

INTRODUCTION

The Italian Section of the Institute of Specialized and Intercultural Communication organises seminars, meetings and conferences every year, attended by outstanding Italian and Polish researchers and specialists of the Italian language and culture from different European countries and the countries of the world. The year 2014 was a year particularly rich in events: after the annual international translation conference held at the Institute in the spring, we decided to celebrate the 140th anniversary of the death of Niccolò Tommaseo. We also wanted to remind the role of *Risorgimento* in the history of the Polish and Italian nations, including their political, cultural and literary relations, with the Dalmatian being its leading representative. Hence the motto of the conference: «*Uscir di se medesimo*», or «*Reaching out beyond oneself*», the famous saying of Tommaseo.

The international conference under the auspices of the Italian Embassy in Warsaw “*Uscir di se medesimo*” *Identità italiana e contatti italo-polacchi dal Risorgimento alla Grande Guerra* took place on 30 and 31 May 2014 at the Institute of Specialized and Intercultural Communication. It was addressed to a wide audience interested in the Italian-Polish relations from Risorgimento to World War I, as well as the role of history and literature in *establishing the Italian nation*, which is a reference to the memorable call to the rulers uttered by Massimo d’Azeglio. Moreover, one of the sessions was dedicated to women’s literature that is of social and political nature and its contribution in shaping the national identity and the modern society.

His Excellency Ambassador of Italy, Mr Riccardo Guariglia, who had left Warsaw before the end of his term of office, leaving an empty space behind him, was glad to join the project, offering the patronage of the Embassy to this very important event, for which we are very grateful.

The conference was opened by our distinguished guests: the Italian Ambassador, Riccardo Guariglia, the Director of the Italian Culture Institute, dr Paola Ciccolella; and the Director of the Institute of Specialized and Intercultural Communication, prof. dr hab. Sambor Grucza. The participants of our conference mostly represented European universities (“La Sapienza”, “Tor Vergata” and “LUMSA” in Rome, Sorbonne in Paris, universities in Verona, Macerata, Amsterdam, Leuven, Catania, Messina, Turin, and Warsaw); the conference was also attended by professor Pietro Frassica with the Princeton University.

Authors of the papers published in this volume of post-conference publication touched upon some important issues related to the Polish-Italian relations and contacts

in that period of history that was of immense significance for both nations, referring to the topic of the conference. Niccolò Tommaseo is frequently mentioned as a common theme of both aspects of the scientific debate. In the paper by Silvia Tatti discussing the new interpretations of the Italian political emigration in the *Risorgimento* period, the Dalmatian is frequently mentioned (in the context of his Parisian period), particularly when the author mentions the contacts between the Italian and Polish political exiles at the time. Similarly, Laura Fournier-Finocchiaro refers to Tommaseo in her paper, which mostly focuses on the contacts between Giuseppe Mazzini with Adam Mickiewicz and other Great Emigration representatives; she also remembers to mention the role played by Towiański, the mystic.

The famous Tommaseo scholar, Fabio Danelon, this time follows the direction that does not cross paths with the Dalmatian and analyses the patriotic aspects of the works by Foscolo, Leopardi and Manzoni from different points of view. An interesting point of view of identity leads to an unique comparison. In a truly ingenious manner, Danelon discusses the role of ‘the great trio’ in forming the national and cultural identity by the great works of the Italian Romanticism writers. Tommaseo returns in the paper by Laura Melosi, who emphasizes the interest the Italians had in Poland in the 1830s, based on the publications found in the political-literary *Antologia* magazine run by Tommaseo.

The interest of the Italian intelligentsia in the ‘Polish matter’ is the subject of analyses presented in the volume entitled “*L’Italia per la ricostituzione della Polonia: un Referendum del 1915*” conducted by Marina Ciccarini. The volume, published by the «L’Eloquenza» magazine, discusses the complex social and political situation in Poland from the European perspective.

Continuing the deliberations about the same period of history, an interesting analysis of the connection between the Risorgimento traditions and the participation of Italy in World War I can be found in the paper by Massimo Baioni, who uses the writings of soldiers (letters and memoirs) to prove that the memory of the Risorgimento period was used by the propaganda to incite patriotic reasons. However, the confrontation with the brutal reality of war causes disappointment, which is clearly visible in the letters and memoirs written by soldiers.

The historical part of the conference was concluded with a thorough and insightful review of the scholars analysing Italian-Polish relations, such as Lewak, Kalikst Morawski, and others, who contributed significantly to the spreading of mutual knowledge in both nations. Analysis of these issues by Pasquale Fornaro extends the horizons of knowledge by the newly understood issues of the Polish contribution in describing the history of *Risorgimento*. It is confirmed by the works on the famous “Legion” by Adam Mickiewicz. The historians from Messina undertook this massive task and discussed the results during our conference, for which we are very grateful.

The literary part of the conference was opened by the paper by Dario Prola, a Polish studies specialist and comparative analyst, who analyses the contacts of the

Arrigo Boito, a poet belonging to the artistic Scapigliatura current, whose mother was Polish, with Poland and some Polish representatives of culture, including Józef Ignacy Kraszewski and Ignacy Paderewski. Dario Prola analyses the significance of his translations of *Mazurek Dąbrowskiego* and also probably of *Pan Tadeusz* into Italian, interestingly, not from Polish, but from French.

Another paper authored by Rita Verdirame refers to the multi-cultural writer Violet Paget (writing under the pen-name: Vernon Lee), whose father was a Polish exile. Her writing exhibits the reflections on the national identity, the creative thoughts connecting Poland and Italy, the country that the writer chose to be her adoptive homeland. In the next paper Małgorzata Trzeciak discusses the influence of the works by Leopardi on certain poems by Maria Konopnicka – the ones inspired by her Italian journey and the awe of the writer when confronted with Italian culture and literature. As she crosses into the “Italian mind-space”, her writing becomes a bridge between two literary realities and takes an intimate and singular tone. Still in the feminist writer sphere, Giulia Cilloni has provided a thorough description of the person and the output of Anna Zuccari Radius (pen-name: Neera), who is a perfect example of the “New Woman” concept in the united Italy. In her Trilogy, Neera treats the female matter in a brave and modern manner thanks to using the verismo concept, which sees the writer as an impersonal observer.

The volume is concluded by the paper by Lia Flavia Guzzetta, which offers a bridge to the considerations of the national identity and the connection between the language, history, culture, tradition and the love of the homeland. The author thoroughly analyses the poem *Myśląc ojczyzna* written by Wojtyła under the pen-name Stanisław Andrzej Gruda, in which the idea of homeland contains the elements of anthropology, history, culture, and language.

Our conference, held under the motto in the form of a quote of Niccolò Tommaseo, made it possible to hold an important debate on the issues raised by the Dalmatian in his writing: the relationship between the history and the literature, the Italian matter, multi-culturalism, particular literary sensitivity of women, tolerance, cultural closeness over the ages between ‘brotherly nations’, which is what he called Poland and Italy in his well-known book *Dell’Italia*. It is a significant contribution of historical importance, including the current Italian-Polish relations. We would like to thank all persons who accepted our invitation. We also need to thank Dario Prola and Piotr Podemski for their assistance in the final stages of editing this volume.

On this occasion we would like to thank the editorial team of «Kwartalnik Neofilologiczny», which accepts the papers from our conferences every year. We would like to extend our gratitude to professor Franciszek Grucza, Editor-in-Chief, hoping for the future and, as always, fruitful cooperation.

Anna Tylusińska-Kowalska
Dominika Michalak