thanks to the so called Grand Canal [...] which, like a sinuous serpent, flows through the city with various curves and in its course outlines the European letter 'S' on the map; we crossed it while it was crowded with an impressive number of citizens, and after observing this multitude of people, the magnificence of the works of art, the majesty of the entire city, we easily understood why this city was most famous in Europe.

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³⁵ *De Missione Legatorvm Iaponensium ad Romanam curiam, rebusq; in Europa, ac toto itinere animaduersis Dialogvs Ex Ephemeride Ipsorvm Legatorvm Collectvs, & In Sermonem Latinvm Versvs ab Eduardo de Sande Sacerdote Societatis Iesv. In Macaensi portu Sinici regni in domo Societatis Iesv cvm facultate Ordinarij, & Superiorum*. Year 1590. According to Vilignano's intentions, the text was supposed to be used in seminars and, after being translated in Japanese, to be used to get the locals to know the magnificence of the European courts and of the Holy See. His ideas were nullified by the changes in the political situation and by the aversion that the authorities had towards the missionaries.

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150 Years of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari

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Japanese Studies in Venice from 1964 to Present Day

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Abstract This paper traces the history of Japanese Studies in Ca' Foscari University from the foundation of the Course in Oriental Languages and Literature in 1965 to this day. Furthermore, the paper outlines the state of the research in Japanese Studies describing profiles, the scientific production, methods and lines of research of the professors, researchers and scholars in Ca' Foscari University. The range of Japanese Studies is based on a long standing tradition and includes Japanese Language, Literature, Philology and Linguistic, History and Institutions, Economics, Society, Politic and International Relations, Religion, Philosophy and Cultural Anthropology, Figurative and Performing Arts, Fine Arts, Theatre, Film and Visual Culture, etc.

Summary 1 Introduction. – 1.1 From 'Seminary' to Department (Adriana Boscaro) (abridged). – 1.2 The Founders. – 2 Japanese Studies in Venice. – 2.1 Religion and Philosophy, Cultural Anthropology. – 2.2 Literature. – 2.3 Language, Linguistics, Philology, Japanese Classical Language. – 2.4 History, Institutions, Politics, International Relations. – 2.5 Fine Arts. – 2.6 Performing Arts. – 2.7 Cinema, Animation, Visual Culture, Media and Society.

Keywords Japanese Studies. Ca' Foscari University. Italy. History of the Department. Asian Studies.


1 Introduction

The history of the teaching of Japanese language in Venice was reconstructed by Adriana Boscaro, who was a fundamental figure for the branch of Japanese Studies in Italy during the post-war period, and the pillar of the Japanese Studies section in Venice, in its numerous transformation from Seminar of Japanese Language and Literature, to Institute, and then Department of East Asian Studies, nowadays known as Department of Asian and North African Studies, which, however many changes of name, never

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transformed its substance and its relevance, if not in crescendo, regarding the teaching and researching about Japan in Venice.¹

1.1 From 'Seminary' to Department (Abridged)

In the summer of 1964, Italo Siciliano, Ca' Foscari Rector at the time, announced the establishment, starting from the a.y. 1964-65, of new teaching posts for Chinese, Hebrew, Persian and Japanese, which followed the previous experience of the Arab language course, which at the time had already been active for a few years. The news spread through the local newspapers, and it caused quite a stir, since it was assured that all the future graduates would have the chance to access the diplomat public exams. However, because of a wrong initial interpretation of the requirements, this did not happen, to the great disappointment of the dozens of first students who had enrolled: nonetheless, an impressive number participated from the beginning.

At the time the institution was still called Academic Institute: it would become Ca' Foscari University in 1968, while since the very beginning the course, which referred to the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, was called Bachelor Degree in Oriental Languages (Paladini 1996).

To retrace the 40-year-old history of the Japanese Studies branch of the Department of Asian and North African Studies of today is not an easy task, as it could result in a monotonous list of name changes for each class, of the teachers' different roles during the years, of the various passages from Seminary to Institute, from Institute to Department, and of the numerous three-year and four-year plans. We will try to describe as accurately as possible the various figures who 'passed through' the Seminary first, and the Department then, through a few final lists. However, it seems necessary to mention now the 'founding fathers' of Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari: Gianroberto Scarcia for Near and Middle East Studies (Persian), Lionello Lanciotti for Chinese Studies (after a fleeting appearance from Martin Benedickter), and Paolo Beonio-Brocchieri for Japanese Studies: pioneers who, with their enthusiasm and deep knowledge, were able to create schools who soon became well known both in Italy and abroad.

Summarising, from 1965 to 1991 the various Institutes functioned separately, then, in 1992, Chinese, Japanese and Hindi Studies constituted

¹ Our report was written on the basis of the materials, research, and drafts first started by Adriana Boscaro, who retraced the 'old phase' in "Docenti giapponesi alla Regia Scuola Superiore di Commercio (1873-1923)" (2007), now re-edited and translated into English for the present volume, and "Docenti giapponesi in laguna (1873-1923)" (2008a), but then abandoned the materials already gathered without tracing definitively the key elements from the post-war period until today, thus not completing the general picture.

together the Department of Indian and Far Eastern Studies, which in February 1998 changed its name to Department of East Asian Studies (with the exit of Hindi in July 2003). Here we will discuss only the Japanese Studies branch, bearing in mind that the Korean language course is still active nowadays, starting from a.y. 1997-98.

A step back: the event that crucially changed the study planning happened around the '80s, when the competent authorities realised that it was time to divide the teaching programme into different fields, as, for example, a teacher alone, however encyclopaedic, could not possibly cover the whole syllabus for the History of the Institutions of Near, Middle and Far East class, without penalising one, if not more, geographical area.

To think that it was possible to ask someone to be versed in more than one foreign language (and an already difficult one) and to be able to interpret both ancient and modern texts, it was pure madness, and it showed how odd the configuration of an Oriental Studies course not properly organised by Oriental Studies scholars was. The same could be said for the classes of History of Religions and Philosophies, History of Art, Geography, and so on. Thus, the students were not put in the condition of being able to benefit from a proper study plan, coherent with their choice of first language. The 'dismemberment' was carried out in stages, and it took many years of debates and requests in order to find a proper structure and to compose articulated programmes, which in the end comprised not only a more suitable partition in geographical areas (e.g. 'Eastern Asia'), but also a further partition between China and Japan. Another important moment was when the various branches began to host a stable number of fundamentally important mother tongue collaborators, even though the teacher/student ratio is still not at the optimum level of other centres abroad.

Since it is quite difficult to describe the continuous academic rotation happening, it can be interesting to follow instead the various relocations of the headquarters of the Seminary, first, and the Institute and the Department, after: Ca' Foscari, Ca' Cappello, Ca' Soranzo, Palazzo Vendramin dei Carmini, palaces which all had an important past in the context of the history of the City. Today, they are revived by the presence of hundreds of 'wandering clerics', youngsters who, together with those who frequent the other 40 university buildings scattered around, form a swarming web that spreads all over the city.

At the beginning, in 1965, the Oriental Studies courses found their home at Ca' Foscari. This is not the time to talk profusely about the main building of our University, if not to mention that at the end of the XIV century the Giustinian family waived the constructed land to the Republic, in 1429 (Foscari 2005, 22-37). After some pass-ons, in 1453 the doge Francesco Foscari bought the building for himself and had it refurbished, in the form

that can be admired nowadays.² It was three centuries later, with another Francesco Foscari (1704-1790), son of Sebastiano, that the decline of the building started. It was then bought by the City Hall in the 1850s. Indeed, by that time the idea that the building could be used as the location for an educational institution was already present. However, it was not until April 1868, after various problems related both to the previous use as a barrack and to the damages caused by the Austrian bombings in 1849, that the City Hall decided to assign the Ca' Foscari building to the Royal High School of Commerce (Sartori 2005, 78-81).

However, the arrangement to hold the Oriental Studies courses in the new wing overlooking the courtyard was not permanent: as the building was soon found to be unsuitable for the ever growing number of students, there was no possibility but to move the courses as soon as possible. Thus, the University bought Palazzo Cappello-Layard in San Polo from the heirs of the lawyer Mr. Carnelutti, and then started its renovation. However, the renovation took more than expected, with great inconvenience for the students attending the classes. In the end, in August 1968, a providential roof fire accelerated this process, and the Palace was soon usable.

As every venetian Palace, Ca' Cappello is not really apt to host various educational activities, given the many restrictions put in place by the authorities regarding plasters, painting, fireplaces, inlaid doors and so on, but still, despite the unforeseen large number of students (the then Seminary of German language was hosted there, too), the Oriental Studies course, which referred to Arab, Chinese, Hebrew, Japanese, Hindi and Iranian Studies, finally found its own autonomy.

Ca' Cappello-Layard is a XVI century Palace, based on a previous gothic building, as the capital of the three-mullioned window on the *piano nobile* shows, located at the corner of the Grand Canal and Rio San Polo, with a magnificent view of the Ca' Foscari main building. The façade bore frescos by Veronese, which were destroyed in a fire in 1627. The Palace was then bought by Henry and Enid Layard, who lived there from 1883, and transformed it into a house-gallery, with paintings by Giovanni and Gentile Bellini (like the Mohammad II portray by the latter, nowadays at the National Gallery in London), Carpaccio, and Cima from Conegliano in the *piano nobile*, in rooms upholstered in red, yellow and green damask. Austen Henry Layard had lived in the Middle East for a long time, and participated in the excavations in Ninrud, identifying many imperial palaces and retrieving large bas-reliefs that now are part of the Assyrian collection at the British Museum. Honorary citizen of London, he was a politician who was given many important responsibilities, and was then nominated ambassador in Istanbul. After that, he moved to Venice, where

2 For the anecdote regarding the buying and the new construction, refer to Gullino 2005, 85-95.

he became a prominent figure and opened his house to every important visitor who came into the City. After his and his wife's death (respectively 1894 and 1912), all the works collected in Ca' Cappello went to numerous museums and galleries in England.³

The fact that many young scholars got to study in the same rooms where Layard, bent over his desk, wrote his memoirs about Persia, Susiana and Babylon, is a fortuitous coincidence, especially given the fact that from 2003 on the building has been hosting only the Near and Middle East Studies branches.

The before-mentioned capacity problems soon lead to a new relocation, which took place in 1988: this time, however, the twin Chinese and Japanese seminaries were separated. The Japanese seminary – under the guide of Adriana Boscaro – remained in Ca' Cappello, while the Chinese seminar – under the guide of Mario Sabattini – was moved in November to Ca' Soranzo, a palace dating back to the XIV century overlooking Campo San Polo, one of the most colourful *campi* in the city, once symbol of the glorious past of the Serenissima, made of fairs, parties and games. Ca' Soranzo, once decorated with frescos attributed to Giorgione, is comprised of two buildings, the left one called the 'old house', the right one called the 'new house' (XIII century). In the latter, the piano nobile is enriched by a marble upholstery, with an eight fornici window and gothic capitals. In this building the Chinese and Indian Studies sections, and their respective libraries, were hosted. Some curious facts regarding the palace, which is nowadays still owned by the Soranzo family, who has had the palace since the second half of the XV century, are the following: the two buildings are slightly curvilinear because they once overlooked the rio di Sant'Antonio, filled in 1761, when the two bridges connecting it to the *campo* were also demolished. The Soranzo family has had sixteen of its members active as San Marco Prosecutors to the city, and in 1312 even had a doge, Giovanni Soranzo (as a small doge horn above the nameplate reminds us), who in August 1321 hosted Dante Alighieri, ambassador of Guido Novello da Polenta, lord of Ravenna.

After more than fifteen years, the branches were reunited again in Palazzo Vendramin dei Carmini, in Fondamenta Foscari. The palace dates back to the second half of the XVII century, and has a particular structure. Contrary to the usual disposition, the main façade overlooks the inner garden, while the secondary one, comprised of a courtyard overlooking the fondamenta and the canal facing the Carmini church, now hosts the main entrance. Its baroque style can be seen in the decorated windows. Every room has fine floorings and is decorated with plasters and frescos.

³ A colourful description of Henry and Enid Layard's life in Ca' Cappello can be found in Norwich 2006, 190-207. It seems that Enid was really strict when it came to the punctuality of her guests, and that she vehemently prohibited smoking...

The library, the meeting rooms and the professors' offices are also located here, while the classes are scattered around the city.

Across the years, many initiatives have been organised by the Department and it is not possible to mention them all in this brief excursus. Always relevant at an international level thanks to its academic publications, organisation of meetings and seminars in many languages, lectures with Italian and foreign speakers, film showings, theatrical performances, an advanced Erasmus programme, and so on, the Department is the ideal continuer of the project that Francesco Ferrara, director of the School of Commerce, started way back in 1873 as a "bridge to the [then] distant cultures of the Far East".⁴

Adriana Boscaro

1.2 The Founders

1.2.1 Paolo Beonio-Brocchieri

Beonio-Brocchieri (1934-1991) was born in Milan where he graduated in Philosophy with Antonio Banfi. In the years 1957-59 he went to Japan with a scholarship where he continued his studies of philosophy and history of religions under the guidance of the famous Japanese scholar Nakamura Hajime (1912-1999). After returning to Italy, in 1965 he was called to hold the Chair of Japanese Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari, where he laid the foundations of the then Seminar of Japanese Language and Literature and of its library. He held the chair of Religions and Philosophy of East Asia until 1980, when he moved to Pavia and occupied the chair of History and Institutions of the Afro-Asiatic Countries that had been of his father Vittorio (1902-1979). In his quality of scholar of history of international relations, from 1960 to 1982 Paolo Beonio Brocchieri collaborated also with the ISPI (Institute for International Political Studies) in Milan, directed at the beginning by Giorgio Borsa. During the mid-'60s Beonio himself started to regularly contribute articles and essays to the journal *International Relations*. His library of about 1.000 volumes, including monographs and periodicals, was donated by his family to the Centro Studi Popoli Extraeuropei "Cesare Bonacossa" in Pavia, of which he was director for many years.

Among his important scientific production we must remember at least the fundamental *La Filosofia cinese e dell'Asia Orientale* (1977), volume

4 The text provided by Adriana Boscaro, which the Editors have partially abridged, is updated to the situation of the Department of East Asian Studies in the year 2007. As it may appear clear from many of the interventions in this volume, a Department of Asian and North African Studies was established in 2011, thus reuniting in the same institution, for the first time, all the branches of the Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari. As it has been told before, the Department is hosted in two different locations, i.e. Ca' Cappello and Palazzo Vendramin.

2 of the series “Storia della filosofia” directed by Mario Dal Pra, on which generations of students were formed; *I Movimenti politici del Giappone* (1971); the brief but essential *Storia del Giappone* ([1972] 1995), and *Religiosità e ideologia alle origini del Giappone moderno* (published posthumously in 1993), which is based on his first monographic course, taught in the 1965-66 academic year. Furthermore, we should not forget a little gem, *Confucio e il Cristianesimo* ([1973] 2017), about the Latin translation of the texts of Confucius by the Jesuit Prospero Intorcetta.

After his early passing in 1991, at the initiative of Japanese Studies at Ca' Foscari and with the financial support of a former student, Franco Manni, the Paolo Beonio Brocchieri Prize for theses on Japan-related topics was established, consisting of four scholarships; the award ceremony also included a Memorial Lecture held by a specialist in the field of Japanese Studies.

Unfortunately, the award was short-lived, only five years from 1996 to 2000, and on the occasion of the last edition, prof. Gian Carlo Calza made a touching speech about the scientific importance of Beonio-Brocchieri in the field of Japanese and East Asian Studies.

Aldo Tollini

1.2.2 Adriana Boscaro

Adriana Boscaro was born in Venice in August 1935, and Venice was where she was destined to spend most of her private and academic life. She remains deeply connected to her Venetian roots despite a willingness to travel frequently, as a citizen of the world, to further scholarly contacts and to meet new colleagues. Her roots are most easily seen in her love of irony; her manner of speaking, which shifts easily from Italian to Venetian; her islander's identity – she likes to quote the local saying that “without a bridge linking the mainland to Venice, Europe would be an island”; and, certainly not least, in the nature of her academic research. Despite the distance between Japan and Venice, Boscaro has always looked for connections between the two. For example, as part of a collective project on the affinities between certain Italian and Japanese cities in given historical periods – a project that unfortunately was never realised – Boscaro chose to focus on the parallels between Venice and Edo in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Edo and Venice: cities on the water, cities of commerce, cities with a similar urban structure, cities of entertainment, with their pleasure quarters, casinos, and beautiful women painted by artists and praised by poets.

Over the course of the years, the links between Edo and Venice led Boscaro to focus her attention on the Tokugawa period and the years immediately preceding it. Given the broad chronological span and artistic wealth of this period, she soon came to cultivate a range of interconnected

interests. To use an analogy better fitted to the pleasure of discovery, the development of these interests was almost an unconscious reaction, i.e. an attraction of similarities.

Boscaro took her first steps toward a career in the field of Japanese Studies in 1956, when she took courses given in Venice by the Mideast and East Asian Institute of Rome (IsMEO). She was introduced to Japan and Japanese culture by a gifted young teacher, Tsuji Shigeru, who later became a professor at Geidai University in Tōkyō. Professor Tsuji was an art historian, a specialist in Giorgione and a translator of Vasari, who was in love with Venice. He communicated his love for Japanese culture so effectively that Boscaro continued to study Japan on her own; she even published some articles while waiting for the University of Venice to inaugurate its Japanese Studies programme in 1965. Since her command of Japanese culture was already substantial, her career as a university student smoothly progressed. In 1969 three major events occurred in her life: she received her degree, she was appointed Assistant Professor at Ca' Foscari and was awarded a Monbushō fellowship. During the eighteen months of her grant term she carried out research at the Shiryō Hensanjo (Historiographical Institute) of the University of Tōkyō under the guidance of Professors Numata Jirō and Kanai Madoka.

While in Tōkyō, Boscaro met Professor Kanai twice a week to discuss her translation of Toyotomi Hideyoshi's letters. These meetings frequently ended in a *yakitoriya* across from the Tōkyō University campus. Boscaro has often said that she learned a great deal from her long conversations with her advisors. Not only did Professor Kanai answer her questions, but he would also tell facts and anecdotes, thus earning him the nickname 'Machine Gun of Tōdai'. Boscaro's research on the letters was later published as *101 Letters of Hideyoshi* (1975).

No sooner had Boscaro returned to Italy – bringing with her much material on the history of the Warring States period (*Sengoku Jidai*), Nobunaga, Hideyoshi, and Ieyasu, and eager to begin the new academic year – than a piece of news dampened her enthusiasm. She was told that the programme she was assigned to had to focus more on literature, leaving history within a cultural framework. Boscaro, therefore, turned to an intensive study of Japanese literature, a field of interest that fortunately she had never quite abandoned but that she now sought to explore in greater depth. Having been asked to focus on a contemporary author, she chose Endō Shūsaku, whose *Chinmoku* (Silence) had recently been the subject of much acclaim. As she had already worked on 'the Christian century' (see below), she was now able to cultivate her interest from a literary perspective. Her long friendship with Endō gave Boscaro privileged access to his literary world – one of the reasons she continues to be regarded as *the* Italian specialist in Endō.

In the course of the years she taught at the University of Venice (1969-2004) and held, among many positions, those of Director of the Institute

of Japanese Studies, Director of the Department of East Asian Studies, and member of the Board of Directors.⁵ She taught courses on Japanese literature, the history of Euro-Japanese relations, and the cultural history of Tokugawa Japan (with specific focus on popular literature), as well as seminars on such Japanese writers as Kawabata Yasunari, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, Endō Shūsaku and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō.

Here follows a brief outline of Boscaro's academic interests. Driven by a keen desire to learn more about the impact of the West on Japan, Boscaro began examining early European relations with Asian countries. She took the accounts of Italian travellers – adventurous merchants and clerics who followed the caravan trails east in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries – as her starting point. Her interest in this subject fit well with her teaching program on 'the century of discoveries', when Portuguese vessels made the fortuitous crossing to Tanegashima and St. Francis Xavier reached Kagoshima in 1549. The roughly hundred-year period (1549-1636) of the Jesuits' mission in Japan is called 'the Christian century', a never-ending source of discoveries.

Boscaro continued to study Jesuit letters and reports and to explore related issues (here mentioned at random), such as the introduction into Japan of the moveable-type printing press by the Jesuits; the menace of Hideyoshi; the sixteenth-century mission to Europe of four young Japanese men under the direction of Alessandro Valignano; and the Jesuit Gerolamo de Angelis's discovery that Ezo (Hokkaidō) was an island rather than an extension of the continent.

The journey made by the four young Japanese converts and their Jesuit companions in the eight years between their departure from Nagasaki in 1580 and their return in 1588 was carefully reconstructed by Boscaro on the basis of printed sources of the period. A bibliography of the texts and frontispieces of all the pamphlets issued in Europe on that occasion appeared as *Sixteenth Century European Printed Works on the First Japanese Mission to Europe. A Descriptive Bibliography* (Boscaro 1973). This work was followed by the publication of several articles detailing their travels to Italy, and an exhibition at the Marciana Library in Venice in 1985, the four-hundredth anniversary of the young men's visit to that city in 1585.

Da Angelis's 'discovery' of the island of Ezo triggered Boscaro's latent passion for cartography. She had already done some research on the representation of Japan in European cartography from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. She now turned her attention to a report and hand-

5 Among the collaborators of Adriana Boscaro at Ca' Foscari during the eighties and nineties, I would like to remember Yoko Kubota (which wrote the first complete grammar of Japanese language in Italy, *Grammatica di giapponese moderno*. Venezia: Cafoscarina, 1989; her publications have been posthumously collected in *Frammenti di un discorso interrotto*. Venezia: Cafoscarina, 1993), Francesco Marraro and Yasuko Ichihara, which moved to the University of Turin before retirement.

written map in the Jesuit Archives in Rome. Boscaro examined the sources prior to da Angelis, and drew chronological comparisons between the various representations of Ezo on Italian, French, Portuguese, English, and Dutch maps, noting errors and discrepancies. She also produced a translation and commentary of da Angelis's 1621's *Relazioni e mappa del regno di Yezo*, which was not published until 1981. Although this edition is no longer in print, a new one was published by da Angelis's hometown, Enna in Sicily, on the occasion of his being proclaimed a patron of Enna in 1987. All this reference material, used in classes for many years, appeared in print under the title *Ventura e sventura dei gesuiti in Giappone, 1549-1639* (Boscaro 2008b).

Despite the sealing of Japanese borders and the expulsion of Roman Catholic missionaries in 1639, the presence of Dutch merchants at Deshima led to a Japanese interest in Western learning (*rangaku*). Those Japanese who challenged bakufu authority were interested in the new knowledge and technologies brought by these 'red-haired men' (*kōmōjin*): medicine, ballistics, telescopes, the compass, oil painting, perspective and so on. These events attracted Boscaro's interest, who examined a number of figures from this period: Shiba Kōkan, Takano Chōei, Hayashi Shihei, Honda Toshiaki, Sugita Genpaku, and especially Hiraga Gennai. Gennai's broad range of interests makes him an extraordinary figure for his time. Albeit not a genuine *rangakusha*, Gennai can be seen as a link between science and the spirit of Edo, for he was an imaginative, unpredictable, and ingenious inventor, a product of his time but endowed with a broad vision, as Boscaro observes in her annotated translation of Gennai's *Fūryū Shidōkenden* (Hiraga Gennai 1990).

In 1987, Boscaro organised the International Conference *Rethinking Japan* and in 1995 the International Symposium on Tanizaki Jun'ichirō. The latter was an epochal event that is still fondly remembered: Tanizaki experts from all over the world (with the exception of Edward Seidensticker, who was ill at the time) gathered in Venice to participate in the first international meeting devoted to a single Japanese author. The transactions from this conference were published in 1998 as *A Tanizaki Feast*, a volume jointly edited by Boscaro and Anthony H. Chambers.

Boscaro had already devoted many years to the study of Tanizaki, translating and editing his works, lecturing, and gathering bibliographic material. The result was the publication of *Tanizaki in Western Languages. A Bibliography of Translations and Studies* (2000b), a list of 263 translations in seventeen languages and 224 articles and books on Tanizaki. One of Boscaro's distinguishing traits is the desire to have an overview of any subject she might be discussing; to inform herself, for instance, on everything about a given literary work: its composition, the chronological order of its translations in other languages, and the choices made by the translators. Hence Boscaro's decision to catalogue all Japanese literature translated

into Italian, culminating in *Narrativa giapponese. Cent'anni di traduzioni* (2000a), which brought to light one little-known fact: that the works of many authors, including Tanizaki, were translated into Italian long before they were translated into other languages.

Boscaro's official positions are too numerous to list in their entirety. Suffice it to mention a few. She was a founding member in 1972 of the European Association for Japanese Studies (EAJS), served as president from 1991 to 1994, and has been an honorary member since 2005. Boscaro was also one of the founding members, in 1973, of AISTUGIA (Italian Association for Japanese Studies), served on the board of the Association for many years, and has been its president since 2005. In 1999 Boscaro was asked by Fosco Maraini to become academic director of the new Vieusseux-Asia Center of the Gabinetto P.G. Vieusseux in Florence, where Maraini's library and photo collection are now kept. Boscaro's role at the Center is to coordinate projects aimed at strengthening ties with Japan.

The position of which Boscaro is most proud, however, is one she has held since 1988, that of editor of a Japanese Literature series published by Marsilio in Venice. This is the first series in either Italy or Europe devoted to classical and modern Japanese literature; it has published thirty-one translated volumes to date. Each volume is the work of a specialist scholar and includes a detailed introduction to the life and literary career of the author, an annotated translation, and a glossary. While primarily aimed at an academic readership, the series has attracted the interest of the wider public, and the volumes have been reprinted several times.

In 2000, Boscaro sponsored the awarding of an honorary degree to the scholar and critic Katō Shūichi by the University of Ca' Foscari, Venice. Katō had been a Visiting Professor there in 1983-84. The Italian edition of his book *Nihon bungakushi josetsu* has been widely used in Italian departments of Japanese Studies.

The most prestigious honours bestowed on Adriana Boscaro has been the Okano Prize for the promotion of Japanese culture in Italy, 1990; the Premio Cesmeo for her translation of Katō Shūichi's work (1999); and in the same year, the Japanese Order of the Rising Sun, Third Class.

Luisa Bienati

2 Japanese Studies in Venice

2.1 Religion and Philosophy, Cultural Anthropology

Massimo Raveri is Professor of East Asian Religions and Philosophies at the Department of Asian and North African Studies. At Ca' Foscari University he has also taught History of Religions.

Anthropologist, he majored at the University of Florence, under the guidance of prof. Fosco Maraini. He then specialised in the field of Japanese Religions at the Research Institute for Humanistic Studies (*Jinbun kagaku kenkyujo*) of the University of Kyōto and at the Institute of Social Anthropology of the University of Oxford, being a member of St. Antony's College.

From 1976, in different years, he did his research in Japan. He studied the Shintō tradition, focusing his analysis on the communal rituals connected with rice culture: see his *Itinerari nel sacro: L'esperienza religiosa giapponese* (1984), and *Symbolic Languages in Shinto Tradition* (2008). He studied also the ideas of death and the visions of afterlife in Asian shamanistic practices and the ascetic techniques for achieving immortality in the Buddhist esoteric tradition. On these subjects he published the book *Il corpo e il paradiso. Le tentazioni estreme dell'ascesi in Asia Orientale* (1998) and edited, with Andrea De Antoni, *Death and Desire in Contemporary Japan. Practicing, Representing, Performing* (2017).

He worked on the Japanese religious traditions (*Il pensiero giapponese classico*, 2014) but, more recently, he is doing research on the new forms of faith and the mediatic languages in contemporary society in the context of a wider interdisciplinary research on the relationship between forms of language and the ultimate truth as it has been interpreted in different religious traditions (*I linguaggi dell'assoluto* 2017).

He has always been involved in sustaining/encouraging the inter-religious dialogue: he published *Del bene e del male. Tradizioni religiose a confronto* (1997) and *Verso l'altro. Le religioni dal conflitto al dialogo* (2004). From 2000 he has directed the research programme Religions and Peace: for the Coexistence of Faiths and the Inter-religious Dialogue, established by the Venice Foundation for Peace. From 2013 he has directed two European Comenius Life Long Learning Projects, involving five European Universities, on the intercultural education through religious studies (IERS) and on the study of religions against prejudices and stereotypes (SORAPS).

2.2 Literature

2.2.1 Luisa Bienati

Luisa Bienati is Professor of Japanese Literature in the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. After majoring in Japanese Studies at Ca' Foscari (1983), she spent several research periods in Japan, specialising in Modern Japanese Literature of the Meiji period. She taught many courses on Japanese Modern and Contemporary Literature as a Researcher of Japanese Language and Literature (1999) and then as Associate Professor (2000). Her principal research interests lie in modern Japanese narrative. She translated novels by Nagai Kafū (1999) and Tanizaki Jun'ichirō (1988, 1995, 2011) and the most famous work of the atomic bomb literature, *Kuroi ame* by Ibuse Masuji (1993); she studied also trauma narratives. She is doing research on trauma narratives after Fukushima's disaster of 2011.

She also studied literary criticism and published *Una trama senza fine. Il dibattito critico degli anni Venti in Giappone* (2003) and *Letterario, troppo letterario. Antologia della critica giapponese moderna* (2016).

Selected publications include *Dalla fine dell'Ottocento all'inizio del terzo millennio* (2005), *La narrativa giapponese classica* (2010) and *La narrativa giapponese moderna e contemporanea* (2009). She is the co-editor, with Bonaventura Ruperti, of the collection of essays on Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, *The Grand Old Man and the Great Tradition* (2009). She is now the editor of the Japanese Literature series Mille gru published by Marsilio in Venice.

2.2.2 Carolina Negri

Carolina Negri is Associate Professor at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Department of Asian and North African Studies. Previously, she has taught Japanese language at the University of Salento (Lecce). She spent four years (1992-96) at Ochanomizu University (Tōkyō), where she received the Master of Arts in Japanese Literature and Philology. She subsequently spent several research periods in Japan because of the awards and fellowships she had been granted.

Her main research interest focus on diaries written by ladies in waiting of the imperial court and on the literary production of women in the eleventh century. In this regard, she has edited and published the translations of *Sumiyoshi monogatari* (2000), *Sarashina nikki* (2005), *Izumi Shikibu nikki* (2008), and *Murasaki shikibu nikki* (2015).

2.2.3 Pierantonio Zanotti

He holds a PhD in Oriental Studies (2009) from Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where he is fixed-term researcher at the Department of Asian and North African Studies. His research interests focus on Japanese literature of the early twentieth century and the reception accorded to European avant-garde movements (especially Italian Futurism) in Japan. He is a contributing editor of the *International Yearbook of Futurism Studies* (De Gruyter). He has published on such writers as Yamamura Bochō, Hagiwara Sakutarō, Tayama Katai, Sōma Gyofū, and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti.

He published an *Dalle origini all'Ottocento* (2012a) and *Dall'Ottocento al Duemila* (2012b), respectively volumes 1 and 2 of *Introduzione alla storia della poesia giapponese*. Recently edited books include *Letterario, troppo letterario. Antologia della critica giapponese moderna* (with Luisa Bienati et al. 2016).

2.2.4 Caterina Mazza

Caterina Mazza is fixed-term researcher at the Department of Asian and North African Studies (DSAAM) of Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where she teaches and conducts research on contemporary Japanese literature. She received her PhD from Ca' Foscari and Inalco (Paris) with a thesis on the parodic rewriting of modern literary canon in contemporary Japanese literature; on the same topic, she has also published the book *Traduzione e parodia. Le riscritture contemporanee di Kawabata* (2012). Her research interests focus on the dynamics of canon formation and the translation of Japanese literature in the last thirty years. She is one of the founding member of LaboraTorio@DSAAM, a research group on the topics of translation related to East Asia, and part of the editorial board of the related book series *Translating Wor(l)ds* by Edizioni Ca' Foscari.

2.3 Language, Linguistics, Philology, Japanese Classical Language

2.3.5 Aldo Tollini

Aldo Tollini is former Associate Professor at the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice, where he taught Japanese classical language. His fields of research focus on: Japanese pre-modern language, Japanese Buddhism (especially Zen), Japanese language teaching, Christianity in Japan (Kirishitan) and Japanese culture mostly of the Kamakura-Muromachi period. He is also active in the field of translation into Italian of pre-modern Japanese texts, mostly related to cultural and religious subjects.

Previously, he has taught Japanese language at the Universities of Pavia (1987-98) and Milan (1997-98), and has been general secretary of the Italian Association for the Teaching of Japanese language AIDLG (2002-06). In that period he has been actively engaged in research in the field of Japanese language teaching, with particular regard to the teaching and learning of *kanji*.

Recently edited monographs include *Antologia del Buddhismo giapponese* (2009), *Lo Zen. Storia, scuole, testi* (2012), *La cultura del Tè in Giappone e la ricerca della perfezione* (2014).

His latest monograph is *L'ideale della Via. Samurai, monaci e poeti nel Giappone medievale* (2017).

2.3.6 Paolo Calvetti

After having taught at the University of Naples “L’Orientale” for about twenty years, Paolo Calvetti, who is Professor of Japanese Language and Literature, arrived at Ca' Foscari at the end of 2009 and soon started his teaching activities focusing on Japanese linguistics and history of Japanese language. Before joining Ca' Foscari, he published the first non-Japanese comprehensive introduction to the history of Japanese language (1999), which was used as a handbook for his courses at Ca' Foscari. His research is focused on social aspects of the language such as ‘taboo words’, ‘impoliteness’ and connections between technology (mobile phones) and language changes. His expertise in Japanese lexicography was reflected also in some publications on corpora linguistics and the making of Japanese dictionaries. From 2015 to 2017 he acted as Head of the Department of Asian and North African Studies.

2.3.7 Patrick Heinrich

Patrick Heinrich is Associate Professor at the Department of Asian and Mediterranean African Studies at Ca' Foscari University in Venice. Before joining Ca' Foscari he taught at universities in Germany (Duisburg-Essen University), France (University of Toulouse) and Japan (Dokkyō University). His present research interests focus on sociolinguistics, language endangerment and revitalisation, language planning and policy. He has been awarded the annual research award by the Japanese Association of the Sociolinguistic Sciences in 2010 and since 2014 is an honorary member of the Foundation for Endangered Languages.

He is currently editing *The Handbook of Japanese Sociolinguistics* (forthcoming). Recently edited books in English include *Language Life in Japan. Transformations and Prospects* (2011), *Globalising Sociolinguistics*.

Challenging and Expanding Theory (2015), *Handbook of the Ryukyuan Languages* (2015), *Urban Sociolinguistics. The City as a Linguistic Process and Experience* (2017), *Being Young in Super-Aging Japan. Formative Events and Cultural Reactions* (2018), and many others. He is also the author of *The Making of Monolingual Japan Language Ideology and Japanese Modernity* (2012) and *Die Rezeption der westlichen Linguistik im modernen Japan* (2002).

2.3.8 Marcella Mariotti

Marcella Mariotti holds a MA in Media Sociology from the University of Ōsaka (2000) and a PhD in Glottodidactics of Japanese grammar from Ca' Foscari University of Venice (2007). She has conducted research in Japan as a JSPS Postdoc Fellow on hypermedia application and critical pedagogy of Japanese language learning at the International Christian University and Waseda University (2008-10). Since 2010, she is a Tenured Assistant Professor at Ca' Foscari where she designed and directed research, teaching and placement projects with Japanese companies in Italy and with Italian companies in Japan. She is involved in international collaborative research projects in the fields of glottodidactics, E-learning, critical pedagogy and Translation Studies with the University of Kyōto, Waseda University, Kōbe University, UTS (Sydney). Since 2014, she is the first non-native Japanese speaker acting as President of the Association of Japanese Language Teachers in Europe (AJE) and is the Representative Delegate of Europe, Near and Middle East and Africa block for the The Society for Teaching Japanese as a Foreign Language (Nihongo kyōiku gakkai).

Selected publications include *La lingua giapponese* (2014), *Shiminsei keisei to kotoba no kyōiku. Bogo, daini gengo, gaikokugo o koete* (Citizenship Formation and Language Education: Beyond Native, Second, and Foreign Language) (2016); *New Steps in Japanese Studies. Kobe University Joint Research* (2017); *Contemporary Japan. The Challenge of a World Economic Power during a Period of Transition* (2015); *Rethinking Nature in Contemporary Japan. Science, Economics, Politics* (2014). She also translates from Japanese into Italian manga and works of contemporary literature, e.g. Nakazawa's *Hadashi no Gen* (2014) and Katayama's *Sekai no chūshin de ai o sakebu* (2006).

2.4 History, Institutions, Politics, International Relations

2.4.9 Francesco Gatti

Francesco Gatti (1935-2009) was a Professor of East Asian History at Ca' Foscari University of Venice from 1986 to 2007, where he was Vice Rector (1992-97). A specialist of contemporary history of Japan, he was the author of numerous books and essays, mostly focusing on the political and social history of the interwar period, among which *Il Giappone contemporaneo, 1850-1970* (1976a); *Il modello giapponese. Il capitalismo alla prova* (1976b); *La ricostruzione in Giappone, 1945-1955* (1980); *Il fascismo giapponese* (1983); *1939: il mondo verso il baratro* (1989); *La fabbrica dei samurai. Il Giappone nel Novecento* (2000); *Storia del Giappone contemporaneo* (2002); *Storia del Giappone* (2004).

He was the recipient of the Okano Prize in 1992 and the Order of the Rising Sun in 2004.

2.4.10 Rosa Caroli

Rosa Caroli is Professor of Japanese History at the Department of Linguistics and Comparative Cultural Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and a specialist of modern and contemporary history of Japan. Her major fields of research concern memory and identity in modern Japan, the relations between the central state and its peripheries, and the intellectual history in modern Japan. She has also written extensively about the history of Okinawa and, more recently, about Edo-Tōkyō history.

She is adjunct researcher at the Institute of Asian Studies (IAS) of Waseda University, visiting scholar at the Institute of Okinawan Studies and the Institute of the International Japan-Studies of Hōsei University, and Visiting Professor at the Center for International Education (CIE) of Waseda University (2018).

In 2009, she was the recipient of the 31st Okinawa Bunka Kyōkai prize, Higa Shunchō award, for her research on Okinawan history, particularly the last king of the Ryūkyū Kingdom, Shō Tai.

She is the author of numerous books and essays, published in Italy and abroad. Among them: *Il mito dell'omogeneità giapponese. Storia di Okinawa* (1999); *Storia del Giappone* (2004), *Tōkyō segreta. Storie di Waseda e dintorni* (2012), *History at Stake in East Asia* (2012), *Legacies of the U.S. Occupation of Japan. Appraisals after Sixty Years* (2014), *Sōzō no Okinawa. Sono jikūkan kara no chōsen* (2015), *Fragile and Resilient Cities on Water. Perspectives from Venice and Tōkyō* (2017).

2.4.11 Andrea Revelant

Andrea Revelant is fixed-term researcher of Modern and Contemporary Japanese History. He received his PhD in Oriental Studies at Ca' Foscari University in 2008. He spent extensive study periods at Tōkyō University of Foreign Studies, Université Paris VII, the University of London (SOAS) and Waseda University (Graduate School of Economics). He has been Adjunct Professor at Milano-Bicocca University and visiting researcher at Meiji, Keio, Waseda and Sophia Universities in Tōkyō. Under the Erasmus programme, he has taught in Geneva, Heidelberg and Berlin. His research and publications focus on the political and economic history of modern Japan, with particular attention to issues of governance, popular representation, inequality and mass communication. He is the author of the monograph *Sviluppo economico e disuguaglianza. La questione fiscale nel Giappone moderno 1873-1940* (2016). He is currently working on a discourse on Republican China in interwar Japan.

2.5 Fine Arts

2.5.1 Gian Carlo Calza

Gian Carlo Calza entered Ca' Foscari University of Venice as a junior Professor of Middle and East Asian Art History in 1971 and kept the position with various titles and qualifications till his retirement in 2010 as a Full Professor of East Asian Art History.

During his 39 years at Ca' Foscari he held art history courses on the arts of India (in the '70s), of China (till 2000) and of Japan (throughout his career). At various stages he covered also the positions of: vice-director of the department of East Asian Studies, Member of the University's Senate, Chairman of Ca' Foscari's Asian Languages courses in the Treviso's detached seat. He created and was director of the International Hokusai Research Centre at Ca' Foscari, from its foundation in 1990 to its closing in 2012.

While at Ca' Foscari, he organised many international conferences, festivals and exhibitions, such as: *The Venice Conferences on Japanese Art* (1990, 1994, 1996, 1998); *Giappone. Potere e splendore 1568-1868*, Milano, Palazzo Reale, 2009-10; *Hiroshige. The Master of Nature*, Roma, Museo Fondazione Roma, 2009; *TDC 2008 New Graphic Design Japan*, Venezia, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 2008; *Capolavori dalla Città Proibita. Qianlong e la sua corte*, Roma, Museo del Corso, 2007; *Le Japon Art déco*, Sarran, Musée du Président Jacques Chirac (as Commissaire Général), 2006; *Giappone. L'arte del Mutamento*, Genova, Palazzo Ducale, 2005.

He was visiting Scholar at Columbia University in 1989-90 and Fellow of the Japan Foundation (1975, 1995). He was the recipient of the Order

of the Raising Sun (Golden Rays with Rosette), Okano Prize and Prize Susumu Uchiyama in 2004.

Among books and catalogues on Asia there are: *Hokusai Paintings. Selected Essays* (1994); *Hokusai: Il vecchio pazzo per la pittura* (1999, later also in to English, French, Spanish and Japanese 2003-05); *Poem of the Pillow and Other Stories* (2010, also in English, Italian, French and German); *Akbar: The Great Emperor of India* (2012, in English and Italian); *Stile Giappone* (2012, also in English, French and German).

2.5.2 Silvia Vesco

Silvia Vesco is Tenured Assistant Professor of Japanese Art History in the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. After a Master in Art and Archeology of East Asia at SOAS (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London) she studied as Japan Foundation Fellow at Gakushūin University in Tōkyō as part of her PhD. She has organised several international conferences and curated important Japanese art exhibitions in prestigious Italian locations and in Japan. Her scientific interests are focused on *ukiyo-e* prints and paintings, in particular on Katsushika Hokusai's works, and the role of Japonism as well as on public and private collections of Japanese art in Italy (*Bi no michi. La Via della Bellezza*, 2018).

Among her latest publications, some contributions are dedicated to prints by Hokusai (2001), Hiroshige and Kunisada, the refined iconography of the *Genji monogatari* and the aesthetic of *Chūshingura*. A monographic book on the history of Japanese art from prehistory to contemporary times (*Storia dell'arte giapponese*) is forthcoming (2018).

2.6 Performing Arts

2.6.1 Paola Cagnoni

Paola Cagnoni (1940-2004) was born in Padua and studied Japanese language and literature in Venice. In the years 1969-71 she went to Japan with a Monbushō scholarship; here, she continued her studies of *nō* theatre. After returning to Italy, in 1972 she started to teach Japanese language and literature, with courses also on *nō* theatre and later Japanese theatre history, until 2002, when she retired. She was a very original teacher and researcher with great ideas and a passionate approach in her studies and didactic activity; she introduced and applied the most innovative and up-to-date methodology, from French structuralism to semiology and post-structuralism, to her research on Japanese theatre, in particular *nō* thea-

tre, and modern and contemporary literature. Unfortunately, her scientific production was very limited: her essays – among which the most notable *Note sulle origini e sulla funzione della maschera nel dramma giapponese antico* and *Introduzione alla trattatistica di Zeami* – are collected in the volume *Scritti teatrali* (2006).

2.6.2 Bonaventura Ruperti

Bonaventura Ruperti is Professor of Japanese Language and Japanese Performing Arts in the Department of Asian and North African Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. He received his PhD from the Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples and Ca' Foscari University, in 1992. As a specialist in Japanese theatre, he attended postgraduate courses at Waseda University in Japanese Theatre under the guidance of prof. Uchiyama Mikiko and prof. Torigoe Bunzō. From 1994-95 he was a Japan Foundation fellow researcher at Waseda University with prof. Uchiyama and prof. Takemoto Mikio; in 2004-5 Visiting Professor at the National Institute of Japanese Literature (Kokubunken) in Tōkyō with prof. Takei Kyōzō; and in 2015-16 at the International Center for Japanese Studies (Nichibunken) in Kyōto with prof. Hosokawa Shōhei. He has been visiting researcher at Waseda University, Hosei University (Nogami Memorial Noh Theatre Research Institute), Keio University, Tohoku University, Ritsumeikan University, Kōbe University. In 2017, he was the recipient of The Foreign Minister's Commendation (*Gaimu daijin hyōshō*) for the Promotion of Japan research in Italy. His research focuses on Japanese performing arts, traditional theatre and genres in premodern Japan as well as in modern times. He is the author of numerous books and articles on *bunraku*, *nō*, *kabuki* and traditional Japanese dance. He has also translated into Italian a selection of short stories by Izumi Kyōka (1991). He is author or editor of the volumes *Mutamenti dei linguaggi nella scena contemporanea in Giappone* (2014), *Storia del teatro giapponese* (2 vols., 2015 and 2016a), *Scenari del teatro giapponese, Caleidoscopio del nō* (2016b), and *Nihon no butai geijutsu ni okerushintai – Shi to sei, ningyō to jinkōtai* (2018) and many others.

2.7 Cinema, Animation, Visual Culture, Media and Society

2.7.1 Maria Roberta Novielli

Maria Roberta Novielli graduated in East Asian Language and Literature at Ca' Foscari University with an Advanced Specialisation in Cinema (*kenkyūsei*) at Cinema Nihon University of Tōkyō. As Associate Professor

at Ca' Foscari University of Venice she teaches History of Cinema and she is the director of Ca' Foscari Short Film Festival and of the Master in Fine Arts in Filmmaking. She is head of the website AsiaMedia (Ca' Foscari University), and the editor of the book series Schemi Orientali (Cafoscarina).

She has co-operated for numerous cinematographic activities with film festivals (Venice, Tōkyō, Locarno and others), for which she has often organised film retrospectives on Japanese filmmakers, and she was Chair of the press conferences related to Japanese movies for the Venice Film Festival, La Biennale di Venezia (2003-11).

She is a contributor to numerous Italian magazines and the author, among the other books, of *Storia del cinema giapponese* (2001), the first history of Japanese cinema written in Italy (also translated and published in Brazil), *Metamorfosi. Schegge di violenza nel nuovo cinema giapponese* (2010), *Animerama. Storia del cinema di animazione giapponese* (2015), and *Floating Worlds. A Short History of Japanese Animation* (2018).

Her works are extensively published and she has taken part to numerous conferences, panels and symposiums, both nationally and internationally.

2.7.2 Toshio Miyake

Toshio Miyake is Associate Professor of Japanese Society and Cultural Studies at Ca' Foscari University of Venice. After majoring in Japanese Studies at Ca' Foscari (BA 1997, PhD 2005), he has conducted field works in Japan on anime, manga and youth subcultures at Ōsaka University, International Christian University and Kyōto University (JSPS Postdoc Fellow 2008-10). Since returning to Venice as the first Ca' Foscari Marie Curie International Fellow (2009-11), he has investigated the intertwinement between Occidentalism, Orientalism, and self-Orientalism in modern Italy/Europe-Japan/Asia relations. His main research interests are related to the fields of Cultural Studies, Postcolonial Studies, Race Studies and Cultural History, focusing on a critical understanding of issues related to identity, culture and power. He is the author of monographs on the representations of the 'West' (*Occidentalismi*, 2010) and on monster culture in Japan (*Mostri del Giappone. Narrative, figure, egemonie della dis-locazione identitaria*, 2014); co-author, with Marco Del Bene and others, of a volume on modern and contemporary history of Japan (*Il Giappone moderno e contemporaneo. Stato, media, processi identitari*, 2012) and editor of a special journal issue on media culture and (post)nuclear Japan ("Da Hiroshima/Nagasaki a Fukushima. Cinema, manga e anime nel Giappone postbellico", 2012).

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Since its establishment in 1868, Ca' Foscari University's educational vocation has been marked by its attention to the study and teaching of Oriental languages. Inheriting the legacy of Venice as a commercial and cultural gateway to the East, the development of Oriental studies has been envisioned as one of the most important and peculiar missions of this University as a national educational institution. This volume revisits the history of the teaching and research on Middle, Central, South-Asian and East-Asian languages and civilisations at Ca' Foscari, and the history of this University's relationships with the East, offering some insights and information about the evolution of these disciplines, the main protagonists and the multiple connections that have tied and still tie Ca' Foscari with the Oriental world.



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