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Research Notes

The Archive of the History of Psychology at the University of Rome, Sapienza*

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The History of Psychology Archive at the University of Rome, Sapienza was founded in 2008 in the Department of Dynamic and Clinical Psychology by the Faculty of Medicine and Psychology (website: <http://www.archiviodistoria.psicologia.uniroma1.it/>). The creation of the archive, promoted by Professor Giovanni Pietro

Lombardo, arose out of research on the origin and development of psychological sciences in Italy, conducted by a Roman team.¹ The archive is intended as a physical and virtual documentation of the historical progress of Italian psychology, useful for research, education, and scientific popularization. To this end, the archive proposed to identify, collect, preserve, and make available online archival works and published articles: the correspondence of the major Italian psychologists of the past two centuries, the old historical journals of psychology and related sciences, the most important contributions of Italian psychology historiography, pictures and movies of important events, and other material that documents the development of the discipline.

The archive aspires to become an indispensable tool to (a) understand the currents, schools, and research traditions that have marked the path of Italian psychology, (b) focus on issues of general and applied psychology developed in each university, (c) identify experimental and clinical-differential methodologies specific to each lab, (d) reconstruct the genesis and consolidation of psychology institutions and, ultimately, (e) write a “story,” set according to the most recent historiographical criteria. This story may be a *multifactorial history* (which draws a plot intertwining “internal” technical and scientific factors with “external” political-social factors; Cimino & Dazzi, 2003), or a *histoire croisée* (which takes into account the intersection of different research traditions, i.e., the mutual influence of the “human sciences”—psychology, anthropology, pedagogy, sociology, criminology, and psychiatry—which were born and developed simultaneously with psychology; Cimino & Lombardo, 2014), or a *history of hybridizations* (attending the way in which knowledge, research, and psychological applications developed in one country are transmitted to another country, where they influence research and give origin to something new and different that then can emigrate for further hybridization; Pickren, 2009, 2010).

Notes on the History of Italian Psychology

The archive is designed according to scholarship on the history of Italian psychology from the past two decades (Cimino & Dazzi, 2003; Ceccarelli, Cimino, & Foschi, 2010),

which have drawn a new picture of the route taken by the discipline in the second half of the 19th century (Cimino & Dazzi, 1998; Cimino, 2006; Dazzi & Lombardo, 2011; Cimino & Foschi, 2012). These studies have analyzed the various stages of development of Italian psychology, starting from the work of the early pioneering authors, such as Roberto Ardigò (a positivist philosopher who established the epistemological foundations for making psychology a science, giving it scientific stature and defining its object of study, methods, and borders with philosophy and physiology; Büttemeyer, 2011); Giuseppe Sergi (an anthropologist at the University of Rome, who set up psychology studies according to a psychophysiological perspective and established an experimental psychology laboratory in 1889; Mucciarelli, 1987); and Gabriele Buccola (who started experimental research in a broad and systematic way, in particular with his investigations on RTs in both normal individuals and the mentally ill; Degni, Foschi, & Lombardo, 2007; Degni, 2013).

Other scientists from various backgrounds joined these early pioneers in promoting the “scientific” study of mental phenomena, including the neurophysiologist Luigi Luciani, the anthropologist Cesare Lombroso—the latter founder of criminal anthropology with his famous theory of “born” criminal (Baima Bollone, 2009; Gibson, 2002)—and psychiatrists Augusto Tamburini, who established the first Italian laboratory of experimental psychology in 1879 in the town of Reggio Emilia (Bongiorno, 2002), and Enrico Morselli, director of the *Rivista di Filosofia Scientifica* [Journal of Scientific Philosophy], whose “critical positivism” contributed significantly to the birth and affirmation in Italy of the new scientific psychology (Bartolucci & Lombardo, 2012).

Between the 19th and 20th centuries, psychological science was also consolidated on an institutional level and in 1905 some important events occurred simultaneously: the organization in Rome of the 5th International Congress of Psychology, the establishment of the first three chairs

¹ This group gathered around Professors Nino Dazzi, Guido Cimino, and Giovanni Pietro Lombardo is composed of a first generation of young researchers, including Renato Foschi, Silvia Degni, Elisabetta Cicciola, and Antonino Trizzino and a second generation of PhD students, including Chiara Bartolucci, Mariagrazia Proietto, and Giorgia Morgese.

of experimental psychology at the universities of Rome, Turin, and Naples, and the founding of the *Rivista di Psicologia* [Journal of Psychology] by Giulio Cesare Ferrari, the first Italian periodical specifically aimed at psychological studies. These coincidental events, then, have led historians to consider the year 1905 as the birth of scientific psychology in Italy (Ceccarelli, 2010).

In the first decades of the 20th century, the discipline continued to develop in a number of universities. In Rome, under the leadership of Giuseppe Sergi, two scholars worked and distinguished themselves: the psychiatrist and psychologist Sante De Sanctis who published authoritative studies of general and applied psychology as well as of child neuropsychiatry and psychophysiology of dreams and sleep (Cimino & Lombardo, 2004; Ferreri, 2008; Lombardo & Foschi, 2008; Foschi, Lombardo, & Morgese, 2015); and the child psychologist Maria Montessori who became known internationally for her “Montessori method” (Babini, 2000; Foschi, 2008). In Turin, Federico Kiesow, a student of Wundt, continued to carry out considerable research on the senses (especially taste; Sinatra, 2000). A strong boost in favor of experimental psychology came from Florence philosopher Francesco De Sarlo, founder in 1903 of a laboratory at the University of Florence and a supporter of act psychology proposed by Brentano (Albertazzi, Cimino, & Gori-Savellini, 1999; Guarnieri, 2012; Sava, 2000). In 1919, Vittorio Benussi, forerunner of Gestalt psychology and author of important research on perception and optical illusions, was named the chair in Padua (Antonelli, 1996; Trizzino, 2008). In 1927, he was succeeded in the management of the laboratory by Cesare Musatti (but for racial reasons not in the chair), the leader in Italy of psychology of form and, with Marco Levi-Bianchini and Edoardo Weiss, also of psychoanalysis (David, 1990; Reichmann, 1996). Finally, in Milan, Agostino Gemelli was founder of the chair and the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology at the Catholic University (Foschi, Giannone, & Giuliani, 2013).

Since the 30s, then, and also because of a certain distrust of psychology by fascists, Italian psychology went through a period of difficulty and, according to some historians, of crisis (as evidenced by the survival of only two university chairs), developing mostly psychotechnic research and neglecting more general laboratory research (Lombardo, 2014; Proietto & Lom-

bardo, 2015). Only after World War II did psychology in Italy begin to grow again, especially with the support of Gemelli, Musatti, Adriano Ossicini, Ernesto Valentini, and Gaetano Kanizsa. In 1971, the first two degree courses in psychology opened at the universities of Rome and Padua, and in 1989 the profession of psychologist was legally defined.

To aid the historical reconstruction of Italian psychology some conservation initiatives of bibliographic, archival, and instrumental heritage have followed, such as the creation of a Laboratory and Museum of the History of Psychology at the University of Bari (Sinatra, 2006; <http://www.cismus.uniba.it/laspa.htm>), a historical archive of Italian psychology (ASPI) at the University of Milano-Bicocca (<http://www.aspi.unimib.it/>), and the archive at the University of Rome Sapienza, presented here.

Structure, Content, and Perspective of the Archive

The online archive is divided into five sections for ease of access. Digital copies of major monographs of some of the most important Italian psychologists active mentioned in the previous historical note are available in the *Works* section (*Opere*), preceded by a bio-bibliographical note; also accessible are all the articles of “historical” magazines in the *Periodicals* section (*Periodici*). One can view period videos and interviews of illustrious professors emeritus in the *Virtual Museum* section (*Museo virtuale*), in addition to recordings of seminars and deeper analyses by qualified historians. In the *Scientific Contributions* section (*Contributi scientifici*) are international articles on the history of Italian psychology. The *Repositories and Links* section (*Fondi e Link*) includes, finally, the archive’s repositories and the correspondences of the protagonists of the discipline. In particular, this section presently hosts the Sante De Sanctis Repository, comprising approximately 800 letters addressed to De Sanctis from numerous Italian scholars and leading researchers from many European and American countries. The repository was created several years ago when the heirs of De Sanctis entrusted Lombardo with the study and care of documents preserved by the family. The section also contains information, with related images, of the tools used in experimental research in the psy-

chology laboratory of the Institute of Psychology of the University of Rome (1908–1980).

The Sapienza archive is a work in progress and its expansion plan provides for (a) the acquisition—and their addition to the site—of new, unpublished documents regarding the history of Italian psychology; (b) putting the major texts and articles of the protagonists of this story online; (c) the selection of the most significant contributions of the historiography (in particular those of the authors of the “Roman School”); (d) a collection of stories about the past of the discipline through interviews with prominent scholars; and (e) the setting up of virtual connections with other archives, institutes, and Italian and foreign museums to facilitate the dissemination of Italian historical research and its comparison with the international research.

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