



NEWS
BULLETIN
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IN DIEM

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| NEWS BULLETIN OF FSCIRE |
| NO. 3 | 12/2019 |

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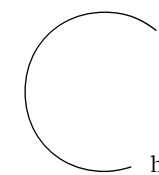
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in Bologna**

BEHOLDING THE WHOLE

Alberto Melloni



Christian du Chergé was not a Muslim, nor was he even an Arab. He was French, from an aristocratic family, and had been baptised. He discovered his vocation in the course of time when, in Algeria in 1959, a young Algerian Muslim saved his life and, in the process, lost his own. A priest of the Council, a Trappist monk and a scholar in the field of Islamic-Christian dialogue, he was the prior of the monastery in Tibhirine in the years of the countless murders in a succession of massacres of various origins. For those who had chosen to live a contemplative life in the land of Islam, it was easy to foresee that the mortal destiny that devastated the life of so many could easily knock at the door of the monastery and tear up the roots of the peace that were being nourished by silent contemplation. And so it came to be, but before this occurred, Christian du Chergé wrote a letter-testament to his assassin in the (perhaps mistaken) conviction that he had to be a Muslim. Among other things, he said that by dying defencelessly he would finally be able to see “Islam as God sees it”. It was a mystical desire, perfectly in keeping with a spiritual path in which the church to which he belonged (finally) recognised the sign of martyrial beatitude.

However, Frère Christian’s desire perfectly overlapped, and overlaps, with an objective critical necessity: the knowledge of Islam that last century made available to all was necessarily fragmentary, far more than the ordinary critical segmentation of objects of research would normally be.

By definition, when knowledge of the religious experience is scientific, it is limited because it seeks a rigour in which linguistic, cultural, chronological, and methodological specialism is not fungible, yet, any knowledge worthy of this name is able to collocate itself within a disciplinary grid and an *universitas* of knowledges that stimulate one another. This is frequently the case thanks to the physical contiguity created by the common work of research and libraries, whose physiognomy is never neutral, although it should always be impartial.

This is well understood by those in Bologna who have availed themselves of the Dossetti Library or gleaned knowledge among its bookshelves, there where the experience of research that is now Fscire’s began. And those who inhabit and animate that place have felt that committing themselves to giving life to the European Academy of Religion, and the European Research Infrastructure on Religious Studies RESILIENCE, means committing themselves to extending their specialist proficiencies in other directions. With a discernment of historical urgency, while it seemed to us that European and Israeli Judaism had their scientific dynamism that the library “accompanies” through the acquisition of books and research collaborations, it also seemed to us that we still needed to assume a commitment with reference to Islam. Italy, indeed, has a first-rate Arabist tradition and first-rate academic institutions that have become a part of the panorama of the best and greatest European research and continue to produce authoritative specialists.

However, these are schools, areas, and works that do not address the problem of providing anyone with working tools on the basis of a comprehensive vision of the unitary nature of Islam, which, as also happens in other areas, ends up being fatally sacrificed or retreating to a “regionalistic” or *per sussumptionem* generality, as if the different Islams – with cultures that are not only Arab, with other polarities, and not merely a confessional one alone – should resign themselves to

being read *sub specie aliena* by virtue of their connection with the Arabic language generated by the Qur’anic revelation.

With the wish to construct and put ourselves forward in order to lead a European infrastructure for the historical religious sector worthy of the ES-FRI Roadmap,

*the desire to illuminate a place
where Islam could be seen “as God
sees it” became imperative, and
Palermo was chosen for reasons
linked to its spiritual history and
physiognomy, a place to which we
could not but go.*

Hence the fraternal benevolence of the archbishop and the friendship of the city permitted the selection of the first scholars and librarians who gave rise to the La Pira Library, on the most hermit-like spur of Poggio Ridente. It is a place of study for anyone who wants to take advantage of a library collection that is fast increasing, thankfully also shared and understood by the authorities for whom it is intended; the library neither asks for nor accepts monetary donations from Islamic authorities, whether they be states or not, but requests and accepts books, manuscripts, rarities, and collections. In this way will be constructed, by holy emulation, the calligraphic mosaic of the ways in which the Qur’anic revelation was accepted and lived, is accepted and lives, in a everlasting consciousness that can and must endow the human family with the spiritual and cultural treasures that have enriched its path. Hence, one cannot take for granted that those who come to La Pira see Islam “as God sees it”: it would already be more than acceptable if they see that this is the intention of all those who believe in the unity of the human family.

LA PIRA LIBRARY AND RESEARCH CENTRE

On the History and Doctrines of Islam

The Giorgio La Pira Library and Research Centre in Palermo (Sicily) is a branch of the Dossetti Library in Bologna, both established by the Fondazione per le scienze religiose Giovanni XXIII, whose headquarters are in Bologna. Fscire is a leading research institution in Italy, project coordinator of ReIReS.eu and RESILIENCE (Research Infrastructure on Religious Studies), founder of the European Academy of Religion and holder of a UNESCO Chair on Religious Pluralism and Peace.

The Dossetti Library, founded in 1953, has become one of the best libraries in the world for the history of Christianity, possessing one million volumes and three thousand journals.

After 65 years, in October 2018, the new Giorgio La Pira Library and Research Centre was established as a library specialising in the history and doctrines of Islam, with the aim of representing all its linguistic, doctrinal and cultural varieties.

It is dedicated to Giorgio La Pira, a Sicilian scholar and political leader who played a key role in the peace movement throughout his life and career.

The Giorgio La Pira Library and Research Centre was founded thanks to the crucial support of the Italian institutions and has three main goals:

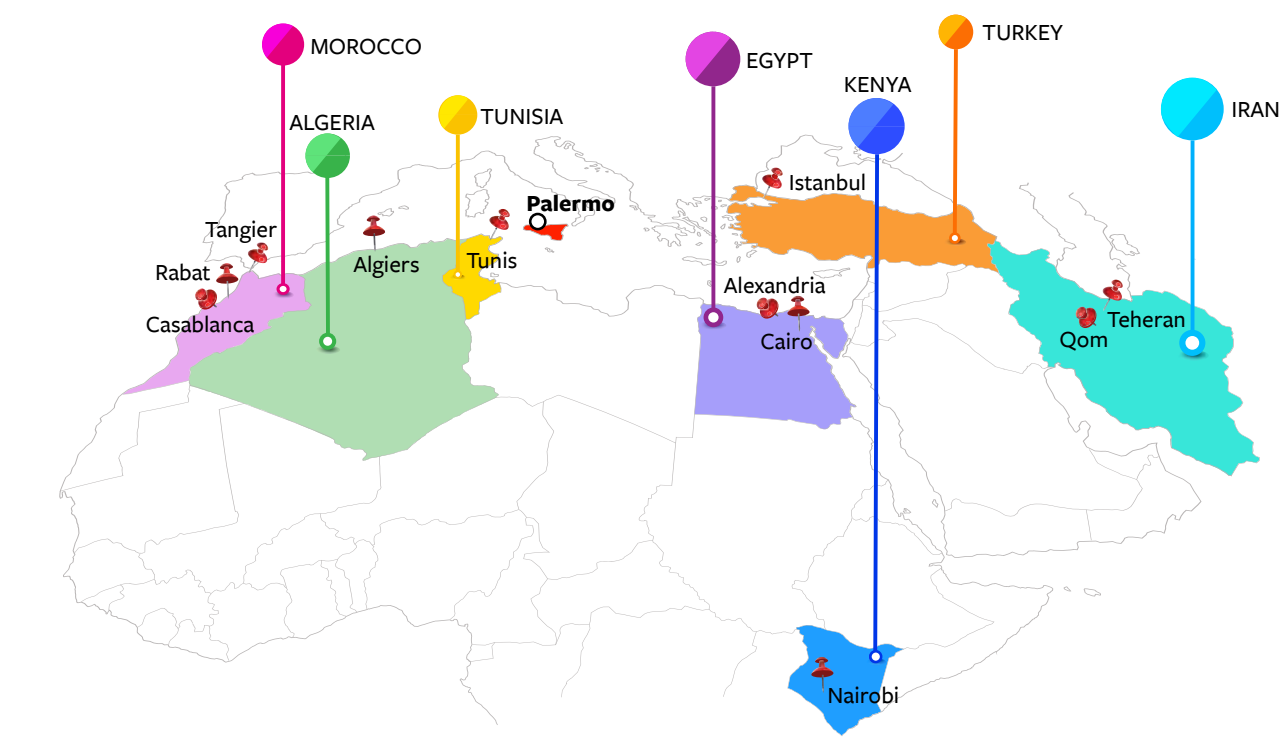
1. planning and realising a long-term scientific activity which will deal with a sensitive issue for the future of Europe and the Mediterranean area through knowledge and research. In order to attain this goal, the Library intends to be one of the major independent centres in this field and one of the few to represent all Islamic traditions;
2. making the city of Palermo a crucial hub for religious studies and one of the main poles of research and cultural diplomacy in the Mediterranean region and in the European research area, complementing the winning example of the Fondazione in Bologna;
3. encouraging the research cooperation among different traditions, which will be able to create an area of rights and understanding through scientific progress in the fields of history, theology, jurisprudence, philosophy and philology.

In order to maintain its independence, the La Pira Library and Research Centre has not asked and will not ask for financial support from Islamic countries or institutions; the economic resources are provided by the Italian government and the top players in national and European culture thanks to direct awards and successful EU competitive procedures. On the contrary, donations of books and manuscripts are welcome, and a great effort is now implemented for the purpose of reaching 200 thousand books in two years and 500 thousand in six years, with an investment of 1.5 million euros per year.

The new library in Palermo is administered by the same board of directors that organises the activities of the Fondazione in Bologna and its mission rests on a few main pillars: a coenobitic rigour of the work; the administration, inspired by parsimony and based on an egalitarianism exceptional for this day and age; the scientific excellence as an instrument to disclose knowledge; a network of international and first class relationships which confirms an Italian leadership and visibility through the European Research Infrastructure on Religious Studies; a full independence from universities and religious communities; a planned cognitive voracity.

With its ambitious project, the La Pira Library and Research Centre does not plan to become an institution focussing exclusively on the Arab world, an educational centre for imams, an organisation for inter-religious dialogue, or not even an academy devoted to detached erudition. On the contrary, it hopes to become a reference forum for learned research, enhancing the experience of the EU Research Infrastructure on Religious Studies as launched and led by Fscire in Bologna.

One year after its foundation, the Library has obtained a substantial number of classical and modern works: it now possesses around 10,000 volumes in concrete copies and over 175,000 digital books. This collection – the result of donations and purchases – includes books mainly in Arabic and Persian but also with substantial stocks in Urdu, Turkish and various European languages. The Library has recently obtained the credential of the National Library System (SBN) and begun the cataloguing process. The texts in the Latin alphabet are catalogued using the national software (Sebina); those in Arabic are catalogued with the AlKindi 4.2 system, borrowed from the IDEO library in Cairo, the most advanced version in Arabic of the cataloguing system RDA (Resource Description and Access).



A team of seven researchers and librarians with different specialisations and academic backgrounds is currently working full-time at the La Pira Library and Research Centre and their number is expected to double in the next five years. The team is affirming its scientific leadership both within and outside Europe with an agenda based on scientific excellence, open research, inclusive independence and diplomatic integrity.

To launch the La Pira Library the Archdiocese of Palermo made a building located on the beautiful hill close to the city centre, called Santa Silvia, available. The Library and Research Centre includes a reserved area for prayer and a guest house for visiting researchers.

Following in the footsteps of the huge libraries of the Islamic traditions, the La Pira Library and Research Centre is organising a series of visits to huge institutions in numerous countries in order to acquire double editions, rare books and donations of books.

B I O



ALESSANDRO CANCIAN is a senior research associate in the Qur'anic Studies unit at the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. His areas of expertise are the intellectual history of Shi'ism and Sufism in early modern times. Among his publications: *La scuola degli Imam: l'Iran e l'educazione religiosa nell'Islam sciita* (Jouvence, 2016), *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Iran* (OUP/Institute of Ismail Studies, 2019).



MOHAMMED HASHAS is a senior research fellow at the La Pira Library in Palermo. He is also an adjunct professor at the Department of Political Science of LUISS Guido Carli University in Rome. Hashas' latest publications include *The Idea of European Islam* (Routledge, 2019), and *Islam, State and Modernity: Mohamed Abed al-Jabri and the Future of the Arab World* (Palgrave, 2018).



IVANA PANZECA is researcher at the La Pira Library, where she works on manuscripts of the Arab-Persian philosophical tradition. She cooperates with the Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa and is a "cultore" in History of Arabic Philosophy at the University of Palermo. Her most recent publication is *Il Calamo dell'esistenza. La corrispondenza epistolare tra Šadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī e Našīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī* (with P. Spallino, Fidem-Brepols, 2018).



PATRIZIA SPALLINO is professor of Arabic Language at the Faculty of Primary Education of the University of Palermo. She edited the translation of *Questioni Siciliane* by Ibn Sab'īn (2002, Officina di Studi Medievali) and has recently published with Dr. Ivana Panzeca *Il Calamo dell'esistenza. La corrispondenza epistolare tra Šadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī and Našīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī* (Fidem-Brepols, 2018).

T H E W E D N E S D A Y S

ISLAM: TRADITIONS AND TRANSLATIONS

18 September 2019

MODERN ARAB SCHOLARSHIP ON ISLAMIC ETHICS AND TRUSTEESHIP CRITIQUE: A REFLECTIVE CONTEXTUALIZATION

Mohammed Hashas (Fscire, Bologna/La Pira, Palermo/LUISS, Rome)

23 October 2019

ARAB ISLAMIC TEXTS FROM ĠAZĪRAT AL-SIQLIYYA

Patrizia Spallino (University of Palermo)

13 November 2019

EXEGESIS, SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY AND (RE)BIRTH OF SHIITE SUFISM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY IRAN

Alessandro Cancian (Institute of Ismaili Studies, London)

29 January 2020

THE PERSIAN MANUSCRIPT TRADITION OF THE ŠIFĀ' BY IBN SĪNĀ IN THE SAFAVID ERA

Ivana Panzeca (Fscire, Bologna/La Pira/Palermo/Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa)

FROM CAIRO TO PALERMO BY WAY OF LIBRARIES

Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies

The Cataloguing of Non-Latin Alphabet Books

The Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO) was established in Cairo in 1953 to promote a dialogue and cultural encounters between Muslims and Christians and to study the classical Arab-Muslim heritage.

In order to fulfil this mission, an exceptional library with over 155,000 volumes and a large collection of journals in Arabic and Western languages was built, opening up the outstanding heritage of Arab culture to Egyptian and foreign students and researchers.

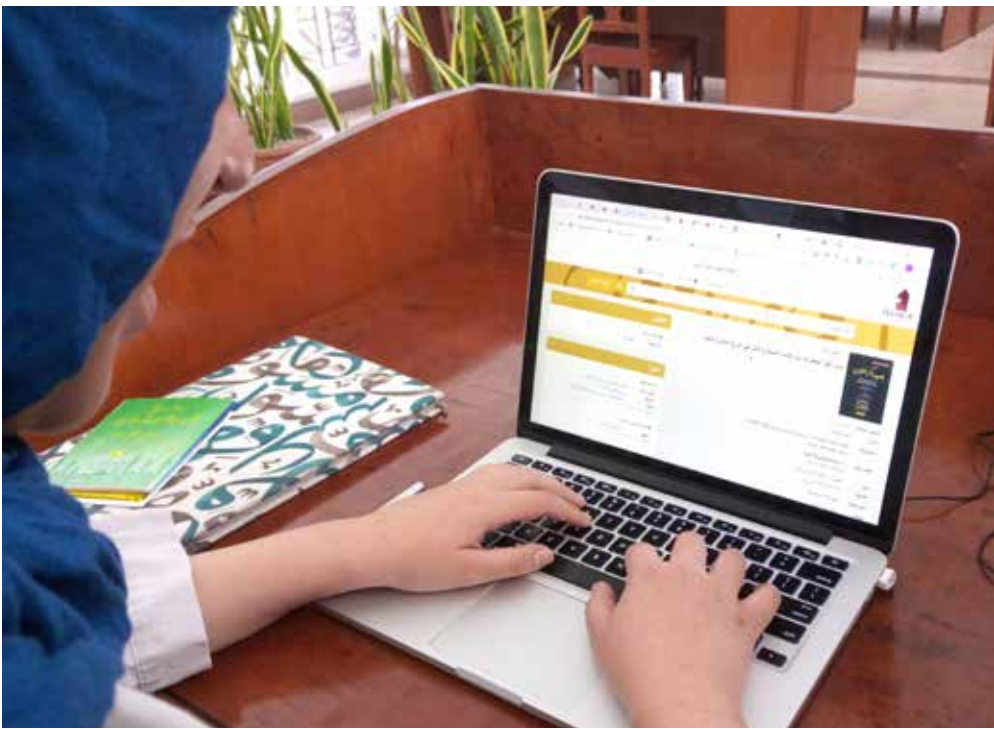
At present, the library catalogue is undergoing a major development programme, integrating pioneering and innovative cataloguing standards (FRBR and RDA).

The greatest potential of this project conducted by IDEO is that the mapping of the Arab-Muslim *turâth*, made available to the researcher, will not be limited to its own borders.

The incomplete and “regional” mapping of the Arab-Muslim heritage of the first millennium of Islam will be expandable and linked to other “regional” maps and other cultural heritages.

To this end, IDEO will distribute its cataloguing tool to all research institutes and specialised libraries wishing to participate in this general mapping by pooling their contextualised data according to the standards of FRBR and RDA.

In Arabic, the term “critical thinking” (*tafkîr naqdî*) is often taken to mean distrustful of the Arab or Islamic culture and is unbearable for many Arab researchers. They find it difficult, therefore, to adopt a historical perspective as researchers in the West do. They prefer to consider classical culture in its internal consistency and organ-



IDEO Library, Cairo
(Photo: IDEO)

ic development, an a-historical approach that brings out the specific beauty of Arab culture but tends to minimise the discontinuities, hence becoming inadequate when new cultural challenges are encountered. The AlKindi catalogue makes a more helpful historical reading of the *turâth* possible.

Furthermore, the use of international standards will facilitate the reconciliation of the Arab-Muslim heritage of the first millennium with other cultural heritages of humanity, since the same tools, intelligently implemented, will permit them to be explored together.

A Pioneer Collaboration

Since July 2019, the La Pira Library in Palermo and the Dominican Institute (IDEO) in Cairo are collaborating in a ground-breaking project: the cataloguing of books of the Islamic heritage within the IFLA-LRM framework, thanks to a software developed at IDEO called Diamond-ILS. La Pira and IDEO, along with the Manuscript Institute of the Arab League in Cairo, enrich the AlKindi Portal of the Written Islamic Heritage every day. This portal includes metadata of both manuscript and printed

books, in all possible alphabets and in transliteration. The interface is available in French, English and Arabic, and we hope that Italian may soon be added. So far, AlKindi contains 226,000 records of publications, which correspond to 212,000 records of works. Of these works, 30,000 are works from the Classical Islamic Heritage. The La Pira Library is now cataloguing their books in the same database, enriching it in particular with data from the non-Arabic Islamic world (IDEO is focusing on the Arab world alone). To date, they have recorded 500 books (and 100 new works).

Jean Druel, director of the IDEO
The AlKindi portal: <https://alkindi.diamond-ils.org/>
The La Pira online catalogue: <https://lapira.diamond-ils.org/>
Legend of the online catalogue: A 15th-century work by Ibn al-Murtaḍā (d. 840/1437)

“LA PIRA”

19 February 2020

THE TRANSMISSION OF SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT BETWEEN GREECE AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD: TREATISES AND ENCYCLOPEDIAS

Giuseppina Ferriello (independent researcher)

25 March 2020

PHILOSOPHY AND SUFISM IN THE ABBASID PERIOD: MEETING OR CLASH?

Víctor Pallejà de Bustinza (Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona)

22 April 2020

LATE OTTOMAN MUSLIM RELIGIOUS ETHICS: A FEW EXAMPLES

Taraneh Wilkinson (Fscire, Bologna/Georgetown University)

MISSION

IRAN

Iran was the destination of two missions, carried out in December and April. The December trip was undertaken by Professor Alberto Melloni, Giuseppina Ferriello and Ivana Panzeca. On that occasion, the delegation met several personalities from academic, diplomatic and religious institutions. In particular, they had an encounter with Ambassador Masjed Jamei and Ayatollah Shahrestani (Qom), who donated a large number of books to the La Pira Library. The April trip was dedicated to the Teheran Book Fair, where Ivana Panzeca and Francesco Cargnelutti acquired books for the La Pira collections and held talks with many professors from different Iranian institutes and libraries.



The Italian Ambassador Mauro Conciatori with Ashraf Boroujerd, director of the National Library of Tehran
(Photo: Fscire)

EGYPT

In January, a delegation composed of Rosanna Budelli, Margherita Picchi and Francesco Cargnelutti travelled to Egypt, where they spent some days at the Cairo Book Fair, the largest in the Arab world, purchasing a great number of Arabic books. During their stay in Cairo, they had the chance to meet H.E. *shaykh* Saleh Abbas from al-Azhar – who donated some of the books in their institute to the La Pira Library –, the Apostolic Nuncio, Bruno Musarò, and the Italian Ambassador, Giampaolo Cantini, who contributed to the creation of links with other Egyptian institutions. The team visited the Library of Alexandria and the Dominican Institute for Oriental Studies (IDEO), with which Fscire started a collaboration.



Andrea Benzo, counsellor at the Italian Embassy with shaykh Saleh Abbas from al-Azhar
(Photo: Fscire)

TUNISIA

In April a group from the La Pira Library, consisting of Francesco Cargnelutti, Francesca Badini and Ines Cumerlato, went to Tunis to visit the local book fair. They made contact with local publishing houses and bought several books to add to the library's collections. On that occasion, the delegation met Abdelmajid Charfi, president of Beit al-Hikma, and Ridha Dabbabi, *chef de service* of the National Library of Tunis. The La Pira Library has an agreement to exchange books with both of them.



Abdelmajid Charfi, president of the Beit al-Hikma of Tunis
(Photo: Fscire)

INFORMATION

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Rosanna Budelli – librarian
Ines Cumerlato – librarian
Ivana Panzeca – senior researcher
Mohammed Hashas – senior researcher
Margherita Picchi – junior researcher
Francesca Badini – PhD candidate
Francesco Cargnelutti – PhD candidate

ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS TRANSMISSION IN A GLOBAL AND DIGITAL WORLD

During a two-day workshop, on 24–25 June 2019, the La Pira Centre hosted a group of scholars to discuss the topic of “Islam for the Future: Religious Transmission in a Global World”; the workshop was led by Professor Joselyne Cesari (University of Birmingham and Georgetown University), accompanied by twelve junior and senior scholars from various institutions and universities. The workshop examined the theme of the transmission of Islamic religious knowledge in the current global world and its future prospects in order to outline some major subthemes for focused study and research. First, issues of gender,

religious freedom, violence, and pluralism were among the major points that were discussed, and which were categorised as relevant for more extensive investigation. Second, and more importantly, the discussion focalised the digital world as a new platform on which more religious knowledge and transmission is being invested by various stakeholders in the religious field, be it the believers themselves, their representative local bodies, national state institutions, or transnational movements and stakeholders. From these two major themes emerged the need to create a circle of scholarship to study the multiple ways and forms of living the Muslim faith in the modern global world based on the classical diversity within the tradition, both in theory and in practice.

Photo: Fscire



ANNUAL LECTURE IN BOLOGNA

LETTURA DOSSETTI 2019

La categoria di *éсhaton* ha perso oggi di significato: dalla fine dei tempi si è passati a un tempo senza fine. Dal “definitivo compimento” all’idea di progresso: in questa impresa si è consumata l’“iperpolitica”, che oggi è divenuta “fine delle ideologie”. Il futuro resta però ineliminabile: per operare sensatamente per esso è necessario assumere una misura. Quale? Le generazioni. Non l’umanità, nozione astratta, ma i venturi. La generazione presente è vincolata a preservare il futuro per loro e, magari, a lasciare un mondo migliore di quand’essa vi è entrata. Se si può dire, dall’utopia all’eutopia

IL FINE DELLA POLITICA NELLA FINE DELLA POLITICA

Lectio Magistralis del filosofo
SALVATORE NATOLI

Saluti di:
MATTEO CARD. ZUPPI
arcivescovo di Bologna
ALESSANDRO PAJNO
presidente Fscire

**MARTEDÌ
17 DICEMBRE 2019**
ore 17.00

Oratorio di San Filippo Neri
Bologna – via Manzoni 5

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B I B L I O

Alberto Melloni

RIMOZIONI. LERCARO. 1968

“Rimozione” [“Dismissal”]. This is how in 1986, with his meticulousness as a canonist, Giuseppe Dossetti publicly described what had happened in Bologna at the beginning of 1968. In that year, after Antonio Poma had been Cardinal Archbishop Giacomo Lercaro’s coadjutor with right of succession for four months, a previously decided, written episcopal succession markedly gathered speed and, with its obscurities, reiterated lies, unspoken and unspeakable shadows, marked the universal destiny of the post-conciliar period, the role of local churches in the reception of Vatican II and the whole climate of the Italian Church. An unpublished dossier of private papers, the archives of the CIA and of the Quirinale, together with political and ecclesiastical documents, shed light on the events surrounding that succession: what remains, in the end, is the obedience of a man ruined by power yet liberated by truth. Il Mulino (Testi, ricerche e fonti), pp. 452 ISBN 978-88-15-28039-8



Jeffrey M. Perl (ed.)

COMMON KNOWLEDGE

25, 1–3 (2019)
The special issue of *Common Knowledge*, which in 2019 became a partner of Fscire, commemorates the journal’s quarter-century and consists of pieces from in- and outside symposia, arranged into conversational groupings, in order to fulfil the publication’s original obligation. *Common Knowledge* has founded a new intellectual model, one based on conversation and cooperation rather than on metaphors – adopted from war and sports – of “sides” that one must “take”. The pages of *Common Knowledge* regularly challenge the ways in which we think about scholarship and its relevance to humanity. Readers are invited to move, from one thorny question to another, around a common room filled to bursting with lively colleagues, both young and old, but also with ghosts, whose words now mean more and something different from when they were originally written. Duke University Press, pp. 587 ISSN 0961-754X



Andrea Tilatti (ed.)

QUADERNI DI STORIA RELIGIOSA MEDIEVALE

1 (2019)
In order to ensure the journal a wider international scope, *Quaderni di storia religiosa*, founded by Giuseppina De Sandre Gasperini, Grado Giovanni Merlo and Antonio Rigon, has begun a new series in cooperation with Fscire. While remaining loyal to its monographic organisation, and dealing with themes of, mainly Medieval, religious history, the journal will be open to comparative studies and perspectives that go beyond pre-established eras and areas. It will continue to pay attention to people, above all in the study of archival sources, since the latter always refer to real situations and people, both men and women, who experienced and bore witness to their religious experiences. Il Mulino, pp. 233 ISSN 1126-9200



THANK YOU

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Franco Bassanini
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Marco Piccinini
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dell’Università e della Ricerca
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