School reforms and university transformations and their function in Italy from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries

Fabio Pruneri a & Angelo Bianchi b

a Università degli Studi di Sassari, Dipartimento di Economia Istituzioni e Società, Sassari, Italy
b Università Cattolica S. Cuore, Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche, Milano, Italy

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SOURCES AND INTERPRETATIONS

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Fabio Pruneri¹ and Angelo Bianchi²*

¹Università degli Studi di Sassari, Dipartimento di Economia Istituzioni e Società, Sassari, Italy; ²Università Cattolica S. Cuore, Dipartimento di Scienze Storiche, Milano, Italy

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The twofold objective of this paper is to communicate the findings and the methodology employed by a group of Italian researchers who have spent more than six years constructing an atlas of education in the ancient Italian states from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, and to compare the quantitative observations reported in an earlier publication on this research project with a qualitative analysis of one particular aspect: changes in secondary and university education and their systemic relationship introduced after the French Revolution in the Kingdom. In Part 1 we discuss the methodology and its achievements in mapping the distribution of schooling, drawing on two areas in northern Italy; Part 2 reviews the transformations in post-primary education, as evidenced in this research; Part 3 considers the fundamental changes in organisation and roles of the universities over this period, with particular attention to the interplay of tradition and innovation. In conclusion this paper reviews the contribution of this major research project to understandings and interpretations of schools and universities and their relationship in this historic period of change.

Keywords: education systems; Italy in the Napoleonic era; universities and schools; methodology; cartographic research

Introduction

There is a twofold objective in this paper: on the one hand to communicate the findings and the methodology employed by a group of Italian researchers working for more than six years to construct an atlas of education in the ancient Italian states from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century (Per un atlante storico dell’istruzione maschile e femminile dall’età delle riforme al 1859. Un’analisi comparata tra gli antichi stati italiani);³ on the other hand, we aim to compare the quantitative observations reported in an earlier publication on this research project: L’istruzione in Italia

*Corresponding author. Email: angelo.bianchi@unicatt.it
¹F. Pruneri, parts 1 and 2.
²A. Bianchi, part 3.
³The first outputs of the research resulted in two distinct volumes, both edited by Angelo Bianchi, in the first L’istruzione in Italia tra Sette e Ottocento. Lombardia–Veneto–Umbria, I Studi (Brescia: La Scuola, 2007) are to be found the essays which are attached to the Atlas of Education (Atlante) published in the second volume with the title Le Carte Storiche (Brescia: La Scuola, 2007). The research group hopes to activate a section which can be consulted online, but which for the moment has only reserved access.
tra Sette e Ottocento. Lombardia–Veneto–Umbria (Education in Italy in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries. Lombardy–Veneto–Umbria) with a qualitative analysis of one particular aspect: the changes in secondary and university education, and the systemic relations between them, introduced after the French Revolution in the Kingdom.\(^4\) The importance of this research becomes apparent if we bear in mind that northern Italy was overwhelmed, during the years under analysis, by particularly significant historical events, events which affected the whole re-configuration of the secondary and university education system to a more modern basis. It was only after the reforms put into action by Maria Teresa of Austria (1717–1780), Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, and therefore also of the Duchy of Milan (which, following the Spanish War of Succession, had passed in 1714 to the Austrians), that a complete reorganisation of primary education and boarding schools was carried out. However, it required the suppression of religious orders, republican and Napoleonic legislation and the subsequent era of the Restoration for the progressive nationalisation of schools to be completed. These changes took place by different means and within different structures in the three historical regions which were the subject of our major study (Lombardy, Veneto and Umbria). Nonetheless, certain similarities soon became evident throughout the Lombardy–Veneto areas, such as the formation of a disciplined and virtuous youth, a typical feature in the science of education in the early nineteenth century. It started at primary school and was conceived increasingly more as an instrumentum regni to achieve forms of control and coordination of secondary education and of the universities by the national authorities.

In this article, therefore, a case study will be presented – limited in time (end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries) and in its geographical area (northern Italy) – corresponding, though, to a structural policy which is common to many European countries: centralisation, scholastic territorialisation, potential linearity and a uniform cycle of studies.\(^5\) The implications of this scheme for the system of so-called secondary education are clear since in those years the State, amongst its most politically important functions, undertook that of public education, entailing councils, magistracies and ministries within an extensive bureaucratic machinery. The ‘centre’ also imposed, as we will see, prescribed courses to gain access to the professions, proposed the suppression and re-establishment of institutions on the basis of territorial planning, and set uniform didactic standards, homogenous pedagogic rules and compulsory curricula.

Through the creation of an atlas of education in modern times our research group aimed to distinguish itself from other similar research carried out, for example, in


France and Spain. The atlas, does not, in our case, constitute an appendix of historical research, but rather the starting point. It is, in fact, starting from the atlas that in the future themes, tracks and research hypotheses will be singled out and verified through new studies. We hope to be able to reconstruct the historical-social phenomena present on the maps, supported by images, but also to go beyond what is visible, that is, paying attention to the interaction between social, judicial and economic factors which often cannot be completely represented even if documented for small areas of territory or as subsequent snapshots taken in various periods. We have felt the need to fill a historiographic gap and set up a means capable of visualising, through graphs, charts and, above all, maps, ‘structural’ elements of national history such as, in our opinion, the spreading of literacy and, indirectly, the organisation of culture. There is a need to have at our disposal maps capable of allowing a comparison of past data, also useful for making us ponder the dissimilarity of the present, already perceived in the eighteenth century, but made difficult in Italy by the historical/institutional system and by the presence of administrative and religious units (the dioceses) constantly subject to variations.

Part 1: Research methodology

For a long time now, and not only in our country, scholars have pondered the need to prepare a highly developed means of examining the history of educational processes, so as to obtain a series of comparative elements which are capable of explaining the connections between various factors: for example, the relationship between education and development (Cipolla, Graff, Sanderson), the connections between an


9Carlo Maria Cipolla, Literacy and Development in the West (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969).

10Harvey J. Graff, Literacy and Social Development in the West (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

educational curriculum and professional activities (Ruggero, Savoie, Philippe Savoie, Les enseignants du secondaire. Le corps, le métier, les carrières. Textes officiels (Paris: INRP-Economica 2000).), the choice of attending a certain type of school (for example a classical or technical one) and the subsequent results coming from this choice in the formation of the elites, between the urban fabric and compulsory education (Houston, Siddle, Toscani, Attilio Bartoli Langeli, Xenio Toscani, Istruzione, alfabetismo, scrittura: saggi di storia dell’alfabetizzazione in Italia (sec. XV–XIX) (Milano: Franco Angeli, 1991).), the relationship between compulsory education and the spreading of bourgeois values (Furet and Ozouf, Reading and Writing: Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).), between women and literacy.

New computer technologies nowadays allow the collection of enormous amounts of data, which can then be correlated and examined with extreme precision and flexibility. Moreover, Global Positioning Systems, as never before, allow for the precise location of objects on geographical maps. And finally, the internet offers to all the possibility of using and interacting with such a rich and informative body of data.

The ‘challenge’ which guided all this work, involving various universities (Milan, Pavia, Perugia, Naples, Sassari) and over 50 researchers – between 2003–2005 and 2005–2007 – in a careful investigation of the sources, was to modify software essentially capable of collecting two types of information: the existence of schools during a certain period and their exact topographical location.

Using a standardised database each researcher was able to enter, online, all the information found in the state and parish archives, in libraries, in administrative lists, in surveys, censuses and bibliographic sources. The preparation of a database to enter all the data and satisfy all the needs of every user proved to be one of the most difficult aspects since, once a certain way of working had been adopted, it would have been extremely complicated to go back and change our previous choices. Our preference was to differentiate between two types of database for the reading of the data collected, one for information concerning the primary classes and one with reference to the secondary schools. This wide-ranging database was to include all the information concerning the date of origin and type of school, the subjects taught there, the type of staff and the quality of the teaching. Adopting this framework about 100,000 records were entered.

As far as the methodology is concerned it is fitting to highlight the difficulties that emerged, which in some cases constituted formidable obstacles exceptionally difficult to overcome. One of the most significant along the route towards a correct interpretation of the data came from the stratification and the differentiation of the administrative subdivisions of the various Italian States. Each had its own bureaucratic machinery, a controlling system of the territory, a precise nomenclature which

17Francois Furet and Jacques Ozouf, Reading and Writing: Literacy in France from Calvin to Jules Ferry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
19What is more, bear in mind that it is not easy to define the very concept of literacy teaching. On this subject refer to Peter Roberts, ‘Defining Literacy: Paradise, Nightmare or Red Herring?’, British Journal of Educational Studies 43, no. 4 (December 1995): 412–32.
described, hierarchically, the subdivision of the territory into small portions (‘districts’, ‘departments’, ‘intendancies’, ‘populations’). Furthermore, in its passage from the modern to the contemporary era the school system answered to both the civil and religious authorities. The borderline between the sources produced by the religious orders, parishes, dioceses and state inquiries compared with official censuses is noticeably variable. Suffice to say, the clergy continued to exercise a fundamental role in state education even after the process of secularisation was implemented by the State. In order to overcome these difficulties, a criterion to define a ‘lowest common denominator’ was used, for example, that of taking a census of a certain territorial area, possibly a limited one and therefore more easily investigable over a long period of time, independently of the nature of the producing subject (state or private). In other cases it was decided to keep a single year as a reference, a year which was particularly significant and which would initially focus the attention of various researchers. Lastly, there were a large number of individual scholars involved in the research, which, if on the one hand offered rich opportunities to exchange and compare experiences, on the other made the interpretation of the sources less homogeneous. Each collaborator, in fact, on the basis of his or her own sensitivity and experience, might be led to discard or to highlight data which others, subjectively, might consider either significant or quite superfluous. Finally we should not fail to mention that the construction of the atlas has brought into contact a complex series of subjects: historical, computer-technological, geographical, statistical, pedagogical and demographic.

Complex, too, was the cartographic portrayal of the historical records, that is, the scenarios for grouping the existing schools in a given period. To give a sample of the inferences that derive from a simple reading of the maps, here below we present three examples with reference to: (1) the distribution of boarding schools in cloistered monasteries in the city of Milan; (2) the network in Lombardy of ‘post-elementary chairs’ (terminology developed by the research team and explained below); (3) the presence of seminaries in the Lombardy–Veneto area.

**Convent boarding schools in Milan**

In Figure 1 and Figure 2 can be seen the urban fabric of Milan and the distribution of the girls’ convent boarding schools. Around the mid-eighteenth century it becomes extremely clear, as the years go by, that these types of educational institutes multiply and then decline in favour of non-denominational schools due to the abolition of religious orders after the French Revolution. The cartographic representation, at a first glance, permits us to draw attention not only to their presence but also to their absence, and thus provokes new investigations into the causes, and also into effects produced by the various levels of literacy.

**‘Post-elementary chairs’ in Lombardy**

In Figure 3 our so-called ‘cattedre post-elementari’ are highlighted; this is a convenient definition used by the research group to define the teaching of subjects beyond the basic skills of reading and writing, that is, basic Latin (*Limen grammaticum*) and the teaching of grammar, humanities and rhetoric. This map highlights a school network often unknown because it is not easily classifiable. It was an intricate complex of lay and religious institutions fostered not only by the local communities, but also
Figure 1. Distribution of girls’ convent boarding schools, Milan 1777.

Figure 2. Distribution of girls’ convent boarding schools, Milan 1814.
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by private or ecclesiastic legacies. As can be seen, there is a high concentration in some agricultural areas which highlights the role played by the ‘chairs’ in giving the rural middle class higher notions, in terms of both educational level and consequent social aspirations and status, previously offered only in grammar or boarding schools. The latter, in fact, were located in cities which could not be easily reached by the agricultural entrepreneurs and so they remained excluded, with grammar and boarding schools destined primarily for the noble classes.20

Figure 3. ‘Post-elementary chairs’ in the Lombard departments in the Kingdom of Italy (1805).

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20 *Cattedra* (‘chair’) carries three different, but related meanings. *Cattedre postelementari* is a convenient definition used by our research group to define classes or lessons given by paid teachers (*maestri mercenari*). The main subject taught was basic Latin (*limen*). *Limen* in Latin means ‘border’, beyond which lay a deeper knowledge of Latin that all members of the nobility had to acquire by attending *scuole di lingua latina*. Since well-to-do people living in the countryside could not attend the schools in large towns, they ‘enrolled’ their children with these private *cattedre*. After the last quarter of the eighteenth century, schools beyond *limen* were founded in towns and private teachers who worked in *cattedre postelementari* were forced to impose policies to control such teaching. It is important to note that a lot of *cattedre postelementari* were given to priests who could teach easily (and at a low fee) reading, writing and a little Latin. This kind of *cattedre* had no links with universities, but students wanting to attend universities could go first to *cattedre postelementari*. See also Part 2 and note 27 for further development of this feature.
Seminaries in Lombardy–Veneto
Lastly, in the following maps (Figure 4 and Figure 5), which refer to the presence of seminaries in the first half of the eighteenth century between Lombardy and Veneto, the ramification of a certain type of institute becomes evident. This institute was designed for the education of young men destined for an ecclesiastic career but was also attended by students who intended to follow professions or enter the civil service. As a matter of fact, the seminaries were an integration of the schools of the religious orders which expanded significantly both in numbers of students and in geographical spread, so much so as to trouble the Vienna government in the 1770s and 1780s. Measures were, therefore, introduced to limit the subjects taught within the secondary school curriculum and to force the aspiring clergymen of the Lombard dioceses to attend the theology courses held at the University of Pavia. In north-east Italy both the seminarists and the lay students, the so-called ‘externals’, were numerous. From 1796 many seminaries in the Lombardy area were suppressed, while, as can be seen in Figure 4, in Veneto they thrived. Last of all, Figure 5 shows how, with the Restoration both in the Lombard dioceses as well as in the Veneto ones, thanks to the support of the authorities, there was a significant expansion of the seminaries which had become real secondary school institutes, functionally present in every administrative centre.

Figure 4. Seminaries of the Cisalpine and the Veneto Austrian Republic (1800).

Figure 5. Seminaries of the Lombardy–Veneto Kingdom (1850).

These brief references to the maps in the atlas allow a more holistic approach to understanding the question of the university within a wider framework. The university degree may be viewed as the natural conclusion to an educational course initiated within a compact network of institutions oriented to the preparation of the cultured classes (such as in secondary schools and seminaries).

**Part 2: Post-primary education**

Having illustrated the methodology of our research, we can now highlight the implications as far as the history of the Italian university system and its relationship to the provision of schooling are concerned. Given the limited amount of space available in a single article, we will take only one case into consideration, that is, secondary education in the Lombardy Veneto area after the coming of the Napoleonic era.\(^22\)

Extensive studies in modern times of post-primary schooling have identified the significant presence of religious congregations of teachers, and not only Jesuits, who were very active in the education of the ruling classes. In many cities Barnabites,\(^23\) Piarists\(^24\) and Somascans\(^25\) settled, giving life to an efficient school system, as can be seen, made up of boarding schools, seminaries and ‘cattedre post-elementari’.

In his bull *Dominus, ac Redemptor noster* of 21 July 1773, Pope Clement XIV ordered the suppression of the Jesuit order and they were soon withdrawn from the boarding schools and substituted with teachers employed from year to year by Maria Teresa of Austria. With the ‘*Regolamento scolastico*’ (School regulation) of 1774...
the primary schools were organised and put under state control, making them compulsory from six to 12 years old and imposing uniformity in teaching methods. After primary school, the pupils could continue their studies in the grammar schools of Latin culture or in the schools of arithmetic and professional design or foreign languages (for those who had no intention of following classical studies). In classical studies, Italian, arithmetic, history and geography were introduced in addition to Latin, of course, which until then had been the only subject to be studied. As well as these subjects, philosophy, logic, metaphysics, experimental physics and geometry were taught. The teachers were chosen by competitive selection and to ensure the principle of making steady progress students were obliged to follow a step-by-step study plan. The creation of a secondary school system under the control of the government made it possible to define a clear separation between secondary schools and the university system.

The victories of Napoleon in Italy and the formation of provisional governments accelerated the reforms. The new political class proposed revolutionary school models inspired by the principles of uniformity and state teaching. In short, it was confirmed that all pupils resident in the city between the ages of 12 and 17 would have to attend a grammar school where they would study Italian, history, geography, mathematics and military gymnastic exercises. With the creation of the Cisalpine Republic in 1797 a constitutional paper was issued which foresaw the opening of public state schools for the people and which gave private citizens the right to open

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23 The male religious institute of the *Clerici Regulares Sancti Pauli*, founded by Antonio Maria Zaccaria (1502–1539), popularly known as the Barnabites, from the institute’s mother house at the Church of San Barnaba in Milan, is one of the oldest regular clergy orders in the history of the Church. Set up on the eve of the Council of Trent, on the wave of the ‘reforming’ movements of Christian life, it benefited from remarkably good fortune. The Barnabites dedicated themselves to the education of young people and took over from the Jesuits after the suppression of that confraternity; however, they too were struck by the processes of secularisation in the Napoleonic era.

24 The *Ordo Clericorum Regularium Pauperum Matris Dei Scholarum Piarum*, commonly known as the Piarists, was founded in the seventeenth century by Giuseppe Calasanzo (1557–1648). The order, dedicated to the apostleship of education, spread considerably thanks to the insight of pursuing the freedom from sin and ignorance of children and young men through the foundation of free schools for the common people.
educational institutes. However, many of these programmes remained nothing but projects due to lack of funds.

Data supplied by our *Atlante* (the atlas) demonstrate clearly how the scholastic system, with the proclamation of the Italian Republic on 25 January 1802, and the coming of moderate liberals, was sufficiently well constructed as a result of the existence of a multiplicity of educational institutions at all levels. It was a system which, at least in Northern Italy, and in particular in Lombardy, could easily compete with the most advanced European states. Education could be divided into three stages, primary, secondary and further, and to each of these a different administrative system was applied. The cost of the primary stage fell back on local authority funds, after the Jacobin phase when it had been considered a national expense. The middle stage was financially dependent on the departments and envisaged the existence of a grammar school in municipalities with more than 10,000 inhabitants and a secondary school in every provincial capital. The university system (universities, academies of fine arts and special schools), however, was entirely at the expense of the State.

Contrary to immediate appearances from this schematic presentation, the whole model for state education was not conceived as hierarchical and progressive. During the Austrian period all the preparatory institutes at the University of Pavia which had replaced the Jesuit boarding schools were known as grammar schools (*ginnasio*), while the secondary schools (*liceo*) would only gain clearer definition after 1807–1808 when they became the route for proceeding to the grammar school and then to continuing studies to university level. The grammar schools were, therefore, a type of secondary school but with a more limited number of subjects taught. On the other hand, the secondary schools, if the departments were in a situation to finance them (in provincial capitals), could maintain within their structure ‘chairs’ of subjects also present in the faculty of philosophy at a university.27 It could,

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25Founded by the Venetian nobleman Gerolamo Emiliani (1486–1537), the *Ordo Clericorum Regularium a Somascha*, known as Somascans, distinguished itself, in its early activities, by taking care of orphans and the destitute. Later, between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it specialised in teaching children from poor families. The order was involved in the subsequent periods of suppression between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries.


27Here we encounter a second meaning of *cattedre* (see note 22): after 1802 the route to university was not clearly defined. We have *ginnasio* (or alternatmatively *cattedre postelementari* as described earlier) and *liceo*. It was possible to open a *ginnasio* if there were four *cattedre*, in this case *cattedre* indicating specialist teachers of four subjects (humanistic letters, Italian and Latin rhetoric; analysis of ideas and moral philosophy; elements of geometry and algebra; elements of general and experimental physics). For a *liceo* six *cattedre* were required (for the four subjects just described together with architectural and figurative drawing, and natural history). In some cases secondary schools had the appearance of small universities because local authorities paid to have a good number of *cattedre*. These teachers were not ‘professors’ but every teacher had to teach just two hours per day in class. Some such teachers moved to universities but the government made every effort to distinguish between the *cattedre* of the *liceo* and university chairs. (A third meaning of *cattedre* is that familiar today, reflecting university disciplines.) Emanuele Pagano, ‘Ginnasi e licei (Lombardia e Veneto, 1802–1848)’, in *L’istruzione …. Lombardia–Veneto–Umbria*, ed. A. Bianchi, 269–302.
therefore, be said that they were a type of *minor* university, not in a position to give degrees, but in preparation for the higher faculties. Suffice it to say that in some provincial secondary schools there were even courses programmed in the faculties of medicine and law.

In brief, between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, already at the level of secondary education, the conditions for rationalising the school were set by removing it from private initiatives and progressively making it a State monopoly. Between 1805 and 1808 the policy of nationalisation developed further; secondary boarding schools were created, as a state and non-denominational alternative to the seminaries and religious boarding schools. The Napoleonic educational policy, with the intention of making education one of the most important items of its public spending, had to achieve its fulfilment with the proposal to integrate religious schools into the state school system, making attendance at the royal secondary schools de facto compulsory.

A decree of 15 November 1808 standardised the organisation of the teaching in secondary schools making them, in effect, a preparatory route, reduced to a mere two years, to be attended before enrolling at university. Shortly afterwards, the grammar schools were downgraded to a preparatory level and it was no longer possible to enrol in a secondary school without having a ‘licence’ that certified the possession of a grammar school certificate. In this way the students’ freedom of choice was severely reduced. At this point uniform and hierarchical control by the State of the education of the ruling classes was clearly taking shape.

A cartographic cross-section of this process is visible in two maps concerning the Veneto region. The first map (Figure 6), dated 1750, shows a flourishing of boarding schools and schools entrusted to the teaching orders: Somascans, Piarists, Jesuits and Barnabites, often spread over the territory, in competition with each other. Chances of survival of schools depended on various factors: availability of finance, religious traditions, social dynamics, the spontaneous outcome of centuries of cultural stratification without national control (one can identify, for example, the presence of many institutes in the city of Venice). In the second map (Figure 7), dated 1812, may be seen how the distribution of the grammar and secondary schools subsequently corresponded to precise administrative and territorial logic.

To conclude, the maps and the statistical part of the research take into account a situation with certain political connotations from the political trend adopted centrally, but also from the resistance of individual institutions in adapting to the new rules. It bears witness, that is, to the permanency of consolidated traditions and shows how, apart from the rigidity imposed by national standards, there were adjustments and flexibility. As the nineteenth century approached, the university system in Lombardy and Veneto was based on a more solid and uniform secondary school system. It was rationally distributed over the territory, but still marked by century-old traditions such as those which came from the religious orders that since the sixteenth century had worked to prepare the young for ecclesiastical, public and professional careers.

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28In this progression can be identified the beginnings of the modern *catena degli studi* (sequence of studies) discussed further below: (1) *ginnasio* (grammar school); (2) *liceo* (secondary school); (3) *facoltà universitaria* (university).
Figure 6. Secondary boarding schools and schools entrusted to the teaching orders in Venice 1750.

Figure 7. Distribution of the grammar and secondary schools in the Italian Kingdom 1812.
Part 3: Universities

Within the framework of the scholastic system in the Italian peninsula during the period of Napoleonic domination, as described earlier, the universities too underwent profound modification. Their role changed, both within the scholastic system into which they were progressively integrated until they formed, at least in the intentions and projects of reformers and governments, an integral part of the modern ‘catena degli studi’ (sequence of studies), as well as in the world of the so-called liberal professions where by contrast they acquired the monopoly of education and professional preparation.29 As will be better seen later, it was between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and thanks to the normative intervention of the Napoleonic legislation on professions, that the university consolidated its role as a body for the ‘scientific’ and theoretical preparation of future professionals, and it would extend its teaching activities not only to those aspiring to the more important professions (doctors and lawyers), but also to notaries, legal advisers, land surveyors, engineers – the so-called minor professions – who previously had prepared only through a practical apprenticeship. In this way a particular form of ‘professionalisation’ of the ancient ‘arts’ was being achieved that was founded, above all, on scientific and technical merit and on a cultural preparation of the professionals, and no longer on their class position which would have constituted one of the cardinal points of the new system of ‘bourgeois’ society.30

Similar transformations were initiated, in this same period, in other parts of Europe: for example in Germany, for the legal professions (lawyers, magistrates, notaries);31 in England for the medical professions, in France for engineers, teachers, lawyers and doctors.32

In the Italian peninsula, this profound transformation and this new role of the university were the fruit of two main, seemingly conflicting factors: the resolute

31Aldo Mazzacane and Cristina Vano, eds, Università e professioni giuridiche in Europa in età liberale (Napoli: Jovene, 1994).
intervention of the pro-French governments, during the republican period and – after the constitutional transformation – during the imperial period in the field of state and secondary education and the strong influence of the models of education of the Grande Nation. This intervention and this influence were strongly limited by the traditional fragmentation of Italian policies which in time resulted in a high number of universities, both big and small, each one jealous of its own prerogatives and with different methods of administrative and political organisation in the various territories into which Napoleonic Italy was divided.

In order to offer a clear analysis of this complex period, by means of our data, it is necessary to follow a certain chronological sequence of political events, supplying a picture of the distribution and organisation of the universities in the various states of the Italian peninsula.

Universities in Italy before Napoleon’s arrival

For a period of over 600 years, from the mid-twelfth century to the threshold of the nineteenth, a close network of universities was forming in Italy, which covered almost all the areas of the peninsula, and by the second half of the eighteenth century there were about 26 (Figure 8).

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33During the 20 years from the first Napoleonic campaign (1796) to the fall of the French Empire (1815), the states of the Italian peninsula were, in different ways, subjected to the control of the government in Paris: during the Republican period (1796–1804), through the action of the governments tied to French policies (‘the sister republics’); following the proclamation of the Empire, two wide-ranging Kingdoms were established on the peninsula: in the north-east the Italian Kingdom, with Milan as its capital and Napoleon I as its sovereign, governed by the viceroy Eugenio Beauharnais, stepson of the Emperor; and to the south, the Kingdom of Naples, at first entrusted to the Emperor’s brother, Giuseppe Bonaparte, and then, after his passing to the throne of Spain, to General Gioacchino Murat, Carolina Bonaparte’s husband and the Emperor’s brother-in-law. The western part of the peninsula from Piedmont and along the Tyrrhenian coast as far as Rome were progressively annexed to the Empire, coming to make up the so-called ‘reunited departments’. For these general aspects refer to Carlo Zaghi, L’Italia di Napoleone dalla Cisalpina al Regno (Torino: UTET, 2004).


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There were, however, significant differences between the various institutions. The first and most relevant can be observed looking at Figure 8 and consists in the fact that the oldest universities, those founded between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, were all municipal institutions, established thanks to imperial or papal privileges, or to both, while the most recent universities, those founded between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were all ecclesiastical institutions. In particular, they were Jesuit boarding schools which obtained, after their foundation, the authority to grant degrees in philosophy and theology, and were mostly concentrated in
the regions under the control of the Spanish crown (in Messina and in Palermo, Sicily; in Sassari and Cagliari, Sardinia); and in the Papal states (Urbino, Camerino, Fermo, Macerata); as well as in Modena and Genoa. The most recent universities, therefore, were the direct fruit of the counter-reformation, the work of the Apostolic See in spreading cultural institutions and rivalry with the non-denominational universities.37

As is evident from the map (Figure 8), no universities were founded in Italy after 1682; however, during the eighteenth century, reforms were introduced in some of the most important centres. This was also as a consequence of the significant political and institutional changes that were taking place in the first part of the century in the Italian peninsula. The young Kingdom of Sardinia under the energetic and reforming guidance of Vittorio Amedeo II introduced a profound reorganisation of the University of Turin, starting from 1720.38 The aim was to tie it to, and make it more functional for, the interests of the crown and the state for scientific, technical and economical development. A magistrate for reforms was nominated and the syllabus was renewed. The University of Pavia too, in the State of Milan and now under the control of the Austrian Habsburgs, underwent a profound reorganisation.39 A further step was taken with the general suppression of the Jesuits in 1773: in that case, the universities which were directly administered by the Order were ‘nationalised’, that is, they came under state control, but in some cases, such as Parma, this entailed a profound renewal, while in other cases, such as Genoa, not even a change in management seemed to produce any effect and the universities continued with great difficulty.40

The eighteenth-century reforms, therefore, even in the cases where they were incisive and efficient, as in Turin, Pavia, Padua and Parma, concentrated above all on problems concerning curricula and syllabus. They favoured a general modernisation of teaching methods and the opening up of courses reflecting new tendencies towards


experimental sciences, technological applications and the so-called mixed mathematics as a sign of scientific policy looking towards economic and social utility.\(^{41}\) Reforms concerning the liberal professions and the training of professionals, on the other hand, proved to be less efficient. Owing to strong resistance from the privileged classes, governments hardly managed to touch the old-fashioned training and licensing for practice of the professions which ran along two parallel tracks, often without any communication between them. Indeed, on the one side there was the university with open enrolment, with systems and institutions very often controlled by boards of professional citizens, and on the other the system of religious boarding schools, such as the Jesuits, but also Barnabites, Somascans and Piarists, which gave good enough preparation to gain access to training in the city professional schools (doctors, physicists, lawyers, engineers and architects), with closed enrolment, controlled by the important families and dynasties of professional citizens.\(^{42}\)

In this way, in the second half of the eighteenth century in Italy, the gap which existed between modern science (not only experimental sciences and physics, but also economic and juridical sciences) and professional training, which took place mainly through apprenticeship and internship with a member of a board of professionals, and outside the universities, became more than apparent.

**The Jacobin triennium and the plans to abolish universities**

With the arrival of General Bonaparte in the peninsula and the victories of French forces in the 1796 campaign, in various regions, especially the north, revolutionary republics were established, directly inspired and controlled by the transalpine occupiers. During the so-called ‘Jacobin triennium’ therefore, the strong French influence saw to it that, in these regions, as far as universities and education were concerned, ideas and tendencies which they had already introduced in their native country spread and asserted themselves. This involved the abolition of every monopoly, against the existence of every type of ‘collegium’, not only those for the practice of the professions and the control of the corresponding university faculties, but also those for educational colleges, the traditional bulwark of the religious teaching congregations. On the basis of these ‘liberal’ principles – the freedom of teaching was proclaimed over and over in the constitutional texts of the mother country and was repeated also in the constitutions of the Cispadane (1797) and Cisalpine (1797 onwards, incorporating the


\(^{42}\)Concerning the system of liberal professions and the attempt at its transformation in Lombardy during the late eighteenth century, see above all the important studies of Elena Brambilla, ‘Il “sistema letterario” di Milano: professioni nobili e professioni borghesi dall’età spagnola alle riforme teresiane’, in Economia, istituzioni, cultura in Lombardia nell’età di Maria Teresa, ed. Aldo De Maddalena, Ettore Rotelli and Gennaro Barbarisi (Bologna: Il Mulino 1982), III, 76–160; Brambilla, ‘Università, scuole e professioni in Italia’; Brambilla, ‘Le professioni scientifico-tecniche a Milano’.
Cispadane) Republics – the universities were gradually suppressed in France, substituting them, as is well known, with special colleges and isolated faculties, the so-called ‘Grandes Ecoles’ (for example, l’École polytechnique in 1795; l’École Normale Supérieure in 1794; l’École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr in 1802), according to the example of the technical studies organisation which was already in action in some secondary, technical schools already founded during the eighteenth century: l’École des ponts et chaussées (1747), l’École royale du génie de Mézières (1748), l’École royale des ingénieurs constructeurs des vaisseaux (1765), l’École des Mines (1783).43

In the Cisalpine Republic too, by 1798 included the ancient State of Milan, the provinces of the ex-Venetian Republic as far as Verona, the ex-duchies of Parma and Modena in the Po Valley as far as Bologna and the Romagna regions after unification with the Cispadana Republic, a debate on educational reforms took shape based on the proposal of Vincenzo Dandolo, a Venetian Jacobin taking refuge in Milan. This involved the suppression of the universities of Bologna and Pavia, substituted respectively by a ‘Scuola di approvazione’ in Pavia for obtaining qualifications for the practice of liberal professions, and by a National Institute in Bologna for the development of scientific research and the government specification for the school system (the definition of a teaching syllabus for the primary and secondary schools, preparation of textbooks).44

The aim of Dandolo’s proposal was to supersede the old university system and approve democratic ambitions to decentralise further education in an effort to reproduce the model of the French central schools. In practice, he believed that a university education could not be reserved only for those who could afford to live away from home at the only two universities in the Republic (Pavia and Bologna), but that in every departmental capital, at every local secondary school (central school) university chairs (in advanced mathematics, law, chemistry, physics, natural history) should be set up for the higher education of the young people of the department. The latter would need to go to Pavia only to obtain their degree and the qualification to practise the profession.

Beside Dandolo’s proposal, in Milan in the same period (1798) a more moderate proposal was presented by the mathematician and professor of Pavia University, Lorenzo Mascheroni, which envisaged maintaining the university institutions and their scientific and technical modernisation.45

Similar reforming and reorganising initiatives of the education system were presented and put into practice in other places: in Padua, by Melchiorre Cesarotti, and in Rome, by the French mathematician Caspard Monge, but the brief and precarious life of the Napoleonic republics, tormented by a continuous state of belligerence and destined to interrupt their activity already in the spring of 1799 when the Austro-Russian troops arrived, saw to it that these reform projects never got any further than the planning phase and parliamentary debates. In contrast with France, the universities were not suppressed, and continued, even if with difficulty, to hold courses and confer academic qualifications following the old methods.

Napoleonic reforms subsequent to the law of 4 September 1802

The contents of the Mascheroni reform project were taken up immediately after proclamation of the Italian Republic (1802), in a more moderate and politically more stable climate which was established after the ‘Comizi di Lione’ (December 1801). With the law of 4 September 1802, destined to remain in force despite adjustments and modifications throughout the Napoleonic period and even later, a general reform of the scholastic system was passed. By virtue of this action the model of the central schools prevailed and a new secondary school (liceo) was introduced, as has been recalled by a number of scholars, the real cornerstone of the Napoleonic educational system, foreseen in every department capital.

The 1802 law, however, also made innovations in some parts compared with the French model: the Italian universities were not suppressed as in France, but the whole system was rationalised. The two oldest and most prestigious universities of Pavia and Bologna were kept running and in each three faculties were set up: medicine, law and mathematics. The university chairs of rhetoric and philosophy were closed and included in the departmental secondary school syllabus. As has been recalled in the first part of this research, at first these secondary schools were allowed to open chairs in physics, pure mathematics, mechanics and hydraulics, not only as preparatory courses but in substitution for the university courses. The other, so-called minor universities, which remained in the Republic and in the Modena and Ferrara territories, were suppressed and transformed into departmental secondary schools (licei).

The subsequent constitutional transformation of the Republic into the Italian Kingdom in 1804–1805, and its extensions at first to the Austrian Veneto in 1807 and later to the central regions of the Papal State in 1809 (Emilia and Marche) confirmed this policy: the ancient and prestigious university of Padua was maintained whilst

Camerino, Fermo and Macerata were transformed into departmental secondary schools, and Urbino was suppressed altogether (Figure 9).49

Paradoxically, there was a different situation in the so-called Départements Réunis – the very large area of Italian territory annexed to the French empire on the Tyrrenian side, from Piedmont to Rome – compared with that in the Kingdom of Italy and in the French motherland, on which were dependent many of the ancient universities in Turin, Genoa, Parma, Siena, Perugia and Rome, but they changed their

Figure 9. Universities in Napoleonic Italy (1812). Source: Angelo Bianchi.

name from University into Imperial Academy.\textsuperscript{50} The University of Pisa was reformed in 1810 with the establishment of the \textit{Scuola Normale Superiore}, for teacher training (see Figure 9).\textsuperscript{51}

Conclusion

At the end of this fertile and complex period the secondary school and further education system had extensively and fundamentally changed. Our comprehensive cartographic research has provided a means capable of visualising, through graphs, charts and, above all, maps, structural elements of national history such as the organisation of culture. As indicated, this has not been an \textit{appendix} to historical research, but rather a \textit{starting point}, enabling us to go beyond what is visible, paying attention to the interaction between social, judicial and economic factors which often cannot be completely represented even if documented for small areas of territory or as subsequent snapshots taken in various periods. We have seen how the maps present evidence for both continuity and change; systematisation and also the consolidation of tradition.

The introduction and spread of secondary schools and their integration with the three universities of the Kingdom, through the amalgamation of programmes and teaching content with faculty syllabuses, had by now formed a compulsory route for the education of those who wished to reach the higher professions (engineers, architects, doctors, lawyers, notaries and pharmacists) and secondary teaching, and had also altered the function and role of the university. Within a few years, from institutes controlled by municipal oligarchies and by boards of professional citizens, which then spread throughout many medium-sized and small cities, the universities were reduced to only three (Bologna, Pavia and Padua), the most ancient, prestigious and complete, and had become the apex of a public educational system, reunited in a single vertical route, mostly financed and organised by the State with programmes decided by the government and teaching staff selected by public competition.

Thus the so-called modern ‘\textit{catena degli studi}’ (sequence of studies) was achieved, passing basically from a monopoly of the higher classes to a monopoly of the State, whose value as a qualification recognised in law, depending for academic recognition on validation by the State universities, was the most obvious element: a system of studies which, despite subsequent modifications and changes, in its constitutional lines is still in use in contemporary Italy.
