

# The Turin Oriental Tradition and the CESMEO's Contribution to Indological Studies

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## ABSTRACT

*The Italian Indological Studies had a beginning in Turin in 1852 when a chair in Sanskrit Studies was established at the University and awarded to the eminent Scholar Gaspare Gorresio (1807-1891), famous for his edition and translation of the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmiki. It's undeniable that Gorresio was attracted to Indological studies owing to the "cultural ferments" coming from Europe where they were already fruitfully cultivated, but also owing to the influence of the fertile ground created in Turin by the tradition of some near East teachings, established at the University the year after its foundation that's in 1405. Gorresio was followed by a long list of scholars, down to prof. Oscar Botto. In 1963 O. Botto founded in Turin the Department of Oriental studies and directed it until 1995. With his rare philological thoroughness Botto studied the ancient Indian poetry, drama and epics, the politics tradition and Buddhism, giving a deep impulse to these studies which at present are carried out both at the University and at the Cesmeo, International Institute of Advanced Asian Studies, founded by him in 1982. It's a page of history that is lasting since more than 150 years and that today has become so effective to liven up important working hypotheses that have been welcome with great interest and waited with concern in Italy and even more abroad, where a considerable group of Scholars is cooperating in some of most significant projects carried on in Turin which are the results of this great tradition, such as the Corpus Iuris Sanscriticum, Indologica Taurinensia, the first Sanskrit-Italian Dictionary and a new Italian version of the Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa.*

The interest for Oriental studies, limited to the area of the near East and particularly to the Semitic and Camitic sectors<sup>1</sup>, from 1405 to 1720, that's the period of the "ancient" University, is indissolubly connected with the changing fortunes of the Piedmontese kingdom and with the personalities of the Savoy kings who followed one another on the throne. Even afterwards it is clear that the development of Oriental studies, then more specifically referred to the Asian Countries, coincided or found more suitable conditions of development in particular historical periods, characterized by creative and innovative ferments.<sup>2</sup>

The constitution of a bibliographical fund by Carlo Emanuele I, from 1606 to 1608, that included also printing works in Syriac, Caldean and Hebrew types contributed to the arising of the interest for these studies and the creation of academic teachings in these disciplines. In fact, Carlo Ravani, expert in Oriental languages who was entrusted with the Library in 1608, was also appointed from 1610 to 1621 as "translator" of Hebrew, Chaldean, Syriac and Greek languages at the Turin University.

These commitments were carried on by Ravani's successors for a certain period, then they gradually diminished and ceased completely when the teaching of the Holy Scriptures was interrupted in 1627 and only in 1720 the professorship of Hebrew and Holy Scriptures was restored by the king Vittorio Amedeo II, awarding it to the Abbott Giuseppe Pasini who published in 1749 a monumental catalogue of the University library. Then another period of "standstill" of these studies followed as in 1771 was established again only the professorship of Holy Scriptures at the Faculty of Theology. All over Europe, on the contrary, the Oriental studies were cultivated fervently and with a great success.

Anyway, owing to some outstanding scholars, the interest for these disciplines was still uphold. They were Gian Bernardo de Rossi, a great expert in Hebrew, Syriac and Arabic languages<sup>3</sup> who taught Oriental languages and Holy Scriptures at the University of Padoa since 1769 and Tommaso Valperga di Caluso, eminent mathematician, but renowned also as a learned Orientalist, author of a grammar of Coptic and of an introduction to the Hebrew, who held the professorship of Oriental languages at the reopened Turin University from 1800 to 1815. These interests were strengthened by the Abbot Amedeo Peyron (1785-1870), brilliant and renowned scholar of Coptic in Italy and abroad, expert in papyrology<sup>4</sup>, pupil and successor of Valperga di Caluso. Unfortunately the precious volumes donated by Caluso to the University Library, among which 80 Hebrew manuscripts - one of them of XII century - 4 Greek, 3 Italian, 6 Arabic and some on palm leaf from Malabar, were nearly completely destroyed by a fire in 1904.<sup>5</sup>

The utmost importance of Turin Bibliographical patrimony was well-known in Europe owing to the relationships among the learned Scholars of those times as it is witnessed by the report made at the Accademia delle Scienze "*News of eighteen Persian codes of the Royal University Library of Turin*" by the Austrian Orientalist Joseph Purgstall von Hammer, who catalogued the Oriental manuscripts in 1825.

Subsequently to the purchasing in 1723 by the king Carlo Felice of the collection of the Egyptian archaeological finds and art pieces of the Piedmontese Bernardino Drovetti<sup>6</sup> and the creation of Egyptian Museum, these new subjects attracted the academic world and contributed to the flourishing of cultural, historical and philological interests towards the East.<sup>7</sup> A fascinating uncritical exoticism, a kind of Egyptian-mania, was also encouraged by some writers, explorers, adventurers and by the travel-reports of some uneasy aristocrats. A fruitful way was thus paved in Turin for the arising of new interests and for more far cultures.

For what concerns particularly the Middle and the Far East<sup>8</sup>, fundamental has been the work of the missionaries who contributed with their reports to a more documented knowledge of the social condition and a more objective approach to the historical reality, the religious beliefs and customs of the region where they carried out their mission. So the Tibetan studies in Italy began with

the Jesuit Ippolito Desideri from Pistoia (1684-1733)<sup>9</sup> who was able to deeply analyze the Tibetan culture and thought with particular attention to buddhist philosophy. He can be considered the first Scholar who understood the essence of the doctrine and the depth of its spiritual value, the first who revealed the secrets of the speculations of the Mahāyāna Buddhism.<sup>10</sup> The Library of the *Collegio di Propaganda Fide* was enriched more and more with important documents brought by many Capuchin missionaries and Tibetan studies knew a great scientific importance thanks to the Capuchin Cassiano Beligatti (1706-1785?) from Macerata<sup>11</sup> and the friar Augustinian Antonio Giorgi (1711-1797) from San Mauro di Romagna whose monumental work concerning not only the field of linguistic and lexicography, but also history, geography, cosmogony, religion, is noteworthy also for the systematic approach. But the first European who learned Sanskrit and who gave birth to the Indological studies about the end of the XVI century was a merchant from Florence, Filippo Sassetti, author of *Lettere dall'India*<sup>12</sup>. From then on, many other missionaries distinguished themselves by their methodological thoroughness and scientific accuracy; among them the Jesuit Giovanni Pietro Maffei<sup>13</sup> and the Jesuit Jacopo Fenicio (1558-1632) from Capua, the Jesuit Roberto de Nobili (1577-1656) from Montepulciano, who not only mastered the religious and philosophy concepts and ancient Indian literature thanks to his deep knowledge of Sanskrit language, but also the regional languages such as Tamil and Telugu, writing about twenty volumes on palm leaves in these languages<sup>14</sup>. Among the many minor figures<sup>15</sup>, the Jesuit Leonardo Cinamo (beginning of the XVII c.) from Naples described the regions of Mysore and gave one of the best definitions of the concept of *māyā*<sup>16</sup>.

The Carmelite Vincenzo Maria di Santa Caterina da Siena<sup>17</sup> wrote *Viaggio all'Indie Orientali*, in five books, published in 1672, noteworthy for his sharp observations and descriptions, not only geographical, but also relevant to many aspects of local culture. The descriptions of India made by the Franciscan Friar Minor Giovambattista Maoletti (1669-1725) from Serravalle Vercellese<sup>18</sup> are particularly devoted to the historical period and to the political events of Aurangzeb's kingdom, while the Jesuit Giuseppe Costantino Beschi (Castiglione delle Stiviere, 1680-1747), studied Indian languages and learned Tamil so perfectly that he is considered as the founder of the Tamil philology. However, his essays on linguistics and lexicography<sup>19</sup> are of more great value than his works written in Tamil<sup>20</sup>. Very acquainted with the Malabaric Language was Father Ildelfonso della Presentazione<sup>21</sup> who lived in Malabar for many years, while Gaetano Maria Mantegazza from Monza (1745-1794), Vincenzo Sangermano (1758-1819) and above all Melchiorre Carpani from Lodi<sup>22</sup> (1726-1797) were mainly interested in Buddhism. Carpani was also the donator to the Vatican Library of many manuscripts in Pali language, among which the *Patimokkha*, considered the original nucleus of the *Vinaya-piṭaka*. But the most representative figures of the XVIII century who contributed to the establishment of Indology as a qualified and separated discipline are the Capuchin Marco della Tomba (1726-1803)<sup>23</sup>, author of *Diversi sistemi della religione dell'Indostano e regni circonvicini* and *Libri Indiani*, of a great documentary value for the informations he gives about the *Vedas*, some *Śāstras*, the *Purāṇas* and the literary

texts he summarized, and the barefoot Carmelite Paolino da San Bartolomeo (1748-1806)<sup>24</sup>. Among the most significant works of this talented Sanskritist of an encyclopedic erudition, are two Sanskrit grammars, many works on different topics and the *Viaggio alle Indie Orientali*<sup>25</sup>, an outstanding work for the large quantity of exact information on Indian culture<sup>26</sup>. Furthermore, cataloguing the manuscripts of the Museo Borgiano of Velletri, he contributed to put at the Scholars' disposal a considerable bibliographic patrimony.

Such an important and glorious season for culture and science was followed by a sudden interruption of the missionaries' contribution and a long period of poor interest for this field of studies. This situation was pointed out by Angelo De Gubernatis in his encyclopaedia *Matériaux pour servir à l'Histoire des Etudes Orientales en Italie*, that was presented at the Orientalists' Conference of St. Petersburg on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1876. But the time was ripe for the official beginning of Indological Studies and this took place in 1852 when a chair in Sanskrit Studies<sup>27</sup> was established at the University of Turin and awarded to the eminent Scholar Abbot Gaspare Gorresio, whose work alone is enough to illustrate the greatness of the contribution given by Italy to the Indological studies<sup>28</sup>. He was born in Bagnasco in 1807 and after a period of study at the religious school went to the University of Turin exactly when was President the eminent philologist and semitist Abbot Amedeo Peyron, so well renowned in Europe. The help of a learned and influential politician, the Marquis A. Brignole Sale allowed him to attend a two years specialization course on Classical Philology in Wien where he got friendly with the Count C. Beraudo di Pralormo, who was then the Ambassador of the kingdom of Savoy in that town. These influential friends proved themselves very useful for him to carry out his prestigious enterprise. Therefore, Gorresio happened to take part in a productive period a great development of science and culture and social renewal that, with Carlo Alberto's kingdom (1831-1849), brought to the establishment of several cultural institutions<sup>29</sup>. The king himself financed the publication of important works. The king Carlo Alberto was truly rather mistrustful towards literary studies, that he considered dangerous for the religion and he preferred scientific studies, but thanks to the work of Prospero Balbo, who was president of the *Accademia delle Scienze* - real author of the cultural policy of the albertine age - assisted by a large group of intellectuals, he operated a wide project of cultural renewal and of political and institutional reformations.

Won over by the fascination of those Indian studies that, between 1830 and the forties were living in Europe their magic season and wishing to complete his researches that from Greek culture had leaded him to the Indian culture, attracted by the school of the distinguished indologist E. Burnouf, Gorresio went to Paris, invited by the marquis A. Brignole Sale, who was at that time Ambassador and gained him the economic support of the Piedmontese king.

His achievements had been so deep that after only two years he could undertake with scientific thoroughness the difficult and impressive task of publishing six volumes in devanagari characters, appropriately coined by the

Imprimerie Royale, and six volumes of the Italian translation, offering to Italy the pride of the first translation in Europe of the *Rāmāyaṇa* of the Indian poet Vālmīki, one of the greatest and most wonderful epic poems of every literature and of all times.<sup>30</sup> Of the two existing collections of manuscripts, the Northern and the Bengali or Gauḍa, Gorresio choose the last, again confirming his sensibility, as Gauḍa collection is indubitably superior both in literary value and aesthetic perfection. The edition of the Sanskrit text was the result of a careful collation of manuscripts conducted on the codices belonging to the Bibliothèque Royale in Paris and afterwards on those preserved in London at the Royal Society of Sciences and at the East-India House. In London, where he arrived on the 20 of April 1841, he availed himself of the precious suggestions and help of H. Wilson, professor of Sanskrit literature at Oxford and director of the museum and the library of the East India House and could consult the commentaries: *Manohara* by Lokanātha Calravartin and *Rāmāyaṇa Tilaka* by Ragunātha Vacaspati. Gorresio made also use of the Kullūkabhaṭṭa commentary and of the previous works of Schlegel and others.

This enterprise, great from a scientific and technical points of view, covered a period of thirty years from 1843 to 1870 and the excitement for the studies and the researches he was making in Paris, the report of the problems linked to the preparation of the printing and of the translation work, the living conditions and the bitterness deriving from the constant lack of funds are included in several letters Gorresio wrote to his friend count C. Beraudo di Pralormo who had become the Minister of Finance. The financial support of the king Carlo Alberto and afterwards of the Piedmontese government, not free from difficulties and oppositions, is witnessed by a thick correspondence in which the essentially cultural and scientific subjects intersect with the almost stifling developments of a hard and exhausting "administrative history"<sup>31</sup>.

Gorresio was followed in the prestigious Professorship at the University of Turin by Giovanni Flechia (1811-1892), distinguished linguist, deep inquirer of the innovative theories of comparative philology, great indologist and author of the first scientific Sanskrit Grammar, published in 1856, an exhaustive and useful instrument for the diffusion of the Sanskrit language. Also Flechia's work was published thanks to the patronage of the Piedmontese Government, aware of the great interest and of the importance that this field of the scientific research had for all the area of the humanistic studies.

Gorresio and Flechia were followed by a long list of scholars, but a simple list of Professors of Sanskrit is not enough to testify the ferment and intense interest in Indology, which made Turin the center of these studies in Italy. During this period famous teachers from Turin and the Piedmont contributed to the spreading of Sanskrit: Giacomo Lignana (1830-1891) from Tronzano Vercellese, Professor in Naples and Rome, Michele Kerbaker (1835-1914) from Turin, Professor in Naples, Angelo de Gubernatis (1840-1913) from Turin, Professor in Florence and Rome, Pietro Merlo (1850-1888) from Turin, Professor in Naples and Pavia, Oreste Nazari (1866-1923), Professor in Turin and subsequently Professor of Sanskrit in Palermo.

Flechia was succeeded at first by one of his most famous pupils, Domenico Pezzi (1844-1905), and then by Italo M. Pizzi (1849-1920), a brilliant scholar and an extremely active teacher: he taught Persian Literature and Languages, Sanskrit language, and later Persian, as well as Hebrew, Arabic and Semitic Languages. A pupil of Pizzi, Carlo Alfonso Nallino was one of the leading Italian scholars of Arabic and the author of many books on mathematics and astronomy in the Arabian world.

After the Twenties in Italy operated an unrivalled series of scholars of Indology: Paolo Emilio Pavolini (1864-1942)<sup>32</sup>, Carlo Formichi (1871-1943)<sup>33</sup> and, mostly, Giuseppe Tucci (1894-1984)<sup>34</sup>, and many others<sup>35</sup>.

It is a particular historical period characterized by the personality of Benito Mussolini who, after taking over the power and becoming Prime Minister in 1922, was seeking a form of international legitimation. A cultural agreement with India was signed by the Italian Government that allowed Carlo Formichi and Giuseppe Tucci to teach at Santiniketan, in the Visva Bharati University, founded by Rabindranath Tagore, for long periods. On the basis of the same agreement the official visit of Tagore in Italy was organized, during which he was accompanied by Formichi as translator and that included also Torino<sup>36</sup>.

Carlo Formichi, teacher of Sanskrit at the University of Rome and Paolo Emilio Pavolini, teacher at the University of Florence, are the authors of some valuable works on Buddhism<sup>37</sup>.

Over all of them stands out Giuseppe Tucci whose buddhist studies are characterized by a systematical methodology, by a rigorous scientific fairness and by an accurate criticism. He is the author of many translations of originals and critical editions of texts of fundamental importance for the studies on Mahāyāna Buddhism. All the most important Tucci's works on Buddhism as well as in other fields of Oriental Studies are still reprinted<sup>38</sup>.

His activity links the philological knowledge of the scholar with the broader spiritual interests of the constant traveller and the organizer of archaeological expeditions and cultural events. The imposing and fundamental contribution given by prof. Tucci is represented by the creation of the Is.M.E.O. (Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente)<sup>39</sup>, the Institute which publishes the editorial series "Serie Orientale Roma" and the scientific journal *East and West*, both renowned and appreciated by all the scholars.

In fact, Buddhist studies in Italy would deserve a wider space, however it is beyond our aim that is to offer a broad survey of Indological studies starting from their cradle in Turin. However, we cannot omit the studies<sup>40</sup> of A.M. Pizzagalli<sup>41</sup>, Raniero Gnoli<sup>42</sup> and Corrado Pensa<sup>43</sup>.

When Rabindranath Tagore visited Turin in 1926 with his retinue and Carlo Formichi, he met a young professor, Mario Vallauri (1887-1964), Oscar Botto's teacher, the most complete and eclectic Sanskrit Scholar who excelled in scientific and philological thoroughness and critical perspicacity. He was Professor in Turin from 1922 to 1961, and author of many philological works on classical literature, theatre, politics, medicine and ancient Indian sciences. Even if he manifested broad range of cultural interests, which was also multiform and varied, he was a deep investigator of the essentials in the evolution of the scientific, legal and political thought and in certain aspects of the cultural history of ancient India.<sup>44</sup>

On the cultural legacy left by these great authors naturally persists the framework of the Indological studies of our time, headed by Vallauri's two direct disciples, the eminent indologist Carlo Della Casa (b. 1925), who has been Director of the Institute of Linguistics and Eastern studies of Milan University, and Oscar Botto (b. 1922) who succeeded M. Vallauri at the University of Turin<sup>45</sup>, and taught first Sanskrit, then Indology. He was Professor of *Religions and Philosophies of India and Far East* from 1963 to 1974 and founded the Institute of Indology in 1963. The Institute later became a Department, covering all Oriental studies. O. Botto was director of this Department until 1995. With his rare philological thoroughness Botto has studied poetry, drama, novels, epics, ancient law, politics and Buddhism.

In his works Oscar Botto shows a wide variety of interests, which range over all Indian literature from the epic to lyric poetry, from theatre to artha and dharma texts. His scientific production can be divided in four sets of works.

His edition of the abridgement by Vināyaka of the *Daśakumāracarita* of Daṇḍin was published in 1956 and belongs to the first set. It was made on the basis of an unpublished manuscript and is very important because it can enlighten on the intricate question connected with the authenticity of Daṇḍin work that is the first romance of Indian Literature. Oscar Botto comes back to this question also in his general work on Ancient Indian Literature published in 1969. The translation, which follows the edition of the Sanskrit text, confirms Oscar Botto's solid language knowledge, his careful observance of the original text, the soundness of his translation criteria and his emendations to the original Sanskrit text.

His philological and historical researches on Kṣemendra belong to the second set. This was an arduous task because of the affected style, syntactic refinements and recurring new words which characterize the texts of the famous Kaśmīrian writer. In spite of these undeniable difficulties in understanding and explaining the text, in 1951 Oscar Botto translated Kṣemendra's *Daśavatāracarita*. Thanks to his experience and exceptional sensibility as a philologist, this work placed him in the forefront of the experts in Sanskrit studies. In the same set can also be included his translation of the *Upadeśaśataka* of Gumāni, with explanatory notes and a detailed analysis of the sources.

In the years from 1960 to 1969 he organized and directed a comprehensive History of Oriental Literatures in Italian language in four big volumes, that was the first and most important study published till that time in this field. About thirty were the scholars who contributed to this impressive work. Prof. J. Brough declared in his review: "Many of us will surely welcome such an opportunity to learn something of the scope of other branches of Oriental studies - a glimpse into a neighbour's garden". In the third volume Botto himself wrote an exhaustive history of ancient Indian Literature still unsurpassed. About this Botto's work the famous scholar J. W. de Jong wrote: "It's an excellent and lucid survey in which no branch of Indian literature is omitted. There is probably a work of similar scope in no other language".

In the third set we can include Botto's works on ancient Indian polity, which are a very useful contribution to understand this important aspect of Indian civilization. His study in this field begins in 1950 with his analysis of the fourth and fifth chapters of the *Arthaśāstra*, it continues with his research on the role of the Minister and the Counsellor in ancient India and leads to the publication of the *Nītivakyāmrta* of Somadeva Sūri and the foundation of the Series *Corpus Iuris Sanscriticum*.

The fourth set of his works is devoted to Buddha doctrine. In this field he has written an outstanding book on Buddha and Buddhism, which was published in 1974, but is still read and reprinted. In Italy many and many people have discovered Buddhism thanks to Botto's book. The same significance has to be given to his scientific activity in favour of the spreading of a correct knowledge of buddhist doctrine. His critical judgements on misleading handbooks have been very precious. In the field of Buddhist studies, O. Botto published in 1959 a short study on Buddhism, many entries for the 1981 and 1995 editions of the prestigious *Enciclopedia Italiana* known as "Treccani", and for the 4th edition of the Encyclopaedic Dictionary published by UTET in 1989. He also wrote an interesting study about the comparison between Buddha and Christ, published in 1985, a critical analysis of Italian bibliography on Buddhist studies published in *Tucci Commemoration volume*, a study on Early Scholars of Asia and Buddhism in connection with Oriental Studies in Italy, published in 1997 in *Jean Boisselier Felicitation Volume* and some contributions to a correct reading of Buddha doctrine published in some newspapers: we remember the articles about the conflict between Buddha and Māra, on the role of Buddha message in today's suffering and on the fascinating Buddhist philosophy of life.

His chairmanship of some prestigious Conferences of National and International Buddhist Associations confirms the fundamental role of his contribution in favour of the spreading of Buddha message.

Another ambitious Project set up by O. Botto is the compilation of the *first Sanskrit-Italian Dictionary* that responds to a very well founded, objective need as a century and a half has passed since Sanskrit studies were first officially

recognised as an academic discipline in Italy at Turin University and yet Italian Sanskrit scholars have still to mediate their knowledge of the language mainly through English, French and German dictionaries. The Dictionary will be published by the year 2006. A new *translation of the Vālmiki-Rāmāyaṇa* is going to be published in the Series *I Classici delle Religioni Orientali* (Classics of Oriental Religions) - UTET - directed by Prof. Botto. The work, organized by Irma Piovano, is the result of the cooperation of some distinguished Sanskrit scholars and includes the Introduction by J.L. Brockington, a world wide famous specialist of Indian epics.

However, the Cesmeo, International Institute for Advanced Asian Studies<sup>46</sup>, created by O. Botto in 1982 to support the University, owing to a more active structure, has opened up much wider possibilities and new perspectives and it is now the reference point to Oriental scholars and researchers, for Italian students who need help and assistance in their researches and dissertation/thesis writing, and for Asian students who can find at Cesmeo information and references on the culture of their countries. Cesmeo, besides its activity, houses important Indological Scientific Projects that have brought the fame of the studies of Turin all over the world. Cesmeo's vitality is witnessed by the many eminent scholars who are involved in the Scientific Committee<sup>47</sup> and who participate to the events.

The aim of the Cesmeo is promoting and developing the relationships and the cultural exchanges between Piedmont and Asian countries, spreading the knowledge of Asian culture and languages and strengthening the relevant scientific researches. To enforce this aim, cultural agreements have been established with many foreign Universities and Institutions which share common interests and working programmes.

Cesmeo organizes basic courses of Asian languages and cultures as well as advanced programmes for technical translation, and short monographic courses on particular aspects of Asian cultures. Many of these courses have been devoted to Buddhist literature, art and ethics in India and in other Asian countries. Cesmeo organizes lectures and advanced seminars held by distinguished Italian and foreign scholars, with the aim of deepening peculiar subjects of Asian Civilizations. Many scholars have analysed Buddhist subjects in their lectures<sup>48</sup>.

Cesmeo publishes the reports of specific researches, when the results can significantly contribute to the development of science and the Series *Orientalia* edited by Irma Piovano. Some volumes are relevant to Buddhist studies: *Max Weber and India*, Proceedings of the Conference on Max Weber thesis in relation with Hinduism and Buddhism; *Gyantse revisited*, edited by Erberto Lo Bue and Franco Ricca; *Les Etres de l'Himālaya*, an original analysis by J. Boisselier of a Thai illustrated manuscript of the Cesmeo Library; *Change and Continuity*, the proceedings of the Conference on Nepalese culture of the Kathmandu Valley, edited by S. Lienhard; a study on the architecture and art of the Tibetan Gnas Chun temple, by Franco Ricca; and an analysis of the subjects and techniques of the Buddhist painting in the Cambodian monasteries by Madeleine Giteau.

The Institute promotes cultural agreements with Italian and foreign Scientific Institutions in order to develop exchanges, publications and conferences. It organizes events – such as exhibitions, concerts and film series - to show and explain cultural traditions of Asian countries, thanks to the valuable collaboration of prestigious museums and distinguished researchers.

Cesmeo has awarded some distinguished experts with the international prize "Cesmeo for Oriental Studies". Among them Ananda W.P. Guruge for his fundamental volume on *Aśoka. A definitive biography*.

The Institute houses a rich and specialized library on Oriental studies, which is connected with the "on line Italian National Catalogue". It owns 32000 volumes, including monographic studies, journals, a large collection of literary works in Asiatic languages and three important book funds: "J.Boisselier's Fund", on the arts of South-East Asia and the history of Buddhism, "S.Lienhard's Fund", on Nepalese studies, "O. Botto Fund" and "A.M. Esnoul's Fund" on Indological Studies, and a hundred of scientific journals on Asian studies in complete series.<sup>49</sup> The Library has got a multimedia area and offers photocopying and research facilities and services. Its collection on Buddhist studies includes over 1000 titles of volumes and articles: the 39 volumes of the *Pāli Buddhist Canon*, written in Thai characters and published in 1927, are very important in this section.

The Library is fundamental for the Scientific projects which are hosted by Cesmeo. The *Corpus Iuris Sanscriticum*, a Series on Social and Religious Law of India, South-East and Central Asia, founded by Oscar Botto. It is published under the scientific patronage of the Union Académique Internationale and Italian National Academic Union<sup>50</sup> The project is led by an Editorial Committee whose president is Irma Piovano. In the year 2000 the Series was awarded the prize "Ikuo Hirayama" by the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* of the *Institut de France*, Paris.

The Series publish yearly: critical editions of juridical texts with translation, translations of juridical texts hitherto untranslated; monographs on juridical topics with bibliography and notes, reproduction of rare manuscripts which are remarkable from an aesthetic point of view, with introductory remarks.

The Scientific Committee<sup>51</sup> has decided in a recent meeting to include in the Series also texts of other juridical traditions of the Greater India. This means that the Series will also include Buddhist texts dealing with legal practices. By now four Volumes have been published: 1. *Dakṣa-smṛti*, by Irma Piovano, with a foreword on the *Corpus Iuris Sanscriticum* by Oscar Botto; *Le Code népalais de 1853*, by Jean Fezas (only the transliterated text in two volumes); *Saṃvarta Tradition*, by K.V. Sarma and S.A.S. Sarma; *Sāṅkara-smṛti* by N.P. Unni; *The Boundaries of Hindu law, tradition, custom and politics in medieval Kerala*, by Donald R. Davis, Jr.; *The price of purity. The religious judge in 19<sup>th</sup> century Nepal, containing an edition and translation of the chapter on the Dharmadhikārin in two legal texts* by Axel Michaels. The volumes in preparation are: *The theory of Sources of Dharma. An Analysis of the Smṛtipāda of*

*Kumārila's Tantravārttika and Medhātithi's commentary to Manusmṛti II.6-15*, by Domenico Francavilla; *Texte, traduction, etude de la section dite Samacari du Kalpasūtra*, by Nalini Balbir; *Kalivarjya: forbidden customs in Medieval India*, by Agata Pellegrini; *Social Institutions in Ancient India*, by Irma Piovano.

Cesmeo houses also AIT, a scientific editorial Project, founded and directed by Oscar Botto, which publishes the yearly Journal *Indologica Taurinensia*, one of the most prestigious Indological Journals, *official* organ of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies, acknowledged as a "Journal of High Cultural Value" by the Italian *Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali* (30 volumes have been issued up to now).

At the Cesmeo has its seat the Italian Association of Sanskrit Studies (AISS), also founded by O. Botto who is now the Honorary President, joined by over 50 Italian members. It publishes the proceedings of the biennial Conference of Italian Sanskrit Studies.

Such an intense activity and these impressive scientific and editorial projects represent the future perspectives of Indological Studies in Turin. There are projects that for the exceptional commitments needed will require more and more the cooperation of foreign eminent scholars, as only a friendly, intense and effective cooperation will allow to realize them properly. Many Italian scholars are already involved, as the glorious tradition of Indological Studies and the path traced out by Gorresio and Vallauri, have been pursued by both Vallauri's pupils Carlo Della Casa and Oscar Botto and presently by their respective pupils who are teaching in the principal Italian Universities or making researches in University Centers. The most meaningful realities are represented by the current of the philological criticism applied to the different fields of the linguistics, Sanskrit religious literature, *kāvya*, Hindu law and Buddhist religion and philosophy which knows an intense and fruitful period of researches and studies.

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<sup>1</sup> These interests were cultivated at the Theological Faculty and only in 1580 a teaching of Hebrew language was included in the professorship of the Holy Scriptures.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. O.BOTTO, "Gli Studi di Orientalistica", in *L'Università di Torino, Profilo storico e istituzionale*, edited by Francesco Traniello, Torino, 1993, pp. 135-140.

<sup>3</sup> He was born in Piedmont at Castelnuovo Canavese in 1742.

<sup>4</sup> He was considered the pivot of all the Coptic studies of his century. He authored an excellent *Grammatica Linguae Coptae* and a *Lexicon Linguae Coptae*.

<sup>5</sup> A catalogue of this fund was published by A.Peyron at Leipzig in 1820.

<sup>6</sup> He was born at Barbania Canavese. He had been general consul of France in Egypt.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. A. BONGIOANNI - R. GRAZZI, *Torino, l'Egitto e l'Oriente - fra storia e leggenda*, Torino, 1994; S. CURTO, *Storia del Museo Egizio di Torino*, Torino, 1976; ELVIRA D'AMICONE, "Itinerari egittologici italiani, la riscoperta dell'Antico Egitto, secoli XVIII-

- XIX", in *La conoscenza dell'Asia e dell'Africa in Italia nei secoli XVIII e XIX*, ed. Ugo Marrazzi, vol. III, tome II, Napoli 1989, pp. 831-844; GIOVANNA LOMBARDO, "L'opera di Bernardino Drovetti e la sua importanza per la formazione del Museo Egizio di Torino e per gli studi egittologici", in *La conoscenza...* quoted, vol. III, tome I, Napoli, 1989, pp. 91-98.
- <sup>8</sup> Cf. O.BOTTO, "Early Scholars of Asia and Buddhism in Connection with Oriental Studies in Italy", in *Living a life in accord with dhamma: papers in honor of professor Jean Boisselier on his eightieth birthday*, editors: Natasha Eilenberg, M. C. Subhadradis Diskul, Robert L. Brown; preface: princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Bangkok, Silpakorn University, 1997, pp.95-104.
- <sup>9</sup> The first knowledge of Tibet in Europe dates back to 1624 when the Jesuit Antonio D'Andrade from Portugal reached the capital of West Tibet. Cf. O.BOTTO, "Early Scholars...", quoted, p.95.
- <sup>10</sup> Cf. G. TUCCI, "Le missioni cattoliche e il Tibet", in *Le Missioni Cattoliche e la Cultura dell'Oriente*, Roma, 1943, pp. 224-225; A. DE GUBERNATIS, *Matériaux pour servir à l'Histoire des Etudes Orientales en Italie* (Paris-Florence-Rome-Turin 1876), pp.367-373; G. TOSCANO, "Contributo del Desideri alla conoscenza dell'Asia nel sec. XVIII", in *La conoscenza ...* quoted, vol. I, tome I, Napoli 1984, pp. 295-299.
- <sup>11</sup> He wrote the *Alphabetum brahmanicum seu indostanum universitatis Kasi*, published by Propaganda Fide on 1771, repr. on 1787 and compiled the *Alphabetum Tanguticum* which served as a basis for the *Alphabetum Tibetanum* of A. Giorgi.
- <sup>12</sup> F. SASSETTI, *Lettere Indiane*, edited by A. Benedetti (Torino 1942; repr. *ibid.* 1961).
- <sup>13</sup> Author of a collection of letters, *Selectarum epistolarum ex India libri quattuor (Venezia 1588) and Historiarum indicarum, libri XVI* (Venezia, 1589, and Bergamo, 1590).
- <sup>14</sup> His most famous work is the treatise *De Brachmanum Theologia*. About R. de' Nobili, see W. CALAND, "Roberto de' Nobili and the Sanskrit Language and Literature", in *Acta Orientalia* III (1904), p. 38 ff.
- <sup>15</sup> Among these the Venetian travellers Angelo Legrenzi, Giovanni Borghesi and the missionary Gemignano da Sant'Ottavio, who authored translations and several works on linguistic.
- <sup>16</sup> "Some people state that the whole world is nothing but a mere appearance, neither human beings nor animals, nor other beings or elements do exist: everything is only a dream and an appearance of reality".
- <sup>17</sup> His name was Antonio Murchio, (1626-1673). On his stay from 1656 to 1658 in the Malabar and his activity, cf. A. DI SAN FILIPPO, *Biografia dei viaggiatori italiani*, Roma, 1882, p. 423 ff. and P. FR. A.S. TERESIA *Bio-Bibliographia Missionaria Ordinis Carmelitarum Discalceatorum* (1584-1940), vol. I, Roma, 1940, p. 125, n. 359.
- <sup>18</sup> A. FAUDELLA, *Descrizione dell'India secondo Giovambattista Maoletti*, drawn from the "Itinerario" Italia-Cina (1702-1705), in "Memorie dell'Accademia delle Scienze di Torino," Series 4a, n.30 (Torino, 1974).
- <sup>19</sup> Cf. L.BESSE, *Father Beschi of the Society of Jesus. His Times and his Writings*, Trichinopoly, 1918; J.C. HOUPERT, *Constantinus Beschi S.J. Missionary and Scholar* (1680-1747), Trichinopoly, 1925.

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- <sup>20</sup> Among these works also a poem, a kind of *Rāmāyaṇa* in 36 cantos and 14.000 verses. He compiled also an excellent Tamil grammar and a Tamil-Latin dictionary.
- <sup>21</sup> He is the author of an *Alphabetum Samscrdamicum (litteris granthamicis cum latina pronunciatione earum)* supplemented by a Malabaric lexicon and of a work on Hinduism criticized by Charpentier who considered it a questionable translation of a Fenicio's work. Cf. L. AMBRUZZI, "Il contributo dei missionari cattolici alla conoscenza delle religioni, dei costumi e della geografia dell'India (dalla seconda metà del '500 alla metà del secolo XVIII)", in *Le Missioni Cattoliche ...* quoted, pp. 276-277.
- <sup>22</sup> He compiled an *Alphabetum Barmanum seu Bomanum* to which he included later (1776) the translation of the *Kammuva (Kammavaca)*. Copies of this text are kept at the Library of Propaganda Fide and at the Museo Borgiano of Velletri. It was the Cardinal Stefano Borgia who had entrusted Carpani of the translation.
- <sup>23</sup> His name was Pietro Girolamo Agresti from Castel Colonna where he was born in 1726. He lived in India from 1757 to 1773 from which he brought to Rome a large amount of textual material. Cf. *Gli scritti del padre Marco della Tomba*, collected, arranged and illustrated by A. De Gubernatis, Firenze 1878; L. PETECH, "I Missionari Italiani nel Tibet e nel Nepal" in *Il Nuovo Ramusio*, ed. by G. Tucci, Roma 1950-73, vol. II, part I; C. SILVI ANTONINI, "Della Piccola descrizione dell'India Orientale o Industan di Marco della Tomba", in *La conoscenza ...* quoted, vol. I, Tomo I, Napoli, 1984, pp. 397-409.
- <sup>24</sup> He was born in Hof am Leithaberge (Austria) as Filippo Wessdin (1748-1806) and lived in Malabar from 1776 to 1790.
- <sup>25</sup> It was published in three volumes, Roma, 1796 and translated into German and French.
- <sup>26</sup> For a complete bibliography Cf. L. WETZL, *Der osterreichische Karmelit Paulinus a S. Bartholomeo*, Wien 1926, and *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, vol. IX, 1952, p. 704.
- <sup>27</sup> The chair was named Studi Indo-Germanici, corrected by Gorresio himself in "Ariopelasgici", the first teaching of Indological disciplines in Italy.
- <sup>28</sup> Cf. I. PIOVANO, *Gaspare Gorresio*, Collana di Biografie e Saggi" (Publications of *Indologica Taurinensia*), n. 1, Torino 1983, English version in *Prof. Gaspare Gorresio's Prefaces to the Sanskrit (Ramayana's) Text*, Madras, Indian Heritage Trust, 1986, pp. XV-XXIV, reprinted in *Newsletter of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies*, ed. by S. Lienhard, n. 6 (1999), pp. 19-30; "Gorresio Gaspare", in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 58, Roma, Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002, pp. 93-96.
- <sup>29</sup> The *Galleria Sabauda* (opened in 1832), the *Accademia di Belle Arti* (1833), the *Deputazione Subalpina di Storia Patria*, the *Accademia di Medicina* (1836), the *Armeria Reale* (1837), while the *Museo Egizio* and the *Biblioteca Reale* had a worthy arrangement.
- <sup>30</sup> The volumes including the Sanskrit text (1980-1982) and a volume (1986) that contained Gorresio's introductions, translated in English by O. Botto, were published by the Indian Heritage Trust.
- <sup>31</sup> L. Bravi, *Gaspare Gorresio e la sua traduzione del Rāmāyaṇa*, *Storia Amministrativa con documenti inediti*, in *Bollettino Storico-Bibliografico Subalpino*, LXVII (1969), pp. 141-264.

- <sup>32</sup> Paolo Emilio Pavolini: *Una suktavali giainica anonima*, Torino, 1901. *Mahābhārata : episodi scelti e tradotti, collegati col racconto dell'intero poema*, Milano, 1902. *Atharva-Veda*, Milano, 1907.
- <sup>33</sup> Carlo Formichi: *Aśvaghōṣa: poeta del buddhismo*, Bari, 1912, *Apologia del buddhismo*, Roma, 1923. *I primi principi della politica secondo Kamandaki*, Roma, 1925. *Sette saggi indiani*, Bologna, 1938.
- <sup>34</sup> Giuseppe Tucci, author of over 250 works, among them: *Indo-Tibetica*, 4 vols., Roma, 1932-41. *Tibetan painted scrolls*, Roma 1948 (repr. 1980). *Minor Buddhist texts*, 2 vols., Roma, 1958, 1971, Indian repr. Delhi, 1986. *Il Libro Tibetano dei Morti*, Torino 1975, repr. 2004.
- <sup>35</sup> Other scholars of Indology, a little less renowned, are Ambrogio Ballini, Ferdinando Belloni Filippi, Ermenegildo La Terza, Angelo Maria Pizzagalli, Valentino Papesso, Vittorio Bettei and Giuseppe De Lorenzo.
- <sup>36</sup> From a lecture held by Irma Piovano at a Seminar on "Rabindranath Tagore: India Renaissance Personality" organized by Italia-India Association for Friendship and Cooperation at Italian Parliament in Rome (September 26th, 2005).
- <sup>37</sup> Cf. O.Botto, "Appunti per una storia degli studi buddhisti in Italia", in *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, ed. G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti, Roma, Is.M.E.O., 1985 (S.O.R. LVI, 1), pp. 175-189, in part.177-178.
- <sup>38</sup> Cf. O.Botto, "Appunti...", quoted, p. 181.
- <sup>39</sup> Now Is.I.A.O. - Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente.
- <sup>40</sup> Cf. O.Botto, "Appunti...", quoted, p. 186-188.
- <sup>41</sup> Some works of Angelo Maria Pizzagalli: *Elementi di grammatica sanscrita: con esercizi, crestomazia e glossario*, Milano, repr. 1981. *Il Buddhismo e l'anima giapponese*, 1942. *Origini del Buddhismo*, Roma, 1914. *La medicina e le origini della scienza indiana*, Milano, 1935. *La scienza indiana e il suo valore*, Milano, 1932. *Filosofia indiana*, Pavia, 1913.
- <sup>42</sup> Some works of Raniero Gnoli: Pundarika, *La realizzazione della conoscenza del supremo immoto*, Roma, 1997. *Bhagavadgita : il canto del beato*, Milano, 2001. Abhinavagupta, *Essenza dei Tantra*, Milano, 1990. *La civiltà indiana*, Torino, 1973. Aryasura, *La ghirlanda delle nascite: le vite anteriori del Buddha*, Milano, 1991. Abhinavagupta, *Il commento di Abhinavagupta alla Paratrimśika: traduzione e testo*, Roma, 1985. *Alcune tecniche yoga nelle scuole saiva*, Roma, 1956. *Testi buddhisti in sanscrito*, Torino, 1983.
- <sup>43</sup> Some works of Corrado Pensa: *La tranquilla passione: saggi sulla meditazione buddhista di consapevolezza*, Roma, 1994. Isvarakṛṣṇa - *Samkhyakarika, con il commento di Gaudapada*. Patanjali, *Gli aforismi sullo yoga, con il commento di Vyasa*. Torino - 1968. *L' intelligenza spirituale: saggi sulla pratica del Dharma* - Roma - [2002] Vimuktisena - *L'Abhisamayalamkaravṛtti di Arya-Vimuktisena: primo abhisamaya: testo e note critiche*.
- <sup>44</sup> Some works of Mario Vallauri: Vidyanāyana - *Saggio di versione del madhavanidāna*, Firenze, 1915. *La terapeutica indiana: saggi sulla medicina indiana*, Roma, 1924. *L' antica medicina indiana*, Milano Roma, 1941. *Il teatro*, Siracusa, 1936. *L' antica tossicologia indiana*, Siena, 1926. *L' ippiatria indiana*, Siena, 1921. *Intorno alle*

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*recensioni del Ramayana: note e saggi comparativi sulle recensioni B e C*, Firenze, 1912. *Sommari dello Skandapurana*, Firenze, 1935. *Saggi ramaici*, Firenze, 1914. *Lineamenti e caratteristiche dell'antico diritto indiano*, Milano, 1952.

<sup>45</sup> For a complete bio-bibliography cfr. "Professor Oscar Botto Bio-data", in *Lex et litterae: studies in honour of professor Oscar Botto*, ed. by Siegfried Lienhard and Irma Piovano, Torino, 1997, XVII-XX, and Irma Piovano, "Bibliography of Professor Oscar Botto Works", *ibidem*, pp. XXI-XXXIX,

<sup>46</sup> A non profit institution founded by the University of Turin, the Piedmontese Region and Province, the Municipality of Turin.

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<sup>48</sup> In particular, the Italian professors: Mario Bussagli, Maurizio Taddei, Erberto Lo Bue, Pierfrancesco Callieri, Mario Piantelli, Giovanni Verardi, the French famous experts in this field: Jean Boisselier, André Bureau, Madeleine Giteau; the outstanding specialists Richard Gombrich, Siegfried Lienhard, Subhadradis Diskul and Ananda Guruge, who have cooperated with the Cesmeo on the occasion of many international events.

<sup>49</sup> Donations of books have been made also by ISMEO (now ISIAO), Japan Foundation, Thai Embassy, and some private citizens.

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